

Published September 10th, 2014

New Art Form Makes Debut Spin at Art and Wine Festival

By Cathy Tyson



Jon Barry Photo provided

This year's Art and Wine Festival brings the public debut of a new art form - live trAction painting that feeds off the energy of the crowd and music as it's performed. Several artists have stepped up to volunteer their time during the festival to introduce the magic, just for the fun of it. Look for the artists near the Fiesta Stage as they bring their own creative signatures to this unique method that utilizes wheeled conveyances that will "paint" to the music played on stage, boldly interpreting the vibe in real time. The art will be auctioned off upon completion when there's a break in the music; 100 percent of the proceeds will go to Meals on Wheels.

Artist Jon Barry came up with the concept of trAction painting as a fresh look at Action painting, a genre that emphasizes the physical act of painting as an essential aspect of the finished work. TrAction is his interpretation using a variety of

wheeled contraptions, like a mountain bike, roller blades or a scooter, produced on large canvases.

Initially he practiced on an unused street, and he has customized his sidewalk. He even had summer camp kids participate in producing the art. Barry describes it as a combination of performance and process art, abstract expressionism, and much more of a kinetic experience - pedaling and skidding, making patterns - than producing art with a brush.

He and fellow artist Bill Carmel walked into the Jennifer Perlmutter Gallery in Lafayette and spoke to Perlmutter, pitching the idea of a collaboration at the Art and Wine Festival. Perlmutter was enchanted, so her gallery is generously donating the canvases and organizing the artists. She describes the upcoming exhibition as "exactly the kind of community/art hybrid event that I love to share."

Unfortunately Barry had existing plans to visit England during the days the festival is being held, so Carmel, along with other artists including Kaleo Ching and Judy Chamberlin, will be doing the trAction painting, but on a smaller vertical surface. Because the festival is so popular, there just isn't room to do the large-scale bicycle version; attendees can watch the process as it develops to produce the bright, musically inspired pieces.

All of the artists are donating their time and talent to produce these one-of-a-kind works. Perlmutter will also have larger trAction art from Barry, along with other pieces from a variety of artists on display in the Perlmutter Gallery, across from Diablo Foods for those who would like to take a peek or purchase.

Artists are slated to be painting from 12:30 to 6 p.m. on both Saturday and Sunday, Sept. 20 and 21, at the Fiesta Stage tucked into the small street just past the The Cooperage American Grille off of Lafayette Circle. For more information on John Barry and his unconventional art of skainting (skating painting), go to www.traction-painting.com. Complete details about the Art and Wine Festival can be found at www.lafayettefestival.com.

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