



Crossing Borders

One of the greatest gifts of art is that it takes viewers outside of themselves: introducing people, places, and ideas that may be unfamiliar or, in some cases, totally unknown. In December TREX Region 2 sent out the new exhibition Turtle Island. This exhibition, sponsored by Syncrude Canada Ltd., features the work of three Indigenous artists from central Alberta who, through their works, take viewers on a journey into ways of seeing and being in the world different from the Euro-North American beliefs and modes of artistic expression viewers may be used to.

The exhibition Turtle Island features the work of Aguenus (Angela Hall), Brandon Atkinson and Jessica Desmoulin; artists who, to varying degrees, bear witness to the importance of the Woodland style of art making in their work. The Woodland style is based on traditional artistic representations used by Indigenous ancestors. The rudiments of this style are expressive and symbolic use of line; a system for transparency; interconnecting lines that determine relationships in terms of spiritual power; the prevalence of images of transformation; and x-ray decoration. Developed by the renown Ojibwe artist Norval Morrisseau, this style celebrates the bonds between all forms of life on Turtle Island, the name given to the earth or North America by many Indigenous groups and the place we all call home.

Aguenus (Angela Hall) was born and raised in Edmonton. Her mother is of Métis heritage while her father was Lithuanian. Largely a self-taught artist, Aguenus draws upon personal symbols, narratives and a deep spirituality to create her energetic and colourful paintings.



Aguenus
The Path of Wisdom, 2020
Mixed media on canvas
Collection of the artist

The subjects of Aguenus' art works are inspired by her visions, feelings, personal symbolism and the things she loves such as turtles, Indigenous pow-wow regalia, Indigenous beading and flowers. Her painting style is linked in many ways to the Woodland School of Art as devised by Norval Morrisseau. She believes, for example, that there are numerous dimensions inside a person or object and strives to express this in her work. One means of doing this, as seen in her imagery, is to create shapes/objects within other shapes/objects. This means of representation is seen in Morrisseau's work. The layers and energy within and between animals and plants seen in Morrisseau's paintings is also something she tries to capture in her own work. Unlike Morrisseau, who accomplished this sense of energy through 'flat' paint, however, Aguenus gives her work a real dimensionality using 3D paint and sparkles.

Brandon Atkinson is a Métis artist from Edmonton whose ancestral roots can be traced back to Wales and western Canada (Manitoba). Born in Edmonton, Atkinson was raised by his grandparents and has lived in the city for most of his life.

Atkinson states that he *...always drew. From 8 years old I knew I could always draw and when I'm drawing time just passes by.* Described as a self-taught artist, Atkinson's work is intuitive in nature: he never knows exactly what will be in a drawing or how it will turn out. As he describes himself

I'm the kind of artist that has to draw what I 'see', what I feel I should draw, not what I actually see or am told to draw. No one has ever taught me how to draw and my granny always told me to just do what I do.

In his drawing Brandon Atkinson focuses on animals and the environments in which they live. While his drawings are unique creations, based on what he feels and sees with his 'inner eye', his work

does demonstrate similarities with aspects of the Woodland school of art. This is seen in the emphasis placed on line in his work as well as the use of X-ray decoration where inner structures - environments and narratives - of people and animals are depicted.



Brandon Atkinson
Polar Warrior (Polar Bear), 2020
Archival ink, graphite on paper
Collection of the artist

Jessica Desmoulin is a mixed heritage artist who lives in Sherwood Park. While always interested in art, Desmoulin never thought of it as a 'life-goal' and never studied art in an academic way. It wasn't until she was in her mid-20s that she started taking her painting seriously as a means of mental and emotional release. As she states:

Art lets you have an outlet to make you feel 'better'.

Desmoulin approaches her artwork in an intuitive fashion, creating whatever appeals to her. Though intuitive, however, her work is inspired by actual experiences. An out-doors-person and hunter, she is motivated by the natural world and animals she encounters in her travels. If she sees a moose, for example, she will be inspired to create a painting about a moose. Rather than simply painting the animal, though, she bases her composition on the associations she makes with the animal. She associates swans, for example, with being 'motherly' and so the artwork she creates will reflect this in some way.

