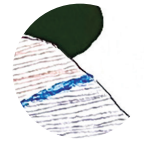
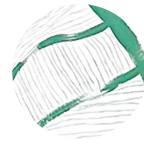
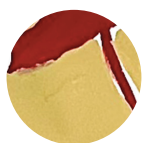
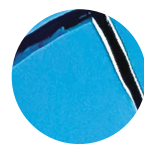
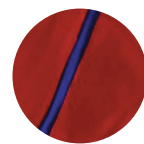
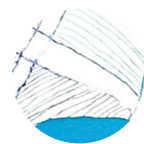
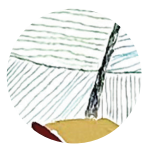
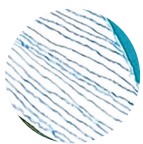
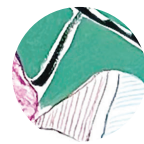
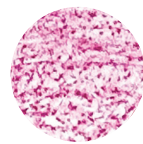
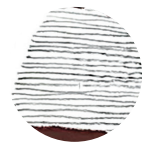
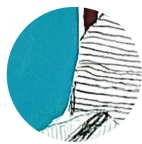
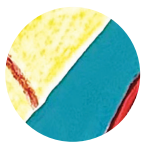
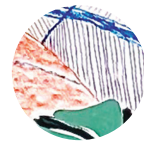
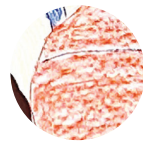
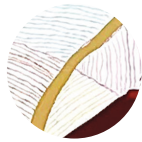


# HUE



Spring 2023

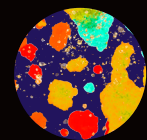
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## Who We Are

The Duluth Art Institute enriches daily life with dynamic, innovative visual arts programming that upholds excellence and promotes inclusive community participation.

**Image Credit, Front & Back Cover:** Carole d'Inverno, "I Didn't Know How to Say Goodbye" (detail), vinyl emulsions and pencils on paper, 2023, 84 x 51"

# DIRECTOR

3

## What Art Can Do

Christina Woods



The arts are an essential element of community vibrancy. They contribute to cultural and social vitality, artistic expression, creativity, and innovation. Art has power to connect people, bridge cultural gaps, and foster belonging and identity. The arts support vibrancy in a community in a variety of ways:

**1. Cultural enrichment:** The arts provide a window into the cultural heritage of a community, reflecting the values, beliefs, and traditions of a society, offering insights into its history, customs, and identity. Art exhibitions provide opportunities for individuals to expand their knowledge about the diversity of lived experiences.

**2. Economic development:** The arts play a significant role in driving economic growth and development. The arts attract visitors, tourists, and businesses, providing a boost to the local economy. Cultural events and attractions create jobs and stimulate the growth of related industries, such as hospitality and tourism.

**3. Community engagement:** The arts provide a platform for community engagement and social interaction. They can bring people together, create a sense of belonging, and promote social cohesion. Artistic events and activities encourage community members to work together, share ideas, and collaborate on projects.

**4. Creativity and innovation:** The arts are a source of creativity and innovation, providing opportunities for individuals to express themselves and explore new ideas. The arts inspire people to think differently and approach problems in new ways. Artistic activities can also foster the development of critical thinking, problem-solving, and communication skills.

**5. Education and personal development:** The arts can play a significant role in education and personal development, providing opportunities for individuals to learn new skills, expand their knowledge, and develop their talents. Artistic activities can also help individuals build confidence, self-esteem, and resilience, fostering personal growth and well-being.

The arts enrich cultural heritage, drive economic development, promote community engagement, encourage creativity and innovation, and foster personal development and well-being. When you invest your time into creating and engaging in the arts, you contribute to making communities more vibrant and prosperous for all. Check out the opportunities at the DAI in this edition of HUE to meet artists, make art, and experience something new.

