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MOSAIC

THE ART & CULTURE
MAGAZINE - GREY BRUCE

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Processing Place

WALKING AND DRAWING

Feature interview with the Owen Sound painter Kristine Moran.

PEOPLE PLANTS & LAND

Fiddlehead Nursery in Kimberley brings balance to their gardens.

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Cover Image:
THE CENTER HOLDS (2024)
Kristine Moran

A place of becoming.

The issue features an interview with Owen Sound artist Kristine Moran, where we touch on place as a starting point for exploration of universal themes and personal stories. Exploring local garden Moreland Place, Moran finds inspiration in elements of landscape and architecture that touch on hidden feelings longing to surface.

Places like these continuously evolve into something new every year, changing and growing new elements that bring new meaning to light — just like an artist can build spaces ripe for interpretation through painting after painting.

We again explore place while meeting Kimberley-based permaculture farmer Ben Caesar, who balances plants, people, and land to create thriving perennial ecosystems. And we discover the multitude of opportunities to develop personal creativity through a look at arts education organizations right here in Grey Bruce. Finally, we learn to think about art galleries within their own creative ecosystem.

Each of these places inspire a process of becoming, whether through painting, farming, or taking an art class. It is place that ground us — giving us time to grow each and every day.

- Ken Bryson

MOSAIC

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Stepping into the circle of dance

Gurudayal Khalsa & Philly Markowitz

You arrive at the studio just before the music begins. Shoes come off at the door. Inside, the wooden floor is open and quiet. People drift in slowly, stretching, breathing, greeting each other softly. The atmosphere is intentionally ceremonial and community-oriented. Without conversations, phones, or mood altering substances, the experience becomes focused on moving with the music, and listening to the body.

Ecstatic Dance is about sharing a space where everyone is free to dance alone together and to express themselves without judgement. The event begins and ends with a simple opening circle. The presenter describes the rules of engagement for the session (sober event, no talking on the dance floor etc.). Then a seamless flow of music begins.

The Ecstatic Dance movement has spread around the world and has now come to Owen Sound. Local event co-organizer and DJ Guru Khalsa says: “I first attended an ecstatic dance session at a festival in India, and was struck by both the way that it was presented as an interactive workshop, and the idea of free-form dance as the medium for somatic release.” Somatic release is a process of “shaking off” stress and unwanted energy that is trapped in the body.

This way of dancing can be traced to the late 1960s; dancer Gabrielle Roth began exploring freeform movement at the Esalen Institute in California and later went on to develop 5Rhythms, a movement meditation exploring five energetic phases: Flowing, Staccato, Chaos, Lyrical, and Stillness. These tempos bring the dancer through a variety of mental and physical states. Her work spread globally through workshops and teacher training, establishing the idea that dance could be a path to personal transformation; movement as medicine.

Ecstatic Dance also relies on elements of rave and nightclub culture. DJs, sound systems, and long-form electronic sets found their way into conscious dance spaces. Weekly conscious dance events began appearing in North America in the late 2000s and 2010s, often blending tribal and organic house or drum and bass music, world percussion and vocals, and ambient soundscapes. The music may run alongside ceremonial elements like drinking cacao, breathwork, sound baths or simple intention-setting. Ecstatic Dance can be seen as a kind of workshop on the dance floor, keeping the powerful musical arc and collective energy of rave culture while



Photo by Kamyar Dehghan on Unsplash

reshaping the setting into something more reflective, intentional, and rooted in community connection.

Ecstatic Dance is a sober experience. Says Khalsa: “I like to think of the “ecstatic” part as, using your own innate relationship to music and movement to achieve an altered state of consciousness, beyond the assistance of substances.”

The events in Owen Sound are co-created by Philly Markowitz, former world music programmer for CBC Radio and current clinical hypnotherapist. Markowitz is drawn to the practice of using music as a full-body meditation. “I’ve always found music to be a powerful tool to focus intention and energy. Free movement is great for my mental health. You simply dance with yourself and for yourself for the pure joy of it, and you are surrounded by others who share that joy.”

The Owen Sound gatherings are held monthly, in the beautiful Trillium Healing Arts Centre studio space on 9th Street East, next to The Roxy Theatre. The events are held on the third Sunday of the month at 2pm. Exceptions may be made in months with 5 Sundays. Additional elements, like sound baths or guided meditation, may be woven into the experience.

There is a dance on Sunday, May 24. A special event will be held on the summer solstice: Sunday, June 21. For event details, follow Ecstatic Dance Owen Sound on Facebook and Instagram @ecstaticdanceowensound.

The invitation is simple: arrive on time, step onto the dance floor, and allow the music to guide you. ■

From bannock to bison at Naagan

Frankie Condon explores the food scene in Grey Bruce in this ongoing series

Chef Zach Keeshig, creator and owner of Naagan — the Owen Sound restaurant recently named by Time Magazine as one of the World’s Greatest Places of 2026 — is a master storyteller.

And stories, it seems to me, go quite naturally with food. Indeed, when food scholars and writers speak of *foodways*, we speak of the cultural knowledge and belief, the figuration of social relationships, and the ways of gathering, shaping, preparing, and sharing sustenance that are embedded in the food traditions of a people. That is, where our food comes from, how we gather or procure our food, what we make of it, how we share our food and with whom, are the foodways that emerge from our collective histories. Our foodways are stories we nurture about who we have been, are now and may become.

Every dish served at Naagan is a story composed by Chef Keeshig. His stories are told as diners are introduced to the locally sourced, foraged ingredients that compose each dish, and to the combining of Indigenous and western culinary methods by which each dish is prepared. Each story is deepened as bodies as well as spirits are nurtured by the sharing of Chef Keeshig’s cuisine.

The experience of dining at Naagan is magical. Foraged sweetgrass, sunchoke, knotweed, sweet clover, and lemon grass hang to dry from pine beams. Paintings and prints by Indigenous artists hang on the restaurant’s pine-paneled walls alongside objet d’art created in the meeting places of wind, water, fire, and earth. A galley kitchen and shelves of the most fascinating assortment of “plates” (ceramic turtles, birch plates, bison skulls, etc.) are positioned along the left side of the main room, while tables for seventeen lucky diners are carefully spaced for mobility and access along the right.

Each course (loosely, four starters, four entrees, and four desserts) is finished and plated in the galley kitchen and each is preceded by its story. Diners learn a little of the place of principal ingredients in Ojibwe foodways; learn where and how principal ingredients were foraged by Chef Keeshig and his assistants; and the culinary methods — both Ojibwe and western — that have been braided to produce the dish now placed before each patron. Beautifully plated, the flavours of each dish progress along the tongue: layered, complex, and fantastically textured.



Photo courtesy Naagan.

will not give away the menu I partook in its entirety but rather give you a hint, a sense of the courses. One of our favourite dishes of the night was a lion’s mane mushroom bite finished over charcoal, gently seasoned with salt, and served with a frothy reduction of whey reserved from the yogurt base for the first of the starter courses. The interplay of the mushroom’s umami with the light, tang of whey was breathtaking! This dish was served in a handcrafted pottery bowl, lightly distressed.

From Bannock to bison, tartlet to duck breast, sweet clover ice cream to chaga, we wondered as we ate and talked, “how did he even think of this?!” And that, I am quite certain, is the question every fine artist hopes will be asked of their work.

