

Women's Work

"This is so good, you wouldn't know it was done by a woman."

—Artist/instructor Hans Hofmann's "compliment" to Lee Krasner

Every now and then, it is time for a reality check. Settler women have had the vote in Manitoba for over 100 years now, right? So why does it still *feel* unequal? Are we just crazy? Persecution complexes? Whining to cover our own inadequacies? No, dear MAWA reader, it's not just you.

Here, just in time for beach reading season, are just a few of the reasons why you are feeling grumpy as a female-identified visual artist, not only here at home but in the larger art world.

- Women make up a higher percentage of practicing visual artists (54.4% according to the 2011 Canadian Household Survey), but we have a lower income in the sector: \$22,600 annually versus \$32,900 for a male artist (Hill Strategies Research, 2011).

- Although women make up the majority of most art school students (64% of art school students in the US in 2012 were women and the number is considerably higher at the SoFA at the U of M), women's artworks still comprise lower numbers than men's in public art gallery collections. In the US and Europe, they make up only 3% to 5% of major permanent collections.

- At auction, the highest price paid to date for a work by a living female artist is \$7.1 million, for a Yayoi Kusama painting; the highest price paid to date for a work by a living male artist is \$58.4 million, for an editioned sculpture by Jeff Koons. The most ever paid for a work by a deceased woman artist is \$44.4 million, for a Georgia O'Keeffe painting; the most ever paid for a work by a deceased man artist is \$250 million, for a Paul Gauguin.

- Women artists receive fewer solo exhibitions. At the eight largest art museums in the US, between 2000-2009 only 28% of solo exhibitions were by women artists. Closer to home and more recently, in 2015 the National Gallery of Canada (NGC) presented only one solo show by a woman, Mary Pratt, and five by male artists. That's less than 17% by women artists! The number of solo exhibitions by women has actually declined at the NGC since the 1990s: between 1990-99, 31% of solo shows were by women; between 2000-2009, 20% of solo shows were by women; in 2015 it was even lower.

- As late as 2012, only 4% of artists on display at the Metropolitan Museum of Art were women. (This is less than in 1989!) At the MOMA, of the 383 works installed from the permanent collection, only 19



Elise Dawson (in sunglasses), performing at the conclusion of the Performance Art Mini-Mentorship, led by Ming Hon

were by women artists.

- In the 1970s, only 0.5% of art books published about individual artists focused on female artists. By 2012 we reached 2.7%.

- Women fill fewer of the top executive positions within large public art galleries, hold fewer tenured positions within university art departments, even though (as mentioned) there are greater numbers of female students than male in these institutions. The 2014 study, "The Gender Gap in Art Museum Directorships" by the Association of Art Museum Directors (representing the US, Canada and Mexico), reports that female art-museum directors earn substantially less than their male counterparts, and upper-level positions are most often occupied by men.

And we could go on. For additional statistics on sexism in visual art, go to artnews.com/2015/05/26/taking-the-measure-of-sexism-facts-figures-and-fixes/

All of this is more than reason enough to remind yourself that "making it" as an artist is really hard, and as a woman artist, it is (still!) even harder. So don't beat yourself up, but don't quit, either. We need everyone's voice, everyone's vision, everyone's point of view. A healthy visual culture reflects many experiences and identities. Keep on making! And we'll see you at MAWA.

—Artist Teachers Group leader Dawn Knight
and MAWA Co-ED Shawna Dempsey



Gislina Patterson, referencing Yoko Ono's *Cut Piece* in performance



Shawn Jordan's performance takes drawing to a whole new level

Women Who Run with Bees

by Lori Weidenhammer

Friday, June 3, 2016, noon-1pm at MAWA



Lori Weidenhammer will discuss female artists who have fallen madly and deeply in love with bees, and create bodies of work inspired by their favourite pollinators. These “women who run with bees” perform in-depth research, deep listening and deep observation, opening up the secret lives of bees and, in some cases, taking immediate action to improve their habitat. The current honeybee crisis and threatened populations of native bees means that the dissemination of bee-inspired art is more important than ever, providing the community new points of entrance into understanding the critical issues connecting humans to bees.

Lori Weidenhammer is a Vancouver-based artist originally from Cactus Lake, Saskatchewan. For nearly a decade she has been exploring the persona Madame Beespeaker, reviving the tradition of *telling the bees*. She also appears as The Queen Bee at schools and community events. Her collaborative media works with her partner Peter Courtemanche have been shown in Canada and abroad and she has worked in devised theatre in Canada and the UK. As an artist/educator Weidenhammer works with students of all ages on eating locally, planting for pollinators and community gardening. She is passionate about art that creates and strengthens community bonds and makes the world a better place for humans and bees. Lori has just released her first book: *Women Who Run with the Bees: A DIY Guide to Saving the Bees* published by Douglas and MacIntyre.



Rebecca Chesney, *I'm blue, you're yellow* (meadow, Everton Park, Liverpool), photo, 2012

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Artists in Residence 2016

The May residency by Syrian artist Huda Takriti has been postponed due to difficulties in obtaining a visa. Her residency has been rescheduled to May 2017.

Kandis Friesen (Montréal)

in residence at MAWA June 8-30, 2016

Artist Talk Wednesday, June 29, 7 pm at MAWA



During her time at MAWA, Kandis Friesen will be working on the latest iteration of *Tape 158*, an ongoing series based on video footage she found at the Mennonite Heritage Centre Archives in 2010. Unfinished, unedited, untranslated and badly made, the original 1980s-era VHS tape subtly documents the ethnogeographies, conflicts and complexities of Ukrainian history. Friesen spent May in Ukraine refilming the footage of the original production, and will begin post-production and reflection during her time in Winnipeg.

