

MEET OUR 2024 SCHOLARSHIP WINNERS



Photo by Mica Martinelli

Back row, from left: John Quigley, Maria Medina Almaguer, Hong Nguyen, Samantha Tanelli, Miracle Deveaux.
Front row, from left: Emmalee Bunnell, Noelle Prouty, Danae Tran, Lillian Fox. Not pictured: Colin Leonard

We are pleased to announce that ten Sarasota and Manatee county students have each been awarded a \$5,500 scholarship for the 2024-2025 school year. The \$55,000 total marks the celebration of Arts Advocates' 55th anniversary. Since 1969, Arts Advocates has awarded over \$1.1 million in scholarships and outreach grants. The scholarship program honors students whose studies include visual and related arts, dance, writing, music, theater, and architecture. All scholarship monies are generated through Arts Advocates activities and donations.

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Artwork by the winning visual arts students will be on display in the window of the Arts Advocates Gallery throughout July and August. In addition, the gallery will feature a video of winners' performances from the scholarship awards luncheon. The Arts Advocates Gallery, located in the Crossings at Siesta Key mall, 3501 S. Tamiami Trail in Sarasota, is open Saturdays from 2:00 to 4:00 p.m.



Maria Medina Almaguer is a two-year Arts Advocates scholarship awardee studying piano at the Berklee College of Music in Boston. During her first year at Berklee College, Almaguer collaborated and composed music with special attention to her Cuban heritage. Almaguer, an accomplished pianist, declared her major in contemporary writing and production.



Emmalee Bunnell graduates from Venice High School this spring and will pursue a B.F.A. in dance, with a minor in arts in communities. For the past 10 years she has been actively involved in competitive dance. She has received numerous state, regional and national competition awards.



Miracle Deveaux graduates this spring from Booker High School's Visual and Performing Arts Program. She enjoys songwriting, producing, and performing and plans to major in music production in college. Deveaux has been involved with the Westcoast Black Theatre Troupe, showcasing her talents in dancing, singing, and acting. She is also a member of Girls Empowering Girls Everywhere.



Colin Leonard is a four-year recipient of the Arts Advocates scholarship. This fall he enters his final year at Oberlin Conservatory of Music where he studies jazz saxophone, flute, and clarinet. He is a member of the Oberlin Jazz Ensemble and has played in numerous jazz combos of different styles including fusion, free jazz, soul, samba, New Orleans jazz and more. In addition to music, Leonard will graduate with a minor in environmental studies.



Lillian Fox is a three-time Arts Advocates scholarship awardee. She will be a junior at the University of South Florida where she began her studies as a double major in dance and studio art. She has narrowed her focus to painting and design and added printmaking into her skill set.

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Hong Nguyen graduates from Booker High School this spring with plans to attend Ringling College of Art and Design in the fall. Nguyen has already been attending Ringling College as a pre-college student. His interests are painting, illustration, and digital art, and his dream is to be an illustrator with a gaming company. He won the Winning Portfolio award of the 2024 Florida State Fair Contest.



John Quigley is a multi-year recipient of the Arts Advocate scholarship. This fall, Quigley enters his final year at Ringling College of Art and Design where he majors in illustration and digital art. His goal is to have a career as a concept/storyboard artist. Quigley exhibited his work in the Arts Advocates Gallery twice in the last year: once in the student scholarship exhibition and again in the veterans' exhibition. Numerous pieces in his body of work represent experiences from his military service.



Danae Tran is a second year Arts Advocates scholarship awardee. She will continue to study violin performance at Stetson University. Tran is a first violin of the Stetson University Symphony Orchestra and Stetson University Chamber Orchestra, and she is a leader of the prestigious chamber music ensemble The Barron Quartet. The quartet was the winner of the Stetson at Carnegie Hall Chamber Music Competition 2023. In March 2024, the quartet played Grieg's Op. 27 in G minor at Carnegie Hall.