There is nothing old, tired, or stodgy about the food Chef Keeshig is serving. Rather, this food is a most generous introduction to foodways eons in the making, and to communities whose spirits as well as bodies are sustained by the beauty and plenitude of the lands, riverways, and lakes that are the homelands of the Ojibwe Peoples of the Saugeen Peninsula.

From dishes created by Michelin chefs to the plethora of farm, woodland, lake and stream ingredients in use, from avant garde and haute cuisine to an array of culinary traditions and cultures, writer Frankie Condon explores the diversity of fine dining experiences available along the shores of Lake Huron, the Georgian Bay, and the villages and towns of the Saugeen Peninsula.

Frankie Condon works as a professor in the Department of English at the University of Waterloo. She is a writer of creative nonfiction, memoir, and poetry as well as of scholarly prose.

Poetic transition in Owen Sound

Rebecca Diem & Jennifer Frankum

The following is a condensed conversation between past poet laureate Rebecca Diem and the newly announced poet laureate Jennifer Frankum.

Rebecca: We just introduced you to City Council as the new poet laureate. How are you feeling?

Jennifer: I am feeling really energized and excited. Looking forward to more events this month and onward for two years – not quite two years, till the end of 2027.

Rebecca: Yeah, there's that nebulous time between the poets laureate. What was it like when you knew, but no one else did?

Jennifer: Oh, how did that feel? I felt like I was pregnant. This is a good surprise, and I know people are going to be excited for me because I've got such a strong group of friends and writers that are so supportive. But I couldn't say anything, and they were asking me because they knew I had applied.

Rebecca: I was so happy, especially finding out just after the Poet Laureate's Community Revue. It felt like everything that I'd worked on was going to continue – that idea of bringing the community in – and I think that you do that so well, you invite people to discover the poetry in their own hearts, and you do it in such an impactful way.

Jennifer: Thank you so much! People may say they don't like poetry – I think what they don't like is picking poetry apart bit by bit and analyzing it. But if someone writes a love poem for you? You love that poem.

Rebecca: I really like that conversation around what a poem needs to be. You have so many workshops planned and you create that space for people to sit with that poetry and then to grow their skills, especially with your background as a teacher!

Jennifer: I think it's a whole other ball game being the poet laureate than being a teacher of poetry in a high school. Because when I would say, "we're having a poetry unit," there would be great groans. They had to be turned onto it somehow. Almost every teenager I knew went through this angsty stage and the time when the self-loathing was very close to the bone, and not only did they not like themselves very much, they didn't like anyone else very much, including their parents. Probably, if they had a dog, they were happy with



Jennifer Frankum & Rebecca Diem

their dog. As a poet laureate, people are already coming to the workshop ready to listen. It's like conversational poetry.

Rebecca: And meanwhile, when I got your message, I'd had my grandparents' 60th anniversary party and then the very next day my mom's 60th birthday party, and we were in the living room with my daughter and nieces and nephews just, yeah, floor is lava, cake and cookies everywhere, trying to get other foods into their little bodies. It was so intense and then I saw your words about your daughter being grown, and like, I need both the hope that one day that she will be grown and also the reminder to sit with her while she's young.

Jennifer: It will happen, and it happens so quickly that all you're left with are the pictures and the memories and your children don't remember half the things that you remember because their little brains were just forming. They are still so close to me, and I think we must have done something right.

Rebecca: There was something that you said about the freedom of the poet laureate role, and I think that it really solidified something that I tried to do in my term, which was to extend that freedom and permission and validation to others. What did becoming the poet laureate do for you creatively?

Jennifer: It was a great confidence booster, you know? Someone believes that I can do this job. And it's an honour, and a responsibility, and an opportunity to reach out to different communities. Small communities where people are quite isolated, especially if they don't drive anymore. It's very rewarding, and sometimes we just talk. It's wonderful to have the background in teaching and also to have the background in being counselled by different people. To say: 'you are creative, you just don't know how you're creative. You don't know how, but you will be creative.' **■**

Past and Present, Present and Past

By Jennifer Frankum & Rebecca Diem

Shall we write a poem
one line at a time?
Your turn now
Though you are likely busy
while I am lounging on the sofa,
sipping my second cup of bliss
scribbling and texting by turns.

My friend,
you're a balm in the chaos.
This idea is divine.
My world is a constant refrain
of her hopeful voice:
'Play with me, Mama?'
And so I make the time
to dance silly dances
sing our made up songs
to snuggle, to read,
to stand on our heads.

You may be searching
for toddler socks,
while my daughters' clothes
are nowhere in our home.
My babies grown
up and away,
and your sprout
you tend to
root, stalk, leaf, bloom
as you listen to the voice
of one you made from your love.

And meanwhile,
I forget the world is turning.
No past, no future
only our collection of now
And when the nowness
is overwhelming
I look to friends like you
And I feel reassured

Easy does it, young mother,
that's the way to forget
until a far away September.
It's the growing and the loving
you'll remember.

Process, place and painting with KRISTINE MORAN

Interview by Ken Bryson

Some places continuously inspire. For Owen Sound artist Kristine Moran, each visit to Moreland Place unlocks fresh inspiration, feeding a process that moves intuitively from line drawings to luminous large-scale canvases. It's a practice built on layers of meaning and sustained by the strong circle of community she's found along the way.

Tell us about your journey to becoming a painter.

I first studied Landscape Architecture, but it wasn't the right direction for me. I'm better suited to long, solo days in the studio, and I wanted the freedom to follow my own line of inquiry. I applied to the Painting program at OCADU in Toronto, where I found a way of working that aligned more closely with how I think and work.

My mother had an art practice while I was growing up in a suburb of Montreal. She had a studio in the basement of our house and worked with oils and oil pastels. It had a strong impact on me. I used her materials and began oil painting at a very young age. My mother passed away while I was in my third year at OCADU and never saw my first gallery exhibition, but I feel grateful for the connection I have with her through my art practice.

After graduating from OCADU, I moved to New York to pursue an MFA at Hunter College. Throughout much of my career, I centered my work around personal experience, working through things such as my mother's death, my own mortality, and raising children. Over time, I was led back to the landscape, not as observation but as a way to construct something else. It became a space to work through desire, distance, and the idea of an alternate reality.

At the same time, I began creating abstract spaces rooted in my drawings through space, as a way to reconstruct something

in my mind — possibly from childhood, or as another form of escape. Each iteration, or new painting series, builds on the previous one, both in mark-making and in concept.

Moreland Place has been an inspiration for you, what takes you there?

From speaking to Barry at Moreland Place — who he is as a person and his history — it feels as though he's created his own pleasure garden. It's a passion project for him. He puts so much labour and love into this property. The perennial garden is an ongoing obsession. He's said to me that it's never done, and he's always talking about how he has so much more to do. There's something interesting about that, about this obsession over something that you can't let go of. I'm drawn to that idea.

Every time I go, I bring my sketchbook. This is how I've been working since about 2022, going to the property and doing quick line drawings as I'm walking around. I've been calling this project "drawing while walking."

I try to incorporate parts of particular elements as I see them, architectural details of the greenhouse, parts of his garden, the stone sculptures he's made, and the stone paths leading from one space to another.

I'm not interested in a particular vista. I'm more or less deconstructing the space and then reshaping it into something that answers questions for me.



