

# BONNIE MARIN

*What are you  
scared of?*

January 18 to  
March 1, 2013

School of Art Gallery



UNIVERSITY  
OF MANITOBA

curator Mary Reid  
editor Heidi Harms  
designer Kristina Nordstrom  
printer Dave's Quick Print, Winnipeg



UNIVERSITY  
OF MANITOBA

---

## School of Art Gallery

School of Art Gallery  
University of Manitoba  
180 Dafoe Road  
255 ARTlab  
Winnipeg, MB R3T 2N2  
Canada  
[umanitoba.ca/schools/art](http://umanitoba.ca/schools/art)  
[facebook.com/uManitobaSchoolofArt](https://facebook.com/uManitobaSchoolofArt)

© The School of Art Gallery, the Writer, the Artist, 2013.  
Permission has been obtained for photographed artwork  
contained herein. Printed in Canada.

Cover image credit:

*What are you afraid of?*, detail, 2012, paper collage, 17.4 x 27.3,  
Photo credit: Ernest Mayer



**BONNIE MARIN:** What are you scared of?

*Bonnie Marin's most recent body of work taps into the fears that dominate contemporary society and highlights the anxieties that they produce. Marin employs her highly attuned skills with collage to tweak our memories, to pick at our sore spots, and also to provoke a wry smile. Through the combination of humour and grotesque, Marin titillates and teases our innermost desires and secret, scary thoughts.*

*The following interview outlines Marin's inspirations and impulses that have led to her newest experiments with collage:*

**Mary Reid:** Over the years you have gained recognition for your collage-based work. How long have you been working in collage, and what is it about the collage aesthetic or process that really interests you?

**BM:** It's funny because collage is the most recent development in my practice. I did my major at the School of Art in sculpture. Working in collage came about over time. I was in New York and saw an exhibition of Hannah Hoch's work that was incredible. Later, I remember seeing Paul Butler's work as part of an exhibition at Plug In ICA, and I thought, "Wow,

that is a different way to use things.” These two events inspired me to try my hand at collage. When I first started doing collage the pieces became book works. I then tried painting collage. This all progressed up to the work that I do now with paper. For me, there is something immediate about working with this medium.

**MR:** The found images that you employ are imbedded with a lot of nostalgia, evident in the colour palette and their illustrative and reproduction quality. What is the significance of using these historical pictures drawn from the '40s, '50s, and '60s as opposed to using photographic material readily available in a contemporary fashion magazine?

**BM:** I love the illustrative feel of this older material. There was another artist who created this aesthetic. The pinups, for example, are very lush and sensuous, not because of what they depict, but because of the way that they are depicted, particularly with the saturation of colour. It's akin to viewing old movies in Technicolor. This older material also holds a lot of constructed meaning which I get to play with and subvert.

**MR:** Not only do you deconstruct your source material but you also reconstruct new meanings. The paper collage *I have something to tell you* is quite timely, given recent events. It features a rec room with a large window providing a cross-section view of the swimming pool. Can you tell me how this piece came about?

**BM:** This backdrop was in one of the Taschen books on advertising from the '60s, and it presents a home of the future, which is, remarkably, underwater yet still has a black-and-white television set. Represented here is a family watching their young son swim. The collaged part is the teenage daughter coming in from the side with a gun in her hand. You don't know what's going through her mind and what's going to happen. What is it that she has to tell me?

**MR:** With *What Are You Afraid Of?* the shapes of the clouds mimic each other, creating an apocalyptic explosion in the background. A hooded figure appears in the forefront, coming in on the side. However, it takes a while before you see the perpetrator in the background. Can you talk about how this image came together?





**BM:** It took me a really long time to make this collage work. I really liked the background because it could be a dust storm or a bomb. The figure in the front is a soldier with a suit on to protect himself. Is he part of the problem or part of the solution? This piece is about death and destruction.

