



ANNUAL REPORT

ST. THOMAS-ELGIN PUBLIC ART CENTRE

2025

ST. THOMAS-ELGIN PUBLIC ART CENTRE

Our Vision

The St. Thomas-Elgin Public Art Centre is a highly valued and respected art centre that is a focal point for the St. Thomas and Elgin community. The Art Centre is dedicated to fostering a welcoming, enriching and engaging environment of art and creativity that inspires, challenges and educates our audiences.

Our Mandate

The St. Thomas-Elgin Public Art Centre is mandated to exhibit, preserve and promote visual arts and to provide exhibition related programming.

Our Mission

The mission of the St. Thomas-Elgin Public Art Centre is to encourage and promote an appreciation for and support the practice of the visual arts in St. Thomas and Elgin County through a variety of exhibitions and educational programs and through the preservation of a permanent collection.

Our Address

301 Talbot Street, St. Thomas, Ontario. N5P 1B5
519.634.4040 info@stepac.ca

www.stepac.ca

We gratefully acknowledge the continued support of the City of St. Thomas, the County of Elgin, and our valued donors, members, and supporters. Your ongoing generosity enables the Art Centre to continue offering creative, responsive, and enriching experiences for the community.





The St. Thomas–Elgin Public Art Centre is pleased to present its 2025 Annual Report, a reflection of a year shaped by creativity, community engagement, and its commitment to the visual arts. Throughout 2025, the Public Art Centre continued to provide meaningful cultural experiences, fostered partnerships across St. Thomas and Elgin County, and strengthened its role as a dynamic space for learning, connection, and artistic expression.

St. Thomas-Elgin Public Art Centre – 2025 Annual Report Summary

In 2025, the **St. Thomas-Elgin Public Art Centre** continued to strengthen its role as a vibrant cultural hub and critical arts institution for St. Thomas and Elgin County. As a **charitable, non-profit public art centre**, we remained deeply committed to its mission of encouraging appreciation for and supporting the practice of the visual arts, fostering creative engagement across all ages and abilities, presenting high-quality exhibitions and programs that reflect both local artistic voices and the preservation of the permanent collection.

Exhibitions & Curatorial Highlights

Throughout the year, the Public Art Centre hosted a series of dynamic exhibitions showcasing a wide range of artistic perspectives. Highlights included *A Covenant of Reciprocity* by Jeff Suchak, a compelling photographic exploration of humanity's relationship to the natural world, which invited thoughtful community dialogue and engagement. Additional exhibitions, such as the Annual Juried Exhibition "*In View of the Artist*," and "*Between the Boards*", continued to spotlight emerging and established artists and reinforce the Public Art Centre's role as a platform for creative expression. The Public Art Centre also continued outreach with projects like Art, Trees & Trails, extending the reach of visual art beyond the Art centre walls and into local public spaces.

Education & Community Engagement

2025 saw robust participation in Public Art Centre's **classes and workshops** for children, youth, adults and seniors, offering a creative environment where individuals could explore artistic potential and develop new skills. In 2025, we were excited to launch *In Studio*, a welcoming daytime program designed specifically for adults who want to explore their creativity, build new skills, and connect with others in an inspiring environment. These programs strengthened community connections and supported creative exploration at all levels.

Special Events & Fundraising

A key event such as the **Annual Fall Art Auction** provided an opportunity for patrons and supporters to engage with the arts, celebrate creativity, and support the Public Art Centre's ongoing programming. This and other events not only generated critical funds but also reinforced our role as a cultural gathering place and community anchor.

Collections & Cultural Value

The Public Art Centre continued stewardship of its expanding permanent collection, which comprises significant works by local, regional, and national artists, preserving art heritage and making it accessible to the public. The Public Art Centre's activities helped sustain St. Thomas' cultural vibrancy and contributed to the broader tourism, education, and economic landscape of the region.

Board of Directors

Dang Ho President
Suzanne Baehr Past President
Jenny Couse Vice President
Meaghan Vreman Treasurer
Neil Hubert Secretary
Steven McLarty Payson
Ciabh McEvenue
Sue Fortin Smith
John Allen
Andrew Snetsinger
Lynn Coates
Tara McCaulley
Keith Mayer
Kevin Morrell
Dominique Giguère (County of Elgin Rep.)

