

# GLIMPSE

## Exhibition Guide



Alberta  
Foundation  
for the Arts

TRAVELLING EXHIBITION PROGRAM

Alberta Foundation for the Arts

# TRAVELLING EXHIBITION PROGRAM

The Alberta Foundation for the Arts (AFA) has supported a provincial travelling exhibition program since 1981. The mandate of the AFA Travelling Exhibition Program is to provide every Albertan with the opportunity to enjoy visual art exhibitions in their community. Three regional galleries and one arts organization coordinate the program for the AFA:

Northwest Region:

The Art Gallery of Grande Prairie, Grande Prairie

Northeast and North Central Region:

The Art Gallery of Alberta, Edmonton

Southwest Region:

The Alberta Society of Artists, Calgary

Southeast Region:

The Esplanade Arts and Heritage Centre, Medicine Hat

Each year, more than 600,000 Albertans enjoy many exhibitions in communities ranging from High Level in the north to Milk River in the south and virtually everywhere in between. The AFA Travelling Exhibition Program also offers educational support material to help educators integrate the visual arts into the school curriculum.

Exhibitions for the TREX program are curated from a variety of sources, including private and public collections. A major part of the program assists in making the AFA's extensive art collection available to Albertans. This growing art collection consists of over 9,000 artworks showcasing the creative talents of more than 1700 artists. The AFA art collection reflects the development of the vibrant visual arts community in the province and has become an important cultural legacy for all Albertans.



**TREX****Region 1: Northwest Alberta**

# GLIMPSE

Meaningful photographs, gestural paint marks, collage, bold colours, poetry, and sweeping handwritten text are all manifestations of expression that allows Lussier to claim these moment-in-time spaces as her own. One may glimpse the origin poems within each painting of this exhibition and seek to understand the core emotion or sentiment behind each one, we have all been there - perhaps not physically, but mentally. These fifteen artworks are a deeply personal exploration of being aware and taking ownership over one's mental health.

Our society is becoming more aware of the effects of mental health. Everyone is affected differently and has their own story or experience to share. This exhibition strives to encourage conversations about differing mental states and wellbeing rather than getting lost in blanket statements and generalities. We all have obstacles, concerns, and frustrations brewing inside us daily, and yet we continue to push forward with our education, with our social activities, and with our work. This can be a great human quality of perseverance, but perhaps one that can be overused and feel harsh when we are expected to constantly function with the same levels of energy and enthusiasm each day.

Much like how parts of these images were masked off from being painted, many feel the need to wear a 'social mask' to manage every day with their peers, to protect and hide what is truly inside, and to feel accepted in their community. Some days this task feels extremely difficult, as there is a presumption that tears can not be seen in public, yelling is unseemly, and that you need an excuse or justification for an "off day". When you are just feeling mentally run down; it is hard to smile, your brain spirals, your stomach may coil in knots too tight, and your body may feel too heavy. This is why we refer to it as mental illness, because it is a sickness that can overrule our minds and bodies. But these glimpses of vulnerability can also be strengthening and freeing - a chance to get in touch with our deeper selves. Lussier uses these photographs, of places in which she has cried, and explores these physical and emotional spaces by creating them into mixed media artworks.





# GLIMPSE

It is terrifying when you feel trapped inside your own head. There can be a fear of reaching out for help and having your darkest thoughts spoken aloud. Some days it feels easier to distract yourself or write it down rather than risk exposure and allow anyone to glimpse the invisible and unseen parts within us. We are ingrained with an apprehension of giving voice to our less than ideal thoughts; of shining a light on the darkness within. It is hard to admit when it is not just your thoughts, but your brain chemistry that is unbalanced and making every day living so challenging that it requires intervention. However, in our communities we try to find balance through counselling, meditation, specialists and medication, but why can it still at times feel shameful, secretive, or like something broken that needs fixing rather than having it normalized as just another human condition? Lussier breaks down these barriers by sharing and representing her vulnerability throughout these pieces.

Each artist or person uses art as a means of expression, whether subconsciously or deliberate, and finds ways to express their mental states so that it does not consume them. Art, poetry, and communication are brilliant tools in exercising safe ways of expression. Whether we need to be bold or subtle with it, the artist states it is a "cathartic release, and integral to overall wellbeing." It is also integral to have a zone in which we can find serenity from the things that trouble us. Sometimes that means cozying up in your private space, with your favourite soft fabrics, putting on headphones, resting, and being gentle with yourself instead of exhausted by those raw, guttural, frightening emotions that can cloud our hearts and brains, and like one of the paintings suggest sometimes it is good to "stay home".

