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The Melt that explodes

By Jeff Roedel

Friday, June 30, 2006

The second annual Art Melt last summer made nothing short of a seminal impact on the artistic landscape of Baton Rouge—something akin to the effect Frank Lloyd Wright’s designs had on turn-of-the-century Chicago suburbia or Nirvana’s Nevermind had on the Seattle rock scene in 1991. For the first time several thousand people packed body-to-body inside a practically just-out-of-the-box Shaw Center for the Arts for a smart mix of painting, photography, sculpture and multimedia work. Avenues of arts and crafts vendors lined up outside. Live jazz and ballet set the mood.

Forum 35’s Art Melt representative John Jackson knows there is only one way to go bigger and better this year. With more than twice as many artists submitting for The 2006 Art Melt, Forum 35 aims to make it the largest juried art show in Louisiana. But out of more than 350 submissions, less than 60 have been chosen for display. This is mainly because of space limitations, says Jackson. Yes, demand has outgrown even the Shaw Center.



The Third Annual Art Melt is July 14 at The Shaw Center.

“Judges will decide what makes it into the show, but Kevin Duffy and Jessica Weaver submitted, and their work is really good,” Jackson says. “I would be surprised if they didn’t make it.”

One of Weaver’s submissions is a sculptural installation called “Sixteen failed attempts at nesting (everything my Grandmother taught me was wrong).” It is essentially a timeline of a decade she spent dating, with each nest representing a failed relationship and including pieces of letters and journal entries.

“Visitors are going to experience so many more genres of art this year,” Jackson promises. Of Moving Colors dance troupe and an Art Car parade add to this year’s festivities. The Art Melt: A Fusion of Art, Jazz and Forum 35 is free from 6:30 to 10 p.m. at The Shaw Center for the Arts on July 14.