

Laguna Festival of the Arts: Selections from the Permanent Collection

(SANTA ANA, CA) – Opening July 1 and running through November 1, 2023, the John Wayne Airport Vi Smith Gallery will feature a significant selection of works from the Permanent Collection of the Laguna Festival of the Arts.



The Magician, Murray Kruger, 2011

Presented in its largest exhibition to date, this selection celebrates works by early Laguna artists such as Joseph Kleitsch, Virginia Wooley, and Edgar Payne, as well as modern artists Stillman Sawyer, Roger Kuntz, and Thomas Waddelow. Vivid and diverse, this exhibit offers the chance to explore Southern California culture through an artistic lens.

In 1932, a group of artists in Laguna Beach banded together to create what would become the Festival of Arts, a now world-renowned fine arts show that has been a part of Laguna Beach's and Orange County's art community for over 90 years. Since then, the Festival has been acquiring work that is significant to the Festival's and Laguna Beach's rich history, and now includes over 1,000 works.

The Festival's Permanent Art Collection serves as part of Laguna Beach's collective memory, capturing stories of the natural environment, the community, and the people that shape them. This exhibit showcases a sample of the considerable collection of artworks that the Festival of Arts has developed over the years, from early California plein-air painters to current Festival Exhibitors.



Balloon Vendor, Jack Dudley, 1980

Sustained through donations and bequests, the Collection purchases pieces from Festival Exhibitors each year to further its mission of supporting artists and preserving our shared history. In 1991, the Collection was significantly enhanced by the donation of the Lorna Mills – Great American Bank Collection of early California artworks. In 2004, the entire photographic collection of exhibitor Stillman Sawyer was given as a bequest by the Sawyer Trust, as well as seed funds for a permanent location for the Collection.



Electric Love II, Elizabeth McGhee, 2016

To find out more about the Laguna Festival of the Arts Permanent Collection, visit www.foapom.com/collection. The Festival of Arts and Pageant of the Masters takes place this summer from July 5 through September 1, 2023, where 120 local artists are continuing the tradition. *Come see where art happens!*

The exhibition will be on view in the Vi Smith Gallery, spanning the entire secure side of the airport, half in Terminal A and half in Terminal C.

For more information about the John Wayne Airport Arts Program, contact Curator Heather Bowling at hbowling@ocair.com.

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