

NEILSON PARK CREATIVE CENTRE



Annual Report 2023-24

Message from the Board President

January, 2025

It has been an honour to serve Neilson Park Creative Centre as the newly appointed President of the Board this past year. I would like to begin by expressing my deep appreciation for the opportunity to steward this long standing arts organization that thrives after 30 years of continual growth due to its supportive membership, staff, board of directors, and its surrounding community. Neilson Park Creative Centre contributes to produce a sense of belonging within the community that is directly related to the passion, creativity, and unwavering support it receives from the people who interact with the centre. Our stakeholders are not just part of our community; they are the very lifeblood that propels us forward.

A heartfelt thank you goes to our incredible staff, whose dedication, skill, and hard work continue to push the boundaries of what we can achieve. Their commitment ensures that our programs remain vibrant, our exhibitions thought provoking, and our mission of fostering art as an integral part of daily life continues to thrive.



Vaishnavi at the NPCC Celebrates PRIDE Fashion Show, June 2024
Designer: Julia Farrant
Image: Petra Nyendick

And of course, none of this would be possible without the support of our board, partners, donors, volunteers, members, and resident groups. Your belief in the transformative power of art is what allows us to have a meaningful and lasting impact in building our community.

As we look back over the past year, it's inspiring to see the growth we've experienced — not



Children Making Art, September 2024
Image: Mia Buono

only in the number of people we reach but also in the diversity of voices and perspectives that we embrace. The organization has evolved, and with each new step, we're reminded of how art has the unique ability to shape our world, foster



Rick, Plein Air Contest Prize Winner at the Neilson Park Creative Festival, July 2024
Image: Mia Buono

connection, and spark the imagination. It is a universal language that speaks to our shared humanity, elevating us beyond the ordinary and into spaces of beauty, empathy, and understanding.

I am so proud of the work we have done together, but we know there is still much more to come. Thank you all for being here, for being part of this journey, and for your ongoing support of Neilson Park Creative Centre.

Sincerely,

Jenneen Marie Beattie
President of the Board of Directors
Neilson Park Creative Centre

Resident Group Updates

CALLIGRAPHIC ARTS GUILD OF TORONTO

Website: calligraphicartstoronto.ca Facebook: Calligraphic Arts Guild of Toronto Instagram: [@calligraphicartsguild.to](https://www.instagram.com/calligraphicartsguild.to)



We popped the champagne! The Calligraphic Arts Guild of Toronto is the oldest in Canada, and in 2024, we celebrated our 50th anniversary. Our penultimate event was our exhibition, *We Are Golden*, in NPCC's main gallery in May. The theme was gold and the assignment was simple: sprinkle calligraphy with gold. If you had a chance to catch our show, you saw lettering styles from medieval to modern; paper, fabric, wood, and metal surfaces; and glittering stars suspended from the ceiling.

The inky lifeblood of our guild is our members. This year we travelled through guild history and the calligraphers who built it. We are in a privileged position to have Mark Lurz, one of our founding members, to share tales of yore and the calligraphers. At one point in our history, we were roughly 200 members strong. We celebrated 50 years because of the commitment of our core members and the infusion of wonderful new members. Despite the ebbs and flows of an art form challenged by digital alternatives, there has been a resurging interest. Thank you to our members for contributing to our show and for your commitment all year!



"We Are Golden", CAGT 50th Anniversary Exhibition
Image: CAGT

As a guild, we are committed to outreach. In addition to supporting NPCC's Pride Day in June, we were at both NPCC'S Handmade Art and Fine Craft shows—always a fantastic opportunity to meet new folks. The spring show took us outdoors with complimentary personalized bookmarks for visitors, with chats often turning to the loss and return of cursive writing to schools. In November, our chats turned to the postal strike and the impact that has on our Christmas cards. You see, our guild members sell Christmas cards at the show and our guild holds an annual Christmas card exchange, so the impact is felt.

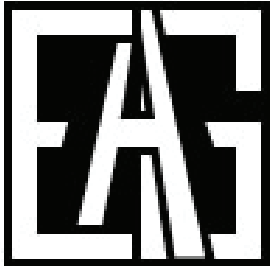
Our studio space at NPCC is home. This year we once again welcomed international instructors (always a treat to learn from a former scribe to Queen Elizabeth II) and learned from our local, talented and innovative fellow calligraphers, with a touch of social time thrown in to chat about our favourite tools of the trade. The spirit of community is strong with calligraphers!

From the Guild Executive, and from all of us in the Guild, a big thank you to Petra and her team at NPCC (especially Cory and Gabby) for helping us put on our anniversary exhibition, keeping us connected, and supporting our love of art throughout the year.

