Anne Labovitz
122 Conversations: Person to Person, Art Beyond Borders
September 25, 2018 – January 6, 2019
Greetings from the Tweed Museum of Art:

May I introduce you to a program that is close to my heart? The project 122 Conversations: Person to Person/Art Beyond Borders was created by artist Anne Labovitz with citizens of Thunder Bay, Canada; Rania, Iraqi Kurdistan; Växjö, Sweden; Petrozavodsk, Russia; and Ohara Isumi-City, Japan. Over six years in the making, 122 Conversations was conceived as an outreach with the people of Duluth’s Sister Cities. The artist-led project was inspired by art making derived from social engagement and cross-cultural dialogue. Celebrating the collective 122 years of Sister Cities’ relationships, the project was organized by Labovitz under the auspices of the Tweed Museum of Art in collaboration with Duluth Sister Cities, International, and the University of Minnesota Duluth, School of Fine Arts.

Anne Labovitz transformed the process of cross-cultural dialogue into her own visual forms and then invited the many participants to share their own artistic responses. The artwork in the exhibition represents 60 Skype, or in-person, interviews comprised of at least nine residents and the mayor of each Sister City. By conducting and recording the person-to-person interviews and engaging with participants on a personal level, Labovitz initiated trusting relationships. These conversations became root sources of inspiration for Labovitz’s initial artworks of the project which were at first formal paintings. As the project progressed, the form changed into long scrolls (that elicit a sculptural bearing in the gallery). Each artwork depicts an interpretative vision of the collective interactions from each city, including archetypal figures, words, and descriptions of the experiences that were related by interviewees. These elements from the conversations have been inscribed within the artwork and are embedded within, layer upon layer.

From 2015 to 2018, each Sister City hosted an exhibition of the Labovitz artworks. To extend the participatory nature of the project, multiple elements of the exhibition encouraged creative engagement with guests according to participatory opportunities organized by the artist. Many people added to the project by creating works by writing, mark-making, and drawing on paper sheets prepared for each venue by Labovitz. The imagery of these intimate artworks, ranging from the vernacular to the abstract, all embody the humanist message. The culminating exhibition at the Tweed presents representative elements of the entire project, including Labovitz’s paintings, participatory artworks from each venue, photographs, video, and documentation.

We hope that this project serves as a catalyst for positive social change, one individual at a time.

Sincerely,

Ken Bloom, Director
September 2018

Dear Friends,

As the Mayor of Duluth, I am honored to announce the opening of 122 Conversations: Person to Person, Art Beyond Borders being hosted at Tweed Museum of Art from September 25 through January 6. The exhibition celebrates humanity, human connection, and the seemingly radical and political act of caring.

122 Conversations: Person to Person, Art Beyond Borders is the culmination of an epic five-year, artist-led initiative that visually – and viscerally – connects our city to the world. 122 Conversations is a visual and creative response to our Sister Cities International Mission: To promote peace through mutual respect, understanding, and cooperation—one individual, one community at a time.

The exhibition is the vision of Duluth-born, Twin Cities-based artist Anne Labovitz with citizens of our city and our five Sister Cities—Thunder Bay, Canada; Växjö, Sweden; Petrozavodsk, Russia; Rania, Iraqi Kurdistan; and Ohara Isumi-City, Japan. The exhibition is the culmination of a six-country, international tour to those cities and ours, organized through Duluth Sister Cities International network.

Through this project, the artist explored cross-cultural connections based on interviews with a variety of individuals from each of our sister cities. 122 Conversations documents and reflects these conversations about generosity, friendship, reciprocity, community building, emotional exchange, and how these ideas are experienced through art.

In this culminating exhibition, 122 Conversations showcases more than 100 objects—paintings, sculpture, video, and many other elements—that were created by Anne, some in collaboration with participants from all six countries.

I encourage you to take advantage of these upcoming events to experience 122 Conversations. On October 25, 2018 from 6:30 p.m., Tweed is hosting a Special Artist's Reception. This event is free and open to the public. And, on November 10, 2018 at 1:30 p.m. Anne will conduct an Artist's Talk. In addition, a catalogue, which documents the entire project, is being published that will serve as a memoir of the exhibition and our Sister City connections.

