



COMOX VALLEY ART GALLERY 2020 ANNUAL REPORT

presented to the Annual General Meeting
May 8, 2021



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2021 CVAG Annual General Meeting

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GRATITUDE

The Comox Valley Art Gallery gratefully acknowledges that we are located upon the Unceded Traditional Territory of the K'ómoks First Nation. CVAG recognizes the enduring presence of First Nations people on this land.

We rely on generous funders + community partners to serve our community.

CORE FUNDERS:

City of Courtenay
Canada Council for the Arts
BC Arts Council
Province of BC Community Gaming Grants Program
Comox Valley Regional District
Town of Comox

PROGRAM FUNDERS:

Canada Council New Chapter program
First Peoples' Cultural Council
Service Canada
Vancouver Foundation
Vancouver Island Health Authority
Young Canada Works (Heritage Canada)

COMMUNITY PARTNERS:

ABC Printing & Signs
AVI Health and Community Services
BC Teacher's Federation
Bruce Lewis Surveying
Campbell River Museum
City of Victoria
Hitec Printing
Imperial Welding Ltd.
Industrial Plastic & Paints
Izco Technology Solutions
K'ómoks First Nation
Lush Valley
MakeltZone
McElhany Consultants
McLoughlin Gardens Society
Muir Engineering Ltd.

Museum of Anthropology at the University of British Columbia
North Island College
Ocean Pacific Abrasive Blasting
Outlook Engineering and Landscape Architecture
Phillipa Atwood Architect
Project Watershed
Royal BC Museum and Library and Archives Canada
SD71 Print Shop
Sherwin-Williams Paint Store
Sparc BC
Thompson Rivers University
U'mista Cultural Centre, Project of Heart Canada
University of Victoria - Legacy Art Galleries
Valley Prototyping & Custom Cutting
West Coast Home Theatres

We are especially grateful for the support of consulting Elders and Cultural Carriers, guest artists and curators, program participants and collaborators, gallery volunteers, donors and members.

DOCUMENTATION + POST-PRODUCTION:

Alun Macanulty
Angela Somerset
Cassidy Gehmlich
Colby O'Neill
Denise Lawson

Gabrielle Moore
Kyle Little
Leigh Selden
Sam Patterson
Tom Elliott

**Message from the President
Comox Valley Art Gallery
Presented to the Annual General Meeting, May 8, 2021**

Welcome to the Annual General Meeting of the Comox Valley Art Gallery! This is where we present our annual report and financial statements for 2020, elect our upcoming Board of Directors, and provide our membership with the opportunity to provide feedback and ask questions.

CVAG is a non-profit, charitable society that is governed by our volunteer Board of Directors. We are honoured to be located on the unceded territory of the K'ómoks First Nation.

We all know that 2020 was an extraordinary year that provided multiple challenges for the Gallery, for our community, and for society around the world. It was a year when art was needed more than ever, but artists and galleries faced more obstacles than ever.

I am proud that our gallery team and board of directors met the challenge. As you'll see in the following pages, the Gallery team found new and creative ways to support artists, exhibit artwork, and offer programming that was safe, enriching, and meaningful.

I want to express my deepest gratitude to:

- The staff team that guided us through such an extraordinary year;
- The artists who created and shared the artwork we needed at such a time;
- The community partners who collaborated so generously;
- The volunteers who gave so willingly of their time; and
- The funders at all levels of government that provided the support to enable the Gallery to survive and thrive.

I especially want to thank my fellow board members: vice president Meaghan Cursons, Treasurer Sharon Robarts, Secretary John Heintz, Cultural Protocol Advisory Wedlidi Speck, and directors Claire Aitken, Brian Charlton, Nicole Crouch, Keisha Everson, Judy LeBlanc and Miguel Strother.

They freely give of their time to provide the oversight, accountability and governance that ensures the Gallery is strong and healthy. It is a pleasure to work with this group, and I am pleased they are willing to continue serving on the Board. I look forward to the year ahead.

Submitted by Jasmin Badrin
President, Comox Valley Art Gallery

AGENDA
2021 CVAG ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING
APRIL 8, 2021

1. Call to order / review of zoom meeting procedures
2. Land acknowledgement
3. Approval of Agenda
4. Approval of minutes from the 2020 AGM
5. President's Report
6. Staff Reports
 - a. Executive Director
 - b. Overview of 2020 Programming
7. Financial Reports
 - a. Motion to approve the 2020 CVAG financial statements as circulated
 - b. Motion to approve Stuart Barry as the Accountant for the 2021 fiscal year
8. Election of Board Members
 - a. Motion to approve the report of the nomination committee
 - b. Election of a maximum of three additional board members from the floor
9. Adjournment

COMOX VALLEY ART GALLERY
2020 ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING
By Zoom
April 25, 2020 10:00AM

1. Call to order: 10:04AM
Review of zoom meeting procedures, including the fact that the meeting is being recorded
The President declared that a quorum was present.
2. Approval of agenda
Moved: Bruce. Second: David. **Passed**
3. Approval of minutes from the 2019 AGM
Moved: Judy. Second: David. **Passed**
4. President's Report (attached)
5. Staff Report (attached)
Glen invited
 - a. Denise talked about the programme 'ROOT – LOVE'
She highlighted the curators' focus on building relationships and enfolded members of the community in the Gallery's programming. This brought people from the community in several ways: artists who will be brought in 'incubators,' students from the college who will be brought in to develop new ways of exhibiting their work – to give them space and a voice; CVAG Next Door has enabled artists from afar to come or return to contribute their ideas and work.
These are examples of the fruits of this work on the Gallery website.
 - b. Angela shared her screen. She reiterated Denise's focus on convergence. Angela took us through the website history of Gallery programmes during the past year and a glimpse into the future.
She mentioned an unanticipated opportunity to present work of students in Vanier High School.
She noted that the programming had allowed several artists to participate in the first professional exhibition for which they received artists' fees.
Angela noted the number of encounters and conversations with members of the public that arose with artists' making their work in the Gather Place.
“This was a year where we decided to 'slide' our programming” with gallery visitors engaging with work, developing ideas, and having their interactions recorded and included in a growing video presentation with the project.
One of the things that developed during the year is its 'porousness.' The different ways in which the gallery interacts with people inside and outside the gallery space, including the Andy Everson installation in the plaza, the videos that run behind the reception desk, and the window space that is also a pathway to lead people to different areas of the gallery.
An important part of the exhibitions has been preparing their documentation with careful presentation of the artists' work and an e-publication to define the piece.
6. Financial Report (2019 Financial Statements attached)

- a. Jasmin introduced the 2019 financial statements.
She noted the significant drop in income from the Shop. She mentioned that the Gallery renovations and the move of the Shop were in part responsible for the
- b. **Motion** to approve Stuart Barry as the Accountant for the 2020 fiscal year.
Moved: Bruce. Second: David. **Passed**
- c. **Motion** to approve the 2019 CVAG financial statements as circulated.
Moved: Judy. Second: David. **Passed**

7. Election of Board Members

- a. The nominating committee nominates for 2-year terms on the Board
Sharon Card
Nicole Crouch
Meaghan Cursons
Keisha Everson
John Heintz
Judy LeBlanc

Jasmin invited the several members nominated to introduce themselves.

- b. The nominating committee nominates for 1-year terms on the Board
Claire Aitken
Wedlidi Speck
- c. The nominating committee proposes the following slate of officers
President – Jasmin Badrin
Vice-President – Meaghan Cursons
Secretary – John Heintz
Treasurer – Sharon Card

Motion to approve the report of the nominating committee.
Moved: Bruce. Second: David. **Passed**

- d. Election of a maximum of three additional board members from the floor.
Jasmin reported 2 nominations for a 1-year term, and invited the nominees to introduce themselves.

Brian Charlton
Renée Poisson

Motion to elect the persons nominated from the floor.
Moved: Judy. Second: David. **Passed**

8. Adjournment: 10:58AM

Executive Director Report
2021 CVAG Annual General Meeting

Art holds us together, even when we have to be apart

2020. A year of unprecedented challenges for the creation and presentation of art. A year of pandemic, pain and social isolation that tore into the fabric of our community. A year of extraordinary obstacles for artists, curators, and galleries. And yet, a year where the need for art was more powerfully felt than ever.

At the Comox Valley Art Gallery, our team was keenly aware of our responsibility to the community. We needed to find new ways to safely present art, to assist artists with the creation of new work, and to meaningfully engage the community while maintaining health protocols.

I am deeply inspired and grateful to work with the staff, volunteers, board members and community partners who rose to the challenge. The following report by our programming team illustrates how much CVAG accomplished under such daunting circumstances. Not only did the CVAG team respond quickly and effectively to the requirements of running a gallery in a pandemic world, they also provided a badly-needed artistic response to the situation faced by our community.

Some examples:

- In April we celebrated the installation of Andy Everson's "Crossroads", a new public artwork located on the CVAG plaza, in a way that respected both traditional protocols and public health protocols. In a time of pandemic, "Crossroads" took on particular significance as a prominent signal that art and culture continued, even when our doors were closed.
- We were able to continue running the Youth Media Project by working with funder Service Canada to redesign the program to ensure it could be safely delivered.
- Under the guidance of Elder Barb Whyte, we continued expansion of the traditional Indigenous tea garden on the CVAG plaza, contributing to our efforts to present cultural experiences outdoors.
- After being closed by the City for nearly four months, we re-opened the Gallery in July and extended the exhibition *TIME OF THINGS: The Continuum of Indigenous Customary Practice into Contemporary Art*. The staff team, including an amazing group of summer students, worked hard to establish and apply safety protocols that kept everyone safe.
- In the fall we adjusted the program *WALK WITH ME: uncovering the human dimensions of the overdose crisis* so that it was primarily presented as outdoor walking tours where participants listened to a soundscape through wireless headsets.
- In December we presented the convergent program *SPACE BETWEEN US*, which responded directly to the impact of the pandemic on our lives.
- In 2020, we laid the foundations for an ongoing pivot toward more digital and outdoor creation and presentation. Today we can see the impact with soundscapes and video that can be experienced outdoors, plus enhanced lighting to make artwork in our Window Gallery more visible.