Team

Laura Woermke Executive Director / Curator
Sherri Howard Program Director
Kait Ouellette/ Tiffany Cairns Education Assistant
Arantxa Arreaza Instructor Preschool Picasso
Amie Steven Administration Assistant
Kendal Goodhue Summer Student Gallery Attendant
Kiera Batzold Summer Art Program Instructor
Wilma Pineau Summer Art Program Instructor Assistant
Julianne Bryans Instructor Summer Programs / Workshops

Committees

Acquisitions Committee

Chair Kevin Morrell
Bethany Green
Steven McLarty Payson
Laura Woermke

Fundraising Committee

Ciabh McEvenue
Andrew Snetsinger

Finance Committee

Chair Dang Ho
Jenny Couse
Treasurer Meaghan Vreman
Laura Woermke

Membership Committee

Chair Sue Fortin Smith

Human Resource Committee

Chair Dang Ho
Megan Vreman
Jenny Couse

Sponsorship Committee

Andrew Snetsinger
Laura Woermke
Dang Ho

Governance Committee

The governance committee is committed to modernizing policies and investing in compliance initiatives to ensure alignment with current regulations and best practices. This strategic approach aims to enhance our organizational integrity, promote transparency, and support a culture of accountability, ultimately safeguarding our stakeholders' interests and fostering trust within the community.

Chair Dominique Giguère
Meaghan Vreman
Dang Ho
Steven McLarty Payson
Neil Hubert
Laura Woermke

JackPot Time Volunteers

Chair Kevin Morrell
Suzanne Baehr
Jenny Couse
Dang Ho
Neil Hubert
Andrew Snetsinger

Volunteers

Trent Hoff, Olivia Hoff, Chloe Crosby, Bethany Green, Andrew Snetsinger, Suzanne Baehr, John Allen, Steven McLarty Payson, Jenny Couse, Danni Dowson, Delilah Robinson, Riley Doan, Arielle Radcliff, Sydney Kingstone, Aubrey Kingstone, Presley Tychynski, Ayanna Ganda, Yasmine Amir, Sarah Taylor, Eric Bargenda Ciabh McEvenue, Michelle Woermke, Mike Pineau, Tara McCaulley, Kevin Morrell, Avery Payne, Josee Coutu, Matthew Coburn, Neil Hubert, Meaghan Vreman, Ardythe Anderson, Katherine Fournier, Jim Coburn, Sharon Little, Joan Dennis,

Total Volunteer Hours: 476.5



2025 COMMUNITY IMPACT

In 2025, the St. Thomas-Elgin Public Art Centre continued to affirm the essential role that arts and culture play in community life. National research highlighted in the *Artworks* report shows that Canadians are drawn to arts participation because it fosters connection, offers new perspectives, strengthens belonging, and supports well-being. Notably, 75% of Canadians believe that attending arts and culture events positively impacts their sense of belonging in Canada.



4319 Exhibition Visitors



**520 participants
Tours & Community Outreach**



**251
Adult Program Participants**



**852
Children & Youth Participants**



**418
Facility Rental Users**



**1,124
Special Event Attendees**



**146
Active Members**

Message from the Executive Director

As we reflect on 2025, I am proud to share a year defined by creativity, resilience, and meaningful connection at the St. Thomas–Elgin Public Art Centre. This past year, we strengthened our role as a vibrant cultural hub for our community, welcoming visitors of all ages to explore, learn, and experience the transformative power of the visual arts.

Our exhibitions showcased a dynamic range of artistic local and regional artists, each contributing to conversations that resonate across our community. We deepened our commitment to education through expanded art programs, hands-on workshops for youth, adults and seniors, and partnerships that allowed us to reach new audiences. These initiatives reaffirm our belief that access to the visual arts is essential for a healthy and thriving community.

Preserving and caring for our permanent collection remained a cornerstone of our work. In 2025, we continued important conservation efforts and improved access to the collection through exhibitions and our digital database. These efforts honour our responsibility as stewards of cultural heritage and ensure that future generations can learn from and appreciate these works.

None of this would be possible without the dedication and enthusiasm of the Public Art Centre's team. We extend special thanks to Sherri Howard for her unwavering commitment to the Public Art Centre, her passion for delivering meaningful, high-quality educational experiences, and the care she shows in making every participant feel welcomed and valued.

To our members, donors, volunteers, community partners, and the Board of Directors, thank you. Your belief in the value of St. Thomas–Elgin Public Art Centre sustains our momentum and inspires our ongoing work.

As we look ahead, we remain committed to fostering creativity, inclusivity, and connection. The year to come promises new collaborations, expanded programming, and continued opportunities to celebrate the role of the visual arts in our community. Together, we will build on the successes of 2025 and continue shaping a bright future for the St. Thomas–Elgin Public Art Centre.

With gratitude,

Laura Woermke

Executive Director

St. Thomas–Elgin Public Art Centre



2025 EXHIBITIONS

The St. Thomas-Elgin Public Art Centre presented a rich and varied exhibition schedule that celebrated artistic excellence, regional history, and community connection. The year's program included *A Picture is Worth... The Importance of Preserving Artwork*, which highlighted the value of stewardship and care in preserving cultural heritage, alongside group exhibitions such as *Ontario Society of Artists (Western Hub)* and smaller exhibitions such as *Beyond Horizons: William St. Thomas Smith, salon styled in our gallery three*,

The exhibition schedule also featured *Between the Boards* as a special exhibition, highlighting the artwork of a group of artists that participated in the "Between the Boards En plein air event that took place in 2024.

