

February 4, 2010

Our City, Our Stories powered by Canon

Our City, Our Stories powered by Canon is a partnership between the City of Toronto and Canon Canada aimed at building youth skills in the digital arts, visual storytelling, self expression, engagement and leadership in their communities.

From February to December 2009 youth, in the city's Priority Neighbourhoods for Investment from ages 13 to 22, participated in 19 different (eight-week) programs. A total of 152 digital photography workshops were held in schools and community centres. On completion of the workshops, each participant was invited to post a suite of nine photographs that shared a story about life in Toronto and enter the *Our City, Our Stories powered by Canon* photography contest. 197 submissions were received by December 15, 2009.

In addition, 10 youth were able to develop their artistic careers through employment in the workshops as arts assistants. A video documentary was also started with three youth under the mentorship of "Shoot With This", a community arts organization that mentors and engages youth through video making.

On December 22, 2009 a five-member jury met to select the top 10 winning entries. The top three of the final top 10 group will be announced on the evening of February 18, 2010 in the Rotunda at City Hall.

From February 16 through February 21, 2010 in the Rotunda at Toronto City Hall, the *Our City, Our Stories powered by Canon* exhibit will showcase the photography of the top 10 winning entries, as well as including exhibit materials that will display many of the 197 photo stories submitted to the contest. A sneak peak of a documentary on the project will also be on display. This free exhibition will then move to the Etobicoke Civic Centre from March 11 to 25, 2010 and to the Scarborough Civic Centre from April 12 to 21, 2010.

In *Our City, Our Stories powered by Canon* there are many stories being told. There are stories about home, about difficulties in school and in life. There are funny stories, happy stories and stories that make you think. The exhibit reflects the city back to us through the eyes of youth and encourages us to think about our own stories. It allows us all to participate in reflecting on what the story of Toronto is today and what we all want it to be tomorrow. Most of all, it reflects the joy of youth in discovering more about themselves and their city through the camera and sharing their stories with us.

The top ten winners names and projects for *Our City, Our Stories powered by Canon* include: Gabriella Abis – *The Odyssey of Play*; Veronica Brown – *No Man is Yet an Isle*; Kevin Graham – *Dance with the Shadows*; Maria Khan – *The Road to Home*; William Kuan – *Tresvonne's Dynamic Personality*; Jawad Mashuque – *City in Perpetual Motion*; Kyle Minniti – *Our Impact*; Mapela Uhindu-Gingala – *These are the Fables of my City of Toronto*; Zheng Wu – *Secret* and Hawa Yusuf – *Family*.

Information on the jury and competition prizing is available on the next page

Jury Information:

The winners of the *Our City, Our Stories powered by Canon* photography contest were selected by a jury that included: Michael Awad (internationally known Toronto photographer); Dionne Brand (internationally acclaimed Toronto-based poet and novelist who is Toronto's Poet Laureate); Royson James (Toronto journalist and columnist for the Toronto Star); Ruba Nadda (award-winning Montreal born filmmaker) and Wayne Doyle (Senior Manager, Corporate Communications, Canon Canada).

Prizing Information:

The first prize winner receives: A Canon SLR camera and a Canon photo printer; the opportunity to have their winning entry purchased and accessioned by the City's Fine Art Collection; the opportunity for an internship (with honorarium) with the Arts Services, City of Toronto's Cultural Services.

The second prize winner receives: A Canon SLR camera and a Canon photo printer; a gift certificate of up to \$200 for photography - related materials or instruction; promotional items (up to \$100 each in value) from City of Toronto.

The third prize winner receives: A Canon SLR camera and a Canon photo printer; promotional items (up to \$100 each in value) from City of Toronto.

The remaining seven of the top ten finalists will win a Canon point and shoot camera as well as promotional items (up to \$100.00 each in value) from the City of Toronto.

Our City, Our Stories powered by Canon is an initiative of Toronto's Economic Development and Culture division produced in association with Arts Etobicoke, Lakeshore Arts, the Scarborough Arts Council and the UrbanArts Community Arts Council.

More information on this program is available online at:

http://www.toronto.ca/culture/arts-services/our_city_our_stories.htm

The top ten winner's photo series' can be viewed at <http://www.flickr.com/photos/ourcityourstories/sets/>

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