

Salmon Arm Art Gallery Presents



# The Pollinators

A community-focused exhibition about the pollinators of the Shuswap region, with works by fifteen visual artists and a collaborative community-made fibre sculpture



## April 30 to July 2, 2022

Opening Day Saturday, April 30, 11am to 1pm

Gallery Hours Tuesday to Saturday, 11am to 4pm

Coffee Break & Artist's Talk Thursday, May 19 at 2pm

Exhibition Sponsor



THE CITY OF  
**SALMON ARM**



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# You are standing on the unceded and ancestral lands of the Secwépemc people.

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The board and staff of Shuswap District Arts Council acknowledge that they have benefited from the systems and structures that have oppressed Indigenous people for nearly two centuries.

We apologize for the harms that have been inflicted upon Secwépemc people.

We endeavour to work in accordance with the 94 Calls to Action in the Truth and Reconciliation Report. We pledge to support reparations and reconciliation through our mandate, using the arts to build respectful relationships, create cross-cultural community engagement, and to make space for Indigenous cultural and artistic expression. Our policies reflect the importance of supporting authentic Indigenous voices, as well as guiding the education of settler cultures by including Indigenous perspectives in every exhibition and program.

Director/Curator Tracey Kutschker wishes to personally thank Neskonlith Councillor Louis Thomas, as well as artists and storytellers Dolan Badger, Mary Thomas, Delores Purdaby, Aaron Leon, Gerry Thomas, Kenthen Thomas and Geri Matthew for their generous guidance, advice and wisdom over the past 18 years. It is now time for settler cultures to take on the re-education of our collective history, and to make the changes that are needed to decolonize our systems and structures.

# Curator's Statement

## Tracey Kutschker

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My goal in this exhibition is to bring attention to the plight of the pollinator. Like many of you, I have felt sadness and frustration when reading the news about the devastation pollinators are facing. Colonies are collapsing in the honey bee industry, hummingbirds are dying from thirst because of swollen tongues, and monarchs whose milk thistle islands are being cleared for monoculture crops are disappearing. Scientists know why the pollinators are in crisis, and yet agri-industry, corporations, and misinformed individuals continue to wreak havoc on these essential creatures. In the face of these issues, my response was what it will always be: to challenge artists to do what they do best by bringing attention to the issue.

Pollinators play a key role in regulating the ecosystems, habitats, and natural resources needed by humans and animals for food production and shelter. The volume of pollinator-dependent food crops has increased threefold over the last 50 years alone, making humans increasingly dependent on pollination to survive. Socially, pollinators are embedded in local cultures and traditions, giving inspiration to art, music, literature, technology and education. In recent decades, climate change and human activities have altered the range, abundance and seasonal activities of many wild pollinator species like bees, birds, bats and butterflies. Simultaneously, environmental pollution has continually degraded the natural habitats of pollinators. Awareness and mitigation are the first steps toward finding long term solutions to this issue.

The artists in this show each asked to be a part of the exhibition because of a personal passion for the topic. They did not shy away from doing research, and I admire their ability to articulate the science. Interpreting that information and then delivering it to us in a way that is both thought provoking and visual is no small task. It is one they approached ambitiously and with a great deal of creative generosity.

Now it is time for us, as viewers, to identify how our actions may impact pollinators around us. In our own gardens we can make the conscious choice to grow organically, plant a nectar banquet with a variety of pollinator-friendly plants, and to resist the temptation to tidy up the organic material that serves as habitat for wild bees. At the municipal level we can communicate the need to create pollinator pathways through our city, petition to change regulations on insecticide usage, and demand increased public education on agricultural practices.

Never doubt your ability as an individual to change the world. Let this exhibition inspire us all to take action to save the pollinators.

1. Frieda Martin

**Attraction and Distraction**

*mixed media, \$130 each*

Attraction, distraction, defence, and camouflage - the versatility of wings is one of the many reasons butterflies and insects fascinate artist Frieda Martin. Despite their short two to four week lifespan, “minor” pollinators like butterflies play an important role in the ecosystems they inhabit. Drawn to their beauty and impermanence, Martin chose to explore these pollinators by delving into the world of butterfly wing designs.

