

Aurora Art Show & Sale returns for 58th year



As we shake off the remnants of a dull, grey winter, local artists are excited to offer a vivid splash of colour at Town Hall with the return of the Aurora Art Show & Sale.

A partnership between the Town of Aurora and the Society of York Region Artists (SOYRA), the show is back for its 58th year after a two-year hiatus on in-person shows due to the global pandemic and participating artists couldn't be more excited to share their work with local art lovers.

"This is our first in-person event in two years and it is so exciting," says SOYRA President Linda Welch. "This is the first opportunity we will have to see a large number of people under the same roof at the same time or scattered throughout the weekend. It really is a landmark event."

The Aurora Art Show & Sale typically brings together between 350 and 400 works created by SOYRA members and community artists at large, and this year will be no exception.

"There are always people who are surprised there is such high-quality art in the area," says Ms. Welch. "Based on the communities where art is coming from, it is a little narrower geography this year. We are looking forward to having people just coming through and spending a part of the day enjoying the creativity and colour after such a dull winter we've had. It will be a really pleasant way to spend some time, whether you decide to buy something or not. Of course, we're always delighted if [sales] happen, but we're mostly honoured to have our work out there so the public will enjoy it."

The Aurora Art Show & Sale is also a chance for members of the public to see work created by some of the community's most talented up-and-coming artists.

"We have a solid component of youth entries and I am always really excited by that because having followed this Art Show for a number of years now, you see very young students in elementary school entering, then they enter again in high school and I have followed them and their art development over the years [into university] and it is such an inspiring thing.

"Townpeople should come and take a look at what the young people are doing. It's inspiring to everyone and the youth category is always a favourite for all artists. They love looking at what the young people are creating."

Since artists were last able to gather for this show in-person, a number of changes have taken place in the Town Hall gallery spaces

which will improve the way art can be displayed. While easels will fill the corridors groaning under the weight of paintings, drawings, and more, professional wall-hanging systems have since been installed to maximize the space.

This is just the latest chapter in the Town's support of local artists, says Shelley Ware, Special Event Coordinator for the Town of Aurora.

"The Town has been so progressive in supporting the arts for nearly six decades," says Ms. Ware. "The fact that this is the 58th annual show certainly speaks volumes of Town Council's foresight 60 years ago in getting an art show and still supporting it today. The partnership is extremely special, long-standing over decades. SOYRA is so passionate about the arts and culture, they have really kept the local arts community together, intact, and has certainly built a strong cultural network as well. We could not do the show without them, their presence, their partnership and their volunteerism.

"By the time the show is open to the public, collectively they would have volunteered more than 300 hours in just getting the show off the ground."

Behind-the-scenes work has also taken place to ensure members of the public can gather as safely as possible. Additional hand sanitizers will be available for members of the public to use while easels will be spaced further apart than in years past.

It might have a slightly different feel, but being able to renew artistic ties will be worth the effort.

"The nice thing about the show is not only is it about the appreciation of the arts, but it is also about the dialogue that tends to develop organically when you look at such passionate art," says Ms. Ware. "It's not a show that you rush through from beginning to end; it's a show that you take and appreciate. It's certainly a strong show to see. We have all seen, whether you're an art enthusiast or not, the absence of art in the community during COVID. It has been quite significant. If this show is a new experience for you, you won't regret it."

The 58th Aurora Art Show & Sale will take place at Town Hall on Saturday, April 30 and Sunday, May 1 from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Admission is free. For more information, visit www.aurora.ca/en/recreation-arts-and-culture/art-show-and-sale.aspx.

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