

# THE GALLERY



## Strengthening Our Spaces, Serving Our Communities

Recent facility improvements across SAMA locations reflect a continued commitment to stewardship, accessibility, and enriching experiences for artists, students, and visitors.

At SAMA Altoona, the installation of new, large windows has transformed the space by increasing natural light and improving energy efficiency.

At SAMA Ligonier, critical building improvements were recently completed, including a new roof that protects the historic structure and a remodeled Children’s Classroom designed to enhance hands-on learning experiences for young artists and families. These upgrades ensure a safe, welcoming, and inspiring environment for educational programming.

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SEE WHAT’S COMING UP NEXT



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PLAN YOUR VISIT TODAY!

# EDUCATION UPDATE

Walls are Vibrating with Color, Talent, and Joy at



Two sisters held hands as they admired the artwork of an older sibling.

Smiling faces and laughter have been filling the galleries of all four Southern Alleghenies Museum of Art (SAMA) locations. Johnstown, Altoona, Bedford, and Ligonier SAMA locations are hosting their annual “Artists of the 21st Century Exhibitions” now until April 2026.

With quiet pride and wonder grandparents, parents, aunts, uncles, cousins, and siblings have been excitedly visiting our galleries. Upon entry the usual introductions include, “My child has artwork in this exhibit. Do you know where we can find it on the walls?” The look of relief, satisfaction and pride that spread across their faces as our directors and gallery associates share the exhibit layout could light up our museums for days.

In a breakdown of numbers, the “2026 Artists of the 21st Century Exhibitions” in Johnstown, Altoona, Bedford, and Ligonier contain over 540 works of art created by children inspired by their talented art teachers. More than 570 students participated and contributed to the exhibitions. More than sixty schools from twenty school districts and independent schools sent artwork. Sixtyfive art teachers submitted student artwork, with fifteen new teachers joining in the celebration of the amazing creative talents of our youth.

If you have not visited SAMA recently, now is the time! Our walls are vibrating with hope, dedication, and inspiration from these stunning works

## EITC UPDATE

A special thank you to our Educational Improvement Tax Credit sponsor, Benzel’s Bretzel Bakery, Inc. for your continued support. We utilize funds to create AIR programs for local students, supply art kits for special programming, and bring our permanent collection into classrooms throughout our region at little or no cost to the school districts that want and need arts programming.

To learn more about becoming an EITC Sponsor, please contact Heather Konhaus at (724) 238-6015.

of art. Thank you to all our participating art teachers, artists, and museum staff for helping to create these stunning exhibits at each of our SAMA locations.

Artists of the 21st Century will be hanging in SAMA Johnstown until Sunday, March 22, at SAMA Altoona until April 2, at SAMA Bedford until April 26, and at SAMA Ligonier until April 19, 2026. Make time in your schedules to visit one or all our SAMA locations to take in the playful, meaningful, colorful, talented, and inspiring artwork of our children.

## STRENGTHENING (cont from front)

Looking ahead, additional improvements to the SAMA Ligonier building are planned for this spring, made possible in part through the generous support of private foundations and the Donald L. Green Legacy Fund, further strengthening the museum's ability to serve children, families, and the broader community.

SAMA Bedford marked two major milestones this year. The long-anticipated outdoor pavilion has been completed, expanding opportunities for plein air workshops, community gatherings, and seasonal events. In addition, the museum was able to cement its basement thanks

to support from the Community Foundation for the Alleghenies, addressing longterm infrastructure needs and improving the building's stability and usability.

Several of these enhancements were made possible by a grant from the Department of Community and Economic Development. Together, these improvements reflect SAMA's commitment to stewardship, accessibility, and excellence.

Sincere thanks go to our dedicated maintenance crew, Lee Rummel and Cameron Farabaugh, for their hard work and care.

## Creating Calm



With generous funding and support from an anonymous donor, Ligonier has established a new respite/quiet room, designed to provide a calming space for visitors who may need a sensory break during their museum experience.

Director of Operations, Sandra Hampton, emphasized the importance of this addition, stating, "The creation of this respite room further supports SAMA's mission of providing inclusive, educational, and accessible arts programming that strengthens individuals and communities across the Southern Alleghenies region."

The respite room was created to support neurodivergent visitors attending art workshops, viewing exhibitions, or participating in residency programs. Staff members, Lee Rummel and Cameron Farabaugh, diligently designed an environment that reduces noise and overstimulation, offering a safe place for relaxation and emotional regulation. The room allows individuals to regroup and manage anxiety when experiencing sensory overload.

## MEMBER BENEFITS

As SAMA celebrates its 50th anniversary, we are proud to introduce newly expanded membership tiers offering greater access, enhanced benefits, and deeper engagement for art lovers across the region.

These updates reflect our commitment to connecting communities with the visual arts and strengthening support for the Museum's future. The revised structure provides flexible options for individuals, families, and supporters at every level.

Members enjoy added benefits such as gift shop and venue rental discounts, invitations to memberexclusive events, and website recognition.

