

East End Event: **Shining a light on East Danforth**

By Gina Bearne

How often do you really take the time to notice the world around you?

For ten days starting April 23, Art of the Danforth is challenging East Danforth residents to spend that extra bit of time seeing their neighbourhood anew.

Art of the Danforth 2010 poses the question 'what is this place?' Over 50 unique arts projects will encourage a reverence for what was, an appreciation of what is, and a consideration of the legacy to be passed to future generations. Installations developed by artists in partnership with the community will transform the area between Greenwood and Woodbine Avenues. Guided by strategically mounted silhouetted figures representing past and present human and natural influences on our public spaces, audiences will encounter an abundance of artistic creations and events.

A rich and diverse (though not always visible) creative culture exists along this part of the Danforth. Store owners approached to host exhibits often admitted "I'm an artist". They are being encouraged to display their own work if so inclined. Art of the Danforth organizers have also



Local students create imagery reminiscent of their home countries at Woodgreen Newcomers' Youth offices. Their work will be one of many on display during the Art of the Danforth event.

been keen both to reflect and to stimulate creativity across cultures, faiths and generations. Community contributors include the Ethiopian Association, Community Care East York and local schools and colleges.

Organizers from the coordinating agency Arts Imperative have been delighted by an enthusiastic local response and the ability of an independent arts event to cut across divisions and draw people together. "There is something valuable about bringing art to the local

level and sharing a part of your soul with those who live around you," says Assistant Producer Mila Khan. Reinforcing this, Luc Bihan of LucSculpture says "I want everyone to be involved – art is an open spirit, without barriers."

Landscape architects Real and Barbara Eguchi are collaborating with others to create the silhouettes that tie the art walk together. Real is hoping for an event that uses art to invigorate and renew the social fabric in the neighbourhood. "The beauty of art is that it

has the potential to refocus us on the beauty of the world around us . . . to reconnect us to our environment," he says. "We want people to spend that extra bit of time experiencing where they are, to appreciate the place as it is and to ponder about how it might be made better."

Mary Vallis of Danforth East Community Association further emphasizes the importance of arts events in encouraging community cohesion. They "are a sign that a neighbourhood is filled with creative thinkers who value each other's ideas. . . a sign that we care about our community and want to show it off to others. Art brings people out of their homes and gets them talking."

Art of the Danforth organizers are certainly hoping that the event will reach as many people as possible and that they will talk about it. That way, it will become a catalyst for a series of increasingly vibrant events that continue to shine a light on local culture, creativity and community.

Want to know more? Check out the Art of the Danforth website www.artofthedanforth.com for updates on this year's event and, from May 2010, for post-event images and news, leading in to Art of the Danforth 2011!

PULSE Youth Scholarship Award Winners

Congratulations to all the youth who participated in the 2010 PULSE contest. The winners, shown below (L-R), are: First - **Self Portrait** by Katherine Mark (conte & pencil crayon); Second - **Walk Away** by Athena Panagiotidis (digital photography); Third - **Limits** by Nabil Yalung (pen, ink, acrylic collage). PULSE is designed as an experiential learning opportunity for emerging artists.

