

'Come listen to a painting'

Dale Clark has opened his own gallery in Warkworth, and his first show pairs paintings with songs from his new CD.

by FRED HENDERSON
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Dale Clark. Want to meet him? Just go to Re-lease, the new art gallery at 39 Main Street, in Warkworth, anytime between 12:00 and 5:00, Thursday through Sunday. And don't forget to take a dog biscuit. No, no, no, not for Dale! For Tofino, his artistic assistant, part Chow and Samoy.

Dale grew up in Bowmanville, studied design in college, and then spent the next thirteen years in Toronto, creating brands for large companies including *The Globe and Mail* and Tim Hortons. He then shifted his focus to social causes, developing campaigns for Pollution Probe, Invest in Kids and various hospitals.

Three years ago he escaped to Campbellford, to spend some serious time on developing his three loves: music, art and writing, free from the distractions of work, friends and city life.

Dale admits a lot of self-discipline was required to focus on his

own work. "There are two parts to being a successful artist: the creative and the foreman. Some artists write one line, then lie on the couch for three weeks and say 'Look what I did.' They may have the creative but they don't have the foreman. The foreman is the one who at the end of the day says 'You're useless, you've created nothing, get to work.' Once you balance both parts and understand them, you can actually get something done."

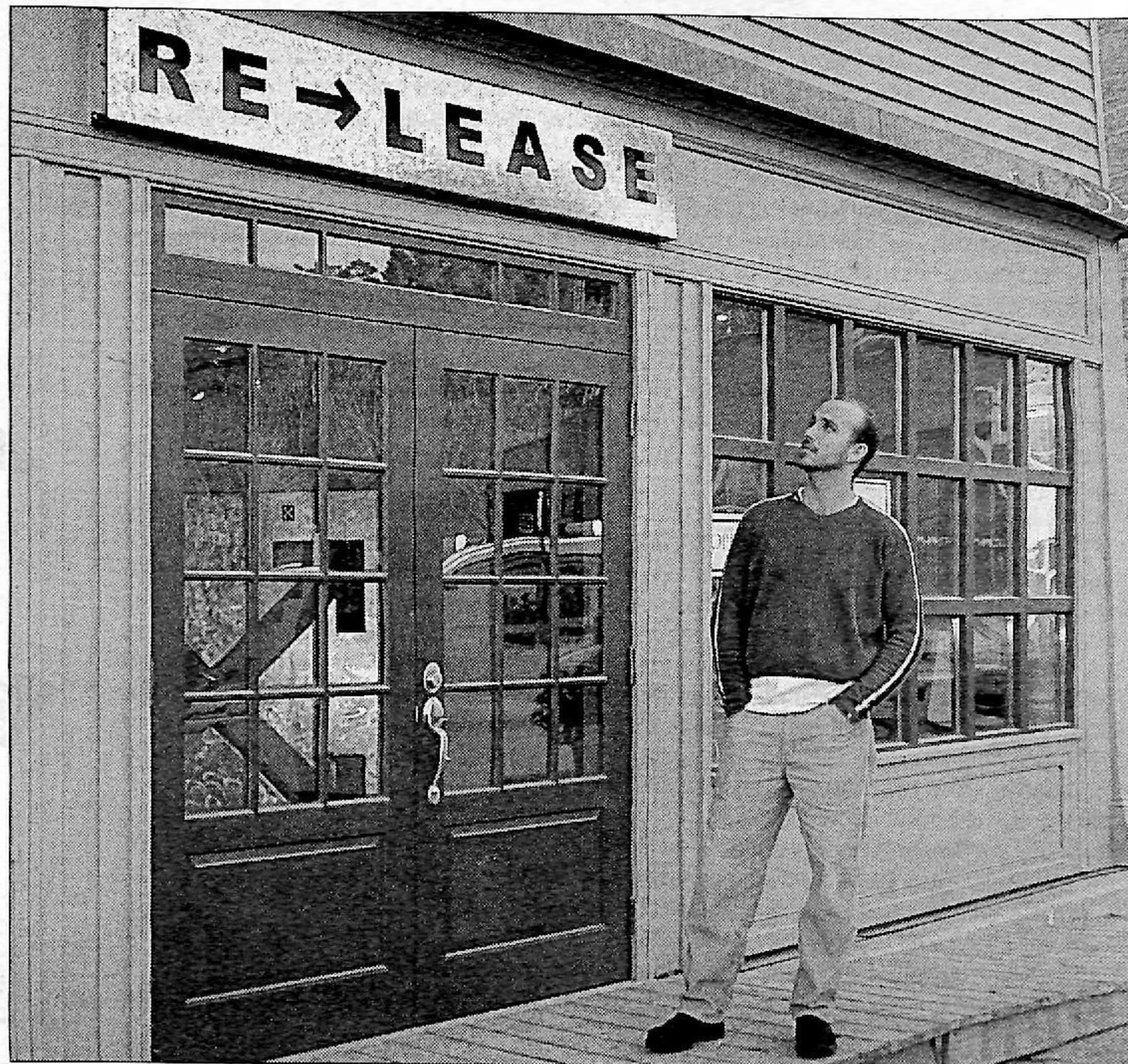
His philosophy worked. You'll now find Dale in his own gallery, the completely restored Orange Hall in Warkworth, and it's worth a visit to see the building, meet Dale and experience his work.

