

SCREEN

TEST



ARTISTS OF
CREATIVE
SPIRIT
ART CENTRE

ART IS
DELAYED
ECHO.

"SCREEN TEST"

EXHIBITION CATALOGUE

AN EXHIBITION OF ART
BY CREATIVE SPIRIT ART CENTRE ARTISTS
WITH AND WITHOUT DISABILITIES
"THE CREATIVE SPIRIT"
ARTS FESTIVAL/CONFERENCE/EXHIBITION 2010"



CREATIVE
SPIRIT
ART CENTRE
999 DOVERCOURT ROAD
TORONTO, ONTARIO M6H 2X7

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Robert J. Anderson
Meiko Ando
Gilles Arseneault
Kristine Erglis
Glenda Hird
Ann Hrinco
Mark Humenyk
Cynthia Kemerer
Will Kennedy
Marc Labonte
Martin Owen
Shirley Sinclair
Joan La Mantia
Alan Parker
Jai Wax
Vitali Zelinski

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“SCREΞN TEST”
ARTISTS OF
CREATIVE
SPIRIT
ART CENTRE

ART
SAYS
EYE,
BELIEVE.

HISTORY OF C.S.A.C.

Creative Spirit Art Centre began in 1992 as a tiny storefront art gallery and studio in Toronto, Ontario. It was started by Ellen Anderson, mother to Gabe, a developmentally disabled adult. His creative talents necessitated a supportive environment where he could develop in the community and as an artist.

At this time, Canada could not offer any such opportunities to persons living with disabilities. Ellen decided to start an art centre for her son and others, which she formulated through research of similar art centres created by Dr. Elias Katz and Florence Luden Katz, founders of the National Institute of Art and Disability in San Francisco, Oakland, and Richmond, California.

Ellen found an ally in Michael Seary, head of the Independent Learning Centre for Ontario who donated his expertise in writing grants. Creative Spirit Art Centre was made possible through the support of a grant from the Ontario Office for Disability Issues which funded one year's rent for a storefront gallery/studio space.

The labour of running the centre was entirely donated as were the art supplies and support offered by local artists. The doors opened in May of 1992 and have stayed opened to this date through the assiduous support of the Toronto community. Over the past 18 years, those who have wished to produce, exhibit and sell their art have become members of the unique community generated at Creative Spirit Art Centre. Members include people with many medical labels such as: multiple sclerosis, muscular dystrophy, Down's syndrome, head injuries, cerebral palsy, bipolar mood disorder and many other visible - and invisible - disabilities. Their collective interest does not focus on medical definitions, but a love for making and showing art. Many Creative Spirit artists rely on disability pensions which pay for food, clothing and shelter, but are not enough to purchase art supplies or tuition at art schools. Furthermore, some artists with disabilities have not been accepted at art schools because of preconceived notions about their intellectual and physical limitations.

Creative Spirit Art Centre exists because it speaks to a number of audiences including:

1. **Artists** from mainstream arts communities who donate their time and artwork.
2. **Art dealers** from the mainstream arts community who became aware of the centre and donate their art work each year to our fundraising art auction, *Straight From the Heart*.
3. **Art collectors** who collect art.
4. **Art Museums** specializing in Folk Art, Outsider Art and Art Brut.
5. **Community organizations** notably short and long term care facilities for people living with medical issues.
6. **The general public and stakeholders** who attend events such as the Creative Spirit Arts Festival which showcase talented Canadian dancers, performers, musicians and visual artists with disabilities.
7. **Professionals and organizations** that coordinate conferences which are held to create a Canadian network of services in the fields of art and disabilities, social services, rehabilitation and occupational therapy.
8. **The VSA arts International Associate community** represented by Creative Spirit Art Centre and is a member of the global arts and disabilities network located in over 68 countries worldwide.

YOU
LOOK AT
ART.
ART
SEES
YOU.



ART.
MIRRORS,
WIBBLES,
ON THE
WALL.



