

Visual Arts Nova Scotia Annapolis East Regional Art Exhibit

LARGE

small
experiments with scale

LARGE/small: Experiments with Scale

The artists in this exhibition have been asked to create works that in some way address the concept of scale. But what does it mean to consider scale in art? Whereas size refers to dimension or magnitude, scale implies a relationship between one dimension and another; it refers to the network of spatial relationships that we use to create coherence and meaning in our visual experience of the world. We are always in relationship with the objects we encounter and the environments we inhabit—and we constantly monitor these relationships to decide how things “measure up.” Whether or not we are conscious of it, a sense of scale is fundamental to everything we see and determines how we assign significance and value to our visual experience.

One of the most basic ways in which we apprehend scale is in relationship to the human body. This is the “container” from which we assess the relative magnitude of the objects and spaces in the world around us. It is from the viewpoint of the human body that we construct a meaningful perspective of what we see and from which we build the network of associations that lend value to what is big or small, near or far, high or low. According to the neurobiologist Antonio Damasio,

Whatever happens in your mind happens in time and space relative to the instant in time your body is in and to the region of space occupied by your body. Things are in or out of you. . . . The stationary can be close or far or somewhere in between. Moving things may be looming toward you or moving away from you or traveling in some trajectory that misses you, but your body is the reference.¹

This “experiential perspective” allows us not only “to situate real objects” but “to situate ideas, be they concrete or abstract.” For “organisms endowed with such rich cognitive capacities,” experiential perspective becomes “a source of metaphor” and expands to include ideas and associations.² In *LARGE/small: Experiments with Scale*, artists draw on this rich network of meanings to demonstrate how scale—and distortions of scale—can intensify or change the significance of what we see.

1 Antonio Damasio, *The Feeling of What Happens: Body and Emotion in the Making of Consciousness* (New York: Harcourt, 1999) 145.

2 Damasio 145

For Nistal Prem de Boer, the human figure is the predominant reference point and a source of continuing fascination. In *Birth of a Woman*, the female form appears as both woman and embryo. By presenting the figure in the larger wax form and the small bronze, de Boer creates an interaction in which scale becomes an element in the paradoxical relationship between container and contained. For Barbara Kaiser, the representation of the human body becomes a means of exploring her own perceptions of scale and volume. Immersed in the drawing process itself, Kaiser creates images that emerge in symbiosis with her own perceptions and gestures.

In Terry Drahos’s large canvases, small, shadowy figures float in the expansive colour fields they inhabit. Almost but never quite absorbed into the abstract ground of the paintings, the tiny human figures drift somewhere between absence and presence.

In a different vein but also referring to the human element, Candice Dunn’s portraits are deliberately intimate in scale, inviting the viewer to study them more closely.



Enlargement of scale is an effective strategy for prompting awareness, and a number of artists have enlarged their images to push us beyond our habitual perspectives. In her monumental drawings, Muriel Zimmer honours the beauty of the forms we normally perceive as “common or garden” fruits and vegetables. By reiterating her subjects in clay relief, Zimmer creates a memorial to these living forms. Also playing on the large scale, Deborah Nicholson’s Frejya 4x4 is an outsize portrait of a dog whose steadfast dignity is highlighted by the sheer size of the image and the warmth of the colours. Frejya is the very image of what we love in dogs; but the abstracted, flat colour fields of the digitally manipulated photograph remind us that we are dealing with a representation, perhaps of our own projections. In Judith Leidl’s work, Atlantic Seascape, scale functions more directly. Here the size of the painting is meant to evoke the vastness of the sea and the richness of the life it contains.

When enlargement becomes exaggeration, there is often humour involved. Reminiscent of Claes Oldenburg’s giant Pop sculptures, Nistal Prem de Boer’s supersized Banana is a tongue-in-cheek reference to Canada Creek, his home community, dubbed “Banana Creek” because of its population of creative eccentrics. Taking the name to heart, de Boer has created a playful monument to that very eccentricity. In another whimsical treatment of scale, Bob Hainstock has associated large and small with that figure of comic distortion—the clown. Maybe the clowns in Two Fishermen’s Tales are not “right sized,” but they don’t seem to be too worried about it. They’ve gone fishing. And in Konrad Wendt’s witty Einstein’s Secret, girth becomes entirely relative. For some artists, “scaling up” involves a highlighting of certain ideas and associations. Pia Skaarer-Nielssen’s weaving of large, tumbling acorns is a reference to the story of Chicken Little who was hit on the head by an acorn and assumed that the sky was falling. For Skaarer-Nielsen, though, the sky is falling because the natural order is now threatened by our irresponsible plundering, a dangerous situation that is clear and present to a weaver who works with natural fibres and whose farm keeps her close to natural processes.

Works that enlarge the small can also focus attention and invite contemplation. Dawn Block, for instance, uses close-ups to make us pause and pay attention to events and details that would otherwise pass unnoticed: two grasshoppers mating and a delicate, fallen feather.



In the work of other artists, enlarging the small becomes an effective means to address issues of gender. For Yvette Davison, the thimble has many associations, including its traditional association with “women’s work.” But in Davison’s painting, The Great Re-evaluation, a small thimble has been transformed into something much weightier—a monumental form that casts a long shadow. Here the thimble has been translated into an object that dignifies and lends significance to the often-denigrated “small tasks” traditionally undertaken by women.

In her installation, Gender Position, Pam Frail also works with gender associations. The earring, created from a hyperbola devised by a female mathematician, fuses adornment and intellect, refuting assumptions about male intelligence and female “decoration.” Frail takes this idea one step further, however, by translating the small, delicate silver earring into a large knotted sculpture made of industrial material, affirming the weight and significance of both female work and female intelligence.

Sometimes the play of large and small refers to otherwise hidden histories and ideologies. Elinor Whidden’s performance, in which she dismantles cars and transforms their components into snowshoes and

backpacks, creates complex intersection of meanings. By carrying the car on her body, Whidden inverts the normal relationship between automobile and human, and in her epic trek across the sublime landscape of the Rockies she also deflates notions of the heroic history of the West, substituting her small, female self for the male heroes of the Western frontier. In Ulrike Walker's installation, a small, cheap souvenir made in occupied Japan also becomes a complex of historical references, including a link between a picturesque tourist location in Nova Scotia and the dropping of the atomic bomb on Hiroshima, an instance of the smallest element (the atom) being used to unleash destruction on an unimaginable scale.

