

Quebec artist Vallières brings sculpted whimsy to Aurora in solo show

Montreal sculptor Laurence Vallières will bring her own special brand of whimsy to the community next week ahead of a new solo exhibition at the Aurora Cultural Centre.

Set to take over the Centre's Homeroom Galleries from May 8 ? July 22, the show will feature an array of unique pieces, many of which are sculpted out of cardboard.

?[She] is internationally acclaimed for her larger-than-life cardboard sculptures,? says the Centre. ?Initially focusing on ceramics during her education at Concordia University, her art evolved following a 2010 artist residency in St. Petersburg, Russia, where she was exposed to the practice of urban art.

?Environmental concerns and sustainability lie at the core of Vallières's practice, which she expresses through depictions of animals and references to pop culture characters like Mickey Mouse and Tweety Bird. Each of her creations are made from recycled cardboard, often gathered from the very location where her projects take place. Reflecting on her ties with urban art, where work is often created in response to pressing cultural, social, and political issues, her dedication to cardboard in her art serves as a call for sustainability?a commentary on consumer culture, advocating for the movement of reuse over consumption and waste.?

The show will open with a special artist meet and greet at an opening night reception this Thursday, May 8, from 6 ? 9 p.m. in the Centre's Homeroom Galleries. Remarks are set to begin at 7 p.m. An artist-poet gathering follows on Saturday, May 10, from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m.

On Monday, May 12 ? and again on Monday, June 2 ? at multiple times, the exhibition will host Gallery Yoga + Sound Baths in the galleries.

These initiatives, which were first tested as part of the Centre's 2024-2025 season, have been honed by the Centre as a way for patrons to experience art in new ways, offering fresh perspectives.

?It is quite enriching,? says Gallery Manager Samantha Jones. ?The experience of doing this in the space compared to just visiting the gallery is so different because of the amount of time you spend with the artworks. There is something online that says the average person looks at a piece of art for half-a-second, and if you really like an artwork, you might look at it for five seconds. At this one, you're spending a whole hour surrounded by several artworks and when you're in there spending that much time surrounded by those pieces, you start to look at them differently and you notice different things. You really start to feel connected to what's around you ? not just the people, but the things that are there. I think the sculptures are going to be a really unique experience.?

For more on the show, visit auroraculturalcentre.ca.

By Brock Weir