

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:**

**Vancouver Outsider Arts Festival to feature Marginalized “Outsider Artists”**

**The Third Annual VOAF - Inviting the Outside In - will take place at the Roundhouse Community Arts & Recreation Centre - August 9 to 11**

**August 6, 2019 (Vancouver, BC)** – Artists marginalized by mental health and other issues will have a unique opportunity to display their work and to learn how to market their art at the third annual Vancouver Outsider Arts Festival (VOAF) presented by the Community Arts Council of Vancouver (CACV), August 9 to 11 at the Roundhouse Community Arts & Recreation Centre.

The VOAF is Canada’s first and only Outsider Arts festival offering visual and performing artists facing social exclusion and other barriers opportunities for art exhibition and sales; performance and participation; and, connection and learning. The artists may be self-taught or trained, but they are all devoted to their creative practices, and come from a point of view that is outside the mainstream art world trends.

“The work these artists create is incredibly compelling and unique and delves into challenging social and political issues,” says Eric Rhys Miller, Vancouver Outsider Arts Festival Producer and Executive Director of the Community Arts Council of Vancouver which organizes the festival. “When you consider how many artists we know as masters today were completely unknown in their times, and lived with many of the challenges we see in our group, it’s very exciting to see what these outsider artists produce.”

Eligible artists self-identify as outsiders and have strong creative practices, with wildly diverse aesthetics. One hundred percent of sales go to the artists, and performers are paid fees representing a significant professional opportunity for outsider artists.

“VOAF is a unique opportunity for artists on the periphery of the art world to be part of a genuine art show,” says Leef Evans, solo VOAF artist in 2017 and 2018, part of the Coast Mental Health group show and VOAF online art auction in 2019. Evans finds painting an integral part of his battle against chronic depression, “I finish a painting and begin the next, and it is the most important part of the process. It is the *verb*, not the noun; it’s *painting* not the painting”.

Festival artists have the opportunity to work with renowned Vancouver artists Jeff Wilson and Francis Arevalo over the weekend to learn how to produce, market and sell their work. A special appearance by Barrie Mowatt from Vancouver Biennale will give them insight into both the commercial and public art worlds.

“The workshops are designed to provide these artists with real world instruction from those who have established careers in the arts. They are informed by life experiences and are invaluable to our participants,” says Miller. “Past demand was so high, we had to move the workshops into the 200-seat theatre. Artists leave inspired and ready to take the next step in their journey.”

VOAF includes 150+ exhibiting and performing artists as well as organizational partners Alternative Creations Studio, Coast Mental Health, MPA Society, The Art Studio, and CACV’s Artist-in-Residence program partner the John Howard Society. There are free public workshops including one on Acrylic Pouring sponsored and presented by Opus Art Supplies; hundreds of artworks on display and for sale; community art activities; aerial acrobatics; Cantonese opera; intergenerational dance; and, a wide range of musical performances. The family-friendly festival is free to the public and the full event schedule, silent auction details and workshop pre-registration is available online at: [www.cacv.ca](http://www.cacv.ca)

Financial support for the festival comes from the Government of Canada, BC Arts Council, and the City of Vancouver, as well as private and corporate sponsors.

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*Contact for an interview with artists, Festival Producer Eric Rhys Miller, a partner organization, and/or to see one of the workshops for outsider artists. B-Roll Clip [https://youtu.be/MFKxkNSL\\_BM](https://youtu.be/MFKxkNSL_BM)*

**ABOUT THE COMMUNITY ARTS COUNCIL OF VANCOUVER (CACV):**

The Community Arts Council of Vancouver (CACV) was the first arts council in North America. Since its beginning in 1946, the Community Arts Council of Vancouver has been a contributor to shaping the cultural life of Vancouver. CACV is an independent non-profit organization, unaffiliated with any government department.

Our vision is of a socially-engaged, inclusive, and vibrant city alive with community arts.

Community arts is made by, with, for, and because of people sharing a sense of community. We currently advance our vision in Vancouver through community arts programs that address Indigenous and non-Indigenous relationships, social exclusion and stigma, sustainability in the arts sector, and our relationship to the environment.