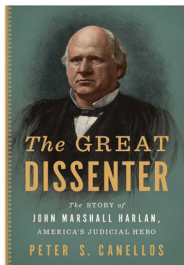


HAPPY 20th, FESTIVAL OF BOOKS!

It was at the bottom of Fran Heaney's Spencertown/Red Rock column in the August 31, 2006, issue of *The Chatham Courier*. "The Festival of Books is coming to the Spencertown Academy in September." That was it. Not exactly the sort of attention-grabbing (or terribly informative) announcement you'd want for your first-time event.

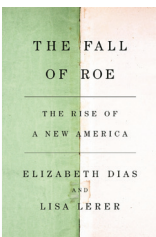


Organizers' expectations were modest. As sales would prove to be: \$9,500 or about 4 percent of the Academy's 2006 revenues. "After that first year," recalls Al Vinck, who co-chaired the event with Karen Jahn, "we wondered if we could ever get enough books for a second or third year."

Vinck needn't have worried. Fast forward to the 2024 Festival of Books: Gross sales topped \$51,000, more than a third of the Academy's revenues for that year. Not enough books?

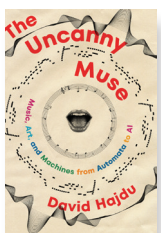
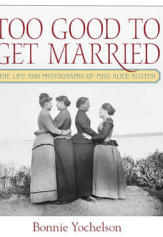
Fifteen thousand books, CDs and DVDs were donated, and when the dust had settled, 250 boxes of unsold books had been given to local libraries and other organizations.

The Festival of Books is celebrating its 20th anniversary. This year, the gently used book sale, one of the area's largest, will be open to the public on Saturday, August 30, from 10am to 5pm; Sunday, August 31 from 10am to 4pm; and on Monday, September 1 (bargain day), from 10am to 2pm Admission is free. Academy members will have a first crack at the books during a members-only preview on Friday, August 29, from 3pm to 7pm.



The Special Book Room will feature an array of curated books, on subjects including art, photography, architecture, design and cooking, as well as graphic novels, collectible first editions, signed books and more. There will also be a media section with vinyl LPs, CDs, DVDs and audio books.

The highly anticipated authors' program kicks off on Saturday at 12:30pm and will feature conversations with **Peter S. Canellos**, **Bonnie Yochelson**, **Lisa Lerer** and **Elizabeth Dias**. Sunday's program starting at 11:30am will include **Chloé Caldwell**, **Mayukh Sen** and **David Hajdu**. For more information spencertownacademy.org



The Festival's authors program, with its A-List of award-winning novelists, poets, historians, journalists and playwrights, has often drawn SRO crowds over the years, beginning with crime fiction master Donald Westlake in 2006. This year's event co-chair David Highfill remembers historian Russell Shorto: He was "pitch perfect, one of the most artful, captivating writers I've ever seen speak extemporaneously." Not even the pandemic could dampen the excitement: Jill Lapore and Joyce Carol Oates joined one of the virtual Festivals via Zoom.

And every year since 2009, Academy member Susan Grybas has arrived at the Festival with a different literary friend to introduce to the children. Her guests have included Lyle, Lyle Crocodile; the Cat in the Hat; Curious George; and Clifford.

Twenty years ago, Fran Heaney went to the Festival twice. "The shopping is sublime," she reported. "It would appear that the Academy has a new tradition. From now on we can clean out our shelves at the end of the summer and then get ready to shop for new editions. What could be better?"



what's coming up



FESTIVAL OF BOOKS

Labor Day Weekend
Friday August 29
Special Members Preview Day
Saturday-Monday
August 30-September 1
Open to All



FAMILY ARTS KALEIDOSCOPE

"Make it, Shrink" it, Wear it"
Create Wearable Art
Ages 8 and over
Saturday, September 20, 10:00-12:30



GALLERY SHOW

Regional Juried Show: Art as Memoir
September 27 - October 26
Reception September 27, 3-5pm



