



**CVAG**  
VISION • ART • CULTURE

# CONVERGENT PROGRAMMING 2021

## REFLECTION:

what is our motivation. our orientation to the places we find ourselves in. our relationship to one another. how do we see a year - at a glance, in the traces, in the memories awakened by an image. a phrase. a familiar or an unfamiliar. how do we integrate experiences - individual and collective, set down on a ground that is rooted and uprooted. this is the certainty - that of constant change.

"How can I hold so much in some moments and so little in others? I feel my own capacity for empathy change often. Can I extend my capacity for holding space to something outside of me? Can I create objects to hold space when I cannot?"

– Shelley Vanderbyl



*Maybe they don't mind my dirty shoes (9 min., performance, 2021)*

APPROACHING CONVERGENT PROGRAMMING @ CVAG 2021 / A MULTI-YEAR SPAN

WALK WITH ME / COMMUNITY ACTION + RESEARCH PROJECT

YOUTH MEDIA PROJECT

SPACE BETWEEN US

VISIBLE LABOUR

SUMMER PROGRAMMING / PROJECT ROOM STUDIOS

OFFSITE / ONSITE

TERRI-LYNN WILLIAMS-DAVIDSON, A COMMUNITY COLLABORATION

cover:

Shelley Vanderbyl

*Help* (fire on plastered panel, 24 d., 2021)

*Prescribed Fire* (single channel video, in collaboration with CVAG Productions, 10:40 min., 2021)

**Convergent:** *adjective*

- to come together
- merging
- meeting at some point
- concurrent
- confluent
- connecting
- occurring simultaneously
- blending and running together
- unite gradually
- establish communication between
- accompanying or associated features
- combine
- coalesce
- unite

The descriptors in the definition of convergent aptly describe programming at the Comox Valley Art Gallery. These keywords frame the intentions that underpin the work undertaken over the span of a year and that flows into the future.

In January of 2021, we were in the middle of the pandemic and social political upheavals. Our world was shut down. We were masked, our contact with one another limited to strident parameters for physically distancing. We suffered disillusionment, discouragement, and disorientation. As we faced this challenging reality, we learned to Zoom. In this virtual space we begin to imagine ways in which the gallery could continue to support creative practice and engage community in programming using the virtual world as another platform of connection, creative experimentation and making.

We took time to reflect:

'What is our motivation, our orientation to the places we find ourselves in our relationship to one another, how do we see a year – at a glance, in the traces, in the memories awakened by an image, a phrase - familiar or unfamiliar, how do we integrate experiences – individual and collective, set down on the ground that is rooted and uprooted, this is the certainty – that there is constant change.'

We resolved to continue to move forward to find our way through the changes imposed by a world turned upside down. We released the future plans that were no longer feasible we held fast to threads of the past that could be woven into a new fabric – that expressed the new possibilities that erupted from responsiveness and resilience.

In a virtual conversation (zooming between Courtenay and Stockholm) with collaborating curator Abir Boukari, we asserted that "We must keep going. We must support artists and their practice. We must find new ways to engage the communities around us." So, in the face of diversity we learned new technologies that would bring us together; to sustain and form new connections, to collaborate, to learn, experiment and create. We learned to share physical spaces in a safe way, and to extend ourselves out into the community and to "bring "the community in. 2021, with its obstacles, became a year in which we expanded existing programs and developed innovative new programming at CVAG:

**Denise Lawson (co-curator, CVAG)**

WALK WITH ME / COMMUNITY ACTION + RESEARCH  
(2020-ongoing)



## WALK WITH ME / COMMUNITY ACTION + RESEARCH

(2020 - ongoing)

Under the leadership of Dr. Sharon Karsten, this ongoing project brings together diverse stakeholders within the community to re-frame, imagine, and honour lived experience of those at the heart of the toxic drug crisis. 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. Supported by Elder / Traditional Knowledge Keeper Barb Whyte.

[Walk With Me \(web site\)](#)

YOUTH MEDIA PROJECT  
(2012 - ongoing)





## YOUTH MEDIA PROJECT

(2012 - ongoing)

Youth Media Project Led by the project's team leader, Krista Tupper, the program was able to carry forward during Covid and has expanded its capacity in the past year. This project uses digital media, creative facilitation, and artistic collaboration as a framework for training youth, over a 13 week period, to create media for community action.

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. 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.

"The Comox Valley Art Gallery's Youth Media Project uplifts emerging creative changemakers and story-tellers. It is a safe and inclusive space where contemporary issues can be examined and where participants can make and share meaningful media." says Team Leader Krista Tupper.

The Youth Media Project provides intensive hands-on training in video production, sound design, and other media skills. This program is open to anyone from the ages of 16 to 30 who is interested in learning how to create videos that tell stories and inspire community discourse. We recruit nine participants per 13 week session.

Participants create two films: one independent film that speaks to what they would like to see done better in our community, and one film in collaboration with a small business or community organization that celebrates the sustainable work that is being done in the Valley.



# EXPOSURE

CVAG YOUTH MEDIA PROJECT FILM SCREENING

**THURS, JUNE 30**  
**SID WILLIAMS THEATRE**  
**DOORS OPEN @ 6:30 PM**  
**FREE ADMISSION**

CVAG creative employment

# SPACE BETWEEN US

December 3, 2020 - February 27, 2021



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

## SPACE BETWEEN US

December 3, 2020 - February 27, 2021

ONLINE + IN-GALLERY INCUBATORS / ARTIST RESIDENCY / MAKE ART / COLLABORATIVE PUBLICATIONS / ART TALKS **E-publication Launch Event**

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

Onsite / Offsite Production Incubator / Residency / Exhibition – a collaboration between the Comox Valley Art Gallery, local and international artists.

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

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.

Participants create two films: one independent film that speaks to what they would like to see done better in our community, and one film in collaboration with a small business or community organization that celebrates the sustainable work that is being done in the Valley.



Foroozan Taleifard *Our New Normal*  
2020. Plaster, Fabric . 9" x 5" x 3".  
Photo by Alun Macanulty

## FIN 230 SCULPTURE + INTEGRATED ART PRACTICE STUDENT INCUBATOR

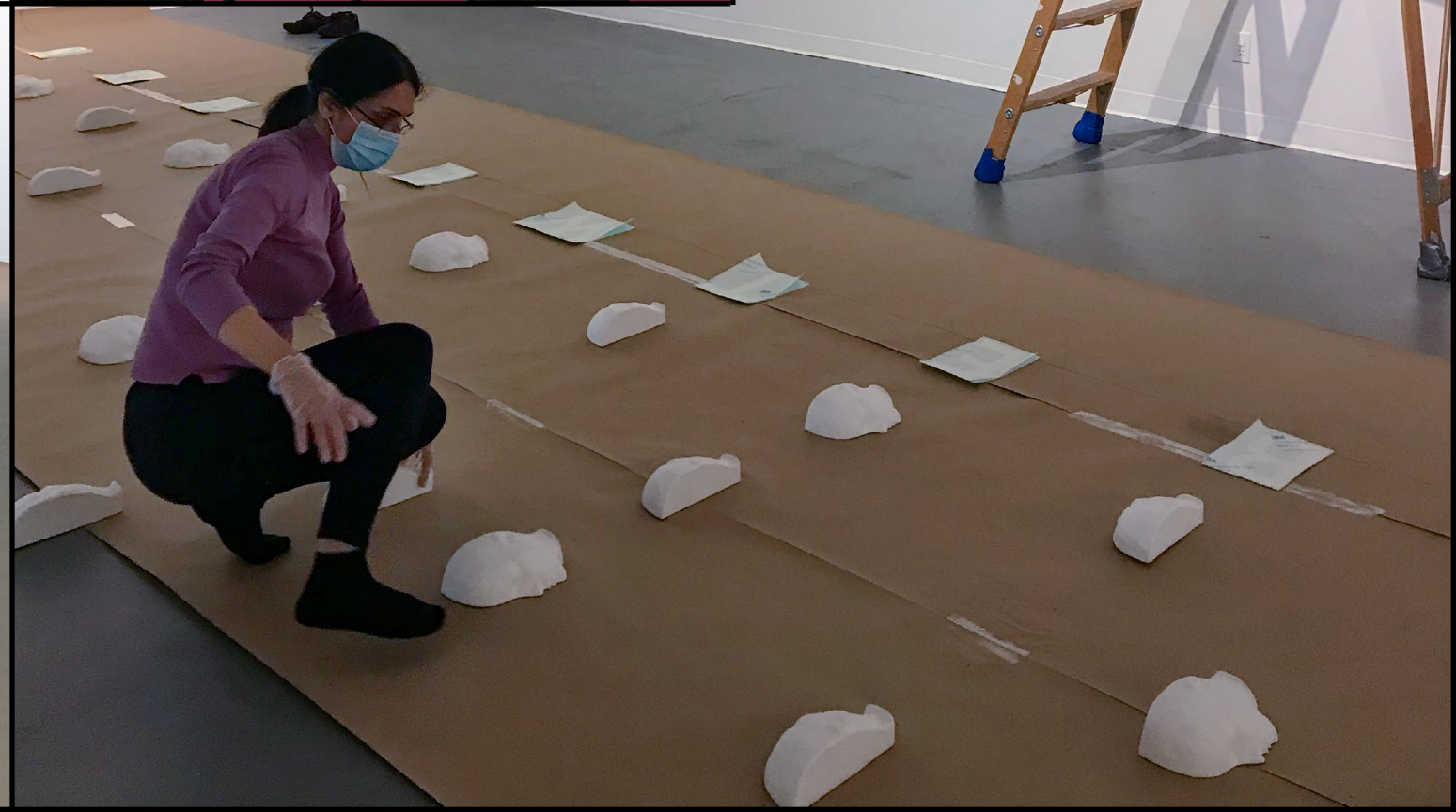
December 3, 2020 - February 27, 2021

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

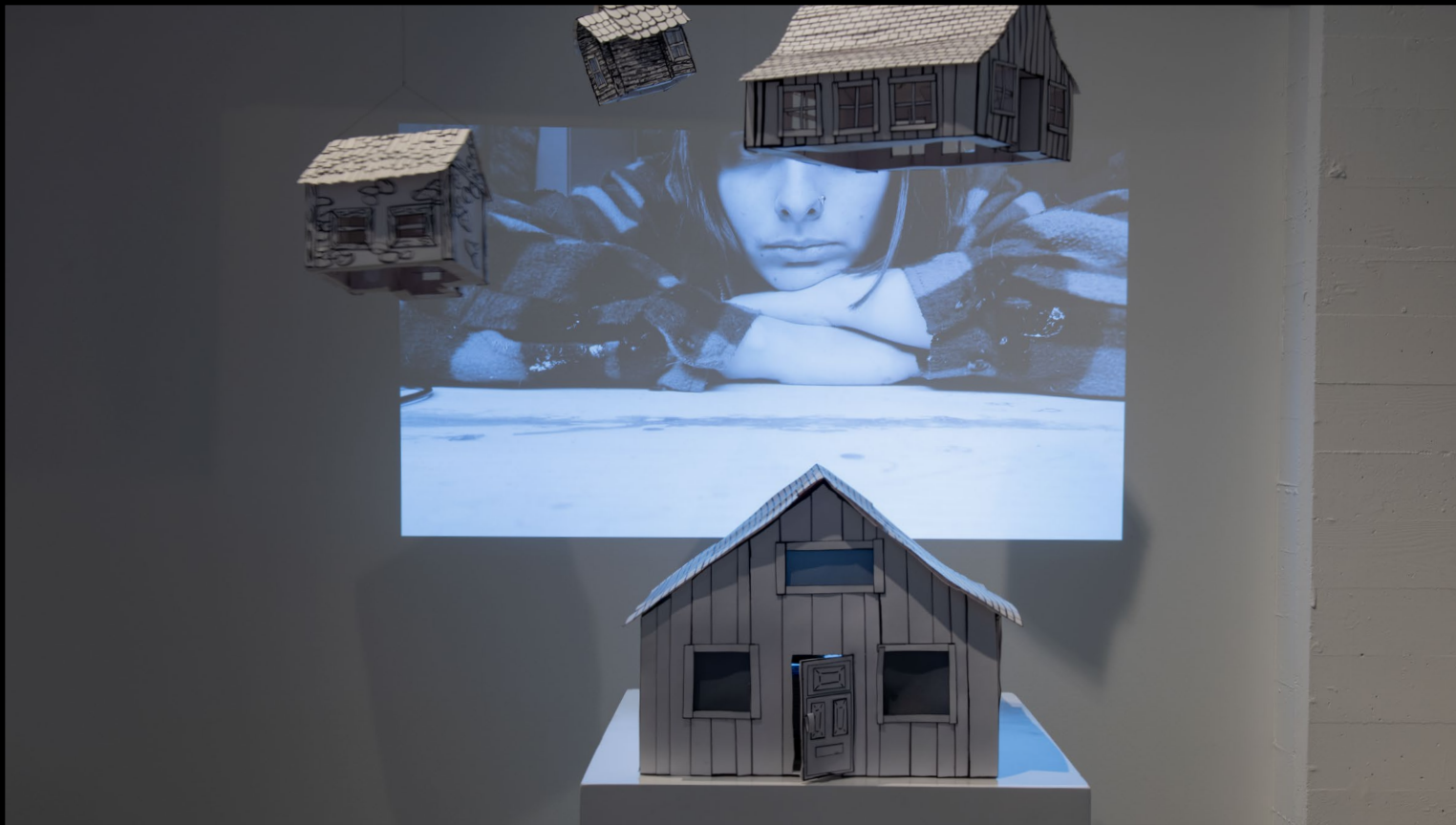
This production incubator shared the work of students in the FIN 230 Sculpture and Integrated Art Practice / Fine Art and Design program at North Island College.

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. Students had been navigating the conditions of new learning platforms during the 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.











Small text on a white poster or document mounted on the wall to the right of the shelf.

## **SPACE BETWEEN US / VIRTUAL + ON-SITE PROJECTS**

**December 3 - February 27, 2021 (began with virtual connections, technology training in the spring 2020)**

**EXHIBITIONS ONLINE + IN-GALLERY INCUBATORS / VIRTUAL PRESENTATIONS / E-PUBLICATION**

**SPACE BETWEEN US E-Publication**

**Ravel – Maleea Acker / Renée Poisson / Sophie Wood**

**Untitled – H. Pearl Gray / Bran Mackie**

**Simple Syrup – Hannah Brown / Cassidy Gehmlich**

**You and I are also infrared heaters – Meesh QX / Kara Stanton**

**Medicine Dreaming – Spencer Sheehan Kalina**

The resilience and generosity of creatives, the gallery, and community as a whole, was reflected through what transpired in the space between us. By reaching out to one another we nurtured a collective experience – a weave of strength and interconnectivity that 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. Sometimes this was a visible, palpable, and tangible exchange, however, it was 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 took place behind the scenes, over distance, and through virtual exchange. Out of these workings new ways of making, collaborating and presenting unfolded.

c o l l a b o r a t i o n s

# space between us

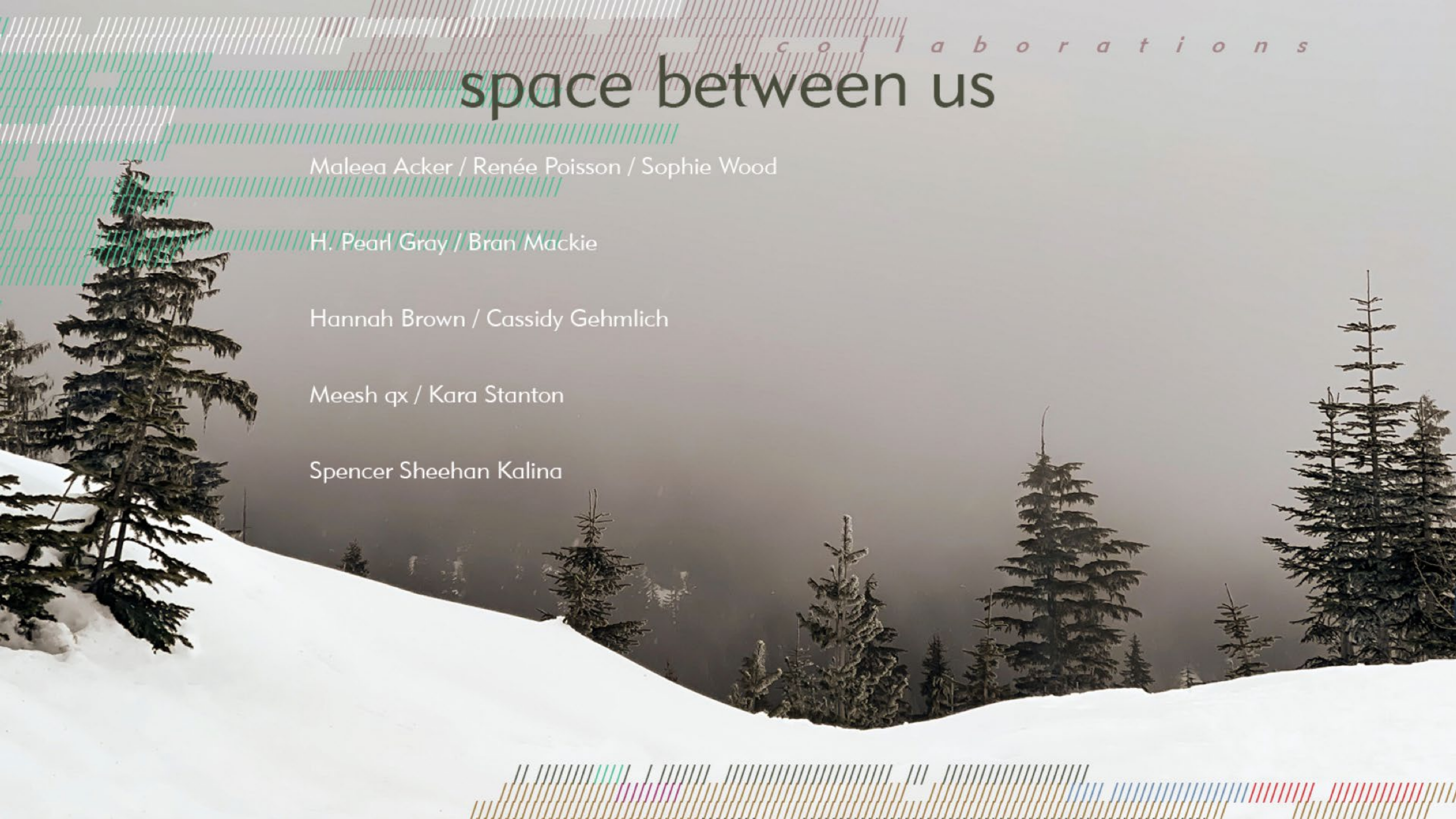
Maleea Acker / Renée Poisson / Sophie Wood

H. Pearl Gray / Bran Mackie

Hannah Brown / Cassidy Gehmlich

Meesh qx / Kara Stanton

Spencer Sheehan Kalina



# space between us / collaborations

## anthology

curated / Denise Lawson + Angela Somerset

contributors / Maleea Acker + Renée Poisson + Sophie Wood

H Pearl Gray + Bran Mackie, Hannah Brown + Cassidy Gehmlich

Meesh qx + Kara Stanton, Spencer Sheehan Kalina

2020–2021

publication production:

documentation + site photography / Alun Macanulty

concept + design / Angela Somerset + Denise Lawson

production / Tom Elliott + Angela Somerset

site installation - incubator / David Lawson

website / The Update Company

assistance / Gabrielle Moore Pratt, Cassidy Gemlich, Caresse Nadeau

additional documentation for *Ravel* / Bran Mackie



# SPACE BETWEEN US / PUBLICATION INCUBATOR + LAUNCH

December 3, 2020 - February 27, 2021



The SPACE BETWEEN US Publication Incubator presented production components of the collaborative work of visual / media artists / writers:

**Maleea Acker / Renée Poisson / Sophie Wood**

**H. Pearl Gray / Bran Mackie**

**Hannah Brown / Cassidy Gehmlich**

**Meesh QX / Kara Stanton**

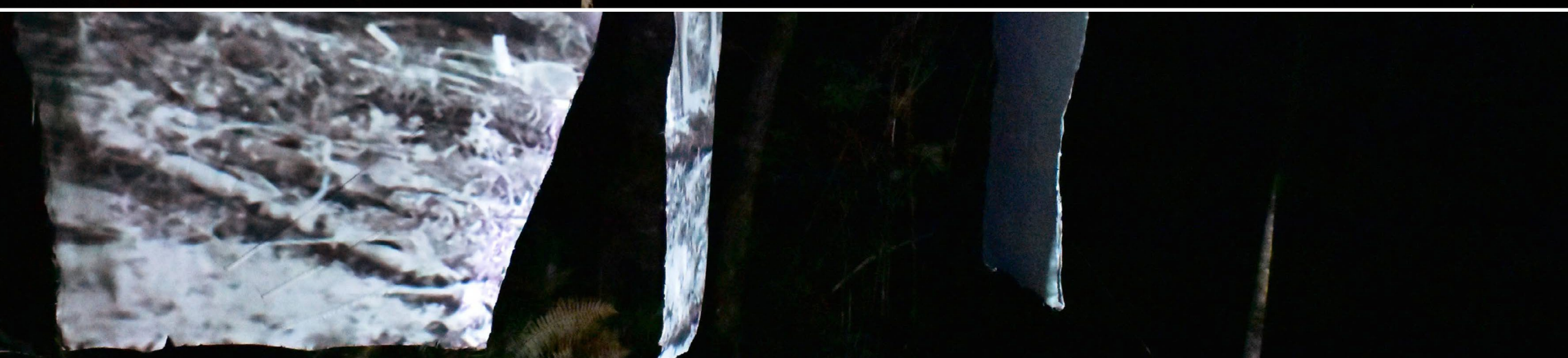
**Spencer Sheehan Kalina**

In the early spring of 2020, CVAG's curators instigated the SPACE BETWEEN US publication project as a way of supporting creative inquiry, production and collaboration across creative practices. At that time artists and writers began working together, through conceptual ideation + making, to develop and prepare digital-based productions. The incubator presented material / digital / sound installations, online presentations, and virtual events pointing to the creative foundations and thematic content of the final works.

