

# OKWA NEWSLETTER 04

AUGUST 2011

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

Lise Melhorn-Boe

## 2011 OKWA SCHOLARSHIP GOES TO JACOB CALCAFUOCO!



Jane Derby, June Anderson and Mary Peppard presented Jacob Calcafuoco with his OKWA Scholarship cheque (\$500) yesterday, July 13, 2011 at Pan Chanco where Jacob works. "He is a really great kid and was a lot of fun to talk to." The scholarship is to help a Kingston highschool student further his art education. Jacob is going on to study at OCAD.



Jacob: "After every piece I have created, I know that time will eventually do away with most of them. My goal in art isn't to be declared the next Van Gogh, Steven Spielberg, or Robert Munsch. I have no interest in my work becoming the latest hype or critically acclaimed wonder. I have learned to open my mind and allow time to take its course—I will continue to explore. Exploration is key to discovering what is in front of our noses. There is no wrong or right path to take. How long will my journey take? Time will determine whether it is timeless or not."



## MEET THE ARTISTS Lise Melhorn-Boe



An evolution of Lise's work: "Breasts" 1984, cast paper with rubber stamped text. Life sized. Edition of 3/ "Ghost Costumes" 1996. 8 garments: sewn nylon fabric with rubber stamped text. Life-sized. Unique/ "More Garbage" 2010. Book sewn on tapes: garbage, including masonite, fabrics, plastics, mittens, socks, etc. 12" x 8' x 3". Edition of 12.

### 1. When did you join OKWA?

I joined OKWA in February, having recently moved to Kingston.

### 2. How did you first hear about OKWA?

I've been visiting Kingston for many years, and somehow had heard about the organization. I knew that Barb Carr and Wendy Cain were members.

### 3. What did you hope to gain from joining OKWA?

I hope to make some connections with other artists through OKWA. I really enjoyed the three speakers in March or April.

Lise Melhorn-Boe...

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

I am a book artist. *What do you like about it.* There are many things I love about the book as an art medium: the variety of possibilities intrigues me. The book is a three dimensional object with two dimensional elements. I like the way the reader becomes a participant—along with the physical turning of the pages, s/he can choose to skip, jump backwards, re-read or re-view. I also like the intimacy afforded by a book, and the fact that books are ubiquitous in our society, so they are accessible to many non-art-savvy viewers. Since the message of my work is so important to me, I appreciate the fact that it can reach a wide audience. I love stories and like being able to integrate text into my work. *What do you find challenging about it.* The fact that artist's books are relatively unknown in Canada is challenging. I am constantly having to explain just what it is I do, and there isn't much of a private market, or even much of an institutional market for artist's books. Most of my work is sold in the U.S.A.

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

Louise Bourgeois, Frida Kahlo and Joyce Wieland are three artists whose work I admire: all three use(d) their personal lives as fodder and inspiration for their work. I admire Judy Chicago for her challenges to the art establishment and Barbara Kruger for her use of text. I really like Shari Boyle's bizarre drawings and ceramics.

**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 working with embroidery as a teen-ager, then studied printmaking with Gene Chu and Walter Bachinski at the University of Guelph, but reverted to working with fibre after graduation. I later did graduate work in the Fibre Department at Wayne State University in Detroit, where I also augmented my paper-making skills. I had already started to make books before going to Detroit, but there had the opportunity to learn letterpress printing and bookbinding skills.

For most of my career, the focus of my work has been an examination of women's lived experience in our society. I have addressed personal and political issues, ranging from women's perceptions of their bodies to the relationship between fashion images and pornography. I use a variety of materials and techniques in my work, choosing what seems to be the most appropriate structure for the content. I almost always start with the text, but enjoy playing with the form which the book takes, trying to make the structure tell a story of its own. I often use humour as a tool to draw the viewer/reader into a critique of a situation. My current body of work concerns the relationship between our environment and our collective health.

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

I have Multiple Chemical Sensitivity. this limits the type of work I can do, the media I can use, and the spaces in which I can work, and show/sell. *What is the most rewarding?* Making work that can touch people's lives is very rewarding.

# KRISTEN LIPSON

I grew up in a family of artists in Toronto & was fascinated by the works of the OP and POP ART painters that were exploding onto the scene at that time.

I first became a member of OKWA after attending a marvelous group exhibit of OKWA in The Baby Grand in 1995, (if I remember correctly) although I was familiar with the group years before then, having met local artists when I first moved to Kingston from Vancouver, in 1990.

