



BOOKED FOR DECEMBER 2026

Given the weather, organizers happy with this year's Holly Jolly attendance

This year's Holly Jolly art show and sale was well attended on Saturday but the snow on Sunday cut the traffic a bit (always a risk with winter events). Show sales were approximately \$8,700 and we had 347 visitors.

The informal survey of visitors told us that our postcards and social media campaign were most effective of all of our marketing efforts.

There were lots of complimentary comments from visitors remarking on how professional the show looked and on the overall quality of the offerings.

We've booked the legion for 2026, the first weekend in December which coincides with the Perth Santa parade. It was the weekend we wanted for this year but it was already booked so we're optimistic for the 2026 show.

Finally, our thanks to the many, many volunteers who helped with set-up and take-down.

(Photo and story by Barb Jordan.)



President's Message

There is always truth and beauty

In summing up my feelings about art and creativity I must acknowledge some truths about myself as a person. Some of you know that I am someone who spends about three hours a day trying to understand what is happening in the world.

As a result of that focus on what is happening now and what has happened before I can become stressed and frightened, but then I remind myself that there is also "truth and beauty", which brings me to RLAA.

This group of volunteers has been a big part of my life for more than 10 years. The heart of my involvement has been the Wednesday afternoon "paint-ins."

When creative people get together so much happens that for sure results in amazing art, but I would suggest that important other things happen between people as people.

There are two specific events I would like to bring to mind. One is something that happened in the past and one that happened last week.

About three years ago I and fellow member had a heated disagreement about a fairly serious matter and it became obvious that we would have to agree to disagree and get on with focusing on the things that we did agree on.

We succeeded with flying colours and I truly miss him when he is not around.

The second event was a lovely note I got from a new member, Diane Strickland, prompted by a piece she received by fellow artist Sarah Hale as part of the gift exchange at the Christmas lunch. Unfortunately, we don't have room for the story here, but Ben promises me it will be in the spring issue of the *Paint-In*.

*Deborah Jodoin
RLAA President*

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Kristi Bird introduces workshop participants to “the glow”

Kristi Bird, seen here at her easel, delivered a fantastic workshop October 4 & 5. She provided eight enthusiastic participants with informative tips and tricks in colour mixing, brush usage, application, and conservation. She also provided many planning and compositional considerations.

The main focus was on “the glow”. This is the special quality of light that Kristi achieves through her long-time experimentation with light and richness achieving high contrast in



learning, in the good company of other artists, as Kristi offered her generous

her style of creative realism. The orange ground base on the canvas, in preparation for all the planning stages in burnt sienna, was a new concept for many of us.

This was a wonderful two days of

spirit of sharing “tried and true” techniques through solid hands-on demonstrations.

She also made time to connect with each of us, as we practised incorporating our new learning into our own painting styles. Slowly, and steadily, we developed our chickadee paintings together and encouraged her to consider sharing a second session in the new year! In the meantime, we have a considerable volume of quality information to practice.

Thanks, Kristi! (And special thanks to Deborah Jodoin who steered the weekend along and kept us fueled with tea, coffee, and laughter.)

(Story and photo by Chris Bonza.)

Events

January 9: RLAA general meeting, North Crosby Hall, Westport. 1 p.m. Speakers: Amanda Lloyd & David Slack from the Hive in Bath.

NO MEETING IN FEBRUARY

March 13: RLAA general meeting, North Crosby Hall, Westport. 1 p.m. Speaker: Gary Barnett, an artist who creates websites for artists.

April 10: RLAA general meeting, North Crosby Hall, Westport. 1 p.m. www.rideaulakesartists.com. Speaker: Carolyn Huff-Winters.

May 8 : RLAA general meeting, North Crosby Hall, Westport. 1 p.m. www.rideaulakesartists.com. Speaker: Joanne Kells.

June 12 : RLAA general meeting and picnic, North Crosby Hall, Westport. 1 p.m. www.rideaulakesartists.com.

