

Bernice Phillips – Focus on Local Artists – Issue #105

January 18, 2021 by [Bill C](#)

January 2021

For this month, Winnipeg River Arts Council updates previously profiled visual artist Bernice Phillips. From her home in Powerview-Pine Falls, on the banks of the Winnipeg River, she studies the surrounding flora and fauna and finds endless subjects to paint. She also loves gardening and the hours of playing in the dirt keep her grounded.

Using water colours and acrylics, along with mixed media, Phillips loves trying different surfaces such as glass, wood, and canvas. A recent innovation involves painting on diverse objects, such as recycled windows, vases, and other glass pieces. She says, “This reduces my carbon footprint, while creating useable works of art that showcase the beauty of the boreal forest.”

Phillips plans to create a series highlighting local scenery and wildlife. Painting boreal animals fascinates her and she’s developed a process for depicting realistic details of fur and feathers. After studying the subject and noting the light, fur directions, and position, she makes a sketch and traces an outline onto water colour paper. Next, she paints the background, and the main features (eyes, ears, nose and mouth). She prepares the undercoat, using soft strokes to show the direction of the fur, and adds a slightly darker layer.

During this process, she often walks away for an hour, or even a day, to get fresh perspective or wait for natural light. (The best light is found at her kitchen table). She continues until the painting is complete, which can take from three to seven days.

Bernice’s work has been sold across Canada and the USA, and it is presently on display at Winnipeg River Heritage Museum (St. Georges), Through the Harbour (Pine Falls), and Gwen Fox Gallery (Selkirk). This year, she will have glass pendants, cards, and prints of her paintings available.

When COVID restrictions are lifted, Phillips plans to teach classes in Lac du Bonnet, via Winnipeg River Recreation, and at her “Garden Path Studio.” Lessons will include working with mixed-media and different surfaces. Sessions in her yard will enable participants to walk among gardens and flower beds, and draw inspiration through smell, vision, and touch.

Her advice for artists: “If you’re interested in making art, follow your instincts and do it for yourself. Feedback is important but first you have to like what you’re doing. Don’t be afraid to ask for help, try new media, and see where art takes you!”



Bernice Phillips



Roberta Laliberte – Focus on Local Artists – Issue #106

March 3, 2021 by [Bill C](#)

February 2021

For this month, Winnipeg River Arts Council updates previously featured visual artist, Roberta Laliberte. Although well-known for her work with watercolor, acrylics, inks, and pastels, her fans are really excited about her latest creations, specifically hand carved art on mugs. Over the last year, she found a way to combine the beauty and practicality of ceramics with her background in visual arts.

She said, “My pottery designs are inspired by Nature and my passion for ceramics is influenced by its practicality. I love creating beautiful items that serve a purpose.”

Aside from the time when she pursued further education, she has lived in Pine Falls all of her life. Although she was enrolled in Mount Allison University's Bachelor of Fine Arts program, she quit after one semester and came home. She said, “I hated being away from family. And, at the time, I didn't fit the “artsy fartsy” profile.”



Roberta Laliberte

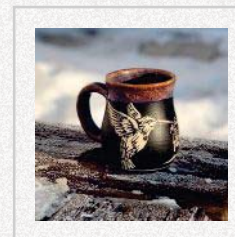
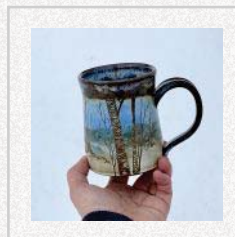
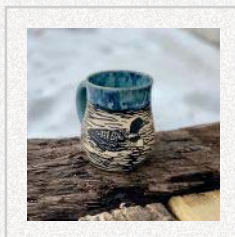


A self-identified independent learner, Laliberte has always loved acquiring new skills. Long before COVID-19 hit and virtual classes became commonplace, she embraced online learning. She reads and researches extensively, and calls the internet “a goldmine of information.” Also, she loves sharing her artistic knowledge and has instructed in several school divisions, via Artists in Schools programs and arts grants. Before pandemic limitations threw a wrench into her plans, she was also teaching ceramics workshops in her Pine Falls studio. She said, “Now restrictions are starting to lift, I'll be offering classes again – both group and one on one.”

