

ERYN O'NEILL

Ottawa, ON

BIOGRAPHY

Eryn O'Neill holds a BFA from (the) NSCAD University in Halifax, NS (2008), and a MFA in conjunction with her thesis exhibition titled *Restrictions of Routine* from the University of Waterloo (2018). She is currently pursuing her MA in Art and Architectural History at Carleton University (2022).

Eryn has had numerous solo and group exhibitions in Toronto, Ottawa, Kitchener-Waterloo, Guelph, Hamilton, and Montreal. Her most recent solo exhibition *Ottawa Underground* was held at Wall Space Gallery in June 2020. She has participated in numerous artist residencies, including the Vermont Studio Centre in March 2016, and the Golden Foundation Artist in Residence Program in March 2019.

She is a multiple Ontario Arts Council grant recipient, and a two-time recipient of the Elizabeth Greenshields Representational Painting Award. In 2021, O'Neill's works were collected into the City of Ottawa's permanent Art Collection and the Global Affairs Canada collection.

Eryn has a studio at the Rectory Art House in the Byward Market. She is an instructor in the Diploma Program at the Ottawa School of Art.

This will be Eryn's second solo exhibition at Wall Space Gallery.

ARTIST STATEMENT

My process involves gathering source material after establishing regular running routes through the liminal space of the city. Once I have established a series of routes, I start to observe and photo-document their particular features. While photos are important, the documentation being a critical link to capturing and translating the actions of running to the paintings, they are ultimately a device employed as a visual reminder and location prompt. The paintings themselves are re-worked many times in the studio and the photographic content is gradually lost in the gestural application of paint.

My work is inspired by my complicated relationship with both running and painting. While they are two separate activities, within my studio practice I have found that both are in constant dialogue.

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The way I see and experience the world as a runner has become the source material and inspiration for my paintings. This dialogue came to fruition during my MFA research where I developed a stronger connection between my interests as a painter and experiences as a runner circumnavigating the urban environment

Desire Paths is the result of months of repetitive outings, in all weather conditions, to gather visual information about the ways in which pedestrians often blaze their own trails. These small, seemingly insignificant features are commonly referred to as *desire paths* or *desire lines* by urban geographers, and represent unofficial, localized pedestrian trails and short cuts that run counter to urban planning, offering up an alternative to sidewalks and roadways. These paintings are an ongoing exploration of how we encounter and interact with highly localized environments and how through mimesis, paintings can act out an experience of being in the world. The markings, perspective and scale of the works evoke a sensory interpretation of motion, exploration and uncertainty.

This led to my series, *Ottawa Underground*, an exploration of the infrastructure within the LRT stations in the city. This project is a celebration of the advancements Ottawa is making to move its residents through the city more efficiently. As an active user, I spend time observing the unremarkable details that are in place for functionality as the main priority. The areas I deem worthy to paint come from years of careful observation and editing in my studio to create confident and narrative pieces that resonate with a broader audience. I aim to make relatable work, and to continue to lower the barrier where art, architecture and urban advancement intersect.

The concept for the exhibition, *Travelling Vicariously: The High Line*, stems from two years of gathering photos virtually of New York City (@oldmannewyork). With the intention to travel in March 2020 postponed indefinitely, the concept for the exhibition evolved from an archive of images, with particular attention of the High Line.

This has become a form of support, encouragement, and positivity through a time of continual uncertainty and frustration. The motivation to create a body of work that shares a story of connectivity is at the core of this series of paintings. The process has been both creative and co-dependent, motivating each other to be productive, and sightsee under bizarre conditions, to say the least.

I was able to travel to New York at the end of 2021. That trip did not change the final outcome of the exhibition, but rather the connection to the space. Being there physically brought back memories of past visits, and allowed me to witness development and changes to the city itself as well as the surrounding features of the High Line.

Thank you to the High Line staff, sponsors and caretakers for preserving such a unique urban pedestrian space.

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CV

EDUCATION:

- 2020-2022 Candidate, Masters of Arts: Art and Architectural History, Carleton University, Ottawa, ON.
- 2020-2021 Curatorial Studies Graduate Diploma, The Institute for Comparative Studies in Literature, Art and Culture (ICSLAC), Carleton University, Ottawa, ON.
- 2016-2018 Masters of Fine Art (MFA), University of Waterloo, Waterloo, ON.
- 2004-2008 Bachelor of Fine Arts, Major in Fine Art, NSCAD University, Halifax, NS.
- 2002-2003 Portfolio Development Certificate Program, Ottawa School of Art, Ottawa, ON.

SELECTED SOLO EXHIBITIONS:

- 2022 Wall Space Gallery, *Travelling Vicariously: The High Line*, Ottawa, ON, March 5th -March 26th
- 2020 Wall Space Gallery, *Ottawa Underground*, Ottawa ON June 18th – July 16th
- 2019 Rotunda Gallery, *Desire Paths*, City of Kitchener September (CARFAC Fee).
- 2019 Button Factory Arts. *Strangely Familiar*, Waterloo, ON June 28-July 20
- 2018 MFA Thesis Show, *Restrictions of Routine*, University of Waterloo Art Gallery (UWAG), April 12-April 28th.
- 2016 Bytown Museum, *Our City*, Ottawa, ON May 21st to September 8th.

SELECTED GROUP SHOWS:

- 2022 City of Ottawa, *Holding Pattern: 2021 Additions to the City of Ottawa Art Collection*, December 17th – February 11th.
- 2022 Ottawa Art Gallery, Annexe Gallerie, *Art + Parcel Holiday Exhibition*, December 15th – January 10th.
- 2021 Ottawa School of Art, *Instructors Exhibition*, Ottawa, ON, July 29th to August 29th.
- 2021 Wall Space Gallery, *New Beginnings*, Ottawa, ON, January.
- 2020 Sam & Adele Gallery, Golden Artist Colors, *Made in Paint* New Berlin, NY, April 4-July.
- 2018 Orillia Museum of Art & History, *Carmichael Canadian Landscape Exhibition: Tradition Transformed*, September 29th – November 26 (Juried).

GRANTS:

- 2021 Elizabeth Greenshields Representational Painting Award, 2nd Time Recipient.
- 2020-2021 City of Ottawa, Production and Creation Grant.
- 2019 Region of Waterloo, Arts Fund Project Grant, *Desire Paths*, June.
- 2019 Elizabeth Greenshields Representational Painting Award, 1st Time Recipient.
- 2019 Ontario Arts Council, Emerging Artist Project Grant, March.

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ARTIST RESIDENCIES:

2019 Golden Foundation Artist in Residency, New Berlin, NY, March
2016 Vermont Studio Center Artist Residency, Johnson, VT, March.

PRIVATE AND CORPORATE COLLECTIONS:

Global Affairs Canada.
City of Ottawa Art Collection.
Tomlinson Group of Companies, Construction, Ottawa, ON.
Roderick Lahey Architecture Firm, Ottawa, ON.
B4 Corrosion, Shakespeare, ON.
Golden Artist Foundation, New Berlin, NY.
D-Squared Construction Company, Greely, ON.
Construction Sector Council, Ottawa ON.

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