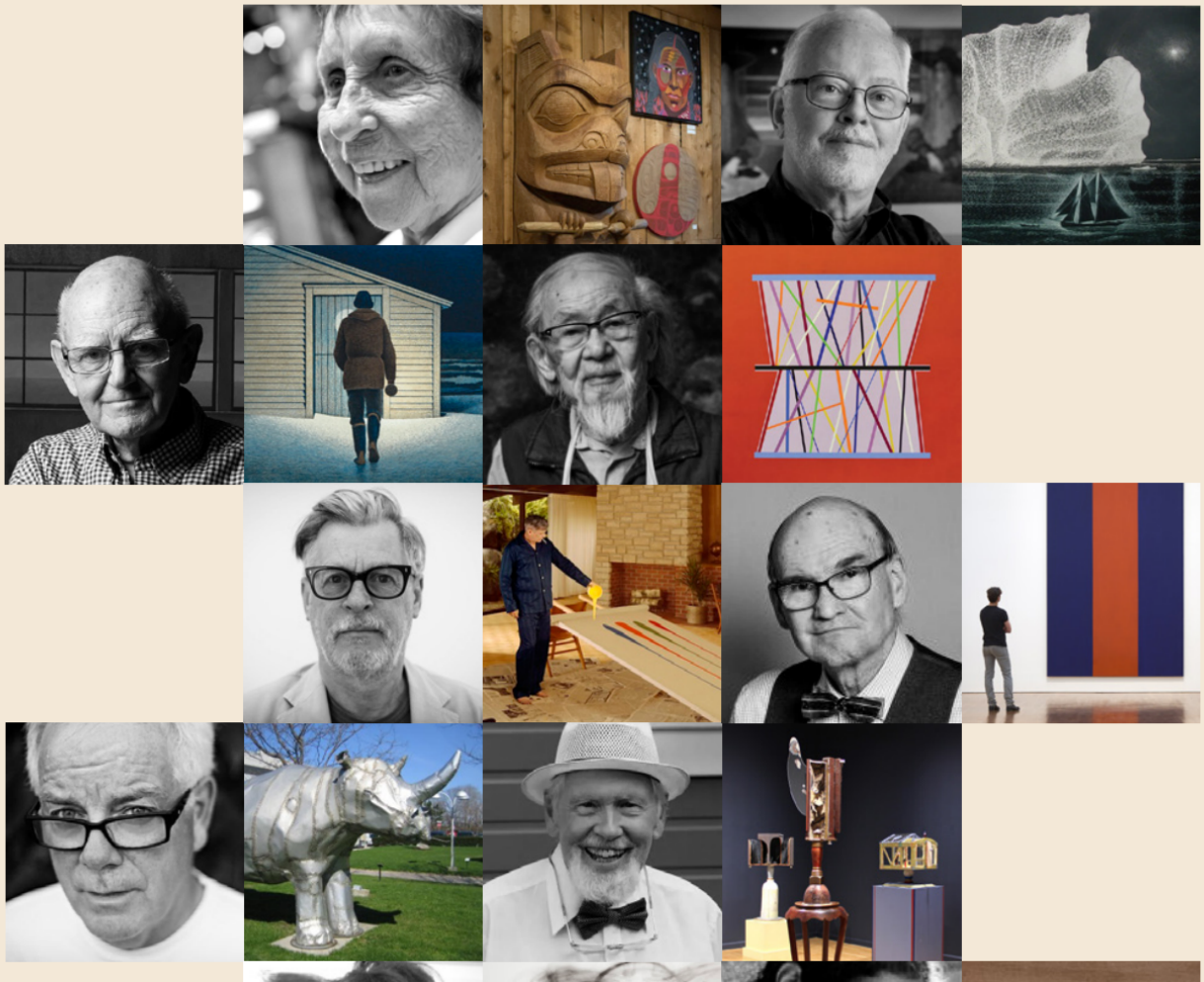
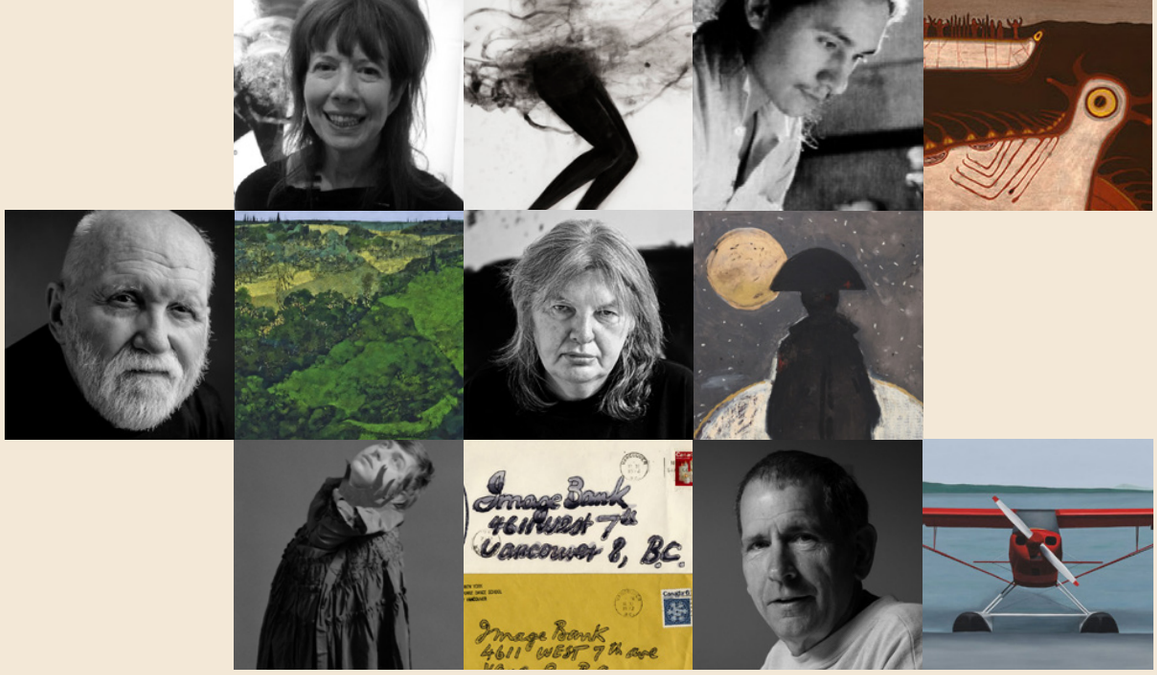
ART CANADA INSTITUTE | INSTITUT DE L'ART CANADIEN

