

The air between the leaves

An exhibition by Michel Daigneault and Stephen Schofield at Gallery Stratford, Stratford Ontario

October 19 2025 - January 4 2026

The air between the leaves proposes a dialogue between the practices of two artists who over the past thirty years have shared their life and their studio.

. This project invites viewers to join an intimate conversation between painting and sculpture, between nature and the body, between the figurative and the abstract and between Michel Daigneault and Stephen Schofield.

Presented as “stations” throughout the gallery, the exhibition brings together pairings of two to three pieces (paintings and sculptures)—to highlight recurring motifs, techniques, and visual strategies developed in tandem over the years.

Some stations explore shared processes and the visual rhythms they generate—for example, the *Lennie Small* sculpture is formed from the accumulation of myriad parts in the manner of a sewing pattern, and in a parallel manner, some paintings are built by the accumulation and layering of stencilled leaf motifs to form a whole.

Conversely, Daigneault’s monoprints, made from cut-outs and fragments of children’s books of hero and superhero masks, echo a similar tension between form and pattern that we see in Schofield’s *Sailor’s Delight*, where there is a dissonance between the floral patterns and the sailor’s body. These works establish subtle, yet intentional, tensions between the parts and the whole.

A notable example includes the painting *Tighten Up* (2019) and the sculpture *S’élancer vers la nuit* (2023). Both works gather loose bundles of leaves and branches, tying them together with a thread entangled in foliage of the painting and the rusted iron wire holding the plant stems in the sculpture. Poetic resonance runs throughout the exhibition, encouraging visitors to uncover unexpected and imaginative connections.

Through these visual and material conversations, *The Air that the Leaves Breathe* reveals the poetic potential embedded in both artists’ practices. From the suspended figure in *Lennie Small* to the window-like structures in *Rear Window* and *Who Made the Sky*, the exhibition invites viewers into a layered story—one that unfolds between works, across dimensions, and through shifting states of abstraction and figuration.

More than a simple pairing of artworks, this exhibition is a reflection on work, play and intimacy in the studio, and shows the way that the sharing space over time has shaped the artistic vision of these two artists. For visitors, it offers a dynamic space for the imagining and contemplating the negative space, the forgotten space, the space held by an object — the air between the leaves.









