

Culture Days 2023 Preview: Metis art, calligraphy on tap for next month's Culture Days

September is just around the corner and planning is underway for a spectacular celebration of all the cultures that make up Ontario ? including here in Aurora.

In Aurora, the centrepiece will be the Town's annual Multicultural Festival, which will take over Town Park with a full day of music and dancing.

On nearby ball diamonds, however, Aurora's cultural organizations are hard at work on complimentary programs ? including the Aurora Cultural Centre.

Aurora's Culture Days celebrations will take place on September 23 from 9.30 a.m. to 2.30 p.m. and in Town Park's Community Zone, the Cultural Centre will host a number of programs showcasing cultures that call this country home.

?We have curated a selection of arts professionals in different media,? says Samantha Jones, Gallery Manager for the Aurora Cultural Centre. ?In the morning from 9.30 a.m. to 12.30 p.m., we'll have our first drop-in workshop: a bead art painting workshop exploring Metis floral traditions with artist Marissa Magneson. She will introduce Metis floral beadwork characteristics and then invite people to curate their own painting with each dot representing a bead.?

From 12.30 ? 2.30 p.m., a different art form will be showcased with artist Elsa Hashemi leading participants in lessons on gold sheet calligraphy.

?She will be using this workshop to familiarize people with gold sheet calligraphy writing, how to use gold adhesives and gold sheets to create design and calligraphy paintings inspired by the Iranian community,? explains Jones. ?In her workshops, she will motivate people to create their own background on a cardboard surface and design the abstract use of alphabets, letters and poems, but in a contemporary way ? and this is part of her arts practice.

?Students create what they feel with the written word? but not in a technical way, more of an emotional, expressive way. These are for all ages so families can drop in.?

Throughout the day, the Centre's booth will feature artist Andrew Cheddie Sookrah, who first exhibited in Aurora last year, who will showcase a new collection of work inspired by Newfoundland and Labrador's Gros Morne National Park and Nahanni National Park Reserve of the Northwest Territories.

?He goes on these amazing excursions and paints in the back country,? says Jones. ?We have asked him to bring some works in progress and throughout the day he will be painting in the booth as a demonstration so you can see how he works en plein air. You can see these bright, bold colours that are usually at the bottom of the surface. It's cool to see how bright they are at the very surface value.?

Additionally, at 11 a.m. the artist will host a talk about Nahanni National Park Reserve entitled ?Colossal Canyons and Deep Roots? and the second talk in the afternoon, focused on Gros Morne, will be ?Soaring Above and Floating in Fjords? where ?he will talk about his really intense process and also his spiritual connection to the wind, which is important to his practice.?

By Brock Weir
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