



# www.spiritofmanitou.ca

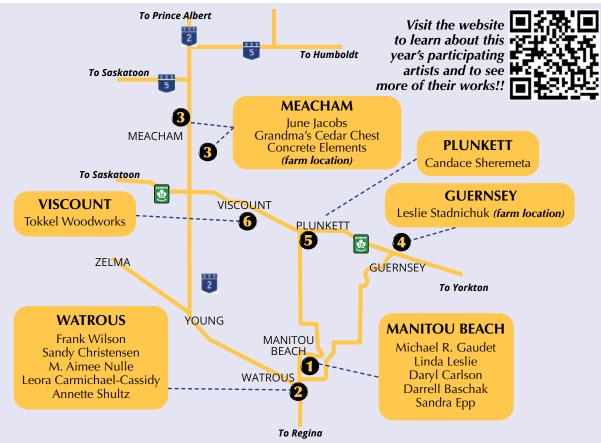
# #spiritofmanitoustudiotrail





# 2024

SATURDAY, JULY 6 • 10 am - 7 pm SUNDAY, JULY 7 • Noon - 6 pm



#### 2024 STUDIO TRAIL SPONSORS



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CARFAC Saskatchewan publishes six newsletters per year:

January/February
March/April
May/June
July/August
September/October
November/December

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Note: Due to time and space restrictions all submissions cannot be thoroughly checked or all information printed. Use contact listed. Material published in the CARFAC Saskatchewan Newsletter reflects the view of the author and not necessarily the view of CARFAC Saskatchewan.





As part of the Travelling Mentorship Program, CARFAC SASK and Art in the Park are pleased to present the following free workshop:



Art in the Park Patterson Park La Ronge, SK



Saturday May 11th, 2024 11am-3pm









#### SAVE THE DATE:

Prairie Webinar - presented by CARFAC Alberta, CARFAC SASK and CARFAC Manitoba

"Just Graduated? Now What?" with Brody Burns and Mohammad Hossein Abbasi

Wednesday June 26 @ 6:30pm MDT/CST, 7:30pm CDT



#### **EDITOR'S NOTE**

Thanks for picking up this latest copy of the CARFAC SASK Newsletter. We're excited to bring you a new mix of artist stories and perspectives, as well as news and announcements for our members and artists across the province.

Our main feature in this issue is a conversation with Traci Foster, Artistic Director and Founder of Listen to Dis' Community Arts Organization (pg. 6). Traci's reflections on artists' struggles, accessibility, and competition in the arts offer us all an opportunity to reflect on how we sustain ourselves and one another. As part of the piece, Traci has shared photos from LTD's project Light Play with photographer Gabriela García-Luna. The images are beautiful portraits of light and movement created by artists who live with a visible disability.

In our ongoing photography feature (pg. 13), we are highlighting a few of artist JingLu Zhao's photographs as well as drawings she made from them. Known by many for her paintings, JingLu's skill and artist's eye for framing, light, and detail can be seen across mediums. Thanks for sharing your work with us, JingLu!

As part of a new partnership with Saskatchewan Arts Alliance, in this issue we are reprinting Marsha Schuld's piece Making Art in the Middle of Nowhere (pg. 18). The op-ed originated from work the SAA is doing to establish a Rural Artists Working Group, looking at issues around isolation, professional development, and connecting provincial artists and arts communities of all disciplines.

CARFAC SASK Members, please take note: the Foundational Mentorship Program Call for Mentors and Mentees is now open! Deadline to apply is June 18. More details and contact information at the end of this issue (pg. 26).

For artists in and around the La Ronge area, CARFAC SASK is pleased to be partnering with the annual Art in the Park event at Patterson Park. Don't miss out on this free ceramics workshop, From Mind to Matter, with artist Rob Froese. Also for everyone who can join online, we're co-hosting a webinar on June 26: Just Graduated? Now What? with Brody Burns and Mohammad Hossein Abbasi will be an excellent learning opportunity for students and recent graduates. (More details on pg. 4)

In News and Notices (pg. 21), we have some artist opportunities and exhibition announcements. As always, if you have anything you would like to share in the newsletter, don't hesitate to get in touch with the Newsletter Editor to let us know (contact info on pg. 3). We would love to hear from you, and we're always looking for interesting stories and opportunities to celebrate artists working here.

