

New multi-disciplinary art festival coming to N.B.



The Arts Atlantic Festival and Conference, hosted by non-profit organization ArtsLink NB, will be held in the Port City from Oct. 14 to 18 in 2020.

Photo: Courtesy of Mark Burnett/Arts Link NB

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SAINT JOHN • A new multi-disciplinary arts festival and conference is coming to Saint John next year, which will be the first of its kind and size in Atlantic Canada, according to ArtsLink NB.

The Arts Atlantic Festival and Conference, hosted by the non-profit organization that works to advance the arts in New Brunswick, will be held in the Port City from Oct. 14 to 18 in 2020.

According to Mark Burnett, events coordinator for ArtsLink NB, the multi-day event will be larger in scale than the previous art symposiums they have held, and they expect to draw between 200 and 300 artists to the event, if not more.

The aim of the festival and conference, Burnett said, is to provide artists with the tools that they need to become successful and make a living with their art, all while showcasing their art to the public.

"We're opening it up to every artistic discipline that you can think of. Everybody is welcome," he said.

"We're going to try to bring everybody together, give [artists] learning opportunities they can use right away ... to become successful within New Brunswick and not have to look outside of our borders to do that."

From 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. each day, artists will get to hear from guests speakers and participate in group discussions surrounding making a business out of the art that they create.

In the evenings, a festival will be open to the public showcasing the wide-ranging talents of the artists, including live painting, music and performance art. There will also be a marquis performance held at the Imperial Theatre, with more details to be released in the near future.

"There is a perception out there that for someone to access quality art and artists, that they have to look outside of New Brunswick, because of course, the perception is there's no way that it's happening here. The fact of the matter is, that it is," Burnett said.

"We want to fill the city with as much art and as many disciplines that we can ... so that the general public can have the appreciation of the art that is happening here."

Burnett said ArtsLink NB hopes to make the Arts Atlantic Festival and Conference an annual event, with new cities across the province playing host each year.

"We're really hoping for really good community support so that what we have birthed here next year will become an annual thing and we'll be able to take it on the road and hopefully do a different city the year after," he said.