

MENNONITE HERITAGE CENTRE Gallery

CANVASSs

Volume X, No. 1, January February 2007

<http://www.mennonitechurch.ca/programs/gallery/>

hours: Mon. – Fri., 8:30 AM – 4:30 PM; Sat., noon – 5 PM

located on the campus of Canadian Mennonite University

TAX DEDUCTIBLE DONATIONS: The MHC Gallery's budget is met almost exclusively through donations. The gallery receives no government, university or church conference funding for its operating budget. Please, help keep the gallery alive.

MHC Gallery, 600 Shaftesbury Blvd., Winnipeg, MB R3P 0M4
(204) 888 6781; Ray Dirks, curator, rdirks@mennonitechurch.ca



by Rhian Brynjolson

& children from Wellington Elementary School

OPENING: Friday, January 19, 7:30PM

to March 3

Have you seen Ben Shahn's painting, *Liberation*? In it the children swing precariously from a playground pole, surrounded by the rubble of a recent war. How can they play in the midst of ruin? Which one will fall? Which one will jump up laughing?

Defying gravity, children swing, balance, skip and play and so I play on canvas, sorting through rubble for bits of hope and small victories, wishing for the collective will of a war on poverty, wishing that the United Nations Declaration of the Rights of the Child, drafted in 1959, could one day be fulfilled. In the meantime we offer breakfast programs and tape to fix broken shoes; such meager aid and such small condolences.

We could reach out to our local and global neighbours and invite them in. Begin to re-imagine society. Defy the gravity of the situation and work together to build something new. Perhaps we could restore balance by repairing safety nets: weaving work

Yearend

December 31 marks the end of each calendar year. The MHC Gallery yearend is January 31. We are still looking for about \$10,000 to make sure we have raised enough donations during our current year. Can you help us to have a happy new year's eve on January 31? Make out a cheque to the MHC Gallery and drop it in the mail. You will receive a tax receipt and many thanks.

incentives into welfare regulations, planning affordable housing for families, demanding adequate services for victims of abuse, supporting individuals with mental health issues, establishing more safe houses and foster homes, and providing adequate treatment for addictions. Perhaps we could improve life overseas by defying the IMF and the World Bank and sharing our wealth more equitably.

If there is an enormous weight that children and their families bring with them through the doors of our inner city elementary school — feeling the gravity of poverty, abuse, gangs, addiction and violence — there is also enormous talent. Our students have delighted us with their efforts in acting, drawing, painting, photography, writing, video editing, dance, athletics, music and humour. There is an infectious energy they bring to each new challenge or opportunity. After several 8:00 a.m. painting sessions, volunteering to help paint our winter concert set, one student put down her paintbrush and asked, "What's our next big project Ms. B.?"

So here is 'our next big project'. Students have collaborated with me on an exhibition of work that celebrates their talent and spirit of playfulness. The work is about the children and the grounds they play on. We hope that you enjoy the show.

20% of proceeds will be donated to inner city youth programs.

Rhian Brynjolson

Rhian Brynjolson is a children's book illustrator, author of Art and Illustration in the Classroom, and currently teaches 'Art and Integrated Curriculum' at Wellington Elementary School. She lives with her family in Winnipeg.

From the Gallery

Rhian Brynjolson's work came to my attention through our annual juried group exhibition. Submitting work for consideration to juried shows is a good way to be stumbled across. After encouragement by a few trusted artist friends and a hearty endorsement from Bob Haverluck, a respected artist friend of Rhian's, she was asked to consider mounting an exhibition. I visited her home studio and found an artist, not only talented artistically but passionate about issues of poverty and children, a perfect fit for the mandate of our gallery. Rhian's paintings of children are wonderful, lively, honest and, despite reflecting the lives of individuals who often come from difficult circumstances, celebratory. She brings with her the work of some of her students to fill out this show. Don't miss the fun and the opportunity to be pushed and prodded, to be made to think.

Ray Dirks

Proposals?

