

**September 29 – October 2, Ohio Mart, Akron.** Contact: Deb Sheldon & The Women's Auxiliary Board of Stan Hywet Hall & Gardens, Ohio Mart Exhibitor Committee, 714 N Portage Path, Akron OH 44303. Website: <http://www.stanhywet.org/dynamic/ohiomart.aspx>. Space fee: \$450 - \$750 plus \$25 jury fee and \$50 required donation. Exhibitors: 140. Hours: 10-5 daily. Admission: \$7 plus \$5 for parking.

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Medium: *Silversmithing*

In its 45<sup>th</sup> year, Ohio Mart is one of the best-known fall fine art shows in Ohio. This show is held on the grounds of Stan Hywet Hall and Gardens in Akron, Ohio. F.A. Seiberling, the founder of Goodyear Tire and Rubber Company, built the estate in 1912.

I have been participating in Ohio Mart for three years. All three of those years were unfortunately cursed with bad weather. When I think of Ohio Mart, I think cold, wet, mud and that awful barnyard smell of decaying wet straw. But I'm not ready to give up yet. Despite the horrendous weather, I also think of the awesome staff and volunteers. This is where Ohio Mart shines. I can't imagine how hard it is to organize 140 artists but they do it well and with smiles on their faces. I would say that this is the biggest artist amenity available at Ohio Mart.

Set-up happens before the show starts at times chosen by the artists during the week. Artists arrive at their time to be given a number in line to unload. Unloading happens with a golf cart or ATV and you make several trips to your spot to get your vehicle unloaded. There is no driving to your booth space. There are also fees for trailers and extra vehicles due to the tiny lot available for vendor parking. Tear down is much the same process. Those artists who can come back at the following week are encouraged to do so otherwise you are required to wait for a ride out. It is sometimes is after 9:00 pm before they get everyone loaded up Sunday night.

This year at Ohio Mart was the normal rainy, cold and muddy. So muddy in fact that I heard from the volunteers that by Friday they had to close the parking lots because vehicles were getting stuck in the mud. Vendors saw this sorely reflected in their totals. Attendance was definitely down from previous years. From my personal experience, in 2011 my sales increased slightly from 2010 but were nowhere close to what I was expecting. Many fellow artists told me they had no sales on Thursday or Friday and may have made enough to cover expenses by the end of the weekend. I think most artists experienced sales equal to or less than 2010.

Also both patrons and artists alike noticed an inconsistency in the overall quality of the artwork. Some exhibitors seemed to not reflect the goals for the show. Perhaps this is how the downturned economy is affecting show promoters.