

# Women's talents showcased

"Great advances are being made by woman along the various lines of human endeavor these days, and in the realm of art, she has come very much to the front. This applies especially to the Hamilton woman who is at present holding an exhibition of paintings which is unique in that no man's work is allowed on the premises.

Hamilton Herald, February 19, 1896

**W**hen a small gathering of Hamilton ladies gathered at the home of Mrs. John Calder on Sept. 25, 1894, they set into motion an

organization which would have a profound affect on the cultural scene in the Ambitious City.

Establishing as its motto, Labor and Constancy, the Hamilton Branch of the Women's Art Association was created to fulfill a number of set purposes.

Besides nurturing a general interest in art, the members of the new organization specifically desired to encourage the development of women artists in Hamilton through mutual help and encouragement.

The holding of exhibitions of art work done by women was seen as one of the Women's Art Association's best ways to further its goals.

The first ever exhibition organized by the Women's Art Associa-

tion took months of hard work to put together, but when it opened on February 19, 1896, the event was a success.

All three Hamilton daily newspapers gave coverage to the exhibition, urging Hamiltonians to attend.

The Spectator noted that "the Women's Art Association is one of the organizations formed to demonstrate the ability of the fair sex in decorative and illustrative art, as well as to hold exhibitions of a decidedly successful sort quite without the assistance of mere men.

"The first annual exhibition of the local branch of the association was opened in the YMCA building yesterday, and it is, as it could not help but be, a most interesting and instructive display of what the ladies can do when thus put upon their mettle."

As described in The Spectator, "the exhibit includes over 250 contributions of oil, water color, painting on china and repousse work, and it must be candidly admitted that the average of merit in each class is very high..."

The exhibition of the Hamilton branch of the Women's Art Association was the initial major public effort by an organization currently celebrating its centennial year.

With funds and art awareness raised by efforts such as the exhibition, the Women's Art Association was able to push for a proper public art gallery and to encourage local women artists.

