

2015 Annual Report



Harry Hamm, "The Half Full Glass". Oil on board 9 ½" x 7 ½"



VANS
VISUAL ARTS
NOVA SCOTIA

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Works for Artists

Visual Arts Nova Scotia advances the visual arts through leadership, education, and communication.

We Are

Visual Arts Nova Scotia is an artist-run organization incorporated in 1976 to support and promote artists while advocating for the visual arts sector in Nova Scotia. By encouraging artists to pursue their creative and professional practices creating connections to a community of peers and serving as a primary source for information. Visual Arts Nova Scotia fosters excellence, skills development, and learning in the arts.

Our Objectives

OFFER programs, services and resources to individual artists and the visual arts sector

SUPPORT the activity of professional visual art practices

ADVOCATE for individual artists, the visual arts sector and the arts in general

Brief History

Over the last thirty-eight years, Visual Arts Nova Scotia (VANS) has organized exhibitions, conferences, workshops and symposia, developed and kept current a useful and informative website, administered *PAINTS*, an artist-in-the-schools program, advocated and lobbied for among other issues and concerns: payment of artists' fees and rights, a provincial arts council, provincial cultural policy, recognition of and support for Nova Scotian art and artists, established an online artist directory and housed materials in our resource centre. We have also published the magazine, *Visual Arts News*, since the inception of the organization.

Funding

As a cultural organization, VANS applies annually to the Operating Assistance program through Nova Scotia Communities, Culture and Heritage. Additional revenues are generated through membership, service and program fees, project grants, fundraising, magazine advertising, private donors and corporate sponsorship. The government's funding of CFNS provides VANS with subsidized rent, photocopying, Internet and telephone service, fax, and postage among other essentials.

Patrons

VANS thanks its supporters for their generosity and support. VANS is a registered charitable organization and all donations are tax deductible (# 11906 3618 RR001).



Kas Stone, "Pic Island Revisited", photograph, 20" x 24", 2010

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2014-15 Board of Directors (as of Nov. 1, 2014)

President Pamela Swainson, Tatamagouche
Vice President Eliza Fernbach, Merigomish
Past President Katie Belcher, Halifax
Treasurer Nora Macnee, Ketch Harbour
Secretary Natasha Krzyzewski, Halifax
 Hannah Minzloff, Dartmouth
 Susan Wood, Halifax
 Fenn Martin, Antigonish

2014-15 Board of Directors (June - October 2014)

President Katie Belcher, **Treasurer** Andrea Puszkas, **Vice President** Eliza Fernbach, **Secretary** Susan Malmstrom, Kelli Janson, Digby, Alexa Jaffurs, Middleton, Lis Van Berkel, Canning, Sally Warren, Mahone Bay, Natasha Krzyzewski, Judith Brannen, West Chezzetcook, Pamela Swainson, Tatamagouche, Carolyn Vienneau, Pictou, Adelle Schemm, Sydney

Last year, the Board Governance committee underwent a professionally guided process to identify areas of governance most effective, and those in need of improvement. As the governing body of VANS, we spent a great deal of time considering the history, mandate, and needs of the organization. Much has changed since VANS' establishment in 1976, and we want to make sure that we stay relevant and able to adapt to the needs of artists in Nova Scotia. At our AGM in June 2014 proposed by-law changes were voted in and a new Board of Directors was elected at a special meeting in November.

The changes formalize the separation of the Board and its governance responsibilities from the organizational activities. At a Board level, we discuss the larger vision of the organization, oversee the fulfillment of our mandate, and complete the tasks of organizational governance. To best accomplish this, we now have a smaller, more focused Board. Selected based on a variety of skills, the Directors meet six times a year in order to maintain an active role. To ensure province-wide representation, we designated one-third of the board from outside the HRM. Engagement, including pan-provincial activities, will be approached through more active committees that are open to members. Board members are asked to participate in one committee.

