



As an artist and curator of Kanien'keha:ka and French ancestry, I would like to acknowledge the traditional territory of the K'ómoks First Nation where this exhibition is presented. I would also like to express my gratitude to the WSÁNEĆ (Saanich) First Nation on whose traditional territory I have lived for the past 16 years.

In 2005, I had the opportunity to participate in a 7-week Aboriginal New Works Residency at the Banff Centre. During that period, I created a two-part installation piece entitled *Vessels*. The vessel is the central object in this installation. The first part is contemplative. It is composed of four video projections and four large wax vessels. The second part is participative. It is composed of one hundred and forty four small wax vessels placed on the ground.

During every exhibition of *Vessels*, visitors are invited to bring an object of cultural significance to be placed in one of the bowls. The meaning of each object is affected or transformed by the presence of other peoples' objects. Their objects have stories attached to them—sometimes extraordinary stories. They have spirit. The objects and their journeys become part of the gift.

In an unplanned and unforeseen way, some people use the installation as a safe place to make an offering. And as they do, the installation transforms. Not only do the objects visually interact with each other, but each 'aura', each story starts to inhabit the installation. I was emotionally overwhelmed by the stories that were told to me. This led me to explore the meaning of gifting and offering from different cultural perspectives. And so in 2012, during a residency at artist-run centre *Vaste et Vague* in Gespe'gewa'gi (Gaspé Peninsula, Québec), I created and exhibited, for the first time, the installation *Offerings / Offrandes*.

Offerings / Offrandes is grounded in collaborative authorship. It pays homage to relational aesthetics. It welcomes the presentation and interpretation of practices rooted in different cultures. The installation is land-based. It establishes a connection to specific artists and their communities — both Indigenous and non-Indigenous — that inhabit this land.

In many Aboriginal cultures, offerings are gestures filled with spiritual, social and political meaning. We offer a feast to the members of the community or to visitors. We offer stories. We offer songs to the plants that we harvest and to animals that feed us. We offer tobacco to elders, to spirits. Offerings were at the heart of the exchanges that took place during contact with Europeans. We offered refuge. We offered knowledge of the territory. We offered medicine to cure the newcomers. We offered to share the land.

Offerings are also present in many different cultures. They are based in the spirit of giving without a time frame or self-interest. They can take the form of rituals, of ceremonies or of communal exchanges. They are sometimes private gestures.

With Offerings / Offrandes it is my intention to create a gathering space and engage Indigenous and non-Indigenous audiences to consider what has been offered in the past and what can now be offered, both individually and collectively.

– France Trépanier



France Trépanier is a visual artist, curator and researcher of Kanien'kéha:ka and French ancestry. Her practice is informed by strategies of collaboration. Her artistic and curatorial work has been presented in many venues in Canada and in Europe.

France is co-leading Primary Colours/Couleurs primaires, a 3-year initiative which seeks to place Indigenous art practices at the centre of the Canadian art system. She is the Aboriginal Curator at Open Space Arts Society in Victoria BC, where she co-curated, with Michelle Jacques and Doug Jarvis, the exhibition Deconstructing Comfort. She also recently curated the Awakening Memory Project with artists Sonny Assu, LessLIE and Marianne Nicolson. France was selected, by the Canada Council for the Arts, to be part of the International Indigenous Curators Exchange in Australia, New Zealand and the 2017 Venice Biennale. France was the co-recipient of the 2012 Audain Aboriginal Curatorial Fellowship by the Art Gallery of Greater Victoria.



OFFERINGS / OFFRANDES has three main components:
performative rituals, longhouse and website

Artist Collaborators: Matt Everson, Kumugwe Cultural Society,
Anita Lawrence, Medwyn McConachy, Monica McKean

Cultural Knowledge Contributors and Facilitator:
Elder Mary Everson+Andy Everson / Lee Everson

PERFORMATIVE RITUALS

Five Artist Collaborators accepted Trépanier's invitation to create and record an offering. The videos are edited then presented continuously. The videos and accompanying photographs were created by media artist Kirk Schwartz.

