

Renegades Art Show Benefits Verde Valley Caregivers

In what has become an annual tradition, a group of artists calling itself The Renegades is exhibiting an imaginative collection of art works in the Special Exhibition Gallery of the Sedona Arts Center.

The show encompasses works from some of the area's best known artists, including new paintings by Claudia Hartley and Rick Gandolfo; photographs by Carol Gandolfo and Jim Peterson; weavings by Wendy "The Weaver" Bialek; jewelry and gourds by Pat Priolo; and ceramic pieces by Karl Williams and Mike and Sharon Upp.

The exhibit runs from February 28 through March 14 and will be open each day between 10 AM and 5 PM. Sales from the show will benefit the **Verde Valley Caregivers Coalition**, a worthy local charity dedicated to supporting older adults in maintaining their independence and quality of life.



In addition, the artists will be hosting a First Friday reception on March 2 from 5:00 to 8:00 PM, and the public is cordially invited to meet the artists and enjoy a cordial gathering.

The Renegades bring a remarkably diverse wealth of life experiences and artistic backgrounds to their work. **Mike Upp**, for example, initially used his art studies at Arizona State University as the springboard to a highly productive career as a ceramic artist.

But he then moved on to a 25 year sojourn in corporate America, working in the high-end software industry in senior marketing and sales positions. With that detour out of his system, he has now revived his love for ceramics, focusing on refined, functional and decorative pieces for the kitchen, home, and garden.

Sharon Upp's artistic passion was first kindled by her studies of pre-Columbian art in Mexico City plus time observing Dona Rosa in Oaxaca create her internationally renowned black pottery. She also traveled widely in Latin America and Europe and visited the ruins of earlier civilizations, observing their art forms first hand. After studying ceramics in Southern California, Oregon, and Sedona, she and her husband



Mike established Earth and Fire Design Studio in Cornville, where she produces free-flowing forms that embody her many influences plus the inspiration she takes from the natural beauty of the area.

Renowned ceramist **Karl Williams** uses a wide range of natural elements, including wood, glass, stone, steel, copper, cane, and clay, to express the passion and inspiration he receives from nature. Among his newer pieces are faces that reflect grief, surprise, anguish and acceptance, revealing a journey of emotions that gives viewers an opportunity to look within themselves.



“I don’t plan for that in my pieces,” he notes. “Instead, I give them the freedom to become what they are meant to be. “

Pat Priolo had a long and rewarding career as a social worker and social services manager, and now is a masterful gourd and jewelry artist. She often incorporates Southwestern and Native American themes into her works, but with an unceasing inventiveness guaranteeing that no two pieces will ever be alike.



Wendy Bialek is a master weaver with over four decades of experience in creating one-of-a-kind works of textile art for use in interior design, as well as selected wearable art projects. Her unique pieces have graced homes, public spaces and exhibits across the United States. "Hand woven products add color, texture, and pattern to any residential or commercial setting," she notes. "They enhance an environment by offering a soft, subtle statement that pulls an entire room together or to a more dramatic focal point."

Photographer **Carol Gandolfo** holds a doctorate in clinical Psychology and, after a successful career in the defense industry, now operates a busy practice helping the developmentally disabled. She also volunteers extensively for emergency response agencies and The Verde Valley Coalition Against Human Trafficking. Her abiding interest in people and animals (especially cats) has considerable influence on her art, helping her to capture fleeting moments that reveal her subjects’ inner moods.



Rick Gandolfo was born on Arizona’s Williams Air Force Base and after early studies at the Chouinard Art Institute in L.A., spent most of his career working in the aerospace industry. Now retired, he paints unique plein air landscapes with bold brush strokes and a contemporary bent. “I work to have my viewers discover a new way to look at the world on both a conscious and unconscious level,” he notes.

Claudia Hartley’s love affair with art began early and she went on to earn a BFA degree in painting and drawing from the University of Georgia. While raising a family, she opened her own art school in Atlanta and showed her work extensively in the region. After taking new inspiration from extensive travels and living in a variety of areas, she settled in Sedona, where her works and her teaching are inspired by our spectacular natural surroundings.



Award winning photographer **Jim Peterson** is inspired by the stunning landscapes of the Southwest, where he grew up and first snapped a shutter. He earned a B.A. in Music and a PhD in Biochemistry from the University of Chicago, and then went on to a successful career in the tech industry. After retirement, he reinvigorated his longstanding passion for photography. His works have since received numerous awards and honors in juried shows and international competitions and have been acquired by collectors worldwide.



The Special Exhibition Gallery of the Sedona Arts Center is located on the lower level at 15 Art Barn Road, Sedona, Arizona 86336, and the show is open from 10:00 AM until 5:00 PM daily from February 28 through March 14. For more information, contact Jim Peterson at (928) 554-4340.