



Claire (as Sheila Spence) with Sheila Spence



Nouran (as Diane Whitehouse) with Diane Whitehouse



Noel (as Wanda Koop) with Wanda Koop and Lily (as Frida Kahlo)

## AN INQUIRY ON FAMOUS FEMALE ARTISTS

*In May of this year, MAWA received an intriguing letter from the Grade 5 class of Grosvenor School in Winnipeg. They were researching human rights, and wondered why there aren't more famous women artists. Good question! We asked the Grade 5 students and their teacher, Karen Pellaers, what they discovered during the course of their inquiry. Here's what they wrote us....*

Our class started by listing all of the famous artists we knew. Our list consisted of 14 artists: Emily Carr, Daphne Odjig, Norval Morrisseau, Carl Ray, David Neel, Saul Williamson, Pablo Picasso, Donatello, Jan Vermeer, Edvard Munch, Vincent Van Gogh, Raphael, Michelangelo, Leonardo Da Vinci and "The Group of Seven" (we did not know their names, but had heard of the "Group"). This is what we noticed about our list:

- most are men
- most are European
- the women artists we know about, we learned about in school
- the Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles are named after 4 of the artists we know about
- if we asked someone on the street, they would probably know lots of the men we listed.

We then discussed possible reasons why we only knew two female artists:

- maybe women were not as respected as men "back then"
- maybe women were too busy taking care of their homes to have the time to create art
- maybe the women did create art, but it wasn't talked about like the men's art was

As a class we decided to do something about this! So we made a plan. We decided to research the following female artists: Emily Carr, Georgia O'Keefe, Mary Cassatt, Mary Pratt, Frida Kahlo, Margaret Bourke-White, Daphne Odjig, Sheila Spence, Wanda Koop, Diane Whitehouse, and Faith Ringgold. The students wrote a biography about each artist and created artworks in their style. Then the Grade 5s interviewed the students in our school (nursery-Grade 6) and the teachers, asking them about their knowledge of famous male and female artists, and graphed the results. We also videotaped the interviews, and edited them into a documentary. Finally, the class wrote letters to the Winnipeg Art Gallery asking about issues related to female artists. Here is a sample of one of the letters:

Dear Dr. Stephen Borys,

Hello, our school is involved in a three-year project on human rights. Our Grade 5 class is doing a project on gender inequality. We conducted a survey about famous artists and found that more males were known about than female. Why do you think that is? Do you have any art pieces in the art gallery made by females? If so, how many are displayed? Also, do you think that there are any female art pieces that should be more valuable than pieces made by Van Gogh or Picasso or other famous artists? We would love for you to come in and help us with our studies.

Sincerely, David

As we were gathering information about female artists, we came across a 2008 calendar that had 365 art images, but there were only 2 images created by female artists. We immediately said, "We need to write a letter to this calendar company!" and did. We heard back from the National Gallery of Art who thanked the students for noticing the issue in their calendar. They assured us that they would think about the male/female balance presented in further publications.

The Grade 5s were proud to learn about female artists, and wanted to promote the work of female artists by sharing their voices. The Gender Inequality Project concluded with the *Artist for a Day* celebration in which each student dressed up as an artist, created a book about their artist, and created a piece of work in their artist's style. The event was a huge success! The students wrote invitations to Diane Whitehouse, Wanda Koop, Sheila Spence, Jordan Van Sewell, Dr. Joanna Black from the University of Manitoba, Dr. Stephen Borys from the Winnipeg Art Gallery, and the staff of MAWA. All of the people we invited attended our event! We were thrilled to meet some of the artists we had studied.

Through this journey we learned a lot more about women artists and inequality in the art world. But the project also made us think about issues of gender inequality in our everyday lives. We will continue to address issues that happened in the past, that are currently happening in the present, and we will take action to help prevent gender inequity in the future.

Teacher Karen Pellaers for the Grade 5s, Grosvenor School  
kpellaers@wsd1.org



Roewan Crowe

## The Autobiography of a Feminist Artist: A Resisting Subject

with Roewan Crowe

Friday, September 2, 2011, noon-1 pm at MAWA  
(rescheduled from April)

Drawing from the practices of feminist artists who have consciously engaged with artistic and cultural performances of the self, and from feminist theories of autobiography, performance and affect, Roewan Crowe will explore the ideas of autobiography and the feminist artist as a resisting subject.

In her queer artistic practice, transdisciplinary artist Roewan Crowe irreverently crafts together video, text, theory, photography, performance and activism. Currently she is completing an experimental novel entitled *Quivering Landscape*. She is an Associate Professor and Co-Director at the Institute for Women's and Gender Studies at the University of Winnipeg.

## Sound Sculpture: from wanderin' in industrial zones to dreamin' in the fields

with Julie Rousse

Friday, October 7, 2011, noon-1 pm at MAWA  
Co-presented with *send+receive: a festival of sound*



Julie Rousse

Julie Rousse has been collecting sounds for over 15 years, and is always seeking new sources and making field recordings worldwide. Raw sounds are, for her, an infinite source of rhythm and colour, which she shapes with real time sound treatment software – real time being the essential element of her spontaneous approach. Her talk will explore the artistic process of a sound sculptor.

Julie is a self-taught sound artist and collector of sounds. She is interested in regaining an organic feeling in music by means of electronic devices and improvisational acts, with a marked taste for abstract narration, turbulence of details and the inextricable disorder of life. She has presented her work throughout Europe, and in Canada, USA, Tunisia and Chile. She lives and works in Paris.

