



**SALINA
ARTS**
& HUMANITIES



SMOKY HILL RIVER FESTIVAL ART SHOW MERIT AND PURCHASE AWARDEES

(Salina, KS 06-24) Every year, more than 125 visual artists travel to participate in the Smoky Hill River Festival. This year, the festival welcomed 56 new artists from across the nation who came to sell their artwork.

Juried by five art professionals from across the state, \$11,200 in prize money was awarded to fifteen artists. The jurors visited each individual booth to determine award winners. Showing for the first time at the Festival, Tai Taoalii from Hannibal, MO, received the highest Merit award named after Martha Rhea, the first Director of the Salina Arts & Humanities. Andrew Rola of St. Louis, MO, also received another one of the top awards, named after the late Marie Chapman, festival co-



Pictured, from right: Crystal Hammerschmidt, art show director, Tai Taoalii award-winning artist, and Martha Rhea, award namesake and former director of Salina Arts & Humanities.

founder, and Caroline Lanterman, granddaughter of Chapman and former staff member.

In addition to the cash prizes determined by the jury, the city of Salina purchases \$2000 in original festival artwork for the public art collection each year. This year, the Salina Chamber of Commerce was chosen as the Purchase Partner

recipient. A Purchase partner representative is responsible for choosing artwork(s) for public display within the organization's public space(s). Works by artists Jen Unekis of Lawrence, KS, and Angie Spears of Houston, TX, were chosen to be added to the community collection this year.

The Smoky Hill River Festival continues to attract high-quality and passionate artists to our city each year. The Art Show is always a

NEWS RELEASE

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unique opportunity to support and make personal connections with artists. The following award winners represent various media and content within their artwork and only a fraction of the talent displayed during the 48th annual Smoky Hill River Festival.

In addition to the cash prizes, art patrons' sustaining enthusiasm and commitment to purchasing directly from artists support a thriving artists' community. Thank you to all who chose to purchase work during the event, and congratulations to all our 2024 Awardees.

- Martha Rhea Award of Merit
 - Tai Taoalii, Drawing, Hannibal, MO
- Marie Chapman & Caroline Lanterman Award of Merit
 - Andrew Rola, Painting/Digital Animation, St. Louis, MO
- Purchase Award
 - Jen Unekis, Painting, Lawrence, KS
 - Angie Spears, Drawing/Pyrography, Houston, TX
- Award of Merit
 - Leah Evans, Fiber, Madison, WI
 - Kristen Haug, Jewelry, Pierre, SD
 - Angie Spears, Drawing/Pyrography, Houston, TX
 - Caitlin Penny, Printmaking, Lenexa, KS
 - Fred Tate, Jewelry, Austin, TX
 - Cassandra Dixon, Painting, Oklahoma City, OK
 - Kris Kratz, Wood, Hickman, NE
 - Nick Perry, Printmaking, Topeka, KS
 - Joshua Cook, Sculpture, Oklahoma City, OK
 - Jon Bidwell, Photography, Overland Park, KS
 - Morgan Daniel, Painting, Kansas City, MO
 - Paul Punzo, Printmaking, Lawrence, KS

For information on how to get involved in the next Smoky Hill River Festival, taking place June 12-15, 2025, call 785-309-5770, visit riverfestival.com or e-mail sah@salina.org.

Salina Arts & Humanities, a department of the City of Salina, has served a unique role as an arts advocate and resource partner since 1966. The Smoky Hill River Festival, Horizons Grants Program, Smoky Hill Museum, Arts Infusion Program in schools, Community Art & Design, and Creative Connections are among the programs of Salina Arts & Humanities, located at 211 W. Iron Avenue in Salina.

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