Working from an expanded approach to both drawing and moving image, Kandis Friesen explores the role of document and archive in the construction of public memory and public space. She approaches the archival as a contemporary and active site, navigating the construction of the image, the position of its framing, and the functions of power within it. Her work often emphasizes more latent forms of knowledge, emerging as re-makes, erasures and re-tracings. Through video, installation, performance, drawing, and print, she examines diasporic language and translation, migrating audio-visual culture, ethnicity and nationalisms, and the relationship of migration and colonial structures, often through a critical Russian Mennonite cultural lens.

Seza Bali (Istanbul, Turkey)

in residence at MAWA July 2-31, 2016

Artist Talk Wednesday, July 13, 2016, 7 pm at MAWA

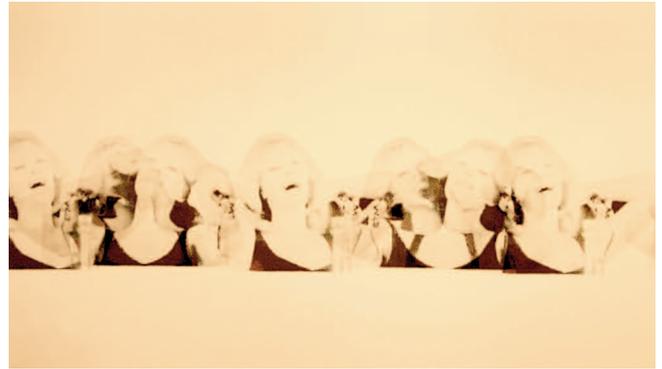


During her time at MAWA, Seza Bali will be working on a new photographic project titled *I wish I knew you* based on an archive of photographic negatives from the 1930s taken in and around Istanbul, Turkey, of a Jewish family (a minority group in Turkey). Bali will be creating photo collages, layering the original photographs with new ones that she took at the same locations, combining the past with the present to re-imagine lives of others.

Seza Bali works with photography in untraditional ways. Her work has recently shifted from a documentarian approach to one that disrupts the technical processes of photography to create a new visual language. Bali returned to Istanbul, the city of her childhood, five years ago and began a rediscovery of self and place. As well as her art career, Bali works as an editor and Pilates instructor.



Seza Bali, *Untitled*, from the series *Patterns*, photomontage, 2015



Kandis Friesen, *Katyusha: Rocket Launchers, Folk Songs, and Ethnographic Refrains*, video performance lecture with live audio mixing, 2016

Nayda Collazo-Llorens (Kalamazoo, Michigan)

in residence at MAWA August 2-28, 2016

Artist Talk Thursday, August 4, 7 pm at MAWA

Presented in partnership with ArtCenter/South Florida



During her residency, Nayda Collazo-Llorens will be working on a new series that explores site and location through an expanded approach to drawing, involving not only works on paper but also found text, collected elements, audio and video. Collazo-Llorens considers markmaking in the most inclusive way: an erased line, a mark on the ground, a sound to be traced, lines on a map, people's movement through space, a beam of light, etc. Her onsite research in Winnipeg will consider location as multilayered, and as a space of intersections where edges blur and boundaries are fluid.

Nayda Collazo-Llorens, born in San Juan, Puerto Rico, is a visual artist engaged in an interdisciplinary practice incorporating multiple mediums and strategies. Through her practice, she examines the ways in which we perceive and process information, dealing with concepts of navigation, language and hyperconnectivity. Collazo-Llorens received an MFA degree from New York University and is a former Pollock-Krasner Foundation Fellow. She is currently the Stuart & Barbara Padnos Distinguished Artist-in-Residence at Grand Valley State University in Michigan.



Nayda Collazo-Llorens, *Geo Dis/connect*, wall installation with found maps, overall dimensions 5' x 16', 2014

Wiki & Wine!

with Alexis Kinloch

Thursdays June 9 and July 7, 2016, 6-8:30pm at MAWA
Free!

In celebration of International Women's Day, women and men met at MAWA for a highly successful Art+Feminism Wikipedia Edit-a-thon, to write online content about women in the visual arts. In one afternoon the team helped to redress gender imbalance by creating new pages documenting the careers and contributions of Sheila Butler, Lita Fontaine, Divya Mehra, Bev Pike, Jeanne Randolph, Diana Thorneycroft and Diane Whitehouse. They also added content to existing pages about Shawna Dempsey and Lorri Millan, Barb Hunt, Mentoring Artists for Women's Art and the Wendy Wersch Memorial Lecture Committee.

Botanicals

with Linda Fairfield

Saturday and Sunday June 18 and 19, 2016, 1-4pm at MAWA
\$40

Registration and payment deadline: Wednesday, June 15 at 4pm



The art of botanical illustration has existed for millennia to identify species, particularly medicinal and toxic plants. Spurred on by advances in the printing press, taxonomy and the rise of the amateur botanist, these renderings became exquisitely detailed by the 1700s. Usually rendered in watercolour, illustrative botanical paintings continue to adorn field guides and scientific studies. Join the tradition in this two-day workshop led by artist Linda Fairfield, in which she will discuss history and examples, and coach beginners in how to create their own botanicals, using the medium of their choice.

Please bring a plant you wish to use as your subject, as well as your own paints, pencils and/or markers and paper. Painting clothes or smocks may be advisable.

