



rideau lakes
artists' association

www.rideaulakesartists.com

The Paint-In

Rideau Lakes Artists' Association Newsletter

Spring 2023

LAST WEEKEND IN AUGUST

Paint The Summer back in Westport

Paint The Summer returns to the Westport Arena this August and the spaces are going fast.

Last year's event, the first RLAA show since pandemic restrictions, was considered a huge success, with

sales totalling more than \$20,000.

Fred Fowler is leading the 2023 organizing committee and more details will be finalized in the coming weeks.

But the date is firm (August 26-27)

and the arena has been booked.

The association will be purchasing dozens of new racks in the meantime, so every full booth will have 18 linear feet of display space.

(The RLAA has also secured a storage space adjacent to North Crosby Hall to house the racks.)

In addition, the RLAA will purchase a transaction processing unit (known as a Square) for use at the *Paint The Summer* show payments and for membership fees.



Last year's *Paint The Summer* in August brought in lots of people and about \$20,000 in sales for RLAA artists. Here Judy Hollinger makes a point to a potential buyer.

(Photo by Riley Garner).

President's Message

"Spring is the time of plans and projects" (Leo Tolstoy)

Welcome everyone to spring; I think it has finally arrived. Maybe I should tread lightly with that statement, just in case, but according to the calendar it is here.

It was certainly an interesting winter and for some a very long one. As we pass through the equinox we look forward to the return of warmer weather, the arrival of the spring birds (I understand the robins have been spotted) and the promise of new life as nature awakens the trees and plants around us.

I love to see the first green tinge on the trees; it's a sure sign of renewal and promise. With the coming of spring we also look forward to making preparations for our *Paint*

The Summer art show, which are starting to get under way in earnest.

As the committee is brought together new ideas will be shared and we look forward to an even better show than last year.

I would like to welcome the new members who have joined us over the winter and look forward to a very productive exchange of ideas and experiences.

As our group rebounds after the past couple of years of Covid we hope to see some former members return, too. We can all look forward to the many inspiring new projects we have been dreaming of all winter.

Welcome and see you soon.

Sherry Rogers
RLAA President

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Audience “driven to abstraction” by Ann Gruchy presentation



Photos by Chris Dickson

Ottawa area artist Ann Gruchy spoke to a full house of RLAA members in March and demonstrated how she works on her paintings, building the layers as she goes.

In what has to be the most intriguing presentation title in years—*Driven to Abstraction*—the North Gower-based artist began by showing several abstract paintings, by various artists, and pointing out which ones work for her, and which do not, and why. (One abstract artist she particularly recommended for those interested in abstract work is Brian Rutenberg - www.brianrutenbergart.com/paintings.)

After her slide presentation, Ann started an abstract painting of her own and explained what she was doing as she went. While abstract paintings are frequently non-representative by nature, she still stressed the importance of composition on the canvas. If the viewer doesn't know where to look, the painting probably won't work as well.

A graduate of Mount Allison University, Sackville, New Brunswick, Ann has also studied visual arts at St.

Lawrence College, Brockville and at the Ottawa School of Art. She teaches regularly and gives workshops. In 2012, she was elected member of the Society of Canadian Artists.

SERVED AS JUROR

Ann has served as a juror for numerous shows, groups and associations. She is an active member with the Manotick Art Association, the Glebe Fine Art Guild, the West Carleton Art Society, Ottawa Mixed Media Artists and the North Grenville Art Guild.

To learn more about Ann visit her website (www.anngruchy.com/).

In April, the RLAA guest speaker will be abstract specialist Leah Hicks.



New National Gallery of Canada show features women artists from the 1920s

A new exhibit at the National Gallery in Ottawa features women painters, photographers, weavers, bead workers and sculptors.

In its introduction to the show, the gallery says it provides a “cross-country snapshot of female creativity during the dynamic inter-war period”, opening up new frontiers for women artists in Canada.

Uninvited: Canadian Women Artists in the Modern Moment opened in early March and runs to August 20 in the Special Exhibition Galleries.

Incorporating the work of indigenous and settler visual artists, it is a “stirring affirmation of the female creative voice.”

It explores the diversity of women creators from coast to coast to coast, many of whom have been neglected by traditional art history.

