



**Thunderbird Artists  
Surprise  
Fine Art & Wine Festival**

The 10th Annual Festival in  
Surprise, AZ

January 7th, 8th & 9th, 2022

PRESS KIT

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## **This winter, Thunderbird Artists brings the indoors outdoors, with Surprise Fine Art & Wine Festival, on January 7th, 8th, and 9th—our 10th year in downtown Surprise**

Thunderbird Artists, the leading producer of fine art events in the southwest, is thrilled to present the Thunderbird Artists Fine Art & Wine Festival, held for the tenth year in Surprise. As with all Thunderbird Artists events, guests can view fine art selected through a comprehensive jury process, sample fine wines and spirits, snack on festival food, and listen to live music, all while enjoying the sunshine and meeting fellow art lovers.

### **Art:**

Known in the art world as ‘...a Collectors’ Paradise,’™ Thunderbird Artists prides itself on quality and diversity. The festival boasts over 85 juried artists exhibiting a wide range of oils, acrylics, pastels, watercolors, gouache, original and limited-edition photography, as well as ink, pencil, and charcoal drawings. Collectors with more surfaces than empty walls can take home sculpture in stone, bronze, metal, hand-blown glass, wood, clay, and gourds. And for those who wear their art collections, Thunderbird Artists festivals offer a broad range of one-of-a-kind jewelry. This year’s featured artist is Ken Ferguson, a 21st century watercolor and gouache artist with a 19th century heart (see page 3 and his pictures throughout).

### **Wine and Spirits:**

Combining world-class fine art with an extensive selection of domestic and imported wines has long been Thunderbird Artists’ winning formula. This year’s participating wineries include Cellar 433, Schlossadler, King Frosch, and Mediterranean Table, as well as Desert Diamond Distillery for whiskey, vodka, and rum. For an additional fee, patrons receive an engraved souvenir glass with tasting tickets; unlike festivals with designated drinking areas, Thunderbird Artists events have patrons wandering at will, sipping wine and immersing themselves in phenomenal art.

### **About Thunderbird Artists:**

For four decades and over 400 events, Thunderbird Artists has launched artists’ careers, united nationally recognized artists with international collectors and helped elevate the southwest art scene to one of global admiration and respect. Thunderbird Artists’ festivals have amassed countless awards and consistently rank among the nation’s top shows. The upbeat atmosphere provides a unique marketplace for artists to make connections and sell their work, while the comprehensive jury process and trusted name give buyers a reason to visit Thunderbird Artists first.



A family business from the start, Thunderbird Artists is girl power at its best. Founder and CEO (and former artist) Judi

Combs works side by side with her daughter, company president (and former ballerina) Denise Colter who, long before earning her own art degree, cut her teeth in the art world by accompanying her mother to local art shows—although back then, she was still playing under the easel. But while Thunderbird Artists’ reach is global, their scope has always been local. Judi and Denise are gratified that their festivals drive foot traffic to area merchants and give a platform to local and international artists, and the company always donates a percentage of their admission to area non-profits.

Family. Community. Art. Wine. To Thunderbird Artists, this is everything that makes life worth enjoying.

## Quotes:

“Thunderbird Artists provides the festival forum for artists to exhibit and sell their work, and for art buyers to make a direct connection to the artists and the vast selection of art genres.”

— *Judi Combs, CEO, Thunderbird Artists*

“The City of Surprise is thrilled to welcome Thunderbird Artists’ Surprise Fine Art & Wine Festival again this year. The elegance and cultural vibrancy of this event is something that both residents and visitors enjoy and return to year after year with great expectation.” —*Skip Hall, Mayor, City of Surprise*

“I like the variety they always have. They put on one of the better shows in terms of the quality of the artists they invite.”

—*Susan Zivic, oils and acrylics artist*

“Artists love coming to Surprise because the people there really appreciate everyone’s art. The festival customers are so much fun to work with; it’s like being at a giant block party, and everyone’s a future customer or friend.”

