Welcome to the first eNewsletter from the School of Art!

Director’s Message

The launch of this publication marks an exciting new chapter in the long history of the School of Art and arrives near the completion of my first year as its new Director.

My adjustment to life in Winnipeg has been both exciting and challenging. In many respects, Winnipeg offers a quintessentially Canadian experience: a city spread out but not too large; the fullness of seasons year ‘round, a verdant landscape; mornings full of light and freshness, intense summer heat and frigid winter cold. This shifting environment constantly stimulates our perceptions of the world, challenges us to engage our senses and, coupled with Winnipeg’s unique geographical centrality, makes us aware of our place in the big picture.

For many decades the School of Art has played an important role in the development of art in western Canada. The future holds great promise: we are planning for a new home in a renovated Taché Hall and continue to lay the groundwork for an MFA program.

I welcome the challenge of shaping the vision of the School of Art during these exciting times and encourage each one of you to consider how each member of the School’s educational community, both present and past, might play an important role in building our success.

This newsletter is the first in what I hope will be a series of communications between the School of Art and its extended family of alumni and friends. You are a very special group and one of the most important objectives I have is to welcome you into a dialogue with each other and the School of Art as we move these projects forward. I encourage you to get in touch with us, let us know what you are thinking, making and want to share. I hope that the future versions of this newsletter will make a useful contribution to our collective voices.

I look forward to hearing from you. Paul Hess, Director
Taiwan is the place that stole my heart because of the lush green landscape and the progressive, warm people. They have a most impressive museum of ceramics in Yingge, just outside of Taipei. Their ceramic work is heavily influenced by Chinese traditions, but at the same time, they are pushing toward a contemporary expression of clay. The East and West coming together allows for a mutually beneficial cultural exchange; they have a long and particular tradition and are looking for a release from that, while we in the West don’t have much of a tradition, we are free generally from restrictions, but want to learn from or about their tradition.

I am currently working on a commission for the Beechwood National Memorial Centre in Ottawa. The Beechwood Cemetery recently became Canada’s official national cemetery. I am creating an installation of porcelain commemorative trees, ranging from three to seven feet in height. The central component of the installation is a tall, forked tree inscribed with quotations from distinguished individuals buried in the cemetery. The other three trees support donors’ names. These constructions are a continuation of my interest in the use of trees as memorials, that is, how trees are often planted to commemorate special events or dedicated to people who have died. While I was doing my graduate work at NSCAD I visited Point Pleasant Park in Halifax, and although people had told me that it was back to normal, the remnants of the 70,000 trees destroyed by Hurricane Juan in 2003 still had the quality of a battlefield. When I was in China, making work for the new Canadian Ceramic Museum in Fuping, I saw petrified tree trunks displayed on elaborate bases, and also trees wrapped in rope to keep them warm, or in paper to ward off harmful insects. These all suggested the idea of the tree as vessel, something to be protected and memorialized. Once back in Halifax, I decided to create a memorial to Point Pleasant Park in Halifax, and it was my residency study at the Banff Centre in 1985 where American artist, Betty Woodman, and Jacquie Poncelet who taught at the Royal College of Art in London, were teaching that really changed my perspective about the objects that I was making. These two women were pioneering the concept of vessel as sculpture and, as women, they were in the minority in the then male-dominated field of ceramics, so they were also role models. Because of them I began to think differently about my work – about increasing the scale of the work, about developing my mould-making techniques, and I began thinking more conceptually.

To learn more about Grace Nickel’s artistic practice and achievements visit: www.gracenickel.ca
Russ Germain studied at the School of Art from 1966-1970 graduating with a thesis major in Painting. Russ was very active within the School, and although his candidacy for Senior Stick was unsuccessful he continued to work on other projects. He helped to mount various exhibitions and help co-ordinate other social events such as parties and dances that were held in the new fine art building.

Russ studied Painting with Ken Lochhead, Printmaking with Arnold Saper, Sculpture with Ken Brown and Drawing with Robert Sakowski. Besides his busy schedule at the School he found time in the evenings to work as a broadcaster, hosting a classical music program for a private station in Winnipeg. It was these activities as well as his excellent speaking voice that later earned him a position at the CBC.

His art work evolved through various figurative styles until he reached a point where a kind of Baroque abstraction became his major interest. Although all his work had a romantic sense, it was the organ music of J.S. Bach that informed the ideas that became the basis for his thesis work. The paintings became more structural and the figure was replaced with an intricate, complex mesh of intersecting arcs using very minimal colour.

Russ Germain died of cancer on February 2, 2009 in Toronto. He is survived by his wife, Wendy Stratten and his daughter, Katherine.

Bill Pura
Taché Hall is poised to become the new home for the School of Art. As a part of Project Domino, the University will relocate the residence beds into a newly constructed dormitory. This will free up the building for a significant renovation. The School of Art and the Marcel A. Desautels Faculty of Music will move into the renovated Taché Hall building once construction is completed. The extensive work of planning and designing the new space is well-underway. This project represents one of the most exciting challenges for the School of Art since becoming a part of the University of Manitoba in 1950.

