

Immersive experience lands at Aurora Cultural Centre in 'Sabzeh'



An immersive, multi-sensory experience lands at the Aurora Cultural Centre this week, looking at the spirit of growth at renewal through a Persian lens.

'Sabzeh' is a new multi-artist exhibition brought together by Parisa Sabet and Laura Friedman, inspired by Omid Fallahazad's short story of the same name, which opens this Thursday, August 14, in the Homeroom Galleries. It blends traditional media like textiles and dance with contemporary media ranging from video projection to soundscapes, 'meditating on the themes of rebirth and renewal, connection to the past, and the strength found in community,' says the Centre.

'It invites the viewer to look inward and reflect on the threads of interconnection that bind us to one another ' and to all living things,' say organizers.

Installation of the expansive show began last week and Gallery Manager Samantha Jones says the initial vision of the show evolved as more artists became involved.

'It was initially proposed as a meditation labyrinth,' says Jones, who said the further development of the project only dovetailed further with the Centre's vision. 'Our dream for the galleries was to eventually take on projects that included multimedia and new media practices, as well as traditional media. I think in the setting of an old heritage building, you don't expect to come across new media works.

'When the project was initially proposed, it had traditional practices, but Parisa had also proposed a soundscape, and that really intrigued us because our spaces had been used for concerts before. They're really great spaces for sound. It's a project that fell on our lap at the right time, and we were waiting for an artist with the background to really pull it off ' and Parisa is one of those people. She holds a Doctor of Musical Arts, a Master of Music and Composition, and a Master of Music, Technology, and Digital Media from the University of Toronto. She is very in-depth into the field, very successful, and would be the right person in Aurora to pull this project off at the Homeroom Galleries.'

As installation continues, Jones says lighting has never been used in the Cultural Centre in quite the way it is in this show. Friedman has redirected lights to flow through her textile works to create shadows on the wall. The result, she says, is transformative and modern, but it also considers tradition.

The story that inspired it all boasts a title that loosely translates to 'sprouts,' typically grains or legumes, often used as a symbol of growth and renewal in the observance of Nowruz, the Persian New Year ' a time for togetherness.

'The project itself meditates on the themes of rebirth and renewal, and also connections to the past and the strength that is found in community,' says Jones. 'Part of the message is there is strength in the diversity in our community. I think in times of hardship, it's important for people to physically bond and come together. They've really shown that by including artists that are all across different walks of life.

?I encourage everyone to stop by and take part in tending the sabzeh as well. There will be some instructions set up and folks can literally help with growing sabzeh in the exhibition.?

?Sabzeh? will formally open this Thursday, August 14, at the Aurora Cultural Centre with an opening reception from 6.30 ? 8 p.m.

An Artist-Poet Gathering will be hosted within the exhibition on Wednesday, August 27, from 7 ? 9 p.m. where local artists, poets and other participants are invited to create spontaneous written or visual responses to the various artworks around them.

Closing out the show on Sunday, October 19, will be a closing panel featuring Sabet, Friedmann, participating artists and creatives Bahia Marks, Rah Eleh, and Olya Glotka, among others.

For full information, visit auroraculturalcentre.ca/sabzeh.

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