

GERALD DAVID PEDROS BLIND CONTOUR DRAWINGS

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Front: Blind Contour Drawing, mixed media on mylar, 36"x31", 2022

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Design: Laura Woermke

Photography: Paul Lambert

Essay: Sylvia Curtis Norcross

Stills From Life/Dance and Dialogue by Sylvia Curtis-Norcross

Gerald Pedros brings a Beginners Mind to this iteration of figure drawings in what is both well travelled and new territory. With a practice deeply rooted in thousands of hours of practice over 50 years Pedros is an expert, but where the expert tends to think they know what the outcome of their work will be, the perspective of a Beginners Mind sees in each endeavour new possibilities. With this series of drawings Pedros leans heavily into his honed compositional skills working with informed intuition to create a body of figurative work that captures the essence, flow, and dance of the model sessions in the finished work.

Pedros' process of drawing the figure began when he was a student at Concordia University in Montreal, Que. studying under Jennifer Dickson (RA). The program took a Classical approach to art instruction, prioritizing skill development and a strong foundation in drawing the human form. The thinking was "if you can draw the figure you can draw anything". Dicksons' methods however, added an influential aspect in her teaching. In sessions dubbed "Jazz Ballet" she had the students dance freely until she called stop, as in the childhood game of Freeze. Students were then invited to focus their awareness on their postures. Where was their weight being supported? Where were their bodies compensating to maintain balance? What were the lines of force? It was an experiential approach to teaching how the body compensates to shifts in weight, a concept the ancient Greeks named Controposto, or counter poise. Around the same

time a reinforcement to the value of movement came when Pedro's was diagnosed with Arthritis in his hip and was prescribed movement as the best therapy to keep his mobility. With characteristic discipline he integrated movement throughout his life, pursuing Karate, Hiking and walking. Movement became second nature for Pedros and it laid the foundation for developing a dynamic approach to drawing.

Rather than sitting and drawing the model in a series of static poses of increasing duration, Pedros asks the model to move continuously while he draws onto a long scroll of paper on the floor, constantly moving around the paper which he can periodically unroll throughout the session without disrupting the flow. He captures the model in dynamic lines of force without her context, without generating composition, just creating a mid-space between life and still life. These dynamic drawings are the source material for the finished images which will be traced from the live session with pencil then painted over. Using semi-transparent Frosted Mylar, Pedros can not only trace directly from the paper, he can also flip the Mylar and trace onto the other side. This allows him to reverse a figure creating formal relationships between the figure and itself. The arch of an arm might be placed to echo the same curve of the same arm with just the right amount of negative space in between to hold the space in the way a sound and its' echo holds an auditory space. Arms crossed at the wrist or a curved hip approaching a square shoulder cre-

ate counterpoints to each other. Some of these relationships are subtle, a line and a bold curve in contrast to each other takes a longer look to feel the connection, but is a reward to find. When there is more than one figure present, which accounts for most of the work, it is a figure in dialogue with it's former self, however recent.

Pedros' compositions are dynamic balances, each one as if it is a suspended moment on the verge of disappearing. There is a greater sense of space here than the scant lines defining the figures which comes from the direction in which the figures look, lean, or face and it's into these spaces the figures could move. In contrast to his very controlled compositions, in the flat painted planes the textures are left to reveal themselves as the saturated acrylic paint settles and dries.

