



6th Annual  
PLRAC/McKnight  
Artist Grantee Exhibition  
January 11 - February 19, 2016

**Emerging Artist Grantees**

**Ryan Acker**, Mankato  
**Carolyn Borgen**, New Ulm  
**Yvonne Cory**, Easton  
**Makenzie Greimann**, Blue Earth  
**Susan Hayes**, Montgomery  
**Esther Hoffmann**, Mankato  
**Margie Larson**, Mankato  
**Humerio Mendez**, St. Peter  
**Melody Mickelson**, Madelia  
**Joellen Preston**, Mankato  
**Nicholas Schleif**, Comfrey  
**Jason Schroeder**, New Ulm  
**Dana Sikkila**, North Mankato  
**Amy Sinning**, Mankato

**Fellowship Grantees**

**Greg Abbott**, North Mankato  
**David Hyduke**, Kasota  
**Leslie Laidlaw**, Mankato  
**Nell Musolf**, Mankato  
**Denise Neushwander-Frink**, Mankato  
**David Olson**, Madison Lake  
**Amber Rahe**, Mankato  
**Allison Roberts**, Mankato  
**Robyn Sand Anderson**, New Ulm  
**Joe Tougas**, North Mankato

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Held at **Ylvisaker Fine Arts Center**

**Bethany Lutheran College, 700 Luther Drive, Mankato, MN 56001**  
Gallery Hours: Sun.-Thurs. 1-9 p.m. and Fri. & Sat. 1-8 p.m.

# Prairie Lakes Regional Arts Council



Brenda Byron  
Executive Director

We are pleased to present the sixth Annual Artist Grantee Exhibition funded by a grant from the McKnight Foundation, in Minneapolis. This group exhibit features twenty-four artists; fourteen artists were awarded a \$1,000 Emerging Artist Grant and ten artists were awarded a \$3,000 Fellowship by Prairie Lakes in 2014.

We are happy to collaborate with Bethany College to host this exhibition. The Prairie Lakes Regional Arts Council has a 23 year history of funding Individual Artists with grants with funding provided by the McKnight Foundation, Minneapolis. "I have been the Executive Director of the regional arts council since 1989, noted Byron, and we began Individual Artist

Grants in 1992 and five artists were awarded \$500 project grants. The program has developed over the years and the amount and number of grants has increased based on funding from McKnight." **A total of 293 Artist Grants have been awarded from January 1992 through June 2015.**

In Fiscal Year 2016 Prairie Lakes (PLRAC) will continue to award \$1,000 Artist Career Development Grants and \$3,000 Fellowships.

We share in the McKnight Foundation's goals to support and develop our communities by supporting high quality art that is broadly accessible. We continue to focus our McKnight grants on support of our professional artists in the region through an emerging artist and fellowship program and juried regional art exhibition. The regional arts council truly believes that our individual artists are at the heart of all arts activity. The council and staff believe that technical assistance, grants, and networking amongst our artists and arts organizations is crucial to the region's arts development. We have a vibrant arts community in south central Minnesota that plays an important role in community development and the economic development of our region. The arts enrich each one of our lives.

PLRAC serves the nine county area in south central Minnesota. We provide programs for the development of the local artists, arts organizations and art audiences. The council administers several grant programs with funds appropriated by the Minnesota State Legislature and the McKnight Foundation.

**In FY 2015 Prairie Lakes awarded 222 arts grants totaling \$464,639.** The combined State art grants and Arts & Cultural Heritage grants of \$421,639 were awarded; and the McKnight Foundation supported our Artist Grant Program which awarded \$43,000 to twenty-three artists. This includes Emerging Artist and mid-career Fellowships with amounts of \$1,000 and \$3,000 respectively.



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# Exhibiting Artists



## **Yvonne Cory, Easton**

“Candlewicking to Chenille, an Artistic Journey”,  
Fiber, NFS  
“Dainty and Fancy”, Fiber, NFS  
“Wedding Mementos”, Fiber, NFS  
“White Pearl Flour”, Fiber, NFS

## **Susan Hayes, Montgomery**

“Cheetah”, Batik, \$75  
“Elephant Walk”, Batik, \$85  
“Northern Lights”, Batik, \$75  
“Three Sheep”, Batik, \$75

## **David Hyduke, Kasota**

“Celestial Dancers”, Bronze, \$3,500  
“Last Dance”, Bronze, \$3,500  
“Life Form”, Bronze, \$2,500

## **Leslie Laidlaw, Mankato**

“Untitled Teapot #1”, Ceramic, \$350  
“Untitled Teapot #2”, Ceramic, \$350  
“Untitled Teapot #3”, Ceramic, \$350  
“Untitled Teapot #4”, Ceramic, \$350