## **ACCESS AND RESPONSIBILITY IN THE ARTS**

CONVERSATION WITH TRACI FOSTER



Traci Foster, LTD' Co-Creator and Director, at Listen to Dis' theatre production Mine to Have, Regina 2020. Photo: Daniel Paquet.

#### Jeff Morton, Newsletter Editor:

Hi Traci, thanks so much for taking time to share your thoughts here. As you know, I reached out to you after reading your social media post last October that followed the release of Canada Council grant results. You had expressed care and concern for anyone whose application was unsuccessful, and you mentioned that understanding the reality of arts granting is important and arts funders in particular have a responsibility to be more transparent. You also called out to artists who did receive grants, to say congratulations and emphasize that for people and organizations who are able, they should find ways to build opportunities for others. I wondered if you would be able to speak a bit more on this topic of arts granting and more generally on how to sustain and collaborate in the arts.

#### Traci Foster:

Thanks for the conversation. I would reiterate that many folks working in the arts and cultural sector are concerned for their future or the future of their organizations. The current climate feels dire, and hope seems to be diminishing. How do we work within this?

It feels to me that leaning towards what is right—paying attention to what is working and is operating with a semblance of ease and pleasure—that's a sensible start. If nothing else, it would be supporting a healthier nervous system and therefore providing us with something other than worry and concern. But truthfully, I feel we have what we need to sustain ourselves individually and as a collective, if we were to surrender the need and want of having or possessing more; if we shared resources in a fair and equitable manner.

For example, what if a fairly funded organization had a responsibility to annually fund an up-and-coming organization—to use \$50,000 of their resources to stabilize an organization just starting out? Let's say for four years. What if that same organization's financial manager (because they can afford to have one) and administrative manager (again because they can afford to have one) were to take on this smaller organization's bookkeeping while offering four hours per month for mentoring and helping orient the new organization so they have a stable start?

What I see happening within the operational side of this sector is abysmal. It is everyone for themselves. It is the antithesis of collaborative, and it is in direct contrast of how artists generally function.

So, I feel that we need to start with honesty and transparency. This sector is broken. What has been relied on before is no longer reliable. People are reeling, and nothing is changing in a way that provides safety

and security—two of the most important ingredients for the health and wellbeing of us as humans and as organizations. This is Business 101; this is also Health 101.

How does this begin? Slowly, I suppose, at the speed of trust, and it cannot be done without transparency.

We must be willing and able to be vulnerable together, and to embrace the discomfort and awkwardness that we experience when we are struggling. We must look at what is not working and what has never worked, and to build from there.

For those in our province who work without worry of there being a tomorrow, are you in it for the better good for all?

For example, competition for survival for disabled people—including those who are neurodivergent, have mental health disorders, learning disabilities, etc.—it's not fun. Competition activates our systems, and our bodies and minds are often already activated enough. How we deal with that at Listen to 'Dis is interdependently—the only management model that truly works for us. It is the only reason we are still around today.

JM: There is something important to be discussed around the idea of competition and fairness in the arts. In my experience, this is a pressing topic in arts granting, but it is also a larger idea in how we relate to one another. A few years ago, a friend told me about the concept of the "tournament field" and how ubiquitous it is in the arts. As I understand, the tournament field model presupposes fairness, as if anyone could succeed, but in reality, the playing field is neither fair nor equitable. I wonder, what do you see?



Light Play, a collaboration between Gabriela Garcia-Luna and LTD', facilitated somatic and choreographed movement, photography, and performance, 2018. Photo: Gabriela García-Luna.

**TF:** As a disabled, queer, femme, senior artist, I can honestly say competition is inherently challenging. I don't have it in my bones, and I don't think I ever did. Competition has been challenging for me and many others from long before we were writing grants as artists or as arts administrators.

