

Grimsby Public Art Gallery was founded in 1975 as a committee of the Grimsby Public Library Board, creating an active and accessible community art gallery in the lower level of the Grimsby Public Library. In 1999 the Gallery became a separate sub-department of the Town of Grimsby, although we still shared a building with the Library. In 2004 both Gallery and Library moved into a new purpose-built facility that has significantly enhanced our ability to fulfill all aspects of our mandate.

Forging and maintaining connections with our community is of primary importance and we do this through our careful selection and presentation of exhibitions and programs. We preserve art by our responsible care of the permanent collection. We encourage visual art by maintaining a gallery that is open and welcoming to all visitors and by offering a range of thought provoking art and related programs.

Grimsby Public Art Gallery is wheelchair accessible.

GALLERY HOURS:

Tuesday, Wednesday, Friday: 10 am - 5 pm

Thursday: 10 am - 9 pm

Saturday: 1 pm - 5 pm

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Collective Memory: 50 years of collecting

January 25 - April 5, 2025

GPAG
GRIMSBY PUBLIC ART GALLERY

Collective Memory: 50 Years of Collecting

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For five decades, Grimsby Public Art Gallery has been a cornerstone of the region's artistic and cultural identity. Collective Memory surveys the remarkable journey of building GPAGs permanent collection, a testament to the vision and dedication of artists, directors, curators, donors, and volunteers who have all had a hand in shaping its legacy. From foundational acquisitions to recent treasures, the exhibition reflects on the shared efforts and enduring passion of building and preserving a renowned collection for the community it serves.

Artworks often reflect the era in which they were created, yet also have an ability to transcend time, adapting and gathering different meanings with each viewer — serving as both symbols of their origins and their ever-evolving interpretation. In celebration of GPAGs 50th anniversary, this exhibition brings together key pieces from the permanent collection and features 80 works by over 70 artists, including: Carl Beam, Otto Beyer, John Davies, Suzy Lake, Dennis Lukas, Kim Ondaatje, Jacques Schrygens, Tony Urquhart, and Andy Warhol. Together, these works embody not only artistic excellence but also the spirit of collaboration and community, forged over time.

The artworks exhibited for Collective Memory were selected by GPAG staff. Coloured markers alongside a variety of the works on display indicate a staff selection. Visitors can learn more about staff selections and their thinking behind these choices through the accompanying catalogue.

with what could be considered flags flanking each side. A series of letters are included in the work and although it is difficult to make out what it says as some of the lettering appears to be missing, the second line reads “partido” which translates to “party” or “match” in English. The remaining word is missing letters, but could read “republica,” translating the line to read “republic party.” Though it can be easy to jump to conclusions when it comes to theorizing works in the absence of provenance, this mystery piece in the collection underscores the significance of collecting practices and archival research.



Unknown, *Untitled*, n.d. embroidered textile

-Alexandra Hartstone



Exhibition installation view - image courtesy of Ollie Lauricella



Conrad Furey, *Man in Boat*, 1982, acrylic on canvas

We are lucky to have such incredible works nestled in our permanent collection, such as Conrad Fury's, *Man in Boat* (1982) and Walter Bachinski's *Untitled (Souvenir of Summer)* (1992). Along with these works we have found a few mysteries within the collection, like the almost entirely unknown embroidery work hanging in this exhibition (number 29 on the salon wall). While we have little information surrounding this double-sided, embroidered textile piece, it does recall the molas often made and worn by Indigenous Guna peoples of Panama and Colombia. Generally depicting stylized figures, plants, animals, patterns, and other scenes of daily life, molas are widely recognized as a symbol of Indigenous cultural identity. The textile work in our collection includes a stylized figure in the centre



Exhibition installation view - image courtesy of Ollie Lauricella

GPAG first opened its doors in 1975 in the lower level of the Carnegie building, next door to the Gallery's current location. Founded by Director/Curator Bill Poole, GPAG quickly became an artistic hub supporting local and emerging artists, producing meaningful exhibitions, and engaging with the community through a variety of programs and special events. In 2004, the gallery moved to its current location which included a specialized vault for the permanent collection. Since 1975, GPAG has amassed over 2,500 works of both contemporary and historic Canadian pieces with special focus on printmaking, works on paper, book arts and fine craft, and art that addresses human interactions with the environment.

Having been at GPAG for just over 30 years now, our permanent collection is a well-known entity to me, yet at the same time I have barely scratched the surface of what we hold in the collection. There are always surprises found within its depths along with many familiar faces. For my picks, I chose pieces that spark strong memories with me from over the years.

