

rated

ART

Summer 2025

A McQueen Agency Publication

Get to Know
the Tofino
Gallery of
Contemporary
Art

Art Fairs,
Exhibits
& More!

10 Things
We're Looking
Forward to
This Summer

MCQUEENAGENCY.com

A woman with long dark hair, wearing a light blue denim shirt, is seated and painting a large abstract landscape on an easel. She is using a brush to apply paint to the canvas. The painting depicts a dramatic scene with dark, swirling clouds and a bright, hazy horizon. In the foreground, there is a palette with various colors of paint. The background shows other art pieces hanging on the wall.

Meet Tiffany Blaise

AN ARTIST Q&A

AGENCY DIRECTOR'S NOTE

Summer Lovin'

I have always loved summer, and nothing beats the summers here in Edmonton.

With +30 degree days, and warm comfortable nights, it is a welcome reprieve from the sub-zero temperatures we suffer through all winter. Once summer arrives, it all somehow seems worth it, and we remember why we live here. The long daylight hours (when it doesn't get dark until 9 p.m. or later) and the pace of summer make everything seem a bit more relaxed. And that more leisurely pace means less rushing and more time for kicking back and connecting with friends.

That laid-back pace is also synonymous with the west coast, so it's fitting that in this issue we meet Vancouver-based artist, Tiffany Blaise, and explore her scenic works that capture the vast beauty of the ocean. Speaking of the west coast, our "In the Spotlight" article takes us to the Tofino Gallery of Contemporary Art, where we had the pleasure of connecting with its gallerist, Leah van Beers-McDiarmid.



Jared Tabler. Photo by Ryan Parker.

Our summer issue always highlights great art fairs and exhibits to explore with friends and loved-ones, and this issue's recommendations deliver in spades. From the Whyte Avenue Art Walk in Edmonton, to the Remai Modern in Saskatoon, and all the way overseas to BEERS in London, there is no shortage of great art to experience this year.

So whether you're travelling abroad or staying close to home, we hope that art makes its way into your summer plans!

– Jared

ARTIST Q&A

Meet Tiffany Blaise

To Vancouver-based artist, Tiffany Blaise, nature is more than a source of inspiration—it's fuel for her practice and soul. Her work, which you'll soon discover, explores themes of movement and transformations—paintings of land and sea, uniting the physical landscape with the world of her mind.

Whether adventuring around BC or travelling abroad, Tiffany's favourite places are where the skies swirl and the coastlines call. Beckoning her to follow her passion, trust her creativity, and explore the



Tiffany Blaise, photo by Silvia Martinez.

intersection of strength and softness in nature. Meet Tiffany Blaise.

**Who was the first person to put a paintbrush in your hands?
And was it a natural fit, or something you grew into?**

My mom signed me up for a watercolour class, and I loved it! I remember the feeling of creating a painting and how magical it was to see a piece of art emerge from a pencil sketch and brushstrokes. Painting has always felt somewhat intuitive to me, yet I still feel like I'm growing into it as I learn more year after year.

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Something that I've always embraced is following my passion and trusting my creativity... where energy goes, creativity flows.

”

Have you always drawn inspiration from nature? And how has that relationship grown over time?

Nature has always been my main source of inspiration, and it will always fuel my practice because I find a spiritual quality in it. I feel a deep connection to nature, so spending time in it and living in a city with access to mountains and the coast is important to me.

It's also a relationship that keeps growing because the more I study the landscape, the more I seek new environments to explore and learn about.

What's one piece of advice you wish you'd had when starting out? And what's something you knew instinctively that's still serving you?

I love this question! One thing that I wish I had known in the early stages of my career is to accept the fact that *everything* will happen to you... from the bad things—like lost or damaged art shipments, gallery relationships that don't work out, getting rejected from art fairs or exhibits, and underselling your work for lower than it's worth—to the good things, like making a great sale, meeting awesome artists who help you, having a successful art show, winning awards, and so on. And all of that is okay because it's all part of the artist's journey. You learn from everything that happens, whether the result is desired or undesired!



