

Art is Everywhere in ARTWN



(C. Proxmire, Ferndale 115 News, June 1, 2012 ed)

In case you haven't noticed, Ferndale is a pretty artsy place. And if the multiple galleries, murals, sculptures, festivals, and art-related stores and activities are not enough, the next two years are going to be even more full of art as the Ferndale Downtown Development Authority launches ARTWN.

Working with world-famous curator John Sauve, ARTWN centers around the instillation of ten large sculptures at various points around Downtown Ferndale. The sculptures will remain for two years, and at the end of that time the DDA hopes to buy at least two of them to remain for years to come.

 The official kick off is a fancy art party held at The Rust Belt Market on June 28, 2012. The ARTWN Party is a black tie casual that will include an artist meet-and-greet, food, music, patron recognition, guided tours of Ferndale's art, parking pass and free transportation for guests. Tickets are \$50 and the proceeds go towards making some of the art permanent.

In July the collection will be joined by another temporary exhibit, the Detroit Institute of Arts Inside/Out Exhibit. This program brings replicas of real art to places outside the museum itself. From July through November the DIA is expected to add eight pieces around Ferndale.

Other highlights include an "Art Car" at the Woodward Dream Cruise, an artistic bike rack designed by Hazel Park sculptor Richard Gage which is now in front of Western Market, a  catalog of all works of art in the city, and promotion of other art-related activities.

On May 30 volunteers for the DDA met with business owners and regular FernNet attendees to talk about art in Ferndale, and

how that can benefit business owners. Suave, who specializes in large art installations, said that Ferndale is poised for success because of our experience in leveraging the things that make the community great. “Most shows you go to the show and that’s it. They put all this planning into the launch, but then they stop,” Suave said. “Once the artwork is done that’s when the work starts... A lot of communities are embracing this theme... The way you’re so organized through the DDA means in Ferndale it’s going to work. And that’s because you have a plan.”

✘ He suggested that businesses plan promotions around the art in the community, including having gatherings around the art or using it as a conversation piece with customers. “As much as you embrace it, the more return you will get.”

Suave has spent over ten years planning large exhibits. He has a degree in Art History and worked for the Michigan Council for the Arts Art in Public Places project. For the Ferndale project he’s recruited artists from around the country and locally, like Gage, to be part of ARTWN. There’s also financial support from Motor City Casino, and many partnerships with local businesses and artists.

After the May 30th FernNet Meeting, Suave and artist Mike Sohikian installed four pieces. One is a red ram on an I beam that some have likened to a giant Pez dispenser, located on West 9 Mile near Livernois. Others are up in Shiffer Park, in the pedestrian alley near the Community Arts Building, and by Credit Union One on East 9 Mile. ✘

“Survey after survey tells us that what people like about Ferndale is the creativity and the art, and public art is a top priority,” said DDA Communications Director Chris Hughes. Upcoming artsy events include Pimp Your Pot (June 21), ARTWN Party (June 28), Hangin’ in Downtown Ferndale/DIA Exhibit launch (July 19), Auto Art (Aug. 16), DIY Streetfair and Funky

Ferndale Art Fair (Sept 14-16), and a student art show (September, TBA).

To keep up with the latest in Downtown Ferndale, including updates on ARTWN, go to www.downtownferndale.com. Tickets to the ARTWN Party are \$50 and available by calling the Ferndale DDA at 248-546-1632. For all Ferndale 115 News Art-related stories, go to <http://oaklandcounty115.com/category/arts/>.

