

AGB 43!!! Fundraiser raises over \$11,000 for gallery



By Michael Riley

Local Journalism Initiative Reporter

The Art Gallery of Bancroft had their "most important fundraiser of the year" on March 1 at the gallery located at 10 Flint Street. In addition to the festivities called 43!!!, in honour of the gallery's 43rd anniversary, they had an online auction that started on Feb. 14 and ended March 1 and a mystery art grab that occurred the evening of the event. The fundraiser was sponsored by REVA Realty. Visual artist and host of the event Molly Moldovan comments to Bancroft This Week on the event and how \$11,106.04 was raised for the gallery.

While the AGB usually has an art opening each month, they were planning to have the gallery closed for February to give their volunteers a break, and decided to have this 43!!! fundraiser to make money for the gallery, which is unfunded, surviving solely on exhibition sponsorships, memberships and commissions on artwork sold. Moldovan told Bancroft This Week that a major successful fundraiser is crucial to their continued existence.

The AGB decided to have an online auction, with the artwork previewed in the gallery until the event on March 1 and the works were also available to be viewed online at www.32auctions.com/43_AGB. The bidding opened on Feb. 14 and ended the night of the event at 5 p.m.

Moldovan told Bancroft This Week they wanted the fundraiser to be fun and engage the local community. She said that each of the 43 artworks in the mystery art grab were specifically made for the event and donated by the artist, who only signed their pieces on the reverse side, preserving the mystery of who created it.

"My favourite part of the Mystery Art Grab idea is that people will actually choose an artwork based solely on their reaction to it, rather than because they know the artist," she says.

The Mystery Art Grab artwork was available for preview from Feb. 14 and the artists names were on the wall but not associated with any specific artwork. Tickets were \$75 each, only 43 tickets were sold, and guaranteed the ticket holder would go home with a piece of art worth more than that.

The artists that participated in the 43!! online auction were; Peter Barron, Gail Burstyn, Jennifer Delaney, Caroline deMooy, Susan Dunlop, Tanya Fenkell, David Ferguson, Kendra Gadzala, Abby Gowland, Tracey Lee Green, Ernst Grell, David Grieve, Kathy Haycock, Miriam Hookings, Karen Istead, Elizabeth Jackson, Carolyn Jongeward, Linda MacKey Lang, Jessica Lin, Margo Merritt, Kelly O'Neill, Bob Pearson, Daryl Phillips, Beth Popham, Susan Rankin, Liz RayShine, Micky Renders, Nina Sampaleanu, David Smith, Linda Sorensen, Wendy Trusler, Lynne Vegter and Eric Weiner.

The artists that were part of the 43!! Mystery Art Grab were; Jewell Allington, Barbara Allport, Nancy Brookes, Shelley Brown, Elizabeth Jackson, Laurie Calder, John Christie, Anne Coleman, Abigail Cook, Jennifer Delaney, Patrick Doherty, Mark Doney, Tori Drost, Susan Dunlop, Andrew Edgar, Holly Edwards, Renée Fellbaum, Tanya Fenkell, Ken Fraser, Diana Gurley, Carolyn Henderson, Wendy Hewko, Miriam Hookings, Alex Jack, Audra Lalonde, Linda Mackey Lang, Heather Lawrie, Anka Milligan, Molly Moldovan, Ketha Newman, Rob Niezen, Allan O'Marra, Kelly O'Neill, Beth Popham, Ann Shier, Freddie Towe, Lynne Vegter, Leilah Ward, Clasina Weese, Elayne Windsor and Julie Withrow.

Nicki and Renee Fellbaum were there, with Fellbaum having a piece in the Mystery Art Grab and is also the AGB's sponsorship coordinator. Nicki thought the fundraiser was amazing.

?It brings awareness to the gallery. I didn't even know it was here. It's very nice to know it's here,? she says.

Andrew Edgar, who had a piece in the Mystery Art Grab, thought the format was great.

?I like it a lot. I think it's a great idea. Having the constraints as an artist, the 10 by 10 panel to work on it, sort of gives you a little bit of a goal. Fill this but don't just put colour on it. Make it interesting,? he says.

David Ferguson, wood artist and AGB volunteer, thought the fundraiser was really good.

?It will keep the old gal going for a little longer. Already they are talking about next year's event. It's a great opportunity to show off the range of local talents and have a bit of fun with it.

I unsuspectingly grabbed a Freddie Towe. I was drawn in by the strong colours and patterns. It's on view in my office area along with another of her pieces!? he says.

Gary Hoey from REVA Realty, who sponsored the event, thought it went very well and it was nice to see a friendly, fun, close community event in the cold of winter.

?People sharing their art and time was wonderful to see and be a part of. We at REVA love being part of people getting together for good, community fun times,? he says.

AGB volunteer Mary Williams wanted to thank their amazing presenting sponsors and neighbours Reva Realty Inc. who were there at the event and enjoyed the festivities.

?They snagged a Mystery Art Grab piece and some great auction items. They really value supporting local artists and promoting the arts in our small rural town,? she says.

While the AGB was hoping to raise between \$15,000 and \$20,000 from this event, Moldovan told Bancroft This Week that they ultimately raised \$11,016.04. She said there were at least 80 people there and that both sides of the venue seemed quite full at all

times.

?[It's] absolutely amazing for a tiny gallery in a small town. The Mystery Art Grab was everyone's favourite part of the event. The suspense increased with every piece that left the wall, and the reactions when the artists' names were read out/attached to each piece was lovely, often a combination of surprise and delight. I must add that it takes an amazing team to put together an event like this: the fundraising committee, our capable and patient installation crew, our amazing caterer, our equally amazing bartender, the best emcee ever, the event volunteers, and, at the heart of it all, the talented, generous artists who donated their time and their artwork for the 43!! Mystery Art Grab and the 43!! Online Auction,? she says. ?An art gallery cannot exist without artists, in any and every way.?