With a more effective governance structure, the Board of Directors is better able to oversee the larger purpose of the organization, the mandate, and support VANS in its continued relevance. We are confident that this shift will allow us to better represent the interests of artists in our province.

Appointments

AGNS Representative Sally Warren, Mahone Bay
CFNS Representative Charlotte Wilson-Hammond, Clam Harbour

Staff

Executive Director Briony Carros
Programming Coordinator Becky Welter-Nolan
PAINTS Coordinator Andrea Ritchie
Bookkeeper Jackie Burke

Intern/Volunteer

Caleb Hung
 Jack Wong



Lynn Rotin, "Downtown", mixed media on paper, 30" x 24", 2014

Visual Arts News

Publisher Briony Carros

Editor Lizzy Hill

Art Director Bob Williams

Ad Sales Agent Janet Doble

VANS programs are overseen by volunteer committees. Staff are responsible for day-to-day operations. A board member serves on each committee.

Board Committees

Personnel develops and evaluates HR policy. Responsible for developing terms of hiring, evaluation and contract negotiations of the Executive Director. In consultation with ED, may advise on issues of staff management.

Executive steering and management committee, strategic planning.

Nominating responsible for board makeup and recruitment

Standing Committees

***Programming:** To research, develop and evaluate current programs and new initiatives.

***Engagement:** Explores outreach, membership development and pan-provincial engagement activities. Focus on strategies for recruiting and retaining members, ensuring programs are aligned with membership needs. Develop partnerships and fosters relationships with organizations across the province to achieve programming objectives.

PAINTS oversees the PAINTS program working with the Coordinator to establish policy and program direction. Committee: Kate McKenna, Leesa Hamilton, Kyle Jackson, Audrey Nicoll, Hannah Minzloff.

Editorial oversees publication of *Visual Arts News* in conjunction with the Editor, Art Director, Ad Sales Agent and Executive Director who acts as Publisher. Committee: Katie Belcher, Daniel Higham, Audrey Nicoll, Kathleen Higgins.

Artist Emergency Fund reviews applications as needed, make recommendations to the Board with regard to the guidelines and application procedure on an annual basis to ensure the fund is best serving the needs of the community. Committee members are appointed by the Board every 3 years and their names are not made public.

***New** Committee descriptions were approved in January 2015. The board has begun a recruiting process to populate committees and ensure they start with success. Our goal this year to re-engage our membership in the organization program planning.

AD HOC Committees

Political Action discusses and determines advocacy and awareness strategies directed at government, membership and the public. Committee not active this year.

Board Governance reviews and recommends on issues related to organizational design and governance.



Wilma Needham, BRINK, photographs

Membership

La Baie Ste Marie/Yarmouth	19
Annapolis West	25
Annapolis East	22
South Shore	50
Dartmouth/Bedford/Sackville	62
Halifax	136
Eastern Shore	20
Cumberland/Colchester	15
Guysborough/North Shore/Antigonish	19
Cape Breton	18
Outside NS	10
TOTAL	396

Report from the President



Visual Arts Nova Scotia is approaching its' 40th year of providing advocacy and support for artists practicing in Nova Scotia. As President this past year, I have had the privilege of participating in navigating new growth and change for the governance model for the Board. Important to this has been laying the ground for how we work together and maintain active participation. A core value as we proceed, has been attention to how we engage the full diversity of the artists we represent in Nova Scotia. This is no small task as we are all aware artists in this province include a wide range of artistic practices, mediums, educational backgrounds, culture, ages and place of residence.

As a Board, we chose to take the time needed to check in often on how we are proceeding. We started in the fall with the majority of board members being new to the Visual Arts NS Board-though not necessarily new to serving on boards. It has been an interesting and challenging task to begin to implement the re-structuring to better support Visual Arts NS in a changing landscape that is the Art World in NS and beyond.

From our membership, we have asked for support and patience as we slowly implement change. It has been important to take the time to establish how we will work together, clarify our roles in and on the Board. Change always brings some anxiety, but it also opens new opportunities. I hope in the year ahead members will see not only continuation of the excellent program offerings, but opportunities to speak up, get involved and be part of new growth.