BOOK 1 / RAVEL

Maleea Acker / Renée Poisson / Sophie Wood

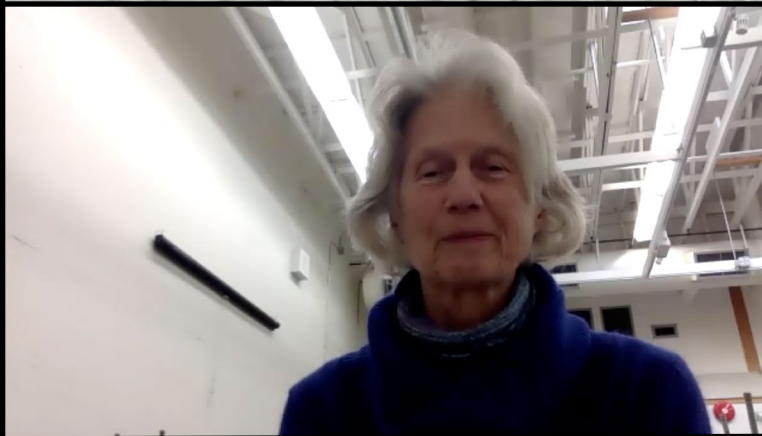
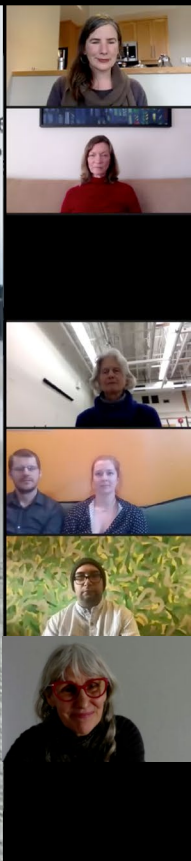
ANTON  
DREAMING





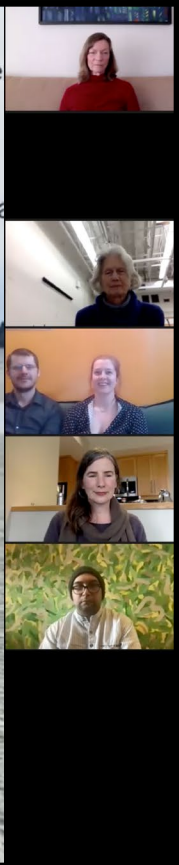
Does 7 or 7:30 work? Gives me time to do the image prep. Early start tomorrow

Are we all able to connect  
Virtually or otherwise?



Oh excellent! I think I'll get my bio roughed tomorrow I'm bagged this evening, been busy I didn't get a chance to send images today. Busy work day no break just home now and looking at our to dos. Will email screen shot of our ordering draft and our favorite images for the gallery print

I have a zoom a





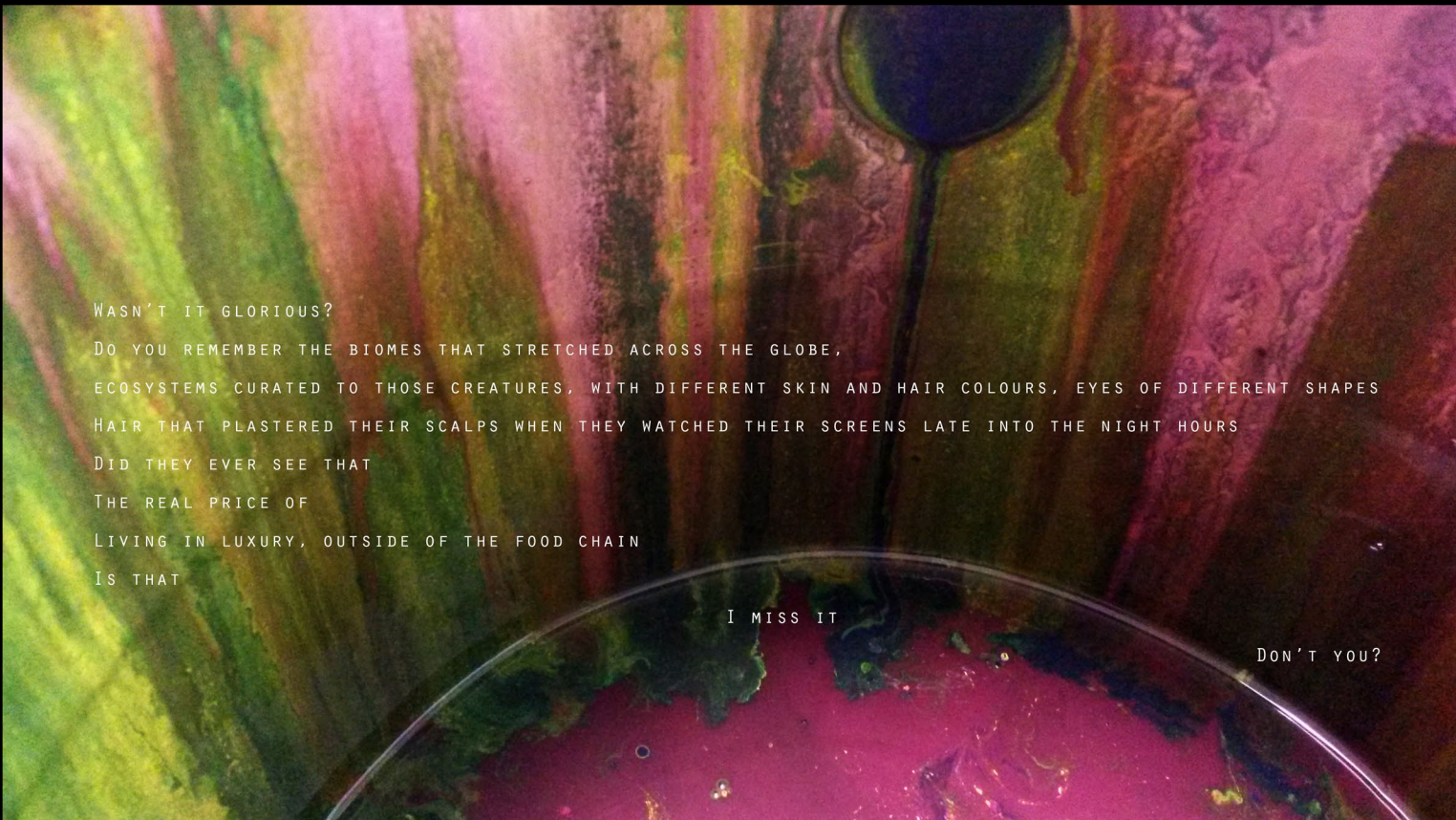


# BOOK 3 / SIMPLE SYRUP

Hannah Brown / Cassidy Gehmlich

THERE WAS A TABLE. CREATURES SAT AROUND IT WITH TEA AND DISCHITS.  
WHEN SHE PUT HER HUB DOWN, THE CREATURES CLIMBED AT HER AND BATED NOTHING. THE VOLE STARTED TO MASH ITS FACE WITH ITS PANS, WHILE THE PORCUPINE SCRATCHED ITS HEAD WITH ITS HIND LEGS. THE HAMMOY CAME OFF TO GRAB SOME BERRIES, THEN RETURNED AND HUNCHED GIBBERLY.  
THE FOREST LAY BEGONE IN HER FEET. A LOON MAY BORN: SCORCHERS WAS OFF.

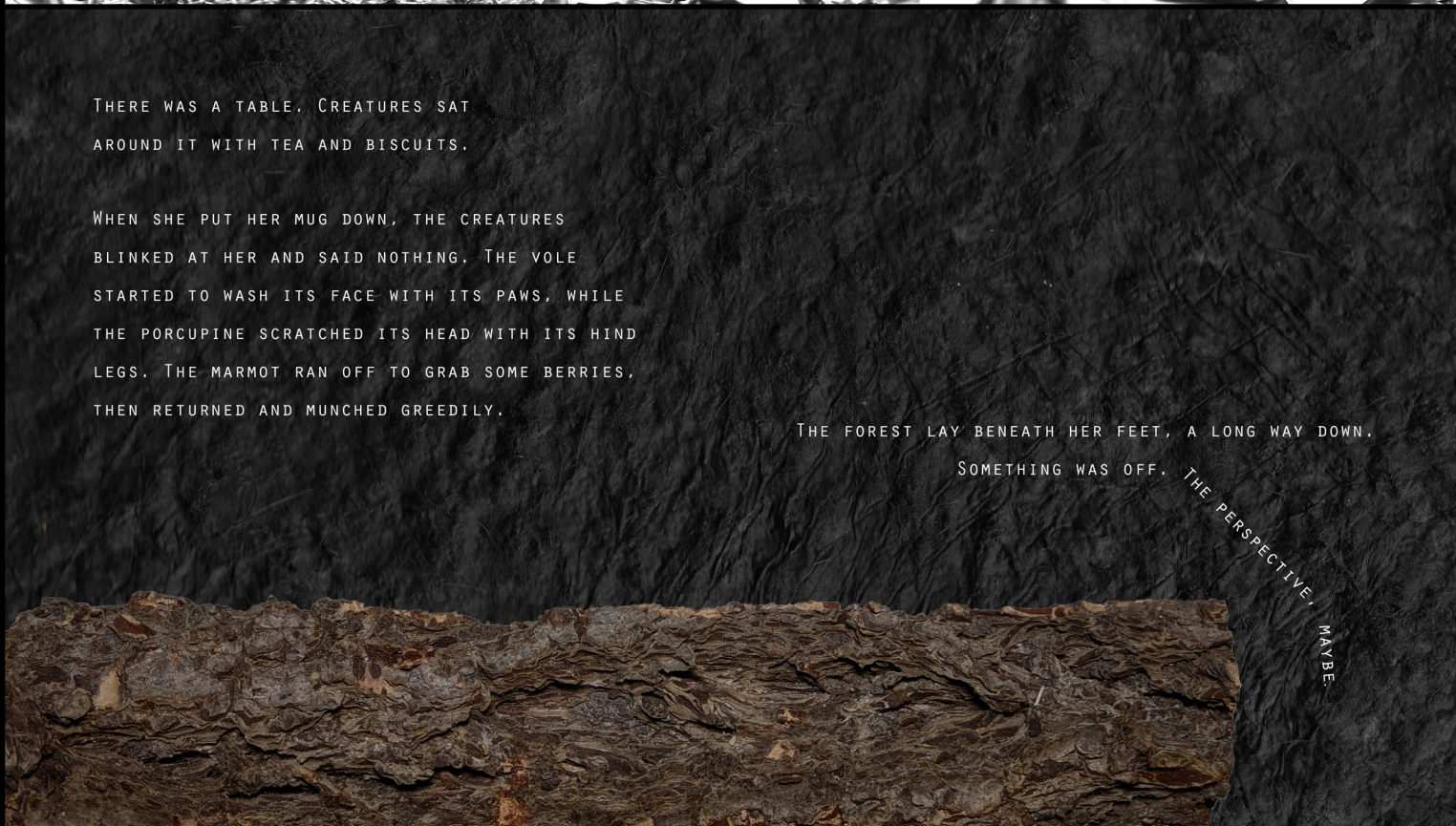




WASN'T IT GLORIOUS?  
DO YOU REMEMBER THE BIOMES THAT STRETCHED ACROSS THE GLOBE,  
ECOSYSTEMS CURATED TO THOSE CREATURES, WITH DIFFERENT SKIN AND HAIR COLOURS, EYES OF DIFFERENT SHAPES  
HAIR THAT PLASTERED THEIR SCALPS WHEN THEY WATCHED THEIR SCREENS LATE INTO THE NIGHT HOURS  
DID THEY EVER SEE THAT  
THE REAL PRICE OF  
LIVING IN LUXURY, OUTSIDE OF THE FOOD CHAIN  
IS THAT

I MISS IT

DON'T YOU?



THERE WAS A TABLE. CREATURES SAT  
AROUND IT WITH TEA AND BISCUITS.

WHEN SHE PUT HER MUG DOWN, THE CREATURES  
BLINKED AT HER AND SAID NOTHING. THE VOLE  
STARTED TO WASH ITS FACE WITH ITS PAWS, WHILE  
THE PORCUPINE SCRATCHED ITS HEAD WITH ITS HIND  
LEGS. THE MARMOT RAN OFF TO GRAB SOME BERRIES,  
THEN RETURNED AND MUNCHED GREEDILY.

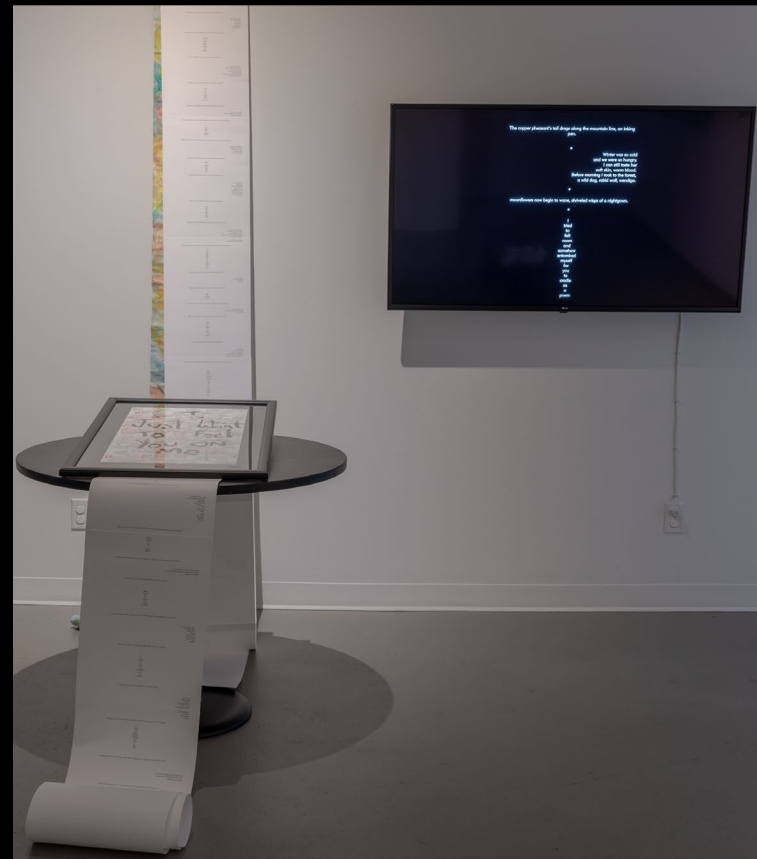
THE FOREST LAY BENEATH HER FEET, A LONG WAY DOWN.

SOMETHING WAS OFF. THE PERSPECTIVE,  
MAYBE.

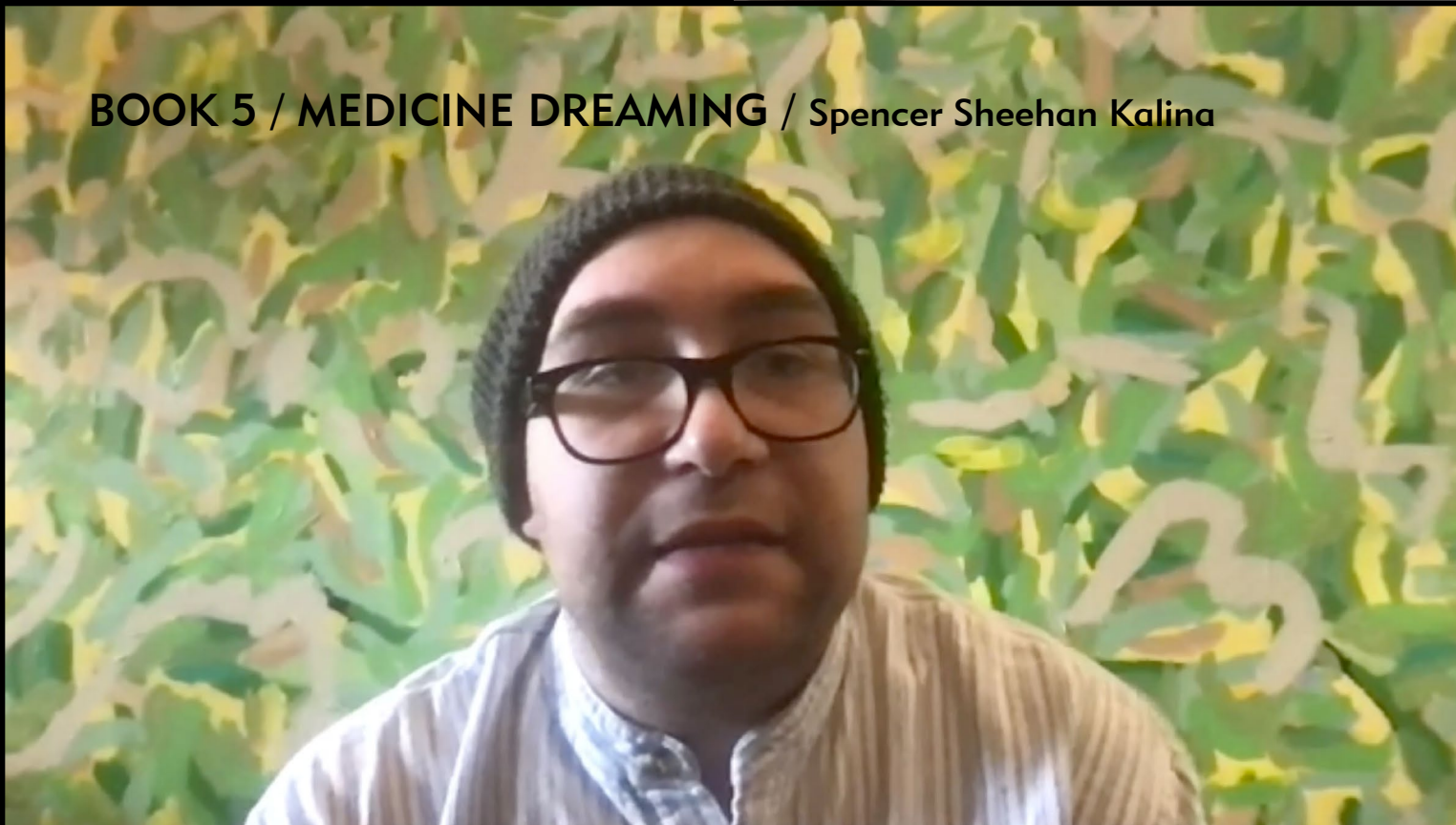


## Medicine Dreaming

Grandmother's gift,  
bought at a YOW  
tourist shop,  
suspended  
mid window,  
a bad-dream  
catgut fishnet,  
beading trapped  
inside, dangling  
acrylic feathers  
like lures on lines,  
snared dreams  
wriggling  
and medicine  
dreams  
flowing through:

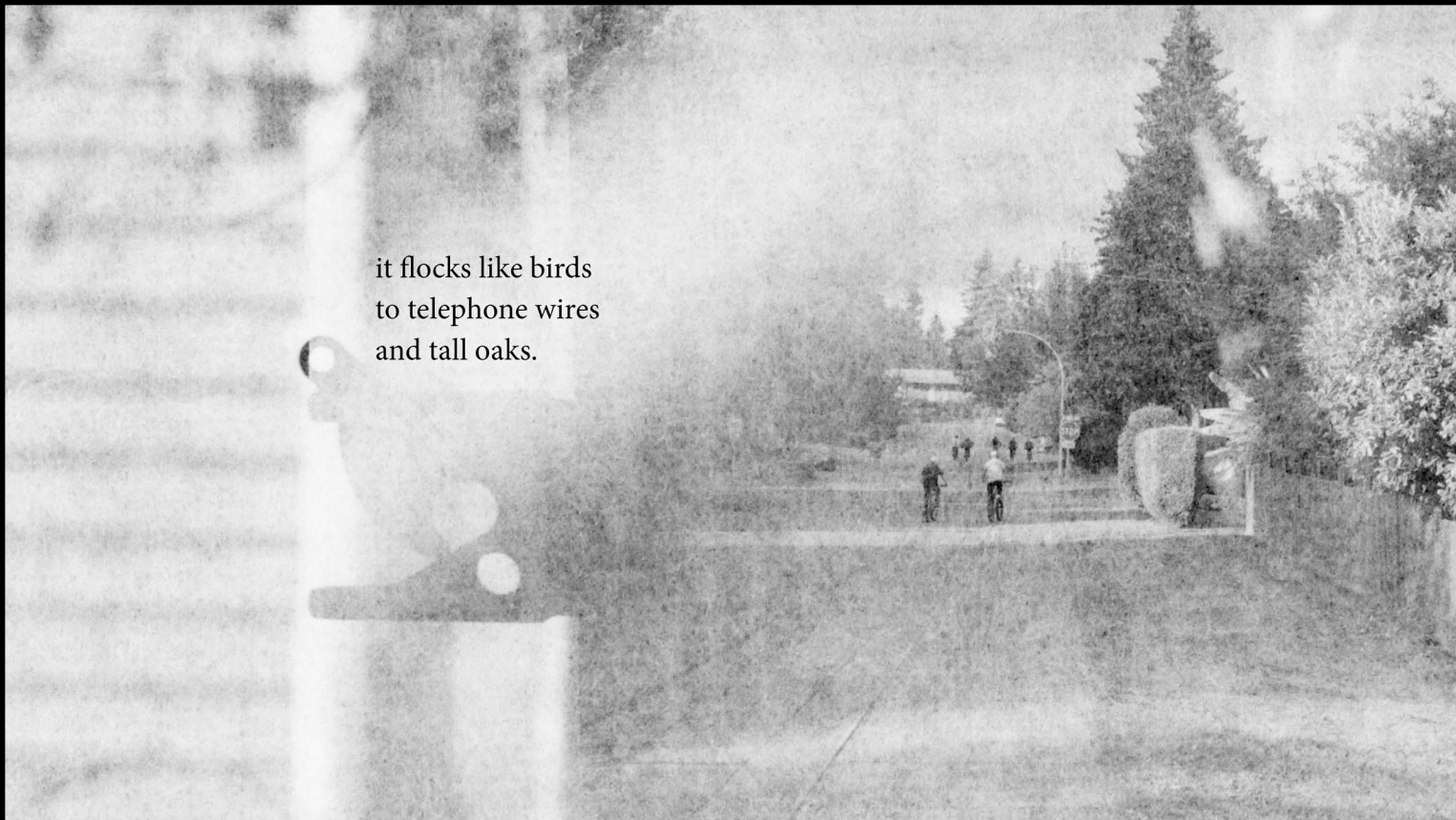


## BOOK 5 / MEDICINE DREAMING / Spencer Sheehan Kalina



ONE DAY MY  
Body will die,  
will nourish  
flowers, trees,  
will become  
water ♪ stone,  
♪ Then become  
a star...





it flocks like birds  
to telephone wires  
and tall oaks.

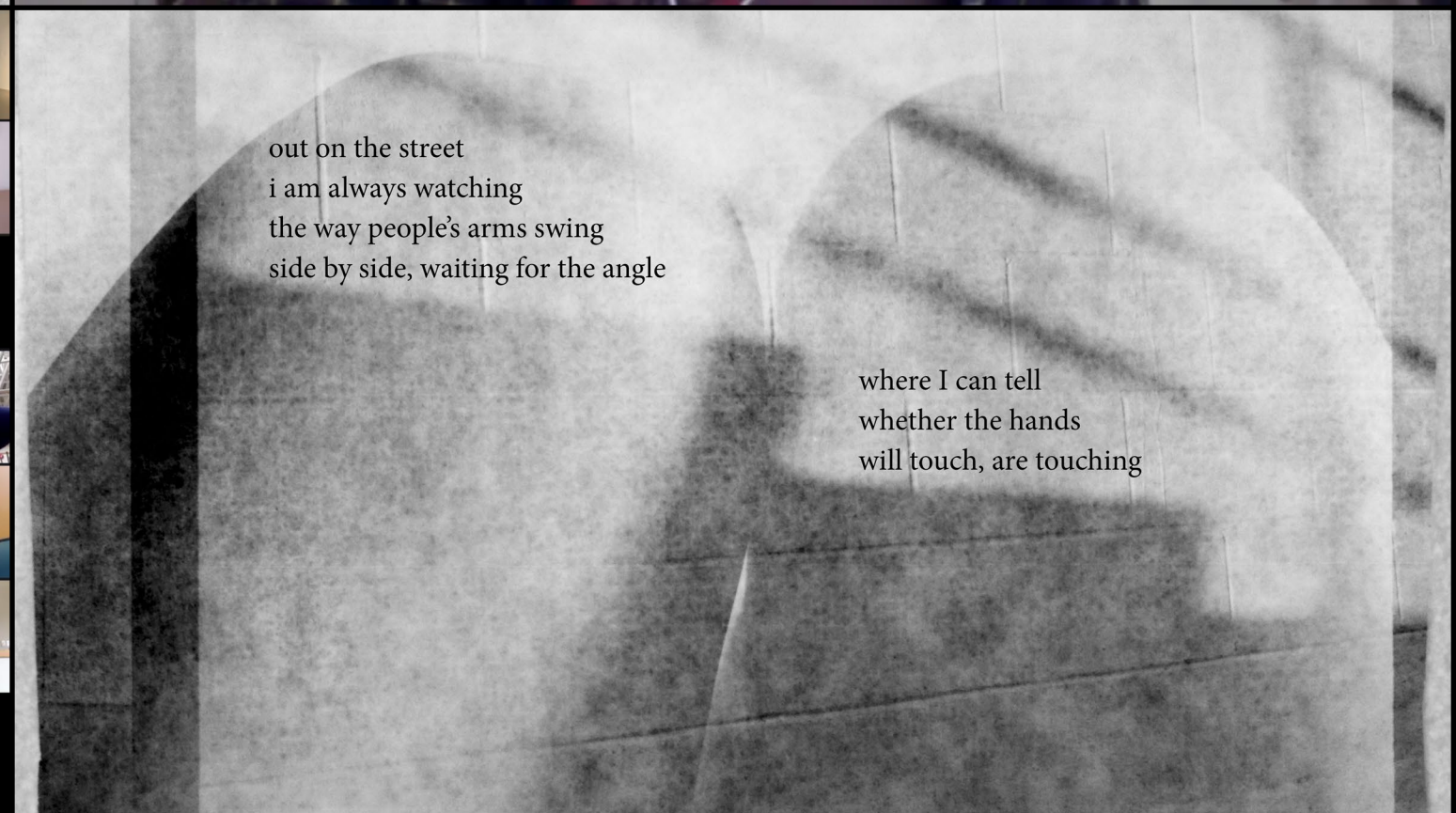


BOOK 4 / YOU AND I ARE ALSO INFRARED RADIATORS

Meesh Qx / Kara Stanton

out on the street  
i am always watching  
the way people's arms swing  
side by side, waiting for the angle

where I can tell  
whether the hands  
will touch, are touching

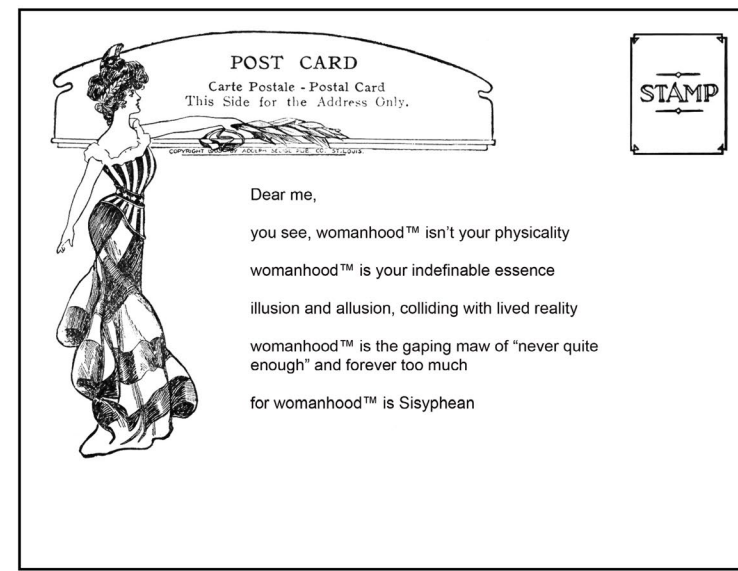


out on the street  
i am always watching  
the way people's arms swing  
side by side, waiting for the angle

where I can tell  
whether the hands  
will touch, are touching



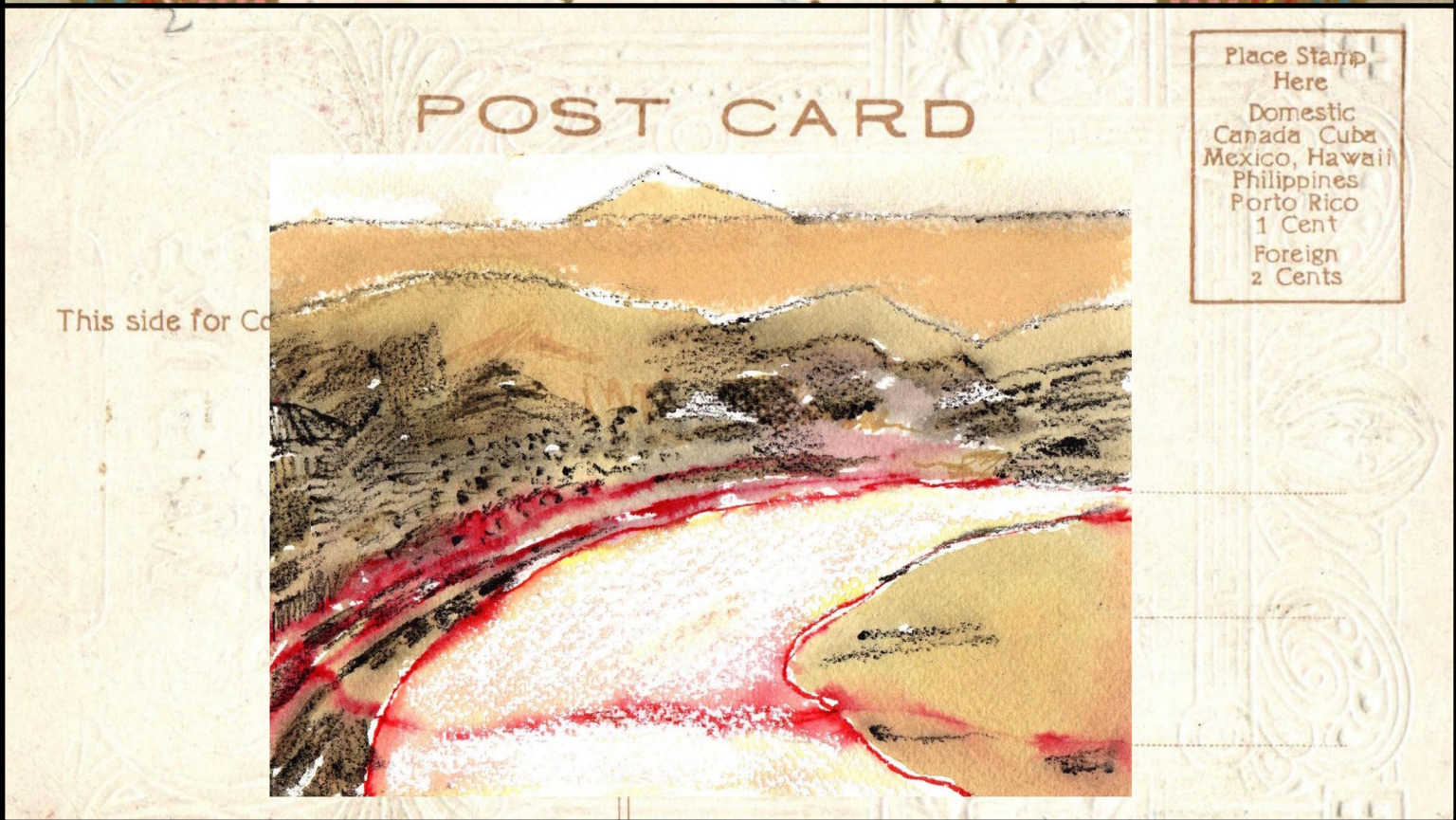
**PRECARITY**



"precarity" designates that politically induced condition in which certain populations suffer from failing social and economic networks of support and become differentially exposed to injury, violence, and death. Such populations are at heightened risk of disease, poverty, starvation, displacement, and of exposure to violence without protection. Precarity also characterizes that politically induced condition of maximized vulnerability and exposure for populations exposed to arbitrary state violence and to other forms of aggression that are not enacted by states and against which states do not offer adequate protection. So by precarity we may be talking about populations that starve or who near starvation, but we might also be talking about sex workers who have to defend themselves against both street violence and police harassment"  
 - Judith Butler

**BOOK 2 / UNTITLED**

**H. Pearl Gray / Bran Mackie**



A LETTER FROM THE OCEAN  
March 4 – 23, 2021



## A LETTER FROM THE OCEAN

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)

While the gallery was closed during public health guidelines for the pandemic, visitors (while keeping a respectful COVID distance from others) were invited to experience this poetic and beautiful 11-minute video screened nightly on the CVAG Plaza between 6-9 pm.

“What words does the ocean speak? How can people listen?”







# KILL YOURSELF

December 17, 2020 - February 20, 2021

Mackai Sharp



“KILL YOURSELF.”

Photo series by Mackai Sharp.

## **KILL YOURSELF**

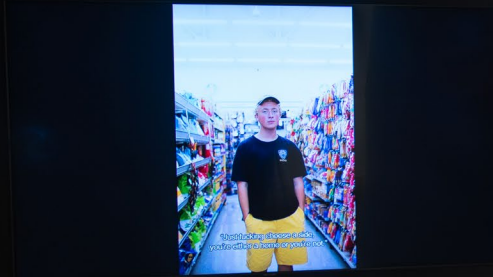
**December 17, 2020 - February 20, 2021**

**Mackai Sharp**

This exhibition is an example of the responsive way in which CVAG is able to present relevant programming. Former YMP participant and emerging artist in our community approached CVAG's curators about presenting Kill Yourself – work that brought the casualness of gender-based 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 allowed 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.



"Just fucking choose a side, you're either a homo or you're not."



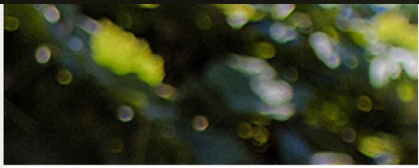
"Just fucking choose a side, you're either a homo or you're not."



GEORGE SAWCHUK GALLERY



"You should kill yourself because you're a faggot."



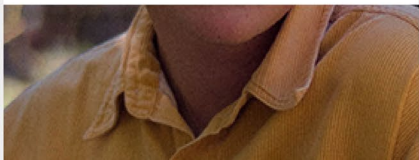
### Hello,

This is an open letter to my community, the people in my life and a past version of myself. I am finally at a place in my life where I feel ready to clarify who I am and how that has severely affected my life in the Comox Valley.

This community has been very vocal with me about how they felt and continue to feel. And these feelings have been expressed verbally in passing on the street or shouted from the window of a car. I have received phone calls and digital messages filled with slurs and threats. Now why might people be telling me to kill myself? Because of ignorance and because of bigotry. This wasn't some misunderstanding, I have been intentionally followed and harassed by people who know who I am and have explicitly told me that I shouldn't exist. This perpetuated ignorance, I don't want to blame it on the individual, I don't want to blame it on my peers. However these intentional acts were meant to cause me direct harm. I originally downplayed how I wanted to get this across, however to put it simply there are some whose intention was entirely malicious.

It is the educators, leaders and parents responsibility to eradicate this ignorance. It is the responsibility of our education system to ensure every student leaves understanding that *bigotry is wrong*. That *racism is wrong*. That *homophobia is wrong*. And yet I left highschool because the teachers wanted to pretend I wasn't getting called a **faggot** everyday. Nobody wanted to take the initiative to tell these students that what they've been raised to believe is okay, is not. So here I am, and there they are, waiting to terrorize the next queer kid that comes around.

And why do I care so much about this? Because I was that queer kid and I am that queer kid. And to clarify what has been so previously misinformed, I am **bisexual**. And I don't label myself, really at all but for sake of confusion that is the best word to describe me.



"Listen, I think you're dope, but you make my friends uncomfortable."

v i s i b l e

# LABOUR

VISIBLE LABOUR: RESIDENCY / EXHIBITION / OUTREACH PROJECTS / MENTORSHIPS / COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

DEBORAH DUMKA + CLAIRE SANFORD, CONNIE MICHELE MOREY, KRISTIN NELSON

## VISIBLE LABOUR / Creative Development + Production Residency

January 15 - May 29, 2021

### Deborah Dumka + Claire Sanford

Creative development + production residencies at CVAG provided 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, is both an artist and an electrical engineer, worked on a project that addressed social and paternalistic resistance to women entering male dominated fields. Related to Deb's fibre and electronic based works, are video and sound installations that were developed by filmmaker Claire Sanford. This foundational research contributed to the creation of a final documentary film premiered in 2022. 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.

