



“Artists and Writers: They Played In The Game” Opens June 15 at Guild Hall Museum

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by Pat Rogers

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EAST HAMPTON, NY-

It's difficult to fathom that a softball game could have rallied creative types to take to a dirt diamond and push a charity event into history. Yet, this is exactly what artists and writers have accomplished. Then again, when it's the Hamptons and the players include giants from the art world, literary and entertainment fields, perhaps its enduring popularity and fame is a no-brainer.

The Artists vs Writers Celebrity Softball Game celebrates its 65th Anniversary when the players square off in August. To celebrate, Guild Hall is presenting an exhibition that brings the art and writing created by some of the game players before the public. “Artists & Writers: They Played In the Game” opens on Saturday (June 15) with an Opening Reception from 5 to 7 p.m.

Players in the famed charity event have included Mort Zuckerman, Franz Kline, Paul Simon, Kurt Vonnegut, Woody Allen, Christie Brinkley, Roy Scheider, Mike Lupica, Regis Philpin, Ken Auletta, B Smith, Dick Cavett, Chevy Chase, Yogi Berra and many more artists, writers, actors, celebrities, politicians, publishers and more.



Ed Tivnan. Photo courtesy of The East Hampton Star and Guild Hall Museum.



Paul Simon. Photo courtesy of The East Hampton Star and Guild Hall Museum.

Even the umpires have a celebrity line-up. They have included President Bill Clinton, Supreme Court Justice Stephen Breyer, former New York City Mayor Rudy Giuliani, Anne Jackson, Eli Wallach and Gwen Verdon.

Play-by-play announcers have also had a star line-up. Their likes has included Peter Stone, John Scanlon, Howard Stringer, Bert Sugar, James Lipton, Juliet Papa, Joan Hamburg and Elaine Benson.

To pay homage to the long line of celebrities, artists, writers and creative talent, "They Played In The Game" will include two flat screens will highlight decades of photos and footage from many of the games.



James Lipton and Bert Sugar. Photo by Chris London.
Courtesy of Guild Hall Museum.



The Good Wife's Josh Charles. Photo by Chris London.
Courtesy Guild Hall Museum.

In addition to celebrity sightings, "Artists & Writers: They Played In the Game" will present art and writing by those who have played in the game. The artwork in the exhibition was either loaned by artists or collectors or is part of Guild Hall Museum's permanent collection. The show is curated by Elena Prohaska Glinn and Christina Mossaides Strassfield, Museum Director/Chief Curator of Guild Hall.

Exhibiting artists form a star lineup from history and contemporary times. Included are works by Willem deKooning, Franz Kline, Warren Brandt, Jimmy Ernst, Eric Fischl, Ross Bleckner, Dan Flavin, Elaine deKooning, Balcomb Greene, Joan Mitchell, Bill King, Ibram Lassaw, Jackson Pollock, Larry Rivers, James Rosenquist and Wilfred Zogbaum.

Also, Herman Cherry, Audrey Flack, Dan Christensen, Paul Davis, Eric Ernst, Ray Prohaska, Randall Rosenthal, Esteban Vicente, Bill Durham, Calvin Albert, Adolph Gottlieb, Syd Solomon, Ralph Carpentier, Leif Hope, Billy Strong, Jim McMullen, Eric Ernst, Jeffrey Meizlik and others.



"Sweet Memories" by Randall Rosenthal, 2009. Vermont white pine, acrylic, and ink, 12.5 x 22.5 x 3 inches. Photo

by Gary Mamay. Courtesy Guild Hall Museum.

To celebrate the writers, books by writer-players will be displayed in the exhibition. Authors with books in the show include James Irwin, James Jones, Willie Morris, George Plimpton, Senator Eugene McCarthy, Richard Reeves, Ken Auletta, Gail Sheehy, John Irving, Linda Francke, Walter Isaacson, Lynn Sherr, Ben Bradlee, Roger Rosenblatt, Bill Clinton, Sylvia Tennenbaum, Carl Bernstein, Shana Alexander and others.



Mort Zuckerman. Photo by Sonia Moskowitz. Courtesy Guild Hall Museum.

