

# ART > ENTURES

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**ART VENTURES** GALLERY ON THE FAYETTEVILLE SQUARE, 101 W MOUNTAIN STREET.

ARKANSAS LIVING TREASURE, LEON NIEHUES, *BASKETS: BEYOND FUNCTION*

JAY McDONALD, AWARD WINNING PHOTOGRAPHER, EXHIBITS *BOTANICALS: UP CLOSE AND PERSONAL*

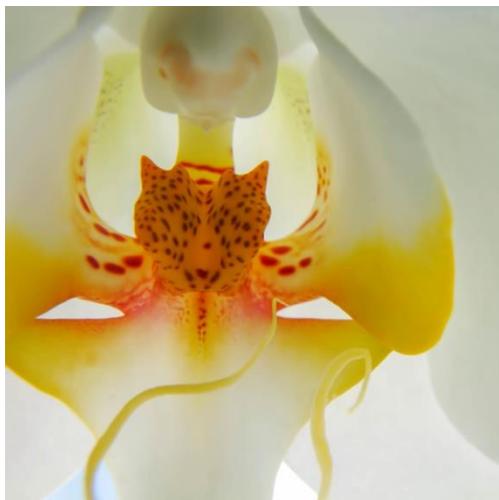
**FIRST THURSDAY OPENING RECEPTION: OCTOBER 5<sup>TH</sup> • 5—9 PM**



Leon Niehues spent his artistic career on a 40 acre plot of land in the Arkansas Ozarks with the hardwoods of his craft available to harvest just outside his studio. The utilitarian baskets he made have evolved into forms that give homage to the materials, emphasizing sculptural aesthetics and elements of design that live for their own sake. His baskets surpass functionality, holding the viewer in the realm of art as beauty.

Niehues says of his work, “I have been making baskets, sculptural baskets, and now bentwood sculpture for 36 years. My home and studio are in Huntsville, AR, which is Northwest Arkansas, the Ozarks. While using traditional materials and techniques I have added innovative ideas, methods of construction, and new and unique materials such as 3-M emery cloth, paint, and brass and stainless mini machine screws for connections. These processes and materials have led to work that is more complex and hopefully more interesting. One reason I think my work is attractive to the viewer is because it is old and new at the same time. I harvest my materials from my 40 acre woods where I enjoy working and being part of the natural world.”

*JAY McDONALD* EXHIBITION — *BOTANICALS: UP CLOSE AND PERSONAL*



Jay McDonald is an award winning Fine Art Photographer who has studied under the tutelage and mentoring of several masters in photography including Jay Maisel, George Lepp, Matt Seuss and Tim Ernst in both experiential and landscape photography. He has traveled the world photographing its magnificent people, urban environments and iconic landscapes. His work is displayed in offices, corporate collections, museums and homes throughout the world. Jay says about his work, “The Plant Kingdom throughout art history has supplied endless subject

matter for the artist. Through the visual arts, poetry and song, botanicals have been an integral part of our adoration of the beautiful.

The artist and plant both depend on light for existence. By uniquely capturing the light, color, and gesture of these familiar subjects, I strived to evoke a new appreciation of these familiar botanical objects.

All of the subjects save the lettuce bowl and the ferns come from my garden in Fayetteville or on my rural land in Newton County. While most of these photographs emote life, beauty, and vibrancy, the image of decaying wood courtesy of fungus and lichen reveals the final stage of all plants quietly returning to the soil in order to provide for the infinite possibilities of its next cycle of life.

In order to reveal the brilliance of the floral components, I constructed a special spacing of the focal plane in relation to my camera lens to get the close up and personal view. The trans-illumination was accomplished by my lying on my back and shooting against a bright sky. For exhibition I have mounted the photograph on hardboard and coated it with acrylic resin. The increase of internal reflection creates an exaggerated radiance of light that adds to their beauty.

***Art Ventures** is a Gallery of the Fayetteville Art Alliance. Our mission is to promote the visual arts in Northwest Arkansas by collaborating with the community, supporting artists, and encouraging education and public engagement in the arts. Underpinning this mission is our belief that quality of life is enhanced through exposure to art. The universal language of visual art is an especially exciting way to receive and exchange information. Individuals and communities participate in creative learning practices when they can identify culturally. Because of this, we reach into cultural micro-communities to bring thematic exhibitions that reflect those communities and send a direct message of inclusiveness. These opportunities serve to enrich our entire populations and encourage education and public engagement.*

*The Fayetteville Art Alliance is supported in part by the Windgate Foundation, the Walmart Foundation, and the Arkansas Arts Council.*

Art Ventures  
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