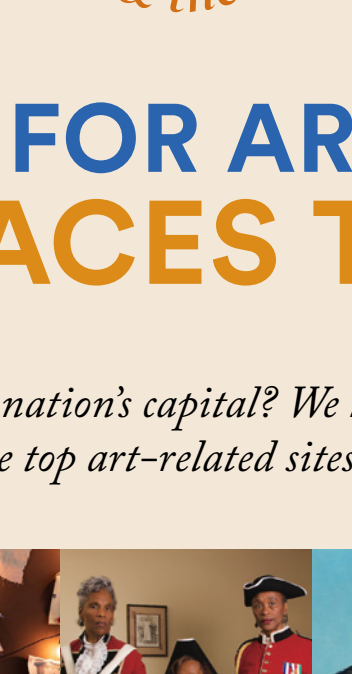


OCTOBER 4, 2024

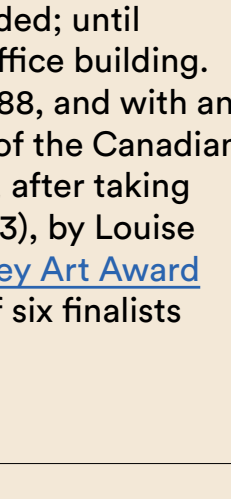


# OTTAWA FOR ART LOVERS TEN PLACES TO VISIT

Heading to the nation's capital? We have you covered on the top art-related sites to see.



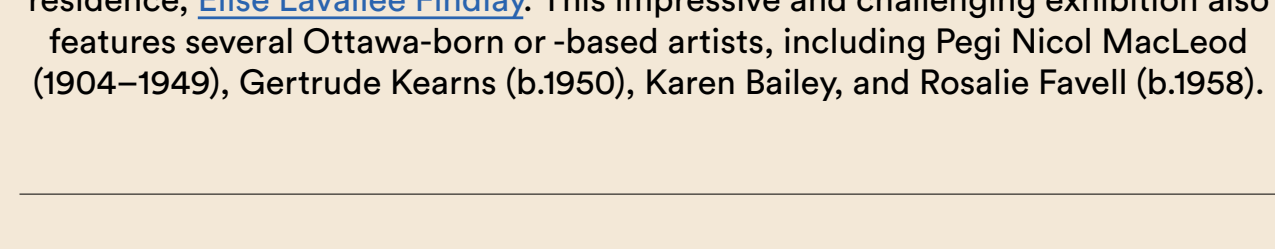
Few people know the Ottawa art scene better than Jim Burant, the author of ACI's *Ottawa Art & Artists: An Illustrated History*, so we asked him to guest-edit today's newsletter and share his must-visit art destinations. Ottawa is a city of contrasting identities. It is known as a raw lumber town and a national capital, and it's the centre of a much wider hinterland on both sides of the river dividing Quebec and Ontario. The city has always been home to Indigenous inhabitants, including the original Anishinaabe Algonquians and, in recent years, one of the largest Inuit populations outside of Nunavut. As a centre for artistic endeavour, Ottawa has mostly lived in the shadow of Montreal and Toronto, but in the past few decades it has become one of the country's most vibrant artistic communities. When you are next in the capital, here are Jim Burant's recommendations.



Jim Burant

**Sara Angel**  
Founder and Executive Director, Art Canada Institute

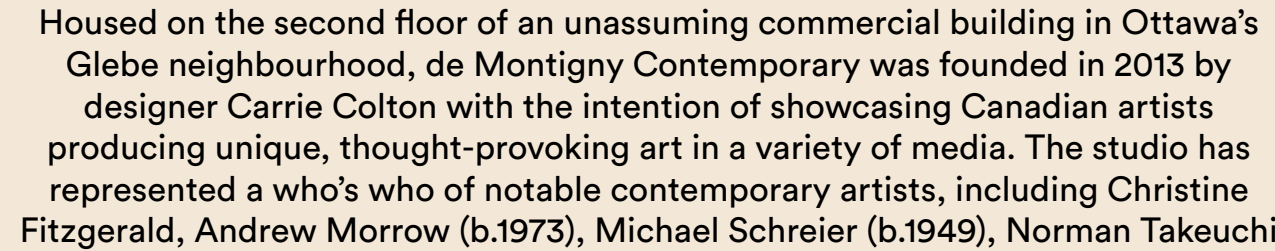
## NATIONAL GALLERY OF CANADA



National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa, 2012. Photograph by Tullia. June Clark, *Harlem Quilt*, 1997, courtesy of the artist and Daniel Faria Gallery, Toronto.

