

June Arts Crawl bustling with activities Shop, listen to music or color the streets!

Written by By Melinda Russell Sun Correspondent
Friday, 05 June 2015 14:06



According to Nitasha Manning, Arts Crawl Coordinator, the monthly festival is more than an event, it is a great way to build community and relationships. The June 13 event is all about exploring cultures through visual and performing arts.

“It’s a great outlet for alleviating stress,” Manning said. She encourages everyone to come downtown and hang out for an hour or two. She says you’ll be surprised, you might just paint the street with your feet while listening to the bands.

There will be seven live artists working on the streets including Vanessa Wild from Albuquerque and Greg Ballinger.

Ballinger attended Rehoboth High School, Idyllwild Arts Academy in California and will be starting his second year at the Institute of American Arts in Santa Fe in August. You can preview his work at the southeast corner of Coal Street and 2nd Street. He is doing a six mural project for the city. The project will highlight local veterans.

His first work features Desert Storm and Desert Shield veteran, Sheila Silva.

KleenSI8 is a Christian Rock and Gospel band from Shelbyville, MI. The four siblings in this band try to send a message about fresh starts (clean slates). They will be one of the street performers during Arts Crawl.

Activities will kick off early this month. At 2 pm the Children’s Branch Library will feature Rainforest Birds.

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At 5 pm the El Morro Theatre will have a ribbon cutting and grand re-opening ceremony along with tours for those interested. Recording artist, Nite Gomez will sing the National Anthem for this event and will also be singing with a band of friends later that evening.

The 2nd Street addition to the El Morro will be host to a Navajo Nation Museum exhibition entitled "Working With The Wool." Arts Crawl is also expecting the Zuni Dancers to appear on the streets during the festivals performing the Zuni deer and buffalo dances.

Also at 5 pm, Marco Bello, chef at The Eagle Café will be serving a four course meal. The Eagle has been around for more than a century, according to Manning. And while eating, you can enjoy the artwork display in the restaurant's gallery.

Arts Crawl officially starts at 7 pm. Amy Coats, owner of Foundations of Freedom Performing Arts Studio, will feature hip hop dancers, break dancing and belly dancing. Students will perform pieces that were a part of their Spring Recital entitled "The Story of Hip Hop."

"[Arts Crawl] is a great event and it's continually building," she said.

Manning said that their attendance has been growing, starting with around 400 participants in January and February, but increased to about 900 participants in April. With the weather getting nicer and tourists starting to visit, Arts Crawl attendance is expected to get even bigger over the summer.

Manning says one of her favorite parts of Arts Crawl is how the downtown walkway transforms into a vibrant and beautiful gathering place.

"I love to stand back and watch people enjoy," she said.

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Manning discussed the walkway's stigma of being an undesirable pathway. She said the event really changes your point of view.

More than 24 businesses offer specials for their products and many of them add entertainment to their palette of products for Arts Crawl each month.

Other June activities during Arts Crawl include an outdoor cornhole tournament at Sammy C's, free demonstrations at Zumba Fitness, MMA sparring sessions at Jody Sanchez Academy of Martial Arts, and the spray paint art of Josh Fambrough at Max's Tattoos Zone.