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Dufferin Arts Council revives programming with After 5 Salon event in Hockley Village

Written By Constance Scrafield

The Dufferin Arts Council is well and truly back, as a revitalized organization and it is inviting you to attend the first of its planned four ?Salons? on June 16 at the Hockley Historical Community Hall in Hockley Village.

Running from 5 to 7 p.m., this is a pleasant couple of hours during which a short video presentation is offered by Art Conservator Alison Douglas, followed with refreshments and a chance to discuss the information in the video with its author.

A ?salon? has a historical tie to a time of a less structured, more casual style to socializing, enjoyed for its relaxed yet informative approach to a subject.

The dates and venues for the additional three salons are not confirmed at this time but announcements will be made as plans come into place.

The Dufferin Arts Council (DAC) will launch its summer programming with an After 5 Salon at the Hockley Historic Community Hall on June 16 from 5 to 7 p.m. The informal gathering will feature a short video presentation by a guest speaker, followed by a relaxed question-and-answer discussion, alongside light refreshments and a social setting designed to encourage conversation and connection among attendees.

The event marks the first in DAC's summer lineup, as the organization moves forward with renewed energy after discussions last fall about its future

?Last autumn, there was talk of shutting down the Dufferin Arts Council,? said David Nairn, co-chair with Signe Ball of DAC. ?But there were some young people who came on board and said that we should bring new life into it and keep it going.?

The mantra of the Dufferin Arts Council is to enrich the community by actively supporting the arts and artists through communication, resources, programs, and partnerships. This is partly achieved through grants and awards for post-secondary education and travel to learn new techniques and to study how art is expressed in other countries and cultures. There was every reason for the idea of revitalizing DAC.

In an interview with the Citizen last week, Nairn provided some details about the After 5 Salon event.

?This is a casual conversation, starting with a video presentation by the speaker,? he said. ?That will be followed by a Q and A of sorts but more relaxed.?

Catering with a collection of hors d'oeuvres by the local restaurant, The Goodhawk, is matched by a glass of wine from Adamo's winery or beer from one of the community's very fine local breweries.

The speaker for this first Salon is Art Conservator Alison Douglas, whom the Citizen interviewed this past weekend.

?Signe [Ball] asked me to speak at this ? out of the blue,? Douglas said. ?She had put a feature about me in her magazine, In the Hills.?

While doing a project in grade 13 at high school, Douglas learned about the fantastic 10-year cleaning of the Sistine Chapel in the Vatican. At the time, as she noted, there were the beginnings of her feeling, ?I knew I was going to do that.?

Still in grade 13, she did chemistry and organic chemistry, moving on to get her Honours B.F.A. and Master's of Art Conservation at Queen's University.

While there were longings to be an artist, it was clear that conserving art was her better calling. A member of the Canadian Association of Professional Conservators (CAPC), Douglas has years of stories her work has seen, commenting, ?Every piece is different.

?It really is a labour of love,? she admitted. ?Sometimes, it's like opening Pandora's box.?

In addition to working for establishments, like the McMichael Canadian Art Collection, Douglas also offers her talent as a Conservator to individual owners, making a point to see where the work is usually displayed and then giving an estimate of what it will need to be conserved.

Her base for the last 23 years has been with the McMichael, where there are the realities of the work, as well as putting together shows for galleries across Canada and into the US. Diligence is required for every detail needed for safe arrival and handling of the pieces shipped, to be hung and admired and then returned.

Douglas wanted to emphasize that conservators cannot do their job without the contribution of the team that works with them. ?A whole team have to work together, an entire crew making the work look as beautiful as we can.?

David Nairn has always and still does aver and insist that ?there is no other community in the country more passionate about art than this most vibrant arts community. Our goal is to promote the work of the artists ? the creators.

?This was not a Salon, but rather a curated day trip.?

He went on to say there will be an art show in Alexander Park in the summer, and comedian Michael McCreary will be on stage at the Orangeville Opera House early in the fall.

Staging fresh events to attract young artists, with the Salons and awareness pieces, begins the plans.

?To share a love of art with a wider palette, the support of grants; announcing this at the end of the school year, there was a ground swell of renewed energy,? Nairn was enthusiastic to say.

A new Board of Directors is established with co-chairs Signe Ball and David Nairn, who are passionate about people joining. There will be a list of all members on the DAC website, so when there is a need for talent, there will be a hub of information about artists and creators.

A fully reinvigorated DAC welcomes new artists and creators.

Visit www.dufferinarts.com/dac-newsletter/ for tickets at the Hockley Salon at $25.