

COMPANION SPECIES



*Alberta Foundation for the Arts
Travelling Exhibition Program*



COMPANION SPECIMENS

**Alberta Foundation for the Arts
Travelling Exhibition Program**

Interpretive Catalogue
and Education Guide
AFA Travelling
Exhibition Program

Curated by
Genevieve Farrell
Esplanade Arts & Heritage Centre
Trex Southeast

Left
Jim Logan
A Warm Day
(detail)
2014







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left
Vivian Lindoe
Tree Cats
(detail)
1971

Acknowledgments

The Alberta Foundation for the Arts and the Travelling Exhibition Program (TREX) acknowledge that the artistic activity we support takes place on the territories of Treaty 6, 7 and 8. We acknowledge the many First Nations, Métis and Inuit who have lived on and cared for these lands for generations and we are grateful for the traditional Knowledge Keepers, Elders and those who have gone before us. We make this acknowledgment as an act of reconciliation and gratitude to those whose territory we reside on. We reaffirm our commitment to strengthening our relationships with Indigenous communities and growing our shared knowledge and understanding.

This publication was produced in conjunction with the TREX Southeast exhibition Companion Species. Companion Species will tour throughout Alberta to non-traditional gallery spaces from September 2021 – August 2023.

Visit trexsoutheast.ca to find out more about the program and locations of each exhibition.

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The Alberta Foundation for the Arts

The Alberta Foundation for the Arts (AFA) has supported a provincial travelling exhibition program since 1980. 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:

TREX Northwest – Art Gallery of Grande Prairie, Grande Prairie

TREX Northeast and North Central – Art Gallery of Alberta, Edmonton

TREX Southwest – Alberta Society of Artists, Calgary

TREX Southeast – Esplanade Arts & 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.



Esplanade Arts & Heritage Centre

The Esplanade Arts & 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. 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.

right

Irene McCaugherty

Wash Day and Cultivating Potatoes

(detail)

1992



WASH DAY AT
CULTIVATING PLACE
IRENE McCaughey

Companion Species features a selection of eighteen artworks depicting some of Alberta's favourite friends: cats, dogs and horses too (needless to say, in this province). Drawing from the Alberta Foundation for the Arts' (AFA) permanent collection, the featured artists in this show span cultures, time and artistic media. Together, their visual interpretations of these three animal groups tell a nuanced story of the deeply intertwined and celebrated relationship between certain animals and humans.

The term "companion species," for which this exhibition takes its name, is popularly attributed to the feminist cyborg scholar Donna Haraway. In her book *The Companion Species Manifesto*, Haraway uses this term to explore the historical emergence

of animals who are not viewed as wild creatures or pests, nor used for meat or in labs, but rather animals that are intensely bonded to the history of human's social, cultural and emotional life.

While Haraway's text examines the joint lives of dogs and humans specifically, our relationships with cats and horses (and even cell phones!) parallel many of the observations outlined in her book. In Haraway's own words, dogs are "partners in the crime of human evolution, they are in the garden from the get-go, wily as Coyote."¹

Dogs, cats and horses each are the subject of countless legends and folklore. They appear in our music, literature and visual culture. Where might we be without these important relationships? And while our histories are deeply connected, it



Curatorial Statement

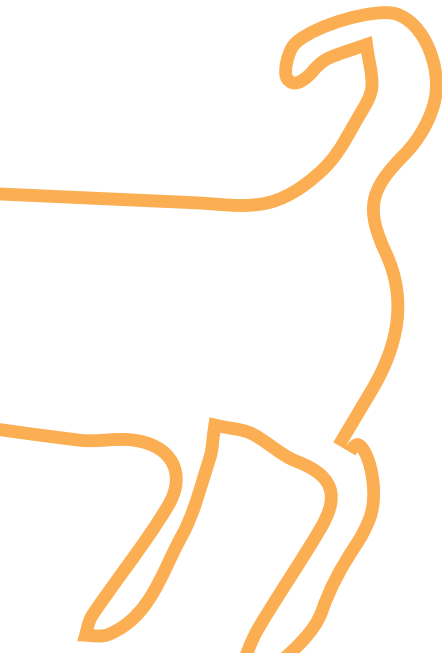
is perhaps what separates us from these animals which offers these interspecies relationships their unique therapeutic and inspirational qualities. Where our relationships with fellow humans are often complicated through the language we share, and the societal pressures expressed through that language to compete, compare and achieve, many lessons on how to pursue a good life are witnessed in and modelled by these animals for us. In the presence of the cat, dog or horse, we are perhaps reminded that we are perfect just the way we are.

The coming together of this exhibition was guided by a desire to share sentiments of love and connectedness; a desire to add a moment of joy into each spectator's day. I hope this selection from the AFA's permanent collection will charm, ease and enliven your day.

