

Dr. Sheila Petty
Dean of Fine Arts
University of Regina

28 November 2011

Dear Dr. Petty:

It is with tremendous excitement that I submit this letter of application for tenure, and promotion to Associate Professor, in the Department of Visual Arts at the University of Regina. It is my intention that this letter will elucidate and contextualize the key elements and contributions of my professional activities – highlighting my engagement at local, national, and international *plateaux* – as well as my commitment to excellence in teaching and service to the University of Regina, and beyond. In keeping with personal and institutional aspirations towards environmental, social, and fiscal sustainability – as noted in the University of Regina's Strategic Plan, *mâmahowkamâtowin: Our Work, Our People, Our Communities* – the entirety of the accompanying support material will be provided online, in digital format for ease of navigation, manipulation, and portability, with the exception of my CV, which will also be provided in hardcopy. The application can be examined online at <http://www.truszkowski.org>.*

Since completion of my Bachelor of Fine Arts (BFA) degree from Queen's University at Kingston (2000), and following into my Master's degree in Fine Arts (MFA) from Concordia University (2004), I have been actively and successfully pursuing a career in the Visual Arts. Working in Printmaking, Print and Digital Media, and Photo-based practices, I have amassed a sizeable record of professional dissemination in Canada and internationally. Since coming to the University of Regina in 2007, I have successfully folded my professional activities into an engaging and energetic teaching practice. As the sole Full-Time faculty member in Print Media, I am responsible for the pedagogical, curricular, and infrastructural *renaissance* of this area of the Department of Visual Arts. My activity on campus has not been limited to the Print studios in the basement of the Riddell Centre however, as I have served on committees at the Department, Faculty, and University levels. My commitment to the University of Regina, to my artistic profession, and to the communities of which I count myself a member can be felt through my participation in artist lectures, local arts festivals, and in mentoring current and former students towards success beyond the studio classroom. In the pages that follow (and in the comprehensive online application) I believe that you will find my contributions and professional activities to be *excellent*, as evidenced by a recent Merit Increase, voted unanimously by the Peer Review Committee in 2010.

*please note, the case-sensitive password for the site is: Truszkowski

TEACHING

I teach courses in Print Media in the Department of Visual Arts. As a discipline, Print Media encompasses a very large range of material and conceptual approaches to art making. Calling upon historical Printmaking and commercial printing technologies, and current photo-digital, computer-mediated and generated technologies, as well as expanded definitions that include digital design, two and three dimensional printing, and virtual and conceptual notions of “print”, “impression”, and “type”, Print Media is a truly exciting, evolving field that crosses many of the boundaries normally associated with traditional process-oriented practices. Since coming to the University of Regina in 2007, I have radically altered the approach to teaching Printmaking that was in place; students have many more options in terms of processes offered, and a great deal more exposure to contemporary theory, content, and practice. The Print Studios at the University of Regina are a dynamic, engaging place to work and learn. The following points highlight key aspects of my teaching history and approach.

- In my first semester at the University of Regina, there were 4 students enrolled above the introductory level in Printmaking, of which only 2 were graduating BFA Printmaking majors in Spring 2008. By the Spring of 2011, there were 16 students above the intro level, with 5 graduating BFA Printmaking majors. (This was the largest studio area specific contingent in the entire Visual Arts graduating class of 2011.)
- I have taught 40 classes, including 4 directed reading/special topics courses, 8 graduate courses, and 2 research and exhibition thesis preparation courses.
- According to departmental records there have been **no** graduate students in Printmaking since at least 1999. At present, there are **2** students pursuing graduate work in Print Media at the University of Regina: I am co-supervisor for **Amanda Damsma** (with Professor Leesa Streifler) who has **successfully defended her MFA thesis exhibition entitled “Here There Be Monsters”, on 25 November 2011 at the MacKenzie Art Gallery.** (In addition, I mentored Amanda as my teaching assistant for ART270 in Fall 2010, as well as in her University Teaching Fellowship to instruct ART270 in Fall 2011.), and; I have begun supervision of Rowan Pantel (MFA programme entry September 2011).
- I have stellar student evaluation comments.
- I have organized Print Exchanges for University of Regina students with students at Emily Carr Institute of Art and Design, and through PrintZero Studios in Seattle.
- I have begun an annual tradition of facilitating Advanced-level Print Media student portfolios which have been used to highlight excellence in the Print Media Area (2009, 2010, and 2011).

