

# Exploring words and paper through art

BY FRANCIS BAKER  
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I've collected over time," she said.

She likened the process to a mix of compulsion and obsession to create something she'd visualized. The resulting "huge snowball of words" complements the large "Wordfield" piece that wraps around one wall of the gallery.

It's a huge blowup of a winter scene - a barren farm field that echoes landscapes Trask said she was very familiar with. Into the scene she's inlaid fragments of words, pieces of text, lines of spun pages, and embossed letters pressed into the sheets of handmade paper.

Originally from this area, Trask grew up on a farm "where all the women made things, so I make things."

The farm family's ability to use things - to patch and repair things and turn them to other uses - is another theme she's presenting in her work.

"Proust's Bed: Waiting for a Kiss" comes out of Trask's attempts to read French

author Marcel Proust's *In Search of Lost Time*, which she tackled, she said, to try to slow down the passage of time.

It didn't actually work - time still went by - but the process created the artwork: a cascade of pages from French and English editions of Proust's book that fall over the back of the daybed, cover the mattress and loop around the front into a tangled "tail" of threads.

Born in Fergus, Trask lives in Montreal. Her work has been shown across Canada, as well as in Spain, Finland, Taiwan, and she recently spent several months in Paris developing new projects.

She holds degrees in art from both the University of Waterloo and Concordia University, Montreal.

"Wordfield" runs until Sept. 13 in the Minarovich Gallery at the Elora Centre for the Arts, 75 Melville St., Elora. For information call 519-846-9698 or go to [www.eloracentreforthearts.ca](http://www.eloracentreforthearts.ca).



**WEAVING WORDS** - Montreal-based artist Karen Trask (right) talks about her work, "Where the Words Go" at the opening of her "Wordfield" exhibit at the Elora Centre for the Arts last week.

News Express/Francis Baker

Paper has a special meaning in artist Karen Trask's work.

"Paper is the absent space that lets you see the letters," she says. "I just wanted to privilege the paper, to see the empty space."

The five works that make up her "Wordfield" exhibit running this month at the Minarovich Gallery at the Elora Centre for the Arts explore the relationship between words, language, paper, and art.

Three visually display Trask's notions that creating writing is a process similar to weaving - in "Where the Words Go," for example, she spun dictionary pages into paper "thread," spliced and wound them into a large ball.

"It was very labour intensive," she told a crowd at last week's opening. "It took months to make."

"I should have counted the number of dictionaries