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EDMONTON ART CLUB
edmontonartclub.com

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cover photo by rob guetre

January Horizons: A Fresh Canvas for 2026

An overview and perspective

Authored by Seraya Smit

Welcoming the new year with curiosity, courage, and creative connections



As the first light of January stretches across Edmonton's snowy streets, we find ourselves standing at the edge of possibility. A new year is a blank canvas—inviting us to imagine, to experiment, and to create with renewed spirit.

For the Edmonton Art Club, 2026 is not simply another chapter—it is a season of bold exploration. Our past year was filled with growth, resilience, and shared inspiration. Now, as we step into the future, we carry forward the lessons of 2025 while opening ourselves to the unknown.

A Season of Renewal

January is a time of beginnings. It asks us to pause, to breathe, and to set intentions. For artists, this means embracing both discipline and play. Whether you are sketching in a quiet studio, painting against the hum of winter winds, or experimenting with artistic tools, this month is an invitation to start anew. Our club's strength lies in its diversity of voices. Each member brings a unique perspective, and together we form a chorus of creativity that is richer than any single brushstroke. In 2026, we will continue to nurture this collective energy—through workshops, exhibitions, and moments of spontaneous collaboration.

Experimentation and Discovery

This year, we are leaning into experimentation. We will explore unconventional materials, artistic storytelling, and collaborative projects that blur the boundaries between tradition and innovation.

We encourage every member to take risks, to try something unfamiliar, and to embrace the beauty of process as much as product.

Art is not static—it is a conversation. And in 2026, we invite you to speak boldly, listen deeply, and create freely.

Strengthening Community

Our vision extends beyond the walls of our club. In 2026, we will deepen partnerships with local schools, cultural institutions, and community organizations, ensuring that art remains accessible and transformative for all. These collaborations will include joint exhibitions, mentorship programs, and outreach initiatives that bring art into classrooms, libraries, and public spaces.

We also plan to host open studio days and interactive workshops that invite the public to engage directly with our artists. By creating welcoming, hands-on experiences, we hope to demystify the creative process and foster a sense of belonging for all who enter our space.

We believe that creativity is a communal act. Whether through shared sketchbooks, collaborative murals, or intergenerational storytelling, we aim to build bridges between artists and audiences. By inviting others into our process, we not only expand our reach—we deepen our impact.

Honouring Legacy, Inspiring Future

For over a century, the Edmonton Art Club has been a custodian of creativity and history. Each generation of artists has added its voice to our collective story. As we move forward, we honour this legacy while embracing the evolution that keeps our community vibrant.

This year, we will spotlight our club's history through curated retrospectives, member interviews, and archival showcases. These initiatives will celebrate the artists who came before us and inspire those who are just beginning their journey.

Every brushstroke today carries echoes of those who came before—and every new member ensures that our story continues to unfold. Our legacy is not a museum—it's a living studio, shaped by every idea, every risk, and every shared moment of inspiration.

Gratitude and Vision

To our members, thank you for your courage, generosity, and passion. Your willingness to grow, experiment, and support one another is the heartbeat of our club. To our volunteers and supporters, your behind-the-scenes dedication—from setting up exhibitions to managing logistics—makes everything possible.

To our Edmonton community, thank you for believing in the power of local art. Your presence at our events, your feedback, and your encouragement fuel our momentum.

As we begin 2026, may you find inspiration in the quiet of winter, courage in experimentation, and joy in connection. Let this be a year where we not only create, but also uplift—where we honour our legacy while embracing bold new directions.

We envision a future where every artist feels seen, supported, and celebrated. Where creativity is not measured by perfection, but by authenticity. Where our club continues to be a place of refuge, renewal, and radiant possibility.

Together, we will continue to celebrate, promote, and advance the visual arts in Edmonton—ensuring that our club remains a beacon of creativity for generations to come.

Here's to a year of fresh horizons, bold discoveries, and shared artistry.

With gratitude and creativity,

Seraya Smit

"It is my belief that we are the custodians of preserving and safeguarding the historical significance of the Edmonton Art Club." Seraya Smit is past-president and webdesigner for the Edmonton Art Club.



