



ETERNAL SUMMER IN EAU GALLIE

By Athena Sasso

If you missed the buzz preceding the opening of "Eternal Summer: The Art of Surf Culture at the Brevard Museum of Art & Science," welcome back to town.

The works of more than twenty artists and artisans are on display in historic Eau Gallie through September 10. The exhibit, which opened on July 29, is a collaboration between the Brevard Museum of Art & Science and the East Coast Surfing Hall of Fame Museum. Award-winning Cocoa Beach artist Bruce Reynolds is the curator of the exhibit.

Art has been a part of surfing culture from the beginning, and surf art is exhibited worldwide to enthusiastic audiences. The most well-attended show in the history of the Laguna Art Museum (CA) was "Surf Culture—The Art History of Surfing," which even inspired a reprise: "Surf Culture Redux." In the United States, the majority of exhibitions are staged on the West Coast, and an exhibition of this scope and excellent quality is a first in Brevard County.

The Brevard Museum of Art & Science always strives to offer a unique experience in its exhibits. The

museum's executive director, Dane Pollei, wanted to present an exhibit that created a context for the art. Surfing provided the context. "It is impossible to live here and not realize that surfing has an impact not just on the local community, but nationally," said Pollei.

The museum staff wanted to do an exhibition that combined artwork and culture. "It really came together after we talked to Tony Sasso and the East Coast Surfing Hall of Fame Museum and they agreed to partner with us," said Pollei.

For his part, Tony Sasso said, "I had the good sense to seek out Bruce Reynolds as curator." With his many contacts and reputation in the surf and art communities, Reynolds marshaled a collection of the best of surf art, craftsmanship, history, memorabilia, and everyday surf culture icons. The montage envisioned and executed by Reynolds delivers an experience that replays in your head like the good dream you will yourself to remember.

"Eternal Summer" opened with an array of activities, to one of the largest crowds ever to attend an opening at the museum. Bob Salmon said, "Half of Cocoa Beach is in the street out there." Delighted and horrified squeals of children reacting to scary crab puppets

intermittently drowned out lively conversation and surf guitar music in the tradition of Dick Dale. With kids' impromptu art, a skateboard demonstration, a puppet show, tiki carving, a live auction, music by Danny Morris Band and Tribal Drums, and food and drink, the opening had something for everyone.

The real tingle up your spine, though, was inside the museum. Bob Freeman said, "Especially interesting is the surfboard manufacturing exhibit contributed by Ricky Carroll. After all, handmade surfboards are a work of art." The exhibit is composed of art in mediums as diverse as acrylic, wood, fabric, watercolor, foam, fiberglass, rubber, a Barbie doll, and cigarette butts. The art of Rick Piper prompted one wide-eyed young viewer to ask, "Is it still wet?" Yes, actually, "wet" is the elemental medium of surf culture.

In addition to content by artists and museums, the exhibit includes pieces on loan from private collections. Featured artists are Chris Birch, Robert Brennan, Dave Burton, Wayne Coombs, Steve Forstall, Jim Hannan, Reggie Holladay, Paul LaMontagne, Mark Longenecker, Henry Lund, Pat Madden, Eric Maurus, Mike (Nemo) Nemnich, Hassan Patterson, Rick Piper, Larry Pope, Gary Propper, Bruce Reynolds, Tony Sasso, Damian Share, and others.

This Eternal Summer ends on September 10, so make a plan to visit. It's worth a trip across the bridge.

