

Artist residency at Martha Street Studio, Winnipeg, Manitoba

From March 19 to April 4, 2026, I was a visiting artist at Martha Street Studio, Manitoba's artist-run printmaking centre. Located downtown Winnipeg, on Treaty 1 Territory, in the 1919-built R.S.R. Building, beside the Exchange District National Historic Site and meandering Red River, Martha Street Studio is both steeped in heritage and a flourishing gathering space for contemporary printmaking.

It's small wonder that my research and work during my time in Winnipeg was heavily influenced by its history: walking through Winnipeg's Exchange District feels a bit like stepping back to the turn of the 20th century, when it was nicknamed the "Chicago of the North". I went for no fewer than seven long walks through the exchange – named after the Winnipeg Grain and Produce Exchange, founded in 1887 - collecting photos, and learning a little about some of the buildings and their architecture, through the Manitoba Historical Society InSite app, the Winnipeg Public Library's PastForward website, and conversations with Winnipeggers.

I first fell in love with Winnipeg and its history and people 25 years ago, when I moved there to attend the University of Manitoba (where I met my partner, Richard). Spending quality time there this visit only strengthened my captivation with this part of the Prairies, the layered stories, and warmth of the people.

In addition to exploring downtown Winnipeg, I visited a number of natural sites, including Assiniboine Forest, the Waterfront Trails, and King's Park, within the city; as well as La Barriere Park and Bird's Hill Provincial Park just outside of Winnipeg. All of this site-specific research would feed into the work made during and after my residency.

I spent long studio days experimenting with some new techniques with both mokuhanga (water-based woodcut) and copper etching, as well as exploring ways of combining the two. I created seven new printmaking pieces during my time in Winnipeg, making 4-6 proofs of each. I took over 1000 reference photos, dozens of ecological recordings on my digital sound recorder, and made daily writing entries.

I appreciated the opportunity to share my work with other artists at the studio, including a 2.5-hour hands-on-demonstration of mokuhanga to about 20 participants just a few days after I arrived. After that, it was a pleasure to be a part of a busy printmaking studio, connecting with other artists each day.

Thank you to everyone who made this experience so rewarding, including Angela, Ali, Agata, and other staff at Martha Street for their warm welcome and support; my in-laws for hosting me and lending me a vehicle for the duration of my stay; and all of my Winnipeg friends and family, old and new, for the many great memories.



King's Park, Winnipeg. 2026. Woodcut, sumi ink on paper, 9x12".



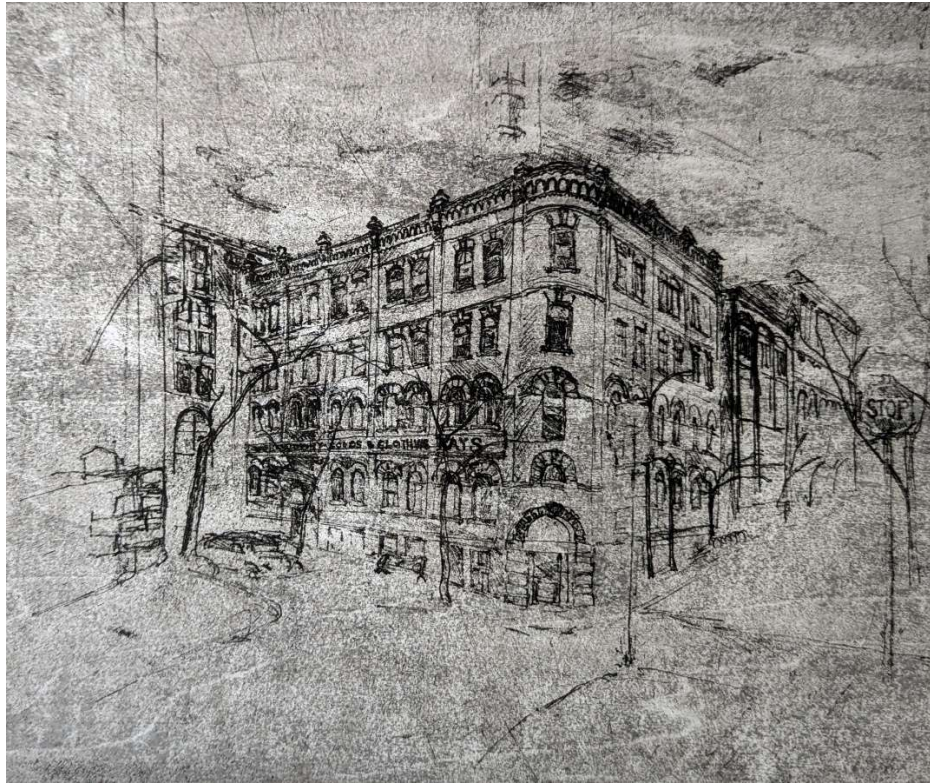
Galt Building, Winnipeg. 2026. Woodcut, sumi ink on paper. 9x12".



