**Report on IIW Welded Art Photographic Exhibition**

**7th to 12th July 2019 Bratislava, Slovakia**

**by**

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**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

As part of a strategy in the IIW National Welding Capability (NWC) project to improve the image of welding, an initiative was launched at the 72nd IIW Annual Assembly and International Conference in Bratislava to show the contribution that welded art makes to society in general. It was agreed to hold a welded art photographic art exhibition close to the registration area in the Crowne Plaza hotel during the week of the 72nd IIW Annual Assembly from 7th-12th July 2019, with over 700 participants.

The organising team was Chris Smallbone, Petra Zavodna and Lesanka Barbuscakova and together with photographic exhibits by 18 very talented artists from Australia, Austria, Canada, Czech Republic, France, Slovakia, Spain, South Africa and the USA, a very successful exhibition resulted.

A number of recommendations are given, which could add more value for future welded art exhibitions.

It is envisaged that the concept of the exhibition will be expanded for future IIW Annual Assemblies as well as being used by IIW Members at their own activities such as conferences and congresses.

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1. **INTRODUCTION**

Welded art provides a number of benefits to people. As a hobby it helps improve mental health and well-being, it is a wonderful tool to improve the image of welding and in some cases provides an income for people with the appropriate artistic skills.

In any country, the enhancement of a national welding capability is very important and improving the image of welding is a key strategy to achieving this.

In conjunction with this year’s IIW Annual Assembly in Bratislava, which hosted over 700 participants, IIW and the IIW Annual Assembly Organisers decided to stage a welded art photographic exhibition mounted in the reception and lobby area of the main conference venue at the Crowne Plaza Hotel.

It was hoped that after this inaugural exhibition, the concept would continue to be expanded on at future IIW Annual Assemblies as well as future IIW Members’ activities throughout the world. Such welded art exhibitions would enhance the image of welding to a wider audience. The people allocated to the project were Chris Smallbone, Petra Zavodna and Lesanka Barbuscakova who followed an agreed Action Plan to ensure a successful exhibition.

1. **ARTISTS PORTRAYED**

There are many examples of people around the world who create such welded art. Such people were invited by Chris Smallbone to send in photographs of their work to be selected for display to participants at the IIW Annual Assembly.

A formal invitation was also given by Chris Smallbone to IIW Members to identify artists in their country who might also have been interested in participating.

A very positive response was received to the invitations and in many cases artists offered a number of pieces to be exhibited.

Due to the limitations on space it was decided to accept one exhibit per artist with 18 artists finalising their information in time for the exhibition. In alphabetical order, these artists were:

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Name of Artist** | **Country** |
| 1. | Antoine Aranda | France |
| 2. | Steve Bodrag | Australia |
| 3. | Hilary Cole | Canada |
| 4. | Jennifer Costa | USA |
| 5. | Pavol Dubina | Slovakia |
| 6. | Jordi Diez Fernandez | Spain |
| 7. | Sandra Garcia | USA |
| 8. | Clive Gazet de Chattelier | South Africa |
| 9. | Eric Harristhal | USA |
| 10. | Greg Holster | Australia |
| 11. | Libor Hurda | Czech Republic |
| 12 | Victor Ivanoff | South Africa |
| 13. | Milan Maronek | Slovakia |
| 14. | Will Phipps | Australia |
| 15. | Kendall Polster | USA |
| 16. | Ryan T Schmidt | USA |
| 17. | Brad White | Australia |
| 18. | Martin Willinger | Austria |

1. **EXHIBITION AND ALBUM OF PHOTOGRAPHS OF WELDED ART EXHIBITION**

As mentioned earlier, it was agreed that due to the positive and excellent response, only one photograph per artist would be exhibited based on the display space available.

The 18 artists had sent suitable photographs of their welded art, as well as a brief introduction to themselves and the welded art exhibit, to Chris Smallbone, Petra Zavodna and Lesanka Barbuscakova.

Such photographs had been taken on a digital camera with decent image quality and a resolution of 12 megapixel or more, which gave high quality A3 prints.

Once the photographs were selected for display, Lesanka Barbuscakova and Petra Zavodna had them printed out to A3 size of appropriate quality and displayed on easels in the Crown Plaza Hotel reception and lobby area.