Laliberte's work has been exhibited in group shows at Winnipeg's Cre8tery Gallery and her first solo show, North of 49, in Syracuse, New York, showcased prairie and boreal landscapes in a collection of works. One of her art installations, juried and funded by Heritage Canada and Maison des Artistes, is located in Allard Library, St. Georges. Dateline Arts Magazine personally profiled her in their publication.

At this time, she has several painting commissions to complete and she plans to update her website to accommodate the ceramics inventory. Although several companies have approached her to sell her work wholesale, she creates her pottery as a small batch artist, and prefers to sell it via her website. She is also focused on offering ceramics instruction and taking glazing classes so she can expand the scope in her work.

Her artistic tip: “When I share what I know and experience personally, and share how I see the world around me, people connect on a personal level. As an artist, that's the ultimate goal.”



Winnipeg River Arts Council – Focus on Local Artists – Issue #107

April 3, 2021 by Bill C

March 2021

For this month, in honour of its tenth anniversary, WRAC would like to tell readers a bit about its establishment and ongoing activities. In March of 2009, interested individuals from Eastman met to figure out how to develop a regional arts council. After a few meetings, they decided that Winnipeg River corridor could benefit from an organization that would promote and enhance local visual, performing, and literary arts.

With help from Community Futures Winnipeg River, the group started work on this project. After months of consultation and presentations, the Towns of Powerview/ Pine Falls and Lac du Bonnet, Rural Municipalities of Lac du Bonnet and Alexander, and Local Government District of Pinawa agreed to support the concept and provide funding. A ten-member board was formed, composed of individuals from each municipality.

In July of 2011, Winnipeg River Arts Council was incorporated as a non-profit organization, created to raise awareness of arts events, services, partnerships, workshops, grants, and talent development opportunities, and to remind people about the economic, health, and social benefits of arts and culture.

The board of directors holds monthly meetings. After WRAC's formation, they developed a constitution and organizational structures, conducted a regional arts inventory, set up a website and social media platforms, designed a logo, and hired a part-time employee. WRAC's current administrator, Jennifer Hudson Stewart, works in the Winnipeg River Community Futures building in Lac du Bonnet, and can be found in her office on Tuesday and Thursday mornings from 9:00 until 12:00.



Membership is open to artists, all residents, arts organizations, and businesses. Forms are available on the website for anyone who wants to join. Privileges include a vote at the annual general meeting, consultations on grants applications, opportunities to run classes and workshops, event promotion and artist profiles, subscription to WRAC newsletter, and reduced rates for programs. Please note: if you buy a membership, you do *not* have to attend any regular monthly meetings.

Here are a few of the events, organizations, and programs WRAC has supported and promoted: 4P Festival, Fire & Water Festival, Eastman Judged Art Exhibits, Pinawa Players, Eastern Manitoba Concert Association, Whiteshell Winter Arts Festival, Boreal Shores Art Tour, Pinawa Art Gallery, Truck Stop Circus, photo exhibits, art shows and sales, library events and displays, school drama productions, concerts, workshops, author readings, and youth mentorships.

Since 2014, in partnership with Royal Manitoba Theatre Centre, WRAC has hosted six touring productions in Great Falls, Pinawa, and Lac du Bonnet. Every month, a WRAC artist or arts organizations is featured in local newspapers and the arts council's newsletter, and on the website.

WRAC artists create quilts, books, paintings, fibre art, theatre, plays, videos, music, concerts, crafts, photography, wood carvings, sculpture, needlework, pottery, and much more. If you love the arts, please let WRAC know that you appreciate its ten years of hosting events, and celebrating all the talented artists and arts organizations in our region.

Happy tenth birthday, Winnipeg River Arts Council!

Ann Brough – Focus on Local Artists – Issue #108

April 24, 2021 by [Bill C](#)

April 2021

For this month, Winnipeg River Arts Council features writer Ann Brough.

Born in Staffordshire, England, she moved to Canada in 1967, one year after she married David, her husband. In 1970, after her father's untimely death, they moved back to England and lived there for seven years. In 1978, they returned to Winnipeg with their three small children. Twenty-three years ago, they bought a cottage in Lester Beach, a scenic community on the shores of Lake Winnipeg, and, fourteen years later, they built a year-round residence there.

