

CLAIRE DESJARDINS

Gore, QC

BIOGRAPHY

Claire Desjardins is an award-winning abstract painter known for her vibrant and dynamic compositions. Originally from Montreal, Desjardins now lives an hour north of the city. Surrounded by the natural beauty of the Laurentians, she spends most days painting in her studio.

On the international stage, Desjardins' paintings have appeared in major motion pictures and TV series. She collaborates regularly with brands such as US retailer Anthropologie, tech giant Microsoft, Birkenstock, GelaSkins, and many others.

Claire launched a full line of women's apparel under her signature label, *Claire Desjardins*, in North America, in January 2019, and in the UK, in February 2020. Combined, they are sold in about 700+ stores and online.

She is a Brand Ambassador for the DeSerres chain of art supply stores.

ARTIST STATEMENT

What is colour when laid out onto a surface, but an expression of human emotion? Colour can represent a scent, a touch, sometimes a sound. We respond to it intuitively. My own experience with it is visceral and it triggers various emotions in me. I'm sometimes unaware of its effects until they manifest themselves by showing up as I apply paint to the surface of my canvas. Colour is my guiding principle, and informs other components of my work: form, composition, texture.

My work is often drawn from happy, carefree memories. My intention is to have the viewer experience the sunny side of life. I am attracted to the use of bold and colourful palettes, and typically emphasize energetic, animated brush strokes.

While my work is formally abstract, I strive to communicate a sense of the personal and unpredictable throughout - wanting to convey a sense of immediacy, spontaneity, and a range of emotional expression through my use of abstraction.

I work primarily in large format and with acrylic-based paints, but also sometimes explore other mediums such as sculpture and textile arts.

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Ready to Exhale – Curatorial Statement

Wall Space Gallery is proud to introduce the latest solo exhibition by Claire Desjardins. In her recent abstract paintings, Desjardins allows billows of colour, shape, and form to merge into in-depth expressions of personal experience. Focusing mainly on her *Exhale* series, Desjardins' body of works in *Ready to Exhale* explore the emotional passage of losing a loved one.

With the recent passing of her mother – a talented artist in her own right – Desjardins brings us on a journey through emotive abstraction, poetic reflections on connection, love, loss, and the enduring creative spirit.

Breath is deeply connected to the body. We often hold our breath when the trials of life take over and emotions are left to be dealt with later. The release of a long-held breath brings with it a sense of relief that rushes through the whole body. In its place is a temporary weightlessness – and space for something new. Desjardins explains feeling the necessity for herself to exhale and process her loss.

Throughout the exhibition space are scanned pages of Desjardins sketchbook, featuring drawings of family members created during the quiet moments of respite between hospital visits. Amongst the drawings is a bright red poppy, the final drawing made by Desjardins' mother, Jane.

The inclusion of the sketchbook pages is deeply meaningful to Desjardins, not only for their rich documentation of emotions and her mother's final moments, but because maintaining a sketchbook was a large part of her mother's own artistic life. Desjardins feels that beginning her own sketchbook practice for the first time is an act of carrying on her mother's flame.

As a vivacious optimist, Desjardins focuses her practice on bringing uplifting moments into the world through painting. Using her own artistic language of luminous colour and enigmatic mark-making to work through this difficult period of bereavement, she allows us to experience grief through an explosion of colour. We often think of the colours of death and dying as necessarily somber, but Desjardins shows us sadness can be vibrant yellow, fuchsia and deep blue – a celebration of life.

Across Desjardins' *Exhale* series, washes and transparencies create expanses that slowly obscure and combine with past marks. These veils of colour speak to the transience of memory, shifting emotions, and the underlying vibrancy of life. Using her trademark effervescent sweeps of acrylic on canvas, Desjardins offers us a moment to exhale.

