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ENTERTAINMENT

## 5th Avenue Arts Festival offers fun for the entire family

Cleveland Tinker Correspondent  
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Sherry Sherrod Dupree discusses items in her booth at the 2014 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue Arts Festival. The 2015 event is April 25-26 along Northwest Sixth Street between Third and Seventh avenues. *The Gainesville Sun*

The 36th annual 5th Avenue Arts Festival will feature more dancers than normal, genuine documents from the African slave trade era, children's activities, food, music and more for the entire family.

NKwanda Jah, executive director of the Cultural Arts Coalition and the longtime organizer of the festival, said the festival will offer something for all ages and people from all walks of life.

The theme this year will be “Water: The Rhythms of Life.”

“The significance of the theme is that we are trying to continue to educate the community about protecting our natural resources, with an emphasis on water,” said Jah, adding that the festival has been held since 2008 to coincide with Earth Day activities. “You can't live without water, air and food,” she said.

There will be at least 30 vendors at the festival, including artists, jewelers, food trucks, community and government agencies, organizations and others.

Below is a look at some of the highlights of the festival.

Delores Perry, organizer of the children's area, said the area will feature a bounce house, face painting, finger-nail art and science projects.

On Saturday, there will be “Make Your Own Robot,” and on Sunday, there will be a “Frisbee toss” session.

Perry also said author Kentrell Martin, a graduate of Eastside High School who lives in Tampa, will read from his book, “Shelly's Adventures,” which is about a girl who uses sign language to communicate.

Jah said the festival will begin Saturday with various praise dance groups, with Ken Harden presiding over the entertainment.

Ashley Wallace, a Gainesville poet, will be joining him.

Jah said youth dancers from the community will perform, including students from Metcalfe and Williams elementary schools and Caring and Sharing Learning School. Later in the day, students from Santa Fe College and the University of Florida also will perform.

This year, there will be more dance performances due to the efforts of Larry Rosalez, a local dance instructor who teaches African dance at Metcalfe and Williams and other forms of dance at Santa Fe and UF.

“People should come to the festival expecting to see our young dancers perform traditional African dances,” said Rosalez, adding that the Metcalfe dancers will perform dances from Ghana, while the dancers from Williams will perform dances from Guinea.

Jah said musical entertainment will be provided by local bands, such as Uncle B's Live House Band, Passion Band and others on Saturday, and Studio Percussion, The What Band, Swamp Cats, Macaxeira and others on Sunday.

Jah said she will be asking Uncle B's and Passion to close out the festival on Saturday, with a special tribute to the late Leroy “Pop” Timmons, a drummer who played with Passion at the festival for more than 20 years, and the late Lavell Kamma, a longtime Gainesville musician who played at the festival in past years. Timmons died in February and Kamma died last month.

On Saturday, Jah said Kandra Albury, author of “Don't You Dare Touch Me There,” and Marvin Wilson, an author and artist who wrote “The Paintings of My Pieces,” will be reading excerpts from their books.

Jah said artists Ernest Lee of Gainesville and Rueben Wilkerson of Alachua, winners of last year’s juried art show, will be attending the festival this year.

Mallory O’Connor, an expert juried art judge, will again judge the show. Winners will be announced on Saturday.

There also will be a history exhibit featuring original documents showing the names of slaves and how much they were sold for, as well as a collection of items from Mali, Zaire and other African countries.

What: The 36th annual event will feature art, vendors, entertainment and more

When: 10 a.m.-5 p.m. April 25, noon-5 p.m. April 26 Where: Northwest Sixth Street between Third and Seventh avenues Info: 372-0216

## **5th Avenue Arts Festival**