THE ARTIST HERSELF: BROADENING IDEAS OF SELF-PORTRAITURE IN CANADA

THE THIRD CONFERENCE OF THE CANADIAN WOMEN ARTISTS HISTORY INITIATIVE

8–9 May 2015

Queen’s University and the Agnes Etherington Art Centre, Kingston
## CONFERENCE AT A GLANCE

**FRIDAY 8 MAY**

**Registration:** 8:30–4:00 (Agnes Etherington Art Centre)

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<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>STRAND 1</th>
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| 9:00–9:30 | **Opening Welcome** (Ellis Auditorium)  
Susan Mumm, Dean of Arts and Science, Queen’s University  
Kristina Huneault, Canadian Women Artists History Initiative, Concordia University |
| 9:30–11:00 | **STRAND 1**  
**Subjects and their Objects**  
Chair: Amandina Anastassiades, Queen’s University  
- Peter Larocque  
- Carolyn Dowdell  
- Mark Clintberg |
| 9:30–11:00 | **STRAND 2**  
**The Limits of Inclusion: Indigenous Women and Visual Art Genres I**  
Chair: Sherry Farrell Racette, University of Manitoba  
- Sherry Farrell Racette  
- Lori Beavis |
| 9:30–11:00 | **STRAND 3**  
**Self-Image: Bodies and Faces**  
(Ellis 327)  
Chair: Allison Morehead, Queen’s University  
- Julia Skelly  
- Devon Smith  
- Catherine Sinclair |
| 11:00–11:30 | BREAK (Ellis Lobby) |
| 11:30–1:00 | **STRAND 1**  
**Mediated Subjects: Photography**  
(Ellis 324)  
Chair: Martha Langford, Concordia University  
- Susan Close  
- Colleen Skidmore  
- Karla McManus |
| 11:30–1:00 | **STRAND 2**  
**The Limits of Inclusion: Indigenous Women and Visual Art Genres II**  
(Ellis Auditorium)  
Chair: Sarah E.K. Smith, Harvard University  
- Annette De Stecher  
- Carolyn Butler Palmer  
- Norman Vorano |
| 11:30–1:00 | **STRAND 3**  
**Animal/Nature**  
(Ellis 327)  
Chair: Elysia French, Queen’s University  
- Andrea Terry  
- Keri Cronin |
| 1:00–2:30 | LUNCH (Ontario Hall 323)  
Courtesy of the Department of Art History and Art Conservation |
| 2:30–4:00 | **STRAND 1**  
**Mediated Subjects: Material Objects and Creative Processes**  
(Ellis Auditorium)  
Chair: Rachel Gotlieb, Gardiner Museum  
- Samantha Burton  
- Georgiana Uhyarik  
- Anne Koval |
| 2:30–4:00 | **STRAND 2**  
**Self, Ethnicity and Colonial Experience**  
(Ellis 324)  
Chair: Norman Vorano, Queen’s University  
- Lisa Binkley  
- Adrienne Johnson  
- Michelle Paquette |
| 2:30–4:00 | **STRAND 3**  
**Subjects and their Spaces**  
(Ellis 327)  
Chair: Katherine Romba, Queen’s University  
- Annmarie Adams  
- Amy Furness  
- Tanya Southcott |
| 4:00–4:30 | BREAK (Ellis Lobby) |
| 4:30–5:30 | **Public Panel** (Ellis Auditorium)  
From Curatorial Eyes: Exhibiting and Collecting Canadian Women Artists, Then and Now  
Chair: Alicia Boutilier, Panelists: Dorothy Farr, Linda Jansma, Tobi Bruce, Sarah E.K. Smith |
| 5:30–7:30 | **Spring Exhibitions Launch and Reception** (Agnes Etherington Art Centre)  
**Welcome and Remarks**  
Jan Allen, Director, Agnes Etherington Art Centre |
**SATURDAY 9 MAY**

**Registration:** 8:30–12:00 (Agnes Etherington Art Centre)

| 9:00–10:00 | **KEYNOTE ADDRESS** (Ellis Auditorium)  
Stitches and Thread: Transcultural Exchange and Gendered Creation across Global Networks, c.1600s–1800s  
Beverly Lemire, University of Alberta  
Introduction: Janice Helland, Queen's University |
| 10:00–10:30 | BREAK (Ellis Hall Lobby) |
| 10:30–12:00 | **STRAND 1 (continued)**  
Subjects and their Objects  
**Mediated Subjects: Scrapbooks and Albums**  
(Ellis 324)  
Chair: Rosaleen Hill, Queen's University  
* Andrea Kunard  
* Patricia Sheppard  
* Laura Murray and Lisa Pietersma  
| **STRAND 2 (continued)**  
Self and Community  
**Searching (for) the Self**  
(Ellis 327)  
Chair: Anne Koval, Mount Allison University  
* Janice Anderson  
* Carey Pallister  
* Lora Senechal Carney  
| **STRAND 4**  
Self Portraits and Art History  
**Looking at Self-Portraiture: Method and History**  
(Ellis Auditorium)  
Chair: Susan Surette, NSCAD University  
* Lara Perry  
* Catherine MacKenzie  
* Dominic Hardy |
| 12:00–1:00 | **TOURS**  
Queen’s University Archives / Master of Art Conservation Labs  
**LUNCH (On Your Own)** |
| 2:00–3:30 | **Block B**  
**Portrait Objects I**  
(Ellis Auditorium)  
Chair: Catherine MacKenzie, Concordia University  
* Janice Helland  
* Rachel Gottlieb  
* Sandra Alfoldy  
| **Public Self-Presentation**  
(Ellis 324)  
Chair: Steven McNeil, Queen’s University  
* Gemey Kelly  
* Geneviève Lafleur  
* Susan Surette  
| **Artists, Historians and Archives**  
(Ellis 327)  
Chair: Joan Schwartz, Queen’s University  
* Heather Home  
* Loren Lerner  
* Mary Ellen Weller |
| 3:30–4:00 | BREAK (Ellis Hall Lobby) |
| 4:00–5:30 | **Block C**  
**Portrait Objects II**  
(Ellis 324)  
Chair: Sarah Alford, Queen’s University  
* Jennifer Salahub  
* Julia McArthur and  
* Johanna Amos  
* Julie Hollenbach  
| **Portraits and Self Portraiture**  
(Ellis 327)  
Chair: Pat Sullivan,  
Agnes Etherington Art Centre  
* Isabel Luce  
* Jaclyn Meloche  
* Mary Jo Hughes  
| **Feeling the Chill: Self-Representing through Struggle in a Cold Academy**  
(Ellis Auditorium)  
Chair: Erin Morton, University of New Brunswick  
* Erin Morton  
* Susan Cahill  
* Kristy Holmes |
| 5:30–5:45 | **Closing Thanks** (Ellis Auditorium)  
Janice Anderson, Canadian Women Artists History Initiative, Concordia University  
Alicia Boutilier, Agnes Etherington Art Centre |
CONFERENCE PROGRAM

FRIDAY 8 MAY

8:30–4:00  Registration  (Agnes Etherington Art Centre)

9:00–9:30  Opening Welcome  (Ellis Auditorium)

Susan Mumm (Dean of Arts and Science, Queen’s University)
Kristina Huneault (Canadian Women Artists History Initiative, Concordia University)

9:30–11:00  BLOCK A

STRAND 1: SUBJECTS AND THEIR OBJECTS  Mediated Subjects: Textiles  (Ellis 324)

Chair: Amandina Anastassiades (Queen’s University)

Faces in the Fabric?: Self-Portraiture and Women’s Textiles
Peter Larocque (New Brunswick Museum)

“Her love of fine clothes”: Self-Representation and the Fashions of Agnes Etherington
Carolyn Dowdell (Queen’s University)

Passion Over Reason: Joyce Wieland, Margaret Trudeau, and Fogo Island
Mark Clintberg (Concordia University)

STRAND 2: SUBJECTS AND COMMUNITIES  The Limits of Inclusion: Indigenous Women and Visual Art Genres I  (Ellis Auditorium)

Chair: Sherry Farrell Racette (University of Manitoba)

Nehiyawak Dolls as Self-Representation and Embodied History
Sherry Farrell Racette (University of Manitoba)