The [National Gallery](#) is one of the best starting points for understanding and experiencing Canadian art. Founded in 1880, the gallery was intended to foster a love for the arts in a largely rural country barely conscious of its own identity as a nation. For nearly a century, however, it was underfunded; until the 1980s, it occupied the second floor of an undistinguished office building. But with the opening of a beautiful new building downtown in 1988, and with an increasing understanding of its role in representing the diversity of the Canadian experience, the National Gallery became a must-see. This fall, after taking a sabbatical in front of the spider sculpture *Maman*, 1999 (cast 2003), by Louise Bourgeois (1911–2010) on the outdoor plaza, visit the 2024 [Sobey Art Award](#) exhibition, which includes work by June Clark (b.1941), one of six finalists for the prestigious prize.

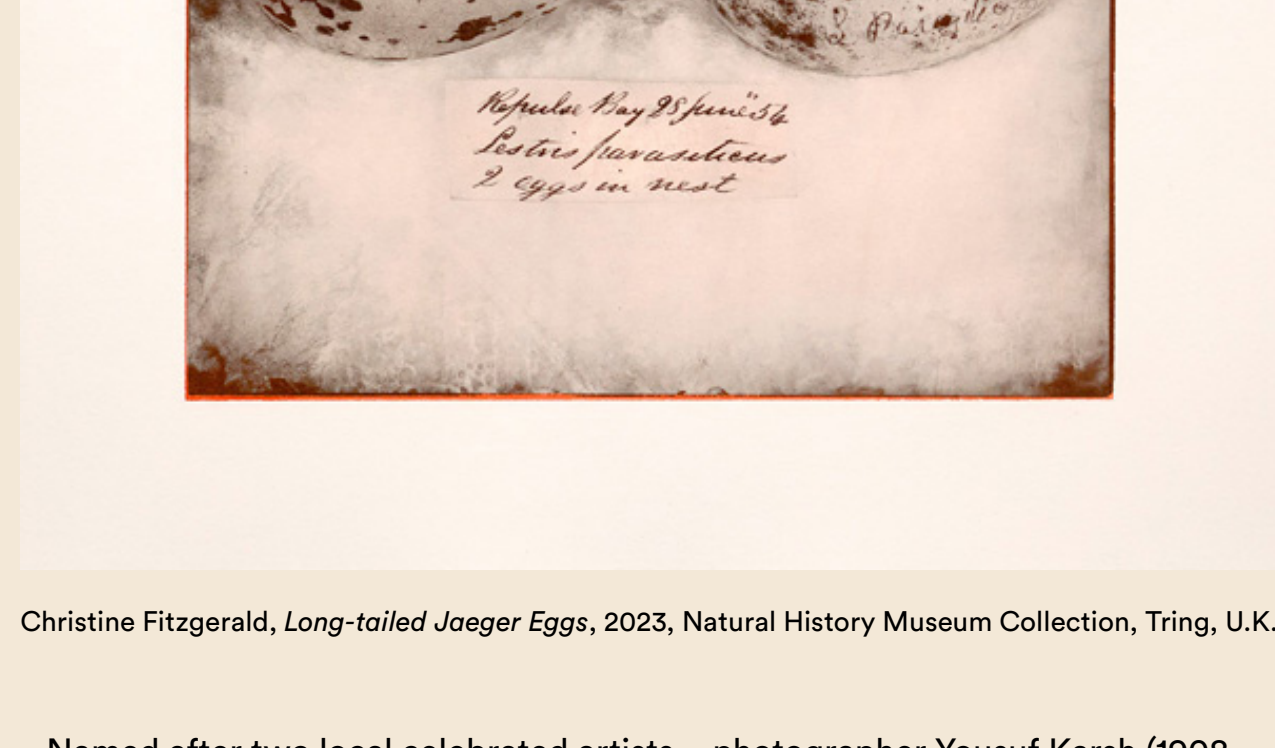
## CANADIAN WAR MUSEUM



Anique Jordan, *Sixth Company Battalion*, 2016, courtesy of the Canadian War Museum, Ottawa. Lillian Yano Blakey, *Reiko, Alberta* (1945), 2013, Nikkel National Museum, Burnaby.

