

## Studio Tour creates opportunities to share



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By Nate Smelle

The warm weather and fall colours provided a perfect atmosphere for art enthusiasts to explore the creative spaces of the 18 artists featured on the Bancroft and Area Autumn Studio Tour. Now in its 26th year the tour is still going strong.

Glass artist Karen Istead has been working in fused and stained glass for the past 20 years, and has been on the Studio Tour for nearly a decade. As soon as the 2019 wraps up this year, she said she will begin preparing for next year's tour. Despite the great deal of work that goes into opening up her studio for the tour, she said it is always a thoroughly enjoyable experience.

‘What I love about the Studio Tour is all the people who come out to talk to you,’ said Istead.

‘From a selfish point of view I love to talk about glass, except most people don't want to hear about it. People who come for the Studio Tour usually want to hear all about it. I really enjoy how much they like to talk and share their perspective. There is a real sharing that takes place on this tour.’

Having been featured on the Studio Tour for the past seven years, landscape painter Nancy McKinnon said the first weekend of 2019 has been the busiest tour she has ever been a part of yet. According to McKinnon, on the first Saturday of this year's tour she had more than 160 people visit her studio. She said what makes her studio on the shore of Baptiste Lake such a popular attraction for art enthusiasts is that it gives them a chance to admire some the views that have inspired several of her paintings. Recalling how different her studio was the first year she exhibited in the space as part of the tour, McKinnon said ‘Three years ago was my first tour on this property and at the time we had just finished putting on the roof and installing the windows, so all the art was just hung on the studs. I've had some people come back to see what the place looks like with walls.’

This year, McKinnon is sharing her studio with Jenny May Gifford, an award-winning mosaic artist based out of London, Ontario. Being Gifford's first year on the tour, she said she didn't know what to expect. Reflecting on her experience over the first weekend, Gifford said she is already blown away.

‘I am having a great experience and I am way outside my comfort zone,’ Gifford said laughing.

‘I love that it's about more than just seeing the art. It's all about seeing where the artist is, where they draw their inspiration from, and where they live.’

The 26th annual Bancroft Studio Tour will take place again next weekend from 10 a.m. until 5 p.m. on Saturday, Sept. 28 and Sunday, Sept. 29. For more information on the 2019 Bancroft Studio Tour, including addresses and directions to each of the 13 participating studios visit [www.bancroftstudiotour.org](http://www.bancroftstudiotour.org).