

LISTEN & BE HEARD.

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HIGH END ART AT BARGAIN PRICES

by paula mc connell

On Saturday evening, October 2nd, a well dressed crowd of approximately 250 people showed up to celebrate the arts in Benicia, at the 12th annual "Arts Benicia Art Auction". Over 200 of the region's finest artists contributed their works to the event. There were textiles, paintings, original prints, drawings, photographs, sculpture, jewelry, ceramics and glass beautifully displayed for purchase.

"This fund-raiser is one of the biggest annual events in Benicia. It is always a special affair, not to be missed," according to Benician Denise Margolis, originally from Baltimore, Maryland. "Many artists put an incredible amount of work, time and effort into their pieces, to be auctioned for the benefit of the arts community. As always, Benicia celebrates their contributions, and comes out in full force to help their work to continue," Margolis added.

Many of the artists were seen mixing and mingling with attendees throughout the evening. They seemed happy to discuss their creations. There were over fifty items in the Silent Auction, including generous gifts of dinners donated by the area's restaurant community. At the live auction, the biggest ticket of the night was assigned to a work by Manuel Neri which was

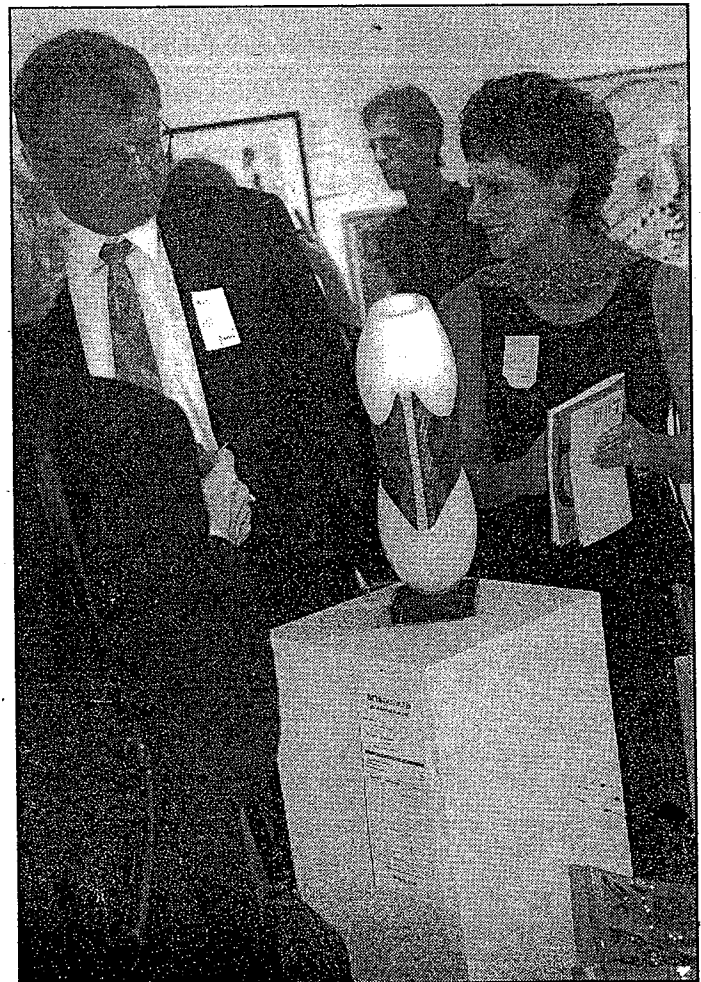
described as "charcoal and oil paint stick on paper." Unframed it was valued at \$8500. The piece is entitled "Andrea No. 10 and was donated by Neri for the benefit. The final highest bid price on the auction floor was \$6,000.

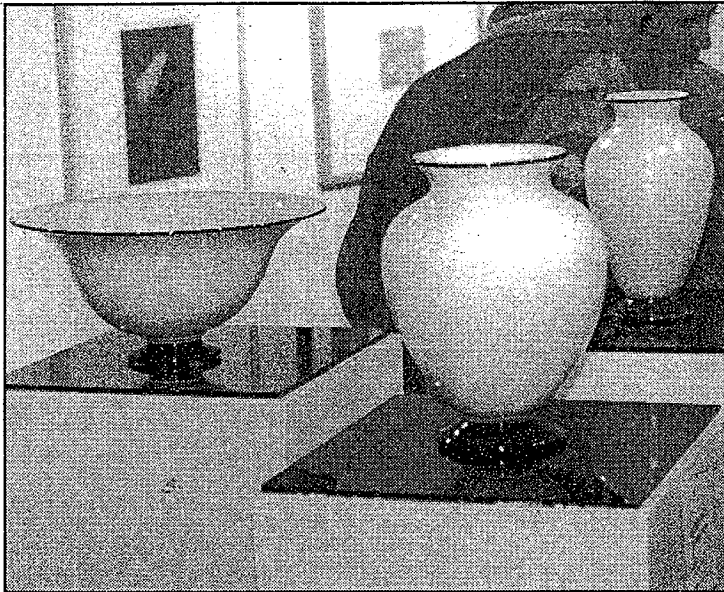
Dave Trumbull showed his cash when he bid on a Gregg Renfrow piece described as "pigment on cast acrylic" valued at \$2500.00. Renfrow is a famous artist who exhibits at prestigious houses such as the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art. Trumbull's successful bid for the Renfrow work was \$1100.00. A particularly beautiful piece called "Wild Flowers Vase," done with ink on water color, had brilliant colors, and great warmth. It sold at auction for \$140.00. Well known Benicia glass blowers Smyers and Von Voog donated some wonderful creations. An especially magnificent work was a red geometric vase valued at \$500 which sold for \$275. All bargains benefitted a worthy cause: perpetuation of the arts.

Auctioneers Jane Alexiadis and Ashaki Johnson, from the Clars Auction Gallery, kept the auction moving and the crowd entertained. The food was fab, donated by many places such as Kaigan Sushi, Matsuri Sushi, Buen Appetito, Butterfly Bakery, the First Street Café and Issy's Restaurant which is also on First

master of ceremonies, dan clark, and dyanne vojvoda look at a sculpture by rob jenkins

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at left, 3 pieces by Opal Art Glass

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Street in downtown Benicia. The coffee donated by Duvall's Coffee Roast was particularly good, according to several patrons. Owner Marty Duvall was a chair of the evening's event.

Perhaps one of the biggest highlights of the evening was the committee's choice of a band. As everyone knows, the musician choice can send attendees fleeing into the night, or it can be the integral catalyst to help keep patrons around for more

drink purchases, i.e. more money in the coffers of the fund-raiser. In this case, the crowd lingered longer to enjoy the sounds of "JAZZ, MINE," a virtual small orchestra who played traditional swing, jazz, ragtime, and other popular tunes. People seemed to really like their sound, and honored them by dancing the night away, literally under the stars. According to many, it was just great.

Former Vallejo Councilman, Kim Stafford said: "My wife and I love Benicia." "We live in Vallejo, but we spend 97% of our time over here. We

love this annual event, and the arts community. She has our check-book," he chuckled.

Denise Margolis contributed by winning the silent auction bid on a piece called "Shore Thistles" by Robert Gonsowski which she notes "Is a wonderful framed oil on board. My ending bid was \$130.00. It is worth all of that and more. I am very pleased."

For more info about next year's auction, to become a member, or to put your name on their mailing list, contact Arts Benicia Center Gallery, 991 Tyler St., #114, Benicia, CA. Telephone: (707) 747-0131.