

THE CRAFTASTICS

AGENTS FOR SOCIAL CHANGE

A new WITH ART Community Project
Created by Jennie O and the girls of the
Valley Gardens Middle School Grrlz Club
Platform Gallery, 121-100 Arthur St
May 23-25, Reception May 23, 5:00-8:00



WINNIPEG
ARTS COUNCIL

IS IT A BIRD? A PLANE? NO IT'S THE... CRAFTASTICS!

A new visual art project developed through the Winnipeg Arts Council's Community WITH ART Program will open on May 23rd, revealing the identities of Winnipeg's newest superheroes, a group of young ladies who call themselves the Craftastics. **The project will be on exhibition May 23 – 25 at Platform Gallery. An opening reception will be held May 23rd from 5:00pm to 8:00pm, with the artists in attendance.**

The Winnipeg Arts Council's Community WITH ART Program partners professional artists with community groups to work on community identity, issues, and shared goals through the development of an art project. The Craftastics were formed when Jennie O and the girls of the Valley Gardens Middle School Grrlz Club decided to address the issues they've encountered as teens, like gender discrimination, stereotyping, body-issues, depression, anxiety, gossip, peer pressure and bullying. Who better to swoop in to the rescue than a group of superheroes...and who better to be super heroes than teenagers themselves?

The group fabricated costumes and sculpted clay and cloth dolls, and one photo shoot later, ***The Craftastics: Agents for Social Change*** were created! The end product is a deck of trading cards that showcase their superhero creations.

"It was an honour to mentor the girls and collaborate with them in creating *The Craftastics Trading Card Deck*," said artist Jennie O. "This art project truly celebrates the creativity, resilience and diversity of the teenage girls who created it. I am proud to say that it also gave the girls a voice to express their views, experiences and opinions and the platform to be active producers of their own culture. My hope is that this project will inspire and empower others to be creative agents of social change in their own communities."

The exhibition at Platform will display the dolls and posters that were created through the project, and the trading cards will be distributed through the library, schools, and youth outreach centres. The sets will also be available to purchase through the Winnipeg Arts Council.

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"This project has been amazing and I believe has given these girls a voice to share their thoughts on issues they face growing up today," said Pamela Jansen, Community Programming Coordinator. "We all need to help raise aspirations of young women and help them recognise their talents and full potential so they can achieve positive things in their life and in the community around them."

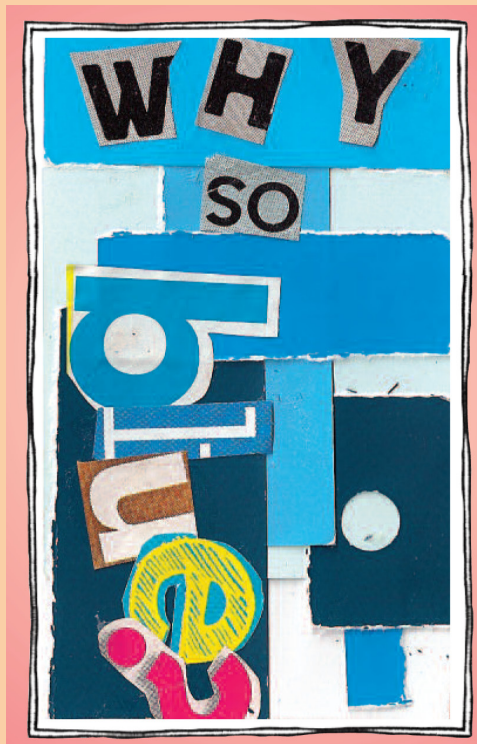
More information about the Winnipeg Arts Council's WITH ART program can be found at www.winnipegarts.ca/withart

The Craftastics: Agents for Social Change

Platform Gallery, 121-100 Arthur St

May 23-25, Reception May 23, 5:00-8:00

Dolls, posters and photos of the project in progress will be on display



MORE ABOUT WITH ART:

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THE CRAFTASTICS: AGENTS FOR SOCIAL CHANGE

WHO

The Winnipeg Arts Council WITH ART Program brought artist Jennie O and the Valley Gardens Middle School Grrlz Club together to create a collaborative public artwork.

