

Swarming artists

“What is unique about the festival, compared to other Plein Air events is the ‘& More’ part,” Whitebird Gallery owner Allyn Cantor said. “Our group wanted the event to be as inclusive as possible to all media and artists who are able to work outside and demonstrate their techniques for the visitors.”

The organizers include arts beyond the visual as well. Stilt walker Melissa Rae will appear throughout town distributing festival brochures, and a number of live bands will provide music for the events, including the Boka Marimba Band on Saturday beginning at 11:30 a.m., and the Zingari Band playing gypsy-Italian-folk fusion on Saturday night.

One of the most popular festival events is the “Artists’ Swarm” held 2 to 4 p.m. Saturday in the Coaster Theatre courtyard. This is when every artist at the festival comes together to celebrate and create together — if there are artists you’d really like to see, you are sure to find them at the Swarm.

Organizer Bonnie Gilchrist said that the energy of all the artists crowded into the courtyard together is just electric. She described the festival as a family-friendly, dog-friendly celebration of the arts.

Her favorite aspect is that the public is “able to see what is involved in stone sculpture and what goes into making a glass piece — they are able to see all the different stages and steps of the creative process in a remarkably short amount of time.”

Firing, dueling

Another perennially popular festival event is the Saturday evening Raku firing on the beach at Whale Park with husband-and-wife potter team Dave and Boni Deal beginning at 6:30 p.m.

Western Raku is a form of pottery that involves removing ceramic work from a kiln at incredibly hot temperatures, then dropping the pieces into a container of combustible materials for a post-firing smoke reduction. The smoke cracks and blackens the clay and glazes in unpredictable and organic patterns.

“When Dave pulls out the pot and it’s glowing, there’s always a huge reaction from the crowd,” Gilchrist said. “Then he drops it into the container and flames go shooting up — it’s a magnificent sight.”

Cantor said the Raku firing is one of the “most unique attractions of the weekend.”

Cantor also points to DragonFire Gallery’s Dualing Easels event as another highlight for her. In this demonstration, on Sunday from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m., two



Gary Lavarack’s ‘Witches Wicket,’ at Cannon Beach Gallery

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Brooke Borcharding’s ‘Night Traffic,’ at White Bird Gallery

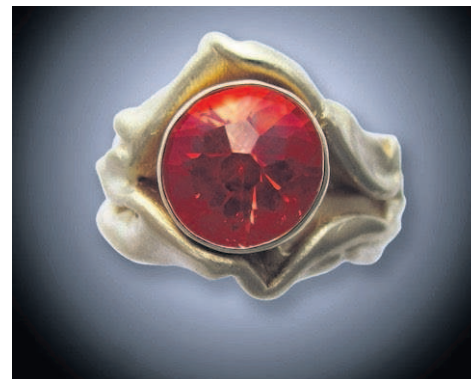
artists, Anton Pavlenko and Michael Orwick, paint the same subject matter using their own dramatically different styles and approaches. They switch canvases several times throughout the process, allowing audiences to watch a spontaneous collaboration unfold in real time.

Coastal inspiration

Artist and co-organizer Jeffery Hull is both a painter, working in watercolors and oils, as well as a gallery owner. He moved from Portland to Cannon Beach 45 years ago and has seen the community grow and mature. He has always been



‘Acrobat’ by Karen Croner, at Imprint Gallery



Jewelry by Sharon Amber

an artist, and was originally attracted to the area for its surfing. Today he paints coastal seascapes, inspired by the beauty of the Pacific Northwest coast.

“I feel so fortunate to have landed here,” he said. “I didn’t come here knowing I would grow old here.”

Thirty-one years ago he started Jeffery Hull Gallery with his wife, both motivated by a desire to convey their deep love for the area through their art. Hull said of Plein Air & More, “It’s a really wonderful experience to watch and converse with other artists as they are working.”

On any given day of the year, Cannon Beach is a town charming enough to earn National Geographic’s designation as “One of the Most Beautiful Places in the World” — but fill it up with working artists creating alongside nature, and you’ve got a sure recipe for a weekend of Oregon Coast summer magic. 