

T H E
LAWRENCE HOUSE
 C E N T R E F O R T H E A R T S





the lawrence house.

MISSION STATEMENT

The Lawrence House Centre for the Arts is a community based, independent, not-for-profit, charitable organization committed to encouraging the creation and appreciation of the visual, performing and literary arts in Sarnia Lambton.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT OF ANCESTRAL LANDS

We acknowledge that this land on which we are gathered today is part of the ancestral land of the Chippewa, Odawa, and Potawatomi peoples, referred to collectively as the Anishinaabeg. It is through the connection of the Anishinaabeg with the spirit of the land, water and air that we recognize their unique cultures, traditions, and values. Together as treaty people, we have a shared responsibility to act with respect for the environment that sustains all life, protecting the future for those generations to come.

OPPOSITE: Ashinique Soney-Wesaw, Contemporary Indigenous Artist, Three Fires by the Water, Sunday, June 7th enjoying the crowds and weather at the Lawrence House.

editorial

*"Art is a form of consciousness."
– Susan Sontag*

Welcome to July at the Lawrence House!

This month features the artwork of two local artists. In the Main Gallery, Rabia Rizvi shares her exploration of socio-political issues in a compelling exhibition, while the Turret Room features Familiar Places by Sydney McKichan, an evocative look at our local landscape.

I'm a photographer with a strong interest in documentary work, and Susan Sontag's extended essay *Regarding the Pain of Others* resonates deeply with me, as does the work of Rabia Rizvi. While Sontag wrote about photography's impact, Rabia's art also explores our visual understanding of global conflict and our response to human suffering amid war, destruction, and genocide. Below, you'll find a link to the compelling YouTube video - *How Artists Respond to Conflict*, which is well worth watching.

In Familiar Places, Sydney's work offers a wonderful look at our local landscape, capturing the familiarity and comfort of home, wherever that may be across Lambton County.

Throughout July and August, The Art House will host Summer Art Camps for young artists ages 6-12. With several weeks already sold out, this promises to be a successful return of children's art programming at the Lawrence House.

A newsletter reading tip: when you come across a link you'd like to follow, right-click and select "Open Link in New Tab" to continue reading without losing your place.

And, as always, your feedback on the newsletter is most welcome. Stay in touch, and stay creative!

Leann Cotton
Editor in Chief

How Artists respond to conflict
by nationalgalleries



in this issue

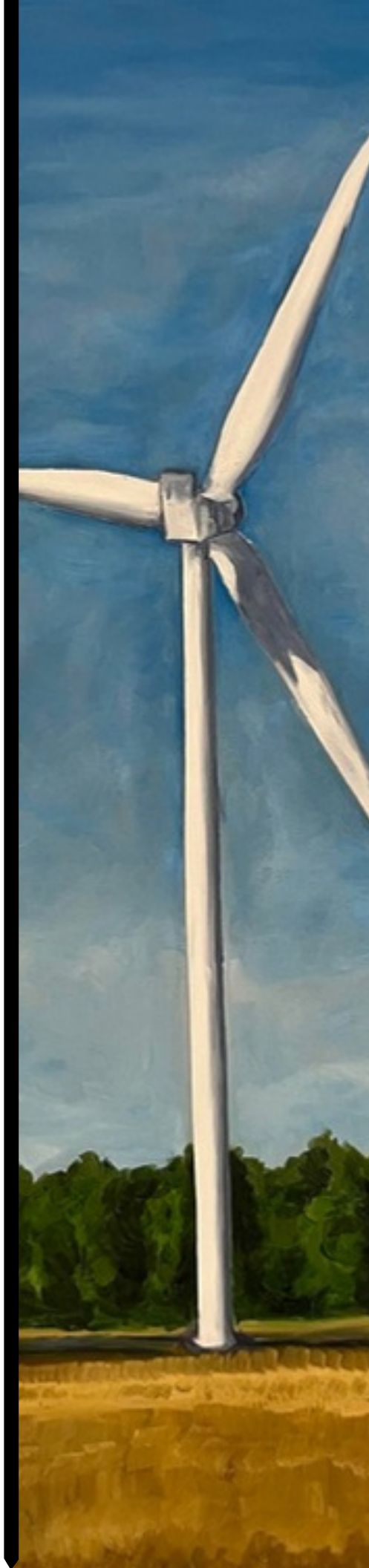
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ON THE COVER

Title - "Gaza 2023-3, Sole Companion"
Artist - Rabia Rizvi

See our coverage on Pages 19-26





contributors

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Leann Cotton

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John Pilat

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Gift Shop Committee

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City Of Sarnia Rep

Claudio Montanaro

Volunteer Coordinator

Deb Scraggs

Dedication

To all of the artists who show up every day to create something beautiful.



THE LAWRENCE HOUSE CENTRE FOR THE ARTS

Calendar
2026

- ART THAT MAKES YOU FEEL GOOD -

JANUARY 01	FEBRUARY 02	MARCH 03	APRIL 04
Gift Shop Sale (Ends January 18th)	Floyd Gibson Annual Members Juried Exhibition	Main Gallery - Fibre Art Turret Room - Members Show	Lambton College Arts Collective Photography & Pottery Show
MAY 05	JUNE 06	JULY 07	AUGUST 08
High School Art Show	Three Fires by the Water (Intake May 30 - May 31)	Main Gallery - Rabia Rizvi Turret Room - Sydney McKichan	"The Art Life" Texture & Colour Members Show (Intake August 1 - August 2)
SEPTEMBER 09	OCTOBER 10	NOVEMBER 11	DECEMBER 12
The Lawrence House Volunteers Show (Intake August 29 - August 30)	Main Gallery - Sarnia Artists Workshop Turret Room - Peg Kivi (Intake September 25 - September 26)	"Wrap it Up & Put a Bow on It" Members Extended Gift Shop (Intake October 31 - November 1)	"Wrap it Up & Put a Bow on It" Members Extended Gift Shop (Intake October 31 - November 1)



a look at...

