

### Teaching children well

One festival organization sponsors and recognizes the most emerging of artists: students who are still in primary and secondary school. Hot Works LLC, the organization that produces shows in Estero and Boca Raton, Florida, as well as a large-scale summer festival in Orchard Lake, Michigan, includes a family area and a young artists' recognition program at each of their shows.

Hot Works Director Patty Narozny believes that the youth-recognition program is not only a way to bolster the ability of the youngest artists but also an opportunity to teach them about the business. Narozny is also on the board of non-profit organization Institute for Arts & Education, and reaching out to youth is an integral part of all of Hot Works' shows.

Sponsored by Kroger grocery stores, the Orchard Lake Fine Art Show's Youth Art Competition is intended to plant the seed of art and entrepreneurship in young people, starting with artists ages 5-12 and grades K-8. "Kroger's Youth Art Competition provides the beginning rules for the students to learn about being part of a professional fair," Narozny said. "It exposes them to the entrepreneurship and self-employment of doing something they love for a living."



Beyond the business side of things, Narozny encourages young creators not to give up, explaining that even the best artists do not always get into their desired shows. The program is also intended to bolster community among the young participants. "The students, if they do not win, are asked to congratulate those who do win," Narozny said.

For July's Orchard Lake Fine Art Show, the Youth Art Competition also featured talks from third-generation metal artist Kurt Ruby and young sculptor Austin Brantley. Setting up professional artists to speak to the Youth Art competitors gives the students a unique opportunity to network and understand the nuances of the business from a young age.

According to Narozny, many of the artists who show at Orchard Lake's Youth Art Competition also matriculate to the Budding Artists Competition, aimed at teenaged artists in grades 6-12, at February's Boca Raton Fine Art Show. As Narozny put it, this initiative provides a unique opportunity for "...getting the kids to think nationwide."

In addition to the competition, this year's Orchard Lake show featured the Ameriprise Financial's Family Area. Here, young children can create works of art of their own, starting with decorating piggy banks, as well as appreciate the competitors in the Youth Art Competition and the rest of the juried show.

Adding dimensions every year to Hot Works' events, Narozny is currently seeking sponsorship to offer financial support to emerging artists beginning their careers. In the meantime, she seeks to offer them logistical support. "Art show directors do not help new people get into shows," she said. "When I see that artists have potential, I spend a lot of time with them."

There is hope, perhaps, that one of the participants from the Youth Art Competition or the Budding Artists Competition will mature into an emerging artist, just starting their career and seeking assistance from Hot Works or any number of nationwide shows. Luckily for these young creators, there is no shortage of opportunities aimed at them — and those incentives are only expanding.

*Emily Jane Scott is a writer, musician and SA contributor. She can be reached at [emily.scott.music@gmail.com](mailto:emily.scott.music@gmail.com).*