John MacGregor's, *The Jennifer Suite*, is a small series of 4 serigraph prints coloured with watercolour paint. This series is one of the first artworks I remember seeing when I started at GPAG for a high school co-op placement. I fell in love with the colours and the whimsical movement of the lines. Everyday stationary objects are given vibrancy and life.

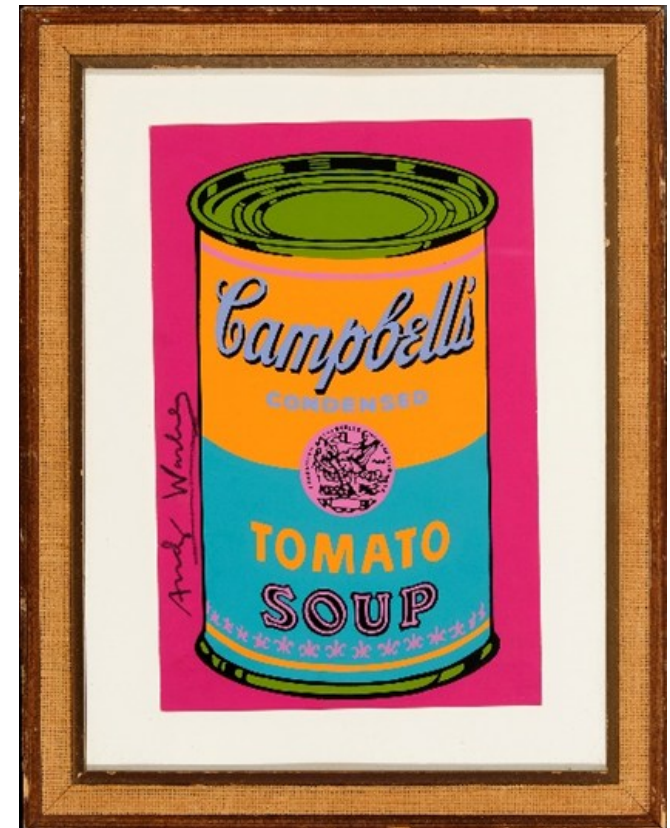
Lupe Rodriguez's, *The Arrival of Liam*, has been a fan favourite, among both visitors and staff. It's easy to see why it has been routinely selected to be exhibited in permanent collection shows over the years and I'm honoured to have my turn in choosing it for display. I am a big fan of bold, bright colours in life, so this piece is an easy favourite for me.



Lupe Rodriguez, *The Arrival of Liam*, 1995, acrylic on canvas

Andy Warhol is an extremely well-known artist whose work holds meaning to me personally. I have always enjoyed Warhol's use of pop culture paired with pops of colour and throughout my own artistic practice, I have found myself inspired to use bold and flashy colours in my own work. As well, I believe that it is an artist's job to explore contemporary themes in pop culture and current events through your art. This exhibition provided me with my first opportunity to explore GPAG's permanent collection freely and discovering that we have a Warhol in the collection made me very excited as someone who has a strong interest in art history and preservation.

-Ollie Lauricella



Andy Warhol, *Campbell's Tomato Soup Can*
1969, serigraph



David Hylinsky, *Plane*, 1980, photograph

As a photographer with a special focus on historical mediums, images shot on film will always catch my eye. In the case of *Plane* by David Hylinsky, the subject matter as well as the medium interests me. Airplanes are notoriously fast-moving objects so to capture the subject with such clarity using the slow process of film is extremely impressive to me. Photography as a concept has become extremely accessible in the present day through the use of phones, tablets and digital cameras. Everyone is able to take thousands of pictures one way or another in the blink of an eye but with film, the process requires thought and intention. This intention, combined with technologies of the past is what draws me to the use of film photography in my own practice and to this piece.



Ivan Wheale, *Fraser Point #2*, 1996, acrylic on canvas

Ivan Wheale's largescale painting, *Fraser Point #2*, is a piece I became intimately familiar with. When it was accessioned into our collection, GPAG was in the basement of the old Library in the Carnegie building next door and our art storage was very limited, nothing like the state-of-the-art storage racks and vault we have now. The 7'5" wide painting was hung on the wall next to our desks as there wasn't room to store it anywhere else. We enjoyed the painting while we worked for 4 more years before moving into the new gallery. In my own art practice, I have done many landscapes while taking oil painting lessons and have painted both traditionally and digitally in a photorealistic way, so I have a true love and appreciation of this piece.