We are all extremely thrilled at the opportunity this represents.
The nominees for the long list for the Sobey Art Award were announced in March. The Prairie and North list included Manitobans Paul Butler, Marcel Dzama (1997), Sarah Anne Johnson (2002) and Jon Pylypchuk (1997). Selected works from each of the artists will be exhibited next fall at the Art Gallery of Nova Scotia in Halifax.

Prints by Patrick Mahon (1979), now a faculty member of University of Western Ontario, and drawings by former School of Art instructor Sheila Butler, are part of a group exhibition, Art and Cold Cash, at Platform Centre for Photographic and Digital Arts. (Feb. 13 – Apr. 4, 2009). The exhibition explores the impact of monetary exchange in Northern Canada.


Revolver exhibitions at Gallery One One One provided a feast of artworks by SOA alumni. The three fall 2008 exhibitions, Revolver Uptown One, Two and Three, showcased works by Winnipeg artists who were sessional instructors or technicians at the school 2007-08. They included: Sarah Crawley (1994), Sarah Anne Johnson (2002), Lisa Stinner (2001), Craig Love (1999), Johanna Schmidt (2005), Lisa Wood (2002), Derek Brueckner (1998) and Bruce Kirton (1983). Revolver Downtown One, Two and Three featured work by downtown Winnipeg artists who don’t work at UofM. Alumni included Liz Garlicki (2000), Paul Robles (1996), Dominique Rey (1999), Cyrus Smith (2004), Richard Hines (2004), Collin Zipp (2005) and Andy Gamache (2000). “The exhibitions are about the relationship in Winnipeg between “uptown” or School of Art artist/instructors and “downtown” or Winnipeg Exchange District artists. It is hardly a surprise that almost every one of these artists was educated or is a part-time teacher at the University of Manitoba School of Art,” said curator Cliff Eyland.

Running concurrent with the Revolver exhibitions was an exhibition component of the Art School Anatomies project. Works were selected primarily from the Permanent Collection including former faculty and students Lionel LeMoine Fitzgerald, Richard Williams, Sharon Alward (1983), Ken Lochhead, Sheila Butler, Diane Whitehouse, and Gordon Lebredt (1976). Winnipeg Hydro at Urban Shaman highlighted recent work by Ian August (2004). (Mar. 13 - Apr. 25, 2009) In drawings and paintings August reflects on how a city founded on waterways deals with freeze up, atrophy and rethinking its worth.


La Maison des artistes visuels francophones, Winnipeg, featured Singes, matelots et tout le tralala/ Monkeys, Sailors and the Whole Shebang by Adrian Williams (1996), former member of the Royal Art Lodge, Jan. 29 to Apr. 9, 2009.


Paved Arts, Saskatoon, presented Scream, a two-person video installation and collaborative billboard by Jo-Ann Balcaen (1994) and Jillian McDonald (1993). (Jan. 16 - Feb. 21, 2009). Balcaen currently lives and works in Montreal while MacDonald is based in New York City.

Leo Kamen Gallery in Toronto presented Professor Cliff Eyland’s signature miniature paintings in Book Shelf File Cards (Feb. 21 - Mar. 21, 2009). Here in Winnipeg visitors to the Millennium Library are welcomed by a two-storey high installation of his works. This public artwork has been a work in progress since the library opened in 2005 as its 1000 component pieces are completed and installed.

The Art Gallery of Southwestern Manitoba in Brandon presented textile works by Colette Balcaen (2005) in a two-person exhibition, Agrarian Worlds (Mar. 12- Apr. 18, 2009). Running concurrent with the Royal Manitoba Agricultural Fair which has long been part of Brandon’s winter, Balcaen’s work echoed the handiwork of women that was a traditional part of the agricultural fair.
Chris Cooper, a BFA (Hon.) graduate of 2002, was engaged as Program Assistant in 2008 by the Art Gallery of Southwestern Manitoba.

Martha Street Studios has introduced Quadrangle, an exhibition space for new work by members. Mary Krieger (1980) is among the four artists currently using the space.

In the Winnipeg Art Gallery exhibition, She Works Hard ..., artworks from the gallery’s collection explore women and work from various perspectives. An onsite performance piece, The Plastic Housewife by School of Art student Lyndsay Ladobruk, augmented collection works by Sarah Anne Johnson (2002), Dominique Rey (1999), and Bonnie Marin (1989).

The Sherwood Village branch of Regina’s Dunlop Art Gallery is showing Trying to Love the Normal Amount by Daniel Barrow (1995) (Jan. 16 - Mar. 29, 2009). Barrow’s exhibition and accompanying performance was part the Sobey Art Award exhibition at the Royal Ontario Museum, Toronto, (Aug. 27 to Oct. 13, 2008.)

The Winnipeg Art Gallery recently acquired 96 artworks by Professor Cliff Eyland while Calgary’s Glenbow Museum added 28 of his artworks for their permanent collection.

