



***Celebrating Municipal Excellence***

## **Nomination Form**

***Deadline:*** 4:00 p.m., Thursday September 18, 2014

*Please attach all additional pages to this cover sheet when submitting your nomination.*

### **Contact Information**

<b>Nominee Contact Information</b>	
<b>Name of municipality (ies) being nominated:</b>	City of Humboldt
<b>Contact Name:</b>	Jennifer Hoesgen
<b>Telephone #:</b>	306-682-5226 ext 3
<b>Mailing Address:</b>	Box 2349 Humboldt Sask. S0K 2A0
<b>E-mail Address:</b>	jhoesgen.humboldtmuseum@sasktel.net
<b>Name of Nominated Project:</b>	Revitalization of Merchants Bank of Canada building into Humboldt and District Gallery
<b>Date Project or Practice Initiated:</b>	January 2012
<b>Date Project or Practice Completed:</b>	Opened the Gallery in January 2014

<b>Nominator Contact Information</b>	
<b>Name:</b>	Malcolm Eaton
<b>Organization:</b>	City of Humboldt
<b>Position:</b>	Mayor
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## **General Questions**

**Answers to these questions MUST be included using the following headings. The Selection Committee has found it helpful to include photos and detailed information, including measurable outcomes, in your nomination. Also, please remember when filling out your nomination that winning practices are posted in the Best Practices Library, so be sure to include all information that may be helpful to others if it were to be used as a reference or resource.**

### **A) The Practice**

#### **1. What was the issue that inspired the nominated project or practice?**

There were two main areas that created the need for this project. The first was that the Humboldt and District Museum and Gallery (HDMG) has been serving the city of Humboldt for over 30 years, in a beautiful 1912 historic post office building. The main floor area provided the only space for temporary exhibits, education programming and special events. This presented a significant challenge in having an adequate area to provide education and public programming for an increasing audience. Over 1,500 students per year participated in museum programming, and providing an adequate space was a challenge!

Humboldt residents understand the importance of their heritage and donate artifacts to the collection for safe keeping. The collection numbers about 18,000 artifacts. There were significant community stories that required additional exhibition space - such as the Humboldt District Sports Hall of Fame, and several new stories that required exhibit space.

The museum provides arts education through a partnership with the Humboldt Area Arts Council. Unfortunately, the museum was not able to accommodate large travelling exhibits due to the limited size on the main floor. There was a need for increased access and participation in the visual arts in the community. Artists were expressing a need for further development and celebration of the visual arts in Humboldt.

The second area was several community based issues. The municipality owned a building in the downtown core that was under-utilized and in need of development. With expansion on the city's peripheral areas, there became a need to focus attention on the downtown, and so a Downtown Business Improvement District was formed in 2012. The municipality and business owners realized that the downtown needed more development in arts and cultural facilities and events.

The recent loss of a performing arts theatre was a real concern, and it was noted that a smaller venue for concerts and events could serve as a short-term measure, as the

community developed plans for a new theatre.

Humboldt was expanding at significant rates, and there became a need to provide arts and cultural programming for new residents, especially with the large increase in new residents from outside of Canada.

These divergent community needs, expansion needs of the HDMG and a re-focusing on the downtown brought increased public awareness of the need to create a vibrant arts and cultural destination.

## 2. What has this project or practice done to address the issue?

The HDMG board, established through a municipal bylaw to govern the museum for city council, had been planning expansion for several years, and had been raising money through their Foundation to fulfill this dream. The most economical and practical expansion option was the revitalization of a 1920s historic building across the street from the current museum building. The HDMG board's request to council for their support was granted and the HDMG assumed stewardship in mid-2011. The building was assessed and designated as municipal heritage property. Over two years of renovations to the building resulted in the opening of the Humboldt & District Gallery (Humboldt's first and only public gallery) in January 2014.

The revitalization of the building addressed several issues. The building is an example of the success of a collaborative effort between the municipality and other levels of government, businesses and community organizations to create a dynamic and engaging public space. The building's two floors are wheel chair accessible, and provide an exquisite gallery space for local artists and travelling art exhibits. New programming provides arts education opportunities through youth and adult classes. The space is flexible with equipment and supplies to provide a venue for musical performances – which have included a new very successful series of coffee houses this spring and summer. The venue also provides rental opportunities for organizations who want to have a unique space for their events – such as the Big Brother/Big Sister volunteer appreciation event, that was just held at the Gallery. Events are also created in partnership with the gallery, such as a fun-raising fashion show in partnership with a local clothing store.

