

View on Canadian ArtA Visit to Walnut Street Studios

3-4 minutes

This past weekend, at the invitation of artistic director Ilene Sova I visited [Walnut Studios](#), a grey, graffiti covered building just off lower Niagara Street in Toronto. The studios are divided up into about 50 artists spaces, where painters, mixed media artists, street artists, jewellery makers and even fashion designers hone their craft.



Artistic Director Ilene Sova. All images: VoCA

There was some good work being made there. I met [Aaron Li-Hill](#), a 'street' artist who also maintains a bit of a studio practice. He was working on a piece on Kraft paper that looked as though it had been inspired by [Degas](#).



Artist Aaron Li-Hill at work.



A painted skip by Aaron Li-Hill.



The back of the skip.

There were also some intriguing paintings and more abstract, mixed media work. But when we met the fashion designer Julie Phelps, whose label is called Jool, I noticed a wonderful patchwork quilt she was working on and learned that it was for a local school, as part of a program that the studio has, where artists supplement the arts curriculum. I love this kind of community engagement, and it's something that Walnut Studios seems to do really well.



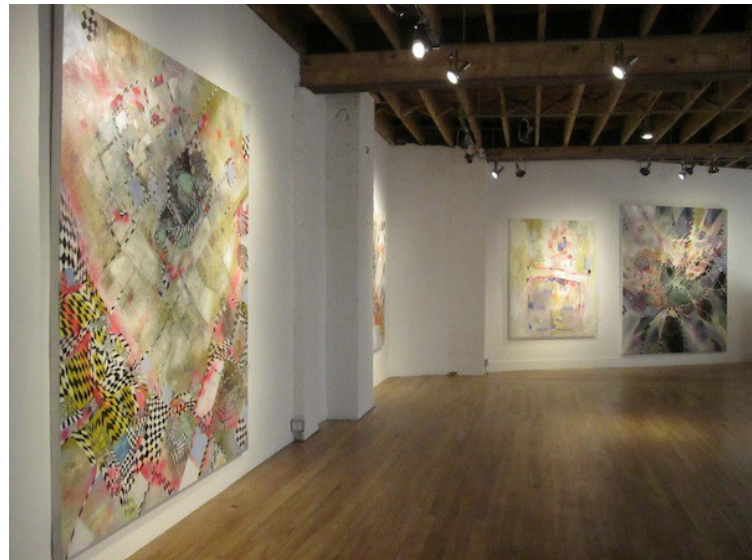
A patchwork piece by Julie Phelps.

Part of the space is also rented to some families who share studio space for their children, which I think is a fantastic idea. Such a creative environment and it means the kids can experiment with paint and on a scale that they may not have room for at home.





The adjacent commercial gallery, with works by Julie Gladstone.



Walnut also maintains a commercial gallery down the street. This gallery shows work by a range of artists, not just those in the studio, and is soon expecting a tenant – [L.A. Design](#) – to share the building. That seems like a good fit to me, since L.A. Design is well established and will attract clients who may also be in the market for art.



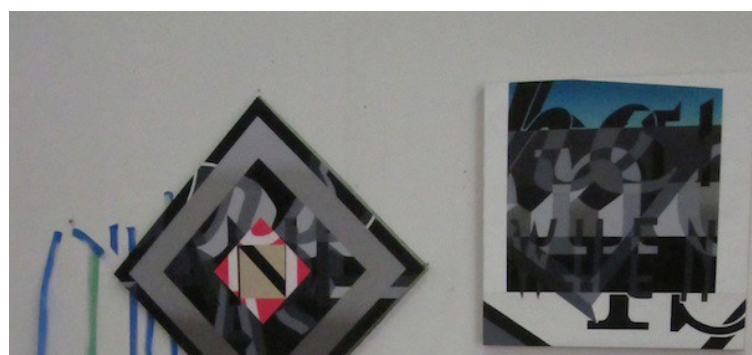
Paintings by Ilene Sova.

The thing about Walnut Studios that most impressed me was the Ilene Sova herself. She is a painter whose latest works are a series of portraits of missing Ontario women covering dates from 1970 to 2000. These works will be exhibited [HERE](#) in March, and Ilene is organizing a [Feminist Art Conference](#) to accompany them.

There is a call for submissions for “visual artists, writers, filmmakers, poets, musicians, actors, and dancers who are creating artwork which addresses feminist issues” to become involved. Deadline is February 1, 2013. More info on that, is [HERE](#).

In the spirit of sustainability and buying local, Walnut Studios will open their doors for a sale and open studio, on November 24th, 1 – 6 pm, to support creative sustainability.

More images from the studio:

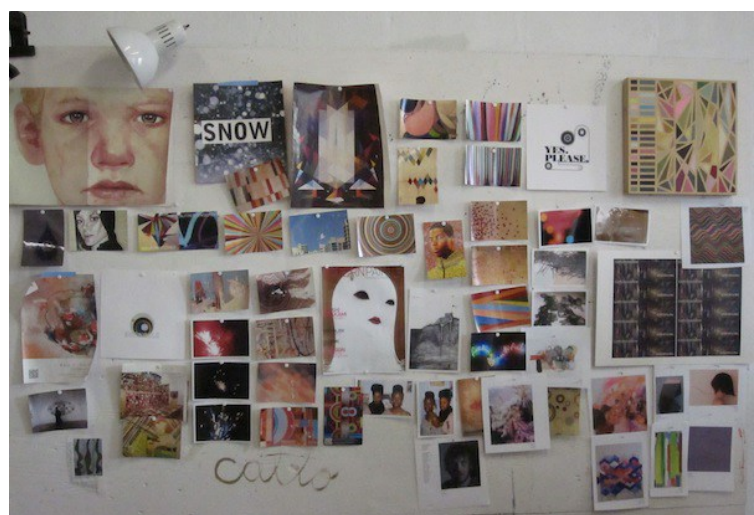




Work in progress by Trevor Wheatley.





Painting by Kira May.



Inspiration boards.



Work by Catto Houghton.



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
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Default	Agnes (English)	Albert (English)	Alex (English)	Bad News (English)	Bahh (English)	Bells (English)	Boing (English)	Bruce (English)	Bubbles (English)	Cellos (English)
Daniel (English)	Deranged (English)	Fiona (English)	Fred (English)	Good News (English)	Hysterical (English)	Junior (English)	Karen (English)	Kathy (English)	Moira (English)	
Pipe Organ (English)	Princess (English)	Ralph (English)	Samantha (English)	Tessa (English)	Trinoids (English)	Veena (English)	Vicki (English)	Victoria (English)	Whisper (English)	
Zarvox (English)										

