

# CityFile

What's going on  
in Winnipeg  
and who's  
making it  
happen

## WATCH THE VIDEO

■ Artbeat Studio's Nigel Bart previews "Brushing Away the Darkness," the latest exhibit at the gallery.



[winnipegson.com/Video](http://winnipegson.com/Video)



# Art helps brush away darkness of mental illness

**JULIE HORBAL**  
Sun Media

Brushing Away the Darkness is more than just a gallery name for eight mentally ill Manitoba artists.

The creative process that goes into producing the exhibit — which opens tomorrow at Artbeat Studio in the Exchange District — means nearly six months of healing, acceptance and growth for otherwise marginalized artists.

## 'Creative catharsis'

"Brushing Away the Darkness was really based on the darkness of mental illness," Nigel Bart, co-ordinator of Artbeat Studio, told Sun Media yesterday. "We have mostly painters here and, you know, brushing sort of symbolizes using painting to overcome depression or psychosis."

Artbeat, which was created to foster what Bart called "creative catharsis," accepts up to 10 mentally ill

artists into its workshop program every six months.

Staff and volunteers at the studio provide guidance, studio workspace and eventually a gallery platform.

The latest show, which features the work of eight artists, is the sixth in studio history and also celebrates the not-for-profit organization's third anniversary.

Bart, an artist who has schizophrenia and founded the studio to help others like himself, said the power of art is sometimes surprising.

He said the Artbeat program requires artists to spend 20 hours each week honing their skills — both artistic and social. It promotes mental and emotional recovery.

"The skills they get here help them transition back into society," he said. "Many of them become professional artists in the community, but the skills are also transferable into the workplace."

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Nigel Bart (top) displays work by artist Mark Kosatzky. Below are sports-themed paintings by Jamie Hogaboam and Head Illuminair by Cam Droguet.



**JASON  
HALSTEAD/  
SUN MEDIA**

## Got an idea for CityFile?

If you know a person who deserves a spotlight or a place everyone should know about, let us know so we can share it with Sun readers. Send your ideas to [cityfile@wpgsun.com](mailto:cityfile@wpgsun.com).