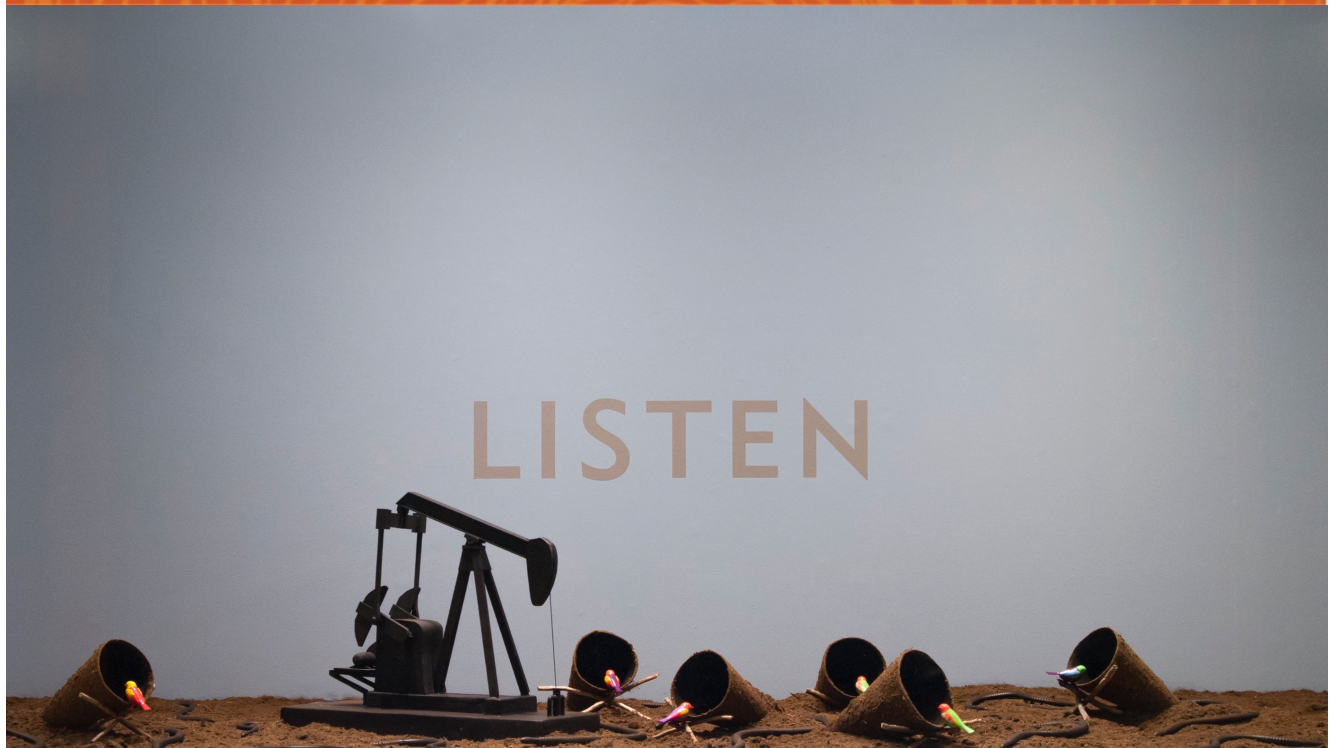


CVAG

VISION • ART • CULTURE



Rita McKeough: *Listen* (July, 2017)

COMOX VALLEY ART GALLERY ANNUAL REPORT 2017 PRESENTED TO THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING APRIL 14, 2018

With Gratitude to our Funders:

BC Arts Council / Canada Council for the Arts / Canadian Heritage / Canadian Museums Association / BC Gaming / Province of BC / Government of Canada / City of Courtenay / Town of Comox / Comox Valley Regional District and the CVAG members, donors, sponsors and volunteers who sustain the Gallery



**ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING
COMOX VALLEY ART GALLERY
Saturday, April 14, 2018 - 10:00am.**

