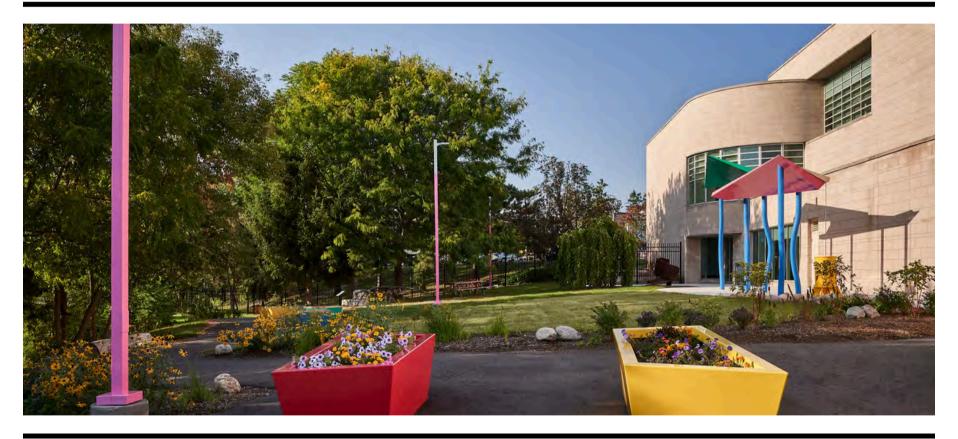


## **ANNUAL REPORT 2023**



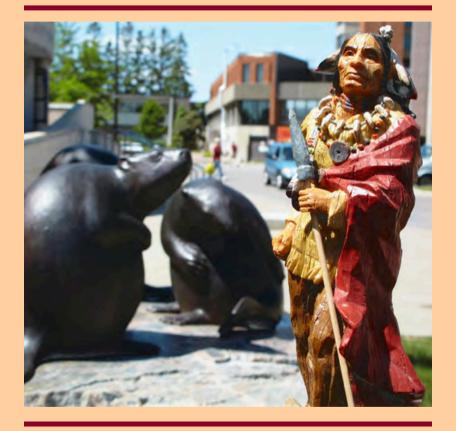
#### THE ROBERT MCLAUGHLIN GALLERY



Installation of "World-builders, shapeshifters" at The Robert McLaughlin Gallery, 2023 Photo by Toni Hafkenscheid.

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Jeff Thomas (Iroquois, b. 1956). "The Delegate Visits the McLaughlin Gallery". 2007. Colour photograph on paper. Gift of the artist, 2009.

## LAND ACKNOWLEDGMENT

The Robert McLaughlin Gallery is in the treaty lands of the Mississaugas of Scugog Island First Nation. This land has been the traditional territory of the Michi Saagiig Nishnaabeg since 1700; before that time, it was stewarded by various communities belonging to the Haudenosaunee and Wendat confederacies. It is covered under the Williams Treaties and the Dish with One Spoon Wampum.

This area continues to be home to many Indigenous people from across Mishiike Minisi. We recognize the sovereignty of all Indigenous nations and are grateful for the opportunity to learn, live, and work on this land.

We acknowledge that the RMG is in treaty land, and respect our collective responsibility to protect and nurture the land. We also recognize the continuing impacts of colonialism and our responsibilities to redress the ways this has helped shape our organization. We are committed to working to address structural inequities and to centering Indigenous voices in the gallery

## VISION

## Art cultivates connected and caring communities.

As an artist-centered and community-oriented public art gallery in Durham Region, we bring people from diverse backgrounds together to engage with art that inspires new perspectives, generates meaningful conversations, and creates a sense of belonging.

## MISSION

# We build relationships with diverse artists and communities through art.

The RMG works in collaboration with artists, partners, and audiences to present dynamic and inspiring collections, exhibitions, and programs in an inclusive and equitable environment. "Enjoyed a fabulous Mother's Day Tea, hosted by Berry Hill of Oshawa at the gallery. Provided a beautiful background and such a day of fun and inspiration. I would highly recommend a visit to this gallery?."

**Comment on Google reviews** 



**Kegan Winters** Chair, Board of Directors

## **MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR**

2023 was an exciting year for the RMG! New members joined our community, bringing energy and diverse views; large projects were completed, allowing us to use our space in different ways; and our programming continues to build connection in our community through art.

First, I would like to extend deep gratitude to my predecessor, Carrie Williamson, who completed her tenure on the RMG Board as well as her term as Chair this past year. Carrie is a tireless champion of the gallery and was able to see through the completion of several major initiatives before moving on to "cheer us on from the sidelines". At the same time, we onboarded three new directors to our board. Kelly McKenzie, Paola Beci, and Reema Chopra bring new perspectives and deep expertise in many different areas – welcome Kelly, Paola, and Reema!

In addition to the completion of The Backyard at the RMG, the staff also oversaw a full renovation of Arthurs. With the completion of Arthurs and the Backyard, in addition the main Isabel McLaughlin Gallery and the WS Nurse Lobby, the RMG has been able to offer a multitude of unique spaces for many types of events, from business meetings, to presentations, to celebrations of all kinds. With 2023 being the first time since 2020 that the RMG has been open for the full year, venue rentals have been growing hugely and it is wonderful to see the space being used by the community in so many different ways.

Our programming was dynamic and inspiring and continues to foster community connections. I enjoy seeing the continued impact of the RBC Artists in Residence program, providing Emerging Artists encouragement to create new work, experiment with bold ideas, and make meaningful connections with our community. In the fall the exhibits, "World-builders, shapeshifters" and Couzyn van Heuvelen's "CAMP" offered two Indigenous perspectives exploring different themes around building connection and community. The RMG continues to engage diverse audiences in new and familiar ways - our school programs were full for the first time since 2018-19 school year and we were able to pilot a new at-school program, linking directly to artworks from the permanent collection with a focus on Painters 11.

Looking back on 2023, I would like to offer a huge thank you to the staff, to the artists, to our partners and funders, and to our leadership team – together, a tremendous amount was accomplished, and I have even more excitement for what we will do together in 2024!