Julie Rousse is a guest sound artist at the 13th edition of *send + receive: a festival of sound*, taking place from October 5 – 8, 2011, [www.sendandreceive.org](http://www.sendandreceive.org).

## Into the Wild-erness

with Suzanne Morrissette

Friday, November 4, 2011, noon-1 pm at MAWA



Suzanne Morrissette

Art and cultural writer Lucy Lippard opens her book *The Lure of the Local* with the following definition: "Place for me is the locus of desire". In this sense, a place is not definitive but rather, it can be constituted variably from a myriad of different perspectives. Employing this understanding of place, this lecture will explore the place of wilderness as a subject of contemporary art, exemplified through displays of desire in land as a means to observe the power of imagination and images in the creation of our environments.

Suzanne Morrissette is an artist, a curator and a writer. In July 2011 Morrissette received Canada Council Assistance to Aboriginal Curators for Residencies in the Visual Arts funding to complete a two year Curatorial Residency with the Thunder Bay Art Gallery.

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Milena Placentile

## What's up with the neoliberalization of culture? ... And why does it matter even if you consider your practice apolitical?

with Milena Placentile

Friday, December 2, 2011, noon-1 pm at MAWA

As the public sphere shrinks to become little more than a place for commercial transaction, governments cutting cultural funding and other public benefits recommend corporate sponsorship instead. What motivated this transformation? What is at stake when we agree to frame our work according to economic outcomes? How can we keep an eye on the big picture?

Milena Placentile is a curator, writer and researcher concerned with socially and politically motivated artistic practices, audience experience and cultural policy. After time spent as a guest researcher at Konstfack University College of Art, Craft and Design in Stockholm, she is now working on a resource for activist artists and their allies.



Thatcher and Reagan, best of chums. Source: [dailymail.co.uk](http://dailymail.co.uk) (photographer uncredited)

The Wendy Wersch Memorial Lecture Committee Presents

Lee-Ann Martin

Intersecting Practices of Art and Activism:

Joane Cardinal-Schubert, Doreen Jensen and Daphne Odjig

Sunday, November 6, 2011, 2 pm at Cinematheque (100 Arthur St.)



Daphne Odjig, *Indian in Transition*, acrylic on canvas, 9' x 27', 1978, collection of CMC

Senior curator Lee-Ann Martin presents the work of three ground-breaking artists, and discusses the ways they challenged art movements and society at large. Joane Cardinal-Schubert (1942-2009), Doreen Jensen (1933-2009) and Daphne Odjig (b. 1919) each played a significant role in advancing the recognition of Aboriginal art in Canada. The focus of this talk will be the roles of each artist within distinct (and often male-oriented) moments in this recent history: Daphne Odjig and the "Indian Group of Seven" in Winnipeg; Doreen Jensen and the formation of the Society of Canadian Artists of Native Ancestry (SCANA); and Joane Cardinal-Schubert and a "new" generation of Aboriginal artists in Canada.

Lee-Ann Martin is the Curator of Contemporary Canadian Aboriginal Art at the Canadian Museum of Civilization in Gatineau, Quebec and is the former Head Curator of the MacKenzie Art Gallery in Regina. She has curated, written and lectured extensively on contemporary Aboriginal art both nationally and internationally over the past twenty-five years. Her writing has been published by Oxford University Press, University of Washington Press, Banff Centre Press, and the National Museum of the American Indian, among others. Martin's recent curatorial projects include *Close Encounters: The Next 500 Years* for Plug In ICA in Winnipeg and *Bob Boyer: His Life's Work*, for the MacKenzie Art Gallery.



The Wendy Wersch lecture is an annual event dedicated to autonomy for women artists, celebrating the memory of Winnipeg artist Wendy Wersch. Each lecture focuses on women in the arts as role models for innovative cultural investigation. The lecture series builds awareness of feminist art criticism, activism and practice. This lecture, organized by the Wendy Wersch Memorial Committee, is also supported by Mentoring Artists for Women's Art (MAWA) and the Wendy Wersch Memorial Fund at The Winnipeg Foundation.



## Mini-Mentorship in Paint with Lisa Wood

Saturday, October 15 and Sunday, October 16, 2011, from 10 am - 5 pm  
 at the Art Gallery of Southwestern Manitoba, Brandon  
 \$30 for MAWA members  
 Application deadline: Tuesday, October 11, 2011, at 4 pm  
 Co-sponsored by the Art Gallery of Southwestern Manitoba

Lisa Wood will lead a group of women artists in a two-day mini-mentorship that will focus on painting. The mini-mentorship will feature critical readings, slide presentations of other artists' works, and group critiques of participants' paintings.

Each artist-participant will have an opportunity to show their work and receive feedback, as well as participate in discussion about other artists' work and art issues. This is an excellent opportunity to practice speaking about your work, to receive constructive criticism, to talk about issues specific to paint and to expand your community.

Lisa Wood is a Winnipeg-based artist who focuses on representational painting and drawing. She received a Master of Fine Arts degree in painting from Yale University in 2005. Lisa has been the recipient of many awards and scholarships, and has exhibited locally, nationally and internationally, most recently at the Art Gallery of Southwestern Manitoba in the fall of 2010. For the last three years she has taught painting and drawing at the University of Manitoba. She is currently the Programming and Administrative Coordinator at MAWA.