One of our main goals for this past year has been the establishment of the Engagement Committee and the Programming Committee. The former has the mandate to explore and map strategies to reach out to members. The Programming Committee will steer visioning of future directions-both addition and maintenance-for programming. Thank you to Hannah Minzloff and Fenn Martin for bravely taking on the building of these committees and doing excellent work. I have immense gratitude to all the members of the Board for their hard work, attention and patience in the past year. Two board members are stepping down as they finish their

terms. Thank you to Eliza Fernbach for her four years of service. Katie Belcher, past President and mentor to the new board, a big thank you for her six years of service to Visual Arts NS. And, of course, we could not do it without the tremendous skill, patience and knowledge of the hard working staff of Visual Arts NS, Briony, Becky and Andrea.

Pamela Swainson

Treasurer's Report

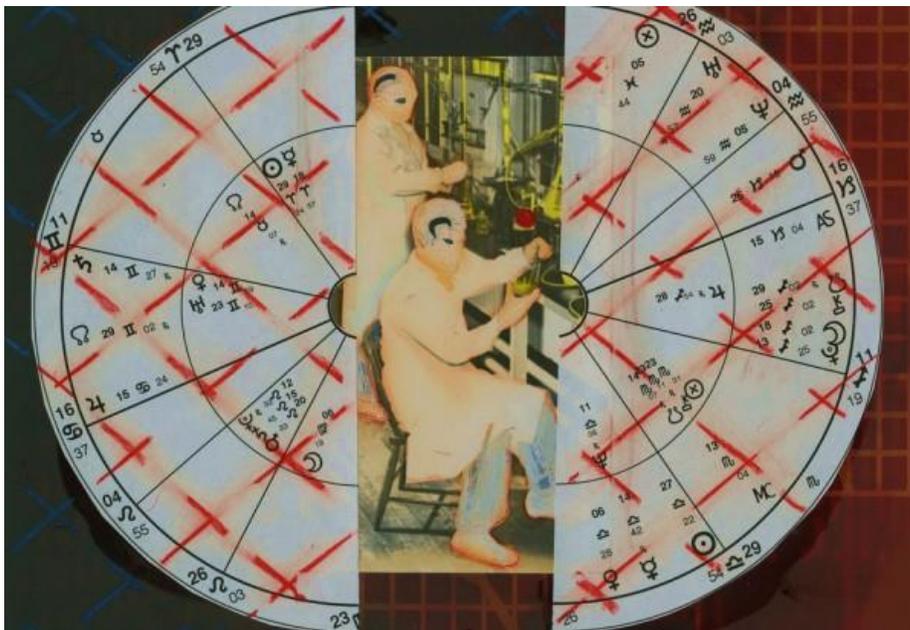
It has been just over half a year since I joined the Board as Treasurer and it has been a pleasure to contribute at a time when the Board was embarking on a new governance model. In this short time I have grown in my appreciation and understanding of Visual Arts Nova Scotia and our management and staff team.

The financial statements for the year ending March 31, 2015 are consistent in revenues and expenses with previous years. Our organization works within tight budgets to provide quality education, advocacy and development of the visual arts in our province. In 2014-2015 Visual Arts Nova Scotia was successful in accessing new operational funding through Halifax Regional Municipality. Our dependence on government funding for core operations is always a challenge, but we continue to successfully work within these constraints.

As Treasurer I would like to see the Board continue to grow the reserve fund for use in special projects, financial security in lean times, capital equipment replacement and emergency funding for artists. Long term, our Board and staff will continue to seek out funding opportunities that support our mandate.

Over the coming year I look forward to meeting more Visual Arts Nova Scotia members and welcome any ideas for strengthening our financial position in the years to come.

