

Search this site...

Search

Winnipeg, Canada
 -8°C Partly Cloudy
 WU WEATHER UNDERGROUND
 click for full forecast

You are not logged in

Log in or Register

News by you!

- HOME
- ABOUT CNC
- OUR CITY
- CULTURE
- OUR NEIGHBOURHOODS
- PHILANTHROPY
- CONTACT US

BECOME A CITIZEN REPORTER



CNC is an online news hub authored by you, your friends and neighbours, sharing stories to make our world a better place. By creating CNC, The Winnipeg Foundation believes a more informed and engaged community is a more caring and giving community, building the capacity needed for stronger, healthier neighbourhoods.

Browse: Home / Our City / Health & Safety / An opening in a world filled with barriers

An opening in a world filled with barriers

By Marie LeBlanc on March 2, 2016

Posted in Arts & Entertainment, Charitable Organizations, Downtown, Environment, Health & Safety, Stories of Giving



Canary In The Coal Mine Exhibition runs Mar. 4 to Apr. 16 at Martha Street Studio.

Artists Susan Aydan Abbott, Sandra Campbell, Yvette Cenerini and I present the alarming warning signs of environmental failures during opening night of the *Canary in the Coal Mine* Exhibition, Mar. 4 from 5 p.m. to 8 p.m. at *Martha Street Studio*, 11 Martha Street in Winnipeg.

The exhibition continues until April 16, although opening night is where the action is.

Each artist, self-identified as a person with a disability, uniquely presents a theme within their installation expressing how their work fits into the *Canary in the Coal Mine* (CITCM) Exhibition.

It's all part of Making Our Mark II (MOMII), a year-long professional development mentorship program centred around printmaking, made possible by Martha Street Studio (MSS) in partnership with *Arts & Disability Network Manitoba* (ADNM) and funded by *The Winnipeg Foundation* and *Manitoba Arts Council*.

After an interview last spring, where the juried committee, consisting of MSS staff and ADNM Chair, Susan Lamberd, met me outside (due to my disability of *Multiple Chemical Sensitivity*), I received a life changing call saying I was accepted into the program.

For me, Martha Street Studio was an opening in a world filled with barriers, in areas where there is supposed

<http://www.communitynewscommons.org/our-city/health-safety/an-opening-in-a-world-filled-with-barriers/>

DAILY NEWS PODCAST



CommunityNew...
News Podcast

1
TRACK

November 21, 2017

148

Cookie policy



PHOTO OF THE DAY



On the bandwagon: a sign of the times at a local donut shop. No word yet on official bagels or perogies. PHOTO by Greg Petzold

Submit your Photo here!

Check out our Photo of the Day Gallery!

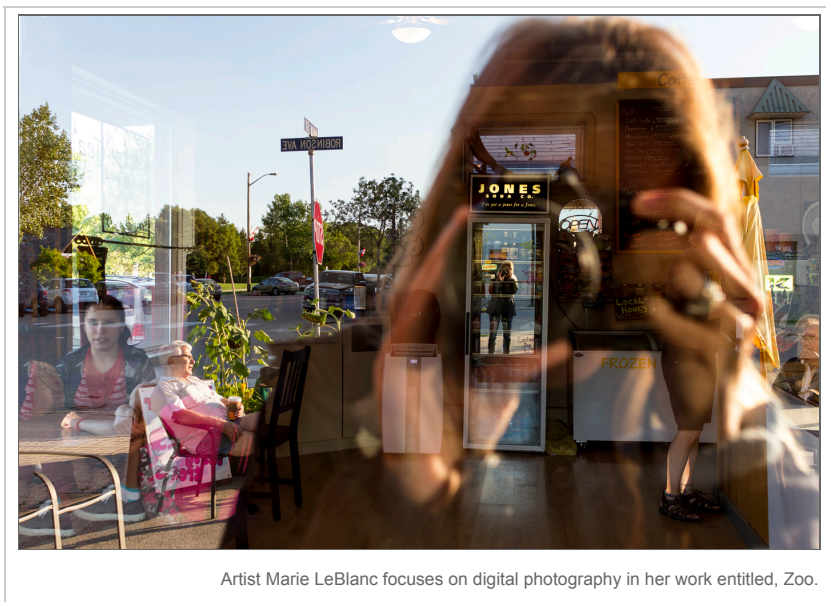
RIVER CITY 360

to be help for people with disabilities.

Since I could not have physical access to the building, due to the unusual nature of my illness, instructor and administrative organizer of the program, Larry Clawson, was keen to take on the challenge.

"We wanted to work with you [Marie] to see how we could accommodate the kind of restrictions that come with working with this kind of person," says Clawson.