ROOTS & SHOOTS CONCERT

Jen Chapin Trio
Saturday, October 4, 8pm



CLASSICAL SUNDAY

Joanne Polk, pianist
Sunday, October 12, 3pm



FAMILY ARTS KALEIDOSCOPE

with John & Anne Marie Farrell
Ages 3-7

Songs about Nature

Saturday, October 18, 10-11am

Let Your Heart Sing

Saturday, October 25, 10-11am



ROOTS & SHOOTS CONCERT

Amy Ryan Band
& The Dusty Wright Four
Saturday, November 1, 7:30pm



ALL WRITE, COLUMBIA

4th Annual Creative Nonfiction
Writers Conference

November 6-9

Submissions close October 2

spencertownacademy.org/events

FESTIVAL OF BOOKS

20
Years
Strong!

There will be a Kids' Corner for young readers as well as the opportunity for them to meet *The Rainbow Fish*, the title character of Marcus Pfister's beloved children's picture book.

Special guest: Saturday, August 30, 10am

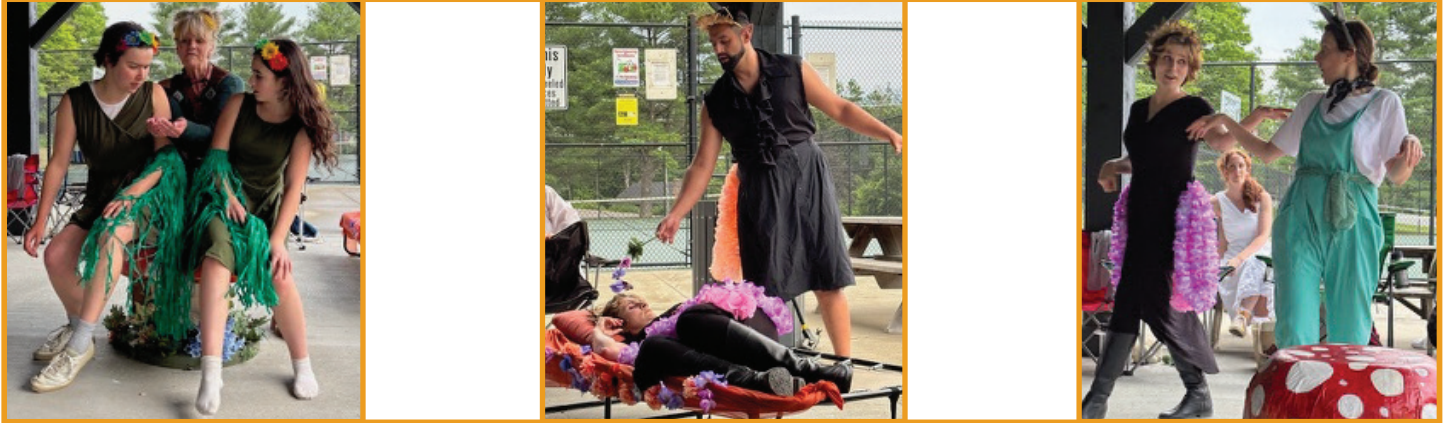


A REMARKABLE SUMMER

They say a picture is worth a 1,000 words. It was a remarkable summer at the Spencertown Academy Arts Center. The high point was the exhibition of the extraordinary quilts of Gee's Bend, Alabama, which drew nearly 3,000 visitors. Here are pictures of some of the events that made this summer so special. As always, thank you for your help supporting our programs and events.

Nick Van Alstine

Shakespeare in the Park - *A Midsummer Night's Dream* The Rooted Voyageurs - June 27



Gee's Bend: The Next Generation - July 12-August 3



the Academy

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Are you a current member of the Spencertown Academy?
Visit our website to sign up or to renew your membership today!
We thank you for your support.

PLEASE VISIT

spencertownacademy.org
for information on programs, membership, and volunteer opportunities or to subscribe to our e-blast list.

