

Urban Visionary Carol Coletta to Speak at KWAG's Culture Talks Series



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Tuesday, 28 October 2025

The Kitchener-Waterloo Art Gallery continues a series of conversations on the creation of socially conscious cities with the upcoming presentation [Culture Talks: Art, Architecture, the Public Realm and Social Infrastructure](#). This popular series returns on Thursday, 6 November at 6:30 p.m. with Carol Coletta, a nationally recognized leader in civic design and public space innovation—known for bold, people-first approaches that connect communities and expand opportunity.

KWAG's series of Culture Talks stems from the Gallery's commitment to civic engagement, in which it takes seriously its role as an art museum in city revitalization and explores the future role of artists and architects as cultural placemakers. This year, the series takes a deeper dive into the essential functions of social infrastructure—the network of services and facilities that support community well-being, promote social equity, and drive economic growth.

“Waterloo Region is immersed in an exciting period of rapid growth,” explains Shirley Madill, KWAG’s Executive Director. “With a goal of reaching 1 million and with shifting demographics, there will be a higher demand for areas that are culturally vibrant, walkable, and amenity-rich - places that support the well-being of our citizens. This demands an integrated approach that shows the importance of arts and culture in social transformation. With our partners, Perimeter Development Corporation, Waterloo Region Community Foundation, and Grand Valley Society of Architects, we believe that these talks contribute to our region’s success in an urban and social transformation.”



With Coletta’s longstanding focus on inclusivity and public spaces, it comes as no surprise that she was recently selected as the 2025 recipient of the Urban Land Institute’s highest honor, the ULI Prize for Visionaries in Urban Development. The award recognizes Coletta’s lifelong commitment to shaping inclusive, vibrant, and equitable cities through innovative public spaces and civic partnerships.

"We need to start with the intention of mixing, welcoming, and belonging. It doesn't just happen; you need to be intentional. One of the toughest aspects is getting people across demographics to come together, particularly across income." - Carol Coletta

Carol Coletta is the former President and CEO of Memphis River Parks Partnerships, a public-private partnership responsible for five miles of public property on the Mississippi River. She led a new riverfront concept plan with extensive public engagement, the renaming and redesign of two parks with confederate associations, and the design and construction of Tom Lee Park, winning international acclaim for its designers Studio Gang and SCAPE.²

Limited tickets to Culture Talks: Art, Architecture, the Public Realm and Social Infrastructure are available online from \$12.50 - \$22.50 plus HST or by phone at 519-579-5860 x 100.

About Kitchener-Waterloo Art Gallery

As Waterloo Region's leading public art gallery, the Kitchener-Waterloo Art Gallery (KWAG) connects people and ideas through art. Its nationally acclaimed exhibitions and programs welcome all to be inspired and challenged through a deepened understanding of ourselves, our cultures, and our communities. For the benefit of current and future generations, the Kitchener-Waterloo Art Gallery collects, preserves, researches, interprets, and exhibits the visual arts. It offers dynamic public programs that inspire creativity and an appreciation of the visual arts in the Region and beyond. Established in 1956 and incorporated in 1968, KWAG is a non-profit organization open to the public and administered in the public trust. Admission is free.

KWAG respectfully acknowledges that we are located in Block 2 on the Haldimand Tract: land promised to Six Nations, which includes ten kilometers on each side of the Grand River.* This is the traditional home of the Attawandaron (Neutral), Anishinaabeg, and Haudenosaunee Peoples, whose resilience we honor by offering this Gallery as a space to reflect and learn from one another.

We are committed to reconciliation and ensuring that our Gallery's programs and Permanent Collection demonstrate more diverse, culturally relevant Canadian art and artists.

Accessibility: KWAG is fully accessible.

Visit Us

Kitchener-Waterloo Art Gallery, 101 Queen Street North, Kitchener, ON N2H 6P7
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KWAG gratefully acknowledges the ongoing support of our presenting sponsor, Perimeter Development Corporation, the support of the Walper Hotel, Grand Valley Society of Architects as well as the Waterloo Region Community Foundation.

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(top) The Sunset Canopy published in Urban Land is the magazine of the Urban Land Institute (ULI), photo by Tom Scape. Courtesy of Carol Coletta. (middle) Headshot courtesy of Carol Coletta.

References:

1. Fleming, Sibley, UL Interview: Carol Coletta, 2025 ULI Visionary Prize Winner, interview, released 15 October, 2025
<https://urbanland.uli.org/design-planning/awards/ul-interview-carol-coletta-2025-uli-visionary-prize-winner>
2. Coletta, Carol, Homepage, 1 September, 2025,
<https://www.colettaandcompany.com/>