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Shelburne?s Town Hall Art Gallery features Orangeville Art Group in new exhibit

By Paula Brown, Local Journalism Initiative Reporter

Dufferin residents have the opportunity to celebrate seven decades of artistry in the community at the hands of a local not-for-profit arts organization.

The Orangeville Art Group (OAG) is hosting an exhibit titled "OAG: 70 Years of Art in the Community" at the Town Hall Art Gallery in Shelburne until July 25. The exhibit opened on July 7 and celebrates the group's 70 years of history.

?It's our first time at the Shelburne Town Hall and this is what we're all about; bringing art to the community,? said Genni Selby, show coordinator and president of the OAG. ?Our biggest and most important mandate of this group is community outreach and building relationships with the community by bringing art to the community through shows, exhibitions of members work, and by performing and creating workshops.?

The Orangeville Art Group was founded in 1955 by a group of nine women who met in the basement of Westminster United Church and christened themselves the Orangeville Art Club. Bonded by a shared love of painting, these friends became the driving force behind the group that would one day become a not-for-profit arts organization.

Today, the group has more than 100 members, representing a wide range of styles and media ? from painting and photography to pottery, sculptures and jewelry making. The group also works to educate the community in different artistic mediums by hosting workshops.

?We're very proud to be able to say that our legacy goes back 70 years,? said Selby. ?Our artists come from all different walks of life.?

The ?OAG: 70 Years of Art in the Community? exhibit features roughly 40 pieces of work from a total of 10 artists who are members of the Orangeville Art Group.

A special reception to celebrate the exhibit was held on Saturday (July 12), with four of the featured artists in attendance.

Judi Island has been a member of the OAG for 25 years and during that time, has taken part in roughly 12 exhibition shows. Island received a Bachelor's degree in Fine Art and Education before going on to teach art, sculpture and photography for 15 years at Wexford School for the Arts in Toronto. Her artwork has been exhibited in galleries in New Zealand, Australia and Canada.

?My work is sort of an impressionist style. I love colour and the use of light in my work more than working in a specific subject matter,? explained Island.

Milly Tseng is a mainly self-taught artist who has been crafting her skills over the last 15 years. She had her first solo exhibition in 2020 at Steve Wilson Studios and The Gallery, Niagara. In May 2023, she was the featured artist for the Mayor's Showcase in Georgetown Town Hall. Tseng currently sits as director on the Board of the Orangeville Art Group (OAG) and is the current president of the Credit Valley Artisans (CVA).

?For this show, I've only presented my watercolour painting, but otherwise I do work with oil acrylics as well as stained glass,? said Tseng. ?I'm not familiar with [Shelburne], so it's very nice to be able to take part in a art show in such a beautiful setting.?

A full-time barber in Bradford, Jane Kulha joined the Orangeville Art Group in 2025 when she took part in one of the group's workshops. Kulha's passion for art began at a young age and was heavily influenced by her mother, who was an artist and former president of the Toronto Watercolour Society.

Kulha has a single oil painting in the exhibit called ?Sunday Journey,? which she painted based on a photograph of a couple going to church on Rice Lake.

?When you walk around these old Ontario towns you start to think of the generations; what it was like when these houses were new and the clothes they wore. What a time they lived in,? said Kulha about the inspiration behind her painting.

Freda Wrench began her journey in the arts first with a passion for figurative work, which led her to study Fashion Design at George Brown College. She was later drawn to fine art and received her education through evening classes, workshops and many hours of painting and drawing.

Wrench has experimented with various art mediums, but finds her favourites to be watercolour and acrylic ink. As a visual artist, her subject matter varies with inspiration coming from nature, humanity and music.

She's participated in group and solo shows as well as studio tours throughout Ontario and Quebec. She also sat on the Headwaters Art Gallery Committee in Alton for 10 years.

?It's good to be able to show and share your work with a new audience,? said Wrench about the exhibit in Shelburne.

The ?OAG: 70 Years of Art in the Community? exhibit will be on display at the Shelburne Town Hall Art Gallery until July 25.

More information about the Orangeville Art Group, including membership and workshops, can be found at orangevilleartgroup.com.