

TWO EXHIBITIONS May 3 – June 22 OPENING: May 4, 7:30pm

Winnipeg is fortunate to be home to an increasingly diverse population. That diversity has taken some time to be reflected in the greater arts community, but in recent years diversity also thrives in the arts.

When the MHC Gallery opened in 1998, an integral part of its formal mandate was to celebrate our diverse community. Its first exhibition signalled that mandate by featuring the art of gallery curator Ray Dirks and paintings by a recent arrival to Canada from Nigeria, Yisa Akinbolaji.

Akinbolaji credits early opportunities initiated by Dirks as influencing his decision to stay in Winnipeg, starting with being asked to include pieces in the *Rise with the sun: women and Africa* contemporary African art exhibition hosted at the Manitoba Museum in 1997.

Akinbolaji is back with a new solo exhibition at the MHC Gallery. Joining him with a solo exhibition of her own is Argentina born artist Gabriela Agüero. Agüero also has forged a close relationship with the MHC Gallery through the years, having exhibited together with artists from Colombia and Chile and teaching art in the gallery.

Akinbolaji and Agüero are both gifted artists, insightful, passionate, open, asking you through these exhibits to join them on their journeys as immigrants, as Winnipeggers, as artists, as creative souls adding to and enriching our wonderfully diverse community.

The gallery is proud to host exhibitions by two Manitobans with roots in Africa and South America.

Who is In and Who is Out Yisa Akinbolaji

Let us all be involved in improving our society: In North America, newcomers, refugees, indigenous people, the underprivileged - all of these groups have at different times been labelled as 'other' and have been overlooked or isolated. In the current social climate of North America, a great deal of suspicion and fear has arisen regarding the other. This solo exhibition, "Who is In and Who is Out" draws attention to and documents what was once only silent discrimination and now has become an increasingly open dialogue being played out in the media and in communities around us.

Impassioned debates have emerged regarding who belongs in a country and who does not. News reports abound globally of select immigrants being required to return to their countries, even as more cross the border illegally in search of hope and a better life. A few of those who have immigrated successfully harm their own communities through unlawful deeds. Our city showcases the outward expressions of cultural diversity in public



Yisa Akinbolaji, © *Stolen Identity*

celebrations, even as its citizens discriminate against each other and ignore the missing women from at-risk communities. Also unsettling is the negligence toward the *Boko Haram* issue when the news first broke of the abduction of over 200 girls from their boarding school. Only a few of the girls have gained their freedom since.

My innovative process of painting, through which hidden layers of colours are revealed, conveys this message of exposing prejudice and the unknown narratives of "Who is In and Who is Out?"

To add to the engagement of my exhibition, a friend, Dr. Michalis Andronikou, who is an accomplished music composer, has created a piece specifically for my theme, "Who is In and Who is Out." The music was performed and recorded by TerraEnsembleTrio (Piano: Angelika Papanikolaou, Mezzo-soprano: Maria Latsinou, Bass Clarinet: Panagiotis Sioras). <http://yisagallery.com/>

TAX DEDUCTIBLE DONATIONS: The MHC Gallery relies almost entirely on donations from gallery supporters who undergird operating and project budgets — from office and exhibit supplies to salaries and everything between. To help keep the gallery growing, see the ways to donate at the bottom of the following page.

LUMINOUS Gabriela Agüero

Place and memory are intrinsic aspects of identity. Ontological perceptions of space are embedded in cultural consciousness, creating pervasive specificities of time and space. This recent body of work in photography precariously suggests narratives that aim to elucidate the disjuncture and tension between perceptions of outdoor/indoor, nature/culture, and domestic/public spaces. The portraits in landscapes are dichotomies interrogating deeper (dis)connections to the environment as a domain of an unconscious; a dream time that insinuates an apostasy for the allure of the sensual.

The tight coupling of images chronicles altered states in dimensions beyond the self. From the locus of the body, pairing figure and landscape allows for liberating existential and sometimes anxious associations that seek to narrow a crumbling distance in often futile sympathetic magic. Beyond the haunting of dogmatic labels: immigrant, woman, artist, mother, latina, mestiza, old or wise, this body of work shifts focus onto the artist as a deferential channel. The images allow flashes of insight to grow in an organic magma of outward intention and inward unease. These are the realms of self-absorbed states



Gabriela Agüero, Untitled

of introspection; to evoke self-discovery, reminisce, dwell in the past, dream in darkness and through storms, and to present myths, recollections, partial amnesias of spaces where the spirit was and still is boundless. Within them, the landscapes hold histories of places I grew into and out of. These places remain, and I often return to them in dreams – in a parallel universe where time never runs through. They are déjà vu, beholding the present as a distinct vision of the pristine landscape, as an analogy for a persistent reframing of lifelong cultural alienation. The process involves spending timeless moments immersed in nature, alone in silence and reverence, in liminal states of trance-like detachment.

Gabriela Agüero is a visual artist from Argentina who immigrated to Canada in 1985. She holds a BFA Honours from the University of Manitoba and a MFA from Louisiana State University. In the past her work addressed issues of human rights, gender, technology, and metamorphosis. Gabriela has been recently awarded a Winnipeg Arts Council grant to develop further in video media. Her work continues with an urgency to address ecology, reason, women, and the wild. Gabriela has four children and makes her home in Winnipeg, Manitoba, Treaty One territory. Her favourite place in the world is outdoors in nature. <https://gabrielaaguero.tumblr.com/>

NEXT Manitoba Society of Artists juried exhibition opening on Thursday, June 27, 7:30pm. Juror lecture on Tuesday, June 25 at 7:00pm.

DONATIONS April 30 is the gallery fiscal yearend. Tax deductible donations to help the gallery end the year well are needed and much appreciated. We are approaching 21 years as a virtually entirely donor supported institution. We thank you!

CALL FOR ENTRY (deadline June 17, 2019)

Manitoba Society of Artists 87th Annual Open Juried Art Exhibition

Would you like to be part of the upcoming annual MSA show to be held this summer at the MHC Gallery?

For entry details, go to <https://www.manitobaartists.com/ojce-2019/>



Exhibitions

The gallery generally hosts six exhibition time slots per year — either one exhibition using both levels or, most often, different exhibitions on each level. Contact Ray Dirks at rdirks@cmu.ca for exhibition information.

Mailing list

To receive information on all upcoming exhibitions join our mailing list by contacting Selenna Wolfe at swolfe@cmu.ca or 204 487 3300, ext 344.

Thank you

To all who make donations, large and small, we thank you for helping this unique gallery continue to thrive and make a difference.

DONATIONS

The **MHC**Gallery is a program of Canadian Mennonite University. It is 100% funded, from hammers and nails to salaries, by donations. Your support is what keeps the gallery alive.

donation options:

- by cheques payable to Canadian Mennonite University, **MHC**Gallery on the memo line, mailed to 500 Shaftesbury Blvd., Winnipeg, MB R3P 2N2
- online at cmu.ca/donate (by credit or debit card) See drop down tab to designate the gallery.
- make a monthly commitment using the online portal or by contacting Selenna Wolfe at swolfe@cmu.ca or 204 487-3300, ext. 344
- bring a donation when you visit the gallery in person