

Presented by Latcham Art Centre

work from home



A showcase of artwork by past and present Latcham instructors, volunteers, Board members and staff, created during the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic.

NOVEMBER 4 - DECEMBER 10, 2022

Front cover:

Sarka Buchl Stephenson, *Moth and Feathers* (detail), 2020, waterbased monoprint, 12.5" x 12.5".
Courtesy of the artist.

work from home

work from home includes art made during COVID-19, by past and present instructors, volunteers, staff, and Board members of Latcham Art Centre. These works were created while much of the global workforce shifted from working in-office to working remotely. For some visual artists, their studios also moved into their homes. Creative time provided by the pandemic was abundant—for better or for worse—and the challenge of separating work, life, and studio presented itself.

The exhibition acts as a viewpoint to see the Latcham community as makers and artists, in addition to the cultural workers they are recognized as in Stouffville. This booklet contains statements from each artist about their works that help to reveal their inspirations, interests and ways of making. Throughout the gallery space, scanable QR codes link to interviews from the artists that give additional insight into how the pandemic changed their art practices, revealing stories of growth and transformation.



Valerie Ashton, *May 28, Road Trip and Hamburger Day*, 2021, collage and photo, 9" x 12"
Courtesy of the artist.

Valerie Ashton

“Collage allows me to bring attention to situations I feel need to be exposed, whether that is environmental or political issues, but it also allows me the freedom to just be humorous for the sake of making me smile.”

Valerie Ashton has been a practicing artist for over twenty years. She is an elected member of the Ontario Society of Artists and has been awarded a Master Pastelist status from the Pastel Artists of Canada. Her work has been juried into many shows and has won numerous awards. Valerie’s work is in the permanent collection of the Government of Ontario, the Town of Markham and Sir Sanford Fleming College.

In 2016, Valerie was the reclaim artist in residence at the Haliburton School of Art & Design, working with the school and the Haliburton landfill. Valerie was on Brier Island, Nova Scotia, in 2019, where she was one of three artists in residence in the Town of Westport.

Watch Valerie’s Interview:



Marianne Botros

"This piece is called Grounded Spiritually Upwards. It is inspired by the Coptic Orthodox Iconography style, evolved to align with my inner soul. My vision of this icon is different in the design, composition and colours.

Coptic Iconography dates back to the first three centuries A.D. The composition starts from the bottom with an icon of the Theotokos, a Latin word that means the mother of the Logos (God) in Arabic called el "3zra2 Mariam Waledet al Elah" ٥١إلا مرأ ءارذع. This painting is a concept of how to empower ourselves with our beliefs and culture; it is an archive to document the present moment for many others. Art is a transformative process, in addition to informative knowledge. It is not embodied in the information, it is embodied in the process of community change. The whole painting represents my inner self in relation to my Coptic Egyptian community who are living in Canada. This painting is a call of coming together to evoke collective identity and build a sense of belonging."

Marianne Botros (she/her) is an Egyptian-Canadian contemporary visual artist, muralist, therapeutic art practitioner and art educator. Marianne is an M.Ed. candidate in the Adult Education and Community Development program at Ontario Institute for Studies in Education OISE, University of Toronto, and has received a B.SC in Applied Arts and Science from Helwan University. She has worked as an Instructor at the German University in Cairo and is currently working as a Teacher Assistant in the Department of Visual Studies.

She participated in the 2011 *Egyptian Revolution* exhibition, and was recently selected as one of the winners of the *Ethnic Diversity Legacy Bench* project, funded by the *Stouffville Chamber of Commerce Choice Grant 2022*.

Marianne is passionate about facilitating art-based community workshops that foster mindfulness and empowering different cultures by co-cultivating art interventions to align with each community's needs. Marianne finds art as a process that improves mental well-being for adults, she also believes that art-related activities enhance cooperation, collaboration, and emotional regulation.

Watch Marianne's Interview:



Diana Bullock

"Life is about communication and painting is my way to convey a captured moment in time, my vision of the essence of nature and the human experience. Working quickly, I enjoy the creation, challenge, and excitement with each new painting. This joy never fades.