When asked what prompts her to write, Brough said, "I'm inspired by the stories of strong women in my family's past, who led interesting and often courageous lives."

During her time as a student, English literature and creative writing were always her main focus. As well, she studied higher level English at night school for six years, while she worked during the day. She said, "I was fortunate to have a wonderful teacher, who encouraged my storytelling and helped me develop writing skills."

Since 2017, Brough has published three novels: *The Prussian Captain*, *The Welsh Guardsman*, and *The Bitter Sweet Life of Annie Jenkins*. The first two novels have been recently recorded as Audio books. The response to her stories from all over the world has amazed her. She said, "I've even found distant cousins who I now correspond with regularly."

These days, almost everybody she meets tells her their family stories, and they often ask how they might begin to write them down. Her son, also an author, gave her the best advice. "Just start writing. Don't worry about organization, grammar, spelling, or time lines. Write your thoughts down and all the rest can be sorted out later."

His suggestions helped, although they did cause a great deal of trouble with the chronological order in her third novel. Now she always works on a time line graph, before beginning a new project.

Her final words on her art: "I love to write. It's my number one hobby, and gives me great joy."



Ann Brough

Mitch Toews – Focus on Local Artists – Issue #109

May 28, 2021 by Bill C

May 2021

For this month, Winnipeg River Arts Council features writer Mitch Toews. Born and raised in Steinbach, he lived in Chilliwack, British Columbia, for nine years with shorter stints in Winnipeg and Victoria. In 1995, Toews and his wife bought a cottage at Jessica Lake in Whiteshell Provincial Park and they have lived there full-time since 2016.

Toews writes fiction and creative nonfiction, including flash, short story, and novel, and he describes his work as what he calls, “MennoGrit.” Inspired by Patrick Friesen’s poetry and Miriam Toews’ prose, he also enjoys Hemingway and Vonnegut (even though they aren’t Mennonite). He paints as a hobby and loves Winslow Homer’s water colours.

He says, “I like unusual people, and situations or characters that cause me to consider social issues or ‘the human condition’ in a new way. I’m drawn to stories of those who go against the grain or stand their ground.”

While he was a teen, people encouraged him to follow his artistic leanings, but he soon realized the challenges of survival as an artist. Although he ended up working in business, he preferred the parts that involved creativity, marketing, and advertising. At university, he studied sociology, but did not quite complete his BA. He also did a two-year program to earn a Master’s Certificate from Schulich (York) in Marketing. He says, “The latter program taught me a lot about business copywriting and marketing communication, and these skills have spilled over into my creative writing.”

Toews enjoys critique groups and the camaraderie of writers, participate in readings whenever he can, and works hard at his craft. At present, around 90 of his stories have appeared in print and online, via literary magazines and anthologies in Canada, United Kingdom, and United States.

His writing has also earned prose contests awards and two nominations for Pushcart Prizes. Recently, he learned that his story, selected from over 800 entrants, won a finalist spot in The Writers’ Union of Canada’s annual contest, Short Prose Competition for Emerging Writers. He says, “As a 65-year-old emerging artist, this inspired me to keep reaching.”

Upcoming pieces will appear with Fenechty Publishing in UK and in WordCity, a Canadian and International online literary journal. His story postings can be found at: Mitchellaneous.com, <https://www.facebook.com/mitch.toews>, https://twitter.com/mitchell_toews When asked for inspiring words, he quotes Winslow Homer – “Travel widely, experiment boldly, love deeply.” And an old advertising pal, upon hearing Toews was working in fiction, told him – “Shut up and write.”



Mitch Toews

Rick McGregor – Focus on Local Artists – Issue #110

July 1, 2021 by [Bill C](#)

June 2021

For this month, Winnipeg River Arts Council features photographer Rick McGregor. Originally from Markham, Ontario, he has lived in Winnipeg for 35 years. Almost six years ago, McGregor and his wife purchased a cottage on Pinawa Bay, and they go there as often as possible, twelve months of the year.