Community engagement remained central to the year's programming through exhibitions such as *In View of the Artist*, the Art Centre's Annual Juried Exhibition, which showcased the talent of participating artists, and the *St. Thomas and District Horticultural Society Floral Interpretation*, which encouraged creative dialogue between visual art and floral design. *Under the Same Sky – Selections from the Permanent Collection* further emphasized the strength of the Art Centre's collection and its role in preserving and sharing works of lasting cultural significance.

The year concluded with the always-anticipated *Miniature Show and Sale*, which brought together artists, supporters, and collectors in a celebration of creativity and accessibility. Together, these exhibitions reinforced the St. Thomas-Elgin Public Art Centre's role as a vital cultural hub, offering meaningful experiences that connected art, heritage, and community throughout 2025.

"A Picture is Worth... The Importance of Preserving Artwork"

Selections from the Permanent Collection

November 15 to February 16, 2025

Galleries One and Two

In a world inundated with fleeting images and ephemeral content, the preservation of artwork stands as a testament to the enduring power of creativity and expression. "A Picture is Worth" explores the significance of safeguarding artistic creations for their intrinsic value, narrative richness, and cultural legacy.

A Quiet Conversation

Selections from the Permanent Collection

January 11 to February 15, 2025

Gallery Three

The artists featured in this exhibition, utilize a variety of techniques and styles, from traditional realism to bold abstraction, to highlight the interplay of light, color, and texture. Through their work, they challenge us to see beyond the surface, to explore the emotions and memories that objects hold, and to reflect on our personal relationships with the world around us.





Ontario Society of Artists

Ontario Society of Artists (Western Hub) Group Exhibition

February 22 to April 5, 2025
Galleries One and Two



Ontario Society of Artists Group Exhibition (Western Hub) February 22 to April 5, 2025 Gallery One and Two Closing Reception Saturday April 5, 2025 1-3pm

Ontario Society of Artists (Western Hub) brought together a dynamic selection of work by artists affiliated with one of Canada's oldest professional art organizations. Representing a range of approaches, materials, and visual languages, this group exhibition reflected the breadth of contemporary artistic practice across Southwestern Ontario. Collectively, the works spoke to the ongoing relevance of observation, experimentation, and individual expression, while underscoring the value of artistic dialogue within a shared professional community.



Beyond the Horizon: A Salon of William St. Thomas Smith

Selections from the Permanent Collection
February 22 to April 5, 2025
Gallery Three

Beyond Horizons: William St. Thomas Smith featured evocative seascapes that captured the beauty, power, and changing moods of maritime life. Blending realism and impressionism, Smith's work invited viewers to reflect on the vastness of the ocean and the intimate character of coastal environments.



Between the Boards

Group Exhibition
April 12 to June 7, 2025
April 12, 2025, Awards presentation
Galleries One and Two

Between the Boards highlighted the creative outcomes of a collaborative project inspired by landscape, place, and the legacy of Clark McDougall's interior barn paintings. Emerging from the *Between the Boards* project held in August 2024, the exhibition showcased innovative approaches and unique artistic perspectives shaped by shared experience, observation, and creative exchange. The exhibition also reflected the importance of community partnership, with thanks to Ian Begg for the inspiring location and award support, and to the project judges Catherine Elliot Shaw, Ciabh McEvenue and Kevin Morrell, for their contributions.

Echoes of the Past: Clark McDougall's Barns

Selections from the Permanent Collection
April 12 to June 7, 2025
Gallery Three

Echoes of the Past: Clark McDougall's Barns invited visitors to explore rural Elgin County through a selection of works from the Public Art Centre's permanent collection. The exhibition highlighted McDougall's distinctive ability to document family barns not only as physical structures, but also as symbols of heritage, memory, and community. Through these works, the exhibition reflected on the changing rural landscape and the enduring stories of the families who shaped Elgin County.

Jeff Suchak

A Covenant of Reciprocity

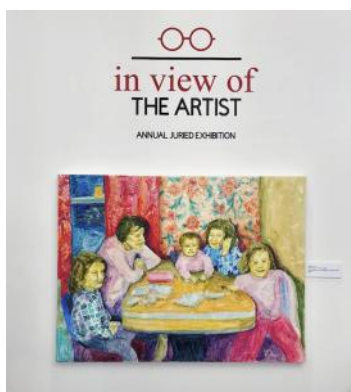
Galleries One & Two
June 14 to August 9, 2025

A Covenant of Reciprocity, featuring photographs by Jeff Suchak, invited visitors to reflect on humanity's relationship with the natural world at a time of increasing environmental change and climate disruption. Through contemplative images in both film and digital formats, the exhibition encouraged a sense of wonder, attention, and reflection, asking audiences to consider renewal, stewardship, and a deeper sense of reciprocity with the land.