Joining an artists' group is a very visually stimulating, although at times daunting, experience. While it does encourage the individual to stretch & grow, it can also be distracting to see so many approaches to expressing the artistic drive. It requires a firm focus to stay on one's own path, having the courage to express as best we each can in our own unique way.

I began painting in watercolors in the 1970s in Portugal. I later attended The Ontario College of Art, and discovered mixed media collage. This is my true favorite form of visual artistic expression, because it's so very tactile. I prefer to work with acrylics, crayon, pencils and trash, paper bits, old negatives, feathers etc. There is the pleasure of scavenging through the flotsam & jetsam left behind by a consumerist society.....looking for that perfect bit of junk to help express a certain feeling or thought.

The challenge is always knowing when a piece is finished.....

Some favorite artists are Frida Kahlo, Jean Michel Basquiat, David Bolduc and many Latin American graffiti painters. It would seem that what I find most compelling are those images that require a great deal of courage to create. While a high level of technical skill can produce visually appealing images, it's the intensity of the drive behind a piece that pulls me in.

Personally the challenge is always about "butting heads" with my limitations, and having the guts & patience to push through that. My next exhibit will be in September, with Barb Carr and Brenda Wight in the new Window Gallery in The Kingston School of Art.



Mixed media on canvas,  
16 x 20" 1 and 2 from left

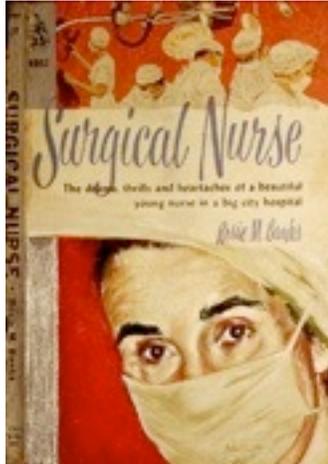
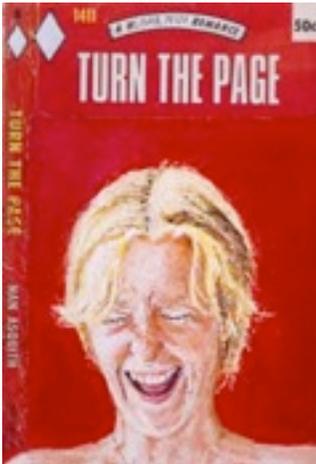
29 x 21" on paper, right



Art talks will resume this fall, probably the end of September. With the possibility of having Nataalka Hussar as juror for our 2012 (February 04) show at the Kingston Public Library, Jane Derby is looking at an ART TALKS topic of "social commentary" in the visual arts.



**ON THE TOPIC OF "SOCIAL COMMENTARY".....**



[http://www.ccca.ca/artists/artist\\_work.html?languagePref=en&link\\_id=1624&startRec=1&cnt=89&ord=desc](http://www.ccca.ca/artists/artist_work.html?languagePref=en&link_id=1624&startRec=1&cnt=89&ord=desc)

Nataalka Hussar was born in Newark, New Jersey, USA in 1951 to Ukrainian immigrant parents. She graduated from Rutgers University in 1973 with a degree in Fine Arts and moved to Toronto. She currently lives and works in Toronto.

Nataalka Hussar will be our February 2012 juror at the Kingston Public Library.

At the MacKenzie Art Gallery in Regina Saskatchewan I caught a humorous and delightful exhibit by Nataalka Husar, called "The Burden of Innocence" May to August 2011. "In this exhibition, Canadian artist, Nataalka Husar, takes her lifelong obsession with painting and the Ukraine, her ancestral home, into new territory and presents three interwoven, though unresolved narratives, in the form of a history play in three acts.

Act 1 is a narrative on the nature and fate of painting itself. In Nurse and Stew, Husar paints her own image, masked and costumed, to address the surrogate dependency between painter and subject, the cannibalistic relationship between the artist and her muse, and the anachronistic limbo in which painting currently lies.

Act 2's Trial is a social narrative conceived in terms of art's power to bring things to light if not to justice. Though it deals with fictitious characters, it is a form of contemporary history painting. Old Soviet-style and new-capitalist corruption collide in the collective of fictive portraits..

Act 3 presents a banquet in a time warp: Husar merges 1960's North America with a depiction of contemporary Ukraine. The protagonists from the first and second acts reunite in the cumulative canvas Looking at Art. Husar, cast as her dual personae, plays the waiter in her examination of the artist's role and art's responsibility vis-a-vis the social narrative."



