

MARGARET WITSCHL

Biographical Notes

Margaret Witschl is an Edmonton painter and photographer. She studied painting, printmaking and art education at the University of Alberta and holds a BFA (1968) and Dip Ed (1971).

"As a ten-year old with simple drawing materials I discovered the pleasure of art. When it came time for me to choose an adult career path there was only one. In the fall of 1964 I had the exceptionally good fortune to be among a small group of students who were accepted into the brand-new, four-year Bachelor of Fine Arts program at the University of Alberta."

Early teachers were H.G. Glyde, J.B. Taylor, Norman Yates (painting and drawing) and later Jonathon Knowlton (printmaking) Robert Sinclair, Stephen Andrews (painting and drawing) and Ronald Davey (theory). Two major British and American trends of that time were Op Art and Pop Art. These were powerful influences that one can see in her work today.

Margaret worked for Alberta Visual Arts for 13 years and her work focused on the research and production of art business information. She also administered the Government of Alberta's provincial and international art purchase and art commission program which involved her in on-site work in London, England and New York City.

Since 2000, Margaret has worked exclusively on her studio practice, including attending residencies at The Banff Centre, AB and at Emma Lake, Saskatchewan. Her work has been exhibited across Canada and is included in public collections. It has been supported by grants from the City of Edmonton and the Canada Council. Exhibitions of my work have been exclusively in public galleries. The exhibition entitled *Margaret Witschl: MAPS* at the Bugera-Matheson Gallery, Edmonton, AB in 2019 is her first solo commercial gallery exhibition.

Artist Statement – Maps for Self-Discovery

Maps show us where we are going. Illustrated maps give us a preview of what we'll see when we get there. When we are in unfamiliar territory, maps are reassuring objects. The further we are off the beaten path, the more comforting they can be.

The ideas of anxiety, chance and unpredictability are longstanding interests of mine.

To symbolize these ideas, images of mundane objects are combined with bits of landscape and simple silhouettes. These seemingly unrelated images and their sometimes odd connections represent what is random, unpredictable and uncontrollable. They are chosen for their power to suggest anxiety... weapons, warnings, barriers, violence, conflict, peril, loss. Some are drawn from my personal diary of events gone awry, worrisome visions and fretful dreams.

They are juxtaposed with graticules - map lines - a logical geometric pattern which in contrast suggests constancy, equilibrium, and perhaps security.

These paintings explore ideas of chance, risk, the unknowable and the oddities of coincidence. They draw on ideas of the subconscious from the dreamlike art of Surrealism, the literary world's stream of consciousness and traditional illustrated maps.

I recognize the instinctive need to make sense of things, and these present possible, but non-linear storylines, open to personal interpretations.

"One thing leads to another" describes both my work process and its final imagery. It expresses for me the fact that we are who we are through unpredictable and unique influences and events...the very randomness that we fear.

Margaret Witschl, April 2019

Curriculum Vitae

Education

1964-1968 University of Alberta, Edmonton, AB, Bachelor of Fine Arts

1970-1971 University of Alberta, Edmonton, AB, Diploma, Faculty of Education

Residencies

2007 The Banff Centre, Banff, AB

2009 University of Saskatchewan, SK, Emma Lake Artists' Workshop

2011 University of Saskatchewan, SK, Emma Lake Artists' Workshop

Grants/Awards/Honors

1964, 1965, 1966, 1967 Imperial Oil Limited Higher Education Academic Award

2007 City of Edmonton Arts Council Travel Grant

2009 City of Edmonton Arts Council Project Grant

2010 Canada Council For the Arts/Alberta Creative Development Initiative Project Grant

2013 Nomination (Art Gallery of St Albert) Eldon and Anne Foote Visual Arts Prize

2013 CARFAC National Arts Advocacy Award 2013

Solo Exhibitions

2014 "As Luck Would have It", Mann Art Gallery, Prince Albert, SK

2013 "Rules of Play" Gallery @ 501, Sherwood Park, AB

2012 "Game Pieces", Art Gallery of St Albert, St Albert, AB

2012 "Getting Anxious", Okotoks Art Gallery, Okotoks, AB

2012 "Getting Anxious", Harcourt House Gallery, Edmonton AB

2008 "Gains and Losses", Paintings and Photographs, Multicultural Centre Public Art Gallery, Stony Plain, AB

2003 "Margaret Witschl: Marking Time", Profiles Public Art Gallery, St. Albert, AB

1984 "Margaret Witschl: Painting", solo exhibition, Muttart Gallery, Calgary, AB

Group Exhibitions

2010 "12th Annual Art on the Block", Exhibition and Auction, Art Gallery of Alberta, Edmonton, AB

2010 "With All Its Beauty", Multicultural Center Public Art Gallery, Stony Plain, AB

2010 "Knows No Kindness", Multicultural Center Public Art Gallery, Stony Plain, AB

2009 "In the Balance", Visual Arts Alberta Gallery, Edmonton, AB

2009 "Planet Earth", The Woks Art and Design Festival, Stanley Milner Library, Edmonton, AB

2009 "Signs", Profiles Public Art Gallery, St Albert, AB

2009 "11th Annual Art on the Block", Exhibition and Auction, Art Gallery of Alberta, Edmonton, AB