## **Margie Larson, Mankato**

“Awakening”, Oil and cold wax on board, \$300  
“Desert Sun”, Oil and cold wax on board, \$300  
“Fallow Fields”, Oil and cold wax on board, \$300  
“Shreds of Corn”, Oil and cold wax on board, \$250

## **Humerio Mendez, St. Peter**

“Abstract”, Acrylic, \$5,000  
“Erotica”, Acrylic, \$5,000  
“Geometric One”, Acrylic, \$5,000  
“Geometric Two”, Acrylic, \$5,000

## **Melody Mickelson, Madelia**

“Finn Mouseson”, Pen and Ink, NFS  
“Little Leaf Boat”, Pen and Ink, NFS  
“Thistle with Kila Mouseford”, Pen and Ink, NFS  
“Zuzzy”, Pen and Ink, NFS

## **David Olson, Madison Lake**

“Study #1”, Oil, \$300  
“Study #2”, Oil, \$300  
“Study #3”, Oil, \$300  
“Study #4”, Pastel, NFS

## **Joellen Preston, Mankato**

“It’s Hard Not To Wander Away”, Soft Pastel, \$150  
“Others Have Excuses; I Have Reasons Why”, Soft  
Pastel, \$150  
“Playing My Role With Nerves Left”, Soft Pastel,  
\$150  
“This Feeling Is Short Of A Love”, Soft Pastel, \$150

## **Amber Rahe, Mankato**

“Continuous Breath”, Oil, \$1,000  
“Everlasting Life”, Oil, \$2,000  
“Logic and Reason”, Oil, \$1,000  
“Our Lady”, Oil, \$1,000

## **Robyn Sand Anderson, New Ulm**

“O Magnum Mysterium”, Acrylic, \$2,500  
“Sun Rise”, Acrylic, \$100  
“Waves of Grief”, Acrylic, \$985

## **Nicholas Schleif, Comfrey**

“Lipstick & Gunpowder”, Gunpowder burns on  
canvas, \$4,500  
“March On”, Gunpowder burns on canvas, \$3,500  
“The Great Purger”, Gunpowder burns on canvas,  
\$3,500  
“Zealot Shepherds”, Gunpowder burns on canvas,  
\$5,000

## **Dana Sikkila, North Mankato**

“Beehive Boston”, Mixed Media Installation, NFS

## **Amy Sinning, Mankato**

“Fabric Willow Tree at the Children's Museum of  
Southern MN”, Photograph, NFS  
“Photo Collage of Tree Dress from Raw Fusion”, NFS  
“Tree Dress from Raw Fusion”, Fibers, NFS  
“Holiday Lights Dress”, Fibers, NFS

**This exhibition features twenty-four artists; fourteen artists were awarded a \$1,000 Emerging Artist Grant and ten artists were awarded a \$3,000 Fellowship by Prairie Lakes in 2014.**

Below is an alphabetical list of all artists describing their background and how they utilized their grant.

**Greg Abbott** Greg works for the Minnesota School Boards Association in communications. His hobby is playwrighting. He used the PLRAC/McKnight Fellowship to finish writing a kids' play called "Electable," about a girl with a learning disability who is helped by neighborhood friends in running for a county commissioner seat. He worked with the Madelia Community Theatre and Madelia theatre students to make the performance its summer production. For seven years, Greg has been the coordinator for the Minnesota Shorts Play Festival, which performs 14 short plays from around the state and country on the Thursday and Friday after Labor Day. He also served on the Mankato Mosaic Theatre Company board for five years and helped to start the 4Playwrights Project, a local writing group for playwrights. His latest show "A Merry Dysfunctional Christmas," was performed in November 2015 in New Ulm.



**Ryan Acker** Ryan is a banjo player and songwriter in the Minnesota based folk band, The Last Revel. Ryan found a passion for music early on in his life growing up in Wisconsin. After graduating from Minnesota State University, Mankato in 2012 Ryan has been actively pursuing a career in music. The PLRAC/McKnight Emerging Artist grant helped Ryan purchase home studio equipment and helped him find his own songwriting voice.



**Carolyn Borgen** Carolyn is a string bass teacher at the New Ulm Suzuki School of Music and the Executive Director of the Mankato Area Youth Symphony Orchestra. Carolyn has a Master's Degree from Saint Mary's University in Art Administration. She plays bass in a variety of music groups from the Cannon Valley Regional Orchestra, to the Mankato Community Orchestra, to the State Street Theater. She has also played with the Saint Paul Civic Symphony and Winona Symphony Orchestra. Carolyn has received an Emerging Artist grant from Prairie Lakes Regional Arts Council and a Suzuki Association of Minnesota Summer Institute Scholarship. Carolyn used her artist grant to attend the Suzuki "Every Child Can" training to be a qualified Suzuki trained string bass teacher in the New Ulm area; and she purchased a bass case and wheel to take the bass to local performances. She is also the mother to a Suzuki trained budding violinist who will, hopefully, one day consider playing duets with her mom.



