

The
LAWRENCE HOUSE
Centre for the Arts



APRIL 2026 | ISSUE NO.4

The LAWRENCE HOUSE Centre for the Arts



EDITOR'S NOTE

“*There is an ocean of creativity within every human being.*”

- *David Lynch*



creativity. David Lynch was on to something. Painting. Drawing. Photography. Writing. Filmmaking.

As children, we're encouraged in school to explore art. As adults, our life paths sometimes take us away from art, even if only on a temporary detour. For others, art becomes a career, expanding across a wide array of professions, or, in the studios of working fine artists and photographers. Perhaps you're a student of the arts, a senior exploring or rediscovering their creative interests, someone exploring the art life as a way of working through trauma, or an artist expressing their thoughts on the world around us - creativity is within us all.

This month, the Lawrence House is excited to present two creative groups from Lambton College - second-year students from the Photography program and students from the Ceramics Studio, along with their instructors. A group of photographers embarking on their career dreams and a pottery group paying it forward with their participation in Empty Bowls 2026, a fundraiser for the Inn of the Good Shepherd. Led by artisans, ceramics is an elective course, with students coming from a variety of programs including nursing, technology, and firefighting. The photography program is a two-year Ontario Diploma program.

With this April newsletter, please enjoy our biggest edition to date, designed by Adrien McKechnie (please check out the link below to explore his fabulous art and professional work) and chock full of insightful five questions segments from both students and the instructors of the Photography program at Lambton College. I've also included a link below to Arts Across Ontario, a great read highlighting the impact of the arts, creative industries and culture in driving the economy of Ontario.

This newsletter is truly a labour of love & creativity - for the arts, and the art community. An ocean, indeed.

Cover Photo by **Ella Ferrera**

Graphic Design/Co-Editor - **Adrien McKechnie** ✨

ARTS Across Ontario [CLICK HERE](#)

Leann Cotton
Chief Editor



GALLERY SCHEDULE 2026

Gallery Standards for The Lawrence House Centre for the Arts 

January

Gift Shop Sale
(Ends January 18th)

February

**Floyd Gibson Annual
Members Juried Exhibition**

March

**Main Gallery - Fibre Art
Turret Room - Members Show**

April

**Lambton College Arts Collective
Photography & Pottery Show**

May

High School Art Show

June

Three Fires by the Water
(Intake May 30 - May 31)

July

**Main Gallery - Rabia Rizvi
Turret Room - Sydney McKichan**

August

**“The Art Life” Texture & Colour
Members Show**
(Intake August 1 - August 2)

September

**The Lawrence House
Volunteers Show**
(Intake August 29 - August 30)

October

**Main Gallery - Sarnia Artists
Workshop
Turret Room - Peg Kivi**
(Intake September 25 - September 26)

November

**“Wrap it Up &
Put a Bow on It”
Members Extended
Gift Shop**
(Intake October 31 - November 1)

December

**“Wrap it Up &
Put a Bow on It”
Members Extended
Gift Shop**
(Intake October 31 - November 1)



The
LAWRENCE HOUSE
Centre for the Arts

Presents

APRIL'S SHOW



01 LAMBTON COLLEGE
ARTS COLLECTIVE
PHOTOGRAPHY SHOW
(Main Gallery & Turret Gallery)

02 LAMBTON COLLEGE
CERAMICS STUDIO
POTTERY SHOW
(Main Gallery)



LAMBTON COLLEGE ARTS COLLECTIVE PHOTOGRAPHY SHOW - ATTENDEES



Rylee Kerr



Robynn Marks



Sean Pogue



Jamie Kneeshaw



Alessandra Perras



Michael Ritchie



Tayah Kennedy-Laws



Summer Kutz



Audrey Labonte



Ella Ferrera



Darren Fielder



Pete St.Marseille



Brooke Featherstone



Mark Ritchie



Mavis Wilson



TAYAH KENNEDY-LAWS



How has your style changed since you started?

When I first started photography, I shot everything in colour. As I've grown, I've started incorporating black and white more often. I've realized that sometimes removing colour brings out a different kind of emotion and depth. I now like having both colours to highlight vibrancy, and black and white to focus on feeling and contrast.

What do you hope people feel when they view your photography?

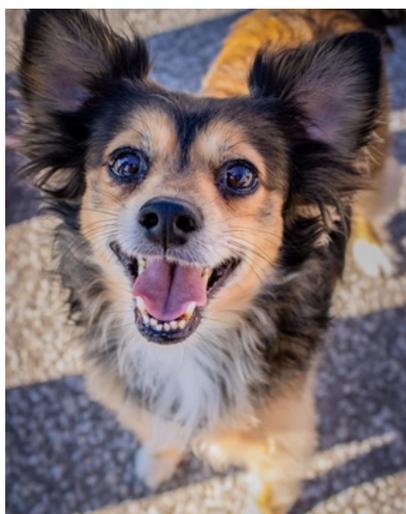
I hope people feel connection and joy when they look at my photos. I want them to see more than just an image; I want them to feel the moment behind it and maybe even relate it to their own memories.

How does your environment affect your creativity?

My environment really influences the way I shoot. If I'm in a colourful, happy place, I'm naturally drawn to capturing it in colour to reflect that beauty. If I'm in a darker or more reflective space, I lean toward black and white to highlight a different kind of beauty, the softer, moodier side of life.

Are there particular places or experiences that spark your creativity?

