Prairie Art Institute 2025 (Calgary, 25-27 Jun 25)

Calgary, Jun 25–27, 2025
Deadline: Feb 28, 2025

Devon Smither, University of Lethbridge

Building on the impactful presentations and dialogues held at the 2023 Prairie Art Institute in Regina, we are excited to announce the upcoming Prairie Art Network Institute, scheduled for June 25–27, 2025, in Calgary. This year's conference will take place at the Alberta University of the Arts, with the support of partner institutions across Alberta. We look forward to an engaging program, including keynote sessions, with further announcements to come.

We invite proposals for presentations and papers that address critical topics in the visual arts, fostering dialogue and knowledge exchange among artists, makers, practitioners, knowledge keepers, curators, educators, and researchers. Proposals may be submitted as written abstracts, brief videos or audio recordings and should include a concise bio. All proposals must be submitted no later than February 28. Proposals may be sent directly to panel organizers or to prairieartnetwork@gmail.com.

There are no formal eligibility requirements for submission; however, we encourage those proposing topics across multiple sessions to inform session organizers in advance. Information about panels is provided below. If you have questions about logistical arrangements for the conference or you are interested in contributing to the planning, please reach out to Tak Pham (Tak.Pham@auarts.ca) or Jocelyn Anderson (janderson@glenbow.org).

SESSIONS

"Creative Visions of the Land"
This panel seeks artists, scholars, and practitioners to examine art and creative theorizations of the land. Moving beyond white settler imaginings of the land as territory to be claimed, dominated, extracted, and owned, "Creative Visions of the Land" aims to engage with art that thinks through being on the land as an ethical praxis that must be situated in relation to antiracist, decolonial, queer, and Indigenous frameworks. For this panel, our goal is to learn from and contribute to a developing body of artistic practices and critical writings that take up the question of land in and as relation, grounding our inquiry in the regional area of the prairies. We want to create space for people to come together and envision expansive creative practices and theories that reimagine an ethical politics of being-in-relation to each other and the territories we occupy.
Panel Organizers: Erin Sutherland (University of Alberta) and Susan Cahill (University of Calgary)

"Teaching Art History in the Prairies"
In this session, presenters will discuss their experiences teaching art history at universities across the Prairies. They will explore how they have adapted their courses to meet the specific needs of

their diverse student populations. This includes addressing the unique cultural, geographical, and educational contexts of Prairie universities and how these factors influence teaching strategies. Presenters will share the challenges and successes they've encountered while developing their curriculum, and they will offer insights into how to make art history more engaging and relevant for students in this region. The session will also highlight the ways in which local art histories and practices are incorporated into course materials to create a more inclusive learning environment. Through these shared experiences, educators can gain valuable ideas for refining their own approaches to teaching art history in similar settings.
Panel Organizers: Devon Smither devon.smither@uleth.ca (University of Lethbridge) and Karla McManus, karla.mcmanus@uregina.ca (University of Regina).
Please submit abstracts of 250-words including a 100-word bio to: devon.smither@uleth.ca and karla.mcmanus@uregina.ca by February 28, 2025.

"Curating and Communities in the Prairies"
In recent years, many organizations have set new goals for engaging with communities. Community engagement is fundamental to efforts to work toward reconciliation: it is at the centre of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Calls to Actions specific to museums and archives. It is also essential for initiatives that aspire to create greater inclusivity within—or beyond— a museum or gallery space. In light of these imperatives, many curators are developing new ways of working, going beyond traditional curatorial methodologies and practices. What are the opportunities for greater engagement, whether in cities or in remote communities? How are community curating projects affected by local environmental challenges? How can curators create projects that go beyond the gallery itself? What are the challenges in working outside of museum spaces, or outdoors? What does it mean to empower community groups to co-create exhibitions within the gallery? How can new digital technologies support communities in developing new models of interpretation? This panel is an opportunity for curators to share recent experiences in participating in community projects and share best practices and recommendations for moving forward.
Panel Organizers: Jocelyn Anderson and Mackenzie (Kama□mak) Brown (Glenbow)

"Crafting the Prairie: Expanding Possibilities"
"Craft is a vessel that holds space for embodied contexts, the consequences of making, and the meaning of objects as they circulate in the world." – Joy Xiang, C Magazine (Winter 2024)
Craft is a way of thinking and engaging with this world. Craft is active, an approach and way of being. Craft is on the radar with C Magazine (Toronto, Ontario, Canada) dedicating an entire issue to it and large retrospective exhibitions like Prairie Interlace: Weaving, Modernisms and the Expanded Frame, 1960–2000 (Nickle Galleries, Calgary, Alberta, Canada) filling galleries with sublime textiles. While craft is everywhere, it remains an unknown, confusing and sometimes abject concept. Closer to home, what does it mean to craft on the Prairie? What is Prairie craft? This panel seeks to delve into the unknown, to "hold space for" the metaphorical vessel of Prairie craft, expanding upon the temporalities and economies of craft as art, material culture, design and/or craft as concept. It will explore what craft is and isn't and foreground craft as scholarship, aim to consider the complex relationships between craft and curatorial practice, amplify diverse voices and perspectives and explore the intersectionality of craft.
Embracing craft's inherent interdisciplinarity, we welcome papers with fresh perspectives and voices from across disciplines. Researchers are also encouraged to present material/discipline specific (ceramics, textiles, glass, jewellery, etc.) papers spanning a variety of methodological and mate-

rial approaches.
Panel Organizers: Julia Krueger (SK Arts) and Michele Hardy (Nickle Galleries, University of Calgary)

"Artists, Transformation, and Change in Prairie Environments Since 2000"
I invite proposals for presentations that explore the role of artists in addressing transformations in prairie environments since 2000. I am particularly interested in less well-known and emerging artistic practices that engage with these transformations. I am looking for papers that critically engage with how artistic practices respond to and reflect upon changes in land use, agriculture, and climate within prairie ecosystems. Submissions may address a range of perspectives, including: how artists have represented and interpret transformations in prairie environments since 2000; how prairie artists since 2000 incorporate colonial narratives and Indigenous perspectives into their work to address changes in land use, agriculture, and climate; how contemporary artists since 2000 integrate local or traditional environmental knowledge into their work to address modern environmental challenges; and how socio-ecological changes since 2000 are informed by historical colonial structures that are reflected in the artworks and exhibitions of prairie artists. Both theoretical analyses and practical case studies are welcome, with a particular emphasis on less well-known and emerging practices. Proposals from artists themselves are also encouraged.
Panel Organizer: Jane McQuitty

For further information on the conference visit: https://www.prairieartnetwork.ca/prairie-art-institute-1

Reference:
CFP: Prairie Art Institute 2025 (Calgary, 25-27 Jun 25). In: ArtHist.net, Feb 10, 2025 (accessed Nov 24, 2026), <https://arthist.net/archive/43886>.