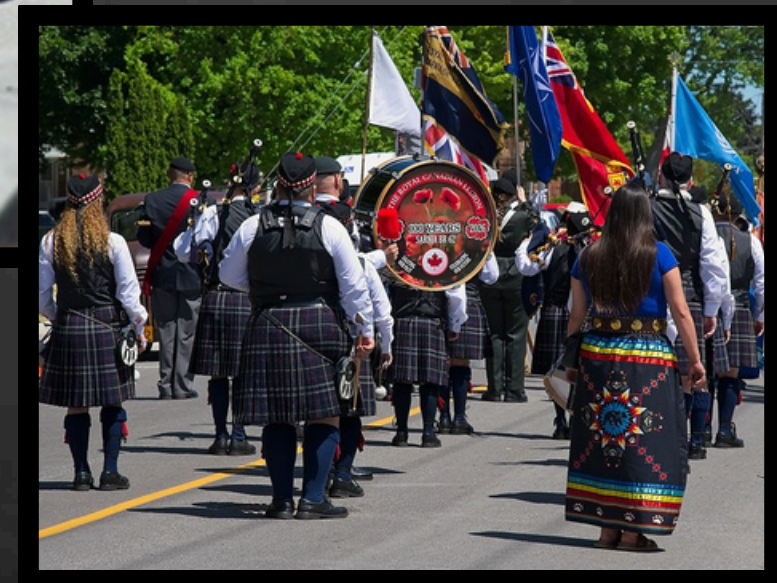


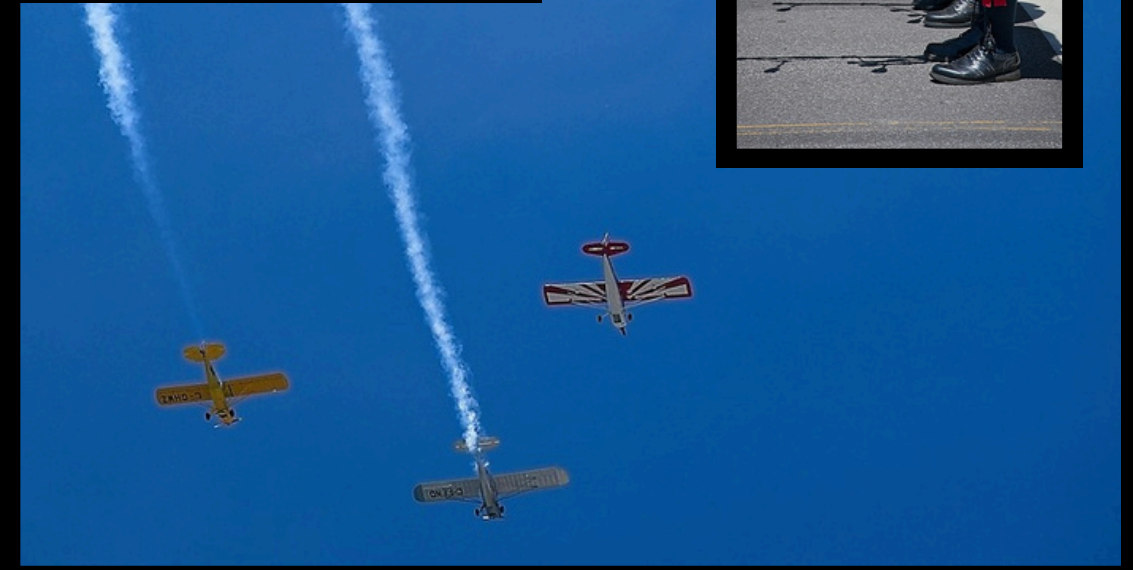
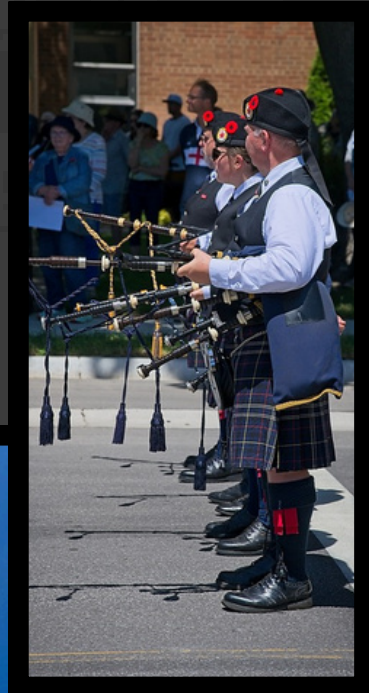
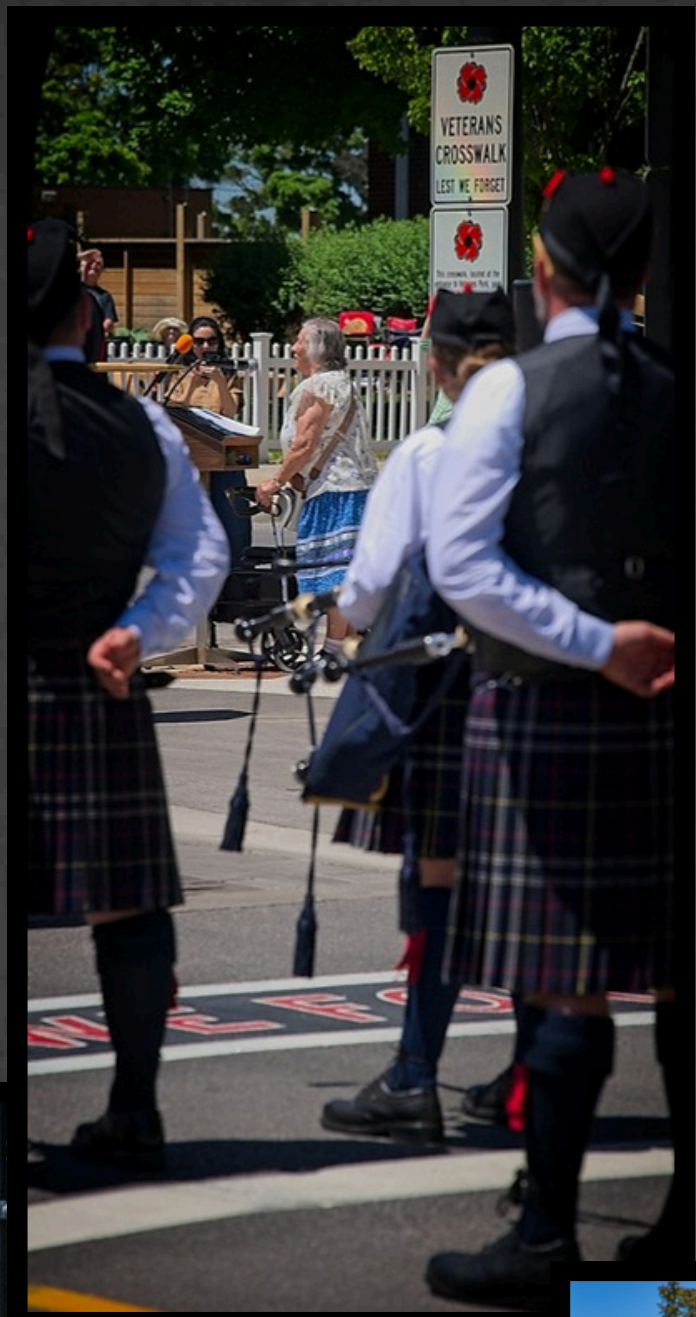


