

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Simple Joys: Intimate Works Exploring Joy, Grief, and Connection

ANNAPOLIS ROYAL, Nova Scotia (February 5, 2026) – ARTSPLACE Gallery is pleased to present “Simple Joys” by Barbara Brown Conrod, on view from February 21 to March 21. In an era dominated by digital communication, this exhibition highlights the personal, historical, and connective value of handwritten messages.

In the fall of 2023, Barbara Brown Conrod created and mailed 84 original hand-drawn and painted cards over a three-month period. Each week, she sent a daily card for seven consecutive days to a single friend or family member. While modest in scale, these works were made with intention and care, and recipients were advised that the cards might later be borrowed for exhibition.

At the time, Conrod was also working on a separate body of paintings centred on grief, which she developed in response to the loss of her mother. As a means of emotional balance, the daily card making focused on everyday objects, interiors, and surrounding landscapes. This practice became a source of joy and offered a meaningful counterpoint to the heavier emotional content of her grief paintings. Elements from the cards later informed medium- and large-scale canvases, which were exhibited alongside the grief series in her 2024 solo exhibition “The Art of Balancing Grief and Joy” at the Fraser Gallery in Tatamagouche, Nova Scotia.

“Simple Joys” brings together 32 of the original cards, with at least one example from each week of the project. The recipients represent a wide circle of personal relationships, including family members, friends, and colleagues, though identities are not always disclosed.

“I have always been a letter writer and card sender. I enjoy taking the time to write a letter to someone I know but do not live nearby. After brief genealogy research, I realized this tradition and interest was not only my mother’s but also my maternal aunt, both of whom kept daily journals as well as corresponded throughout their lives with family members and friends throughout North America and the United Kingdom,” explains Conrod.

“Visitors are invited to engage both visually and interactively. Materials are provided in the gallery for visitors to create their own cards, either to leave for the artist or to take home, reinforcing the exhibition’s spirit of shared connection,” said Gallery Director Sophie Paskins.

Barbara Brown Conrod’s “Simple Joys” opening reception, Sat. February 21, 2026, 12-2 p.m. Light refreshments served, all welcome. Exhibition continues through March 21.

Barbara Brown Conrod has exhibited for over forty years and works primarily in acrylic, with an expansive practice that includes oil, watercolour, encaustic, drawing, intaglio, and collage. She holds a Bachelor of Fine Arts and a Certificate in Computer Graphics from the Nova Scotia College of Art and Design and resides in Port Williams, Nova Scotia.

ARTSPLACE is a public Art Gallery that is operated by the Annapolis Region Community Arts Council, a registered charitable, community organization dedicated to encouraging and promoting the arts. Supported through the Province of Nova Scotia and the Canada Council for the Arts.

ARTSPLACE Gallery is located at 396 St. George Street in Annapolis Royal, Nova Scotia

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