

Arts Fest Events at Library Will Explore the History of Photography

The Ohio County Public Library in Wheeling will serve, along with West Virginia Northern Community College and West Virginia Independence Hall, as one of the venues for the annual Wheeling Arts Fest on Saturday, June 21.

As announced by the History and Literature Committee of the City of Wheeling Arts and Cultural Commission, the theme for the library events will be the “Art and History of Photography.”

The first program will begin at 11 AM in the library’s auditorium, and will feature West Virginia Poet Laureate Marc Harshman, who will conduct a special reading plus workshop concerned with ekphrastic poetry, that is, poetry that is inspired by or offers comments upon another art form, such as photography. He believes ekphrastic poetry provide an exciting prompt for a writer and suspects that people know more of such work than they may realize citing the pop song “Starry Night” by Don McLean, as one example, and Bob Dylan’s many allusions to Shakespeare, as another. Harshman will conduct a reading of some of the seminal verse arising from this peculiar yet often popular perspective. Following the reading he will lead participants in a writing exercise designed to draw them into a full engagement with a work of art that will fuel their own literary art, their own work of words.



Harshman was appointed poet laureate by Governor Earl Ray Tomblin in 2012. His eleven children’s books include THE STORM, a Smithsonian Notable Book, and he has three new children’s books forthcoming. His full-length poetry collection, GREEN-SILVER AND SILENT, was recently published and his fourth chapbook, ALL THAT FEEDS US: THE WEST VIRGINIA POEMS came out from Quarrier Press just last year. Last year, Marc was commissioned by the Wheeling National Heritage Area to write a poem in honor of West Virginia’s Sesquicentennial. On June 20th his poem “A Song for West Virginia” was presented in both Charleston and Wheeling as a part of the day-long festivities. A new, full-color edition of this poem will be available at the Wheeling Arts Fest.

At noon, Miriam Meislik, Media Curator, Archives Service Center, University Library System at the University of Pittsburgh, will present a history of photography as an art form and discuss the importance of photographs as primary source documents for historians. The presentation will include a hands-on exhibit. Meislik is an experienced speaker and educator and has published a book called *Historic Photos of Pittsburgh*.

At 1:30 PM, attendees will be able to learn the art, science and history of tintype photography with expert Jason Snyder, owner of Pittsburgh Tintype Studio. Snyder uses a 19th century process to create unique photographs on aluminum using the same technique that was popular during the Civil War era. Following Snyder's presentation, for a fee, guests will be able to have their own authentic tintype portrait taken and developed. “This is an excellent great opportunity for living historians and Civil War reenactors to have an authentic tintype portrait made in costume,” Snyder said. The photographs will be 4x5 in size, and Snyder will offer a discount from his usual studio rate to \$45 per plate. He will only have time to complete a limited number of tintypes, so make your reservation today by sending an email to lunch-withbooks@yahoo.com or calling 304-232-0244. Stages Inc. of Wheeling will be on hand with one-size-fits-all costumes for people who want to have a tintype done and don't have a costume with them. There will be no charge for costume use.

In addition to the library programs, the History and Literature Committee will offer a “Spoken Word” table at the main festival venue at the WVNCC plaza. Books from local authors will be available.

All of the library’s Arts Fest programs are free and open to the public. As described above, there will be a charge of \$45.00 for any attendees who would like to receive a tintype portrait from Pittsburgh Tintype Studio. Please call the library at 304-232-0244 or visit ohiocountylibrary.org or wheelingartsfest.com for more information.