One place that really sparks my creativity is under the Blue Water Bridge. When the sun sets, the colours can be so vibrant and almost dreamlike, it feels magical. I'm also inspired by experiences with my friends, being out, laughing, having fun, and being able to capture those memories for them. Those are the moments that mean the most to me.



“ I hope people feel connection and joy when they look at my photos.





DARREN FIELDER

What inspired you to pursue photography in the first place?

One of my favourite things to do while visiting family was to look at old family photos and learn about my family. My father shared his love of photography with me when I was young, and it always had a place in my life. I reached a point in my life where I stood at a crossroads. I chose to take a risk and pursue my dream of telling stories, creating art, and raising awareness of the causes important to me.

What emotions or messages do you aim to convey in your photography?

I photograph wildlife and landscapes to promote conservation and to bring the beauty of the natural world and its wondrous views to everyone. In my photographic art, I aim to evoke emotion and memory; to take the viewer within themselves in quiet contemplation.

“*Photography teaches us to slow down, live in the moment, and really, truly see.*”



Do you often look at other photographer's work for ideas?

I do. However, I believe that studying the work of other artists, not just photographers, is essential for artistic and personal growth; by experimenting in mimicry, we grow as artists.

Has travel or exposure to other cultures influenced your photography?

I grew up going camping and exploring the outdoors with my father. His love for nature inspires me to share the beauty he shared with me.

How does photography reflect the times we live in?

Technologically, photography has evolved faster than anyone could have imagined with sensors over 100 megapixels and the ability to capture over 120 frames per second, reflecting our fast-paced world. Yet with all the speed, photographers still slow down and wait for the decisive moment. Photography teaches us to slow down, live in the moment, and really, truly see.



JAMIE KNEESHAW



What inspired you to pursue photography in the first place?

I've always loved art and creative pursuits of all kinds, so after taking a photography class in high school I realized photography had the potential to be a good way to make a living while still providing me with a creative outlet.

How has your background influenced the type of photography you create?

When I first started learning photography in high school I fell in love with film and the whole process of developing it in the darkroom. To this day it is still by far my favourite form of photography and what I feel most motivated to work on. Hobbies of mine have always included vintage fashion, nature, cinema and especially music which I draw inspiration from in my work.

Do you leave your photography open to interpretation, or is there a specific meaning?

Oftentimes my work holds meaning for me, but I believe art is always up to the viewer's interpretation. Even if artists intend for viewers to perceive their work a specific way, factors such as personal experience and beliefs will impact how they see artwork/what it means to them. I think part of what makes art so important is its ability to resonate and affect everyone uniquely.

Do you find inspiration in other art forms, such as music or literature?

I always find inspiration in other forms of art. Specifically music and film which are what I'm most passionate about. I spend a lot of time consuming these types of media which are bound to seep in and influence my art, whether consciously or not.

Can photography be a tool for social change?

Not only do I absolutely believe photography can be a tool for social change, but I believe it is one of the most important tools for inciting change. Historically photography has been an extremely important tool for informing the world on events, making them tangible and impactful. Nowadays with social media it can feel very overwhelming being made aware of everything happening in the world at all times. This oversaturation can desensitize viewers to important events, but I still believe in the importance of good photography, specifically photojournalism.



“ I think part of what makes art so important is its ability to resonate and affect everyone uniquely.



RYLEE KERR



What inspired you to pursue photography in the first place?

Photography has been part of my life for as long as I can remember. My mom and grandma were always taking pictures when I was growing up, and those photos became memories and keepsakes. On my eighth birthday, I got my very first camera. It wasn't anything fancy, but it meant everything to me. Eventually, I started using my mom's camera and began photographing everything around me. I was always at my brother's races, capturing moments there, and slowly photography became second nature. It's always been a part of who I am. I notice the small details in everyday life, the moments others might miss, and photography gives me a way to hold onto them.

How do you handle creative blocks and find inspiration again?

When I lose motivation, I usually turn to reading or try to reconnect with other creative projects. Taking a step back helps reset my mindset. Sometimes I revisit old work or start something new just for myself, without pressure. Giving myself space reminds me why I love creating in the first place.

How do you manage mistakes or unexpected outcomes in your work?

I try to see mistakes as learning opportunities. Not everything turns out the way I expect, but sometimes unexpected results end up being the most meaningful. I reflect on what went wrong, adjust, and keep going. Photography has taught me patience, flexibility, and always being prepared for the unexpected.

Do you see your work as contributing to cultural conversations?

Yes, I do! Through travel, nature, and landscape photography, I hope to show the beauty of different places and everyday environments in a way that makes people slow down and really look. I want my images to capture moments, moods, and details that others might overlook. By sharing these perspectives, I hope my work encourages appreciation for nature and different cultures, and helps people feel more connected to the world around them. Even if it's just through a single photo.

What are the challenges of staying original in your work?

Staying original can be hard when there are so many images everywhere. I try to stay true to my own perspective and focus on what feels personal to me. Paying attention to real moments and details helps keep my work authentic instead of chasing trends.

“ I want my images to capture moments, moods, and details that others might overlook.



ROBYNN MARKS



What inspired you to pursue photography in the first place?

When I was thirteen, I asked my father to buy me a camera for Christmas. It was an Olympus, just a basic point and shoot. I have always been the person in the family taking pictures of everyone and capturing memories to look back on. Sometimes we forget the tiny details, but pictures remain steadfast through the test of time.

How do you balance creativity with the business side of photography?

My entire family is comprised of entrepreneurs, so I grew up surrounded by businesspeople. And I have always loved arts and making something with my hands too. From knitting to pouring candles and some jewelry making. It just comes so naturally to me.