Lisa Wood, *Twin Reflection Self Portrait 3*, oil on canvas, 4' x 5', 2009. Art Gallery of Southwestern Manitoba, October 2010. Photo by Brendon Ehinger



## Mini-Mentorship in Photography with Lisa Stinner-Kun

Wednesdays, October 12, 19 and 26, 2011, 7- 9:30 pm at MAWA  
 \$30 for MAWA members  
 Application deadline: Tuesday, October 4, 2011, at 4 pm

Lisa Stinner-Kun will lead women photographers in a three-session, three-week mini-mentorship that will focus on photo-based practices. Lisa will present a range of images illustrating the breadth of the medium and will lead discussions about photo-based art issues. Each participant will be encouraged to bring in work to receive critical feedback. Expand your "frame" of reference, share your work with others and move your photo-based practice forward.

Since graduating from the School of the Art Institute of Chicago with a MFA in Photography, Lisa Stinner-Kun has shown her photographic work in numerous exhibitions, locally, nationally and internationally. In her work, Stinner-Kun searches for photographic contradictions found within the built environment. Her work has been featured in art publications such as *Border Crossings* magazine and published in juried collections such as *Carte Blanche* and *Flash Forward*. Stinner-Kun teaches at the University of Manitoba.  
[www.lisastinnerkun.com](http://www.lisastinnerkun.com)



Lisa Stinner-Kun, *Hatfield House (workers)*, Digital C-Print, 2008

### TO APPLY FOR A MINI-MENTORSHIP:

Please email us with:

- a one-paragraph description of what you make and the ideas that drive your work
- a line or two about why you want to participate in this program
- 5 jpg images of your artwork

If you are not already a member, please also submit a MAWA membership form and payment. MAWA membership costs \$15 for underwaged persons and \$30 for others. Email applications to [programs@mawa.ca](mailto:programs@mawa.ca) and put "Mini-Mentorship" in the subject heading. Note, places are limited.

Cost of each program for successful applicants is \$30.

# Huma Mulji

## ARTIST TALK

Tuesday, January 17, 2012, 7 pm at MAWA  
Free! Open to all



Huma Mulji, *Arabian Delight*, rexine suitcase, taxidermy camel, metal rods, cotton wool and fabric, 41.5" x 57" x 61", 2008

MAWA is proud to announce that, with the assistance of the Canada Council Visiting Artist Program, world-renowned interdisciplinary artist Huma Mulji will be coming to Winnipeg in January. Here's what Wikipedia has to say about her:

"Huma Mulji's work has moved more and more towards looking at the absurdities of a post-colonial society in transition, taking on board the visual and cultural overlaps of language, image and taste, that create the most fantastic collisions. She describes the time we live in as moving at a remarkable speed. In regard to Pakistan, Mulji refers to the experience of "living 200 years in the past and 30 years in the future all at once". She is interested in looking at this phenomenon with humor, to recognize the irony of it, formally and conceptually. Rather than dwell on and follow existing theoretical issues of living and working in a post-colonial nation and applying those stagnant studies to a lived existence, she examines the pace of cultural change through her artwork. Mulji's sculptural works respond to the possibilities of making things in Pakistan, and embrace low-tech methods of "making", together with materials and forms that come from another time, and that are "imported", "newly discovered" or "re-appropriated". For example the work *Arabian Delight* is a low-tech taxidermy camel, stuffed in a suitcase. It plays with ideas of travel, transition, and of mental and physical movement, combined with an old world symbol of the camel, forced into the suitcase, looking formally uncomfortable, but nonetheless happy. This particular work also examines the relationship between Pakistan and the Gulf States and the manipulation of the Governments of Pakistan, the "Arabisation" of the country, for years, towards all but wiping out a "south Asian" identity, to replace it with a "Muslim" identity. For Mulji, this in itself is forced, unnatural, and disagreeable. However, she also approaches this problem from the angle of someone living within it: therefore looking at it with humor, and recognizing the absurd results of the situation, in daily life, and through interactions with each other, and the world."

Intrigued? Don't miss her artist talk!

## MASTER CLASS

Tuesday, January 17, 2012 –

Saturday, January 21, 2012, inclusive; \$75

Application deadline: Friday, December 9, 2011, 4 pm

Huma will be teaching a 5-day intensive for mid-career and established women artists. Discussion topics will include the challenges of large-scale sculpture, issues of cross-cultural representation and how to navigate the perils of the international art world. She will also conduct studio visits with participants, and provide detailed, constructive feedback.

Enrollment in the master class will be limited to 4-6 artists, chosen by Huma in consultation with the MAWA staff.

Huma Mulji was born in Karachi, Pakistan, in 1970, completed her Bachelors in Fine Art from the Indus Valley School of Art and Architecture in 1995, and an MFA from Donau-Universität Krems, Austria in 2010. Mulji's participation in recent selected exhibitions includes *Hanging Fire: Contemporary Art from Pakistan*, Asia Society, NY, *Half-Life*, Zahoor ul Akhlaq Gallery, Lahore, *Farewell to Post Colonialism*, Third Guangzhou Triennial, Guangdong Museum of Art, China, and *Flights of Fancy*, Royaat Gallery, Lahore, Pakistan. Mulji currently lives in Lahore, Pakistan, and teaches at the School of Visual Arts, Beaconhouse National University. She is represented by Saatchi Gallery, London.



Huma Mulji, *Her Suburban Dream*, taxidermy buffalo, metal rods, duco paint, welded sheet metal, cotton wool, 142" x 37" x 36", 2009

### TO APPLY FOR THE MASTER CLASS:

Please email us with:

- a cover letter outlining why you want to participate in this program and describing your artistic practice (doc, docx or pdf)
- a c.v. (maximum 3 pages)
- 10 jpg images of your artwork (72 dpi, not imbedded)
- an image list

If you are not already a member, please also submit a MAWA membership form and payment. MAWA membership costs \$15 for underwaged persons and \$30 for others. Applications are due at MAWA by Friday December 9 at 4 pm. Email applications to [programs@mawa.ca](mailto:programs@mawa.ca) and put "Master Class" in the subject heading. Note, places are limited.

