

culture club

The Peninsula Arts & Humanities Alliance

Putting Brush to Canvas at Peninsula Art School

By Cinnamon Rossman,
Community Relations Director



Billyo O'Donnell will arrive from Missouri to take part in The Door County Plein Air Festival.

At the Peninsula Art School, summer days sometimes run like a well-oiled machine and other days seem like a rusty bike; but, each day we aim to provide an outstanding arts experience for every person on campus. As a kid, I remember coming here with my dad while he took drawing classes in the barn, playing in the summer meadow and watching in awe as he sketched. And now, coming here each morning

Gonzales, our Executive Director, and I went there with notebooks in hand to watch every detail. From the first step off the plane, I outlined the distant mountains and the artists' events in my mind – and wondered if we could come close. Was Door County as majestic a place as the West? Could we attract well-known artists from the beginning and elevate the festival in the first year? Could we make the Door County Plein Air Festival a

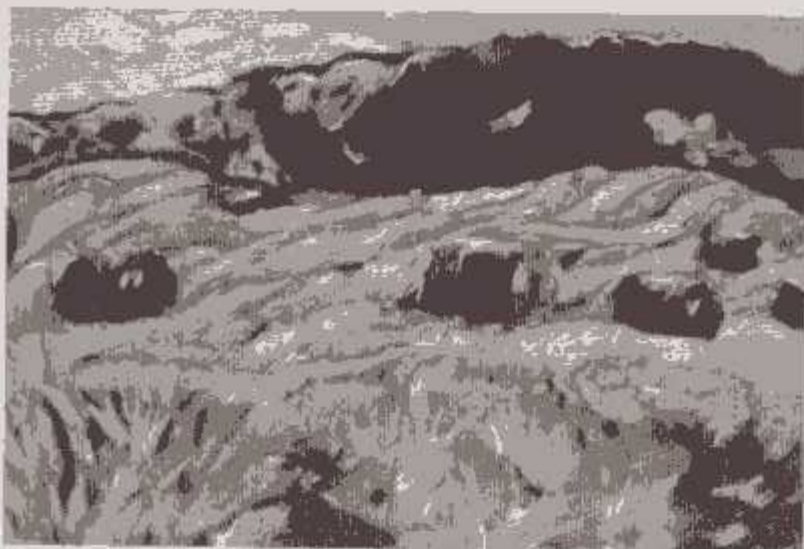
Door County Plein Air Festival Schedule of Events

- July 23-27 – Tour the towns and villages to find painters working from nature. Green and white flags mark painting spots throughout the county, so you'll have no problem finding the action. The Door County Plein Air Festival Guidebook will also help you find easy parking places, and spots to eat or shop. On your way through each town, be sure to check out the galleries. You'll find a variety of painters and potters in each town. Enjoy the rich artistic culture of Door County.
- July 24 – Meet the artists of Fine Line Designs Gallery, Ephraim and see select painters working on site. Fine Line will be presenting a collection of works from Door County by artist Tom Maakestad.
- July 25 – Artists and collectors will gather at Maärhaven, the home of Virginia and Tom Maher for a relaxed "Evening with the Artists." Tour the Maher's private museum and sculpture gardens, enjoy wines and light desserts, and meet the artists. The Maher's private collection is an inspiration to those who think about purchasing art. Tickets: \$35.

- July 26 – Take an art history tour of Fish Creek and beyond aboard the Door County Trolley. Tours run every hour starting from the Peninsula Art School and stop at Weborg Point in Peninsula State Park, Fish Creek's Clark Park, and Edgewood Orchard Gallery. Enjoy a guided tour, learn about the history of Fish Creek as a cultural destination, stop for lunch with the artists at Weborg Point, and join a selection of artists painting the gardens and grounds at Edgewood Orchard Gallery. Tickets: \$45 (includes box lunch).

and am a part of the staff who help to shape the future of the school and of the visual arts in Door County.