Kristine Moran, NIGHTWALK (2026).
Image courtesy the artist.

Image by JF Documentation.

Are you interpreting it as you go, or is it more a reproduction of what you're looking at?

I would say I'm reinterpreting it, to the point where it becomes something completely different. I'm interested in shapes and colour, in making something that is a little unexpected and unique that might connect to a memory that I have, but at the same time something that I've never seen before. It's a mix of reality, what's going on in my head, and also a sense of longing. It's a confluence of all these things at once.

It doesn't really matter to me where the original sketch was made. I often lose touch with the geography of the original space. Even within that space, I lose track of what I was looking at once I get into the oil on paper. I like that because it's a way for me to have a framework for which to start a painting with, it's something that I have an emotional and physical connection to. But once back in the studio, I can reshape it into something I'm grappling with.

It might be a desire I'm after, or a nostalgic space I can't quite access. That's what I'm trying to discover through the paintings.

There's an element of space to your paintings, similar to how a garden or landscape is designed to elicit an experience. Are you conscious of creating space within a painting in the same way?

Yeah, absolutely. I think it's a way to ground abstract painting. I use abstract painting to open up the landscape, or vice versa — the landscape is a way to ground abstraction. I appreciate a slow read in a painting — something that slowly reveals itself over time. The more you look, the more you discover. I find that fascinating. I'm very curious about human nature and how we interact with space and patterns.



Kristine Moran in the studio.

This led you to researching the idea of Pleasure Gardens. How does that feed into the new work?

What I'm finding through reading the book *The Pleasure Garden, from Vauxhall to Coney Island*, is the many public-facing gardens in England and beyond draw on the model of the 18th and early 19th century pleasure garden, spaces that were designed for leisure, spectacle and social interaction.

They borrowed heavily from aristocratic landscape design. There's a lot of detail around how these spaces were used, people spending time there during the day in a more structured, social way, while at night the atmosphere shifted, allowing for more anonymity, class mixing and looser social behaviour.

What attracts me to these spaces, like the botanical gardens and Moreland Place, is how they're constructed to feel almost perfect, guiding the viewer in a certain way. It's a curated experience, with utopian endeavours. I also like that there's a duality between the serious aspect of conservation, the science of botanical research, and at the same time there's a need to engage the public.

That's when aspects of spectacle and entertainment come in, which has its historical roots in pleasure gardens and later amusement parks. I find that tension compelling.

I'd like to center my next exhibition around the idea of the pleasure garden. I think it's an open enough thematic idea that other things can still come into it. I don't want the work to be didactic or restrictive. I don't want to box myself in. I'd rather see where the work goes and be open to it.

Can you walk me through your process — from the sketchbook drawings, to the oils on paper, to the large canvases?

I have at least a dozen sketchbooks on the go. The drawings I find most successful, I scale up into oil on paper. Usually about 16" x 12", so still on the small side. I use Arches oil paper, so I don't need to prime it, which helps me to not be precious about it. Taking out that step means I can get into it quickly and if it fails, it's fine, onto the next.

There's something about paper, psychologically, that allows me to be more open to experimentation, and let colour lead the way to composition in an intuitive way.

And what tips you from the oil on paper to committing to a large canvas?

I've been thinking about this recently. There are times I go through my sketchbook and think: "no, none of these drawings are speaking to me right now." Then two months later, I'll look again and think "this is exactly what I was looking for."

If I look too soon after making the drawings, I'll be like, oh, I got nothing. With time and a bit of contemplation, I begin to see the drawings differently. It's also true that for me, the context of



Image by LF Documentation.

Kristine Moran, PRESQU'ILE (2026).
Image courtesy the artist.

what's happening in my life will affect how I perceive the work. In that sense, it's unpredictable whether a certain drawing will make it to a painting at first.

I see potential in many of my line drawings, because at that stage, it's very open, it could be anything and go in any direction. But when I bring them into oil on paper, something maybe goes wrong and it diverges too far from the initial idea. Once it's lost I often don't give it a second chance.

I'll aim to have around 50 oils on paper before deciding which ones to scale up as large paintings on canvas. Then it becomes about what works together and what tells the story that I'm trying to convey the best.



Image by LF Documentation.

Kristine Moran, FUTURE PLANS (2026).
Image courtesy the artist.

You describe moving from the small works to the large canvas as a translation, not a transfer. Can you explain what you mean by that?

Once the painting scales up, the change in brush size alone alters the painting. And so the large painting really does become its own project.

I think of painting as a bit of a chess game. You're going back and forth — I make a move and I sit there and wait for the painting to make its move and then respond to it. With the smaller ones it happens a lot more quickly. But with the larger format, sometimes it can take weeks before the next move is applied because I can't figure it out. I sit with it, step away, and eventually come back with clarity.

Your paintings use abstracted architectural and landscape elements to suggest a space, rather than depict one. Is that intentional?

For a while last year, I was thinking a lot about archways — how they suggest the promise of something just beyond. I was trying to work through that idea.

In one painting, I was trying to reach something I couldn't quite access — possibly a childhood memory, or something imagined. A path with water, structures, maybe a canal lined with buildings, and something just beyond reach at the end. That's where I was trying to go.

What is this space in the back of my mind that I'm trying to reach?



(L) Kristine Moran, Notebook Sketch (2025)
(R) Kristine Moran, Oils on Paper (2025)
Images courtesy the artist.

It's an impossible task, like trying to paint a dream. You can't fully get there.

Now I'm thinking more about excess, frivolousness and grand events, the descriptions of pleasure gardens in the 17th and 18th centuries — a lot of night lights and dark corners, but also sculptural and architectural elements of that time. That's informing how I look at my new drawings. It will usually come down to a mix of interest and something in my past, a memory I can't fully identify, that I'm trying to understand.

You spent a year travelling across North America with your family, and ended up in Owen Sound after living in Brooklyn. How did that change your practice?

For years while living in Brooklyn, I was working with thicker, more impasto brushwork. Then we traveled for a year cross-country in a trailer. I was painting the whole time but on small canvases, eight by ten inches, because of the space restriction. I kept my materials in a box under the bed.

We were driving a lot, and I was drawing constantly. That's where the drawing while walking initially took shape, though it was really drawing while in motion as a passenger in the car.

Being in a different phase of life gave me permission to change how I worked. I shifted to thinner layers out of necessity, and

that has stayed with me. Over time, these accumulated marks and techniques become part of my painting vocabulary, one that I can draw from for each of my paintings.

And how did you end up settling in Owen Sound specifically?

After travelling, we visited many towns to see how it felt — even all the way out in BC — but then we knew we wanted to be closer to family. We have family in Southern Ontario. We went to Peterborough and then Collingwood and Meaford and then Owen Sound just felt right. We stayed at Harrison Park campground and started meeting people there. Our kids were five and seven, and people were telling us about the schools in the area. It felt open and easygoing.

We love it now. I feel connected to the community. My kids have had a good childhood here. I love my studio space and the community at the Harmony Centre. I've found a strong circle of friends in the art community. It feels grounded.

Kristine Moran is a mid-career visual artist best known for having a painting practice that employs an abstract approach to convey autobiographical experiences. Her work is included in the collections of the Buffalo AKG Art Museum, the Glenbow Museum, the University of Toronto and the Tom Thomson Art Gallery. She is represented by the Daniel Faria Gallery in Toronto.

