



Culture_arts



Children contribute drawings to artist Dan Bazuin.



A piece from Stephanie Avery.



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(Please note, only photographs relevant to Madeleine Collective's Zone X have been included)

DANFORTH & GREENWOOD

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ARTS

The Danforth gets arted up

Interactive festival Art of the Danforth hopes to draw the city's attention to a neglected, east-end stretch of the city.

BY: CHRIS RIDDELL

Venture through the East Danforth neighbourhood between now and June 10 and you'll find some artful surprises. Art of the Danforth, a three-week festival of public art installations produced by the East Danforth Creative Collective, boasts interactive exhibits in stores and public spaces from Greenwood to Woodbine.

This year marks the second edition of the festival—after debuting in 2010—and it's shaping up to be bigger, better, and broader than the last. In addition to the installations, Art of the Danforth features workshops, art in stores, street performances, and walking tours.

“My vision was to increase points of contact with people, and to give people a range of ways they could interact,” says Event Producer Cindy Rozeboom. “Some people like to just look at art, and that's great, but for some people that might be kind of flat. Some people want to get their hands messy. Other people might look at [the art] and feel intimidated, so I was trying to think of different points of contact and different types of ways so that people can come into it in whatever way makes sense for them.”

As Ward 31 Councillor Janet Davis mentioned at yesterday's media launch, *The Globe and Mail* once called this neighbourhood “the forgotten part of the Danforth,” but organizers feel this event will revitalize the community and attract some needed attention. The Danforth is home to a vital cluster of creative talent, and the art festival is manifesting that talent in a big way.

According to Director of Visual Arts, Asad Raza, Art of the Danforth is an experiment. “What we're basically doing is we're diffusing all this remarkable creativity into the neighbourhood for three weeks and seeing what happens,” he says.

He expects local residents will go through a process of amazement, discovery, and then boredom. In the first week, they may find it new and exciting. In the second week, they may become more accustomed to seeing these pieces of art and start analyzing them deeply. Then, by the third week, they may become bored with art after seeing it every day. Ironically, this result is what Art of the Danforth organizers are most interested in achieving: That moment when art and everyday life become fused.

No matter what the reaction, everyone is eager to see what happens in the coming days. This could be the boost that the East Danforth needs to get back into the public eye.