



ARTS ADVOCATES FACT SHEET

Inspiring, educating, and connecting people to the arts for over 50 years

artsadvocates.org

Who We Are

Arts Advocates is a membership organization dedicated to inspiring creativity, advancing education, and connecting the community to the arts. We do this through sponsoring creative educational and cultural programs, and awarding scholarships to students pursuing careers in the arts.

History

Arts Advocates, formed as The Fine Arts Society of Sarasota, a 501(c)(3) not-for-profit, held its first organizational meeting on April 24, 1969. By the first official meeting, October 23, 1969, there were already 57 members. Arts Advocates now has nearly 250 members who participate in luncheons with notable speakers, workshops, educational tours, and other activities that support the arts.

The Sarasota Colony

Over the years, the organization has assembled a renowned collection of paintings and sculpture from the Sarasota Colony of artists who migrated to Sarasota from the 1930s to the 1970s. Represented in this collection are artists from the "Colony," or Sarasota School of Art, such as Syd Solomon and Ben Stahl. They were inspired by Florida's natural beauty and the circus, which provided an abundance of subjects. Many began their own schools of art, helped found Ringling College, and made Sarasota an epicenter for the arts. The collection is on display at the Arts Advocates Gallery and in the Van Wezel Performing Arts Hall.

Art Collection – Docent Tours

In 1970, the Fine Arts Society purchased its first piece of art: Hilton Leech's watercolor painting, "Descending Yellows." By August 1970, works by Jerry Farnsworth and Charles McCurry had been acquired, and the collection now contains over 50 pieces representing a wide range of media and styles.

The exhibit at the gallery is open to the public every Saturday from 2:00-5:00 pm. No appointment is required. Written information is available for self-guided tours.

Docent-guided tours of the exhibit are open to the public at 11:00 am on the first Wednesday of each month. Tours are \$10 per person and can be booked at artsadvocates.org/activities. Attendance is limited to 10. Group and special tours can be arranged through Stephenie Frasher, docent team leader, at stephfrash@comcast.net or by calling 443-454-2206.

Scholarship Program

The scholarship program offers tuition assistance to Sarasota and Manatee county resident students and is based on need, academic achievement, and artistic talent. Since 1969, over \$1,000,000 has been awarded to students whose studies include visual arts, dance, creative writing, music, theater, and architecture. Grant recipients have attended Berklee School of Music, Pratt Institute, Ringling College of Art and Design, and many others.

Community & Educational Outreach Grants

Since 2007, Arts Advocates has awarded over \$100,000 in grants to help support arts organizations, schools, and children's programs.

Speaking of the Arts

Our Speaking of The Arts lecture series features internationally known leaders in all fields of the arts. The inaugural event featured Marin Alsop, conductor of the Baltimore Symphony, who was the first woman to lead a major orchestra. She described her "Adventures On and Off The Podium," referencing her own amazing story and the challenges she confronted in her career.

Our second lecture featured Lynn Ahrens, who has written extensively for theater, film and television, winning the 1998 Tony, Drama Desk, and Outer Critics Circle Awards for the lyrics of the acclaimed Broadway musical, "Ragtime." In the same year she received two Academy Award nominations and two Golden Globe nominations for best song and best score for the animated feature film "Anastasia."

We Zoomed over to London for our presentation with Francisco Serrano, an artist with England's Royal Ballet. Serrano shared his star-studded journey from Sarasota to London via New York and Havana.

Arts Advocates Membership

Membership dues start at \$55 annually for an individual. Other membership levels can be viewed online at artsadvocates.org/join.