The greater part of this series features partial figures in tight compositions, with positive and negative spaces given near equal dominance. Like fractured descendants of Matisses' lyrical quartet Nu Bleu IV (1952), these pieces have a sense of flow, of movement, of dance, that happens outside of the figure, but because of the figure. The figures' relationship to space and to other versions of itself on the page create the flow without any imposition of details or context. Robert Motherwell's (1915-1991) description of his Elegy paintings as "stripped bare of other things in order to intensify it, its rhythms, spatial intervals and colour structures" is as an apt a description here.**

In some pieces the figure, with her curves and high arching hips, bring to mind the Palaeolithic Venus Figures that are currently experiencing a new relevance. While commonly thought to be symbols or talismans relating to fertility, new research suggests a correlation between the proportions of the figures and the availability of food, which in turn is linked to climate variations due to the glacial cycles during their making. As a result, Venus figures are entry points for discussions of our cultural response to food security and climate change.*

Pedros' approach to making art owes as much to his Tradesman roots as to the gestural Automatism of artists' like Motherwell who sought to bypass the conscious mind when creating. He balances the formal properties, light/dark, line, space, shape, to capture the body in motion and invites us to find meaning in our own relationship to the figure.

- * Johnson, Richard J., et. al., Upper Palaeolithic Figurines Showing Women with Obesity may Represent Survival Symbols of Climatic Change. Obesity 2021;29:11-15.
- **The Museum of Modern Art, MoMA Highlights, MoMA Highlights New York: The Museum of Modern Art, revised 2004, originally published 1999, p.244. as sited in MoMA.org, Nov 10, 2024.

