

Managerial Commentary – Q3 2025

Introduction

The 3rd quarter of 2025 saw the inaugural summer Brevik Collaboratory program with a new performing arts festival of 5 Saturdays on the Mirkoplous Plateia. The dedicated work of the artists and mentors provided invaluable learning and outcomes for the emerging artists in the cohort. We also opened the 2025/2026 performing arts season with a sold out concert featuring Canadian folk-rock band Skydivers.

Enrollment was at an all-time high for summer programs, and substantial collaboration with our Town partners to navigate use of Aurora Town Square in the summer months. After a busy and successful summer camp season, our education programming launched its fall session with a variety of adult and youth multiweek programs and one-day workshops on offer. We participated in special events and outreach into the community including farmer's markets and Doors Open.

THANK YOU TO OUR SUPPORTERS

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A SNAPSHOT OF AURORA CULTURAL CENTRE Q3 OPERATIONS

July - September 2025

Canada Day

July 1, 2025

Lambert Wilson Park, Aurora

Summer camp staff and volunteers engaged with the community at the Town of Aurora's Canada Day festivities at Lambert Wilson Park. The public learned about offerings including our summer camps, while children & adults alike were invited to decorate leaves to hang on our community tree – "Where community grows!" – and participate in colouring and crafts.



Camp counsellor Bryan, the tree's builder, helps young artists hang their leaves on the community tree.

Farmer's Markets

July 19, August 9

Town Park, Aurora

Members of the ACC summer camp counsellor team met with the community at the Aurora Street Festival to share information about our summer camp programming with the community at large. The July 19th engagement included a pop-up with artist Madam Rose Zhao, whose exhibit was launched in the Great Hall Gallery on July 31st.



Madam Zhao showcases her artistry at the Farmer's Market.

Doors Open Aurora 2025

September 21, 2025

Shining Hill Visual Art Studio & Art Activity Room

The community was invited to come and explore Aurora's unique built heritage and vibrant cultural spaces during Doors Open 2025, and discover local history, art and music!

The Aurora Cultural Centre's offerings included a Wildlife & Waterways Watercolour Workshop and Doors Open Collage Workshop for kids, and a Woodcarving Workshop and 4 Colour Watercolour Workshop for adults. Additionally, fall artist-in-residence Julia Mobbs opened the



A young learner explores art at Doors Open.

doors to the residency studio for visits to drop in and sneak a peek into what she is working on during her time at ACC.

National Day for Truth & Reconciliation

September 27, 2025

Lower Hall Gallery & Brevik Hall

Reflecting upon the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation, Mohawk-Ojibwe artist Sharon Rigby shared the stories of Indigenous individuals impacted by the residential school system and the Sixties scoop through a series of hand-crafted ribbon skirts. Next, the day was marked with live music from Red N Blue. Red N Blue is, Jeff Monague from the Beausoleil First Nation on Christian Island; Heather McIntyre who resides in Collingwood and has roots in Georgina Island First Nation; Michael Martyn is a settler who hails from Peterborough but now resides in Orillia. Their original music tells the story of the land and the First People to walk upon it.

PERFORMING ARTS EVENTS

Brevik Collaboratory

July & August 2025

Through the support of the Canada Council for the Arts, the Aurora Cultural Centre produced a series of professional development summer sessions in Brevik Hall. A slate of talented new and emerging artists, with a focus on equity seeking artists, were selected to participate in training from industry professionals in performance and the business of art. With masterclasses taught by acclaimed Canadian vocalist Micah Barnes, the program included the opportunity to put learning into practice with performances at the Bright Lights in the Afternoon outdoor concert series.



Micah Barnes leads a Masterclass for the Brevik Collaboratory

Bright Lights in the Afternoon

Saturdays at 2pm, from July 26 through August 23

Visitors were offered the opportunity to take a midday break and join us at Aurora Town Square for Bright Lights in the Afternoon—a relaxed, outdoor concert series presented by the Aurora Cultural Centre's Brevik Collaboratory.

Each Saturday, emerging performers from our new professional development residency share short sets of original and in-progress work. It was the perfect excuse to slow down, soak up some sun, and support local talent.



Micah Barnes with special guests Dana Valerie & Daeyong Lim (and their accompanying musicians)

<https://auroraculturalcentre.ca/brevik-collaboratory/bright-lights-in-the-afternoon/>

Skydiggers

September 18, 2025

Beloved Canadian roots-rockers **Skydiggers** return with *Dreams & Second Chances*—a stunning new collection born from instinct, trust, and the magic of collaboration. Recorded at the iconic Bathhouse Studio, the album captures the band's evolution as they blend rock, R&B, country, and soul with signature harmonies and heartfelt lyrics. Led by founding members Andy Maize and Josh Finlayson, and joined by a powerhouse ensemble, Skydiggers deliver songs that explore love, loss, reflection, and renewal. It's a deeply personal, profoundly moving live performance that reminds us our best days may still lie ahead.



