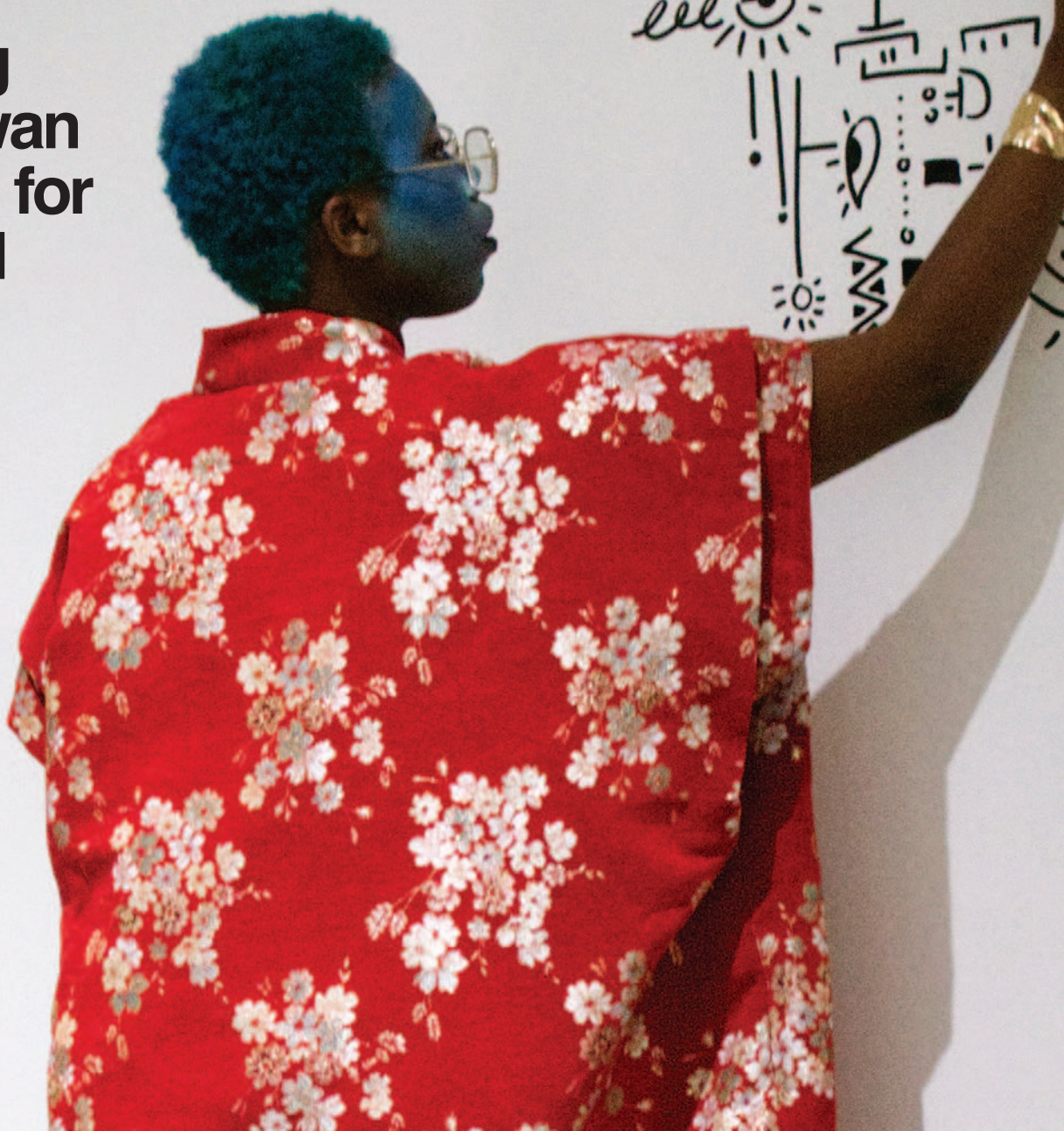


# arts

saskatchewan

Issue 3, Volume 1

**Cataloguing  
Saskatchewan  
Arts Stories for  
Canada and  
Beyond**



# arts

saskatchewan Issue 3, Volume 1

Cover: Peace Akintade during her solo exhibition, *Ori Ara Emi*, Sym-poetic Mural 2025.

Photo credit: Ava Henderson

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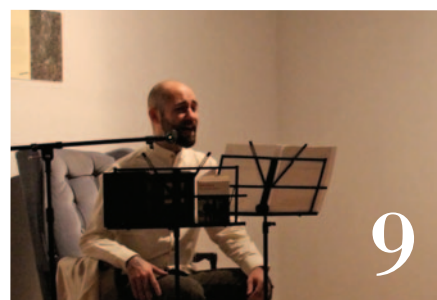
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## Welcome to the third issue of *ARTS Saskatchewan*

Photo credit: Mark Greschner



Reflecting on the past year, I am proud of our Board's energy and engagement. The Board of SK Arts is active in governance, strategic planning and strengthening community connections. By attending events, listening to artists and joining community discussions, the Board deepens its appreciation for the impact of arts and culture in our region.

This third issue of *ARTS Saskatchewan* highlights the outstanding artists, organizations, communities and creative initiatives

supported by SK Arts programs. Each grant represents a story of vision, dedication and artistic expression.

On behalf of the Board, I thank our staff, partners, volunteers, artists and community members for their commitment to a vibrant arts sector. Together, we are building a stronger creative future. I encourage you to stay engaged by attending upcoming events and sharing your stories with us. Your participation strengthens our arts community and ensures every voice is heard.

I am also grateful to the Government of Saskatchewan and the Ministry of Parks, Culture and Sport for their ongoing support and continued partnership with SaskCulture with funding from Sask Lotteries. I hope you enjoy reading the stories featured in this issue and learning more about the talented individuals and organizations making a difference through their work.

Sincerely,

**Ian Rea**  
**Chair, SK Arts**

---

## tansi

Photo credit: Stobbe Photography



I invite you to celebrate the artists, organizations and communities that make Saskatchewan's arts sector vibrant, resilient and inspiring. In this issue, you will find stories from funding recipients whose creativity, dedication and vision enrich lives and strengthen communities.

SK Arts supports artistic excellence and ensures artists and cultural organizations have the resources to create, connect and thrive. Each funded project brings new ideas to life, fosters collaboration and cultural expression and shows the power of the arts to build understanding and belonging.

Over the past year, we have deepened our engagement with artists, organizations, Indigenous communities, cultural leaders and partners. These conversations shape our programs and priorities, ensuring support reflects the evolving needs of the communities we serve. The stories in this issue highlight the arts' impact: bringing people together, celebrating diverse voices, preserving cultural traditions and sparking meaningful dialogue.

I sincerely thank the artists, organizations, Board members, staff, assessors, partners and supporters who contribute to a thriving arts ecosystem. Your passion and commitment inspire us and strengthen our collective impact.

We thank the Government of Saskatchewan for its support through the Ministry of Parks, Culture and Sport and to SaskCulture for its partnership, funded by Sask Lotteries.

Thank you to our readers for joining us in celebrating these achievements. I hope the stories in this issue inspire you to discover new artists, connect with your community and experience the transformative power of the arts.

maarsii,

**Lisa Bird-Wilson**  
**Chief Executive Officer,**  
**SK Arts**

By Shandean Reid

# *Comical* REALTY





***Bird People*, William Bessai-Saul, 2023 - Present, ongoing comic**

Photo courtesy of the artist

Storyteller, filmmaker and cartoonist William Bessai-Saul values comics for how they blend images and words to create powerful, immediate stories. He appreciates how comics let an artist invent entire worlds using drawing and imagination, building engaging narratives from small moments. He earned a BFA in Visual Arts with a focus on drawing from the University of Regina.