DECEMBER 16, 2022

GONE BUT REMEMBERED ALWAYS
CANADIAN ART LIVES LIVED

This year saw the passing of many talents in the Canadian art world. They were individuals who changed this country's cultural landscape and dared us to see things differently. We honour their memories with recollections from their loved ones, peers, and colleagues.





In 2022 we lost revered artists, educators, curators, and gallery owners who forged their own paths and, in the process, made a resounding impact. In this week's newsletter, their family members, friends, and colleagues offer poignant recollections of those who are gone but will not be forgotten. The unique talent and vision of the individuals included below pushed Canadian art forward in unprecedented directions, while their passion and generosity encouraged the creative potential of their peers and younger generations. Their contributions and legacies will be with us for decades to come.

Sara Angel
Founder and Executive Director, Art Canada Institute

LEONA LATTIMER

MARCH 21, 1932 – JUNE 25, 2022

Passionate advocate of Indigenous art and Northwest Coast culture, founder and owner of the Lattimer Gallery, Vancouver

Leona Lattimer, 2019,
courtesy of Peter Lattimer.

Works on display at the Lattimer Gallery, Vancouver, 2020,
courtesy of the 500 Hidden Secrets.

Leona Lattimer was a strong-minded woman who was full of life and energy. The hundreds of artists and thousands of customers Leona met and worked with were her true passion. She told people who walked into her gallery: “Don’t worry about who made it or whether it’s a good investment. Just let it speak to you and if it does, buy it!” When not in the gallery, Leona could often be found in her kitchen, cooking for loved ones. She was a woman who changed the Canadian art market, yet was never too busy for others—around Christmastime, she would cook ten full turkey dinners for those in need. Leona loved Saturdays, when she read aloud to children at the Lattimer Gallery, often from Bill Reid’s book *The Raven Steals the Light*. Saturdays were also Leona’s time to visit with her friend Norval Morrisseau, who often came for tea.

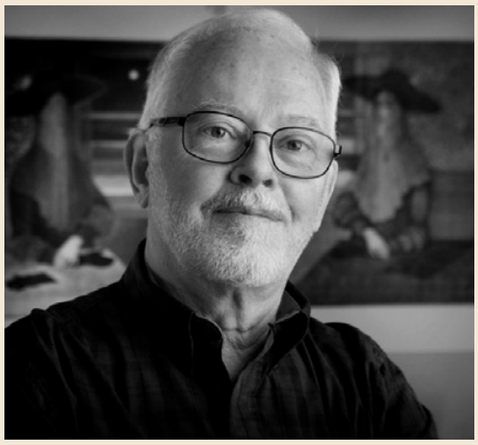
—Peter Lattimer, Leona’s grandson, who continues to run her gallery,
as told to Dara Vandor, Waddington’s

Learn more about Leona Lattimer

DAVID BLACKWOOD, CM, OONT

NOVEMBER 7, 1941 – JULY 2, 2022

Artist and teacher whose vivid scenes of life in outport Newfoundland made him one of Canada’s most revered printmakers and painters



David Blackwood,
photograph by Stephen Amini.

David Blackwood, *Down on the Labrador: Towing the Nickerson*, 2004, courtesy of Michael Gibson Gallery, London, Ontario.

David Blackwood’s name is inextricably linked to Newfoundland. Among his best-known works is *The Lost Party*, a superb series of intaglio prints based on his native province’s 1914 sealing disaster, with their universal themes of displacement, loss, death, threat, hope, and survival. David maintained studios in Port Hope, Ontario, and Wesleyville, Newfoundland, but after moving to Ontario in 1959 he was no longer considered a Newfoundland artist back home. When The Rooms in St. John’s hosted the touring exhibition *Black Ice: David Blackwood: Prints of Newfoundland* in 2011, he was afraid no one would come to the opening. But the place was packed, and when David—shy, modest, and articulate—spoke from the heart, he was overwhelmed by the thunderous applause. He told me he felt that he had finally come back home.

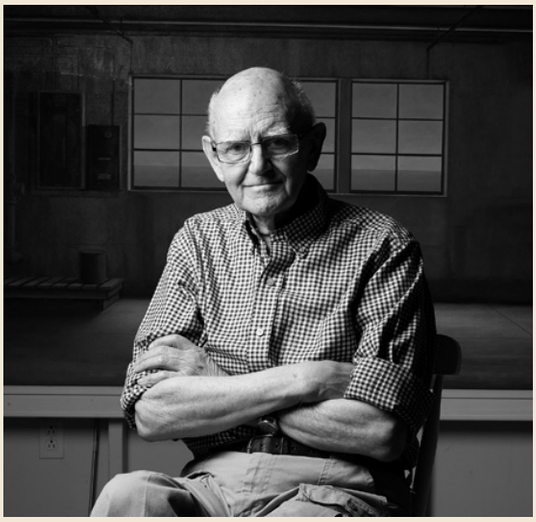
—Dr. Katharine Lochnan, Senior Curator Emeritus, Art Gallery of Ontario, curated the exhibition *Black Ice: David Blackwood: Prints of Newfoundland*

Learn more about David Blackwood

JOHN CHRISTOPHER MAXWELL PRATT, CC, ONL, RCA

DECEMBER 9, 1935 – JUNE 5, 2022

Eminent Newfoundland painter and printmaker whose art poignantly captured the province's progress, transformation, and modernity



Christopher Pratt, photograph by Ned Pratt.

