

Art St. Croix provides all people interested in arts places to create, exhibit work

Andy Blenkush

Lake Elmo Leader - 03/04/2009



Involvement is empowering.

Art St. Croix uses this motto in its quest to provide opportunities for artists of all abilities and genres. The local art is preparing for the fourth annual “Living Creatively” exhibit March 4 through March 28 at the Lake Elmo Regional Art Center.

For the first time, Art St. Croix required the work to center on the theme “All things home.” Entries include paintings, photographs poems and more revolving around what the artists think of when they consider “home.”

“Everybody has memories of home,” said Judy Gulden, a key member of the organization. “People have memories of a home, good or bad. It might be a current home, they might be homeless, or they might have lost a home.”

A theme was added to the exhibit to help artists pare down their entry possibilities. According to Gulden, artists in past years had a difficult time deciding what to exhibit. The theme was added to help people.

About 57 artists plan to show work in this year’s exhibit, totaling more than 120 original pieces.

While the number of artists is up, the total number of pieces entered is slightly below last year’s total of 150. That is fine according to event organizer Ken Moses, adding that the gallery will feel less congested, and allowing people to browse the work more comfortably. Artists were limited to three entries apiece in an attempt to keep the number of exhibits manageable.

The “Living Creatively” exhibit is being funded through a combination of grants and money from organizations such as the McKnight Foundation, the Metropolitan Regional Arts Council, Thrivent Financial for Lutherans, the St. Croix Community Foundation and the Wisconsin Arts Board.

About a dozen of the artists are showing work through Art St. Croix for the first time. Although the organization focuses on helping adults with disabilities gain opportunities in the arts, it is not specifically for the disabled, according to Moses.

“There are a number of people who are not disabled,” Moses said. “It’s not just artists with disabilities. That’s whom we cater to, but we are open to everyone.”

“This is a good opportunity to get resume credit, to exhibit something at a low cost,” Moses added. “Some people see an opportunity to get into the east metro. And many do have disabilities.”

One thing Gulden noticed about the organization is that it helps people who are interested in the arts, but afraid to become involved, take the first steps into the local arts scene. This is possibly the most important aspect of an organization like Art St. Croix, she said.

“Involvement is very empowering to people,” Gulden said. “[Artists] are invited to explore interests, that they might need a little help in. Some people get hooked on art with just a little push into the direction of actually doing the arts.”