**MR:** Your work really does sit on the edge. There is humour twinned with a lot of darkness. You tend to uncover certain taboos. Your work isn't for everybody. What was the impetus for creating the collage *Shhh...* ?

**BM:** This image of a woman falling came from an old book on photography. It is powerful because you question, was she pushed; did she commit suicide? You know she's falling to her death. Inside the hotel there's a coffee shop with a "Give Till it Hurts" sign in the window, and people are going about their day. But everybody's life is about to be affected by her death. Represented by this figure on the right, Death is quiet; he takes her, and then she's gone.

**MR:** Your whole project deals with fear. Why is the issue of fear an important concept for you to explore?

**BM:** I find there are a lot of scary things going on in society. It's almost as if we're in a society that doesn't really care. I've always found it interesting that you'll drive down the street and you'll see all these houses and have no idea what's going on inside. It is fascinating that there are so many stories. I chose to look at people's lives through the concept of fear, because sometimes people are trapped within their houses. They have a fear of what's going to happen to them when they're in the outside world. There is so much anxiety in the world today; there's so much fear.

**MR:** A number of collages, particularly the wax reliefs, are done in black and white. Does this have a particular significance?

**BM:** For this project I thought it would be good to revisit the black-and-white collages and wax pieces. There is a film noir quality to this work. I look at the wax pieces as films, because the repeated images continue to retell a story over and over.

**MR:** The wax relief *Life in a Cave* features a number of repeated images of bats, skulls, and a nude female bather, along with other art historical references.









**BM:** This work reminds me of a horror movie, where the main character becomes trapped in a dark place. Specifically, the female nude is trapped within herself. With this claustrophobic overtone she is bringing in her own set of fears, which has the result of placing her in the middle of this creepy cave.

**MR:** *"How long will you walk your kids to school?"* features a number of multiple images of infants in quite a disturbing fashion.

**BM:** The images in this work are from a Caravaggio painting of what appears to be a dead child. For me the main issue at hand is the fear of losing a child. I have friends who have little babies, and I can't imagine what it would be like if something happened to them.

**MR:** The title *"They can't hear you when you scream!"* is quite evocative and features Rolling Stone rock stars Mick Jagger and Keith Richards covering their faces paired images of John the Baptist.