A Conscious Act: Pauline Johnson, Esther White Deer and Self-Representation
Lori Beavis (Concordia University)
STRAND 3: BODIES AND SPACES  Self-Image: Bodies and Faces (Ellis 327)

Chair: Allison Morehead (Queen’s University)
“Oh Doctor, is it alright if I keep on my bracelet?”: Probing Prudence Heward's Epistolary Self-Portrait
Julia Skelly (Concordia University)

Faciality, Duration, and Unfinish in Pegi Nicol MacLeod's Self-Portraits
Devon Smither (University of Toronto)

Circling the Essential: Alma Duncan’s Women Series (1964–1967)
Catherine Sinclair (Ottawa Art Gallery)

11:00–11:30  BREAK (Ellis Lobby)

11:30–1:00  BLOCK B

STRAND 1: SUBJECTS AND THEIR OBJECTS  Mediated Subjects: Photography (Ellis 324)

Chair: Martha Langford (Concordia University)

Made in Canada: Self-Representation in Women's Early Camera Work in Canada
Susan Close (University of Manitoba)

Mary Schäffer: “She Who Colors Slides”
Colleen Skidmore (University of Alberta)

Images from the Frontier: Lorene Squire, Photography, and the Canadian Wilderness
Karla McManus (Concordia University)

STRAND 2: SELF AND COMMUNITY  The Limits of Inclusion: Indigenous Women and Visual Art Genres II (Ellis Auditorium)

Chair: Sarah E.K. Smith (Harvard University)

Representation of Self and Community: The Ceremonial Headdress of Caroline Gros-Louis
Annette de Stecher (Université Laval)

Ellen Neel’s Totemland in the Era of Do-It-Yourself-Culture
Carolyn Butler Palmer (University of Victoria)

Indigenous Cultures and the Potentials of Self Portraiture
Norman Vorano (Queen’s University)
STRAND 3: BODIES AND SPACES  Animal/Nature  (Ellis 327)

Chair: Elysia French (Queen’s University)

Treks, Traces, and Technology: Contemporary Challenges to Historical Art
Andrea Terry (Lakehead University)

Speaking Across Species Lines, or When Is a Self-Portrait Not a Self-Portrait?
Keri Cronin (Brock University)

1:00–2:30    LUNCH (Ontario Hall 323)
             Courtesy of the Department of Art History and Art Conservation

2:30–4:00    BLOCK C

STRAND 1: SUBJECTS AND THEIR OBJECTS  Mediated Subjects: Material Objects and Creative Processes  (Ellis Auditorium)

Chair: Rachel Gotlieb (Gardiner Museum)

A Short Pause: Self-Portraiture, Illustration, and Marginality in Emily Carr’s Early Work
Samantha Burton (University of Southern California)

Christiane Pflug: A Certain Degree of Truthfulness
Georgiana Uhlyarik (Art Gallery of Ontario)

Mary Pratt: Still Life as Self-Portraiture
Anne Koval (Mount Allison University)

STRAND 2: SELF AND COMMUNITY  Self, Ethnicity and Colonial Experience  (Ellis 324)

Chair: Norman Vorano (Queen’s University)

The Needle as Brush: Recouping Anne Little Bell
Lisa Binkley (Queen’s University)

Invisible Images: African Canadian Women in Canadian Art
Adrienne Johnson (Concordia University)

L’Autre comme autoportrait : les représentations canadiennes-françaises de Kateri Tekakwitha
Michelle Paquette (Université du Québec à Montréal)
STRAND 3: BODIES AND SPACES  Subjects and their Spaces  (Ellis 327)

Chair: Katherine Romba (Queen’s University)

Maude Abbott Herself: Architecture as Self-Representation
Annmarie Adams (McGill University)

The Artist in Her Studio, across Time, beyond Place
Amy Furness (Art Gallery of Ontario)

The Photography of Edith Mather
Tanya Southcott (McGill University)

4:00–4:30  BREAK  (Ellis Lobby)

4:30–5:30  PUBLIC/PLENARY PANEL  (Ellis Auditorium)

From Curatorial Eyes: Exhibiting and Collecting Canadian Women Artists, Then and Now

Chair: Alicia Boutilier (Agnes Etherington Art Centre)

Panelists: Dorothy Farr (Independent Scholar), Linda Jansma (The Robert McLaughlin Gallery), Tobi Bruce (Art Gallery of Hamilton), Sarah E.K. Smith (Harvard University)

5:30–7:30  EXHIBITIONS LAUNCH AND RECEPTION  (Agnes Etherington Art Centre)

Welcome and Remarks

Jan Allen (Director, Agnes Etherington Art Centre)
SATURDAY 8 MAY

9:00–10:00  KEYNOTE ADDRESS  (Ellis Auditorium)

Introduction: Janice Helland (Queen’s University)

Stitches and Thread: Transcultural Exchange and Gendered Creation across Global Networks, c.1600s–1800s

Beverly Lemire (University of Alberta)

10:00–10:30  BREAK  (Ellis Lobby)

10:30–12:00  BLOCK A

STRAND 1: SUBJECTS AND THEIR OBJECTS (continued)  Mediated Subjects: Scrapbooks and Albums  (Ellis 324)

Chair: Rosaleen Hill (Queen’s University)

Photography as Gesture in Historical Family Albums
Andrea Kunard (National Gallery of Canada)

Expanding the Definition of Portraiture: Self-Representation in Leonora Clench’s Nineteenth-Century Album
Patricia Sheppard (Concordia University)

“A Valuable Book [to me]”: The Scrapbooks of Minnie McColeman as Archive and Labour
Laura Murray (Queen’s University) and Lisa Pietersma (Queen’s University)

STRAND 2: SELF AND COMMUNITY (continued)  Searching (for) the Self  (Ellis 327)

Chair: Anne Koval (Mount Allison University)

Katherine Jane Ellice: Interior Space as Psychological Tell
Janice Anderson (Concordia University)

Sister Marie Osithe’s Self-Portraiture
Carey Pallister (Sisters of St. Ann Archives)

Pegi Nicol, Modern Woman
Lora Senechal Carney (University of Toronto)
STRAND 4: SELF-PORTRAITS AND ART HISTORY  

Looking at Self-Portraiture: Method and History  (Ellis Auditorium)

Chair: Susan Surette (NSCAD University)

In Person: (Self) Portraiture as Social Exchange
Lara Perry (University of Brighton)

Making Space for Another Vera
Catherine MacKenzie (Concordia University)

To Find Ourselves?: Searching for Self-Portraiture by Women Artists in Québec Art History
Dominic Hardy (Université du Québec à Montréal)

12:00–1:00 TOURS (Meet in Ellis Lobby)

Queen’s University Archives
Master of Art Conservation Labs

1:00–2:00 LUNCH (On Your Own)

2:00–3:30 BLOCK B

STRAND 1: SUBJECTS AND THEIR OBJECTS (continued)  Portrait Objects I  (Ellis Auditorium)

Chair: Catherine MacKenzie (Concordia University)

Embroidered Samplers: Crafting Children
Janice Helland (Queen’s University)

Canadian Women China Painters: Artists and Amateurs
Rachel Gottlieb (Gardiner Museum)

You Are What You Craft: Food as Portraiture
Sandra Alfoldy (Nova Scotia College of Art and Design University)
STRAND 2: SELF AND COMMUNITY (continued)  Public Self-Presentation  (Ellis 324)

Chair: Steven McNeil (Queen’s University)

Self-Representation in the Academic Sphere: Women Artists as Teachers and Students at Mount Allison University 1854–1957
Gemey Kelly (Owens Art Gallery, Mount Allison University)

La galeriste elle-même : Agnès Lefort, autoreprésentations et discours de réception
Geneviève Lafleur (Université du Québec à Montréal)

Greta Dale's Clay Reliefs: The Min-Maxi Factor
Susan Surette (NSCAD University)

STRAND 4: SELF-PORTRAITS AND ART HISTORY  Artists, Historians and Archives  (Ellis 327)

Chair: Joan Schwartz (Queen’s University)

The Archival Fonds as Holographic Portrait
Heather Home (Queen’s University Archives)

Anna Dawson Harrington’s Drawings and Letters: Visual and Textual Elements of an Autobiography
Loren Lerner (Concordia University)