BLIND CONTOUR DRAWINGS



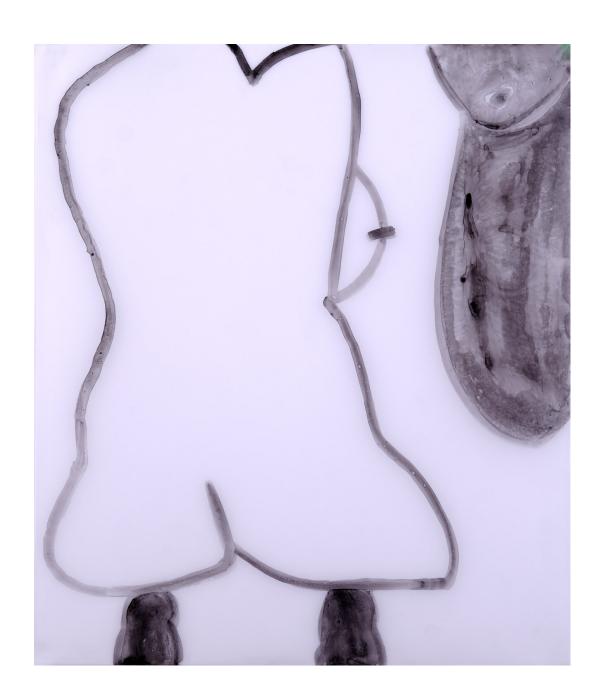






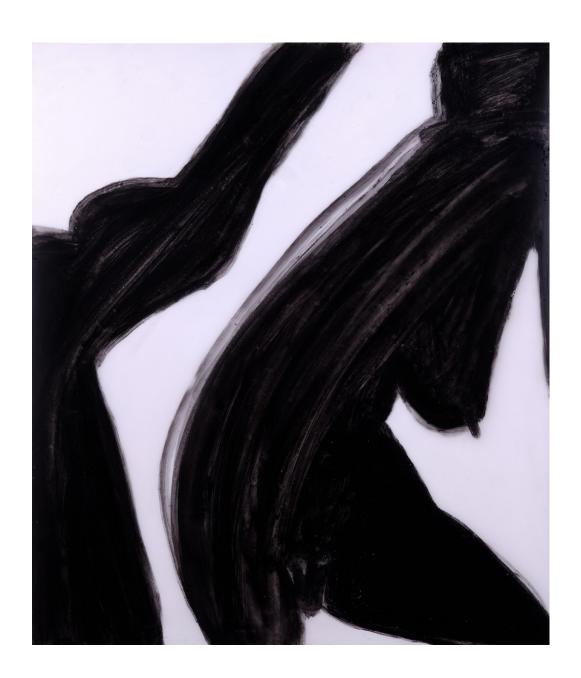


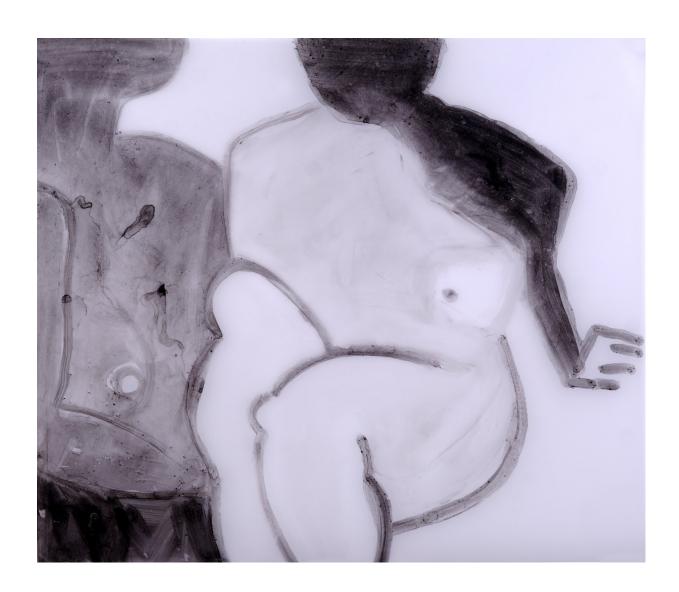


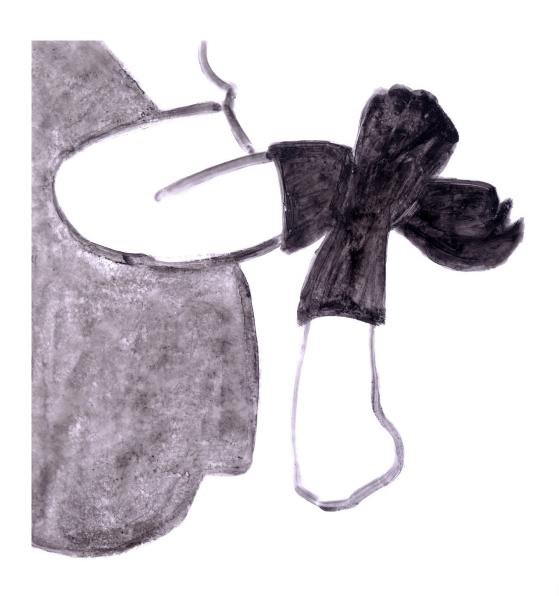




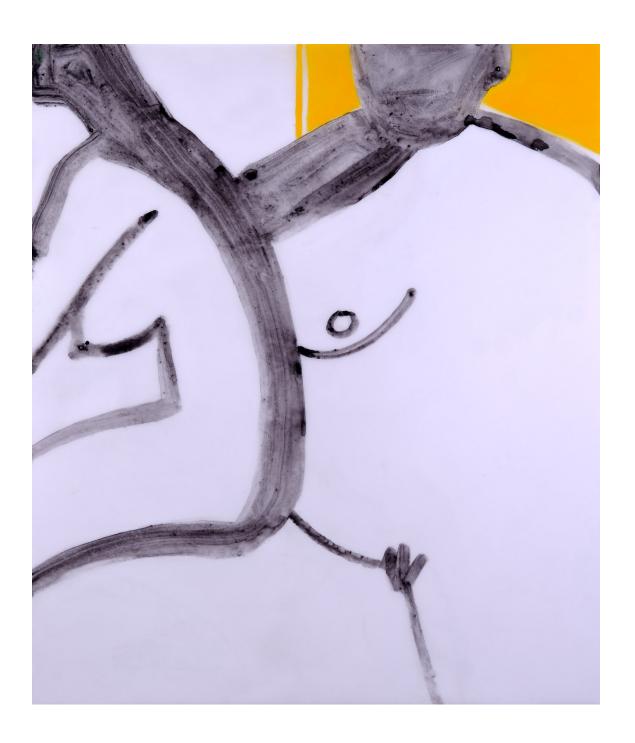


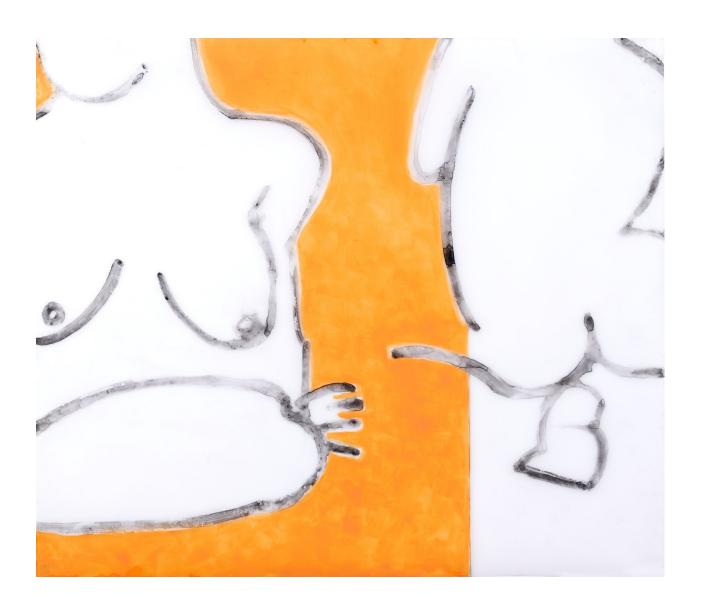




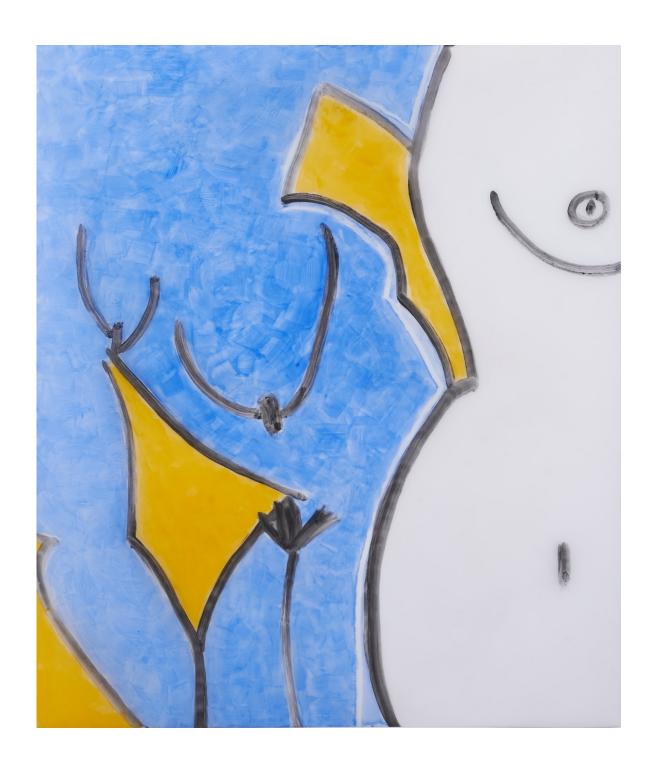




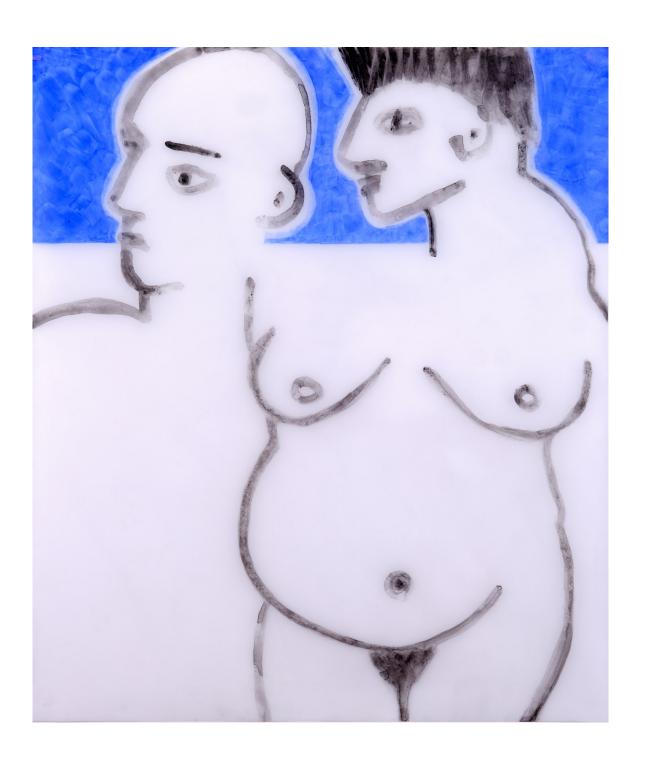






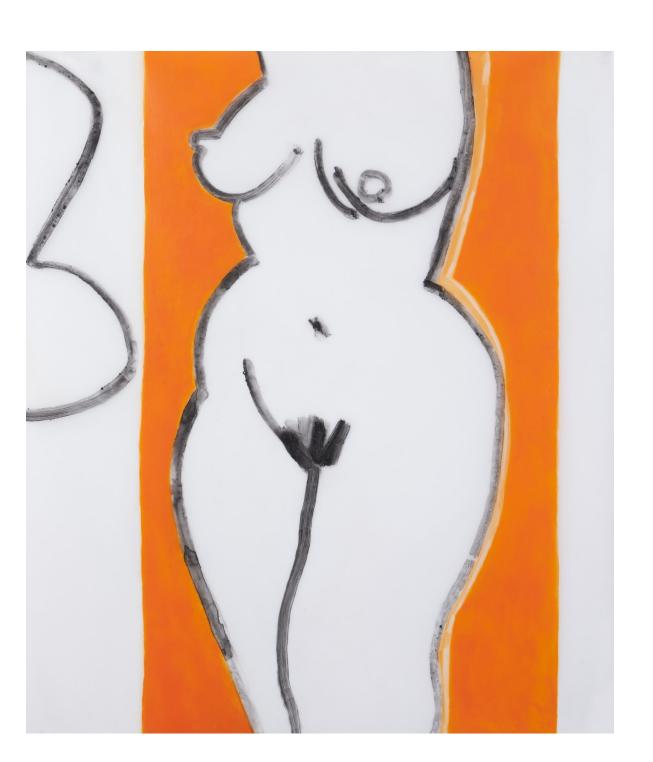








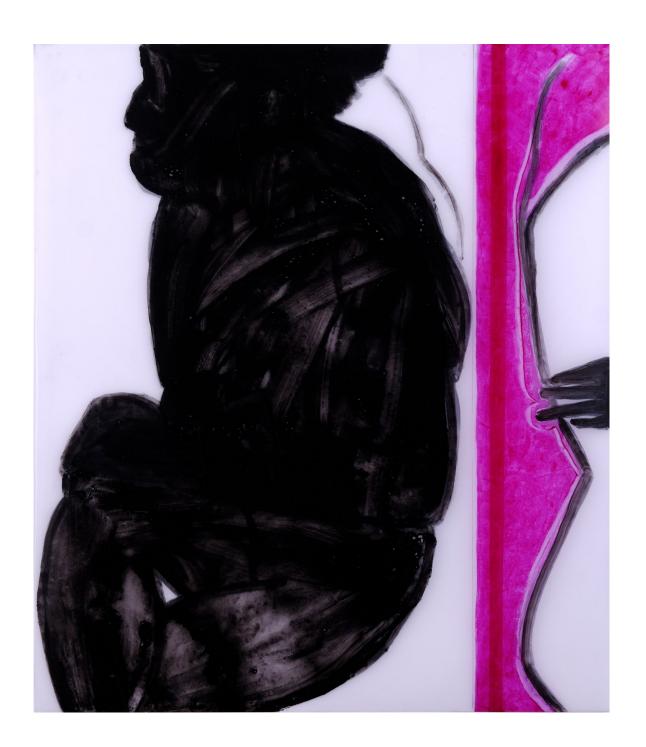


