

enough to cover all travel/hotel/show expenses ... fun experience ... happy customers and shoppers," "well-established event," "Great show for me [with] lots of new exposure," and many, many more.

Low sales were reported by an artist selling paintings/jewelry/decoupage furniture (\$115 total/\$20 AIP), a gourmet food artisan (\$500 total/\$8 AIP), a casual jewelry maker (\$625 total/\$15 AIP), and a textile artist

45th Annual

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(\$800 total/\$20 AIP). The casual jewelry maker said the show was "too far," and the painting/jewelry/decoupage artist wrote: "I had a tree coming through the back of my booth making it dark. I did not make enough sales to cover [the] expensive entry fee which is very disappointing since I love the Little Falls Art Fair." The gourmet food artisan was located at the outer edge of the festival and said he/she did not receive as much traffic as other exhibitors.

For all reporting exhibitors, the average sales score was a 7.4 (on a 10-point scale), attendance an 8.2, and weather a near-perfect 9.9. Overall, exhibitors were happy with the quality of medium (8.4), the balance of medium (7.8), and the prestige of show (7.9). A primitive wood and fabric craftsperson (\$2,900 total/\$15 AIP) commented: "Strictly homemade products is what brings people to shop."

Contradicting that, one artist did mention: "Many items I saw were not (to me) handmade. I even had a customer compliment me because I do have handmade items." An artist making repurposed creations (\$3,500 total/\$16 AIP) noted they felt there were too many jewelry booths and witnessed "lots of buy/sell metal art."

Many artists commented they felt the show's layout could benefit from some condensing, and gave the show a layout score of 7.3, load-in/out an 8.2, and parking a 7.8. A fiber artist (\$1,400 total/\$10 AIP) whose main customers were mothers with children was unhappy with their booth placement, which was next to a honey vendor who brought a sealed box of live bees. As a result, this attracted other bees, and deterred patrons from the area.

A canned goods artisan (\$700 total/\$18 AIP) said it was "easy to load and unload."

Varied individual scores in some categories ranged from 1-10 and affected average scores in

advertising (8.1), management (8.0), artist treatment (8.4), and artist amenities (7.2). A jewelry maker, who reported this to be their sixth year at the show commented on dirty portable toilets, and two auditors said they complained of an exhibitor playing "loud, annoying music."

Over 84 percent of reporting auditors said they would come and show again in Little Falls. One artist (undisclosed medium) who earned \$2,500 total/\$25 AIP said they could "make money with a hobby," and another (undisclosed medium) who made \$2,300 total/\$15 AIP said, "[This] show is the best show of the year ... people attending buy." Others also said the show was "great" and one artist wrapped up the overall positive vibe of the show and said, "I love this town! The people are fun and love shopping."

If you'd like to check this popular show out, which was ranked #99 on *SA's 200 Best* in 2015 (Classic and Contemporary Crafts), you'll find the show in the same downtown location on October 10-11, 2016.



New Mexico

► November 27-29, Rio Grande Arts and Crafts Festival - 16th Annual Holiday Show, Albuquerque. Contact: Ruth Gore, Rio Grande Festivals, 3709 Westerfield NE, Albuquerque, NM 87111. Phone: 505-292-7457. Email: info@riograndefestivals.com. Website: www.riograndefestivals.com. Application fee: \$30 (Zapplication). Spacefee: \$495 plus \$65 for a corner booth. Space size:

10x10. Exhibitors: 185. Admission: \$7 - under 12 free.

By Jim Carnevale

New Mexico and National Reporter

Email: jimc411@me.com

Medium: Photography

Black Friday - it has become a day that is synonymous with shopping. Visions of Black Friday include throngs of people clamoring around an entrance waiting to get into a store to find the perfect item. Imagine an art show where prospective buyers are lining up, gathering at the door, and anxiously waiting to spend. It's the dream of any artist. Here it's not a dream. Welcome to the Rio Grande Arts and Crafts Holiday Show.

Promoter Ruth Gore has a knack when it comes to bringing in an abundance of willing buyers into her shows, and she and her staff managed to do it again this year. As a result, attendance was excellent and sales were brisk. Thousands of shoppers, both locals and visitors to the area, came to enjoy the show and shop, bringing plenty of sales to the 185 juried artists.

As I informally surveyed the artists over the course of the weekend, the vast majority were sharing they were enjoying excellent sales. The artists that were not experiencing satisfactory sales were few and far between and most, but unfortunately not all, said they would return if selected by the jury to be in the show again.

Specifically, two metal artists working primarily in copper shared that this was one of their best shows ever. An artist specializing in fiber said that she nearly ran out of inventory. Photography sales ran the gamut from average to excellent. My sales (in photography) were among the best that I've ever experienced - having three very solid days of sales. Two clay artists who are long time veterans of the Rio Grande shows expressed they had an excellent weekend too.

While sales for a few artists were

not as lucrative, they were clearly the minority and did not follow any particular patterns. A wood artist who historically has had exceptional sales for this show was disappointed this year, and one jeweler vowed not to return. In summary, most artists were either pleased or very pleased with only a few leaving the show with disappointing sales.

The variety and quality of the artists that were juried into the show was again outstanding. Carefully selected by the jury, the artists were selling a wide variety of items that perfectly met the needs of holiday gift-giving. Of the artists who I interviewed, the average price point in sales was in the range of \$65 to \$70. It is apparent that the success of the show is in part due to Ruth Gore's ability to attract high-quality artists, which in turn brings in high-quality buyers.

The show is also known for its variety of entertainment, live music, and activities which all add to the festive spirit of the event. The music is provided by carefully selected entertainers, which include a variety of performers ranging from country, piano, and even holiday carolers in period costumes.

Setup for the show is leisurely

because artists have the choice to load in and set-up on either Wednesday or Thursday. The venue has abundant parking and several access points for artists to enter the building for set-up. For out-of-town artists, the promoters also arrange for a Thanksgiving dinner at a local restaurant for those wishing to participate. Teardown is also equally as easy.

Overall, the Rio Grande Holiday Show is a festive event that is enjoyed by artists and patrons alike. Sales were brisk for most artists and seemed to be consistently good over the entire weekend. For local artists, having the show over Thanksgiving weekend does not pose any problems. Out-of-town artists may find that it involves some sacrifices, but for those who experience a successful show it could be well worth it.

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