

THE SECOND ANNUAL HULA VALLEY ARTISTS FOR NATURE FESTIVAL MARCH 5 - 15 2009



The Israel Ornithological Center of the Society for the Protection of Nature in Israel (SPNI) together with the Dutch-based Art For Nature Foundation (ANF) are planning to hold the 2nd Artists for Nature Festival at the Hula Valley in early 2009. The festival will raise awareness of top priority conservation issues through the intimate cultural exchange of art. The culture of nature artists and nature lovers provides a unique, non-political platform for people to connect to their natural environment. Nature art is extremely popular in Europe and a part of its cultural heritage for centuries; whereas in Israel nature and wildlife art are not well known. The ANF is an excellent example that brings together renowned artists from all over the world to help save "endangered" places.

SPNI and ANF began planning for this project five years ago with the culmination of the first Hula Valley Artists for Nature Festival which was held in January 2008. The festival was an enormous success, with non-stop nature art workshops, tour groups visiting artists on site, lectures, discussion groups about art and conservation, exhibitions and more. Seven visiting European, Russian and American Artists painted the Hula's rich habitats and wildlife together with seven Israeli Artists. Hans Rademakers, an ANF film maker from Holland filmed the events and wildlife during the week and is currently working on a promotional film for the project.

Specific goals of the festival include:

- To draw broad public attention to the importance of the environment, nature conservation, and traditional landscapes through art.
- To focus the creative efforts of International and Israeli artists on the importance of preserving Israel's natural heritage.
- To create a unique dialogue and exchange of cultures between artists, conservationists and the general public from different countries around the world with a special emphasis on Israel's European neighbours.

The festival will draw much needed focus on tourism and the environment to Northern Israel and to the region as a whole through the universal interest in art and nature. With art and

nature as the main themes, the festival will emphasise peace through cultural meetings based on cooperation, dialogue and unity, and will help balance the negative image of Israel.

Art and nature are excellent focal points for bringing people together and creating a sustainable future. Eco-tourism, nature painting, photography and bird watching can form an important economic base for the region. Through our wildlife and bird conservation efforts, SPNI is creating a healthier environment benefiting the entire biodiversity of the region. Much of the dialogue surrounding environmental issues is based on dry scientific facts. In contrast, art has the ability to break through barriers of the mind and work at the level of the heart and soul.

In a world where natural habitat and conservation are in a constant battle with development and environmentally disastrous governmental policies on the national and regional levels, raising public awareness is crucial for protecting the natural and diverse ecosystems.

Implementation

Twenty internationally-renowned wildlife artists will visit Israel for ten days and meet Israeli wildlife artists who will work alongside the visitors. The artists will spend each day in the open landscapes of the Hula Valley drawing and painting. In addition, there will be tours, lectures and workshops for students, artists and the general public. The ten day long festival will culminate in an exhibition of their work that will form the basis of a travelling exhibition and a full colour art catalogue.

Organization and preparations will begin 6 months prior to the festival. Follow-up, auditing and reporting should be completed within two months after the festival. At least one major exhibition will be held in Israel and then a travelling exhibition will be held in at least two locations in Europe and one in the US over the course of one year. The ANF will organize the group of International wildlife artists and assist in all aspects of the festival, exhibits and catalogue.

Planned Activities

Festival Organisation- The SPNI and ANF will organize and implement the festival with the help of supporters and subcontractors. This will include a part-time Festival Coordinator and administrative assistant. Activities during the festival will include a variety of nature art workshops, tours that will visit artists on site, lectures and discussion groups about art and conservation, artistic dialogue and artistic cooperation programs and more.
Creating Website- Web pages will be created for the official websites of the SPNI and ANF.
Marketing- The marketing plan will include advertising, media reports and printed materials.
Art catalogue and exhibition- At the end of the festival, and according to the funds that will be raised, the Festival Coordinators will prepare a catalogue and a series of exhibitions of the finest artworks created during the festival both in Israel and abroad.
Creating an "Artists for Nature" organization in Israel- SPNI will help promote this initiative.
Education- Environmental education activities will include art workshops for children and students, a young talent support initiative as well as guided excursions for children and teachers.

The first Artists for Nature Festival, held in January 2008, was organized with the support of the European Commission, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Jewish National Fund (JNF), the Agamon Hahula and Hotel Mitzpe Hayamim. Due to the great success of the first festival, we are certain that other stakeholders, such as local municipalities, European Embassies and businesses will be interested in supporting this initiative.

To help support this event please contact:

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