

An abstract sculpture made of several thin, dark metal ribbons that are intertwined and looped together, creating a complex, organic form. The ribbons are highly reflective, showing bright highlights and deep shadows. The background is a plain, light gray.

Local(i)ty 3

A Curatorial Project by Carin Covin

Featuring

Nora Curiston

Brenda Feist

Laura Widmer

HEADBONES GALLERY

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January 28 - March 30, 2017

Exhibitor Catalogue: *Local(i)ty 3*

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Micro Publishing

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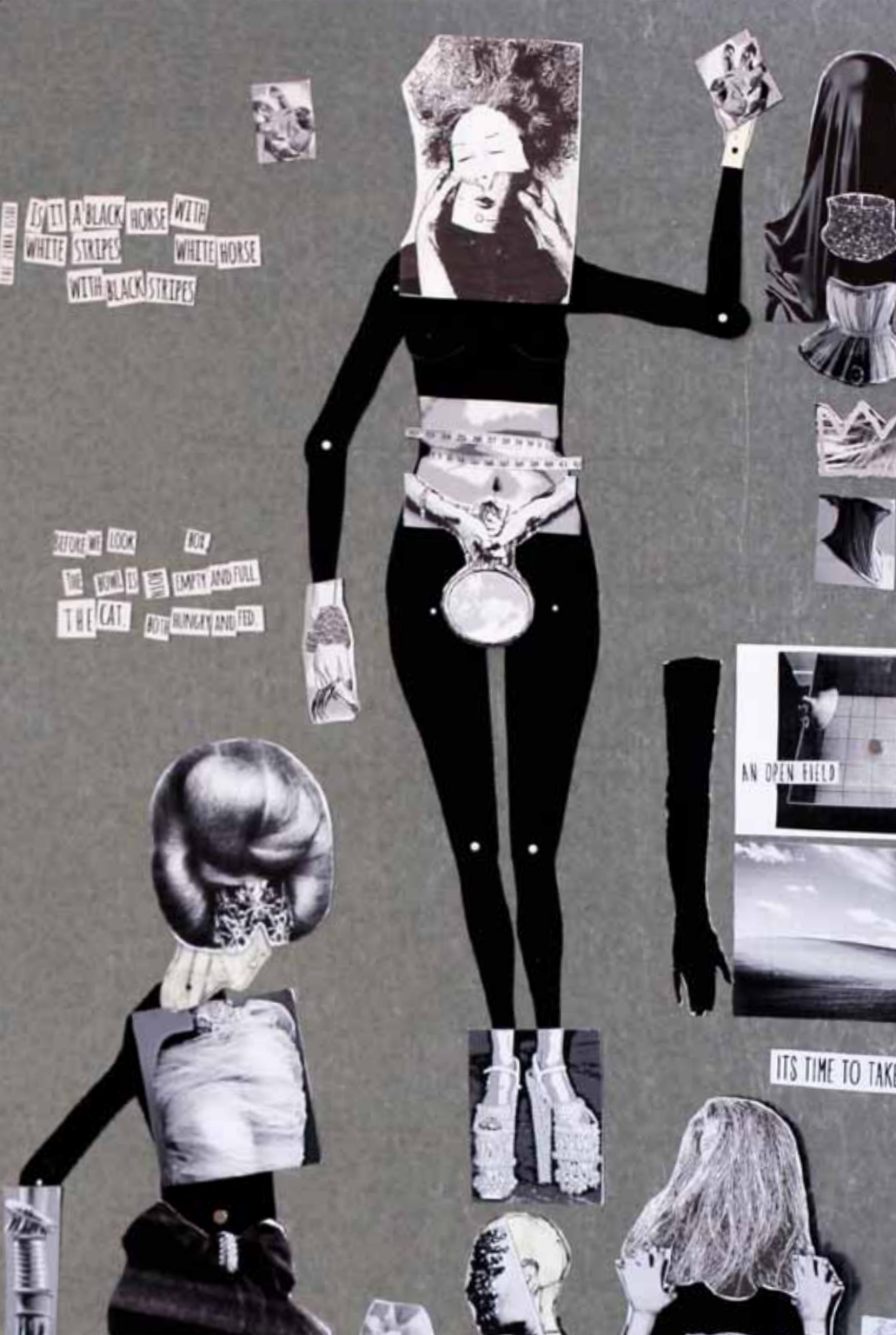
Nora Curiston

Brenda Feist

Laura Widmer

Introduction by Julie Oakes

Curatorial Essay by Carin Covin



Girls in Bags With Words

installation detail

Brenda Feist

2017

Local(i)ty

While 'global' is a buzz word, Carin Covin has put together an exhibition titled *Local(i)ty* with the parenthesized 'i' pivotal. That the artists are women is significant. Virginia Woolf sited: "As a woman I have no country. As a woman my country is the whole world." By concentrating on the self and from that local centre understanding connectivity, Woolf, who spent a novel focusing on one day during the preparation for a dinner party, also said that only a man could have written *War and Peace*.