The new gallery has also provided a new gift shop and sales outlet for area artists. One major exhibit this summer sold approximately \$9,000 of original art, within three months. This project also has an important youth engagement component. The youth of the community now have a public venue for their work, as Gallery staff have worked with educators at the local high school to produce a student photography exhibit and a fine arts exhibit. Public programming for the Gallery include new youth and adult art classes as there is studio space on the second floor. New residents have become engaged with the arts through gallery tours for ESL students and an area for public engagement in the arts at any

time. The Museum and Gallery are the core locations for the City of Humboldt Culture days which are done in collaboration with the Humboldt Regional Newcomers Center.

The Gallery has been open for less than a year, but the opportunities have already been outstanding, and the potential is still growing!

## **B) The Process**

\*This section should be the longest and most detailed part of your nomination. Include enough information so that a municipality interested in applying the same project or practice can follow your steps.

### **3. What was the role of the municipal council and/or municipal staff in this project or practice?**

The consent of the municipal council to provide the HDMG with the building for its expansion purposes was critical to the initial steps of the project. The municipal commitment of \$50,000 in capital support over the two years was an important contribution. However, the most critical aspect of the municipal role was to provide ongoing core operational support for the Museum and the new Gallery. It is the commitment of city council to support the arts, heritage and cultural activities of the city that has allowed this project to succeed. This project reflects the values identified in the “Our Humboldt” culture-led growth plan which was adopted by Council in 2014. This plan includes the goal of making Humboldt a regional destination for heritage, arts, culture and entertainment. This is accomplished through valuing our heritage and fostering cultural vitality. This project is a perfect combination of heritage, arts, and culture!

The accessibility aspect of the revitalization was overseen by architect Maurice Soulodre. The rest of the two-year revitalization work was managed by municipal staff, primarily HDMG Director Jennifer Hoesgen.

### **4. Were other groups were involved in developing this project or practice? If so, who were they and what role did they play?**

This was a partnership project, and other groups played a significant role in developing the Gallery. Groups that work with people with disabilities toured the building and helped identify accessibility issues. These were incorporated into the design of the building, which is completely wheelchair accessible. These organization wrote letters of support for the federal accessibility grant application. Artists were consulted to ascertain the appropriate type of display space and lighting that would be conducive to art exhibitions. We had local artists reclaim old tables to create beautiful mosaic bistro tables. We invited members of the local performing arts groups to help plan the space and equipment required for performing arts events. This resulted in the purchase of a good quality sound system, stage, backdrop curtains, seating, and other supplies. We brought in our local caterers to discuss

their needs for catering at events, and designed the space to accommodate their needs.

The other groups involved were the HDMG Public Foundation volunteers who raised funds and contributed approximately \$235,000 to the revitalization of the building.

## 5. What resources were involved?

The human resources involved were having a municipal staff person (HDMG Director) as project manager who could oversee the revitalization of the building, along with other member of the HDMG staff.

The financial resources were provided primarily by the volunteer efforts of the HDMG Public Foundation, as well as the three levels of government. The City of Humboldt provided capital support, as well as operational funding. Provincial funding came from the Community Initiatives Fund and the Saskatchewan Heritage Foundation. Government of Canada funding was derived through the Enabling Accessibility Fund. Corporate support included the signature corporate sponsor - BHP Billiton Canada Inc., and Platinum level sponsors – Conexus and the ArtsVest Saskatchewan program.

Local support was also critical to the success through organizations such as the Humboldt Good Neighbour Store and the Friends of the Museum, as well as numerous private donations by businesses and individuals in the Humboldt area.

The two-year revitalization project costs were approximately \$475,000. A beautiful glass donor panel was designed for the entrance of the gallery.

## 6. How was the project or practice developed?

The project was developed by first assessing the needs of the community in regards to the arts. The HDMG board had done significant amount of work in determining whether expansion was necessary and sustainable. There was strong indication of community support for the project through volunteer contributing time, monetary donations, letters of support for grant applications, and overall public awareness of the project. The HDMG developed operational plans to determine ongoing operational costs and potential revenues. A set of goals for the project were developed, such as accessibility. Historic buildings were not designed to be wheelchair accessible, and this can be quite a costly renovations. However, the HDMG board determined that a new community venue should be accessible to all citizens, and therefore this became the first consideration for the revitalization.

