



napaARTwalk

~ SCULPTURES ADD A TOUCH OF ART TO DOWNTOWN NAPA, YOUNTVILLE ~

Downtown Napa's street scene got a lot more interesting this summer with the installation of ten outdoor sculptures along the city's streets. Whether you're walking, driving or riding a bike, it's hard to miss the big, hungry-looking bass at the corner of Main and Third streets ("Fish 'On" by West Sacramento metal sculptor Terrence Moore), or the intriguing concrete cut-out of an insect at First and Franklin ("Beetle Shadow," by John King of Eureka).

Keep looking around and you'll notice more: a mosaic pillar, a stylized skiff, a river of glass. "Celebrating the Napa River" is the theme for the city's inaugural "ARTWalk," which invited sculptors from California, Nevada, Oregon, Washington and Arizona to submit their works for consideration.

The ten winners were selected by a "blind" jury that included artist Ned Kahn, recipient of the Americans for the Arts Public Art Award and a MacArthur grant; Jon A. Lail of Lail Design Group, St. Helena's representative to the Napa County Arts & Culture Commission; Carrie Lederer, artist and curator of exhibitions at the Bedford Gallery in Walnut Creek; Kathryn Reasoner, executive director of di Rosa in Napa and Patricia Watts, curator and co-founder of Ecoartspace of San Francisco and New York City.

Approved by the Napa City Council in the fall of 2009, the self-guided ARTWalk tour is a collaboration between Arts Council Napa Valley and the Napa Community Redevelopment Agency, with the goal of increasing foot traffic downtown by creating a showcase of Western sculpture. The California Arts Council and the National

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Endowment for the Arts also contributed funding.

“This program is designed to bring people downtown to celebrate the arts, showcase creative talent, and provide educational opportunities,” explains Arts Council executive director Kristina Young.

The program also helps the Arts Council fulfill a pair of key goals in the county-wide Community Cultural Plan, which was developed with the help of hundreds of residents: “Build Effective Awareness of the Arts” and “Establish Effective Arts Public Policies.”

The ARTWalk helps reach those goals by turning downtown Napa into an open-air gallery: It invites viewers to respond to the sculptures by voting for their favorites. Ballot boxes—artistically designed by the developmentally disabled residents of Napa’s Vine Village—are located at numerous downtown spots, including Napa City Hall, the Napa Valley Visitor’s Center, ABC Bakery, the Napa County Historical Society/Goodman Library, the Napa Valley Opera House, Napa Coffee Roasting Company, Downtown Joe’s, the Napa River Inn and the Napa City-County Library.

A printed sculpture map, also widely available, not only provides viewers with detailed information about the artworks, but offers an extra option to smart-phone and camera-phone users: They can scan the map’s QR codes—matrix barcodes—to hear recorded commentary about each piece.

Because the “Celebrating the Napa River” ARTWalk is not a permanent installation, there’s less than a year left to view the sculptures and cast those votes. After the works have been on view for eleven months, a new theme will be announced, and a fresh set of sculptures will go on display next summer.

A smaller artwalk in Yountville offers an additional four works by Napa sculptor Gordon Huether, who is also represented in the downtown Napa walk. In both towns, the sudden glimpse of a colorful, graceful or provocative piece of original public art is worth slowing down for a second look.

Even kids will find themselves engaging with works like King’s “Beetle Shadow,” in which they can hunt for a dozen or more smaller river denizens hidden in its concrete frame.

For more information, visit Arts Council Napa Valley at www.artscouncilnapavalley.org; you can download a color brochure of the Napa ARTWalk at http://www.artscouncilnapavalley.org/docs/ARTwalk_Brochure.pdf.

