

LEIGHTON ART CENTRE



2021

ANNUAL REPORT

OUR MISSION

As a vibrant and open space for creativity, the Leighton Art Centre inspires us to explore, appreciate and create.

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The privilege of the Leighton Art Centre's presence on 80 acres of foothills landscape within Treaty 7 territory is combined with respect, humility, and responsibility to be caretakers of the land. We acknowledge the people of these traditional lands which includes the Blackfoot Confederacy comprised of the Siksika, Kainai, and Piikani, as well as the Tsuut'ina First Nation, and the Stoney Nakoda, including the Chiniki, Bearspaw, and Wesley First Nations. We acknowledge that this territory is home to the Métis Nation of Alberta, Region 3. We welcome all people who make their home in the Treaty 7 territory of Southern Alberta and who act as respectful stewards to this land where we learn, create, and build relationships in meaningful ways.

Cover photo by Amanda MacKay: *Wandering with Wonder*, September 2021



EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

I joined the Leighton Art Centre in May 2021 when the COVID 19 pandemic was shifting through another wave of infections. We were closed to the public but in no way idle. The organization had been bustling and growing in the years before the pandemic and retained momentum on devising a plan to redevelop the Education Centre. A feasibility study had already been undertaken, and an ambitious plan was set in place to design and build a new education studio to serve our community.

The study found the heritage schoolhouse “Ballyhamage” to be fully functioning, but the pottery and weaving studios were found to be degrading. Our well-loved spaces, patched and pulled together for years by dedicated staff, volunteers, and tradespeople, were signaling it was time to renew and rebuild. In 2021, we embarked on this journey in collaboration with Works of Architecture who conceived of a new studio that will honour the history of the site while imagining a vibrant future. The design is centered around Leighton Art Centre's pillars of art, history, and nature. It echoes the shape of the traditional schoolhouse, while incorporating artist-centered classrooms that embrace the beauty of the natural environment. With flexible, light-filled spaces, the new studio will improve the accessibility, capacity, and functionality of the Education Centre. In 2021, we laid the groundwork for this important capital project and from 2022 to 2024 we will raise \$3 million to design and build a new education studio at Leighton Art Centre.

The Education Centre is central to serving our community and to fulfilling our mission and vision. In an average year, we welcome over 6000 school children through our *Art & Nature* program, which provides hands-on experiences with art, history, and

nature. We know that children of today will be the leaders of tomorrow, and through our programs they will find a love of nature, a place of refuge, and the creativity they'll need to tackle the challenges of the future. The redevelopment of the Education Centre will have a huge impact on our community, and in 2021 we developed a strategic plan for the Education Centre that will help guide its operations through the redesign, development, and implementation of the new facility. Some key notes from the strategic plan anticipate that the new facility will:

- Increase capacity to 13,500 students per year through Art & Nature programs
- Increase capacity for summer camps by 50%. Our popular day-camps for children aged 6 to 12 run in July and August and sell out each year.
- Be fully accessible and will enhance our commitment to diverse communities.
- Allow us to support more artists at every stage of their artistic development. We're planning to grow workshop attendance by 100% by year five in the new facility.
- Provide a flexible community space that can be used for lectures, exhibitions, children's programs, and events that will broaden community connection and engagement.

In June 2021, we re-opened to the public with a renewed desire to share this place with people of every age, socio-economic background, gender identity, sexual orientation, race, religion, ethnicity, and ability. In 2021, we re-committed to:

- Ongoing collaborations with National accessArt Centre (NaAC), Canada's leading arts organization supporting artists with developmental disabilities.
- A safe and healthy creative space where discrimination is never tolerated, and artists of all skill levels are supported in their artistic development.
- Subsidized programs for schools and families who need financial support.
- Hands-on tours for groups with little or no English language.
- Addressing Calls to Action outlined by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. In 2022 we will hire a Truth and Reconciliation Advisor who will guide content and policy development that will help us be responsible stewards of history and nature.
- Following arts industry best-practices as outlined by CARFAC and other arts leaders. 2021 saw the introduction of CARFAC fees for exhibiting artists.

