

## Art Professor Godollei Wins Thomas Jefferson Award

**St. Paul, Minn. - Ruthann Godollei**, Professor of Art, has been awarded the 2013 Thomas Jefferson Award. The award was established in 1961 by the Robert Earl McConnell Foundation to honor faculty members who exemplify the principles and ideals of Thomas Jefferson. Godollei was selected by a committee of past Jefferson Award winners.

### Here's part of the citation:

Provocative artist, inspirational teacher, and valued colleague, Ruthann has expressed the essence of an artist at Macalester College over the past twenty-five years. Her art is exhibited internationally with work shown in galleries, museums, and traveling exhibits in places such as Estonia, Belgium, Malaysia, New York, Mexico, Spain, Croatia, Poland, and Nicaragua, as well as in numerous locations in Minnesota including the Minneapolis Institute of Arts.

Hers is a body of work that pushes boundaries. Art and civic engagement are inextricably bound together. Ruthann challenges us. She has taken on the big issues of the day through her art: gender issues – abuse of power – environmental destruction – honest self-assessment. And while most were silent, over the past two decades Ruthann, as an artist and our colleague, has not let us forget that we have lived amid two wars.

Ruthann's art often incorporates political and social commentary, using everyday objects juxtaposed with ironic texts to produce a sense of disquiet in the viewer. Any visit to one of Ruthann's exhibits produces gut wrenching reactions and visceral emotions. In her words, "this unease is meant to provoke empathy, evoke memories, or encourage discussion of issues too often ignored."

Ruthann's art, however, is not only aimed at serious social commentary, she is a champion of the "Art Car." Certainly most at Macalester are aware of her green, hand-stenciled 1984 Volvo. And where else but here in Minnesota could you be co-creator of "Art Cars on Ice," the world's only Art Car parade across a frozen lake. Simultaneously humorous and serious, the scope of the art car movement is international as documented in her book co-authored with Eric Dregni '90: "Road Show: Art Cars and the Museum of the Streets." Ruthann's involvement in printmaking and art cars extends to her role as the organizer of numerous international print exchange portfolios and art car events. We applaud her pro-active, socially conscious, and street-wise presence within and beyond the Macalester community.

The challenges of life as an active and acclaimed scholar/artist have not kept Ruthann from bringing joy and inspiration to the classroom. The impressive range of her artistic skills and interests are made evident through the courses she's taught. In addition to her focal area – Printmaking – she has taught such courses as Dissent,



Professor Ruthann Godollei poses with the printing press. Amy Leibowitz, photographer

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Women in Art, 2-Dimensional Design, Political Art, Images in Consumer Society, and Performance and Installation Art.

Many students have found in Ruthann a model, and she has empowered scores of students to follow their passion and to pursue the rewarding, but not always highly remunerative life in the Arts. Her pedagogy inspires students to do socially and politically engaged work. Ruthann has shaped a generation of young printmakers who, just like their teacher, are impacting the world by producing art that gives voice to the less fortunate and wages protest against war, oppression, and violence. Amidst all this, her fantastic sense of humor, disarming laughter, and her “cool” art car are just a few of the gifts that she brings to her teaching. As noted by one of her students, “Art for Ruthann is doing what needs to be done...she has done what she felt was needed to make sure I grew as an artist, but more importantly as a person, for whom art is the foundation of my worldview.”

Ruthann has been tireless in her service to the college. She has served on countless committees, often numerous times. Whether chairing the Educational Policy and Governance Committee, the Faculty Advisory Council, or the Art Department, contributing to numerous advisory committees often aimed at expanding opportunities for students and faculty-of-color and deepening Macalester’s commitment to civic engagement, or serving on almost every Search Committee across the Fine Arts, Ruthann’s contributions have enriched the quality of learning and life on our campus.

It should be noted that Thomas Jefferson was a botanist and plant lover. Ruthann originally planned to major in botany in college and so, perhaps, it is especially appropriate that Ruthann be named as this year’s Jeffersonian.

We thank you, Ruthann Godollei, and offer our congratulations on being selected for the 2013 Macalester College Thomas Jefferson Award.

Macalester College, founded in 1874, is a national liberal arts college with a full-time enrollment of 2,035 students. Macalester is nationally recognized for its long-standing commitment to academic excellence, internationalism, multiculturalism, and civic engagement. Learn more at [macalester.edu](http://www.macalester.edu) (<http://www.macalester.edu/>)

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