

October 15, 2013

To whom it may concern:

I have known Dr. Barbara Bridges for the last year in my capacity as a mentor through the WARM Mentor Program. The Mentor Program is a two year intensive program for women artists to work with a more established artist to move their career to a new level, improve the quality of their work and/or to “learn the ropes” to move more quickly and successfully into the local and national art scene.

Barbara is one of the most driven and accomplished artists I have worked with in some time – and that includes almost 20 years of mentoring protégées through WARM. She is intelligent, insightful, and creative in ways I have not seen before in my many years as a mentor. Her life - and her home - are living art pieces. Her work as an artist is not a compartmentalized portion of her life; she has made a total commitment to her life and work as an artist.

Barbara is also a teacher, an artist and a woman of great integrity and passion. She was named “Minnesota Teacher of the Year” not once, but twice. As anyone in Minnesota’s educational system can tell you, this is no small feat – and borders on the miraculous. A very small few are ever nominated, but a much smaller number are nominated and awarded this prestigious honor twice.

Barbara is also a risk taker, willing to assess a situation and take calculated, but significant risks to move her work, her career – and her students - to a new level.

I am also a great admirer of her artwork. She is more than an artist, she is a change agent. Her works are not so much about giving answers, but about asking a better question. I am particularly drawn to her work “Ode to Gluten.” The first time I saw it, I was amazed that this was the work of an artist *looking* for a mentor; it felt as if she could be one.

And, in reality she is, to all of the international students in the online licensure program she developed for Bemidji State University. It is often assumed that “women of a certain age” are less than adept when it comes to computers and online functionality. But, Barbara is on the cutting edge of an industry that is presumed to be youth driven.

In closing, I would like to add that Barbara is fair minded, efficient, and cool headed. In the worlds of academia and art this is not just an asset, but a necessity. Barbara would be an asset to any project or program.

Thank you,

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