Nataalka says "I adopted (the nurse) persona as a stand-in for the artist: someone who both probes and heals. As an artist I've always thought of myself as a surgeon. I like to get to the heart of the wound. I like emotional precision...I (also) paint myself as a time-warped stewardess ...the artist as a cultural shepherd: a guide who brings the audience into an alternate reality and leaves them jet-lagged."

*Nataalka Husar in center surrounded at her opening with her nurse and stewardess icons.*

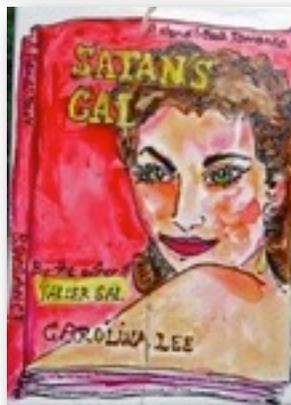


Two Kingston and area artists, Dorene Inglis and Julie Withrow kindly sent us their views of social commentary in their work:

## Dorene Inglis

Kingston Visual Artist

"I came upon a small box of pulp fiction novels at a garage sale as one comes upon a small treasure. I was with another artist and we both looked at each other in awe when we saw them. We knew we had come upon some little gems, in terms of wonderful paintings and those quirky titles. We split the lot between us. Some years later I started to paint classic novels on book size tiles, And then smaller tiles, the perfect size to put the pulp covers to use.



What is their appeal to me? The more I painted, the looser the paintings would become and ceramic paint really lent itself to a transparency and opaqueness that my background in watercolour permitted. The bright colours, the chunky letters of the titles and tag lines were outrageous....some I reconfigured and changed the text. Most of the images were lurid, but over the top. These images were not of women in their best light. A lot of the covers had a frozen in time appearance. Although they were sexually provocative, they were far from sexually liberating. The covers required the sexiness to sell sober, dull, conservative texts. Some illustrators, many of them women, referenced movie stills and cheesecake photos so the subjects could mime the appropriate horrified, evil or seductive pose.

More often than not what started as cheesecake ended up cheesy.

This is their appeal to me.

You see something that would lend itself to paint. " (Dorene Inglis)

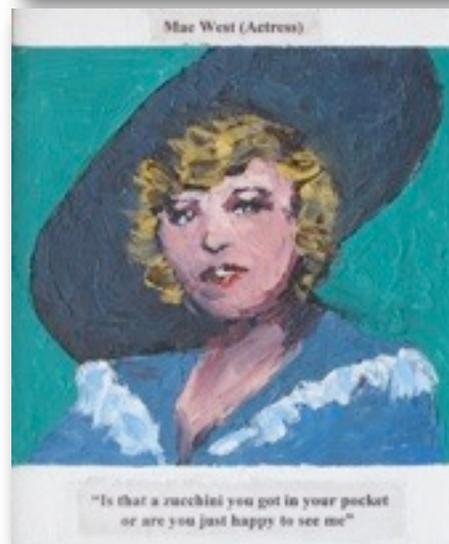
## Julie Withrow

Nalalka Husar's work is thoroughly delightful. She is a very skilled painter and her work is packed with biting satire on topics of feminism and politics.

In a much less ambitious way, I have always had some satirical projects in the mixed-up conglomeration of work that is the art practice of Julie Withrow. Back 22 years ago, I had an exhibition called the *Big Mama Papers*. It involved 250 papers of text and images. It was back in the days when "the personal was political". I can remember a bit of text that I used over and over again with various funny or serious images. It simply stated, "I don't know what I look like".

Another project was the *Famous Women Boxes*. Each box had 9 portraits of a real or made-up "famous" woman with a text for each. For instance....Margaret Sanger (birth-control activist) ...."And there are many options, ladies. There is the sponge, the douche, or separate beds".

My last big project using social commentary was shown at the Modern Fuel Gallery. It was called *The Daily Papers, Diary of a Radio Junkie*. There was a paper for every week-day. The collaged image and the text were taken from whatever subject took my fancy from the radio for that day. I still listen to the radio while I am working and it is surprising how many of the topics keep coming up again and again without anything really happening. So, you might as well laugh. Go to Nalalka's web-site and have a good giggle. (Julie Withrow)





## ARTIST STATEMENTS

I have frequently heard concerns from local artists that they are stymied by the task of creating statements for their work.

Here is a “from-the-heart” statement from musician and visual artist, Heather Bishop.

