

Headwaters Art Gallery to host Fall Festival opening event September 16

By Rob Paul, Local Journalism Initiative Reporter

This fall, the Headwaters Art Gallery will host its Fall Festival Art Show and Sale, "Raising the Bar," from September 15 to October 3.

The opening event will take place September 16 from 6 p.m. to 9 p.m. at the gallery, located at 1402 Queen Street West in Alton.

This year for the fall show, the gallery challenged artists to submit works created during the unprecedented times of being in solitude and isolation throughout the pandemic.

The exhibition will showcase over 80 works of art by 45 artists and features a diverse and personal selection of differing subject matters in multiple mediums including oil, water colour, and acrylic paintings; mixed media/collage/mosaic; sculptures; blown glass; ink/pencil; photography/digital print; silk/fibre art; clay/stoneware; and recycled/handmade paper.

The Fall Festival Show is Headwaters' biggest fundraising event, and the official opening event will have live music and entertainment, juror and student award presentations, a Meet the Artists opportunity, art for sale, and the chance to enjoy local foods and beverages all outdoors underneath the newly tented Annex Courtyard.

"The Headwaters Art Gallery flagship event is our fall festival, which is September 15 to October 3," said Sue Powell, Headwaters Art board member and Marketing Chair. "It's a keystone event for us and it's a huge fundraiser, but then we also have the opening event with it and because the new tent [allows] us to have even more opportunity to have people gather. We'll have a bar outside at the tent for people to go back and forth to see the work and have a drink. We're really excited we're able to go forward with it."

The event will be juried by oil painter Olaf Schneider and curated by Regan Jane Hayward.

"Raising the Bar exhibition offers artwork fully motivated by our artist's contemplations and new directions spurred on by COVID-19 impacts," said Regan, Headwater Arts curator, and Gallery Committee Chair. "This show reflects visual expressions on all kinds of different levels, mirroring the global pandemic experience we all relate to."

Many of the artists who have submitted works for the event, which focused on the emotional depth of everything that has been going on for more than a year.

"I am a retired physician, trained to think," said painter Anne Smythe. "Across the pandemic, I challenged myself to break free from my own rules, plans, and expectations for my art."

"I was incredibly inspired by the struggle for hopefulness during the pandemic, shared by so many the roller coaster of emotion that is the human journey through chaos into light," said painter Nancy McNabb.

All 80-plus works will be on display inside the Headwaters Art Gallery and throughout the Alton Mill Art Centre until October 3 with COVID-19 protocols in place.

Tickets for the event are \$35 each and will include one bar ticket, refreshments, and live entertainment.

Visit headwaterarts.com to view works that are in the show and to purchase a ticket to the opening event.