

## Annual Report June 22, 2022

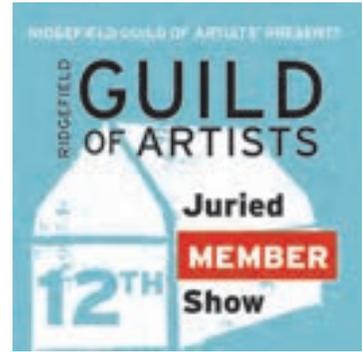
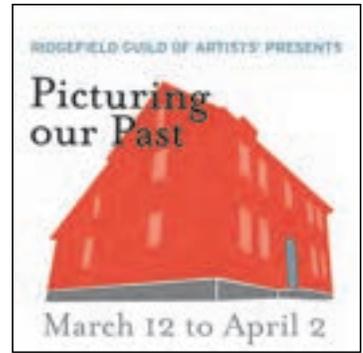
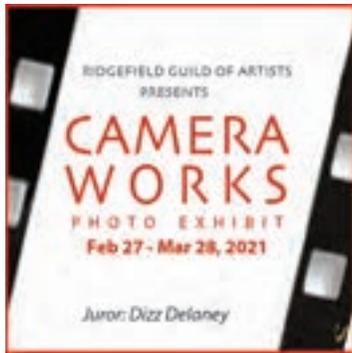
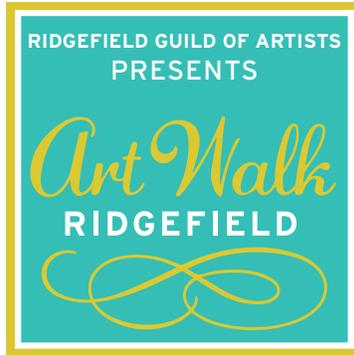
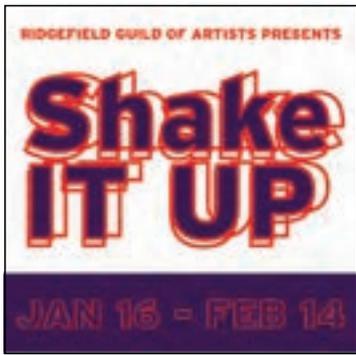


**Original Guild Members in our Norway Maple Tree circa 1970's**

### **Overview of Organization**

Forty-eight years ago, the Ridgefield Guild of Artists opened its doors as a place for artists to gather, bringing art and creativity to the Ridgefield community. From its humble beginnings as a clubhouse-of-sorts for a couple dozen local artists to today, with 300+ members, we continue to offer quality gallery space, education, and special community collaborative events for Ridgefield and our surrounding communities, with thousands served annually. The Guild's mission is to encourage and inspire the creation of art and offer artistic opportunities to our artists, young and old. We are happy to report that our reputation as a vibrant and friendly arts organization grows and grows year after year, as we continue our dedication to meet the demands of serving this wonderful artistic community.

**JANUARY 2021 - JUNE 2022 AT THE GUILD**



## **Another Different Kind of a Year with COVID: Update**

COVID has certainly changed the way we do things at the Guild, in fact, the way we *all* do things these days. Though we were able to open our doors again in 2021/22, it was met with some trepidation (understandably) by us and our members and patrons. The ups and downs and morphing of COVID has created challenges, but we have remained flexible in our scheduling and sympathetic to our Guild community's concerns and needs. We've come a long way since the early days of the pandemic when everyone was scrambling to figure out how to live with it. Our hope is that our new normal will end up being much like the normal of days past, and we can return to a full line-up of shows and classes, along with community events, as we move forward.

## **Year in Review: Creative Inspirations**

### **Exhibitions**

***Note: Our fiscal year coincides with the calendar, so in addition to our offerings for 2021, we have included January to June 2022.***

Our gallery shows are the foundation of our arts organization. The various shows presented by the Ridgefield Guild of Artists enable our member artists to bring their creativity to the larger community.