Of course, the pandemic had numerous side effects that negatively impacted the gallery and our programs. We had to cancel most of our film series, and our traditional winter art market. Not only do these events normally serve a broad audience, they are also significant fundraisers for the gallery. We were closed for almost four months, and when we re-opened in July we had to reduce the hours of public access to ensure adherence to our COVID protocols. The pandemic led to a decline in visitors to our physical indoor space. We experienced significant declines in sales at SHOP:MADE, donations at the door, and of course revenues from our film series and winter art market.

We cannot express enough our gratitude to the City of Courtenay, the Canada Council for the Arts, the BC Arts Council, and the federal government for providing COVID supports and flexibility that made it possible for us to continue.

And of course, none of this would be possible without the dedicated team of staff (full time, part time, temporary and contractors) that hold us together. I want to particularly thank our creative leaders, co-curators Angela Somerset and Denise Lawson, who guided us through a most challenging year with grit, grace, and inspiration. Sharon Karsten provided invaluable support and assistance on CVAG's administration and fundraising, plus she heroically led the *WALK WITH ME* program. Cassidy Gehmlich supports us in *everything* and keeps our lives organized. We were delighted when she started a one-year full time internship in the fall. David Lawson started as a contractor with us in 2020, and today he is our guiding light on our ongoing technical pivot. Kat Radford leads our SHOP:MADE with a potent mix of kindness, thoroughness, and care. Gallery assistants Leigh Seldon, Sam Paterson, and our students Gabrielle Moore Pratt, Joelle Poitras, Kaili Hodacsek, Tara Betancourt, and Deanna Burnett (now Stratford since her marriage earlier this spring) were all instrumental in keeping the gallery strong through it all. As Team Leader of the Youth Media Project, Krista Tupper kept the ship afloat against all odds, supported by her able crew of Colby O'Neill, Kyle McFayden, Alison Sanders, Kim Nunuann, Renee Friedman, and Tracy Lynn. Our bookkeeper Kirsten Humpherys and accountant Stuart Barry combine professionalism with compassion as they help us navigate our complex finances. And the amazing Alun Macanulty provides extraordinary services as a photographer, a painting expert, and one of the finest ice cream makers in the land.

It is a blessing to work with a team like this. They are the very definition of resilience and adaptiveness. They are the glue that holds together an elaborate, interwoven network of artists, guest curators, community collaborators and dedicated volunteers. As a whole, they make everything seem possible. And in 2020 they rose to challenge of nurturing and presenting the art we need in times like these.

Submitted by Glen Sanford, Executive Director

Gratefully living and working on the unceded territory of the K'ómoks First Nation

CVAG AGM programming 2020

Convergent Program Overview - Co-curators Denise Lawson + Angela Somerset

OVERVIEW

2020 was a monumental year of change. The worldwide pandemic presented unprecedented challenges to the way in which gallery's comprehensive programming approach fulfilled CVAG's vision and mission of supporting contemporary art practice.

The CVAG team's commitment to being a socially relevant and robust centre for the arts is guided by principles and practices that foster relationships, creative inquiry, innovation, interdisciplinary collaboration, production, education, outreach, engagement, inter-community and cross-cultural dialogue through:

- Taking time to build trust in our relationships with artists, collaborative partners, and the wider community
- Interweaving thematic programming initiatives over extended spans of time to allow deep inquiry and innovative presentation to thrive.
- Providing spaces and resources that foster creative research, experimentation, and production for established and emerging artists, curators, and students.
- Supporting interdisciplinary collaborations, intergenerational art-based education activities and outreach, mentorships and community engagement.
- Facilitating socially relevant dialogue and the convergence of diverse communities within the Comox Valley, across Canada, and internationally through programming and presentation.
- Nurturing art-based decolonization through programming that deepens understanding of the historical and present day Indigenous – settler cultural narratives and relationships.
- Continuing to broaden CVAG's digital platforms for communication, presentation, publication + production initiatives.

CVAG's philosophy extends out through convergent programming that is centred on interdisciplinary collaboration, exhibition-making and curating that involves innovative methodologies for research, creation and presentation. This foundation has enabled the CVAG team to respond to the new reality precipitated by COVID-19 with resilience and creativity.

Taking time to build trust in our relationships with artists, collaborative partners, and the wider community.

Emphasis on meaningful relationship-building is key to the way in which the gallery supports artists and develops programming. Over time and distance connections with artists, guest curators and community partners are established as a way of conceptualizing, deepening and expanding programming.

A year prior to KC Adams arriving in the Comox Valley for her residency *Singing to the Water* and exhibition *Birchbark Technology*, a studio-visit in Winnipeg and long-distance conversations took place. Taking time to build a solid relationship with KC enabled creative risk-taking as she completed work on-site for exhibition, engaged the local community in cultural sharing / art making events.

In the past, CVAG's co-curators have had the opportunity to engage in curatorial gatherings, community engagement activities, and collaborate in programming with guest curator France Trepanier. This longstanding relationship underpinned the Comox Valley Art Gallery presentation of, *The Time of Things: The Continuum of Indigenous Customary Practice into Contemporary Art*. The traditional and contemporary art practices of five women artists – Daphne Boyer, Maureen Gruben, Susan Pavel, Skeena Reece, and Marika Echachis Swan was enfolded into this exhibition.

The *Space Between Us* publication program was instigated as a way to nurture artistic practice during the standstill in art presentation during the first months of the pandemic. The project brought artists and writers together for interdisciplinary collaboration. Curatorial studio visits and mentorship, over several months, supported artists in their individual and collaborative research and creation processes as they developed work that became part of the *Space Between Us* gallery presentations and e-publication.

The gallery supported the repeat visits of *Visible Labour* contributing artists, Deb Dumka, Claire Sanford and Connie Michele Moray through residencies that allowed the artists to connect with the community collaborators, conduct research, as they developed projects for presentation.

The gallery has developed and deepened relationships with community partners to assist with expanding its innovative output and knowledge sharing capabilities. Over the past few years the gallery has been collaborating with MakeltZone fabricator/technician Julian Rendell as it has expanded creative exploration and presentation using digital based technologies. In the time of pandemic expanding digital technologies has become imperative to presenting programming at the gallery. CVAG was able to call on Julian to work intensively with gallery staff and presenting artists to develop hardware technology and programming capabilities for digital technology-based projects and virtual presentation components of the exhibitions *Space Between Us* and *Visible Labour*.

Interweaving and extending thematic programming initiatives over longer spans of time to allow deeper inquiry and innovative presentation to thrive.

Begun in 2018, *Public Place: Sacred Space* is an ongoing multi-year program that continues to support reconciliation and recognition of the historic relationships the K'ómoks peoples have had with this Valley for thousands of years. The undertaking is a collaboration between the Comox Valley Art Gallery, participating artists, curators, Elders, the K'ómoks First Nation community and the City of Courtenay. Last year saw the further expansion of the creative elements of the project. The Comox Valley Art Gallery worked with artist Andy Everson and several community partners on the creation, development and installation of the public art piece *CROSSROADS*. This innovative work integrated contemporary materials and creation technologies with traditional Kwakwaka'wakw and Coast Salish imagery to represent the significance of this region as a place of territorial, environmental and cultural intersections.

The weaving of programming impulses is also seen in the *Onsite Offsite* program that has run over the past year. Over vast distances (Sweden, Austria, Mexico, Vancouver Island) and the spans many months, the participating artists and curators have been involved in research-based dialogue as a way of preparing for a future exhibition. This taking-of-time allows for responsiveness to exterior circumstances and unexpected new perspectives to erupt and be expressed. This has proved to be true in the work of Shelley Vanderbyl, whose onsite residency was interrupted by the set fire outside the gallery. This incident has provided the opportunity for new work to evolve and for new conversations that are informing the project as a whole.

Providing spaces and resources that foster creative research, experimentation, and production and presentation for established and emerging artists and curators.

Throughout the year CVAG has fostered creative research, experimentation and production by providing incubator and research residency spaces.

The Project Room Studio that opens onto Simm's Alley provided on-site space for the research and production residencies of Shelly Vanderbyl as well as Claire Sanford and Josephine Anderson. CVAG Next Door offered Deb Dumka, Claire Sanford, Josephine Anderson, KC Adams, France Trépanier and Connie Michele Moray to remain onsite and conduct comprehensive creative research and production. GATHER:PLACE has been the site for hands-on learning opportunities through incubator projects for the North Island College Fine Art students studying Sculpture and Integrated Practice.

With the advent of the pandemic, new public health protocols presented challenges to the way in which the gallery provided space for presentation, creative research, and production.

The gallery was closed for several months and then reopened with limited access permitted.

Innovative access points for presentation and community engagement have been developed by using virtual spaces, existing porous onsite areas, and adapting new spaces in the gallery.

CVAG's virtual spaces have provided a way to share and communicate programming dialogue and inquiry.

