

## Think you know Aurora? Soak up some Local Colour!



### By Brock Weir

Having lived in Aurora for 26 years and 14 years respectively, artists Eva Folks and Judy Sherman have seen Aurora grow and develop in ways they had never thought possible.

What was once a small town is now a bustling area that has expanded outwards towards its borders? but whether you believe this has helped or hindered this sense of community, this duo is aiming to restore those tight community bonds through a year-long art project set to launch this month.

Ms. Folks and Ms. Sherman will be out in the fabled Merlin's Hollow Garden on Centre Crescent this Saturday, August 9, from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m., painting en plein air? in a precursor to more public outdoor painting on Saturday, August 16, where they will again be painting in the great outdoors in conjunction with Doors Open Aurora and the Aurora Farmers' Market.

They invite you to come up to them, watch them work, and ask those all important questions as they aim to reintroduce Aurora to Aurorans one brushstroke at a time through Local Colours Aurora.

The artists have had Local Colours Aurora on the backburner for quite some time, starting last year with a weekend art show hosted by Ms. Sherman in her Sherman J studio on Temperance Street. After the success of this event, they looked for a way to engage the entire community in their vision.

?Through this project we want to create an awareness of Aurora in Aurora so people get involved on all edges of the boundaries,? explains Ms. Sherman. ?We hope it will bring more of a community together.?

Exhibitions in places like artists' studios, the Aurora Public Library, and even culminating in a grand finale art show at the Aurora Cultural Centre in September 2015 to showcase the fruits of their labour, they, along with a larger group of artists and art students, are setting out to capture the landscapes, the people, and other hidden gems that make Aurora tick as a community.

?By painting local people and places, it could be just the fellow who drives the Zamboni at the ice rink, who everyone knows,? says Ms. Sherman. ?Merlin's Hollow's David Tomlinson said he will sit for a portrait because he has a really cool face. We're going to be painting at the Farmers' Market because it is so important to the community, and even just along Yonge Street. Home Hardware has their cat that everyone knows, so why not paint the cat? What is going to be nice about the show is everybody paints differently, so you will have a different take on the things in Town. It is not just going to be landscapes or portraits painted in the traditional ways.?

Eva and Judy paint in anything but the traditional ways. While their materials and methods might be traditional, Ms. Folks describes

her personal artistic style as 'surreal art studies' that focused on wild interpretations of, for instance, architecture, while Ms. Sherman describes hers as 'retro' with a bit of a pop art edge, inspired by animation.

'We are still painting in our styles and we're not going to change that,' says Ms. Folks. 'I am going to go out into the dog park where people normally stand around with their coffees and their dogs run around ' except this time it is going to be the dogs standing around having their coffee.'

With an art style that often gears towards objects like a Pez dispenser or the Pillsbury doughboy, some people having their portraits painted by Ms. Sherman shouldn't be surprised if they are interpreted as a bobble head or, yes, as a Pez dispenser.

'It gives variety to the work at the show because not everybody likes a traditional landscape or a traditional piece,' says Ms. Sherman.

Adds Ms. Folks: 'There is going to be a good variety and all the different things people bring into it because everybody has a different view of Aurora and they do different things.'

At the end of the day, going out to places like the Aurora Farmers' Market and Merlin's Hollow will allow everyone a chance to see what they do, ask questions, and perhaps break down barriers. People might see artists as 'crazy people who just sit in their houses and paint all day', but that couldn't be further from the truth, says Ms. Folks.

This is a view shared by Ms. Sherman.

'For me, it is about having people know about the people in Town, whether it be your neighbour, whether it be your businesses, any of that stuff,' she says. 'It is about bringing an awareness back to that community feeling.'