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Sculptures on their way to Fort Zach 'gallery'

Posted - Friday, December 30, 2005 11:31 AM EST

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Nearly 100 works to be displayed at outdoor venues

Don't be surprised if you see a 24-foot aluminum lightning bolt, a 10-foot steel dog or a 16-foot stack of toilets coming into town this week.

Strange sights may be the norm in Key West, but the 11th annual Sculpture Key West exhibition, which opens Jan. 15 at Fort Zachary Taylor State Park, has enticed the participation of an international entourage of sculptors-and their work promises to delight, excite, challenge and stir creative souls.

Nearly 100 large-scale sculptures in steel, stone, wood, marble and other materials are rolling into the Keys.

The Keys Civil War-era fort will become an outdoor gallery for the larger-than-life sculptures, which will be on display through March 17.

Artists hailing from the United States, Argentina, France, the Netherlands, Cuba, Germany, Australia and other countries will be represented in the exhibition.

Among them are leaders in the national and international sculpture world such as Robert Chambers, Ron Fondaw, Susan Rodgers, Diana Shpungin, Nichole Engelmann and part-time Key West resident John Martini. The work of emerging sculptors will be displayed alongside that of the featured professionals.

Sculptures will be scattered inside and outside the historic fort, in its surrounding moat, in the park's waterfront field and wooded areas and along the shoreline.

Still other pieces will grace other settings including the Key West Tropical Forest & Botanical Garden, 5210 College Road; the Key West Museum of Art & History at the Custom House, 281 Front St.; and Fort East Martello Museum & Gardens. 3501 S. Roosevelt.



The installation of almost 100 larger-than-life sculptures is about to take place in Key West, and volunteers are needed prior to the exhibition kick-off Jan. 15. Insects may or may not 'fly' in again this year, but at least one huge Chia-dog is already on its way. Photo by Karley Klopfenstein

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Many pieces, particularly those at the park, are designed to be visible from air and sea as well as land to be enjoyed by boaters and airline passengers.

Featured artworks in the 2006 exhibition include Bradley Lezo's "Duct Ducklings," a flock of huge metallic ducks made of heating duct material; Mike Ross' "Color Fields," an interactive kinetic sculpture designed to bathe the viewer in colored light; and Doug Makemson's "Henry," a nine-foot steel pooch, which will be perched in Key West's Bayview Park.

Sculpture Key West's grand-opening reception is scheduled for 3 to 6 p.m. Jan. 15 at Fort Zach, where presenting artists will be on hand offering hourly exhibit tours. The reception is free, and the state park is waiving its entry fee during the event.

Following the opening, the sculptures in the park can be viewed from 8 a.m. to sunset daily. Viewing of the exhibition is free with park admission, and visitors receive programs and maps pinpointing the location of each piece.

Fort Zach's entrance is on Southard Street past Thomas Street.

Daily park entrance fees, which include a pass allowing visitors to leave and return, are \$1.50 per person on foot or bike, \$3.50 for a motorized vehicle and one person, \$6 for a vehicle and two people and 50 cents for each additional passenger.

Installation week is Jan. 7 to 14, where viewers can see the works in progress - cranes lifting pieces high into the air, artists and volunteers placing sculptures and, in some cases, creating the work on site.

A giant Chia-dog, big red feet, a sea turtle, Speedos, a juggler, a horse, graceful dancers, a driftwood boulder, a seaweed maze, a wrecked boat, ducks, sheep, birds, a scorpion and disco balls - installation week will be an exciting time to at the park, but be warned, visitors might be asked to lend a hand.

Sculptures will also be installed at Bayview Park, the Keys Energy building, the Custom House, Tropic Cinema, the Gato Cigar Factory, the Coffee and Tea House, pocket parks at Angela and Grinnell streets and Flagler and 18th streets, East Martello near the airport, and the Key West Tropical Forest and Botanical Garden on Stock Island.

Jan. 13 at 4:30 p.m., the Schooner Liberty Artists' Sunset Sail will depart from the Hilton dock, which will present an opportunity to see the display by sea and to meet the sculptors. For tickets, \$49, call 292-0332.

Volunteer help is still needed at various locations; call 295-3800 or visit <http://www.sculpturekeywest.com>.

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