



Ms. Laurel Elizabeth Woodcock

January 7, 2017

October 22, 1960 - January 7, 2017

A noted conceptual artist and educator, Laurel died at Toronto General Hospital after receiving extraordinary care.

Born in Ottawa, Laurel grew up in Montreal, studying Fine Art at Concordia University and later completing her Master of Fine Art at the Nova Scotia College of Art and Design.

Laurel was a professor at the University of Guelph, where she started the Extended Practices program, and was mentor to many artists and colleagues. She exhibited her work widely including shows at The Power Plant, Museum of Contemporary Canadian Art, the Art Gallery of Ontario in Toronto, The Contemporary Art Gallery in Vancouver and Artist's Space in New York City. Her work was represented by Michael Klein's MKG127 gallery in Toronto.

She was predeceased by her mother, M. Lois Woodcock (née Pennycook) and her father John G. Woodcock. She will be lovingly remembered by her sisters Lynn Breadmore of Brisbane, Australia, Heather Eagle of Dundas, Ontario, her brother W. John Woodcock of Buckhorn, Ontario and their families, including her many nieces and nephews and grand nieces and grand nephews.

Laurel loved Montreal, the city she grew up in, but ultimately she loved Toronto, the city she called home for the past 15 years.

She was stylish. She loved books, design and dogs. First came Harley, then came Eddy, Maya, Sadie One and Sadie Two. Laurel loved to walk her dogs and to spoil them, even after one of them chewed her Eames Moulded Plywood Dining chairs into bits.

Laurel loved working and loved making art. She loved contemporary art, but she was not fond of all contemporary artists, or the art they made. She loved teaching. Laurel loved her students and she loved those students who became contemporary artists.

She loved music and she loved making playlists. She loved titles and names and words. Most of all Laurel loved her privacy and she certainly would not have wanted you reading this.

Charitable donations in Laurel's name can be made to the SPCA (<https://ontariospca.ca/>) or alternatively please take something that you sort-of like (but may not want) from your house and leave it on the curb for someone else to enjoy.

A memorial will be held at the Gladstone Hotel Ballroom February 5, 2017 at 6:30 pm.

Previous Events

Memorial Service

FEB 5. 6:30 PM (ET)

Gladstone Hotel Ballroom
1214 Queen Street West
Toronto, ON M6J 1J6 (CA)

Tribute Wall

GL

“ I was Sad to hear about Laurels passing, we always had excellent discussions about film and video, and she always peaked my interest in new and interesting topics in the medium. Her diverse artistic interests were always intriguing, and comprehensive, I was glad to have her as a mentor, and may all her showers be golden.

Grea Larr - March 26, 2022 at 08:52 PM



“ I was a student of Laurel's at the University of Guelph. She went above and beyond in her role as teacher and mentor. She worked super hard, and expected others to do so as well. This made for a really rich, intense and productive learning environment where a lot of great work was made.

Laurel dispelled the mystery around what it took to be an artist, she laid out a formula of sorts that made it seem like a totally reasonable decision and a real possibility. Part of that formula was community-- Laurel had a way of lassoing her students into the Toronto art community, pointing out or finding opportunities for us to contribute and be involved, insisting we attend openings and lectures. The classroom functioned as a microcosm of this community...she was always encouraging us to be there for each other, as she was for her friends, fellow artists and students. Case in point: when I first moved to Toronto after graduating, Laurel hired me to do just about every odd job imaginable...this really helped me get through a scarce time. She was extremely generous. I also will remember her as being pretty tough. She had a clear idea of what kind of artwork "worked" and what didn't. (This made for some pretty intense critiques!) Part of my maturity as a person and artist has been being willing to make work that I'm pretty sure she'd disapprove of (sorry Laurel), but I love her all the more for the lesson in growing a thick skin (or accepting my thin one).

Much love to Laurel's family and loved ones, and all who were touched by her.

a - January 31, 2017 at 10:14 AM

FP

“ Please accept my most sincere condolences. My thoughts and those of my colleagues at the Musée régional de Rimouski will accompany you in this difficult time..

Sincerely

Francine Périnet

Francine Périnet - January 30, 2017 at 11:04 AM

NT

“ Laurel was an exceptionally thoughtful and meticulous student in an undergrad BFA class of mine at Concordia, but it was later during a visit to Halifax where she was doing an MFA that I saw her prowess as a conceptual artist really emerge. I thought then that it was going to happen for her, and she made it so. That's her legacy and how we'll remember her. My deepest condolences to Laurel's family and her network of close friends, so saddened by this loss.

Nell Tenhaaf - January 14, 2017 at 07:50 AM

LW

“*Laurel was a friend. We shared various flats in Montreal. She made wonderful coffee. I remember how particular she was about the type of beans, the store she bought them from, the specific coffee pot used, whisking the hot milk... it took time, but was delicious. It was the period between her dogs Harley and Eddy. Eddy (a Picardy Shepherd) was a loopy dog but Laurel adored him and was undeterred by his desire to eat through the library of precious theory books. She got some dog behavior trainers round – I came back once to find Laurel on all fours, impersonating a dog as instructed by the trainers. We watched so many thrillers /detective videos together –Laurel laughed as the staff at Blockbuster seemingly knew our telephone number by heart. She was a fearless driver – able to park her van in the tiniest of spaces. I returned to Canada to see Laurel in Guelph briefly– it was evident how much she cared for her students and pushed them to make good work. She coined the term ‘stand up theory’. She was so funny, kind, warm and very generous. Much love to all her friends and family xxx
Louise K Wilson*

