

# *Figured*

ALBERTA FOUNDATION FOR THE ARTS  
TRAVELLING EXHIBITION PROGRAM



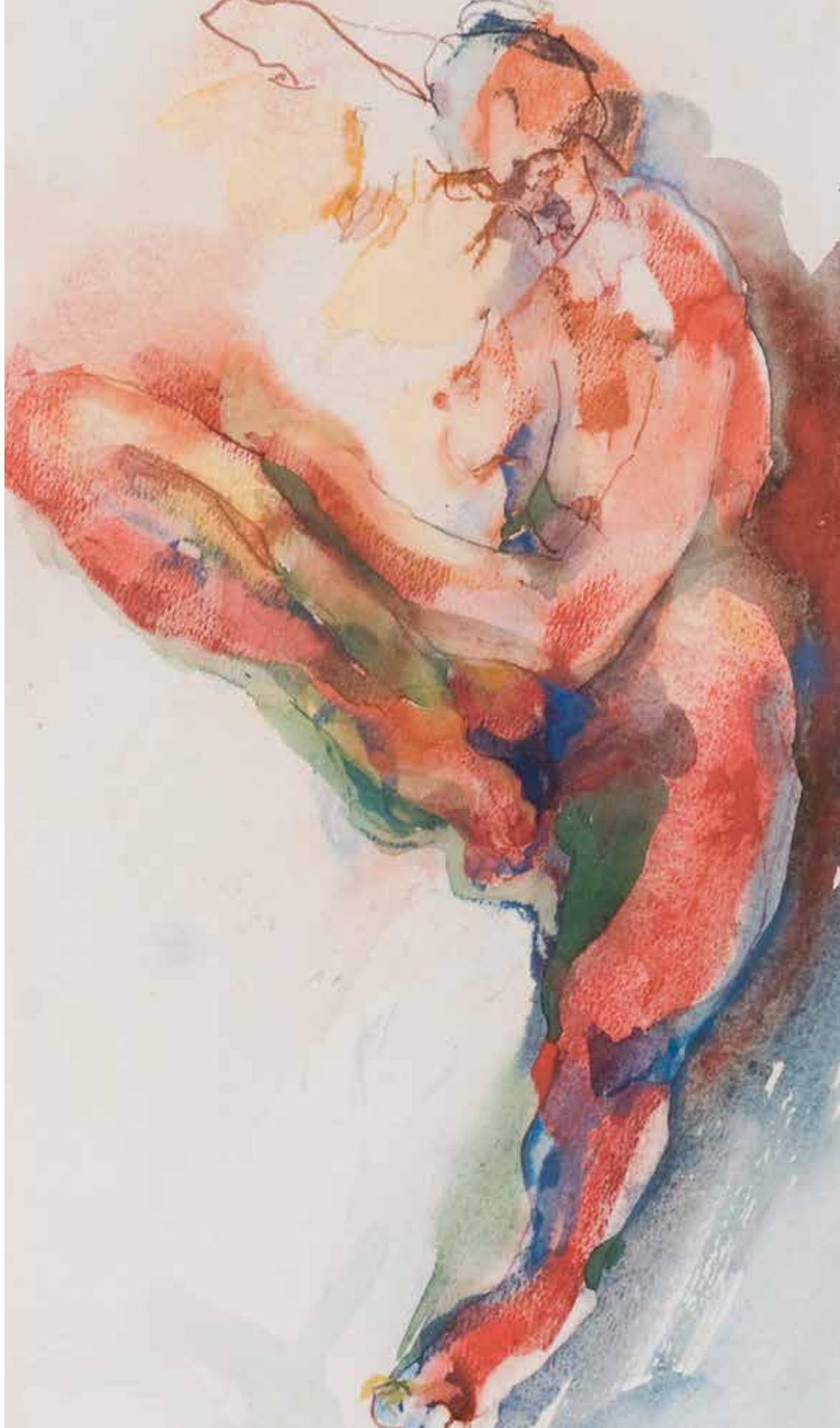
# *Figured*

ALBERTA FOUNDATION  
FOR THE ARTS TRAVELLING  
EXHIBITION PROGRAM

Interpretive Catalogue and Educators  
Guide: AFA Travelling Exhibition Program  
(Trex)

