

Sonoma Plein Air Festival

Various locations, September 11-16

THE 15TH ANNUAL Sonoma Plein Air Festival kicks off on Monday, September 11, when award-winning artists from across the country come to Northern California to paint outdoors. At the same time, they're raising funds to benefit art education in 14 different public schools, museums, and community centers in Sonoma Valley.

Artist Keith Wicks, the festival's founder, says he started the Sonoma Plein Air Foundation because his daughter had art class at her school just once a month. "The public schools here had no money for art," Wicks says. "There needed to be a charity to serve artists, who receive 60 percent of sales, and artists-to-be, who receive 40 percent of the sale through art education programs." Since its inception

in 2002, the foundation has raised more than \$1.2 million to support art education.

The week of events includes an evening Quick Draw on Tuesday, September 12, at the weekly farmers' market on the Sonoma Plaza. Then, meet and mingle with the artists on Friday, September 15, at the gala auction and awards ceremony at the Buena Vista Winery. All works are available for purchase on Saturday at the festival on the plaza.

A few longtime participants include previous Artists' Choice Award winners Wicks, Robert Sandidge, Eric Bowman, Eric Jacobsen, and Kevin Courter. Their works are featured in a special exhibition alongside other winners from the past 15 years. Among the 35 other juried artists are Peggy Immel, Greg LaRock,

Michael Obermeyer, Carolyn Hesse-Low, Jim Wodark, and Anette Power.

Debra Huse, who has participated in the festival each year, is hoping to paint between 10 and 12 pieces during the week. "My favorite part is the incredible beauty and variety that we are able to explore all the way from San Francisco to Sonoma and beyond," Huse says.

—Katie Askew

contact information

www.sonomapleinair.com

See more work at www.southwestart.com/events/sonoma-sep2017.



▲ Jim Wodark, *High Sierra Gem*, oil, 20 x 24.

◀ Debra Huse, *Wine & Roses*, oil, 12 x 12.

Aspen Delight I, 6 x 6 , Oil

Peggy Immel

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Sunrise, 20 x 10 , Oil

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Sunday Ride, 12 x 16 , Oil on Linen