Being a local has been a term of derision (who wants to be deemed 'provincial'?) especially when cosmopolitanism is praised. As ecological concerns have stepped up to the political fore however, there is a shift towards a more hands-on appraisal of our place within the cosmos. The power-of-one movement, for instance, through fostering an awareness of recycling, toxicity, and pollution challenges the damaging effects that mankind exerts and advocates for positive change.

Nora Curiston uses the wind as muse, overlaying conceptual witticisms upon this essential element that is so innocuous and taken for granted. We breathe without thought yet air is an omnipotent force when enraged - tornadoes, hurricanes, gale force winds. Poetically phrased, her installations and videos spark a new engagement with materiality.

Brenda Feist chose a semi enclosed space for her site specific installation. With an open box labeled Lady Parts encouraging ongoing participation she has 'set up house'. Feist's is a collaged world referencing family, decorating and using text for a free play of feminine expression that pushes against the categorization and limitations of gender ("Playing dress up never ends", "Its time to take back lunch", "girls in bags with words").

Laura Widmer's disciplined linocuts, handmade paper and incised text show that sophistication has little to do with 'where' as is implicit in 'local' and more to do with 'I' for refinement is a quality of civilization moving in positive progression. She brings skill, taste and dignity into the picture, the 'grace' of Biblical vocabulary that transcends the coarseness of physicality into a higher state of being. Widmer is a valued resident in the meticulous discipline of printmaking.

Local(i)ty is not confined to place but reaches outwards and successfully connects ideas to others. Curiston, Feist, Widmer and Covin have put another Virginia Woolf quote into practice – "Arrange whatever pieces come your way". Their immersion in *Local(i)ty* shows that there are no restrictions.

-JULIE OAKES



Wind Fence (outdoor)

single strand, heavy
gauge galvanized steel
fencing wire

Nora Curiston

2017

Local(i)ty 3

In 2013 I wrote *Local(i)ty*¹ as an account of the current cultural production of three artists, who live in centres outside the mainstream cities of Canada. The original essay aimed to articulate the differences of small versus large centres within the concerns of what art can be seen as today, where it can be produced, and how it can be given an audience. Writers such as Daniel Baird use phrasing such as “creative communities in regions cut off from a cultural centre like New York”², and Baird suggests that these major cultural centres produce the meanings that communicate the contemporary issues surrounding art. Yet, the curator Ihor Holubizky³ explains that ideas have a larger life than just being isolated in cultural centers in the sense that any place imports and exports meaning. Holubizky proposes that the creative, cultural, and critical ideas found within our global discourse are constantly circulating.

I invited these three artists to be a part of this project, as I find that they are producing critically important work. Brenda Feist is based in Kelowna, Nora Curiston is based in Grand Forks and Laura Widmer is also based in Kelowna. I feel that what these three artists have in common is their dedication to their practice and to the quality of the intellectual component of the work. Art is the common denominator of how each of these artists views the world around them, and art is the filter that gives voice to their individual pursuits of thinking and looking.

Looking at the work of Nora Curiston, we are reminded that the 1960's were a dynamic time within Art History, with the results affecting a whole generation of artists. With thinkers such as Duchamp and Barthes, the idea for a work of art became more important than the finished product, and is the basic tenant of Conceptualism. *Local(i)ty* has always owned Nora Curiston as our resident conceptualist. Curiston's ideas are integral in her creative problem solving. She is interested in cosmology and this intersection of the concept of our universe and the commonality of the materials she chooses produces interesting esoteric and poetic works. Nora suggests that she wishes to engage with ideas one degree off of their centre and she is hopeful that her best works are the ones that least confirms

our expectations as viewers. These goals are evident in the work presented in this Headbones exhibition, as she explores the phenomenon of wind, understanding wind as the invisible thing that animates the physical universe. Wind is known as a kinetic energy of air in motion, and there is much poetic language surrounding this motion: a howling wind, the doldrums, the Brisote winds of Cuba, the southerly Buster winds of Australia, the Zonda winds of Argentina, the Chinook winds of the Rocky Mountains, our winds of change. Curiston's wind investigations explore machines made to give wind a specific shape and sculptures that contain the wind.

As a sculptor and a writer, Brenda Feist is obsessed with form and space, and she points out that she is constantly searching for the form to suit the content. Her work reminds us that metaphor and symbolism have a rich place within visual language. Brenda deconstructs figures of speech that have shaped her own life and that of the society that she observes around her. A simple definition of metaphor is a figure of speech that is ordinarily used for one thing and is then used to designate another. Brenda pushes these ideas to suggest unusual pairings and therefore, unusual meanings, and in doing so, challenges the many societal tropes that she sees around her. In *Local(i)ty 2*, exhibited in Grand Forks, Brenda composed a chalked wall, which is evocative of one's elementary school years of learning. She recognizes the complicated authorship of her ideas, understanding that her inner self has been imprinted by all of the other people she has encountered in her journey since first meeting "Dick and Jane" in elementary school. This representation of the blackboard allows Feist to investigate the conventional hierarchies of gender, economies, and personal politics.

