

An inside look at

Plein
2022 Air

West Reading

June 13-18, 2022

SPONSOR & VOLUNTEER GUIDE

Plein Air West Reading 2022 is produced by Art Plus Gallery and the Berks Art Alliance. Dozens of volunteers from these two 501(c)(3) non-profit organizations will dedicate hundreds of hours, without compensation, to plan and stage the event. That's only half of the story. The other essential piece is the financial support of our sponsors.

Here's a walk through the highlights of this major cultural event that you help make possible.

Thank you. We couldn't do it without you.

Outstanding Field & Juror

Now in its seventh year, Plein Air West Reading (PAWR) has earned recognition as one of the region's top fine art competitions. This year, over 50 artists submitted entries for a chance to vie for \$3500+ in awards and share their work with thousands of people.

From this year's exceptionally large and talented field, our juror, nationally renowned painter Valerie Craig, selected 34 artists from six states to capture the character of Berks County in their art.

Sponsor Recognition

Major sponsors (\$500+) of Plein Air West Reading are recognized throughout the event and across the spectrum of media: websites, social media, event program, Plein Air Painter's Guide, advertising and publicity, Artist-Sponsor Mingle, Awards Presentation, Art on the Avenue, and extended exhibition. From now through the event, the PAWR web pages will get hundreds of hits each month, and our social media sites will garner thousands.

More Awards

First Place, Best Berks County: \$1000. *Sponsored by the Berks Art Alliance*

First Place, Best West Reading: \$1000. *Sponsored by the
West Reading Community Revitalization Foundation*

Second Place: \$700

Third Place: \$400

Honorable Mentions (2): \$200

People's Choice Award: \$100
Sponsor-themed Awards

New for 2022, individuals, businesses and organizations will have the opportunity to theme their own award. It could be the best painting of a specific area, historical site or subject. It could be a medium in memory of an artist friend, e.g. "The Jane Smith Award for Best Watercolor." The sponsor's name can appear in the title or description of the award.

These are primarily "pass-through" awards. The sponsor chooses the amount between \$200 and \$500, which will go directly to the artist, and adds \$100 to help support the event, which will cost over \$8000 to stage. Sponsor-themed Award creators will receive 4 tickets to the Friday night Patrons Preview & Awards Presentation at the Olympian Ballroom, and like our major sponsors, enjoy early access to purchasing the week's artwork. Those whose award amounts are \$400 or more also receive 2 invitations to the private Artist-Sponsor Mingle on Tuesday.

"The Plein Air Painter's Guide to Berks County"

Twenty of this year's participating artists are from outside Berks County. To help them sharpen their focus on potential subjects, we are producing the first-ever "Plein Air Painter's Guide to Berks County", a free, web-based resource packed with location suggestions and tips from local artists. We are literally putting Berks County on the map as an artistic destination! This guide will become a permanent feature on www.artplusgallerypa.com, updated annually, and recognize our event sponsors throughout the year.

Host Housing

Twelve of this year's participants are in need of overnight accommodations. Hosting a visiting artist for June 13-18, or any part thereof, can be a rewarding experience for everyone. Traditionally these accomplished artists, some of whom are nationally recognized, are very self-sufficient, needing little more than a roof, bed and a little refrigerator space. It is also customary for most to thank their hosts with the gift of an original painting!

Widening the Window

For this year's competition, the window for painting has been opened an additional day—from Monday, 6/13 until noon until Friday, 6/17.

Check-in: Monday, 6/13

Starting at 9:00AM, artists will check in at Art Plus Gallery, pick up their swag bags, get their surfaces stamped, and head out to paint at locations throughout Berks County through the week. Artists may get additional panels stamped at Art Plus Gallery any afternoon during the week.

Artist-Sponsor Mingle: Tuesday, 6/14

On Tuesday evening, the participating artists, major sponsors, and sponsors of themed awards of \$400+ will join hosts Stephanie Rawden and Mark Ratcliffe for a casual get-together at a historic mansion in nearby Wyomissing.

