

Photography

Galleria

June 29, 2018 | Charles T. Low, Photographer

Art exhibitions near and far

Recently, gallery-visiting has been on my agenda. To some degree, it just worked in. To some degree, I made it happen. Regardless, it's been a pretty wild intellectual and/or art-appreciation romp for this geeky dude, without much similar previous exposure.



(Disambiguation: "galleria" is not a correct plural for "gallery" in English, in which it actually has different meaning - I just like it as a blog title!)

I visited the McMichael Gallery in Kleinburg Ontario in 1983. If you're thinking "Group of Seven" then you're correct but there is so much more there. My photographic inclinations were already clear but also clearly at the fledgling stage, so it felt mind-expanding and awe-inspiring.



A. Y. Jackson, of the Group of Seven

Some time later, I found myself at the Art Gallery of Ontario, also in the 1980s, taking a tour. (To take a tour or just to wander ... with a tour you will generally see less, but get into more detail). The guide showed us, among several others, some "school of Rembrandt", by which she meant that it might have been one of his students who painted it. She said that Rembrandt himself often did the hands.

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[I'm sure that this isn't the Rembrandt I mentioned. However - it is quite the hat!](#)

She pointed out the light (note the Rembrandt triangle of light on the far cheek), and also the lines, how the curve of a hat for example would swoop one's gaze around and bring it back to rest on the face. It was really the first exposure I had had to the concept that there are known principles to composition, important though instinct also most assuredly is.

Always the one to ask the uncomfortable but essential question, I asked the guide if those compositional principles were explicitly taught at the time, or were just learned by osmosis. "Oh!" she said, "yes ... um ... er ... yes. I'm sure that they were explicit. They *must* have been explicit. Next question?"

I.e.: she didn't know. That's okay. Just say so!

Time went by. I continued to make photographs, purely as a hobby, of everything and anything (almost), including one wedding (last-minute pinch-hitter, terrifying), a magazine cover, reading photography magazines, not quite having the time nor inclination - nor confidence - to join arts communities, as I worked on my craft. My circle and I weren't into the gallery-scene, so there was so much I missed.

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My first published photograph, in 1988 - quite a rush!

More recently - and there's a large gapisis of time in there, I know - things have changed. In this newer phase of my life, charging money for doing photography, I have been more active in seeing what else is going on.

So, in 2017, I again visited, with my brothers, the Ontario Gallery of Art. I took three tours on the half-day they were there, one a formal one-hour tour, and two other ten-minute tours, marked by a moveable X on the floor, all described in the AGO's daily agenda.

The longer tour didn't travel very far, nor, as mentioned above, look at very many pieces. One of them - and I cannot find it, sorry - was a huge work, filled most of a wall, and was really four seamless images, with symbolism in it in every detail, about which the guide delighted in telling us. I asked about whether in such a work, overall compositional cohesiveness mattered (because it didn't seem to me to be there, but was sublimated to the symbolism), and she said, "Er ... um ... well ... yes. Yes, it is there. Certainly, it is there. Any other questions?"

I.e., she didn't know. That's okay. It was a hard question. Just say so.

Evidently I'm the only one to ask such questions. Perhaps it's me ...

I also attended the astounding, and hitherto unknown-to-me, [Before the Rush](#) show, and later the similar [Before The Summer](#). Both are organized by Betty Matthews and John Sorenson, and you may recall the latter as the owner of [Balleycanoe](#), showcased in an earlier [blog](#). This leads into one of many local arts organizations, and the one in which Betty and John have been most active is [Thousand Island Arts](#). Again, I continue to be astounded by the talent and effort. The works are so varied that I cannot describe them. Put them in your calendars and go. There is nothing else you can do. Go.

A year earlier, I had attended the annual show of the [South Grenville Guild of Fine Art](#), at the [MERC Hall](#) in nearby Maitland, Ontario. Again: some truly strong showings. I had had no idea about the plethora of artists, many highly talented, who come out in droves at such shows.

Also in 2017, I had my own exhibitions, for a month at [Hang Ups](#), and for several months at [Richard's Coffeehouse](#). Those are other stories - overall wonderful stories - but I will leave that for another time. Hang Ups more recently is about to display a large work of mine in their window, a new photograph done from a location suggested by the gallery itself, which had me out of bed two mornings at about 4:30 a.m. at this time of year to catch the light(!).



