

Field Recordings of Icebergs Melting

Michael Campbell

COMOX VALLEY ART GALLERY

June 19 – August 29, 2026





**Michael Campbell during installation
at the Comox Valley Art Gallery**

Between Utopian + Dystopian Worlds

Curatorial Foreword by Denise Lawson

The program *Field Recordings of Icebergs Melting* presents installations in video + sound + sculptures + drawings that warp ideas of time, the world, space, and science.

Artist Michael Campbell has gathered found materials from beaches on Hornby Island, the “archives” and ad hoc collections populating the shops of friends, old structures in foreign places, and the fields of farmlands on the prairies and in Ontario. Inspired by popular cultures, movies, music, writing, militarism, Victorian Steam Punk ethos, research, fantasy, historical expeditions, space travel, science fiction, and humour, the artist has created intricate assemblages. The aesthetics of materials, patina, warmth of hue, and texture infuse the construction of ingenious structures that become armadas drifting through an evolving forever. Stages of miniatures in the densest of blacks absorb 99.5% of light as they perch on stalagmites of maple, walnut, cedar, and “beach” wood. The sets are private interiors that reveal the artist’s chimerical worlds. Drawings in ink, watercolour, and intaglio allude to imagined pasts and future possibilities. Using old and new equipment and both rudimentary and sophisticated technologies, the artist has created video + sound scapes that offer glimpses of the microcosms + macrocosms of historic expeditions and futuristic adventures that sit at the edges of the earth and the universe — top • bottom • above • below • visible • invisible • water • ice • earth • cosmos. Adrift in these liminal realms, the exact details for navigation, what to expect, what might happen, who might survive, are never revealed.

The work is fascinating to look at and be enfolded by. It offers a space for settling into wonder, to release the need for certainties, and to drift in the evolution of the artist’s utopian and dystopian worlds.



Field Recordings of Icebergs Melting #16 - The Redwood Jason Bekk

Field Recordings of Icebergs Melting

Artist Statement

Michael Campbell is interested in obsolete technologies, remote landscapes, purposeless inventions, suburban boredom, bad sci-fi films, utopic schemes, adolescent fantasy sketchbooks and handmade tools.

Field Recordings of Icebergs Melting is a body of work that has been touring across Canada and France since 2008. This ever-expanding series incorporates a range of materials and objects, including; driftwood, copper, zinc, cloth covered wiring, stressed plywood, cogs, levers, sphagnum moss, canvas, vacuum tubes, hemp line, rusted brake line, brass ornamentation, and thousands of tiny nails.

Recent exhibitions include The Trianon Gallery (Lethbridge), Agnes Etherington Art Centre (Kingston), EXPO 2005 Aichi (Japan), Plug-In Institute of Contemporary Art (Winnipeg), The Southern Alberta Art Gallery (Lethbridge), Red District Gallery (Marseilles France), the 2002 and 2005 Alberta Biennial (Edmonton, Calgary and Banff), YYY (Toronto), and Truck Gallery (Calgary).

Michael Campbell is a Full Professor at the University of Lethbridge, Faculty of Fine Arts and currently lives on Hornby Island, BC.