Everlasting Light, oil, ink, and cold wax on canvas, 40 x 30, by Tiffany Blaise.

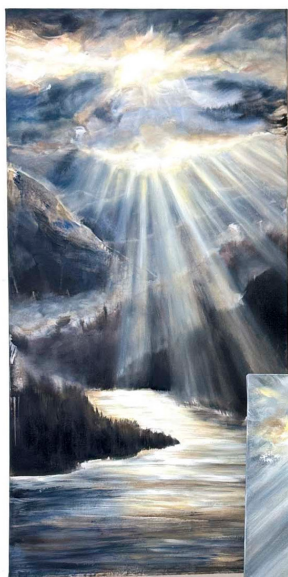


Something that I've always embraced is following my passion and trusting my creativity... where energy goes, creativity flows. I have doubts and face challenges constantly, but ultimately, I persevere as an artist because I know that I want to paint for the rest of my life.

“

I'm currently working on a collection of paintings that meditate on the timeless dialogue between mountain and water, permanence and change.

”



Solitude in the Fjords and Lands of Wonder, from the "Skylight and Shadow" series, by Tiffany Blaise.

What was your very first art purchase? And what was your last art purchase?

My first art purchase was a beautiful black-and-white figurative drawing by my friend Flory Huang. I bought it at her solo exhibition and remember instantly connecting with the posture and expression of the figure.

My latest purchase was an abstract Eric Louie painting, titled *Water Dancer*. He's a talented Vancouver-based contemporary. My colleagues at the gallery I used to work at surprised me by contributing to the purchase as a wedding gift, which was incredibly kind!

What has being a painter taught you about yourself?

I've learned countless things (both good and not so good) about myself through painting, which has been both eye-opening and helpful.

- It's revealed how much I love and seek beauty and creativity in the world through art, film, and music.
- It's shown me how scared I am of failure and how important it is for me to push through that fear and take risks in my art practice.
- It's taught me that I use my art as an outlet for my emotions and soul.
- And it's helped me develop a quick ability to problem-solve and make decisions, thanks to the hundreds of decisions I have to make every day in the studio while painting a piece!



The Gilded Tide, oil, ink, and cold wax on canvas, 36 x 48, by Tiffany Blaise.

Tell us a little about what you're currently working on or hoping to explore next.

I'm currently working on a collection of paintings that explore the sublime intersection of strength and softness in nature through misty, atmospheric portrayals of mountainous landscapes. Inspired by the wild beauty of British Columbia's coastal terrain and the poetic visual language of traditional Chinese mountain scroll paintings (*shanshui hua*), these paintings meditate on the timeless dialogue between mountain and water, permanence and change. My artistic process is greatly influenced by the seasons, so as we've emerged from winter and are now in

spring, I'm feeling inspired by trees, foliage, and lakes, so some of my next pieces might involve those subjects.

What's your favourite way to procrastinate? And do you delight in it?

I love to procrastinate by surfing Pinterest and looking at landscape photos (and photos of interiors and stylish outfits!). Gathering inspiration online—and also through art books—is one of my favourite activities and definitely eats up a lot of time when I should be working on other things. In a way, it's productive procrastination though, since I'm feeding my painting habit with new ideas!



In what ways do you hope to grow this year, both as an artist and personally?

I hope to push myself both physically and creatively during an artist residency I have coming up in September at the Cassiar Cannery near Prince Rupert, followed by a big trip to Haida Gwaii.

One of my goals include learning to ocean kayak so that I can paint en plein air from the kayak! During the summer, I want to explore and paint outside more, while also getting outside of my comfort zone so that I can learn how to paint new subjects and to use colour more impactfully. Also, I'm trying to approach my practice and different opportunities that come up more intentionally and in a focused way, rather than taking on things that don't align with my values or long-term goals.



FloatingThrough, oil, ink, and cold wax on canvas, 36 x 36, by Tiffany Blaise.



“
One of my goals include learning to ocean kayak so that I can paint en plein air from the kayak!
”



Into the Light, mixed-media painting on canvas, 30 x 60, by Tiffany Blaise.

