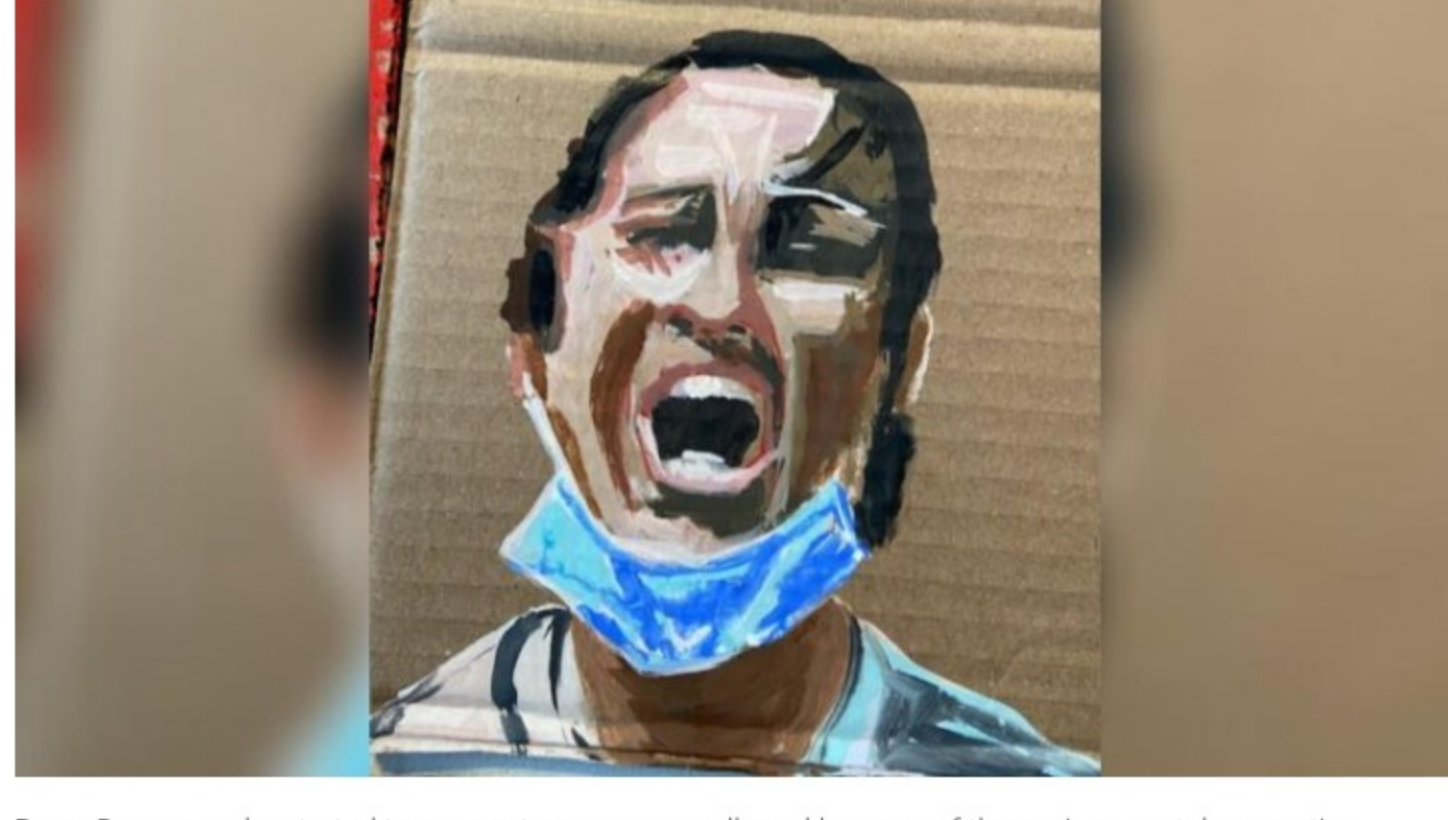


Saskatoon

Journal of the Plague Year exhibition examines politics through an artistic lens

Betsy Rosenwald and Dawna Rose use post-consumer cardboard to create artwork akin to protest signs

Ashleigh Mattern · CBC News · Posted: Feb 14, 2021 4:48 PM CST | Last Updated: February 14, 2021



Dawn Rose says she started to use post-consumer cardboard because of the environmental connection between our consumerist culture and the effect on the environment. (Submitted by Dawna Rose)

Facebook X Email Print LinkedIn Comments

When Kamala Harris was nominated for the vice presidency, President Donald Trump called her a "nasty woman." It wasn't the first time he used the insult — he used the same words to describe Hillary Clinton in 2016.