Canvassing the County

Artists will paint through the week. As paintings are completed they'll email photos and label information, but hold their work until intake on Friday.

Thursday: Set up panels & lighting

A team of volunteers will ready the Olympian Ballroom—a historic Art Deco theater—for the exhibition and awards presentation. While the space is beautiful, in the past the lighting, even with stronger spotlights and chandeliers, was less than ideal. This year, Art Plus Gallery purchased rechargeable gallery lights that will clamp onto the panels to augment the overhead lighting during the judging and Patrons Preview.

Friday, 6/17:

Morning Intake, Afternoon Set-up: From their paintings done that week, artists will choose three for judging. They'll deliver those to the Olympian Ballroom, 603 Penn Avenue (across from Art Plus Gallery) between 9:00AM and noon. Volunteers will set up the exhibit as the artwork comes in. Once the show is set up, juror Valerie will have the exhibit room to herself to judge the entries and select the winners. Meanwhile in the anteroom, another team of volunteers will set up the food and beverage service for the evening.

Noon-3:00PM: West Reading Paint Out! Following intake, all entrants—including those who weren't juried into the competition—will be invited to join in a fast-paced, 3-hour "paint out", choosing subjects between the 400 and 800 blocks of Penn Avenue and the mural-packed Cherry Street alley. Intake of one piece per artist will be in the 400 block, and close at 3:15.

6:00-8:00PM: Patrons Preview & Awards Presentation

The invitation-only preview opens at 6:00 for artists, sponsors, patrons of the arts, community leaders and event volunteers. Collectors and supporters enjoy the opportunity to get their pick of the entries. Sponsors and volunteers will be recognized by name to the crowd of approximately 100 attendees. At 7:00, the juror will announce the winners and share her thoughts on each of those entries.

Saturday, 6/18: Art on the Avenue

Now in its 28th year, Art on the Avenue has become Berks County's largest street festival—an immensely popular one-day event that typically draws over 10,000 visitors to West Reading.

- **Plein Air West Reading's** large tent will be directly in front of the theater—a valuable convenience as the entire exhibit is relocated *(in less than 2 hours) from the ballroom to the heart of the street festival, which opens to the public at 11:00AM. During the day approximately 1000 people will come through the tent, where they'll be able to vote for (and purchase) their favorite paintings. Transactions will be conducted at Art Plus Gallery; volunteers at the tent will be available to take the customer, painting and label across the street to Art Plus to complete the sale and wrap the artwork.
- **West Reading Paint Out!** Meanwhile in the 400 block of Penn Avenue, the West Reading Paint Out! tent will display the previous day's creations on the artists' own easels.

- **1:00 Demo:** Juror Valerie Craig will do a plein air painting demonstration near the PAWR tent.
- **6:30 People Choice Award** winner will be announced at the PAWR tent.
- **7:00 The Show's Over (briefly...):** As the festival closes, volunteers will move the unsold artwork into Art Plus Gallery.

Other Art Plus Activities During Art on the Avenue

Volunteers from Art Plus, the BAA and community will be helping at three additional major attractions during the festival:

- **Fine Art:** Adjacent to the PAWR exhibit will be another large tent showcasing abstracts, still lifes, whimsical paintings, woodturnings, jewelry and other types of artwork from members of Art Plus Gallery.
- **Me-sterpieces:** Festival-goers are invited to put their faces in the middle of the Mona Lisa, Girl with a Pearl Earring, The Scream, and other classics. There's no charge for folks to photograph themselves in these popular face-in-the-hole panels, but donations are appreciated and profits go to Art Plus Gallery's College Scholarship Fund.
- **Mini-Masterpieces:** Mini-canvases, child-safe paints, miniature easels and guidance are provided for children to create their own keepsake artwork.

Sunday & Monday: The Show Goes On: The remaining pieces from the juried show, along with those done during the event but not submitted for the competition, art from the Paint Out!, and plein air paintings done that week by other entrants will be rehung as the Featured Exhibit at Art Plus Gallery, Say Cheese! Restaurant, the West Reading Tavern, and possibly other nearby showcases. That show will run through July.