Sumi-e (Japanese ink painting) is more than just a style of painting. It is a spiritual, meditative art form that taps into your patience, self discipline, and concentration. The intention is to capture the inner essence of your subject, not an exact replica; "to paint the rose the artist becomes the rose." Negative space is just as important as the positive space, and is carefully considered in every work. Using primarily ink, the nature of the paper requires a rapid technique. It gives the illusion of effortless painting, however each brushstroke is carefully considered and has been practiced many times. Once the brushstroke is placed on the paper it cannot be erased.

The pandemic created a real challenge for me and for so many others. All Alone is how I think so many people felt. All normal routines were upended and we needed to reinvent ourselves. The small figure in the upper left side may be all alone, but as I have discovered, we are quite resilient and have found creative ways to stay in touch and be together. Sumi-e captures the timeless beauty and complexity of the natural world."

Diana Bullock is a Stouffville visual artist working in acrylics, mixed media, watercolours and Sumi-e. Her work reflects the influence of Eastern and Western styles of painting. A lifelong passion for the creative arts first developed growing up in the Birch Cliff area of Scarborough. This interest led to classes in various different mediums. She enjoys experimenting and playing with the brush and paints to create happy surprises.

Diana's background includes workshops in watercolours, acrylics and mixed media with many prominent artists. The beauty, simplicity and Zen quality of Sumi-e led her to study the Nagna style of Sumi-e at the Japanese Cultural Centre. In 1999 she submitted a painting and earned her Seal. Diana continues to study Eastern Art in workshops with Sumi-e artists, including artists from China and Japan. Diana's work reflects the influence of Eastern and Western styles of painting. There are traditional Sumi-e, acrylics and watercolours with some paintings a mixture.

Watch Diana's Interview:



Kate Carder

“The transformation of raw wool into garments, when using hand-operated technology, has remained essentially unchanged by the passage of time. Nor is it likely to change in the future, given that each step in the process is directed by the nature of the fibre itself. It follows then that the bodily actions involved in using each of the wool processing tools have not changed over time. In enacting this physical process, I am participating in a system that exceeds the boundaries of my own time and place. The use of historical tools and processes within my practice allows me to exist in the past and the future at the same time. When my hands are in the wool, I am simultaneously occupying a moment that has already happened and that is yet to come. The process of working wool by hand enables me to refuse the linear progression of time and the notion that we are only ever moving forwards.”

Kate Carder earned a Bachelor of Fine Art from Concordia University, a Bachelor of Education from the University of Toronto, and a Master of Fine Arts in Studio Practice from Western University. She has exhibited her work at various public galleries in Ontario including the Art Gallery of Mississauga, the McIntosh Gallery in London, and the Agnes Jamieson Gallery in Minden.

Kate is a part-time faculty member at the Haliburton School of Art + Design, teaching in the Certificate and Diploma programs, and is a part-time instructor with Yorkville University where she teaches Art History. Her current research involves investigating



Kate Carder, *The Falling is Inevitable*, 2021,
wool, stoneware, hibiscus blossoms. Courtesy of the artist.

paper dolls as a form through which feminine agreeability has been performed and can be challenged. This research is tied deeply to her love of wool, clay, and garment making.

Watch Kate's Interview:



Daniela Figueiredo

"Working from home expanded my interest in the human figure to explore its relationship to the natural world and how that connection is being lost. During the pandemic I found myself feeling limited by my surroundings and subject matter and decided to try my hand at painting scenery in a way that stayed true to my practice. From this series of scenery paintings in the midst of a pandemic, I was thrown into self reflection and began to explore the connection between the body and the natural world. Shortly after, I narrowed my focus further and began creating works that redefine, challenge and confront societal expectations and control over the female body. My current work explores the female nude through the lens of healing through self discovery and reflection as many of us were forced into during periods of isolation. I create works that explore healing the relationship between the body and the natural world, healing from physical illnesses, and healing from societal expectations and religious dogma surrounding the female body. I aim to redefine, reject and confront societal expectations of the female in a way that is empowering. My art explores societal expectations of the female body and breaks the confines that condemn women for expressing themselves through the body while praising men who do the same. My work is meant to empower and give a voice to women who have fallen victim to the pressures of misogynistic institutions and spaces that are meant to be safe and non-judgmental. Ultimately, I create to speak to women who have felt the limitations of society's control, understanding and false narratives of their bodies."

