



**PUBLIC PLACE
SACRED SPACE**



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The Comox Valley Art Gallery acknowledges with gratitude that we are on the Unceded Traditional Territory of the K'ómoks First Nation. CVAG's Convergent Program *Public Place / Sacred Space* is supported by Canada Council for the Arts New Chapter Program and Engage and Sustain Program, BC Arts Council, Government of Canada, Province of BC, Kómoks First Nation, City of Courtenay, Town of Comox, Village of Cumberland, Comox Valley Regional District, City of Victoria, University of Victoria Legacy Art Gallery, North Island College, BC Gaming, Campbell River Museum, Royal BC Museum and Library and Archives Canada. Local businesses and community partners include: Phillipa Atwood Architect, Valley Prototyping & Custom Cutting, Industrial Plastic & Paints, ABC Printing & Signs, West Coast Home Theatres, Imperial Welding Ltd., McLoughlin Gardens Society, SD71 Print Shop, Sure Copy and Hitec Printing. 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.

This exhibition *Nump Ma Noche Gyai Yoo Lahss / We All Come From One Root* by John Powell was originally presented at Campbell River Museum, co-curated by Ken Blackburn and Liz Carter. George Littlechild has supported the work since its inception.

In Defiance production, presentation and didactic materials were supported by the Legacy Art Gallery – the host gallery for the originating exhibition.

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Supported by the Province of British Columbia



580 DUNCAN AVE. COURTENAY BC
COMOXVALLEYARTGALLERY.COM





PUBLIC PLACE / SACRED SPACE is a multi-year program which integrates Indigenous place-naming, public art, full circle tea garden, exhibitions, installations, cross-cultural sharing, performance, video screenings, workshops, gatherings and residencies. Together, these projects 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.

This 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.

PUBLIC PLACE / SACRED SPACE emerged from years of a growing and strengthened relationship between the Comox Valley Art Gallery, the K'ómoks First Nation, and local Indigenous artists, elders and community members. In 2014 CVAG curated and hosted the first solo exhibition of K'ómoks artist and anthropologist Andy Everson. In 2016 CVAG worked with Andy Everson and Karver Everson on a mapping project and site tours as part of our convergent program *MAP (Make/Art/Place)*. The map, installed in the CVAG Community Gallery, traced the traditional territory and place names of the K'ómoks people. At the same time, the Gallery was working closely with K'ómoks artists and elders on documenting cultural practices including the installation of Guardian Poles in traditional K'ómoks territory.

When a new hospital was being constructed in Courtenay in 2017, the *North Island Hospital Public Art Project* began through conversations with diverse healthcare stakeholders. The CVAG creative team took on the project of conceptualizing, designing and producing six unique responsive artworks for the new North Island Hospital in the Comox Valley. The concepts and imagery were developed in response to each unique site: The Welcome Wall, Central Registration, Waiting spaces, Pediatrics, Cancer Care, and the Psychiatry atrium.



RELATIONAL PRACTICE

CVAG worked closely with the North Island Hospital staff, the K'ómoks First Nation, Elder Barb Whyte, and local artists, to create public artwork for the Welcome Wall at the hospital's main entrance and the central registration area. The CVAG creative team worked closely with Elder Barb Whyte as she selected traditional indigenous healing plants for and guided the installation of the public art at the hospital's entrance. CVAG photographer Alun Macanulty carefully documented the process at the hospital as well as the plant walks on the land led by Barb Whyte, that included cultural knowledge sharing with CVAG collaborative curators Denise Lawson and Angela Somerset. These images are now on permanent exhibition as the Welcome Wall at the hospital entrance. At the same time, Alun Macanulty worked with K'ómoks elders and artists to document stunning images of land and cultural practices, including the Guardian Pole that was installed at Goose Spit on K'ómoks land. These large-scale images are installed at the hospital's central registration area.

These and other collaborations strengthened the relationship and trust between CVAG and K'ómoks artists and elders, and laid the foundation for the ambitious program **PUBLIC SPACE / SACRED SPACE**.

The place-naming of the gallery site unearths the significance of the land upon which the Centre for the Arts, including the Comox Valley Art Gallery and public plaza, has been constructed. The hope is to nurture an inclusive cultural core that symbolizes and practices welcoming, gathering and healing, and acknowledges the unceded K'ómoks First Nations territory.

The creation and installation of two traditional welcome poles on the Comox Valley Art Gallery plaza, created by local artists Karver Everson and Randy Frank, under the cultural/artistic mentorship of Master carver Calvin Hunt, expands upon the work being done by the K'ómoks Nation to identify the Unceded territory with twenty+ reclamation poles. A sculptural public art installation by artist Andy Everson brings awareness to the traditional Bighouse architecture and the formline/fineline of the Kwakwaka'wakw and Coast Salish imagery. An ever-evolving full-circle tea garden replaces the urban decorative landscaping on the plaza with traditional Indigenous food and medicine plants, designed under the guidance of Traditional Knowledge Keeper Elder Barb Whyte.

Public Space / Sacred Space saw exhibitions, residencies, new work, research and productions, public sharing

events, workshops and performances unfold within nested convergent programs that included *In This Place* and *Touching Earth Bodies*.

TOUCHING EARTH BODIES was a convergent program that looked at collaborative art practice through three bodies of work (*Touching Earth Bodies*, *In Defiance*, and *In the Shadow of our own Dust*) by Victoria-based artists Lindsay Katsitsakatste Delaronde and Valerie Salez, supported by collaborative curator Toby Lawrence. This multi-media program explored the dynamics of connection to one another and the land, through ceremony, installation, photography, performances, a creative residency, and experiential learning through a public make art event.

Guest curator Toby Lawrence (Kelowna/Gabriola Island) and Victoria-based artists Lindsay Katsitsakatste Delaronde and Valerie Salez participated in a concurrent land-based creative residency related to the their individual and collaborative art practices.

IN THIS PLACE was a convergent program that reached into the past to root us in this place and time.

