

ARTS & CULTURE

Major changes to FSJ's annual art auction

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FORT ST. JOHN – The Peace Arts Gallery Society's upcoming 31st annual Art Auction will be a celebration of community, with art, live music, dancing and a midnight dinner bringing together artists and art lovers alike.

The popular fundraising event has grown significantly, and organizers have had to switch venues to accommodate more people, as many as 300.

"We've made huge changes," said Sandy Troudt, acting president of the Peace Arts Gallery Society. This year's event is called Auction 31: Gala Dinner and Dance.

There will be door prizes and raffles, and live entertainment. A dance is among the new additions, as is a midnight dinner.

All the auctioned pieces are original works. The pieces range from watercolours to oil and acrylic paintings, hand pulled prints made using a variety of processes, antler carving and sculpture.

"It's mostly two dimensional artwork, but there really is a nice variety," she said. "We have 60 original artworks, we've limited to that number . . . people are sending high standard pieces," said Troudt.

Contributors range from signature members from the Federation of Canadian Artists, an organization founded by the Group of Seven's Lawren Harris, to members of

the Peace River chapter of the Federation, to local, highly skilled artists who have taken many workshops to develop their talents.

"There's a very passionate community of artists, not only in Fort St. John, but in the region," said Troudt.

"It's quite an eclectic group . . . and then we have artists that just do their wonderful artwork because they are just so devoted and passionate . . . some are members of the local Flying Colours [Artists' Association], and others are working on their own, but also connected to the community," she said.

Allen Sapp, a well known artist and recipient of the Order of Canada, is among the donors.

"He has documented life on a First Nations reserve since he was quite young, and so his collection of work is really a historical account of First Nations' way of life . . . he's kind of this national treasure of Canada, so he's very, very well known, and there are several people in Fort St. John who have really collected him, and there's competition for his work," said Troudt.

Also new this year is a preview exhibition that will take place in the two weeks prior to the auction at Peace Gallery North. All of the items that will be up for auction will be on display.

Organizers are operating under CARFAC guidelines (Canadian Artists' Representation / Le Front des artistes canadiens), a non-profit corporation that promotes a social and economic climate that supports the production of visual arts, to ensure that artists will receive remuneration for their donations.

"We're no longer asking artists to just give us everything for free, we give them

an artist's fee, they can ask for one to cover their costs, and they can set a minimum bid," Troudt explained.

"That way, if a piece doesn't go for that minimum value, somebody's heart isn't going to be broken, because they've donated to a worthy cause, and they want to feel that they have actually given something that matters."

The annual Art Auction enables the Peace Arts Gallery Society to support Peace Gallery North operations and exhibits, as well as children's art programming, student bursaries, and other community and North Peace Cultural Centre art initiatives.

This year's event will take place on Sat., Oct. 18, at the Pomeroy Hotel. Doors will open at 6 p.m., and the night will wrap up at 1 a.m.

The evening will begin with a cocktail hour, including a complimentary glass of champagne and viewing of the artwork from 6 p.m. to 7 p.m., which will be accompanied by live entertainment. A live auction program will begin at 8:30 p.m.

"We have a fun variety of games with some wonderful prizes," Troudt said.

The auction itself has something for everyone.

"There are large, small and inexpensive ones, and very high end pieces. The quality is good," she said.

A four-line buffet will include complimentary wine and an assortment of desserts, coffee and tea.

Tickets are \$75 each and are available at the North Peace Cultural Centre Box Office. They can be purchased in person, or over the phone at 250-785-1992. Tickets can also be purchased at the door on the night of the event, but for groups attending together and hoping to sit together, early registration is recommended.



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All items are sold as is, where is with no guarantee of any kind. Buyers are urged to inspect goods before bidding. All purchases must be paid for at end of auction. Should you have any questions, please ask a member of the auction staff.

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