Linda Fairfield is a Winnipeg artist whose work focuses broadly on the natural environment that she identifies specifically as "the garden". She developed a strong interest in botany and botanical illustration and began seeking out and collecting Manitoba wildflowers. Working in graphite and watercolour from live specimens, she has collaborated with the Manitoba Museum to produce a substantial collection of illustrations of Manitoba wildflowers. Some of her botanicals have been reproduced in field guides (*Wild Flowers of Churchill*) and other publications. Because she works from live plants, which restricts her botanical production to summer, she spends the remaining months drawing and painting other subjects relative to "the garden" – landscape, birds and animals.

Essentials of Mentorship

with Shawna Dempsey

Saturday, September 10, 2016, 1-4 pm at MAWA
\$50

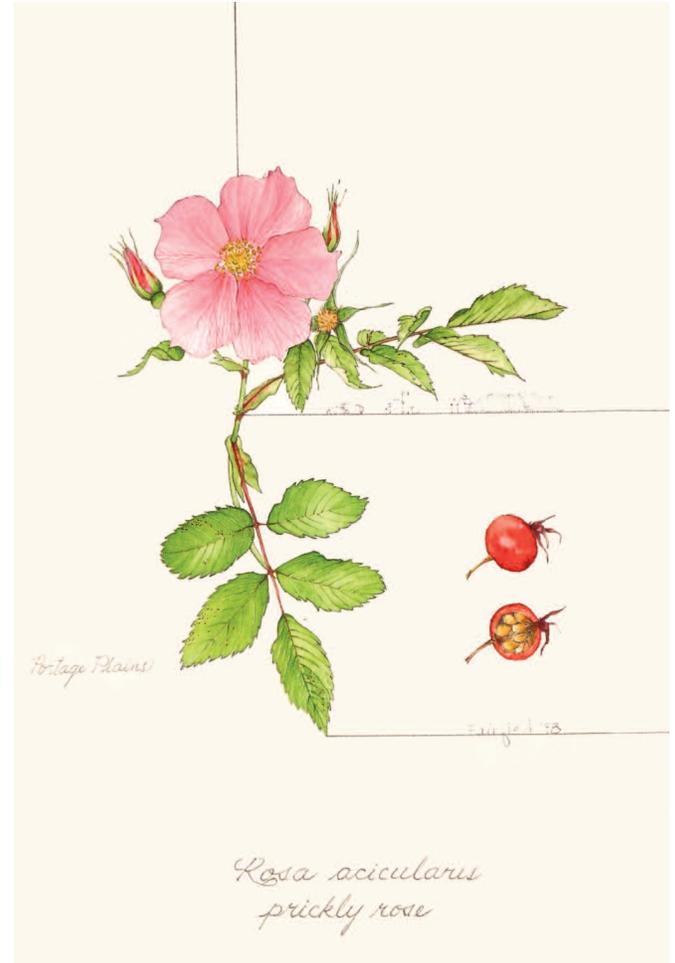
Registration and payment deadline: Friday, September 9 at 4pm

This three-hour workshop will explore the dynamic of the mentor/mentee relationship. The afternoon will be active and fun, as attendees participate in a variety of activities designed to highlight their own experiences, strengths, skills and gifts, as well as some of the challenges in establishing a mutual mentorship vision. Topics discussed will include: defining structure, boundaries and expectations; avoiding pitfalls and negotiating conflict; and creating closure. The workshop will also explore learning models, and will offer a variety of approaches and practical advice. It is an excellent how-to

Don't worry if you missed it. You can still participate in changing who is represented on this global encyclopedia. We will show you how Wiki editing is done. It is remarkably easy... and fun! Bring your laptop and we will provide a tutorial on how to post on Wikipedia to help get you started. No experience required!

Note: Wikipedia has a limit on the number of accounts that can be created in a day at one IP address, so please register on Wikipedia prior to coming.

en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wikipedia:Tutorial/Registration



Linda Fairfield, *Wild Rose*

for anyone considering setting up a mentorship program, anyone who will be mentoring, or anyone who works in peer-based arts education. It is based on MAWA's experience as a pioneer in the field of arts mentorship for the past 32 years.

Artist and MAWA Co-ED Shawna Dempsey has mentored for MAWA, Video Pool and Crossing Communities. She has also taught mentoring workshops for Visual Arts Ontario and CARFAC Saskatchewan, among others.

Creative Resistance: Art and Women in Syria Today

with Abir Boukhari (rescheduled from April)

Wednesday, June 15, 2016, 2pm and 7pm at the

Canadian Museum for Human Rights, 85 Israel Asper Way

Free with admission to CMHR

(adults \$18, seniors and high school students \$14)

Co-presented with the Canadian Museum for Human Rights



Abir Boukhari, founder of the first contemporary art centre in Syria, will trace the impact of profound geopolitical shifts on women and artists in her country. Despite the fact that creative expression is now seen as a brave political art, Boukhari and the artists of Syria continue to draw the world's attention to issues such as child marriage, sexual slavery, and state-enforced control of women.

Boukhari will discuss the resistant power of art for her country, and particularly its women, even as so many have been forced into exile. She will also trace the changes she has experienced in her lifetime with respect to the rights of women, as a cautionary tale regarding the fragility of human rights.