When I was a little girl, I danced. I danced because it was my first way of expressing, and also because it did not reveal the physical, emotional, and intellectual disabilities that I came in with—it was safe. The stage, however, which was where everyone wanted to put me, was terrifying and exhilarating. At times it was as much of a home as my home was. At other times, it was the most uncomfortable place imaginable. When my fear of competition or judgement was activated, I would freeze and often not be able to engage with my own body and mind. I would choke, literally.

Although more of a metaphor, this still happens today. When something is going to be assessed or judged by a person or a group of people, I can choke. I witness this in almost everyone I know in the arts sector, especially those who have been historically underrepresented. Grant writing is a very challenging journey, and one that I think amputates creativity.

In way, I feel as though I am working in a sector that is hypocritical. Art and artists have the job of transforming this messy life into something beautiful or interesting. We are asked to understand the ridiculous nature of humanity, reveal it with transparency, and invite spectators witnessing or engaging with the work to experience something, a transformation of sorts.

If we juxtapose this with grant writing, it could be superficially interpreted as aligned, but if we examine and analyze it critically, the most successful authors of grants are often academics or artists who are able to paint a picture with words and manage to cultivate clarity within it. Historically speaking, these have more often than not been people of privilege and entitlement.

I believe anyone that feels the granting system is a fair and equitable way to work—just part of the reality we all have to deal with—is living with an ableist ideology and is most likely also entrenched in privilege and entitlement.

The tournament field model seems to summarize this quite nicely. It essentially gives a prize to those who can put in enough effort and reach one of the best positions. That sounds familiar. It suggests that if we work hard enough, and work at keeping up and keeping on, then eventually we will be rewarded. That also sounds familiar.

This has not been my experience as an artist or as the founder of an organization. Listen to Dis' has worked, and probably always will work, with a fragile foundation where financial support like operational funding is concerned. This is why it may not be sustainable. Who would want to come in as a successor at an organization that cannot pay the wages necessary for its own operation? I mean, listen to that question.

The tender, truthful, and nurturing nature of life is not inherently competitive; it is inherently about connection. It understands interconnectedness and interdependence. Although I have worked on feeling like I am in a trusting relationship with funding organizations, it does not last, because I am not. There is always a next thing that we are fighting for and educating about. Because we are really in it for the better good for all, it is disheartening to work in a sector with so many elephants in the room.

I was recently invited to speak at a gathering organized by the Professional Association of Canadian Theatres (PACT), and I listened to Canadian funders speak about their experiences and the challenges that they are faced with today. I spoke to the need for cultivating truth and transparency before looking for ways out of the current crisis—to move slowly and with purpose, and moreover, to look at what is working—leaning into "what's right" instead of "what's wrong."

When I reflect on that day and the months that have followed, I realize that we are in trouble, and in part because they are in trouble: the funders. This is modelled clearly with in-person consultations being eliminated, with the "ineligible" status that is replacing consultation to support you in correcting budget errors, et cetera, and in the fact that Canada Council (among others), have made new operational funding functionally unavailable.





For those of us at Listen to Dis', understanding that we have no option for increasing operational funding, we may decide to leave, and in this action we understand that we would not be failing.

We have tilled a lot of soil, and the Saskatchewan ground is much more fertile than when we began 18 years ago. But in some way, actually because we do not have the information necessary to make better informed decisions, myself, my team, our members, and the Board of Directors—we all hang on. This is not equitable, this is not accessibility, and arguably this is not acceptable. It does not represent the inclusivity that is needed to be opened to diverse and marginalized populations.

I do not believe fairness exists within the granting structure. The model being explored, the one in which peers assess their fellow applicants, seems exciting to those working it from the inside, but I fail to see how it eliminates the inherent inequality within the competitive system. I would be very happy to be proven wrong.

I don't believe competition like this is a necessary compromise in the context of limited public funds. It feels like a familiar concept, hierarchical and aggressive. When a tree gets cut down in a forest, other trees nurture its roots to ensure to the best of their ability that it will survive. What about that as a model?