1. Approval of Agenda
2. Approval of Minutes - April 8, 2017
3. New Business
4. Reports - President
5. Reports - Executive Director, Curator
6. Financial Report - President
7. Motion: to approve Stuart Barry as the Accountant for the 2018 fiscal year.
8. Election of Board Members
 - Board Members completing term/stepping down:
Karver Everson, John Powell, Tom Severson, Jason Nemeth, Nicole Crouch
 - Board Members continuing term:
Jasmin Badrin, Carolyn Kirk-Albert
 - Board Members nominated for a new two-year term:
Sharon Hadden, Kate Campbell, Diane Naugler, Wedlidi Speck, Keisha Everson, John Heintz, Renee Poisson, Linda Perron
 - *No additional nominations received
9. Adjournment

MINUTES

Comox Valley Art Gallery

Annual General Meeting

Saturday, April 8, 2017 at the Comox Valley Art Gallery

ITEM

Call to order at 10:38 am

In the absence of Board Chair John Powell, Board Vice-President David Maclean presided; we met quorum. David welcomed all on behalf of the Board to the AGM.

David reported that John Powell will remain on the Board of Directors but is stepping down from the role of President.

David read a letter from Roger Albert informing the Board that due to ill health he is unable to remain on the Board. The letter is appended to the Minutes.

1) *Motion to approve Agenda*

Amendment to Agenda: because the President, John Powell was not in attendance his President's Report was not read out but will be appended to the minutes.

i) Moved: John Heintz; Seconded: Heili Garcia; Carried

2) *Motion to approve Minutes of April 9, 2016*

i) Moved: Bruce Curtis; Seconded: Linda Perron; Carried

3) **Business Arising**

No Business Arising from April 9, 2016 meeting

4) **New Business**

No New Business to report

5) **Reports**

For complete reports please see Annual Report 2016

President's Report - John Powell, President: see Annual Report

Executive Director - Sharon Karsten

- Sharon opened by acknowledging that CVAG is on the unceded territory of the K'omoks First Nation. She acknowledged the dedication and hard work of the CVAG Team: staff and volunteers. She went on to inform the membership of:
- the Creative Residency Program
- the Publications Program
- Internships and Mentorships

Shop Manager - Rhonda Burden

Rhonda reported that the shop has had some challenges this year due to economic uncertainty. Higher than expected annual costs included updating the POS System and the Till Receipt Printer, as well as new card racks and shop displays.

Curator - Angela Somerset

Angela reviewed the past years' programming. She emphasized the many partnerships that have been developed over the past year. Her presentation included a slide-show of the incredible and varied shows that were held throughout the year.

Financial Report - Jasmin Badrin, Treasurer

Congratulated staff on their hard work and dedication. She focused on the current challenges of the Shop and reported that the Board will be dedicating time and energy to these challenges.

Motion: to accept the all Reports. Moved: Bruce Curtis; Seconded: Nicole Crouch; Carried
Motion: To appoint Stuart Barry as the Accountant for 2017 fiscal year. Moved: Bruce Curtis; Seconded: Kirsten Humphries; Carried

Election of Board Members

Three board members are completing their two-year terms:

Board Members completing their 2-year terms:

Nicole Crouch
Bruce Curtis
Karver Everson
John Heintz
David Mclean
Jason Nemeth
Renee Poisson
Tom Severson
Linda Peron

Board Members nominated for a new two-year term

Jasmin Badrin

Carolyn Kirk-Albert

John Powell (acknowledged he is stepping down as President but will remain on the Board)

Motion: Acceptance of the nominees for two-year term positions. Moved: Bruce Curtis; Seconded: George Littlechild; Carried

One new board members was nominated from the floor:

Denise Lawson nominated Bobby Denton

She accepted the nomination. She was elected by acclamation

Announcements

Recognition of John Powell's work as President and Roger Albert's dedication to CVAG.

After the AGM there was a presentation of the annual Nonny Milne Award. This year's recipient is artist and former teacher, Neil Crouch.

AGM 2018: April TBA

Motion to adjourn: Moved: David Maclean

President's Report

Wow, what a year it has been for the Comox Valley Art Gallery. It has been a memorable one for me as this was my first year with the responsibility of President, especially during a time of change and transition. Much is happening regarding the direction of the Gallery and its relationships with our community. Thank you for taking the time to be here with us today and for your continued support.

