



## **SOOKE FINE ARTS SHOW – 2023 A RECORD-BREAKING SUCCESS**

### **Sooke, BC – August 24, 2023 – For Immediate Release**

The Sooke Fine Arts Show's 10-day arts festival returned in spectacular style on July 28, carrying through to its successful conclusion on August 7. Record-breaking numbers of people came to view more than 370 diverse and inspiring art pieces at the SEAPARC Leisure Complex in Sooke, thanks to well-curated artworks, enthusiastic public support, and a focus on supporting and promoting regional artists. Well over 8,500 guests, some of them from around the world, also enjoyed the daily tours, demos, talks, and musical performances that are signature Show events.

The 2023 Show continued its 37-year legacy with unprecedented numbers of both visitors and art sales. The phenomenal success of this year's show can be attributed to several elements, including the trio of talented local art professionals who made up this year's jury. Kathleen Prince, Mike Svob and David MacWilliam selected pieces that were described by attendees as "uplifting," "well-balanced and thoughtful," and "world-class pieces of art." Show Designer, Mike McLean's, and the experienced Design Team's, placement of the artworks created small stories of connected works around every corner. As well, visitors were eager for the opportunity to experience art up close and in person again.

The Show's increased focus on its Youth Art Gallery also contributed to its success in 2023. Local youth engagement led to more than double the number of pieces shown in the Youth Art Gallery, which frames, showcases, and awards phenomenal talent by Sooke School District 62 students.

Public support of the show, by artists, media, past attendees, and local businesses also drummed up fantastic awareness for the event, spreading the word across platforms and communities.

In addition to the awards chosen by the Jury, which were presented at an entertaining Artists Celebration Event on August 4<sup>th</sup>, visitors were keen to express support for their favourite art pieces by voting for the following awards:

1. People's Choice Award: "Divine Duality" by Cathy Key
2. Youth Art Favourite Award: "New Home" by Eden Moon
3. Children's Choice Award: "The Alicorn" by Sheena McCorquodale

The ability for Show attendees to take home a piece they love at accessible prices is a draw for attendees and an incredible support to artists. In promoting the event to their networks, one artist said of their involvement in SFAS, “[A] long-time goal of showing work at the Sooke Fine Arts Show is materializing! I am humbled and excited to be a part of this amazing show,” and an SFAS award-winning artist wrote, “I received an honorary award... and sold both pieces! It was really an amazing show.”

“This year’s show was an outstanding success on so many levels. We welcomed more than 40 new artists who had not previously shown with us. More visitors than ever before attended the show, from the UK, the US, and across Canada and most importantly, from right here at home,” said Terrie Moore, Sooke Fine Arts Society Executive Director.

“From returning guests to those new to the show, enthusiastic support for the arts and the artists of our region was evident in all the smiling faces throughout the gallery. This translated into record art sales for the artists,” said Moore, adding, “It was especially gratifying to see how engaged visitors of all ages were, whether taking tours, attending demos, or having fun creating their own artworks on Family Artz Day.”

The Sooke Fine Arts Society returns to its preparation for next year’s show, with plans to welcome and accommodate the increasing interest in accessible and high-quality art from outstanding regional artists.

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The Sooke Fine Arts Show and Sale is a volunteer driven, community-proud event with a 37-year history of showcasing art and culture of the region. It draws visitors from the local area, from the Lower Mainland, across Canada, the US and abroad to enjoy and celebrate the unique culture of Sooke and BC’s coastal area.

Sooke Fine Arts Society respectfully acknowledges that we live, work and create on the traditional territory of the T’Sou-ke First Nation, and we are grateful to be in this beautiful place.

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