**Yvonne Cory** Growing up on a farm in southern Minnesota, I had many encounters with textiles and fibers: I watched my parents sew everything from family clothing to car upholstery and a hand-crank Singer sewing machine ignited my love for fiber art at an early age. Later I completed a Needle Arts course at the Minneapolis Technical School before graduating from Mankato State College with a Bachelor of Science degree in Home Economics. Teaching sewing skills, fashion history and textile identification cultivated my continued interest in fiber art, which now carries over to my passion for collecting vintage aprons. My textile collection is no longer on a single shelf at our Easton, MN farm home, but has become an integral part of my multi-disciplinary artistic journey. Family heirlooms of three generations and hundreds of additional aprons promote education and appreciation for vintage textiles when presenting programs in the tri-state area. I also design aprons that honor memories, use reclaimed textiles and make people smile. Vintage styles, artistic techniques and fabric combinations provide an outlet for my creative inspirations. I love reclaiming “throw away” items and transforming them into new aprons. A solo art show featured aprons made from old clothes, men’s ties, tablecloths, bedspreads, a vintage flour sack and more. The Emerging Artist grant allowed the purchase of a portable, wireless sound system; design and display items; and, a research trip to The Textile Art Center Library in Minneapolis, which provided a wealth of knowledge for my vintage programs and designs.



**Makenzie Greimann** Makenzie is originally from Blue Earth and is an all-around artist: dancer, singer/songwriter, visual artist (drawing, painting and graphic design) writer (lyricist, blogger, closet screenwriter) and actor (Off Broadway, ABC and CBS television shows). She attended Brigham Young University’s Music Dance Theatre program. During her years of performance pursuit, she taught herself graphic and web design programs to utilize her visual art capabilities. Through these skills she’s been able to support herself as an artist and have the flexible schedule needed for rehearsals, gigs and auditions. Makenzie used her PLRAC/McKnight Emerging Artist grant to produce a music video “Star Crossed Lovers” and uses Makie as her artist name, here is the link: <https://youtu.be/JYayT-sfcWs>.



**Susan Hayes** I’ve always loved to draw. Art was my favorite subject all through school. I majored in art in college and graduated with a degree in Art Education. I worked in advertising and marketing for many years and finally got the chance to use my education degree when I was hired to teach art and media in the Montgomery-Lonsdale School District (now Tri-City United). I first did batik in college and after graduation I continued to explore the medium and create and sell my work. Then life got in the way, work, marriage and family. I recently retired and finally have the time to devote to my art and show my work. I hope to continue creating and showing my work. My style is always evolving and I enjoy the challenge of interpreting a subject using wax and dye. I used my Emerging Artist grant to mat and frame 20 batiks for a show at the Arts and Heritage Center, Montgomery in 2014.



**Esther Hoffmann** With extreme gratitude, I used my PLRAC/McKnight Emerging Artist grant to purchase a computer and printer and to hire an editor and a director. I created a one woman show, *Suffering for Nothing*, that was performed in 2014. After writing twelve monologues, two dramatic and five comedic were used in the final production. Under the direction of Travis Carpenter, the show was performed at the Ostrander Theatre and then later at the Mankato Brewery and Minnesota Fringe Festival. I enjoy writing and performing and live for the connections they create. It's said that writers write alone. Well, I type alone, with intent based on my view point. Yet, if I don't involve my insecurity or ego, in the excitement of writing, there's a connection to all human possibility. What I write is beyond me. When performing in a play, the audience might gasp or laugh. While "bombing" during a stand-up routine, an audience member may break eye contact and slowly look down. No matter the context, there's an energy exchange that gives unexplainable aliveness to the moment. I've produced of *The Spice of Life Variety Show* since 2007 and have enjoyed collaborations with Four Playwrights, Mankato Mosaic, Cabaret Le Ruse, and Southern Minnesota Poets Society. Last Fall, I worked with Project Luna and co-created *A Merry Dysfunctional Christmas* with the X-mas Misfits, both funded in part by Prairie Lakes Regional Arts Council.



