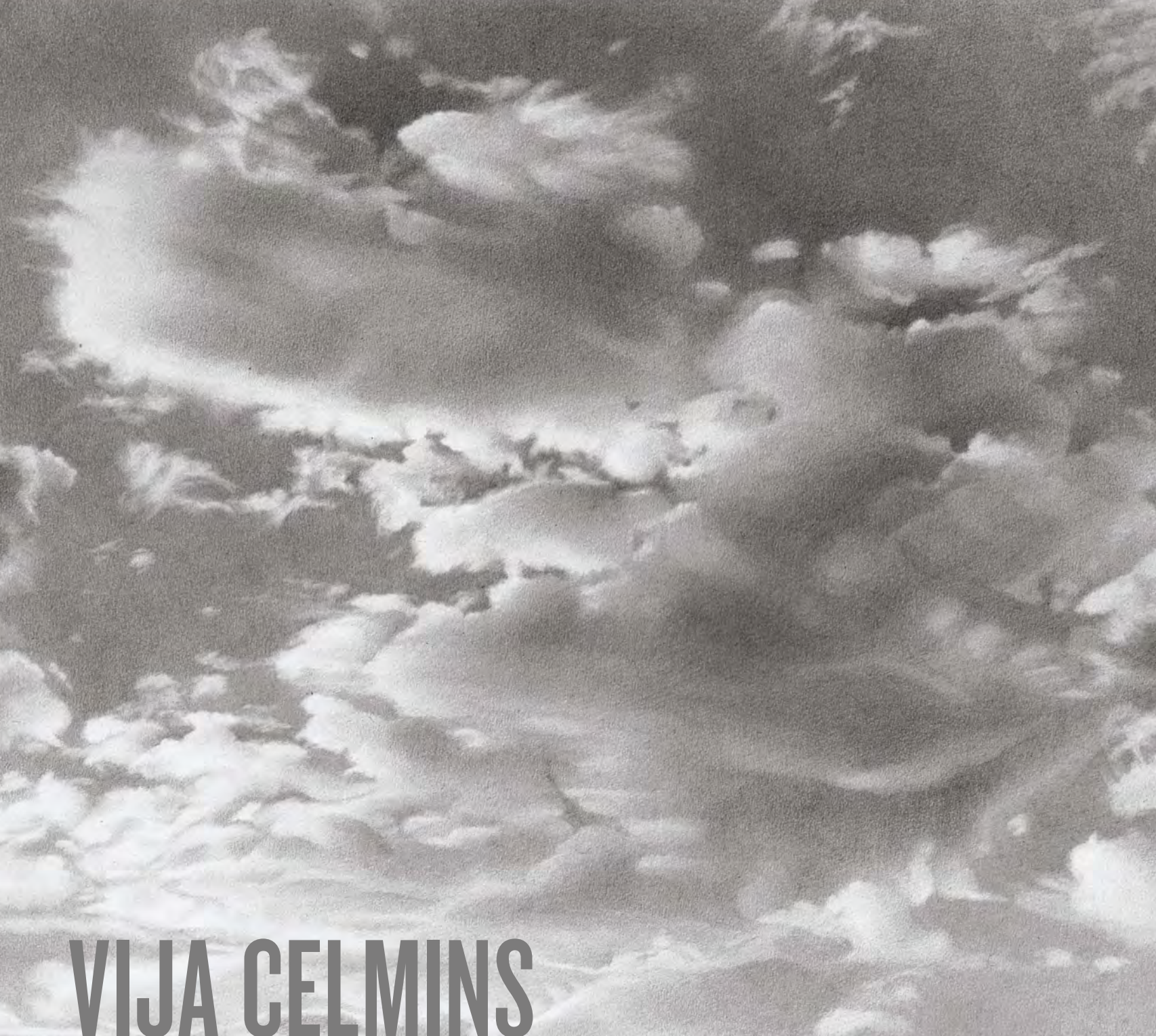


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ONTARIO

Roughly 40 per cent of Canada's artists live in just one province: Ontario. They live all around the region, from Sudbury to Windsor to Big Island and beyond—and increasingly so, as Canada's big cities become less affordable. More than 260,000 Ontarians work in culture, with the creative economy generating \$27.7 billion each year. This guide provides a window into the rich artistic scenes beyond the megacity—communities, galleries, schools and studios that reshape colonial structures, honour Indigenous knowledges and reaffirm the power of art

Installation view of Ron Benner's *Trans/mission: Barley-Corn-Maize* (2019) at the Visual Arts Centre of Clarington's Loft Gallery in Bowmanville PHOTO TONI HARKENSCHIED



VIJA CELMINS TO FIX THE IMAGE IN MEMORY

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Vija Celmins, *Clouds* (detail), 1968. Graphite on paper, 34.9 x 47 cm. Collection of Eba and Jerry Sohn. © Vija Celmins. Photo: courtesy Matthew Marks Gallery.