Online platforms enabled artists and collaborating curators come together to develop ideas and prepare for presentation of work. Online presentations expanded to include an interactive e-publication *Space Between Us* and live streaming events in which community could participate from wherever they are. A sixty-five inch screen was placed outward-facing in the front window of GATHER:PLACE and exterior speakers were installed for the presentation that could be viewed by visitors on the gallery plaza. Nightly video screening of the performance of *A Letter From the Ocean* offered an immersive outdoor experience to viewers. Currently, the screen is presenting components of Anne Steves' incubator project *a sense of abandon / but not a lack of discipline*.

Using sensor technologies placed on the gallery exterior enabled the Window Gallery to become an interactive space to present Deb Dumka's electronic and fibre-based work *Our Young Girls*. The gallery's lower-level windows and entranceway on 6th street were transformed into access portals for encountering video, sound and installation glimpses of the Offsite Onsite research and production residencies "*as if you were here*" (Nisrene Boukhari) and *Signal Fires* (Shelley Vanderbyl).

Supporting interdisciplinary collaborations, intergenerational art-based education activities and outreach, mentorships and community engagement.

At the beginning of the year the gallery continued its tradition of robust community outreach. Engagement, supporting interdisciplinary collaborations, intergenerational art-based education activities, and outreach, mentorships was at the heart of the 2019 – 2020 winter program *Root Love*. The Annual Winter Market presented the work of local artists and artisans. Emerging artist Gabriel Moore-Pratt and established interdisciplinary artist Nadine Bariteau led seasonally inspired art making opportunities. The gallery continued its tradition of collaboration with local schools by providing presentation space to Ecole Puntledge Elementary for its annual art-based social practice campaign *Everybody Deserves a Smile*. The *Living Wall*, a wall of plant cuttings installed in CVAG's Window Gallery and a plant sharing station, instigated ongoing community plant exchange events. Incubator projects in GATHER:PLACE and the Community Gallery provided North Island College Fine Art students studying Sculpture and Integrated Practices with hands-on mentorship opportunities to collate their work, present in a gallery space with the support of the Comox Valley Art Gallery.

In mid-January, the gallery's new program *In the Water* focused on to the concept of "a better relationship with land and water" through arts-based programming that included:

- artist KC Adams' research, production and installation residency *Singing to the Water* that led to the solo exhibition *Birchbark Technology*. KC actively engaged community in Indigenous ways of knowing and honouring the land through making, stories, song and ceremony.
- *Water (re)Source* incubator projects + community engagement projects that included: *A Repository for Water*, an onsite community ongoing community make station and collective studies project that reflected memory, perceptions, experiences, and relationships with water; and collaborative projects educators and students from Queneesh Elementary / *Drawing Water* and Beachcomber Academy / *Water Cycles*.

The gallery supports the creative development and hands-on skill building of youth and fine arts students. The Comox Valley Art Gallery's Youth Media Project uses digital media, creative facilitation and artistic collaboration as a framework for intensive hands-on training in video production.

The Summer Student Employment program provides hands-on arts related mentorship and workplace job experience to fine arts students from across Canada each summer.

SHOP:MADE acts as a HUB that provides an opportunity to greet and orient visitors to the gallery and to present the work of local makers. On a rotating basis, the shop features work that is thematically related to gallery programming as a way of raising public awareness of local artists. Currently, the work of the late George Sawchuk titled *After Forty Years of Labour* is on display in the HUB area of the shop.

**Facilitating socially relevant dialogue in its programming and presentation
by facilitating the convergence of diverse communities within the Comox Valley, across Canada and internationally.**

This year the gallery has held space to make visible challenging issues within our society. During the summer and running through the fall the gallery programming was focused on the arts-based community action project *Walk With Me*, instigated by CVAG's development and research officer, Sharon Karsten. This ongoing program seeks to uncover the human dimensions of the overdose crisis as it has unfolded locally in the Comox Valley. Within and through it, a group of artist-researchers, front-line workers and people with lived and living experience banded together in a spirit of solidarity, attempting to come to terms with the impact of the crisis on individuals and community groups through a practice of story-sharing. December to February, CVAG presented the work by emerging artist Mackai Sharp, *Kill Yourself*, a video and sound installation that brought the casualness of sexual orientation harassment to the foreground and reminded our community of the ever-present threat of intolerance.

Nurturing art-based decolonization that deepens understanding of the historical and present day Indigenous – settler cultural narratives and relationships.

The historical and present day Indigenous – Settler cultural narratives in the Comox Valley and across Canada remained vital to the programming at CVAG last year. The year began with the residency *Singing to the Water* and solo exhibition *Birchbark Technologies* of KC Adams, a Winnipeg-based artist of Cree and Ojibway descent. This program offered engagement with traditional knowledge and understanding of the land and water held by Adams' ancestors. This program was followed by *The Time of Things: The Continuum of Indigenous Customary Practice into Contemporary Art* an exhibition the work of five women artists – Daphne Boyer, Maureen Gruben, Susan Pavel, Skeena Reece, and Marika Echachis Swan and guest curated by France Trépanier, explored the concept of how time informs the production of Indigenous art today. Continued commitment to the ongoing multi-year *Public Place: Sacred Space* project included the installation of CROSSROADS, and the ongoing care of the *Traditional Full Circle Tea Gardens*, begun in 2018, a land-based practice that replaced the urban decorative landscaping on the gallery's plaza with traditional Indigenous food and medicine plants. Designed under the guidance of Traditional Knowledge Keeper, Elder Barb Whyte, the gardens invite ongoing contemplation and learning about this land from which we receive nourishment. Over the past year, Elder Barb Whyte held ceremony and guided traditional harvesting of the gardens with CVAG staff and student interns to create calming teas for gifting CVAG programming participants and community partners.

Continuing to broaden CVAG's digital platforms for communication, presentation, publication + production initiatives.

In part due to the current pandemic, we engaged in rapid shifts in our working processes hinged on individual contributions to production towards shared networks of ideas and knowledge. New forms of communication virtual forums potentiated the integration and expansion of working methods. The new digital platforms - Zoom and Bluejeans - have enabled the opportunity for reaching out to initiate simultaneous connections for establishing ongoing streams of creative inquiry and collaborations over time and distance. CVAG curators have undertaken virtual connections with curators and artists locally, across Canada and Internationally mount onsite and offsite residencies and collaborative production towards exhibition of all its programming since April of 2020.

Community in programming, when in-person engagement is not possible, has led to live-streamed make art collage workshops series led by artist Anne Steve Collage and past live streamed onetime events – the CROSSROADS unveiling ceremony was the first CVAG streamed event that connected the community to the ongoing programming at CVAG.

In previous years, the gallery has had a strong publication program both digital and paper – based. This year it expanded its digital publications to include e-publications that include interactive video and sound content as experienced in the *Space Between Us* publication.

Behind the scenes, the gallery has undertaken a commitment to a digital pivot program the support of community consultants, technology experts and artists, to enhance its ability to foster robust interdisciplinary research and development, share knowledge, support artistic practice through new knowledge sharing, and deliver robust and varied programming in the future.

During this past year CVAG's programming has remained robust in spite of the limitations of the pandemic. Over the past months the gallery has focused its programming efforts through mentorship, education, facilitating interdisciplinary collaborations, expanding residency opportunities, and utilizing digital technologies in new ways to engage art practice and community. It has been a challenging year, but also exciting as we creatively responded and pivoted our approaches to the work we do.

CONVERGENT PROGRAMMING:

ROOT LOVE 2019 – 2020

November 24, 2019 - January 10, 2020



CVAG presents *Root Love* – its convergent thematic Winter Program 2019. The community was invited to view the “live window” exhibition; participate in a variety of community projects; be immersed in the installation *Physica* by Clea Minaker; and to browse an extensive selection of well-made-things featured in the 45 Annual Winter Market. In December the gallery extended its hours to offer the community a variety of opportunities to visit the Winter Market, participate in special events, view the installations and interact with artist projects and presentations.

During the winter program, visiting artists/curators were housed in the CVAG Next Door artist residence. France Trépanier visited to initiate an exhibition and residency to take place in the spring and summer of 2020. Connie Michele Morey was in residence from November 27 to December 11, 2019 for *Project Homesick / Roof (Over My Head)* and conducted site-specific creative research in GATHER:PLACE, on the gallery plaza and throughout the community.

Ecole Puntledge School students’ art-based *Everybody Deserves a Smile* project was presented in the CVAG Community Gallery from November 25 – December 9 as part of the community campaign that receives donations of toques, hats, mitts, socks and neck-warmers for gifting. Each hand-painted bag was filled by the students at the end of the donation period, then distributed to those in need.

Students in the North Island College Fine Art and Design Program presented work in Gather:Place beginning December 12 along with pop-up presentations in CVAG’s Project Room Studio and Community Gallery.

CVAG hosted a Community Make Art Project Event + Solstice Celebration on Friday, December 20 from 12 – 9 pm. A plant-sharing project was part of the evening’s events.

EXHIBITION: ROOT LOVE

Interactive Window Installation

December 7, 2019 - January 10, 2020



CVAG’s Convergent Winter Program 2019-20 featured an interactive window installation project / community plant-sharing station. The public was asked to bring plant cuttings to share (avoiding invasive species) and take home something different.

CONVERGENT PROGRAMMING:

IN THE WATER

January 9 - February 29, 2020



EVENTS: WATERSHED

EXPLORATIONS / Connected By Water

Community Facilitator: Meaghan Cursons

February 22, 2020



Everywhere we turn there is water. The land and our lives flow with it.

