**Selection of MAWA Mentees
– Some Guidelines for Mentors**

**1. Preview all artworks submitted and engage with them respectfully.**

**2. Think about who you could work with.** Questions to consider are compatibilities in terms of choice of media; process; themes in the work; critical, formal or cultural concerns. Do you and the potential mentee appear to have similar work ethics? Could you help to move their work forward?

**3. Think about whether the applicant is ready for mentorship.** Do they demonstrate a commitment to a profession in the visual arts? What is their level of focus? Do they have realistic goals? Do they seem to be receptive to critical feedback and new ideas? Do they have adequate time to devote to the program?

**4. If it is a program with a group component, think about the group dynamic and strive for diversity.** Often a diverse group will yield the most interesting group discussions. Mentees that reflect a range of ages, artistic media, cultural backgrounds and points of view are preferable to a homogenous group.

**5. Be unprejudiced toward self-taught artists.** MAWA recognizes that every artist’s path is unique. Where we begin differs, the route we have taken differs, our goals and aspirations differ, and our personal milestones and achievements differ. A committed practice is more important than the level of education achieved.

**6. Consider an applicant’s particular needs**, i.e. are they isolated, unable to access other educational programs, or do they have special life considerations? Often an artist’s practice has been impacted by forces beyond their control, and will experience profound growth with mentorship and access to support and resources).

**7. If possible, avoid selection of artists who have just completed their undergraduate studies.** Artists accustomed to a hierarchical learning environment will expect assignments and rules from their mentor. A possible exception to this rule of thumb is mature students. A degree of self-reliance and self-definition as an artist makes a more active program participant who will benefit more.

**8. Remember, MAWA does not have pre-conceived goals for the mentorship.** MAWA supports visual artists as they pursue their personal artistic goals. We expect artistic excellence and growth based upon an artist’s self-defined benchmarks and aspirations. Commercial success, graduate school and/or participation in the national or international “art world” are not the aims of the program (although they could be goals of individual participants). MAWA seeks to advance professionalism, skills, self-confidence and self-determination.

**9. In all aspects of Mentorship, including selection, flexibility is key.** Challenge yourself to consider different practices and different approaches. Your mentees don’t need to practice in your medium for there to be a good “fit”.

**10. Do not discount out-of town applicants.** MAWA can work with you to enable some travel.

**11. Create a shortlist of artists you would like to interview.** It is not necessary to interview all applicants, only the ones you feel you can take furthest in pursuit of their goals. Interview questions should be given to the interviewed applicants in advance of the interviews.

**12. Be honest in your assessment of the applicants and what you think you can contribute to their development.** Sometimes we feel torn by friendship and collegial relationships in this small community. Remember, the assessment of applications and the selection of mentees is a professional duty, and not about being “nice” or personal “likes”.

**13. If it is a group selection process, keep all comments confidential.** This will enable candor as you discuss potential mentees.

**14. Remember that this program cannot accommodate everyone.** Every year, strong applicants are not selected because they aren’t a good “fit” with any mentor. Fortunately, MAWA has many other programs they can engage in, and they will be encouraged to apply to this program again.