



# *Women X Women*

Alberta Foundation for the Arts Travelling Exhibition Program



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Interpretive Catalogue and Educators Guide: AFA Travelling Exhibition Program (TREX)  
Curated by Xanthe Isbister, Esplanade Arts and Heritage Centre

*Cover artwork:*

Tammy Salzl, *Girl in Between*, 2014, watercolour on paper, 24 x 17 7/8 inches, collection of the AFA



Helen Mackie, *Self portrait*, 1972, etching on paper, 22 1/2 x 16 1/2 inches, collection of the AFA



## About *the* Esplanade

The Esplanade Arts and Heritage Centre is where the stories of our great collective culture are told through music and dance, painting and sculpture, plays and concerts, exhibitions and installations, artifacts and art, education programs and private events. Featuring a 700- seat main stage balcony theatre which boasts superior technology and striking design, the Esplanade is where Medicine Hat celebrates arts and heritage.

A marvel of contemporary Canadian architecture on traditional Blackfoot territory just steps from the South Saskatchewan River, the Esplanade occupies an eminent position on downtown's historic First Street Southeast. From its rooftop terrace, you can see Saamis, the dramatic shoreline escarpment which is the setting for the story of how Medicine Hat got its name.

Inside, visitors discover the vibrant Esplanade Art Gallery, the prized Esplanade Museum, the Esplanade Studio Theatre across the lobby from the Esplanade Main Stage Theatre, the expansive Esplanade Archives and Reading Room, an art education space called the Discovery Centre and the catering-friendly Cutbanks Room.

In the northeast corner of the Esplanade grounds stands the oldest remaining brick home in Alberta, the Ewart-Duggan House. With its gingerbread trim and quaint heritage gardens, it now serves as a charming venue for select cultural events and a home away from home for artists in residence.

The Esplanade opened in celebration of Alberta's centennial in 2005 and ever since, Medicine Hat has welcomed a steady procession of artists and audiences, storytellers and story-lovers from around the region and around the globe. The celebration continues today.

# About the AFA 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 300,000 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 8,000 artworks showcasing the creative talents of more than 2000 artists. As the only provincial art collection in Alberta, the AFA collection reflects the development of the vibrant visual arts community in the province and has become an important cultural legacy for all Albertans.



Marion Nicoll, *The Model*, 1958, watercolour on paper, 10 <sup>7</sup>/<sub>16</sub> x 7 <sup>7</sup>/<sub>8</sub> inches, collection of the AFA

# Curatorial Statement

This exhibition features portraits of women by fifteen female artists. It showcases works from the Alberta Foundation for the Arts' permanent collection that span several decades—from 1947 to 2015. The motivation behind the female focus came from a 2017 *Canadian Art* magazine article on gender diversity within Canadian galleries and museums. Consider the following statistics: women constitute 63 percent of living artists in Canada, but in 2012, only 36% of exhibitions were solo female, compared to 64% solo male. This exhibition not only highlights the conceptual strength and facility each of the works conveys—it also celebrates the vast scope of femininity and the female psyche through the eyes of women.

Ruth Syme's *Winnie* captures a moment in time when the realities of mortality set in; Winnie sits in her wheelchair, her hair greying, a knitted light blue sweater covering her shoulders, a rigid frown expressing her mood. Her attention is directed to the side, as though she is preoccupied by someone's actions. She looks on, disapprovingly. The artist explains, "I have a fascination with facial features and an intense interest in one's acceptance of their existence and eventual extinction. Every painting is an opportunity to examine another human being minutely." And she does so with prodigious technical skills. Through her facility with watercolour paint, she has expertly personified her subject.

In her book *Women, Art, and Society*, Whitney Chadwick states, "During the 1970s feminism expressed itself in a generally celebratory attitude towards the female body and female experience, and an embrace of personal and collaborative approaches to artmaking. Some artists and critics explored the notion of a 'female imagery' as a positive way of representing the female body, reclaiming it from its passive object of male desire."<sup>1</sup> Artist Marion Nicoll was a pioneer in this approach, and has done just that in her piece *The Model*, from 1958. Born in Calgary, Marion Nicoll was a prolific artist whose career extends over decades. She was an educator at the Provincial Institute of Technology and Art (now the Alberta University of the Arts) for over thirty years. Her work evolved from landscape painting to a distinct genre of abstraction. This small yet assertive watercolour painting emanates a bold femininity. A balance of light painterly brushstrokes, blocks of dark colour and red highlights creates a piece on point with postmodern abstraction.

Watercolour paintings, etchings, charcoal and pencil drawings, inject prints, sewn plastic, photography, mixed-fibre yarn, and oil on canvas are the various mediums used to create the works featured in this exhibition. The eighteen works span seventy years of Canadian art making, highlighting some of the most influential female artists in Canada. The artists include Helen Mackie, Marion Nicoll, Bev Pike, Ruth Syme, Dana Shukster, Jill Thomson, Maureen Harvey, Megan Dickie, Allyson Glenn, Carolyn Campbell, Dana Holst, Petra Malá Miller, Megan Morman, Tammy Salzl, and Allison Tunis.

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<sup>1</sup> Whitney Chadwick, *Women, Art, and Society* (London: Thames & Hudson, 2012).