The ecosystem of art galleries

An ongoing conversation about art between Jennifer Norman & Timothy Dyck

Tim: I sometimes hear from artists who are frustrated that a gallery won't exhibit their artwork. How do galleries select artwork?

Jen: I get it, it can be overwhelming for me too. Learning more about the different gallery types and their purposes can be helpful. Each type offers a distinct way to engage with art. Four general gallery categories are: institutional, public (non-profit organizations), cooperative (artist-run), and commercial.

Tim: So what type is Durham Art Gallery?

Jen: We fit into "public", and these art galleries prioritize exhibitions with conceptually critical themes, processes or research.

They play a vital role in community cultural life, presenting work by international to local artists, often highlighting underrepresented voices and creating space for work that may not fit within commercial frameworks. Their programs invite public participation, foster dialogue and make cultural issues accessible to diverse communities.

Then there are the big institutional galleries — spaces dedicated to preserving, exhibiting, and educating about art. These institutions prioritize scholarship, public access, and cultural stewardship. They maintain permanent collections alongside rotating exhibitions with interpretive programming that deepen public engagement.

Tim: Like the Art Gallery of Ontario.

Jen: Yes. Then there are artist-run centers and cooperative galleries that are managed by artists, which prioritize innovation and grassroots support, providing opportunities for emerging and experimental practices that might not find a home in traditional venues.

Co-op galleries distribute responsibility among members, allowing artists to share resources and maintain control over exhibition decisions. Private commercial galleries are on the other end of the spectrum, they vary in size and are generally driven by art sales. They often focus on representing,

exhibiting and selling the work of artists who are established or market-ready.

Tim: A huge range of institutions like churches and universities can have galleries too. I've been to a Jewish gallery in Montreal and there's a Mennonite gallery in Winnipeg. Some sports leagues also have galleries.

Jen: Yeah! Those are great. They have built-in audiences and funding too.

Tim: Ok, so where does the idea that some art is more valuable or more worthy of attention come from?

Jen: Well, for starters, the terms 'high-art' and 'low-art' are absurd, outdated labels. Art is experienced on a continuum that is affected by context. At one end of the continuum is artwork that deals with cultural, historical, and conceptual issues. On the other end is artwork that emphasizes aesthetic appeal or functional beauty, offering work that enhances everyday environments.

The terms 'high art' and 'low art' are outdated. Art is experience on a spectrum

Tim: So, rather than a hierarchy, this spectrum can be understood as part of a larger ecosystem, where different types of art and art-galleries fulfill different roles.

Jen: That's beautiful, I love that analogy.

Tim: Someone recently asked me; how do you reconcile the existence of different kinds of art? My answer was that I liken it to evolutionary ecology. Within any ecosystem, you have species that operate with different priorities in different sections of that network, based on what nutrients they can harvest.

So, an artist can "harvest nutrients" and contribute to a given area as part of this interconnected system. All parts of the ecosystem are inter-dependent. The perceived hierarchy is an illusion.

Jennifer Norman teaches at Ontario College of Art and Design, and is Director of the Durham Art Gallery. Tim Dyck is an artist / bookbinder and operates The Colour Jar in Durham.

Fiddlehead Nursery: where land, plants, and people meet in balance

Words and Photos by Kelsey Vansickle

Ben Caesar is the owner and operator of Fiddlehead Nursery, a permaculture plant nursery based in Kimberley, Ontario. For the past fifteen years, Ben has focused on growing edible perennial plants and helping others design low-maintenance gardens rooted in ecological principles. What began as a personal interest in homesteading has evolved into a small, community-oriented business that encourages people to rethink how they grow and interact with food.

Ben's path toward this life began long before the nursery took shape. As a child in Elmira, he wandered streams and swamps, drawn instinctively to the wild edges of the world. The dream of homesteading stayed with him, growing quietly until the opportunity arose to buy a small farm. Though he felt the natural uncertainty of starting a business tied so closely to the land, he trusted the pull and went for it. Looking back, he calls it one of the best decisions of his life — an act of faith that rooted him where he was meant to be.

A defining moment came in 2003, when a chance phone call from Ahren Hughes invited him to help plant a field of nut trees. The two had only known of each other through their fathers, yet that day began a lasting friendship and introduced Ben to the philosophy of permaculture. The idea that an edible landscape could mirror the balance and resilience of a natural ecosystem changed and affected him deeply. Through Ahren, Ben discovered not only a method of gardening, but a

way of seeing — one where humans are participants in nature rather than separate from it.

Books and ideas have continued to shape Ben's thinking over time. Writers such as Samuel Thayer, Martin Crawford, and Eric Toensmeier helped deepen his understanding of edible wild plants, agroforestry, and perennial agriculture. Their work offered both practical knowledge and a philosophical framework — one that envisions humans living in respectful

partnership with the earth while restoring soil, storing carbon, and growing nourishing food. At Fiddlehead, these influences live on in the diversity of crops and the layered, ecological approach to cultivation.

For Ben, the value of his work is measured not in scale but in impact. He takes quiet satisfaction in

knowing he has helped others grow food beyond the industrial system, nurturing both environmental health and personal resilience. Perennial vegetables, he notes, often exist unnoticed in ornamental gardens; what is missing is not the plants themselves, but the knowledge of how to use them. Through his nursery, he has helped shift that awareness, inspiring gardeners to see food where they once saw only foliage.

Permaculture, in his view, is both practical and philosophical — a design system that situates humans within nature and strengthens the resilience of landscapes and communities alike. Yet he is clear-eyed about its limits.

What's missing is not the plants themselves, but the knowledge of how to use them.



Art classes for everyone in Grey Bruce

Ken Bryson

Grey Bruce is well known as a home to many artists. The lifestyle and landscape certainly help, but what keeps artists here, and what draws new ones, is the creative community itself — a community that actively supports and inspires. A key element of that support is the abundance of art classes and artistic education available here.

At the centre of that community, on the main street of Owen Sound, is the Georgian Bay School of the Arts. Co-founder Alan McIntosh tells of how a small group of artists saw a need in 2017 and decided to act. A school that started in a rented storefront has grown into a multi-media hub running everything from three-hour introductory workshops to professional development sessions for working artists. Pottery, printmaking, stained glass, fibre, and jewelry all exist under one roof. It's that mix of media that turns out to be the key.

"Everybody starts with their medium of focus," Alan says, "but then they get drawn into something else."

An hour south in Kincardine, Artemis Atelier offers something more intentional. Athina Gatos Hunter trained in a European atelier system, including long hours drawing from plaster casts, learning to observe before interpreting. Her classes in classical drawing and oil painting are small, intensive in feel, and open to anyone willing to slow down and commit.

"The deeper shift is perceptual," she says. "Once you learn to truly observe light, form, and relationships, it changes how you experience the world." She's now expanding to add a longer-form atelier track for students who want sustained, structured progression over several months.

In Durham, Tim Dyck of The Colour Jar builds on a similar sense of purpose from inside an art supply shop. He teaches pastel, watercolour, and printmaking, and runs intensive six-day bookbinding workshops, with classes now expanding to GB Arts Owen Sound and the Goderich Celtic Roots Festival. For Tim, it's never just about technique. He wants students to understand where their work sits in the long arc of human creative history — to recognize that "now is the time to contribute to that story."