How has social media affected your career as a photographer?

Social media makes it so much easier to share my photographs and let my community know what I do, and friends will tag me when they know someone is looking for a photographer.

Do you struggle with self-doubt about your work?

I am my own worst critic.

How does photography reflect the times we live in?

Pictures say so much more than a written story can. In this age of unlimited information at our fingertips, we can see the emotion and the expressions, more than any text can tell us.



“ Sometimes we forget the tiny details, but pictures remain steadfast through the test of time.”



AUDREY LABONTE



What inspired you to pursue photography in the first place?

The inspiration to pursue photography was creativity. I would be able to express my creative mind and showcase that in photos. Anything involving creative freedom is right up my alley. Once my mind is on a creative spree, there is no stopping me, I am gone.

Was there a defining moment when you realized you were a photographer?

It was at the end of my second term, when our final grades were released. My final grades during my first term weren't the best, then again a lot of it was new to me and I was still trying to get a grip on it all. But after seeing my final grades for my second term, and seeing how well I did, that was the moment I realized: "I know what I'm doing, I've got the skills, I've got the talent and I can do something with this in the future."

How do you stay focused during long creative sessions?

I stay focused during long creative sessions because of the passion I have for my work. I'm willing to go beyond and put in the amount of effort possible to achieve my vision or until I'm satisfied with the final results.

What do you think is the relationship between photography and technology?

I think that the relationship between photography and technology is constantly changing. Technology is always evolving and changing not only cameras but the whole industry. AI has definitely become a problem that has been ongoing for many years, too many even. Oftentimes when you look at a photograph, people tend to question if the photo is real or not. Almost every time. AI is slowly taking over the industry of photography, and that needs to stop. So overall, I don't think photography and technology have the best relationship.

What's the hardest part about showing your work publicly?

The hardest part about showing my work publicly is judgment. I'm afraid people are going to judge my work and make comments about it that'll affect my confidence and self-esteem. I get it though, everyone has different styles and my style may not be their style. So whatever they have to say about it, negative or not, whether I agree or not, I just have to take it. That or someone tries to steal my work and slap their name on it, making it look like it's theirs.

“ *Anything involving creative freedom is right up my alley.* ”

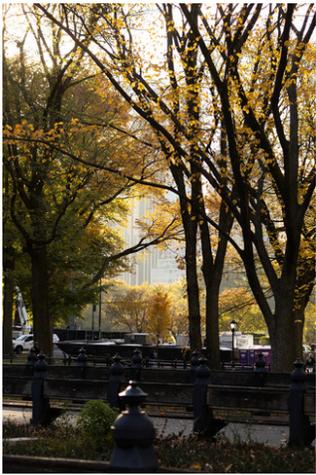


SUMMER KUTZ



What inspired you to pursue photography in the first place?

What inspired me to pursue photography was my great grandfather Hank. He taught himself how to use a Minolta double lens film camera way back in the day. In my grandparents' house, they have a big, framed print of one of his photos. I have seen it my whole life and at a young age I wondered how he did it. But I viewed it as a great example of what I can do as a profession. Since I have learned that he was an amateur photographer, I was given his camera. The shutter is broken, but it still holds a deep meaning to me. Since being in the photography program, I see this profession as a connection to him.



Have you ever reinterpreted your own work after creating it?

I have not reinterpreted my work yet. I get self-conscious when I do shoots. At first, I could love it, then I stare at the image for too long and notice the things that others wouldn't with certain photographs. There are a few photographs I have done that I wouldn't mind reinterpreting.

Are there specific movements or styles that inspire you?

I say the style that inspires me comes from 1960-1980's films. Although that is cinematography, I see a photographer's eye being used to accomplish some shots. The grain, haze, lighting, the clothes, I love deeply. I am obsessed with film, and I often find myself incorporating that into my work whether that's during my shoot or post-production editing.

“ *I say the style that inspires me comes from 1960-1980's films.* ”

Do you experiment with different styles or stick to one?

I do experiment with different styles; I like to try ones I haven't tried before. I find it interesting to learn new styles, it allows me to find one (or more) that I like to incorporate in my work.

Do you prefer working alone or in collaborative settings?

I primarily prefer working by myself. I feel more comfortable and confident when working alone. I don't feel pressure from someone watching me, which is when I tend to make mistakes. But the occasional circumstance that I must do collaborative work, I don't mind, and stay focused on what I'm doing, pushing my fear of making mistakes aside.



MARK RITCHIE



What inspired you to pursue photography in the first place?

The reason I decided to pursue photography in the first place is because of my wife. She has always encouraged me to succeed in everything I set out to do. She often told me that I had an eye for taking photos, but I didn't fully understand what she meant until I took this program and realized that my images told a story. In that moment, I finally saw what she had always seen in me. Because of her encouragement, I learned to look beyond my own perspective and see the world differently. For that, I am truly grateful.

What was the most rewarding experience in your photography career so far?

The most rewarding experience in my photography career so far has been photographing for Tennis Canada. I have always loved playing sports, so being able to bring my camera into that environment and capture the passion, intensity, and emotion of the athletes is incredibly fulfilling. Telling their stories through visual content and freezing those powerful moments in time truly feeds my passion for photography.

What do you hope people feel when they view your art?

I hope that through my art, others can see the story as I see it and feel the emotion behind each moment.

How does your environment affect your creativity?

