

## Sooke Fine Arts Show spirals ever upward



By Sooke News Mirror

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Never ones to do anything on a small scale, the organizers of the first fine arts show in Sooke, had Lieutenant-Governor Bob Rogers open the show. The show attracted 4,500 people and more than 100 paintings were sold. This solidified the show and made it one of the best juried art shows in British Columbia. That was in 1986. It was called Fine Arts '86 and over the next 26 years it would come to represent Sooke as a place where fine art is married to volunteerism.

There have been many changes each meant to strengthen the show and carry it forward to even greater heights. The one constant is that the SEAPARC ice arena is transformed into a unique art gallery.

It is so well done that Sally Manning, show coordinator, said one of the most common questions she is asked is, "What is this building used for when its not an art gallery?"

Sooke Fine Arts Show 2012 brought another new element to the 10-day show. This year the jurying process was done through digital entry, resulting in more entries than they have ever had, says Manning. Artists had the opportunity to take advantage of a couple of workshops on photographing art work.

This process allowed far flung artists who likely wouldn't have transported their work to Sooke for the jurying process to enter.

"We widened out geographical borders to include all of the B.C. coastal island including Haida Gwaii," Manning stated. "I'm pleased to say we have two artists from Haida Gwaii exhibiting with us this year. We are thrilled."

Included, as well, are artists from Port Hardy, Port Alice and points in between.

Artists will be able to select works from their home computers rather than viewing each piece individually at the arena. There were 1,335 art works from 561 artists submitted to be adjudicated with over 275 pieces selected for the show. The jurors were in Sooke on the July 7th weekend to select those works worthy of awards.

Sooke Fine Arts Show 2012 will hand out \$11,750 in prize money for the best works selected by the jurors and the public (People's Choice). A brand new award, the Jan Johnson Memorial Prize, is being given out for the art piece that best depicts Social Commentary. Jan Johnson was well-known for his politically poignant sculptural pieces.

"I was touched when Mary Alice came to us and made this suggestion," said Manning.

Last year 36 per cent of the art, valued at \$425,000, was sold. The gift shop, which features items under \$150, sold close to \$50,000 worth of art items.

The jurors for 2012 were Dan Hudon, a gallery owner with galleries in Victoria and Edmonton; Suzanne Northcott, an inter-disciplinary artist; and Tara Nicholson, photographer, artist, videographer.

There are plenty of reasons for people to attend the show more than once. Along with the opening night, there is a special Purchaser's Preview night on Thursday, July 26 where patrons can get first crack at buying a piece of art. Stroll through the gallery and savour wine and hors d'oeuvres, listen to jazz with Louise Rose & Friends Ensemble and enjoy the art.

The artists and show sponsors will be feted on Friday evening, July 27 with an Artists' Celebration. The Doug Farr Trio will entertain.

The show opens to the public on Saturday, July 28 and will run until Aug. 6. The gallery opens each day at 10 a.m.

Many other events will go on throughout the run of the Sooke Fine Arts Show. The popular gallery shop where one can purchase smaller works by the artists represented in the show; Artz4Kids on July 31; Taste of Sooke, where art lovers can combine their love of food with their love of art, all the while entertained by local band, The Rhythm Miners. The Arts for Re-Fashion show on Saturday, Aug. 4, will feature recycled, re-purposed and re-worked clothing by designers coordinated under the talented hand of Frédérique Philip.

"I'm very pleased that Frédérique is doing that," said Manning. "I know it will be an unusual show."

Add the Seniors Teas on Aug. 2 and 3 at 2 p.m. and you have a show geared to everyone.

For more information on the show, the artists and the schedule go to: [sookefinearts.com](http://sookefinearts.com).

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