Perspective can also function as a means of undoing our normal perception of spatial relationships. David Rimmington, for instance, includes an elephant and a mouse within the same frame, but here the mouse is larger than the elephant, a surprising and amusing reversal of the expected relationship between a tiny creature and a large one, perhaps a reference to a possible reversal in the relationship between the large and the small, the weak and the strong, the child and the adult.

In Geri Nolan-Hilfiker's pinhole photograph, perspective plays a significant role in creating unexpected relationships between what seems large and what seems small. "Seeming" is the operative word here, because the effect of the perspective is to enlarge the pebbles and pieces of ice in the foreground so that they loom much larger than the iceberg in the distance, making them equally consequential signifiers in the Icelandic landscape.

For photographer Richard Groot, perspective becomes a conscious exercise in how we perceive (or misperceive) scale. His image of the Alhambra exaggerates, through perspective, the massive scale of the monumental building. In a second image, that massiveness shrinks to the size of a keyhole. The photograph of the ice cave leaves us in ambiguous territory because we are given no reference as to the actual scale of what we are seeing. Perspective is also significant in Ernest Cadegan's image of seagulls in the sky. To address the gulls' relationship to that vast, blue space, and to determine how distant they are from us, we must have an "experiential perspective" of a seagull—its size, dimension, and weight.

The surreal, dreamlike quality of David MacNeil's painting arises out of the unexpected arrangement of elements within the picture frame and the foregrounding of the seemingly massive red-white-and-blue ball. Reminiscent of innocent childhood games, the ball acts

as a visual contradiction: simultaneously a plaything and a looming threat to the small nude figure looking through the doorway. Also playing on perspective, Rachel Reeve's *The Presence of Flowers* refers to our "window on the world." But here, in place of the vista we expect, we are presented with a window full of flowers. As Reeve puts it, "the subject is no longer 'out there' but immediate and close."

Although enlargement of scale and distortion of perspective are techniques that effectively elicit meaning, the detail and the small scale are also significant for two of the artists. In her silk fusion pieces, Marilyn Rand presents us with a grand vista and a detail of the same scene, an arrangement that lets us see the "big picture" and the close-up simultaneously. In Marie Jardine's little landscapes, a normally large-scale subject becomes miniaturized, suggesting a pocket universe where small things can contain worlds.

Scale, however, is not confined to a relationship between physical dimensions; it can also refer to relationships based on ideas and values. Angela Melanson's *Rabbit*, for instance, refers to the relative symbolic "size" of this animal. Like the rabbit, we are often fearful and timid when facing what seems big and threatening; but this is an important aspect of being human, something that we should accept and even celebrate, as Melanson does in her large-scale painting.

For Kathleen Hull, scale becomes a matter of choice. In her quilted piece, *Small Choices*, she forgoes the "big choice" in favour of an accumulation of small choices through which she composes and builds up her pieces, a process that continues as viewers are invited to make further choices in rearranging the components.

In Ron Hayes's installation, *Everything Must Go*, size and volume, inside and outside—the material dimensions of art, in fact—are related to ideas about art. For Hayes, the container that holds both the viewer and the viewed becomes a vehicle for reflection on the significance of art itself.

As the works in this exhibition demonstrate, the concept of scale can be played out in a wide variety of images, objects, and approaches. *LARGE/small: Experiments in Scale* is a testament not only to the creative resourcefulness of the artists involved but also to the fundamental importance of scale in how we interpret the visual world we inhabit.

Ulrike Walker

Dawn Block
Ernest Cadegan
Yvette Davidson
Terry Drahos
Candice Dunn
Pam Frail
Richard Groot
Bob Hainstock
Ron Hayes
CMK Hull
Marie Jardine
Barbara Kaiser
Judith Leidl
David MacNeil
Angela Melanson
Deborah Nicholson
Pia Skaarer-Nielsen
Geri Nolan Hilfiker
Nistal Prem de Boer
Marilyn Rand
Rachel Reeve
David Rimmington
Ulrike Walker
Konrad Wendt
Elinor Whidden
Muriel Zimmer



Dawn Block

Dawn is primarily a self-taught artist who studied art in high school and then proceeded to work on her own. She has been photographing for ten years. This is Dawn's first exhibit and it celebrates an auspicious start to her career as a visual artist.

ARTIST STATEMENT

Dawn works in photography. She finds her subject matter intuitively and by chance. Often she finds her focus on the ground, on its surface and shape, and in the various habitats that thrive there. With her photography, Dawn aims to bring attention to the subtle but profound aspects of the natural world that often go unnoticed; she is known to see worlds that others never see. For Dawn, taking a photo is an act of appreciation for the one who created these intricate worlds.

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Ernest Cadegan

Ernest Cadegan was born into a large family in 1949 in the town of Glace Bay, NS.

He holds a BSc in biology from St. Francis Xavier University and an MBA from Saint Mary's University.

He joined the NS Department of Fisheries in 1970 and moved through a succession of positions. He left in late 1979 and began working with a series of fish processing companies, including the family business, Highland Fisheries in Glace Bay, where he eventually became president. His family sold that business in 1987. In the nineties, he wrote a weekly column for the Halifax Daily News.

Ernest began photographing in the early seventies but set this aside as his career became busy. In the early nineties, Ernest picked up a camera again. In 1995 he became involved with Miksang, which is a Buddhist approach to photography. He practiced that for about three years.

Ernest and his family moved from Halifax to the Canning area in 2002. From 2004, he became serious about selling his work and has worked to make it more available to the public.

ARTIST STATEMENT

I more or less practice the photography of place and, for the most part, I photograph what I see in the ordinary course of my life.

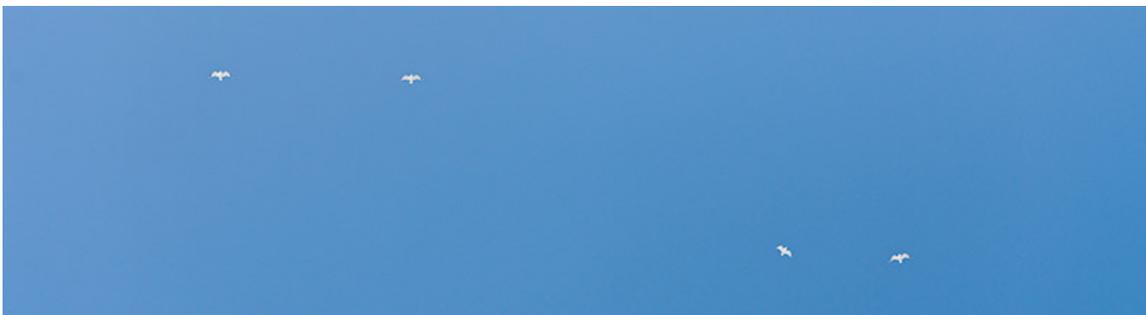
In the city, I made the majority of my photographs during my trek to downtown Halifax for my daily coffee. Now I make them on my regular drive from Canning to Wolfville, where I now have my daily coffee. You see different things during those two very dissimilar types of outings.