It's a perfect day. Where do you go, and what do you do?

Well, an unbeatable day for me would be spent exploring a city abroad somewhere in Spain or Portugal, soaking in art at museums and then having lunch at a cafe with a patio so that I could have a glass of wine and people-watch!

If it's a perfect day in town, it would start with a coffee on my patio, followed by a walk or a run in the forest. I would spend

the morning to afternoon painting and then go to the beach for a swim or to just soak up some sunshine if it's a nice day. I love cooking, so the evening would include a home-cooked meal and a movie with my husband and pup!

Discover more of Tiffany's work [here](#), and give her a follow on [Instagram!](#)





Left: *A Conversation*, acrylic on canvas, 45 x 50 x 1.5, by Matt Dyer, 2024. Photo by Matt Dyer.
Below: Leah van Beers-McDiarmid, Gallerist. Photo by Chris Roberge.



IN THE SPOTLIGHT

Get to Know the Tofino Gallery of Contemporary Art

Hindsight will tell you there's no self-discovery in a safe life. But back in 2021, doing one thing every day that scared you meant standing less than six feet away from someone at the grocery store—not opening an art gallery. Thankfully, Leah van Beers-McDiarmid thought otherwise. Not only did she launch the Tofino Gallery of Contemporary Art (TGCA) during a pandemic, she did it successfully.

"The timing turned out to be, in hindsight, fortuitous," explains van Beers-McDiarmid. "We opened in June 2021 and eased into being, creating our identity and finding our voice. By 2022, as COVID eased, people were looking to reward themselves for enduring lockdown isolation. There was a pent-up demand for travel, art, and culture."

That demand was, of course, met by the gallery's impeccably curated paintings, sculptures, and photography, all created by Canadian contemporary artists. One thing not to expect at TGCA? A lack of diversity. Though one might expect to find more traditional artworks depicting bears, whales, and west coast sunsets, van Beers-McDiarmid's vision for the gallery was to create a space that wasn't defined explicitly by its location. As she explains, "While there is a coastal element to some of the work, my vision as a Canadian contemporary art gallery was to complement the existing First Nations' galleries, the studio of renowned Canadian conservation and wildlife artist Mark Hobson, and other various photography ateliers."

If you've been lucky enough to visit the gallery, you'll know that a feeling of belonging is also something you'll find at TGCA. As van Beers-McDiarmid explains, it's important to her that visitors feel as comfortable walking into the gallery as they do strolling along the beach.

"We are an inclusive gallery. Our space is small, intimate, and guests are welcomed and encouraged to view the artworks up-close. There is nothing pretentious about us—we love engaging with visitors from all around the world, but we also respect quiet viewing."



Little Islands 3, acrylic on canvas with a custom hemlock frame, 48 x 60 x 1.5, by Ben Fox, 2024. Photo by Ben Fox.

“
We are an inclusive gallery. There is nothing pretentious about us—we love engaging with visitors from all around the world, but we also respect quiet viewing.
”

Don't take our word for it though. You can experience it yourself this summer by taking in the gallery's annual group show, *Devine Feminine*, June 18 – July 2, 2025. It will feature figurative paintings and sculptures, including work by Rachel Ovadia (from Toronto), Elly Smallwood (from Ottawa), and Kaelin Palcu (from Salt Spring Island-NYC). Their work will be featured alongside TGCA's collective of artists, Arden Rose, Lucy Schappy, Michelle Miller, Anne-Sophie Falconer, Birgit Piskor, and Miles Lowry.

Can't make the show? No worries—there's never a bad time to visit (and fall in love with) Tofino. Just ask Leah van Beers-McDiarmid.

For more information on exhibits, artworks, and more, visit TGCA's [website](#), and be sure to give them a follow on [Instagram!](#)



Trio of sculptures made from modified concrete and graphite, by Birgit Piskor. Photo by Chris Roberge.

