

Arts&Entertainment

Visual artists studio tour a *walk* of art

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Vaughan Today

For most, buying a painting rarely involves the artist who painted it, let alone the little studio where the brush stroked the canvas.

The fall Thornhill Visual Artists Studio Tour changes all that this weekend.

Running from Friday to Sunday, eight local artists will throw open the doors of their studios for the public to take a peek and possibly buy a masterpiece.

"It is an opportunity for the community to (see) an artist's home-studio, as opposed to only seeing our work in a gallery," says Jeremy Bortz, one of the artists whose studio will be on display as part of the tour.

Bortz, who has lived in Thornhill since leaving his native South Africa in 2000, joined the tour only three years ago. A professional artist of some renown, he sees the tour as a great way for the community to discover lesser-known local artists.

Though the focus of the tour may be on the artists and their studios, all of the artists involved donate a portion of their proceeds and sponsorships to charitable causes. Bortz donates 30 percent of his proceeds to Sick Kids Hospital.

The group puts on two tours a year: one over Mother's Day weekend in the spring and one in the fall. Interested visitors can download a map and make their way to the studio locations at their leisure.

The tours usually attract between 300 and 500 people a weekend, Bortz says.

While he may sell between five and 10 paintings during the tour, the most important thing for Bortz and his fellow artists is the exposure.

"Have you ever actually gone to an artist's studio and seen how they work? How they sit in their little rooms in their basements painting away?" Bortz asks, adding that most people haven't.

Other artists opening their studios this weekend include: Lezlie Winemaker, who makes one-of-a-kind wearable art; Annette Bladys, whose uses exotic materials in her mixed media acrylic paintings; as well as award-winning painter, Margaret Roseman.

While Bortz enjoys the interaction with the community during the tour, he sees the weekend as a unique opportunity for anyone looking to add a little art to their walls.

After all, Bortz says, it's not often you get to meet the artist you're making an investment in.



SIMPLY SPLENDID: Jeremy Bortz, one of the artists opening their studio doors to the public this weekend for the Thornhill Visual Artists Studio Tour, puts some finishing touches on his latest canvas, *White Splendor*.

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