

For Immediate Release: January 13, 2025

Art Gallery of Regina's Exhibition *///* Shares Powerful Perspectives on Female Identity and Aging From Three Notable Saskatchewan Artists

Titled in honour of the three artists—Deborah Potter, Leesa Streifler and Sheila Nourse—whose works make up this exhibition, *///* is free to view at the Art Gallery of Regina from January 23 - March 29, 2025.



Regina, SK:

Recognizing that our society continues to undervalue the lives and bodies of aging and elderly women, the Art Gallery of Regina presents the work of three Saskatchewan artists - Deborah Potter, Leesa Streifler, and Sheila Nourse - that challenge perceptions and propose joy, humour and worth in its exhibition *///*, which runs January 23 to March 29, 2025.

Sandee Moore, Director and Curator of the Art Gallery of Regina, reflects on the importance of showcasing artworks that focus on aging and elderly women. "Recently, I've noticed that nearly every conversation I have with my cis-women friends revolves around topics like menopause and the challenges of caring for aging parents. While each of us has unique experiences with aging, it is a universal journey that affects us all."

Titled for the three "I"s — the three individuals who create from their personal perspectives — *///* addresses themes of aging and female identity. Each artist uses her favoured media and

distinctive approach: figural drawing (Streifler), ceramic sculpture (Potter), and found object assemblage (Nourse).

Ceramic figurines commonly depict sentimental and idealized subjects; Potter's small-scale figural clay sculptures cast a jaundiced eye upon society's devaluing older women, despite their accomplishments or when their youth fades.

Notably, one of her sculptures depicts a woman, reminiscent of American politician Hillary Clinton, raised on a pedestal that, on second glance, turns out to be a garbage can—a stark commentary on how women perceived as past their physical prime are positioned as trash. Potter revealingly reimagines iconic images. For instance, she replaces the little girl in Banksy's image *Girl with Balloon*, with an old woman in her sculpture *Life Is A Balloon*; the slumped, deflated figure contrasts sharply with the plump, buoyant balloon tenuously gripped by a string. Potter's work, whimsical and tragic in equal measures, invites viewers to engage with the complex, oft-hidden realities of aging.

Since her retirement, Streifler, who taught in the Department of Visual Arts at the University of Regina, has exhibited her work in numerous high-profile exhibitions across the prairies. Known as a feminist artist, she has long represented bodies that defy social conventions, behavioural norms, and traditional gender roles in work defined by her sharp wit and equally sharp social commentary.

The artist's lavish application of drawing media—greasy strokes of highly pigmented oil stick outline bulging rolls of fat, shaking incised lines trace wrinkles and broken capillaries, skins of paint flake from withered limbs and jagged strokes in neon hues are a visual analog to the weight of sagging breasts and bellies—enables us to appreciate the imperfect, broken and heartbreaking vulnerability of the bodies she has imagined.

Streifler's drawings, often life-sized or larger, take up space, steeping viewers in the physical realities of aging and conveying her subjects' agency. The artist's newest works in *III* engage with the dehumanization of older women as flawed, failing and in need of improvement through cosmetic procedures. In these drawings, figures are suffocated by clouds of tainted words like "collagen," "turmeric," "osteoarthritis," "lacy bones," and "knee replacement." At the same time, broken cut lines and stitches carve up faces dotted with overly glamorous eyes and inflated lips. Streifler's images are as gorgeous, funny and enjoyable as they are dreadful. The artist urges audiences to embrace the fears that are at the heart of our rejection of images of older women: those of being forgotten, useless and discarded.

Nourse provides a different sort of insight with her *Golden Salon Series*, a series of fifteen assemblage portraits "of women as they age." Hung grouped together to allude to the strength of a community, these portraits allow us to glimpse the activities and relationships from which these women's identities are built.

Each material Nourse uses brings a host of associations to the assemblage—a piece of slate suggests school days, a silver tray relates to domestic ritual, fishing weights can alternatively be

read as that which grounds us or weighs us down, and door handles present opportunities for freedom and escape.

Though a generous and inventive spirit distinguishes her art practice, Nourse occasionally skewers institutions. A picture frame tells us that what's inside of it is art. In her assemblage *Sheltered Gem*, Nourse rejects the frame's authority and pokes fun of the elevation of fine art over craft. In it she pierces a picture frame with a knitting needle, puncturing a symbol of fine art with its antithesis - an old lady's textile-making tool.

By repurposing domestic goods and discarded objects, Nourse encourages viewers to consider the worth of what used to be dismissed as "women's work" and gives new life to the useless. Her multifaceted assemblages, built up of fragments, evoke the tangible traces of lives lived, offering a narrative of identity forged through personal accumulation.

Aging is a topic our society often recoils from. *///* invites viewers to appreciate hidden experiences and complexities of aging and female identity. Perhaps you will see yourself as another "I" joining the female figures in the exhibition *///*.

Join us to celebrate this exhibition at a public reception **on Friday, January 24, from 5:00 to 7:00 PM**. Enjoy refreshments, meet the artists, get a first look at the exhibition and witness a surprise, *in situ* performance by the RRR, Regina's newest secret performance trio. *///* continues until March 29, 2025; admission to the Art Gallery of Regina (2420 Elphinstone Street) is free.

Media contact:

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Contact Moore to arrange interviews with the artists in English.

Please note that this email contains a link to a GoogleDrive folder of images that may be reproduced.

LINKS

Artists' bios:

https://docs.google.com/document/d/1gq5V2nMRVgNUgVQ5rHd_PVSsusDKi5CK55GG8IDu9Kg/edit?usp=sharing

(click link to access GoogleDrive)

Reproduction-ready images:

<https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1RAznBI5a8O3ZAke2DRdtzvLDdRgsSIDL?usp=sharing>

(click link to access GoogleDrive)

Websites:

[exhibition webpage](#)

For Calendar Listings:

Exhibition title: *///*

Artist(s): Deborah Potter, Leesa Streifler, Sheila Nourse

Short description: In the exhibition *///*, Deborah Potter, Leesa Streifler, and Sheila Nourse challenge perceptions of older and elderly women with works in ceramic sculpture, drawing and assemblage that propose joy, humour and worth.

Curator: Sandee Moore

Location: Art Gallery of Regina (2420 Elphinstone Street)

Dates: January 23 - March 29, 2025

Opening reception: Friday, January 24, 5:00 - 7:00 PM

Website: <https://www.artgalleryofregina.ca>

Free Admission





images (clockwise from top in desktop view): Deborah Potter, *Life Is A Balloon*, 2024, clay and glazes; Sheila Nourse, *The Golden Salon Series: Sheltered Gem (Shannon)*, 2024, mixed media; Leesa Streifler, *Old Friends*, 2024, digital print on aluminum.

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AGR

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Contemporary.
Art.

Located on Treaty 4, the traditional territory of the Cree, Saulteaux, Nakota, Lakota and Dakota peoples, and the homeland of the Métis people, the Art Gallery of Regina (AGR) is a dynamic cultural hub, promoting the development and appreciation of contemporary art, primarily created by Saskatchewan artists. AGR provides opportunities for Regina's citizens and visitors to engage with contemporary art through free exhibitions, participatory events, performances, artists' talks, critical writing, and educational programming.