

Press Release - June 4, 2021
For Immediate Release

Following the cancellation of Plein Air Roanoke 2020 due to COVID-19 restrictions, the reconvened Plein Air Roanoke 2021 was a great success. Forty-seven artists from twelve states registered for the event and nearly all attended. Artists came to Virginia from as far as Florida, Colorado, New Jersey, and Wisconsin. The mixing of styles and experiences was a major bonus for participants. Many residents and tourists were exposed to plein air painting for the first time.

Our judge was Mary Garrish of Miami, Florida. Mary is past president of the American Impressionist Society. She has participated in many national and regional shows, winning numerous awards, and she has been featured in Plein Air Magazine, Southwest Art and other publications. She has also been on the faculty of the Plein Air Convention and Plein Air South.

During the week, paintings filled the wet room of Gallery 202 with scenes of Roanoke, the Blue Ridge Parkway, Smith Mountain Lake, and farms and barns throughout the area. Artists made friends with cows and pigs and the farmers who owned them. Artists often expressed that painting opportunities were unparalleled. They also said that they would be returning to paint the scenes they missed.

Plein Air Roanoke is an open event aimed at giving plein air artists opportunities to compete in a structured event. Plein Air Roanoke's second goal was to have a fun, artist-centric event. With the sponsorship of three local galleries, The Little Gallery, Alexander-Heath Gallery, and Gallery 202 Gallery and Studios, opportunities for artists to mingle were a priority. Among other activities, there were two cocktail parties, a pizza orientation, and a day painting at Virginia Mountain Vineyard.

The Gala awards ceremony and private sale was a ticketed event open to all of the artists. Each artist provided one painting for judging, and their other paintings could be viewed in the wet room. More than \$2000 in cash prizes were awarded to the winners. Best of show was awarded to Martin Geiger of Staunton, Virginia for *St. Andrews Mid-Morning*. First Place was awarded to Connie P. Logan of North Carolina for *Piedmont Pentecostal Holiness Church*. Second Place went to Jennifer Young of Ashland, Virginia for *Dee's End Buck Hollow*. Third Place went to David Finnell of Charlottesville, Virginia for *White House on 6th*. There were four special awards. The Judge's Award went to Thomas Buchs of Waukesha, Wisconsin for *Roanoke Market*. The Committee Award went to Maria Reardon of Richmond, Virginia. Special Awards went to Cindy Shaw of Lake Norman, North Carolina for *Window Dressing*; and Lynn Polley of Florida for *Smith Mountain Lake Path*.

The judged paintings were available in a silent auction. The paintings were divided into four auctions with the fourth auction being the award winners. Sales were brisk and approximately \$10,000 was spent on paintings during the week. About ninety percent of all sales proceeds went directly to the artists. Artists were given the opportunity to show their unsold works in The Little Gallery for the following month. Several artists were also invited to show their studio works in The Little Gallery.

The event would not have been possible without the generous donations of The Little Gallery, Alexander-Heath Gallery, Gallery 202, South Roanoke Living, Carter Bank, the Italian Art Store, and Golden Artist Colors, and without the sustained efforts of the PAR Committee, MargaretSue Turner Wright, Karen Carter, Ed Hettig, Pam Fridley, Susan Bradbury, and Dana Phillips, and the PAR Volunteers, Joanne Tesnow, Anne Krogenas, Ann Peterson, Brian Gomes, Gary Myers, Tom Huck, and Rob Way.

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