

## A Stop at the Bakery Perhaps



North Railway shopping day was usually Friday. We'd walk along North Railway, behind my fast-paced mom, through the tunnel to downtown and back again. Along the way we would stop at the post office, the bank, and Woolworths. If we were lucky, we'd stop at the bakery for the day-old apple or lemon desserts.

## Dress Cleaning at its Best



North Railway shopping had everything we needed to meet our weekly needs. There was a pharmacy, a bakery, a grocery store, a corner convenience store, a restaurant and a dry cleaner. Friday was shopping day and all of us three girls would be dragged along all day long. On the way home, my mom would tear a piece of Trident gum in half and give us each a piece.

Just a half of a piece, you ask? Yes, maybe our mouths were too little back then and we couldn't chew that big of a piece of gum! We didn't lean into any excess at our house. But don't even think about taking your gum out of your mouth or spitting it on the ground like I did in front of the dry cleaners. Talk about a whooping and lashes with a wet noodle. You just DID NOT litter.

## A Friendly Neighbourhood Pharmacy



It's the little things that count, don't you agree? Like the friendly service that we received on a regular basis at this little pharmacy on North Railway Street.

Myles was the pharmacist (and the owner, if I recall) when I went to University in Calgary. It was one of the businesses that I would frequent when home from school. They would greet me by name, ask how my schoolwork was going and comment how they had not seen me in awhile. Most importantly, they often asked how my mom was doing — that struck at my heart every time — now that's hometown care and service!

## Artist Statement

I am a visual storyteller. I use visual art to tell the elusive stories of Canadian neighbourhoods and old communities. These urban landscapes and prairie spaces have diverse histories that often go unnoticed.

In this exhibition, I capture the places I remember as a child growing up in the historic River Flats neighbourhood. Each wall designates a specific walk I would take while growing up in this industrial area of Medicine Hat, ...and they all start from Dominion Street, my first childhood home.

As an artist, a westerner, a Canadian and a woman, I have stories to tell about our shared environment. I capture the things people walk by daily, without really taking the time to see the story behind the subject and commit those stories to canvas.

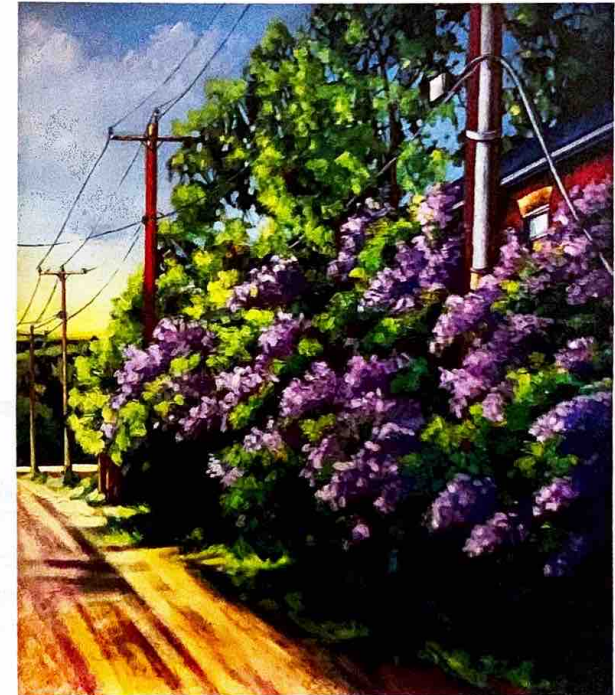
*Eisenbarth*

These neighbourhoods are crucial to our collective consciousness. Like life, these urban spaces are magical...they hold moments in time. A walk at dusk, buying candy at the corner store or an afternoon visit to the neighbours are moments that impact our present and future.

