

ON THE TRAIL OF GREAT ART

NANAIMO IS HOME TO SOME GREAT GALLERIES AND OUTSTANDING ARTISTS.

If you want to find art in Nanaimo, just follow the banners.

The Nanaimo Art Gallery every year hosts the Festival of Banners, which sees local artists of any age and skill level design and paint banners for display around the city.

The 150 banners create a gallery in the streets that is getting notice right across North America, with requests for information coming from as far as California and Texas.

While the banners are at the moment located on light standards across the downtown and the waterfront walkway, in October they'll be sold off by silent auction at the gallery's annual Glitter Ball set.

This year's theme was *Choosing Paradise*, a celebration of the beauty of Vancouver Island.

The banners may just be the thread that weaves together much of the art across the city, which has no better champion than the new Centre for the Arts Nanaimo.

The building at 150 Commercial St. is home to the Nanaimo Art Gallery Downtown where the works of more than 100 local artists can be found in a spacious and relaxing environment.

The gallery is unique for its rental program, which allows an alternative to purchasing expensive works, and offers a solution for styles and tastes that can change over time.

The current show at the Nanaimo Art Gallery Downtown is the *Paradise Project*, an exhibition of art celebrating life on the West Coast showcasing the artwork of Vancouver



Nanaimo is a hotbed of artistic achievement in B.C. So, it's no surprise that the city is teeming with art galleries. Artist Chrissander Neustaedter works her trade at the Nanaimo Art Gallery Downtown.

Island and Gulf Island artists.

The Nanaimo Art Gallery Downtown's parent group, the Nanaimo Art Gallery, is located at Malaspina University-College's campus, and has a long tradition of enriching the Central Island region with exhibitions and education programs.

The gallery maintains a permanent collection of more than 100 works by local and international artists, plus it presents unique works by local artists and craftspeople in two levels of the gallery, and in a gift shop.

Original, local art can be found in Nanaimo's closest answer to a co-op at the Art 10 Gallery at Country Club Centre. There about 26 artists have joined forces to display everything from two-dimensional art to sculptures and pottery.

Artists take turns staffing the store, ensuring an artist is always on staff.

Also at Country Club is Yellow Bird, a framing store and gallery that houses a number of originals including acrylics, oils, watercolours, pottery, giftware and woodcarvings.

More local art can be found at the Nanaimo Arts Council Gallery at Rutherford Mall. Juried shows and open calls for entry can cover a broad range of mediums and topics. July's show will be West Coast Wildlife.

Artzi Stuff at 270 Stewart Ave. offers hand-dyed and printed fabrics, plus one-of-a-kind or custom-ordered fashion and decor accessories.