



For immediate release — Thursday, Sept. 4, 2025

Discover how governments have used art as a means of diplomacy at opening PUBlic Professor series talk

Visiting an art gallery or museum can be awe-inspiring and educational, but did you ever expect it could also be political?

Dr. Anne Dymond, art historian and Chair of the Department of Art at the University of Lethbridge, will explore the mobilization of Canada's art and museums for political purposes during the first PUBlic Professor Series lecture of the 2025-26 season on Thursday, Sept. 25, 2025, 7 to 9 p.m. at the Galt Museum & Archives. A presentation for Calgary audiences has also been scheduled Thursday, Oct. 2, 2025, at the Esker Foundation.



Dymond's talk, [*From a Communist Doctor to Madonna's Cone Bra: Museums and Cultural Diplomacy in Troubled Times*](#), will examine how governments have used art as a means of diplomacy, acting as a bridge that connects nations across challenging divides.

"Of course, museums are for displaying and preserving our cultural heritage, but they've also always been political tools for the governments that fund them," says Dymond. "In this talk I'm going to look at Canada's use of art and art exhibitions to forge an international identity, particularly in the 1970s when the country was taking a new place on the world stage."

Dymond notes that Canada was one of the world's first countries to recognize the People's Republic of China in 1970, and art exhibitions between the two nations played a big role in bridging cultural and political divides.

"From Inuit prints to the creation of new museums, Canada was very active in using cultural diplomacy as a form of soft power," she says. "More recently the federal

government has pulled back from supporting this type of cultural diplomacy, but certain provincial governments have stepped up and, in particular, Quebec has been promoting a Francophone identity abroad by using art and art exhibitions.”

Dymond is a dedicated teacher who has been a University of Lethbridge Board of Governors Teaching Chair and has served on the Board of Governors. Her ongoing work supporting refugees garnered her both the University’s Senate Volunteer Award and the YWCA Woman of Distinction Award. Her book, *Diversity Counts: Gender, Race, and Representation in Canadian Art Galleries*, is the first large-scale quantitative assessment of gender and ethnicity in Canadian art galleries and was described as “a path-breaking study and an invaluable contribution to our understanding of the contemporary art scene in Canada.”

The annual PUBLIC Professor Series lectures spark thought-provoking discussions on the most relevant topics of the day, bringing together a diverse group of experts and researchers from across campus and into the community. Every talk is free of charge. For a look at the full series, visit ulethbridge.ca/research/public-professor.

2025-26 PUBLIC Professor Series

From a Communist Doctor to Madonna’s Cone Bra: Museums and Cultural Diplomacy in Troubled Times — Dr. Anne Dymond, Thursday, Sept. 25, 2025 — Galt Museum & Archives

Cockwambles, Cornucopias and the Curious Task of Economics — Dr. Danny Le Roy, Thursday, Oct. 30, 2025 — Agri-Food Hub & Trade Centre

Has AI Made Teachers Obsolete? — Dr. Richelle Marynowski — Thursday, November 27, 2025 — Sandman Signature Lethbridge Lodge

Playing Telephone with Eyewitness Evidence — Dr. Jamal Mansour, Thursday, Jan. 29, 2026 — The Owl Acoustic Lounge

Indigenous Childhood Stories Transform Worlds – Want Some? — Dr. Don McIntyre, Thursday, Feb. 26, 2026 — Sandman Signature Lethbridge Lodge

Legalized Gambling in Canada: Winners and Losers — Dr. Robert Williams — Thursday, March 26, 2026 — Sandman Signature Lethbridge Lodge

To view online: <https://www.ulethbridge.ca/unews/article/discover-how-governments-have-used-art-means-diplomacy-opening-public-professor-series-talk>

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Our University's Blackfoot name is Iniskim, meaning Sacred Buffalo Stone. The University is located in traditional Blackfoot Confederacy territory. We honour the Blackfoot people and their traditional ways of knowing in caring for this land, as well as all Indigenous Peoples who have helped shape and continue to strengthen our University community.