

Sound Outlook – Part 7: The Arts are Making Owen Sound Look Good

The arts have always been alive and well in Owen Sound, and as we enter into Phase 2 of re-opening in the Scenic City, the arts community is leading the charge. Exhibits are back on display, classes are starting back up again, and new spaces are becoming occupied and beautified. Look no further than the downtown core, where some visible initiatives are not only taking place inside of the arts centres, but outside of them.

Take Grey Gallery for instance – they’ve extended their gallery into the empty lot next door, one that used to be the iconic Scopis Restaurant, but has been vacant since 1993.



“We wanted to transform that derelict looking vacant lot into a more welcoming, green and useful space,” says Grey Gallery owner Anne Dondertman. “In addition to the edible and ornamental plantings, the idea is that the central space will be a sculpture garden, and an extension of the art gallery.”

The Grey Garden will be open during business hours and could be used for events (post COVID). In July, local artist Raquell Yang will get to work adorning the south facing wall with a mural. “She has experience doing large outdoor murals in Taiwan, and has come up with a fantastic design.”

Take a stroll by the Garden and see if you get inspired with a vision of your own for the space. “We are interested to hear from people who have ideas about outdoor sculptures, or just generally ideas about the use of the space,” says Dondertman. They also have a current show running inside which opened last week. Vera Dernovsek and Lorne Wagman are both well-known artists who have a distinguished body of work. Pop inside for a visit and see the colourful paintings on display.



class.

Just down the street, Georgian Bay Centre for the Arts is also busy utilizing both their interior and exterior space. They’ve started classes again in everything from acrylic painting to introductory pottery, and the Palette Cafe is putting a patio out front so you can have a coffee, wine, or beer après-

“Class sizes will be limited, workspaces will be set up 6 feet apart, and tools will not be shared,” they state. “Hand washing stations and sanitizing stations will be available throughout our large space. Masks are not required, but encouraged!” So you can wear your mask to do the class inside, and then take it off to have a beverage and a bite on their patio outside.



How could we have a discussion of the arts in Owen Sound and not mention The Tom Thomson Art Gallery? This iconic gallery is scheduled to open on July 22 for members and July 29 for the general public. Lucky thing this reporter bought his membership a month ago! I'm looking forward to finding six other people in my social bubble and bringing my 'group of seven' to see the Group of Seven feature that marks the 100th anniversary of their first exhibition. There are only 10 people allowed in the Gallery at one time, so it's a great place to practice social distancing while getting some much needed culture this summer. Plus, they have two new contemporary shows opening. One is Toronto based artist, Steve Driscoll. The other is local artist, Emily Kewageshig, who is from the Saugeen First Nation. While you're in checking out their amazing exhibitions, you'll also notice their revamped lobby area and gift shop for easier flow.



2nd Ave Gallery is open Tuesday to Saturday 11-4 each week and is offering all sorts of engaging initiatives from painting classes for teens to portrait painting Sundays. July is a busy month at this gallery so check out their website and social media pages for more details. Gallery de Boer on 2nd Ave East boasts an extensive collection of international and Canadian artists including

a wealth of impressive work from First Nations artists.

The Artists' Co -Op offers work from 45 local artists and is now open 10am – 4pm every day and 12 – 4pm on Sundays. You'll notice the beautiful floral art of Kelly Maw on the walls, the exquisite pottery of Kate McLaren, and sculptures by Pam McCowan.

But perhaps the greatest thing about art in Owen Sound is that you don't even have to enter a gallery to get a glimpse of it. The Owen Sound Art Banner Display showcases 75 local artists' banners along the harbour. And storefronts downtown that have available window space have been filled with local art, as well. All you have to do is go for a walk in the Scenic City and you're bound to be inspired by the beauty of the brush stroke.