Why Warkworth? "It was just a feeling. I knew when I came here that this was the place. I feel like I've found a home and a place to be creative and productive."

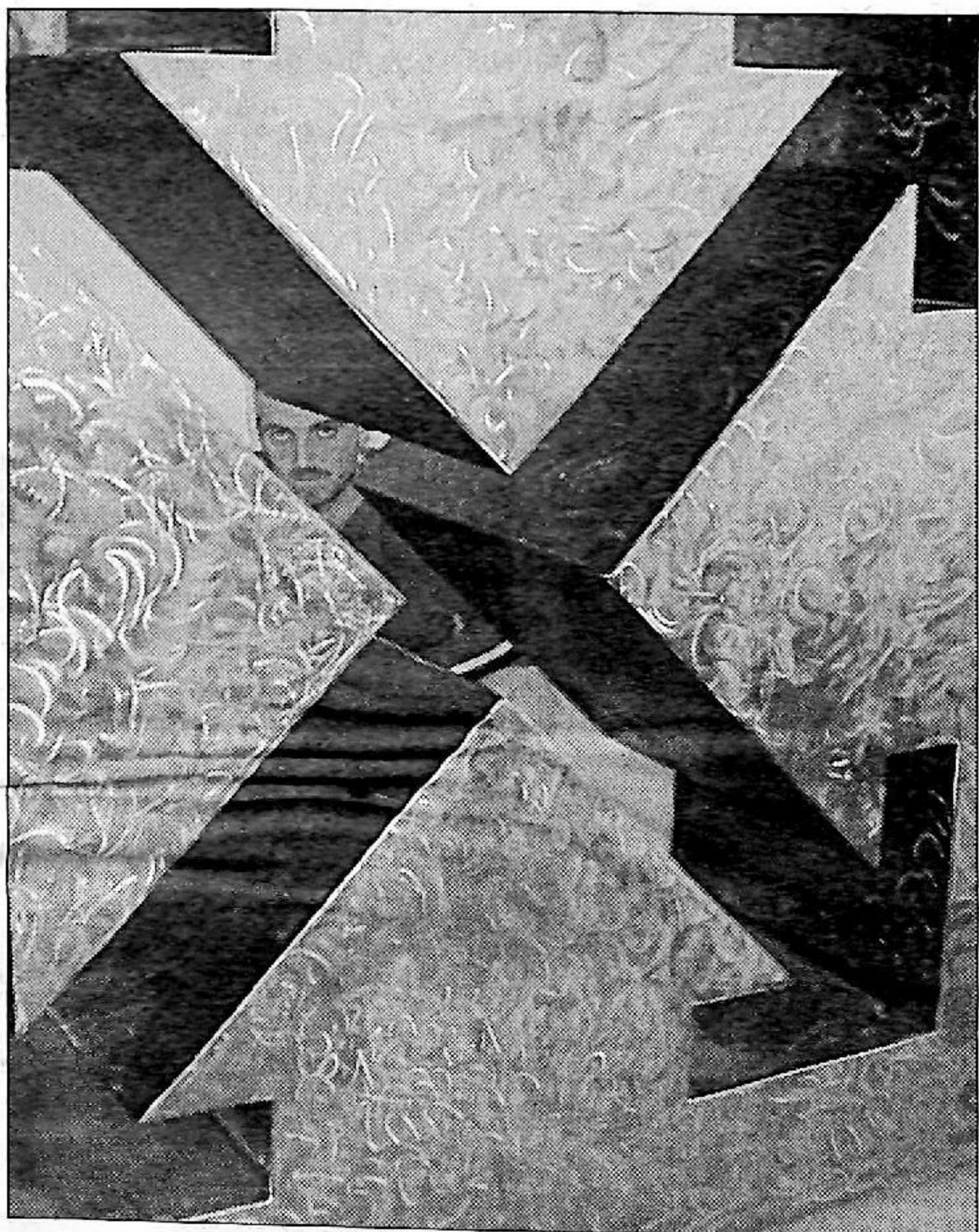
Not sure galleries are your thing? Give this one a try; it's different. The focal point of the gallery is the Re-lease sculpture. Weighing 1200 pounds and composed of brushed aluminum, the six-by-six-by-two-foot monolith was designed by Dale and built by Steve Redden, famous for building the giant Toonie located in Campbellford. Once assembled, the structure was delivered by tow-truck and then placed inside the gallery with a front-end loader.