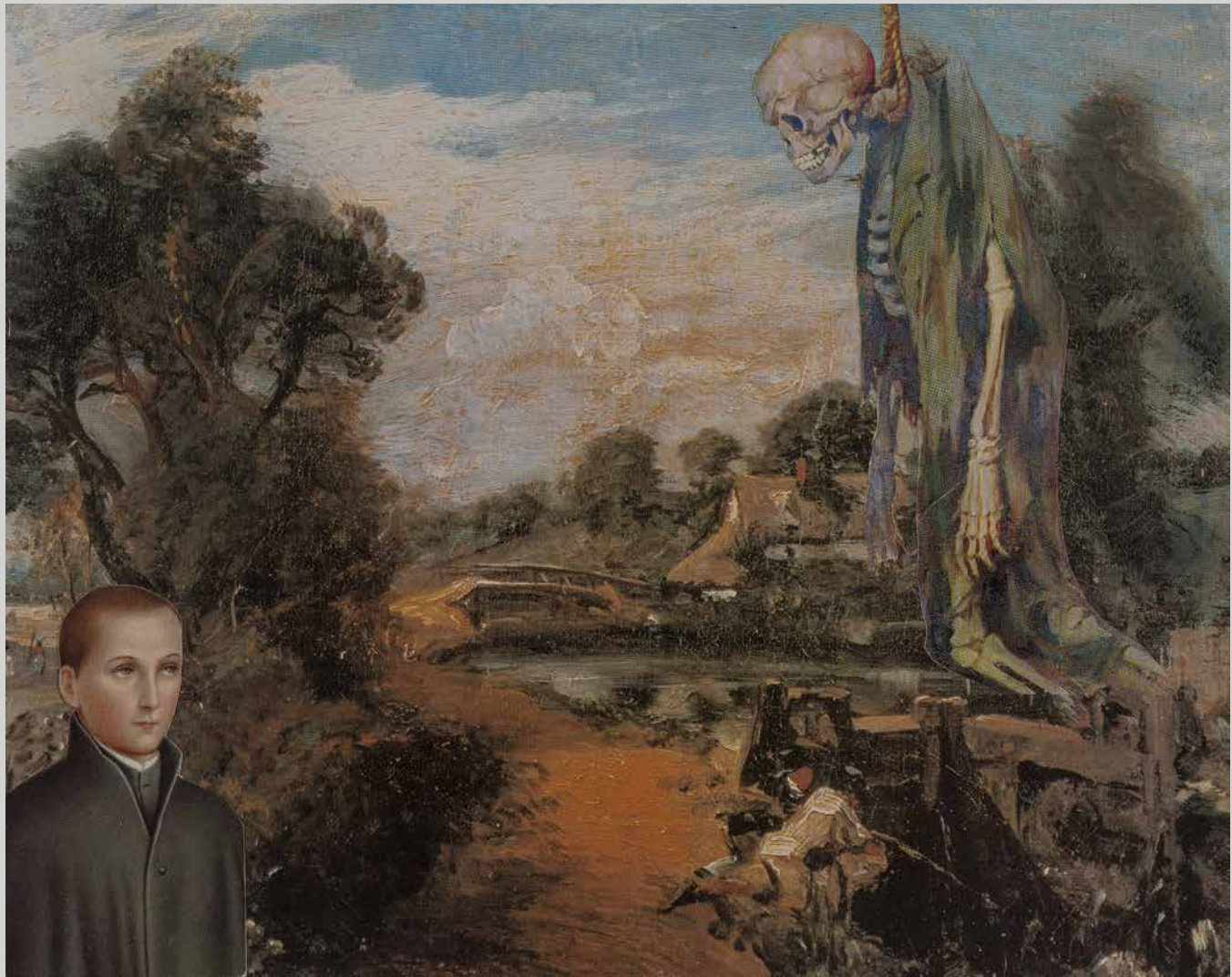
**BM:** An alternate title for this wax relief piece could have been "I don't want to see what's going on." It mirrors a lot of what is happening in society where we don't want to hear about other people's problems, or

acknowledge what's going on. And then it's too late. Something horrible happens but people still don't want to help prevent it from happening again.

**MR:** I agree there tends to be a trend where people generally, and maybe more broadly speaking, society, does not want to engage with the screaming problem that is right, front, and centre. Given this sentiment, what are your overall hopes for this body of work which speaks to our fears and anxieties that are generally wrapped up in these screaming problems?

**BM:** I consider all of my work as narratives, akin to stills from a movie. You see the image on the surface, but there is a whole lot more going on behind the story. With this new body of work I want people to look at themselves and put their own interpretations into my pieces. I want them to reevaluate themselves and consider why my work makes them feel the way they feel.

December 16, 2012









## Artist's Biography

Bonnie Marin is a Winnipeg-based artist with a Bachelor of Fine Arts degree from the University of Manitoba. She works in a variety of mediums including sculpture, collage, painting, and artist books. Her work has been shown in various cities throughout North America, and can be found in public collections such as the Winnipeg Art Gallery, the Canada Council Art Bank, the Glenbow Museum, and in numerous private collections. Over the course of her career she has received several grants for her work from the Manitoba Arts Council and Winnipeg Arts Council. She has been a mentor for Mentoring Artists for Women's Art (MAWA). Marin's work was recently featured at Plug In ICA in the *Winter Kept Us Warm* chapter of the *My Winnipeg* exhibition, which was earlier mounted in France in the summer of 2011.

