



The incomparable Ritchie Velthuis

Title: Freedom 2000
Collection of the Friends of the
University of Alberta Hospital



SCTV Monument: Bob and Doug McKenzie, 103 street & 103 Avenue, Edmonton

Tell us about yourself and what you do.

My Name is Ritchie Velthuis. I grew up on a dairy farm near Edmonton and have spent most of my adult life in Edmonton. Just recently I moved back to my country roots at an acreage near Gibbons.

Have you always wanted to be a sculptor?

I have always wanted to be a visual artist. I began as a painter and graphic designer but from my first experiences with sculpture I discovered I had an aptitude and it became my principal practice.

What is the best advice you have ever been given?

Create the best piece of art that you can. If you really heed that advice you push past the thought of 'that is good enough' to excellence.

Why art?

Art is all around us, from a cereal box to an exquisitely designed building. Without art the world would be a bleak and barren place. Art processes build cultures of collaboration and creativity. Part of my legacy has been to create community driven and interactive art.

What mediums do you work in?

I started as a painter and graphic designer. When I discovered sculpture, I knew I had found my calling. I have worked in clay, cement, mixed media, recycled material, wood, and bronze.

What inspires you?

I am most inspired by nature, the human figure and community. I like to tell stories about community.

What other work have you done besides sculpting?

As an artist you need to be creative to make a living. I have worked as
Continued on page 3

President's message – Ellie Shuster



The days are getting appreciably longer, and Night of Artists is fast approaching! SAA has 18 artists booked into this exhibition/sale and everyone is enthusiastic and engaged.

Because we had such an overwhelmingly positive response to our call for artists, we quickly outgrew our reserved double booth. Fortunately, we were able to secure a third, so we will be a very major presence at the show! Participating artists are Carroll Charest, Jennifer Cornelius, Sally Fairhead, Roy Hinz, Bryan Jackson, Karen Klassen, Jennifer Lang, Deb Laninga, Kay McCormack, Sharon Moore-Foster, Shawn Olander, Laura Ouimet, Wanda Resek, Ruby Serben, Ellie Shuster, Keith Turnbull, David Swojanovski, and Robert Woodbury.

Keith Kobyłka created a wonderful poster and set of promotional banners for social media, and we are grateful for his creative expertise! You will see the poster elsewhere in the newsletter – and I would encourage everyone to help us promote this event. Maria has been posting on our social media and you can grab the artwork there – or contact Maria or me to have it emailed to you directly.

Of course, if you are not involved, please join us throughout the weekend! March 18 – 20 at the Enjoy Centre in St. Albert. Opening reception is 6:30 to 10:30 pm Friday, with the event running Saturday 11 am – 5 pm and Sunday 11 am – 4 pm. Entry is free or by donation, but given the pandemic, space may be limited and visitors are

asked to register at www.nightofartists.com. Thanks to Rubble Road (David and Jennifer) and to Jennifer Lang for donating door prizes. The draw will help us engage visitors, not just for the weekend, but by adding to our mailing/invite list for future SAA events.

And, speaking of Rubble Road, I am very much looking forward to David Swojanovski's presentation at our March meeting and learning about how he and Jennifer Cornelius turned their passion for carving into a thriving business.

As the weather begins to improve – and hopefully we can say the same of COVID – I'm sure we are all looking forward getting out of the studio and on to other events and workshops. There are more to come.... stay tuned!

Ellie Shuster

SAA Monthly Meeting

Tuesday, March 1, 2022, 7:30 pm

Program: David Swojanovski, [Rubble Road Soapstone](#)

On Zoom: [LINK HERE](#) Meeting ID: 840 2844 1497 Passcode: 160357

Agenda & Minutes from the last meeting are distributed by email. Check with [Maria Koulouris](#) if you haven't received them.

Ritchie Velthuis: con't



Allard Centennial Project: Ready for the Foundry. Bronze to be installed in Fort Saskatchewan

a graphic designer (albeit briefly), a florist, landscaper, and an arts administrator.

