

## Artscape Orinda—A Unique Exhibit Not to be Missed

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Artscape Orinda kicked off last Sunday amidst cooler than typical winter weather with a private reception attended by the artists, city council members, and many local patrons of the arts. As the music of the violinist wafted from the upper level of the Library Plaza, guests enjoyed wine and an array of hors d'oeuvres as they walked around the Orinda City Library, Community Center, and City Hall admiring the sculptures that comprise the year-long exhibit and mingling with the artists on hand. The exhibit is sponsored by the City of Orinda and the Orinda Arts Council, and the artworks are on temporary loan from the artists and donors for the residents of Orinda and the surrounding communities to learn from and enjoy.

The sculptures are made from a variety of durable materials and range in size from big to bigger and bigger still. Some are playful in design, others more austere, and a few require some reflection.

Upon approaching the Library Plaza one can't miss the blue-spotted frog suspended in mid-air leaping gracefully from the top of a potted flower into the cascading waterfall, a work done in steel by artist Gale Wagner. To the right and left of the leaping frog are three tall ceramic dogs and four steel totem poles that seem to be keeping watch over the lower level Plaza (works by Jeff Dowling and Vickie Jo Sowell). A few steps away, Bill Wareham's

steel sculpture entitled Chuquito with its assortment of brightly painted and precariously stacked shapes led one guest to comment, "It looks like a pile of orange and grapefruit slices. It's fun."

The Plaza also plays host to Bird by Riis Burwell, a large, heavy and simultaneously elegant piece, and a bright orange aluminum sculpture aptly named Sunburste by artist Kati Casida. (A second work by Casida is located in the landscaped island in the parking area of City Hall.) Placed in the middle of the flowerbed adjacent to the Plaza steps, Archie Held's three panel steel sculpture Negative seems organic to the landscaping. A further walk about, one will find John Toki's ceramic artworks framing the entrance to the Community Center which houses a steel piece entitled IO by Joe Slusky. And, the exhibit is rounded out by a three-piece ceramic sculpture reminiscent of the stone columns at Stonehenge by Patricia Bengtson of Oakland.

Following an introduction of the artists, exhibit organizer Ted Urban took a moment to briefly summarize the concept for Artscape Orinda. "The artists have agreed to loan their art to the City for one year. Hopefully, community members will fall in love with the art and feel that it should stay here after that," stated Ted. "The project is unique. It's an experiment, a year-long exercise. We'll see where it takes us," he concluded.



David and Diane Goldsmith of Orinda enjoying Artscape Orinda

Photo by Andrea Firth