HISTORY OF C.S.A.C. ART AND DISABILITIES FESTIVALS AND CONFERENCES

Creative Spirit festivals and conferences were created to fill a void in the development of organizations working in the field of art and disabilities. In Canada this is a relatively new discipline that seeks universal access to freedom of expression within a cultural format, and the acceptance of “art as art”. It is a separate discipline from art therapy, which uses art as a device to initiate a process of therapy - or cure - within a psychological setting. Often individuals and groups have been working in isolation to create “art as art” within a special needs population. Our first conferences and contacts made us aware of the need to communicate the valuable work being pioneered in various regions of Canada. Sharing knowledge, vision, and successes has been and continues to be part of the process of making this unique cultural idea visible, acceptable and part of mainstream society.





ART
MOVES.
HENCE
IT'S CIVILIZING
POWER.

Art Brut, Outside Art, Visionary Art are subdivisions of Folk Art. “Art Brut” is a term coined by the artist Jean Du Buffet. He recognized the important aesthetic values held in art created by children and untrained artists. Picasso also noticed the value of art that was incorrectly termed “primitive” and “tribal”.

Both artists determined aesthetic directions by progressing beyond the traditional academic confines of the visual tradition. The application of terminology including “primitive”, “naïve” and “tribal” supports the potential of Art Brut, Outsider Art and Visionary Art. Folk Art traditions rely on archetypal images and functionality. Examples include quilts, weather vanes, whirligigs, and furniture that serve a specific function and often enhanced through the use of traditional designs. Art Brut and Outsider artists use unique, personalized icons and symbols. The objects may not serve any useful purpose such as holding liquid or functioning as clothing, but their aesthetic value overrides utility. The meaning of Outsider Art has changed over the years. The term originally referred to art created by people with psychiatric illness: those who lived “outside” of institution. Psychiatrist Hans Prizhorn’s collection of Outsider Art is now recognized as one of the first collections of this genre. The term “outsider” has come to encompass any person who is marginalized in society as a result of medical labels, psychiatric diagnoses, poverty, race, gender, sexual orientation and other hegemonic definitions within any given society. Art Brut, Outsider Art and Visionary Art are significant forms of contemporary art. They constitute one of the fastest growing categories in the retail art sector. Many retail art galleries specialize in selling Art Brut; there are also several public art galleries solely devoted to housing seminal collections of Art Brut. The pre-eminent collection is maintained by the Art Brut Museum in Lausanne, Switzerland; this collection encompasses the works collected by Jean Du Buffet.

ART
IS
A
BRUSH
WITH
LIFE.

Definition of
Universal Access
and Integrated
Exhibitions



The term “universal access” denotes right of entry for everyone. It means that a mother with a baby stroller, to a person in a wheelchair, that all people are granted access to a physical facility. Universal access also means that a person with visual and hearing impairment, developmental disabilities, or psychiatric illness can also utilize a space. It includes accommodation in terms of human support such as an intervener or interpreter for the blind, deaf, or visually impaired. Technological support materials in an art gallery setting include Braille text, large print or audio descriptions, tour equipment, and simultaneous interpretation IT systems.

Integrated exhibitions unite art produced by both disabled and non-disabled artists.

Artwork produced by disabled persons is too often segregated according to illness.

Integrated exhibitions draw attention to the art, not to the presence of medical labels.

We live in a society that often chooses to segregate individuals according to age, race, gender, and disease, among others. Most elderly and medically diagnosed persons prefer to remain engaged with society.

They prefer not to live apart from society. Creative Spirit Art Centre prefers to present integrated exhibitions as a demonstration that cultural activities allow all people to remain actively engaged with society.

At Creative Spirit we believe that everyone has the right to access his or her own culture, as declared by the United Nations:

The United Nations, The Universal Declaration of Human Rights - Article 27.

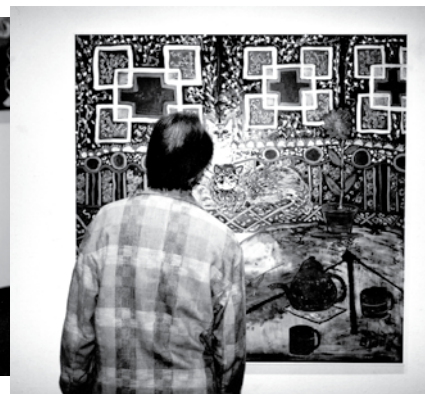
(1) Everyone has the right freely to participate in the cultural life of the community, to enjoy the arts and to share in scientific advancement and its benefits. United Nations, Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

"Screen Test" Definition of the tripartite screening process affecting artists with disabilities in Canada.