-Allison Poole

While having been with the gallery for a few years now, each visit to the vault has resulted in discovering new works I haven't seen before. Aside from the descriptor *Portrait of Emily Fathy*, very little is documented about the significance of the artist and the sitter. It's easy to be enticed by this painting as it is, like many historical portraits of women, shrouded in mystery. I have found some information in our records that indicate Emily Fathy was likely an important figure in Grimsby and who's family names made up some of the town's street names. It is a shame we don't know more about the artist because I'm intrigued by many of the choices they made in this portrait. Stylish and effortless, Emily's pose naturally demands respect: eyes directed off to the side and uninterested in the perception of those viewing her. Despite obvious signifiers of status, like multiple gold jewellery pieces and a left-hand ring indicating engagement or marriage, Emily's personal significance is represented through her powerful pose. As one of the first paintings that catch your eye in the gallery and placed with prominence on the back salon wall, Emily Fathy's curious portrait maintains significance as a valued piece in our permanent collection.

I had just returned from a trip to Ireland to see my family when Grace Cowling's ornate work was shown to me by a coworker. Part of my time in Ireland was touring cultural hotspots, including visiting and learning the history behind the Book of Kells. Famous for its symbolism and religious dedication to detail, the Book of Kells is believed to be created by numerous young monks to complete an extensive and elaborate project that properly honours their faith. Cowling mirrors this devotion with the time and technical skill required to accomplish each knot, gradient, and intricate design. Until you get up close and see the artists application of watercolours and pencil, you may not initially recognize that this level of compositional balance and detail was the result of a human hand.



Exhibition installation view - image courtesy of Ollie Lauricella

I've attempted to include works that speak to the gallery's early beginnings such as: Jacques Schyrgens' *West of Kenora* (1974) which was the first work we accessioned upon opening in 1975; Rita Letendre's *Night Light Phase I* (1971) which bears a holiday greeting on its reverse addressed to Bill Poole with love from the artist and her husband, Kosso Eloul; works by Kim Ondaatje and Tony Urquhart as artists who had good relationships with the Gallery and were fundamental in the foundation of CARFAC; and works by Dennis Lukas, John Davies, and Matthew Harley as representatives of the region's local artistic talent.

-Sarah Oatley

As a recent addition to GPAG in support of the gallery's 50th anniversary, I spent a lot of my time in the archives sorting through paper files, meeting minutes, exhibition ephemera, and photographs to learn about the foundations of the gallery and its evolution over the past 50 years.

My time in the archives produced an image of the gallery that was unique to its surroundings: a community-focused space with a wide-reaching breadth of artistic talent kept within its collection. From notable names in Canadian art and traditional mediums to local favourites and experimental methods, my selections for this show are a reflection of my research at the gallery.



Jacques Schyrgens, *West of Kenora*, 1974, watercolour on paper

Cowling imbues a sense of femininity by visually referencing textile arts, like tapestry, that have been dismissed historically as craft and associated with “women’s work.”

Carl Beam's photo-collage works have remained my favourite addition to GPAG's diverse collection. Simple yet effective, Beam pulls recognizable symbols from Western visual culture and places them with intention, working with a slow and precarious process of image transfer techniques. I love how Beam's work conjures contemplation and even humour from banal imagery. I'm also drawn to Beam's purposeful simplicity and careful use of materials to make everything from the collage - the embossed seal of authenticity, the artist's signature, and the materiality of the paper are equal importance to the artwork as a whole. Beyond aesthetics, I chose to include a work by Carl Beam - *Untitled (Einstein and Joker)* - in this show because his influence as an Ojibwe artist working within the context of Canada's colonial timeline adds important national, historical, and artistic value to the GPAG's permanent collection.



Carl Beam, *Untitled*, c. 2000, mixed media

- Rea Kelly

I was first introduced to the work of Tim Storey in 2015 when GPAG presented an exhibition of his wacky, fantastical works. I had never seen ceramics in this way before. His work has stuck with me ever since.

Whenever I come across these sculptures in the vault, I wonder what sort of characters Tim Storey had in mind as he created them. I wonder where these creatures would live, what they would do, what their story would be. I am drawn to work that sparks my own creative process and Tim Storey's works do just that.

Matthew Harley's Studio Still Life caught my eye immediately. The detail in the floor texture, the spots on the walls, something about it recalls a dollhouse. I am drawn to all of the little moments



Tim Storey, *Pushme-Pullyou*, 1974, low fire earthenware



Dennis Lukas, *Jordan Harbour #1*, 1980, oil on board

happening within the work such as the small but detailed paintings across the floor and the impressive poster of a plesiosaurus.

Dennis Lukas is a foundational artist within GPAG's permanent collection. Over the years I have learned a lot about him, his practice, and the lasting impact his work has had on the art world. The Gallery is fortunate to have many Dennis Lukas works in the collection. My favourite pieces are his Grimsby landscapes with red dots painted across them. There is something so interesting about these works—the natural landscapes juxtaposed with such a linear, almost scanner-like dot process is quite curious.

-Alisen Stewart