Remembering and honouring the ancestors, upholding the land, and creating a place of welcoming, gathering and healing were the foundations of this program.

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

In This Place also included *Honouring: Speaking to Memory / Project of Heart*, an arts-based collaborative production developed by CVAG together with School District 71 Indigenous Education Services. This responsive legacy project honoured the intent to promote reconciliation and healing embedded in two projects: *Speaking to Memory: Images and Voices from St. Michael's Indian Residential School* and *Project of Heart: Illuminating the Hidden History of Indian Residential Schools in BC*.



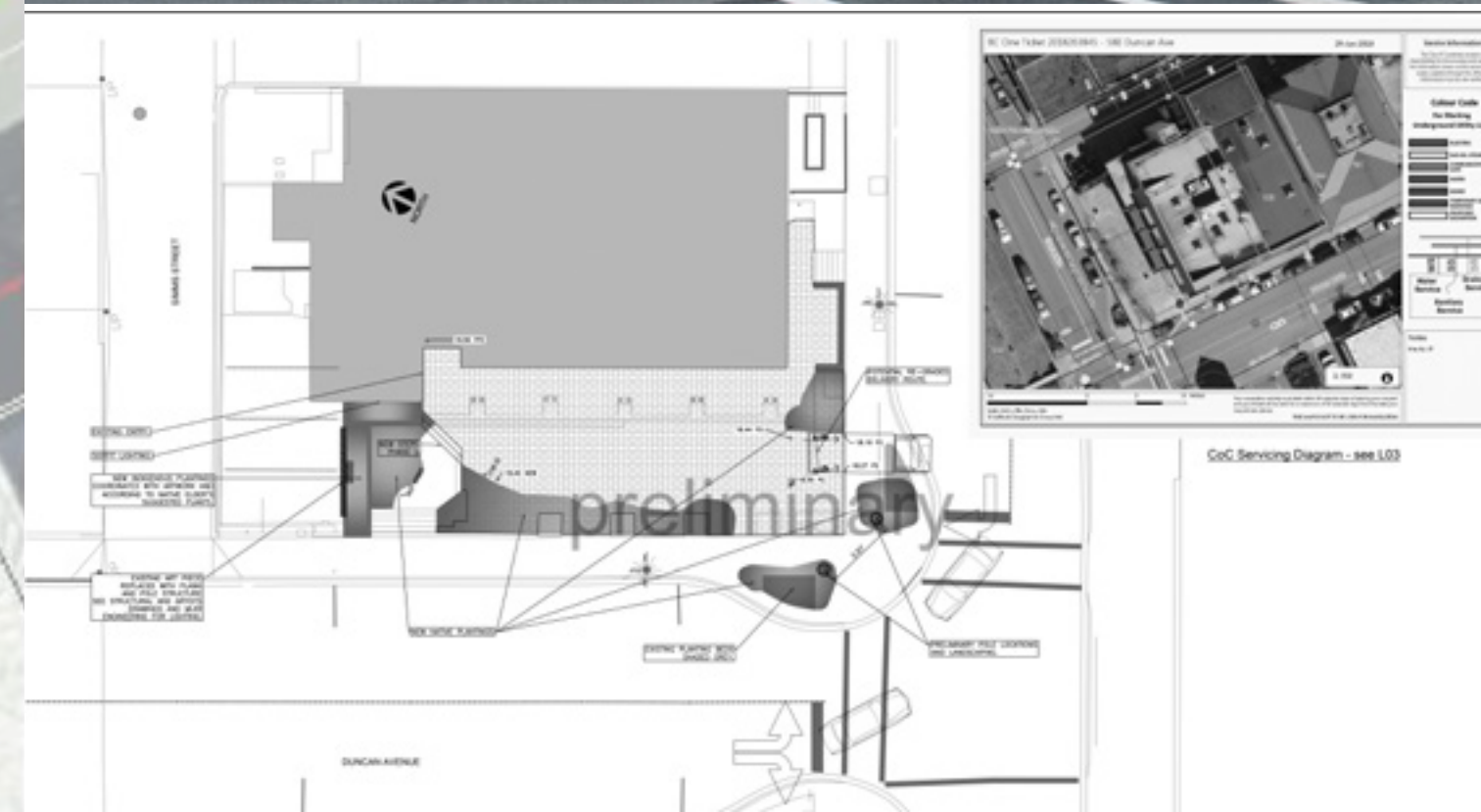
PLACE NAME / HOLD SACRED

Qwee-koos-ah-ool Me'łlun

Qwee-koos-ah-ool (Puntlege) and Me'łlun (K'ómoks)

Qwee-Koos-ah-ool means 'to meet' and Me'łlun means 'calm place'.
Put together, the preference is to call the place 'to meet in a calm place'.

— Elder Wedlidi Speck



There are unexpected places in cities, spaces where one's senses are remarkably provoked, when one's eyes, ears and nose notice something unusual and our minds register a heightened memory or emotion. Sometimes these places are inside rooms, others outside, some full of people and others experienced in solitude. Often they are built on purpose, while many are liminal – leftovers from something else. These places elicit people to respond beyond the ordinary, allow one to contemplate on the mysteries of life and draw the poetics of one's experience into focus.¹

— Gregory Bartle, 2009

The transformative possibilities resulting from the creation of sacred spaces within public places were important considerations for this project.

The place-naming component of the project engaged Andy Everson, First Nations Artist, K'ómoks Cultural Leader and Anthropologist, in a project designed to unearth the significance of the land upon which the CVAG plaza (and downtown core) has been constructed. Andy has been working in recent years to uncover a series of traditional place-names and sacred spaces throughout K'ómoks territory – some of which have been bound to contentious urban planning and development outcomes. In July and August, 2016, the Gallery hosted a presentation of this work as part of its 'Where is Here' symposium –constructing in its Community Gallery a 30-foot visual map that identifies the Territory, Reserves and these traditional sites by their given names accompanied by photographic documentation– placing emphasis on their cultural significance. The **PUBLIC PLACE / SACRED SPACE** project marks a continuation of this relationship. Andy collaborated with K'ómoks cultural leaders throughout 2017 to place-name the Gallery Plaza – recognizing its role as a centre-point within the City's cultural core, its status as a place of welcoming, gathering, and healing, and its significance within K'ómoks culture and territory.