William finds it liberating to capture multidimensional aspects of life, such as time, space and sound, by distilling them into a purely visual, spatial medium. His passion for comics began in childhood, sparked by early sketches. He is drawn to the medium's ability to create alternate realities that reflect life in two dimensions and also to distort and advance narratives.

#### OPPOSITE:

**Top:**  
***Murmurations*,  
Fifth parallel Gallery, 2024**

**Bottom left:**  
**William Bessai-Saul making a  
marionette.**

**Bottom right:**  
**William Bessai-Saul with his  
artwork at *Murmurations*, Fifth  
parallel Gallery, 2024**

Photo credit: Gerald Saul

***"Doing a comic every day, it's incredible and kind of surreal what you can come up with. Stories just grow organically outside your control,"*** William muses. ***"Once you have a body of work stretching over a period of time with that level of detail, it's impossible to keep it inside your head."***

William carried this vision into other media, including his exhibition, *Bird House*, at the Neutral Ground Window Gallery between January and February 2026. *Bird House* extended the comic's world into three dimensions, showing how his work moves fluidly between drawing, sculpture and installation. The exhibition featured a detailed 1:6 scale model that reimagines a typical apartment building from the world of *Bird People*. Constructed from a grid of wooden boxes as a cross-section of urban life, with each box representing an individual apartment. Inside, miniature residents and furnishings crafted from foam core and a variety of mixed-media materials bring the building to life through carefully staged scenes.

Visitors could peek through the windows of each

apartment to see intimate vignettes unfolding behind closed doors. They captured everyday routines, relationships and private moments, creating a richly layered portrait of a community.

William is receiving mentorship from master puppeteer Chrystene Ells. He received a SK Arts Independent Artists grant to create marionettes representing the *Bird People*, advancing his storytelling from the comic through a different medium. The marionettes are carefully designed to echo the stylized, expressive forms of his comic characters, with intricate hand-painted features and jointed limbs that allow for nuanced movement. In performance and exhibition, these creations bring the *Bird People* to life in three dimensions, inviting audiences to experience the world of the comic in a new, immersive way.

***"The ultimate purpose of the artistic process is the creation of a universe unto itself. That's the true potential of narrative,"*** William says.





# Pushing Past the Frame

Queer City Cinema (QCC) is a Regina-based festival that programs film and performance art, founded by Saskatchewan curator and visual artist, Gary Varro.

After a decade away, Varro returned to Saskatchewan. Inspired by Debbie Piapot's film series *Story of Our Lives: How Hollywood Won the West*, he secured a research grant to study queer representation at film festivals. This work led to the creation of the lesbian and gay film and video series exhibition, *queer city cinema – coming out to a theatre near you*, presented by the Dunlop Art Gallery at the Regina Public Library Film Theatre in 1996. The eight-day series broke attendance records and was a success.

From the outset, Varro challenged conventions in queer cinema by choosing not to create stories that seek acceptance or justify their existence. At the time of the exhibition, the term queer was not widely used. Launching 'gay and lesbian' initiatives in a conservative province required courage, as did attending in-person screenings. QCC's progressive vision has consistently provided Regina audiences with insight into the evolving and diverse landscape of queer identity, aligning with global trends toward representation shifts.

**Crash Pad, Cindy Baker—Canada  
Performerium: Festival of Queer  
Performance 7, 2019**

Photo credit: Sunny Adams

**Queer City Cinema continues to distinguish itself by presenting queer creators without limiting queerness to an identity, showing works that are progressive and strident as much as experimental.**

**BELOW:**

**Visiting Thahab, Nabil Vega—USA  
Performatorium Festival of Queer Performance 6, 2018**

Photo Credit: Sunny Adams

***“The very first publication made for the festival, which was an exhibition, says lesbian-gay film festival. It doesn’t say LGBTQ2S+. Those acronyms did not exist,” Varro recalls. “The name of the festival, using the word ‘queer’ back then, was pushing the envelope, especially in a community as small as Regina was back then.”***

This vision to provide access was a challenging endeavour. It sparked passionate resistance at the political level over public funding for festivals promoting queer visibility. However, the festival continued; first as a biennial event, then two separate festivals – a film festival and a performance art festival from 2012 to 2015 – and ultimately amalgamated into a single festival with both components in 2018, where this format continues.

QCC creates space for queer creators, presenting their work without reducing it to political statements or defining it by marginalization, allowing audiences to receive it unframed by those assumptions — a detail that often takes over when queer artists are visible, particularly in artistic spaces. Varro stressed that many queer works confront the



marginalization, oppression of LGBTQ2S+ and racism, and that while QCC recognizes the importance of this work, it is not at the forefront of QCC's mandate.

Queer City Cinema continues to distinguish itself by presenting queer creators without limiting queerness to an identity, showing works that are progressive and strident as much as experimental. A queer artist who is appreciative of this lens told SK Arts, "I'm a queer artist creating work across a variety of themes. ***My identity is part of my perspective, but my art is not confined to it.***"

Varro noted this approach is not a rejection of politics but a move to remove societal expectations that require justification for existence and prioritize artistic relevance. In these stories, characters are not defined or redeemed by their queerness. Themes such as love, violence, desire and gender are presented without explanation or instruction.

At the forefront of Varro's work is visual literacy — reinforcement of ideas through repeated representation of queerness as a recognized pillar of human dynamism, rather than positioning it as something *otherly*. QCC also stresses that, as part of

representation, marginalization at the forefront of spaces that it occupies often creates or implies a fallacy: that all marginalized people are kin and therefore hold the same position on topics.

***"Queer people do not automatically understand one another, agree on most issues or share the same perspectives. Identity alone doesn't erase differences in background, values, politics or personal experience,"*** Varro stresses. ***"Likewise, belonging to one marginalized group doesn't guarantee solidarity with other minority groups. In reality, communities are complex and often internally diverse, with disagreements and divisions just like any other group."***

Queer City Cinema celebrates its 30th anniversary in 2026 and continues to blaze a progressive trail forward.



**ABOVE:**  
***Cassils—Canada/USA***  
**Performatorium Festival of Queer Performance 1, 2012**

Photo credit: Gary Varro

***Day breaks instead of night falling - performance and installation***  
**Benny Nemerofsky Ramsay—Canada (with Layard Thompson)**  
**Performatorium Festival of Queer Performance 2, 2013**

Photo credit: Gary Varro

# *Bookish:* Love Across the *Publishing Spectrum*



*U Alive*, Poetry Collection, Chelsea Coupal, 2026

Published by Thistledown Press, Photo courtesy of Thistledown Press  
Book Cover Design: Mark Byk



*The Birth of Venus with Cane*, poem in *They're Pushing Their Pearls from Their Clams and I Can't Stop Wishing*, Cassandra Myers, 2025

Published by JackPine Press. Photo credit: Cassandra Myers

“

**While their methods differ, both publishing models are responding to the same question: What value does a book hold in today's world?**

”

In an era dominated by digital content, the printed book continues to prove its resilience. However, not all books are created with the same purpose in mind. While some publishers focus on bringing stories and ideas to as many readers as possible, others approach publishing as an art form, crafting books that are as much objects of beauty as they are vessels for words.

Despite their different approaches, Saskatchewan publishers Thistledown Press and Jackpine Press share a common goal: preserving and celebrating the power of the written word. They fall, however, on different scales of the spectrum: For Thistledown, the traditional publisher, the journey begins with the words on the page; for Jackpine, the non-traditional publisher, it begins with the form the words will take when connecting authors with readers. While their starting points differ, both recognize that a meaningful book relies on the successful marriage of content and design.