Previously I would describe my images as being urban abstracts. I rarely did landscape. It came as no surprise to me, though, when we moved from Halifax to the Annapolis Valley in 2002 that landscape began to figure more prominently in what I would see. It dominates my work now.

What I didn't anticipate was how important the infusion of critters into my landscapes would become for me. My best images project a feeling of being unrepeatable and, more often than not, those images include some sort of critter.

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Yvette Davison

Born, raised and educated in the Annapolis Valley, Nova Scotia, I learned to paint after moving to the United States. Not long afterwards, I sold two of my first three paintings. Several years later, still fascinated with the process of expressing a concept or image in a two-dimensional way I continued with painting.

I then took a hiatus from painting and pursued another path. It was not long before I learned that life has a way of pulling one back to the things that bring out our passion, and if we are fortunate enough, we will listen and take heed. I took that leap and have not looked back

ARTIST STATEMENT

Why an object or concept compels one to paint it is often discovered (or hinted at) only near completion of the piece. It is more than just a painting or a collage. Art is often a combined working of the subconscious, awareness, resolution, and personal growth. It is most rewarding when the work evokes a strong reaction in both the artist and the viewer. Themes of my art are usually focused on social issues that make up an important part of the fabric of our life.

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Terry Drahos

Originally from Chicago, Terry Havlis Drahos relocated to Atlanta after finishing a degree in design at Southern Illinois University. In 2001, Drahos moved to Wolfville, Nova Scotia. In 2006, Drahos finished her education degree, specializing in art and technology education. She is currently on the board of directors of VANS and is chairperson of AKA.

Drahos's approach to art is unpremeditated and spontaneous, often exploring social identity and perceptions. Known for her paintings, she sometimes works in other media. Her installation, *Assumptions* (2007), was shown at ARTsPlace in Annapolis Royal. With two other artists, she has also been involved in guerrilla sculptural work, anonymously placing a series of sculptures throughout Wolfville over a fifteen-month period. Drahos directed the first annual Uncommon Common Art Project for the Alliance of Kings Artists (AKA) in 2008. This six-month project brought together eleven artists to create environmental art installations throughout the Annapolis Valley. She is presently directing the 2009 project.

In February 2009, she had a solo exhibition of her paintings at the Craig Gallery in Dartmouth. Drahos's paintings can be seen at Secord Gallery in Halifax and at Harvest Gallery in Wolfville.

ARTIST STATEMENT

My paintings are initially about pictorial space. I begin by using the layering of transparent and opaque colors within a geometric structure, which creates order so the figure is not lost in an endless void. I want to create an environment that the viewer can fall into, and I leave it up to the viewer to see the work as abstract or concrete, positive or negative. This is an environment that has boundaries, but the indeterminacy of the small figures and their relationship to the ground they float in create possibilities for narrative that the viewer is free to create.

The floating figures are derived from an earlier work, *Assumptions*, which consisted of a series of bottles, each with a tiny human figure frozen in clear liquid. I found the figure, seen through the depth of the liquid, to be appealing both aesthetically and emotionally. This imagery became the subject for my subsequent paintings. The paintings translate medium and scale from three-inch glass and acrylic bottles to four-foot square paintings; but they maintain the sometimes elusive small figure floating immersed in its environment.



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Deborah Nicholson

Candice Dunn

Candice Dunn lives in the rural community of Lower Canard, Nova Scotia, and works in her studio in an old barn adjacent to her house. She was born in Nova Scotia but lived for twelve years in Toronto prior to moving back to the Annapolis Valley in 1989. She studied fine arts at the Ontario College of Art from 1985 to 1989. She was awarded the George A. Reid award in 1988 and the Eric Freifeld award in 1989.

Candice works in various media. Recent mixed media works have elements of collage, metal foil, acrylic, acrylic transfers, and digital imagery. Her painting style has varied from representational to abstract. The female figure is often present in her work, and images are based on sketches done during sittings with favourite models or imagined figures with some abstraction of the backgrounds using pattern and texture.

Candice has run several Grow with Art workshops for children at Acadia University in Wolfville and various other community-based programs.

ARTIST STATEMENT

After nearly thirty years of painting I am still drawn to the figure as a subject and especially the female figure. Faces are also a continuing attraction. The two paintings in this exhibition are fairly small in scale. My decision to keep their dimensions small was to invite the viewer closer to study the painting and therefore have a more intimate interaction. I used colour, pattern and texture as a design tool to encourage the viewer's eye to move around the image.

These paintings are painted on a smooth surface that I have covered with a medium (gesso on paper or board) that allows the paint to be lifted and moved around easily. The gesso also creates a texture that shows through the layers of paint. I like the contrast of the matte surface of gouache and the translucent qualities and transparent layers of watercolour. I almost always use line as an important part of any image that I paint.

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Deborah Nicholson

Pam Frail

Pam Frail sees lines of wire or yarn, threads or leather, ropes or grasses and turns them into circles using the technique of crochet. The connected /crocheted loops become jewellery or sculpture for adornment or accessory. This craft, self taught and honed through the past ten years, has opened many avenues for exploration.

She broadens her education by taking courses in corresponding mediums so her work can stay inspired and fresh. Recent courses have been enamelling at NSCCD with Ayelet Stewart, and Living Sculpture with Dawn MacNutt. Pam has received awards from the Metal Arts Guild of NS for works submitted to their annual show and competition in 2007 and 2008.

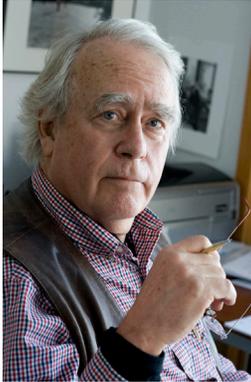
ARTIST STATEMENT

Crocheting is generally viewed as a domestic feminine craft. Daina Damiana, female mathematician, discovered crochet was the best way to express the mathematical model of a hyperbola in 1998. I have used the technique of crochet to explore, embody and express the juxtaposition of our internal masculine and feminine feelings. Each change of medium; fiber to metal to industrial rope, each change of scale and change of purpose has a gender association.

