

smithers

ART GALLERY

2025-2026 Annual Report

MISSION STATEMENT

"Creating Community through Art"

MANDATE

- Maintain and operate an art gallery to provide access to art exhibitions;
- Support local and regional artists;
- Maintain and operate a workshop space to provide visual arts education to children, youth, adults and seniors;
- Encourage connections and growth in the arts community

CORE VALUES

ACCESSIBLITY	Financial, physical limitations and other barriers to participation will not limit access to programming
DIVERSITY & INCLUSION	Equitable access to visual arts programming for underrepresented artists and diverse audiences.
OPENNESS & ADAPTABILITY	Respond and adapt to the needs, aspirations, challenges and opportunities of our community
INTEGRITY & RESPECT	Commitment to fair and transparent processes in gallery policies and decision making
SUSTAINABILITY	Commitment to financial stability, quality programming and professional staffing to ensure organization thrives

BOARD OF DIRECTORS 2025-2026

President - Susan Smith
Vice President - Jo-Anne Goble
Treasurer - Teresa Wojdak
Secretary – Susannah Lam
Art Director – Susan Kinkela
Director at Large - Alan Campbell

Town Representative (non-voting) – Sam Raven

STAFF

Manager - Nicole Chernish/Jenna Savage
Program Coordinator - Alyssa Lebiadowski
Gallery Attendant - Pam Graf

SUMMER INTERNS

Mackenzie Murray
Eleanora Isikima
Lucia Gastiazoro
Valerie Verstegen
Megan Moes

The Smithers Art Gallery respectfully acknowledges that we live, work and celebrate artists on the unceded, traditional Territory of the Gidimt'en clan and the Witsuwit'en people

PRESIDENT'S REPORT Susan Smith

The Smithers Gallery Association is pleased to present our 2026 Annual Report which covers the numerous exhibitions, activities and new initiatives that have taken place at the Smithers Art Gallery and Creation Station during the past fiscal year of April 1, 2025- March 31, 2026.

We hope that our Annual Report will give our community, our members, and our financial supporters a better understanding of the scope of our organization and the successes and challenges that the organization has experienced over this past year. Our organization continues to focus on excellence in exhibitions, programming and community outreach.

Our last financial fiscal year was one of change and challenge. After many years with the Gallery, our manager, Nicole Chernish, moved on, and Jenna Savage took on the role of Gallery Manager in August 2025.

Jenna has met these challenges with skill, a positive outlook, and a determined commitment to the sustainability of our organization.

The board would like to give a big shout to our Program Coordinator Alyssa Lebiadowski, and to our various past and present support staff at the gallery throughout the fiscal year 2025-2026, including Pam Graf, Mackenzie Murray, Eleanora Isikima, Valerie Verstegen, Megan Moes and Lucia Gastiazoro. Our contractors are also very much valued including our bookkeeper, Rene Haehner.



Gallery Summer Students (2025)

Finally, we would like to show our appreciation and acknowledge the many people in our community that support the gallery as gallery volunteers and committee members. As well, the support of local funders including our business community is truly appreciated! The Town of Smithers and the Regional District of Bulkley Nechako partially fund the Gallery and recognize the value that the Visual Arts contribute to the quality of life in our community. Councillor Sam Raven has been a pleasure to work with in her role as council liaison to the gallery!

In closing, I particularly want to acknowledge and recognize those who serve as our Board of Directors. The Board of Directors of a non-profit organization have an important role to fulfill and are essential to the success of the Smithers Gallery Association. I thank you all for your contributions and commitment!

...A **word** from the Manager **Jenna Savage**

I began my role as Gallery Manager on August 15, 2025, with the generous support of my predecessor, Nicole Chernish. Thanks to our overlap, Nicole was able to guide the transition of leadership, introduce me to community members, and walk me through gallery operations. It has been a pleasure to meet the community and to connect with the many arts organizations in town.