My environment plays a major role in shaping my creativity. Being surrounded by movement, emotion, and real-life moments pushes me to observe more closely and think differently about how I capture a scene. Whether I am photographing a sporting event, a landscape, or a corporate environment with my drone, the atmosphere, energy, and people all influence how I frame my shots and tell a story. Different environments challenge me to adapt, stay creative, and find unique perspectives, which ultimately strengthens my skills and helps me grow as a photographer.

“Ultimately, AI cannot truly see, feel, or interpret a story the way an artist can.”

How do you see the role of art changing in the future?

The biggest change in the art community, both now and in the future, is the rise of technology, specifically artificial intelligence. We are already seeing people use AI to shortcut or even replace creative work, but there is also an opportunity to adapt and use this technology to enhance creativity. Ultimately, AI cannot truly see, feel, or interpret a story the way an artist can. Because of this, I believe the art community will continue to play a vital and meaningful role, using human emotion, experience, and perspective to create authentic and impactful work.



ALESSANDRA PERRAS



What inspired you to pursue photography in the first place?

What inspired me to pursue photography is wanting to capture the memories that I make with my best friend and also my love for sports and wanting to share those moments with friends.

What do you think is the relationship between photography and technology?

The relationship between photography and technology I think is more of a partnership now. Technology is more relied on for editing now that it's digital. There are still photographers that shoot on film, it's less common because they had to be precise to get the correct exposure, where as now you can open the photo in camera raw and do some editing to fix a mistake.

How do you see the role of photography changing in the future?

The role of photography in the future I think might be one of having cameras being able to edit on their own based on preprogrammed settings, and then the camera can send it to a computer, phone, or upload to start a social media post with captions.



What has been your biggest challenge as a photographer?

The biggest challenge for me as a photographer has been not having models, having them bail last minute on me, and not having the equipment or time to photograph things.

What's the hardest part about showing your work publicly?

I would say the hardest part about showing my work would be getting feedback, and my feeling for a photo can change when I've seen it enlarged.

“*The relationship between photography and technology I think is more of a partnership now.*”



BROOKE FEATHERSTONE

What inspired you to pursue photography in the first place?

I've always loved taking photos. For the longest time, I never considered it as a real career path. That changed in high school when I took a careers class and started exploring different options. When I came across photography, something just clicked. I realized it was more than just something I enjoyed - it was something I genuinely wanted to pursue long term.

What role did your family or friends play in supporting your journey?

My family and friends have played a huge role in my photography journey. They've supported me not only emotionally, but financially as well, which has allowed me to invest in equipment and continue developing my skills. They've also stepped in as models when I needed to build my portfolio and practice new ideas. Most importantly, they've encouraged and believed in me, which has given me the confidence to pursue photography full-time.

What inspired you to create your most recent piece?

My most recent piece was inspired by the TV series Euphoria. I was drawn to the dramatic lighting, vibrant colors, and statement makeup the show is known for. I wanted to recreate that "Euphoric look" while still making it my own by focusing on strong color contrast and a more artistic, emotional feel.

Do you think photography should always have a deeper meaning, or can it just be for aesthetic enjoyment?

Sometimes I feel like there is pressure to create an image with storytelling. However, I think there is a beauty to photography that allows photographers to just capture a moment and evoke feelings rather than a story. There are a lot of photographs that don't necessarily tell a story but are visually appealing and aesthetic.

Can photography be a tool for social change?

I believe photography can be a powerful tool for social change. Images have the ability to capture real moments and emotions in a way that makes people stop and truly reflect. A photograph can bring awareness to important issues, challenge perspectives, and start meaningful conversations. While photography can absolutely be created for beauty and expression, I think it also holds the potential to make an impact far beyond the frame when used with intention and purpose.



“ I believe photography can be a powerful tool for social change.



MICHAEL RITCHIE



What inspired you to pursue photography in the first place?

My inspiration was sparked by the automotive photography boom on Instagram back in 2019.

What are the biggest challenges of turning photography into a career?

Turning photography into a career presents two main challenges: balancing my professional and personal life and navigating an over-saturated industry to find the business resources I need.

How do you deal with competition in the photography industry?

I gladly shake hands with the competition; I believe there are no 'bones' to a business without the drive that competition provides.

What's one mistake you made that taught you a valuable lesson?

I once let someone else's opinion convince me I couldn't succeed. That belief was a mistake that cost me a chance to evolve.

What responsibility do photographers have in addressing global issues?

Photographers connect journalism to the public eye. Without their work, our global perspective would shift from a visceral experience to a mere abstraction.



“ *Photographers connect journalism to the public eye.* ”



MAVIS WILSON



What inspired you to pursue photography in the first place?

Before starting this program, I didn't really have an interest in photography. I applied because I felt like going to school was the right thing to do, even though I wasn't sure what I was passionate about or what I could see myself doing long-term. I hoped that if I chose something interesting, I might eventually grow to love it. Thankfully, that's exactly what happened with photography. With the support of my classmates and professors, I discovered a real passion for it. I have grown so much throughout this program, and I am truly grateful for everything it has taught me and how it has helped shape my future.



How do you reflect on your early photos compared to your current work?

When I look back at my early photographs, I see excitement and enthusiasm, but not much intention behind them. I was focused more on the outline of my assignments than truly thinking about what I wanted to say with my work. Now that I have developed a stronger understanding of composition, timing, and emotion, my approach has changed. Instead of just documenting events and photographing for assignments I make more thoughtful creative decisions and photograph for myself. I believe my work now shows clearer purpose and more confidence in the choices I make as a photographer.

Do you see your art as a form of storytelling?