2009 "Planet Earth", Leighton Center, Calgary, AB

2008 "10th Annual Art on the Block", Exhibition and Auction, Art Gallery of Alberta, Edmonton AB

2007 "Five", Extension Centre Gallery, University of Alberta, Edmonton, AB

2006 "Snap Shots", Latitude 53 Gallery, Edmonton, AB, Todd Janes, curator

2005 "Four Corners", TU Gallery, Edmonton, AB
 2005 "Diversity 100", juried exhibition organized for The Works Art and Design Festival, VAAA Gallery, Edmonton, AB
 2005 "Viewpoint", with Candace Loewen-Smith, VAAA Gallery, Edmonton, AB
 2005 "Inaugural Exhibition", invitational, TU Gallery, Edmonton, AB
 2004 "Society of Canadian Artists, 37th National Open Juried Exhibition of Visual Arts", La Maison Ogilvy, Montreal, PQ
 2004 "Diversity", juried exhibition organized for The Works Art and Design Festival, VAAA Gallery, Edmonton, AB
 2004 "Systeme", with Nicole Galellis and Daryl Rydman, Profiles Public Art Gallery, St. Albert, AB, Edward van Vliet, curator
 2003 "Open Water", 78th Annual International Juried Exhibition of the Canadian Society of Painters in Watercolour", John B Aird Gallery, Toronto, ON
 2001 "The Convincing Lie", international juried exhibition, James Baird Gallery, St. John's , Newfoundland
 1994 "Alumni", invitational, Profiles Public Art Gallery, St. Albert, AB
 1990 "Recent Drawings: Sharon Moore-Foster and Margaret Witschl", Profiles Public Art Gallery, St. Albert, AB
 1988 "Staff Exhibition 1988", invitational exhibition of the Faculty of Extension U of A, organized for The Works Art and Design Festival, Manulife Place, Edmonton, AB
 1988 "Suspects: Alternatives in Edmonton", group exhibition, Latitude 53 Gallery, Edmonton, AB, Garth Rankin, curator
 1987 "Portrait of a Province" group exhibition, Edmonton Art Gallery, Edmonton, AB
 1985 "Showcase for Alberta Women Artists", juried regional traveling exhibition, Hett Gallery, Edmonton, AB; Muttart Gallery, Calgary, AB; Prairie Gallery, Grande Prairie, AB; Red Deer and District Museum, Red Deer, AB; Lethbridge Public Library Gallery, Lethbridge, AB
 1984 "Water + Colour + Paper", 59th juried national traveling exhibition of the Canadian Society of Painters in Watercolour, Ring House Gallery, Edmonton, AB; Muttart Gallery, Calgary, AB; Estevan National Exhibition Centre, Estevan, SK; Moose Jaw Museum and National Exhibition Centre, Moose Jaw, SK; Swift Current National Exhibition Centre, Swift Current, SK; Centre for the Arts, Simon Fraser University, Burnaby, BC; Kamloops Public Art gallery, Kamloops, BC; Kelowna Art Gallery, Kelowna, BC; Grand Forks Art Gallery, Grand Forks, BC; Medicine Hat Historical Museum and national Exhibition centre, Medicine Hat, AB

Public Collections

Alberta Foundation for the Arts: 1984, 1986, 2002, 2004
 Walter C MacKenzie Health Sciences Centre, Edmonton, AB
 University Collections, University of Alberta, Edmonton, AB

Private Collections/Commissions

Scotland, Belgium, Canada, USA

Instructor

1987-89, Studio Courses, Faculty of Extension, University of Alberta

1987-88, Cultural Board Development Program, Alberta Culture and Grant McEwan Community College, Edmonton, AB
1986-89, Art Business Lecture Series, Faculty of Extension, University of Alberta
1971-72, Edmonton Public School Board, Edmonton, AB

Curator

1987 "Neo-Naïve: Contemporary Painting in the Folk Art Tradition", Profiles Public Art Gallery, St Albert, AB
1985-1987, Corporate Collection Acquisition, Esso Petroleum, Imperial Oil Limited, Edmonton, AB
Writer
1985-1986 Script for "A Brush with Business" Five Part Video Series, Alberta Culture

Board and Committee Service

2011, 2012, Chair, Visual Arts Alberta, CARFAC-Alberta Advisory Committee
2010, 2011, 2012, Member, City of St. Albert Public Art Advisory Committee
2008, 2009, 2010, 2011, 2012 -, National Board Director and Alberta Representative, Canadian Artists Representation/le Front des artistes canadiens (CARFAC)
2009, 2010, Past President and Director, Visual Arts Alberta Association
2006, 2007, 2008, 2009, President, Visual Arts Alberta Association

Recent Selected Bibliography

"Rules of Play", Nadja Pelkey, Art Gallery @ 501, September, 2013
"Margaret Witschl: Game Pieces", Agnieszka Matejko, Galleries West, Spring 2013, ISSN 1703-2806
"Herbert's Homicide", Poem by Troy Sherdahl, 2013
" Witschl Invites Patrons to Play Her Game", Glenn Cook, St Albert Leader, December 6, 2012.
" Game Pieces", Exhibition Catalogue, catalogue text by Amy Fung, published by Art Gallery of St Albert, 2012, ISBN 978-0-9880646-0-7
"Unsettling Down", Scott Hayes, St. Albert Gazette, December 5, 2012.