

Homer Watson *House & Gallery*



2022 Annual Report

Homer Watson House Foundation

Homer Watson House & Gallery 1754 Old Mill Road, Kitchener, ON



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2022 Year at a Glance

8	Exhibitions
92	Art programs offered
554	Program participants
100	Members
4,114	Followers on Social Media
18,631	Visitors to our website
\$18,000+	In fundraising and donations
\$500,000+	In grants and subsidies

Our Team in 2022

Board of Directors

Colleen Bulla	Chair
Rose Mailloux	Treasurer
Karen Buhlman	Director/Secretary
Doris Cowan	Director
Elaine Seeley	Director
Paige Bromby	Director

With Thanks to Christine Michaud,
Councillor, Ward 4, City of Kitchener

Staff

Tabatha Watson
Director/Curator

Cathy Masterson
Director/Curator - started December 2022

Celia Vernal
Education & Public Programs Coordinator

Ralf Wall
Graphic Designer & Retail Manager

Allison Taylor
Collections Management Assistant

Janet Mayhew
Bookkeeper

Alexandra Hartstone
Marketing & Development Officer - left
May 2022

Seasonal Staff

Andrew Ing
Braeden Gruber
Dani Siddique
Katie Pearson
Zoe Wendling
André Porter
Sarah Curtis
Sonia Uppal
Shannelle De Croos

Artist Instructors

Atena Ganea	Janus McBride
Ayesha Shafiq	Jonathan Tang
Elise MacDonald	Katherine Olenic
Bhairavi Jathar	Karen Buhlman
Candice Leyland	Laura Moreland
Courtney Durastani	Lauren Martin
Chris Macleod	Logan Soeder
Danielle Petti	Marika Galadza
Dottie Joyce	Moumita Roychowdhury
Ezri Evans	Ralf Wall
Hasibush Shahaeed	Soma Karmaker
Janice Saunders	Sumaira Tazeen
	Trevor Waurechen

Chair's Message

In 2022, HWHG's commitment to our community remained strong. The Board, staff, instructors, and volunteers worked to stabilize our programming and our exhibitions as we moved forward through the latest waves of Covid-19.

The team continued to bring forward virtual programs and exhibitions to share through our online and in-person audiences. Staff continued to develop unique and creative content for our Social Media channels, promoting Homer and Phoebe's interests in spiritualism, the environment and of course, their artistic practices.

In person programming resumed with smaller intimate class sizes structured to meet the changing needs of our participants. Students of all ages were happy to resume in person classes. Offerings to local schools slowly resumed in the fall—it was refreshing to hear enthusiastic youth enjoying the exhibitions and creating their own master pieces.

The end of the year saw staffing changes with our Director / Curator Tabatha Watson leaving the organization. The Board would like to extend a sincere and thorough Thank You to Tabatha for steering the Gallery through the challenging last few years. We wish Tabatha much success as she explores new opportunities.

- Colleen Bulla, Chair

Director's Message

2022 was a busy year at the Gallery. Staff obtained a significant amount of additional grant funding that enabled the team to move forward with a number of initiatives to support the ongoing gallery operations and preservation of the art collection.

Grant funded staffing positions were created to provide emerging museum professionals opportunities to work with us on Marketing & Social Media campaigns, to develop the Virtual Studio, and to transcribe Homer Watson letters. Generous support was provided through the Ontario Trillium Foundation Community Building Fund, through RTO4 – Tourism Relief Fund, through Young Canada Works and the Canada Summer Jobs program.

Exhibitions and programs continued to be offered both in-person and through virtual classes, allowing opportunities for participants outside of our Region a chance to explore and enjoy creative experiences.

The Collections team continued to work to provide access to our collection through the Past Perfect database. Staff began to digitize and transcribe letters, translating them into French and making them available and accessible to researchers around the world.

The last quarter of 2022 was a transitional time as Tabatha Watson prepared to leave for new experiences. The entire team would like to say a big Thank You for her strong leadership during past several turbulent years.

-Cathy Masterson, Director / Curator



Historical Significance

Statement of Provincial Significance:

The Homer Watson House & Gallery was the homestead, gallery and studio of Canadian-born painter, Homer Ransford Watson (1855-1936). Watson was the first internationally celebrated Canadian landscape painter, rising to fame after selling 2 paintings to the English Royal Family. Homer Watson died in 1936 and was recognized as a National Historic Person of Canada by the Federal Government in 1939.

