

Breathing, Talking, Living Books

Foreman Art lab exhibition explores local experts

By ADAM YOUNG

The Foreman Art Gallery recently put on an exhibition featuring Living Books, which did not require literature, but instead used the community's greatest resource: its people.

The project first began with a call for anyone who had a great deal of knowledge in a subject area of their choosing. Those who answered the call in the community were then asked to simply talk to any gallery visitors about their topic. The variety of subjects included the history of Lennoxville, artwork of the Townships, laughter yoga,

different languages, and Chinese calligraphy.

Though many of the participants were older members of the community, a few young people were also there to share their knowledge.

Etienne Richan, one of the youngest living books, provided expertise on two very different subjects: astrophysics and long boarding. Richan decided to choose astrophysics after a course in the subject at Champlain last semester. "Astrophysics is fresh in my memory, it's mind blowing in itself," reflects Richan.

Another young living book participant was Barbara Cvenic

(Bishop's student), who shared her extensive knowledge on spoken word, as well as some of her own poetry.

The set up of the gallery created intimacy, with a few chairs for visitors to sit and discuss the participant's area of expertise.

Yael Filipovic, Curator of Education and Cultural Action at the gallery, greeted visitors with a bright smile and helped them through the process. Filipovic reflects that this interactive approach to art accomplishes a lot of things. It not only involves the community at a grassroots level, but also provides a more in-depth conversation with art.

"A lot of people in our lives have knowledge," explains Filipovic. "We are always changing. If you talk to one of these people in three years, it could be completely different."

Having an exhibition like this provides a new way of forming a conversation with art, involving not only the participant's area of expertise, but also the dialogue that occurs as knowledge is shared. Filipovic likes the exhibit because of exactly this: "we should always have conversation with art, even if it's unfinished."

