

MENNONITE HERITAGE CENTRE Gallery

CANVASSs

Volume XII, No. 3, June-August 2009

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

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

an institution of Mennonite Church Canada

located on the campus of Canadian Mennonite University

TAX DEDUCTIBLE DONATIONS: The MHC Gallery's budget is met primarily through private, tax deductible donations. Please, help keep the gallery alive and growing. Make cheques payable to: MHC Gallery. Mail to: MHC Gallery, 600 Shaftesbury Blvd., Winnipeg, MB R3P 0M4. Credit card donations, contact Connie Wiebe at cwiebe@mennonitechurch.ca.

(204) 888 6781; Ray Dirks, curator, rdirks@mennonitechurch.ca

Gallery statement

Two years ago Murray Barkman of Open Circle contacted me and asked if I would like to attend an arts event they were hosting in the Great Hall of Canadian Mennonite University. It was an afternoon concert. Artworks by inmate and ex-offender artists ringed the room. It was to be the first annual concert and exhibition. I suggested that it could be a jumping off point to open a full fledged art exhibition in the gallery.

On June 20 Open Circle's third annual arts event will take place, followed by the opening of an exhibition in the gallery.

A number of people connected to Open Circle — Murray, Don Collins, Agatha Lepp, Adam Klassen and others — have worked hard to make the exhibition a reality. Many inmate and ex-offender artists have been asked if they would be interested in participating. I was allowed to interview six inmates at Rockwood and Stony Mountain. It was evident in those conversations that art is a healthy outlet, more than a hobby for many. Hopefully, it is part of a healing process that will help scarred souls reintegrate and grow upon release.

Ray Dirks



Adieu

With sadness, we honour the contributions and lives of two friends of the gallery who have passed away since the last newsletter. Gerald Folkerts' struggle with brain cancer ended on May 30. Gerald had a solo exhibition in the gallery, plus, was an integral part of the *Invisible Dignity Project* and exhibitions. June Springer passed away peacefully on April 8, ending her battle with cancer. June organized two Caribbean art markets in the gallery and helped Ray Dirks and three other Winnipeg artists have an exhibition in her native Trinidad. We hold up both families in our prayers.

Canvas — a piece of strong cloth on which to paint a picture



Beyond Walls: On the road home... art by inmates and ex-offenders

sponsored by Open Circle

June 20 – September 12, 2009

OPENING: SATURDAY, JUNE 20, 8:00PM

The opening will be preceded by a concert featuring ex-offender singers, writers, poets and musicians. **The concert will take place at 6:00PM in the Laudamus Hall, 500 Shaftesbury Blvd.** The exhibition opening will follow at 8:00PM in the MHC Gallery at 600 Shaftesbury Blvd.

For those unfamiliar with the Laudamus Hall, it is a beautiful heritage theatre located just inside the front entrance of the main building on the north campus of Canadian Mennonite University. The MHC Gallery is across Grant Ave. on the south campus.



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, Friesens, Herb Peters and Donna Peters-Small, Ted and Mary Paetkau, other donors

examine carefully, discuss — **Canvass**

Open Circle statement

Open Circle has been 'walking alongside' inmates for over thirty years. The aim of Open Circle is to provide an environment within which inmates can find acceptance, enjoy good relations and be encouraged to accept responsibility for how they live their lives, both inside prison and after their release.

Prison Visitation

The effects of crime are varied and deeply felt. Following a crime victims and offenders often feel pain, anger, resentment, guilt, and shame. Great separation is created; between the offender, the victim and ultimately between all involved and society. Prisons further this separation and as a result prisoners often feel forgotten and worthless. Many spend years locked away without any outside contact, so receiving a visitor can be a life-changing event. Open Circle co-ordinates one-to-one prisoner visitation, taking volunteers from the community and matching them with willing participants who are currently in prison. These visitations can, and often do, evolve into meaningful, life-long friendships. Of course, the number of matches Open Circle is able to make is limited by how many volunteers come forward. There are always more requests from prisoners than volunteers available to visit them.

Community Integration

Facing the outside world is a daunting challenge for many ex-inmates. Having spent years (sometimes decades) locked away from an ever changing world, they emerge to find a foreign and often frightened society. Open Circle provides support to ex-offenders to ease this transition and facilitate healthy reintegration. Monthly coffee houses bring community volunteers, ex-offenders, inmates with passes, and the general public to-

Exhibition run extended

Bob Haverluck's exhibition, "The Secret Treaty between humans and ducks, trees, rivers, bears and the air and..." has been extended until June 13. Take this opportunity to experience an exhibit that has touched many — combining profundity and quirky humour — in the heart, head and funny bone.