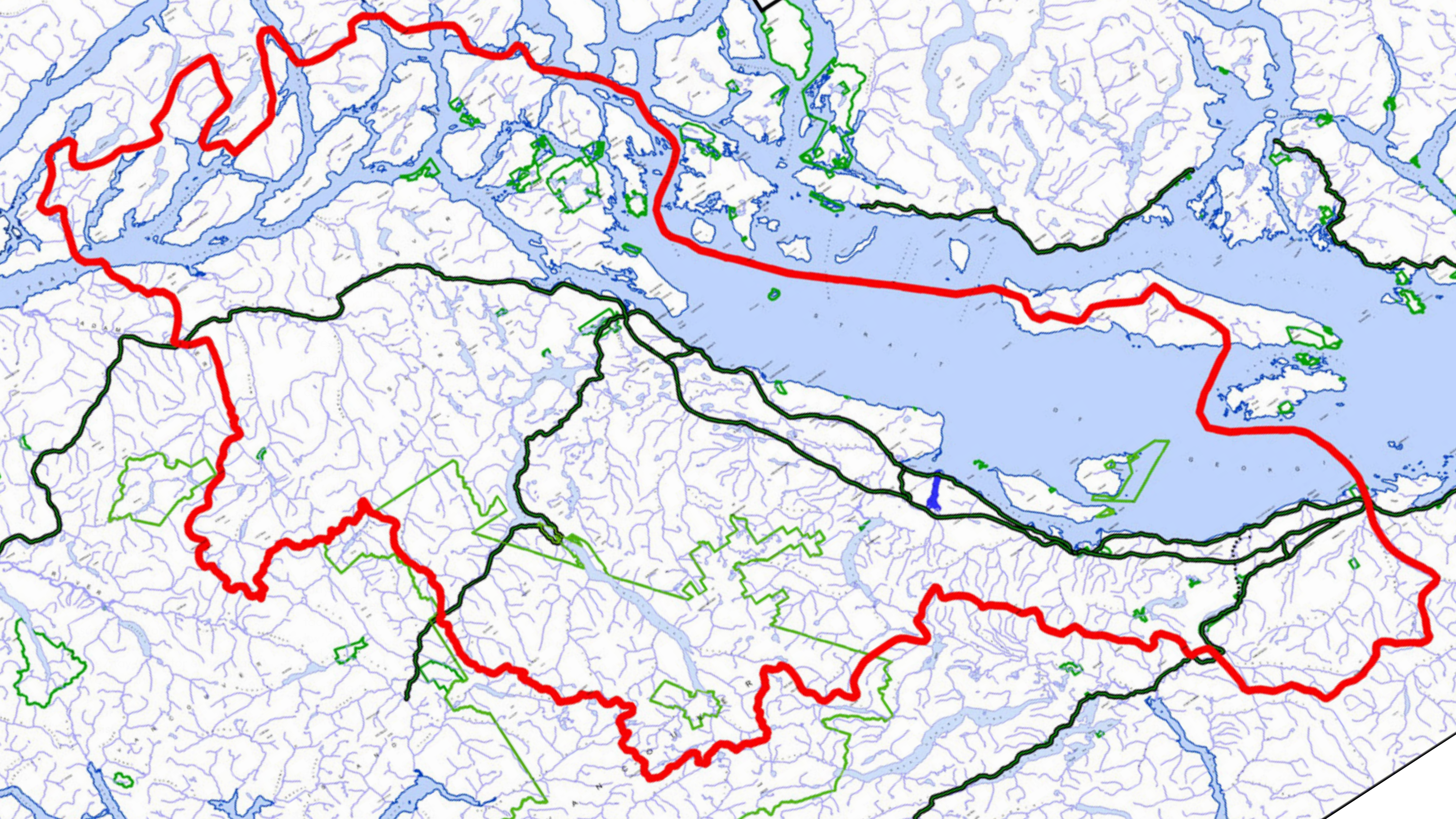
In the summer of 2017, the Gallery staff presented the project to K'ómoks First Nation Chief and Council, and asked for guidance on how to request a place-name for the Plaza. We were directed to consult with the four Heads of House – including Kerry Frank, Allan Mitchell, Ernie Hardy Senior, and Wedlidi Speck. Wedlidi Speck took on the task of connecting with the Heads, and of working with them to develop a place-name. The following two names were put forward by the Heads of House as place-names for the Gallery Plaza:

Qwee-koos-ah-ool (Puntlege) and Me'łlun (K'ómoks)

Elder Wedlidi Speck notes that using the two names or words together suggests a unity between the two peoples. It is a way to honor both. The Comox Valley Art Gallery is honoured to have been gifted this name. It is seen as an opportunity to develop the CVAG Plaza space as a 'calm space' in which differences can be valued, and in which diversity is fostered through public meeting and celebration. We see the Plaza space as providing an opportunity for people within the downtown core to acknowledge our place on unceded K'ómoks territory.

The plaza has been the site of numerous ceremonies and dances led by the K'umugwe Dancers, and by many other First Nations artists and cultural leaders. It has also been named as a 'cornerstone' of the City's cultural commons – within the City's 2017 Downtown Playbook. We look forward to continuing the tradition of Welcoming/Gathering in this space. We hope to honour, through the poles, public art project, Indigenous plants garden and art program, the potential of this space as a place of calm gathering, and of reclamation within the downtown core.

