

MAWA's Rural and Remote Assessment
An Assessment and Developmental Strategy For MAWA on Rural
and Remote Women Artists

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Thoughts from the Consultant...

This project of accessing and communicating with rural and remote women artists across the province of Manitoba could not have come at a better time. Rural and remote women artists are active members of their communities and are, for the most part, operating in isolation from urban and outlying art communities. It is necessary for Mentoring Artists for Women's Art (MAWA) and other arts and cultural organizations to better meet the needs of these artists who are producing artwork with little or no support from any arts organizations.

My interest in this project is personal. I hold a Bachelor of Arts degree with a major in Women's Studies and a minor in Native Studies. Currently, I am enrolled in a Masters of Arts in Native Studies and I am finishing a Bachelor of Fine Arts. These disciplines have provided me with great insight into issues facing rural and remote communities, such as the unequal distribution of wealth, and ethnic or cultural barriers. There is great need for tools to break down the barriers that exist between groups of people and organizations. I have lived and worked in these communities and my personal experience has given me tools to deal effectively with people, to develop programming, and to critique existing programming in remote and rural communities. As a person who claims a hybrid identity I have been able to understand first hand, the racist, sexist and classist ideologies perpetuated in our society. I have acquired knowledge to empower my family, my communities, and myself both creatively and academically. Additionally, I have learned about the different barriers that people face when trying to access certain sectors of our society and the importance of conducting research that is community-based, participatory and creative. This research is important because the knowledge generated from the research aids in struggles for self-determination. My overall goal is to give back to community and to play a part in ending oppression and discrimination.

MAWA's support in this project has been instrumental in the success of reaching out to these rural and remote women artists. I have complete confidence in MAWA's ability to better meet the needs of these artists. This falls within MAWA's mandate and will require a major commitment to support these women and their community art groups. It has been a great honour to meet with all of the talented rural and remote women artists and to work with the amazing and committed crew at MAWA. It is rare to find an organization that practices what it preaches. MAWA is a stunning example of what many art organizations should aspire to become. The amount of support I received from the staff, board of directors and members is unprecedented. Thanks to all the artists, members and people that have affected and impacted this project, nothing would have come to fruition without your support.

Sincerely,



Julie Nagam

Photo by Travis Simonson

Julie Nagam

Introduction:

Mentoring Artists For Women's Art (MAWA) is an artist-run non-profit organization based in Winnipeg, Manitoba, with over 300 local, national and international members (MAWA). Legend has it that MAWA began from a conversation with a group of artists, both women and men, at Plug In Gallery in 1984. Some of the major issues discussed were that women artists and cultural producers were not able to access opportunities to show their work, and that they found it difficult to find employment in the cultural field. Since some women artists in Manitoba did not have access to these opportunities and they were frustrated with their limited access to the 'art world' in their own community, MAWA was formed (MAWA¹). Women represent a huge creative resource, which was not being adequately developed in the arts and cultural community. MAWA was officially established in 1984 and incorporated as a separate organization in September, 1990 (MAWA). MAWA's mandate is: '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' (MAWA). The programs that MAWA facilitates are: Foundation Mentorship Program, Mentor in Residence, Workshops, Lecture Series, Studio Visits, Resource Centre, Critical Reading Group, First Fridays and Umbrella Projects.

Since 1984, MAWA has successfully coordinated direct one-to-one mentoring in the Foundation Mentorship Program. Emerging artists develop their practice in consultation with a professional or more senior artist on a regular basis over the course of a year. This program has played a significant role in developing a strong and vital constituency of mid-career and senior women artists in Manitoba. Studio visits, discussion of readings, visits to exhibitions/lectures and assistance with grant applications are just some of the services provided by the mentor (MAWA). The Mentor in Residence Program consists of inviting well-known Canadian women artists to Manitoba to complete a three to six week residency program. Most recently, Rebecca Belmore was one of these artists. This program provides a mentor who will work in a one-on-one capacity with individual artists, and fosters growth in larger groups through community-based programming.

Workshops at MAWA are designed to develop practical skills that will foster artistic development and to serve as a forum for discussion about the critical, political and ethical issues associated with a particular medium (MAWA). The journal in/versions is an annual publication, which publishes artwork and academic writings based on a theme. in/versions began as a small local mail-out, and grew into a nationally recognized art publication. It features images and text that explore contemporary art and culture, as well as art theory. The Lecture Series is a program that MAWA provides for its members, which is not regularly offered through any other arts organization. Artists or cultural producers are invited to lecture to the community. Studio Visits are also offered. Artists, curators, writers and art historians visit with artists in their studios to discuss their work, contemporary art practice, feminist issues, art history, critical

¹ All MAWA information has been taken directly from the director Vera Lemecha, MAWA website or internal and external documents.

writing and the role of arts funding agencies and other cultural institutions (MAWA).

The MAWA Resource Centre houses a collection of books, exhibition catalogues, periodicals and slides on contemporary and historical art and criticism, which includes members' work and the work of participating artists. The 'First Fridays' program is held on the first Friday of each month. It is a series of professional workshops on various topics such as grant writing, art theory, and other art related issues. Lastly, MAWA sponsors a host of umbrella projects, which are programs conceived, proposed, and conducted by the membership, and facilitated by the board and staff (MAWA).

Based on a comprehensive assessment of programs and resources carried out by MAWA in 2003, the organization contracted me as a consultant to work with MAWA in the development of its rural and remote membership capabilities. MAWA's objective is to diversify and broaden contact with current and potential membership who are living in rural, and remote communities. In addition, MAWA contracted me to make contact with women artists in key areas throughout Manitoba in order to recommend programming initiatives. The goal of this project is to increase MAWA programming participation by women artists in rural and remote Manitoba.

I have examined, assessed and documented MAWA's current organizational strategies and programs involving women visual artists living in rural and remote areas in Manitoba. I referred to the internal document, An Assessment of Mentoring Artists For Women's Art: Programs, Operations and Human Resources, that proposes the development of strategies intent upon reaching the needs of a diverse population of women visual artists and reflecting that diversity in its membership (MAWA). I have researched relevant reports and demographic information available through the Manitoba Arts Council, Manitoba Culture and Heritage Offices and local arts organizations involving visual artists living in rural, remote, and Aboriginal Manitoban communities. I interviewed relevant individuals to discuss their reports in relation to the women artists in their findings and to develop contact information which I will provide in detail later in this report.

Additionally, I have participated in meetings of MAWA's Urban Aboriginal Advisory Committee. I developed a geographical plan for the locations of meetings aimed at broadening MAWA's contact with current and potential members living in rural and remote communities. I have met and consulted with individuals and groups of practicing artists in existing rural and northern organizations through individual interviews, focus groups, discussions, and art events. I have traveled extensively throughout Manitoba consulting with individuals and collectives in rural and northern organizations identified later in this report.

This report suggests key persons throughout the province, who I think will be best to contact to discuss strategies for collaborations and partnerships with MAWA. In this report I have documented the needs and responses voiced by practicing women visual artists living in selected rural and remote Manitoba communities. I have also suggested strategies for collaborations and partnerships in the development of revised

models of current MAWA outreach initiatives. In addition, I recommend new programs that are based on current MAWA models of outreach such as mentoring, workshops, visiting artist talks, and studio visits. Finally, I indicate how these initiatives will benefit women in the visual arts who live in rural and remote communities, and for the communities themselves in terms of MAWA's mandate to encourage and support the intellectual and creative development of women in the visual arts.

Initial Methodology:

I utilized a community-based methodology and Aboriginal epistemologies to create research that reflects a collaborative approach to inquiry or investigation. This approach provides people with the means to take systematic action to resolve specific problems using collaboration, apprenticeship with elders, working with community experts, learning by doing and storytelling. I tap into existing community networks and leverage these relationships and systems to further promote and raise awareness of MAWA and its programs.

Reflections of Methodology:

The overall methodology remained grounded in a community-based practice and utilized Aboriginal and feminist epistemologies. I used a collaborative and collective approach to this inquiry and investigation. I wanted to generate a general overview of women artists in Manitoba. I tapped into existing community networks and leveraged these relationships and systems in order to find out about issues concerning rural and remote women artists. I tried to answer a series of questions: what existing art programs are available in rural/remote communities? What types and forms of support or partnerships do communities want and need from MAWA?



Northern Road

Photo by Julie Nagam

Methods:

The overall method of this research consisted of meeting with artists from communities with established art groups. This concept of art group was a loose one. This method was designed to support and partner with rural and remote women artists. In my opinion, there needed to be a serious commitment to creative practices and I thought this would be the case if they were part of an established art group. I thought this might indicate that these artists would be seriously interested in furthering themselves and their community in the area of the arts.

In order to have a general overview of the situation of rural and remote artists and collectives, I started to research and tap into existing organizations that had contact with these communities. First I met with Sarah Crawley (Administrative Coordinator) and Vera Lemecha (Executive Director) from MAWA to discuss and receive contact information for existing rural and remote artists who were MAWA members. I then contacted various arts and cultural organizations such as: Manitoba Arts Network, Manitoba Arts Branch, Manitoba Culture, Heritage and Tourism, Manitoba Arts Council, past rural mentors, rural board of directors, curators involved in rural and remote shows, art/craft stores, Mother of Red Nations, North Central Development, Friendship Centres, YWCA of Thompson, Leaf Rapids National Exhibition Centre, Heritage North Museum, Northern Juried art committee, Manitoba Arts and Craft Council, Wah-sa Gallery, Urban Shaman, Recreation centres, Art Gallery of Southwestern Manitoba, and Old Town Gallery. Once these contacts were made various people from these organizations assisted in leading me to different organizations, art councils and artists.

The communities were selected based on their artists being involved in an art/creative collective, arts council, and museum or art gallery. The communities selected were: Brandon, Virden, Oak Lake, Arrow River, Thompson, Leaf Rapids, Norway House, Cross Lake, The Pas, Opaskwayak Cree Nation, Flin Flon, Steinbach, Neepawa, Dauphin, Gimli, Boggy Creek, and Russell. This selection was also based on the time frame of the project, location, activity and funding.

Other communities that were selected for mail or email survey (see Appendix B) were Churchill Arts Council, Holland Tiger Hills Arts Association, Pinawa Eastern Manitoba Concert Association, Teulon Green Acres Art Centre, St. Georges (Manitou) Manitou Rapids Arts Council, Hamiota Midwest Arts Council, Snow Lake Aurora borealis Arts Council, Mc Creary Burrows Trail Arts Council, Carberry Plains Arts Council, Carman Golden Prairie Arts Council, Portage la Prairie's Portage and District Arts Council. None of these communities responded to the survey.