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Deborah Nicholson

Richard Groot

In 2002 I started as a serious amateur photographer in Wolfville, working in loosely defined contexts such as portrait documentaries, industrial archeology, and street photography. I have exhibited these themes in ViewPoint Gallery, Halifax, and ArtCan Gallery in Canning (both exhibitions of Come from Away: Artists and Artisans of Minas Basin, 2004 and 2005 respectively). My photographs were also shown at Anderson, in Lunenburg (Streets of Cuba in 2006 as a solo show and Dutch Eyes on Industry in 2005 with Mariette Roodenburg), and at Fototeca de Cuba in Havana (Prosperidades Pasadas, 2007, with Ricardo Elias). I also have an open-ended project called Tidescapes, a photographic series of the Bay of Fundy.

A solo show, Iberian Bricks and Boards, is planned for August, 2009, at ViewPoint Gallery, and I shall also participate in the five-year retrospective at Anderson in that month. A book of photography with poetry by the Dutch poet, Onno Kesters, An Anatomy of Silt will be published in 2010. A sample of four poems and six photographs from this work was recently published in a major literary magazine, De Revisor, in the Netherlands.

ARTIST STATEMENT

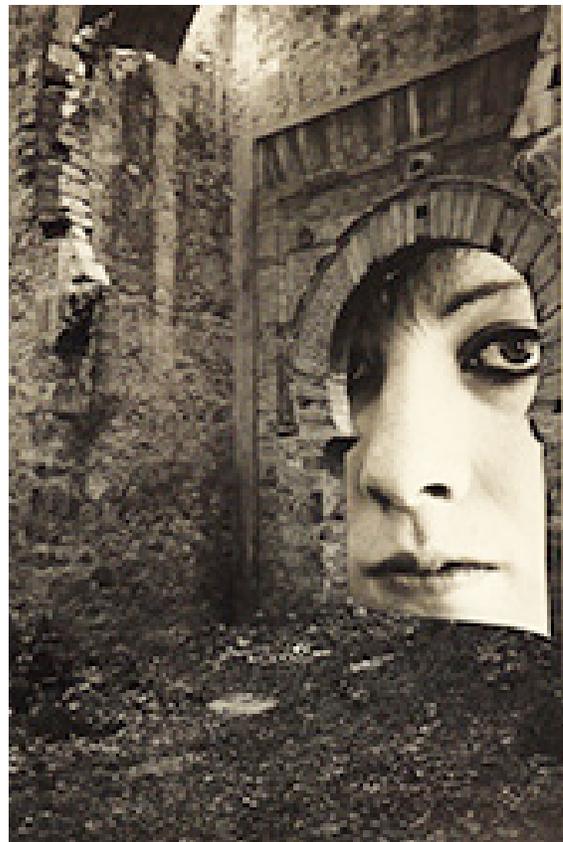
Scale is used deliberately in making photographic images to emphasize or de-emphasize certain dimensional aspects of the subject. For example, short people are usually photographed with a low camera position. Tilting the camera upwards and not correcting the resulting converging vertical lines in the printing stage exaggerate the size of buildings. Often the effect is created by the application of wide-angle lenses. Another technique to achieve playful or disturbing effects is to combine two or more photographs, including different sized subjects in a collage.

For the purpose of this show, I have used three examples of these various techniques. One, Spy, is a visually disruptive collage of a portrait and an architectural image. The second image is called Ice Cave. I believe the viewer's reaction to this photograph is to ask: "How big is this unwelcoming cavern?" The third image is one that exaggerates the size of the towers of the Alhambra castle.

All images are inkjet prints from scanned black and white negatives.

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Bob Hainstock

Bob Hainstock has worked in Atlantic Canada and Western Canada as an artist and journalist for almost four decades. A graduate of the Nova Scotia College of Art and Design, he is a full-time printmaker and painter, and part-time art instructor in schools, universities, and private workshops throughout the Atlantic region.

Hainstock's work frequently explores the increasing contrasts between a shrinking rural culture and swelling urban cultures, and between natural and human-made environments. Bob Hainstock is an award-winning author and illustrator of a best-selling book on rural architectural heritage. He is also an award-winning journalist distinguished for his news stories, feature articles, and photography of rural life. His studio practices include a full range of painting and printmaking techniques as well as mixed media and sculpture from natural materials. His work is represented in various galleries in Canada and the United States and in many corporate and public collections.

ARTIST STATEMENT

Size is important to you. Go ahead and admit it. Size lets you compare and contrast things, both physical and emotional. It offers an obvious scale for the economics of place or environment. It suggests a more subtle scale for individual strength or character. In the extreme states of large and small, human size becomes comical or even tragic. We use disguise and bright color as diversion.

We often measure the non-physical with reference to size. Whether it's your ambitions, your emotions, or your creativity, you should know that they only seem to come in two sizes: large and small. When was the last time someone suggested you had "average" ambition. And since when did ideas come in sizes other than small and large? Artists, too, like their big canvases. It makes their visual statements seem LARGE and more important.

But there is good news. Small cannot exist without a larger comparison, and large cannot exist without a smaller reference point. In the absence of one or the other, everything becomes average or beige. And sometimes we try to get away from it all. Maybe do a little fishing with a close buddy and perhaps tell a fish story or two.

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Deborah Nicholson

Ron Hayes, MA

Ron graduated from Central Technical School in Toronto in 1976. He worked there as a graphic designer and picture framer while pursuing his painting career. In the 1990s he returned to school to study expressive arts therapy. For seven years, he worked with groups of other artists in various disciplines in Toronto, New York, and Switzerland. He completed a master's degree in 1999. Body movement, music, writing, and theatre have opened Ron's work to new ways of making, seeing, and responding to images.

Ron has taught at Acadia University and offers art workshops in his studio in Canning. His work is on display at ArtCan Gallery and Cafe in Canning and at Harvest Gallery in Wolfville, Nova Scotia.

ARTIST STATEMENT

When considering the possibilities of the theme "large and small," I started by reviewing my studio work. *Everything Must Go*, the piece for this show that developed from this effort, is a sharing of my working process and, at the same time, an attempt to find connections to this theme of scale. There is the physical scale from large to small, of course; but there is also the way we weigh ideas. We all have a scale within us that we continuously use to make judgments

Everything Must Go is both painting and sculpture. I have included found objects and found text with various landscape studies and experimental paintings. The doors carry symbolic meaning as well. Viewers can physically enter the work and be seen through the door windows. This puts them on view. They then become part of the art. There is a space inside with more to be discovered for those willing to enter. Studio work is a battle of choices between the acceptance and rejection of each idea. *Everything Must Go* is a response to this situation. There is no escape.