Inspired by the beauty of nature, McGregor identifies himself primarily as a photographer. When he and his wife bought their cottage, they put up a couple of bird feeders and feathered friends they had never seen before, in various colours, started visiting. Then foxes, bears, otters, beavers, and other animals began to wander around and into their yard.

He says, “We just became consumed by the beauty of all of these creatures. I bought a camera to start capturing this finery and it quickly became a fulltime hobby. Now I would call it more of an obsession!”

McGregor also spends a lot of time in a two person kayak, with his wife keeping the boat steady while he take shots of wildlife in, on, and near the water. This gives him a great perspective that a person typically can't get from the land where tall reed and rocks often mar the view. He says, “Half of the fun of creating this photographic art is the chase!”



Rick McGregor



Portrait in Snow

McGregor is self-taught, except for one eight week evening course on camera settings and other technical aspects, and admits that he has a natural eye for capturing artistic shots of birds and animals. He has put this knack to good use, submitting his photos and writing on birding to Lac du Bonnet Clipper, published as space permits. So far, he has only used social media to get his work known.

In February, he donated two framed photographs to Wildlife Haven Rehabilitation Centre's Online Art Auction. Between the two photos, his donation earned almost \$500 for the centre. Also, he's won five or six prizes, including three first place awards for “Wildlife Photography” – two in magazines and one in an online contest. Before this year's Boreal Shores Arts Tour was cancelled, he had hoped to get accepted as one of their artists.

Five of his photos were published in this year's Lac du Bonnet Living Magazine, including three in the cover montage. As well, he donated five photos to the forthcoming Lac du Bonnet Cash Calendar.

He's working to finish his webpage and hopes to have that running by the fall so people can buy prints from my website. He would also like to exhibit his work in Pinawa Art Gallery, once COVID restrictions allow.

When McGregor comes upon an interesting bird or animal, he takes 100 shots or more, moving to different angles and lights or shadows, if the subject doesn't fly or run away. He likes that it doesn't cost too much to get into photography. Almost six years ago, he bought a camera for \$550 and he uses it all the time.

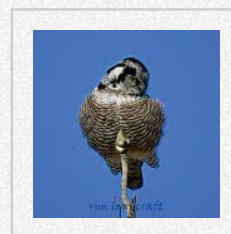
He says, “Unlike in the film developing days, the “delete” key is free so get out there and take lots of shots, and just keep the good ones. My award-winning photographs that people have purchased were taken with my inexpensive camera so don't think you need to spend thousands. The art is in the eye, not the wallet.”



Black & White Menace



The Saprano



The Perch

Kelly Klick – Focus on Local Artists – Issue #111

July 27, 2021 by Bill C

July 2021

For this month, Winnipeg River Arts Council features multi-media visual artist, Kelly Klick, who grew up a homesteader's daughter in the mountains of British Columbia. For 20 years, she was a registered midwife in Manitoba and, in 2015, she moved to Pinawa.

Like many local artists, the beauty of the boreal inspires Klick; she also gets stimulated and motivated by other artists. She says, "I love the artist, Daphne Odjig, and her quote 'Mistakes are the best because they take me somewhere else.'" I'm self-taught and you could say that I'm still self-learning. My formal training is in catching babies!"

Often working in series, Klick employs different media to create a story. Using rug hooking, oil painting, clay sculpting, and found object assemblage, she will put together a number of pieces to present a narrative. She says, "I always look to evoke specific emotions in the audience. I like to make my art with input from my community, asking questions and getting feedback as I create something. This way it becomes more than just my vision."



Kelly Klick



Tree of Life

During the past few months, Klick has been busy. Presently, she is co-hosting Pinawa Art Gallery's clay sculpture drop-in sessions on Monday afternoons and Thursday mornings, and she also serves as Pinawa Art 211's vice president.

Early in the spring, Manitoba Arts Network awarded her a seat in their "Mentoring Artists for Women's Art – Rural Art Mentorship Program." After RAMP participants worked with mentors for several months, their pieces were displayed in an online show. Klick's art can also be found in the Manitoba Regional Art Exhibition, hosted on MAN's website.