2023 was the first year since I started my role in March 2020 that The Robert McLaughlin Gallery has been open for the entire year! This is a milestone I could never have envisioned when I accepted the position, and feels surreal in many ways. As we transitioned to in-person events and programs, the team carefully considered some of the lessons we learned during the closures about our capacity, how we could best support artists, and what was important to our community.

Key highlights for the team and myself included:

- The opening of The Backyard at the RMG! After 18 months of planning, community consultation, and designing, we opened our beautiful outdoor space designed by the LeuWebb Projects and Brook McIlroy team on July 7 with 300 of our closest friends.
- The development of "The Neighbours Project" led by Hannah Keating and Erin Szikora, exploring how we could extend care to some of our closest neighbours who have experience with housing precarity or homelessness. We couldn't have done it without our partners at The Back Door Mission, The Gap Committee, and The LivingRoom Community Arts Studio.
- We launched our new digital collections project under the stewardship of Heather Riley with support from the Department of Canadian Heritage providing access and more information about our Permanent Collection.
- The continued success of our Teen Art Studio led by Farah Hoosain that provides a relaxed, fun atmosphere for creative young people to connect.
- · A number of truly beautiful exhibitions including local artist Aaron Jones and Winnipeg-based artist Anna Binta Diallo during the summer, a group exhibition of contemporary textile artworks in Piecework, and the first annual juried exhibition led by Cultural Expressions who focus on cultural and ethnic art of local artists reflecting our diverse community.

You'll read in more detail about these and the multitude of other projects and initiatives the team led this past year. I am so grateful for our RMG staff team, volunteers, Board of Directors, donors, supporters, and The City of Oshawa for their belief in our vision and mission. As we head into our final year of our current strategic plan, we will continue to cultivate connection and care within our community.

#### Lauren Gould **Chief Executive Officer**

## AUDIENCE + VISITOR STATISTICS

**ONSITE VISITORS** 



#### **PROGRAM PARTICIPANTS**



"A must-see. The entire gallery is worth the drive out to this special space, and you (and your kids, as it's pretty kidfriendly) can spend over an hour here, looking at all the collections."

**Comment on Google reviews** 







Installation of "Piecework" at The Robert McLaughlin Gallery, 2023. Photo by Toni Hafkenscheid.

## CURATORIAL

## **OVERVIEW**

We started 2023 with a few exhibitions with runs that extended from the previous year, such as the group exhibition "Powerful Glow", guest curated by Lisa Myers and organized and circulated by the Kitchener-Waterloo Art Gallery (KWAG), and "The Beyond Within", curated by Crystal Mowry and Leila Timmins also organized and produced in partnership with KWAG. In January we installed a community photography exhibition developed in partnership with the Abilities Centre. In a two-part program with the RMG, participants of the Abilities Centre were asked to share photographs that reflect who their community is and what brings them joy, resulting in the exhibition "Community and Joy". The Curatorial department underwent some transition in spring 2023 with Senior Curator Leila Timmins starting her parental leave in April. We were pleased to welcome Associate Curator Erin Szikora to the Curatorial team.



Installation of "pitch, slip" at The Robert McLaughlin Gallery, 2023. Photo by Toni Hafkenscheid.

In the spring, we opened three major exhibitions "Piecework", "Aaron Jones: Fountain of Dreams" and "Anna Binta Diallo: Topographies" – all of which explored worldbuilding in diverse ways. "Piecework" featured the work of Hangama Amiri, Alicia Barbieri, Colleen Heslin, Jeremy Laing, Preston Pavlis, Jagdeep Raina, Moraa Stump, Judith Tinkl, Joyce Wieland, and Alice Olsen Williams, all contemporary artists who use textiles and assemblage as worldbuilding tools. Pickering-based artist, Aaron Jones's solo exhibition presented new works inspired by Black fantasy and science fiction narratives that reflected on land-based practices, placement, local histories, and world-building methodologies. "Topographies" was a new body of work by Winnipeg-based artist Anna Binta Diallo that explored mapmaking and worldbuilding.

Our Permanent Collection was featured in several onsite exhibitions and also at various galleries across Ontario through our loan program. In 2023, the RMG leant eight works to organizations including the Art Gallery of Ontario, Ottawa Art Gallery, Kitchener-Waterloo Art Gallery and McMichael Canadian Art Collection. In March, we opened a new Painters Eleven exhibition as well as a solo exhibition of Mary Rawlyk's prints. The exhibition, "Mary Rawlyk: Domestic Disruption", pulled together a selection of work that explored Rawlyk's personal struggles with housework and how these gendered domestic demands enable a wider political structure that controls women's lives. In the spring, we opened "Queering the Collection", curated by Heather Riley, which sought to expand upon the established interpretations of the selected artworks by looking at them through a queer lens. In the fall we opened "About Time" and "Alexandra Luke: Push and Pull". Featuring a variety of art from the collection, "About Time" explores how artists have marked the passage of time through seasons and hours, aging, captured moments and referencing the past.

#### CURATORIAL

### 11

The exhibition "Alexandra Luke: Push and Pull" highlighted important developments in the beloved Oshawa artist Alexandra Luke's artistic journey. There was also the Thomas Bouckley Collection exhibition "Oshawa Creek: Industrial History" that pulled together a selection of historical photographs to reflect on the history of industry along the Oshawa Creek and to consider the effects rapid development has on the quality of health and life in a growing city.

In the fall, two contemporary exhibitions opened: Couzyn van Heuvelen: "CAMP" and "World-builders, shapeshifters". Born in Iqualuit, Nunavut, Bowmanville based Couzyn van Heuvelen's exhibition featured four new large-scale sculptures that reflected on the critical role of land-based practices in Inuit selfdetermination, food sovereignty in the North, and the pleasures of celebrating in community around food. The group exhibition "Worldbuilders, shapeshifters" featured the work of artists Alex Jacobs-Blum, Kat Brown Akootchook, Kay Nadjiwon, Natalie King, Nishina Shapwaykeesic-Loft, and Sheri Osden Nault. The exhibition braided together early and mid-career Indigenous artists that made speculative work about where they've been to better understand where, together, we can go.

The RBC Emerging Artist Residency is a collaborative and experimental program. It provides artists with the opportunity to explore and experiment in a supportive environment. In 2023, as a result of this program three artists presented exciting exhibitions: Brigitte Sampogna's "Nowwhere. No, where? Now here.", Alex Close's "pitch, slip", and Noah Scheinman's "HEAVY/WATER/MACHINE", all curated by Hannah Keating.

