

COMOX VALLEY ART GALLERY ANNUAL REPORT 2018

PRESENTED TO THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

APRIL 27, 2019



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 – 2018
3. Business Arising
4. New Business
5. Reports – President
6. Bylaw Amendment
7. Reports - Executive Director, Curators
8. Financial Report - Treasurer
9. Motion: to approve Stuart Barry as the Accountant for the 2019 fiscal year.
10. Election of Board Members
11. Announcements
12. Adjournment

Annual General Meeting Minutes

Saturday, April 14, 2018

10:00 AM

The meeting convened at 10:00 AM with President Jasmin Badrin in the Chair and 31 members present. The presence of quorum was declared.

1. Approval of Agenda

**MacLean/Gillespie: That the proposed Agenda be adopted
CARRIED**

2. Minutes of the AGM held April 8, 2017

Poisson/MacLean: That the Minutes of the AGM held April 8, 2017 be adopted as circulated.

CARRIED

3. New Business

None was proposed.

4. Reports – President

The President's report was included in the AGM package and Badrin highlighted the successful achievement of a first-ever Canada Council grant for operating purposes and the plans for a re-design of the physical space of the Gallery to enhance the welcoming of visitors and provide a more functional gallery shop focus by combining both in one area. Badrin also highlighted last night's Youth Media project film night which included numerous fine productions.

5. Reports – Executive Director & Curator

The reports were included in the AGM package and the Curator presented a visual review of the 2017-18 programmes at the Gallery. The two reports highlighted the focus on making the Gallery an inclusive and welcoming space and the exhibitions designed to engage community, collaborate with our partner groups and marginalized communities. The Education program included artist talks, public forums, make art workshops, performance arts and the hospital art project.

The Executive Director then presented an overview of the space re-design projects for 2018 incorporating the move of the gallery shop to integrate it with the reception centre and a blending of the staffing to meet both functions. The plans for 2018 also include a re-working of the plaza space to include Karver Everson's two welcome poles and a medicinal plants garden.

6. Financial Report

In the absence of the Treasurer, President Badrin presented the reviewed financial statements for the period ending December 31, 2017. The hospital Art Project bumped up revenues and revenue decreases over the previous year represented the end of one-time grants. There were substantial increases in internally and externally restricted funds allocated for important anticipated and ongoing projects.

**Kirk-Albert/MacLean: That the Financial Report for Fiscal year-end 2017 be approved as presented.
CARRIED**

7. Appointment of Accountant Stuart Barry 2018 fiscal year

**Crouch/Poisson: That the AGM appoint Stuart Barry as Accountant to conduct the 2018 Fiscal year-end financial review.
CARRIED**

8. Elections

Albert/MacLean: That the proposed slate be declared elected:

Board members with a Continuing Term for this year are: Jasmin Badrin and Carolyn Kirk-Albert

Nominated for a two year term are: Sharon Hadden, Kate Campbell, Diane Naugler, Wedledi Speck, Keisha Everson, John Heintz, Renee Poisson, and Linda Perron

CARRIED

Sanford/Albert: that those nominated from the floor be declared elected:

Nominated for a two year term are: Bruce Curtis, Judy LeBlanc, and David MacLean

CARRIED

9. Acceptance of Reports

Sanford/Poisson: That the reports of the Executive Director and Curator be accepted and express a vote of confidence in these directions.

CARRIED

10. Adjournment

As the agenda of business was completed, the meeting adjourned.

Following the adjournment of the meeting, CVAG presented the Nonnie Milne Award to Alan Burgess for his years of dedicated service to and support of the Comox Valley Art Galley dating back to the formation of this contemporary art gallery in the 1980's, and ongoing support through his work in the NIC Faculty of Fine Arts. Burgess acknowledged the honour and presented brief reminiscences of these years.

President's Report

The past year has been another successful one of engaging exhibitions and educational programming. First and foremost, I would like to thank Sharon Karsten and Glen Sanford for their solid team leadership and the staff, volunteers and Board members for exceptional hard work and dedication to the success of the Gallery. Thank you!