"Because that's what living with mental illness is like: moments of catastrophe mixed with moments of tranquility, moments of joy mixed with moments of sadness, and every emotion in between," the artist understands that there will always be joy to balance out the negative. We are human, and we will experience many ups and downs throughout our lifetimes. Express yourself and seek help when it becomes too overwhelming. It is important to remember that we don't have to hide our inner selves, and though there will be inevitable glimpses into what may feel too dark, we are always in control and will find a way to release and find peace.







## ABOUT THE ARTIST

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### ARTIST BIOGRAPHY

Gabrielle Lussier is an emerging artist and designer in the Edmonton region originally from northern Alberta. She completed her Bachelor of Fine Arts with Distinction at the University of Alberta in the spring of 2017, and completed a Bachelor of Design in Visual Communication in 2019. She currently works as a User Interface Designer, while still maintaining a fine art practice. Besides loving all things relating to art & design, Gabrielle loves her dog, Pekoe, dystopian fiction, New York Times crossword puzzles, and turtlenecks.

# ARTIST STATEMENT

My artistic practice revolves around mental health as it has to do with public and private space, emotional vulnerability, and underlying stigma. I combine the mediums of photography, paint, print, collage, and poetry to create mixed media interpretations exploring the relationship between physical and emotional spaces. After struggling with my mental health and the repercussions of having gone undiagnosed for much of my adolescence, writing became a cathartic release, and integral to my overall wellbeing. I continue to use these poems, as well as my training in the fine arts as means to investigate the nature of my illness, as well as a chronology of the cyclical phases of deterioration and recovery. By taking photos of places in which I've cried, or felt overwhelmed by the crushing weight of my mental illness I am able to take ownership of the moment, allowing me to feel in control. I combine these images with gestural marks, loud colours and expressive text to make the space my own, mark my presence, and create a tangible remnant of the moment. I combine the resulting imagery with my poetry, which come together to create an intimate portrayal of day-to-day life of someone struggling with their mental health. Rather than trying to hide these private moments from the public eye, I instead take ownership of my vulnerability and shed light on moments that are otherwise invisible, unseen. I aim to reclaim the spaces in which I've attempted to hide my psychiatric condition, and instead showcase them as works of art in which I can take pride.



# IMAGE INVENTORY

Gabrielle Lussier  
*help me forget*  
 2020  
 mixed media  
 20 x 30 inches

there's so much left  
 that I want to say.  
 mainly "thank you"  
 and "I'm sorry"  
 and "I wish things were  
 different."  
 but none of those words  
 will do anything to  
 soothe the wounds  
 I unintentionally left,

just know that you  
 helped me forget.



Gabrielle Lussier  
*happy tears*  
 2020  
 mixed media  
 20 x 30 inches

sometimes the beauty of  
 the view from the train  
 over the river valley  
 takes my breath away,  
 and so sometimes  
 my tears on the train  
 are happy ones.



# IMAGE INVENTORY



Gabrielle Lussier

*rituals*

2020

mixed media

20 x 30 inches

I've never been good  
at routines  
but somehow I manage to  
remember to take my medication  
every morning and night.  
strange to think that  
something that once felt  
so foreign  
now feels as mundane  
as brushing my teeth.



Gabrielle Lussier

*stay home*

2020

mixed media

20 x 30 inches

tonight,  
the weight of the world  
is crushing my soul,  
squeezing out every last  
ounce of caring.  
it's applied numbing cream  
to my tear ducts.  
it's easy to feel  
overwhelmed lately.



# IMAGE INVENTORY

Gabrielle Lussier  
*imperfect practice*  
2020  
mixed media  
20 x 30 inches

I'm trying to make my  
poetry practice a  
habit-  
but it's hard when  
you're only used to  
writing to deal with  
pain.  
I can't remember the  
last time I wrote  
about happiness.



Gabrielle Lussier  
*car radio*  
2020  
mixed media  
20 x 30 inches

I ~~thought~~ thought I was  
over you, but then I heard  
a song on the car radio called  
'Safe in sound' and the blare  
of trumpets met my eardrums  
with a resounding clash of  
cymbals, and then my heart  
broke over and over again.

# IMAGE INVENTORY



Gabrielle Lussier  
*white coats*  
2020  
mixed media  
20 x 30 inches

standing in line,  
waiting for white coats  
to prescribe me happiness  
in a bottle.  
except this time it's  
twice the dose  
which means that lately,  
I've been twice  
as depressed.



