

ARTS

Arts festival goers can 'chalk one up'

By Stephanie Thiessen
CANADIAN CHAMPION STAFF

The downtown core might soon resemble a mass murder scene, with hundreds of chalk body outlines spilling onto Main Street.

But don't let that intimidate you.

Tom Dietrich's latest art project is nothing to shy away from — especially since he needs your help. June 10 from 1 to 6 p.m., the Campbellville artist will be on assignment at the Arts Milton Festival on Main Street, tracing the outlines of anyone who's willing to throw caution to the wind and lie down on the ground.

The project is aptly titled 'Chalk One Up'.

"It's going to be a meandering river going up and down the street," said Dietrich, a member of the Fine Arts Society of Milton (FASM).

The outlines, which will continue onto the sidewalk, will create a scene of human interaction, chronicling the explorations of festival-goers, Dietrich said.

And it'll answer the question 'What makes up a community?'

"Take away all the people, and it's nothing. Just a bunch of boxes," he said. "We're the lifeblood, spirit and energy. I was looking for something that depicted that."

Dietrich said the festival route will become an overlapping collage of colour much like the organic stains left by fallen leaves. "It's quite a wonderful pattern that stays there. It's fleeting. It's only there for a moment," he said, explaining, "This is my own idea of the leaves, only it's people."

For the art to accurately reflect the mood of the festival, it's got to be fun, he said, adding the chalk does that because it reminds people of their childhood.

Dietrich said he hopes people of all ages, shapes and sizes will help him out, whether young or old, skinny or pregnant. He wants to capture all stages of life, he said.

Though rain will wash the colourful display away soon enough, Dietrich said it'll continue to exist in the memories of participants.

Dietrich is a multi-disciplinary artist whose work ranges from sculptures to drawings to paintings.

Much of his work focuses on the relationship between people and the environment.

"Our relationships are reflected in the environment and the environment influences our relationships. It's a continuous circle," he said.



CHALKIN' ONE UP: Artist Tom Dietrich finishes a chalk outline of Mayor Gord Krantz out front of Town Hall to promote the June 10 Arts Milton Festival, which will feature human chalk outlines on downtown Main Street.

GRAHAM PAINE / CANADIAN CHAMPION

It took a while before Dietrich fully pursued his passion for art, enrolling at Ontario College of Art and Design in 2000.

"I always had an interest (in art), but it took a long time before I pushed it. But it was always something I was going to come back to," he said.

Now, Dietrich is starting to make a name for himself. In September and October, his work will be featured at Homer-Watson gallery in Kitchener-Waterloo, his first solo show at a public art gallery.

"It's very exciting. When you start anything like this, it's a hope and a dream. When it manifests and starts to become a reality, it's like, 'Oh boy,'" he said. "In a sense, it's a terrible responsibility because all of a sudden the bar is raised."

The exhibit will include paintings and sculptures. One sculpture is an 80-pound bronze log, an interpretation of Daphne, a star crossed lover in Greek mythology who was turned into a tree.

"It's the organic side of humanity. We don't live forever," Dietrich explained.

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Women of Note gearing up for show next Friday

An intimate concert blending together music, art and fundraising is the Women of Note's latest project.

Next Friday at noon, the vocal ensemble will perform at Hugh Foster Hall beside Town Hall Victoria Park.

The concert will pay tribute to Mozart, whose 250th anniversary is this year, and also to nature and the ideal of peace.

"The music promises to be joyful, rich in beautiful melodies and thought-provoking, and all of it sung in the beautifully-blended style that has become a hallmark of the Women of Note," said director Laura Jeffrey.

Tickets cost \$10 and must be purchased in advance, due to the limited capacity of the venue, from choir members or by calling (905) 878-2432.

This is the first time the Women of Note will perform at Hugh Foster Hall, which is known for its acoustics.

Also new this year is the ensemble's partnership with FASM (Fine Arts Society of Milton) artists, who'll display a sampling of their work to promote the June 10 Arts Milton Festival.

Money raised from ticket sales will go to the Stephen Lewis Foundation, which provides relief for HIV/AIDS victims and their families in Africa.

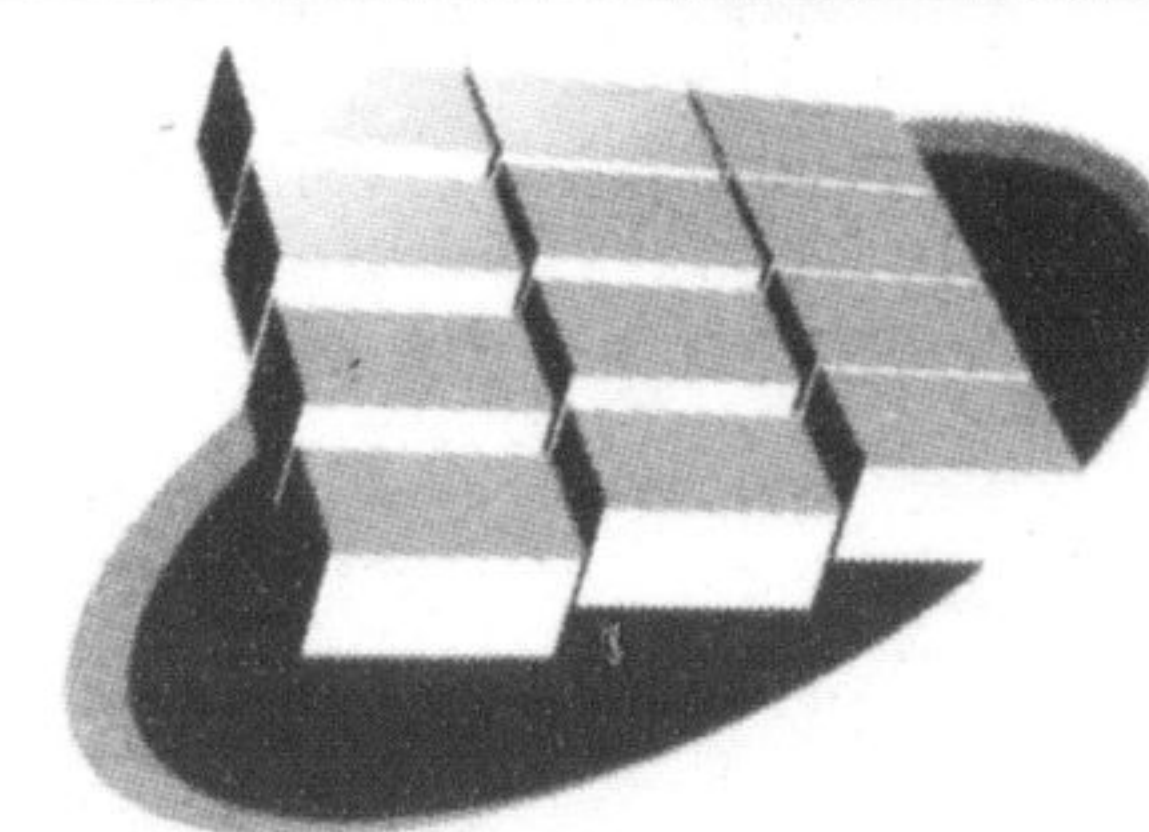
Also, Robert Goderre, owner of the Harrop Restaurant, will be on hand to ask for the audience's financial support for a fundraising triathlon — called the Tri-Adventure — he's doing for the foundation.

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