### **Thistledown Press**

Recently celebrating its 50th anniversary, Thistledown Press is an independent publisher of Western Canadian authors and focuses on traditional publishing and marketing. The small publishing company publishes approximately six books annually and received recognition through several Saskatchewan Book Awards. Its publishing model remains staunchly traditional, with handwritten manuscript submissions, signing, marketing and selling paperbacks, hardcovers and audiobooks as opportunities for stories to travel. Whether through bookstores, libraries or online retailers, the objective is to ensure

books reach the widest possible readership while supporting authors throughout the process.

***“We pay an artisanal level of attention to detail, to the words themselves in particular, with lots of hands-on editorial feedback,”*** says Elizabeth Phillips, Editorial Director and Acquisitions Editor.

At the other end of the spectrum are publishers who produce limited-edition works. These books may be released in small print runs, feature handcrafted elements or incorporate artistic techniques that transform reading into a tactile experience. Here, the book itself becomes part of the artwork.

### **JackPine Press**

JackPine Press in Saskatoon has been publishing limited edition chapbooks since 2003. The books are primarily designed by Saskatchewan and Canadian artists and have received multiple Alcuin Awards for Excellence in Book Design and the bpNichol Chapbook Awards. The books are unique in that they sit at the intersection of visual arts and creative writing. Consequently, the creation process and each chapbook are shaped by the artist's vision and meet JackPine's criteria of uniqueness.

Executive Director Rowan Neufeld says, ***“The books are art objects themselves in addition to being a book. There are so many possibilities, including a unique interplay between the design and the content.”***

Since the visual appearance and creation of the book play a leading role in publication, attention is paid to paper

selection, typography, binding and design. The result is a publication that invites readers to slow down and engage with the physical object in ways digital media cannot replicate. The books also naturally include unique design elements as they are handmade and assembled. The chapbooks are published in print runs of fewer than 100. The artists retain the creative rights once the print run is exhausted.

While their methods differ, both publishing models are responding to the same question: What value does a book hold in today's world?

For Thistledown, value lies in sharing stories widely and building connections between authors and readers. For JackPine, value also lies in craftsmanship, permanence and the preservation of the book as a cultural artifact. Neither approach is more important than the other; they represent complementary ways to ensure literature continues to thrive and reach book lovers over a widening spectrum of consumption. These publishers offer a reminder that books remain remarkably adaptable and continue to create spaces for ideas, creativity and human connection.

The future of publishing may take many forms, but as these two publishers demonstrate, there is still room for both the story and the object that carries it.

Thistledown Press and JackPine Press receive support from the Professional Arts Organizations Program, a SK Arts program delivered in partnership with SaskCulture funded by Sask Lotteries, to support arts and culture organizations.

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# Vida in Community



**M**ackenzie Vida's passion for creativity began through art therapy as a child. She is a francophone, queer multidisciplinary artist based in Regina. She graduated from the University of Regina with a BFA in Visual Arts and a minor in Creative Technologies and is a board member of SK Printmakers. Her practice focuses on illustration, painting and printmaking.

Over the years, her work has expanded across visual and theatre disciplines, where her love for accessible art shines in art workshops and leading community art projects. Two recent programs she led speak directly to this love: participation in SK Arts' 2024-25 LIVE Arts program and a 2025 collaboration supported by an Artists in Communities grant. Vida says both projects offered something unique to her practice.

LIVE Arts is a distance education program for students in grades 1 to 9. The program supports the Saskatchewan arts education curriculum and is delivered through the Saskatchewan Ministry of Education LIVE Network. Students in Vida's LIVE Arts workshop created zines on social justice issues of their choice. The workshop, offered in a hybrid format online and in person, allowed students from across the province to participate regardless of location.

***"The activity offered a chance to explore how artists use their voice through collage, drawing, and writing,"*** Vida recalls. ***"Brainstorming to begin the sessions, students suggested topics relating to environmental concerns, human rights and civic responsibility."***

Vida, who is passionate about arts accessibility, said francophone artists' participation in the LIVE Arts program helps improve accessibility through career support, broader reach and breaking down language barriers. She shared the classroom was set up to enrich the experience, with tables arranged for students to interact, discuss, collaborate and draw inspiration from one another while working with collage materials. Vida also said returning to her elementary school, École St Mary School, as an artist was especially meaningful.

In 2025, Vida received an Artists in Communities grant to collaborate with the Heritage Community Association and Thomson Community School to beautify garden boxes, a vital resource for people facing food insecurity in the community.

***"This project aimed to not only add colour to the neighbourhood, but also to empower collaboration and teamwork among students —"***

**By Shandean Reid**

***a vital skill in the arts and beyond,"*** she says.

The project included teams of students working collaboratively on different sections of the boxes, allowing each group to contribute its own creative vision while working toward a shared artistic goal. As the lead artist, Vida encouraged and supported their artistic decisions throughout the process, fostering confidence in their abilities and helping them develop a stronger sense of creative ownership.

By empowering students to express their ideas and see them brought to life in a public artwork, she helped instill a lasting sense of pride in both their accomplishments and their community. The experience introduced participants to the collaborative nature of public art while reinforcing the value of creativity, teamwork and community engagement.

LIVE Arts Saskatchewan and the Artists in Communities program are SK Arts programs offered in partnership with SaskCulture with funding from Sask Lotteries. LIVE Arts is delivered in collaboration with the Government of Saskatchewan through the Ministry of Education.

**Community garden box beautification project**

Photos courtesy of the artist

# Voices Across



**Art Realities** exhibition, Provincial Archives of Saskatchewan

Photo credit: SK Arts

# ss Time:

## *Archival Recordings Bring Saskatchewan Artists' Stories to Life*



What was it like to be an artist in Saskatchewan in the 1970s? For decades, the answer sat quietly within a collection of aging audio tapes at SK Arts. Later, the tapes were entrusted to the Provincial Archives of Saskatchewan for preservation and long-term care. Recorded interviews captured artists reflecting on their creative lives, the challenges they faced and the cultural landscape that shaped their work during a transformative period in Saskatchewan's arts history. Recognizing the material's significance, the Provincial Archives partnered with SK Arts to transform the recordings from preserved history into a public experience.

Those voices found a new audience through a partnership between the Provincial Archives of Saskatchewan, SK Arts and the University of Regina Dr. John Archer Library and Archives. The recordings served as the foundation for an exhibition, *Art Realities*, that brought together archival material and artwork by many of the artists featured on the tapes for Archives Week 2026. The six-month installation featured artwork by six of the recorded Saskatchewan artists, with works in the SK Arts Permanent Collection: Victor Cicansky, Lorraine Malach, Art McKay, Wynona Mulcaster, Margreet van Walsem and Russell Yuristy.

*Art Realities* offered visitors a rare opportunity to hear artists speak in their own words while experiencing their work. The project included the Archives staff digitizing and cataloguing the tapes, a remarkable snapshot of Saskatchewan's artistic community.

Provincial Archivist with the Saskatchewan Provincial Archives, Carol Radford-Grant, says the partnership between the three organizations felt “**natural and inspiring**.” She pointed out that, due to the Archives' limited number of exhibitions each year, opportunities for a collaboration of this nature are rare.