10 THINGS WE'RE LOOKING FORWARD TO

This Summer



1

Norberg Hall presents: **Robin Arseneault: *If I is a monster, so be it***, through June 21, 2025. Calgary. Learn more [here](#).

2

BEERS London presents: **Andrew Salgado: *Self-Portrait as a Stack of Books***, through June 28, 2025. Learn more [here](#).

3

New Mexico Museum of Art presents: ***The Plain of Smokes***, until June 29, 2025, in the Plaza Building. Learn more [here](#).

4

The Works Art & Design Festival, June 21–July 1, 2025. Sir Winston Churchill Square, Edmonton. Learn more [here](#).

Top Left: *Untitled* (from *The Plain of Smokes* portfolio), 1981, serigraph, 12 5/16 × 14 13/16 in, by Ken Price. Collection of the New Mexico Museum of Art. Gift of Richard Lampert, 1991 (1991.78.1e). © Ken Price Estate.
Bottom Left: *Wink*, cedar, stain, oil, bronze, and patina, 13 x 10 x 21 in, by Robin Arseneault, 2024–2025.



Snuneymux Spring, oil on canvas, 36 x 48, by Collin Elder.

5

Madrona Gallery presents: *Summer Select* (a group exhibition of historic, post-war, and contemporary Canadian art), July 5 – August 9, 2025. Victoria, BC. Learn more [here](#).

8

Remai Modern presents: *Land. Sea. Sugar. Salt: Terrestrial and Aquatic Contemplations of the Caribbean*, through August 17, 2025, at Remai Modern's Feature Gallery. Saskatoon, SK. Learn more [here](#).

6

Whyte Avenue Art Walk, July 11–13, 2025, on Whyte Avenue, in the heart of Old Strathcona (82 Avenue, from 101 to 108 Street), Edmonton. Learn more [here](#).

9

Montreal Museum of Fine Arts presents: *Worlds of Wonder: The Surrealist Journey of Alan Glass*, through September 28, 2025. Learn more [here](#).

7

Seattle Art Museum presents: *Suchitra Mattai: she walked in reverse and found their songs*, through July 20, 2025. Learn more [here](#).

10

Vancouver Art Gallery presents: *Lucy Raven: Murderers Bar*, through September 28, 2025. Learn more [here](#).

WHAT'S ON

McQueen Artists Take Centre Stage

Spring has sprung, and the promise of summer is *just* around the corner. Like you, our McQueen artists have some events and milestones they're looking forward to. Here's where you'll find them.



Tre ere della mia vita (Three ages of my Life), Oil and tar on raw canvas, 170 x 130 x 4.5 cm, by Antonio Garullo, 2025.

Dunce

is excited to be participating in a 10-week summer residency program at [Alberta University of the Arts](#), beginning in June. The work he'll be creating is titled: *Under the Influence—The struggle between artistic integrity and the demands of social media*.

Antonio Garullo

will be in southern Italy this summer, in the spectacular capital of Italian Baroque architecture, participating in [Lecce Art Week](#), June 20 – 30, 2025. You can catch his solo show on display at the Museum of San Francesco della Scarpa, a former church built in the 12th century.

Lisa Graziotto

will be taking part in the [Toronto Outdoor Art Fair](#), July 11 – 13, 2025. Her works will be exclusively available at the [online exhibit](#). To learn more about Lisa, check out her *ratedART* cover story [here!](#)

Charlene Johnson

is excited to be participating in Edmonton's **Whyte Avenue Art Walk**, in the heart of **Old Strathcona**, July 12 – 13, 2025. Be sure to stop by and help celebrate the art walk's 30th anniversary!

If you haven't already, you can still catch *Protect Her Peace*, a group show featuring Charlene's work, through June 27, 2025, at the YWCA Edmonton. Viewings are by appointment only. Visit [MillerArtGallery.ca](https://millerartgallery.ca) for more info.

Pat Marino

will have works on monthly rotation, through December 2025, at A+ Gallery, in Ningbo City, Zhejiang, China.