What makes you smile?

Happy people, a sunset, a job well done.

What is your dream project?

My bucket list was always to work on a major bronze project. The SCTV Monument-Bob and Doug McKenzie was my dream project and it has afforded me the opportunity to create another bronze project for Fort Saskatchewan. I feel grateful and blessed and hope other public art projects are in my future.

What is your outlook on life?

My outlook in life is to live in the moment and pursue things that make you happy.

How has your work evolved over time?

When I made the decision to pursue art full time, I needed to find a salable product and started to create whimsical mixed media sculpture that were very successful for a time. All the while I refined my skills as an artist and spent many years refining my sculptural work. After several decades of dedicated work, I finally feel I have the ability to tackle many projects and this skill set allows me to tell stories that seem to resonate with the public. I have also recognized I can't do everything and that collaborating with people with a specialized skill set is the key to success. I believe successful projects are built in community.

Do you have a favorite work of art or artist?

I am inspired by so many artists and artwork. If I had to choose one it would be Rodin.

What role does the artist have in modern society?

As I said earlier, I think that art builds a culture of collaboration and creativity in communities.

What is the best thing about being an artist?

I feel grateful and blessed to be using my creativity to make a living.

What is the worst?

Using my creativity to make a living.

What advice would you give your younger self?

Pursue your dreams sooner no matter what people tell you.

Where can we see your art?

- One of the first pieces of sculpture I sold was "Freedom" which I created for an exhibit at the McMullen Gallery in the U of A hospital which is part of the Friends of the University Hospital collection. (see p.1)
- Convergence: Cement sculpture collaboration with the SAA, AltaVista Condo, 10303-111 Street, Edmonton
- The Homeless Memorial; a collaboration with Keith Turnbull and those affected by Homelessness
- SCTV Monument: Bob and Doug McKenzie, 103 Ave & 103 Street

More pictures on p.4 & p.12

Exhibitions – Carroll Charest

Donations to Amy's House for Night of Artists



Laura Ouimet

Things are starting to gear up for our shows. Night of Artists (NOA) is just a few weeks away, and what an outstanding participation level! Eighteen of our talented members have signed up to take part in NOA's 25th anniversary show (and maybe last). I think this is a record for participants, at least since I have been involved. It is so good to see! A big thanks to Keith Kobyłka for making the wonderful posters for all of us to share and promote too.

Also, a big thank you to all those who donated a piece to the NOA fundraiser for Amy's House: Ellie Shuster, Roy Hinz, Jennifer Lang-Martineau, and Laura Ouimet. I hope I have

not missed anyone by the time I needed to send this out, and as Ellie mentioned, thank you to David Swojanovski and Jennifer Cornelius from Rubble Road for their door prize donations.

If you are planning on supporting the group and this venue and would like to visit sometime during the weekend of March 18-20, please go onto the NOA website at www.nightofartists.com and register for the day you plan to attend. There is no cost, they just need to know how many are going to be there as there is a limited quantity of people allowed in the show space. It is open Friday 6:30 pm - 10:30 pm, Saturday 11 am - 5

pm, and Sunday from 11 am to 4 pm.

As for our other shows, the next to think about is the VASA show in May and VASA will be starting to look for good photos for the invitation ASAP. If you have not sent in a photo since back in 2020, please do so ASAP as it may get on the invite. I will be sending out more information on requirements after NOA is over, i.e., artwork details, etc.

I expect to hear from GM Western Drumheller Gallery soon as well, and waiting for the contract, so we can get to work on those details as well... more to come.