The insult would become the centre of one of many pieces of artwork Betsy Rosenwald would make on cardboard akin to protest placards.

Journal of the Plague Year is an exhibition by visual artists Rosenwald and Dawna Rose that tackles current events and politics through an artistic lens.

The inspiration for the exhibition started in 2017 when Rosenwald and Rose went to the women's march in New York City.

"There were a lot of absolutely fabulous, creative, impressive signs there," Rose said.

- [As Trump enters office, Saskatoon woman heads to NYC for Women's March](#)
- [10 moments from last weekend's Women's Marches across Canada](#)

Rosenwald is a dual U.S.-Canadian citizen and lived in New York for many years, so both the women's march and the political upheaval that Trump brought to the country are personal to her.

"The shock was quite intense, that after expecting the first woman president, we ended up with Donald Trump and, you know, somebody who has a reputation for misogyny and sexual harassment," Rosenwald said.



Rosenwald says the exhibition is 'a record of a historic time and a frightening time.' (Submitted by Betsy Rosenwald)

She said going to the women's march was a way to be with other people who felt the same way.

Rose has been making signs ever since the 2017 march, on topics including the environment, Indigenous rights, climate change, feminism, Black Lives Matter and — more recently — the pandemic.

"It became a daily undertaking," Rose said.

There are two COVID signs in the exhibition that she updates regularly with data about the pandemic.



Rose describes her work as an 'intricate puzzle,' saying people will discover 'universes of stories' if they look up the text or images that she uses. (Submitted by Dawna Rose)

COVID-19 made it more difficult to show the work as well. Currently, the installation is only viewable by appointment and restricted to two people in the space at a time.

But they found other ways to get the art in front of people.

Rosenwald made a series of 15 postcards out of the signs and has so far sent them to about 100 people she knows across the U.S. and Canada.

"It was ... a way of communicating from our pandemic bubble to other people who are ... experiencing frustration, rage and shock at some of the things that were happening," Rosenwald said.

They also made a video of the exhibition and are sharing details of their work on Instagram at @betsyrose_1 and @dawnrose4art.

Rosenwald said the experience was cathartic and both of the artists have had people thank them for the work.

"It helped them articulate their feelings," she said. "It's almost like you're bubbling over with these, you know, absurdities, but very scary ones."

WATCH | A tour of the Journal of the Plague Year exhibition:



The project was also personally grounding, Rose said.

"If I hadn't had the studio and if I hadn't been able to go there every day to paint something or to do something, I would have gone mad.... The world seems very out of control on all sorts of levels, on all sorts of things. And it just feels like you're hanging on by your fingernails."

Rose noted there are some swear words in her work so it may not be appropriate for children.

The exhibition is in Saskatoon at Gallery 330g until Feb. 28.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR



Ashleigh Mattern

Ashleigh Mattern is a reporter with CBC Saskatoon and CBC Saskatchewan.

[CBC's Journalistic Standards and Practices](#) | [About CBC News](#)

[Corrections and clarifications](#) | [Submit a news tip](#) | [Report error](#)

RELATED STORIES

- [Liz Ikiriko becomes 1st Black artist to be acquired by Dunlop Gallery for permanent collection](#)
- [Remai Modern's incoming chief curator dedicated to breaking down systemic barriers in museums](#)
- [Saskatoon arts organization says it was banned from Facebook after promo for exhibit about QAnon, conspiracies](#)

COMMENTS

To encourage thoughtful and respectful conversations, first and last names will appear with each submission to CBC/Radio-Canada's online communities (except in children and youth-oriented communities). Comments on this story are moderated according to our [Submission Guidelines](#). To learn more about how to participate, visit our [Getting Started](#) guide.

Please note that CBC does not endorse the opinions expressed in comments.

Please note that CBC does not endorse the opinions expressed in comments.

