

Community Art Exhibits at CUA and CEC, Report to AGM 2020

Locations

There are currently two community locations with regular exhibit space, the Credit Union Atlantic (CUA) and the Community Enterprise Centre (CEC). These community locations are available for displays by PCAFA member artists only. Sharon Jessup Joyce is now the contact for both locations.

As people return more to regular activities, we hope other locations will return to the program and new locations will emerge.

The Tantallon Public Library is a third location, and is managed by library staff.

Exhibit spaces

CUA: The CUA has one wall available for pictures and one 8-foot table with white tablecloth available for tabletop displays. There is generally one artist represented each month.

The wall accommodates 4 to 12 pieces and artists are welcome to use adhesive or nails. When possible, artists are asked to re-use existing nail holes, but the CUA is flexible about that. The only restriction on the table display is that, for security reasons, it must not impede CUA staff's ability to see through the window where the table is situated.

Artists are welcome to drop in to see the location ahead of their designated display month.

CEC: The CEC has two gallery walls and one built-in with adjustable niches suitable for 3D works or small paintings on easels. The built-in is new. When possible, the CEC prefers to have two to three artists per month, one on each gallery wall, with the built-in available for one or both those artists to use, or for a third artist.

Artists are welcome to stop by the CEC during its regular business hours of 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. to take a look at the built-in and gallery walls.

Details

Timing: Artists exhibit their works for one month at both community locations. A call for artists is sent out once or twice a year by PCAFA, and artists are asked to contact Sharon, the volunteer who now coordinates this activity, to request a display month and preferred location (CUA or CEC). Specific requests will be accommodated when possible.

Artists are also invited to reach out to Sharon to see if there is upcoming space. Flexibility about location and display month is helpful for scheduling.

Sharon will contact artists during the month before their schedule month to remind them of their upcoming exhibit period, and to make arrangements for them to come in and hang/place their art. When possible, this will happen on either the last day or the last Friday of each month. Ideally, gallery walls at both locations will be left vacant for as little time as possible.

Sales: Both locations have recently had changes to sales protocols.

The CUA will accept cash for small works/items being displayed. The value limit they will accept is \$50. They will no longer accept larger payments or cheques, and instead will refer the interested community member to the artist.

The CEC now accepts payments by cheque on behalf of the artist. Artists may opt in or out of that when they sign their waiver for the CEC.

There is presently no mechanism to accept cash or e-transfers. However, Sharon is the reception volunteer on Friday afternoons at the CEC. With the artists' permission, she has, in her capacity as a PCAFA member, collected cash payments from purchasers, and has kept the cash for the artist. This allows people who do not have cheques to buy art and take it away on the spot or within a few days.

Program marketing: The CUA has had some staffing changes, and the person who shared photos of the art on their website in the past has moved on. Sharon has the contact information for two CUA marketing staff, and will be meeting with them to discuss ways the CUA and CEC can promote the program together. Stay tuned.

The CEC regularly posts photos and comments about displayed art on its Facebook and Instagram accounts and on its website. These have low traffic, but the CEC's connections with the Bay Seniors Association, the St. Margaret's Bay Stewardship Association and the Bay Chamber of Commerce allow for more eyes on these social media mentions. On two recent occasions, seeing works on social media resulted in sales.

Other sales have come from people seeing works in person at either the CUA or the CEC. For security reasons, the CUA will not disclose their visitor numbers. They acknowledge these are lower this year, but there is still foot traffic. The CUA's current hours are 10 a.m. to 4 p.m., Monday to Friday. Evening and weekend hours are currently suspended.

The CEC, conversely, has more visitors now than in the past. As a co-working, meeting and training space, its visitor and member traffic numbers vary, but often exceed 100 in a week. The CEC's current hours are 9 a.m. to 4 p.m., Monday to Friday.

Personal note: While we're always excited when someone buys a piece we have on display, please know that many others look at the art, comment on it, and say how wonderful it is to have it to appreciate in our community locations. They also notice and enjoy it as the art changes month to month.

One recent Friday, when I was at reception, an elderly man came in to buy a fabric face mask. He told me he's a widower who gets out of the house very seldom these days, and he asked if he could stay for a bit to look at the art and quilts we had on display. Of course I encouraged him to take all the time he liked. He spent about an hour looking, and then asked me about where the art comes from, how often it changes, and if he could come in next month to see "the changing of the guard." And of course I said yes. As he was leaving, he said, "Tell those artists, for what it's worth, an old man says thanks."

So, from that man and many other people, thank you, so much, for sharing your art with us.

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