Nora Macnee



Gary Castle, "The Meeting", color photograph, 8"x10"

Executive Director's Report

A small shift can lead to great opportunity. It doesn't need to be drastic to be significant. This past year has offered a change in perspective, a time to stand back and ask some vital questions. Some of the questions we've asked before and some we didn't even think to ask at all. But what became evident quickly was that answers could not be determined until we addressed some issues with our governance model. Thanks to the work of the board governance committee last summer, we were able to delve a little deeper into the organizational structure, drafting more specific job description for the board members and truly thinking about the skills and expertise needed for the Board of Directors. For the staff, this new management model, has provided better clarity for each of our roles and the activation of new committee will create a better foundation to generate new ideas and organizational planning. We have the framework in place to get to the harder work, ask the tougher questions and hopefully not get stuck in some of the places we had struggled out of before

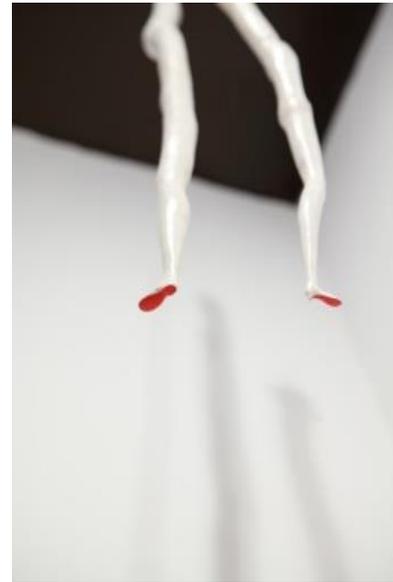
Nearing 40 years, renewal is apropos as many other long-standing organizations are evaluating the how and the why of their mandates.

Just last week, the Canada Council for the Arts announced a drastic new framework to their funding model in response to the changing landscape of art making and sustainability of artists and arts organizations in Canada. While our changes may not be so radical, we share similar motivation. And perhaps now more than ever, as Nova Scotia seems to be intent on austerity, we will have to navigate carefully to ensure our viability for the next 40 years.

Visual Arts Nova Scotia has solid leadership and support to continue great programming and strengthen the role we play in our community. Collaborations and partnerships are integral to future of our organization. I realize there's still some trepidation as we move forward. I hope that as new committees start to come together and we fully embrace our current direction, we will demonstrate our desire to best support artists and arts organizations in Nova Scotia.

As always, I'm grateful to my co-workers, Becky and Andrea for their continued dedication to VANS, to the Board of Directors, past and present, who've embraced our vision to move forward and to committee members who help define the programs we offer. I truly look forward to the next few years, we are in a position to continue our good work and imagine programming that is both exciting and relevant to artists across the province.

Briony Carros



Barbara Louder, detail from *Dorothy and William*, carved and painted walking sticks, exhibited in *Artists' Walks* at the Art Gallery of Peterborough, 2014.

Programming Highlights

ACCESS

Professional Development Workshops

Workshops, information sessions, peer and panel discussions are presented in an effort to keep members and visual artists informed of best professional practices in the visual arts. We have seen a steady increase in our registration and continue to regularly sell out.



I really enjoyed and was informed by tonight's discussion on cooperatives. So much so that I would like to register for the Stewiacke one as well to see their viewpoint. Thanks for all the interesting sessions VANS puts on. – Fran Barclay, Artist Owned & Artist Run – Gallery Co-ops, June 2.

Pilot Project - Creative Work: A Webinar Series for the Arts

After training with CARFAC Ontario this fall, we have partnered with the Artist's Legal Information Society and Strategic Arts Management with the technical support of Stewart McKelvey law firm to offer a three part webinar series on Social Media running June 18 – July 2.

Other highlights include - New workshop instructors: Christopher Webb, Carla Taunton, Susan Haley and Carol Bruneau; New workshops: Curating, Writing Critically and Writing about Your Work; New Information Session with CARFAC: Best Practices for Artists – Charitable Donations of Artworks; New Discussions: Artist Owned and Artist Run: Gallery Co-ops in Halifax and Stewiacke.

