

Ottawa Arts Association

BRINGS VISUAL INTEREST TO REVAMPED RECREATION CENTRE

BY KAREN SECORD

Vibrant colours. Striking poses. Brushstrokes that build texture. Images that evoke emotion.

Art is a window into our souls. It reflects what we see, feel and dream, who we are and where we live. When art is a part of our communities, there is joy and celebration.

The newly formed Ottawa West Arts Association (OWAA) is bringing art to the people with an ever-changing dynamic display of local talent at the Goulbourn Recreation Complex (GRC) in Stittsville.

Two designated OWAA Gallery walls were covered with contributions from the 53 OWAA members during a grand opening of the GRC expansion on November 1. Its first exhibition of west Ottawa artists included photography, mixed media, fabric art, sculpture and a variety of painting mediums.

Now a new exhibition is being hung every two months, ensuring that the walls ooze visual interest.

"This gallery makes art something that is part of everyday life," says artist MaryAnn Camps. "It gives me a connection to the immediate area, and I like being able to have a piece hanging in my own community."

PROMOTING LOCAL ARTISTS

"The OWAA Gallery is such a wonderful opportunity to get in on the ground floor of something great and to promote art within the community," says wildlife and pet portrait artist Wendy Quirt.

A full-time artist, Wendy honed



PHOTO: KAREN SECORD

The OWAA formed in May 2008 with the support of Ward 6 Councillor Shad Qadri; City of Ottawa's Portfolio Manager for the Visual and Creative Arts Program, Tessie Boretos; and the Stittsville Village Association.

The idea to create a gallery that would be supported by OWAA was the brainchild of the Stittsville Steering Committee, which formed in November 2007. Founding members Sue Perley-Robertson, John Madden, Louise Barker, Beverly Ashford, Gerald Smith and consultant Terry Sametz later changed the name of their lobby group to the GRC Gallery X Steering Committee and presented their proposal to city representatives.

"The association is meant to be fairly broad," explains John Madden, OWAA secretary. "And you don't have to be an artist to join."

Plans to develop an exhibition space at the GRC were well received by artists/artisans, art patrons and the general public.



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her craft while training with such greats as Robert Bateman and Terry Isaac. Her realistic depictions of animals are detailed and eye-catching.

Photographers Lora Jude DeWolfe and Ralph Nevins each produce striking images that demand attention. They agree that the opportunity to promote art in general and to share what they have created



PHOTO: KAREN SECORD

specifically, in such a public way, played a significant role in their decision to contribute to the OWAA.

Lora, a recent graduate of the School of Photographic Arts, has an eye for the unusual within the everyday. An engineer by trade with at least two decades of photographic experi-



ence, Ralph's landscapes take on a new dimension through his lens.

"Networking is a huge part of why I became a member of the OWAA, and part of that is being able to show my work in the community," explains Ralph, the recent recipient of a City of Ottawa's "emerging artist" grant.

Having art available in a public space for all to enjoy is a gift. By not containing it within four walls and asking people to enter, the *owaa gallery* is able to reach those who

OWAA Mission Statement

To increase the awareness, appreciation and promotion of the visual arts in the community by providing a valuable and rewarding experience for artists/artisans, art patrons and the general public.

Members of the OWAA gather monthly in the meeting room of the Stittsville Library. Everyone is welcome. For more information, e-mail: info@owaa.ca.

OWAA gallery
Goulbourn Recreation Complex
1500 Shea Road, Stittsville
www.owaa.ca

might not otherwise step inside for a glance. Students at the adjoining Sacred Heart Catholic High School, hockey players of all ages, figure skaters, tournament participants, swimmers, spectators and countless others are all now potential participants in the artistic process.

They are part of a dialogue that happens between artist and viewer each time an art selection is experienced. The dialogue, though often internal, is

a celebration of creativity shared.

In the future, the OWAA hopes to provide even more opportunities for its members and for the community at large to engage in artistic pursuits. Workshops and classes aimed at developing the creative arts are a few of this young association's goals.

The extension of the GRC has created a community hub where art, sports, and other cultural and social pursuits come together. ✂

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