**“What makes archives so compelling is how people can use these historical records in new ways to meet today’s information needs.”**

***“This exhibit really highlights the connection between art, private records and government records. It shows how closely themes are woven together by three different Saskatchewan organizations,”*** Carol says. ***“I think that’s really unique and special.”***

The interviews reveal artists discussing everything from creative inspiration and artistic identity to the realities of building a career in Saskatchewan during the 1970s. Together, the recordings document not only individual experiences but also the evolution of the province’s

cultural landscape. The exhibition used the materials to share the connection between the artists’ words and their creative output. Visitors explored both the archival records and the lasting impact of the artists’ contributions to Saskatchewan’s arts community.

***“What makes the recordings really special is that they offer a window into a moment in time,”*** says Belinda Harrow, Senior Permanent Collection Consultant at SK Arts. ***“What struck me most was hearing***



**Art Realities exhibition, Provincial Archives of Saskatchewan**

Photo credit: SK Arts

**artists I knew, or came to know later in their careers, speaking from an earlier point in their lives. You hear their ambitions, their concerns and their perspectives before history had fully unfolded around them.”**

That connection between past and present was further explored during the exhibition's opening event, which had more than 200 attendees and featured a panel of contemporary artists: Patrick Fernandez, Vera Saltzman and Yuji Lee. The artists were invited to respond to the same questions that had been posed

in the original interviews decades earlier.

The discussion highlighted both the changes and continuities within Saskatchewan's artistic community. While technology, funding models and audiences have evolved, many of the themes explored in the 1970s recordings remain familiar to artists today: the search for creative expression, the challenges of sustaining a practice and the importance of community.

By placing contemporary voices alongside historical

ones, the panel underscored the exhibition's central theme: that art exists within an ongoing conversation across generations.

As visitors moved through the exhibition, they encountered more than archival documents and works of art. They encountered voices, experiences and ideas that continue to shape Saskatchewan's cultural story, proving that history is most meaningful when it can be heard, seen and shared.

Radford-Grant also adds, **“What makes archives so compelling is how people can**

**use these historical records in new ways to meet today's information needs.”**

For the Provincial Archives, the exhibition served as a reminder of the power of preserving cultural records. For SK Arts' Permanent Collection, it offers an opportunity to celebrate the artists who helped shape Saskatchewan's creative identity. Together, the partners have transformed a collection of historic recordings into a living dialogue between past and present.



**Art Realities exhibition, Provincial Archives of Saskatchewan**

Photo credit: SK Arts



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# BUILDING RELATIONSHIPS, EXPANDING OPPORTUNITIES

By Shandean Reid



In-Situ workshop in Standing Buffalo

Photo credit: SK Arts

Chancz Perry, Program Consultant: Equity and Inclusion Focus, has brought SK Arts programs to communities across Southeast Saskatchewan over the past several years. Through the In-Situ Outreach Program, Perry and fellow consultants travel throughout the South East Sport, Culture and Recreation District, attending community events, hosting information sessions, and delivering grant-writing workshops. Building relationships remains central to these efforts.

Earlier in 2026, outreach prioritized Indigenous communities, including 17 First Nations and Indigenous organizations, with visits to Little Black Bear First Nation, Standing Buffalo Dakota Nation, White Bear First Nations, Pheasant Rump Nakota First Nation and the Qu'Appelle Valley Friendship Centre. Perry met with artists, cultural leaders, Elders, knowledge keepers, and community members to understand their specific

priorities, challenges and aspirations, aiming to help close the gap between these communities and available funding.

The response has been overwhelmingly positive. Communities have welcomed the chance to learn about SK Arts grants, programs and resources. Workshop and session attendance has been strong, with participants often reporting they feel empowered, inspired to pursue creative goals and impressed by the breadth of SK Arts support.

During one of those workshops, one participant remarked: ***"Thank you for making the trip all the way to our community. Having these resources brought directly to us shows that we matter too."***

This feedback underscores the importance of meeting people where they are and ensuring artists and cultural leaders across Saskatchewan have equitable access to opportunities and support.

The agency is committed to ensuring all communities feel included, represented and supported by investing in face-to-face engagement beyond traditional outreach. SK Arts is removing barriers, strengthening relationships and expanding access to opportunities for artists and cultural organizations across the province.

“**Thank you for making the trip all the way to our community. Having these resources brought directly to us shows that we matter too.**”

# Raising the Stanza:

By Shandean Reid

Peace Akintade-Oluwagbeye, Saskatchewan's 11th Poet Laureate, is a Saskatoon-based dramaturg, playwright, thespian, intimacy director, interdisciplinary poet, public speaker and textile artist. She earned recognition as Saskatoon Youth Slam Champion (2017–2019), Saskatchewan Youth Poet Laureate (2020–2021), Saskatoon Poet Laureate (2022), and recipient of SK Arts' RBC Emerging Artist Award at the 2022 Saskatchewan Arts Awards. As a young African Canadian navigating multiple creative fields, Peace grounds her practice in the belief that every discipline she pursues is rooted in poetry.

Although her creative journey spans many disciplines, poetry remains her foundation, driven by a deep curiosity about connection. Whether through visual art, performance or other creative forms, she consistently returns to the theme of relationships, the unseen links between people, communities, and shared experiences. For her, poetry is a lens that reveals how we are connected to each other and the world and centres her work in making space for oral storytelling as an art form.

***"Poetry is the bridge to different art sectors,"*** Peace says. ***"For me, poetry was the way to tap into communities and different disciplines and bring them together. Poetry is the foundation of my work."***

Coming to this conclusion and receiving recognition in this way, however, took time and intention. After her term as Youth Poet Laureate, Peace spent significant time with her craft, decided to become a lifelong poet and reflected on her path forward. Residencies like the one with BAM Saskatoon, where she wrote consistently for 104 days and six hours, helped her find the epicentre of her work, revealing that while her practice was and would remain expansive, it was connected through storytelling.

Peace Akintade in front of Sym-poetic Mural during the Ori Ara Emi exhibition, 2025

Photo credit: Ava Henderson



“

For me, poetry was the way to tap into communities  
and different disciplines and bring them together.  
Poetry is the foundation of my work.

”

# *The Voice of Peace*



**“Spoken word poetry is rooted in oral storytelling, but it is still poetry. I highlighted the need for connection between written poetry and spoken word.”**

Today, her work emphasizes that connection and is what draws audiences in. She creates opportunities for people to see themselves in stories or experiences that may at first seem unfamiliar. By highlighting shared aspects of humanity, she encourages viewers to look beyond differences and reflect on how their lives intersect with others. This approach fosters community and reminds audiences that even distinct experiences can resonate on a human level.

One of the most transformative experiences in her career came through a residency that brought together 14 participants, many of whom did not consider themselves poets. Through workshops, she guided the group in exploring language, storytelling and personal expression. By the end, participants who had arrived uncertain of their creative abilities were writing and sharing their own poems. For her, the experience reinforced the belief that poetry belongs to everyone. It is not limited to those who identify as writers but exists wherever people gather to share stories, memories and lived experiences.

***“That was the point which I thought, I can do this. I want to keep doing this for the rest of my life,”*** Peace shares.



***Let the Tree Rest, Then Fall, Peace Akintade. Ori Ara Emi exhibition, 2025***

Photo credit: Ava Henderson



The residency also prompted Peace to reflect on who gets recognized as a poet. When she first applied to become Poet Laureate, she was not selected because there was no clear framework for understanding oral storytelling as poetry. Rather than being discouraged, she wrote to the Saskatchewan Writers' Guild, highlighting that her body of work by then had spanned a decade, even without two professionally published poetry books, a requirement for the Saskatchewan Poet Laureate at the time.

The experience highlighted the need to expand traditional definitions of the art form. By the time she applied again, the conversation had evolved, and she was appointed Poet Laureate. The journey underscored a central theme in her work: creating space for voices, traditions and forms of expression that have not always fit within conventional artistic boundaries.

