

MENNONITE HERITAGE CENTRE Gallery

# CANVASS

Volume XIX, No. 1, JANUARY FEBRUARY 2016

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

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](mailto:cwiebe@mennonitechurch.ca). (204) 888 6781; Online at <https://gallery.mennonitechurch.ca/donate> Ray Dirks, curator, [rdirks@mennonitechurch.ca](mailto:rdirks@mennonitechurch.ca)

## The *Alchemy* of Life Margruite Krahn & Andrew Balfour

### Typoems Norman Schmidt

January 29 - March 26, 2016

Opening: Jan 31, 2:30 pm

with live performance by "Alchemy Ensemble"

*Alchemy* "The paintings in this exhibition are merely paint, oxide, egg yolk, canvas, and wood. I could take a knife to the images, slash and burn them, so that all that remains are the ashes. No material image. However, the physical materials when put together have the potential to go beyond the physical image. Images, like musical notes, when placed in certain patterns will create something lasting. I believe this happens when the artist, as master and servant to the craft, accepts his/her duty to search for beauty and truth. I do not mean this statement to sound inflated or like some romantic idealism. For me, it has become a hard, irreducible fact. Maturity as an artist means I am more vulnerable. I no longer approach the blank canvas with preconceived ideas of the completed image. I approach with a sense that I am about to interpret beauty and truth and how that plays out within my limited understanding of the world and the nature of God.

The *Alchemy* of Life seeks to tell a personal and a universal story through art and music. To engage the viewer on various levels, Andrew Balfour was invited to create a musical composition based on his interpretation of the first five paintings.

Five of the seven paintings follow a symbolic interpretation of alchemy. The ancient alchemist recognized in the flight of birds the symbolic nature of the human soul undergoing spiritual development. The bird as symbol represents both the physical and spiritual worlds as they reflect certain archetypal experiences encountered by the soul as it goes through transformation. In alchemy, the process moves from Nigredo/Black Raven, Albedo/White Swan, Citrinatus/Yellow Pelican or Peacock, to Rubedo/Red Pheonix."

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

**Margruite Krahn's** work has been exhibited nationally and internationally. She has lived and worked in her barn and studio in Neuberghal, Manitoba, since 1998. She became interested in the history and roots of that small Mennonite community and has been actively involved in restoring its built heritage. A teacher, she studied both fine art and commercial art with chosen mentors. Observant of the people and life around her, Krahn portrays the depths of personal relationships in community life as she witnesses them. Her interest in people and their affinity

with the land, each other, and their history permeates these large works.

Krahn uses bold colours in many of her works and **tempera and oxides** (which she got when visiting Zimbabwe and Roussellion, France) in others. "Her use of oxide stains gives a veiled sensibility to those works, forcing a different kind of engagement of the viewer. She also often tilts her compositions so we are included in the specific setting.... Her work is respectful and reflective; it is about personal engagement, yet it is objective."

Patricia Bovey, FRSA



**Negredo-Blackness** Margruite Krahn

Of Cree descent, **Andrew Balfour** has written a body of more than 40 choral, instrumental and orchestral works, including *Empire Étrange: The Death of Louis Riel*, *Migiis: Sound Scape of the Whiteshell*, *Vision Chant*, *Gregorio's Nightmare*, *Raven Can Tango*, *Wa Wa Tey Wak* (Northern Lights), *Fantasia on a Poem by Rumi*, *Missa Brevis* and *Medieval Inuit*. He has been commissioned by many organizations, including the Winnipeg Symphony Orchestra, the Regina Symphony Orchestra, Winnipeg Singers, the Kingston Chamber Choir and Camerata Nova. His works have been performed and/or broadcast locally, nationally and internationally.

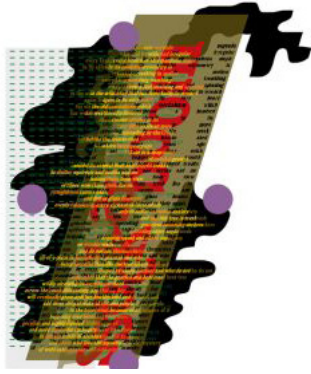
Andrew is also the founder, conceptual creator and Artistic Director of Camerata Nova where he specializes in creating "concept concerts" (*Wa Wa Tey Wak*, *Medieval Inuit*, *Chant!*) exploring a theme through an eclectic choice of music, including new works and innovative inter-genre and interdisciplinary collaborations.

Andrew has become increasingly passionate about music education and outreach, particularly in the north and inner city Winnipeg schools where he has worked on behalf of the National Arts Centre, the Winnipeg Symphony Orchestra and various Winnipeg school divisions.