The second half of 2021 was host to an incredible slate of in-person exhibitions, programs, and events, which are detailed in the following pages. One highlight was the performance of *Wandering With Wonder*, an immersive storytelling performance



created by Samantha Whelan. We were also delighted to hold our annual fundraising events, Clothesline Art Sale and Christmas in the Country. In November we redesigned our membership program to be more inclusive, and saw a 33 percent increase by December 2021. The enormous efforts of staff, board, and volunteers brought Leighton Art Centre through 2021 and have positioned us for an exciting period of growth ahead. A special thank you to full time staff Lindsay Corbet, Amanda MacKay, Alison Marshall, Dave Parkinson, and Coreen Thornhill for their unwavering dedication and hard work! For a full list of staff, and our board of directors see page 13.

Our connections with the land, ecosystems, and legacy of Leighton Art Centre are inherently reciprocal. We steward these living entities – the histories, stories, and wild things – and in return they nurture us by restoring our minds and bodies, and by fostering our ability to create. It's little wonder everyone falls in love with this place; I know I have. It's the deep expressions of care and kinship by all involved at Leighton Art Centre, especially in light of the global events of 2020 and 2021, that make it such a special place. Our commitment as an organization is to an ethos of community, connection, and inclusivity, and to remain as worthy stewards of the land on which we are built.

Respectfully submitted,

Christina Cuthbertson
Executive Director

EXHIBITIONS



PENNY CORRADINE: MY NAME IS NOT TREE

JANUARY 30 TO MARCH 11, 2021

After reading *The Hidden Life of Trees* by Peter Wohlleben, Penny Corradine started seeing trees as individuals or families with lives of their own. She began to feel a closeness to them that she hadn't acknowledged before. Penny wanted these paintings to speak for trees. They're big and assertive, demanding to be seen.



MICHELLE WIEBE: THE SCENE BETWEEN: AN EXPLORATION OF WHEN CULTURES MEET

JANUARY 30 TO MARCH 11, 2021

This exhibition explored Michelle Wiebe's desire to find beauty in the fragmentation within her own family. The heart of this exhibition was a set of letterpressed hand carved blocks that symbolized lost language, cultural assimilation, and genetic traits. Wiebe created this work to explore her Scottish, French, and Ojibwe heritage.



CINDY BOUWERS & JEAN PEDERSON: OF A CERTAIN AGE

MARCH 12 TO APRIL 23, 2021

Cindy Bouwers & Jean Pederson explored life experiences over six decades including youth, education, marriage, motherhood, opportunity, disappointment, and loss. Scars, lumps, bumps, grey hair, and weathered skin are physically, emotionally, and spiritually portrayed within their tracks of time. Many of life's lessons — letting go, shifting expectations, enduring difficulty, being vulnerable, valuing authenticity, overcoming fears, and laughing are reflected in the work.

EXHIBITIONS



TERRA SIMIERITSCH: COEXISTENCE

MARCH 12 TO APRIL 23, 2021

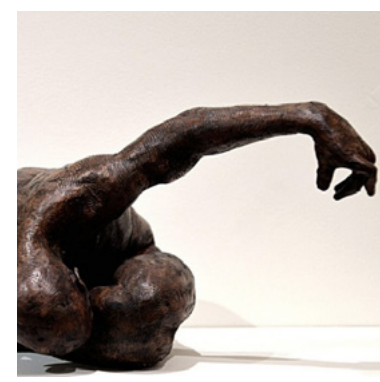
Coexistence featured mixed-media works on paper examining the relationship between animals, especially human and non-human conflicts. Simieritsch depicted wild creatures that have anthropogenic characteristics woven into them. Maps, ribbons, flyers, words, and common causes of conflict were layered into each work asking viewers to rethink their preconceived notions of various species (be they positive or negative) and dig deeper into where those notions came from.



19TH ANNUAL JURIED MEMBERS' EXHIBITION

APRIL 22 TO JUNE 13, 2021

This exhibition featured 102 artworks by 69 Leighton Art Centre members. This annual exhibition is an opportunity to support the wealth of artistic practices in our community.



