

To: David Creery, Chief Administrative Officer
From: Mary Reid, Director/Curator, Woodstock Art Gallery
Re: Art Acquisition Reserve Fund

AIM:

To seek Council's approval to draw out funds from the Art Gallery's Art Acquisition reserve fund (account # 0180-52004-0525) to purchase art works for the Gallery's permanent collection.

BACKGROUND:

As part of the Capital Budget process every year the Art Gallery draws out \$10,000 to be put towards the purchase of artworks for the development of the permanent collection. The following criteria is used to make these selections:

1. Artist/ artwork's connection to Woodstock and Oxford County
2. Representation of Gallery's Exhibition History
3. Connection to existing works in the permanent collection
4. Filling a gap in the permanent collection
5. Condition and rarity of the work

Priority is given to purchasing works from living artists to provide a modest form of income support. These acquisitions are further supported by a grant application to the Elizabeth L. Gordon Art Program run through the Ontario Arts Foundation. From time-to-time desirable works from historical artists do come up at auction which if possible are also acquired.

COMMENTS:

This year the Woodstock Art Gallery's Collections Committee approved the purchase of the following works (see attached justifications):

Frances Thomas, <i>Shouldering</i> , 2022	\$2,400.00
Nicholas Crombach, <i>Xenolith III</i> , 2023	\$5,500.00
Terry Graff, 3 mixed media works, 2015 - 2012	\$3,800.00
Irma Makariunaite, <i>Migration</i> , 2019	\$3,200.00
TOTAL:	\$12,250.00

Application has been made to the Elizabeth L. Gordon Art Program for \$4463 to support the acquisition of the Thomas and Crombach works. Normally the Gallery receives the results of this grant by the middle of October each year but unfortunately, we have not received the results yet. With the other purchases from Graff and Makariunaite in que this puts the Gallery over budget by \$2,250 of the allotted \$10,000.

The Art Acquisition reserve fund currently has a balance of \$24,269.70 of uncommitted funds. These funds cannot be used for any other purpose than acquiring works for the Gallery's permanent collection.

RECOMMENDATION:

That Woodstock City Council grants the Woodstock Art Gallery's request to draw out \$2,250 from the Art Gallery's Art Acquisition reserve fund (account # 0180-52004-0525) to purchase the art works as identified in the report for the Gallery's permanent collection.

*Authored by: Mary Reid, MA, MBA, Director/Curator
Danielle Hoevenaars, BA, Head of Collections*