In The Water enfolded convergent programming centred around artist KC Adams' production + community residency *Singing to the Water* and her solo exhibition *Birchbark Technology* alongside community collaborations and creative incubators - *Water (re)Source*; and an art opening community engagement event.

The exhibition *Birchbark Technology* presented the work of KC Adams, a Winnipeg-based artist of Cree and Ojibway descent. "This work explores the relationship I have with my ancestors' territorial land and water ...I am interested in my ancestors' knowledge and how they worked with land and water technologies to thrive."

During the week prior to the art opening, KC Adams undertook a production + community residency *Singing to the Water*. She prepared new work and embellished existing work embracing traditional and contemporary technologies. The artist's creative practice engaged the local community through the act of making and ceremony to whet the "blood memory" of our fundamental relationship to the land and to water.

Water (re)Source + *Root Love* were incubator + community engagement projects that include a collaborative repository and collective studies reflecting memory, perceptions, experiences, and relationships with the water that surrounds and permeates everything in our world. *Water (re)Source*: Queneesh Elementary / *Drawing Water*; Beachcomber Academy / *Water Cycles*; community collaborations / *A Repository for Water*; and community collaboration and exhibition *Root:Love*.

On Saturday, January 18 at 1 pm CVAG hosted an art opening + artist talk showcasing KC Adams' new work; arts-based research by students of Queneesh Elementary and Beachcomber Academy; *Water (re)Source* repository and community make art stations.

On Saturday, February 22, 2020 from 12:30 – pm, the Comox Valley Art Gallery held *Watershed Explorations*, a community gathering to explore the Comox Lake watershed through maps, history, ecology, climate change, human use and more. This family-friendly presentation explored the source of our drinking water in the Comox Valley through photos and stories, uncovering how each of us is truly connected by water. Afterwards we pulled out the art supplies and drew the watershed, waterways and places where we connect to water in the Comox Valley.

This community engagement event was a partnership between CVAG's *In The Water* convergent program and the CVRD's *Connected by Water* project that aimed to build connection, capacity and community in support of watershed protection and water conservation in the Comox Valley.

CREATIVE RESIDENCY:
SINGING TO THE WATER
 KC Adams
 January 9 – 18, 2020



Singing to the Water (Facebook album)

Singing to the Water was a community and production residency during which KC Adams prepared new work and embellished existing work embracing past and contemporary technologies. The artist's creative practice engaged the local community through traditional and ceremonial making to whet "blood memory" of our fundamental relationship to the land and to water. The work developed was presented in the exhibition *Birchbark Technology*, which opened January 18, 2020.

EXHIBITION:
BIRCHBARK TECHNOLOGY
 KC Adams
 January 18 – February 29, 2020



Download Publication PDF - 0.55 MB

CVAG was pleased to host KC Adams for a production + community residency from January 9 – 18. KC created new work on site at CVAG and on the land for her exhibition at CVAG, which opened on Saturday, January 18 at 1 pm. KC's responsive artwork bridges communities through deep sharing of her art and cultural practices.

Part 1: Contemporary Gallery, 2017– ongoing new works on paper, installation, ceremony

"I am currently creating new work called *Birchbark Technology* – digital prints of circuit boards and birchbark, embellished with painting and beading, that explores the relationship I have with my ancestors' territorial land and water. I am of Cree and Ojibway descent and I have been taught that we all relate to our environment and that we can't be separated from it. We must live in balance with the land and waters to protect all our relations, which includes all current and future living entities. I am interested in my ancestors' knowledge and how they worked with land and water technologies to thrive. Their knowledge carries a wealth of wisdom and experience including the importance of balance, and their ability to adapt to new technologies. *Birchbark Technology* is about embracing past and current technologies to help guide us towards a better relationship with land and water."

Part 2: George Sawchuk Gallery, 2017– ongoing video program

"In the summer of 2015, I traveled to Grand Rapids and I was moved by the people who are walking the path of their ancestors. They are Ki-tah-pah-tumak aski ethinewak (Keeper of the Land). They are using all their knowledge and power to protect the land and waters in their community. The Ki-tah-pah-tumak aski ethinewak have a strong spiritual connection to Mother Earth. They understand that it is their responsibility to practice humility, reverence and reciprocity towards the land. I will be working on a video about how the land, water and the Indigenous people are affected by the building of a Hydro Dam in Grand Rapids Manitoba. The content is derived from images, video, interviews and poetry by former Grand Rapid resident Duncan Mercredi."- KC Adams

EXHIBITION: WATER (re)SOURCE
February 29 - September 11, 2020



Water(re)Source (Facebook album)

Water Cycles (video slideshow)

Drawing Water (video slideshow)

Although the gallery doors were closed, this incubator project continued. Everywhere we turn there is water. The land and our lives flow with it. *WATER (re)SOURCE* is a collaborative repository that holds studies that reflect memory, perceptions, experiences, concerns and relationships with the water.

A REPOSITORY For WATER / a collective consideration of water through the use of multiple formats.

- multi-media work of local and more distant artists: Liz Carter, bobbi denton, Tom Elliott + Angela Somerset, Kim Holmes, Spencer Sheehan-Kalina, Bran Mackie, Gabrielle Moore, Renee Poisson, Sara Vipond, Claire Sanford, Project Watershed (Emily Carr student collaboration).
- water samples, stories, water-colour paintings and drawings created by numerous individuals and community collaborators

Collected water samples from various sites include one from Russia, sent to CVAG by Claire Sanford. Claire is originally from Texada Island and was residing in Siberia where she filled a vodka bottle with water from Lake Baikal, the largest freshwater lake by volume in the world. It's considered the world's oldest and deepest lake, reaching a maximum depth of 1,642m.

Water Cycles presented the arts-based environmental research by Beachcomber Academy students and educators. Their research considers the implications of the cycles of tides and geological + aquarian eras of their school site.

Little Oysters Preschool – shoreline + salmon study

Dolphin Class – flora + fauna at sea level

Older Students – coastal flats to sub-alpine watershed.

Drawing Water presented the arts-based explorations by Queneesh Elementary students + muralist Jason Craft. Students (K- Grade 6), educators, and artist Jason Craft, worked together to create the concept for the new mural in the welcome foyer of Queneesh Elementary. The imagery reflects the watery world that the Comox Valley is steeped in.

"The Mural at Queneesh Elementary was a very special project for me, as well as the school community. All students at the school were asked to do a drawing for the mural, based on the school's unique identity and local environment. Some of which were then used to create the final design. I painted the mural over the winter break, which made it exciting for the students to come back to. I have been painting murals professionally for 15 years and generally use a similar process to involve students. It thrills me to see young people get excited about art. I believe involving young people in art cultivates patience, perseverance and problem solving. Doing art is also very beneficial for their self-worth and gives them a sense of accomplishment and ownership. The students at Queneesh were exceptionally creative and enthusiastic, which culminated in a very successful piece of art."

– Jason Craft

EXHIBITION: THE TIME OF THINGS

Daphne Boyer, Maureen Gruben, Susan Pavel, Skeena Reece, Marika Echachis Swan, curated by France Trépanier
February 29 - September 11, 2020



Daphne Boyer *Rose X*, 2019 *Full Flower*, 2019



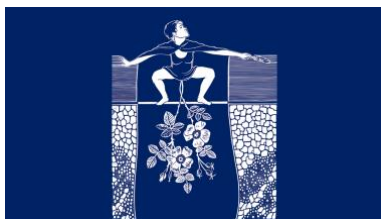
Maureen Gruben *Stitching My Landscape*, 2017



Susan Pavel (Installation view CVAG South Gallery 1+)
Speaker Sash, 2019 *Our Healing*, 2017 *Of the Earth*, 2019



Skeena Reece *Hold This*, 2019



Marika Echachis Swan *As Above, So Below*, 2014

PUBLICATION: THE TIME OF THINGS:
THE CONTINUUM OF INDIGENOUS
CUSTOMARY PRACTICE INTO
CONTEMPORARY ART
March 1, 2020



In 2018 we visited *The Time of Things: The Continuum of Indigenous Customary Practice into Contemporary Art* during its original presentation at the University of Victoria Legacy Art Galleries. This exhibition, curated by France Trépanier, presented the work of five women artists – Daphne Boyer, Maureen Gruben, Susan Pavel, Skeena Reece, and Marika Echachis Swan.

“The Time of Things proposes to challenge the binary of traditional and contemporary art. It considers the continuum of Indigenous customary practices into contemporary Indigenous art through the work of five women artists – Daphne Boyer, Maureen Gruben, Susan Pavel, Skeena Reece, and Marika Echachis Swan. Through their various Indigenous perspectives, this exhibition explores how the concept of time informs the production of Indigenous art today. It looks at how time influences connections to materials and process and it delves into the influence of intergenerational memory and knowledge passed through time on art-making.”

- France Trépanier (curator)

Their work enfold traditional and contemporary art practices that bears witness to ancestral knowledge, the enduring value of family, Indigenous relationships to the land and the impact of colonialism on Indigenous people and their ways of life.

The work in the exhibition is tender, challenging, and of enduring importance. Seeing the artists’ depth of investigation and commitment to the time it takes to bring their work to full realization was deeply moving. France Trépanier’s curatorial values and commitment to hold up and choreograph space for the work of Indigenous women artists in a thoughtful and respectful way resonated with us and ignited our imagination.

In the past we have had the opportunity to collaborate with France on programming and to activate CVAG spaces as a place that inspires change and expansion of cultural understanding and relationships. We began to wonder about the possibility of situating *The Time of Things: The Continuum of Indigenous Customary Practice into Contemporary Art* in the Comox Valley to validate and celebrate these women and their work.