Frances Anne Hopkins: Self-Portraits
Mary Ellen Weller-Smith (Independent Scholar)

3:30–4:00  BREAK (Ellis Lobby)

4:00–5:30  BLOCK C

STRAND 1: SUBJECTS AND THEIR OBJECTS (continued)  Portrait Objects II  (Ellis 324)

Chair: Sarah Alford (Queen’s University)

“Remember Me When This You See”
Jennifer Salahub (Alberta College of Art and Design)

An Enigmatic Likeness: A Posy for Harriet Ford (1859–1938)
Julia McArthur (Independent Scholar) and Johanna Amos (Queen’s University)

Crossed Swords on Porcelain: Restoring and the Home, Re-Imagining the Woman
Julie Hollenbach (Queen’s University)
STRAND 2: SELF AND COMMUNITY (continued)  Portraitists and Self-Portraiture  (Ellis 327)

Chair: Pat Sullivan (Agnes Etherington Art Centre, Queen’s University)

Collaborative Portraits: Gertrude Des Clayes and Montreal’s Anglophone Elite Isabel Luce (Queen’s University)

Facing a Canadian Cultural Heritage: The Politics of Portraiture Jaclyn Meloche (Concordia University)

Myfanwy Pavelic: In the Portrait Painter’s Eyes Mary Jo Hughes (University of Victoria Art Collections)

STRAND FOUR: SELF-PORTRAITS AND ART HISTORY  Feeling the Chill: Self-Representing through Struggle in a Cold Academy  (Ellis Auditorium)

Chair: Erin Morton (University of New Brunswick)

PANEL: Feeling The Chill: Self-Representing Through Struggle in a Cold Academy Erin Morton (University of New Brunswick) Susan Cahill (University of Calgary) Kristy A. Holmes (Lakehead University)

5:30–5:45  Closing Thanks (Ellis Auditorium)

Janice Anderson (Canadian Women Artists History Initiative, Concordia University) Alicia Boutilier (Agnes Etherington Art Centre, Queen’s University)
ABSTRACTS

Adams, Annmarie (McGill University)
Maude Abbott Herself: Architecture as Self-Representation

Curator of the McGill University medical museum from 1898 to 1923, cardiologist Maude Abbott may seem like an unexpected research subject for an architectural historian. This paper explores the power of spaces in the writing of feminist biography to broaden our understanding of what “counts” as self-representation. Architecture should count: I envisage a new type of life-story that might better capture women's lives: architectural biography. I am inspired by Carolyn Heilbrun's thesis about the inappropriateness of traditional biography as a framework for women's lives, and by Dana Arnold’s call for an interrogation of the spatial boundaries that have worked to exclude women from accounts of experience. Arnold describes the biographical traces we all leave behind—belongings, spaces, texts—that contribute to our life stories. As a student, physician, researcher, teacher, and curator Abbott left many material traces, which comprise a non-traditional self-portrait.

Alfoldy, Sandra (Nova Scotia College of Art and Design University)
You Are What You Craft: Food as Portraiture

Today it is a high compliment when someone takes a photo of the food you have prepared and posts it on Instagram, Facebook, or Twitter. These “food selfies” or “food porn” images have flooded the internet, causing great consternation among professional chefs like Alexandre Gauthier, who complains: "I would like people to be living in the present. Tweet about the meal beforehand, tweet about it afterwards, but in between stop and eat. Sitting down for a meal should be an enjoyable moment shared with us, not with the social network." However, for domestic chefs these shared images are important. This paper argues that domestic food pictures are a kind of contemporary portraiture, and sometimes self-portraiture. Such images define the maker as having good taste and refined crafting skills, and carry on a long tradition of domestic improvement through food preparation and presentation.

Amos, Johanna (Queen’s University) and Julia McArthur (Independent Scholar)
An Enigmatic Likeness: A Posy for Harriet Ford (1859–1938)

This paper considers a gold ring by Harriet Ford as an indirect self-portrait. Handmade and set with nacre and pink polymer, Ford's ring alludes to her status as a professional female artist, yet in its use of unconventional materials also subtly references her avant-garde artistic practices. The ring's interior provides a more private portrait of the artist. Inscribed with the sixteenth-century motto “Noe hap so hard as love debarr’d,” the band also offers insight into Ford's romantic life, particularly her relationship to the English artist Edith Hayes. Exploring the materials and qualities of this ring, this paper will reveal the complexities of Ford's identity both as a female professional and private individual. More broadly, we ask whether such objects enlarge our notion of the self-portrait, providing us with a more intimate category of self-representation.
Anderson, Janice (Concordia University)
Katherine Jane Ellice: Interior Space as Psychological Tell

In 1838 Katherine Jane Ellice (1814–1864) traveled to Canada with her husband and visited the seigneury owned by her father-in-law at Beauharnois, near Montreal. During the visit, patriot rebels seeking political, economic and social reform attacked the seigneury and held Ellice captive for a period of six days. In her diary recording the event, Ellice underplays the fear she must certainly have felt. Indeed, throughout the document she makes little mention of, for example, the discomforts of the journey to Canada or any of the anxiety that she must have experienced while journeying through the new land. Her only consistent complaint is of mosquitoes. In this paper I will consider a series of watercolour interiors by Ellice, arguing that although her words themselves seldom betrayed her emotions, we might read the paintings as psychological self-portraits, although she has not necessarily pictured herself in them. Often subtly awkward and oddly framed, the interiors suggest an inner conflict and irresolution that can be read perhaps more clearly in some ways on the painted surfaces than in her diary entries. The images become, in Frances Borzello’s words “absent self-portraits.”

Beavis, Lori (Concordia University)
A Conscious Act: Pauline Johnson, Esther White Deer and Self-Representation

This paper will examine the promotional images of poet and professional orator Pauline “Tekahionwake” Johnson (Mohawk, 1861–1913) and acclaimed vaudevillian Esther “Princess White Deer” Deer (Mohawk, c.1891–1992) as a way to open a discussion on what counts as self-representation and the limits of self-portraiture. As Sherry Farrell-Racette has noted, self-portraiture is a Western concept that makes self-portraits by First Nations’ women prior to 1967 difficult to address. I will argue, however, that Johnson and Deer constructed their images to actively negotiate "Indianness" and modernity through self-directed agency. Johnson and Deer were stage artists who mediated the entertainment world on a micro-level but situated themselves as Native spokespersons and therefore staged resistance as they played with and then shattered early twentieth-century notions of the Native woman. I argue that this opened the door for Indigenous women’s art practices in the later twentieth century.

Binkley, Lisa (Queen’s University)
The Needle as Brush: Recouping Anne Little Bell

A study of the so-called Fallowfield Quilt reveals how the quilt’s maker, Anne Little Bell, used needlework as a vehicle to construct alternate discourses of power, much like a self-portrait. Bell’s skilled needlework on the Fallowfield Quilt serves as symbol of her femininity and her experiences as an immigrant woman in the rugged environment of early Canada West. The colourful collection of intricately embroidered botanical sprays on a background of homespun linen allude to the maker's social position in early Irish society before immigration, while the assembly of linen patchwork points to the pressures of daily life following her arrival in the rugged settlement of the Ottawa Valley. This paper argues that Bell used her needlework skills and the object itself to communicate her role as a woman claiming her own interior space in the rugged and masculine environment of her new home.
Boutilier, Alicia (Agnes Etherington Art Centre, Queen’s University)
PLENARY PANEL: From Curatorial Eyes: Exhibiting and Collecting Canadian Women Artists, Then and Now

When *From Women’s Eyes: Women Painters in Canada* opened at the Agnes Etherington Art Centre in 1975 (International Women’s Year), it was the first exhibition to present not only a history, but also a feminist history, of women’s art production in Canada. Curators Dorothy Farr and Natalie Luckyj brought together eighty-two works from public and private collections across the country and, in the catalogue, investigated the gender-based context of their making. It was just four years after Linda Nochlin had published “Why Have There Been No Great Women Artists?” Now, on the fortieth anniversary of From Women’s Eyes, this panel reflects on its legacy by examining curatorial work—then and now—involving the exhibition and collection of Canadian women artists. This plenary panel will be open to conference delegates and the public and will be followed by the launch of exhibitions *The Artist Herself: Self-Portraits by Canadian Historical Women Artists* and *Deirdre Logue and Allyson Mitchell: I Am Not Myself At All*.

