



# Hope

*DECEMBER / 10 / 2014 – JANUARY / 23 / 2015*

ART GALLERY OF REGINA  
REGINA, CANADA

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*December 10, 2014 – January 23, 2015*

Gabriela Garcia-Luna  
Ernie Klinger  
Monique Martin  
Christine Ramsay  
Amin Rehman  
Joseph Siddiqi  
Jean E. Sonmor  
Sean Whalley  
Carol Wylie

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Hope is different from optimism and distinct from faith. It connects with our desire for a good outcome and builds on any grounds for believing that such an outcome is possible. Hope is often attached to struggle, and sometimes, to chance. It can distract us, or it can sustain us. Usage of the word has become widespread in our culture — often associated with campaigns seeking social, political, or financial support. This group exhibition looks at various ways that contemporary artists interpret and explore the concept of hope. The show features a diversity of approaches to the topic ranging from delusion to renewal. Included in the show are works by Gabriela Garcia-Luna, Ernie Klinger, Monique Martin, Christine Ramsay, Amin Rehman, Joseph Siddiqi, Jean E. Sonmor, Sean Whalley, and Carol Wylie.

**Carol Wylie's** affecting portrait *Harry and Marian* permits the viewer into an intimate moment of resolution. The subjects of the painting are coping with serious illness. Wylie proposed painting the double portrait to the subjects as a way of solidifying the couple's experience, and as a way to distribute the weight of concern. In this, Wylie's painting acts as a signifier of hope. Through the placement and positioning of the figures Wylie conveys the couple's united declaration — the couple look outward beyond their present condition. Their gaze is fixed, beyond the picture plane. As viewer's we first observe the couple, and then follow the direction of their gaze, accordingly, we are joining with the couple in their outward focus.

**Amin Rehman's** encaustic text pieces are a synthesis of language and textual expression. The work represents an artistic intertwining of diverse cultures by combining Perso-Arabic scripts, Islamic Calligraphy and English language. Rehman uses phrases based on the texts of the great Turkish philosopher, poet, and writer of the 13th century, Jalal ad-Din Rumi. Rehman is interested in the fact that Muslims, Christians and Jews

equally respect and study Rumi's writings. Rehman combines Rumi phrases, English language, and Islamic script to encourage conversation and understanding in order to evolve from confrontation to accommodation and to move from conflict to consensus.

Christine Ramsay's paintings, Sean Whalley's photograph, and Monique Martin's sculpture call attention to the fact that hope can divert us from reality.

**Christine Ramsay** explores the persuasion of "hope against hope" in her triptych *Three for Saint Mungo*. Saint Mungo, the patron saint of the city of Glasgow, is acclaimed for performing four miracles. One of which involved restoring life to a friend's pet bird. Ramsay's birds lay lifeless upon biers. Can we hope a miracle will revive them? The paintings also depict eggs, which potentially hold new life. If we cannot embrace enough faith to hope for the birds' revival, will we still hold hope the eggs will hatch? Ramsay suggests we are reluctant to give up the solace of hope, even in the realization that what we hope for is truly unlikely to ensue.

**Sean Whalley** hopes he and his sisters will maintain a close relationship despite the geographical distance between them. His photograph, *Sisters and Me*, taken on a recent visit home, captures the siblings at a moment of cheerful togetherness. The photograph is a testament to their bond. On further consideration the photo discloses another truth. The photo also documents the separation between Whalley and his sisters. The siblings appear together in the same photo but only through the inclusion of Whalley's reflection in a glass surface. The reality is, it is difficult to maintain substantial relationships over distances and time, and hope alone may not be enough to address our aspirations.

Nests are emblematic of hope, home and renewal, yet by delicately arranging fine strands of thread under layers of glass, **Monique Martin** is able to encompass concepts of both resumption and concern into *Twin Nests*. Bearing the weight of glass the elegantly arranged threads expose an insubstantial and inaccessible structure — the nests, along with the hope they represent, are attractive, yet illusive.

Jean Sonmor's mixed media sculptures and Joseph Siddiqi's painting propose that

carrying out anticipative or hopeful acts, either collectively or individually, may improve our chances for a desirable outcome.