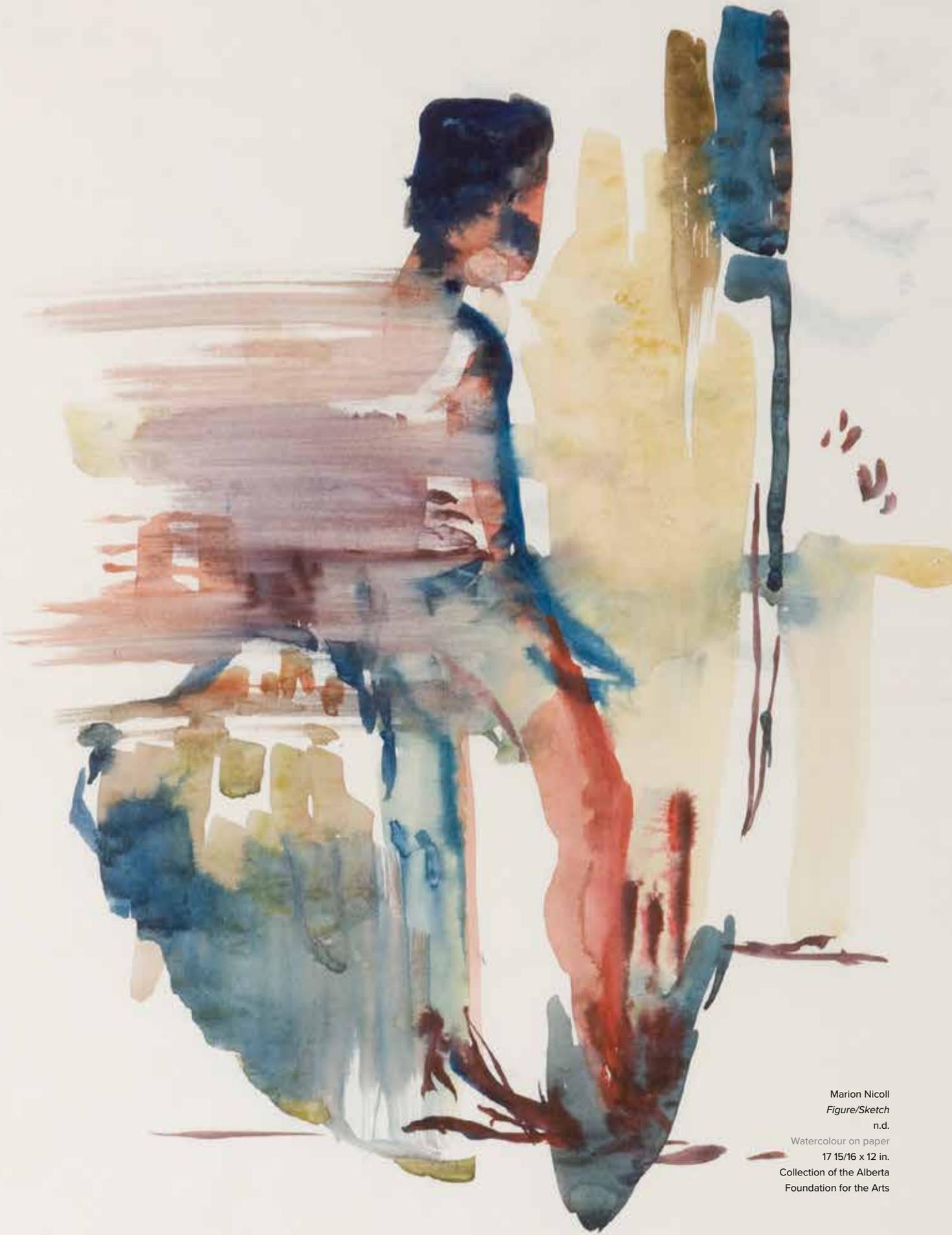
Curated by:  
Xanthe Isbister, Curator of Art  
Esplanade Arts and Heritage Centre

Kay Angliss  
*Figure in Red*  
1978  
Watercolour on paper  
18 1/2 x 11 13/16 in.  
Collection of the Alberta  
Foundation for the Arts



# Table of Contents

7	About the Esplanade
9	About the AFA Travelling Exhibition Program
11	Curatorial Statement
13	Biographies
20	List of Works
25	Introduction to Educator's Guide and Lesson Plans
27	Lesson 1: Blind Contour Drawing
31	Lesson 2: Expressive Mark-Making
37	Lesson 3: Cut-Out Figures
41	Acknowledgements



Marion Nicoll

*Figure/Sketch*

n.d.

Watercolour on paper

17 15/16 x 12 in.

Collection of the Alberta

Foundation for the Arts

## *About the Esplanade*

The Esplanade Arts and Heritage Centre is where the stories of our great collective culture are told through music and dance, painting and sculpture, plays and concerts, exhibitions and installations, artifacts and art, education programs and private events. Featuring a 700-seat main stage balcony theatre which boasts superior technology and striking design, the Esplanade is where Medicine Hat celebrates arts and heritage.

A marvel of contemporary Canadian architecture on traditional Blackfoot territory just steps from the South Saskatchewan River, the Esplanade occupies an eminent position on downtown's historic First Street Southeast. From its rooftop terrace, you can see Saamis, the dramatic shoreline escarpment which is the setting for the story of how Medicine Hat got its name.

Inside, visitors discover the vibrant Esplanade Art Gallery, the prized Esplanade Museum, the

Esplanade Studio Theatre across the lobby from the Esplanade Main Stage Theatre, the expansive Esplanade Archives and Reading Room, an art education space called the Discovery Centre and the catering-friendly Cutbanks Room.

In the northeast corner of the Esplanade grounds stands the oldest remaining brick home in Alberta, the Ewart-Duggan House. With its gingerbread trim and quaint heritage gardens, it now serves as a charming venue for select cultural events and a home away from home for artists in residence.

The Esplanade opened in celebration of Alberta's centennial in 2005 and ever since, Medicine Hat has welcomed a steady procession of artists and audiences, storytellers and story-lovers from around the region and around the globe. The celebration continues today.



Jonathan Knowlton  
*Blue Bathing Beauty*  
1992

Watercolour on paper  
22 13/16 × 19 × 1 in.

Collection of the Alberta Foundation for the Arts

# About the AFA Travelling Exhibition Program

The Alberta Foundation for the Arts (AFA) has supported a provincial travelling exhibition program since 1981. The mandate of the AFA Travelling Exhibition Program is to provide every Albertan with the opportunity to enjoy visual art exhibitions in their community. Three regional galleries and one arts organization coordinate the program for the AFA:

**Northwest Region:**

**The Art Gallery of Grande Prairie,  
Grande Prairie**

**Northeast and North Central Region:**

**The Art Gallery of Alberta, Edmonton**

**Southwest Region:**

**The Alberta Society of Artists, Calgary**

**Southeast Region:**

**The Esplanade Arts and Heritage Centre,  
Medicine Hat**

Each year, more than 300,000 Albertans enjoy many exhibitions in communities ranging from High Level in the north to Milk River in the south and virtually everywhere in between. The AFA Travelling Exhibition Program also offers educational support material to help educators integrate the visual arts into the school curriculum.

