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Ray Dirks, curator, [rdirks@mennonitechurch.ca](mailto:rdirks@mennonitechurch.ca)

# Nature Exposed

Robert Nickel, Walfried Jansen, Stan Born

May 20 – July 9

**OPENING, Friday, May 20, 7:30PM**

Three friends come together to reveal the beauty of Manitoba's natural environment, through photography and lovingly crafted wood forms.

## Robert Nickel

### Why I photograph the natural world

From Genesis... "God saw everything he had made: it was supremely good.... So the Lord God formed from the fertile land all the wild animals and all the birds in the sky and brought them to the human to see what he would name them. The human gave each living being its name....The Lord God took the human and settled him in the garden of Eden to farm it **and to take care of it.**"

I have always been fascinated by the natural world. As a boy growing up I spent a lot of time in the forests around the home where I grew up. Birds and animals held me in awe. Their ability to fend for themselves impressed me. As I grew older and became involved with the things of daily living and making a living, I lost touch, to some extent, with this side of my being.

In 1985 good friends presented me with a field guide to the birds of Eastern North America and I was hooked in a big way. Since then my love of the natural world has been rekindled. Those close to me would say it has become almost an obsession.

I have found that when I show my photographs of the natural world to people, my passion becomes easier to support. What makes my work more urgent is the fact that the natural world is fighting to survive. When I drive by some of my childhood haunts, I very often don't recognize them. Where there were forests and blooming prairies, there are now housing developments, fast food restaurants, petrol stations and parking lots. Where have all the birds and animals gone? Some of them are having difficulty finding a home and have been put on the endangered list. Their beauty and ability to "make a living" should be an example to us of nature's capacity to care for all of us, if we would only pay attention. My hope and conviction is that my photographs will fan the embers in people's hearts and awaken in some small way, a recognition of the beauty that is all around us. Birds and



Robert Nickel



Walfried Jansen



Stan Born

animals have a remarkable resiliency. Even in our urban landscape one can observe White-tailed Deer, Wild Turkeys, a Coyote walking on the river in the wintertime, a White-throated Sparrow in the park by the Centennial Library downtown, Muskrats playing in the river, Raccoons training their children in the ways of humans, and during spring migration more than 20 species of warblers passing through Assiniboine Park. May the images you are viewing give you hope for our natural world. It is my hope that they inspire you and give you joy.

## Walfried Jansen photography

Walfried was born in 1949 in Volendam, Paraguay and immigrated to Canada in 1957. Three years of university netted a degree in the biological sciences. After the birth of their eldest daughter Walfried moved his young family to Thompson, Manitoba in 1975. He worked as a Chemist for INCO (nickel mining) until his retirement in 2006. Walfried and his wife, Ruth, moved to the village of Birds Hill after retirement.

Walfried has had many interests to keep him occupied

over the years including fishing, curling, racquetball, wilderness canoeing, and birdwatching. The formation of a writers' group in Thompson sparked the creative juices. Three books of poetry were published along with several awards for numerous individual poems. A young adult adventure story, *Born of Courage*, followed in 2013.

For the past 15 years Walfried has explored another creative medium, photography. Initially bird photography dominated but Walfried has since branched out into other aspects of nature photography. Photography is a great medium for capturing and displaying nature's beauty that in so many parts of our planet are quickly disappearing. Walfried is hopeful that his current project will result in a coffee table book of Manitoba landscapes.

## Stan Born

### Artistic Woodturning

Stan Born hails from the little hamlet of Kane in southern Manitoba. Even as a child he showed an artistic bent, spending spare time doodling and making art. His interest in wood began in the early 80s when he took a carving course with Garret Kroon. He built his first wood lathe in 1984 and never looked back. As his turning skills developed he fell in love with the bowl form. His turning skills are self-taught through practice and lots of reading and watching videos by luminaries in the turning world such as Richard Raffan and Peter Child.

Stan's specialties include spurtles, lidded boxes, bowls, spinning tops and candle holders. He has demonstrated his skills at the Highland Gathering in Selkirk, at the St. Andrews Rectory and at various other shows around the province of Manitoba. He has also taught woodturning for 12 years at Canadian Woodworker, graduating numerous skilled turners.

Stan belongs to the Woodturners Association of Manitoba and was instrumental in inviting world renowned turner Richard Raffan to demonstrate his art here in Winnipeg at the University of Manitoba.

Stan's past associations include the St. Andrews Arts Association, the Selkirk Arts Association, and the Manitoba Craft Council. He attended the American Association of Woodturners Symposium in St. Paul, Minnesota recently and

will be attending the Regina Turning Symposium featuring David Ellsworth, a consummate hollow form turner.

Being recently retired, Stan has set his sights on doing more demonstrations, rejoining arts associations and selling his art in galleries and shops. His dream is to see one of his works on display at the Winnipeg Art Gallery. In his words "I enjoy creating various shapes and curves in wood, also texturing and carving to enhance the beauty of the turned wood. I also want to explore the art of the hollow form. Ask me about that."

Thursday, May 5



**I came from a faraway land:  
voices of newcomers from Iraq and Syria**  
7:00PM, CMU Chapel (next door to the gallery)  
Reception to follow in the gallery • Free admission

A panel discussion with newcomers to Winnipeg from Iraq and Syria. Hear stories about life before and life now in Canada. Traditional Kurdish dance performance presented by the Kurdish Association of Manitoba. Join us for an exciting and informative evening. Get to know new Manitobans. Experience the powerful, not to be missed *Stories in Art from Iraqi Kurdistan* exhibition following the event.

## Next

### Parvin Shere and Rhonda Harder Epp

July 15 – September 3

**NOTE:** RECEPTION either July 30 or 31 (There will be no reception on July 15. Date and time of the reception to be announced in the next newsletter.)

Two exhibitions. One a journey through the artistic career of former Winnipegger Parvin Shere and the second by Rhonda Harder Epp from Edmonton.

## Mennonite Church Canada Assembly

Artists interested in submitting work for the Mennonite Church Canada assembly exhibition in Saskatoon can go to the Mennonite Church Canada website for information: <http://home.mennonite-church.ca/saskatoon2016/ArtExhibition>

## Annual Gallery Fundraiser

Friday, September 30. Information to follow this summer.

## Proposals?

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

### Mailing list

To receive **CANVAs**, 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.

## Please, consider a donation

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