



## Art as Inquiry

There are many reasons artists create and TREX Region 2 strives to investigate these through the exhibitions developed. Past exhibitions, for example, have looked at process, the multicultural make up of Alberta, and the physical landscape of the province. Another reason for making art is that art is often a vehicle for self-analysis, both for the artist and for those who view their work. The TREX exhibition **The Male Gaze** presents the work of three men who invite us, in these critical years of the 21st century, to consider the character and roles of men in society.

Edmonton artist **Craig Le Blanc** describes himself as a conceptually-based artist where the concept or idea behind his work influences how the work is created. As such his art practice, specifically as concerns the artistic media employed, is characterized by flexibility in approach and appearance.

Le Blanc's art practice reveals a long-standing interest in vulnerability, bravado, ego, loss and façade. In 1996 he began an extended focus on masculinity; work that examined the burden of socially constructed ideals upon what it means to be male. His works negotiate the tension between protective veneer and blatant exposure. Le Blanc creates robust and structured forms that mirror the gendered stereotypes they allude to such as aggressivity, virility and competitiveness, while simultaneously inverting those assumptions.

Raised in a household of strong, independent women, much of his work has been critical – or definitely not celebratory – of men. At the same time, however, he is also attempting to reveal the hidden and secret thoughts, fears and emotions of the male species. As expressed by the artist:



Craig Le Blanc  
*It's Hard to Man Up*, 2020  
Cedar, one shot paint  
Collection of the artist

*I want people to see that not all men are like the stereotypes: not all men are 'bad'. I don't like the public archetype of what men are or are considered to be. I want another perspective on the stereotype without sounding like I'm defending roles. I look at men/males as a species and at how society views men and bring attention to perspectives, such as men's thoughts, fears and emotions that are dismissed.*

As Le Blanc sees it he is a male, not a man, and is just trying to be responsible and take care of things in his life.

**Julian Forrest** belongs to a generation of painters based in Edmonton who are fully representational with a strong social engagement in contemporary society. His narrative subject matter has revolved around male identity and masculinity particularly as it has been represented in pop culture: film and television, comic books and video games, war and sports imagery. Forrest's paintings recycle imagery from these sources and more recently have placed them in more complex compositions with settings as diverse as modern suburbia, the old west and the wilderness.

Most often the stories Forrest relates concern men and the 'performance' of masculinity and the male figures in his works are often in costume performing gender in different ways. This interest in men as subjects in his work has two main origins. As related by the artist

*...at the most basic level I'm a man and, at the end of the day, the works are (often) autobiographical.*

He is also, however, trying to figure out other men:

*(When I moved to Alberta I was) struck by how 'masculine' Alberta and Edmonton were and I was fascinated by how men were presenting themselves (in social media postings). In Edmonton I was seeing men performing in a different way from what I was used to (and in my earlier paintings I was) trying to situate myself in relation to what I was seeing. Finally, there seems to be a moment now where straight white men are questioning themselves as traditionally masculine roles have been shared out more equally amongst genders or disappear altogether. This creates a sense of discombobulation and I like to investigate these dystopic moments.*



Julian Forrest  
*Study (Purple Dinosaur II)*, 2019  
Watercolour on paper  
Collection of the artist

As indicated by the artist, the figures in his works are always in a state of conflict or unrest and he enjoys twisting the things one expects.

**Fren Mah** is an artist and designer who works in Edmonton. For Mah, art is a collaboration of different disciplines and community insights which are used to construct concepts that inspire a deeper understanding of contemporary society.



Fren Mah  
*Fragility of the Male Ego III*, 2020  
Oil on lace  
Collection of the artist

For Mah, the TREX exhibition **The Male Gaze** involves challenging what this phrase can mean and what the future of masculinity is. For three of his works in the exhibition Mah created works made out of lace. As expressed by the artist

*These lace pieces represent the fragility and failures of traditional masculinity. I chose lace because it challenges the idea of masculinity by juxtaposing a material that is traditionally feminine. Lace also references male fragility with lace, a fabric that is inherently fragile and easily broken, being broken and fragile like a man's inability to empathize and to accept that he is not entitled to everything, and his reliance on violence when he feels snubbed or laughed at.*

Painted on the lace are phrases which reference aspects of masculinity. As related by this artist, many of these phrases are ones that he has heard or had to deal with personally as a young boy or man:

*For example, I still remember feelings of frustration as a young child one day when I was told that "Boys don't cry" in the playground. These phrases still create emotional boundaries in men and boys, hinder self-expression and are psychologically unhealthy.*

For Mah, such phrases are a gross oversimplification of the multi-dimensionality of masculinity and underestimate the capacity of male leadership.

