

Bancroft and Area Studio Tour back for 33rd year



By Michael Riley

Local Journalism Initiative Reporter

The Bancroft and Area Studio Tour was back for its 33rd year this past weekend. It continues next weekend, Sept. 28 and 29 from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. each day. The tour allows folks locally and from afar to travel around to the 25 artists on the tour at 16 locations in town and surrounding area. More information on the tour, including a map of the artists' locations, and biographies on the participating artists by fellow artist Allan O'Marra, can be found at www.bancroftstudiotour.org. The Bancroft and Area Studio Tour has returned for its 33rd year, having opened on Sept. 21 and 22; and, wrapping up next weekend on Sept. 28 and 29. There are 25 artists in the tour this year in 16 locations in Bancroft and the surrounding area. They are; potter Amy Doole (amydoolepottery@gmail.com), potter Stephanie Park (sparkpottery@gmail.com), painter and printmaker Ketha Newman (ketha@kethanewman.com), upcycler Lucky Maloo aka Miriam Hookings (info@luckymaloo.com), painter Kathleen Kosloski (khkosloski@gmail.com), painter Abigail Cook (abigailcookartist@gmail.com), painter Barbara Allport (barbaraallport@yahoo.ca), painter Clasina Weese, printmaker Ardea Prentice (ardeadianablade@protonmail.com), painter Ken Balmer (kbalmer@rethink-group.com), painter Robert Pearson aka Kryz Bradley (kryzbradley_13@hotmail.com), painter Lynne Vegter ([lynnevegterart](https://www.facebook.com/lynnevegterart) on Facebook), painter Ingrid Whitaker (tikkitorches@hotmail.com), stained glass artist Karen Istead (kistead0@gmail.com), stained glass artist Emily Istead (ekathryn224@gmail.com), painter Nancy McKinnon (rockwoodartstudio@gmail.com), jeweller/designer Michelle Bruce (botglass7@hotmail.com), potter Karen Gray (thepottersstudiogallery@gmail.com), photographer Daryl Phillips (darylscottphillips@gmail.com), photographer Michael Hankus (michaelhankus@gmail.com), painter Allan O'Marra (haomarra@gmail.com), painter Patrick Doherty (416-579-4229), painter and printmaker Irina Shestakowich (irina@irinaprints.com), woodworker Lyle Collins (lyle.collins2@gmail.com), and painter Harry Langford (harry.langford123@gmail.com). Bancroft This Week will also be covering the second weekend of the studio tour, which will be available in its Oct. 4 edition. Hankus is a photographer participating in the tour for a third year. He is also a musician and works at Cicada Design Inc. in Toronto. He also handles the social media for the tour. He says the organizational committee starting planning this year's tour back in February and the application process also began earlier in the year. He says that next year, he'd like to focus more on content creation like doing video documentaries of the artists. "I've done a couple already. I did one for Ken Balmer and Lyle Collins, where I go and interview them and film it. I have footage of them doing their craft and pair that with my own music. I try to amalgamate all my different skill sets," he says. Hankus uses everything from a phone camera, a FUJI XT20 camera, a

