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# Artists Look Back - Part 1: MCAA Turns 60

*By Svetlana Artemoff*



I didn't realize what I was getting into! It seemed like a wonderful idea if we could convince the Grace Hudson Museum to feature a juried retrospective art exhibit of our members' work. Besides featuring their talent, it would document the group's contribution to the historical and cultural fabric of the community.

The Museum's Director, Sherrie Smith-Ferri and Curator, Marvin Schenck warmly welcomed our idea, especially when we all realized that the timing would be perfect to celebrate our 60th Anniversary in 2014.

Besides the art exhibit, scheduled to open on March 29, 2014, we embarked on creating a DVD with oral histories from some of the earliest MCAA members and using archive materials from the organization's scrapbooks, which were at the Held-Poage Memorial Library for safekeeping.

MCAA President Dorleen McBride and I spent many hours pouring through the articles and photos of just this first album. The cover was decorated like an artist's pallet and once you turned the first page, it was like stepping back in time.

We learned that initially, Winona Tomanoczy, hosted a group of 22 artists at her home in Elk to discuss the Boonville Fair Art Shows and the possibility of encouraging art in Mendocino County came up. The idea grew and the group became legally organized in March of 1954. Their first president was Andy DeGrassi of Redwood Valley, followed by Mrs. Edward Axt of Ukiah in 1955; Mrs. Gus Barth of Mendocino in 1956-57; and Carl Sauer of Ft. Bragg in 1958.

It wasn't easy in those days getting to and from the coast, so eventually it made sense that the valley section would become an independent group with it's own president, Mrs. Craig Bosworth in 1958.

1958 was a busy year for the group as they partnered with the Chamber of Commerce for their Beaux Arts Ball and participated in the Second annual Art Exhibit at the Redwood Empire Fair.

I had to smile when I looked at the vintage hairdos and fashions of those days and not without a bit of nostalgia, yet it felt like I could just step back into history and join the fun.

And how about this graphic design? It was the group's first logo. I haven't gotten very far yet, but I'll just leave that for my next installment!

Svetlana Artemoff, a local artist and MCAA member, is currently serving as the Special Event Coordinator their 60th Anniversary Celebration and can be reached at 462-3279 or vial email at [lartemoff@yahoo.com](mailto:lartemoff@yahoo.com).