Daniela Figueiredo is a Portuguese-Canadian visual artist based in T'karonto. She is currently completing her BFA at York University. Daniela works primarily in acrylic paint and recently ceramics. She is inspired by the human figure and aims to connect the body to the natural world. She describes her practice as an artistic reimagination of the struggles that she has experienced as a woman, and trying to find empowerment through healing from those experiences. During the pandemic, nature and the human figure captured her focus and have remained crucial components of her practice. As a student during the pandemic, art making became an outlet for her to stay creative and to express herself. During isolation, creation allowed Daniela to better understand herself and her practice, and gave her the courage to begin to heal her body, mind, and soul. Today, she hopes to empower women through her artwork, especially in terms of their bodily autonomy.

Watch Daniela's Interview:



Marisa Gallo

“Frolicking Fields is a performance video exhibiting a series of movement excerpts with diverse cardboard masks. My explorations and intentions of play, joy, and liberation in my work as an artist became especially heightened for me during the pandemic, resulting in the creation of Frolicking Fields.

In contrast to the pandemic’s mandated mask requirement, I created ulterior masks that were colourful and lively. These were created using materials I had at home: old pencil crayons from years of school projects and cardboard obtained from a surplus of online order shipments. Spending the majority of time in isolation during the pandemic, I sought to connect with family and friends in alternate ways, and found sending videos of me dancing in the masks helped to provide vitality and humour, despite our shared uncertainty. The music in Frolicking Fields was selected for its peaks and valleys, and its ending of zeal and hope, which resonated with me as my experience with the pandemic continued.

This piece is apolitical. There are connotations associated with masks following the pandemic, however Frolicking Fields is a human response of escapism; a response to being contained indoors and the desire to be free and expressive outside and to share this with others.”



Marisa Gallo, Still from *Frolicking Fields*, performance for video, 2022, Courtesy of the artist.

Marisa Gallo (she/her) is a Stouffville-based multidisciplinary artist and arts educator whose practice includes performance, drawing, and film. Her work explores the notions of play and liberation and seeks to elicit feelings and expressions of jubilation.

Marisa holds a Master of Teaching and Bachelor of Arts (Honours) from the University of Toronto where she was awarded the Helen Gardiner Phelan Playhouse Scholarship for excellent performance in Drama. Marisa has over five years of professional acting experience and has performed in several theatre and commercial productions in the GTA. As an arts educator, Marisa teaches through exploration techniques and culturally responsive pedagogy. She was recently awarded “Best Art School/Instruction” by the Stouffville Sun Tribune Readers’ Choice Awards (2021). *work from home* is Marisa’s first exhibition.

Watch Marisa’s Interview:



Margaret Grandison

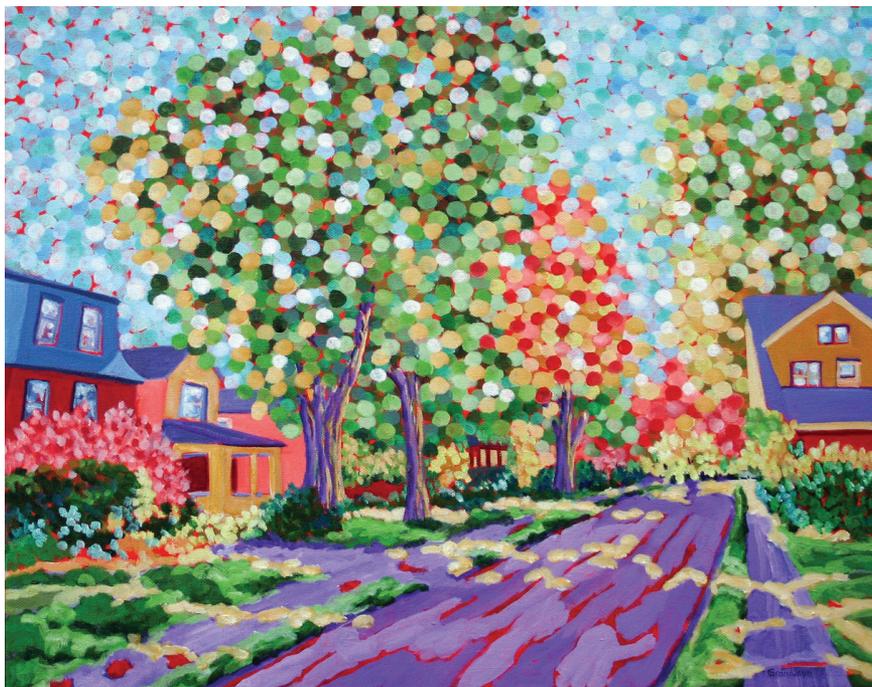
"I have been drawing and painting all my life. I am drawn to landscapes and houses. I am constantly looking for shapes and foliage to frame my subjects. Yellow and white houses figure prominently in my watercolour and acrylic paintings as they act as a foil to the surrounding landscape

In my "en plein air" paintings in watercolour, I like the way the colours mix together on the paper as well as on the palette. I often paint the trees and foliage first, watching the colour combinations emerge. The buildings are painted next and lastly, the sky. I often use the watercolour paintings as sketches or ideas for my acrylic paintings. Here I will paint the sky first, then the trees, finishing with the houses.

I love experimenting with many colour combinations and find it difficult to limit my palette. So many colours; so many choices."

Margaret Grandison is a local Stouffville "en plein air" artist working primarily in watercolour, but also in acrylics and printmaking. Attracted to colour and the play of light and shadow, her delicate style is well suited to the landscapes that form her subject matter. Margaret and her husband have travelled extensively across Canada as well as Italy, Portugal, Scotland, Ireland and England and these painting scenes become the 'postcards' of their travels.

She has participated in many group shows at the Latcham Art Centre, McKay Art Centre, Markham Theatre and Lemonville



Margaret Grandison, *A Purple Road*, 2022, acrylic, 16" x 20". Courtesy of the artist.

Community Centre. She has been a member of the Stouffville Studio Tour since 2002, and Guest Artist on the Uxbridge Studio Tour.

Margaret was educated at the University of Windsor and has a BA with a major in Fine Arts and Child Psychology. She was an educator with a Montessori School, the YRDSB and the YCDSB.

Watch Margaret's Interview:



Erica Joaquin

"One late evening my partner and I were watching "Letters to Juliet." We were in awe of how beautiful all of the scenery is, especially Tuscany with its beautiful Cypress trees within the open fields. We could not help but talk about our plans to go there together one day, and the wonderful adventures we would have. All of our favourites would be there - wine, pizza, and gorgeous views!"

Erica Joaquin is a Canadian-Filipina interdisciplinary artist and designer born in Richmond Hill. She studied a year abroad in Florence, Italy, where she completed her thesis, and her work has been exhibited in Canada, the U.S., and Europe. Erica earned her Bachelor of Fine Arts in Drawing & Painting and a minor in Graphic Design from OCAD University. She is the Education Programs Coordinator at Latcham Art Centre and the Founder of RSNIFY by Erica Joaquin.

RSNIFY by Erica Joaquin was inspired by Erica's love for new experience and the creation of memories, but more specifically, game nights with her family and friends throughout the pandemic of 2020. RSNIFY, pronounced res-in-ify, is defined as the metamorphose into or treat with resin. The creations are not only functional and/or decorative but are also sentimental. Each piece is handcrafted by Erica, with a story connected to them. Whenever the viewer looks at the pieces, her wish for the viewer is that they will be reminded of the wonderful memories they created while using them. Whatever it is, she hopes it brings happiness and light into your life!



Erica Joaquin, *Tuscany*, 2021, resin and acrylic on canvas,
7.5" x 10". Courtesy of the artist.