It's surreal to think about last year when I announced the Board's preliminary discussions to centralize the gallery and shop operations to create a more welcoming inclusive space. Please look around, those plans quickly became reality. This centralized centre has brought new and refreshing life into this space. It is remarkable how all the staff, interns and volunteers stepped up in every capacity conceivable to make the transition as smooth as possible during the renovations. Truly incredible! This refreshed floor plan has allowed for diverse programming and use of spaces. The Gallery was able to facilitate school groups visiting (and sometimes four groups a day), more interactive artist exhibits, and the old shop space is currently hosting a creative technology centre filled with virtual reality, robots and 3D printing. The possibilities are endless!

Other significant additions The Gallery is delighted to report include the Comox Valley Art Gallery signage on the building exterior. This has been a long time in the making, but we finally have beautiful signage identifying who we are and so prominently in our beautiful downtown core. The plaza project was the other magnificent addition. The Welcoming Poles carved by artists Karver Everson and Randy Frank under the mentorship of Calvin Hunt completely transformed and The Gallery's presence. We also had the honour of collaborating with Elder Barb Whyte to plant the Indigenous Plants garden that surround the base of the poles. The whole plaza is simply beautiful and functional.

Something incredibly new for The Gallery is the Arts-Based Opioid Crisis project, where we have partnered with Thompson Rivers University. The aim of this project is to activate arts-based cultural mapping to further explore and understand the opioid crisis within the Comox Valley. Through this project we hope to partner with other community organizations and front-line agencies to make this happen.

Finally, we are entering the final year of our five-year strategic plan, so now the Board will be assessing what we have accomplished, re-evaluating and corroborating what direction The Gallery will focus on the next strategic plan. The Gallery is very fortunate to have such conscientious and accomplished Board members who are focused on working together with the intention of building an innovative plan that empowers The Gallery to continue to push boundaries, provoke and think out of the box.

Thank you for taking the time to celebrate with us today. Your continued support is so greatly appreciated. I am very excited and honoured to continue with the Comox Valley Art Gallery, here's to new and exciting ventures and endless possibilities.

Kind regards,

Jasmin Badrin

Staff Reports:

Sharon Karsten – Executive Director

2018 was a year of growth and transition. Throughout the year, the Gallery team made progress in accomplishing key objectives outlined in our Strategic Plan, which places ‘Arts-Based Inquiry’ as a primary goal and orientation. Of note is a substantial renovation made to the facility, which serves to:

- a) create an open lobby/welcoming space;
- b) centralize our visitor services function (now called ‘the Hub’) and make more efficient our staff resources – providing a single rather than double entry-points for visitor welcoming and engagement;
- c) develop a new ‘Gather Space’ – a facility used for the activation of relational programs and activities;
- d) re-conceptualize our shop, bringing it into a stronger relationship with the curatorial program, allowing for an interplay to be developed between these two functions

Also enacted were changes to the exterior of the building, including the addition of signage, and the commissioning on the plaza of two Welcome Poles developed by K’ómoks artists Karver Everson and Randy Frank under the guidance of Master Carver Calvin Hunt, and an Indigenous plants garden by K’ómoks Elder Barb Whyte.

These transformations, achieved through contributions by Canada Council for the Arts, BC Gaming, First People’s Cultural Council and the City of Courtenay, fulfill a number of goals outlined in our strategic plan. They allow us to achieve new space for arts-based inquiry, a more unified and efficient welcoming centre and a stronger visual profile within the downtown core. The poles acknowledge our place on unceded K’ómoks traditional territory.