Eastern Ontario



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Where Old Is Made New

There's a barley mill in Bowmanville that was built in 1905. In 2019 this dramatic space is home to an inaugural year-long artist installation organized by the **Visual Arts Centre of Clarington**. From now through November, London, Ontario, artist Ron Benner's assemblages of corn, maize, and, yes, barley, form minimalist gestures with maximalist impact—raising provocative questions about where food comes from and how it is produced. "There will be a corn roast in the summer with Benner too," says Sandy Saad, curator of exhibitions and education at the centre. And if that's not up your

alley: "Our mill has a fully equipped pottery studio in the basement," says Saad, "and we have an open studio program that has created an avid community of potters."

That's just one instance of the growing art scene in Eastern Ontario. Another is the recently formed Prince Edward County Art Dealers Association. "Over the last 10 years, there's been a dramatic influx of folks coming up here," says David Hatch, director of **Hatch Gallery** and an association member. Painter and performance artist Kent Monkman is building a studio on Big Island. Man Booker Prize–longlisted author and video artist Shani Mootoo is in Bloomfield. And Clement Greenberg–praised abstract painter Otto Rogers lived in the county for years.

A range of art is on offer in the local gallery scene too: "You can go up the street in Bloomfield to **Oeno Gallery** and buy a Maud Lewis, then come to my gallery and buy a Tony Urquhart, or go to **Blizzmax Gallery** and see incredible print works

In Focus The Electric City

In Peterborough, sometimes called the Electric City, energy for art seems to be self-generating. "Peterborough punches above its weight," says Art Gallery of Peterborough curator Fynn Leitch. "When Trent University opened here in 1964, a bunch of artists moved to this area—you could get a much larger studio, you could work bigger." That effect has been intensified in 2019, with rising real-estate prices, and shrinking square footage, in Canada's big cities. "Not only are people moving here—they are staying here," says Leitch. Textile maker Dorothy Caldwell, painter Alex Bierk and photographer Arnold Zageris are among the local luminaries who are celebrated at monthly First Friday events, when businesses and galleries stay open late. Leitch and her team also run a yearly art-studio tour every September. "It's a great chance to meet the artists, see their practice, talk to them, and get a sense of what's happening in Peterborough," says Leitch. In town for a while? "In the summer we recommend the Silver Bean Café—it's only open seasonally, but it is right on the water," says Leitch. "Their tagline is, 'Your waterfront cottage in the city.'" And make sure to stop in at iconic artist-run centre Artspace at its street-front gallery space in downtown Peterborough, where work by Tia Cavanagh is on view this summer.

in an old barn. "If you are looking to make prints, plan a whistle stop at Whitby's **Station Gallery**. Located in a Victorian-era train station, it recently renovated its boxcars as homes for printmaking presses. "Next year is going to be our 50th anniversary," says Station curator Olex Wlasenko. "And we are the only institution between Kingston and Toronto with a fully equipped print studio."

Tasting the Terroir

"The Toasted Walnut makes homemade scones every morning," says Saad of one of her Bowmanville favourites. She also likes locavore **Three-Six Kitchen**. Hatch attributes much of the growing art scene to the nearby **Drake Devonshire**, described by the *Globe and Mail* as being like "a summer camp-themed mess hall and participatory art project."

