

surrey
art gallery

TEACHERS GUIDE

Spindle Whorl

Counting the Steps of the Sun

ECOLOGY | CIRCLE | COMPOSITION



WITH BIG IDEAS & CURRICULUM CONNECTIONS

Don Li-Leger, *Hundred Year Bloom 7*, 2018, acrylic on canvas.
Image courtesy of the Li-Leger Family.

Dear Teachers and Parents

This guide is a classroom resource, designed to support teachers, parents and students attending exhibitions and experiencing art. This particular guide is a resource designed specifically with content from the exhibitions, *Spindle Whorl* and *Counting the Steps of the Sun* originally on display from January 25 – March 22, 2020.

The Teachers' Guide contains exhibit information, as well as activities that will help prepare your students for taking in art and to engage them in discussion afterwards. These activities reinforce the ideas and processes explored in the exhibition—specifically themes related to Susan Point's study of the spindle whorl, as well as floral landscape and ecology in the work of Don Li-Leger—and provide continuity between the exhibition and the classroom.

We feature elements of hands-on Art Encounter Workshop typically offered at the Gallery, but revised to be facilitated from home. Joyfully engage methods of printmaking as well as additional activities that consider ecology, landscape, and composition.

This guide also provides terms and concepts, a resource section, and links to the BC Education Curriculum focusing on Arts Education, from grades K-12. We hope that you enjoy using this guide to engage with the exhibition work and to create art with your students or with your family.

Sincerely,
Cecily Nicholson, Interpretive Programmer

Teachers' Guides are created with contributions from Surrey Art Gallery staff including: Interpretive Programmer Cecily Nicholson, Art Educator April Davis, Art Educator Alanna Edwards, Volunteer Program Coordinator Chris Dawson-Murphy, Visual Arts Programmer Lindsay McArthur, Curator of Exhibitions and Collections Jordan Strom, and Director Alison Rajah.

ABOUT SURREY ART GALLERY

Surrey Art Gallery is the second largest public art gallery in the Metro Vancouver region. Internationally recognized, the Gallery showcases diverse contemporary art practices including digital and sound art and exhibits renowned local, national, and international artists. Surrey Art Gallery's mission is to engage the public in an ongoing dialogue about issues and ideas that affect our numerous communities as expressed through contemporary art, and to provide opportunities for the public to interact with artists and the artistic process.

To receive announcements about exhibitions and related events at the Gallery, sign up for our e-newsletters at www.surrey.ca/arts-signup. The City of Surrey also has an e-newsletter specifically for teachers: www.surrey.ca/12392.aspx.

SCHOOL PROGRAMS

The Gallery's school programs develop an appreciation, understanding, and excitement about contemporary art. Visit the Gallery's website to learn about our school programs and the resources that we offer for teachers called "Teachers in the Know" visit: www.surrey.ca/galleryeducation.



Don Li-Leger's studio, 2018. Image courtesy of Cora Li-Leger.

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Susan Point, *Salmon*, 1981, screenprint, courtesy of the artist.
Image courtesy of Spirit Wrestler Gallery.



Don Li-Leger, *untitled*, 2017, acrylic on canvas.
Image courtesy of the Li-Leger family.

ABOUT THE EXHIBITIONS

January 25 – March 22, 2020

Spindle Whorl

On tour from the Vancouver Art Gallery, *Susan Point: Spindle Whorl* showcases her silkscreen prints and their significant role in her practice, with a focus on the recurring motif of the Coast Salish spindle whorl. Comprised of a small (usually) wooden disk with a pole inserted through the centre, this tool was traditionally used by Coast Salish women to prepare wool that would be woven into garments and ceremonial blankets. Point has drawn upon the spindle whorl to provide a formal structure for her art while combining this motif with a uniquely Salish vocabulary of circles, crescents, and curved triangles—elements that distinguish the art of her people from the formline-based art of northern Indigenous peoples of the Northwest Coast.

While Point's practice is informed by a profound respect for Coast Salish traditions, she has pushed the boundaries of tradition in her desire to represent Salish culture in the contemporary world. When she embarked on her career, there were few precedents for an Indigenous woman carving or working with sculpture, as these were activities traditionally done by men. Nonetheless, as this exhibition shows, Point has continually pushed the traditional form of the spindle whorl in extraordinary new directions.