CONNECT

Peer Review Program

A peer review process developed for members to strengthen their upcoming applications. The Peer Application Review is a 6-week process in the spirit of a book club, where applicants are expected to send peers their application drafts, and review drafts received from their peers. Five artists participated this year.

I have to say our emails to one another and this general process has been extremely helpful! – Carly Butler, participant and grant recipient

Mentorship Program



The VANS Mentorship Program is designed to support the individual artistic methods and professional ambitions of emerging artists in Nova Scotia by providing access to the skills and experience of selected mentors.

My personal experience in the mentorship program was one of great impact. Ericka Walker and VANS were committed, thoughtful, and incredibly supportive throughout the entire program. I feel the goals I set out during my initial application have been achieved or set in motion (which is really more than I could have asked for). One of the best parts about the program is its length. Having someone to be accountable to each meeting over 10 months really brought some consistency to my art practice. It allowed me to interact with someone who was continuously working towards artistic goals and propelled me to keep focused on mine. Other parts of life have gotten in the way in the past and with the help of this program I have been able to reassess my priorities and put my art practice at the forefront. – Sera Senakovicz, Mentee (2013-14)

This year we are supporting emerging artists, Stephanie Yee, Kate Walchuk and Angela Glanzmann Apprentices were individually paired with established artists and mentors, Barbara Louder, Eryn Foster and Wilma Needham for a 10-month mentorship, beginning in September.

Participants engaged in a day-long intensive group meeting to share experiences and knowledge with the support of AGNS curator David Diviney.



En Route Artist Talks

VANS facilitated an exchange of artists visiting Nova Scotia. We partnered with galleries across the province to enhance existing programming by offering to organize talks outside of the host gallery/venue. Essentially we capitalized on artists already traveling to Nova Scotia and facilitated an opportunity to go beyond the one location in the province. This year we were able to support seven artists travelling throughout Nova Scotia for presentations.

Chris Reid	From: CBU Art Gallery, Sydney	To: Craig Gallery, Dartmouth
Marc Courtmanche	From: MSVU Art Gallery, Halifax	To: Acadia University Art Gallery Wolfville
Léopold L. Foulem	From: SMU Art Gallery, Halifax	To: Le Trécarré Gallery, Church Point
Henri Faberge	From: Eyelevel gallery/ Nocturne, Halifax	To: Lunenburg School of the Arts Lunenburg
Sarah Saunders	From: ArtsPlace , Annapolis Royal	To: A.S.A.P. Artist-run Centre Antigonish
Germaine Koh	From: Dalhousie Art Gallery, Halifax	To: ArtsPlace , Annapolis Royal
Jean Rene Leblanc	From: Viewpoint Gallery, Halifax	To: McCarthy Gallery, Truro

I just wanted to send out a big thanks to you and VANS for sending Sarah Saunders our way for the EnRoute series. It is wonderful to have the opportunity to see her unique work and hear about her process. We had about 12 in attendance for the talk and all engaged in a lively discussion about her practice. We are so pleased to host for this lecture series. Thanks again from all of us at ASAP! -Adele McFarlane, Chair, ASAP Artist Run Centre in Antigonish

SUPPORT

Open Grants to Groups and Galleries

Any gallery or group who is a member of VANS can apply for up to \$250 to assist with costs related to an exhibition. The grants are given out on a first come, first serve basis. The intention of the Visual Arts Nova Scotia Open Grants to Galleries and Groups program is to encourage exhibition activities across the province.

Eight exhibitions were supported in the following areas Annapolis Royal, Halifax, La Baie Ste. Marie, Sheet Harbour, Peggy's Cove, Petite Riviere, Lunenburg and Wolfville.

Corridor Gallery

Giving VANS members an opportunity to create an exhibition of their work. 11 artists exhibited their work in the Corridor Gallery this year in as many exhibitions.



