

Growing Up

In childhood, we press our nose to the pane,
looking out. In memories of childhood, we press our
nose to the pane, looking in.

Robert Brault, author

Artists' Statement:

When we were little, there was promise of a time when we would be "all grown up". We thought it might happen with the first pair of big girl panties, or on the first day of school, or perhaps even on the occasion of the first errand we were allowed to run on our own. Frustratingly, it seemed that as soon as those milestones were passed there were new ones in their place. Grown up was then signified by a first bra, the switch from a desk to a locker, or a first kiss. Still, new challenges presented themselves. Over time we've come to acknowledge that the process of growing up is a never-ending one, and we've looked at, and laughed at, moments when we thought the process was complete. We are adults now, but we know that we will never be "grown ups".

As illustrators our work is strongly tied to story telling. Though we work in different mediums and different styles, we are unified in our approach to art-making; for us, a picture begins with a story. We hope that the stories we have shared will prompt you to recall some of your own. Perhaps you will remember moments when you could feel yourself growing up.

Davey Thompson
Amanda Woodward
Crystal Driedger

Growing Up presents the work of Crystal Driedger, Davey Thompson and Amanda Woodward, three Edmonton-based illustrative artists who, through their paintings, reflect on their personal childhood memories. While some of these memories are 'laugh-out-loud' and others bitter-sweet, all invite the viewer into the artists' lives and allow viewers to reflect on their own histories. Though each work is a complete story on its own, together the paintings are like the pages of a book. Leading the viewer from the 'beginning' to the 'end' they demonstrate that the process of 'growing up' is a never-ending one and that, though we all hope to become adults, we will never really be 'grown-ups'.

Growing Up was curated by Shane Golby and Alix Walsh and organized by the Art Gallery of Alberta for the Alberta Foundation for the Arts Travelling Exhibition Program. The AFA Travelling Exhibition program is supported by the Alberta Foundation for the Arts.



The Alberta Foundation for the Arts Travelling Exhibition Program

Travelling Exhibition

2010-2012 Season

The Art Gallery of Alberta is pleased to present this travelling exhibition for the 2010-2012 season. Currently the Art Gallery of Alberta serves up to 50 venues in approximately 35 communities. Exhibitions on tour from the Art Gallery of Alberta easily adapt to space requirements of smaller venues: schools, libraries, museums, health care centres and other community facilities. The exhibitions are organized in such a manner as to make unpacking, packing, hanging and shipping as easy as possible. Along with the exhibition, each venue receives an Educational Interpretive Guide for the show. These materials enable teachers to use the exhibition within the school curriculum.

The Alberta Foundation for the Arts Collection is the primary source of works featured in the travelling exhibitions. Other sources for exhibitions may include community partners, archives, private collections and loans from artists. Each year we welcome new venues to enrich their community art through the Alberta Foundation for the Arts Travelling Exhibition Program.

Our Thanks

The Artists:

Crystal Driedger
Davey Thompson
Amanda Woodward

The Alberta Foundation for the Arts and to the many individuals, organizations and communities who contribute to the success of the the Alberta Foundation for the Arts Travelling Exhibition Program each year.

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Front Cover Images:

Amanda Woodward, *Rooted*, 2009, Acrylic on canvas,
Courtesy of the artist

Davey Thompson, *First Kiss*, 2009, Watercolour on paper,
Courtesy of the artist

Crystal Driedger, *Sprinkler Dash*, 2009, Acrylic on canvas,
Courtesy of the artist



The Alberta Foundation for the Arts
Travelling Exhibition Program

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Robert Brault, poet

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Crystal Driedger
Sleepover, 2009
Acrylic on canvas
Courtesy of the artist

For each of the artists in the exhibition **Growing Up** an image begins with a story or a memory. In the paintings by Crystal Driedger, her stories are presented in a very literal fashion; the viewer can generally understand the story simply by looking at the image. For the most part the stories presented are also positive, boisterous and fun-loving ones. Playing in the lawn sprinkler on a hot summer day, holding a precious kitten, or gossiping with a bunch of friends as seen in the painting Sleepover, are all happy memories. The artist's method of presentation also creates the impression of happy childhood events. The use of rounded cartoon-like figures and bright pastel colours give the images a cheerful feeling which reflects most of the events shared with the viewer.

