

## Artists Making Artists: Four Generations of Image Makers

(This is a **rough** proposal and a general idea)

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### The idea:

Is knowledge bodily? Four generations in a maternal family line offer visual insights into the interplay of culture and nurture.

I propose an installation of artworks by four generations of artists related to St. Louis artist Mary Sprague, an astonishingly prolific artist and staple for the St. Louis art community since 1963.

Mary came from a line of artists, and has produced another line. Her mother was a painter/educator, her daughter is an artist/educator, and her granddaughter is currently enrolled in a BFA program.

### The cast:

[Mary Sprague](#): major St. Louis artist, 85 years old, still producing work, in St. Louis since 1963

[Nell \(Sprague\) Ruby](#): [Mary Sprague's daughter] artist in Atlanta, University City High School, MFA Washington University, 1989 (printmaking),

[Irene Ruby](#): [Mary Sprague's granddaughter] artist/student, b 1996 (expected BFA 2021, Textiles, Georgia State University)

[Catherine Rademacher Gibson](#): [Mary Sprague's mother] b. 1910? Lived and worked in California

### Details / general bios:

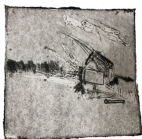
**Mary Sprague (artist, b. 1934)** published a book last year of her mother's "memory paintings". These are a series of watercolors (about 22x40) that Catherine did in her older age as a way to remember her childhood. Mom worked with South Dakota historical society to make it into a story book with verbiage to accompany the paintings. The paintings came first. Catherine's mother Minnie (my great great grandmother) was a hatmaker. Catherine made clothes, crocheted, made quilts, and painted.

*To install in the exhibition:* small drawings produced this year



**Nell (Mary's daughter, b. 1960)** is a good artist, who doesn't produce nearly as much as Mary, but has a distinctive flavor. Trained as a printmaker, her main work is in installation and sculpture, but she has recently created a series of small prints that would fit nicely into a show. Nell teaches art at a women's college in Atlanta (Agnes Scott)

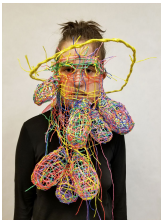
*To install in the exhibition:* small drawings produced this year



Irene (Mary's granddaughter, b. 1996)

Student who wants to be an art librarian

*To install in the exhibition:* tbd, but definitely to include hand-made artist books (for vitrines); may use materials from mother, grandmother and great grandmother to make books



**Catherine (Mary's mother, b. C1910? Died 1996)**

*To install in the exhibition:* watercolors of memory paintings and can bring in "Glorious Fourth of July" (hardback) for display or to sell



**More:**

Knowledge may be seen as a form of bodily interpretation. Images from four generations of related artists present a means culture and nurture have been at work in this family for some time. I propose an installation of artworks by four generations of quality artists, each with their own artistic style and vision, that highlight the generative power of St. Louis artist and educator: Mary Sprague.

Mary (artist, b. 1934) published a book last year of her mother's "memory paintings". These are a series of watercolors (about 22x40) that Catherine did in her older age as a way to remember her childhood. Mom worked with South Dakota historical society to make it into a story book with verbiage to accompany the paintings. The paintings came first. Catherine's mother Minnie (my great great grandmother) was a hatmaker. Catherine made clothes, crocheted, made quilts, and painted. Over the last 3-4 years she's had major health issues, including a stroke, but is still producing work. Recently she told me she was looking for a venue for her next show (she has gone through many many dealers in St. Louis, indeed, her vita could serve as an archive of galleries in St. Louis over the last 6 decades). As we walked home from lunch at TURN to her studio (510 N. Compton, a building she bought in 1980 with four other artists, and that possibly paved the way for the neighborhood that is now emerging and making places like Hi Low possible) we ran into the new construction, and thought this might be a great place for her to show. She thought a deadline would be a good idea to get her to finish her current drawings.

Nell (Mary's daughter, b. 1960) is an active artist in the Atlanta area. with a distinctive flavor, a strong body of work, and good ideas. Nell grew up in St. Louis, graduated from U. Cit High, and got her MFA at Wash U. Trained as a printmaker, her main work has been in mixed media and installation, but she recently created a series of small prints.

Irene (Mary's granddaughter) is enrolled at Georgia State University pursuing a BFA in Textiles. She recently won a \$20,000 award in a competition with all undergraduates working in 3D. (sculpture, clay and textiles). She's awesome and she's smart.

Catherine (Mary's mom) is now deceased, but was an active imaginative artist all her life. Her work includes clay (mummy bundles and spirit houses, weird birds and stuffed side-hill-gouchers); quilts, (for a granddaughter born in 1970 she made a "mediation pad" a circular base for a happy baby with a round structure that fit over it suspended from the ceiling); as well as paintings, walk-bys, clothes, and anything else that might tickle her teakettle.