**Curatorial Text by Genevieve Farrell,
TRES Southeast**

¹ Haraway, D. J. (2020). Cyborgs to Companion Species. In *The companion species manifesto: Dogs, people, and significant otherness* (p. 298). Chicago: Prickly Paradigm Press.

right
Terry Gregoraschuk
Guarding Pumpkin
(detail)
1994





List of Artworks

left to right
top to bottom

Maxwell Bates
Horseman
1950
linocut on paper
21 x 13 cm

Patrick Douglass Cox
The Cowhand
1991
lithograph on paper
38.5 x 67 cm

Terry Gregoraschuk
Guarding Pumpkin
1994
acrylic on canvas
35.5 x 46 cm

Don Cardinal
Stealing Some Fish
1973
acrylic on canvas
58.4 x 73.7 cm

Helen Flaig
Bringing in the Cows
1999
acrylic on masonite
57.7 x 57.7 cm

Wally Houn
Hussar Summer Daze Parade
1976
silver gelatin on paper
18.5 x 23.5 cm





left to right
top to bottom

Alexandra Haeseker
Windbreak
1982
watercolour on paper
51.9 x 70.6 cm

Vivian Lindoe
Tree Cats
1971
silkscreen on paper
35.6 x 43.2 cm

George Littlechild
Written History
1984
silkscreen on paper
42.5 x 55.2 cm

Jim Logan
A Warm Day
2014
acrylic on masonite
30.5 x 40.6 cm



left to right
top to bottom

Helen Mackie
Watering Horses
1997
woodcut on paper
21 x 28 cm

Irene McCaugherty
Wash Day and Cultivating Potatoes
1992
watercolour and ink on paper
27.8 x 37.9 cm

Rita McKeough – Unattributed
Urban Uprising
1984
etching on paper
44.5 x 59.8 cm

Karen Pedlar
Two Dogs Wishing
1991
mixed media, tissue, acrylic, wire,
cement, bone and leather on teak
15.5 x 20.8 x 5.5 cm



left to right
top to bottom

Katie Ohe
Rider
n.d.
linocut on paper
58 x 36.5 cm

Ferdinando Spina
Lady at Leisure
1984
oil on linen
50.6 x 40.8 cm

Trig Singer
Poland Series
1973
silver gelatin on paper
13.5 x 20.3 cm

Ken Swan
Late in the Evening
1991
watercolour and ink on paper
24.9 x 48.1 cm



About the Artists



Maxwell Bates

Maxwell Bates was an architect and expressionist painter who was born in Calgary, Alberta. In 1931, Bates went to England where he supported his studies in painting and architecture as a door-to-door vacuum salesman. When World War II broke out, he enlisted with the British Army and served from 1940 – 1945. After this, he returned to Calgary and worked for his father's architecture firm.

Bates primarily worked with oil, watercolour, chalk and pen to depict romantic street scenes, landscapes and still life paintings. Alongside A.W. Hodges, Bates co-designed St. Mary's Cathedral in Calgary.

Don Cardinal

Don J. Cardinal was a self-taught Metis artist. Cardinal was born in Edmonton and placed in a Roman Catholic Mission in Northern Alberta at the age of two. He ran away from residential school at the age of fifteen and worked construction jobs before landing in Hay River, Northwest Territories (NWT) where he married and had two children. Cardinal began painting full-time in 1967, taking on odd jobs to supplement his income. His talent caught the attention of a CBC film crew on a northern assignment and he was encouraged to show his work down south. This resulted in a brief stay in Edmonton, but Cardinal soon found himself back home in the NWT. Cardinal thought of the surrounding land and Indigenous communities as his greatest teachers. His paintings explore his rich cultural traditions and demonstrate a love for northern life.





Patrick Douglass Cox

Patrick Douglass Cox graduated from the Alberta College of Art's Visual Communication program in 1976 and subsequently attended the first Illustrators Workshop at Marymount College, New York. In 1982 he began painting full-time, following a five-year career as a partner of Crow Quill Studios Ltd., Calgary, one of the city's pioneering illustration houses.

Cox lives near Finnegan, Alberta, an area where his maternal grandparents ranched. He was born in Edmonton but grew up in Carstairs, Alberta. It is this rural upbringing that Cox portrays in his unique artwork. His respect and appreciation for rural life, the people, animals, farm equipment and the beauty of the prairie are just a few of the inspirations that he depicts in his paintings.

“I had a cat and dog growing up and several since, including horses. No particular memories come to mind, but I will say I’ve always thoroughly enjoyed being in the company of all of them.”

*Email to the curator
March 22, 2021*

Helen Flaig

Helen Flaig was a self-described naïve painter who used acrylics and oils to paint everyday scenes of her life growing up on a farm in Saskatchewan. Her paintings are spontaneous and whimsical, full of colour and warmth. Her images reflect the games, play, and the work she shared with her siblings on their farm in the 1930s. Flaig painted detailed scenes of everyday life including milking cows, shelling peas, and the careful production of washing dishes, kite-making, water fights and riding to school in a horse-drawn cutter.

Flaig trained as a teacher and moved to Lethbridge with her husband and children in 1955. It was in Lethbridge that Flaig's passion for art flourished. She joined the Lethbridge Sketch Club and learned the art of watercolour. Flaig was also a potter and a member of the Oldman River Potter's Guild. She experimented with clay sculptures and primitive firings. Flaig was active in her arts community and frequently exhibited her work throughout Lethbridge and Medicine Hat.