Our Executive Director Sharon Karsten has yet again proven herself very proficient when it comes to meeting and exceeding the expectations of the Board. Even with a short leave to focus and her academic studies she teamed up with Glen Sanford, the Director of Strategic Initiatives and acting Executive Director to create a seamless transition enabling the goals of the Gallery to continue with momentum.

The Gallery received notable recognition from the Canada Council for the Arts through its receipt of funding through the 'New Chapter' program. Funding was awarded for the 'Place Naming' project, involving the development of the CVAG Plaza, and the creation of public art and Welcoming Poles. The Canada Council also awarded operating funding to the Gallery this year - a first in our history. Please keep in mind - as great as this news is, the Gallery is still a small non-profit that relies on grants and donations, so we still need to work as hard as ever to keep the Gallery going.

The Board has been focusing on the direction of the Gallery which lead to comprehensive discussion and planning for the building layout. The goal of this planning is to centralize operations to create a more welcoming inclusive space for community members to enjoy. Stay tuned as this is a major development and will take some time to implement.

My involvement with the Board of Directors began in 2012 - the past five years have been a great experience of growth for myself and most importantly the Gallery. I am extremely appreciative for the artists, volunteers and staff who work hard to bring quality installations to the Comox Valley Art Gallery.

Respectfully,

Jasmin Badrin

2017 GALLERY STAFF REPORT:

Arts-Based Inquiry

I would like to begin by recognizing the phenomenal contributions made this past year by our dedicated team of volunteers. We are fortunate to have over 100 volunteers involved at the Gallery - contributing to a wide range of areas, including production and exhibition install, event coordination, retail and customer service and governance - to name a few. We are tremendously grateful for the support provided by these individuals - your help enables us to invest more deeply and fully in activating culture within the Comox Valley.

I also extend a heart-felt thank-you to the student interns, staff and contractors who have worked tirelessly this past year to help us move forward in accomplishing our strategic plan and vision. This team contributes to a dynamic and growing organization that is making change in the Comox Valley through the development of meaningful art experiences. We are so pleased and proud to be working with you.

2017 Overview

Highlights of 2017 include the continued development of programs that allowed us to explore the Gallery's role as a space for 'Arts Based Inquiry' (ABI). Three key programs were expanded during this time- a Creative Residency, Publication and Practicum Program. These play a powerful role in engendering new ways of thinking and being within our community. They augment our ongoing exhibition program - allowing the themes and ideas discussed to resonate and achieve rootedness.

The Gallery further developed its Creative Residency Program in 2017 - a program designed to provide extended research and site-specific production opportunities for artists, collaborators and curators presenting within our exhibition series. We wanted to develop, through residency, deep and sustained artistic practice, meaningful relationships between artists and our local community, and relevant forms of community-engaged research, exhibition and presentation. In developing this program, we cultivated an array of community partnerships - including a 'housing' partnership (McCloughlin Gardens, Creekside Commons), and a 'production studio' partnership (North Island College Fine Arts and Design Department - NIC). We invested in a second stage extension of the Gallery's technological platforms - our Project Room Studio, media/production lab and edit suites - with an aim to support artistic processes requiring access to these resources. Throughout 2017, three Creative Residencies were undertaken - In March, Montreal artists Vida Simon and Jack Stanley produced work at the Gallery for over a month - their research evolving their collaborative work *Carried Away*. Between May and July, 2017, Inter-disciplinary Calgary-based artist Rita McKeough undertook a creative residency that involved collaboration with local and visiting artists - through which she produced her solo exhibition *Veins/Listen/Cul de Sac*. In October, 2017, Victoria-based artist and curator France Trépanier conducted a community collaboration in conjunction with her installation *Offerings/Offrandes* - developing work designed to "establish a connection to specific artists and their communities - both Indigenous and non-Indigenous - that inhabit this land". These residencies allowed the local Comox Valley community access to the creative processes engaged by professional community-engaged artists.

Our Publications Program was birthed in 2015, and has expanded the impact of our ABI programming. We view publications as vehicles for dissemination of ideas, critical dialogue and exchange. We also see them as self-contained art projects - creative expressions that have a unique life, identity and aesthetic impact. Drawing upon latent skills and knowledge in our senior staff team, we set about designing these publications in-house - with minimal resources, but significant inspiration. Again we drew on community partners to help us in this work. Between 2015 and 2017, we produced four print/e-pubs in conjunction with exhibitions. In 2017, we continued this work by producing a publication for the exhibition 'All Tomorrow's Parties / The Perfect Nowhere' - by

artists Jeroen Vitvliet and Neil McClelland. We also created diverse printed matter throughout the year, which is disseminated through our website.