Aesthetic Screen



Medical Screen



Socio-economic Screen



The theme of Screen Test encompasses all of the elements that shape an art centre designed for people living with disabilities. These fundamentals need to be taken into account for any artist dealing with medical disabilities. Creative Spirit Art Centre strives to provide an optimum environment taking into consideration all three screens. Over the years, visits to other art centres and workshops has made me aware of the commonalities of the structures and needs being recognized, processed and created for artists with disabilities. It is crucial to determine the kinds of support and facilitation that are required in an integrated art studio and exhibition space. In an exhibition setting, the only screen that is visible to the audience is the aesthetic screen. Functioning in a studio setting requires the evaluation of the three screens.

Quality of life is what we all strive for and that requires that we take all three screens into account.

The Aesthetic Screen is the most important for any artist. Freedom of expression is the banner under which art is created. Most often people with disabilities are given access to art therapy. The subject matter is sometimes dictated and analyzed for personality traits and deficits, or as an indicator of the therapeutic process at work. The choice of what to paint and how to paint it is often the focus of community based arts classes and courses too. The freedom to express and explore is vital for the development of true artistic expression.

The Screen Test Project: The subject matter painted on each triptych commissioned for Screen Test is at the discretion of each artist. This exhibition is devoted to freedom of choice. The triptych format was selected as a metaphor for the three screens: aesthetic, medical, and socio-economic. All three parts of the screens provide a large single visual image but each section can stand on its own. In order for a work to exist as a triptych, the aesthetics must drive the work but the medical and socio/economic elements must remain invisible. Aesthetics and freedom of expression are imperative to any artist. In commissioning the artists, I did not ask for a specific theme nor did I restrict creation other than to request that all the artists use the same size canvases in a portrait orientation.

The triptych is a challenging format. It was used frequently throughout the tradition of Western art to depict religious icons. As a three-panel screen it can be easily folded for storage and transportation. Using the triptych format as the screen allows the work to be freestanding, and the configuration allows the artist to play with the image. The hinges can fold either in or out.

The idea of technical support or assistant(s) in the art world is not new. Successful artists with large studios during the Renaissance and subsequent art periods (including the present) made use of assistants. Assistants can be highly trained artists or apprentice(s) who are required to stretch canvas, make paints, prepare palettes, paint backgrounds and any number of technical tasks.

Art facilitators are often used by studios with artists with disabilities. Again these are academically trained artists who have an ability to interpret the individual needs of each artist and supply technical information as required. A facilitator is an artist who has completed a post-secondary visual arts education: a BFA or equivalent (many places in the U.S.A. require an MFA). Facilitators are often practising artists with highly developed sensitivities for special needs population. The facilitators must be able to help the studio artist reach their own aesthetic values and are required not to impose on the development of the aesthetics of the individual. This requires a facilitator who can see and screen the direction of the studio artist.

Disclosure of the Medical Screen in the exhibition is left to the discretion of each artist featured in this exhibition; it is their choice to disclose or not to disclose the emotional, physical, or psychological conditions affecting their lives. The viewer is first asked to

view the screens without medical background, and if they choose, to view the works again after reading the biographies. Does the information change your point of view, or your opinion of the art or artist?

In some cases knowing a medical condition can influence the perception of the viewer. Some viewers are taken aback when they discover that the artist is legally blind. They have to reconfigure their idea of what a visually impaired person is able to achieve.

There has been much speculation about Van Gogh's medical condition. The idea that one must be mad or insane is an unfortunate belief often connected to Van Gogh. It is believed by some that El Greco's paintings show a medical condition attached to his vision.

Medical definitions are usually required for entry into a studio space that provides for artists with special needs. Medical knowledge is required for the health and safety of the artists in the work environment. People with medical definitions are often excluded from "regular" art courses due to a lack of physical access or because of evident mental or intellectual diagnosis.

The description of disability has changed in the past few decades. Today, people live with a multitude of medical conditions: cancer, diabetes, Aids, M.S., brain injuries, stroke, Alzheimer's, Parkinson's and many other diagnoses.

Society no longer accepts a medical diagnosis as a valid reason to retreat from the world. Hotels have support bars in the washrooms and wheelchair access. Ocean liners have outfitted their luxury suites to provide the necessary aid for those who require physical adaptations. Airlines, conferences and restaurants take into account the fact that there are people who have food restrictions imposed by medical, religious or ethical concerns. The world has changed and so have the expectations of membership in the mainstream community, regardless of ongoing medical limitations.