Terry Gregoraschuk

After attending the Alberta College of Art and Design from 1977 – 1980, Terry worked in the commercial art field as an illuminated sign designer then as Art Director for Western Living Magazine (Calgary branch). During this time, he also created fine art paintings in hopes of one day painting on a full-time basis. His dream came true in 1986 when Terry had built up a following and decided to leave the commercial arts field to pursue painting full-time. In his spare time, Terry loves to cook, travel and write fiction literature. His manuscript entitled "Boxes" placed in the top ten in the 2014 Clive Cussler Adventure In Writing Competition.

Alexandra Haeseker

Alexandra Haeseker is a multi-disciplinary artist whose practise stretches back to the late 1960s. In the 1970s, turning away from abstract art, Haeseker was an early adapter of new modes of realism and representation. Her artistic scope ranges from photorealism to graphic illustration. Haeseker once commented that the source of her images is largely autobiographical. Beginning her practice with dark dreamlike imagery derived from family albums, the artist more recently has depicted contemporary life with hyper-real images adapted from toy effigies, and a more intimate view of other life forms such as insects and marine life.

“When I was very young, we lived in Indonesia, where I would go out into the jungle and “capture” a tropical insect (like a bird spider, black scorpion or iridescent beetle) for the day, studying it at close range, but always releasing it before nightfall back into its environment. I was ten years old when my parents got me my first dog. My parents also got me a Mississippi Slider turtle who lived to an astonishing thirty-nine years old. I have had six dogs in my life so far, and with all of them, just going out on a walk in the countryside has always been my favourite time with them. I continue to be fascinated by animals of all kinds.”

Email to the curator
March 19, 2021

Wally Houn

Wally Houn is a photographer, writer and actor who immigrated to Medicine Hat from China when he was ten years old. He first became interested in photography as a junior high school student, and in the late 1970s, when Houn was living and teaching in Hussar, Alberta, he began exploring documentary photography. He undertook an extensive photographic portrait of the town and its people and captured intimate shots of daily life in Hussar.

Houn graduated with a Bachelor of Education degree from the University of Calgary and taught English in public schools in Swift Current, SK, Nobleford, AB, Edmonton, AB, Hussar, AB and Strathmore, AB until retiring from teaching in 1996. Since then, Houn has worked as an actor, with speaking roles in films and TV, and is a member of the Alliance of Canadian Cinema, Television and Radio Artists (ACTRA).

Vivian Lindoe

Vivian Carroll Lindoe was born and primarily educated in Calgary, studying at the Provincial Institute of Technology and Art as well as the Instituto d'Allende in San Miguel, Mexico. Acknowledged as a member of the small group of post-war Calgary artists from the generation that pioneered professional practice in the province, she was a painter, printmaker, ceramist and fibre artist (working in batik) and also taught painting and ceramics. She played a major part in the production of many of the early works created by the Lindoe Pottery Studios in Medicine Hat from 1954 – 1957. In addition, she served as president and exhibition coordinator of the Medicine Hat Community Art Clubs Association.

George Littlechild

George Littlechild's mother, Rachel Littlechild, was a Plains Cree member of the Erminskin Reserve in Hobbema, and his father, James E. Price, was of Scottish/Micmac extraction from New Brunswick. Littlechild was raised in a foster home and separated from his Cree community. His mixed media paintings record his personal and family history as well as his reclamation and reconnection with ancestral culture. Littlechild believes colours possess spiritual cleansing and purifying powers. He is known for his finesse as a colourist, as well as his collaging of haunting vintage photographs. He is also the author/illustrator of three children's books, including the award-winning publication *This Land is My Land*. George Littlechild now lives in British Columbia.

Jim Logan

Jim Logan is an artist of Métis descent. He began to paint as a very young man, inspired by his mother, a hobby painter. At age twenty, Logan travelled to Europe, studying the works of Van Gogh and Edvard Munch. He continued to develop his technique through wildlife and landscape paintings. In 1982 he enrolled in the Graphic Design program at David Thompson University (Prince George, BC). After his graduation in 1983, Logan took a job as a graphic designer for a Native communications firm in Whitehorse, Yukon.

Logan's colourful, illustrative paintings capture an accurate and painfully honest view of First Nations life in Northern Canada with humour and sensitivity. The time he spent as a lay minister in Kwanlun Dunn Village on the outskirts of Whitehorse inspired his mission to paint social statement pieces based on his experiences.

Dora “Helen” Mackie

Dora Mackie was born in Tavistock, Ontario in 1926. In 1943, she received a B.Sc. Honours at Queen's University and in 1949 a M.Sc. in Physiology and Biochemistry from the University of Toronto. After deciding to expand her understanding of the world via art making, Mackie received a BFA from the University of Calgary in Printmaking and Drawing in 1973.

With a background in biological sciences, Mackie pursued a life-long fascination with mountains, prairie culture and the natural world. In her artistic practise, Mackie takes what is common and everyday and through the medium of the wood-block print, etching, watercolour and charcoal drawing, imagines worlds of surprise, interconnectivity, whimsy and joy.