Those drawn more to making than to fine art will find a home at Grey Bruce Makers in Owen Sound, where woodworking, metalworking, laser engraving, and 3D printing open creative possibilities well beyond the canvas. Executive Director Dan

Herrick describes the space as being fundamentally about empowerment and "helping people realize what they're capable of." Through classes, free community meet-ups, and ongoing member access to tools and equipment, the maker space is a hub of activity.

In Flesherton, retired teacher Robert Pointer launched Wildwood Art Adventures in 2025 from a rural studio near Lake Eugenia, offering painting and drawing in formats ranging from casual "Palette Play" paint-alongs to focused multi-week courses for more experienced artists.

In Owen Sound, Amelia Kraemer of Upwards Art pairs a well-stocked supply store with workshops in encaustic, collage, printmaking, and mixed media — built on a philosophy as clear as it gets: art is for everyone. This summer she's running themed week-long camps for kids; just after Labour Day, she hosts the Canadian Encaustic Conference in Owen Sound, drawing instructors and participants from across the country.

Also in Owen Sound Lesley Bankes of Curvey Lines Art School teaches drawing, painting, and cartooning, even launching her newly self-published *Learn to Draw Realism* to help beginners find their footing. Rounding things out, the Southampton Arts Centre offers everything from wood carving to printmaking to relaxed "Crafternoon" sessions from its landmark building in Southampton.

What emerges across the region is an art community that actively passes it on. From formal ateliers to makerspaces, from kids' camps to professional development for working artists, the breadth of arts education in Grey Bruce reflects a community that takes creativity seriously. The only question left is which class to sign up for first. **M**



Photos by Kelsey Vansickle

Grassroots practices alone cannot counter the rapid destruction of ecosystems; meaningful stewardship must also involve collective action and pressure on governments to protect and restore the natural world. Care for the land, he believes, must move in both directions — from the soil beneath our feet to the policies that shape our shared future.

Fiddlehead Nursery has never been a solitary endeavour. From the beginning, Ben has welcomed volunteers from around the world through the WWOOF program, exchanging knowledge, labour, and hospitality. These helpers have become an essential part of daily life at the nursery, bringing diverse perspectives and energy. Their presence, like the plants themselves, has woven a broader sense of connection into the fabric of Fiddlehead.

Education is central to Ben's work. Throughout the growing season, he hosts workshops on edible landscape design, teaching participants how to create low-maintenance gardens that mimic natural ecosystems while producing food and useful plants. He offers sessions on plant propagation and informal tasting tours, where visitors

encounter unfamiliar vegetables and rediscover the possibilities of perennial crops. These moments — small, sensory, and shared — extend the nursery's influence beyond its borders.

Outside the garden, Ben's passions continue to echo his values. He hikes local trails, canoes nearby rivers, and works as a carpenter throughout the winter months, drawn to natural building and reclaimed materials.

Ben's curiosity extends to passive solar design, literature, and the arts, as well as to community activism. As a co-founder of a local Strong Towns group and an advocate for protecting the former Talisman ski hill from development, he works toward more sustainable and thoughtful patterns of growth — on the land and in society.

When asked what advice he would offer to aspiring gardeners, his answer is simple: start small. A single currant bush, a handful of sorrel plants — these humble beginnings can build confidence and grow into something larger. Permaculture doesn't need to begin as a forest; it can begin as a gesture, a willingness to learn from the living world.

Looking back, Ben finds joy in the quiet successes — a greenhouse shaded by flourishing seedless grape vines, beauty and function intertwined. Looking forward, he feels no need to expand.

The nursery remains intentionally small, shaped to fit a modest life and a steady rhythm. What continues to drive him is curiosity: new plants to experiment with, new structures to build, and the ongoing work of tending a place where people, plants, and land meet in balance.

At Fiddlehead Nursery, growth is measured in depth — in the roots that reach further into soil, in knowledge passed from hand to hand, and in the enduring belief that living well begins with learning how to live with the earth.

Kelsey Vansickle is a Canadian photographer working on projects that explore how things are grown, made, and cared for over time. Rather than documenting for immediacy, her work functions as a form of visual preservation. Based in Grey County, Ontario, available worldwide.

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Arts Listings

Artemis Atelier

286 Harbour Street, Kincardine
 artemisartsupplies.wixsite.com/artemis
 artemisartsupplies@gmail.com

Artemis focuses on classical, fine art instruction, helping students build strong skills in traditional drawing and painting. Based on the atelier model, the studio offers private lessons, group classes, workshops, and fine art lectures. Contact ARTEMIS to receive notifications about classes and upcoming workshops.

The Colour Jar

120 Garafraxa St N, Durham
 www.thecolourjar.ca
 Tel: 519-369-1283

The Colour Jar is brimming with creative energy. Artists shopping for just the right colour or canvas, a working 100-year-old printing press, books crafted by hand, artwork expertly framed and the beautiful sounds of piano emanating from the back area ... all part of the charm you'll find here. Tim knows art and can advise on a huge variety of projects. Prices are very competitive, with specialties such as: TriArt paints, Unison Colour pastels, Briggs& Little wool, Daniel Smith, Apollon canvas, Ugo easels, Fabriano notebooks, and hand bound journals.

Curvey Lines Art School

817 3rd Ave E, Owen Sound
 www.curveylines.ca
 Tel: 519-375-7678

I love to teach people all type of people how to achieve their own artistic ideas. I really like to teach people "the rules" then artists can choose to use the rules or choose not to use the rules. I teach drawing, painting, cartooning, shading, use of texture, perspective, composition, colour theory, with tips and tricks for topics.

Intersections Wood Collaborative

299 10th St E, Owen Sound
 www.intersectionswoodcollaborative.org
 info@intersectionswoodcollaborative.org

We aim to be a place for woodworkers and those who love wood to connect, learn and collaborate. We offer programs, exhibits and events that serve a whole spectrum of interests from very beginners to advanced wood artists. Intersections has an active roster of regular and guest instructors, an enthusiastic membership and a modern, well-equipped and maintained workshop.

Grey Bruce Makers

1130 8th St E, Owen Sound
 www.greybrucemakers.ca
 Tel: 226-974-7399

Grey Bruce Makers is a community makerspace offering hands-on courses in woodworking, metalworking, digital fabrication, and creative technologies. Join a class, attend a meet-up, or become a member for ongoing access to tools, training, and a supportive community built to help you learn, create, and grow

Southampton Arts Centre

201 High Street, Southampton
 www.southamptonartscentre.com
 Tel: 519-797-5068

Discover your creative spark at Southampton Arts Centre. Our adult classes (May–October) offer a relaxing, intimate experience with small class sizes, ensuring personalized guidance from expert artists. We also inspire young minds through vibrant artist-led summer and PA day programs for ages 4–12. Visit our website to find out how to unlock your creative potential.

Wildwood Art Adventures

447085 10th Concession Rd #4, Flesherton
 www.wildwoodart.ca
 Tel: 519-922-1298

Wildwood Art Adventures - Lessons and Parties for over 10 years. Robert Pointer is an award-winning artist and experienced teacher bringing a wealth of knowledge to young and old, beginners and emerging artists. Lessons are designed to fit your level. Whether 8 or 80 learn to paint and draw.