Criterion Hotel Block, Winnipeg. 2026. Woodcut, sumi ink on paper. 9x12".



La Barriere Park, Winnipeg. Intaglio, ink on paper. 8x10".



Kay Building, Winnipeg. 2026. Intaglio and woodcut, oil-based ink and sumi ink on paper. 8x10".



Photographing old murals and "ghost paintings" in the exchange.





11 Martha Street, Winnipeg



Part of the lower level, Martha Street Studio



Mokuhanga carving technique, detail



March sunset, just outside Assiniboine Forest, Winnipeg



Bur oak stand along the Cedar Bog Trail, Birds Hill Provincial Park, Manitoba



The Forks Market, Winnipeg, after my family joined me in Winnipeg for the kids' spring break.

Mokuhanga workshops at SNAP, Edmonton, Alberta, April 11-12 and June 13-14, 2026

I'm pleased to be teaching two workshops at SNAP (Society of Northern Alberta Print-Artists) in Edmonton this spring. Traveling to Japan last summer to study mokuhanga through MI-Lab and with skilled instructors transformed my woodcut printmaking practice in many ways.

Mokuhanga is complex and deeply embodied, and learning it in person was essential to better understanding its full potential.

It feels especially meaningful to share this knowledge here in Western Canada, in the spirit in which it was passed on to me; my instructors at MI-LAB emphasized the importance of carrying this lineage of knowledge outward, adapting it thoughtfully for one's own creative practice, while honouring its roots. Before my own studies in Japan, there was little-to-no opportunity to learn water-based woodcut printmaking locally, and I hope these workshops can help begin to fill that gap for printmakers and artists in the region.

Artist in Residence at George Pegg Botanic Garden, Lac Ste Anne County, Alberta

This growing season I'll be undertaking further creative research at a designated provincial historic resource and protected site, the George Pegg Botanic Garden. George Pegg was a pioneer naturalist, born in Toronto in 1910, eventually moving with his family to farmstead in Glenevis, northwest of Edmonton, in 1913.

I began learning about George Pegg's natural history legacy in 2025, when I first visited the gardens last summer, as well as when I studied many of his botanical specimens in the herbarium at the Royal Alberta Museum for my research last fall. I'm excited to learn more, and for a full and productive season working with the garden, through outreach activities, exhibiting work, research, and creation.

On April 26 I'll be giving a presentation at 2pm, in advance of the garden society's annual general meeting. All are welcome – if you're local to the Edmonton area, come and learn a bit about this fascinating historic garden, homestead, stories, as well as some wonderful upcoming events for the growing season, in addition to an in-person presentation of my work.

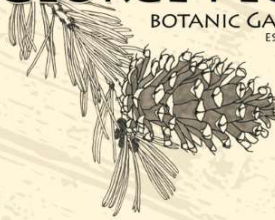
On May 31st an exhibit of my artwork will open in the Pegg Garden homestead. The log house is a beautiful feature of the grounds, and I'm excited to create an exhibition in the space. The opening of this exhibit will coincide with the garden's "Bioblitz": a community effort to record as many species as we can in one afternoon, from 1-3pm. Along with other special guests, I'll be on hand to help participants learn to identify local flora and fauna, as well as use Innaturalist and some useful identification tools and apps. All are welcome.

