13TH FESTIVAL FOR ALL SKID ROW ARTISTS

By Adrian Excel --- October, 2022

— It’s art time again, well at least in Skid Row it is. This time every year the Festival For All Skid Row Artists brings light to the hearts of the city’s most vulnerable. This is done through the efforts of the Los Angeles Poverty Department. LAPD is a theater troupe, started by John Malpede as a performance workshop in 1985. The Poverty Department has helped the flame of ART stay alive in the minds and hearts of the city’s most forgotten, so the world could know; you can have value no matter the situation. This year was special for many reasons. For starters this is the first year the festival was back to its two-day schedule since the pandemic made us all go inside of ourselves. The festival has happened for thirteen years, but this year it felt new. I like to call this year’s festival The Great Reset.

A reset to a clock we can’t allow to run out of time; Art. Throw out history, Art has been the place where you could find the truth of the times in question, when you could not trust the history books to keep it 100%. The festival has always been a snapshot of the humanities that has helped keep humanity in the community of the city’s most marginalized. This year was no different. It opened up with the sounds of Ashe Ase Drummers, who have been providing the community with rhythm and sounds of a time long ago, for a very long time. The pandemic made us all wonder what the world would look like, on the other side of the hall of mirrors we all had to pass through. If the festival has any inclination on what the world will look like, I’m super optimistic.

This year’s M.C. was the fabulous Lorinda Hawkins, who introduced everyone and sang a few songs herself. The lineup was jam packed with some of the community’s most known artists, like Crushow, Unkal Bean, Mike Mahaney – who sang a duet with Stephanie Bell, Mello Bluez, Joe Clark aka Michael Jackson, Lee Maupin channeling James Brown, the Toilet Lady was back with the Toilet Report, Robin Hoodlooom, Chris Mack and Urban Voices Project, Cuban Percussion, Olusheyi Adeeko Banjo and Stephan Folds sang songs that made us all happy, and many others came to share their talents and enjoyed being together again. Coach Ron M.C.-ed a fashion show of the Skid Row Brigade’s T-shirts. And Joseph Warren and Lady Dee-Dee were back with a whole new edition of the LA Playmakers as the final act of the 2-day festival and they got everyone on their feet and dancing in Gladys Park – which is soon to be re-named General Jeff Memorial Park.

Celestine Williams, who used to sign up artists at the table in front with Linda Harris (remember her!) when we started the festival in 2010, was back at the sign-up table wearing her Menacing Cool shades, giving away more Skid Row Artist sunglasses to all the artists who signed in. Sean Gregory was managing the stage again, hooking everyone up to Henry Apodaca’s sound system. And the ‘Grande Dames’ of the festival: Stephanie Bell, Lorraine Morland, Leyla Martinez, and Linda Leigh made sure that everyone got their Festival For All Skid Row Artists 2022 T-shirt – specially designed by Adrian Excel for this occasion. Tom Grode and Carol Zou with Skid Row Now & 2040, filmed people’s responses to the DTLA2040 community plan. Skid Row Action Plan asked, “What is your dream for the Skid Row community?” and created a community wish-list specifically designed by Adrian Excel for this occasion. Tom Grode and Carol Zou with Skid Row Now & 2040, filmed people’s responses to the DTLA2040 community plan. Skid Row Action Plan asked, “What is your dream for the Skid Row community?” and created a community wish-list painting with Jose Mata, and the Sidewalk Project did Narcan trainings and gave info for Harm Reduction.

This year we got to see a lot of new faces too. The pandemic had ushered in a large number of new artists to the community. And boy oh boy did they show you and show us. We heard from an amazing guitarist that goes by the name Valkor. There was a performer by the name of Angel Correa who blessed us with a poem that was so accurate in depicting the community it could have been called ‘Skid Row’. There were Kimani Ali and Theresa Smith dancing the Kakilambay, a traditional Senegalese dance. Gladney Cedrick sang beautifully. Ande K. aka Vegan Ande came with a ukulele and 2B Roy sang West Coast reggae. Our park attendant, City Guy G.O.D., turned out to be a rapper. He did two favorite Dreams On and Novocaine, and he has his own clothing line: Worldwide City Fashion. And even though it wasn’t a competition, I did have a favorite. That was Squiddy Jamazz, playing the clarinet, who did two original songs that could top any billboard charts with DeEha Marie on piano and vocals.

The festival did not only provide for self-proclaimed artists. There was a creative station available for anyone attending to tap into their own creativi- ty. There was a station where you could paint, there was a station where you could make mosaic art with Piece by Piece. Studio 526 was there with their new project manager Alice Corona, and Hayk Makhmuryan had his own workshop: Doodles Without Borders and displayed all the community paintings we have made during past festivals. You could make your own ‘Pop Up Cards’ at Creative I, and wood utensils and mini boards with Would Works. There was even yoga with Raquel Barrantes to help all in attendance to relax and enjoy. I saw Pepper and Eric Dean balance on one leg while breathing deeply! VLM, Kaniah – aka Little Mama, and may others exhibited paintings and artworks. This is a festival that provides something for the mind, body and soul, because it is a festival for the people of Skid Row.