Floral Interpretation
Selections from the Permanent Collection
Arrangements by the St. Thomas and District Horticultural Society

June 25 to 28, 2025
Gallery Three

Floral Interpretation celebrated a creative partnership between the St. Thomas-Elgin Public Art Centre and the St. Thomas and District Horticultural Society. Inspired by selected works from the permanent collection, the exhibition paired floral arrangements with visual art, highlighting the shared creativity, craftsmanship, and community spirit of local horticulturalists and artists. The exhibition also demonstrated the importance of community partnerships in expanding audiences, fostering collaboration, and enriching the cultural life of St. Thomas and Elgin County.



In View of the Artist
Annual Juried Exhibition

August 16 to October 3, 2025
Galleries One and Two

In View of the Artist, the St. Thomas-Elgin Public Art Centre's annual juried exhibition, showcased the creativity, skill, and diverse perspectives of artists working across a range of mediums and styles. Through a juried selection process, the exhibition highlighted both emerging and established artists, reflecting the breadth of contemporary artistic practice in the region and beyond. The exhibition reaffirmed the Art Centre's commitment to supporting artists, encouraging excellence, and strengthening connections between art and community.



Under the Same Sky
Selections from the Permanent Collection

Guest Curator Kendal Goodhue
November 15 to February 21
Galleries One and Two

Under the Same Sky, curated by guest curator Kendal Goodhue, brought together selections from the St. Thomas-Elgin Public Art Centre's permanent collection in an exhibition that invited reflection on shared experience, place, and connection. Drawing from works across the collection, the exhibition offered audiences an opportunity to consider how artists, across time and perspective, responded to the world around them while remaining linked by common human experience. Through Goodhue's thoughtful curatorial approach, *Under the Same Sky* highlighted the strength of the permanent collection and revealed new relationships between artworks, themes, and viewers.

Annual Miniature Show and Sale
November 15 to December 21, 2026
Gallery Three

The St. Thomas-Elgin Public Art Centre's Annual Miniature Show and Sale celebrated creativity on a small scale, bringing together a diverse collection of original artworks in an intimate and accessible format. Though modest in size, the works demonstrated remarkable imagination, skill, and variety, inviting visitors to experience how powerful artistic expression can be within a smaller frame.

The purpose of the Annual Miniature Show and Sale was to support artists while encouraging art collecting within the community. By offering original works at a more accessible size and price point, the exhibition created opportunities for both new and experienced collectors to purchase art and engage more closely with local and regional artists. It also reinforced the Art Centre's commitment to fostering appreciation for original art, promoting artists' work, and making the experience of collecting art welcoming and attainable.

SPECIAL EXHIBITS

The St. Thomas-Elgin Public Art Centre remains committed to creating opportunities for connection, belonging, and participation through the visual arts. This commitment helps shape why the Public Art Centre presents special exhibitions both in-house and off-site. By offering exhibitions within the art centre as well as in community-based locations, the Art Centre is able to reach broader audiences, reduce barriers to participation, and bring art into spaces where people already gather, learn, and connect. These efforts help extend the Centre's impact beyond its walls, making the arts more visible, approachable, and relevant to people of varied ages, backgrounds, and lived experiences.



In partnership with **CMHA Thames Valley Addiction & Mental Health Services** and **Community Homes for Opportunity**, the St. Thomas-Elgin Public Art Centre hosted an exhibition on **March 28 and 29, 2025**, showcasing artworks created by participants through their involvement in the program. Exhibiting these works in the studio was an important act of recognition and inclusion, offering the opportunity to share their perspectives and creativity with the wider community. The exhibition demonstrated how access to the arts can foster confidence, connection, and a sense of belonging, while affirming the value of making space for voices and experiences that are not always visible in traditional cultural settings.

The art installation at **Barrie Family Hospice** in the **Reflection Space and Art Gallery** brought the presence of art into a setting centred on compassion, healing, and remembrance. In sharing artwork within this space, the St. Thomas-Elgin Public Art Centre helped foster an environment of comfort and quiet reflection for patients, families, and caregivers. The installation speaks to the power of art to offer solace, dignity, and connection, while reinforcing the Centre's

commitment to making meaningful cultural experiences accessible throughout the community.

The **Art Trees and Trails** initiative continued to extend the reach of the St. Thomas-Elgin Public Art Centre by bringing images from the **permanent collection** into community walking paths and parks. Through these outdoor installations, artworks became part of everyday public life, inviting residents and visitors to encounter local art in accessible and unexpected ways. This ongoing work strengthened connections between art, place, and community, while encouraging reflection, exploration, and engagement beyond the Public Art Centre walls. Looking forward the Public Art Centre, in partnership with the Free and Young Press will be expanding the initiative into Elgin County with additional works added to Port Stanley. **Generously funded by the Estate of Donna Vera Evans Bushell.**



EDUCATION

In 2025, the St. Thomas–Elgin Public Art Centre continued to grow as a welcoming community space where people of all ages could learn, create, and connect through art. Through school visits, early years programming, student programs, intergenerational experiences, partnerships, and wellness-focused initiatives, the Centre offered inclusive and engaging opportunities that nurtured creativity, encouraged connection, and enriched community well-being.

