



From Deaf Shame to Deaf Same will be displayed at George Bothwell Library's Creation Cube from May 25 - June 25, 2022. **A small gala to open the exhibition will take place at 11am on May 25.**

This installation is a collaboration between the Deaf and Hard of Hearing (DHH) Program at Winston Knoll Collegiate, SKArts' Artists in the Schools program, and Deaf Crows Collective. It is being hosted by Regina Public Library (George Bothwell Branch) and Dunlop Art Gallery (Creation Cube).

From Deaf Shame to Deaf Same illustrates collective experiences of young Deaf and Hard of Hearing artists who have grown up with 'deaf shame': a sense of depression, isolation and humiliation around their hearing loss, that to varying degrees has impacted their emotional, social, linguistic and academic development since birth. 'Deaf same' is a metaphor for each person's awakening to the Deaf Community, a space where acceptance, belonging and a meaningful existence becomes possible.

The youth have shared their various journeys from 'Deaf shame' to 'Deaf same,' a space to which they belong and contribute, and the profound experience of exploring deafhood, and discovering an identity that focuses on their unique strengths as individuals, not on what the world thinks they lack.

From Deaf Shame to Deaf Same is based on stories the youth shared about growing up Deaf or Hard of Hearing. The stories chosen for this installation are based on personal narratives that resonated with most or all of the students, such as feeling alone at the dinner table while a hearing family talks around them, or being bullied in a school yard by hearing peers. *From Deaf Shame to Deaf Same* invites the viewer into these experiences through a series of dioramas and photographs, as well as written descriptions by the students.

Background of Deaf Crows Collective

The demise of the Deaf community in Saskatchewan is due to the fallout from the closure of Saskatoon's provincial school for the deaf in 1991, and the following exodus from the province of key deaf leaders, Deaf teachers, Deaf teaching assistants and Deaf dorm supervisors, as well as the Deaf students. Over thirty years later, the Saskatchewan Deaf community consists of an aging group of Deaf adults who have little connection with Deaf and Hard of Hearing (DHH) youth in the province. As a result, younger DHH have limited access to active Deaf role models and to Deaf community events that are designed to include the cultural interests of DHH youth.

Deaf Crows Collective was born out of early in-school collaborations between professional artists, the DHH highschool program, and two key Deaf community mentors, supported by SK Arts Artists in the Schools program. Telling their stories through art and theatre created a strong sense of community among the DHH youth, and Deaf Crows Collective was created as a way to continue these programs even after graduation, and in so doing, to protect the survival and vitality of the emerging DHH community.

Deaf Crows Collective focuses on the telling and sharing of DHH stories and experiences through visual arts, performance, and film.

The collective has produced several theatrical productions in Regina: *Deaf Crows*, their flagship play (2016); *Nay's Story*, the story of a young Deaf refugee fleeing into the Burmese jungles and eventually arriving in Canada; and *Apple Time* (2017) which explores the individual narratives before discovery of other deaf people in their lives. *Deaf Crows* and *Apple Time* were also both presented in Edmonton at the

Deaf Theatre Festival, SoundOFF. A play commissioned by the Deaf Crows Collective, *Firebird* (in progress) explores the crisis of leadership in a young Deaf community struggling for its survival. *The Deaf Forest* (2017 - Dunlop Art Gallery in Regina and at the Deaf Culture Center in Toronto), was an immersive, interactive installation depicting the DHH experience of the hearing world, the hard of hearing world, and the Deaf world.

Among several short films and videos, the collective is currently in post production on its first major film project, *Fable Deaf*, a cautionary tale looking at rifts in the Deaf community and the urgent need for the aging deaf to support young Deaf people and welcome them into the Deaf community. *Fable Deaf* is due to premiere in the fall of 2022.

Project Participants

14 youth from the high school program created the stories and collaborated with teachers and artists to create the installation. DHH children from the Henry Janzen elementary school also contributed to some of the art making. The project has in various stages been supported by Deaf mentors Allard Thomas and Dr. Joanne Weber, staff and teachers at Winston Knoll Collegiate and Henry Janzen Elementary School, and a partnership between DHH teacher Michelle Grodecki and project artist Chrystene Ells, supported by Regina Public Schools and SKArts.

Contact Information

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