Approved by: David Creery, M.B.A., P.Eng. Chief Administrative Officer



WOODSTOCK
ART GALLERY

Justification

Frances Thomas, Canadian, b. 1949



Midnight Rainbow, 2022, acrylic on canvas, 40.6 x 50.8 cm

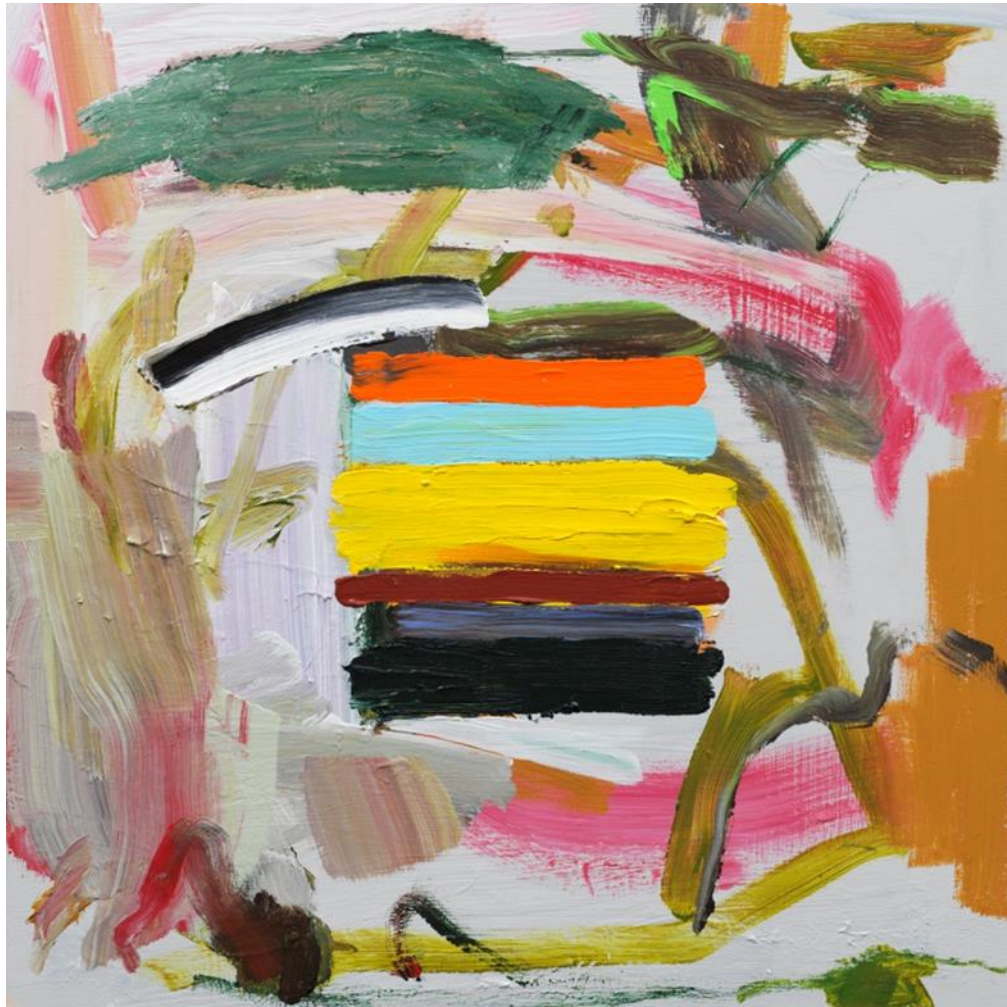


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ART GALLERY



Shouldering, 2022, acrylic on panel, 60.9 x 60.9 cm



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Artist Bio:

Frances Thomas, a Canadian painter and printmaker, was born in Parry Sound, Ontario. She received both her BFA and MFA from York University, Toronto, Ontario, and was the recipient of the Samuel Sarick Purchase Award for excellence in thesis work.

Her paintings were featured in a solo exhibition, *but wait*, with an accompanying catalogue, at the MacLaren Art Centre in Barrie. She has exhibited in Barrie, Montreal, Edmonton, Toronto and New York, and her work is in the permanent collections of the MacLaren Art Centre, Bank of Montreal and York University. Thomas has taught at Georgian College as well as holding advisory positions on various fine arts committees at Georgian. She has provided studio crits for undergrad and MFA students at York University and has been a juror for the Ontario Arts Council. She has participated in residencies in Pouch Cove, Newfoundland, and Triangle Arts in Brooklyn, New York, and in 2016 spent three months in Berlin on a self-directed residency.

Thomas currently lives and works in Barrie, Ontario. She is also the curator of the permanent art collection at Royal Victoria Regional Health Centre (RVH) in Barrie

Pertinence to the Collection:

These two works mark this important travelling exhibition mounted by the Woodstock Art Gallery and join the works by Ron Shuebrook that are also in the exhibition as well as the Gallery's collection. They also address the glaring disparity between the representation of women artists in the collection. Lastly these two pieces make connections with several works in the Gallery's collection, both abstract and representational, that reference the natural environment as a source of inspiration.

Provenance:

Drawn from the Artist's Studio, Barrie, ON.

Exhibition History:

Midnight Rainbow – only:

Both Sides Now: Paintings by Gary Evans and Frances Thomas, Latcham Art Centre, Stouffville, ON

Both Works:

In Conversation: Ron Shuebrook & Frances Thomas



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October 21, 2023 to January 20, 2024
Woodstock Art Gallery
449 Dundas Street, Woodstock, ON, N4S 1C2

June 14 to September 15, 2024
MacLaren Art Centre
37 Mulcaster Street, Barrie, ON L4M 3M2

January 11 to March 22, 2025
Art Gallery of Northumberland
Victoria Hall, West Wing, Third Floor
55 King Street West, Cobourg, ON, K9A 2M2

April to June 2025
Art Gallery of Algoma
10 East Street, Sault Ste. Marie, ON P6A 3C3

Condition:

Midnight Rainbow – Excellent condition.

Shouldering – Excellent condition.