Having a background in dance and an interest in documenting her life through photography and videography, Erica's work depicts past moments in the present time, making intangible memories tangible using various mediums.

Watch Erica's Interview:



Judith Livingston

“When seized by an idea, I run with it to see where it takes me and how the challenge will be met, whether the results are two or three dimensional, realistic or abstract, humorous or contemplative, aesthetic or confrontational.

Before “Immersive Klimt’ made the scene, I was immersed in the beautiful intricate designs of the Symbolist Gustav Klimt, referencing his work from his Golden Phase in some of my own work. My husband and I are avid fans of Sudoku. With the pandemic we had more time to do more complicated and varied Sudoku Puzzles. The August 10, 2021 Sudoku is very significant since this is the day Maki Kaji, the ‘godfather of Sudoku’, died of cancer. I was seized by the idea of combining these obsessions while doing a Sudoku. So I went to my studio, put on my music, planned out my composition, made my selections of Klimt’s patterns and started working to bring you my tribute to the genius of these two men.”

Judith’s artistic journey began in Woodstock, ON, followed her into Teachers’ College and then into her classrooms. A 1978 family move to Grouse Mountain in North Vancouver rekindled her love of art and the beginning of her art exhibitions.

Moving to Markham in 1983 presented tremendous learning and exhibiting opportunities. With the Markham Group of Artists, she learned from Peter Kolisnyk, Denis Cliff, and John Leonard. Holding

classes at the Ontario College of Art while elections to art societies advanced her career internationally.

An introduction in 1988 to Kathleen McKay, with whom Frederick Varley lived during his later years, led to an invitation to join a committee with AJ Casson to bring 'Fred home'. These intense and exciting times resulted in the Kathleen Gormley McKay Art Centre and The Frederick Horsman Varley Art Gallery of Markham. In 1996 she was part of the group exhibition *Re/Grouping: A Living Legacy* at The McMichael Canadian Art Collection. Sketching Ontario's woodlands led to annual Fall exhibitions at The McKay. During her 2004 exhibition she met The Governor General of Canada, The Right Honourable Adrienne Clarkson. In 2008 a twenty-five-year retrospective at The Varley Art Gallery showcased her work.

Watch Judith's Interview:



Nanor Najarian

"In this painting I think of the subject as myself, and I am welcoming you with my open arms. I am presenting you with a bounty. Food is a very important part of everybody's life, but it is not something to be taken for granted. Not every tummy is going to be full at the end of the day. The generosity and loving kindness that the figure in this painting is putting forth, that's the energy that I think makes itself known. She is welcoming you; she is feeding you; she wants to give you that (nutritional) security. Many people are facing food insecurity, and this character, who embodies generosity, is trying to please, fulfill, mother, and comfort.

I am very proud of this painting. It is not hyper realistic because I chose to stylize it for a specific purpose. More than focusing in on the details, I wanted the audience to focus in on the energy. It's the energy that feeds you. There are peaches and grapes, but it is the energy that ultimately feeds the viewer. Gratitude. And the warmth. And to be quite honest, being from a Middle Eastern culture: we feed you. That's how we show love."

Nanor Najarian is an Armenian-Canadian emerging artist based in Whitchurch-Stouffville. She has been creating art for 17 of her 19 years, often taking inspiration from her heritage, antiquity and old masters, and her country hometown close to the city. She finds immense joy in cluttering the kitchen table with tubes of acrylics as she paints feverishly works on varying sizes of canvas.

Nanor has volunteered at Latcham Art Centre and the Whitchurch-Stouffville Public Library to pass on her love for creativity, languages, and learning to the youngest generation of artists. She believes that all children and youth have a right to the positive mentorship she has been blessed with. In the near future, Nanor plans to teach French and Visual Arts. She is thrilled by the idea of continuing her paintings' narratives for the community and the world to see and hopefully relate to.