Practice and Projects

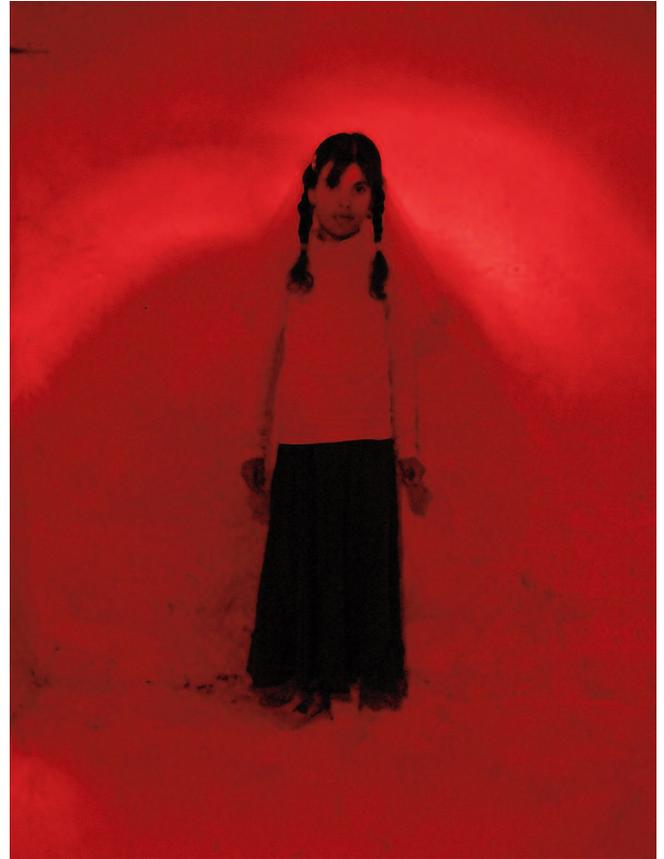
Abir Boukhari Curator's Talk

Thursday, June 16, 2016, noon-1pm at MAWA

Free!

Currently in exile in Sweden with her infant daughter, and separated by war and distance from her husband, Boukhari continues to create platforms for art and artists through her curatorial work. Boukhari will discuss her current global "Nomadism", exploring the effects of displacement on individuals and cultures, as well as the many exhibitions she has curated throughout Europe and the Middle East.

Abir Boukhari is the director and co-founder of AllArtNow, the first contemporary art centre in Syria, founded in Damascus in 2005. It is devoted to contemporaneity and experimentality (controversial ideas in Syria) and supports emerging artists. She has also curated exhibitions for institutions as varied as Taksim Gallery (Istanbul), the Arab Short Festival (Cairo), Les Instants Festival (Marseille) and Gotham Arts Studios (Western Australia).



Maha Shahin (Dubai), *Braids*, a video about child marriage, 2012



MAWA members' showcase, *The Power of 30*, curated by Jennifer Smith, September 2014

Works on Paper: Call to Artists!

September 2–Oct. 1, 2016, at MAWA

Opening: Friday, September 2, 2016, 6-9pm

Closing party: Saturday, October 1, 8-11pm (La Nuit Blanche)

Submission information deadline: Wednesday, August 17 at 5 pm
(email info@mawa.ca)

Artwork drop off: Thursday-Saturday, August 25-27,
noon-4pm at MAWA

This September, MAWA will host a Members' Showcase, *Works on Paper*, featuring one artwork by any MAWA member who wishes to participate. The intention is to fill the north wall of our programming space with a range of works on paper being produced by you, our members. The MAWA Members' Showcase will open on the First Friday in September and grace MAWA's wall until La Nuit Blanche at the beginning of October. It will provide an opportunity for members to show their work, including works-in-progress and sketches. Each member is invited to submit one piece. Please note there is limited space for larger works. The maximum finished dimensions we can accommodate are 3 x 4 feet. Work can be submitted framed or unframed. Please email info@mawa.ca with information regarding your

submission, including your name, title of the work, media, size and year of production by August 17 at 5pm. After you have sent your information, artwork can be dropped off at MAWA on August 25, 26 and 27, noon to 4pm.

R & R? No! Research & Development!

Just because it is summer, doesn't mean there isn't plenty to think about at MAWA. And plenty of like-minded people to do it with. The best part is you can be summer-spontaneous: no need to register ... just show up! And it is all free!

Artist Teachers at MAWA

Monday, June 6, 2016, 6:30-9pm

The last meeting of "the school year"! The Artist Teachers Group meets monthly, and is a safe, nurturing community of artist-peers that encourages group members' individual art practices to grow. Join with others in your field to crit each other's work, make together, exhibit and share experiences regarding what it means to be a teacher and an artist.

Note, the Artist Teachers exhibition, Rock/Paper/Scissors, has been postponed. Are you a female-identified artist educator and want to show your work? It is not too late! Come join the group!



Artist Teachers Group at work, Dec. 2015

Artist Mothers at MAWA

Chrysanthemums

Wednesday, June 8, 2016, 6:30-9pm at the English Garden, Assiniboine Park

This month the Artist Mothers will meet at the English Garden at Assiniboine Park for an *en plein air* session. Bring your materials, snacks and anything else you need to get in the mood. Finally it is summer in Winnipeg! If it is raining, meet in the duck pond shelter beside the English Garden.

Artist Mothers at MAWA experiment, critique, and share concerns, ideas, inspiration, strategies and support. Artist-mothers at all stages of mothering are welcome. If you can't make the meetings, consider participating on the Artist Mothers at MAWA Facebook page.



Artist Mothers at MAWA in action at Assiniboine Park, June 2015

Theory & Beer

The Male Gaze

with Shawna Dempsey and Lisa Wood

Thursday, June 16, 2016, 6:30-8pm at The Royal Canadian Legion, 277 McDermot Ave.

"The Male Gaze" is a term we are all familiar with, but where does it come from? Go to the source with this so-called seminal essay by Laura Mulvey, "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema" (1971) and read until your eyes bleed (it is fabulous, but also fabulously dense.) And then check out an updated take on Mulvey, with Anneke Smelik's "Lara Croft, *Kill Bill*, and the Battle for Theory in Feminist Film Studies". Have women finally become filmic subjects? At what cost?