The Homer Watson House is part of Watson's artistic legacy; he left a significant architectural and artistic mark on the house, adding two additions to the house and painting a frieze in his studio depicting artists who influenced him. A federal plaque was raised at the site in 1955.





Our Mandate

Vision

The vision of Homer Watson House & Gallery is to preserve and celebrate the legacy of Homer Watson's creative spirit by stimulating the appreciation, enjoyment and practice of the visual arts.

Mission

Homer Watson House & Gallery will fulfill its mission by engaging in a three-part program of:

- Preservation and Collection of Homer Watson's art, his home studio and gallery and the heritage of his life, his times and that of Phoebe Watson and the Doon School of Fine Arts.
- Exhibition of Homer Watson's body of work and regular shows of contemporary local and regional artists.
- Education and enrichment through events and instructional programs in the visual arts.

Values

- Inspire creativity, knowledge and ideas through art.
- Celebrate diversity and inclusivity in our activities and working practices.
- Recognize the inherent value of the natural environment.
- Improve accessibility.
- Operate in a fiscally responsible way to ensure long term sustainability of the organization
- Develop meaningful relationships within our region and the broader arts community.

Core Competencies

Core competencies allow Homer Watson House & Gallery to engage a variety of markets and offer unique contributions to the community that are difficult for other galleries to emulate.

1. Celebrate Historic Significance

- Designated Ontario Heritage Site
- Site of the renowned Doon School of Fine Arts
- Unique architectural design of House and Gallery
- One of the oldest operating gallery in province

2. Participate in Art Education

- Wide variety of classes and workshops for children and adults
- School programs for preschool to post-secondary
- Community, Children's and Family Group workshops
- In-house and outreach community programs

3. Provide Centre for Local Artists and Community Interaction

- Student exhibitions
- Local emerging and established artist exhibitions
- Hands-on teaching and mentoring opportunities

4. Protect Environmental Significance

- Part of the Historical Walking Tour of Lower Doon
- Situated on the Heritage Grand River
- Connected to the Walter Bean Nature Trails
- Affiliated with the Homer Watson Park (Cressman Woods)

5. Build Community Partnerships

- Regional elementary and secondary school tours
- Local businesses, community groups and individual stakeholder involvement
- Other charitable foundations associated: Grand River Conservation Association; KW Community Foundation; Ontario Heritage Foundation; Community Museum Associations

These core competencies originate from Homer Watson's philosophies of environmental preservation through the celebration of arts, culture and community.



Exhibitions

Surface Tension

Eastwood Collegiate Institute

Homer Watson House & Gallery presents *Surface Tension* an exhibition celebrating students from Eastwood Collegiate Institute's Integrated Arts Program. This annual show provides a unique opportunity for art students to create and curate an exhibition at Homer Watson House & Gallery.

Bagh-o-Bahar: Let The Flowers Bloom

Sumaira Tazeen

Bagh-o-Bahar: Let The Flowers Bloom showcases a new body of work by Sumaira Tazeen that investigates the conceptual discourse of how traumatic events disrupt constructs of identity. Using irises as a symbol of hope, Tazeen reflects on her personal experiences and healing after living through the challenges of an unsuccessful marriage and domestic abuse.

Close to Home

Homer Watson

As Canada's first internationally celebrated landscape artist, Homer Watson was no stranger to travel. Throughout his career, he travelled extensively across Canada, the United States and Europe. While the well-established art scene in Europe tempted Watson, he inevitably chose to return to Doon (now Kitchener), realizing that no place inspired him as much as the familiar landscape of his birthplace. *Close to Home* celebrates Watson's love of his hometown, featuring several rarely seen local paintings from the Homer Watson House & Gallery permanent collection.

In Solemn Silence

Marjan Kaviani

In Solemn Silence is an exhibition that explores the relationship between the figure and the atmosphere. Kaviani's current practice involves referencing photographs of her family through a second lens, one that is catered with feelings of discomfort and longing. She seeks to replicate the feeling of certain moments in life where numerous discrepancies in time, logic and space coalesce creating bizarre existential-like moments, in which she is constantly subject to, especially when she is brought face to face with her culture and relatives. Psychology influences Kaviani's work immensely as she is completing her double major in Psychology along with Studio Art at the University of Guelph..

