



Mesmerizing new exhibition is launching at Yorkville's top gallery

by Bree Duwyn for Streets Of Toronto | Posted: August 30, 2024 | Photo: Courtesy Peter D. Harris/Mira Godard Gallery

Toronto-based artist [Peter Harris](#) will be unveiling his latest exhibition, "Past and Present" at the Mira Godard Gallery from Sept.14 to Oct. 5. The exhibition showcases Harris' unique exploration of urban landscapes inspired by his everyday experiences and travels.

According to Harris, his artistic process is to study the works of historical artists, specifically those with connections to Canada. He has a fascination with how artists like the [Group of Seven](#) have established nature and landscapes as an integral part of the Canadian identity.

In "Past and Present" Harris brings these concepts together, highlighting the daily commute and overlooked transitional spaces, such as elevators to lobbies or subway cars opening, "as settings where contrasting artistic visions, historical and contemporary, could interact."

Harris curated a historical painting for each of these various settings, positioning them in the direction of travel. A key component of Harris' work is the absence of people, a deliberate choice which allows viewers to imagine exploring the spaces within the paintings themselves. By bringing famous Canadian artworks into his pieces, Harris intends to incite surprise for viewers who encounter these paintings out of context.

The result is a time-bending and mesmerizing collection that turns ordinary spaces for the viewer, such as a Toronto subway car or a waiting room, into something remarkable.

"As we look at "Past and Present," we take in a collection of images that look back at us, their every meticulous detail giving us another reason to take a pause and to move into a fresh Canadian landscape—one that is of the present and, at the same time, often a century old," said Sara Angel, founder, executive director and publisher of the [Art Canada Institute](#), in an essay analyzing Harris' collection.



Courtesy Peter D. Harris

Graduating from the University of Waterloo with a degree in Fine Arts in 1997, Harris has been inspired by urban landscapes throughout his career. In the early 2000s, he concentrated on highways, overpasses and infrastructure before transitioning to parking lots and street scenes in the 2010s. Harris has been dedicated to architecture and interior spaces since 2017.

His work has been exhibited across North America, including Toronto, Montreal, Chicago, Vancouver and New York City. Harris has also had his artwork in many private and corporate collections, including Colart Collection in Montreal, OPSEU in Toronto and Schicker Thies, located in Germany.

Harris is now debuting his work in one of Canada's leading commercial art [galleries](#), [Mira Godard Gallery](#). Established in 1962, the gallery focuses on contemporary Canadian and international art featuring paintings, sculptures and works on paper, including original photographs and prints. Many well-known names in Canadian art have been represented at the gallery since then, from British Columbia's Takao Tanabe to visual artist Tom Forrestall, and international artists, from Jackson Pollock to Mark Rothko and Pablo Picasso, have been featured at the gallery.

You can spot Harris unveiling "Past and Present" on opening night (Sept. 14) at the Mira Godard Gallery, located at 22 Hazelton Ave.

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