

## Saguache Artist Co-op Survey Results

### A. Narrative

Results of a survey of Saguache citizens as to the need for, and viability of, an artists co-operative in Saguache, were both enlightening and encouraging. People were overwhelmingly in agreement that there is a need for such a support system for local artists. Opinions as to how that should happen and what form it should take were varied, thoughtful, and reveal a need for more thorough investigation into an optimal form to best suit the needs of local artists. Of the approximately 40 surveys distributed throughout the community, 27 were returned completed. What follows is a compilation of answers to questions asked on the survey, and a brief interpretation of those responses. In some cases, multiple responses are appropriate and were expected, so numbers will not always adhere to a breakdown of 27.

#### 1. Do you perceive a need for an artist cooperative in Saguache?

24 respondents said, yes, there is a need; 3 responded maybe; while no one thought there was no need. One comment was that a co-op or showcase of artists work may attract new residents, visitors and money to town, and build community.

#### 2. What geographic area should the scope of the co-op cover?

3 thought just Saguache town proper; 6 thought town and specified surrounding area; 9 preferred an area defined as under-represented, (where exhibition space does not already exist,); and 5 preferred to have it open to those having a mailing address of 81149. Other suggestions included: all of the options listed on the survey; an area limited to the north part of San Luis Valley; open, no geographic boundaries; include Villa Grove, Bonanza and Moffat. 3 people favored starting small and expanding later, if that seems to be appropriate. One suggestion was that the co-op not compete with other galleries and shops in the area; and 3 suggested Saguache county as the geographic boundary.

#### 3. What inclusions would you suggest that would best represent the ideal co-op structure?

17 people see a need for exhibition space; 15 for gallery sales space; 17 thought an information space, where examples of artists work and directions to individual studios/galleries made sense. 8 respondents saw a need for workshop space; 3 for studio facilities. 9 thought a gathering/meeting space would be useful; and 4 favored an event-rental space. Six respondents thought all of the suggestions were good. Other suggestions were: that the artists/contributors included should determine space needs; that market research should be conducted, perhaps by Adams State or Western State students, to determine needs. One suggestion was the inclusion of a writing studio, and one individual felt the last 4 suggestions on the survey,(workshop, studio, gathering, and event rental spaces,) should all be the same space.

#### 4. What type of operating management would you prefer?

10 responses favored and artist-run organization, where artists who are exhibiting

members work the gallery. 5 respondents saw a need for an on-site director, who's salary is covered by a percentage of retail sales of art work; and 12 favored a combination of both director/artist-run management. Some felt that not all artists who would like to be included in the gallery, would be able to commit time to working the space. One felt the artists involved should determine its management; and one stated that the director position should be paid a livable wage.

5. What should hours of operation be?

4 people thought 5 days/week, 9-5 was appropriate; 1 person thought weekends only made sense; 8 people favored 5 days/week from noon-7; and 1 person felt 7 days/week best. There were many other suggestions: open 5 days, with a phone number to call on days closed; weekends in summer; salaried director on weekends, the rest of the week covered by competent artists. One person suggested Fridays, Saturdays and Sundays; another suggested those days and Mondays. One suggestion was a 4-day week, noon-7, Saturday, 10-4, and closed Monday. A 4-5 day week from 10-4 was a suggestion; and another recommended coordinating with the theater's hours of operation. 2 people suggested Thursday-Sunday to begin with and add more as demand calls for it. Another suggested 2 weekend days and 3 week days. One person didn't know.

6. How should membership be determined?

12 people favored open membership; while 17 favored a jurying process. One person suggested setting up a way for eliminating those not qualified, (jurying?). One person suggested "types" of memberships: ie., artist, patron, supporter, etc. Another suggested there should be specifications for who jurors the work.

7. What type of physical structure would best function for the co-op?

10 people favored a storefront on highway 285; 14 favored a storefront on 4<sup>th</sup> street; 17 favored sharing a structure with the Saguache visitor's center; and no one thought a shared space with the museum would work. One person specified that the shared space with visitors center should be on highway 285; another took that further to being on both 285 at the end of 4<sup>th</sup> street. One suggested seeking expert advise for the location; and 2 people favored either 285 or 4<sup>th</sup> street. 2 people said any of the suggestions would work.

8. Would you use a group studio if that were an option?

Only 4 respondents expressed an interest in using a group studio. Overwhelmingly, 21 thought they would not use a group studio space; 3 felt maybe they would, one with the specification of it being for the sake of collaboration. One felt it was not-applicable to his/her situation.

9. Would you participate in workshops, if offered?

16 felt they would; 5 would not; and 6 said maybe they would. Many indicated that the focus of the workshop would determine their participation.

10. Would you be willing to volunteer to work in the co-op space if it was:

1-2 times per week—4 people would,

1-2 times per month—14  
1-2 times per year—4  
No interest in working in the co-op—2  
Not applicable—1  
Willing, no committed schedule—2  
When in town—1

Would you consider teaching a workshop in your area of expertise?

11 indicated they would be willing to teach; 13 were not interested in teaching; 2 responded that teaching was not applicable to them; 2 expressed they would maybe consider teaching; one would teach a writing workshop, specifically.

12. Would you assist in coordinating classes or workshops?

6 people would assist in the coordination of classes and workshops; while 15 were not interested; and 1 felt it didn't apply to him/her. 4 expressed they would maybe assist; one would as a consultant; and one would assist when he/she was available.

13. Would you assist in organizing openings of shows in the gallery?

Responses to this seem to be the opposite of the question before, with 17 agreeing to assisting with show openings, and only 7 responding no. One would be happy to assist when in town; and one as a consultant.

14. Would you consider serving as a professional consultant for frequently asked questions about technique, studio operations, materials, methods, etc?

7 would serve as a consultant; 14 preferred not to; and 4 said they would possibly agree to consult. One offered to serve as a consultant in her area of expertise, which is business and marketing. One did not think it applied to him/her.

15. What ideas, needs or wants would you like to see addressed by an artists co-op?

Suggestions:

One suggestion was that it not necessarily be an artist co-op, so much as an artist showcase, or just a place to display and sell art works.

It must be run with a paid director.

It should offer quality fine art, crafts are another matter.

Marketing is important and should be local and outside the area, and similarly, what are publicity plans?

Artists who can't work the gallery can be included on consignment, with a larger percentage taken from the sale of work.

It could provide opportunities for youth to learn and exhibit work.

Maybe it could be located at a new chamber of commerce center.

Rules and guidelines, (by-laws,) need to be put in place and adhered to.

One suggestion was that a house should be provided for a "live-in" coordinator.

Conclusion:

While there is a consensus and agreement that there is a need for an artist forum or co-op in Sagauche, it's structure, location, function, format and operation is still wide open

for definition. Those who responded to the survey, were generous with their time and thoughts in answering the questions, as they were with their comments in general. It does appear an artist co-op of some form will be met enthusiastically and with energy. The next phase of research will reveal various structures that have worked for other comparable co-ops in the region, as will interviews with some survey respondents and gallery managers. A meeting of artists and interested citizens in Saguache will also help to answer any lingering questions and to start the process of bringing the co-op into viable, physical form