

Sale makes local artists' work more accessible



50 Under 50 offers affordable local art options for those who want a piece of Bancroft to give this Christmas. The show is on until Dec. 31 at A Place for the Arts in Bancroft. **SHERWOOD HINES Special to This Week**

By Sherwood Hines

A Place for the Arts on Bridge Street was a beehive of activity on Nov. 24, as the artists' co-operative geared up for their first holiday art sale.

Titled '50 Artworks for Under \$50', the goal is to make local artists' work accessible for a public interested in purchasing art as a Christmas gift, but who may not otherwise think they can afford to buy art.

There is a happy atmosphere as members of the co-operative bustle about hanging an extraordinary collection of eclectic works, including exquisite still life photography, classic landscape photography, oil and acrylic paintings, and beautiful mixed media ensembles.

The show reflects the fact that a large number of professional artists have made the Bancroft area their home, and illustrates vividly why TVO voted Bancroft 'Ontario's most talented small town'.

The show is such an immediate hit that artworks were being purchased before they could be hung on the wall. By lunchtime there are a dozen sold stickers affixed to a variety of pieces.

Fortunately, organizers had the foresight to encourage artists to bring a number of works, so there will be a good supply of pieces to see the show through to Christmas Day.

A Place for the Arts also contains The Partista Cafe, so people were happily sipping locally roasted coffee and eating hand-crafted baked treats as they perused the show opening.

Having celebrated its first anniversary this past August, A Place for the Arts encourages visual artists who work in a variety of media forms — painters, photographers, mixed media, musicians, theatre, and videographers — to come together to show their work, and collaborate in a cooperative space.

The 50 Under \$50 show was the brainchild of first year member Tricia Wyard-Scott, but could not be organized in time for last year's Christmas season. But with a year of experience under their belts, it was this time brought to fruition by mixed media artist Dianne Eastman.

When asked why the project was important to her, Dianne noted that 'the co-operative would love the community to know more about the work the co-operative does, and have the public know that the gallery space is accessible to all in the community.'

'It can be intimidating for many people to first set foot in an art gallery,' Eastman noted, 'but we are truly a community-driven space.'

A Place for the Arts, which hosts the 50 Under \$50 show, has grown in its first year to now include an always-packed open-mike night (last Friday of the month), a blues night (third Thursday of the month), art therapy classes, workshops, provide studio space, and has become the workspace for the North Hastings Community Trust, a collective of local non-profits who work together to

address poverty issues in North Hastings.

Fifty Artworks for Under \$50 celebrates the APA's second Christmas in business, and will run through Dec. 31, at 23 Bridge St. East, Tuesday to Saturdays, 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.