

Support Your Local Artist: 2018 Aurora Studio Tour gearing up for weekend show



By Brock Weir

We know the importance of buying local when it comes to fruits, veggies, meat, and anything else that might need to go on your shopping list ? but, what about art?

If you're looking to check a few names off your gift-buying list this holiday season, local artists encourage you to come out next weekend for the 2018 Aurora Artists Studio Tour.

Twelve local artists will fan out to five different studio locations around Aurora on Saturday, November 24 and Sunday, November 25, inviting you in to not only see their creativity in full bloom, but also see the best of what area artists have to offer.

?'This is a cultural event,?' says tour organizer Deborah Campo, who will be displaying a variety of her original pieces, along with seven other artists, at The Patrick House Gallery on Temperance Street. ?This year, we have new art from new artists and it is exciting for us to be able to showcase their work. I am thrilled that in addition to painters, we have photographers and ceramicists. Each year we grow more experienced with our styles and with our work as artists. We mature and it is a reflection of our lives, styles and presentations.?

Among the artists participating in the Artists Studio Tour this year is Campbell Sampson, who took up painting just a few years ago as a hobby and has been amassing a steady following ever since.

?It started off as a hobby and I never expected to be part of something like this,?' says Mr. Sampson. ?I am a rookie, self-employed in the fire protection industry, and this is something I just happened upon. When you're self-employed, you get bogged down in the same old same old, so I thought I would try painting. My wife said sure and we put up space in the basement.

?I've been to flea markets with my work and got a good reaction from people. Deborah liked my stuff and introduced me to this group of people. Now I am part of this. [As an artist] it is one small step at a time, and it is a fun thing. I don't look at it as a way to make money; I just want to have fun.?

Mr. Sampson, an Aurora resident, hails from the United Kingdom and has called Canada home for the last 25 years. His experiences are reflected in his art and, in turn, he wants viewers to find something ?interesting and different? in his work.

?I just want people to have fun with it too,?' he says with a laugh. ?There is no pressure to sell this piece to pay the mortgage. That part is gone, and I think it is better if you're having fun!?

Another first-timer on the tour is Vikki Mikkola, who was introduced to the tour through its participation in the Aurora Historical Society's series of ?Art at the Manor? exhibitions at Hillary House. A member of SOYRA (Society of York Region Artists), Ms. Mikkola describes her style as abstract landscapes.

?I never thought of myself as an artist, so I have to start thinking that might be the direction I'm in,?' she says. ?My friends and family tell me I'm an artist, but I never thought of it. Ever. That's just too daunting; I just paint whatever comes out ? I can't explain it any differently.?

Her first sale, she said, happened shortly before the photograph accompanying this article was taken, a factor she said ?gives me a little bit of enthusiasm to produce more.?

Artists on the 2018 Artist Studio Tour, a self-directed tour that is free to all patrons, include Carol Beaver, Judy Bobsin, Deborah Campo, Claire d'Aurore, Colin Emsley, Philippa Hajdu, Jim Jackson, Amy McNeill, Vikki Mikkola, Willo Rodrigues, Campbell Sampson, and Christine Valentini.

For more information on the tour, including times and studio locations, visit www.aurorastudiotour.com.