

FORT WAYNE AREA ARTISTS

<http://artists.acpl.info/>

by Nancy Saff



After years of dreaming and a year and a half of planning, *Fort Wayne Area Artists* went live to the public on January 31, 2005.

The web site showcases 130 area artists with over 500 images and is continuing to grow. The Allen County Public Library (ACPL) created the web site after recognizing a need for better access to this local information. *Fort Wayne Area Artists* is a community hub for area artists and art lovers, offering links to area

galleries and artist web sites. You can search by name, browse by media, or view all the artists in the database. We currently offer portfolios of sample works to view, an artist's statement, and contact information when provided by the artist. In the future, we hope to expand to provide biographical information as well.

We've recently made the addition of a blog (<http://fortartists.blogspot.com/>). The blog offers artists the chance to share information about current and upcoming exhibits, post recent news and work, receive

The screenshot shows a web browser window displaying the website for Fort Wayne Area Artists. The browser's address bar shows <http://artists.acpl.info/>. The website header includes the Allen County Public Library logo and navigation links for 'about', 'join', 'blog', 'contact', and 'home'. The main heading is 'FORT WAYNE AREA ARTISTS'. On the left, there is a search box with the text 'SEARCH by Name, Location or Media or View All' and a 'Search' button. Below the search box is a list of 'AREA ART LINKS' including various galleries and centers. The main content area features 'Featured Artists' with three artist profiles: Kristin Carlile, Doug Sundling, and Willie Jordan, each with a thumbnail image and a 'View Portfolio' link. A welcome message follows, stating that the site showcases over 100 artists from northeast Indiana and northwest Ohio. Below this, there is a note about a real-time information blog and a link to 'here' for more information. The footer contains copyright information for 2004 Allen County Public Library and a disclaimer.

feedback and discuss the visual arts in the Fort Wayne area with the general public.

What took a year and a half? Much of the planning stage was spent in contacting and reaching out to the visual arts community, getting them involved and collecting their information and artwork. Along with our web developer, we spent a great deal of time working out what the site should include and how the database search should function. We used MySQL for the database and a ColdFusion server. A content management site was designed separately so updates could be made by staff. We continue to receive updated artwork for the site and new artist submissions.

In our efforts to connect with the arts community, we are also becoming better informed and better able to share this information with others. For example, in the process of promoting *Fort Wayne Area Artists*, our attention was turned to IndianaArts.org (www.indianaarts.org). Their web site offers information about contributing visual artists, performing artists,

and arts organizations throughout the state. Many of the artists in our area learned of this opportunity through ACPL. IndianaArts.org and *Fort Wayne Area Artists* share some common goals, but also complement each other very well. However, in both instances, the web sites are only as good as the level of participation by the arts community. We are excited that Fort Wayne Area Artists has been so well-received and well-used by the whole community.

***Fort Wayne Area Artists* is keeping ACPL connected to the art and artists of the area so we can connect and inform others.**

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Links mentioned in article:
www.acpl.info
<http://artists.acpl.info>
<http://fortartists.blogspot.com/>
www.indianaarts.org