School Programs

School programs remained a strong and valued part of the Centre's educational outreach in 2025, attracting classes from across St. Thomas and Elgin County. Through guided exhibition tours and hands-on studio workshops, students engaged with visual art in ways that complemented the **Ontario curriculum** and enriched classroom learning. These experiences supported creativity, critical thinking, and visual literacy while providing young learners with meaningful opportunities to connect with original works of art in an inspiring and inclusive environment.

The Public Art Centre also welcomed teachers from across the **Thames Valley area** for a special **PA Day learning** opportunity. By opening its doors to educators, the Public Art Centre created space for inspiration, shared learning, and creative exchange. Teachers had the opportunity to participate in art-based experiences. This initiative reinforced the Centre's role not only as a destination for students, but also as a valuable partner for educators working to foster creativity and cultural learning in schools throughout the region.



Students from Parkside Collegiate Institute also had the opportunity to visit the Art Centre through the Specialist **High Skills Major (SHSM) program**, creating meaningful connections between arts education and future career pathways. Their visit introduced them to the gallery as both a creative and professional space, offering insight into the many roles, skills, and opportunities connected to the arts and culture sector. Experiences like this help young people see the arts not only as a form of expression, but also as a meaningful part of their future education, employment, and community life.

The Public Art Centre deepened collaborations with secondary and post-secondary students in 2025. Volunteer and summer employment opportunities allowed students to engage directly in exhibition preparation, public programming, administrative support, and community outreach. These partnerships help cultivate the next generation of arts professionals and advocates.

Just a few of the participating Schools for 2025: New Sarum Public School, Lockes Public School, Éva Circé-Côté French Immersion Public School, Mitchell Hepburn Public School, Elgin Court Public School, and Parkside Colligate

CLASSES / WORKSHOPS



The Public Art Centre offered classes and workshops for children, adults, and seniors throughout the year, providing welcoming spaces for people of all ages to learn, create, and connect. From beginner-friendly art experiences to more focused skill-building opportunities, these programs encouraged creativity, confidence, and self-expression while making the arts an accessible part of everyday community life.

In addition to its regular programs, the Centre also presented new special classes and events that brought new energy and unique creative opportunities to participants. Programs such as **Valentine's Eat, Drink & Create** offered a fun and social way to engage with art, while **In Studio with Sherri Howard** and **Laura Woermke** gave participants the chance to learn and explore creative processes in a more intimate, social and inspiring setting.

Children's programs continued to be especially popular, with classes regularly reaching full capacity at 12 or more participants, per session, and often generating waiting lists. This strong response reflects the growing demand for creative experiences for young people and highlights the Public Art Centre's important role in providing accessible, high-quality arts programming for children and families.

Preschool Picasso (18 Months–3 Years)

A sensory-rich introduction to art designed for toddlers and caregivers. This program emphasizes exploration, texture, colour, and creative play, supporting early developmental skills while introducing young children to a gallery environment through gentle, hands-on activities.

February 5 to 26 10:30-11:30

March 19 to April 9 10:30-11:30

November 10 to December 10 10:30-11:30

Elementary Expression (Grades JK–4)

An engaging program introducing foundational art concepts through playful experimentation and guided creativity. Students explored colour, texture, and basic design principles.

February 1 to 22 (am and pm sessions)

April 26 to May 17

October 18 to November 8 (am and pm sessions)

Drawing (Grades 5–8)

A structured, skill-based program focused on developing observational drawing techniques, composition, and creative problem-solving. Activities included sketching, thematic drawing challenges, and guided technique-building exercises.

February 1 to 22 1-3pm

October 4 to 11 12:30-3:00pm

Pet Portraits November 15 to 29 10:00-12:00

PA Day Workshops (Grades JK-4)

PA Day workshops for children offered creative, hands-on opportunities for young participants to explore art, experiment with new materials, and express themselves in a fun and supportive environment. These popular programs provided engaging art experiences during school breaks while giving children a chance to learn, create, and connect at the Art Centre.

January 17 9:00am-3:30pm

April 11 9:00am-3:30pm

May 30 9:00am-3:30pm

October 10 9:00am-3:30pm

November 14 9:00am-3:30pm

Summer Classes and Workshops for Children

Summer programs at the Art Centre provided children and youth with engaging opportunities to explore creativity, build new skills, and enjoy meaningful artistic experiences during the summer months. Led by instructors Kiera Batzold and Wilma Pineau, these programs offered a welcoming and inspiring environment where participants could experiment with a variety of materials and techniques while developing confidence and self-expression through art.

