

MAY 2022

the Humour

free

Arts,
Entertainment
& Ideas

p.24 & 25



May's Events

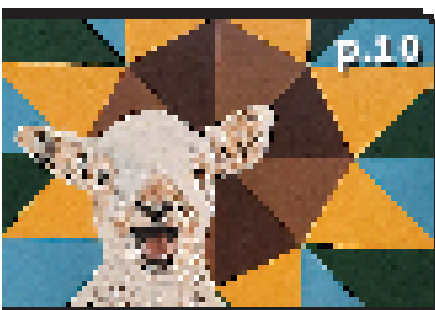
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the wilds

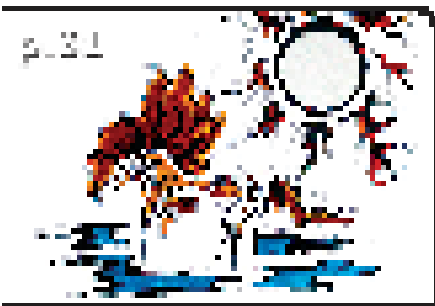
Perth Film Festival

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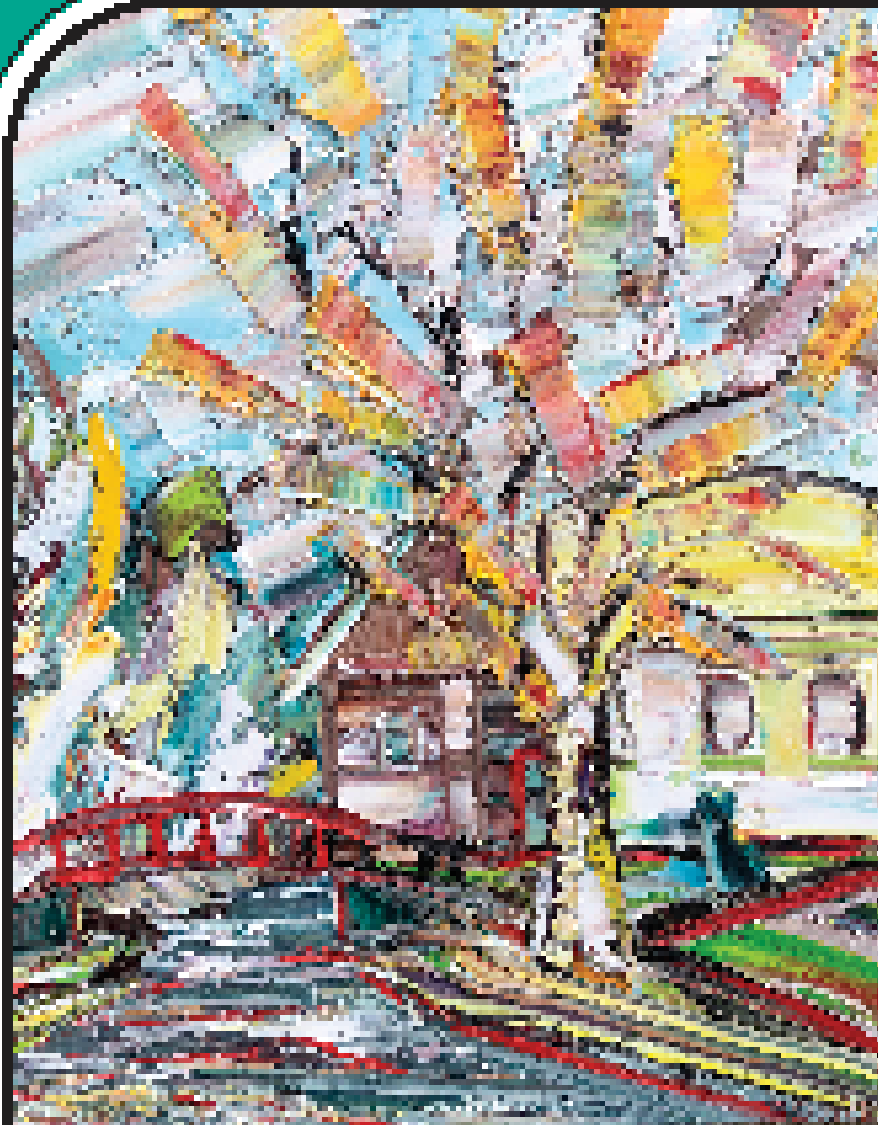