Further to these transformations, it is important to acknowledge a key line of inquiry that ran through our 2018 programming slate – rooted in the pursuit of meaningful relationships with Indigenous communities. Through this line, we asked questions about, and critically reflected on, the colonial roots embedded within and in many cases driving Canada’s contemporary art world. We posited the Gallery as a site of social change and transformation, and provided a platform for counter-narratives bringing to light hidden histories of oppression and emancipation. These conversations were supported, in-part, by the new spatial configuration at the Gallery, which provided room for teaching, reflection and gathering. This work again fulfilled many of the objectives outlined in our strategic plan – it enabled us to explore issues of relevance within the Comox Valley, and to cultivate a welcoming, safe and inclusive container –a laboratory for deep creative practice and exploration.

The metamorphosis enacted by the Gallery team and its partners throughout 2018 was intense and meaningful. I wish to extend a heart-felt thank-you to all who helped make this transition happen –to the artists and cultural leaders who fostered new understandings and potential; to our dedicated staff and board team; to our team of committed volunteers; to our funders; and to individuals who give time and money to make it work. To all who helped actualize this last year’s projects and programming, I express deep gratitude.

Sincerely,

Sharon Karsten

2018 Convergent Program Report

Co- curators Denise Lawson + Angela Somerset

OVERVIEW

In 2018 CVAG instigated and supported contemporary art practice, presentation, research, production, exchange dissemination, learning and sharing, dialogue and collaboration through a robust year of convergent thematic programming. In the years preceding 2018, the CVAG programming team worked diligently to create a foundation upon which to initiate and sustain its role as a nucleus for activating community relationship. This past year the gallery demonstrated its potential for under-pinning presentation, in-depth arts based exploration and engagement, through an emphasis on relationships. The historical and present day Indigenous – settler cultural narratives in the Comox Valley and across Canada were at the heart of the contemporary art practices, presentations, research, activations and dialogues presented at CVAG in 2018.

The programming spaces and processes reflect significant growth and change in CVAG during 2018. The year's cycle of programming focused on precipitating shifts in the contexts and perspectives of the relationships we have with the land we are situated on and the people of this place. During 2018, the Comox Valley Art Gallery engaged in significant collaborations with Indigenous and settler-identified artists, traditional cultural carriers, guest-curators and facilitators, to present a year of thematic programming rooted in cultural learning and dialogue. Expanded connection with the local community was manifested through inter-cultural and organizational collaborations, mentorships, embedded education strategies, creation and production initiatives, broadened digital publication platforms, dissemination and touring. Multi-year programming initiatives continued to be activated in the community through public art projects and creative residencies.

1. NEW PROGRAMMING SPACES

Articulating gallery spaces to enhance production, presentation and community engagement was part of the considerations for the renovations and facility upgrade process. The George Sawchuk Gallery was upgraded to serve as a Black Box specifically for time based artwork, screenings and light-based presentations within each programming block. The Window Gallery was revamped as a dynamic ground level accessible site for active engagement, interactive presentations, and as a connecting thoroughfare between the South Gallery and the new activation space that now inhabits the former shop area. CVAG curated large scale site-specific works for the street front Window Gallery to extend visibility and awareness of the programming thematics. The conversion of the former shop area into GATHER:PLACE enhanced capacity for creative research, presentation and community interactions beginning in the fall of 2018. The newly integrated reception and shop HUB provides a strong welcoming presence as the point of entry for introducing visitors to the gallery presentations and upcoming programming events.

The gallery has been transformed into a beautifully crafted, integrated and modular space to hold the work that we need to do. We had the honour to work with a strong team to translate the gallery's vision into a reality. Lacasse construction generously supported the build. Phillipa Atwood and Mary Alice worked through the architectural and design choreography. Alun Macanulty expressed his knowledge of the gallery workings through his meticulous attention to detail in the SHOP:MADE design and fabrication, the custom floor treatments and all the space finishings. We are most grateful to these contractors, support staff and volunteers who contributed to these beautiful renovations and upgrades.