The Socio-Economic Screen is significant because most artists with disabilities live with the assistance of a disability pension, from which they must pay for their rent, food and clothing. The amount is approximately \$15,000 a year. It is supplemented with allowances for prescription and dental care, and access to subsidized public housing. The pension does not provide for the purchase of art supplies, which are costly. The artist's ability to write and distribute biographies, purchase frames, pay entry fees for juried exhibitions, and compete in the mainstream arts venues is sometimes limited by lack of literacy, inability to write or retain information, and of course the money to pay for services.

Money is a factor in lack of access to computers and printers to accomplish the tasks. Lack of education is a factor. Often the knowledge required to respond to the tasks has never been taught to people who might have the intellectual ability to process information. Our society does not view being a visual artist as a viable career.

Art supplies, framing and promotion are expensive. Materials are usually provided by the organization delivering art programs.

Fees for a program can vary from none to a cost per session. Unfortunately, in some cases a governing body dictates that the disabled person pay the user fee of running an arts program.

At this time most arts programs are not funded with the exception of grants for social economic development projects. These are projects which attempt to set up a workshop to teach marketable arts and crafts skills and to market the products under the guise of being a business. Such projects are usually time limited for the participants, however there are exceptions.

The average wage of an artist in Canada was reported to be approximately \$23,500 in the 2001 Canada Census report. The success rate of graduates from Art College is 1%. The purpose of support services is to alleviate the challenges of medical and socio-economic conditions in order to allow each artist to contribute to the mainstream arts community, regardless of their specific disability.

ALL
ART IS A
REVOLT
AGAINST
MAN'S
FATE.

THE ARTIST'S
EYE
IS A WINDOW
INTO YOUR
SOUL.



Takashi Gabe Anderson was born in 1970 in Toronto, Ontario. Gabe has cerebral palsy, epilepsy and is developmentally disabled. He is the reason Creative Spirit Art Centre was developed. In 1991, there were no opportunities for people with disabilities to create art in Canada. The process of making art has always intrigued Gabe. When he turned twenty-one he was no longer eligible for special education or other government-funded programs. In 1992, Gabe's mother, Ellen Anderson, founded Creative Spirit Art Centre to accommodate Gabe and similarly talented artists.

In 1992, Gabe became a fulltime artist, joyfully adopting art as his career. His work involves watercolour pencils, coloured pencils, ink and Styrofoam and linoleum prints. His art is about the world he sees: the view across a street, the pages from a newspaper, or places in his imagination. Gabe was accustomed to observing the world from a ground level, a perspective that translated into his artwork. One day, Gabe visited a friend who lived in a high-rise condo. For the first time Gabe saw the city from high above – and it looked entirely different! Since then his artwork has developed to include aerial views of Toronto as this experience has changed the way Gabe thinks about what he sees and portrays.

Gabe's art was recently on display at the Kennedy Centre for the Performing Arts in Washington D. C. for the 2010 VSA Arts International Arts Festival.





Robert J. Anderson was born in 1934 in Sherbrooke, Quebec. His family eventually moved to Montreal where he spent his early childhood. The next move took him to Thunder Bay, Ontario where two important influences would alter the course of his aesthetic career. The first was the majesty of north shore of Lake Superior and the Precambrian shield. The second was his art teacher, Bob McClure, who encouraged Robert to consider art as a real profession and to enrol in an art college.

In 1957, Robert graduated with a BFA from the Minneapolis College of Art & Design where he studied fine art and advertising. He returned to Canada and settled in Toronto. The advertising world paid his bills and bought him time to paint the Canadian landscape. The Merton Gallery and later the Roberts Gallery in Toronto were among the first to exhibit his watercolour landscapes.

Robert was the first founding Chair of Visual Arts Ontario and an active member of the Canadian Society of Painters in Watercolours (CSPW). The CSPW gave him the opportunity to meet many artists including A.J. Casson and Doris McCarthy. Robert's commitment to the visual arts community was recognized when he received the Queen Elizabeth II Silver Jubilee Medal in 1977. His work as a volunteer art teacher for Creative Spirit Art Centre continues to provide him with connections to emerging and established Canadian artists.





