



Detail of "Lacunosus", linoleum cut, 2015

## Laura Widmer / *Threshold*

Exhibition: September 09 - October 08, 2016  
Artist Talk : September 09, 2016 , 7:00pm - 8:00pm  
Opening Reception to follow



Alberta Printmakers Gallery  
4025 4 Street SE, Calgary AB

Laura Widmer – Threshold  
Essay by Gina Freeman

Laura Widmer describes her work as “a quiet act of defiance in a digital age.” The Kelowna-based artist finds herself living in tension with our connected/dis-connected world. She seeks to celebrate the physical and handmade in an era of glossy tablets and storing memories on a cloud. These memories are permanent, and yet subtly impermanent. While they may never be lost, they are easily changed and altered. Hand-made, physical objects, however, are not so easy to change. They carry with them the histories of their making – the errors and triumphs of their creation.

In the linocut process, Widmer finds a living world of greys between the black and white. Each cut gives life and depth to her subjects – bringing them away from the simple binary. There is a tension within the linocut process itself. Though it is gradual and time consuming, there is a certain immediacy in cutting: every gouge is lasting, and will appear in the final print. We live with the imperfections of the physical type. Each cut is permanent, made in a moment, persisting forever. In our push towards digital perfection we lose these moments and the history entwined in them.

Threshold’s large-scale prints present glimpses of a shifting, sensual world. Heads, hands and torsos are cropped, abstracted. Strings of pearls are grasped tightly and held dear, freely offered and willingly accepted, tangled about throats and fingers, and draped lovingly around shoulders. There is an ambiguity in the moment captured. Without knowing what came before or what will come after, the viewer cannot know whether the pearls are being offered or received. The exact nature of the moment remains enigmatic. Widmer encourages the viewer to interact with the images, to create their own narratives and find the stories hidden in their histories.

There are many hidden, parallel histories captured within each of Widmer's images. There is the history of the person: a lifetime filled with sudden and gradual changes, negotiations between shifting states. Each pearl contains its own history as well. Starting out as an irritant – a parasite or grain of sand within the shell of an oyster – each pearl accumulates value over years until it becomes something that is sought after and treasured. Finally there is the history of the print itself: cuts captured in proofs and stages, contemplated and recut. The creation of a body of work, like the creation of a pearl or a personal history, is a slow and solitary process. With *Threshold*, Widmer explores these private narratives and presents a fleeting glimpse of them to the viewer.

In *Threshold* Widmer takes intimate moments and makes them public. She catches a brief, shifting instant and makes it eternal through a slow and meditative process. With accumulated cuts and gouges she carves out a moment of time. In her work Widmer explores contrasts between black and white, permanence and impermanence, intimacy and openness, and finds a vibrant world between opposing forces. This tension makes her work alive and animated, like the string of pearls featured in *Threshold*: pulled taut, thrumming with energy.

### Writer Biography

Gina Freeman is a Calgary-based writer, comedian and bioethicist. She runs a weekly writer's room at Loft 112 in the East Village, contributes to CJSW's feminist podcast and radio program "Yeah What She Said", and writes and performs for "Late Night at the Plaza" a comedy and variety show based out of the Plaza Theatre in Kensington. Her plays have been performed at the Montreal Fringe Festival, Calgary's Ignite Festival of Emerging Artists, and various sketch comedy festivals across Canada.

### Artist Biography

Laura Widmer earned her Fine Arts degree with a concentration in printmaking from the University of British Columbia's Okanagan campus. In 2014 she completed a residency at The Banff Centre and returned to a long-standing interest in hand papermaking, which she has since incorporated into her print-based practice.

Laura regularly exhibits her work within Canada and internationally. Her work has been shortlisted twice for the Open Studio National Printmaking awards, earning First Prize in 2010 and Honourable Mention in 2014. She was also awarded the Muskat Prize at the 2011 Boston Printmakers North American Print Biennial.

Laura lives and works from her studio in Kelowna, British Columbia.

[www.laurawidmer.ca](http://www.laurawidmer.ca)

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Alberta Printmakers (A/P) is a non-profit, artist-run centre founded in 1989 in Calgary, Alberta, Canada. The organization's goals are to increase public awareness of print media, to engage a diverse audience, to provide resources for the artistic community and production facilities for printmaking.

A/P has an open membership, and is governed by a board of directors. Management and administration of A/P's activities are the responsibilities of its Directors, who reach out to volunteers in accomplishing A/P's goals. A/P also hosts residency and summer student programs.

[www.albertaprintmakers.com](http://www.albertaprintmakers.com) / 403.287.1056

A/P thanks its funders:

