

**MINUTES OF THE CELEBRATORY MEETING
OF BOARD AND THE OPEN STUDIOS ART TOUR MEMBERS
OF THE
MORONGO BASIN CULTURAL ARTS COUNCIL
MBCAC**

A celebratory/information meeting of the Board of Directors and the members of the Open Studio Art Tours of the above Corporation was held on **November 8, 2017**, at the Center for Healthy Generations, Yucca Valley, CA.

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

President Keesling introduced S.W.O.T., Strengths-Weaknesses-Opportunities-Threats, a method of evaluating and strengthening a group's ability to succeed in their endeavors. This group evaluation allows a unanimous platform for sharing ideas that can be discussed and possibly incorporated into a business plan. Attendees were asked to provide comments using post-it-notes below the four categories of S.W.O.T which would be sorted and summarized and discussed by the end of the meeting.

Co-Director Esther Shaw announced the planned December exhibit at Gallery 62 for the month of December. It will follow a holiday salon style exhibit, it will cost \$20.00 for 36 inches of wall space with no absolute limit on the number of art pieces allowed within that space, and the art pieces must each be priced at or under \$100 dollars. Intake will be on November 28, 2017 between 10am and 12pm. Laurie Schafer and Valerie Davis will be exhibiting textiles and jewelry in the Signature gallery. Co-Director Shaw announced her and Co-Director Zara Kand's upcoming retirement from their positions as Gallery 62 directors and the need for interested volunteers to fill their position(s).

Amara Alban provided information on the upcoming Empty Bowls event which will be held at the Center for Healthy Generations on November 19, 2017 between 4pm and 6pm. Volunteers that have signed up, or wish to sign up, must contact Amara Alban so that she can map out a schedule for all volunteers. Volunteers will show up as scheduled, or by 2:45pm on the day.

Alane Levinsohn announced the ongoing Life Drawing workshop held at the 29 Palms art gallery on Thursdays from 5:30pm to 8:30pm. President Keesling announced the upcoming Ingrained Painting workshop with Paula Izydorek which will be held on Thursday, November 9, 2017 between 5:30pm to 8:30pm.

ART TOURS REPORT:

Director Patricia Knight shared feedback she was given for this year's Open Studio Art Tours which was generally positive. Much of the feedback was about the seemingly successful extent of the marketing and high quality of the catalog. Some feel that the catalog presents too grand an expense, that it is too high class for the desert and that it should be printed on newsprint. Some also felt that artists shouldn't have to sign up so early in the year. Director Knight reminded everyone that the marketing for this event actually begins at the start of the year, and that early registration creates a marketing budget that is necessary to begin paying for advertisements and

catalog printing. The ability to provide the public with a catalog well in advance of the actual art tour dates allows the interested consumers to schedule the event, and this can only be done if the budget is established early in the year.

The catalog will attract interested consumers to the community, and one of the most important parts of the catalog is high quality imagery of artist's work. This year was an especially successful catalog.

S.W.O.T. DISSCUSSION/SUMMARY

A member of the audience was tasked to summarize each of the categories of S.W.O.T. and lead a discussion on the results. Each of the category entries has been provided within this document.

Strengths; what is the 2017 Art Tour doing well?

Marcia Geiger shared that an overwhelming strength is the quality of the catalog. Many offered positive comment on the Director – Patricia Knight and that advertising was strong this year.

Weakness; what needs improvement for 2018?

Kathi Klopfenstein shared a breakdown of weaknesses offered by the audience, after dividing the category into items outside of the Art Council's control and items within the Art Council's control. Items such as road quality will fall outside of our control. The overlapping of conflicting events are uncontrollable, however the attempt to organize Art Tours *before* the time change and during weekends that do not share the Halloween evening will always be of prime concern to the Art Council due to safety reasons. Any other event conflicts will be weighed by the council but cannot always be avoided. Weather issues cannot be controlled, but the Art Council will always ask that artists try their best to be prepared for all situations, be it wind, rain, or temperature.

- Strengths**
- Outstanding catalog and good distribution
 - Catalog
 - Longevity, word of mouth, advertising
 - Enjoyed the experience – smooth process overall
 - Email communication is very good, sign availability is very good, and catalog was excellent
 - Nice catalog
 - Consistency in number of years
 - I liked that the collective show was at our own gallery 62
 - I liked that the names of the artist as well as studio number was on the map
 - Catalogs are better every year
 - Our catalog
 - Deadline to complete work and then share with public and get feedback
 - Good turn-out, we got 150 visitors over two days
 - Good organization, advertising, catalog
 - Online registration
 - Publicity seemed to be effective
 - Catalog and distribution
 - Quality of catalog
 - Group show flow
 - Larger area of promotion = more people and sales
 - Communication with Director
 - Beautiful catalog, Facebook group, Patricia Knight

- Weaknesses**
- Cost of admission for artists
 - Road quality
 - Gatherings before and after that are compelling
 - Overlapping other events
 - Need to get people interested in volunteering
 - Website issues
 - More social media – Facebook, Instagram
 - Let artists know where advertising is occurring
 - More ads – Verizon, Amazon, etc.
 - We need a highway sign

One suggestion that is within the Art Council's control is the quality versus the cost of the catalogs. It is important to keep in mind however that an eye catching, high-quality catalog will draw in the customers willing and able to purchase art. High quality merchandise costs money, and in order to provide that catalog for free, the cost must be covered by the artists through registration. Another consideration is to provide additional gatherings before and after Art Tours. Website issues came up

as a weakness and this will best be dealt with additional volunteers that will be dedicated to problems as they may arise. Additional marketing through Instagram and other social media will be dependent upon the number of volunteers we have throughout the year.