Louise K Wilson - January 13, 2017 at 01:51 AM

SD

“*I am heartbroken to learn of Laurel's death. She was a wonderful and generous artist and teacher who earned deep respect from colleagues, the art world and her students. I had the pleasure of working with Laurel when I was the Artistic Director of Media and Visual Art at The Banff Centre, where she undertook a number of residencies, exerting her terrific imagination. When I moved to Toronto I encountered her at many events in the art community and have continued to follow her creative practice as an artist and professor. I extend my condolences to Laurel's family, friends and colleagues. What a loss!
Dr. Sara Diamond, President, OCAD University*

Sara Diamond - January 12, 2017 at 08:27 PM

JB

“ I studied *Extended Studio Practice* with Laurel at Guelph, where she was a challenging, funny, encouraging, intimidating yet nurturing professor- one of the best mentors I've ever had. I may not have developed the courage and confidence to become an artist if it wasn't for her recognition of my then underdeveloped ideas. She warned me against letting overly personal sentiments cloud my concepts. The most important thing Laurel ever taught me, a mantra I will carry in my art practice always, is to "always allow people more than one way to enter the work". I had hoped to one day look her up to thank her for the guidance she gave and the sparks she lit. She gave me ways to connect my love of art with my love of music. She will be forever admired and missed by many. I will be putting some sweet scores out by the curb side in her memory. Sincerest sympathies to her family, friends, colleagues, students, and art community. ✨

Jocelyn Claire Burke - January 12, 2017 at 11:44 AM

RP

“ Laurel was former professor turned friend. She was remarkably generous, especially in her role as a teacher. She took her role as a mentor seriously and invested untold amounts of energy encouraging young artists to stay the course. She made a palpable impact and altered the paths of many, in ways that only she could. She was smart, kind, witty and thoughtful and she will be missed.

RP - January 11, 2017 at 11:56 PM

FR

“ Laurel was the first teacher at UofG to truly open my eyes to the power of art. She was an epic teacher with the ability to balance encouragement and kindness with enough tough love to motivate even this slow starter.

Freya - January 10, 2017 at 09:21 PM

JM

“ *Laurel's class was the best one I had at Concordia. She was an excellent teacher who really cared about her students' work. My condolences to her loved ones.*

Jennifer McVeigh - January 10, 2017 at 08:53 PM



“ *My favourite instructor at UofG; she will be remembered fondly.*

Lee Bondzio - January 10, 2017 at 09:42 AM

ML

“ *I rememver Laurel and Eddy fondly from our Jeanne-Mance Park dog-walking pack. She was good company. May she rest in peace. Condolences to all who loved her.*

mary lamey - January 10, 2017 at 08:58 AM

NI

“ *Rip Laurel woodcock , She was my second cousin !!!!!!! She will be missed.:(*

nicole - January 09, 2017 at 06:39 PM

NI

“ *She was such a nice and caring person . Rip Laurel Woodcock . I 'll miss u.*

nicole - January 09, 2017 at 06:36 PM

NI

“ *Rip Laurel , may you rest in peace , I am her second cousin Nicole arsenault*

nicole - January 09, 2017 at 06:35 PM



“ *Laurel was such a large part of my experience at Guelph. She was supportive and challenging and she changed the way that I thought and spoke about art. I remember I was doing a performance writing love poems about whatever people wanted for 25 cents and Laurel asked for a poem about her dog Maya. She even brought me a photo from her office for inspiration. A few years later when I was visiting she showed me that she still had the poem in her office. She will be tremendously missed.*

Amber Landgraaf - January 09, 2017 at 12:53 PM

AC

laurel was both brilliant and discrete. i'm so sad she's already left us. we knew each other via the queen west arts community, mutual close friends, and our love of dogs, which we shared often in parks over the years. in fact, not so long ago, we rescued an unruly puppy together close to her house as we were heading to work. she was a boss in her own right, and i hope she will be remembered as such

anne cloutier - January 09, 2017 at 11:19 PM

JB

I studied Extended Studio Practice with Laurel at Guelph, where she was a challenging, funny, encouraging, intimidating yet nurturing professor- one of the best mentors I've ever had. I may not have developed the courage and confidence to become an artist if it wasn't for her recognition of my then underdeveloped ideas. She warned me against letting overly personal sentiments cloud my concepts. The most important thing Laurel ever taught me, a mantra I will carry in my art practice always, is to "always allow people more than one way to enter the work". I had hoped to one day look her up to thank her for the guidance she gave and the sparks she lit. She gave me ways to connect my love of art with my love of music. She will be forever admired and missed by many. I will be putting some sweet scores out by the curb side in her memory. Sincerest sympathies to her family, friends, colleagues, students, and art community. ✨

Jocelyn Claire Burke - January 10, 2017 at 10:06 AM

JB

One of my favourite memories of Laurel was her tiny apartment in Montreal near a curve in the train tracks. When the train went by the screeching of the wheels was so loud you would have to stop your conversation until the train passed.

Jonathan Browns - January 10, 2017 at 04:16 PM

DA

Laurel was a friend of mine in Montreal..She was a wonderful supportive friend and always fun to be around..she was one of the good ones and will be missed..

dave arden - January 11, 2017 at 09:32 PM