Art in the Attic

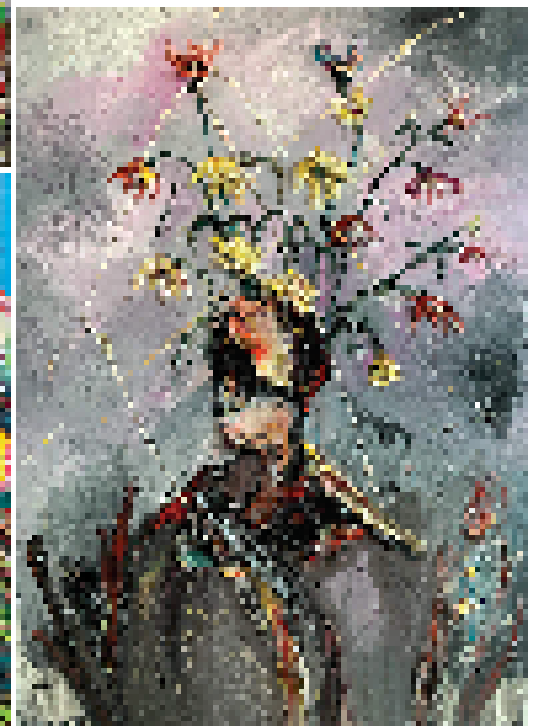
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Indigenous Art Show



The Art of Patrick John Mills p.3



May is all about Mother's Day



Take your ultra special mum out for brunch, buy her some flowers or a handmade gift, and if you really want to do something special, move out of her basement! I'd be happy to help you find your ideal first home.

Patrick Kelly
SALES REPRESENTATIVE

Pat's Picks for May: \$100 gift certificate (for only \$80) from **8008 Lingerie** <8008lingerie.com>
Brunch at **The Cove Country Inn** <coveinn.com>
Beautiful cut flowers from **The Floral Boutique** <thefloralboutique.ca>
Handmade crafts from **Riverguild Fine Crafts** <riverguild.com>

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Patrick John Mills — An Artist to Look Up To

For starters, he's six-foot-three. He paints huge, mesmerizing abstracts. He's incredibly intense and passionate about art and life and helping people. He's all in. Patrick John Mills is a force of nature.

by Sally Hansen

And that's when he's in the middle of his fourth round of chemotherapy to hold his CLL (Chronic lymphocytic leukemia) at bay. His life is much too compelling and challenging and rewarding to loosen his grip on it. He actually describes having cancer as a gift — it has “prolonged my waltz with death. It is a fundamental, beautiful inspiration that is so raw, so intense, so conducive to me being who I am.” His unflinching embrace of a verdict that could completely incapacitate has the opposite effect. “As difficult as it is, I love it. I have to train myself to have control over what I think about — what I marinate my mind in...” His response is very much in tune with his musical tastes: “I love listening to intense music — the rage, the full-on freedom of artists like Kurt Cobain.” Mills occupies a headspace when he's painting that he characterizes as “improvisation, freedom, I'm the exponential king of liberation, of movement...”

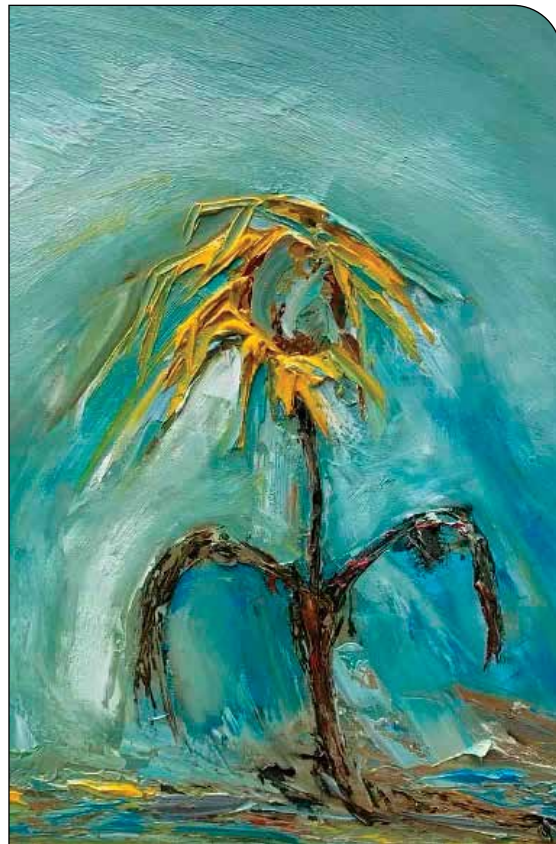
Patrick paints like he lives. His poem expresses it very well:

*I am a starving artist
I am starving for understanding
I am starving for truth
I am starving for acceptance
Searching for Freedom
Dreaming in colour
A little boy dressed up as a clown
Releases a handful of balloons
Into the sky
And walks across the street*

His exuberant abstracts are magnificent manifestations of his intense experience of life. In someone else's hands his exorbitant use of paint could be a disaster, but, as usual, he pulls it off. In his painting videos that he shares on Facebook you see how