Christopher Pratt, *Christmas Eve at 12 O'Clock*, 1995, courtesy of Mira Godard Gallery, Toronto.

Christopher Pratt described his artworks as "littoral"—existing in the space where the land meets the water, between the abstract and the figurative, between the planned and natural. The form of things mattered: the movement of the seasons, the rhythm of the waves, the points on a compass, the quality of a name. In particular, he was an artist whose imagery revealed his deep respect for the beautiful but rugged nature of his beloved home province of Newfoundland and Labrador. When asked why he painted subject matter that most might not consider beautiful, he replied: "It's not about beauty. It's about presence."

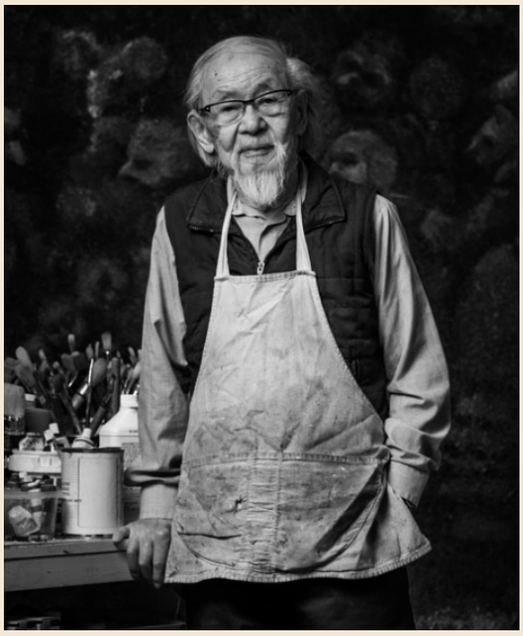
—Mireille Eagan, Curator of Contemporary Art, The Rooms, St. John's, travelled with Christopher Pratt across Newfoundland in 2016 and 2017

Learn more about Christopher Pratt

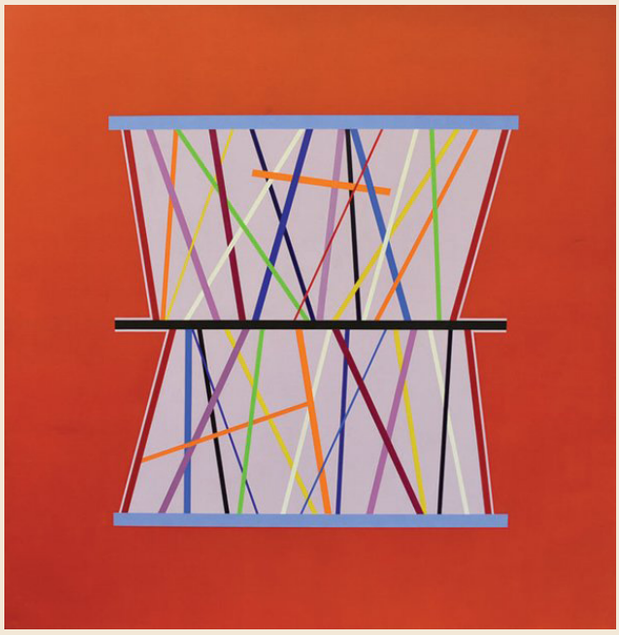
HARRY MITSUO KIYOOKA, RCA

FEBRUARY 18, 1928 – APRIL 8, 2022

Leading figure in the Calgary arts community as an artist, Professor of Art at the University of Calgary for twenty-seven years, co-founder of the Kiyooka Ohe Arts Centre, and a founding member of the Calgary Contemporary Arts Society



Harry Kiyooka,
photograph by Jeremy Fokkens.



Harry Kiyooka, *The Skein of Time*, 1966,
courtesy of Herringer Kiss Gallery, Calgary.

