

## **COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE - SEPTEMBER 15, 2008**

### **STATUS REPORT ON THE ARTS & CULTURE IN CITY- OWNED HERITAGE BUILDINGS PROGRAM**

#### **Recommendation**

The Commissioner of Community Services, in consultation with the Director of Recreation and Culture recommends:

1. The information contained in this report with regard to the one-year status report on the Arts and Cultural Use at City-owned Heritage Building program, be approved.
2. The Art Exhibition + Studio Space Rental program be continued beyond its 3-year term and that staff monitor and adjust the program, as required.

#### **Economic Impact**

There are no costs associated with extending the Art Exhibition + Studio Space Rental program beyond its 3-year term.

#### **Communications Plan**

The availability of heritage buildings for arts and cultural programming (i.e. through the *Art Exhibition + Studio Space Rental Program*) will continue to be advertised and promoted to artists, arts and cultural organizations through the Recreation Guide, Vaughan community centres, libraries and the City of Vaughan website.

#### **Purpose**

The purpose of this report is to respond to Council's request in June 2007 to provide a one-year status report on the *Arts and Cultural Use in City-owned Heritage Buildings* program, in particular, addressing whether the program has met its programming goals and to obtain approval for the continuation of the program beyond its 3-year term.

#### **Background - Analysis and Options**

At the June 25, 2007, Council meeting a 3-year pilot project was approved by Council and later re-titled the *Art Exhibition + Studio Space Rental Program*. At the June 2007 Council meeting, it was requested that staff provide a one-year status report on the approved program in particular whether the program has met its goals. The program's goals are as follows:

1. To increase the use of City-owned heritage buildings by establishing programs, services and fees that provide affordable access to heritage buildings;
2. To assist in the development and promotion of arts & cultural groups and individual artists in the community by providing them with affordable access to City-owned heritage buildings for their activities and programs;
3. To provide the Vaughan community opportunities for participation in arts and cultural exhibitions, displays, and workshops within their community.

The City of Vaughan has ownership of heritage buildings that have been restored and are managed by the City as part of its inventory of City-owned public facilities. The usage of these buildings by the community is integral in creating vibrant and purposeful focal points within

Vaughan. The arts program approved in June 2007 by Council, makes available heritage buildings for arts and cultural use at a new, reduced weekly \$150 +GST rental rate. Under the program, applicants are required to clearly define the proposed use of the space. Applications are evaluated on how well their use/program meets the established criteria, how appropriate it is for the site and building and how it will benefit the community. Priority booking will be given to Vaughan-based artists and arts and cultural groups.

A review of the availability and suitability of buildings for arts and cultural use, determined that the MacDonald House (121 Centre Street, Thornhill) the Armstrong House (42 Old Yonge Street, Thornhill) and the Vellore Hall (9541 Weston Road, Woodbridge) were the centres in which the art studio program was to be launched. The program was initiated in December 2007 after the retrofitting/cleaning of the buildings. A rail-hanging system and track lighting, for example, was installed at the MacDonald House as it was determined to be the most appropriate space for art installation. It should be noted that while sites are being used for the art studio program, registered Recreation programs such as camps and workshops are also being held at the sites as required.

To date, approximately 12 permits, representing a 3-month use, has resulted from the initiation of this program. The MacDonald House and Vellore Hall have been the most popular sites showcasing 95% of the exhibits and events. Overall, an increase in awareness and increase heritage building use has been a direct result of the program. Overall, the goals of the program have been met and as a result of the feedback received, it is recommended that the program continue beyond its 3-year term approved by Council in June 2007.

In a consultant's report prepared by Synercom Strategies in 2004, community arts and culture exhibition space that is affordable and suitable to showcase and exhibit artwork, install displays, and use for short-term instructional programs/workshops, was identified as a need in the community. Emerging community arts and cultural groups maintained that the old rental fee for heritage buildings was too high as their ability to operate and sustain themselves is limited.

The feedback received on the new reduced fee is overall extremely positive in that it is affordable and accessible to most artists and art groups. Additionally, community artists have identified that the program offers an opportunity to exhibit their work, sometimes for the first time, and sell their work to the public. Exhibitions are advertised on the City's website, however invitations and promotional work is mostly done by the artists or art groups themselves. Events are not only focused on art exhibitions, but also one-week music clinics, piano recitals/competitions and vocal clinics have been hosted at the heritage facilities.