Welcoming

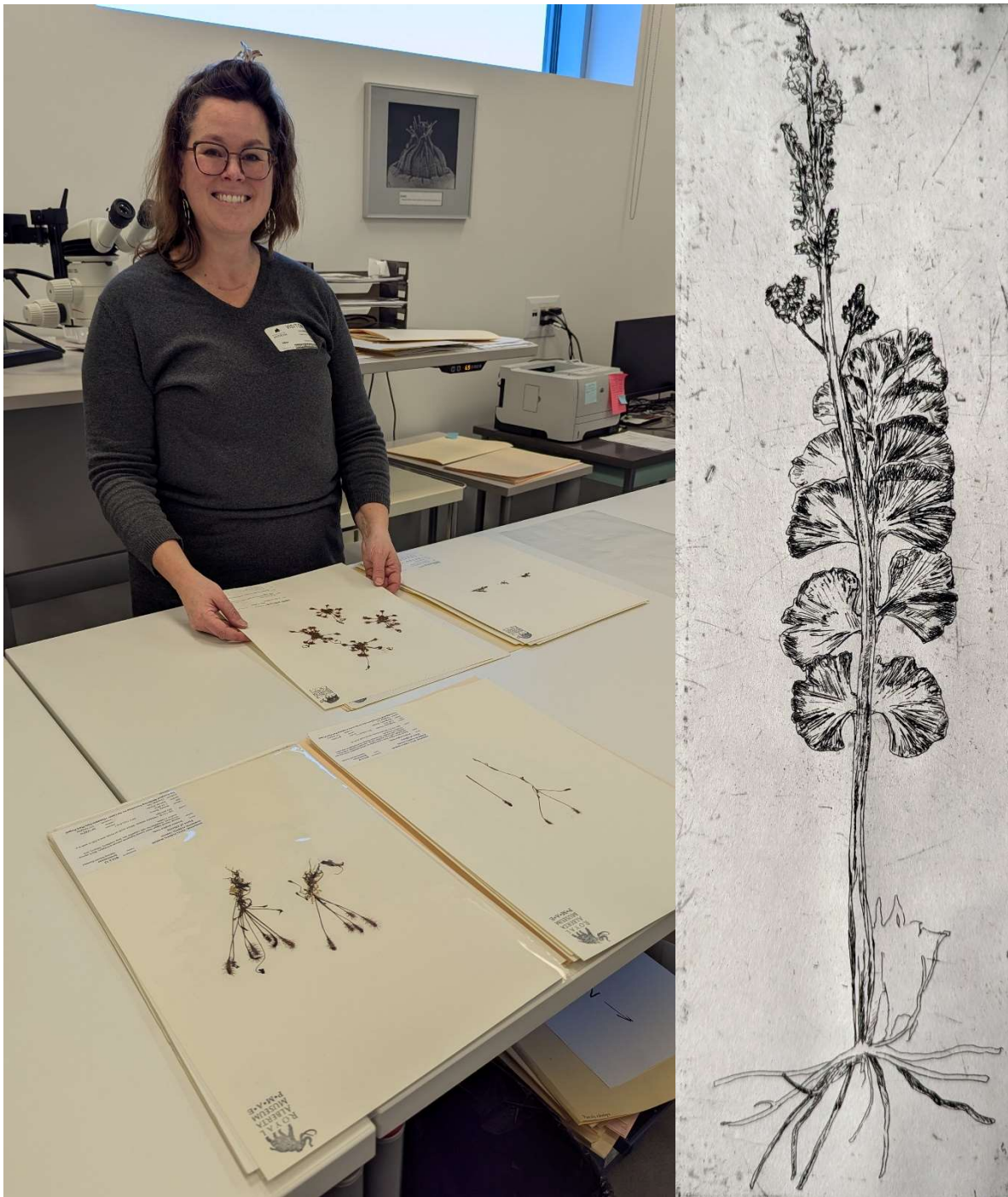
Lisa Matthias

George Pegg Botanic Garden's
Inaugural 2026 Artist-in-Residence

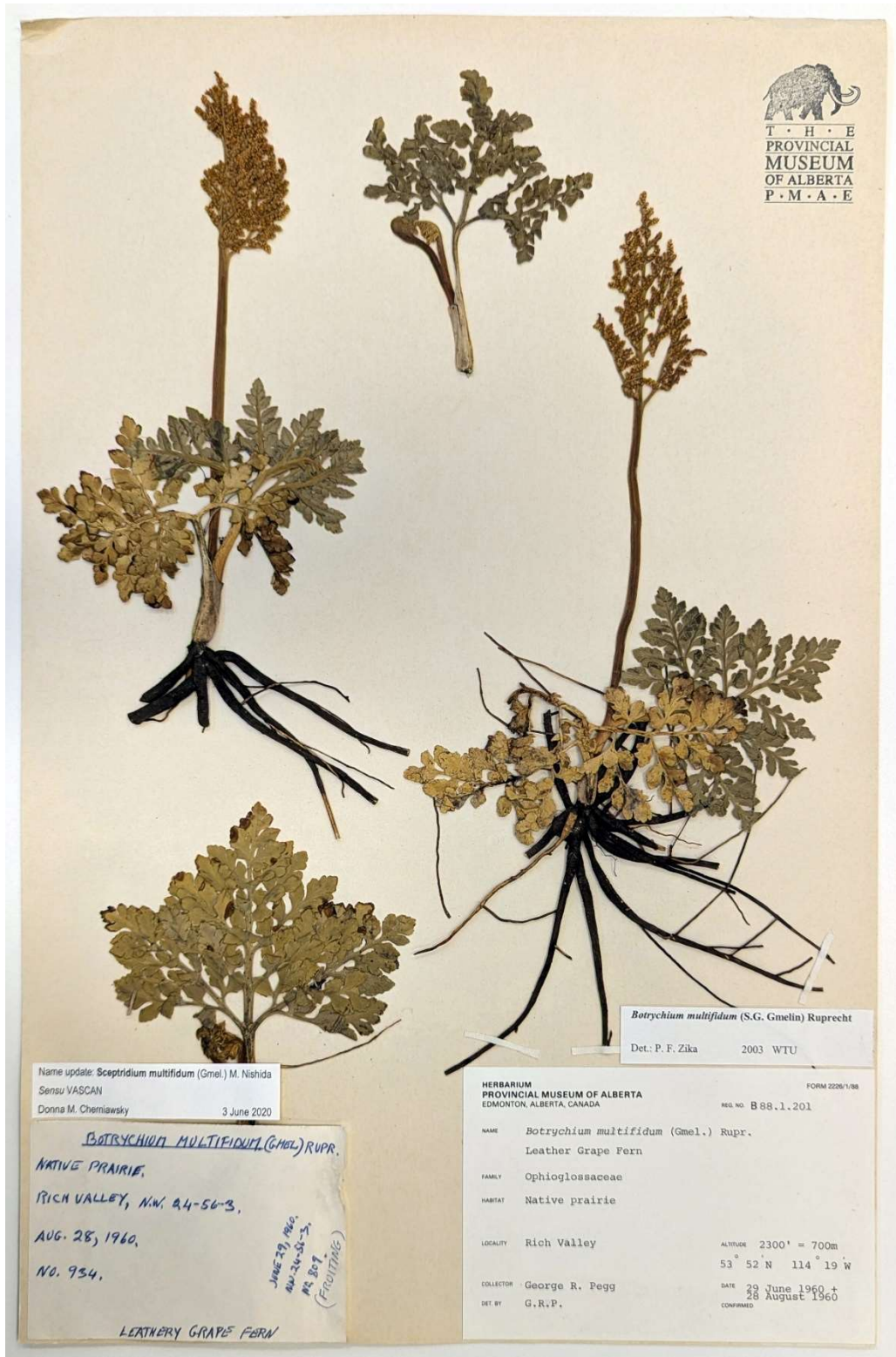
GEORGE PEGG
BOTANIC GARDEN
EST. 1913



Visual artist and printmaker
based in Parkland County



Studying herbarium specimens at the Royal Alberta Museum (left), my etching of a specimen of *Botrychium lunaria* collected by George Pegg (right). Fall 2025.



One of many herbarium sheets of specimens collected by George Pegg, which I studied at the Royal Alberta Museum in 2025.



The Pegg log home, where I'll be installing an exhibition at the end of May.



Artist in Residence at University of Alberta Botanic Gardens, Parkland County, Alberta

Finally, I'm so honoured to be a visiting artist this growing season at the University of Alberta Botanic Gardens. I've been visiting this magical place for over 20 years, since first moving to the Edmonton region. My residency there will include working on site, exhibiting work, and engaging with the public in various capacities. I'm so excited to see how it will all unfold in the coming months, and I can't wait to begin working on site in their many incredible gardens and natural spaces.