***"Spoken word poetry is rooted in oral storytelling, but it is still poetry. I highlighted the need for connection between written poetry and spoken word,"*** She recalls. ***"If being the Poet Laureate is a representation of poetry in its entirety, it should consider all aspects."***



Peace has found peace in poetry, as a connector of art disciplines, people and the human experience. Since her entry into the Saskatchewan arts community, much has changed.

Peace's work remains a catalyst for change, opening spaces and opportunities for spoken word artists in Saskatchewan.

**TOP LEFT TO RIGHT:  
Completed Sym-poetic Mural,  
Peace Akintade and workshop participants  
Ori Ara Emi exhibition, 2025**

Photo credit Ava Henderson

**Sym-poetic Mural, Peace Akintade and  
workshop participants. Ori Ara Emi  
exhibition, 2025**

Photo credit Ava Henderson

***I Wish to Write Again, Peace Akintade, 2024  
Presented at Ori Ara Emi exhibition, 2025***

Photo credit Ava Rae

**BOTTOM:  
*First, She Rests and Relaxes, Peace  
Akintade. Ori Ara Emi exhibition, 2025***

Photo credit Ava Henderson



# MEACHAM:

## *A Saskatchewan Arts Hub*

Meacham, Saskatchewan is a small community with a big reputation. Located about 45 minutes east of Saskatoon, it is known for its vibrant ceramics and theatre scene. Many prominent Saskatchewan artists call the tiny village of 100 home, including Charley Farrero and Bonnie Gilmour, who offer professional ceramic services through Ceram Canada and the Centre for Ceramic Activities, as well as artists like Jeff Stewart, Cathryn Miller and the late Mel Bolen.

The character of this tiny community is built on interconnectedness and offers a variety of artistic experiences to visitors. Two such threads lead to the Handwave Gallery, owned and operated by artist June Jacobs, and to Dancing Sky Theatre, owned and operated by Artistic Director Angus Ferguson.

### Inside Handwave Gallery

Photo credit: SK Arts

### Dancing Sky Theatre

Actor Angus Ferguson ran a theatre in Montreal and, in the 1990s, moved to Saskatchewan with his wife to settle as practicing artists. Dancing Sky Theatre is housed in a building more than 100 years old, formerly the Ukrainian Hall in Meacham, which serves as a historic community anchor. Though Ferguson and his wife considered a theatre in such a small community impractical, against all odds, the theatre became a vital pillar of the community and remains successful almost thirty years later.

***“It had virtually no chances of success,” Angus muses. “It was a crazy thing to do – run a theatre with a hundred seats in a village with 87 people.”***

To help Saskatchewan theatre artists build thriving local careers, Dancing Sky Theatre showcases 100% Saskatchewan artists and their work. It draws its audience from Saskatoon and a large rural area of the region.

Ferguson reminisced that theatre brings communities together. As a rural attraction, Dancing Sky Theatre serves as a place for the community to gather and share an experience. The theatre also offers home-cooked meals as part of the experience for its mainly out-of-town audience, which has enjoyed more than 80 shows over the years.

Jerre and Stewart Stone live in Saskatoon and have been making the trip to Meacham to see performances at Dancing Sky Theatre for more than 25 years. The couple, along with their family member Alice, chatted with SK Arts following a sold-out Saturday matinee of James O'Shea's *The Red Truck* last spring [2026].

***“There is just something about it that keeps us coming back,” Jerre says. “You can tell the team puts their soul into theatre and the productions.”***

The two fondly shared their love for their favourite play at



**Dancing Sky Theatre, Meacham**

Photo credit: SK Arts



**Cecile Miller, *Thoughts. Waves* Exhibition, 2023, at the Handwave Gallery**

Photo courtesy of Handwave Gallery.



**Handwave Gallery, Meacham**

Photo credit: SK Arts

Dancing Sky Theatre, *The Shipbuilder* by Ken Mitchell, which ran there in 1999. The three also expressed their gratitude for the sources that keep the theatre in operation, including SK Arts, SaskCulture, Sask Lotteries and donations. Jerre, Stewart and Alice discussed the theatre's resilience and their appreciation for adding an outdoor theatre during the COVID-19 pandemic.

***"It was so great to be able to be out, enjoying theatre while staying safe at a time when the community needed that support and distraction. We will always make the drive out," Stewart quips. "My only complaint is that there should be at least three more shows for the year."***

The couple also shared that trips to Meacham frequently involve visiting the Handwave Gallery and ***"spending too much on art."***

### **Handwave Gallery**

The Handwave Gallery, also nestled in the quiet, vibrant community and owned and

operated by renowned fibre artist June Jacobs, has been a community staple for almost 45 years. It offers seasonal exhibitions showcasing established and emerging artists, featuring media such as fibre, ceramics, paper, glass and more.

Carrying a selection of artwork year-round, the gallery runs its program from spring through fall and represents over 50 artists. The outdoor exhibition of sculptures also features work that encourages visitors to meander through the expansive garden at the rear of the gallery.

Jacobs says Meacham, and by extension the gallery, is supported by a rich community of artists who together make the village a worthwhile experience for visitors.

Tourism Saskatchewan reports that the province sees more than 12 million visits both to and within the province annually. Jacobs says that as a member of the Tourism Saskatchewan Business Hub,

the Saskatchewan Craft Council, Saskatchewan Professional Art Galleries Association and the Spirit of Manitou Studio Trail, the Handwave Gallery and, by extension, the community are involved in member services like access to marketing resources, industry training, product development support and advocacy to connect businesses with visitors. Dancing Sky Theatre follows a similar promotional model.

***"All these things are arts-connected and promote the arts," says Jacobs. "Visitors can combine gallery and artists' studio visits, interesting places to see and eat along the drive out: all of those things make for an interesting trip to come out and enjoy."***

So, the next time you feel the itch for a road trip, make a day of the rural charms of Meacham.

**“Visitors can combine gallery and artists' studio visits, interesting places to see and eat along the drive out: all of those things make for an interesting trip to come out and enjoy.”**

”

**RIGHT: Dancing Sky Theatre, set of *The Red Truck***

Photo credit: SK Arts



By Shandean Reid



# conducting *connection*

“

The work inspires Gerrard to create conditions for connection, both on and off the stage. Gordon says one of the reasons the orchestra remains enduringly possible is its ability to make a lasting impression.

”

B

orn and raised on the prairies, conductor, pianist and music director Gordon Gerrard established his reputation on various Canadian stages, including in Quebec, Vancouver, Calgary and Toronto for decades before joining the Regina Symphony Orchestra (RSO) in 2016. Born near Brandon, Manitoba, Gerrard's undergraduate studies at the University of Manitoba were later anchored by a master's degree at the Manhattan School of Music in New York.

After a decade at the RSO podium, Gerrard took his final bow, leaving the symphony with a legacy of innovation, accessibility and artistic ambition. Over the last ten years, Gerrard has been instrumental in transforming the RSO, where he has balanced tradition with renewed enthusiasm for orchestral music in Regina, a welcome turn for the RSO experience. He credits the orchestra's transformation to talented new personnel, in addition to fostering a respectful, supportive environment that encourages musicians to share ideas and participate in artistic decisions — a contrast with traditional, top-down conducting. At the RSO, Gerrard observed that the musicians themselves actively embody this collaborative spirit, and he has immensely enjoyed the challenge of inspiring curiosity through enjoyment.



