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THE CHESTNUT GROUP CELEBRATES 20 YEARS WITH ART SHOW & SALE AT MBA

The Southeast's most prestigious plein air painters celebrate two decades of "Painting to Preserve"

NASHVILLE, Tenn. – The Chestnut Group, founded in Tennessee in 2001, is home to the region's largest and most prestigious group of plein air painters. In celebration of 20 years of dedication to the conservation of special landscapes in middle Tennessee, The Chestnut Group is partnering with Montgomery Bell Academy (MBA) to present the **"Painting to Preserve" Art Show & Sale, Jun. 25-27, 2021**. Hosted on MBA's campus, the exhibit celebrates the past, current, and future partners of The Chestnut Group. Member submissions will feature beloved alfresco settings in middle Tennessee, including the campus of MBA. All art and conservation enthusiasts are encouraged to attend the Opening Reception on Friday, Jun. 25 from 6 to 9 p.m. Admission is free and open to the public.

The Chestnut Group began its mission twenty years ago as a nonprofit alliance of landscape artists and conservationists dedicated to protecting endangered places, celebrating open spaces, and documenting historic landmarks and structures. Through art show fundraisers and exhibits featuring original Chestnut Group artist creations, the membership has raised more than \$500,000 to support over 25 local partner organizations.

"Twenty years ago, the idea of artists sharing their passion for landscape painting to aid conservation efforts was unheard of in Tennessee," said Kim Barrick, award-winning artist and Chestnut Group founder. "Today, the commitment of Chestnut Group artists to preserve the land they love is stronger than ever. The dream of making a difference as an outdoor painter and inspiring others to do the same is a beautiful reality, so far exceeding anything I could have imagined. I am proud to have been part of this incredible journey."

From novice to master, The Chestnut Group membership has always been inclusive, breeding diversity and collaboration in a volunteer, artist-run organization. In addition to participation in the mission-focused partner art shows, members enjoy developmental opportunities through workshops conducted by internationally known artists, lectures, art-related educational sessions, and mentorship relationships.

"My first encounter with The Chestnut Group was over 15 years ago. A group of plein air artists arrived at my family's farm to paint along the Duck River," said Karen Philpott, Chestnut president 2021 and award-winning artist. "This paint-out was in partnership with the Nature Conservancy, one of the many partnerships for conservation and historic preservation held by the group. The welcoming spirit of the artists, their stunning paintings and the incredible mission of this diverse group was the allure, and I soon became a member."

Philpott continued, "It is humbling to look back at my early painter's journey and see how important The Chestnut Group has been. I can think of no other group in Tennessee that has given back so much to the preservation of our beautiful state and the education of its members. It is my honor to now serve as president in this our 20th year."

MBA, a longstanding supporter of The Chestnut Group, will host the “Painting to Preserve” exhibit on their historic campus in the Davis Building, 4001 Harding Road. The exhibit will celebrate the 20-year journey of the group’s plein air painters and their efforts to memorialize some of the region’s most beloved places and spaces, including The Land Trust of Tennessee, Radnor Lake, Centennial Park, Warner Parks, The Hermitage, Harlinsdale Farm, and MBA’s campus. In keeping with the group’s financial support of partner organizations, proceeds will benefit MBA as well as The Chestnut Group and Chestnut artists. Opening Reception is on Friday, Jun. 25 from 6 to 9 p.m. Show hours on Saturday, Jun. 26 are from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. and Sunday, Jun. 27 from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Admission is free and open to the public.

About The Chestnut Group

Founded in 2001 as a nonprofit alliance of volunteer outdoor painting enthusiasts, The Chestnut Group has collaborated with local partners sharing the same vision of preserving fragile local environments, threatened habitats, and protected natural areas. While offering artists the opportunity to explore the advantages of painting outdoors, the membership and their partners represent a unique alliance with the artistic world. To date, The Chestnut Group has raised more than a half-million dollars for preservation partners through the sale of members’ work. Embraced by Tennesseans for over two decades, plein air painting has become an international phenomenon.

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