Learn more at [sama-art.org/membership](https://sama-art.org/membership).



Ligonier has also joined the Autism Travel Club, further strengthening the Museum's commitment to accessibility and inclusion. Staff members will participate in training sessions focused on communication and support strategies for neurodivergent visitors.

SAMA remains dedicated to ensuring that everyone can engage with art in a space that feels welcoming, safe, and inspiring.

# EXHIBITION SUCCESSES



Elizabeth Castonguay, All that Glitters

## 30TH SPCARTS

Another successful year for the annual juried regional exhibition.

Each year, the Southwestern Pennsylvania Council for the Arts endeavors to create a space where 19 southwestern county artists can showcase their current work at SAMA Ligonier. Last year's exhibition presented a fresh and eclectic mix of works from 60 regional artists. Thank you for supporting the emerging and established artists with your presence and patronage.

Award winners of this exhibition are as follows:

FIRST PRIZE: Elizabeth Castonguay, All that Glitters SECOND

PRIZE: Elizabeth Sickles, Winter in the kitchen corner THIRD

PRIZE: Peggy Black, Pathway FOURTH PRIZE: Sophie Thompson, Indulgence

AWARDS OF SPECIAL RECOGNITION, EXCELLENCE, AND MERIT:  
Jim Murphy, Wendy Mackin, Nancy Rusbosin, Dai Morgan, Ana Valiente Carvalho, Larry Brandstetter, William Karaffa, Skip Allen

## EVIDENCE OF JOY

Meaghan Troup's luminous paintings invited reflection, gratitude, and a deeper connection to nature at SAMA Bedford.



A visitor enjoys Troup's work during the opening celebration event.

The exhibition of works by Meaghan Troup at SAMA Bedford was well attended and warmly received by the community.

On view from October 31, 2025 through February 1, 2026,

visitors were drawn to Troup's paintings for their striking depictions of the natural world and the emotional responses they inspired. Many viewers lingered with the work, commenting on the sense of peace, wonder, and reverence con-

veyed through her imagery.

Troup's paintings celebrated the beauty of God's creation, a theme that resonated clearly throughout the exhibition. Her use of vivid, luminous color brought landscapes to life, while her expressive palette knife technique added texture, movement, and energy to each composition. These bold strokes created a sense of depth and immediacy, inviting viewers to experience nature not just as scenery, but as a living, sacred presence.

Through her distinctive approach, Troup successfully bridged observation and emotion, realism and expression. Her work encouraged reflection and gratitude for the natural world and our place within it. The exhibition offered audiences an opportunity to slow down, reconnect with nature, and appreciate the spiritual beauty that surrounded them every day.

# THIS FALL AT SAMA

## Artists in Our Midst

The talent is here. The inspiration is local.



Exhibiting artists gather to hear award winners announced at the opening celebration.

On October 17, 2025, our galleries came alive with creativity, conversation, and community during the opening of the Artist in Our Midst Juried Exhibition. This annual favorite celebrates the remarkable talent that surrounds us and affirms the museum's commitment to providing a platform for regional artists working across a wide range of media, styles, and perspectives.

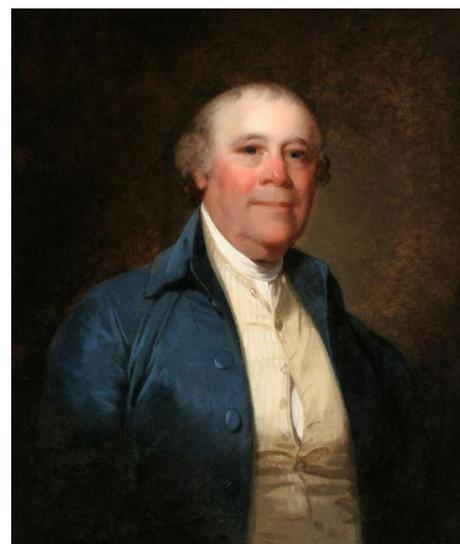
This year's exhibition drew an impressive pool of submissions, making the juror's task both exciting and challenging. The selected works represent a dynamic cross-section of contemporary practice—from intimate works on paper and striking photography to bold painting, sculpture, and innovative mixed media. Together, they offer visitors a compelling snapshot of the artistic energy thriving right here in our midst.

Guests at the opening reception and awards ceremony, held the evening of October 24th, enjoyed the opportunity to meet many of the participating artists, hear about their processes, and gain insight into the stories behind the work. These personal connections are at the heart of what makes the exhibition so meaningful; it is not only about viewing art, but about building relationships between creators and the community that supports them.

We extend our sincere thanks to our juror, Jessica Campbell, for her thoughtful selections, to the artists who shared their work, and to everyone who joined us to celebrate.

If you have not visited SAMA during this annual exhibition, we invite you to visit next fall to experience the local showcase.

The talent is here. The inspiration is local.