## List of Works

Dimensions are listed in cm as height x width

All works by Bonnie Marin, Canadian, b. 1965, and courtesy of the artist

r = reproduced page

Photo credit: Ernest Mayer

*A Trip through Hell*, 2012, paper collage, 19.2 x 24

*Accelerated Night Terrors*, 2012, wood wax collage, 38.1 x 96.5 x 5.1

*Bobby: Portrait of a Serial Killer*, 2000–2012, wood wax collage, 73.7 x 45.7 x 5.1

*Confessions of a Priest*, 2012 paper collage, 11.4 x 17.3

*Death Becomes Her*, 2012, paper collage, 22.9 x 19.8

*Erasing the Past*, 2012, paper collage, 17.4 x 26.7

*Fatman and Little Boy – The Implosion of a Life*, 2013, mixed media, 62.2 x 50.8 x 15.2

*Fear and Loathing in a Single Family Dwelling*, 2005–2013, mixed media, 43.2 x 63.5 x 30.5

*Hanging by a Thread*, 2012, paper collage, 23 x 17.7, r 11

*"How long will you walk your kids to school?"*, 2012, wood wax collage, 33 x 76.2 x 5.1, r 7 top

*I have something to tell you*, 2012, paper collage, 14.6 x 21.3, r 3

*I hear noises in the attic*, 2012, paper collage, 20.2 x 23.8. r 10

*"I think something is wrong"*, 2012, paper collage, 13.8 x 21.5

*Keep off the Grass*, 2012, paper collage, 12 x 17.5

*Life in a Cave*, 2012, wood wax collage, 68.6 x 101.6 x 5.1, r 6

*Living in the Shadows*, 2012, wood wax collage, 61 x 104.1 x 5.1



*Living with a God Complex*, 2012, wood wax collage, 94 x 50.8 x 5.1

*Looking after the Aging Burlesque Queen*, 2012–2013, mixed media, 63.5 x 30.5 x 27.9

*Lost*, 2012, wood wax collage, 61 x 109.2 x 5.1

*Missing Persons*, 2012, paper collage, 13.5 x 20.1

*Mortal Reckonings*, 2012, mixed media, 53.3 x 38.1 x 27.9

*No One Believed Him when He Said He Could Walk on Water*, 2012, paper collage, 19.4 x 19

*No Parking*, 2012, paper collage, 22.5 x 23

*Ornithophobia*, 2008, mixed media, 25.4 x 27.9 x 10.2

*Panic Attack*, 2012, paper collage, 10 x 14

*"Run!"*, 2012, paper collage, 19.2 x 24, r 9

*Shhh...*, 2012, paper collage, 22.9 x 18.7, r 4

*Sleeping with the Lights On*, 2012, wood wax collage, 81.3 x 96.5 x 5.1

*Stalker*, 2012, wood wax collage, 121.9 x 53.3 x 5.1

*Survival of the Fittest*, 2012, paper collage, 19.7 x 20.2

*The Angel of Death*, 2012, wood wax collage, 58.4 x 99.1 x 5.1

*The Basement Apartment*, 2012, mixed media, 48.3 x 20.3 x 15.2

*The Face on the Other Side of the Peep Hole*, 2012, wood wax collage, 60.1 x 110.5 x 5.1

*The Flesh Eaters*, 2012, wood wax collage, 59.7 x 76.2 x 5.1

*The Unfortunate Life of an Altar Boy*, 2012, wood wax collage, 50.8 x 116.8 x 5.1

*"They can't hear you when you scream!"*, 2012, wood wax collage, 61 x 91.4 x 5.1, r 7 bottom

*Unlucky Strike*, 2005–2013, mixed media, 45.7 x 43.2 x 22.9

*What are you afraid of?*, 2012, paper collage, 17.4 x 27.3, r cover (detail)

*What Was I Thinking?*, 2012, paper collage, 21.6 x 16.5

*Wrestling with the Snake in Your Pants*, 2012, mixed media, 35.6 x 35.6 x 25.4

*You Can't Always See What Is Happening to You*, 2012, mixed media, 40.6 x 38.1 x 28