*Lightly, Lightly* virtual workshop with Deborah Dumka and Julian Rendell

*Lightly, Lightly* workshop (more information)

Julian Rendell preparing for the *Lightly, Lightly* workshop

# VISIBLE LABOUR CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT + PRODUCTION RESIDENCY

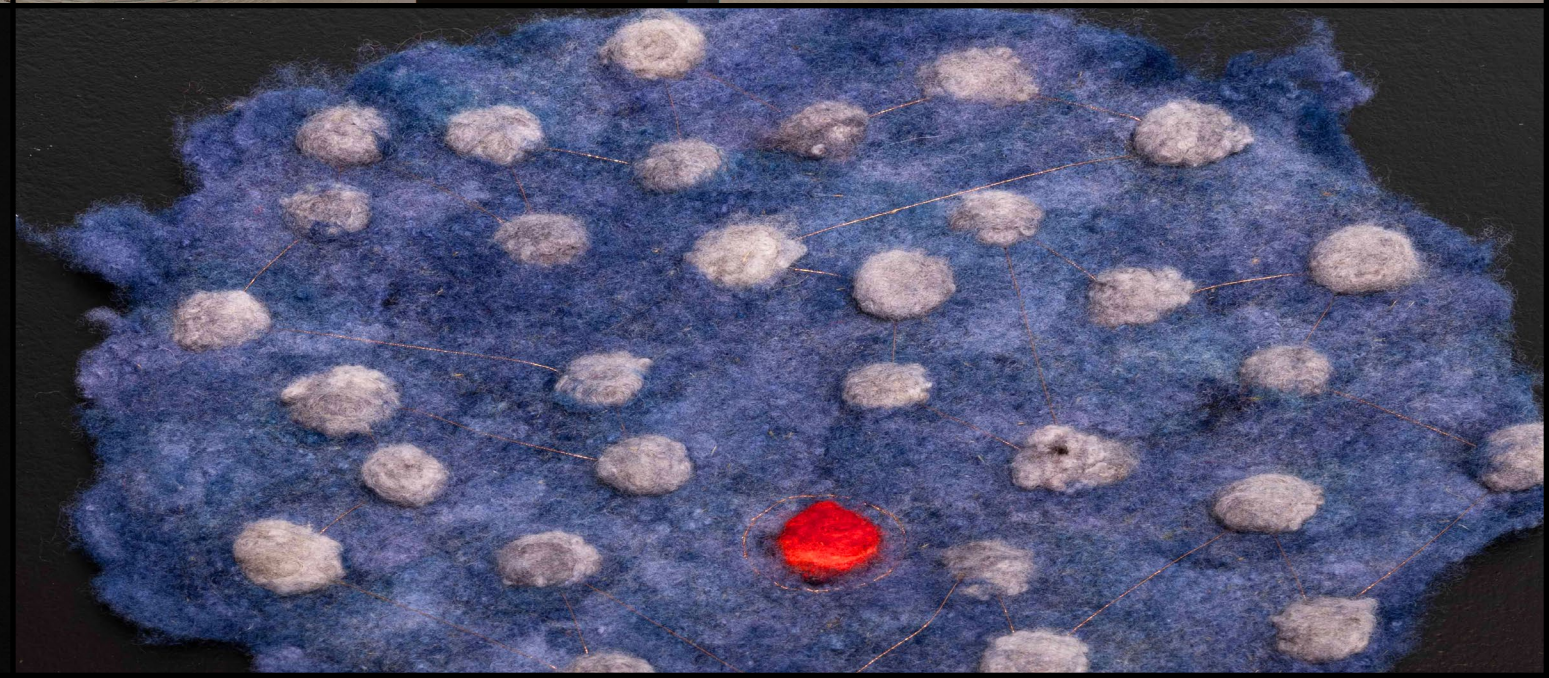
December 3, 2020 - February 27, 2021

Deborah Dumka + Claire Sanford

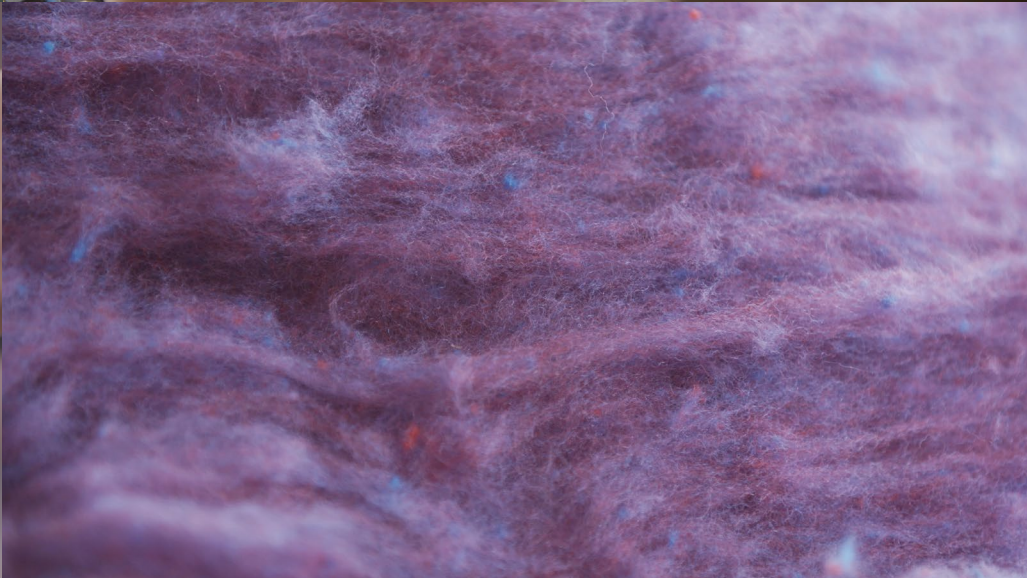


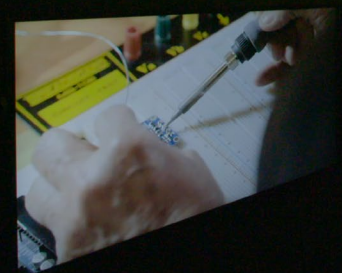
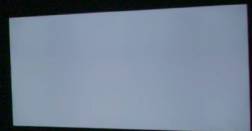
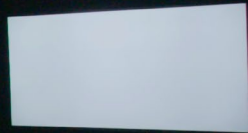


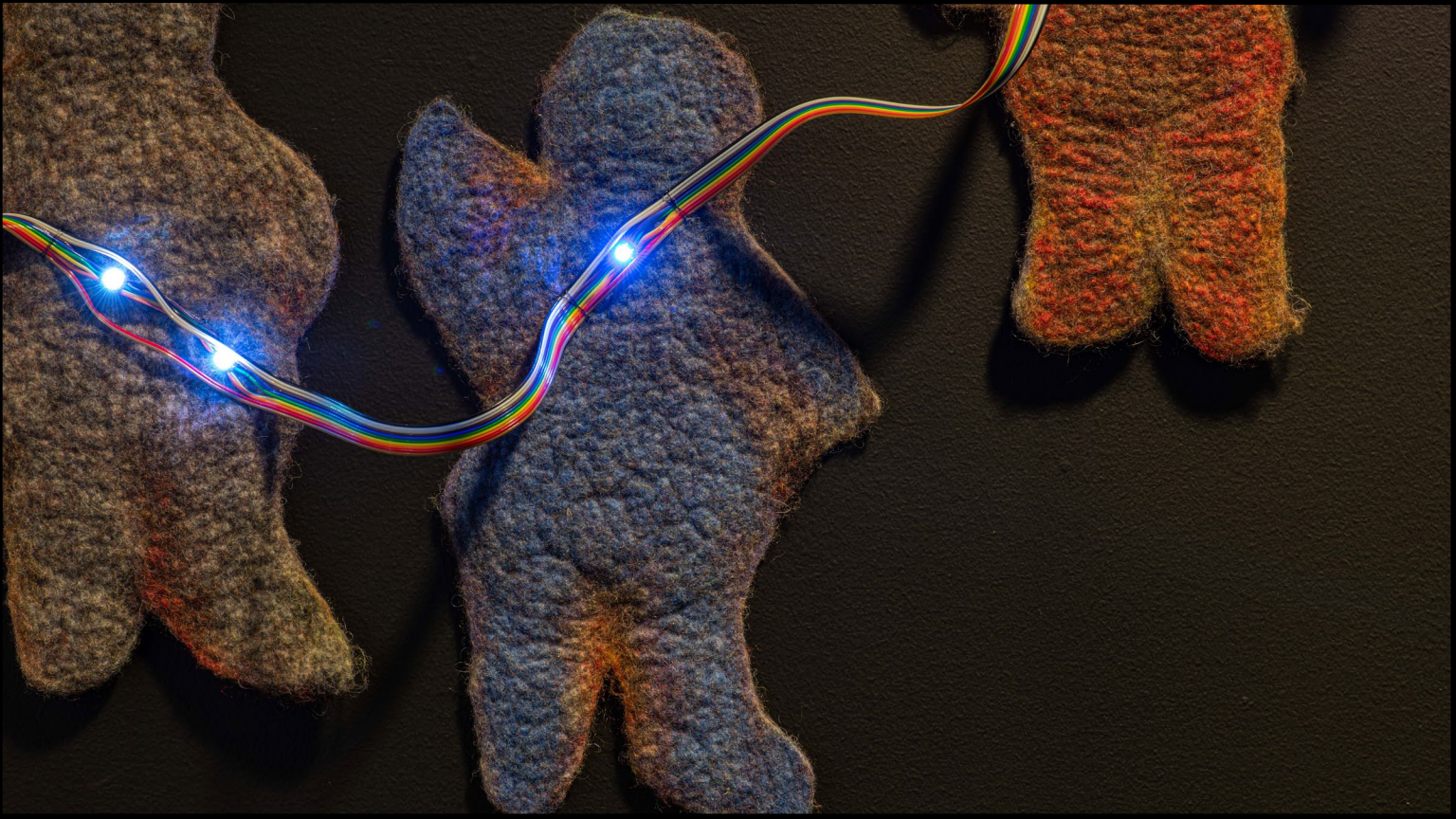
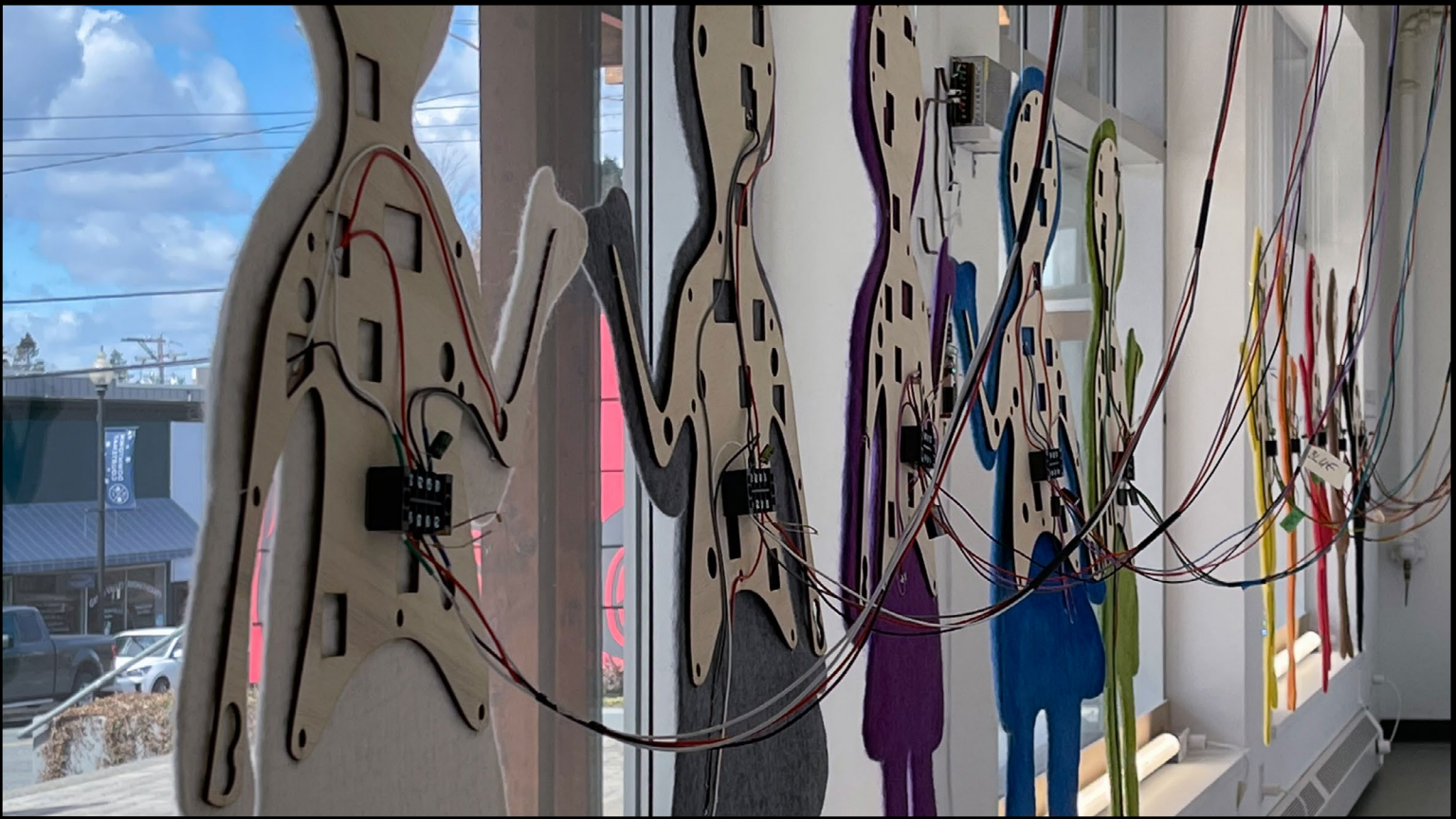














v i s i b l e  
**LABOUR**

Deb Dumka + Claire Sanford

Kristin Nelson

Connie Michel Morey



# VISIBLE LABOUR / Exhibition

March 25 - May 29, 2021

Kristin Nelson

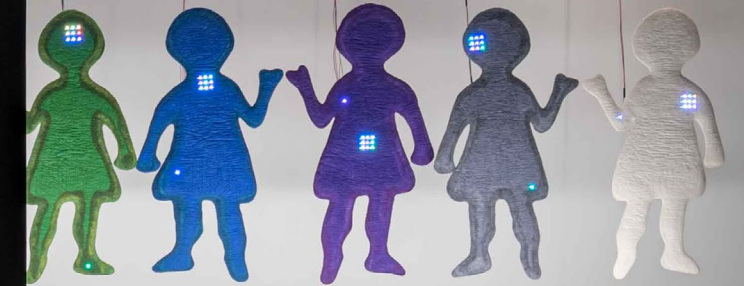
Connie Michele Morey

Deborah Dumka + Claire Sanford

M: VISIBLE LABOUR  
NIE MICHELE MOR  
ANFORD



EB DUMKA





## VISIBLE LABOUR / Exhibition

May 25 - May 29, 2021

Kristin Nelson

Deborah Dumka

Claire Sanford

Connie Michele Morey

An exhibition that brought artists working in very different ways together to share their perspectives about ever-present constancy of the work that is going on all around us.

Virtual platforms actively engaged participants in presentations and make-art activities. Student interns, artists + collaborating partners, and curators engaged in hands-on and technology skills activities that brought them into deeper relationships through knowledge-sharing.

Virtual Community Outreach:

Net Making: An Online Workshop April 17, 2021 | <https://vimeo.com/571332060>

Net Making: An Online Workshop (4:34 excerpt) | <https://vimeo.com/641901321>

Kristin Nelson residency Oct. 31 - Nov. 7, 2021 | <https://vimeo.com/642701999>

NETS / Creative Residency + Make Art Kiosk at CVAG | <https://vimeo.com/642734573>

v i s i b l e  
**LABOUR**

Kristin Nelson Deb Dumka Claire Sanford Connie Michele Morey









CURATORIAL VISIT: DENISE LAWSON (CO-CURATOR) IN CONVERSATION WITH CONNIE MICHELE MOREY  
August 4, 2021



# NETMAKING: AN ONLINE WORKSHOP

April 17, 2021

Instructor: Aidan Smith

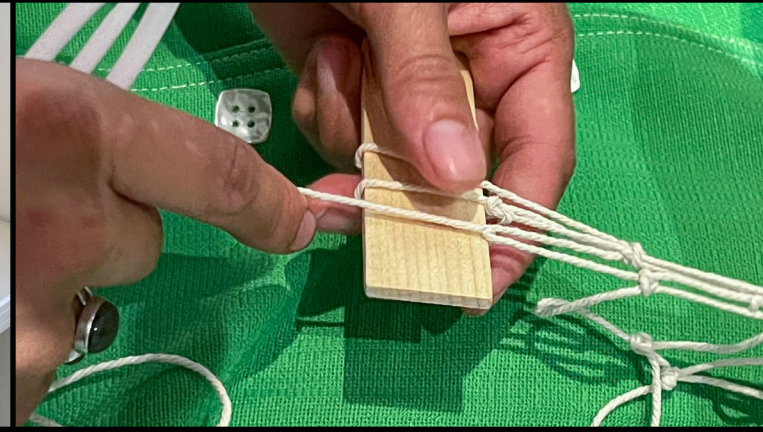
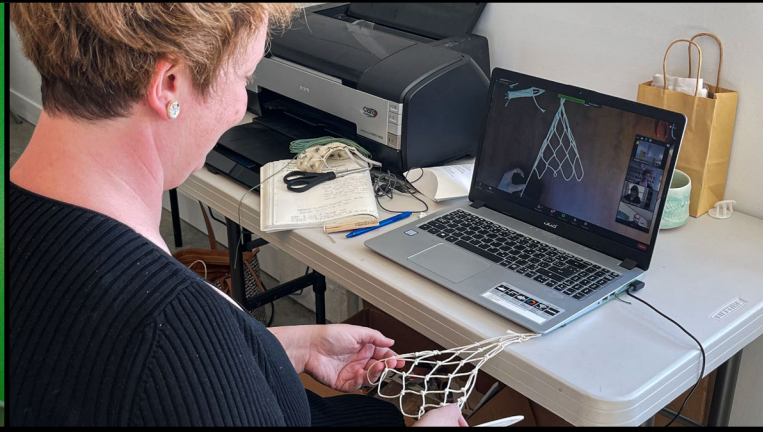
Moderator / Assistant: Kristin Nelson

# visible LABOUR

Kristin Nelson   Deb Du   re Sanford   Connie Michele Morey



This hybrid workshop emerged out of a desire to collectively make, and of a continued curiosity around nets as an object rich in meaning and use value. 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.