¹ Bartle, G. (2009). *Sacred Places: Public Spaces*. An Inquiry into sacred public places for the Canadian City—With a design response in and around St. Ann's Park in Montreal and urban planning and design recommendations. Retrieved from McGill University, School of Urban Planning website: <https://docplayer.net/37373760-Sacred-places-public-spaces.html>



MAPS

The K'ómoks First Nation (KFN) traditional territory is the eastern portion of Vancouver Island from the Salmon River watershed in the north to the Englishman River watershed in the south. The territory includes all of the islands and portions of the BC mainland from Forward Harbour in the north to include the northwestern Texada Island and all of Denman and Hornby Islands in the south. Significant KFN villages and settlements have existed throughout the territory, including in the Salmon River watershed, on Quadra Island, in the Courtenay and Comox area, as well as on Denman, Hornby, Sandy, and Seal Islands. This is supported by archaeological evidence.

We will negotiate a Treaty with the Crown that builds upon the rich culture and vibrant history of our people bringing forward the capacity and gifts that are present within each of us and the community. To this end, we will work cooperatively and collaboratively with all community members and those who support the K'ómoks First Nation Community Vision.

– K'ómoks First Nation Treaty Team

<https://www.komoks.ca/maps>

COMMUNITY RESPONSE

ARTISTS, COLLECTIVES, AND COMMUNITIES

In conjunction with Map: Make Art Place, the Comox Valley Art Gallery invited documentation from artists, writers, collectives and groups to explore variations on mapping practice and visual interpretations of place. The project began with a visual dialogue in relation to understandings of the Comox Valley, First Nations Territory and satellite artistic research locations where interconnected projects are taking place. The large scale maps, made directly on the walls of the community space, identified the locations, boundaries, migration behaviours and pathways of mapped experience and terrain being explored through this thematic intersection. Documentation as a form of witness practice, comprised of images, texts, symbols and objects was embedded in the space in relation to the paths and places identified by the maps articulated on the walls. This accumulative community MAP project expanded from summer to winter of 2016 and offered diverse expressions of our community life.