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Catherine Jamison

Kathleen Hull

Kathleen was apprenticed in needlework at an early age to three generations of Hull and Morrison women. She was introduced to theatre costume while studying at Acadia University and continued designing and building costumes for professional and university theatres for many years in Manitoba. In 1990 she turned her needle towards traditional quilting, combining it with storytelling techniques to create coded visual narratives of women's lives in literature and personal history. Currently she is working on designs for a series of sculptural quilts, exploring the story of place and time. In an attempt to turn her inherited collector gene to good use, she creates jewellery from old and recycled buttons and seeks to give new life to other people's unfinished needlework projects. She is the recipient of a Canada Council creation award and her work is in private collections from Manitoba to Nova Scotia. Her non-fabric work is as an arts consultant.

ARTIST STATEMENT

This work, *Small Choices*, consists of eighteen 10" x 10" quilted cotton modules that are machine pieced, machine and hand quilted, embroidered and embellished.

Our lives are built on choices. We attend to and ponder the large choices that we consider to be life changing. Our small, daily choices often seem insignificant in comparison; but what happens when we add up the small choices? When do they begin to amass to create a large impact? When does one small choice change the direction of our lives?

This piece started with my scrap bag, remnants of past projects, past choices. After quickly sorting the scraps into colour groupings, I randomly sewed them together to create the individual panels. Each subsequent design choice grew out of previous choices, but without conscious predetermination of the next choice. The machine quilting is a tile from the quilt pattern *Whirligig* or *Whirlwind*, invoking changing directions. The nine sculptural units are not fixed into a final form. Feel free to stack and re-arrange. It's your choice.



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Deborah Nicholson

Marie Jardine

Copper. It is very exciting to work with a material that can be bent and shaped easily, folded and hammered into almost anything. Not only that, it can be coloured without using toxic chemicals and paints, colours that can be layered to produce vibrant and natural effects, not to mention adding the colours of other metals as well. Plus, I can find the copper in scrap yards instead of always buying it from a factory! I am inspired just by the material itself.

ARTIST STATEMENT

These works, Patinated Paintings: Little Landscapes, are a departure from the realistic plant life I usually do. I wanted to experiment with "marriage of metal" techniques to produce work that is more abstract, more painterly. I also usually work on giant scale, so I thought I would do the opposite for this show.

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Deborah Nicholson

Barbara Kaiser

Barbara Kaiser attended the Rhode Island School of Design and graduated from Pratt Institute, NY, in 1970. After several years as a commercial artist in New York City, she moved to Canada where she and her first husband made and sold stained glass windows, some of which can still be seen at restaurants in Montreal.

After twenty-five years in education, Barbara moved to Grand Pré, Nova Scotia and has been painting and drawing ever since.

ARTIST STATEMENT

I have always been fascinated by the human figure. In my efforts to turn a disability—the lack of three-dimensional vision—into an ability, I have learned how to manipulate line, shadow, and form to interpret what I see and feel. Drawing large figures allows me the opportunity to actually get inside my work and draw from the inside out.

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Judith J. Leidl

Judith Leidl received both her BFA and MFA from NSCAD University in Halifax, where she was awarded the Elizabeth Nutt Award and the Joseph Beuys Scholarship for both academic and artistic excellence. Since then, her work has been featured in over eighty group and solo exhibitions both nationally and internationally. Judith has received numerous awards for her artwork.

Judith has taught printmaking at NSCAD University and Nunavut Arctic College, Baffin Island. More recently, she has been Artistic Advisor for the 2001- 2007 Pangnirtung Community Print Collections and has conducted several workshops in relief printmaking, collage, and drawing at the internationally known Uqurmiut Centre for the Arts and Crafts.

Judith Leidl has also taught at Acadia University since 1998, teaching both drawing and painting. Her work is included in many private and public collections nationally and internationally. Judith will be attending the Leighton Artists' Colony at the Banff Centre for the Arts this summer.

ARTIST STATEMENT

I delve into memory, stream of consciousness and nature to create images from both the everyday and dream worlds. My artwork, while representational in nature, contains a strong abstract component. This duality contributes to the unique substance, texture, and dimension of the work.

Thematically, these paintings range from still life, seascapes, and landscapes to dreamscapes, and most recently, figurative work that tells a story. Also, and to varying degrees, my interest and affinity for textile design is reflected in my artwork. I am particularly drawn to intense colours and patterns, the sensual and the exotic. I decided to create this painting, Seascapes of the Atlantic, on a grand scale, as I felt it was reflective of the subject matter. I wanted to have the scale reflect the vastness of the sea itself.

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David MacNeil

Born in Halifax, Nova Scotia, in 1958, David MacNeil's interest in art took hold early and remains strong to this day. His earliest memories include the smell of oil paint in his grandmother's studio, a space of mystery, which primed the imagination and took "play" to uncharted territories. Grandmother Beulah MacCready was a wonderful impressionist painter who recognized an honest interest and started David off on a lifetime journey.

