



News Release - Hawai'i State Legislature

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State Legislators take on First Friday armed with Art

HONOLULU – The Hawai'i State Legislature opened its doors for March's First Friday event with the 2nd Annual "Art at the Capitol," an opportunity for the public to view over 430 works of art that are a part of the State's Art in Public Places program. The free and public event was held from 5 – 7 p.m. on March 5, 2010.

The floors of the Hawaii State Capitol crawled with hundreds of people strolling in and out of the offices of state lawmakers to view state-owned art pieces. Forty-five offices in both the House and the Senate participated.

"It was a successful event with many of our constituents and their families coming to view the artwork collection from the Art in Public Places Program," said Senator Brian Taniguchi (D-10 Manoa, Mo'ili'ili, McCully, Makiki) who has led efforts to open the Capitol on First Friday. "I was happy that many took advantage of the opportunity to see art that is normally not seen or available."

Event-goers met and talked with some of the original artists, including Satoru Abe, Yasuko Abeshima, Marianne Au, Nicholas Blecker, Allyn Bromley, Ramon Camarillo II, Kathy Chock, Shelley Ferreira, Norm Graffam Jr, Tom Haar, Lily Hasegawa, Yoshio Hayashi, Charlene Hughes, Anne Irons, May Izumi, Kloe Kang, Sanit Khewhok, Amos Kotomori, Karen Lee, Alan Leitner, Rochelle Lum, Hanae Uechi Mills, Shigeeru Miyamoto, Barbara Miyano-Young, Yukio Ozaki, Aaron Padilla, George Woollard, Mamoru Sato, Esther Shimazu, Lori Uyehara, and Doug Young.

They were also able to meet and greet state lawmakers and talk to them about their art choices.

"We, the Legislators, were more than happy to open our doors and showcase these precious pieces of artwork for all to enjoy," said Sen. Taniguchi. "Since most of the artwork is masterpieces of local artists, we are also promoting art in Hawaii."

Live music from the Hawai'i Youth Symphony set the mood as students played compositions on the corners of the second and third floors, allowing the melodies to resound into the volcanic-like opening of the Capitol building.

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Baron Gushiken, a staff member in the Office of Rep. Cindy Evans, conducted tours of the Capitol, sharing with guests the history of the Capitol, its building design and the symbolism behind key features. For example, renowned local artist Tadashi Sato designed the mosaic "Aquarius" located on the ground floor. Its interlocking patterns of colors represent the Hawaiian waters, giving the impression, if viewed from a top floor, of a large opening into the ocean. The building itself represents the volcano that created the Hawaiian Islands, and the pond surrounding the building represents the ocean.

Some of the art on display were unconventional. Rep. Tom Brower (D-23 Waikiki, Kakaako, Ala Moana) brought his personal collection, not bought with state funds, of modern and classic chairs to share with visitors. He had pieces from well-known designers such as Phillippe Starck, Verner Panton, and Charles and Ray Eames.

"We are excited to take this opportunity to show people how accessible art is in everyday life and in public spaces. It's extremely fascinating to find art in everyday objects," said Rep. Brower about the art event and his collection.

Sen. Taniguchi was pleased with the success of the second annual event and looks forward to more in the coming years.

"In view of the tough economic times facing all of us, we are pleased that the Legislators were able to offer the public a 'free' event which was enjoyed and appreciated by many," said Sen. Taniguchi.

"We look for further support and cooperation in future programs, projects and causes of mutual interest and benefit," he added.

Works of art are placed in public areas of the State Capitol as part of the State Foundation on Culture and the Arts' "Art in Public Places" program, which seeks to enhance the environmental quality of state public buildings and spaces for the enjoyment and enrichment of the public; cultivate the public's awareness, understanding and appreciation of visual arts; contribute toward the development and recognition of a professional artistic community; and acquire, preserve, and display works of art expressive of the character of the Hawaiian Islands, the multicultural heritage of its people, and the various creative interests of its artists. The program was established in 1967, and was the first program of its kind in the nation.

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