Hang Ups

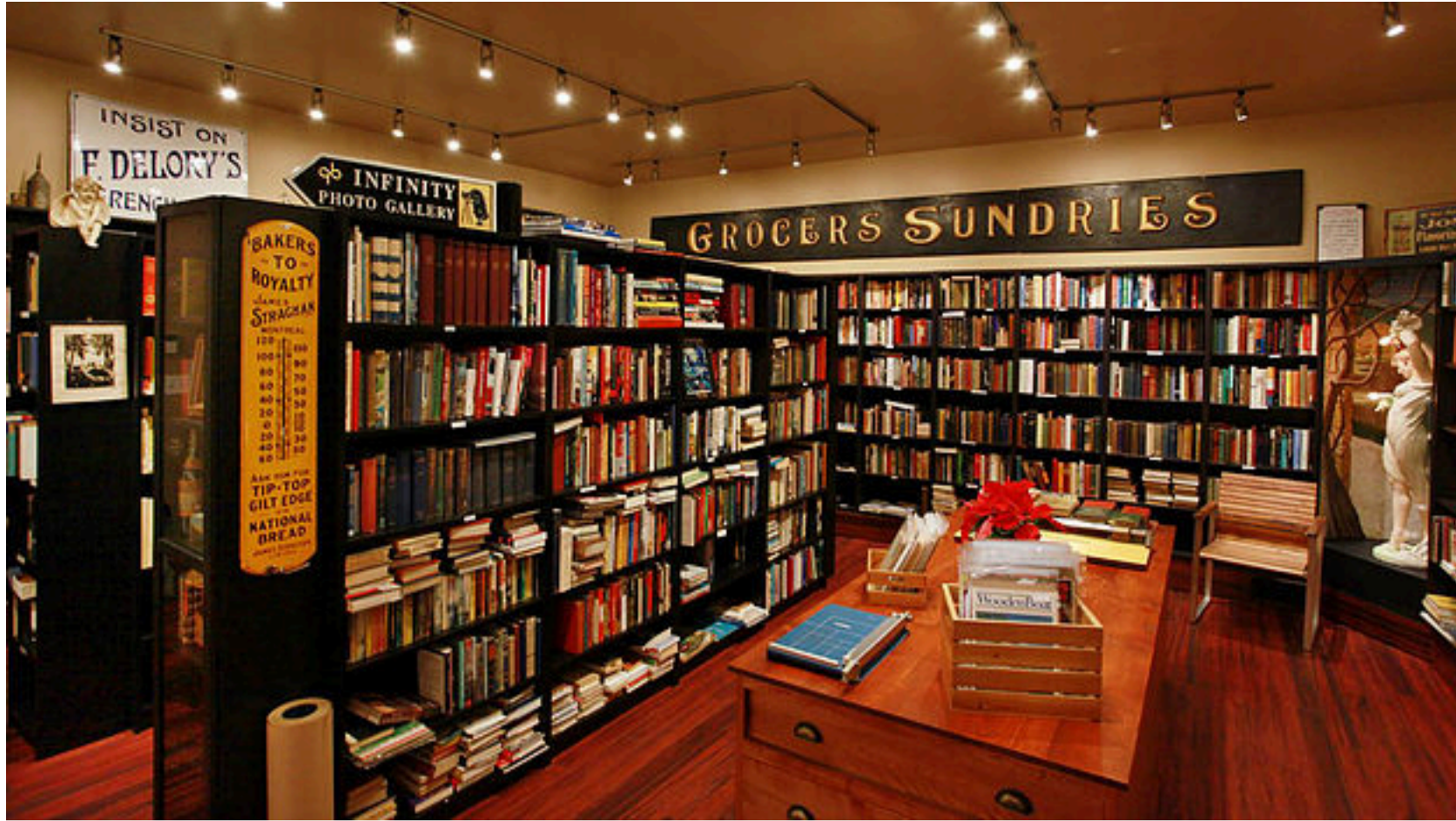
And Hang Ups has more plans for me - again, more on that some other time. (I'm loving it!)



Feel free to purchase this at Hang Ups. I have to say in all humility that the 22-inch print is gorgeous, and we also have a beautiful 11-inch version. The final prices aren't set, but it will **not** be in the tens of thousands (keep reading to see why I say that!).

In 2018, visiting galleries has been more on the menu. Part of this is me wanting to see what others offer, what sells, and what connections I can establish (which sounds mercenary, but one needs connections ... and they cannot then be mercenary).

Right here in Brockville we have the Infinity Gallery, owned and run by the redoubtable Gordon Beck, and among the offerings are numerous impressive photographs of his own. You really need to check it out. As often happens, many people I speak with don't even know it's there. (I didn't!) It's right in front of us all the time on the main drag (213 King St. W.), and there is much more going on there than photography.



[From Here to Infinity Gallery](#)

I've been to the [Heather Haynes Gallery](#) in Gananoque, where the works rotate frequently, and are simply stunning. Even the more subtle ones - and I'm in a phase where I like pizzazz! - will have you gazing into them for a considerable time. Heather's own works, which I find mesmerizing, of course always number among those on display, and ... well, you simply must go. There are no other options. Go.