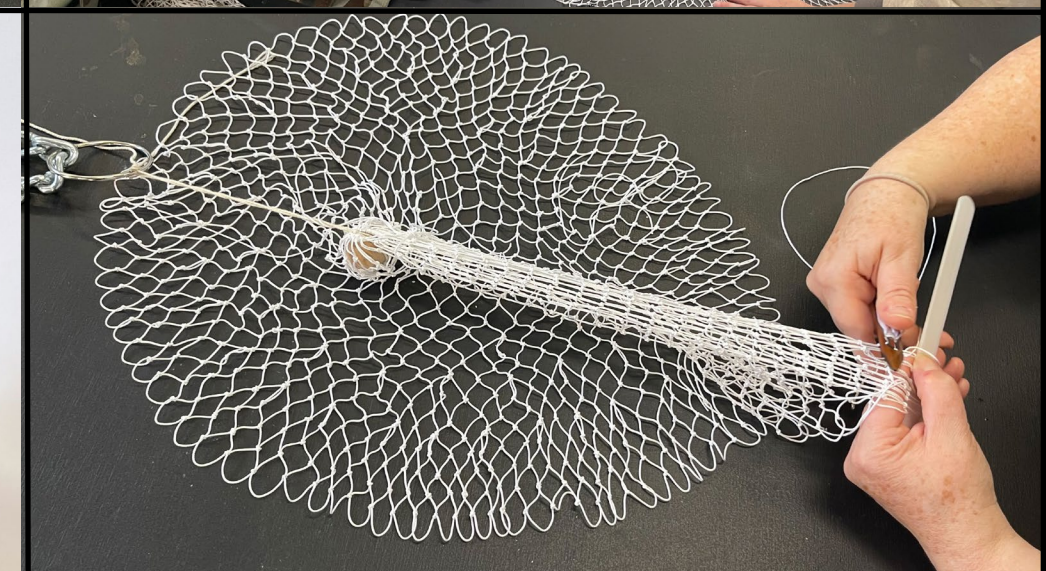
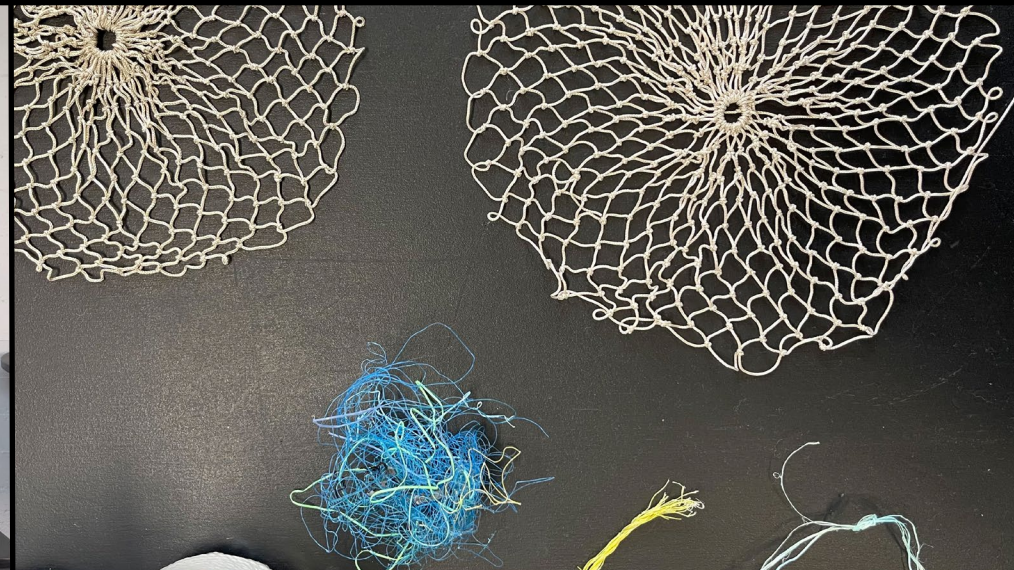
## NETS / CREATIVE RESIDENCY + MAKE ART KIOSK

October 31 - November 7, 2021

### Kristin Nelson

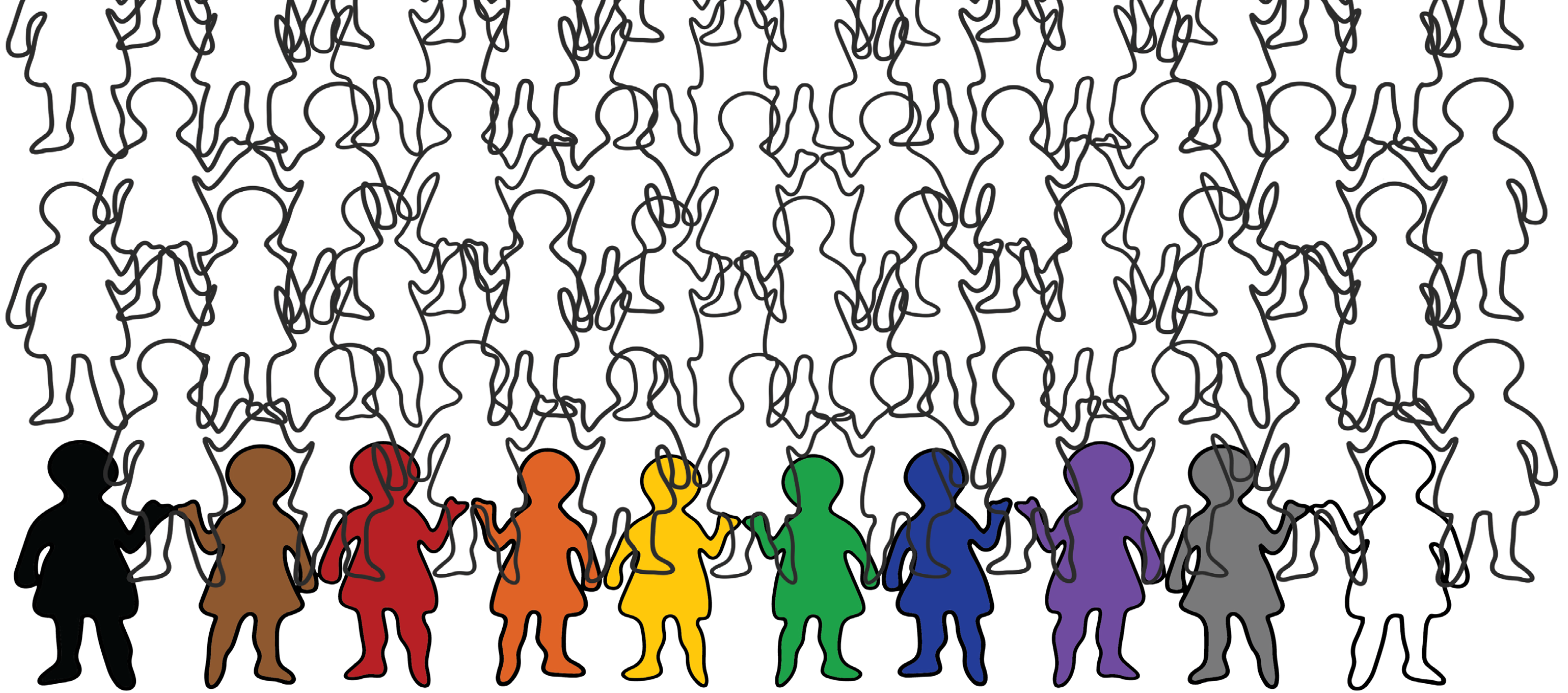
Winnipeg artist Kristin Nelson visited CVAG to undertake a creative residency. The community was invited to visit + try net making. Kristin was onsite at the gallery during regular gallery hours. Visitors were invited to drop in on Kristin in CVAG's Project Room Studio while she worked on her new project *Nets*. A self-serve make art kiosk gave people an opportunity to learn about making nets, alongside Aidan Smith's *Net Making: An Online Workshop*.





VIRTUAL INTERVIEW: KRISTIN NELSON IN CONVERSATION WITH MARLEE MUNRO  
April 11, 2021





O U R Y O U N G G I R L S

A CONVERSATION THAT GIVES VOICE TO LIVED EXPERIENCE AND RADIATES POWER FROM SPEAKING UNCOMFORTABLE TRUTHS

## OUR YOUNG GIRLS /

Interactive Exhibition, Artist Talks, Community Make Art + Live Art Program

March 25 - September 24, 2021

Deborah Dumka

Claire Sanford

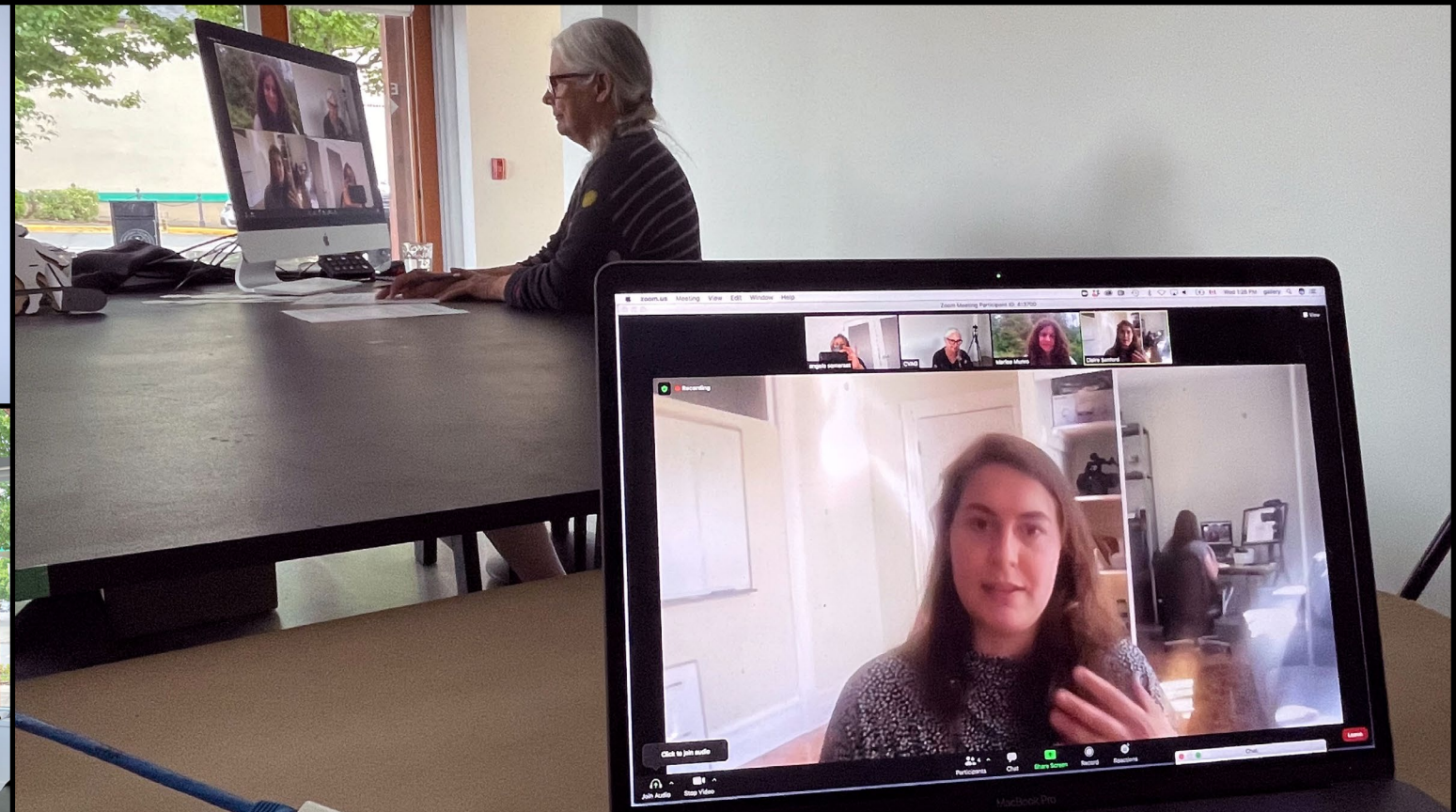
As artists, collaborators, mother + daughter, Deborah Dumka + Claire Sanford have given voice to uncomfortable truths about gender, power and workplace culture. Their material processes integrate fibre, light, colour, interactive technology, and multi-channel video installation to invite the viewer into a relational dynamic emerging from lived experiences. The exhibition OUR YOUNG GIRLS lays bare the continuum and legacy of gender-based discrimination, sexism, and sexual violence and gives voice to the artists experiences. Power radiates from speaking these uncomfortable truths and asks viewers to listen deeply and, in doing so, share in carrying the heavy load – the labour – of sexism and the status quo.

Our Young Girls Community Make Art events  
May-June, 2021

CVAG Community Make Art Drop In Events  
July-Aug. 2021



IN PERSON + VIRTUAL INTERVIEW  
DEBORAH DUMKA + CLAIRE SANFORD + JULIAN RENDELL  
IN CONVERSATION WITH MARLEE MUNRO





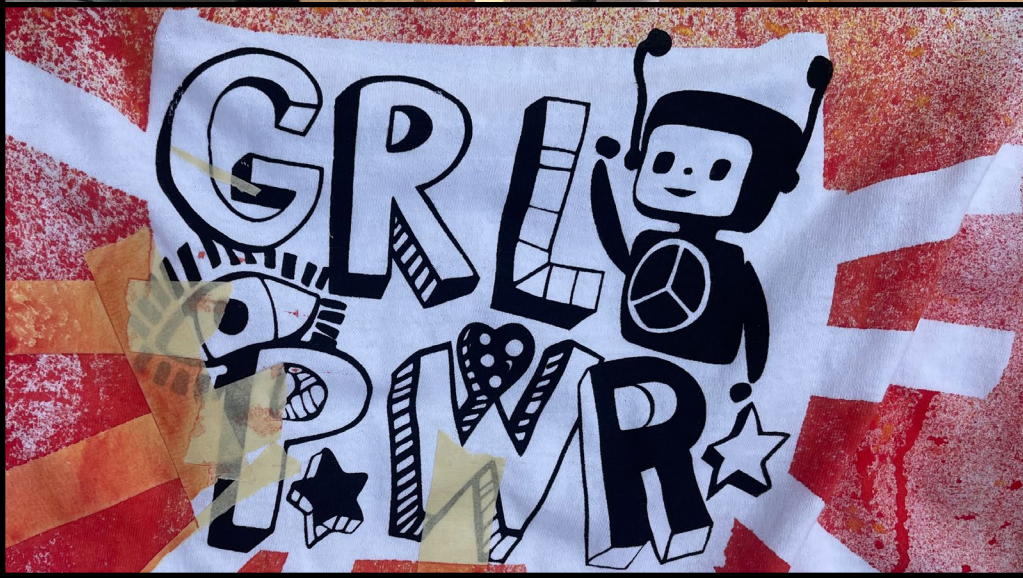
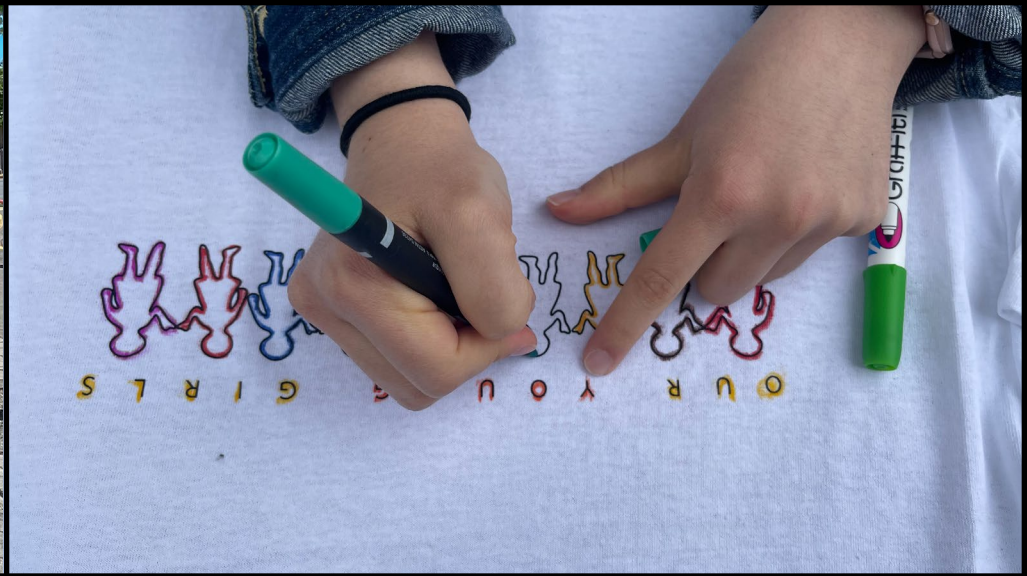
T-shirt design by Zoe Klassen-Somerset, student in the NIDES E.N.T.E.R. (Ecademy of New Technology, Engineering and Robotics) program

## COMMUNITY MAKE ART DROP-IN EVENTS: OUR YOUNG GIRLS

We held several Make Art drop-in events on the CVAG Outdoor Plaza from May to July, 2021 in solidarity with Deborah Dumka's *Our Young Girls* – an interactive installation exploring gender + digital empowerment + access + technology + safe spaces + art. People brought their own T-shirts to screen print and hand colour. We also had some available for purchase. Artist-in-residence Anne Steves held in-person and virtual collage, poster and postcard making drop-ins alongside her work in the exhibition UNDER ONE SKY, which opened on June 23, 2021.









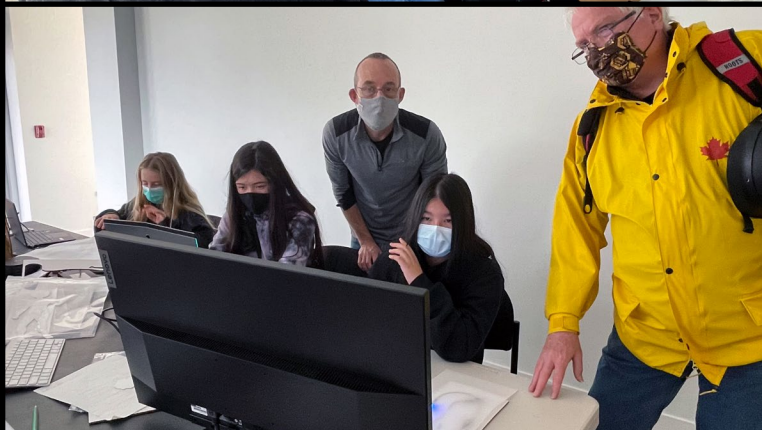
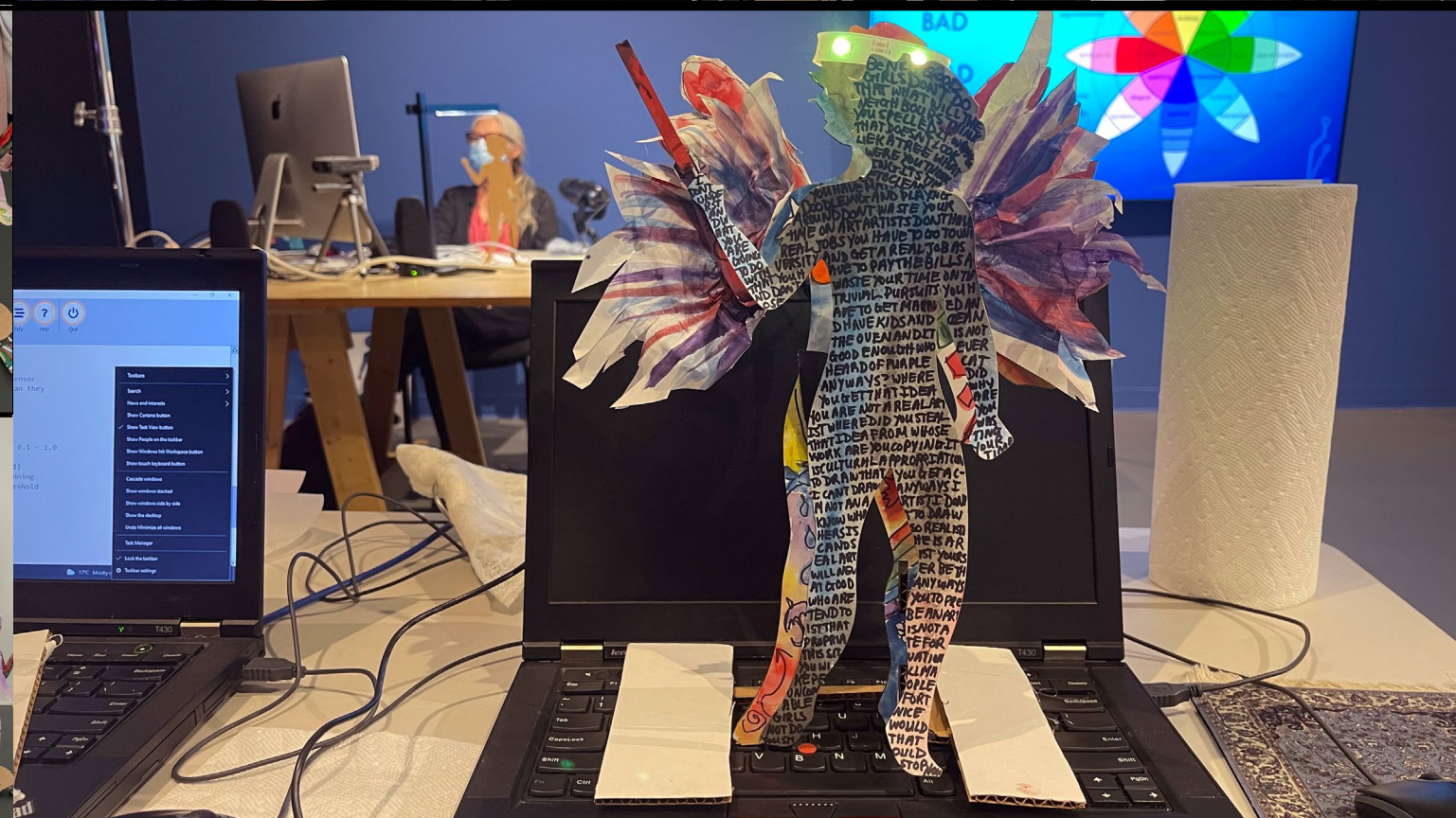
# LIGHTLY, LIGHTLY: AN ONLINE WORKSHOP

