



Moving Forward, **Looking Back**

Annual Juried Part 2
²⁰/₂₂ Exhibition

Modern Fuel Artist-Run Centre is a non-profit organization facilitating the presentation, interpretation, and production of contemporary visual, time-based and interdisciplinary arts. Modern Fuel aims to meet the professional development needs of emerging and mid-career local, national and international artists, from diverse cultural communities, through exhibition, discussion, and mentorship opportunities. Modern Fuel supports innovation and experimentation and is committed to the education of interested publics and the diversification of its audiences. As an advocate for contemporary art, as well as for artists' rights, we pay professional fees to artists in accordance with the CARFAC fee schedule.

Modern Fuel is situated on the unceded ancestral territory of the Haudenosaunee and Anishinaabeg peoples. We acknowledge the Haudenosaunee and Anishinaabeg peoples as the past, present, and future caretakers of this land. We also recognize the Métis peoples and other nations from across Turtle Island who have called Katarokwi / Kingston home for generations upon generations. We are grateful to be able to live, learn and make art on this land and be in such close proximity to the waters of

the St. Lawrence River and Lake Ontario. To acknowledge this traditional territory and waterways is to recognize this city and country's longer history pre-dating confederation and the work that must still be done in decolonizing our spaces and relations. We at Modern Fuel strive towards respectful relationships with all of our communities in hopes of walking a good path together.

We at Modern Fuel want to state unequivocally that Black lives matter, Indigenous lives matter, and that the lives of People of Colour matter. Modern Fuel strives to ensure that members and visitors feel safe and welcome in our space and at our events. We do not tolerate discrimination, harassment, or violence including but not limited to ableism; ageism; homophobia and transphobia; misogyny; racism and white supremacy. It is also important to us that Modern Fuel not only continues to present works and programs that support Black and Indigenous artists, members and visitors, but invests in the work of becoming an inclusive, anti-racist organization. We feel it is only then that Modern Fuel can advocate for artists and foster community with care and respect.



Modern Fuel Artist-Run Centre
305-307 King Street West
Kingston, ON K7L 2X4

Gallery Hours
Tuesday-Saturday
12-5PM

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EMEBET BELETE

Old Work: *Montreal, 1997/1998* | New Work: *Standing Still, 2022*

ABOUT

Emebet Belete is an artist and educator who was born in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. A graduate of the Addis Ababa Fine Arts School, she received her BFA and B. Ed from Queen's University. She uses pastel, oil and acrylic, collage and mixed media to create images that reflect her experiences growing up in Addis Ababa, and living in Canada and working in Asia. Her work can be found at the National Museum of Ethiopia, the Ethiopian National Institute of Culture, and TEDA Archives (Tianjin), as well as in private collections around the world. Emebet is a recipient of a Visual Arts Grant from Ontario Arts Council and Canada Council for the Arts. Since 2015 Emebet has received Ontario Arts Council School Projects grants which she uses to teach students in her local schools in the Bay of Quinte.

Emebet loves the feeling of experimentation and learning. When she first moved to Canada, she continued working with collage, techniques that have evolved into her mixed media work.

For her 2019 Modern Fuel exhibition, she combined working with languages on Ethiopian fabric and soundscapes. Her most recent work involves using photopolymer etching (Solarplates), where she gets to work with traditional printmaking while using more environmentally friendly materials.

You can find out more about her at www.emebet.ca.

DESCRIPTION OF THE WORKS

OLD WORK: Montreal (Collage), 1997/1998

My collage in 1997/1998 (when I first moved to Canada) was a combination of my thoughts around Ethiopia, and my experiences in Canada.

I was living in downtown Montreal that year. For several months, I placed an easel near my window, and worked on capturing what I saw every day. That was also the big ice storm year. When I walked out into the empty streets in Montreal, I saw the beauty of the storm, and the changes. I walked back into my

apartment and said to my brother, “Ice is covering everything. It’s beautiful. Things are falling to the ground – even the branches!” My brother replied, “That is not normal,” and rushed out to see. My collages often worked with shades of blue.

**NEW WORK: *Standing Still*
(*Printmaking*), 2022**

The printmaking piece was done thanks to Visual Arts Grants from the OAC and CCA, which allowed me to take the time to research and create. I’ve loved revisiting printmaking, and learning an entirely new technique with Solarplates. Solarplates tested my love for experimentation! So many different

variables in making things work. On top of the etching itself, I had to learn and work extensively with Photoshop. For printmaking, a traditional medium, I needed to integrate a number of technologies I’ve always wanted to use. I loved how Solarplate is a non-toxic etching technique, and how I was able to look again at Ethiopian Historical sites of Lalibela and Gonder. I usually work on larger sizes. For me, the other challenge with these pieces was to work small and detailed.

