

PARTY ON!

Celebrating
50

years of the Alberta Foundation for the Arts Collection



1. Carole Bondaroff, *A Performance Suite - Philharmonic*, 1988, coloured etching on paper, 14 x 18 inches. Collection of the Alberta Foundation for the Arts.



2. Carole Bondaroff, *A Performance Suite - Shumka Dance*, 1988, coloured etching on paper, 14 x 18 inches. Collection of the Alberta Foundation for the Arts.

The Party Goes On and On! Creating Artwork in a Series

Introduction

Professional artists often create art in a series. Sometimes, the pieces of work in a series are united by a common subject matter or **aesthetic** (how the work looks visually). For **figurative** artists, unity could include a common subject, theme or narrative. Other artists may achieve unity through cohesive compositions and craftsmanship. In some cases, a series needs to be presented together to make sense or be complete (such is the case for a diptych or triptych). In other cases, the work from a series can be exhibited separately and still make sense to the audience. The latter is the case for artists Carole Bondaroff and Irene McCaugherty, each of whom have produced series' of work based on celebratory scenes and special occasions.

The key to the success of any series is an overall feeling of unity in theme and composition. McCaugherty and Bondaroff achieve this in varying ways. Bondaroff's *Performance Suites* are presented with the same compositional format: a stage with varying performances taking place. Notice how each of the prints feature a prominent theatrical curtain within a compositional archway? The work is also unified

through a limited colour palette — blues and purples in *A Performance Suite - Philharmonic* and reds and oranges in *A Performance Suite - Shumka Dance* (see images 1 & 2).

In McCaugherty's series, a distinct folk art aesthetic is carried through each work. McCaugherty emphasizes the movement of whooshing fabrics and bodies with simple grey lines hovering below each dancing couples feet. The pieces are also connected by their titles (see images 3 - 5).

In this activity, participants will create their own series of three illustrations depicting a special celebration or event from memory or imagination. The narrative options are limitless but should reflect each participant's personal interests. Examples include: the step-by-step process of preparing a favourite recipe for a special occasion, a series of events that unfold over the course of a day during Ramadan, the colours and movement of people gathered at a pow-wow or the sights and scenes at a birthday party.

Objectives

- * Produce a series of watercolours that illustrate a special day using Irene McCaugherty and Carole Bondaroff's dance and musical scenes as inspiration.
- * Explore the dynamic, cohesive and unifying effects of a complementary colour scheme.
- * Develop a personal illustrative aesthetic.

Materials

- * Watercolour paper (3 sheets per participant)
- * Watercolours
- * Watercolour pencil crayons
- * Pencils
- * Sketching paper
- * Photocopier
- * Watercolour brushes (variety of sizes)
- * Container of water

Preparation

* 1 * Begin by taking a slow, detailed look at the aforementioned artwork series' and the rest of the work in the TREX exhibition *Party On! Celebrating 50 Years of the Alberta Foundation for the Arts Collection*. What do you notice in the details of the work? How does each artist use line to communicate atmosphere and narrative?

* 2 * Have a discussion or take a moment to think about the use of colour. Do complementary colour schemes (blue/orange, green/red, yellow/purple) work best to describe a situation, or would a more wild, open approach to colour do better justice to the subject matter? If you are working with school-aged students, take time to show them the range of colours and tones that can be achieved using a limited palette. For example, mix white into colours to create tone, or experiment with different levels of saturation by adding water and mixing two complementary colours to create neutrals.





left to right

3. Irene McCaugherty, *House Party Everybody Swing*, 1987, watercolour and ink on paper, 15 × 22 inches. Collection of the Alberta Foundation for the Arts.

4. Irene McCaugherty, *Ballroom Dancing*, 1989, watercolour and ink on paper. Collection of the Alberta Foundation for the Arts.

5. Irene McCaugherty, *Kitchen Sweat Everybody Dancing*, 1987, watercolour and ink on paper. Collection of the Alberta Foundation for the Arts.

Instructions

* **Step 1** * Brainstorm ideas and create preliminary thumbnail sketches for a series of work using pencil and paper. Stress the importance of unity throughout each of the three compositions.

* **Step 2** * Photocopy the thumbnail sketches and experiment with different colour schemes using watercolour pencil crayons. Which colour scheme best captures the atmosphere of your scenes?

* **Step 3** * Sketch the final three designs on an individual sheet of watercolour paper, leaving a half inch border on all sides if desired.

* **Step 4** * Fill in large areas of colour using watercolour paints and brushes.

* **Step 5** * Fill in small areas of detail with watercolour pencil crayons.

* **Step 6** * Create a title for each illustration in the series. Write these titles in pencil along the bottom margin of the border or within the images themselves.

Variations

Work collaboratively! Instead of having participants create individual series', ask them to work in groups of three. Each group will agree upon a celebratory event to illustrate and each person will be assigned one of the pages or unifying factors (title, composition, colour scheme) to work on or illustrate.

Vocabulary

Aesthetic: a set of principles underlying and guiding the work of a particular artist or artistic movement.

Figurative: representing forms that are recognizably derived from life.

Perpetual: occurring repeatedly; so frequent as to seem endless and uninterrupted.

Muted: not bright; subdued, quiet and soft.

Primary Colours: a group of colours from which all other colours can be obtained by mixing (red, blue and yellow).

Secondary Colours: a colour resulting from the mixing of two primary colours.

Colour Symbolism

Red: passion, love, anger

Orange: energy, happiness, vitality, health

Yellow: happiness, hope, deceit

Green: new beginnings, abundance, nature

Blue: calm, responsible, sadness

Purple: creativity, royalty, wealth

Discussion Questions

* Ask the participants why they chose their colour scheme. How would the mood of the illustrated series be different had they chosen other colours?

* Did participants find it challenging to work with a limited palette?

* Would participants consider creating a series of works in the future? If so, what themes would it explore and what would it look like?

* Why might an artist create a series? In what ways could an artist achieve unity throughout a series (i.e., composition, colour, titles)? What does the unity in Bondaroff and McCaugherty's series' achieve and why might this be important?