Photo credit: Chris Graham Photography

Continuing his commitment to inclusivity and innovation, Gerrard highlights the formation of an Indigenous Advisory Council, supported by Audra Young, a past board member and Cowessess First Nation member, to help the orchestra better reflect the community it serves. He also points to the Forward Currents Festival as a key experience with

the RSO. Building on the collaborative environment he fosters, the festival merges orchestral and chamber music with opera, hip-hop, visual arts and panel discussions to spark dialogue on social and cultural issues. Performances feature musicians surrounded by the audience, challenging traditional concert formats.

Reflecting on the impact of the Forward Currents Festival, Gerrard shares, ***“Those are very formative memories, and I think they brought in a lot of people who would not have ordinarily seen themselves as being among the orchestra's regular audience.”*** This underscores how the festival's innovative approach helps expand the orchestra's reach.

The work inspires Gerrard to create conditions for connection, both on and off the stage. Gerrard says one of the reasons the orchestra remains enduringly possible is its ability to make a lasting impression. He encourages emerging artists to protect their passion for the work amid the hard realities of pursuing a career in the arts.

***“What keeps you going [through hard times] is the act of creating music,”*** Gerrard says. ***“So that when it gets challenging, you can retreat to that part of you and reconnect.”***

As he moves on from the RSO, Gerrard hopes his legacy is that the orchestra, under his direction, sounded as good as it could, and that the audience that continues to go to experience the RSO sees the orchestra always reflect the people in the streets of the city.



# When Art Meets Market:

## *Turning Creative Practice into Creative Enterprise*

There comes a moment in many artists' journeys when the work is ready to enter the commercial marketplace. A collection of songs becomes an album. A manuscript becomes a book. A film finds its audience. This exciting moment of success, where a passion project becomes a career, is what Creative Saskatchewan exists to support.

Creative Saskatchewan supports creative entrepreneurs who are ready to bring their work to market with a clear sense of audience, demand and business potential. Our funding is designed to help move projects from completion to commercialization, supporting activities like production, marketing, promotion, distribution, showcasing, scaling up operations and more.

In the music industry, for example, this might look like an artist who has already

honed their craft and is ready to professionally record and release an album for sale. Creative Saskatchewan can then support the production of that album, but also the critical steps that follow to ensure its success: hiring publicists, developing marketing campaigns, creating music videos, and launching digital and physical distribution strategies. We can also help creatives by funding opportunities to showcase at industry festivals, attend international conferences, or pitch to labels, publishers and agents. These activities are not just about exposure; they are about building sustainable revenue streams and growing a business.

Like our friends at SK Arts, we believe supporting artistic excellence is essential, but so is the ability to reach audiences, generate income and scale success over time. Whether it's expanding a fan base through targeted marketing, securing distribution deals or touring

strategically in new markets, Creative Saskatchewan supports the business side of creative work. In this way, our grants complement the broader arts ecosystem. By supporting projects with demonstrated market potential, we help Saskatchewan's creative entrepreneurs not only share their work, but build lasting, sustainable careers from it.

Creative Saskatchewan supports creative entrepreneurs operating in film & TV, craft and visual arts, live performing arts, music, digital game development, and book publishing. For a full list of our grant programs and successful grant recipient stories, visit us online at [creativesask.ca](http://creativesask.ca). We're happy to take a meeting with potential applicants; reach out to us to book a consult at [creativesask.ca/about/#programs](http://creativesask.ca/about/#programs). We can't wait to hear about your project!

**Saskatchewan band Gil & Wil utilized Creative Saskatchewan's Showcase or Sell Travel Grant to travel to Winnipeg to participate in Breakout West, a combined music festival and conference opportunity**

Photo credit: Joey Senft





# SASK FESTIVALS



SK Arts' **SaskFestivals** program supports and encourages eligible festival organizations and series presenters in the province that have a positive impact on the arts in Saskatchewan.

The program has three streams:

- **Project:** October 15
- **Development:** April 15
- **Established:** April 15

**2026 DEADLINE**  
**OCTOBER 15**



SaskFestivals is administered by SK Arts in collaboration with SaskCulture with funding from Sask Lotteries.

**SK Arts provides funding and support to the arts for the benefit of all people in Saskatchewan.**

Visit us at [www.sk-arts.ca](http://www.sk-arts.ca)

By Shandean Reid

# *Ballad to Saskatchewan:*

*Bridget Alexander  
Reflects on Nurturing  
Arts Community*



“

**The fact that I was able to play in the professional symphony as a high school student was such an incredible experience.**

”

**B**ridget Alexander grew up on a farm near Weyburn, Saskatchewan. She began violin lessons at age three and by seven was travelling to Regina for instruction. Alexander credits her early success to her parents' commitment to her interests. At the age of 10, she joined the Regina conservatory's junior orchestra and a string quartet in Regina, identifying this period – when she began working with other musicians – as when her passion for playing truly developed. As a teenager, she performed with the South Saskatchewan Youth Orchestra and the Regina Symphony Orchestra. Recently, she earned a bachelor of music in violin performance from the University of Toronto and plans to pursue a master's degree before returning to her home province.

Building on her early experiences, Alexander highlighted the distinctive nature of the Saskatchewan arts community, particularly in music.

***"The fact that I was able to play in the professional symphony as a high school student was such an incredible experience. In larger urban centres, there are enough professionals so senior students don't get that opportunity, whereas in Saskatchewan, that was something really special that led to a career in music."***

Alexander is one of three violinists representing Saskatchewan in the National Youth Orchestra of Canada. The other two violinists are Zihan Xu and Zelda Faulkes.

Her dedication to growth shows in her work with violinist Erika Raum, who also comes from Saskatchewan. Early in

Alexander's career, she attended professional development programs in Montreal and Newfoundland and Labrador, with support from the Prince Edward Arts Scholarship. These formative experiences shaped Alexander's extensive yet young career. Now, as she explores learning opportunities out of province, she holds a fondness for the Saskatchewan community that nurtured her love for the violin.

She plans to culminate her career with another passion: teaching. Alexander's vision for returning home to teach and join an orchestra includes making a significant impact by strengthening the community that gave her wings.

***"When I was younger, you couldn't pay me enough to live in Saskatchewan. However, the more I've been away, the more I realize how special Saskatchewan is,"*** Alexander says. ***"My long-term goal is to pursue a master's degree before returning to Saskatchewan to teach and hopefully continue performing in some capacity. There is so much room in Saskatchewan's musical scene to make a difference."***

Photo credit: Chris Graham Photography

# EXPERIENCE ART *with Cheryl L'Hirondelle*



Cheryl L'Hirondelle is an interdisciplinary artist, performer and award-winning musician from amiskwaci-wâskahikan (Edmonton) and the Papaschase First Nation. Now based in Saskatoon on Treaty 6 territory, she grounds her practice in Métis and Cree heritage, challenging conventional notions of art. Her collaborative projects unite Elders, Knowledge Keepers and community members, reflecting Indigenous methodologies and relational art. She has developed language revitalization projects with Cree and Michif speakers, partnering with organizations such as the Canadian Indigenous Languages and Literacy Development Institute.

Cheryl's work bridges generations, weaving personal narrative with collective Indigenous experience and inviting participation over observation. Her practice encourages audiences to experience, participate, critique and share solutions. By inviting people to touch, listen, converse or take objects

or experiences away, she critiques art commodification and re-centres human connection within galleries.

***"The work requires you to lean against it to hear the audio or lie on it," Cheryl shares. "The idea is to challenge these boundaries in galleries that you are not supposed to touch anything."***

Her participatory installations, such as those featured in the Art Gallery of Ontario and the MacKenzie Art Gallery, have garnered national and international recognition, with her work exhibited in Canada, Australia, the United States and Germany.

