

Neighbours of

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THE GLEBE

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Meet Nicole Allen: A Local Artist!



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By Rielly Riggs | Photos by Union Eleven Photography

As an artist who finds inspiration for her paintings in nature and her surrounding environment, it's no surprise that Nicole Allen lives in the Glebe. Much of the inspiration for her floral paintings comes from her walks in the Glebe, where she appreciates the beauty of nature and the local gardens. "For me, the Glebe is an artistically-supportive and inspiring community," says Nicole.

Growing up in Oakville, her father, an artist himself, inspired her to create her first paintings. Nicole received her Bachelor's degree in Art History from Queen's University before moving to Ottawa to study Applied Museum Studies at Algonquin College and further her artistic skills at the Ottawa School of Art. Through showing her work locally, Nicole realized that art was her passion and decided to pursue it as a career with the support of her husband, Jeff.

Nicole met Jeff in Lake Louise, Alberta, where she worked after completing her degree at Queen's. Jeff attended Glebe Collegiate Institute in the 80's and although he didn't live in the area, would bike in for GCI's French Immersion program. Jeff has fond memories of the Glebe and is still close with his GCI friends – many of whom are also Glebe residents. After living in British Columbia for several years, Jeff and Nicole returned to Ottawa and decided that the Glebe was the community in which they wanted to live and raise a family.

The couple has lived in the neighbourhood since they were married 21 years ago and feel fortunate to be raising their two kids here. Their son Charlie is 18 and attending St. F.X.

University in Nova Scotia, while their daughter Sydney, 15, is enrolled at Canterbury High School in the Visual Arts program. Currently, their family lives on Craig Street at Holmwood Avenue, across from Brown's Inlet where their dog Mojo enjoys playing with neighbouring dogs. They have also previously lived on Clarey Ave and on Second Ave.

Nicole's education led her to work at the Canadian War Museum here in Ottawa before her painting took over full time. For the past seven years she has been working out of a studio on Gladstone Avenue as part of The Loft Art Studios, where she finds herself painting five days a week. Collectively, there are 18 artists with studios on the third floor of a heritage building which was once home to the Standard Bread Company almost 100 years ago.

When she isn't busy painting, Nicole volunteers her time to benefit the community. She has served on the GNAG board in the past and has been working with the Taste in the Glebe volunteer committee for the past six. This annual food and wine event raises money for the centre's Community Development Fund. "I really love having the opportunity to help out with such a wonderful event," Nicole said. "The GNAG family has been such a support to our family through the years and I'm sure will continue to be as we grow here. To be able to give back in a small way through serving on the GNAG Board or through Taste in the Glebe is a pleasure. We have tremendous respect for the entire staff and their commitment to this community and the city."

In addition, Nicole participates in The New Art Festival every June in the Glebe and in a privately-hosted Glebe show each November with proceeds of the latter benefitting both local and provincial charities. These initiatives keep her engaged artistically with the community.

"There is so much support for art and artists in the Glebe," Nicole said. "People support each other and it's one of the reasons I never want to leave. Life is more interesting and colourful living in a community like the Glebe."

Nicole's artistic work focuses on acrylic paintings on canvas. "Right now, I am focusing on large-scale, semi-abstracted florals," she said. Landscape and figurative work can also be found in her collections, but she is more known for her loose and colourful floral pieces.

"Everything inspires my art," Nicole said. "Colour and nature, and especially natural lines. It just makes me happy to paint and find a mood through colour. It's a gateway to abstraction and allows you to create a mood using colour, composition and line."

Just as the Glebe gardens inspire her floral pieces, the Muskoka Region of Ontario, where Nicole spent her summers at a family cottage, inspires her landscape work.

You can find some of Nicole's work on display right here in the Glebe at Bloomfields Flowers. Her pieces are also displayed at Wall Space Gallery in Westboro, at Canvas Gallery in Toronto and at in2art Gallery in Oakville.



Do you know someone who just moved to the area and would appreciate an introduction, someone involved in charity work, a neighbour with an interesting hobby, someone who won an accomplishment, neighbours who are recently retired, have been living in the neighbourhood for a long time, or a family with a new addition? We are currently looking for feature residents so send an email to riggs@bestversionmedia.com and nominate your neighbours to be featured!

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