



Youth Art plus Bonac Tonic Fun [Video]

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by Pat Rogers

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SPRINGS, NY-

Student artists participating in a group show at Ashawagh Hall this weekend may be surprised to find some extra fun among the artwork. The Bonac Tonic artist collective has decided to join the student art show with its interactive artwalk installation. "THE BONAC CAVE SYSTEM" will be a site specific installation made from cardboard boxes, streamers, plants, lights and other assorted materials for visitors to play in, said Grant Haffner, a professional artist and Bonac Tonic founder. It will be located inside Ashawagh Hall.

"I'm calling it "THE BONAC CAVE SYSTEM" and it will be an interactive cardboard cave of wonder for everyone to walk through and enjoy (hopefully)," said Haffner.

Haffner and his fellow Bonac Tonickers got into the spirit of the youth art fair to help young exhibitors to connect art beyond the classroom and their budding interests in art. They also signed on to co-sponsor "Super Happy Fun Time Mega Blast Youth Art Show and Experience" with Hampton Photo Arts of Bridgehampton, NY. Bonac Tonic is an artist collective based in Springs, NY-home to Ashawagh Hall and the historical enclave of artists including Jackson Pollock (1918-2010), Willem de Kooning (1904-1997), James Brooks (1906-1992), Charlotte Park (1918-2010) and others.

"The Bonac Tonic gang wants to encourage young enthusiastic artists and give them an opportunity to showcase their work in a gallery setting," said Haffner. "As an artist myself, sometimes there is nothing better than actually seeing your artwork hung on a wall for you and others to view and appreciate."

This weekend's youth art show is the brainchild of Hampton Photo Arts in Bridgehampton, NY. Each year, the photography, frame shop and art supply store holds a trio of open call group exhibitions at Ashawagh Hall as a way to thank its customers and foster the arts in the Hamptons, said Ben McHugh, the shop's master framer and a photographer. Informally referred to as the "Thank You Shows," Hampton Photo Arts sponsors a photography show, a youth show and a painting show. All are held at Ashawagh Hall in Springs, NY.

This year's photography show, "HPA/OVERXPOSED" was held in February. The youth show, "Super Happy Fun Time Mega Blast Youth Art Show and Experience" is being held this weekend. The painting show is expected to be held in April.

"Super Happy Fun Time Mega Blast Youth Art Show and Experience" features artwork by around 50

students ages five to 19 years old submitted through an open call, according to Hampton Photo Arts. The show is on view this weekend only with an opening on Saturday from 5:30 to 10 p.m. The show is curated by Barbara Imperiale of Tuckahoe School in Southampton, NY. It is juried by Hamptons artists Grant Haffner, Carly Haffner, Scott Gibbons, Elaine McKay, Scott Bluedorn plus a “special secret guest star judge,” according to Hampton Photo Arts.

Bonac Tonic got behind “Super Happy Fun Time Mega Blast Art Show” from the start. To get the excitement started and artists involved, Grant Haffner teamed up with filmmaker and director Jason Nower to produce the following video. While whimsical, the short video is professionally conceived and produced.

In it, Haffner plays town crier and spreads the impossibly-happy news that the youth show is coming to town and is open to artists. Nower decided to film Haffner in a little-visited place in the Hamptons:

“I filmed Mr Grant Haffner the only place a man of such magnificent artistic and spiritual stature could be filmed; in the land between the waking world and that of dreams, that place where ones eyes are open yet their mind is still walking on the border of the undiscovered country...also known as Wainscott,” Nower wrote in an email.

[Spoiler Alert: Art is part of the video. Can you find it?]

Exhibiting artists in “Super Happy Fun Time Mega Blast Youth Art Show and Experience” include Grant Haffner, Carly Haffner, Scott Gibbons, Kate Nicolai, Mike Nicolai, Bridie Raustiala, Van O’Neill-Haskell, Rhianna Gale, Charles Schaefer, Andrew Schaefer, Michael Low, William Broich, Emma Brannen, Winter Shaw, Sailor Brinkley-Cook, Orly Lindgren, Scarlett Lingren, Victoria Dupree, Sarah Dupree, Alexander Sanchez, Uma Rose Nolan, Arthur Moats, Sam De Poto, Noel de Lesseps, Catherine Bartlett, Dola Mari, Lance Schroeder, Luca Vignolli, Julia Gaare, Richard Cernilli, Tiana Schwenker, Bryan Scott and others.

The opportunity to join the fun as an exhibiting artist may still be possible (for youth and young-at-heart artists with kid-friendly art). Contact Hampton Photo Arts for details at www.hamptonphotoarts.com.

BASIC FACTS: “Super Happy Fun Time Mega Blast Youth Art Show and Experience” opens to the public on Saturday with an Opening Reception on Saturday from 5:30 to 10 p.m. The show continues on Sunday from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. It is held at Ashawagh Hall, 780 Springs Fireplace Rd, Springs, NY 11937. www.ashawagh-hall.org.

The Opening Reception includes live music by Julien Pasqual and Jet Set Renegade, made up of high school musicians from East Hampton, Westhampton Beach and Shelter Island.

For details, visit www.hamptonphotoarts.com.

Hampton Photo Arts is located at 2044 Montauk Hwy, Bridgehampton, NY 11976.

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