Heather Bishop and I (alana kapell) went to art school together in Regina, Saskatchewan. On a recent visit to my family in Regina, where I saw Nataalka Husar’s exhibit, I met with Heather. She has had a full career as a musician and in recent years has been developing her painting again hoping that she could cut down on time on the road. Things haven’t quite worked out that way for her because a new agent has taken her on and she has more bookings then she can handle on speaking tours! Because of her wide background as teacher, musician, visual artist, back-to-the-lander, social activist and feminist, she can speak on a number of topics.



Proud to know her. ak

In 2005 Heather was awarded the Order of Canada and on June 4, 2011 Heather was awarded an honorary Doctorate of Laws in recognition of outstanding contributions to the world of music and for pioneering contributions to the equality of women and minorities, and the furtherance of social justice for all Canadians. She is also now a marriage commissioner and delights in marrying the generation that grew up on her bellybutton records. <http://www.heatherbishop.com/>



oil on canvas, “Prayers for Bhutan”  
Heather Bishop

<http://www.cbc.ca/manitoba/scene/music/2011/06/22/heather-bishop-modern-renaissance-woman/>

Heather Bishop, “The state of being creative is an unfathomable gift and privilege. Perhaps a glimpse into the ultimate Creator. Mostly certainly a glimpse into one's own centre wherein lies that connection to all.

I have learned to trust the call of that *Muse*. I cherished her as a child, followed her with wild abandon through art school in the 60's - a most powerful time on this planet - and followed her from the canvas to the stage and now back again.

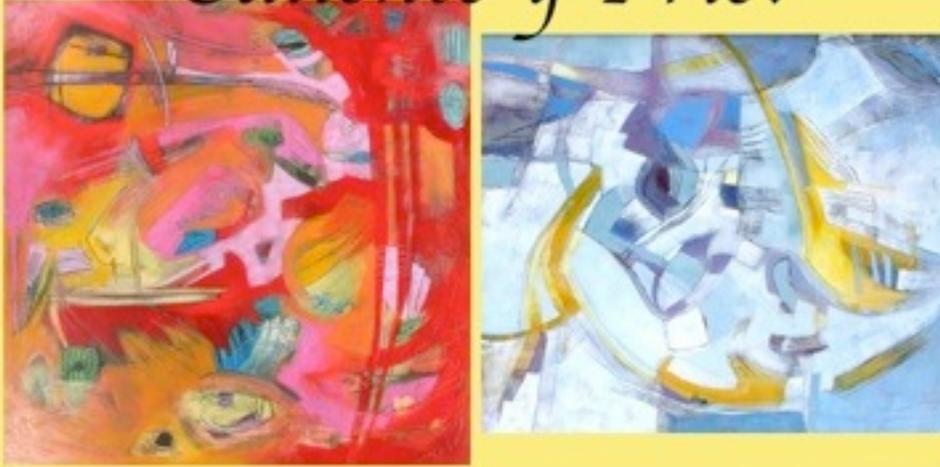
Among many things it has taught me this. The gratitude of the moment.

The process of being creative is truly a time of worshipping the divine and marvelling that we mere mortals have access to that energy. Truly giving over of oneself to the state of being creative is to sink into that place, on your knees, heart and hands outstretched in awe to receive such gifts.

And then the real world begins to put bar codes on it and package it and market it and pay people to judge it. But the miracle has already been and gone. The state of being creative is, at the genesis of any creation, a very private moment. I feel as privileged peeking in as I do peeking out.

# OKWA UPCOMING EXHIBITIONS

## Caliente y Frío!



*Michele LaRose at The Mill Street Gallery/Cafe  
June 29 to August 27, 2011*

THE MILL STREET GALLERY, 4400 Mill Street, Sydenham, ON <http://millstreetgallery.blogspot.com/>  
Open Tuesday to Saturday 11:30-2:30pm and Saturdays 5:30 to 9pm (613 376-1533)

For more information about the artist see [www.michelelarose.ca](http://www.michelelarose.ca)

Michele LaRose at The Mill Street Gallery Cafe, June 29 to August 27. Open Tuesday to Saturday, 11:30 to 2:30 and Saturday dinners 5:30 to 9pm.

613 376 1533.

For more information about the artist see [www.michelelarose.ca](http://www.michelelarose.ca)

OKWA will open the Academy Gallery's season in April 2012. Each artist will submit 3 images from which Janice Teare will choose 1. 50% commission will be charged. More information to follow...