July 10 : RLAA general meeting, North Crosby Hall, Westport. 1 p.m. www.rideaulakesartists.com. Update on *Paint The Summer*.

Five artists saddle up their easels for the art rodeo

By Doris Power
Programs Committee Chair

Our November Art Rodeo was quite a success after a few years of being absent from our program. There were five members participating: from left clockwise, Margaret Martin, Kristi Bird, Fred Fowler, Judith Versavel and Barb Sohn. During the 40 minutes allowed for completing their paintings, there was much excitement and a flurry of conversation which added to the drama!

Each participant created a lovely piece, indicative of their own unique style and after they had left the room, the voting took place with each voting member having three votes. Following the voting, the room was abuzz with anticipation. Our three prize winners were: Judith Versavel third place; Barb Sohn second place; and our first prize winner was Kristi Bird!

I would like to extend my thanks to each member for taking part in this art rodeo and for making it such an exciting event! Thanks also to David Gilmore for his guidance and excellent organization — and for being our whistle-blowing timekeeper extraordinaire!

We are looking forward to next year's November Art Rodeo, so please consider participating!



(Photo by Leane Bailey)

Fear no art (continued from the fall 2025 Paint-In)

PART TWO

Editor's note: The following is a presentation given by well-known local artist Aili Kurtis to the RLAA general meeting in August. To ensure these inspiring words are available to all members, we have included the speech in our newsletter, in two parts. Part one was in the fall 2025 Paint-In.)

By Aili Kurtis

Making art can feel dangerous! Revealing oneself makes us feel vulnerable and fearful in two major ways: we fear our own critical minds and we fear the judgments of others.

We carry these real and imagined critics with us constantly and as artists we are continually working in the face of uncertainty—and living with a lot of doubt and contradiction.

We may fear we lack the ability to live up to our own expectations because making art provides uncomfortable feedback about the gap between what you intended to do, and what you actually did. And there is the fear of not having anything worthwhile to say, and, of course, the feeling that other people's art is much better than yours. Defeat seems all too inevitable. Everyone wants to be understood, acknowledged, and admired—not misunderstood or ridiculed!

But I think life and art are totally entwined and that uncertainty in art is, in fact, a virtue! Making art means working in the face of uncertainty and uncertainty is, indeed, the very prerequisite for success. That is how we expand our vision and hone our skills.

Some people are dismayed by failed pieces. But failed pieces are essential.

Embrace the mistakes—and the surprises—along the way. The seed for your next painting might lie embedded in the imperfections of your current piece. Art is about having some loose thread, some unresolved issue, to carry forward to the next piece.

ESSENTIAL INGREDIENT

Imperfection is an essential ingredient to making art. To err is human. There is no need to strive for perfection in art. Perfection would result in your art being called "craft", done by a highly-skilled craftsperson.

You are not creating a product; you are creating "an experience". The art is not the paint on the canvas, it is in experiencing the perceived image. To require perfection is to invite paralysis

and is a huge impediment to creativity.

Some artists fear that they don't have enough talent. But the world is full of talented people who were given natural gifts, yet never produce much work. So, continue working, and exploring, and producing your art. Get to know other artists, exhibit when you can, study art history, visit galleries, stay involved. Paint!

Other people fear that they don't have enough "inspiration". Picasso said that there is such a thing as inspiration—and it finds you when you are working in the studio! Chuck Close said "inspiration is for amateurs".

Those who challenge their fears continue in their art; those who don't, quit.

When fear becomes paralyzing, it robs us of our hope or our personal agency. We need to re-evaluate our worries and learn to process fear, deal wisely with fear, and find a way to let our nerves guide us rather than stop us. There's a middle zone and you can find it and learn to operate inside it by being awake and somewhat fearful—but not held back! Don't give up because of fear.