[Heather Haynes Gallery](#)

Also, watch this [four-minute video](#) about Heather Haynes' Wall of Courage. If it doesn't change you, then I don't know who you are.

At the Haynes Gallery, I bumped into Dennis O'Connor. He was manning the desk one day. He is an experienced gallery owner and curator, from some former life, and gave me an impromptu but well-organized, thorough, private seminar on marketing and selling art photographs. (Thank you, Dennis!)

That was Dennis' last day there, because he was about to expand his Interior Decorating business into another art gallery, the [O'Connor Gallery](#), also in Gananoque. I went to the official opening, with an old family friend, [Fraser Radford](#), himself an impressive artist, and met some amazing and fascinating people.



There were other media than paintings, but all of the paintings at that time were by [Behal/Catchpole](#), eye-popping abstracts which, even for those not familiar with the genre, will have you immediately intrigued and engrossed. (I see one of their paintings, *High Desert Traffic*, for sale at [Saatchi Art](#) for only \$44,750 USD - now if only they had it in blue ...)

It is a different world. Fear not - the pieces at the O'Connor aren't quite that dear.

None of the above are particularly *photography* galleries or exhibitions.. They are general art galleries, with paintings using many media, sculptures, even clothes, jewellery and furniture. There is some photography.

On our annual brothers retreat, you may have read in this space some months back about visiting the specifically *photographic* galleries at [Ryerson University](#), and at the [Bau-Xi](#). No two shows, seen on the same day, could be more dissimilar. I have documented some of that [here](#). The obviously more commercial work at the Bau-Xi was quite unlike mine.

So, I needed to see that.

That doesn't mean that everything about my style (if I have one ...) changed at that moment, or has changed at all since.

But ... the pieces at the Bau-Xi sell.

They are certainly eye-catching, technically flawless, very imaginative. For example, one was of the underbelly of a [commercial plane](#) as it was landing. You could see the pilot's eyes. Amazing. But where would I hang it? Another was an altitude shot of a large swimming pool with one small figure of

a distant man swimming in the middle, creating concentric ripples around him. It did intrigue! It just wouldn't match my sofa!

I was in St. Catharines, Ontario, for other reasons, but aware that Fraser Radford had some works up there, so went to see them, at the TAG Art Gallery. Again, many locals don't seem to have heard of it. What they need to do is go there. They don't really have any other options. Go.



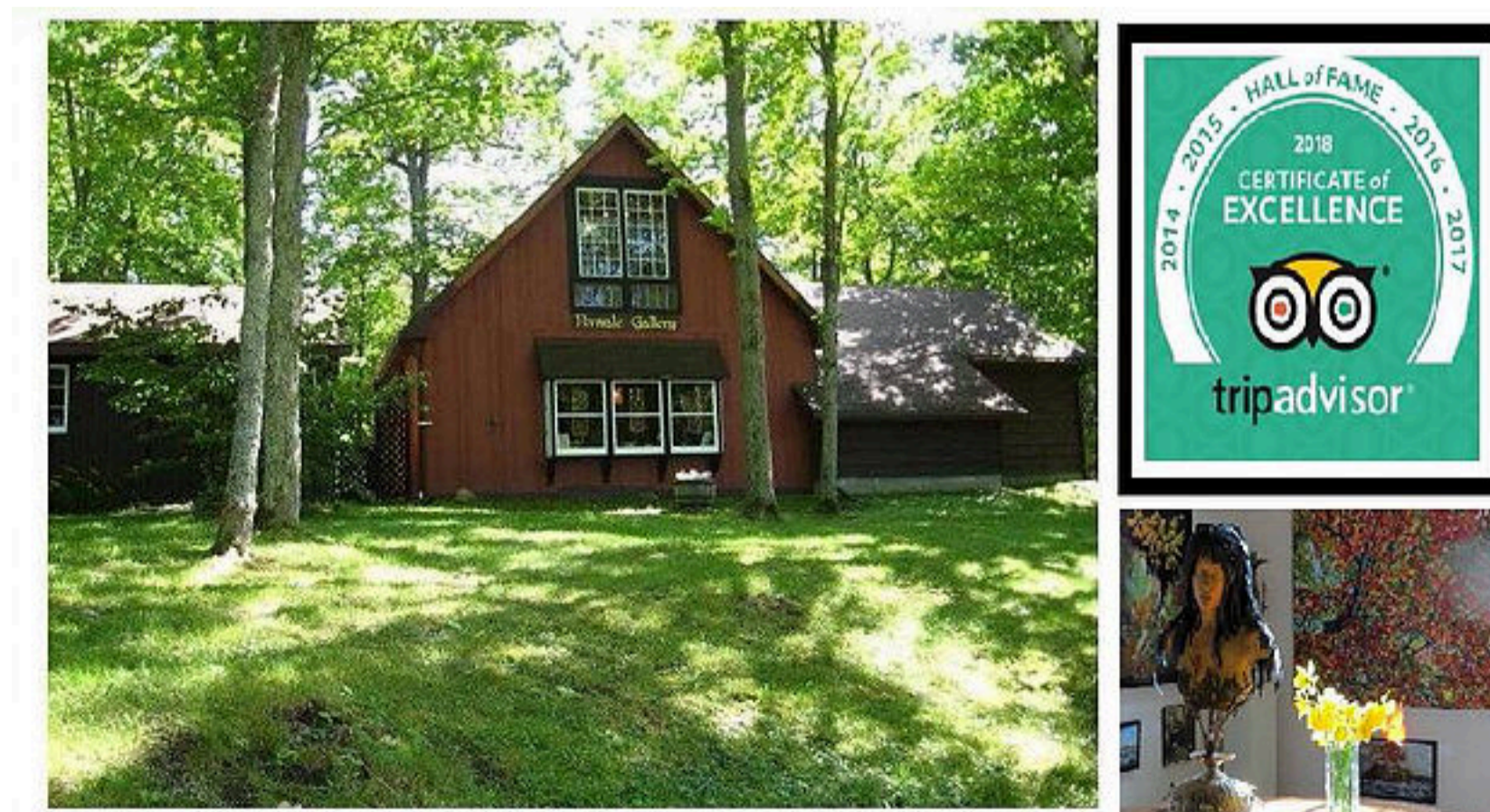
[TAG Art Gallery](#)