Successful applicants will be charged \$75 for the program. Specific meeting times will be decided by the group.



## Mentorship 101

with Shawna Dempsey

Saturday, September 10, 2011, 1-4pm at MAWA

\$50; open to all

Registration deadline: Thursday, September 8, 2011, at 4 pm

MAWA has been a pioneer in the field of arts mentorship for the past 27 years. In this 3-hour workshop, we will explore the ins and outs of arts mentorship. Topics discussed will include what is mentorship, what makes an effective mentorship program, sample structures, how to select good mentors, how to make effective pairings with trainees, ingredients of a productive mentorship, pitfalls and how to avoid them, managing expectations (realistic and unrealistic), negotiating conflict and closure. This workshop is an excellent how-to for anyone considering setting up a mentorship program, anyone who will be mentoring, or anyone who works in peer-based arts education.

Performance and video artist Shawna Dempsey has mentored many times for MAWA, Video Pool and Crossing Communities. She has also taught mentoring workshops for Visual Arts Ontario and CARFAC Saskatchewan, among others. Along with Dana Kletke, she is Co-ED of MAWA, and actively produces and curates with her long-time collaborator, Lorri Millan.

Please email [programs@mawa.ca](mailto:programs@mawa.ca) by Thursday, September 8 at 4 pm to reserve your spot. Put "Mentorship 101" in the subject heading. Places are limited.

Cost of the workshop is \$50.

## Readings and Creative Writing for Artist Mothers

with Amy Karlinsky and Ariel Gordon at MAWA

Monday, Sept. 12, 6-9 pm; Sunday, Oct. 23, 1-3 pm; Monday, Nov. 21, 6-9 pm; and one date in January TBD

\$30 for MAWA members

Registration deadline: Friday, September 9, 2011, at 4 pm



Amy Karlinsky



Ariel Gordon

Amy Karlinsky and Ariel Gordon will lead a four-session reading and writing workshop for artist mothers. The sessions will focus on texts by artist mothers that encompass poetry, fiction and non-fiction, as well as "mothering" images from art history and contemporary art. Participants will identify themes, patterns and issues; share their own writings and imagery; and develop ideas. This is an opportunity for artist mothers to discuss and theorize experiences, to examine the objective/subjective, social/cultural/economic position of the artist-mother in art and literature, and to create out of the experience of being an artist-mother. It is a forum for play and collaboration, and may be an opportunity to expand the use of text in your visual arts practice.

Cost of the program is \$30. Email your intention to attend to [programs@mawa.ca](mailto:programs@mawa.ca) and put "Mothers" in the subject heading.

If you are not already a member, please also submit a MAWA membership form and payment. MAWA membership costs \$15 for underwaged persons and \$30 for others.

Amy Karlinsky is a writer and curator with experience in galleries and museums in New York State, Manitoba, Ontario, British Columbia and Nunavut. She has taught sessionally for the departments of film, women's studies and native studies, and at the school of art at the U of M; has facilitated workshops for Aqua Books, Manitoba Association of Art Educators, Early Childhood Education Council, and Limmud; and has mentored for MAWA. Her art criticism has appeared in *Border Crossings*, *Canadian Art*, and the *Winnipeg Free Press*, to name a few, and her writing has been short listed for the Manitoba Book Awards. She has taught mothers, babies and children at Villa Rosa and Osborne House and she currently teaches art at TEC VOC High School in Winnipeg.

Ariel Gordon is a Winnipeg-based writer and editor. In spring 2010, Palimpsest Press published her first full-length poetry collection, *Hump*, which focuses on pregnancy and mothering. She is the 2010 recipient of the John Hirsch Award for Most Promising Manitoba Writer and the 2011 Aqua Books Lansdowne Prize for Poetry/Le Prix Lansdowne du poesie. When not being bookish, Ariel likes tromping through the woods and taking macro photographs of mushrooms.



## The Studio Visit

with Mary Reid

Tuesday, November 22, 2011, 7-9 pm at MAWA

Free for MAWA and ACI members; \$10 for non-members; open to all

No need to register... just show up!

Co-sponsored by Arts and Cultural Industries Association of Manitoba

You have been toiling away, all alone, in your studio for quite some time. You feel strongly about your new work and want to share it. More importantly you want to receive some feedback on your practice from a peer, a senior artist, a curator or an arts writer. Curator Mary Reid will offer some keen advice on how to prepare for a successful studio visit and break down some of the anxiety about presenting your work.

Mary Reid is Curator of Contemporary Art and Photography at the Winnipeg Art Gallery. Her primary curatorial interests lie in modern and contemporary art as well as public sculpture, with a particular interest in the investigation of the creative process itself. She has taught and lectured on art and contemporary issues regarding curating and exhibition practice at the University of Winnipeg, University of Manitoba and Georgian College. She has curated a number of exhibitions and contributed to various publications, exhibition catalogues and magazines focused on contemporary art.

## Guided Journey

### Foundation Mentorship Program Year-End Showcase

Saturday, October 1, 2011, 7pm - midnight at MAWA

As a part of Nuit Blanche, Mentoring Artists for Women's Art will be open to the public from 7pm - midnight Saturday, October 1st. Come celebrate the works of the 2010-2011 Foundation Mentorship Program graduates: Willy Carleton, Jamie Drew, Kelly-Jo Dorvault, Heather Komus, Clara Kusumoto, Candace Propp, Wendy Sawatzky, Marilyn Schick, Janet Shaw-Russell and Sue Sutherland.

