

Join us as we celebrate
Arts Advocates' 55th Anniversary
with \$55,000 in Scholarships to be awarded at the
2024 Scholarship Luncheon!

The Scholarship Committee is pleased to announce ten recipients of our 2024 Arts Advocates Scholarships! In honor of the 55th anniversary of the Fine Arts Society of Sarasota/Art Advocates, we are awarding \$55,000 to this exceptional group of talented and deserving young people! The seven returning scholars and three new scholars will each receive a \$5,500 scholarship.

2024 Awardees

Maria Medina Almaguer, Emmalee Bunnell,
Miracle Deveaux, Lillian Fox, Hong Hguyen, Colin Leonard,
Noelle Prouty, John Quigley, Samantha Tanelli and Danae Tran

Our guest speaker at the luncheon is Ms. Sara Curtis Robinson, Vice President for Advancement at Ringling College of Art and Design. Ms. Robinson oversees advancement programs for Ringling College and its arts and culture programs in the community, including the Sarasota Art Museum, the Town Hall Lecture Series, Osher Lifelong Learning Institute (OLLI), and the Englewood Art Center.

See the online registration page or mail-in response card for opportunities to further support our scholarship program and attend a special private reception for the awardees prior to the luncheon.

Date: Thursday, May 16 | 11am-1:30pm
Place: Sarasota Yacht Club, 1100 John Ringling Blvd.
Cost: \$45 Members, \$50 Nonmembers

[REGISTER HERE.](#)



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2024 Scholarship Awardees



Artwork and performances by our talented scholarship recipients will be presented at our Scholarship Luncheon on May 16th. Sign up now for this very popular event! Bring a friend and introduce them to the inspiring world of Arts Advocates!

FROM YOUR PRESIDENT

Dear Members of Arts Advocates,

Our month began with the art show “Elisabeth Trostli: Fierce and Fabulous” at the Gallery, showcasing the mesmerizing digital paintings of Elisabeth Trostli. The show ran every Saturday in April.

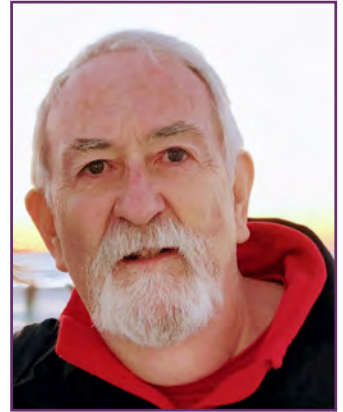
On April 9th, Elisabeth Trostli treated us to an enlightening Art Talk, “From Digital Painting to AI,” offering fascinating insight into her innovative artistic process, digital artistry and the uses of artificial intelligence in the world of art.

The Sarasota Film Festival (SFF) ran from April 5th to the 14th. Arts Advocates sponsored the Arts “Side Bar,” which consisted of eight films focusing on visual and performing arts.

The 2024 Giving Challenge kicked off at noon on April 9th and concluded at noon on April 10th. Arts Advocates will receive an estimated donation total of over \$11,000! Thank you to all who donated.

At our April Board of Directors Meeting, we announced the newly elected officers: Bill Rusling, President; Carol Darling, Vice President; Elaine Foster, Treasurer; Judy Herman, Recording Secretary; and Barbara Hyde, Corresponding Secretary.

Our member’s luncheon featured a thought-provoking presentation titled “Banned Books: What People Are Reading,” delivered by Georgia Court and Bryn Durgin of Bookstore 1. We learned of Florida’s commanding lead in the nation’s banned books statistics, igniting a compelling conversation about intellectual freedom.



Bill Rusling, *President*

Arts Advocates also hosted an Art and Backstage Tour at the Van Wezel.

We held a Celebration of Life event on April 27th in the Gallery for a member of our Gallery team, Sally O’Neil, who passed away suddenly in October. Sally was instrumental in setting up the Gallery with Donna Maytham and in assisting with staffing in the early days. She will be greatly missed.

Stay informed by checking our weekly eblasts and monthly newsletters, and remember to visit our website, www.artsadvocates.org, to register for events aligned with your interests.

With warmest regards to all,

Bill Rusling
President, Arts Advocates

MAY MEMBER ARTIST EXHIBIT

MICHAEL COHEN: WHAT LIGHT DOES WHEN NOBODY'S LOOKING

Michael Cohen began his interest in photography around age 13, creating a darkroom to process and print his pictures. He became enamored with the fine-art black and white photography of artists like Edward Weston, Lee Friedlander, Ansel Adams and Henri Cartier-Bresson. At age 15, as a member of the Sarasota Art Association, Cohen exhibited surrealistic images and visual constructions, using light and shadow along with interesting found objects. After studying fine arts at the University of Florida, he moved to the New York City area and exhibited his unique photographs in both group and solo shows. Cohen once again lives in Sarasota, operating JAM Marketing with his wife Jayne Wallace.