Counting the Steps of the Sun

View late works of painting and video from Surrey Civic Treasure Don Li-Leger. Don Li-Leger (1948-2019) had a five-decade-long art practice marked by a deep and enduring curiosity for nature. Over his career, he explored flora, fauna, and landscapes through a variety of media. This exhibition brings together selections of late video works alongside a series of paintings the artist made in response to the 2017 "super bloom" of wildflowers in Southern California and Arizona. Vivid colours and abstraction point to Li-Leger's enduring ecological vision, rooted in life and light.

Don was honoured as a Surrey Civic Treasure in 2015 along with his wife of 43 years, fellow-artist Cora Li-Leger.

EXHIBITION INSPIRED ACTIVITY: PRINTMAKING INSPIRED BY SUSAN POINT

THEME: COMPOSITION AND ANIMALS IN NATURE



Susan Point, *Salmon*, 1981, screenprint.
Courtesy of the artist. Image courtesy of
Spirit Wrestler Gallery.

OBJECTIVES

Through this activity students will consider elements of composition and imagery found in Susan Point's prints.

ACTIVITY

Students will create prints using a circle motif and animal imagery.

BIG IDEAS FROM BC CURRICULUM

- Exploring works of art exposes us to diverse values, knowledge and perspectives. (Art Education, Grade 4)
- Works of art influence and are influenced by the world around us. (Art Education, Grade 5)
- The visual arts use a unique sensory language for creating and communicating. (Art Education, Grade 9)

FIRST PEOPLES PRINCIPLES OF LEARNING

Language for Learning is holistic, reflexive, experiential, and relational (focused on connectedness, on reciprocal relationships, and a sense of place).

MATERIALS

- * Scratch foam plates (4 ½" x 4 ½") or recycled food container foam
- * Pencils
- * Wide mouth mason jar rings or 3 ½" cardboard tracers
- * Paper
- * Block printing ink (water-based) or acrylic paint
- * Brayers (ink rollers) or common sponges
- * Smooth surface (i.e. Plexiglas plate or baking pan)

EXHIBITION INSPIRED ACTIVITY: PRINTMAKING INSPIRED BY SUSAN POINT

THEME: COMPOSITION AND ANIMALS IN NATURE CONTINUED...

DISCUSSION & INTRODUCTION

Engage students in a discussion of their experience of seeing the exhibition *Susan Point: Spindle Whorl*. What did they find interesting? Looking at the following artwork, ask students:

What do you see? What shapes do you see? Can you find a trigons? A trigon is like a curved triangle, and is used in Coast Salish design. Can you find a circle or circles? Where else in the world do we find circles. Do circles have any special meaning? Listen to what Susan Point has said about circles:

The circle is a natural inspiration for me. It represents the circle of life, the Moon, the ripples in a pond, salmon eggs, and so on. This triggers my inspiration, as I am sure it did for my ancestors and [human] kind, kindling invention and harmony. (read the full interview at <https://www.gallery.ca/magazine/artists/an-interview-with-susan-point>)

What else do you see? Can you find any animals? Susan Point and her daughter Kelly Cannell created *Memory* (2005) together. They focused on the metamorphoses or life cycle of the frog. How many forms of a frog can you find?

Ask students to recall animals that they have observed in nature. Encourage students to consider many kinds of animals, even those as small as insects. Ask students to consider how the animal they have observed is connected to the environment where it lives? What does it eat? Where does it find shelter?

Talk to students about looking at the artwork. How does your eye move through the composition? In what direction? Why do you think this happens? Where do you see patterns in the artwork? Can you find interesting shapes in the spaces between the animals? In art these shapes are called negative spaces.

Explain to the students that they will create a print using a circle motif and animal imagery.



Susan Point and Kelly Cannell, *Memory* (2005), 1981, screenprint. Courtesy of the artist. Image courtesy of Spirit Wrestler Gallery.

EXHIBITION INSPIRED ACTIVITY: PRINTMAKING INSPIRED BY SUSAN POINT

THEME: COMPOSITION AND ANIMALS IN NATURE CONTINUED...