Community partnerships remain a vital part of the Curatorial department's exhibition programming. We were pleased to continue our relationships with the Durham Catholic District School Board



Installation of "Couzyn van Heuvelen: CAMP" at The Robert McLaughlin Gallery, 2023. Photo by Toni Hafkenscheid.

with their student exhibition- "Kaleidoscope", the Oshawa Art Association's annual juried exhibition, the Durham College's Fine Arts Advanced program thesis show "EMERGING VISIONS", as well as the Seniors Art Competition and Exhibition "Nourish" co-hosted with Oshawa Senior Community Centres and the Oshawa Public Libraries. We also welcomed new community partnerships, with the "Community and Joy" exhibition presented with the Abilities Centre, and "Unity Through the Arts: An Inaugural Juried Exhibition" presented in partnership with Cultural Expressions Art Gallery Inc. that celebrated cultural diversity in Durham Region. Additionally, Associate Curators Hannah Keating and Erin Szikora developed a public program in partnership with The Back Door Mission, the Gap Committee, The LivingRoom Community Art Studio, April Hind, and Selena Hind.

## **EXHIBITIONS**

"Community and Joy" January 14 – June 4, 2023

"Kaleidoscope: Durham Catholic District School Board" February 24 – March 12, 2023

"Brigitte Sampogna: Nowhere, No, Where? Now here." February 28 – April 23, 2023

"Painters Eleven: Ontario's Abstract Collective." March 11 – August 20, 2023

"Mary Rawlyk: Domestic Disruptions" March 11 – June 18, 2023

"Piecework" April 1 – September 3, 2023

"Oshawa Art Association's 55th Juried Art" Exhibition April 28 – May 14, 2023

"Emerging Visions: Durham College Thesis Exhibition 2023" May 5 – June 11, 2023 "Aaron Jones: Fountain of Dreams" June 10 – September 24, 2023

"Anna Binta Diallo: Topographies" June 10 – September 24, 2023

"Queering the Collection" June 24, 2023 – January 15, 2024

"Oshawa Creek: Industrial History" June 24, 2023 – January 7, 2024

"Nourish: Seniors Art Competition and Exhibition" August 19 – September 27, 2023

"About Time: Permanent Collection" September 2, 2023 – August 25, 2024

"Alexandra Luke: Push and Pull" September 2, 2023 – March 3, 2024

"Noah Scheinman: HEAVY/WATER/MACHINE" October 7 – December 3, 2023

"Unity Through the Arts: Inaugural Juried Exhibition" October 12 – October 29, 2023 "Couzyn Van Heuvelen: CAMP" October 14, 2023 – February 18, 2024

"World-Builders, shapeshifters" November 24, 2023 – April 7, 2024

"The Neighbours Project" December 14, 2023 – February 16, 2024

#### 2023 Virtual Exhibitions:

"The Canadian Group of Painters" May 2023

#### 2023 Publications:

"Aaron Jones: Fountain of Dreams"

"Anna Binta Diallo: Topographies"





Installation of "Piecework" at The Robert McLaughlin Gallery, 2023. Photo by Toni Hafkenscheid.

### "PIECEWORK"

Hangama Amiri, Alicia Barbieri, Colleen Heslin, Jeremy Laing, Preston Pavlis, Jagdeep Raina, Moraa Stump, Judith Tinkl, Joyce Wieland, Alice Olsen Williams

#### April 1 – September 3, 2023

#### Curated by Leila Timmins

Using the materiality of quilt making as a metaphor for how the fabric of the world holds together, this exhibition brought together a group of contemporary artists who use textiles and assemblage as worldbuilding tools. Pulling together the seemingly discarded, quilts are a composition of scraps, held together with the intention of offering warmth and comfort. This process of building something new from what was left behind, offers an orientation for engagement and opens possibilities for what can become. This exhibition forms a patchwork of ideas and objects, centering materiality and sensuousness as a ground for the various approaches and intentions within the works.



Installation of "Aaron Jones: Fountain of Dreams" at The Robert McLaughlin Gallery, 2023. Photo by Toni Hafkenscheid.

## **"FOUNTAIN OF DREAMS"**

#### **Aaron Jones**

#### June 10 - September 24, 2023 Curated by Leila Timmins

Inspired by Black fantasy and science fiction narratives, this solo exhibition by Pickering-based artist Aaron Jones presented a new installation that combined video, collage works, photomurals, and a multi-channel soundscape. Finding inspiration from exploring the vast northern shoreline of Lake Ontario, Jones' nuanced approach brings insights to land-based practices, placemaking, local histories, and world-building methodologies. In a period defined by socioecological uncertainty, the work proposes ways of being in tandem with the natural world, and considers what it means to be human beyond the body. By constructing imagined spaces from images of thriving and overgrown urban areas, Jones proposes an idealized relationship to the world that considers environmental futurity and celebrates abundance. Here, bold fictions are defined by the unknown, and viewers are challenged with seeing themselves within the uncertainty.



Installation of "Anna Binta Diallo: Topographies" at The Robert McLaughlin Gallery, 2023. Photo by Toni Hafkenscheid.

## **"TOPOGRAPHIES"** Anna Binta Diallo June 10 – September 24, 2023 Curated by Leila Timmins

Topographies is a new body of work by Winnipeg-based artist Anna Binta Diallo, exploring map-making and world-building. Inspired by the rich visual histories and formal qualities of maps, the work explores the metaphoric and symbolic possibilities of representation. Diallo employs a personal archive of historical and outdated maps to re-interpret them as the basis for a new body of sculptural works. By assembling imagery from a diverse set of archival sources, this immersive installation maps a new world, evoking themes of placemaking and stewardship, as well as the consequences of colonial histories and conquest, divisions, and ownership. Together, the works in "Topographies" explore how our perception of land and ground can transform, interwoven with our experiences and history, mutating and morphing like earth's crust.