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NEW YEAR, NEW WAYS TO CREATE

resolution ideas for artists

THE MONTH OF JANUARY HAS A WAY OF INVITING REFLECTION. For the artist, it doesn't have to mean rigid goals or productivity pressure—it can be a chance for a reset. Build new habits, deepen curiosity, and reconnect with why we make things in the first place. Whether you paint, work with fibre, collage or prefer sculpting, here are some resolution ideas designed to upgrade your practice.

1 Resolve to experiment more—and judge less.

Make room for work that doesn't actually *need* to "succeed." Painters might try a limited palette or unfamiliar surface; fabric artists could explore nontraditional materials; sculptors might work small and fast and try different materials. Treat experimentation as research, not performance.

2 Favour a sustainable rhythm, not constant output.

Instead of resolving to "make more art," consider setting a realistic working routine that you can maintain. This might mean weekly studio days, setting aside time for daily sketching, or a monthly deep-dive project. Consistency, not intensity, builds momentum.

3 Learn one new skill—or revisit an old one.

The new year is a great excuse to stretch yourself. This might mean learning a new medium, mastering a tricky process you've avoided, returning to foundational skills like drawing, colour mixing, or pattern drafting.

4 Finish more work (even imperfectly).

Most of us have shelves of unfinished pieces. Determining to complete some of that work—even when it feels

unresolved—can be powerful. Finishing a work can teach different lessons than starting, and just as we all learn from our mistakes, we learn from imperfect finished pieces.

5 Strengthen your connection to other artists.

Art-making doesn't have to be solitary, growth thrives in community. Join an art club if you haven't already done so and resolve to attend, and to participate in club challenges, visit more exhibitions, or simply talk more openly about process. Shared inspiration enlivens.

6 Make space for reflection.

Consider keeping a simple studio journal—notes, sketches, material tests, or thoughts about what's working and what isn't. Reflection turns experience into insight and helps your work evolve.

Rob Guetre



Above all, let your resolutions be flexible and kind. The best artistic goals support curiosity, resilience, and joy. May this New Year bring fresh questions, satisfying struggles, and moments of genuine discovery.



A NEW CHALLENGE FOR THE NEW YEAR



A NEW YEAR'S CHALLENGE FOR ME? Getting back into oil painting. I've been focusing on acrylic landscape painting for a few years now, trying different techniques, even different styles. But...the oils have been calling! As I looked into my box of old dried up oil paint tubes that looked more like curled up chicken feet, I thought 'hmmmm...'

Then I thought I'd explore the newer water-mixable oils. So, in November, I bought some Cobra colours from my favourite art supply store (Delta) and I *LOVE* them! Life got busy in December and I had less time to explore but 2026, here I come!

What do I love about the water-mixable oils so far?

- They clean up with water!
- They're healthier and more environmentally friendly without the nasty solvents.
- They are buttery smooth and behave just like regular oils.
- Colours blend so beautifully and oh, the textures!

Acrylic paints have the wonderful advantage of being fast-drying. But if you're not in a hurry, oils are lovely.

Some tips about water-mixable oils

- Yes, you can still use your bristle brushes; however, don't let them stand too long in water like your synthetic acrylic brushes can.
- I am finding that they take even longer to dry than regular oils, so be aware.
- Not all supply stores carry Cobra, a Dutch-made Royal Talens brand. As they become more popular, perhaps they will?
- Don't use them **WITH** your regular oils, or you won't be able to use water for thinning or cleaning up.



I look forward to 2026 explorations!

Cheryl Johnson



The banner features two panels of artwork. The top panel shows a vibrant, abstract painting with green, yellow, and orange hues, overlaid with the text 'Unfinished Painting Challenge 2026'. The bottom panel shows two smaller paintings: one of a white figure on a red bicycle and another of a panda on a red bicycle. A circular logo for 'THE PAINT SPOT' is in the bottom left corner.

Unfinished Painting Challenge 2026

10032 81 Ave Edmonton AB paintspot.ca

GALLERY ART MATERIALS ART CLASSES

This challenge is a wonderful way to declutter your studio, collaborate with fellow artists, and contribute to a unique exhibition.

What: A chance to trade your unfinished painting with another artist, complete their work, and showcase it in an exhibition.