## Biographies *Allison Tunis*

Allison Tunis has a Bachelor of Fine Arts degree from the University of Alberta, and a graduate diploma in Art Therapy from the Vancouver Art Therapy Institute. She works mainly in cross-stitch embroidery, but also explores mixed media involving acrylic painting and gel transfers, and has self-publishing a body positive colouring book entitled *Body Love: A Fat Activism Colouring Book*, which can be found on Amazon in many countries.

Tunis is currently developing and facilitating a Queer Youth Art Club through the Alberta Sex Positive Education & Community Centre (ASPECC), which is a project supported by the Edmonton Arts Council and the Edmonton Community Foundation. As well, she is in the process of developing a body of work themed around language, social norms, and the experience of living as a fat person in our society. Previously, Tunis was the Artist-in-Residence for Youth Empowerment and Support Services (YESS), on grant from the Edmonton Arts Council, working with high-risk youth in the Edmonton area to create art in a therapeutic and activist context, as well as creating her own body of work focusing on body diversity, feminism, and reducing weight-based and mental illness stigma. Allison's first solo exhibition premiered at the Alberta Craft Council Discovery Gallery in January 2018, and was well-received. It went on to travel to the Calgary location, and Allison has been slated to be a part of a number of group exhibitions and commissioned projects in 2019 and beyond.

Her pieces question our society's obsession with aesthetic beauty, restrictive beauty standards, and body conformity, while exploring her own struggle with body image and a hunger for more diverse representation. Issues of feminism and intersectionality, diversity in media representation, and social constructions of beauty all influence Allison's work as an artist.

## *Allyson Glenn*

Allyson Glenn graduated with a BFA from the University of Alberta in 1998 and an MFA from the University of Calgary in 2000. She has received three Elizabeth Foundation Awards, several grants from the Alberta Foundation for the Arts, BC Arts Council, the Canada Council for the Arts, and a President's SSHRC from the University of Saskatchewan in 2010. Her work is part of private and public collections including the University of Calgary and the Alberta Foundation for the Arts, and she has exhibited in the United States, Great Britain, Czech Republic, India, Switzerland, and China. In May 2016 Glenn had the opportunity to participate as the Canadian Artist in Residence at the Vorres Museum in Athens (Paenia), Greece. She now lives in Saskatoon, Canada where she teaches full-time as an Associate Professor for the Department of Art and Art History, University of Saskatchewan.

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## *Bev Pike*

Bev Pike is a Winnipeg polymath known for large scale performative landform paintings. Since graduating from the Alberta College of Art and Design in Calgary, Pike's work has exhibited across Canada in solo and group exhibitions. She has received senior arts grants from the Winnipeg Arts Council, Manitoba Arts Council and Canada Council for the Arts. Selected collections include: Canada Council Art Bank, the Museum of Contemporary Canadian Art, the Manitoba Arts Council Art Bank, Winnipeg Art Gallery, MacKenzie Art Gallery, Robert McLaughlin Art Gallery as well as artist-book collections at the Victoria and Albert Museum, Tate Modern and numerous other special collections in North America and England.

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## *Carolyn Campbell*

Carolyn Campbell received her Master of Fine Arts degree in painting from the University of Alberta in 2004. She has exhibited at various galleries throughout Alberta, such as Harcourt House Artist Run Centre, Peter Robertson Gallery,

Triangle Gallery, and Willock and Sax. In 2009 she was a finalist in the Kingston Art Council's National Portrait Competition. Her work is held in corporate, public, and private collections, including the University of Alberta's collection, the Alberta Foundation for the Arts' collection, and private collections in Toronto, Calgary, and Lethbridge.

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## *Dana Holst*

Dana Holst (b.1972, Canada) is an Edmonton, Alberta based artist who received her B. A. in Fine Arts from the University of Waterloo in 1995. Working primarily in figurative painting and drawing, her work is an ongoing investigation into the human experience, focusing on the feminine self and it's nebulous place within society. Holst creates theatrical and speculative narratives around the emotional lives of young women, who are depicted in the process of building their identities, discovering their sexuality and learning about the world. Using portraiture as a catalyst, Holst's girls are caught in situations of import and fate, where dark social secrets are explored with ambiguous outcomes offering further opportunity to navigate from a place of innocence to deeper understanding.

Noteworthy public exhibits include the solo show *She's All That* (2015) at the Art Gallery of Alberta, which was curated by Kristy Trinier and accompanied by a catalogue; *Betwixt and Between* (2014) a two person show with mixed media artist Jude Griebel at The Reach Museum in Abbotsford BC; and *Artefact Artefiction* (2013) a group exhibition curated by Dawn Owen at The Macdonald Stewart Art Gallery (now The Art Gallery of Guelph) in Guelph Ontario. In 2011 Holst was honored to be selected by Wajdi Mouawad, the director of the Théâtre Français of the National Arts Centre in Ottawa, to be Associate Visual Artist for the 2011-2012 season titled *Nous Ne Sommes Pas Dangereux*. Her work is included in numerous public and private collections including the Alberta Foundation for the Arts, The Agnes Etherington Art Centre of Queen's University, the Art Bank Collection, the Colart Collection and the Glenbow Museum.

## *Dana Shukster*

Dana Shukster is a printmaker based in Medicine Hat Alberta. She completed her MFA in 2008 at Donau-Universität Krems in Austria. She is past chairman for the Medicine Hat Cultural Alliance and active participant in the Medicine Hat art community.