I would like to thank everyone for their support during this transition. In particular:

- The Gallery Board, for their incredible support and knowledge
- Alyssa, for keeping operations running smoothly throughout the changeover
- Rene, our bookkeeper, for taking extra time to explain the ins and outs
- Pam, our Saturday assistant, for her cheerful attitude and enthusiasm
- The staff at the Bulkley Valley Museum, for their ongoing support and helpfulness
- The arts community, for their collaborative energy and willingness to share knowledge and offer help



Alyssa Lebiadowski and Jenna Savage

STAFFING

2025/2026 - In addition to a full-time Gallery Manager, we had a full-time position focused on visual arts education programming, plus a Saturday attendant. From July to August, we also employed five full-time summer staff through the Canada Summer Jobs and Young Canada Works programs.

The Gallery

2

Full Time Staff
1 Part Time,
5 Summer Students

8962

IN PERSON VISITS

7473 EXHIBIT VISITORS,
766 SATURDAY DROP INS,
723 STUDENT & TEACHERS

4

Special Events & Festivals

492

Participants at festivals
& events

Total Program participation (exhibition visits and educational programming) was 10,295 from April 1, 2025-March 31, 2026.

EXHIBITIONS (no exhibitions in Dec or Jan)

The Gallery hosted eight exhibitions and one community exhibition in 2025/2026. Artists were local, regional or from BC and two artists from Ontario.

Our community exhibition was the Roots in the Valley Exhibition where we had 40 people who displayed their art. This exhibition is held every two years and gives local and regional artist of all ages the opportunity to showcase and sell their work through a professional gallery. Artists from the Bulkley Valley, Hazelton, Kispiox, Terrace and Burns Lake participated. 580 visitors (including 83 online visits) attended the exhibition which ran for almost a month. 13 pieces sold for a total of $3,619.



Caroline Marko

Ali Simone

Poppy Dubar



Arlene Ness 2025

EXHIBITION STATISTICS

Our total attendance for over the past year in Gallery was 10029. This included: 7473 visitors to our exhibitions, 32 class visits with 723 students and teachers participating, 766 Saturday drop-ins, which included children and adults, In-Gallery special events 1067.

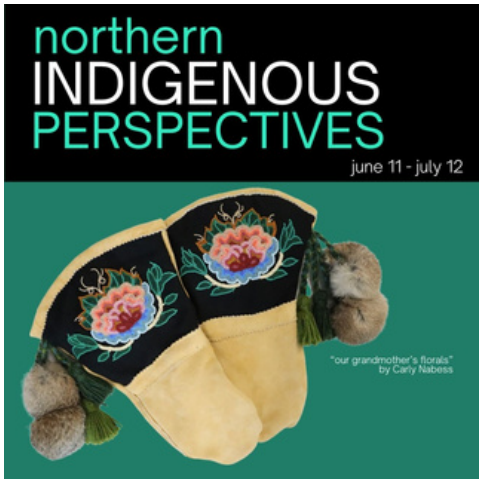
Online exhibitions are a regular part of our programming and resulted in an additional 2147 views (not included above).

EXHIBITIONS SCHEDULE

2025 –2026



















Exhibitions

7,473
VISITORS

9
Exhibitions

32
School Visits

1
Community Exhibition - 40 **Artists**

3
Out Province Artists

723
Students & Teachers

2147
Online Exhibition Visits

8
Local & Regional Artists

1
BC Artist



EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS

The Smithers Gallery Association is the largest non-profit organization offering art education programs in Smithers and the Bulkley Valley to children, youth and adults. We offered 38 workshops and kids camps to meet the growing demand for visual arts education.

We offer bursaries to anyone facing financial barriers as we are committed to ensuring everyone can have access to visual arts!

Secondary location: Creation Station (3866 Railway Ave)
Since February 14 2018, our workshop space (Creation Station) has been located in the Town of Smithers building on Railway. This space is no longer available and we had to move as of September 2025. A new location has been found but has greatly increased our rental expenses. Ongoing efforts will need to be made to accommodate this increased expense so we can continue to serve the community with this vital service that keeps art thriving in our Valley.