PROCESS

- ⇒ Place a mason jar ring or 3 ½" cardboard tracer in the center of the scratch foam plate.
- ⇒ Use a pencil to trace the circle pressing hard enough to push into the foam.
- ⇒ Draw one or more of the same animal within the circle. Try to make the animal/s touch the outer edge of the circle in several places. This will create negative spaces.
- ⇒ In the area surrounding the circle draw one or more of the things the animal is connected to in its environment. Look for ways to include patterns in your drawing.
- ⇒ Place a small amount of ink or paint on the Plexiglas plate or baking pan. Use the brayer to roll ink into a thin layer or a sponge to dab the colour in place.
- ⇒ Roll or sponge colour onto the scratched foam plate making sure there is an even layer of ink over the entire drawing.
- ⇒ Position a piece of paper over the plate and use your fingertips or a second brayer to press the paper onto the plate (this is called burnishing). Lift the paper carefully and allow the print to dry.
- ⇒ Repeat the inking, burnishing, process for each print.

CONCLUSION

Display all the prints together and spend some time looking at them. Encourage the students to share their experiences – did they learn anything through this process? Which prints stand out? Why? What do they think the artworks say about the animal they chose, about themselves?

Susan Point, *Autumn Moon*, 2008,
screenprint. Courtesy of the artist.
Image courtesy of Image courtesy of
Spirit Wrestler Gallery.

EXHIBITION INSPIRED ACTIVITY: FLORAL LANDSCAPES AT HOME

THEME: TECHNIQUES FOR RENDERING FLOWERS

OBJECTIVES

Through this simple activity students will consider elements of floral composition and imagery inspired by the painting of Don Li-Leger and their own backyards or local greenspace.

ACTIVITY

Learn some new techniques and invent your own to study to enjoy flowers, some of the most beautiful elements of colour and design in our everyday lives.

INTRODUCTION & DISCUSSION:

From Vincent Van Gogh's study of sunflowers to Claude Monet's water lilies, Georgia O'Keeffe's close-ups to Gustav Klimt's garden, flowers by themselves and in landscapes, have inspired artists through the centuries, and have been the subject of masterpieces.

Look through images of *Don Li-Leger: Counting the Steps of the Sun*. Confident and inventive, these vivid paintings showcase Li-Leger's love of colour and tactility in painting, as well as his interest in depicting floral and plant life. Continuing his earlier practice of combining Chinese classical painting techniques with European modernist abstraction, these pictures capture an approach that combines precise botanical detail and loose expressionist gesture.

What do students notice or like about the work? List three things.

What kind of flowers and plant life do they notice in their home, park or backyard? What kind of shapes make up flowers?

EXERCISE ONE:

For poet Gwendolyn Brooks, dandelions are,

“yellow jewels for everyday studding the patched green dress of her back yard”

Here is a simple exercise using common household items, to make your own flower images. Substitute colours and explore patterns to grow your own garden. Use this technique to explore other designs too: galaxies, skies, fire works... what else can you imagine?



Activity example



Don Li-Leger, *Parade XV*, 2011-12, acrylic on canvas. Image courtesy of the Li-Leger family.

EXHIBITION INSPIRED ACTIVITY: FLORAL LANDSCAPES AT HOME

THEME: TECHNIQUES FOR RENDERING FLOWERS

MATERIALS

- * Toilet paper or paper towel roll, straws can work for smaller sizes
- * Q-tips
- * Bottle cap
- * Children's scissors, or adult ones with someone to help
- * Yellow and/or white poster or acrylic paint and container (i.e. recycled margarine container lid) to put paint in
- * Black crayon, paint or marker
- * Blue and black construction paper preferred, but any paper will work.

INSTRUCTIONS

- ⇒ Take an empty toilet paper (or similar) roll and cut around the ends at ½ centimetre intervals, about 3-5 centimetres deep. The lines do not have to be exact.
- ⇒ Fold back the strips of paper to create a flat, frayed circle of cut cardboard.
- ⇒ Create a couple of these to create various sizes, and to use one each for each colour choice.
- ⇒ Spread an even layer of your white or yellow paint on a flat surface (i.e. margarine container lid)
- ⇒ Dab the frayed end of the paper role into the paint making sure to get pain on all the strips
- ⇒ Make a few prints on the paper in a circular motion, to create the flower top (this doesn't have to be perfect!). Will you make one flower, or perhaps a collection of three or four?
- ⇒ Dab the bottle cap (inside facing down) into the paint (can be the same colour or a different one) and use to make circular centres for your flower blooms
- ⇒ Using a paint bush or Q-tip, draw a dot in the centre and a line from there for your stems
- ⇒ Use a bundle of Q-tips (5-6) tied together (by an elastic band or twist tie); dipped in paint this little tool can be used to add to the outside of the lower or the fill in the centre.