The next step was to assess the heritage value of the building. The HDMG researched the history of the building. In June 1920, the Merchants Bank of Canada head office opened tenders for the construction of a two storey, 25 feet by 60 feet solid red brick building with a

full sized basement, two vaults and a fireplace, at an estimated construction cost of \$30,000. The main floor was occupied by the bank and the second floor was staff living quarters. Although several elements of the building draw from classical architecture, the simplified banding on the second floor reflects a streamlined 1920s modern influence. The Merchants Bank of Canada used the building until it was taken over by the Bank of Montreal in 1922. The Bank of Montreal was located here from April 1922 until it closed in March 1931. The Canadian Bank of Commerce purchased the building in 1932. The branch became part of the Canadian Imperial Bank of Commerce (CIBC) in June 1961. A one-story addition with full basement was constructed on the west end of the building in 1964. The CIBC moved to the building next door in October 1989 and donated the building to the town of Humboldt. The municipal offices and display area for the tourism and special events department were housed in the building, which became known as the Willkommen Centre from 1989 to 2010.

Overall the history of the building centered on its use as a bank, and therefore, the elements of the banking history that remained were kept, including the numerous vaults throughout the building, and the night deposit drop on the exterior.

This building is the only remaining historic bank in Humboldt. The building was designated as Municipal Heritage property in 2012. Many people believe that designation restricts redevelopment or renovation of a building, but this is not the case. The character defining elements such as the brick and tyndal stone appearance, and the banking related features such as the vaults were retained, but the designation allows renovations for contemporary use. The best way to conserve an old building is to find a new use for it!

The HDMG developed an overall plan to revitalize the building. The first phase was safety and accessibility, which included the installation of a wheelchair elevator, new front door and entry area, new wheelchair washroom on the main and second floors. This work was followed by the installation of a sprinkler system, new heating, ventilation and air conditioning system, as well as a fire alarm panel, and new exterior doors.

The next phase of the project included installing new walls on the main floor to display art work, new flooring throughout the main and second floors, new lighting, new suspended ceiling, and painting every surface. This phase also included creating new storage areas at the front and back of the main floor and a front desk reception area. Supplies were purchased for events and rentals, such as stage, sound system, chairs, tables, etc. A surveillance system and security system have been installed. Exterior work included painting the cornice and windows, and repairing the parking.

As the physical work on the building continued, plans were developed to provide art exhibits, events and programming beginning in 2014. This was done with partners such as the Humboldt Area Arts Council, local artists, performing artists and residents. Please see attached a copy of our "Content Matters" promotion, which was done to encourage residents to have a voice in the development of programming for the Gallery.

## C) The Results

### 7. What effect did this project or practice have on the community?

This project was an outstanding success, as the Gallery opened in January 2014, with a standing room only crowd, of approximately 250 people. Attendance at the numerous events, exhibit openings, and education programs have met or exceeded expectations. There have been approximately 3,500 people through the doors in nine months.

Local artists are excited to have a space to display their work. We have a dedicated “Local Perspective” area, which is booked up to mid-2015. We have created submission guidelines for artists to submit a proposal to have a future exhibit. We have an artists advisory committee to help develop a “Humboldt arts” permanent collection.

Humboldt now has a venue to present travelling exhibits, which is done in partnership with the Humboldt Area Arts Council. Residents and visitors are surprised at the beautiful art gallery that has been created in a small city.

The gallery space has provided opportunities for several new events for the downtown core, including musical performances put on by Arts Humboldt, as well as the Gallery. The new “Streetfest” event by the Downtown BID was centered around the Museum and Gallery corner.

This building demonstrates the municipal commitment to revitalizing the downtown core. The juxtaposition of the museum on one side of the street, and the gallery on the other side of the street creates a cultural hub in the downtown.

### 8. Was a formal evaluation done after the project or practice was completed?

For the renovations project – the evaluation was conducted by the HDMG board for City Council. The project came in under budget and on time. The evaluation has been ongoing throughout the first year of operations. As more people and organizations use the space, policies and procedures are adapted to provide a flexible venue for all forms of performance and visual arts.

### 9. Describe any challenges faced.

The challenges were similar to other renovations project. There is always a challenge to coordinate the numerous contractors for the various projects, and ensure the timelines and budget are managed. Historic buildings have an integral appeal and presence in the community, but one must be respectful of their heritage values while updating them to a contemporary space for extensive community use.