Exhibitions for the TREX program are curated from a variety of sources, including private and public collections. A major part of the program assists in making the AFA's extensive art collection available to Albertans. This growing art collection consists of over 8,000 artworks showcasing the creative talents of more than 2000 artists. As the only provincial art collection in Alberta, the AFA collection reflects the development of the vibrant visual arts community in the province and has become an important cultural legacy for all Albertans.





Illingworth Kerr  
*On the Beach #2*  
1966

Ink on paper  
11 x 13 15/16 in.  
Collection of the Alberta  
Foundation for the Arts

## Curatorial Statement

This group exhibition from the Alberta Foundation for the Arts' permanent collection features a selection of works focused on the study of the figure. The human figure provides a vast window into humanity, allowing us to document culture and ideology. It has been a source of inspiration throughout history — consider Mary Cassatt's impressionist painting *Summertime* and pop artist Andy Warhol's *Triple Elvis* — and has been depicted in almost every art period and genre.

Delicate contour lines, voluptuous strokes of watercolour and thoughtfully etched textures express the beauty of the human form throughout the works in this exhibition. Kay Angliss's watercolour on paper *Figure in Red* offers a figurative study; a model leans against a wall, one foot resting against it, a knee jutting out. Warm pink and red tones, loosely painted, highlight the form's angles and planes. *Let It Go*, by Yuriko Kitamura, another figure study, depicts the artist's masterful drawing ability. Each line of the ink on paper is thoughtfully placed, defining a seated form, head bowed, leaning into arms.

The works in this exhibition are rendered in vastly different ways but draw from the same source of inspiration: the body. In art school, students study figure drawing; live models are observed and rendered. Students visually investigate the curve of a back, the volume of a thigh muscle, the sharpness of a collarbone and the delicateness of a fingertip. The artists in this exhibition have done the same — they have studied and created expressions of humanity using the human form as their visual vehicle. From Maureen Harvey's bright watercolour painting *Reclining Male Figure* to Susan Bolinger's contemplative black-and-white ink on paper *Untitled*, the figurative works in this exhibition are fascinating and invite us into a place of universal understanding.

*Figured* spans five decades (1966 to 2004) and features twelve renowned Canadian artists: Deanna Boucher, Susan Bolinger, Pat Holland, Kay Angliss, Marion Nicoll, Illingworth Kerr, Andie Wicherts, Yuriko Kitamura, Maureen Harvey, Helen Mackie, Jonathan Knowlton and Blair Brennan.



Maureen Harvey  
*Reclining Male Figure*  
1994  
Watercolour on paper  
9 3/16 x 14 13/16 in.  
Collection of the Alberta  
Foundation for the Arts

# Biographies

## *Kay Angliss*

Kay Angliss was born and raised on a farm in British Columbia. She graduated from the Vancouver School of Art (now Emily Carr University of Art and Design) after four years of study. Following this, she continued her educational pursuits by attending numerous workshops, including the Emma Lake Artists' Workshop at the University of Saskatchewan, as well as printmaking and ceramics workshops at the University of Calgary, where she studied under Shane Weare (England), Andrew Stazic (New York, New York) and Hal Reiger (Mill Valley, California).

Angliss transitioned from the role of student to teacher, leading workshops for Penticton Summer School of the Arts (Okanagan Summer School of the Arts) from 1964 to 1966. She went on to teach children's art for fourteen years and credited the experience as an influence on her artistic practice, stating, "[The children's] clear, bright symbolism and approach has affected my approach to my own work. I think of each piece as a celebration." Kay also taught for eight years at the Alberta College of Art (Alberta University of the Arts) via the Department of Extension at the Southern Alberta Institute of Technology.

Kay Angliss's work is represented in both private and public collections, including the Alberta Foundations for the Arts and Shell Oil Company. Her work has been exhibited in Alberta, PEI, Newfoundland, and in New York.

## *Susan Bolinger*

Susan Bolinger's work is in the Scholarship Collection of the Alberta Foundation for the Arts. Additional biographical information for this artist is not forthcoming at this time.

### *Deanna Boucher*

Deanna Boucher was born in Winnipeg, Manitoba. She received her BFA from the University of Alberta. Following graduation, she taught across Canada, including as far north as Arctic Bay, Nunavut. In 1990, she moved to Truro, Nova Scotia, and has remained there ever since.

A multimedia artist, Deanna captures everyday life in her subject matter, and she is most drawn to figures. She uses déchirage to add metaphor and depth to this, noting that the negative space, rips, and tears reinforce the fragile nature of everyday life.

Deanna has been an active member of Visual Arts Nova Scotia and the Truro Art Society. She has shown in solo and group exhibitions throughout Truro and Tatamagouche, Nova Scotia. Her work is in the permanent collection of the Municipality of the County of Colchester, Nova Scotia, and the University of Alberta Art Collection, as well as in private collections across Canada.

### *Blair Brennan*

Blair Brennan was born in Edmonton, Alberta, in 1959. He received his BFA from the University of Alberta, where his most consistent studio training was in abstract formalist welded steel sculpture. Following graduation, he quickly distanced himself from this practice and began creating ragged, room-filling installations that incorporated found and fabricated objects.

Brennan's work contains an awareness of conceptual art, pop art, minimalism, Fluxus, and Arte Povera and has been described as having a rude punk brutality. Since the late 1980s, he has been creating text-based works by employing a hot steel branding iron to objects and works on paper. His artworks often reference literary influences and frequently explore themes of ritual, religion, and magic.

