

LOCAL NEWS

Sausalito center holds outdoor painting competition



J. Thomas Soltesz of Point Reyes Station works on an oil painting near the Spinnaker restaurant in Sausalito on Friday, Aug. 25, 2023. He was among several local artists participating in a plein air program organized by the Sausalito Center for the Arts. (Alan Dep/Marin Independent Journal)

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PUBLISHED: August 25, 2023 at 5:32 p.m. | UPDATED: August 25, 2023 at 5:36 p.m.



The Sausalito Center for the Arts has launched its first outdoor painting competition.

The “paint out,” which began Aug. 17, features artists specializing in outdoor, on-the-spot creations called plein-air painting. The competition has drawn artists from all over the county to paint scenes downtown.

Laura Culver, a San Rafael resident and painter for about 20 years, is a participating artist. She said to be invited is an honor, and she is excited to paint at one of her favorite places because there is so much scenery to explore.

“For me, a favorite thing is the total immersion in nature, finding the right colors, and being connected to all of it,” she said. “All the rest of reality just drops away.”

Randy Sexton, a 20-year painter, said painting like this is always an adventure he enjoys.

“The world is your studio,” Sexton said.

The 15 participating artists were invited by the Sausalito Center for the Arts. Kay Carlson, a co-organizer, said the area has a long history of artists working in the area, especially on plein-air painting.

“This is a well-loved tradition,” Carlson said. “And we absolutely plan on doing this yearly.”

Both artists mentioned the day-to-day variability of the weather and scenery in Sausalito as part of the excitement. For example, Thursday was sunny and hot, while Friday was overcast and cooler.

“I could have painted the same scene today that I painted yesterday and it would have been a whole different painting,” Culver said.

Sexton said this kind of painting is different because of the added pressure to produce something under a time constraint. He said it felt like sports painting.

“You’re under pressure to come up with something fast,” Sexton said. “It’s a different kind of experience, but it pushes you and helps you grow, and the plein-air community is very supportive.”

The art will be on display at the center from 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. Wednesday through Sunday through Sept. 10. Awards in various categories will be presented from 6 p.m. to 8 p.m. Aug. 24.



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