Clawson devised a program to teach me the technical aspects of digital photography through remote training so I could be in a safe environment.



Artist Marie LeBlanc focuses on digital photography in her work entitled, Zoo.

"Participants were selected on the work they did, the quality of work they already were producing as artists and what their perceived barriers were in terms of limitations and or disabilities," Clawson explains.

"Part of the idea was not only to work with those they knew they could work with, but to work with people they were not sure they were able to work with," he says.

"We wanted to work with them so that we could learn from them as well in terms of how to expand access to our services" adds Clawson.

"These are the kinds of things we are trying to recognize, to understand, to learn about and then do the research and figure out scenarios, methods of delivering service to people. We've now learned what services are needed for people with certain physical and mental limitations in relation to fully realizing a professional art practice."

There are three aspects to the program: 1. Access to technical training (offsite digital photography for myself); 2. Offsite professional development seminars, experiencing visiting artists Jenel Shaw, Diana Thorneycroft and Sarah Anne Johnson; 3. The exhibition, where we had access to curator Sigrid Dahle, who helped organize our thoughts and realize our body of work.

Currently we are in the installation process. The group "gets the full experience," says Clawson.

"For MSS the idea is for us to learn how we can give our programming to as many people as possible and if it does mean sometimes going offsite and going to the location of the artist as opposed to the artist coming to us, that is a reasonable thing to do," explains Clawson.



Listen to audio stories from **River City 360**, a project of The Winnipeg Foundation, in partnership with Community News Commons and 93.7 CJNU-FM.

LOCAL HEROES



Women of Distinction sparkle with greatness

By Julien Cooper on May 25, 2017

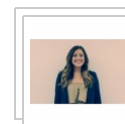
Women recognized for their courage, determination and hard work in making our community better.

Like 6

Tweet

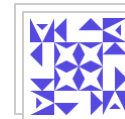
Know someone who is a local hero? Tell their story and we'll feature it here.

CNC CITIZEN REPORTERS



Rebecca Henderson

This is our chance to do better



Paul Rayner

Documentary brings story of hope to the screen



Dr. Syras Derksen

Connections Workshop aims to cultivate genuine listening



Huguette and Roger Lacroix

Stunned by bogus Taylor Swift tickets, shocked by stranger's act of generosity

See all 2017 CNC Stories
See all 2016 CNC Stories
See all 2015 CNC Stories
See all 2014 CNC Stories
See all 2013 CNC Stories
See all 2012 CNC Stories

“We quickly learned that accommodation is more successful than intimidation; it’s about working with people and honouring their limitations and doing whatever we can to realize their ambitions and our ambitions at the same time, and I think we were quite successful with the Making Our Mark group.

“We want people to have access to the studio. The program has been very useful for us in helping us find out what we don’t know,” chuckles Glawson. “And once we find out what we do need to know then it is up to us to try to realize a solution to the limitation that we discovered through the program,” he adds.

Being a non-profit organization, it would take a lot of funding to have an improved ventilation system at MSS, which Glawson says he is not adverse to, and has put that on his to do list.



Artist Susan Aydan Abbott's ink and oil on Lino print, Stains.

My theme in the *Canary in the Coal Mine* Exhibition is Zoo (a work in three iterations); Zoo I is digital photographs and scans, Zoo II includes found objects (yes, you have to be there to see it) and the third, Zoo III, is avatar performance – how am I present at the event – that’s a surprise too. Really, life is a zoo.

My work focuses on safety of endangered species, both human and the animal kind. As a person with Multiple Chemical Sensitivity (MCS), this was my opportunity to express myself.

Are we just a by-product, or as I say, “collateral damage” of the industrial revolution? Animals are being looked after in the zoo, however, what about the humans? Both the animals and people are going down like the canary in the coal mine. Where is our protection and safe haven? Really, who’s looking at who? You have to come to the show and find out.

In hindsight, it is funny how back in the 1980’s I studied Human Geography, Tourism, Natural Resources and Population Studies, where I wrote papers on how tourism affects the environment and how the environment affects tourism among many other papers, not realizing that today I would have been one of those people I wrote about.

I am now expressing my ideas through art to create awareness in hopes it will help others of the endangered kind.

My most important experience is being accepted for who I am. I appreciate working with the staff at MSS, at ADNMM, and with the visiting artists, Sigrid Dahle, Liz Garlicki, Kristin Nelson, the main co-ordinator of MOMII, my fellow peers, and in particular, Larry Glawson, helping me overcome the barriers in the art world for a person such as myself with MCS.

