

## Reading the Museum

### DEMONSTRATION PROJECTS • 1993-1999

*Reading the Museum undertook 34 projects from its beginning in 1993. This chronology, put together by Coordinator Lon Dubinsky and grouped alphabetically by province, summarizes the projects. The Canadian Museums Association is collaborating with The Centre for Literacy to consolidate the learning from these projects, and develop a sustainable model for cooperation between museums and adult literacy programs across the country and beyond.*

## ALBERTA

### Family Treasures

**Partners:** Glenbow Museum, Calgary and Partnership Approach to Literacy (PAL), Pincher Creek, Alberta

**Date:** 1993

**Coordinators:** Jean Bruce, Canadian Museum of Civilization, assisted by Kathy Day and Carole Godreau, PAL, and Sandra Morton-Weizman and Linda Hawke, Glenbow Museum

**Description:** Families researched, wrote and displayed their objects using the "Family Treasures" model developed by Jean Bruce.

**Other Information:**

Press: BRENDA SHENTON. "Pal tutors and students tour Glenbow Museum." *Echo*. Pincher Creek, October 19, 1993, cover and p. 16.

## Youth and Cultural Literacy

**Partners:** Glenbow Museum, Calgary; Sir Alexander Galt Museum, Lethbridge; Medicine Hat Museum and Gallery, Medicine Hat; Red Deer and District Museum, Red Deer, Alberta

**Date:** 1995

**Coordinators:** Sandra Morton-Weizman, Kirsten Evenden, Glenbow Museum

**Description:** This was the literacy component of a larger initiative of community-based exhibitions about contemporary youth culture.

**Other Information:**

KIRSTEN EVENDEN. "The Youth Curator Project." *Reading The Museum Newsletter*, Vol. 1, No.2, November-December, 1995, p.4



## Blue Ink in My Pen

**Partners:** Edmonton Art Gallery and Prospects Literacy Association, Edmonton Alberta

**Date:** 1995

**Coordinator:** Marie Lopes, Curator of Education, Edmonton Art Gallery assisted by Prospects Director Maureen Sanders, writing instructor and author Don Trembath, and Jennifer McVaugh, resource person

**Description:** Adult learners wrote about art works in the gallery and produced *Blue Ink in My Pen*.

**Publication:** *Blue Ink in My Pen*

**Other Information:**

This project is featured in the video "Reading The Museum."

LON DUBINSKY. "Literacy and Visual Culture in Three Art Gallery Settings." In Rita L. Irwin and Anna M. Kindler Eds.

*Beyond the School: Community and Institutional Partnerships in Art Education.*

Reston: NAEA, 1999, pp. 70-79.

MARIE LOPES. "Creative Writing at The Edmonton Art Gallery." *Reading The Museum, Newsletter*, Vol. 2, No. 1, March-April, 1996, p. 6.

MARIE LOPES. "Blue Ink in My Pen: Student Writings about Art." *Muse*, Vol. 14, No.2, 1996, pp. 41-43.



## Handing Down Our History

**Partners:** Whyte Museum of the Canadian Rockies and Bow Valley Literacy Program, Banff and Canmore, Alberta

**Date:** 1998

**Coordinators:** Barbara Parker and Sally Truss

**Description:** Thirty-three second language learners wrote about and visually documented their memories and traditions.

**Publication:** *Handing Down Our History*

**Other Information:**

*Reading The Museum Newsletter*, Vol. 4, No. 2, December, 1998, p.5



## BRITISH COLUMBIA

### Loggers, Wives and Sawmill Workers: Memories of the Cowichan Valley

**Partners:** British Columbia Forest Museum and Malespina University College, Duncan, British Columbia

**Dates:** 1993-94

**Coordinator:** Kate Nonesuch, Upgrade Program, Malespina University College

**Description:** Adult learners collected and wrote oral histories of the logging industry.

**Publication:** *Loggers, Wives and Sawmill Workers: Memories of the Cowichan Valley*

**Other Information:**

JOHN KOVACS. "Book highlights loggers." *The Citizen*, April 13, 1994. n.p.

