

WHO: Pacific Northwest Sculptors
WHAT: Grand Opening of Sculptors Gallery in Portland
WHERE: Sculptors Gallery, Pioneer Place Mall,
700 SW Fifth Avenue, Third Floor
DATE/TIME: Saturday, May 16, 2015, 5 p.m. – 9 p.m
CONTACT: Carole Murphy, 503-235-7233
WEBSITE: <http://www.pnwsculptors.org/>



There is an new sculpture gallery in the heart of downtown Portland that features works by noted Northwest sculptors and is operated and staffed by the sculptors themselves.

Sculptors Gallery, which opened its doors April 15 on the third floor of Portland's Pioneer Place Mall, will host a grand-opening reception for the public on Saturday, May 16, from 5 p.m. to 9 p.m. It will be an opportunity to see the work of and meet some of the region's most distinguished sculptors.

The gallery is the project of the Portland-based Pacific Northwest Sculptors, a non-profit organization serving member sculptors in Oregon, Washington, Idaho and British Columbia.

PNWS President George Heath said one of his group's central objectives is to create opportunities for the more than 120 PNWS members to show and sell their work. The new gallery does that, he says, while also providing for "a deeper public understanding of the diversity and sophistication of the regional arts community."

He called the opening of the gallery a watershed event for PNWS.

"For the past 14 years Pacific Northwest Sculptor's only permanent physical location has been a post office box," he said. "We have traveled locally demonstrating, mounting shows and exhibitions, but we have not had a place we could call our own."

Now the group does, he said, "thanks in large part to Chris Haberman, Jason Brown and the management at Pioneer Place Mall."

Haberman and Brown are partners in the A.I.R (Artist in Residence) and Peoples Art of Portland galleries at Pioneer Place and hold the lease on the 3,000 square-foot space now occupied by PNWS. After consultation with key PNWS members and with the cooperation of Pioneer Place Mall, the two men made the space available to PNWS.

"This space will give a face to our organization and provide a means for us to give the public a deeper

understanding of the sculptural arts,” said Heath.

He added that the sculptors themselves will operate the gallery and that visitors will interact with them rather than paid employees.

“We hope to create not just a gallery but something much more,” said Heath. More, he said, includes demonstrations, classes, talks and workshops, some of which already are in the planning stage.

“The public will not only see a sculpture,” Heath explained, “they will learn what went into the making of it and perhaps a hint of what it is that appeals so much to those involved in the sculptural arts.”

A cooperative gallery in Portland’s upscale commercial core offers easily accessible exposure for participating artists, according to Heath

He noted also that as a cooperative gallery the commission taken to help support the gallery is “much smaller than what is standard today.” That makes the sculptures more affordable for the public and allows the artists to keep more of what their work commands.

Carole Murphy is a Portland sculptor who has served a total of 12 years on the PNWS board, including seven years as the group’s president. She is the director of the new gallery.

She said that the gallery currently shows the work of about 45 artists working in media that cover the gamut—steel, bronze, clay, polymer clay, found objects, collage, paper fiber, aerated cement, resins and more.

“There’s literally something here for everyone,” said Murphy, “and in a price range that makes cutting-edge art accessible to everyone: \$7.50 to \$17,000.” PNWS wants to put art “into the hands of people who love it,” according to Murphy. “We have several way to do that, so talk to us.”

Leading up to the grand opening and prior to any publicity about the gallery, traffic there has been “pretty steady,” in Murphy’s words. She pointed to an “enthusiastic” public response, adding that “people are excited to see an all-sculpture gallery.”

The group’s central focus has always been to provide opportunities for its members to share and sell their work. Like Heath, Murphy said the opening of the gallery marks an important milestone in that effort.

“This is where we’ve been headed all along. It’s a huge opportunity for all of us to put our work out there on this grander scale and support each other in what we do,” she said. “This is the culmination of years of effort of putting together shows and learning how to do so in a manner and an environment that is consistent with the extraordinary quality of our members’ work.”

Murphy and Heath agree that having a sculpture gallery staffed by artists is a big opportunity for the public too.

“You can have an intimate interview with an artist every day,” said Murphy, confirming that once-a-week artist demonstrations are being scheduled now for the gallery, as well as a monthly lecture by an artist.

The evening of the gallery’s grand opening May 16 is the third Saturday of the month. The gallery will routinely remain open until 9 p.m. on every third Saturday. Otherwise, Sculptors Gallery is open Thursday through Sunday, noon to 6 p.m.

Pioneer Place Mall is located at 700 SW Fifth Ave.

Learn more about PNWS and Sculptors Gallery on line at <http://www.pnwsculptors.org>.