The strategic travel plan began with an initial contact and confirmation of interest. The contact person in the community would then contact local artists and discuss possible dates and times for meeting with the MAWA consultant. Once an official meeting time and place was determined, community members were informed by posters and informal networking such as telephone contact or running into someone

who might be interested. In some communities such as Flin Flon and The Pas, councils took out an ad in the local newspaper; communities such as Norway House and Cross Lake interviewed me on the local radio stations to encourage artists to meet with me; in other communities I spoke to people at local vendors and asked them if they could give me any contacts for artists or cultural producers.

In some communities I was invited to their collective or council meeting as a guest speaker. I found that this was the most successful situation for gathering information and grasping what they as an art collective were focused on. I would recommend this method because it had the best results. Larger numbers of people would be present at these meetings because it affected them or their community. The community member is less likely to see the immediate benefit of a meeting with a stranger representing an unheard of arts organization. In contrast, as an invited guest, the consultant, having been asked to participate in the community, is seen as bringing beneficial knowledge to the meeting. I could not conduct this method for all the communities based on the tight time frame and holiday season, which was selected for this project. In the month of December and part of January, very few people showed up to the formal meetings, therefore I gathered a list of local artists from various contacts and searched these people out. I visited them at their work, met with them for coffee and I was invited into their homes. Although this was very time-consuming, it was very rewarding since people let me, an outsider, into their home life and their community.

Since I grew up in a rural town with ten houses and I presently reside in a remote community, I was able to communicate and connect with rural and remote artists. Many of these artists expressed that they would not have met or granted me the information they did if I was an urban researcher/consultant. Another important role that I played as a guest was to provide an opportunity to give back to the people I was requesting time and information from. At each meeting I answered general questions about their concerns, about applying for grants, specific questions about art-making practices, and my experiences with MAWA. Of course I could not answer everything but I tried my best to steer the women in the right direction, presenting them with organizations, arts organizations, artists and other people that might aid them in their questions or that could provide them with some insight. This process was greatly appreciated and needed since rural/remote women artists lack the resources required to support their practices and have extremely limited access to people who are experienced in the arts.

I was invited to an art opening at Old Town Gallery, which was an excellent opportunity to meet with two artists and people in the community of Oak Lake, including people from the surrounding communities. I was one of three hundred guests that attended an opening at the Art Gallery of Southwestern Manitoba, wow, with an in-house DJ. I visited a local show in Neepawa, that exhibited some unique work, such as wood-working, glass, pottery, painting and photography. I toured the most interesting show in Leaf Rapids at the Exhibition Centre, where local youth were given a camera and photographed the ways they saw their community. There were some really artistic youth up there. I was able to catch a youth art show in Russell; there was birchbark biting, sculpture, drawing, painting and installations. I was invited to a reading at the

Thompson Library by an Irish writer who now lives in rural Manitoba. I made it in time to see a fiber-based show in The Pas and was able to tour the amazing museum there. I was invited into the homes of traditional art crafters in Cross Lake. I was asked to tour the newly built school in Norway House, to view the elders' court and the breathtaking artwork of local artist Gale Sinclair. I was invited for dinner, lunch and into the hearts, homes and communities of rural and remote women. And for that I am truly grateful.

I provided Flin Flon, Neepawa, Virden, Thompson and Dauphin with MAWA's Community of Culture publication. In addition the Thompson Library and art community requested copies of Women and Humor, Glass House and Working with Prisoners. I also was invited on CBC North and CBC Radio One as an interview guest for an on-air discussion. I distributed many copies of MAWA newsletters and new member packages.

Organizations Contacted:

Manitoba Arts Network – Karen Wardle and Edna Nabess
Manitoba Arts Branch – Jackie Weenusk
Manitoba Arts Council – Jazz Mongany and Marian Butler
Manitoba Culture, Heritage and Tourism – Chris Moore and Sam Antila
Past rural mentors – Shirley Brown, Fay Jelly and Barb Flemington
Rural board of directors – Dana Kletke, Fay Jelly and Pauline Braun
Curators – Kristen Paunch and Cathy Mattes
Sam Waller Museum – Ron Scott
Ukridge Art Gallery – Maureen Scheanke
Cabin Country Pottery – Elaine Angelski
Pembina Hills Gallery – Pamela York Harding
Mother of Red Nations – Wendy
North Central Development – Liz Souza
The Pas Friendship Centre – Jerome Conaty
YWCA of Thompson – Pam Logan
Aurora Borealis Council – Sylvia Zamzow
Burrows Trail Art Council – Ann Dulle
Flin Flon Arts Council – Jennifer Donaghy
Viriden Community Arts Council – Linda Rogalsky-Tapp
The Pas Arts Council – Barbara Shaw-ings
Steinbach Arts Council – Shelly Fucile
Russell Recreation Centre – Robin Mack and Mary Wood McNeil
Mid-West Arts Council – Tracy Pederson
The Spirit Walk Way – Teresa Burrows
New Iceland Museum – Tammy Axelssa
Precambrian Art Gallery – Marsha Carroll
Norway House Recreation – Anthony Apetagon
Norway House Education – Heather York
Cross Lake Education – Mary Jane McKay and Kathy Ross
The Pas Theatre Group / Retreat – Darrel & Richard and Baschack
OCN Youth Council – April Brass
Jane's Craft and Hobbies – Jane
Tipi Flutes – Margaret Head-Steppan
Viscount Cultural Council – Brenda Kryschuk
Tiger Hills Arts Association – Denise Walley
Golden Prairie Arts Council – Jane McDonald
Dauphin & District Allied Arts Council – Nina Crawford
Russell Art Collective – Mary Van Damm McNeil
Boggy Creek Cultural Centre – Yvette Bouvier
Brandon University – Colleen Cutchsal
Studio 55 – Linda Sexton Kellett
Manawaka Gallery – Brenda Kryschuk
Cross Lake Recreation Centre – Alexander McKay
Art City – Janine Hogue

Brokenhead Recreation Centre – Bruce
Leaf Rapids National Exhibition Centre – Joan Seddon
Heritage North Museum – Paul Legault
Northern Juried Art Committee – Teresa Burrows and Jan Hall
Manitoba Arts and Craft Council
Wah-sa Gallery – Gary
Urban Shaman – Steve Loft
Thompson Recreation Centre – Darlene Dick
The Pas Recreation Centre -- Wanda
Art Gallery of Southwestern Manitoba – Barb Flemington and Cathy Mattes
Old Town Gallery – Poppy Cumming

Communities Contacted:

In Person:

- Brandon - Brandon University, Art Gallery of Southwestern Manitoba
- Virden – Virden Community Arts Council
- Oak Lake – Old Town Gallery
- Arrow River – individual artist
- Thompson – studio 55, poetry group and individual artists
- Leaf Rapids – Leaf Rapids National Exhibition Centre
- Norway House – Recreational band department, school
- Cross lake – Recreational band department
- The Pas – The Pas Art Council, Manitoba Arts Network
- OCN – Recreational band department
- Flin Flon- Flin Flon Arts Council
- Souris – Organized group meeting
- Neepawa – Viscount Cultural Council
- Dauphin – Dauphin & District Allied Arts Council
- Steinbach – Steinbach Arts Council
- Boggy Creek – Arts Council
- Roblin – Organized meeting
- Russell – Organized group meeting
- Gimli – New Iceland Heritage Museum

By Mail or email:

- Churchill – Churchill Arts Council
- Holland – Tiger Hills Arts Association
- Pinawa – Eastern Manitoba Concert Association
- Teulon – Green Acres Art Centre
- St.Georges (Manitou) - Manitou Rapids Arts Council
- Hamiota – Midwest Arts Council
- Snow Lake – Aurora borealis Arts Council
- Mc Creary – Burrows Trail Arts Council
- Carberry – Carberry Plains Arts Council
- Carman – Golden Prairie Arts Council
- Portage la Prairie – Portage and District Arts Council



Northern Road

Photo by Julie Nagam

Total of 42 days of travel
A total of driving 9849 kilometers
A total of 41 different highways
A total of 43 different communities
A total of 55 different arts organizations
A total of 126 people

Community Profiles:

Southwest Region: 14 days in 6 main areas

The southwest region is primarily a farming area with livestock and some urban development. The area surrounding Brandon is about 2 to 3 hours southwest of Winnipeg. Brandon is the second largest city in Manitoba and is home to over 35 000² people. Souris is home to about 2000 people and Virden has over 3000 people. The town of Neepawa is north of Brandon with a population of over 3500. These are thriving communities and all have employment opportunities in health care, education, social services and the service industry. The smaller area of Oak Lake is populated by 400 people and Arrow River would be lucky, by my own estimate, to have 75 people. This area has a diverse population. There is a high Aboriginal population, high immigrant population and past generations of immigrants.

Central West Woodlands Region: 7 days in 5 main areas

The central west woodlands is home to our National Park and some of the most beautiful landscape Manitoba has to offer. These towns are a 4 to 5 hour drive from Winnipeg. This area is dense with woodland forest and natural resource industries such as forestry, mining and tourism. In addition there is farming and livestock. There are employment opportunities in the service industry, health care, government and education. This area is just as diverse as the rest of Manitoba: in the towns of Boggy Creek and Onanoe there is a high population of Aboriginal people and in Dauphin and Russell there are large numbers of Aboriginal people, a high concentration of new immigrants and past immigrant people. The population of Russell is over 2000, Onanole around 500 people and Dauphin is over 9000 people.

Northern Region: 17 days in 8 main areas

The northern region is diverse in landscape and in industry. This area is a 7 to 12 hour drive from Winnipeg. The major employment areas are in natural resources such as forestry, mining and tourism. In addition, there are many opportunities in social services, education, hydro, construction, health care, government and service area. In the extreme remote areas there are very few opportunities for employment. The communities I visited are the larger communities of the remote areas and are primarily industry towns. Flin Flon, The Pas, Thompson and Leaf Rapids were created by the mining industry. These places have a diverse population of immigrants, past immigrants and a high Aboriginal population. The areas of Cross Lake, Norway House and Opaskwayak Cree Nation are all First Nation Reserves where the majority of the people are Aboriginal. The town of Thompson has 1500 people, Flin Flon has 8000 people, and The Pas has over 7000 people. According to census data Leaf Rapids had 1500 people before the closure of the mine. It is presently estimated at 350 people. Cranberry

² All information on communities has been taken from Censuses 2001 data.

Portage has 900 people, Norway House has over 4000 people, Cross Lake has over 2500 people and Opaskwayak Cree Nation is not listed but is estimated at 3500 people.

Steinbach and Gimli: 4 days in this area

Steinbach is about 45 minutes east of Winnipeg and is home to over 6000 people, many of whom are rooted in strong Mennonite beliefs. It has a thriving economy with livestock, farming, service industry, education, social services and personal businesses. The community is comprised primarily of past and recent immigrants. Gimli is just over an hour north of Winnipeg and is home to the New Iceland, a community of past and recent immigrants of Iceland. There are about 2000 people in the town which is surrounded by many Aboriginal communities. Some of the economy is based on commercial fishing, farming, livestock, small business and tourism.