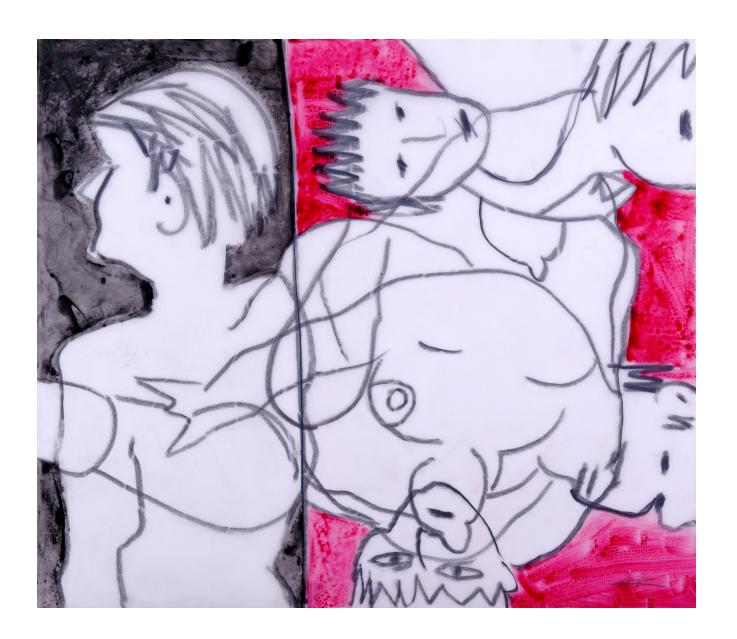












Gerald Pedros

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Canadian Exhibitions

- 2023 Sketchbook Series, Central Studio, London, ON
- 2022 BIG Print Show, Vancouver, BC
- 2021 Central Studio, London, ON
- 2020- Excavo Gallery, London, ON
- 2019 Central Studio, London, ON
- 2018 Thielsen Gallery, London, ON
- 2017 Thielsen Gallery, London, ON
- 2017 Big Print Project, Roundhouse Community Centre Gallery, Vancouver, BC
- 2017 Big Print Project, Chinese Cultural Centre Gallery, Vancouver, BC
- 2015 St. Thomas Public Art Centre, St. Thomas, ON
- 2014 Big Print Project, Waterfront Theatre, Vancouver, BC
- 2012 Thielsen Gallery, London, ON
- 2011 St. Thomas Public Art Centre, St. Thomas, ON
- 2010 Stewart Hall Art Gallery, Pointe-Claire, QC
- 2009 Fieldcote Memorial Park and Museum, Hamilton, ON
- 2009 Thielsen Gallery, London, ON
- 2009 St. Thomas Public Art Centre, St. Thomas, ON
- 2007 MacLaren Art Center, Barrie, ON
- 2007 Thielsen Gallery, London, ON
- 2006 Woodstock Art Gallery, Woodstock, ON
- 2006 Thielsen Gallery, London, ON
- 2005 St. Thomas Public Art Centre, St. Thomas, ON
- 2005 James Baird Gallery, St. John's, NFLD
- 2004 Thielsen Gallery, London, ON
- 2001 Thielsen Gallery, London, ON
- 2000 Roberts Gallery, Toronto, ON
- 1999 Jean-Claude Bergeron Gallery, Ottawa, ON
- 1997 Thielsen Gallery, London, ON
- 1997 Blyth Festival Art Gallery, Blyth, ON
- 1997 Wallace Galleries Ltd., Calgary, AB