Noelle Prouty is a two-time Arts Advocates scholarship awardee. She will continue her studies at the University of Florida, majoring in both art and biology with a minor in entomology. Her focus of study this year is drawing, three-dimensional art, art history, entomology research, and chemistry. She plans to study in Thailand to learn more about Asian art and explore the biodiversity of the region. Upon graduation she hopes to pursue a career in medical or biological illustration.



Samantha Tanelli is a second year Arts Advocates scholarship awardee. Tanelli, who describes her artwork as "whimsical wildlife art," attends Ringling College of Art and Design. Her primary goal is to illustrate children's books and realize the dream of owning a children's art studio. In 2023, she secured both first and third place in the Sarasota County Spring Art Show. She was also a recipient of the Sarasota Chapter of the National League of American PEN Women's Betty Altman Art Award of Excellence.

Deb Altshul-Stark, co-chair of the Arts Advocates scholarship team along with Tonya Eubank, stated, "Members of Arts Advocates are proud to support these students in furthering their educations. We are impressed by the work, optimism, and drive of our awardees. We look forward to following their careers."

Luncheon photos by Suzanne Havens

FROM YOUR PRESIDENT

Dear Members of Arts Advocates,

Our month began with the art show “What Light Does When Nobody’s Looking” at the Gallery on May 4th, showcasing the incredible black and white photography of Michael Cohen. The show ran through May 25th.

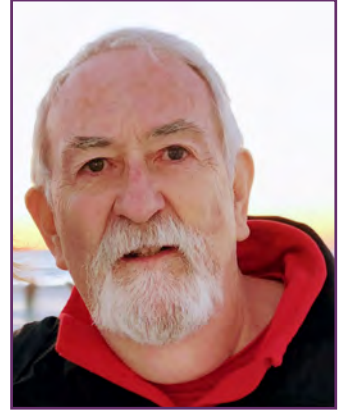
I was honored to present cash awards to top Middle School art students from the northern and southern Sarasota County schools on May 2nd and 9th. Jeannette Palladino and Liz Trostli chose the winning artworks of these talented young students. The works will be on exhibit this summer at the Gallery.

On May 7th, Nanette Crist presented an enlightening Art Talk on “Reimagining Famous Works of Art.” This subject offered a fascinating insight into the way many Black, female and other artists are updating iconic paintings to see themselves in the picture.

At our May Board of Directors meeting, we welcomed Barbara Fischer Long to the Board as a new member-at-large.

Our member luncheon was held on May 16th at the Sarasota Yacht Club to honor this year’s 10 scholarship winners. In celebration of Arts Advocates’ 55th anniversary, \$55,000 was allocated to the scholarship fund, so each winner was awarded a scholarship of \$5,500. Our guest speaker was Ms. Sara Curtis Robinson, Vice President for Advancement at Ringling College of Art and Design. I would like to thank Debra Altshul-Stark and Tonya Eubank for cochairing the Scholarship Committee and organizing this amazing program, as well as all

the volunteer members of the committee who no doubt put in countless hours during the selection process. Most of all I would like to congratulate our ten scholarship winners.



Bill Rusling, *President*

Arts Advocates also hosted an Art and Backstage Tour at the Van Wezel on May 20th. These tours provide a look at paintings and sculptures on loan to the Van Wezel from the Arts Advocates permanent collection of well-known Florida artists, such as William Hartman, Ben Stahl, Eugene White and Julio de Diego.

Stay informed by checking our weekly Eblasts and monthly newsletters, and remember to visit our website www.artsadvocates.org to register for events aligned with your interests.

With warmest regards to all,

Bill Rusling
President, Arts Advocates



Presented by the
Community Foundation of Sarasota County

Thank You!

THANK YOU to everyone who donated to Arts Advocates during the Giving Challenge campaign. Over \$11,000 was raised this year! Your generous contributions help us promote the arts in our community.