Irene McCaugherty

Irene McCaugherty was a self-taught artist, writer and poet. Her folk-art paintings explore the people and cultural narrative of southern Alberta's pioneer days in the later part of the 19th and early 20th century. McCaugherty recorded the daily happenings of life in early Alberta with humour and colour and invited viewers to enter her world of auction sales, musical rides, road building, small town life and ranching. She often painted in an unusual long and narrow rectangular shape that reflected the view she had out the window of her pickup truck. Her watercolours do not conform to traditional one point perspective, and she found a voice that was uniquely hers, capturing the imagined past and invented history of life on the prairie. McCaugherty created more than 1000 paintings before her death in 1996. For many years, she also wrote a newspaper column for the Lethbridge Herald called “Diary of a Farmer's Wife” about cowboy life on her ranch in the Porcupine Hills of Alberta.

Rita McKeough

Rita McKeough was born in 1951 in Antigonish, Nova Scotia. She received a BFA from the University of Calgary and a MFA from the Nova Scotia College of Art and Design before settling in Calgary, where she currently teaches at the Alberta College of Art and Design. Rita McKeough has been working as an interdisciplinary artist for over thirty years and has been a major contributor to Canada's strong reputation in audio, media installation and performance art.

The etching Urban Uprising was produced and printed during a residency at the University of Lethbridge in the summer of 1984. The print documents the invasion of the Urban Scroungers in the development areas where older homes were being demolished. "As the houses were being torn down the urban scroungers were roaming the downtown core, to survive they were digging up all of the house bones. As they consumed the bones of the demolished houses their bodies developed into high-rise buildings, and they expanded and replaced the houses."²

² From *Mittenism and the Quest for Empathy* (p. 18).



Katie Ohe

Katie Ohe is a renowned artist and educator, best known for her abstract and kinetic sculptures. She was one of the first artists to make abstract sculpture in Alberta and has spent over six decades experimenting with ways to rise above familiar heavy and static forms to achieve a sense of weightlessness, dynamism, fluidity and optical confusion. Her innovative approaches to material, form and movement have influenced a generation of artists in Canada, and she has singlehandedly made a significant contribution to the development of contemporary art in Alberta.

“I grew up on a mixed farm: cows, horses, chickens, dogs, cats... animals were my childhood companions. I could ride one or two of the horses bareback, Joe and Fanny. I was fascinated by the idea that horses could dream of their braided tails and manes (to this day I do not know if there is truth to that). We always had two dogs for cattle herding, however, they were natural companions for my brother and I. We had a house cat and barn cats. I was instructed not to be too cat friendly with the barn cats, as it could endanger their lives to become too trusting, too tame, but I was cat friendly anyways. I never knew to have a chicken pet. My brother and I enjoyed having pet crows and magpies and to this day I feed them and call to them. Cats I enjoyed as pets in later life.”

Email to the curator
March 27, 2021



Karen Pedlar

No available information.



Trig Singer

Trig Singer was born and worked in Edmonton for many years before moving to Vancouver where he still resides and works as an artist and in film.

“I had a dog growing up, but when in Poland in 1973, I came across this girl on her three-wheel bike. Everything seemed so grey there. There was a tremendous amount of damage, still from the war, the politic and the people seemed so beaten down. There, this girl seemed to fit in with time. Her little dog on its leash, a victim, I could only imagine, of the girls cycling skills and the wanting to have the dog close made for this disaster of love.”

Email to the curator
April 11, 2021

Ferdinando Spina

Fred currently has two dogs, Freya, named after the Norse goddess, and Louis, after the American trumpeter and vocalist Louis Armstrong.

Phone conversation with the curator
March 21, 2021

Ferdinando (Fred) Spina is an artist, poet and writer who lives in balance between his career as a social worker and his passion for art and creative expression. Spina's paintings are ambiguous and mysterious. His murals and sculptures are whimsical works that explore the contradiction between the vastness of space inherent in the Western Canadian landscape and ideas of solitude and loneliness. The figures he portrays are almost always placed in situations of isolation, where the relationship between space and figure are most accentuated.

Spina is largely self-taught. He began to draw and paint while working towards a degree in Psychology and Social Work. His most recent paintings have been inspired by the Kitikmeot Region in the Canadian Arctic, where he works with children as a social counsellor and art therapist.



Ken Swan

Edmonton born artist Ken Swan began drawing at the age of four. His artistic career blossomed thanks to the early encouragement of teachers who recognized his talent and potential. He worked primarily in pen and ink sketches but branched into wood sculptures and watercolour paintings as well. His work often featured characters he observed or envisioned.

Swan lived at Enoch Cree Nation, west of Edmonton, for 13 years before moving to St Paul, Alberta, where he freelanced as a graphic artist and cartoonist for the St Paul Journal. He studied life drawing at Vermillion College, and later enrolled as a student in the drawing program at the then Alberta College of Art in Calgary.



Education Guide

*Lesson Plans by
Jenn Demke-Laing*



CREATIVE SIDEKICK

beginner



OVERVIEW

Our companion animals are like hero sidekicks. They provide emotional support, protect us, alert us and support our overall well-being. Best of all, we mutually benefit from the relationship. If we think about all the characteristics that our animal companions have, some of them are qualities that we consider to be inherently human — trustworthy, kind, intelligent, protective and loving.

In this exercise, participants will use creative prompts to create their own one-of-a-kind animal sidekick. We will brainstorm animal and human characteristics, both outlandish and everyday items, plus descriptive actions in order to develop our creative prompts. These prompts, chosen at random, will help force us into new territory — expanding our creativity and imagining our companion animals as fantastical, out of this world sidekicks.



OBJECTIVES

Participants will:

- *Use prompts to direct, exercise and develop spontaneous creativity.*
- *Translate written words into visual renderings.*
- *Create an illustrated character.*

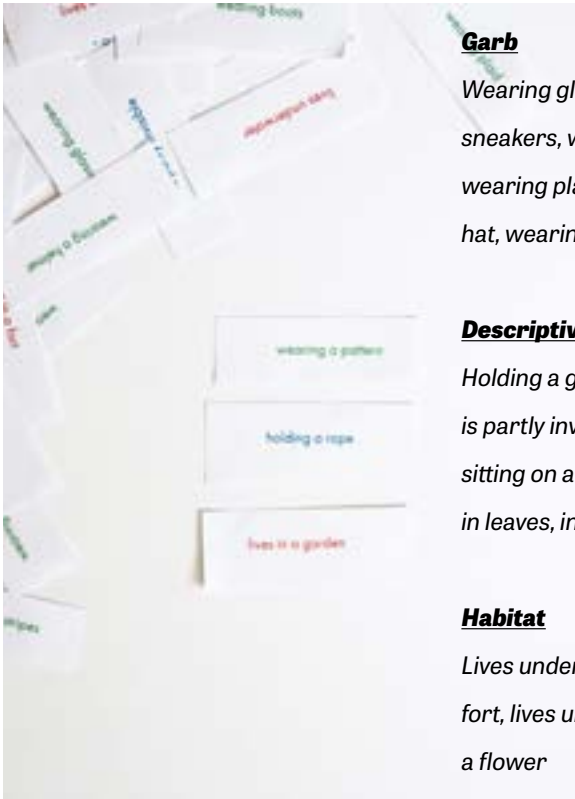
MATERIALS

- *Paper*
- *Scissors*
- *Pencil*
- *Eraser*
- *Colouring material of your choice*



STEP ONE

Begin by creating your prompts. You may use the prompts listed below or you can brainstorm your own that fit into distinct categories such as garb, descriptive phrases, habitats, props etc. Choose three categories and write ten items in each category.



Garb

Wearing glasses, wearing a vest, wearing a helmet, wearing sneakers, wearing a crown, wearing an oversized sweater, wearing plaid, wearing a watch, wearing stripes, wearing a hat, wearing a pattern, wearing boots, wearing leopard spots

Descriptive Phrases

Holding a golden treasure, has a map, has a walking stick, is partly invisible, singing a bewitching song, holding a rope, sitting on a rock, holding binoculars, carrying a bag, covered in leaves, in a disguise

Habitat

Lives underground, lives in a tree, lives in a garden, lives in a fort, lives underwater, lives in a cave, lives in a shell, lives under a flower

Variations: Older participants can participate in the development of these prompts whereas younger participants can use prompts that have already been created for them.

STEP TWO

Cut strips of paper into smaller pieces. Write your creative prompts onto the small strips. Write each category in its own coloured marker or pen so you can easily sort and separate the different categories.

STEP THREE

Have each participant choose their animal sidekick that they wish to begin working from. They may choose a dog, cat or horse, similar to the companion animals depicted in the exhibition, or perhaps another animal that they feel a companionship to such as a bird, hamster, goat etc.

During this process we will be anthropomorphizing our sidekicks through the prompts that we are using to build their character. Participants can determine how much of their character they wish to remain animal characteristics and what becomes more human. If we look at the way animal characters are often anthropomorphized in illustrated books or animated films, we can see that they may have the head of a cat and a tail, but walk upright on two legs and wear clothing.

STEP FOUR

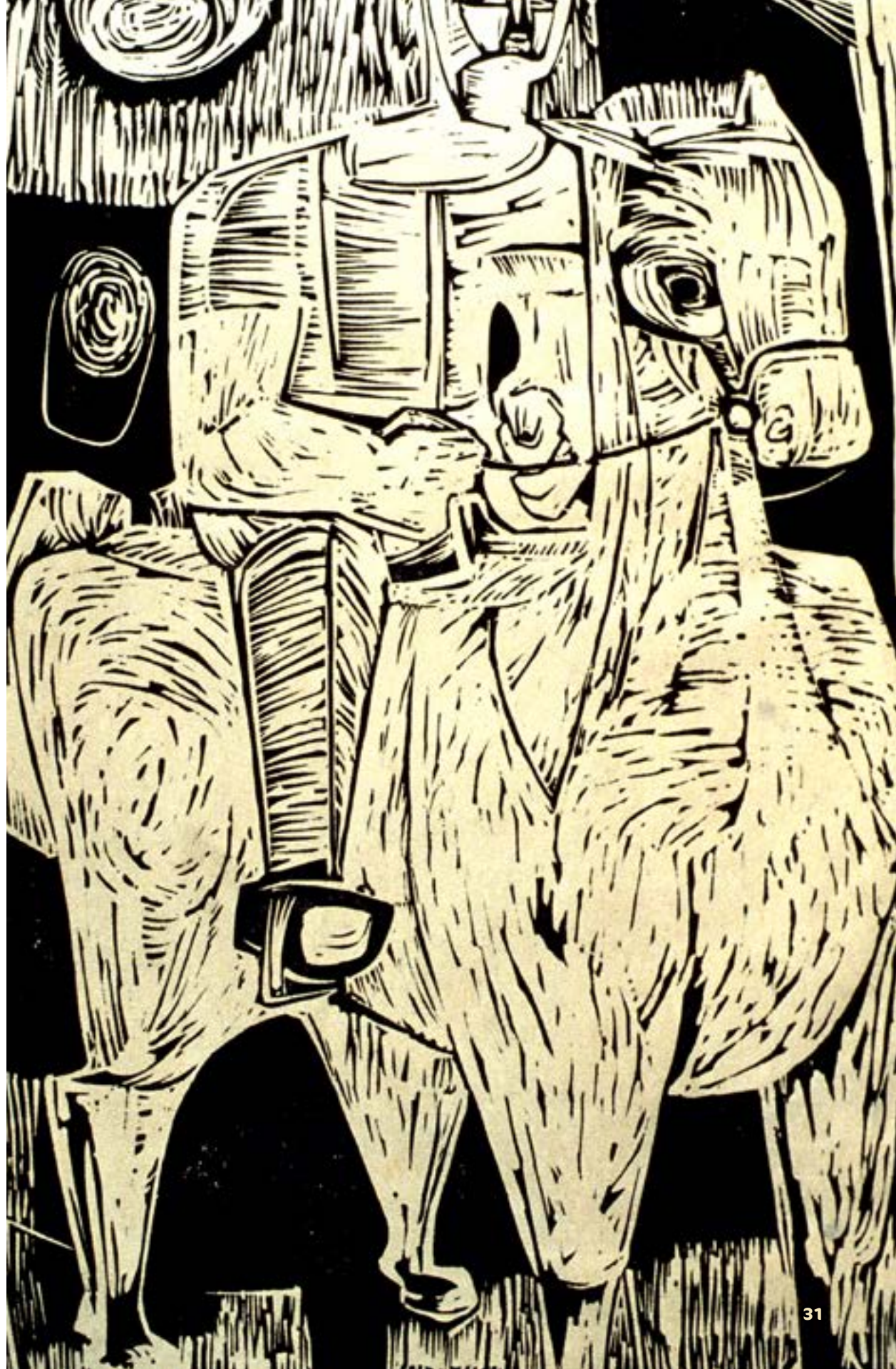
Have participants choose one slip of paper at random from each category, recording their selection and returning the paper back into the category pile for the next participant to choose from.

STEP FIVE

On a fresh sheet of paper, use your pencil to sketch or draw your sidekick following your chosen prompts. Complete your sidekick character by colouring it using your material of choice ie. ink, coloured pencils, crayons, markers or watercolours.

right
Katie Ohe
Rider
(detail)
n.d.





STORY MIND MAP

intermediate





OVERVIEW

After viewing the works in Companion Species, we can reflect upon the types of relationships that we have with animals and how much they are a part of our everyday lives, not only as members of our moral community, but also in all the ways these relationships are reflected in our culture — especially through literary and oral storytelling. The artworks in Companion Species can also be interpreted as a means of storytelling. They set a scene, depict characters and also set a mood. It is up to us as the viewer to determine where the story will lead, or perhaps what came before.

Many forms of storytelling commonly use animals as characters and some stories are even written from the animal's point of view. This allows access to viewpoints that humans do not have which can make for very creative storytelling! Before we begin writing a story, we can organize all the wonderful and strange ideas we have floating around inside our heads and write them down on paper.

In this creative brainstorming activity, participants will select a work of art from the exhibition to use as a visual prompt to build their own story mind map. They will examine and interpret all of the details in the artwork to inspire their story, focusing on the companion animal(s) depicted as the main character(s) and create a fun and visually engaging mind map to record and plot all of their ideas.

MATERIALS

- Blank paper
- Pencil
- Eraser
- Coloured markers
- Pencil crayons

OBJECTIVES

Participants will:

- Learn how to capture ideas creatively in a mind map.
- Organize details and structures needed to build a short story.
- Interpret a work of art to inspire written word.

STEP ONE

Have each participant select a work of art from the exhibition that they would like to use as a visual prompt to inspire their story. Sit in front of the selected artwork with a piece of paper to begin brainstorming. Take the time to carefully examine all of the details in the artwork to provide you with the information needed to inspire and build a story.

STEP TWO

Start building your mind map by writing down all of the ideas and details you have floating around your head from looking at the artwork. Focus on the animal(s) depicted as they will be the main character(s) of your story. You will use your mind map to help organize all of your ideas. Where does the story take place? What came before? What is the weather like? What happens next? You can describe smells, colours, textures and sounds. Will you include dialogue, is someone speaking, what's happening? Who are your main characters? Is the story being told from the animal's point of view?

STEP THREE

Be creative with your mapping process and think of all the different ways you could visually capture your ideas. Use coloured drawing materials to help organize and illustrate your mind map.

