

# CAMPUS & COMMUNITY

## “Waiting for Beds” Debuts in KRUK Gallery

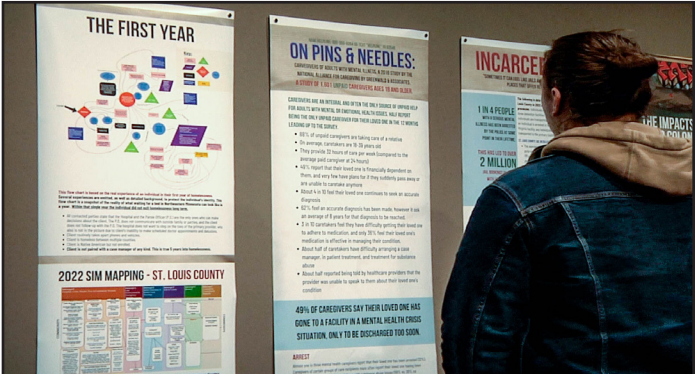
Drew Kerner  
akerner@uwsuper.edu

March 31 saw the closing of an exhibit which provoked the feelings of hopelessness and personal struggle in Holden Fine Art’s KRUK Gallery. The University of Wisconsin-Superior’s Human Behavior, Justice and Diversity Department hosted two local artists’ relationships with mental health and medical advocacy with their traveling mixed media collaborative exhibit, “Waiting for Beds.” An exhibit which focused on mental health care accessibility, it provided honest insight about the artists’ own personal struggles.

“It just started with shared experiences,” said Local Duluth Artist Carla Hamilton. “We (Moria Villiard and herself) were just talking about her as a caregiver and me as a woman of color as we navigated through the health system, about trying to be your own advocate when you’re sick. Which is very difficult.”

Against the dark grey walls of the gallery lies expressionistic, mixed, and intruding artworks compiled by Hamilton and her gallery partner and another Duluth-based Artist and UWS Alum Moria Villiard.

Hamilton is known for her mixed-media pieces, often blending incorporating collage. Meanwhile, Villiard works more traditionally with painting, more familiar with murals, graphic design,



Presented with the gallery show, Artist Moria Villard printed on banners statistically data about St. Louis and Douglas Counties response to people in crisis and other facts about mental health in our area.  
Photo by Drew Kerner

they’re amidst a crisis, something that the exhibit explains with visual data collected by UWS Social Work and Interdisciplinary Studies Professor Lynn Goerdt.

Torn banners in the middle of the main room, dangled downwards with messages like, “homeless shelter,” “treatment,” “survival sex,” “basement,” etc., are representative about the unfavorable and sometimes self-destructing choices that people make in extreme crisis. Another piece of art on display, titled “Melrose,” presents numerous empty prescription and admission wrist bands from Hamilton. “I like taking a lot of things from my experiences and put them in,” said Hamilton. “I use my hospital papers, the art that I make while I was in the hospital, I collect napkins and buttons, all these memories and put them on paper.”

Past the colorful and self-reflective artwork, lies a deeper narrative of a larger community’s struggling access to crisis response. A topic relevant to the Twin Ports region,



“Melrose” by Hamilton; mixed media  
Photo by Drew Kerner

On March 21, the UWS Human Behavior, Justice and Diversity Department held a community discussion about the mental health struggles in Douglas County. Villiard was a special guest speaker at the event, alongside Randy Barker, UWS director of health, counseling & well-being, and Crissy Barnard, president of National Alliance on Mental Illness Lake Superior South Shore (NAMI LSSS). “The system is really broken and traumatizing,” said Barnard at the community discussion. “We need more resources that are trauma informed.”

“Listening other people who work in this field always expands my knowledge and interpretation of this show,” Villiard said after the discussion. “That question of what would the world or just America look like if people didn’t have to wait for a bed.”

The exhibit also showcases submitted artwork from other local artists with a focus on mental health and the access to care. Artwork can still be submitted to the gallery and can be pulled out of the show at any time.

