

PROFILE

WISCONSIN REGIONAL ARTISTS ASSOCIATION, INC.

Wisconsin Rural Artists Association, Inc. was founded in 1954 as the result of the efforts of a handful of amateur artists from rural central Wisconsin, who enlisted the help of the University of Wisconsin Extension Art Department. There were thirty-six charter members. The purpose of the organization was to create a vehicle for communication and art education among members and associates, to offer an opportunity for participation in visual arts activities among nonprofessional artists, and to promote and develop an appreciation of the creative visual arts among all people of the State. These basic purposes have remained the cornerstone on which the organization was built down through the years.

The acceptance of the organization was immediate, and membership rapidly expanded throughout the State. In 1982, the name was changed to Wisconsin Regional Artists Association, Inc. to reflect more accurately the geographical distribution of its expanded membership.

WRAA, in cooperation with the University of Wisconsin Extension, sponsors educational workshops in conjunction with judged or juried art exhibits throughout the State, in which approximately 500 entries are registered each year. Winners of these regional shows, numbering between 80 and 120 or more artists, are invited to exhibit their winning work in Madison at the Annual State Exhibit on the University campus. The best of these are selected by judge or jury to receive what has become known as "State Awards", for which criteria has been documented in accordance with the intent or limitations established by the award donor.

Over and above this, WRAA publishes four issues of CONTOUR NOTES each year, a magazine devoted to the dissemination of State art news, art education and other information of value to nonprofessional artists. All WRAA members receive a copy.

Over the years, WRAA has become known as the organization which concerns itself with the interests of the nonprofessional artist, an organization which is completely nonprofit run by a volunteer Board of Directors and completely removed from any commercial enterprises. It is dependent upon its dues structure for operating funds and upon the generosity of its supporters for its award programs.