Crosswalk Dedication Ceremony

June 7th, 2026

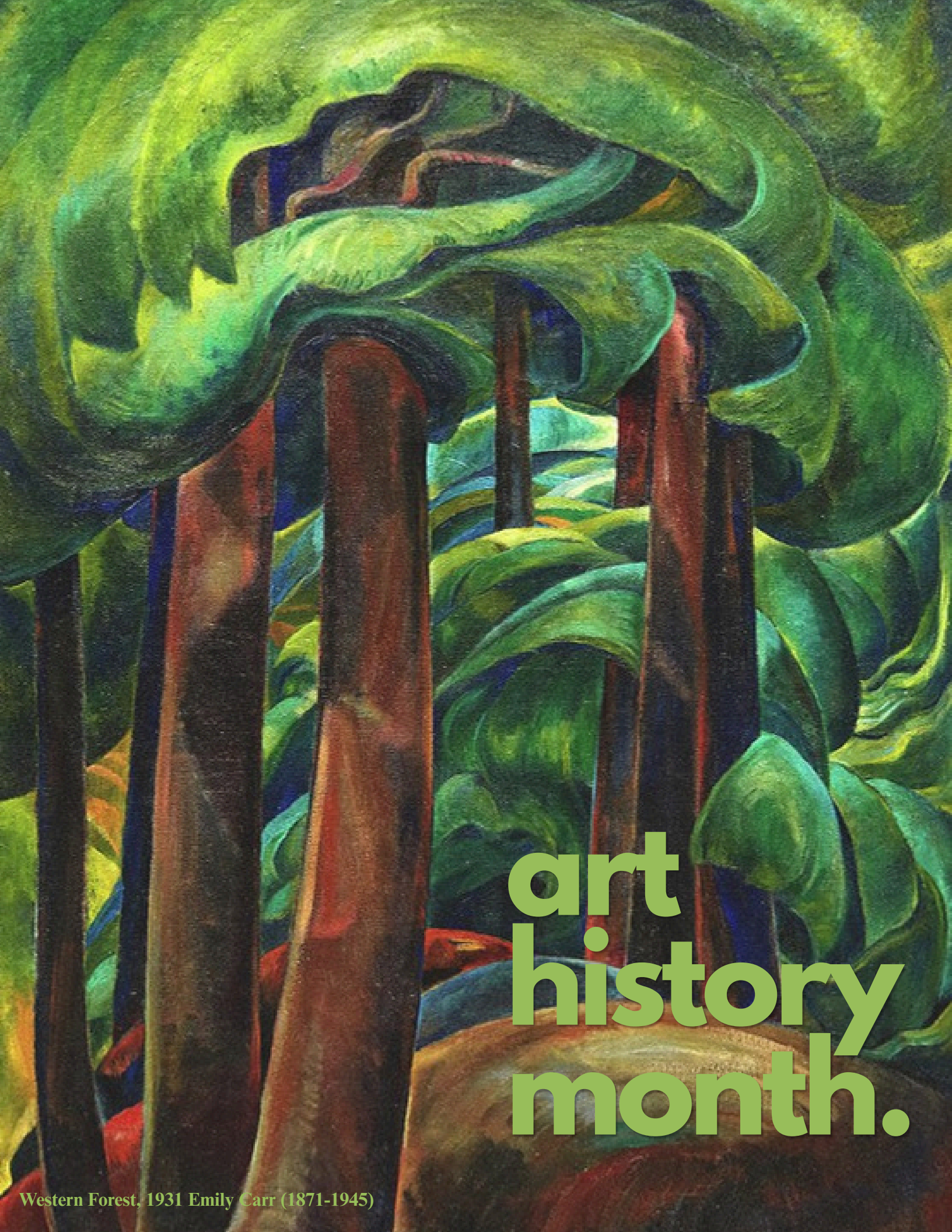








this month in art history



art history month.

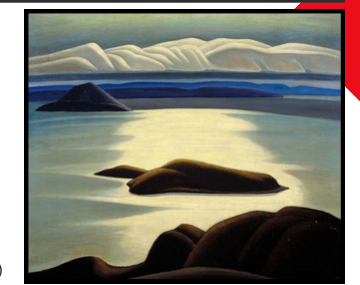
Western Forest, 1931 Emily Carr (1871-1945)

Group of Seven Day, Ontario (July 7th)




In 2024, Ontario officially established Group of Seven Day, observed annually on July 7th to recognize the contributions of the Group of Seven to Canadian art. The designation recognizes their major role in shaping a distinct Canadian artistic identity.

Morning, Lake Superior Lawren Harris (1885-1970)



Outbreak of WW1 (July 28, 1914)


The outbreak of WW1 begins reshaping European art. Many artists turn toward Modernist and Avant-garde styles in response to the conflict.

 [Learn more about the Canadian War Art Programs](#)



The Apollo 11 Moon Landing (July 20, 1969)

The Apollo 11 Moon landing inspires countless artists worldwide and becomes a major theme in contemporary art.

 [Learn more about the Canada's role in the Apollo 11 Moon Landing](#)



International Recognition of Canadian Impressionism (July 2019)



On July 24th, 2019, the exhibition Canada and Impressionism: New Horizons brought Canadian Impressionist and Modernist art to European audiences, highlighting artists such as Emily Carr and members of the Group of Seven.

Sunset on the Coast, 1896 Wm. Blair Bruce (1859-1906)



Corridart, Montreal (July 6th-13th 1976)



A large public art exhibition on Sherbrooke Street in Montreal was dismantled just before the 1976 Olympics. The incident remains an important case study in public art, censorship, and cultural politics in Canada.

[Learn more about Corridart](#)





ARTIST SPOTLIGHT

*rabia*rizvi

Rabia's art reflects its characteristic focus on jewel-like colors, minute details, and a complexity that invites the eye to wander around a composition freed from single-point perspective. Each piece reflects Rabia's reaction to the horrors and injustice she sees in the world around her. Undoubtedly controversial, Rabia's work is irrefutably passionate.

