

Quimet WD

January 16, 2023

To whom it concerns,

As the Event Manager of the U of A Botanic Garden, I would like to nominate Laura Ouimet for the Eldon and Anne Foote Award. At the onset of this installation, I sought unique pieces of Art that would create a magical feeling for the Winter Queens Royal Court and Laura delivered with every challenge. At the start, as I walked her through the garden, Laura immediately saw the vision of what we wanted to achieve and began imagining the installations to life. Her talent and skills were evident as she fashioned these characters, worked in cooperation with our staff and taught us a few skills in wire art along the way.

The Dancers

When we began planning our winter 2022 Luminaria; A Winter Garden Story, our challenge was to bring some of the integral aspects of the story to life, in such a large-scale environment as we have in Alberta's largest Botanic Garden.

This charming, new evening festival experience, tells the story of the Winter Queen who overlooks and protects the Garden in its Winter slumber. The Winter Queens court overlooks the Calla Lily Pond where a water spirit, in the form of a Wire Serpent, is seemingly drawn to the music of the festivities.

In the throne room the Winter Queen greeted and interacted with her many visitors. Laura's three Wire Victorian Dancers added an element of magic and wonder to help to tell this story. They appeared to be dancing and celebrating under the swirling lights which lit them. Guests were seen to dance along with the trio. Her sculptures were created to be interactive and accessible to all and guests were encouraged to touch. Many posed to have their photos taken along with them as well.

The male dancer stands at 7 feet tall and is dressed in his best with top hat and tails. The woman and child dance gracefully in their beautiful ruffled gowns. All made entirely with Galvanized Chicken Wire.

A Winter Garden Story, ran for over 30 nights, from November 23-December 31st. These pieces all played an important part in our storyline as guests explored the tastes, sights, sounds and surprises of a magical winter story. There were over 22,000 guests who visited our 2022 winter event. Laura also designed three other pieces to enhance the Luminaria installation. A Fox and an Owl graced the hills above the Alpine village as well as the Serpent, Lilje, which lit our pond with over 1500 lights.

Furthermore, Laura's innovative Chicken Wire Art is a very unusual medium and her entrepreneurial spirit, and willingness to take risks with her Art is commendable. Forging partnerships with other artists and organizations is very important to her. She is an inclusive artist who seeks out collaboration and community engagement. We look forward to working with Laura again!

Should you have any questions, I can be reached at 780-492-3106

Sincerely,

Josee Walters

Guest Experience Manager

University of Alberta