LONGHOUSE

A longhouse is the central element of the installation. The presence of this Aboriginal architectural structure within a contemporary art space carries a symbolic charge. This longhouse marks the territory. It speaks of Indigenous traditional land, of nomadism, of protected space during a journey. The contemporary rendition of the structure is inspired by Aboriginal traditional methods. It was created in collaboration with Rene Martin, a senior Mi'gmaq artist from the Listuguj community in Gaspé, Quebec.

The structure is partly covered by a screen on which two video time-lapse versions of the sky over a 24-hour period are projected. The moving images are a metaphor of Indigenous cosmology. They connect the sky to the land and remind us of the relation between all things. The time-lapse video was created in collaboration with artist Estelle Marcoux.

WEBSITE

The website acts as a receptacle, a guardian of images and sounds inspired by the rituals associated with giving/offering. The community is invited to contribute to this collective artwork by making an offering, which they can submit for uploading. Short contributions such as videos, photos, text or music are welcomed at www.offerings-offrandes.com

Tłalkwala 03:44 min

Matthew Everson / Andy Everson / K'umugwe Dancers

This song was originally owned by great grandmother Mary Frank when she was initiated into the Hamatsa dance society. It was then passed to my grandfather, Chief Andy Frank, and the song was later held by my mother, Mary Everson, as a Tłalkwala or 'ladies dance'. Eventually the song and dance was passed to me when I was 10 years old at my grandmother's potlatch. The Tłalkwala is one way that our women use their powers to bless the attendees at our sacred potlatch ceremonies. The boy leading the dancers here is my son, Matthew Everson, who, in time, will eventually receive this dance as well.

– Andy Everson



Andy Everson was born in Comox, BC in 1972 and named Nagedzi after his grandfather, the late Chief Andy Frank of the K'ómoks First Nation. Andy has also had the honour of being seated with the 'Namgis Tsitsq'walagame' name of Kwamxgalagalis l'nis. Influenced heavily by his grandmother, he has always been driven to uphold the traditions of both the K'ómoks and Kwakwaka'wakw First Nations. In this regard, Andy has pursued avenues where he can sing traditional songs and perform ceremonial dances at potlatches and in a number of different dance groups, most notably the Le-La-La Dancers, the Gwa'wina Dancers and the K'umugwe Dancers.

The K'umugwe Dancers take great pride in preserving the ancient traditions of their ancestors. Through sharing the songs and dances of the K'ómoks and Kwakwaka'wakw peoples, the K'umugwe Dancers are able to help facilitate respect and understanding within the local community and communities abroad. Taking their name from the traditional Bighouse that sits within the heart of the K'ómoks First Nation, members of the dance troupe have been practicing and performing together since 2001. The K'umugwe Dancers feel that by encouraging young members of their community to learn the ancient songs and dances of their people, they will ensure the survival of the culture for generations to come.

Impressionable Marks 01:45 min

Anita Lawrence



Our physical landscape is ever changing as corporations dictate its uses and establish the outcomes. Inspired by the book *The Lure of the Local* by Lucy Lippard, I am investigating my sense of permanence in my own community that is situated in a heavily forested area on the west coast of Vancouver Island. The idea of permanence within the landscape is another area I grapple with as I watch sections of our forest disappear due to forest practices and yet I need to come to terms with the connections of the land to what the majority of people do for a living in my region. The notion of 'observed landscape' and 'lived in landscape' applies to this project as I ponder the uses of the land around me and how I function within it. This work that I have offered in this installation was part of a table setting of ceramic work done in a Tromp l'oeil style that resembles wood. This work was part of a series titled, *Who Provides This Meal?* and asks the viewer to think about the idea of provision, jobs, sourced materials, family and wealth and wellbeing. As well, I hope the viewer is taken to a deeper understanding of the complexities that surround the practice of an industry that affects them directly within the boundaries of living and consuming on planet earth.