This past year, despite continued pandemic challenges, we managed to sell well over a hundred pieces of art through in-person shows, our online virtual gallery, Art Walk and Festive Home. With the success of quickly pivoting to online galleries at the start of the pandemic in the spring of 2020, in 2021, we continued to offer online and in-person shows, giving our artists more opportunities to exhibit with the added bonus of providing additional revenue for the Guild when we really needed it. We continue to offer our in-gallery shows in conjunction with an online gallery, thanks to the efforts of Chris Perry making it happen.

### ***January - December, 2021***

***Shake it Up:*** Member Themed Show (January—February) in the gallery and online. 63 artists participated.

***Spread the Love:*** Member Show (February) online only - a valentine inspired exhibit. 62 artists participated.

***Camera Works Juried Photography Show:*** (February - March) in the gallery and online - our biennial photography exhibit, juried by Dizz Delaney of Getty Images. 69 artists accepted.

**Focus On: Portraiture:** (April-May) A second installment of our open 'Focus On' series presented in our gallery and online. 71 artists participated.

**11<sup>th</sup> Annual Juried Member Show:** (May-June) In-gallery and online show juried by Paul Efstathiou, the Director of Contemporary Art at Hollis Taggart Gallery in New York City and Southport CT. 105 artists accepted.

**Summer Bedlam:** (June-July) Guild's crazy hang-it-yourself-annual member show back in our gallery. 47 artists participated.

**ArtWalk:** (August – September) Our annual community event bringing artists to the streets of downtown Ridgefield and in store windows. 55 artists participated.

**Artist-in-Residence Program Gallery Exhibition:** (August – September) An exhibit culminating a yearlong residency of 5 artists who worked in our small studio, each for 10 weeks during the pandemic.

**44<sup>th</sup> Annual Juried Show:** (September – October) in the gallery and online -juried by George Billis of the George Billis Gallery, Westport, CT. 101 artists accepted.

**16<sup>th</sup> Annual Festive Home:** (November – December) in the gallery – We brought back Festive Home after a year's hiatus, this time collaborating with the Habitat for Humanity's Re-store in Danbury, providing furniture as the backdrop for works by our participating artists and artisans. 42 artists and 51 artisans participated.

### ***January – June 2022***

**Color:** [January-February] Annual member themed show - online due to post-holiday COVID upsurge. 98 participated.

**2-1-2 Small Group Juried Show:** (February-March) juried by Georgette Gouveia, Editor-in-Chief of WAG Magazine. Five artists selected, two in the front, one in the middle and two in the back galleries. Hence the name!

**Picturing Our Past:** (March-April) An open and collaborative show with the Ridgefield Historical Society in celebration of their 20<sup>th</sup> year, included original art from members and artifacts on-loan from the Historical Society. 33 participated.

**Coming of Age:** [April-May] A special show curated by member Nancy Moore, featuring 70 artists over 60, including individual statements describing their experience as over-60 artists.

**12<sup>th</sup> Annual Juried Member Show:** [May-June] juried by Lisa Cooper, owner of the Elisa Contemporary Gallery in Riverdale, NY. 74 artists accepted.

## Ridgefield Guild of Artists' Outreach

Ridgefield Guild of Artists is constantly working to bring art to various venues in the community, often joining with other non-profits, to reach out to an even wider audience. During these challenging times, collaborations have been more important than ever. The various non-profits in town worked together to build a stronger artistic community.