Practicums constitute another key element of our ABI research. In 2017 we continued to offer a number of paid practicums (6). These positions offer significant practical and theoretical learning opportunities, with exposure to all aspects of programming. Practicums contribute to the development of multi-staged curatorial projects. Participants are valued as creative players on our staff team.

Challenges

A key challenge we face in our turn toward ABI is the need for additional resources to support an increased level of production, presentation and engagement. In supporting professional presenting artists in the making of new work, in developing meaningful connections with diverse communities that have stake in the work and in disseminating stories about the work to a wider audience, we are having to grow our resource base. We are now engaged in the task of increasing artist fees to allow for increased artist/community interaction, building a more extensive in-house production facility that serves the needs of artists working in a variety of media, and strengthening our human resources support for artists in production. We are actively seeking funding to enable us to do this work.

Opportunities

Increasingly, the Gallery's programming intersects in powerful ways with marginalized communities, including street-involved and homeless populations, immigrants, members of the GBLTQ community, etc. By programming interventions that house difficult but much-needed conversations within and across local community divides, we have gained a reputation as a key driver of the City's 'democratic', or 'citizen-based' culture and identity.

As testament, perhaps, to this role, CVAG has been positioned as a 'cornerstone' in the newly-released 'Downtown Courtenay Playbook'. The Gallery is currently exploring the potential of this position. We are developing, in consultation with the City, a plan to enhance our plaza space. This involves working with K'ómoks First Nation artists to develop two Welcoming Poles, a public art piece and an Indigenous Plants Garden - a project for which the Gallery has received a contribution from the Canada Council for the Arts' 'New Chapter' grant. It also involves renovations at the Gallery - that will re-locate the Gallery Shop to the current administration area, and create a unified reception area at the entrance to the Gallery. This project will enable us to create a dynamic and welcoming single entranceway by which to greet visitors, enable us to enhance our visitor services function, and achieve greater staff efficiency. This move will, we believe, dramatically increase our engagement potential. In conjunction with this move we're also looking at the possibility of online sales, flexible community programming, artist demonstrations, outdoor market days that showcase local artists' work, etc. These initiatives respond to our need for more flexibility within the shop enabling it to remain viable in an age where bricks and mortar retail is struggling.

This is a time of transition for the Gallery, and also a time of great possibility. We are grateful for the opportunities we've had this past year to deepen our Arts-Based Inquiry mandate and exploration. Looking forward, we see our connectedness with our local community, and with the downtown Core, as expanding. The activation of our Plaza demonstrates a new kind of democratizing role being played by the Gallery, and highlights the potential for contemporary art programming to bring new meaning to the cultural identity of place. Here contemporary art emerges as a driver of citizen and public sphere activation.

2017 Programming Summary

Programming slated for 2017 includes themes, ideas and cultural expressions that push boundaries with and for our presenting artists and public, and that provoke new forms of thought and action. Each programming year is organized into five programming blocks comprised of exhibitions that are activated and extended through adjunct outreach events and programs, with concurrent and/or lead-in residencies as appropriate to the project. These blocks include engaged research, production, presentation and diffusion of contemporary artwork by professional artists interacting with, and stemming from, diverse cultural communities.

January - February, 2017: 'The Perfect Nowhere: All Tomorrow's Parties'. Neil McClelland and Jeroen Witvliet (Victoria/Netherlands) expressed shifting interpretations and propositions in response to collapsing social, ecological and technical constructs and global systems. The project took shape as a two-person exhibition of new works comprised of large-scale paintings, paired with a site-responsive window gallery installation and two community artist talks. The Make Art Project Workshop involved an art walk, discussion and image-based response to our local downtown environment. 'Source Material', a concurrent exhibition in our Community space, featured narrative relationships between sculpture objects and lens-based work by local NIC/ECUAD visual arts students and instructors.