The enormous collection of art held by the [Canadian War Museum](#) (CWM) is fascinating and telling in terms of human reactions to war and conflict. On at the museum this fall is an outstanding exhibition called *Outside the Lines*, which examines the work of women artists in response to conflict, military events, and sites, and the changing roles for women at war. The pieces date from the 1800s to the present; the newest ones have been created by the CWM's first artist-in-residence, [Elise Lavallee Findlay](#). This impressive and challenging exhibition also features several Ottawa-born or -based artists, including Pegi Nicol MacLeod (1904–1949), Gertrude Kearns (b.1950), Karen Bailey, and Rosalie Favell (b.1958).

## DE MONTIGNY CONTEMPORARY



Leslie Hossack, *Sea Level*, 2024, courtesy of de Montigny Contemporary, Ottawa.

Housed on the second floor of an unassuming commercial building in Ottawa's Glebe neighbourhood, de Montigny Contemporary was founded in 2013 by designer Carrie Colton with the intention of showcasing Canadian artists producing unique, thought-provoking art in a variety of media. The studio has represented a who's who of notable contemporary artists, including Christine Fitzgerald, Andrew Morrow (b.1973), Michael Schreier (b.1949), Norman Takeuchi (b.1937), Andrew Wright (b.1971), Leslie Hossack (see above), and David Hoffo (b.1966). Since Colton's retirement in early 2024, new owner [Brendan de Montigny](#) states he is committed to "critical conversations in the creative arts industry, and promoting Canadian artwork internationally."

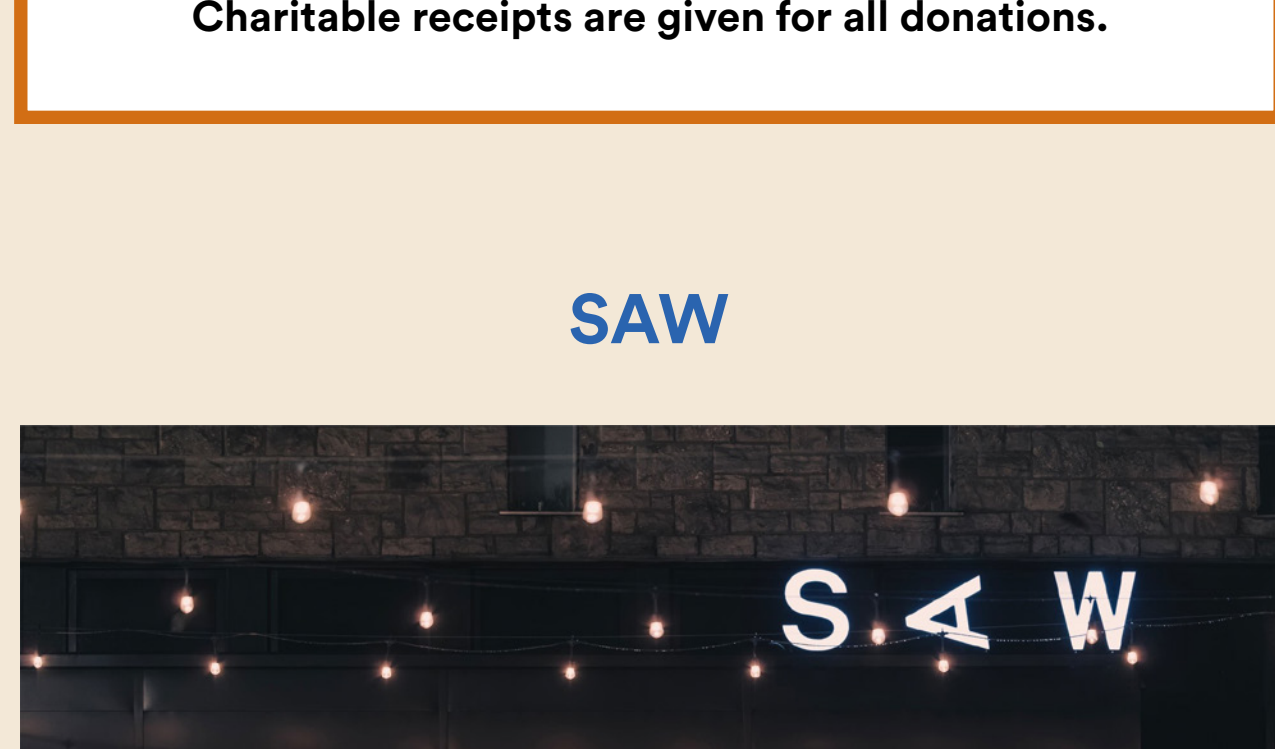
## KARSH-MASSON GALLERY, OTTAWA CITY HALL