A group of CGP friends at Whitefish Falls, 1936, The Robert McLaughlin Gallery Archives

### **"THE CANADIAN GROUP OF PAINTERS"**

Curatorial Text/Editor: Heather Riley French Translation by: Jay Gonzalez Tinoco and Émeraude Domingos-Mbuku

The Canadian Group of Painters (CGP) was formed in 1933. The self-professed "direct outgrowth" of the Group of Seven aimed to represent the whole of Canada, and permitted women membership. They held the idea of a national artistic consciousness, championing modernist painting styles including figuration and abstraction. The CGP moved away from nationalistic landscapes, and saw the potential painting had to express social concerns, especially in the post-war years, with subjects that explored urban scenes, industrial sites, and portraits of the working class. This exhibition features a selection of works by artists who were members of the CGP from 1933 – 1969, with a focus on significant women artists from the group.

## ACQUISITIONS

#### Meryl McMaster

#### "The Grass Grows Deep"

2022, pigment print on archival paper mounted to aluminum composite panel Purchase, 2023

#### Ed Pien

"Mis Vecinos My Neighbours" 2020-2023, ink, assembly of 3 paper sheets Purchase, 2023



Meryl McMaster, "The Grass Grows Deep", 2022, Pigment print on archival paper mounted to Aluminum Composite Panel, Purchase, 2023.



Ray Mead, "Untitled", 1987, acrylic on canvas, Gift of Carolynn Lund Mead, 2023.

Ray Mead "Untitled" 1987, acrylic on canvas Gift of Carolynn Lund Mead, 2023 Ray Mead "Untitled" 1980, acrylic on paper Gift of Carolynn Lund Mead, 2023

Ray Mead "Untitled" 1996, acrylic on paper Gift of the estate of Frances Orr, 2023 Ray Mead "Untitled" 1997, ink and acrylic on paper

Gift of Carolynn Lund Mead, 2023

#### ACQUISITIONS

## 18

#### Paul Till

**"Graham Coughtry"** 1983, silver gelatin print Gift of Drs. Alice and Ron Charach, 2023

#### Paul Till

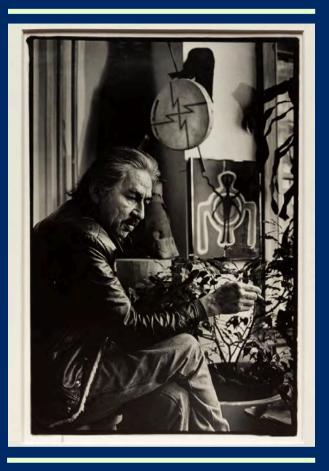
Norval Morrisseau 1984, silver gelatin print Gift of Drs. Alice and Ron Charach, 2023

#### Gene Chu

**"The Nameless Civilians"** c. 1975, lithograph on paper Gift of Drs. Alice and Ron Charach, 2023



Gene Chu, "The Nameless Civilians", c. 1975, lithograph on paper, Gift of Drs. Alice and Ron Charach, 2023.



Paul Till, "Norval Morrisseau", 1984, silver gelatin print, Gift of Drs. Alice and Ron Charach, 2023.

Jack Bush "White Flip" 1974, serigraph on paper Gift of Ronald Haynes, 2023

#### Jack Bush "Crossover"

1974, serigraph on paper Gift of Ronald Haynes, 2023

## **DIGITAL COLLECTION**

In 2023, with the support of a Digital Access to Heritage Grant from the Department of Canadian Heritage, the RMG team embarked on a process of reimagining how visitors can digitally access and interact with our collection. Our permanent art collection is one of our greatest assets, and we are always seeking ways to share it more broadly with our community. This project was an opportunity to improve access to our Permanent Collection through a more engaging and user-friendly digital experience.

One of our key goals was finding ways for visitors to explore and be led by their curiosity. More than just a simple search function, the online database has transformed into a space for learning that offers various ways to explore. You can create a personal account to assemble and curate your own online 'collection' and scroll through a timeline to visualize the history of Canadian abstract art.

Seeking copyright permissions was an important part of this project to increase the number of artworks with images. We have successfully increased the number of works with images through this dedicated copyright project. There is also more in-depth interpretive information about artworks and educational activities to inspire you.

The user interface designed by Helios and Puncture was implemented successfully, and allows for a smooth and seamless transition from the RMG site to the Minisis collections search. We upgraded and updated our Minisis database to M3Online, allowing for ease of use for us, and smoother integration of updates coming from Minisis.



Digital Collections Search Webpage.





Opening and Artist Talk with Alex Close for her exhibition "pitch, slip", June 22, 2023.

## RBC EMERGING ARTIST RESIDENCY PROGRAM



Alex Close, "Grandparents' Measurements" (diptych), 2023, acrylic on canvas. Photo by Toni Hafkenscheid.

## RBC EMERGING ARTIST RESIDENCY PROGRAM

Marking the fifth year of the RBC Emerging Artist Residency Program, the 2023 artist cohort included Alex Close, Noah Scheinman, and Kendra Yee. These three artists brought unique perspectives to the artist studio, each producing work with exciting ties to Durham Region and building on their emerging practices with ambition and purpose.

Drawing on her local ties and international networks, Close nurtured a profoundly grounded residency, seeking advice and connection from RMG staff, local artists, and friends abroad. Producing nine medium to large paintings, Close pushed her abstract practice into new territory, exploring fresh techniques, subject matters, and mediums, including 3D mixed-media installations alongside her 2D works.

Expanding on his academic research, Scheinman re-rooted his practice from Kingston to Oshawa, exploring Durham Region by foot, car, and water to create a new series of video and installation works inspired by the nuclear power plants in Pickering and Darlington. Collaborating with local clothing makers FRÈRE DU NORD, Scheinman created sculptural pieces with geo synthetic textiles, exploring the divergent scales of the human body and the environmental legacies of energyproducing industries.



Installation of "HEAVY/WATER/MACHINE" at the Robert McLaughlin Gallery, 2023. Images by Toni Hafkenscheid.

Kendra Yee initiated a community-engaged project that asked gallery audiences to share a memory with her through the medium of their choosing. Collecting well over 100 submissions over the course of her residency, Yee translated and transformed these stories into ceramic tiles. Caring for these offerings like a friend, Yee discovered the bonding nature of exchange and was inspired to experiment within her practice as a ceramic artist.

