

# IMPORTANCE OF ART IN THE COMMUNITY

By: Janet DiBernardo

“There is more to art than meets the eye.” The arts affect us in every aspect of our lives; they challenge us, inspire us, affect our emotions and feed our creativity.

Toronto is known for its community neighbourhoods. The Junction is a fine example that is supportive of its residents, businesses and the arts. Art plays an important role in The Junction, rich with artists and art-related events. The role of a gallery in the neighbourhood is a place where people can come to be a part of the local art community as artist or art lover. People can come to view art in inviting surroundings, meet artists and discuss the artwork. In a gallery, one can learn about collecting art, conserving it through framing, participate in collaborative projects, and celebrate special events.

One such project was in partnership between the West Toronto Junction Historical Society, the local businesses, artists and the community. The Local Option for Art Awards was a unique exhibit of community art celebrating the centennial of West Toronto Junction. For the project, the community was asked to submit art with a Junction theme. Junction businesses exhibited the work, ending with a fundraiser for the historical society at Latitude 44 Gallery Framing Décor.

At the annual art festival, Latitude 44 Gallery Framing Décor and local artist Reid English invited the community to bring found objects from home or work and build a 7-foot-tall sculpture together over the weekend. The creative participation and interaction was overwhelming.

Ongoing interaction of this sort between residents and art galleries is important to the health, development and vitality of the community.

The mandate of Latitude 44 Gallery Framing Décor is to showcase, support and preserve the work of Canadian artists. We encourage you to visit often, take your time, ask questions and give your opinion. Art is meant to evoke emotion. It doesn't matter what you are drawn to, but how the art affects your interests and desires.

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