“We want to let people know that it’s really hard to be your own advocate and be patient when you are sick and, in a crisis,” said Hamilton. “Maybe this will remind people to help advocate for people and help them.”

“Waiting for Beds” was open from March 7-31. The exhibit is set open next at the Washburne Culture Center in Washburn, WI, April 1-30. For more information, submit artwork, or to see where the gallery is currently at, visit: waitingforbeds.com.



(Left) “Mutual Paranoia, a portrait of love” by Villiard, mixed media canvas, ribbon. (Right) “When Carla was Dead” by Villiard, mixed media on canvas, ribbon.  
Photo by Drew Kerner

indigenous illustrations, and surrealism. “This is the first body of work where I sort of leaned into the mixed media approach,” said Villiard. “We tried to make a wholistic vantage point for people to come in and enter the world of crisis in our society from multiple lens.”

“Waiting for Beds” is a collective response about our region’s lack of crisis response in healthcare. Often people are left alone without any support until

which has been under resourced and notably tends to invest in response over prevention.

“The art that’s in here is beautiful and it speaks really nicely to the subject that it’s about,” said Alayna Kilgore, a UWS social work student. “As someone who works in the mental health field, it’s really nice to see that expressed in a different way that is more than words on a page.”



Tickets are \$15 for adults, \$10 for Seniors (60+) & students, and \$5 for students with UWS Student ID.  
Photo attributed by UW-Superior Theatre

## Rollercoaster of a Musical Lands in Manion Theater

Mikayla Swanson  
mswans30@uwsuper.edu

A rollercoaster of a musical is set to crash into the University of Wisconsin-Superior’s Manion Theatre for six showings.

Members of the St. Cassian High School chamber choir have all perished after an accident on the faulty roller coaster called “The Cyclone.” The musical explores what happens in the afterlife, as each of the six choir students have to tell a story to a mechanical fortune teller, the Amazing Karnak performed by Ava Bersie, with one student given the chance to return to life.

“This is such a unique and exciting story to tell as a musical,” said UWS Assistant Professor of Theatre Sean Naughton in a UWS News press release. “It’s a story that is a little sci-fi and a little silly but is really balanced out by the way it’s asking big questions about life and death, and grieving a life cut short before the big dreams you have for yourself can be fulfilled.”

From transforming the Manion from a Dungeon and Dragon’s gameboard

to a haunting amusement park, a technical feat the show’s Set Director Sue Wedan had to overcome making a set around a revolve. The outlandish story is paired with an up-tempo, off-beat, contemporary rock/pop musical and will be performed live by the UWS Music Department.

“‘Ride the Cyclone’ has been such a popular musical among young people over the past few years,” said Naughton. “The story is wild, and it is genuinely hilarious script. I think the audiences will also appreciate the diversity of musical styles represented in the play... I think it will be unlike anything they’ve ever seen on the UWS stage.”

Opening night is April 12 at 7:30 p.m. Tickets are \$15 for adults, \$10 for seniors age 60+ and students, and only \$5 for UWS students with a valid student ID. Ride the Cyclone will also show Sat. April 13, Wed. April 17, and Sat. April 20 at 7:30 p.m. and Sun. April 14 & 21 at 2 p.m. Tickets can be purchased online or in-person at the box office.



“Ride the Cyclone” stars (from left to right) Holland Venhuizen as Constance, Sara Vindel as Ocean, Tanner Lee as Mischa, Sydney Adkins as Jane Doe, Xavier Walt as Ricky, and Emmett Appleby as Noel.  
Photo by Daniel Young



Special Guests speakers conversed about their experiences living through, overcoming, and working alongside people experiencing mental health crises. From Left to Right: Artist Moria Villiard, UWS Director of Health, Counseling & Well-Being Randy Barker, and NAMI LSSS President Crissy Barnard.  
Photo by Drew Kerner