Blair Brennan's artwork has been exhibited nationally in numerous group and solo exhibitions, including at the Art Gallery of Regina; Harcourt House Artist Run Centre Edmonton; and the Cambridge Art Galleries of Cambridge, Ontario. His works are represented in numerous private and public collections, including the Alberta Foundation for the Arts, the Art Gallery of Alberta, and the Canada Council Art Bank in Ottawa. He has contributed articles to numerous arts and culture publications. Blair currently works as the galleries and exhibitions manager of the University of Alberta's Fine Arts Building Gallery.

## *Maureen Harvey*

Maureen Harvey was born in 1939. She received her BFA from the University of California, Los Angeles, in 1961. A prolific painter, Maureen works in both small and monumental scales and employs a range of media. Whether small watercolour paintings or large acrylic murals, Harvey's subjects are bright, strong, and imaginative. Her work plays with ideas and perceptions of space, presenting suspended figures seemingly supported by invisible structures.

Maureen Harvey has exhibited throughout Alberta, including at Harcourt House Artist Run Centre, the Bowman Arts Centre (now Casa), Muttart Public Art Gallery (now Muttart Conservatory), and Medicine Hat Art Gallery (now Esplanade Art Gallery) and in the Works Festival in Edmonton. Her wall murals can be found in Edmonton, Leduc, and Stony Plain. Her work is in the permanent collections of the Alberta Foundation for the Arts and the University of Alberta, and in private collections throughout Canada, the Bahamas, Japan, Mexico, and the USA.

## *Patricia Holland*

Patricia (Tish) Holland was born in St. John's, Newfoundland, in 1959. She received her BFA from the Nova Scotia College of Art and Design in 1982. She also studied printmaking at York University in Toronto and at St. Michael's Printshop in St. John's. Tish has spent almost forty years teaching art. From 1983 to 1993, she worked as an art instructor in Memorial University of Newfoundland's Continuing Studies department. Following this, she taught children's art classes for Conception Bay South schools for another ten years. Today, she continues to offer group and private lessons from her studio in Conception Bay South.

At her studio, Tish creates murals, paintings, and prints. Her work draws attention to environmental issues, exploring the relationship between people and nature, and pays homage to the majestic landscape of her home province.

Holland has exhibited in many solo and group shows across Canada, the USA, and Japan. Her work is present in many private and public collections, including the Rooms, the National Gallery of Canada, the Banff Centre for Arts and Creativity, Parks Canada, Kyoto Gallery (Japan), and the Canadian Council of Professional Fish Harvesters.

## *Illingworth Kerr*

Born in Lumsden, Saskatchewan, Illingworth Kerr (1905–1989) was a Canadian painter and writer best known for his landscapes. He studied at the Central Technical School in Toronto, at the Ontario College of Art (now OCAD University), and at the Westminster School of Art, London, England. As an art student, his greatest ambition was to return to the West as a landscape painter. He reflected that he was imbued by the nationalist spirit of the Group of Seven but that none of them had ever tackled the prairies. This was perhaps the artist's greatest challenge.

Kerr's experience and knowledge of the land was significant. He began hunting and trapping at the age of twelve and supplemented himself as a young painter through harvest work. He camped and travelled across Canada, writing and painting along the way.

Kerr taught at the Vancouver School of Art (now Emily Carr University of Art and Design) and in 1947 became the art director of the Provincial Institute of Technology and Art (now Alberta University of the Arts). From 1952 to 1953, he served as president of the Alberta Society of Artists and in 1974 became a member of the Royal Canadian Academy of Arts. In 1983, he was awarded the Order of Canada. His work has been exhibited across Canada and around the world.

## *Yuriko Kitamura*

Yuriko Kitamura (b. 1937) graduated from Tohoku Medical and Pharmaceutical University in Japan with a BSc. She immigrated to Canada in 1963 and for the next two decades pursued education and training in the arts, attending the University of Alberta and Red Deer College, as well as the Metchosin International Summer School of the Arts in Victoria, BC. In 1985, she began teaching for the Extension Department of Fine Arts at the University of Alberta (now University of Alberta Faculty of Extension). Kitamura is a watercolour artist and often works on location sketching and painting. She is specialized in mixed-media painting on rice paper and in Japanese-style inked-brush drawings. She is credited for pioneering the studio technique of dye painting on rice paper. Her work often deals with themes related to nature's spontaneous and sometimes-fragile existence.

Yuriko Kitamura has exhibited throughout Alberta, including at the Kensington Fine Art Gallery, Red Deer Museum and Art Gallery, and Muttart Conservatory (formerly Muttart Public Art Gallery) and has been featured in travelling exhibitions across Canada, the US, and the UK. Her work is in permanent and corporate collections, such as the Alberta Foundation for the Arts, Alberta Culture, the Edmonton Journal, and Suncor Energy, as well as in private collections in Canada, the USA, Australia, China, England, and Japan.

## *Jonathan Knowlton*

Jonathan Knowlton (1937–2004) was born in New York City. He graduated from Yale University with a BFA and received his master's from the University of California, Berkeley. Travel contributed to his development as an artist. He was a Fulbright scholar and studied printmaking and painting in Paris, France, and sculpture in Florence, Italy, with the aid of a Canada Council grant.

In 1966, Knowlton was hired by the University of Alberta to help establish the printmaking department. Once this was achieved, he shifted his focus back to his preferred medium, in the painting department. While Knowlton was described as having gone through many different phases and having experimented with various mediums, he was best known for his postmodern oil and watercolour paintings. Knowlton's style is representational, including lifelike street scenes reflected through store windows and perfect reproductions of Harley-Davidson motorcycle engines.