Carroll
Interim Exhibition
Director

Ritchie Velthuis

Homeless Memorial

Collaboration with Keith Turnbull and people affected by homelessness
Location: Across the street from City Hall

Devonian Gardens Luminaria Installation 2019-20

Collaboration by Ritchie Velthuis & Kalli Melenius
Recycled packing material and video mapping





Sculptors' Association of Alberta



Ellie Shuster



Kay McCormack



Carroll Charest

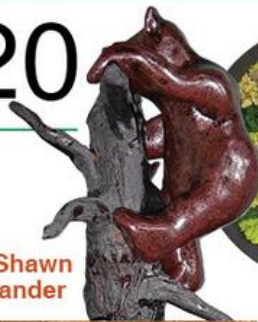


Sally Fairhead

at Night of Artists

March 18-20

Enjoy Centre
101 Riel Drive,
St Albert



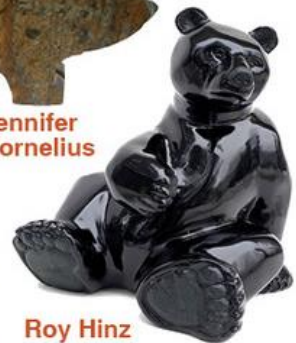
Shawn Olander



Jennifer Lang



Jennifer Cornelius



Roy Hinz



Laura Ouimet



Bryan Jackson



Robert Woodbury



Sharon Moore-Foster



Ruby Serben



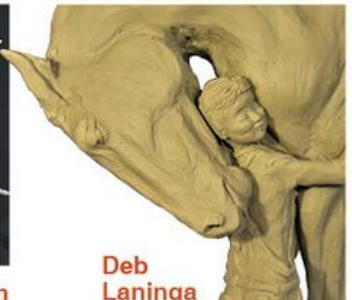
Wanda Resek



Keith Turnbull



Karen Klassen



Deb Laninga



David Swojanovski



Sculptors' Association of Alberta

WILLOW WORKSHOP

This workshop is hosted by YiYi Datar and Ritchie Velthuis but the project is self-directed.

Prior to the workshop there will be a harvesting day to gather willow that needs to partially dry. Some sculptures and furniture require willow to be harvested the same day as assembly.

Please research your idea ahead of the workshop to determine which kind of willow you require.



WHEN: This spring (dates to be announced) Harvest likely in April.

LOCATION: Sturgeon County - Address provided upon registration

COST: Members \$90 Non-members \$125

SUPPLIES: Included (*Optional: Bring hammer, drill, saws, axe, shears, screwdriver.)

BRING: your lunch, water, and a foldable camping chair or blanket



REGISTER: Contact Shawn at shawnolander@gmail.com

PAYMENT: e-transfer to sculptorsAB@gmail.com or mail a cheque to: Sculptors' Association of Alberta PO Box 11212 Stn Main, Edmonton, AB T5J 3K5



ADDITIONAL INFO:

- Only 12 spaces available
- This is an outdoor socially distant workshop.
- There is more than ample space available for you to feel comfortable participating.
- Payment must be received 7 days prior to the workshop to secure your spot.
- Workshop will be cancelled if there is not sufficient participation.

www.sculptors-alberta.com



Willow artworks top right, bottom left and centre created by Carmen Colbourne. Willow chair made by YiYi Datar and Ritchie Velthuis, and bird made by Beata Kurpinski. Artist at work is Barb Marcinkoski.

Raku & pit fire workshop - Lisa Wilkinson



Possible Raku /pit fire workshop dates: May 14, May 28, June 4.

Location: Edson
 Fri 7-9 pm – Pit fire (and get a head start on raku)
 Sat 10-5 – Raku (four pieces)

Raku only - \$80 members, \$110 non-members
 Raku & pit fire - \$100 members, \$130 non-members
 Maximum: 8 people

Reserve your spot at shawno_lander@gmail.com. Please indicate your date preference.

Raku is a fast and exciting, process. Pieces are heated to about 1800F (outdoor kiln heated with propane) in a relatively short period of time (30-60 min) then carefully removed and placed in metal bins with combustible materials (the pieces will be glowing orange from the heat). The bin is then

closed, creating a reduction atmosphere. Raku glazes are designed to mature in the bins and are influenced by the amount of smoke in the bin. Pieces remain in the bins for 10-20 minutes – and then you have your finished piece! The results are mostly unpredictable, and often spectacular.

