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Shelburne artist shares story behind his exhibit in Town Hall Art Show

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Local Journalism Initiative Reporter

Works of art from local Black artists have been celebrated this February in a special Black History Month art show from the Town of Shelburne.

Shelburne-based artist Dave August Ellington has had his pieces of art on display at the Shelburne Town Hall Art Gallery throughout the month of February as part of a Black History Month exhibit.

?I'm very humbled by the opportunity given to me, it's really pulled on my heartstrings, how people have received the work. It's nice to get the reception and welcome,? said Ellington.

Ellington spoke about his desire to be a part of the Black History Month exhibit at the Town Hall.

?I definitely feel that art is a thing that unifies. It brings people together,? said Ellington. ?I wanted to have a representation of minority voice, the Black voice, that's open to sharing cultures and points of view, sharing experiences through art that help the community grow.?

Ellington's interest in painting originally began as an appreciation of art and art history as a whole. In 2018, while facing a particularly difficult period of health due to a chronic illness, he began exploring his abilities to create his own works.

Ellington first started his art journey by creating abstract pieces, but after experiencing a lack of resonation with the art form, he chose to delve into painting portraits. His first piece was a portrait of his mother, which he gifted to her.

?It's simply a matter of sitting there and trying to find a voice to express through paint and canvas,? said Ellington. ?When it comes to portraits, it's about studying the individual, watching their movements, mannerisms and figuring out the personalities. I find that when I paint people, especially people that I know, that they see themselves through my lens which is a wonderful feeling and experience. I think when you paint an image on canvas, there's energy and soul that is transferred through the hand, to the brush, to the paint and the canvas; all of that gets accumulated on the canvas and sort of presents itself as a story.?

In the exhibit, Ellington has roughly a dozen pieces of his work on display. One piece in particular that Ellington expresses pride in is a portrait of various Jamaican artists that have had significant impacts on the entertainment industry. Another of Ellington's favourites is a piece called ?Journey Home.'

?These pieces carry special meaning because they struck a chord on the inside when I was doing them. It's about our history, our journey and it all culminates together in where we came from, where we're going as a culture and people.?

Having his works of art on display at the Town Hall, Ellington said he hopes has sparked a love of art for others. The Black History Month exhibit at the Shelburne Town Hall Art Gallery also featured pieces of work from Mono-based artist John Opoku.