Aurora Cultural Centre

Managerial Commentary – Q3 2021

Introduction

The summer months of 2021 brought much optimism to the Aurora Cultural Centre. Programs to support artistic activity now available, we launched our Aurora Pops Up! series that captured the community's heart throughout parks, businesses, retirement communities and at community meals. Summer camps were given the go-ahead to activate in person and we transferred our plans to offer this special shift for families. We also hosted digital art talks to hear from experts in their field of practice and celebrated Culture Days with the community. With the first National Day of Truth & Reconciliation announced in June, we reached out to our partners in the Chippewas of Georgina Island to support their creation of ceremony to commemorate the day with the community. Gallery programs continued digitally to an international audience.

The administration was restructured to enable performing arts programming for the 2022-2023 year as current workloads were overloaded with pandemic related requirements and growth objectives to Aurora Town Square. The pandemic lessoning its grip on us provided a window of time to come together, slowly, in small groups, and with health protocols in place.

THANK YOU TO OUR SUPPORTERS

AURORA
ONTARIO ARTS COUNCIL
CONSEIL DES ARTS DE L'ONTARIO
an Ontario government agency
un organisme du gouvernement de l'Ontario
Ontario Trillium Foundation
Fondation Trillium de l'Ontario
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Aurora's Community Newspaper

A SNAPSHOT OF AURORA CULTURAL CENTRE Q3 OPERATIONS
July – September 2021

SPECIAL EVENTS

Arts Talk Series #2
From an Artist's Viewpoint: Art during - and emerging from – COVID
July 20, 2021

The world pandemic stopped live performing and visual artists from meeting their public in person. This has been the largest crisis to hit a particular sector, and one that is reeling without clarity on when things will fully reopen. The Aurora Cultural Centre hosted a panel of artists to hear about their careers, how they changed during COVID-19 and what they see as the next steps to rebuild their career and place in the world's stage. Questions and insights were welcomed after the presentation. Moderated by Jane Taylor, Communications & Events Manager with Barbra Lica, Jazz Artist, Charles Richard-Hamelin, Classical Pianist, and Salman Khattak, Visual Artist and Instructor. Offered over Zoom.

Arts Talk Series #3
Lifting the Voices of Emerging Diverse Artists
August 17, 2021

We live in a very diverse world, particularly in Canada, and there is a disparity and inequity in access for artists as they move through their career. Patrons joined us in speaking with an emerging diverse artist as we discover the opportunities and challenges moving from local high school education to post-secondary, and what they perceive they will need to emerge into the professional art landscape. We open the conversation to what post-secondary institutions are doing to welcome these students and how funders look for ways to lift up the voices of these artists through their programs. Moderated by Glenn Marais, Artistic Outreach Coordinator with Mary Anne Garcia, Admissions & Recruitment, OCAD and Sarah Cole, Emerging Artist. Offered over Zoom.

Culture Days Kick-Off!
September 25, 2021

Cultural Days was a national celebrations of culture that invited the public to participate in hands on and behind the scenes activities that highlight the importance of culture in our communities. The Culture Days Kick-Off celebrations were held in Town Park from 11:00am to 4:00pm. Bandshell programming was our responsibility. Patrons were able to enjoy live performances and meet some of the wonderful cultural partners doing amazing work in Town. Culture in a Box kit was filled with fantastic interactive activities the whole family could enjoy were able to be picked up free of charge to Aurora residents.

Live performances included the following:

Njacko Backo & Kalimbas at Work

Njacko Backo is a singer, songwriter, storyteller and percussionist originally from Cameroon. Nominated for a 2021 Juno for Best Children's Album, the quartet presents a hi-energy family performance that includes the kalimba, an African instrument with a wooden soundboard and metal keys.

Marquee Theatrical Production

Marquee Theatrical Productions brought a musical Theatre presentation featuring some of Marquee's students ranging in age from 8-16. They performed a highlight selection of numbers from productions including Les Miserables, Matilda, The Lion King, Waitress, Throughly Modern Millie and more!

Sara Thawer

Sarah is a JUNO-nominated drummer and recording artist whose versatile work ranges from jazz and fusion all the way to Indian, funk, R&B, hip hop and Latin to name a few.

