

PRESS INQUIRIES

941-365-2032 ▪ press@artsarasota.org

Su Byron ▪ su@subyronenterprises.com

Art Center Sarasota's Annual Regional Juried Exhibition “Beyond Comfort”

Opens May 23

The exhibit, juried by Virginia Shearer, executive director at Sarasota Art Museum, calls upon artists throughout the Southeast region to delve into their interpretations of beauty and the grotesque.

(May 11, 2024) Art Center Sarasota unveils its much-anticipated annual regional juried exhibit, "Beyond Comfort," on May 23. Juried by Virginia Shearer, the executive director of Sarasota Art Museum, the exhibition calls upon artists statewide to delve into their interpretations of beauty and the grotesque within contemporary art and society. The exhibit, which spans all four galleries, runs through July 27. The opening reception is Thursday, May 23, 6-8 p.m. A critique with Virginia Shearer will take place on Thursday, May 30, 3:30 p.m. at Art Center Sarasota. For information, visit www.artsarasota.org or call 941-365-2032.

Shearer notes that the exhibit invites artists to engage deeply with notions of aesthetics and their evolving significance in the 21st century. “By challenging participants to confront the enduring dichotomy of beauty and grotesque, ‘Beyond Comfort’ prompts a reevaluation of artistic perspectives and societal norms,” says

Shearer. "How do artists navigate the boundaries between the sublime and the unsettling? This exhibit encourages creators and viewers alike to confront these questions, inviting dialogue, introspection and expanding perceptions."

Virginia Shearer joined Sarasota Art Museum of Ringling College of Art and Design in August 2021. Prior to Sarasota Art Museum, Shearer worked at the High Museum of Art in Atlanta, Georgia, where she served as the Eleanor McDonald Storza director of education and as associate director of education. Shearer participated in the Getty Museum Leadership Institute at CGU in 2014 and the Getty's Next Gen Executive Leadership Program in 2012. She holds a BA in Humanities from Florida State University and an MA in Teaching in Museum Education from The George Washington University.

Christina Baril, the exhibitions director at Art Center Sarasota, notes that the annual exhibit gives area residents and visitors a chance to see outstanding works by area-based artists—as well as art by artists from outside the tri-county region.

"By staging this exhibition in the summer months, we're able to create cultural opportunities for tourists and year-round residents during a time when there are less arts and cultural events happening in our area," says Baril. She explains that winning artists receive \$800 for first prize; \$600 for second prize; \$400 for third prize; \$100 for merit awards; and \$50 for honorable mentions. The exhibit is funded, in part, by Sarasota County Tourist Development Tax revenues, Florida Department of State—Division of Cultural Affairs.

About Art Center Sarasota

Founded in 1926, Art Center Sarasota serves as the first and oldest visual arts organization in Sarasota. Art Center Sarasota is admission-free and open to the public; our mission is to bring together creatives and the broader public to increase understanding of our human condition, support wellbeing, and build community connection through the universal language of art.

Art Center Sarasota

707 N. Tamiami Trail, Sarasota, FL 34236

Phone: 941-365-2032

www.artsarasota.org

Gallery Hours

Monday-Friday: 10 a.m.-5 p.m.

Saturday: Noon-5 p.m.