

For Immediate Release

Exhibition

04 May - 09 June 2012

Curatorial Lecture

Shadow archives and ladies of the evening: Commemoration, incarceration and self-fashioning in Winnipeg mugshots, 1878-1916

Friday 04 May 12PM @ Mentoring Artists for Women's Art [611 Main Street]

Opening Reception + Curator's Tour

Friday 04 May 7PM

Panel Discussion

Histories and Futures of the Sex Trade in Western Canada

Saturday 19 May 3PM

Pioneer Ladies [of the Evening]



Winnipeg Madam, ca. 1904. Courtesy of Winnipeg Police Archive

PLATFORM centre for photographic + digital arts is pleased to present the third exhibition in our thematic programming year, where we are exploring artists use of collections and archiving with an idea toward to palimpsest or re-writable text as a way to discuss photography. *Pioneer Ladies [of the Evening]* is curated by Dr. Laurie K. Bertram for PLATFORM and will use archival mugshots and

additional museum objects to reconsider the lives of sex trade workers in Winnipeg more than one hundred years ago.

Drawing from the Winnipeg Police Museum Archive, this project uses turn-of-the-century mug shots of Winnipeg women arrested for a variety of offenses to investigate linkages between commemoration and incarceration. In response to the unveiling of the “Famous Five” statue on the grounds of the Manitoba Legislature in 2009 amid ongoing attempts to secure attention for missing sex trade workers in the West, this project asks: “what challenges does the sex trade pose to Canada’s commemorative landscape?” “How can carceral images be redeployed in the construction of radical gender histories?”

The exhibit will feature original mug shots of Western Canadian women alongside panels of text that imagine an alternate commemorative landscape dedicated to their lives. Panels will feature archival research on each woman, including the details surrounding her arrest, but will resituate this information in a new commemorative landscape for the Canadian West, where honours are still usually reserved for often White male officials, planners, soldiers and judges.

By transforming these shots of captivity into portraits of “pioneer ladies,” this exhibit tests the sexualized and gendered boundaries of Canadian commemoration while imagining new histories that acknowledge the remarkable pasts of marginalized and incarcerated women.

- Dr. Bertram, curatorial synopsis

Please join us for the opening reception + Curatorial tour Friday, May 4th beginning at 7PM. Refreshments will be served.

About the Curator:

Laurie K. Bertram is a specialist in immigration, material culture, trauma, and memory in Canadian history. She completed her PhD in the Department of History at the University of Toronto in August 2010. Using the often understated and private cultural terrains of the Icelandic-Canadian community, her dissertation examines the contributions of ‘inauthentic’ and undervalued forms of cultural expression, including ghost stories, fibre, landscape, souvenirs and family history narratives, to complex, innovative, and compelling strategies in the enduring definition of ethnic cultures on the prairies.

PLATFORM wishes to acknowledge the support of its membership, board of directors, volunteers, and staff. *Pioneer Ladies* [of the Evening] is made possible with funding and additional support received from Manitoba Arts Council, Winnipeg Arts Council, [núna \(now\)](#), and [Mentoring Artists for Women's Art](#). Special mention is owed to the Manitoba Museum, the Winnipeg Police Archive, Dalnavert Museum & Visitors' Centre, and the Strathclair Museum their generous loans to the exhibit.

For more information about this exhibition, please contact the PLATFORM directly:

PLATFORM | 121-100 Arthur Street [Artspace Building] | Winnipeg, Manitoba | R3B 1H3 | 204.942.8183