1 Blizzmax Gallery in Prince Edward County

2 Art Gallery of Peterborough

3 Installation view of Ron Benner's *Trans/mission: Barley-Corn-Maize* (2019) at the Visual Arts Centre of Clarington in Bowmanville
PHOTO TONI HAFKENSCHIED

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Northern Ontario

In Focus A Legend, Reframed

"We were originally established as a memorial to Tom Thomson, and we host one of the biggest collections of his works and personal artifacts," says Tom Thomson Art Gallery curator Heather McLeese. "We have his mandolin. We have a really large palette that he worked from—that's my favourite. It's neat to see how he mixed his paints." But this Owen Sound gallery also has 1,200 works by contemporary artists—some of which reframe the local landscape and its icon. "There's work by really great Indigenous artists like Carl Beam, Norval Morrisseau, Arthur Shilling and Rebecca Belmore. And art by Edward Burtynsky, Diana Thorneycroft...our collection is just stacked." Visitors can find more local views at the Owen Sound Artists' Co-op.



1

A Striking Start, A Vital Now

Many important creations begin on Manitoulin Island. "In different folklores, Manitoulin is considered the birthplace of, or the start of, Turtle Island—part of the origin story of the world," says Anong Beam, artist and executive director of the **Ojibwe Cultural Foundation** in M'Chigeeng First Nation. Beam and her colleagues are dedicated "to nurturing the expression of Anishinaabe culture in all forms, so our art, language, stories, songs and teachings flourish now and remain strong for future generations." On deck for summer 2019 is an exhibition by Christi Belcourt and Isaac Murdoch. "This is an active public art space that promotes Indigenous art," says Beam. Catalogues are published in Ojibwe, then translated into English. Artists working in the region include Ann Beam, Ursula Hettmann, Oliver Girling and John Hartman.

A new creative spirit is visible in Sudbury. "In the past 10 years, there's been a burgeoning film production capacity up here," says Demetra Christakos, director/curator of the **Art Gallery of Sudbury**. "That has a great spillover effect, because artists of every technical capacity have found a new ability to support themselves." Though the gallery has an emphasis on historical works—particularly those of Group of Seven



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member Franklin Carmichael, who had a cabin close by—it also supports contemporary artists. "Over the past seven years, the urban art and music festival **Up Here** has produced large murals transforming downtown Sudbury," says Christakos. "**Foire d'art alternatif**, a project of the **Galerie du Nouvel-Ontario**, is great too."

Some Northern Delights

In Sudbury, "**Laughing Buddha** has great pizza; we have a partnership with them to show local artists, and in summer they have a nice garden," says Christakos. In Owen Sound, McLeese recommends the **Milk Maid** café. And don't miss a drive through Killarney if you're in the Manitoulin area, Beam says: "I miss it terribly when I travel. It's classic Group of Seven landscape: very Canadian and very beautiful."



COURTESY TOM THOMSON ART GALLERY, OWEN SOUND, GIFT OF THE LYCEUM CLUB AND WOMEN'S ART ASSOCIATION OF OWEN SOUND, 1988

3

- 1 Alexandra Berens-Firth's *Vous Êtes Ici* (2015) at Sudbury's Up Here PHOTO ANDREW KNAPP
- 2 Anong Beam, of the Ojibwe Cultural Foundation, pulls out works by her late father, Carl Beam
- 3 Tom Thomson *Spring Lake* 1916

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Escarpment Ontario



2

- 1 Life of a Craphead's *Bugs* (2015) in the 2016 Outdoor Screening Series at Hamilton Artists Inc. PHOTO CAITLIN SUTHERLAND
- 2 *Manghoe Lassi* (2019) will be part of the group exhibition "The Gender Conspiracy" opening at the Art Gallery of Burlington on August 29, 2019 PHOTO HUMZAH AMIN
- 3 Summer outdoor painting class at the Dundas Valley School of Art
- 4 Costume-drawing class at the Dundas Valley School of Art

Creative Communities

"Art is the new steel." That's an oft-debated idea in Hamilton this past decade, as creatives priced out of the Toronto housing market moved in. But now, there's more public discussion about how Hamilton itself is gentrifying. **Hamilton Artists Inc.** is one gallery holding space for that conversation. "We have exhibitions inside the gallery, we have an outdoor wall that we program, we have artist talks, art walks, residencies, a film festival," says executive director Julie Dring. A number of galleries nearby have closed due to rising rents, and that's important to address, along with art itself. As Dring puts it: "We see it as our responsibility to use our space for artists and the community to come and talk."

A related, but slightly different kind of art-community has been growing in the town of Dundas, just west of Hamilton's core. "We started with one class held over a hardware store in 1964," says Claire Lougheed, director of the **Dundas Valley School of Art**, "and now we offer more than 100 programs per term in a beautifully renovated 1862 building." Potters were among the first wave of artists and artisans in the area. "We are also known as the town of 100 waterfalls, which means water everywhere—and clay beds too," says Lougheed.