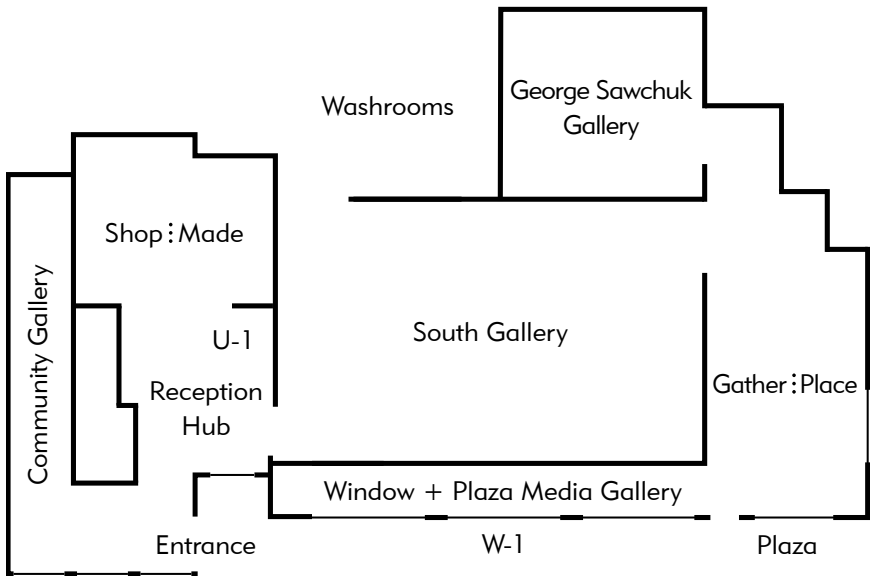


Field Recordings of Icebergs Melting #2 - The Cathy S



Studio Liminal

Exhibition Key



Window + Plaza Media Gallery

W-1 **I want to know who you'd be in the best of all possible worlds**

Video with multi-speaker sound installation | 6 min, 12 sec
(continuous loop) | 2005

Reception Hub

U-1 **Untitled**

2 framed drawings | 20 x 29 inches | 2015

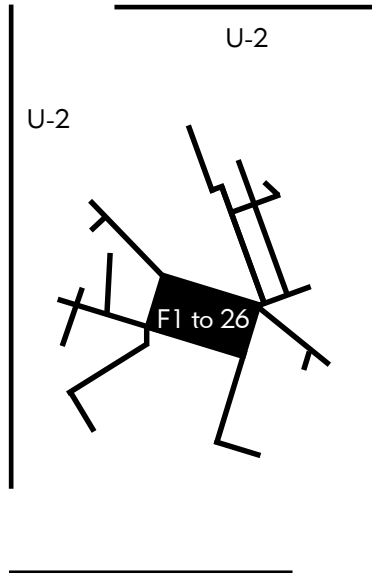
South Gallery

U-2 **Untitled**

Simultaneous video projection and sound installation | 17 min, 42 sec (continuous loop) | 2015

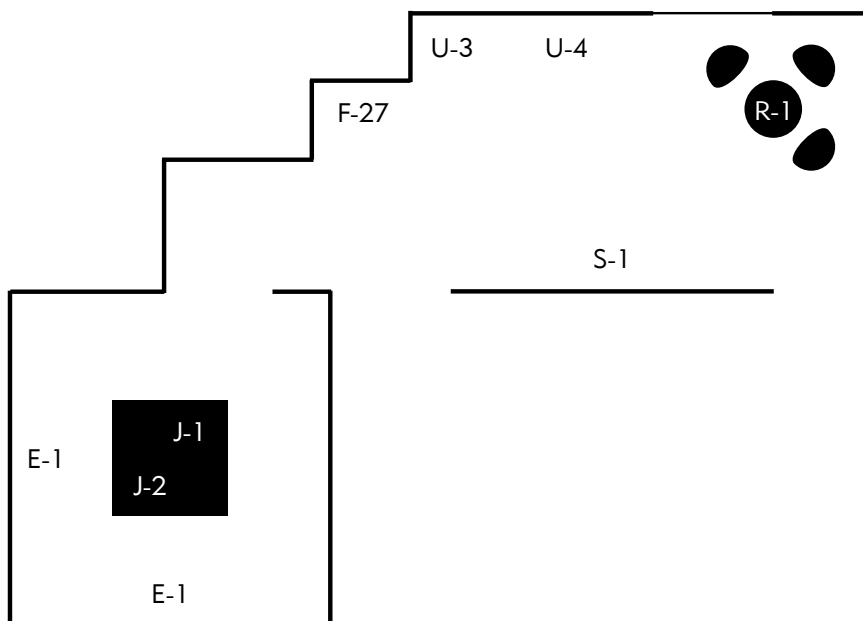
F-1 to 26 **Field Recordings of Icebergs Melting #1 – 26**