**Get your art out there!**  
**Registration for the Annual Member Show opens May 1 (see page 9), and submissions for the Arrowhead Regional Biennial open June 15 (see page 12).**

*Any form of art is a form of power; it has impact, it can affect change. It can not only move us, it makes us move.*—Ossie Davis





Morrison Gallery	Steffl Gallery	Corridor Gallery	Lincoln Park Building Great Room
Carole d'Inverno <i>I Didn't Know How to Say Goodbye</i> March 7–May 3 <b>Art Night Out April 25</b>	Robert DeArmond, Karen Keenan, Ray Shelerud <i>Reconnecting Through Clay</i> March 28–May 17 <b>Art Night Out April 25</b>	Alexa Carson <i>Reclaiming</i> April 4–June 7 <b>Art Night Out April 25</b>	Adam Swanson <i>Bellwether</i> May 1–June 1 <b>Reception May 10</b>
Keren Kroul <i>Atlas of the Mind</i> May 31–September 12 <b>Art Night Out Sep. 12</b>	Matthew O'Reilly <i>Shed Self</i> June 12–September 12 <b>Art Night Out Sep. 12</b>	Cassandra Quinn June 20–September 18 <b>Art Night Out Sep. 12</b>	<b>Depot Great Hall &amp; Performing Arts Wing</b>  DAI Member Artists <i>Annual Member Show</i> Art drop-off May 15 On view May 22–June 19 <b>Reception May 31</b> Art pick-up June 20

# I Didn't Know How to Say Goodbye

**Carole d'Inverno**  
George Morrison Gallery | March 7–May 3 | Art Night Out April 25

“I didn’t know how to say goodbye.”  
–Excerpt from the documentary *Ellis Island—History of Immigration to the United States | 1890–1920*, on view in the St. Louis County Historical Society Immigration Room

Abstract artist Carole d’Inverno weaves history together with her imagination, building work that embodies her impressions of a region. In Duluth, d’Inverno describes feeling anchored to the Lake; its vast horizon melts into the sky and dictates the landscape and history.

*I Didn’t Know How to Say Goodbye* illustrates the long story of immigration, from the first arrivals post-Ice Age to the subsequent migrations through the centuries. Each group carried their own story, adding their journey to a collective history. Each person left behind a piece of themselves and chose what to carry: colorful bundles of necessities and homeland memories. D’Inverno captures the physicality of both and filters them onto large-scale canvases.

Duluth is a region of contrast: dark, cold times surge into a spring explosion of life. This divergence is

mirrored in d’Inverno’s sizeable paintings, where gentle muted palettes are accented with pops of color. Matted vinyl emulsion paints and colored pencils build into meditative landscapes that invite one to pause and reflect on stories both personal and universal.

*Carole d’Inverno immigrated to the United States from Europe in the 1970s. She found herself grasping to understand the contradictions in her new home: disparity of wealth, gun violence, and racial tensions set against close-knit communities, pride in country, and the belief that everything is possible. Researching regions, meeting locals, and visiting historical sites gives d’Inverno perspectives that morph into paintings and drawings. Her work has been exhibited throughout the United States and abroad and is housed in public and private collections around the world.*



# Reclaiming

Alexa Carson  
Corridor Gallery | January 12–March 26, 2023 | Art Night Out April 25

"Replacing shame with power. Replacing concealment for boldness. Rejecting objectification for embodiment."

–Alexa Carson

Alexa Carson’s paintings empower and celebrate the female body, communicating a warrior stance against the oppression, objectification, and ridicule often expressed by the patriarchal dominant culture. The miracles of the female body are often shunned and shamed. From menstruation to birth to menopause, women are taught to conceal their natural processes. Carson’s work embodies the sacred feminine, presenting paintings of birth, breastfeeding, and menstruation. Carson explains,

“The amazing magic of female bodies has been shamed and hidden long enough; it’s time for a reclaiming.”

*Alexa Carson earned her BFA from Columbus College of Art and Design. She has exhibited throughout the Midwest, and her work can be found in local galleries including Lizzard’s and Siviis. Carson’s unique acrylic techniques honor the beauty found in nature and exemplify the power of the natural world.*

Image Credit: Alexa Carson, "Nourish," acrylic on canvas, 2022, 24"x36"



Image Credit: Ray Shelerud, "Serving Bowl," high fire porcelain, 2022, 14"x18"x3"; Karen Keenan, "Flask," buff stoneware, 2022/23, 9"x5"; Bob DeArmond, "Shino glaze trailed plate," gas fired stoneware, 2022, 8.75"x1.5"

# Reconnecting Through Clay

Robert DeArmond, Karen Keenan, Ray Shelerud  
John Steffl Gallery | March 28–May 17 | Art Night Out April 25

Minnesota clay artists Robert DeArmond, Karen Keenan, and Ray Shelerud follow the same calling: creating distinctive ceramics for everyday use. Their creativity is nourished by the clay, and the resulting aesthetic quality of their pieces reflects their dedication. They value the daily impact of using handmade goods, of building work that feels good to hold. Keenan explains, “Handmade includes feeling personally connected to the maker.”