VISUAL ARTS EDUCATION STATISTICS

In our fiscal 2025-2026 year, our Education Programming had a total of 1032 participants! 145 children in workshops, 121 in adult workshops and 766 Saturday drop-in free art activities. We offered 20 child programs (totaling in 76 days of programming!), 18 adult programs, 17 Saturday drop-in sessions (NO COST) at the gallery and 5 special event activities in collaboration with other organizations and non-profits in the area.

Workshops

20
Child Programs

18
Adult Programs

76
Child Programing Days

266
PARTICIPANTS
(*443 IN PREVIOUS FISCAL)

6
Wait Lists

38
Adult and Child Programs
(*60 in previous fiscal)

*decrease due to relocating setup time and reduced square footage

CHILDREN & YOUTH WORKSHOP SCHEDULE 2025 –2026

July 8-11, 2025 (Ages 6-8)
Inky Imprints and Hammer Hits Summer Camp

July 8-11, 2025 (Ages 9-12)
Inky Imprints and Hammer Hits Summer Camp

July 15-18, 2025 (Ages 9-12)
Mix it up Summer Camp

July 22-25, 2025 (ages 6 - 8)
Famous Artist Summer Camp

July 22-25, 2025 (Ages 9-12)
Famous Artist Summer Camp

July 22-25, 2025 (Ages 5-6)
Little Explores Safari Summer Camp

July 29-August 1, 2025 (Ages 5-6)
Creepy Crawlies Summer Camp

July 29-August 1, 2025 (ages 6 - 8)
Mix it Up! Summer Camp

July 29-August 1, 2025 (Ages 9-12)
Mix it Up! Summer Camp

August 5-8, 2025 (Ages 6-8)
Inky Imprints and Hammer Hits Summer Camp

August 5-8, 2025 (Ages 9-12)
Inky Imprints and Hammer Hits Summer Camp

August 12-15, 2025 (ages 6 - 8)
Famous Artist Summer Camp

August 12-15, 2025 (Ages 9-12)
Famous Artist Summer Camp

August 19-22, 2025 (ages 6 - 8)
3D Art creation Summer Camp

August 19-22, 2025 (ages 9 - 12)
3D Art creation Summer Camp

August 19-22, 2025 (Ages 5-6)
Inky Imprints

October 17, 24, 31 2025 (Ages 3-5)
Jen Mio Art Explorations

Oct. 25, Nov. 1, 8, 2025 (Ages 10-16)
Manga and Comic Characters

November 4, 18, 25, 2025(Ages 7-9
Jen Mio Create-a-Palooza

Jan. 31, Feb. 7, 14, 2026 (Ages 10-16)
Manga and Comic Characters

Courses that were scheduled but did not run

April 10, 2025 (ages 9-12)
Ink-Tastic Creations

July 15-18, 2025 (Ages 6-8)
Mix it up Summer Camp

Sept 18, 25, Oct 2, 2025 (ages 9-12)
Mixed Media Mayhem

ADULT WORKSHOP SCHEDULE 2025 –2026

April 1, 8, 15, 22, 2025
Absolute Beginners Watercolour

April 5, 2025
Art for Personal Growth

April 26, 2025
Epoxy Resin Charcuterie Board

May 2, 3, 2025
Whimsical Watercolour Illstrations

May 28, 2025
Happenstance Watercolour Art

September 15, 22, October 20, 27, 2025
Intermediate watercolor

October 2, 9, 16, 23, 2025
Figure Drawing

October 29, Nov. 5, 12, 19 and 26, 2025,
Absolute beginners Watercolor

November 6, 13, 20, 27, 2025
Intro to Drawing Horses and Animals

November 15, 2025
Photo Transfer/Mixed Media

November 24, 25, 2025
Needle Felted Ornaments

November 29, 30, 2025
Willow Baskets

January 24, 2026
Rest & Rhythm: negative space

February 21, 2026
Peak Creativity

February 25, March 4, 11, 18, 2026