Resident Group Updates

ETOBICOKE ART GROUP

Website: etobicokeartgroup.com Facebook: [EtobicokeArtGroup](https://www.facebook.com/EtobicokeArtGroup) Instagram: [@etobicokeartgroup](https://www.instagram.com/etobicokeartgroup)

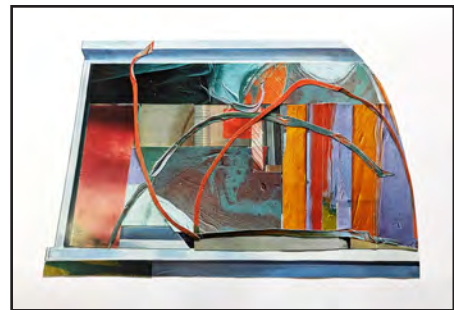


The 2023-2024 year was very successful for The Etobicoke Art Group with an influx of new members adding an extra dimension to the group. It is always exciting to experience the impact of new artists melding with the group.

EAG's first exhibition of the year at NPCC was "Transformation" with 51 works displayed in the Parkview Gallery from March 26 to April 13 and also displayed on our website.

In October, members installed "Highlights 2024" in the Artspace Connect Gallery. There were 59 works in the exhibition which was also displayed on our website through the generous efforts of Helen McCusker. In 2023, EAG had donated our usual time slot for a "Highlights" exhibition, for Steve Rose's "Memento Mori" exhibition. That show and art talk was a resounding success.

There were also shows by break-away groups within EAG, all members of the group but holding shows specific to their own media. The Etobicoke Printmakers excellent show, "Impressions 2024", ran in the Parkview Gallery concurrently with the group's "Highlights" exhibition. And the Etobicoke Collage Collective representing the members of our Friday Collage Zoom class exhibited their work in "Bits & Pieces" in the Parkview Gallery from May 7 to 25.



Kathleen Haushalter, Fenced,
Paper Collage, 10 x 14 inches

The "Highlights 2024" show ended on November 3 when EAG also had our inaugural art talk after a hiatus of 4 years. Art talks are a shared event, open to all members of NPCC and guests, and are an integral part of EAG activities as they have been since the group's inception. This year's event with speaker Jeff Fortinsky was very well attended and we are looking forward to the next one in the series.

Each year, The Etobicoke Art Group gives an award to a student at the Etobicoke School of the Arts who is enrolled in a post-secondary visual arts related program and has demonstrated outstanding ability in Contemporary Arts. This year's award was presented to Kip McDonnell at the commencement held at Koerner Hall. We congratulate Kip on his achievements and wish him the best in his future art studies.

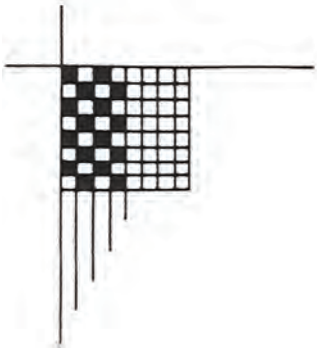
Overall, classes held in-studio and via Zoom were well attended throughout the year and we are hoping to expand our programs in the coming year.

We are looking forward with anticipation to 2025 and the art that will be made in Studio B!

Resident Group Updates

ETOBICOKE HANDWEAVERS AND SPINNERS

Website: ehsguild.com Facebook: Etobicoke Handweavers & Spinners Guild Instagram: @ehsguild



We are pleased to have so many of our members back in Studio C for regular drop ins on Friday mornings, the second Thursday and last Sunday of every month. As well, several members partake in the Neilson Park Open Studio times on Friday afternoons and Thursday evenings. This is when members collaborate on various spinning, weaving, knitting and dyeing projects, make use of our Guild equipment, and enjoy our library.

We also continued with some of our Zoom programs. These sessions include regular Study Group meet ups on topics such as weaving and knitting, workshops, and our monthly meeting which has enabled us to have a variety of speakers from all over the world to address our members.

Education is a key mantra of our Guild which we achieve through informal studio collaboration, Zoom Study Groups and Workshops both in Studio and on Zoom. EHS was a participant in the Community Fibre and Textile programs offering workshops on Kumihimo, braiding with a Lucet, and wet felting. In the new year, a weaving on a rigid heddle workshop will be offered via this program. Workshops over the past year included a Learn to Weave program, and Krokbragd weaving which included both in-studio and on Zoom sessions.



Photo credit: Dawn Juruc

Over the course of the summer and fall months, members were busy preparing for the annual Sheep-to-Shawl competition at the Royal Agricultural Winter Fair where our theme was The Natural Colours of Sheep and how the different sheep breeds & colours take dyeing with madder, harvested from our dye garden at NPCC.

While some of the members were spinning the warp yarn, others were harvesting and preparing the plant material for the dyeing process. The result was an amazing array of shades that were used as the warp threads. The competition team consisted of 6 members tasked with turning a freshly shorn fleece into a shawl in just 4 hours. With a 3rd place finish, the team proudly posed for a picture.

Discussions have already started in planning for next year's competition.

Resident Group Updates

ETOBICOKE QUILTERS' GUILD

Website: etobicokequiltersguild.com Facebook: Etobicoke Quilters' Guild Instagram: @etobicokequiltersguild



The whirl of sewing machines, chatter, laughter and a boiling kettle are the sounds coming from Studio C on Monday and Wednesday every week year 'round. Some quilters are working on their personal projects and many are producing an amazing variety of quilts for our Comfort Quilt program. Twice a year hundreds of quilts are donated to a number of agencies. There is a list on our website.

