



CONTEMPLATION – Sculpture by Sandra Highfield at Auburn Gallery. Cover photos by Metroland staff.

Art for art's sake

We are a region of artists and art lovers. For some that has meant getting out in the wild and painting en plein air. For others it means putting on a pair of toe shoes and leaping the length of the dock. And for many of us, it means getting out to the pub for a little live jam on a Friday night. Whatever suits your fancy, whether fancy or down home bluegrass, Muskoka has something to delight and amuse.

In these pages soprano Pamela Hoiles talks about how Muskoka seduced her with its musical charms and how she became one of Huntsville's patrons of the arts. And indie icon Hawksley Workman talks about the boy in him that is still moved by the natural landscape of the north.

If laughter really is the best medicine, comic Robin

Clipsham must be the attending physician to our funny bone. Read about her take on women in comedy.

Visual artists are in here too. Huntsville Art Society's reigning queen Col Mitchell lets us in on the opportunities here for emerging artists and we offer suggestions on how to make the most of the Artists of the Limberlost and the Muskoka Autumn Studio Tours.

You'll want to keep this guide around, because we've done the legwork and provide a list of all the events to tickle your sense of creative curiosity right through the fall. Go to the theatre, paint a picture, dance a dance or play a song.

We'll be watching for you.

Pamela Steel.

Arts and Theatre Guide



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The artist within

The courage to create. There may be an artist within everyone, but taking the first steps to recognize and validate the yearning for expression is difficult. Not everyone makes it.

Muskoka attracts an artistic temperament. Professional and emerging artists are drawn to the beauty and stillness of our region that inspires the eye and encourages passion – the heart and soul needed to create.

And so we have become a mecca. The studios within our boundaries are count-



A LITTLE HELP FROM HER FRIENDS – Artist Col Mitchell has found great encouragement and inspiration from Muskoka's creative community.

less. On any country drive you're likely to come across the workspace of potters, painters and all manner of artists, their shingle hung out at the roadside. It is not for small reason that Muskoka has become a designated arts community.

For the new artist who is just summoning the bravado to begin their journey, they couldn't find a happier home than in this community of artists.

Col Mitchell decided to return to her work after a long hiatus not quite two years ago. She is now president of the Huntsville Art Society (previously called the Huntsville Art Crowd), a group of 90 local artists. Mitchell studied fine arts at Fanshawe College in London and worked for a graphic arts company in Huntsville before taking 12 years off to home-school her children.

She summoned the courage to drop into one of the Huntsville Art Society's open studios at Robinson's Independent Grocer with a piece of her work. The warm reception she received was encouraging and affirming of her decision to pursue art as a career.

"The first time I walked in there, it was really nice," says Mitchell. "I didn't come prepared to work but everyone was working and a couple of other artists set me up.

They gave me paper and paints and got me going.

"I hadn't met a single one of those people before. It was the weirdest thing; I hadn't met a single artist in 12 years, so this was a step back into what I had loved. And everyone was welcoming, kind and generous.

"I was going back! It was an extremely positive experience. I went to the open studio every week. Having access to other artists like that is terrifically beneficial – it's gold really. I was also a member of Muskoka Arts and Crafts and they were running their business of art series so

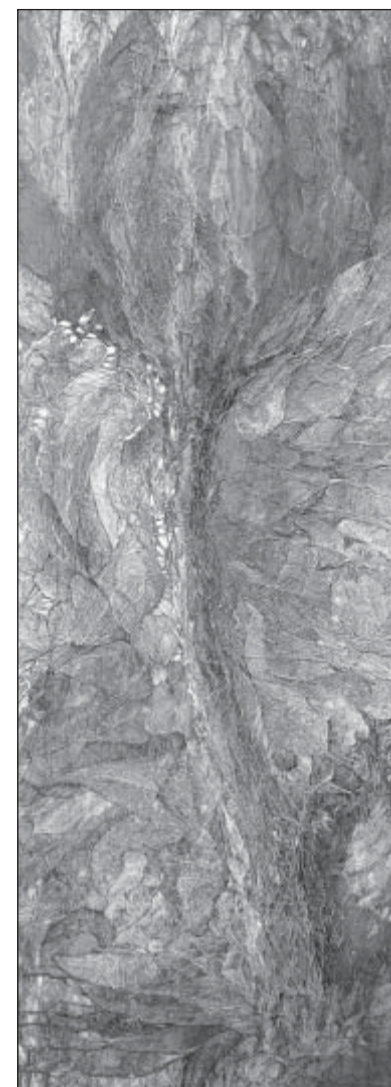
they had these great workshops discussing the business aspects of art. How to do shows, market yourself, how to show your work.

"Guidance also came in a very strong way through the marvelous women at North Art Supplies. Donna Buchan, Janine Marson and Naomi Brinkhof are so extremely knowledgeable – they were my mentors. I would bring my work in and they would discuss it with me and offer suggestions.

"In Huntsville you have access to working artists who are beyond generous with their help and support on a daily basis. If you consider Northart and the weekly open studios, you have access which is pretty unique."

I went to the open studio every week. Having access to other artists like that is terrifically beneficial – it's gold really.

– COL MITCHELL



RED HEADS - Col Mitchell's artwork is unique in its use of texture.

Visual Artist