Drawing Portraits

February 28, 2026
Emily Klaassen Lino Cutting

March 7, 2026
Creating Texture in Watercolour

March 14, 21, 2026
Absolute Beginners Watercolour

Courses that were scheduled but did not run

April 12, 2025
Tote Bag Painting

May 3, 2025
Art for Personal Growth

October 4, 2025
Intro. to Origami

October 18, 2025
Make Your Mark

November 22. 2025
Creative Expressions

December 6, 2025
Willow Ornaments

December 13, 2025
Art Without Intent

Artist Support

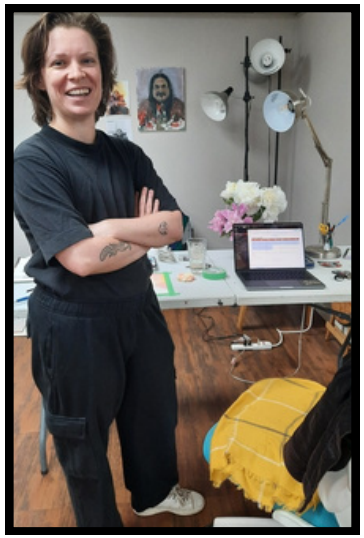
ARTISAN SHOP

Our in-house artisan shop sells work created by local and regional artists and artisans, providing the community with access to original works and artists with a venue to sell them. We continue to expand our Indigenous artist offerings and encourage new artists to submit their work.

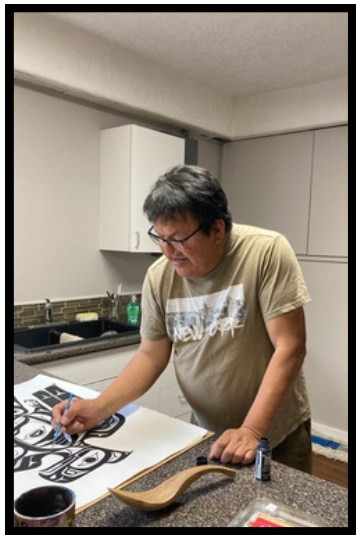
One third of our shop display is local Indigenous art. By showcasing Indigenous artists and business owners, the shop makes Indigenous art and design accessible to residents and tourists alike. Visitors can learn about the artists, take home a meaningful piece, and directly support Indigenous creators and entrepreneurs, strengthening economic and community connections.

EXHIBITIONS

All artists (outside of community group exhibitions) receive fees for displaying their work in our gallery as outlined by guidelines developed through CARFAC. This provides artists with a small fee regardless of whether they sell their work during their exhibition and allows them to qualify for funding through Canada Council and BC Arts Council. As one of the few galleries in the northern part of BC to pay these fees, we provide a platform where local and regional artists can develop. This in turn provides the community with a professional visual art gallery and community space with access to a wider variety of media and artists for viewing.



Robin Lough



James Madam

ARTISTS IN RESIDENCY

Thanks to the BC Art Council Project Grant, the Gallery hosted two artists in residency. Each artist was paid $32 an hour to spend six hours a day in the studio honing their craft.

Robin Lough was hosted for two weeks and James Madam for one week, as grant funds permitted. The program was open to any underrepresented artist. Members of the public were welcome to drop in, chat with the artists, and see their work in progress.

Special Projects



Northern Indigenous Perspectives (Year 2)

Featuring powerful works by local and regional Indigenous artists, this exhibition celebrated identity, tradition, and contemporary expression through a Northern lens. This was the second time the Gallery hosted and organized this exhibition. The exhibition featured over 20 regional Indigenous artists working in various media, such as painting, carving, beadwork, and mixed media. This year's guest curatorial team was Rob Davis, Calvin Morberg, and Stephanie Anderson. The exhibition ran from June 11 to July 7, 2025.