Anonymous

Maryann Armour

Martha Ballard

Franklin G. Berlin Foundation

Christine Boone

Beverly Burger

Rennie Carter

Carol Darling

Tonya Eubank

Laura Feder

Elizabeth Ferguson

Judy Fiala

Stephenie Frasher

Carol Hirschburg

Robin Klein-Strauss

Barbara Long

Dan Macey

Margaret Marcus

Donna Maytham

Tom McArdle

H. Gladstone & Betty Pritchard
McKeon Foundation

Mark Ormond

Jeannette Paladino

Julie Planck

Nancy Roucher

William Rusling

Jane Sheridan

Wendy Surkis

Patricia Taylor

Sandra Warner

Sandra Williams



The 2024-25 officers of the Arts Advocates Board of Directors are (left to right) Elaine Foster, Treasurer; Carol Darling, Vice President; Bill Rusling, President; and Judy Herman, Recording Secretary. Not pictured: Barbara Hyde, Corresponding Secretary.

ARTS ADVOCATES RECOGNIZES YOUNG ARTISTS

Arts Advocates continued its mission to promote arts education by supporting the Sarasota County Schools Spring Art Show for the third year. The Art Show is held in two venues representing north and south county schools. Together they showcase over 1,500 pieces of artwork created by local students in grades K-12.

Arts Advocates supports the effort by presenting cash awards to top middle school artists. Jeannette Paladino and Elisabeth Trostli, both members of the Arts Advocates Board of Directors, selected 1st, 2nd and 3rd place winners at each of the two locations.

North County winners are: First Place – Rowan Ingram (6th Grade, Booker Middle School), Second Place – Ryan Johnson (8th Grade, Booker Middle School), Third Place – Avery McNutt (8th Grade, Sarasota School of Arts and Sciences).

South County winners are: First Place – Amelia Bonds (8th Grade, Woodland Middle School), Second Place – Ivy Case (8th Grade, Laurel Nokomis School), Third Place – Marcelino Irigoyen (8th Grade, Heron Creek Middle School).

Congratulations to all our artists! The six winning art pieces are on display in the window of our gallery this summer. Be sure to stop by to take a look!

JUNE MEMBER ARTIST EXHIBIT

SUZANNE HAVENS: SEEING WITH IMAGINATION

Suzanne Havens has always loved art. Upon graduation with a Bachelor of Fine Arts degree from Michigan State University, Suzanne taught high school art. She then earned a Masters in International Business for a career in marketing, culminating as Vice President, Senior Brand Planner, at Fitzgerald + Company in Atlanta, where she created advertising strategies.

Suzanne Havens' latest photographic artworks express the beauty of nature, often overlooked because of small size or unusual form. She then imagines the subjects in unusual settings or isolates the subjects. She sometimes combines them with her other photos, or paints under and over them digitally.

Suzanne has mounted five one-woman shows of her art. In 2020, her photo won Best in Show at the 40th Annual Selby Gardens Juried Photographic Exhibition. Afterwards she became one of six volunteer photographers for Marie Selby Botanical Gardens.

Opening Reception:

Saturday, June 1 | 2-4pm

Exhibit Dates:

Every Saturday in June | 2-4pm

Presentations by the Artist

(all at 2:30pm):

June 1 – Vision and Inspiration

June 8 – Close-Ups from Marie Selby Botanical Gardens

June 15 – Layers upon Layers

June 22 – Gardens

June 29 – Large Prints

Place: Arts Advocates Gallery, The Crossings at Siesta Key
3501 S. Tamiami Trail, Sarasota

Cost: FREE



Top: Bullet in Space
Right: Walking Iris

JUNE ART TALK

JESS POPE:

THE TRANSFORMATIVE POWER OF MOVEMENT AND HUMAN CONNECTION

In celebration of Pride Month, June's Art Talk will feature Arts Advocates member Jess Pope.

Raised in a strict Pentecostal family – no television, no computers, no dancing – Jess was taken to a ballet by a neighbor when she was seven years old. Her life and dreams were changed forever. She is a firm believer in the transformative power of movement, and everyone's need for human connection and community.