In addition to their engagement with gallery audiences, artists, and local businesses through community call outs and offsite collaborations, Close, Scheinman, and Yee invited us into their work through dynamic studio visits and public talks. These virtual and in-person events allowed others to gain insight into their work, motivations, and processes and supported their growth as emerging artists. From concept to realization, the RBC Emerging Artist Residency Program gives artists the time, resources, and curatorial support to develop and present new work. It continues to be an important way for the RMG to support artistic practice in our community and enrich the cultural ecosystem. The RMG is grateful to receive funding for this program from the RBC Foundation through the Emerging Artist Project.





The Backyard at the RMG opening, July 2023.

## COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

## **PUBLIC PROGRAMMING**

The Neighbours Project: Meet & Greet Brainstorming Sessions January 21 and 26, 2023

**IG Live Residency Update with Brigitte Sampogna** January 24, 2023

Kazuo Nakamura: Influence and Legacy February 4, 2023

**Curatorial Tour: Loose Parts** February 16, 2023

Exhibition Opening Reception: For Art's Sake March 7, 2023

Exhibition Opening Reception: Community and Joy March 9, 2023

RMG Fridays Presents: Black Lit Durham and Desarae Dee March 10, 2023

IG Live Welcome to the Studio Artist Talk with Alex Close March 23, 2023 **Curatorial Tour: Powerful Glow** March 23, 2023

**RMG Friday: Piecework** March 31, 2023

Artist Talk with Brigitte Sampogna March 31, 2023

**Curatorial Tour: Piecework** April 20, 2023

**OAA Opening Reception and Awards** April 27, 2023

**RMG Friday: Renewal** May 5, 2023

**Emerging Visions: Durham College Fine Art Thesis Artist Talks** May 10, 2023

IG Live Residency Update with Alex Close May 14, 2023

Seniors Art Competition and Exhibition: Info Session & Exhibition Tour May 16, 2023 **Curatorial Tour: The Ties That Bind** May 18, 2023

Artist Residency Information Session + Application Workshop May 30, 2023

**RMG Friday: Put Your Best Heel Forward!** June 2, 2023

**Fragments: An Artist Talk with Hangama Amiri, Preston Pavlis, and Jagdeep Raina** June 7, 2023

Summer Exhibitions Opening: Fountain of Dreams and Topographies June 10, 2023

Artist Talk: Anna Binta Diallo June 10, 2023

**pitch, slip: Opening and Artist Talk with Alex Close** June 22, 2023

**Curatorial Tour: Queering the Collection** June 29, 2023

**RMG Fridays: The Backyard Opening** July 7, 2023

## **PUBLIC PROGRAMMING**

IG Live: Welcome to the Studio with Noah Scheinman July 27, 2023

The Neighbours Project: Outdoor Picnic + Flower Pot Painting July 30, 2023

**RMG Fridays: Late Summer Chill** August 18, 2023

**Civic Conversations: Speculative Mapping for the Star Glyph Garden** August 19, 2023

Nourish: Seniors Art Competition and Exhibition Opening Reception and Awards August 23, 2023

IG Live: Residency Update with Noah Scheinman September 5, 2023

In Conversation with Aaron Jones and Jair Kale September 17, 2023 **Curatorial Tour: "Fountain of Dreams" and "Topographies"** September 21, 2023

**RMG Fridays: The Harvest** September 29, 2023

**The Neighbours Project: Personal Symbols + Poetry Workshop** October 4, 2023

**Cultural Expressions: Opening Reception and Awards Presentation** October 12, 2023

Noah Scheinman: Exhibition Opening and Panel Talk October 14, 2023

Alexandra Luke: Life and Art Lecture by Margaret Rodgers November 9, 2023

Curatorial Tour: "CAMP" November 16, 2023 How to Price Your Artwork with Chrissy Poitras and Kyle Topping of Spark Box Studio November 15, 2023

IG Live: Welcome to the Studio with Kendra Yee November 23, 2023

"World-builders, shapeshifters" Exhibition Opening + Odibaadodaan: Celebrating First Nations, Inuit, and Metis Storytellers November 24, 2023

What We've Learned Installing Our Art with Chrissy Poitras and Kyle Topping of Spark Box Studio November 29, 2023

**The Neighbours Project: Community Celebration** December 14, 2023

## **COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS**

**Abilities Centre** Ajax Public Library **Back Door Mission Black Lit Durham Brock Libraries** Central Lake Ontario Conservation Authority City of Oshawa **Clarington Library Museums & Archive Cultural Expressions Art Gallery Inc** Durham Catholic District School Board **Durham College Durham Community Health Centre Durham Metis Council Durham Region** DRIFF (Durham Region International Film Festival) **Fleming College** Gap Committee LivingRoom Community Art Studio Love and Light Collective **Ontario Tech - Indigenous Education** Oshawa Art Association

Oshawa Public Libraries Oshawa Senior Community Centres Pickering Public Library Scugog Memorial Public Library TeachingCity Oshawa Trent Durham - First Peoples House of Learning Uxbridge Public Library Whitby Public Library Wunderlit



Unity Through the Arts: Inaugural Juried Exhibition, 2023.



Installation of "The Neighbours Project" at The Robert McLaughlin Gallery, 2023. Photo by Toni Hafkenscheid.

### COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIP HIGHLIGHT

The RMG has a long history of engaging with people through partnership projects. The goal of this work is to extend creativity into the community and to pool resources that open up opportunities for deeper connections with one another. Over the past few years, the worsening housing crisis has affected communities across the country. The growing rates of homelessness in Oshawa, as elsewhere, have illustrated the need for change in public policy and support services. Many people and organizations in our immediate community are working to meet that call, all while offering immediate aid to those who need it.

Throughout 2023, the RMG dedicated time and resources to act on our shared belief that we have responsibilities to all of our neighbours. The goal of this initiative, The Neighbours Project, was to better understand how we could be good neighbours amongst the diverse network of individuals, businesses, organizations, and civic institutions with whom we share this place. We forged new connections and built lasting relationships. Through a prolonged series of events, workshops, and collaborations, we saw how art has the potential to meet, at least in part, the essential need for belonging and self-expression and got to know so many incredible people along the way. We worked with three core collaborators during this project: the Backdoor Mission, the Gap Committee, and The LivingRoom Community Art Studio. Through these organizations, we were able to welcome many new and some returning visitors to the gallery and shape a slate of programming around their input and needs. From closed private programs to a temporary public art installation in Gallery A, these engagement opportunities revealed the barriers institutions like ours must address as well as the potential they hold for rest and community care.