Erin Jaeger-Freeborn, *Shades of Off White*, paper and foam, 3' x 2' 6", 2014

April 2014 *Time and Memory*, Gary Castle

May *What Was Here*, Sera Senakovicz

June *Image*, M.E. Sparks

July *Bird Maps / Marsh View*, Charlotte Wilson-Hammond

August *Talks with Sweet*, Erin Jaeger-Freeborn

September *Low Relief*, Christine Waugh

October *A Passionate Sense of Place*, Kas Stone

November *Rooms 1* Kyle Martell

January 2015 *Improvisational Landscapes*, Rosemary Dzus

February *Pyschomom- A graphic story* Wilma Needham

March (*empty sets*) Jocelyn Li



Karen Langlois, "Threads," wool, linen and cotton threads, installation on the artist's property

Artist Profiles

To identify, promote and educate the public about current members of VANS who are engaged in our programming and maintain an active practice. Artist profiles are featured in the monthly newsletter promoting VANS activities: *VANS Matters* and are archived on our website. This past year we profiled Janet Larkman, Karen Langlois, Bethany Riordan -Butterworth, Judith Leidl, Christopher Webb, Barbara Schmeisser, Suzanne Gauthier, Harry Hamm, Kat Frick Miller, Jack Wong, Pamela Swainson, and Lynn Rotin.

Visual Arts News

Visual Arts News is the only magazine dedicated to contemporary visual art in Atlantic Canada.

- Artist pages: **Jerry Ropson, Charley Young.**
- New partnership with **Kobo** to offer digital subscriptions.
- New mobile app - **The Gallery: Visual Arts and Design, Exposed**, is available for free on iOS and Android devices featuring content from Canadian magazines in the visual arts and design niche.
- **Exhibition listings** moved to online format only, providing our readers more accessible and frequently updated listings for galleries and artist-run centres across Atlantic Canada.
- **Art News Roundup** provides unique and timely online content solicited by curators, gallery directors and other art workers.



PAINTS

Professional Artists in the Schools is a program that helps schools in Nova Scotia bring professional visual arts into their classrooms. There are more than 87 artists that are part of PAINTS living and working in every part of NS. Projects can range from 3 hours to 12 hours, and can involve artists working in every imaginable discipline.

"It was great having Sherry in our school. She was ultra-prepared, but also flexible to meet the needs and interests of our students. Her enthusiasm helped to encourage students to think outside the box, and their finished shorts looked great. An excellent workshop! Thank you, PAINTS!" - Diane Clarke, Teacher, Musquodoboit Rural High School on working with artist Sherry Lynn Jollymore

By the Numbers

70 projects in **35** schools
(more than 1/3 of total schools for the first time).

Over **440** project hours
involving **36** artists
working with **60** teachers
and over **2100** students.



Wire sculptures with Rebecca Fisk at Bayview Community School

- **VANS in Residence** We extended our work at The Woodlawn Public Library. This past fall saw Sherry Lynn Jollymore return to the library to lead more fun and exciting workshops with youth. Planning is now underway for a residency in Antigonish in the fall of 2015.
- **Website** Work has begun to revamp the PAINTS website, to be completed this summer to launch in time for the school year.
- **Outreach** In October Andrea made a presentation to the annual conference of the Art Teachers Association of NS and attended the national conference of the Canadian Society for Education Through Art.

"I appreciated the fact that the students I was warned might be more turbulent got even more involved than the others. They seemed to pour their excess of energy right into the clay and were often the ones who stayed longer at the end. I had a fairly "free form" approach with regard to the results, because I wanted to encourage their imaginations. This was very successful as they easily appropriated the simple techniques I taught them and then got completely absorbed in the imaginary world they were creating. The mountains in particular contained hidden treasures, guarded by all sorts of creatures, and were infested with booby traps, all of which was enthusiastically explained to me."

- Elizabeth Sircom, artist on working with Grade One students at L.E. Shaw Elementary School



Drawing with Dylan Fish at Alderney School