The Foundation Mentorship Program is a year-long program

in which senior artists share their experience with developing artists. It is designed to help women in the visual arts develop skills and define their decision-making philosophies, and to provide access to the information, resources and support they need to realize their goals. In addition to a one-on-one relationship with a mentor, the program provides a peer group for the mentees through group meetings.



The 2010/11 Foundation Mentorship group in action, August 2011

## Artist Residency At MAWA

Next deadline: October 28 (for residencies in 2012)



Artist in residence Pamela Norrish at work in the MAWA studio apartment, July 2011

MAWA is offering our urban, loft-style apartment to women visual artists living outside of Winnipeg for residencies of 2-4 weeks in duration. Applicants can use this space and time for research, reflection, networking and/or production.

We will provide free accommodation. The MAWA apartment is fully furnished and includes a kitchen, a bathroom with shower, a double bed, a double futon/couch and a designated parking space. All linens and cooking utensils are provided. The apartment is located on the second floor of 611 Main Street in downtown Winnipeg. Sadly, it is a walk-up and is not wheelchair accessible.

MAWA's apartment is a clean space that is not conducive for painting and many forms of sculpture. However, we will work with you and other Winnipeg art centres to help you gain access to the facilities and resources you need. These could include a rough studio, printmaking, video and darkroom facilities, or introductions to likeminded artists and curators.

While at MAWA, we ask that you present your work to our members in a form of your choice (screening, talk, performance, showcase of work-in-progress, etc.). In return, we will pay you a \$300 artist fee.

Artists at all stages of their careers are encouraged to apply. Equal consideration will be given to emerging and established artists. Rural Manitoba artists are especially encouraged. Imagine an urban retreat! To apply for a MAWA Artist Residency:

Applications must be received by mail, courier or email (doc, docx or pdf formats) by October 28 at 4 pm, and should include:

- a cover letter saying why you would like time in the MAWA apartment (goals, rationale)
- a detailed description of what you will need while you are here (access to other facilities or equipment requested)
- first choice of preferred dates; second choice of preferred dates (including start and end dates)
- an artist's c.v.
- up to 20 images on CD as jpgs, 72 dpi (please do not embed in a program such as PowerPoint)
- up to two videos on playable DVD, in Quicktime or as a web link
- a stamped, self-addressed envelope for the return of your materials if applicable

In conceiving of this residency program, MAWA hopes to increase dialogue between our geographical community—Winnipeg—and the art world beyond; to create networking opportunities for women artists; and to provide an oasis in which women artists can do whatever they need to do in order to move their practices forward.

Please send applications to: [programs@mawa.ca](mailto:programs@mawa.ca) or Residency Program, MAWA, 611 Main St., Winnipeg, Manitoba R3B 1E1. If you have any questions, contact Lisa at 949-9490 or [programs@mawa.ca](mailto:programs@mawa.ca).

## Solid Gold Potluck

Thursday, November 10, 2011, 7 pm at MAWA

Tickets: \$30

Don't bring a dish... just come!

All proceeds will go to MAWA's Legacy Fund at the Winnipeg Foundation



Channel the solid gold dancer within... where else but MAWA can you look so groovy at a potluck?

For one magical night only, lucky diners will be transported back in time to a bell-bottomed universe. Don't miss the most delicious, fun meal of the century! Featuring the signature dishes of MAWA's stellar chefs. All you can eat. Enjoy starters, mains, veggie options, desserts, beverages and more! Groove and dine to the musical hits of the 70s and 80s. Dust off those headbands! Dig out that blue eyeshadow! Dress up, chow down, and help us build a sustainable financial future for MAWA.

Spaces are limited so act fast. Buy your tickets at MAWA or from any board member. Then just show up on November 10, ideally in a FABULOUS outfit. Don't bring a dish. This is the best kind of potluck... you don't have to cook!

### But cook if you WANT to...

MAWA is seeking volunteers to contribute a decadent dish of your choice to our Solid Gold Potluck. Do you make something better than anyone? Would you be willing to share a pot or a pan (approximately the size of 12 side servings)?

If so, we ask that you call or email Lisa to register your gift (949-9490 or programs@mawa.ca). Then drop it off at MAWA on November 10 along with warming instructions if any (MAWA has access to a stove in our apartment and a microwave in the main space). Or, if you can deliver it in a hotpot, on an electric warming tray or close to 7 pm, that would be ideal. Please provide an ingredient list, so folks can identify vegetarian dishes and dishes containing allergens.

We will be forever grateful. And your name will be entered into a draw for a special donor prize!

### Another Way You Can Contribute

Board Chair Gwen Armstrong recently made a donation of a hefty pile of Canadian Tire money, 85¢ in all, which she challenges you to match. Most of us have bills featuring Sandy McTire littering our drawers. Why not put them to good use at MAWA? We will use them to purchase a bike basket for the MAWA bike used by our artists in residence, furnace filters, cleaning supplies and so many other useful things...! Drop offs accepted anytime during regular hours, Tuesday-Friday, 10-4. Or plop them in the mail!



### More Excitement!!

MAWA will be partnering to co-host Women's History Month in October 2011 at the Manitoba Legislative Building. This year's celebration will focus on women and the arts. More information to follow.

