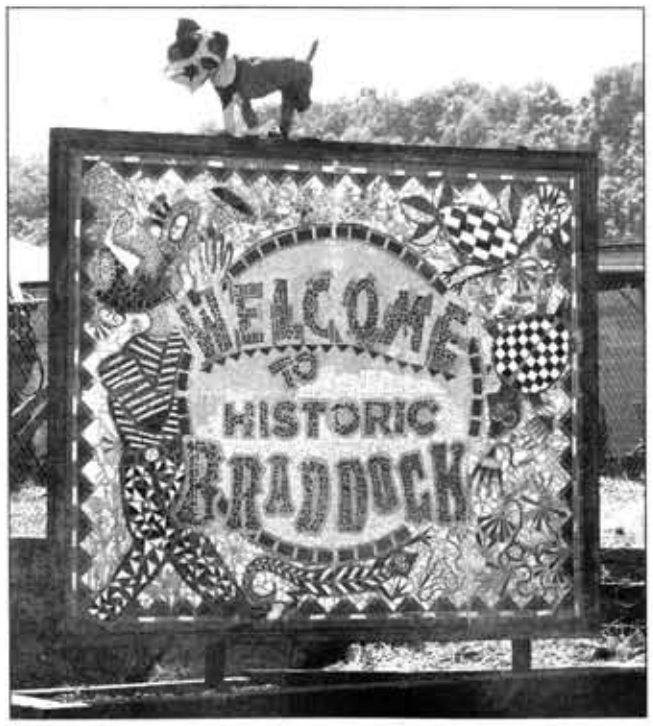
Art photography featuring Braddock to support community projects



Fueled by the success of last year's Art Lottery, the Braddock project Obscurae will hold its second photography exhibition and fundraiser on Saturday, Sept. 19. Benefiting the many continuing art and community revitalization efforts of this historic steel mill town, Obscurae features more than 75 donated and framed photographs of Braddock from over 25 photographers. Public viewing of the work, open to all and free of charge, begins 7 p.m. Saturday; the art lottery commences at 8:30 p.m. Those attending Obscurae, held at UnSmoke Systems Artspace at 1137 Braddock Avenue, are invited to take part in the Portrait Booth Project, an interactive photo booth by Portland Oregon artist John Ryan Brubaker, and taste fresh-baked breads made in Braddock's very own outdoor wood-fire community oven located next to UnSmoke Systems Artspace.

There is no charge to attend Obscurae and view the exhibition; visitors wishing to take home a work of art can purchase lottery tickets for $45 through the website, www.obscuraegallery.org, or for $55 at the door. In this time of economic turbulence there is more of a need for individual support. The lottery offers those in favor of Braddock's many art and community projects the opportunity to contribute directly to their continuation. At the same time, supporters will be able to enjoy the exhibit, local food and drinks, the photo booth installation, AND leave with a limited edition framed art photograph. Photographs included in the lottery range from 8x10 to 17x22 and are mounted and framed using a variety of reclaimed materials. A Sneak Peak of the show is available for viewing online.

Change is underway in Braddock as groups working within and with the community bring renewed energy to a town that many wrote off. Artists, social entrepreneurs, community organizers, urban homesteaders and others with a pioneering spirit are inspired by the town's potential for grassroots urban renewal and are using the inherent energy in Braddock to fuel their creativity. It is with this spirit that Obscurae views the maligned town – turning a photographic eye towards the borough's oft-overlooked beauty amidst the former grandeur and "urban blight" that Braddock has come to represent for many in the Pittsburgh area. Curated by Braddock residents Jodi Morrison and Jenny Fremlin, with special guest curator Jeanine Hall of UnSmoke Systems Artspace, Obscurae pays homage to Braddock's unique post-industrial urban beauty. From the borough's Victorian and industrial-era construction to particulars of its natural surroundings, each photograph captures a unique perspective of the town. Works are mounted and framed with found and reclaimed materials. In creating Obscurae, curators Morrison, Fremlin and Hall hope to encourage others to look deeper and appreciate the small wonders that drew them to Braddock.

How does the Art Lottery work?

Donated pieces are exhibited throughout the gallery, and pieces displayed will go home with a ticket holder that evening. Lottery participants are encouraged to browse the gallery before the lottery begins and compile a list of at least their first 25 favorites. The lottery begins with the first ticket being randomly chosen. When a ticket holder's number is called, he or she has up to 60 seconds to choose a piece. Once a piece is selected it is removed and packaged for the winner. The lottery continues until all the ticket holders have chosen a one-of-a-kind framed photograph.

In addition to the show, Obscurae's online gallery offers the chance to purchase frames and prints from both the 2008 and 2009 exhibitions. Proceeds from the gallery will support both the continued efforts in Braddock as well as the photographers who donated pieces for the exhibition. Some photographers participating in the show have also contributed additional pieces for purchase only available online. Visit www.obscuraegallery.org to view the work.