July 7-11, 2025 9 am to 3:30 pm Ages 4-9 years

July 14-18, 2025 9 am to 3:30 pm Ages 4-9 years

August 11-15, 2025 9 am to 3:30 pm Ages 4-9 years

July 21-25, 2025 9 am to 3:30 pm Ages 4-9 years

August 18-22, 2025 9 am to 3:30 pm Ages 4-9 years

The new classroom area in Gallery Three created a dedicated space for older students to engage more deeply with art through focused learning and hands-on creative activity. Designed to support more advanced projects and discussion, this new area strengthened the Centre's ability to offer age-appropriate programming for youth while expanding opportunities for skill development, creative exploration, and meaningful engagement within the gallery setting.

Let's Face It: Portraiture

July 8-10, 2025 12:00 to 3:00pm Ages: 9-14 years Instructor Julianne Bryans

Fairy Gardens July 15-17, 2025 10:00 to 1:00pm Ages: 9-14 years Amie Steven

Comics July 29-31, 2025 12:30 to 3:30pm Ages: 9-14 years Wilma Pineau

Back by popular demand, the **Cursive Writing program** returned in 2025 and was moved to the Centre's main gallery space to accommodate increased enrollment and growing interest. Led by Sherri Howard, this well-received program provided students with the opportunity to build handwriting skills in a creative and supportive environment, reflecting the strong community response to specialized learning opportunities at the Art Centre.

Cursive Writing August 5-7, 2025 12:30 to 2:30pm Ages: 9-14 years





Adult and Senior Programs / Workshops

“Research continues to show that participation in arts and cultural activity supports mental health, well-being, and community belonging.”

Source: Canada Council for the Arts / Hill Strategies, *Canadians' Arts Participation, Health and Well-Being*, 2021.

In Studio

Launched as part of the St. Thomas–Elgin Public Art Centre's commitment to community well-being, **In Studio** brings together people, art, and social connection in a supportive and creative environment. Led by instructors **Sherri Howard** and **Laura Woermke**, the program offers guided art-making sessions that encourage relaxation, personal reflection, and meaningful interaction among participants. Designed to promote wellness through artistic expression, **In Studio** has become an important space for fostering community care, reducing isolation, and supporting mental well-being through the arts.

February 5 to 19, 2025 1-3pm

April 16 to 30, 2025 1-3pm

October 8-22, 2025 1-3pm

Eat, Drink & Create offered participants a relaxed and social opportunity to engage with art in a welcoming gallery setting. Through multiple hands-on creative activities, along with casual refreshments and snacks, the program encouraged participants to unwind, connect with others, and enjoy the Art Centre in a fun and accessible way.

February 7, 2026 7:00-9:30pm

October 3, 2026 7:00-9:30pm

November 28, 2026 7:00-9:30pm

Watercolour, Ultimate Beginner's, led by **Pat Duwyn**, offered an accessible and encouraging introduction to watercolour painting for new learners. This course was designed for either the ultimate beginner, someone interested but unsure if they wanted to pursue watercolour, or a seasoned artists who wished to readdress the basics of watercolour. **October 14 to 28, 2025**

Tuesdays 5:00-8:00pm

Mastering The Brush, Instructor Maksym Nechytilo
Painting workshops led by Maksym Nechytailo invited participants to explore a range of painting materials, methods, and creative approaches. Through hands-on experimentation with different paints and techniques, participants expanded their skills, developed confidence, and discovered new ways of expressing their ideas through art.

Friday, January 31 to February 21, 2025 5:30 – 7:30pm



COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS/OUTREACH

CMHA Thames Valley Addiction & Mental Health Services

Community Homes for Opportunity

We believe in the transformative power of art as a means of fostering mental well-being. Our free art programs are designed to support the Canadian Mental Health Association by providing individuals with a creative outlet to express themselves, build connections, and promote healing. Through these programs, we aim to enhance the overall well-being of the participants and our community. Together, we are committed to nurturing mental health and inspiring resilience through art.

Community Living (Community Access Program) These sessions offered free art programs is dedicated to promoting mental health and well-being by providing a creative outlet for self-expression and healing. Through sessional art activities, participants explored the materials while building connections with others. We believe that art has the power to inspire, uplift, and transform lives, making it an essential tool in supporting mental health in our community.

Winter, Fall, Spring (four weeks each session)

St. Joseph's High School **2nd Annual Girls Night Out art-based wellness session** (off-site)

2nd Annual Girls Night Out offered students an art-based wellness session led by **Sherri Howard**, creating a welcoming space for creativity, connection, and relaxation. Through a guided activity and shared experience, the program encouraged self-expression while supporting well-being through the arts.