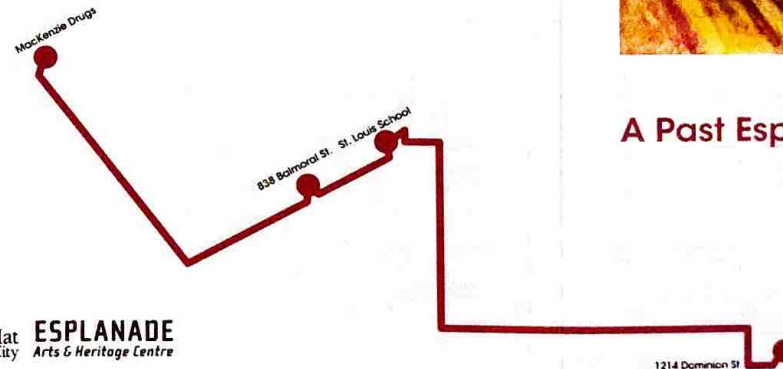
Neighbourhood's shape who we become, they shaped who I became. I want people to see the magic in their neighbourhood.

# Walking the Flats

Theresa Eisenbarth



## A Past Esplanade Exhibition



### Theresa Eisenbarth

Contemporary Artist

Original Artwork Art Workshops Commissions

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Art Studio (by appointment only)

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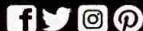
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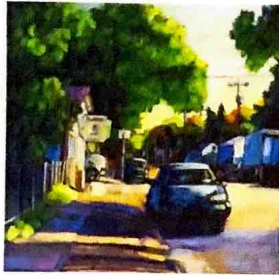




# Walking the Flats

Theresa Eisenbarth

## Neighbourhood Grocery a Deluxe Experience



Remember in the movies, especially the ones in New York at Christmas time like in "You've Got Mail" where they go to the corner grocery store and pick up their wrapped, freshly cut tree to take home? Those are my most vivid memories of this store. My big brother Allan and I would go there to select our tree before the big day in the make-shift tree lot they would set-up outside the front doors

We would hum and hah over the price as we were only given so much money to purchase the perfect tree (I can still hear my mother complaining about how the tree prices slid up every Christmas season). After much deliberation and critical "looking", we would make our selection (because, it had to be perfect you know). They would wrap and tie it up with red string and my brother would swing the string over his shoulder to drag it home. I would follow behind him in my snow covered toque and watch to make sure that the tree made it safely home.

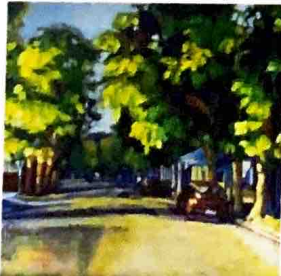
## Blanket of Memories



Sometimes just a number can bring you back to your younger days or even just a few months ago.

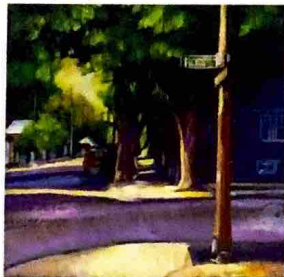
This was the number of our first house on the River Flats project on Dominion Street. We had a white picket fence like in the movies. It seemed so idyllic from the outside.

## Start of the Walk



It was a long way to school. Eight blocks... walking to school with my sister in the snow, rain or sunshine was just a fact of life. A city bus or mom driving us was not an option.

## On My Way to School



When you are alone with your thoughts and one foot is striking right in front of the other, don't you notice the most amazing things? ... The sky changing colour, the chirping birds and the cool darkness of the trees. I recently listened to a podcast and the author said that these little things around us is God "whispering". These whispers are asking you and me to wake up, listen and take action in order to notice the beauty surrounding us. Do you hear it?

## A Street Gone Too Far



Something that happens when you don't pay attention!

## Blinding My Eyes



A turn around the corner never looked so good. On my way to school, it meant that I only had six blocks left to go!

