

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Behind the Mask: Stories of Healing and Transformation

ANNAPOLIS ROYAL, Nova Scotia (March 13, 2025) – ARTSPPLACE Gallery is proud to present *The Masks I Wear: My Journey Through Expressive Arts*, a powerful group exhibition that explores the role of expressive arts therapy in personal healing. Organized by 7Arts in partnership with Annapolis Art Therapy, the exhibition features mixed media masks created by participants in the *Life Through a Mask* program—a workshop designed to introduce expressive arts therapy as a tool for military personnel, veterans, and their families.

Inspired by the National Endowment for the Arts' Creative Forces initiative, *Life Through a Mask* was co-facilitated by a veteran and trained sculptor alongside a registered art therapist. Funded by Veterans Affairs from 2020 to 2024, the program was hosted at Nova 7Arts in Greenwood, Nova Scotia, providing a supportive space for participants to process personal experiences through artistic exploration.

“Over four weeks, participants engaged in a guided creative process, developing personas through visual brainstorming before sculpting masks using plaster and clay. Artists incorporated materials such as tree bark, mirrors, lace, and paint, embedding personal meaning into each piece.” said art therapist Jaime Lightle.

This exhibition showcases up to 36 masks, displayed on plinths and mounted on the gallery walls, each accompanied by a written reflection on its significance. Through this deeply moving collection, *The Masks I Wear* sheds light on the impact of expressive arts therapy, fostering dialogue about mental health, trauma, and the transformative power of creativity.

“By sharing these works with the wider community, the exhibition encourages meaningful conversations about the role of art in healing and resilience, bridging military and civilian experiences through personal storytelling and creative practice,” said Sophie Paskins, ARTSPPLACE Gallery Director.

The Masks I Wear: My Journey Through Expressive Arts (Group Show)” opening reception Sat. April 5, 2025, 12-2 p.m. Light refreshments served, all welcome. Exhibition continues through May 24.

ARTSPPLACE is a public Art Gallery that is operated by the Annapolis Region Community Arts Council, a registered charitable, community organization dedicated to encouraging and promoting the arts. Supported through the Province of Nova Scotia and the Canada Council for the Arts.

ARTSPPLACE Gallery is located at 396 St. George Street in Annapolis Royal, Nova Scotia

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