

Art center's Collaboration '11 show welcomes huge turnout

By Tim Riel

The opening reception for the Jamestown Arts Center last Friday was a huge success by most standards—nearly 300 people attended the Collaboration '11 show on April 1 and a record number 130 art pieces were submitted, which will be on display and on sale through Sunday, April 24.

"It was an amazing night," said Dianne Grippi, one of six members on the JAC's board of directors. "More people than we expected showed up."

The show was done in collaboration with the Jamestown Philomenian Library and the Jamestown Education Foundation.

Jocelyn Donaghue, the art center's secretary, said that it wasn't just Jamestown residents who participated. She said people as far as Virginia submitted pieces into the contest.

It was the arts center's fourth annual collaboration show and its first since buying and renovating the new building on Valley Street. The center's 2,500-square-foot main gallery space was packed with enthusiasts on Friday evening, with dozens of 12-by-12-inch works of art wallpapering the edges of the room from composers of all ages, abilities and addresses.

"It went so well," said JAC President Kate Petrie, who submitted five pieces of her own, all made using photographs. "It was an incredible turnout. The whole night, between the ebb and flow of people, we estimated around 300 or more people showed up. We didn't know what to expect, but it was an absolute mob scene."

Participants ranged from professional artisans to grammar school students and the art squares were created using an array of materials just as diverse: Ben Hutchinson made two pieces— one using Legos and another using duct tape—while other artists used more traditional tools such as crayons, photos and acrylic paint.

Prices for the Collaboration '11 pieces also varied drastically: Elizabeth Congdon created six works of art—all of them made from oil painting on linen—and each is on sale for \$1,200, while Melrose Avenue School student Lauren Atkinson has her "Penguins" paper collage on sale for \$5.

In conjunction with this year's show, the JAC invited winners of the three previous collaboration shows to display and sell their works of art. Unlike Collaboration '11 entries, the Top Collaborators weren't restricted to just 12-by-12-inch art squares. Among the most expensive pieces from Top Collaborators was David

and Jennifer Clancy's "Prairie Grass," which is on sale for \$25,400, and "Blossoming Aloe," which carries an asking price of \$14,600—both are glass-blown work.

Peter Diepenbrock's "The Emancipated Emanations of Loop d' Loo," a structure made out of copper and bronze, can be had for \$18,500.

"Overall, we sold quite a bit," Petrie said.

The event, which was curated by Donaghue, was an open-juried show and awarded first, second and third place, along with three honorable mentions. Vanessa Fay Wurman, a Jamestown resident and the former owner of Station 29 Gallery in Newport, judged the show.

First place was awarded to youth artist Nicholas Hood for his piece titled "Explosion." The square was made using watercolors and pastel. Second place was given to Georgia Nassikas, the sister of Gov. Lincoln Chafee. Her effort—"Screen Ecology"—was made using encaustic painting, which utilizes hot wax, and is on sale for \$350. Third place went to another youth artist, Philip Reilly, for his creation titled "Movie Theatre." Reilly's piece had a more basic approach than the other winners; he used pencil to create his art square. The winners earned \$100, \$75 and \$50, respectively.

Honorable mentions were Petrie's husband Aidan for "Burning Beavertail," Jamestown Conservation Committee Chairwoman Carol Trocki for her work "Barrier Beach from the Air," and Lawn Avenue School fifth-grader Caleb Wagner for his untitled recycled book creation.

Classmates of Wagner's— Mei-Ella Vickers and Hope Benson— both successfully sold their art squares. Vickers sold her untitled work for \$25, while Benson sold her piece for \$50. All three Lawn Avenue students took part in the art center's workshops that led up to show. The JAC held five separate workshops for youth artists in March, which were taught by John Kotula, the arts coordinator at the East Bay Met School. More than 20 total Lawn and Melrose Avenue students participated in the workshops and displayed their work at the event.

Petrie said that the JAC staff and volunteers worked tirelessly to get the event ready for April 1. "It is now a real arts center," she said.

The Collaboration '11 show continues through April 24. The arts center is open from noon to 3 p.m. on Saturdays and Sundays for art enthusiasts to come by and browse or purchase the dozens of works of art on display.