Snapshot of Economic Conditions for Rural and Remote Women Artists:

For many of us in rural and remote towns, community is the reason for living. Our community impacts our worldview, which in turn affects our culture or understanding of the concept of culture. It is an understatement to suggest that rural and remote women artists have a role in their community; basically many of these women are running their communities. By running I mean these women are strong, hardy, confident, creative and masters of multi-tasking. These are women who are constantly balancing multiple responsibilities including their family duties, paid labour, art and their volunteer community work. As mothers, employment counsellors, teachers, health care workers, grandmothers, and youth workers they are committed to establishing a strong foundation in their community.

All of the women (with the exception of 2 out of 100) that participated in this project had employment outside of cultural production. Only the women who have retired from their past employment could afford to work as full-time artists. This is a significant issue for many of the women because they would be interested in employment related to cultural production but these opportunities do not exist in rural and remote communities. In addition to their full or part-time employment most of the women had families and were the primary caregiver. A large number of the women reported exhaustion from all of the unpaid and paid labour, which further complicates their relationship to 'finding the time' for creating art.

According to Census data in 2001, Northern communities had less than 5% of employment in arts, entertainment and recreation. As well, women are already at a disadvantage because, as stated in Women and the Economy, "The assumptions of traditional economics have had devastating consequences for women. Women's secondary status within the paid work force has meant that women experience poverty much more frequently than men"(45). "It is not only women who are excluded from the economy. People of color, Aboriginal peoples, people living with disabilities, and many others who do not fit the separate and self-interested model of human behaviour described by economists are so vulnerable"(45). When these facts are compounded with these women living in non-urban settings, the situation is worse. Where the economy is based on one main or no industry, how do people support themselves?

The assessment and final strategic plans of this project must take into account these difficult economic issues that face rural and remote women artists. In addition, comprehension of the unique issues facing women artists in non-urban settings, such as limited opportunities in cultural production, limited access to continued professional development and academic and critical dialogue in the arts, is also important.

Understanding the Rationale, Priority and Structure of the Recommendations, Actions and Outcomes:

First, I want to articulate my discomfort with having to prioritize my recommendations. All of the communities I visited had excellent feedback and deserve more support from the arts and cultural community in the area of programming, visiting professional artists, professional workshops and networking. In order for MAWA to optimally address these recommendations, programs need to be framed in an accessible, realistic and approachable manner.

These recommendations are based on my informed opinion as a result of my research, the time spent with rural and remote artists in their communities and listening to their feedback. As well, I have been engaged in events and programs by MAWA, and I have spent a great deal of time with MAWA's staff, members, Executive Director and Board Members to truly understand the ways in which MAWA's goals and mandate function. My goal was to articulate the needs of rural and remote women artists in a realistic framework that took into account MAWA's ability to support and run programming as a vital but small organization. With the implementation of these recommendations, actions and outcomes, rural/remote women artists will have more options and opportunities in cultural production and MAWA will better meet its goals and mandate.

The recommendations are framed in a realistic implementation strategy without overwhelming or excusing the small but vital resources MAWA currently employs. However, to ensure the ultimate success of these recommendations, actions and outcomes, there is a need for increased funding, partnership and employment opportunities. In addition, there needs to be a task force that is generated by the governing procedures of MAWA to oversee and commit to these recommendations. This task force should collaborate with various art organizations who are also committed to ensuring opportunities for rural and remote women artists.

I have listed the programs MAWA is currently offering and within each program I have prioritized a list of recommendations. These recommendations are based on MAWA's economic ability, staffing resources and ability to execute the suggested tasks, and a natural progression toward the final result. Each program is listed with numbered recommendations in priority that matches the same numbered actions and outcomes.

MAWA Programs:

Foundation Mentorship Program:

The Foundation Mentorship Program is MAWA's signature program and has been central to the organization's programming since MAWA's inception. It will be difficult for this program to meet the needs of rural and remote women artists since the program operates out of Winnipeg. However, it would be very beneficial for rural and remote artists to access it because of the high level of learning and positive outcomes that each mentee experiences while in the program.

My recommendations in priority include:

- 1.1 Given the different levels of artistic development between rural and urban artists (based on access to art development and art culture), a two-tiered mentorship system is proposed. This could take the form of the mentors choosing a committed but less experienced artist, as well as a more developed artist if they match the mentor's area and interest.
- 1.2 Make a rural/remote artist a priority in the mentorship program. This would not take the shape of forcing mentors to take on rural/remote mentees, however mentors would be encouraged to consider rural/remote mentees. This is current practice.
- 1.3 Apply for funding for the mentor to visit the rural/remote mentee, instead of the mentee traveling to Winnipeg. This would give the mentor an opportunity to better understand the rural/remote mentee situation. The mentor would see, first hand, the mentee's studio and community, including the barriers they face.
- 1.4 Implement a sponsorship program for rural/remote artists for the mentorship advisory section in order to train and provide artists with tools to become mentors in their communities. This would provide ongoing mentorship for the selected artists because they would, in turn, provide ongoing mentorship in their communities. This could be the first step in developing mentorship advisory programs in rural and remote communities.
- 1.5 Implement a Foundation Mentorship Program in rural/remote areas. This could take the form of having a central location that services the communities in that specific area. For example, Thompson could act as a hub because there are many mature, experienced artists who could become mentors for the areas of Leaf Rapids, Nelson House and so on. This would work similarly for other communities.

Action for Foundation Mentorship Program:

- 1.1 Develop a two-tiered system in the mentorship program, being mindful not to create a backlash for rural/remote artists. This would require finding mentors who were willing to work in rural/remote areas for part of their time in the mentoring program.
- 1.2 Seek mentors who are committed to mentoring rural/remote mentees and who want to see an increase in rural/remote participation in this program.
- 1.3 Incorporate an increase in funding for the Foundation Mentorship Program which will allow the mentor to travel to the rural/remote mentee's studio and will allow the mentee to partake in the meetings held in Winnipeg. As well, have a mentee meeting in their area so that artists in the group (including urban artists) have an opportunity to understand, first hand, the experiences of rural/remote women artists.
- 1.4 Seek resources for a sponsorship program for rural/remote artists. As well, establish partnerships to enlist rural/remote communities.
- 1.5 Establish partnerships and seek funding to implement the Foundation Mentorship Program in the communities suggested in the assessment.

Outcomes:

- 1.1 Better access for rural/remote women artists without discrimination or thoughts of not "being good enough" to get into the program.
- 1.2 Increased awareness of rural/remote women artists and the benefits they provide for their communities and the general arts community.
- 1.3 Better understanding for urban artists and mentors about the lived experience of rural/remote artists. As well, provide the opportunity to showcase the rural/remote community and its assets as well as providing strength to the rural/remote artist in being a responsible 'host'.
- 1.4 Capacity building in rural/remote communities, assisting communities in becoming more self-sufficient. Artists would develop as professionals and as mentors with valuable skills to offer young and upcoming artists.
- 1.5 Increased number of professional artists contributing to Manitoba's cultural sphere and awareness of MAWA programs. An overall increase of awareness of Manitoba's rich artistic capabilities, practices and communities.

Mentor in Residence:

Mentor in Residence is a recent addition to MAWA's programs. It is the most relevant to rural/remote artists because of the design of the program. This program is transportable, which could significantly benefit rural/remote communities. Many women indicated they wanted an artist in residence in their community. The community of Russell spoke positively about mentor Libby Weir. She worked with professional artists, children in schools, people with disabilities, as well as amateur artists and those who pursued art as a hobby. This program had a very positive impact on the community; it raised the level of art awareness and benefited many people in the community.

My recommendations in priority include:

- 2.1 Reserve a spot and fund a rural/remote woman artist to participate in MAWA's mentor in residence that operates out of Winnipeg.
- 2.2 When the Mentor in Residence program is operating out of Winnipeg and the mentor is an Aboriginal artist, for example Rebecca Belmore, there should be a spot reserved for a rural/remote Aboriginal woman artist. This could take the form of making requests through various community contacts for participation by Aboriginal artists. For example, the call could be distributed to locations that Aboriginal artists would have access to. There would hopefully be an opportunity for Aboriginal artists to connect with one another. In addition, if the mentor is or was a practicing rural/remote artist (which Belmore is), then having a Manitoban rural/remote artist is important because this mentor will have insight into the struggles or roadblocks rural/remote artists face.
- 2.3 When MAWA is funding a trip to Winnipeg for the mentor in residence, this should include having that artist spend time in rural/remote communities. For example, the mentor could have a workshop or show their work. Many people were not that interested in an artist's talk, however they expressed interest in the artist showing their work. As well, community members want the opportunity to ask the mentor in residence questions about the community member's artwork.
- 2.4 Since another concern is showcasing Manitoba's talent, supporting local professional artists to become an artist/mentor in residence traveling to and staying in rural/remote communities would have a great impact on the communities and local artists. The length of stay would depend on the artist and the community needs.
- 2.5 MAWA could fund and partner with community organizations to have a mentor in residence in rural/remote communities. This could give opportunities to local talented artists in rural/remote communities and give urban artists an opportunity to understand challenges involved in sustaining rural/remote art practices.

Actions for Mentor in Residence:

- 2.1 Reserve a spot for a rural/remote artist and seek funding to execute this possibility. This could involve assisting the selected artist to apply for funding available to them or applying directly for this funding.
- 2.2 Reserve a spot for rural/remote Aboriginal artist, in particular when the mentor in residence is a rural/remote Aboriginal artist.
- 2.3 Establish partnerships with rural/remote communities in order to share the benefit of having a professional artist visit Winnipeg. Seek funding partnerships to share the cost of this artist spending time in rural/remote communities.
- 2.4 Seek funding to establish a program to fund and partner with rural/remote artists to travel and become mentors in residence in rural/remote communities.
- 2.5 Hire an outreach person to coordinate these actions and seek funding and establish long-term partnerships to have a permanent rural/remote mentor in residence program.

Outcomes:

- 2.1 Strengthened commitment to rural/remote artists and support to these artists' development in their professional careers as cultural producers.
- 2.2 Strengthened commitment to rural/remote Aboriginal artists and the development of Aboriginal female artists as mentors in their communities.
- 2.3 Develop long-term commitment and partnership with rural/remote community organizations, which will impact how MAWA is perceived to be dedicated to professional development of rural/remote women artists. This benefits the entire community and helps build capacity in the area of the arts.
- 2.4 As stated in 2.3, as well it will aid in the long-term development of the arts and cultural production in rural/remote areas. This is greatly needed.
- 2.5 Increased awareness of MAWA's programs and an increase in membership. In addition, it would provide rural/remote artists with an exclusive program for their professional development.

Newsletter:

The newsletter is an integral part of MAWA's communication strategy and builds a sense of art community within the membership. However, the newsletter does not

meet the needs of rural and remote women artists because the information is sometimes not applicable. For example, dates for grants and upcoming shows specific to Winnipeg.