DeArmond, Keenan, and Shelerud first connected in the 1970s. They shared teachers, perspectives, and a devotion to pottery that brings joy. With their respective careers in teaching, arts administration, and construction, they launched into life outside the studio. They met again in retirement, reconnecting through

their passion for clay. From experimenting with glazes to playing with scale and adding embellishments, the three continue to investigate the complexity of clay. In turn, they inspire others to explore something in their lives that they once found rewarding, engaging, and meaningful.

*Robert DeArmond, Karen Keenan, and Ray Shelerud live and work in Duluth, Minnesota. They help foster a vibrant community at the Duluth Art Institute Lincoln Park Building Clay Studio that honors mastery and individual voice. As their joint artist statement states: “While our work is unique, we are motivated by the quest to grow in our craft.”*





**Image Credit:** Adam Swanson, "Uncas Skipper,"  
acrylic on cradled panel, 2022, 48"x32"

## Bellwether

**Adam Swanson**

**Lincoln Park Building | May 10–June 1 | Reception May 10**

Adam Swanson integrates nature and technology to bring attention to some of Northern Minnesota's essential pollinators. Richly-textured insects dominate the canvases among colorful blooms juxtaposed against field equipment and mechanical devices. Swanson explores humanity's relationship with the environment, highlighting the importance of pollinator species and their tenuous existence. "My recent paintings make scientific data clearer and, most importantly, inspire audiences to learn what can be done to change course." *Bellwether* is on view at the DAI's Lincoln Park Building during the month of No Mow May to celebrate the perennial flowers and community garden on site. Reception includes an artist talk and scientific presentation.

American Foundation for the Blind-approved audio descriptions and tactile representations for the visually impaired are available for select paintings.

*Adam Swanson's work has been exhibited at the The Massachusetts Institute of Technology Visual Arts Center in Cambridge, MA, The Walker Art Center in Minneapolis, MN, The Herbert Johnson Museum of Art at Cornell University in Ithaca, NY, The South Pole Station in Antarctica, Växjö Konsthall (Museum of Modern Art) in Växjö, Sweden, and Karatay University in Konya, Turkey. Swanson earned his BFA from University Minnesota Duluth and lives and works in Sawyer, Minnesota. This exhibition is in part made possible by the ARAC Established Regional Artist Grant.*

# DAIAMS

## Annual Member Show 2023

**DAI Member Artists | Depot Great Hall**

**Pre-registration opens: May 1**

**Art drop-off: May 15, 10am–6pm**

**On view: May 22–June 18**

**Reception: May 31**

**Art pick-up: June 20, 8am–6pm**

Catch up with the latest work from over 100 DAI member artists all in one place: the 2023 Annual Member Show. Representing astonishing diversity and skill, the AMS is a visual feast and community celebration unlike any other.

*Each DAI member can submit one piece created in 2022 or 2023. All media welcome. Maximum size of 40" length and 40" in width, and maximum weight of 50 pounds. DAI membership and pre-registration are required. Complete the registration online at [duluthartinstitute.org](https://duluthartinstitute.org).*

**[YOUR ART HERE]**





Image from Rawpixel.com

# SUMMER CAMPS

Camp descriptions & registration:  
[DuluthArtInstitute.org/Camps](https://DuluthArtInstitute.org/Camps)

## Comic Illustration and Design with Jesse Switters (Two camps)

Monday–Friday (5 sessions)  
First camp: July 10–14 (Ages 9–13)  
Second Camp: July 24–28 (Ages 14–17)  
9:00am–4:00pm  
DAI Lincoln Park Building  
2229 W 2nd St.  
\$220 (\$275 Non-Member)

## Soft Sculpture, Character Design, and Comics with Lauren Faherty

Monday–Friday (5 sessions)  
June 26–30  
9:00am–Noon  
DAI Lincoln Park Building  
2229 W 2nd Street  
Ages 12–17  
\$150 (\$200 Non-Member)

