

Paintings, sculpture, and a little international relations in store for this weekend's Art Show



By Brock Weir

The best and brightest York Region artists will have another chance to shine this weekend as the Society of York Region Artists (SOYRA) teams up with the Town of Aurora to host the 51st annual Juried Art Show and Sale.

Bringing together more than 300 pieces from artists across Ontario, the show gets underway at Aurora Town Hall (100 John West Way) this Saturday, May 4, from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. The show continues Sunday from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Included this year are the traditional categories spreading the wide spectrum of media from oils and pastels, through to sculpture and photography.

There will also be a chance for budding artists to get into the spotlight with a youth category, sponsored by the Optimist Club of Aurora, for kids between the ages of 12 and 17. One piece will also be selected for the Town's collection as part of the Preserve Aurora initiative.

While SOYRA and art enthusiasts have a meeting of the minds, there will also be a little international diplomacy going on as well.

This year for the first time, Mayor Geoffrey Dawe will be selecting, in addition to his choice for Preserve Aurora, a piece to send overseas as a goodwill gesture to Aurora's twin, Leksand, Sweden.

Aurora became twinned with the Leksand, dubbed the "Hockey Capital of Sweden", in the mid-1970s following a visit by an Aurora hockey team to the city at the start of the decade. The relationship endured, fostered by a "friendship visit" by local councillors in 1974, and continues to this day.

"We have been looking for opportunities to re-engage with Leksand and it seems to be a pretty good idea that we could pick one of our really cool paintings here and send it over to them through the art show," says Mayor Dawe.

"Leksand is always welcoming of how we foster relations with them and I think they will find it to be a very innovative way to enable the community to have a footprint in this endeavour," adds Shelley Ware, Special Events Coordinator for the Town of Aurora.

The idea was brought to their attention by Melody McKay, Aurora's Manager of Recreation, and they decided to run with it. They have been considering many ways to re-engage with Aurora's Swedish counterpart, ideas including a "Skype date" with the Town during the annual Aurora's Borealis to have a simultaneous tree lighting ceremony and other ways to help, in the Mayor's words, "foster community and connectivity."

"The Mayor has been steadfast and very focused on having several ideas on the table," says Ms. Ware. "We're just massaging what would fit best with international relations as well as sustainability of those ideas. Since arts and culture are a priority of the Town of

Aurora, especially with the 51st Aurora Art Show, and because of how strong our arts and culture is, it opens up relations on that forefront ? and it also demonstrates internationally how you are always in good company when you deal with Aurorans!?

Mayor Dawe says he hopes this new addition to the Art Show lineup will be an enduring part of the tradition and help cultivate an ongoing cultural exchange with our twin across the pond, and a little to the left.