

NICOLE ALLEN

Ottawa, ON

BIOGRAPHY

Born in Oakville, Ontario, Nicole developed an early appreciation for painting the Canadian landscape from her father. Nicole has an undergraduate degree in Art History from Queen's University, and an honours diploma in Applied Museum Studies from Algonquin College. After working in the Art Rental and Sales industry in Victoria, BC, Nicole and her husband Jeff settled in Ottawa in 1997. They have two wonderful teenaged kids. Over the years, Nicole has consistently developed her painting and figurative skills through her studies at the Ottawa School of Art and local art groups.

In 2010, Nicole began exhibiting her work in the Ottawa region and now paints full time at her studio, as a member of The Loft artists collective. She is currently represented by Wall Space Gallery in Ottawa, in2art gallery in Oakville, and Canvas Gallery in Toronto. She also loves exhibiting her work at art fairs throughout Ontario. Her paintings are held in private collections across Canada, the United States, and Europe.

ARTIST STATEMENT - *Beyond the Garden Gate*

There is pulse, a field of energy within the world of the garden that invites us to connect with the ephemeral. By deconstructing the initial floral form and embracing spontaneity and experimentation in my work, I allow the materials and colours to guide me as much as I guide them. This relationship results in pieces that are both intentional and organic – a reflection of the interplay between control and surrender.

Over the past year, I feel that my painting process and approach has shifted. I am moving away from loose representation to a more abstracted and experiential form of painting, which feels both satisfying and at times uncomfortable. Layers of paint are exposed and hint at material experiments until the piece holds an energy of its own. I agree with those who feel that art is a "journey" – an exploration of self, nature and the indefinable spaces in-between. I invite you to interpret the work through the lens of your own experiences, emotions and imagination.

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WALL SPACE GALLERY
1090 Bank St. Ottawa, ON. K1S 3X5 | 613.729.0003 | info@wallspacegallery.ca



CURATORIAL STATEMENT - *Beyond the Garden Gate*

Wall Space Gallery is proud to present the latest solo exhibition by Ottawa painter Nicole Allen. *Beyond the Garden Gate* explores flowers as an avenue of nonverbal communication and willing exposure of intimate feeling. Allen's canvases brim with life as she moves us through the rhythms of her innermost thoughts in jubilant and tender palettes.

Her varied arrangements of flower species extend beyond the edges of the canvas, unconfined by its boundaries. Their abundance becomes the meaning of the work – an overflow of feeling, or competing feelings, as suggested in the title of *Indecision II*. Set against neutral backdrops of greys, Prussian blues, and teals, Allen uses colour and line to pull us into the liveness of texture and movement contained within her subject. Avoiding hard edges, the boundaries of her flora blur into one another breaking their representation down into tensions of colour. Each unique flower competes for our focus, pushing into a dance across the canvas.

Allen's reference to the garden gate and what lies beyond calls up moments of entering or being invited into an intimate space of personal creativity. *Closing Time II* is one of the rare works of Allen's that abandons the restriction of the vase, opening the canvas to the controlled chaos of an English garden. She places us at eye level with the upward sprouting stems, as though we are lost amidst the tangle. Patches of navy blue suggest night sky and the inevitable coming of morning.

Flowers carry depths of meaning, and are often given to, or cultivated by us at the most important times of our lives. Their sentiments shift depending on the intention of the bearer and the context of their giving or growing. Roses from a romantic partner speak a different message than a bundle of wildflowers gathered with a friend from their garden. Allen is adept at capturing the subtleties of speaking through flowers, teasing out the complex intertwining of relationships and inner narratives.

Tiffany April
Curator

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CV

EDUCATION

- 2013 Applied Museum Studies, Algonquin College, Ottawa, ON
1994 Bachelor of Arts, Art History, Queen's University, Kingston, ON

SELECTED SOLO + GROUP EXHIBITIONS

- 2023 *Beyond the Garden Gate*, Wall Space Gallery, Ottawa, ON
2023 Toronto Outdoor Art Fair, Toronto, ON
2023 *Dear Flora*, group exhibition, Westland Gallery, London, ON
2022 *The New Art Festival*, Ottawa, ON
2022 *Second Nature*, Wall Space Gallery, Ottawa, ON
2022 *The Artist Project*, Queen Elizabeth Building – Exhibition Place, Toronto, ON
2021 *Treading Water*, Wall Space Gallery, Ottawa, ON
2020 *Renewal*, Wall Space Gallery, Ottawa, ON
2020 *Inhale Again: Celebrating International Women's Day*, Enriched Bread Artists Studios, Ottawa, ON
2020 *The Artist Project*, Better Living Centre, Toronto, ON
2019 *The Loft Art Studios Open House*, The Loft, Ottawa, ON
2019 Toronto Outdoor Art Fair, Nathan Philips Square, Toronto, ON
2019 *The New Arts Festival*, Central Park in the Glebe, Ottawa, ON
2019 *Hush*, solo exhibition, Wall Space Gallery, Ottawa, ON
2019 *The Artist Project*, The Better Living Centre, Toronto, ON
2018 *The New Arts Festival*, Central Park in the Glebe, Ottawa, ON
2018 *FLORAgaphic*, Wall Space Gallery, Ottawa, ON
2018 *The Artist Project*, The Better Living Centre, Toronto, ON
2017 *The Loft Art Studios Open House*, The Loft, Ottawa, ON
2017 *The New Arts Festival*, Central Park in the Glebe, Ottawa, ON
2017 *The Muskoka Arts & Crafts 55th Annual Summer Show*, Annie Williams Memorial Park, Bracebridge, ON
2017 *Art Gallery of Hamilton Group Exhibition*, Art Gallery of Hamilton, Hamilton, ON
2017 *The Artist Project*, Better Living Centre, Exhibition Place, Toronto, ON
2016 *Art In Bloom*, Bloomfield's Flowers, Ottawa, ON
2016 *The Muskoka Arts & Crafts 54th Annual Summer Show*, Annie Williams Memorial Park, Bracebridge, ON
2016 *The New Arts Festival*, Central Park in the Glebe, Ottawa, ON
2016 *The Artist Project*, Better Living Centre, Exhibition Place, Toronto, ON
2015 *Gallery Hop*, Trinity Galleries, Saint John, NB

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2014 *Warmth*, Cube Gallery, Ottawa, ON

2013 *Great BIG Smalls IX*, Cube Gallery, Ottawa, ON

PUBLICATIONS

2020 "Naturally beautiful. The art of Nicole Allen," by Hilary Thomsom, Ottawa Life Magazine

2018 "Interview with Nicole Allen," by Reilly Riggs, Neighbours of the Glebe

2018 "Random Desires: Spring Dreaming Edition," by Sarah brown, Ottawa Magazine

2016 "Ottawa painter Nicole Allen finds inspiration in nature's beauty" by Ailsa Francis, Ottawa Citizen

Nicole's work has also been featured for home staging on HGTV's "Buyer's Bootcamp with Scott McGillivray"

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