

Locals Fall for the Arts at Newest Fairfax Festival

By MARIE SKELTON
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Max Toledo-Paris looks about 60 years old. He has wrinkles and gray hair, but he has the cheeky smile of a mischievous boy who is up to no good and is wearing a Boy Scout uniform.

"I am about to do something that's never before been performed," he says.

The people gathered around him smile, cheer and clap. He carefully lays out a piece of rope about 10 feet long on the grass. With the unsteady movement of a man who feels his age, he steps on the end of the rope. He walks slowly along the rope with his arms out to the side, pretending to keep his balance. When he gets to the middle of the rope, he slowly lifts his leg behind him, and holds it in the air for a few seconds. The crowd cheers, some onlookers laugh and shake their heads. Max carefully places his back leg on the rope and walks to the other end. He takes a bow, and the onlookers, who are nearly all artists themselves, go back to their stalls.

Toledo-Paris is one of many artists that showed their work over the weekend at Fall for the Arts.

Fall for the Arts is a new festival featuring award-winning artists, entertainment, wine tasting and cuisine. The festival drew more than 100 artisans from across the country to Fairfax for the weekend.

Tonya McCreary from Celebrate Fairfax Inc. said the festival has been a success, especially considering it is the event's first year.

"On any given corner of the festival you can find three PhDs, in both related and unrelated

fields, who bring that same mastery to their new life as artists," she said.

McCreary said the festival targets a different segment of the population from the other festivals held in the area.

"We already have events for families and for children, but this one is more for adults," she said.

On display over the weekend was a selection of watercolor, oil and pastel paintings, functional and decorative ceramics, fiber and wearable arts, handcrafted furniture, fine jewelry, metal and clay sculpture, woodcraft, leather, fused and blown glass and photography.

As well as the huge array of arts, the festival showcased some of Virginia's finest wineries such as AmRhein Wine Cellars, Breaux Vineyards, Chateau Morrisette, Farfelu Vineyards, Prince Michel/Rapidan River Vineyards, Tarara Vineyard & Winery and Valhalla Vineyards.

The entertainment schedule for the weekend was packed with a little something for everyone. Patrons could enjoy, among others, jazz, acoustic and a cappella entertainment.

The sense of community between the artisans was apparent, as they casually chatted to each other, relaxed in the sun, and looked after each other's stalls while exploring the festival themselves.

Robert Stadnycki had a stall full of paintings and clothing. He has shown his artwork at many festivals, he said Fall for the Arts had a nice relaxed atmosphere. "The organizers have done everything correctly," he said as he ran off to watch Toledo-Paris perform.