Bruce, Tobi (Art Gallery of Hamilton)
PLENARY PANEL: From Curatorial Eyes: Exhibiting and Collecting Canadian Women Artists, Then and Now
(See Boutilier)

Burton, Samantha (University of Southern California)
A Short Pause: Self-Portraiture, Illustration, and Marginality in Emily Carr’s Early Work

This paper examines Emily Carr’s use of illustration as a means of self-portraiture in the early years of her career. Focusing on a small number of illustrated books produced in the years 1900–1910 and largely untouched in the large body of Carr scholarship, the paper looks at the ways in which the artist employed illustration, a marginal medium, to negotiate her own marginal identity in what is now seen as a marginal time in her career. Dealing variously with her position as a foreigner in Britain, a student among wealthy colleagues, a woman traveling, and a patient in a sanatorium, the books each present a series of simple, frequently humorous drawings augmented by poems, diary entries, and other written reflections. I argue that the serial and collective nature of the images constitutes a particularly effective form of self-portraiture for an artist negotiating her de-centred and changing position in the world.

Butler-Palmer, Carolyn (University of Victoria)
Ellen Neel’s Totemland in the Era of Do-It-Yourself-Culture

Ellen Neel (Kwakwaka’wakw, 1916-1966) is often considered to be the first woman carver in the Pacific Northwest. Trained in Alert Bay by her grandfather Charlie James (c.1867-1938), Neel moved to Vancouver in 1948 where she founded a carving studio and retail store known as the Totemland Studio. Neel routinely captured the attention of newspapers and magazines both in Canada and internationally. In media images she often appeared carving alongside family members, making public presentations of artwork to political and artistic dignitaries, or displaying a recently completed miniature pole. Although these photographs promoted her business, situating these news images in conjunction with period debates about family law, do-it-yourself ethics, and the concept of place allows for a more nuanced reading of how Neel negotiated her experience of dispossession, as well as the reassertion of her Kwakwaka’wakw identity, during post-war era Vancouver.
Cahill, Susan (University of Calgary)
PANEL: Feeling The Chill: Self-Representing Through Struggle in a Cold Academy  (See Morton)

Clintberg, Mark (Concordia University)
Passion Over Reason: Joyce Wieland, Margaret Trudeau, and Fogo Island

This paper explores the theme of self-portraiture by looking at women’s affective interventions into masculine political discourse. In particular, it explores the legacy of Joyce Wieland’s Reason Over Passion (1968) and La raison avant la passion (1968)—two quilted wall hangings that use the intimate associations of the quilting medium to subtly shift the words of former Canadian Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau. The Trudeau family owns the French version of the piece, and according to Margaret Trudeau, during a marital argument she tore the letters off Wieland’s piece and threw them down the stairs “to put passion before reason just this once.” My discussion revisits these two moments when women have intervened in a man’s political slogan. A recent quilt project made with a group of sixteen quilters on Fogo Island continues the trajectory of these interventions by reordering P.E. Trudeau’s political phrase.

Close, Susan (University of Manitoba)
Made in Canada: Self-Representation in Women’s Early Camera Work in Canada

Long before the age of the “selfie” Canadian women photographers understood the power of self-representation and turned their lenses on themselves. In this paper, I consider how these self-portraits allowed their makers to construct identity and position themselves within Canadian society. Analyzing a selection of self-portraits made by amateurs such as Annie McDougall and Mattie Gunterman, as well as professionals including Hannah Maynard, Edith S. Watson, and Geraldine Moodie, my discussion employs concepts of narrative and performance to consider how these women photographically imaged themselves. Photographic technologies did not merely allow them to reproduce themselves visually; instead, photography offered a comparatively accessible means of reconfiguring the self despite constraining influences such as patriarchal expectations and discourses. Indeed photographic self-portraiture was a diverse practice: some women used it to position themselves professionally, others to make contact with their communities and articulate aspects of their identities beyond quotidian domestic routine.

Cronin, Keri (Brock University)
Speaking Across Species Lines, or When Is a Self-Portrait Not a Self-Portrait?

This paper situates questions of self-representation alongside post-humanist inquiries through an exploration of two illustrated books published in the nineteenth century by Canadian women. Margaret Saunders’s Beautiful Joe (1893) and Annie Savigny’s Lion, the Mastiff: From Life (1895) are both written from the perspective of a dog, and represent the “animal autobiography” genre. These books were part of the burgeoning animal welfare movement in the late nineteenth century as their authors attempted to prevent cruelty to animals by fostering empathic connections between readers and the central protagonists of the story. Both include photographic portraits of the canine “authors.” These images—described as “taken from life”—emphasize the tension between “fact” and “fiction” in animal autobiographies. The books, particularly their illustrations, trouble assumptions about agency on the part of nonhuman animals while at the same time raise questions about categories of “self” and “other” in the context of nineteenth-century animal advocacy in Canada.
de Stecher, Annette (Université Laval)
Representation of Self and Community: The Ceremonial Headdress of Caroline Gros-Louis

The moosehair-embroidered feather headdress (before 1911) created by Wendat artist Caroline Gros-Louis, part of the formal regalia she wore in public ceremonial events, represents the personal, political, and social roles that contributed to her identity as a Wendat woman in the early twentieth century. Her headdress reflects not only her expertise and traditional knowledge but also the meaning acquired through the ceremonial performances in which she wore it. It embodies who she was, how she lived, and how she saw her role as a woman in Wendat society, close to the centre of colonial government in Quebec, amid assimilationist tensions, Western understandings of women's position and Western understandings of Indigenous women. Considering the marginalization of historical Indigenous women artists until recent decades, the recognition of this headdress as a form of self-portrait represents the inclusion of what is artistically, socially, and spiritually significant in Indigenous—specifically Wendat—women's terms.

Dowdell, Carolyn (Queen's University)
“Her love of fine clothes”: Self-Representation and the Fashions of Agnes Etherington

Agnes Etherington (1880–1955) is best remembered at Queen's University and by the city of Kingston for her passionate patronage of art. However, among family and friends she was also known for her passion for fine clothing. As a member of the locally prominent Richardson family, Etherington was part of Kingston's social elite. She also actively participated in women's organizations both locally and at the national level, and tirelessly supported arts programming at Queen's. Given the many social and philanthropic obligations that followed from these responsibilities, Etherington must have felt significant concern for her sartorial self-representation. A selection of ensembles from Etherington's personal wardrobe is housed at the Agnes Etherington Art Centre; examination of these items allows a personal, even intimate, glimpse of a passionate and dedicated woman, vital to her community. The diversity of the pieces contextualizes Etherington's life and paints a portrait of a vibrant and creative woman.

Farr, Dorothy (Independent Scholar)
PLENARY PANEL: From Curatorial Eyes: Exhibiting and Collecting Canadian Women Artists, Then and Now (See Boutilier)

Farrell Racette, Sherry (University of Manitoba)
Nehiyawak Dolls as Self-Representation and Embodied History

This paper explores how a genre-based approach to art history has wittingly or unwittingly marginalized or excluded Indigenous women. Self-portraiture is tightly bound to Western intellectual traditions and notions that make it difficult to find entry points for the inclusion of Indigenous women working before 1960. Two late eighteenth-century Nehiyawak dolls, for example, might be considered a form of self-representation, but they are most important as holders and carriers of memory and knowledge. Most likely created on the western shores of Hudson Bay, these tiny dolls, dressed in elegant hide and porcupine quill embroidered outfits, embody a moment when Nehiyawak women and their daughters were essential to fur trade economies and community life, and they document the skills, materials and techniques of a rich artistic repertoire.
Furness, Amy (Art Gallery of Ontario)
The Artist in Her Studio, across Time, beyond Place

“The studio has of course always been as much an ideological construct as a physical location, the image or description of the studio always an active reflection of the artist's self-image, whether substantial or mythical.”

Contemporary art theory has problematized the concept of the artist’s studio, and simultaneously opened it up for consideration as a form of self-representation. When the studio is conceived of as a virtual space of creation, the locus of the unfinished or potential work of art, it can be seen to extend well beyond its physical manifestation in space and time. This paper will examine the studios of selected Canadian historical women artists in this light, finding their vestiges in our contemporary institutions of art. In particular, the “studio” of sculptors Frances Loring (1887–1968) and Florence Wyle (1881–1968) and its traces at the Art Gallery of Ontario will be explored.

