



Background Information and Time Line

Artists of The Oak, an informal group of artists in Orleans County New York, began in early 2009 when several artists in the county networked together as they prepared to participate in the Town of Gaines' Bicentennial Celebration.

Prior that time there were no art galleries in Orleans County, leaving local artists limited to hanging and/or displaying their works in private settings, restaurants, or in one of the satellite galleries (within other business establishments) curated by GoArt! (Genesee-Orleans Regional Arts Council). Before the formation of this group, artists in Orleans County for the most part did not know one another and there had not been an arts-related support structure within the county since the 1980's.

By mid-2009 the first art gallery in Orleans County was established by Kim Martillotta-Muscarella in one-half of her duplex-divided home on Main Street in Albion. An artist herself and one of the first members of Artists of The Oak, Martillotta started the gallery using proceeds from the sale of a large body of her own work.

Since opening, the gallery has hosted more than twenty shows open to the general public featuring multiple artists. One room in the gallery is devoted entirely to works by members of Artists of The Oak and there is one Artists of The Oak group show each year.

As of mid-summer 2011 the gallery has shown works by more than fifty individual artists (includes student, amateur, and professional artists), with nearly 50% being emerging artists who might not otherwise have had or taken an opportunity to show their work.

After trying several possible names during their early development, the group unanimously adopted the name "Artists of The Oak". The name connects the artists and their works conceptually to Orleans County where the abundant, natural environment is fed by the many watersheds, rivers, and streams known collectively as "The Oak".

What began as a handful of networking artists has grown (mid-2011) to more than twenty artist-members working in a variety of mediums ranging from oil painting to ceramics. Members gather for a group meeting once each month at Marti's on Main; there are no membership fees or dues and artists of all mediums are welcome to join. The two requirements for group membership are 1) members must be artists of some kind, and 2) live within Orleans County.

In 2010 Artists of The Oak launched a website and blog; in 2011 the group began using social media tools (Twitter and Facebook) along with email marketing to promote show openings and events as well as build broader

awareness of Orleans County, local artists and their works of art. Group members have an opportunity annually to buy a share of Artists of The Oak promotional materials including full-color brochure, rack cards, and postcards designed by fellow member-artist, J. L. Fleckenstein.

Annual events include the group show at Marti's on Main curated by gallery owner Kim Martillotta-Muscarella, and the annual Artists of The Oak Art Trail featuring several multi-artist plein air tent studio locations. The Art Trail event is scheduled annually for the last Saturday of August and is organized in coordination with GoArt!'s Artist Road Show in Orleans County on the same date.

For more information visit the group website at www.ArtistsofTheOak.com, contact via email at ArtistsofTheOak@gmail.com, or phone Marti's on Main at (585) 589-6715.