## Notes on the underground (the truth is in the dirt): the video works of Aleesa Cohene

by Kim Nguyen

Situated below the surface of the earth, the basement of a house is a place of deep intimacy and deep anxiety. Its small windows, often concealed with white lace curtains, create privacy yet seem more like claustrophobic exit routes rather than viable sources of sunlight, and the division between above and below ground is punctuated by the moist air that seeps into your nostrils upon descending the stairs. The basements of my youth were dark: brown carpets and wood paneled walls, drop ceilings and orange lamps, activated briefly by slumber parties or family gatherings. At one time this space was a stronghold for scandalous entertaining—swingers parties and all-night cocktail affairs with mysterious substances and polyester dresses slipping off the shoulders of inebriated women. The only evidence of these activities is the requisite bar in many of these 70s style bungalows, complete with leather stools, mirror tiles and shelves now absent of liquor, tumblers or even a crystal carafe, long since drank or broken.

For many, the basement was the site for first sexual encounters and secretive phone conversations barely above a whisper. It is home to relics of the family and traces of a life previously lived—gently used sporting equipment, deep freezes, broken or unused technological devices, boxes of winter clothes and dusty baby toys alongside secondary furnishings that were demoted downstairs when new items were acquired. The hoarding of these outdated remnants accentuates the anxiety of being below ground, and immediately conjures up other uses of the basement: as bomb shelter or panic room; as danger zone during natural disaster; or as place in which people or things are kept out of light and away from prying eyes.<sup>1</sup> In its temporal confusion and absence of light, the basement is also a humble surrogate for the theatre, making it an appropriate setting to watch an endless stream of forgettable films.

In her video work, Toronto-based artist Aleesa Cohene stitches together scenes from an extensive library of B-movies from the 1970s and 80s, removing images, dialogue, and music from their original contexts to create new affecting narratives. The foundation of her research was formed in her family basement, in which she spent hours watching film upon film, absorbing bits and pieces of stories as she began to explore the parameters of her imagination. Cohene watched television secretly at night, doing one of the most illicit things children do—staying up late. Falling in and out of sleep on the couch, she developed what would later become an intricate understanding of the characters, not as complex personalities but vacant females dulled by emotion, in need of complication. These women, portrayed by the likes of Meryl Streep, Diane Keaton, Debra Winger and Kathleen Quinlan, to name a few, would collectively become central players in Cohene's work.

Like many of us, Cohene grew up watching one-dimensional mothers and sisters; hyper-sexualized single women punished for their femininity, and tragic females in profoundly flawed heteronormative relationships in film and television. Her projects expose mainstream representations of women, often depicted as pathetic, weak, desperate, or pining for a prominent male lead. Her composite characters (generated by merging hundreds of others) challenge these norms as she attempts to reinsert dimension and depth into these empty roles. The process of combining numerous personalities from a multitude of films makes these stereotypes more apparent, yet

1. In 2007 it became illegal to rent out window-less basement apartments in Fort McMurray, Alberta as the apartments were considered fire hazards. For almost 9 months between 2010 and early 2011, I worked in a window-less basement with improper ventilation. For the duration of my time there I suffered from a sinister result of no natural light: constant fear and anxiety over intruders and the invasion that would lead to my imminent and unheard death.

allows Cohene to remove these women from the constraints of the original conventions. Her characters are linked through an emotional undercurrent, which builds, peaks and eventually falls while their faces change and disappear.

The unpopularity of the films the artist chooses, with their lack of special effects, lush scenery or polished aesthetics, brings even more rawness to the footage that is presented, accentuating a narrative wrought with emotion. In two-channel video installations such as *LIKE, LIKE* (2009), an endless stream of women that have despaired over and seek the attention and love of men are put in conversation with one another, their desperation and anguish edited into a new painful story of heartbreak. Are these women lovers? The dearest of friends? The ambiguity of their relationship further immerses us in the intensity of these two women, as Cohene creates a space in which we can listen in on an incredibly private exchange. She composes films that mimic how she witnessed them originally—from the intimacy and loneliness of a basement, a place for us to explore our inner experiences of anxiety, guilt, fear or sadness.

For recent exhibitions, Cohene has introduced an installation component to her video work, painting the walls surrounding the monitors as an extension of the interior and exterior spaces that feature prominently in her films. The colours and patterns are derived from actual items in the source material, producing a situation in which we can physically step into this tumultuous world, into this relationship. We delve deeper, to a point in which we may even just reach out and touch these characters. In their flatness, they look nothing like how we look now, but somehow are reminiscent of how we remember ourselves. In this manner, the work functions like a photograph, capturing a specific memory and point in time while marking the disconnection between past and present. The coloured walls act as mirrors; moments in which the awnings and wallpapers of the film turn into tangible objects in our present, reflecting information back while bringing us to a place somewhere in between then and now—back to the basement, into the dark.

*Kim Nguyen is a curator and writer based in Vancouver. Her curatorial projects frequently explore the realms of personal mishaps, failure, and the intricacies of memory. She has curated exhibitions at the Belkin Satellite, Or Gallery, Gallery Atsui, and PLATFORM: Centre for Photographic + Digital Arts. She is currently the Director/Curator of Artspeak.*

This text was commissioned by MAWA in conjunction Aleesa Cohene's screening on Wednesday June 29, 2011.



Aleesa Cohene, *LIKE, LIKE*, 2009, installation view from the exhibition *Seemed Like a Good Idea at the Time* at Or Gallery, Vancouver, 2010.