### **Relationship to Vaughan Vision 2020**

In consideration of the strategic priorities related to Vaughan Vision 2020, the report will provide:

- **STRATEGIC GOAL:**  
Service Excellence - Providing service excellence to citizens.
- **STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES:**  
Preserve our heritage and support diversity, arts and culture.

This report does not recommend a change from the priorities previously set by Council and the necessary resources have been allocated.

### **Regional Implications**

There are no Regional implications associated with this report.

## **Conclusion**

In general, the *Art Exhibition + Studio Space Rental Program* has been successful in achieving its goals of increasing the use of City-owned heritage buildings, assisting in the development and promotion of arts & cultural groups and individual artists and providing the community with opportunities for participation in arts and cultural exhibitions, displays, and workshops. Staff recommend a continuation of the program beyond its 3-year term in order to provide a valuable service to the arts community in this area and also provide an excellent use of the City's heritage facilities.

## **Attachments**

1. Sample exhibitions & newspaper coverage

## **Report Prepared By**

Mary Reali, Director of Recreation and Culture, ext. 8234  
Angela Palermo, Cultural Services Manager, ext. 8139

Respectfully submitted,

Marlon Kallideen  
Commissioner of Community Services



**LSS ART CLUB PRESENTS**  
AN EXHIBIT OF ORIGINAL WORKS  
*April 16 - 20*

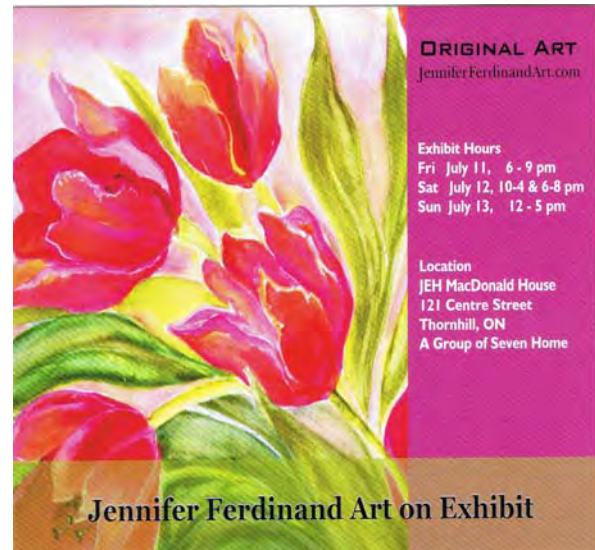
Linda Chiaravalloti  
Martha Griffith  
Matthew Catalano

Maccdonald House, 121 Centre Street, Thornhill, Ont.

Wed., Thurs. 4 - 9 pm  
Fri. Artist's Reception 6 - 10 pm  
Sat. 12 - 7 pm  
Sun. 12 - 5 pm



contact: Linda, 416 275 1964 cash or cheque purchases




**ORIGINAL ART**  
JenniferFerdinandArt.com

Exhibit Hours  
Fri July 11, 6 - 9 pm  
Sat July 12, 10-4 & 6-8 pm  
Sun July 13, 12 - 5 pm

Location  
JEH MacDonald House  
121 Centre Street  
Thornhill, ON  
A Group of Seven Home