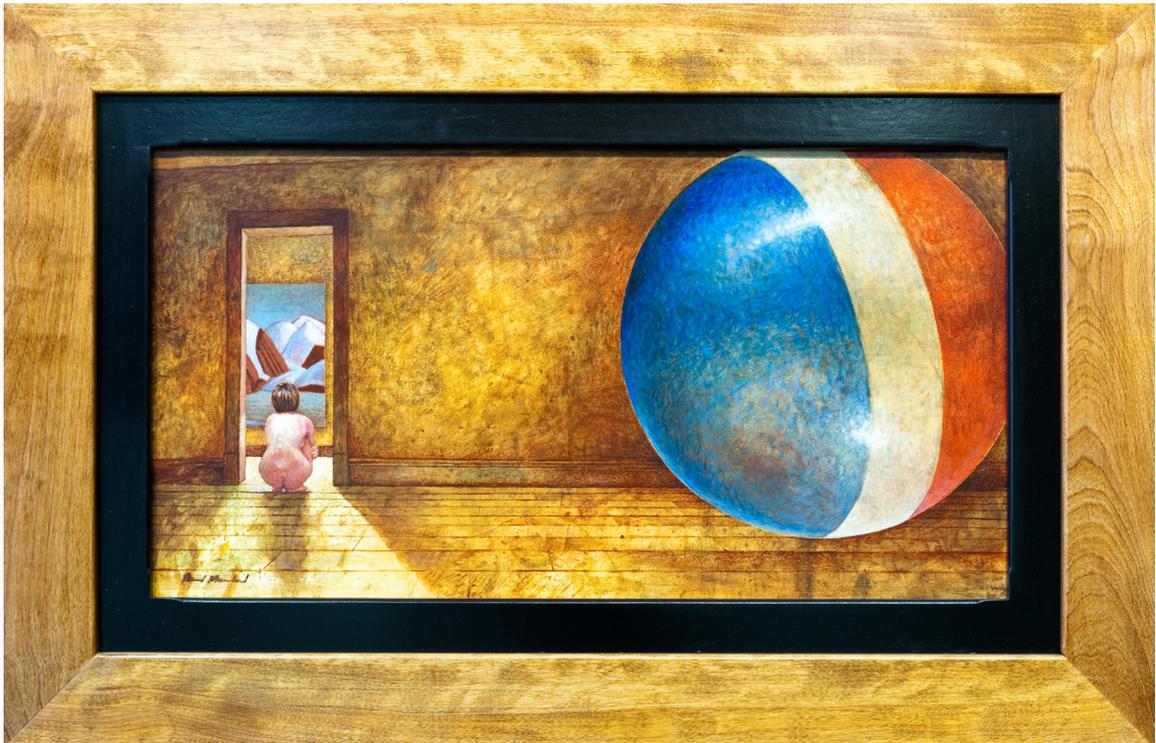
Since the early 1980s, David has been included in many shows of local Valley artists. One high point was receiving the Elizabeth Greenshields Foundation Award in 1986. The generosity of Jean Hancock and George Walford must be mentioned. Without their help, many of the mysteries would not have been solved.

ARTIST STATEMENT

The ball enters the scene at eye level, diminishing rapidly in size as it moves towards the figure. Is motion created by playing with scale?

Contact Information

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Angela Melanson

Angela Melanson has worked in Nova Scotia and Ontario as a costumer in various theatres for eleven years. She is a textile artist and painter who has her own accessories and home décor line. She also gives private workshops on various textile techniques. Her work is primarily focused on creating products from recycled fibres and locally grown wool, with much attention to colour and stitching details. She is very much influenced by urban cultures yet maintains her sense of connection to her rural roots. Angela's studio techniques include felting, needle felting, dyeing, stitching, screenprinting, and painting.

ARTIST STATEMENT

The image I have created is that of a rabbit. My goal was to invoke my inner animal and hopefully learn from this animal through its inspirational power while working within the confines of scale. The teachings of native people about animal energies inspired my piece. It is often said that the animals you encounter throughout your day are there to teach you something and to help you heal. The healing for me came about as I decided to create a work larger than any I have ever created. This caused me much anxiety and fear as I realized that I would be working outside of my own comfort zone in relation to scale.

To help me with this anxiety I would often go for walks on the pathways of my property. Each day on my jaunts I was confronted by rabbits frantically scurrying about for safety, fearful of my presence. It was these very encounters with the timid rabbits that guided me through my own fear—the fear of scale, which was hindering my creativity and not allowing me to grow or move forward. Like a rabbit, I was fearful of what may lie before me and was afraid to venture too far from my comfort level or warrens.

Rabbits teach us about growth and transformation and that our fears do not need to paralyze our growth or movement. Rabbit teaches us, through its timidity, to be gentle with ourselves in all situations. Once I decided to conquer my fear by just starting the piece, I felt relieved that the task at hand was perhaps not as bad as the fear that I had envisioned and that this experiment with scale was really just something to help me grow.

“We need to look upon our own fearful side with the same compassion we have for Rabbit.” (Animal Energies by Gary Buffalo Horn Man and Sherry Firedancer)

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Deborah Nicholson

Deborah Nicholson

Having studied drawing, painting, sculpture, and photography at the Art Gallery of Ontario, The Toronto School of Art, and The Dawson School of Photography in Montreal, I now primarily create photograph-based works on wood and aluminum. My work has been seen in group and solo exhibitions in Toronto and in Nova Scotia.

I am a board member of the Alliance of Kings Artists, a member of Nova Scotia Design and Craft Council, Visual Arts Nova Scotia, and the artist collective, Seven. In my spare time, I manage an art gallery and work as a commercial and event photographer.

ARTIST STATEMENT

A gaze from one being to another: a distance between them, filled with story, emotion, and memory. It is that span, beckoning to be examined, that guides my work.

I am delighted by the happenstance of composition that occurs when I photograph animals just being animals. The immediacy of our digital age, where my mouse is my brush and my monitor my canvas, propels me to create digital silk screens, inspired by artists such as Andy Warhol and contemporary printmaker, David Gillespie.

Through digital manipulation, flat colour fields of reds and pinks define the form and give a candy-like, unreal appearance to my Freyja series, which, to me, illustrates our relationships with our dogs; we gaze upon their faces, often as a subject of our stories, an object of our emotions, and a place for our memories, rather than a living, independent being.

For me, Freyja 4x4 represents the span between me and an endearing dog with which I have no relationship. Freyja's face fills me with so many stories, emotions, and memories of my own dogs. Yet, as much as I wish her gaze to be returned, she is not my dog, and Freyja's gaze will always remain elsewhere.

The large scale of Freyja 4x4 invites us to gaze upon her with the same intimacy with which we gaze upon our own pets, lovingly tracing the curves, the gentleness, the softness and furriness with our eyes.

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Pia Skaarer-Nielsen

Pia is a self-propelled weaver, fruit and vegetable felter, and fibre artist. Through a sequence of fortunate circumstances, Pia came to Canada in 1989 from Denmark.

After settling down with her family in Canning, NS, she acquired a spinning wheel and a loom, and mysteriously, these have now multiplied to five looms in the studio, three looms in the living room, and five spinning wheels spread all over the house.

Pia cares for her small flock of ewes in the barn, her husband in the house, the two kids who have flown the coop (usually by email), and her copious amounts of wool, fibre, and yarn, which inhabit every nook and cranny of her living space. She dreams, eats, and lives through experiments and experiences of colour and texture, working with the looms and other fibre tools, which are in constant use, either by her or by inquisitive students who regularly come to participate in the joyous mayhem through which Pia expresses her love for textile, texture, and life.

ARTIST STATEMENT

“The sky is falling!” was the exaggerated cry from one chicken when the acorn hit her head. She ended up with an umbrella to protect her head, but we are wearing blinders—and perhaps ear plugs. When are we going to listen to that chicken again and acknowledge that not all is as it should be in our environment?

