

OKWA NEWSLETTER 02

PRESIDENT: Mary Peppard
VP: June Anderson
SECRETARY: Lee-Ann Taras
TREASURER: Mary Peppard
PAST PRESIDENTS: Barb Carr
and Martine Bresson

Artist Talks: Jane Derby

Belleville Exhibit: Hanna Back

Newsletter: Alana Kapell
alanakapell@mac.com

WEBSITE: <http://www.okwa.ca/>

OKWA@yahogroups.ca

BLOG: [http://
organizationofkingstonwomenarti
sts.blogspot.com/](http://organizationofkingstonwomenartists.blogspot.com/)



The Organization of
Kingston Women Artists
Box 581, Kingston, ON
K7L4X1

OPENING IMAGES:
Sally Milne
Sharon Thompson
Julie Davidson Smith
January 2011 Art Talk
presenters.

OKWA ON EXHIBIT

at Kingston Frontenac Public Library February 2nd to 25th

AND the Belleville Public Library March 3rd to 30th

"Synergy"
OKWA
organization of
kingston women artists

Kingston Frontenac Public Library
February 2nd to 25th 2011
130 Johnson Street, Tel 613-549-8888

You are cordially invited to attend the opening on
Saturday February 5th, 2-4 pm

John M. Parrott Art Gallery
Belleville Public Library
March 3rd to 30th 2011

BARB CARR at the Donald Gordon Centre

Barb Carr received a commission to create a work for the newly redecorated Donald Gordon Centre at Queen's. The commission came via the Kingston interior design company, Reid and Siemonsen. The large acrylic piece, titled *Canadian Shield*, is now hanging in the large room next to the modern entrance to the Centre.



BOOK REVIEWS

Free Play The Power of Improvisation in Life and the Arts by Stephen Nachmanovitch

Free Play is a must-have book for any teacher of the creative arts. Norman Cousins reviews the book with “S.N. has produced a celebration of human uniqueness. In so doing, he helps us to make better use of our resources of playfulness, ingenuity, and creativity in general. What it amounts to is a **guide for getting the most out of whatever is possible.**”

S.N. “One of the many catch-22’s in the business of creativity is that you can’t express inspiration without skill, but if you are too wrapped up in the professionalism of skill you obviate the surrender to accident that is essential to inspiration.”

S.N.’s comments on creativity tie in coincidentally with a comment I just read today by Sarah Thornton in last newsletter’s recommended read, “**Seven Days in the Art World**”. Sarah says, “Perhaps creativity is not on the agenda at art school because being creative is tacitly considered the unteachable core of being an artist? Asher believes that the ‘decisions that go into making a work are often social,’ but he’s in a minority. Most artist-teachers believe that creativity is a very personal process that cannot be taught. As a result, students are expected to have it when they arrive, so creativity is an issue only when it comes to admissions. President Lavine says, ‘We hunt for students who have some spark of originality. It might seem like eccentricity or cussedness, but we want students who are in some way on edge with their world.’”

“Originality does not mean being unlike the past or unlike the present; it means being the origin, acting out of your own center.”



The Lost Painting

by Jonathan Harr

The book is available at Kingston Library, hard copy and through ebook. Derek Jarman's film, *Caravaggio* is available at Classic Video.

The Lost Painting is written by the author of *A Civil Action* which was made into a movie (very good too!) starring John Travolta. The book reads like a movie script and not like a dry take on history; it is very engaging. The characters live. The work is non-fiction but reads like fiction, a mystery in search of one of Caravaggio's lost paintings, "The Temptation of Christ".

"The entry did not name the artist, but that was not unusual. Many inventories failed to note the names of painters and sculptors, in part because artists had almost never signed their works. Up until the Renaissance, they had been regarded merely as skilled tradesmen, practitioners of a manual craft, like shoemakers or potters. And even after they began to achieve individual recognition and ascend the social ladder--after

Michelangelo, Leonardo, and Raphael--the idea of signing one's name to a work of art remained foreign, a practice that wouldn't fully take hold until the end of the nineteenth century."