Gotlieb, Rachel (Gardiner Museum)
Canadian Women China Painters: Artists and Amateurs

From the turn of the century to the First World War many Canadian women enjoyed the fashion of china painting, yet scholars have neglected this phenomenon. This paper looks at three examples of china painting recently acquired by the Gardiner Museum: a dish with dogwood flowers (1891) by Mary Ella Dignam (1857–1930), founder and first President of the Women’s Arts Association (WAAC); an art nouveau pitcher (1909) by Florence McGillivray (1864–1938), a member of WAAC who studied at OCA and taught at Ontario Ladies College; and a Crane Vase (1912) by A.E. Kearney, whose biography is unknown. I ask how Canadian women of this era expressed themselves through porcelain painting. How did a “hobby for amateurs” become a tool of artistic self-expression and possibly financial independence? And, most importantly, how might these works be read as portraits of “ideal femininity,” that is, as “stand-ins” for the perfect wife and mother?

Hardy, Dominic (Université du Québec à Montréal)
To Find Ourselves?: Searching for Self-Portraiture by Women Artists in Québec Art History

This investigation that draws on the work of the Équipe de recherche en histoire de l’art au Québec, an interuniversity research group founded in 2012. The paper will present a historiographical overview of the studies (monographs, exhibition catalogues, journal articles, masters and doctoral theses and archival sources) that might allow us to form an idea of the role accorded in Québec art history to the practice of self-portraiture by women artists working in the colonial and post-confederation periods. The task of winnowing out the historiographical representation of that practice is likely to be as challenging as that of delimiting the temporal, territorial, identity and linguistic parameters of what is imagined as a “Québec art history”; the challenge is the measure of a corresponding necessity, since it is the very visibility of the practice in the historiographical record that will be in question.
Helland, Janice (Queen’s University)  
Embroidered Samplers: Crafting Children

When nine-year-old Elizabeth Jane Turner completed her embroidered sampler in New Brunswick in 1834, she participated in a European tradition at least 400 years old and introduced to Canada by immigrants probably in the eighteenth century. The sampler was a catalogue of different stitches regularly used by embroiderers when hand-stitching was a required practical skill; by the nineteenth century, and while young women still relied on pattern books, a tendency toward more originality in design and unique combinations of stitches could be found on what remained a relatively standardised format—letters and numerals, text that was often religious and personal self-representational devices from everyday life such as a house, flowers, trees. Turner’s sampler is one of hundreds that can be collected and discuss them as hand-crafted objects that represent the self and the material culture of childhood.

Hollenbach, Julie (Queen’s University)  
Crossed Swords on Porcelain: Restoring and the Home, Re-Imagining the Woman

In 1965, Betty Tierney, the great-granddaughter of the cattle ranching tycoon Cornelius O’Keefe and his wife Mary Ann O’Keefe, purchased at auction a mid-nineteenth century Saxon Meissen porcelain table service to be displayed in the dining room of what would become the Historic O’Keefe Ranch, built in 1892, and now a British Columbia heritage site. Tierney was restoring the main house and augmenting the collection of original furnishings and decorations assembled by her great-grandmother in order to open the house to the public. Mary Ann O’Keefe, was known for taking as her special duty the creation of a home that reflected the civility, comfort and leisure associated with correct bourgeois Victorian domesticity, despite being located on the fringe of the western colonial frontier. This paper suggests that these two women created, asserted and imagined their specific identities within disparate shifting socio-cultural frameworks through the accumulation of domestic objects for display.

Holmes, Kristy A. (Lakehead University)  
PANEL: Feeling The Chill: Self-Representing Through Struggle in a Cold Academy (See Morton)

Home, Heather (Queen’s University Archives)  
The Archival Fonds as Holographic Portrait

In this presentation I will explore the value of the archival fonds in considering the question posed in the call for papers: “What counts as self-representation?” Using examples from the personal archives of select Canadian women artists such as Isabel McLaughlin (1903–2002), I will articulate how archival fonds can unveil a multitude of selves—interpreted, projected, internalized, reflected, or perceived. Referencing particular document types such as diaries and letters, and examining the notion of the “organic whole” of the fonds, I will propose that within the fonds lies the opportunity of discovering a holographic portrait: approachable from many angles, not privileging one particular approach, not merely reflecting but also refracting and diffracting.
Hughes, Mary Jo (University of Victoria Art Collections)
Myfanwy Pavelic: In the Portrait Painter's Eyes

Myfanwy Spencer Pavelic (1916–2007), one of Canada's foremost portrait painters, had official commissions that included world-famous figures such as Ravi Shankar, Yehudi Menuhin, and Pierre Trudeau. In other portraits she explored the inner life and deep relationships of her artist friends and family. Perhaps most striking are the numerous self-portraits produced over Pavelic's career. They track her deep, personal yearning to establish an individual identity separate from the preconceptions of others. Indeed one of her biggest challenges was overcoming the assumptions related to her lineage within one of British Columbia's most affluent families. Her self-portraits reveal her frustrations with physical impediments and the strains and stigma of raising a developmentally challenged daughter. This paper will examine the self- and group portraits in which Pavelic placed herself, as well as object and room studies that reveal something of her deep and solitary search for identity.

Jansma, Linda (The Robert McLaughlin Gallery)
PLENARY PANEL: From Curatorial Eyes: Exhibiting and Collecting Canadian Women Artists, Then and Now (See Boutilier)

Johnson, Adrienne (Concordia University)
Invisible Images: African Canadian Women in Canadian Art

This paper discusses nineteenth- and twentieth-century paintings by African Canadian women, focusing on Edith Hester McDonald (c.1850–1950), Africville, Halifax N.S.) and Artis Lane (b. 1927), to question the limits of early Canadian and feminist art histories of this period, as embodied by publications such as the Agnes Etherington Art Centre's exhibition catalogue From Women's Eyes: Women Painters in Canada (1975). McDonald's and Lane's paintings—landscapes and self-portraiture—challenge historical stereotypical representations of Black diasporic women as mammies, buffoons and/or grotesques, insidious representations crafted by hegemonic Eurocentric colonizers to justify their participation in the globalized economy of the African slave trade. Instead, through critical postcolonial analysis of select extant paintings, this paper suggests that McDonald's and Lane's cultural productions may be read as poignant reflections of Canada's colonial past and the invisibility of Black women artists in early Canadian art history.

Kelly, Gemey (Owens Art Gallery, Mount Allison University)
Self-Representation in the Academic Sphere: Women Artists as Teachers and Students at Mount Allison University 1854–1957

How have women who teach and study art represented themselves within the Academy? What forms has self-representation taken in the context of teaching and learning? I will consider the artistic productions of women artists at Mount Allison University as acts of creative self-expression and signifiers of artistic skill and proficiency in these roles within a male-dominated pedagogical context. Research will also include photographic portraits of these teachers and students from University Yearbooks, at graduation, and at work and play, proposing that such presentations of oneself to others also count as important acts of self-representation. Included in this discussion are the artists Ethel Ogden, Christian McKiel, and Elizabeth McLeod, who taught at Mount Allison University from the late nineteenth century on, and the Fine Art Department archive of student self-portraits from the 1940s to the 1960s.
Koval, Anne (Mount Allison University)
Mary Pratt: Still Life as Self-Portraiture

Mary Pratt, known for her still-life painting, has rarely painted self-portraits. However, on closer viewing, the surface of her still-life painting is often reflective, arguably self-reflexive—an aspect of self-portraiture that has been overlooked in her work. By “looking at the overlooked,” I will be using a methodology that includes a close reading of Pratt's journals, housed in Mount Allison University Archives. Pratt willingly admits: “Perhaps the only place I can be what I want to be is in my journals and my letters.” This reveals a less conventional self-representation of Pratt, and is telling of her identity as a woman artist in Canada. The retrospective Mary Pratt, currently on national tour, is a timely acknowledgement of the artist; this paper addresses the critical need to position her work within the wider context of still life painting, self-portraiture, and feminist art history.