## Don't Forget the Cream Mama

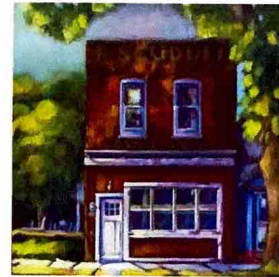


Helen (as we called her back then) had long, braided pigtails. They were done up so tightly I couldn't imagine how her Polish mom had the patience to wind them so evenly and perfect every day. My hair, on the other hand was all over the place... wispy, half curled and knotted most of the days when I didn't have a hot shower.

I would go over to Helen's house and sit in their cool, shaded kitchen. The boy twins would come-and-go, the older sisters would sit with their legs crossed at the end of the table.

dangling their slippers at the end of their toes. They would review stories about their new, dreamy boyfriends and I would listen with hearts in my eyes and wish these tales of adventure in love would never end. Eventually, if I timed it right, scrumptious and exotic food would trickle hot onto the table... perogies, cream-filled desserts and all good things. Polish families were accustomed to eating. My mom was a good, solid cook, but their mom mesmerized me with food I had never tasted before. I thought she was an amazing cook.

## Cash for Groceries



This has always been a building of mystery to me. When I walked down the street to go to school, I often wondered, who started this old grocery business? Like many small towns starting around the turn of the century, grocery stores popped up in the populated areas. Today, they may seem like odd locations, but you can still feel the bustling activity of the past.

These are the images that I LOVE: local stores that project a community vibe and sense of necessity, located in the heart of a working class neighbourhood.

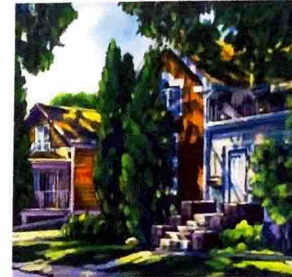
## St. Louis - Who is That Guy Anyway?



Well, I did a Google search and found out! St. Louis turned out to be of particular interest to me.

Louis IX, King of France at the age of 12, was a follower of St. Francis of Assisi. Unlike other kings who gave customary offerings to the poor, Louis invited the poor to his own table each day and even waited on them! He was also a great patron of the arts.

## A Tale of Two Houses



Balmoral Street: In grade two, we moved to Balmoral Street. My walk to school shrank from six blocks to one. I made new friends with the boys next door.

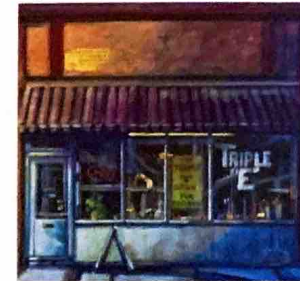
## Barbie Doll Houses Across the Street



I love these quick, get-them-ready houses they built in the early years of all small towns. I would call it row housing, but someone at the gallery recently mentioned that they were called "Ten Commandment Houses" as they often built "10 of them" in a row.

This is a remnant of the row housing located on Balmoral Street. I love how the lines and perspective on the street looks so precise and why I painted this artwork at Easter time... I guess I was inspired!

## Triple Antiques



I'm not sure why it was called the Triple E - I only know that at one moment in time, they had three different antique stores lined up along North Railway Street. Real estate must have been at a low on North Railway in those days, or the antique business was a thriving enterprise!

I'd go in there for something to do... you know, to waste time when I knew that the chores were piling up at home and I needed an escape. I'd run my fingers along all the brass bells, old glass lanterns and admire the diverse wood grain in the classic bedroom dressers and matching sets they had in the showroom.

There's something to say about all those old treasures. I remember thinking, if only I had the money to buy this, or the money to buy that! - a luxury I knew I couldn't afford.

## Taking the Train to Lethbridge



Yes Virginia... there was a train to Lethbridge! My mother's family were in Lethbridge and she would often take the train to visit as we did not own a car.

Why don't we have this service nowadays? Wouldn't it be great to take the train to Edmonton, Calgary or even to Lethbridge for the day or a quick overnight shopping trip? We would feel like the people living in the East who still have a vast train network.