In a world of exclusion and isolation, I’ve been welcomed with open arms and introduced to a world of inclusion. I find myself being part of a community in a social network of peers in a world without judgement.

I cannot thank my instructor Larry enough for all he has done to assist me in the program and all the time he took to answer my many, many questions.

Visual artist Sandra Campbell has titled her print media installation, My Garden.

"The Garden of Eden has always been an inspiration," says Campbell. "My work fits into the [CITCM] exhibition because it deals with the failures of humankind to keep the garden beautiful."

She says her most important experience in the program is that, "I have had the opportunity to work with great people."

Visual artist Susan Aydan Abbott titled her four-component installation, Bare Witness. She felt it was "important to purge the shame and own one's story."

Abbott feels her work fits into the CITCM exhibition because she is, "Raising the alarm of the toxicity of unresolved trauma."

Her most important experience in the program is "learning a new means of expression, like learning a new language" and "meeting and connecting with very talented, wonderful peers."

Visual artist Yvette Cenerini titled her print media installation, Songbird Decrescendo. "I found the gradual decrease in volume of the prairie melody is an eerily disconcerting phenomenon," says Cenerini.



Artist Sandra Campbell's mono print of a daisy, part of her work entitled, My Garden.

"I began feeding the birds in my backyard. I kept track of the types of birds that visited and for this project, I drew one of each," she explains.

"I have always been interested in animal extinction and after doing a very small amount of research, it was evident that the songbirds in my backyard were threatened, even in danger due to predation, habitat loss, herbicide, insecticide, climate change and collisions," Cenerini says.

In response to how her theme fits into the CITCM exhibition, Cenerini says, "Often taken for granted, the sights and sounds of birds add beauty to our environment. So delicate and vulnerable, they're slowly slipping away. Such a shame it would be to live in a world without the organic, spontaneous chirps and trills of our fine feathered friends," she says.

"I really benefited from the opportunity of trying different printmaking techniques to find one that suited my interest and abilities. I also really enjoyed the camaraderie of working and spending time with the other members of the group, program facilitators and guest speakers," Cenerini adds.

"I've learned that everyone out there is dealing with some sort of struggle, sometimes they're evident and sometimes they're not. The only way to survive and create is to reach out and accept help from others and be ready and willing to reciprocate."

Martha Street Studio has created this opening in an environment of barriers. Like a canary in the coal mine, where access is denied in most other areas of my life, my experience during my time in the program has been refreshing and inclusive.



Artist Yvette Cenerini's intaglio print, American Robin.

Like 46

Tweet

In spite of our disabilities, we all have abilities, and MSS recognizes our potential. This program is itself a reflection of the canary in the coal mine. After their pilot project in Making Our Mark I, MSS is the first to go down and test the waters, so-to-speak, of helping artists such as ourselves, as they adapt their program for all artists, and everyone has come out alive.

"If this exhibition is any indication, the canaries and other deeply attuned beings living among us are showing signs of distress," says Winnipeg-based curator and writer Sigrid Dahle. "Everything is not fine," she says emphatically.

As Dahle so candidly remarks, "Poignantly, the question remains: what's in it for the canary?"



About Marie LeBlanc

Marie is an artist, poet, photographer, with a background in alternative health and Bachelor of Arts in Human Geography and Sociology (Advanced Major). She advocates and has been active in many committees to create awareness for people with various disabilities. She was awarded the Mental Health Volunteer Hero of the year in 2012 and has helped coordinate mental health walks. Marie believes creative expression through art and entertainment is healing for your body, mind and soul. She is extremely inventive, creative and resourceful. Other Interests include the environment, culture and just about anything due to her curious nature. She enjoys and has learned a lot through her experience writing and taking pictures for the community news commons.

One response to "An opening in a world filled with barriers"



Perry Nikolychuk April 9, 2016 at 10:25 pm | [Permalink](#)

That would be an interesting exhibit!

« Previous

Next »

Community News Commons Primary Partners:



Community News Commons is funded by:



The Community News Commons is a public media project established through grants from the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation and The Winnipeg Foundation, and supported by this community. The opinions expressed by contributors do not necessarily reflect the opinions or receive endorsement from The Winnipeg Foundation or the Knight Foundation.

Users indemnify and hold harmless Community News Commons, its partners and sponsors in issues related to content submitted.



All content on this website, unless otherwise notated, may be redistributed, subject to Creative Commons license "Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivs". However, all logos, marks, code and structure are property of the Community News Commons. Please contact us with any questions you may have.

Community News Commons is a website managed by The Winnipeg Foundation and subject to its website's Privacy Policy and Terms of Use.

Copyright © 2017 Community News Commons. All rights reserved.

Close X