



Because of her, I am

"Because of her, I am"

Curatorial Statement

ON THE COVER
Moon Calendar (2019),
Rebecca Pickard, acrylic
and graphite on wood,
30"x30"

Gender is a social construction. For some societies, there are only two genders, male and female, compared to a Cree worldview of eight genders. Each gender has specific roles and responsibilities that contribute to the health and well-being of the community. Imagine a world where gender is fluid, complex, multidimensional and a living entity, expanding from our cosmic relations to our water relations. Come see the diverse views of her from five local Edmonton artists, exploring "Because of her, I am."

Lana Whiskeyjack

Make art to reflect who I am:

A mother and a first generation Chinese-Canadian.

Because of my mother/earth, I am.

Being a mother of two young children, I am constantly thinking of the future: what kind of home and identity will my children inherit. My maternal instincts beckon me towards two fundamental priorities: living sustainably, and making Edmonton a place that I feel at home.

There are a lot of misconceptions about Chinese culture in Edmonton. I want to recast Chinese culture visually with humor. My Canadian experience gives me the privilege of accessing information on a global scale, and I use my art as a form of activism.

Yong Fei Guan



叽哩咕噜 Ji li gu
lu (2019), Yong Fei
Guan, acrylic on
wood, 36"x48"



My Secret Heart (2019),
Rebecca Lippiatt,
photography

Integrity versus Dispair

This series of self portraits originated over 25 years ago during a hypnosis session when I was called to make a choice between head and heart, art and science. I chose heart and art. At the time I was in the middle of a degree in microbiology. I committed to completing the degree, but shortly thereafter began working as a photographer. The subsequent years were devoted to my artistic practice which was interwoven with raising my family.

My photography centers heavily around the family. Both familial emotional relationships and the experiences are crucial themes in my work. Recording families lives in order to create a record of love and joy that can be later accessed by those children once they have reached adulthood is the crux of my work.

In this series, the images are an interpretation of my dream world and my visioning, which are both comprised of and illuminated by archetypal motifs and mythologies. Jungian classical themes feature heavily in these creations. The objects in the photographs are

both symbolic and representative of important moments or experiences in my life.

This series of photographs is titled Integrity versus Despair. A health crisis necessitated my looking into the heart of myself, weighting my life and my contributions to the world. Erik Erikson writes about the stages of psychosocial development, and this work is the story of the final stage, Integrity versus Despair.

Rebecca Lippiatt



My Sacred Heart
(2019), Rebecca
Lippiatt, photography

Aba Garbrah is a visual artist who explores themes of intersectionality of race and gender in her paintings. Aba believes that through her vibrant portraits of iconic women of colour she can amplify their strength and independence, counteracting the negative stereotypes of “her” that are portrayed in the media. Inspired by the strength of her mother, prominent figures such as Michelle Obama, and fictional characters like the Wakanda Warriors of the Black Panther Universe, Aba celebrates the movement of women of colour from the background of public discourse to stand firmly in the foreground. With her brightly painted depictions, Aba’s subjects cannot be ignored, a sharp contrast for a group that has been historically “invisible”.

Caring (2019), Aba Garbrah, monoprint, 12.5"x17"

Aba Garbrah





Trella (2017), Allison Tunis, cross-stitch embroidery on aida cloth, 15"x17"

Because of Her, I Am – there are many people that come into our lives, and as individuals and a society, we are constantly learning, adapting, and evolving. The six pieces in this series are portraits of people that have come into my life - some I have met only briefly and some I have known my whole life, some I am still in contact with and some have moved on from our relationship. They have each impacted me and taught me new ways of being, living, and interacting with others. Because of these six women and femmes, I have become a better version of myself and I believe that our society can also grow by listening and learning from diverse and marginalized voices.

Allison Tunis



Thirteen (2019),
Rebecca Pickard,
acrylic and graphite
on wood, 30"x30"

Exploring the sacred shape of the circle was my launching point for these works. I've come to understand the circle as the symbol of life itself; in its form we witness the sun, moon, earth, and all other planets. The circle speaks of an undeniable feminine force that is echoed in the shape of ova, yoni, seeds, breasts and bellies. We gather in them, tell our stories in them, dance in them, drum in them. In the circle we find cycles, and our return to wholeness. There is no hierarchy in a circle and because of this there is safety, strength, kinship, and shared responsibly.

Rebecca Pickard

Moon Calendar (2019),
Rebecca Pickard, acrylic
and graphite on wood,
30"x30"





Aba Garbrah
thenina.ca

Olivene Aba Gyimah Garbrah (known at the Nina as Aba) is a versatile and highly skilled artist. In ceramics she created a series of small busts of famous African-American people. Her figures convey her fascination with black history in North America and, in particular, iconic celebrities as well as people that she has met. She worked in the Nina's glass studio to create intricate portraits. Aba has written and published short stories and participated in the Nina's digital storytelling project.