Working in the traditional Persian, and the 16th-century Mughal miniature style, Pakistani-Canadian artist Rabia Rizvi creates contemporary works that explore the current socio-political affairs. Using mark making and layering techniques, she tells stories using text and symbolic images in her art. She talks of war, destruction, and genocide.

Rabia's works have been featured in solo and two-person shows in Canada, the U.S. and on-line.

Her works have also been in a number of juried and group shows in Pakistan and in Canada.

Rabia's works are in private collections in Pakistan, Canada, U.S. and the U.K.

Rabia, originally from Pakistan, lives in Sarnia. She completed her BFA from the prestigious National College of Arts (N.C.A.), Lahore Pakistan in Fine Arts in 1993 where she received Honors in her thesis work. Rabia later went to the Ottawa School of Arts where she took various courses.

"My work portrays the widening social divide, focusing on the "other"—those weaker communities unable to escape their fate."

"Each of my landscapes has a story to tell. I invite you to meet their inhabitants."



Q/A with Rabia Rizvi

How did you develop your artistic skills?

RR - After grade ten, I studied fine arts at a college under my moms guidance (Mrs. Kishwar Rizvi). She was an art professor at a local college in Pakistan and was later appointed the Head of the Fine Arts department. I then did my four year undergrad from an art school, National College of Arts (NCA), in Lahore Pakistan. My major was in oil painting, and my minor was in the traditional miniature painting. At NCA, I studied under the guidance of professor Asif and ustad Bashir Ahmad. I also received Honors in my thesis. When I came to Canada, I joined the Ottawa School of Arts in Ottawa, On. where I took some courses in painting, photography, and ceramics.



“Art can be one of the ways we can help spread awareness of what is going on around us.”

