



Augmented Reality Creates Moving Pictures: Increases Accessibility to Art Work

BY SHAUNNA GRANDISH

An exhibition hosted by the Art Gallery of Regina, during Culture Days in 2020, has taken the art gallery experience virtual and increased its accessibility.

Moving Pictures is an on-demand screening of video artworks by Saskatchewan artists through an augmented reality smartphone app called Artivive. This app, which is paired with augmented reality-enabled posters scattered throughout Regina and other locations, provides a link that will connect users to a new and innovative art experience in Saskatchewan. Sandee Moore, curator of exhibitions and programming, Art Gallery of Regina, says *Moving Pictures* was not only a reaction to COVID-19 restrictions but it was also a response to how many people view the traditional art gallery experience.

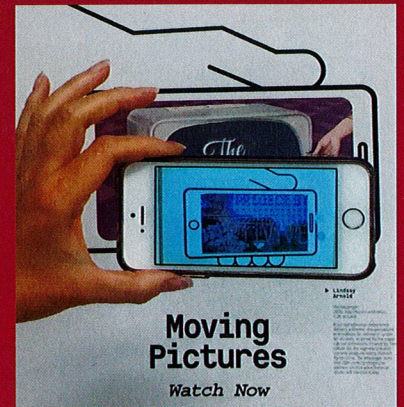
“We were aware that even before COVID-19 that a lot of people had anxiety about entering an art gallery; they may think that an art gallery isn’t for them,” explains Moore. “We thought it was important to reach out and engage people in a novel experience of art – one that is facilitated by familiar technology in a place that they are already comfortable with.”

Moore, who is also a media artist and an instructor at the University of Regina, had previous experience working with augmented reality technology in her own practice. Because of that experience, she knew how easy it was to use this technology. Through her work as a university lecturer, she observed that many young people and newcomers rely solely on their smartphones, rather than home computers, to connect.

To help in the quick development of *Moving Pictures*, she looked for work that was already completed. Moore also searched for artists’ work that expressed universal experiences while telling stories about the diversity and complexity of the Saskatchewan experience.

According to Moore, viewing and sharing these stories allows for people to ‘connect’ with one another even though they aren’t physically together in a gallery. She hopes that people will come across them by accident.

“Everyone is burned out with Zoom meetings, so let’s invite people to walk around and use the phone in their pocket to experience art,” says Moore.



What is Augmented Reality?

Augmented reality is created when digital content is laid over a live view of the physical world, often shared through a smartphone or other viewing device. For *Moving Pictures*, users just take out their phones, open the free Artivive app and view the poster through the app connected to their phone’s camera. The video plays on their phone, when it is aligned with the artwork on Augmented Reality poster.



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People can experience *Moving Pictures* not only in Regina, but in several other communities across the province such as Shaunavon, Leader, Estevan and Yorkton. Moore says she has heard feedback that viewers found the art exciting and delightful including comments from someone in Willow Bunch who talked about how great, and unexpected it was to view art in a local pub.

Moore adds that when she was putting up posters at a playground, children came by to see what she was doing. She showed them the augmented reality video and they were astounded. Seeing a still image come to life was like magic to them, she says. Moore also used this opportunity to talk with the children about the video.

“Video art still seems a little out there for some people,” notes Moore. “We are saying that experiences of technology-based art shouldn’t be limited to the big cities. We want to put this out in communities across the province, and this is an easy way to do it. You don’t need to make an appointment with a gallery or sign up for an online screening to see it – you

can encounter it on the street anytime, anywhere.”

The Art Gallery of Regina received support through SaskCulture's Culture Days Hub Sponsorship for the project.



Artists Lindsay Arnold's *The Messenger* (previous page), John Graham's *Trio of Enchanted Visions* (top), Dennis Jackson's *Journey Through Fear* (side), and Theo Pelmus with Kristin Snowbird's *Adam and Eve Saiteaux* (bottom) were part of the video arts selected for the *Moving Pictures* event. Photos courtesy of the Art Gallery of Regina.