Skeena Salmon Arts Festival

The Skeena Salmon Art Show toured to the Gallery again this year. Organized by the Skeena Salmon Arts Festival Society and the Terrace Art Gallery, this traveling exhibition also went to the Nisga'a Museum. The 2025 exhibition featured artists with connections to the Skeena, Nass, and Bulkley watersheds. Together, their work celebrated salmon as a life-sustaining species of critical importance to our cultures, communities, and ecosystems. The exhibition ran October 16 to November 8, 2025.



Pump House Mural

This project was a collaboration between Wetzin'kwa Community Forest Corporation, the Town of Smithers, and the Smithers Art Gallery. The Gallery received $2,500 from the Wetzin'kwa grant program to help fund the project. Because we were not able to raise the full amount needed, the Gallery and the Town of Smithers covered the remaining $1,500. The Gallery hosted the project and handled all administration. Emily Wilson was chosen to complete the mural at Riverside Park, and the work was completed on July 7, 2025.



FUNDRAISING

The Smithers Art Gallery continually strives to organize fundraising events that meet our goals of representing and supporting visual artists in our community, making connections with the broader arts community, and providing opportunities for learning about the visual arts.

Wintergold Gallery had 36 vendors and 922 visitors. The event brought in $3,073 in revenue with expenses of $212.

One of a Kind is the Gallery's artisan Christmas Gift Shop. Sales over the period totaled $21,975.41, which provided $5,446.46 in commission to the Gallery. We had 1,221 visitors from November 22 to December 24, 2025.

The Gallery Artisan Shop is open year-round. Sales provide income for local artists while also providing additional revenue to the Gallery. Sales were $21,147.59 (not including our Christmas Market or Exhibition Art Sales), bringing in an additional $5,286.89 in commission.

Exhibition Art Sales are artist sales from booked exhibitions in the Gallery. Sales revenue was $18,354. Of that, the Gallery took a 25% commission, equaling $4,588.50, to cover operating, admin, and card processing fees. The remaining 75% goes directly to the artist.

GRANTS & FINANCES

The Gallery Association has worked diligently to secure operational funding through grant partnerships. This fiscal year we were successful in acquiring an operating grant from the BC Arts Council. This funding is fairly stable- it depends on the Provincial Government providing funding to the BC Arts Council. We have received notice that we are approved for funding until 2027.

Town of Smithers - Grant-in-Aid, Creation Station lease (ended August 2025) & associated tax exemption

Regional District of Bulkley-Nechako - Grant-in-Aid

BC Ministry of Finance Community Gaming Grant - Operating Assistance

BC Arts Council - Operating Grant- Visual Arts Organization

BC Arts Council - Accelerate - Visual Arts Organization

BC Arts Council - Project Assistance: Visual Arts Organizations

Young Canada Works - Summer Student Funding

Canada Summer Jobs - Summer Student Funding

Rural Initiatives Plan 54 - Art Pulse Survey Grant

Wetzin'Kwa Community Forest Corporation - Riverside Mural, Computers

FINANCES

2025/2026 year ended with a surplus of $3,056 which increased our net assets to $48,611. At the end of the fiscal year, the association had $90,588 in cash assets ($51,231 in deferred revenue from grants). $63,732 is held in an interest-bearing term deposit.

Our grateful thanks to the following

CORPORATE SPONSORS

Skeena Gold & Silver Nature's Pantry Hy-Tech Drilling Ltd All-West Glass

Thanks to these local businesses that continue to offer discounts and special offers to Gallery Members:

Mills Interior Stationery Aquabatics Heartstrings

VOLUNTEERS

A HUGE thank you to everyone who has helped out this year!
You are the life and soul of the Gallery - your time and commitment is highly valued and appreciated.

CURATORIAL/SELECTION COMMITTEE

Selection Committee: Chair Susan Kinkela
Facundo Gastiazoro, Anne Desplanches, Jo-Anne Goble, Shannon Finnegan, Jill Dunbar

Other Thanks

Rene Haehner - Bookkeeper, Edmison Mehr Chartered Accountants