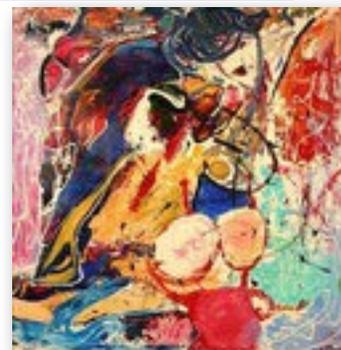
There are supposedly only 60 or so Caravaggio paintings around now and you would be lucky to get one for forty million pounds, yet the critics of his era found his paintings coarse and vulgar. They said that he did not understand the true essence of art and beauty, that he merely copied what he saw before him, that his work was no more than a 'base imitation of nature.'" "He was exceedingly poor...his clothing little more than rags. He lived on the bleak margins of the art world, selling his paintings in the street, along with hundreds of other young artists who had come to Rome to make their fortunes."

"Caravaggio (born in 1571) defied the aesthetic conventions of his time; his use of ordinary people realistically portrayed--street boys, prostitutes, the poor, the aged--was a profound and revolutionary innovation that left its mark on generations of artists. His insistence on painting from nature, on rendering the emotional truth of experience whether religious or secular makes him an artist who speaks across the centuries to our own time."



A very **inspirational dvd** (and sometimes disturbing) is "My Kid Could Paint That" (2007) on 3 year old Marla Olmstead.
www.marlaolmstead.com

By four years of age she had over \$300,000 in her bank account from art sales and a waiting list of international patrons!





Maya Jagger

www.earthwerk.ca

MEET THE ARTISTS Maya Jagger and Mary O'Brien

1. *Maya, when did you join OKWA?*
I joined OKWA in 2008.

2. *How did you first hear about OKWA?*
I know several members and specifically, Julie Withrow, mentioned OKWA to me.

3. *What did you hope to gain from joining OKWA?*
I see OKWA as an opportunity for exhibiting in Kingston. I have already exhibited in Belleville as a member of Gallery 121. Also as an opportunity to meet new artists. The artist talks seem to be a great way to interact and learn about other people's processes and inspirations.

4. *What is your current medium? What do you like about it? What do you find challenging about it?* My last series was in oil pastel and collage, about the shamanic culture of South American aboriginal peoples. I like the vibrant colour, the

opportunity to explore the medium in non-traditional ways through gouging, scraping, layering the image. Challenging--they look too bright to me back here in grey Ontario.

5. *Who are some of your favourite artists? And why?* Tom Thomson, Vincent Van Gogh, Matisse--all for the colour!

6. *Can you describe your progress as an artist, ie. what medium did you start out with, your training, your influences, the stages of development of your work.*

I started out with very conventional landscapes in oil - in the early 1980s. I also did a lot of life drawing in conte and charcoal. I exhibited and lived in Toronto and attended Three Schools of Art and Haliburton School of Art. I moved to Eastern Ontario and had an artistic hiatus, then went back to university and took studio courses at Queen's.

Now, I am interested in the meaning of the work, not just "pretty pictures". Thus, excited by layers of meaning in shamanic culture, themes of death and rebirth, transcendence of earthly body, all connecting to my interest in world religions and mysticism (my B.A. from Queens is in Religious Studies). Throughout all the work, use of intense colour is a connecting thread.

7. What do you find is the biggest challenge for you as an artist? What is the most rewarding?
 Challenge as an artist - staying focused. I have many other passions - writing, teaching. I also treat garden design as an art form, and do this professionally for fun and profit!!

Maya and Christian Melcher are partners who share many interests and enterprises. Their landscaping business creates low maintenance organic garden solutions. Their art reflects the natural world. Their business and art can be seen on their website at www.earthwerk.ca

MARY O'BRIEN



To paraphrase new OKWA member, Mary O'Brien, "The most rewarding challenge as an artist is to surprise myself with goals met."

Current work images: 1. *Aragon Field* 6x4" collage, acrylic, coloured pencil on paper.
 2. *Rock Island* 4x6" collage, acrylic, coloured pencil, graphite on paper.
 3. *Portals of the Past* 14x18" collage, acrylic on canvas.

1. When did you join OKWA?

I joined OKWA in December 2010.