Twilight BBQ Dance Party - July 12



Roots & Shoots Concert: Jim Lauderdale - July 19



Family Arts Kaleidoscope



CREATING WEARABLE ART. SONGS ABOUT NATURE AND THE PLANET EARTH

Two programs offer families opportunities to share artistic experiences.

The goal of the Academy's Family Arts Kaleidoscope, a series of free arts workshops for toddlers, school age children and their adult companions, is simple: to bring the arts into family life.

"We believe that families sharing artistic experiences together enhances childhood development and social skills," says Phyllis Diamond, who co-chairs the FAK with fellow board member Carol Essert.



This fall, the Kaleidoscope will offer two programs. On September 20, from 10am to 12:30pm Karen Martin, director of the Art School of Columbia County, will present "Make it, Shrink it, Wear it". Children 8 and over will



create their own designs and images on a sheet of polystyrene with markers, pastels and paint. Sheets will then be baked in a low-heat oven—and *Voilà!* Creative, wearable art!

On October 18, singer, songwriter and recording artist John Farrell and his wife Ann Marie will lead "The Earth is our Home," a participatory session of songs about nature, animals and the planet Earth for children ages 3-7 with an adult companion. Sign language and call-and-response songs will have audience members laughing while learning. The Farrells will return on October 25 for "Let Your Heart Sing," a program of singing that explores how kindness, empathy and working together make the world a better place. Both programs will be from 10am to 11am.

[more information](#)

In the Gallery

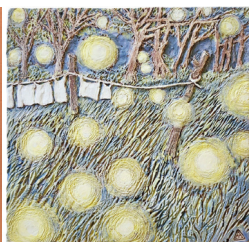


ART AS MEMOIR

Forty-eight artists share quiet reflection and fragments of memory.



COLLAGE



CERAMICS



SCULPTURE



OIL PAINTING



PHOTOGRAPHY

In April, artists living in Columbia County and neighboring counties in New York, Massachusetts and Connecticut were invited to submit work for the Academy's biennial Regional Juried Fine Arts Show. Work was to be based on a personal memory or memories. From the 400 submissions from nearly 150 artists, jurors accepted 72 works by 48 artists, which will be on display at the Gallery from September 27 to October 26. Media include oil, acrylic and watercolor paintings; graphite and charcoal drawings; mixed media and collage; fiber art; printmaking;

digital media; photography; ceramics; and sculpture. Winners will be announced at the opening reception on the 27th.

"It was a pleasure to jury Art as Memoir," says Sienna Patti, founder of the Sienna Patti Contemporary Art Gallery in Lenox. Patti, along with Ian Berry, Dayton Director of the Tang Teaching Museum and Art Gallery at Skidmore College, was one of the show's two jurors. "I was struck by the honesty and variety in the work—some pieces felt like confessions, others like quiet reflections or fragments of memory.

The exhibit has been curated by Academy members Munya Avigail Upin, Meryl Enerson and Alice McGowan.

Music at the Academy



JAZZY, DREAMY, PLUSH

An urban folk singer and classical pianist headline upcoming concerts.



The next Roots & Shoots concert, on October 4 at 8pm, will feature Jen Chapin, accompanied by bassist Stephan Crump and Jamie Fox on electric guitar, debuting a new cabaret-style performance of her urban folk songs. Chapin brings "a jazzy edge to the folk form," noted *The New Yorker*. "Sometimes she explores a fleeting emotion, sometimes she weaves a solid narrative — not at all surprising for the daughter of Harry Chapin."



Grammy-nominated pianist Joanne Polk, whose work has been described by one critic as "plush and dreamily attractive," will appear at the Academy on Sunday, October 12, at 3pm. Polk is known as a champion of women composers, two of whom — Amy Beach and Cécile Chaminade — will be featured in this eclectic program that will include the work Johan Sebastian Bach, Alberto Genistera and David Shenton. Polk's albums have been named "Best of the Year" by *The New York Times* and *The Seattle Times* and debuted at No. 1 on the Classical Billboard Chart. Polk is a member of the piano faculty of Manhattan School of Music