

June 2, 2020

Support for local artists to navigate pandemic realities

A new mentorship program will support emerging artists through the challenges of the current pandemic. The Mitchell Art Gallery (MAG) Exchange Artist Mentorship Program will provide honorariums and opportunities to collaborate to nine emerging Edmonton-area artists. These local artists have been paired up with established artists from across Canada in an effort to share knowledge and gain an understanding of how to approach creating in this new reality.

“We saw an opportunity to build new networks of support for emerging artists, who are otherwise missing some important opportunities for their artistic and professional development this summer,” says Carolyn Jervis, director/curator of the MAG.

The MAG Exchange Artist Mentorship Program was put together rapidly in April when gallery administrators realized the reality that, due to COVID-19 opportunities for public gatherings would be lost, and after the MAG temporarily closed its physical gallery.

“Part of our mandate is community connection and sharing ideas, and that doesn’t stop in this reality,” says Jervis. “We knew we could create a forum for artists to discuss the current social factors informing artistic practise right now.”

The emerging artists who applied for the program expressed concerns from feeling isolated and not being able to access studio space to make work, to worries about being unemployed and unable to afford art supplies. The support of this program helps them build a network, one-on-one support to expand their practice and reimagine its possibilities with the help of exceptional artists from across Canada.

A call for submissions for the program in April received dozens of applications. Nine local artists were selected and paired with nine established artists from across Canada.

Throughout spring and summer, the MAG's social media will be filled with their works in progress, and each mentor-mentee pair will be collaborating to create public programs and artworks accessible online.

Participating artists:

Emerging artists Anica Neiman, Ana Smith, Thomas Weir, Eric Almberg, Max Elwood, Kiona Ligtvoet, Grace Papineau-Couture, Taïessa Pagola, and Emily Storvold will be mentored, respectively, by Corri-Lyn Tetz, Emily Davidson, Collin Johansen, Guadalupe Martinez, Aislinn Thomas, Florence Yee, Karen Asher, Alma Visscher, and Hazel Meyer.

Artist profiles available [here](#).

The MAG continues to support artists through the pandemic in a variety of ways. Two virtual exhibitions, and community-oriented initiatives, [WORK IT](#), MacEwan University's Design Portfolio Show at macewandesign.com/2020 and *The 2020 Fine Art Grad Show* at macewan.com/fineartgradshow. Both sites explore and celebrate the hard work and dedication students have demonstrated throughout their diplomas and degrees.

In partnership with Latitude 53, the MAG has launched [Writing From Here](#), a series of commissioned personal letters by and for emergent artists in Edmonton to foster connection and community. [Art From Here](#), in collaboration with Latitude 53, Ociciwan Contemporary Art Collective, and SNAP (The Society of Northern Alberta Print-Artist) was developed to highlight artists who are making work, or thinking about how to make – or not make – work, for and in this unprecedented environment. The work also addresses community, collaboration, isolation, anxiety, technology, pressures of productivity, illness and care. *Art from Here* is supported in part by the Edmonton Arts Council and Edmonton Community Foundation. Both digital platforms provide local artists with paid opportunities to share and further their work and thoughts while staying connected and engaged with their communities.

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