



August 25, 2005

To whom it may concern,

Re: Application to the Virtual Museum of Canada Investment Fund from the Maltwood Art Museum and Gallery for creation of "A Woman's Place" website

This letter is in support of the application from the Maltwood Art Museum and Gallery to build a virtual exhibition based on the gallery exhibit and research for "A Woman's Place."

For the past 4 years I have collaborated with Dr. Karen Finlay, and numerous students from the University of Victoria undertaking research that will underpin the proposed virtual exhibition. As the Curator of the provincial historic sites of Helmcken House, Emily Carr House, Craigflower Manor and Schoolhouse and Point Ellice House, all in Victoria, I worked as the community partner for the CURA project that undertook this research. I will continue to work as an advisor on the project during the construction of the virtual exhibition. The results of our work provide new information on women's art making in 19th century Victoria and evidence that these women and their work acted as a crucible in the formation of an artistic community and tradition in western Canada.

The proposed virtual exhibition will allow the Canadian public and students in Canadian schools access to our findings. Both public and private collections will be made available and the virtual exhibition will provide access to primary and secondary sources as well as historical interpretations of the material. This project will make available a huge body of historical material on women's social, artistic and technical achievements in western Canada that would otherwise be hidden in archives or private collections. The research findings will provide an excellent framework through which this material can be interpreted and made relevant in today's world. Using interactive web, these collections will be accessible through an interactive database, that will allow the public, researchers and students to search and access the information in any way they wish.

A new aspect of the proposal is the concept of the Virtual Heirloom Roadshow. Using a web database such as Plone to collect data and images of artistic works made by Canadian women but still in private collections and presenting them as an element of A Woman's Place website will provide an innovative opportunity for Canadians to interact with the website and to contribute to the story of woman's art making in Canada. The Virtual Heirloom Roadshow will build a true 'virtual museum of Canadian women's art'. Contributions from across Canada will be actively solicited for a year during which submissions can be made the the Heirloom Roadshow.

I believe this to be a very worthwhile project and encourage you to support it.

Best regards

Jennifer Iredale
Heritage Stewardship Officer
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Province of B.C.

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Tourism and Culture**

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