Kunard, Andrea (National Gallery of Canada)
Photography as Gesture in Historical Family Albums

This paper will examine nineteenth-century photographic albums through the recent insights of David Green, Joanna Lowry, Geoffrey Batchen and Margaret Olin who, via Charles Sanders Peirce, evoke photography's “performative index.” The “performative index” emphasizes photography not simply as an image or document of an event, but an event in its own right. The photograph, inscribed as gesture, prompts movement outward, demanding to be held, exchanged, and manipulated. Within albums and personal displays of remembrance, it entangles the subjectivities of those it encounters. Set in motion through interpersonal relationships and consumer economies (tourism, celebrity), the photograph creates imagined communities of shared experience. Albums, often a product of women's domestic labour, demonstrate how photographs actively create communities. A portrait of its assembler's desires, the album retains not simply images, but traces of events initiated by the photographic act, revealing rich relations between photographs and users.

Lafleur, Geneviève (Université du Québec à Montréal)
La galeriste elle-même : Agnès Lefort, autoreprésentations et discours de réception

Agnès Lefort (1891-1973), artiste peintre, mais également galeriste, elle aurait été la première au Québec à s'intéresser principalement à l'avant-garde et aux artistes canadiens vivants, à une époque où le public est généralement encore réfractaire aux esthétiques modernes. Bien que Lefort ait une production artistique reconnue et significative, il sera plutôt question, dans cette communication, d'une conception davantage élargie de la notion d'autoreprésentation. Nous proposons de nous intéresser aux autoreprésentations que Lefort produit et diffuse dans les médias afin de défendre la production artistique qu'elle expose et justifier son rôle de galeriste d'avant-garde durant la décennie 1950. Nous constaterons que ses interventions (articles publiés, entretiens accordés à la presse écrite ou radiophonique, photographies, etc.) témoignent d'un désir de situer son action dans la sphère domestique et dans la poursuite des rôles traditionnels féminins de l'époque, plutôt que de l'inscrire en tant qu'innovation, modernité ou prise de risque.
Larocque, Peter (New Brunswick Museum)
Faces in the Fabric?: Self-Portraiture and Women's Textiles

Not all creative productions are intended to be self-representation yet all artifacts provide some access to the identity of their creator. As tangible manifestations of a particular combination of knowledge, ideas, and abilities those artifacts can be seen as self-portraits. In addition to the traditional examples of painting, sculpture, and photography, museum collections contain myriad examples of other artworks produced by, and closely associated with, women, such as decorative needlework, household textiles, and fashion costumes. These artifacts required a specific set of skills and reflect particular decisions, from which we might begin to imagine a portrait of their makers. This paper will explore how certain textiles in the New Brunswick Museum collection might be viewed as agents in how women may have chosen to represent themselves, while also taking into consideration why our current interpretation might be the imposition of an "idealized" identity rather than a truly accurate portrayal.

Lemire, Beverly (University of Alberta)
KEYNOTE: Stitches and Thread: Transcultural Exchange and Gendered Creation across Global Networks, c.1600s–1800s

Mary Margaret, Countess of Wilton, might feel satisfaction if she saw the esteem accorded women's needlework in the twenty-first century. In the 1840s she decried the “false prestige” accorded “the scathing and destroying sword ... without limit and without end!” while at the same time “the NEEDLE and its beautiful and useful creations hitherto remained without their due meed of praise and record.” Wilton championed the needle as a tool of female self-expression. Needlework also offers evidence of transcultural exchange, as trade, colonial and imperial projects refashioned material culture among many ethnicities and ranks in the early global period. By the 1840s cross-cultural influences infused the needlework Wilton so revered. The preceding centuries saw diffusion of complex Asian designs through European mediators, colonial and indigenous translators, in cycles of exchange shaped by needle-workers in many locales. This process also generated a shared aesthetic vocabulary, a by-product of the early-globalized era.

Lerner, Loren (Concordia University)
Anna Dawson Harrington’s Drawings and Letters: Visual and Textual Elements of an Autobiography

In biographies Anna Dawson Harrington (1851–1917) is portrayed variously as the eldest daughter of John William Dawson, geologist and first principal of McGill University, the wife of Bernard James Harrington, McGill professor in mining and chemistry, the sister of John Mercer Dawson, scientist and surveyor, and the mother of Lois Winslow-Spragge, first art teacher at Miss Edgar's and Miss Cramp’s School for Girls. This presentation aims to discover Anna Dawson herself from her autobiographical evidence. One source is visual, the large corpus of watercolour drawings at the McCord Museum. The second is textual, the many letters in the McGill Archives that Anna wrote to her husband, brothers and children. Theoretical approaches that guide this study include Linda H. Peterson's analysis of the domestic memoir and family history, and feminist ideas about individual autonomy that consider how relations with others contribute to self-concept.
Luce, Isabel (Queen's University)
Collaborative Portraits: Gertrude Des Clayes and Montreal’s Anglophone Elite

In 1912 Scottish-born Gertrude Des Clayes moved to Montreal where, over the next twenty years, she would paint portraits of members of Montreal's elite. Many represent prominent, white Anglophone women. These sitters have been primarily referred to in histories as wives and daughters; their roles as patrons and curators have been largely ignored. Likewise Des Clayes’ artistic career has been overlooked by Canadian art history texts despite her oeuvre being well represented in art institutions across Canada. I will discuss Des Clayes’ pastel self-portrait in relation to her portraits in order to examine both her erasure from the Canadian art canon and her sitters' roles as engaged, political members of society. By examining the collaborative nature of portrait making I will draw attention to the agency of the sitters, and explore how these works show the place of women as one that extends beyond “wives, daughters and heiresses.”

MacKenzie, Catherine (Concordia University)
Making Space for Another Vera

Portraits of Vera Weatherbie, as constructed by at least three artists, have been seen by millions of Canadians since 1930. The portraits made of her by Frederick Varley, the most well-known one of which now hangs in the National Gallery of Canada, have been canonized by art historians, and characterized as displaying “an intensity unrivalled in Canadian art.” While there have been references to Weatherbie’s own status as professional artist, someone who was more than “muse,” lover and wife, they have not pushed very far into the realm of her own visual production, which included self-portraiture. This presentation takes seriously the notion that there may still be a need to focus on the more traditionally understood act of “self-portraiture” in women’s art, in this case as a charged entrée into a strong, interesting body of work sidelined by familiar dynamics which have not yet run their course in the discipline of art history.

McArthur, Julia (Independent Scholar) and Johanna Amos (Queen’s University)
An Enigmatic Likeness: A Posy for Harriet Ford (1859–1938)

This paper considers a gold ring by Harriet Ford as an indirect self-portrait. Handmade and set with nacre and pink polymer, Ford’s ring alludes to her status as a professional female artist, yet in its use of unconventional materials also subtly references her avant-garde artistic practices. The ring’s interior provides a more private portrait of the artist. Inscribed with the sixteenth-century motto “Noe hap so hard as love debarrd,” the band also offers insight into Ford’s romantic life, particularly her relationship to the English artist Edith Hayes. Exploring the materials and qualities of this ring, this paper will reveal the complexities of Ford’s identity both as a female professional and private individual. More broadly, we ask whether such objects enlarge our notion of the self-portrait, providing us with a more intimate category of self-representation.
McManus, Karla (Concordia University)
Images from the Frontier: Lorene Squire, Photography, and the Canadian Wilderness

American wildlife photographer Lorene Squire longed to see the North, where the wildfowl of her birthplace (Kansas) spent their summers. Beginning in 1937, Squire made a series of trips into the Canadian wilderness, photographing and later publishing the results in several prominent magazines, including the Hudson’s Bay Company’s The Beaver. The photographs she took in the Canadian North before her untimely death at thirty-two in 1942, included more than just pictures of sea birds and ducks: amongst the negatives and prints in the Manitoba Archives HBC collection are a select few images of the photographer herself. These images of a young, modern, professional woman posing with her Brownie camera, leaning on the rail of a ship, standing amongst the marsh reeds of northern Quebec, and posed alongside a prop-engine bush plane, present a carefully constructed “self-portrait” of an independent artist who created images from the frontier of women’s production.