## DIY Room Decor with Tiffany Fenner (Two Camps)

Monday–Friday (5 sessions)  
First camp: June 12–16  
Second camp: June 19–23  
9:00am–4:00pm  
DAI Lincoln Park Building  
2229 W. 2nd St.  
Ages 9–13  
\$220 (\$275 Non-Member)

## Wild Watercolor with Holly Brown (Two camps)

Monday–Friday (5 sessions)  
First Camp: June 26–30  
Second Camp: July 31–August 4  
1:00pm–4:00pm  
DAI Lincoln Park Building  
2229 W 2nd St.  
Ages 8–13  
\$150 (\$200 Non-Member)

## DIY Room Decor (Half-Day) with Tiffany Fenner

Monday–Friday (5 sessions)  
July 17–21  
9:00am–noon  
DAI Lincoln Park Building  
2229 W. 2nd St.  
Ages 9–13  
\$150 (\$200 Non-Member)

## Nordic Art and Design with Alison Aune

Monday–Friday (5 Sessions)  
July 17–21  
9:00am–Noon  
DAI Lincoln Park Building  
2229 W. 2nd St.  
Ages 6–13  
\$150 (\$200 Non-Member)

## Fantastic Fiber with Lauren Faherty

Monday–Friday (5 sessions)  
July 31–August 4  
9:00am–Noon  
DAI Lincoln Park Building  
2229 W 2nd St.  
Ages 11–14  
\$150 (\$200 Non-Member)

## Flags and Bags with Kirsten Aune

Monday–Friday (5 sessions)  
August 7–11  
9:00am–Noon  
DAI Lincoln Park Building  
2229 W 2nd St.  
Ages 9–14  
\$150 (\$200 Non-Members)

“The world always seems brighter when you’ve just made something that wasn’t there before.”—Neil Gaiman

Details & registration:  
[DuluthArtInstitute.org/ClassRegistration](https://DuluthArtInstitute.org/ClassRegistration)

# CLASSES

## Color Mixing for Oil Painters with Matt Kania (Evening)

Mondays (4 sessions)  
April 24–May 15  
5:30–8:30pm  
DAI Lincoln Park Building  
2229 W 2nd Street  
Ages 16+  
\$130 (\$150 Non-Member)

Whether you’re new to oil painting or painting with experience, this class offers an opportunity to learn more about color relativity and develop hands-on experience at mixing desired colors with confidence. As a class, we will learn from and copy examples by master painters. Then each student will work directly from individually arranged (subtle color) still lifes to create original ‘color faithful’ oil paintings.

## Color Mixing for Oil Painters with Matt Kania (Morning)

Tuesdays (4 sessions)  
April 25–May 16  
9:30am–12:30pm  
DAI Lincoln Park Building  
2229 W 2nd Street  
Ages 16+  
\$130 (\$150 Non-Member)

Whether you’re new to oil painting or painting with experience, this class offers an opportunity to learn more about color relativity and develop hands-on experience at mixing desired colors with confidence. As a class, we will learn from and copy examples by master painters. Then each student will work directly from individually arranged (subtle color) still lifes to create original ‘color faithful’ oil paintings.

## Youth Photography Club

Second Tuesday of Each Month  
Final Spring session: May 9  
Sessions resume September 12  
4:15pm–6:45pm  
DAI Lincoln Park Building  
2229 W 2nd Street  
Ages 13+  
\$25/session (\$105 for all 5 sessions)

Spend time at the historic Lincoln Park Building exploring the art of photography with local artist and educator, Susanna Gaunt. Learn the ins and outs of your camera, creatively compose images, and develop your photographic vision. Build a zine, keep 3-5 photo prints, and work towards an exhibition in fall 2023.

Students have access to a photo studio equipped with backdrops and lighting and will take walking field trips throughout the Lincoln Park neighborhood. Participants are required to submit a signed permission/emergency contact form prior to their first session.

Artists are encouraged to bring their own equipment (digital cameras, phones, etc.), but the DAI will have a limited number of cameras on hand. Email Kaitlyn at [kkoehler@duluthartinstitute.org](mailto:kkoehler@duluthartinstitute.org) with questions about equipment or scholarships.