2. How did you first hear about OKWA?

I heard of OKWA through Barb Carr and through advertisements, for instance, the group show at the Mill Street Gallery Cafe in Sydenham.

3. What do you hope to gain from joining OKWA?

I hope to gain an opportunity to network with other artists, to share information, knowledge, learning and to support one another. I think it will be an excellent opportunity to be able to discuss the artwork of other artists as well as my own.

4. What is your current medium? What do you like about it. What do you find challenging about it.

My current medium is MIXED MEDIA (acrylic, collage from my own photos, colour pencil, watercolour) on both paper and canvas. I love the tactile, visual and aesthetic depth created from interweaving various media. The fact that these materials dry fast allows me to work at a quickened pace and to act intuitively while merging multiple layers.

5. Who are some of your favourite artists? and why?

At the risk of sounding like I only like the work of artists whose last name starts with an "M", I admire Matisse (his wonderful sense of colour and composition), Manet (his handling of tones and shapes), Magritte (his imagination and adventurous mind) and Morisot (her unique use of tones, gesture and her ability to communicate personal feeling).

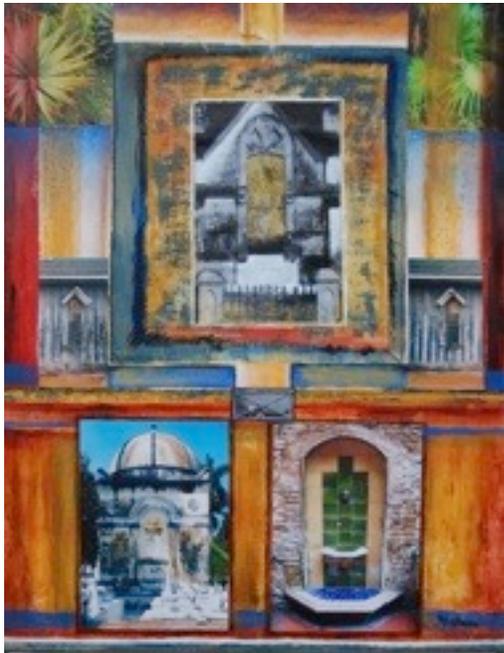
6. In a brief paragraph can you describe your progress as an artist? ie what medium did you start out with, your training, your influences, the stages of development of your work.

At my age, it is difficult to summarize my progress, but I will try...one of my earliest recollections of childhood seems to be that I was never happy unless I was making something. My keen interest in art began at around the age of twelve, when I had my first one person show in Kingston. The early years of making art involved the use of oil paint on canvas. Over the most recent half of my career I have learned more on acrylic painting with the addition of many other materials. I studied art and art history at Concordia University, Montreal and then, through the University of Windsor. While trying to maintain a steady exhibition record, I taught art history and studio art courses at various colleges in Ontario. I think that landscape has always inspired me both in a literal and an ethereal way. In the most recent years, I have been intrigued by the contrast and interaction of nature's organic characteristics with the more geometric constructions of our built environments.

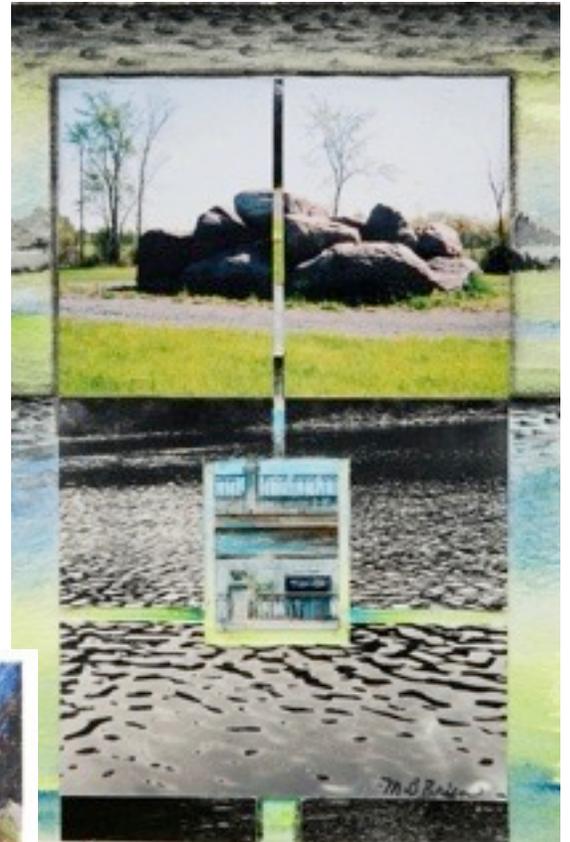
7. What do you find is the biggest challenge for you as an artist? What is the most rewarding?

The biggest challenge as an artist is the rather cliché factor of finding adequate time to do my artwork, and juggling the making of art and its promotion is challenging as well.

The most rewarding challenge is the eternal 'problem solving' inherent in creating art and the pressure within to always improve and surprise myself with goals met.



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MARY O'BRIEN

OKWA 2010 MEMBERS

Anderson, June. *Back, Hanna.* Black, Diane. *Zillah.* Lyon, Sue. *McDiarmid, Marney.* Milne, Sally. *Morley, Peggy.* O'Brien, Mary. Olson, Erika. *Peppard, Mary.* Sheedy, Su. *Sheridan, Maureen.* Spielmann, Isidora. *Springer, Judy.* Stewart, Rose. *Taras, Lee-Ann.* Thelwell, Jane. *Thompson, Sharon.* Van Dijk, Janice P. *Van Geest, Mieke.* Vowles, Verna. *Wing, Terri.* Winik, J.T. *Withrow, Julie.*

Christensen, Kathrine. *Conley, Pauline.*
Cowan, Rebecca. *Crawford, Mary.* Davidson-Smith, Julie. *Derby, Jane.* Falkner, Suki. *Hughes, Margaret.* Jagger, Maya. *Jass, Sandra.* Kapell, Alana. *LaRose, Michele.* Lipson, Kristen. Locke, Margaret. *Loney,*

Welcome to new OKWA members: Mary O'Brien, Margaret Locke and Terri Wing.



Conversations with Artists

an artist's musings on why to make art and how to share it.. by former OKWA member, Marni King

I have been pondering the whole dilemma of purpose and how art provides it. It seems to be a treacherous and often deceiving path. I thought it might help bring some clarity for me by writing down my current thoughts, so here goes.

I think in our Western culture we lose track of our real needs and desires. The marketplace creates our desires in its own best interest, not ours. If we lived in a more primitive culture our art would be valued for its many sacred and/or magical properties or its ability to tell stories. Artists would be honoured for revealing these hidden messages and secrets and for their ability to bring beauty and honour both to special occasions and to the mundane. Our Western culture values our art for the price it can get in the marketplace which is based on its rarity or its trendiness, currently often its shock value. With the plethora of images and the speed of images being circulated on the internet, it feels the process and specialness of art and creativity has been devalued more.

I think in my own process of writing and art, I have discovered much magic and much insight that is only available through a sacred practice. It puts me in touch with my soul and in that connection new levels of understanding are reached. I think because I came to art after my experience of marketing a product as a business owner, I wanted my art to be something other than a commodity. I never wanted to sell my art. But I always wanted to share my art. My problem is that our culture is not set up for this radical idea and I have not yet found a way to satisfy my need to share my art. I also know that if I did want to sell my art, it is often a path full of disappointment.

Because the sale of one's art seems to be the success criteria, I am looking to redefine what success in my art would be. For me I think the value of my art lies in the process and the delight of discovering my soul revealed on paper. Here is where the magic takes place, the insights and clarity comes and life lessons get named and understood. It feels that within the personal story that is being revealed image by image a link is forming with a universal story. Through the understanding of this, a transformation of sorts is taking place. The trust that is necessary I think is to trust that this individual transformation is towards a larger good. My process of creating art makes the being of who I am a more positive energy in the universe and even if that energy only touches a few human beings and even if I never know the full extent of this, I need to trust that it is happening. Because my intentions are honest and heartfelt, the energy that comes from it must be positive. What you said about the