Jess holds a BA in Visual Studies from Ringling College and an MFA in Visual Art from Vermont College of Fine Arts. She has danced with Moving Ethos Dance Company since 2008 and is an instructor at Ringling College. Jess leads movement classes at the Sarasota Art Museum and is a Drama and Dance coach at Booker High School, her alma mater.

The Art Talk will include videos of some of Jess' performances.

Date: Tuesday, June 4 | 4 – 6pm

Place: Arts Advocates Gallery
The Crossings at Siesta Key
3501 S. Tamiami Trail

Cost: Free for members/\$5 nonmembers

[REGISTER HERE.](#) 



Photo by Harry Sayer

Book Club

DO YOU LOVE TO READ?

We're looking for someone to lead the Arts Advocates Book Club — someone who will set up a system to determine both how books are selected and who will lead each discussion. Book Club meetings can be held in the Arts Advocates Gallery. Contact memberengagement@artsadvocates.org if you're interested!

In the meantime, Arts Advocates members have been invited to participate in *Literati*, the Ringling Museum Library book club! They vote on and discuss arts-related books each month. The July book is ***The Keeper of Hidden Books*** by Madeline Martin, the *New York Times* bestselling author of *The Last Bookshop in London*.

***The Keeper of Hidden Books* is a novel of historical fiction about the power of books to bring us together. It is inspired by the true story of the underground library in WWII Warsaw.**

Summary: *All her life, Zofia has found comfort in two things during times of hardship: books and her best friend, Janina. But no one could have imagined the horrors of the Nazi occupation in Warsaw. As the bombs rain down and Hitler's forces loot and destroy the city, Zofia finds that now books are also in need of saving. With the death count rising and persecution intensifying, Zofia jumps to salvage whatever books she can from the wreckage, hiding them away, and even starting a clandestine book club. But the closer Warsaw creeps toward liberation, the more dangerous life becomes. Zofia must fight to save her friend and preserve her culture and community, using the only weapon she has left – literature.*

Coming in August: *The Color Storm: A Novel of Renaissance Venice* by Damian Dibben.

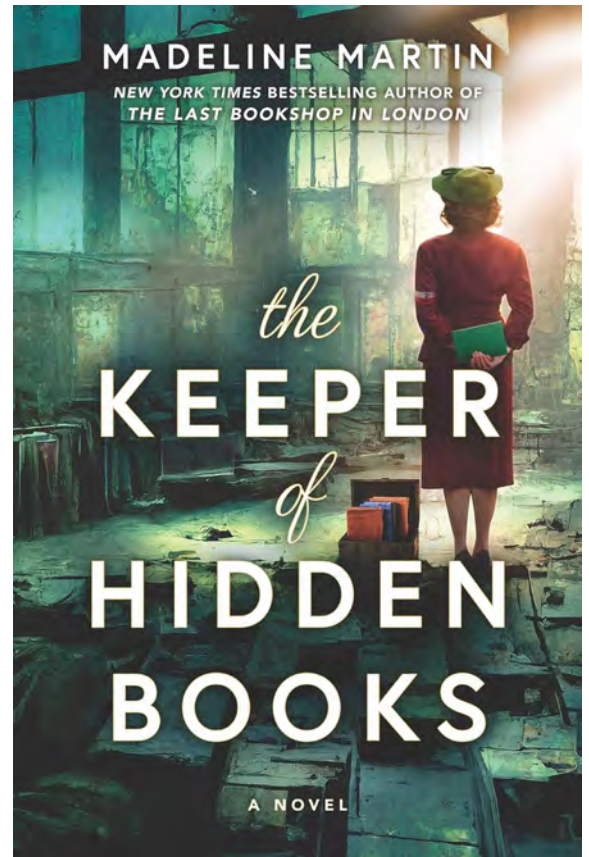
Date: Friday, July 12

Place: Online via Zoom or in the Ringling Museum Library, 5401 Bay Shore Road

Time: 10:30 via Zoom, or 2:30 in the museum library

Cost: Free

Register by contacting Elisa Hansen, Head of Ringling Museum Library Services, at (941) 358-2701 or elisahansen@ringling.org.