It is our desire to instigate a context at CVAG in which the important ideas and perspectives of this exhibition are encountered. We are grateful to guest curator France Trépanier and to Mary Jo Hughes of Legacy Art Galleries for their past work and for collaborating with us to present this iteration of *The Time of Things: The Continuum of Indigenous Customary Practice into Contemporary Art*.

We are delighted and honoured to be part of this significant project.

- Angela Somerset + Denise Lawson

Guest Curator: France Trépanier

Artists: Daphne Boyer, Maureen Gruben, Susan Pavel, Skeena Reece, Marika Echachis Swan

YOUTH MEDIA PROJECT



The Comox Valley Art Gallery's Youth Media Project uses digital media, creative facilitation and artistic collaboration as a framework for youth to create media for community action. Youth between the ages of 16-30 get paid a full-time minimum wage to learn concrete media and employability skills over a 13-week program. Participants create one independent film, and one film in collaboration with a small business or community organization that is doing sustainable work in the Valley. Those who come through the program end up creating long-lasting connections not just with each other, but with other community members and organizations in the Comox Valley.

YOUTH MEDIA TRAINING:

The Youth Media Project provides intensive hands-on training in video production, and more, to young people between 16 and 30 years of age. We recruit nine participants per 13-week session. They are paid to attend workshops, make videos, and take job placements where they work with an employer. To be eligible for the program, participants must be interested in art and video, not attending school full time or receiving Employment Insurance, be eligible to work in Canada and be experiencing frustration trying to find employment.

UPCOMING PROGRAMS (2021):

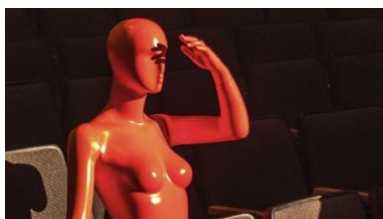
Deadline to apply for the next YMP Fall program is Oct 5, 2021. The program will run for 13 weeks from Oct 18, 2021 to Jan 28, 2022 with 2 weeks off over the December holidays. There will be an online information session on Sept 27, 2021. Please contact Krista.cvagymp@gmail.com for an invite.

EVENT: *APERTURE*

(CANCELLED BY COVID)

March 27, 2020 7:00 pm - 9:00 pm

Cancelled by public health order



In normal years, at the end of each program the Youth Media Project presents a large public screening of the films created by the participants. In 2020 public health orders prevented these events from happening. However, thanks to support from the Sid Williams Theatre, a virtual screening took place on September 19, 2020.

CONVERGENT PROGRAMMING:
PUBLIC PLACE : SACRED SPACE



This multi-year program integrates themes of welcoming, gathering and healing through the incorporation of Indigenous place-naming, installations, public art, a full circle tea garden, exhibitions, cross-cultural sharing, performance, video screenings, workshops, gatherings and residencies. The undertaking was a collaboration between the Comox Valley Art Gallery, participating artists, curators, Elders, the K'ómoks First Nation community and the City of Courtenay.

Together, the components in this program are seen as a step toward reconciliation and recognition of the historic relationships the K'ómoks peoples have had with this Valley for thousands of years.

'The path to reconciliation can be a rough trail for some when we first become aware of the history of residential Schools in Canada. These exhibits touch our hearts and teach our minds to educate future generations in knowing this history and will help them to ensure this history is never repeated.' – Anonymous

EXHIBITION: CROSSROADS
Andy Everson
April 5, 2020 – ongoing



Installing *CROSSROADS*: Before and After
(Facebook album)

Celebrating the installation of *CROSSROADS*
(Facebook album)

Situated on the Comox Valley Art Gallery plaza, this sculptural public art installation by artist Andy Everson is part of the overarching program *PUBLIC PLACE : SACRED SPACE*. The work brings awareness to the traditional Bighouse architecture and the formline/fineline of the Kwakwaka'wakw and Coast Salish imagery and represents the historical and current significance of the region as a place of territorial, environmental and cultural intersections.

"The Comox Valley has long been a crossroads—an intersection for environmental zones and for cultural differences. For thousands of years before Europeans arrived, the Pentlatch, who spoke a Salishan language, occupied the southern majority of the Valley. The northern portion, however, was held by the K'ómoks—speakers of another, separate, Salishan language. In the mid-1800s, the K'ómoks moved south and joined with the Pentlatch as the Ligwilda'xw encroached upon their territory.

This piece is structured on the cedar wall planks of a traditional K'ómoks and Pentlatch house. As one faces south, towards the CVAG plaza and beyond to the far-reaching lands of the Salish, the wings of a thunderbird are visible. This is a major crest of the Pentlatch and it is rendered in a distinctly Salishan style. As one gazes north, an abstract tail fin of a whale is evident. This at once symbolizes the Whale House of the united K'ómoks tribes, while simultaneously representing the art forms of the Kwakwaka'wakw peoples. Ultimately the thunderbird and whale in Crossroads symbolize the intersection of the sky and the sea worlds to point us to the world in which we reside: the land." – Andy Everson

**EVENT: TRADITIONAL FULL CIRCLE
INDIGENOUS TEA GARDEN**
Planting Day April 9, 2020 (ongoing)



As a land-based practice, the evolving full-circle tea garden replaces the urban decorative landscaping on the gallery's plaza with traditional Indigenous food and medicine plants, designed under the guidance of Traditional Knowledge Keeper, Elder Barb Whyte. The planting of the gardens began in the fall of 2018 in beds that surround the south and west corner of the plaza and Traditional Welcome Poles. Traditional indigenous plants the gardens hold oregon grape, wild strawberry, nootka rose, yarrow, huckleberry, and lemon balm. The plantings are in beds that surround the north and east corners of the plaza and the base of the public art installation *CROSSROADS*. The gardens invite contemplation and rooting to the land in which we live and receive nourishment.

'I give thanks to the Creator, Creator of our planets and our stars. I honour Mother Earth for all that she gives us, the oceans, rivers, mountains, and plains. I give thanks to the trees and the plants for supporting the physical, emotional, and spiritual wellbeing of our elders, mothers and fathers, and our children that walk upon her with respect for ourselves and respect for Mother Earth and all of my relations.' – Barb Whyte

INDEPENDENT STUDIO PRACTICE:

ROCK PEOPLE

Josephine Anderson & Claire Sanford

June 7 - 24, 2020



Time is huge, and it just keeps slipping into the future. An island rises from the ocean, and its inhabitants go about their life's work – blasting, hauling, and shipping the rock on which they live. Framed as an immersive portrait of a tiny oceanic enclave called Texada Island, *Rock People* explores the elasticity of time, and the nature of how we spend ours.

During this independent studio practice, Josephine Anderson & Claire Sanford developed an interactive virtual reality documentary using stereoscopic 360-degree video, ambisonic sound design, and animation. The artists were in residency at CVAG Next Door and used the Project Room Studio as a working space.

Rock People is a short virtual reality experience that draws on documentary storytelling techniques to explore how time is spent in our resource extraction society. Set in active mines, abandoned quarries and industrial sites that have been reclaimed by nature, *Rock People* explores life in a community dedicated to blasting, hauling and shipping limestone – the principal ingredient in cement and one of the main building blocks of modern society.

The VR film blazes through geologic time in an animated, immersive, dreamlike rush of landmasses rising from the sea, and emerges onto present day Texada Island, the only industrial island in a region known for its untouched natural wonders. From a miner surveying a deserted quarry, to a carver reflecting on the permanence of stone, to the birth of a baby in this small town, *Rock People* meditates on the nature of time and how we spend it. The project contrasts minutes, days and lifetimes against the geologic timescale in which the planet – and the limestone of Texada Island – was created.

Rock People is an interactive virtual reality documentary using stereoscopic 360-degree video, ambisonic sound design, and animation. The voices of Texada Islanders are woven into a lyrical audio narrative, as they reflect on limestone, work, and how they spend their time. The project's 360-degree video brings the VR user into a world where limestone is everywhere: from a huge mine dominating the shoreline, to a defunct quarry turned swimming hole, to an active pit where a dynamite blast erupts over a tranquil morning. Using a controller, the user can trigger geologically-inspired animations that emerge overtop of live-action imagery.

Rock People is an immersive, sensorial experience presented through a VR headset with a controller, and exhibited in galleries and festival spaces.

CONVERGENT PROGRAMMING:
WALK WITH ME
September 30 - November 21, 2020



Stories shared throughout this project are available to listen at www.walkwithme.ca/stories.

To learn more about the project, visit www.walkwithme.ca

In the Fall of 2020, CVAG opened space for *WALK WITH ME / uncovering the human dimensions of the overdose crisis*, a project dedicated to those who have given bravely their life stories...and to all who dare to imagine a better future.

This arts-based community action project sought to uncover the human dimensions of the overdose crisis as it has unfolded locally in the Comox Valley. Within and through it, a group of artist-researchers, front-line workers and people with lived and living experience banded together in a spirit of solidarity, attempting to come to terms with the impact of the crisis on individuals and community groups through a practice of story-sharing. Through these stories, we aimed to cultivate awareness leading to change.

The artwork and audio created through this project was accessible September 30 – November 21, 2020 (with the exception of a closure on November 11th) 10 am – 4:30 pm following COVID protocols. On these days, activities at the Gallery included Community Conversations, Food-Sharing, Artist Talks, Speakers, Healing Circles, a Film Screening, Panel Discussions, Policy Discussions, Story Walks and more. Those who had taken the 'Story Walks', or were about to take them, were encouraged to attend these supplementary events, as they provided a way to think and talk about the stories and insights being shared.