**David Hyduke** David is a metal sculptor living in Kasota, Minnesota. He attended Bemidji State University where he studied philosophy and psychology. He has made sculpture since his early twenties and learned the bronze casting process under the tutelage of Paul Granlund who was a long time sculptor-in-residence at Gustavus Adolphus College in St. Peter. Working predominately in bronze he has operated his own foundry for many years. David has been represented by Imprimatur Gallery, Peterson Fine Art and Art Resources all of Minneapolis. The sculptor's work can be seen at the Mayo Clinic in Rochester, the Metropolitan Medical Center in Minneapolis, the Children's Hospital in St. Paul, Concordia College in St. Paul, and Investors Diversified Services in Minneapolis. Major commissioned works are at the Anoka County Courthouse, Good Counsel-School Sisters of Notre Dame in Mankato and Gustavus Adolphus College in St. Peter. David has done sculpture maintenance and has been involved in the restoration of historically significant monumental sculpture. He has also done numerous art residencies in Minnesota schools. David used his Fellowship funds to purchase bronze, steel and other supplies to create large sculptures. He exhibited his work in 2014 in the Mankato "CityArt" sculpture walk.



**Leslie Laidlaw** Growing up in a rural town in Idaho, in high school we didn't have an art class. In my junior year after seeing my drawings, and realizing this, the principal hired an art teacher. During my senior year while attending two art classes, but with lack of facilities, I was only able to work two-dimensionally. As an Art Education major, at Boise State University attending my required classes found a new passion. Having never touched clay until my first year in college at Boise State University in 1991, it grabbed me and never let go. After graduation from BSU while working outside of art I was able to purchase a house and studio and was represented by Browns Gallery in Boise. In 2000 while attending a ceramic workshop in Penryn, CA with artists Peter Voukos, Rudy Autio, Paul Soldner, Janet Mansfield and Don Reitz I was inspired to attend graduate school. I applied to Kansas State University and later that year and was accepted for the Spring semester 2001 to study under Yoshiro Ikeda. Later that March, NCECA was being held in Charlotte, NC and while attending I met Mika Negishi who is now my wife, greatest supporter and critic. She was hired at Minnesota State University in 2003 to teach ceramics while I was still in graduate school. We bought a house and after finishing my degree in Kansas, we moved to MN in the winter of that same year. Teaching adjunct for the past twelve years and also working in and exploring new mediums, I have worked in aluminum casting, woodworking, steel fabrication, and have many hobbies from aviation to salt water marine aquariums. Minnesota has opened a lot of opportunities and experiences and I am looking forward to my next adventure here in Mankato. I used my Fellowship to purchase supplies to create new work.



**Margie Larson** Margie is a native of southern Minnesota and graduated from Minnesota State University with a degree in art education. After her retirement in 2009 she began painting seriously, renewing her skills by working regularly at her studio in the Emy Frenzt Arts Guild in down town Mankato. Margie is proud to say that she has received three PLRAC/McKnight Emerging Artists grants since she resumed her art career. With these generous grants she has been able to study with artists who have taught her to open her eyes to new and engaging ideas for her work. Margie used her recent grant to attend a workshop at the Shake Rag Alley Arts Center in Mineral Point, Wisconsin. There she studied with James Scherbarth an artist who specializes in painting with oil and cold wax in an abstract and expressive style. When Margie first worked with Mr. Scherbarth, she felt like she had found a medium and process that felt like home. The style is free flowing and open to many different ways of manipulating and layering oil paint. Her work since taking James Scherbarth's work shop has shown the inspiration she found in this new and exciting process.



**Humerio Mendez** Humerio of St. Peter is a Afro-Cuban with ethnic Haitian roots who grew up in Camaguey. His father was a commercial painter and his mother was a seamstress. He learned about painting by watching Bob Bruss on television, reading about and studying works by Picasso, Kandinsky and various abstract expressionists. The PLRAC/McKnight Emerging Artist grant was used to prepare acrylic paintings for a solo show, which was displayed at the North Mankato Library last spring. The paintings are about his experiences and artistic journey from a province in Cuba to southern Minnesota. He also used the funds to purchase a camera so that he could document his work and also send high-quality images to prospective galleries.