**Jennifer Ferdinand Art on Exhibit**




*Artists at  
Thoreau Mac Donald House*


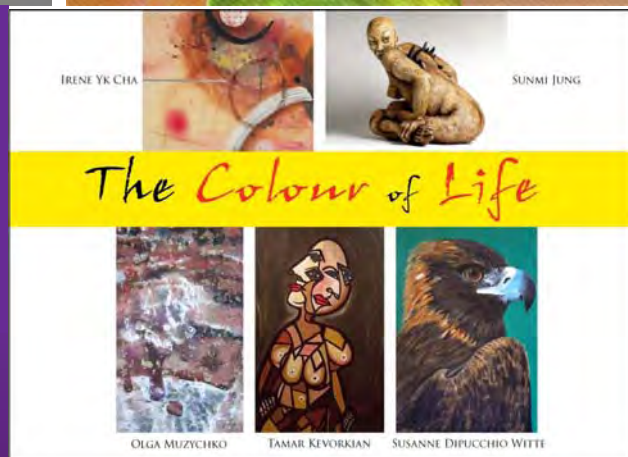
POTTERY - SCULPTURE - B/W PHOTOGRAPHY - GLASS

EXHIBITION BEGINS  
JUNE 3RD TO JUNE 8TH  
11AM - 10PM  
SAT & SUN 10AM-10PM

A PERCENTAGE OF SALES TO BE GIVEN TO L'ARCHE DAY BREAK



THOREAU MAC DONALD HOUSE  
121 CENTRE STREET  
THORNHILL, ONTARIO  
416-400-0708

IRENE YK CHA

SUNMI JUNG

*The Colour of Life*

OLGA MUZYCHKO

TAMAR KEVORKIAN

SUSANNE DIPUCCHIO WITTE

**2008  
GROUP ART  
EXHIBITION  
MAY 6-18**

THOREAU MACDONALD HOUSE 121 CENTRE STREET, THORNHILL

*The Colour of Life*

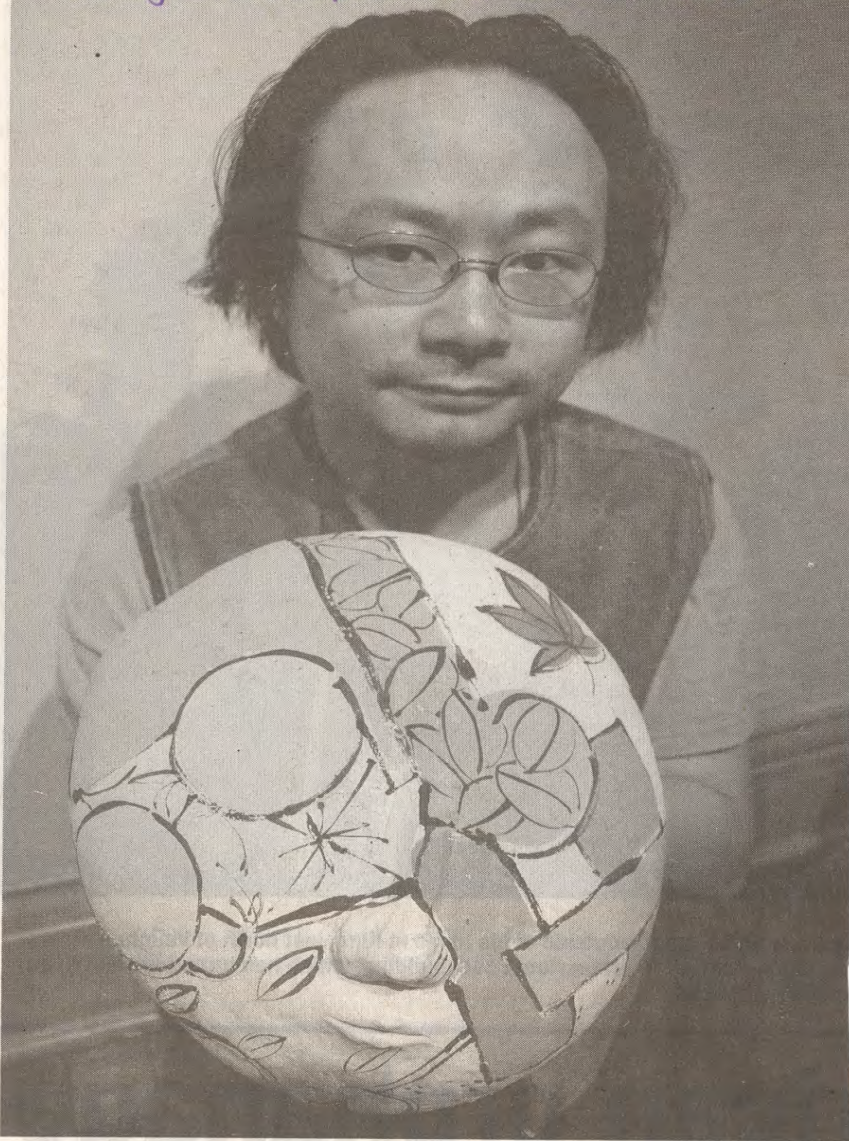
- IRENE YK CHA  
- OLGA MUZYCHKO  
- SUNMI JUNG  
- SUSANNE DIPUCCHIO WITTE  
- TAMAR KEVORKIAN



Access to Brooke St. & Park at Holy Trinity Church

OPENING RECEPTION :  
MAY 8 (THU.) 2008. 7 - 9 P.M.  
GALLERY HOURS :  
MON - FRI : 4 - 8 P.M.  
SAT, SUN : 12 - 6 P.M.