Funded by the Manitoba Lighthouse Program, an initiative of Neighbourhoods Alive!, VG Grrlz Club is a River East Transcona School Division after school program for teenage girls. During their weekly meetings, they make crafts, play games and have group discussions on topics from healthy dating relationships to self-esteem issues. Once a month or so, they volunteer in the community or help out another organization with events. The major goal of Grrlz Club is to empower girls in their teenage years and help them realize that girls are awesome and to help them inspire, heal and transform the community, each other and the world in which they live.

WHERE AND WHEN

Over the course of a year and a bit, Jennie O met with the grrlz in the multi-purpose room at Valley Gardens School in Winnipeg's River East Neighbourhood.

HOW

During their weekly meetings, the grrlz discussed why their club was important and how they could demonstrate that in their art project. While Jennie O facilitated art activities; including artist trading cards, self-portraits, blind-contour drawings, and exquisite corpses, the group continued to discuss the ups and downs of being teenage girls as they would have done before Jennie O joined their club.

Eventually the group decided that the artwork should address the issues they've encountered as teens, like gender discrimination, stereotyping, body-issues, depression, anxiety, gossip, peer pressure and bullying. Together they decided to create a team of superheroes to combat some of the challenges teens face. So,



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drawing on the skill set of Jennie O, they fabricated costumes and sculpted clay and cloth dolls. It was decided that the end product would be a deck of trading cards to showcase their superhero creations and thus, *The Craftastics: Agents for Social Change* was formed.

WISH

The Craftastics: Agents for Social Change Trading Card Deck, can be accessed by the public through schools, resource centres and libraries. It is the wish of the Grrlz Club and Jennie O that those who come across this project will be inspired to form their own art club to create positive social change in their schools and beyond.



ABOUT JENNIE O (A.K.A. THE MATRIART)

Jennie O (O'Keefe) is a self-taught artist. Her sculptural narratives aim to draw viewers into a subversive yet honest world of biographical experience, myth and fairytale. Beginning with herself as the protagonist of each endless dreamlike story, she becomes surrounded by her family, friends, and foes in the forms of animal/human, fruit/human or inanimate object/human hybrids. Tongue-in-cheek at first glance, her dolls look at issues surrounding gender and social roles, human vs. animal, the environment, politics and identity. She has facilitated many art projects with youth in Winnipeg, Northern Communities and the U.S. She has received many awards and has exhibited locally, nationally and internationally.

INTRODUCING TWO OF THE HEROES!

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STRAIGHT SHOOTER



STRAIGHT SHOOTER

STRAIGHT SHOOTER

SLOGAN

Too smart to start!

ATTRIBUTES

Athletic, funny, patient, caring.

MISSION

To promote good health through positive activities.
To demonstrate you don't need drugs and alcohol to have fun.

POWERS

She gives youth the power to stand up and say no just by being there for them.
Turns gangs into team players by waving her shield.

HOW SHE GOT HER POWERS

It's just love not magic!

HOME BASE

The multi-purpose room.

WORDS TO LIVE BY

A strong positive attitude will create more miracles than any wonder drug.
- Patriela Neal -

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BIKER CHICK



BIKER CHICK

BIKER CHICK

SLOGAN

It isn't big to make others feel small!

ATTRIBUTES

Assertive, loyal, courageous, confident.

MISSION

To stop bullying
To empower those who think they are weak.

POWERS

Freezes punches in thin air and turns them into hugs.
Converts insulting and mean text messages into good wishes.

HOW SHE GOT HER POWERS

She slid on a patch of mystical healing oil while riding her bike.

HOME BASE

Auto body and power mechanics classroom.

WORDS TO LIVE BY

When people hurt you over and over think of them like sand paper. They may scratch and hurt you a bit, but in the end, you end up polished and they end up useless.
- Chris Culfer -

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