In March Professor Bill Pura (1970) attended the 2009 Southern Graphics Council Conference in Chicago where he presented on the panel “Canadian/American Printmaking: Cross Fertilization or Cultural Imperialism.”

Professor Kirk Warren’s (1992) sign system project with the Winnipeg Trails Association has garnered attention in various applied art situations. At the 17th Applied Arts Photography & Illustration Awards, some signs will be exhibited 3rd and 4th floor galleries of the Burroughes Building, 639 Queen Street West in Toronto. Images from the 3x3 ProShow 5/ will be published in 3x3 The Magazine of Contemporary Illustration Annual #5. And in the Society of Illustrators Los Angeles Illustration 47, the Winnipeg Trails Association sign “Sagimay Trail” will be displayed on the Illustration West 47 website and exhibited at Gallery Nucleus in Los Angeles March 2010.

Artist in Residence Sarah Anne Johnson (2002), won the $50,000 inaugural Grange Prize in 2008, an award recognizing the work of Canadian and international contemporary photographers.

In May 2008, Professor Sharon Alward (1983) presented her commissioned performance work (also a collaboration with Professor Alex Poruchnyk (1976), Bushi, during Video Pool’s 25th anniversary celebration at the Rachel Brown Theatre in Winnipeg.

Sessional Instructor Diana Thornycroft (1979) received a two year grant of $80,000 from the Canada Council for the Arts for research, development and dissemination of Group of Seven Awkward Moments, May 1, 2007 - Apr. 30, 2009.

Dr. Marilyn Baker researched and curated the exhibition FitzGerald in Context which was introduced at Gallery One One One in 2007 and opened at the Winnipeg Art Gallery in March 2009. The exhibition looks at the art and life of one of the School of Art’s major artists, L. LeMoine FitzGerald. From January to March 2009, University of Manitoba Archives and Special Collections presented FitzGerald and Friends, a look at the connections between the Group of Seven and FitzGerald. Links were explored through exchanges of letters as well as artworks, documents and publications. Gallery One One One’s FitzGerald Study Centre was a source for many of the objects.

Dr. Jim Bugslag is creating a comprehensive record of 12th - 18th-century stained glass in Canadian collections with support from a Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada Collaborative Research Grant with a three year term ending 2010.

Dr. Mary Ann Steggles (1987) is currently co-editing a publication with Paul Gladston, University of Nottingham at Ningbo, China on contemporary Chinese art and is researching the Bianca C, the luxury Italian cruise liner that sank off the coast of Grenada, for a documentary to be aired in 2010. She was awarded a grant to direct five brief documentaries on Chinese art in 2008 and her curated exhibition, Soup and Sustenance, opened in December 2008 at the Portage and District Art Gallery.

Sessional Instructor Darren Stebeleski (1996) received an Access Award for outstanding service in providing accommodations for students with disabilities, a grant from the Winnipeg Arts Council toward work based on sustainable urban development, and will have a solo exhibition of the above work at Martha Street Studios in the fall of 2010.
In 2008, Sessional Instructor Lisa Stinner (2001) received a Canada Council for the Arts Production Grant and a Manitoba Arts Council Visual Arts Grant.

Dr. Oliver Botar’s exhibition, Technical Detours: The Early Moholy-Nagy Reconsidered, shown in New York City in spring 2006 and at the Zimmerman Art Museum of Rutgers University in New Jersey that fall, was shown in an expanded version in Hungary in 2008 at the Janus Pannonius Museum in Pécs and the Hungarian National Galley in Budapest. The title of the Hungarian exhibition and accompanying book appeared as Természet és technika: Az újraértelmezett Moholy-Nagy 1916-1922 [Nature and Technology: Moholy-Nagy Reconsidered 1916-1922]. It was a popular exhibition with tens of thousands of visitors and brisk book sales. There was significant press attention, with dozens of articles and reviews in the popular press and media, the cultural press and the scholarly press appearing during 2008 alone, including at least a dozen major interviews with Professor Botar.

Professor Kevin Kelly’s exhibition curated by Suresh Jayaram, Air Sell, was presented at One Shanti Road, Bangalore, India concurrent with his time there as artist-in-residence in the spring 2008. Colonizing Oort, Kelly’s 2009 exhibition at The University of Winnipeg’s Gallery 1C03, augmented work from this residency with paintings, textile works, animations, digital prints and an artist’s book that were part of five years of research.

In January, Montreal’s In Plain Site Gallery presented Chernobyl Photographs, a selection works by David McMillan curated by Zoe Casino and Penny Cousineau-Levine. McMillan has been visiting the Chernobyl Exclusion Zone in Ukraine since 1994, photographing the transformation of nearby Prypiat, a city empty of residents since the disaster at the nuclear power station in 1986.

Feedback
we hope that you have enjoyed hearing from the School of Art. please share eletter with other alumni and friends. we welcome hearing from you! if you would like to contribute news about your activities to eletter, we welcome hearing from you! here is how to get in touch—
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