- 1996 St. Thomas Public Art Centre, St. Thomas, ON
- 1996 Thielsen Gallery, London, ON
- 1995 Ottawa School of Art, Ottawa, ON
- 1995 Centre Interculturel Strathearn, Montreal, QC
- 1994 Thielsen Gallery, London, ON
- 1993 Centre for Contemporary Art, St. Thomas, ON
- 1992 Temiskaming Art Gallery, Temiskaming, ON
- 1991 St. Thomas Public Art Centre, St. Thomas, ON
- 1989 Galerie Samuel Lallouz, Montreal, QC
- 1985 Centre Saidye Bronfman, Montreal, QC

International Exhibitions

- 2015 Zadar and Bankovac, Croatia
- 2015 Museum Gallery, Biograd Na Moru, Croatia
- 2013 University of North Carolina, Greensboro, North Carolina, USA
- 2011 Provinciale de Artes Plasticas y Diseno, Santiago, Cuba
- 2010 Galeria Jose Peon Contreras, Merida, Yucatan, Mexico
- 2008 Salon de La Plasticas Mexicana, Mexico City, Mexico
- 2006 Public Exhibition, Berezategui, Argentina
- 2006 Faculty of Arts Universidad Nacional de Tucuman, Tucuman, Argentina
- 2006 Public Exhibition, Catamarca, Argentina
- 2006 2005 4th International Conference on Public Art & Muralism, Tlaxcala, Mexico
- 1994 Swords into Plowshare Peace Museum, Detroit, Michigan
- 1991 Galeria Praxis, Mexico, DF
- 1991 Morelia, Michoacan, Mexico
- 1991 Kilkenny Arts Festival, Kilkenny, Ireland
- 1991 Guinness Hop Store Gallery, Dublin, Ireland
- 1990 Ernst Brant Galerie, Cologne, Germany
- 1987 Sociedad mexicana des Arts Plasticas, Mexico City
- 1978 Centre Genevois de Gravure Contemporaine, Geneva, Switzerland
- 1978 Galerei Paralelle, Geneva, Switzerland

Public Collections

Museo Nacional de la Estampa, Mexico City, MX

Consejo Nacional Para La, Mexico City, MX

Musee d'Estampes Geneva, CH

Centre de Gravure, Geneva, CH S.O.M.A.R.T., Mexico City, MX

Guinness Brewery, Dublin, IRL

Bibliotheque Gabrielle Roy, Quebec City, QC

Consulate General of Morocco, Montreal, QC St. Thomas-Elgin Public Art Centre, St. Thomas, ON Teleglobe Canada, London, ON Woodstock Art Gallery, Woodstock, ON London Life, London, ON Concordia University, Montreal, QC St. Joseph's Hospital, London, ON St. Thomas-Elgin General Hospital, London, ON University of Western Ontario, London, ON Canada Council Art Bank, Ottawa, ON Air Canada Corporation, Toronto, ON Museum London, London, ON McCormick Home, London, ON Fanshawe College, London, ON

Curatorial Projects

Francis Caprani, *Ghost in the Machine*, July 7 – September 1, 2018 St. Thomas-Elgin Public Art Centre, St. Thomas, Ontario, Canada

Francis Caprani and Gerard Pas, *The Nude*, May 24 – June 18, 2018 Central Studios, London, Ontario, Canada

Francis Caprani, *Recent Works*, July 6, 2017 Central Studios, London, Ontario, Canada Brian Saby, *Playas Tropicales*, November 19, 2016 Central Studios, London, Ontario, Canada Laura Woermke, *Paper Crown*, August 27, 2016 Central Studios, London, Ontario, Canada Pamela Williams, *In The Midst of Angels*: Esther Rausenberg, *Anima of Air Spirit Soul*, January 17 – March 18, 2009 St. Thomas-Elgin Public Art Centre, St. Thomas, Ontario, Canada Tobey C. Anderson, *The New American Century Project*, November 14 – January 10, 2009 St. Thomas-Elgin Public Art Centre, St. Thomas, Ontario, Canada