Of Wood and Water

Sharl G. Smith

Constructed using bead-stitching, a form of bead-weaving traditionally used for jewellery, the sculptures featured in *Of Wood and Water* explore the intersection of place and identity through the lens of varying states of wellbeing. The title, derived from the Indigenous name of Jamaica (Xaymaca), simultaneously evokes the influences of Japanese elemental philosophy and the Jamaican woodlands and waterways that served as inspiration for the works. Each piece plays with the boundaries of rigid/flexible, interior/exterior, and material/spiritual to create forms that reference both geographical features and corporeal experiences.

AIR25

City of Kitchener, Artists in Residence

Over the last 25 years, the City of Kitchener has been host to a variety of talented and creative artists as part of their Artist in Residence Program, offering selected artists studio space and an opportunity to contribute to the City's public art collection. Throughout the years, the program has evolved to focus on community engagement and building meaningful connections to art through thoughtful workshops, events and festivals. In collaboration with the City of Kitchener, Homer Watson House & Gallery is pleased to present *AIR25*, an exhibition in celebration of current and past artists in residence and their bodies of work.

HWHG Juried Show

The HWHG Annual Juried Show showcases artworks with an aim to celebrate the diversity, creativity and talent of our art community. For 2022, we had a completely open call for submissions and received almost 200 artworks demonstrating the wealth of creativity in the region.

Mother's Day Soiree

Homer Watson House & Gallery held its first-ever Mother's Day Soirée on May 7, 2022, which was attended by municipal politicians, local business owners, HWHG members, donors, and the local community. The event included artist-led workshops, jewelry making, music, shopping at a pop-up gift market, and more. Tickets included gallery admission, entry to all event activities, a goodie bag, and a signature beverage from Café Pyrus pop-up café. The pop-up gift market featured 6 local artisanal gift creators. The presenting sponsor was Momentum Developments, who committed \$5000 towards the event.



Art Market

2022 saw the second year of our annual art market. With 31 local artist on the grounds of Homer Watson House & Gallery, the event proved to be a success bringing in \$1,200.

Spirit Season

Each year, Homer Watson House & Gallery (HWHG) hosts "Spirit Season," an annual fundraiser in celebration of Homer Watson's fascination and involvement with the spiritualist movement.

The 2022 Spirit Season at Homer Watson House & Gallery included events for all ages:

The Launch Party on Friday October 14, 2022 consisted of haunted tours, spirit-themed workshops, mystical lectures, card readings and refreshments.

The Spirit Market on Saturday October 15, 2022, featuring a spirit-theme vendors market with an activity station for kids.

Psychic Sessions on Saturday October 15, 2022, included Psychic and Medium Readings.

Family Movie Night on Saturday October 22, 2022, featuring the vintage Casper The Friendly Ghost movies from the 1940s, catering to a diverse crowd while being appropriate for all audiences.

T.O.P.S. Paranormal Investigation on Friday October 28, 2022. Led by The Ontario Paranormal Society on the weekend of All Hallows Eve!

Watson's Apothecary (19+) on Saturday October 29 & Sunday October 30, 2022. A cocktail making experience allowing participants to gather rare medicinal ingredients from the grounds to brew their very own cocktail! (Including non-Alcoholic beverage options)

All proceeds went toward supporting Homer Watson House & Gallery's mission to provide accessible arts education, exhibitions and events to our community.



Education and Program Report

Homer Watson House & Gallery's Education and Public Programs aim to provide as many individuals as possible across the region with access to art and its benefits. In 2022, our digital programming continued, catering to families, youth, and adults. The pandemic continued to impact programing registration well into 2022. Homer Watson House and Gallery resumed a majority of its in-person classes by the spring months. Both adult and children's programs were significantly low in registrations resulting in multiple cancellations. Additionally, classes remained in place with lower maximum class sizes.

Summer Camp Revenue in 2022 was \$55,010 which saw a total growth in revenue of 56% from 2021. In total there were 119 campers.

2022 Overview

There were a total of 39 programs that ran in 2022. Total number of participants were 239. There were 51 cancelled programs during the year. Attendance for most programs in the first half of the year ranged at the 45-55% capacity mark growing to between 65-75% for the last quarter of the year.



HWHG Memberships

2022 Overview

Individual memberships purchased: 50

Family memberships purchased: 41

Student/Senior memberships purchased: 9

In 2022, HWHG had 100 unique, active members.

