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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:**

**Bakersfield Museum of Art Announces the 22<sup>nd</sup> Annual Via Arté Italian Street Painting Exhibition**

**Bakersfield, CA – Thursday, October 8, 2020** - The Bakersfield Museum of Art's 22<sup>nd</sup> Annual Via Arté Italian Street Painting Exhibition will be held Saturday, October 17 and Sunday, October 18 at The Marketplace (9000 Ming Ave) from 9am – 8pm. A beloved, local art tradition since 1998, the shopping plaza's parking lot will be brought to life and transformed into a gallery of extraordinary chalk masterpieces for visitors to enjoy.

During the exhibition, spectators will watch professional artists unleash their imaginations using the asphalt as their canvas. Participating artists are encouraged to draw their inspiration from the Masters, reminiscent of the classic Italian Street Painting style.

This year's exhibit is structured differently compared to years past. "Given concerns about the coronavirus, we worked closely with the Kern County Department of Public Health to design the exhibit and approve our COVID19 safety measures," says BMOA Executive Director Amy Smith. Face coverings, social distancing and exhibit capacity limits are among the measures that will be in place at the event. "Those capacity limits meant that we couldn't host our high school group squares and our Via Bambino," says Smith.

Artists of all ages can participate in BMOA's Virtual Via Bambino. Visitors are encouraged to purchase a box of chalk at Via Arté and take the box home to create their own masterpiece. Artists can post their designs on social media (#bmoaviaarte @thebmoa) and the Museum will share their work on its social media platforms. BMOA will also have custom face coverings available for sale at the event.

This free community event, sponsored in part by the Don C. and Diane S. Lake Family Foundation and The Marketplace, is the largest yearly fundraiser for the Museum, with proceeds used to support its exhibitions, educational programs, and operations.

More information and a detailed schedule of events can be found at [www.viaartebakersfield.com](http://www.viaartebakersfield.com)

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**ABOUT BMOA**

The Bakersfield Museum of Art's mission is to inspire and engage diverse audiences by providing a broad spectrum of creative visual arts experiences through the exhibition and preservation of fine art, educational programs, community outreach and special events. BMOA is closed to the public until further notice, due to concerns about the COVID19 outbreak. Call 661-323-7219 for more information. Connect with BMOA on Facebook, Instagram and YouTube @thebmoa