

Cultural Centre welcomes art students back into the classrooms

The Aurora Cultural Centre is excited to welcome art students of all ages back into the classrooms as new and returning course favourites come into bloom this spring.

Sessions for children and adults alike are now in full swing, featuring lessons on an array of media from traditional watercolours and acrylics, to wood carving and stained glass.

Perfect for March Break and PA Days and beyond, programs for students include You Can Uke It!, a ukulele workshop with Anthony Clayton, while lessons for adults range from calligraphy to stained glass, to beading with Cree-Metis artist-educator Marissa Magneson, card- and print-making, paper flowers, and punch-needle rug hooking.

‘The return to the classroom is really exciting for us,’ says Leanne DiMonte, Education and Outreach Manager for the Aurora Cultural Centre. ‘It has been great to do some virtual programming, but I think we can all kind of agree that the energy of the classroom and feeding off one another, and just the social aspect of being in the same room as people while creating art or making music, is really exciting. We’re stoked to have a lot of offerings this spring.’

Regular children's art classes on Saturdays are returning, as are March Break and PA Day offerings, and in many ways they're returning to the fundamentals for adult and youth programs alike.

‘We have our core programs like our watercolours, acrylics, and wood carving, but we have been getting feedback from our students every season and offering short courses and one-day workshops,’ says DiMonte. ‘We’re really excited to do some of that programming [such as] stained glass, which is always a popular one, and the beading workshop. Another thing we’re adding is oil painting. That was a medium we haven’t done too much of, but feedback from the community indicates they would like to try that. The stained-glass workshop [was a must] and something people have been looking for more of every season. We do two-dimensional pieces in that stained-glass workshop, but certainly there is interest to do more 3-D works from our instructors. This is kind of a level up in terms of taking it beyond 2-D and making some 3-D pieces.’

‘Another thing that always fills up each season is our woodcarving class. This season, I am offering a chip carving class. While our wood carving class is eight weeks, the chip carving class is one day and it is more of a foray into a different type of more ornate wood carving on a smaller scale. For those who aren’t able to commit eight weeks to a program, that one day is kind of a good intro. I am always trying to keep in mind [in programming] is doing multi-week classes, which are six to eight weeks, and also doing some short courses that are two or three weeks and then one-day workshops for people who aren't able to commit. That is why we try and have a multitude of different programs that can hopefully serve the different needs of people and their time schedules.’

One more ‘must have’ for this season based on patrons' feedback has been a return to print-making and this time going beyond black and white prints to offering prints in ‘all the different colours of the rainbow.’

‘For all of our in-person programs, we have always kept class sizes relatively small to allow for ample physical distancing for kids and adults where we have each student at their individual workstations [with] their own materials for the most part,’ says Ms. DiMonte. ‘For children's programs, we have enough art supplies to go around so everyone has their own kit at the station, another way to avoid swapping stuff we don't want to swap.’

As the historic Church Street School building, home to the Aurora Cultural Centre, remains closed for the duration of the Aurora Town Square (formerly Library Square) redevelopment, these individual stations will be found in various locations around the community through partnerships with the Town and other businesses.

Many classes will take place in the sunlight-filled third floor of Town Hall, while some will take place at Aurora Armoury, home to the Canadian Food & Wine Institute at Niagara College, and the Royal Rose Gallery, which is located in the former Caruso's

building on Yonge Street just south of Wellington.

For more on the Aurora Cultural Centre's education programming, visit auroraculturalcentre.ca.

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