Anne’s hope, as is mine, is that 122 Conversations serves as a catalyst for ongoing positive social change across cultures and beyond borders.

Sincerely,

Emily Larson
Mayor
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

In the Midst of Divisive Politics, Labovitz's Timely 122 Conversations Unites Countries, Cultures, and Communities
Show’s Worldwide Odyssey Culminates in Tweed Exhibit Opening September 25

WHAT: Anne Labovitz’s 122 Conversations: Person to Person/Art Beyond Borders is the culmination of a six-year initiative by the Duluth-born, Twin Cities-based artist.

WHEN: Opening Reception: Thursday, October 25, 2018, 6:00 - 8:30 PM
Exhibition Dates: September 25, 2018 - January 6, 2019

WHERE: Tweed Museum of Art, 1201 Ordean Court, Duluth, MN 55812

Duluth, MN September 25, 2018 - The scope, scale, and complexity of artist Anne Labovitz’s 122 Conversations: Person to Person/Art Beyond Borders is both humbling and inspiring. The exhibition, which opens at the Tweed on September 25, is the culmination of a six-year initiative by the Duluth-born, Twin Cities-based artist to meaningfully connect people from six diverse countries, cultures and continents. Labovitz envisioned a multi-city, multi-year interpersonal project with citizens of Duluth’s Sister Cities as a catalyst for positive social change, one person at a time.

“122 Conversations: Person to Person, Art Beyond Borders is an artist-led project that celebrates humanity and the radical and political act of caring,” observes Omayra Alvarado, Executive Director, Instituto de Visión, Bogotá, Colombia. “In a world where we are inundated with differences, oftentimes, in our haste, we focus on how these differences divide us. Through mutual respect, understanding, and cooperation, the artist aims to create a heartfelt connection.”

The show explores cross-cultural connections through interviews, paintings, and participatory artmaking as a creative catalyst for breaking barriers. According to Labovitz, the work transforms conversations about generosity, friendship, reciprocity, and community into powerful artworks. The words of the many Skype conversations with Sister Cities participants were inscribed layer over layer and became embedded as the foundation and narrative content of the artworks throughout the show.
The artist was able to effectively engage with each participant while simultaneously documenting the encounters. Labovitz became ever more fascinated with the impact on the individual and the collective narratives. The experience of finding ways to relate to another and sharing that experience with a stranger revealed a fundamental of human nature: interdependence can bridge distances. Yet, while there is a collective narrative in all of the works, each city’s creative outcomes display their unique character.

At first glance, most visitors will immediately notice that the paintings are vivid, lush with color and intense brushstrokes. Labovitz uses painting and overlapping elements to represent emotion, connection, people, and experience. According to the artist, some colors reflect her emotional or intuitive response to the interview, while others are chosen with consideration of more formal elements of composition and contrasting tone. In this way, each piece is unique and reflects her visceral experience of that specific conversation.

According to Tweed Museum of Art director Ken Bloom, “The significance of 122 Conversations to the Tweed Museum and its participating communities is in affirming the creative opportunities found in recognizing social interdependence. Each person’s sense of creative place making, revealed in the shared art-making experience, expands the range of mutual understanding. This goes directly to the social-engagement mission of the Museum.”

The exhibition is the final stop in a six-venue, worldwide tour, which was organized through Duluth’s International Sister Cities network. The tour included exhibits in Canada, Sweden, Russia, Iraq, and Japan. Labovitz’s final exhibition in Duluth will include some 100 objects.

