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**THE SHERIDAN PRIZE FOR ART - A FIRST EVER REGIONAL ART PRIZE FOR THE SAN FRANCISCO BAY AREA**

*A grassroots series of art prizes open to all artists in the 9 counties of the San Francisco Bay Area*

* ***OAKLAND, California***

**Announcing the launching of the first ever region-wide series of Art Awards for all artists in the Bay Area's 9 counties.**  The San Francisco Bay Area is home to many thousands of artists. While it may appear there are a large number of art galleries, art consultants, dealers and museums to showcase art, the reality is that most artists are struggling to find venues for their work to be seen. The high costs of living in the Bay Area take a larger and larger amount of the income for artists, as well as other people in the region.

Galleries can only show a small number of artists, and generally only those whose work sells in a capitalist marketplace. Museums see their charters as catering to showing their permanent collections, or if they show contemporary art it is heavily curated and filtered through an academic conceit and lens.

What artists have not had - and do not have - is an easily accessible, super inexpensive, large and open stage for their work that is not filtered through so many winnowing prejudices such as, will the work sell? Does it fit my/our curatorial biases? Can I raise my social profile by buying this work of art? Can I make money off of buying this art?

I want to create a low cost and grassroots opportunity for any artist over the age of 18 in the 9 counties to be able to showcase their own work and to win awards, with no or very little interference as to the kinds of art or who they are created by. The Sheridan Prize for Art will have 12 groups of artists based either on media or on their own self-identified artistic social group. Each group or category will have a winner and 5 honorable mentions for a total of 72 cash awards for local artists.

I have created the Sheridan Prize for Art as the beginning of a remedy for the isolation, atomization, lack of social focus, lack of acceptance, lack of press and a lack of consciousness of the art that is being created in what is a major metropolitan area of almost 8 million people.

Artists remain sidelined, ignored, condescended to and taken for granted. But the increasingly high costs of living which have shuttered many galleries and other venues, as well as the Covid pandemic, have pushed artists out of the picture in a way that does not reflect well in any way on the social structures, prejudices, cultural sophstication and visual literacy of the region. Artists are also being forced to leave the Bay Area for the same reason, mostly impossibly high rents and other costs.

This very first series of Prizes, which aim to become an annual event, will circumvent the galleries, museums, what little press there is and other social gatekeepers and instead create a new focus, hopefully the first of many, for artists to look forward to and to begin to take our rightful place as the tremendous human resource that we are and the respect that they deserve and which will be easier to see within the context of this first ever series of art prizes.

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