Local Color

Community Palette Supports Peninsula Artists

BY MICHAEL CHATFIELD

"Diana" by photographer Michelle Magdalena Maddox, an accomplished local artist involved with Community Palette.

Research has shown that when consumers buy produce at localized marketplace solutions such as farmer's markets and Community Supported Agriculture programs versus a chain supermarket, twice as many of their dollars stay in the community, doubling their power to keep a local economy thriving.

Carmel native Kierstyn Bachmann-Berlin put that theory to work when she founded Community Palette, an organization dedicated to helping Monterey Peninsula artists and artisans find a path to financial success. Bachmann-Berlin is personally committed to buying locally and sustainably—not an easy task for a mother of two young children.

"I haven't been to Target in more than a year," she says. "I think that with every dollar we spend, we're casting a vote. When you spend that dollar locally, you're voting for your community."

Last year, Community Palette held its inaugural event with more than 20 artists working in an eclectic mix of media—jewelers, clothing designers, a DJ, painters, sculptors—showcasing their work at a gala dinner. Attendees voted for their favorite, with all proceeds from ticket purchases going to the winner.

That winner was clothing designer Domini Anne, who pocketed around $4,000. Bachmann-Berlin, impressed by her work, asked the designer to join the Community Palette board and Domini Anne accepted. "It was a match made in heaven," the artist says.

This year, 25 artists have been nominated to participate in the Artist Showcase event, to be held Saturday, March 7 at the Independent Gallery, 600 Ortiz Ave. in Sand City. And just like last year, it's an eclectic mix. There is Serah Evans, a hair stylist; poet Perry McCormick; singer/songwriter Sandy Greenfield; and sculptor Yves Goyatton. Though what they do may vary widely, these and the rest of the group have one thing in common: a desire to be able to earn a living doing what they are called to do.

"We see art and small business as overlapping in many ways," Domini Anne says.

Community Palette hopes to obtain nonprofit status this year, and Bachmann-Berlin says that will help her cause enormously.

"We will be able to receive grants, many of which we already qualify for," she says. And she has goals that go beyond the organization. "My ultimate dream is to have a storefront that exclusively carries locally made products, bringing artists together under one roof and to create a brand for them."

For more information on the organization and the artists involved, please go to www.communitypalette.com.

"Exposed" is a collaborative piece, shot by photographer Rachael Short, designed by Domini Anne. The model is clad in rejected prints from Short's collection, punctured bicycle inner tube, metal D-rings and remnants of two wedding dresses.