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

RR - After my studies, I took a break from art for a long time. I came back to acrylics, and then moved on to miniature paintings. My pieces at that time were based on landscapes. But again, for personal reasons, I took another break. When I started back in 2020, I realized that my subject matter had changed. Now, my landscapes were not just landscapes, they were a means, using various symbols, to convey a message. I was more aware of some of the political situations going on around me and that awareness started showing up in my work.



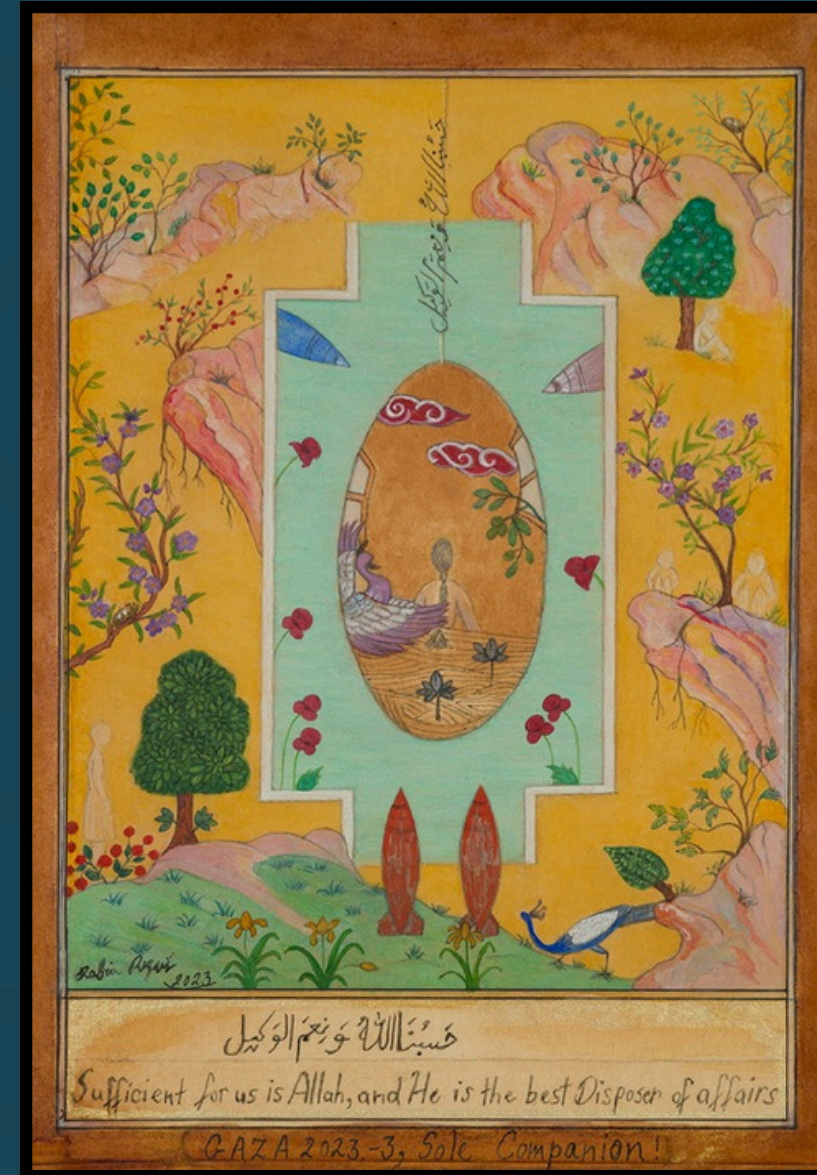
Q/A with Rabia Rizvi

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

RR - Working in the traditional Persian, and the 16th-century Mughal miniature style, I create contemporary miniatures that explore the current socio-political affairs. Working in watercolour, gouache, inks, and gold-leaf, using mark making and layering techniques, I tell stories using text and iconography in my art. My work portrays the widening social divide, focusing on the “other”—those weaker communities unable to escape their fate. I talk of war, destruction, genocide, and the cruelty that the powerful leash on the powerless. My current works are on the genocide of the Palestinian people by Israel.

What’s the most important lesson you’ve learned as an artist?

RR - As an artist I have realized a few things. Most importantly, that it is never too late to pick up where you left. An artist is never stagnant, their skills and themes evolve with time. Another important thing that I have come to realize is that art is not just for decoration purposes, an artist can go beyond that and stand up for their beliefs. Art can be one of the ways we can help spread awareness of what is going on around us.



“My paintings are imaginary landscapes that convey underlying socio-political themes.”

Q/A with Rabia Rizvi

Are there hidden symbols or stories in your pieces?

RR - My subjects are mostly socio-political. My work is based on real events and it conveys the underlying socio-political themes. In order to do that, I use various symbols in my work. I use hoopoe bird, fish (freedom within limits), poppy flowers (symbolizing the oppressed and the martyrs of the occupied Palestine), barbed wires, three wise monkeys (world leaders), and images of a two-headed person; Uncle Sam (U.S), and the Blue head (Israel). I keep developing new symbols based on the messages that I need to convey.

RABIA'S MINIATURES

ARTO GALLERIA

FINA ART AMERICA



Familiar Places

@ The Lawrence House,
Turret Room
July 3rd - 31st

Opening Reception: July 3rd @7-9pm

Sydney M^cKichan

artist spotlight

sydney mckichan



Sydney McKichan is a Southwestern Ontario-based artist and recent University of Guelph Studio Art graduate. Working across multiple media, Sydney creates art deeply tied to place, memory, and her rural roots in Petrolia. Her process starts behind the lens, photographing local architecture, empty streets, and open fields across Lambton County. She then translates these snapshots into rich oil paintings that emphasize light, texture, and nostalgia. By leaving her painted landscapes unpeopled, Sydney invites viewers to step into these quiet scenes and connect with their own histories, proving that ordinary spaces hold extraordinary meaning.