**Melody Mickelson** Melody is an Artist, Writer and Photographer. She earned a Bachelor's degree in Fine Art, with a minor in Creative Writing and Art History from the University of Wisconsin in Stevens Point. She also attended Texas Woman's University in Denton, Texas, with an incomplete Masters in Fine Art and Art History and MSU in Mankato, Minnesota with an incomplete Masters in Creative Writing and Fine Art. Melody has been writing most of her life and has written 4 books (unpublished) aimed at the children ages 2 and up. She recently completed writing and illustrating a 1<sup>st</sup> chapter book for children ages 7 to 10 with the generosity of the PLRAC/McKnight Emerging Artist Grant. She has taught art in continuing education programs to adults, children and developmentally disabled adults in New York; Dallas, Texas; St. Peter, Minnesota; and Madelia, Minnesota. She also was an Assistant Curator and Curator of the Permanent Art Collection for the Carlson Gallery at the University of Wisconsin in Stevens Point. Melody was selected to have her work displayed in the Prairie Lakes Regional Juried Art Exhibition at the Arts Center of Saint Peter, Minnesota in 2013 (1 Photograph), 2014 (2 original pen and ink drawings) and 2015 (1 Photograph). She has had two editorials in the local newspaper and had a Thursday morning writer's talk show on the MSU radio station for a year. She currently resides in Madelia with her husband Randy, dog Boone and cats Sully and Molly.



**Nell Musolf** grew up in the Midwest and has never left. She is the mother of two adult sons, married and the foster mom to three cats and one very demanding dog. She writes fiction and non-fiction and has been published in the Chicago Tribune, the Minneapolis Star-Tribune, the Christian Science Monitor and the Mankato Free Press newspapers. She has published four non-fiction books and five fiction books and will have a book of essays that will be published next year. Nell used her PLRAC/McKnight Fellowship to complete her novel for adult readers entitled, "The Forget-Me-Nots". The novel is about people coping with Alzheimer's and the love between parents and children, spouses, patients and caregivers.



**Denise (Wilbur) Neushwander-Frink** Since I was four years old, I have written plays. In those early days, the plays were about a super girl who saved the world from evil. Nearly 22 years ago, I began to write plays for a community theatre group in New Ulm about disability issues. Today, I work with two community-based theatre groups in Mankato and New Ulm to write plays about disability issues - the United We Stand Players of New Ulm and Aktion Club Theatre of Mankato. As a community organizer in the self-advocacy movement - a civil and human rights movement for people with disabilities, I use the art of theatre as a way to raise consciousness and organize around issues of disability people care about. Some of the issues people care about are community inclusion, accessible communities, and the idea that people are not defined by a disability label but rather they are people just like everyone else. With the PLRAC/McKnight Fellowship, I wrote a large-scale play, "The Other Side" that both theatre groups performed in 2015. The play highlighted the gifts and talents of the actors as well as spoke about the actor's concerns around community inclusion, civil dialogue and accessibility. With over 70 people involved in the production, the play was seen by approximately 800 people. The actors stated that the play offered them the opportunity to give something back to their communities through providing a valuable message and also afforded them a chance to shine through sharing their gifts.



**David Olson** I grew up in the southern suburbs of Minneapolis which allowed me to spend a lot of time at the Minneapolis Institute of Art. When I moved to St. Peter in 1979 I joined a group which met once a week to draw from life. My current work comes out of the practices of this group. Until this past year I had worked in charcoal and soft pastel for reasons of convenience and economy. In 2015 I returned to oil painting for the first time since high school. I have received two PLRAC/McKnight Artist Grants. The Fellowship in 2014 was used for framing materials to mount exhibits of my Pastel paintings in Mankato (24 works) and St. Peter (43 works). The 2015 Emerging Artist grant allowed me to transition from pastel to oil painting and I used the funds for supplies to create new works in oil.



**Joellen Preston** Joellen has been offering classes and quality arts experiences for over ten years. She is a member of Twin Rivers Council for the Arts and maintains an art studio on location, where she provides private art mentorship for adults and youth. She works one-on-one or in groups to develop art-making skills and foster creative expression. In addition to private art lessons, Preston is the Visual Arts Coordinator for Mankato Lifeworks. She develops programming for developmentally disabled individuals and organizes public art exhibitions of their work. She advocates for the acceptance of her clients as artists in their own right, capable of creating artwork that resonates with a greater audience. Preston is primarily a figurative artist, telling stories of quiet, introspective moments. She uses a visual vocabulary of figure and gesture because it communicates with viewers on a familiar and intimate level, and because she feels that the stories that our bodies tell are often more honest than the stories we choose to speak. Working with her own physical limitations of flexibility and strength in her wrists, Preston has adopted a wide variety of drawing techniques and materials. She uses soft chalk pastels, colored pencils, and graphite to create loose drawings and finds that a mixed media approach helps develop a richer narrative in her work.