Andrew has been Curator and Composer-in-Residence of the WSO's Indigenous Festivals and in 2007 received the Mayor of Winnipeg's Making a Mark Award, sponsored by the Winnipeg Arts Council to recognize the most promising midcareer artist in the city.

examine carefully, discuss — **Canvass**

## Typoems: Norman Schmidt



**ssockaboom Norman Schmidt**

The constituent elements of these artworks are printed words or text, cut and pieced paper, and stitching. In them you will see, on the one hand, structure with an overall textural visual effect, as in a patchwork quilt, with the core structure being the cruciform. On the other hand, there is the text, words to read.

Now this word "text" is curious. It has long been of interest to me that the word has nothing to do with the act of reading but with visual appearances, the patterning that letters make upon a page. Poet typographer Robert Bringhurst recounts an ancient metaphor: "Thought is a thread, and the raconteur is a spinner of yarns. But the true storyteller, the poet, is a weaver. The scribes made this old and audible abstraction into a new fact. After long practice, their work took on such an even, flexible texture that they called the written page a *textus*, which means cloth (weaving)." Texture is affected by the size of letters, their spacing, and their style. These also affect how words are understood.

Here I am particularly exploring the relationship between word texture and image texture. Tension exists between the two. On the surface, without reading the words, these works "read" immediately like any abstract art. When the texture becomes text (through the act of reading) you can feel the tension. The reading is meant to make the reader work.

With the rapid expansion of print technology in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, work appeared around the world that explored the relationship between graphemes and phonemes having unorthodox orthography, strange syntax, unusual typography, and graphical arrangements, work that bridged literary and visual art. It became known as visual (concrete) poetry.

This tradition, in part, informs my work. Quilts do also. However, unlike much of the work from the modern/postmodern period, which is concerned with minimalism and the reduction of linguistic/visual concepts and often has little aesthetic quality to make a viewer linger, I seek to visually enrich the cloth. The intricate overlaying and interweaving of shapes and text multiplies its dimension (analogous to lyrics with instrumental accompaniment). I call them typoems.

*Having retired from a professional design career and teaching, which kept him in the city most of his adult life, Norman and his wife, Sharon, now live in Altona, the place of Norman's birth. Interest in things artistic began at an early age. But a passion for the integrated expression of ideas in various forms, literary and visual, began during undergraduate studies at the University of Manitoba, and were further developed in graduate school at the University of Alberta, when he realized what writer, Leo Tolstoj, meant when he said that anything which stirs the emotions might be turned into art. For Norman, art is quintessentially humanizing, uniquely individual, but divinely inspired and universal; everything humanly made lies within its domain – without art, life is bereft of glory, as the world becomes when earth, air, water, and fire are not held as a sacred trust. Over the years his ideas have been realized as prints (book arts), quilts, and kites.*

## Mennonite Church Canada Assembly 2016 JURIED ART EXHIBITION, July 6-10, TCU Place, Saskatoon's Arts and Convention Centre Assembly and exhibition theme: Faith~God~People

*"This is the covenant... I will write it on their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people." Jer 31:33 (paraphrased)*

**Visual artists are invited to submit entries** for the 2016 Mennonite Church Canada assembly in Saskatoon. Artists may submit up to three works for consideration. Submissions should be good quality digital images – jpeg, PDF, TIF... Send them to Ray Dirks at [rdirks@mennonitechurch.ca](mailto:rdirks@mennonitechurch.ca) by June 13, 2016. Include title, media, size, a statement explaining how the art connects with the assembly and exhibit theme and a brief personal bio. Artists will be notified of the jury decisions by June 18. Accepted artworks can be delivered/sent/dropped off in either Saskatoon or Winnipeg. All shipping costs must be covered by the artist.

From assembly planners: In the expression of God ~ Faith ~ People, tilde symbols show the connection between the three elements, with Faith metaphorically represented in the middle as the conduit/relationship between God and People. The tilde signs illustrate movement and activity. Illustrate how, for you, "Faith is our connection between God and the People."

## Gallery Year End January 31

**Many thanks** to those who have supported the gallery financially this past year. The gallery year end is approaching. If you would still like to help the gallery finish 2015 well, then, early donations by January 31 would be much appreciated. To donate see the box below.

2016 promises to be an exciting year. Showings include a timely and important exhibition of art from Iraqi Kurdistan by residents and refugees living along the edges of conflict and an exhibition currently touring in Mexico which is a cooperative effort between the gallery and Atzin Mexico. The painting portion of the Along the Road to Freedom project will finally conclude. The tour will be ongoing in BC, Saskatchewan and Manitoba in 2016. We anticipate the creation of books connected to Along the Road to Freedom and the Leap in Faith project.

## Proposals?

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

## Mailing list

To receive **CANVASs**, invitations to all exhibitions and other gallery updates contact Connie Wiebe, [cwiebe@mennonitechurch.ca](mailto: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](mailto:rdirks@mennonitechurch.ca)

## Thanks

To all who make donations, large and small, we thank you for helping keep the gallery alive and relevant.

## Canvass

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