“For my show “Familiar Places”, all of the paintings and drawings are based off of photos I have taken around Lambton County.”

Q/A with Sydney McKichan

Was there a defining moment when you realized you were an artist?

SM - I have been passionate about art for as long as I can remember. Growing up, I was always drawing, colouring, and creating my own stories. My family often tells me that when I first picked up a pencil, I was already holding it correctly. As a child, I would draw everywhere I could on walls, under the pool table, and on every piece of paper I could find.

My interest in art continued throughout high school, where I took every art course available and graduated with the Specialist High Skills Major (SHSM) program in Art and Culture. Through these experiences, I developed my creative abilities and gained a deeper understanding of different artistic techniques and practices.



“Over the years, I have continued to learn, grow, and refine my skills, which has helped me become the artist I am today. Art has always been an important part of my life, and I look forward to continuing to create, explore new ideas, and develop my artistic practice in the future.”

Q/A with Sydney McKichan

Do you find inspiration in other art forms like music and literature?

SM - I find inspiration in my own photography. I take many photos of Petrolia and Lambton County. I find that there are many interesting buildings and landscapes that catch my eye. For my show "Familiar Places", all of the paintings and drawings are based off of photos I have taken around Lambton County.

How do you think art impacts the community or culture?

SM - I believe that our art impacts communities and culture positively by bringing people together, preserving history, expressing identity, inspiring dialogue, and creating a deeper connection between people and the places they live.

"Growing up, I was always drawing, colouring, and creating my own stories."



Q/A with Sydney McKichan

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

SM - One mistake I made that taught me a valuable lesson is to always participate in critiques and discussions. I was really shy in my first year at university and I learned that if you participate more in discussions or critiques you learn more about how to improve your technique and about yourself as an artist.

Do you plan everything out, or do you create as you go?

SM - I usually plan out everything before I create any of my paintings or drawings. Although, during my paintings I sometimes alter the colours from the original plan as I go to see what feels right to me.

art



what are 7 key facts about the Group of Seven?

1. 1920

The Group of Seven officially formed in Toronto in 1920, their first exhibition being held later that year.

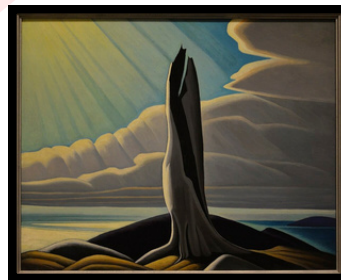
“We were told, quite seriously, that there never would be a Canadian art because we had no art tradition.”
- Lawren Harris



(l-r) Frederick Varley, A. Y. Jackson, Lawren Harris, Barker Fairley (not a member), Frank Johnston, Arthur Lismer, and J. E. H. MacDonald. Image ca. 1920 F 1066, Archives of Ontario, I0010313

2. landscape

The artists became famous for painting the Canadian wilderness, forests, lakes, and northern landscapes in a bold and colourful style.



3. seven

The original group had seven members. The founding members were Lawren Harris, Arthur Lismer, Frederick Varley, A.Y. Jackson, J.E.H. MacDonald, Frank Johnston, and Franklin Carmichael. Although Tom Thomson was not an official member, he was a massive influence on the group, & a close friend and colleague to the founding artists. Thomson died July 8th, 1917, three years before the collective was formed, in a mysterious drowning accident in Algonquin Park.



art



why are they important?

The Group of Seven helped create a distinct Canadian artistic identity and are still celebrated as some of Canada's most famous painters. Their works can be seen in collections such as the Art Gallery of Ontario and the National Gallery of Canada. Learn more at [The Group of Seven](#)

4. into the wild

Many of their paintings were based on sketching trips to places such as Georgian Bay, Muskoka, Algonquin Provincial Park, and the Algoma District.



5. controversy

Their style was initially considered controversial. Early critics thought their paintings were too bold and unrealistic, but the public came to appreciate their unique vision of Canada. Contemporarily, the Group of Seven has drawn criticism that many of their works illustrate the Canadian wilderness without Indigenous people residing there.



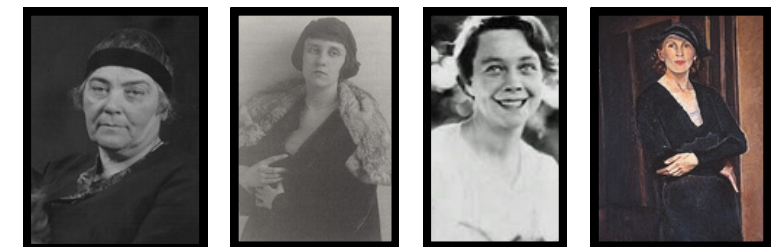
6. expansion

Although founded with seven members, artists such as A.J. Casson, Edwin Holgate, and L.L. FitzGerald later became members.



7. 1933

The group dissolved in 1933 and was replaced by the larger Canadian Group of Painters (CGP), a national collective of 28 painters which included a broader range of artists. The group embraced modernist painting styles including realism, abstraction, and figuration. Notably, the group was intentionally inclusive of women, making up one third of the membership. The group extended the vision of the Group of Seven to reflect Canadian life & identity.