While her artwork brings her closer to the natural world, it has also brought her more into contact with her Indigenous heritage. Though she is of mixed heritage (Ojibwe and white), Jessica Desmoulin did not identify as indigenous until her mid-twenties. Also, while her reserve is in Ontario - the birthplace of the Woodland School of Art - she did not know what the Woodland influence was until someone viewing her work made the connection. Since making these discoveries she has been learning about her heritage and has started connecting Ojibwe stories to the animals she encounters and how her thoughts about the animals connect to the traditional stories.

As an artist, Jessica aims to make people feel better and feel something when they view her work. As she expresses:

If something I'm doing can make someone feel better, it makes me feel better. I'm not trying to be 'spiritual'. I'm just trying to be 'connected' and help others relate to the subject in an emotional way. (My aim is) to bring connection between humanity and the natural world/animals we share the planet with.



Jessica Desmoulin
Movement and Growth, 2020
Acrylic on canvas
Collection of Jessica Desmoulin

Exhibition Schedule January to June, 2021

Exhibition	Jan. 28 - Feb. 24	March 4 - April 7	April 15 - May 12	May 20 - June 16
<p>The Male Gaze The travelling exhibition The Male Gaze 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</p>	<p>Victoria School of the Arts 10210-108 Ave., Edmonton, AB., Contact: David Cameron Phone: 780-426-3010</p>	<p>Vermilion Public Library 5001-49 Ave., Vermilion, AB., Contact: Sheila Heit Phone: 780-853-4288</p>	<p>Ponoka Jubilee Library 5110-48 Ave., Ponoka, AB., Contact: Don Galway Ph: 403-783-3843</p>	<p>Lynnwood School 15451-84 Ave., Edmonton, AB., Contact: Darvin Neuplauer Phone: 780-489-4500</p>
<p>...fire and frost The exhibition ...fire and frost 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</p>	<p>Davidson Creek School 360 Davenport Drive Sherwood Park, AB., Contact: Kaye Schindeler Phone: 780-467-5557</p>	<p>Town of Ponoka #200, 5604-50 Street Ponoka, AB., Contact: Val Somerville Phone: 403-783-0130</p>	<p>Lynnwood School 15451-84 Ave., Edmonton, AB., Contact: Darvin Neuplauer Phone: 780-489-4500</p>	<p>Stuart MacPherson Public Library 8702-91 Ave., Lac La Biche, AB., Contact: Kristy Arsenault Ph: 780-623-7467</p>
<p>The Rush and Roar! 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</p>	<p>Belgravia Elementary School 11605-74 Ave., Edmonton, AB., Contact: Brent Irving Phone: 780-4435-5560</p>	<p>Leduc Public Library #2 Alexandra Park Leduc, AB., Contact: Linda McLean Phone: 780-986-2638</p>	<p>Rideau Park School 10605-42 Ave., Edmonton, AB., Contact: Jane Zaiane Phone: 780-437-0010</p>	<p>Westview Public School 407 Wolverine Drive Fort McMurray, AB, Contact: Catherine Aasen Phone: 780-791-3121</p>
<p>Turtle Island The Woodland School of Art, developed by Indigenous artist Norval Morrisseau, has influenced Indigenous artists throughout Canada since the 1960s. The exhibition Turtle Island 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</p>	<p>Lakedell School RR#1 Westerose, AB., Contact: Donald Teplyske Phone: 780-586-2415</p>	<p>Mother Margaret Mary School 2020 Leger Road Edmonton, AB., Contact: Nicole Thauvette Phone: 780-988-2279</p>	<p>Alix Mac School 4723-49 Street Alix, AB., Contact: Tammy Shapka Phone: 403-747-2778</p>	<p>St. Paul Municipal Library 4802-53 Street St. Paul, AB., Contact: Eunhye Cho Phone: 780-645-4904</p>