Meiko Ando is an independent Butoh dancer and a choreographer based in Toronto, Ontario. She is also a visual artist who creates relief prints and sculptures using Japanese paper and plant matter. She was born in Tokyo where she studied classical ballet, ballroom dancing, and modern dance before coming to Canada in 1982. She graduated with a Bachelor of Arts in Dance from the University of Waterloo. From 1987 to 1990 Meiko returned to Japan to perform for a professional Butoh dance company while simultaneously researching Japanese traditional arts and festivals. This experience later influenced her choreographies such as a series of Butoh dance called *Onibaba*, which was performed in Toronto, Quebec, Mexico City and St. Louis. Meiko also designs costumes and visual art for her stage productions. One of Meiko's recent projects is a collaboration with the music improvisation group Odradek (Andy Yue, James Bailey and Michelangelo Iaffaldano) at Somewhere There in Toronto (2009). Inspired by the music of this collaboration, Meiko has created 10 new prints that are presented in a handmade box.





Gilles Arseneault is an Acadian Canadian born 1955 in Dalhousie, New Brunswick.

In 1991, Gilles founded the first Environment Committee in the Canadian building trades and served on the Waste Caucus of the Ontario Environment Network.

In 1995, Gilles suffered a severe head injury. He was paralyzed down the left side of his body and lost his ability to read, write, and function as a carpenter and union leader. He had been left handed. He learned to use his right hand. His artistic and activist concerns merged in 1998 with an exhibition of his work with the Mayworks Festival of Labour Arts. Recently, he exhibited at the City of Toronto Outdoor Art Show and the Yorkville Public Library. In 2010, OPSEU chose Gilles' art to promote an event for their workers within the developmentally disabled community.

Gilles was an artist before his injuries and continues to paint today. He describes his pre-injury self as pessimistic and grumpy. In contrast, his post accident personality is optimistic and happy. The life-changing realities that followed his injury allow him to be at peace and appreciate every day. He sums up his point of view in his oft-repeated mantra: Lovely (Jolie).





Kristine Erglis was born 1954 in Nottingham, England. Kristine left a career as an accountant to pursue her dream of becoming an artist. She studied painting and printmaking for two years at the Toronto School of Art. In 1983 she experienced her first psychotic break. Kristine was misdiagnosed and from 1983 to 1988 she underwent treatment that was ineffective. She was unable to paint from 1988-1992. Kristine arrived at Creative Spirit studio in 1993. Entering the studio helped her to re-enter the world of art. She says, "Painting is true magic; so is drawing. The sheer thrill of what I can create with my inkpots and watercolours... Magical leapfrog in Wonderland. Jumping from idea to idea and once it starts it never stops". Kristine's artistic vision and output changed dramatically after a new diagnosis. Her works document the turmoil and anguish as a result of her medical issues. The viewer recognizes the moods, emotions and angst that Kristine conveys. She makes them visible with vibrant colours and metaphorical images, which distil the very essence of our needs, fears, dreams and nightmares. Kristine moved to Dartmouth in 1997 and then to Halifax in 2010. She works as a painter, printmaker, writer and Constructionist. She is a member of the Pedway Gallery and Creative Spirit East, Nova Scotia.





Glenda Hird was born in 1942 in Owen Sound, Ontario. After years of working as a secondary school teacher in Ontario, Glenda is currently pursuing her love of painting. Glenda draws inspiration from her childhood memories growing up near Owen Sound and returns often to the area to keep in touch with her family and inspiration.

Glenda works in watercolours and collage. Old photographs along with other personal mementos and family history make their way into her mixed media compositions. She paints the fences and roads that take her on her journeys to her family and friends across the province.

Glenda worked for many years teaching students professional food preparation. She often stops on her trips to purchase freshly grown produce, plants and flowers. Her paintings of vegetables, including tomatoes, squash and fennel, reflect the changing seasons. You can almost smell the flowers and ripeness of tomatoes, which glow in the context of her paintings.