2. RELATIONSHIP-BASED CROSS-CULTURAL PROGRAMMING

In 2018, CVAG's curatorial process for developing programming was relationship centred, with an emphasis on creating space and opportunity for meaningful cultural dialogue, arts-based inquiry and presentation. Remaining relevant to and actively engaged with the community was central to the vision. Each block of programming in 2018 offered meaningful relational opportunities to collaborate in responsive and dynamic ways from concept through development and presentation. These relationships continue to hold meaning and value in new ways, beyond the framework of presentation as an end goal.

New insights into the cycles of our relationships with each other and with Earth's rhythms were prompted by the convergent program *RETURN*, that brought together the politicized lens-based work of two contemporary feminist photographers, Eileen Leier and Nancy Bleck. The artists travelled to the Comox Valley to spend time on the land, in the community and with the CVAG curatorial staff, to share their experiences and perspectives and to prepare their knowledge-sharing documentation/witness projects for presentation at CVAG.

Touch Me, was an opportunity for the CVAG team to work with galleries across Canada, artist Skeena Reece and the artists who collaborated with her to collate and present a retrospective exhibition that presented the artist's experience and perspective as a contemporary Indigenous woman, second generation residential school survivor and as an artist.

Stekyawden Syndrome was a site-specific mural created by Bracken Hanoose Corlett for the CVAG Window Gallery. Hanoose developed the mural as part of Skeena Reece's exhibition *Touch Me*. Through a responsive and collaborative consideration process with CVAG, the artist extended the run of the exhibition of his work to offer an expanded period for considering the anxiety of Canadian and Indigenous relations.

Touching Earth Bodies was developed out of the ongoing dialogue that focused on collaborative creative practice between guest curator Toby Lawrence, the CVAG curators, and the presenting artists to deliver a program that addressed interrelationships between the human body and the land, while considering the history and ongoing practices of deforestation across Vancouver Island's rainforest and the resulting environmental and social impact.

The Potlatch 67–67: The Potlatch Ban – Then And Now convergent thematic program was a major undertaking that incorporated cross-cultural collaborations, mentorships, expanded presentation, off-site community engagement events, interdisciplinary and organizational partnerships, development of an e publication, production of videos + sound recordings, and extensive educational outreach. The Comox Valley Art Gallery worked with the Kumugwe Cultural Society, led by Cultural Carrier Elders Chief Wedlidi Speck, Elder Mary Everson, Dr. Evelyn Voyagur, Nagezdi - Rob Everson Hereditary Chief of the Gigalgam Walas Kwagwł, and Guest Curator Lee Everson, to present an Indigenous art exhibition and cultural program that examined the impact of the attempted cultural genocide through the potlatch ban and the resilience of Indigenous peoples in maintaining and reclaiming traditional cultural practices and in creating new forms of cultural expression.

Nump Ma Noch Gyai Yoo Lahss: We All Come From One Root, the solo exhibition of artist John Powell offered the opportunity for collaboration with previous curators Ken Blackburn / Elizabeth Carter, and presenting organizations, the artist, and facilitator George Littlechild to receive and present work that articulates the powerful interconnectedness of First Nations identities, embedded within cultural practices, diversity, ceremony, art and the everyday.

Honouring: Project Of Heart / Speaking To Memory is an arts-based legacy project that honours the intent to promote reconciliation and healing embedded in two projects; *Speaking to Memory: Images and Voices from St. Michael's Indian Residential School* (BC Museum of Anthropology) and *Project of Heart: Illuminating the Hidden History of Indian Residential Schools in BC* (BC Teachers Federation). CVAG collaborated with School District 71 Indigenous Education Services to create

responsive legacy project that was initially presented at CVAG and will continue to be presented through touring opportunities in the education system.

3. MENTORSHIPS / EDUCATION – LEARNING AND SHARING / COMMUNITY OUTREACH

Mentorships:

2018's convergent programs provided the foundation for a wide variety of mentorships. Summer students from fine arts programs in BC and Alberta and from the Kómoks First Nation were involved in CVAG exhibition preparation, presentation and education outreach from May through early September. CVAG worked closely with the Kumugwe Cultural Society guiding the guest curator and cultural carriers in grant application and gallery presentation logistics for *6767. Honouring* afforded the opportunity to invite individual youth to design and create exhibition specific work. These young artists were supported in the development and making processes to bring the work to presentation readiness.

