

A Brief History of the Northern Juried Art Show

The Northern Juried Art Show celebrates its 40th year in 2016. Over the years the talented artists from northern Manitoba have packed up their works and had them shipped to the location of the show for that year. Works have come from all over the region, from the larger cities and towns to the smallest villages and remote locations. The early founders of the show recognized the wide variety of artistic talents in the region and wanted to provide them an avenue in which to grow by the jurying process and to gain some public exposure. The dedication of these early supporters to the visual artists and their work is greatly appreciated forty years later.

Although there were many people actively involved in the early organization, the main thrust seems to have been provided by Lorna Rogan of Flin Flon. She worked hard herself and inspired others to jump in and assist. Through her efforts, the Northern Juried Art Show had its start. It would be impossible to list all those who over the years contributed to the NJAS. When any community took its turn as host, a committee of capable volunteers showed up to make each and every show a success. Some of these committee members were artists but many others were there for the appreciation of the art and a dedication to community. Every one of those volunteers should feel very proud of the part played in keeping this show active for 40 years.

Another helping hand to the NJAS that cannot be omitted is Gardewine. They have faithfully, each year, picked up the art at depots across the north, transported it to the show then picked it up and returned it. This has been an immense undertaking and the dedication is greatly appreciated by artists and organizers.

Throughout the years various agencies and businesses, both public and private, have provided financial assistance to making sure there was money for prizes, the jurors and other costs. Each year the host community gives special reference to all those who have contributed for that year. The NJAS is a true example of communities in action.

The first show was held in The Pas in 1977. It was a true juried show where artists submitted their works then a panel of jurors selected what they considered to be the best pieces and these were put on display for the public to admire. Those works not chosen for the main show were placed in a separate area sometimes called the 'salon de refuses'. This way all the works entered were available for viewing. The practice continued for a time but then it was decided that all entrants deserved to have their pieces juried or critiqued by the panel. This practice of all entries being critiqued continues today.

The NJAS would not exist without the artists whose creative spirits grace their submissions. One artist who entered the first NJAS is still in the O area and regularly enters is Jan Hall. Many of the early artists are still within the region but are no longer active in the NJAS. Others have moved from the area but are still actively involved with their art. A list of the artists who were involved over the years would be massive. A binder listing many of the prize winners has been assembled so future artists can look back at those who have painted their way into the hearts of the north. Should anyone have prize lists from the missing years or be aware of artists who entered the first NJAS and is still submitting entries, please leave a note at the attendant desk and additions will be made. From all the artists of yesterday and today, a thank you to all the organizers over the years for providing this venue for learning from the critiques and for the appreciation of the viewers. HAPPY 40th!