Watch Nanor's Interview:



Ray McNeice

“First and foremost I am a painter ‘en plein air’ I feel that all the information that my various senses take in during the time I am painting end up finding their way through my brush and into my work. My style is a product of a forty-six-year career in graphic design... a concern for shape and form, eye movement and spatial relationships. My medium of choice is transparent watercolour. I like its brilliance, its immediacy and its transportability. My work has a sense of movement with a colour intensity reminiscent of acrylics. It has a strong design and composition leaning toward an objective abstract approach. I paint with controlled washes, working smoothly with an eye toward the balance of forms and shapes that give my work its distinctive character.”

Educated at the Ontario College of Art and Design, Ray has had a forty-six-year career as a graphic design professional and creative director in Toronto. He and his wife moved to Stouffville in 1983 where they joined a nascent group of painters “en plein air”. This pursuit filled his need to draw and paint from life that was missing in his advertising design career.

Ray developed a painting style that is a product of his long career. His medium of choice is transparent watercolour; Ray likes its brilliance, immediacy and its transportability. This transportability has allowed him and his wife to travel across Canada and Europe.

His work has a sense of movement leaning toward an objective abstract approach. Painting with controlled washes, working smoothly with an eye toward the balance of forms and shapes gives his work its distinctive character. He also works in acrylic in his home studio in order to reinterpret his studied from life on a larger scale.

He has participated in a number of group and juried exhibitions at Latcham Art Centre and McKay Art Centre, solo exhibitions at the Beacher Cafe in Toronto, the Kent Farndale Gallery in Port Perry and has been a member of the Stouffville Studio Tour since 2022. He has also been a guest artist on the Uxbridge Studio Tour.

Ray is a strong advocate for the visual arts community in York Region and has sat as a Board Chair of Latcham Art Centre and the Stouffville Studio Tour.

Watch Ray's Interview:



Sarka Buchl Stephenson

"I like to touch and experience images that I choose to paint or print, so I gather and collect remnants of nature. I seek out natural forms that have a unique array of patterns, interesting colour schemes and intricate lines.

During COVID there was not much to do except for walking, so I continued to walk about in the park across my house, our family cabin up north and canoe trips to Georgian Bay and collect. Just finding a feather brought me a solitude, connection to nature and an escape from the world of COVID.

There is a story for every image that I portray in my artwork. Mushroom and herb picking derives from a family tradition. My childhood memories are filled with smell of herbs and sliced mushrooms as they are drying on a newspaper. I don't like working from photographs because I need to see the subject matter up close to develop a relationship. My oil paintings are painted on wood that I stain and then I use a sharpie for the outlining. The two printmaking techniques that are used within my prints are waterbased monoprinting and drypoint. The monoprints are painted in watercolours onto a lexan plate, dishwashing soap is used to bind the paint to the plate and to create bubble effects. The dry points are executed on aluminum onto which lines are incised with a sharp tool and printed on arches paper. A traditional press is used to print these two techniques."

Sarka Buchl Stephenson was born in the Czech Republic and immigrated to Canada with her parents in 1980. She demonstrated keen interest in drawing and painting at an early age and her formal art training began in 1989 at the Ontario College of Art

and Design, where she specialized in Illustration and minor in Fine Arts. In 1993 she graduated from OCAD with a four-year diploma and went on to pursue post-graduate studies at the Academy of Applied Arts in Prague, Czech Republic. At the Academy, Sarka studied book illustration and printmaking under a well-known Czech Illustrator Jiri Salamoun. It was in Prague that Sarka became interested in printmaking and upon returning to Toronto she enrolled in printmaking courses at the Central Technical Institute and the Open Studio.

Since 1995, the artist has been exhibiting her work throughout Toronto and York Region. It is nature and familiar objects that influence her creative process. When not creating artwork, Sarka enjoys instructing art classes, yoga, canoeing, and most of all spending time with her family up north at their “Lily Pad Bay Cabin” in the Madawaska Valley. It is on the river that Sarka gathers strength and inspiration for her art.

Watch Sarka’s Interview:



latcham

ART CENTRE

Latcham Art Centre inspires the community to engage with visual art through exhibitions of contemporary art and education programs including classes, workshops, artist talks and tours. It is funded by donations, sponsorships, membership and fundraising events as well as annual grants from the municipality of Whitchurch-Stouffville and the Ontario Arts Council.

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