11am – 12 pm / Bridge Walk
12pm – 1 pm / food, panels, and discussions
1pm – 2 pm / Alley Walk

Saturday, October 3 12-1 pm, Comox Valley Art Gallery Plaza
Gabrielle Moore-Pratt: Printing Social Change

Artist Gabrielle Moore-Pratt led participants in pulling screen prints of the *Walk With Me* stamp – an image symbolizing collective listening and action around the overdose crisis. The public was encouraged to bring a t-shirt or other clothing item to print at a station set up outside on the CVAG Plaza. Here we drew upon the history of screenprinting as a medium for awareness-raising and community action, to call attention to the need to walk alongside those at the centre of the crisis. The event included food and community conversation.

Wednesday, October 7 12-1 pm, Comox Valley Art Gallery Plaza
Galen Rigter: Naloxone Saves Lives

AVI Health and Community Services outreach worker Galen Rigter led a community training session on Naloxone - an injectable drug that can reverse opioid overdoses of such drugs as fentanyl, morphine and heroin and oxycondone. Learn how to spot an overdose, and how to quickly respond.

Saturday, October 10 12-1 pm, Comox Valley Art Gallery Plaza
Patrick Dionne: Lived Experience and Creative Practice

A group of lived experience participants, along with Montreal-based artist Patrick Dionne, presented and spoke about the piece they had developed for the CVAG Window Gallery.

Saturday, October 17 7 - 8:30 pm (evening event), Comox Valley Art Gallery Plaza
Youth Media Project: Films that Speak

Youth Media Project participants expressed their truth about the overdose crisis – bringing to light the ways in which it is uniquely impacting young people. The event consisted of a screening and panel discussion with the filmmakers.

Saturday, November 21 12-1 pm, Comox Valley Art Gallery
Guy Felicella: Harm Reduction in the Age of COVID

Guy Felicella spoke of his lived experience and advocacy for change. Felicella grew up in a middle-class home in Richmond but fell into addiction at a young age. He spent 30 years in the repeated cycle of gangs, addiction, treatment and jail. He spent nearly 20 years residing in the two-block radius in the Downtown Eastside and using many resources, including harm reduction, to keep himself alive. Today Guy has escaped the grips of the turmoil that kept him suffering and resides with his wife and two young children with multiple years of recovery and sobriety under his belt. Guy's talk drew attention to the impacts of COVID-19 on the overdose crisis, to challenge our ongoing culture of stigma.

EVENT: EVERYBODY DESERVES A SMILE
December 1 - 8, 2020



Each December the EDAS program engages students and educators in an arts-based outreach program. In 2020, students created “envelopes of love” that were later filled with small items and gift cards and delivered to those in need during Christmas.

To raise community awareness the artwork of students from local schools were displayed at various locations throughout the Comox Valley.

Dec 1 – 8 – “Art Envelopes of Love” created by the grade 7 French Immersion students at Ecole Puntledge School were on display at the Comox Valley Art Gallery.

EXHIBITION: KILL YOURSELF
Mackai Sharp
December 17, 2020 - February 20, 2021



Kill Yourself brings the casualness of harassment to the foreground, reminding our community of the ever-present threat of intolerance. Highlighting the complicity, that we as a community tend to hold when bigotry plays out in public spaces. This piece allows for time to reflect on the present situation within the Comox Valley and searches for a way to evolve our collective ideologies to encompass inclusivity.

‘Visual arts quickly made its way to the forefront of my life as a way of expressing myself and showcasing my perspective. As an artist I strive to capture authenticity and vulnerability in my work. Slowly over time I discovered the value that is found within connecting images to a greater narrative. What I hope to manifest for the future, is the opportunity to highlight the people, places and stories that have gone unrepresented, without an audience. These hopes and manifestations have taken over the importance of my life and have become the reason I wake up in the morning; to share stories.’

– Mackai Sharp

CONVERGENT PROGRAMMING:**OFFSITE_ONSITE**

December 3, 2020 - September 4, 2021



OFFSITE_ONSITE is a multi-faceted year-long convergent program. Residencies and site installations will be followed by a Digital Publication and Exhibition opening in June, 2021.

As a response to the current circumstances that prevent us from fully engaging with one another, the gallery windows, media screens, and Internet platforms offer vicarious glimpses through which we are able to enter the simulacra of the places and experiences that cannot be lived in the realm of real time and space. Looking in and looking out, the traces of creative research, dialogue and curiosity are made visible through virtual and onsite residency projects.

A relational practice over the span of time and the space between us.

CREATIVE RESIDENCY:**OFFSITE_ONSITE / RESEARCH + PRODUCTION**

Shelley Vanderbyl

December 3, 2020 - May 29, 2021



Shelley Vanderbyl residency (Facebook album)

Shelley Vanderbyl has been onsite at the Comox Valley Art Galley for a production residency in the Project Room Studio, December 2020 - March 2021. During this time, the artist further explored her inquiry of signal fires as way-finding / making visible / a calling out into the distance. Simultaneously, Shelley continued to expand her work of painting tiny landscapes inside small medicine tins that fit into a pocket, and when opened, become portals for being transported to another world. Exterior influences have further informed Shelley's research and development of fresco works. The pandemic and an illicit fire have imposed an unexpected staccato in the flow of practice, demanding new responses and articulations of the process of making. Currently, Shelley continues her research + production residency offsite.

CREATIVE RESIDENCY:**OFFSITE_ONSITE / RESEARCH + PRODUCTION**

Nisrine Boukhari + Abir Boukhari

December 3, 2020 - May 29, 2021



Over the span of time and the space between us, we engage in a relational practice that brings together the work of artists and curators from the Comox Valley, Sweden and Austria.

ONGOING INSTALLATION PROJECTS – made visible day and night @ The Comox Valley Art Gallery corner of 6th Street + Duncan Ave. / lower level window spaces

CREATIVE RESIDENCY:**OFFSITE_ONSITE Incubator Project A
SENSE OF ABANDON / BUT NOT A
LACK OF DISCIPLINE**

Anne Steves

December 3, 2020 - May 29, 2021



a sense of abandon / but not a lack of discipline instigates connections between artists working in different places and continues Anne's "exploration of distance and belonging through making and craft."

During the upcoming months Anne will continue the labour of expanding this social engagement project onsite at CVAG. Situated in GATHER:PLACE at the gallery, this incubator project engages community locally and across Canada.

Over the coming months her work will be made visible day and night on a large screen that is visible from the gallery's outdoor plaza. Virtual makes, slow mail exchanges with artists locally and in faraway places will be documented and made visible virtually.

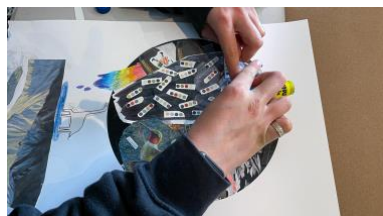
Anne's ongoing project is written about in *Until* magazine, created by the Victoria Arts Council.

EVENT: OFFSITE_ONSITE /
Ongoing Installation Projects
February 25 - May 29, 2021



Virtual glimpses of *OFFSITE_ONSITE* residencies:
Shelley Vanderbyl Nisrene Boukhari

EVENTS: OFFSITE_ONSITE Virtual
Make Art Saturdays
Anne Steves
May 1 - May 29, 2021



Click [here](#) to view instructional video at any time.
Collage templates to print (click on links below):

[makespace](#) [makespace 2](#) [officespace](#)
[galleryspace](#) [washspace](#) [fridgespace](#)
[ladderspace](#)

The Zoom link ([here](#)) will be active Saturday,
May 1, 8, 15, 22, 29 from 11 am – 4 pm

Over the span of time and the space between us, curators and artists from the Comox Valley, Sweden and Austria have undertaken a relational practice that is mounting a collaborative exhibition to be presented June 2021 – September 2021.

Abir, Shelley and Nisrine have known one another for a number of years. Having met in Sweden and worked together in Winnipeg, Manitoba, they have maintained connection and collaboration over times and distances apart. The ongoing dialogue between them informs their practices.

Looking in and looking out – the traces of their creative research, dialogue and curiosity are made visible through vicarious glimpses of ongoing offsite and onsite residency projects.

Installation Glimpses of *OFFSITE_ONSITE* research + production residency can be seen and heard day and night through the lower side windows of CVAG on 6th Street.

Anne Steves, a Welsh/Canadian interdisciplinary artist, is currently in residence in CVAG's GATHER:PLACE for an incubator project and research and production residency that is part of the gallery's *OFFSITE_ONSITE* program. She is developing and expanding her collage project *a sense of abandon/but not a lack of discipline*, working with themes of place, distance and connection. Anne's residency will inform the work that will be part of the upcoming *OFFSITE_ONSITE* exhibition at CVAG June – September 2021.

The public is invited to make their own collages alongside Anne every Saturday in May over Zoom.

How to participate:

WATCH Anne's instructional video (6 minutes)

GET collage templates (no charge)

PICK-UP collage templates (no cost) at CVAG during gallery hours Thursday – Saturday 10am – 5pm

CREATE YOUR OWN template inspired by Anne's questions: *"What emotional landscapes, imagined collaborations or impossible creatures might live in the secret spaces that distance creates? What sort of thing can you imagine has been happening or lurking in the gallery all this time?"*

PRINT collage templates (8 1/2 x 11 inch/portrait) at home from the selection on the left. Click on the links to print a copy.

