

COMING UP

Newcomers under spotlight at Latcham

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Every generation wants a better life than their predecessors.

Sometimes that means being the first family member to graduate from college or university. Other times it entails moving to another country in order to experience the opportunities not afforded in one's homeland.

As Whitchurch-Stouffville is becoming the town many new Canadians call home, Latcham Gallery curator Chai Duncan wanted to provide them a voice.

Home: Stories From Here and Away opens Saturday at the Main Street gallery.

"We want to provide gallery visitors a reflection of their community," he said.

In choosing the pieces for the show from the roughly 30 artists who answered the gallery's open call for submissions, Mr. Duncan found a few common themes, with the most striking being that "life is similar everywhere and contains both victory and failure".

Among the five artists cho-

sen for the show is Whitchurch-Stouffville's Souvankham Thammavongsa, who immigrated to Canada in the early 1980s from a Laos refugee camp.

Ms Thammavongsa could speak English when she arrived as a young child. But like many bilingual people, she sometimes spoke to her friends in Lao. In Grade 2, the teacher put her in the school's ESL class.

Ms Thammavongsa didn't mind. The class had no structure to it so the students spent much of the time eating foods from other countries, she said.

The 34-year-old's piece in this show is actually a powerpoint presentation of photos and drawings depicting her and her family's immigration experience.

"That makes me interested right away," Mr. Duncan said of Ms Thammavongsa's chosen medium, which is typically found in the boardroom, not the art gallery.

Ms Thammavongsa chose to exhibit her experience this way because, as with all of her art, she utilizes everyday objects.

Oshawa's Toni Hamel, also

worked with a common object for her work — yarn.

"Yarn creates a kind of tension within the work" that illustrates the strain that might occur with immigration, according to Mr. Duncan.

No matter the medium or experience, one thing the exhibition depicts is "we're all really the same. When we talk about home, it doesn't really matter if we're from Canada or not," Ms Thammavongsa said.

The other exhibitors in the show originally hail from Israel, Palestine, Taiwan, Hong Kong and Italy.

This is the first of two shows dealing with immigration. At about the same time next year, the gallery will host an exhibition by first-generation Canadians that will examine the culture clash of Canadian children being raised by immigrants.

The opening reception for this show takes place June 1, 7 to 9 p.m. at Latcham Gallery, 6240 Main St. The show runs until July 20.

For more information, go to www.latchamgallery.ca



STAFF PHOTO/STEVE SOMERVILLE

Souvankham Thammavongsa, who immigrated to Canada in the early 1980s from a Laos refugee camp, will be featured at Latcham Gallery's 'Home: Stories From Here and Away'.

Who will be Whitchurch-Stouffville's 2013 Sports Person of the Year?

DEADLINE JUNE 9, 2013

Nominations should include nominee's detailed resume and letters of support.

Award to be presented during the opening
of the 29th annual Strawberry Festival

E-mail: jmason@yrmg.com

Mail or hand deliver to:

Stouffville Sun-Tribune

6290 Main Street, Stouffville, Ontario L4A 1G7

Attention: Jim Mason

For more info: **905-640-2612 ext. 23**

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Sun-Tribune

Who do you think should be Whitchurch-Stouffville's 2013 Citizen of the Year?

Nominations are open for this year's award.

We are looking for a person who:

- makes our community a better place to live, work and play
- is involved to benefit more than his or her family or business
- sets a positive example for others

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