## **D) Lessons Learned**

10. What lessons were learned and what would you recommend doing differently? Remember, all nominations will become part of the Best Practices Library, so be sure to include specific information.

The lessons learned were several – historic buildings are challenging to renovate, but are worth the rewards. The systems and renovations were adapted and installed in a manner that is respectful of the historic integrity of the building. The 1920s style building, its presence on Main Street, and its integral history to the community make it worthy of a new contemporary use. When planning a renovation, allow extra time (at least 6 months) to deal with unforeseen challenges such as leaky roofs and to schedule contractors. The booming Saskatchewan economy means most contractors are very busy and scheduling can become a challenge.

Municipalities should consider having a general contractor manage the project. Having a municipal staff member saved a significant amount of money, but was quite a challenge for someone with limited experience in this area, and added a significant workload.

The most beneficial lesson learned was to create a space that was flexible! Every decision – from the placement of lights to types of flooring; from portable staging to wall colour was done with “flexible” as the key, so that the space can be utilized for a wide variety of events and programs, now and as the community grows.

The overall lesson is that community based dreams can succeed through the partnership of the municipality with businesses, community groups and volunteers. The Humboldt and District Gallery is an example of a contemporary art gallery created in a historic building.

Please submit your completed nomination package to:

**E-mail:** [awards@municipalawards.ca](mailto:awards@municipalawards.ca) or

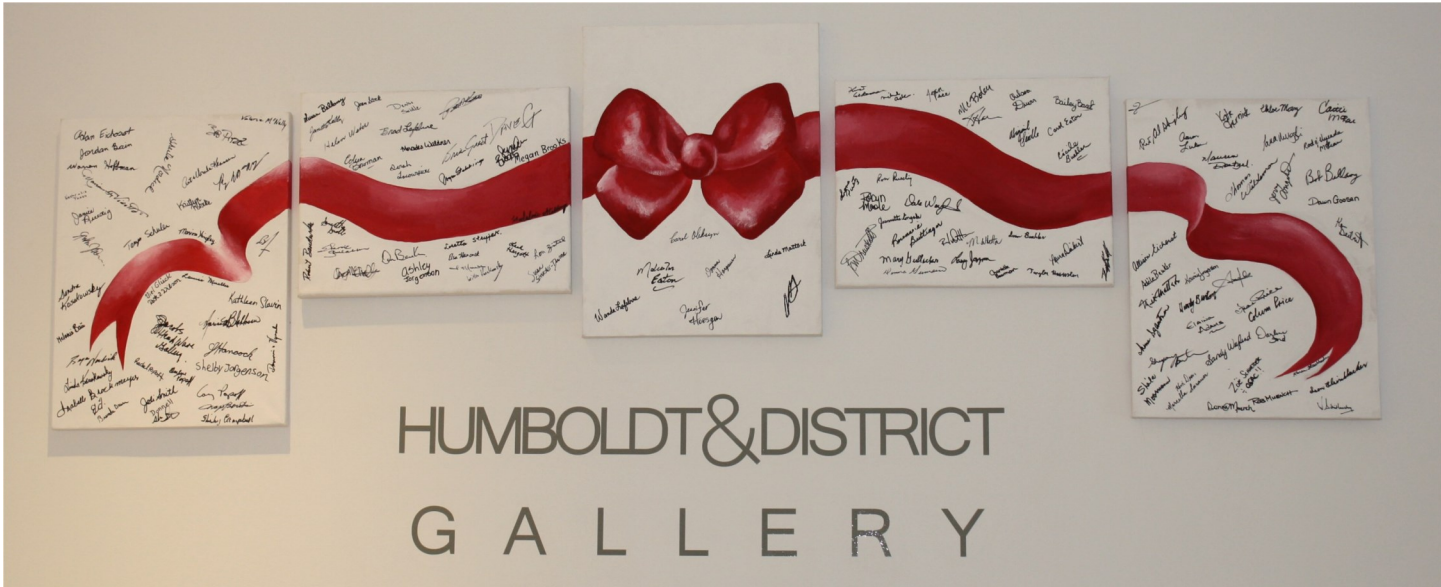
**Fax:** Attn: Saskatchewan Municipal Awards Program, 306.798-2568; or