Her ethos extends to public art and education, collaborating with youth and communities to create artworks reflecting shared histories. By centring Indigenous methodologies – storytelling, song and land-based practices – she challenges Western hierarchies of knowledge.

Her installation, *Cheryl L'Hirondelle: where the voice touches* (((acts, utterances,

Photo credit: Tenille Campbell



transmission for freedom))), curated by Jaqueline Bell and Tarah Hogue in 2026 at Walter Phillips Gallery, culminates 25 years of practice. It shows art as a matter of relation and reciprocity, not a static commodity. Works like *Why the Caged Bird Sings—Immersive Engagements* highlight lyrics, voices and musical arrangements from her decades-long collaboration with incarcerated and detained individuals in Saskatchewan.

***“My practice very notably disrupts the thought that ‘I want to go see that.’ It is about being immersed or participating in something,” Cheryl says. “You are experiencing the work in a different way.”***

Some works, like *Light Tipi* (*iskoc s: okihcit w-iskw w-kamik ohci*), adapt to the environment. This live performance features a 100-foot-high tipi made of light beams. Originally held in warmer months, it was moved to winter due to the use of sage and the potential fire hazards.

In addition to her visual and performance art, L'Hirondelle

is an accomplished songwriter and vocalist. Her music fuses Indigenous rhythms with contemporary genres, exploring resilience, displacement and cultural resurgence. She performs at festivals, community gatherings and activist events, using her voice to inspire and unite.

L'Hirondelle's influence extends beyond galleries. As a sought-after speaker and mentor, she advocates for Indigenous voices in art institutions and supports the next generation of Indigenous artists. Her contributions focus on decolonizing practices and processes of creation and art interaction and have earned recognition from Indigenous and non-Indigenous communities, as well as international exhibitions.

This approach is inspired by L'Hirondelle's mentor (auntie) Jamaican dub poet Lillian Allen: ***“Anyone can see there is a problem, but it is the creative mind, the responsibility of the artist, to come up with at least two solutions.”***

Her practice testifies to art's power to foster connection, understanding and transformation. L'Hirondelle's achievements include the Governor General's Award in Visual and Media Arts (2021) and the 2026 Arts of Celebration Established Artists and Arts Leaders – Multidisciplinary award, underscoring her impact and leadership.

“**My practice very notably disrupts the thought that ‘I want to go see that.’ It is about being immersed or participating in something.**”

**Photo: yahkāskwan mīkiwāhp (Light Tipi), Cheryl L'Hirondelle**

Photo credit: Aaron Leon



Highlights from Arts of Celebration—CREATION 2026 Photo credit: Mark Greschner

# Arts of Celebration 2026

As part of the Arts of Celebration—CREATION 2026,  
SK Arts proudly honoured the following:

## EMERGING PROFESSIONAL ARTISTS

**Alysia Androsoff**, photographer and multidisciplinary artist

**Holly Aubichon**, artist

**Courtney Bates-Hardy**, author

**Ivana Beer**, drag artist

**Brody Burns**, artist

**Silvia Taliza Chavez Cordova**, dance artist

**Jon Cooper**, visual artist

**Mohana Das**, choreographer, educator and community arts leader

**April Doepker**, artist and designer

**Marcy Friesen**, artist

**Simon Garez**, filmmaker

**Tea Gerbeza**, artist and writer

**Alexa Hainsworth**, artist

**Josh Jacobson**, multidisciplinary artist

**Zoë James**, multidisciplinary artist

**Suzy Krause**, author

**Brianna LaPlante**, fine artist

**Rawda Mabrouk**, multidisciplinary visual artist, designer and dancer

**Ty McCaig**, artist

**Chikako Ogawa**, visual artist

**Gabriela Sieminska-Hauck**, multidisciplinary artist

**Karandeep Singh**, founder and director, Bhangra Crew Dance Academy Inc.

**Nathan Smit**, film producer, writer and director

**Syndel Thomas Kozar**, artist and community facilitator

**Iryn Tushabe**, writer and independent journalist

**Mackenzey Vida**, visual artist

**Carson Walliser**, actor, playwright and designer

**Hailey Weber**, painter

**Dr. Ken Wilson**, writer and teacher

## ESTABLISHED ARTISTS AND ARTS LEADERS

**David Baudemont**, writer and playwright

**Stephanie Bellefleur**, visual artist and niche public art muralist

**Lisa Birke**, Associate Professor of Digital and Extended Media, School for the Arts, University of Saskatchewan, and independent video artist

**Johanna Bundon**, dance artist

**Rigmor Clarke**, visual artist

**Tarralik Duffy**, writer and multidisciplinary artist

**Miguel Fenrich**, professional literary artist

**Traci Lynne Foster**, artist, founder and director, Listen to Dis' Community and Art

**Sumetha Geevarghese**, Artistic Director, Nrityati Performing Arts

**Lindsay Harpham**, contemporary dance artist, educator and kinesiolgist

**Michelle Jacques**, Director of Exhibitions & Collections and Chief Curator, Remai Modern

**Carly Jaye**, mural and visual artist

**Danny Knight**, actor, comedian, writer and musician

**Serhij Koroliuk**, Artistic Director and choreographer, Pavlychenko Folklorique Ensemble

**Marie Lannoo**, professional artist

**Jacqueline Latendresse**, choreographer and Artistic Director, Free Flow Dance Theatre

**Sandra Ledingham**, ceramic artist

**Cheryl L'Hirondelle**, interdisciplinary artist

**Roberto López López**, artist

**Melvyn Malkin**, architect and artist

**Laureen Marchand**, artist and arts leader

**Judy McNaughton**, Northern Artistic Director, Common Weal Community Arts

**Lynda Monahan**, writer, poet

**Jefferson Moneo**, mural and visual artist

**Robin Poitras**, dancer and Artistic Director, New Dance Horizons

**Jeremy Ratzlaff**, cinematographer and producer

**Melanie Monique Rose**, visual artist, curator and arts educator

**Ernie Scoles**, sole proprietor, Scoles Fine Arts & Framing

**Tara Dawn Solheim**, singer, poet and DJ

**John Timothy**, president and CEO, Regina International Film Festival & Awards Foundation

## ASPIRING YOUTH ARTISTS

**Keira Schumack**, acrobatic dancer

## ORGANIZATIONS, FESTIVALS AND COLLECTIVES

**Artesian**, non-profit charitable arts hub

**Art Gallery of Regina**, art gallery

**Azerbaijani Cultural Association of Regina**, non-profit organization

**Conseil culturel fransaskois**, Francophone cultural council

**FadaDance Troupe**, contemporary dance studio

**International Francophone Film Festival of Saskatoon, CINERGIE**, film festival

**Jillian Ross Print**, print studio

**KSAMB Dance Company**, dance company

**LATAM.CA's Latin Summer Festival**, cultural organization

**Latinos en Regina Association**, non-profit organization

**Listen to Dis' Community and Art**, disability arts and culture organization

**New Dance Horizons**, contemporary dance organization

**PAVED Arts**, artist-run media arts centre

**SICA Women Dance Group**, cultural collective

# In Memoriam

August 2025 - July 2026

## **BENTHAM, Douglas**

Douglas Bentham was an acclaimed Saskatchewan sculptor. He earned a BA and an MFA from the University of Saskatchewan. His work has been exhibited across Canada and is included in private and public collections in North America and Europe, including the Canada Council Art Bank and SK Arts Permanent Collection. Bentham's career spanned 60 years, throughout which he has also taught, was a founding member of Canadian Artists Representation (which later became CARFAC), served on the Saskatchewan Arts Board (SK Arts) Board of Directors and other advocacy advisory committees, was a member of the Royal Canadian Academy and received the Lynch-Staunton Award from the Canada Council (1981). Particularly well-known are his stainless-steel sculptures across Canada, including *Unfurled* (2006) in Saskatoon and *Garland* (2008), installed at Durham College (DC) and the University of Ontario Institute of Technology (UOIT) on the north Oshawa campus. He was also a printmaker, painter and writer. Douglas Bentham passed away on July 20, 2026.