Summer Program

July 12 – September 17

MAP: COMMUNITY RESPONSE

Fall Program

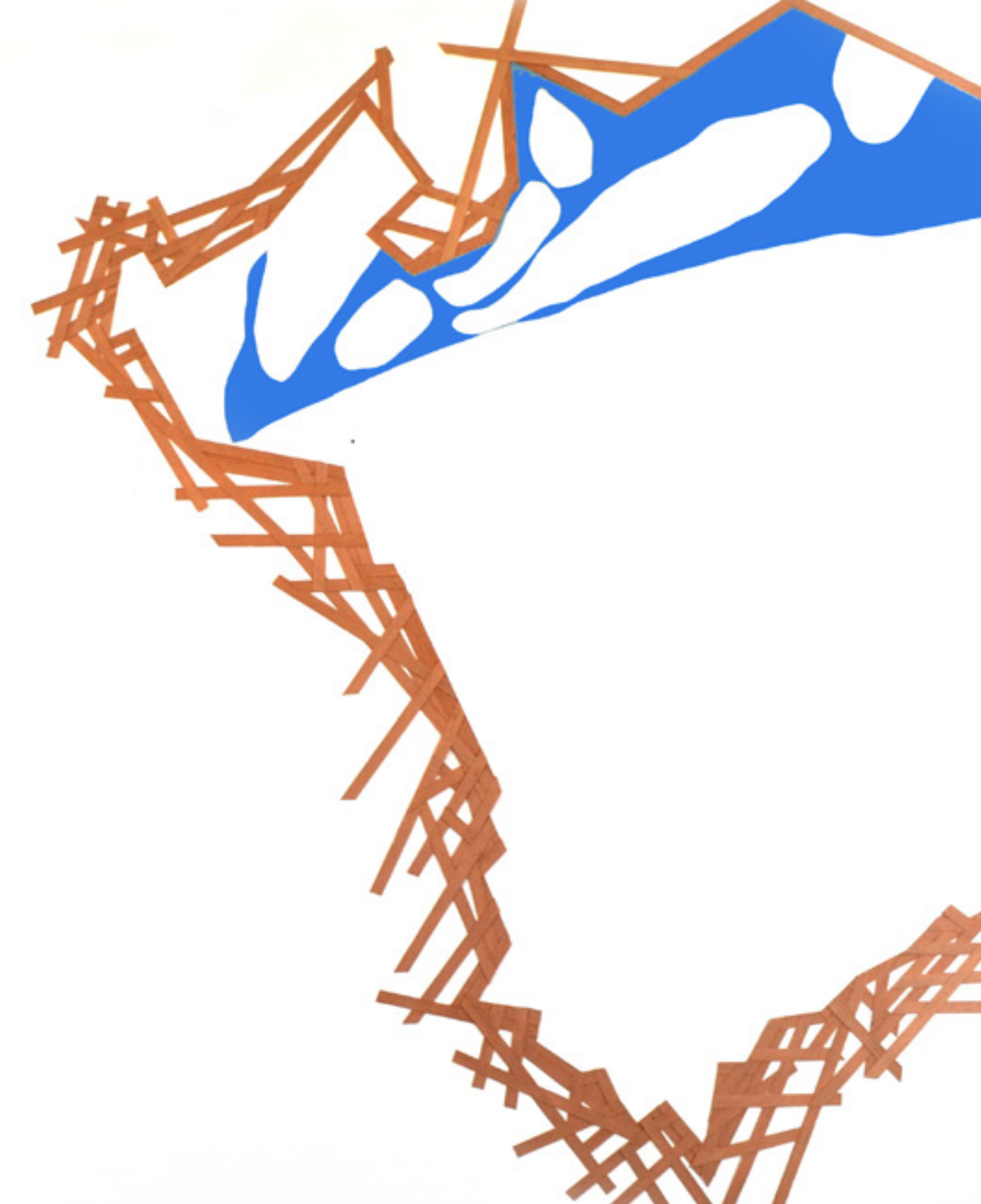
October 1 – November 5 2016

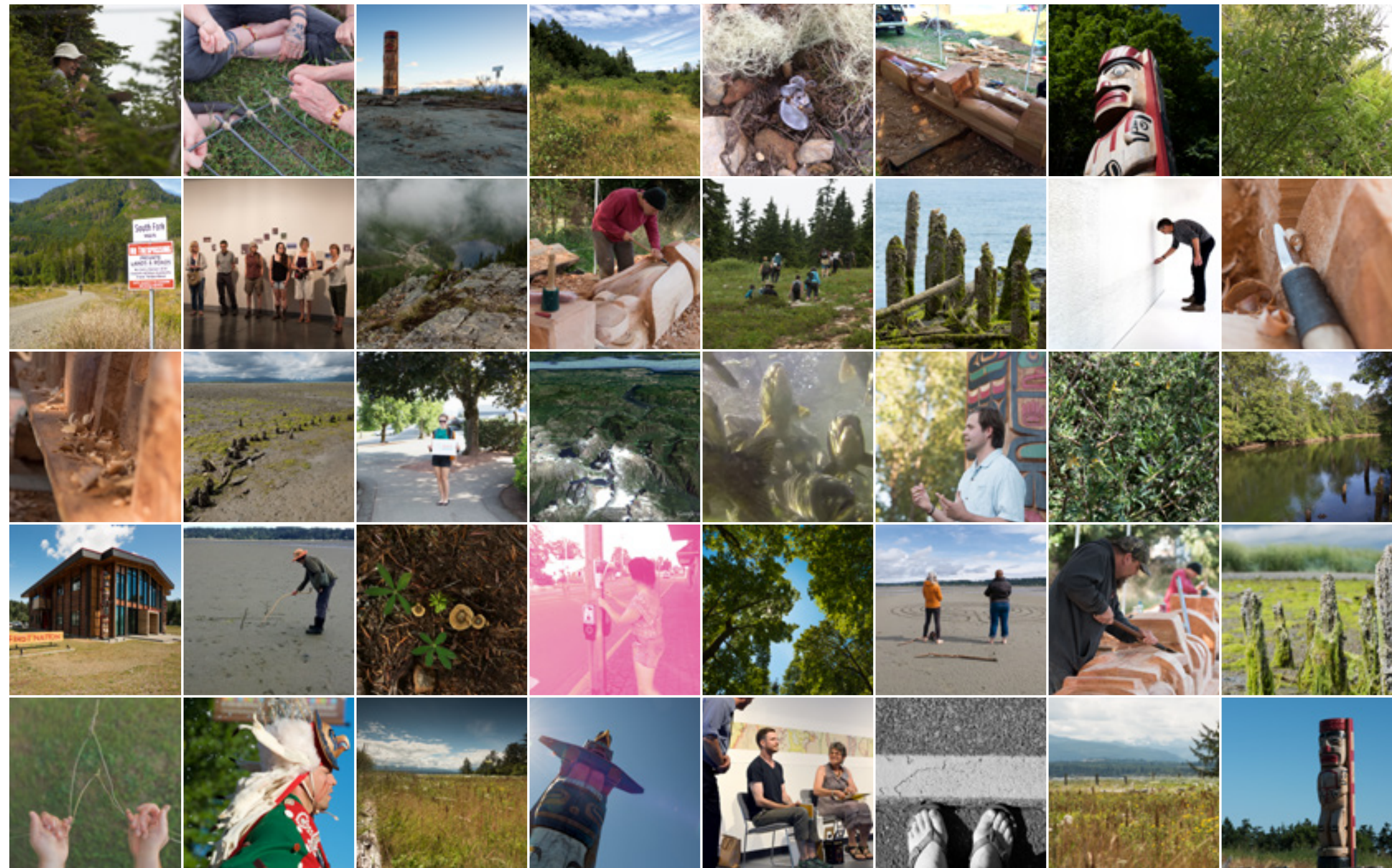
MAP: WITNESS / DOCUMENT / COLLECT

Winter Program

November 5 – December 26 2016

MAP: DIMENSIONS OF THE SEASON





MAP: MAKE ART PLACE

CONTRIBUTORS:

Karver Everson
 Steven Thomas Davies
 Clive Powsey
 Joanne Bristol
 Denise Lawson
 Jeanette Kotowich
 Dani Zaviceanu
 Karver Everson
 Lindsay Katsitsakatste Delaronde
 Margaret Breire
 Naomi Kennedy
 Erynne Gilpin
 Achilles Emmanuel
 Liz Carter
 Barbara Meneley
 Calvin Hunt
 George Littlechild
 Joyce Lindemulder
 Jessie Zelko
 Matt Rader
 Cornelia Hoogland
 K'umugwe Cultural Society
 Medwyn McConachy
 Trish Smith
 Sara Vipond
 Jeannette Reinhardt
 Cassidy Gehmlich
 Pieter Vorester
 Caila Holbrook
 Randy Frank
 Comox Valley Art Gallery
 North Island College
 Vancouver Island University
 City of Regina







TRADITIONAL WELCOME POLES

The Guardian Pole Project is an initiative of the K'ómoks First Nation that will see the creation and installation of 20 poles over a 10 year period. The poles identify traditional K'ómoks territory, spanning from the southern Great Bear Rainforest south to Denman and Hornby islands.

The project started in 2014 with the installation of poles at the Goose Spit and Puntledge reserves. By 2019, poles created by K'ómoks artists Randy Frank and Karver Everson, under the mentorship and training of master carver Calvin Hunt, have also been installed on the Salmon River, Hornby Island, Denman Island, and the cemetery on K'ómoks Reserve.

In 2018, Randy Frank and Karver Everson created and installed two Welcome Poles on the plaza of the Comox Valley Art Gallery in downtown Courtenay. Again guided by master carver Calvin Hunt, the poles were an integral part of the PUBLIC PLACE / SACRED SPACE program, and are closely linked to the Place Naming project, the installation of an Indigenous Full Circle Tea Garden, a contemporary public art work by K'ómoks artist Andy Everson, ceremony and celebration.