Featuring nearly 200 works of art, the gallery’s presentation of *Uninvited* includes more than 30 works from its own collection. This show is the fourth and final venue for this exhibition, which offers “a fuller and more diverse picture of the visual arts in Canada during a pivotal modern moment.”

Other special exhibits at the National Gallery include contemporary artist Paul P.’s *Amor et Mors* until June 11, 2023; British artist John Akomfrah’s three-channel video installation *Vertigo Sea* (until July 2023); *Movement: Expressive Bodies in Art*, until September 10, 2023, and *Beautiful and Useless: the Douglas Schoenherr donation of books*, until June 18, 2023.

The National Gallery is located at 380 Sussex Drive, Ottawa, Ontario, Canada K1N 9N4,

For more information visit the gallery’s website: (www.gallery.ca/).



Paraskeva Clark, *Myself* (detail), 1933. Oil on canvas. (NGC photo)

Briefly...

New display opportunity in Perth

RLAA treasurer Riley Garner has been talking with the operators of the new Lifestyles retirement facility in Perth (corner of Gore St., and Scotch Line) about having RLAA members exhibit their art work there. There are more than 119 suites in the new construction and many specialized areas, so plenty of exhibition space. (Look for updates in future issues.)

Haliburton art courses

Registration has opened for the summer courses at the Haliburton School of Art & Design (Fleming College). A variety of art courses is offered, including acrylics, oil, water colour, encaustic and many more. Course lengths also vary, and include many one-day workshops and four-day classes. For more information visit the Fleming College website (<https://flemingcollege.ca/school/haliburton-school-of-art-and-design/>).

Flea market in June?

To be confirmed but it has been suggested we have a flea market for art materials at the May RLAA meeting. Check the agenda for details.

Sunday paint-ins at Deborah’s studio

RLAA member Deborah Jodoin continues to host paint-ins in her studio on the Opinicon Road from 12 to 3 p.m., on Sundays. They are open to all and are very good for members who cannot attend regular paint ins or meetings. For more information, email Deborah at jdjodoin@hotmail.ca.

New source for art materials

A craft store in Smiths Falls is now offering an array of artists’ materials. *The Craft Witch* is located at 9 Russell St. E. Smiths Falls, and has agreed to offer a 10% discount to RLAA members. For opening hours and more information visit the store’s website (<https://craftwitch.ca/>).

AN EARLY INFLUENCE

The artist and the step ladder

By Ben Bennett

Every time I see a step ladder I think of Edmond Perrini.

Back in the day, he was a fellow painter in London and once a month we met at the old community centre in Wood Green for a day of life drawing and painting.

To my young mind, Edmond was about as close as it got to a real artist. He was half French, half Egyptian with an accent to match and he wore a back beret. He was also a great influence.

There is a lot to learn from watching and listening to others, even in an informal setting, which is one of the reasons why I enjoy the Wednesday afternoon paint-ins at the North Crosby Hall. (Best five bucks you'll ever spend....)

Meanwhile, back to the step ladder.

In addition to our monthly sessions with a nude, my London art group had a Friday night do-your-own-thing get-together.

Edmond had this obsession about looking at all the angles. He'd consider the usual perspective and then two minutes later he'd face away, bend down and look between his legs.

NO SMALL FEAT

Or he'd haul the step ladder out from the closet and climb half-way up to check out the view from there (no small feat given he was no spring chicken).

Or he'd take what he had done and hold it in front of a mirror. This actually works great as a way to check the composition, I find, and not just for portraits or figures.

When it came to putting paint on the canvas Edmond used a half-inch wide flat brush so that his final

work was a whole bunch of smallish squares. And it worked really well.

He always said to look for the lights and darks first and then do the in-betweens. It was quite the contrast to another of the artists, George, who

"He'd consider the usual perspective and then two minutes later he'd face away, bend down and look between his legs."

always seemed to be using a tiny brush on a large canvas – and it took him forever to finish a painting. He attended the regular sessions but not the monthly days of painting—he'd never finish.

So those were my influences as a young painter: the impressionist and the pointillist, so to speak. (You can guess who "won".)

At our RLAA painting sessions on Wednesday afternoons there is again a variety of styles and techniques. Just by looking and listening there are often informal opportunities to learn, if only by osmosis.

I am always amazed at the folks who bring their cell phones and other devices and paint from the images they have on them. Clearly their eyesight is better than mine.