1. Kupu  
2. Pulelehua  
3. Paloma  
4. Papillon

5. Limpempele  
6. Parpar  
7. Rama-Rama  
8. Metelyk

9. Farfalla  
10. Pepe  
11. Paruparo  
12. Kelebek

13. Putali  
14. Motyl  
15. Schmetterling  
16. Vlinder

*Frieda Martin is a self-taught ink and watercolour artist. In her practice she experiments with wrapping watercolour paper around cradled wood panels and protecting the finished paintings with a cold wax medium instead of traditional framing. Growing up near Victoria and moving to Salmon Arm in 1982, Martin’s work is informed by the natural world around her. Her work has been featured at venues throughout BC.*

2. Louis Thomas and Phil McIntyre-Paul

**A Conversation**

*audio*

One sunny afternoon in late August, 2021, Neskonlith te Secwépemc knowledge keeper, Louis Thomas, joined Phil McIntyre-Paul for a walk along the Gayle Creek trail to Syphon Falls reflecting together on the pollinators theme. The walk started with a Thomas trademark – laughter – as Phil gifts Louis with a bunch of celery, a reference to Louis’ teasing Phil for sounding like he was eating celery as his boot steps crunched in snow during a previous winter audio trail recording. After setting the tone with laughter Louis confesses, he is not sure he really knows anything about pollinators, but then proceeds to reflect on Secwépemc knowledge and stories shared from his elders revealing a wealth of wisdom upholding the importance of pollinators in the web of life. Louis’ sharing, teaching, humour, and interaction with others walking the trail prompts Phil to remark: “You’re a pollinator, too, Louis!”

*Louis Thomas is a Neskonlith te Secwépemc councillor, knowledge keeper, and cultural advisor to the Salmon Arm Arts Centre. His efforts to improve the health of this community, preserve traditional Secwepemc food plants, restore the Salmon River delta, share Secwépemc cultural knowledge, build relationships, and take better care of each other and the land received recognition by the Province of BC in 2019 with the Medal of Good Citizenship.*

*Phil McIntyre-Paul is a trail steward and settler in the Switzmalph te Secwépemc bay area of Salmon Arm over the last 25 years. His audio sound walks were featured at the Walking at 6000’ exhibition with artist Lisa Figueroa in the spring of 2021. Together with Louis, Phil is one of the co-founders of the Shuswap Trail Alliance and the regional trails roundtable inviting leadership throughout the Shuswap to work together, build relationships, and take better care of the land.*

3. Myrna Giesbrecht

**Reflections on Pollinators**

*mixed media*

While reflecting on the theme of pollinators, Myrna Giesbrecht considered the irony of human distaste for insects critical to our food production. By swatting away pollinators and destroying their habitats, we not only harm the insects, but sabotage ourselves. The removal of bee hives threatens us both, and this interspecies conflict is conveyed with a sense of wry humour in Giesbrecht's work. Each of these works reflect on the intimate lives of busy pollinators as they buzz in spaces around us.

1. At the Heart of the Matter	\$275	
2. Getting Down to Bee-siness	\$275	
3. Hey, What's Going on in There?	\$95	
4. Beyond the Bud	NFS	
5. A Cameo Appearance	\$95	
6. Is Everything Coming Up Roses?	\$95	
7. It Begins With Flowers	\$125	

Media: found objects, polymer & epoxy clay, acrylic paint, gilder's paste, copper wire, crystals, resin, clear sealant

*Moving to the Shuswap in 2015, Salmon Arm based artist Myrna Giesbrecht has had a lifelong interest in the process of making. Her work often includes textiles, creative fashion, jewelry design and mixed media. Drawn to bold yet functional designs, Myrna's practice is one that prioritizes the experience of making over the final product. This process-based approach allows Giesbrecht to work intuitively with her materials to create memorable works of art using recycled and found objects.*

4. Leilani Ambrose

**Hidden Patterns**

*acrylic on board, \$1700*

The symmetry and colour present in butterfly markings have long been a source of inspiration for Leilani Ambrose's work. In *Hidden Patterns*, Ambrose explores the delicate balance and beauty in the relationships between local butterflies and wildflowers. Over the past two decades alone, butterflies like the Monarch have seen a decline in population of up to 80%. *Hidden Patterns* uses a trail experience informed approach to consider the fragility of these environmental relationships by focusing on the species impacted by changes in land usage and climate change. By hiking on local trails Ambrose was able to not only collect valuable reference images of butterflies but also forge a deeper connection to the ecosystems they inhabit.

