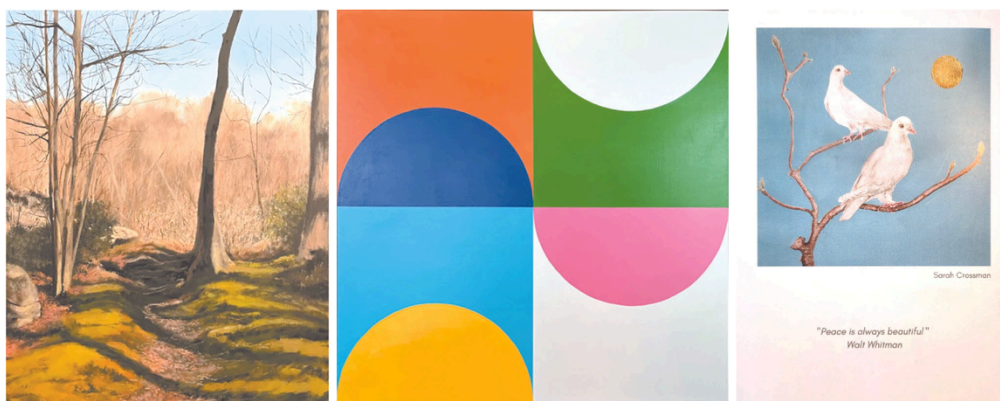


Jan 17

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Art Show: Bedford: Brushstrokes of genius & goodwill



Art Show: Bedford features works by 45 artists including from left, Michael Summers, Shelby Smith, and Sarah Crossman.

By JOYCE CORRIGAN

Art Basel Miami in December or Art Show: Bedford in January? Luckily, you don't have to choose.

If it's a global art market blowout with a dash of bacchanal you're after, Miami's the better bet. Besides works like Maurizio Cattelan's "Comedian" the infamous banana duct-taped to wall that debuted at Basel and sold in November at Sotheby's for \$6.2 million, you can catch Leo DiCaprio clubbing til dawn, soccer megastar Lionel Messi hosting a hot pink pop-up café to launch his wine collection and, fresh from Japan, the U.S. debut of the latex-clad Lady Wrestlers of Sukeban.

But if you're looking for a top-rated, meticulously-curated group show featuring outstanding artists who happen to live locally, and where all the proceeds go to community charities, then it's Art Show: Bedford hands-down.

You can't beat the venue: the elegant, just renovated Fellowship Hall in the Parish House of the stately red brick St. Matthew's Church. Consecrated in 1810, St. Matthew's archived list of renowned attendees include Katonah's own founding father, first Supreme Court Chief Justice John Jay who, it must be said, had an impressive art collection of his own.

“Actually, Basel Miami and ASB have more in common than you’d think,” said ASB advisor Christopher Brescia. “Very few art shows last more than a couple of years,” he continued, “The original Art Basel started in Switzerland in 1970 and ASB was launched in 1973 by the Women of St. Matthew’s committee. Both have endured five decades because they continue to attract great new talent and their success only grows.”

And lest you think Miami has all the fun, Brescia confided that the annual Preview Party on opening night is “my absolute favorite kick-off to every new year! Just when the winter doldrums are taking hold, here’s an evening with live music, delicious refreshments and really great energy. It’s all about art for charity’s sake.”

The Preview Party on Friday, Jan. 24, is also an opportunity to purchase or reserve art before the show opens to the general public. This year’s music is provided by Mark Weigel and appetizers are from Happiness Is.

“We are particularly excited that 16 of the 45 artists in the show are here for the first time,” ASB Co-chair Jenny Convery said. “In our 52 years, that’s a record. There will be a fresh look to ASB this year, with oil paintings, watercolors, pottery, jewelry and photography.”

This year’s judging panel is also diverse and star-studded. It’s headed up by Michelle Yun Mapplethorpe, executive director of the Katonah Museum of Art; Joseph Abboud, the only menswear designer ever to receive the National Arts Club Medal of Honor; and fashion journalist Alexandra Kotur, whose credits include Town and Country and Vogue magazines, not to mention pride of place on the International Best Dressed List.

“What sets our art show apart is that 100 percent of the proceeds go to charities that serve the most in need,” remarked Co-chair Tara Deeks. “The focus has primarily been on providing shelter, fighting hunger, protection from domestic abuse, and rehabilitation.” The nonprofits benefiting this year include: A-Home, Boys & Girls Club of Northern Westchester, Community Center of Northern Westchester, Endeavor Therapeutic Horsemanship, Hope’s Door, Hour Children, Midnight Run, Mount Kisco Interfaith Food Pantry, Neighbors Link and Rehabilitation Through the Arts.

“We’re very excited to have added a new one to our roster,” she added, “New Dawn Family Resource Center, which provides counseling and legal services to abuse victims in northern Westchester.”

“Our parish realizes how fortunate we are,” she continued, “and it strengthens our desire to help our neighbors who are, in many cases, in different circumstances. Art touches the soul and invokes awe and spirituality. The sense of community at the show is very special and very spiritual. “

“Life is short, art is eternal” believed Greek philosopher Hippocrates, and so, one believes, are art shows like ASB. “Some of our members have served on the committee for over 50 years, as long as the show has been in existence,” said Deeks.

Laura Blau, who chaired the show for 10 years, believes that ASB has stayed true to its mission to feature local artists, many who were parishioners of St. Matthew’s, and to donate all the proceeds to local charities.

“It has grown tremendously,” said Blau, “but it is still what its founder Mary Berol wanted — that Art Show: Bedford be the face of St. Matthew’s in the community, organized and run by the Women of St. Matthew’s and that local charities would benefit.”

Keeping ASB fresh each year, of course, means already looking ahead to 2026. “Each year we ensure the work covers a variety of price points,” said Ms Convery, remarking, “You certainly don’t always have to write a check with a comma in it.”

In the future, show organizers hope to add new media, too. “What we don’t have,” she said, “and would love to have, is glass. So we’d love to hear from any glassblowers!”

The Art Show: Bedford Preview Party will be held Friday, Jan. 24, from 6:30 to 9 p.m. For tickets, visit artshowbedford.org. The show is open to the public at no cost on Saturday and Sunday, Jan. 25-26 and 31, and Feb. 1-2.

The Parish House of St. Matthew’s Church is located at 382 Cantitoe St. Bedford.