26 sculptures (various) | Variable dimensions | 2015 – 2026 (ongoing) | Found materials + mixed media (this ever-expanding series incorporates a range of materials and objects, including; driftwood, copper, zinc, cloth covered wiring, stressed plywood, cogs, levers, sphagnum moss, canvas, vacuum tubes, hemp line, rusted brake line, brass ornamentation, and thousands of tiny nails)



F-1		The Morag-Elizabeth
F-2		The Cathy S
F-3		The Leo (Taps)
F-4		The Hon. Alton Jacob
F-5		The Mazat Run
F-6		The Ulysses Martin
F-7		The Janice May
F-8		The Maharatta Run
F-9		The Lydia Bryde
F-10		The Betty Jean
F-11		The Sovereign Mary E
F-12		The Donald Drew
F-13		The Aston Mondaro Run

Tugball - The Master Hyager		F-14
Tugball - The Constance Pauline		F-15
The Redwood Jason Bekk		F-16
Tugball - The Greta		F-17
The Daniel Dymond		F-18
The Scrub		F-19
Tugball - The James Arthur		F-20
The Hon. Wendall Scot		F-21
The Lana Chun-Lan		F-22
The Pamela Anne		F-23
The Tucker and Co.		F-24
The Jurek-Jannsz		F-25
The One Thousand Central		F-26



George Sawchuk Gallery

E-1 **The Elephant's Graveyard**

Simultaneous video projection and four point sound installation |
 Janice Rahn and Michael Campbell | 5 min, 32 sec (continuous
 loop) | 2010

J-1 **The Janice May**

J-2 **The Janice May II**

2 sculptures | Variable dimensions | Found material and mixed
 media | 2016

Gather :Place

F-27 **Field Recordings of Icebergs Melting #27 - Untitled (Plane)**

1 sculpture from series | 53 inches (w) x 29 inches (h) x 15 inches (d) | 2015 – 2026 (ongoing) | Found materials + mixed media (this ever-expanding series incorporates a range of materials and objects, including; driftwood, copper, zinc, cloth covered wiring, stressed plywood, cogs, levers, sphagnum moss, canvas, vacuum tubes, hemp line, rusted brake line, brass ornamentation, and thousands of tiny nails)

S-1 **Studio Liminal**

9 sculptures | Variable dimensions | 2026 | Walnut, cedar, found material, and mixed media

U-3 **Untitled**

Etching drypoint | 21 x 21 inches (framed) | 2018

U-4 **Untitled**

3 drawings | 12 x 28 inches (framed), 12 x 28 inches (framed), and 13 x 37 inches (framed) | 2025 | Water colour and ink

R-1 **Reading Resources Station**

Gallery copies of the artist's previous exhibition publications for visitor reading | *Michael Campbell: 12,000 Years Collapsing Into Eight Seconds*, Southern Alberta Art Gallery, essay by David Garneau, 2002; *Michael Campbell: Field Recordings of Icebergs Melting*, Agnes Etherington Art Centre, 2009; and *The Elephant's Graveyard*, Janice Rahn and Michael Campbell, essay by Don Goodes, 2014 (take-home copies available at Shop:Made)

Acknowledgments

The Comox Valley Art Gallery is grateful to operate on the Unceded Traditional Territory of the K'ómoks Nation.



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Images in this publication are courtesy of the artist, Paul Litherland, and CVAG staff.



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580 Duncan Avenue, Courtenay, BC, V9N 2M7
HOURS: Wednesdays – Saturdays, 10AM – 5PM
ADMISSION: donations gratefully accepted



Michael Campbell recording audio of seals on Hornby Island, which can be heard as part of the exterior installation's soundscape

CVAG

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To learn more, visit:
comoxvalleyartgallery.com/field-recordings-of-icebergs-melting

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