Laura Widmer employs one of the basic tenets of visual language, one of observation and response. One views the world around oneself, and formulates a visual response to what one sees. In the case of Laura's work, the response is complicated by engaging with the rigor of the printmaking process. She has added another complicated process of making her own paper for the supports of these ideas. The bulk of the work in this exhibition is from the observation and response to her studio walls as she prepared for an exhibition in 2015. Her studio walls are full of artifacts of her making processes, and as such, is a rich visual installation in its own merit. Widmer is expanding the role of paper in her work, where once it was solely the somewhat anonymous physical support for a wood or lino cut print, her handmade paper now becomes an equal visual component found within the work. This research is expanding her understanding of paper as material, object and subject. She is investigating paper as document, material, permission, record and technology. Widmer feels that working with the complex process of printing and the methodical process of making paper mirrors our human condition; processes that become a metaphor for the search for the ultimate meaning of life.

I am interested in definitions of art, and a curator's talk that I attended in 2012 suggested that art is about when you are making it, the activity of it, and that you are devoted to that, independent of the outcome. *Local(i)ty* proposes that the creative, cultural and critical ideas found within our global discourse can be found anywhere and everywhere.

The original curatorial essay, *Local(i)ty* that was funded by a British Columbia Arts Council grant, was published in 2014. In 2016, *Local(i)ty 2* was exhibited in Gallery 2 and the East Gallery, in the Grand Forks Arts and Heritage Centre. Now in 2017, *Local(i)ty 3* is presented by Headbones Gallery in Vernon.

-CARIN COVIN

The artists of *Local(i)ty* gratefully acknowledge the financial support of the British Columbia Arts Council for the ability to realize this project with the award of a Category I Project Grant.



BRITISH COLUMBIA
ARTS COUNCIL
An agency of the Province of British Columbia

Notes:

1. *Local(i)ty* received financial support from the British Columbia Arts Council in 2013, with the award of a Category I Projects Grant. The publication was published with CC Publishing in 2014 and also has an online presence with <http://localityproject.weebly.com/>
2. Daniel Baird is an American writer living in Toronto. This quote is from an article titled "Aristotle Got It" page 69, The Walrus Magazine, October 2012. The article explores issues of funding surrounding contemporary art.
3. Ihor Holubizky, in his 2006 curatorial project titled "Radical Regionalism: Local Knowledge and Making Places" explores the local, as researched by artists whose sense of place informs their creative practice that is juxtaposed with the binary of regionalism and globalism.



The Opposite of Air
(detail)

rock

2017

Nora Curiston

To me art operates somewhere in the realm of magic. It proposes things that might not otherwise be possible or even considered.

My work is conceptual in nature and can demand a lot of the viewer. Often I will present a simple coupling of items and a title. One definition of conceptual art is work in which the concept is more important than the actual object. My project is to create art in which both the object and the concept are important and ultimately work that makes it worth any effort, on the part of the viewer, to make the journey.

The work in this show investigates 'wind'.

Wind is of personal importance to me. A good wind always feels purifying. It comes close to 'spirituality' – not in any kind of standard religious sense – but in that it is an invisible thing that animates the physical universe.

The sculpture 'The Opposite of Air' was the final piece created for this exhibit. A rock may not be scientifically the 'opposite of air' but poetically it embodies the essence of the physical as it stands against the unseeable.



Failure of Lift

basswood

2016

Wind
plinth, steel
2016





Reach

airport windsock,
aluminum pole

2016

Wind Fence (indoor)