G9 ARTIST GROUP: WHAT A DIFFERENCE A DAY MAKES

JUNE 19 TO JULY 25, 2021

Artists: ASTA Dale, Cindy Delpart, Greg Pyra, Cameron Roberts, David Harrison, Seka Owen, Aaron Sidorenko, Susan Kristoferson, and Jean Pederson.

The earth rotates from one day to the next; lives start and diminish; viruses mutate; attitudes, thoughts, and feelings come and go with the passage of time. This exhibition was a chance to reflect on the passage of time and the effects of isolation caused by the COVID 19 pandemic.

EXHIBITIONS



NESHKA KRUSCHE: WHERE DO WE STAND?

JULY 31 TO SEPTEMBER 5, 2021

Where Do We Stand? was an exhibition of sculpture and two-dimensional works by Neshka Krusche. Neshka finds the driftwood, mostly cedar and fir, on the West Coast and brings it back to her studio in the Foothills, not far from Leighton Art Centre. Here, the wood is completely transformed to take on a new, sharp, thought-provoking presence. The long process of carving, charring and oiling the sculptures is an exploration of the process of change.



DOUG LEVITT: BIRDS EAT MOSQUITOES

JULY 31 TO SEPTEMBER 5, 2021

Daily walks and en plein air painting trips slowly revealed the vast and busy world of bird life Doug had been taking for granted. He began to see their personalities – the tricksters, the nurturers, and the curious – and also how protective they are of each other. It made him think deeply about his own relationships and the greater world. A fascination with birds and how they balance and help nature, fuels his desire to learn more about nature and in so doing, learn more about himself.



IN THE OPEN AIR: JURIED PLEIN AIR EXHIBITION

SEPTEMBER 11 TO OCTOBER 24, 2021

The practice of creating art outdoors dates back centuries but was popularized by the French Impressionists in the 1800's. The act of outdoor painting from direct observation continues to be popular, including here in Alberta. This exhibition showcases the work of a number of accomplished Alberta artists, all of whom enjoy creating art en plein air.



EVENTS & PROGRAMS

February to June: Despite school and museum closures, *Art & Nature* school program offered virtual programs for hundreds of students. Many of these programs were subsidized through the Linda Putnam Legacy Fund.

January to November: *Art & Nature Workshops* led by local artists and naturalists included everything from birdwatching to inks and felting. Workshops are a great opportunity to connect with the arts community and generate new visitors and members.

June 26 and 27: We were happy to host *Clothesline Art Sale* in person and online. This annual fundraiser continues to be a community favorite. We saw over 300 visitors and raised over \$41,000 online and in-person.

July to August: *Art & Nature Summer Camps* for kids ran at 1/4 capacity throughout July and August. We nurtured the creativity of 128 children, gave them valuable outdoor and social time.

September 11 and 12: *Paint the Foothills* celebrated the tradition of plein air painting. Held during Alberta Culture Days, this event featured artists painting the foothills, a wet paint competition, and a series of free plein air workshops. We welcomed over 360 visitors to the centre during this two-day event.

September 10 to 12: *The Most Beautiful Art Tour in Alberta* continues to be a robust community endeavor, which opens art galleries and private artist studios to visitors for a three-day event.

EVENTS AND PROGRAMS

September 18 and 19: Wandering with Wonder – an immersive outdoor musical storytelling experience – was performed for live audiences at Leighton Art Centre, for the very first time. Over three years in the making, the production was performed three times over two days, each time for an outdoor audience one hundred strong.

The creation of Calgary musician and teaching artist Samantha Whelan Kotkas, Wandering with Wonder tells of a magical young woman “Wonder”, who guides the audience through a day that never was. Through the eyes of Wonder (a puppet) and moving together as a group across the landscape, audiences experienced the transformational power of nature, music and friendship as Wonder searches for her lost song. For those who attended, and for the cast, crew and LAC staff and volunteers, it was a remarkable experience.