Randy Frank is one of the K'ómoks Guardian Watchmen, whose mission is to protect and preserve the environment within the traditional K'ómoks territory. In his statement on the K'ómoks First Nation website, he says "We work on protecting and monitoring our lands and everything in it, from plants and animals, to marine life as well. We work with a bunch of local stewardship organizations to help our estuary and rivers and creeks. As Guardians of our traditional lands, we not only protect but we also make efforts in restoring our lands for our future generations."

In describing Guardian image at the top of the poles to the magazine CV Collective, Karver Everson said "It's holding its belly, it's full of wealth and I think it reflects the land that we're on, how wealthy we are to live in the Comox Valley."

Read more about the K'ómoks Guardian Pole project in the CV Collective: <https://cvcollective.ca/standing-tall/>







TRADITIONAL INDIGENOUS FULL CIRCLE TEA GARDEN

Planting the gardens on the gallery plaza, under the guidance of Elder and Traditional Knowledge Carrier Barb Whyte and City of Courtenay Horticultural Supervisor Tyler Johns took place on October 23, 2018. The next stages of the garden and the first harvest gathering will take place in 2020.





WELCOME

The public artwork created for the Welcome Wall at the North Island Hospital honours the traditional territory, medicine plants and cultural healing practices of the K'ómoks First Nation people, both Coast Salish and Kwakwaka'wakw. The work invites contemplation and rooting to the land in which we live and receive health care. This collaborative project between CVAG and Barb Whyte was the foundation for the continued land-based practices being undertaken on the CVAG Plaza.

I give thanks to the Creator, Creator of our planets and our stars. I honor 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

ARTISTS / PARTICIPANTS

Elder Barb Whyte, born Barbara Billy – Consultation and Knowledge Sharing
Alun Macanulty – Photographer

ADMINISTRATION / DESIGN / PRODUCTION

Comox Valley Art Gallery's Creative Team:
Glen Sanford, Sharon Karsten, Angela Somerset, Denise Lawson, Krista McAllister, Lukas Roy, Alun Macanulty

WITH GRATITUDE

Ernst Vegt, Coast Imaging Arts – Production Support
ABC Printing & Signs – Production Collaborators





Gathering Place Public Art, North Island Hospital, main floor entrance, digital colour prints, 2018



Oregon Crab Apple

Yew

Bullthistle

Elderberry

Nootka Rose

Black Hawthorn

Nodding Onion

Blackberry

Kinnikinnick

Snowberry

Springbok Clover

Licorice Fern

Oregon Grape

Sage

Thistle

Salmonberry

Borage

Ribwort Plantain

Blackberry

Thimbleberry

Huckleberry

Salal

Dandelion

Wild Celery

Rhubarb

Mint

Foxglove

Lavendar

Evergreen Huckleberry

Yarrow

Broadleaf Plantain

Strawberry

Cedar

Teasle

Highbush Cranberry

Honeysuckle

Comfrey

Bullrush

Swordfern

Feverfew

Greater Horsetail

Silverleaf Grass

Western hazelnut

Juniper





IN THIS PLACE

Three large panels in the Central Registration of the North Island Hospital in Courtenay offer a reflection of the local landscape and cultural history that is embedded within it. The imagery offers a welcoming invitation through scenes that embrace the forest and sea, comprising the Comox Valley.

The series of photographs communicate a sense of comfort and safety for individuals visiting the hospital.

With arms outstretched and our songs clinging to the wind, the K'ómoks First Nation welcomes visitors into our unceded traditional territory. Since time immemorial, the ancestors of the K'ómoks people have been the caretakers of this land — living off the wealth and abundance that this region has to offer. From the cool rivers teeming with salmon to the mountains and forests that surround us, the environment has always looked after our people. We welcome you to share in the abundance that this region has to offer... with the expectation that you give back as much as you take.

— Andy Everson

ARTISTS / PARTICIPANTS

K'umugwe Cultural Society – Dance and Song
K'ómoks First Nation – Consultation
Alun Macanulty – Photographer
Calvin Hunt, Karver Everson, Randy Frank – Carvers

DESIGN / PRODUCTION

Comox Valley Art Gallery's Creative Team:
Glen Sanford, Sharon Karsten, Angela Somerset, Denise Lawson, Krista McAllister, Lukas Roy, Alun Macanulty

WITH GRATITUDE

Ernst Vegt, Coast Imaging Arts – Production Support
ABC Printing & Signs – Community Production Collaborators



1 TŁALKWAŁA OR ‘LADIES DANCE’ – detail, K’umugwe Cultural Society performance

2 RECLAMATION POLE (Pelxwikw / Goose Spit) K’ómoks First Nation Unceded Territory
Artists: Karver Everson, Randy Frank, & Master Carver/Mentor Calvin Hunt