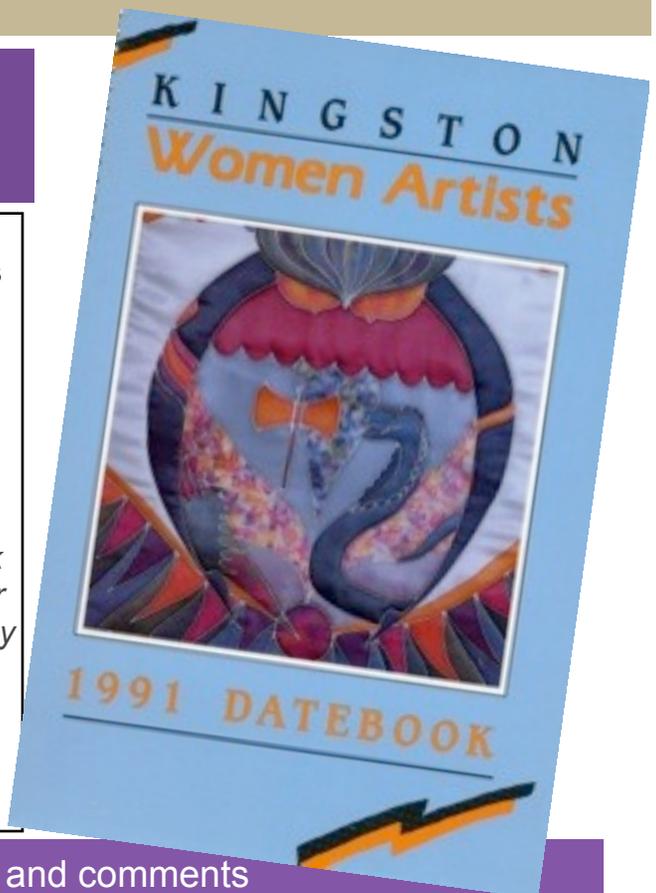
exchange of energy I think is also critical. So each artist needs to find a way to share the energy and keep it circulating and expanding. That is my neverending and so far unanswered challenge. I think my feeling successful lies in being able to find this way of sharing. I think the honing of technique and form lies somewhere within this but maybe that is simply what draws the artist into the process or is the outcome of the artist staying with their practice.

I think it is a given that art has a purpose. One just needs to imagine the world with no expressions. It would be like listening to a constant drone of Hal the computer and seeing his words in plain type everywhere. I think the purpose behind doing art can be many different things. The marketplace is only one means of sharing art. Maybe we need to look at primitive cultures to find other purposes to art. To base the value of art on current market conditions sure misses the point in a big way. The marketplace simply tells people what the market wants them to desire - creating needs that don't fill their real underlying needs. I think art has a purpose to fill these underlying needs. It is up to the artist, the ones who slow down to stop and look more carefully, to find ways to pass on the insights that come up when you slow down and step away from the dictates of our culture. Art can be a light into the world which can be for sale or not. It can also be to share darkness so that others who are in darkness don't feel so alone. It can also be a light that shows a way out of the darkness through the process of doing art. Purpose can also lie where the act of doing art or the process of doing art takes you. By doing what we love and are drawn to do, it lights the way and gives permission for others to ignite their own passion. It's also about where it takes us, how it feeds us and nurtures our being so that our being that we exchange with others is a positive force. So a purpose in doing art can be to use it as a vehicle for putting light into the world even if the art is only shared in a small circle of people. Here's a quote On "Being Vision" from the workshop I took this past summer at Kripalu: "Your 'Being' vision is the consciousness, presence, values, and energy with which you live each moment. It is the true purpose of your life, and is the true contribution you make to the world, regardless of the outer form your work takes." ★

BLAST FROM THE PAST

The Organization of Kingston Women Artists started as a vehicle to get local Kingston women's art images into print. The second edition was covered by Isidora Spielmann's batik and the introduction was done by artist, Lenni Workman.

"The Kingston Women Artists was founded as a non-profit, independent association to provide a forum for regional women artists to share their experiences and as a means to present their work to the public. The datebook format was chosen for the latter purpose because datebooks produced by women have become symbolic of their desire to empower themselves. Books such as this have brought to women's everyday lives an aesthetic that challenges traditional notions of femininity."



NEXT ISSUE: May 01, 2011 articles, notices, and comments welcomed at alanakapell@mac.com