Become a CBC Account Holder

Join the conversation [Create account](#)

Already have an account? [Log in](#)

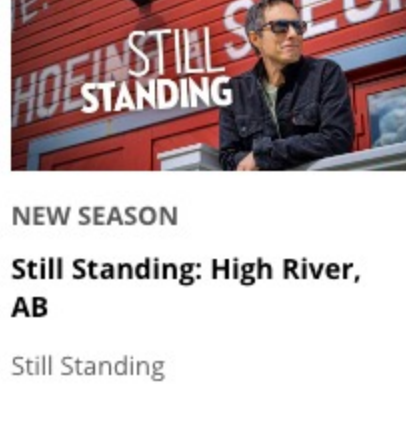



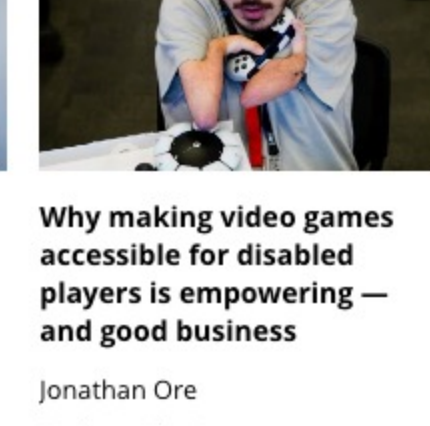

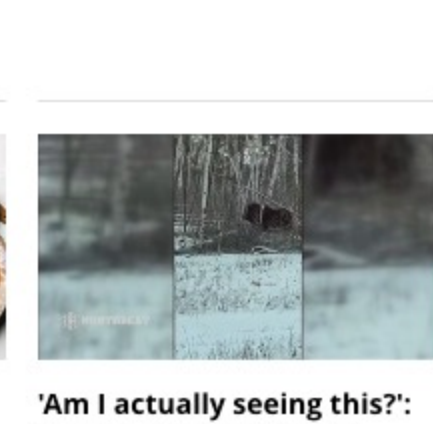

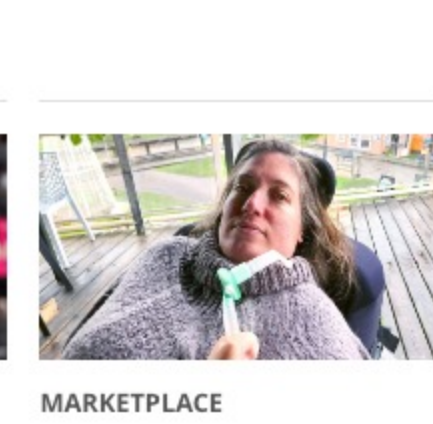
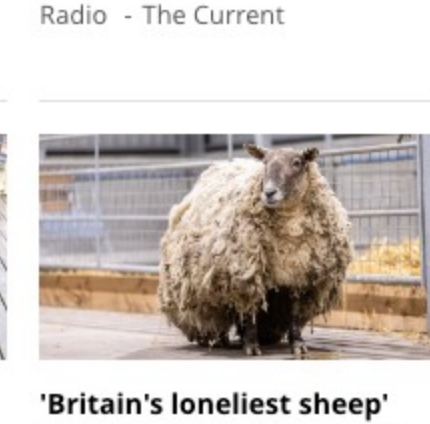
Start the conversation

Start the conversation

Popular Now in News

- 1 **Alberta government planning to dismantle AHS, may sell off care homes, leaked documents show**
517 reading now
- 2 **She died without learning a secret: She'd played with the Beatles**
234 reading now
- 3 **Israel says Hamas leader trapped in bunker as its troops battle militant group in Gaza City**
228 reading now
- 4 **MARKETPLACE**
Hidden cameras capture passenger who uses wheelchair struck by lift on Air Canada flight
207 reading now
- 5 **Humber College voices 'regret' after student removed from campus for posting Palestinian flag stickers**

DISCOVER MORE FROM CBC

 <p>NEW SEASON Still Standing: High River, AB Still Standing</p>	 <p>Israel says Hamas leader trapped in bunker as its troops battle militant group in Gaza City News - World</p>	 <p>THE BUZZER Some Canadians qualified for Paris 2024 at Pan Am Games, while others await their next shot Jesse Campigotto Sports</p>	 <p>Canada gets low marks for opioid deaths, access to health care in OECD report Amina Zafar News - Health</p>	 <p>Why making video games accessible for disabled players is empowering — and good business Jonathan Ore Radio - The Current</p>
 <p>What to cook in November Life - Food</p>	 <p>'Am I actually seeing this?': Muxok spotted in Fort Chipewyan, Alta. Mah Noor Mubarak News - Canada - North</p>	 <p>Jack Campbell waived by Oilers 16 months after signing 5-year, \$25M US deal Sports - Hockey - NHL</p>	 <p>MARKETPLACE Hidden cameras capture passenger who uses wheelchair struck by lift on Air Canada flight Jenny Cowley News - Business</p>	 <p>'Britain's loneliest sheep' rescued after more than 2 years stranded at the bottom of a cliff Sheena Goodyear Radio - As It Happens</p>