Ann Hrinco was born 1952 in Toronto, Ontario. Ann has lived all over Western and Northern Ontario. Ann has worn many hats. She has owned a farm, reared livestock and grown vegetables. She has raised a family and, as a hockey mom, organized tournaments for children and teenagers. Ann has also been as a social worker looking after the needs of abused women. She has coordinated community events and led the varied and demanding life of a woman living in a rural community. Her aesthetic recalls both the verdant landscape of tamed farmland and the untamed Ontario wilderness. The rocks, hills, trees, lakes and rivers of her rural home would eventually become the focus of her artwork. Ann has always had an interest in making art. Upon discovering Creative Spirit Art Centre in her neighbourhood, Ann attended watercolour and life drawing classes there. The artist inside her emerged. Her keen eye for interesting people and places found an outlet through bold colour and form. Ann paints with the strength gained from experience and fresh vigour. She loves to be bold, in painting as in life, and likes to have a good laugh.





Mark Humenyk

was born in Toronto in 1966. He lives in a group home. Mark has never let his autism get in the way of his passions which include drawing, taking photographs, navigating public transit systems and broadcasting on his short-wave radio. He is a HAM radio operator. Collecting radios from the past and present is another of Mark's occupations along with collecting stamps. His remarkable ability to remember Toronto Transit Commission routes and schedules allows Mark to navigate to myriad, far-flung places of the city. He has a considerable timetable of events which he attends diligently. His fascination of intricate maps became the subject matter of his artwork. The maps include charts which are visualizations of his paths in his life. He draws maps of his home, the highways around Sarnia and Port Stanley, and Lake Simcoe. He draws charts of his collection of radio antenna.

Everything in Mark's life appears to be ordered and remembered in a precise methodical way as expressed in his diagram drawings. He articulates his speech with great precision. Every word he speaks is delivered distinctly, with great calm and in his drawings everything is given equal visual weight. His art is cool, calm and collected. It reflects the way he manages his life.





Cynthia Kemerer was born in 1934 in Hamilton, Ontario. Cynthia studied with Gerry Scott at the Forest Hill Art Club in Toronto. Gerry studied with Frederick H. Varley, of the Group of Seven. Varley became Gerry's mentor. Scott and Varley were portrait painters. Gerry became Cynthia's mentor and helped her develop her skills in portraiture. Her exploration of modern Ethiopian tombstones was presented in an exhibition of photographs entitled *Tombs and Traditions* at Creative Spirit Art Centre in 1998. Extracts from the exhibition along with an article were published in the international journal, *Raw Vision* (# 34, 2001)

Cynthia's portraits feature her friends and family in Toronto, Northern Ontario, Newfoundland, the Philippines, and Ethiopia. She uses symbols of eagles, owls, turkeys, butterflies, day lilies, drinking vessels, and religious icons in her works. These symbols evoke the persona of each sitter. Cynthia has worked on a series of portraits of her favourite places in old typesetting boxes into which she places miniature paintings of people, buildings, birds, fish and landscapes. The boxes represent places: Newfoundland, Toronto and Ethiopia. Cynthia employs a mixed media technique: water based pigments and iridescent acrylics are applied to watercolour paper as collage. The collages are often flat, though sometimes they are boxes or are cut into free standing life size pieces and covered in clear acrylic.





William M. Kennedy was born in 1944 in Toronto, Ontario in the middle of an earthquake. Although people often scoff when told this, anyone who knows him will attest that Will's personality matches the circumstances of his unique birth.

Will studied art at Central Technical School in Toronto. For many years he worked as a display designer for travelling exhibitions for the Royal Ontario Museum. He is married to Marye Barton, a writer, actor and therapist.

His friendships with fellow artists include Hanni Sager, collector and maker of dolls and toys. After meeting Hanni – who is the founder of three toy workshops for disabled orphans in Mexico – Will created angel pins and sculptures based on Hanni's Angel works made from broken crockery and recycled metal and wood. Will sends a portion of the sales of his angels to help fund Hanni's initiatives in Mexico.

Will's recycled artwork is made from found objects: tin cans, animal skulls, feathers, old bicycle parts and paper wrappers. His influences include Dada, folk art, Art Brut and artists Hanni Sager and Victor Tinkl. Will's work is whimsical and enchanting. It ranges from folk art, checkerboards, bike seat bulls, and tin can-decorated birdhouses.