How does it look, are you going to add in leaves or another colour? What shapes make up flowers? What colours of flowers do you see on a walk? Do you know what the purpose of a flower is? What animals like flowers and why?

BIG IDEAS FROM BC CURRICULUM

- People create art to express who they are as individuals and community. (Art Education, K)
- Creative experiences involve an interplay between exploration, inquiry, and purposeful choice. (Art Education, Grade 3)
- Plants and animals have observable features. (Science, K)

A flower is a special part of the plant. Flowers are also called the bloom or blossom. Flowers have petals. Inside the part of the flower that has petals are the parts which produce pollen and seeds.

In all plants, a flower is usually its most colourful part.

EXHIBITION INSPIRED ACTIVITY: ECOLOGY AT HOME

THEME: IN THE OPEN AIR: EN PLEIN AIR

MATERIALS

- * Mark-making tools: pastels, paint, watercolors, markers, charcoal, crayon etc.
- * Sketchbook or paper
- * Easel, clipboard, or firm, flat surface that you can attach your paper to

INSTRUCTIONS

Can you work outside, on a porch or at your open window? In the late 1800s painting “en plein air” was a method taken up by many artists such as Pierre-Auguste Renoir and Claude Monet. In a general sense, this practice challenged the artist to render an impression of a subject or landscape while being immersed within it. Artistic practices the world over have engaged this method. Art historians note the influence the Barbizon school of French Realism, the Hudson River Valley in New York, the Macchiaioli in Tuscany and the Newlyn School in the south of England. Well known examples within the Canadian context include The Group of Seven and related artists such as Tom Thompson, as well as Emily Carr.

Let’s take out our sketchbooks and favourite mark-making tools and find a place to set up for a while to draw or paint. If you can access them, chalk and oil pastels are easy to manage. Work with your paper upright in front of you, making sure to observe your subject frequently. Finish at least one work in a single sitting. Enjoy the spontaneity and outcomes of completing the work outdoors (or out windows!). Share the work with classmates or family – what ecology can you see this season, are there floral blooms?

Variation: In the 2017 exhibition *We Come to Witness: Sonny Assu in Dialogue with Emily Carr* at the Vancouver Art Gallery, Sonny Assu overlaid some of Emily Carr’s outdoor paintings with a series of digital tags using Kwakwaka’wakw formline elements from his Northwest Coast culture (practices and history that are different from the Coast Salish designs and motifs taken up in Susan Point’s work). Perhaps you would like to mix mediums and use your landscapes or floral images in a collage?

BIG IDEAS FROM BC CURRICULUM

- People create art to express who they are as individuals and community (Art Education, Indigenous Knowledge and Perspectives)
- Creative experiences involve an interplay between exploration, inquiry, and purposeful choice (Art Education, Grade 3)
- Plants and animals have observable features (Science, K)
- People create art to express who they are as individuals and community (Art Education, 1)

FIRST PEOPLES PRINCIPLES OF LEARNING

- Learning recognizes the role of Indigenous knowledge

CURRICULUM CONNECTIONS FOR SCHOOL PROGRAMS

Participating in a guided tour, studio workshop, or self-guided tour in conjunction with the exhibitions supports Big Ideas and Learning Standards in the British Columbia Arts Education Curriculum for grades K-12. Exhibitions can be used as a touchstone for discussion relating to themes and concepts addressed in a variety of curricular areas.