Harry was quietly dynamic and scholarly. He studied Jungian philosophy and art. He spent time in Italy painting and wearing fine Italian suits and shoes. He was kind and generous, but also stubborn and used his iron will to create Calgary's Kiyooka Ohe Arts Centre (KOAC) with his beloved wife, the sculptor Katie Ohe. Although he treasured quiet times in his studio painting, their house was always lively with their friends, who came for New Year's Eve parties even when they were out of town. Harry's big laugh was as infectious as that of my father's, Roy Kiyooka.

—Fumi Kiyooka, Harry's niece, filmmaker

Learn more about Harry Mitsuo Kiyooka

RODNEY GRAHAM, OC

JANUARY 16, 1949 – OCTOBER 22, 2022

World-renowned artist, musician, and pioneer of lens-based media; member of the Vancouver School of conceptual photography in the 1970s

Rodney Graham, photograph by John Lehmann.

Rodney Graham, *The Gifted Amateur, Nov 10th, 1962*, 2007, courtesy of Lisson Gallery.

Rodney Graham was a much-loved Canadian artist who had a huge international following. His early Conceptual pieces showed great scholarship as well as great wit as he intervened in the work of others, like the American writer Edgar Allan Poe and German composer Richard Wagner. In his photographic work of the last decades, Rodney is always the model. Not as himself, but as a fictional character, who is sometimes an artist. It helped that he could have been Marcello Mastroianni's brother. Rodney had a well-deserved reputation as a generous and kind man, and as a luminous genius who knew the perfect mix of the pop, the esoteric, and the political.

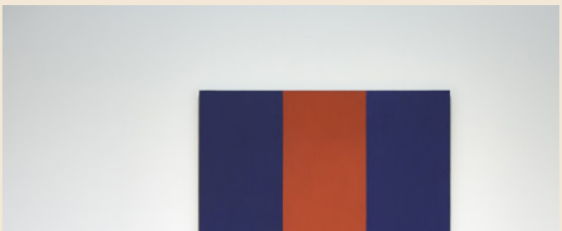
—Scott Watson, Professor Emeritus, Department of Art History, Visual Art & Theory, University of British Columbia, Vancouver

Learn more about Rodney Graham

BRYDON SMITH

FEBRUARY 1, 1938 – JULY 19, 2022

A fearless and prescient curator of modern art, celebrated internationally for his acquisitions and exhibitions at the National Gallery of Canada



Brydon Smith, 2014,
photograph by Martin Lipman.

Barnett Newman, *Voice of Fire*, 1967,
National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa.

Beginning in 1964, Brydon Smith defended some of the most challenging contemporary artists of our time. As a curator at the National Gallery of Canada, he organized landmark exhibitions of work by Dan Flavin (1969) and Donald Judd (1975), and made over one hundred acquisitions for the collection. In 1989 he purchased Barnett Newman's *Voice of Fire*, 1967. In the heated debates that followed, Smith engaged in passionate conversation with Canadians about abstract art. "I'm interested in breaking down conventional ways of seeing," he stated bravely, "in keeping our powers of perception as open as possible; it's only then that we have any possibility of seeing what's there."

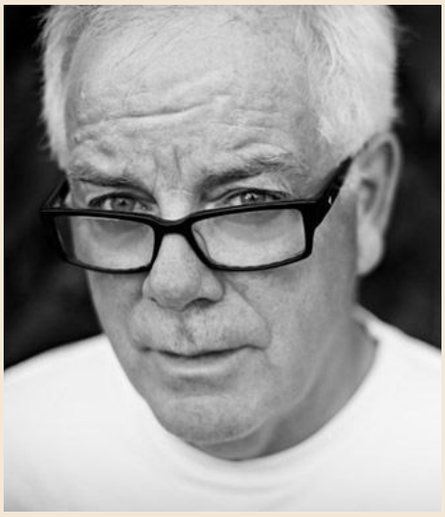
—Adam Welch, associate curator of Canadian art,
National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa

Learn more about Brydon Smith

TOM BENNER

JANUARY 5, 1950 – SEPTEMBER 21, 2022

A pillar of the London, Ontario, art scene, Benner's large-scale sculptures and installations that honoured animals and addressed the environment, history, and nature were widely exhibited in Canada and the United States



Tom Benner.