KH Kanna

KH Kanna is a Bharantanatyam dancer and choreographer with deep connections to Dancehall, Soca and Hip Hop. He presented a duet with Shobi Ruban, showcasing the rich rhythms, music and storytelling of the Indian Classical dance tradition.

Honouring the Children

National Day for Truth and Reconciliation

September 30, 2021

Jared Big Canoe of Georgina Island led the recognition and acknowledgement of this historic day, through tradition ceremony, reflections, song and dance. Patrons were able to stay afterwards to create a healing card to send to our closest Indigenous neighbours on Georgina Island.

Ceremony

Jared Big Canoe & Honoured Guests from the Chippewa's of Georgina Island First Nation. Performing artist J Rez debuted his new song *The Children*. Additional programming included music, dance and remarks.

Healing Card Activity

Patrons joined Alicia Allare at the art station to create a healing card with their own message of hope. These cards that reflected support were gathered up and sent to Georgina Island First Nation.

Video: https://auroraculturalcentre.ca/ndtr2021/

PERFORMING ARTS EVENTS

Signature Series

Kobo Town

July 24, 2021

Kobo Town is a Juno Award-winning Canadian-Caribbean music group, lead by singer songwriter Drew Gonsalves. A potent blend of calypso, wrapped up with influences ranging from ska, reggae, dub and rapso, this fan-favourite band brings an irrepressible energy to their live shows. What better way to celebrate the return to live music, surrounded by the beauty of Aurora Town Park on a Friday night!

Heather Bambrick Quintet
August 20, 2021
Heather Bambrick's live performances have been described as "what happens when Ella Fitzgerald meets Carol Burnett at a Newfoundland Kitchen Party!" A fan favourite of Aurora Cultural Centre audiences, her wide repertoire includes everything from jazz standards and re-imagined pop tunes, to Newfoundland folk songs. A born-and-raised Newfoundlander, her East Coast charm, incredible vocals and outstanding stage presence welcome the audience to an evening filled with laughter, stories, song – and true entertainment.

Heather Bambrick is a Juno-nominated artist who has collaborated with a Fred Hirsch, Guido Basso, Rob McConnell, Peter Appleyard, the Toronto Symphony, and others. Awarded Canada's National Jazz Award for Vocalist of the Year, she has three solo recordings to her name, including *You'll Never Know* in 2017. An accomplished voice actor as well, she voices characters including the Emmy-nominated Wild Kratts. She is also a beloved broadcaster on JAZZFM91.

KUNE – A Global Musical Experience
August 21, 2021
Celebrate sounds from across the globe with a quartet from KUNÉ, Canada's Global Orchestra in this family show! Patrons discovered music from Latin America, Africa and the African Diaspora, the Middle East, Asia and North America in this 1-hour show, perfect for all ages.

KUNÉ was developed from a major initiative by The Royal Conservatory of Music in Toronto to explore and celebrate Canada's cultural diversity and pluralism. The ensemble seeks to communicate in ways that words, politicians, and spiritual leaders cannot, and help to find a common language through music. The musicians hail from all corners of the globe—from Peru, Burkina Faso, Cuba, Ukraine, and beyond—and play instruments as diverse as they are, from the tar of Iran to the bouzouki of Greece to the sitar of Pakistan.

KUNÉ (which means "together" in Esperanto) released their debut Album on Universal Music Canada in April 2018 and will embark on their first US tour in the 19-20 Season.

Kaleidoscope Family Series

Njacko Backo & Kalimbas at Work
September 25, 2021
Njacko Backo is a singer, songwriter, storyteller and percussionist originally from Cameroon. Nominated for a 2021 Juno for Best Children's Album, Njacko's concerts are filled with energy designed to get children – and their adults! – up on their feet and grooving to the music. Join him with his quartet "Kalimbas at Work" for a lively family-friendly show geared to ages 2+. Filled

with positive song, this concert will inspire audiences to take pride in the tremendous diversity of Canada – from coast to coast to coast! You'll discover a range of African instruments – from the kalimba and ngoni, to percussion instruments all kinds.

Aurora Pops Up!

APU concerts will continue through to October 2nd. Here are the performances in July and August. We are so pleased to be able to offer this free programming for the community, funded in full from Canadian Heritage's Support Live Art and Cultural Workers grant.