PETER RUSLAND. "Looking Back To The Future." *Golden Times*. April 24, 1994, p.53

*Reading The Museum Newsletter*, Vol. 1, No. 1, May-June 1995, p. 5

### Gift of Age

**Partners:** Matqui-Sumas-Abbotsford Museum Society and the University College of the Fraser Valley, Abbotsford, B.C.

**Date:** 1996-97

**Coordinator:** Lynne Wright

**Description:** Adult learners developed a clear language guide to the museum based on interviews with local pioneers.

**Publication:** *Gift of Age*

**Other Information:**

LYNNE WRIGHT. "Gifts of Age." *Reading The Museum Newsletter*, Vol. 3, No. 2/Vol. 4, No. 1, April, 1998, p.3.



**Hear Are Your Roots**

**Partners:** Fraser-Fort George Museum, School District 57 and Immigrant and Multicultural Services Society, Prince George, British Columbia.

**Date:** 1998

**Coordinators:** Alecia Greenfield and Ramona Rose, Fraser-Fort George Museum

**Description:** Second language learners did research and documented the immigrant experience for an exhibition about the region's forestry workers. Included was a clear and plain language glossary of forest industry terminology.

**Publication:** *Hear Are Your Roots*

**Selected further information:** ALECIA GREENFIELD. "Hear Are Your Roots." *Reading The Museum Newsletter*. Vol. 4, No. 2, December 1998, p. 2-3.  
GORDON HOEKSTRA. "Voices from the past describe forest work." *The Citizen*. n.d.

## Breath Of Our Grandfathers

**Partners:** 'Ksan Museum and Learners Opportunity Group Society, Hazelton, British Columbia.

**Date:** 1999

**Coordinator:** Gwaans (Beverley Clifton Percival)

**Description:** Films on Gitksan life and culture were used to encourage learners to write about and participate in museumrelated activities.



**Other Information:** GWAANS. "Breath Of Our Grandfathers: The Story Continues....." *Reading The Museum Newsletter*, Vol. 5, No. 2, November-December, 1999, pp 1,3.

In 1999-2000, the Fraser-Fort George Museum (now Exploration Place) and the Fort St. James Carrier Band participated in a literary research project supported by the "Valuing Literacy in Canada" program of the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada.

## MANITOBA

### Family Literacy in the Children's Museum

**Partners:** Manitoba Children's Museum and Literacy Manitoba, Winnipeg, Manitoba

**Date:** 1995

**Coordinator:** Nancy Newman

**Description:** Adults and children explored several exhibits to create a series of written and visual works.

### J'apprends avec le musée

**Partners:** Musee Saint Boniface and Pluri-elles Inc., Saint-Boniface, Manitoba

**Date:** 1995

**Coordinator:** Pierrette Boily, Curator, Musee St Boniface

**Description:** Learners developed an exhibition for seniors that focused on the cultural importance of linguistic background and the value of oral history for developing pride in one's heritage.

**Other Information:** PIERRETTE BOILY. "Voices from the Past." *Reading The Museum Newsletter*, Vol. 1, No. 1, March- April, 1995, p. 6-7.

## NEW BRUNSWICK

### Anniversary Exhibition

**Partners:** York-Sunbury Historical Society Museum and Literacy Council of Fredericton, Fredericton, New Brunswick

**Date:** 1996-97

**Coordinator:** Betty Robertson

**Description:** Learners from several literacy organizations helped develop the museum's 65th anniversary exhibition.

**Publication:** Literacy Resource Handbook

**Other Information:**

Press: "Oral History Highlighted," *Daily Gleaner*, Fredericton, October, 1996.

BETTY ROBERTSON. "Fredericton Literacy Project," *Reading The Museum Newsletter*, Vol. 3, No. 1, April, 1997, p.2.

### Once Upon A Time in the Museum

**Partners:** New Brunswick Museum and Read Saint John New Brunswick

**Date:** 1998

**Coordinator:** Leanne French, New Brunswick Museum assisted by Brenda Jarvis, Read Saint John

**Description:** Each adult learner, with assistance from their tutors, wrote a fictional story based on the collection of one the museum's six galleries and children participating in several community programs provided illustrations.