*This activity is made possible in part by the voters of Minnesota through a grant from the Arrowhead Regional Arts Council, thanks to a legislative appropriation from the arts and cultural heritage fund.*

## Free ArtDAI

Saturday, April 22, 2023  
1:00pm–4:00pm  
DAI Lincoln Park Building  
2229 W 2nd Street  
All Ages  
FREE

## Weekly Open Studio

Tuesdays, 12:30pm–3:30pm  
DAI Lincoln Park Building  
2229 W 2nd Street  
Ages 16+  
\$5 + DAI Membership

Bring your supplies and artistic visions to the inspiring, historic Lincoln Park Building. Connect with other creative people and spend time experimenting with your medium of choice. Each session includes plenty of time to create and optional end-of-session group critiques. Non-members can attend one free session of open studio before becoming a member. Members receive three free sessions.

“Creativity is allowing yourself to make mistakes. Art is knowing which ones to keep.”—Scott Adams



# OPEN CALL

## 64th Arrowhead Regional Biennial

Open call June 15–August 1, 2023

On view December 2023–January 2024

The 64th Arrowhead Regional Biennial celebrates art that represents a wide variety of perspectives and voices. The call is open to artists of all mediums who reside in Minnesota, Wisconsin, North Dakota, South Dakota, Iowa, Michigan, and Ontario, Canada. Applications and guidelines are hosted on Submittable with a deadline of August 1, midnight CST.



**Image Credit:** Aya Kawaguchi, "American Mountain Ash in Shu," watercolor on paper, 2021, 12"x12"

The DAI is honored to introduce the 64th Arrowhead Regional Biennial judge, Aya Kawaguchi. Kawaguchi earned her BFA from Tokyo Zokei University in 1998, and MFA from Tokyo National University of Arts in 2000. In her practice, Kawaguchi integrates the physical and psychological senses of landscapes, striving for harmony. Her lyrical compositions blend subject and negative space to create a framework for the viewer to penetrate.

Kawaguchi's work has been exhibited throughout the world, including Argentina, Japan, Korea, Russia, and the United States. She has also received national and international awards, among them: Holbein Scholarship Prize, 2001 Art Fellowship Niigata City Art Museum, and Emerging Artist Award, Tokyo Metropolitan Museum of Photography.



**Image Credit, left to right:** Chimakwa Nibawii, "Mother Tbird" (detail); Gary Carlson, "Clarion Whisper" (detail); Jonathan Thunder, "Modern Times" (detail); Rachel Bruya, "Empty Inside" (Orb 2, detail); Ashley Hise, "Ocean Incarnate 1" (detail); Moira Villiard, "Fetishism, Hands, and the Lives They Are Attached To" (detail); Natalie Salminen Rude, "Conquistadors Know" (detail). All artworks featured in the 63rd Arrowhead Regional Biennial, 2021.

# SAVE THE DATE

## DAI Masquerade Gala

Thursday, October 26

5:00pm–9:00pm

# EVENTS

## Free ArtDAI

Saturday, April 22 | 1:00pm–4:00pm

DAI Lincoln Park Building, 2229 W 2nd Street

All Ages | FREE

Stop by the Lincoln Park Building for a FREE in-person art-making event! There will be snacks, beverages, and a casual, creative vibe.

## Art Night Out: Reception and Artist Talks

with Carole d'Inverno, Alexa Carson, Robert DeArmond, Karen Keenan & Ray Shelerud

Tuesday, April 25 | 5:30–8:00pm

Lake Superior Railroad Museum, 506 W Michigan St, Duluth, MN 55802

FREE

Enjoy light apps and a cash bar, hear artist talks from Carole d'Inverno, Alexa Carson, Robert DeArmond, Karen Keenan & Ray Shelerud, and chat with the artists in the upstairs galleries.

## AI Art: A Human Discussion

Monday, May 8 | 5:30pm–7:00pm

Virtual: Zoom call & YouTube livestream

FREE

How are the recent advancements in AI art generation affecting artists and illustrators? Bring your questions about AI art to working arts & technology professionals in this livestreamed panel discussion.

## Bellwether Reception & Artist Talk

with Adam Swanson

Wednesday, May 10 | 5:00pm–7:00pm

DAI Lincoln Park Building, 2229 W 2nd Street

FREE

Learn about endangered pollinator species with an artist talk by artist Adam Swanson, celebrating his innovative exhibition in the DAI Lincoln Park Building Great Room, and a related scientific presentation.