	Dates:	Time:	Organization/Space:	Artist:	Discipline:
1	Wed July 21st	12:00PM	Prime Data Warehouse	James Brown	Guitarist
2	Wed July 21st	2:30PM	Kingsway Arms Aurora	James Brown	Guitarist
3	Fri July 30th	10:15AM	Chartwell Aurora Long Term Care Facility	George St. Kitts	Singer/Band
4	Fri July 30th	3:00PM	Chartwell Park Place Retirement Residence	George St. Kitts	Singer/Band
5	Sat Jul 31st	9:00AM	Aurora United Church - Rise 'N Shine! Breakfast	George St. Kitts	Singer/Band
6	Sat Jul 31st	11:30AM	Coconut Village Spa	George St. Kitts	Singer/Band
7	Fri Aug 6th	3:00 PM	Sunrise of Aurora	Jay Dee	Singer/Band
8	Fri Aug 6th	6:00 PM	Machell's Alley	Jay Dee	Singer/Band
9	Sat Aug 7th	11:30AM	Thomas Coates Park	Roy McRae	Steel Drummer
10	Sat Aug 7th	1:30 PM	Coconut Village Spa	Roy McRae	Steel Drummer
11	Mon Aug 9th	10:30AM	Kingsway Arms Aurora	Mimi O'Bonsawin	Singer
12	Mon Aug 9th	12:30PM	Edward Coltham Park	Mimi O'Bonsawin	Singer

13	Tues Aug 10th	9:30AM	Tuesday Breakfast	Mimi O'Bonsawin	Singer
14	Tues Aug 10th	12:00PM	Machell's Alley	Mimi O'Bonsawin	Singer
15	Thurs Aug 19th	3:30PM	Stewart Burnett Park	Justin Massey	Saxophone/Piano
16	Thurs Aug 19th	6:00PM	Machell's Alley	Justin Massey	Saxophone/Piano
17	Sat Aug 21st	10:00AM	Farmer's Market	Justin Massey	Saxophone/Piano
18	Thurs Aug 26th	7:00PM	Machell's Alley	Aubrey McGhee	Saxophone/Band
19	Fri Aug 27th	12:30PM	Hurst Bakery	Aubrey McGhee	Saxophone/Band
20	Fri Aug 27th	3:00PM	Stewart Burnett Park	Aubrey McGhee	Saxophone/Band
21	Thurs Sept 9th	4:00 PM	Chartwell Aurora Long Term Care Facility	Scott Hardware	Singer/Band
22	Thurs Sept 9th	7:00 PM	Machell's Alley	Scott Hardware	Singer/Band
23	Sat Sept 11th	9:30 AM	Chartwell Park Place Retirement Residence	Sailbruntha	Carnatic Vocal
24	Sat Sept 11th	11:15 AM	Copland Park	Sailbruntha	Carnatic Vocal
25	Thurs Sept 16th	4:00 PM	Aurora Cultural Centre	VC2 Cello Duo	Cellists
26	Thurs Sept 16th	7:00 PM	Machell's Alley	VC2 Cello Duo	Cellists
27	Sat Sept 18th	1:30 PM	Hillary House	HMLT	Singer/Band
28	Sat Sept 18th	3:30 PM	Chapman Park	HMLT	Singer/Band

29	Thurs Sept 23rd	4:15 PM	Aurora Town Hall	Hasheel Lodhia	Hindustani Flute
30	Thurs Sept 23rd	7:00 PM	Machell's Alley	Hasheel Lodhia	Hindustani Flute
31	Sat Sept 25th	12:00 PM	Hickson Park	Sarah Thawer	Drummer
32	Sat Sept 25th	2:00 PM	Culture Days	Sarah Thawer	Drummer

Information and Video: https://auroraculturalcentre.ca/aurora-pops-up/

GALLERY PROGRAM

Flowers in the Park

May 15 to July 24, 2021

Sangmin Lee's featured art installation Flowers in the Park continues to evolve and additional new works are added to this, not to be missed, contemporary solo exhibition. Son of Korean immigrants, Lee was raised in the densest high-rise community in Canada, St. James Town (Toronto). As one of the most ethnically rich neighbourhoods in North America, Lee takes inspiration from this "world within a block" and creates large mixed-media installations describing non-linear stories about integration, displacement and cultural survival.