Value:

Midnight Rainbow - \$1800 (donation)

Shouldering - \$2400 (purchase)

Aesthetic Qualities:

Quote from Emily McKibbon's essay "Call & Response" from the IN Conversation Catalogue:

For Thomas, her formal education at York University came only after her second divorce, when she shed enough of her own politeness to fully embrace the life of an artist. While Shuebrook trained with second-generation abstract expressionists in a period of late high modernism, Thomas initially entered her



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studies in a postmodernist paradigm, with the tenets of abstraction unsteady on shifting political and social grounds. While Thomas has always embraced the call to the personal and the specific in her work, she is never shy in her practice to speak to more universal concerns. Attaining her BFA in 1998 and her MFA in 2015, both at York, Thomas credits artists such as Janet Jones, Hugh LeRoy, and most particularly Tim Whiten, for giving her confidence to engage with universal themes and forge spiritual connection. What Thomas values most of what she learned from Whiten—of living with unbounded porosity, of giving oneself over to journeys beyond one’s control—is expressed with such sincerity that sometimes one aches to see her vulnerability. While inward-seeking in her studio practice, Thomas is no navel-gazer—she seeks connections in her painting, hoping for a kind of reciprocal engagement with a potential viewer that hinges on notions of beauty, truth and justice, albeit in lived-in, grittier ways. Returning to the notion of perception and reception, philosopher François Jullien states that “the painter must be receptive to things at a stage prior to that when they display and impose their forms...at a stage when, emerging from the indivisible-undifferentiated fount, they are in the process of taking form and coming into actuality.” A foundational philosopher for Thomas—her copy of *The Great Image Has No Form* is dog-eared with extensive notes crowding the margins of most pages—Jullien’s emphasis on emergence over fixity echoes the strongest through-line in Thomas’s career. In a world that forecloses opportunity for conclusions, Thomas is sincere in her desire to capture these moments of potentialities, rendering them in tangible form for us viewers who are less alive to them.

Shouldering (2022) highlights this. What Thomas fears most is confinement, but this fear has never prevented her deep commitment to the people in her life or to her practice. *Shouldering* features stacked bars of black, blue, yellow, brown and orange, in the midst of a swirling composition; a double-banded weight of white and black balances uneasily on its upper-left “shoulder.” In an exhibition replete with forms that could be read as self-portraits, this one holds particular meaning: its central form is forced into an artificial stasis amidst a context of swirling motion, the act of balancing a toppling weight forcing stillness into a scene that adamantly resists it. In many respects, formal education freed Thomas from a life that would otherwise have been denied to her—it released her to move with the shifting tides and currents of the world, remaining receptive to things as they emerge and take form, engaging always in a practice that tries to capture something ineffable before it coalesces into the known. If



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Shuebrook's ethics involve teaching, Thomas's praxis involves learning: they both engage in intergenerational dialogue through their constant attempts to learn and stay attuned to the world and its changes.

Quote from Reid's essay "Opportunity Cost" from the *In Conversation* Catalogue:

In *Midnight Rainbow* (2022), the allusions to a natural terrain are easily identifiable. The dark blue/black beach shifts as swatches of bright yellow, orange, green and purple dance around. Here Thomas challenges the idea of the rainbow, forgoing the expected clichés and interspersing the darkness of sadness with bits of joy and hope. In her former studio this painting hung below the following quote written in Thomas' beautiful looping script: "The whole business of painting is very much to do with forgetting myself and being able to act instinctively." Written by German-British artist Frank Auerbach (b. 1931), it appropriately sums up Thomas' intent of quieting her rational, logical mind to allow these imaginary landscapes to come to fruition.

This kind of collecting up of energy leads to an explosion of colour... Thomas began her foray into art making as a landscape painter, and the natural world still holds a strong influence over her. For her "nature is always there, as we are nature" and this is evident in this work along with many others in this exhibition... By giving herself over to the process of painting, Thomas allows the work to take her where it will go. Although there is a focus on the centre, a more overall approach to the canvas is employed. Here, floating over the surface... are Thomas' concerns, interests and struggles, all swirling around.

For Thomas it is painting the landscape that led her to abstraction. At some point in the late 1990s, while she was painting *en plein air*, she was so engaged with her composition that she made the conscious decision to forgo incorporating the horizon line. She "would later come to understand that the landscape was a mere tool for inspiration. What was far more interesting, intriguing, and important was the act of improvisation, of getting behind the gesture, of going deeper than the visible."