## Annual Member Show Reception & Spectrum/Ovation TV Award Ceremony

Wednesday, May 31 | 5:30pm–8:00pm

SLC Depot, 506 W Michigan St, Duluth, MN 55802

FREE

One evening, two celebrations! Celebrate a prolific year of work by DAI member artists and a \$10,000 award granted to the DAI by Spectrum and Ovation TV. The DAI was one of only sixteen arts nonprofits nationwide honored by Spectrum and Ovation for our focus on justice. After the award ceremony, the Great Hall will open for viewing the Annual Member Show.

"The aim of art is to represent not the outward appearance of things but their inward significance"—Aristotle



# MEMBER SPOTLIGHT

Karen Keenan

Exhibiting artist, *Reconnecting Through Clay*



Image Credit: Karen Keenan, "Milkweed Seedpod Teapot," stoneware, 2022, 7.5"x7.5"x6"



What happens when time, interest, circumstance, intent, and opportunity intersect?

I fell deeply into the world of ceramics in college. When my career became a primary focus, I kindled my relationship with clay just enough to keep the embers glowing. I assembled an in-house studio, attended exhibits, read relevant publications, and enrolled in clay workshops when time permitted.

Prior to retirement, I charted a way to re-immense myself in clay. First, I took a week-long ceramics immersion workshop. Then, I furthered my attention by following clay social media, websites, a few conferences, and print resources. I quickly

found that returning to a physically demanding art form after a decades-long pause can be a challenge. Intellectually and artistically, the mind and spirit are eager to release creativity. The body, meanwhile, needs significant practice. It took about 5 years of practice to build back my clay-building chops.

Part of activating this intention has been transitioning into a previous state of being and doing, but through a contemporary lens. When I returned to ceramics, I noticed a change in aesthetics, tools, and the working environment. At first, this was surprising and daunting. Graphic surfaces and bold colors reigned, techniques had advanced, clay options had improved, and new tools were abundant. My head was spinning with possibilities.

Another challenging change was to embrace digital tools such as social media, transactional apps, website building, and online networking. An artisan works much differently in the 2020s than in the 1970s.

My fellow exhibiting artists, Bob DeArmond and Ray Shelerud,

have had their own transitional experiences. Our stories intersected about 5 or 6 years ago at DAI's Lincoln Park Building Clay Studio. This space is an amazing regional resource, providing artists at all stages a place to create work, meet people, and learn as a community, including guest workshops and in-house instructors. It is also a space to exercise growth-filled ideas. Bob and I were teacher-facilitators for three relatively recent workshops: *Flask*, *Contained*, and *The Horse of Course*. The first and third culminated in community exhibits at Duluth's Nordic Center. Holly Jorde and Robin Murphy joined us as teaching colleagues for *The Horse of Course*. The consistent and varied support of the DAI is valued and worthy of continued engagement and robust support.

There were, and still are, multiple learning curves to climb. But now, with humility and gratitude, after almost a decade-long re-entry timeline, I feel my knowledge, artistry, and skill in clay opening to an intentional expressive pathway. It is here that *Reconnecting Through Clay* picks up my journey.

Read more about *Reconnecting Through Clay*, a group exhibition with Karen Keenan, Ray Shelerud, and Bob DeArmond, on page 6.



# MEMBERSHIP

Thank you to our members. Membership is vital to the DAI, supporting education, exhibitions, and studio spaces.

Visit [www.duluthartinstitute.org/membership](http://www.duluthartinstitute.org/membership) to become a member today.

**Benefactor Members**

Janet Sklaris  
Robin Washington <sup>B</sup>

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Bea Levey  
Richard Levey  
Kim Whittaker

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Ella Fox  
John Fox  
Mattie Fox  
Tammy Fox  
Rosemary Guttormsson  
Wendy Larson  
Dale Lucas  
Edie Michalski  
Roger Michalski  
Mark Newman  
Tammy Newman  
Dr. Patricia Rogers <sup>B</sup>  
Two Loons

Steven Bardolph  
Zane Bardolph  
Joseph Barnstorf  
George Bateman  
Nathaniel Bateman  
Emily Beaton  
Elizabeth Beattie  
Theresa Beaulier  
Timothy Beaulier  
Jennifer Beers  
Amelia Beisang  
Jolene Beisang  
Norah Beisang  
Mary Kay Berarducci  
Lisa Berg  
Gladys Bergstedt  
Rita Bergstedt  
Aryn Bergsven  
Nancy Berini-Jespersion  
Susan Betz  
Tori Billings  
Pat Black  
Sarah Black  
Roy Blackwood  
Edna Blanchard  
Kay Bloom  
Ken Bloom  
Andrea Boehland  
Libby Bolen  
Daniel Boyer  
Silvia Boyer  
Shelley Breitzmann  
Sara Briles  
Evaline Britton  
Sarah Brokke  
Carole Brossart  
Sue Brown  
Craig Bruce <sup>C</sup>  
Derek Burns  
Celia Cameron <sup>B</sup>  
Doug Cameron  
Patricia Canelake