Su Sheedy negotiated with Janice Teare of The Academy Gallery in Bath for a group OKWA exhibit in 2012. This is an exceptional exhibit space because it can handle large formats.

The Academy Gallery/352 Academy Street, Box 52, Bath ON K0H1G0. The Academy Gallery is located in Bath, 20 minutes west of Kingston and 100 meters north of the only signalized intersection in Bath, which is at Church Street (Hwy 33 and Cty Rd 7). <http://www.theacademygallery.ca/>



### Mill Street Gallery/Cafe 2012



The Mill Street Gallery/Cafe in Sydenham will be giving a year-long "fluctuating" exhibit (Feb. 2012 to December) to OKWA members: Wendy Cain, Rebecca Cowan, Alana Kapell, Mary O'Brien, and Julie Withrow.



## Conversations with Artists

*OKWA member, Diane Black comments on doing the Toronto Outdoor and the Toronto Artist Project:*

### A Story of Two Shows

I've just recently come home from doing the Toronto Outdoor Art Exhibition and have spent the last day or two recovering. It was hot. But there was no rain and the crowds didn't seem to mind too terribly much because they came out in very good numbers.

I also did the Toronto Artist Project back in March and I would like to reflect a little on my experiences at these shows and perhaps throw in a few personal comments.

First off, I'd like to get something out of the way. It may have something to do with my own insecurities but when people ask "How was the show?" it seems to me that what they are most often actually asking is "How much did you sell?". So I spend a lot of time with self-talk that is intended to counter the need to justify my efforts in that way alone. If it were only about making money, these shows probably wouldn't be worth it for me. There are many more straight forward ways to make money (although I've never been particularly attached to any them). It can be an exhausting (mentally and physically) and risky way to put a few bucks in the bank. I prefer to think of it as putting experience and connections in the bank (a much more valuable currency). But on the other hand there is no denying that selling a few pieces is energizing. It validates your efforts in the eyes of others and there are those pesky bills that keep coming. The little red dots are only one element in the equation and I'm holding out in my belief that they are not the most important one.

The Toronto Artist Project took place last March. In contrast to the TOAE, it was more expensive for the artist and there was an entrance fee for the viewers. It was very well attended and it seems to me that because people had paid the admission they were a little more interested in engaging with the artists, more determined not to miss anything, whereas at TOAE many people strolled right on by a good number of the booths. This also had something to do with both the temperature (the heat of Nathan Philips Square on a sunny day in July can be overwhelming), as well as the number of booths - about 150 more at TOAE. While the quality of work was very high at both shows, the Artist Project tended to attract the slicker, business savvy artists who were willing to shell out some pretty big bucks to be there. The up and comers could more easily afford the booth fee at TOAE without taking as much of a risk. Both shows were very well organized and the staff did an excellent job of sending regular email notices leading up to the event. I felt fully informed when I arrived and there was little guess work about where to unload, what would be waiting at the booth, etc.

At the Artist Project my booth size was 5 x 10. The TOAE tents are all 10 x 10. I actually liked the 5 x 10 size better because people could see what was there without having to commit to entering the booth. After the first day at TOAE I rearranged my booth so that most of the work was at the front and we had the back corner for sitting rather than having the chairs at the entrance to the booth, thus partially blocking the view of the work. It's a lot of effort getting set up for any of these shows and it is important to have an assistant - someone who can do the slogging while you do the flogging. I especially can't imagine doing the Outdoor show without help. So be kind to your partners.

Both shows attracted a good mix of people - casual viewers, serious collectors, gallery scouts and so on. One thing I noticed was how the collective personality of the crowd would shift depending on the time of day or other factors that I could only speculate on. I found this interesting and as an avid people watcher, I found the crowd a rich source of fascination and inspiration. What really impressed me at both shows was the openness and supportiveness of my fellow exhibitors. I enjoyed the company of the artists around me very much and left feeling touched by the connections I had made with these talented, creative people.

I go through a series of highs and lows during these shows. The script is something like this: "What the heck am I doing here? This is ridiculous." to "Wow. This is such a fantastic place to be. I am so fortunate to be able to do this" and then "Nobody's even paying any attention to my work. How am I possibly going to make it through the whole weekend?", "OMG! Did you hear what that person just said? This is definitely where I'm meant to be. I hope I brought enough stuff." , "I'm never putting myself through this again." "I could do this every weekend!" "This is @\$#%\$^ bad.", "This is \$%#\$\$&# amazing!" And repeat. No wonder it takes a few days to recover!