single strand, heavy
gauge galvanized steel
fencing wire

2017



WHO HAS SEEN
THE WIND

FLUID

Who Has Seen The Wind

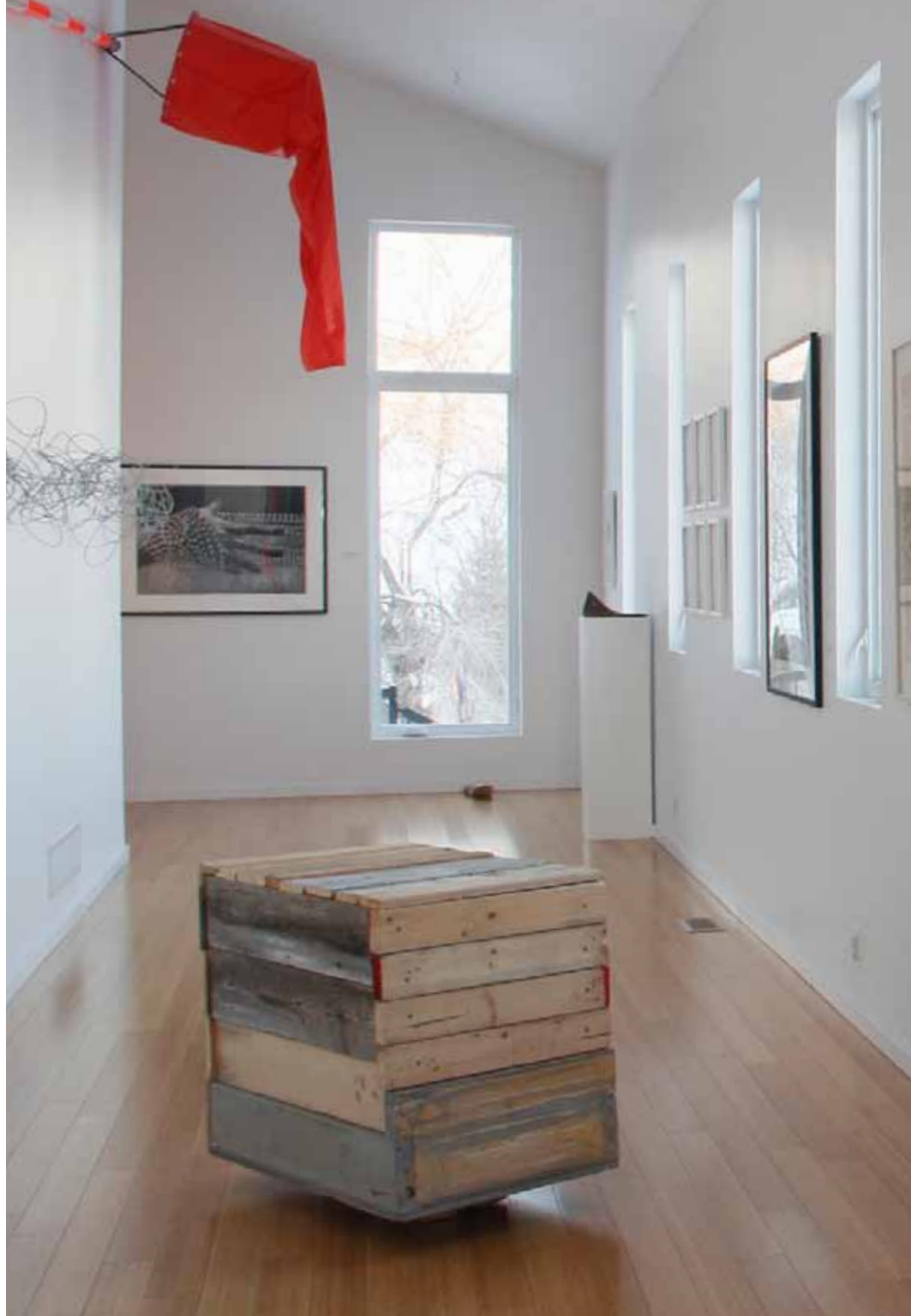
video loop

2016

Box of Wind

mixed media

2016





*Machine for Making a
Heart Shaped Wind*

video

2014

*Machine for Making a
Heart Shaped Wind*

video

2014



LADY
parts



Brenda Feist

To domesticate is to 'bring into the house'.

The story our culture communicates defines a landscape of thinking and behaviour and then, like a chameleon disappears within it.

-Philip Shepherd, New Self, New World: Recovering Our Senses in the Twenty-First Century.

A wall of description, with all the substance of a canvas theatre flat, stands between us and our experience; descriptions taken into the body, dividing up self and world, enforcing divisions within, and stifling plasticity.

We still imagine a line around the self and the head still reigns supreme over the body, a robust fiction that fathers our entire experience of world and self (Shepherd) and a prototype for all the other hierarchies and dualities we create.

The self and the atom are both classically understood to be 'stand-alone' units interacting with other 'stand-alone' units. But self closed to any influence that lies beyond description (Skinner box?) has lost its ability to transform. It lives by duplicates. Static knowledge keeps it asleep. I sit, within the wall of 'me' or my 'known' self like a framed picture, spinning powerful hallucinations, and displaying all the symptoms of other animals in captivity.

Why do some stories need to be told over and over? Why do some questions need to be asked again and again? All the myths and fairy tales of the world warn of the tyrant within us, pitting us against ourselves, trapping us in the detached pole of male consciousness, the call, the refusal (that creates the tyrant) and the sacred unity of the male and female elements. The widening of our consciousness (or waking to our own experience) progresses hand in hand with a deepening remembrance of the body and the female element. When the scaffolding of the 'known self' drops away....she wakes.