K-12 ARTS EDUCATION CURRICULAR COMPETENCIES

Students will be able to use creative processes to create and respond to the arts:

KINDERGARTEN - GRADE 2

- Explore elements, processes, materials, movements, technologies, and techniques of the arts
- Create artistic works collaboratively and as an individual, using ideas inspired by imagination, inquiry, experimentation, and purposeful play
- Reflect on creative processes and make connections to other experiences
- Interpret how symbols are used through the arts
- Express feelings, ideas, stories, observations, and experiences through the arts

GRADES 3 - 4

- Create artistic works collaboratively and as an individual, using ideas inspired by imagination, inquiry, experimentation, and purposeful play
- Reflect on creative processes and make connections to personal experiences
- Creative experiences involve an interplay between exploration, inquiry, and purposeful choice

GRADES 5 - 7

- Observe, listen, describe, inquire, and predict how artists use processes, materials, movements,

technologies, tools, techniques, and environments to create and communicate

- Works of art influence and are influenced by the world around us
- Experience and interpret the local environment
- Intentionally select artistic elements, processes, materials, movements, technologies, tools, techniques, and environments to express meaning in their work

GRADES 8-9

- The arts provide opportunities to gain insight into the perspectives and experiences of people from a variety of times, places, and cultures

GRADES 10-12

- Interpret and evaluate, using discipline-specific language, how artists use materials, technologies, processes, and environments in art making
- Engage in a period of research and empathetic observation
- Intentionally select and combine materials, processes, and technologies to convey ideas, and justify choices

TERMS & CONCEPTS

Brayer: a hand tool used historically in printing and printmaking to break up and "rub out" or spread the ink.

Burnish: to polish something, especially metal, by rubbing; the shine on a highly polished surface.

Circle: a round plane figure whose boundary (the circumference) consists of points equidistant from a fixed point (the center).

Climate: the average course or condition of the weather at a place usually over a period of years as exhibited by temperature, wind velocity, and precipitation. For example, a healthful climate or a warm, humid climate.

Experimentation: the action or process of trying out new ideas, methods, or activities.

Form (object/noun): the visible shape or configuration of something, the particular way in which a thing exists.

Material: the matter from which a thing is or can be made.

Matrix: in printmaking, an object upon which a design has been formed and which is then used to make an impression.

Motif: a distinctive feature or dominant idea in an artistic or literary composition.

Movement: Visual movement is the principle of art used to create the impression of action in a work of art. Movement can apply to a single component in a composition or to the whole composition at once.

Nature: the phenomena of the physical world collectively, including plants, animals, the landscape, and other features and products of the earth, as opposed to humans or human creations.

Observation: an act or instance of noticing or perceiving; an act or instance of regarding attentively or watching; the faculty or habit of observing or noticing.

Pattern: a regularity in the world, in human-made design, or in abstract ideas; the elements of a pattern repeat in a predictable manner. A geometric pattern is a kind of pattern formed of shapes and typically repeated like in wrapping paper design. Any of the senses may directly observe patterns.

Perspective: the ability to see, hear, or become aware of something through the senses.

Positive/Negative space: in art "positive space" refers to the main focus of a picture, while "negative space" refers to the background. When used creatively positive and negative space together can tell a story using visual composition alone.

Printmaking: the process of creating artworks by printing, normally on paper. A print that copies another work of art, especially a painting, is known as a reproductive. Prints are created by transferring ink from a matrix to a sheet of paper or other material, by a variety of techniques. Printmaking can be divided into four basic categories: relief, intaglio, planographic, and stencil.

Sensory: of or relating to sensation or the physical senses; transmitted or perceived by the senses.

Sustainability: in the environment, the rates of renewable resource harvest, pollution creation, and non-renewable resource depletion that can be continued indefinitely. If they cannot be continued indefinitely then they are not sustainable.

Texture: The quality of a surface (i.e. smooth, rough, dry).

ARTISTS IN THE EXHIBITIONS

Susan Point

- <https://susanpoint.com/>
- https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_pxioeoy01U
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MN4cV1UmFp8>
- http://www.firstnations.de/development/coast_salish.htm
- <http://uvac.uvic.ca/gallery/cornett/susan-point/>
- <https://www.surreynowleader.com/entertainment/points-spindle-whorl-featured-next-at-surrey-art-gallery/>



Susan Point, *Dewdrop* 1999, screenprint on paper, courtesy of the artist. Image courtesy of Spirt Wrestler Gallery.

Don Li Leger

- <https://www.surreynowleader.com/entertainment/late-artist-li-leger-would-be-thrilled-to-see-exhibit-of-his-work-at-surrey-gallery/>
- <https://www.surreynowleader.com/entertainment/south-surrey-artist-remembered-as-a-gentle-genius/>
- <https://www.surrey.ca/files/LiLeger1.pdf>
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=C-7ZrbimlsA>
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EJOSndDEzaA>

Don Li-Leger, *Untitled*, 2017, acrylic on canvas.
Courtesy of Li-Leger Family.