Shukster's work has been exhibited across Canada and in the United States and Europe. It is supported by grants and awards from the Canada Council for the Arts and the Alberta Foundation for the Arts and is held in numerous public and private collections in Alberta and British Columbia.

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## *Helen Mackie*

Helen Mackie received her Bachelor of Fine Arts Degree from the University of Calgary in printmaking and drawing in 1973. This accomplishment came after earning a Bachelor degree in Biology and Chemistry from Queen's University, and a Masters degree in Physiology and Biochemistry from the University of Toronto. With a background in biological sciences, she "has had a life-long fascination with prairie culture and the natural world. Helen makes visible nature's rhythms, and reveals spiritual and symbolic points of reference for our own realities. Helen's strong images, in conjunction with her use of color, contain high levels of energy and denote her compassionate nature and keen sense of humor." (Willcox and Sax Gallery)

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## *Jill Thomson*

Jill Thomson's artwork evokes her personal history of a small town/prairie childhood, an urban Montreal young adulthood and a settled life as artist and mother of three in Edmonton. Her rich colourful palette and complex compositions celebrate a creative life in cities with generous front porches, cafes, bookstores, bicycle paths, gardens and ravines.

She received her BFA from Concordia University in Montreal and is represented by Gibson Fine

Art in Calgary and AGA Art Rental and Sales in Edmonton. She has work in the Alberta Foundation for the Arts provincial collection and in international public and private collections.

(Heather Hamel, Scott Gallery, Edmonton)

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## *Marion Nicoll*

Marion Florence Mackay Nicoll, was born in Calgary. She studied at the Ontario College of Art, 1927-1929, and under A.C. Leighton at the Provincial Institute of Technology and Art (now Alberta University of the Arts), 1929-1932. She accepted a teaching position in crafts and design at the Institute in 1933 and taught there for nearly thirty years. Through the influence of Leighton, Jock Macdonald, automatic drawing and Will Barnet, her art evolved from landscape painting to a distinct style of classical abstraction. Both Marion and her husband, Jim, exhibited their art during the 1960s-1970s. They were involved in a number of organizations in the community such as Alberta Society of Artists, Calgary Allied Arts Council, Calgary Kinsmen, Old Cabin Crafts Society, Bowness Recreation Centre and Bowness Library Board. (Loch Gallery)

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## *Maureen Harvey*

Maureen Harvey received her Bachelor of Fine Arts from the University of California, Los Angeles, in 1961. She is a prolific painter whose career spans over forty years, with a focus on commission works, murals, and stage design. Harvey's works are in numerous collections throughout Alberta, such as the City of St. Albert's collection, Grande Prairie Hospital's collection, and Alberta Oil Sands Equity's collection. She has exhibited at Fringe Gallery, Bowman Arts Centre, and Harcourt House Artist Run Centre, and has participated in the Works Festival in Edmonton.

## *Megan Dickie*

Megan Dickie is an artist who works in the mediums of sculpture, video and printmaking. Her artistic research focuses on the seductive tension that exists between reason and play. Dickie explores this concept by subverting systems and structures with critically deployed humour. Megan Dickie's most recent project uses video games as a platform to question the competitive structure of contemporary art and our enduring fascination with watching human struggle. The project is comprised of sculptures and a video trilogy that takes inspiration from 1980's video games. The videos have recently been shown at TUFF (Toronto) BIDDU (Reykjavik) and Eastern Edge (St. John's). A major solo presentation of the entire project will be presented at Open Space (Victoria) in early 2017.

Megan Dickie has exhibited her work across Canada with exhibitions at Oxygen Art Centre (Nelson), Latitude 53 (Edmonton), Stride (Calgary), Grunt Gallery, (Vancouver) BC, the Art Gallery of Greater Victoria, the Kenderdine Art Gallery (Saskatoon), Artcite Inc. (Windsor) and Artspace (Peterborough) to name just a few. Dickie has received numerous grants from the Canada Council for the Arts and the BC Arts Council. She has also been awarded professional development funding from the University of Victoria. Her BFA in printmaking was obtained from the University of Calgary in 1997 and she received a MFA in sculpture from the University of Saskatchewan in 2002. Her work is in the collection of the University of Saskatchewan, The Alberta Foundation for the Arts and the Nickle Arts Museum. Megan Dickie currently resides in Victoria, BC and teaches sculpture at the University of Victoria.

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## *Megan Morman*

Over the past twelve years, Megan Morman's visual work has shown in solo exhibitions and festivals across Canada, including at the Art Gallery of Alberta (Edmonton), the Southern Alberta Art Gallery (Lethbridge), Artspace (Peterborough), and Galerie Sans Nom (Moncton). Morman grew up

in rural Minnesota; before moving to Lethbridge in 2012, she spent fifteen years in Saskatoon working in communications and administration with arts and community-based nonprofits including AIDS Saskatoon and the Saskatoon Pride Festival. Morman has a B.A. in Sociology from the University of Saskatchewan (2003), and an M.F.A. from the University of Lethbridge in 2016.

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## *Petra Malá Miller*

Petra Malá Miller was born in the Czech Republic and grew up in Blatnice, a village in southern Moravia. Her photographic work explores the poetics of childhood, of innocence, ageing, memory and loss and raises questions surrounding representation, cultural identity, the individual, the family and the community.