Christine Fitzgerald, *Long-tailed Jaeger Eggs*, 2023, Natural History Museum Collection, Tring, U.K.

Named after two local celebrated artists—photographer Yousef Karsh (1908–2002) and painter Henri Masson (1907–1996)—in honour of their contributions to Canadian art, the [Karsh-Masson Gallery](#) is located on the main level of Ottawa City Hall. It is part of the city's art program to make the public aware of Ottawa's extraordinary visual art history and introduce younger artists to a wider audience. An exhibition related to the [Karsh Award](#), which celebrates the importance of photography in the history of art in Ottawa, is held every two years. The award highlights the work of an individual who has been deemed to have created an outstanding body of work and whose contribution to lens-based art is of deep significance. This year, the exhibit featured the work of 2023 Karsh Award winner [Christine Fitzgerald](#).

## CARLETON UNIVERSITY ART GALLERY



Jane Martin, *Clematis Ramona*, 1983, Carleton University Art Gallery, Ottawa.

[Carleton University Art Gallery](#) (CUAG) opened its doors in 1992 and has since become a beacon for both the academic community and for the wider Ottawa public. With an innovative program of exhibitions, the gallery has established itself as a key player in the region and has introduced many Carleton students to art curatorship and scholarly work. Although CUAG was closed for renovations last summer, the gallery has ambitious fall programs for its reopening featuring artist Jane Martin and exhibitions such as [A Dream of Return and Practice as Ritual / Ritual as Practice](#).