Participants need to make and bisque-fire pieces beforehand. Grogged clay (available at Plainsman) is preferred for raku because it is more resistant to the thermal shock, however, regular clay bodies are usually fine provided pieces are small, e.g., M370. Raku pieces are decorative and not suitable for food, water or outside placement (because they are low fired). There is always a risk of cracking so you have to be prepared to lose a piece, however,

there is a high chance of success.

A couple of notes about what kind of pieces to make and glazing considerations:

- Not excessively thick or thin, or not with lots of variation of thickness because they heat at different rates and are more likely to crack, i.e., 1/2 - 1 cm thickness is fine, with about 2 cm max.
- Hand built and wheel thrown both work. You can also roll out flat pieces, like tiles. Again, the bigger the piece, the more chance of cracking. I suggest not exceeding about 20 cm as the biggest dimension, especially if your clay is not grogged. I recommend having most of your pieces a bit smaller (less than 15 cm) you have a

higher chance of success – especially with your first raku.

- Personally, I prefer hand-built pieces for raku (partially because grogged clay feels like sandpaper when you're throwing it!). 'imperfect' pieces are often well suited to the look of raku. That being said, I've seen some beautiful raku wheel thrown pieces

- I'll have several glazes available for use. It is important to remember that there is a high degree of variation with the glazes so you can't guarantee a certain color (except for the white glaze, which is designed to 'crackle')
- Any areas left unglazed will go black from the smoke, so it is often a good idea to incorporate this into your design
- If you don't like the look of the piece, you can glaze again and refire, although the chance of cracking increases.

Edson is about 2 hours from Edmonton. Glazing and firing would take place over the course of one day, and we could finish with a potluck. I live on 80 acres of mostly forest with walking trails. A day of raku is fun!

If you have questions, you can reach me at: frogpots@gmail.com.

Member News

Spring willow furniture fundraiser

Join Ritchie Velthuis and Yiyi Datar this April to make willow furniture and sculptures to sell to benefit Sculptors Association of Alberta. The fundraiser will be on a weekend in April.

With Ritchie and Yiyi's expert guidance, furniture pieces are easier to construct than you would think. All supplies will be provided. (Bring a drill if you have one). There is no cost for this event.

Come for a few hours, a day or the whole weekend. Yiyi's property in Sturgeon County is vast and peaceful. It promises to be a great time. Please let Shawn Olander know if you are interested in participating.

Wire workshop with Laura Ouimet

Two-day chicken wire garden sculpture workshops, \$300 per student
April 23 - 24, Saturday 9-4, Sunday 10-4

Classes are held in Laura's south Edmonton studio. No prior experience working with wire is necessary. These classes are a great way to spend a weekend learning to work with this very cool medium!

You will make an approximately three-foot chicken wire sculpture of your choice of subject, following a pattern that Laura makes for you.

Register at <mailto:wemetwirework@gmail.com> or <https://paypal.me/wemetwirework>

Aluminum casting service



The foundry is open and offers an aluminum casting service for artists. Lost foam or pattern casting available. They do small projects at affordable rates. Contact Andre for a free quote.

There may be an aluminum casting workshop this summer if there is enough interest.

Contact Shawn at 780-237-7037 regarding a workshop or Andre at 587-591-8726 or andrezfoundry@hotmail.com for project quotes.



Title: COVID-19: From Darkness Comes Light Paintings by Ritchie Velthuis

Feb. 24 to May 24, 2022
Galerie Cité
La Cité Francophone
8627 Rue Marie-Anne
Gaboury (91 Street N.W.)

Ritchie Velthuis's exhibition of paintings

As the COVID-19 pandemic reality began to unfold, we all began to adjust to a new world. No longer did it feel safe to connect with community in a meaningful way. Isolation became the norm. Grocery shopping became risky business. Each new day came with yet another new restriction and anxiety filled my world. I needed an outlet for these negative feelings. I took comfort in taking long walks in nature.