Shawna Dempsey and Lisa Wood work together at MAWA where they spend many lunch hours discussing theory, feminism and art.

Links:
<http://www.pdfdrive.net/laura-mulvey-visual-pleasure-and-narrative-cinema-e7431831.html>
<http://www.annekesmelik.nl/wp-content/uploads/2015/08/LaraCroftKillBill.pdf>



Uma Thurman in Quentin Tarantino's *Kill Bill*, 2003



James Stewart and Grace Kelly in Alfred Hitchcock's *Rear Window*, 1954



Lisa Wood and Alexis Kinloch



Fond Farewells

Going Away Party

Wednesday, June 1, 2016, 6-9pm at the Yellow Dog Tavern, 386 Donald St.

This summer will be a time of tremendous change at MAWA.

Lisa Wood has accepted a position as tenure-track professor at Brandon University, following her passion: art education. We are so happy for her, yet so sad to see her go!

Lisa's relationship with MAWA began as a teenaged participant in the pilot Youth Mentorship Program; she was a mentee in the Foundation Mentorship Program (FMP); she mentored for MAWA's FMP; she served on the MAWA Board; and, for the past six years, she has worked as the MAWA Program and Administrative Coordinator. Has there ever been a time when Lisa hasn't been at MAWA!?!

Since joining the staff, Lisa has transformed the organization, bringing a level of rigour and professionalism to all programs, elevating all aspects of what we do. We cannot begin to list the number of (daily) contributions Lisa Wood has made to MAWA: all MAWA program coordination, volunteer coordination, promotion, website maintenance, apartment rental, newsletter advertising, Over the Top organization, a whole lot of administration and more. She also leads the Crit Club and, most importantly, the Foundation Mentorship Program. Under her direction it has become a competitive post-graduate program, welcoming exciting emerging artists who have MFAs, BFAs and are self-taught. The expectations are high and participants meet them, in no small part due to the standards set by Lisa, and her ability to work with mentors and mentees to ensure the mentees' needs are being met.

Alexis Kinloch, who shares the front office with Lisa as MAWA's Administrative Assistant, is also resigning this summer. She has accepted an expanded position at the Winnipeg Arts Council. It is a great opportunity for her and a big loss for MAWA.

Alexis first worked at MAWA on an undergraduate internship in 2008-9. She was such a valuable addition to our organization that

we hired her as staff at the conclusion of the practicum, initially as a summer student, putting together our monumental archives project, and then as a staff member. She has held the position of Administrative Assistant from September 2009–September 2011 and September 2012–the present. During this time she has managed memberships, developed our database, corresponded weekly with members, processed donations, led the Wiki & Wine program, managed all the Over the Top data, coordinated newsletter distribution and contributed to the general brain capital of MAWA, through creative suggestions and problem-solving. Like Lisa, she is a magnanimous team-player, generously sharing ideas, and actively listening and responding in kind. At MAWA she frequently comes up with suggestions and, once they have been approved, implements them within 24 hours! In this way, she and Lisa have made MAWA what it is today.

But wait, that's not all! Outreach Coordinator Erna Andersen is going on maternity leave! Huge congratulations to her and her partner Leonard Podolok on this exciting development. We all look forward to meeting the new MAWA member and to welcoming Erna back in the fall of 2017.

Erna was assisted this year by University of Manitoba Women's and Gender Studies Student Natalie Nathan, provided to MAWA by the Department of Women's and Gender Studies. We couldn't have done it without her. Natalie is now back in Minnesota for the summer... another good-bye.

MAWA will say thanks to Lisa, Alexis and Erna on Wednesday, June 1 from 6-9pm at the Yellow Dog Tavern. Each of these women has been essential in making MAWA, MAWA. Come and raise a glass to their many contributions and their future successes. All are welcome. There won't be a dry eye in the house.



Erna Andersen and Natalie Nathan



Over the Top AWESOME!

Huge and heartfelt thanks to the hundreds of artists, donors, sponsors, bakers, buyers and volunteers who made this year's Over the Top Art Auction and Cupcake Party THE BEST EVER. That's right, THE BEST EVER! The event grossed over \$41,000, netting \$39,000 that will be used entirely for MAWA programming. We are so grateful for your commitment to MAWA. You make this over-the-top fundraiser possible. THANK YOU!

All photos by Lindsey Bond



So many beautiful things!

The artists and art donors:

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Bidding frenzy as Leah Decter, a Marshal (see her star?), looks on



Donating artists (left to right) Tracy Woodward, Rachel Schappert, Sandra Brown and Heather Komus enjoying the day with OTT Committee Member Mary Agnes Welch (right)



A happy art buyer with his Wanda Koop painting



The excruciating suspense of the raffle draw!

You Make It Possible

Volunteers make everything possible at MAWA. You work our bingos, you stuff our envelopes, you paint our walls and you staff one of the most successful annual art fundraisers in Winnipeg, the Over the Top Art Auction and Cupcake Party.

