

Chinese Calligraphy and Painting comes to life through workshop series

A new workshop focusing on Chinese calligraphy and painting is being hailed as a significant breakthrough for Aurora's multicultural landscape.

Colour Your Life, Heals Through Heart is a new community initiative led by the Federation of Literati and Artists of Canada.

Led by acclaimed artist Dr. Wang Shivong, the series kicked off on March 27 and filled up fast. It continues this Friday, April 24, and again on both May 22 and June 27. Its purpose is to promote traditional Chinese arts at the local level and inspire new artists ahead of what they describe as a Grand Exhibition of work at the Aurora Cultural Centre in September to coincide with the Town's annual Multicultural Festival.

National Federation of Literati and Artists of Canada is a federally registered non-profit organization. Its mission is to promote arts and culture, foster cross-cultural understanding, and support community well-being through accessible artistic programming, particularly for seniors and diverse communities, says Anne Zheng, the organization's Executive Director. Dr. Shiyong Wang is a renowned Chinese painter, educator, and the founding president of the Federation. He has served as a professor and cultural leader, with extensive experience in both traditional Chinese painting and international art exchange. His work bridges classical techniques with contemporary expression, and he is dedicated to bringing Chinese art into community settings.

This workshop series introduces participants to the aesthetics and techniques of traditional Chinese ink painting. Each session includes one hour of guided appreciation of classical masterpieces, followed by two hours of live demonstration and hands-on practice. The program is designed to be inclusive, welcoming participants of all backgrounds and experience levels.

Chinese ink painting is a traditional art form similar to calligraphy in that it uses brushes, ink, and water, applied to rice paper or silk in various ways to achieve rich, flowing effects.

It reflects the artist's inner state and philosophy, often drawing inspiration from nature such as landscapes, flowers, and birds to express harmony, balance, and spirit. Along with calligraphy and poetry as essential parts of the arts work, the use of an artist's seal [stamp] is also a part of the composition, together forming a complete and distinctive work of art, says Zheng. The inaugural session was held successfully at Aurora Public Library, drawing a full house of 59 participants ranging in age from 6 to 88. Due to the high turnout, the library staff had to add extra tables and chairs several times. Among the attendees, 32 participants took part in hands-on painting. Participants engaged deeply with both the artistic appreciation segment and the practical session, creating a warm and inspiring atmosphere. The event clearly demonstrated the strong community interest in traditional arts and cultural learning.

By Brock Weir
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