March - April, 2017: 'Carried Away'. Collaborative interdisciplinary artists/writers Vida Simon and Jack Stanley (Montreal) undertook a month-long creative residency, in which they produced a new site work. The project included seven durational performances and temporary installations, three artist talks with different communities, and a Make Art Project workshop facilitated by the artists. 'Source Material II: Unfolding' was a parallel exhibition of sculpture and printed matter by art students and alumni from ACAD, ECUAD UVIC and NIC post-secondary arts programs. 'Carried Away' investigated the relational dynamics of art and the everyday, incorporating live drawing, live writing and improvisation. The project extended throughout CVAG's contemporary gallery spaces. A publication between the artists and the gallery is in production - reflecting on the installation, collaborative processes and community relations that arose throughout the process.

April - May, 2017: 'Gather' The exhibition featured the work of senior and graduating visual arts students from the Emily Carr Degree program offered at North Island College. The work served as points of convergence as the students transitioned their art practices into the community and wider world. Artists: Sarah Bergeron, Tonja Bjermeland, Brigitte Cattell, Heather Clark, Karissa Comer, Roberta Denton, Tara Lee Houston, Tesla Mayenburg, Lukas Roy, Mariya Vancheva, Jenna Walker, Jessie Zelko. 'Gather' opened concurrently with the NIC Interactive Media Showcase - an event occurring in the Project Room Studio featuring the work of the North Island College Interactive Media graduating class.

June, 2017: 'Image to Text to Image'. CVAG and the Comox Valley Arts invited current and past Comox Valley culture makers - artists, writers, performers, collaborators, creative collectives and cultural thinkers to submit work for a thematic show that explored the diverse relationships found in the creation of dialogue between visuals and words. In CVAG's South Gallery and Window Space, works created by individual artists and collaborative teams express a wide range of responses to the theme. Throughout the duration of the program, a community engagement make art station within the gallery provided visitors with opportunities to participate in the ongoing thematic dialogue. Comox Valley Printmakers Association + North Island College School of Fine Art and Design provided an expanding collage of printed matter in CVAG's Community Space. *Finding Form in the Repeated Absurdity of Dada Art* "is an extended dialogue that pokes at today's global climate, utilizing the Dada tools of satire and nonsense."

May - June, 2017: 'The Book of Changes: Notes and Gestures'. Ted Gooden Cornelia Hoogland (Comox Valley - Hornby Island) collaborated on a new installation project, comprised of 64 figurative sculptures and corresponding poems, spoken word and audio recordings derived from interpretations of the IChing. The work was extended through an artist talk, performance events (as part of a local arts festival), and three Make Art Project workshops.

May - July, 2017: CVAG hosted the second annual Summer Intensive, in partnership with NIC Fine Arts Department (production space/equipment) and The McLoughlin Gardens (accommodation and studio space). Interdisciplinary artist Rita McKeough (Calgary/Nova Scotia) is undertook a two-month creative residency to develop two new site-responsive installations. CVAG presented 'Veins' in conjunction with the two new installations 'Listen', and 'Cul-de-Sac'. 'Viens' is an ambitious interactive installation that makes visible a sense of unease related to the ongoing planning and construction of the oil and gas pipelines developed across a fragile landscape. 'Cul-de-Sac' looks at clear-cuts and the resulting urban development arising in and out of these sites. 'Listen' is an installation and audio work designed for the public plaza space that asks viewers to consider what the land has to say, as translated by a flock of sensor- and plaza-activated songbirds. Over the past 40 years McKeough has gained an international reputation for her complex projects, often involving collaborative efforts that deeply investigate issues such as displacement, domestic abuse and ecological damage. McKeough employs humour, performance, electronics, kinetics and audio to choreograph diverse forms of communication, embedded in nature and new technology. A preliminary visit and artist talk took place in March 2017 as means of creating linkages with the community as a whole in preparation for this rigorous project. Five practicum students employed by the Gallery were involved in Rita's projects during her residency and installation. An Artist talk and thematically connected kids camp 'making art from unmaking electronics' took place during the opening week of the exhibition.

July, 2017: Renee Sills (Portland/Montreal) and Clea Minaker (Montreal) undertook concurrent two-week summer research residencies in the gallery's Project Room Studio with a focus on sound walks, deep listening and social engagement with diverse audiences.