**Jean Sonmor's** assemblages act as agents of hope, each work is made with a particular person in mind. Sonmor views these pieces as “votive offerings”. In *Using Talents*, scissors, a tool used to cut or incise, is rendered ineffectual, as Sonmor has meditatively knitted over the surface. What was potentially damaging is transformed into something benign. Sonmor also integrates knitting and stitching into *Inner Journey* and *Protection* as gestures of shielding and securing.

**Joseph Siddiqi's** painting, *Mad Love*, depicts people in a public square congregating under a hopeful placard. Whether the crowd is gathering defiantly or jubilantly is not clear. What is clear, however, are the sizeable glowing letters spelling out love. The sign acts as a beacon through murky light, resulting in the crowd amassing below.

**Ernie Klinger** views the act of painting, itself, a hopeful act in that his painting process is a concentration on faith. Working within a self-imposed framework of nonrepresentational imagery and an achromatic palette, Klinger views these limitations as a constructive challenge. The process requires a surrendering of control — not knowing exactly what the outcome will be. Consequently, for Klinger, the start of each new painting reaffirms the perpetuity of the unknown and concludes with an affirmation of resolution and renewal.

**Gabriela Garcia-Luna's** photographs depict layers of aged and worn wallpaper from the walls of a house she visited. Framed through the lens of her camera Garcia-Luna sees the layering and merging of paper and past histories, not as disintegration, but as an image suggesting continual renewal.

Holly Fay



CAROL WYLIE

*Harry and Marian*, 2011  
acrylic on canvas  
54 x 40"

*Harry and Marian 2*, 2011  
acrylic on canvas  
40 x 32"



the middle  
path is a **میشت**  
to **موجنتش**

only from the  
heart can you  
touch the sky

what you  
seek is  
seeking you

AMIN REHMAN

*Middle Path*, 2012  
encaustic on board  
10 x 10"

*Can You Touch the Sky*, 2012  
encaustic on board  
10 x 10"

*Seeking You*, 2013  
encaustic on board  
10 x 10"



CHRISTINE RAMSAY

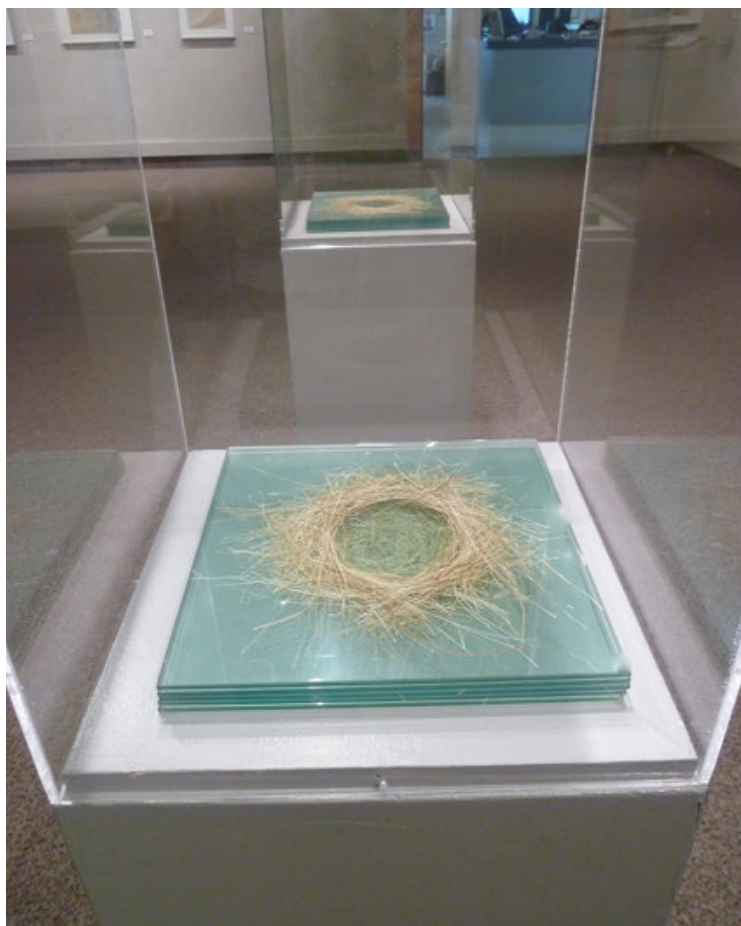
*Three for Saint Mungo*, 2012  
acrylic, charcoal on board  
each painting 18 x 24"