**Mail:** Saskatchewan Municipal Awards, Room 1010 – 1855 Victoria Avenue, Regina, SK S4P 3T2

**Contact:** Phone No. 306.525.4398

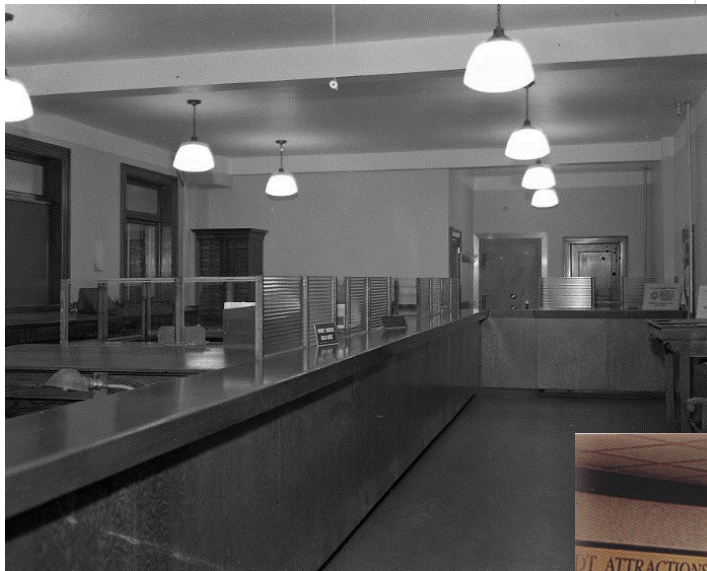
***Thank you for submitting a nomination for the 2014 Saskatchewan Municipal Awards.***