- Tiffany April
Curator

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CV

SOLO EXHIBITIONS

- 2020 *LOVE*, Wall Space Gallery, Ottawa, ON
2019 *Halcyon Days*, URBN Gallery 543, Philadelphia, PA
2019 *Basking in the Glow*, Wall Space Gallery, Ottawa, ON
2018 *Voices in My Head*, Eleanor London Art Gallery, Cote St-Luc, ON
2017 *summerCRUSH*, Wall Space Gallery, Ottawa, ON
2016 *Imaginary Friends*, Galerie Lydia Monaro, Montreal, QC
2016 *The Secrets We Keep*, Wall Space Gallery, Ottawa, ON
2006 *After the Sky Clears*, The Gallery at Victoria Hall, Westmount, QC
2015 *Visceral Expression*, Wall Space Gallery, Ottawa, ON
2014 *Claire Desjardins*, Sozo Gallery, Charlotte, NC, USA
2014 *Claire Desjardins*, East Gallery – Helen Day Art Center, Stowe, VT, USA
2013 *This Way*, Galerie Lydia Monaro, Montreal, QC
2013 *Then and Now*, Muse Gallery, Toronto, ON
2012 *Ebb & Flow*, Muse Gallery, Toronto, ON
2011-2012 *Surface*, Le Meriden Versailles, Montreal, QC
2011 *Transition*, Massarelli Design Studio, Belgo Building, Montreal, QC
2010 *Got Gallery?*, Massarelli Design Studio, Belgo Building, Montreal, QC

SELECTED GROUP EXHIBITIONS & PERFORMANCES

- 2019 *Looking North*. Stowe, VT
2016 *La nouvelle collection 2017 de l'Artothèque*. Stewart Hall Art Gallery, Pointe-Claire, QC
2016 *Strangers in the Night fundraising events*. Montreal QC
2014 *Autumnal Equinox group exhibition*. Galerie EK Volland, Montreal, QC
2010, 2012 & 2014 *Art Westmount*. Westmount, QC
2014 *Group exhibition*, Galerie EK Volland, Montreal, QC
2013-2014 *Feng Lin Shan Shui International Art Exhibition 2013*. Shenzhen, China
2012 *Abstraction in Canada*, Little Paper Planes – Online, Curated by Otino Corsano, OCAD
2011 *Square AFFAIR Art (Fundraiser)*, McClure Gallery, Visual Arts Center, Westmount, QC
2011 *City of Westmount Annual Exhibition*, Victoria Hall Gallery, Westmount, QC
2011 *Taste of Stowe*, Helen Day Arts Centre Members' Gallery. Stowe, VT, USA

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2011 *Jacob Walker Group, River Arts, Morrisville, VT, USA*

EDUCATION

2013, 2014 Independent Studies with Victoria Leblanc, Visual Arts Centre, Montreal, QC
2011 Course in Painting with Harold Klunder, The Visual Arts Centre, Montreal, QC
2009, 2010 Courses in Abstract Painting with Nicole Label, Montreal, QC

ARTIST RESIDENCES

2015-2016 Self-directed artist residency, San Miguel de Allende, Mexico
2013 Da Wang Culture Highland Residency, Shenzhen, China
2013 Vermont Studio Centre, Johnson, VT, USA
2012 Vermont Studio Centre, Johnson, VT, USA

AWARDS

2016 Winner, Liquitex/Artfinder Muted Collection competition
2013 Grant recipient, Da Wang Culture Highland Artist Grant – Da Wang, China
2013 Grant recipient, Vermont Studio Center – Johnson, VT
2011 Grant recipient, Vermont Studio Center – Johnson, VT
2010 Featured artist, "Taste of Stowe Arts Festival" – Stowe, VT
2010 Nominated for "Best in Show", Art in the Park – Ottawa, ON
2007 The Ronnie Terry Award for Excellence in the Creative Arts

PROFESSIONAL AFFILIATIONS

2019 Member, Artist Rights Society (ARS)
2018 Member, CARCC Copyright Visual Arts
2015 Member, Federation of Canadian Artists