**Amber Rahe** Amber was born in Marshall, MN. Her interest in art began with the creation of cartoon characters and instruction from her grandmother at an early age. She received a Bachelor of Fine Arts degree in 2002 and a Master of Arts Degree in 2008 from Minnesota State University, Mankato and then moved on to receive a Master of Fine Arts degree from the University of North Dakota. She now teaches as an adjunct instructor at Minnesota State University, Mankato and also works at Hilltop HyVee as a cake decorator. She used her PLRAC/McKnight Fellowship for art supplies to create new work for an exhibit and also purchase a new camera to document her work and update her website. Amber's work has appeared at many venues and shows in the Mankato area including The 410 Project, Lookout Gallery, and The Emmy Frenz Arts Guild Gallery, Mankato. She also has work in permanent collections at South Central College and in the Living Museum of North Dakota. Her work is mostly traditional oil paintings and graphite drawings that draw inspiration from the Romantic period and children's storybooks.



**Allison Roberts** I use printmaking techniques in a painterly way to create layered, gestural marks which reference human responses, memory, and emotional scars. Structure, memory, and the function of "home" are explored in terms of relationships and layers in my work. Loss and nostalgia are tinged with optimism. Emotional vulnerability is tempered with control. Structure is dismantled. Layering and obscuring create a metaphor for coping, constantly redefining perceptions and expectations, and depict the resulting reactions and responses that are now embedded in memory. Personal narratives inform my work-providing a rich background of experiences and feelings related to the comfort and security of home and how those expectations are fundamentally altered through trauma and mental illness. The PLRAC/McKnight Fellowship enabled me to have access to printmaking facilities and equipment at Highpoint Center for Printmaking in Minneapolis, so I could continue to develop my work and experiment with new techniques such as screen printing onto digital prints. This body of work helped me realize that I work with ideas or themes rather than focusing on specific media. To pursue that interdisciplinary concept and develop my work and skills in a variety of art disciplines, I returned to graduate school to pursue an MFA degree. I am currently in my second year at UW-Madison, working with printmaking, sculpture, and the projected image. *Allison is unable to display her work in the exhibit, at this time, but has a photograph of one of her pieces in the brochure only.*



**Robyn Sand Anderson** Robyn is a native of Decorah, IA, has a Bachelor of Arts degree in Fine Art and Art Education from Luther College in Decorah. She taught high school art for four years and has been a professional artist specializing in transparent watercolor and acrylic for over thirty years. After a diagnosis of rheumatoid arthritis in 2008, Sand Anderson's paintings also changed. She suffered extreme and constant pain and fatigue for over two years, at one point believing that she would no longer be able to paint at all. With medication and rest, she has been painting again since 2010 and is back up to speed and good health. Moving from representational watercolors to acrylic abstract expressionism, she has found non-objective painting expresses those things that are hard to understand or explain. Her last three exhibits explore the mystery of human suffering without becoming macabre. Her use of bright, vibrant color always moves toward hope. She is especially tuned in with those who suffer and hopes to be a visual voice for hope and healing. Robyn lives in New Ulm and used her Fellowship to purchase arts supplies, attend an acrylic painting workshop in Sedona, Arizona, and had an exhibit in fall 2014 at the Grand Center for Arts and Culture, New Ulm.



**Nicholas Schleif** I was born and raised in Comfrey, MN. I received a BFA from Southwest State University in Marshall, MN. I show my art in many different cities around the country from Minneapolis, MN to Chicago, IL to Brooklyn, NY. I spent many years working with the human form, and have developed in to a what many have called a “non-traditional portrait artist”. I have done charity partnerships with organizations such as the Walter & Connie Payton Foundation. My work is part of permanent collections with organizations like The COFO Center, and the Medgar & Myrlie Evers Institute (both located in Jackson, MS), The National Vietnam War Museum in Mineral Wells, TX, The San Fransisco 49ers, and the Minnesota Vikings. Nicholas used his PLRAC/McKnight Emerging Artist grant to purchase art supplies to create about 30 pieces of new work that were displayed in Minneapolis and New York City in 2014.



**Jason Schroeder** I am a recipient of the PLRAC/McKnight Artist Grant, which allowed me to purchase a Fender guitar amplifier and a delay effects pedal for my electric guitar. This grant gave me great opportunities to further develop my music by adding endless possibilities of creative sounds to my music projects. I have since used my Fender amp and delay effects pedal to record many different electronic sounds to songs I have written and recorded. This grant was a wonderful and rewarding experience. I appreciate that it allowed me to put more focus on my passion for music. It also provided me with deadlines to meet when finishing my music projects which gave me great motivation to work hard at developing my own sounds. I was also able to use my Fender amp and delay pedal at several live shows with The Little Prairie Pickers, a bluegrass band that I was a member of. I am hoping to get more involved with other music grant organizations in Minnesota to share these great opportunities with other artists and musicians. I hope to even start a career that involves sharing music and the arts in Minnesota and promoting the talent that exists in these areas.



