



MEDIA RELEASE

2018 Middlebrook Prize for Young Canadian Curators is awarded to Lauren Gabrielle Fournier

The Art Gallery of Guelph (AGG) is pleased to announce that **Lauren Gabrielle Fournier** has been awarded the 6th annual Middlebrook Prize for Young Canadian Curators. Her project, *epistemologies of the moon*, has been selected as the winning submission and will be presented at the Art Gallery of Guelph from September – December, 2018. The award was presented at a gala awards ceremony, amongst leaders of the Canadian arts scene, at the Gladstone Hotel in Toronto.

Created in 2012, the prestigious annual prize is given to a Canadian curator under 30. By supporting and mobilizing Canadian creative talent, the Middlebrook Prize aims to inspire positive social change through creativity in an era of ongoing and unprecedented economic, environmental, social, and cultural change. The prize challenges Canadian institutions to find their futures within this emerging generation of curators working and studying in Canada.

epistemologies of the moon engages with the symbolism and imagery of the moon as a historically feminine and, more recently, feminist symbol, opening it up to new meanings and valences in the transnational 21st century. The exhibition emerges from Fournier's curatorial research around land and place, settler-colonialisms and decolonization, mythology, mysticism and alternative spiritualities and includes work by emerging and mid-career artists and collectives whose practices are indebted to ideas around the politics, aesthetics, and ethics of feminism today.

This year's jury, chaired by Andrew Hunter (AGG Senior Curator), included Srimoyee Mitra (Director of Stamps Gallery, Stamps School of Art and Design, Ann Arbor, Michigan) and Lisa Steele (Artistic Director of VTape and Professor, University of Toronto John H. Daniels Faculty of Architecture, Landscape, and Design).

According to Andrew Hunter, "Lauren Gabrielle Fournier's submission stood out for its richness of critical thought as well as its deep relevance to this moment in Canada. *epistemologies of the moon* features an impressive group of artists and this curator is clearly committed to true public engagement and creative research."

"A brilliant title," stated Srimoyee Mitra, "Fournier is an excellent writer and they show confidence and depth in bridging communities and complexities. This has potential to be a very impactful and expansive project."

Lisa Steele highlighted the "strong, interdisciplinary and participatory emphasis" within Fournier's work, as well as their "deep focus on community as well as the negotiation of safety and trauma."

Fournier's commitment to a progressive and socially engaged methodology reflects the vision of the Middlebrook Prize for Young Canadian Curators as well as the values of the Art Gallery of Guelph.

Curator's Biography

Lauren Gabrielle Fournier (b. 1989, Regina/Treaty 4 Territory, Saskatchewan) is a curator, writer, artist, and scholar of experimental feminist art, literary, and theoretical practices. She works across film, video, performance, sound, music composition, and experimental writing to create cross-disciplinary work. Now based in Toronto, Fournier is a PhD candidate in the Department of English at York University, where she is completing a SSHRC-funded dissertation on "auto-theory" as a post-1960s mode of feminist practice across media. Her research is grounded in the intersections of art history, philosophy, literature, gender and sexuality studies, and contemporary art. Fournier holds a BA in Fine Arts from the University of Regina (2010) and an MA in English from Simon Fraser University (2012). She has worked as a frontline mental health and harm reduction worker, and she is actively engaged in bridging social work with her academic and artistic practices. Her commitment to mental health, class and racial justice, trauma, and addictions advocacy shapes her work.

Fournier is the creator of *Fermenting Feminism* (Berlin: Laboratory for Aesthetics and Ecology) and *Self Care for Skeptics*, and is the Associate Editor of *Kapsula Magazine*, a multimedia platform for experimental, web-based approaches to contemporary art writing and criticism. She is on the programming committee of the Feminist Art Conference (since 2014) and is a Graduate Associate on the Executive Committee for the Centre for Feminist Research/Le centre de recherches féministes. She has served on the Board of Directors of Trinity Square Video and has worked at artist-run centres across Canada, including VIVO Media Arts Centre and Gallery TPW.

Fournier's writing has been published in *Canadian Art*, *Magenta*, *Contemporary Women's Writing*, *Comparative Media Arts Journal*, *Imaginations: Journal of Cross-Cultural Image Studies*, *Canadian Journal of Woman Studies*, and *West Coast Line*, and in the edited collections *Desire Change: Contemporary Feminist Art in Canada* (McGill-Queen's University Press, 2017) and *Feminist Food Studies: Exploring Intersectionality* (Women's Press, forthcoming). Recent curatorial projects include *The Sustenance Rite* (Blackwood Gallery), *Fermenting Feminism* (Critical Distance, Front/Space, Büro BDP), and *Out of Repetition, Difference* (Zalucky Contemporary). Her art has been exhibited in galleries, artist-run centres, and screenings across Canada, the United States, and Europe.

About Middlebrook Prize for Young Canadian Curators

Founded in 2012, Middlebrook Prize is a national prize awarded annually to foster social innovation and curatorial excellence in Canada. The Middlebrook Prize encourages social connectedness and a shared sense of community. The winner selected by jury of arts professionals is a curator under 30 who receives an honorarium, senior curatorial mentorship while mounting an exhibition at our partner gallery, Art Gallery of Guelph. More information about the Prize and the cohort of past winners, please visit MiddlebrookPrize.ca.

The Middlebrook Prize for Young Canadian Curators is funded by the Centre Wellington Community Foundation's Middlebrook Social Innovation Fund at Centre Wellington Community Foundation, Musagetes Fund at Guelph Community Foundation, and by private donations.

About the Art Gallery of Guelph

The Art Gallery of Guelph (AGG) is one of Canada's premier public art spaces, engaging audiences with innovative artists and ideas from around the world. Through a rigorous and collaborative artistic program that positions visual culture in an ever-changing cultural landscape, the gallery supports social exchange and shapes public discourse. Located in one of Canada's most innovation-rich and socially-engaged urban environments, AGG offers compelling artistic encounters and contributes to a thriving national artistic climate through global connections that foster and proliferate creativity and imagination. For information about all of our programs, please visit www.artgalleryofguelph.ca.

The Art Gallery of Guelph gratefully acknowledges the support of the Ontario Arts Council, Canada Council for the Arts, The Ontario Trillium Foundation, and the Department of Canadian Heritage.

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