I'm learning, I think, that many galleries put their most vibrant works right at the entrance. I walked into the TAG, and POW! My eyes bounced in and out in their sockets a bit, reacting to a riot of colour and line and shape which made me want to buy something!

Of course, "vibrant" isn't all that art has to offer, and the rest of the gallery has lots of variety.

Lastly but not leastly, I was on Manitoulin Island for other reasons, but dropped by the outstanding Perivale Gallery. I only knew about it from mutual friends, because the owner/manager, Shannon, is a part-time and former Brockvillian. It turns out that her gallery - her mother's, in years gone by - is the third most popular tourist attraction on the island, tucked away on a beautiful wooded lot as it is, roughly in the middle of nowhere, near the village of Perivale (of course).

Shannon was phenomenally accommodating to my father and me, who were visiting outside of regular business hours. She clearly loves the gallery herself.



[Perivale Gallery](#)

Again, I entered the gallery and couldn't breathe for a moment. The intensity and beauty of the works near the entrance was overwhelming. It didn't stop there, although naturally the tone and style varied. Perivale represents an amazing artist, Ivan Wheale, and be prepared to gasp when you first gaze upon one of his works.

And there are many others. I want to specifically mention, partly because she is a fellow

photographer, one of several which Shannon has on display currently, [Sarah Furchner](#). Her skill with light is sublime, and her works quite unlike anything, let's say, that I saw at Bau-Xi. Let me call it "accessible" and that implies no value judgement over other styles.

I must mention that my father, an incredibly old man (but very well preserved!!!), has never been in any kind of arts milieu, would profess to know nothing about it, and was raving about the Perivale Gallery for days after our visit.

Incidentally, there is also an amazing and unique cabin for short-term rental at the Perivale Gallery, a great location with a private waterfront on the shores of beautiful Lake Kagawong, with kayaks, canoes, etc.

Superfluity of superlatives

If it sounds like I've run out of superlatives to describe all of the galleries I've visited, then so be it. Whether by luck or by skill, I have only been to great ones.

Well, I think that I might have seen the odd mediocre one, but I'm not discussing them; hence the unremitting praise.

For any other artists, established or starting, photographic or "other", one way or another it will inform your art and expand your network - and both are necessary - to visit galleries.

While you're here:

Remember that I make photographs and that I sell photographs.

Almost everything which you see on this web site is for sale. Prices at the time of writing, for example, for an 11x14" fine-art print with a generous white border would start at about \$50, and you can go up or down from there. Check the [rates](#) page. More importantly, check out my [gallery](#).

Book a portrait-sitting - the right frequency with which to commission formal [portraits](#) is a bit more often.

Remember also to leave a comment, or to [contact](#) me. Note that on the main [blog](#) page you can sign up for new-blog notifications. I am very careful and respectful with your privacy.



Thank you so much for reading.

Charles T. Low
Photographer

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