Petra Malá Miller earned her MFA from the Academy of Arts, Architecture and Design in Prague (2008). In 2009, she received the ESSL Museum Award for Contemporary Art, Klosterneuburg, Vienna. She received Alberta Foundation for the Arts awards for her photography and is represented in the AFA's Art Collection. Her work has been featured in solo and group exhibitions in Europe, the United States and in Canada including: *The Intimate Circle* in Contemporary Czech Photography, Landskrona Museum, Sweden (2015) and at the City Gallery of Prague (2013); *The Voice Reached Us Through the Floor, but the Words Themselves Were Lost*, Harbourfront Centre, Toronto (2013), Trianon Gallery, Lethbridge (2012) and Jiri Svestka Gallery, Prague (2011); *On the Threshold*, Jiri Svestka Gallery, Berlin (2011); *Inter-view*, Nitra Gallery, Nitra (2010); Czech It, an exhibition of modern and contemporary Czech photography presented at Space Gallery, Pittsburgh (2009); *Frame*, Leica Gallery, Prague (2008). The artist is currently preparing *Living in the Zone*, a large-scale project that explores the afterlife of Chernobyl and its effects on the children of Belarus.

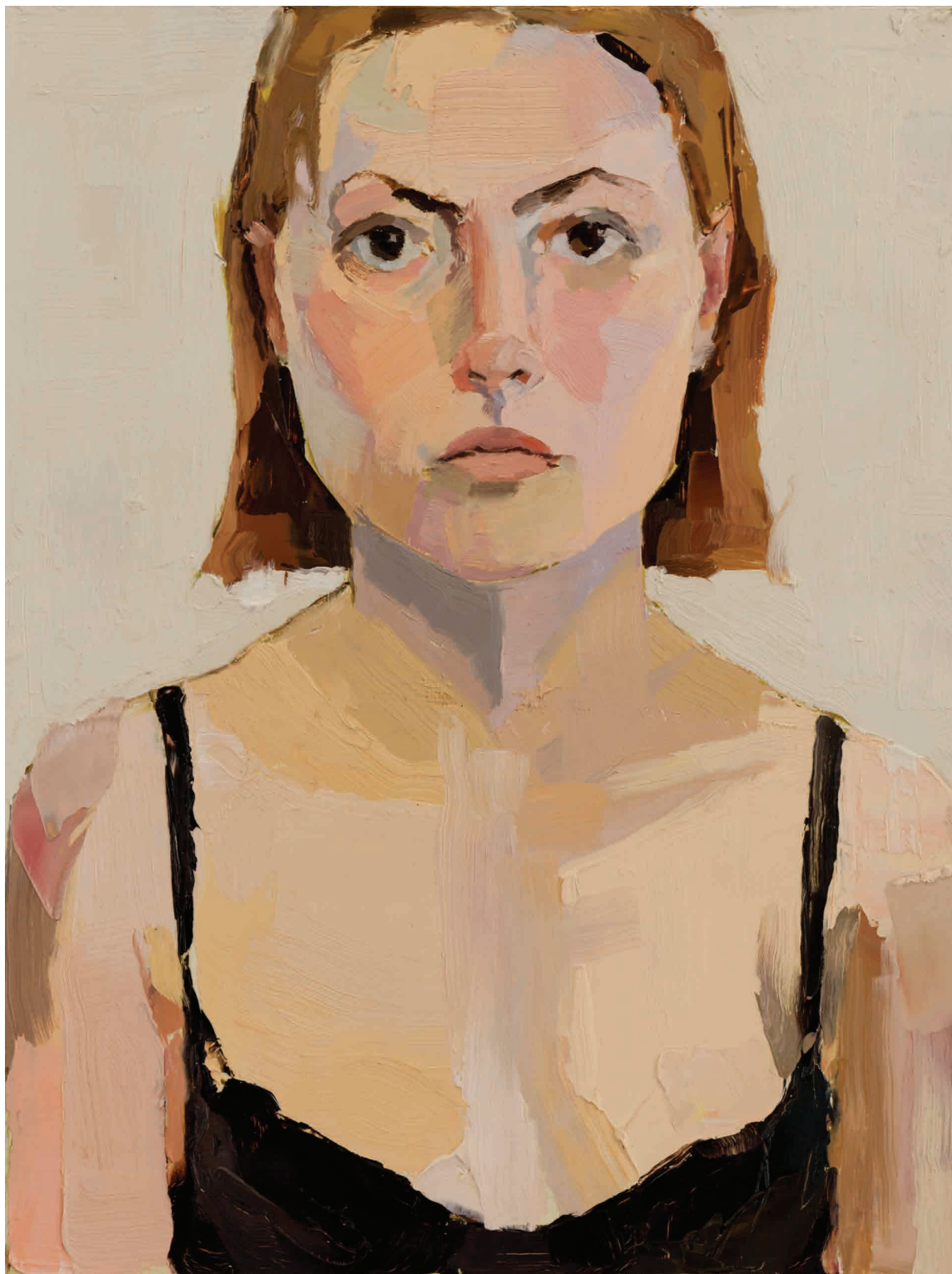
## *Tammy Salzl*

Tammy Salzl is an Edmonton/Montreal based interdisciplinary artist who completed her Master of Fine Arts at Concordia University in 2014. Salzl's work is driven by her interest in the power of storytelling and the connections she sees between the human psyche and humankind's relationship with the natural world. Salzl has presented her work across Canada, as well as in Germany, Mexico, and the U.S.A. She is a Tedeschi Scholarship recipient, a 2018 OALA/Ground Award recipient, a 2011 Honourable