Emebet Belete thanks the Ontario Arts Council and The Canada Council for the Arts.

REBECCA COWAN

**Old Work: *Reunion Cheers Ailing Father*, 1994 |
New Work: *Keeping Time #3*, 2021**

ABOUT

I am a storyteller who uses images in place of words.

I am inspired by accounts of relationships that have been altered by time and memory. An underlying theme of my work is the ongoing conflict between security and freedom that is a part of all our

lives. My goal is to create imagery that resonates with the viewer so powerfully that they are able to see their lives through new eyes. Printmaking is my primary medium, but over my career I have expanded my practice to include collage, book arts and, most recently, assemblage. Along with several solo exhibitions in Toronto, Vancouver and Kingston,

my work has been in numerous national and international group exhibitions. In 2016 I was honoured when one of my books was chosen for the Seventh Annual Biennale for the Artist's Book, in Alexandria, Egypt.

My work can be seen in private and public collections throughout Canada and the United States, and has been recognized with grants and awards from a variety of organizations, including Canada Council for the Arts, the Ontario Arts Council, Open Studio and the Toronto Outdoor Art Exhibition.

DESCRIPTION OF THE WORKS

My work consists of an etching from 1994 and an assemblage from 2021. It wasn't until I began choosing pieces that addressed the theme of *Moving Forward, Looking Back* that I realized how closely related these works are. Although the technical aspects of my practice have expanded over the years, my artistic concerns and goals have barely wavered.

In 1994, as I was dealing with the loss of my father, I created a series of etchings that tried to answer the question: Can the memory of small moments of pleasure sustain us and aid in our psychological healing? To enhance the idea of pleasure overcoming pain, I titled the work

with newspaper headlines that reveal the shadows lying beneath the public face each of us wears.

In 2021, as the pandemic raged, these questions of emotional survival re-emerged. I began working on a set of assemblages using the bodies of antique mantle clocks. Broken and no longer marking the hours, these decorative wooden boxes seemed a perfect metaphor for the strange times we were in. I used bits of my old prints, found images, and natural elements to create images that would return the viewer to a different time and place, where simple pleasures abound.

ELYSE LONGAIR

Old Work: *Between Atoms*, 2016 | New Work: *Boy with Balloon*, 2020

ABOUT

Elyse Longair is an artist, curator and image theorist, currently pursuing her Ph.D. in Screen Cultures and Curatorial Studies at Queen's University. In 2021, Longair received her MFA from the Interdisciplinary Art Media and Design program at OCAD University. From 2020-2021, she was an RBC Emerging Artist at The Power Plant Contemporary Art Gallery. Longair's 'simple image' theory in collage re-imagines the role of images away from the overt-complexity that dominates our world, opening up new possibilities for imagined futures.

Artist Statement:

My artistic praxis references and engages with simple images, using collage and collage aesthetics. The simple images encourage us to rethink and reflect on the role of imagination, opening up new possibilities for imagined futures. In my current series of collage-based work, I aim to explore how fragmented worlds of a reconstructed past may question our notions of time and reshape our thinking of the future.

DESCRIPTION OF THE WORKS

OLD WORK: *Between Atoms*, collage, 36 x 56.5, 2016

NEW WORK: *Boy with Balloon*, collage, 36 x 22, 2020

Between Atoms was one of the first collages I reproduced large-scale for a solo exhibition at the *Ministry of Casual Living*, Victoria BC, 2016. From 2016 onwards, collage has become my primary practice. I have developed image-making practises to critically question our relationship with the future by reimagining a simple aesthetic which has become the foundation of my MFA thesis and Ph.D. dissertation. For me, the simple image is defined by a number of key qualities: (1) presenting the images as a flat seamless surface, (2) visually similar source material, (3) limiting the number of images used and (4) embracing subtly, all qualities present in my 'old work' and refined in my 'new work'. The simple image relies upon profound understandings of the images being used, with the ability to see beyond the realities and meanings of the original image, as well as to recognize powerful relationships

made possible through (re) imagining already existing images in the world. I find that as my work has progressed, I am able to embrace subtly and provide more space to take on different meanings, to open up the possibility for different experiences, instead of mere passive

consumption and proliferation, which is embedded in us through our engagements with images in consumer culture. I attempt to draw the viewer into a different world, one defined through questions of imagination, a common goal seen through my collages.

KATHLEEN SELLARS

Old Work: *Ear Hood*, 1996 | New Work: *Skin Deep (Bloody Gorgeous)*, 2022

ABOUT

Kathleen Sellars' artwork has been exhibited nationally for over 30 years. She has received a number of creation and presentation grants through both provincial and federal arts councils, as well as Queen's University. She currently lives in Kingston where she teaches Sculpture and New Media in the Fine Art Program (Visual Art) at Queen's University.