**Dana Sikkila** Dana is a native of Litchfield, MN. She received her Master of Arts as well as her Non Profit Leadership Certificate from Minnesota State University, Mankato. Still based in Mankato she concentrates on making her art work as well as being Executive Director of the 410 Project Art Gallery and Artistic Director of Black Water Press, both volunteer managed art spaces bring arts and arts programing to the Mankato community. Dana used her Emerging Artist grant to purchase art supplies to create public installation artwork in 2014 and display it at the 410 Project in Mankato. Her art work has also been on display at Minnesota State University, Mankato; University of Minnesota, St. Paul; Macy's Department Store; and Minnesota Museum of American Art Project Space, just to name a few. She also acts as an Adjunct Professor at MSU, Mankato within the Art Department teaching sculpture and drawing. Over the past several years of progressing into her arts career and being Director of the 410 Project she's introduced numerous art programs and special events for both children and adults to help strike creativity, positive self-esteem, and art awareness in all. Besides these duties Sikkila has received numerous awards including 2015 Mankato's YWCA Young Woman of Distinction, 2015-2016 Art Educators of Minnesota "Distinguished Service Outside the Field" Recognition, 2015 Woman of Courage and Vision from MSU, Mankato, featured on Post Cards, Pioneer's PBS Art TV Program, and KEYC's Jefferson Good Person Award.



**Amy Sinning** Amy is a local fiber artist that has a degree from the Fashion Institute of Design and Merchandising in Los Angeles, CA. She has worked in the apparel industry as well becoming a teaching artist and mentor. She is currently working on a research study funded by the Wallace Foundation for the Boys and Girls Club of America. It is a project targeted at 10 to 14 year olds in fine arts programs and it is based off the "Something to Say Report". She is currently the only fashion design teaching artist in the country with this project. Her work in the past few years has concentrated on bringing LED lights into wearable dresses. She also creates the dresses as art installations that are not meant to be worn, just viewed. Amy used her Emerging Artist grant to purchase special LED light-up fabric to create a weeping willow tree in the new Children's Museum of Southern Minnesota in Mankato. Amy lives in Mankato, with her husband, Shannon and her two children, Chloe and Parker.



**Joe Tougas** Joe is a singer/songwriter and guitarist who for nearly 10 years has worked exclusively in The Frye, an acoustic duo with vocalist Ann Rosenquist Fee. The two have written music and performed from Mankato to Memphis in bars, arts centers, music festivals and private events. In 2015 Joe completed 12 original songs and a script for a work of musical theater titled "The Best of Hank and Rita: A Barroom Operetta." In it, he and Rosenquist Fee portray a husband-wife country pop duo whose brief popularity has long since faded. "The Best of Hank and Rita" has performed to sold-out audiences in Minneapolis, New Ulm and Mankato. The creation of this work received financial support from a 2014 McKnight Fellowship through Prairie Lakes Regional Arts Council. That award was followed by an Artist Initiative grant from the Minnesota State Arts Board. Originally from Chicago, Il, Joe attended Milton, WI high school where he formed bands with great names such as Escape, Phase II and The Press. Under his guidance and influence, each band did a disproportionate number of songs by Alice Cooper. Joe worked for more than 10 years as a journalist at The Free Press in Mankato, quitting in 2004 to pursue creative writing, musical and otherwise. Thanks to the Prairie Lakes Arts Council, that pursuit is in full swing.



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## Thank You Bethany Lutheran College for hosting our 6<sup>th</sup> Annual Artist Grantee Exhibit!

We especially want to thank Bill Bukowski, Professor of Art at Bethany, who assisted us in coordinating this exhibition at the college. Also Bill and Eric Ouren were instrumental in hanging the artwork in the Ylvisaker Fine Arts Center.

The Ylvisaker Fine Arts Center serves as the campus art gallery. Its walls are home to an ever-changing collection of artwork; the lobby is frequented by sculpture and other works of art. Each month, a new guest artist displays a portfolio. Sometime during the exhibit, the artist gives a public lecture on the meaning and relevance of the art. Gallery hours are Sunday-Thursday 1-9 p.m. and Friday & Saturday 1-8 p.m. For information on upcoming exhibits go to: [www.blc.edu/art-exhibits](http://www.blc.edu/art-exhibits).

# Opening Reception

**Sunday, January 17, 1:00-5:00 p.m.**

1:15 p.m.

## **Program Starts**

Introductions and Presentation of Artists by Brenda Byron,  
Executive Director of Prairie Lakes Regional Arts Council

\*Visual artists will each discuss their work.

2:15 p.m.

Melody Mickelson, literature

2:25 p.m.

Nell Musolf, literature

2:35 p.m.

Wilbur Neushwander-Frink, playwright

3:00 p.m.

