



Annual Report for 2023 January 2024

The years of 2023 brought new challenges and new successes. We are grateful for the help and support of foundations, government agencies, and corporate sponsors, as well as numerous generous individuals. We continued to look for innovative ways to reach the community with art and music.

Major corporate and grant support for projects

- A grant from Colorado Creative Industries for operating expenses.
- A grant from the City of Florence for operating expenses
- A grant from the Fremont Community Foundation for natural gas line repair.
- A grant from Fremont County Tourism Council for advertising for Paint the Town.

Events

- Eleven art shows were held in 2023, allowing local artists to display and sell their work.
- Head Start pre-school held their annual art show for parents in February.
- Monthly concerts were held, with music including jazz, Celtic, bluegrass, and country.
- “Courtyard Art” a project in collaboration with the Florence Farmers Market, offered low-cost introductory courses in our front courtyard during the Thursday Farmers’ Market. The program ran for eighteen weeks in 2023, attracting all ages. Art, story-telling, music, yoga, the art of being a clown, and dance were included in the mini-classes.
- Open Mic is held every Wednesday, and we included a Youth Open Mic in September
- A free Shakespeare performance was brought to the Bell Tower, with students from a local college entertaining the public.

Fiesta A CELEBRATION OF THE PASSION AND VIBRANCY OF HISPANIC ART

Exhibit & Sale:
June 7th 2023
through
July 11, 2023

Art Due In:
by June 6th
2023

Receptions:
Friday,
June 9th, 2023
5pm-6:30pm

OPEN TO ALL AREA 2D AND 3D ARTISTS SHOWING ORIGINAL DESIGN.
CONCEPT AND WORK COMPLETED WITHIN THE PAST 3 YEARS.

Bell Tower Cultural Center / Florence Arts Council
201 E. 2nd St. Florence, Colorado 81226 ~ florenceartscenter@yahoo.com
Web: florenceartscenter.com ~ 719.784.2039 ~ Facebook: belltowerculturalcenter



New Public Art





- With the help of numerous volunteers, the building was decorated for the holidays. Local high school students set up and took down the outdoor lighting display.
- **Paint the Town**, our annual plein aire competition, was held in October, with a month long exhibit following the competition. A record amount of cash awards were given in 2023. For the 2nd year we have reached our maximum capacity of artists.
- Weddings, memorial services, and church services are held at the building on a regular basis. Community gatherings and meetings are held in the building. The Community Choir and the Royal Gorge Artist Association both use the building weekly.

Public Art

- A billboard promoting the arts continues to be displayed.
- We continue our mosaic mural projects, with a four month long public art event involved community members creating a mosaic mural on the north side of the Second Street bridge in 2023, celebrating the arts. Peg Piltingsrud designed the central section and oversaw the four month project. Another mosaic is planned for 2024 on Florence Museum property.

Physical improvements

- A committee has been formed to explore the possibility of installing an elevator to reach the lower level meeting room.
- Gas line upgrade and repair was completed in October, 2023.
- Toilets and plumbing were upgraded on the 2nd floor.
- With the donation of a large floor loom and several smaller looms, one of the studios on the 2nd floor is set up for a cooperative weaving space.
- Free standing raised garden beds were installed and a summer community garden project operated again in 2023.

Classes and Programs

- Art classes for adults and children operated all year, reaching over 200 people in the community.
- We have several ongoing weekly classes including mah jong, “Open Mic Night”, and “Open Paint” night.
- We ran our annual children's summer art camp, which operated in June and was filled to capacity for the young students three of the four weeks.
- An expanded “Cowboy Poetry” event was held in September.
- For the 3rd year in a row second-graders did the planting for our garden program which includes planting, take-home art projects, harvesting, and farm to table recipes. Vegetables and herbs were given away weekly to the community throughout the summer.
- Courtyard Art was offered throughout the summer months.
- We offered a youth Open Mic for music students under 18.
- We continued to offer low-cost studio space to artisans. Currently they are occupied by a graphic artist, musicians, and an oil painter.

Through the use of volunteers, we were able to staff the building, keeping it open five days a week. Our volunteer hour total for 2023 was 3,700 hours.