Thank you to all of the Over the Top volunteers this year: Francesca Carella Arfinengo, Geneva Armstrong, Gwen Armstrong, Hassaan Ashraf, Ian August, Abi Auld, Queti Azurin, Noor Bhangu, Lindsey Bond, Yvette Cenerini, Connie Chappel, Genevieve Collins, Nicole Coulson, Elise Dawson, Leah Decter, Lily Despic, Louise Duguay, Richard Dyck, Robin Eriksson, Elvira Finnigan, Angela Forget, Gabrielle Funk, hannah_g, Liz Garlicki, Naomi Gerrard, Kaj Hasselriis, Lindsay Joy, Sarah Keller, Dawn Knight, Megan Krause, Alerry Lavitt, Daniel Lavoie, Colleen Leduc, Jen Loewen, Monica Mercedes Martinez, Sean McLachlan, Ingrid McMillan, Allison Moore, Mariana Muñoz, Heather Murray, Alison Norberg, Corrie Peters, Tracy Peters, Keith Oliver, Cheryl Orr-Hood, Mélanie Rocan, Kelly Ruth, Renée Saurette, Gurpreet Sehra, Jenel Shaw, Liz Shearer,

Jennifer Smith, Chrissy Troy, Lindsey Walker, Karen Wardle, Tricia Wasney, Mary Agnes Welch, Michelle Wilson, Collin Zipp and Cheryl Zubrack.

Hats off to all the MAWA volunteers (more than 400 each year!) who contribute so much to MAWA in so many ways, and especially to our board of directors who set policy, make key decisions and do so much of the behind-the-scenes labour that makes MAWA happen. If you would like to become more involved, MAWA is currently seeking applications for committee and board members. If you are interested in serving on the space maintenance committee, the governance committee, the fundraising committees (Over the Top and Fall Supper Fundraiser), the award nomination committee, the board succession committee or the board itself, please send a letter stating the reasons for your interest and your relevant experience to dempsey@mawa.ca. Any questions about the commitment level and types of work involved? Call Shawna at 204-949-9490.

All photos by Lindsey Bond



Colleen Leduc, a Marshal, closes bidding on an art lot



Art Runner Captain Gurpreet Sehra (left) takes an artwork to Wrapping Station Captain Tricia Wasney (right)



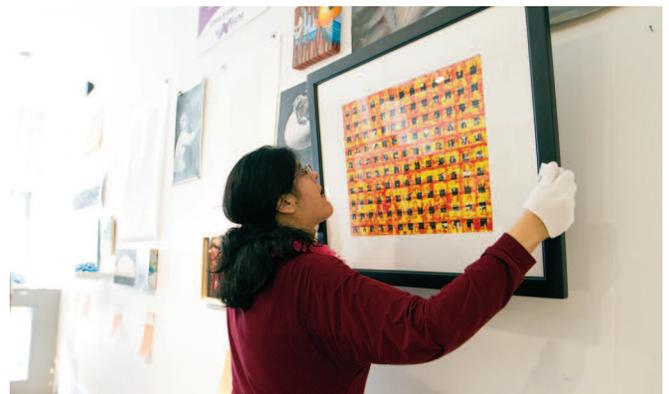
Contributing artist Val Klaassen, contributing artist and Installer Elvira Finnigan, contributing artist and Board Member Queti Azurin and Student Intern Natalie Nathan (left to right) share a laugh with artwork by Steven Leyden Cochrane in the background



The amazing Cash Desk Crew, (left to right) Kelly Ruth, Renée Saurette, Genevieve Collins, Mariana Muñoz, Elise Dawson and Gabrielle Funk



Celebrity Host Chrissy Troy (left) checks the winning ticket of Volunteer Hospitality Coordinator Tracy Peters (right)



Art Runner Monica Mercedes Martinez takes a print by artist Link Phillips off the wall



Walking with Our Sisters community conversation, Winnipeg, January 2014

Art in the Community

by Becca Taylor

For most of my career, I have worked to insert community collaborative art projects within the white walls of galleries and institutes, and community members into them as well. One of my challenges has been to ease the anxiety many people feel when entering art spaces —sites that have opaque protocols and their own complex language: the language of contemporary art. It can be very intimidating and uncomfortable. It is certainly unfamiliar to most people. So how DO we engage with the community? How do we get them into art spaces? How do we help them to relate to the work?

These questions have many different answers. But I believe that the most successful examples of socially engaged contemporary art practices are ones in which the community is able to take ownership of the work, ones that take place in the community (not galleries), and ones that take the time to create meaningful conversations with community members.

Community members need to be able to relate to art initiatives and to have their own/collective voice heard. People do not want to be talked for but engaged with; they want to be a part of the discussion. This work can extend beyond the goals, both conceptual and aesthetic, of the artist. It is no longer just the artist creating the work, but the community creating the work. The art itself becomes the act of conversation, organization, time together and commitment to the collective thought, idea, ideal or message.

Before Christi Belcourt's *Walking with Our Sisters* commemorative art installation arrived in Winnipeg in 2014, the community was invited to a series of conversations, allowing them to be involved in fundraising, exhibition planning and ceremonies that would take place during the exhibition. The number of people at each conversation grew until there were over 50 community members sitting at the planning table. This was not unique to Winnipeg. The installation specifics are decided by each community that *Walking with Our Sisters* travels to, allowing each community to invest the installation with their issues, needs, histories and spiritual practices. Community members engage with Belcourt's project because they have worked to make it happen in a way that matters to them.

Making a space in which the community is comfortable is another important aspect to the success of projects. Sometimes this means stepping outside of the white cubes of galleries and the hallowed halls of academia, and going into public spaces: parks, community centres, libraries, bars and the streets. Removing ourselves from the limitations of institutional physical space and all that it imposes can be freeing. It allows artists and community members to meet each other on the communities' turf. Therefore we must be flexible regarding where art happens, in order to effectively engage with community.

