

EDMONTON HISTORIAN LAUREATE



Edmonton's first five Historians Laureate

Photo by John Chalmers

l-r: Marlena Wyman, Chris Chang-Yen Phillips, Danielle Metcalfe-Chenail, Shirley Lowe, Ken Tingley

MARLENA WYMAN

REPORT TO CITY COUNCIL

March 2019 to March 2020

The position of Historian Laureate has been a full and exciting one for me.

It has provided me with opportunities to make a difference, to meet passionate, fascinating people who I may not have met otherwise, and to be involved in the City's decision-making process around our heritage and identity. I am grateful to have had this unique opportunity and experience and I wish the next Historian Laureate all the best in their term.



Marlena Wyman photo by Ted Smith

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PROJECTS

ART EXHIBITS



Detail of "Bluebird" painting by Marlena Wyman

REAL WOMEN exhibit

- Art Gallery of Alberta/Alberta Art Foundation Traveling Exhibition Program (TREX)
- Group exhibit curated by Shane Golby of the AGA. The exhibit is travelling through Alberta from August 2019 to September 2021 and will be on display in schools, libraries, museums, and other community facilities.
- My paintings in the exhibit are inspired by the archival records of Edmonton women. Two paintings illustrate First World War stories (based on Mary Capling Hyde's diaries and Madeleine Jaffray's scrapbooks), one painting is based on the records of the Beulah Home for unwed mothers, and one based on early Edmonton women's societies.
- AFA newsletter: <https://bit.ly/2TZzrP3>
- Further historical background on these paintings can be viewed on my art blog posts by searching TREX: <https://theprairieline.wordpress.com/>



*Artist's talk at Millet Museum & Archives
Photo by Tracey Leavitt*



Exhibit in place at Concordia University

PROJECTS ART EXHIBITS (cont')

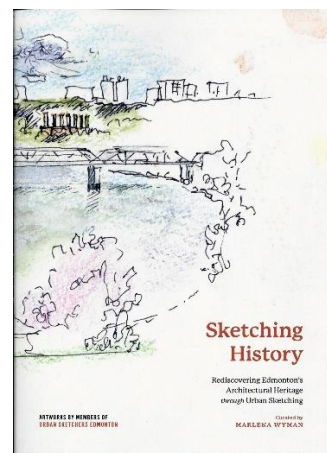
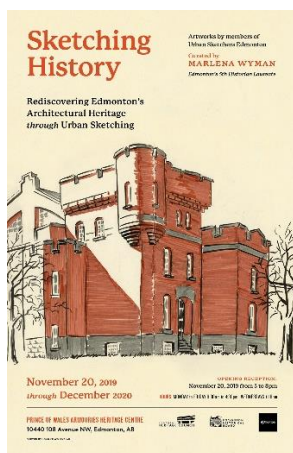


Visitors at opening of *Sketching History* exhibit

Photo by Ted Smith

SKETCHING HISTORY: Rediscovering Edmonton's Architectural Heritage through Urban Sketching

- *Sketching History* is a group exhibit that I curated featuring sketches from members of Urban Sketchers Edmonton of the city's built and natural heritage, as well as photographs and paintings from the City of Edmonton Archives. These are exhibited alongside background stories that I researched and wrote for the heritage locations that we sketched. There were approximately 120 people in attendance at the launch, and the exhibit is in place for one year beginning November 20, 2019 at the Prince of Wales Armouries and City Archives.
- A smaller exhibit is travelling to Edmonton Public Library branches, an exhibit catalogue was published, and an online version is on the City Archives webpage: edmonton.ca/sketchinghistory
- To see posts on my art blog, search *Sketching History*: <https://theprairieline.wordpress.com/>
- I am very grateful for the financial support of this project by the Edmonton Heritage Council, the Edmonton Historical Board, and the City of Edmonton Archives.



SPEAKING ENGAGEMENTS



Talk and workshop at the Millet Museum & Archives, August 28, 2019 Photo by Tracey Leavitt

I gave nine talks from March 2019 to March 2020, most of which included slide presentations, for various groups including students, heritage groups, arts groups, women's groups and the general public.

