

Love is all around at Cultural Centre in collaboration on Seven Grandfather Teachings



The Seven Grandfather Teachings of Bravery, Honesty, Humility, Love, Truth, Respect, and Wisdom have guided Indigenous people for millennia and on Saturday, April 22, the teaching of Love will be embraced by the Aurora Cultural Centre.

The Centre will host Teaching Four: Love from 10.30 a.m. to 12.30 p.m. in an event led by Dazaunggee and other artists who will be displaying and discussing their interpretation of Love.

The event is the result of a collaboration with the Orillia & District Arts Council on The Seven Grandfather Teachings.

It brought together four artists of diverse cultural backgrounds to tackle each of the teachings.

The theme of Love is represented by The Eagle. It is taught that love must be unconditional. The Eagle represents love because of its unique relationship with the Creator. Only the Eagle has the ability and strength to fly higher than any other animal, placing it closer to the Creator than all others.

Eagles are loving parents and teachers to their offspring, protecting and guiding them. An Eagle's feather represents Creator's love for us and our need for greater understanding of ourselves and each other. Many Indigenous cultures hold the Eagle feather close to their heart and consider receiving an Eagle feather to be the greatest gift.

We said 'yes' pretty much right away,' says Aurora Cultural Centre Gallery Manager Samantha Jones of being approached by the artists. 'I think any opportunity to host events that have the interaction between Indigenous and non-Indigenous artists are in the spirit of programming we did last year [on Truth & Reconciliation], it's something we would like to continue, and it's an honour and privilege to host it.

We're always looking to host these types of knowledge-sharing opportunities with Indigenous artists. We had an opportunity to pick [a Teaching] and we picked April 22 because we're in the middle of a short show Samar Hejazi's Illusion & Separation and we know that her show has these interesting scenes can almost go along with the Seven Grandfather Teachings. Even though it is a totally different culture, her work is about undefining boundaries and borders and how you can create connections even when borders don't exist. Some of the themes of our show can be translated and it is also accessible to people across mediums and across

cultures. It is a really good opportunity to bring people into the short show and enjoy the interaction if it. It is also more immersive installation art, so when they come to look at the paintings that are provided by these artists, they can also be surrounded by this really beautiful installation to fully immerse them into this artful event.?

The April 22 presentation is just the latest step the Aurora Cultural Centre has taken on the road to Reconciliation. It's hosted to support Call to Action #83 from the 94 calls issued by the National Truth & Reconciliation Commission, ?We call upon the Canada Council for the Arts to establish, as a funding priority, a strategy for Indigenous and non-Indigenous artists to undertake collaborative projects and produce works that contribute to the reconciliation process.?

?It is something that was started over the last two years and we really threw ourselves into it with the Aurora Bell Box Murals project and [the Centre's temporary gallery space at Town Hall] is just down the street from one of the Bell Boxes, which was a Seven Grandfather Teachings Box,? says Jones. ?We want to keep doing these events and it's something we will continue to be doing forever because Indigenous people are going to be around forever and we're always going to be living together. It's going to be part of our process of Reconciliation and also just extending the hand of friendship. As a Cultural Centre we're always going to be learning from the people around us and this is exactly how we're going to do that ? more in-person events and more opportunities to share and extend our knowledge.

?We want to make sure we're giving Indigenous artists the opportunity, the platform, to really share their history and knowledge.?

The April 22 presentation is free and open to the public.

Participating artists include Paul Shilling, Julie Tian, Xavier Fernandes, and Ted Fullerton.

By Brock WeirEditorLocal Journalism Initiative Reporter