## Staff Comings and Goings



Alexis training Gurpreet, August 2011

MAWA has recently hired a new Administrative Assistant. Gurpreet Sehra is a painter and MFA student at U of M. Originally from the Toronto area, she has lots of experience working with arts organizations such as the Blackwood Gallery, the Power Plant and the South Asian Visual Arts Centre (SAVAC). She is also a database whiz, and will be using that whiz-ardry to process your memberships, send you renewal notices, and generally pitch in around the office.

Of course most changes are bittersweet, and this one is no exception. Everyone will greatly miss outgoing Administrative Assistant Alexis Kinloch. Alexis started at MAWA in the fall of 2009 as a student intern, while she was completing her BA in Art History at U of W. Her research project culminated in a paper entitled *MAWA: Successes, Crises and Issues after Twenty-Five Years of Feminist Mentoring in Canada*, that was published in the international journal *n. paradoxa* in July 2010.

Alexis joined our staff in April 2010, performed the bulk of work on our archive project in the summer of 2010, and has worked in the office, maintaining the database, processing donations and mailing out memberships, for the past 17 months. Her sharp mind, ability to conceive and implement positive change, and amazing attention to detail have been a huge part of what makes MAWA function so smoothly and happily. The MAWA staff will miss her endlessly curious questions around the lunch table.

MAWA wishes Alexis tons of luck as she embarks on a Masters in Art History at University College London, focusing on the intersection between art and science. Founded in 1826, UCL was the first university in England to be established on an entirely secular basis, to admit students regardless of their religion and to admit women on equal terms with men.

## Annual General Meeting

Thursday, October 27, 2011, 7 pm at MAWA

MAWA will hold our Annual General Meeting for the fiscal year, May 1, 2010 to April 30, 2011, on Thursday, Oct. 27 at 7 pm. Learn what MAWA has been up to and marvel at a balanced budget! Door prizes! Snacks! Thrills and chills (or at least chilled beverages)! Join us as we celebrate another amazing year.



Revellers Tracy Peters, Karen Schlichting and Allison Norberg (left to right) enjoy an edamame moment at last year's holiday party

## Crafternoon Update

Saturdays Nov. 19 and Dec. 10, 2011, 1-4 pm at MAWA

MAWA is in the process of hiring an Outreach Coordinator who will be programming the upcoming year's Crafternoons. As always, the Crafternoons are free, informal workshops in a craft-based technique. They will be held on Saturday afternoons, and will be led by new Canadian artisans. Want to learn a rare embroidery stitch? This will be the place! Crafternoons are also a great opportunity to hang out with other artists and expand your community. So stay tuned for details!

## New MAWA Membership and Registration Payment Option

Thanks to our beautiful new website, memberships can now be purchased or renewed online. As well, you can register and pay for workshops. Hurray for the 21st century!

## Holiday Party at MAWA

Thursday, December 8, 2011, 5-7 pm at MAWA

MAWA will be hosting a holiday party on Thursday Dec. 8 from 5-7 pm. Come and enjoy the festivities. Everyone is welcome! Bring a friend.

# Honouring our Heroines

By Shaun Jordan

We all do it. Take things for granted, that is.

After hearing about the celebration to honour two of the MAWA founders, Diane Whitehouse and Sheila Butler, I found myself reflecting on what, if anything, did these women and this event have to do with me and should I attend? Aside from their names and their artwork, they were near strangers to me. Yet their life and their actions had impacted me in ways that I hadn't yet considered or acknowledged. I suddenly thought: "What if MAWA never existed?"

With that thought came an unexpected rush of gratitude – to Diane, Sheila and all those who had built MAWA, stoked it and kept it growing. Frankly, until that moment, I had taken what the organization had meant to me for granted. Joining MAWA and participating in the events, workshops and discussion groups has been an integral part of my reawakening and respecting my artist/self. After hearing their stories at the event, I realized that MAWA had been chiselled out of real life experiences and situations that had summoned the heroine to rise up and fight, to clear a path for other women.

For at least 20 years, I put my practice on "life-support" while my choices led me in other directions including a career in graphic design and communications. Without getting too deeply into art versus design (I respect both disciplines), I often likened the experience of being an artist working as a graphic designer to that of a harnessed animal as opposed to one living in the wild. Over the years I became lost – an artist without a community, without an identity as an artist.

My story is not entirely unique. The logistics of living as an artist can be a steep hill to climb and I expect that most artists, particularly women, have at some point faced barriers, whether it be

role conflicts, inadequate supports (financial and otherwise), divided energies and/or compromised identities.

Entering the door at MAWA I found a diverse group of women with one burning thing in common – that creative fire – and with it an implicit respect for the artist/self in all those seeking to nurture it. To that end, there is an incredible array of resources offered – intellectual, practical and inspirational. Whatever your barriers, self-imposed or not, you will at the very least receive as much as you put into your practice. Having these supports and tools available means that reaching your creative potential is squarely in your hands – which I believe is at the core of what Diane and Sheila were seeking to accomplish in their efforts.

The freedom to express yourself and to create art is such a basic human right. The creative fire is something that belongs to all of us and yet none of us. To take that for granted would be like dismissing all of the other gains in the women's movement that are built on real courage, strength and tenacity to push against the weight of centuries of accumulated oppression masquerading as the status quo. It is a lot like taking our artist/selves for granted. I know all too well what a betrayal it amounts to when we do not honour that heroine.