Skydiggers

Cooo

September 27, 2025

Brevik Hall

Created especially for infants and toddlers (6-24 months), **Cooo** was a gentle and engaging theatrical concert that introduced little ones to the wonder of live music. With two performances by acclaimed vocalist Xin Wang and percussionist Michael Murphy, the intimate experience blended soothing sounds, playful rhythms, and "I love you" sung in multiple languages. Inspired by the music of Canadian composer Ana Sokolović, Cooo invited families into a world of sound drawn from global traditions—from monastery bells to street calls in southern China. Only 12 children seat per show,

shows at 10am and 11:30am.

Commissioned by [WeeFestival](#), it was a beautiful first theatre experience designed to spark joy, curiosity, and connection.

GALLERY PROGRAM

In-person gallery visits are in the Homeroom, Great Hall and Lower Hall Galleries in the 22 Church Street space of Aurora Town Square. Gallery hours are:

Homeroom Galleries: Monday – Saturday 9 a.m. – 4 p.m. (open until 7 p.m. Wednesdays)

Lower Hall & Great Hall Galleries – Monday – Friday 8:30am – 9pm, Saturday 8:30am – 6pm, Sunday 8:30 am – 4pm

Exhibitions are also accessible through our online gallery and a virtual 3D map.

<https://auroraculturalcentre.ca/current-exhibitions/>

When Aurora Thaws

In person: May 1 – July 13, 2025

Lower Hall Gallery

<https://auroraculturalcentre.ca/jianming-chen/>

Said Through Silence

In person: May 1 – July 27, 2025

Great Hall Gallery

<https://auroraculturalcentre.ca/said-through-silence/>

Laurence Vallières

In person: May 8 – July 22, 2025

Homeroom Galleries

<https://auroraculturalcentre.ca/laurence-vallieres/>

Streaming

Artist: Carol Walters

In person: July 17 – September 14, 2025

Lower Hall Gallery

<https://auroraculturalcentre.ca/streaming/>

Streaming, a melding of *stream* and *dreaming*, evokes the meditative state of quiet reflective time in nature. Paddle on a quiet pond and be surrounded by thick swaths of lily pads with aquatic life hidden below, as the canoe creates a gentle wake you see under the surface to the myriad of life underneath.



Artist: Carol Walters

This exhibition is an invitation to unplug from the digital media

and consider the wetlands and deposits of gravel below – filter agents for our water and essential for our survival.

Confronting the irrevocable loss of wetlands and wildlife habitats caused by industrial and urban expansion, the artist poses a vital question: *can we still protect our groundwater and conserve these critical ecosystems?*

From Rocks to Brushstrokes: A Geologist's Artistic Transformation

Artist: Rose Zhao 赵寿薇 (Zhào Shòuwēi)

In person: July 31 – October 30, 2025

Lower Hall Gallery

<https://auroraculturalcentre.ca/from-rocks-to-brushstrokes/>

Madam Rose Zhao (b. 1937, Rongxian County, China) finds beauty in all corners of the natural world—the rocks and soil of the earth, flowers, plants and animals, her granddaughter's pet chicken, the deer outside her daughter's house...

Prior to her artistic practice, Madam Zhao served as a hydrogeological and engineering geologist, completing her education at Chengdu Institute of Geological Exploration (now Chengdu University of Technology). She turned to painting during her retirement in 2003, isolated amid the global SARS epidemic. She studied the meticulous style of Gongbi, a traditional Chinese painting style using highly detailed brushwork, rich colours, and elegant, balanced compositions to create life-like renderings of figurative and narrative subjects.



Photo Credit: Rose Zhao

What began as a personal refuge soon blossomed into a 20-year devotion, with Zhao capturing life through delicate lines and vibrant detail wherever she went. She has since completed over 300 works, creating a global map of lived experience—from Beijing and Leshan to New York, New Jersey, Toronto, and ultimately, Aurora.

The Aurora Cultural Centre is proud to present a glimpse into Madam Zhao's remarkable body of work through her first-ever solo exhibition: a visual story of her life and creative journey. Printed materials for the exhibition are available in English and Simplified and Traditional Chinese.

Opening Night for both Streaming and From Rocks to Brushstrokes

Thursday, July 31, 6:30-8:30pm | Remarks at 7pm

Sabzeh

Artist: Parisa Sabet, Laura Friedman

In person: August 14 – October 19, 2025

Lower Hall Gallery

<https://auroraculturalcentre.ca/upcoming-exhibitions/>

Like knots woven by hand or seeds pushing through the dark, beauty and strength appear when we hold each other through all seasons of growth. Some of us are just beginning to sprout, others stretch further toward the light. All are vital. All are bound together.



