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## MEDIA RELEASE

## Arts initiative to connect local artists, art seekers

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Downloadable photos of Martin, and with members of her team: <http://at.sfu.ca/XotoEL>

Vancouver will soon have a new gathering place for community artists and those who buy and rent art. On Sept. 15, [Simon Fraser University Beedie School of Business](#) student Michelle Martin will launch [ArtsALLY.com](#), a new online and offline arts initiative.

The goal of ArtsALLY.com is to help boost the city's creative economy and support artists working to break into new markets, while bridging connections between artists, the business market, and art buyers and renters.

"Artists are some of the lowest paid workers in our community," says Martin. "Meanwhile, high-priced art prints are purchased from department stores because it's easy, even though many people prefer to buy local. It's a problem and we want to be part of the solution."

SFU's [Venture Connection](#) has been providing mentorship for Martin and the concept. The program, in partnership with Coast Capital Savings, provides support for student ventures from initial idea to business validation.

Martin says the ArtsALLY team, including co-founders Francis Pilon, Steve Krueger, social media coordinator Marley Bathe and several advisors, was inspired by local art start-ups in London and New York (RiseArt and Artsicle) and recently came together in Vancouver. Their vision is to build a community, both online and offline.

The portal, which already features hundreds of art pieces, will enable people to search for art by category, size and price, and also follow artists. The group currently runs a community blog that features weekly profiles of local artists.

With the launch, Martin says Vancouverites will be able to discover local art from their laptops and smartphones, and summon that art to their home or office as a rental. "If they fall in love with it, they can purchase it, no sweat, no hassle. Either way, the artist gets paid. We're breaking down barriers for people to commit to local art."

Martin says that while ArtsALLY will always be hyper-local, she hopes to bring the website to cities across Canada in the future to bolster their respective arts communities.

Simon Fraser University is consistently ranked among Canada's top comprehensive universities and is one of the top 50 universities in the world under 50 years old. With campuses in Vancouver, Burnaby and Surrey, B.C., SFU engages actively with the community in its research and teaching, delivers almost 150 programs to more than 30,000 students, and has more than 130,000 alumni in 130 countries.

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