

Cultural Centre's fall visual arts season kicks off with the Hindu-Canadian experience



Art can say far more than mere words about the human experience, and the Hindu-Canadian experience is set to come into the spotlight this fall as the Aurora Cultural Centre rolls out their visual arts program for the season ahead.

On September 9, the Aurora Cultural Centre, which is currently based out of Town Hall due to ongoing construction at Town Square, will welcome artist Vicky Talwar with her solo exhibition, *A Path to Totality*.

Talwar draws on her experiences as a Hindu-Canadian, through her work, explores themes of diaspora, individuality and identity, says Samantha Jones, Gallery Manager for the Aurora Cultural Centre. The reason she does this is because she has this very beautiful story about being in Canada, then being uprooted from Canada, and moving back here just trying to discover her roots when she moved around so frequently. She creates these very vibrant, colourful paintings where, when you look at them the best way I can describe them is there are so many different layers she paints onto them, it's like imagine you're paddleboarding over a pond and its colourful murky water with layers of water flowers, roots, and abstract things below the surface.

One thing that is really special about Vicky's exhibition is she has had quite a few solo shows in the last year and she's really on a roll. What's pretty amazing about these exhibitions is they change and transform from one gallery to the next.

Among the highlights will be LED projections showcasing the mandala art form. When Talwar installs her work in galleries, she creates a mandala from her mental vision and no two are ever exactly the same.

She's quite literally creating in the gallery for this specific exhibition, says Jones. At Station Gallery now, one piece is roughly about 15 feet high and our walls only go about 9.5 feet high, so she'll actually be manipulating this 15-foot installation into our space because that is how her art works. It's never one artwork; she sees everything as constantly changing within the space that is surrounding it and I think that is completely reflective of her practice. It's also very reflective of the Aurora Cultural Centre and how adaptable we've had to be because we're not in our original location we have also been uprooted and I think we can relate to her practice of going with the flow and just trying to make something beautiful, even though you don't feel rooted.

An opening reception for *A Path to Totality* will take place at Town Hall on Thursday, September 14, at 7 p.m. and the public is welcome to attend.

The show will run through November 18, but in between the Centre will maximize space at Town Hall by temporarily expanding the gallery to the third floor with a mini-exhibition from September 25 to October 14 showcasing art made by youngsters who have participated in the Cultural Centre's summer camp programs

Here, the Centre will host 'Camp Retrospective: A Journey Through Young Artistry' curated by Aitak Sorahitalab, Education Manager for the Aurora Cultural Centre.

'It's an exhibition showcasing the artwork created by the students in our summer camp programs - they have been aware of this all summer and have been selecting their most favourite pieces from their camp experience, saving it for the exhibition,' says Jones. 'It's a very interesting process. The reason all the kids are keeping their artwork in a safe space and holding onto them is we're actually inviting the students, after they left for the summer, to come back to the Aurora Cultural Centre to install the artwork themselves.'

After the participating kids host a closing reception on October 14, Talwar will be back at Town Hall to host a workshop on how to make mandalas from found objects, running from 12.15 p.m. to 3 p.m.

'She will have felts, rice, beads, and rocks there for people to make their mandalas with. We're actually also encouraging participants to bring their own objects,' says Jones. 'Because mandalas are a reflection of the self, we're suggesting people bring their own objects, especially objects that come in colours they're particularly drawn to. If you have rocks, buttons, stamps, beads, anything that is in a big bag in your closet that you're hoarding for no reason, I think that is a great starting point to bring to the gallery. I'm bringing a big bag of embroidery threads I have had in my closet for years!'

Rounding out the fall visual art program from December 2 through January 27 will be a show entitled Perennial Darkness, a show with a focus on December being the darkest month of the year. An open call for participating artists is on now.

'We're welcoming submissions from artists working in any medium so long as the artwork responds to the theme of darkness of the night,' says Jones. 'It can be a literal or abstract connection, as long as they connect with their submissions.'

By Brock Weir
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