*Leilani Ambrose is an acrylic painter and watercolourist based in Salmon Arm. Having spent some of her formative years living overseas in Papua New Guinea, she draws inspiration from both the tropical and the more temperate local flora and fauna. With a background in Fine Arts from Vancouver's Langara College, she creates work that seeks to express the sense of peace and wonder that nature evokes in her. Ambrose's work expresses the beauty of the natural world while bringing awareness to the importance of protecting our ecosystems.*

5. Joanne Salé

**Thirty-Two**

*mixed media*

Drawing on her increasing concern over rapid climate change, Joanne Salé's work *Thirty-Two* focuses on the complex interconnectedness of life in our ecosystems. While 400 of BC's native 500 bee species reside in the Southern Interior, our local bees are under enormous pressure from habitat loss and other man-made risks. When even one species within such an interdependent system disappears, it can cause widespread environmental destruction. In *Thirty-Two*, 32 bumblebees fall from their network in an expression of grief, each one representing a bumblebee species in British Columbia.

*Joanne Salé is an artist working in sculpture, drawing, etching and painting. Having obtained her BFA from UBC-Okanagan in 2005, her work often deals with themes such as perception, connection, adaptation and longing. Salé has participated in a wide variety of artist residencies throughout BC, and her work has been exhibited throughout the province in solo and group exhibitions.*

6. Sara Wiens

**Honey Bee Flight Path I, II, III, IV**

*mixed media on canvas, \$900 each*

This collection of mixed media works by Sara Wiens represents the flight patterns of honeybees as they forage to and from their hives. Actual tracking maps, created when researchers attach tiny radar backpacks to the bees with superglue, show that bees will orient themselves based on major landmarks both natural and man-made. While their lifespan may be only a mere six weeks in summer, these tiny creatures travel great distances to have a profound impact on the ecosystem. Through complex layering of line and colour, this piece reminds the viewer that over time the paths of individual bees overlap to create an indispensable imprint vital to the survival of all species.

*Sara Wiens is a Salmon Arm based artist working in oil, acrylic and mixed media. She has her BA in Studio Arts and a Bachelor of Arts Education from UBC. Sara has exhibited her work throughout BC and has taught art in both the private and public education systems. Her contributions to art in her community includes a public mural project completed in the summer of 2020.*

7. Melissa Nasby

**Like a Moth to a Flame**

*mixed media, \$425*

Moths are the unsung heroes of pollinators. While often getting overshadowed by their brightly coloured cousins, moths' softer neutral palettes and glorious textures make them stunning in their own unique ways. These natural qualities of the winged insects served as the inspiration for Nasby's *Like a Moth to a Flame*.

*Melissa Nasby is an award-winning local fibre artist who specializes in life-sized animal sculptures, wearable art and puppets. Inspired by the variety of textures found in natural fibres, she creates sculptures that are as realistic as they are magical. Her works can be viewed on social media under the name SoulFibre.*

8. Sarah Hope  
**At Home in the Wild and Messy**  
mixed media

Bees, butterflies, wasps and beetles require beautiful yet wild and messy spaces to exist. Pollinator neighbourhoods are found in forests, weedy ditches and the edges of gardens. These insects make their homes in dead trees, fallen leaves, overwintering plant stalks, native plants and bare patches of earth. Sarah Hope's work implores the viewer to seek out and observe the natural homes of pollinators in these various layers of earth. *At Home in the Wild and Messy* is a reminder to keep a place for the pollinators.

Sarah's art materials include handmade papers and paper molds from recycled and foraged fibers dyed with natural dyes and pigments including tansy, goldenrod, indigo, madder root, cannabis and lobster mushroom with leaf and wool inclusions. All of these biodegradable materials ensure that the pollinators do not suffer for the creation of Sarah's artwork.

*Sarah Hope is an artist and beekeeper with an interest in food security and pollinator landscapes. Her work highlights the importance of water, diversity and human ecological impact. Critical of the human desire to leave behind permanent objects, Hope works with foraged and recycled materials in an experimentation-based process to explore themes of change and loss. Creating her own bone and rock pigments, Hope uses paper and plant-based inks to portray themes of vulnerability and change over time.*

9. Kathryn Ross  
**A Charm of Hummingbirds**  
oil on canvas

In the process of creating this series of oil paintings, Kathryn devoted her time researching the many hummingbird species native to the Interior of BC. Representing her subject on canvases of varying sizes, the work evokes the experience of spotting a hummingbird in one's peripheral vision. As the viewer's gaze drifts across the panels, the work takes them across the delicate creature's fanciful and fluttering flight path.

