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## The Heart in Orinda's Art

By Laurie Snyder



"Art is a long-time interest of mine," says Susan Mautner, recently seen standing next to another of the works chosen by the Art in Public Places Committee to brighten the community. Created by Richard Starks, this sculpture is displayed inside the offices of the city's Planning Department. Photo Ohlen Alexander

Visual Arts Competition to appreciate just what a difference this level of professional instruction makes.

Mautner notes that exhibits at the Orinda Library Art Gallery also play a crucial role. "OAC helps artists utilize that space month in and month out." In addition, she and her fellow APPC members visit with Bay Area artists to encourage them to loan pieces of their work for display, and hope to launch additional events to help a greater number of artists connect with prospective donors and art collectors.

For those reading this and thinking they don't have the time to serve on the APPC or another city commission, Mautner stresses that the commitment need not be onerous. The APPC meets "during the day, once a month. Meetings don't go more than an hour-and-a-half. It's just a very delightful group of people to work with. And beyond the hours of this meeting, I have my reporting to the Arts Council."

The reward, she says, is priceless - a sense of inspiration and accomplishment. It touches her deeply each time she sees people of all ages "walking through the library gallery, enjoying the art work."

To learn more about how you can apply to become a member of a city commission or committee, visit the City of Orinda's website: [www.cityoforinda.org/](http://www.cityoforinda.org/). To become a member of the Orinda Arts Council, visit: [www.orindaartscouncil.org/](http://www.orindaartscouncil.org/).

Winston Churchill once asked, "What is the use of living, if it be not to strive for noble causes and to make this muddled world a better place for those who will live in it after we are gone? How else can we put ourselves in harmonious relation with the great verities and consolations of the infinite and the eternal?"

Those words are both an excellent description of what volunteers do daily for town and country and of the positive difference arts supporters make in Orinda each year - something Susan Mautner has experienced firsthand.

"I was pretty new to the community and looking for some way to get involved," says Mautner, who moved to Orinda when her oldest son was in junior high - just as Orinda was about to incorporate. "I was very inspired by the amount of volunteerism going on all around me for the sake of the community."

Mautner, who began studying art history at UC Berkeley, became truly hooked on the arts while volunteering as a museum docent in Seattle. After returning to the Bay Area in the mid-1980s, she put her training to use for the Orinda Arts Council.

An avid booster of the arts in Orinda's schools, she has been president of OAC's board of directors and has also taken a special interest in art installations in community gathering spots. Four years ago, she was appointed to serve as the liaison from OAC to the City of Orinda's Art in Public Places Committee. Her dual roles now are intertwined. "My part is in the area of making sure kids get art as part of their education." Orinda's students benefit because the APPC, OAC, and Educational Foundation of Orinda collaborate to ensure that instruction is delivered by teachers who have formal arts training - unlike in other schools where the arts are a "frill." One only need attend OAC's spring



According to Richard Starks, creator of "Open-Ended," one of the newest pieces to arrive on Orinda's public arts scene, the Cor-ten steel used is known for its characteristic oxide patina, which will mature "in about 8-10 years and is said to form a protective 'rust' layer over the base metal, thereby halting the formation of further rusting." Photo Ohlen Alexander

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