"The Neighbours Project Art Hive" at The Robert McLaughlin Gallery, 2023.



"The Neighbours Project" exhibition, 2023. Photo by Darren Rigo.

The installation in Gallery A, "The Neighbours Project Art Hive," was the culmination of a year's learning and unlearning that opened one of our spaces for daily drop-in art making and connection from the end of 2023 into the first two months of 2024. A team of passionate community members from The LivingRoom Community Art Studio facilitated weekly sessions that allowed our new friends and partners to gather and make side by side. Reflecting on the past year, we are grateful for the foundations we have built and look forward to growing these relationships into the future.

## ONLINE ENGAGEMENT

#### Website

The RMG website is a vital channel for marketing and communication. This platform allows us to promote all gallery offerings as well as allow audiences to purchase and register. We publish all our events and exhibitions as well as news. Through the platform we are able perform monthly audits to ensure our website is accessible and conforms with WCAG standards.

- Most visited pages = home, visit, events, RBC Emerging Artist Residency Program, Exhibitions
- Published content = 59 events, 23 exhibitions, 13 news posts

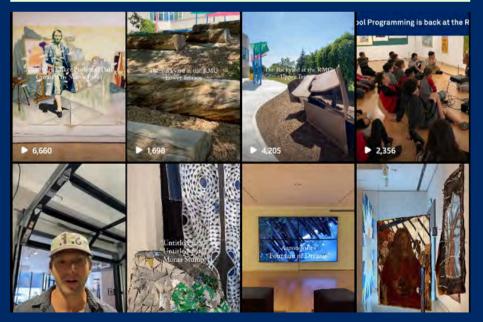
#### Advertising

Ads on Meta (Facebook and Instagram) were a big part of our social media strategy. Over the year we saw a reach of 105,165 and 353,941 impressions over 124 ads. We also saw 3675 link clicks and 4741 post engagements. These ads led to an increase in event and class registrations, social shares, and public interest in our programming.

#### Video content production

As platforms become more video focused, the RMG continues to integrate short and long form video into our social media strategy and planning.

Throughout the year, we used video content through Instagram Reels and TikTok videos to explore the themes and context of exhibitions and artworks. We also used video to meet and learn more about artists in our RBC Emerging Artist Residency Program through Instagram Live and Studio visits and tours. We used short form video to share information about our Backyard renovation and Learning and Engagement programming. We have seen a great interest in this type of content and have received feedback that these videos have drawn people into the gallery and its events.



Screen capture of Instagram reels, 2023.

#### Search Engine Marketing + Google Grants

The RMG qualified for Google Grants which enables our Google Ad Accounts free media spend every month to run ads. These paid ads will enhance website visibility on search engine results.

#### Email

We deploy a monthly e-newsletter to our general subscriber list and two types of targeted emails, for Curatorial and for Learning audiences.



### Social Media



#### **FACEBOOK**

5,694 followers +9.99% engagement with our posts (2.2% increase in followers)



#### **TWITTER** 4,887 followers

+1.60% engagement with our posts (2.4% decrease in followers)



#### **INSTAGRAM**

5,008 followers +6.01% engagement with our posts (15.6% increase of followers)



#### LINKEDIN 568 followers

6.74% engagement with our posts (15.6% increase in followers)







Summer camp 2023

## LEARNING + ENGAGEMENT

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Summer camp 2023

## LEARNING + ENGAGEMENT

In the Learning and Engagement department, 2023 marked a year of growth; building audience, sustaining community partnerships, and building relationships were the trends for the year.

With the development of a framework document, the department was able to derive programs that were focused with intention towards continuity for all levels of Learning and Engagement programming. We continued to offer art classes, camps, special onsite and offsite events, and OPG Sundays. We were able to reintroduce a full offering of elementary school programs including at-gallery, at-school, and teacher resources available through the website.

#### **Art Classes**

The RMG's partnership with Durham's Homeschool Association continued to flourish in 2023 with expanded programs that offered classes for ages 5-10, and one-off workshops for ages 8-12 as well as a newly developed art history workshops for students ages 10-14. A new Homeschool High School class was added in fall 2023. These classes encouraged the use of fine art materials in new and exciting ways to help build individual creativity and self-confidence in Homeschool participants while fulfilling Ontario curriculum requirements. These programs were tremendously successful and almost always full. Feedback surveys were positive with high praise for the instructors – Farah Hoosain and Jennifer Morrison.



Teen Afterschool program, 2023.

Here are a few things parents had to say:

"Every week I am absolutely amazed by what my kids bring home. They are always excited to tell me about the different techniques they used. This class is, by far, one of our favourites. We cannot wait for the next session!!! Thank you!!!" The Saturday Studio program (art classes for children ages 5-12) continued to be popular, led by instructors Judith Vijayasenan and Tara Larkin. In total, 63 students joined the three session classes at 88% capacity.

After piloting the Teen Afterschool program in fall 2022, the program continued through 2023 with 204 participants enjoying the relaxed and social atmosphere created by Farah Hoosain in the studio. Parent feedback; "Farah is so enthusiastic and encouraging, she's gone out of her way to encourage and inspire. Great snacks too!"

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#### March Break and Summer Camps

March Break camp marked the return of a full cohort program where 26 children enjoyed 5 days of exhibition related art making activities. March Break camp provided an opportunity for children to learn new art skills and socialize with children who share an interest in art. Among the positive feedback was an email from a parent who wrote:

"(He) was very nervous about the camp, he has a lot of anxiety in new situations and has a really hard time at camps in the past. He LOVED it! He was happy to go every day and literally came out skipping when we picked him up. It was such a relief to send him somewhere he was so well looked after and enthusiastic about. And the art he produced is fantastic, we framed the large piece for our dining room! Anyway, your program is really wonderful and we're so grateful to all the staff. Thank you again."

