

Museum of Dufferin unveils new art exhibit



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The Museum of Dufferin (MoD) has opened a new art exhibit featuring the works of local artist Steven Volpe.

The museum hosted a reception last Saturday (April 23) to celebrate the launch of Volpe's 20-piece art show now located in the MoD's Silo Gallery.

A resident of Orangeville for over 20 years, the award-winning painter's journey to becoming a full-time artist has included receiving degrees in both fine arts and education, a stint in teaching, and working as a graphic designer.

While all have played some role in shaping his art, Volpe points specifically to his time in graphic designing as an influence in how he creates his pieces today.

"I use the software as a visualization tool in planning my paintings, as a guide to lay down ideas because I can cut, paste, and move things around quickly. There are always many changes in the painting process, but it's a really good starting point especially as a realist figurative painter," explained Volpe. "It's also made me a better designer, just how to put together a composition that hangs together well."

Volpe's works showcase ordinary people doing ordinary activities, but also uses unexpected twists to create open-ended narratives for viewers to interpret themselves.

"I like the subtle twist; things are just a bit askew. It looks like it could be just a slice of life representation, but then there's something there that makes them ask why."

These twists can be found in pieces such as "Anchor", where amongst sharks in an aquarium an anchorwoman is blurrily depicted, or "Birthday", which shows a man sleeping on a beach beside a kangaroo donning a red birthday hat.

"These aren't riddles with one single answer to them and I prefer when people can find things in the painting and see connections where otherwise you wouldn't," said Volpe.

A reoccurring theme viewers of Volpe's artwork will find is that of smoke, a motif he says he uses often.

?I like it symbolically because it can be suggestive of obscuring or destruction or burning, but also production,? said Volpe.

Over the time that his works are displaced at the MoD, Volpe said it will be a success for him to see a greater appreciation for original art and having people view artwork a little more closely.

?I'm interested in stimulating dialogue, getting people to make connections and associations and seeing the world in different ways,? said Volpe.

Volpe's work will be featured in the MoD's Silo Gallery until July 22.