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Duane Allen  
Dennis Anderson  
Judy Anderson  
Haley Anderson  
Karen Anderson  
Manette Anderson  
Thomas Anderson  
Karen Annala  
Alison Aune-Hinkel  
David Austin  
AJ Axtell  
Mary Azmitia  
Brian Barber  
Cadence Bardolph

Pamela Carberry  
Kathleen Cargill  
Kris Carlson  
Alexa Carson  
Melissa Cedars  
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“Art has always been the raft onto which we climb to save our sanity. I don’t see a different purpose for it now.”—Dorothea Tanning



# MUSINGS

## Recording and Sharing Immigrant History

**Erin Hicks**

*Curator, St. Louis County  
Historical Society*



Visual art is a powerful means of communicating both large, abstract concepts and deep, fuzzy emotions. Abstract artwork can evoke a feeling in the viewer while presenting a larger story through shape, color, texture, and symbol. Similar to art, historical narratives convey matters that are close to the heart—and both evoke frustration, enthusiasm, sadness, or bliss. Art plays a vital role in recording and discovering history, especially local history, that is both personal and emotional.

Creative serendipities occur daily at the St. Louis County Depot, home of both the Historical Society and DAI galleries. In learning that Carol d'Inverno's DAI exhibition of abstract art, *I Didn't Know How to Say Goodbye*, was influenced by the video in the Historical Society's Immigrant Waiting Room exhibit,

I appreciated our shared historical building for uniquely representing stories of Duluth immigration. There is no one Duluth immigrant story—there are multiple and varied stories, all deeply personal, intimate, emotional, and uniquely told by the people who experienced them. Those tales are passed on within families and communities through inter-generational storytelling or genealogy—or through visual artmaking.

With a background in Fine Art and Art History, I've always loved art in historical museum collections. The potential for the creative crossover of art and history, from expression to research to new understanding, is exciting. All art mediums can be a goldmine for local historians in gaining perspective on a time no longer accessible. Photography is a well-recognized medium that captures a historical record of time and place, but a photograph can also serve as a beautiful expression of a moment in time, capturing cultural and emotional truth. Historically, paintings of cityscapes can represent an ideal, a mood, or a feeling of place, but can also demonstrate class structure or institutional systems. Sculpture might present social and cultural details through figure, dress, architecture, but also convey aspects like speed or even struggle to someone learning about history. To me though, abstract art is special, and it teaches local historians about emotion.

D'Inverno's large-scale abstract works fill the Morrison gallery with bright colors and the pleasant smell of paint. The sketchy shapes and loose forms in the artwork tell the viewer about her own immigration story, although the nod to Duluth's rich immigration history is clear in multiple works; black steamship stacks, formless bags with straps, and repeated tear drop shapes.

Through artmaking, artists express themselves and their experiences, whether the viewer understands it intellectually, emotionally, or not at all. In looking deeper for connective elements in the artwork, I looked deeper into myself. I remembered a few of my own family's immigration stories. I was inspired to learn more about my own family and the great great grandfather I knew immigrated to the United States from Ireland to evade imprisonment for accused horse theft. He left to start a new life and create a new story, which I'm inspired to discover more about. This is the imaginative magic that happens when history and art mingle, underscoring the role of visual art in recording and sharing local history.

Visit the Depot and view the St. Louis County Historical Society Immigrant Waiting Room and other exhibits on the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor.

[www.thehistorypeople.org](http://www.thehistorypeople.org)

**Read more about Carole d'Inverno's exhibition, *I Didn't Know How to Say Goodbye*, on page 5.**

**Opposite:** 1883 hand-drawn aerial depiction of Duluth, artist unknown. Collection of St. Louis County Historical Society, donated by Duluth Children's Museum.





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**May 10**  
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Adam Swanson

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See page 13 for more information  
about events.



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