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## SAW

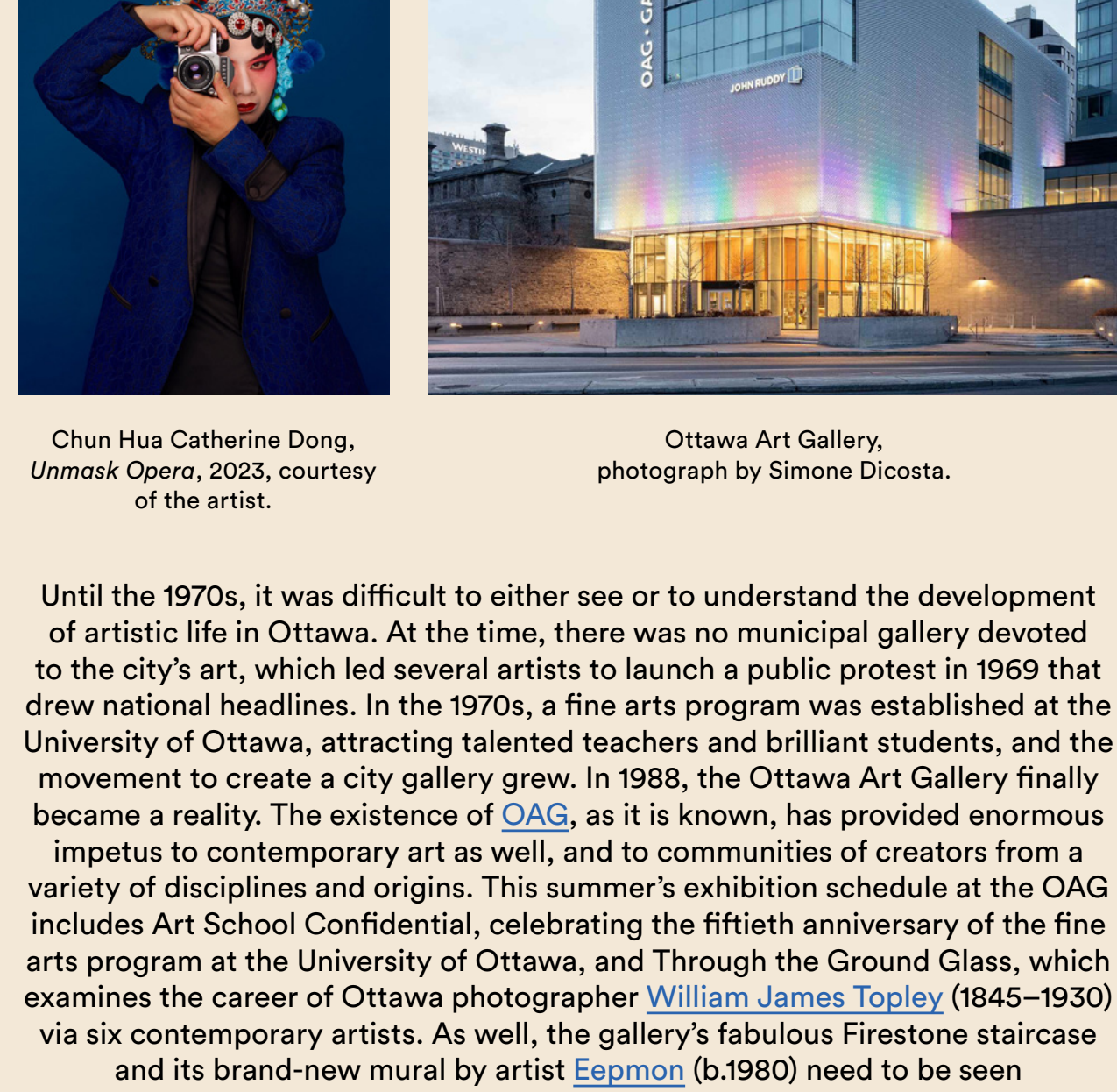


SAW, Ottawa, courtesy of SAW.

Ottawa doesn't have a long history of well-established commercial art galleries. In 1972, several local artists took matters into their own hands, and founded one of the first artist-run gallery spaces in Canada, Sussex Annex Works (later shortened to [SAW](#)). Now housed at Arts Court, close to the Rideau Centre in downtown Ottawa, it has nurtured the careers of many notable artists over the decades. It is well known for supporting politically and socially engaged art, especially performance and media arts. As an artist-run centre, it [aims to engage](#) "in innovative programming, outreach, and exchange initiatives." [SAW](#) has inspired other similar artist centres in the Ottawa region, such as Ottawa's Gallery 101, a non-profit gallery formed in 1979, and Axenéo7, founded in Gatineau in 1983.

