

# A Brighton Arts Council gala evening



The Pridmore Collection, an innovative way to exhibit artwork, made its debut last week at the Brighton Arts Council gala. Photo: Ray Yurkowski

By Ray Yurkowski  
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**EMC News - Brighton** The Gates, the new headquarters of the Brighton Arts Council (BAC), celebrated a milestone anniversary last week with some special guests, a whimsical, one-night-only art display and a somewhat controversial, yet innovative way to exhibit art.

It was one year, to the date, (July 27) the journey began to develop the property into an arts and culture centre, BAC president Ron Waddling told the crowd gathered for the gala event. Located at the entrance to Presqu'île Provincial Park, the biggest tourist attraction in Northumberland County, and with the Waterfront Trail right at their doorstep, it's a good fit for a regional tourism centre promoting attractions for, not only Brighton but also the entire county.

The special guests were Order of Canada recipients, Jane and Tony Urquhart.

"What is very special and truly encouraging to the Brighton Arts Council is your attendance here tonight and your generous support to our local community," Waddling said as he presented the internationally acclaimed artists with an honorary membership to the local arts organization.

Gala attendees were treated to an exclusive, one-time outdoor art installation from Warkworth artist Clive Russell.

"I've been an architect most of my life and am used to thinking visually, in form and space and dimension," he said. "I often noticed the black painted plywood figures in people's yards along country roads—a silhouette of a cowboy leaning against a



Brighton Arts Council president Ron Waddling (centre) presents Order of Canada recipients Tony and Jane Urquhart with honorary memberships to the local arts organization. Photo: BAC

tree is one of the standards—and I thought it unfortunate that such a simple, flexible

medium and a local folk art tradition was so limited in expression. I decided to see



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what else I could do with it, while expressing some of the things that I see and enjoy about life and culture here in Northumberland County."

"There is something wondrous about seeing replicas, cut-outs, crude as they are, of these masterpieces from another time and place, set into our landscape," added Russell. "It makes me realize how beautiful our surroundings are, and how precious is our time here."

Many patrons at the gala show embraced the Pridmore Collection, which took

high-resolution images of original works by BAC artists and printed them directly on acrylic sheets. Some, not so much.

"This collection provides a buoyant representation of works ranging from oil paintings to photography to sketches," explained Waddling.

The process, says creator Brian Pridmore, was an accident.

With a background in the cosmetic industry providing point-of-purchase advertising, he had to have "very high-end, sophisticated equipment—software and printers of which there are only three in Canada."

"When you look at it, it looks like the art is jumping out at you," he explained.

The collection featured 17 artists and the majority didn't have any opportunity to see their art in the new format until the night of the show.

"The reason was because there wasn't enough time," said Pridmore. "Some were overwhelmed—at least 75 per cent loved it—others were negative."

Is the process destined to be the new wave of displaying art?

"I don't know. I've been doing this for only three weeks," said Pridmore. "I'm trying to figure out if I'm going forward with this."

"This was done for the members of the Brighton Arts Council," he added. "I can help the artists present their work in a different way. Some said the way their work has been presented is better than the original."