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ArtFest Midwest Transitions to Nonprofit and Grows DEI Focus

Des Moines, IA – ArtFest Midwest, a two-day fine art festival held as a featured event each summer during Des Moines Art Week, recently transitioned the organizing body from for-profit (SPPG) to non-profit (ArtFest Midwest Foundation) led by a diverse, artist-majority board of directors.

“We are in the process of engaging the broader artist, business, government, and non-profit community in shaping the event to build its vibrancy and relevance to Iowa,” says Jackie Norris, the Foundation’s board chair. “Our goal is for the event to be reflective of the community, offer high-quality, original art that is affordable, and provide artists of all kinds with the opportunity to engage with our nearly 10,000 attendees.”

One of the event’s new partners is Mainframe Studios, which brought together a diverse focus group of artists to inform the artist application process. The application has now been revised to be a more accessible point-of-entry for emerging and traditionally underrepresented artists, including artists of color. ArtFest Midwest will also provide scholarships for emerging artists who need help covering the costs of their booths and other costs that traditionally prohibit new artists from breaking into the fine art festival scene. The artist application for ArtFest Midwest is currently open through March 25, 2022.

“Artists are essential to community vitality, and in providing space dedicated to sharing art with the public, we are ensuring Iowa and the Midwest are seen as leaders in creativity and ingenuity,” said Siobhan Spain, executive director of Mainframe Studios.

Mainframe will also host an artist networking event for ArtFest Midwest artists on Friday, June 24, the evening before the weekend festival which runs June 25-26.

“There are many daunting aspects to exhibiting at an art festival for the first time or in a new city, and we want artists to experience how welcoming our community is through their experience at ArtFest Midwest and have the tools to continue their success,” said Alicia Velasquez, ArtFest Midwest Foundation board member.

Art mediums at ArtFest Midwest include clay, drawing, metal, printmaking, mixed media, sculpture, fiber, painting, wood, glass, paper, photography, and other forms of fine art. The event has free admission and provided in an air-conditioned, ADA accessible space at the Iowa Events Center. ArtFest Midwest is made possible thanks to the support of donors, sponsors, and partners. To learn more, visit www.artfestmidwest.org.

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The mission of ArtFest Midwest Foundation is to grow Midwest art culture by fostering talented regional artists and art patrons.

www.artfestmidwest.com