

OHIO

December 2-4, American Holiday, Youngstown. Contact: Jack Haims, 524 Wick Ave., Youngstown, OH 44505. Email: j_haims@butlerart.com. Website: <http://www.butlerart.com/holidaycraftshow.htm>. Space fee: \$200. Exhibitors: 120. Hours: 6:30-9:30 Friday, 10-5 Saturday, 10-4 Sunday. Admission: \$7

By Kristina Malcolm

Ohio Reporter

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Medium: Silversmithing

The Butler Institute of American Art has been home to the American Holiday fine art show for 41 years. I have to admit, I love being in an art museum for an art show. A museum is a great place to display art. Go figure. Each gallery in the museum is emptied of exhibits well before set-up. When each artist has completed their set-up, a member of the museum staff positions the lighting to suite your display. This is the only show I have with museum quality lighting and it is awesome!

On the other side of the spectrum, make sure to bring plenty of patience to this show as the unloading and loading process makes things difficult. This unfortunate circumstance all revolves around the loading dock at the museum. It is the only way in and out of the museum for vendors at this show. It is an eight-foot wide platform about five feet up which makes for a very exhausting experience for everyone. Artists back into the dock to pass their set-up up to an employee on the dock who then loads a cart and takes you in a freight elevator to your space (if your not on the first floor). This one artist at a time unloading is very frustrating for those arriving on time to wait in line. At the end of the show, it is very much the same. Artists tear down and then wait for assistance and their turn at the dock. I was able to wait patiently to unload at the beginning of the show but was unable to do so at the end and ended up walking my set-up out (from the second floor) to load my own truck in the parking lot. This technique took two hours of very hard labor but I was still able to complete loading my vehicle before my turn at the loading dock. Additionally, artist parking actually occurs in a Youngstown State University parking deck and you have to cross a pedestrian bridge to reach the museum.

However, if you can handle the drama, I would highly recommend this show. It is a three-day, indoor, juried show of the highest quality. No buy/sell accidently slipping in here. All of the artists are extremely high quality craftsman who attract art savvy customers.

Set-up begins Friday morning for non-local artists (all local artists are recommended to set up Wednesday or Thursday) and the preview party for museum members begins at 6:30 with a quality boxed sandwich dinner provided for the artists before the party begins. Friday nights at this show are some of the latest in my schedule with patrons leaving well after 10pm. Returning to your post by 8am the next morning is difficult but doughnuts and coffee make it slightly easier (and are available both Saturday and Sunday mornings before the show opens).

Of course, like most preview events, Friday night sales were not good but artists reported "fair" sales for the rest of the weekend. This year at the show we had good weather all weekend. Most artists described having sales commensurate with sales in 2010 and new artists seemed pleased with their sales. For myself, 2011 was my third year in this show and my sales are still steadily increasing.