

Youth artists invited to show work in 62nd annual Aurora Art Show

Art offers limitless possibilities and that's certainly true for artists who have participated in the Aurora Art Show and Sale, an enduring partnership between the Town of Aurora and the Society of York Region Artists.

Now in its 62nd year, it's a show that has attracted generations of artists, including one-time youth art participants who are now celebrated local artists in adult categories, and if you're a young creative looking for a local venue to have your work shown, there are still spots available in the youth category.

The 62nd Aurora Art Show and Sale will take over Aurora Town Hall on Saturday, May 2, and Sunday, May 3, from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.

The show will feature more than 350 works from more than 120 York Region-based artists.

Sponsored by TD Bank and youth sponsor the Optimist Club of Aurora, the event is billed as one that fosters connections between artists, art enthusiasts, and collectors, bolstering the local art community.

In our modern world, we're rushed, there's never enough time, we're flying for one thing and we're chasing another. Some people book massages to try to reset their stress level, some people try to go for walks, but then they don't have time but this show is in your back yard, says Shelley Ware, Special Events Coordinator for the Town of Aurora. Honestly, you come into the show on a Saturday and your emotions are moved. I'm not sure of any other service you could provide or exercise class you could do, or trail you could walk, that will give that experience. It can only happen during this show.

With a waiting list for artistic adults, it's a point not lost on the local creative community regardless of age.

You have to be ready to register once we open the floodgates because there's such a demand for artists who want to be in the show and are proud to be able to make the cut, Ware adds. Then, with our Youth category, to date we're still accepting nominations. You have to appreciate some of the youth over the previous years have stayed in the category and now they're in the adult category. It's like their first experience here guides them in their journey because they get to meet other artists. They get to see that they can make a career out of this, a side passion, or even a side commerce opportunity as well.

Linda Welch, a long-time Director with the Society of York Region Artists (SOYRA), and a long-time collaborator on the Aurora Art Show and Sale, cites one young man who first put his work forward for the Youth category a number of years ago, stayed in touch as a volunteer as he studied at OCAD, and is now a professional curator at an Oakville gallery.

Another secret ingredient in keeping the Show fresh after 62 seasons is being nimble and evolving with the community.

A brand-new category in the juried portion of the Show this year is devoted to work on Chinese Scrolls.

York Region has a very significant Chinese population and we wanted to broaden out our representation, not just culturally, but the kind of art they would submit on scrolls didn't fit our traditional hanging, mounting and framing requirements, so we worked on adapting to that, explains Welch. We're trying to reflect the culture of the Region as well.

That, adds Ware, is reflective of the fluid nature of art and the professional nature of this partnership.

I personally think the professional artists we have are very skilled and I think that's [due to] the reputation of the Town, but also the reputation of the Society of York Region Artists that this is a sought-out show, that they want to be identified as having being in the show, and, after 62 years, it's got history, it's got longevity, it's got stamina even with COVID thrown in there. The demand for the show didn't diminish because it's so strong. We shouldn't be surprised it's in its seventh decade.

Adds Welch: ?And what you see one year isn't necessarily what you're going to see another year, and that's the exciting part of it, but the key factor is people know they can submit three, maybe up to four pieces, depending on the category, and they know they have to submit their best.?

For more information on the 62nd Annual Aurora Art Show & Sale, including how to submit your work, visit aurora.ca/ArtShow.

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