Award Winner in The Kingston Prize, and has received grants and residencies from Conseil des arts et des lettres du Québec, the Alberta Foundation for the Arts, I-Park International Artist in Residence Program, U.S.A, the Klondike Institute of Art and Culture Centre, Yukon, The Banff Centre, KH Messen Art House, Norway, and the Vermont Studio Center, USA.

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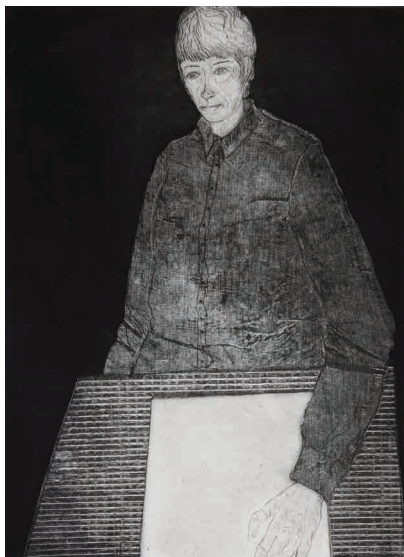
## *Ruth Chapman*

Born in Chatham, Ontario, in 1934, Ruth Ellen Chapman is an accomplished Canadian painter. In 1952 she attended London Teachers' College, and she worked as an educator from 1957 to 1965. In 1975 she attended the Alberta College of Art, where she received a diploma in visual arts with a major in painting. This experience ignited her artistic career with a focus on commissioned portraits. Her work is found in the Alberta Foundation for the Arts' collection; the Husky Oil building, the Petro Canada building, Gulf Canada Square, in Calgary; and private collections.



Allyson Glenn, *Stacey*, 2000, oil on board, 19 1/2 x 16 3/8 inches, collection of the AFA

## List of Works



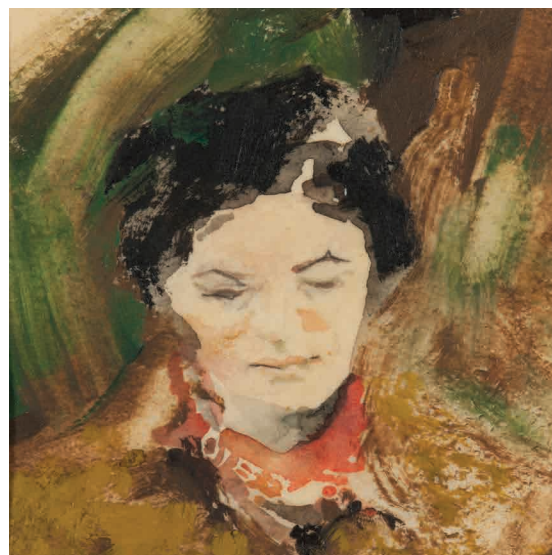
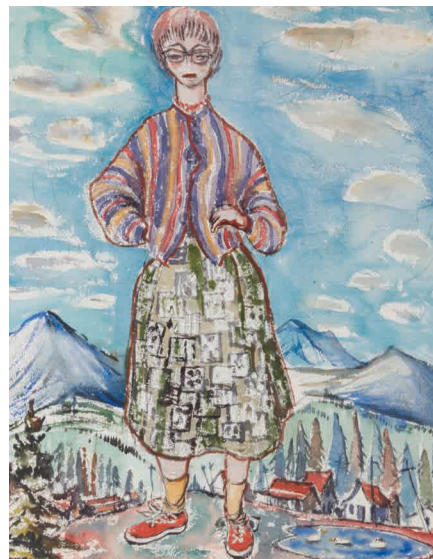
*Left to Right/Top to Bottom*

Helen Mackie  
*Self portrait*  
1972  
Etching on paper  
22 1/2 x 16 1/2 inches  
Collection of the AFA

Marion Nicoll  
*The Model*  
1958  
Watercolour on paper  
10 3/16 x 7 7/8 inches  
Collection of the AFA

Bev Pike  
*Portrait #15*  
1979  
Charcoal, watercolour, pencil,  
gouache on paper  
21 7/8 x 29 13/16 inches  
Collection of the AFA

Ruth Syme  
*Winnie*  
1982  
Watercolour on paper  
13 5/16 x 18 13/16 inches  
Collection of the AFA