This contemporary solo exhibition features both Lee's hanging wall artwork and his Ricebag Pillowcases art installation. This installation was the central piece of the exhibition and our first time presenting an installation in the Aurora Town Hall Gallery Space. In addition to the installation, the gallery walls were populated by 24 unique pieces, the majority of which are wooden panels which the artist engraved or otherwise transferred his prevailing rose motif. Twenty-two of the 25 hanging artworks were for sale, as well as 10 of the 60 rice bags. From the Gallery Team first discovering his Flowers in the Park wood panel series in 2019, Lee's art practice continues to evolve and expand. So much so that we are excited to include artworks as newly completed as this month!

Lee's artwork seeks to finds beauty in the ordinary and romanticizes the familiar, by presenting common cultural images and then reimaging them in new ways. The title of the exhibition, Flowers in the Park, is a play on the modernist architectural 'Towers in the Park' style in which St. James Town is based. In the artists own words, "These are the roses that grow from drywall. Despite the bareness of its plaster composite, they continue to take root. The lack of light only inches them closer, till one day they crack through the rows of their enclosures and overcome. "

This exhibition was online only as Town Hall was closed to the public. It was easily accessible online through our website and featured a 360 clickable virtual tour, high resolution

photographs of all the works, friendly didactics unpacking the two primary artworks, and accompanying Art Bytes videos to be released throughout the duration of the exhibition.

Art Bytes:
Art Bytes are an ongoing online series which accompanies our exhibitions and give viewers an opportunity to deepen their understanding about the art and artists.

- Behind the Scenes installation video

Art Bytes can be found here:
https://auroraculturalcentre.ca/flowers-in-the-park/flowers-in-the-park-art-bytes/#fitpbts

THE CONVERSATION Group Exhibition and Sale

Sat July 31 – Sat Oct 23, 2021

The Conversation, group exhibition and sale of 17 artists working in a variety of mediums. Artists share their creative gifts, thought processes that inspire their artwork and, the connections to the materials with which they work. An exhibit intended to build comfort in engaging with art and bring forth shared conversations with artists, it is filled with many mediums to ignite curiosities: wood, metal, clay, glass, textiles, oil, acrylic, and encaustic painting, drawing and photography.

Artists:
Lynn Bishop with Tom Loach, Lillian Michiko Blakey, Carmel Brennan, Ann Cummings, D. Ahsén:nase Douglas, Jean Eng, Fly Freeman, Dorsey James, Bert Liverance, Lynne McIlvride, Francis Muscat, Christl Niemuller, Mark Puigmarti, Saundra Reiner, Ernestine Tahedl, Gayle Temple, and Judith Tinkl

Note from Curator and participating artist, Carmel Brennan:
As artists, we have a gift that allows us to create our artwork, limited only by the materials we use and our physical environments. As the poet, essayist, translator, and cultural critic Lewis Hyde said, “A gift is something we do not get by our own efforts. We cannot buy it; we cannot acquire it through an act of will. It is bestowed upon us.” He continues to say that the gift “is supposed to be given away…” (it) “must stay in motion”. (Artists) thank you all for agreeing to participate in this upcoming exhibition, “The Conversation”. It is not a commercial venture though maybe for some of you, sales will be a by-product. My aim in organizing this group exhibition is to encourage and allow you to share your gifts with viewers. I am organizing this program, but I am definitely not directing you in your paths. The sharing is encouraged but optional.

https://auroraculturalcentre.ca/the-conversation/

Art Bytes include
3D Virtual Tour: https://my.matterport.com/show/?m=uWFLCWVrqCm&play=1
Behind the Scenes video: https://youtu.be/UaOUpd2NaYw
What is an Art Catalogue?: https://youtu.be/31bpJ9eY-RI

EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM

Summer Camps

Camps started virtual in July and opened to in-person at the end of July. The room at the Armoury could house a maximum of 12 students. While all in person classes were filled immediately, there were some who had to withdrawal due to COVID related symptoms or anxiety. We provided refunds to these families.