Jonathan Knowlton's paintings, watercolours, and prints are included in the permanent collections of major museums such as the Museum of Modern Art (NYC), the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts, and the Victoria and Albert Museum (London), as well as in universities and corporations across Canada and the USA.

## *Helen Mackie*

Helen Mackie (1926–2018) was born in Tavistock, Ontario, and spent her early childhood outside of Bogotá, Colombia, where her father managed a cattle-breeding operation. Her family returned to Tavistock when she was in grade school, and she spent the remainder of her formative years there on their farm.

Helen received her BA (with Honours) in biology and chemistry from Queen's University in 1947. Following this, she got her master's in physiology and biochemistry from the University of Toronto. In 1973, she committed to pursuing her passion for art and received her BFA in printmaking and drawing from the University of Calgary. Helen also studied at the Emma Lake Artists' Workshops in Saskatoon and the Banff School of Fine Arts (now Banff Centre for Arts and Creativity) in Banff.

Helen's work is reflective of a deep-seated appreciation of nature that was informed by a childhood spent in the country and an astute, inquisitive mind. Art and the spirit of scientific inquiry weave together intricately through her creations, which span over forty years. While she enjoyed working with watercolour in the plein air tradition, admiring its ability to enhance an appreciation for nature through direct observation, following her formal studies, she found printmaking most to her liking. Her artwork speaks to humanity's relationship with the natural world and the energy that flows through the earth and all living things. She also incorporates stories, myths, and fables encountered through childhood exploration.

Helen Mackie's artworks are included in the permanent collections of cultural and educational institutions and corporations provincially, nationally, and internationally, including the Glenbow Museum, the Canada Council for the Arts, the Royal Collection in the UK, and Shell Oil Company.

## *Marion Nicoll*

As a student of Central High in Calgary (now Central Memorial High), Marion Nicoll (1911–1985) studied art under R. L. Harvey (then supervisor of art, Calgary Schools). Spotting Marion's talent, Harvey encouraged her to enroll in art school. Marion followed this advice and left high school to enter the Ontario College of Art (now OCAD University) in 1926. Due to health concerns, she transferred to the Provincial Institute of Technology and Art (now Alberta University of the Arts), which was closer to home, and studied under school head A. C. Leighton. Following graduation, Marion became the school's first female instructor, teaching design and crafts until 1965. She was also the first woman on the Prairies to become a member of the Royal Canadian Academy of Arts.

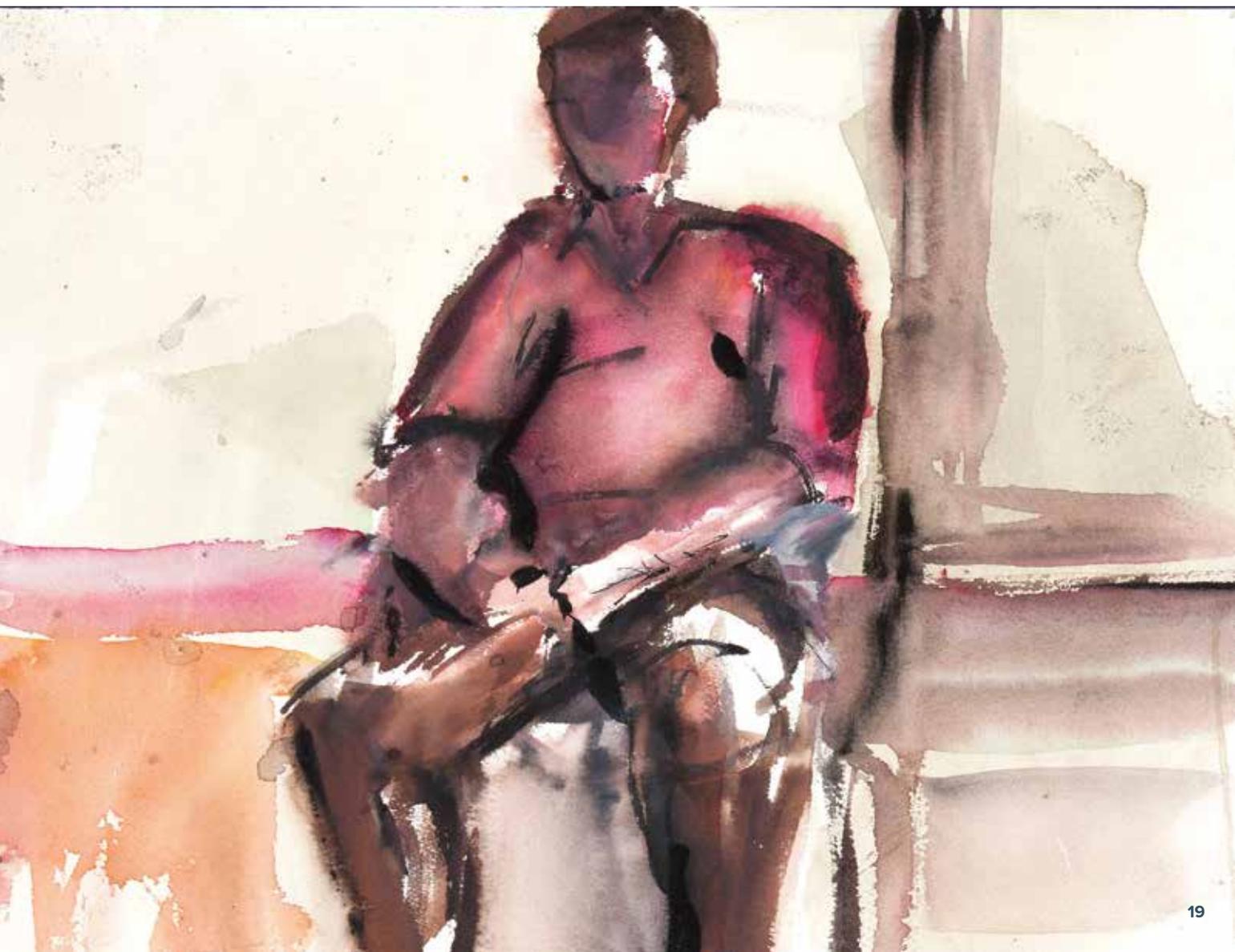
Throughout her career, Marion took a number of sabbaticals to travel and study art, the first of which was in 1937, when she studied design at London County Council School of Arts and Crafts. Another was in 1958, when she studied in New York under Bill Barnet. Marion worked in watercolours, oils, and drawings. Automatic drawing bridged her later transition to abstract work. She also experimented with many printmaking techniques and may have been one of the first artists to produce limited-edition prints with MacPaint. Marion Nicoll's work has exhibited widely throughout Canada and is found in private collections in the USA and Canada, as well as in the permanent collections of the Art Gallery of Alberta, the Alberta Foundation for the Arts, and the Glenbow Museum and in corporate collections throughout Alberta.