Tom Benner, *White Rhino*, 1985–86, Museum London.

Like his twelve-foot copper sculpture of a white pine, Tom Benner was a towering artistic presence. His irrepressible, irreverent sense of humour meant that an encounter with him could be hilarious, while also serious. Tom's awareness of the human impact on our natural world led to meticulous research about extinct and endangered species. In 1982, seven fiberglass great auks waddled across the floor of the Forest City Gallery in London, Ontario, calling attention to a long extinct species. Since then, his large iconic sculptures of earth's creatures have appeared—a bison in Union Station, Toronto, followed by a tour to Vancouver in a red pickup truck; a moose in Charlottetown; owls in Woodstock; a white rhino and turkey vultures in London. His sculptures, installations, and multi-media works in many public and private collections continue to bear witness to environmental degradation.

—Judith Rodger, art historian, London, Ontario

Learn more about Tom Benner

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ANTHONY MORSE URQUHART, CM, RCA, LL.D

APRIL 9, 1934 – JANUARY 26, 2022

Pioneer of abstract art in the late 1950s and early 1960s; co-founder of Canadian Artists' Representation (CARFAC), whose work resulted in Canada becoming the first country in the world to pay exhibition fees to artists in 1975

Tony Urquhart,
photograph by Andrew Trant.

Installation view of the exhibition *Tony Urquhart "The Box,"* Michael Gibson Gallery, London, Ontario, 2022.

One of Canada's trailblazing abstractionists, Tony joined Toronto's Isaacs Gallery in 1956 at the age of twenty-two. In the 1960s, as artist-in-residence and faculty member at Western University, he was a vital member of the London, Ontario, scene. He was a founding member of the Department of Fine Arts at the University of Waterloo, where he taught from 1972 to 1999. Tony was a wonderful artist who drew almost until his last breath. Paintings, drawings, prints, and sculptures (including his unique and intriguing "boxes"), often referencing landscape, graves, and memory, defined his practice. Gentle, thoughtful and caring, and always enthusiastic, he was a gifted teacher who inspired generations of artists. Tony grew up next to his family's funeral parlour in Niagara Falls. He was buried this year in the family plot in the cemetery next to that home and his grandmother's garden, one of the artist's favourite subjects.

—Joyce Zemans, curated *Tony Urquhart: The Revenants: Long Shadows* (2002) and wrote the essay that accompanied the national celebration of Tony's boxes, *Coast to Coast: The Little Worlds of Tony Urquhart – Forty Years of Opening Boxes* (2005). She was privileged to have Tony as a friend.

Learn more about Tony Urquhart

CATHY DALEY

APRIL 24, 1955 – MARCH 2, 2022

Toronto artist and educator whose drawings, exhibited throughout Canada and internationally, critically explore the representation of women in Western culture

Cathy Daley, photograph by Christopher Drew.

Cathy Daley, *Untitled - No. 6*, n.d., courtesy of Robert Kidd Gallery, Birmingham.

Cathy was a marvelous artist and dedicated faculty member at OCAD U, where she was honoured as Faculty Emerita. Cathy taught drawing—with an interdisciplinary edge. She brought embodied making, rigorous studio discipline, and a subtle feminist critique of images to her students, famously through her popular course "Representation from Memory and Desire." Always generous, at a recent Drawing Festival Cathy laboured with students over several days to create a beautiful ink wash and charcoal dreamlike mural. As I write, a pair of black pastel legs and a skirt twirl towards me from my wall and I celebrate Cathy's strength, brilliance, and elegance.

—Dr. Sara Diamond, President Emerita, OCAD University, Toronto

Learn more about Cathy Daley

DR. BLAKE DEBASSIGE

JUNE 22, 1956 – JUNE 13, 2022

Notable Ojibwe artist, Elder, and teacher who painted in the style of the Woodland School; co-founder of Kasheese Studios Art Gallery, Debajehmujig Theatre Group, and Weengushk Film Institute

Blake Debassige, courtesy of the Debassige family.

