

# POLITICAL STUDIES NEWSLETTER

Volume 2

Winter 2007

## Artistic Politicians and Political Artists: The Connection Between Art and Politics

By Dina Dexter

### Special points of interest:

- There are multiple connections between art and politics in this issue. Can you find them all?
- Our faculty gains world acclaim with documentary
- The National Day of Action: Who, What, Where and How?

Every year the Mount Saint Vincent University Art Gallery hosts a Community Show, in which students, faculty and their families submit their artistic creations. One may be surprised to find many submissions by the faculty and student body of the Political and Canadian Studies Department. When thinking of present day politicians, parallels to Claude Monet or Andy Warhol are not generally realized. However, after speaking with several of the Community Show participants the connection becomes clear.

David Porter, a peace and conflict studies major, has submitted paintings of expressionist style for the second year in a row. David suggests that expression through art helps formulate thought and communicate feeling without words. David's painting, "Hobbes in the State of Nature", is a commentary on the political writings of Thomas Hobbes, filtered through his own values and arguments. When looking closely at the painting, David tells me the viewer will see a homeless man curled up on the street.

Dr. Jeff MacLeod, an Assistant Professor with the Political and Canadian Studies department, has submitted artwork to the Community Show since joining Mount Saint Vincent University in 2004. Dr. MacLeod's work features portraits from both models and his imagination. While it may be easier to see a connection between an abstract expression of political thought on canvas, Dr. MacLeod asserts that there is a political connection in all forms of art. He describes his portraits as narratives, they tell a story, much the same way as the political arena plays out as a narra-



"Hobbes in the State of Nature". Painting by David Porter, Peace and Conflict Studies Major.

tive. Dr. MacLeod suggests, "Art and politics are profoundly intertwined. Not only is art a critique of the political, but it also influences or shapes it".

Being a political artist is not such a stretch of the imagination considering the relationship between governments and art in society through promotion or censorship, but is there such a thing as an artistic politician? "Absolutely", says David, "The interplay of bureaucracy is a form of art". Dr. MacLeod concurs saying, "A clever politician understands the theater of politics through the medium of speech and image". There seems to be a constant interplay between art and politics that is inseparable. When asked to summarize the relationship between art and politics in one sentence, Dr. MacLeod stated, "Art and Politics are both expressions of passion and neither could exist without the other".

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# National Day of Action - A Perspective from the Mount

By Scott MacDonald

Post-Secondary students, coming together through the Canadian Federation of Students, across Canada will be marching the streets on February 7<sup>th</sup> 2007 the National Day of Action, demanding that governments lower the costs of attending university in the country. Looming debts and student loans affect all students and prospective students. Students in Halifax will be meeting downtown at Victoria Park to begin a convergence on Province House to let the government know that we have had enough. Students at MSVU will be provided with transport to meet in solidarity with our fellow students downtown in a sign of unity. The departure time will be at 12:30 p.m. at the Rosaria Student Centre.

It is a well-known fact that Nova Scotia has the highest tuition fee rates for post-secondary institutions in all of Canada. Even when the provincial government "lowers" tuition by approximately \$400 dollars, the fees not only remain the highest in the country but the cut is not available for 13,000 non-permanent residents of Nova Scotia. That is about one third of all post-secondary students in our fair province.



Scott MacDonald, Political Studies and Women's Studies Major, Councillor at Large for the MSVU Students Union

As the Councillor at Large on the MSVU Student Union, I have been working with not only fellow Mount Students, but have also been meeting with the Canadian Federation of Students Halifax Planning Committee, which is comprised of students from NSCADU, King's College and the Mount. Through endless organizing and the countless hours put in through committed students from all the schools involved, I feel it is a great privilege to help make this national Day of Action possible. Feel free to contact me with any questions you have regarding the event and I will get back to you as soon as possible. Thanks for reading, and I hope to see you out on the streets February 7<sup>th</sup>!

Contact: Scott MacDonald  
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## Feature Student: Studying, Politics and Plans for the Future

By Krissy Arbuckle

My name is Krissy Arbuckle and I am in my final year of an Advanced Major in Political Studies here at the Mount. As a young woman interested in politics, I see the importance of getting involved in the matters that affect me. I am currently in my second term as the VP Academic Affairs for the Students' Union. Prior to this I was involved in the Union as staff, then management, and now as an executive. This experience goes well with my program as my position is elected, which has allowed me to gain first hand experience of political life.

I have also been involved in other ways as well. I attended and completed the first Nova Scotia Campaign School For Women in 2004 that was hosted by MSVU in conjunction with the NS Advisory Council for the Status of Women. This campaign school definitely helped me to prepare for my own elections.

This year I am the Coordinator of the Third Annual Women in House Program. This is a program de-

signed to allow female students the opportunity to job shadow an MLA, then we all come together for a roundtable discussion of some of the issues that are facing women in politics. Each year the program has improved, and it provides a great networking opportunity for our students.

After graduation, I plan to scratch the itch from the travel bug that has been

biting me for years, and will go to South Korea with my two cousins to teach English. I plan to return home (with no student loan) and enter into a Masters Degree.