Inspired by the short story of the same name, *Sabzeh*, by Omid Fallahazad, this exhibition is rooted in the symbolic resonance of growing spouts and intricately woven Persian carpets.

Blending traditional and contemporary media—including soundscapes, video, projection, textiles, and dance—**Sabzeh** transforms the gallery into an immersive, multisensory installation. The project meditates on themes of rebirth and renewal, connection to the past, and the strength found in community. It invites viewers to look inward and reflect on the threads of interconnection that bind us to one another—and to all living things.

Sabzeh spans both of the Homeroom Galleries. In Homeroom Gallery 1, visitors encounter the immersive installation; in Homeroom Gallery 2, a group exhibition features works by Bahia Marks, Susan Wood, Teresa Dunlop, and Vicky Talwar, along with a participatory garden of live-growing *sabzeh* for the community to tend throughout the run of the show.

Stories Woven Through Fabric

Artist: Sharon Rigby

In person: September 20 – November 3, 2025

Lower Hall Gallery (and beyond)

In this multi-site project, artist Sharon Rigby uses the medium of ribbon skirts to share the lived experiences of Indigenous individuals impacted by the Sixties Scoop and residential school systems.

Ribbon skirts hold deep cultural significance for many Indigenous communities across Canada and North America. While their meanings vary between nations, they are recognized as symbols of identity, connection to heritage and the land, and tools for healing. Through her art, Rigby creates a space for truth and reflection, inviting members of her community to share their stories, and in doing so, foster a sense of healing and understanding surrounding the National Day of Truth and Reconciliation.



Artist Sharon Rigby (right) and Gallery Manager Samantha Jones

Stories Woven Through Fabric begins in the Lower Hall Gallery (Level 1, Aurora Cultural Centre) and extends across several locations throughout Aurora Town Square. Visit the Lower Hall Gallery or check back here for a map of the ribbon skirt installations.

Open Studio

Weekly on Wednesdays (hiatus for summer, resumed September 3)

Art Activity Room

<https://auroraculturalcentre.ca/events-for-artists/>

Gallery Art Bytes

Art Bytes are an ongoing online series that accompanies our exhibitions and give viewers an opportunity to deepen their understanding about the art and artists. Art Bytes are available for viewing through our YouTube channel during and after gallery exhibitions. Art Bytes can be found here: [Gallery Art Bytes link](#)

Art Byte Topic	Exhibition	Link
Sabzeh/Sprouts	Sabzeh	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GN2EU-T3twY&t=3s
Carol Walthers: The Flow of Artmaking	Streaming	https://youtu.be/u54XEFrRUHg?si=35grsRrM4Q5yy8vC

EDUCATION PROGRAM

Summer Camps

We were delighted to welcome our summer campers to our newly revitalized spaces at Aurora Town Square, starting in early July. Eight weeks of week-long camp options were available, with each one offering both a Junior Art Yard (ages 4 – 7) and Senior Art Yard (ages 7 – 12 option) and a unique theme.

Theme	Dates
The Wonderful World of Nature & Animals	July 2 – 4*
Artistic Imaginations	July 7 – 11
Art & Science Fusion	July 14 – 18
Eco-Art	July 21 – 25
Art Through the Ages	July 28 – August 1
Visual Art & Music Harmony	August 5 – 8*
Famous Artists & Their Styles	August 11 – 15
Now Streaming: Animation	August 18 – 22

*short week due to statutory holidays

Term Classes, Workshops and Short Courses

Term classes resumed in September with 26 multi-week classes, workshops and PA Day programs kicking off this month (15 adults/senior adults & 11 child/youth). To see a full description of current educational offerings, please visit: <https://auroraculturalcentre.ca/adult-classes/> or