Education – Learning and Sharing:

Throughout the year programming education outreach was strong. Over a thousand students from School Districts 71 and 72, private schools, North Island College and Vancouver Island University visited the gallery to participate in culturally guided tours and facilitated discussions about the artists and the programming presented. The gallery became a container for school district educators to gather on professional development days to discuss strategies for developing arts-based and culturally relevant curriculum. *Honouring* – was a new collaborative production, programming, publication and education initiative between CVAG and School District 71 Indigenous Education Services. Bruce Carlos, principal of this program, approached the gallery to conceptualize, design and produce a legacy project encompassing a touring exhibition with strong education outreach platforms. This program included multiple elements including: a full size interactive sculpture /cedar canoe lightbox, a 64-page full colour publication (in print and as a digital epub), the production of two single channel videos, extensive archival documentation, and a curriculum resource plan.

Community Outreach / Make Art Projects:

As part of the year's programming, CVAG presented extensive educational events and opportunities as a means of amplifying the core issues of the work presented in the gallery. Artist-facilitated *Make Art Projects*, performances, talks and presentations threaded through all the programming blocks. Nadine Bariteau and her North Island College Fine Arts class facilitated *Pop-Up Printmaking*, workshops held in a bus parked in front of the gallery. *Potlatch 6767 The Potlatch Ban Then and Now* included thematically related public film screenings (Natalie Boll and Latiesha Fazakas' "Maker of Monsters: The Extraordinary Life of Beau Dick and Barbara Cranmer "Our Voices, Our Stories"). Storytelling and public discussion were part of the Kumugwe Big House Cultural Sharing *Kitchen Table Dialogues* day-long event. Culture-specific community events entitled *The Blanket Exercise* further augmented the program.

4. CREATIVE RESEARCH RESIDENCIES / PROJECT ROOM STUDIOS

In 2018, CVAG programming continued to support the research and development of work by artists and curators by offering its summer residency and project room studio opportunities on-site at the gallery. Curator Toby Lawrence, and artists Lindsay Kandinsky-Delronde, Valerie Salez and Sandra Semchuk participated in the 2018 Summer Residency May through July. Artist, Nadine Bariteau initiated new creative research in CVAG's GATHER:PLACE for her Project Room Studio creative residency *Restructure* – a project that proposed the "...subtle dialogue that lies somewhere between poetry and social awareness and strives to highlight various ways in which we connect with our surroundings." (Bariteau)

5. DISSEMINATION – PRINTED MATTER AND E-PUBLICATIONS

CVAG publications focus on the production, dissemination and dialogue emerging out of artist and gallery-initiated media. The publications are conceived of as small open printed editions, and are democratically available in a digital format, with an emphasis on circulation and sharing. The editions are produced as stand-alone projects and as extensions of exhibitions and events.

Besides disseminating paper based printed matter for each exhibition, CVAG produced four publications as projects to augment and perpetuate the thematic of the convergent program out which they were generated:

HONOURING: PROJECT OF HEART / SPEAKING TO MEMORY November 15 2018

This publication is part of a responsive legacy project that honours the intent of two projects; *Speaking to Memory: Images and Voices from St. Michael's Indian Residential School* and *Project of Heart: Illuminating the Hidden History of Indian Residential Schools in BC*. Copies of the bound publication are part of the *Honouring* project touring in the education system – provide the opportunity to examine the history and legacy of Indian Residential Schools in British Columbia and prompt meaningful engagement in the reconciliation process.

POTLATCH 6767 – THE POTLATCH BAN THEN AND NOW July 20 2018

An e-publication (available on the CVAG and 6767 websites) documenting the convergent program Potlatch 67–67: *The Potlatch Ban – Then And Now* and exhibition *Hitsista'am (The Copper Will Be Fixed)*. Produced by the Kumugwe Cultural Society and the Comox Valley Art Gallery (concept, design / production / publishing).

