



Pat Ruth Jeffries

August 20, 2025

It is with deep sadness we share the passing of Pat Ruth Jeffries at the age of 74. She passed away peacefully on August 20, 2025 at St. Micheal's hospital. Pat was the beloved sister of Bonnie Thomson and Robert Jeffries, and loving aunt to Suzanne, Jeff, Rodger and Scott.

The creative spirit of Pat Jeffries, a true force of nature, lives on in the vibrant, unyielding art she left behind. Her life was a testament to the power of creative expression, a journey that wove together her roles as a painter, musician, filmmaker, and tireless advocate. Her legacy is etched into the very fabric of Toronto's independent cultural scene, a tapestry of grit, heart, and uncompromising vision.

A proud Torontonionian, Pat was an honours graduate of the Ontario College of Art and Design, where she honed a talent for drawing and painting that would serve as the foundation of her many artistic pursuits. From the outset, her work was infused with a potent political consciousness. Early exhibitions like "Venceremos" and "Peacework" at the Partisan Gallery spoke to a deep-seated commitment to social justice, a theme she would revisit throughout her career. In her later years, this fascination with power dynamics found its ultimate expression in "Demonocracy," a powerful exhibition of paintings and performance at the WARC Gallery that fearlessly skewered political hypocrisy. Pat's creative spirit, however, could not be contained by a single medium. For nearly a decade, she was the electrifying frontwoman of The Heretics, a seminal Toronto band that combined feminist rage with a funky, danceable

beat. As the band's singer, songwriter, and co-producer, she led them on a cross-Canada tour and earned a CASBY Award nomination for Best Female Vocalist. In a telling article from The Toronto Star, a comparison was drawn between the police scrutiny faced by Madonna's 'Blond Ambition' tour and the lack of such reaction to male performers like Mick Jagger. Her fierce and insightful commentary was a hallmark of her approach, both as an artist and as an individual. The Heretics were more than just a band; they were a movement, performing at crucial events like Lesbian and Gay Pride Day and using their platform to champion social change

Yet, for all her public-facing artistry, Pat was equally dedicated to the vital, often unseen work of supporting the arts. As a producer, fundraiser, and communications director, she was an anchor for some of Toronto's most important cultural organizations, including the Mayworks Festival, A Space Gallery, and Trinity Square Video. Her ability to write a compelling grant, design a striking catalogue, or manage a complex festival budget was as much a part of her artistry as her painting. She was a teacher who nurtured young talent at high schools and community colleges, and a mentor who helped countless artists find their voice and their footing in a challenging world.

In the final decades of her life, Pat found a profound new source of inspiration on the Toronto Islands, where she made her home. Here, she became captivated by the century-old willow trees, their ancient, gnarled forms speaking to her in a language of resilience and beauty. She dedicated herself to documenting their presence, creating hundreds of paintings that explored their intricate details and sweeping grandeur. In these works, the political fury of her earlier career gave way to a quiet reverence for the natural world, a final, beautiful chapter in a life lived in constant creative motion.

Pat Jeffries was a unique and irreplaceable presence. She gifted us with a life of fierce independence, intellectual curiosity, and boundless generosity. In lieu of flowers, donations can be made to Donate – Toronto Artscape Foundation

Please take a moment to share a memory or leave a message of condolence.

Tribute Wall

SW

“ I met Pat at Artscape Gibraltar Point in several summers. I live in Switzerland. She was a wonderful woman and painter, a lively person and a great gardener. I bought this beautiful painting of a willow by her. It hangs above our dining table. It makes me think of Pat every day. I'm sad.



sieglinde wittwer - September 13, 2025 at 04:52 PM

SG

“ I was in a writing group with Pat for years. I will never forget her very special laugh.

Sandra Gulland - September 07, 2025 at 07:11 PM

JM

“ 2 files added to the tribute wall



judi mccallum - September 02, 2025 at 08:51 PM

RJ

“ 1 file added to the tribute wall



Roger Jeffries - August 29, 2025 at 10:54 AM

NN

I shared living on the 14th floor commune with Pat and her brother in 1968/69 an 1970. She witnessed the birth of my baby in the commune 55 years ago. A beautiful soul.

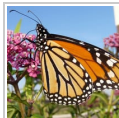
Nicole morrison also known as nikki - September 29, 2025 at 04:28 PM

RJ

“ 2 files added to the tribute wall



Roger Jeffries - August 29, 2025 at 10:49 AM



Love the picture of Pat laughing. She had a great infectious laugh.

Bonnie Thomson - September 26, 2025 at 02:41 PM

SD

“ 27 files added to the tribute wall



Suzanne Danku - August 28, 2025 at 02:49 PM