Absolutely. As someone interested in sport and event photography, every athlete has a story, discipline, pressure, teamwork, resilience. Every event has layers, preparation, anticipation, celebration, sometimes disappointment. A photograph can hint at all of that without saying a single word. A tight shot of a focused face before a race tells a different story than a wide frame of a cheering crowd. Both matter. Both speak.



Are there particular places or experiences that spark your creativity?

I find that high-energy environments inspire me the most. Being surrounded by movement, emotion, and real moments pushes me to stay alert and creative. I especially enjoy photographing people who are not performing for the camera, but are simply being themselves. Capturing those natural, unposed moments feels the most meaningful to me. The authenticity in those situations fuels my creativity and motivates me to keep improving as a photographer.

“Art, especially photography, can connect people through shared human experiences.”

Do you think art can bridge cultural or social divides?

Yes, I do. Emotion is something everyone understands, no matter where they come from. You don't have to speak the same language as an athlete to recognize the determination on their face. You don't need to share the same cultural background to understand the joy after a win. Art, especially photography, can connect people through shared human experiences. It allows us to see and feel moments that go beyond words, helping bring different communities closer together.



ELLA FERRERA



What inspired you to pursue photography in the first place?

I've always been a creative person because I found that I could express myself much more clearly through visuals than through words. When I started doing photography in one of my high school classes I realized photography can become my way of communicating emotions, ideas, and stories that I sometimes couldn't fully explain verbally. Creating allows me to translate feelings into something tangible and meaningful.

What emotions or messages do you aim to convey in your photography?

In my photography, I aim to convey genuine emotion. Whether it's the energy of a celebration, the confidence in a portrait, or a quiet meaningful exchange, my goal is to capture it in a way that feels real and alive. I want clients to look at their photos years later and instantly feel that same emotion all over again.

Do you often look at other photographers' work for ideas?

I think it's important to stay inspired and aware of different styles, trends, and creative approaches. However, I always make sure to put my own creative spin on anything that influences me. Inspiration helps spark ideas, but I focus on interpreting them in a way that feels authentic to my style and the people I'm photographing.

Has travel or exposure to other cultures influenced your photography?

Yes, travel has definitely influenced my photography. When I went on the trip to New York with the Lambton College photography program, it really opened my eyes to how many moments and details are worth capturing even the ones you might not notice at first. Being in such a busy, visually rich city showed me that there's beauty and storytelling everywhere.

How does photography reflect the times we live in?

We live in a very fast paced world where everything moves quickly and moments can easily pass without us fully realizing it. Photography allows us to slow that down. It captures moments that might otherwise be forgotten.

“ I always make sure to put my own creative spin on anything that influences me.



SEAN POGUE



What inspired you to pursue photography in the first place?

My inspiration to pursue photography was the next level of expressing my artistic expression and to make a living doing something that brings me so much joy.

How has your style changed since you started?

I've found that I'm a lot more in tune with what makes a good picture and I'm pushing myself harder to deliver quality pictures.

How has your inspiration evolved over time?

I find my inspiration comes from a very personal place, I find that my pictures reflect where I'm at as a person at the time that I'm taking the picture.

Do you have a favourite photographer or style you admire?

I don't have a favourite photographer or style, because I don't like to limit myself to one style or photographer. I believe you can learn so much if you keep yourself open to everything.

Do you prefer working alone or in collaborative settings?

I'd say I enjoy collaborative settings because I love the whole process that goes into working with another photographer. Another head is always good cause the flow of ideas is amazing and what you learn in a collaborative venture is incredible.



“ *My inspiration to pursue photography was the next level of expressing my artistic expression.* ”



PETE ST. MARSEILLE



What inspired you to pursue photography in the first place?

My daughter-in-law Olivia took the program, so that got me interested. I also thought I would be good at it because I am an artist.

How has your style changed since you started?

It has changed a lot because of all the classes we had. I started to get interested in different photography styles, especially night photography.

How has your inspiration evolved over time?

It has a little, Richard and Geoff have taught me a lot. I really appreciate that and will have to visit after this semester because I will miss you two.

Do you have a favourite photographer or style you admire?

I would have to say Richard and Geoff as I don't keep up on photographers. I do like George Rosema's photos and he is going to be the mentor I interview.

Do you prefer working alone or in collaboration settings?

I like working alone and in a collaboration. I enjoy working in a collaboration with my classmates because they show me styles and settings in the camera I never knew about. Plus I like all my classmates and will miss them when we're done this semester.



“ I enjoy working in collaboration with classmates.”



GEOFF ROBINS

PHOTOJOURNALIST & INSTRUCTOR



What was the first exhibition or public display of your work?

I have worked for newspapers and wire services since my student paper at University so I guess sometime in the mid 1990's my work was first published. The first time I was published in a major newspaper was the on front page of the Globe and Mail on May 15, 2002 with a photo from the Leafs playoff game against the Ottawa Senators while I was interning at the Canadian Press.

How do emotions or moods affect what you create?

Much of my work is journalistic so I try to keep my opinions or emotions out of my work but instead I try to capture the emotion of my subject instead. If I can channel the mood or emotion of my subject in my composition, as well as trying to capture it within them, then I think I have done my job.

What responsibility do photographers have in addressing global issues?

I wouldn't say photographers have a responsibility to address global issues with their work. That is a choice you can make. If you are a wedding or newborn photographer your work only has to reflect the small part of the world you are covering that day. Awful things can be happening around the world but the people you are documenting may be celebrating and that is important too. For photojournalists like myself, we have chosen to take on the responsibility of addressing sometimes controversial issues. Some will choose to address global issues and others may address issues within their own community. The important part is to bring attention to issues and give voice to those who may not be easily heard.