There were big mistakes made in the building of this sector, and money was given in a way that did not consider its impact on future. Now, without putting away ableist attitudes towards who leads and what is productivity, we are stuck. The scarcity model does not support survival or care. We desperately need to foster skills that support and develop solid yet malleable foundations and create safety in communities coming together.

You asked, how can we move to a collaborative model that considers everyone's positionally and which does not attempt to reduce people to the same level in the name of supposed "fairness"? We can't, and we must face that truth.

We are not all on the same playing field. When you place an established artist or experienced grant writer beside a disabled person or anyone who struggles with writing, deadlines, numbers, budgets, descriptive narratives, etc., and you say "go, compete for the same prize," the outcome is predictable.

I will end with a story: a tragedy. In 2021, my dear blessed mother, Gladis Marie Maier died by cause of hospital error. I was in deep grief, disbelief, and shock. Two weeks later, I was called back to work for what was supposed to be a simple issue regarding a grant. I had a realization, I said, "This work is more stressful than being in the ICU with my mother while she fought for her life and died at the hands of negligence." I know I am not alone in this feeling. Not at all.

\* \* \*

Traci Foster is a disability artist and theatremaker who explores and develops her work, focusing on where awareness, intuition, and action intersect. She works with creation as care and unapologetically seeks pleasure in all aspects of life, including art making.

Traci is the founder and Artistic Director of Listen to Dis', Saskatchewan's first and only disability-led, disability arts organization Through facilitated dialogue and inclusive art practice and performance, LTD weaves new realities for its members and the broader community – shifting the way people perceive disability and creating understanding of and appreciation for crip art, mad art, and disability culture.

# DRAWING PHOTOGRAPHY

JINGLU ZHAO

#### Artist Statement:

I love to take photographs and draw. I use the camera on my phone to capture life's interesting moments of figures, my family and friends, animals, and views, such as trees, gardens, clouds, landscape and cityscape. I take photographs and then transfer those ideas with pencil to paper. I especially love black and white photography. It's artistic, distraction-free, and allows the viewer to easily interpret the main focus of the picture. In this colourful word, a black and white image can stand out from the norm.

I have been passionate about drawing for 20 years. Drawing is one the simplest and most efficient means of communicating ideas. A drawing instrument releases a small amount of material onto a surface, leaving a visible mark. Sketching is like happily drowning into a river of thoughts, creativity, coordination and patience. It is meditation to me. I like to line draw and shade. I use paper, graphite, charcoal, and sandpaper, kneaded erasers, and scrapers.My technique was inspired by my mentor, Conglin Cheng, when I was doing MFA at Sichuan University. While my usual drawings are not large (5 x 7 inch), they require a lot of energy and many hours go into each creation. My main focus of drawings is blending Point and Line to Plane delicately.