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Cindy Norton, MONKEYMAN (2026)
Image courtesy the artist.

Gallery Listings

Bruce County Museum

33 Victoria Street N, Southampton
www.bruce-museum.ca
Hours: Mon-Sat 10-5, Sun 1-5

**Taylor Cameron:
Woodland People**
Jun 6 - Sep 13

Taylor Cameron delves into the history and culture of the Woodland peoples who have inhabited this territory since time immemorial. Taylor was inspired by his passion for uncovering forgotten stories and, drawing on his archaeological training, presents authentic depictions of past lifeways.

Grey Gallery

883 2nd Ave E, Owen Sound
www.greygallery.ca
Hours: Thu-Fri 10-5, Sat 10-4

Cindy Norton: Fragments
Jun 4 - 27

Through an intuitive process of layering and disruption, Cindy Norton develops fragmented figures that exist between surface appearance and inner, subconscious experience.

The Gallery at LE Shore Library

173 Bruce Street S, Thornbury
thebluemoountainslibrary.ca/art-gallery
Hours: M, W, F, Sa 10-5; Tu, Th 10-7

**Eden Watt & Mikael Sandblom:
The Nature of Seeing**
May 2 - Jun 3

In this photography and mixed-media exhibition, two artists engage with the landscape in distinct yet complementary ways.

**Diana Bick & Kim Etherington-Reid:
Nature in Motion**
Jun 6 - Jun 30

This abstract, non-objective exhibition explores the evolving state of nature and humanity's role in preserving our environment.

Deep Water Gallery

583 Berford Street, Wiarton
www.deepwatergallery.ca
Hours: Thu-Sat 11-4

**Tanya Zaryski:
Shake Off the Darkness of Winter**
May 2 - May 30

Tanya Zaryski, a painter, glassblower, potter, and sculptor, presents a dynamic body of work that captures and celebrates the beauty and depth of everyday life.

Catalyst:26
Jun 4 - Jun 17

Catalyst:26 is an annual exhibition at Deep Water Gallery showcasing diverse and compelling artwork created by students from Peninsula Shores District School.

Southampton Arts Centre

201 High Street, Southampton
www.southamptonartscentre.com
Hours: Wed-Sat 10-4

Bev Morgan: Watercolour and Batik in Harmony
May 27 - Jun 20

Hanover artist Bev Morgan explores traditional watercolour and melted wax on paper, embracing experimentation and the surprising, beautiful results of this expressive process.

**Sandy Nelson: Exploring Wildlife:
a Global Photography Story**
Jun 24 - Jul 18

Photographer Sandy Nelson, active since 2002, uses images to tell stories celebrating life's wonders, inspiring viewers to protect wild places and the creatures that inhabit them.

Durham Art Gallery

251 George Street E, Durham
www.durhamartgallery.com
Hours: Thu-Sun 11-5

**Breanne Jeethan:
The System is Broken**
Apr 11 - June 7

The System is Broken is a body of work based on the artist's experiences as a worker in the Emergency Department of a hospital. The series represents abstract scenes of the clinical workspace and is a response to the fast-paced, stressful environment that is rife with trauma, high emotions, and anguish. By manipulating and distorting found imagery created by various medical technologies, abnormalities in the imagery are created to signal the bureaucratic structures and power imbalances that undermine healthcare.

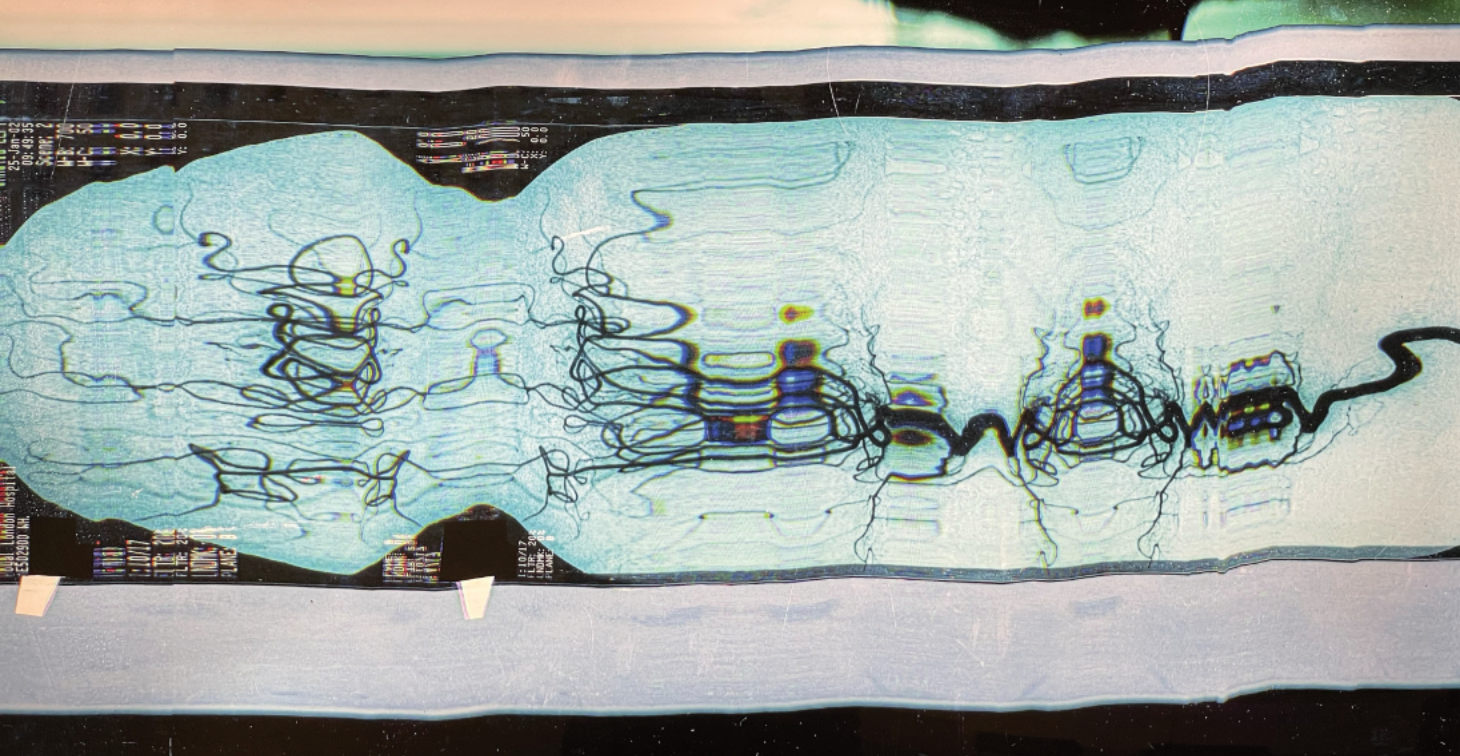
Tom Thompson Gallery

840 1st Ave W, Owen Sound
www.tomthomson.org
Hours: Mon-Sat 10-5, Sun 12-4

**Liz Zetlin: More Than Human –
a year in my garden**
Apr 25 - Jun 27

Liz Zetlin's More Than Human unfolds as an immersive four-channel video installation, filmed over the course of a year in her local garden. Each projection corresponds to a season, unfolding chronologically as shifting light and colour trace the passage of time, from frost giving way to thaw, to blossoms opening into dense summer abundance, and autumn's gradual return to stillness. Within these projections, the garden becomes a dynamic, entangled ecosystem.