<https://auroraculturalcentre.ca/childrens-classes/>

Theme	Start Date	End Date	Age Group
Wood Carving	September 15	November 10	Adult
Acrylic Pouring and Mediums	September 15	November 10	Adult
Comic Drawing for Children	September 15	November 10	Children
Watercolour Level 1 (55+)	September 16	November 25	Adult - Senior
Watercolour Level 2 (55+)	September 16	November 25	Adult - Senior
Expand Your Horizons in Acrylics Level 2	September 16	November 11	Adult
Drawing Club Intermediate	September 17	October 22	Adult
Guitar Intermediate	September 17	November 5	Adult
Guitar Beginner	September 17	November 5	Adult
Watercolours: Intermediate & Advanced	September 17	November 5	Adult
Drawing Fundamentals – Session A (55+)	September 17	November 19	Adult - Senior
Learn Cartooning	September 17	October 15	Child/Youth
You Can Uke It! Beginner & Intermediate	September 17	November 5	Child/Youth
Watercolours: Basics & Beyond	September 18	November 20	Adult
Drawing Fundamentals – Session B (55+)	September 18	November 20	Adult - Senior
Acrylic Paint – Beginner (55+)	September 18	November 20	Adult - Senior
Children's Visual Art 2	September 30	November 15	Children
Printmaking: Trace Monotypes	September 25	September 25	Adult
PA Days (2 sessions: Ages 4 to 7 & Ages 7 to 12)	September 26	September 26	Children
Melody Makers	September 27	November 22	Children
Children's Visual Art 1	September 27	November 22	Children
Early Years' Visual Art	September 27	November 8	Children
Rhythm Kids	September 27	November 22	Children
Lil' Jammers, Caregiver & Child	September 27	November 22	Children
Brush to Digital Print	September 28	September 28	Adult

To see current educational offerings please visit: <https://auroraculturalcentre.ca/adult-classes/> or <https://auroraculturalcentre.ca/childrens-classes/>

ACTIVITY STATS YTD Q3 2025

	2025	Q3
1	Educational Programs (incl. KITS)	16
2	Volunteer hours donated	986
3	Art Exhibitions	7
4	Art Bytes	3
5	Art Bytes Online Views	118
6	Gallery Artists Exhibited	42
7	Virtual Gallery Views	984
8	Performing Arts Events	8
9	Free Community Events/Performances	5
10	Outreach Events	4
11	Public Meeting	1
12	Visitors (across all pillars)	49715

Organizational Information

CENTRE HOURS

Business Hours	Monday to Friday	8:30 AM – 4:30 PM plus in-person programming needs
Staff Office Hours	Monday to Friday	8:30 AM – 4:30 PM
Events & Classes	As programmed	
Virtual Galleries	24/7	

AURORA CULTURAL CENTRE STAFF (as of September 30, 2025)

Executive Director	Suzanne Haines
Finance Associate	Franca Zumpetta
Administrative Assistant	Helena Barkla
Audience Services Manager	Alyssa Spear
Front of House Managers	Debbie Bunze
	Shelagh Carlini
Education Manager	Aitak Sorahitalab*
Interim Education Manager	Anna Vander Heide
KITS Tour Coordinator	Benton Roark
Gallery Manager	Samantha Jones
Gallery Assistant	Adora Lau
Performing Arts Manager	Derek Andrews
Production Manager/Technical Director	Robert Hess
Technicians (Part-Time)	Anne Keillor

Development Officer
 Development Co-ordinator
 Director of Marketing
 Digital Services Specialist
 Marketing Assistant
 Summer Outreach
 Summer Program Supervisor
 Summer Camp Counsellors

Drew Chale
 Erwin Lau
 Hussein Esmail
 Jake Robertson
 Jasper Jacobs
 Jonny Juffs
 Mikaila Strickland
 Shawn McNamara
 Sina Momtahan
 Glenn Coulson
 Tamae Vassell
 Steve Klein
 Matthew Knox
 Jenny Burton
 Milaina Colucci
 Romy Barakat
 Amitis Almasi (Jr)
 Christy Lai (Jr)
 Andrea Huerta (Jr)
 Shericko Chen (Sr)
 Bryan Ho (Sr)
 Shannon McClelland (Sr)
 Nazia Munir (Sr)
 Julia Sobiesiak (Sr)

**On Leave*

BOARD OF DIRECTORS – Q3 at end of September 2025

Executive

President	Mary Ann McConkey
Vice President	Morry Patoka
Treasurer	Paulina Vujinovic
Secretary	Anita Townsend

Directors

Edlene Antonio
 Garry Blye
 Phiona Durrant
 Stephen Lusk
 Mandana Gholami Mobarakabadi
 Colette Nemni
 Councillor John Gallo*
 Councillor Ron Weese*

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

COMMITTEES OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Executive Committee

Finance & Audit Committee

Development Committee

Governance & Nominating Committee

Outreach Committee

MEETINGS

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

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 processes bi-weekly AP/AR and payroll, 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

- Accountant creates GAAP quarterly financial report based on bookkeeper's financial statements. This is reviewed by the Treasurer and Finance & Audit Committee and presented to the Board. Opportunity for questions from Directors. Once approved, ED provides this report to the Director, 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)

Canada Council for the Arts

Canadian Heritage

Canada Summer Jobs

Ontario Creates

Ontario Trillium Foundation

Young Canada Works

Financial Review

Third Party Audit undertaken annually.

Financial standing publicly posted annually on the websites of the CRA, Imagine Canada, and our website.

ONGOING COMPLIANCE

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

Respectfully Submitted,

Suzanne Haines, Executive Director