This past year's collaborations included partnerships with The Ridgefield Historical Society, The Ridgefield Library, The Ridgefield Arts Council, The Ridgefield Theater Barn, and the Artful Gives Initiative. The following is a few outreach highlights from 2021 and early 2022:

- ***Little League Sponsorship:*** In the spring of 2021 and 2022, we continued our sponsorship of one of the Ridgefield Little League T-Ball Teams.
- ***ARTalks:*** This program is a long-running collaboration between the Guild and the Ridgefield Library. This very popular lecture/workshop series attracts more than 500 people annually. 2021/22 ARTalks were both virtual and in-person.
- ***Art Walk 2021:*** Our annual Art Walk event gains more momentum every year. This event offered 55 artists the opportunity to display their work in storefronts in downtown Ridgefield. The event brought hundreds of visitors to our town with artists selling over 100 pieces of art, including original artwork, prints, hand-crafted cards and small works. Art Walk is fast becoming a town favorite with its outdoor, summer setting.
- ***Bow Wow Dog Event:*** In 2021, we were asked to collaborate in a downtown event by providing artists to paint large fiberglass dogs. The dogs were displayed along Main Street during the summer and auctioned off in September. The Guild was a beneficiary of some of the proceeds from the *Artful Gives'* inaugural event (a non-profit wing of RPAC).
- ***Education:*** In 2021 and the first half of 2022, we were able to start up our education program after being closed for close to a year in 2020 due to COVID. Taking baby steps, we offered a combination of online and in-person classes. Naturally, we were all a bit trepidatious about getting back to the classroom. But now, we are working to get our in-class program fully running again by the fall of 2022. Stay tuned.
- ***Artist-In-Residence Program:*** With the cancellation of our classes in the spring of 2020 and our small studio sitting idle, we offered an Artist-in-Residence program in our small studio space beginning in January of 2021. We had four residencies with five artists, each ten weeks long. This program culminated with a small group show featuring each of the artists and the work they produced during their time at the Guild

- **Summer Program 2021:** For the second year, we offered a modified version of our popular art-themed summer kids' program, limited numbers, social distanced with mask-wearing a must. It was a general all-around art program with activities in murals, paper sculpture, clay casting, portrait art, mono-printing, slime, and so much more. Kids really seemed to need the creative outlet we could offer them even more than ever last summer since the program was sold out! This year's program begins next week.
- **Ridgefield Responds:** Earlier this June, the Guild participated in the *Ridgefield Responds'* Ukraine benefit in Ballard Park by asking our artists to paint and donate 12 x 12 paintings of sunflowers to be sold at the event. The sales of the paintings raised over \$1,000, to be sent to Ukraine for the many humanitarian efforts in that war-torn country.

### **Membership**

As of May 31, 2022, the Guild has a total of 335 members with the majority of members coming from Ridgefield and surrounding towns and New York state.

### **Financial Status During Pandemic**

As with other local non-profit organizations, Ridgefield Guild of Artists was hit hard by the unexpected and immediate closure in mid-March of 2020. All classes and exhibitions were stopped for the for-seeable future. We went to work immediately to consider ways to stay afloat during the uncertain times ahead, while continuing to keep our member artists engaged. We moved our gallery shows online and applied for (and received) two forgivable, federal PPP loans, along with several state and local grants. We successfully brought three of our in-person classes online through a virtual class setting. We continued to search for cost-cutting measures and other sources of income. We got by. We thank all who have been able to continue to support us by joining or renewing their memberships, as well as participating in our online and (finally, yeah!) in-gallery shows. This is a major source of funding for us, helping to keep us alive and growing during these unprecedented times.

**The following pages offer an overview of the Guild's financials.**

## Goals For 2022/23

**COVID Preparedness:** We will continue to follow federal, state, local and CDC guidelines and remain flexible in planning to keep our barn open safely for exhibitions and in-person classes.

**Building our Educational Programs:** We look toward safe and practical solutions, as we continue to work to offer a safe environment for our educational programs for adults and children. We are eager to get back to our pre-pandemic capacity and are in the process of hiring a part-time Education Coordinator to help us re-build and grow our offerings beginning this fall. We are looking into offering ceramics and online class series, along with more workshops and painting parties.