## UNTITLED (PIMISI/EEL), 2018

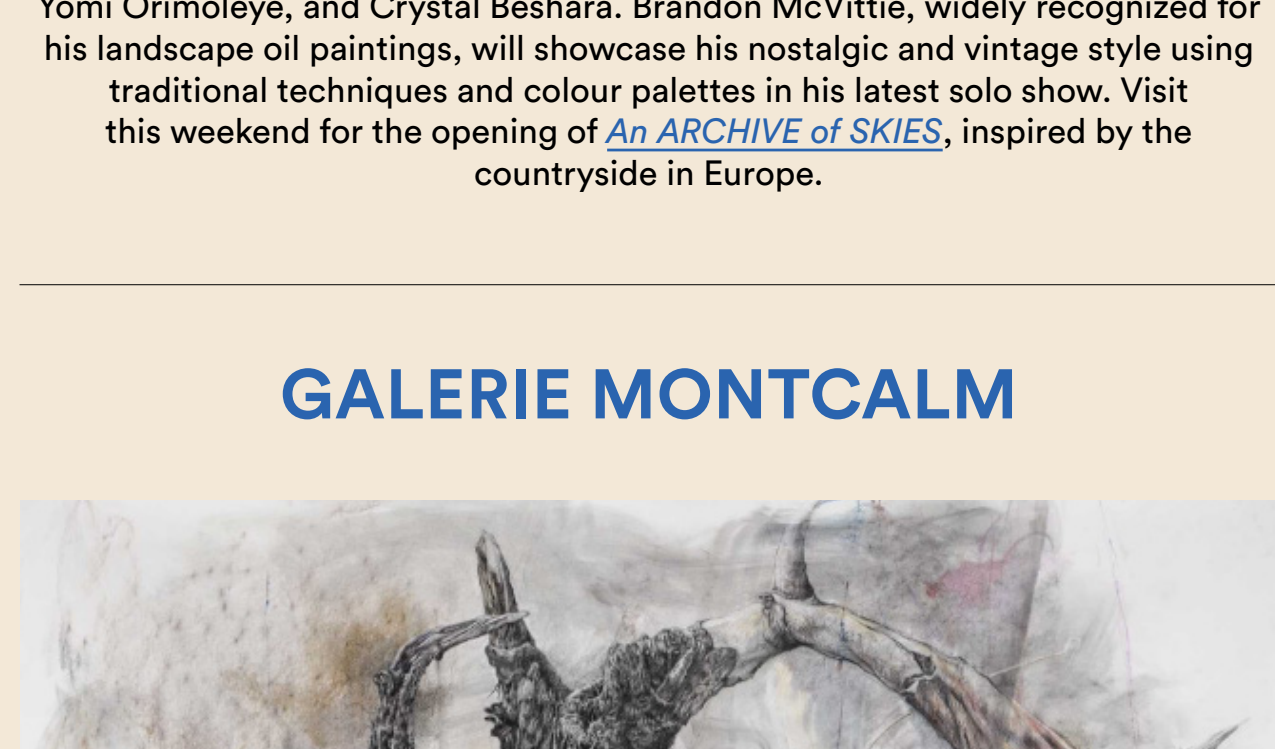
by Nadia Myre



Nadia Myre, *Untitled (Pimisi/Eel)*, 2018, Pimisi Station, Ottawa, courtesy of Nadia Myre.

There are many outstanding and impressive pieces of public art in Ottawa. One of the most interesting yet difficult to find works is *Untitled (Pimisi/Eel)*, 2018, a towering stainless and chromed steel depiction of an eel by [Nadia Myre](#) (b.1974), an Algonquin member of the Kitigan Zibi Anishinabeg First Nation. The work was one of three commissioned by the Public Art program of the City of Ottawa to stand in the area beside Pimisi LRT station. Its attraction lies in the beauty of its lines, and the deeper meaning it holds in relation to the eel fishery once so important to Algonquin life and culture and now virtually extinct because of dam construction, pollution, and other factors.