You can look up 'illustrated maps' online to inspire you and see if you can creatively translate some ideas into a mind map. Does your map look like an actual map — does it have 'roads' connecting your ideas? Is your story an adventure and your map drawn like a treasure map — with a "start", obstacles along the way and an 'X' marking your story's conclusion? Maybe it looks like the inside of your head — where all your ideas are coming from!

Maybe you are directly inspired by your chosen artwork, such as Vivian Lindoe's Tree Cats, and create a tree mind map with branches connecting your ideas and leaves holding all the details.

STEP FOUR

After your mind map is complete you can begin writing your story! Or, keep your mind map and file it away until you are inspired and ready to finish.

Variations: Older participants can add more literary structures and complex devices to branches of their mind maps. Younger participants can use the artwork as a visual prompt to tell a very short oral story. You can provide them with simple starter storytelling language to help them begin: "Suddenly...", "One day...", "The next thing that happened was..." etc.



COMPANION PORTRAIT

advanced



OVERVIEW

In Companion Species we see a diverse approach to the methods and materials used by the featured artists to create their works. If we were to examine each artist's career, we would see that it is common for an artist to use a range of methods and materials within their artistic practice and through the span of their career. Each artist is selective and intentional about what materials they will use to render an idea. Every material brings something unique to the creative process and can influence how an artist works and how the finished artwork is perceived.

Within this collective of artists, four works of art were created using watercolour. Watercolour is a unique medium that uses light filled areas and richly coloured dark transparencies that can often produce spontaneous and intuitive effects. If you

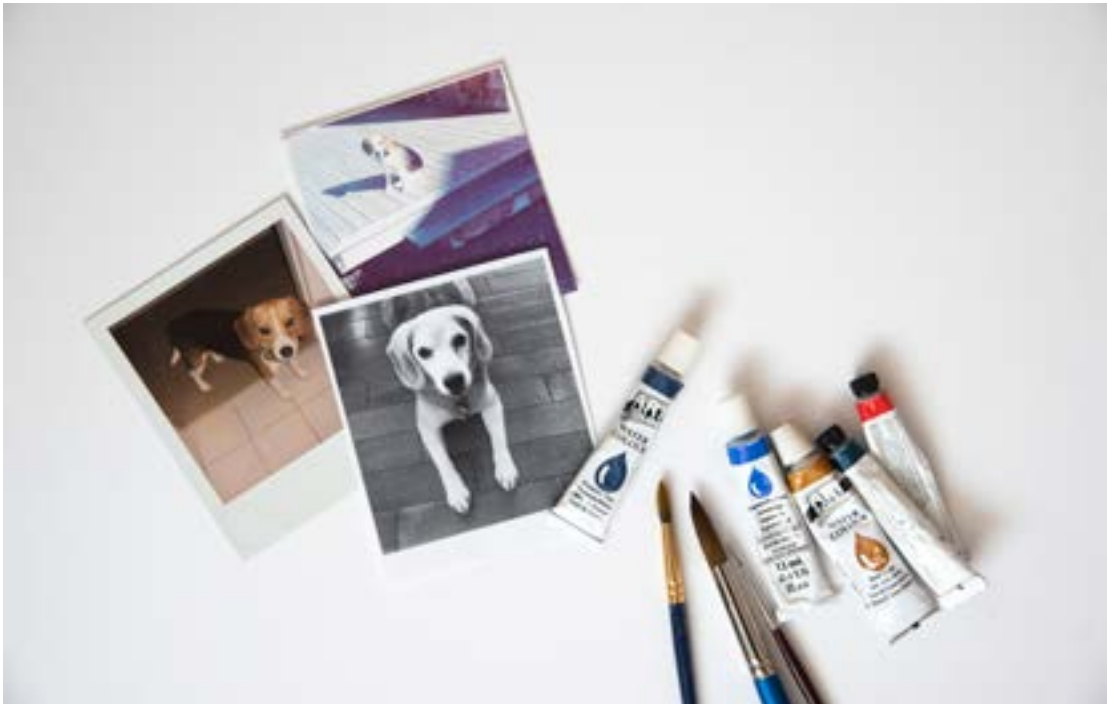
examine the specific watercolour works in the exhibition, observe how light is created — not by using white paint as in other painting techniques, but rather by using the white of the paper and transparencies. Negative watercolour painting is a technique that focuses on this unique aspect of watercolour painting by using the unpainted surface of the paper as the main focus. Instead of painting the primary object, the surroundings are painted first, leaving the primary object free and therefore with the most amount of light, bringing it closest to the viewer.

In this exercise, participants will create an animal portrait, honouring a personal relationship with an animal companion. At the same time, they will explore negative watercolour techniques, emphasizing the medium's unique characteristic of using light to create focus and depth.



Alexandra Haeseker
Windbreak
(detail)
1982

This work was rendered with watercolour — the same material participants will use in this art project!



OBJECTIVES

Participants will:

- *Learn basic watercolour concepts of transparency, gradients and water pull.*
- *Develop a composition rich in depth.*
- *Use a personal relationship with an animal companion to inspire an idea.*
- *Use fine motor skills and precision to learn a complex watercolour technique.*

MATERIALS

- *Good quality watercolour paper x 2*
- *Painters tape*
- *Variety of round brushes (small, medium and large)*
- *Pencil*
- *Eraser*
- *Watercolour paints*
- *Paint palette*
- *Water containers x 2*
- *Paper towel*
- *Reference images of your companion animal*

STEP ONE

For participants who have never worked with watercolour, you can complete this first quick exercise and learn how to create gradients in watercolour. This will help set up our palette for the main project.