By the time I packed up at the end of the day on Sunday (for both shows), I was feeling an overall sense of well-being. I'd been able to talk to many interesting people and felt the joy of belonging to a fascinating community of artists. What's more, I can't wait to get back into the studio and put into play some of the inspired (I think) ideas I developed over the weekend.

<http://www.dianeblackstudio.com/>



Oeno Gallery outside of Picton is establishing a grandiose sculpture garden. (Shayne Darke in the blue).

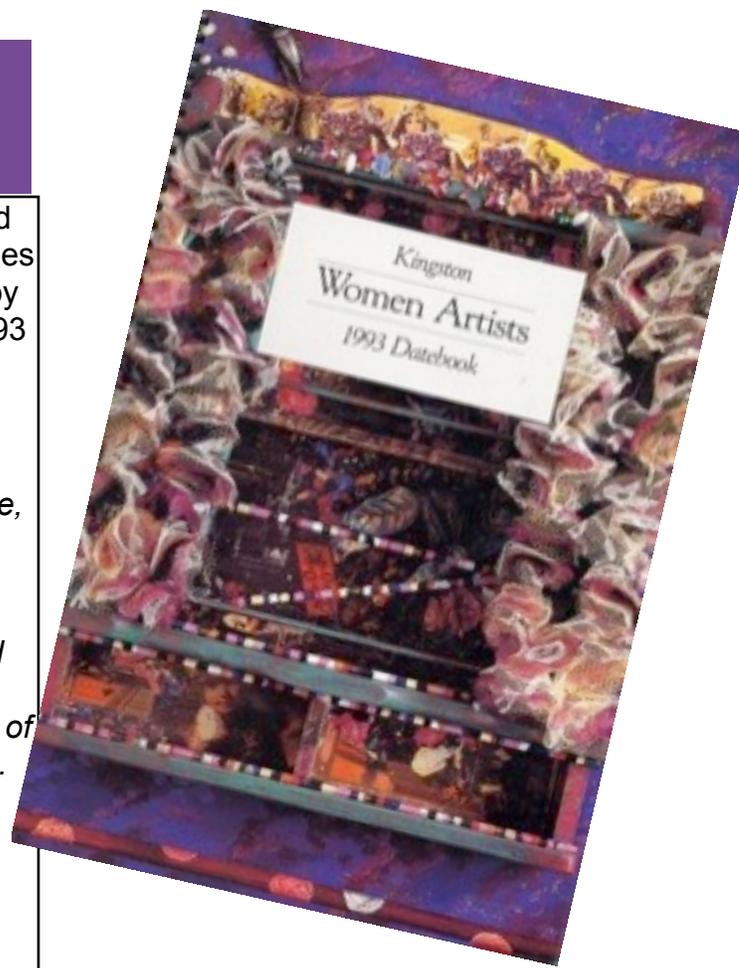


## BLAST FROM THE PAST

The Organization of Kingston Women Artists started as a vehicle to get local Kingston women's art images into print. The cover of the third edition was done by Deborah Brown. Sarolta Gyoker introduced this 1993 edition:

*"The works offer gentle yet powerful, playful yet strong personal passages to moments of density marked by new questions or answers. In either case, they initiate us in an intimate encounter--with light, colour and form, as with personal discoveries in a shinningly resonant and non-obtrusive way.*

*There exists an encounter between question and offering, wonderment and touch. This touch is the expression of reality felt and seen, fusing moments of intensity experienced in the past and in the present. that art is a bridge over moments of search and revelation, whether this revelation manifests itself through intuition, smile or laughter, is suggested in manifold ways by the present works of Kingston's women artists."*



## OKWA 2011 MEMBERS

Anderson, June. Back, Hanna. Black, Diane. Bresson, Martine. Burns, Barbara. Cain, Wendy. Carr, Barb. Cassidy, Arlene. Christensen, Kathrine. Conley, Pauline. Cowan, Rebecca. Crawford, Mary E. Davidson-Smith, Julie. Derby, Jane. Dickinson, Phileen. Falkner, Suki. Hughes, Margaret. Jagger, Maya. Jass, Sandra. Kapell, Alana. Kojro, Julie. LaRose, Michele. Lipson, Kristen. Locke, Margaret. Loney, Zillah. Lyon, Sue. Marshall, Caroline. McDiarmid, Marney. Miedema, Carla. Melhorn-Boe, Lise. 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.

NEXT ISSUE: December 2011 articles, notices, and comments welcomed at [alanakapell@mac.com](mailto:alanakapell@mac.com)