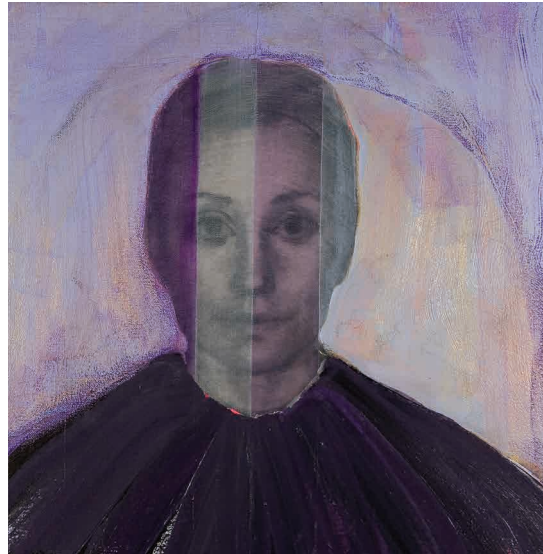
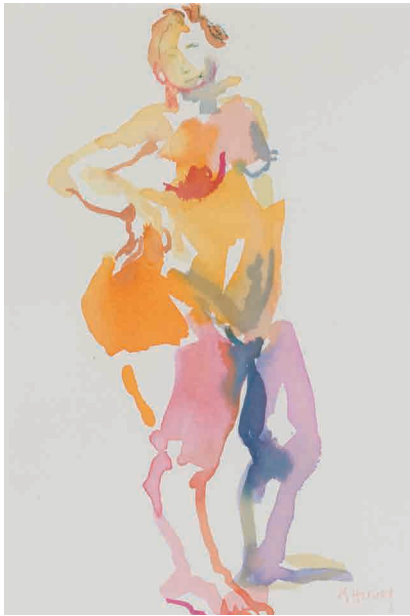
*Left to Right/Top to Bottom*

Ruth Syme  
*Summer of 83'*  
1983  
Watercolour on paper  
19  $\frac{3}{16}$  x 13  $\frac{1}{2}$  inches  
Collection of the AFA

Marion Nicoll  
*Portrait of Janet Mitchell*  
1947  
Watercolour, pencil on paper  
16 x  $\frac{1}{8}$  x 12  $\frac{15}{16}$  inches  
Collection of the AFA

Dana Shukster  
*These faces I give to the world, self portrait*  
1988  
Woodcut on paper  
16  $\frac{15}{16}$  x 15  $\frac{1}{2}$  inches  
Collection of the AFA

Jill Thomson  
*Portrait II*  
1992  
Watercolour, oil, wax on paper  
7  $\frac{1}{2}$  x 7  $\frac{1}{2}$  inches  
Collection of the AFA



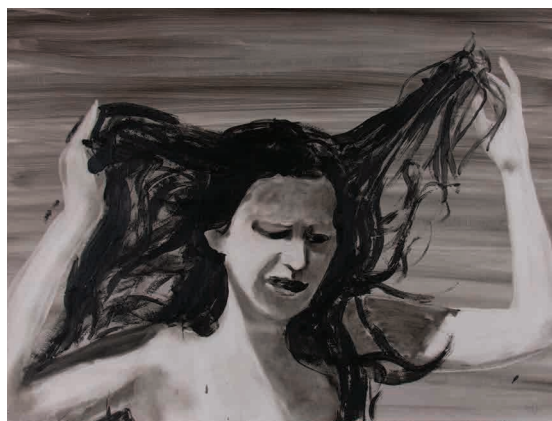
*Left to Right/Top to Bottom*

Maureen Harvey  
*Thesesa*  
1994  
Watercolour on paper  
12  $\frac{3}{16}$  x 9  $\frac{1}{16}$  inches  
Collection of the AFA

Megan Dickie  
*Backyard Beauties: Cedar*  
1999  
Inkjet print, sewn plastic on  
sewn mulberry paper on panel  
13 x 13 x 1  $\frac{1}{16}$   
Collection of the AFA

Allyson Glenn  
*Stacey*  
2000  
Oil on board  
19  $\frac{1}{2}$  x 16  $\frac{3}{16}$  inches  
Collection of the AFA

Carolyn Campbell  
*Proxy (3)*  
2008  
Oil on canvas  
14  $\frac{1}{16}$  x 14  $\frac{1}{16}$  x 1  $\frac{1}{16}$  inches  
Collection of the AFA



*Left to Right/Top to Bottom*

Dayna Holst  
*Study for nice bunny*  
2008  
Oil stick, sterling silver point  
on 100% cotton paper  
10 <sup>1</sup>/<sub>16</sub> x 7 <sup>11</sup>/<sub>16</sub> inches  
Collection of the AFA

Petra Malá Miller  
*The voice reached us through the  
floor, but the words themselves  
were lost*  
2009-2010  
Inject print on paper  
16 x <sup>3</sup>/<sub>16</sub> x 19 <sup>9</sup>/<sub>16</sub> inches  
Collection of the AFA

Megan Morman  
*Rita McKeough (Calgary)*  
2010  
Mixed fiber yarn on plastic  
canvas  
13 <sup>1</sup>/<sub>16</sub> x 10 <sup>3</sup>/<sub>4</sub> x 1 <sup>7</sup>/<sub>8</sub> inches  
Collection of the AFA

Dana Holst  
*Coming Undone*  
2013  
Oil and encaustic on prepared  
paper  
22 x 30 inches  
Collection of the AFA



*Left to Right/Top to Bottom*

Tammy Salzl  
*Girl in Between*  
2014  
Watercolour on paper  
24 x 17 7/8 inches  
Collection of the AFA

Allison Tunis  
*Sam*  
2017  
Needlepoint on canvas  
9 1/4 x 6 7/8 inches  
Collection of the AFA

# Introduction to Educator's Guide *and* Lesson Plans

The AFA Travelling Exhibition Program Southeast created this educators' guide based on the exhibition's themes and concepts. It is composed of lesson plans and informative material. We strive to create projects that will inspire individuals to experience our exhibitions beyond the decorative and to explore their own creativity. Educators, writers, curators and artists have all contributed content; we hope you create something amazing from it.