Krissy Arbuckle, Advanced Major in Political Science and VP Academic Affairs for MSVU Student Union

"As a young woman interested in politics, I see the importance of getting involved in the matters that affect me."

# Focus on Faculty: Dr. Meredith Ralston

## “Never take no for an Answer”

By Dr. Meredith Ralston

I've been at the Mount since 1993, first in the Women's Studies department and then in 2004, I became cross-appointed in the Political and Canadian Studies department. All my degrees are in Political Science or International Relations so it's a natural fit. I teach and do research in the broad areas of 'women and politics', and 'women and international relations'.

My research interests started with homeless women in Halifax. I moved on to a comparative study of prostitution in Canada and in South-east Asia soon after my PhD. I've had a development project in the Philippines since 1995 and just completed a documentary on sex tourism called *Hope in Heaven*, which was broadcast on CBC Newsworld in January.

I have two other documentaries, produced in association with the National Film Board of Canada on women and politics. I am currently working on Dr. Stephen Perrott's project in the Gambia and plan to do another film based on this project; this time on female

sex tourists. I am currently negotiating to develop a 10-part series on prostitution called *Selling Sex Globally* while I'm trying to finish off a book manuscript about the Philippines project. My interests also expand into



From right:: Jessica Ibbitson, Dr. Meredith Ralston, Angela McLelland  
Jessica and Angela were featured in the documentary "Hope in Heaven".

writing screenplays, some of which are currently being distributed through my manager in Los Angeles. My advice to students is always to learn as much as possible about what you really want to do and then work very hard getting it. Never take no for an answer (politely find another way) and always ask for what you want. You'd be surprised how many people never ask for what they want thinking they'll never get it, or even worse, don't know what they want in

the first place...

*Congratulations Dr. Meredith Ralston on the World Premier of your documentary "Hope in Heaven", which received the highest ratings ever for "The Lens" on CBC Newsworld!!*

## “As for the Internship”: Report from a co-op Student

By Gaston Saulnier

As for the internship:

I am settling in quite nicely here at the Department of Health. Every one has been very welcoming and eager to "show us the ropes". One thing is clear; there are many opportunities here in the Department and in the provincial government overall. This has been made quite clear to us by many guest speakers - from the lower ranks to the Deputy Minister herself - during our first day, which was essentially an orientation day. This is quite encouraging!

As for specific work, we are tasked with building an inventory of internal, departmental policies. Following this task, we are to try to eliminate any redundancies and suggest ways to increase the efficiency and effectiveness of the policy process. It is no small task, but one that will be very interesting. The great part of this

work is that we have to meet with various people throughout the Department. This gives us great exposure and allows us to get a better understanding of the many different jobs here in the Department.

Finally, during my term, I will have the opportunity to attend meetings of a cross-departmental youth team. This enables me to meet other "new" bureaucrats and professionals working for the provincial government.

All in all, it is turning out to be a very positive experience.

Regards,

Gaston

“One thing is clear, there are many opportunities here in the Department and in the provincial government overall. “

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[www.msvu.ca/political-canadian](http://www.msvu.ca/political-canadian)



Olga Serghantova, Peace and Conflict studies Major

*Congratulations Olga on the upcoming arrival of your baby.  
From all the students and faculty at MSVU*

This would be a good place to insert a short paragraph about your organization. It might include the purpose of the organization, its mission, founding date, and a brief history. You could also include a brief list of the types of products, services, or programs your organization offers, the geographic area covered (for example, western U.S. or European markets), and a profile of the types of customers or members served.

It would also be useful to include a contact name for readers who want more information about the organization.

## Political Studies Society Update: Involved in Our Community.

By Dina Dexter

The Political Studies Society (PSS) became ‘Society of the Year’ in 2005. The Society is striving to make it two years in a row by excelling in program planning, participation and fund-raising. The first fundraiser of the academic year was an Arts Fair, promoting the artistic connection to the political, while raising funds for delegates to attend the Canadian Political Science Students’ Association (CPSSA) conference in B.C. Thanks to all the fund-raisers including the Arts Fair, a bottle drive, draws, raffles and the generous donations of several Nova Scotia MLA’s, PSS was able to send two delegates, including the Atlantic Representative Justine Muller, to the CPSSA conference this past January.

There is a lot more on the go for the winter semester. PSS has already hosted an Atlantic meeting of Universities to promote political discussion and inform CPSSA delegates of pressing issues that are of interest to students attending Atlantic Canadian Universities. PSS is also participating in events like Women in House and National Day of Action.

The Political Studies Society of Mount Saint Vincent is committed to social awareness of world is-

...sues. Therefore, PSS is having a book drive in order to acquire political studies text books for two universities in Indonesia that have contacted Mount Saint Vincent requesting donations. Due to the success of the Society’s first Arts Fair there are plans for another in March. The proceeds for the second Arts Fair will be donated to the Society’s charity, Autism Awareness.



From Right: Justine Muller Vice-President, Dina Dexter Fund Raising Coordinator. September Arts Fair

PSS is actively involved in our local and global community.

**Can’t wait to see you as a new member!**