<p>Life Lit Up This exhibition, featuring works from the collection of the Alberta Foundation for the Arts, explores the influence of chiaroscuro and tenebrism on photographers from Alberta. Using dramatic contrasts between areas of black and white, these artists expose the 'wonder' and beauty of the ordinary. Curated by Shane Golby, Art Gallery of Alberta</p>	<p>Travelling TREC Region 3 Alberta Society of Artists Calgary</p>	<p>Onoway Public Library 4708 Lac St. Anne Trail North Onoway, AB., Contact: Kelly Huxley Phone: 780-967-2445</p>	<p>Lacombe Memorial Centre 5214-50 Ave., Lacombe, AB., Contact: Maureen MacKenzie Phone: 403-782-1258</p>	<p>Lilian Schick School 4509-54 Ave., Bon Accord, AB., Contact: Shelley Greenwood Phone: 780-921-2200</p>
<p>Portraits in Light The exhibition Portraits in Light 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</p>	<p>Stuart MacPherson Library 8702-91 Ave., Lac La Biche, AB., Contact: Kristy Arsenault Ph: 780-623-7467</p>	<p>Goes to TREC Region 1 Art Gallery of Grande Prairie Grande Prairie</p>		
<p>Women X Women Featuring works from the collection of the Alberta Foundation for the Arts, this exhibition explores the female psyche through the eyes of women artists from Alberta. Curated by Xanthe Isbister, Esplanade Arts and Heritage Centre</p>	<p>Travelling TREC Region 3 Alberta Society of Artists Calgary</p>	<p>Drayton Valley Libraries 5120-52 Street Drayton Valley, AB., Contact: Verna Wicks Phone: 780-514-2722</p>	<p>Two Hills School 4806-51 Ave., Two Hills, AB., Contact: Mirela Olah Phone: 780-657-3383</p>	<p>Beaumont Public Library 5700-49 Street Beaumont, AB., Contact: Laura Winton Phone: 780-929-2665</p>
<p>Around the Block 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</p>	<p>Ellerslie Campus 521-66 Street Edmonton, AB., Contact: Elizabeth Mauger Phone: 780-988-5556</p>	<p>Goes to TREC Region 4 Esplanade Arts and Heritage Centre Medicine Hat</p>		
<p>The Animal Responded In this exhibition artist Philip Kanwisher presents nine photographs and five drawings inspired by his encounters with wildlife in Alberta, Yukon Territory, Eastern Canada and Svalbard. This initial meeting, however, is just the beginning of his practice. Curated by Shannon Bingeman, Alberta Society of Artists</p>	<p>Travelling TREC Region 4 Esplanade Arts and Heritage Centre Medicine Hat</p>	<p>Caslan School 4903-50 Ave., Caslan, AB., Contact: David Skoglund Phone: 780-689-2118</p>	<p>Ardmore School 4801-48 Ave., Ardmore, AB., Contact: Evelyn Bourbeau Phone: 780-826-5144</p>	<p>Robina Baker School 1 Jasper Court South Devon, AB., Contact: Karalene Coleman Phone: 780-987-3705</p>
<p>Curbside Museum The exhibition Curbside Museum 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</p>	<p>Eastglen High School 11430-68 Street Edmonton, AB., Contact: Christina Hamer Phone: 780-908-0617</p>	<p>Goes to TREC Region 3 Alberta Society of Artists Calgary</p>		
<p>Vital Patterns The exhibition Vital Patterns 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</p>	<p>Richard Fowler JHS 65 Sir Winston Churchill Ave., St. Albert, AB., Contact: Brent Kieser Phone: 780-459-2644</p>	<p>Goes to TREC Region 4 Esplanade Arts and Heritage Centre Medicine Hat</p>		
<p>Permanence of Ink The use of ink in art to reflect on themes of mortality, mythology, religion and spirituality is an age-old practice. This exhibition features the works of four artists who use ink to explore these very human themes. Curated by Danielle Ribar, Art Gallery of Grande Prairie</p>	<p>Travelling TREC Region 4 Esplanade Arts and Heritage Centre Medicine Hat</p>	<p>W.P. Wagner School 6310 Wagner Rd. NW Edmonton, AB., Contact: Karly Kulpa Phone: 780-469-1315</p>	<p>Lilian Schick School 4509-54 Ave., Bon Accord, AB., Contact: Shelley Greenwood Phone: 780-921-2200</p>	<p>Eastglen High School 11430-68 Street Edmonton, AB., Contact: Christina Hamer Phone: 780-908-0617</p>