# Lesson 1

## Portrait Tracing Grades K–3

### *Overview*

Portraits are all about capturing a subject's story and personality. In *Women X Women*, the various artists use women as their subjects. Body position, stance, and gestures communicate certain ideas to the viewer. In this project, participants will create full-body portraits to examine how a subject can express themselves and communicate an idea through their body.

### *Objectives*

Students will:

- Create an expressive self-portrait
- Learn to connect body language and expression
- Explore two-dimensional-drawing and process-painting techniques

### *Materials*

Large white mural paper  
Sharpie (black, fine point)  
Liquid watercolours  
Foam brushes  
Scissors

# Instructions

## Step One

Lay out the mural paper on the floor. Lie down on the paper in your carefully considered pose, and have another participant trace the outline of your head and body with a Sharpie. (If young children are participating, an adult can help with the tracing.)



## Step Two

Cut out the tracing. You can then add defining details to your portrait using the Sharpie.



### *Step Three*

Use foam brushes and watercolours to add colour and expression to the portrait.



### *Variations*

Younger participants can work more intuitively to create self-portraits or imagined portraits. Older participants can research/reflect beforehand and produce more representational portraits (either self-portraits or portraits of other subjects).





## Lesson 2

### Needlepoint Grades K–12

#### Overview

The various artists in *Women X Women* use diverse methods and materials in their artistic practices. Two artists create their works using a form of needlepoint, which involves stitching yarn through an open-weave structure or fabric and relies on colour changes in the yarn to build the pattern or image. This technique has a strong history within traditional feminine practice and is closely connected with ideas of domesticity.

This process-focused project uses needlepoint to explore basic stitching techniques and colour-blocking design to create a composition.

#### Objectives

Students will:

- Learn basic needlepoint techniques
- Focus on the process of mark-making with new materials
- Develop fine motor skills
- Learn how to draft a simple pattern

#### Materials

An open-weave plastic structure or scrap fabric (large open-weave fabrics, such as burlap or canvas, work well for younger participants)

Embroidery hoop (if using scrap fabric)

Large-eye sewing needle

Scrap yarn and embroidery thread (various colours, thicknesses and textures)

Graph paper

Pencil crayons



# Instructions

## Step One

Open the embroidery hoop and place the fabric inside. Close the hoop securely around the fabric, making sure the fabric is taut.

## Step Two

Thread the large-eye needle with yarn of your choice and then tie the end of the yarn in a knot. (Younger participants may need help tying the knot.) Be sure to make the knot big enough so it doesn't pull through the open weave.

## Step Three

Begin with your needle at the back of the fabric. Poke through the open weave and pull the needle through to the front side until the yarn stops moving. Then poke the needle down into the front side and through to the back side.



## Step Four

Have fun experimenting with mark-making by using yarn of varying colours and textures and trying different stitch variations. trying different stitch variations.

### Stitch Variations:

- Vary the distance between where you poke the needle up through the weave and down through the weave to create shorter or longer stitches
- Make one stitch out and then come back to the same spot to create a radial design (such as a starburst)
- Make short, random stitches that look like polka dots
- Stitch around other stitches and then fill in to create a background
- Make x's by crossing over your previous stitch
- Thread a folded piece of yarn to create a wider stitch
- Thread twisted strands of different-coloured yarns together
- Make longer rows of stitches beside each other to create a solid shape
- Research different stitching techniques and try them (e.g., cross stitch, blanket stitch, buttonhole stitch, chain stitch, fern stitch, knotted stitch and many more)



## *Variations*

While younger participants can explore and experiment with the materials in a no-rules/free-form manner, older participants can challenge themselves by learning to draft and follow a pattern.

### *To draft:*

Trace your embroidery hoop or the outline of your plastic weave structure on a piece of graph paper to create a template of dimensions to work within.



Using pencil crayons, colour in squares on the graph paper until your pattern is complete. Use colours that correspond to the colours of the yarn you'll be using. Your draft will act as a visual guide while you're doing the actual stitching.



2/5 "JONI MITCHELL" *[Signature]*

## Lesson 3

# Block Printing

Grades K–12

### Overview

Whether you're an artist, a mathematician, a basketball player, a storyteller, a student, a daughter or a brother, you have important influences in your life—people who inspire you. Artists are inspired by the people around them, as well as by other artists. They learn their craft by examining others' works and techniques.

All of the artists featured in the *Women X Women* exhibition are women, and all of their works are inspired by women and have women as their subjects. The artists use a variety of styles and techniques to create their works.

For this project, participants will be looking at the technique used in Dana Shukster's *These Faces I Give To The World, Self Portrait* to create their own block-printed portraits of female subjects who inspire or influence them.