**Publication:** Six "Once Upon a Time" Stories

**Other Information:**

This project is featured in the "Reading The Museum" video.

Writing and visual work from this project was included in the World Literacy of Canada Calendar for 2000.

JULIE CORMIER and HELEN FRIGAULT, two learners in the project, read at the Community Writing session of Blue Metropolis, the Montreal International Literary



Festival, in 1999.

LEANNE FRENCH. "Once Upon a Time." *Reading The Museum Newsletter*, Vol. 4, No. 2, December, 1998, p, 6-7

## NORTHWEST TERRITORIES



### Literacy as Theatre

**Partners:** Prince of Wales Heritage Centre, Native Theatre Group, several Aboriginal Literacy Programs, Yellowknife, Northwest Territories

**Date:** 1993

**Coordinator:** John Blondin

**Description:** Learners wrote and performed a play about their cultural and personal experience using the collection and other resources of the Prince of Wales Centre.

**Other Information:**

For a report of follow up activities, see BARB CAMERON. "Literacy Notes North of 60: Prince of Wales Northern Heritage Centre," *Reading The Museum Newsletter*, Vol. 1, No. 2, November-December, 1995, p.2.

### Literacy and Traditional Knowledge

**Partners:** Northern Life Museum and Aurora College, Fort Smith, Northwest Territories

**Date:** 1996-97

**Description:** Adult learners recorded and preserved traditional knowledge and skills.

**Publication:** Joint Report by Learners. See below

**Other Information:**

Joint Report by Learners. "Literacy and Traditional Knowledge at the Northern Life Museum," *Reading The Museum Newsletter*, Vol. 3, No. 1, April, 1997, p.4.

## NOVA SCOTIA



### This Week in Nature

**Partners:** Nova Scotia Museum of Natural History and Literacy Coalition of Nova Scotia, Halifax, Nova Scotia

**Date:** 1995

**Coordinator:** Darcy Rhyno assisted by Jennifer McVaugh, resource person

**Description:** This project recruited adult learners throughout the province to be nature reporters. Their hand written accounts of bird sightings and other observations were displayed over several months in "This Week in Nature," a changing exhibit at the museum.

**Publication:** *Nova Scotia Nature Watch*

**Other Information:** DARCY RHYNO. "This Week in Nature." *Reading The Museum Newsletter*. Vol. 2, No. I, March- April, 1996, pp.3,7.

### A Story Quilt

**Partners:** Nova Scotia Museum and Adult Literacy Program, Halifax City Regional Library (North Branch), Halifax, Nova Scotia

**Date:** 1993

**Coordinator:** Kilby McRae

**Description:** Adult learners created a story quilt, based on an exhibition of old Nova Scotia quilts at the museum, and a book of writings about their personal experiences.

**Publication:** *Word of Mouth*



**Other Information:**

PAULA JARDINE,. "Quilters turn patchwork into history." *The North End News*, Halifax, Nova Scotia, October 22, 1993.

## ONTARIO

### Landscape as a Metaphor for History

**Partners:** Tom Thomson Gallery and Literacy Program, Owen Sound Public Library, Owen Sound, Ontario

**Date:** 1993

**Coordinator:** Paula Huisman

**Description:** Using works in the collection, learners used the idea of landscape as a means to create written and visual works based on their lives.

**Other Information:** LON DUBINSKY. "The Artifact as Narrative." *Canadian Society For Education Through Art*. Volume 27, 1, Spring , 1996, p. 23-29.

### Newcomers

**Partners:** Saint Mary's Museum and St. Mary's Adult Literacy Program, Saint Mary's, Ontario

**Date:** 1993-94

**Coordinator:** Mary Breen

**Description:** Adult learners recorded the experiences of newcomers to the St. Mary's area.

**Publication:** *So I've Been Told...Stories from St. Mary's*

### Historic Site Brochure

**Partners:** Woodside Historic Site, Parks Canada and Core Literacy, Kitchener, Ontario

**Date:** 1994

**Coordinator:** Mike Starr with assistance from Parks Canada and Core Literacy Staff

**Description:** Adult learners researched, designed and wrote a clear and plain language brochure about the site specifically for visitors with low literacy skills but useful and appropriate for all visitors

**Publication:** Brochure

**Other Information:** MIKE STAR. "A Literacy Project at Woodside National Historic Site." *Reading The Museum Newsletter*, Vol. 1, No. 1 May- June, 1995, p. 5-6.



