

## **IMPORTANT UPDATE: 2020 CAMANO ISLAND STUDIO TOUR IS CANCELLED**

**CAMANO ISLAND, Wash. – March 16, 2020** -- Today, the Camano Arts Association board made the decision to cancel the 2020 Camano Studio Tour in response to growing concerns about the spread of COVID-19.

The tour, which takes place over Mother's Day weekend and weekend following every year, is a long-standing Camano Island tradition. While tour participants noted that this decision was not taken lightly, they also described that it was the right thing to do in light of the Centers for Disease Control's (CDC) recommendation to halt gatherings of 50 people or more in addition to the proven methods of social distancing as one of the most effective means of preventing the spread of a virus that can take weeks to incubate with no symptoms.

Further, given that many of Camano Island's residents and tour participants are above the age of 60 – an age group determined by the CDC to be at a higher health risk from the virus – leaders determined cancelling the tour was the best decision for all.

"The hardest part of cancelling this tour is recognizing the very real social and economic impacts it will have on our community," said Mary Simmons, this year's Studio Tour director and well-known glass artist. "As a 20-plus year tradition, the studio tour is part of the fabric of our community – bringing people together over their love of art and showcasing the beauty of our island. Not to mention the fact that many people in our community rely on the tour for their livelihoods."

According to Simmons, many professional artists count on this tour every year as part of their annual income. As thousands of visitors flock to the island over a two-weekend arts event, it not only exposes artists to new buyers, but it exposes the island to new tourists. Local businesses, such as restaurants and hotels already negatively impacted by COVID-19, also will likely see the cancellation of the tour as a significant impact to their annual revenues.

"Like everyone else, in this period of uncertainty we are taking it one day at a time," Simmons added. "But one thing we are confident we can promise is an amazing 2021 Studio Tour."