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New exhibit at Town Hall features portraits of influential women

Written By PAULA BROWN

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Shelburne residents can see an array of portraits of influential women and share the influential women they'd like to see drawn in a new exhibit at the Shelburne Town Hall Art Gallery.

Local artist Alicia Janssen-Thayer is sharing her works of art in a new exhibit, titled ?In Our Eyes,? at the Shelburne Town Hall Art Gallery until Oct. 25.

The exhibit features more than 40 pieces of work from Janssen-Thayer's collection including portraits of influential women, her perspective on nature, and beauty standards. The portraits of influential women include Cher, Avril Lavigne, Britney Spears, Janis Joplin, and Marilyn Monroe.

The inspiration behind the exhibit comes from Women's History Month, which celebrates women and girls from past and present, who are contributing to a better more inclusive Canada.

October is marked as Women's History Month in Canada.

?There's a lot of standards that society puts on women and I don't always agree with them, so this is where [the exhibit] stemmed from,? explained Janssen-Thayer. ?It's a mixture of influential women in my eyes and other people's eyes as well as sort of how I see the world.?

At a young age, Janssen-Thayer developed a passion for drawing and painting, but recalled naysayers telling her she was ?no good'.

In an effort to prove them wrong, Janssen-Thayer attended the Haliburton School of Art and Design at Fleming College where she studied visual and creative arts with a specialization in moving image design. In her paintings and drawings, she works mostly with acrylics, graphite and charcoal, and has recently expanded to adding ink to create more depth in her portraits.

?Now I do portraits for my own sake, not to prove it to anybody,? said Janssen-Thayer.

Her favourite piece in the collection is a portrait of iconic country singer Dolly Parton, which is on display on the lower level of Town Hall.

?It's the one I'm most proud of, it has the most depth and my most accomplished piece of realism,? said Janssen-Thayer.

As part of the exhibit and her hopes to expand it with more pieces, Janssen-Thayer is looking to involve the community in her artwork by encouraging visitors of the exhibit to share influential women they think she should draw next. Visitors are able to share their input by submitting a name in a mason jar located at the exhibit.

?It's about attracting more people to see that they can be a part of other people's artwork and for those who might feel less creative or artsy that they can have a contribution; it feels like we're all doing it together,? said Janssen-Thayer. ?I don't what it to just be women who I think are influential, but from all walk of life.?

The ?In Our Eyes? exhibit will be on display at the Shelburne Town Hall Art Gallery until Oct. 25 and is open to the public Monday to Friday between 8:30 a.m. and 12 p.m. and 1 p.m. to 4:30 p.m.