#### Images (next 4 pages):

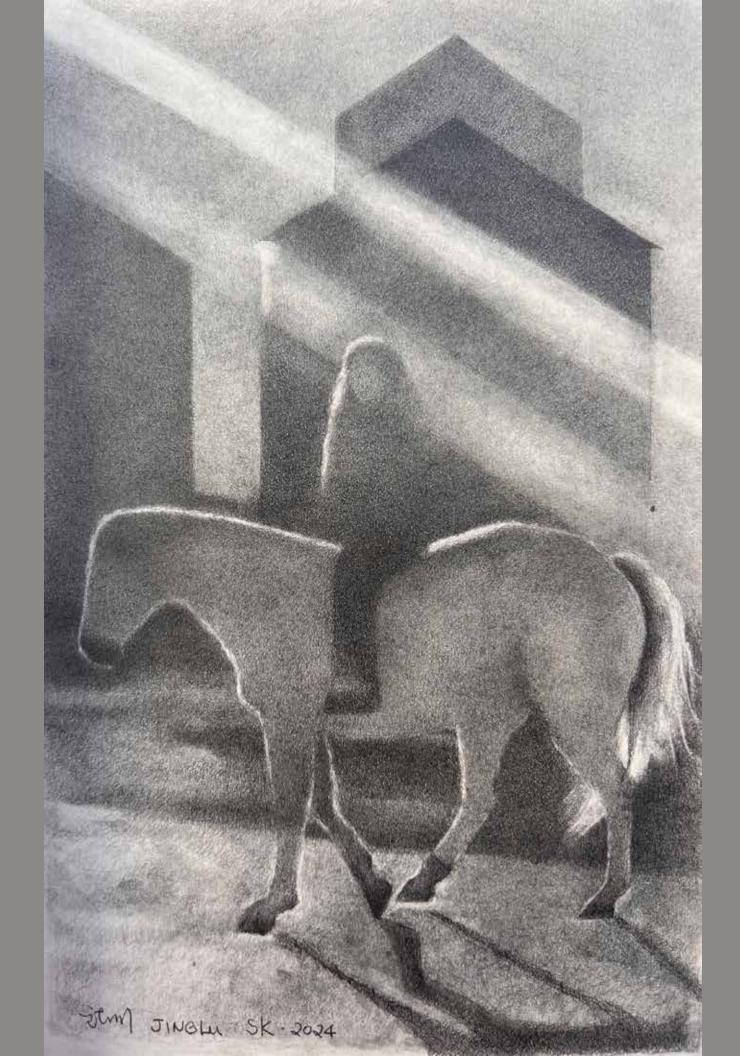
Pg. 14: Sylvia Stack and Tattoo (the horse), photo: JingLu Zhao Pg. 15: JingLu Zhao, #576, 8 x 5 inch, Graphite on Paper, 2024

Pg. 16: The Pond beside Ecole Lakeview school, photo: JingLu Zhao Pg. 17: JingLu Zhao, #212, 7 3/4 x 5 1/4 inch, Graphite on Paper, 2023



www.zhaojinglu.com









# MAKING ART IN THE MIDDLE OF NOWHERE - CHALLENGES OF BEING A RURAL ARTIST

MARSHA SCHULD RURAL ARTIST WORKING GROUP SASKATCHEWAN ARTS ALLIANCE

Art can be made everywhere. But being an artist also involves being a part of a community, exposing oneself to new ideas and other forms of art and expression, and receiving feedback from others in order to grow as an artist. If you happen to live in an urban area, access to such resources is fairly simple – go to a Wednesday night painting group, hang out for an afternoon at the local gallery or join the board of an arts advocacy organization. This is not the reality for rural artists.

Rural artists face unintended barriers at almost every turn. In a world of near constant communication, it is still possible to be physically and digitally isolated if you live outside of urban hubs. Rural artists often lack a network of peers and mentors and this may have a slowing or stalling effect on an art career. Without connections, opportunities for growth, for exhibition and for collaboration become limited.

I am a rural artist – this is both by choice and by circumstance. I am a rural person by nature and my inspiration comes from the landscape, creatures and people that live around me. I am also actively involved in the business of growing food which, of necessity, happens in rural areas. This does not alter my desire to be part of a greater whole, to meet other artists, share ideas and participate in a community of creative people. In an increasingly urbanized world this is becoming an evergreater challenge.

Challenges that rural artists face when compared to their urban counterparts are many and complex but it starts with communication. High speed internet and cellular connections are an incredible challenge in rural areas with many areas having spotty to non-existent coverage of both services. Added to that, the cost is generally higher than equivalent service in urban areas.

Increased urban connectivity has increased the number of meetings, events, and opportunities that occur online rather than in person. Add to that the complications of a worldwide pandemic, and the move to virtual platforms has been exponential. If you do not have access to high speed internet services, these opportunities do not exist.

This has left many in rural areas out in the cold. I have had to turn down offers to promote my work or share my expertise because I do not have access to the wifi bandwidth necessary to participate effectively in events that are now commonplace in cities and towns, like online courses or virtual round table proceedings. I struggle with professional development because where I live limits what is available to me in terms of training and post-secondary education. Many rural artists experience this kind of isolation as well as the puzzled lack of understanding when one says "I can't use Zoom" or "I can not download files of that size".

