



NEWS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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AMERICA'S 1ST INTERNATIONAL STREET-PAINTING FESTIVAL BRINGS 250 ARTISTS FROM AROUND THE WORLD TO DOWNTOWN SARASOTA

Edgar Mueller of Germany and Tracy Lee Stum of California Headline a Long List of the World's Top Artists Celebrating the 500-Year-Old Tradition of European Street Painting

Sarasota, Florida – October 11, 2010 – Never before has such talent in street-painting come together into one location in America, until now for the Sarasota Chalk Festival. More than 250 street-painters from the United States, Italy, Germany, Mexico, Netherlands and Slovenia will work on their hands and knees for two days along South Pineapple Avenue in Historic Burns Square to create masterpieces that are all the more magnificent for their vulnerable, short-lived beauty. In its third season the Sarasota Chalk Festival anticipates 40,000 visitors along a seven-block stretch of downtown Sarasota on October 30 and 31, 2010, from 8 a.m. to midnight.

Every year since its inception, the Sarasota Chalk Festival has grown in the number of artists participating and the attendees who gather to watch innovative works of art come to life. This year, when “Maestro Madonnaro” Edgar Mueller from Germany accepted an invitation to create one of his oversized 3-D illusions for the first time in the United States, it generated a huge buzz on the art scene. Within a month, artists from all over the world had contacted the Sarasota Chalk Festival, requesting to participate.

It has become the not-miss event for artists who want to become a part of the first international street-painting festival in America and all the exposure it will bring. Documentary crews from the Netherlands, Japan, NY and dozens locally have requested permission to be there.

Along with Mueller, who will create a one-of-a-kind painting that stretches 82 feet (the entire width of the street), and which appears to change as day turns to night, notable artists such as Tracy Lee Stum, Leon Keer, Henry Darnell, Lori Escalara and others are on the list of featured artists.

Participating professional artists will donate a combined total of \$300,000 worth of artwork, and while they will compete for cash prizes their love of this 500 year-old art-form is why they are coming. In the Little Chalk'ers area, the young and young at heart are invited to create their own 2x2-foot chalk painting as part of an artistic quilt that will measure 40x100 feet long.

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(continued)

This year's Chalk Festival also coincides with Halloween. A wide variety of downtown performance-art events for the whole family, supported by the Festival, include a Pumpkin Carving Contest, HallowScreen Film Festival and Professional Vampire Couture Runway Show.

What Are *Madonnari*?

In Italy, street painters are known as *madonnari* for the traditional practice of creating chalk murals of the Virgin Mary, or Madonna. As far back as the 16th century, Italian artists used the streets as their canvas as they traveled from village to village, painting in the town squares during religious festivals to collect tips from passersby.

Today, this traditional art form is becoming a popular expression of contemporary art, with *madonnari* traveling to festivals throughout the United States and Europe. Using a creamy, pastel chalk for subtle blends of color, contrast, shadow and depth, each artist painstakingly creates a masterpiece before the viewers eyes, knowing its fleeting beauty is destined to be experienced in the moment and washed away by the next passing rainstorm.

About Sarasota Chalk Festival

All proceeds from the Sarasota Chalk Festival benefit Avenida de Colores, Inc., a 501c(3) non-profit organization that provides students with experiences and instruction in the visual and performing arts, and enriches the community with cultural events. For more information, contact Denise Kowal, Event Chair, at 941-374-4790 or visit the website at www.chalkfestival.com

Photo attached: The Apocalypse by Italian artist, Vera Bugatti.

Grapevine Communications is a full-service, award-winning advertising, marketing and public relations firm based in Sarasota, Florida, and serving clients nationwide. The firm was recently awarded the 2010 Frank G. Berlin, Sr., Small Business Award by the Greater Sarasota Chamber of Commerce. For more information on Grapevine Communications, contact Jamie M. Smith at 941-351-0024 or email pr@grapeinc.com

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