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BELLEVUE ARTS MUSEUM

New record set in attendance and income at Bellevue Arts Museum's annual fundraiser *Artful Evening*

Bellevue, WA – On July 22, 2009, **Bellevue Arts Museum** welcomed more than 400 enthusiastic arts aficionados, political officials and community members to the Museum's annual fundraiser, *Artful Evening*. A tradition that started in 1953, *Artful Evening* raises funds in support of the Museum's important exhibitions and educational programs and to keep **BAM** both accessible and affordable.

With over **\$600,000** raised this year, the Museum set a new record.* The success is due to the outstanding contributions of its patrons and business supporters, many of which have not only renewed, but increased their commitment to **BAM**. "We are immensely grateful for the tremendous dedication and trust the community has demonstrated in the Museum, despite the challenging economic times," says **Susan Edelheit**, President of the Board of Trustees. "The community made a clear statement that they believe in the Museum's importance as a vibrant artistic center and a crucial part of the social fabric of Bellevue, the greater Eastside and the Puget Sound region," adds **Mark W. Crawford**, Executive Director/CEO. "We can not thank our patrons enough for their generosity, enthusiasm and commitment."

BAM has dramatically increased both attendance and income generated through its annual fundraiser over the past few years. In 2007 the event welcomed 320 attendees and grossed \$411,000; in 2008 it grew to 350 attendees and \$530,000. Today, *Artful Evening* is the largest annual fundraising activity to benefit Museum programs. "Thanks to the generosity of our patrons, we are able to bring some of the finest craft and design artists of our region and nationwide to this community," **Michael Monroe**, Director of Curatorial Affairs, states. "We are able to expand our educational and community programs and we can be more effective in reaching out to underserved communities. It takes all of us to make it happen."

The evening began with a festive reception at the Museum with a silent auction that featured over 90 unique art items, all of which had been generously donated by **BAM artsfair** artists. Following the reception, guests were led down a red carpet for a delicious dinner at The Westin Bellevue and a live auction featuring amazing art by some of the finest contemporary artists and spectacular art experiences. The festivities also included the presentation of the 2009 **Carol Duke Artist Awards of Excellence** sponsored by Tiffany & Co. Ten award winners, chosen by this year's esteemed **BAM artsfair** jurors, were given a \$1,000 prize each in memory of Carol Duke, one of the founders of the original fair.

The evening was emceed by Susan Hutchison, former KIRO-TV news anchor and now Executive Director of the Charles Simonyi Fund for Arts and Sciences. Nationally recognized auctioneer Kip Toner officiated the live auction. Long-term **BAM** supporters and community leaders **Rick and Bonnie Collette** were this year's honorees in recognition of their outstanding leadership and dedication to **Bellevue Arts Museum**. The event was generously sponsored by Davis Wright Tremaine, LLP; GLY Construction and Tiffany & Co.

For more information on exhibitions and other Museum-related programming or to receive press images, please contact Tanja Baumann (contact information above).

About Bellevue Arts Museum:

Bellevue Arts Museum is the Pacific Northwest's center for the exploration of art, craft, and design. A leading arts center on the Eastside, **BAM** celebrates regional, national and international artists working in a broad range of craft media, including ceramics, fiber, metal, wood and glass. The Museum also offers a unique array of free or low-cost educational and community programs such as artist demonstrations, lectures and workshops as well as a variety of engaging and fun hands-on kids activities. The **Bellevue Arts Museum artsfair**, the largest and most prestigious arts event in the Pacific Northwest, is held annually in late July. **BAM** is located in the heart of downtown Bellevue, provides free parking and is wheelchair accessible. www.bellevuearts.org

* The funds were raised through ticket sales and sponsorships as well as from the silent and live auctions.

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