Martin Owen was born 1964 in Montreal, Quebec and is the son of Don Owen, a Canadian filmmaker famous in the sixties. Martin grew up in the presence artists and poets: Leonard Cohen, Robert Markle, Gordon Rayner, Michael Snow, Graham Coughtry amongst many others. He studied with Richard Gorman in Ottawa from 1984 to 1985. Martin's older brother, Andrew is also an artist and works as a designer and photographer.

An accident drove Martin down a path of medical complications. During the years in which most young people are finishing college and entering a career, Martin dropped out of the Ontario College of Art to struggled with his medical conditions. In spite of his physical and emotional burdens, Martin has never stopped making art. He volunteers as an art teacher at the drop in centre Our Place Community of Hope in Toronto. He goes to open life drawing classes at the Toronto School of Art. He often carries his sketchbook to the Riverdale Zoo to draw the animals and the landscape.

Martin works in watercolours, pastels, acrylics and coloured pencils. His life as an artist is his dedicated vocation.





Shirley Sinclair was born in 1933 in Toronto, Ontario. Shirley's father Harry Cavanagh was a self-taught artist who loved to paint. He painted everything including his lunch box and volunteered to paint floats for the Santa Claus parade and windows at Sick Kid's Hospital. He frequently brought home lithographs from Samson Mathews, the printing house where he worked. Artists Franklin Carmichael and A. J. Casson both worked there. Harry worked on the railroad and offered free rides into the countryside to painters (probably Carmichael and Casson).

A few years ago, a neighbour suggested that Shirley take up art lessons at Creative Spirit Art Centre where Robert J. Anderson was teaching still life watercolours. Shirley signed up and fell in love with painting and drawing. She paints plants, flowers and people she knows. Her largest portrait project was to make drawings of her twelve grandchildren.

Making art came at the right time. Shirley had been recently widowed. She missed her husband and needed to fill her time with an occupation which would keep her engaged with the world. Art classes allowed Shirley to see through the eyes of an artist. She became aware of the various colours, lines and shapes required in making a picture. Now, she makes art all the time. She, like her father, loves to make art.





Marc Andre Labonté was born in Toronto in 1968, and he continues to live in the city. His summers were spent visiting family in northern, French-speaking, Ontario and Quebec. His extended family lived on farms with horses and cows. They lived by rivers where they fished. They hunted for their food and tapped maple trees for syrup. His summer memories inspire images that appear in his art.

A friend talked about making art at Creative Spirit Art Centre and Marc became interested and wanted to try making art himself. He has painters on both sides of his family. One aunt did not know she could paint until she retired. His young nieces and nephew can spend hours drawing pictures. Making art appears to be an essential part of Marc's family culture.

Once Marc began painting his ability to make pictures was immediately apparent. Marc's paintings are filled with images which reflect his French Canadian summers on the farms, rivers and woods of his youth. The landscapes are filled with trees and flowers. There are horses roaming outside in the woods. His media of choice are watercolours and conté crayon. The images are poetic, filled with delicate colours and the rhythms of magical places and times.





Alan Parker was born in 1952 in Peterborough, Ontario. Alan moved to Toronto to attend the Ontario College of Art where he studied painting and drawing from 1970 to 1972. After graduating, Alan stayed at O.C.A. as a technician for the print studio under the direction of Fred Hagan. Alan developed into an accomplished printmaker. He created lithographs of ordinary objects seen through the lens of extraordinary details. In his hands a print of a single cup becomes instilled with a Zen-like simplicity. His woodcut prints provide dense, distilled landscapes of trees, fields of sunflowers and grasses. From his studio, in Toronto's Annex, Alan creates detailed works of his neighbourhood. Alan's Canadian landscapes are developed from drawings done in situ. He starts his final works from a black background which is a traditional method established by the old masters.

Alan is involved with Workman Arts, a project developed under the aegis of the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health. He had a solo exhibition in 2002 accompanying the Rendezvous with Madness Film Festival at CAMH. His works are frequently exhibited in the annual juried exhibition Being Scene at CAMH. Alan paints, reads about art and artists and visits art galleries. His multifaceted art work reflects his multifaceted fascination with the world of art.





Jai Wax was born in 1954 in Toronto, Ontario. He is an articulate, Jewish, artist, poet, writer, and philosopher. Jai is a student of Jewish, Native Canadian and Indian spirituality. The amalgam of his studies and interest in art is a major influence in the images he produces. The artwork is created through the use of a stream of consciousness technique. His paintings are mostly oil on canvas.

