**A Brief History of the Texas Masters of Fine Art and Craft Invitational Show**

            In 2004, a small group of 11 Texas artists with a long, collective history of exhibiting in the Hill Country launched the first Texas Masters of Fine Art and Craft Invitational Exhibition at the iconic Y.O. Ranch Hotel. Most of the exhibitors in that first show had previously won awards at the Texas Arts and Crafts Fair in Kerrville, as well as other juried art fairs around the state. Their goal was to present high-quality artwork in comfortable surroundings in a show produced and run by the artists themselves.

             The show was so successful in both an artistic sense and on a financial level that most of the exhibitors’ sales surpassed their expectations. Visitors to that first show clearly appreciated the addition to Kerrville’s already rich offering of cultural events on Memorial Day weekend which included the Kerrville Folk Music Festival, the Hill Country’s art gallery and winery trail, and exhibitions at both the Kerr Cultural Arts Center and the Museum of Western Art. One patron commented to a participating artist that she had received six invitations to the sale and that “there are only eleven exhibiting in the whole show.” Hours later she was still admiring the artwork and visiting with the artists.

            Now in its 21st year, the Texas Masters of Fine Art and Craft Invitational Show has established a national reputation as a prestigious art collectors showcase with some of Texas’s finest artists exhibiting their work in the comfortable gallery-like setting of the Y.O. Hotel’s ballrooms. During this time, it has become the longest tenured high quality art show in Kerrville as well as the surrounding Texas Hill Country. The Texas Masters has demonstrated that an art show can be viable even in tough economic conditions if it's attentive to the needs of talented artists and provides a congenial atmosphere for them to show their work.

            Most of the artists in the show have exhibited together in art shows since the 1970’s and ‘80’s and have a mutual respect for each other’s talent. Consequently, they’ve developed a following of patrons from throughout the Southwest who return every year to collect the latest creations from their favorite artists.

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