YOUTH OPEN MIC

Age 18 or under? It's YOUR time to shine!!! Open to performers of all skill levels. Come join us as a performer or just come watch & support talented young performers! Free or Donation. Performers Sign up starts at 3pm!

Saturday September 30, 2023 3pm
 Belltower Cultural Center/Florence Arts Council
 201 E. 2nd Street, Florence Colorado
 florenceartsCouncil.com ~ 7197842038 ~ facebook: belltowerculturalcenter

**Bell Tower Cultural Center
2023 Concert Series**

Presented by

TOM MUNCH

Saturday December 16, 2023 7pm
TICKETS: Members \$8 ~ Non-Members \$10

201 E. 2nd Street, Florence Colorado
 florenceartsCouncil.com ~ 7197842038 ~ facebook: belltowerculturalcenter

The Florence Arts Council proudly presents

Coleen Bobinac
2023 FEATURED ARTIST

Public Artist Reception
October 7, 2023
5:00-6:30pm

Solo Exhibition & Sale
show runs 10am-4pm
Tuesday-Saturday
October 3rd - 19th 2023

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Long-term Goals

According to the Historic Society, “preservation” focuses on the maintenance and repair of existing historic materials, and retention of a property's form as it has evolved over time. “Rehabilitation” acknowledges the need to alter or add to an historic property to meet continuing or changing uses while retaining the property's historic character. The Arts Council is working within these definitions as needed repairs and upgrades are made. For 2024 our goals are:

- The visual committee is looking at improvements for hanging art in the performance hall.
- A committee was formed to explore the possibility of installing an elevator for the building.
- We hired an external grant writer, looking for long-term sustainability.

Major donors and Grantors for 2023

Gold donors \$1,000 per year or more

Bruce Bell

Silver donors \$250-999 per year

Steve and Becky Andrews
 Larry Lasha
 Brendan Pardue
 Barbara Smith

Beryl Baker
 John and Willie Miller
 Tom and Peg Piltingsrud
 Bob and Sue Wood

Major corporate and foundation donors for 2023

Colorado Creative Industries; \$4,000 for operating expenses
 Florence City; \$1,000 for operating
 Fremont County Tourism Council, \$1,000
 Fremont Community Foundation, \$1,000
 Rocky Mountain Bank and Trust, \$250
 Emergent Campus, \$250
 Holy Cross Winery at the Abbey, \$250
 Canon City Daily Record; ongoing ad support
 The Crusader; ongoing ad support
 Kroger Industries

Patron Members \$500

Coleen Bobinac

Bruce Bell

Donor members: \$100 to \$499

Brenda Jackson

Nancy Rienstra

Individual members: 165

Special thanks to our volunteers and other contributors:

T.J. Aitkin, Becky and Steve Andrews, Big D's Market, Terri Baker, Bruce Bell, Mark Clinard, John and Barbara Clark, Mary Jo Cline, Colon Orchard, Jim and Jeannene Cox, Sandy Dale, Merri Daley, Rod and Erin Davidson, Diane DelDuca, Lori Ann Dickerman, Janna and John Dixon, Joen Elliot, Jan Fead, Randy Ford, Fremont Center for the Arts, Carol Gordon, Gary Grindle, Denise Hood, David Hooker, Janet Hopper for 103 Vintage Market, Carol King, The Lavendar Farm, Beverly Little, Johnny Macias, Scott McMillin, John and Pam Maxwell, Rudl and Darlene Mergelman, David Manship, Joanne Mohr and the Farmer's Market, Michael Oliver, Arlene Pennington, Doris Petro, Bill and Emily Phillips, Carol Pfaffly, Tom and Peg Piltingsrud, Suzie Popkess, Lisa Quinlan with Hang Em High framing, Rocky Mountain Bank, Jim and Beth Red Hawk, John Schleyer, The Shopper, Mark and Joan Sindler, Barb Smith, Marsha and Dennis Snell, Holli Thompson, Jeannie Truitt, Debra Veeder, Sharon Whelan, Jean Whitmore, Pat Wiles, Millie Wintz, Bob Wood, Valerie Wulf,