Meloche, Jaclyn (Concordia University)
Facing a Canadian Cultural Heritage: The Politics of Portraiture

This paper considers Alma Duncan as a powerful feminist voice who materialized Canadian visual culture on paper, canvas and in film. During the 1940s and 1950s, Duncan was an unofficial Canadian War Artist, film animator at the National Film Board of Canada and visual artist who captured the faces that narrate our country's cultural heritage in portraits of Audrey (Babs) McLaren, P.K. Page, Norman McLaren, several self-portraits and many miniature masks. Drawing from Mikhail Bakhtin's theory that performative exchange between characters creates meaning, I interpret Duncan's portraits as a dialogical collectivity that shapes a post-war national identity. This study reclaims Alma Duncan's painted figures and painted self within a single critical space where they become a conceptual performative archive for the feminist and sociopolitical body.

Morton, Erin (University of New Brunswick)
PANEL: Feeling The Chill: Self-Representing Through Struggle in a Cold Academy

It has been over ten years since the publication of Women in the Canadian Academic Tundra: Challenging the Chill (MQUP 2002) and twenty since the release of Breaking Anonymity: The Chilly Climate for Women Faculty (WLU Press 1995). These two books have been instrumental in helping women in Canadian academe traverse its chilly climate. This roundtable will bring these strategies for warming up the chill into the present. We will lead an interactive audience discussion on strategies for women academics self-representing through their struggles. We are particularly interested in having a conversation about how a gendered position in academe intersects with such everyday discriminations as sexism, racism, homo- and trans-phobia, parenthood, labour, health, and happiness. These discussions will be driven largely by audience participation, before and during the panel. A call for questions amongst delegates will be circulated in advance in order to help discussants shape the particulars of the conversation.
Murray, Laura (Queen’s University) and Lisa Pietersma (Queen’s University)
“A Valuable Book [to me]”: The Scrapbooks of Minnie McColeman as Archive and Labour

Minnie McColeman (1880–1969) lived in the vicinity of Collingwood, Ontario all her life. Around the time of her children’s marriages and her husband’s death, she began an ambitious project of making scrapbooks, which she continued until her death. Over twenty of them survive. Viewed as self-portraiture, the materiality of these books is as significant as their content. The string bindings, paper and cloth adhesive, mending, layered annotations, and inadvertent or intentional repetitions in the books can be seen as an archive of Minnie’s labour. Moreover the curation, assembly, and use of these books indicate that popular knowledge, family history, political events, and literature were contiguous elements that informed her work. Understanding reading and interpretation as performative acts, we explore the thickness of self in these scrapbooks—building Minnie’s labour into an ever wider portrait of the woman and her world.

Paquette, Michelle (Université du Québec à Montréal)
L’Autre comme autoportrait : les représentations canadiennes-françaises de Kateri Tekakwitha


Pallister, Carey (Sisters of St. Ann Archives)
Sister Marie Osithe’s Self-Portraiture

The topic of art by Canadian Women Religious has largely been overlooked by academics. In part this is because religious artists have customarily worked anonymously, striving for humility, repressing the sin of Pride, and simultaneously believing that talent was a gift from God. Sister Marie Osithe (Elizabeth Laboissiere), one of the preeminent artists of the Congregation of the Sisters of St. Ann, was an architect, painter, and photographer. I will present two of her works, arguing that they evince a tension in art by religious women: the struggle to honour God-given talent while remaining humble. A farewell scene painted in October 1934 is not only a self-portrait but a portrait of her whole community; a hand-tinted photograph of Sister Marie Osithe is, I believe, a self-portrait disguised as a casual snapshot. Both works reveal Sister Marie’s attempt to express personality without succumbing to egotism.
Perry, Lara (University of Brighton)

In Person: (Self) Portraiture as Social Exchange

A portrait is an index of its sitter, and also of its maker, and in the case of a self-portrait, it is a complex realization of both simultaneously. The ways that women artists visualize their own status as artists has proved rich territory for contemplating the gendered character of artistic creativity. What is the significance for that enterprise of the shift in emphasis from studying portraiture from the content of the image, to the exploration of the life of the object itself? Authors such as Gillian Rose have presented a 'self' which is constituted not through the portrait image, but through the relationship that is facilitated by the portrait image. Is a social network a kind of self-portrait? How have women artists used portraiture of themselves and of their friends to establish a creative identity for themselves? These questions will be considered of Vancouver portraitist and medical artist Nan Lawson Cheney (1897–1985).

Pietersma, Lisa (Queen’s University) and Laura Murray (Queen’s University)

“A Valuable Book. [to me]”: The Scrapbooks of Minnie McColeman as Archive and Labour

Minnie McColeman (1880–1969) lived in the vicinity of Collingwood, Ontario all her life. Around the time of her children’s marriages and her husband’s death, she began an ambitious project of making scrapbooks, which she continued until her death. Over twenty of them survive. Viewed as self-portraiture, the materiality of these books is as significant as their content. The string bindings, paper and cloth adhesive, mending, layered annotations, and inadvertent or intentional repetitions in the books can be seen as an archive of Minnie’s labour. Moreover the curation, assembly, and use of these books indicate that popular knowledge, family history, political events, and literature were contiguous elements that informed her work. Understanding reading and interpretation as performative acts, we explore the thickness of self in these scrapbooks—building Minnie’s labour into an ever wider portrait of the woman and her world.

Salahub, Jennifer (Alberta College of Art and Design)

“Remember Me When This You See”

In 1831, a young woman meticulously wrought an embroidered text on a small circle of bound silk. Using hair, she stitched a poignant verse that begins “Remember Me, When This You See.” During the nineteenth century any lady wanting to be recognized or remembered was likely to dismiss the traditional self-portrait as “vainglorious” and would have turned instead to the more meaningful materials in her workbasket for inspiration. Unlike Proust’s madeleines that evoked involuntary memories, the objects that are the focus of this paper were specifically created to evoke “voluntary memories” of the maker. Looking at several historic examples, including a crazy quilt of 1884, I will show that fashionable domestic needlework provides not only meaningful insights into the ongoing attitudes and mores of the period but, in selected cases, creates autobiographical documents that may be interpreted as meaningful self-portraits by Canadian women.
Senechal Carney, Lora (University of Toronto)
Pegi Nicol, Modern Woman

“She entered a room like a self-portrait,” wrote the poet Frank Scott of the painter Pegi Nicol (1904–1949). Friends and acquaintances of Pegi Nicol spoke often of her uniquely vibrant presence, her distinct way of bringing life to any atmosphere. But her own self-portraits reveal none of this, and seem instead to be constituted in terms of a search for selfhood. Nicol’s biographer Laura Brandon sees certain kinds of symbolism in them, symbolism that reflects Nicol’s intense emotional adventures. Using Brandon’s work as a starting point, I study these enigmatic self-portraits, particularly in relation to other Pegi Nicol paintings that I see as more or less their inverse, but also in order to see how Nicol situates herself in relation to the social, and in relation to recent ideas concerning the modern self-portrait.

Sheppard, Patricia (Concordia University)
Expanding the Definition of Portraiture: Self-Representation in Leonora Clench’s Nineteenth-Century Album

I am studying a friendship album by Leonora Clench (1867–1938), compiled between 1881 and 1889. It contains a variety of material: handwritten verses, sketches, drawings, extracts from musical scores, and caricatures. I will analyze its contents as a mode of self-representation and consider it in relation to photographic portraits taken of Clench during this same period. Clench was a musical prodigy, and compiled her album while studying with the best violinists of the era at the Loretto Convent in Hamilton in 1882, and at the Royal Conservatory at Leipzig in 1884. Such albums were indicators of their owner’s priorities, communities and affiliations. They memorialized moments in time. Their compilers, by virtue of whom they invited to contribute, constructed an identity, a process that can be read as a mode of self-representation.