## *Andie C. Wicherts*

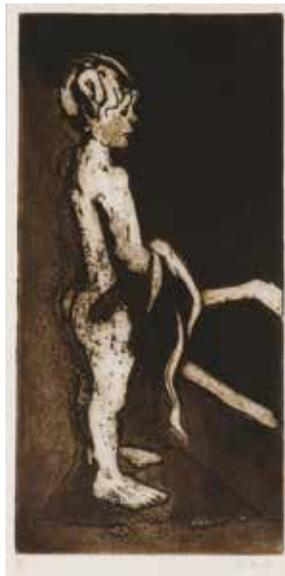
Born in Holland, Andie Wicherts earned a diploma in textile design from the Gerrit Rietveld Academie in Amsterdam. She immigrated to Canada in 1954, and in 1969, she began designing and creating costumes for Alberta Theatre Projects and Allied Arts Centre Theatre (now Theatre Calgary). After this, Wicherts apprenticed in costume design at the Banff School of Fine Arts (now Banff Centre for Arts and Creativity) and gained employment as a costume designer for Alberta Theatre Projects. At this time, Wicherts was also pursuing a BFA in printmaking and drawing from the University of Calgary. Following graduation, she was a partner in and initiator of the Station Studio, a cooperative printmaking workshop started in Calgary, in 1977, and a visiting artist at the St. Michael's Printshop in Newfoundland, in 1979.

Andie Wicherts was a member of the Federation of Canadian Artists, AFCA status, and served as the president of the Alberta Society of Artists. She has had solo and collaborative exhibitions in Alberta, British Columbia, and Ontario, and was featured in the touring exhibition *Sharing Visions*, which travelled to Japan and Korea in 1984. Her artworks can be found in numerous corporate collections, including the Alberta Foundation for the Arts, Edmonton; the Canadian National Railway Company, Montreal; Shell Oil Company, Calgary; Standard Oil Company (Indiana), Chicago; and Zeidler and Associates (Zeidler Architects Inc.), Toronto.

Blair Brennan  
*Portrait of Jonathan Knowlton*  
1980  
Watercolour and ink on paper  
12 3/16 × 16 in.  
Collection of the Alberta  
Foundation for the Arts



# List of Works



*Left to Right / Top to Bottom*

Deanna Boucher  
*Self Portrait with a Boring  
 Abstraction*  
 n.d.  
 Pencil crayon on paper  
 14 x 12 3/16 in.  
 Collection of the Alberta  
 Foundation for the Arts

Susan Bolinger  
*Untitled*  
 1970  
 Ink on paper  
 13 11/16 x 10 15/16 in.  
 Collection of the Alberta  
 Foundation for the Arts

Pat Holland  
*Untitled*  
 1974  
 Etching on paper  
 11 1/2 x 6 in.  
 Collection of the Alberta  
 Foundation for the Arts

Kay Angliss  
*Figure in Red*  
 1978  
 Watercolour on paper  
 18 1/2 x 11 13/16 in.  
 Collection of the Alberta  
 Foundation for the Arts



*Left to Right / Top to Bottom*

Kay Angliss  
*Seated Figure*  
1978  
Watercolour on paper  
20 11/16 x 15 3/4 in.  
Collection of the Alberta  
Foundation for the Arts

Marion Nicoll  
*Figure/Sketch*  
n.d.  
Watercolour on paper  
17 15/16 x 12 in.  
Collection of the Alberta  
Foundation for the Arts

Marion Nicoll  
*Figure/Sketch*  
n.d.  
Watercolour on paper  
17 15/16 x 12 in.  
Collection of the Alberta  
Foundation for the Arts

Illingworth Kerr  
*On the Beach #2*  
1966  
Ink on paper  
11 x 13 15/16 in.  
Collection of the Alberta  
Foundation for the Arts



*Left to Right / Top to Bottom*

Andie Wicherts  
*The Seated Figure*  
 1992  
 Watercolour on Japanese  
 paper  
 17 3/4 x 12 3/16 in.  
 Collection of the Alberta  
 Foundation for the Arts

Yuriko Kitamura  
*Let it Go*  
 1992  
 Ink on paper  
 17 5/16 x 12 9/16 in.  
 Collection of the Alberta  
 Foundation for the Arts