Esther Hoffmann, playwright

3:25 p.m.

Greg Abbott, playwright

3:50 p.m.

Ryan Acker, musician

4:05 p.m.

Carolyn Borgen, musician

4:20 p.m.

Joe Tougas, musician with Ann Rosenquist Fee

**This activity is made possible by a grant Prairie Lakes received from the McKnight Foundation.**

**THE MCKNIGHT FOUNDATION**



## Prairie Lakes will feature Twenty-Four McKnight Artist Grantees in an Art Exhibition & Reception

**January 11-February 19, 2016**

**at the Ylvisaker Fine Arts Center, Bethany Lutheran College, Mankato**

We are pleased to announce the upcoming exhibit of PLRAC/McKnight Artist Grantees from 2014. We are excited to provide our artist grantees this opportunity to be featured in a group exhibition. This exhibition will highlight fourteen Emerging Artist grantees and ten Fellowship grantees from 2014 funded by Prairie Lakes Regional Arts Council. The exhibit will take place at the Ylvisaker Fine Arts Center at Bethany Lutheran College in Mankato, from January 11 to February 19, 2016. Funding for our artist grant programs and this exhibit is from the McKnight Foundation in Minneapolis. **The Opening Reception will be Sunday, January 17, 1:00 to 5:00 p.m. and visual artists will talk about their work and literary artists and musicians will perform.** “We are pleased to collaborate with Bill Bukowski, Art Professor at Bethany and have the exhibition held in the Ylvisaker Fine Arts Center,” noted Brenda Byron, PLRAC Executive Director. **There will be 14 visual artists, 5 literary artists and 3 musicians that will be featured at the reception.** Visual artwork is represented on page 2. Also here is a link to the Exhibition Brochure: [http://plrac.org/plrac\\_acrobat/2016ArtExhibitionBrochure.pdf](http://plrac.org/plrac_acrobat/2016ArtExhibitionBrochure.pdf).



Greg Abbott



Esther Hoffmann



Nell Musolf



Wilbur Neushwander-Frink

6th Annual  
**PLRAC/McKnight**  
**Artist Grantee Exhibition**

Featuring Emerging Artist and Fellowship Grantees from 2014 funded by the McKnight Foundation.

**January 11 to February 19, 2016**

Held at the  
Ylvisaker  
Fine Arts Center  
Bethany Lutheran College  
700 Luther Dr., Mankato



1-800-298-1254 • [www.plrac.org](http://www.plrac.org)

Greg Abbott	Nell Musolf
Ryan Acker	Denise Neushwander-Frink
Carolyn Borgen	David Olson
Yvonne Cory	Joellen Preston
Makenzie Greimann	Amber Rahe
Susan Hayes	Allison Roberts
Esther Hoffmann	Robyn Sand Anderson
David Hyduke	Nicholas Schleif
Leslie Laidlaw	Jason Schroeder
Margie Larson	Dana Sikkila
Humerio Mendez	Amy Sinning
Melody Mickelson	Joe Tougas

**Opening Reception**  
**Sunday, January 17**  
**1:00 to 5:00 p.m.**

Visual artists will talk about their work and literary artists and musicians will perform.

**On this page are photos of our writers and musicians.**

**THE MCKNIGHT FOUNDATION**



Ryan Acker



Carolyn Borgen

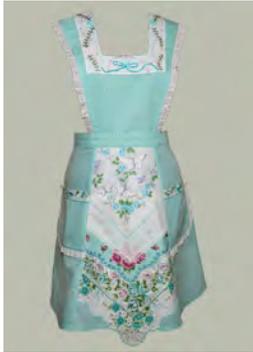


Joe Tougas

# Visual Artists Displaying at the PLRAC/McKnight Artist Grantee Exhibition, Jan. 11-Feb. 19, 2016

at the Ylvisaker Fine Arts Center, Bethany Lutheran College, Mankato

The Artist Grantees who are visual artists will be displaying their artwork at Bethany. Here is a sample of their artwork which is also featured in the Exhibition Brochure.



Fiber Work by Yvonne Cory



Acrylic Painting by Humerio Mendez



Oil Painting by Amber Rahe



Batik by Susan Hayes



Pen & Ink Drawing by Melody Mickelson



Acrylic Painting by Robin Sand Anderson



Gunpowder burns on canvas by Nicholas Schleif

Bronze Sculpture by David Hyduke



Oil Painting by David Olson



Mixed Media Installation by Dana Sikkila



Ceramic by Leslie Laidlaw



Oil and Cold Wax on Board by Margie Larson



Soft Pastel Drawing by Joellen Preston



Fabric Willow Tree at the Children's Museum of So. MN by Amy Sinning