The following link shows photographs of the display of all the exhibits plus each individual exhibit print and write up on the artist and the exhibit both mounted on an easel.

<https://www.flickr.com/photos/iiw2019/sets/72157709860492162/>

The photographs submitted by artists or IIW Members were treated with the utmost respect. Only one A3 sized print of each selected photograph was made for display and nobody is allowed to copy the electronic images submitted to the organisers unless the artists give their general agreement to do so.

On Wednesday 10th July 2019, four of the photographs were raffled as prizes at the IIW Gala Banquet and presented to the winners on stage. On Thursday 11th July 2019, members of the IIW Board of Directors and other individuals were invited to choose a print as a keepsake of the occasion.

1. **RESPONSES AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE EXHIBITIONS**

The exhibition received very positive responses from many individuals who viewed the exhibits during the IIW Annual Assembly as well as the audience at the presentation of prints to four delegates on the stage at the Gala Banquet. Unfortunately due to meetings of the IIW Annual Assembly being held in two separate hotels, it was probable that a number of participants did not view the exhibition.

With respect to recommendations to assist IIW to improve the image of welding through welded art exhibitions the following may assist:

1. far greater promotion is given to the welded art exhibition, both in the IIW notices and circulars of the forthcoming IIW Annual Assembly but also on the IIW Annual Assembly Website;
2. when participants arrive at the registration desk, the registration staff point out to the registrants exactly where the exhibition is taking place with a recommendation to view it as soon as possible.
3. a small booklet is prepared showing each exhibit and appropriate details about the artist , the exhibit and contact details of the artist. This booklet can be made available to all participants electronically with links shown in all the promotional material;
4. the easels were an excellent method of showing the prints of the exhibits both from practical aspects as well as having a smart appearance. Although it can be quite difficult to arrange in a busy area of a venue, it would enhance the situation if there were no other photos on the walls behind the exhibits;
5. besides the individual exhibits, it would also be useful to have a poster explaining the ideas behind the exhibition plus additional information such as a list of the artists and their contact details if they wish these to be made available;
6. although it can be difficult for future exhibitions, artists could be encouraged to display actual welded art or sculptures, and on the National Evening of the IIW Annual Assembly, a practical demonstration of creating welded art could take place;
7. more promotion is also given to the artists who exhibit in terms of people viewing the exhibitions being able to contact and purchase exhibits or commission exhibits from such artists;
8. IIW Members hold similar exhibitions at their own activities such as conferences, congresses, career days etc as well as use examples of welded art in their marketing and promotion of welding;
9. IIW and its Members widely promote welded art as a career, hobby and a means of improving well-being.
10. **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

The author would like to acknowledge the following people who have helped make the welded art photographic exhibition a success:

* IIW President Doug Luciani, IIW CEO Cecile Mayer and Peter Duric, Chairman, 72nd IIW Annual Assembly Organising Committee for their full support on this initiative;
* Petra Zavodna and Lesanka Barbuscakova from the 72nd IIW Annual Assembly Organising Committee for their tremendous efforts and dedication in the planning, preparation and implementation of all aspects of the initiative;
* Mary Ruth Johnsen from the American Welding Society (AWS) for her excellent cooperation and the interesting articles, leads and introductions to artists in North America;
* Stephan Egerland, Leonie Doppler and Harald Langeder from Fronius International, Austria for their excellent cooperation and the leads and introductions to artists who had been involved in their “Beauty of Welding” campaign;
* Gillian Wilson, Secretary, Queensland Metal Artisans Collective for her excellent cooperation and the leads to members of her Collective who exhibited;
* Fernando Manas, Cesol, Spain, and Dimitra Kreouzi and Jim Guild, SAIW, South Africa, and Vaclav Minarik, Czech IIW ANB and Ales Plihal, ESAB, Czech Republic for sourcing artists and exhibits from their respective countries;
* Peter Kuebler, BOC Ltd and Rick Kuebler, Lincoln Electric Company (Australia) Pty Ltd, both based in Australia, for their excellent cooperation and leads to their employees Will Phipps and Greg Holster respectively who exhibited;
* Representatives of IIW Members who promoted the exhibition in their countries;
* All the very talented artists listed in the report who enthusiastically gave up their time to assist us with the initiative and make it so successful.

Chris Smallbone

8th September 2019