<p>Taylor Gallery & Ashanti Café Commercial Art Gallery 550 Berford Street Mon-Fri, 8 am-4 pm</p>	<p>Little MAD Gallery Little Gallery of Miniature Art and Design In front of 704 Gould Street</p>	<p>Deep Water Gallery Public Art Gallery 583 Berford Street (alley by TD) Thurs-Sat, 11 am-4 pm</p>
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Breanne Jeethan, UNVIABLE (2024).
Image courtesy the artist.

The system is sanguine

Amalia Savva

We were recently asked that our next show include colour. The winter has been long, the snow relentless and gallery goes could use a bit of colour this spring! The Durham Art Gallery, a small contemporary rural art gallery, welcomes Breanne Jeethan's solo exhibition *The System is Broken*.

Jeethan, a healthcare worker and recent MFA graduate from the University of Waterloo has a fascinating body of work. The pieces range in media from embroidery to curtains to monoprints and media arts, forming a cohesive narrative across the whole of the exhibition. And when I say body, I mean her work relates directly to the body as a place of injury, illness and trauma.

The artist is interested in medical imagery and spends her work week looking at images of ultrasounds, brain scans and other visuals that help medical professionals determine patient health. Jeethan has distorted and abstracted some of these images into her works in order to highlight profound inequalities resulting from the power structures of healthcare.

Walking into the Durham Art Gallery, you only are given a glimpse of the corner where 200 monoprints are mounted in a grid. They represent the daily intake of patients from the artist's job working in a Toronto hospital's emergency room. The monoprints took Jeethan a year to make, each one different but using similar objects that are found in hospitals,

such as disposable gloves, gauze, and suture thread. It takes a moment to recognize them as clinical and sterile objects because they are so effectively remade into intriguing works on paper. This is where the colour comes in, albeit more sanguine than what visitors may have in mind.

The monoprints, as a collection, are titled *Wound Dressings*, and they remind us of a particular colour found within our bodily veins and vessels.

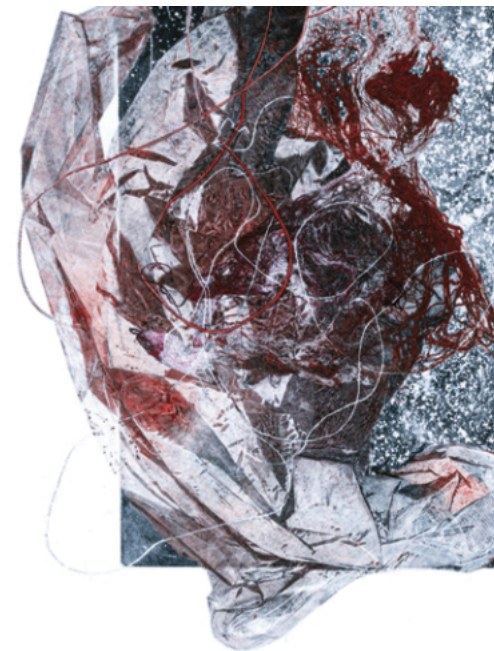
The benefit of working with artists is that the stories of how the works were created are just as interesting as what the finished works convey. At first, I thought that Jeethan's embroidery works were done by machine – they are extremely precise and exact, and the threads so thin.

In fact, she did hand embroider images of cancer growths seen through an ultrasound in order to bring to light the specificities of cancers found in women, entitled *Women's Health*.

Breanne Jeethan's use of different media to collide the health care and art worlds is skillful and intriguing. These artworks can only be vaguely written about. It's best to see them in person. *The System is Broken* is on now at the Durham Art Gallery until June 7th.

Amalia Savva is the Gallery Coordinator at Durham Art Gallery.

Durham Art Gallery

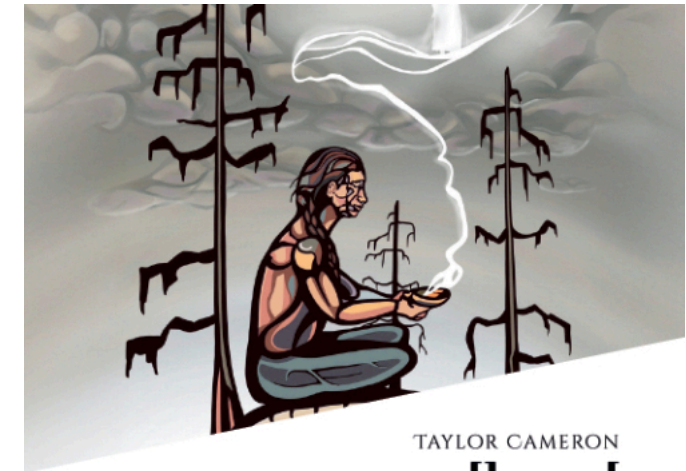
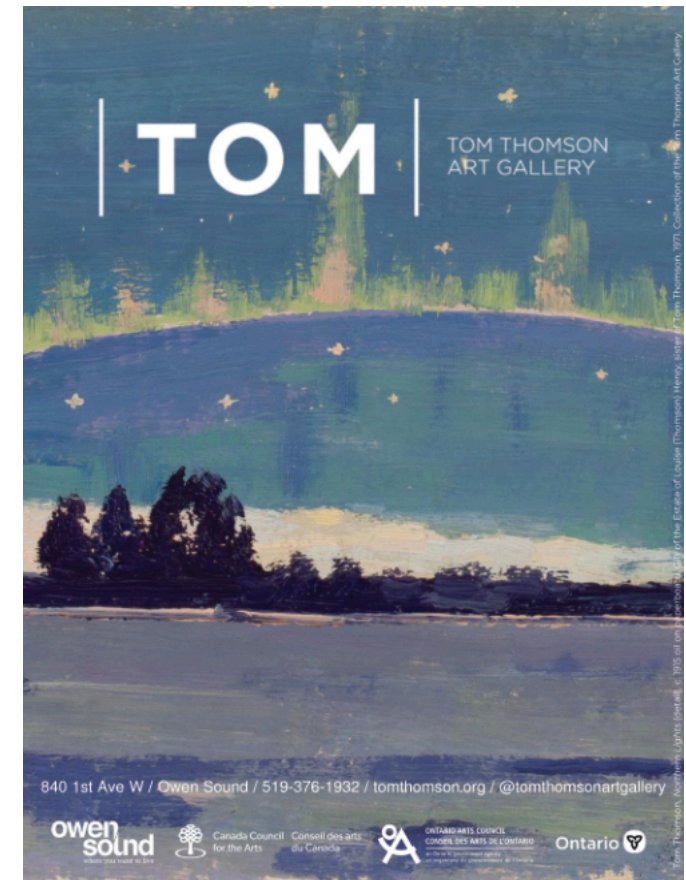


"signals the bureaucratic structures and power imbalances that undermine healthcare"

The System is Broken
Breanne Jeethan
April 11 - June 7
www.durhamartgallery.com



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Choir Camp encourages people to sing

Arlen Wiebe

I recently shared the question, “How can we encourage young people to sing?” in the Grey-Bruce Choir News. Many of my friends and fellow singers responded with great ideas and personal insight.