This year we were able to purchase and install four cabinets on casters that when pushed together become layering tables. Under the cabinets, there is sufficient space to store the completed quilts. No more running up and down the basement stairs on distribution day!

There are monthly meetings, sometimes in person, sometimes on Zoom, with interesting and engaging speakers. The world of quilting is large and there is so much to learn and appreciate. Workshops to learn new or unfamiliar techniques are

held throughout the year. However, nothing anywhere compares to our four part Learn to Quilt Series. It covers all the techniques from operating a sewing machine right through to designing your own quilt.



Our members are not all single focused. Many enjoy other crafts such as embroidery, knitting, crochet and needlepoint. During our studio time some members are available to help with layering a quilt, doing the machine quilting or attaching the binding. We all join in when someone can't decide on a colour or a block placement. Opinions are free and freely given!

There are currently 168 members and we always welcome new members. In the coming year, we are looking forward to hosting another Quilt Fever in late March and an official celebration of our 50th Anniversary in June.

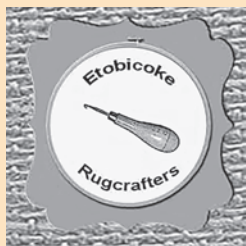
Judith Veinot, *Canadian Autumn*

Photo credit: submitted by Etobicoke Quilters' Guild

Resident Group Updates

ETOBICOKE RUGCRAFTERS

Website: etobickerugcrafters.weebly.com Facebook: Etobicoke Rugcrafters Instagram: @etobickerugcrafters



It has been a busy year for the Etobicoke Rugcrafters – we had a display of rugs at the Ontario Hooking Craft Guild Conference as well as our “Hook and I” Show at NPCC. We hosted a Gathering in the Gallery, inviting rugcrafters from neighbouring groups to join us and we were able to partake of NPCC’s technology set up to have a guest speaker present from Newfoundland.

We also participated in the NPCC Pride Event, Creative Festival (including the Plein Air Competition), the Community Fibre & Textile Programme, and Handmade Art and Fine Craft Sale.

The Etobicoke Rugcrafters (ER) meet in Studio C all year on Tuesdays – the first, third, and fifth (if applicable) Tuesdays of the month during the day and the second and fourth Tuesdays in the evening. There are Zoom meetings on

the second and fourth Tuesday morning. All of this to practice, promote, and share the techniques of traditional and contemporary rug hooking.

Our membership includes people with a few months to a few decades of experience. The wide variety of styles our members practice inspires everyone to grow. Information, assistance, and instructions are always available. In addition, ER sponsors workshops with guest teachers.

We are always willing to welcome new members and to teach the basics to get one started. And we have the tools and materials available so anyone can try their hand at this wonderful fibre art.



Connie Clement, Wolf
Winner of the ER Shirley Kirby Award (Hook and I Show)
Photo Credit: Jennifer Curran

Resident Group Updates

HUMBER VALLEY ART CLUB

Website: humbervalleyartclub.ca Instagram: @humbervalleyartclub



At Humber Valley Art Club we welcome all of you who are looking for ways to boost your creativity through painting, and to meet with fellow artists. As a club that was founded in 1951, there have been many changes in venues over the years. We continue to be grateful to be a Resident Group, since 1993, at Neilson Park Creative Centre. New technology offered by the Centre through recent up-to-date audiovisual equipment has enhanced our program delivery, as has the reliable and friendly support from office staff.

It was exciting to continue to offer watercolour classes to those who have never owned a brush, and start them on an exciting journey with our fall, winter and spring Monday beginner/intermediate eight-week class series. In addition, our four-week intermediate/advanced full-day workshop series in watercolour, acrylic and oil took place on Wednesdays, mostly in person in Studio A. Also, many members and visitors enjoyed two winter Zoom series with long-distance master painters.

In the past year we have hosted three excellent exhibitions. The fall Members Choice Show took place in November 2023 at NPCC, followed by a spring fundraising show at Sunnybrook Hospital, where 21 participating artists were able to make a substantial donation through the many sales. Finally, we presented our annual spring juried exhibition at NPCC, juried by Kim Lee Kho with seven awards granted.

Many members enjoyed getting together socially for a fall luncheon at our AGM in November and at a boisterous Festive Luncheon at the Markland Wood Golf club in December.

At HVAC we feel that being socially interconnected with others through the arts is an important aspect of life, especially through volunteerism and membership in clubs. We truly appreciate the founders of the Humber Valley Art Club and continue to value their original motto: "Join us in Experiencing the Joy of Creation through Painting".



Vlad Rasper, *Country Road In Autumn*, Oil on Canvas, 9 x 12 inches
Photo credit: Submitted by HVAC

We gratefully acknowledge our 2023-24 donors:

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and Spinners Guild
Etobicoke Quilters' Guild
Etobicoke Rugcrafters
Humber Valley Art Club
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Sharon Doyle Drieger
Eileen Menzel
Jean Mull
Helga Nyendick

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