Class	**Ages offered**	**Dates**
VIRTUAL – Artistic Imaginations	Ages 4-6, 7-12	July 5-9
VIRTUAL– Faces & Places	Ages 4-6, 7-12	July 12-16
VIRTUAL – Art & Media	Ages 4-6, 7-12	July 19-23
VIRTUAL – Colour Around Us	Ages 4-6, 7-12	July 26-30
IN PERSON – Colour Around Us	Ages 7-12	July 26-30
VIRTUAL – Art Olympics	Ages 4-6, 7-12	August 3-6
IN PERSON – Art Olympics	Ages 7-12	August 3-6
VIRTUAL – Famous Artists & Their Styles	Ages 4-6, 7-12	August 9-13
IN PERSON – Famous Artists & Their Styles	Ages 7-12	August 9-13
VIRTUAL – Art Through the Ages	Ages 4-6, 7-12	August 16-20
IN PERSON – Art Through the Ages	Ages 7-12	August 16-20
VIRTUAL- The Wonderful World of Nature & Animals	Ages 4-6, 7-12	August 23-27
IN PERSON – The Wonderful World of Nature & Animals	Ages 7-12	August 23-27
Wood Carving with Marlene Ash	Adult	September 20-November 1
Painting in Acrylics with Helen Walter	Adult	September 20 – November 1

Exploring Watercolours (Intermediate/Advanced) with Kathryn Christensen	Adult	September 29-November 17
Watercolours: Basics & Beyond with Kathryn Christensen	Adult	September 30-November 18

KALEIDOSCOPE IN THE SCHOOLS

In Q3, on August 24 we ran a free Drama & The Arts Integration workshop on Zoom for YRDSB teachers in preparation for their upcoming school year. Feedback from educators was excellent: "This was a very informative and fun experience"; "It was a great workshop!" Throughout the month of September, we spent re-connecting and connecting with new Principals and Administrators to provide them an update on our 2021/22 plans.

Community Programs

Centre-Pieces: Tote-Ally Creative Activities for Home
Imagination Medley: Harvest & Family Kaleidoscope Event Edition

- 100 totes created & distributed (over two events)
- four activities were associated with and handed out at *Kaleidoscope in the Park Family Event* - Saturday August 21, 2021
- Left-over totes were handed out on Saturday September 25, 2021, Culture Days Launch Event
- Opportunity for Summer Co-Op student, Caitlin Plestid to create community project - they designed the four activities included in the tote

In addition to the *Imagination Medley* edition, 100 additional sketchbook packages were provided for Culture in a Box. This was a collaboration with Town of Aurora's Cultural Partners with the boxes distributed on Saturday September 25, 2021, Culture Days Launch Event.

Volunteer Program

Between July and September there were 254 volunteered hours which were accumulated through education programs and events. We also had 41 volunteer applications during Q3 in which 21 have remained regularly active.

ACTIVITY STATS YTD Q3 2021

	2021	Q1	Q2	Q3
1	Educational Programs	13	21	17
2	Volunteer hours donated	272	267	577
3	Art Exhibitions	2	2	2
4	Art Bytes and Social Media Engagements	21	7	3
5	Art Bytes Online Views	434	333	247
6	Artists Exhibited	31	32	18
7	Gallery Tours	virtual	virtual	virtual

8	Virtual Gallery Views	1331	840	1654
9	Performing Arts Events	2	7	36
10	Free Community Events	1	1	8
11	Public Meeting	0	2 (April & June)	1
12	Visitors	3681	5,181	4,493

FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

Please see Q3 Financial Report attached.

Organizational Information

CENTRE HOURS

Business Hours	Temporarily closed	
Staff Office Hours	Monday to Friday	8:30 AM – 4:30 PM plus in-person programming needs
Gallery Hours	Online 24/7	
Events	As programmed	
Classes	Virtual and In-person in Q3	
Community Facility Rentals	Rental program now closed due to Aurora Town Square project	

