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URBAN SPACES



The artist Suzanne Metz in front of her graffiti-inspired art piece at the Vaughan Metropolitan Centre

Thornhill artist tackles controversial art forms

New exhibit at Vaughan city hall brings graffiti in from the street

by Jo-Anne Craine

Vaughan's city hall has been tagged by graffiti since September, but it's not what you think. The on the slate Atrium Gallery is hosting a new exhibit by Thornhill artist Suzanne Metz.

The urbangraffiti collection allows Metz to bring her interpretation of the sometimes controversial style to the public. Not everyone thinks of graffiti as a form of art, especially in light of some racist and anti-Semitic vandalism that has recently popped up around York Region. Although this exhibit is not a direct response to those events, Metz wanted to change that impression of the urban art form.

The painter has been a Thornhill resident since she moved from South Africa with her two daughters back in 1986. Metz teaches different styles of art at various art centres and studios in Richmond Hill and North York, such as Schwartz/Reisman Centre in Richmond Hill, Prosserman Jewish Community Centre at Bathurst and Sheppard, and a studio at Eglinton and Laird

called Art Embassy. Metz, who practises various art forms aside from graffiti, said she's not a "politically oriented artist."

"The act of vandalism is what some people associate with graffiti. This particular show is about positiveness," said Metz. "[Graffiti art] is a social expression that is more positive for me than negative. I don't want people to associate graffiti art with vandalism and negativity."

The exhibit, which was commissioned by the City of Vaughan, comprises 11 different pieces that are the artist's conceptualization of a vibrant reinvigoration of the Vaughan Metropolitan Centre. The urbangraffiti exhibit is her reflection on the growing cityscape.

"It's reflective of the modernity, the vibrancy, the contradiction of the open spaces, the urban squares, businesses, buildings, walls, materials in the city," said Metz.

Urbangraffiti will be exhibited on the slate in the Atrium Gallery until Nov. 10 at Vaughan city hall.



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