

## Art Incubate Progress Report 2019-20

Art Incubate began on May 1, 2019 when HIP Developments donated two adjacent buildings on Regina St. in Waterloo for Art\$Pay (AP) to manage as a non-profit initiative, with two gallery meeting spaces and 16 visual artist studio spaces, private and shared, with common areas. Five of those shared studios are in the sponsored Incubator program and the remainder are artist of all ages and backgrounds, happy to have an affordable, clean safe place to work,

AP works on behalf of visual artists and groups across the region, with high schools, universities, other arts organizations, and has organized five artist-run visual arts groups to work together under an umbrella organization called LAF which represents 300 artists from across the region. Those juried exhibitions are hosted at the Gallery at 52.

The five LAF organizations- The Art District Gallery, ArtsPay, Kitchener-Waterloo Society of Artists, Riverside Print Group, and Uptown Gallery - have been working together under the marketing banner 'Local Art for Local Walls'; or LAF. This initiative promotes art events happening in the Waterloo Region and increased support between these arts organizations. As a result of this successful collaboration, LAF is currently working to launch an on-line art shopping presence locally for our members.

AP is acknowledged and contacted as a regional visual arts resource and advocate by the public and private sector. With the donation of the Art Incubate as a home with exhibitions spaces, the AP membership grew from 130 to over 160 in a short time.

The galleries at Art Incubate have been programmed continuously since May 1, 2019. The Window Gallery at 56 Regina offers 2 -3 week exhibitions and month long bigger exhibitions are held at the Gallery at 52 Regina which has regular open gallery hours. Both galleries exhibit a wide range of local visual art from the Incubator artists, other Art Incubate tenants, the queer and LGBTQ+ community, Art\$Pay members, the regional visual arts community, organizations like S.A.I.L. , and University of Waterloo Fine Arts students. Using 'a pay what you can' model has lowered the bar for participation. Art crawls in May and December organized by AP for Art Incubate with BFA and LAF partners were highly successful.

AP launched a pilot project for Developing Curators, mentoring and paying emerging curators, for those who want to develop the skills, to install an exhibition in the Window Gallery. Two exhibition proposals were selected with one installed in late December and the other in June.

Both galleries are booked for exhibitions until March 2021 by individual artists, new and professionals, and organizations such as the Habitat for Humanity, Art District Gallery, University of Waterloo, KWSA, and LAF among others. Projects with Lumen, CAFKA, filmmakers, the local neighborhood association, programming the parking lot and more are underway. Portable art display equipment stored on site facilitates artist participation in other shows and pop-ups at Art Incubate; inside and out.

AP hosts monthly *Meet-ups for the Visual Arts* at Art Incubate and AP members use the space to host their own professional and skill development workshops.

Meet-ups topics represent community needs and have included branding and marketing an art practice, safe and eco -friendly studio practices, de-mystifying conceptual art, and art in the public sphere.

Meetups are a chance to talk with other artists, get professional practice advice, and stay connected.

In 2019:

Jan. - *Interior Designers & Art*

Feb - *UWAG Art Critique Session*

March - *Safe Environmental Studio Practices & Kenyan Art Safari Presentation*

April - *Demystifying Conceptual Art*

June - *Branding Your Practice*

Sept - *Branding, Marketing, and Website Design*

Sept. - Inaugural Experimental Film Night

Oct. - *Art in the Public Sphere*

Nov. - Skills workshop on file sharing

2020

Jan. - *AP Painters: Styles & Processes*

Feb. – AP Photographers: Five Unique Views

March 3 - Button Factory Arts- AP Members *Art Critique Session*

March - Postponed) - *Jack of All Trades & Mixing it up – Mixed Media Artists*

AP actively seeks to establish good working relationships with other sectors. As an associate member of the UpTown BIA, Art Incubate has participated in their holiday activities and publications. Art Incubate has paid young musicians from the KW Symphony Youth Orchestra and Laurier's music department to play Saturdays afternoons on the porch at 52 Regina St. during open gallery hours. Word is spreading and community groups such as Flamenco Fest and the Canadian Society of Decorative Arts' are booking the galleries as meeting spaces. Film-makers, photographers, neighbourhood associations, community groups, other arts organizations and more are contacting AP about possible use.

Providing a connection and a bridge into the greater community for young artists coming from universities and secondary schools helps to strengthen the creative sectors. Students are often invited to exhibit in the Window Gallery and participate in some AP juried exhibitions. The Incubator artists have facilitated a number of collaborative projects with the secondary schools and university art programs, and in February I was invited to address the visual art department heads at the Waterloo County Board of Education offices to explore new ways we might effectively work together.

COVID-19 has forced postponements and cancellations at Art Incubate including:

- New signage and a mural incorporating the new Art Incubate logo
- The first year birthday celebration
- Meet-ups and meetings
- All gallery exhibitions, including the month long April collaboration planned with Habitat WR
- Studio use
- Incubator 2019-20 activities including sponsor outreach projects, the Article Club, community art help drop-ins, the interactive community social art activity and debriefing meetings
- Incubator 2020-21 was to begin on May 1<sup>st</sup> and those five selected artist are now on hold

### **Art Incubate Sponsors, Partners & Community Engagements**

Specific to the first 10 months of Art Incubate

- Createscape Waterloo Region
- HIP Developments

- Region of Waterloo
- City of Waterloo
- City of Kitchener
- Forwell Electric
- Melloul-Blamey Construction Inc
- Miller Thomson LLP
- PAUL Consulting Inc
- Perimeter Development Corporation
- Westmount Signs

- Art District Gallery
- Button Factory Arts
- Habitat for Humanity
- Idea Exchange
- Interior designers
- KPL
- Kitchener Waterloo Society of Artists KWSA
- KW Symphony Youth Orchestra
- LAF Group
- Regional Secondary School Art Teachers
- Riverside Print Group,
- Robert Langen Gallery
- S.A.I.L. & Cameron Heights Collegiate Institute
- Schools of art, including U of G, OCADU, NSCAD
- University of Waterloo Fine Art Department
- WPL
- WLU School of Music
- Uptown Gallery
- Uptown North Neighbourhood Association
- Uptown Waterloo BIA