A diagnosis of schizophrenia was made when he was 17 years old. His medical condition has not hindered his progress and development as either an artist or philosopher.

"I always admired art and loved to study the paintings in galleries and books. As a person living with schizophrenia, I also believed that there is healing in producing art. For years I painted rather chaotic and undisciplined art which impressed people with originality, humour and mystery...I would call my art *Brute Surrealism*".





Vitali Zelinski was born in Russia in 1981. In 1992, he attended Art School in the North Administrative Area in Moscow, Russia. He immigrated to Canada and lives in Toronto. Vitali started his approach of self-taught art in 2002. In 2008, he studied abstract art at George Brown College.

Vitali's work explores biomorphic forms within mathematical theory and describes his work as "abstract biomorphism". His approach verges on the creation of biological forms in nature, as observed through an electron microscope: partly mathematical and partly organic. He produces work that intersects art and science. Perhaps the scientific approach is an echo of his training in Russia at the Moscow University of Aviation Technologies.

Vitali echoes Op art values pioneered by Victor Vasarely and M.C. Escher yet he applies a more playful and detailed method of shapes with vivid colours. His detail provides organic structures within mathematical structures that create their own universe.



Conference Presenters listed in Canadian Arts Access Network

CREATIVE SPIRIT ART CENTRE/VSA ARTS ONTARIO (Toronto, Ontario)

Ellen Anderson
Executive Director and Founder
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Toronto ON
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www.creativespirit.on.ca

VISIONS SUR L'ART QUEBEC / VSA ARTS QUEBEC (Montreal, Quebec)

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Acknowledgements

Gavin Barrett

Gavin Barrett is a poet and creative entrepreneur. His poems have been included in Penguin's anthology of 14 contemporary Indian poets, *Reasons for Belonging*. He is also founding partner and Creative Director of Rao Barrett and Welsh, a small, award-winning advertising agency that uses idea-centric creative work to build successful brand relationships in the new, multi-ethnic Canadian mainstream. He is a member of the Advertising and Design Club of Canada.

Deb Cochrane

Deb Cochrane is Studio Manager at Rao, Barrett and Welsh. Deb is a graphic industry veteran who started working in the graphics industry in the 80s as a typesetter and since then has produced every sort of print media: ads, brochures, billboards, TSAs, catalogues, annual reports, FSIs, newsletters, packaging, table talkers, DM packages... just about anything that ultimately finds itself on a printer, plotter or press. She walks the fine line between ego-crazed creative people and budget-impooverished clients with grace and balance.

Michael D'Amico

Michael D'Amico is a Toronto based artist originally from St. Catharines, Ontario. He records and produces music, video and photography for a number of projects.

Bhupesh Luther

Bhupesh Luther was a senior creative leader in Indian advertising before he came to Toronto. As the Creative Director at JWT/Contract in Delhi, his signature art direction style led the agency to multiple awards at the international level. In Toronto, Bhupesh co-founded Stirred Creative and produced campaigns for clients such as Investors Group, The Easter Seal Society, Eglinton Way and Shaw Cable. Bhupesh now lends his fine eye and typographic skills to a number of key creative collaborations with Rao Barrett and Welsh.

Richard Picton

Richard Picton has been a Commercial Photographer for over twenty years, working out of London, Madrid & Toronto. He has traveled extensively on assignments around the world and has won awards in London, Toronto, New York & a Lion d'Or at the Cannes International Advertising Awards. He is currently living in Toronto with his partner Augusta and their Spanish tabby cat Goya.

Aaron Tucker

Aaron Tucker writes and teaches in Toronto. His first chapbook, *Apartments*, was nominated for the 2010 bpNichol chapbook award.

Nora Webb

Nora Webb is an emerging arts professional, writer and adventurer living in Toronto, Ontario. After earning an undergraduate degree in Art History from McGill University she moved to the wilds of Sherbrooke, Quebec to bring contemporary art to the Eastern Townships as Curatorial Assistant at the Foreman Art Gallery. Since then Nora has earned her stripes as a souvlaki-slinging waitress, learned to say 'thank you' in seven different languages, and made contemporary art her life's work. These days, when she's not eating her way through Toronto's Chinatown, Nora works as Managing Director at Creative Spirit Art Centre.

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