

MUSING AWAY THE AUTUMN

FALL'S VISUAL ARTS SLATE IS AWASH IN COLOUR

visual BY TINA HASSANNIA



SELF-PORTRAIT BY PETER SCHMELZER (2008). OIL ON
CANVAS, 10" X 18"

Autumn is nature's own muse, a season chock-full of colourful backdrops that inspire contemplation. For the past four months, we've let our minds roam free while soaking up the warm rays. But as the sun sets on the passing season, autumn invites us to reflect on our surroundings, an activity that is well placed inside of Ottawa's art galleries.

The city's annual photography festival, simply titled **X**, is one of the biggest events to happen this fall, mostly because it involves almost every gallery in town – that includes suburban locations. From Sept. 10 to 28, solo and group exhibitions and events will take place at 28 locations in a cumulative effort to celebrate the art of photography. This year's theme is "The Decisive Moment," which reflects that well-known split-second action photographers must take to capture that perfect shot. The festival website (festivalx.ca) lists this year's schedule, locations and events, which include an opening gala on Sept. 18 at St. Brigid's Centre for the Arts and Humanities.

Small gallery exhibitions show the most promise this season, which include **LORE**, a Gallery 101 exhibit about the storytelling customs of First Nations cultures. Unlike oral traditions, the three artists behind **LORE** tell their stories through artwork, though they will be giving artist lectures on their pieces Sept. 5 at 7:30. You can catch the exhibit from then until Oct. 4.

The Ottawa Art Gallery continues the trend of Canadian-inspired artwork with **Le Salon**, a 35-year-anniversary

exhibit dedicated to its Firestone Collection, compiled by O.J. and Isobel Firestone over 50 years ago, and donated to the city in 1972. A selection of the best pieces has been picked from the collection's 1,600 pieces to be displayed for the anniversary exhibit, which runs Aug. 2 to Nov. 9.

Speaking of celebrations, the OAG throws away its teenage growing pains on Sept. 4 to celebrate its 20th birthday. Retro tunes from the '80s, delicious cake, button-making activities and karaoke will be offered at the gallery's birthday bash. The event also marks the opening of the gallery's **Evidence: The Ottawa City Project** exhibit, which examines the contradictions of the nation's capital that span from its poor arts funding and nationally funded cultural institutions to its extremes in weather conditions.

Speaking of contradictions, the two-headed, furry-faced naked man that introduces **Peter Schmelzer's** absurdist paintings at La Petite Mort is surely an indication that Schmelzer's stuff is worth checking out, which will run at LPM Oct. 3 to Nov. 2. For spur-of-the-moment gallery dates, LPM lists an entire season's worth of one-night shows on its website, lapetitemortgallery.com.

Beside's nature's own artwork – like the colourful leaves and gourds of autumn – galleries are one of the last refuges to satiate the senses. Get thee to a gallery, now.

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