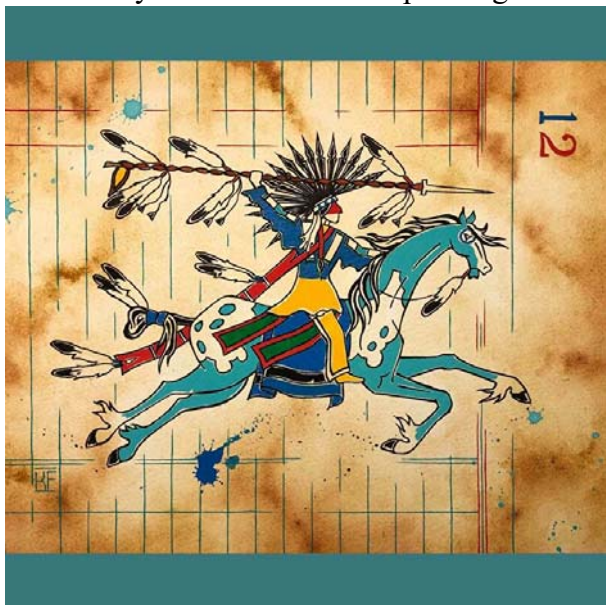
—*Greg Meyerdirk, metal artist*

—“Thunderbird Artists are so well-juried; the quality of art is the highest—by far—of shows in the Phoenix area. If you want to run with the big dogs in the art world, these are the shows to be at. And if you want to decorate your home with something of real quality, this is the place to come.”

*Jerry Locke, stone mountainscape sculptor*

## Thunderbird Artists’ Festival’s Featured Artist for Surprise: Watercolor and Gouache Painter Ken Ferguson

A twenty-first century artist with a nineteenth-century heart, watercolor and gouache artist Ken Ferguson sees history through a modern lens, rendering nature, animals, and classic old-west figures in clean contemporary lines and rich color. Although he traces his fascination with historical military culture to a childhood viewing of the 1964 film *Zulu*, Ken’s passion extends to the natural world, and he brings his varied subjects alive with vivid detail. He’s spent a lifetime as a working artist, navigating changing tastes and economic challenges, but still follows a simple truth: “I paint what I like and try to sell it instead of painting what sells and trying to like it.”



Ken counts Thunderbird Artists festivals among the best show experiences in his 40-year career. “They’re well juried, well thought-out, and well attended,” he says. “There’s a lively atmosphere, and because they’re only three days long, the people attending are present and focused. And the wine loosens everyone up.” He also loves the promoter-artist camaraderie. “Some shows, after you set up, you’re on your own,” he says. “But Judi and Denise are at every Thunderbird Artists show, and one or both will make sure they stop by every artist’s booth to check in and see how you’re doing. As an artist, you get a lot of support.”

## Surprise Fine Art & Wine Festival

### *Just the facts...*

WHEN: January 7th, 8th, & 9th, 2022

HOURS: 10 am to 5 pm each day

WHERE: Downtown Surprise, Arizona (next to Surprise Stadium, the springtime home of the Texas Rangers and the Kansas City Royals)

ADMISSION: \$3 for adults, 18+ (\$13 for admission and wine-tasting ticket)

PARKING: Free

WHO: Nationally recognized artists from throughout the United States, displaying original pieces of fine art in a variety of mediums and subject matters.

FEATURED ARTIST: Ken Ferguson, watercolor and gouache artist.

FEATURED ENTERTAINMENT: Vibhas Kendzia and Henry Molder

WINE TASTING: Cellar 433, Schlossadler, King Frosch, Mediterranean Table; Desert Diamond Distillery for spirits. The \$13 tasting fee includes an engraved souvenir wine glass and eight wine tasting tickets. Additional tickets may be purchased for \$1.

### **Thunderbird Artists, Inc.**

#### *The nuts and bolts...*

Thunderbird Artists' mother-daughter team is Founder and CEO Judi Combs and President Denise Colter

Established in 1981, Thunderbird Artists has held over 400 festivals in ten cities in three states. Their 2021-2022 season presents festivals in Carefree, Surprise, Scottsdale Waterfront, Chandler, and Fountain Hills.

The Thunderbird Artists Gallery is the company's permanent space, established in 2018 and located on 99 Easy Street in Carefree, Arizona.

**Thunderbird Artists** has received over 50 awards, honors, and distinctions since 1995; see below for the most recent, and <https://thunderbirdartists.com/awards> for a full list

- 2021 - North Valley Magazine awarded Carefree Fine Art & Wine Festival as Best Annual Art Festival
- 2020 – The prestigious Best of Arizona Business Company has ranked Thunderbird Artists as #1 of the TOP 10 for Signature Events in Ranking Arizona
- 2020 - North Valley Magazine awarded Carefree Fine Art & Wine Festival as Best Annual Art Festival
- 2019 - November Carefree Fine Art & Wine Festival ranked 2nd in the Top 100 shows for "AFSB Blue Chip 100 Fine Art Events" across the United States.