Inspired by its beauty, I began to paint again. With each brush stroke my stress would melt away as I became lost in the creativity of the moment. My original motivation was to create a series of 16 paintings during the first year of COVID. I thought COVID would be behind us at the end of that first year. Shortly after I achieved my painting goal, I contracted COVID-19 and I realized that this pandemic had just begun.

I continued to paint after my original goal. The extended series focuses on light and shadow in the Alberta landscape during the changing of seasons. Although COVID has been difficult for all of us, I am confident that the worst is behind us and this unexpected pause has allowed many of us to reexamine our priorities. I am truly grateful for my renewed love of painting and the restorative and healing power of nature.

Ice time – Barb Marcinkoski

It's been a busy year and a busy month in February. Despite a few hiccups along the way, some pretty great ice sculptures have been created by our artists, including some that have been made by first-time carvers at the Ice on Whyte workshop. With the last scheduled commissions on Feb. 20 and 21, in Blackfalds, Alberta there are currently no

commissions on the books for March. We received about 30 inquiries and did about 15 commissions this year.

Much thanks to our ice supplier, Ice Works, our clients who are supporting "winter art" across Alberta and of

course to all our ice carvers who worked hard and travelled far to make these transient masterpieces happen!

Barb

Castor, Sat. Feb. 12

(L to R) Stephen Chung and Randall Fraser



Drayton Valley, Sat. Feb. 19

Eileen Heidler and Randall Fraser



Revera McConachie Gardens, Tues. Feb. 22

Randall Fraser



More Ice

Blackfalds, Sunday-Monday, Feb. 20-21

Jeremy McConville – honeycomb and bee, Christian Denis – Bulldog (local team) goalie, Randall Fraser – winged scarab, Eileen Heidler – Egyptian with flying dress.



Ice workshop, Ice on Whyte, Feb. 5



Sponsored by Ice on Whyte and organized by SAA Snow and Ice Director, Barb Marcinkoski, Steve Buzak instructed this workshop at the Ice on Whyte Festival on Feb. 5.

Left to right, top to bottom:

Rooster – Jeremy McConville

Bear rubbing his back on a tree – Deb Laninga

Dinosaur – Jayleen Wilke

Ammonite shell – Janet Smith

Picasso head – Lucy Cook

Mouth of a cave – Elena Lukawiecki



Ice tools for sale

Stephen Chung has ice carving tools to sell. Contact him at stephenck@hotmail.ca

Newsletter submissions

We are always looking for your submissions to the newsletter. If you are showing your work, teaching a workshop, working on something special, have an update you'd like to share, or any story ideas, please contact me. Also, please keep the photos coming, they are greatly appreciated.

Submit your items to me, Shawn Olander at: shawnolander@gmail.com by the 25th of the month and contact me with any questions!
Shawn

Laval Bergeron - St. Isidore snow sculptures



Ritchie Velthuis: past snow sculptures



Journey to a New Home by Ritchie Velthuis, Stuart Ballah & Eileen Heidler, Carnival National Snow Sculpture Competition. 1st place and People's Choice



Snow Sculpture, Silver Skate Festival 2018 by Ritchie Velthuis, Eileen Heidler, Jeremy McConville

The Armature is published by the Sculptors' Association of Alberta. Images have been supplied by artist members and may not be reused without permission of the artist(s). For more information contact Maria Koulouris, SAA Administrator at sculptorsab@gmail.com.

This newsletter was prepared by Shawn Olander and edited/formatted by Barb Marcinkoski. If you have anything for the newsletter, please contact Shawn at shawnolander@gmail.com

Sculptors' Association of Alberta PO Box 11212 Stn. Main, Edmonton, AB T5J 3K5 P:780-668-6300
www.sculptors-alberta.com