AURORA CULTURAL CENTRE STAFF

Executive Director	Suzanne Haines
Administration & Operational Services Manager	Carol Sharp
Communications & Events Manager	Jane Taylor
Gallery Manager	Clare Bolton (on leave)
Acting Gallery Manager	Stephanie Nicolò
Education & Outreach Manager	Leanne DiMonte
Box office & Digital Services Coordinator	Matthew Knox
Administrative Assistant	Jennifer Marrocco
Gallery Assistant	Christina DiPaola
Volunteer Manager & Events Coordinator	Robert Hess
Artistic Outreach Coordinator	Glenn Marais
Performing Arts Producer	Kalaisan Kalaichelvan
Facility Supervisor (part time)	Laura Beaton, Christina DiPaola

BOARD OF DIRECTORS – Q3 at end of September 2021

EXECUTIVE		**DIRECTORS**
President	Eric Acker	Nicole Asquith
Treasurer	Laura Hostick	Nitin Bagga
Secretary	Sharon Kelly	Andrea Chan
		Damien Chan
		John De Faveri
		Christina Kerr
		Mandana Gholami Mobarakabadi
		Parisa Sabet
		Councillor Wendy Gaertner*

Councillor Rachel Gilliland*

*Ex officio Town of Aurora Directors

COMMITTEES OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Executive Committee
Finance & Audit Committee
Fund Development Committee
Governance & Nominating Committee
Outreach Committee
Facility Task Force

MEETINGS

The Board of Directors meet approximately 10 times per year and committees meet monthly as required.

**Ex-officio Directors have the full rights & responsibilities of Directors of a corporation under the Ontario Corporations Act.*

COMPLIANCE & REPORTING CONTROLS

The Centre has strict compliance, oversight, and reporting procedures in place; third party bookkeeping, a Finance & Audit Committee, several specialized Board committees, the day-to-day oversight of the Executive Director and the monthly review by the Board of Directors who each have personal and collective fiduciary responsibilities related to the governance and financial health of the Centre.

MONTHLY

Financial

- Third Party bookkeeper reconciles financial activity each month and creates financial statements that are reviewed by Treasurer, Finance & Audit Committee and Executive Director (ED).
- Statement of Account for Current Source Deductions (and payment) made to CRA.

Operational

- ED creates monthly activity report and presents to Board of Directors; once approved this is posted to the public website.

QUARTERLY

Financial

- Treasurer creates GAAP quarterly financial report based on bookkeeper's financial statements. This is reviewed by the Finance Committee and presented to the Board. Opportunity for questions from Directors. Once approved, ED provides this report to the Director of Community Services at the Town of Aurora as per our Agreement (and to the Mayor, Town Council, and Town CAO as a courtesy).

Operational

- ED creates a Managerial Commentary reporting on activities during the quarter in question.
- This is presented to the Board. Once approved, ED provides this report along with the Quarterly financial Report to the Director of Community Services (and Mayor, Council, and CAO). This report is posted on public website.

Oversight

- ED provides a compliance statement to the Board stating that all payments have been made and all areas of the Centre's compliance responsibilities have been met.

ANNUALLY

Town of Aurora

- As per Agreement

Canada Revenue Agency (Federal Government)

- Registered Charity Information Return
- Ontario Corporations Information Act Annual Return

Imagine Canada

- Annual report on compliance of the Standards identified by IC as a requirement of our accreditation.
- Board reviews Compliance report and IC comments

Current Funders (this is variable)
Young Canada Works in Museum Organizations via Canadian Heritage, (Federal Government)
Canada Summer Jobs via Employment and Social Development Canada (ESDC), (Federal Government)
Canada Arts Presentation Fund, Canadian Heritage
New Horizons, Canadian Heritage
Ontario Arts Council
Ontario Trillium Foundation

Financial Review
Third Party Audit undertaken annually (not legally required until budget reaches $1 Million). Financial standing publicly posted annually on the websites of the CRA, Imagine Canada, and our website.

ONGOING COMPLIANCE

- Town of Aurora
- Banks
- Insurance
- Canadian Anti-Spam Legislation (CASL)
- Service Ontario (Provincial Government)
- Canadian Code of Practice for Consumer Protection in Electronic Commerce
- SOCAN

IN SUMMARY
Programming continues to ramp up in the third quarter with a look to the last quarter planning. The COVID-19 pandemic has not passed, and we are grateful to have taken this window to provide work for artists and joy for the community.

Respectfully Submitted,
Suzanne Haines, Executive Director
*www.auroraculturalcentre.*ca
Follow us on Facebook, Twitter & Instagram