Gabrielle Lussier  
*unlucky pennies*  
2020  
mixed media  
20 x 30 inches

when all else fails,  
look down so they can't  
see the tears forming  
in your eyes.  
pretend to tie your laces,  
or better yet,  
search for lucky pennies.  
God knows you need them.



# IMAGE INVENTORY

Gabrielle Lussier

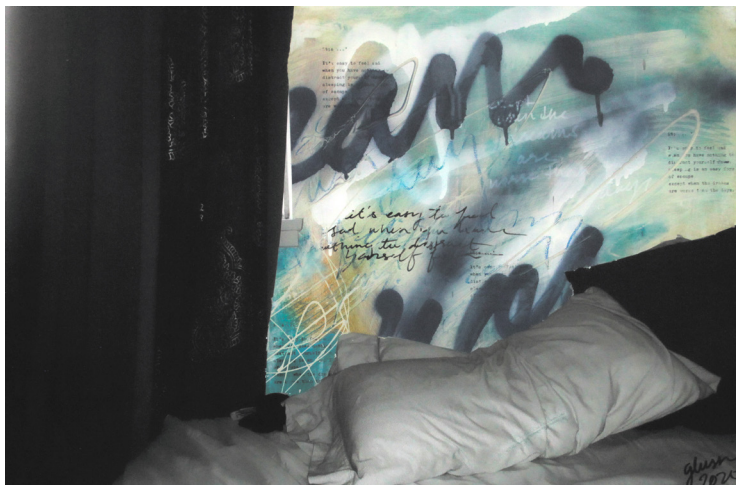
*less alone*

2020

mixed media  
20 x 30 inches

it;s

it's a bad day when  
I leave the house  
without my headphones  
you see, listening  
to sad music makes  
me feel less alone.



Gabrielle Lussier

*escape*

2020

mixed media  
20 x 30 inches

it;s ...'

It's easy to feel sad  
when you have nothing to  
distract yourself ~~from~~.  
sleeping is an easy form  
of escape  
except when the dreams  
are worse than the days.

# IMAGE INVENTORY



Gabrielle Lussier

*almost there*

2020

mixed media

20 x 30 inches

just 17 more steps  
before I set foot  
before I can sob  
in the comfort of  
my room  
where the only thing  
I need to hide is the  
sound of my breathing.  
thankfully,  
most of my tears are silent.



Gabrielle Lussier

*semi-private*

2020

mixed media

20 x 30 inches

not exactly the best place  
to let yourself feel,  
but at least with the door  
closed I can pick up  
my feet,  
pretend I'm not there,  
and wallow in the sadness.



# IMAGE INVENTORY



Gabrielle Lussier  
*imposter syndrome*  
2020  
mixed media  
20 x 30 inches

insecurities blossomed  
here. it was easy to feel  
inferior, being constantly  
reminded of everyone's  
thriving talent  
meanwhile feeling like  
yours never flourished.

redefinition of  
imposter syndrome.

Gabrielle Lussier  
*burning hands*  
2020  
mixed media  
20 x 30 inches

I know

I thought of you  
while my hands became  
numb from rinsing the dishes  
in the too-hot-tap-water  
while my eyes stung  
with the prickling of tears  
but I told myself it was  
because my hands were burning  
and not my heart.



# IMAGE INVENTORY



Gabrielle Lussier

*weightless*

2020

mixed media

20 x 30 inches

how can you feel the  
crushing weight of the  
universe when the room  
feels weightless--  
the way the sun dances  
beneath your eyelids--  
when you close them and  
instead of blackness  
you see warmth  
and you know that there  
exists a time when you  
weren't this sad.

# CRATE LISTINGS

## CRATE # 1

1. stay home, mixed media
  2. almost there, mixed media
  3. imperfect practice, mixed media
  4. car radio, mixed media
  5. weightless, mixed media
  6. help me forget , mixed media
  7. burning hands, mixed media
  8. rituals, mixed media
- 
- A. Travelling Exhibition Didactic
  - B. Curatorial Statement

NOTE: FRAGILE WORKS- Carefully review how the works are packed.

NOTE: Only remove foam packing that is marked remove/replace.  
Keep all packing with the crate.  
Repacking – Line up the numbers.

Concerns Contact: Art Gallery of Grande Prairie  
Robin Lynch – TREX Manager, 780.357.7483  
Region 1, AFA Travelling Exhibitions

# CRATE LISTINGS

## CRATE # 2

9. happy tears, mixed media
10. lucky pennies, mixed media
11. escape, mixed media
12. white coats, mixed media
13. semi private, mixed media
14. less alone, mixed media
15. imposter syndrome, mixed media

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