### Objectives

Students will:

- Research and reflect on a female of influence
- Learn basic block-printing techniques
- Learn to distinguish between negative and positive space while working in relief
- Develop fine motor skills

### Materials

Lino printing block (4 x 6) (Speedball makes a soft and smooth flexible block that's easy to carve)

Water-based printing ink or acrylic paint

Carving tool

Smooth card stock (multiple pieces)

Printer paper

Brayer

Flat tray for ink or paint

Pencil

Pen

Scratch-foam board or foam plates (for younger participants)

Mark-making tools (for younger participants)



# Instructions

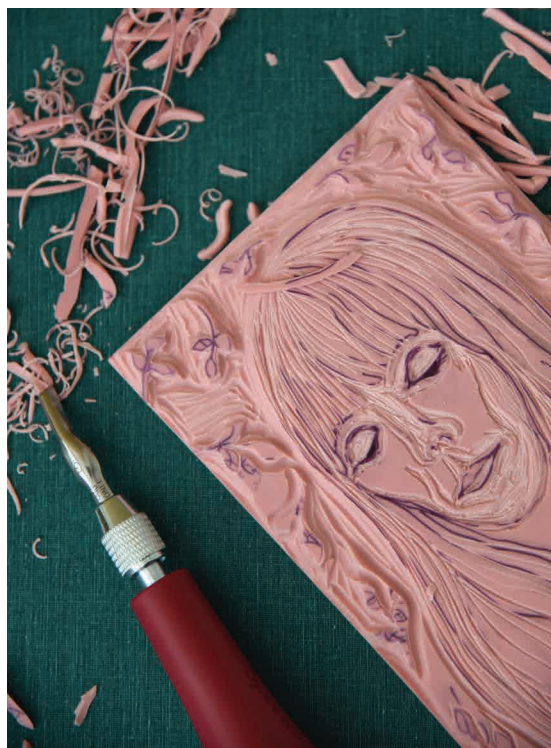
## Step One

Take time to reflect and choose a female subject who inspires you. If possible, find a photo to use as a reference.



## Step Two

With a pencil, trace an outline of your subject on a piece of printer paper. Place your drawing on top of the lino block, drawing side down, and rub to transfer your design onto the block. To prevent the pencil guides from rubbing off while you're working, trace them with a pen. Your design will flip during the transfer. Once you print your block on paper, your design will flip back to its original state.



### *Step Three*

Carefully visualize your design and the negative space. Remember: the areas you carve away will be white in your final print. The block still remaining is where the ink will sit.

Using your carving tool, follow your pencil lines and cut into the block. Cut alongside the pen lines to leave them raised. Work slowly and thoughtfully—make sure you’re considering negative and positive space and cutting away the correct areas. Carefully control the angle of the tool. Holding it at a steep angle will make a deep cutting edge, while a shallow angle will bring the cutting edge up.

Start by cutting less. You can always cut more later, but you can’t add once it’s been taken away. And remember to cut away from yourself and keep your non-carving hand (which will be holding the block) behind the carving tool.

### *Step Four*

Once carving is complete, you’re ready to ink your block. Place a small spoonful of ink/paint in your flat tray. Roll the ink around with your brayer until the ink is smooth and the brayer rolls easily. When the brayer is loaded evenly with ink, roll it over your block. Ensure you coat it evenly. If you use too much paint, it will begin to fill the carved areas and you’ll lose some detail.



### *Step Five*

Carefully position a sheet of printing paper on top of your block. Rub in circles to transfer the ink evenly. Then remove the paper and hang your print to dry. If you're making multiple prints, re-ink your block and repeat.



### *Step Six*

You're now ready to sign, title, and create an edition for each of your prints. In pencil, sign your name at the bottom right of the image, title your piece at the bottom centre of the image, and mark the edition number at the bottom left of the image. Editions are labelled with the print number, then a slash, then the number of prints in the collection. For example, 1/5 is print number one out of a total of five prints.

## *Variations*

Block printing originated in China before 220 AD. The carvings were created on woodblocks and used for printing on textiles. After you've tested your printing block on paper, try printing on cloth.

While older participants will enjoy the challenge of translating a detailed, representational drawing into a carving, younger participants can explore the medium by carving simple patterns and designs. If participants are too young to use carving tools, they can use Styrofoam plates and explore mark-making by indenting the foam and creating a design. Be sure they're indenting deep enough to allow for a successful transfer.



Ruth Syme, *Winnie*, 1982, watercolour on paper, 13 $\frac{3}{16}$  x 18 $\frac{13}{16}$  inches, collection of the AFA

# Acknowledgements

This publication was produced in conjunction with the TREX exhibition *Women X Women* by the AFA Travelling Exhibition Program (TREX) Southeast Region 4, at TREX Space, City of Medicine Hat. *Women X Women* will tour throughout Alberta to non-traditional gallery spaces August 2019-February 2023. Visit [www.trexprogramsoutheast.ca](http://www.trexprogramsoutheast.ca) to find out more about the program and locations of each exhibition.

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Images: Alberta Foundation for the Arts

Printing: Warwick Printing

*A special thanks to:*

Joanne Marion, Director of Galleries,  
Esplanade Arts and Heritage Centre

Gail Lint, Arts Collections Consultant,  
Arts Branch, Alberta Culture and Tourism

Neil Lazaruk, Arts Collections Preparator,  
Arts Branch, Alberta Culture and Tourism

Kristine Stoesz, Arts Collections Registrar,  
Arts Branch, Alberta Culture and Tourism

Doug Haslam, Kodama Woodworking

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