As of Dec. 31, 2022 all memberships included:

- 10% discounts on our children and adult art programs
- 15% discount Framing and Art Centre - 716 Belmont Avenue West Kitchener, ON
- Free admission to Museum & Gallery
- Free admission to Exhibition Receptions
- Free admission to our monthly CreativiTEA Lounge
- Updates about programs, exhibitions, and events through our WATSnew Magazine or WATSon e-newsletter

Donations

In 2022, Momentum Developments generously supported the Mother's Day Soiree with a \$5000 sponsorship.

Donations received totalled \$2522 from 44 supporters. We are grateful to all our donors who have continued to support us through the years.

Grants

Despite the challenges that the pandemic continued to present in 2022, we were very grateful for the many grants and subsidies that were made available to arts and culture to help carry us through the year.

Special thanks to the following granting bodies:

- City of Kitchener Community Tier 1 Grant
- Museum Assistance Program—Digital Access to Heritage
- Ontario Trillium Foundation Resilient Communities Fund
- Young Canada Works
- Canada Summer Jobs

New Acquisitions

In 2022, Homer Watson House & Gallery received a generous donation of 24 pieces of Phoebe Watson's hand-painted china and a selection of archival materials from Sharon Allison.

The ownership of 3 long-term loans were also transferred to the Gallery and are now a part of the Permanent Collection. This includes:

- Various Watson family items from the Ken Seiling Waterloo Region Museum.
- A china candy dish painted by Phoebe Watson from Amy Wadley.
- A dresser set and collection of 6 plates painted by Phoebe Watson from Nolly Gelsing on behalf of the late Ann Hardy-Payne.

We would like to thank everyone for their kind and ongoing support.



Untitled (Watson House Basement). Transfer from the Ken Seiling Waterloo Region Museum.



China dish painted by Phoebe Watson, from the Collection of Amy Wadley.



China plate painted by Phoebe Watson, from the Collection of the Hardy-Payne Family.



From Sharon Allison and the Family of Robert James Watson.

Thank You to Our Supporters

Funders



Membership Sponsor



Donors

Abdul Khaliq
Allen Wadley
Anatoll Guelfgat
Andrew Downs
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Bryen & Karen Fulcher
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Laura Shaw
Linda Brooks
Linda Ponti-Scargi
Melissa Hooper
Momentum Developments
The Paul Bulla Family Foundation
Peter Elgin
Susan Fogo
Zoe Wendling

In-Kind Sponsors

T.O.P.S. (The Ontario Paranormal Society)
Junction 56
Spring Mill Distillery



Treasurer's Report for Year Ended December 31, 2022

BDO continued in their second year as our auditors. Our staff worked closely with them as they audited HWHG's December 31, 2022 fiscal year. The year 2022 continued to impact the normal programs and activities of HWHG as we experienced the slow emergence from the Covid pandemic.

Municipal funding from the City of Kitchener of \$233,652 continues to provide the core annual funding necessary to fulfil our mandate. Additional funding for a Tourism Recovery Project from RTO4 (Regional Tourism Organization 4) brought the municipal funding envelope to \$288,652.

Covid grant funding received from the federal and provincial governments continued to provide support to assist HWHG in this pandemic-recovery year. HWHG has been successful in applying for various grants that are made available by the provincial government and other entities. These include the Museum Assistance Program, Young Canada Works, Ontario Summer Experience Program and Canada Summer Jobs.

Two additional grants have supported the Mission of the gallery to provide education and enrichment through events and instructional programs in the visual arts. The RTO4 Tourism Recovery Project enabled the development of an Augmented Reality Walking Tour of Homer Watson Park (<https://www.homerwatson.on.ca/about/walking-tours/homer-watson-park/>). The Ontario Trillium Foundation, Resilient Communities Fund provided project funding to create the Virtual Studio which supports the online programming and videos created. This combined funding has been identified in this Annual Return as Project Funding totalling \$87,042.

Registration and program fees together with public fundraising combined to \$101,586 in 2022 down slightly from \$103,000 in 2021 as Covid restrictions eased and HWHG was able to open to more public programs.

Expenses, particularly wages grew to meet our staffing program requirements and were prudently managed. Several grant funded staff were hired throughout 2022 raising the wage expenses from \$293,875 in 2021 to \$409,915 in 2023. We are very grateful for the funding we received over the course of 2022 from all levels of government.

During the year, the Board continued to work with our advisor at Investor's Group to comply with HWHG's conservative investment strategy for our funds. The unrealized loss on investments at year end represents market fluctuations at year end.

The year ended on a solid and clean financial footing for HWHG to enter 2023.

Rose Mailloux - Treasurer