Blake Debassige, *One Who Lives Under the Water*, 1978, Royal Ontario Museum, Toronto.

Blake Debassige, from M'Chigeeng First Nation, was a creative force who painted contemporary and sacred subjects using a visual language shaped by Anishinaabeg ways of knowing. He pushed visual storytelling in fresh ways, clearly demonstrated in works like *One Who Lives Under the Water*, 1978, and *Tree of Life*, n.d., included in the pivotal exhibition *Norval Morrisseau and the Emergence of the Image Makers* at the Art Gallery of Ontario, Toronto, in 1984. While often categorized as a Woodland artist, Debassige found this label confining. It gave an oversimplified vision of his abundant work. To fully appreciate his body of art is to understand Debassige's oeuvre as an endless experiment in storytelling.

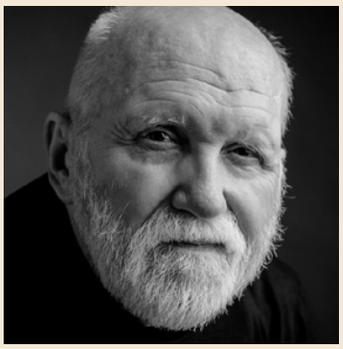
—Dr. Carmen Robertson, professor of art history, Carleton University, Ottawa

Learn more about Blake Debassige

IVAN EYRE, CM, OM, RCA

APRIL 15, 1935 – NOVEMBER 5, 2022

Esteemed Manitoba artist who drew inspiration from the Canadian prairie landscape; professor at the University of Manitoba for thirty-three years



Ivan Eyre, courtesy of University of Manitoba, Winnipeg.

Ivan Eyre, *Tanglewood*, 1973, Winnipeg Art Gallery.

Two years after emigrating from Scotland to Winnipeg in 1967, I came across a painting by Ivan Eyre in a client's home. Never had I been so moved by such a wonderful work of art. I finally met Ivan in 1995 after purchasing his painting *Redhill*, 1978. I planted the seed about building a museum for him, and he eventually gifted his entire collection of paintings, drawings, and sculptures to the City of Winnipeg's Pavilion Art Gallery Museum at Assiniboine Park. His giving continued when he donated nine monumental bronze sculptures to form the Ivan Eyre Sculpture Garden at the McMichael Canadian Art Collection in Kleinburg, Ontario. These two public institutions will ensure that future generations will be able to see Ivan's work, and to feel the same as I did more than fifty years ago when I first experienced Ivan's genius.

—David Loch, Founder, Loch Gallery, Toronto, and Ivan Eyre's art dealer

Learn more about Ivan Eyre

JOHN SCOTT

MAY 11, 1950 – FEBRUARY 17, 2022

Distinguished Toronto-based multimedia artist whose work offers social commentary on war, politics, and industrialization; professor at OCAD University for thirty-eight years

John Scott, 2014,
photograph by Lauren Barless.

John Scott, *Dark Commander*,
2012, courtesy of Nicholas
Metivier Gallery, Toronto.

John Scott joined the Nicholas Metivier Gallery in 2004, its opening year. From the beginning, his raw, expressive drawings and sculptures connected with a diverse and far-reaching audience. John understood the frailty of the human condition like no other and he channeled this in his powerful, very funny, and, at times, alarmingly clairvoyant works. In the last decade of his life, John's career reached new heights—his first major survey exhibition in the United States opened at the Grinnell College Museum of Art in 2014 before travelling to the Art Gallery of Hamilton and the McMaster Museum of Art. In addition to his own practice, John was a revered and long-serving Professor at OCAD University, where the John Scott Bursary was established in 2022 to honour his wish to help students in need.