The St. Thomas–Elgin Public Art Centre continued to serve as a welcoming gathering place for community groups and creative individuals, offering space for connection, learning, and cultural exchange. In 2025, the Centre was pleased to host the **Downtown Development Board Annual General Meeting**, welcome local poet **Peri Hayes** for a book signing (February 28), and provided a tour and presentation (February 25) for the **Golden K Kiwanis**. These activities reflect the Art Centre's important role as a shared community space where creativity, conversation, and civic life come together.

Autism Ontario June 11, 2025 6-9pm **McDougall Landscapes with Watercolour** invited participants ages 12 and up to explore landscape painting through a watercolour workshop inspired by the work of Clark McDougall led by Sherri Howard. Beginning with a brief tour, the program offered an engaging introduction to McDougall's artistic approach before participants created their own landscape studies in a guided studio session. The program provided an accessible and inspiring opportunity for the group to connect with the Centre's collection through hands-on learning.

The Public Art Centre also provided a valuable gathering space for **Elgin County Studio Tour artists** to meet, connect, and strengthen relationships within the local creative community.

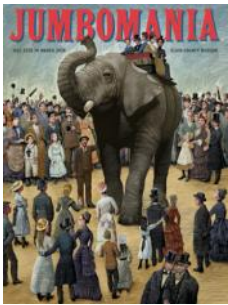




On **April 25**, the gallery space welcomed the **Elgin Writers Guild Poetry Night**, offering an inviting setting for literary expression, community connection, and shared creative experience. By hosting this event, the Art Centre continued to support a broad range of artistic practices and provide space where writers, readers, and the wider community could gather to celebrate creativity in its many forms.



Participation in **Downtown Development Board** events such as **Pumpkin Prowl**, which welcomed more than **800 guests**, and **Light Up Talbot** played an important role in extending the Art Centre's community presence beyond its walls. These popular public events offered valuable opportunities to engage with families, residents, and visitors in festive and accessible settings, helping raise awareness of the Centre's programs and inviting new connections with the arts. Involvement in these downtown initiatives also reflects the Art Centre's commitment to community partnership, civic pride, and contributing to a vibrant and connected cultural life in St. Thomas.



On **November 27**, in partnership with the **Elgin County Museum**, the Art Centre welcomed students from **Éva Circé-Côté French Immersion Public School** for the **Jumbo School Tour** that connected young learners with art, history, and community culture. These collaborative visits provided students with engaging, hands-on educational experiences that encouraged curiosity, creativity, and a deeper connection to local heritage through meaningful cross-institutional learning.



The St. Thomas–Elgin Public Art Centre continued to serve as an important partner in the **City of St. Thomas's Public Art Committee**, helping guide the selection of public art that enhances shared civic spaces and reflects the community's identity. By bringing arts knowledge and curatorial perspective to the process, the Centre supported the thoughtful inclusion of artworks that contribute to civic pride, cultural visibility, and a stronger sense of place. This work highlights the Art Centre's role not only as a gallery, but also as a trusted cultural resource in shaping the visual and creative life of the city. In June, the city included a new work by blacksmith Kyle Thornley.



Kin Canada
St. Thomas
Kinsmen Club

Throughout 2025, the St. Thomas–Elgin Public Art Centre continued to welcome community organizations into its spaces for meetings, events, and special gatherings. This included **Wraparound** on **May 28**, **London St. Thomas Association of Realtors** on **September 17**, **St. Thomas Elgin Medical Association** on **November 1**, and the **Kinsmen Club of St. Thomas** on **November 13, 2025**. By opening its doors in this way, the Art Centre strengthened its role as a shared commu-



nity space that supports collaboration, connection, and the many ways people come together in St. Thomas.

CLARK MCDOUGALL SCHOLARSHIP



McDougall Scholarship

Each year, the St. Thomas–Elgin Public Art Centre awarded the **McDougall Scholarship** to a graduating high school student from St. Thomas–Elgin pursuing post-secondary studies in the arts. In 2025, the recipient was **Gabriella Omari**, a graduate of **St. Joseph's High School**, who began attending **OCAD University** in the fall. The Art Centre extended its congratulations to Gabriella on this important achievement.

In 2025, one of the two available **\$1,000 scholarships** was applied for and awarded. To help protect and sustain this important educational opportunity for students in St. Thomas–Elgin, the Public Art Centre also established a new in-trust account dedicated to securing funds for the scholarship's future.

EVENTS / FUNDRAISING



Drop-in Acoustic Jam FREE Community Event

Last Saturday of the month
The monthly **Drop-In Acoustic Jam**, held on the last Saturday of each month from **1:00 to 3:00 p.m.**, offered a welcoming opportunity for musicians and community members to gather, share music, and connect in an informal setting. This popular program added to the Art Centre's role as a vibrant community hub and will continue into **2026**.

