

**“River on the Run North” Project
2008 – 2009**

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The Red River and the connecting lake and river systems are the focus for a collaboration of artists from varied disciplines who will explore the wounded body of the river as it flows – or flees – north. This entails witnessing the river system’s brokenness, as well as celebrating the face of resilient beauty, which pleads ‘please do not kill me’. The group’s engagement with the river and lake, while being an aesthetic entanglement with the ‘otherness’, the alterity of the wild, is also a political and ethical dialogue. As we explore the damage done to the river system we will engage in discussions with ecologists, community members and other artists, and draw their insights into our work.

There have always been (a minority of) artists who have chosen to work collaboratively rather than in isolation. There are precedents for artists working together to foster social change. Likewise, amidst the environmental crisis of the river outside our door we are confronted by the need to work and respond together. We will engage in a series of preparatory gatherings and on-site collaborations. Preparation will include conversations with ecologists knowledgeable about Manitoba waterways, research into aspects of the issues that are presented to us, day trips to investigate locations in all seasons, explorations in a variety of multi-media, and ‘mini-collaborations’ as we learn to mesh our disciplines, perspectives and personalities to each others’. Each artist will take a turn in leading the group through an exploration of our theme. Our on-site collaborations will engage the artists’ collective experience in writing, songwriting, photography, videography, drawing and painting, and will encourage interplay among them.

Funding was provided by the Manitoba Arts Council.

Anticipated art production will include exhibitions and performances in Winnipeg and rural areas surrounding Lake Winnipeg, a DVD and/or printed materials. The artistic output will be interdisciplinary, with equal emphasis on each artist’s work.