—Nicholas Metivier, Owner, and Sarah Massie, Partner,
Nicholas Metivier Gallery, Toronto

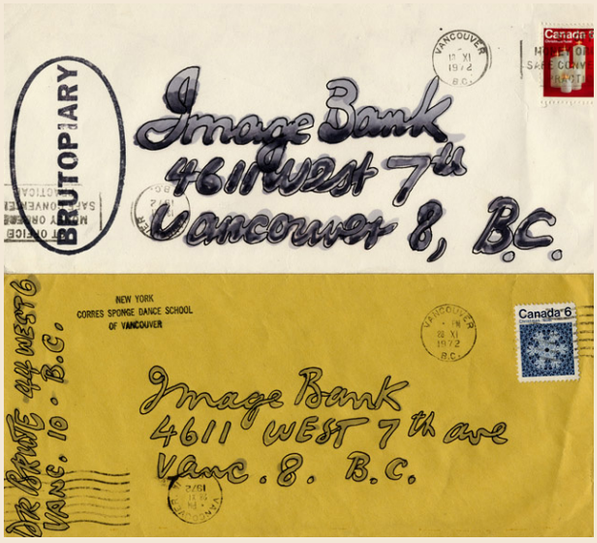
Learn more about John Scott

MICHAEL MORRIS

MAY 16, 1942 – NOVEMBER 18, 2022

Highly influential artist and curator who helped shape the Vancouver art scene beginning in the 1960s; co-founder of the artist-run centre Western Front and of Image Bank, a network of artists who exchanged ideas through the mail

Michael Morris, courtesy of Helen and Morris Belkin Art Gallery, University of British Columbia, Vancouver.



Mail sent to Image Bank, 1972, courtesy of Morris / Trasov Archive.

Michael mentored many young artists and curators, including me. In 1987 I was suddenly out of work and Michael urged me to come to Berlin where he and Vincent Trasov were living after finishing an artist's residency. The ten months I spent there was a late coming-of-age as I learned the German and European perspectives. Michael was attentive, generous, and wise, as well as being a great deal of fun. He had in the late 1960s transitioned from being a painter to being committed to a lived life as art, saying, "I am a citizen of art. Art is my country." Michael did not conform to any consensus about what was cool or interesting. Whenever he saw a spark, he encouraged a flame.

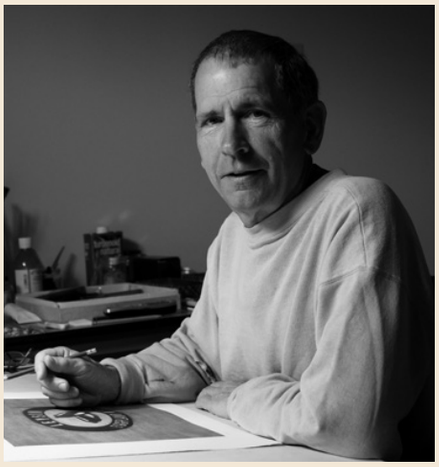
—Scott Watson, Professor Emeritus, Department of Art History, Visual Art & Theory, University of British Columbia, Vancouver

Learn more about Michael Morris

TIM ZUCK

NOVEMBER 18, 1947 – NOVEMBER 27, 2022

Ontario-based artist whose deceptively simple realist paintings of landscapes and people explore the complex process of perception; professor emeritus at the Alberta University of the Arts



Tim Zuck, courtesy of Anna Zuck Downs.

Tim Zuck, *Yukon*, 1994, McMichael Canadian Art Collection, Kleinburg, Ontario.

Tim was a devoted father, a dedicated friend, a passionate teacher, and a talented artist. His gentle quirks were unlike anyone else's and his perspective allowed countless students, friends, and peers the opportunity to view the world from a new place. While he lived many places, Tim always called his island on Georgian Bay home. It is reflected in his work, in the way he was when he was there—relaxed, calm, and creative—and in the way he allowed only a select few to his sacred refuge. Tim attracted people to him instantaneously with a charisma that no one can describe and was doing so until his last day. We are all better for knowing him and lucky to call him friend, brother, dad.

—Anna Zuck Downs, Tim's daughter

Learn more about Tim Zuck

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PAST NEWSLETTERS

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