

A response by hannah_g

Hannah is a writer, artist, and community radio producer living in Winnipeg, Treaty One Territory, Canada.

We Myself and Us

January 8 - 30, 2021

Mentoring Artists for Women's Arts - 611 Main Street, Winnipeg

I visited the 2019-2020 MAWA Foundation Mentorship Program exhibition, *Me Myself and Us*, via a crisp website created by the mentees. Viewing the work like this was akin to reading, in that it was a concentrated, intimate, and interior experience and I appreciated the opportunity to encounter the work in this way.

Another of the many things that I appreciate about MAWA's FMP is that groups are not assembled around a theme or skillset. Difference is centred as a resource that is accessed through a foundation of mutual support and free exchange. The exhibition title speaks to this useful mix of valuing individual and group experience. In light of this, I will talk about each artist's work individually rather than focussing on common themes, which you will nevertheless doubtless observe.



Jocelyne Le Léannec

Cycle (2020; 112 piece, leaded stained glass, with zinc frame, and chain, 21" diameter).

Within a sealed blood red ring of glass Le Léannec's bright blue fish tops the mortal circle it forms with a skeletal brown fish below, their lips at each other's tails. The daylight shining through the piece—affected by clouds scudding across the sun and the sun's own journey across the sky—will enliven different parts of *Cycle*, creating movement, changes in emphasis, a sense of being at the mercy of prevailing forces.

An image such as Le Léannec's is potent with fishy symbols and stories told in response to powerful forces, such as the flight of Aphrodite with her son from the monstrous Typhon. At this point in time, the cycle of life and death seems to be in overdrive with the Covid-19 pandemic, climate crisis, and chasm of social and economic inequalities growing wider in their wake. People are swirling together in this cycle while experiencing profound separation from each other, enclosed in the blood red circles of ourselves, our bubbles. But by naming her piece *Cycle*, Le Léannec seems to sound a note of hope—the full blue body of life will surely return.