Jaime Black's *REDress* project adapts and adjusts to diverse spaces. This travelling installation has been exhibited in public parks and within museums. The work is not defined by the space, but rather transforms the space. The suspended red dresses create haunting reminders of Murdered and Missing Indigenous Women wherever they are installed. Another example is KC Adams' *Perception* series, which exists entirely outside of white walls. Adams pairs portraits of Indigenous community members with text that contrasts racial stereotypes with the subjects' own self-definitions. These works are exhibited exclusively within the public realm, on bus shelters, on billboards and in the windows of local businesses. For this project, daily commuters are Adams' audience.

To be effective, a community-based art initiative must also be an open-ended exploration that allows the art itself to be moved and changed by the conversation. I find this to be particularly true in youth art initiatives. If youth aren't being listened to, they stop talking. In order to be truly collaborative, it is essential that the artist constantly adapts to community needs, discards preconceptions and is willing to rework their project. This takes time. There is no way to "know" and respond to the complexities of a community overnight.

While I was curating *Mapping Identities: A Decolonizing Art Practice*, a partnership between mentoring artist Praba Pilar and young artists from Ndinawe Youth Resource Centre, we discovered that the needs and interests of the youth changed throughout the course of the workshops. As a result, the program and its expected outcomes were constantly shifting. The works in the exhibition are the result of being adaptable and letting the youth drive the conversation and creative process to reflect what they needed to address. We were there to help keep the project focused and safe, and to compile the work created over the course of six weeks into a final product they were proud of.

When it works, the feeling of collaborating with community to create an exhibition or project is indescribable. "Look at what we can do together!" To see people invested and taking ownership of their work, and talking to other community members about the issues imbedded in the artwork creates the seeds for change. Communities know what they need. We, as artists and curators, just need to listen and help them with our knowledge to make their/our projects successful.

Becca Taylor is a multi-disciplinary artist, youth coordinator and curator of Cree, Scottish and Irish descent. She currently is the Aboriginal Curator in Residence at Urban Shaman, awarded through the Canada Council for the Arts, and a member of the Ociciwan Contemporary Art Collective, based in Edmonton, Alberta.



28 beadars at the Cross-Cultural Beading Group, January 2016



Leatherworkers-in-training at the Craftstravaganza, March 2016. Photo by Rachel Carlson



Jeanette Dzama (centre) teaching needle felting at MAWA's annual Craftstravaganza, March 2016. Photo by Wanda Wilson



Erica Mendritzki (standing, right) delivers her First Friday Lecture, *Let me talk to you man to man*, February 2016



Zipporah Machuki (centre) teaches Maasai Beading at the February 2016 Crafternoon



Wikipedia Edit-a-thon for International Women's Day led by Lindsay Joy, March 2016



Cheryl Zubrack (far right) leading a Theory and Beer, *The "Other" in Art Education*, about art education and GBLTQ students, January 2016



Jen Robinson taking questions after her Frist Friday lecture, *The Effects of Art on Behaviour and the Brain*, April 2016



Alex Keim (standing) leads an Artist Bootcamp, Pricing Your Artwork, with ASL interpretation provided by Arts and Disability Network, February 2016



Spontaneous selfie making after Christina Hajjar's First Friday Lecture, *(Sk)Inquiring Self(ie)-Representations*, March 2016. MAWA Practicum student Hajjar is in the front row, second from left!



Grantwriting with Cecilia Araneda (standing) at ACI, January 2016

Tiny Gallery: MAWA Members' Wall

The 45"-wide "bump" on the north wall of MAWA's 611 Main Street programming space is dedicated to showcasing work by a MAWA member each month in any 2D or 3D media. We also accept single channel videos that will be featured on our large format TV. If you are interested in exhibiting, please contact Shawna at dempsey@mawa.ca. No artist fees will be paid for this opportunity.

Summer Hours

Although MAWA will be hosting our artists in residence, we won't be keeping regular office hours this summer. This means that between July 1 and August 24, we suggest that you phone before dropping by or, better yet, make an appointment. Flexible hours will allow us to take vacations and plan for the flurry of activities in the fall. That said, the MAWA staff is still here for you. If you have any questions, concerns or ideas, please call us. And have a great summer!

New Social Media Team

Have an exhibition, commission or residency coming up? Want to spread the word? Let MAWA's Social Media team help celebrate your successes. Email jennifersmith062@gmail.com with member's news.

Rural Artists Mentorship Program

RAMP is a partnership with Manitoba Arts Network (MAN) and is designed to serve the needs of artists in rural and northern Manitoba. This year, the Rural Artist Mentorship Program will be centred in the Parkland Region (pending funding), led by mentor Chris Cooper. Cooper's work includes drawing and painting, but her primary media is sculpture created with clay, welded metals, found objects, wood and bronze that she casts in her studio. Recently she has been exploring public art and community art projects, and has completed public sculptures in rural southwestern Manitoba and in Carberry (as Resident Artist in the Community). She has worked as the Art Educator at the Art Gallery of Southwestern Manitoba for the past seven years, and has taught workshops for the AGSM, Art City and Red Deer College. Cooper has been exhibited locally and nationally, and her work is held in the Winnipeg Art Gallery collection. If you live in the Parkland area and are interested in applying, check out the MAN website:

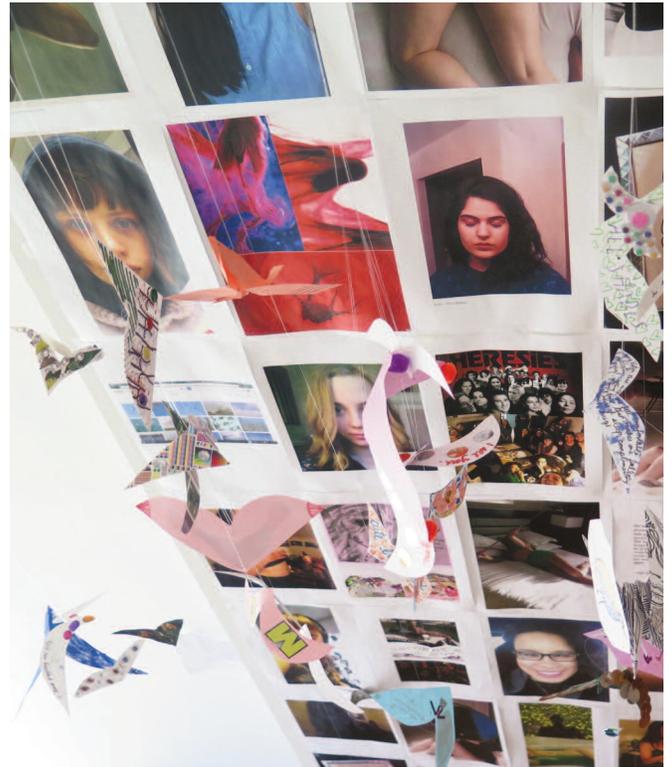
manitobaartsnetwork.ca/rural-art-mentorship.html

Congratulations, Diana!

MAWA is so pleased to have successfully nominated artist Diana Thorneycroft for the prestigious Manitoba Arts Council Award of Distinction. This award "recognizes the highest level of artistic excellence and distinguished career achievement by professional Manitoba artists in any art form." The \$30,000 prize is presented biennially.

For over four decades, Thorneycroft has created provocative artworks, garnering enthusiastic critical response, both nationally and internationally. She employs a rigorous technical, formal and conceptual approach to subject matter that consistently challenges the viewer, offering up a troubling version of what we accept as familiar. In addition to the undisputed quality of her work, Thorneycroft has exerted a profound influence as a professor, mentor and colleague, sharing her knowledge, contacts and enthusiasm.

We applaud you, Diana, and all of the other women in our community who juggle a committed art practice while actively contributing to a generous, healthy community.



The Flock Art Collective installation *Twilight Flight* in the Tiny Gallery, April 2016



Chris Cooper, *Purifier*, bronze, 2005



Diana Thorneycroft prepares to teach an Artist Bootcamp, How Arts Council Juries Work, MAWA, Feb. 2016

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MAWA and its projects are generously funded by Manitoba Arts Council,
Canada Council for the Arts, The WH & SE Loewen Foundation,
Winnipeg Arts Council, The Winnipeg Foundation, Manitoba Community
Services Council, donors and members.



The team that will be working at MAWA in June. From left to right, back row Alexis Kinloch (Admin Assist), Debbie Girard (Bookkeeper) and Shawna Dempsey (Co-ED). Front row Lisa Wood (Program & Admin Coordinator) and Dana Kletke (Co-ED).

JUNE

- Wed, June 1 **Good-bye Party**
6-9pm at the Yellow Dog, 386 Donald
- Fri, June 3 **First Friday Lecture**
noon-1pm Lori Weidenhammer (Vancouver):
Women Who Run with Bees
- Mon, June 6 **Artist Teachers Group**
6:30-9pm
- Wed, June 8 **Artist Mothers at MAWA**
6:30-9pm *En plein air* at Assiniboine Park
- Thurs, June 9 **Wiki & Wine**
6-8:30pm Alexis Kinloch
- Wed, June 15 **Creative Resistance:**
2 pm & 7pm **Art and Women in Syria Today**
Abir Boukhari (Damascus, Syria, now in
Stockholm)
at Canadian Museum for Human Rights
- Thurs, June 16 **Curator's Talk: Practice and Projects**
noon-1pm Abir Boukhari
- Thurs, June 16 **Theory & Beer**
6:30-8pm Shawna Dempsey & Lisa Wood: *The Male Gaze*

- Sat-Sun **Botanicals Workshop**
June 18-19, 1-4pm Linda Fairfield
- Wed, June 29 **Artist in Residence Artist Talk**
7-8pm Kandis Friesen (Montréal)

JULY

- Thurs, July 7 **Wiki & Wine**
6-8:30pm Alexis Kinloch
- Wed, July 13 **Artist in Residence Artist Talk**
7-8pm Seza Bali (Istanbul, Turkey)

AUGUST

- Thurs, Aug 4 **Artist in Residence Artist Talk**
7-8pm Nayda Collazo-Llorens (Kalamazoo, Michigan)
- Wed, Aug 17, 4pm **Members' Showcase submission deadline**
- Thurs-Sat **Members' Showcase work drop-off**
Aug 25-27, noon-4pm

SEPTEMBER

- Fri, Sept 2, 6-9pm **Members' Showcase opening**
Works on Paper
- Sat, Sept 10 **Mentorship Essentials Workshop**
1-4pm Shawna Dempsey

THANK YOU TO ALL OF OUR RECENT DONORS. WE REALLY APPRECIATE YOUR SUPPORT

Briony Haig, Connie Bart-Hamel, Debroah Challis, Helene Dyck (in honour of Reva and Harold Stone's 50th anniversary), Barb Hunt, Linda Fairfield, Sophie Lavoie, Jen Loewen, Paulette Migie, Sappho Zine Collective, Marilyn Schick, Susan Turner, Terry Vatrt, Sharron Zenith Corne and Cheryl Zubrack.

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.

Mentoring Artists for Women's Art encourage et appuie le développement intellectuel et créatif des femmes impliquées dans les arts visuels en mettant à leur disposition un forum continu qui vise l'éducation et le dialogue critique.