You can also catch Pat's work in an exhibition, titled *Thrive*, through June 30, 2025, at Målet Gallery, in Yinzhou District, Ningbo City, Zhejiang, China. For details and updates, check out Pat's "Goings-On" page [here](#).

Alice Rich

will be participating in a group exhibition, titled *Group of Five*, August 1 – 4, 2025, at the **Gabriola Arts & Heritage Centre**, on Gabriola Island, BC.

Curtis Trent

is honoured to have been a recently chosen winner in the 2025 Applied Arts Photography Awards and American Photography 41 Awards. You can view all the winning works [here](#).

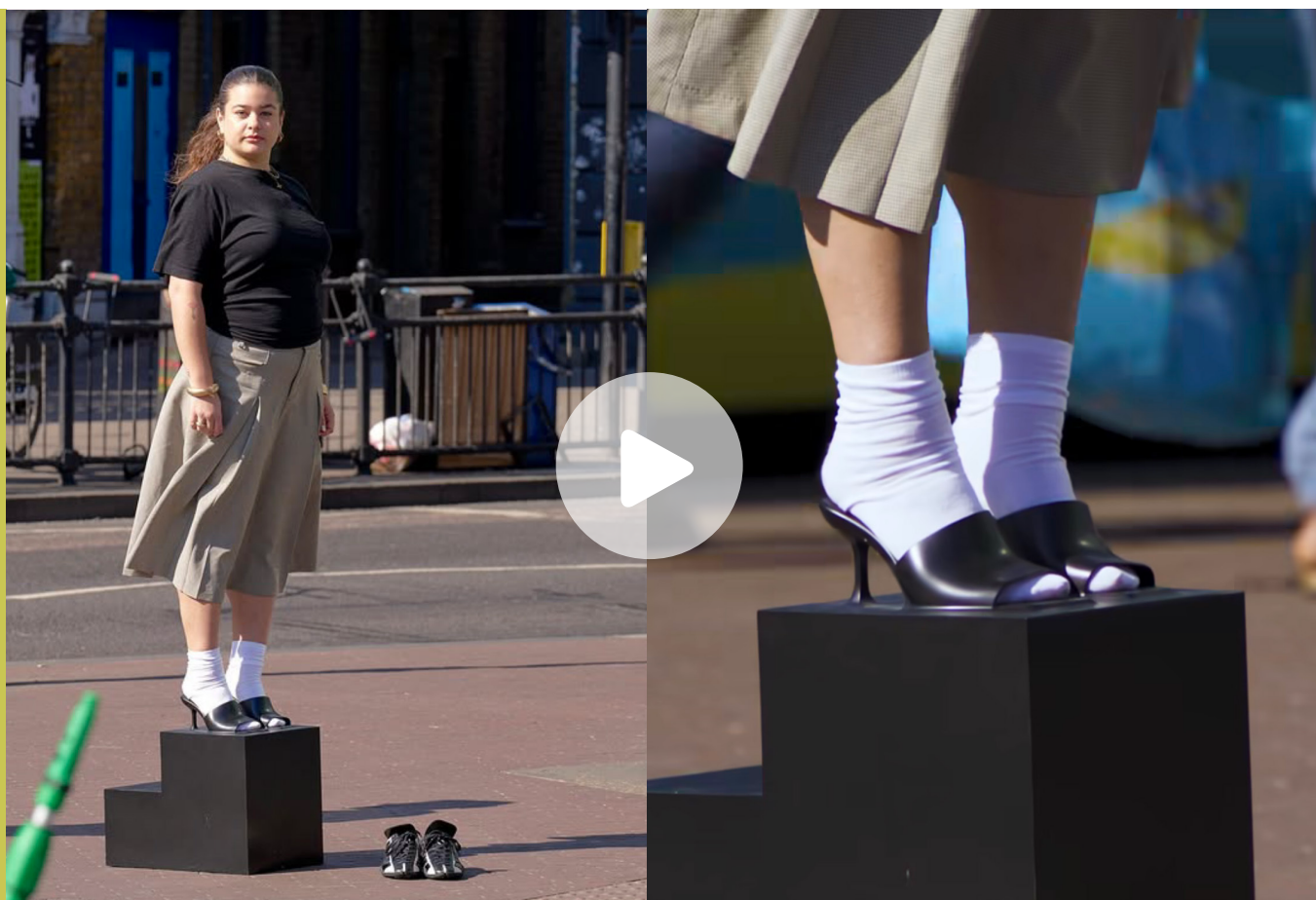


Factory Standards, oil on canvas, 102 x 122 x 3.8 cm, by Lisa Graziotto, 2024.

