

Artists initiate a joint studio tour

Seventeen galleries, workshops, and studios open up to the public for two consecutive weekends.

Roxanne Hooper, Langley Advance

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Many Langley artists independently hold open houses and season studio tours to bolster interest and sales of their work. But working in such isolation and holding separate events might not always be the best use of time, money and other resources, admitted Deborah Strong, an animal-inspired Murrayville artist.

For a number of years, Strong and Brookwood raku artist Julie Bourne, talked about combining their efforts and doing one event to maximize publicity and audience. This past summer, South Langley artist Vivian Harder joined the discussion, and it didn't take long for the Langley Artists Studio Tour to be conceived.

"From talking with her (Harder), and from the original idea that Julie and I had, the studio tour was born and the three of us have collaborated to pull it together," Strong told the Langley Advance. Langley is home to a wide range of talented visual artists, including painters, ceramic artists, sculptors and others.



Kevan Alden is a Langley artist participating in a new studio tour.

Langley Advance files

"In all parts of the community they can be found working diligently, creating wonderful works of art in their home studios and workspaces." To draw attention to local talent, they've devised Langley Artists Studio Tour, a self-guided tour of 17 participating studios and galleries that will run Saturdays and Sundays, Nov. 14 and 15, as well as Nov. 21 and 22, from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Neighbouring communities, including White Rock, Maple Ridge and Abbotsford among others, as well as other communities all around the province, host studio tours on a regular basis. "But for some reason it has never happened in Langley before," Strong said. "I have spoken with long-time Langley artists Barbara Boldt and Lora Armbruster, both of whom have joined this year's studio tour, and who have been active in the community for many, many years. Neither of them remember a studio tour happening here before. So I really think it is a first, at least a first in a very long time, for this community," she added.

By holding the event in November, organizers hope to prompt some early Christmas shopping, and at the same time host the event before everyone's holidays schedules get too chaotic. "And we have spread the tour over two weekends to allow people time to see all the studios, given a lot of driving will be involved for those who wish to see them all. We are also hedging our bets against potential bad weather," Strong said.

On the eve of the 2009 tour, plans are already in the works to make it an annual event and expand to include more artists and stops.

"It's been a lot of work and a lot of volunteer hours (we have lost count), but we've been really pleased with the response both from the artist community in Langley and from the public," Strong said. People interested in participating in the tour can go online and download a printable version of the studio tour map at: www.catmousedesigns.com/langleystudiotour.htm, or printed maps are available for pickup at Langley libraries and Langley Tourism.

Participating studios and galleries:

- Morgan Fitzpatrick

Elements of nature provide the medium for Morgan's life-size sculptures of animals and humans. This large scale work gives the audience a more personal connection to the piece, and the materials have some kind of aesthetic pleasure, either in touch or sight.

- Deborah Strong

Cat & Mouse Designs

Deborah's vibrant, sometimes whimsical silk paintings and lifelike coloured-pencil drawings capture the spirit of the animals with which we share our lives, as well as nature and wildlife.

- The Fort Gallery & Open Studio

The Fort Gallery is a community-based, non-profit, artist collective that encourages and supports individual development and exploration in contemporary art. The neighbouring Open Studio offers education and a supportive development to emerging artists, and to those who are beginning or re-starting their art-making practice.

- Julie Bourne

Specializing in raku and lustre glazed clay works, as well as lamp-work bead jewelry, Julie draws her inspiration from nature and animals. Her work features horses, sea life, totems, trees and a variety of forms, each reflecting Julie's own unique vision.

- Birthplace of BC Gallery

This well-known gallery dedicated to the promotion of local talent, the commemoration of Langley's place in BC's history, and to the improvement of the quality of life in Langley. Gallery artists will be on-site demonstrating their work during both weekends of the Studio Tour.

- Shannon Rooney

CapriBlue Jewelry Design

Heirloom-quality keepsakes for babies, fun, well-made jewelry for fashionable children and teens, and beautiful, affordable jewelry for women, all handmade using only the best sterling silver, Swarovski crystals, and semi-precious gemstones.

- Bellerophon's Equestrian Art & Antiques

This fascinating gallery/shop for horse lovers and collectors of fine equestrian art is located in historic Gasoline Alley in Fort Langley.

- Lucy Adams

Constantly experimenting with painting images on unusual supports including glass and fabric, Lucy is currently working on mirror surfaces to experiment with the multiple images that are formed when one sets up several mirrors at strategic angles to each other. The work is challenging and the results are unique.

- Carmel Clare

Landscape is her passion! Painting in acrylic, Carmel's subjects include washed white riverbeds, dark forests, mist off the river, storm clouds blowing over the water, and warm sunlight reflected on bleached driftwood. Carmel will be displaying her works at the historic CN Station in Fort Langley.

- Susan Falk

Susan's work includes expressionistic, colorist West Coast imagery of bears, rock formations and arbutus trees. She is currently working with images inspired by ancient European cave walls and current runway models. Her bright, airy studio is situated in the heart of south Langley's countryside.

- Candice Perry

Candice is a printmaker focussing mainly on monotypes or etchings, Candice also creates cont? drawings, oil paintings and collage. Her subject matter consists primarily of portraits of people, as well images of babies and children. Candice will be sharing the historic CN Station gallery space with Carmel Clare, and will have her press operating on site during the tour.

- Vivian Harder

Thunderfoot Studio

A visual artist whose colourful paintings reflect her love of animals (particularly horses), her passion for the outdoors, and her enjoyment of her country lifestyle.

- Barbara Boldt

A dedicated painter who creates memorable images of BC's unique landscape, Barbara brings a rich life experience and understanding to her pastel, oil and watercolour paintings.

- Robin Bandenieks

Art on 28th

Robin's country home invites visitors to view her oil paintings in a salon style setting. Her realistic, colourful work includes figurative, still life and animals (especially dogs).

- Lora Armbruster

A versatile painter, Lora's talent and expertise extends to a wide variety of subjects, including landscape, still life, floral, and others. She works in watercolour, oil and acrylic, and has prints available of some of her works.

- Diane Moran

Captivated by culture and prodded by process, Diane's art helps keep her grounded. Ideas, inspiration, and insight take on new meaning, and everyday objects, faces and places of past and present inspire her work. The process of combining materials, is coupled with layering and experimentation. She describes her work as "abstract with a twist".

- Kevan Alden

Alden Earthworks

Functional art constructed of wrought iron and wood, including found materials such as driftwood, cleverly and artfully combined to create chairs, tables, benches, candelabras, picture frames and more.

- Vikki's Clay Art Studio

This is a paint-your-own pottery studio which offers the opportunity for anyone to create their own unique ceramic, clay or glass pieces.

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