**Festive Home:** After the success of last year's Festive Home, our largest annual fundraiser, we are working to move away from "purchasing" holiday goods, to presenting many more local artisans' wares to sell. We hope to partner again with the Re-store in Danbury and the Ridgefield Thrift Shop to create a homey environment with objects and artwork for "living and giving."

**Continue to be a Venue for our Artists to Exhibit:** This is a main goal for the Guild year after year, as it is big part of mission. In addition to the variety of exhibitions *in* our gallery barn, we offer Art Walk at the end of summer to bring our members' works to our community at large.

**Ridgefield Community Outreach:** We will continue to collaborate with the various non-profit arts organizations in town, bringing art in its many shapes and forms to the greater Ridgefield community. We also continue to look to a variety of community projects to present our artists' talents out into Ridgefield, such as painting fiberglass dogs for the Bow Wow event, collaborating with the Historical Society for the special "Picturing Our Past" exhibit, creating sunflower paintings for Ridgefield Responds' Ukraine fundraiser, and offering artist participation in the Ridgefield Art Council's Make Music Day events.

In addition, we continue to strive for racial equity in art world. We at the Guild recognize that the arts have the unique ability to connect people across the barriers that divide us. We promise to be sensitive to these issues and will work towards this equality in our exhibitions and educational programing moving forward.

### **General Gallery and Studio Use:**

- We will continue to offer studio rental space during slower months.
- We encourage other arts organizations to rent our gallery space (when time allows) for exhibits. KMAA is planning a juried exhibit in 2023.
- We were so grateful to Nancy Moore for offering to curate the amazing "Coming of Age" show this past spring. We always welcome ideas for special visiting exhibits or themed shows.

- We hope to bring back our very successful Artist-In-Residence program at some time in the future when space and time permits.

### ***General Ongoing Administrative and Building Upgrades:***

- We will continue to look for savings in all aspects of our expenses to relieve the pressure of the lingering pandemic and rising inflation.
- Due to a very generous donation, we plan a lighting upgrade to our gallery spaces in the coming months.
- We plan a review and update of the Guild By-Laws in 2022/23.
- As always, we continue the necessary maintenance of the barn with the town. We look toward repairing/replacing the outdoor stairs in the near future. We appreciate the town's help, advise, and expertise when needed.

### **Giving Thanks**

We thank all our board members for their dedication to the Guild: Mary Harold, Vice-President and Summer Program Director; Cindi Mullins, Secretary and Co-Creative Director; Karyn Moroney, Treasurer; Barbara Dobbin, Advocacy and Community Liaison; Tina Sturges, Hospitality; Chris Perry, Exhibitions Coordinator; Mara Freeman, Graphics Designer and Website Manager; and Erin Nazzaro, Co-Creative Director. Each in their own way, gives much of their time and talents to meet our mission and improve our offerings to Guild members and the community at large. We are an all-volunteer and working board where everyone pitches in when needed. We also thank Patty Short, our office manager, for her invaluable multi-tasking skills *and* welcoming ways for all who come to the Guild and administering to all our needs at the Guild.

As you know, the Guild is primarily a volunteer organization. We count on and appreciate our dedicated volunteers who always come through for us with everything from receiving for shows and helping out at openings, to committee work, to tagging, painting and decorating for Festive Home, and everything in between. We are also grateful for all the help from both NCL Ridgefield chapters.

We are looking for several new board members. We govern (and exist, honestly) by dedicated folks coming forward to volunteer their time and talents to help with our mission. You can help in several specific areas: special events chairs, fundraising, PR and marketing, and coordinating volunteers. Each board member has a specific position, but since we are a working board, you must be willing to roll up your sleeves to help out when extra hands are needed. We are an easy-going group that works well together and takes pride in what we do. If interested in being considered, please email Mary Pat at [rgoa.president@gmail.com](mailto:rgoa.president@gmail.com).

Thanks to everyone who takes the time to help us out at the Guild!  
Respectfully submitted,

**Mary Pat Devine, President and Pamela Stoddart, Executive Director**