

The Lyons Arts Scene

By Katherine Weadley

Art in Lyons is always a surprise. The scene is in constant reinvention and rebirth, as is art itself. Residents, artists and art-lovers of all ages never know when a new program, sculpture or public art piece will surface or resurface. Artists in Lyons fully understand that art is never static.

The natural beauty surrounding Lyons and its close proximity to larger cities combine to attract a sizable group of artistic residents. Many in Lyons fully support themselves by this profession. Others simply enjoy art as a way to express themselves. Nationally-known artists such as Sally and John King, Barbara Stone, Kristine Smock, Ann Ripley, Coco Gordon, Jill Musser, Susan Peirce and Priscilla Cohan reside in Lyons year-round. Other nationally known artists come to Lyons for inspiration or to exhibit their work. For example, artist Rick Begneaud recently flew in a painting from New York to be part of a Lyons exhibit.

Pottery, painting, sculpture and fiber arts are created and celebrated year-round. Lyons Town Hall, 432 Fifth Avenue, supports the arts with public displays in the municipal offices. This revolving exhibit usually consists of pieces that can easily hang on the wall and is overseen by the Lyons Arts and Humanities Council. Displays usually last about four to six weeks.

Art is so valued in Lyons that many businesses in Lyons double as art galleries. Ohm Salon + Gallery at 440 Main St., above the pharmacy, is known for cutting-edge art exhibits. The Stone Cup Café and the Barking Dog Café constantly rotate art on display with a variety of styles. Of course, there are actual art galleries as well, including Nick Angelo Fine Arts and Red Canyon Art Studios. Lyons Studio Tour is a favorite of art lovers everywhere.

Every year artists in Lyons open up their studios and residences to display their creativity. Many of their homes and studios are pieces of work in themselves. With over 30 participants, the variety of displayed art is extensive. Photographs, oil paintings, fiber arts and large outdoor sculptures, and hard-to-describe art are all part of the tour. Visitors can visit just one studio or all studios. Most artists are on-site and love to discuss themselves and their work.

While in Lyons see if you can spot the giant 30-foot banjo sculpture by artist Jacob Leeuwenburgh out of recycled materials. This huge sculpture was built to celebrate Lyons collective love for art and music. It doesn't have a permanent home yet, but anybody in town can direct you to its current location.

An ongoing public art project known as The Clarifier Project is repurposing a former wastewater treatment plant into a large piece of public art intended to signify peace. The former plant is known as The Clarifier and together members of the community are building layers of hand-painted tile, mosaic and masonry to adorn The Clarifier. All ages have participated in the ongoing workshops to paint tile including school-aged children and the seniors of Lyons and everyone in-between.