Studio life is also a big part of the scene at the **Art Gallery of Burlington**, located a few steps from Lake Ontario. The AGB has several guilds right on-site—for woodworking, ceramics, fibre arts, painting, photography and more—with 5,000



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members creating regularly there. "There is a constant level of activity in this building that I've never experienced before in any gallery I've worked in," says curator Suzanne Carte. "This space just hums." That emphasis on craft is shown throughout the AGB collection: even though Burlington has a population of only 180,000, its civic gallery is home to the largest contemporary ceramics collection of any public gallery in Canada. Carte intends to bring more contemporary art into the AGB this summer, forging an even broader union of creative people and perspectives.

Collective Repasts

In Hamilton, "**541 Eatery and Exchange** is a not-for-profit restaurant with a sliding-scale payment option, as well as the option to pay to purchase someone else's meal. It's a pay-it-forward restaurant," says Dring. "**Redchurch Café** has the Assembly Gallery inside. And **Collective Arts Brewing** is a major presence, featuring works by emerging artists on its cans and bottles. In Dundas, "**Betula** is Canadian comfort food done really beautifully," says Lougheed. "**Taylor's Tea Room** has been here for decades if you want a pot of lapsang souchong." Just steps from the Art Gallery of Burlington is **Spencer's**. If you're headed downtown instead, try the well-reviewed **Tamp Coffee Co.** for espresso and sandwiches.

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Southwestern Ontario



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COURTESY ART GALLERY OF WINDSOR. GIFT OF THE FORD MOTOR COMPANY OF CANADA, LIMITED. 2013 (2013.034)

2

Sparking Exceptional Art

For decades, Windsor has been an auto-industry hub. But it's also a hive of creative production. The **Art Gallery of Windsor** celebrated its 75th birthday last year and the exhibition "401 West! Portrait of the Region" continues on that occasion. "It's really about being here and about what artists have done here," says Catharine Mastin, executive director. Featured are Stan Douglas, whose film *Le Détroit* was made in the area in 2001; Yousuf Karsh, who shot iconic portraits of Ford workers in Windsor in 1951; and John Scott, who was born in Windsor and often integrates cars and motorcycles into his sculptures.

Up the 401 in London, Matthew Kyba, executive director of **Forest City Gallery**, underlines the region's unique creative conditions. "We were one of the first artist-run centres in Canada," says Kyba. "The group of London artists and musicians were really important in the creation of CARFAC," a national artists' organization that campaigns for artist rights. "It's a very tight-knit scene." Forest City Gallery has just started an artist residency, and public art on billboards downtown. There's also room in this region to try something different. The **Clay and Glass Gallery** in Waterloo aims to be one



COURTESY RENANN ISAACS CONTEMPORARY ART, GUELPH

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of the country's great medium-specific museums "In Canada, we have a unique mandate," says gallery director Denis Longchamps. "Our focus is mainly contemporary clay and glass artists." Designed by Vancouver's Patkau Architects, the gallery is a marvel in itself—it won a Governor General's Medal shortly after it was built in 1997.

A Movable (Aesthetic) Feast

"Our neighbours **N+1 Cycle** have Good Sport Gallery located inside," says Kyba. "And **Locomotive Espresso** is great." Kyba also likes **Museum London** for art viewing. In Waterloo in September, there's **Lumen**, an intersection of art and tech in Silicon Valley North. In Windsor, **Biblioasis** recently published a book of fiction based on Alex Colville's paintings. Drop by their shop for a copy. Other local must-sees are artist-run centre **Artcite** and member-driven gallery **Common Ground**, says Mastin.

In Focus

The Greatness in Guelph

"I was a hardcore Torontonionian...until I left," laughs Renann Isaacs, of **Renann Isaacs Contemporary Art**. Her gallery shows senior artists from the area, such as Ron Shuebrook, Will Gorlitz and Susan Dobson, alongside MFA grads from the University of Guelph. Isaacs also represents the artwork of internationally renowned graphic novelist Seth, who lives nearby. "There are all these incredible talents living in smaller communities that still aren't getting the recognition they deserve." Bump into them, maybe, at another Isaacs art fave, **Capacity 3 Gallery**.

