

NEWS RELEASE

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NIC Honours BC's "Grandfather of Public Art"

Douglas Senft sculpture & legacy fund unveiled to inspire future artists

NIC honoured international artist Douglas Senft by unveiling a sculpture at the Comox Valley campus October 7 and creating a fund to continue his legacy at NIC.

The Douglas Senft Legacy Fund will support NIC students in creating public art.

"Douglas was passionate about public art and by setting aside nearly \$5,000 in his memory today, we can ensure NIC fine arts students have the resources to bring their inspirations to life and continue his dreams," said Randall Heidt, NIC's vice president of strategic initiatives. "We thank Douglas' friends, family, colleagues and students who contributed to the fund in his honour."

Called the "grandfather of public art in BC," Senft made a significant contribution to BC's visual arts community. His large sculptures and art installations are recognized in Vancouver and Victoria, as well as the Pacific Coast, Alberta and as far away as Barcelona, Spain. At one point, the prolific artist was said to have more public art in the Lower Mainland than any other artist.

Senft was an outstanding teacher and mentor, who taught sculpture courses at NIC from 1999 to 2012. During this time, he completed 18 public commissions across Western Canada and regularly hired sculpture students from NIC's Fine Arts diploma to work in his studio and help fabricate public works. In 2013, 16 of his former students celebrated his artistic and teaching practice with an exhibition at the Comox Valley Art Gallery.

The sculpture unveiled at NIC, called "turn," was created in 2008 and donated to NIC by Doug's children Emma and Leon Senft and his partner Catherine Lavelle.

"I am very happy to be giving Douglas some long overdue recognition here in the Comox Valley and I am especially excited that the location is at North Island College," said David Maclean, Senft's friend and a professor emeritus at NIC. "It has been our intent to not only acknowledge Doug's contribution to the art community but also his contribution to education and teaching. "turn" will be a daily reminder of the passion and enthusiasm he put into both his art practice and his teaching will continue to inspire students and faculty for years to come."

To contribute to the Douglas Senft Legacy Fund visit www.nic.bc.ca/foundation. For more information on NIC's Fine Arts and Design programs visit www.nic.bc.ca/finearts.

Media Contact

Christiana Wiens
Media Liaison North Island College
O. 250-334-5280 | M. 250-218-4097
christiana.wiens@nic.bc.ca



NIC installed Douglas Senft's sculpture, turn, at NIC's Comox Valley campus this week, thanks to the generous donation by his children Emma and Leon Senft and his partner Catherine Lavelle. Friends, family and colleagues also created a legacy fund to support NIC students in creating public art.

Background

Douglas Senft: Artist, Instructor, Friend

Douglas Senft is known for his contribution to public art across Western Canada and the United States. His large sculptures and art installations are recognized in Vancouver and Victoria, as well as the Pacific Coast, Alberta and as far away as Barcelona, Spain. In 1999, Senft started teaching sculpture at North Island College and continued until his passing in 2012. He made an enduring mark on all his students' lives and elevated the level of discourse for the entire Fine Arts Department.

Senft was the recipient of several Canada Council grants, and his work is in private and public collections including the City of Vancouver Municipal Collection, The Art Bank of Canada and Washington State Arts Public Place Collection. He had numerous public commissions in Canada, the United States and Europe, as well as exhibiting his work in public and private galleries. A portfolio of his work is available at douglassenft.com.

For more information on Douglas Senft and his impact on public art in BC:

<http://www.timescolonist.com/life/island-lives-sculptor-inspired-by-world-of-nature-1.12619>

<https://issuu.com/blackpress/docs/i20130926070138316/29>

turn

Douglas often worked on recurring themes. Many of his works have their roots in nature. Concepts like landscape, geography and water were subjects. One of his other directions was work based on industrial materials, and turn falls into this grouping.

He was definitely influenced by Richard Serra and his enormous rusted steel forms. The idea of turn was initially part of a work commissioned by Canadian Tire in the City of Vancouver that consisted of an enormous drill bit with surrounding elements that represented the shavings created by drilling. Its relationship to its site was crucial and Douglas would often make raw steel components to give him a sense of scale.

These parts often morphed into works in their own right and changed once they were put in a new context. The "turn" at North Island College is exactly this. It has been placed in a new setting inviting new interpretations. Just as in the original conception, we hope that this work will help create a strong sense of place for years to come.

The Douglas Senft Legacy Fund

In 2012, Doug's friends and colleagues created the Douglas Senft Legacy Fund to support NIC Fine Arts and Design students in creating public art. It is administered by the NIC Foundation and School of Fine Arts and Design.

Giving Opportunities

Help grow the Douglas Senft Legacy Fund. Every dollar of your tax-deductible gift directly supports student success and strengthens education in your community. To contribute, visit www.nic.bc.ca/foundation.