- **Edmonton & District Historical Society**, March 19, 2019
 - I presented for one of the ED&HS Speaker Series talks, and I spoke about my first year as Historian Laureate
- **Edmonton Regional Heritage Fair**, May 4, 2019
 - I introduced the event, and spent time chatting with students about their exhibits
- **Alberta Genealogical Society, Edmonton Branch**, June 27, 2019
 - I spoke about filling the gap in women's history and archival collections
- **Friends of the Provincial Archives of Alberta Society**, September 11, 2019
 - I spoke how I have interpreted my role as the Historian Laureate through my art practice, and my use of archival research for inspiration.
- **Let's Find Out podcast**, October 30, 2019
 - I participated in an episode of Chris Chang-Yen Phillips's (Edmonton's 4th Historian Laureate) podcast about Edmonton's natural history: <https://bit.ly/2NZn2H6>
- **Real Women exhibit (see page 3) artist's talks and workshops for:**
 - **Millet Museum & Archives**, August 28, 2019
 - **Spruce Grove Public Library**, February 8, 2020
 - I gave artist's talks about my paintings in the *Real Women* travelling exhibit, and I gave workshops on image transfer techniques using archival photographs
- **Sketching History exhibit (see page 4) artist's talks and tours for:**
 - **The Learning Centre Literacy Association**, January 30, 2020
 - **South West Edmonton Seniors' Association**, March 23, 2020

CLASSROOM VISITS



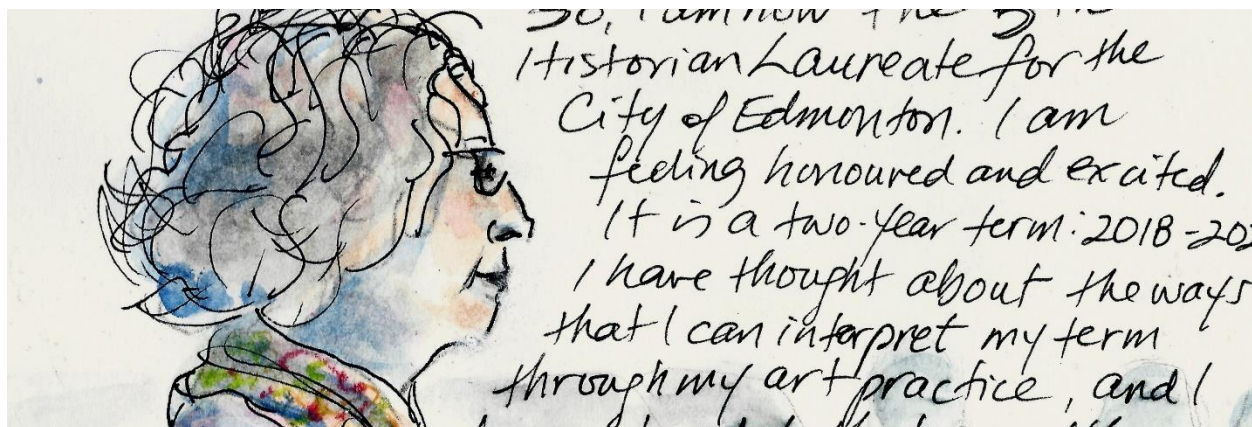
Career Day talk at Michael Phair Junior High School

Photo by Arven Aubrey-Hebert

- **Hardisty Grade 5/6 class at Prince of Wales Armouries for City Hall School,** September 18, 2019
 - I spoke about the Historian Laureate role
- **Michael Phair Junior High School Carer Day,** December 18, 2019
 - I spoke about career opportunities in heritage and the arts