### A Place To Call Their Own

**Partners:** McMichael Canadian Collection, Kleinberg, Ontario, East Mall Community Services, Etobicoke, Ontario and North Albion Creative Kids, Rexdale, Ontario

**Date:** 1995

**Coordinator:** Brad Eyre assisted by Mary Breen, resource person

**Description:** Adults and children made written and visual works about places in their lives and how place is expressed in the McMichael collection.

**Other Information:** BRAD EYRE and SHAWNA WHITE. "A Place To Call Their Own," *Reading The Museum Newsletter*, Vol. 2, No. 1, March- April, 1996, p.5



### If Objects Could Speak

**Partners:** Huronia Museum and Georgian College, Midland, Ontario

**Date:** 1995

**Coordinators:** Bill Smith and Natalie Quealey

**Description:** Adult learners recorded oral histories of North Simcoe seniors and made links between these histories and museum artifacts.

**Publication:** Video of project activities

**Other Information:** BILL SMITH and NATALIE QUEALEY. "If Objects Could Speak." *Reading The Museum Newsletter*. Vol. 1, No. 2, November-December, 1995, p.1.

#### Signs and Designs: The Art in Identity

**Partners:** Art Gallery of Windsor and Multicultural Council of Windsor and Essex County, Windsor, Ontario

**Date:** 1996-97

**Coordinator:** Christine Goodchild

**Description:** Adult second language learners explored and designed advertising, including logos, based on their experiences in the gallery and the shopping mall in which the gallery was temporarily located.

**Publication:** Two signs (displayed in and outside the gallery)

**Other Information:**

The project served as a model for outreach tours of the gallery. LON DUBINSKY. "Literacy and Visual Culture in Three Art Gallery Settings." In Rita L. Irwin and Anna M. Kindler Eds.

*Beyond The School: Community and Institutional Partnerships in Art Education*. Reston: NAEA, 1999, p. 70-79.

CHRISTINE GOODCHILD. "Working with words, art and advertising at the Art Gallery of Windsor." *Reading the Museum Newsletter*. Vol. 3, No. 1, April, 1997, p.3.

#### Inside and Out

**Partners:** London Regional Art and Historical Museums, London/Middlesex Literacy Network and Limberlost Family Literacy Program, London, Ontario

**Date:** 1998

**Coordinator:** Cydna Mercer

**Description:** Adult learners and their children participated in a six-week exploration of historic Eldon House through journal writing and other activities.

**Other Information:**

CYDNA MERCER. "Inside and Out." *Reading the Museum Newsletter* Vol. 4, No. 2, December 1998. p.4, 8. "Inside and Out" has continued as a summer program with support from the London Community Foundation.

## I Do, I Do!

**Partners:** Peel Heritage Complex and Muslim Community Services, Brampton, Ontario

**Date:** 1999

**Coordinator:** Josie Premzell

**Description:** Adult second language learners and heritage staff jointly researched, documented and curated an exhibition about wedding traditions and cultures.



**Publication:** "I Do, I Do" Exhibition Brochure

**Other Information:** Winner for Innovative Programming, Ontario Museums Association, 2000 JOSIE PREMZELL, "I Do, I Do Opens at Peel Heritage Complex." *Reading the Museum Newsletter*, Vol. 5 No. 1, May- June, 1999, p. 1-2.

## Made-In-Hamilton

**Partners:** Ontario Workers Arts and Heritage Centre and Workers Education Centre, Hamilton, Ontario

**Date:** 1999

**Coordinator:** Mary Breen

**Description:** Adult learners contributed to the development of guide books for the "Made in Hamilton Industrial Trail"

**Publication:** Guide Books

**Other Information:** MARY BREEN. "Literacy and Oral History in the Made-In-Hamilton Project." *Reading the Museum Newsletter*, Vol. 5, No. 2, November-December, 1999, pp. 7-8.