- In March 2011 I accompanied 9 current students and 1 BFA alumna to the *Southern Graphics Council International* Printmaking conference in St. Louis, U.S.A. My role in this experience included all planning and logistics, as well as working with UR International to secure \$10,000 in funding to support this initiative. I am planning to bring another group to the 2012 conference in New Orleans, U.S.A. in the new year.
- In addition to my regular and extra-curricular teaching duties, I have assumed the role of “default Print Studio Technician and Manager”. As such, I monitor studio usage, organize and inventory equipment and supplies, repair equipment, create technical bulletins and signage, and train and oversee the student technician.

RESEARCH HIGHLIGHTS

My career as an exhibiting artist began in earnest, in the year prior to receiving my BFA degree in 2000, and for nearly 12 years I have approached art as central to my existence. It is my deep engagement with process, content, history, and theory related to my practice, my field, and contemporary art in general, that provides the profound basis for my role as teacher and creative researcher at the University of Regina. The following points highlight key aspects of my creative research career. For a complete list, please see the accompanying cv in both hardcopy, and online formats.

- Since 1999, my creative work has been shown in 7 solo, 2 two-artist, and 90 group exhibitions.
- Spanning that same time period, my work has been included in 7 full-colour publications, dozens of black & white catalogues, essays, and publicity materials, as well as reproductions in English and French consumer magazines and on websites, produced or facilitated by external organizations. Recent examples include catalogues from **La Biennale internationale d’estampes contemporain de Trois-Rivières**, **Okanagan Print Triennial 2009**, **Traditions and Transitions** (Alternator Centre), **Selections from the PrintZero Studio Exchange 2010**, and **RBC Canadian Painting Competition > Ten Years**.
- In 2009 I won 1st Prize – The Solo Exhibition Award, for my work that was accepted to the juried **2009 Okanagan Print Triennial (OPT)**. As a result, I will be mounting a confirmed solo exhibition in March 2012, entitled **Penance**, with a full-colour catalogue and critical essays, at the *Vernon Public Art Gallery* (B.C.) to run concurrently to the **2012 OPT** group exhibition.
- I have received more than **\$50,000** in public and private funding to support my practice, develop infrastructural frameworks, build and enhance curriculum, and disseminate my research since 2003.

- For the past 4 years I have been included in **100 Prints** (the national Canadian Printmaking Awards exhibition) at *Open Studio* in Toronto.
- I have been awarded funded, juried, artist-in-residence opportunities at important traditional Printmaking and digital Print Media artist-run-centres including *St. Michael's Printshop* (St. John's) *Atelier Circulaire* (Montréal), *Open Studio* (Toronto), and *Centre Sagamie* (Alma, QC).
- Other notable exhibitions include "Semper Fi" at *Open Studio* (solo exhibition in Toronto, Canada), "PrintZero Juried Exhibition 2010" (group exhibition juried by Karla Hackenmiller, shown in Miami, Seattle, and Chicago U.S.A., and Granada and Mangua Nicaragua), "Encounters" at *Druckvereinigung Bentlage* (group exhibition in Munster Germany), *Biennale internationale de l'estampe contemporain* (group exhibition in Trois-Rivières, Canada), "Salon Écarlate " at *Marian Graves Mugar Art Gallery*, New Hampshire, U.S.A. (group exhibition), "White" at *Galérie d'art St. Ambroise*, Montréal Canada (solo exhibition), and the RBC New Canadian Painting (finalist for National Painting competition, group exhibitions held Toronto, Halifax, London, and Winnipeg Canada).

SERVICE TO THE UNIVERSITY

From the time of my initial appointment at the University of Regina, I have been active in committee work, and my responsibilities have grown with each subsequent semester. I strongly believe that the privilege of a university faculty position comes with responsibilities pertaining to the collegial governance and operation of the institution. As such, I have attempted to position myself wherever my expertise and judgement would best serve the University of Regina.