Both perseverance and process are extremely important. Find nourishment within doing the work itself. Relax and enjoy the very process of making art. Dip into the sheer joy and pleasure of creation. Play. Be in the flow.

FLOW STATE

When deeply immersed in art-making you enter this "flow state"—a state of focused engagement where time disappears. Art, for me, is like meditation because I am "in the present moment" with EVERY brushstroke. Our awareness is sharpened when we play with shapes and colours. We discover ourselves. It is the mind opening up to what is, and to what is unknown. The practice of painting brings a "fullness of being" and an unveiling of our true nature. By striving towards "wholeness" in a painting, we gain insights into wholeness for ourselves.

So, making art can be both transformative and healing. Making or engaging with art can heal trauma, foster

resilience, and restore identity. Art therapy and personal creative expression all tap into this transformative power.

Art and dopamine are deeply linked. Dopamine, along with endorphins, helps sustain that concentration and pleasure. Dopamine is a neurotransmitter involved in motivation and anticipation—it pushes you to seek rewarding experiences, which is addictive, and keeps you motivated and involved in the creative process.

Perseverance furthers. Overcoming the fear of art can enhance your personal power as well as communal power. We have the power to override feelings of doubt and helplessness just through the very doing of art.

To quote Michelle Obama: "Each of us carries a bit of inner brightness, something entirely unique and individual—a flame that is worth protecting. When we are able to recognize our own light, we become empowered to use it. When we learn to foster what's unique in the people round us, we become better able to build compassionate communities and make meaningful change."

In making art, YOU are declaring what is important to you. There is a vitality, a life force, an energy that is translated through you into action—because there is only one of you in all time. This expression is unique. And if you block it, it will never exist and it will be lost to the world. (Martha Graham). The voice you need is the voice you already have. In large measure, becoming an artist consists of learning to accept yourself, and in following your own voice.

Art is accessible to everyone. Art is essential. Art inspires independent thought. Art communicates and creates empathy and solidarity and is so powerful it can spark revolutions and overthrow dictatorships. We need art, not just as decoration, but as a pulse, a question, a force.

No one should have anxiety about art. Live your life fully and embrace the spirit within. Find the strength to overcome fear and anxiety. Feel the freedom in creation and the power to realize your dreams. Art is always alive and ready and waiting inside you.

Fear no art!





Bon Appetit!

Members of the Rideau Lakes Artists Association and their guests enjoyed a pot luck lunch at the North Crosby Hall, December 12. In addition to the various foods and desserts on offer there was a small-painting gift exchange. And, as a special treat, there was also an unexpected but most entertaining cabaret performance from RLAA member Judy Versavel.

(Photo by Ben Bennett)

MAXIMIZING DISPLAY SPACE



While some painters prefer their displayed art to have some “room to breathe”, there are times when you may want to jam as many paintings into a small space as possible. I had a 10-foot wall space in which to show at a recent pop-up event. So rather than add more hooks to the wall, I made a quick shelf unit which allowed paintings to be leaned against it for the lower level, and a second row of art sitting on the ledge. It took just two 16” 2x4’s for the uprights, two small (8”x9”) pieces of plywood for the “feet” with a (1”x4”) pine plank on top for the shelf itself. It worked nicely. BB

The fine print

The Paint-In is the official newsletter of the Rideau Lakes Artists’ Association. RLAA activities include pastels, oils, watercolours, acrylics, and other mediums. We hold our monthly meetings (except February) at the North Crosby Hall, south of Westport. For an up-to-date monthly meeting and paint-in schedule please check our website at www.rideaulakesartists.com. To submit articles or information on workshops, seminars etc., please contact newsletter editor Ben Bennett at bbc@rideau.net.



Leane Bailey
Sunflower Garden

RLAA member Leane Bailey entered this coloured pencil drawing of a sunflower garden in an art contest sponsored by Ann Kullberg's Coloured Pencil Magazine on Facebook, winning a Silver Ribbon Award. Well done, Leane!

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