For rural artists, participating in events is also a matter of time and distance. Attendance, in person, often requires many hours on the road, hotel and food costs and time away from family, studio or other jobs. A three-hour evening meeting becomes a three-hour drive, dinner, three-hour meeting, hotel, breakfast and three-hour return trip home – often more than a 24 hour commitment. For the equivalent participant living in the city, it is simply a three-hour meeting. The same goes for access to art museums, courses, or specialized collectives. Decisions to participate have to include time commitment, travel distances and weather conditions, as well as attendant costs.

Don't get me wrong, those of us living in more remote areas are used to the imbalance and for the most part, are accepting of the reality of it. It still makes sense to go to where the majority are. The question is this: Can we start to meet the minority part way? Can we acknowledge there is a difference of experience and work toward reducing the imbalances inherent in a place where urban and rural both need to exist? Simply becoming aware of and acknowledging the challenges and limitations that rural artist's face would be a huge step in the right direction.

I do not have the answers to all the issues ready to hand. I feel a starting point would be to have a better understanding of how many rural artists are out there, working in isolation and seeking a broader community. From that point an exchange of experiences, ideas and solutions can grow. Can we foster new programs that support isolated artists? Mentorships, residencies, distance studies, access to collections, group forums, studio visits – all these and more can aid in narrowing the gap between rural and urban.

I live in a place that inspires me and is a muse for artistic expression. I also live in a place where animals outnumber people, roads aren't paved and businesses refuse to deliver to a post box. I live three hours drive from the nearest major cities and five kilometers from my closest neighbour. But I still want to participate in a broader arts community. I have things to contribute, techniques to learn, opinions to share and questions to ask. I am a firm believer that in all things, art included, the sum of all of our experiences is what makes life interesting.

\* \* \*

Marsha Schuld is an intermedia artist living and working from her farm studio in rural southwest Saskatchewan. Marsha's op-ed was originally written for the Saskatchewan Arts Alliance and has been reprinted here with permission.



The SAA, along with rural artists, are working on the creation of a Rural Artists Working Group (RAWG). This group will tackle issues around isolation, professional development, and connecting provincial artists and arts communities of all disciplines. If you are interested in participating, please contact: info@saskartsalliance.ca

## **NEWS & NOTICES**

Grasslands Nature in Me© intuitive Painting MINI Retreat (1 Night 1 Day) August 9, 6 pm - 9:30 pm and August 10, 9:30 am - 5:00 pm

10 hours program time, one night accomodation at Sky Story B & B including robust organic breakfast, Mary's Labyrinth Walk, all materials included, no art or meditation experience necessary. Package rate starts at \$350. Registration without accomodation \$225. Only seven spaces available.

Full Nature in Me© Retreat Weekend in October, dates and location TBD

Cactus & Lotus Wellness Retreat
Art, Nature, Meditation in Grasslands, July 19 -21

Cactus & Lotus: A Deeper Look Worldview Retreat Art Nature, Meditation in Grasslands, Sept 6-8

See skystory.ca for details

# Portrait of the Prairies Art Show

Jane Evans, Myra Clarke, Bev Brenna with Jaime Speed, Poet

How Fires Spread Jaime Speed

...they mistake dormancy for death a trick of time when the ashes lift see how we bloom see how we spread...



April 19 - May 13

#### Receptions:

- April 19 from 6-8:30
- April 20 from 11-2

#### Poetry reading

- April 19 7pm & 8 pm
- April 20 1 pm

Dandelion Art Framing & Gallery located at 2207 1st Ave North, Saskatoon









## **Assiniboia Artist Retreat**



MONDAY, JULY 15 TO SATURDAY, JULY 20, 2024

The Shurniak Art Gallery & Assiniboia Arts Council are happy to announce this year's Artist retreat will be back again.

Please contact the gallery for more information.



#### CONTACT



Our mandate is to promote the well-being of practicing visual artists resident in Saskatchewan, to enhance the development of the visual arts as a profession, to represent artists for the advancement of their common interests, and to assist artists in their negotiations with individuals and institutions.

