



Phantasamagoria Show set to celebrate the art of Halloween this weekend

by Cory Davenport, Contributing Writer
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ALTON – Warm Soda Magazine will be hosting a spooky art show this coming weekend in the theme of this spooky season.

Called Phantasmagoria, the art show will be held in the East Gallery of the Jacoby Arts Center from Oct. 26 – Nov. 2. The opening reception will take place on Oct. 26 at Jacoby from 7-11 p.m. The event is a celebration of local art as well as the Halloween season. It was named after a form of horror theater, which used optical illusions and showed frightening images, but it also means a dreamlike state in which real and imaginary images blur together.

“Phantasmagoria really fit as a name with what we were trying to convey with a Halloween art show,” Shelby Clayton of Warm Soda said in an email. “We created Phantasmagoria to recognize the importance of Halloween for the area. Alton takes this holiday very seriously, and we feel local artists of the area appreciate it too. So, of course, those artists should be part of the recognition too – they help fuel Halloween.”

During the opening reception, a costume contest will take place at 9 p.m. Art show awards will follow after that at 10 p.m. The gallery is free to enter, but people are asked to bring some dollars to vote on the costume contest. There will be a crowd favorite chosen by votes, with each vote costing \$1, as well as a judge's pick. Jacoby will also be operating a cash bar for the event. There will also be an open and free candy bar – while supplies last.

“People should expect a spooky good time,” Clayton said. “In addition to spooky and mysterious art, there will be a costume contest with several categories: scariest, most creative, best overall and crowd favorite. We encourage everyone to come in costume, even if they don't want to participate in the contest.”



Pieces entered into the show are of all medium types, including sculptures, paintings, photography, mixed media, digital and more. There will be more than 50 pieces included in the show, chosen double blindly, Clayton said. Artists range in age and levels with some being new to displaying and others being veterans of the craft.

“This really allows visitors to see a variation of art with different aspects and, honestly, different personalities – some pieces are scary, while some are more tame and give mysterious vibes,” Clayton said.

Warm Soda is a collective of creatives still in their fledgling stage of growth, having been in operation less than a year. They have the goal of uplifting local art and music in the community through their publication, art shows, workshops and chances to try something new.



"We strive to connect all people through art and to show people that the East Side of the Mississippi has a lot of rich and vibrant culture, too," Clayton said.

In the future, the group is working to paint murals on the Von Dell Gallery and Studios in Wood River. The Post Commons in Alton is allowing the group to create an art wall in its entrance as well, with new artists switching each quarter. They also want to host a gallery featuring local black artists.

“We are extremely lucky to have our staff member, CyRhen Sohngs, who has given us some amazing insight about the shortcomings of the racial divide in Alton,” she said.

“We believe art brings us together. And we hope this show will be a start for people to come together in the name of art and help break down walls and social stigma, so we may be able to make Alton a stronger, better, loving community for all of us.”