“ *The important part is to bring attention to issues and give voice to those who may not be easily heard.* ”



GEOFF ROBINS

PHOTOJOURNALIST & INSTRUCTOR

How do you approach sensitive or controversial topics in your photography?

I document what I see. I have to make decisions as to how much to show and still be true to the scene. Sometimes it is necessary to capture everything in a very raw form because censoring it lessens its impact. Other times it is more important to capture the idea rather than all of the awful details. Usually I try to photograph sensitive things in many different ways and then I take at least a few seconds to reflect on the impact before sending out the photos. Other times that is the decision of my editors. When working for an international news agency like Agence France-Presse, my decisions are different than if I am working for a local newspaper. Understanding the sensitivities of your audience is important. That can sometimes be at odds with the sensitivities of those who you are photographing and that can be challenging.

Is it better to freelance or work under an organization as a photographer?

I have worked as a staff photographer for about 1/10 of my career. The other 9/10 has been as a freelancer. They both have their advantages and disadvantages. Today (a Friday in January) I was able to go skiing with my son because it was beautiful and he had the day off. Other days I will have to drop everything and be out the door in 10 minutes because of breaking news. When I was a staff photographer the worst that would happen is that you were late getting home or have to come in a bit early because of a breaking news event but generally you had scheduled hours. It also brought stable hours, benefits, constant practice and a sense of being part of a community. I have been fortunate enough as a freelancer to have clients who would send me to many large events. I have covered world leaders, large sporting events, important news and I have done it across Canada and the US. It has been a very interesting career but I was lucky and my experience is not typical.

“*Understanding the sensitivities of your audience is important.*”



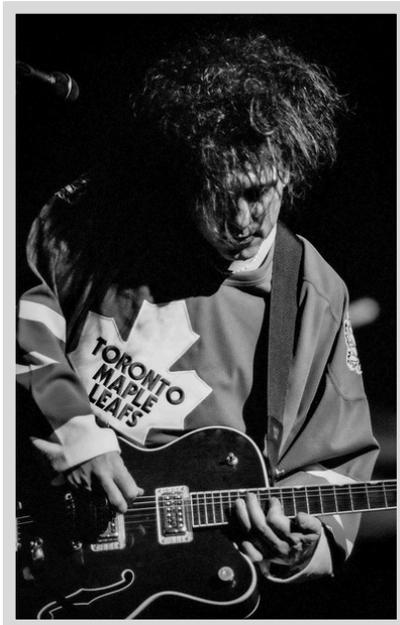
RICHARD BELAND

PHOTOGRAPHER & INSTRUCTOR



What inspired you to pursue photography in the first place?

My journey really began with music. I started taking photos at concerts in the mid-1980s and soon realized photography allowed me to capture moments that would otherwise vanish as soon as the show was over. A concert might only last a few hours, but a photograph can keep that moment alive forever. Early on I photographed bands like the Grateful Dead, Neil Young, and U2, and I loved that I could come home and look at my own visual record of the show rather than flipping through a magazine. That realization that photography could preserve moments in music history has stayed with me ever since.



“A concert might only last a few hours, but a photograph can keep that moment alive forever.”

How has social media affected your career as a photographer?

I find social media helpful for sharing my work and staying in touch with people who are interested in music photography, but I still think the real impact of photography happens in an exhibition where people can spend more time with each image. All said, social media has been great for meeting new people and for sales purposes.

How do you handle legal aspects like copyright and contracts?

Copyright is very important for photographers. Usually, photographers keep the copyright unless they agree to give it up. I've worked with magazines, record labels, musicians, and galleries, and having clear agreements is essential. Whether I'm licensing photos, contributing photos to album artwork or an artist's publicity campaign, it's important to set the terms from the beginning. A good contract protects everyone.





RICHARD BELAND

PHOTOGRAPHER & INSTRUCTOR

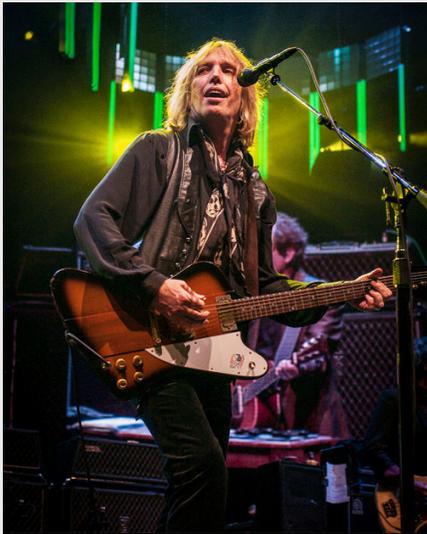


Do you think photography can bridge cultural or social divides?

Yes, I do. Photography speaks through images and can connect with people regardless of language or background. Music photography is especially powerful in this way. When you see someone like Gord Downie performing or a crowd reacting to a song, you see a shared moment. Music brings people together, and photography lets others experience that connection even if they weren't there.

How do you deal with competition in the art industry?

Photography has always been a competitive field, but I try not to focus on what others are doing. Instead, I work on building my own photo career and connections over time. I've shot thousands of concerts, always aiming to grow and capture culture as it changes. If you stay true to your vision and create work that matters to you, you'll find your place and ultimately stand out.



APRIL EVENT SCHEDULE



OPEN STAGE HOSTED BY ANNETTE DILLON

April 13th & 20th at 7 PM

Doors Open at 6:45 p.m.