Whitefish Falls in 1936. Top row: [Randolph Hewton](#), [Mr. Whittall](#), [Charles Comfort](#), [Yvonne McKague](#), [Housser](#). Middle row: [Isabel McLaughlin](#), [Gordon Webber](#), [Bennie Hewton](#). Bottom row: [Hal Hayden](#), [Audrey Taylor](#), [Prudence Heward](#), [Rody Kenny Courtice](#), [Mr. Macdonald](#).

By Robert McLaughlin Gallery, Ottawa - Murray, Joan (1999) Canadian Art in the Twentieth Century, Dundurn, p. 63 ISBN: 978-1-55002-332-9, Public Domain

uproar

NOUN

1. A loud and impassioned noise or disturbance.
'the room was in an uproar'
 - 1.1 A public expression of protest or outrage.
'it caused an uproar in the press'
- (Lexico Dictionary)



The Lawrence House Uproar Online Literary Journal invites contributions for its upcoming edition entitled “Sometimes Hollowed Bones Do Creator’s Work: A Gathering of Voices.”

This edition celebrates Indigenous writers and artists of all ages with a special emphasis on local contributors. For this special edition, content includes all Indigenous lived experiences. Artists are invited to submit videos, photography, and written word forms of expression (e.g. poetry, fiction or non-fiction prose).

Deadline for submission is August 30. Publication on September 30, 2026.

Stacey Nahdee, cultural practitioner from Bkejwanong territory, is our special facilitator for this edition. Stacey speaks of the intent of the collection: “This edition of Uproar highlights the necessity of becoming hollow bones so Creator can work through us, as expressed through family and community history, written and oral tradition, culture and ceremony, language and art, song and dance; while honoring grief, loss, resiliency, wisdom, laughter, peace, and harmony.”

An open mic event celebrates this collection of voices, set for October 4, 2026, in the Turret Room at the Lawrence House, hosted by the Lawrence House Literary Committee. At this live event, the artists included in this edition of Uproar are invited to present their work in person. Following the presentation is an open mic welcoming anyone who feels called to share their words, songs, or music celebrating Indigenous people, art and culture.

Note: if your work includes a video file, you will need to make arrangements to send the video file separately from the form below.

[Uproar Theme Submit](#) 

JULY EVENTS SCHEDULE

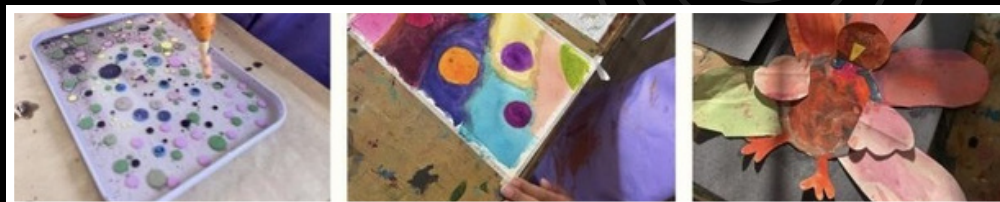
SUMMER ART CAMPS



The Lawrence House is thrilled to have The Art House Sarnia bring Children's Art classes back to the House. The Art House Sarnia camps at The Lawrence House Centre for the Arts will make art education more accessible, vibrant and central to community life, inspiring the next generation of artists here in downtown Sarnia.

Summer Art Camps begin July 6th for ages 6-12 and run to the end of August. Check out the Art House Sarnia website for all classes. information.

[For more info, visit the Art House!](#)



FIRST FRIDAY, JULY 3RD MUSIC ON THE LAWN
with
MISSY BURGESS
6:30-8:00

WELCOME TO THE LAWRENCE HOUSE LIBRARY

With a wide range of topics available, books can be enjoyed in The Heritage Room. All current Lawrence House members have generous sign-out privileges. This library has been developed with the generous donations of pre-loved books on art, technique, and many more relevant subjects.

Canadian Art - History - Art History - Art techniques - Local Interest - Artist Specific Books

[Visit our Online Library](#)



Open Stage is on vacation until September 2026.

Slow Flow Yoga sessions with Monica Gillis will begin a new session in September. Monica is offering a class at 10:00 AM or 11:30 AM. Registration is required as space is limited.

Please email

butterflyrisingyogaandwellness@gmail.com



ART GALLERY &
SHOP.LAWRENCE



CALL FOR ARTISTS & MUSICIANS

Interested in a 5 Questions segment? Artist Spotlight? Contact us for your spot in an upcoming issue!

This is a great way to introduce yourself to fellow artists & musicians, in addition to giving our readers an insight into you and your art!

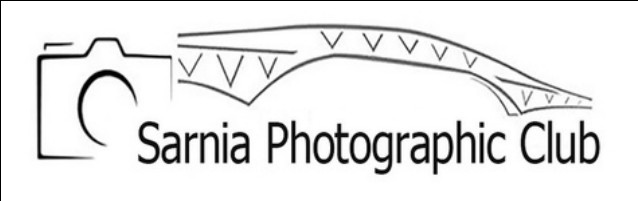
[Contact Leann](#)

JULY EVENTS SCHEDULE

TOASTMASTERS INTERNATIONAL RIVERSPEAK

Meeting Times: Thursdays 7:00 pm to 8:00 pm
Phone: 519.466.2512
Location: Lawrence House Centre for the Arts
127 Christina St. South Sarnia, ON N7T 2M8

Riverspeak (Sarnia) Toastmasters Club



THE SARNIA PHOTOGRAPHIC CLUB

The Sarnia Photographic Club is a non-profit organization dedicated to excellence in photography. We come together to share our work, listen to speakers, and go on outings, all with the goal of making impactful images. Visitors are welcome to attend two meetings to find out more about the club and its activities before joining.