Some of Driedger's happy memories are expressed in her writing concerning individual art pieces in the exhibition. In speaking of the work *Becoming Mother*, for example, she writes:

The birth of my first child was the most life-changing event I've ever experienced. Labor is hard work, but if you let it it's so beautiful it could make you cry just thinking back on it. When my water broke late at night this May, I took a deep breath and allowed the process to overtake me. Sixteen hours passed swiftly, and before I knew it my exhausted body was completely naked for the entire world to see and my son was being placed in my arms. He was covered in all manner of things that would normally make me pale, but all I wanted to do was kiss him, stare at him and hold him. He became, in that moment, the



Crystal Driedger
Becoming Mother, 2009
Acrylic on Canvas
Courtesy of the artist



Amanda Woodward
Orange Sniffer, 2009
Acrylic on canvas
Courtesy of the artist

The artworks presented in **Growing Up** are illustrative in nature. Like illustrations each image tells a story or presents an idea. Also, each artist has produced artworks in the same medium and style used in the creation of their illustrative projects. The difference between their illustrative works and the paintings presented in this exhibition lies in the intent behind the creation of the works.

In illustration the story or product illustrated is more important than the actual image. The illustrator is confined to the limits placed on them and does not have complete artistic control. Also, illustration is created to be reproduced, become a page in a book, or occur on a poster or advertisement.

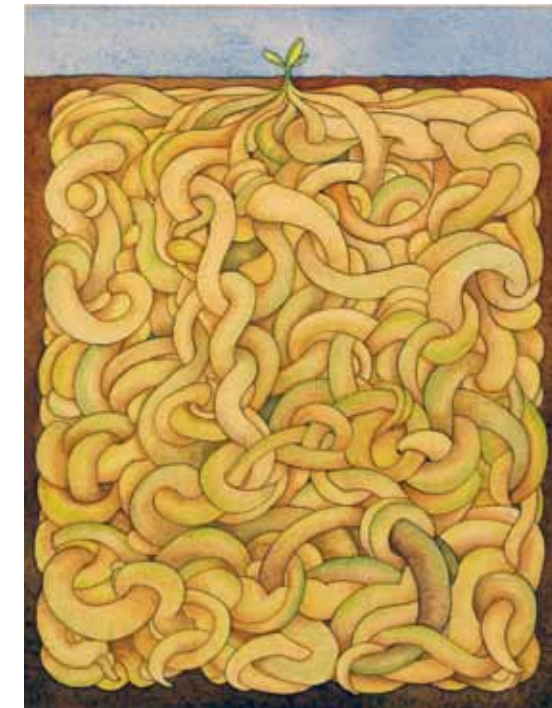
The difference between illustration and fine art is clearly expressed by comparing two works by Amanda Woodward. In the image for *NORTHCOUNTRY FAIR*, the artist is illustrating and advertising an event. The use of text is extremely important for this purpose and the composition and the colours used serve to frame and accentuate the text.

In the work *Orange Sniffer* the artist's intent is much different. While she utilizes the same illustrative style used in the poster, she is presenting a personal memory rather than trying to advertise something. Text plays no part in this and she thus has greater freedom as concerns composition and overall imagery. As expressed by the artist concerning this painting:

Smell can bring strong associations with past memories and childhood experiences. For me, the smell of fresh citrus brings me back to trips to the playground and half-time at after-school soccer games.



Amanda Woodward
NORTHCOUNTRY FAIR, Poster
Courtesy of the artist



Davey Thompson
Growing Up, 2009
Watercolour on paper
Courtesy of the artist

While both Crystal Driedger and Amanda Woodward present quite literal images of events and memories from the past, Davey Thompson's work is often allegorical in nature. This is seen clearly in the painting *Growing Up*. As described by the artist concerning this image:

So much of the growing that we do takes place privately, below the surface. Decisions and actions that seem to come from nowhere can be years in the making, and it is often remarkable how much work is expended in effecting the smallest of changes. For this reason, I feel it is important to recognize even the humblest achievements; there is no knowing the effort that was involved.

Rather than drawing a literal representation of the thought patterns that go into the making of decisions, the artist chose to portray this symbolically. She uses the tangled roots and tiny shoot of a plant to represent the effort and complexity involved in even the smallest actions.

When Thompson does create a more literal representation of the story she is relating, her work still differs from the other artists in the exhibition by being more introspective in nature and 'quieter' in mood. This is partly a result of the actual image: many of Thompson's works concern a solitary figure or element rather than a multitude of characters. This difference in mood, however, is also created by the artist's choice of medium and artistic technique. The use of flat washes and subtle tonal gradations of watercolour give the images a 'softer' quality than expressed by the other works in the exhibition which make use of either more expressive lines or brighter colours to relate the stories told.



Davey Thompson
Floating Dock, 2009
Watercolour on Paper
Courtesy of the artist