

Editorial COMMENTARY

by Tom Starland, Editor and Publisher

ArtFields 2017 - an epic event

People have been bugging me about ArtFields, they want to know what I know, as ArtFields doesn't get a lot of press and they (ArtFields) don't like talking about details or anything.

Here's what I know. One of the staff has jumped ship. Somewhere around 425 artists made the cut for the 2017 event, but no word was offered about how many entries they got. They added more cash awards, but not much info was offered about them. There has been little if no chatter on Facebook from the artists who made the cut compared to the chatter over the last four years. And, I really don't care to know too much more. But here's a few observations about what I know.

All but one of the ten art professionals, 5 on the Review Panel and 5 on the Juried Panel are from within the 12 states included in the competition. Professional artists don't like this and either do I. It makes the artists wonder how much these panel members pull for artists from their own state. All of the Panel members should come from outside the 12 participating states.

But a quick look at the artists who were juried into the 2017 exhibit/competition would tell you that "might" not be the case. Sixty percent (60%) of the artists selected to be in the competition are from SC and not one member of the Review Panel was from SC. One Review Panel member was from Arkansas, but only one artist from that state made the cut. Surely there are more talented artists in the state of Arkansas and is SC bursting with such talented artists? Of course not - it all comes down to who enters the competition. If 253 artists from SC made the cut - imagine how many entered from

SC - 300, 400 or even 500. How many entered from Arkansas? Hopefully more than one. Seven of the 12 states included in the competition had 10 or less artists make the cut.

And that's the real problem with ArtFields after five years - not many artists outside of SC and its two neighboring states (GA & NC) are entering this competition - even with such BIG money being offered as cash awards. So it's not really a Southeastern regional competition. It's a Carolina competition. Sure, two out of the four top winners were from outside of SC, but that was more a decision of the Juried Panel. And for all we know that one artist from Arkansas could end up being the top prize winner this year.

The ArtFields staff has made nice field trips to these other states trying to sell artists on ArtFields, but they haven't produced many entries - unless they're ready to say those states have produced lots of entries, but the work just wasn't that good compared to SC's artists. Right. The cost of these trips isn't paying off as far as entries go - as far as we know.

And, the ArtFields' folks don't like to talk numbers or should I say they don't like to show their numbers.

So maybe that staff member who jumped ship knows that ArtFields is sinking. I don't know, but in year five I don't see anything epic about ArtFields. And, it's a shame as it could have been something really good. At least it's still a good opportunity for SC's artists. Oh I hope artists in those other states didn't hear me say that. But 2 out of 4 is 50% and that's not bad odds that if you enter you might win the BIG money and all that fame.

That's it from me. Don't expect to hear anything else about ArtFields out of me - unless there is really something juicy to tell.

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