Where: The Paint Spot - 10032 81 Ave Edmonton

When: Submit your unfinished painting now, and complete the new piece by **Friday, February 20, 2026**.

How to Participate


- Submit Your Unfinished Painting:
- Bring your half-finished painting to The Paint Spot.
- Size requirements: Between 12" x 16" and 30" x 40" on cradled birch or stretched canvas (no hard boards or canvas boards).
- Sign a form to donate your work, allowing it to be reworked and used for promotional purposes.

Trade and Take Home a New Painting:

- Exchange your unfinished piece for another artist's work.
- Keep at least 20% of the original painting visible in your rework (no starting from scratch!).

Complete and Submit the New Work:

- Finish the painting and return it to The Paint Spot by February 20, 2026.
- The completed works will be displayed and sold during the exhibition.
- Proceeds Split: 40% to the original artist, 40% to the finishing artist, and 20% to The Paint Spot.



The background features a watercolor-style illustration of a branch with green leaves and small red berries.

**Our January 2026 Critic
Samantha Williams Chapelsky**



Authorized by Seraya Smit

SHARED SPACES

...coming together to paint, write, plan or visit

Betty Dean

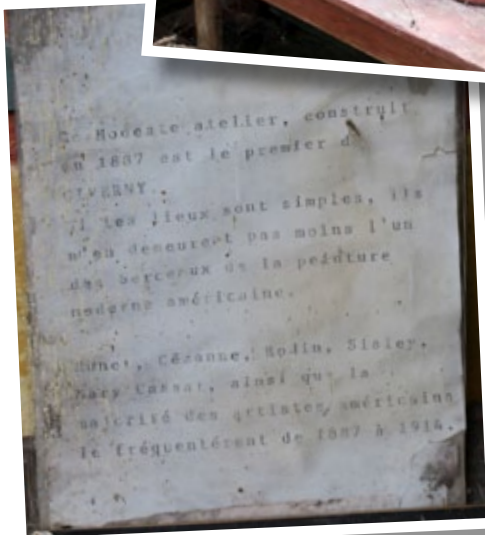
FOR MEMBERS OF THE EDMONTON ART CLUB spaces are important and varied: open studio, retreats, Muttart Conservatory, friends' homes and regular meetings. They are welcoming and respectful, often including informal critiques, debates and discussions.

Common in many art communities, shared spaces have a long history. In 2019 I was able to visit Giverny, the home of Claude Monet, and saw the

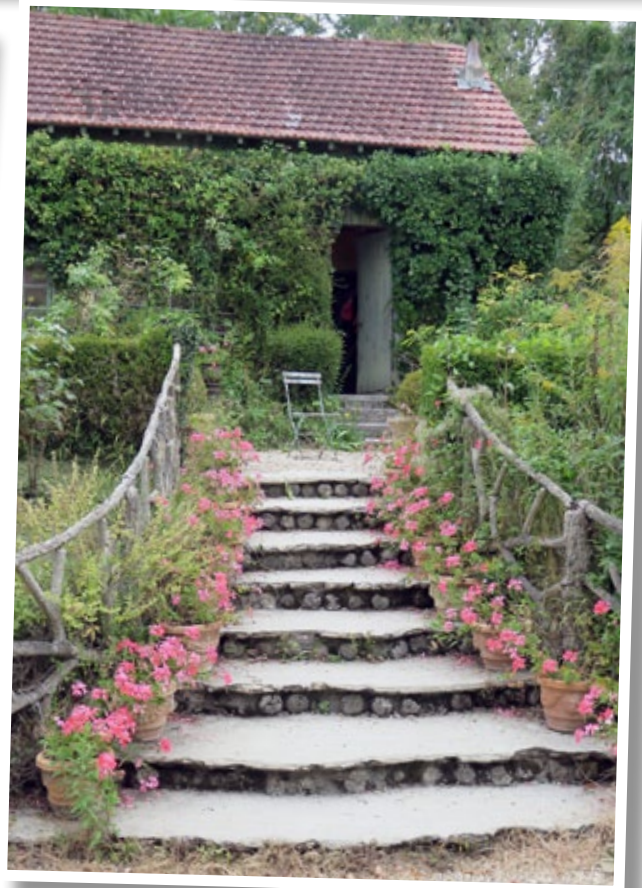
studio space he had close to his home. Between 1887 and 1914 the studio was shared primarily by Monet, Cezanne, Rodin, Sisley, and Mary Cassatt, as well as some unknown Americans.

