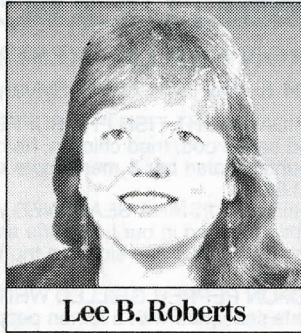


Chair-i-ties Auction is fun and fulfilling

Grab a coffee and head Downtown to Monument Square Saturday morning for a rare treat. From 10 a.m. to noon on July 30, the square will come alive with the color and activity of the Main Gallery Chair-i-ties auction and art sale.

There you'll discover one-of-a-kind, decorative painted furniture and mirrors, handmade bird houses, palette mural art, jewelry and framed photography — all of it created by young artists taking part in the city's Main Gallery summer arts program. And any purchases made that morning will help ensure that Main Gallery — which provides summer employment for area youth ages 14-18 — can continue for years to come.

Modeled after a similar program in Chicago, Main Gallery was launched 22 years ago by Chuck Tyler, then director of the City of Racine's Parks, Recreation and Cultural Services Department. Through the years, the program has employed an average of 30 to 35 young artists each



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summer — working with practicing artists to learn new skills and techniques, while also obtaining valuable employment experience. In addition to the artwork they create for Chair-i-ties, participants have been responsible for a variety of public works of art through the years, including mosaic murals, lakefront bike racks and

more.

Today's Main Gallery program is managed by the PRCS department, under the direction of recreation supervisor Jason Mars, with additional funding from a Racine Unified School District grant and a Community Development Block Grant from the city of Racine. You can learn more about it at www.cityofracine.org/Parks-Jobs and at [facebook.com/RPRCS](https://www.facebook.com/RPRCS).

Better yet, stop in at the Chair-i-ties event Saturday morning, meet some of the Main Gallery artists and see what they've been up to this summer. Visitors can browse the artwork and enjoy a bit of entertainment beginning at 10 a.m. and, at

11 a.m., professional auctioneer Paul Vnuk will pick up the pace with the live auction. It is a fun and fulfilling way to start your weekend.

Interested in becoming a Main Gallery artist next summer? Applications for the 2017 season will be available beginning March 1, 2017. For more information, contact Jason Mars at jason.mars@cityofracine.org or 262-636-9454.

"Fictitious Flora" at RAM

Aug. 5 offers another enlightening opportunity — this one related to our cover story this week about what's going on at the Racine Art Museum. In addition to the many interesting things happening inside the museum at 441 Main St., those walking past RAM's Fifth Street windows will soon notice some unusual flowers cropping up in the gallery there.

Wisconsin artist Jessica Calderwood's "Fictitious Flora" exhibit will open in RAM's Windows on Fifth Gallery next Friday, in conjunction with Downtown's First Friday event. And, the museum is offering a chance to meet the artist behind these fantastic forms at a special, behind-the-scenes program, led by RAM's curator

of exhibitions, Lena Vigna, at 6:30 p.m. on Aug. 5. Those interested in attending the meet-the-artist program are encouraged to arrive early, as capacity is limited.

Admission to RAM is free on the first Friday of each month, with extended hours from 10 a.m. to 9 p.m. The museum also offers a free, Hands-On Art Activity on First Fridays, and the theme for the Aug. 5 activity is "How Does Your Garden Grow? All ages are invited to explore their own creativity during this program, which runs from 4 to 8 p.m. at the Downtown museum.

Calderwood's exhibit — which addresses complex topics such as the relationship between the beautiful and the absurd, the powerful and the powerless, and the feminine and masculine — will continue in RAM's windows gallery through July 23, 2017. For more about it and other RAM programs, go to www.ramart.org.

Lee Roberts is the arts and entertainment reporter for The Journal Times. Scene & Heard appears periodically in Out & About. Lee can be reached at 262-631-1755, by email at lroberts@journaltimes.com and by mail at 212 Fourth St., Racine, WI 53403.