Artist's Statement: Most often, the sun supplies my "paint and canvas." My work examines how we perceive light and darkness and their interesting relationship, creating forms and patterns, almost as yin/yang elements. My work attempts to capture those things that "light does when nobody's looking": fleeting scenes we sometimes fail to appreciate as found-art. The subject of my photographic work isn't typically a person or object, but rather the light itself, its reflection, or, in the case of deep shadows, the absence of light. The very meaning of photography is to paint or draw with light, which is how I see my work.

I am currently creating art with digital cameras that fit into my pocket. I try to keep one with me at all times. When creating black and white from digital shots, I make choices for various tonal values across the image. Archival inkjet printing has replaced traditional photographic processes, which lets me present the work on a variety of surfaces, adding richness and detail, and creating works to last.

Opening Reception: Saturday, May 4 | 2-4pm

Exhibit Dates: Every Saturday in May | 2-4pm

Place: Arts Advocates Gallery, The Crossings at Siesta Key
3501 S. Tamiami Trail, Sarasota

Cost: FREE

[REGISTER HERE.](#)



(Registration for Opening Reception requested but not required)



MAY ART TALK

REIMAGINING FAMOUS WORKS OF ART

Kehinde Wiley is known for his works that take their inspiration from famous European paintings. But Wiley is not alone in “flipping the script” in his work. Many Black, female and other artists are “updating” iconic paintings to see themselves in the picture.

This presentation will focus on artists who have created alternative versions of iconic paintings depicting American history, including “Washington Crossing the Delaware” by Emanuel Leutze. These artists’ revised narratives reflect the different lenses through which they view our past and their hopes for our future. Thanks to modern technology, you will have an opportunity to hear some of the artists speak directly about their work.

Presenter (and Arts Advocates member) Nanette Crist has returned to her love of art after a career as a corporate lawyer. Instead of writing contracts, she now pens an art-heavy blog that can be found at www.nanettesnewlife.blogspot.com. Nanette is also a docent at Sarasota Art Museum and leads public art walking tours with Judy Levine and Stephenie Frasher.



Date: Tuesday, May 7 | 4 – 6pm

Place: Arts Advocates Gallery
The Crossings at Siesta Key, 3501 S. Tamiami Trail

Cost: Free for members/\$5 nonmembers

REGISTER HERE.



JAZZ CLUB HONORS NANCY ROUCHER



L-R: Terell Stafford, Jazz Festival musical director; Michael Cornette, co-emcee and host for the festival; Nik Walker, president of the Jazz Club of Sarasota; Nancy Roucher; Ed Linehan, past president and board member of the Jazz Club of Sarasota.



The Jazz Club of Sarasota created its most prestigious honor, *The Satchmo Award*, in 1987 to honor those who have made a “Unique and Enduring Contribution to the Living History of Jazz... Our Original Art Form.” Our own Nancy Roucher is the 2024 recipient of the award.

The Award celebrates contributions to arts education, and there couldn't be a more deserving recipient than Nancy. She was two-time interim director of the Sarasota County Arts Council, now known as the Arts & Cultural Alliance of Sarasota County. She is founder of the Arts Education Task Force, now known as Sarasota County Arts Education Partnership (also under the Alliance), a coalition of arts educators and supporters to strengthen arts education for all students K -12. In 2019 she received the Trailblazer Award from the Florida Alliance for Arts Education.

Nancy created a jazz education program for students called *Jazzlinks: Jazz Connects to Students*, now a collaboration of the Westcoast Black Theatre Troupe, the Jazz Club of Sarasota and Sarasota County Schools.

Nancy served as co-director of the Florida Institute for Arts Education for 12 years and director of Project HEART (Helping Education through Arts Resources for Teachers), working with 75 schools in the Midwest.

Nancy Roucher is an Arts Advocates member, Team Leader and chair of the luncheon program committee. She is also a member of the Jazz Club's Board of Directors.

Congratulations, Nancy!

The Satchmo award was designed by Frank Eliscu, a sculptor and art teacher who designed the famous Heisman Trophy. Another Eliscu sculpture, Great Blue Heron, is part of Arts Advocates' permanent collection at the Van Wezel Performing Arts Hall.

Behind the Curtain:

EXPLORING THE VAN WEZEL FROM THE ART TO THE STAGE



Take a guided tour of the paintings and sculptures owned by Arts Advocates on display at the Van Wezel. After that, step onto the stage where a Van Wezel guide will give you a peek behind the curtain and share stories and anecdotes about the colorful world of show business!

