

'Painting the Path' promises to be unique fashion show for good causes



Fashion and visual arts are set to converge at Aurora's Royal Rose Gallery on May 9 at 'Beyond the Runway: Painting the Path.'

Creativity and self-expression 'beyond the traditional boundaries' will come together for what organizers describe as an 'immersive experience' that will benefit Aurora's Lighthouse Learning and Development Centre, Newmarket's Girls Inc. of York Region, and Hill House Hospice of Richmond Hill.

The event is the brainchild of Rossy Bustamante, a financial advisor who co-owns Roca Financial Solutions. While she's a financial advisor by day, she's always had a love for fashion and design, and struck with the idea of holding a fashion show like no other. She took her idea to Rosa Calabrese-Teal, owner of the Royal Rose Gallery, who was eager to help bring the vision to life.

'I absolutely loved [the idea] because I think fashion, art and music all goes together 'it's the creative process,' says Calabrese-Teal. 'Anything I can sink into helping designers, artisans and artists, I'm all for it.'

Bustamante agrees, noting that fashion is a way of expression.

'We wanted to showcase that women can express themselves through fashion the way they are, as they are, and to show different ways of doing it,' she says. 'We as women sometimes feel a bit insecure, we don't feel like we're wearing the right outfit or doing the right thing; it has to be catered to who you are and we wanted to show that you can put these pieces together and make yourself feel beautiful and confident. It's about acceptance 'accepting yourself as you are and embracing the way you like to dress.'

The May 9 event will feature clothing from Glitter Glam Apparel & Co., Coup De Foudre Luxury Lingerie, Escenia Handmade Artwear, Lily's Tiny Eco, Omar's Shoes, designer Tracy Toulouse, and Cotton Roses. The event will feature a boutique set-up and a designer market as well, so attendees will have the chance to purchase from featured designers, helping to support both them and the local business community.

The work of textile and beading artist Breeyn McCarney will decorate the walls, with students providing the music 'all illuminated by specially-installed lighting that Bustamante and Calabrese-Teal describe as nothing short of immersive.

'It's an immersive fashion show, so it is not a traditional catwalk per se 'it's cocktails, food, raffle prizes, door prizes, and the models will be walking in and amongst the crowd as well so you can interact with them. The whole atmosphere of the fashion show is a different experience.'

?The lights will be a surprise,? adds Bustamante. ?It's so pretty the way we are doing it. People will feel that they are somewhere else for the duration of the show. I think that is one of the highlights for us and surprises of people ? the mix of the lighting and the music we will have. And the runway that we are creating ? it's all based on lighting.

?I think this will be a great ladies' night out ? to come and have a bite to eat, some wine, some networking with people in the community. It is a great event for women to come and see a fashion show and enjoy. We already have so many challenges that we face as women and I think by helping them it will help increase the awareness of the challenges women have and that's a reality. I think that that's why this fashion show should be one of the ones on the list to help us help them to thrive on whatever endeavours they do.?

Beyond the Runway ? Painting the Path will take place Thursday, May 9 from 6 ? 8 p.m., at the Royal Rose Gallery, located on Yonge Street just south of Wellington. For more information, including tickets, visit royalroseart.ca/beyond-the-runway-painting-the-path.

By Brock WeirEditorLocal Journalism Initiative Reporter