

Art Gallery of Bancroft celebrates 39th annual Invitational Show



By Chris Drost

The Art Gallery of Bancroft celebrated the opening of the 39th annual Invitational Show on the evening of Dec. 3. Although the crowd was somewhat smaller than in non-COVID-19 times, those in attendance were enthusiastic about the quality of the show. AGB president, Hugh Monteith, opened the evening by thanking the committee of Ken Fraser, Leilah Ward and Freddie Towe for the excellent mounting of the show. "This is an exciting exhibition. Every year the quality of the art becomes better and better. It was a hard job for the jurors. They have done a great job," said Monteith. Although there was no student category this year, because of limitations around COVID-19, it is the AGB's hope to offer this category next year, explained Monteith. Boyer Chevrolet Buick GMC Bancroft is the sponsor for the show and Monteith expressed words of gratitude for its long history of sponsorship. Before moving on to the awards presentation, Monteith announced that there is a People's Choice Award this year. A ballot box is located in the gallery and members of the public are invited to vote for their favourite piece of work. The piece with the most votes at the end of the exhibition period will be declared "The Peoples Choice Award." The two jurors for the show were Lisa Martini Dunk and Rob Niesen, both artists from Peterborough. Martini-Dunk is a scratch board, print maker, wood worker and illustrator who also does etchings. Niesen is a painter, print maker and illustrator. "The show looks great. It has nice diversity of style and medium. I think it is all here," said Martini-Dunk. Niesen agreed that "there is a great diversity and a lot of good works." The jurors explained how they defined their standards for jurying the exhibition. First, they look at technical skill and mastering, and execution of the chosen medium or media. Secondly, they look at whether the composition is balanced and what choices are made in expressing idea, point of view or narrative, and thirdly, originality of point of view, angle, new way of looking at something, new use of materials and whether or not the piece surprises you. "To be on the wall, a piece has to score well in at least two of these categories. The winners and honourable mentions had to score well at all three and excel in at least one, relative to the category," said Niesen. He also noted that they tried to choose the best one in cases where they saw duplications in work. They were also limited by space and the importance of giving each piece the space to be shown without interference from neighbouring pieces. With the jurying process explained, the jurors announce the winners of the 39th annual Invitational Show. Best in Show went to Marilyn Simpson for her piece called, "Autumn Fields." It was described as "subtle and delicate, at the same time powerful (despite its size), due to effective choice of colours, applied in loose strokes, exactly where need to influence and reinforce each other. Wonderfully balanced in composition. It is almost impossible to create something unique in landscape painting, but this piece brings a unique mood and feeling." Honourable mention in the Still Life category went to Wendy Sneffjella for her piece, "Pink Heritage Lilies." "A no holds barred use of colours, ranging from strong full pigments to subtle, an interesting composition, well rendered objects, and effective use of the medium. These all make for a unique piece of joy." Winner in the Still Life category was Philo Smith for "Quiet Corner, Grant Road." "A simple object made interesting and beautiful. It actually makes it come alive! A very strong painting: effectively

applied loose strokes, perfect composition, amazing use of colour, great depth. A master piece. Honourable mention went to Leilah Ward in the Figurative category for her piece, 'Going Home.' The subtly changing area around the figure sets a thoughtful mood and suggests there is more to the scene. The centred composition seems the right choice for the 'story,' as is the choice of medium and its application. The piece draws you in, and asks for contemplation. The winner of the Figurative category was Tracy Lee Green for 'Big Red Bead.' Beautifully rendered, great use of the medium creates the narrative of playful action, and the choice of multi-panel supports the story. A fresh approach of the subject matter based on keen observation. Honourable mention in the Abstract category went to Ingrid Monteith for 'Ingrid's Folly.' A strong combination of 3D form, 2D forms and the variety of patterns and colours, flawlessly painted, make an original and joyful piece - both simple and complex, the organic lines combine with the wood stump. This sculpture keeps you captivated. The winner of the Abstract category was Eric Glenn Weiner for his piece, 'Plastic Chair with Puddle and Leaves.' It was described as 'photography at its intriguing best: making viewer stop and take time to process what they may be seeing and what they actually see. A unique point of view, eye for detail, masterfully cropping and play on contrasting colour confuses the eye allowing for a new visual experience. Honourable mention in the Landscape category went to Krys Bradley for 'Red Roof Bancroft.' The jurors expressed that it is 'beautifully rendered, a perfectly balance composition and colour harmonies. The red roof catches the eye in this unique perspective. A simple and mundane scene from a singular point of view catches the perfect mood. And finally, the winner in the Landscape category was Kelly MacLeod for her piece, 'Store Alone.' It was described as 'a magical scene of an ordinary location, impeccably crafted. The duotone mood, paired with the lone red element (the mail box), and the rendering of the lights and their atmospheric glares, create a deep sense of emptiness and longing. The use of colour to create the light in the back is reminiscent of the aurora borealis. The contrast between straight and rigid lines versus free-flowing organic lines makes this piece intriguing. A wonderful narrative painting.' Following the presentation, Monteith reminded attendees that memberships are one of the AGB's most important funding sources as they receive no support from local or provincial sources. The next intake for Out if the Box Gifts is the week of Dec. 13, Tuesday through Saturday. Accepted items will be on display the following week in time for last minute Christmas shopping.