



PRESS RELEASE

Burlington, ON – August 13, 2026

Wiigwasitig / waskway / Honouring the Birch Tree

Curated by Albany Sutherland

Pat Bruderer, Helen Pelletier, Amber Sandy, Seth Arcand, and Angelique Merasty

September 12, 2026 – January 3, 2027

Public Opening Reception: September 12, 1-3 pm

Lee-Chin Family Gallery

The Art Gallery of Burlington (AGB) is excited to present ***Wiigwasitig / waskway / Honouring the Birch Tree***, curated by Albany Sutherland featuring artists Pat Bruderer (Halfmoon Woman), Helen Pelletier, Amber Sandy, Seth Arcand, and the late Angelique Merasty in the Lee-Chin Family Gallery, opening September 12, 2026, and running until January 3, 2027. The public opening reception will take place at the AGB on Saturday, September 12, 1-3 pm.

Reflecting on themes of intergenerational knowledge and healing, *Wiigwasitig / waskway / Honouring the Birch Tree* includes the works of five First Nation artists focusing on birch bark (Wiigwas/waskway). Coming from Anishinaabeg and nêhiyawak communities over several generations, the exhibition features bark biting, baskets, film, photography, and wearable art, through an intersection of traditional and contemporary forms. This exhibition invites conversations on the significance of knowledge systems in sustaining relationships with the Land and kin.

As Indigenous knowledge systems continue to be actively revitalized, this exhibition creates space for cultural continuity by positioning the Gallery as a site for learning, exchange, and the ongoing presence of Indigenous ways of knowing within contemporary art contexts.

Each artist featured has strong community ties and a deep connection to the materials they work with, reflecting their responsibility to Land through artistic practice. **Angelique Merasty**, among the few birch bark biters of her generation, preserved this vital cultural practice during a period when it risked being lost entirely. This legacy continues through **Pat Bruderer**, who creates intricate designs by folding and biting thin layers of harvested birch bark, and now teaches the practice to youth across the region. **Helen Pelletier**'s work contributes to the ongoing transmission of Anishinaabe knowledge, using artistic practice as a form of medicine and connection, informed by the sacred

mountain Anemki Wajiw (Thunder Mountain) on Fort William First Nation, where she harvests annually. **Amber Sandy**, mentored in part by Pelletier, reflects this same intergenerational knowledge sharing through her practice of tanning hide and harvesting quills and Wiigwas. **Seth Arcand**'s film and photography work similarly explores how Indigenous peoples interact with *waskway*, grounded in visiting and reciprocity to document the experiences of Indigenous people across generations. Together, their work shows the cultural continuance of knowledge sharing, memory, and relationships across generations. While systems of cultural transmission have been disrupted, these artists are actively engaged in revitalization by sharing their practices with future generations, offering reflections on the resurgence of Indigenous knowledge systems through their practices of making.

This year, Arcand joins AGB as a **Mentor-in-Residence**, facilitating a five-day mentorship centered on visiting as a cultural and creative methodology. The gathering invites Indigenous artists across disciplines to experiment with new approaches to filmmaking, exploring how storytelling emerges through connections with place, process, and community. Using AGB's studios and both analog and digital tools, participants will follow creative processes guided by curiosity.

Wiigwasitig / waskway / Honouring the Birch Tree has been generously supported by TD Bank Group through the TD Ready Commitment and sponsored by The Rotary Club of Burlington Lakeshore. The Art Gallery of Burlington is supported by the City of Burlington and Ontario Arts Council. The AGB's learning programming has been supported by Culture Days, incite Foundation for the Arts, and Canada Council for the Arts.

This fall, the AGB's **Community Generator** series continues to connect artists with audiences through exhibitions that foster dialogue and new perspectives with local artists and curators. From August 14, 2026 to January 3, 2027, the AGB Lounge presents *The Image Remembers: Chughtai Moving Portraits* by **Mahnoor Euceph**, curated by **Hibah Mian**, which reimagines the legacy of Pakistani artist Abdur Rahman Chughtai through contemporary moving image and explores how artistic inheritance evolves across generations, technologies, and geographies. Throughout the AGB Hallways and Displays, **Paper Pals Collective**'s *Paper Bound* celebrates connections to the living world through printmaking, paper arts, and mixed media inspired by the patterns, rhythms, and textures of nature. Together, these exhibitions celebrate the creativity thriving within our community.

PUBLIC PROGRAMMING

At the AGB, learning is in the making. Through hands-on workshops and courses, artists can build a greater personal connection to their craft and experience professional growth by learning new techniques, discovering other artists' practices, and understanding contemporary art in greater depth. Go to www.agb.life/learn to read more about the programs and register. Friends of the AGB enjoy discounted registration fees for courses and workshops – visit agb.life/support to learn more.

Birch Bark Etching with Helen Pelletier

Friday, September 11, 2026

6:00 - 8:00 pm

Birch Bark Biting with Pat Bruderer (Halfmoon Woman)

Saturday, September 12, 2026

9:30 – 11:30 am

Mentor-In-Residence

Visiting Through Film with Seth Arcand

September 14 – 18, 2026

Indigenous participants only

Working with Land-Based Materials: Artist Talk with Amber Sandy

Saturday, October 3, 2026

1:00 – 2:00 pm

Curatorial Tour with Albany Sutherland

Wednesday, September 23, 2026

6:30 – 7:30 pm

Free – Registration required

EVENTS

Contemporary Art Bus Tour

Saturday, September 19, 2026

2:30 – 8:30 pm

Open Family Studios

Sundays from 1:00 – 4:00 pm (drop-in)

September 20 - December 20, 2026

Free – No registration required

Gallery Guide Tours

Saturdays at 1:00 pm (drop-in)

October 17, November 14, December 19

Free – No registration required

About the Art Gallery of Burlington (AGB)

The Art Gallery of Burlington (AGB) is a hub for artistic excellence and community connection in downtown Burlington. The AGB presents thought-provoking exhibitions, hands-on learning opportunities, and public programs that invite visitors to see, think, and create in new ways. Home to the largest collection of contemporary Canadian ceramics in the world, the AGB champions a unique artistic perspective that challenges traditional boundaries and celebrates innovation.

The Art Gallery of Burlington is located on the ancestral territory of many Indigenous Nations including the Anishinaabeg, Haudenosaunee, and Métis peoples. The territory is mutually covered by the Dish with One Spoon Wampum Belt Covenant, an agreement between the Iroquois Confederacy, the Ojibway, and other allied Nations to peaceably share and care for the resources around the Great Lakes. We acknowledge that the land upon which we gather, to create and learn, is part of the Treaty Lands and Territory of the Mississaugas of the Credit.

Accessibility Information

The AGB is wheelchair accessible, and wheelchairs are available for loan within the Gallery space. The Lakeshore and Brock Lobby entrances are equipped with automatic doors. Ramps facilitate access throughout the Gallery, and an elevator is available for access to the second level studios. Service animals are permitted in the Gallery. The Gallery has gender-neutral washrooms and upholds that everyone has the right to safe public washroom access.

Art Gallery of Burlington

1333 Lakeshore Road

Burlington, ON L7S 1A9

www.agb.life

@artgallburl

Media Inquiries

Sarah Miserere, Manager of Development and Communications

Art Gallery of Burlington

905-632-7796 x 325

sarah@agb.life