

THE COMMERCIAL APPEAL

DRAWING ON GROUND ALLOWED AT ANNUAL CHALK FESTIVAL

By Sara Hoover
Sunday, September 7, 2008

The various groups of chalk-wielding artists huddled at the Memphis Farmers Market on Saturday combined to produce a picture of success for a local festival.

The third annual Chalk Art Festival attracted its largest number of participants ever, said June West, executive director of Memphis Heritage, which hosted the event along with the American Institute of Architects Memphis.

Not only were all the spaces filled, but many walk-ups had to be turned away.

The festival plans to move next year to have more competition spaces and other additions to the festival atmosphere.

“Unfortunately, that’s our limitation of space, which is why we want to get a new location. We’re ready to grow and bring in new partners,” said Heather Koury, executive director of AIA Memphis.

Sponsored by St. Francis Hospital and Art Center, the Downtown festival is part of architecture month, which consists of community outreach and education programs.

“We also want to create family-

oriented, kid-friendly events that would introduce the general public to new areas of architecture and a fun environment that was free and accessible,” Koury said.

The festival consists of a competition with several divisions.

Fifteen groups of competitors participated and received canvas totes filled with chalk and fun takeaways.

Audrey Morgan and Taylor Gore, both 9, won the youth category with their rainbow octopus. It was their first time competing.

“I missed it last year. We did a thing on the side not for the competition,” said Morgan, who returned after encouragement from last year’s judges.

Patricia Schwarz’s “In Honor of Jackie” won the individual category. Schwarz, an art teacher at Frayser Elementary, “wanted to get out on a Saturday morning and do something different and fun.”

The Family/Team category ended in a tie -- the festival’s first -- between Becky Vandewalle’s and Eleanor Davis’ “Technicolor Sky” and Edison Vibat’s and Gary Gardo’s “Memphis is Music.”

Vandewalle and Davis, freshmen at Rhodes College, had no idea it was a

contest.

“This is our first time ever doing anything like this,” said Vandewalle.

The architecture firm Askew, Nixon and Ferguson won the professional division with its “Memphis Undercover” design.

Prizes included sketch books, origami sets, drawing kits and a set of Don Newman’s iconic photos of Memphis. Firms received special prizes.

Best of Show, voted by the general public, went to Shapiro and Co. Architects in their first appearance.



Participants create their masterpieces during the Downtown Chalk Art Festival at the Central Station Pavilion next to the Memphis Farmers Market on Saturday. Fifteen groups competed for prizes during the third annual event.