

NWA – New West Artists 2015

The tag line on our website announces: ***Through connection, education, and promotion, this local non-profit society inspires, encourages, and celebrates visual artists.***

New West Artists indeed welcomes visual artists of all levels, from hobby artists to full-time professional veterans, from anywhere. We all have much to give and can benefit from pooling our talents, ideas, and creative energy.

Meetings are held nearly every month, where we share information about producing our own NWA shows; announce calls to artists; promote our own work; and otherwise solve problems artists consistently face. One needn't be a member to attend any of our meetings; however, membership is a requirement to exhibit in any NWA show. Annual membership is currently \$20, which helps cover advertising expenses, venue rentals, supplies, and some exhibition entry fees. We have 65 paid up members.

2015 was a turbulent but stimulating year for NWA since the previous board retired *en masse* after many years of dedicated service; thus in January a new group of five directors took on the administration under the presidency of Julia Schoennagel.

NWA is very grateful to have such a willing and hard-working executive team. We all thank Virginia Railton, our treasurer and membership director, for keeping track of our funds and membership. Our secretary-ish, Teresa Morton, takes our minutes and keeps us on track at our meetings. Special kudos to Janet Kvammen for doing her utmost to keep our events front and foremost on FB, Twitter, in the local papers, and wherever else. Thanks to directors-at-large Elena Zhukova for designing fabulous posters, and to Robert Jost for helping out where he can. Participating artists volunteer at every show to share the workload.

For the society, highlights of this past year's events included:

2015 SAPPERTON DAY STREET FESTIVAL

Seven artists exhibited at the Knox Presbyterian Church on June 14. The Knox community was very welcoming to our artists and we were pleased to give them a donation in return for the space. Knox is a good site (especially if some of us display outside). However, sales were sparse. Not enough people attended our show! This was due partly to not having enough signs, resulting in poor visibility from Columbia Street.

NEW WEST CULTURAL CRAWL

The annual NWCC in August attracts visitors to local studios from all around the province. For the second time, NWA was pleased to collaborate with the Century House Association and participate in this year's Crawl. The sunny days attracted many walk-in guests from Moody Park; however, perhaps because the weather was so nice, plus the fact that there were many other events that same weekend, attendance was not quite as high as in 2014.

FACES AND PLACES

At the Anvil Centre from July 27 to September 25, 17 New West Artists presented the character--and characters--of New Westminster. The opening reception of **FACES AND PLACES** on July 30 was a smash success. Well over 100 people attended, including Chief Rhonda Larrabee, subject of Janet Kvammen's fabulous photo, and Judy Darcy, MLA. There were, no doubt, other stars of the City who weren't recognized (recognizable?). We know Arts Co-ordinator Biliiana Velkova was very pleased with the turnout and the positive, high energy. And four pieces have since been sold. Brilliant!!!

On September 10, **IN AND OUT** celebrated the first year anniversary of the Anvil Centre. It's hard to believe that only one year earlier, the **WAIT FOR ME DADDY** inaugural exhibition

included works by several NWA members. At IN AND OUT, New West Artists greeted the community, handed out our new informational literature, and were pleased to register a new member as a result.

Over the weekend of September 12 and September 13 NWA presented **POTPOURRI** at The Gallery in Queen's Park. This was the first ever **popUP** show presented in conjunction with the Arts Council of New Westminster. It was an exciting opportunity to enjoy a broad range of quality art by established and emerging artists, set against the magnificent backdrop of Queen's Park. A total of 67 people browsed throughout the weekend; 40 enjoyed the Opening Reception.

Elena Zhukova said, *"We thank all organizers and remarkable artists who participated in our Potpourri show this year. It was very well organized and advertised, with a great variety of amazing contemporary art, fine traditional art, phantasmagoria, plus photography."*

Robert Jost commented, *"The New West artists were the pioneers of the pop up shows. This has made me proud to have been part of this group. The show turned out to be successful for me as I sold a picture. I am sure as people become familiar with this Gallery and the positive changes that have been made, attendance and interest will grow. Thanks!"*

Finally, our **Fall Classic Show & Sale** was held at the **Shadbolt Centre in Burnaby** on November 7. Fourteen visual artists, including three photographers and a jeweller, displayed their works and wares. Regrettably, the weather was uncooperative—it teemed with rain. Nevertheless, sales were encouraging and both artists and visitors had a good time.

We again thank Lisa Lawrence for donating her fabulous wolf painting for our raffle, and congratulate Mike and Janet Kvammen for winning it. According to our unofficial but entertaining poll, our favourite artist is Janet Kvammen, and the favourite picture is Kay Kline's Skytrain photo.

Many NWA artists have their own studios which are open to the public. Individually, artists also exhibited at Century House, the New West Public Library, River Market, Riverfest, Eco Art in Moody Park, the Old Crow Café, Surrey Art Gallery, Seymour Centre, Semiahmoo, and numerous other venues around the Lower Mainland. On May 28, "The Art of History" debuted at Anvil Centre's Community Art Space; "The Dichotomy of Change" displayed works by some of NWA's members.

As you can see, NWA is active in the community and looks forward to another year of exciting art events.

Director Janet Kvammen writes, *"One of the reasons we feel that New West Artists is unique is the fact we are open to everyone, residency is not a requirement, but a love of the City of New Westminster certainly is! New West Artists foster diversity and inclusiveness in the community, and welcome all artists of every skill level and medium, from beginners to seasoned award winners."*

"I am proud to be included among this eclectic mix of talented artists, bringing our art and creative endeavours into the community of New Westminster in multiple ways, through connection, exhibits, and unjuried shows. We believe that everyone is an artist at he(art); sometimes all we need is a little encouragement to blossom."

In closing, we'd like to invite you to our Christmas gathering, which will be held on Monday, December 7 at Queen's Park Gallery. We'll be sharing potluck finger foods, good conversation, good company, and lots of laughs. Hope to see you there!

Thank you for the opportunity to present details of our progress in 2015.

Respectfully submitted,
Julia Schoennagel, President, NWA
Wednesday, 11 November 2015