-Parent



Summer camp 2023

#### Summer Camps

In June, the RMG secured 5 summer staff facilitators to assist with a return to full summer camp programs and schedules. The Learning and Engagement department welcomed Young Canada Works Summer Education Assistant, Madelyn Hebbes, and Canada Summer Jobs Facilitators Nawal Dabbagh, Judith Vijayasenan, Lauren Shervill, and Jordan Forsey. Summer Camp offered eight weeks of programming that had campers create masterpieces in the studio, the Lookout, in The Backyard as well as within the gallery spaces. Summer staff did a tremendous job. Camp surpassed last year's highest camp attendance with 215 campers.

## Special onsite and offsite events

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Also continuing was the senior initiatives made possible by the New Horizons grant and subsequent Seniors Community grant. Two local senior residencies were invited to participate in a series of fine art making workshops. Surveyed feedback and comments were tremendously positive.

We hosted our first Spring Seniors Social event held on the first day of spring. This event encouraged visiting seniors to "curate" their own experience over the course of two hours. The offerings included a flower arranging workshop with Hillary from Brookstead Fine Flowers, a watercolour workshop with Farah Hoosain, gallery tours and light refreshments in Arthur's catered by Berry Hill Co.

Other popular events included two offsite outreach on Canada Day and the new Convergence Arts and Music Festival, each event had over 300 visitors.

#### **OPG Sundays**

Ontario Power Generation has been generously sponsoring OPG Sunday events for over 10 years. These free monthly events encourage families to create art together and to interact and socialize with other visiting families. As a result, a sense of community is forming where families are encouraging others to come back for OPG Sundays as well as other events including RMG Fridays. This year, we welcomed 569 participants and two community members to partner with the March and May events. Kathy Morgan from The Durham Metis Council in March tied to the Powerful Glow exhibition and Trician-Renée Edwards (Ms. Love from The Love and Light Collective) for the May event.



OPG Sunday 2023

### **Elementary School Tours**

We were able to offer the first full year of school programs since the beginning of the pandemic with support from the Ontario Trillium Foundation. RMG school program offerings included elementary at-gallery and at-school programs as well as teacher resource guides (JK-Grade 12), which were available on the website. The 2022 format continued including a Kindergarten program engaging students in the Permanent Collection exhibition, a half-day primary level program featuring Permanent Collection artworks, an optional full-day junior level program, and an optional full-day intermediate level program. The full-day programs encouraged students to explore both the Permanent Collection and the special exhibition, "World-builders, shapeshifters" exhibition. In the studio, students created abstracted landscapes using a variety of different materials. In all, 2382 students participated in school programming.



Some of the teacher feedback we received:

"We really enjoyed our day. Our guide did a wonderful job with the age group and was able to make a last minute switch to show us an exhibit of interest. The art project was wonderful. It had many parts and all students were successful, regardless of their artistic ability. Well done! Thank you for a wonderful experience."

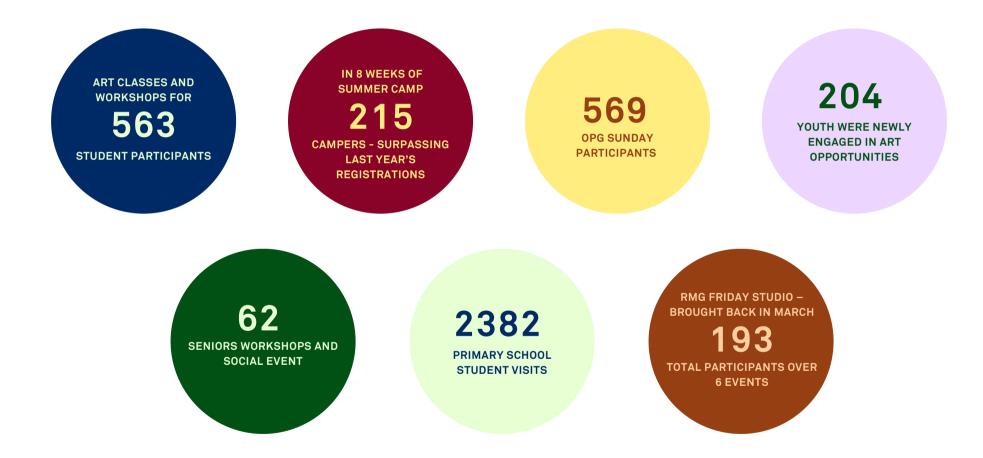
"It was excellent! I loved it. Very informative, interesting and interactive!"

"Thank you to all the staff. Students (And myself) enjoyed all aspects of the program. It was wonderful to see our students so engaged with the art and the depth of their discussions was impressive. Thank you for covering so many important topics (socially and for the curriculum side!)"

In 2023, the Learning and Engagement department fulfilled onsite programming needs with continued support of fellow staff, artist instructors, volunteers, our audience and partners.

At-school program 2023

# **LEARNING + ENGAGEMENT HIGHLIGHTS**



"The Robert McLaughlin Gallery allowed us to rent spaces to host our wedding reception. This site is stunning, my guests absolutely loved the venue. A huge thank you to the gallery event coordinator Carole who helped us every way she could. It was a pleasure to have her on our wedding team. The gallery is open 6 days a week to the public, does not charge admission, they do rely on voluntary donations and it is well worth a visit. The gallery hosts many events for adults and children, many programs and they make everyone feel welcome."

**Comment on Google reviews** 







Artist Talk and Opening of Brigitte Sampogna's exhibition "Nowhere. No, where? Now here", March 31, 2023.

# VISITOR ENGAGEMENT

# **VISITOR TRENDS + STATISTICS**

With a 57% increase in visitors, 2023 has been a year of healthy growth and recovery at the RMG. It was our first year with no public health closures, giving us the most accurate full-year data set since 2019. The opening of our Backyard and renovation of Arthur's reintroduced our guests to spaces they could explore and enjoy with a new lens. A steady increase in participation in curatorial tours, RMG Fridays, Learning and Engagement Programming, and event bookings reflect an increasing trend towards our pre-pandemic visitor figures.

Aligning ourselves with and opening our doors to cultural events in Oshawa and Durham Region have yielded our largest opportunities to connect with the community. This demonstrates that people are beginning to reengage in their communities with more confidence than we have seen these past few years. While we have yet to reach pre-pandemic numbers, we are steadily trending upward in events, school bookings, and in average daily visitors; this, paired with the general public's uptick in engagement should translate to an increase over the next year.