IMAGE GALLERY



Don Li-Leger, *Brainbow 1*, 2015-16, acrylic on canvas. Image courtesy of the Li-Leger family.

IMAGE GALLERY



Don Li-Leger, *Counting the Steps of the Sun* exhibition photo. 2020, Surrey Art Gallery.

IMAGE GALLERY

Susan Point, *Legacy*, 2004, screenprint, courtesy of the artist. Image courtesy of Spirt Wrestler Gallery.



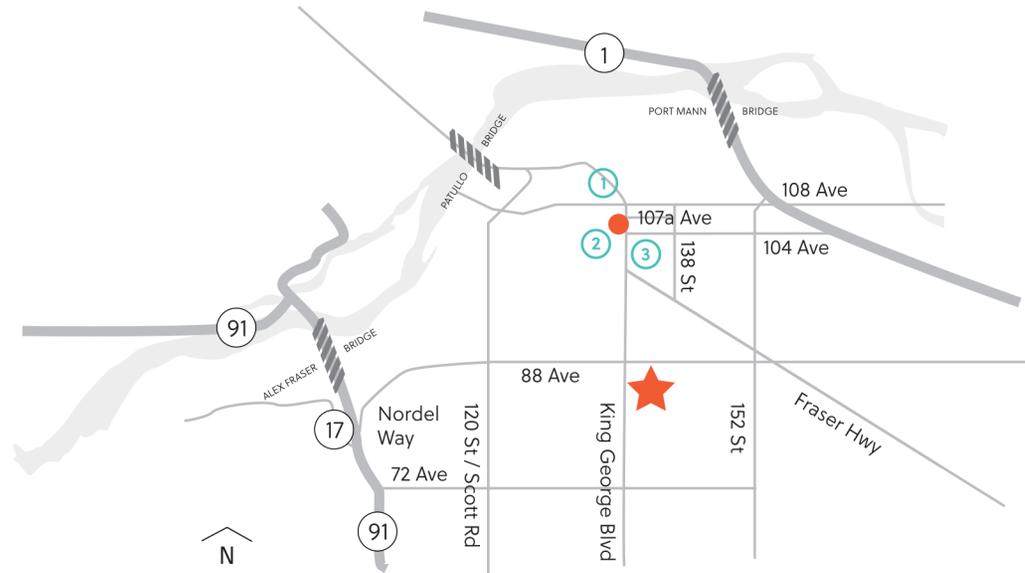
Susan Point, *Scanned Salmon*, 1981, screenprint, courtesy of the artist. Image courtesy of Spirt Wrestler Gallery.



IMAGE GALLERY



Susan Point, *Birth of a Star*, 2016, carved cedar, acrylic. Courtesy of the artist. From the Collection of the Vancouver Art Gallery



- 40 minute drive from downtown Vancouver
- 2 km walk from King George Station
- Catch Bus #321 at Surrey Central Station and get off on King George Hwy at 88 Ave.

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| <p> SURREY ART GALLERY / SURREY ARTS CENTRE
13750 88 AVE IN BEAR CREEK PARK</p> <p> URBANSCREEN / CHUCK BAILEY REC CENTRE
13458 107A AVE (FACING UNIVERSITY DR.)</p> | <p>SKYTRAIN STATIONS</p> <p>1 GATEWAY FOR URBANSCREEN</p> <p>2 SURREY CENTRAL (FOR CITY HALL, LIBRARY, AND 321 BUS TO SURREY ARTS CENTRE)</p> <p>3 KING GEORGE (TO CATCH 321 BUS TO SURREY ARTS CENTRE)</p> |
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SURREY ART GALLERY

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artgallery@surrey.ca
www.surrey.ca/artgallery

GALLERY HOURS

Tues, Wed, Thurs: 9am – 9pm
Fri: 9am – 5pm
Sat: 10am – 5pm
Sun: Noon – 5pm
Closed on Mondays & holidays
Admission by donation

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Visit www.surrey.ca/arts-signup to receive gallery exhibition and program updates.



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