This summer, Klick's art placed second in the Eastman Juried Art Exhibition. Her series, "Mother Cake," will be exhibited, along with the other RAMP participants' works, at the Art Gallery of Southwest Manitoba in Brandon (September), Pinawa Art Gallery (November), and Manawaka Gallery in Neepawa (January of 2022).

As well, she received a Youth in Philanthropy Grant to run Teen Mud Pit (teen clay classes) at the Pinawa Art Gallery, and a grant from Manitoba Arts Council to present an exhibition of the RAMP artists' work – including her own – this November at Pinawa Art Gallery.

Her upcoming plans include: creation of a new series that engages people in her process (working title – "Mother Tree"), collaboration with Art 211's board to ensure the gallery's sustainability and visitor appeal when things fully open up, and partnership with Arlene Bohn and Eastman Tourism to put together art experiences for tourists. It's no wonder that Klick sometimes feels she spends too much time on arts administration and curation.

Check out her work on Facebook, Instagram, and her website.

www.kellyklickart.ca

<https://www.facebook.com/kellyklickart>

<https://www.instagram.com/kellyklickart>



Mother's Helper

Jan Claude – Focus on Local Artists – Issue #112

August 31, 2021 by [Bill C](#)

August

For this month, Winnipeg River Arts Council features previously highlighted visual artist, Jan Claude. Although she is originally from Winnipeg and still has ties there, she and her husband live year round at Bird River. She has worked in most painting mediums, but presently she concentrates on creating her main love, water colour pictures.

When asked about her passions and inspirations, Claude cites a wide variety of sources: people, situations, and other artists. She adds, "But it's mostly the beauty that surrounds us in this incredible country of ours. My husband and family are the primary source of encouragement for me. They are all incredibly supportive!"



Her artistic inclinations do not include instructing other artists but she admits to teaching her grandchildren and willing participants in a few spontaneous situations. Although she has had no formal training, her creative bent and love of all things involving design and art drive her to make art. She says, "I simply must create to feel whole."



Jan Claude

When she joined the Pinawa Art Gallery, it gave her momentum to paint more regularly and the courage to show her work, which led to more opportunities. Her work can be seen primarily at Pinawa Art Gallery and online at her website: janclaudio.ca. She has also shown work in the Boreal Shores Art Tour, every Eastman Juried Art Exhibition since 2015, as well as the Rural and Northern Art Show of Manitoba.

Claude's work has won the water colour division of Eastman Juried Art Exhibition and gone on to be displayed in the final exhibit of Manitoba Rural and Northern Art Exhibits at The Buhler Art Gallery, and The Gallery in the Park at Assiniboine Park. This year, due to COVID-19 restrictions, the MRANAE is being presented online and runs September to December on the Manitoba Arts Network website. Claude's "Slumberland" won first place in the painting category.

Her newest pursuit is creating water colour earrings. She says, "These are fun to do in between larger projects. My goal in the next year is to do some larger works."

She encourages every person who has an interest in art to just go for it and pursue their passion and have fun without comparing themselves to others. She says, "There are so many different styles of "artwork." Find the one that suits you and appreciate the ones that are different than yours. Join an art group of some type."

Mural at LdB Senior School – Focus on Local Art – Issue #113

October 1, 2021 by [Bill C](#)

September 2021

Mural at Lac du Bonnet Senior School

For this month, Winnipeg River Arts Council would like to highlight a mural project at Lac du Bonnet Senior School, created with the help of talented WRAC artist, Annie Bergen. The following article was written and submitted by Ms. Rebecca Reynolds and Mrs. Amy Usackis, teachers at LdBSS.

On the eve of September 15 (2021), under the careful gaze of a late summer Waxing Gibbous, Changing Leaves moon, a stunning piece of student artwork was installed high upon the western wall of the Lac du Bonnet Senior School gymnasium. The mural is the latest addition to an ongoing project involving over one hundred Indigenous and non-Indigenous LDBSS students, teacher leaders, staff, community members, local tradesmen, knowledge keepers, and artist mentor, Annie Bergen.



Transformational change of space is at the heart of our ever-evolving project. We hope that while transforming the spaces around us, we will transform ourselves, creating pathways towards Truth, Reconciliation, Reclamation, and Onjisay Aki (A Change of Heart).