The Artists vs Writers Celebrity Softball Game began in 1948. Franz Kline, Willem deKooning, Joan Mitchell, Grove Press founder Barney Rosset, Jackson Pollock, Howard Kanovitz and art critic Harold Rosenberg and others turned up to play softball and picnic on Wilfred Zogbaum's front yard on Springs Fireplace Road in Springs.

Since then, the annual softball game has continues to attract talent from the American art and literary worlds.



Hockey legend Rod Gilbert, Mort Zuckerman, and Mike Lupica. Photo by Chris London. Courtesy Guild Hall Museum.



"The Sleeping Geisha" by Eric Ernst, 2002.
Mixed media, acrylic on canvas, 39 x 39 inches. Courtesy Guild Hall Museum.

In the 1960s and 1970s, game participants included Kurt Vonnegut, Willie Morris, Irwin Shaw, Peter Maas, James Jones and others. Around this time, the charity game began to attract actors, politicians, publishers, editors and broadcast personalities, according to Guild Hall. Artist Leif Hope

began organizing the game in 1972 and further introduced a new cast of changing players who have become a part of the Hamptons tradition.



Christie Brinkley. Photo by Chris London.
Courtesy Guild Hall Museum.



Roy Scheider. Photo by Sonia Moskowitz.
Courtesy Guild Hall Museum.

The Artists and Writers Softball game takes place annually in August in Herrick Park. The event benefits local charities that include East End Hospice, East Hampton Day Care Learning Center, The Phoenix House Adolescent Center in Wainscott and The Retreat based in the Hamptons.

A full slate of exhibiting programming provides an in-depth look at the phenomenon of the game and some of the art and writing created by players who have contributed to the game's legacy.

A panel discussion on the history of the game takes place on July 21 from 11 to 12:30 p.m. at Guild Hall. Moderated by Ed Bleier, panelist-players include artists Leif Hope, Eric Ernst, Ed Hollander, Walter Bernard and Lori Singer and writers Carl Bernstein, Mort Zuckerman, Mike Lupica and Juliet Papa.



"The Beach Boys" by John Chamberlain,
1964. Masonite and formica, 12 x 12 inches.
Courtesy Guild Hall Museum.

Book signings and talks will be held by Ken Auletta (June 23 at 11 a.m.), Eric Fischl (June 26 at 7 p.m.), Roger Rosenblatt (June 30 at 11 am.).

The game itself will be held on August 17 at 2 p.m. in Herrick Park in East Village. A pre-game party takes place on August 16 from 6 to 8:30 p.m. at LTV Studio in Wainscott.

Playing for the artists are Leif Hope, Eric Ernst, Ed Hollander, Christie Brinkley, Anthony WEHM, Josh

Charles, Walter Bernard, Joel Perlman, Gregg Bello, Randall Rosenthal, Nathan Sawaya, Lori Singer and others.

The writers team includes Ken Auletta, Mike Lupica, Carl Bernstein, Mort Zuckerman, Ed Burns, Jim Leyritz, Tom Colicchio, Matt Lauer, Rod Gilbert, Lawrence O'Donnell, Mark Green and Richard Wiese.

Manning the broadcast booth will be Juliet Papa, Bob Balaban, James Lipton and Fred Graver, according to Guild Hall. Suggested donation for the game is \$10.



Carl Bernstein at bat. Photo by Chris London. Courtesy
Guild Hall Museum.

BASIC FACTS: “Artists & Writers: They Played in the Game” exhibition opens June 15 and remains on view through July 28. Guild Hall is located at 158 Main Street, East Hampton, NY 11937. www.guildhall.org.

Also opening on June 15 are solo shows by visionary artist John Alexander and sculptor Joel Perlman. Alexander’s exhibition will remain on view through July 28. Perlman’s outdoor exhibition remains on view through Oct 14.

The 65th Annual Artists vs Writers Celebrity Softball Game will take place on August 17 at 2 p.m. in Herrick Park in East Hampton, NY. Admission is \$10. For information, visit www.artistswritersgame.org.