Historic—photos  
of building  
exterior and interior





Exterior Renovations,  
Sprinkler System work, and  
new HVAC system





## Interior Renovations

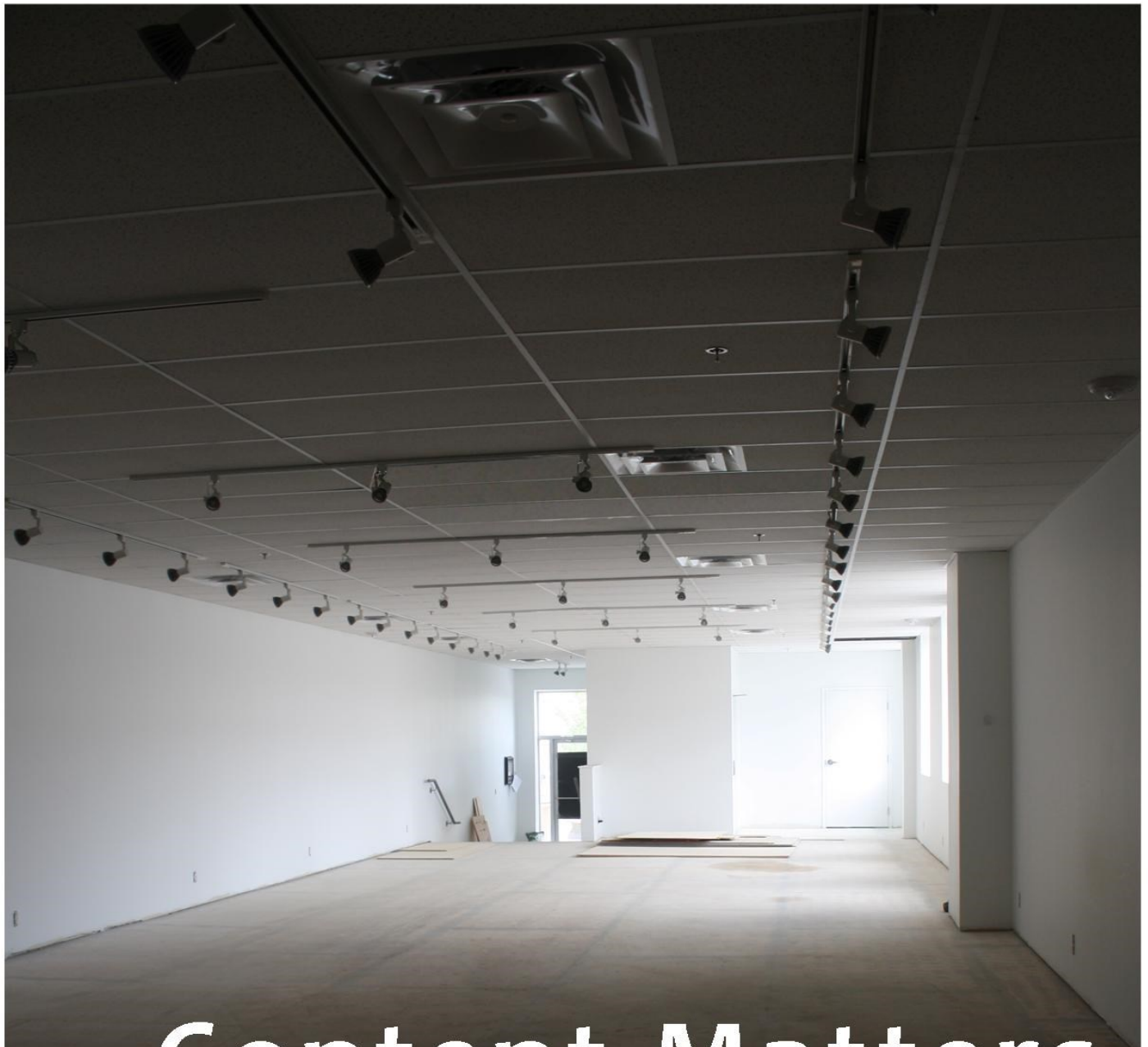


## Renovations to ensure accessibility





Promotional material to encourage community ideas for the space!



# Content Matters

This is the Merchants Bank of Canada building devoid of all content.

We are creating this exciting new community space for creative arts, culture and heritage that will open in January 2014. We invite you to help us define the content. What do you want to see as creative events and activities in Humboldt? Share your thoughts with us...



**Humboldt & District Museum & Gallery**  
Corner of Main Street and Sixth Avenue

humboldt.museum@sasktel.net  
(306) 682-5226 | [www.humboldtmuseum.ca](http://www.humboldtmuseum.ca)



## Gallery Opening—January 10, 2014

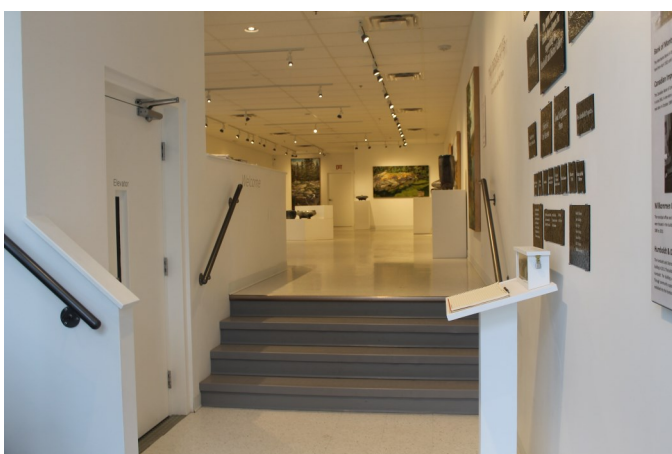


Instead of cutting a ribbon, a work of ribbon art was created and everyone at the opening signed it, and it now hangs over the reception desk.





Present day







## Community Engagement

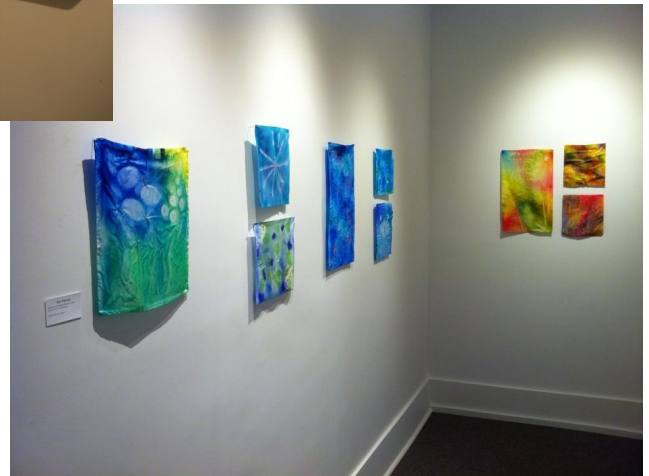






High School art exhibit

## Community Exhibits



Adult Art Classes

Community Engagement Piece—visitors create a flower petal about what they love about Humboldt and put them on the wall.

