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Community Focus

Jacksonville Arboretum & Gardens Plein Air Painting Invitational "A Brush with Nature"



Jacksonville Arboretum & Gardens is once again hosting a 'plein air' painting invitational, where top artists from our region will set up their easels to capture, on canvas, the essence of this beautiful natural park in the midst of our city. From Thursday, March 29th through Saturday, March 31st, the artists will paint their favorite scenes from locations throughout the park. This 120 acre beautiful property is owned by the City of Jacksonville and leased to the Jacksonville Arboretum & Gardens, Inc., an independent non-profit organization, who is responsible for its management,

improvements and maintenance. Since it is not funded through local or state budgets, the Arboretum operates strictly through grants, memberships and individual donations of funds, labor and materials. Thus, this plein air painting event accomplishes a twofold purpose -- to raise awareness of the Arboretum within the community and to raise funds for its operation and growth.

Besides offering a free fun and festive outdoor outing for people of all ages and abilities, this event gives the general public a unique opportunity to interact with working artists and to experience art in the making - actually watch a painting come alive! Renowned local artist Jim Draper, who will be painting at the event, summed it up well when he said "Art takes us through the gamut of emotions, and it's in these emotions where genius happens. Art is like a magic act. One takes nothing and makes something out of it. It's my vehicle for taking people out of the mundane and to another place."

All works of art will be for sale at both the on-site event and at a special Gala, with proceeds benefiting both the artists and the Arboretum. Tickets are required for the Gala held at the Wells Fargo Bank Building downtown. "A Brush with Nature" offers a perfect pairing of art and nature in a unique urban forest. For more information on this special event, visit www.abrushwithnature.org.