- At the departmental level, I have served on committees pertaining to undergraduate curriculum, MFA, scholarship, and sessional hiring. In addition, I have served on the search committee for a term instructor position in Ceramics (Ying-Yueh Chuang, 2009), and tenure-track assistant professor position in Studio Art (Risa Horowitz, 2011).
- At the faculty level I have been a part of the nominating committee, faculty representative to Business Administration, as well as having participated in UR Connected Faculty Tour sessions for student recruitment. My most intensive activity involved the organization of the Fine Arts Presentation Series (2009-2011), which was both very rewarding personally, and very well received by speakers and audience alike.
- At the university level, my commitment to service has risen sharply in the last few years. From 2008-2010 I served on the Occupational Health & Safety Committee (as URFA representative). Beginning in 2010, I was appointed to **Chair** the Council Committee on Undergraduate Admissions and Studies, as well

as sit on the Council Committee on Student Appeals and the Senate and Council Joint Committee on Ceremonies.

SERVICE TO THE COMMUNITY

Service extends beyond the institution as well. In keeping with my sentiments regarding the privilege of a university faculty position in relation to the responsibilities contain therein, I have attempted to offer my energy and expertise in a variety of ways.

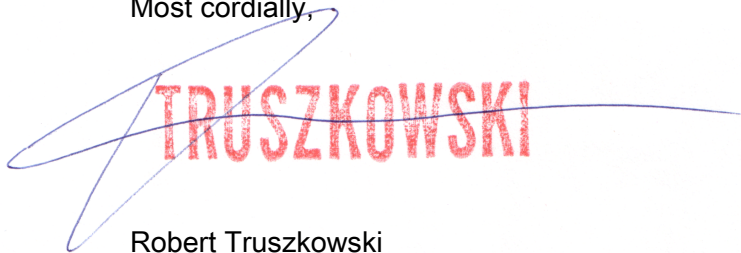
- I have, on many occasions, given artist lectures locally and nationally, served on juries for art competitions (notably as the sole visual artist jury member for the *2010 Saskatchewan Lung Association 100th Anniversary Art Contest*), and donated artwork for fundraising at artist-run-centres and Printmaking programmes across Canada.
- For the past two years, I have been organizing **Printmaking in the Streets**, as part of the *Cathedral Village Arts Festival*. With student and alumni volunteers, I have erected a portable Printmaking studio, complete with etching press and sundries, to perform feats of printing on 13th Avenue in Regina, during the annual street fair. Part performance, part community outreach and engagement, this project has permitted me to educate, entertain, and even recruit potential students to the Department of Visual Arts. In addition to the day-long street fair event, this year I served on the 2011 Planning Committee for the Festival.
- Since 2010 I have been aiding and advising the members of *Articulate Ink* in their pursuit of an artist-run Printmaking cooperative in Regina. As recent graduates of the BFA programme in Print Media, these four artists have sought to synthesize and apply their university education to a real-world scenario, and because of their drive and determination, I have been compelled to extend my role as their university professor to one of community mentor/advisor. Their success is very rewarding to me, both personally and professionally.
- In 2010 I became a member of *Southern Graphics Council International (SGCI)*, the oldest academic institution in North America with a focus on promotion of Printmaking on an international scale. Just prior to writing this letter, I was appointed to the **Board of Directors** for *SGCI*, and will begin my two-year term as International Member-at-Large in 2012, with a mandate to engage Printmakers and Print Media artists and scholars in North America and abroad.

IN SUMMARY

I count myself extremely fortunate to have had the opportunity of my current position with the University of Regina, and I strongly believe I have made the most of it. In examining the exemplars and key elements of my Teaching, Research, Service to the

University, and Service to the Communities, as described above, and in digesting the full contents of my comprehensive online application, I would suggest you will find a compelling case to grant me tenure, and promotion to the rank of Associate Professor. My commitment to excellence is well-documented, proven, and ongoing. I very much look forward to the next chapter in my career.

Most cordially,



Robert Truszkowski
Assistant Professor
Department of Visual Arts

Potential External Assessors:

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cc: Professor Rachelle Viader Knowles
Chair, Department of Visual Arts