Visit the club for more information!



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*](#)



2026 MEMBERSHIP

BASIC

As a Basic 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.

PRICE: \$17.70 PLUS TAX

BRONZE

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.

PRICE: \$44.25 PLUS TAX

SILVER

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.**

PRICE: \$17.70 PLUS TAX

2026
MEMBER SERVICES

The Lawrence House Centre for the Arts (LHCA) invites submissions to exhibit in the Turret Room (Gallery) to its members.

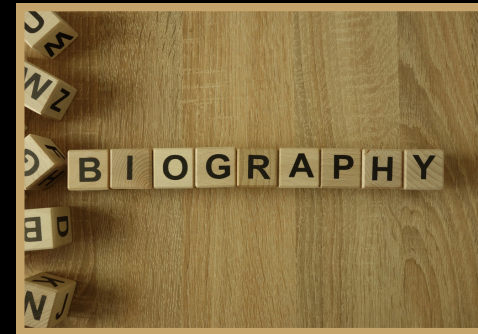
Exhibition opportunities of one month in duration are available. The LHCA welcomes proposals from artists of all disciplines and career levels. The call is open to all LHCA members who reside or work in Lambton County and who have not had a solo show at the gallery in the past 3 years.

Consideration is extended to both solo or two-person proposals.

Artist's creations are juried for their workmanship and creativity. We accept only high quality items that we feel will be received well by the public.

It is important to us that your items sell.

[Gallery Standards for The Lawrence House Centre for the Arts – The Lawrence House Centre for the Arts](#)



[Check out our Artist Bio page here!](#)



[Upload your Artist Bio today!](#)



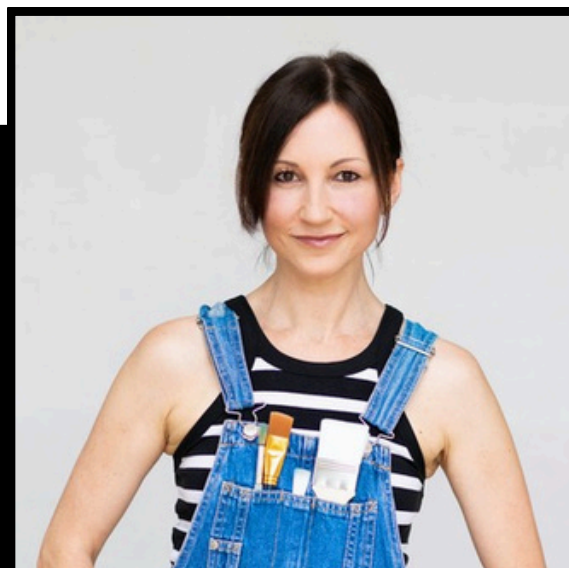
[Upload your product submission form here!](#)



[Submission to Exhibit at The Lawrence House](#)

RENTALS

EVENT & WORKSHOP SPACES



STUDIO A

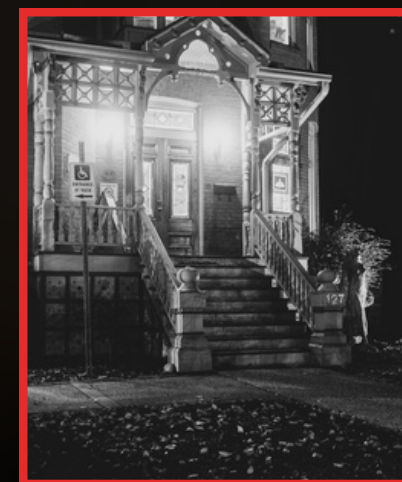


\$25.00 (3 hour block)

THE TURRET ROOM



\$25.00 (3 hour block)



Room Rental After Hours



Room Rental Entire House

Hi Everyone!



I'm Wilma Mehl, a pastel artist from the Sarnia area.

The Lambton County region is full of creative and artistic talent, and we're here to help showcase your art, and connect you with art-centric businesses.

I'm pleased to announce this newly-launched Instagram account, dedicated to supporting local artists, art-allied businesses, and art galleries. Featured artists will enjoy increased exposure and gallery opportunities.

We welcome all 2D media, including digital art and photography.

Feel free to reach out to us - simply click on our logo above to join our artistic community!

Don't forget to share, so we can give local artists a bigger platform!

 [ARTISTS OF LAMBTON COUNTY](#)

THE LAWRENCE HOUSE AMENITIES INCLUDE:



- Accessible access with elevator
- Kitchenette
- Special Event Permits
- Wi-Fi/AV Equipment

The Lawrence House has a wide range of options for event rental.
Please contact us for all the details!



next month...

**Art intake dates:
August 1st & 2nd**

Please upload your info and .jpeg
before you drop off your work at the
Lawrence House, link on page 46.

“the Art Life”

the Lawrence House Members Art Show