For Samantha, it brought her full circle. Originally hired as a children's camp instructor at the Leighton Education Centre during the summers of 1992 and 1993, when she was a university student, Samantha credits her experiences here with helping to form her future as a storyteller. “That’s [part of] what I was asked to do for the children... to tell stories, about Echo Hill, about ants and animals and plants, about Barbara and A.C. and their lives and art. This place was pivotal in my life as an artist and what I chose to write about and what I chose to create around.”

Conceiving the project to bring together many disciplines, including theatre, visual arts, puppetry, music and dance, Samantha was thrilled to be able to choose not only the subject of and location to perform the production, but most especially the artists involved. The original group was a carefully selected ‘dream team’ for Samantha: composers/performers Chris Andrew, Jordan Andrew, Matt Epp, Sherryl Sewepagaham and Walter MacDonald White Bear, as well as dancer Yukichi Hattori. As the project grew and evolved, so did the team, and Samantha repeatedly tapped into the large network of arts professionals who she is proud to call friends.

For Leighton Art Centre this collaboration was an incredible chance to invite visitors to explore and appreciate art and nature in a new way. **More at leightoncentre.org/wandering-with-wonder/**



September to November: Art & Nature school programs resumed in-person and we were thrilled offer hands-on programming to more than 1000 students.

October 30: Art-Oween on Halloween at the Leighton Art Centre was a sold-out event, safely bringing creative and spooooky fun to some family cohorts.

November 6 to December 22: Christmas in the Country Art Sale opened on-site and online November 5. This is an important fundraiser for Leighton Art Centre, generating more than \$100,000 in sales in 2021.

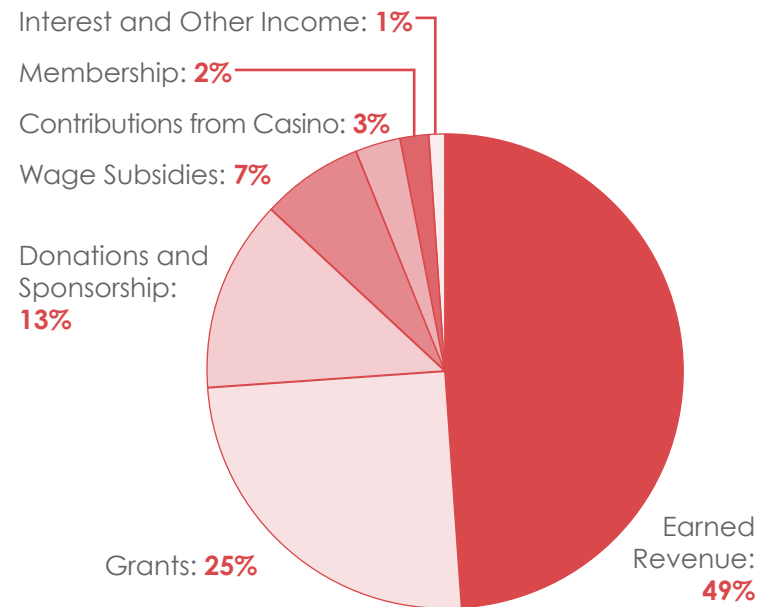
BIRD NESTING BOX PROGRAM

MOUNTAIN BLUEBIRDS	1st Broods	2nd Broods	Total	
# of successful nests	2	0	2	14% bluebird
# of eggs	13	0	13	
# of nestlings	11	0	11	
# of fledged young	11	0	11	
# of banded birds	0 (Adults)	11 (Young)	11	100% baby birds banded
TREE SWALLOWS				
# of eggs	52	64% of boxes; average of 5.7 eggs per box		
# of successful nests	9	100% of nest attempts were successful		
# of nestlings	50	96% of eggs hatched		
# of fledged young	48	96% of hatched chicks survived to adulthood!		
# of birds banded	3 (Adults)	22 (Young)	25 (total)	

