

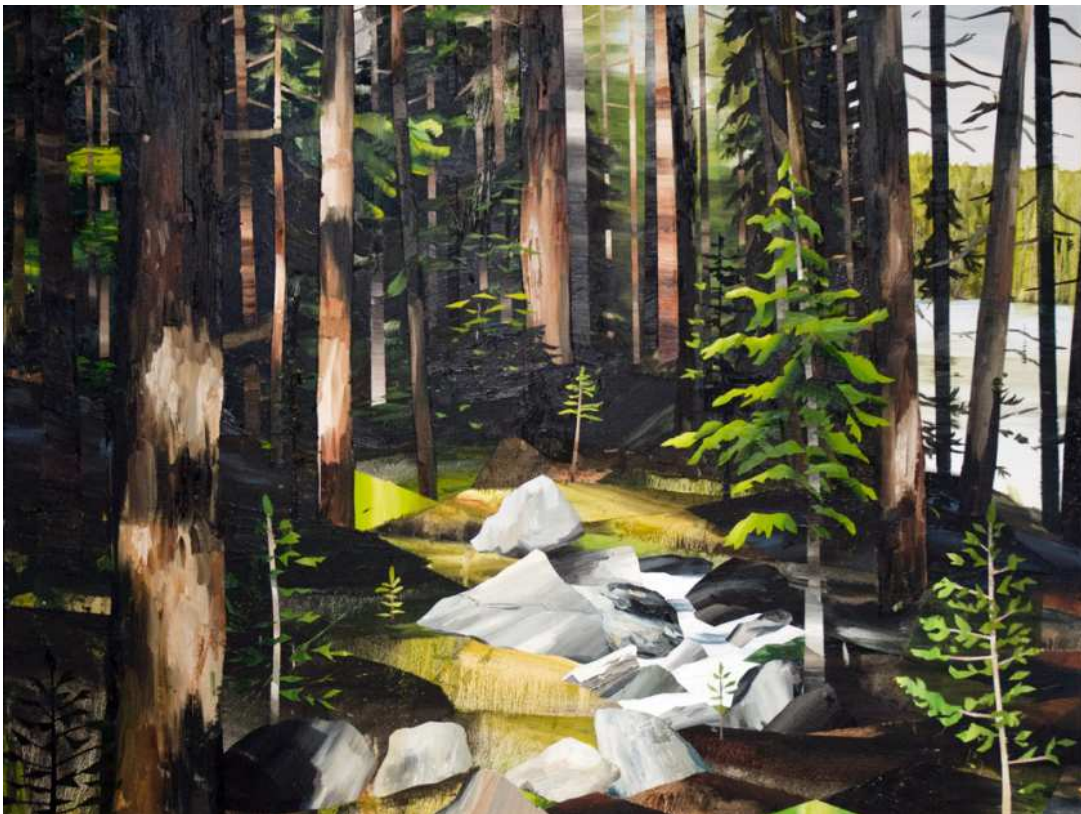


City shows off new art, and reaches to east and west ends



PETER SIMPSON - THE BIG BEAT

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Gavin Lynch, Lake of the Woods, (2014, oil on canvas, 76 x 102 cm, City of Ottawa art collection)

The City of Ottawa's annual exhibition of new art is bigger this year than it has ever been before, having spread across both the map and the calendar.

The annual unveiling of new purchases and donations to the city's public art program is typically held at Karsh-Masson Gallery in city hall, where many of those acquisitions are now on display to Jan. 17. (Official opening is 5:30 to 7:30 p.m. on Thursday, Dec. 17.) To mark this year's 30th anniversary of the program, there are additional exhibitions in Trinity

Gallery at the Shenkman Arts Centre in Orléans (to Jan. 4), and in the Atrium Gallery at Ben Franklin Place in Centrepointe (to Jan. 5).

“Because it’s the 30th anniversary of the public art program, we wanted to do something a little different,” says Jonathan Browns, development officer with the public art program. “We get the works out of the downtown core, and people have an opportunity to see parts of the collection in other parts of the city.”

Because the shows are being staged later in the current calendar year, they include acquisitions made in this year and last, so the number of pieces added to the city collection is 425, double the annual average. Of that total, 157 works, by 97 artists, appear in the exhibitions, though each location has a video slide show in which all acquisitions can be seen.



Whitney Lewis-Smith, What came in with the flowers (2014, digital print on paper, 140 x 112 cm, City of Ottawa art collection)

A fourth, briefer exhibition, to go up this week at city hall, will feature work by a few of the 42 artists included in a donation to the city by the Canada Council for the Arts’ Art Bank.

The Art Bank donation focuses on artists who were active in the city in the years between the creation of the Art Bank, in 1972, and of the city’s public art program, in 1985.

“It brings in some artists to the collection that are local but we don’t have in the collection, and in other cases it brings in art works from artists to add to works we have of theirs we already have in the collection,” Browns says.

The gift introduces to the collection artists such as Jean-Claude Bergeron, who now runs his eponymous gallery in the ByWard Market, and work by artists previously represented in the city collection, such as Jennifer Dickson.



Norman Takeuchi, *After the Bath* (2013, acrylic on canvas, 102 x 152 cm, City of Ottawa art collection)

The gifted works by Dickson are among many that make photography the happenstance star of this 2014-15 lot. There's plenty of eye-grabbing work in other formats — paintings by Gavin Lynch (*Dad*, circa 1964, and *Lake of the Woods*), Norman Takeuchi (*After the Bath*), Carol Wainio (*The way back*, and *What to do*), Peter Shmelzer's hilarious and sardonic *Grumpy Cat*, or, in other media, the bead work of Barry Ace — but photography dominates this biennial crop.

The single biggest oomph comes from the young Whitney Lewis-Smith, who combines vintage techniques with large digital prints to bring life to what is dead. Lewis-Smith's works "Death of the moth" and "What came in with the flowers" are phantasmagoric, like fleeing glimpses of a memento mori dream.

Olivia Johnston — like Lewis-Smith a graduate of SPAO, the small photography school on Dalhousie Street — has scenes from her series of young women posed as women of the bible. A woman as Susanna poses next to the text of "the Judgement of Daniel." In another image, two young women pose as Lot's daughters, Clara and Emma. Johnston's series of photographs, titled *Fallen*, touches meaningfully on too many historical and contemporary issues to be adequately considered in a mention so brief as this.

The bounty of striking photographs continues across the three venues, with works by Justin Wonnacott, Bozica Radjenovic, Freeman Keats, Jeff Thomas, Rosalie Favell, Andrzej Maciejewski, Tony Fohse, Ramses Madina, Meryl McMaster, and others.

Browns says there was no deliberate tilt toward photography in the acquisitions or exhibitions, but he does note that "there is a very strong photography community here in Ottawa."

He credits the work of professors at the University of Ottawa — at least one of whom, Andrew Wright, is represented in the exhibitions — and at SPAO. “You’ve got some really important people coming out of those schools.”

The city’s new acquisitions are a loud declaration of the truth in that statement.

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What: This is Us Now, new acquisitions by the City of Ottawa art program.

When & where: Shenkman Arts Centre (to Jan. 4), Ben Franklin Place (to Jan. 5), and city hall (to Jan. 17, with official opening 5:30 to 7:30 p.m. Dec. 17).



Weather Report #37, February 5, 2004, 12:15 am,
Clear; Temperature: -7.0 °C; Wind: 14.5 km/h, SW;
Pressure: 1009.7 hPa; Humidity: 74%; Visibility: 19.3 km

Andrzej Maciejewski, Weather Report number 37, (2004, digital print on paper, City of Ottawa art collection)