The Bank Job: Three Canadian Painters "Francis Caprani, Ron Kingswood and Brian Saby" September 2008 353 Richmond St. London, Ontario, Canada

Aidan Urquhart, *Making Memories*, Helene Lefebvre, *Social Queen*, September 6 – October 26, 2008 St. Thomas-Elgin Public Art Centre, St. Thomas, Ontario, Canada

John Krygsman, *Upon Closer Introspection*, John Maggio, *Images along the Way*, July 12 – August 31, 2008 St. Thomas-Elgin Public Art Centre, St. Thomas, Ontario, Canada Richard Tetrault, *Urban Topographies*, January 19 – March 8, 2008 St. Thomas-Elgin Public Art Centre, St. Thomas, Ontario, Canada

Gerald Vaandering, *Under The Influence*, November 10 – January 6, 2008 St. Thomas-Elgin Public Art Centre, St. Thomas, Ontario, Canada

Leslie Putnam, *Alternate Route,* November 10, 2007 – January 6, 2008 St. Thomas-Elgin Public Art Centre, St. Thomas, Ontario, Canada

Holly King, Francois Morelli, Lorraine Sims, Michael Smith, Shelly Reeves, Giuseppe Di Leo, *Montreal Artists*, June 16 – August 18, 2007 St. Thomas-Elgin Public Art Centre, St. Thomas, Ontario, Canada

Ron Milton, *Symbols* January 20 – March 3, 2007 St. Thomas-Elgin Public Art Centre, St. Thomas, Ontario, Canada

Jan Row & Julie Berry, *Discovering a Different Shore* January 20 – March 3, 2007 St. Thomas-Elgin Public Art Centre, St. Thomas, Ontario, Canada

Brian Saby, 99-06 September 2 – October 21, 2006 St. Thomas-Elgin Public Art Centre, St. Thomas, Ontario, Canada

Grants

Canada Council for the Arts: 1979

Ontario Arts Council: 1989, 1992, 1995, 1997, 2001

Greenshield Foundation Graduate Assistantship: 1976, 1977

Education

Dawson College, Montreal, QC 1972 -1974 BFA - Concordia University, Montreal, QC 1974-1977

MFA - Concordia University, Montreal, QC 1980-1983

Studio Residencies

Potrero Studios, Potrero, Costa Rica (2015)

Pouch Cove Foundation Art Residency Program, Newfoundland (2005)

Banff Centre Leighton Artists Colony, Banff, Alberta (1993)

La Sociedad Mexicana de Artes Plasticas S.O.M.A.R.T., Mexico City, Mexico (1987)

Le Centre Genevois de Gravure Contemporaine, Geneva, Switzerland (1978)

Volunteer Work and Professional Affiliations

Vice President, Board of Directors, St. Thomas-Elgin Public Art Centre, St. Thomas, 1994-1996

President, St. Thomas-Elgin Public Art Centre, St. Thomas, ON, 1996-1999

Board of Directors, St. Thomas-Elgin Theatre Guild, St. Thomas, ON, 1999-2001

Committee, Unity Project: UPWithArt, London, ON, 2016-2018

Projects Founder, Central Studios, London, ON, 2017-present

Artist, York Theatre Collaborative Mural, Vancouver, BC, 2017-2018

Artist, Big Print Project, Chinatown, Vancouver, BC, 2016

Artist, Big Print Project, Granville Island, BC 2014

Coordinator, Point of Contact (mural), Santiago Cuba, 2011

Coordinator, Canada/Argentina mural (a collaboration with Argentinean Artists), London, ON, 2011

Artist, Jornada por la Paz y la Amistad Argentina Mural, Argentina, 2006