What a privilege it was to see their welcoming entrance, their materials, and perhaps even a favourite mode of transportation! I am in awe when I think of the art that they may have created there.

article continues next page



*photos I took while
at Giverny*



SHARED SPACES

...coming together to paint, write, plan or visit

continued from previous page



MEMBERS OF THE EDMONTON ART CLUB also benefit from shared spaces. On the first and third Tuesdays of each month, from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m., I host open studio in our home, welcoming members of our club and others in a space very different from Monet's! We strive to make it warm and respectful, believing that by sharing our art and conversations we build camaraderie, confidence and creativity. I have found that my own skills have evolved and I've become more aware of both materials and techniques.

Several of our newest members started at open studio, finding the environment stimulating, comfortable and a great way to get to know a few people before coming to their first meeting. People come and go as schedules permit, and come for varying amounts of time. Some only

have time to stop for coffee and a visit; others stay for the full length. Staying over lunch is easy- people bring food to share and take home the leftovers. I provide coffee, crackers and cheese, washroom and the laundry room sink for clean up. Easy and fun for me- and it seems good for all of us.

We break over the summer, and start again mid September, or as soon as I return if we're travelling. New members are always welcome. On the Sunday before each open studio date, I send an e-mail to club members and a few friends who have expressed interest. I expect people to let me know if they're coming – just to help with my planning. If no one is coming I may not stay home.

It would be lovely to see more people – you don't have to sign up, just let me know if you're going to join us!

OUR NEXT OPEN STUDIO DATE IS TUESDAY, MARCH 3, 2026



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how to develop your gifts

IF YOU WERE RECENTLY GIVEN SOME BRAND NEW SKETCHING SUPPLIES, here are a few suggestions to get you started down the right path

1. The best subjects are close at hand. They are around you already—your family, yourself in a mirror, your dog, your kitchen table, your neighborhood. You don't need to travel to exotic or picturesque places to find "worthy" subjects. If you can't find magic in a fire hydrant or a pair of shoes, you won't find it in Venice.

2. Figure out your way of seeing.

There are basically two mindsets: Imaginative and Observational. Some people like to build worlds from their heads; others prefer to report on the world in front of them. Most of us are a mix, but knowing which one makes your heart beat faster helps you choose your first project.

3. Linear vs. Tonal. There are two main ways of seeing: as a the map-maker (lines, edges, and shapes) or the sculptor (form, light and shadow). I've noticed that artists often



Pencils from *The Artist's Guide to Sketching*

seem hard-wired for one or the other. Try both. You'll soon realize which approach is for you.

4. Social or Solitary?

If you're a social soul, invite a friend or find a sketch group. But if you relish the chance to be alone with your thoughts, don't feel guilty about heading out solo. The

sketchbook can be a bridge to people or a fortress of solitude.

5. Figure out what motivates you. You don't have to show anyone—or publish—your results unless you want to. Build on your internal motivation. If you're drawing for likes on social media, you're letting a committee drive your car. Drive it yourself.

6. Defeat the perfect page syndrome. If you're afraid of sullyng or defiling the pristine whiteness of the first page, start on the second. Just as you have to crack eggs to make an omelet,

you've got to put your pencil in the sharpener or squeeze out some paint to make a picture.

7. Ignore the "Fail Fast" crowd. Art gurus often say you have to fail a lot when you're starting out. I think that's terrible advice. It's much better to focus on succeeding in small ways. We all mess up from time to time, but you'll grow faster by analyzing what went right than by anticipating screwing up.

8. Limit your art supplies. Even if you have a big set of 48 delicious colors that you can't wait to try, leave most of them in the box at first. Start with just black-and-white paint or even a single pencil.