I like to blow up the image I want to paint on my computer (no smart phone for me) and get my local commercial printer to make an 11x14 colour copy. I then paint from that. My home printer is only black and white but I can use it to make a regular page-sized image and then fold it in half and quarters (and even eighths) to make a sort of a grid to guide me.

But the biggest thing I do, and I have seen many of my Wednesday afternoon colleagues do this too, is to just stare at what I have done and then stare at the image I want to put on the canvas. This takes time.

And if that involves climbing a step ladder, then so be it.

Edmond would be proud.

Ben Bennett is a former journalist now living in Perth who admits to keeping a step ladder within easy reach where possible.

The fine print

The Paint-In is the official newsletter of the Rideau Lakes Artists' Association. Our activities include oils, watercolours, acrylics, and other mediums. We hold our monthly meetings at the North Crosby Hall. They are scheduled on the second Friday of each month at 1p.m., except for the months of February and July when no general meetings are held. For an up-to-date monthly meeting and paint-in schedule please check our website at www.rideaulakesartists.com.

Advertising

*Business card ad (3.5 inches by 2 inches) - \$25 for one year
Display ad (3 inches by 6 inches) - \$50 for one year.*

If you have workshops, seminars etc., that you would like to advertise in this newsletter we have a one-time cost of \$10 per ad.

For more information on advertising please contact newsletter editor Ben Bennett at bbc@rideau.net.

LET'S START A CONVERSATION

It's *your* newsletter; share your ideas

So here's a challenge.

While there is a lot to be learned from standing with other artists while we paint, draw, ruminate and look closely at our work, it is when we hear more about their ideas and their experiences that we can broaden the way we look at things.

Once we get beyond our initial appreciation of someone else's art for its skill, colour, composition, energy etc., how often do we ask ourselves, "Why did they do that? How did they do that? Why didn't they do this?"

With more than 70 artists in our membership now (not bad, given the past three years) there is an awful lot of wisdom, wonderings and wishful thinking that guides what we do.

THE CHALLENGE

So the challenges to the RLAA members is simple: tell us how and tell us why. To get you thinking, consider the following: What about your home set-up: table top or easel? Do you always start with a blank canvas, or by covering the canvas with paint? Why?

Given the time many of us spend

trying to get started (or restarted) on a work, learning how others get their motors running could be really helpful.

Do you prefer silence or music playing when you paint or draw?

How do you know when a painting is done? If you have a particular technique that you find works for you, share it.

TELL US WHY

If there is a painting or an artist that you really like, tell us why. What is it about a certain work that you find compelling?

Some modern art can be dismissed by some as not real painting. ("My two-year-old could have done that"), and the controversy is usually initiated by the news that public money is paying for the work.

The old masters often command respect automatically ("Look at the detail!") but there's no guarantee we will like their work. Why do we like some but not others?

The Impressionists had a hard time getting accepted, but are immensely popular now. What did

they offer that the old masters did not? Is art subject to fashion?

No one is expecting professional art criticism here, but club-level thoughts on these things. What does it for you? What doesn't? Why?

Some of you have already offered to share their thoughts. So stay tuned.

If the outcome of the exercise is that we all look more closely at art, and perhaps with a broader perspective, then that can't be all bad, can it?.

Let's hear from you. **BB**

Events

Now until April 30; Local Colours Fine Art Group at the Arts Hub, 14 Main St W, Smiths Falls.

April 14: Next RLAA meeting—North Crosby Hall 1.p.m.
www.rideaulakesartists.com

April 21-23: Manotick Arts Association Inspirations Show—Manotick Curling Centre.
www.manotickart.ca

April 29-30: Bath Artisans Spring Delights art show—St. John's Hall, Bath. www.bathartisans.info

May 6, 7: Arts Carleton Place fine art show - C P Arena.
www.artscarletonplace.com

June 22-25: Art Works Perth art tour, Perth and environs.
www.artworksperryth.ca

July 1, 2: Rideau Lakes Studio Tour—Rideau Lakes environs.
<https://rideaulakesstudiotour.ca/>

August 26-27: RLAA Paint The Summer show—Westport Arena.
www.rideaulakesartists.com

TELL US HOW

If you tried something different, tell us about it.

For example, next time we'll look at how Linda Rush went from..



(Watch for her article in the summer edition of *The Paint-In.*)