My recommendations in priority are as follows:

- 3.1 List upcoming events from various rural and remote communities, such as local shows, workshops, retreats, and events. This would involve having a key person keep in contact with a MAWA representative throughout the year.
- 3.2 Mail newsletters to rural and remote art groups, art councils, Brandon University, University College of the North, galleries, and local libraries. This would also provide MAWA with the opportunity to communicate to new artists or artists who are not part of an organized art group.
- 3.3 Utilize the newsletter to showcase events after they have happened and write reports of events in rural and remote communities. The newsletter could display photos from events such as an exhibit or a rural and remote artist could write about an art event that happened in their community.
- 3.4 The newsletter offers a great opportunity to showcase rural and remote women artists, particularly if they have an upcoming show or have done something noteworthy in the arts.

In creating the newsletter as a space that includes rural and remote women artists' lives, these artists will connect to the newsletter and see themselves and the people in their community. This will inspire and create a sense of community outside of their 'technical perimeters'. In essence, many people define community based on geographic locations, however when a group of people communicate or network it creates a sense of community. If the newsletter reflected what was happening in other communities or discussed issues of interest for rural/remote women artists, this would create a sense of community outside of their geographic borders and with MAWA.

Actions for Newsletter:

- 3.1 Hire an outreach person to collect and continue to collect information on the events in rural and remote communities. This information could be passed on through the newsletter.
- 3.2 Add addresses of all participating organizations, libraries, universities, art councils and so on, to the regular mailing and distribution list.
- 3.3 As stated in 3.1, have a MAWA representative involved in and supporting events in rural/remote communities. This would allow for long-term communication about

events that would be listed in the newsletter. As well, it would provide opportunities for local people to report and write about art events in their community, providing professional development.

- 3.4 As stated in 3.1, make a commitment to increasing awareness surrounding new and upcoming rural/remote artists. These new artists would have contact and support from the outreach person.

Outcomes:

- 3.1 The outreach person would become a MAWA representative and would provide people in rural/remote communities with a personal contact to MAWA and its programs. It would increase MAWA's visibility in rural/remote communities, build trust and a long-term relationship. This information would inform the rest of the urban art community allowing them agency to participate in these events.
- 3.2 Increased awareness of MAWA's presence and programs by allowing communities to have contact through MAWA's publications and events. This would expand the membership to new, young or upcoming artists in these communities.
- 3.3 As stated in 3.2, increased interest in the MAWA newsletter because the information would be relevant since it involved people and events in their own and outlying communities.
- 3.4 Increased level of cultural production for Manitoba rural/remote artists and at the same time increased awareness of MAWA's programs. In turn this would increase membership based on the growing numbers of new, young and upcoming Manitoba artists.

Workshops:

Workshops are very important for MAWA members and non-members. They provide artists and cultural producers with meaningful learning and development opportunities. Workshops are much needed in rural/remote communities. Artists in these communities rarely have these opportunities. This could be an opportunity for MAWA to partner with art councils and other art organizations to bring workshops and lectures to rural/remote communities.

My recommendations in priority include:

- 4.1 MAWA to design and sponsor a workshop that covers topics such as grant writing, distributing artwork, applying or approaching galleries, photographing

artwork, how to prepare a CV and a professional artist's statement. This should be designed and provided by a person who is familiar with the issues facing rural/remote women artists and who has been a MAWA past mentor. As well, these artists need workshops on how to submit artwork to galleries and exhibitions, how to stay motivated and creative in isolation, and how to promote and sell artwork.

- 4.2 Sponsor rural/remote artists to perform workshops in Winnipeg in order to expose urban artists to different types/styles of art making, which would also provide rural/remote artist with professional development.
- 4.3 General workshops of interest are: painting of all types, drawing, sculpting, molding, performance, printmaking, photography, and new and innovative art making techniques such as a photo emulsion workshop. Including the existing workshops held in Winnipeg, many people were interested in some of the workshops that were happening at MAWA (for example the photo emulsion transfer workshop).
- 4.4 Provide workshops in rural/remote areas because many of the rural/remote artists indicated they do not want to always travel to Winnipeg. They would like to see benefits for their entire community, not just for individual artists.
- 4.5 There is a need to develop mentors in rural/remote communities. Modify the existing Creating Community Through Mentorship Workshop to meet rural/remote needs. This workshop would be beneficial in key geographical areas where there are professional artists that could become mentors in their community. Providing this workshop for cultural producers and artists in rural/remote communities will allow for future development in the area of community mentorship programs in rural/remote areas.

All of the events (except the Foundation Mentorship Program) in rural/remote communities should or could be attended by both male and female artists. There are very few opportunities for rural/remote artists and it needs to benefit the entire community.

Actions for Workshops:

- 4.1 Create a workshop that encompasses all of the above in 4.1, that is a hands-on, multiple day workshop where the instructor stays in the community for a short period of time to work with individuals and groups. There would be a few artists who are more interested and dedicated, therefore more time would be spent working with them, creating mentors or more experienced people who could aid others in the community.
- 4.2 Provide funding and the opportunities to bring a rural/remote artist into Winnipeg to perform a workshop, artist talk, or a 'First Friday' talk. This could be done

through an application process that selected a certain percentage of rural/remote artists to conduct any of the above tasks as part of MAWA's yearly budget.

- 4.3 Contract professional urban and rural/remote women artists to travel to communities to conduct the types of workshops listed above in 4.3, and other events.
- 4.4 Provide workshops in rural/remote communities.
- 4.5 Hire an outreach person in conjunction with the creator of this workshop and a rural mentor to create and travel with a revised version of this workshop for rural/remote artists.

Outcomes:

- 4.1 This would create capacity building in the area covered by the workshop and would allow the community to become self-sufficient; therefore these people would become informal mentors in the area of this workshop. This would make MAWA a community support, instead of providing an external teacher to the community for a short period of time.
- 4.2 This would increase exposure to the urban art community and would provide professional development for rural/remote women artists. There are few opportunities for rural/remote women in the area of teaching, working with others, learning in a new community and personal development.
- 4.3 Exposure for MAWA and increased membership, as well as providing rural/remote and urban artists with professional opportunities as stated in the mandate.
- 4.4 Build capacity for rural/remote communities and increased exposure of MAWA's programs. This would be an indication that MAWA was committed to long-term relationships with rural/remote communities.
- 4.5 As stated above in 4.4, it would provide local mentors with professional development opportunities and support them to take on the role of mentoring in their community.

Lecture Series:

The lecture series is a very important program for MAWA members and non-members. It gives artists and cultural producers the opportunity for continuous learning and development. As well, it acts as professional development for the artist who is presenting.

My recommendations in priority are as follows:

- 5.1 Videotape all lectures and artist's talks for rural/remote women and for art organizations to borrow and watch, if they are unable to attend lecture in Winnipeg or are unable or do not want to travel. Have these available to borrow on the website.
- 5.2 Request that guest lecturers provide one or two of their presentations outside of Winnipeg. This will reduce the cost to MAWA since expenses could be shared with other arts organizations. Rural/remote communities could have access to artists from other provinces without paying the total cost of the travel expenses from long distances.

Actions for Lecture Series:

- 5.1 Seek a videographer to videotape lectures, artist's talks and other relevant MAWA programs. Catalogue the tapes in the Resource Centre, so that members can borrow these materials or organizations can duplicate them and keep a copy in their own resource centres.
- 5.2 Hire an outreach person who will be able to seek funding partnerships to execute this possible programming. As well, inform communities and their organizations that an artist is being asked to be a MAWA guest. This would provide the opportunity for them to decide if this artist is of interest to their community and to pursue funding.

Outcomes:

- 5.1 Better exposure for the artist involved and increased support from MAWA to rural/remote organizations that were given duplicate tapes. For members who are able to borrow tapes, an increase in their learning and professional development.
- 5.2 This would supplement the small budgets of rural/remote art councils or art collectives and at the same time provide these organizations with access to cutting edge professional artists.

MAWA Resource Centre

The MAWA resource centre is an excellent source for creative development for women artists. Many artists stated that there was a lack of knowledge available to them and access to this resource would be greatly welcomed by many rural/remote artists.

My recommendations in priority include:

- 6.1 The resource centre holdings should be listed on the website so that rural/remote members can request titles or publications to be mailed out to them for a period of time. The member would mail back the borrowed item. This model would be similar to the distance library at the University of Manitoba.
- 6.2 Mail past and present MAWA publications to rural/remote libraries, galleries, art councils and museums.
- 6.3 Encourage and support rural/remote communities to create their own resource library, which would better meet their needs and provide non-MAWA members the opportunity to access art publications.

Actions for MAWA Resource Center:

- 6.1 Hire an outreach person to catalogue this information on the website and send out invitations to rural/remote communities to view the site. Invite them to participate by encouraging artists in their community to borrow resources. As well, this person (or another staff person) would assist in sending out and receiving the borrowed items.
- 6.2 Donate or gift communities with past and present MAWA publications.
- 6.3 As stated in 6.1, the outreach person could create a package of how to implement a community resource centre in their community, also providing ongoing support and information.

Outcomes:

- 6.1 Employment opportunities in the cultural field, better exposure of MAWA and its programs, publications and so on.
- 6.2 This action would provide rural/remote artists and community members' access to more information about the arts. In addition, this would give artists, who are not members, exposure to MAWA.
- 6.3 This would build capacity for rural/remote communities and support them to create their own resources for artistic development.

Website:

The website is an important connection for many MAWA members and non-members. It provides people with up-to-date information on current workshops, events, requests and calls for submission. The MAWA website is a vital component in today's virtual society.

My recommendations in priority are:

- 7.1 Include information on workshops, events and requests from rural/remote communities on the website.
- 7.2 List a complete catalogue of items from the MAWA Resource Centre on the website.
- 7.3 Showcase rural/remote women artists including information about their art practice and the community work they are involved in.

Actions for Website:

- 7.1 Hire an outreach person to collect this information regularly. This information would be given to the person who is responsible for maintaining and updating the website.
- 7.2 Have this information regularly posted on the website by the person who maintains the MAWA website.
- 7.3 Have the outreach person interview or stay in contact with various rural/remote artists. Select a person to showcase bi-monthly or invite artists to submit their work to be considered for selection.

Outcomes:

- 7.1 Better exposure and networking for rural/remote community events. This would increase public awareness of events and cultural production in rural/remote communities.
- 7.2 Increased use of the MAWA resource centre and website, as well as increased publicity for MAWA, which would have an impact on membership.
- 7.3 Increased exposure for rural/remote artists and their community. As well, a visible long-term commitment from MAWA.