SEAN WHALLEY

*Sisters and Me*, 2014  
digital print  
25 x 35"



MONIQUE MARTIN

*Twin Nests*, 2012  
glass, thread  
each 12 x 12"



JEAN E. SONMOR

*Using Talents*, 2010  
scissors, cotton  
thread  
11 x 35"

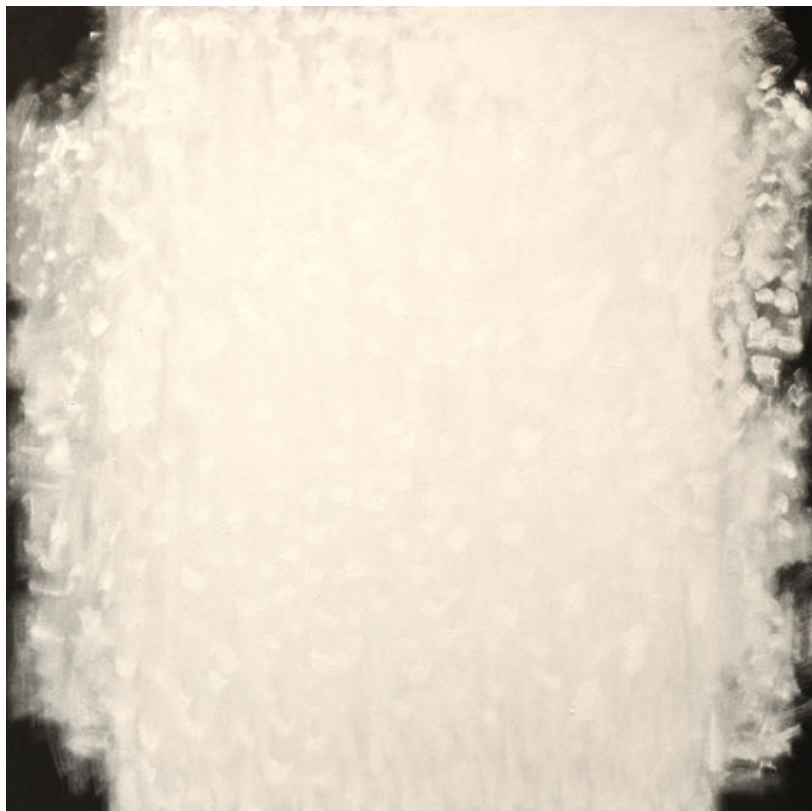
*Protection*, 2013  
leather, stones, silk,  
thread, shell  
6 x 10"

*Inner Journey*, 2013  
wool, branch  
10 x 18"



JOSEPH SIDDIQI

*Mad Love*, 2011  
oil on linen  
26 x 33"



ERNIE KLINGER

*Unseen*, 2014  
oil on canvas  
33 x 33"



## GABRIELA GARCIA-LUNA

*Sakura*, 2011  
archival inks on cotton paper  
edition 3/5  
17 x 17"

*Untitled #20*, 2011  
archival inks on cotton paper  
edition 1/5  
17 x 17"

*Li River*, 2011  
archival inks on cotton paper  
edition 3/5  
17 x 22"



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**Artists:** Gabriela Garcia-Luna, Ernie Klinger, Monique Martin, Christine Ramsay, Amin Rehman, Joseph Siddiqi, Jean E. Sonmor, Sean Whalley, and Carol Wylie

**Reception:** January 21, 2015

**Gallery Director:** Karen Schoonover

**Guest Curator:** Holly Fay

**Essay:** Holly Fay

**Cover:** Amin Rehman, *Can You Touch the Sky*, 2012, encaustic on board, 10 x 10"

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