The inspiration for our 16 foot round mural is Ogichi Tibakonigaywin, Kihche Othasowewin, Tako Wakan: The Great Binding Law, written at Turtle Lodge by Oshoshko Bineshiikwe – Blue Thunderbird Woman, Osawa Aki Ikwe (Florence Paynter), Zoongi Gabowi Ozawa Kinew Ikwe – Strong Standing Golden Eagle Woman (Mary Maytwayashing), Nii Gaani Aki Inini – Leading Earth Man (Dave Courchene), Giizih-Inini (Dr. Harry Bone); Zhonga-giizhing – Strong Day (Wally Swain), Naawakomigowiinin (Dennis White Bird), Kamintowe Pemohetet – Spirit Walker (D'Arcy Linklater), and Mah Pe Ya Mini (Henry Skywater).

The Great Binding Law teaches us that “Mother Earth is alive and she is the Original Mother. She has a living spirit and she is sacred.” She “gives us everything we need to live” and “whether we realize it or not, there is an invisible umbilical cord that always connects us to our Original Mother, our life source.” We are connected to her, as are all Natural Laws and other living beings. This is why Mother Earth is the central figure and focal point of our mural's imagery.

Our mural depicts the principle that we are all connected. We are all related. Everything and everyone. In Nehetho, “Waskaawe Siweno means – Everything around you.” In Dakota, “Mitakuye Owasana means – All my relations – we are related.” The Anishinabe acknowledge, “Nikanisitook – all my relatives in life.” We are related “to the stars in the sky, the birds, the fish, the animals, and plant life.” And so, we created space for relationships to guide our creative processes from beginning to end.

The first step of our process was to share the story of The Great Binding Law with students. Together, they went on to consider, collect, and cite the words that meant the most to them. Their idea boards included: Mother Earth, Tree of Life, rising and setting sun, cycles of the moon, balance, harmony, spirit, seeds of life, air, water, land, medicines, plants, animals, ancestors, and so much more. Students used their idea boards to find, create, and collect a vast array of images and imagery which they eventually combined to create our final representation.

Local artist and gentle mentor, Annie Bergan, joined our artist collective in the LDBSS Home Ec. lab for 12 days of sketching, chalking, outlining, painting, layering, shading, blending, and highlighting. Each day our painting became more like a living being, growing, changing, evolving, becoming. The strawberries, sage and marsh grasses grew, providing nourishment and shelter for bees, caterpillars, and butterflies. The sturgeon, northern pike, and pickerel swam by. Goose, duck, owl, and raven flew in, perching, drifting, watching, and caring for their young. The sun and the moon and the stars filled the sky. Moose, deer, and fox arrived. Our teachers (Buffalo, Eagle, Bear, Sabe, Beaver, Wolf, and Turtle) presented themselves, encircling Mother Earth who stands tall like The Sacred Tree in the centre of the Circle of Life.

As it is only “the human being that has severed its natural connection to Mother Earth and lost its connection to her Natural Laws,” the people came last. But, they are depicted as being led by Crazy Horse up a rainbow path, coming back to Mother Earth. They are returning home on a “peaceful journey” to “love the land, connect to the land, and take care of the land.” They are learning to walk a new and ancient path, together. They have chosen to “stand strong now in alliance with Mother Earth.” Through the echoes of time, they have heard the call of great Lakota leader, Crazy Horse who said:

“Upon suffering beyond suffering,

The Red Nation shall rise again.

It will be a blessing for a sick world

A world filled with broken promises, selfishness and separations

A world longing for light again!

I see a time, long after the skies have grown dark and dirty

And the Water has become bad-smelling

I see a time of seventh generation,

When all the colours of mankind

Will gather under the Sacred Tree of Life

And one whole Earth will become one Circle again.”

They are on their way. And, so are we.

With Words and Wisdom from The Great Binding Law, written at Turtle Lodge

Jane Marion – Focus on Local Artists – Issue #114

November 12, 2021 by [Bill C](#)

October 2021

For this month, Winnipeg River Arts Council features visual artist Jane Marion, who works with alcohol ink and resin. She paints on special paper made for these inks, and also uses medium density fibreboard, gesso coated wood panels, and porcelain.