1. Flying Jewel	\$895	8. A Taste of Nectar	\$99
2. Fancy Fliers	\$725	9. Garden Visitor	\$175
3. Sitting Pretty	\$175	10. Whispering Wings	\$99
4. I'm Ready for my Close-Up	\$99	11. Fuchsias, My Favourite	\$175
5. My Little Redhead	\$175	12. Garden Gem	\$99
6. Garden Guardian	\$99	13. Tempting Trumpets	\$250
7. Zany for Zinnias	\$175	14. Romancing the Hibiscus	\$250

*Kathryn Ross is a painter whose work focuses on her fascination with animals and nature. Residing in a rural area of the North Okanagan, she spends her time tending to her horses, fruit trees and flower garden with her dog, Jazz. She is an active member of the Federation of Canadian Artists and the Okanagan Artists of Canada Society.*

10. Valerie Rogers  
**In the Garden**  
*acrylic on canvas*

Valerie Rogers composed this series of canvases illustrating pollinators of all shapes and sizes as a reflection of her interest in the natural world. The smallest of the works depicts perhaps the most famous of the pollinators: the bees. While bees are often the first to mind when one thinks of pollinators, Rogers also directs the viewer's attention to accidental pollinators such as ladybugs. Despite being visually distinct and on separate picture planes, each individual creature is a part of one harmonious whole as they work together for the benefit of the entire ecosystem. Rogers' work depicts nature as a web of life interconnected through striking visual devices such as the usage of sky blue as the backdrop against which all life manifests.

1. The Garden	\$675	7. Bumble Bees I	\$20
2. Anna's Hummingbird	\$40	8. Bumble Bees II	\$20
3. Rufous Hummingbird	\$40	9. A Bee	\$10
4. Glass-Winged Moth	\$40	10. Another Bee	\$10
5. Swallowtail I	\$20	11. Two Bees	\$10
6. Swallowtail II	\$20	12. Lady Bugs	\$10

*Valerie Rogers' work reflects her intense fascination with the natural world while highlighting the importance of conservation. She has been awarded both the Wildlife Federation Artist of the Year award and the GOBC Artist of the year award. Rogers donates the proceeds from the sale of her work to wildlife and environmental conservation efforts in North America.*

11. Vanessa Skotnitsky  
**Flourish**  
*photograph, \$500*

Vanessa Skotnitsky created this digital collage depicting her daughter alongside vintage illustrations of flowers and bees as a nod to where the artist's own interest in climate awareness originated. Skotnitsky's children played an important role in bringing her attention to the struggles of pollinators in modern ecosystems. This work highlights the importance of children as enthusiastic ambassadors for the health and well-being of both animals and the natural world. *Flourish* honours the contributions of Skotnitsky's own children while also encouraging young viewers to nurture their own passion for the environment.

*Smaller prints available by contacting the artist*

*Vanessa Skotnitsky is a photographer and artist residing in the Shuswap. After receiving her first digital camera in 2008, Skotnitsky soon devoted her time to becoming a stay at home mom and learning the art of photography and photo editing. Specializing in this digital medium, her work evokes a sense of whimsy and magic.*



12. Janet Aitken  
**Pure Gold**  
*acrylic on board, \$950*

Inspired by beautiful golden canola fields like those found on her parent's farm in 1960's Saskatchewan, Janet Aitken created *Pure Gold* as a consideration of the effects of Neonicotinoid insecticides on vital pollinator species. Neonicotinoids, or "Neonics" refers to a nicotine-based chemical seed coating that permeates not just the plants themselves but also leaches into the surrounding ground and water systems. Ironically, while the livelihoods of farmers depend on the efforts of pollinators, research has shown that the usage of Neonics harms many different species essential to agricultural pollination. Her depiction of Hairy Canola specifically draws attention to options currently available through genetically modified varieties. For example, the flea beetle does not like the hairs on the Hairy Canola, and therefore Neonics would not be required for this crop.

*Janet Aitken is a Salmon Arm based artist who is known for her BC landscapes that highlight her interest in preserving wild spaces. After years of encouraging the artwork of thousands of children in her career in education, Janet was able to pursue her own art practice upon her retirement in 2012. Janet is an avid bird watcher, photographer and is passionate about protecting the environment.*

13. **Calendario Wheel**  
A Runaway Moon Project  
Cathy Stubington, Molly March, Eric Kutschker, and many community members

The Calendario Wheel is an interactive structure designed to enhance awareness of and appreciation for the many beings that are part of the local community. Species depicted are native to the region surrounding Enderby and Splatsin First Nation, in Secwepemc traditional territory. On each of the six cylinders there is a band of images: birds, insects and reptiles, plants, cultivated food plants, farming tools (the tasks of humans) and fish. Each image was created by a member of the community, and represents this unique place.

