

PATRICIA FRISCHER

By Kay Colvin, Published in the Coast News and Rancho Santa Fe News
Sept, 2012

Every other month, artists from the far-flung corners of San Diego County gather in Cardiff-by-the-Sea for an interactive meeting of the creative tribe. The attendees are part of the San Diego Visual Arts Network (SDVAN), who come together to meet other like-minded individuals, reinforce relationships, and share their current involvements in the arts.

Patricia Frischer is cofounder and coordinator of SDVAN, the non-profit arts organization. Born in Kansas City, Missouri, Frischer received her Bachelors and Masters degrees from California College of Arts and Crafts, before taking a position with **Archer/JPL Fine Arts** in London as gallery director. She wrote Artists and the Art of Marketing, an instructional book concerning the business aspects of art. In 1977, Frischer returned to America as art instructor and gallery director at Humboldt State University. She later returned to the UK as lecturer on the subject of art marketing and held the position as head of the art department of London's Southbank International School.

Having flourished for a total of 25 years in the sophistication of London's art scene, the established artist and art-marketing specialist found herself as an unknown in a somewhat disjointed art market when she relocated to Southern California in 1996 with her husband Darwin Slindee. She says, "I discovered a rich but unconnected vein of creativity in the San Diego region. It seemed obvious to me that the community of artist and art professionals would be stronger together than we were separately."

In 2002 Frischer invited a select group of other visual arts leaders to join her in forming the founding committee of the San Diego Visual Arts Network. The initial objective of the organization was to produce a database of information that would aid collaborations and raise the bar on the discourse about art. Over the past decade, the SDVAN resource directory has grown to over 2015 regional visual arts resources including artists and has incorporated an extensive events calendar. The website currently receives well over one million hits per year.

In addition to providing a resource-rich website, with Frischer's guidance the organization facilitates countless opportunities for inspiration and collaboration on extensive projects. Each of these

multifaceted undertakings is selected on the basis of qualities that assure a successful outcome, which Frischer refers to as "MERC": Mentorship, Education, Recognition, and Collaboration.

Designed to engage many participants, examples of past projects include: "Little and Large" in 2009, which provided 180 artists and jewelers the opportunity to show their work throughout San Diego County; "Art Meets Fashion" in 2010, which involved over 60 participants and resulted in 14 exhibitions as well as two fashion shows which accommodated a total of 1250 guests; The San Diego Art Prize, with cash grants and two exhibition opportunities to the annual winners, is currently in its sixth year.

Four teams of artists and scientist are currently involved in the "DNA of Creativity" project. One team is developing a smart-phone application called "San Diego View Art Now" which, with GBS technology, will locate events near the user. Projected for completion in 2013, Frischer expects that the phone app "should grow our network to tourists visiting the city as well as an even larger local population."

As a 100% volunteer organization in which all services are free and financed by donations, Frischer says, "It is vital that every volunteer has a win-win experience with the project. That is why we have no permanent volunteers and no staff." She continues, "Each project has a start, middle and end and once over, the volunteer is set free. We have repeat volunteers, but we always have a new stream of eager helpers who are not burnt out trying to reach our goals."

Frischer explains her shifting focus back and forth from creating art to supporting the success of other artists, "It takes as much time to market art as it does to create art. Once you realize and accept that, you might as well help other artists as you help yourself. When I see how an artist has raised the bar on the quality of their work because of some inspiration or support I supplied, that is very rewarding."

Of her life aspirations Frischer says, "My goal is not to be the most successful artist in the world, although my art is one of my greatest joys. My goal is to have life full of wonderful experiences and amazing people, and I achieve that by immersing myself in the artistic community."

Having earned the appreciation and gratitude of countless artists for her vast generosity of time, energy, and expert guidance, Frischer is a

treasure of the San Diego arts community. She urges everyone to contribute to the arts community in any way that brings challenge through creativity into our lives.

Learn more about SDVAN at www.sdvisualarts.net.