

DOGGIE: Fund-raising art show

Continued from page 1A

greasy- spoon icon packed the moderate-sized Canvas gallery, many of them dressed especially for the occasion.

"I am very happy, it's a miracle really," said Berkeley resident Eni Green, dressed head-to-toe in fashion featuring dogs of various shapes and sizes.

Collectors in attendance described Doggie Diner memorabilia as immensely popular among a local community of aficionados, who sniff out the items from word-of-mouth tips and on Internet markets.

Sebastian Melmoth, owner of the Doggie Diner heads on display on the flatbed in front of the gallery, said his trio of statues had been around since the late 1940s. But he had no intention of selling them, he said.

Jeremy Friedman, a friend of the artist, traveled from Oakland to see the work of the woman he described as an "undiscovered genius."

"She takes images that are a part of our history that say so many different things," Friedman said.

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Conti cited symbolism and surrealism as elements pres-

ent in her Doggie Diner paintings.

One acrylic-on-canvas, in which the dachshund appears in an upright position against a background of squares, signifies stability and calm, while a neighboring canvas, featuring a tilted dachshund floating in a sea of colorful spirals, suggests unrest and change, she explained.

And in *Blackwatch Doggie*, in which the animal appears in the uniform of the Scottish Blackwatch regiment against a background sporting the Blackwatch tartan, Conti pays tribute to her Scottish heritage.

Elizabeth Steele, an associate of Hang, an organization that promotes Bay Area artists, said the fund-raiser was a blowout. Only three paintings remained on the wall at the show's closing, she said, and nearly \$2,400 was raised to restore the fallen Doggie Diner head to its longtime home at the Carousel Restaurant.

According to Supervisor Leland Yee, who attended the event, the Department of Public Works needs approximately \$25,000 to repair the statue and return it to the Carousel.