Admission is free. Musicians, poets, storytellers, and writers are welcome to the microphone to perform in a quiet intimate setting. The House piano and guitar are available for performers to use.



BRENDA EARLE STOKES -JAZZ, ORIGINALS, AND BEYOND

April 24th at 7 PM

Sarnia native Brenda Earle Stokes is an internationally recognized jazz pianist, vocalist and composer. After a 24 year stint living and performing in New York City, she has returned to Sarnia armed with the songs and improvisations that she has cultivated. This performance will feature standards, original compositions and unexpected arrangements showcasing Stokes' wide range of musical talents.



THE ART HOUSE SUMMER ARTS CAMP

Our Summer Arts Camp is the perfect creative getaway for kids ages 6–10! Held at the historic Lawrence House Centre for the Arts in downtown Sarnia and proudly run by The Art House, this camp offers a fun and inspiring setting for young artists. Led by Miss Ciara, Miss Chelsea, and our enthusiastic student teachers, campers will enjoy days filled with art, crafts, games, and outdoor play. Each day encourages creativity, imagination, and connection—expect messy hands, big smiles, and lots of summer fun!



FIFTH ANNUAL CARMEN ZIOLKOWSKI POETRY PRIZE

The Entry Deadline is May 15, 2026.

Details & Entry Form: [Fifth Annual Carmen Ziolkowski Poetry Prize](#)



In the spirit of beloved Sarnia poet Carmen Ziolkowski, The Lawrence House Literary Arts Committee is again seeking well-crafted poetry that is heartfelt, nature-based, and hopeful for the fifth annual Carmen Ziolkowski Poetry Prize.



APRIL EVENT SCHEDULE



SLOW FLOW YOGA

Slow Flow Yoga sessions with Monica Gillis will begin a **new session on April 15th**. Monica is offering a class at **10:00 AM or 11:30 AM**. Registration is required as space is limited. Investment: \$75 for all six classes. Please email butterflyrisingyogaandwellness@gmail.com to register or for additional information.



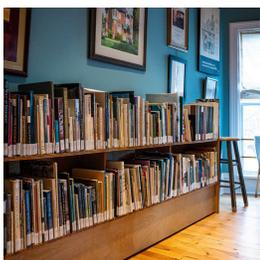
RIVERSPEAK (SARNIA) TOASTMASTERS

Join us every Thursday at the Lawrence House Centre of Arts at **6:45 pm**. Meeting starts at 7:00 pm. We also meet on the **1st and 3rd Sunday from 7:00 - 8:00** for those who are busy Thursday Evenings! Call Deep Vaishnav (VP of membership) at (226) 886-5445 or E-mail deepvaishnav111@gmail.com



EMPTY BOWLS

Empty Bowls, the annual fundraiser for The Inn of the Good Shepherd, returns April 9th at the Lambton College Event Centre. Any bowls left over after the event will be available for sale at the Lawrence House.



LENDING LIBRARY

Included in your annual membership for The Lawrence House is the ability to borrow books from its newly catalogued collection. The collection of over 600 art books includes many technique books of various mediums such as watercolour, sculpture, ceramics, photography as well as art history and exhibit catalogues. All materials are donations from generous patrons. Due to our limited space we will continue to accept donations but will have to decide whether to place them in the library or sell them for fundraising.



APRIL EVENT SCHEDULE

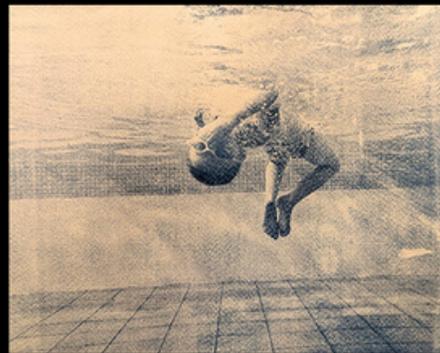


Sarnia Photographic Club Presents

member Erica Laker



*Playing with Prints: Cyanotype printmaking
and Polaroid emulsion lifts*



*Tuesday, April 7th, Lawrence House 127 Christina St.
7 pm live and on Zoom. Guests welcome*

April 7, 2026 Meeting - Featuring Erica Laker

The next main meeting of the Sarnia Photographic Club will be held **Tuesday, April 7th, 2026 @ 7 pm** at the Lawrence House Centre for the Arts, 127 Christina Street S., in the Turret Room.

Erica Laker has been practicing photography for many years and is a former member of the Sarnia Photo Club Executive. Although she enjoys taking digital photos still, she has also shot on 35mm film, medium format film, Polaroid film, and Instax film over the past year. She loves to experiment with different cameras and different ways of printing and creating further art with photos.

"Playing With Prints" is about bringing photos into the physical world through processes like cyanotype printmaking and Polaroid emulsion lifts. Other alterations to photographic prints that will be shown include collaging and embroidering with printed photos. These processes and techniques can provide new ways to play with any image, even if you took the original photo long ago.





In the spirit of beloved Sarnia poet **Carmen Ziolkowski**, The Lawrence House Literary Arts Committee is again seeking well-crafted poetry that is heartfelt, nature-based, and hopeful for the **5th Annual Carmen Ziolkowski Poetry Prize**. The deadline is **May 15, 2026**.

With generous support from the Ziolkowski family, this year's **first prize is \$500**. **Second prize is \$250**, and **third prize is \$100**, with selected **Honourable Mentions**.