Currently Aba is exploring abstract painting using geometric shapes and vibrant colours. In addition to being an artist, Aba bowls competitively, and enjoys participation as a Toast Master. Aba has been a volunteer at the Strathcona Place Seniors' Centre for twenty years.



Yong Fei Guan
yongfeiguan.com

Yong Fei Guan is a Chinese-Canadian artist and illustrator with a degree in Fine Arts from the Emily Carr University of Art + Design.

Guan explores multicultural identity, politics and their relationship to environmental issues in her work. She has been involved in public and community art projects, which include 塑胶狮 Su Jiao Shi 2018, a pair of contemporary Chinese guardian lion sculptures created from household plastic waste; YEGmidautumn2017, a milk jug lantern workshops and milk jug contest during Chinese Mid-autumn Festival; YEGCANVAS 2015, The Postcard Project 2013, engaging neighbours with environmental conversations through the postal system.



Rebecca Lippiatt
rebeccalippiatt.com

Rebecca Lippiatt is a self-taught photographer. Influenced by the photojournalistic style of National Geographic, by the clarity and introspection of Frida Kahlo and clean simplicity of Georgia O'Keefe's work, Rebecca Lippiatt refers to her work as visual storytelling. Rebecca's public exhibits include The Ave We Had, A Living History (portraits of Alberta Avenue residents) and Mother Love (a visual and oral storytelling). Rebecca works as a portrait and commercial photographer and seeks authenticity through her lens. All of her work, from art to commercial photography is executed from a desire to serve her subjects and her audience with an open heart.



Rebecca Pickard
rebeccapickard.com

Rebecca Pickard is a self-taught Métis artist, mother and educator. Over the last decade she has been involved in several solo and collaborative projects in and around Edmonton. In addition to working as a free lance visual artist, she is an art consultant for the First Nations, Métis and Inuit Education unit with Edmonton Public Schools.

She is passionate about exploring how art can be a powerful entry point to bridging cultural understanding, aiding in reconciliation and shifting the collective consciousness.



Allison Tunis
allisontunis.com

Allison has her Bachelor of Fine Arts from the University of Alberta, and a graduate diploma from the Vancouver Art Therapy Institute. She is currently the artist-in-residence at Harcourt House Artist-Run Centre, creating a body of work exploring the language our society uses towards and about people of size. Allison also runs a Queer Youth Art Club for LGBTQIA2S+ youth to create art in a safe space and connect with peers.



Lana Whiskeyjack
lanawhiskeyjack.ca

Lana Whiskeyjack is a multidisciplinary treaty iskwew educator and art actionist from Saddle Lake Cree Nation, Treaty Six Territory, Alberta. Among her early influences were her mother's gifts in the traditional arts (beadwork, moose hair tufting, fish scale, moccasin making, and sewing) and grandmother's gifts of song, storytelling and hard work. Her work is passionate and expressive, born from the deep roots of her culture, history, and intergenerational relations. Through the examination of sometimes difficult subjects, Lana's work reflects the intrinsic beauty of the powerful interconnections of the Cree language, the land, and all living beings. Lana Whiskeyjack is an Assistant Professor at the Faculty of Extension, University of Alberta and was featured in a documentary, "Lana gets her talk" (2017).



Mickey LaForge
miclaforge.com

Mickey LaForge is an industrial design student at the University of Alberta. Influenced by post modernism, she focuses on exploring materials and manufacturing methods. Particularly, she is interested in how these materials affect ones experience within a space. This year is Mickey's third year interning with the SkirtsaFire Festival and her first as the Visual Arts Assistant Coordinator.



SKIRTS AFIRE FESTIVAL

MARCH 7-17
2019

Founded in 2012, SkirtsAfire Festival is Edmonton's only theatre and multidisciplinary arts festival featuring women. In conjunction with International Women's Day, our 10 day festival runs each March at various venues in the heart of Alberta Avenue, an area that is reinventing itself as an Arts and Dining district in Edmonton, and we continue to expand to more venues all over our downtown core. We present powerful and insightful stories to a diverse audience that is hungry to be moved by passionate performances and exhibitions. Programming reflects the true diversity of the thriving arts community in Alberta and Canada, and is adaptive in its approach in order to remain responsive to the needs of artists and audiences.

SkirtsAfire Festival values diversity in the women we represent and therefore welcomes women artists of all diverse backgrounds including trans women, self-identifying women, the LGBTQ2 community, all ethnicities and all abilities.

Lana Whiskeyjack would like to acknowledge and gratitude to Sandi Peel for sharing the NAIDOC theme 'Because of Her We Can', which is the inspiration for the exhibition title "Because of her, I can"