In closing I would like to zoom out because perspective is everything right? What is Skid Row, some would ask? I would then ask, ‘What is Larchmont?’ A community. So is Skid Row. But some would disagree. Why is that? Is it because the people don’t own a 2022 Mercedes? But Skid Row has yoga, coffee shops and food. Not to mention Art. So, if we don’t see Skid Row as a community then we might need to reconsider why that is. We as the human race have an obligation to maintain our collective humanity and when we stop doing that, I don’t think we can continue to call ourselves human. Only the humanities can save humanity.
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**City Guy G.O.D.**
I draped dream on, I wrote it: "Cause women, a lot of people strange and they just need a little motivation to keep those dreams on. The 2nd song is "Movin' On. It's the aesthetic of the universe." I wrote it with Lucinda. "Cos just my true and one time all my people win.

**Ms. Marla Gigi**
**Talk Is Cheap**

**Valkor Slayer**
I haven't really performed much lately with Juice. I've been in two bands as a drummer, but I first came into the music business. Player over the last couple years. So now I'm getting my career out it's time to start drawing it with the world.

**Alexander Levi**
Performing my new tracks
Doggie & Jerusale

**28 Roy**
"Jello" and "Veils Swooning" are my songs. I am from Belize City, but I grew up here in California. I love reggae so that kind of drew me into West Coast reggae.

**Jeffery Jackson**
This is a song by George Reece
"Westfield" and a founding member of Parliament-Funkadelic.

**Mello Blu**
With brother Don on guitar.

**COACH RON**
**GREY BEAN**
**LOOKING FOR LOWEN**
**LYNN LARRY**
**PADDY SLOAN**
**WILLIAM ADEEB**
**CREATIVE I**
**YOUNG MI CHI**
**HELEN JACOBS**
**ALEXANDER LEVI**
**MARIAE PARR**
**CITY GUY G.O.D.**
**28 ROY**
**JEFFERY JACKSON**
**DOVE ROMERO**
**ALEX K**
**MARIA GIGI**
**PEARL-LILIAN VICTORIA**
**HOWLIN' JERRY**
**GRAND CHAMPION**
**LUCINDA BRIGHTFIELD**
**ROBERT HODGKINSON**
**SHERILL ROBY**
**QUEEN MAYA BURHAM**
**MIKE ARMAND**
**STEPHANIE BELL**
**FREDDIE JAMES**
**GERI LEWIS**
**RENA NORMOY**
**MILEY CYRUS**
**JUSTIN BIEBER**
**YVONNE MICHELLE AUTRY**
**HAYK MAKHMYRAN**
**ALICE CORONA**
**Cedric Cashaw**
**Rodger**
**Yolanda**
**Julian "El Boxeador" Pocholo**
**Pedrito "El Balseto"**
**Pedro Muneko**
**Leyla Martinez**
**Cubano Percussion**
**JOSEPH WARREN**
**RENO GREENFIELD**
**DEMETRA WILSON**
**KENNY CHRISTOPHER**
**PAUL RUSSO**
**JACOB BATHERY**
**STAN WATSON**
**MARK WASHINGTON**
**JOSEPH HICKS**
**Denise Silkieie Harris**
**Lee Maupin**
**Young Kilo**
**Ayoo Duce**
**Black Blossom**
**Iron Donato**
**Leeav Sofer**
**Christopher Mack**
**Ana Pepe**
**Gary Brown**
**Will Gordon**
**Ray Lewis**
**Dakari Ashby**
**Robin Hoodlum**
**LaRonda Hartfield**
**Kanniah Chapman**
**Big Mama**
**Marla Giggi**
**Ande K**
**Iron-Chris Mack**
**Gladney Cedric**
**ANDE K-IRON-CHRIS MACK**

**She takes all my pains away.**
Luciano, cuz she's my drug and at the dentist. I wrote it with dreams going. The 2nd song is little motivation to keep those struggling. And they just need a little help. I rapped Dream On. I wrote it with the world.

**Squiddy JamZZz**

**Eecca Maria**

**Valerie Gladney**
I am Teresa Smith. I'm headquartered in Leimert Park. I'm a dancer and a drummer. I've always liked to dance this Senegalese, West African dance. my heart feels it. This dance really speaks to my soul, it is my heritage. I get my exercise and dance at the same time! I am Teressa Smith, also from Leimert Park. I am a choreographer, dancer, actress, I've danced modern jazz ballet all my life. I danced at Alvin Ailey. Linda Johnson was my first African dance teacher, and it was just fine. It was like the spirits, the ancestors, literally got inside of me. It's a great feeling to carry on the African culture. I teach children. I have a one woman show.