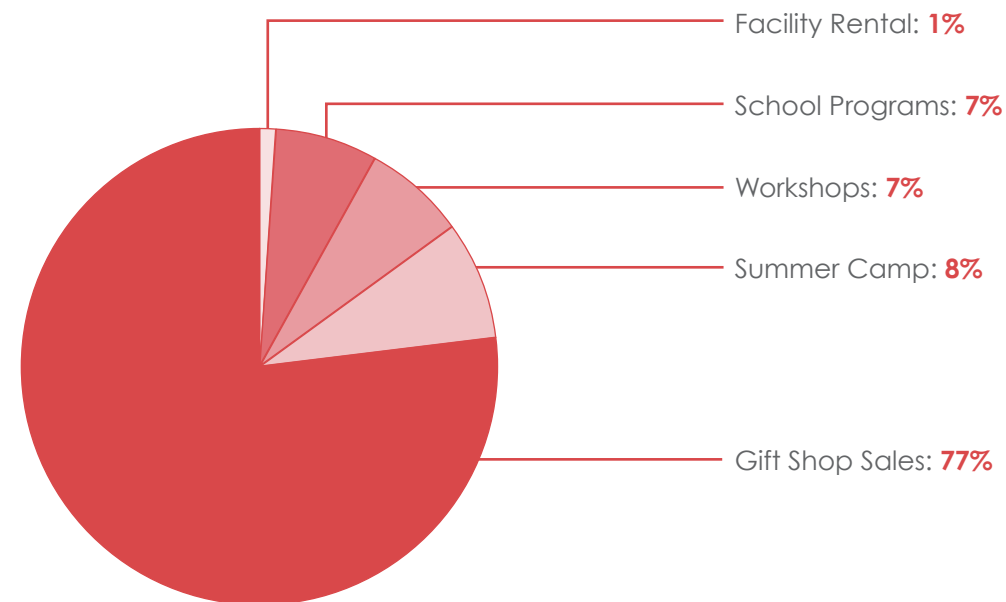
THE NUMBERS

For 2021 Audited Financial Statements visit:
leightoncentre.org/about/board-of-directors/

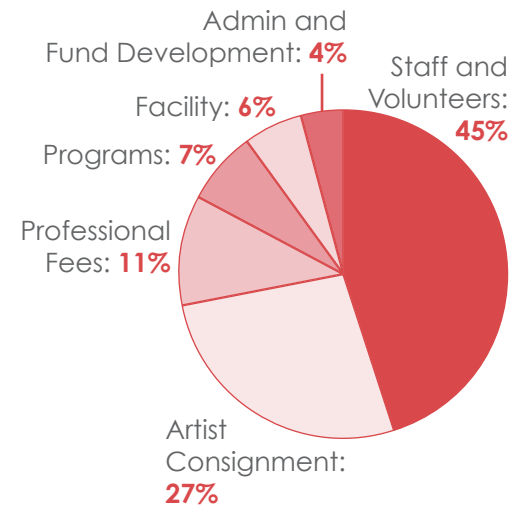
REVENUE: \$805,835



EARNED REVENUE BREAKDOWN:

