

A Quarter-Century of Creativity: Celebrating the 25th Annual Art Exhibition at Heritage Village



Pictured: Jeri-Lyn Walsh, Faith Vicinanza, Audrey Sussman, Ox, David Walsh

By Kelly Keenan, SACA
Photos courtesy of the artists

For twenty-five years, the Brush & Pencil Club of Heritage Village has brought people together to explore their creativity in a welcoming, supportive environment — producing an impressive body of artwork along the way. What began as a small gathering of artists has grown into one of Southbury's cherished annual traditions, bringing painters, sculptors, stained-glass artists, and art lovers together each year for a weekend celebrating art and community.

As the club celebrates its 25th Annual Art Exhibition, the Southbury Arts & Culture Alliance connected with event organizer David Walsh and members of the Brush & Pencil Board to reflect on the exhibition's history, from its modest beginnings to the amazing showcase it has become today. In this special Q&A, organizers share how the show has evolved over the years, what makes this milestone anniversary particularly meaningful, and how collaboration among Heritage Village's creative clubs helps make the event possible. This year's exhibition will take place Friday, May 1 through Sunday, May 3, 2026, at Sarah Cooke Hall in Southbury, Connecticut, and will feature artwork from the Brush & Pencil Club, the Clay Club, and the Stained Glass Club.

The exhibition is free and open to the public. It kicks off with a Gala Evening on Friday from 5:00–7:00 p.m., where guests can enjoy light refreshments, live piano music, and the opportunity to meet participating artists while previewing the exhibition. On Saturday at 1:00 p.m., acclaimed Southbury artist Susan Hayward will present a live oil painting demonstration. The weekend concludes on Sunday with a raffle drawing at 12:00 p.m., featuring artwork donated by Heritage Village artists; winners do not need to be present and will be notified afterward.

Exhibition hours are Saturday from 10:00 a.m.–4:00 p.m. and Sunday from 10:00 a.m.–2:00 p.m., and Sarah Cooke Hall is fully accessible to all visitors.

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Bill Gramigna



Jeri-Lyn Walsh

This year marks the 25th Annual Art Exhibition in Heritage Village. What does this milestone represent?

Reaching a twenty-five-year anniversary signifies more than the mere passage of time; it reflects the enduring vitality and commitment to the arts within our community. Throughout the past quarter-century, our organizations have fostered engagement through hands-on demonstrations, educational lectures, and esteemed events such as our Annual Art Exhibition. These initiatives have not only highlighted exceptional artistic talent but have also facilitated lasting connections between artists and enthusiasts. Our venue serves as an inclusive environment where individuals—ranging from established practitioners to newcomers—can engage, develop their skills, and collaborate.

How has the exhibition evolved over the years?

The annual exhibition originated with a select group of artists who sought to showcase their work within the Heritage Village community. Initially, participation was restricted to residents and a limited number of guests. However, as the event matured, it broadened its scope to welcome a diverse array of artists from various backgrounds. In recent years, the exhibition has drawn both participants and attendees from throughout the region, demonstrating its increasing influence and prominence.

What makes this year's event especially memorable compared to previous years?

Celebrating twenty-five years is a remarkable achievement, and this anniversary brings together both cherished memories and exciting new experiences. This year, we're welcoming back several founding members, honoring the individuals who helped launch the exhibition and shaped its legacy. Building on the traditions established over the past quarter-century, this year's celebration bridges the past and future that will inspire the next generation of artists and art lovers. All these elements make this year's event truly unforgettable for everyone involved.

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This exhibition brings together several clubs. Can you tell us more about that collaboration?

The Brush and Pencil Club organizes and curates the exhibition, ensuring a thoughtful and engaging presentation for all visitors. The Clay Club and Stained-Glass Club contribute original artworks, each created on the Heritage Village property, adding diversity and depth to the collection. Together, these clubs coordinate to present a unified fine art showcase that highlights the talents and creativity within the community. Our board members defined fine art as works that demonstrate originality, craftsmanship, and artistic intent, distinguishing them from decorative or utilitarian pieces. This shared vision guides the selection and display of art, ensuring that every piece reflects the high standards and collaborative spirit of our annual exhibition.

Approximately how many artists are participating this year?

There are twenty artists whose work will be displayed this year, including pieces from two artists who have passed away. We have invited two spouses to honor the memory of their loved ones by sharing their artwork, both have been open to this idea.

What range of artistic styles and mediums can visitors expect to see?

Visitors can expect to see artistic styles ranging from abstract to realistic, including fine art, illustration, cartoonish works, and pieces created with very fine dots. Mediums on display include acrylic, oil, pastel, ink, scratchboard, pencil, encaustic wax, gouache, multi-medium, pottery, as well as beautiful stained-glass art—a wide range of art that leaves many visitors in awe!

What can guests expect during the Gala Evening on Friday?

The atmosphere of the opening gala sets the tone for the weekend, as a warm and welcoming place for every visitor! Prior to the doors opening, we will have a private remembrance acknowledging members we have lost. Live piano music by a well-renowned pianist, Ron Dukenski, and light refreshments will be offered in Room D.



Rick McCollum



Audrey Sussman and Bob Ferrucci



Faith Vicinanza



Ox and Eva Mungo



Jean Carrao



Marcia Cole

One highlight of the weekend is the live demonstration by Susan Hayward. What makes this special?

Susan Hayward, a beloved local artist known for her extraordinary oil paintings of horses, brings a truly interactive and welcoming spirit to her live demonstration. Her warmth puts everyone at ease, making even first-time visitors feel comfortable asking about her techniques or inspiration. What really sets Susan apart is her generosity: after the demonstration, she often donates her finished artwork to our raffle. Susan's open-hearted approach and community-minded spirit make her demonstration not just a lesson in art, but a celebration of giving back and connecting with others.



Rich Palermo

The Art Raffle has become a popular tradition. How does it enhance the event?

The Art Raffle generates excitement among attendees, encourages community participation, and provides unique opportunities for guests to take home original artwork, making the event more memorable. Members from each club donate items about two months prior. Artwork in various styles is available, including beautiful pottery and stained-glass art. These donations appeal to guests and strengthen community bonds.

The exhibition is free and open to the public. Why is that important?

We offer this event free of charge to provide an "Art Gallery Experience" right here in our local community. Unlike larger city galleries, our exhibition features talented local artists and interactive activities, making it a truly community-centered experience that welcomes everyone. The convenience of an on-site venue means residents don't have to travel far, and word spreads quickly among friends, relatives, and art lovers looking for something fun and engaging to do as the weather warms up.

What do you hope visitors take away from this 25th anniversary exhibition?

We hope visitors leave this 25th anniversary exhibition feeling truly inspired by the creativity, skill, and passion showcased by our community's artists. Our wish is for guests to experience a sense of connection—not only to the artwork, but also to the artists and fellow art lovers gathered here. We want visitors to discover new perspectives, appreciate the diversity of artistic expression, and take pride in supporting local talent. Ultimately, we hope this memorable event encourages attendees to share their experiences and promote the exhibition within their own communities, helping our tradition of artistic celebration continue to grow.

For more information about this month's maker, or if you are interested in being featured in an upcoming issue of the Southbury Makers Spotlight, contact us at info@southburyartsandculturealliance.org or visit www.southburyartsandculturealliance.org