Girls in Bags with Words

installation

2017

GIRLS

→ IN BAGS ←

**WITH
WORDS**

**PLAYING
DRESS-UP
NEVER ENDS**



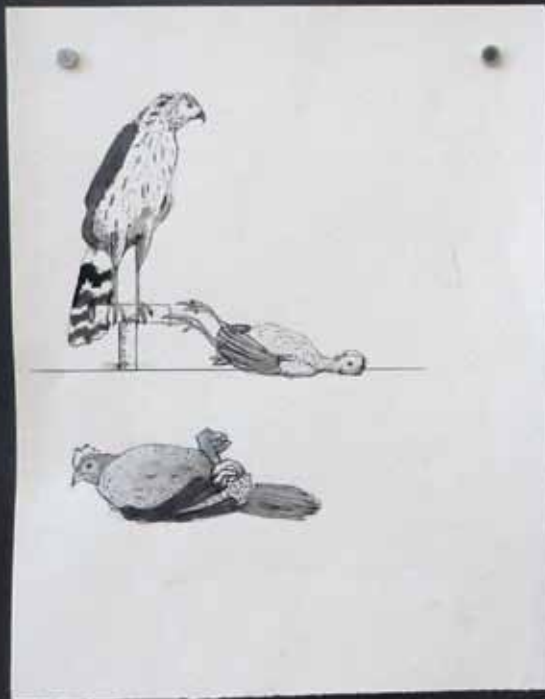
**GIRLS IN BAGS
WITH WORDS**



THAT'S WHY IT'S
WORDS CAST SPELLS

WORDS
CAST
SPELLS.





WE
EASILY
DESTINGUISH
TRUTH
FROM
FICTION
BUT
LINGUISTICALLY
THEY'RE
THE SAME.

ITS THE NONSENSE MAKES ME THINK...



His beard's not that blue.

THE VERY WORD "NUTRITION" SAYS IT ALL
THINK BIG

ME THINKING THINGS. THINGS THINKING ME.

WILLIAMS, A. D. 1971. *Journal of Fish Biology* 3:1-10.

STARTING THE DONKEY

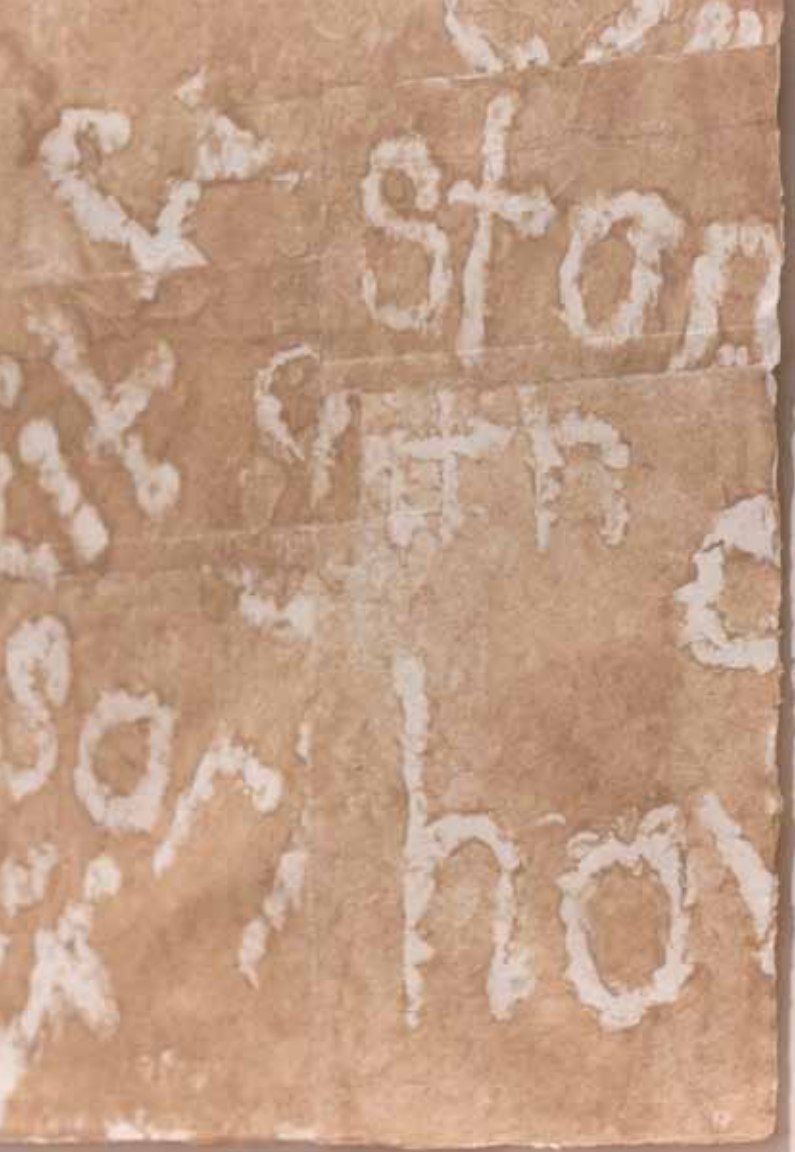
Creating a Name

...to be like your help us forget what we
are talking about

The first of my 1000 words was the year
I learned to swim. I was 4 years old and
my mother took me to the swimming pool.
I was nervous at first but she encouraged me
and I learned to swim. I was proud of my
achievement and I was happy to be able to
swim. I was 4 years old and I was proud of my
achievement and I was happy to be able to
swim. I was 4 years old and I was proud of my
achievement and I was happy to be able to
swim.