Studio Visits:

Studio Visits are an integral part of an artist's learning, growth and development as a professional artist. This interaction allows for the artist to ask questions and for the viewer to see the various stages of their work, including where the artist started. The viewer also has the opportunity to see the limitations of the artist's space and assist in trouble shooting. Studio visits for rural/remote MAWA members have consisted of the artist bringing in their artwork to Winnipeg, presenting great difficulties for the rural/remote artist. It is important to understand the limitations of this process because many rural/remote artists have to travel a great distance, choosing artwork that will be transportable therefore limiting their options, and what will be seen.

My recommendations in priority are as follows:

- 8.1 Provide rural/remote women artists with studio visits at their studios, so that the visiting artists will comprehend the artist's context and the barriers that they face. Rural/remote artists will not have to transport their artwork. This will also offer them the experience of having a professional artist visit their studio space.
- 8.2 If an artist is able to travel to an outlying community for a studio visit, this should be timed with an artist's talk or workshop.

Actions for Studio Visits:

- 8.1 In order for rural/remote artists to participate the artist and the member must be aware of the limitations of not having the visit at their studio. Seek funds that would allow the visiting artist to travel to the member's studio.
- 8.2 Once this funding is found then it should be incorporated with an event that would benefit the community. This could be an opportunity for partnership with community organizations.

Outcomes:

- 8.1 This will provide the artist with an opportunity to showcase all of their artwork in their studio space.
- 8.2 This will offer the opportunity for many people to work with or learn from the visiting professional artist. This will allow for the entire community to benefit from the visiting artist, thus inspiring new and young artists about the possibilities of becoming an artist.

Umbrella Projects

Umbrella projects are important because they allow different voices to be heard. This needs to be open to the rural/remote membership. There are many talented and active artists in rural/remote Manitoba and supporting their current ideas and projects would truly benefit MAWA.

My recommendations in priority include:

- 9.1 Encourage and support rural/remote communities to start and maintain a critical reading or art group. Provide expertise or material that might be of interest.
- 9.2 Create a list of artists and cultural producers within the province, which would indicate where the artist lived and the type of work they produced. This could be a possible project with Manitoba Arts Network and Manitoba Heritage, Culture and Tourism, based on their links to artists throughout the province.
- 9.3 Host an event to showcase rural/remote women and MAWA members' artwork to provide an opportunity for people to meet, discuss their work, ask questions and learn from each other. This would be an event where women could network and exchange information.
- 9.4 Host or support art shows and exhibits in the area of rural/remote women artists. This would raise the profile of MAWA and provide women artists with great opportunities and learning. It could be the first time some artists would have shown their work, which would function as mentorship in the area of displaying or exhibiting artwork.
- 9.5 More visibility in art communities/schools. For example having a MAWA member or staff visit art schools, such as the University of Manitoba or Brandon University and high schools in the outskirts of Winnipeg and rural/remote areas. The MAWA representative would explain all the programs MAWA is currently providing and answer any student questions.
- 9.6 MAWA could connect with local community events; therefore the community would know there was a serious commitment from MAWA. This could take the form of MAWA partnering with a specific event or supplying an event with artwork, publications, and promotional items such as t-shirts.

Actions for Umbrella Projects:

- 9.1 Create a support package to aid people in starting a critical thinking or art group.

- 9.2 Hire an outreach worker to collaborate with organizations stated in 9.2 because they have existing lists and information on rural/remote artists. Once this list is created, it would be distributed to various urban art organizations, rural/remote organizations, art councils, groups, museums and libraries.
- 9.3 As stated in 9.2, organize, coordinate and find funds to host an event to bring rural/remote and urban members together.
- 9.4 As stated in 9.2, organize, coordinate and find funds to host several art shows and events to promote rural/remote women artists.
- 9.5 As stated in 9.2, prepare a presentation to visit and connect with educational organizations to educate new, young and upcoming female artists.
- 9.6 As stated in 9.2, organize, coordinate and find funds for partnering and organizing community events in rural and remote areas.

Outcomes:

- 9.1 A critical reading or art group is an excellent source of stimulation and professional development. It provides artists and cultural producers with ongoing learning and intellectual stimulation in rural/remote communities where this type of support is greatly needed.
- 9.2 This list could be a resource that could be given to art organizations, galleries and art councils across the province, aiding these organizations in locating possible visiting artists for their community.
- 9.3 This would increase exposure to rural/remote artists and MAWA. It would create more opportunities in the area of the arts and provide professional development for women artists as stated in MAWA's mandate.
- 9.4 This would provide new and upcoming artists an opportunity to learn first hand about MAWA and the possibilities that exist for them as a female artist.
- 9.5 This would provide a visible person who would represent MAWA in educating, promoting and expanding MAWA's mandate and programs. This would increase MAWA's membership and exposure to their programs.
- 9.6 This would be a visible long-term commitment to rural/remote communities. This would promote MAWA's mandate, commitment and programs to various funders, communities and organizations.

Community Feedback

About 200 kilometers southeast of Winnipeg lies a farming community in the heartland of rolling hills in a sea of crops. There are giant rolled straw bales at every corner. The air is still and the land is flat, if you're lucky enough to drive through in the fall you might see people working in their metal machinery. In the heart of a farming town is an amazing Fine Arts program at Brandon University and the Southwestern Art Gallery, it would come as no surprise that the women who run these operations are extraordinary to say the least. In the home of Margaret Lawrence lies a busy group of artists, active and thriving. I was able to see their local show in their gallery space called Manawaka. Just when you think you figured out these communities, they will throw you a curve ball, because their community artists are spectacular and popping out of the woodwork!

Feedback from Brandon and Neepawa:

- Southwest Gallery discussed the possibility of having a mentorship program operating out of Brandon to service the women in the surrounding rural areas.
- Discussed a youth mentorship program, so youth have a person to talk to who would recommend books, share information, and give general feedback.
- Discussed the possibility of more shows and group shows by the mentees (like the group show of MAWA mentees, *Have I Been Here Before?* held in Winnipeg in November 2004). More support by MAWA to encourage partnerships or relationships with galleries for members.
- More juried art shows to provide rural artists with feedback.
- Two levels of mentorship, one as it is and another for women artists starting from a more conservative or realist background, who need encouragement in the beginning stages and in the education and development of contemporary art style.
- Provide background information about the artist having the studio visit and about the visiting artist. Try to offer in-studio visits rather than asking rural artists to drive to Winnipeg and bring a few pieces of their work for critique.
- More promotion at the Fine Arts program at Brandon University because there are art history courses on line and there is an Aboriginal Art program.
- Rural mentorships would support artists in the community, could network and find other contacts and relevant information. Could work together in applications for grants, shows and other professional development. Would prevent total isolation and provide an atmosphere where artists could motivate each other.

- Should hold a members' show for all Manitoban women artists to meet each other, talk and learn from each other.
- Different workshops such as grant writing, how to write an artist statement, how to show and submit artwork. These should happen in the community, rather than rural people having to travel to Winnipeg. This would allow more people in the community to access these workshops.

Key People in the Brandon Area:

Cathy Mattes – Art Gallery of Southwestern Manitoba
Barb Flemington – Art Gallery of Southwestern Manitoba
Colleen Cutschall – Brandon University
Brenda Kryschuk – Manawaka Gallery



Colleen Cutschall

Photo Julie Nagam



Art Gallery of Southwestern Manitoba

Photo Julie Nagam



Neepawa Artists with work

Photo Julie Nagam



Neepawa Artists

Photo Julie Nagam

Imagine an old town movie house converted into a gallery space displaying the original woodwork. Downstairs is a hardware store...255 kilometers southwest of Winnipeg. You would be standing in the Old Town Gallery in Oak Lake. Then picture a converted CN train station as an arts centre for the community of Virden and that is not all. In the small town of Arrow River there is a woman with a house converted into a studio and gallery space called Ukeridge Art Gallery, which they use to serve tea and treats in. Once you have imagined these fantastic little places then you can begin to understand the remarkable women artists I met.

Feedback from Virden, Souris, Arrow River and Oak Lake:

- Need better networking among themselves and the art councils/organizations.
- Would like to have artists' talks and lecture series video-taped and available for loan to people in rural areas or have copies available for loan at their local art councils.
- Would benefit from information on juried shows, galleries, and calls for submission.
- Would benefit from bulletin of upcoming shows and events outside of Winnipeg.
- Need mentorship for rural artists because these artists are creating work in isolation and need peer feedback and senior artists' feedback.
- Need more coverage in newspaper and media in their own communities to inform people what is going on in the area of arts.
- Would benefit from having local artists involved in the schools to encourage new generations of artists. They are not getting support from the existing art teacher.
- Interested in critical thinking group, looking at and discussing work or text in the area of the arts.
- Interested in professional workshops, such as how to photograph your own work and what grants and funding resources are available.
- Interested in MAWA sponsoring a traveling art show by rural and remote artists. This would show off some of the rural/remote talent.

Key Contact People in these areas:

Virden Community Arts Council – Linda Rogalsky-Tapp
Artist – Faye Jelly
Artist – Shirley Brown
Artist – Kathy Skelton
Old Town Gallery – Poppy Cummings

Tucked away in a snow village 900 kilometers northeast of the urban centre is the thriving community of Norway House. Its population is boasted to be over five thousand people. It is home to the Norway House North Stars and I was lucky enough to participate in the event. Many would consider sports not related to art but the same person in the band office manages them both. I was engulfed in a giant snowstorm, but a wonderful woman and her husband drove me to their new school, to view the elders' courtyard and the huge painting by local artist Gale Sinclair...wow! Unfortunately my contacts fell through but I had a guest appearance on the local radio station CJNC, with the host translating my words into Cree.

Feedback from Norway House:

- Would like to see some partnerships with the school and the community because art is important to the community.
- Interested in having creative elders work with new and upcoming artists in traditional art-making and in having artists from other northern communities, for example Teresa Burrows, staying there to work with some of the artists and youth in the community.
- Would benefit from accessing a northern mentorship program since there are not enough professional artists or people to carry the past knowledge of creative people into their community.
- Interested in workshops on painting, carving, drawing, photography and any new and traditional art-making or art practices.
- Need more networking in the north and communicating activities and workshops happening in other outlying locations.

Key Person in Norway House:
Educator – Heather York



Norway House York Boat

Photo Julie Nagam

An hour or so North of Norway House lies a three-foot deep snow covered road leading to the community of Cross Lake, better known as Pimichikamak Cree Nation. This is home to many fluent Cree speakers, which was music to my ears. I was lucky to have a very good friend in Cross Lake. The recreational director dropped the ball, he said there were no women artists in the community, although he still wanted me to come and had my visit advertised on the local radio station CFNC. It never surprises me that always women know what is happening in their communities and have the will power to search out the people who have the knowledge if they do not.

