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Collabs highlight 50th Laguna Art-A-Fair



David Rubel, Sheri Morrison, Teri Powers, Tanya Flink, and Mike Cahill cut the ribbon during the official opening of the 2016 Laguna Art-a-Fair's 50th season on Friday. (Don Leach / Coastline Pilot)



By **Bryce Alderton** · Contact Reporter

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Laguna Art-A-Fair officially celebrated its 50th anniversary Friday with a ribbon-cutting as visitors eagerly awaited a stroll through the grounds to admire stunning photography, jewelry, paintings and sculptures.

What may not be as noticeable as the artwork on display from 125 artists is an underlying theme of this summer's showcase — collaboration.

Laguna Art-A-Fair officials, most of them volunteers, have teamed with Festival of Arts and Sawdust Art Festival representatives on a scavenger hunt-style activity while partnering with [Alzheimer's](#) Orange County to bring awareness to conditions such as Alzheimer's disease, a disorder that slowly destroys memory and thinking skills.

"A lot of people do not even know [Laguna Art-A-Fair] exists," Teri Powers, the festival's vice president of marketing, said.

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This is the first year Memories in the Making, a program of [Alzheimer's](#) Orange County, has had a booth at Laguna Art-A-Fair.

Through the program, established in 1988, adult day care centers and assisted-living facilities host classes for those with Alzheimer's or other forms of dementia to paint as a form of communication.

Also in 1988 Laguna Art-A-Fair, named Art-A-Fair until this year, moved to its current home at 777 Laguna Canyon Road after struggling for years to find a permanent spot.

The group, who wanted juried work on display from artists around the world, split from the Sawdust festival in 1968 to create Art-A-Fair.

Mike Cahill, Laguna Art-A-Fair's current president, dispelled the notion Friday that a rivalry exists between the festivals, no matter how one interprets history.

"People assume the shows are at each other's throats and that is absolutely incorrect," Cahill said. "We share things."

Cahill, who has exhibited at Laguna Art-A-Fair for 20 years, held his photo of a B-17 World War II bomber printed on an aluminum sheet. Printing on aluminum, while more expensive, helps images "pop," Cahill said.

Artists throughout the grounds were ready to welcome and explain their craft to visitors.

Emilee Reed, a watercolor painter, has exhibited at the art festival for seven years. It took Reed three years to secure a space after earning sufficient scores from jurors.

Reed, an Anaheim resident, paints every day and always carries a camera for that opportune moment, whether on a walk or while dining at a restaurant.

A bucket hanging from a rope at O'Malley's on Main, an Irish pub in Seal Beach, caught Reed's attention a few years ago, so much so that she created a piece titled "O'Malley's Bucket List."

"People ask me, 'What is your style,'" Reed said. "I don't have one. It depends on what strikes me." Reed said she owes a great deal of gratitude to Mariann Brewer, a watercolor painter whom Reed peppered with questions as she contemplated applying to the festival.

"I had no idea how to set up a booth," Reed, who booked entertainment for Disney before retiring, said.

Every Monday during the festival, which runs through Aug. 28, Reed will teach a class on watercolor painting, one of several workshops offered on different topics such as clay sculpting and acrylics.

As part of the collaboration theme and in honor of Sawdust and Laguna Art-A-Fair's 50th anniversaries, artists from the two festivals, and the Festival of Arts, created 50 clocks that are placed at various Laguna Beach hotels and restaurants.

The public can purchase the clocks, inspired with the theme "Art is Timeless", by visiting Lagunabeachpassport.com. Any remaining clocks will be auctioned at 6 p.m. Aug. 23 at [seven-degrees] with proceeds benefiting each festival's education programs.

For more information about Laguna-Art-A-Fair, call (949) 494-4514 or visit art-a-fair.com.

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