



The Chain of Parks would normally be bustling with the LeMoyne Chain of Parks Art Festival. It's been tentatively reset for June. TORI SCHNEIDER/TALLAHASSEE DEMOCRAT

ART POSTPONED

The show is off but the work goes on

Amanda Sieradzki
Council on Culture & Arts

Artist Powell Kay Kreis has attended LeMoyne's Chain of Parks Art Festival for as long as she can remember. A Tallahassee native, Powell joined the LeMoyne team as Festival Manager this year where she was excited to dream up new experiences including a chalk art exhibition and festival "passport."

This year will be the festival's 20th anniversary, however, following the recommendations of local and state officials regarding the coronavirus pandemic, the LeMoyne Arts Gallery and Education Center is temporarily closed and the festival is on hold.

In spite of the celebration's postponement, Kreis is looking forward. She says the festival committee will be using social media to stay connected with sponsors, artists and festival-goers in the coming months to keep the community engaged.

"People tend to take the arts for granted until you have a situation like this and suddenly, culturally, there is a big sense of loss," says Kreis. "We love to gather, we love to share. Humans are very creative and I don't think we always appre-



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PHOTOS/
POWELL KAY
KREIS



In addition to jewel tones, Powell Kay Kreis finds satisfaction in earthy color palettes and natural materials. POWELL KAY KREIS

ciate how much hard work it is and how much art is valued until we don't have it."

For Kreis, the arts are seamlessly woven into her everyday life. Her mother, who is also an artist, was her first role model. She fondly recalls a childhood decorated with tie-dye coffee filter projects, and encouragement to paint and make ceramics from teachers at LeMoyne's summer art camps.

Kreis attended the School of Arts and Sciences and SAIL High School before earning her fine arts degree from the

University of North Florida. It was there that her mentor, Louise Freshman Brown, brought the human figure to life and gave Kreis the freedom to explore different painting styles. Back home in the summertime, Kreis apprenticed for local artist Quincie Hamby and fell in love with jewelry.

"She is really focused on using authentic, genuine materials," Kreis said. "Real stones and real shells because they have so much personality. She works

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Event postponed

What: The Chain of Parks Art Festival is tentatively rescheduled for the week-end of June 20-21 in the hopes that gatherings will once again be allowed.

Where: 200 North Monroe St

Contact: For more information, call 850-222-8800 or visit www.chainofparks.com to stay informed on updates from the Lemoyne Arts Gallery & Education Center

Kreis

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with really special materials, and no piece is ever going to be the same.”

From that experience, Kreis knew she wanted to be a jewelry designer. She started small, selling earrings at a local hair salon to raise money for breast cancer awareness. After college, she landed a position with Chico’s FAS headquarters and designed jewelry for the company for six years.

Kreis created entire collections of earrings and necklaces, collaborating with vendors and choosing each detail from the size of the stone to the type of closure or bezel to use and mass produce. She always starts with a sketch, and her inspiration often comes from visits to the closest art museum — the Metropolitan Museum of Art in NYC being a favorite.

“I would be inspired by old Byzantine jewelry, so any time I got to play in vintage coins or Byzantine bezels or stones was always really exciting,” Kreis said. “Any time I go to a museum and there is a beautifully carved platter, I’ll take a detailed picture because it might make a great pendant. There is inspiration everywhere.”

In addition to jewel tones, Kreis finds satisfaction in earthy color palettes and natural materials. One collection she co-designed with a vendor incorporated leaves under colorful resin which were then manipulated into a unique looking bead. During her time freelancing with an Indian company, she was able to execute many out-of-the-box ideas, using woven basket material, gold leaf, wood

submerged in resin, hand-knotting and brown cord.

In her personal explorations, Kreis works with a variety of materials, including her father’s pendants and medallions of religious saints. She also experiments in polymer patterned clay jewelry, layering and placing differently colored clays together, then slicing them up and repositioning them to fun patterns. She calls these beads and earrings her “amoebas.”

“I find using traditional elements in an unexpected way to be really exciting,” says Kreis, who will incorporate a little taste of history with more modern looks and styles. “The contemporary paintings and art that I like the most, you can see the artist has studied the masters but they are putting their own spin on it rather than just replicating what the old masters have done. They are using that education and incorporating it in their own way.”

Kreis’ pieces have been worn on television by stars like “Black-ish’s” Tracee Ellis Ross and have been chosen as standout designs by “Oprah Magazine.” While she is grateful for these acknowledgements, she finds the unexpected encounters to be most rewarding when she sees pieces being worn in public by strangers.

“It is always important to me to have a creative element but also that a piece is simplified enough that any woman feels comfortable enough to wear it,” Kreis said. “I want the majority of women to feel like they can pull off something I’ve made and still feel like it is special and creative.”

Amanda Sieradzki is the feature writer for the Council on Culture & Arts.