Respectfully submitted by:

Mary Reid, Director/Curator, May 2024



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ART GALLERY

Justification

Nicholas Crombach, Canadian, b. 1989



Xenolith III, 2023, found brass and copper objects, found materials including brick, stone and coral embedded in cast aluminum, 96.5 x 57.2 x 16.5 cm



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Artist Bio:

Nicholas Crombach was born in 1989, in Kingston, Ontario, where he currently lives and works. In 2012, Crombach graduated from OCAD University's Sculpture and Installation program, winning the Faculty Award, the Samuel Lazar Kagan Award, and the Hayden Davies Memorial Award. Since completing his studies, Crombach has continued his success, receiving the Abraham and Malka Green Award, a BMO 1st Art Nomination, and grants from both Elizabeth Greenshields Foundation and the Ontario Arts Council. Earlier in his career, Crombach was the artist in residence at The Florence Trust in London, UK.

Crombach works in a variety of media, but mainly cast bronze and resin. Many of his works study human and animal figures, creating narratives through found objects in unusual scenarios. Crombach takes a humorous approach to his artwork, spinning his traditional techniques into a more contemporary final product.

Crombach has completed some public commissions throughout his career, notably *Billy, Nanny, and The Kids* displayed at Appleby Village Mall in Burlington. Most recently he completed the inaugural public art commission *Wind Vane* (2023) for the Bruce Flowers sculpture garden located in the Florence Carlyle Park in Woodstock. The artist has exhibited widely across Canada, Spain, and England, with many of his works residing in private and public collections.

Pertinence to the Collection:

Xenolith III is one of six other "Xenoliths" displayed in "Landslip", 2023 in WAG's 2nd floor community gallery. Acquiring the artwork would broaden the gallery's collection in terms of contemporary works. This piece has a uniqueness that separates it from other works in the collection, while still having potential for future collection exhibitions. This piece could work with many potential exhibition concepts, for example, found objects, metals, and contemporary sculpture.

It would also benefit the gallery to acquire this piece because it differs from Crombach's other works, which often depicting human and animal figures and is represented in the collection by the maquette and full size sculpture for the Bruce Flowers Sculpture Garden which Nicholas completed last year. Acquiring *Xenolith III*



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would help to communicate Crombach's stylistic range as a prominent Canadian sculptor.

Provenance:

Artist's studio. Purchased by Woodstock Art Gallery.

Condition:

Excellent condition. There is some intentional tarnishing of the found objects within the piece.

Value:

\$5,500

Aesthetic Qualities:

The piece is a large "slab" like object organically shaped out of cast aluminum with several found items embedded in it. The aluminum is unpolished and is reminiscent of molten lava consuming anything in its path. The found objects in the piece are difficult to identify, but with closer inspection is clear that they are historical dishware made of brass and copper. From the front of the piece, these items are abstracted into hollow metal caverns.

Respectfully submitted by:

Hollie Stoneman, Curatorial/Collections Assistant, May 2024



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Justification

Terry Graff, Canadian, b.1954



Shooting Gallery Painting, 2015, collage and paints, 70.5 x 84 cm



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Wind-up War Bird, mixed media assemblage, 25.5 x 8 x 8 cm



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COVID-A-THON FROM DUSK TILL DAWN, 2021, collage and paints, 20 x 24.3 cm

Method:

Purchase from the artist.



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Artist Bio:

Terry Graff was born in Cambridge Ontario in 1954, his hometown is where his passion for the visual arts developed. In his adulthood, Graff pursued an education in art, receiving degrees from multiple post-secondary institutions such as Fanshawe College, the Jan Van Eyck Academie, Western University, and the Nova Scotia College of Art and Design.

Throughout his extensive education, Graff has continued to develop his unique style and interests. Graff's work predominantly explores birds, mechanics, and social issues. His work has dark and experimental themes, incorporating collage, painting and found items, including animal remains, into his work.

Though well known for his artistic practice, Graff is also an established curator and has produced many major exhibitions and publications. He has served as director of four public art galleries across Canada. Graff has authored numerous articles, catalogues, and books, and taught drawing and sculpture at Mount Allison University, Sackville, New Brunswick.

He has received many awards and honours, including the Fanshawe College Distinguished Alumni Award, the Commemorative Medal for the Centennial of Saskatchewan, and two eagle feathers from the Mi'kmaq First Nation for his work in promoting the art of Indigenous artists.

