

MAKING AN IMPRESSION

The Southwest Print Fiesta Celebrates the Art of Printmaking

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Las Cruces Bulletin

If you've been thinking about sprucing up your walls with fresh art, or just want to add to your collection of woodcuts, etchings, engravings or lithographs, the opportunity to get the freshest art available is here. The Southwest Print Fiesta, now celebrating its ninth year in Silver City, brings together printmakers, artists and enthusiasts from all over the southwest to celebrate the rich tradition and diverse techniques of printmaking.

Launched in 2016 by the Mimbres Regional Arts Council, the Fiesta has grown over the years, in part due to the influence of organizers Jamie Karolich and Kyle Durrie, who took over operation of the event in 2020. Using their connections within the community of working printmakers, as well as the experience of participating in similar festivals and markets themselves, the organizers bring an artist's perspective to the proceedings they say has expanded the reach to attract a broader range of participants.

"It's always been a really great festival, since day one, but as working printmakers ourselves we had ideas about how we could change little things, while still keeping the spirit of what made it a great festival to begin with," said Durrie, owner

of Power and Light Press. "It's been really fun to have a little bit more involvement with it."

In keeping with that spirit, this year's event has been expanded to include more programming. Whereas in the past the event was a simple weekend affair, this year it encompasses four days. In addition to workshops, the Southwest Print Fiesta will feature engaging artist talks where participants can gain insights into the creative process and artistic inspirations directly from visiting artists. Exhibitions showcasing a diverse range of prints will also be on view, offering attendees the chance to explore and appreciate the wide breadth of printmaking techniques and applications.

"We're trying a few new things, like single-day workshops, in addition to two-day workshops, just to accommodate different budgets and taking into consideration that not everybody has two full days to commit to workshops," Durrie said. "We just like giving people smaller options that they can choose from."

One of the highlights of the weekend is the Printers' Market, where attendees can browse and purchase printed goods from local and regional vendors. Over 40 printmakers from all across the southwest, including Arizona, Texas, California



Southwest Print Fiesta photo

and Colorado will be set up in an outdoor market to offer a broad range of printmaking, techniques and price points.

"The market is a really fun place to shop," said Durrie. "The feedback we get from a lot of people is that they stock up. They can get a lot of really affordable art. It's just a really accessible way to engage with art through print. That's something that we all really love about this event."

Of course, the weekend would not be complete without the Steamroller printing event, in which four artists are given 4'x4' linoleum blocks to carve, which are then used to make prints using a steamroller generously provided by the Fowler Brothers Construction Company.

"In the past, it was any image of their choosing, but this year we're doing a wilderness theme, because it coincides with the hundredth anniversary of the Gila Wilderness," said Durrie. "Beyond that, the artists are completely on their own to design whatever they want."

The spectacle of the

event is watching as a team of volunteers help the artist ink their block and get it ready for printing. The steamroller then rolls over it, acting as a press.

"It's a really fun event to watch, because afterwards there's this big reveal as we peel the paper up and watch the image

come to life," Durrie said.

With programming running over four days, Durrie suggests that attendees check out the schedule on their website, to decide what might interest them and on what day.

"There's just really a lot to do," she said. "I think that people tend to think of it as just a market and a steamroller event, because that really is the public-facing part of it, but there are a lot of things that we have tucked in there, this year, that we hope people can join us for."

The Southwest Print Fiesta runs Oct. 11-14, with exhibitions and artist talks at Power & Light Press, 601 N. Bullard St., Unit F, and Light Art Space Gallery, 209 W. Broadway St., as well as a Printer's Market on the downtown Main Street Plaza, 704 N. Bullard St. For more information, visit SouthwestPrintFiesta.org



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