**Related Events:**
- Family Day: Saturday, October 6, 2018, 1-3 PM
- Gallery Talk with the artist: Saturday, November 10, 2018, 1:30-2:30 PM

Connect with Anne Labovitz on social media:
Facebook: https://www.facebook.com/annelabovitz
Instagram: @annelabovitz
Twitter: @annelabovitz
Website: 122conversations.com

Follow the hashtag: #122Conversations

Follow the #tweedmuseum

**About the Museum:**
The Tweed Museum of Art is a collecting art museum that holds in trust a historical and contemporary art collection of over 11,000 artworks on behalf of the University of Minnesota and the people of Duluth and the outlying regions. The museum is located on the campus of the University of Minnesota. Hours and directions can be found at www.d.umn.edu/tma or by calling 218-726-8222.
Anne Labovitz
122 Conversations: Person to Person, Art Beyond Borders

ARTIST BIOGRAPHY

Anne Labovitz is an American artist based in St. Paul, Minnesota, whose practice includes painting, drawing, and printmaking, as well as experimental film and sound. Labovitz has a BS in Psychology and Art from Hamline University in St. Paul and MFA from Plymouth University, UK / Transart Institute, Berlin, Germany. Her work considers many themes often returning to the central notion of an enduring interest in people—the human spirit, its emotional resonance, and the way it manifests in relationships. Working within the portraiture tradition, she employs a process of layering—from multiple images and text to conceptual connections and multiple elements of physicality found in mark-making and materiality. The notion of contemporary portraiture and human connection—and the activation of the space that connects us—is central to an important new direction in her oeuvre. This new direction is manifesting in a transition from traditional, expressionist self-portraits to composite portraits depicting several people. Most recently, she has begun incorporating text, audience engagement, and public interventions as a vital element of the creative method.

Recent solo exhibitions include: 122 Conversations in Ohara Isumi-City, Japan; Petrozavodsk, Russia; Växjö, Sweden at the Växjö Konsthall; Rania, Iraqi Kurdistan at the University of Raparin and at Thunder Bay Art Gallery in Thunder Bay, Canada; Layers at Burnet Gallery, Le Méridien Chambers in Minneapolis; Composite Portraits at the Tweed Museum in Duluth, Minnesota; and Passions at the Athenaeum in La Jolla, CA. She has also exhibited at national and international venues, including Chapman Art Center at Cazenovia College in New York and Taigut die Schönne in Kunste, Germany. Recent group shows include Someone Else’s Story at Burnet Gallery; Blood Memoirs at the Tweed Museum, curated by Amber-Dawn Bear Robe, and the Burnet Gallery’s group show at Select Fair NYC during Frieze Week in New York City. Recent public projects and private art commissions include: I Know You public collaborative drawing as a visiting artist for the Walker Art Center’s Free First Saturday and Projecting the City for Northern Spark at the Weisman Art Museum.

Labovitz’s paintings are part of permanent collections at the Minnesota Museum of American Art, St. Paul, MN; the Tweed Museum of Art in Duluth, MN; the Athenaeum Music & Arts Library in La Jolla, CA; the Frederick R Weisman Art Museum in Minneapolis, MN; and the International Gallery of Portrait in Bosnia-Herzegovina.

Labovitz’s work has been published in Studio Visit Magazine, Vol. 19, New American Paintings Midwest 2010 and the Penang International Printmaking Exhibition 2010 and International Contemporary Artists, vol. II and III. She has co-authored several books on portraiture with Australian artist Carole Best and provided illustrations for the children’s book, Honoral & Zarina. Her artwork has been discussed on Minnesota Public Radio and written up in the Chicago Sun Times, the Minneapolis Star Tribune, the Villager, the Duluth News Tribune, Lefite Magazine and the Taos Review. She recently has been named 2013 Artist of the Year in Duluth and in 2015 was awarded keys to all six sister cities of Duluth Sister Cities, International (DSCI).

Labovitz is active in the art community in the Twin Cities metro area and is currently an Advisory Board member of The Artist Book Foundation in New York City, and a former member of the Colleagues Advisory Board at the Weisman Art Museum on the campus of the University of Minnesota and the Board of Trustees for the Walker Art Center in Minneapolis. Her passion for art education both in schools and in the community keeps her teaching within both public and private schools and offering workshops to artists of all ages around the Twin Cities.
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WORKSHOP, THUNDER BAY, CANADA
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122 CONVERSATIONS
RANIA, IRAQI KURDISTAN
Anne Labovitz
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122 CONVERSATIONS
INSPIRED BY THUNDER BAY (SHOWN IN PETROZAVODSK)
Anne Labovitz
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122 CONVERSATIONS
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Mayors Video
122 Conversations overview

Press Links

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