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## Lafayette Library Art Features Local Artists

By Andrea A. Firth

Along with the thousands of books available for perusal, patrons of the new Lafayette Library and Learning Center (LLLC) will also have the opportunity to view and enjoy the artwork of 27 Bay Area artists including seven from Lamorinda.

"I am so excited, because I live in Lafayette," states artist Arlynn Bloom whose watercolor painting, Resting, was chosen to be part of the LLLC's collection. The 22 by 30 inch painting shows a row of boats set on a dock along the Lafayette Reservoir-a location frequented by many Lafayette residents and an iconic image for the city. "It's a nice recognition of my work. Plus I'm thrilled to have new library. I read a ton," adds Bloom.

Bloom was one of 321 artists who submitted their work to be considered for purchase as part of the art to be displayed inside the LLLC. "The response to the call was overwhelming, and we are really pleased to see that seven local artists are represented," states Cherie Newell, the Director of Professional Services at the Oakland Museum of California.

The City tapped the expertise of the museum to help coordinate the procurement of art for the LLLC. The Oakland Museum of California is part of the Glenn Seaborg Learning Consortium, a collaboration of 12 high-profile arts, education, and cultural organizations that will be based out of the LLLC and serve as a regional resource.

Public art has been integral to the LLLC's design, notes Newell. "The goal was to fill the Library with art inside and out. These artworks are the foundation of the City's public art collection," she adds. Two large artworks were commissioned for the LLLC-a 16-foot bronze tower of book pages created by San Francisco-based sculptor Brian Goggin will soon be installed in the Reading Court outside the entrance and a series of art elements created by Richmond resident Kana Tanaka will reside on the Children's Activity Deck.

The interior art, 34 works in all, was chosen by five-member selection committee consisting of two Lafayette residents who were very involved with the LLLC, two art professionals, and an art collector from Orinda. Artists had to live in the greater Bay Area, from Sonoma to Santa Cruz counties, and complete an extensive online application process along with submitting digital images of their work. "The committee wanted an eclectic mix of art with a variety of media and styles," says Newell.

In addition to Bloom, the works of four other Lafayette artists were chosen for the LLLC. This was the first time oil painter Tom Taneyhill, whose paintings of northern California's golden hills and craggy oak trees can be found in galleries in the artsy towns of Carmel and Tiburon, had responded to a call for art in a public place. "It's been a fun experience," says Taneyhill. Nineteen-year old Carolyn Ahr, who grew up in Lafayette, was surprised and honored that her oil painting of a bright orange and red tulip on a stark black background was chosen. "It's been a great experience," says the Campolindo High School graduate who attends Diablo Valley College. A graphic and prisma color work by Sarah Gross and an abstract photographic image by Kris Vagner will also be part of the collection. Two Orinda-based artists round out the seven local artists represented. "The idea that artwork is supported within the library's design is fantastic," says Michael Almaguer, a printmaker who also teaches art at Diablo Valley College and serves as the Dean of the Fine Arts Division. Almaguer's monotype, Balance, of a hand holding a twisted branch with a hanging birdhouse alighted by a bird, is part of the collection. A series of watercolor paintings of children participating in Lamorinda sports by Rob Becker will also be included.

Many of the artists will be on hand when the doors of the new Lafayette Library and Learning Center open to the public on November 14th.

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