## **BERGAMUDRÉ, Ven**

Poet, writer and playwright Ven Begamudré was born in India and migrated to Canada as a child. He earned a BA in Public Administration at Carlton University, following which he moved to Regina and pursued his career as a writer. He also earned an MFA in Creative Writing at Warren Wilson College (US). Ven received several grants and awards for writing books, including novels, short stories, children's stories and poetry, and remained enthusiastic about his craft, taking and teaching workshops, jurying writing awards, mentoring emerging writers and pursuing numerous residencies across Canada. He was a member of the Writers' Union of Canada and the Saskatchewan Writers Guild. Ven Begamudré passed away on July 5, 2026.

## **BIRD, Kathie**

Writer, poet, photographer and mental health therapist Kathie Bird was born and raised in Prince Albert. Her art practice began with her love of the arts as a child, and she was fascinated by people and nature. She served on the Mann Art Gallery's board of directors and was an art instructor, a member of Prince Albert's Kyla Art Group and of CARFAC, and a signature member of the International Society of Acrylic Painters. She participated in numerous residencies across the province, including with the University of Regina, creating a collection of portraits and stories of people who identify as marginalized. Kathie Bird died on January 20, 2026.

## **BOWEN, Gail**

Author and playwright Gail Bowen was born in Ontario, where she received a BA from the University of Toronto and an MA degree from the University of Waterloo. She moved to Regina in 1979, where she was an English professor at the First Nations University of Canada. Her work included several mystery novel series and plays, and has garnered significant recognition across Canada, including a nomination for the W.H. Smith/Books in Canada Best First Novel Award for *Deadly Appearances* (1990) and winning the Arthur Ellis Award for *A Colder Kind of Death* (1995) for best crime novel. Bowen was named Canada's Best Mystery Novelist (2008), the Derrick Murdoch Award from the Crime Writers of Canada (2009) and the Crime Writers of Canada Grand Master Award (2018). Bowen has also written plays that have been produced across Canada and on CBC Radio and received the Saskatchewan Order of Merit (2018). Gail Bowen died on June 25, 2026.

## **GOLDMAN, Lyn Roberta**

Writer, actor and journalist Lyn Goldman was active in Regina's theatre community for several years before expanding to stages in the United States and Europe. She returned to Regina as a writer and producer. She received her BA from Campion College, an MA from the University of Regina and an Honorary Doctor of Laws. She was a freelance writer and broadcaster for the CBC, CKCK, and CJTR Community Radio. Lyn was a founding member of Regina Women's Network, a board member of the Saskatchewan Arts Board and Saskatchewan Foundation for the Arts, and a lifetime member of the Canadian Public Relations Society, ACTRA, the University of Regina Lifelong Learning Centre, Sask Writers' Guild and Regina Little Theatre, where she performed for over 60 years. She also received the Saskatchewan Order of Merit (2019). Lyn Goldman passed away on January 13, 2026.

## **MAHONEY, Adrienne**

Musician, singer-songwriter and visual artist, Adrienne Mahoney was born Regina. She earned a BA/BE from the University of Regina and went on to teach in the Regina Public School system. As an arts education specialist, Adrienne loved working with elementary school students, inspiring their creativity and planning and directing the annual holiday concert. She was a talented bass player, pianist and songwriter for 28 years. Adrienne was a member of the metal band, Kelevra, which won a Saskatchewan Music Award for Metal/Hard Rock Artist of the Year. She composed a very personal piece of music entitled *Duende* after receiving a heart transplant in 2019. She created the song as a thank-you to her donor and a reflection on her health journey and created the cover artwork for the record. Adrienne Mahoney passed away on November 29, 2025.

## **WILKINSON, Ken**

Potter Ken Wilkinson fell in love with clay and the arts through a ceramics class after studying engineering and computer science at the University of Regina and the University of Saskatchewan. The experience led to a 50-year career in pottery and cemented his place as a pillar of the Saskatchewan arts community. Known as one of the province's best throwers, Ken's work included creating exquisite bowls, teapots and goblets, as well as producing larger pieces such as ceramic tables and pedestals. Ken served on the Saskatchewan Craft Council's (SCC) board of directors from 1992 to 1996 and again from 2003 to 2009, and was awarded an Honorary Lifetime Membership in 2015. The ceramic door frame in SCC's Fine Craft Shop was originally installed as part of an exhibition by Ken and fellow potter Judy Tryon in 2007, where it remains. Ken's work sold widely in craft shops and fairs throughout Western Canada and won numerous juried awards. Ken Wilkinson passed away on December 14, 2025.

## MISSION

To provide funding and support to the arts for the benefit of all people in Saskatchewan.

## VISION

Saskatchewan artists, their work and their contribution to the province's quality of life are recognized and valued.

## ABOUT SK ARTS

The Saskatchewan Arts Board, now operating as SK Arts, is the oldest public arts funders in North America. Governed by *The Arts Board Act, 1997*, SK Arts provides grants, programs and services to individuals and groups whose activities have an impact on the arts in Saskatchewan and ensure that opportunities exist for Saskatchewan residents to experience the arts.

SK Arts acknowledges that the land currently known as the Province of Saskatchewan is comprised of portions of lands from Treaties 2, 4, 5, 6, 8 and 10, the territories of the Nêhiyawak, Anihšīnāpēk, Dene, Dakota, Lakota and Nakota nations and the homeland of the Métis. We give thanks to the host Indigenous communities in this province, as we bear the collective responsibility to honour and respect Indigenous protocols and homes and to engage meaningfully with their knowledges in our work.

SK Arts values an equitable, diverse and inclusive world, where all people have fair access to the tools and resources needed to realize creative and community endeavours.

## OUR GRANT PROGRAMS

- *Artists in Communities* – support for artist projects and residencies in partnership with community organizations and businesses
- *Artists in Schools* – support for artist projects and residencies hosted in traditional school settings
- *Building Arts Equity: BPOC Program* – supports artists of colour who may have struggled to access funding from other SK Arts programs
- *Independent Artists* – professional development, research, creation and production and presentation funding for professional artists
- *Indigenous Peoples Art and Artists* – support the development and continuation of Indigenous arts practices, including both traditional and contemporary work
- *Micro-Grant Program* – supports small-scale projects for professional artists writing their first grant application to SK Arts and activities that contribute to the development of artistic practices in Saskatchewan for previously funded artists and organizations
- *Prince Edward Arts Scholarship* – scholarships for Saskatchewan students pursuing post-secondary studies in an arts discipline
- *Professional Arts Organizations Program* – supports arts programs and services, governance, management, administration and operational functions
- *SaskFestivals* – supports festivals/artistic programs and services and governance, management, administrative and operational functions
- *Share and Connect: Indigenous Community Arts* – empowers Indigenous communities to control and develop their own arts and culture

## ABOUT ARTS SASKATCHEWAN

*ARTS Saskatchewan* is a collection of stories showcasing prairie artists' creativity, diversity and innovation. This publication is a vehicle packaging the history, present and future of Saskatchewan's artistic landscape for the province and Canada.



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