PRESS & PRINT PUBLICATIONS

2019 *Wearable Art for Creative Women,*
Breakfast Television Montreal with Derick Fage, CityTV (video)
2019 *Claire Desjardins and Brian Azeff: from canvas to clothing,*
All In a Weekend with Sonali Karnick, CBC Radio 1 (audio)
2018 *Meet Claire Desjardins,*
By Edward Claire, Boston Voyager Magazine

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- 2017 *Claire Desjardins' Tool of Choice for her Artworks is Color,*
By Evangeline Delacare, Canvas Blog by Saatchi Art
- 2017 *Abstract Artist Claire Desjardins on her MS Surface Book,*
Microsoft Canada promotional video, Microsoft.com
- 2017 *Claire Desjardins earns a living painting abstract art,*
Breakfast Television Montreal with Derick Fage, CityTV (video)
- 2017 *Artist interview : meet Claire Desjardins,*
Artist feature interview, GelaSkins.com
- 2017 *Inside the studio : Claire Desjardins,*
By Poppy Rooney, Artfinder.com
- 2016 *Artist Claire Desjardins goes from canvas to clothing,*
All in a Weekend with Sonali Karnick, CBC Radio 1 (audio)
- 2016 *Artist Claire Desjardins is in her element, surrounded by nature,*
InStyle Magazine (The Ottawa Citizen)
- 2016 *Artist Claire Desjardins paints a visual diary | Urban Expressions Magazine*
(Montreal Gazette)
- 2015 *Painting Movement, Magazin'Art, Vol. 27, No. 107, pages 34, 35, 65 & 66)*
- 2014 *Claire Desjardins, Painter (pages 66 to 69 of Art Inc.)*
Book by Lisa Congdon. Published by Chronicle Books LLC | ISBN 978-1-4521-2826-9
- 2013 *Traverser la couleur, Parcours Magazine | By Robert Bernier. Issue #78, page 34*

SELECTED PRESENTATIONS & WORKSHOPS

Expressions in Paint with Claire Desjardins | Painting Workshop Series

- 2017 Donna Downey Studios, Huntersville, NC, USA
- 2014-2017 Helen Day Art Centre, Stowe, VT, USA
- 2016 Gore Community Centre, Gore, QC
- 2016 Artists Association of Nantucket, Nantucket, MA, USA
- 2016 Oakville Art Society, Oakville, ON
- 2016 Oakville Art Society, Oakville, ON
- 2015 Woodlands Art League, Houston, TX, USA
- Jul 2016 *Artist Talk, Wall Space Gallery, Ottawa, ON*
- Apr 2016 *Artist Talk, Galerie Arts Monaro, Old Montreal, QC*
- Mar 2016 *Artist Talk "After the Sky Clears", Westmount, QC*
- Oct 2015 *Expressions in Paint with Claire Desjardins (3 day painting workshop),*
Woodlands Art League, Houston, TX, USA

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Apr 2015 *Atelier avec Claire Desjardins (2-day painting workshop), College Ste-Anne,
Lachine, QC*

May 2014 *Speaker, Westmount Library, Montreal, QC*

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PRESS

"Creative Business"

Interview by Olivia Taggart

Ottawa At Home Magazine

December 20, 2020

Wearable Art for Creative Women,

Breakfast Television Montreal

March 28, 2019

"Claire Desjardins and Brian Azeff: From canvas to clothing" (audio)

Interview by host Sonali Karnick

CBC Radio 1 - All In A Weekend

January 14, 2019

Abstract painter, Claire Desjardins, earns a living painting abstract art

Breakfast Television Montreal

May 4th, 2017

"Abstract landscapes and ceramic gardens"

Apt613.ca

Brenda Dunn, July 4th, 2016

"In her element surrounded by nature"

Janet Wilson,

Ottawa Citizen

April 1, 2016

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