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Deborah Nicholson

Geri Nolan-Hilfiker

Nova Scotian by birth and by choice, Irish by ancestry, Geri Nolan-Hilfiker lives on the south side of the Minas Basin along the Avon River in Summerville, Hants County, NS.

Her artistic occupation is to explore how we interact with our environment, and she has used pinhole photography as a means to reveal unique characteristics of landscape in her imagery for over twenty years. In 2006 she spent time at Gros Morne Park, Newfoundland, as Artist-in-Residence photographing wilderness areas there. In 2005 she produced a body of work with her pinhole camera, documenting both sides of the Minas Basin at ground level to introduce the character of its tidal environment.

Geri teaches photography part time at NSCAD University and also works part time as a photography technician there. She recently travelled the Ring Road in Iceland during August of 2008, and she plans a return visit in 2010 to hike in the wilds of the northwest region with her pinhole camera.

ARTIST STATEMENT

This pinhole image was made at Jökusárlón Lagoon in southern Iceland. The image shows a tiny bit of an iceberg, about the size of a baseball, stranded on a black stone beach, waiting for the tide to carry it out into the Atlantic Ocean. The lagoon was packed full of luminous blue icebergs that had come from Breiðamerkurjökull glacier.

The pyramid shape of the ice in this photograph is a kind of metaphor of geological time. The Jökulsárlón Lagoon formed about seventy-five years ago. The glacier itself dates from the last ice age. Global warming has caused Breiðamerkurjökull to retreat more rapidly, and the water level of the lagoon is rising as more icebergs break away. This small bit of a glacier, this little piece of ice, full of light in its luminousness left me humbled while I stood on the shore facing the ocean, the mountains in back of me, and the world all around me.

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Deborah Nicholson

Nistal Prem de Boer

Nistal Prem de Boer was born in Amsterdam and immigrated to Canada after finishing his degree in architecture and engineering at the Technical University of Delft. In Montreal he worked at several architectural offices. In 1976 he moved to Nova Scotia and started working as an independent architect. In 1988 he returned to Europe, to Italy where he studied sculpture. Now that he is back in Canada, bronze sculpture has been his main occupation.

ARTIST STATEMENT

My architecture has always been abstract sculpture. After sculpting buildings and travelling the world, I have returned to the figurative sculpture that I enjoyed in my youth. Now I feel driven to express the many ideas, stories, and precious encounters of a lifetime.

To me, the human body is the most mystical and beautiful thing in creation. In the body we can read emotions, thoughts, past experience, and even the future potential of a human life. The vocabulary of the body is movement and change. My challenge is to capture these most fleeting expressions in the solid and permanent materials of bronze or terra cotta. Sculpting becomes a form of story telling, and my bronze celebrates this intrinsic human activity. I find inspiration in spiritual traditions and ancient myths.

It is interesting to experience how scale affects us. A simple banana much larger than life remains very recognizable. Certainly the flimsy construction method does not affect it. This Banana is the totem of my homestead "Banana Creek."

Birth of a Woman shows a life-size sculpture and the same sculpture repeated on much smaller scale. We are very used to maquettes on a smaller scale, and seeing them side by side demonstrates this difference. The same sculpture is used again to reinforce the idea of birth by showing the young woman coming out of an egg.

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Deborah Nicholson

Marilyn Rand

Marilyn Rand is a farmer, artist, and teacher living in the Annapolis Valley. Following a thirty-year career in textile production, Marilyn has gone back to the grass roots of the industry. Marilyn and her husband, Marshall, raise a flock of wool-breed sheep on their farm in Delhaven. Marilyn spins novelty yarns, felts, knits and creates textile pictures from fibre. Marilyn teaches spinning, dyeing, felting, and knitting courses on a regular basis, sharing her enthusiasm for the versatility of her medium.

Recent shows and events include SEVEN at Argyle Fine Art, Halifax (2007), the Evangeline Artist Co-Operative show (2008), the Canning Art District show (2008), and the Acadia Art Gallery Alumni and Community show (2009). Her work can be seen at The Moorings Gallery in Mahone Bay, NS and at the Harvest Gallery in Wolfville, NS.

ARTIST STATEMENT

I am primarily a textile artist, using fibre as my medium. Wool from my own sheep is used in my hand-spun yarns. These yarns are dyed in brilliant colours and are used in garments, hand hooked rugs, and fulled for handbags and hats. I also sell many of my hand-spun skeins.

My visual art line consists of silk fusion and ink paintings, watercolours and wool sculpture. I am constantly experimenting with other mediums and their use in the work I am doing. The greatest inspiration for my work comes from nature. The more rustic and natural a piece is, the more I like it. A textile artist who has influenced my work is felter Maggie Glossop. In the works I have created for this show, I decided to focus on both the big picture and the small picture: the vista and the detail.



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Rachel Reeve

Rachel Reeve graduated with a BFA from the Nova Scotia College of Art and Design in 1998. While Rachel's primary focus has been printmaking, her interdisciplinary background includes work in mixed media, site-specific art, and installation. Rachel has recently been working with reclaimed materials, such as old windows, doors and apple barrels. During her years spent living in Japan and Hawaii, Reeve exhibited her prints at the Canadian Embassy in Tokyo and the Honolulu Academy of Art where she was a member of the Honolulu Printmakers Association.

Rachel is a member of the Nova Scotia Printmakers Association, The Alliance of Kings Artists, The Kings Historical Society, The Art Gallery of Nova Scotia, and Visual Arts Nova Scotia. She recently opened Ladybird Art a small business run from her Kentville studio.

ARTIST STATEMENT

Presence of Flowers - Looking out a window, the view is of a landscape reaching out to the horizon. The perspective stretches out, encompassing a foreground, mid-ground and a background. Ultimately, there is a grand host of visual subject matter for the mind to take in. However, all too often, when we look out a window, we are not really looking; instead we are caught up in our own thoughts. This is the irony. We have windows to look out of, and yet there is a natural inclination to withdraw into the mind's inner chatter. Can we look out a window and truly observe what we see? What if the scale of the perspective changes: when there is no longer a "view out," no longer a horizon, and no vast array of subjects? What happens when subject is no longer "out there" but immediate and close. The window and flowers merge, like a landscape merging onto a canvas. Has the inner chatter been silenced by the change of perspective and the presence of flowers?

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David Rimmington

David Rimmington has been producing art for many years. He has shown work at the Apple Blossom Festival, the Public Archives of Nova Scotia, Argyle Fine Arts, Acadia University Gallery, and at the Janet Pope Summer Gallery.