GATHER supplies
magazines/flyers/newspapers
fibre/fabric scraps
scissors
glue
pencils/markers/pens
paper (white + colours)

CONNECT by Zoom to the live-streaming make art days with Anne from 11 am – 4 pm
every Saturday in May, 2021

CONVERGENT PROGRAMMING:

SPACE BETWEEN US

December 3, 2020 - February 27, 2021



Foroozan Taleifard *Our New Normal*

ONLINE + IN-GALLERY INCUBATORS / ARTIST RESIDENCY / MAKE ART / COLLABORATIVE PUBLICATIONS / ART TALKS

In this time the resilience and generosity of creatives, the gallery, and community as a whole, is reflected through what transpires in the space between us. Sometimes this is a visible, palpable, and tangible exchange. However, these days it is often facilitated through and mediated by technology platforms. Labour associated with research, development, production and presentation – all that it takes to make things happen, often takes place behind the scenes, over distance, and through virtual exchange. In making visible and reaching out to one another we nurture a collective experience – a weave of strength and interconnectivity. The incubators that are part of SPACE BETWEEN US are an important part of a larger exchange – that has made space for individual and collaborative creative exploration and development and a coming together as a whole within the larger context of a convergent program of artists, writers, makers, curators, participants and viewers.

CVAG Book Project Production Incubator towards E-pub + Print-publication – the work of writers and visual artists who have collaborated over time and distance.

NIC Student Production Incubator – the art explorations of the FIN 230 Sculpture and Integrated Art Practice students at North Island College.

EXHIBITION: FIN 230 Sculpture + Integrated Art Practice Student Incubator

bobbi Denton / Brittany King / Foroozan Taleifard /
Gabrielle Moore-Pratt / Kaili Hodacsek / Kimberly
Holmes / Renée Poisson

December 3, 2020 - February 27, 2021



Gabrielle Moore – Pratt *NOODZ*

This production incubator shares the work of students in the FIN 230 Sculpture and Integrated Art Practice I / Fine Art and Design program at North Island College. Students have been navigating the conditions of new learning platforms during of the current COVID-19 pandemic. Through online courses, limited access to the onsite art studios and shops at the college, and carefully orchestrated offsite hands-on learning opportunities, the students produced individual projects and a collaborative group project - a Fluxus Emergency Kit. With the support of Julian Rendell of the MakeltZone, students had the opportunity to explore integrated sculpture technologies. CVAG supported the students' experiential curriculum learning opportunities through mentorship, access to gallery technology support, and installation + presentation experience in Gather:Place and Window Gallery.

The work presented as part of this past semester's course bears witness to what is possible in the space between us.



Kaili Hodacsek *"but... you don't look sick"*



Kimberly Holmes *My house is not a home*



Renée Poisson *Drift*

**EXHIBITION: SPACE BETWEEN US /
PUBLICATION INCUBATOR**

Maleea Acker / Renée Poisson / Sophie Wood
H. Pearl Gray / Bran Mackie
Hannah Brown / Cassidy Gehmlich
Meesh QX / Kara Stanton
Spencer Sheehan Kalina

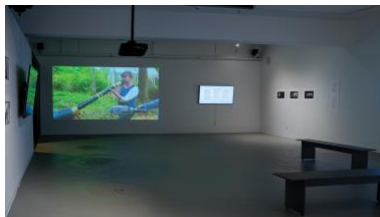
December 3, 2020 - February 27, 2021

PUBLICATION: SPACE BETWEEN US

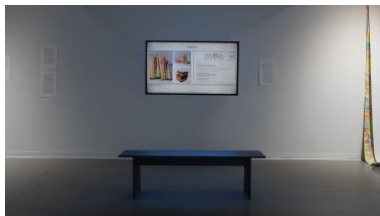
February 27, 2021 - January 1, 2022



The *Space Between Us* interactive digital publication can be [viewed here](#).



Maleea Acker / Renée Poisson / Sophie Wood



H. Pearl Gray / Bran Mackie



Hannah Brown / Cassidy Gehmlich



Meesh QX / Kara Stanton



Spencer Sheehan Kalina

In the early spring of 2020, the *Space Between Us* Publication project was instigated by CVAG's curators as a way of supporting creative inquiry, production and collaboration across creative practices. Since that time artists and writers began working together, through conceptual ideation + making, to develop and prepare digital-based productions.

The *Space Between Us* Publication Incubator presented production components of the collaborative work of visual / media artists / writers. The incubator presented material / digital / sound installations, online presentations, and virtual events point to the creative foundations and thematic content of the final works.

Side by side, each project offered new intersections and juxtapositions. By threading them together a stronger voice was given to the individual works. During the onsite incubator presented December 3, 2020 - Feb 27, 2021 at CVAG, the material / digital / sound installations, online presentations, that pointed to the creative foundations and thematic content of the work evolving for publication project. When the projects came together in the space of the gallery, a dialogue erupted between them and expanded to the other presentations that were part of the overarching *Space Between Us* convergent program. It was this unanticipated dynamic that inspired the five books that were a part of the publication project to be assembled together as an anthology.

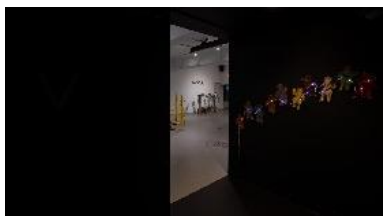
Books are loved as material things, picked up laid on a lap, fingers to paper, pages turned, images and words fill the gaze and travel into the heart and mind. In these times, we were asking for the idea and the materiality of books to be translated and to become a new thing which could - perhaps - show us a way forward ...to shape-shift and not lose our essential impulse or voice. Perhaps in that space between being present together and the distances that separate ...collaboration, making, laying out the "telling", revealing the message, - ...intersections could happen. Perhaps it could be possible that these "new" books could do what books do: delight, capture the imagination, work the magic of transforming minds and hearts by inspiring new ideas, and challenge perceptions to precipitate change...

The final interactive digital publication cannot be held in our hands, but it can be held ... in our gaze ...we can look and pause, read, watch, and listen... as the powerful, the beautiful, the difficult, and the poetic are threaded into our thoughts, our hearts, our being.

CONVERGENT PROGRAMMING:

VISIBLE LABOUR

March 25 - May 29 2021



VISIBLE LABOUR is a convergent program that reveals the ever-present constancy of the work that is going on all around us – through exhibition, outreach projects, offsite and onsite creative residencies and community engagement activities.

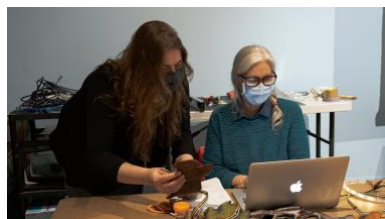
CREATIVE RESIDENCY:

VISIBLE LABOUR / Creative

Development + Production

Deborah Dumka + Claire Sanford

January 15 - May 29, 2021

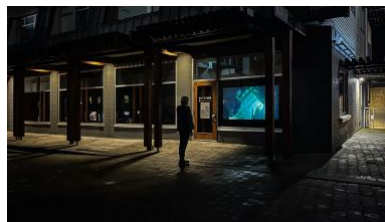


Creative development + production residencies at CVAG provide an opportunity for artists to take their concepts through a process of creative development and production to a point of readiness for exhibition. Connecting artists with experts in the community from whom they can resource technical support and skills acquisition, providing working spaces, access to tools, and housing next door to the gallery are all ways in which the gallery bolsters these residencies.

Deborah Dumka, who is both an artist and an electrical engineer, is working on a project that addresses social and paternalistic resistance to women entering male dominated fields. Related to Deb's fibre and electronic based works, are video and sound installations being developed by filmmaker Claire Sanford. Claire presents a unique perspective as Deborah's daughter, as she bears witness to her mother's experiences as a woman practicing in the world of art and engineering.

Julian Rendell, engineer and programmer, founder of The MakeltZone in Courtenay, has supported Deb and Claire with their research and development, through skill and resource sharing, as they build the digital and electronic components of their work. Facilitating community collaborations / creative exploration and new skills acquisition are part of the work that the gallery is doing to pivot accessibility to artists' presentations and to support artists as they take risks and expand their art making processes.

EXHIBITION: A LETTER FROM THE OCEAN / An Ode to Loss and Love
March 4 – 23, 2021



Playwright - Caridad Svich
Cast - Clea Minaker & Warona Setshwaelo
Creative Team - Andrew Andreoli (Director of Photography), Cristina Cugliandro (Director), Danna-Rae Evasiuk (Lighting Designer), Clea Minaker (Art Director), Evan Stepanian (Sound Designer), Diana Uribe (Environment Consultant)

"What words does the ocean speak? How can people listen?"

While keeping a respectful COVID distance from others, visitors were invited to experience this poetic and beautiful 11-minute video screened nightly on the CVAG Plaza between 6-9 pm.

SHOP:MADE



The Comox Valley Art Gallery supports the creative practice through presentation and sale of the work made by local artists and makers in its curated shop.

SHOP:MADE offers a selection of work for sale that includes: pottery, glass, jewellery, wood, toys, fibre, art cards, art prints, small original paintings, DIY kits, seasonal ornaments, and unusual things. These well-made-things are ideal gifts for all occasions and budgets.

CVAG's centralized reception HUB unites the entrance, the presentation galleries, and SHOP:MADE.

Staff are here to support visitor inquiry and curiosity and to encourage discussion about the artists, programming, and events at CVAG.

