

**The Fine Art Society of Sarasota**  
***Luminaire Award***  
**Recognizes a Creative, Educationally Inspiring and Philanthropic**  
**Sarasotan.**

The 2011 *Luminaire Award* Winner:

**Howard C. Tibbals**, Master Model Builder and creator of the model railroad and circus at the John and Mable Ringling Museum of Art, Sarasota, FL.

**The Howard Bros. Circus** is a ¾-inch-to-the-foot scale replica of Ringling Bros. and Barnum & Bailey Circus. It includes a complete reproduction of the entire circus (circa the 1920s).

The name for the Circus comes from the name of the creator, Howard C. Tibbals. Tibbals asked Ringling management if he could use their name for his circus when he started building it, but they refused. So he called it The Howard Bros. Circus instead. There never was a full-scale Howard Bros. Circus.



Tibbals began toying with circuses in 1943 at the age of 7. At 12 he was given a lathe and jigsaw which advanced his model building. Tibbals started working on the model in earnest in 1956. Much of the circus was completed by 1974, but it did not premiere until the 1982 World Fair in Knoxville, TN. In 2004, Tibbals set up the Circus at its current location in the John and Mable Ringling Museum's Tibbals Learning Center, which includes a full-scale replica of Tibbals's workshop. It took Tibbals, the former Director of Hartco Flooring Company in Tennessee, over one year to set up the circus in its current location.



Some interesting facts about the circus:

- It contains 42,143 items, not including small pieces such as thousands of railroad stakes.
- It consists of eight large tents, 152 circus wagons, 1,500 workers and performers, 7,000 folding chairs and more than 500 hand-carved animals.
- Everything can be packed up into the 55 train cars, also individually hand-crafted.
- The display includes seven miniature video stations positioned in various tents with documentary footage of circus life from the 1920s and 1930s.