Maureen Harvey  
*Noni/Side View*  
 1995  
 Watercolour on paper  
 14 15/16 x 7 3/4 in.  
 Collection of the Alberta  
 Foundation for the Arts

Maureen Harvey  
*Reclining Male Figure*  
 1994  
 Watercolour on paper  
 9 3/16 x 14 13/16 in.  
 Collection of the Alberta  
 Foundation for the Arts



*Left to Right / Top to Bottom*

Helen Mackie  
*Orange, Brown, Blue*  
1973  
Etching on paper  
22 5/8 x 16 9/16 in.  
Collection of the Alberta  
Foundation for the Arts

Jonathan Knowlton  
*Untitled*  
2004  
Watercolour on paper  
18 1/8 x 22 1/16 in.  
Collection of the Alberta  
Foundation for the Arts

Jonathan Knowlton  
*Blue Bathing Beauty*  
1992  
Watercolour on paper  
22 13/16 x 19 x 1 in.  
Collection of the Alberta  
Foundation for the Arts

Blair Brennan  
*Portrait of Jonathan  
Knowlton*  
1980  
Watercolour and ink on  
paper  
12 3/16 x 16 in.  
Collection of the Alberta  
Foundation for the Arts



Susan Bolinger  
*Untitled*  
1970

Ink on paper

13 11/16 x 10 15/16 in.  
Collection of the Alberta  
Foundation for the Arts

# *Introduction to Educator's Guide and Lesson Plans*

The AFA Travelling Exhibition Program Southeast created this educators' guide based on the exhibition's themes and concepts. It is composed of lesson plans and informative material. We strive to create projects that will inspire individuals to experience our exhibitions beyond the decorative and to explore their own creativity. Educators, writers, curators and artists have all contributed content; we hope you create something amazing from it.



Example of finished Blind Contour Drawing project

# Lesson 1

## Blind Contour Drawing

Grades K - 12

### Overview

Drawing the human form requires careful observation. Its representation can range from highly detailed to loose and expressive, depending on an artist's approach. We see this range of approaches in the works of the *Figured* exhibition. What they have in common is that each depicts a careful and personal observation of the human form. Drawing a live subject allows an artist to study all aspects of it in its full form—every shape, line, and contour.

In this project, participants will observe a live human to create their own blind contour drawings. The human form is one of the most difficult subjects for artists to accurately render. Doing so can take years of careful study. A blind contour drawing allows participants to approach human figure drawing in a way that relies on careful observation of lines and shapes but also removes expectations and encourages imperfection.

### Objectives

Students will:

- Exercise hand-eye coordination
- Develop representational-drawing abilities through observation
- Apply the fundamental principles of figure drawing (consideration of proportions, careful observation, attention to detail, etc.)
- Embrace imperfection and remove expectations through process-art making

### Materials

Any drawing material that allows for fluid motion (pen, pencil, marker)

Newsprint, manila or any other sketch-quality paper



## Instructions

### Step One

You may want to do a quick blind contour drawing as a warm-up exercise. Work in pairs and sit across from one another—you will be each other's subjects. If you choose to draw a portrait, you and your partner can draw simultaneously, as neither of you will be moving your head to look at your paper. If you want to challenge yourself with a full-figure drawing, you and your partner will take turns being the subject while the other one draws.

### Step Two

Fix your eyes on the outline of your subject. Pick a point and begin tracking the edge of the subject/object with your eyes. When your eyes begin to move, so should the hand holding your drawing instrument. Continue to follow the outline of your subject while simultaneously drawing the contour very slowly in a steady, continuous line—don't lift the pencil or look at the paper.

### Step Three

Repeat this exercise and see if you can observe and include more details.

### Variations

Do the exercise using any objects of interest—perhaps fruit, flowers, tools, stuffed animals, or a single body part, such as a hand or foot. A small object that doesn't move will be easier for younger participants to observe.

Create a blind contour self-portrait by setting yourself up in front of a mirror.

Add colour to the blind contour drawing.







Example of finished Expressive Mark-Making project

# Lesson 2

## Expressive Mark-Making

Grades K - 12

### Overview

Each artist featured in the *Figured* exhibition has invited us to understand the human figure through their own language of mark-making. The artists use varying materials to create unique gestural qualities and marks that define their particular approach and compose the visual language within the work of art. Some artists focus on shapes within a figure, using smudges and bold separations of colour; some take an anatomical approach, with soft, curved lines creating delicate features; others use ink to create bold, volumetric, geometric and gestural forms; and others use the translucent nature of watercolour to evoke movement and expressions. Each artist successfully uses mark-making as a form of expression that the viewer can interpret.

In this project, participants will learn the language of mark-making. They will examine the varying qualities and attributes of marks and materials to determine how marks can be forms of expression within their own artwork.

### Objectives

Students will:

- Connect mark-making with self-expression
- Familiarize themselves with simple mark-making techniques
- Make informed decisions regarding materials and medium
- Explore different mark-making approaches to develop their visual language

### Materials

A variety of mark-making materials (pencil, pen, ink, charcoal, oil pastels, watercolours)

Newsprint, manila or any other sketch-quality paper





## Instructions

Spend a few minutes exploring each material and the type of mark it can create on a piece of paper. Some materials may be new to you—try them out before you begin the mark-making exercises.

All the exercises can be completed on one large piece of paper. You'll end up with an artwork that features a personal vocabulary of marks.

Before you begin the hands-on exercise, write several adjectives on sticky notes (one adjective per sticky note). Gather in front of the exhibited works and place the sticky notes beside the artworks that express the adjective written. Discuss the selections.

