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Canal Convergence Wins Top International Events Award



“Floatus” by Walter Productions (left) and “Re-Cylone” by Martin Taylor and the Chromaforms Art Collective were part of the Gold Grand Pinnacle Award-winning 2018 Canal Convergence. Photo: Betty Hum Photography.

SCOTTSDALE, Arizona — Scottsdale Arts took home 12 awards Wednesday, Sept. 25, from the International Festivals & Events Association (IFEA), including the top honor for Canal Convergence | Water + Art + Light. The Pinnacle Awards recognize the best festivals and events from around the world.

Canal Convergence won the Gold Grand Pinnacle Award in its budget category and three other honors. Scottsdale Arts Festival also won eight different awards, including four Gold recognitions.

“I am extremely proud of the amazing team that has created two, large-scale, world-class events in the heart of our beautiful city,” said Dr. Gerd Wuestemann, president and CEO of Scottsdale Arts. “In the short time I have served as CEO, I have seen this unique arts umbrella grow together. When all of Scottsdale Arts works together, we are much more than

the sum of our parts. Being recognized by our global peers is fabulous, and seeing our community come together around these great arts events is deeply rewarding.”

The awards were announced during the 64th Annual IFEA Convention, Expo & Retreat in Williamsburg, Virginia. The professional competition draws entries from some of the world’s top festivals and events, with those responsible for those events voting for their peers. Winning entries came from such diverse events organizations as the National Cherry Blossom Festival, the Kentucky Derby Festival, and the Pasadena Tournament of Roses. International winners included events in Australia, Ireland, South Korea, and United Arab Emirates.

Scottsdale Arts is a nonprofit organization that partners with the City of Scottsdale to deliver artistic services, inspired experiences and creative educational opportunities throughout the City.

The other awards received by Scottsdale Arts honor the many elements that go into presenting major events like Canal Convergence and Scottsdale Arts Festival each year. For example, the Gold Sponsor Partner Award for the Festival’s partnership with Scottsdale Water highlights the special relationship between Scottsdale Arts and the City of Scottsdale. The two organizations will partner again this November at Canal Convergence, which will also host the One Water Brewing Showcase — the world’s first beer festival featuring only craft beers brewed with recycled water from the City’s Advanced Water Treatment Plant.

“The arts have always been at the core of what makes Scottsdale such a special place to live,” said Scottsdale Mayor Jim Lane. “Canal Convergence is an event that celebrates our public art investment and brings over 250,000 of our citizens together. We are proud of our partnership with Scottsdale Arts and honored that this hallmark event has received this international recognition.”

In 2018, Canal Convergence moved to a new November timeslot. It will return Nov. 8–17, 2019.

Kim Boganey, director of Scottsdale Public Art, the branch of Scottsdale Arts that created Canal Convergence, said the event would not be possible without the support of partners like the City of Scottsdale, the Tourism Development Commission, Experience Scottsdale, Salt River Project and Billie Jo and Judd Herberger.

“What began as a means for public art to transform place has turned into a recognized destination event for Scottsdale that touches on all aspects of the arts, sustainability and ways to learn more about the world we live in,” Boganey said. “I am humbled and honored that IFEA has recognized what Canal Convergence has become.”

Art lovers, philanthropists and longtime supporters of Scottsdale Arts, the Herbergers are also Scottsdale Waterfront residents who have watched Canal Convergence steadily grow.

“The arts are our lifetime passion and the reason we call Scottsdale home,” Billie Jo Herberger said. “Watching the entire community come together around Canal Convergence is the reason we live on the Waterfront. Congrats to the entire Scottsdale Arts team for making it a global destination.”

Karen Churchard, director of Tourism & Events for the City and a member of the IFEA World Board of Directors, said she is proud of the work Scottsdale Public Art has put toward Canal Convergence, a relatively young event that started only seven years ago.

“Any time you are recognized in your industry it is fulfilling, but for Canal Convergence to win the highest award given by the IFEA — the Gold Grand Pinnacle Award — is extraordinary, knowing the high caliber of competition internationally,” Churchard said.

Rachel Sacco, president and CEO of Experience Scottsdale, noted that Canal Convergence has injected new energy into the fall tourism season.

“We are thrilled Scottsdale Arts has earned this recognition for Canal Convergence, which shines a spotlight on Scottsdale’s arts and culture scene,” she said.

The Scottsdale Arts Festival will celebrate its 50th anniversary on March 13–15, 2020, at Scottsdale Civic Center Park, where guests enjoy the best in visual, culinary, cultural and performing arts, including 170 jury-selected artists from throughout the United States and abroad.

Kathy Wills, chair of the Scottsdale Arts Board of Trustees, said the board is “thrilled” about the international recognition for these hallmark events.

“A little over a year ago, this board began a journey of evolution for Scottsdale Arts to become a leader and innovator in the arts,” Wills said. “It is wonderful to see so much progress in such a short period of time and to be recognized for it by our peers.”

Jamie Prins, director of Scottsdale Arts Festival, said that Scottsdale Arts’ membership in the IFEA creates relationships and builds resources for the organization within the festival and events industry.

“Being recognized by our event and industry peers on an international level is a tremendous honor,” Prins said.

Awards are given in four budget categories. Canal Convergence competed in the second-highest budget category against events like the Des Moines Arts Festival and Denver’s Cherry Creek Arts Festival, while Scottsdale Arts Festival competed in the third-highest division.

Scottsdale Arts Festival won awards in the following categories:

- Gold: Best Newspaper Insert/Supplement
- Gold: Best Promotional Poster
- Gold: Best T-Shirt Design
- Gold: Best Sponsor Partner
- Silver: Best Miscellaneous Multimedia
- Silver: Best Food & Beverage Program
- Bronze: Best New Merchandise
- Bronze: Best Children’s Programming

Canal Convergence won awards in the following categories:

- Gold: Grand Pinnacle Award
- Gold: Best Event Program
- Silver: Best Company Image Pieces
- Silver: Best Other Merchandise

SCOTTSDALE ARTS

Through its dynamic partnership with the City of Scottsdale, the nonprofit Scottsdale Arts (formerly known as Scottsdale Cultural Council) creates diverse, inspired arts experiences and educational and outreach opportunities for the community, while fostering active engagement of individuals, businesses, education and government with the arts. Since its founding in 1987, Scottsdale Arts has grown into a regionally and nationally significant, multi-disciplinary arts organization offering an exceptional variety of programs through four acclaimed branches — Scottsdale Center for the Performing Arts, Scottsdale Museum of Contemporary Art (SMoCA), Scottsdale Public Art and Scottsdale Arts Learning & Innovation — serving more than 400,000 participants annually.

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