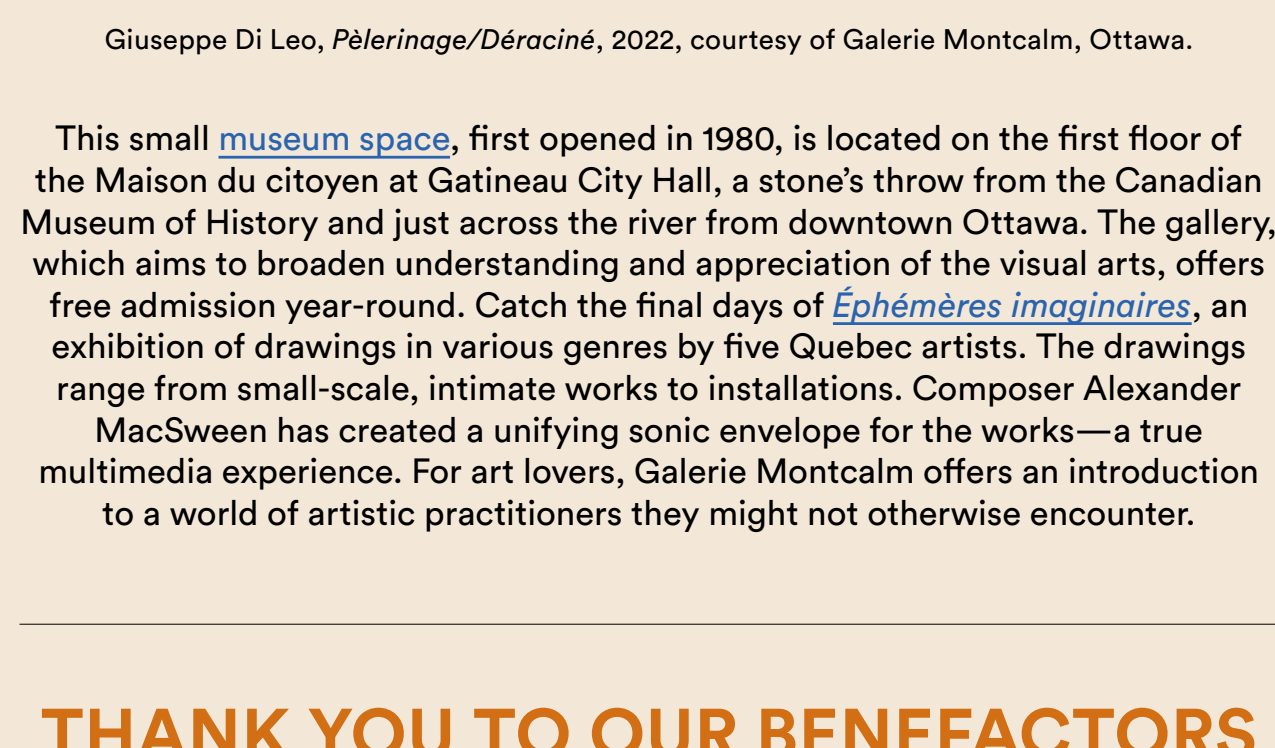
## OTTAWA ART GALLERY



Chun Hua Catherine Dong, *Unmask Opera*, 2023, courtesy of the artist. Ottawa Art Gallery, Photograph by Simone Dicosta. Courtesy of Intu Design. [2] Wall Space Gallery, Courtesy of Wall Space Gallery, Ottawa. [4] Giuseppe Di Leo, *Pelerinage/Déraciné*, 2022, graphite, coloured pencil, pastel on paper, 162 x 127 cm. Courtesy of Galerie Montcalm, Ottawa. Photo credit: Paul Litherland.

Until the 1970s, it was difficult to either see or to understand the development of artistic life in Ottawa. At the time, there was no municipal gallery devoted to the city's art, which led several artists to launch a public protest in 1969 that drew national headlines. In the 1970s, a fine arts program was established at the University of Ottawa, attracting talented teachers and brilliant students, and the movement to create a city gallery grew. In 1988, the Ottawa Art Gallery finally became a reality. The existence of [OAG](#), as it is known, has provided enormous impetus to contemporary art as well, and to communities of creators from a variety of disciplines and origins. This summer's exhibition schedule at the OAG includes Art School Confidential, celebrating the fiftieth anniversary of the fine arts program at the University of Ottawa, and [Through the Ground Glass](#), which examines the career of Ottawa photographer [William James Topley](#) (1845–1930) via six contemporary artists. As well, the gallery's fabulous Firestone staircase and its brand-new mural by artist [Espmon](#) (b.1980) need to be seen to be believed.

## WALL SPACE GALLERY



Wall Space Gallery, Ottawa, courtesy of Wall Space Gallery. Brandon McVittie, *Huron Dunes*, n.d., courtesy of Wall Space Gallery, Ottawa.

Wall Space Gallery, founded in 2004 and now located in Ottawa South, which aims to broaden understanding and appreciation of the visual arts, offers free admission year-round. Catch the final days of [Échelles imaginaires](#), an exhibition of drawings in various genres by five Quebec artists. The drawings range from small-scale, intimate works to installations. Composer Alexander MacSween has created a unifying sonic envelope for the work—a true multimedia experience. For art lovers, Galerie Montcalm offers an introduction to a world of artistic practitioners they might not otherwise encounter.

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