

Why Guelph would benefit from a Centre for Visual Arts

Play. The word has a childish connotation: child's play, play acting, playful. As such we don't think much about it in terms of its' value. Some even regard it as something you do when you are not working or being productive.

In fact play, is when you are at your most productive. It is through playing that humans collaborate, cooperate and solve problems, big problems like climate change, economic disparity, a housing crisis, and crippling mental health issues. These problems can only be solved through play: the coming together of many to come up with creative solutions to complex problems. That's what play IS.

We are mistaken if we think playing is easy. Often it is hard, the hardest thing we do. I can hear you say, "Yes, but you are having so much fun when you play." The fun comes from the feeling of accomplishment the group feels...after hours of hard, very hard "play". To play a piano, or play a part, requires hours and hours of hard, sometimes, mind-numbing practice. That too is play. Yes, oddly play is hard work. It's the same thing.

Art is play. Art stimulates all the senses. It is through our senses that humans experience and make sense of the world.

Communities that have a high level of respect for art and play are the communities that thrive. They are the most desirable places to live and work. They attract the very best. Understanding this, is how your community creates a River Run Centre, Recreation Facilities, A Library, an Arts Council and soon a Guelph Centre for Visual Arts. Be brave. Show leadership. Let neighbouring municipalities know that Guelph understands the value of play – cooperation, collaboration, community, inclusiveness, and the courage to tackle problems through creative play. Its how we get things done, by playing, or if you prefer this term "hard work". Same thing only it sounds like a whole lot more fun...and it is.

PS

The Drill Hall has a long tradition as a performing arts centre. It was Guelph's second theatre after the one inside City Hall.

JayWalking Guelph has been commissioned by the Alton Mill Arts Centre to conduct historic walking tours of that facility and the village of Alton, hence another reason for my interest in seeing this project, through... the historical significance of this building.