

## STREET ARTISTS COME TO PALO ALTO THIS WEEKEND

More than 40 artists will create "chalk art" masterpieces at Palo Alto's Festival of the Arts in downtown Palo Alto August 23rd and 24th. The chalk art – which is known as the Italian Street Painting Festival – has become one of the most popular attractions at the annual city festival.

The large paintings, created by professional, amateur and student artists, include replicas of works by old masters and spectacular original pieces. The artists use the street's pavement as their canvas and brightly colored soft pastels for their paint.

The annual event is sponsored by Palo Alto Partners in Education, a non-profit foundation dedicated to raising money for Palo Alto Unified School District. The proceeds from the festival -- generated through artist sponsorships -- support teacher grants and the arts in public schools. University Art donates pastels and art supplies.

Chalk art began in Italy during the 16th century when artists known as Madonnari began painting beautiful images – many of the Madonna -- on streets and squares of the great cities of Italy. The traditional art form has gained in popularity over the last fifty years, as cities across the world have held competitions as part of street festivals.

Palo Alto's Italian Street Painting Festival first began in 2002 and over the years has attracted experienced artists from across California. This year, there will be more artists on hand than ever before, including several talented students from Palo Alto's high schools and middle schools.

Organizers will set aside a special section for the artistically inclined junior artists – ages 2 to 12. For a nominal fee of \$10, youth artists are given a 2' x 2' square to create their own chalk art masterpieces. Children who participate will be given a gift pack, which includes a set of soft pastels.

The street painting is free for members of the public to view and will take place on Tasso St., between University Ave. and Lytton St. from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. on August 23rd and 24th.

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