Artists, please, submit your proposals to us! The gallery hosts exhibits in approximate two month blocks throughout the year.

Mailing list

To receive **CANVASSs**, invitations to all exhibitions and other gallery updates contact Connie Wiebe, cwiebe@mennonitechurch.ca.

Contact

Ray Dirks, MHC Gallery, 600 Shaftesbury Blvd., Winnipeg, MB Canada R3P 0M4. Ph: (204) 888-6781. E-mail: rdirks@mennonitechurch.ca

Thanks

Bill and Margaret Fast, Herb and Erna Buller, Frank and Agnes DeFehr, The Winnipeg Foundation, Agatha and Al Doerksen, Friesens, Herb and Donna Peters, Ted and Mary Paetkau, other donors



I spent part of November and December in Ghana doing research for an upcoming book. I also had the pleasure of being in Accra when the Nima Community Centre was officially opened. This fine building in a poor area of Ghana's capital was built thanks to Kathy Knowles and the Osu Children's Library Fund. The gallery and Kathy have teamed up on two exhibitions in the past. Osu does amazing work, initiated out of Kathy's River Heights home. We are proud to have partnered with Osu in the past and hope our relationship can continue.

With Kathy's help, I was able to spend a week in a remote village, Dzogadze, in Volta region. Dzogadze is the type of place where I love to go. It is isolated, a place where tradition is still strong, truly a community. I asked for permission to stay and to live, as closely as possible, as local people do. There was not much of an agenda for me — all that was asked of me was to stay longer. Oh, and I was made to dance — fortunately, no one I knew saw that. I had no great agenda other than to slide into the rhythm of life and document it. Paul Azumu, the village librarian, was my gracious host. His six days a week dedication to an unpaid job, while struggling with sickness for many months, was both inspiring and humbling. The eagerness with which the children gathered at the small library everyday reminded me to be more thankful for things we take for granted. Thanks to Paul, Ledze, the Master Drummer, the Chief and his wife and the beautiful children of Dzogadze I spent a most memorable and moving week in the village.

I took 3,000 photographs in Ghana. On Saturday, February 24 the gallery will host an evening of visual exploration. If you'd like to meet the Master Drummer and the Chief, if you'd like to see the event that provoked my having to dance, if you'd like to be inspired by Paul

Next

Manitoba sculptor Ken Loewen and Ontario artist James Paterson. Opening on March 9.

Azumu's story, if you'd like to meet children to make the most jaded smile, join us at...

An Evening in Ghana
7PM, Saturday, February 24, MHC Gallery



Experience two photo "tours" — one in the east, on foot in the fascinating village of Dzogadze; one along the southwest Atlantic coast, driving from Cape Coast, and its famous castle, to Elmina, Sekondi, Takoradi and Busua with many stops and adventures between. Catch the rhythm of a beautiful land and its people.

SCHOOL TEACHERS

A variety of visual presentations are available from Ray Dirks' Ghana trip. Contact him at rdirks@mennonitechurch.ca or 888 6781 to set up a visit to your school.

the gallery survives as a result of your gifts...

Donations are tax deductible and should be made out to the MHC Gallery.

I'd like to support the MHC Gallery (PLEASE PRINT)

name _____

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Make your cheque payable to the MHC Gallery
Mail to: MHC Gallery, 600 Shaftesbury Blvd., Winnipeg, MB R3P 0M4

The MHC Gallery **CANVASs** is published by the Mennonite Heritage Centre of the Mennonite Church Canada. Gallery curator: Ray Dirks. All correspondence and exhibition proposals should be sent to 600 Shaftesbury Blvd., Winnipeg, MB, Canada R3P 0M4. Phone (204) 888-6781. E-mail: rdirks@mennonitechurch.ca. Contact us and join our mailing list. <http://mennonitechurch.ca/programs/gallery/>



Defying Gravity by Rhian Brynjolson



more from Ghana

Playground by Rhian Brynjolson