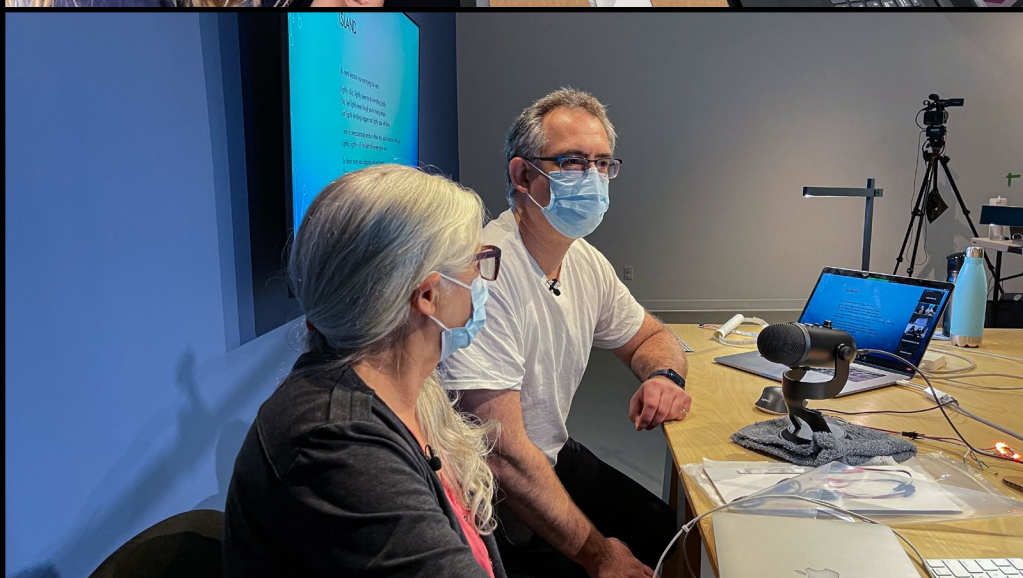
June 12, 2021

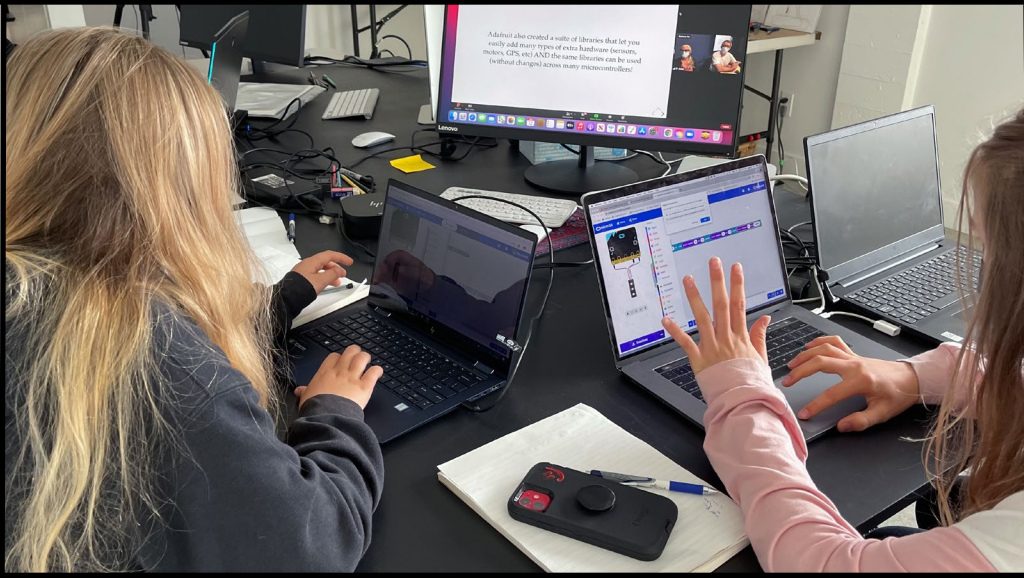
Facilitated by Julian Rendell + Deborah Dumka

*Lightly, Lightly* was an all-day virtual workshop aimed at exploration and experimentation across practices, facilitated by Deborah Dumka and Julian Rendell / hosted by the Comox Valley Art Gallery. Participants were able to join virtually as well as participate onsite at the gallery.

This workshop was part of CVAG's digital pivot, which supports collaborations between art and technology. The gallery is committed to fostering access, safe learning spaces, skill-sharing and relationship building. The gallery supports intergenerational learning and sharing. We always welcome diversity of experience, ideas, perspectives – think incubator + laboratory of curiosity!









## S.T.E.A.M INCUBATOR

July 14 - September 1, 2021

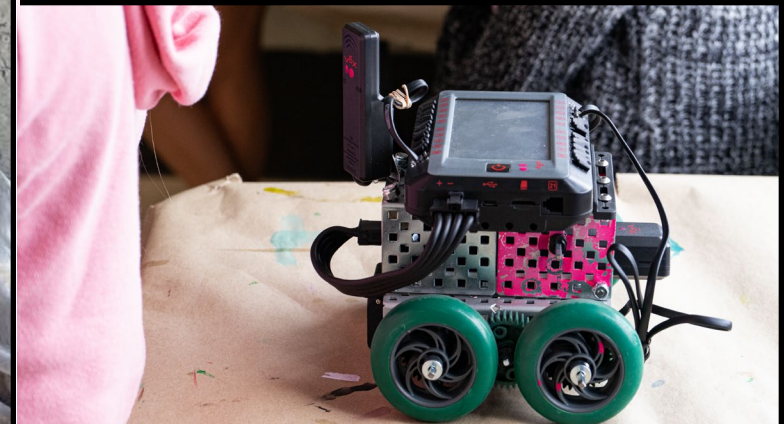
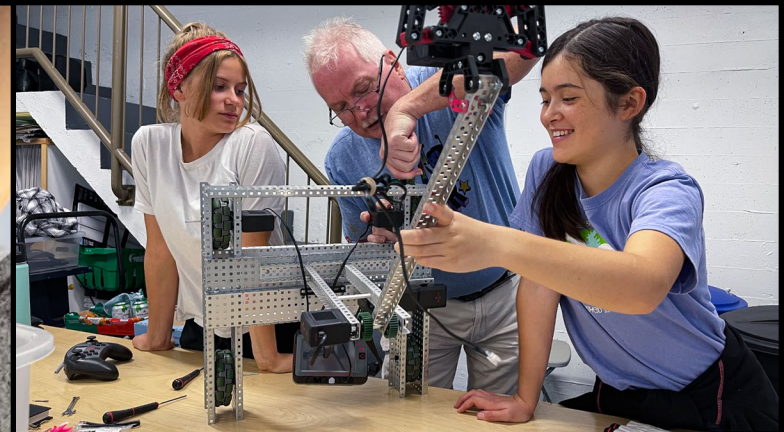
Facilitated by Stew Savard

The incubator was inspired by the work created by Deborah Dumka + Claire Sanford's OUR YOUNG GIRLS interactive installations and related projects at CVAG in the summer of 2021. The collaborative work of this artist and cinema photographer highlighted the challenges those who identify as female often encounter when entering into the fields of mathematics, computers, robotics, engineering, and technology.

A core group of the S.T.E.A.M. INCUBATOR had participated in the collaborative electronics/fibre workshop at CVAG *Lightly Lightly*, facilitated by Deborah Dumka and Julian Rendell. Stew Savard had attended this workshop to check in with the participants, whom he had mentored in robotics as part of their Montessori education program at Queneesh over the past few years. From *Lightly Lightly*, a seed was planted to support the girls in their transition into the E.N.T.E.R. program.

The S.T.E.A.M. incubator provided spaces at CVAG and twice-weekly sessions in July and August for hands-on learning for participants to become familiar with the components for building and programming robots and navigating the culture of these historically male-dominated subject areas. Guest speakers from the community were invited to offer mentorship in their related fields. Thank you, Katie and Kemp, for coming out!

The group showcased their work on Wednesday, September 1 during the S.T.E.A.M. INCUBATOR Open house + OUR YOUNG GIRLS Make Art Event.



**SUPPORTING CREATIVE PRACTICE + COMMUNITY:  
Independent Project Room Studios 2021**

Anne Cummings

Kelsey Epp

Elizabeth Russell

CVAG supports artistic practice with opportunities that occur throughout the CVAG spaces and offer artists dedicated time to do their work. Projects may be stand-alone or woven into the gallery's thematic programming as preparatory inquiry and development for future exhibition work.

Developing Ideas:

Elizabeth Russell's research + creation in  
Gather:Place at the Comox Valley Art Gallery



# PROCESSION (Project Room Studio)

Anne Cumming

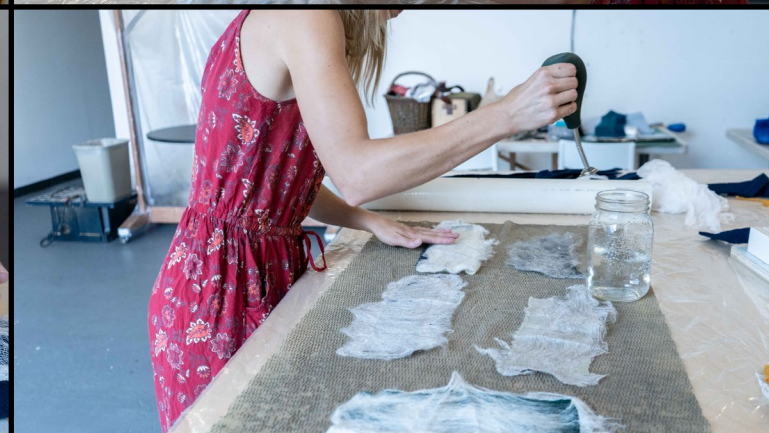


PROJECT ROOM STUDIO

Kelsey Epp



photos by Taylor Robinson



# PROJECT ROOM STUDIO

Elizabeth Russell







## GEORGE SAWCHUK – AFTER FORTY YEARS OF LABOUR

March 11 – May 29, 2019

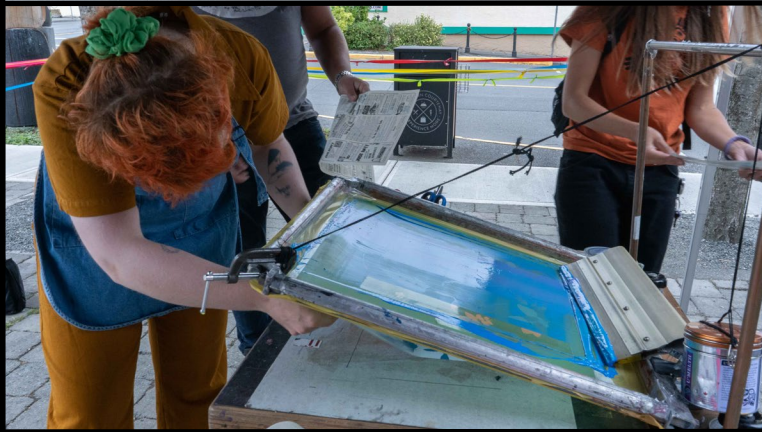
George died in 2012. In 2014, a retrospective exhibition *The Book of George*, at CVAG, featured the breadth of George's art practice. Over the years since, time and nature has enfolded the Forest Gallery to the point where only traces remain. Today, George's portables are the works "left behind" that point to "the poetry, lyricism and understanding of his materials, the labour to secure them and the life lived". Pat Helps, George's wife, has now opened the doors of the storage sheds that have housed George's portables for decades. A small sampling of George's art at CVAG is presented as a way of increasing awareness of an artist whose powerful work is in our midst.

# MAKE ART GARDEN

August 25, 2021

Facilitator: **Gabrielle Moore-Pratt**

Inspired by the Traditional Indigenous Full Circle Tea Garden that resides on CVAG plaza, we held a live screen-printing event where people could ring plant silhouettes onto postcards to decorate.



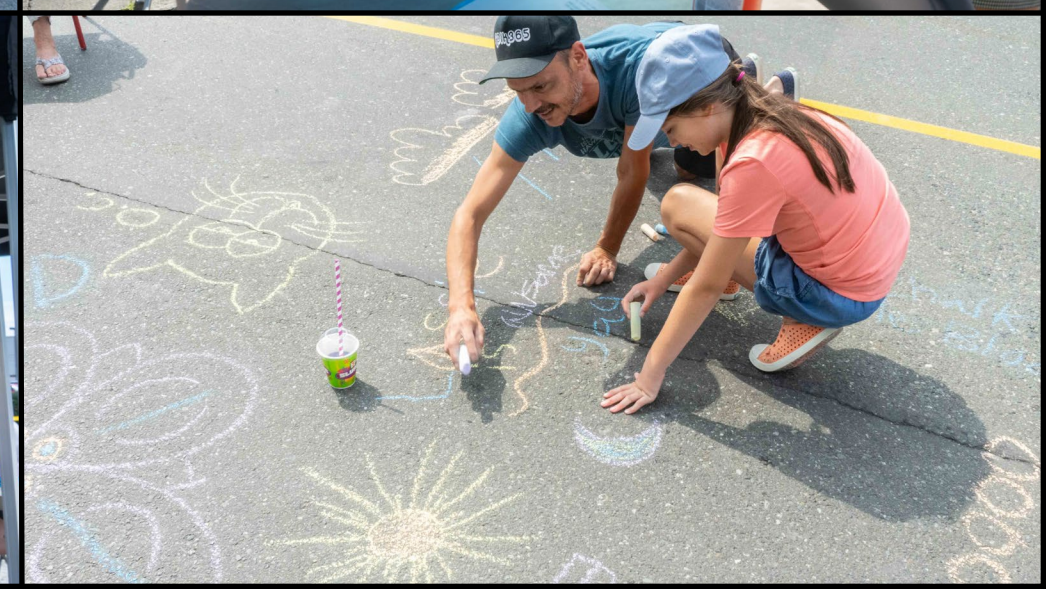




# MAKE ART: CHALK THE BLOCK + LANTERN-MAKING STATION

August 15 - 21, 2021

These events were part of the Salish Sea Festival A Week of Lanterns.



# OFFSITE\_ONSITE

NISRINE BOUKHARI (AUSTRIA) / ALFREDO DE STEFANO (MEXICO) / ANNE STEVES (CUMBERLAND) / SHELLEY VANDERBYL (COMOX)

## **OFFSITE\_ONSITE / A multifaceted year-long program with international outreach.**

**February 27 - September 4, 2021**

**Abir Boukhari (Sweden)**, All Art Now collaborating curator,  
local and international artists:

**Nisrine Boukhari (Austria)**

**Alfredo De Stefano (Mexico)**

**Anne Steves (Cumberland)**

**Shelley Vanderbyl (Comox)**

Relational practice, artist to artist to curator to curator to artists to collaborators, underpinned the OFFSITE\_ONSITE convergent program. Creative research and production residencies extended over the year allowing for relationship building, deep inquiry, collaborative production, sustained community engagement and the evolution of presentations for exhibition. Gallery spaces were adapted, windows have become portals, media screens and internet platforms were enlivened, and installation projects were situated offsite and onsite. These portals became access points to lived experiences, truth telling, realms of time, notions of shared space, and to places both near and far.

OFFSITE\_ONSITE program and UNDER ONE SKY exhibition video documentation

*"About the Blue": an artist talk by Nisrine Boukhari*

Nisrine Boukhari *The Light That Gets Lost*

UNDER ONE SKY Alfredo De Stefano artist talk

*Maybe they don't mind my dirty shoes*  
performance by Shelley Vanderbyl

Anne Steves Community Make Art Virtual Events

Shelley Vanderbyl Residency Images

Shelley Vanderbyl Offsite\_Onsite Research  
and Production Residency 2021

Anne Steves *Contact*

Nisrine Boukhari *The Light That Gets Lost*

Alfredo De Stefano *Visit My Studio*

OFFSITE\_ONSITE / RESEARCH + PRODUCTION RESIDENCY

December 3, 2020 - May 29, 2021

Shelley Vanderbyl



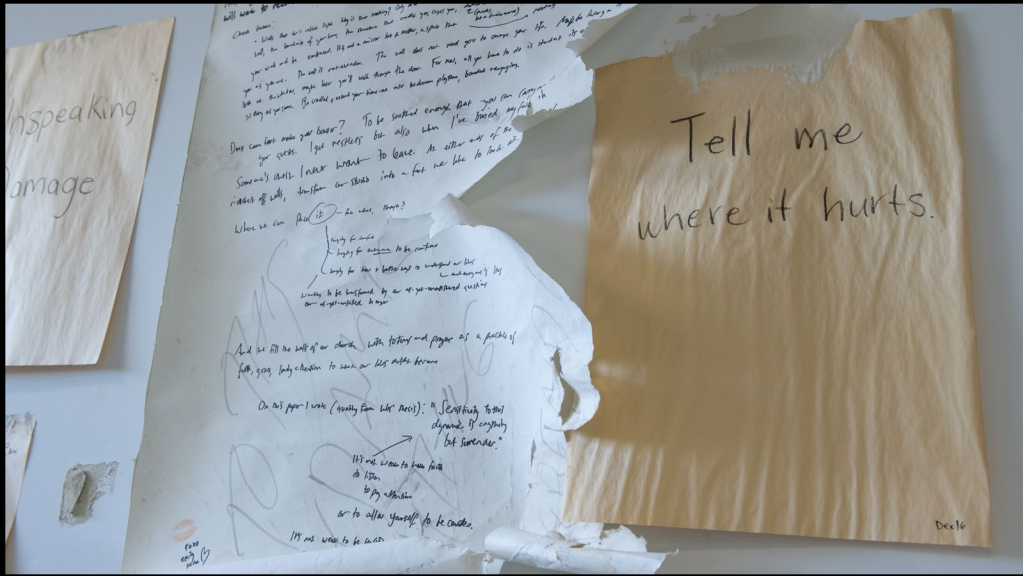
## OFFSITE\_ONSITE / RESEARCH + PRODUCTION RESIDENCIES

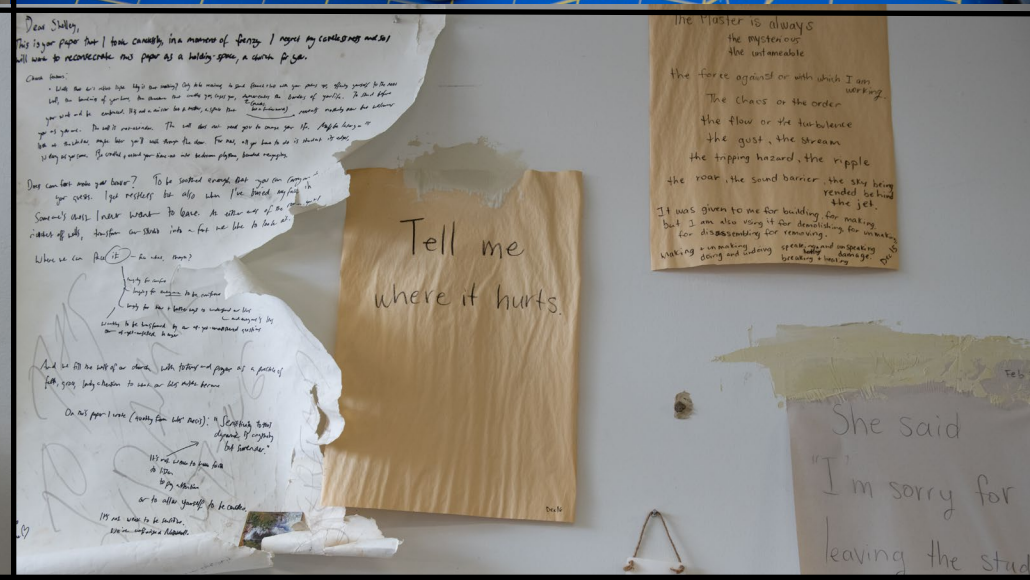
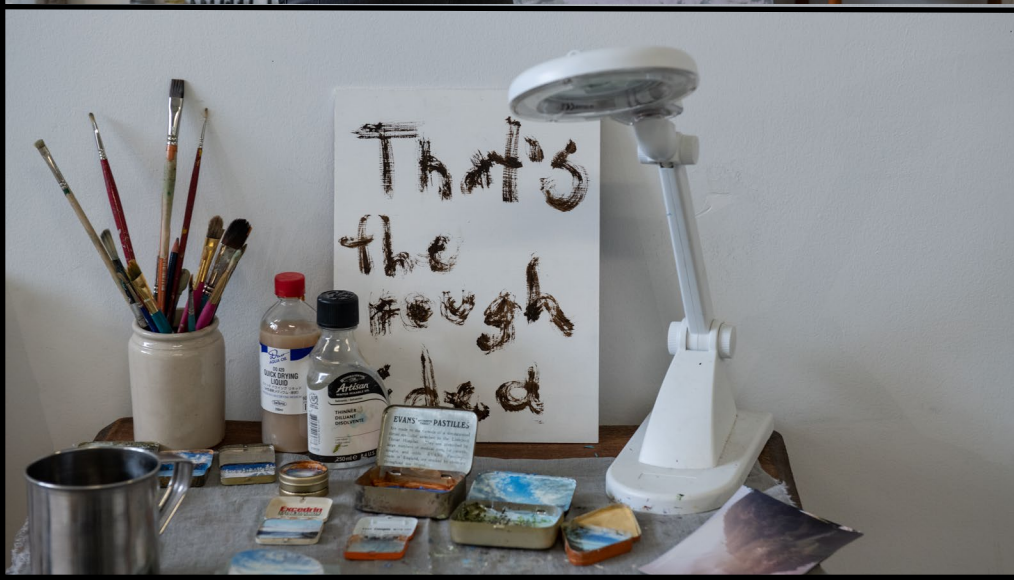
Over the span of time and the space between us, curators and artists from the Comox Valley, Sweden and Austria have undertaken a relational practice toward the collaborative exhibition UNDER ONE SKY, presented June – September, 2021.