## ANNIVERSARY EXHIBITION

This special exhibition will feature a curated selection of works from SAMA's permanent collection, celebrating five decades of art and culture. Visitors will view iconic works including Andy Warhol and selections by local metal sculptor, Kurt Bonello. The display reflects five decades of collecting and preserving American art, showcasing the museum's growth from 47 works in 1976 to more than 7,500 pieces today. Visitors will experience highlights of SAMA's artistic legacy and learn about the cultural impact of these works on the region.

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04.17.26 - 07.05.26  
@LIGONIER  
08.14.26 - 11.01.26

# FUNDRAISER FUN

## A successful return of Dueling Pianos at the Blairmont

A wicked evening was had by all at Dueling Pianos: Emerald Fantasy on November 7, 2025!

We extend our heartfelt gratitude to everyone who supported the fundraiser. Your generosity and enthusiasm make it possible for us to continue our mission of celebrating the arts, fostering creativity, and enriching our community. A special thank you to lead sponsors: UPMC Altoona, Ward Transport & Logistics, and Wolf-Kuhn Foundation.

This event was a success because of your support! Our donors, sponsors, volunteers, and attendees believe in the power of the arts to inspire and transform lives. Whether you attended, contributed, or helped behind the scenes, your dedication is truly appreciated. As we look ahead to another exciting year, we hope you will continue to be part of our journey. See page 7 for dates of upcoming events and fundraisers. Become a member to receive special invitations!



Board members and guests pose for a photo by SLY Photography at the photo booth.

## Keys to a KIA

Your chance to try a 2026 Kia Sportage Hybrid has arrived.

SAMA members have an exciting chance to support the arts—and possibly drive away a winner! In partnership with Courtesy Kia, the Southern Alleghenies Museum of Art is offering a Car Lease Raffle with an incredible choice of prizes: a 3-year lease on a 2026 Kia

Sportage Hybrid (valued at \$15,000) or \$10,000 in cash.

Tickets are just \$50, with only 500 tickets available, and each ticket gives you two chances to win. The winning number will be drawn using the first three digits of the PA Lottery at 7:00 PM on Saturday, June 13, 2026, during SAMA's Gala.

Tickets may be purchased at SAMA locations in Altoona, Bedford, and Ligonier, at Courtesy Kia in Altoona, or online at [www.sama-art.org](http://www.sama-art.org). All proceeds directly support SAMA's exhibitions and educational programs. Support the arts, go green, and take a chance on an amazing prize!



## THANK YOU

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FOR YOUR SUPPORT

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# LACE UP ALTOONA

Run for the arts (and maybe a medal) with this energizing community fundraiser where every step supports exhibitions, education, and outreach across the region.

Join us for the return of the Art for Your Heart 5K Run/Walk, taking place on Saturday, May 23, 2026, at 9:00 a.m., rain or shine. This heART-healthy community event welcomes participants of all ages and fitness levels to run, walk, and celebrate wellness while supporting the arts. Every step helps sustain our exhibitions, educational programs, and outreach initiatives.

The route begins and ends at SAMA Altoona. Pre-registration

is \$25, with race-day registration available for \$35. Participants who register by April 30, 2026, are guaranteed an official event t-shirt, while later registrations will receive shirts as supplies last.

Professional timing will be provided by Miles of Smiles Timing Service, ensuring accurate race-day results. Medals will be awarded to the top finishers in each age group, as well as the top three overall male and female runners.



The sun shines brightly as the race begins in this view from 2024.

Register to run/walk and help champion the arts—one step at a time!



## Mark Your Calen-



**March 28 | Ligonier Let's go Hunting!** 10th Annual Easter Egg Hunt

Children of all ages can search for eggs on the museum lawn. Thanks to the "Friends of SAMA" volunteers participating children can enjoy prizes, face painting and take home art activities. Event will be held at 1:00 p.m. - rain or shine.



**May 22-24 | Bedford Plein Air Weekend** Paint or Purchase at Omni Bedford Resort and Spa

Celebrating art, nature, and culture with artists painting throughout Bedford and Omni Bedford Springs, concluding with a lively Wet Sale of freshly created artwork on Sunday, May 24th from 1-4pm at the Omni. Meet the artists and purchase unique works of art.



**June 13 | Altoona Golden Gala** Coal Aly Performs at the 50th Anniversary Golden Gala

This milestone event will be a spectacular evening starting at 6pm at the Blairmont Club honoring SAMA's rich legacy and bright future—sponsored by Honorary Chair and Event Sponsor, Roberta Titelman. Tickets available now!



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**nier** 1210 11th Avenue P.O. Box 3061 Altoona, PA 16601 (814) 946-4464 Wednesday-Sunday: 12:00 PM - 4:30 PM  
137 E. Pitt St. Bedford, PA 15522 (814) 589-3020 Wednesday-Sunday: 12:00 PM - 4:30 PM  
450 School-house Road Johnstown, PA 15904 (814) 515-1374 By appointment and during performances at the Pasquerilla Center  
One Boucher Lane & Route 711 South Ligonier, PA 15658 (724) 238-6015 Wednesday-Sunday: 12:00 PM - 4:30 PM



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