THE NORTH ISLAND HOSPITAL PUBLIC ART PROJECT July 20 2018

This e-publication and printed display is a record of the design plans and installed placement of artwork installed in the hospital spaces. The CVAG creative team took on the project of conceptualizing, designing and producing artwork for the new North Island Hospital in the Comox Valley. CVAG worked closely with the North Island Hospital Art Project, K'ómoks First Nation, Elder Barb Whyte, other local artists, plus students, parents, and educators from Queneesh Elementary School.

IN DEFIANCE May 18 2018

CVAG created an print and e-publication of the images and associated writing that comprised the exhibition of Lindsay Katsitsakatste Delaronde's exhibition *In Defiance* presented CVAG and University of Victoria Legacy Art Gallery.

6. MULTI-YEAR PROGRAMMING INITIATIVES / PUBLIC ART – IN THIS PLACE

Begun in 2017, *In This Place: The North Island Hospital Public Art Project* and the Plaza Project: *Public Place: Sacred Space* continue activate community spaces.

North Island Hospital Art Project – the installation of the initial stage of the project was completed and the ongoing development of work for installation in the youth outreach clinic has been initiated. The installed work includes:
Gathering Place Wall / main floor: honours the traditional territory, medicine plants and cultural healing practices of the K'ómoks First Nation people, both Salish and Kwakwaka'wakw.

- Central Registration / main floor: Three large panels offer a reflection of the local landscape and cultural history that is embedded within it. The imagery offers a welcoming invitation through scenes that embrace the forest and sea comprising the Comox Valley.
- Outpatient Lab Waiting Area / main floor: panels with image details of ceramic works by Gordon Hutchens
Wellness Center – Cancer Care / main floor: Inspired by the importance of the natural world in our lives, the artists created a transitional image matrix that laces together a relational conversation between the surrounding forests and the interior hospital space.
- Psychiatric Inpatient Unit –*Dreaming Together* 2017-2018 matrix window weaves Nicole Crouch / Ed Odgaard
Krista McAllister.
- Maternity + Children's Unit: Queneesh Elementary School Students (Kindergarten through Grade 7) *Becoming* digital prints/watercolour + mixed media original, 2017–18 Inspired by their relationships to place – where they live and learn – the children of Queneesh Elementary School came together in a series of art-making sessions to respond to the theme of transformation and change facilitated by Denise Lawson and Angela Somerset (Comox Valley Art Gallery Curatorial Staff).

Plaza Project: *PUBLIC PLACE : SACRED SPACE* incorporates place-naming, public art installations and an Indigenous garden. This undertaking by the Comox Valley Art Gallery in partnership with the K'ómoks First Nation community and City of Courtenay, aims to unearth the significance of the land upon which the Centre for the Arts plaza has been constructed. The project involves a place-naming process for the Plaza, the creation and installation of two traditional welcoming poles, carved by local Artists Karver Everson and Randy Frank under the cultural/artistic mentorship of Master Carver Calvin Hunt, the installation of a sculptural piece by artist Andy Everson and the development of a full-circle tea garden holding traditional Indigenous tea and medicine plants – designed under the guidance of Traditional Knowledge Keeper Elder Barb Whyte. The integrated themes of welcoming, place-naming, gathering and healing run through the project components. Together, these projects are seen as a step toward reconciliation and recognition of the historic relationship the K'ómoks peoples have had with this Valley for thousands of years.

LOOKING FORWARD

2018 was a significant year of change and growth for the gallery. With a focus on our commitment to a year of Indigenous programming, learning and sharing, a depth of inquiry became visible and lasting relationships took shape. We learned ways of holding space differently and for making space for uncertainty. We learned that trust takes time. Entering into relation involved humility and dedication as we opened to cultural protocols and teachings. The courage to willingly open things up and to then be open to what might happen, called us out repeatedly through the year. We learned to walk alongside. Expertise and generosity was shared in the form of offerings. We learned gratitude in the familiar and in the profound. We are proud of the work that has been done.