*Shaun Jordan is a multi-media artist and communications coordinator at the University of Manitoba.*

**Congratulations to Diane Whitehouse, who was honoured with the "Making a Difference" Award at the Winnipeg Arts Council Mayor's Luncheon for the arts in June. MAWA thanks its awards committee, Reva Stone and Val Klassen, for their work on this successful nomination.**



The ever-inspirational Aganetha Dyck, Carol Phillips and Elvira Finnigan (left to right) with Diane's daughter Stephanie Whitehouse (second from right) at the founding foremothers celebration



Long-time feminist art champion Marian Yeo with her daughter Maggie at the celebration for Diane and Sheila



MAWA Board member Rosemary Dzus (third from left) opens the celebration by delivering a brief history of MAWA



Sheila Butler (left) and Diane Whitehouse (right), the two foremothers MAWA celebrated on June 1, 2011, flanking Co-ED Dana Kletke

What You Missed



Lisa Wood introduces the First Friday lecture on Feminist Pedagogy by Amy Karlinsky (waving), April 2011



Curator Clint Enns introducing the works of Aleesa Cohene at her screening, *I Know How you Feel*, June 2011



Colouring with Toronto artist Lauren Hortie (far right) at her First Friday lecture, *The Importance of Pop Culture for a Queer Experience*, June 2011



Divya Mehra (waving) prepares for her artist talk, May 2011



Liz Garlicki's artist talk, July 2011



Some of MAWA's staff, past and present, at the Mayor's Luncheon for the Arts, June 2011



Pamela Norrish (centre in white) shows her current beaded project at her artist-in-residence talk, July 2011



Some of the Mothers Group drawing in Assiniboine Park, June 2011



The fabulous painting party volunteers who spruced up the MAWA space, June 2011



Crafternoon led by quilter Joy Eidse (centre right) at the Winnipeg Art Gallery in front of the *Quilt of Belonging*, June 2011

*" Sooner or later everyone  
needs a little cloth... "*

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Tuesday-Friday, 10am-4pm and some Saturdays

### **Current Board of Directors**

Sharon Alward, Gwen Armstrong (Chair), Chantal Dupas, Rosemary Dzus, Arwen Helene (Treasurer), Alice Linski (Student Rep), Kelsey Middleton, Cheryl Orr-Hood (Vice Chair), Tracy Peters, Kelly Ruth, Karen Schlichting (Secretary), Jenny Western (on leave), Erin Wicks and Anna Wiebe.

Honorary Board Mentors: Diana Thorneycroft and Reva Stone

### **Staff**

Dana Kletke (Co-Executive Director)  
Shawna Dempsey (Co-Executive Director)  
Lisa Wood (Program and Administrative Coordinator)  
Gurpreet Sehra (Admin Assistant)

DESIGN Susan Chafe

MAWA and its projects are generously funded by Manitoba Arts Council, Canada Council for the Arts, Canadian Heritage, The WH & SE Loewen Foundation, Winnipeg Arts Council, The Winnipeg Foundation, Assiniboine Credit Union, donors and members.

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# Heads Up!



**Programming**  
Lisa Wood

**Co-Executive Director**  
Shawna Dempsey

**Admin Assistant**  
Gurpreet Sehra

**Co-Executive Director**  
Dana Kletke

**MENTORING ARTISTS FOR WOMEN'S ART** encourages and supports the intellectual and creative development of women in the visual arts by providing an ongoing forum for education and critical dialogue.

## SEPTEMBER

Friday, Sept. 2, noon-1pm

### First Friday

Roewan Crowe: Autobiography of a Feminist Artist

Saturday, Sept. 10, 1-4pm

### Workshop

Shawna Dempsey: Mentorship 101

Monday, Sept. 12, 6-9pm

### Workshop

Mothers' Readings and Creative Writing

## OCTOBER

Saturday, October 1, 7 pm-midnight

### Nuit Blanche FMP Showcase

Friday, Oct. 7, noon-1pm

### First Friday

Julie Rousse: Sound Sculpture

Wednesdays, Oct. 12, 19, 26,  
7-9:30pm

### Mini Mentorship

Lisa Stinner-Kun: Photography

Sat. and Sun., Oct. 15 and 16  
10 am-5 pm

### Mini Mentorship in Brandon

Lisa Wood: Paint

Sunday, Oct. 23, 1-3pm

### Workshop

Mothers' Readings and Creative Writing

Thursday, Oct. 27, 7pm

### Annual General Meeting

## NOVEMBER

Friday, Nov. 4, noon-1pm

### First Friday

Suzanne Morrisette: Into the Wild-erness

Sunday, Nov. 6, 2-3pm

### Wendy Wersch Memorial Lecture

Lee-Ann Martin: Intersecting Practices of  
Aboriginal Women's Art and Activism

Thursday, Nov. 10, 7-9pm

### Solid Gold Potluck!

Saturday, Nov. 19, 1-4pm

### Crafternoon

Monday, Nov. 21, 6-9pm

### Workshop

Mothers' Readings and Creative Writing

Tuesday, Nov. 22, 7-9pm

### Artist Bootcamp

Mary Reid: The Studio Visit

## DECEMBER

Friday, Dec. 2, noon-1pm

### First Friday

Milena Placentile: What's up with the  
neoliberalization of culture?

Thursday, Dec. 8, 5-7pm

### Holiday Party!

Saturday, Dec. 10, 1-4pm

### Crafternoon

## THANK YOU TO OUR DONORS FOR ALL OF YOUR SUPPORT!

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Marilyn Schick  
Indra Skija-Grislis  
Susanna Sutherland  
Catherine Toews  
Richard Walls

Diane Whitehouse  
Iris Yudai

# Bonus! More Grade 5s at *Artist for a Day* at Grosvenor School

Photos by Wanda Koop, May 2011