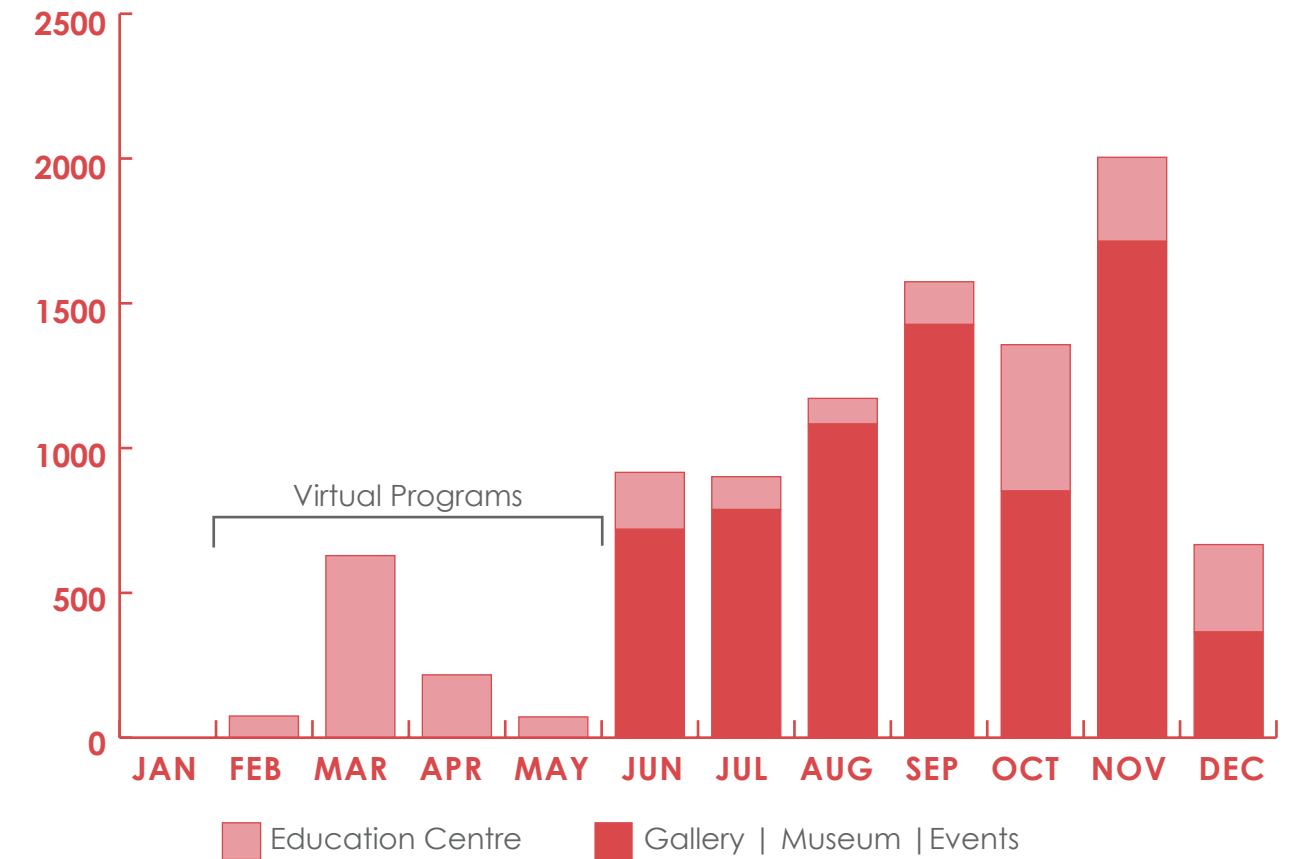


EXPENSES: \$763,046



THE NUMBERS

ATTENDANCE: 9,604



COMMUNITY:

Members:	400	33% increase
Volunteer Hours:	1864	246% increase
Earned by Artists:	\$226,352	82% increase (consignment, workshops, CARFAC)
Facebook:	3,588	17% increase
Instagram:	4,721	21% increase
Twitter:	761	8% increase

THE TEAM

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Melissa Cole

Chair

Jim Conway

Vice Chair

Annette Resler

Secretary

Darryl Hass

Treasurer

Michele Chiasson-Suart

Past Chair

Kirsten Christopherson

Director

Jim Critchley

Director

Lynne Cunningham

Director

Sarah Johnson

Director

Holly Wennerstrom

Director

MANAGEMENT

Stephanie Doll

Executive Director
(January - February)

Kirsten Christopherson

Interim Director
(February - May)

Christina Cuthbertson

Executive Director
(May - December)

Lindsay Corbet

Manager of Exhibitions,
Volunteers & Events

Amanda MacKay

Director of Marketing &
Communications

Alison Marshall

Manager of Gallery Shop
& Guest Services

Coreen Thornhill

Manager of Public
Programs

STAFF

Abigail Dyke

Gallery Assistant

Olivia Felstrom

Camp Counsellor

Chandra Kuran

Educator

Riley Merchant

Gallery Assistant

Joanne Smith

Gallery Assistant

Manhattan Turn

Camp Counsellor

Tatiana Vacey

Camp Counsellor

Lauren Wills

Camp Counsellor

GROUNDS

Dave Parkinson

Groundskeeping &
Maintenance

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LEIGHTON FOUNDATION, CANADA REVENUE AGENCY # 119241917 RR 0001



SUPPORTERS



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