The exhibition **The Male Gaze** is travelling Alberta from September, 2020, until September, 2022.

# Exhibition Schedule    September, 2020 to January 2021

Exhibition	Sept. 3 - Sept. 30	Oct. 8 - Nov. 4	Nov. 12 - Dec. 9	Dec. 17 - Jan. 20
<b>The Male Gaze</b> The travelling exhibition <b>The Male Gaze</b> presents the work of three male artists from Edmonton who investigate male subjects and concerns as themes in their work; exploring concepts of gender and what it means or could mean to be 'a man'. Curated by Shane Golby, Art Gallery of Alberta	Stuart MacPherson Public Library 8702-91 Ave., Lac La Biche, AB., Contact: Kristy Arsenault Ph: 780-T0A 2C0	Mother Margaret Mary School 2010 Leger Rd., Edmonton, AB., Contact: Nicole Thauvette Ph: 780-988-2279	University of Alberta - Augustana Campus 4901-46 Ave., Camrose, AB., Contact: Nancy Goebel Ph: 780-679-1189	Alice Melnyk Library 5009 Diefenbaker Ave., Two Hills, AB., Contact: Betty Lou Kobe Ph: 780-657-3553
<b>...fire and frost</b> The exhibition <b>...fire and frost</b> presents the work of three contemporary artists who document past and present experiences, objects and places to awaken memories universal to us all. Curated by Shane Golby, Art Gallery of Alberta	University of Alberta - Students' Union Building 8900-114 Street Edmonton, AB., Contact: Arlo Grundberg Ph: 780-492-1479	Concordia University of Edmonton 7128 Ada Blvd., Edmonton, AB., Contact: JoAnne Iddings Ph: 780-479-9334	Viking Municipal Library 4920-53 Ave., Viking, AB., Contact: Barb Chrystian Ph: 780-336-4992	Barrhead Public Library 5103-53 Ave., Barrhead, AB., Contact: Elaine Dickie Ph: 780-674-8519
<b>The Rush and Roar!</b> The 1920s were a pivotal decade in human history, ushering in political, economic, social and cultural changes which continue to impact contemporary society. This exhibition presents art works from the collection of the Alberta Foundation for the Arts which reflect these changes and provide context for the tumult of this present time. Curated by Shane Golby, Art Gallery of Alberta	Concordia University of Edmonton 7128 Ada Blvd., Edmonton, AB., Contact: JoAnne Iddings Ph: 780-479-9334	H.W. Pickup School 3505-58 Ave., Drayton Valley, AB., Contact: Scott Kupsch Ph: 780-542-4495	Calmar Public Library 4705-50 Ave., Calmar, AB., Contact: Susan Parkinson Ph: 780-985-3472	Stuart MacPherson Public Library 8702-91 Ave., Lac La Biche, AB., Contact: Kristy Arsenault Ph: 780-T0A 2C0
<b>Nitssaakita'paispinnaan: We Are Still In Control</b> This exhibition honours the well of life in the place the artists in the exhibition live: Siksikaissksahkoyi (Blackfoot land/territory).This exhibition features work by three contemporary Blackfoot artists whose works are inspired by Blackfoot ways of life, places, and knowledge. Curated by Troy Patenaude and Kent Ayoungman for the Art Gallery of Alberta <b>Sycrude</b>	Redwater School 5023-50 Ave., Redwater, AB., Contact: Kyla Graham Ph: 780-942-3625	Bigstone Medical Clinic Wabasca-Desmarais, AB., Contact: Angela de Varennes Ph: 780-509-0235	H.E. Bourgoin School 4313-39 St. Bonnyville, AB., Contact: Cheryl Edwards Ph: 780-826-3322	Goes to Alberta Society of Artists TREX Region 3 Calgary
<b>Woodlands</b> Utilizing paint, natural materials and seed beads, the works featured in this exhibition celebrate the wonder of Alberta's boreal forest and the remarkable perspectives, sense of place and cultural practices of contemporary Indigenous artists. Curated by Sharon Kootenay and Shane Golby <b>Sycrude</b>	Robert Rundle School 50A Grosvenor Blvd. St. Albert, AB., Contact: Suzanne Weir Ph: 780-459-4475	Onoway Elementary School 5108 Lac St. Anne Trail North Onoway, AB., Contact: Twyla Lesko Ph: 780-968-5209	Leduc Jr. High School 4412-48 Ave., Leduc, AB., Contact: Jodi Temple Ph: 780-986-3184	Retires Art Gallery of Alberta TREX Region 2