October - November, 2017: 'Reciprocity'. The first in a series of Indigenous exhibitions focused on relational gatherings and strategies of collaboration. France Trépanier (Victoria), artist, curator, Indigenous educator and researcher of Kanien'kéha:ka and French ancestry presented 'Offerings / Offrandes', a collaborative multimedia installation exploring the meaning of gifting and offering. The project posed an opportunity for local artists and community members to collaborate and create a unique configuration of this accumulative, touring installation. The 3-part project is comprised of the LONGHOUSE - a sculptural central element representing a form of aboriginal architectural that speaks to nomadism, protection and traditional land. Housed within the LONGHOUSE are two single channel, time-lapsed video projections depicting local sky, over a 24-hour period - metaphors for indigenous cosmology and the interrelatedness of all things. The 'Offerings/Offrandes' website serves as a guardian of the documented images, sounds and words, and as a receptacle for the public to contribute digital offerings. A two-week creative residency took place prior to the exhibition, during which time France produced the work for the exhibit on-site at the Gallery - in collaboration with four local artists and Indigenous cultural communities. Artist Collaborators include: Matt Everson, K'umugwe Cultural Society, Anita Lawrence, Monica McKean and Medwyn McConachy. Cultural Knowledge contributors include Elder Mary Everson with Andy Everson and Lee Everson.

December, 2017: 'Look over Look'. Sculptor and master weaver Cynthia Minden (Denman Island BC) created an interactive kinetic Window Project installation, assembled from found objects and a broad range of local natural materials, with a focus on the fragility and resilience of relationships that link ecology and cosmology. Cynthia gave an artist talk and facilitated a Make Art Project

workshop. Also in December, CVAG hosted the 43rd Annual Christmas Craft Fair - a winter art market featuring handmade work by over 90 local and regional makers.

Youth Media Project

In addition to our Art Exhibition, Residency and Community Programming, the Gallery also hosted, in 2017, a 4-month Youth Media Project. This initiative provides intensive hands-on training in video and production to young people between the ages of 16 and 30 who face barriers to employment. Participants are paid to attend workshops, make videos, and take job placements where they work with an employer.

TIFF Film Series

The Gallery also continued to host the Toronto International Film Festival's Film Circuit - presenting two Film Series - one in the fall and one in the winter/spring. This event raises funds for the Gallery towards our artistic programming.

Acknowledgements

The City of Courtenay is a major funder and partner of the Comox Valley Art Gallery. We are grateful to work with Dave Snider, as well as with Joy Chan and Eric Jernslet.

At the Gallery, we have a keen affection and total respect for the students who have worked with us this past year - Denise, Tesla, Marlee, Deanna, Cassidy, Jessie, Lukas, Brandon, Krista and Stephanie. We are wowed by their capacity to pick up skills in a fast-paced, constantly-changing environment.

We want to thank our Youth Media Project team, including Krista Tupper, Dan Peruzzo and all the participants whom made the project another outstanding success.

We thank the part-time staff and the contractors, including Krista McAllister, Sue Pyper, Sue Baldwin, Lorna Locke, Patricia Lowe, Carrie Tannant Kirsten Humphries (our bookkeeper), and Stuart Barry (our accountant).

We took significant strides in 2017 to continue with our space upgrade project. This could not have been achieved without the support of Kevin Traveland, Alun Macanulty and Tom Severson. Our documentation was further strengthened by Alun Macanulty.

Finally, we thank the Board of Directors.

Summary

CVAG'S 2017 programming continued to explore Arts-Based Inquiry by connecting community-engaged artists with numerous diverse communities in the Valley, and by fostering dialogue, contemplation and exchange surrounding key issues of our time. Engagement occurred both through our regular extensions - including artist-talks and make-art projects, workshops, etc. It also occurred through creative residencies. We look forward to the opportunity to expand the Gallery's presence in Downtown Courtenay and outward - through the dynamic renovations planned for our facility and Plaza Space - enabling more people to engage in meaningful ways with the cultural life of this community.

Submitted by:

Sharon Karsten, Executive Director

Angela Somerset, Curator/Program Director