Feedback from Cross Lake:

- There is no art program in the schools and many women stated there was little help from the band council.
- There was a group of older women who formerly came into the school and met as a group but many of them have passed away. There should be a group of people or artists/crafters that could meet and come into the school.
- Would like to see various workshops happen in the community, quilting, beading, needlework, and carving.
- Many women stated they needed support in selling or having a personal business to distribute their work. This was a major issue because there was little support from the band.
- Another issue was space to display and sell their artwork. This was a huge concern because many people in the community did not know where or what people were making and if they could buy the work.

I arrived home to -37 degrees, however the artists I met here are warm and friendly, committed to their art practices. It is a 800 kilometer drive north on a cold, long, hard stretch of highway, but at the end of it you find a bustling community with people from all over the world. I was able to attend a reading at the library and meet with artists, the collective studio 55 and the creative writing group. All of these amazing people were hiding in my community, right under my nose! Well lucky for me, I will be able to finish and work with some of these dedicated artists and creative people.

Feedback from Thompson:

- Interested in mentor in residence coming to the north.
- Would enjoy having professional development workshops or meetings for interested artists in the community, perhaps something similar to MAWA's program First Fridays. This would give some of the professional artists an opportunity to expand their development, and in turn could provide better support for less professional artists.
- Interested in working with other organizations, University College of the North, the school district, and arts organizations in partnership with MAWA.
- Need more networking in the north outside of the northern juried art show, in the form of holding more juried shows, traveling exhibitions and so on.
- Need to enroll young artists and youth because many older people are leaving and there is a need to keep the art community strong. Work with the high school to have a mentorship program.
- Link with other arts organizations such as MAWA, Art City, and Urban Shaman to support and build partnerships with Northern artists and collectives.
- Start a Northern Advisory Mentorship program. There are many talented artists in the north who would benefit from mentorship. It would be best for the mentor to travel and/or be in the area. This mentor would need to understand the issues surrounding remote art practices.
- Would benefit from writing workshops in the area of critical dialogue, exploring different types of genre writing, performance and preparing, techniques, access to different kinds of teachers, learning to be a mentor, learning how to constructively critique other people's work, publishing and distributing your work.

- Interested in networking with other organizations in the North and the rest of the province, this will enable people to utilize other community workshops, retreats etc. Then organizations could partner to bring in different artists and workshops.
- Interested in workshops on painting of all kinds, pottery, batik, fiber-based, lens-based, quilting, printmaking, felt making, the photo transfer emulsion workshop and other exciting new art-making techniques.
- Could use cost-efficient workshops, on weekends or during the week, which are used by many people in the community. There needs to be more development for professional artists, in order for them to become mentors in their community.
- Need access to more art supplies and space for showing artwork and producing work, which could include a traveling show of remote artists.
- Need workshops on how to access grants, how to write and prepare grants, how to show your work, how to photograph your work, how to apply for other shows and gallery space.

Key people in the Thompson Area:

Artist – Teresa Burrows

Artist/Instructor – Anu Fiddler

Community Educator – Margaret Dumas

Artist – Jan Hall



Leaf Rapids meeting

Photo Julie Nagam



Leaf Rapids Exhibition Centre Photo J Nagam

Over 900 Kilometers northeast of Winnipeg lies a remote past mining town of Leaf Rapids and believe it or not a National Exhibition Centre. On this beautiful, bright, cold day of -47 I drove to Leaf from Thompson. The director there was under the impression I was from Winnipeg and thought I broke down in the frigid weather, but when I arrived and told her I was from Thompson, she sighed relief and said "thank god...I thought you were from Winnipeg, I was so worried"! Needless to say, I toured the gallery and met some of the local people. I was able to see the local youth show and speak to some of the young artists. Everyone was so kind and friendly and actually came to the evening meeting in -56... I had to buy a better extension cord!

Feedback from Leaf Rapids:

- Need to access funding that is linked to the gallery, for example Canada Council and Manitoba Arts Council grants.
- Interested in workshops in the area of digital photography, and other lens-based mediums, pottery workshops, paint mixing and techniques, beading, carving, jewelry and other new kinds of art mediums and art production.
- Interested in having visiting artists, cultural producers or curators present artwork with an interactive slide show, including how to write an artist's statement and possible issues and/or concepts to discuss.
- Would benefit from starting a critical reading or dialogue group to discuss work, thoughts and new theories. Could be a group that generates ideas for workshops or events for the entire community.
- Interested in establishing a Northern mentorship program for existing artists in their community, there are not enough experienced or professional artists to access or the funds to bring artists in from the south.
- Would benefit from having a mentor/artist in residence in the North, therefore all the communities could have access to creative development.

Key People to contact in Leaf Rapids:
National Exhibition Centre – Joan Seddon
Educator – Sandra Crawford

Separated by a river and the distinct smell of a paper mill, The Pas and Opaskwayak Cree Nation are a bustling hotbed of activity. When you first drive in after a long stretch of highway there is a stunning hotel with a casino. Then you cross the bridge into an old school, and a turn-of-the-century downtown with brick buildings lined down the main drag. Situated in this downtown is the Sam Waller Museum with four levels, in the basement is the old jail cell. Next is the main level with the town history museum, which includes a gallery space and a historical junk or pack rat area. The third level is a gift store and the last is the office space. I was able to see a traveling fiber-based show sponsored by Manitoba Arts Network.

Feedback from The Pas and Opaskwayak Cree Nation:

- Would welcome access for artists to a mentorship program in the North. This would provide an opportunity for artists in the community to become mentors. There are many younger artists that would benefit from this program.
- Would welcome workshops in the area of all styles of painting, digital photography, lens-based, fiber-based, drawing, doll-making, textile, working with words and art, caribou tufting, papermaking and any new and interesting art techniques or practices.
- Interested in sponsorship of northern art shows with local artists, which would raise the profile for remote artists.
- Need more networking in the North and with other southern arts organizations. This would increase people's knowledge of workshops and opportunities.
- There were concerns expressed that MAWA's version of art was not the same as the Northern people's understanding of art. For example, traditional Aboriginal art differs from contemporary art as displayed in the MAWA publication in/versions.
- Need information sessions on: grant writing, where to apply for grants, how to submit work to galleries to be considered for group and solo shows, how to photograph your work.
- Would benefit from cost-efficient workshops, on weekends or during the week, which are used by many people in the community. There also needs to be more development for professional artists, in order for them to become mentors in their community.
- Need access to more art supplies and space to produce and show work, which could include a traveling show of remote artists.

- MAWA could provide visiting artists or cultural produces for artist's talks, shows, or dialogue about art issues.

Key Contact people in The Pas/OCN area:

The Pas Art Council – Barbara Shaw-ings

Youth Director – April Brass

Retreat/guild – Darrel and Richard Baschak



White Feather Shop Photo Julie Nagam



Sam Waller Museum Photo Julie Nagam



Sam Waller Museum Photo Julie Nagam



Shop Artists Photo Julie Nagam

In the Canadian Shield lie Cranberry Portage and Flin Flon in the Northern Boreal Forest, among a ton of lakes and sandy beaches. Although many of the beaches were covered with five feet of snow ... I know they are there! Cranberry Portage has a craft/art shop and a gallery in the heart of the community. Their closest community has many artists but no gallery. But Flin Flon was a very active place, with a newsletter, artist retreat, pottery club, painting club and so much more. I guess the big old smoke stack has made artists show their work in Cranberry and Denare Beach. I was lucky enough to meet some great people five days before Christmas and share some holiday cheer!

Feedback from Cranberry Portage and Flin Flon:

- Flin Flon distributes a newsletter and would like to collaborate or include workshops, shows and any arts opportunity happening to provide members with all the information they can. Would like to see more networking and communication among Northern communities.
- Need information sessions on grant writing, where to apply for grants, how to submit work to be considered for exhibitions and how to photograph your work.
- Would benefit from cost-efficient workshops, on weekends or during the week, which are used by many people in the community. There needs to be more development for professional artists, in order for them to become mentors in their community.
- Could use access to more art supplies and space for showing artwork and producing work, which could include a traveling show of remote artists. This would help Northern artists in the area of development and showcase the artists here.
- MAWA could provide visiting artists or cultural producers for artist's talks, shows, or dialogue about art issues. They have brought other remote artists as guests to their retreat such as Pauline Braun, and would enjoy bringing in other new artists and workshops.
- Interested in access for artists in a mentorship program in the North. This would provide an opportunity for artists in the community to become mentors. There are many younger artists that would benefit from this program.
- Would welcome workshops in the area of all styles of painting, digital photography, lens-based, fiber-based, drawing, performance, textile and any new and interesting art techniques or practices.
- Interested in sponsorship of a northern art show with local artists, which would raise the profile for remote artists. There is no gallery space in Flin Flon but there

is in Cranberry Portage. Many artists felt this was important because the community and the surrounding areas have not been able to really see what they had to offer as artists.

- Interested in hosting community events such as a potluck to bring people in to discuss and show their work, with the possibility of a guest artist or cultural producer.

Key Contact People in this area are:
Flin Flon Arts Council – Jennifer Donaghy
Pottery Club – Elaine Angelski



Tipi Flutes

Photo Julie Nagam



Catherine Joa

Photo Julie Nagam

On a blistery day I traveled from Gimli to Steinbach, which is a booming town with a fantastic art facility. Unfortunately the weather was bad and there was a small turnout.

Feedback from Steinbach:

- Interested in networking with other organizations in the rest of the province, this will enable people to utilize other community workshops, retreats etc. Then organizations could partner to bring in different artists and workshops.
- Would welcome workshops in the area of digital photography, and other lens-based mediums, pottery workshops, painting, drawing, paint mixing and techniques and other new kinds of art mediums and art production.
- Interested in having visiting artists, cultural producers or curators present artwork with an interactive slide show, including an artist's statement and possible issues or concepts to discuss.
- Would welcome access to mentorship and other MAWA programs, which would mean informing the arts council of MAWA's activities.

Key Contact Person in this area:
Steinbach Arts Council – Shelly Fucile

It triggered many memories when I arrived in Iceland or sorry I mean Gimli. I spent five months in Iceland and the environment and people reminded me of their original land base. The New Iceland museum was a flood of past memories revived. The people I met were just amazing, excited and dedicated to their work as artists. They have a lot of different and exciting art projects happening and they have support from the museum, which is a great space to show their work.

Feedback from Gimli:

- Would welcome workshops on how to access grants, how to write and prepare for grants, how to show your work, how to photograph your work, how to apply for other exhibitions and gallery space.
- Interested in networking with other organizations in the rest of the province, this will enable people to utilize other community workshops, retreats etc. Then organizations could partner to bring in different artists and workshops.
- Would like access to the mentorship program in Winnipeg since they want more challenges and opportunities. Or a rural mentorship program in their area. There are many artists that could access this.
- Need space for showing artwork and producing work, which could include a traveling show of remote/rural artists.
- Interested in workshops in the areas of critical dialogue, performance and preparing, techniques, access to different kinds of teachers, multi-media, learning how to constructively critique other people's work, and distributing your work.
- Would enjoy workshops on painting of all kinds, drawing, fiber-based, photography, printmaking, felt making, molding or bronzing, mixed media, the photo transfer emulsion workshop and other exciting new art making techniques.

