

Artists provide ‘Geography Lessons’ for gallery-goers

Geography Lessons: Nellie Duke and Sophie Atkinson
May 13 to August 20, 2023

May 10, 2023 – Kelowna, BC: The landscapes and locations of the Okanagan and Columbia Basin form the inspiration for a presentation of watercolour paintings at the Kelowna Art Gallery.

Guest curator and art historian Carolyn MacHardy has chosen to feature two British-born artists who were active in the area in the 20th century — **Nellie Duke** (1889-1980) and **Sophie Atkinson** (1876-1972). MacHardy has titled the exhibition *Geography Lessons*.

Visitors will have the opportunity to view over forty watercolour paintings by the two artists, on loan from private collections and from public art galleries and museums across British Columbia.

“Looking at the geography of this region through the eyes of Nellie Duke and Sophie Atkinson, we see a land where the Illecillewaet Glacier had not yet almost completely receded; where a view to the west from the east side of Kalamalka Lake did not reveal the slash of a four-lane highway; and where the tops of hills had not been shaved off for development,” explains **Carolyn MacHardy**.

In 1926, Nellie Duke and Sophie Atkinson arrived in British Columbia and became active in the local arts community. Their separate, but similar, life paths overlapped in their explorations of the Okanagan Valley and Interior BC, which became the primary subject matter for their plein air watercolour paintings. Despite the challenges of making a living as an artist during this period, both Duke and Atkinson made artwork that was greatly valued by the people in their respective communities.

An opening reception to celebrate the exhibition is planned for Friday, May 12, 2023, from 6 to 8 pm. It is free and open to the public to attend.



Geography Lessons runs from May 13 to August 20, 2023.

Carolyn MacHardy is Associate Professor Emerita of Art History at UBC Okanagan, where she taught courses in Contemporary, Canadian, and Outsider Art History. She has written numerous exhibition catalogue essays on Okanagan artists and published articles on Lady Aberdeen’s *Guisachan Album* and Tom Thomson’s *The West Wind*, among many others.

The Kelowna Art Gallery is located at 1315 Water Street in downtown Kelowna, B.C.

Media Inquiries

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