<b>Turtle Island</b> The Woodland School of Art, developed by Indigenous artist Norval Morrisseau, has influenced Indigenous artists throughout Canada since the 1960s. The exhibition <b>Turtle Island</b> bears witness to this as this style is expressed in the drawings and paintings of three contemporary Indigenous artists from central Alberta. Curated by Shane Golby, Art Gallery of Alberta <b>Sycrude</b>	In Development Art Gallery of Alberta TREX Region 2			Rideau Park School 10605-42 Ave., NW Edmonton, AB., Contact: Jane Zaiane Ph: 780-437-0010
<b>Portraits in Light</b> The exhibition <b>Portraits in Light</b> features photographic works by Lethbridge artist Mala Miller. Through her work Miller raises questions surrounding representation, cultural identity, the individual, the family, and the community. Curated by Xanthe Isbister, Esplanade Arts and Heritage Centre	H.W. Pickup School 3505-58 Ave., Drayton Valley, AB., Contact: Scott Kupsch Ph: 780-542-4495	Beaumont Library 5700-49 Street Beaumont, AB., Contact: Laura Winton Ph: 780-929-2665	Slave Lake Public Library 50 Main Street SW Slave Lake, AB., Contact: Kendra McRee Ph: 780-849-5250	Archbishop MacDonald CJHS 14219-109 Ave., Edmonton, AB., Contact: Jonathan Eschak Ph: 780-451-1470
<b>Around the Block</b> This exhibition features works by Ted Rinkel, a self-trained artist from Calgary who creates animated three-dimensional sculptures which illustrate familiar narratives and provide a window into the colourful personality of their creator. Curated by Shannon Bingeman, Alberta Society of Artists	Killam Public Library 5017-49 Ave., Killam, aB., Contact: Barb Cox Ph: 780-385-3032	Warburg School 5412-50 Street Warburg, AB., Contact: Janet Sarvas Ph: 780-848-2822	High Park School 40 Highridge Way Stony Plain, AB., Contact: Amy Collett Ph: 780-963-2222	Neerlandia Public Library 4918-50 Street Neerlandia, AB., Contact: Brenda Gelderman Ph: 780-674-5384
<b>Curbside Museum</b> The exhibition <b>Curbside Museum</b> was originally designed as a piece of public art in downtown Canmore – a space of ideas and contemplation for those who stopped by the installation. This exhibition was created in collaboration with artist and curator Enza Apa. Curated by Danielle Ribar, Art Gallery of Grande Prairie	Belgravia Elementary School 11605-74 Ave., Edmonton, AB., Contact: Brent Irving Ph: 780-435-5560	Lakedell School RR#1, Westeros, AB., Contact: Donald Teplyske Ph: 780-586-2415	W.P. Wagner School 6310 Wagner Rd. NW Edmonton, AB., Contact: Karly Kulpa Ph: 780-469-1315	Warburg School 5412-50 Street Warburg, AB., Contact: Janet Sarvas Ph: 780-848-2822
<b>Vital Patterns</b> The exhibition <b>Vital Patterns</b> explores patterns that are common to both humans and the natural world. This exhibition features works from the collection of the Alberta Foundation for the Arts and includes works by artists Clint Wilson, Doris Freadrich, April Dean and William Laing. Curated by Danielle Ribar, Art Gallery of Grande Prairie	Viking Municipal Library 4920-53 Ave., Viking, AB., Contact: Barb Chrystian Ph: 780-336-4992	Two Hills School 4806-51 Ave., Two Hills, AB., Contact: Mirela Olah Ph: 780-657-3383	Ardmore School 4801-48 Ave., Ardmore, AB., Contact: Evelyn Bourbeau Ph: 780-826-5144	H.W. Pickup School 3505-58 Ave., Drayton Valley, AB., Contact: Scott Kupsch Ph: 780-542-4495



Craig Le Blanc  
*Forgot to be a Man*, 2020  
Cedar, one shot paint  
Collection of the artist



Fren Mah  
*My Best Friend*, 2020  
Oil on canvas  
Collection of the artist

*sightlines* is a newsletter from the Art Gallery of Alberta and is published to promote awareness for the Alberta Foundation for the Arts Travelling Exhibition Program. For information contact Shane Golby, Manager/Curator by telephone 780.428.3830 or email [shane.golby@youraga.ca](mailto:shane.golby@youraga.ca)