2018 CONVERGENT PROGRAMMING SUMMARY

January – March 2018: *RETURN* was a convergent artistic program that brought together the politicized lens-based work of contemporary feminist photographers Nancy Bleck (Vancouver) and Eileen Leier (Kamloops). The collective experiences of solidarity, resistance and healing journeys were at the forefront of these knowledge-sharing documentation/witness projects. The work in the exhibition reflected on migrations and evolutions in nature and within shifting Indigenous/Settler perspectives of the environment. Artist led Make Art Workshops prompted insights into the cycles of relationships with each other and with Earth's rhythms.

April 6 - May 12 2018: *Touch Me* was a solo exhibition by interdisciplinary artist Skeena Reece. Elements of a body of work developed over many years include drawings, paintings, installation, video, an on-site mural, performance and collaborative practice. Reece, who is of Cree, Tsimshian, Gitksan, and Métis descent. The artist's words provide insight into her exhibition:

Defiantly my work resists the loss of our true history of contact, but it also nods to the accountability that we must have in order to go forward in this society. My response to this painful history is to share the continued ability to show reverence, respect, care and love. Not despite our colonial history, but as a continuation of this strength that has been passed on since time immemorial. Speaking to my people I am saying that these abilities are not lost on me. Speaking to others I am saying this is 'our' resilience. – Skeena Reece

May 13 - June 29 2018: *STEKYAWDEN SYNDROME* This large scale mural was a site specific work that offered another way to look at the anxiety of Canadian and Indigenous relations. It reflected a story about bullying those who are unable to defend themselves. The project was a commission of Bracken Hanuse Corlett, a (Wuikinuxv/Klahoose Nations) muralist / painter / writer / singer / songwriter. Skeena Reece asked the artist to design and paint a mural that spoke to "the power imbalance that exists between Canada/Crown and Indigenous peoples here in North America." Bracken Hanuse Corlett is an interdisciplinary artist from the Wuikinuxv and Klahoose Nations. He began working in theatre and performance in 2001 and eventually transitioned towards his current practice that fuses painting and drawing with digital-media, audio-visual performance, animation and narrative.

May 18 - June 29 2018: CVAG collaborated with guest curator Toby Lawrence to present *Touching Earth Bodies*. The multi-media exhibition included three bodies of work (*Touching Earth Bodies*, *In Defiance*, and *In the Shadow of our own Dust*)

created by Victoria-based artists Lindsay Katsitsakatste Delaronde and Valerie Salez. Installation, photography, performance, a creative residency, and experiential learning with a public make/art activity, were elements of the thematic program. Delaronde produced a new performance in response to *Touching Earth Bodies* and Salez will performed *Chakras in the Dark*, a performance developed as part of her 2012 installation, *In the Shadow of our own Dust*. Lawrence expanded her curatorial research as part of the associated residency.

July 20 - October 4 2018: *Potlatch 67–67: The Potlatch Ban – Then and Now* examined the impact of the attempted cultural genocide through the potlatch ban and the resilience of Indigenous people in maintaining and reclaiming traditional cultural practices and in creating new forms of cultural expression. 2018 marked the 67th year since the Canadian government's Potlatch Ban was lifted, after it was imposed on Indigenous people for 67 years. Nagezdi, Rob Everson Hereditary Chief of the Gigalgam Walas Kwagwł, recognized that many Canadians do not understand the history of Indigenous peoples. He envisioned an Indigenous art exhibition and cultural program that would powerfully engage the local community and fellow Canadians, both Indigenous and settler, about this shared history and the impact. The program included community partnerships, the art exhibition [*Hilt'sist'a'qm \(The Copper Will Be Fixed\)*](#), a creative residency, community engagement through traditional ceremony and knowledge-sharing, performance, film screening, sharing circles, Blanket Exercise workshops, documentation practices, a dedicated website and an e-publication.