The Lies Journal



June 28 (detail)

handmade paper: cotton and
bullrush fiber

21 x 28.5 inches

2016

Laura Widmer

Paper as surface, material and object has fascinated me for as long as I can remember. I am certain that it is partially to blame for my interest in printmaking, as paper is the usual support material for my print-based works. In 2014, I completed a residency at the Banff Centre and there began to focus on the idea of working “in” paper as opposed to simply working “on” it. I created my own handmade paper and started to explore its unique character and potential. As a result, I think of the page less as an anonymous flat blank support and more as a specific meeting space, the physical, three-dimensional location where idea and viewer intersect.

This way of thinking has shifted some of my more traditional print-based works into subtly sculptural explorations where the paper might read more like skin than a uniform presentation surface. Customized to its purpose, the paper might map a history embedded in weathered leather, shift gently to a room’s whispers, or record the evidence of its own making. In the context of these new works the printed multiple provides opportunity for repetition and iteration and underlining of an idea rather than an edition of identical original pieces.

The very process of papermaking--recycling fibre from previously used printmaking paper into pulp and again forming new sheets for further printing--echoes some of the ideas of being and becoming embedded within these works.

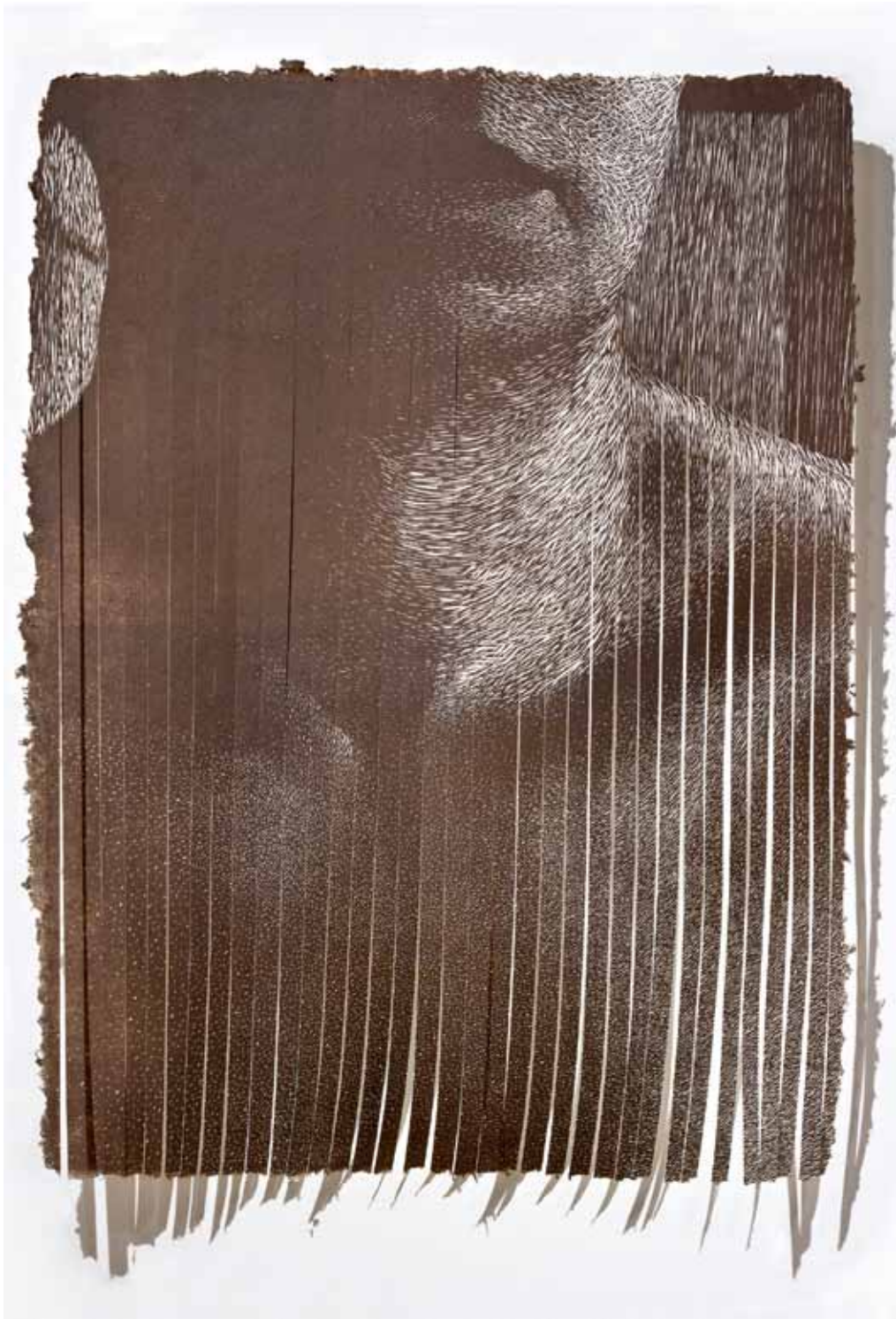


*Cascades I, II, III:
Cirrus, Lacunosus,