I have been a maker of pots for over 20 years. The material of clay has always appealed to me as a medium that can be transformed into almost anything I can imagine. I work primarily on the potter's wheel to create functional stoneware and I use a slab roller for forming tiles and platters. Functional ware is a pleasure for me to create and my throwing focuses mainly on platters, bowls, mugs, cups and other serving dishes. The nature of clay as a malleable medium lends itself to a therapeutic process of introspection and contemplation and is completely mesmerizing to observe. A viewer is often impressed watching a demonstration of a ball of clay being molded into a beautiful shape or manipulated into a different profile by cutting away or piercing the clay.

My current work reflects the flora and fauna of the area as well as more abstract designs interpreted from nature. I see my pottery taking a turn from purely functional to more conceptual, relating to topics of environment and sustainability.

Threads 02:02 min

Monica McKean

I have no personal memories connected to weaving. I was too young to remember if my birth mother ever weaved in front of me. It's possible she never weaved anything for herself. It's also possible she weaved everything she wore. Who's to say?



What I do have is an undeniable feeling of “rightness” when I have the wool in my hands and begin moving the threads around to form those first few lines. It feels like I’m reconnecting to something I’ve lost. There might always be a barrier between me and the Peruvian heritage I left behind, but while I’m weaving I feel like it’s lifted for a brief moment in time.

That feeling is very precious to me.

My name is Monica McKean and I’m Peruvian (Quechua). I was born in Lima, Peru in the Ate-Vitarte district during the time of Shining Path. I was later adopted by my mother and brought to Canada when I was 2 ½ years old. I left behind an older brother. Like him, I was renamed when I was adopted, but have since used my birth name as a way of staying connected to my Peruvian heritage and honouring my birth parents.

My first step into the arts and the unique community of creative people within was through Rainbow Youth Theatre with Carol Coulson and Mike Butler. I can’t thank Carol enough for nurturing this young creative spirit.

Currently I’m learning and developing my skills as an artist at North Island College and hope to graduate from the Fine Arts Diploma program in the years to come.

Between the Worlds 01:45 min

Medwyn McConachy

I stand on the threshold breathing into the sacred earth beneath my feet. My heart opens, I reach out calling through the veils that separate this world from the otherworlds. My blood and bones sense the presence of the ancient ones whose lives and stories are the teachings guiding my life. Wisdom offered to me through the breath of the wind, the fire of the sun, the cool of the waters and the timeless stillness of the mountain.

This is the feast of Samhain and I bring my humble offering to honour my ancestors. I am held in their presence as the pomegranate seeds drop from my fingers running red with the juices of life. I feed them and I remember, for what is remembered lives.

I am an artist/researcher/educator moving through my crone years within an art practice that draws from my relationship with the natural world and to the seen and unseen worlds among which I am privileged to dwell. Wherever I have lived, I have always felt a strong love for the land and it's history. My practice of ritual and ceremony brings me closer to an experience of place through opening to the mystery, stepping through the portals into inquiry, devotion and reverence.

I interpret these experiences through visual, tactile and performative artmaking. Community and collaborative performance art has been a strong thread in my practice for the last ten years. I work with sound and movement, weaving through and between the conscious and unconscious realms.

My current practice is contemplative and 'slow' using textiles, natural dying methods and slow stitching in the making of ceremonial veils as offerings for the revitalization of traditional practices honouring the sacred in the everyday.





OFFERINGS / OFFRANDES FRANCE TRÉPANIER

EXHIBITION

13 October – 18 November 2017

ART OPENING / WELCOMING

13 October / Friday 7pm

CREATIVE RESIDENCY

4 October – 13 October

Installation collaborator:

Guylaine Langlois

Videographer/Photographer/Editor:

Kirk Schwartz

You're invited to make an offering at

www.offerings-offrandes.com



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250.338.6211 COMOXVALLEYARTGALLERY.COM
GALLERY TUESDAY TO SATURDAY 10-5
SHOP MONDAY TO SATURDAY 10-5

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