Septemer 17 – December 7 2018: *Honouring – Speaking to Memory / Project of Heart* is an arts-based collaboration developed by CVAG together with School District 71 Indigenous Education Services. This responsive legacy project honours the intent to promote reconciliation and healing embedded in two projects: *Speaking to Memory: Images and Voices from St. Michael's Indian Residential School* and *Project of Heart: Illuminating the Hidden History of Indian Residential Schools in BC*. The gallery's GATHER:PLACE held the work in exhibition and was the focal point for workshops, facilitated conversations and tours prior to being readied for touring by SD 71 Indigenous Education Services.

October 16 - November 20 2018: *In This Place* – a convergent program that reaches into the past to root us in this place and time. Remembering and honouring the ancestors, upholding the land, and creating a place of welcoming, gathering and healing are at the foundation of the comprehensive presentiations:

Nump Ma Noch Gyai Yoo Lahss / We All Come From One Root (October 16 – November 17 2018): was a multi-media exhibition by Kwakwaka'wakw artist John Powell. This extensive body of work articulated the powerful interconnectedness of First Nations identities embedded within art and cultural practices, diversity, ceremony, and the everyday. Recognizing the impact of colonization on First Nations identity, the artist/archivist/witness welcomes, gathers and transforms stories, names, places and experiences as a means of creating space for healing traditional lands and people.

PUBLIC PLACE:SACRED SPACE (2018 ongoing): This undertaking by the Comox Valley Art Gallery in partnership with the K'ómoks First Nation community and City of Courtenay, aims to unearth the significance of the land upon which the Centre for the Arts plaza has been constructed. The project involves a place-naming process for the Plaza, the creation and installation of two traditional welcoming poles, carved by local Artists Karver Everson and Randy Frank under the cultural/artistic mentorship of Master Carver Calvin Hunt, the installation of a sculptural piece by artist Andy Everson and the development of a full-circle tea garden holding traditional Indigenous tea and medicine plants – designed under the guidance of Traditional Knowledge Keeper Elder Barb Whyte. The integrated themes of welcoming, place-naming, gathering and healing run through the project components. Together, these projects are seen as a step toward reconciliation and recognition of the historic relationship the K'ómoks peoples have had with this Valley for thousands of years.

December 2018: CVAG hosted the 44th annual Christmas Craft Market rebranded as the Winter Art Market (WAM) The event featured handmade work by over 90 local and regional makers. A series of Make Art Projects were hosted by CVAG for community engagement during the run of the market.

2018 Civic Engagement / Outreach Projects

Youth Media Project: The Gallery hosted, in 2018, two 4-month Youth Media Project intakes. This initiative provides intensive hands-on training in video and production to underserved youth between the ages of 16 and 30. Participants are paid to attend workshops, make videos, and take job placements.

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.

Opioid Crisis Project: The Gallery began working, in 2018, on a project that explores the impact of the opioid crisis in the Comox Valley. This project, currently in development, marks a collaboration between the Gallery and a range of front-line workers and organizations, with people with lived experience, and with researchers from Thompson Rivers University.

Acknowledgements

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

We wish to express gratitude to the students who have worked with us this past year.

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

We thank staff, contractors and regular volunteers, including Krista McAllister, Sue Pyper, Lorna Locke, Sofie Skapski, Kirsten Humphries (our bookkeeper), and Stuart Barry (our accountant).

We took significant strides in 2018 to make upgrades to our space. These could not have been achieved without the support of Alun Macanulty and Tom Severson. Our documentation was further strengthened by Alun Macanulty.

Finally, we thank the Board of Directors.

Summary

CVAG’s 2018 season was one of dynamism and transformation. We look forward to building on the Arts-Based Inquiry platform developed this year –continuing to explore the power of arts in shifting perceptions and enacting social change. We are grateful to all who have walked with us on this journey.