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 the *OFFSITE\_ONSITE* research + production residencies could be seen and heard day and night through the lower side windows of CVAG on 6th Street.

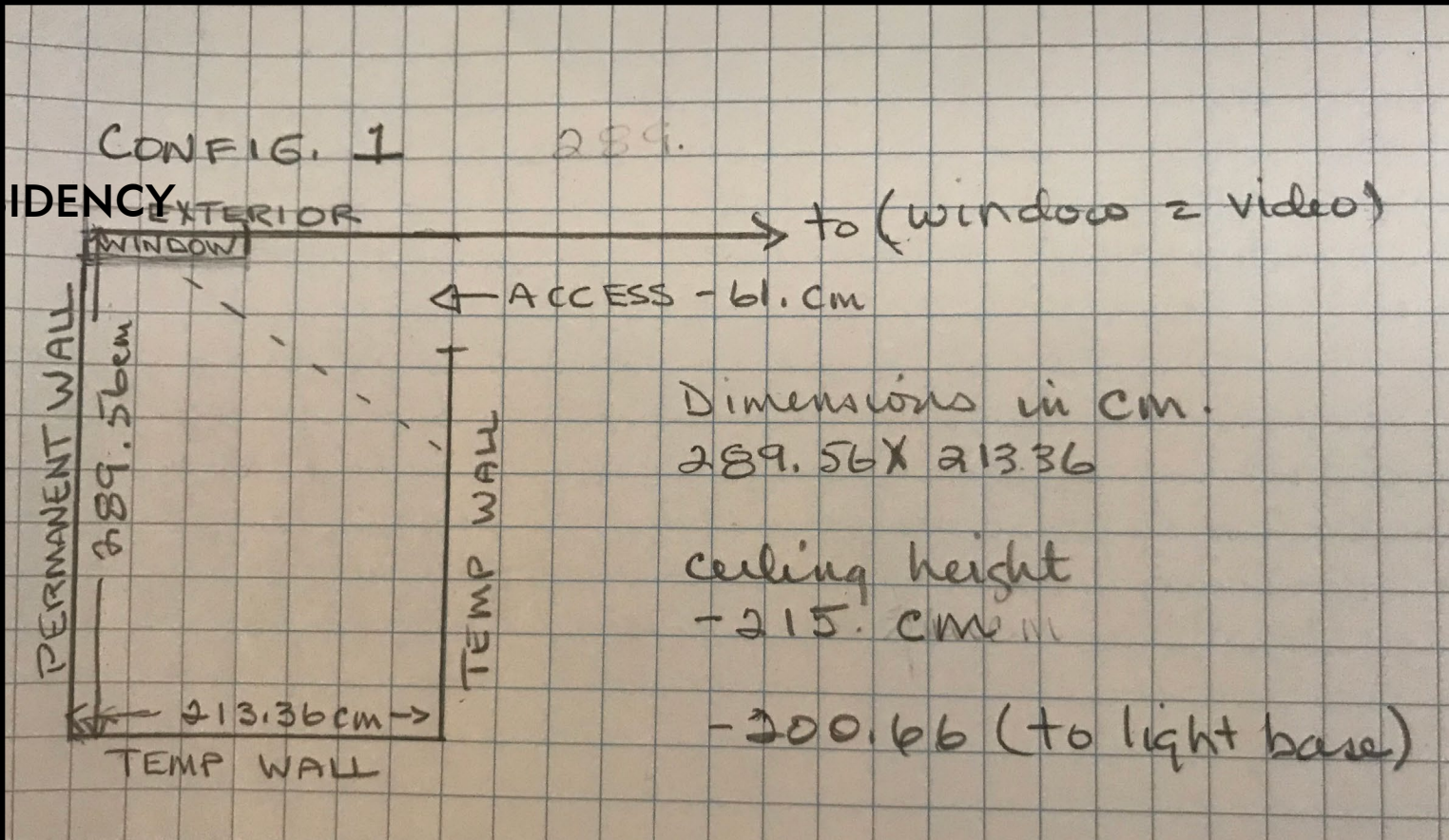




# OFFSITE\_ONSITE / VIRTUAL RESEARCH + PRODUCTION RESIDENCY

February 25 - September 4, 2021

Nisrine Boukhari





**THE LIGHT THAT GETS LOST** (installation with audio, 2021)

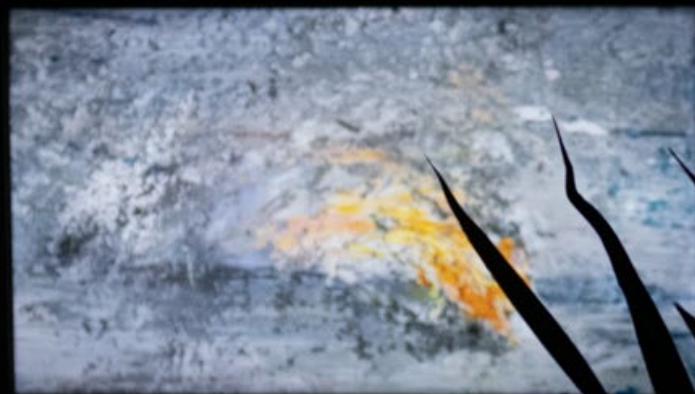
February 25 - September 4, 2021

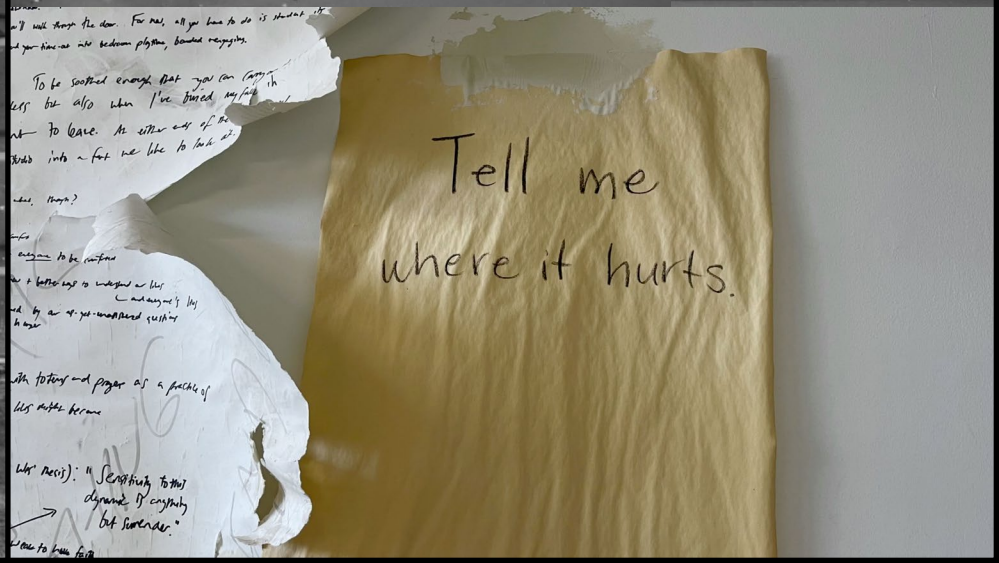
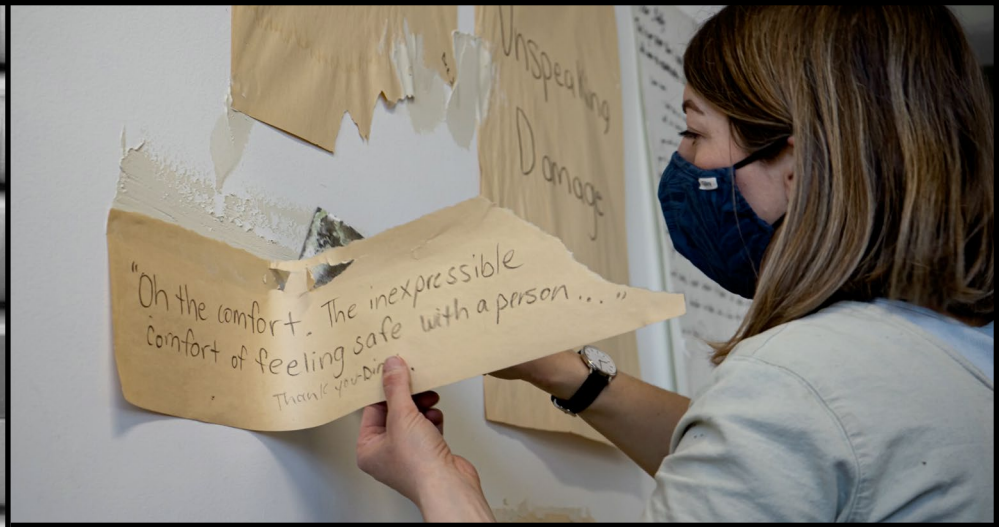
Nisrine Boukhari

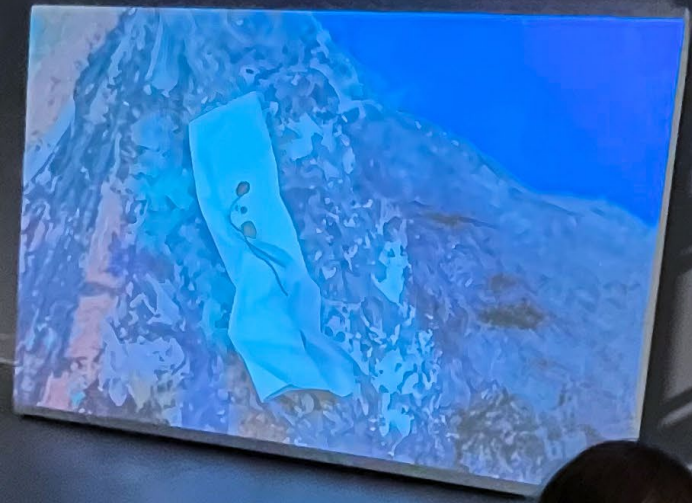
**FIRE SAFETY / HELP** (video installations, 2021)

December 3, 2020 - September 4, 2021

Shelley Vanderbyl







Do we both  
 ally and the  
 e between us?

Carve  
 crum  
 the  
 arrange the d

Sometimes the  
 wall is somebody  
 else. Sometimes the wall  
 is me. Look at all  
 the imperfections  
 and see the beauty  
 acceptance there  
 some beautiful things

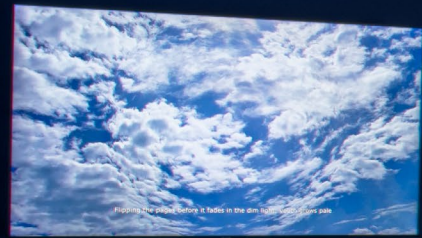
increase  
 the wrong  
 comes  
 fire got out

fire  
 safety

Handwritten notes on a yellow piece of paper, including the words "fire" and "safety".

# UNDER ONE SKY / EXHIBITION

June 16 - September 4, 2021



## Shelley Vanderbyl

*Stacked Painting Installation* (*Fire break* (fresco and fire on wooden panel, 8" x 10", 2021), *Giving the grease to the wheel that never squeaks* (fresco on wooden panel, 24" x 36", 2021), *Accidental signal fire* (fresco diptych on panels 8"x8", 8"x8", 2021), *Help* (fire on plastered panel, 24" d., 2021), *Prescribed Fire* (video in collaboration with CVAG Productions, 10:42 2021))

## Nisrine Boukhari

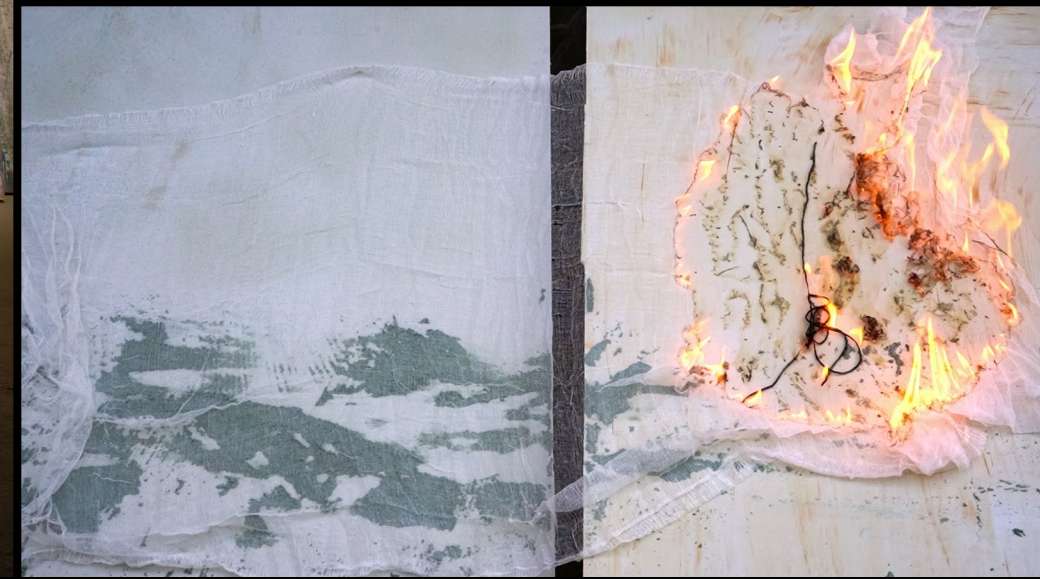
*The Blue Was More Distant Than The Sky* (video installation, 9:07 min., 2021) Produced in collaboration with Havremagasinet LansKonsthall

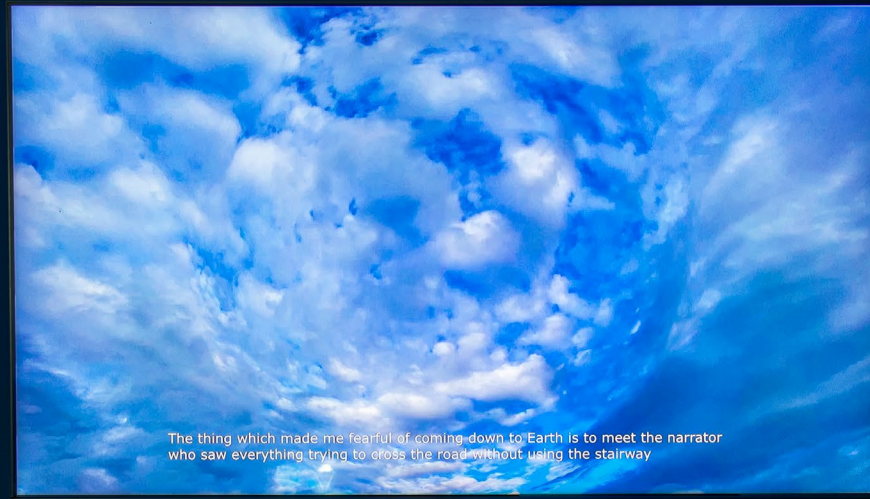
## Alfredo De Stefano

*Constellation* (video, 2:36 min., 2019) / *Meteoritos* (video, :57 min., 2020) / *VISIT MY STUDIO / VISITA MI ESTUDIO* (video, 4:00 min., 2020)

## Anne Steves

*Contact* (video, 26 min., 2021) / *Tracing* (video, 6 min. 30 sec., 2021)





*The Blue Was More Distant Than The Sky* (video installation, 9:07 min., 2021)

**Nisrine Boukhari**

Produced in collaboration with Havremagasinet LansKonsthall



*The Blue Was More Distant Than The Sky* (video installation, 9:07 min., 2021)

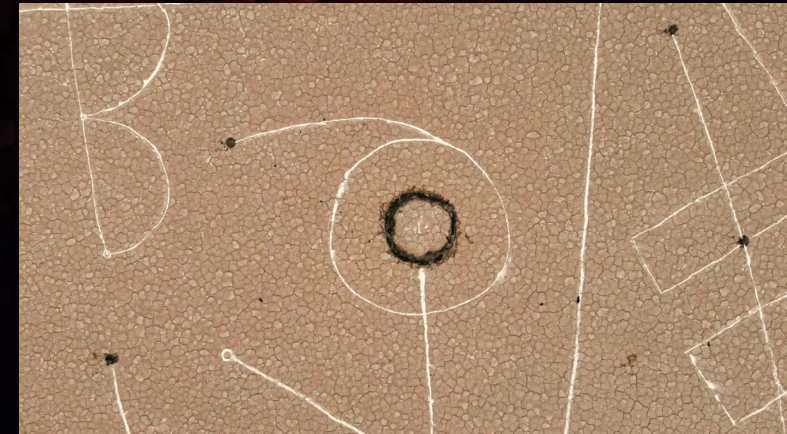
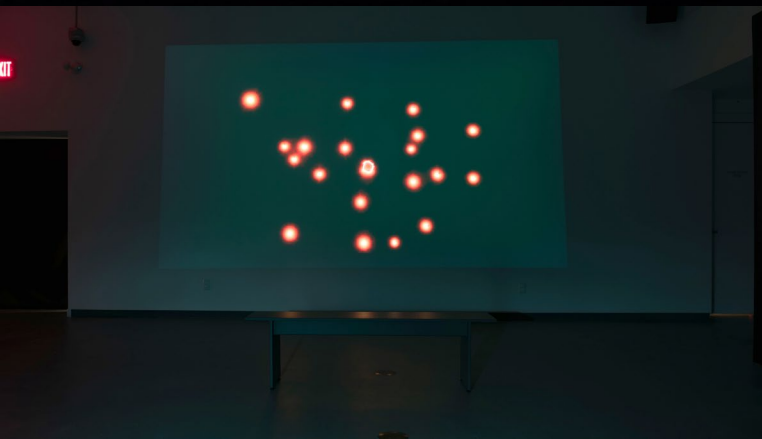
**Nisrine Boukhari**

Produced in collaboration with Havremagasinet LansKonsthall

Let's start again to discover how the weather has changed

*Constellation* (video, 2:36 min., 2019)

Alfredo De Stefano






Dinosaur (offsite installation at Courtenay + District Museum and Palaeontology Centre)

Alfredo De Stefano



Contact (top left, right) video installation, 2021), Tracing (bottom left, middle) (video installation, 2021)

Anne Steves

ENTER 

DEAR NICOLE  
IS IT POSSIBLE  
TO BE TOGETHER  
APART?  
I HAVE BEEN WONDERING  
WHETHER THE SCREEN ACTS  
LIKE THE SURFACE OF A LAKE,  
REFLECTING BACK A DISTORTED US.

