

West Oak Lane – Mount Airy – Cheltenham
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Artists share knowledge for all

A variety of art subjects were offered to the public

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Artist Adrienne Mills of Washington, D.C. creates abstract art on human bodies. Sometimes the models are photographs or drawn to create another dimension to her live artwork. Other times the models just parade around, showing off the subtle hues of pastel, primary or unique combined colors. Thus, “The Art of Adrienne Mills” with her statuesque and shapely models was done live at art pavilion tent at the Fourth Annual West Oak Lane Jazz and Arts Festival.

Yet Mills was not the only world-renowned artist on hand for the three-day event. Artist Karen Sawyer from Baltimore was creating her version of live body art that she called fantasy painting. This included painting animal faces and even clothing outlines on her models.



The Leader / John Patillo
Body paint artist Adrienne Mills works a body painting onto a model at the festival.

“People just love the body art,” said Mills, as she flipped through the photographs from her impressive collection. “I consider what I do as a painting on a human body. The body becomes my canvas. I use the same painter’s eye that I use when I’m working on (a traditional) canvas.”

With the body you get to create these live rhythms. Most of the times these rhythms get photographed so you can capture it like a live painting.”

“There are so many ways to use the fantasy or body art,” added Sawyer, as she pointed to a photograph of a young boy wearing a Baltimore Orioles shirt. “Many people think that this is an actual photograph of a boy wearing a shirt. I have to point to the edges along his shirt so they can see that this was actually painted on and he was not wearing a shirt. I like to use a lot of soft lines so that the fact is not obvious. This type of art just gives you more license to express yourself as an artist.”



The Leader / John Patillo
Boston based artist Paul Goodnight delivers a lecture on how the average person can discover their talent for art.

great event with the jazz and the art,” said Jenkins, who resides in Westchester County, New York. “You hear the lyrics of Sun Ra and then you see the art like that (of Lawrence) and it is saying the same thing. It is just great.”

Trudy Lusan of Rosedale, New York said than a van load of them came from the borderline Queens-Nassau communities with the object of purchasing art at the festival.

She said that over the years she heard about the October Gallery and their annual event.

In addition, Boston’s premiere artist Paul Goodnight not only brought along some of his masterpieces, but gave lectures like “Painting Made Easy,” “Conversations with Goodnight,” “The Secrets of the Art brush,” and “Body Movement and Painting.” Artist David Lawrence, a New York native who now resides in Germantown, pointed to the geometry and pyramidism of his latest collection, while artist Kevin Henderson lectured on how “Art Chose Me” and “Straight Art Talk.”

What I like about this year’s jazz and art festival is that it is as much an arts festival as it is about jazz,” said Lawrence. “The festival has really come a long way and I think the art (component) is one of the reasons it is growing. I noticed that many more people came prepared to purchase art. Before when it first started they were just looking, but now they are coming here to find the art pieces they want to add to their collections. I think it is great because art is just as much a part of our culture as jazz.”

Vocalist Art Jenkins, who performed with the Kenny Gates Trio at Cornbread & Coffee on Sunday morning, could not agree more. “I’ve been performing more than 60 years and this is a

Word of mouth from some of her sorors led them to rent the vehicle and take the three-hour trek to West Oak Lane this weekend.

“I just love art,” said Lusan. “I cannot draw at all, but that does not stop me from appreciating quality artwork. When you have artists like Paul Goodnight and Kelvin Henderson, you know that you have quality artwork. It not only looks good in your home, but art is a great investment. I know people who hit hard times and instead of taking out home equity loans or loans against their car, they can use art as collateral for loans. So it’s a great way to build wealth that you can pass down to your children in addition to being aesthetically pleasing to the eye.”

During the question and answer session following Goodnight’s lecture he also discussed the benefits of art collecting.

When asked by Lawrence if the audience is really the one who determines that his art is quality, Goodnight said that he first determines if the art is “good,” but a positive response from art lovers and collectors affirms that he is on the right track, he said.

“Unless you are creating art just for yourself and no one else is going to see it, you get reassurance from the audience that you are connecting with them when they like and purchase your art,” said Goodnight. He readily admitted that he was pleased with the sales he made over the past weekend to many who lived in the neighborhoods like Mount Airy, West Oak Lane, and Cheltenham.

“Sometimes an artist may need to (rethink) what he is doing if it doesn’t resonate with others,” Goodnight continued.

“That’s the reality of making art for a living. I want people to be able to relate and be satisfied with what I am doing. It’s not about ego tripping. Sometimes the audience may not see what I see, but I also know that I am not doing my art in a vacuum. I don’t even consider myself an artist, but I am a story teller and an image maker. That makes more sense to me than being an artist, whatever that means.”

Stacy Williams of West Oak Lane was among those who purchased art on Sunday afternoon. She said that she often would browse Art Noir and October Gallery, both located along the Ogontz Avenue commercial corridor, but never had enough money to purchase art.

“I wish I could buy the paintings that were sold over \$1,000 but I was able to find much less expensive art work at the festival,” said Williams. “Next year I plan to save part of my income tax to buy art. I think it’s just great to have art as a part of the festival because I am learning more about art by talking to the artists. I am expanding my horizons right in my own back yard.”