Tours begin in the main lobby and cost \$15 per person. Tickets can be purchased at the Van Wezel box office or by calling (941) 263-6799. Private group tours can be arranged by calling (941) 955-7676. Proceeds benefit Arts Advocates and the Van Wezel's education/outreach programs.

Dates: Monday, May 20

1:30-3pm

Place: Van Wezel Performing Arts Hall

Cost: \$15

A huge **THANK YOU** to everyone who donated to Arts Advocates through the 2024 Giving Challenge! Thanks to YOU and matching donations from the Patterson Foundation and a generous member, we raised an estimated \$11,000 to continue our missions to preserve our historic collection of works by Florida artists, to raise awareness of local arts organizations, and to award scholarships to local students pursuing careers in the arts.



Presented by the
Community Foundation of Sarasota County

JUNE MEMBER ARTIST EXHIBIT

SUZANNE HAVENS: SEEING WITH IMAGINATION

Suzanne Havens has always loved art. Upon graduation with a Bachelor of Fine Arts degree from Michigan State University, Suzanne taught high school art. She then earned a Masters in International Business degree for a career in marketing, culminating as Vice President, Senior Brand Planner, at Fitzgerald + Company in Atlanta, where she created advertising strategies.

Suzanne has mounted five one-woman shows of her art. In 2020, her photo won Best in Show at the 40th Annual Selby Gardens Juried Photographic Exhibition. Afterwards she became one of six volunteer photographers for Marie Selby Botanical Gardens.

Meet the artist and enjoy her impressive body of work every Saturday in the month of June.

Opening Reception: Saturday, June 1 | 2-4pm

Exhibit Dates: Every Saturday in June | 2-4pm

Place: Arts Advocates Gallery, The Crossings at Siesta Key
3501 S. Tamiami Trail, Sarasota

Cost: FREE

[REGISTER HERE.](#) 

(Registration for Opening Reception requested but not required)



JUNE ART TALK

JESS POPE:

THE TRANSFORMATIVE POWER OF MOVEMENT AND HUMAN CONNECTION

In celebration of Pride Month, June's Art Talk will feature Arts Advocates member Jess Pope.

Raised in a strict Pentecostal family – no television, no computers, no dancing – Jess was taken to a ballet by a neighbor when she was seven years old. Her life and dreams were changed forever. She is a firm believer in the transformative power of movement, and everyone's need for human connection and community.

Jess holds a BA in Visual Studies from Ringling College and an MFA in Visual Art from Vermont College of Fine Arts. She has danced with Moving Ethos Dance Company since 2008 and is an instructor at Ringling College. Jess leads movement classes at the Sarasota Art Museum and is a Drama and Dance coach at Booker High School, her alma mater.

The Art Talk will include videos of some of Jess' performances.

Date: Tuesday, June 4 | 4 – 6pm

Place: Arts Advocates Gallery
The Crossings at Siesta Key
3501 S. Tamiami Trail

Cost: Free for members/\$5 nonmembers

[REGISTER HERE.](#) 





◀ Elisabeth Trostli, in a beautiful garment bearing her own digitally designed images, and an early egg tempera painting



◀ A few of Liz's "Fierce and Fabulous" digital paintings

▶ During her Art Talk, Liz demonstrated how she creates art using Artificial Intelligence.



◀ Some banned books on display at Bookstore1



▲ Georgia Court (left) and Bryn Durgin of Bookstore1Sarasota gave an eye-opening presentation about banned books at our April luncheon.

▶ Artist Suzanne Havens (left) presented her photo montage "Walking Iris" to raffle winner Jackie Salvino at our April luncheon.



A graphic for the Local Arts Calendar featuring a purple and teal abstract shape, a calendar icon, and various geometric symbols like circles, squares, and crosses.

Local Arts Calendar

As a core element of its mission, Arts Advocates helps raise awareness of local arts organizations. Please support and enjoy these upcoming programs in our community. Click on the links for more information:

Sarasota Art Museum

[Impact: Contemporary Artists at the Hermitage Artist Retreat](#)

Asolo Rep

[Twelve Angry Men](#)

Westcoast Black Theatre Troupe

[Marvin Gaye: Prince of Soul](#)

Florida Studio Theatre

[Troubadour](#)

Venice Theatre

[Bank Job](#)

save the dates

+ May 4

May Gallery Artist Reception:
Michael Cohen
2-4pm

+ May 7

Art Talk: Nanette Crist, Reimagining
Famous Works of Art
4-6pm

+ May 16

Annual Scholarship Luncheon
11am-1:30pm

+ May 20

Van Wezel Art & Backstage Tour:
Behind the Curtain
1:30-3pm

+ June 1

June Gallery Artist Reception:
Suzanne Havens
2-4pm

+ June 4

Art Talk: Jess Pope: The Transformative
Power of Movement
4-6pm