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The nose knows

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Painter Mathew Reichertz outside of the Gatekeeper's Lodge in Halifax's Point Pleasant Park.

For years, NSCAD professor Mathew Reichertz has been coming to Point Pleasant Park—once, often twice a day, and always in the company of Georgia, a dog with a big personality.

"I think I know every square inch of this park—we spent so much time here," says Mathew.

Georgia's gone now, but Mathew, a painter, still finds himself drawn to the park, attempting to experience it the way Georgia would have—from the perspective of her nose. Over the summer, he's been based at the Gatekeeper's Lodge at the entrance of Point Pleasant Park, setting off each day into the park to paint *en plein air*. The project is supported by the Halifax Regional Municipality through the Open Projects Program.

Several weeks into the project, Mathew is still trying to put his finger on exactly what he's been trying to capture—"I know this sounds kind of corny, but I'm starting to figure out what smell looks like ... and how to represent it in a painting."

He gives it a name—"interspecies synesthesia"—and laughs as he says it.

"For us, smell is a memory trigger," he says to a group of NSCAD students in Sara Hartland-Rowe's studio class. "But a dog's sense of smell is 44 more times acute than a human's. For a dog then, smell is like pure emotion."

Used to working on a large scale, he built a trolley and super-sized easel to take with him on

his forays through the park. Outfitted with a wooden box that holds his paintings in progress, the trolley carries everything he needs, including a palette, two cases full of paints and tools, a bench to sit on and a goofy sunhat.

Dog walkers and runners who encounter him in the park are welcome to watch and ask questions. He also keeps a blog (<http://www.reichertz.ca/dog-park.html>) to tell people where he'll be situated and to share some of the things he's thinking about, like how odor travels in the wind, for example, or the evolution of a dog's nose.

"Georgia was such a crazy, smart, willful dog and always surprising me," says Matthew. Some of the paintings he's started show lush vegetation and underbrush, displayed at "nose-height" in one of the rooms in the Gatekeeper's Lodge. "In a way I'm still trying to figure out what she was doing and why."