MEETINGS AND HERITAGE EVENTS

- I organized monthly heritage sketching locations for Urban Sketchers Edmonton to create content for the *Sketching History* exhibit (see page 4). Over 100 sketches by 12 artists are included in the exhibit.
- I participated as a heritage mentor in the Edmonton Heritage Council's Pilot Heritage Sector Mentorship Project.
- I took part in PhD Candidate Craig Thomas's project *Creative Workers in Place: A Phenomenography of Creative Workers' Perception of Place*. He is researching how creative people give meaning to and define places in Edmonton.
- I attended and participated in a number of Edmonton Historical Board meetings.
- I participated in the Edmonton Historical Board annual report presentation to City Council.
- I attended a workshop regarding the preservation and potential adaptive reuse of Hangar 11.
- I attended the Edmonton Historical Board Annual Awards ceremony.
- I participated in the walk-through of the Ortona Armoury Arts Building on July 4th to help identify historically significant features in order to further the heritage understanding of the building in the pre-construction assessment.



PUBLIC REQUESTS

I was both gratified and surprised by the large number of public requests for my advice and information (119 requests from April 2018 to end February 2020). Although I defined my term fairly narrowly as interpreting the role through archives and my art practice, the public expectations of the role were very wide ranging. These included:

- Advice on family archives and questions about varied aspects of Edmonton's history
- Requests for my advice and/or participation in individual and group history-based projects
- Requests for speaking engagements

I accepted as many speaking engagements as I was able. I provided advice as well as referrals to archives and other sources and/or names of people in the heritage field who specialize in particular areas of history. I declined participation in most projects due to time constraints but provided information.

I have attached my Excel spreadsheet of public requests to date. This will help provide context regarding how the public views the role of Historian Laureate. [See Appendix 1](#)

COMMENTS

Regarding my exhibit from last year about Gladys Reeves, early Edmonton photographer and river valley advocate, two of her great-nieces from New Zealand found my blog post online about the exhibit and emailed me to express their thanks. This is one of the reasons that I make art - to create a connection with history, my artwork and the viewer, and the opportunity to connect with the family of Gladys Reeves was both meaningful and greatly gratifying.

- From great niece Marion: "We were delighted to learn more from your work of Aunty Glad and her contributions to Edmonton's historical records, and even more pleased to hear that she is held in such high regard."
- From great niece Barbara: "Thank you so much for your interest and research into the life of our Aunty Glad. It makes me feel quite proud that I am related to such a strong and daring woman who accomplished such a lot."

ARTICLES/BLOG POSTS/MEDIA



Global TV interviewing me at the Sketching History exhibit Photo by Julie Daly

- I posted regularly on **Edmonton’s Historian Laureate** Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/yeghistory/>
- I wrote several posts on my art blog **The Prairie Line** about my Historian Laureate exhibits and events <https://theprairieline.wordpress.com/>
- The **Sketching History** exhibit was covered in various social media sites, newsletters and blog posts including: Edmonton Heritage Council, Edmonton Historical Board, Edmonton Arts Council, City of Edmonton, YEG City Planning, Councillor Scott McKeen, Dan Rose (Chair of the Edmonton Historical Board), Todayville Edmonton, Urban Sketchers Edmonton, Alberta Foundation for the Arts, and Canadian Artists’ Representation/Le Front des artistes canadiens (CARFAC).
- **Edmonton Heritage Council blog:** Post about the Historian Laureate position: <https://bit.ly/2RRMKOZ>
- **WinterCity Edmonton:** I wrote a guest post titled *Winter’s Inspiration* about winter paintings from the City of Edmonton Archives’ collection
- **CTV News:** I was interviewed for the evening news re: Urban Sketchers Edmonton at El Mirador apartments. <https://bit.ly/2GtX9v2>
- **CBC News:** I was interviewed about the rehab of the historic Ortona Armoury Arts Building: <https://bit.ly/2OGisim>
- **NAIT Newswatch:** I was interviewed at the launch of the *Sketching History* exhibit (at 9:20) <https://bit.ly/30WhfaJ>
- **Global TV:** Three of the artists and I were interviewed by Global TV about the *Sketching History* exhibit. <https://bit.ly/2MJ7WVt>
- **Global TV:** I was interviewed about the heart-bombing of El Mirador apartments: <https://bit.ly/39L8ymP>
- **Edmonton Journal:** I was interviewed by Justin Bell about the *Sketching History* exhibit.