	2020	2021	2022	2023
Total Visitors	9,243	2,013	12,386	19,387
% Change Total Visitors	-66%	-78%	515%	57%
Average Daily Visitor	44	16	45	67
Days Open	209	128	275	307
% Change Days Open	-41%	-39%	115%	12%

### Notable popular events from 2023 include:

Events	Visitors	
Doors Open	574	
Convergence Art + Music Festival	417	
Backyard Opening/July RMG Friday	390	
DCDSB Exhibition Opening	390	
Christmas Market	343	





## **RMG SHOP**

The RMG Shop continued to develop unique merchandise, diversify our artisan vendors, and focus on connections to our exhibitions and Permanent Collection in 2023. We introduced prints and cards featuring artworks from Painters 11 for purchase. With an exhibition of artist Anna Binta Diallo in our gallery spaces, we were able to highlight and sell her jewellery line SAMA RAKK.

Other new vendors introduced in 2023 included: The Happiness Store, Betta Butter, Shop Velanidi, Seventh & Oak, and Sorrel & Sage. As our list of artisan vendors grew even larger in the past year, we used 2023 as an opportunity to evaluate the success of our consignment program. Supporting local artists is important to the RMG, as is ensuring we are providing the best avenue for their sales. After the success of the Bright and Merry Market in November 2022, the RMG aligned our spring artisan market with the award-winning Peony Festival organized by the City of Oshawa.

We have continued to promote products through the RMG's e-newsletter as well as monthly features on our RMG Shop Instagram page. Shop sales increased 44% from 2022, as the gallery was open for its first full year following COVID-19 closures. Sales continue to lag behind pre-pandemic levels, which will lead to changes in 2024 as we look to build our earned revenue streams





Artist talk and opening of Anna Binta Diallo's "Topographies", 2023.

# SUPPORTER + DONORS

43 VOLUNTEERS

Liam Abou-Akl Logo Aganga Anara Dorfman Chris Efstathious Hayley LaForty Katie Hibbs Selina Hind April Hind Amy Hu Sana Imran Alexa Johnson Aruba Kashif Sasha Killian-Searle Owen Kind Hayley LaForty Ashley Leech Rowan Mitchell Rain Morrison Piper Morrison Torren Morrison Patricia Munro Makayla Norissa Arafah Oladipupo Kathylene Pingol Rianna Pingol Tharini Reddy Chloe Smith

## **2023 ACTIVE MEMBERS**

The Robert McLaughlin Gallery is grateful to its many members, community supporters, corporate and foundation donors, sponsors, and government agencies for their donations. Our sincere thanks.

Painters 11 Circle
Peter & Virginia McLaughlin

#### Abstracts Carrie Williamson

**Upstarts** Drago Car Derek Giberson

- **General Members** Carmen Alexander Nash Natasha Allen Andrea Amyot Jody Anderson Zelda Armstrong Robert Ashby **Renate Belzing** Carole Blackburn Nesrin Blair Stuart & Barbara Blower **Douglas Boyce Denise Branton** Stefanie Brennan Elizabeth Brighton Lee-Ann Brodeur Joanne Brown
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2023 ACTIVE MEMBERS

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**Raequel Jones** Sonya Jones Debby Keating Hannah Keating Mason Kehler Sandra Kell-Cullen Irja Ketola Ray & Cathy Kissel Anna Kissoon Melanie Kitchen Anne Labelle-Johnson Josianne Lachapelle Teresa Lam **Ronald & Helen Lambert** Simone Lawrence Yuting Ma Carlie Mackrell Maria Mailleux Mary Marcon George & Judith Marlow **Philip Marmina** Ramona Marquez-Ramraj Ashley Marshall **Rose Mary Mason Belinda Masters Richard Mazar** Kate Mazzuocco Karen McCartney Brendan McGowan Kelly McKenzie Kristen McKinnon Gerald Wayne McLeod Melissa McNamara Sandra McQuade Mary Ellen McQuay Svlvia McVicker Erin Messier Samantha Migus **Catherine Mills** Elenna Monchesky **Christine Monod** Mary Jane Monteith Jennifer Morrison Wendy Moses

Raj Mosur Nancy Mueller Daniela Musial Isaac Musial Anna Natoli Aldwin Neekon Janis Newell Homa Niroobakhsh Kenneth Oko-Oboh Judy & Donald O'Leary Gerard O'Neill Marcia Parker **Richard Parker** Jess Paulino Annie Pinet Alizee Plach **Carol Poitras** Frank Politano Andrew Popov LeuWebb Projects **Betty Pulsifer** Donna Quinn

## **2023 ACTIVE MEMBERS**

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The City of Oshawa

### The Backyard @ the RMG Government of Canada Ontario Trillium Foundation The City of Oshawa

### Preferred Partners Brew Wizards Board Game Café Isabella's Chocolate Café Oshawa House Café Spicy Affairs Indian Cuisine Starapples Restaurant The Portobello Road The Second Wedge Brewing Co.





Conseil des Arts du Canada Canada Council for the Arts



This recognition list is accurate to April 19, 2024, and to the best of our abilities. If you notice any errors or omissions, please contact memberships@rmg.on.ca.

# **STAFF TEAM**

### Full-Time Staff

49

Carole Blackburn Lauren Gould Roanna Green **Brianne Hunte Bradley Isaacs** Sonya Jones Hannah Keating Emeraude Dominigos-Mbuku\* Brendan McGowan Jennifer Morrison **Heather Riley** Sara Rodriguez Erin Szikora Leila Timmins\* Jennifer Welch

### **Curatorial Support Staff**

Timothy J Ediger Joshua Malcolm\*

### Learning + Engagement

Support Staff Nawal Dabbagh\* Jordan Forsey\* Madeline Hebbes\* Farah Hoosain Lauren Shervill\* Judith Vijayasenan\*

Visitor Engagement Support Staff Jody Anderson Sumaira Kasimuddin\* Anna Kissoon Stacey Snow\* Giuliana Taccone

Communications/Marketing Support Staff

Brianna Purai\*



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Lauren Gould, Chief Executive Officer



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Cover: Backyard at the RMG, 2023.