Some adults recognize that young people are often self-conscious about their voices, and adults need to be sensitive when they speak to them. Some people feel shame about their voices, or are afraid to let others hear them sing, not feeling talented enough. If we compare ourselves to professional singers, it’s easy to find reasons to dislike our own voices.

I think there are many reasons people of all ages don’t sing as much as they used to. Can we make singing a regular community activity again?

Do we have the courage to help adults stop shaming their own voices or shaming young people’s voices? Can we let young people sing the songs they love? Can we show young people that singing brings joy to themselves and others?

My wife, Heather, and I both really enjoy singing. We first met in a choir at university in Winnipeg. Since then, we have continued to sing in community choirs, and in small groups.

In 2023, my friend Matthew Allard (a church choir director) and I started an event called Choir Camp to inspire teen and adult singers to sing and learn. Since then, we’ve run an annual camp in Owen Sound (July 20-24) and we are now adding a camp in Peterborough (July 13-17).

What is Choir Camp? We gather over 100 singers to join together in a mass choir and four 25-voice small ensembles, rehearsing for five days and performing on the Friday evening. We also learn about singing and music in workshops, enjoy a professional chamber choir concert, and share our skills at a talent show. You can learn more at choircamp.wordpress.com.

In 2025, I started the Grey-Bruce Choir News to share news about choir concerts, musicals, workshops, and all things singing. You can sign up at tinyurl.com/g-b-news. **✎**

A concert for hope and resilience

Dyan Jones

A simple good idea can be the spark of an exciting project. How does one foster hope and resilience in these challenging times and strengthen community in return?

These are the thoughts that encircled Randy Martin who knew that he could offer his musical talent and positivity which led to the creation of Earth Song Collective.

A fully curated concert of songs and images will be presented at the Harmony Centre in Owen Sound, Saturday May 23 at 7:30pm. The proceeds of this event are in benefit of The Sustainability Project www.thesustainabilityproject.ca of our Grey Bruce region.

This non-profit partners with idea-makers on aspects of sustainability, including climate action, environmental restoration, nature-based solutions, cultural alignments with indigenous reconciliation, local food security and a green economy with youth engagement. They are committed to creating a more optimistic and sustainable future.



With each individual that Randy shared his idea, the enthusiasm and momentum built. A brilliant core of musicians have stepped up to join Randy Martin on stage to share their inspired songs for the evening: Jesse Corrigan, David Sereda, Heather Saumer, Mark Mariash, Ian Harper and Lydia Dyck. Coco Love Alcorn is a member at heart and will be honoured in song.

Isaiah Walters will power image projections uniting the sound and light. Many volunteers are contributing their efforts to the whole endeavour.

Timothy Dyck of The Colour Jar created the original linocut for the stunning event poster. There are ten limited edition prints that he is additionally offering to the fundraising event for The Sustainability Project.

Tickets are available on Eventbrite, \$25 for adults and children 12 and under are of course admitted for free. We are all partners in the Earth Song Collective. **✎**

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Journey with the Moon's cycle

db johnson

The Moon is of the Earth, our companion, our protector, our shadow keeper. Her orbit is a womb holding the Earth, moving the fluids that give us life and passion.

We began beneath the fiery halo of an Annular New Moon Solar Eclipse on February 17, a ring of light framing a portal into your Heart. Providence offers the strength to sing your deepest desires into your future self. You were asked to dream big, trusting that the building blocks of manifestation would appear in their own mysterious timing. That moment was an invitation.

We carry forward the energy of exciting shifts into new territory ignited by the planetary stellium and the New Moon in Aries on April 17. The next seven years are supercharged by Uranus moving into Gemini. Prepare for an accelerated mind as radical thoughts push forward transformation.

☉ Scorpio Full Moon – May 1

Deep inner reflections allow you to hear the language of the Universe resonating within. Ground to the Earth and feel the radiance. Being the kinetic connector between Earth and the Cosmos is an essential building block for a new foundation.

☾ Waning Gibbous – May 2-8

Do not fear the shadow of judgement. Talk about your wounds with dramatic and impulsive emotional release. Allow a transformation of belief structures that do not serve. Defend the beliefs that support your heart's desires.

☾ Aquarius Last Quarter Moon – May 9

Release tension and let your body communicate with the Earth. Listen with your heart to understand your community. Acting cold and distant will not expand your emotional intelligence.

☾ Waning Crescent Moon – May 10-15

Allow radical thoughts to enlighten your Divine body. Observing the shadowed boundaries of our collective beliefs offers an opening for transformation.

☀ Taurus New Moon – May 16

As we continue with nuanced cycles of transformation, pay particular attention to the perfection of your Earthly incarnation. See this perfection in all the Beings you encounter. Your body is the bridge between Heaven and Earth, build the structures within that support the span.

☾ Waxing Crescent Moon – May 17-22

Performance is a community service. Be the master of your voice and share your creative expressions. More intimately, celebrate heightened sensuality energized by seasonal Spring forces.

☾ Virgo First Quarter Moon – May 23

Outlandish ideas are the most likely transformers. Have the courage to express your radical genius. Innovation doesn't just push limits it reaches for new horizons.

☾ Waxing Gibbous – May 24-30

Security is found in service to community. Dissolve duality and merge all parts of Self to discover inner Love. Feel the movement of the molten core of the Earth and know that we too are constantly shifting.

☾ Sagittarius Full Moon – May 31

What do you believe about your connection to Mother Earth? Include her as a powerful Being in your community. Remember your innate abilities and expand them to assist in your transformation.

☾ Waning Gibbous – June 1-7

Family love is complicated and deep. Take charge and reach out to a loved one to share your thoughts and feelings. Then reciprocate and listen.

☾ Pisces Last Quarter Moon – June 8

A wound can restrict the expansion of your Heart energy. The softness of surrender can dissolve blockages. Speak from the Heart to express your needs.

☾ Waning Crescent – June 9-13

Dance between the care of your physical well-being and your electrified imagination. This action will support the realization of your dreams. Don't forget to weave beauty into your reality.

☀ Gemini New Moon – June 14

Any expression born from the Heart will radiate beauty. These beautiful creations can be shared in a gesture of social cohesion. Imagination knows no boundaries. Don't hesitate to start something new.

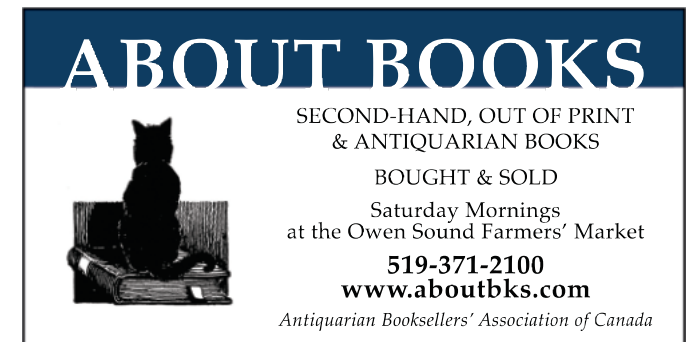
Each of us will experience these lunar energies in a unique and personal way. For a personal reading, you may contact me at johnelmerjohnson@prontonmail.com

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 CHILDREN'S MUSIC & WORKSHOPS · ARTISAN CRAFT MARKET

 **TICKETS hillsidefestival.ca**