Go Pro and a drone to capture great photos, and was inspired by his dad, his mom, his grandfather and his godfather when it comes to photography and videography. His subjects and style range from architecture, musicians, landscapes, animals and any other that interests him in the moment. I like capturing familiar settings in more magical ways. I'll take a photo of Bancroft with a drone as the sun is rising. It's familiar but very different because the vantage point is like a bird, he says. McKinnon, Bruce and Gray were showing their art at West Bay House, off South Baptiste Lake Road in Highland Grove (www.westbayhouse.ca). She says the farmhouse was graciously offered for the tour by its owner Richard, who is a repeat customer of hers. The ladies came back to the area specifically for the tour, as McKinnon and Gray now live in Huntsville and Gray lives in New Brunswick. They've all participated in the tour for many years and McKinnon said they had about 112 people on Saturday and about 50 on Sunday by mid-afternoon. McKinnon, a landscape painter, explains that one of her paintings, entitled 'Out of the Blue' came from a photo her daughter took four years ago, and was done with watery paint giving a much more monochrome effect than the vibrant colours she usually imbues her paintings with, although she says she likes the effect. Bruce, whose jewellery is inspired by her love of stones, and is made from silver, copper and pearls, stones and beads, said it was a beautiful location at West Bay House and that the owner Richard had been so generous by letting them use the farmhouse for the exhibit and to stay over while they staged everything. It's been really wonderful catching up with all sorts of friends that have popped in to visit. It's been nice, she says. Gray said that some of her pottery offerings were made with the Sgraffito method. I made this coaster that I painted black. I draw the design and then with a tool I scratch away the black colour and it reveals the white clay underneath. Then with a little paint brush I paint the red or the accent colours back on. Then it goes through two kiln firings. Sgraffito is 'to scratch' in Italian so that's the technique, she says. Maloo is an upcycler who sews repurposed natural fabric into playful and practical unique clothing and home accessories with no waste. She has been doing the tour for three years, and says she's always been into thrift shopping. She ran a vintage clothing store back in the 1990s in Toronto, where she learned about picking fabric. She said the tour been going really well and she'd seen over 60 people come by through the weekend so far. I have done some things that are useful and a lot of people are really excited to buy, sustainably made items, natural fabrics. I do sort of pride myself on doing good quality work because I use primarily a serger (sewing machine). Everything that's attached is attached really well. So, things aren't going to fall apart. I use a four thread serger that cuts and sews two straight stitches and then across the seam all at the same time, she says. Newman is a painter and printmaker whose art, according to the studio tour page is 'inspired by life in the backwoods with infusions of magical realism.' She says that this is her 22nd year on the tour, starting back in 2002. She says this year's tour has been great with nearly 50 visitors on Saturday and fewer on Sunday, but she says they're always a little slower. Also, we're a bit off the beaten track. One of the neat things about the tour is when you've been on the tour for a few years, you start to see the same people. A lot of people who never left the cottage are coming out to see it, so that's really positive, she says. Joan and Nora were at Newman's studio and thought her work was beautiful. Nora said she first saw her art on the cards for sale at A Place for the Arts. So that's where I was first introduced to her art. So, I'm not too familiar with it yet, she says. Yuki says she first started coming up for the tour a few years ago. It's expanded. It's beautiful and every unique. I enjoy driving around to the artists, she says. Doole is a stoneware potter who has fellow stoneware potter Park as a guest at her studio in Maynooth. This is Doole's ninth year in the tour, while it is Park's third year. Park says that the tour has been going great and it's been really busy. I just live down in Combermere. But Amy and I both went to the same school, Haliburton School of Art. Different years. Amy went before I did but she was the inspiration to get into it and live the dream. It was fun, we have a good time here, she says. Doole was making a teapot body and says they like to throw up dark clay because it looks like chocolate, with a laugh. She says it's really just a small portion of making a teapot. It's the fun part. But then there's also trimming your pot, adding the handles and attachments, there's sanding your pot, decorating your pot. So, there's slip trailing, extra images, and there are two glaze firings it goes through that impart different colours to the pieces by adding different oxides. A lot of things we use come locally, and some artists do paint and decorate them, she says. Park explains that glazes are a mixture of a flux, which is molten silica, which is like a glass. So basically, it's a liquid mixture and you dunk the piece or you can pour it over, you can paint it on. There are so many colours you can get from it, like blues from cobalt and greens from copper. We both do electric firing so there are some colours we can't get very easily, she says. Doole says one of the things they love are seeing people they don't see except for the tour. She says they come by and they haven't seen them since the last tour. So that's lovely, she says. David Ferguson was there perusing Doole and Park's wares with his wife Meryl, who said they'd purchased some beautiful mugs from the talented potters. We'll enjoy our tea tonight! she says. Park says it's also nice hearing people say they've never been to Maynooth and this is a new area for them to explore. Doole told Bancroft This Week that they've had worse years for weather for sure and when it's cold and rainy, it's a downer. Then we'll have the campfire in the driveway, she says. This is a nicer time and the colours are just going to come on in the next week so next weekend is going to be amazing!?