

## Scotiabank CONTACT Festival opens this weekend at the Alton Mill

**By Constance Scrafield**

Back in March, the Citizen reported that Connie Munson was calling for submissions to her two Scotiabank CONTACT-approved satellite venues. One is staged in the Falls Gallery at the Alton Mill Arts Centre in Alton, and the other is at the Lower Sisnett Lobby of the Halton Hills Cultural Centre in Georgetown. The theme for this show is Forms, Faces and Spaces - figuratively speaking. After two months of accepting submissions and preparing for the month-long event, May 2 to May 28, at both locations, they are ready to go.

The opening receptions are a week apart. Saturday, May 6, sees the CONTACT opening reception in the Falls Gallery in the Alton Mill from 1:00 to 4:30 p.m.

This reception on May 6 is concurrent with the Spring Opening weekend of the Alton Mill, May 6 and 7. All the tenant artists are ready to meet and greet patrons at the Mill. An air of festivity in the Historic Alton Mill and its beautiful courtyard is the rule for this tremendous display of art and the chance to meet the artists. Many of the studio artists have new ideas and creative techniques.

As for the artists in the Falls Gallery, Alton and the Lower Sisnett Lobby in Georgetown, they have come from all over the province. Many of them are acclaimed provincially, nationally and internationally. Some of them are new artists whose work is being hung for display with the others, and as Ms. Munson declares, "Their work looks great together!"

The opening reception at the Lower Sisnett Lobby in the Halton Hills Cultural Centre is the following Saturday, May 13, from 11:00 a.m. to 2:30 p.m.

There is a series of events at both Satellite locations, and many of them include live music.

Here are a few examples of what there is to enjoy.

In Georgetown, on Sunday, May 7, from 3:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m. is a Curatorial Presentation by Judy Daley, a Juror's walk and talk through the exhibit at the Lower Sisnett Lobby.

Marnie Cook is bringing her Flamingo Dancing to the Falls Gallery at the Alton Mill on Mother's Day, May 14, performing from 1:30 p.m. to 2:00 p.m. Ms. Cook has participated with her lively performances for several of the Forms, Faces and Spaces ? figuratively speaking events. Flamingo adds a spicy taste to any gathering.

Back in Georgetown, in the studio off the Sisnett Gallery, Connie Munson is creating a coffee shop setting she calls the Bohemian Salon, in which several eclectic mini-presentations are planned. It premieres with the open-mic reading series, booking and inviting writers to share their work. The first one is Friday, May 5, from 7:00 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. A collection of displays and workshops will take place this month, including more open-mics in the Bohemian Salon.

Likewise, in Alton, musicians will play, and a panel discussion is set: "The role of art in a growing community..." at the Mad Hatter's Tea Party from 12:30 to 1:30 p.m. on Sunday, May 21.

The enthusiasm and hard work for all of this double-gallery display and small events blending into the bigger picture is hosted by Studio by Design. A true dedication to artists and their opportunities to show their work in any medium and many traditions is a passion for Connie Munson and has preoccupied her for some years. Her determination to promote art for all its worth has followed her lifetime of employment and participation in many careers as a teacher and a social worker, just to mention two ? always working with people and learning how to turn difficult situations into times of learning and opportunity.

Ms. Munson has joined several arts and cultural communities and organizations over the years, which has given her a broad insight into the world of art in this area of Ontario. It has offered her the chance to meet artists from near and far, many of whom have been happy to be part of the different shows and events she has chosen to create.

In choosing this theme of forms, faces and spaces, Connie Munson encourages the bigger, identified theme: how we have more in common than we are different, meant as a statement globally.

This is a joyously busy weekend on May 6 and 7. Art is top of the attention, meaning all kinds of art. The Scotia Bank CONTACT festival is basically a festival of photography and is the largest of its kind in the world. Last year was the first year Ms. Munson applied for and secured two approved Satellite venues, the Falls Gallery in the Alton Mill Arts Centre and the Sisnett Lower Lobby in the Halton Hills Cultural Centre. Not only photography, her goal has been to include as many types of art as possible, forever posing the question: "What does it mean to be human?"

It is such a prestigious designation that it only makes sense to keep it again this year.

For all the details about obtaining venue passports at no cost and information about the whole scheduling, go to [www.studiobydesign.ca/opening-may-23](http://www.studiobydesign.ca/opening-may-23)