CARFAC SASK is strongly committed to the development of the visual arts, artists, and artistic practice in Saskatchewan. We provide professional and personal development opportunities for visual artists, and stimulate and encourage the production and understanding of artists' work through programs, projects, and services. CARFAC is founded on the principles of fair compensation to artists, respect for artists, and effective and responsive advocacy.

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1734 - A Dewdney Avenue

Regina, SK S4R 1G6

Office Hours:

Mon-Thur, 10am-4:30pm

Fri by appointment

Please note: Regina's CARFAC office is located up two flights of stairs with no

available elevator access

#### CARFAC OFFICE | SASKATOON

Phone: (306) 933-3206

Fax: (306) 933-2053

219, 2366 Avenue C North

Saskatoon, SK S7L 5X5

Office Hours:

Mon-Thurs, by appointment

Saskatoon's CARFAC office is located up two

flights of stairs, accessibility lift on site.

www.carfac.sk.ca

### **MEMBERSHIP**

#### CARFAC SASK MAY | JUNE 2024

#### **NEW MEMBERS**

Richmond Ametefe

Tea Gerbeza

Andrew Keith

James McKay

Shelly Nicolle-Phillips

Michelle Plett

Tim Tyler

Carla Tyacke

#### **RENEWAL**

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Sue Bland

Krishna Brahmaria

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Hilary Johnstone

Jolanta Kedra

Jay Kimball

Ruby Lalonde

Sandra Lamontagne

Kathleen D Loewen

Laureen Marchand

Erin Pell

Cheryl Ring

Susan Robertson

Gerry Ruecker

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Rosemarie Stadnyk

Justine Stillborn

Donna Stockdale

Lorraine Weidner

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Caron Dubnick

Charley Farrero

Bonnie Gilmour

# DONATIONS TO CARFAC SASK WORK

Kathleen D Loewen

# JOIN US / RENEW YOUR MEMBERSHIP



As a member of CARFAC SASK, you (and your art career) can benefit from programs and services including member discounts, advocacy, advisory services, newsletters, e-bulletins, resource centres, tech support, equipment rental, and toll-free telephone contact with our team.



# CALLING ALL VISUAL ARTISTS

# **CALL FOR MENTORS AND MENTEES**

# APPLY BY JUNE 15



Do you want to grow as an artist? Or do you have skills to offer as a mentor?

Apply to CARFAC SASK's 2024–25 Foundational Mentorship Program!

Craft and traditional art forms are welcome.



workshops.sask@carfac.ca carfac.sk.ca/mentorship FOR MORE INFO

#### about the program

For ten months, pairs of artists work together in an informal, peer-learning style, with experienced artists mentoring evolving artists. Craft and traditional art forms are welcome. Artists at all career stages can benefit from the enhanced community and professional growth that mentorship provides.

#### mentee artists

· a letter of application (max 2 pages) - What are your goals as an artist? How would your current work benefit from support of the program? How will you devote adequate time to the development of your work while balancing other commitments?

#### AND

a link to your website

#### OR

- a resume/cv (max 2 pages)
- plus 10 jpeg images or a short video (max 5 minutes) with accompanying image list (including title, date, media, dimensions). Include links and/or passwords to any online documentation in your submissions email.

#### time commitment

7 hrs/month plus group meetings

### eligibility

Participants must be Saskatchewan residents and cannot be undergraduate students.

#### fees

The program is free! Mentees receive a \$700 subsidy. Mentors are paid \$4,000.

#### mentor artists

 a letter of application (max 2 pages) - Why are you interested in mentoring? How will you support a mentee?

#### AND

• a link to your website

OR

- a resume/cv (max 2 pages)
- plus 10 jpeg images or a short video (max 5 minutes) with accompanying image list (including title, date, media, dimensions). Include links and/or passwords to any online documentation in your submissions email.

\*Please note that materials submitted by mentors are not adjudicated by the jury; they are used to determine the relevance of a mentorship pairing only, pending mentee selection.







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JingLu Zhao, #582, 4 x 4 inch without frame, Graphite on Paper, 2023 (See photography and drawing feature on pg. 13)



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