Pertinence to the Collection:

Terry Graff has worked with the Woodstock Art Gallery as an artist and juror. Graff participated in juried exhibitions at WAG in 1980, 1981 and 1983. He had a one-person exhibition at WAG in 1983 titled "Matter into Image," which presented a series of heavily textured works combining painting and collage. During his time living in Woodstock in the early 1980's Graff supported the gallery passionately, attending the majority of new exhibition openings and networking with artists in the community. This year, he was a juror for Visual Element 66, the annual juried show, at WAG.

This year Terry Graff's work was displayed at the Woodstock Art Gallery in an exhibition titled Avian Cyborgs featuring works from all different eras in his career. This exhibition was displayed from February 17th – August 17th, 2024. This exhibition has toured to



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Cape Breton University Art Gallery, Sydney NS, Art Gallery of Sudbury, Sudbury ON prior and is continuing to UNB Art Centre, Fredericton NB.

The works presented in this justification are selections from *Avian Cyborgs*, representing an important show for WAG and the contemporary work of a prominent artist and curator with strong ties to the Southwestern Ontario region.

It is our mandate to collect exceptional work by contemporary artists, with a focus on representing our geographical area.

WAG's collection aims to speak to the history of the region and connect with regional viewers of all demographics. In consultation with our internship students, members of the Gen Z generation, it was determined that our future audiences will desire artworks representing the Covid-19 pandemic to be held within the collection. *Covid-a-thon from Dusk till Dawn* fills this roll and is an example of Graff's more narrative small-scale work. It has future exhibition potential in connection to the pandemic as well as the use of pop culture reference in art. *Shooting Gallery Painting* speaks to the main body of Graff's work in the *Avian Cyborgs* exhibition, blends of machine and bird that speak to environmentalism and war as well as other themes in our natural and social environments. *Wind-Up War Bird* is consistent in these themes but allows for the addition of more contemporary sculpture to the collection. *Wind-Up War Bird* is an example of assemblage and provides exhibition and educational opportunities to discuss this technique.

Aesthetic Qualities:

Shooting Gallery Painting is distinct amongst Terry's larger-scale works yet clearly situated within the *Avian Cyborgs* series and recognizable in style. The work feels thoughtfully constructed with symmetrical composition and carefully layered elements. Colour, texture, text and symbols draw the eye. Conceptually, the work touches on the war bird theme but also ties in with themes of games, environmentalism (hunting and extinction), audience/ viewer agency (placing the viewer as the shooter) with its use of symbols and its references to a shooting gallery game at a fair.

In *Wind-Up War Bird* a bird with wheels and a rocket on its back is presented on a pedestal. The use of colour in this work is eye catching and the use of a pedestal makes reference to art history and traditional sculpture. It connects directly with both



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Graff's war bird and avian cyborg themes and is playful and intriguing for both adults and children.

Covid-a-thon From Dusk Till Dawn is a small scale full colour narrative painting. It depicts a drive-in movie theatre scene in which "The Birds" (1963) produced and directed by Alfred Hitchcock, is playing on the screen. Actress Tippi Hedren screams on the screen but instead of looking towards the crow depicted in the top right-hand corner, her horror is directed at the covid-19 virus depicted in the top left.

Provenance:

Collection of the Artist

Condition:

All in excellent condition.

Storage & Conservation Considerations:

Paintings: 1 large painting, with an industrial and sturdy frame allowing for rack, cabinet or box storage. 1 flat small-scale piece on wood panel for box storage.

Sculptural work: Wind-Up War Bird doesn't include materials that are likely to deteriorate or fragile appendages that may get damaged. It would be easy to create a custom storage box for the work, taking up minimal space in the vault.

No conservation is required or anticipated.

Value:

Warbirds Unlimited, 2019 - \$2000

Covid-a-Thon from Dusk Til Dawn, 2021 - \$800

Wind-up Warbird, 2019 - \$1000

Respectfully submitted by:

Danielle Hoevenaars, Head of Collections, August 2024



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Justification

Irma Makariunaite, Canadian



Migration, 2019, mixed media, photographic transfer, and acrylic on canvas



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The Longing, 2019, mixed media, photographic transfer, and acrylic on canvas



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Method:

One work for purchase, second work for donation.

Artist Bio:

Irma Makariunaite spent most of her life living in Toronto. She studied at OCAD University and the University of Toronto where she earned her AOCA Diploma and her Honours Bachelor of Fine Art History. Makariunaite has also both studied and worked abroad participating in programs in Lithuania, Israel, Latvia, and Italy. Her artwork has been exhibited throughout southwestern Ontario and in Calgary, AB.

