

# Diapers, soccer practices and fine art

Film explores the struggles faced by professional female artists

by Daron Letts  
Northern News Services

**LIKE A MARBLE** bust on a pedestal in a fine art gallery, woman has been claimed as an artistic muse throughout history. Art created by women, however, is seldom honoured with such pomp and reverence.

Who Does She Think She Is is a 2008 documentary that explores the experience of contemporary female artists as they balance parenthood and partnership with the prejudices and inequalities that remain as stubborn obstacles on their artistic path.

The Aurora Arts Society will screen the film at 7:30 p.m. on Friday, Dec. 4, at Northern United Place.

The film focuses on five women from around the U.S. who range in age from 27 to 65. Their diverse identities, backgrounds and experiences find common ground in their dedication to art and family. Other voices include costumed members of the Guerrilla Girls, a troupe of anonymous female artists who don gorilla masks while satirizing the elite, male-dominated art world.

The marginalization of women-

related themes in contemporary art, such as childbirth, motherhood and women's interpretations of their own bodies, is discussed and the under representation of women in fine art galleries is addressed, as well.

"It's a very well constructed, thought provoking film," said organizer, Shawna Lampi-Legaree.

Lampi-Legaree has approached the theme of women's roles as artists in her quilt work, such as in a piece called Artist's Block. In 2006, the small art quilt was published on a full colour page of the book Creative Quilting: The Journal Quilt Project.

"It's about the fracturing of women's time and the struggle to stay focused in what is our job, creating art," the textile artist said. "As a female and as an artist, I have been aware that one of the challenges I have is I have a family. It means my time is fractured."

Lampi-Legaree hosted a preview screening for other women artists in the community earlier this week and said the film earned an enthusiastic reception.

"By watching this documentary and then having a conversation around it we found we were having similar experiences," she said. "Every woman had a different, unique perspective. It was kind of the same thing, but different. It was great."

The audience at Friday's screening will be encouraged to share their thoughts during a facilitated discussion following the film. Lampi-Legaree also emphasized that men creating art from a remote commun-

ity with a high cost of living such as Yellowknife may relate to some of the challenges encountered by women in the film.

"Though it's about women, men, I think, have some of the same struggles to produce art," she said. "Any place that's isolated and distant from the main centres struggles with the same thing."



Daron Letts/NNSL photo

In 2006, Shawna Lampi-Legaree's small art quilt, Artist's Block, was published on a full colour page of the book, Creative Quilting: The Journal Quilt Project.



Camille Musser is among the artists profiled in Who Does She Think She Is. Musser lives in Cambridge, Mass., with her husband of 30 years. The painter explores her roots by rediscovering the home she left in the Caribbean in her work.

photo courtesy of Mystic Artists Film Productions

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