Artist Statement:

Kathleen Sellars artwork embraces sculpture, installation, and time-based media. Her work addresses personal lived experience and thus has evolved throughout her career to include ideas around interpersonal relationships,

academic research, and mental and physical health. Ideas are conveyed through both formal and conceptual cues through specificity of materials and objects that relationally promote viewer felt experience. In other words, the objects include elements that we can all identify with; bodily forms and domestic objects are often combined to create novel forms that are familiar but foreign or are uncannily recognizable. Beauty and humour are often used to draw the viewer in to engage with more serious subject matter.

DESCRIPTION OF THE WORKS

OLD WORK: *Ear Hood*, 1996

Ear Hood is a work from a series of objects made in 1996 that focuses

on ideas around communication and interpersonal relationships. Made of silicone, a head shaped form is enveloped in more than 150 cast silicone ears. The zipper at the back of the hood and the human height of the stand implies that the object is to be worn, presumably to improve hearing. However, ironically, when worn the object becomes disorienting, more an engagement in self-awareness as sight and hearing of the outside world is limited and the sounds of one's own breathing and heartbeat is increased.

NEW WORK: *Skin Deep (Bloody Gorgeous)*, 2022

Skin Deep (Bloody Gorgeous) is a new work that I plan to expand on with other similar objects. It explores my psychological relationship to my body as I deal with and manage bodily issues as I age. This work is so new that I'm having a bit of difficulty writing about it or rather figuring out how much detail I am comfortable with or indeed is necessary to share. Having said that, a few years ago I was diagnosed with a rare autoimmune disease that continues to insidiously develop and progress. These physical changes impact my day to day, how I relate to others and negotiate the challenges that my new body demands. Outwardly some of the signs are obvious to others; patches

of reddish brown discoloured skin is tautly constricted and restricts movement, somewhat resembling the skin remaining after a severe burn. My hands are often so swollen that I can barely make a fist or manipulate my fingers. Not the best characteristics, to say the least, for a person whose identity is partially made up of being a maker of handmade things. So, in the end there is a push pull, an in depth interest and curiosity, and at the same time a horror of what precisely is going on in there, inside my abject body. With these ideas and feelings in mind, *Skin Deep (Blood Gorgeous)* combines casts from moulds of my body and domestic found furniture. My fist is shaped with my thumb in my palm, the only way I can make a tight fist. Coincidentally, this hand position is also the sign for help when it cannot be asked for out loud. As a whole, this piece discretely conveys that which may be seen but also that which is hidden, internal and unknown.

Together, *Ear Hood* and *Skin Deep (Bloody Gorgeous)* have obvious connections in their physical forms and body moulding processes. They also share a sense of the familiar, craftspersonship and abject beauty. They sit comfortably together but also tell a story of my development as an artist, evolution of ideas and representation.

LORNE SINGER

Old Work: *The Old Tree*, 2006 | **New Work:** *The Language of Walking*, 2019

ABOUT

Once upon a time, when I was teaching grade 7 in Picton, our school had a project where every student created a book. As part of the process, I wrote poems based on our class. Teaching poetry to elementary students is one of the most fun parts of my job. Poetry is accessible for kids. Sometimes the strongest poems get written by students without strong language skills (like our ESL students when we taught in China.) Exploring language lets them write something new, and fully be part of what everyone in the class is doing.

I've been writing poems since that time. Poetry has allowed me to reflect on our time living in Kingston and China, on following my kids around when they were little, on little scraps and ideas that come out of nowhere.

The writing I do is mostly based around school and home. I was with the Kingston Whig Standard's Community Editorial Board in 2004, writing columns throughout that year. I've been a school teacher with HPEDSB since 1998.

DESCRIPTION OF THE WORKS

OLD WORK: *The Old Tree*, poem, 2006

Parenthood is both looking forward and back at the same time. *The Old Tree* was one of the first handful of poems I wrote when I started writing consistently. Our children were little, and we were playing at City Park. They were climbing up and down the sideways tree, and this was the result. This is the shortest of my children's poems.

NEW WORK: *The Language of Walking*, poem, 2019

The Language of Walking was based on one of my wife's recent paintings. She was exhibiting at an outdoor art fair, and over those days I started creating poems based on her art. We've done that before, self-publishing a book called *A Circle in Time*, based on her teaching project at Teda International School, in China. One image that came into this poem was walking through Little Catarauqui, on a late summer day. It felt like we were the only ones there, except the frogs hidden on the path, launching themselves into the bushes as we walked by.

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