

## **Gallery Director's Report 2021 AGM**

This has been a challenging year for the gallery, navigating our way through multiple lockdowns to limit the spread of COVID-19. Our volunteers and staff have had to quickly re-strategize and develop new ways to support artists in our community. Exhibition schedules were in a constant state of flux, so we offered online exhibitions through our website, blog interviews with additional promotion on our YouTube channel by creating videos about artists and arts organizations who were exhibiting at WAG. We also started posting on multiple social media platforms and local online event calendars to ensure that artists were able to share their work and encourage conversation with the greater Kingston community. It has also been such a rewarding and inspiring year to see how artists continue to create and push boundaries with their work. While there have been limitations on where we were/are physically allowed to visit, people continued to create and want to share their work and connect with the community. I am very proud of all the work that our team has done this year; diligently working to maintain both a physical and virtual place of connection through art.

### **2020**

#### **April**

##### **Kingston Photography Club**

Unfortunately this group canceled due to the first lockdown.

#### **May/June**

##### **Connection: Forty Years of Artist's Books 1979-2019**

Lise Melhorn-Boe was scheduled to exhibit in May but postponed until June due to continued lockdown. Lise's exhibition was organized according to the decades in her life, and follows from her interest in gender politics, to the birth of her son and her interest in the socialization of children, to her breast cancer and concerns surrounding environmental degradation. (Credit and thanks to Ulrike's blog for this information).

#### **July**

##### **Annual Juried Art Exhibition**

The judges were Bruce St. Clair, Daniel Hughes and Nancy Steele. 59 works were selected from the 126 entries. Awards were given to out to 12 artists, among them 8 Honourable Mentions. First Prize went to Caitlyn Chisamore oil on panel entitled "Believe?". Susan Beyer, was awarded Second Prize for her acrylic work "Ghost Ship". Third Prize went to Valerie Spence Hownsell for her acrylic landscape "Mossy Shore".

#### **August**

##### **Blue Surreal**

This exhibition featured Brockville-based artist Alan Cragg's whimsical and surreal landscapes that were interconnected by hues of blue in each work. Alan's fantasy-like oil paintings were inspired by both physical places and by creations of his mind's eye.

#### **September**

September was originally split into two shows, the first KSOA Student Show and the second was a group show with an exhibition theme of 'Leonhard Cohen "Sweet Burden"'. Both groups asked to post-poned until 2021.

## **Unity Road Four**

Unity Road Four is the work of a group of artists who share a studio space in an old schoolhouse on Unity Road. The four Kingston-based artists were: Ann Clarke, Mark Laundry, Ben Darrah and Mark Birksted. In the eclectic show, these professional artists took us on a multidimensional journey comprised of brilliantly colourful artworks and organic forms.

## **October**

### **OKWA (Organization of Kingston Women Artists) Annual Exhibition**

#### **UNRESTRICTED**

Twenty-five OKWA artists explored the theme of 'unrestricted' in their approach to their work, with some specifically addressing, in varying ways, the impact of the unique conditions caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. As one of the participating artists, Phillida Hargreaves, states: "This pandemic has taken control away from us all. But it has helped me loosen my need to plan for the future. I feel it changing my approach to art." (Credit and thanks to Diane Black who wrote the exhibition description).

## **November**

### **Annual Kingston Printmakers Exhibition**

Annual exhibition of work by members of Kingston Printmakers. This colourful show demonstrated the wide range printmaking provides in creating art: etching, relief, monoprinting (using oil inks, watercolour paints, and incorporated into paper making!), drypoint, and mixed with other media. The artists also presented a wide range of subjects, from the whimsical to the serene, from birds and flowers to figures to landscapes. (Credit and thanks to Barb Carr for the exhibition description).

## **December**

### **Paint the Town!**

KSOA presents Kingston's only Plein Air Annual Painting event. In September 2020, artists gathered in Kingston's Old Sydenham Heritage Conservation District and painted outside, while social distancing of course! Then, in December the work from this weekend was featured in the gallery for all of the Kingston community to experience. It was fabulous to see so many perspectives and styles to capture this lovely area of Kingston. Karen Peperkorn juried the 29 works of the 17 artists who made submissions and selected three artists for the "Best in Show" award and another three artists for "Honourable Mentions".

## **2021**

### **January/February**

#### **KSOA Instructor's Show**

Due to the lockdown that stretched from December into the New Year, this was a hybrid show. In January it was featured as an online exhibition and then was able to open for a short period for the public to view the paintings in person. Participating KSOA instructors included: Barb Carr, Tonya Corkey, Debra Krakow, Mei Chi, Maureen Sheridan, Nancy Steele and Bruce St. Clair.

## **March**

### **KSOA Student Show**

This exhibition was organized by Nancy Ball and Alexis Dishaw, both dedicated students and volunteers at WAG and KSOA. It featured paintings by students in Bruce St. Clair's classes and showcased the work of both emerging and established artists who participate at our community school of art. It was a fabulous show with diverse works from participating artists: Nancy Ball, Barb Carr, Gloria Chalmers-Cowan, Alexis Dishaw, Debbie Gieruszak-Tester, Jane Hamilton-Khaan, Cynthia Johnston, Julia Laidlaw,

Holly Mabee, Cindy Mitchell, Nancy Paul, Jacqueline Prenevost, Liz Rappeport, Jackie Rushmore, Andrejs Skaburkis and Carol Sweet.

### **Closing Comments**

I want to thank the volunteers and staff whose continued dedication to WAG and support to me during my first year with the organization has been truly appreciated. I am really looking forward to restrictions continuing to be lifted and enjoying a year with less scheduling challenges! While we have a limited capacity in the gallery, we are now open to the public as non-essential retail. Our volunteer base continues to increase and with that come new ideas and growth for our organization. It is an exciting time to be part of the WAG/KSOA and I cannot wait to see what this year will bring. I look forward to continuing to connect art and artist organizations through exhibitions to our surrounding community.