9. Don't forget writing. If you lean more toward being a writer, your sketchbook can be more like a notebook. Figure out what's your favorite writing pen. Learn a little calligraphy. Jot down quotes, ideas, dreams, descriptions, and feelings. Preserve them like pressed flowers.

10. Be a visual journalist. Show us the story of your life and your world. Note the date, the weather, or a bit of overheard conversation. Years from now, those little scribbles, no matter how cruddy they look to you now, will be a treasured time machine, taking you back to a specific place and time better than any photograph could.

from a substack post by

James Gurney



John Singer Sargent sketched to escape from his portrait obligations (More at the Metropolitan Museum website.)

Emerging Curator Fellowship

UPCOMING
DEADLINE

You could receive \$15,000 to curate an exhibition for the AFA *art house* in Calgary.

The AFA's Emerging Curator Fellowship program has been updated and is now accepting new applications. We are thrilled to showcase the next Emerging Curator at our beautiful new art gallery during the culmination of their Fellowship.

The deadline to apply is **January 30, 2026**.

<https://www.afta.ab.ca/funding/find-funding/emerging-curator-fellowship>

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A key mission of the Art Canada Institute is the creation of our open-access digital art library, the **Canadian Online Art Book Project**. The project is available in English and French and is free of charge. Recognizing that we live in a multi-platform world where readers seek content in different formats, there remains passionate support for printed books. In 2019, we created the Canadian Art Library that publishes four books annually. As well, numerous books are online, which you can download. Some of the artists are Robert Houle, Emily Carr, Lionel LeMoine FitzGerald, Jock Macdonald, Helen McNicoll, Molly Lamb Bobak, Betty Goodwin, and many more. You can download these books for free.

<https://www.aci-iac.ca/art-books/>



The AFA believes in the full and equal participation of all citizens in the economy, polity, and society. The AFA manifests this belief

through its policies and programs that promote inclusive citizenship in two distinct ways: in the arts and through the arts.

<https://www.affta.ab.ca/EDIA>

In the arts means encouraging a diversity of artists, arts organizations, and audiences to participate through inclusive access to opportunities and resources in the arts sector

Through the arts refers to the use of art as a vehicle to help Albertans learn how to respond to differences in ways that enable dialogue, promote a sense of trust and belonging, and pave the way for innovation, vibrancy, and meaningful structural changes.

The objectives of the AFA's Pluralism Policy are to:

- Advance equity, diversity, inclusion, and access by committing to pluralism in the arts.
- Promote dialogue, understanding, AFA pluralism, and vibrancy by committing to a pluralist Alberta through the arts.
- Guide the implementation of the Pluralism Policy by the AFA.

See this short explainer video to learn more:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=W60KcQ_gaYQ



THANK YOU!

Thanks to Colours, Delta Art and Drafting Supplies, The Paint Spot, and the Strathcona Art Society for their ongoing support in helping to distribute the EAC newsletters! And thanks to the following businesses who give generous discounts to EAC members!



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CARFAC Alberta works to promote and advocate for the visual arts in Alberta and help Alberta artists become more professional in their practice.

It is funded provincially and municipally and provides a communications hub between members of the visual arts community and the general public. Visual Arts Alberta – CARFAC is the affiliate for the national arts organization Canadian Artists Representation/le front des artistes canadiens.

Member Benefits:

- Professional advice about best practices and rights of artists
- Advocacy on issues affecting the arts sector
- Information about intellectual property (copyright)
- Professional development opportunities
- And much more!

While we cannot speak all languages, it is our job to help all Alberta visual artists become more professional in their practice.

CARFAC Alberta Office & Project Space:

3rd Fl., 10215-112 St., Edmonton, AB

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As the primary arts resource and grant-funding body in Alberta, the Alberta Foundation for the Arts helps to unleash the potential of every artist through funding, arts promotion, and capacity-building. We provide behind-the-scenes support to artists and arts organizations, giving them the power to inspire minds, encourage expression, foster creativity, and contribute to Alberta's economy. From story time at local libraries to annual festivals on neighbourhood streets, the arts are active in your community. Albertans celebrate and support the arts as artists, volunteers, donors, and attendees at local arts events and activities. Experience, celebrate, and take pride in the arts—they're all around you!

Read more at affta.ab.ca/home.