



**News Release**

**Contact: Dee McKinsey**

**312-337-1938, or [dmckinsey@oldtowntriangle.com](mailto:dmckinsey@oldtowntriangle.com)**

**ACCLAIMED CHICAGO PHOTOGRAPHER AMONG EXHIBITORS AT OLD TOWN ART FAIR**

***Honored to be among 260 selected for the annual event, June 11 and 12.***

This is Xavier Nuez's fifth or sixth exhibition at the Old Town Art Fair. He has lost count but he does know "this is the best art fair in the city. No other art fair in the city that comes close, I am thrilled and honored that I got chosen," Nuez said.

Nuez, whose media is photography, was among more than 600 artists competing for the 260 slots to exhibit at this year's Old Town Art Fair, June 11 and 12, in the historic landmark venue.

For his work, he looks for the "most rundown corners, and using colored lights, decorates the ugly urban scenes at night to make them beautiful," and takes his pictures.

Nuez, 46, began taking photographs in darkened alleys when he was 18.

"When I started taking photographs, the first thing I thought of was going into a dark alley at night," he said. "I didn't think that was strange at all – I assumed everybody did," he says of his initial interest in these unusual venues. It is these pictures of rundown places that resonate with the public and are the most successful pictures he continues to take. The New York Times has called his Alleys & Ruins series a "masterpiece."

Nuez, originally from Montreal where he was born to Spanish parents and grew up, moved to San Francisco, then relocated to Chicago more than a year ago.

Any similarities between Montreal and Chicago?

"They are similar in many ways," according to Nuez. "They are old cities and have old architecture. Both are very friendly for big cities. There are rusted out corners in Montreal, as in Chicago to shoot."

Last year, a marriage was performed in Nuez's booth at the Old Town Art Fair, and it was quite unexpected by Nuez. A longtime collector of Nuez's work walked into the booth, and asked if he could get married in his booth because he and his fiancé decided they wanted to get married surrounded by his art.

Nuez peeked outside his booth, where there was a bride, a minister, and a wedding party including a flower girl. Of course, he said yes, and gave him a piece from his Crystal series titled *From Soul to Soul*.

For the past 62 years, the Old Town Triangle community has welcomed artists and 50,000 patrons to its charming historic tree-lined streets. This year the Old Town Art Fair has been named one of the top 10 fairs nationally for 2011 by *AmericanStyle Magazine*.

More than 260 artists have been selected to exhibit from more than 600 entrants by a jury of gallery owners, museum curators, and artists.

“Each year, we think that it can’t get better than in the previous year, but it does,” said Emily Rose, general chair of the 2011 Old Town Art Fair. “We are constantly amazed at the innovations and quality of the submissions. As the art fair evolved from the first years of the ‘Old Town Holiday’ when art was displayed on fences, we continue to be delighted with our artists. We know our patrons will be thrilled. There is something for everyone.”

This year’s art fair is open from 10 a.m. until 6 p.m., rain or shine, June 11 and 12. The main gate of the Old Town Art Fair is at Lincoln Ave. and Wisconsin St. Donations of \$7 are requested from adults, with no donations for children 12 and under.

The Old Town Air Fair again this year features a wide range of art media, including 2D- and 3D-mixed media, drawing, painting, photography, printmaking, ceramics, fiber, glass, jewelry and works in metal, stone and wood.

As part of this year’s events is a music stage, a food court, and children’s corner, in addition to a garden walk where residents’ open their gates and show off their beautiful landscapes.

A small army of volunteers, more than 750, put on the art fair and begin planning the event in November of the previous year. Judging and admission is early in the year, as volunteers plan and execute this annual tribute to art. Volunteers also staff the two-day event.

The kickoff of the event is *First Sight, Friday Night*, where artists and patrons preview donated art work in a cocktail party and silent auction. This year’s event is from 7-10 p.m., at The New Leaf Studio, 181 N. Wells St., with music provided by The Jason Miller Group, and fare and margaritas by Adobo Grill, 1610 North Wells St.

Proceeds from the Old Town Art Fair and *First Sight, Friday Night* benefit a host of local youth groups, schools and neighborhood preservation projects.

The Old Town Art Fair thanks its 2011 sponsors: Blick Art Materials, Art De Triumph/Artful Framers, Chicago Tribune, House of Gluntz, WXRT-FM, Yelp.com and Treasure Island.

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Editors' Note: Please feel free to contact Dee McKinsey at 312-337-1938, or for press credentials: [dmckinsey@oldtowntriangle.org](mailto:dmckinsey@oldtowntriangle.org)

Nuez is fluent in English, Spanish and French and is available for interviews.