JULY ART TALK

6 OF 26:

FLORIDA HIGHWAYMEN PAINTINGS IN THE ARTS ADVOCATES COLLECTION



Untitled by Alfred Hair

In 2004, the 26 Florida Highwaymen artists were inducted into the Florida Artists Hall of Fame. These self-taught artists – 25 men and one woman – share the Hall of Fame limelight with Ernest Hemingway, John Ringling, Tennessee Williams, Ray Charles, and Jimmy Buffett.

The Highwaymen, who began painting in the mid-1950s, were not a formal movement and represented no official group, yet they thrived as artists and entrepreneurs through their sheer determination to succeed as painters. Unable to sell their works in galleries, they sold their paintings from the trunks of their cars along Highway A1A on the east coast of Florida. Their story is one of African Americans who carved out unique economic opportunities despite the social conditions of the Jim Crow South.

Join Stephenie Frasher, lead docent at the Arts Advocates Gallery, for an in-depth look at Alfred Hair, Al Black, Rodney Demps, James Gibson, John Maynor, and Sam Newton.

Maria Cecilia Conder and her husband Richard donated five of the works and Cecilia was instrumental in acquiring the donation of the sixth Highwaymen painting from Roger Lightle of Highwaymen Art Specialists.

The Art Talk will feature video clips of the artists demonstrating their painting style and their personal tales of being part of the Highwaymen.

Date: Tuesday, July 16 | 4 – 6pm

Place: Arts Advocates Gallery
The Crossings at Siesta Key
3501 S. Tamiami Trail

Cost: Free for members/\$5 nonmembers

[REGISTER HERE.](#)





Michael Cohen's stunning black and white photographs were on display in the Arts Advocates Gallery in May



Lamp Parade by Michael Cohen



Nanette Crist presented her Art Talk "Reimagining Famous Works of Art" to an appreciative audience in May



Emanuel Leutze's original "Washington Crossing the Delaware"



Three examples of updated versions of the iconic painting

GRANT RECEIVED FROM SELBY FOUNDATION

We are excited to announce that the **William G. and Marie Selby Foundation** has awarded Arts Advocates a grant to purchase additional tables and chairs for our gallery, which are needed to accommodate increased participation in our events and activities there. In awarding the grant, the Selby Foundation acknowledged the difference Arts Advocates makes in our community.



We sincerely thank the Selby Foundation for their generous support!

Local Arts Calendar



As a core element of its mission, Arts Advocates helps raise awareness of local arts organizations. Please support and enjoy these upcoming programs in our community. Click on the links for more information:

The Sarasota Players

[Happy Dale: a Comedy by Dan Landon](#)

Sarasota Orchestra

[Music Unbound](#)

Florida Studio Theatre

[Rhinestone Cowgirls](#)

Sarasota Art Museum

[Impact: Contemporary Artists at the Hermitage Artist Retreat](#)

The Ringling

[Summer Circus Spectacular](#)

save the dates

+ June 1

June Gallery Artist Reception:
Suzanne Havens
2-4pm

+ June 4

Art Talk
Jess Pope: The Transformative
Power of Movement
4-6pm

+ July 6

July/August Gallery Exhibit Opening
Scholarship Winners
2-4pm

+ July 12

Ringling Museum Library Literati
Book Club
The Keeper of Hidden Books
10:30am or 2:30pm

+ July 16

Art Talk
Stephenie Frasher: 6 of 26: Florida Highwaymen
Paintings in the Arts Advocates Collection
4-6pm

PLEASE NOTE: The next Arts Advocates Member Luncheon will be held October 17, 2024.