

Sculpture Evergreen... Unstoppable

By Penny Randell

The people of Evergreen love their art so much they took it outside. On the eve of its 25th anniversary, Sculpture Evergreen prevailed once again with the adoption of 12 new sculptures for its annual Sculpture Walk, and one holdover from last year. Without fail, every year this band of resolute volunteers brings exciting fine art to the streets and parks of this one-of-a-kind mountain community. The first weekend in June is dedicated to the celebration of such, with an artist's reception, and installation of new pieces.

The sculpture selection process begins each February when the chairman of the Sculpture Walk invites community members to jury the contenders for that year. For this year's jury, seven of the 17 current Board members participated, plus several Advisory Board members, one community art teacher, a local artist or two, and at least one business person. Once designated, the jury gathered to consider each submission.

Sculpture Walk chairman Anna Marie Nelson said, "This year's jury of 16 sat before a large screen to view photos of all entries. We voted aloud, scoring each sculpture from one to five. After the numbers are tallied we end up with anywhere from 10 to 16 new sculptures." Once the pieces are chosen, the artists are contacted and plans to host them in June begin. This year June 1st saw a reception at Center for the Arts Evergreen, with installation of all new pieces completed by noon the following day.

Sculpture Evergreen's one employee, Anni Bengtson works part-time to ensure that all ends are tied up for the organization. Volunteers serve on the Board, joining various committees. Board terms are three years with a maximum of three consecutive terms. Past board members often elect to stay involved, joining the Advisory Board. Besides grants and individual donations, these determined and passionate supporters keep enough money coming in to maintain Sculpture Evergreen's 34 permanent sculptures and install the rotating Sculpture Walk pieces.

This is no small achievement, as installing each new sculpture costs approximately \$2000. Monies raised cover a \$700 stipend for each artist, hotel stays for artists and their families, the reception, a luncheon on installation day, removal of a former piece if needed, and the installation itself. Should a piece be held over for a second year, the \$700 stipend must be paid to the artist again.

To find new sculptures, Sculpture Evergreen uses the nationwide Call for Entry website, which allows artists the option to audition for sites throughout the country. Tricia Rosenthal, artist and Board member said, "Evergreen has become a favored town. This year we had 65 entries." Once placed, each sculpture location gets a placard that provides the name of the piece, date acquired and artist. Rosenthal said, "Each year we produce a new trail map showing the sculpture locations. The map is available at many businesses and locations around town. And, too, all pieces can be viewed on our website."

When viewing the sculptures, accessing Guide by Cell provides listeners a recorded description of each piece via their mobile phone. In the past, volunteers such as Sydney Bernard-Hogling have performed the recordings, but today more and more artists are

self-promoting. Each year the public is invited to participate in a People's Choice Award. Anyone, even kids, can vote standing face-to-face with each of these enriching cultural endowments, or online. In addition, the Sternberg Award for Artistic Merit, juried by a noted member of the Denver art community, is presented at the artist's reception. This year's recipient of the \$1000 award was Paul Russell, whose sculpture "Ancient Protocol" has been held over for a second year.

With only one fundraiser a year, it needs to be a triumph. This year the event takes place September 21st at Hiwan Golf Club. Joe Glasmire, artist, Board member and chairperson for the fundraiser said, "The affair promises to be quite the evening, with prizes and art offered through auction and raffle." Last year's auction included a two-hour adventure in a flight simulator at DIA, stays in various resort towns, and a ride in an Evergreen fire truck. "Donations from artists are outstanding. For example, this year's raffle item is a stunning painting of the Lake House by Carol Newsom," said Glasmire.

The logistical challenges behind the placement of each Sculpture Walk piece are daunting. Accessibility, maintenance, and weather are considered long before placing. Visibility is crucial, as is stabilizing the sculpture. Some must be bolted, some welded, and use of a crane is common. Bill Slaughter, president of Sculpture Evergreen says, "We now have 34 permanent sculptures, plus the 12 new ones and one holdover. This equals over \$1,000,000 in art. It is our wish to attract more kids this year and gain the attention of the entire community."

From the get go, energy coupled with exceptional spirit enabled originators Barbara Sternberg, Tom Ware, and Peter Eggers to set a great precedent that has never diminished. Slaughter added, "All our volunteers are special people who remain diligent, creating an annual strategic plan to best provide art for the mountain community. It has been this way since the beginning. Some of our members are artists themselves and believe me, there's no stopping their efforts."