Paraguay

Gallery curator Ray Dirks has been asked to attend the global assembly of Mennonite World Conference (MWC) in Asuncion, Paraguay in July in order to document the event as a photographer. Daily goings on during the assembly will be able to be followed through the internet. Check the MWC website for more information, www.mwc-cmm.org.

In the Spirit of Humanity

Ray Dirks, Manju Lodha and Isam Aboud have begun visiting schools giving multimedia presentations and art workshops connected to the *In the Spirit of Humanity* project, funded by the Winnipeg Foundation. If you are a teacher, or parent, interested in receiving more information, contact Ray

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gether for a time of fellowship and refreshments. Open Circle provides a network to connect ex-inmates with vital resources, such as jobs, and housing. It also helps to find volunteer opportunities for ex-offenders to offer their services back to the community.

Beyond Walls Art Show

Open Circle puts on an annual art show, featuring visual and performing arts by prisoners and ex-offenders. Art promotes self-awareness and healing, builds understanding between artists and their audiences, and strengthens community. Through their art many inmates are able to better express the experience of prison and what brought them there. Many prisoners have had traumatic experiences in their lives, and art provides a means of dealing with those in a healthy way, while providing society with an opportunity to come to a place of greater understanding. Through art audiences can move beyond their fear and prejudices, to see the humanity of the artists, giving them greater understanding and empathy. The art show demonstrates the tremendous giftedness of many prisoners and ex-offenders, and their potential to make positive contributions to their communities. Finding a place to fit into a community is integral to rehabilitating ex-offenders; it changes lives and makes communities safer. *Adam Klassen, Agatha Lepp*

Open Circle is a program of Mennonite Central Committee Manitoba. For more information email opencircle@mennonitecc.ca, or call (204) 925-1912.

The gallery will be closed on Saturday afternoon, June 20. Please join us at the opening at 8:00PM.

Dirks at rdirks@mennonitechurch.ca. Interested places of worship can also request information and presentations that focus on getting to know, respect and accept each other in an increasingly multicultural country.

Donate

Summer is warm, even hot — difficult to believe at this point this year. Things slow down. Manitobans enjoy. Donors also tend

to relax. Help the gallery get through this slow time with a tax deductible donation. Cheques can be made out to the MHC Gallery and sent to 600 Shaftesbury Blvd., Winnipeg, MB R3P 0M4. Credit card donations can be made by phoning Connie Wiebe or Alf Redekopp at 888 6781.

Next

Exhibition by fibre artists the Articulation Group, opening on September 18.

Please, consider a donation

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

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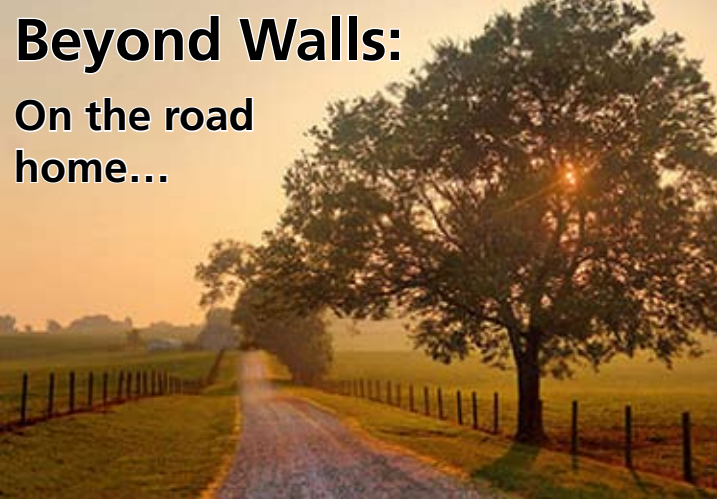
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Make your cheque payable to the MHC Gallery
Mail to: MHC Gallery, 600 Shaftesbury Blvd., Winnipeg, MB R3P 0M4
contact Connie Wiebe at (204) 888 6781 or cwiebe@mennonitechurch.ca to donate by credit card

DONATIONS ARE TAX DEDUCTIBLE

Beyond Walls:

On the road home...



Larry Trout, *Naanaboosh*, acrylic on canvas board



Ovid Charlette, *Compaction of Reflections Wild Life are Representatives of Subjects*, acrylic on canvas board



Jason Pineda, *Cold World*, acrylics, Envirotech on plywood

