

A fresh perspective

HRM art walks connect with languages, marginalized groups



Using frottage to brush a pencil over something and reveal what is hiding within it is just one of the ways art walk organizers Sophie Pilipczuk and Lucie Taussig help people engage with art along each walk. HANNAH MINZLOFF PHOTOS

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Connecting people to different perspectives could sound like a daunting task, but for artist and French language facilitator Sophie Pilipczuk, it's a thing of art.

Pilipczuk has worked alongside her Alliance Française Halifax teammate Lucie Taussig to plan, organize and launch Balad'arts / Wandering With Art, which is a series of family art walks built around exploring art, language and culture across the Halifax Regional Municipality.

Pilipczuk says the tours feature both English and French sections and offer participants a chance to think about things in a new way with connections fostered through art, language and conversation.

"We thought it would be a wonderful experience to have French outside in the world in a mainly anglophone environment. Playing with art in a real-life environment is a great way to learn," says Pilipczuk.

'ART AS A VISUAL LANGUAGE'

Pilipczuk first started the art walks after meeting fellow artist Jessica Winton and realizing the Halifax Regional Municipality was a great place to build walks organized around public art.

With funding from Canadian Parents for French Nova Scotia and the Fondation Communautaire du Grand-Havre, Pilipczuk and Taussig have planned six family art walks that each explore a different area of HRM, as well as different themes through art and language.

Pilipczuk says the main goal on these walks is to consider art as another form of language and to use it to connect people with different perspectives and ideas on the world that surrounds them.

"We're looking at art as a visual language — one of creative skill and imagination. For us, language is a filter and a perspective ... on histories and world views. We think of art as also being one of those languages," she says. "It's helpful for us to think from different perspectives."

Many of the walks will also begin at a piece of public art, like one featuring a recording of artist Dawn McNutt on her Kindred Spirits sculpture by Alderney Landing, along with another walk kicking off at the Chosen Family sculpture on the edge of the



Getting up close and personal with art, whatever it may look like, is what it's all about on the Balad'arts / Wandering With Art family art walks this summer in the Halifax Regional Municipality

Commons.

Pilipczuk says language will also play a key role on each walk, with sections delivered in English and French, plus a section focused on Mi'kmaq words describing everyday objects.

"Our big thing at Alliance Française is engaging with community and hearing different languages, whether

French or Mi'kmaq, in regular spaces," she says.

"And when we look forward in the spirit of reconciliation, thinking of how to navigate this next time, we see this creative skill and imagination is going to be needed. This fosters that and offers people an opportunity to see things a little differently."

'CAPTURE THE ESSENCE'

The 2021 art walks kicked off Aug. 22, with participants registering for each on the Wednesday prior to the walk itself. Each walk includes a group of 15 people and maintains social distancing between bubbles as two guides lead the tour along each art-filled stop.

Pilipczuk says the Sept. 12 walk at the Halifax Citadel National Historic Site will centre on perspective and, like the other walks, will include two art kits for participants to use during the tour and to take home, both created by the Wonder'Neath Art Society.

"We use these for things like frottage, where you take a piece of paper, put a penny or leaf under it and rub a pencil over it. We use them to capture the essence of something, which can reveal things you may not otherwise have noticed," she says.

The walks will also cover area history that Pilipczuk says is not widely discussed, approaching it through conversations on art and language along each walk. Artists will also be featured, including Emma Fitzgerald on the Perspective Walk and sound artist Lindsay Dobbin on the final walk at Point Pleasant Park.

Pilipczuk hopes this combination of artistic elements leaves walk participants with a sense of wonder, of belonging and of caring for the spaces around them. And on the tour, which she describes as one that is not formally led, she hopes people feel inspired to add to it themselves.

"This is not a top-down experience — if people have knowledge and feel comfortable sharing, they can share. We invite that," she says.

Walk participants must book the Wednesday before each walk to secure a spot. For more information on each walk, visit ns.cpf.ca/en/baladarts-wandering-with-art.

Doctors, scientists teaming up to accelerate cancer medicine

CONTRIBUTED

Some Nova Scotia doctors and scientists are partnering with New Brunswick and Newfoundland colleagues to focus on research to improve cancer outcomes in Atlantic Canada.

For the next two years the group will work together

under a joint pilot program with the goal of becoming a member of the Terry Fox Research Institute's new Marathon of Hope Cancer Centres Network, said N.S. Health in a recent news release.

Dr. Robin Urquhart, the consortium's lead in Nova Scotia, said for Nova Scotians this will mean better access to clinical trials for new cancer

treatments.

"It is really an exciting time for us here in Atlantic Canada and I am absolutely thrilled to be part of this consortium," Urquhart said.

The Atlantic Cancer Consortium has a commitment of \$3.6 million in new funding from provincial and national partners. Members of the consortium will be involved

in five projects, three of which will be led by Nova Scotian researchers.

When designated, the Atlantic Cancer Consortium will join the Quebec Cancer Consortium, the British Columbia Cancer Consortium, and the Ontario-based Prince Margaret Cancer Consortium as full members of the Marathon of

Hope Cancer Centres Network, as well as the Prairies Cancer Research Consortium, which is expected to join later this year.

A full list of researcher partners and funders, along with information about the project, can be found on the Terry Fox's Research Institute's Atlantic Cancer Consortium website.

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