Late last summer, the school's members and best advocates started to create an event that would showcase what the visual arts in Door County were built upon – the beauty of the landscape, this amazing place. Standing ankle deep in the bay, looking out over the water and boats, it is easy to imagine putting the picture on canvas. The Door County Plein Air Festival has grown from that simple idea into a week of events for artists and collectors. Painting 'en plein air' isn't a new concept – the Impressionists birthed the style in the 1870s when the invention of paint in tubes and portable easels allowed artists



Local artist Liz Maltman will participate in the events surrounding the Door County Plein Air Festival.

to get out of their studios and paint from life. But bringing artists together in Door County for a festival of this kind is a first for the school.

Our first time out of the block, we knew research was required. Easton, Maryland, Sedona, Arizona, and Laguna, California, just to name a few, have had wildly successful festivals of this kind. San Luis Obispo, California, is a majestic place – and this past October hosted their 6th Annual Plein Air Festival. Cathy Hoke

destination event with benefits for the whole county?

When we invited artists to participate, we aimed high. We picked names that were well-known throughout the country – artists who had achieved success both here and beyond Door County. And we picked artists whose use of color and composition was unique. Those artists that I thought might never come here will be arriving over the next few days, and I imagine meeting them for the first time. I can't picture the faces I haven't met, but the paintings I have been looking at for the past ten months substitute just as well. I picture the artists I have come to know well, out there on the shores and in the fields, painting away. I have the same curiosity for the artists' creative process now, as I did when I was kid here in Door County.

The arrival of the artists is just the first of many landmark happenings this week at Peninsula Art School. Our members, festival artists and everyone on staff has joined in planning an ambitious schedule that will keep the artists on their toes – and keep us all on the edge of our seats as this event finally comes to life. With painting sites around the county, and events nearly every day, we hope that anyone looking over the shoulder of an artist will feel inspired – and that will spark new students, members, and supporters to the school.

You can join in the excitement of this festival from July 23 through August 4. You'll find a schedule of fun and casual events so you can mingle with the artists and satisfy your curiosity. For more information you can pick up a guidebook at many locations around the county (look for the green flags) or check out full details on the web at www.door-countypleinair.com. Call Peninsula Art School with questions at 920.868.3455. The school is located at 3900 County Road E in Fish Creek, and our gallery is free and open to the public from 9 am – 5 pm, Monday through Saturday.

• July 27 – Artists, collectors, and appreciators will gather to celebrate the creation of all these fantastic paintings at the Collector's Preview Gala from 6 – 9 pm. This ticketed event will be the first opportunity to see and to purchase the works created during the week. Artists will have their top paintings on display for the jurying of awards. All paintings, including award winners, will be available for purchase by silent auction that night. If you've got your eye on a particular piece, this is the best way to ensure you get your pick before the exhibit opens to the public! (A special sneak peek for those purchasing the Patron's Package will begin at 5 pm.) Tickets: \$50.

• July 28 – Join artists and spectators for a Quick Paint competition in downtown Fish Creek. At the sound of the horn at 9 am, artists will have two hours to finish a painting. The completed works will be delivered to Clark Park. Take a few minutes to view the completed works right on the artists' easel then bid on your favorite in a live auction beginning at noon.

• July 28 – Exhibit opening reception from 6 – 8 pm. Everyone is welcome. A casual event to mingle with artists from near and far. Relax, Door County style, with a true mid-summer garden party. View and purchase paintings from the festival. Enjoy wine and Wisconsin cheeses.

• July 29 – August 4 – Exhibition and sale of works continue in the Guenzel Gallery at Peninsula Art School.

• August 4 – August 25 – Exhibition and sale of selected works will continue at the Door Community Auditorium's Link Gallery in conjunction with the Peninsula Music Festival.

The Door County Plein Air Festival is hosted by the Peninsula Art School with support from the Wisconsin Arts Board, Gannett Company, Inc., Cellcom, Inc., Wisconsin Department of Tourism and Utrecht Art Supplies. For more information or to purchase tickets call 920.868.3455 or visit DoorCountyPleinAir.com.