Pinawa has always been Marion's home, or second home. Sylvia and Bud Bjornson, her grandparents were Pinawa pioneers, and her great grandfather, Oscar Bjornson, was a former Member of Legislative Assembly for Lac du Bonnet. The story goes that he influenced the location of the AECL facility.

When her mother was in elementary school, her grandparents moved from Lac du Bonnet to Pinawa. For most of her education, Marion attended school in Pinawa. After her grandmother died, she lost her direct connection to this community. But, when the pandemic upended school and work routines, her family decided to relocate from Winnipeg. Marion says, "My daughter is now a fourth generation Pinawanian."

As a young person, Marion felt inspired by the landscape of the Whiteshell and art teacher Vivian Thompson as her mentor. When introduced to the Group of Seven artists, Marion fell in love with Canadian impressionism. These days, she sees colour combinations in a deeper way, and appreciates the beauty in our natural environment. She gravitates to bold colour and less realism, and loves the abstraction of fluid art, and the way it requires a blend of purpose and play. Even if just an abstract skyline or what they call, "dreamscapes," she often returns to landscape forms. Marion's godfather, Allan Geske, a Winnipeg printmaker, also inspired her, and his line work influenced her early works.

She says, "According to Iris Murdoch says art is an 'unselfing.' It can be therapeutic to let go and see where the painting takes me. Whatever's going on in life, making art is total meditation."

In 2016, she discovered alcohol inks while shopping with her daughter for craft supplies. Back home, they played with them together. She says, "I'd painted in oils before I found inks, but as a young mom felt the oils were too messy. Then I started watching tutorials, and experimenting, and found myself moving from paintings to making coasters, mugs, and more functional art. It became an obsession. The colours and the inks' interactions with heat and alcohol create so many different possibilities."

Recently, she started an online course on abstract composition to see if she could use formal theories to bring something fresh to the ink and paper. Also, she has become an ink retailer and hopes to offer workshops in Pinawa. She'd love to connect with anyone who'd like to give inks a try.

She says, "It's a big step to put art into the world. When someone in the UK asked me to do a commission, I thought it was a scam or a joke, but they ended up buying four pieces. I have now sold art to folks in almost all provinces. I feel honoured when people respond."

When Marion lived in Winnipeg, she started Midnight Ink to sell her art but now that she's back in her hometown, she has joined the Pinawa Art Gallery. She has only a few pieces at the gallery but can do commissions upon request. Her website is www.midnightink.ca

"Making art really carried me through the pandemic. If I had compared myself to others as I did with oils or drawing, I would have just packed it up. I failed constantly and still make horrible mistakes. So many artists give up too soon, or are too shy to share their work. So many hidden talents will never be seen. Finding a mentor, taking risks, being vulnerable is hard. But when aspects of our identities are validated by others, it brings us deeper into connection."



Jane Marion

Pinawa Art Gallery – Focus on Local Art – Issue #115

December 6, 2021 by [Bill C](#)

November 2021

For this month, Winnipeg River Arts Council features Pinawa Art Gallery and its thought-provoking exhibition, “Confluence – Rural Artists Emerging through Waves of Isolation.” This travelling display, presented in four rooms, showcases the work of visual artists: Cyndi Wiebe from Île-des-Chênes, Alexandra Ross from Mitchell, Kelly Murray from Stead, and Kelly Klick from Pinawa. Kelly Murray and Kelly Klick are both members of WRAC.

The exhibition began on November 20th and ends on December 6th. In partnership with MAWA (Mentoring Artists for Women’s Art), the Manitoba Arts Network initiated this series via their Rural Art Mentorship Program, a ten-month program for emerging Eastman artists, mentored by Winnipeg-based artist Brenna George. The resulting tour included exhibitions at Art Gallery of Southwest Manitoba in Brandon (September), Pinawa Art Gallery (November), and Manawaka Gallery in Neepawa (January of 2022).



Kelli Klick

Kelly Klick spearheaded the organization of Pinawa exhibition, and reached out to Manitoba Arts Council for funding. She also made herself available outside of gallery hours for anyone who wanted to experience the RAMP art. She says, “It was a community effort and an honour to work with these artists, and the gallery board, to host this exhibition.”

