



ARTS ETOBICOKE

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Arts Etobicoke and Amnesty International Unveil Toronto's Longest Outdoor Poem

Mural project is part of Project: Urban Canvas celebrating the Universal Declaration of Human Rights

Toronto, ON (date) - A 1000 square foot mural in the alley adjacent to Arts Etobicoke has been painted with a newly commissioned poem by **Dionne Brand, City of Toronto Poet Laureate**. The mural will be unveiled on October 19, 2010 at 2 pm at the Arts Etobicoke Gallery at 4893A Dundas St. W.

Members of the news media are invited to the event along with special guest **Mayor David Miller** who will join Ms. Brand for a "walking reading" of the poem. The event also includes an African drum and dance procession featuring **Roshanak Jaberi**, an Iranian-Canadian dancer and choreographer who specializes in the folkloric and contemporary dances of West Africa and examines social issues through the art of storytelling. **Off the Wall**, an interactive and movement-based exhibition that also features artwork inspired by the mural and created by youth participating in Arts Etobicoke's Saturday Storefront Art Classes will be on display in the Arts Etobicoke Gallery.

The Art Alley Mural Project is produced by Arts Etobicoke, participating in **Amnesty International's Project: Urban Canvas** – A mural series celebrating the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. www.aito.ca/urbancanvas. Project: Urban Canvas will produce 30 murals throughout the GTA, each interpreting one of the 30 articles of human rights. The Art Alley Mural is the twelfth mural to be developed in the project.

Arts Etobicoke chose Article 13 for the theme of its mural - **"Everyone has the right to freedom of movement and residence within the borders of each state"** The article holds special meaning for the large immigrant population in Etobicoke and for youth, who have worked with Arts Etobicoke to create their own interpretation of the poem. The mural was designed by **Susan Rowe Harrison** and painted by **William Lazos** with assistance by Etobicoke youth.

Arts Etobicoke commissioned **Dionne Brand**, City of Toronto's Poet Laureate to write an original poem based on this article. Brand's poem 'Article 13' is reproduced on the websites of Arts Etobicoke at www.artsetobicoke.com and AITO at www.aito.ca/urbancanvas.

"Creativity is bubbling west of the Humber River," says **Louise Garfield**, Executive Director of Arts Etobicoke. "We are delighted to partner with Amnesty International Toronto to raise awareness of the intersection of the arts and human rights."

Elena Dumitru, Toronto Regional Development Coordinator for AITO adds “Partnering with Arts Etobicoke in creating a mural to depict Article 13 enable all of us to bring attention to the plight of migrants and refugees through the combined mediums of poetry and visual arts.”

Arts Etobicoke gratefully acknowledges the support of City of Toronto's Arts in the Hood/Live with Culture, Pierre Seunik, the buildings' owner and Chair of the Islington Village BIA and Village Paint in Islington Village. Thanks also to volunteer Karina Dahlin for contributing her time and energy to this project.

Arts Etobicoke was founded in 1973 to provide a united voice for the local arts community. Today, our mission is to engage the people of West Toronto with the arts and artists in their own community. Arts Etobicoke has long been recognized as one of Canada's finest community arts councils in large part because of innovative and quality programming, such as urbanNOISE, an urban arts training program & Festival for at-risk youth in Rexdale, This is My Neighbourhood and Exploring Creativity in Depth for elementary school children, smART stART Student Art Show for secondary school students, the Presidents Legacy Scholarship Fund, an Art Rental and Sales service, Art on the Move, a mobile community arts initiative, a storefront Gallery with a year-round exhibition schedule and free art classes for all ages. Arts Etobicoke serves a membership of 55 community-based arts organizations from all arts disciplines, as well as 200 individual members, 16 Scholarship recipients, more than 60 artists and clients in the Art Rental service, thousands of students in our Arts Education programs, and numerous project partners. Arts Etobicoke is an incorporated not-for-profit arts council managed and governed by a volunteer Board of Directors from business, the arts and the community.

Amnesty International is a worldwide movement of “ordinary” people who work together to achieve extraordinary results. Each day we stand in solidarity with—and help protect—individuals and communities around the world whose human rights are under attack. Amnesty members come from many different cultures and backgrounds. What unites us is our determination to build a world where all people live in dignity, security and freedom. Amnesty International's **vision** is of a world in which every person enjoys all the human rights enshrined in the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* and other international human rights standards.

Amnesty International's **Art in Action** team is the creative force behind *Project: Urban Canvas*. Art in Action is an enthusiastic group of artistic professionals who, on a volunteer basis, provide creative support for the Amnesty International Toronto Organization (AITO).

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