Begin with a sheet of watercolour paper. Draw four squares with a pencil. Select one watercolour pigment and place a small amount on your palette. Fill one small palette reservoir with clean water. Using a paintbrush, pick up a very small amount of your selected watercolour pigment and mix it into the water in your palette. Mix well and load your brush. Fill the first square on your paper, pulling the watercolour inside the shape. Make sure to keep a generous bead of water flowing on the paper and reload your brush when necessary. This first square will be your lightest tone.

Note: *Work with two water containers. One for clean water only and the other for washing your brushes. This way you won't contaminate the clean water when using it to mix new tones.*

STEP TWO

To create the next gradient, fill another palette reservoir with water. Pick up a small amount of pigment and add to the water. We are trying to create a slightly darker tone than our first square by slowly adding a bit more pigment than in our first gradient. You can use the empty space on the paper below your squares to test as you are mixing. Once you are satisfied with the tone, fill the

second square, pulling the watercolour inside the shape and making sure to keep a generous bead of water again.

Note: *You don't ever want to let an edge dry that you are working on or you will see the line when it dries. Keep pulling the watercolour, always working the edges to stay wet so that you have a nice blended look.*

STEP THREE

Repeat step two until each gradient square is complete. Each subsequent square should have slightly more pigment to create a darker tone than the previous square. Once all four squares are complete, you should see a nice graduation in tone across the four squares, the first being the lightest tone and getting increasingly darker moving to the right. Your palette is now set up to create a single colour gradient to use for the project.

STEP FOUR

To begin the project, sketch some thumbnail composition ideas on scrap paper. Your animal should be the focal point so make sure it maintains the main focus. Have your reference photos in front of you to work from to help create a likeness.

STEP FIVE

Transfer your final composition to watercolour paper using pencil, lightly drawing the outline of each object. To emphasize the depth created by this watercolour technique, our background should consist of simple overlapping objects.



STEP 1-3



STEP 5-6



STEP 7



STEP 8



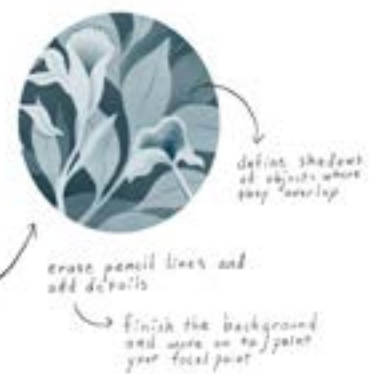
STEP 9



STEP 10



STEP 11



For example, trees, leaves, flowers, houses or geometric shapes etc. You can do an image search of “negative watercolour” online to help visualize some possibilities. Have some of the background objects overlapping one another to create more depth.

STEP SIX

Once you have finished your drawing, label each layer. It can be confusing to keep track of which objects belong in which layer once you begin painting. To make it easier for yourself, label each object identifying which ones will be furthest back and which ones will be closest. All the 1's you will leave unpainted while the 4's will be furthest back and end up darker. Your animal companion should be layer 1 and remain unpainted until the very last step.

STEP SEVEN

Once you have prepared your palette, you can begin painting. Pick one of your lightest tones and paint a wash over everything except the objects marked with 1's. Be precise when you are painting, carefully following the edge of objects in the layer that should not be painted. Otherwise, you should be intuitive and free. Add a bit darker tone in a few areas to create gradient blends within the layer. After you've finished the first layer, wait for it to dry completely.

Note: Always make sure what you are painting next to is completely dry, otherwise your tones will blend and your layers will not be well defined.

STEP EIGHT

Paint your next layer, this time leaving both the 1's and 2's untouched. You are building up the tone of the layers behind to create more depth. With each layer, you should be using slightly more pigment (a darker tone). Let dry completely.

STEP NINE

Apply the third layer, leaving the 3's, 2's and 1's untouched. Be patient, precise and careful defining your edges. Let dry.

STEP TEN

Once all your labelled layers are completed, apply paint to your final background layer. Leaving layers 4, 3, 2, and 1 untouched. Continue to work this back layer to darken it and intensify depth.

Note: You may choose to have less or more than four layers. Repeat steps until all layers are complete.

STEP ELEVEN

Go into previous layers and add your details. Add light pigment to define shadows in areas where an object may be more behind or forward. Use a fine brush to add any other details to the background objects.

STEP TWELVE

Now you are ready to paint your focal point. Set up your palette with colours of your choice and paint your animal companion. Start with a background colour and let dry. Add all remaining details. Gently erase any visible pencil lines.



right

Wally Houn

Hussar Summer Daze Parade

(detail)

1976



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////// Alberta's favourite
friends //////////////////////////////////
partners in the crime
of human evolution ////
animals were my child-
hood companions ////
I've always thoroughly
enjoyed being in the
company of all of them
////// I continue to be
fascinated by animals
of all kinds //////////////////////////////////