Participant Alexandra Ross says, “As a rural artist, it’s been incredible to get this opportunity to exhibit all over rural Manitoba. In Pinawa, I presented on the opening night panel and did a clay workshop on November 27. Also, I got paid CARFAC standard fees for my work so I felt valued as a professional. This doesn’t always happen in rural areas.”

Here’s short overview of the RAMP artwork. Kelly Murray’s expressive paintings focus on water in many forms and places. Cyndi Wiebe’s art depict pages from Molly & Space for Adventure, the children’s book she wrote and illustrated. Alexandra Ross created a large installation from clay shards, driftwood, and industrial material, alongside a complicated lino print and self-portrait photos in different poses and clothing. Kelly Klick, a former midwife, produced a multi-piece installation made from woven parts, lace, paintings, and sculpture that tell the story of birth and the role of the placenta.



Alexandra Ross



by Cyndi Wiebe

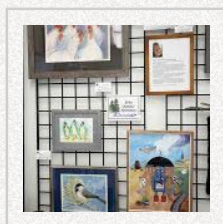
Guest comments include: “So different, so wonderful and so inspiring! – Lots of imagination. -I was incredibly pulled into your ‘worlds.’ – Diverse creative talent. – Love all the artists’ visions and fabulous artwork. – Each display brought different opportunity for reflections and energy and feelings.”

If you haven’t visited the Pinawa Art Gallery, located at the LB Lewis Centre, 24 Aberdeen Avenue, now is a great time to go. It opens on Monday, Thursday and Saturday, 10:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. and showcases the work of many local artists from Pinawa and surrounding areas. PAG artists range from novice to emerging and established artists. Mediums of the various creators include: painting (oil, acrylic and water colour), pottery and sculpting, photography, fibre art, and jewelry.

PAG welcomes visitors to drop by, have a cup of coffee and a chat, or just browse. It’s a great place to find unique artwork as well as one-of-a-kind pieces of jewelry and fashion accessories. They also offer a range of art and photography cards, perfect for gifting or framing.



by Alexandra Ross



Gallery Art



Gallery Art



by Kelly Klick

Sandra Lee – Focus on Local Artists – Issue #116

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For this month, Winnipeg River Arts Council features visual artist Sandra Lee. Originally from Thunder Bay, Ontario, she has lived in Winnipeg, Stonewall, St. Andrews, Tyndall, and the Brokenhead area. Just over two years ago, she moved to River Hills.

Lee is a graphic designer, who also paints with water colours and acrylics, and creates hand-built clay masks and bowls. Presently, she works part-time in the film industry where she buys and/or makes movie and film props that art or design related.

When asked what inspires her, she says, “Mostly education and experimenting. Right now, I’m enjoying the open clay studio at the Pinawa Art Gallery.”

In high school, Lee took a commercial art program and then entered a college program for fashion design. She admits, with a laugh, “I didn’t finish that program. There was too much sewing.”



Sandra Lee



Over the years, Lee has taken many courses in art, design, and technology, and has also worked as a graphic designer. As well, she attended college and university to become a high school teacher. For more than two-and-half decades, she taught graphic design, illustration and painting. Three years ago, she retired from teaching but she still likes to share her knowledge with family and friends. She says, “We have craft and paint sessions in my porch – Front Porch Studio in River Hills.”

This past fall, she made over 30 paper mâché masks for “Dark Harvest” which was partly shot in Beausejour. If all goes according to plan, in the fall of 2022, this movie will appear in theatres everywhere.

If it’s a professional job, such as a prop for a film, she does a lot of research. If it’s for her own satisfaction as an artist, many things inspire her: nature, cultures, films, travel and visiting art galleries and museums.

Lee has never entered any work for prizes, and, except for displaying her art on her garage walls in the summer, she has never formally exhibited anything. But, she says, “My prop creations are featured in the films I work on and this is always fun to watch.”

To sum it all up, she says, “At this stage in my life, I am fortunate that I can pick and choose what I want to do with my art and design. I choose fun projects that bring me joy and not stress. The best part – I keep learning new things and meeting new people!”

