

Art offers creativity, connection, and community



By Bill Kilpatrick

After a five-year hiatus Loyalist College is reviving its Summer Art Experience program at all of its locations including Bancroft, Belleville, Port Hope, and Tyendinaga. The program offers a wide array of courses for people of all skill levels and ages and begins July 8 and runs until July 26, Monday to Friday 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. There is something for everyone that will allow attendees to explore their creative side including, but not limited to, leather work, mixed media, creative writing, drawing and sketching, quilting, stitching skills, photography, basketry and more. While not all of these are available at the Bancroft campus, there are six courses that will allow people to get their feet wet and explore numerous mediums. These include ?painting, drawing and printing: creating works on paper? instructed by Ketha Newman, ?watercolour basics- landscapes? instructed by Tanya Fenkell, ?sketches to line drawings? instructed by Andrew Edgar, ?plein air painting ? acrylic? instructed by David Smith, ?painting the colour of emotion? instructed by Grethe Jensen, and ?stitching skills ? knitting, embroidery and visible mending? also instructed by Tanya Fenkell. Angela Harrison, the continuing education coordinator for the Bancroft campus is super excited to have this program up and running again. For her it's about more than just the art as she explained, ?Part of the reason that I would say why here in Bancroft we are so excited is because it's the start of reestablishing ourselves here as a resource for the community. A place to come that's accommodating, accessible, enriching, and engaging.? Harrison spoke about how many vital community bonds were shattered during the pandemic and why a program like this is so important at this time, ?That's my goal,? she stated, ?to build that foundation where Loyalist college is once again a place where people come to make connections and be in a group together and be part of something. A lot of these courses are designed to create an inclusive environment ? and this is going to get you lost in something totally different.? This was a sentiment that was also shared by Shelley Schell, the Summer Arts Program Director at Loyalist College, who sees the Summer Art program as a ?chance to provide more creative opportunities for people in the Loyalist College region,? she said, adding, ?There's so much creativity in the region already and wonderful things happening, but when it comes to opportunities to engage in arts or crafts you can't have too many. [The courses] give people a chance to spend time with like-minded people and create new relationships. Those have such tremendous value. It's just such a valuable experience for people of all ages and it's something that builds community.? Further to these benefits Sandra Dupret, the Senior Vice President for students at Loyalist College looks at the reinstatement of the summer arts program as a chance to ?celebrate and support the local creative economy.? Bancroft This Week caught up with three of the five artists who are instructing some of the courses on the Bancroft campus and they spoke about what people should expect from their courses, the importance of individual artistic expression, and the healing powers of art. Ketha Newman, who is instructing the ?Painting Drawing and Printing- creating works on paper? course, is hoping that those who sign up for it will find it ?fun and playful? as she helps those enrolled explore multiple mediums on paper, where they will get a chance to ?dabble in a bit of everything.? Newman explained that her goal is to encourage people's natural curiosity and build their confidence by allowing people to experiment using her 10 years of accumulated art materials that she will have available. This course is a chance for people to try out many different styles without the accompanying costs. ?Often times

that's prohibitively expensive as well," she explained. But in a course like hers, she says, "You don't have to put out \$500 in materials just to see that you don't like something. You can try it and say, "This really is not for me but I like this other thing." Newman said that her course is for people of all skill levels, but the people she loves instructing the most are those who "feel that they cannot do art or are not good at it. I love to open their eyes and show them that's not true." For Newman, art is for everybody and she encourages everyone to take it up because, as she says, not only is art "therapeutic" but "meditative and good for your soul." For experimental painter Grethe Jensen, who is instructing "painting the colour of emotion," art is all about colour and making people's paintings "speak loudly and effectively." She says that "colour is the most exciting thing about art," and for those taking her course they will begin with some colour exercises by playing with colours because emotion and colour are directly connected. "The paintings that elicit emotion are always the most intriguing," stated Jensen. She explained that she will not be running a standard art course where everyone does the same thing. She wants to encourage people to choose what style they prefer and then she will help those enrolled to "use colours to make the paintings their own." Her approach comes from over 12 years of feedback from her art students and involves two main strategies: letting students do what they want and sharing what they are learning with their fellow students. "I want them to do what they want. I want them to paint their work," she explained, adding "We will also spend time each day talking about what's happening with them and sharing that between the students. If one person learns something about a certain colour let's share it with everyone and share the learning." Jensen says that anyone taking her course "will come out of there with a whole different understanding of the colours they are using." Tanya Fenkell, who is teaching the watercolour basics course, sees her job more as a "facilitator" to help people discover what they have inside themselves. She is hoping that what people will get excited about is "looking at their favorite places and places they connect to and being able to express them in watercolour." Fenkell also wants people to look at watercolour in a new way. She said that often people view watercolor as a more challenging medium because, unlike oil, you just can't paint over a mistake, but for her it's all about changing that mindset and "going with what the medium has to offer as opposed to trying to make it something else," she said, "I want people to loosen up and enjoy how beautiful watercolour can be." Fenkell believes that, "wherever you end up is an interesting place to be with your watercolour," adding, "I think that just getting into the flow of things is fun along with learning how to use the personality of watercolour." Fenkell said she will teach some tips and tricks that will help people really "get into" landscapes with watercolour. Fenkell is also instructing the stitching skills course that will focus on knitting, embroidery, and visible mending. For more information on the summer arts experience program please email art@loyalistcollege.com visit their web page at www.loyalistcollege.com/art or call 613-332-1743 ext 0.