Key Contact people in this area:

New Iceland Museum – Tammy Axelssa
Artist – Irena Sliwinski

Tucked away in the central woodlands is Dauphin, with its combination of farming, rolling hills and forest. Close by the tracks in the heart of the downtown is an old fire hall and police station, which now operates as their art centre. Fully equipped with studio space, an old school theatre, pottery room and a gallery ... wow! They also have a summer retreat in Clear Lake. It was just a great little place!

Feedback from Dauphin:

- Interested in workshops on how to access grants, how to write and prepare for grants, how to show your work, how to photograph your work, how to apply for exhibitions and gallery space.
- Interested in access to the mentorship program in Winnipeg since they want more challenges and opportunities.
- Need space for showing artwork and producing work, which could include a traveling show of remote/rural artists.
- Would enjoy workshops in the areas of critical dialogue, performance and preparing, techniques, access to different kinds of teachers, multi-media, learning how to constructively critique other people's work, and distributing your work.
- Interested in networking with other organizations in the rest of the province, this will enable people to utilize other community workshops, retreats etc. Then organizations could partner to bring in different artists and workshops.
- Would welcome workshops on painting of all kinds, drawing, fiber-based, photography, printmaking, felt-making, the photo transfer emulsion workshop and other exciting new art-making techniques.



Dauphin Arts Centre Photo Julie Nagam



Dauphin Arts Centre Photo Julie Nagam

Located 400 kilometers northeast of Winnipeg is the heart of the Manitoba's woodland area. The communities of Russell, Roblin and Boggy Creek are situated in some of Manitoba's most beautiful parkland. I was invited to a meeting with some of the funniest and entertaining women. They were planning some of the most creative events for fundraising and were the most community conscious collective I spoke with. I wished that I could live in this area, just to hang out with these women! I was invited into artist's homes and really felt a part of their community.

Feedback from Roblin, Boggy Creek, and Russell

- Interested in workshops in the areas of critical dialogue, performance and preparing, techniques, access to different kinds of teachers, learning to be a mentor, learning how to constructively critique other people's work, and distributing your work.
- Interested in networking with other organizations in the central part of Manitoba and the rest of the province, this will enable people to utilize other community workshops, retreats etc. Then organizations could partner to bring in different artists and workshops.
- Would welcome workshops on painting of all kinds, pottery, fiber-based, photography, traditional art making, quilting, printmaking, felt-making, the photo transfer emulsion workshop and other exciting new art-making techniques.
- Would enjoy cost-efficient workshops, on weekends or during the week, which are used by many people in the community. There needs to be more development for professional artists, in order for them to become mentors in their community.
- Need access to more art supplies and space for showing artwork and producing work, which could include a traveling show of remote/rural artists.
- Need workshops on how to access grants, how to write and prepare for grants, how to show your work, how to photograph your work, how to apply for other exhibits and gallery space.



Russell Ladies Photo Julie Nagam



Russell Youth Art Show Photo J. Nagam

Assessment for the Southwest Area:

This area is highly active and currently has many galleries and artists. As the past rural mentorship has proven successful, I would recommend a stable and continuous Foundation Mentorship program running out of the Art Gallery of Southwestern Manitoba. This could provide opportunities for the entire southwest region. Based on conversations from the Art Gallery of Southwestern Manitoba, it seems they would be interested in this type of a partnership. This could work in conjunction with the fine arts program at Brandon University; therefore there would be no competition but a collaboration of dedicated professionals at the gallery and the university. These professionals would see the success of the mentorship program and would be the key people in the community advocating and encouraging new artists to apply. This would also alleviate the competition and high numbers of people applying to the Foundation Mentorship Program. In addition, many women artists did not feel their work was 'good enough' or had applied to the mentorship program and were discouraged to apply again because they were not accepted. If the mentorship program were in their communities, artists might feel more comfortable and less intimidated by rural mentors or dealing with rural people in the mentorship process.

Another major recommendation is inviting southwestern artists to deliver MAWA's guest lecture or artist's talk. This would give them the opportunity and exposure to Winnipeg's urban art community. In addition, MAWA could sponsor artists from this area to attend events on the condition that they share or speak about the knowledge or experience in their community. Again this will provide the artists with unique opportunities, that will further their career and personal artistic development. When MAWA has a mentor in residence as they have done with Rebecca Belmore, it is important to offer these communities the opportunity to partner or apply for funding to have this artist in as a guest for workshops, lectures and art show. As well, having a mentor/artist in residence could aid artists in this area. As a result of partnership and collaboration MAWA, Brandon University and Southwestern Gallery should be sharing, networking and working together on various projects.

Northern Assessment:

Flin Flon has an existing newsletter, artists' guild, and a pottery club. They are a very active artistic community. Some of the artists in Cranberry Portage access these activities because their community is small and not as active. In addition there is an artist's retreat in the summer at Denare Beach, which is well attended. The Pas and OCN have an artist's guild, retreat, museum and active art community. Leaf Rapids has an Exhibition Centre and can support shows and has a great relationship with the school. Thompson has many professional artists, a writing group, and has started an arts council. There are opportunities for MAWA to develop a relationship with all of these councils, organizations and clubs.

This area is highly active and currently has many galleries and artists. I would recommend a stable and continuous Foundation Mentorship program running out of Thompson or The Pas. This could provide opportunities to the entire northern region. Based on conversations with the councils and artists there would be interest in this type of a partnership. This could work in conjunction with all the northern organizations; therefore there would be a collaboration of dedicated professionals in the area. These professionals would see the success of the mentorship program and would be the key people in the community advocating and encouraging new artists to apply. This would also alleviate the competition and high numbers of people applying to the Foundation Mentorship Program. In addition, many women artists did not apply to the mentorship program because there are very few artists who are aware of MAWA and its program and the few people who did apply were discouraged to apply again because they were not accepted. If the mentorship program were in their communities, artists might feel more comfortable and less intimidated by remote/rural mentors or dealing with remote people in the mentorship process.

A key concern is having professional artists for people to access in remote communities. To deal with this issue MAWA could sponsor or partner with northern organizations to provide a mentor in residence. This could take the form of professional northern artists or southern and out of province people staying in or rotating through northern communities. As well, inviting Northern artists to deliver a MAWA guest lecture or an artist's talk would give them the opportunity and exposure to the Winnipeg urban arts community. This could take place by MAWA sponsoring artists from the North to attend events on the condition that they share or speak about the knowledge or experience in their community. Again this will provide many of the artists with unique opportunities that will further their career and personal artistic development. When MAWA has any programming with a visiting artist, it needs to give these northern communities the opportunity to partner or apply for funding to have this artist as a guest for workshops, lectures and art shows. As a result of a partnership and collaboration with MAWA, the northern organizations, councils and museums could be sharing, networking and working together on various projects.

Central West Woodlands Assessment:

There are many strong and hardworking artists in this area, which makes up for the fact that they have little art space and opportunities to display work in galleries or museums. The Boggy Creek Cultural Council just blew me away and the interest of the Russell women artists was inspiring. However, they do not have enough professional or senior artists to support a mentorship program. There are very talented artists who could tap into a southeastern or Winnipeg mentorship program and this area could develop senior or professional artists. This would be the best route to follow until the area has developed more professional artists to become mentors in their communities.

Therefore the mentor/artist in residence would be best suited for this area. The women in Russell had access to an artist in residence and really benefited from this learning experience. This would meet the different communities' needs and could be shared among the woodlands area. It would have to be MAWA-sponsored or a small partnership with these arts organizations because they have few funds available and are not associated with a gallery or museum.

An important step in professional development for these woodlands artists would be to invite them to deliver a MAWA guest lecture or give an artist's talk to give them the opportunity and exposure to the Winnipeg urban art community. In addition, MAWA could sponsor artists from this area to attend events on the condition that they share or speak about the knowledge or experience in their community. Again this will provide many of the artists with unique opportunities that will further their career and personal artistic development. When MAWA has a mentor in residence or any visiting artist it would be important to provide these woodland communities the chance to partner or apply for funding to have this artist as a guest for workshops, lectures and art shows.

Actions for Southwest, Northern and Central Western Woodlands Region:

Actions are consolidated based on repetition of the assessments and recommendations. These areas are very active and excited about possible partnership and collaborations with MAWA. However, all the participants stated that all activities had to benefit the entire community when art development was happening in their communities. This included the participation of young people and men because there are few opportunities for rural/remote artists, so no one should be excluded. In addition, these artists are tired of driving to urban centres to access professional development in the area of the arts and want art organizations to drive to their communities and bring opportunities to them.

- Communicate with Brandon University, Brandon University and the Art Gallery of Southwestern Manitoba and art councils, Northern art councils, museums and collectives, to establish a relationship that would facilitate a partnership in a rural/remote mentorship program.
- Once a partnership is established secure funding for this project as a collective, and hire an outreach worker to follow through and provide continuous and committed support.
- Communicate with Central Western Woodlands for partnership for Mentor in Residence. Then locate funding and hire an outreach person to organize and provide support for this program.
- Continue to support and partner with these areas and their organizations on various projects.
- Create a sponsorship program that will facilitate rural artists in this area to attend programs in Winnipeg, which would require the artist to share and distribute this learning in their own community and/or nearby communities.
- Create an exchange program for rural artists for professional development in Winnipeg and rural/remote communities.
- Partner with rural/remote communities with MAWA programs that require a visiting artist, therefore the cost could be shared with MAWA and more professional workshops and talks would take place in these areas.

These are not given in priority, in order for MAWA to decide which areas to focus their time and energy into. As well, the strategies for the MAWA programs should be implemented first and then move into these actions.

Assessment for Norway House:

Norway House is on a journey to self-determination and reconstruction of the community. It is important to understand that if a partnership were to transpire, it would have to be a long-term commitment from MAWA and it would have to have assistance from an internal community member committed to this project. That being said, in the past, southern and non-Aboriginal organizations have had a negative impact on the community and in order to have a successful partnership, MAWA would have to work with Manitoba Arts Network or Manitoba Arts Council (or another organization who has had continuous successful contact with the community) in order to build trust. More work needs to be done in this community since my contacts here did not work out. Therefore, I would recommend more contact with various arts and cultural workers in this area before recommending any specific programming.

Actions for Norway House:

- Establish contact with Heather York and the rest of the school. Once this contact is made, have them suggest possible people in the community that might be interested in working with MAWA and expanding the arts and cultural production in Norway House.
- Once there are people interested in working with MAWA, have them assess what they and their community wants or can do with the support of MAWA.
- This partnership from MAWA would have to be long-term commitment and would have to be only in the form of support until there was a strong collective of art producers committed to art in their community.