**Kakilambay** is a sacred dance. Once every seven years, this spirit, this Kakilambay, comes out of the forest. This is a time to beseech Kakilambay to help the women who are not able to have children, or you need more agriculture, more farming, more crops. It's a community festival for the whole village. People come to get healed mentally, physically, and spiritually. The movements come from harvesting and giving and receiving the healing, and giving a prayer. In the African culture the movement is not wild and crazy. Every rhythm, every song, every dance has a meaning.

**Deejha Marie**
I met Squiddy on the street. I'm a Go Show winner and I played with the great Sun Palmer and the Motel Swing Orchestra in San Diego for many years. But I wanted to move on after my kids got grown. So, I came to Los Angeles. Now I wanna be downtown because I feel like I need to give some of me, the music. I'm a really a vocalist, but I've been trying to play piano since I was 18. I've been singing pretty much all my life. My mother died at 42 with cancer, and I was on my own pretty much. Singing saved me from doing drugs, it just saved my life. Because I didn't have no guidance and I had four beautiful children. My children are doing great and I'm so happy. I always thank my mother that she gave me a good job for her grandchildren. That's what keeps me going and the music. There's nothing like music. I hope to help the community and bring love, peace and happiness.

**Gladney Cedric / Ande K-Iron-Chris Mack**

**Gladney Cedric**
This is my first year right here. There is a freedom that comes with performing. You look at yourself and say, “Is that what I did?” I can look back and say, “I did this.” It's like looking in the mirror, you're expressing yourself. I'm coming out of the shyness closet. Coming out to the world and making my craft known. Yeah.
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CREATIVITY STATIONS

WOULD WORKS

CREATIVE!

YOGA

EXHIBITIONS

HAKH HAKHAKHAN INTERVIEWS JOSE ROMERO

MY ART HELPS ME FILL THE HOLE INSIDE OF ME OF Nihilism and nothingness.

LORRAINE MORTLAND

PIECE BY PIECE - JAMES

SKID ROW ADVOCATES

SKID ROW ACTION PLAN

“What is your dream for the Skid Row community?”

CAROL ZOU FILMS MARY JACOB’S RESPONSE TO THE GREEN PAPER FOR DTLA2040.

SKID ROW NOW & 2040

SIDEWALK PROJECT

Narcan training and Harm Reduction.
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ENNORMOUS THANKS TO...

* OUR COMMUNITY PARTNER: Studio 526, Piece by Piece, Creative I, United Coalition East Prevention Project (UCEPP), Project, Skid Row Row and 2040, Skid Row Action Plan, Skid Row Brigade and our ‘house band’ the Ashe Asa Drummers from the Heart.


* VOLUNTEERS: Young Mi, Dakari Ashby, Cathy Gudis, Ian Gabriel, Tiffany Quezada, Franny Alfano, Victoria Romano, Isabella Ramona, Grace Leary, Jules, Bree Lauren.

* CREATIVITY STATIONS BY: Creative I, Studio 526, Piece by Piece, Raquel Barrantes, Doodlies Without Borders and Would Works.


THE 14TH ANNUAL FESTIVAL FOR ALL SKID ROW ARTISTS

SATURDAY & SUNDAY, 12-6 PM, OCTOBER 22 & 23, 2022.

The Festival is 2 afternoons of non-stop performances created and performed by Skid Row talents. We’re talking about performance of all kinds: music, dance, spoken word, poetry, theater and visual artists will display their work. We’ll have workshops and creativity stations - so anyone can make some work on the spot. If you want to perform or exhibit your work, contact us anytime before October and get your spot at the festival.

GET READY FOR LOS ANGELES POVERTY DEPARTMENT’S

LOST ANGELES POVERTY DEPARTMENT

Los Angeles Poverty Department (LAPD) creates performances and multi-disciplinary artworks that connect the experience of people living in poverty to the social forces that shape their lives and communities. LAPD’s works express the realties, hopes, dreams and rights of people who live and work in L.A.’s Skid Row.

LAPD’S MISSION: Los Angeles Poverty Department (LAPD) creates performances and multi-disciplinary artworks that connect the experience of people living in poverty to the social forces that shape their lives and communities. LAPD’s works express the realties, hopes, dreams and rights of people who live and work in L.A.’s Skid Row.

LAPD’S VISION: LAPD makes artistic work to change the narrative about Skid Row and people living in poverty. In doing so, LAPD aims to create a community of compassion, change individual lives and inspire the next generation of artists.

LAPD’S HISTORY: The Los Angeles Poverty Department has been working in LA’s Skid Row since 1985, hosting free performance workshops and creating art. LAPD was the first theater company for and by homeless people in the nation, as well as the first arts program for homeless people in Los Angeles. Our original goals remain the same: to create community in Skid Row and to amplify the voices of the people who live in Skid Row, in order to share the lived experience of our company and community members with the entire city of Los Angeles and the nation.

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