



Andrew Alexander McLaren

July 22, 1960 - February 15, 2025

ANDREW ALEXANDER MCLAREN, Artist, Father, Brother and Friend, died unexpectedly from sudden heart failure at the age of 64, on February 15, 2025 in Halifax, Nova Scotia.

Andrew was born in New Haven Connecticut on July 22, 1960, the son of the late Ian Alexander McLaren, and Ida Bernice (Orchard) McLaren. The new family returned to Montreal 6 weeks later, where Andrew would reside for the next 6 years. The family moved to Halifax, Nova Scotia in 1966, where Andrew was raised with a love of exploring the natural world, and most particularly the seashore. He fostered an early love for shells and shell collecting, and by the age of 8 was already the curator of an enviable and fully cataloged shell collection. This he would delight in showing to any and all visitors to the house. Andrew generously donated this collection to the Nova Scotia Museum of Natural History in 2018.

At his core, Andrew was always an Artist. From a very early age, he learned how to draw and paint, and this was lovingly encouraged by his parents. By the age of 12, he would spend at least an hour a day sketching his hand before moving onto portraiture and watercolour landscapes. In 1979, Andrew completed his first year of the Foundation Program at Kings College in Halifax (with an impressive A-), before convincing his parents to let him go to the Nova Scotia College of Art and Design (NSCAD). He attended for one term,

before moving to England to obtain a Diploma of Fine Arts at London's prestigious Byam Shaw School of Art. Andrew remained in London for 11 years, continuing to contribute to the local art scene. He was also active in public housing, serving as board member of the Lambeth Housing Coop, while working as a bike courier in downtown London. Andrew returned to Halifax and to NSCAD in 1992, completing his Bachelor of Fine Arts in 1994, and his Masters of Fine Arts at the University of Calgary in 2008. During these years he was also actively involved in Halifax arts, especially as board member with Eye Level Gallery and Khyber Centre for the Arts.

Andrew was a life-long student and comprehensive reader, and his art reflected this. His work was profoundly cerebral and experimental, blending elements of history, philosophy, esoterism, politics and science. A central focus became his tessellated maps of the world, computationally re-rendered using sometimes obscure map projections, as well as exploring patterns in geometry, numbers and spelling. These themes were explored and expounded in his many self-published books, perhaps best exemplified by *Time Machine* and *Paragogic Almanac* (2001), *The Atlas of Nowhere* (2004) and in his exhaustively anagrammatic riff on Lincoln's famous speech, "The Spaghettisburg Address" (2005).

From his days as a bike courier, Andrew also adopted a love of cycling and all things bikes. On returning to Canada, he worked as a bike mechanic at both The Trail Shop and Cyclesmith, and was an avid road-racer, competing in – and winning – many races in the mid to late 90's. And as an early adopter of "cargo biking," many will recall seeing Andrew driving his beloved children through the streets of the city over the past 10 years. In the last few years, Andrew found a new sense of community while working the "night shift" at Canada Post. Though the schedule could be challenging by times, he found the intricacies of the mail system to be fascinating and enjoyed the camaraderie shared with his coworkers.

But for those close to him, Andrew will be cherished most of all for his kindness and affability. He faithfully attended almost every opening and event within the local art community, and was an active member of the local cycling community. His ability to instantly recall detailed and by times obscure facts and connections on the spot were appreciated by many in both communities. Andrew led, by times, a difficult life – not always helped by both his honesty and his aversion to conflict – but he was always bighearted and generous to all with his time and his support. In the end, it was literally his big heart that led his passing.

Andrew was predeceased by his parents, Ian and Bernice, and will be deeply missed by his young children, Oren and Hermione (who he loved dearly), his siblings, Jamie (Katy) and Mary (Phil), his nephews, Arthur (Masha), Lucas and Jacob, his Aunt Verona, and his many cousins and extended relations. Cremation has taken place, and a celebration of Andrew's life will be planned for early spring. Donations in Andrew's memory can be made to the Eye Level Gallery in Halifax, Nova Scotia, the Heart and Stroke Foundation, or a charity of your choice.

Tribute Wall

DC

“ 1 file added to the album Family Photos



Dave C. - April 11, 2025 at 02:57 PM

MW

“ When I first moved to Halifax 30 years ago, Andrew was my studio neighbour at NSCAD. I jokingly tacked up a sloppy version of an M.C. Escher thrift store painting, and managed to break the ice with our mutual appreciation of sardonic witticisms. Our friendship continued, and I have enjoyed many many conversations about music and art. His generosity was king! - Mitchell

Mitchell Wiebe - March 11, 2025 at 11:35 AM

LK

“ It has been a very big shock to lose Andrew, I have many fond memories of his visits to Toronto, our time spent in London, UK and of course family reunions. I was looking forward to seeing him again this summer. Rest in peace cousin, we will miss you. Mary, Jamie, my heart breaks for you both. He is gone much too soon. XXOO



Linda Kellock - March 07, 2025 at 03:26 PM

JB

When our family moved to Halifax from Ottawa, I first met Andrew when I was sitting on the edge of the sidewalk in front of our new home, 1734 Cambridge Street. It was a clear, beautiful day. We became very good friends and of course, his friendship didn't end with just me, because he was a very likeable human being. We'll never forget you Andrew. You'll always be one of my best friends, because you were loved by us all. We're all very saddened and sorry that you had to leave us all too very soon. May you rest in peace Andrew. 🙏

John Brack - December 10, 2025 at 04:53 PM

NC

“ My condolences to Jamie and to Mary and their families on the loss of their dear brother and uncle. I met Andrew only once or twice and enjoyed his self-effacing sense of humour.

Nancy Creed - March 05, 2025 at 04:17 PM

MM

“ Andrew was such a charming guy! ! Exceptionally interesting! Would lend me books to read . Andrew will be missed by all . Rip

Mj McGuire (mailman Brenton st)

Michael j McGuire - March 04, 2025 at 04:47 AM

TH

“ A wonderfully warm, kind and incredibly funny cousin, highlight my memories you, Dear Andrew! Inspiring in your art and your character. Godspeed, and may your wings take you to new heights and on the grandest, infinite adventure! Love and light to your beautiful children, to our family, and to your friends, as we journey this most delicate and sorrowful time. Xoxo Cousin Tara



Tara Head - February 26, 2025 at 10:00 PM

KG

I was lucky to work with Andrew at Canada Post the past few years. He was a funny, intelligent and kind man. I will miss him. Rest peaceful my friend.

Karen Glasgow - February 27, 2025 at 05:02 PM

MM

“ 9 files added to the album Family Photos



Mary C McLaren - February 26, 2025 at 11:59 AM

TH

Beautiful Andrew!! Sending love to you in the heavens my Cousin!! May your wings provide you new abilities and adventures as you soar to greater heights than ever imagined ✨❤

Tara Head - February 26, 2025 at 12:58 PM