**Facilitators: Ensure adjectives are appropriate for participants in terms of their vocabulary level.**

## Step One

### *Explore Size*

Choose an adjective that describes size. Then choose a drawing material and translate the adjective into marks on the paper. Explore a few adjectives before moving on to the next exercise.

#### *Example adjectives:*

Grand, tiny, thick, light, voluminous, detailed, bold, thin, modest, heavy, precise

## Step Two

### *Explore Texture*

Choose an adjective that describes texture. Then choose a drawing material and translate the adjective into marks on the paper. Explore a few adjectives before moving on to the next exercise.

#### *Example adjectives:*

Polished, hairy, sticky, rough, smooth

## Step Three

### *Explore Ergonomics*

You have a natural way of holding a pen or pencil when writing. Try holding your drawing material in different ways. For example, if you're right-handed, hold it in your left hand, on its side. What happens if you hold it in a way that gives you little control over the medium? How does this affect your mark-making?

Consider where your movements are coming from when you draw. Try using just your fingers, then extend the movement to your wrist, your elbow, your arm, your whole body. How does this affect your mark-making?

## Step Four

### *Explore Emotions*

Choose an adjective that describes an emotion. Then choose a drawing material and translate the adjective into marks on the paper. Explore a few adjectives before moving on to the next exercise.

#### *Example adjectives:*

Angry, sad, elated, energetic, cheerful, calm, aggressive, boring, violent, gloomy

## Step Five

### *Explore Other Adjectives*

Choose an adjective that describes a state of being, an expression or a feeling. Then choose a drawing material and translate the adjective into marks on the paper. Explore a few adjectives before moving on to the next exercise.

#### *Example adjectives:*

Chaotic, cluttered, unbalanced, controlled, loose, rigid, spacious, fragmented, flexible, vigorous

## Step Six

Discuss your mark-making choices. Describe your “angry” mark. What drawing material did you choose and why? Describe the qualities of that particular mark. Did you make it small or big? Did you use light pressure or hard?

## Variations

### *Facilitators:*

If working with younger participants, for a more intuitive approach, play a variety of music genres and have participants interpret the music through their mark-making. Limit the materials to pens, markers, and chalk pastels.

### *Older participants:*

Apply your new mark-making vocabulary to create a still-life rendering.





Example of finished Cut-Out Figures project

# Lesson 3

## Cut-Out Figures

Grades 3 - 12

### Overview

Artists rely on their observation skills to study their subjects. When observing the human figure, we can see that it is made up of curved lines, articulated edges and carefully arranged shapes of different sizes, some overlapping each other.

For this project, participants will choose one piece of work in the exhibition to observe. Based on their observations of shapes, forms and lines within the composition, they will create their own composition using coloured-paper cut-outs. This cut-out technique, called “drawing with scissors,” was used by French artist Henri Matisse.

### Objectives

Students will:

- Develop observation skills
- Explore a non-traditional drawing technique
- Develop fine motor skills and craftsmanship cutting silhouette forms
- Build a composition based on colour and shape
- Use critical-thinking skills to make choices about placement

### Materials

Coloured paper

Scissors

Glue

Card stock or Bristol paper



## Instructions

Choose one work from the exhibition to observe. When creating your composition, work within view of the piece or have a visual reference in front of you.

### Step One

Carefully study the chosen work. Observe its distinct lines and shapes. How are they arranged to distinguish overall form? Where do they overlap and intersect? How do the lines and shapes compare to one another in terms of size and proportion?



### Step Two

Based on your observations, cut the coloured paper into the shapes and lines needed to build your composition. Use a variety of colours and create several forms you can draw with.

### Step Three

Assemble and rearrange your loose cut-outs on the card stock or Bristol paper to create your composition.

### Step Four

When your cut-out composition is finalized, glue the pieces into place.





An example of a cut-out figure project inspired by  
Andie Wicherts' *The Seated Figure*

Andie Wicherts  
*The Seated Figure*  
1992

Watercolour on Japanese paper  
17 3/4 x 12 3/16 in.  
Collection of the Alberta  
Foundation for the Arts



## Acknowledgements

This publication was produced in conjunction with the TREX exhibition *Figured* by the AFA Travelling Exhibition Program (TREX) Southeast Region 4, at TREX Space, City of Medicine Hat. *Figured* will tour throughout Alberta to non-traditional gallery spaces September 2020-February 2024. Visit [www.trexprogramsoutheast.ca](http://www.trexprogramsoutheast.ca) to find out more about the program and locations of each exhibition.

Curator and Editor: Xanthe Isbister, Curator of Art, Esplanade Arts and Heritage Centre

Biographies: Candace Lundrigan, Art Curatorial Assistant, Esplanade Arts and Heritage Centre

Education Lesson Plans: Jenn Demke-Lange

Copy Editor: Rachel Small, Faultless Finish Editing

Design: Flag Five

Images: Alberta Foundation for the Arts

Printing: Warwick Printing

A special thanks to:

Gail Lint, Arts Collections Consultant, Arts Branch, Culture, Multiculturalism, and Status of Women

Neil Lazaruk, Arts Collections Preparator, Arts Branch, Culture, Multiculturalism, and Status of Women

Kristine Stoesz, Arts Collections Registrar, Arts Branch, Culture, Multiculturalism, and Status of Women

Dan Meller, Gallery Assistant, Esplanade Arts and Heritage Centre

### **TREX Space**

#2 516 3 St. SE

Medicine Hat, AB Canada T1A 0H3

403-527-6682

[www.trexprogramsoutheast.ca](http://www.trexprogramsoutheast.ca)







© 2020 by the Esplanade Arts and Heritage Centre, Medicine Hat, Alberta. The Esplanade Arts and Heritage Centre retains sole copyright to its contributions to this book.