Vaughan Perspectives June 12-18, 2008



## Artist on display

Ian Chung displays one of his creations at the Thoreau Macdonald House in Thornhill. The heritage home – where a number of famous Group of Seven works were created – is available for use at a discounted rate for community art groups seeking a venue for exhibitions.

Photo by Paul Leavoy



Artists (from left) Raymond Chau, Riki Pinhas, Deb Kirks and Mildred and Jerry Ram are featured in an art exhibit at Thoreau MacDonald House in Thornhill from June 3 to 8.

# Clay binds artists at Thornhill art exhibition

BY DAVID FLEISCHER  
Staff Writer

When they come together for an exhibition next month, a group of artists will share a bit of history with a more well-known Group of Seven.

Beginning June 3, five artists from across the region share the stage for a week-long exhibition at Thornhill's Thoreau MacDonald House.

"Everybody here comes from a very varied background," says Ramond Chau, who teaches pottery at his Unionville studio.

Riki Pinhas lives in North York, Ian Chung lives in Markham, Deb Kirks lives in Stouffville and Mildred and Jerry Ram live in Richmond Hill.

Each is a potter, although Ms Pinhas also sculpts, Ms Kirks makes jewelry and glassware and Mr. Ram spent most of life as a black-and-white photographer.

Only Mr. Chung had formal training, having attended the Ontario College of Art.

The Rams began learning pottery in their native Montreal, but found a new home at Mr. Chau's studio after moving here three years ago.

"In ceramics and pottery, there is always the element of surprise," Mr. Ram says.

Mr. Ram remains devoted to shooting with film and sees something of that element in his photographs as well.

"The photographer sees

▶ The exhibition is open June 3 to 8 from 11 a.m. to 10 p.m. on weekdays and from 10 a.m. on the weekend. For more information call 416-400-0708.

things people don't see," he says. "With negative photography you haven't already seen what it's going to come out to be."

Seeing a piece of work emerge from the kiln is just as rewarding as seeing a developed photograph to him.

"Pottery was the starting point," for Ms Kirk.

"It's a serious addiction and a very expensive one," she says, her compatriots laughing in agreement.

"It's really, really fun. It helps a mother of three keep her sanity," Ms Pinhas adds.

The artists banter like the cast of a sitcom, completing each other's jokes, feeding off each others' creativity.

"We kibbitz," Mr. Ram says, using the Yiddish term for idle chatter to describe how the artists interact together. Ms Kirk is forced to laughingly apologize when he suggests that interaction can also involve people accidentally knocking over other's work.

"When you sit in a group of six or eight people and everyone is doing something a little different... you get inspired," Ms Pinhas says.

"It pushes you to challenge more of yourself," Ms Kirk adds.

Each September, the artists participate in the Markham 48 studio tour and exhibit work at Mr. Chau's Kaolin studio. But this show is a more ambitious effort.

Last year, the City of Vaughan launched a pro-active initiative aimed at making use of the 14, largely vacant heritage properties it owns.

Mr. Ram, who had photos in a city exhibition, was a beneficiary of the new policy when he received an invitation extolling the virtues of the MacDonald house.

Once owned by Thoreau MacDonald, son of Group of Seven artist JEH MacDonald, the house recently underwent an extensive renovation, with the aim of making it suitable for art shows and community events.

The artists universally praise the city's efforts, despite having set off the burglar alarm when they first came to check the house out.

"The venue's gorgeous. They've done a really nice job inside and made sure there's appropriate lighting. (The city) is prepared to provide just about everything to accommodate us," Ms Pinhas says.

Mr. Chung recommended donating a percentage of all sales to L'Arche Daybreak, a Richmond Hill facility where arts are used to help people with intellectual disabilities.