Opportunities; what opportunities exist to help improve Art Tours?

Paul Klopfenstein provided discussion on the opportunities that were offered by the audience. Access to grants and volunteer stipends is and will continue to be open for discussion every year, and will be a topic of consideration when the new council is formed.

The 2016 catalog was organized by location within the basin and divided up by weekend, which was a popular concept; however it was not applicable for the 2017 Art Tours because most artists decided to sign up for both weekends.

The formation of tour groups provides an opportunity that will have to be discussed further for the coming year. Tour groups come with certain difficulties due to the sudden number of people that might show up at any given studio, the availability of dining options through the day and rest-stops. The suggestion will require careful thought and further planning before anything has been decided.

Opportunities

- More and advertised steepened positions
- Getting help with grants to fund stipends for volunteers
- I liked it when the EAST end of the basin was on one weekend and the WEST was the other weekend.
- Start a studio tours video log
- Bring in Tour Bus groups from other cities
- Coordination with other local events
- Invite Travel Shows
- Have each studio post maps
- Have roads graded
- SEO for site? Google analytics, etc.
- More categories for type of media for catalog
- List of art media to include Pen & Ink
- Shared studios – they seem to have more visitors

Advertisement through television and online travel shows certainly provides an opportunity and will depend upon the availability of volunteers to contact these travel shows. Group/shared studios provide a great opportunity to visitors but the forming of shared studios is primarily up to individual artists and will be subject to the studio location, parking availability, and even the balance of mediums at any studio.

Threats

- Dates conflicted with music festival, roads and restaurants were packed and busy
- Commitment to other events – Dezerz Daze festival
- Overlap with Pioneer Days
- Everybody wants their event in October because of the great weather. Too much going on at once
- Cost of admission for artists
- Poor weather, rain and wind
- Not getting a competent replacement for Art Tours Director
- Art Detour?
- Not finding as good a director

Threats; what hindrances will cause us to fail?

Scott Doten shared the primary threats to the Art Tours will be conflicting events, the weather and roads, and the unknown new Art Tours director.

Comments included the reminder that part of the Morongo Basin Art Tours romance is in fact the wild nature of the environment, the concept of adventure, and truly feeling

and sharing in the inspiration of the area, with the artists for a day. We probably do not want to *streamline* things too much. On the other hand, it was suggested that if the MBCAC, as a group, were to contact the county, certain improvements might be considered. The Art Tours brings in many visitors from surrounding communities, providing traffic to local businesses. If the MBCAC could tout the improvement of graded roads to many studios, the number of visitors would likely increase, which would only increase the bottom line. A nicely graded dirt road wouldn't make anything too 'slick', it would simply make visiting studios a bit easier.

Art Tours Committee Volunteer List

The following individuals have volunteered to help MBCAC in a capacity that they feel comfortable with. These individuals provided contact information which has been left off of this report.

- Alane Leninsohn, Advertising committee & Gallery 62 volunteer*
- Sharon Davis, Sales Team & Catalog Distribution*
- Snake Jagger, Catalog Distribution for lower desert*
- Amara Alban, Catalog Proof/Review & Catalog Distribution & Website Proof/Review*
- Julianne Koza, Gallery 62 grunt*
- Kathy Miller, unstated*
- Douglas Blanc, Catalog Proofreader*
- Kathi Klopfenstein, Registrar (unless another volunteer is interested)*

GUEST COMMENTS

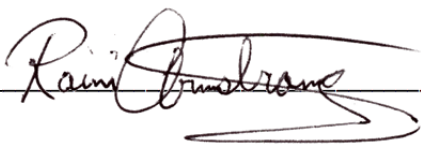
Clarification was requested on how the catalog has evolved over the years. Part of the reason for the current quality is due to what it conveys about the Art Tours event; an opportunity to meet with, and purchase from, professional fine-art artists. It is an eye-catching piece that targets art collectors. It also provides a fine catalog of artists along with an example of their work which has been referenced in the past by collectors and art lovers over the years. The paper quality this year – a satin finish heavy weight paper comes at no cost difference to gloss paper, and yet it allows for greater readability of text in well-lit areas.

NEXT MEETING:

The next regular meeting of the Board of Directors will be held on December 13, 2017, at **6:00 PM** in the Healthy Generations meeting room, 57121 Sunnyslope Dr., Yucca Valley, CA 92284.

There being no further business, the meeting was duly adjourned at 7:50 PM.

These Minutes are certified by the Secretary.

Signature  Date 1/9/2018