

# Mentor's Introduction

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# **mentor's introduction**

**Andrea Fairchild**

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Anne-Marie Émond came to her doctoral studies at Concordia University with a varied background. She is a practicing artist having graduated from Université du Québec à Montreal with a Master of Fine Arts in 1995. Organizing and running an alternative gallery in Northern Ontario, has brought her in contact with many artists. This interest in the work of avant-guard artists has continued with her current work as a museum educator in the National Gallery of Canada. These experiences in making art and dialoguing with people about contemporary art are at the basis of her interest in how people construct meaning when they view art.

Much has been written on how museum visitors find contemporary art challenging and how they have difficulty achieving aesthetic understanding. Is it the intent of artists to make their art inaccessible or do visitors lack the resources to understand contemporary art? The design of her research will enable her to compare how the same people construct meaning when they view traditional, historical art and when they look at contemporary art. Do they use the same affective and cognitive sequences when they are in a state of dissonance and consonance?

This research will expand our comprehension of how non-expert museum goers function when faced with two very different art forms. This should be valuable to museum educators about the theoretical foundations of learning in a museum context.

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