Silver, Erin (University of Guelph)
PANEL: Feeling The Chill: Self-Representing Through Struggle in a Cold Academy  (See Morton)

Sinclair, Catherine (Ottawa Art Gallery)
Circling the Essential: Alma Duncan’s Women Series (1964–1967)

This paper considers a unique series of abstract drawings by Ottawa-based artist Alma Duncan (1917–2004) entitled Women Series (1964–1967). Potent in their simplicity, they are executed with black conté on white paper and exhibit geometrical anthropomorphic forms that hover between realism and abstraction. By 1964 Duncan had been drawing the human form in figure studies, portraits, and self-portraits for more than twenty-five years. Yet this series represents her first attempt to conceptualize the body, and more specifically, the female body. Despite Duncan’s lack of an explicitly feminist goal, the Women Series is situated within second-wave feminism and represents a contribution to feminist visual culture. The drawings expand on the self-representation found in her earlier self-portraits to explore her place within a more universal examination of the domestic, sexual and political roles that stereotyped women in the professional sphere.
Skelly, Julia (Concordia University)
“Oh Doctor, is it alright if I keep on my bracelet?”: Probing Prudence Heward's Epistolary Self-Portrait

Scholars tend to see the characteristics of Canadian artist Prudence Heward herself in her many representations of women. These female subjects are often described as strong and independent, and scholars want to identify these characteristics with Heward, who did not paint any formal self-portraits. She did, however, draw a naked self-portrait in a letter to her friend Isabel McLaughlin, which is now in the archives at Queen's University. In the 1944 letter Heward recalls how, when her doctor told her to disrobe, she asked “is it alright if I keep on my bracelet?” The humorous sketch represents Heward covering her breasts with her arm and wearing only a bracelet. This paper will consider Heward's epistolary self-portrait in terms of female friendship, intimacy and discourses related to the naked and nude female in late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century modernist art.

Skidmore, Colleen (University of Alberta)
Mary Schäffer: “She Who Colors Slides”

“The answer must be: imagine,” concluded Carolyn Heilbrun, in her quest to understand women and self-identity. Mary Schäffer’s photographs and texts of her journeys in the Rocky Mountains in the early twentieth century resonated with audiences in their day and now engage readers whose interests range from conservation and environmentalism to Aboriginal histories, women’s writing, photography histories, and wilderness studies. Much of this work relies on Schäffer biographies. But “can an ‘author’ exist,” Margaret Atwood asks, “apart from the work and the name attached to it?” What happens, asks Jill Lepore, when “the boundary between history and fiction” blurs, as it does in Schäffer’s writing and photography? And what is the effect of what Stephen J. Gould calls “literary bias”—communicating experience through the framework and canon of storytelling—on a woman artist's acts of self-representation and the creation of knowledge and meaning?

Smith, Sarah (Harvard University)
PLENARY PANEL: From Curatorial Eyes: Exhibiting and Collecting Canadian Women Artists, Then and Now (See Boutilier)

Smither, Devon (University of Toronto)
Faciality, Duration, and Unfinish in Pegi Nicol MacLeod’s Self-Portraits

From 1925 to 1939 Canadian artist Pegi Nicol MacLeod executed a number of self-portraits, with her signature loose, undulating brushstrokes and fluid lines of bold colour that were often criticized as unfinished. I argue that the Surrealist, open-ended experimental quality of MacLeod’s paintings counters the masculinist formulation of the masterpiece as fully resolved. Furthermore, MacLeod’s use of her own body subverts modernist art history’s suppression of the embodied, desiring artistic subject. Moving away from a psycho-biographical interpretation of MacLeod’s paintings, I argue that her self-portraits are deeply ambiguous and prompt durational looking that takes into account time and its embodied relations. Like Deleuze and Guattari’s theory of faciality, MacLeod does not fix the face's significance; her self-portraits do not conform to the convention of a death-like mask that objectifies the subject. In contrast to the work of her peers, MacLeod’s self-portraits deterritorialize the face.
Southcott, Tanya (McGill University)
The Photography of Edith Mather

From 1966 to 1985, Edith Mather, an amateur Montreal-based photographer, walked the city's downtown neighbourhoods with a seemingly singular purpose—to document the evolving streetscape. She began these walks each morning by packing a pram with her son, camera, and supplies, and each evening meticulously recorded the places they visited. The resulting collection of over 4000 images reveals the city through candid, black and white photographs that Mather developed and printed in her home darkroom, then annotated and catalogued in a series of handmade albums that she donated to Montreal’s McCord Museum in 2012. While her photographs reflect the broader social and political contexts in which they were formed, they are also acts of self-representation, documenting a highly individual endeavour much like a personal diary. Capturing the intersection between personal experience and collective memory, Mather extends the self-portrait to the scale of the city.

Surette, Susan (Nova Scotia College of Art and Design University)
Greta Dale's Clay Reliefs: The Min-Maxi Factor

How did Toronto muralist Greta Dale represent herself as a professional ceramicist capable of engaging in large-scale projects when the press highlighted her physical "fragility," judging as "ridiculous" the idea she could manoeuvre tons of clay? The 1960s was a key moment in the development of Canadian professional ceramics including its integration into modernist Canadian architectural spaces. Although not well documented, Dale completed impressive commissions, including several for Montreal churches, Sarco Canada and the Manitoba Centennial Concert Hall. Working big, as this paper will argue, was essential for a woman muralist's professional self-representation. This was even more so the case as Dale's medium, clay, was a craft material discursively attached to domestic spaces and associated with traditional gendered roles.

Terry, Andrea (Lakehead University)
Treks, Traces, and Technology: Contemporary Challenges to Historical Art

What is the relationship between selfhood and landscape? While conceptions of landscape art have typically been governed by romantic and nationalist paradigms, Thunder Bay-based contemporary artist Julie Cosgrove challenges such paradigms. Cosgrove's canvases, characterized as “abstract landscape paintings,” reflect her journeys, from pursuing a seven-month nomadic “yurt-to-yurt” horse trek in Mongolia to working as a wilderness canoe guide in Northwestern Ontario. In Cosgrove's first solo exhibition Nowhere is a Place (2014), the artworks capture variations in the artist's physical, mental and digital presence—derived from her use of tracking technologies in and outside the studio space—on the painted surface. Locating Cosgrove's work within a larger socio-historical context, I compare it with work by earlier Canadian landscape artists, both male and female, in order to consider the gendered implications of the genre—notably in terms of the erasures and inscriptions of the self in the land.
Uhlyarik, Georgiana (Art Gallery of Ontario)
Christiane Pflug: A Certain Degree of Truthfulness

I consider Christiane Pflug's self-portraits, with particular focus on her drawings from the early 1960s. Many are unfinished sketches that reveal her process and focus; I compare her self-portraits with her many drawings of pigeons (they are the pigeons of artist and family friend Anton van Dalen). Pflug's work has been considered through a psychoanalytical framework, which sought to insert her into the academic discourse appropriate to the 1980s and 1990s. I approach her drawing as an intensely intimate activity, which reveals her own distinctive construction of the self through materials and process. I have invited women artists with a particular interest in drawing to a series of intense viewings and discussions of Pflug's works at the Art Gallery of Ontario. For my analysis I draw on these discussions, and the insights I have gained through these contemporary women artists’ eyes.

Vorano, Norman (Queen's University)
Indigenous Cultures and the Potentials of Self Portraiture

In the early twentieth century, Indigenous North American artists began to appropriate with greater frequency Euro-American concepts and practices of portraiture and self-portraiture, pursuing personal and political questions while cultivating a sympathetic network of patrons, collectors and critics. Then and today, these appropriations have been encumbered by the baggage of colonial encounter, entangled in the economic and political, discursive and institutional dynamics of a settler society. Of course, so too is the study of Indigenous self-portraiture—an emerging field that continues to emphasize twentieth century Indigenous artists that fit the mould of the European portrait artist over earlier artists who use materials or modes of representation that predate European models of portraiture. To what degree, and to what end, can the concept of "self-portraiture" be used in the latter cases? Importantly, what can this reveal not only about Indigenous modes of representation and portraiture, but Indigenous artists who have adopted Euro-American practices?

Weller-Smith, Mary Ellen (Independent Scholar)
Frances Anne Hopkins: Self-Portraits

Frances Anne Hopkins (1836–1919) included some incidental, partial self-portraits in her scenes of canoe travel in the fur trade era. As a biographer, I propose that these self-portraits created assumptions that minimized her considerable skills, and relegated her work to souvenir and ethnology; the lack of accurate biographical information also contributed. Her years in Lachine and Montreal, as wife of Hudson Bay Company's Edward Martin Hopkins, were a deliberately chosen artistic opportunity. Hopkins's Trust Fund also provided the necessary financial independence to establish her own studio. Returning to a London painfully engaged in re-examining women's status, she exhibited thirteen times with the Royal Academy and joined the growing ranks of women professionals—thanks to those years in Canada.