David enjoys experimenting with form and colour. Most of his artworks involve representations of creatures, but he is not a nature realist. His compositions are more like metaphors or allegories. Most of his paintings begin with an idea, though some are started cold. Each picture strives, as it's worked, to find its voice. Recently, he changed an apple on a branch to a vase with a flower; in the end, the vase with a flower became a cat. The cat was comfortable on the canvas. The painting had found its voice. For his artworks to succeed, he believes they must dramatize some feeling or thought. And, as with most artists, each piece begins a new adventure

ARTIST STATEMENT

These three pieces—Snail, Mouse & Elephant, and Small Brown Bird—fit the theme of this exhibition in three different ways. The first work, Snail (16"x20"), is many times the size of a garden snail. As I worked on it, I believe I wanted to make something that was more than a snail; to evolve a form that could become a meditation on motion or infinity. Making it extra-large gave me room and license to play.

Mouse & Elephant (8"x10") demonstrates how art can tell life unexpected things. The mouse is the discoverer of an artwork, a miniature model of a large creature, an elephant. In this way, art has brought an experience that life never could. Small Brown Bird (7"x5"), is small, but life-size. The bird is busy, as are its fellows. Things are moved about by a multitude of small creatures. Sometimes we barely notice them, though they are changing the world around us, bit by bit, like molecules in constant motion.



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Deborah Nicholson

Ulrike Walker

Born in Germany, Ulrike Walker moved to Nova Scotia in the early 1970s and now lives near Wolfville in the Annapolis Valley. She attended NSCAD in the late seventies, but then went on to study literature, earning her MA in English at Acadia University and her PhD in Victorian Studies at Dalhousie University. During her years in English literature, she continued to be interested in visual art, finally returning to NSCAD, where she completed her BFA in 2007.

Ulrike Walker is a regional representative of Visual Arts Nova Scotia and serves on the advisory board of the Acadia University Art Gallery.

ARTIST STATEMENT

In my work I tend to develop ideas and themes in a variety of media, including collage, assemblage, and digital media. I often work with found materials and objects. *Souvenir of Shelburne, NS: Made in Occupied Japan* consists of a number of digital scans that I made of a tiny souvenir figurine and a postcard that dates from the same period. This strange little figure fascinated me because it represented an unlikely intersection of histories and associations: the small town of Shelburne, Nova Scotia; a cheap rendition of a Doulton figurine, the epitome of "made in Japan" during the postwar years; and the wartime and postwar history of Japan. By enlarging the figurine and placing it in association with the postcard, I intend to "magnify" its value as the carrier of a complex history.

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Konrad Wendt.

Biography

Born in Moeln, Germany, in 1948, Konrad Wendt emigrated with his family in 1951 and grew up near Windsor, Nova Scotia. He studied fine art (1967-1971) and art education (1974-75) at NSCAD University. His art practice is informed by late modern, minimal, and conceptual art and generally involves conceptually-driven installations, photography, and sculpture, often in a site-specific environmental context. He has shown his work in Halifax, Toronto, and Charlottetown.

ARTIST STATEMENT

I make art when I stumble upon an intriguing idea, or when it is absolutely necessary.





Elinor Whidden

Elinor Whidden is a multi-disciplinary artist whose art practice has become a quest to find a way to survive and adapt in a world increasingly threatened by contemporary car culture. Whidden received a BA in Canadian/Environmental Studies from Trent University, a BFA from the Nova Scotia College of Art and Design, and an MFA from the State University of New York at Buffalo. She has exhibited throughout North America, recently showing work in Nova Scotia, Ontario, Alberta, and Buffalo, NY. Whidden's exhibition, Mountain Man, created during the Walking and Art residency at the Banff Centre, is currently travelling across Canada.

ARTIST STATEMENT

My artistic practice investigates the notion of Progress. I use the automobile as a metaphor for Progress, dismembering and reconfiguring cars into sculptural assemblages that I can carry on my back. My assemblages reference modes and accessories of transportation used during the opening of the Western Frontier. These objects are then transported along early fur trade routes. During these car-carrying performances, the waterways and trade routes of this historic period stand in for our current system of highways, freeways and overpasses.

The photograph, "This is Our Country": Chevy Silverado 2008, continues my quest to find a way to adapt in a world increasingly threatened by contemporary car culture. During my Mountain Man performances, I trekked through the Rocky Mountains posing as an intrepid Mountain Man. I used a Rearview Walking Stick (a rearview mirror attached to a stick) to strike various imperialistic poses in this epic landscape ironically asserting the physical power of one small woman to question the epic mythology of the Western Frontier and the colonial attitudes that remain with us today.

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Deborah Nicholson

Muriel Zimmer

Muriel Zimmer is an interdisciplinary artist based in Falmouth, Nova Scotia. Muriel's work is included in the collection of the Nova Scotia Art Bank and is exhibited throughout the region. The Chronicle Herald describes Muriel's recent work at the Ross Creek Centre (2007) as a "parade of her life from colours to clay." In 2006 Muriel was awarded "Best Nature Photography" in a Sunbury Shores Arts Centre regional competition. In 2003 she presented a solo show at the Multicultural Gallery in Halifax, Celebrating Words on Ceramic Forms. Muriel teaches art and English at King's-Edgehill School and produces the school's annual literary art journal that celebrates student work.

ARTIST STATEMENT

In this project Zimmer challenges the viewer to reevaluate his or her understanding of garden-variety organic forms. In her work, size matters. This approach to her subject makes these forms hard to ignore.

Zimmer's work references Georgia O'Keeffe's flower paintings. Like O'Keeffe, Zimmer examines in-depth views of organic forms. Like Suzanne Gaudet's oversize drawings and clay sculptures that examine dogs, Zimmer's oversize drawings and clay sculptures examine plant forms. By stripping them of their colour, Zimmer accentuates and abstracts these organic forms. Removed from our normal comprehension, these forms depart their earthly origins and become larger than life. Are these forms still purposeful? Could we consider them to be a meditation created during the coldest, deadest part of winter, a meditation that calls forth the real organic forms from the ground?



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Barbara Kaiser
Judith Leidl
David MacNeil
Angela Melanson
Deborah Nicholson
Pia Skaarer-Nielsen
Geri Nolan Hilfiker
Nistal Prem de Boer
Marilyn Rand
Rachel Reeve
David Rimmington
Ulrike Walker
Konrad Wendt
Elinor Whidden
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