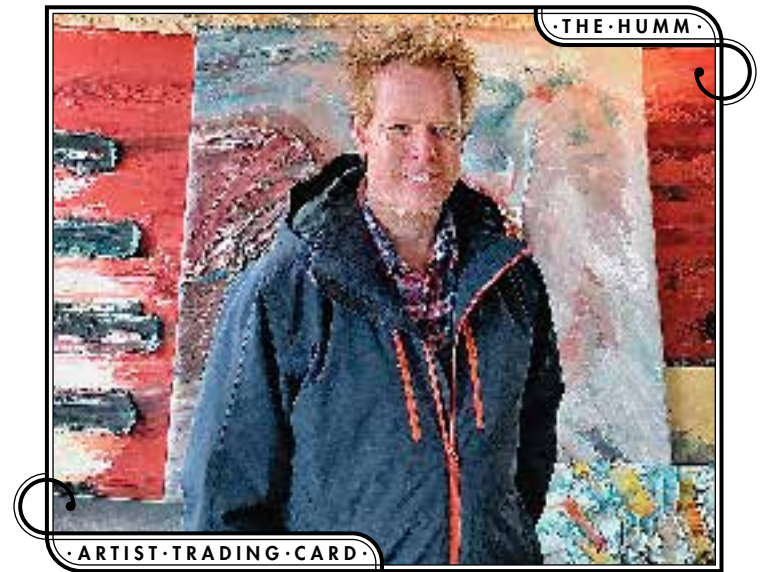


painting for thirty years, often for 18 hours at a time, has enabled him to master the impasto techniques of modern artists like Willem de Kooning. Patrick pays homage to the artists who inspire him, calling them his friends, the ghosts inside his head, the creatures that roam around his studio with him. His unrestrained impasto works that are modeled on the riveting sculptural gestures of Alberto Giacometti even succeed in intensifying the sculptor's depiction of everyday humans simply struggling to survive.



Mills enthusiastically and successfully explores both the colour field (think Mark Rothko) and the action painting versions (e.g., de Kooning) of the Abstract Expressionist Movement. He remembers his first encounter with the works of artists like Francis Bacon and Picasso when he arrived at Concordia University in Montreal at the age of 18. He describes it as an epiphany; “I had never seen a line used so perfectly, with such authority — it tattooed my soul.”

At Concordia Mills first studied civil engineering to please his father, but then completed a degree in Early Childhood Studies. He considers both a waste of time for him, but his introduction to painting by a fellow student proved to be the passion he was seeking. He also garnered some impressive poetry awards. After moving to the U.K. with his first wife, he became an overnight artistic success through



incessant work and extremely fortuitous contacts and word-of-mouth marketing. After a systematic assessment of where to pursue a career as an artist in Canada, the couple purchased a home in the artsy Hintonburg area of west Ottawa, where property was much more affordable than in B.C. where Patrick was raised.

Over many years Patrick experienced repeated rejection by traditional art galleries. Galleries exist to sell art; “difficult” subjects and unconventional painting styles are much more challenging to sell than comfortable Canadian landscapes and pretty florals. One look at Patrick's sole sunflower painting (I absolutely love it!) vividly illustrates the gap. Patrick's painting is existential. It isn't always easy to survive as a sunflower...

Patrick John Mills, however, is an indefatigable survivor. After alienating some of his more conservative Hintonburg neighbours by repeatedly plastering the area with brilliant but provocative handbills, it became very clear that he was no longer welcome. While travelling in Europe, Patrick had met a painter who had created an art ecosystem — a combination of galleries and workshops and events and shops that could be self-supporting. It became his quest, and led to his purchase of a large corner of commercial real estate at 11 Bridge Street in Renfrew. The site of a former foundry, the four existing dilapidated buildings were sitting on contaminated fill that had to be removed. The work has been much more extensive and expensive than expected, and Renfrew has not embraced the project with the kind of fervor that Mills had hoped for and expected. But he is not about to give up.

The Art Factory is an amazing concept and a hugely worthwhile conversion of a polluted site into a true economic success and touristic feature. The former 10,382 square foot industrial factory is on its way to becoming an Art Gallery, Art Studio, Art Supply store and gift shop; Phases 1 and 2 are completed, Phase 3 is still under construction. Upon completion, Art Factory will be the largest independently owned (non-government, non-grant funded) Art Centre in all of Canada.

Mills' heart is as big as the rest of him. He is constantly investing huge amounts of personal energy and capital into his project to create an asset for the community and a gift to fellow artists. Working with like-minded volunteers and supporters, his LIVE-LOVE-ART dream continues to expand and provide much needed and appreciated services to under-served members of the community. He comes up with an endless progression of activities that promote mental health, creativity and having fun. He is well on his way to turning a toxic eyesore into an amazing arts centre for the Town of Renfrew. And his paintings are spectacular. Some people take. Patrick John Mills gives. We wish him spectacular success in his outsized endeavours to be an unstoppable force for the power of life, art, and love.



SUSAN TOOKE

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An installation of paintings and sound
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