- 1 The Clay and Glass Gallery in Waterloo
- 2 Yousuf Karsh *Gow Crapper Putting trim cord on rear window*, *Trim Line No. 1*, Plant No. 4 1951
- 3 Installation view of Jasmine Reimer's *Of, In or Under* (2018) at Forest City Gallery, London
- 4 Seth *King Grain Elevators* 2014

Richard Watts: Earth Etchings

Curated by Heather McLeese with
essay contribution from John K. Grande.

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Artist Talk: June 15 - 1pm

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Image: Ixchel Suarez, Artist's Crowe River Studio, near Havelock, ON, 2018.

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More Ontario Arts



A Place Where Arts Abound

It's hard to wrap up the entire Ontario art scene in just a few short pages. Consider the following a further introduction.

If you're in the Ottawa region, the **National Gallery of Canada** is a must-see, but there are lots of other great art spaces to explore too. The newly reopened **Ottawa Art Gallery** downtown has free admission, and includes a café and restaurant on site. Nearby is **SAW Gallery**, recently expanded to 15,000 square feet with a Nordic Lab, the Annie Pootoogook Studio and (in its club section) a bar with locally sourced fare.

Other worthy highlights in Eastern Ontario are the **Agnes Etherington Art Centre** and artist-run **Modern Fuel** in Kingston, as well as the **Robert McLaughlin Gallery** in Oshawa.

Up north, several galleries are renovating or planning for new buildings, including the **Thunder Bay Art Gallery** and the **Galerie du Nouvel-Ontario** in Sudbury. Opening soonest is the new \$4.5-million **Douglas Family Art Centre** in Kenora, which is based on a major donation of Walter J. Phillips works from Toronto collectors Bryce and Nicki Douglas to the **Lake of the Woods Museum**. (Phillips used to summer in the area, and the Douglasses continue to.) Opening August 17, the

centre will have their gift on display to start, as well as works by the Triple K Cooperative and Professional Native Indian Artists Inc.

On the other side of the province, but also northerly, is the **Timmins Museum: National Exhibition Centre**, which is hosting an outdoor project on climate change this summer in partnership with National Geographic and the Canadian Science and Technology Museum. Not to be missed in Barrie is the **MacLaren Art Centre**, which showcases fantastic art indoors and out—as well as within a quiet, elegant courtyard adjacent to the centre's friendly café. And if you do find yourself in the Manitoulin area, check out **Neon Raven Art Gallery**, featuring important works by Ann and Carl Beam.

Events, Festivals and Exhibitions

In Southwestern Ontario, there are many summer festivals to enjoy. **Riverfest Elora** is full of international and local music acts, and (for a more intimate experience) **Creative Spark in the Yard** at **Elora Centre for the Arts** presents a two-day outdoor juried show in early July. Also within driving distance if you're B&Bing or camping around the area is the **Art Gallery of Guelph**, **Boarding House Gallery** and **Ed Video** in Guelph; the **Kitchener-Waterloo Art Gallery**; **Button Factory Arts** in Waterloo; **Peel Art Gallery**

Museum and Archives in Brampton; and **Museum London**, **Michael Gibson Gallery** and the **McIntosh Gallery** in London. A short drive from there through Lake Huron wind-turbine country leads to Sarnia, where the **Judith and Norman Alix Art Gallery** hosts an excellent touring show of contemporary Canadian photography this summer.

The Escarpment region is full of vibrant art galleries, including **Oakville Galleries**; **Art Gallery of Hamilton**, **McMaster Museum of Art** and **Carnegie Gallery** in Hamilton/Dundas; **Idea Exchange** in Cambridge; and **Rodman Hall Art Centre** in St. Catharines, just to name a few. And if you enjoy an evening at the theatre, line up for the **Shaw Festival** in Niagara-on-the-Lake or the **Stratford Festival**. The Shaw's Secret Theatre program discloses locales just before performances, and Stratford's *Birds of a Kind* is written by Wajdi Mouawad of *Incendies* fame. Mississauga offers the newly renovated **Small Arms Inspection Building**, the **Blackwood Gallery** and the **Art Gallery of Mississauga** too. ■

Shayne Dark's *Glacial Series: Drop Stones 1, 2, and 3* (2015) in the sculpture garden at Oeno Gallery in Prince Edward County PHOTO JOHNNY LAM



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