Dear Nicole,  
Is it possible to be together apart?  
I have been wondering whether the screen acts like the surface of a lake, reflecting back a distorted us.



any,  
live  
of shrunken time  
ce  
retimes this seems to fool us  
eving that more is universal



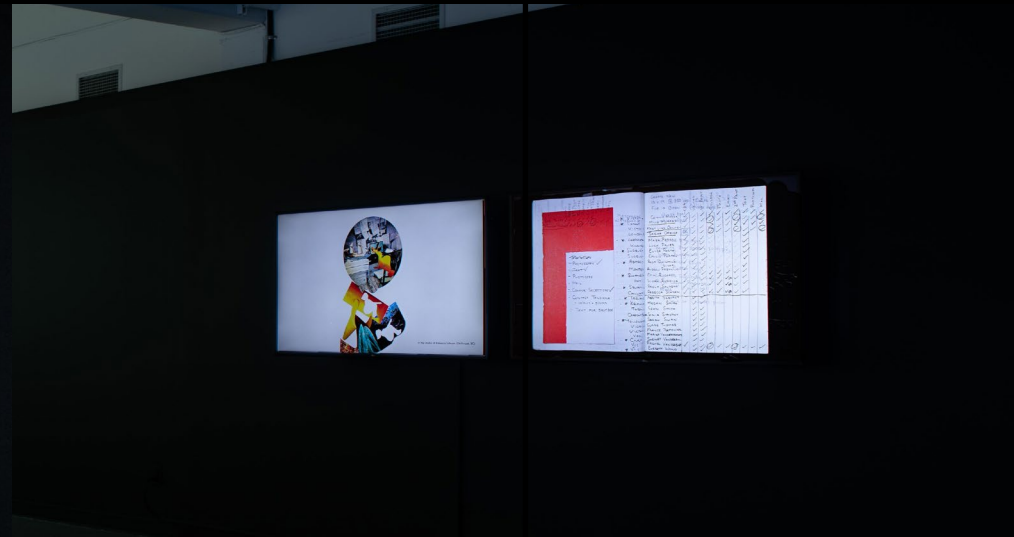
A MAKE → LABOUR → TOIL & TROUBLE → WOMEN WHO CAST

- What can I do to share what these women do?
- How am I choosing who to include?
- Is there a way to include communities?
- How will the physical and the virtual intersect?

OBJECTS FROM ONE ENVIRONMENT IN OURS

WHAT IS THE POINT?  
How do we connect & connect with rural female artists across the country?  
WITH A FOCUS ON THE LAND IN WHICH WE LIVE + THE LABOUR THAT TAKES PLACE THERE.

- Take photos of sites across our region
- Mail out
- Make portraits
- Learn who making
- Make portraits
- Create QR code
- Distribute



Contact (video installation, 2021)

Anne Steves



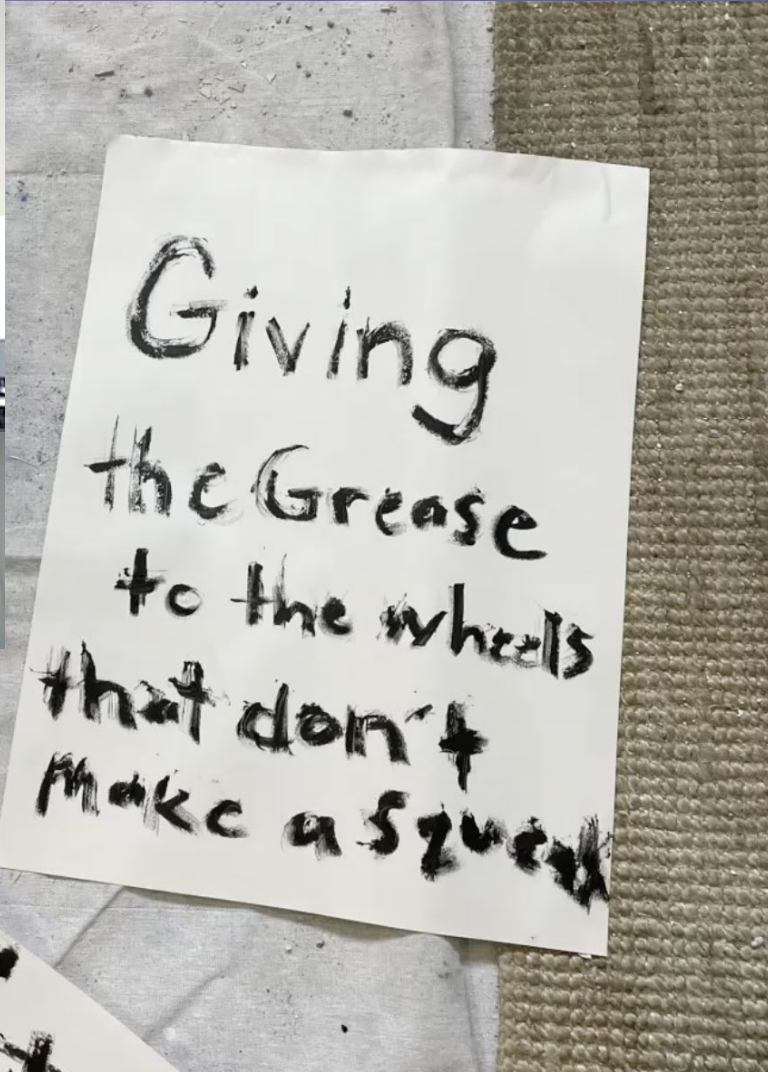
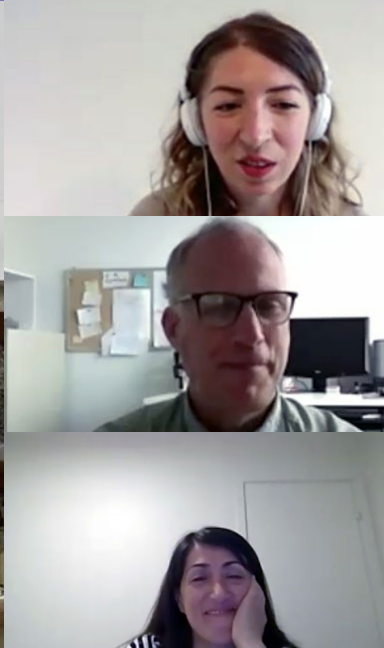
Dear Laura,  
All over the place  
is the best way  
to make  
things.  
Stay Safe?



# UNDER ONE SKY ART OPENING / VIRTUAL EVENT

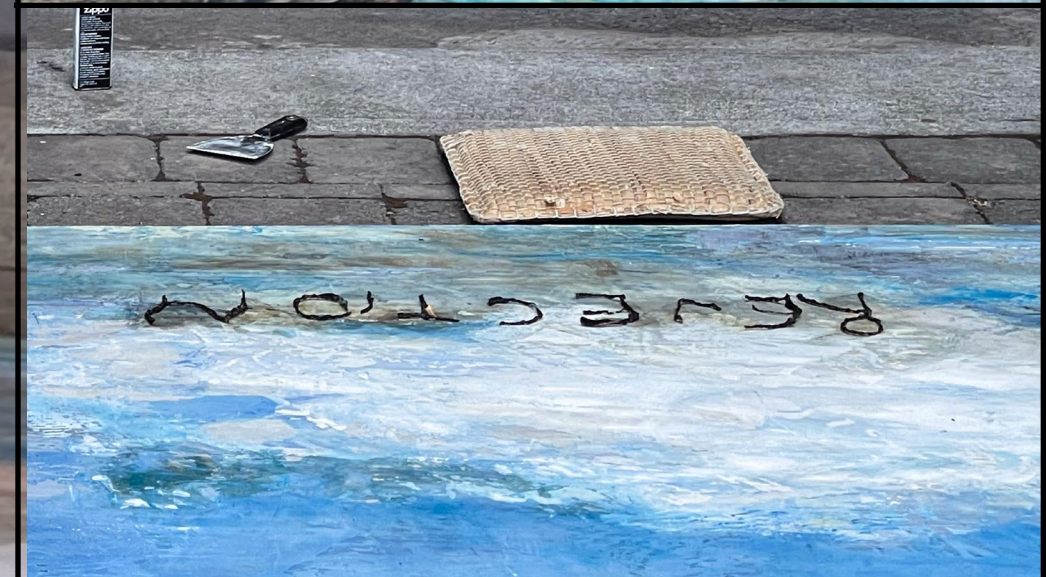
June 23, 2021

Erasing the horizon line, I painted a blue room for blurring the boundaries of sky-earth in an immersive experience to live in for 10 minutes,



Maybe They Don't Mind My Dirty Shoes (9 min., performance, 2021)  
June 23, 2021

Shelley Vanderbyl





GIDAHL-GUDSLAAY / TERRI-LYNN WILLIAMS-DAVIDSON, A COMMUNITY COLLABORATION

September 29 - December 31 2021

COMOX VALLEY ART GALLERY



EXHIBITION / ARTIST TALKS / CULTURAL SHARING / MUSIC CONCERT



## GID<sup>A</sup>HL-GUDSLLAAY / TERRI-LYNN WILLIAMS-DAVIDSON

In collaboration with community partners, the work of Terri-Lynn Williams-Davidson / GID<sup>A</sup>HL-GUDSLLAAY was presented through community engagement events that include cultural sharing + teachings, education outreach to local schools and the public, the annual Iona Campagnolo lecture, an art opening + artist talk, and a music concert at the Sid Williams Theatre.

### Week of Events:

12+13 OCT / SD71 CULTURAL SHARING

13 OCT / COMMUNITY JUSTICE CENTRE DINNER

14 OCT / CAMPAGNOLO 10TH ANNIVERSARY LECTURE

15 OCT / CVAG EXHIBITION PUBLIC OPENING + ARTIST TALK

16 OCT / SGAANAGWA CONCERT AT SID WILLIAMS THEATRE

### Exhibition 29 September - 31 December:

TLGAA K'AAYSGUUXAN SGAANAGWAS / THE SUPERNATURAL REALM

SGAAN TLAGÉE / LAND OF SUPERNATURAL BEINGS

Art Opening / Cultural Sharing / Artist Talk  
livestream October 15, 2021

TLGAA K'AAYSGUUXAN SGAANAGWAS /  
THE SUPERNATURAL REALM  
SGAAN TLAGÉE / LAND OF SUPERNATURAL  
BEINGS Exhibition



*Herring*, window graphics by Robert Davidson

## GID AHL-GUDSLLAAY / TERRI-LYNN WILLIAMS-DAVIDSON, A COMMUNITY COLLABORATION

"My practice of law, music, art, and writing are all grounded in a desire to contribute to our understanding of humanity's relationship with the land and sea."

Born in Haida Gwaii, Terri-Lynn Williams-Davidson has been a promoter of Haida music and language since the age of 13, when she was drawn to the songs her centenarian great-grandmother and grandmother sang. Terri-Lynn is a musician, author, activist, artist, and lawyer who has dedicated herself to the continuation of Haida language and culture.

# TERRI-LYNN WILLIAMS-DAVIDSON / A COMMUNITY COLLABORATION

September 29 - December 31, 2021

Honouring commitment to decolonization + reconciliation + traditional indigenous protocols / collaboration with cultural advisors and community partner / hybrid delivery and activations / comprehensive education outreach

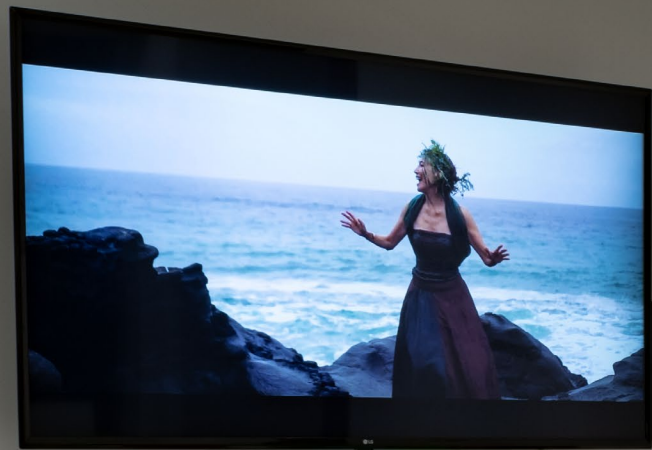
TLGAA K'AAYSGUUXAN SGAANAGWAS / THE SUPERNATURAL REALM  
SGAAN TLAGÉE / LAND OF SUPERNATURAL BEINGS

September 29 - December 31, 2021



*Hiilang.nga Xidid Jaad / Hiilang / Thunderbird Woman,  
Thunderbird Woman, 42"x56.5"x28", metal, leather,  
feathers, crystals, mirror pieces, graphic by Robert Davidson*





Informational text panel next to the digital display.

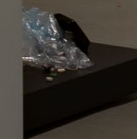


GIDABL-GUDSLLAAY — TERRI-LYNN WILLIAMS-DAVIDSON

TLGAA K'AAYSGUUXAN SGAANAGWAS — THE SUPERNATURAL REALM

SGAAN TLAGÉE — LAND OF SUPERNATURAL BEINGS

29 SEPTEMBER 2021 — 31 DECEMBER 2021



## FOR XAAYDAGA GWAAY.YAAY

### HAIDA GWAIL: THE ISLANDS OF THE PEOPLE



We watched the birth of the land,  
the origins of humanity

Glaciers and floods, we cleansed the earth  
We became the land and sea

Now we stand up and say:  
*Guu dang.ngaay tlaats'iiga*  
*Guu danganhl tlaats ga dii*  
*Guudangáang hl tláats'gaadaa*  
Make Your Mind Strong

#### THE HOPE OF THE SUPERNATURAL BEINGS / GID AHL-GUDSLLAAY — TERRI-LYNN WILLIAMS-DAVIDSON

While I was growing up in Skidegate, my parents introduced me to some of the Supernatural Beings of Haida Gwaii. I was fascinated when my ancestors shared narratives and songs about them, and even more intrigued to hear that some ancestors had actually seen Supernatural Beings. I tried to visualize what they looked like and later learned that many Haida artists—from Charles Edenshaw to Robert Davidson and their contemporaries—have represented Supernatural Beings and crests in their masks, sculptures, paintings, songs, and oral narratives.

The more I studied and learned about Supernatural Beings, the more I appreciated their intimate connections to land and sea, as well as our interconnectedness. Through my work as a lawyer, I came to appreciate the extent of unsustainable natural resource extraction and the impact of such extraction upon the land and sea, the Supernatural Beings, and humanity. I began writing songs about the Supernatural Beings, but I could not escape my desire to visualize them. Photographs became a medium for this exploration, temporarily providing a detour from music recording, but ultimately helping to inspire music lyrics. My practice of law, music, art, and writing are all grounded in a desire to contribute to our understanding of humanity's relationship with the land and sea. All four disciplines have become an exploration of Haida laws expressed through the Supernatural Beings and Crest Figures portrayed in this book.

The art in this book is novel and, therefore, somewhat risky. I assumed the risk and used my image as the basis for the Supernatural Beings. This decision limited the Supernatural Beings to those that are female, but it also opened the way for depictions of Crest Figures, including traditional face paintings belonging to my clan, the Gaagyaits (Gawaay), Those-Born-at-a-Reef-Called-Gaagyaits, also called the Skedans Ravens. As my husband, Robert Davidson, explains, the Haida word for mask is *nijaang.uu*, which translates literally as "to imitate." He explains that in the context of dance, to imitate means to "bring to life" and to become each Being.<sup>1</sup> Equipped with the narratives my mother and others relayed, the written ethnographic record, and the power of visualization, I drew upon my experience as a Haida dancer to dramatize and bring to life the Supernatural Beings and Crest Figures.

Traditionally, the power of Supernatural Beings is contained in dress and adornment. Dress in Indigenous cultures is integral to dramatizing and bringing to life Supernatural Beings and Crest Figures. For instance, one Supernatural Being dons an actual rainbow as its dress to attend a potlatch. Haida people also bring out specific garments and masks<sup>2</sup> and dance them in potlatches, feasts, and other ceremonies to affirm rights to wear them. Every Haida clan has rights to specific crests, which are representations of animals or Supernatural Beings documenting the history of the clan from its origins through to contemporary times. Similarly, each clan also has rights to wear certain adornments to ceremonial clothing, such as the right to wear an eagle feather, to attach mica to the face, or to bear specific face paintings depicting the clan's crests.

Most of the Beings in this book are dressed in Indigenous fashion to affirm their contemporary existence; they are not confined to ceremony or to another time. Indigenous fashion is therefore a tool to help bring each Being out of concealment and into the full light of our consciousness and everyday life.

In addition to Indigenous fashion there are three other layers of art in each image. The first is the art of the principal photographers, art director, and image composers who helped breathe life into my vision. The second is the art of mostly local photographers who provided plate images of specific locations referenced in the oral narratives, thereby reconnecting oral traditions to the land and sea. Third, almost all the images contain Robert Davidson's art, to help draw connections to abstract representations of these Beings. His art is incorporated in a subliminal way so that the viewer is hopefully surprised to locate it when they do, but also so that each Being resonates on her own terms.

Sensitivity to the natural states of each Supernatural Being was necessary to bring them out into the open and into the human realm, because many Supernatural Beings are shy of humans. Even a wild and dramatic Being, like *Gagixiid*, Wild Man, is shy, at first hiding his face before he enters public potlatches and feasts. In fact, glimpsing Supernatural Beings is a rare occurrence: they are said to be "ticked when people look at them."<sup>3</sup> Therefore, I sought to portray the Beings basking in the beauty of their surroundings, in unguarded, intimate moments of sensuality within Haida Gwaii.

Many narratives, and especially narratives about female Supernatural Beings, are inherently sensual and sexual. In traditional Haida culture, and in many Indigenous cultures, female power is intrinsic to healthy sexuality. Christianity suppressed Indigenous feminine power and sexuality. Despite the oppression of women throughout colonial history, my late mother, Mabel Williams, was never one to shy away from oral narratives that are inherently sexual. She openly shared them. I share the view that the suppression of sexuality throughout colonial history is related to violence against women. Violence against women is further related to the wanton destruction of the land and sea. Stated positively, our respect for the land and sea is intimately tied to our respect for women. I dearly hope that sharing these Supernatural Beings will contribute to the coming into being and continued growth of women who own and radiate their power in respectful balance with masculine power, and of men who respect women, thereby reducing violence against women.

These oral and visual narratives of Supernatural Beings strengthened my connections to Haida Gwaii. Transforming into Beings is a familiar process for Indigenous dancers, but the process of transformation for this project provided a unique exploration of the history and identity of Indigenous Peoples—the journey of women in particular—as well as an understanding of how the roots of tradition permeate contemporary life. Having worked with the Supernatural Beings intimately for this book, I believe that if they could speak they would express hope that humanity will recognize the supernatural core of its existence, and the inextricable and fragile interdependencies between humans and the land and sea.

<sup>1</sup> Robert Davidson, personal communication, 2014.

<sup>2</sup> In fact, artists often speak about "breeding" a mask, adding hair, feathers, and other adornments to complete the representation of the subject matter.

<sup>3</sup> Walter McGregg of the Sashon-Tsani People, in John R. Swanton, *Haida Texts and Myths*, Skidegate District, Bureau of American Ethnology, Bulletin 27 (Washington: GPO, 1905), n.p.; New York: Johnson Reprint.

*Xuuya Gaada / Yaahl Gaadas / White Raven, 30"x40",  
LED lightbox with transmounted lightjet duratrans*







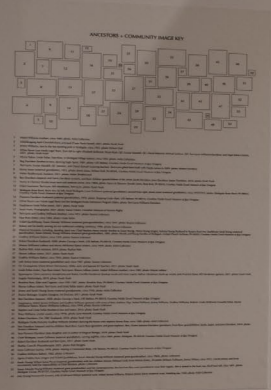
*Kalga Hltaanawa Jaad / Kalga Hltaana Jaad / Plastic Woman, installation,  
dimensions variable*



*Taw Xaasdll Jaad / Tuu Xasdll Jaad / Oil Spill Woman, 23.3"x32", lightjet photographic print on dibond*

*'Laa.a Jaad / 'Laa Jaad / Fine Weather Woman, 19.85"x32", lightjet photographic print on dibond*

*Naw Jaada / Nuu Jaad / Octopus Woman, 21.28"x32", lightjet photographic print on dibond*



*SGid / SGid / Red*, 5 panels 100"x52" each, reactive dye on silk

*Ancestors + Community* (archival + digital images), dimensions variable, inkjet on vinyl





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