Runaway Moon's extensive Calendario project encourages a recognition of seasonal natural indicators, rather than using clocks and calendar dates. Consultation with farmers, gardeners and food gatherers showed that one natural event links with another. When dandelions bloom, it's time to plant peas, and when the sandhill cranes fly overhead, it's time to oil the tractor. These conversations took place at farmers' markets, seed swaps, and other gatherings. The resulting research has manifested in many such Calendario-based artworks.

The images on each of the Calendario wheel bands are arranged in the order in which they have a significant appearance in the cycle of the year. Any given day on the wheel represents interrelationships in this place, at this time. Reminiscent of a Buddhist Prayer Wheel, the Calendario Wheel is a symbolic prayer for the continuity of the cycles of life.

*Runaway Moon Theatre Arts Society ([www.runawaymoon.org](http://www.runawaymoon.org)) is a small local organization with a large vision. The society creates both puppet theatre and large-scale participatory art projects that bring the community together in celebration of itself. Its goal is to inspire wonder at life around us, and to remind everyone at the marvel of their own imagination.*

*Cathy Stubington is the Artistic Director of Runaway Moon Theatre, Cathy initiates both puppet theatre in multiple scales and community engaged art projects, through which she shares her curiosity about what it means to live in this place at this time.*

*Molly March is a scenic designer and a painter who has worked extensively with Runaway Moon Theatre and Caravan Farm Theatre, which brought her to this place originally. She enjoys spending time outdoors and making art that connects her to nature.*

*Eric Kutschker is a sculptor who has worked with Runaway Moon Theatre, Salmon Arm Arts Centre, Shuswap Trail Alliance and Cardiff-Miller Art on collaborative and contemporary projects. His own work upcycles bicycle parts into assemblage sculptures that function as public art bike racks.*

#### **14. The Pollinators in Action**

*mixed fibre media*

Melissa Nasby, Jean Brighthouse, Barb Belway and many community members

The Shuswap community understands the important role that birds, bees, butterflies and bats play in our ecosystem, so there was enthusiastic participation in co-creating a sculpture that used environmentally-conscious biodegradable materials to highlight and celebrate these pollinators. Through workshops led by the artistic team, participants learned about pollinating flowers, the wide variety of wild bee species native to BC, how forest floor mushrooms can fight avian flu and varroa mite, and how keeping a messy garden contributes to the health of the pollinators. The act of gathering to create these works offered an opportunity to learn the skill of needle felting as well as share stories about how pollinators affect our lives. The two landforms represent daytime and evening in the Shuswap, with pollinators keeping busy all the while.

The lead fibre artists' work is available for purchase. A visual map is available at the front desk to determine whose bees are whose.

#### **Melissa Nasby**

1. Calliope Hummingbird	\$225
2. Calliope Hummingbird II	\$225
3. Spotted Bat	\$250
4. Little Brown Bat	\$175
5. Sphinx Moth	\$150
6. Bumbus Vosnesenskii Bumblebee	\$95
7. Bumbus Vosnesenskii Bumblebee	\$95
8. Honey Bee	\$85
9. Mason Bee	\$75

**Jean Brighthouse**

10. Male Rufous Hummingbird (w/ branch)	\$350
11. Female Rufous Hummingbird	\$250
12. Male Black-chinned Hummingbird	\$250
13. Monarch Butterfly	\$200
14. Monarch Butterfly II	\$200
15. Tiger Swallowtail Butterfly	\$200
16. Tiger Swallowtail Butterfly II	\$200
17. Blue Copper Butterfly	\$150
18. Blue Copper Butterfly II	\$150
19. Blue Copper Butterfly III	\$150
20. Blue Copper Butterfly IV	\$150

**Barb Belway**

21. Tiger Swallowtail Butterfly	\$150
22. Pacific Orange Tip Butterfly	\$150
23. Painted Lady Butterfly	\$150
24. Cabbage White Butterfly	\$150
25. Lorquin's Admiral Butterfly	\$150
26. Great Spangled Fritillary	\$150
27. Honey Bee	\$75
28. Bumblebee	\$75

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*Front cover:*

*Jean Brighthouse and Barb Belway felted artworks*