By Doug Hare EBS STAFF

Big Sky – On July 21, under the big tent at the PBR Events Arena the fourth annual Big Sky Art Auction featured work from over 70 artists including world class photographers such as David Yarrow, and painters and sculptors spanning a wide array of styles from traditional to contemporary and everywhere in between.

The fast-paced excitement of live auction brought art connoisseurs, second homeowners and many of the featured artists to the unique outdoor venue for an afternoon of aesthetic appreciation and acquisition.

"One thing that I look forward to is growing a young auction alongside a stable of new, fantastic up-and-coming artists " said Gallery Director Courtney Collins. "That's what happened this year. Miles Glynn, photographers Guillaume and Isabelle Beau de Lomenie, Robert Osborn, and Jeff Corwin all sold their pieces. It's super exciting."

"It was a successful, beautiful auction. This year was 50 percent more profitable than last year's event" said Colin Mathews, owner of Creighton Block Gallery. "This year's auction had very high-quality art at reasonable price points. The challenge for us is to find a wide enough range of buyers for the variety of selections we had."

R. Tom Gilleon, one of the most soughtafter Western artists working today, mingled with art lovers towards the back of the venue. "I'd say this piece is one of my best pieces to date. As an artist, if you're not improving, you're dead," said Gilleon after his piece sold for the highest price of any piece in the auction.

The auction also featured five local artists: Craig Krzycki, Kene Sperry, Lorri Lagerbloom, Ryan Turner and Georgia Baker.

"It was my first piece in a live auction. I thought the event went great. It went incredibly well for myself," said local photographer Ryan Turner, whose submission went for nearly twice the asking price. "I'm super thankful to have so many art lovers come together and support artists."