David Tycho

will be giving an artist's talk at **SOPA Fine Arts**, in Kelowna, July 17 at 7 p.m., where you can also check out some of his fabulous artwork in person.

If you're looking for more David Tycho pieces, you can find them at **Conrad West Gallery**, in Las Vegas, Nevada, and at the **Christopher Hill Gallery**, in Napa Valley, California.



I Carry My Own Podium, Miista

FASHION FORWARD

Step Into Miista's New Public Art Campaign

Miista, a London-based fashion brand best-known for its footwear, is stepping forward with a new campaign that experiments with interactive, public art, titled *I Carry My Own Podium*.

According to the brand, the idea to create and distribute "winner podiums" throughout their East London neighbourhood was born while reflecting on what it means as women to push oneself daily to get better at juggling a million things, and perform them all well or be judged harshly. The remedy? Public-art podiums for people who sometimes win, but also know how to get back up when they don't. Check it out!

Rapid Fire

With Curtis Trent

Pictures may indeed express more than words can, but that didn't stop us from asking photographer **Curtis Trent** to indulge us in this issue's Rapid Fire session. Here's what he had to say...

3 favourite places to travel?

A road trip to Toronto with a stop along the north shore of Lake Superior at Katherine Cove.

First job?

It was a summer job with the RCMP marking home items with an electric engraving gun for insurance purposes.

Last thing you watched on TV?

The Winnipeg Jets advancing to the second round of the Stanley Cup playoffs over the St. Louis Blues.

The thing you impulse buy most at a store?

A share-size tub of coffee-flavoured Häagen-Dazs ice cream.

The person you talk to when you need a good listener?

My wife, Riki.

The first person you tell when you get good news?

Riki.



Curtis Trent

Sweet or savory?

Love them both equally. It's a yin-yang thing.

Last thing you Googled?

How to spell Häagen-Dazs.

Favourite movie?

Withnail and I

3 things that are always in your fridge?

Frozen blueberries, Adams Peanut Butter, and maple syrup.

Ice cream on pie?

Most definitely! And even better with a dense, moist, chocolate cake... just saying.

Favourite person to spoil?

My daughter, Trudy.

Favourite way to relax?

Some quality time with Riki.

Dream vacation?

More quality time with Riki at a spa.

Blue or black ink?

Black with some blue in it.

Morning person or night owl?

I have the personality of a night owl with the habits of a morning person.

A talent/virtue you admire but don't have?

Hmmm, would have to be moderation—what's that?

If you had to be a Disney character, which would you be?

I hear Han Solo is now a Disney character, that's me.

What subject would you be okay NEVER learning about again?

Typing 10

Title of future memoir?

Slow Burn

About Curtis Trent

Curtis Trent doesn't capture what's in front of him. He crafts the picture he wants to see. Binding together his tremendously diverse portfolio is a distinct use of composition, light, and narrative.

Inspired by the never-ending sky of his prairie roots, Curtis doesn't allow for boundaries. Instead, he skillfully glides between editorial, lifestyle, portrait, and advertising. By not compartmentalizing his work, Curtis has found that elusive balance between commercial photography and fine art. In fact, he welcomes both to overlap—undoubtedly a contributor to his telltale style. Curtis's photographs are published internationally, and he was recently a chosen winner in the 2025 Applied Arts Photography Awards and American Photography 41 Awards.

Since moving back west from Toronto, Curtis continues to stretch his experience and skill while enjoying the big sky.

Want to learn more about Curtis? Visit his [website](#), and give him a follow on [Instagram](#)!



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