The huge icon, in the shape of a giant X with arrows, sits immediately inside the front door so that it is the first object you see when you enter the gallery. It is quite imposing.

For Dale, it has enormous symbolism: "It's all about positive and negative energy. Every time you meet an opposition in your life, you learn more and more about what you are fighting against. First you think it's the world, then you think it's the huge corporations, then you focus on another person and then finally, you find out it's really just yourself. I've learned that opposition is good as much as it's bad. Without it life doesn't function. Creativity and depression; they all play a part and when you learn to enjoy them - that's when the fun happens."



Fred Henderson photos



The idea for the sculpture originated several years ago when Dale was working on a book of poetry. Although that project didn't happen, Dale believes in always saving ideas for future use: "That's the neat thing about creativity. Don't ever throw away ideas. They may not come to fruition at the time but at some point they will all come together."

Once you are past the sculpture, the gallery takes on a more traditional look with a large open space with paintings on the wall. However there's more here than meets the eye. There's also something for the ears. On a table in the centre of the room is a Walkman. Pick it up, put on the headphones and turn it on. You're listening to Dale's latest CD, *Raspberries and Gasoline*.

No doubt you've listened to a CD before. And I'm sure you've looked at paintings as well. But have you ever combined the two experiences?

Walk around the room. For each track on the CD, you'll find an associated painting on the wall. According to Dale "The songs allow you to see the paintings and the paintings help you

to understand the songs." A poster that appears in the window of the gallery sums it up. "Come listen to a painting and see the music."

Dale's show is on until the 23rd of November. However there is more to come. Opening on November 28th, will be an artistic showing by Leanne Baskett "Content vs. Content". Content as in "what's in something" vs. content "as in feeling good."

And down the road? For Dale it's time to focus on writing the screenplay for a movie, set in a small town, something he's had in the back of his mind for years. According to Dale: "This town was already painted in my mind even before I moved here. Now I'm walking inside the world that is my set. I'm learning about life, people's stories, relationships, goodness, art; all these important things are here in one location. Whereas before I was just a city guy writing, now I'm actually here."

"Keep watching because the unexpected will happen."

For more information you can visit his web site at www.re-lease.ca.