

ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT

Creativity in action at Hayden Beck Gallery

Newcomer to Whistler's art gallery scene aims to foster welcoming atmosphere

SEPTEMBER 1, 2010

JENNIFER MILLER JMILLER@WHISTLERQUESTION.COM

What happens when you bring a dynamic live guitarist together with an international painter who sees beauty and stories in human faces? A flurry of artistic expression and creativity, concentrated in a couple of hours as music inspires art and vice versa.

People in Whistler are invited to witness the collision of live art and music on Saturday (Sept. 4) at the Hayden Beck Gallery in the Hilton Resort and Spa. Ethiopian-born, France-educated and Vancouver-based artist Yared Nigussu is set to paint one of his large-format portraits, while world music guitarist Shane Carling provides the live soundtrack.

"It promises to be just outstanding," said gallery owner Jennifer Winsor.

Nigussu isn't officially represented by the Hayden Beck Gallery, but Winsor said she caught a live art/music performance by Nigussu and Carling at a charity event in Vancouver and invited them to come to Whistler. Some of Nigussu's work will be on display at the gallery for the event, she said.

All are welcome and the performance is free to attend. Did we mention wine will also be served?

Winsor said events like Saturday's are something she hopes to do more of at the Hayden Beck Gallery. Bringing artists in helps make the art and personalities of the painters more accessible to people, and it gives people a chance to see a piece evolve from a blank canvas.

Her goal is to foster a welcoming environment instead of perpetuating the reputation art galleries can have for being "intimidating," she said. The idea is for people to consider the gallery a meeting place where they can drop in as often as they want and not necessarily because they're in the market for art, she added.

Whether you drop in at Hayden Beck just to get out of the rain, happen to walk by on the way out to dinner or you're looking for a new piece of contemporary art, Winsor said people will find a warm welcome, good music playing in the background, the offer of a glass of wine and an invitation to browse the spacious exhibits.

"It's always a great crowd milling around," she said.

New on the Whistler art gallery scene, the Hayden Beck opened in late December and is named after Winsor's grandmothers — Doris Beck and Stella Hayden. Winsor also owns the Winsor Gallery in Vancouver.

The Whistler location currently represents more than 30 contemporary artists from Canada and beyond. Winsor said she's "excited" to represent some well-known regional artists and also introduce the work of "superstars from further abroad."

"Extremely popular" Vancouver painter Ross Penhall and designer Sabina Hill, who creates custom furniture and art in collaboration with First Nations artists, are two "local heroes," Winsor said. The aforementioned "superstars" from outside Canada include established British artist Patrick Hughes and

California-based Rimi Yang, whose art is collected by celebrities such as Halle Berry and Robert De Niro, she said.

Overall, art people will find at the Hayden Beck Gallery is “very contemporary and a little eclectic,” Winsor said. Landscapes, figurative paintings, sculpture — some pieces would appeal to a young person looking for art for their loft and others would appeal to that person’s parents in a traditional home, she added.

Located in Art Gallery Row in the Hilton, the staff members at Hayden Beck are working to help raise the profile of galleries in Whistler as a whole, Winsor said. She wants to work with the community and existing galleries to help make Whistler a destination for art.

Experience the creativity of painter Yared Nigussu and guitarist Shane Carling on Saturday (Sept. 4) from 5:30 to 7:30 p.m. at the Hayden Beck Gallery in the Hilton.

Copyright 2010 Glacier Media Inc.