Over seventy poems were submitted last year from across Canada and abroad, and first prize was awarded to Don Narkevic, a poet from Buckhannon, West Virginia, for his poem "Emerging Stone." Second Prize was awarded to Sarnia poet Najah Shuqair, and Third Prize was awarded to Burlington poet Karen Kerekes. Honourable Mentions were awarded to Josie Di Sciasio-Andrews (Oakville) and to Mary Anne Griffiths (Ingersoll).

Carmen was born near Naples, Italy, in 1924, and immigrated to Canada in 1955. She studied journalism at Port Huron Junior College and taught creative writing at Lambton College. Her books of poetry include *Roses Bloom at Dusk* (Vesta Publications), *World of Dreams* (River City Press), and *The Moon Before the Sun* (Beret Days Press). She and her husband Bruno had two sons, Robin and Jim, and three grandchildren, Alexandra, Nicholas, and Samantha. She loved her family, nature, travel, and literature. A vibrant member of the Sarnia-Lambton writing community, Carmen passed away on December 26, 2018, at the age of 94. Carmen's friends and fellow writers Ryan Gibbs, Rhonda Melanson, and Lois Nantais are delighted to serve again as judges for the poetry prize. Judging will be blind.

JUDGES



**RYAN
GIBBS**

Ryan Gibbs is a Communications professor at Lambton College who has published over fifty poems, in nine countries. His poems inspired by Carmen include "Do Not Bring Me Flowers (for Carmen)" in *Subterranean Blue Poetry* and "The House of Four Winds," Honourable Mention in the Association of Italian Canadian Writers' Venera Fazio Poetry Contest.



**RHONDA
MELANSON**

Rhonda Melanson is a retired teacher with the Lambton Kent District School Board. She graduated from Queen's University's Artist in The Community Education program. Rhonda has had many poems published in print and online journals and is the author of two chapbooks: *Gracenotes* (Beret Days Press) and *My Name Is Mary* (Alien Buddha Press).



**LOIS
NANTAIS**

Lois Nantais is a poet and the creative force behind *My Father's Pond*, a lavender farm where she cultivates both plants and stories. Her writing explores the healing and seasonal rhythms of rural life. She shares these reflections on her blog and in her forthcoming *Lavender Dreams Journal*, a contemplative guide that invites readers into moments of beauty and grounding. Her poems have been published in *LummoX*, *Tamaracks*, *Ascent Aspirations*, and *Room Magazine*.

Winning works in this year's poetry prize will be featured in a special issue of The Lawrence House's *Uprouar Literary Blog*. A spoken word event to honour Carmen and past winners is planned for August 7.

Entry fees are \$10 (for up to three poems), **\$5 for members of The Lawrence House Centre for the Arts**.

Full contest details and past winning poems are available at <https://lawrencehouse.ca/carmen-ziolkowski-poetry-prize/>



RIVERSPEAK TOASTMASTERS



Congratulations!



GIANLUCA PASQUALUCCI

The Riverspeak Toastmasters would like to congratulate **Gianluca Pasqualucci** on placing second in the Toastmasters Division 5 Table Topics Competition!

REBECCA MOOREHOUSE

The Riverspeak Toastmasters would like to congratulate **Rebecca Moorehouse** on placing third at the Area Level for Toastmasters Area S74 International Speech Contest!

Did you know that the Lawrence House is home to the Riverspeak Toastmasters Club? We meet every Thursday evening, 7 PM in the Turret Room.

What is Toastmasters?

Since 1924, Toastmasters International has transformed nearly eight million lives through a simple, yet powerful, mission: empowering individuals to become more effective communicators and leaders.



PHOTOGRAPHY

Exhibition

**FREE
ENTRY**

**AT THE LAWRENCE HOUSE CENTRE FOR THE ARTS
127 CHRISTINA ST. SOUTH, SARNIA, ON**



**APRIL 10TH
7-9PM**

Explore the artistry behind the lens as we celebrate the 2026 graduates of the Lambton College Photography Program.

JOIN US! MEMBERSHIP 2026

You may renew it in person at the House Wednesday to Sunday 11:00-4:00 or you may renew online at the link below. The memberships run from December to December.

The Lawrence House is an all volunteer run Art Centre. Membership fees help with the cost of running the House, covering office supplies, computers, security, First Friday Events, concerts and so much more.

The benefits of being a Member are many regardless of which Membership level you purchase.

Join or Renew for 2026

BRONZE
Membership
2026
\$44.25 + tax

The **Bronze Membership** is for artists who wish to show and sell their art at the Lawrence House either in the Gift Shop or in one of our five Member Shows through the year. Bronze members also may apply to have a solo exhibition. All the benefits of being a Friend Member also applies to the Bronze Members.

SILVER
Membership
2026
\$17.70 + tax

The **Silver Membership** is for artists or anyone who wishes to volunteer their time at the House. It is a great way to meet other artists and art lovers and to keep in touch with local art events. If we didn't have Volunteers, the Lawrence House would not be able to stay open. There are many different ways to volunteer; the day to day running of the gift shop, special events, hanging exhibitions, computer work, Shopify updating, greeting customers and giving them information on the House, the Library and more.

***Requirement for the Silver** is that you commit to **3 shifts a month** - especially if you are in the Gift Shop so that you are comfortable with sales and the Shopify system.

FRIEND
Membership
2026
\$17.70 + tax

As a **Friend Member** you are included in our mailing list which keeps you up to date on our House Concerts, First Friday events and our Exhibitions. You are able to rent a room at the House if you are having a special event and you have access to our online library.

