

Dialogue on Truth & Reconciliation will unfold in ?Reveal?



By Brock Weir

This summer, Indigenous and Non-Indigenous Canadian artists pooled their talent for an important exchange on Truth and Reconciliation fostered brushstroke by brushstroke.

This Wednesday, September 27, members of the public are invited to become part of the conversation as the artists gather for the big ?Reveal.?

The Aurora Cultural Centre will host Call to Action #83: Reveal, a special presentation from 5 ? 8.30 p.m. The evening will feature the participating artists, as well as Indigenous and non-Indigenous elders who will oversee the final presentation of the group's collaborative efforts towards the Truth & Reconciliation Process.

For over a year, eight Indigenous and eight non-Indigenous artists worked together in their quest for Truth and Reconciliation, inspired by the 83rd Call to Action in the TRC Commission's report for ?a strategy for indigenous and non-indigenous artists to undertake collaborative projects and produce works that contribute to the reconciliation process.?

What it inspired in this group of Southern Ontario artists, most hailing from Simcoe County, as well as York and Durham Regions, was what they described as ?wildfire.?' Kicked off with a creation by one Indigenous artist, this artwork was shared with just one non-Indigenous artist who would use this original work to inspire their own.

The non-Indigenous artist's creation would, in turn, go to an Indigenous artist who would use this last piece ? and only this last piece ? to create their work, which would inspire the next non-Indigenous artist, and so on down the line until all 16 artists had created their pieces only inspired by the one previous work.

The travelling exhibition has been on the road for more than a year, with Aurora it's final stop.

Wednesday's event will include a smudging ceremony and attendees will receive a tobacco prayer tie and strawberries, the symbol of reconciliation.

Event organizers tell those interested to be prepared to ?actively participate? in the reveal.

Additional events planned around Call to Action 83 include the International Festival of Authors Aurora featuring Gwen Benaway of Anishnaabe and Metis Descent. Gwen is a Two-Spirited award-winning Trans poet who will read from her newest collection ?Passage.?' This free ticketed event will take place Wednesday, October 11 at 7 p.m.

The following Wednesday, October 18, will feature Wampum Belts Woven Through Anishnaabe History. Brian Charles, a member of the Chippewas of Georgina Island First Nation, will discuss and showcase the work he has done in collaboration with a group of knowledge keepers in creating replica wampum belts to illuminate the interconnected path of nations.

From the start of Lit On Tour on October 11 through Mr. Charles' presentation, the Cultural Centre will host the Tree of Reconciliation, inviting members of the public to share their messages of hope for the Reconciliation process on a sculptural tree created by Newmarket artist Donald Chretien.