The **White Elephant Bazaar** was a pop-up fundraiser held in **Gallery Three**, bringing together a playful mix of vintage finds, curiosities, handmade items, and creative treasures. Designed as a market for the curious and creative, the event invited visitors to browse, discover unexpected gems, and support the Art Centre in a fun and engaging way. The fundraiser added energy to the gallery space while encouraging community participation and creative exchange.



In 2025, the St. Thomas–Elgin Public Art Centre was pleased to begin a new fundraising opportunity through **Jackpot Time**, creating an additional source of support for the Centre's exhibitions, education, and community programming. This new partnership represents a valuable way to strengthen fundraising efforts and build ongoing support for the Art Centre's work. We extend our sincere thanks to the organization for this opportunity and look forward to working together in the future.





Annual Fall Art Auction Friday November 7, 2025 7:00pm

Our Annual Art Auction, a vibrant celebration of creativity supported by talented local and regional artists, dedicated collectors, and generous donors was held on Friday, November 7. This event showcased a diverse array of artwork, highlighting the incredible talent within our community and beyond. We extend our heartfelt gratitude to our sponsors and participants and our auctioneer, Steve Peters, whose contributions made this event possible. Your support not only enriches our artistic landscape but also helps us promote and sustain the visual arts in our community.



Gift Shop

The Art Centre's **Gift Shop** continued to serve as both a valuable fundraiser and an important way to support local and regional artists. By offering handcrafted items, artwork, and unique gifts, the shop created opportunities for visitors to purchase meaningful, locally made work while directly contributing to the Centre's sustainability. This dual role strengthens the Art Centre's connection to the creative community and helps celebrate the talent of artists across the region.

PERMANENT COLLECTION



Permanent Collection

In 2025, the St. Thomas–Elgin Public Art Centre's permanent collection remained an important cornerstone of its work, preserving and sharing the artistic legacy of the region for current and future generations. The collection, which consists of **2,173 works of art**, reflects the creative history, identity, and cultural memory of St. Thomas and Elgin County. Local permanent collections play a vital role in ensuring that the stories, artists, and artistic achievements of a community are cared for, studied, and made accessible over time, helping to strengthen a shared sense of place and belonging.

While no new works were accessioned into the collection in 2025, the Centre continued important collections management work with **Kath Goodhue**, including ongoing database development and the completion of condition reports for selected artworks. This behind-the-scenes work is essential to the long-term stewardship, documentation, and preservation of the collection. The Art Centre also looks forward to a planned donation by artist **Rosemary Sloat** in 2026, which will further enrich the collection and support its ongoing growth as a community resource.

MEMBERSHIP 2025

INDIVIDUAL

John Allen
Jane Armstrong
Jane Atkinson-White
Robin Baratta
Ella Balkwill
Olivia Bill
Peter Bloch-Hansan
Elizabeth Bourque
Mike Brouse
Christine Buechler
Lynn Coates
Sarah Cowling
Chris Dancey
Kim Douglas Harrison
JoAnn Dunn
Patricia Duwyn
Mark Elms
Donald Ferguson
Bill Foster
Lois Fuchs
Susan Garrington
Lisa Gerrard
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Bethany Green
Cathy Groulx
Dang Ho
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Marion Hummel
Brenda Hunniford
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Debra Jackson Jones
Barbara Landstreet
Michaela Lucio
Brian Lynch
Helen Lynch
Johnnene Maddison
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Josepha Van den Anker
Meaghan Vreman
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Kevin Morrell
Len Ruby & Raegan Little
Andrew Snetsinger
Jeff & Susanna Suchak

CONTRIBUTING

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Darrell & Joan Dennis

Lynn Disbrowe
Diane Dobson
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Susan Fortin-Smith
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Betty Burrell-Beaudry
Downtown Development Board
Candy McManiman

DONORS / GRANTS 2025

The St. Thomas–Elgin Public Art Centre extends its heartfelt gratitude to the individuals, families, businesses, foundations, and community organizations whose generosity made 2025 a successful and inspiring year. Your support enables the Centre to provide meaningful cultural experiences, preserve our Permanent Collection, offer accessible educational programs, and serve as a creative hub for the entire region.

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Howard and Alice Williams Fund within Elgin-St. Thomas Community Foundation

Guided by direction provided in their estate, this fund has a focus on specific charities under a general Education theme.



With heartfelt thanks, we close 2025 with deep appreciation for the many people who continue to support the St. Thomas–Elgin Public Art Centre. To our members, donors, funders, sponsors, volunteers, artists, instructors, partners, board members, and all who visited and participated in our programs, thank you for helping make the Art Centre a vibrant and welcoming place for creativity and community.

Your support makes it possible for the Art Centre to continue inspiring learning, connection, and cultural engagement across St. Thomas and Elgin County. We are grateful for all that was achieved together in 2025 and look forward to building on this momentum in the year ahead.





THANK YOU!

