

# ***ABOUT OUR FOUR DAY LONG CELEBRATION***

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## **The Charleston Art Experience – A Walk through Time!**

Walking through historic downtown Charleston, a city filled with magnificent architecture, natural beauty and diverse culture, it's easy to comprehend how the city has captured the hearts and souls of generations of artists and art patrons.

Charleston's French Quarter Gallery Association will celebrate its 20th Anniversary with a four day long celebration, "**The Charleston Art Experience – A Walk through Time**" from Thursday October 2nd to Sunday October 5th. Art collectors and art lovers from around the world will be arriving in Charleston to participate in the anniversary weekend filled with exciting shows, art receptions, lectures, demonstrations and other art related events all sponsored by the association member galleries.

In the late 1980s, four local gallery owners, Art Thomas, Nina Lui, Billie Sumner and Marty Whaley Adams, decided to start having exhibit receptions on the same evening making it a bigger event for their mutual clientele. Thirteen other galleries were soon joining in holding receptions, and the French Quarter Gallery Association Art Walks were born. Today there are over 30 members of a formal association all within the French Quarter, so named because of the rich French heritage of the Charleston peninsula. From the 17th to the 19th century, French Huguenots and French Catholics from Europe as well as French plantation owners fleeing the Slave Revolution in Santa Domingo, all settled in Charleston

For centuries, the city has produced and encouraged artists of all disciplines. As early as 1708 the first documented professional artist in the United States, Henrietta Johnston, arrived in Charleston. As a widow she supported her family with pastel portrait commissions. The 19th century brought Charleston-born William Aiken Walker, the important genre painter who painted scenes of life on the cotton plantations in the South. In the early 20th century Elizabeth O'Neill Verner, a Charlestonian who studied all over the world, preferred to paint scenes of her hometown. Ms. Verner was a force behind the mid-20th century Charleston Renaissance a time when artists, musicians and writers all came to the Southern heaven.

The Charleston Renaissance was a period now defined as the first half of the 20th century and featuring such artists as Alfred Hutton and Alice R. H. Smith. At the dawn of the 20th century, the war-ravaged Lowcountry inspired dozens of painters and illustrators, from local artists such as Elizabeth O'Neill Verner and Alice Ravenel Huger Smith to nationally prominent artists such as Childe Hassam, Edward Hopper, and Alfred Hutton. These artists captured Charleston in a natural and cultural transition that is still glimpsed today in abandoned rural rice canals and ivy-laden alleys.

Today's Charleston art scene is the ongoing legacy of Charleston's rich art history, as it is a vibrant art center, a bubbling calderon of creativity. In Charleston, considered one of the top ten art destinations in the country, one can find whatever genre of art one enjoys or collects of world-class quality created by not only local, but also national and internationally known artists.

Past, Present and Future is represented within the cobblestone streets of the French Quarter. Fine 19th century paintings to contemporary art are represented in the galleries. Traditional landscape, still life, cutting edge, abstract, textiles, and sporting art along with many other types of artwork are to be discovered.

Fine Art is the one decorating element with the power to single handedly revolutionize the look and

feel of your home, making it a reflection of who you are, where you've been and who you want to become. An investment in a piece of fine art should stir something deep inside, reconnecting us more fully with each other and ourselves. The fine art showcased in the French Quarter Fine Art event speaks to this.

Charlestonians are proud to live in a city where the arts played and continue to play an integral part of its culture and personality. Charleston, the cultural capital of the South, is considered by many to be a living museum, with an extraordinary variety of things to do, see and experience. In this beautifully preserved city you can experience tours through historic landmarks from the Revolutionary and Civil Wars, including 18th century homes and plantations, museums, and city market. Charleston "skyscrapers" are the architecturally beautiful steeples of the many historic churches that dot the city, as glass and steel are not part of the city's skyline.

This culturally rich city's passion includes the performing arts, dating back to 1731, when the first concert series to be held in America was performed in Charleston. Today, one can select from full schedule of dance, music and theater offerings, performed by Charleston Symphony Orchestra, Dock Street Theatre, Charleston Ballet Theatre or at various performing arts festivals held throughout the year.

One only has to visit a few art galleries to experience that southern charm and warm hospitality which makes Charleston number one in the "most polite and friendliest city in America".

Six times a year the galleries of the French Quarter Association open their doors the evening of the first Friday of March, April, May, June, October and December offering the public a treat for both the eye and palate. The art walks have become a tradition not only for the locals but visitor as well; and due to their popularity, most galleries plan their shows openings and artist's receptions for art walk nights.

Much awaits the travelers arriving to take part in the French Quarter Association's 20th Anniversary celebration; the art experience and the Charleston experience are synonymous with Southern haute-couture, and which will surely have them returning year after year for future art walks and celebrations.

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Attachment: French Quarter 20th Anniversary Calendar of Events