

### **The Artistry of Philanthropy**

Attend our 4<sup>th</sup> Annual West Fine Art Show and enter into a magical Glass House filled to the rafters with the wonderfully felt works of 18 professional artists. Be reminded of the sheer joy of getting out and mingling (with masks and social distancing – don't worry, we have it covered). And as you meander throughout a COVID-friendly gallery, relax in the pleasure of staring at an explosive array of creativity and visual poetry.

### **The Partnership**

The Langley School District Foundation has many community partners and one of its most treasured is the West Fine Art Show Society. Since 2017, the group has worked with the Foundation to host an Annual Art Show. Featuring the most talented and renowned artists in Western Canada, the show has emerged as a highly favoured fundraiser for the Foundation. Here, artists agree to donate 25% of all artwork sales to the Langley School District Foundation to support Food for Thought Programs, especially important during the coronavirus crisis.

### **The Art Show - 2021**

The Foundation, the West Fine Art Show Society and the Glass House Winery will be working together to host an Art Show that promises in this pandemic year, to shatter pessimism while promoting a renewal of joy. With meticulous planning, the triumvirate is confident in its ability to host a stylish and safe event in strict adherence to all COVID-19 mandated procedures and protocol.

### **The line-up**

Walking into the gallery, onto the tiled floors you are immediately met with bone-chilling nostalgia. You may be reluctant to move on, so engrossing are the works' smack-on the ground attention to detail. But once you tear yourself away you are then confronted with illuminating episodes of Canadians' obsession with hockey, as only a former Canuck player can so whimsically render. As you carefully move throughout the glittering aisles, you come across the splendour of a birch forest, the gentle solace of a west-coast landscape, and the breath-taking colour of dazzling realism. And that's not all. Award-winning sculpted metal and stone works beckon every eye telling powerful stories of our natural surroundings. And, you'll be confronted with hazy paintings that strike undefined emotions or conjure up crazy feelings of angst. Colours explode, shapes skew themselves into blazing configurations and characters float in virtual space. This is an art show, not to be missed.

### **Birds of Bronze**

In the works of Brent Cooke, every area of focus, from the dramatic swoops of a heron's neck to the delicate lines of a hummingbird's beak, you can't help but find inspiration in the subtleties and mysteries of the natural world. It is in Cooke's works that you appreciate the method in the making of things and in the ultimate joy of seeing them at fruition. From conception to creation and onwards to completion, the journey is long, but filled with passion, industry, foresight, planning and exuberance, not only for the viewer, but most importantly for the artist. For without the artist's passion, brains and brawn there can be no work of art. It takes guts and perseverance to make things happen.

As Brent Cooke said to me, "The worst part of the process is when the inspiration dissolves into drudgery. That is when I start to procrastinate. I walk by the half-finished blob sitting in my

studio and I have to force myself to go through the next steps – never quite sure if my vision will sustain the transfer from ethereal idea to tangible product. But, I’ve never been disappointed,” he says with a palpable sigh mixed with a charming hint of disbelief.

### **From Concept to Completion**

Brent Cooke starts with a vision. There is no drawing.

“I would be the worst person on your team in a game of Pictionary,” says Cooke.

From his vision, he creates an armature (metal structure) of his subject and after a six-month long process (once started, there is no room for mistake) of filling with wax, sculpting with clay, firing and exposing his creation to a 1000 degree furnace, he has his bronze statue. Elegant in itself. But the work is far from complete. Next comes the alchemy of patina as the bronze-made alloy slowly metamorphizes into a startling replica of life. Colours, filigree, shading and nuance are added with extreme and sweaty precision – any tiny misstep could spell disaster.

“I would have to start all over again – from square one and right through that agonizing procrastination period,” says Cooke with a hearty laugh. “Luckily it has never happened.”

I couldn’t help but empathize. Well done Mr. Cooke! Your art is awesome.

### **Glass House Estate Winery**

23449 0 Ave, Langley City, BC

Friday, March 5 from 5 to 9 pm.

Saturday, March 6 from 11 am to 7 pm.

Sunday, March 7 from 11 am to 5 pm

### **Emerging Talent**

Running at the same time, the Foundation will host a virtual online exhibition and adjudication of student art with cash prizes for first, second and third. Photography, paintings and 3-D sculptures are eligible and should follow a theme of COVID-19 and what it has wrought on our society (the positives, negatives, changes, trends). All Langley students from grade 10 to 12 are eligible to enter. Please submit images via email to [scairns@sd35.bc.ca](mailto:scairns@sd35.bc.ca) and [rosemary\\_creative@hotmail.com](mailto:rosemary_creative@hotmail.com).