After the passing of her mother, who was both an artist and an influence on Irma's work, Irma relocated from Toronto to Norfolk County. Living in southwestern Ontario has allowed the artist to focus on her artwork in a more refined way. She is also inspired by the rural lifestyle of the area.

Makariunaite's artworks consist of a combination of collage and acrylic on large canvases. Many of these works contain archival documents belonging to her family such as photographs and letters. This use of found objects makes the artworks very personal in addition to their vibrant compositions.

Pertinence to the Collection:

Irma Makariunaite exhibited her own and her mother, Rita Giedre Bulova-Forest's, work at the Woodstock Art Gallery in *Inspired By... Mother and Daughter*. The exhibition ran through the first half of 2024. These two potential acquisitions were included as key works in this exhibition and exemplify the main messages of the show representing familial relationships, the artist's personal identity, and recent social events.

These pieces pertain to the collection as representations of this exhibition and follow the Woodstock Art Gallery's mandate to acquire contemporary artworks by female artists, specifically from this region of Southwestern Ontario.

Provenance:

Collection of the Artist



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Condition:

Migration: excellent condition – no evidence of any problems or damage

The Longing: excellent condition – no issues other than some mild warping of the canvas stretcher. This is easily corrected during install by a frame lock security fastener on the lower right corner.

Value:

Migration - \$3,200

The Longing - \$3,200

Relationship Between the Works:

Originally, Migration was selected for presentation to the Collections Committee. Makariunaite suggested acquisition of both Migration and The Longing as a near-diptych. The following is written by the artist:

Irma Makariunaite's two mixed media works on canvas, "Migration" and "The Longing", each measuring 48" x 48", are companion pieces that explore the artist's deeply personal experience of immigration, displacement and identity. Both works were created in 2020, during the COVID-19 pandemic. It was the experience of isolation that prompted the artist to delve into her past; as an immigrant arriving to Canada when she was just a child.

"Migration" was the first work created. The red circular forms in this piece evoke the image of red blood cells, symbolizing the virus that spread across the globe and the lifeblood of our connections to one another. Torn shreds of hand-painted paper, positioned diagonally in opposite corners, are symbolic of two land masses with an ocean of fragmented letters in between.

Both "Migration" and "The Longing" contain torn shreds of reproduced hand-written letters sent to Makariunaite from her grandparents and other family members after her arrival to Canada with her mother only. The artist collected these letters over the decades, which serve as a testament of the difficult separation from her family. Fragments of these letters become part of a visual narrative that speaks to the strong



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connection with Makariunaite's family overseas and her cultural background. Fragmented shapes and torn shreds become symbolic of the artist's fragmented life. Adapting to a new world and forming a new identity are universal experiences of immigrants worldwide.

"The Longing" evolved from "Migration" and is thus its companion piece. This work is also highly personal and delves further into themes of immigration and loss. In addition to the handwritten letters, it includes a guest list from the 1960's of the artist's parents' wedding, created by Makariunaite's paternal grandmother. Since the marriage was short-lived, the sense of longing, the loss of connection, and the search for identity, manifest using these documents. These themes have always been a part of the artist's thinking, influencing her identity and informing her artistic process.

Aesthetic Qualities:

Migration is an abstract mixed-media work that features various organic shapes, representing red blood cells, and are placed over a background composed of archival letters. The piece is a vibrant expression due to the use of bright, warm colours (red, orange, and yellow). Yellow creates a connecting thread through the two works, complimented in *The Longing* with dark browns and flecks of orange and red. Reproductions of letters are utilized again, incorporated into the organic, elongated shapes in this work that suggest land masses and topographical maps. Both works are on 48x48" canvases, providing a strong impact when hung together.

Long-term Care:

As mixed-media works, it is possible conservation care will be required in the future for adhesives or to respond to the interaction of the materials. The artist has given great care and thought to the prevention of these issues, though they are possible. The Longing includes a key that has been affixed to the surface. Storage space for large-scale paintings is limited, until the construction of the 4th floor and subsequent renovations to the second-floor framing room & vault storage.

Respectfully submitted by:

Hollie Stoneman, Curatorial/Collections Assistant, July 2024
Danielle Hoevenaars, Head of Collections, August 2024



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