Virga*

linocut on
handmade paper

22 x 78 inches

2015

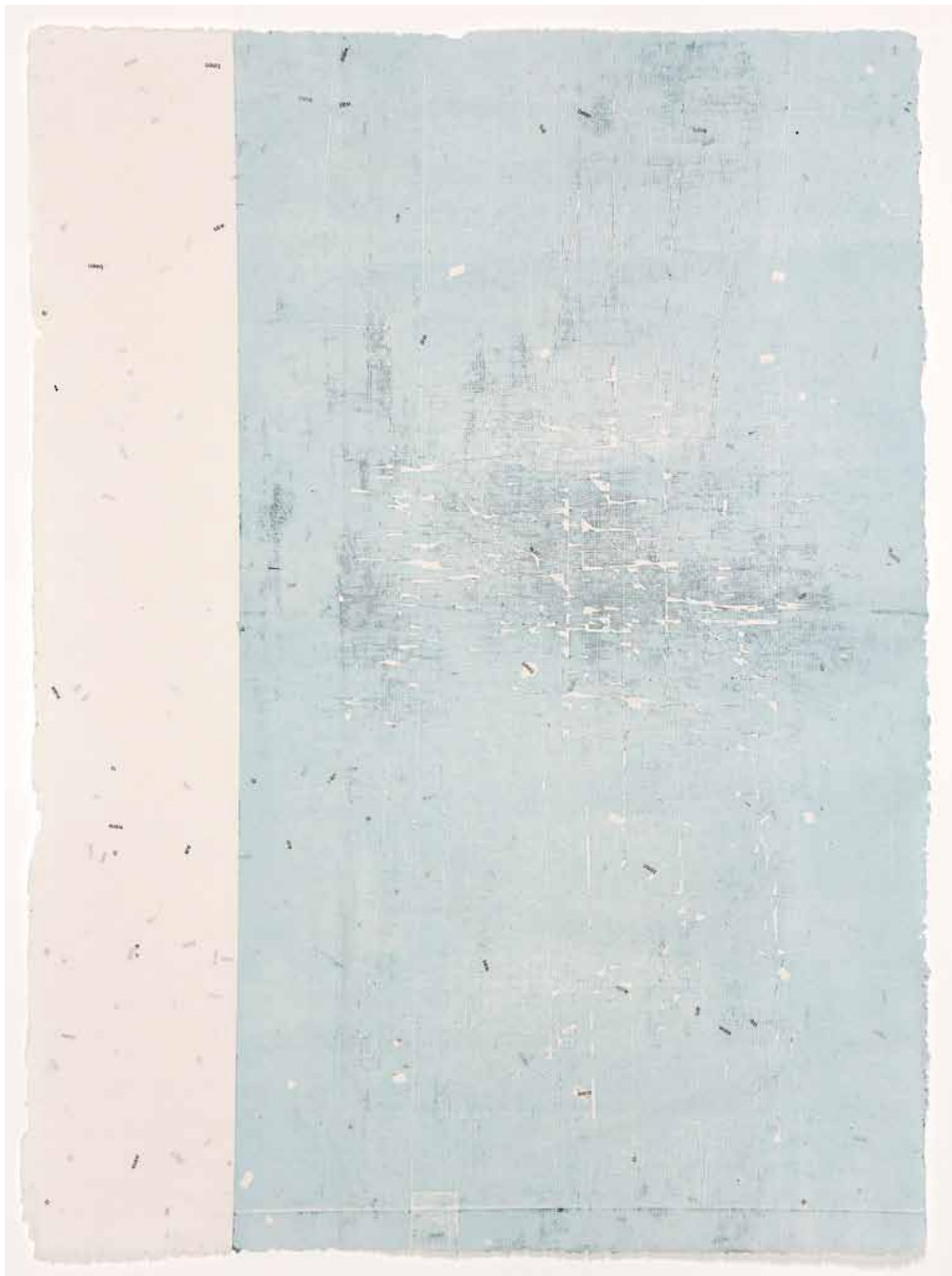


Tide

linocut on
handmade paper

22 x 30 inches

2015



You, the Universe & Me

relief print on
handmade paper

22 x 30 inches

2015



*A Simple Poem
for Virginia Woolf*

handmade paper with
text inclusions

6.25 x 8.25 inches ea
2015



Stratus

linocut

42 x 33 inches

2015



Consumed

screenprint

16 x 20 inches

2009





Unicus

linocut

29 x 42 inches

2015

Nimbus

linocut

29 x 42 inches

2015

Perlucidus

linocut

29 x 42 inches

2015





Carin Covin

www.localityproject.weebly.com

Nora Curiston

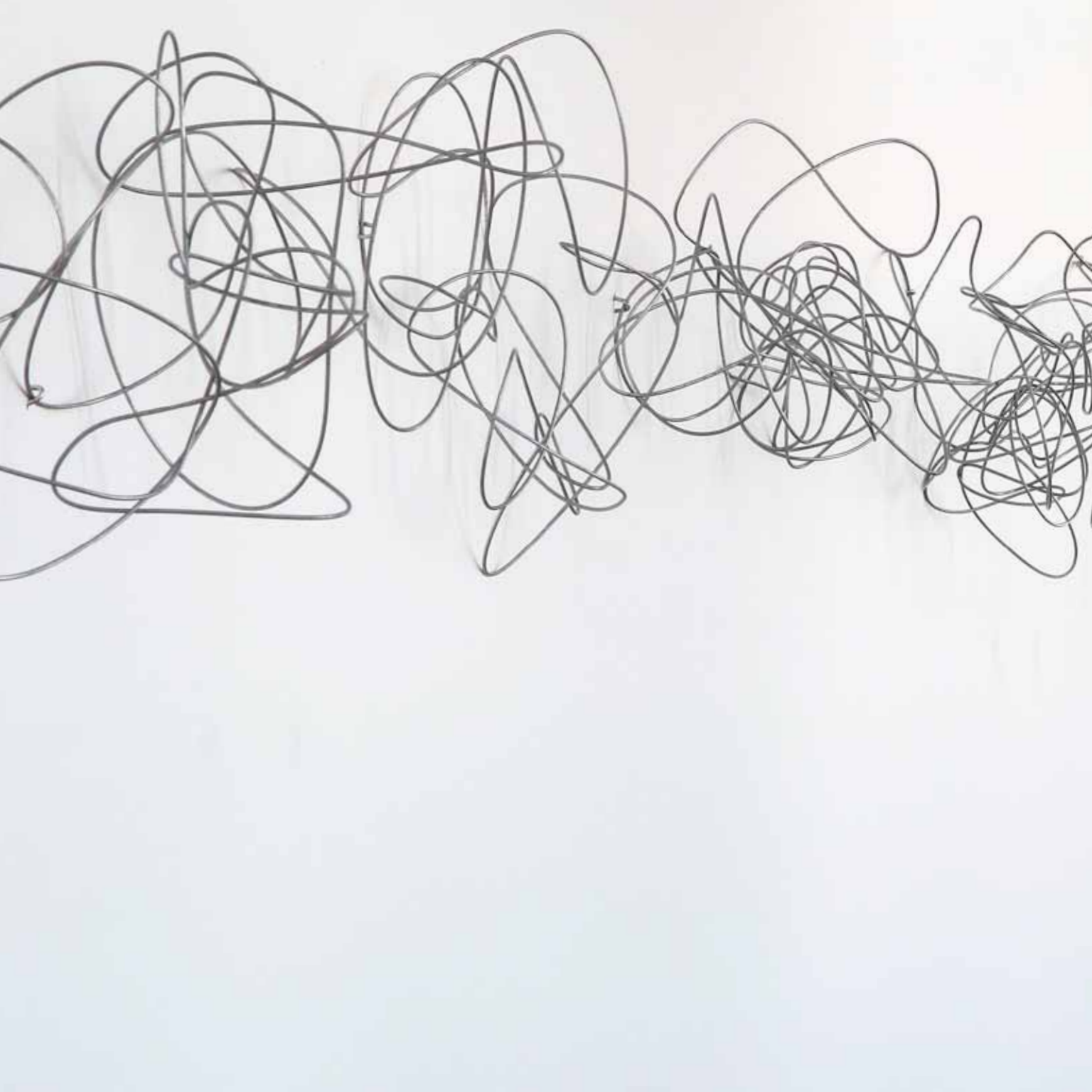
www.noracuriston.com

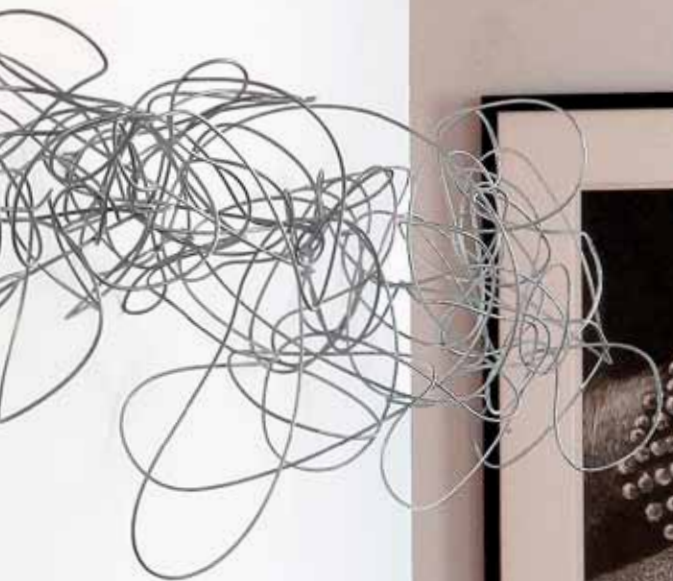
Brenda Feist

www.simplyartschool.com

Laura Widmer

www.laurawidmer.ca





HEADBONES GALLERY

