

Fort Worth, Texas

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latest local happenings



Street Arts



Every April, Fort Worth residents and tourists alike flock to Main Street to enjoy the sights, sounds and tastes of the largest four-day festival in the Southwest. According to festival producer, Jay Downie, the economic impact of last year's festival was \$27 billion with an estimated \$2–\$3 million worth of art sold. From art to food to concerts and more, we caught up with Jay to learn what he's looking forward to this year. **Turn the page.**

**MAIN ST. Fort
Worth Arts
Festival**
April 18–21, 2013
FREE ADMISSION



Street Arts

Your educational background is in music education. What music performance are you most looking forward to?

I was a euphonium player, which meant I couldn't play in the jazz band, but I enjoy listening to all different jazz greats. Richard Elliot is right in that line. He's just absolutely a great musician. The music at MAIN ST. is phenomenal. I'm also interested in seeing William Close, who was second runner-up in last year's America's Got Talent. He will play what he calls the Earth Harp, which uses landscape and architecture as part of the instrument. In this case, strings of the harp will be giant cables strung across the heads of the audience.

What will make 2013 special?

We have some incredible visual artists. After viewing 1,400 applications of the best of the best visual artists from around the country, I really believe that this year's array of art will be some of the best we've ever seen. We're also rearranging the whole area near General Worth Square so it will become a great place to relax and enjoy free music.

How are artists selected?

Our selection process is managed electronically now. It's important to note the judging isn't completed electronically. There are great folks who actually see the work and make their own judgments. There are probably 80,000 artists in this system we use called Zapplication. An artist registers his or her profile in this electronic online system and select shows they want to apply to. I pull together a jury of five

artists. Those five jurors review and score based on their own personal likes, dislikes and judgments. Out of 1,400 applicants, we invited 250 artists to MAIN ST.

Do you remember your first purchase at MAIN ST.?

Yes, I do. It's still hanging in our house. It was purchased in the early 1990s when I first became involved in producing MAIN ST. It's a piece of work comprised of a score of music printed in such a way that the notes form the Statue of Liberty. Each year my wife and I invest and spend a considerable amount of money on our artists. We wait for it every year. We prefer to buy from artists because we want to hear their story. We love to understand how the work was put together and what their thoughts were on it. We can point to almost all of the art we own and say, "I know that artist. Here's their story." We are members of the Collector's Club, which is a unique and fun way to enjoy the art-buying experience.

Do you have any MAIN ST. traditions?

I would say that a cream puff from Little German Kitchen is delicious. Before the festival is over, I will have had one. I love on a Thursday night after we've opened and before the artists close to just kind of walk the booths and say hello to all of the artists. I have the MAIN ST. iPhone app. I use it as I visit the booths. I'll make them a favorite to remind me that I've had a conversation with the artist. I try to talk to every artist before the end of the event. I really enjoy browsing the art.

More than 1,000 kids each year are selling art in the Young Artists Program. Our kids' area continues to expand. To go there and see families enjoying themselves is another favorite tradition. Every year is exciting.

—Sonya Cisneros Curry

According to the producers of MAIN ST., here are five tips to enhance your art-collecting experience:

- Get informed.
- Buy what you love.
- Be creative.
- Know that there is no right way of collecting art.
- Ask questions.