## QUEBEC

### Un Voyage au Musée

**Partners:** Musée des beaux-arts de Montreal and Centre de ressources en éducation populaire, Montréal, Québec

**Date:** 1993-94

**Coordinator:** Ginette Lebel

**Description:** Several hundred adult learners were introduced to a selection of objects, labels and didactic panels in the museum.

**Publication:** Two workbooks

**Other Information:**

"Un voyage au musée." *Reading The Museum Newsletter*, Vol. 1, No. 1 May-June, 1995, p.2.

This project was the incentive for several outreach projects, including the current initiative "Bridging Art and the Community."

### Les ateliers de l'ABC

**Partners:** Musée des-beaux-arts de Sherbrooke and Le Centre-St. Michel, Sherbrooke, Québec

**Date:** 1995

**Coordinator:** Michel Forest

**Description:** Adult learners made connections between reading, writing and visual literacy.

**Publication:** Les Ateliers de conditionnement artistique

**Other Information:** MICHEL FOREST. "Art Appreciation Workouts." *Reading the Museum Newsletter*, Vol. 1, No. 2 November-December, 1995, p.5.



### 26 oeuvres pour 26 lettres

**Partners:** Centre national d'exposition and Centre Alpha, Jonquière, Quebec

**Date:** 1998

**Coordinator:** Rémi Lavoie

**Other Information:** Press: Yvon Bernier. "Apprendre à lire au musée: quelle plaisir!" *Le Progres-Dimanche*, le 8 novembre, 1998, reprinted *Reading the Museum Newsletter*, Vol. 5, No.1, May-June, 1999, pp. 7-8.

## Literacy Through Photography

**Partners:** McCord Museum, Carrefour de Pointe Ste. Charles and PACE, Montreal, Quebec

**Date:** 1998

**Coordinator:** Martha Langford, Independent Curator and Writer assisted by Johanne Bouffard, Carrefour de Pointe Ste. Charles

**Description:** Adult learners created albums containing photographs and words using a collection of albums at the McCord Museum as inspiration.

**Publication:** Albums by learners

### Other Information:

The Carrefour component is featured in "Reading the Museum" video.

JOHANNE BOUFFARD. "Arrêt Sur Image: Ou l'art de Voir le monde d'un autre oeil." *Le Monde Alphabétique*. automne, 1999, pp. 3-6.

MARTHA LANGFORD. "Literacy Through Photography." *Reading the Museum Newsletter*, Vol. 5, No. 1, May-June, 1999, pp 3-5.



## Exposer L'Histoire

**Partners:** Ecomusée du fier monde and L'Atelier des lettres, Montreal, Quebec

**Date:** 1999

**Coordinator:** Lucie Bonnier Description: Adult learners produced an exhibition on the theme of labor that included text, photographs and objects from their own work experiences.

**Publication:** See below

**Other Information:**

"Writing and sharing personal work histories." *Reading the Museum Newsletter*, Vol. 5, No. 2, November-December, 1999, p.4

Building on this work, during 1999-2001, the two organizations participated in a comparative research project about literacy learning funded by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada Program "Valuing Literacy in Canada."

**Publication:** *ABC et Travail*

## SASKATCHEWAN

### Creatures in Our Midst

**Partners:** Dunlop Art Gallery and Adult and Regina Public Library Literacy Service, Regina, Saskatchewan

**Date:** 1996-97

**Description:** Adult learners and their families working with curators, librarians and a social historian developed a self-guided written and visual tour about animals and monsters in local architecture.

**Publication:** *Creatures in Our Midst* Educational Kit, Project Poster

**Other Information:**

JACOLYN CATON. "Searching for our 'creatures'." *Regina Sun*. August 13, 1997, p.4  
LON DUBINSKY. "Literacy and Visual Culture in Three Art Gallery Settings." In Rita L. Irwin and Anna M. Kindler, Eds. *Beyond The School: Community and Institutional Partnerships in Art Education*. Reston: NAEA, 1999, pp. 70-79.  
HELEN MARZOLF. *Reading The Museum Newsletter*. Vol. 3 No.1, April, 1997, p.5.  
AMY NELSON-MILE. "Art as an educational vehicle." *Regina Sun*. July 23, 1997, p.3