Assessment for Cross Lake:

There was no formal group of artists meeting, which would make it difficult for MAWA to partner with this community. In addition, there was not much interest in MAWA or in building a relationship with the organization. If there were to be a partnership it would have to be a long-term commitment from MAWA and would have to have the assistance from an internal community member committed to this project. That being said, past relationships with southern and non-Aboriginal organizations have had a negative impact on the community, which affects the willingness of this community to work with outside organizations. There were no key individuals, I was only able to meet with people because of my friendship with key people in the community and there was no interest from anyone to take on this responsibility.

Actions for Cross Lake:

- Wait until Cross Lake is interested in working with MAWA and they will approach MAWA if they are hearing about positive relationships and collaborations with other Northern communities.

Assessment for Steinbach:

Steinbach seems to have a strong art community. They have a great space where all of the arts and creativity take place. In the past they have had regular workshops running out of a building dedicated to the visual artists. For some reason there has been some issues surrounding the past visual artists and a relationship with a new organization might help. MAWA needs to build a relationship with the arts council and communicate events and opportunities happening in Winnipeg since this community is close and could access some of the resources MAWA has to offer in the city. However, there was very little turnout and when I tried to contact people for individual meetings I did not have good responses. Nevertheless, I still think there are some possibilities, I think MAWA needs a stronger presence before artists will open up and access opportunities.

Actions for Steinbach:

- Establish contact with the arts council and find out if there is interest in MAWA and its program.
- Once contact has been made, distribute MAWA's newsletter and email events that are happening in Winnipeg for MAWA. This will establish contact with MAWA and hopefully some interest in MAWA and/or partnership with MAWA.
- Based on Steinbach's close location to Winnipeg, they are in a great position to access much of the programming in Winnipeg.
- If a relationship and partnership transpires, having artists' visits and workshops in their community would be the next step.

Based on the lack of interest in this project from Steinbach's artists, I have stated that there first needs to be interest from the artists in the community before MAWA could pursue a further relationship. If no interest is expressed in any of MAWA's programs or membership then this community should be left until they are interested because there were many communities who actively wanted to work with MAWA.

Assessment for Gimli:

Gimli has a thriving art community. They have a WAVE program where tourists are invited out to different homes to view artwork and other crafted items. There is a fantastic art museum that supports artists by providing gallery space, a meeting area for artists and much more. They have regular workshops and have the community support the arts.

Based on Gimli's location they would be best suited to access some of MAWA events, programs and opportunities in Winnipeg. However, it is important to support this area and have workshops, artists and lectures in their community. This community is extremely active and would benefit from a mentor/artist in residence. This would work well in the area because it would provide and develop artistic and cultural production. In addition, the arts council and the museum would be interested in partnering or collaborating on a project like this. There are not enough mature full-time artists to support a Foundation Mentorship Program but their artists are in need of accessing the mentorship program because they are talented and committed to their art practices. I would strongly recommend that there is time spent on seeking some of these artists for the mentorship program.

Actions for Gimli Region:

- Seek out artists to access the Foundation Mentorship program and invite artists to attend events at MAWA.
- Create an exchange program for rural artists for professional development in Winnipeg and rural/remote communities.
- Seek out a partnership and once this is established secure funding for this project as a collective. Hire an outreach worker to follow through and provide continuous and committed support.
- Partner to have a Mentor in Residence. Then locate funding and hire an outreach person to organize and provide support.
- Create a sponsorship program that will facilitate artists in Gimli and the surrounding area attending programs in Winnipeg, which would require the artist to share and distribute this learning in their own and neighbouring communities.
- Partner with MAWA's programs that require a visiting artist, therefore the cost could be shared with MAWA and more professional workshops and talks would take place in these areas.

Last Thoughts...

This project is a starting point for understanding and supporting rural and remote artists. These assessments and development strategies are limited due to the massiveness of this project. The geographic extent of Manitoba alone is difficult to comprehend. I have not been able to reach out to the really remote or Aboriginal communities that exist and are producing art. This is due to the time frame and funding of the project. Since there had been very little work done in this area, I was starting from scratch and I considered it necessary to connect with the areas where an art collective or council currently existed.

However, this project is a step in the right direction for an art organization such as MAWA to take. It will hopefully translate into a committed and well-supported relationship. It is important to note that once trust is broken or the commitment is not strong, rural and remote people will not continue a relationship or partnership with an organization. Many rural and remote people are tired of weak attempts at collaboration and want committed relationships to foster growth and development in their communities. Rural and remote women artists are instrumental in building and developing their community assets and capacity. MAWA needs to develop and foster relationships with women artists in order to build capacity within their organizations, art world and rural and remote communities.

Last but not least, recognizing and validating that art is a reflection or foundation of community is essential. Artists actively participate in creating, defining and affirming what community is. It is all of the people who are committed to building community and who advocate for social change that “ know when to form a circle around the fire. No one has to lead. They are paying attention to each other that the moment is recognized and respected by everyone” (Hernandez-Avila 535). Finally, I want to state that there are many challenges ahead for MAWA in implementing and developing relationships with rural and remote women artists, however it will be a rewarding experience for all of those who participate.

Sincerely,

Julie Nagam

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Appendix A

Letter sent to Aboriginal Communities/Reserves



DEAR ,

I AM REQUESTING PERMISSION TO COME TO YOUR COMMUNITY IN FEBRUARY TO SPEAK TO WOMEN ARTISTS ON ISSUES FACING THEM. I HAVE BEEN TRAVELING ACROSS MANITOBA SPEAKING TO COMMUNITIES WITH WOMEN ARTISTS. MANITOBA ARTS COUNCIL HAS INDICATED THAT THERE ARE MANY ARTISTS IN YOUR COMMUNITY AND THAT THERE MIGHT BE SOME INTEREST IN MEETING WITH ME. MAWA IS AN ARTIST'S RUN NOT FOR PROFIT ORGANIZATION, WHICH HAS BEEN SERVING WOMEN ARTISTS FOR THE LAST 20 YEARS. FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION PLEASE VISIT THE WEBSITE AT WWW.MAWA.CA.

MAWA MANDATE:

MENTORING ARTIST 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.

PURPOSE:

THE MAIN PURPOSE OF THESE MEETINGS IS TO HEAR ABOUT THE ISSUES FACING RURAL AND REMOTE WOMEN ARTISTS. THIS COULD INCLUDE WHAT TYPE OF WORKSHOPS, MENTORSHIP PROGRAMS, PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND SO ON. WE ARE HOPING TO EXPAND MAWA MEMBERSHIP, WHICH WOULD BETTER MEET THE NEEDS AND START TO DEVELOP PROGRAMMING AND NETWORKING FOR RURAL AND REMOTE WOMEN ARTISTS

PLEASE CONTACT ME AT 204 333 2300 OR EMAIL AT JULIENAGAM@YAHOO.CA. WITH THE COMMUNITY DECISION IF YOU ARE INTERESTED IN MY VISIT. THANK YOU.

SINCERELY,

JULIE NAGAM

Appendix B

Mail or emailed survey



DEAR, ARTS COUNCIL OR ARTIST,

I HAVE BEEN TRAVELING AROUND MANITOBA AND MEETING RURAL AND REMOTE WOMEN ARTISTS. THE PURPOSE OF MY TRAVELS HAS BEEN TO DISCUSS ISSUES FACING RURAL AND REMOTE ARTISTS AND HOW MAWA COULD SUPPORT BREAKING DOWN EXISTING BARRIERS. UNFORTUNATELY, I WILL BE UNABLE TO COME TO YOUR COMMUNITY. HOWEVER, I DID NOT WANT TO LEAVE YOUR VOICES OR CONCERNS OUT OF THE PROJECT. I AM COLLECTING INFORMATION TO PROVIDE MAWA WITH RECOMMENDATIONS TO FURTHER OR BEGIN A PARTNERSHIP WITH YOUR ARTS COMMUNITY. THEREFORE IT WILL BE IMPORTANT TO PROVIDE AS MUCH INFORMATION AS YOU SEE FIT. I HAVE ATTACHED A FORM THAT YOU COULD MAIL TO, FAX OR EMAIL TO UMNAGAMJ@CCUMANITOBA.CA, FAX (204) 949- 9399, MAIL- JULIE NAGAM 164 WESTWOOD DR. THOMPSON MB R8N 0E8. OF COURSE YOU CAN CONTACT ME AT (204) 333-2300 OR (204) 677-8427. THANK YOU FOR YOUR TIME AND PARTICIPATION. PLEASE SEE OUR WEBSITE FOR INFORMATION ABOUT MAWA. WWW.MAWA.CA. PLEASE DISTRIBUTE. THANK YOU.

MAWA MANDATE:

MENTORING ARTIST 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.

PURPOSE OF PROJECT:

THE MAIN PURPOSE OF THESE MEETINGS IS TO HEAR ABOUT THE ISSUES FACING RURAL AND REMOTE WOMEN ARTISTS. YOUR CONCERNS COULD INCLUDE WHAT TYPE OF WORKSHOPS, MENTORSHIP PROGRAMS, AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND SO ON, YOU WOULD LIKE TO SEE AVAILABLE IN YOUR COMMUNITIES. WE ARE HOPING TO EXPAND MAWA MEMBERSHIP, WHICH WOULD BETTER MEET THE NEEDS AND START TO DEVELOP PROGRAMMING AND NETWORKING FOR RURAL AND REMOTE WOMEN ARTISTS.

SINCERELY,

JULIE NAGAM

WHAT TYPES OF PROGRAMS AND WORKSHOPS DO YOU CURRENTLY HAVE?

WHAT TYPES OF PROGRAMS AND WORKSHOPS WOULD YOU LIKE TO HAVE?

DO YOU HAVE ANY FORM OF AN ARTS LIBRARY OR ARTS SECTION IN YOUR COMMUNITY LIBRARY? IF NOT, HOW DO YOU OBTAIN ART INFORMATION?

WHAT TYPE OF PROGRAM PARTNERSHIPS WOULD YOU LIKE FROM MAWA?

HOW MANY ARTISTS ARE IN YOUR COMMUNITY? DO ALL OF THEM HAVE ACCESS TO YOUR COMMUNITY ARTS COUNCIL? IF NOT HOW DO ARTISTS COMMUNICATE WITH EACH OTHER?

ANY INFORMATION YOU WOULD LIKE TO TELL US?

ANY ADDITIONAL COMMENTS AND QUESTIONS?



MAWA IS COMING TO YOU!

**WE WANT TO HEAR YOUR
VOICE!**

**PLEASE JOIN US IN
A DISCUSSION OF ISSUES
FACING RURAL AND REMOTE
WOMEN ARTISTS**

**DATE: JANUARY
TIME:**

LOCATION:

**CONTACTS: COMMUNITY CONTACT –
MAWA CONTACT JULIE NAGAM (204)333-
2300 OR umnagamj@cc.umanitoba.ca**



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