EVENT: GEORGE SAWCHUK – AFTER FORTY YEARS OF LABOUR
March 11 - May 29, 2021



"After 40 years of labour, I had compiled a great many resources that I could now draw upon, but they were all being evaporated. This I thought is not what life is all about; why live and experience a full life and allow it to be buried with you? How nice it would be if we all could leave a small part of ourselves behind. "

...these are the words that George Sawchuk wrote in his journal, as he reflected on the emergence of his art practice. A long career as a labourer was severed through an industrial accident. It was then that George's real work began. He moved from Vancouver to Fanny Bay where he developed a large body of artworks that spoke to his lifetime that shaped his cultural and social-political perspectives. George is well known for the interventions he installed in the Forest Gallery in the Ship's Point forest. Less known are his portables – assemblages that incorporate the found and the handmade.

George died in 2012. In 2014, a retrospective exhibition *The Book of George* featured the breadth of George's art practice. Over the years since, time and nature has enfolded the Forest Gallery to the point where only traces remain.

Today, George's portables are the works "left behind" that point to "the poetry, lyricism and understanding of his materials, the labour to secure them and the life lived". George preferred not to sell his work during his lifetime, saying he wanted others to do that after he was gone. Pat Helps, George's wife, has now opened the doors of the storage sheds that have housed George's portables for decades. Shop:Made is currently featuring a small sampling of George's art as a way of increasing awareness of an artist whose powerful work is in our midst.

At Home in the Woods by Mary Alice is a short film of George Sawchuk shot in Fanny Bay near the end of his life. In it he talks about his work and the life experiences that influenced his art making.

EXHIBITION: VISIBLE LABOUR

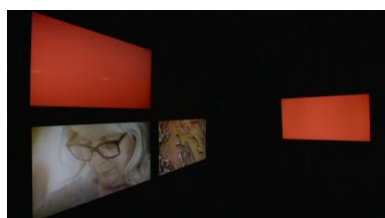
Deborah Dumka, Kristin Nelson, Claire Sanford, Connie Michele Morey
March 25 - May 29, 2021



Deborah Dumka, *Our Young Girls*, 2021



Kristin Nelson, *Drink*, 2017-2019



Claire Sanford (l to r) *Violet Gave Willingly*, 2021



Connie Michele Morey (l to r) *Division of Labour*, 2021 *Writing for the Soil*, 2021

Visible Labour...the work that is going on all around us...

"As an artist with a craft-based practice, I focus on the materials, techniques and traditions of hand felting. Using a variety of wools, silk, dyes and blending tools, I create materials with textural and colour properties that become important elements in the development of my projects. The felting process transforms loose fibre into a substantial textile with an ancient history of utilitarian function and artistic expression that sits embedded within my work. Having lived most of my life close to nature in rural communities, I draw inspiration from the landscape to explore belonging and connection. The work at CVAG in the exhibition Visible Labour is from Resistor, an ongoing series based on my experiences, exploring issues faced by women studying and working as engineers." – Deborah Dumka

"I investigate and ennoble different forms of labour through the re-presentation of mass manufactured objects. Repetition, reproduction and the re-appropriation of technologies are strategies I use to make my work's various relationships to my body evident. Often, my attempt is to reposition how we value labour beyond a capitalist or Marxist value approach. This repositioning of labour – as seen through a disability studies lens – places value on the body itself, instead of on what the labouring body produces." – Kristin Nelson

"Violet Gave Willingly is a video installation and documentary with colour at its heart. Immersing us in the creative world of my mother, textile artist Deborah Dumka, the multi-screen film invites us to witness the unflinchingly intimate details of her artistic process and inner life. Nestled in a colourful textile studio by the sea, we witness an artist at work on a project that delves into a past unspoken. An intimate study of the nature of memory and how it can both harm and protect, the film lays bare the continuum and legacy of gender-based discrimination, sexism, and sexual violence. More than a portrait, the film is a conversation. As mother and daughter struggle to give voice to their experiences, power radiates from speaking uncomfortable truths. Violet Gave Willingly asks viewers to listen deeply and, in doing so, share in carrying the heavy load – the labour – of sexism and the status quo." – Claire Sanford

"Division of Labour (one of three works in VISIBLE LABOUR) is a wall installation made of 80-100 pieces of crocheted cotton thread and their cast shadows. The title of work is meant to be both subversive and curious in exploring the layers of collaboration that exist with the labouring of the earth and domestic labouring. This exploration is not only evident in the division of labour between me as an artist and my mother (collaborating from different provinces during the pandemic) to create the installation, but also in intergenerational collaboration through the passing down of textile skills and knowledge of the land. In this way, the work questions how we might redefine labour practices so that they support the interdependence of personal, communal, and ecological healing and growth. My mother first taught me to crochet as a child, a skill passed down in generational succession; she nurtured creative expression, a love of the land and a deep appreciation of all living things. Moss is a pioneer species that holds space for other species to take root and grow. This labour is one that not only sustains distinct species but also sustains larger communities and ecosystems." – Connie Michele Morey

EVENT: NET MAKING: AN ONLINE WORKSHOP

Instructor: Aidan Smith
Moderator / Assistant: Kristin Nelson
April 17, 2021 10:00 am PST



Kristin Nelson, *Nets* (detail), 2021

Artist Kristin Nelson, of the current exhibition *VISIBLE LABOUR*, organized an online net making workshop at the Comox Valley Art Gallery. This workshop came out of a desire to collectively make, and of a continued curiosity around nets as an object rich in meaning and use value.

In this online workshop, participants were shown how to load a netting needle, start a net, and increase/decrease the net in size. With these basic skills, nets of varying sizes and shapes can be created.

Based in Nova Scotia, Aidan Smith is a jeweller and heritage interpreter. He graduated from the Nova Scotia College of Art and Design University with a BFA in 2011. Since then, he has worked as a jewellery designer and 3D modeler for a multinational company, worked in the Nova Scotia Museum system, and in 2016 opened his own business. Throughout his career Aidan has enjoyed learning hands-on crafts not limited to: metalwork, carpentry, embroidery, knotwork and netmaking. He splits his time between the Maritime Museum of the Atlantic and his own business: Aidan Smith Jewellery Appraisal and Design.

Aidan would like to acknowledge that he is located in Mi'kma'ki, the ancestral and unceded territory of the Mi'kmaq People.

CVAG NEXT DOOR Residency Program



The Comox Valley Art Gallery supports arts-based research and exploration of materials + process, activation, and concept development by making an artist residence and working spaces for independent self-directed residencies available. Artists are welcomed to engage with the community as they determine relevant to their research.

The CVAG Next Door Program is open to international artists and curators engaged in contemporary interdisciplinary art practice. The residency offers an opportunity to focus on creative research without distraction, demands or expectations of production or community engagement. Artists are welcomed to engage with the community as they determine relevant to their research. The gallery sees this as a way to support deep and sustained artistic practice.

Applicants are invited to apply for a minimum self-directed residency of 2 weeks to a maximum of 6 weeks. The residency is intended for one or two solo participants (applying together) or two collaborating participants (applying together). The partner/small families of a residency participant are welcomed to stay when one participant is using the residence.

CVAG Next Door is a contemporary two-bedroom suite situated in the downtown core of the City of Courtenay in the Comox Valley on the east coast of Vancouver Island. It is steps away from CVAG.

Courtenay (approximate population 25,000) is the urban and cultural hub of the larger community, the Comox Valley (approximate population 65,000). Libraries, museums, shopping and recreation/fitness facilities are within walking distance and public transit. Easy access exists to the many beaches along the Salish sea, the rivers and streams, lakes, forests and wilderness parklands with extensive hiking trails in the region. The climate is temperate rainforest.

During this time of travel restrictions and public health protocols related to COVID-19, CVAG has modified the residency program. Contact CVAG regarding current residency parameters.

**REPORT OF THE NOMINATION COMMITTEE
COMOX VALLEY ART GALLERY BOARD OF DIRECTORS
MAY 8, 2021**

As set out in the Comox Valley Art Gallery bylaws, there are between 10 and 13 members of the Board of Directors.

Ten are nominated by the Nomination Committee and presented to the membership at the AGM. Up to another three may be nominated from the floor at the AGM.

Board terms are usually for two years, and staggered so that roughly half the board positions are up for nomination at each AGM. The other half will be continuing their two-year terms.

The Nomination Committee submits the following names for new two-year terms:

Claire Aitken
Jasmin Badrin
Brian Charlton
Wedlidi Speck (Cultural Protocol Advisor)

The Nomination Committee submits the following slate of officers to serve until the next AGM:

President – Jasmin Badrin
Vice-President – Meaghan Cursons
Secretary – John Heintz
Treasurer – Sharon Card

The Nomination Committee also recommends that Miguel Strother be nominated from the floor for a two-year term.

The Nomination Committee notes there are six board members who are in the middle of two-year terms, and will continue to serve until the next AGM. They are:

Sharon Robarts
John Heintz
Meaghan Cursons
Nicole Crouch
Keisha Everson
Judy LeBlanc



580 DUNCAN AVENUE COURTENAY BC V9N 2M7
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HOURS THURSDAY TO SATURDAY 10-5
ADMISSION: DONATIONS GRATEFULLY ACCEPTED

The Comox Valley Art Gallery acknowledges that we are located upon the Unceded Traditional Territory of the K'ómoks First Nation. CVAG recognizes the enduring presence of First Nations people on this land.

CVAG's convergent programming is supported by Canada Council for the Arts, BC Arts Council, Government of Canada, Province of BC, City of Courtenay, Town of Comox, Village of Cumberland, Comox Valley Regional District, BC Gaming, SD71 Print Shop, Hitec Printing, Sherwin-Williams Paint Store, ABC Printing, MakeltZone, Muir Engineering Ltd. We especially thank the artists, writers, guest curators, collaborators, our volunteers, donors + members.