3 TRADITIONAL FISH TRAPS (K’ómoks Reserve shoreline)
K’ómoks First Nation Unceded Territory

4 EAGLE AND NEST / K’ómoks First Nation Unceded Territory

5 PUNTLEGE RIVER SALMON RUN / K’ómoks First Nation Unceded Territory

6 TŁALKWAŁA OR ‘LADIES DANCE’ – detail of drummers K’umugwe Cultural Society performance







CROSSROADS

ANDY EVERSON

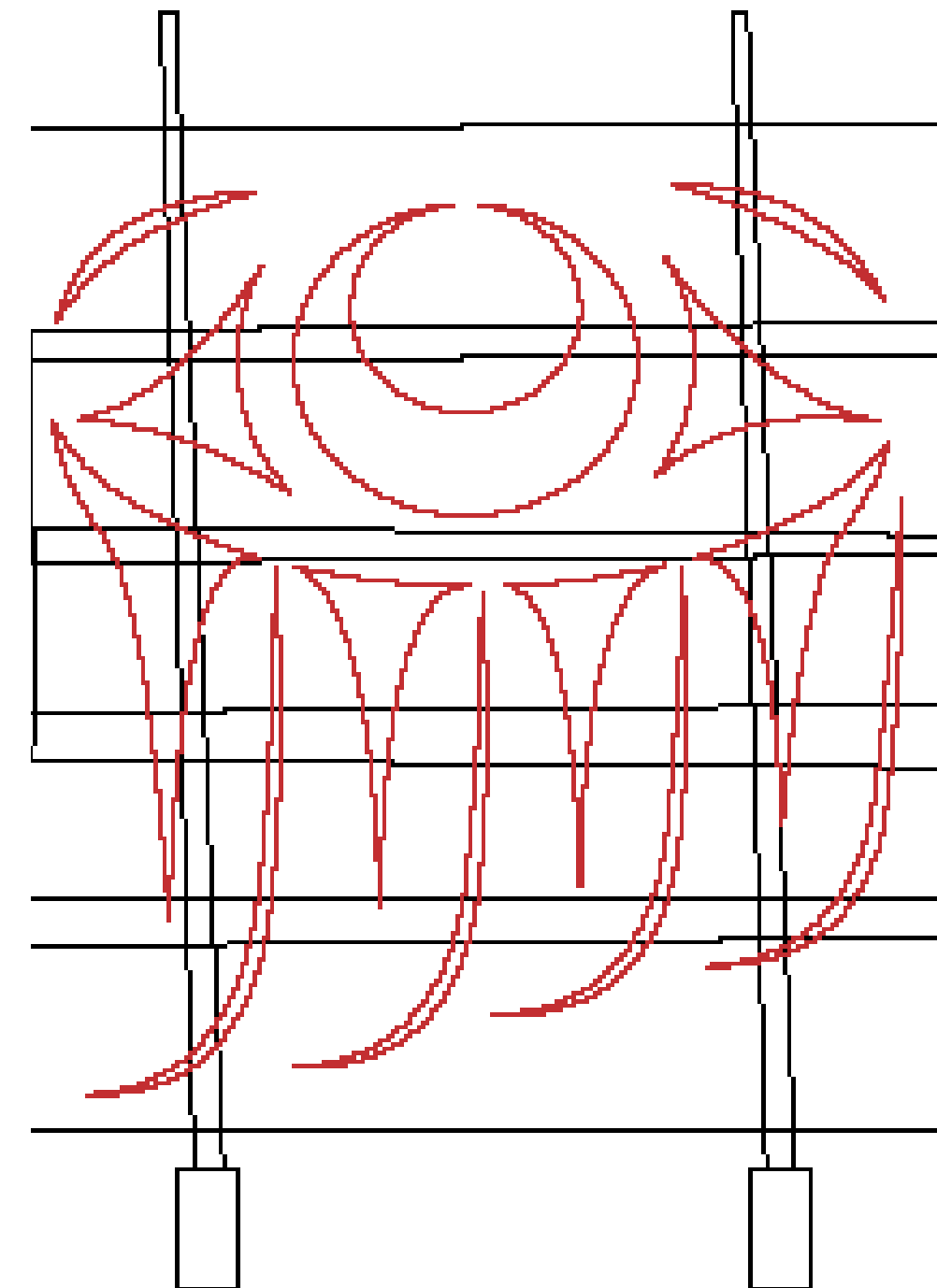
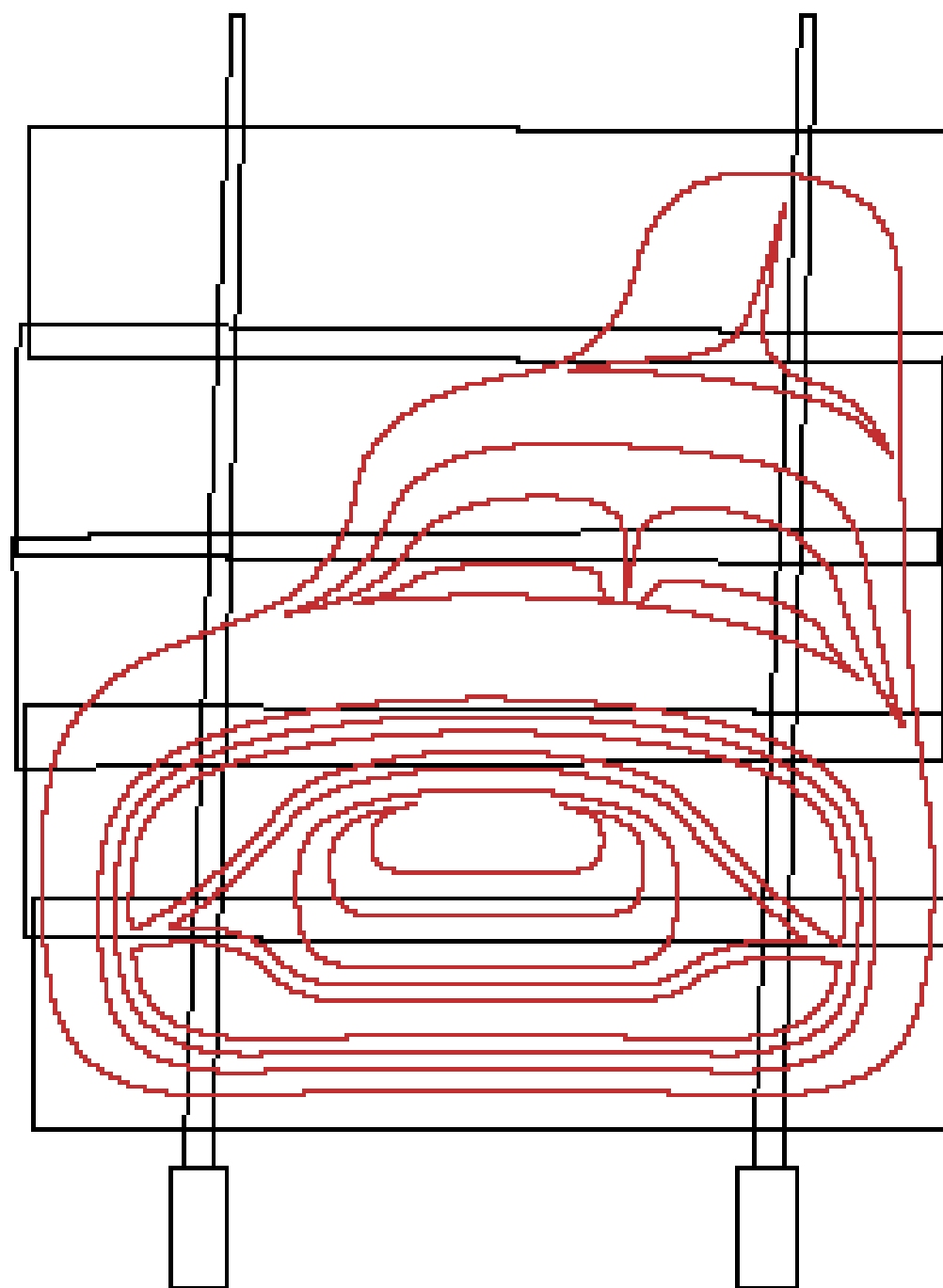
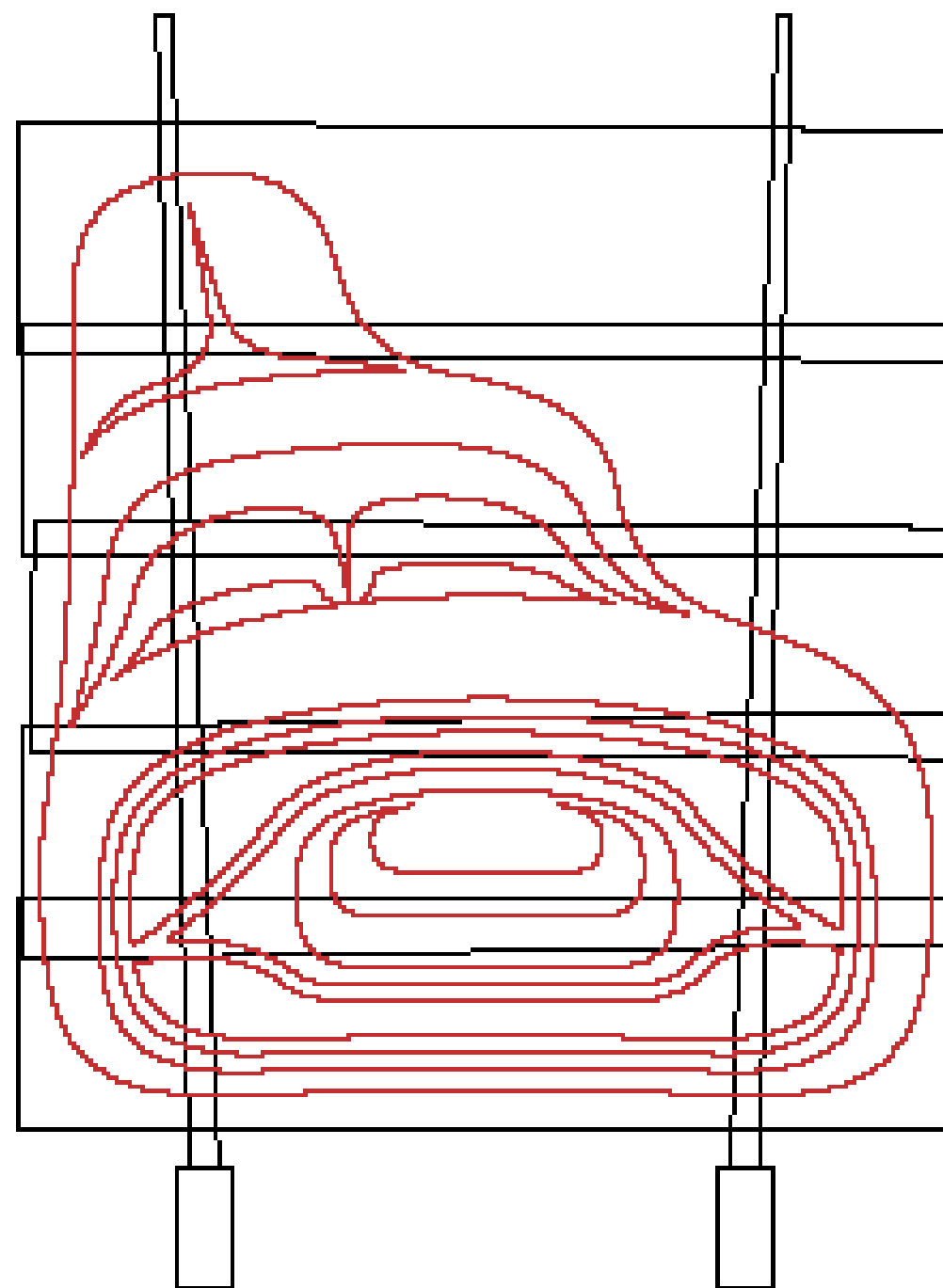
ANDY EVERSON'S public art project CROSSROADS is part of *PUBLIC PLACE / SACRED SPACE*, is an undertaking by the Comox Valley Art Gallery in partnership with the K'ómoks First Nation community and City of Courtenay that aims to unearth the significance of the land upon which the Centre for the Arts plaza has been constructed.

ANDY EVERSON shares these words: "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 Ligwílda'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 was born in Comox B.C. and named Nagedzi after his grandfather, Chief Andy Frank of the K'ómoks First Nation. He has also had the honour of being seated with the 'Namgis Tsiisq'walagame' name of Kwamxlgagalis l'nis. His cultural interests lay with both his K'ómoks and Kwakwaka'wakw ancestries and are expressed through dancing, singing, and even the completion of a Master's degree in anthropology. Andy feels that his artwork stands on par with these other accomplishments. From early self-taught lessons, he has tried to follow in the footsteps of his Kwakwaka'wakw relatives in creating bold and unique representations that remain rooted in the age-old traditions of his ancestors.







IN THIS PLACE

"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.

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– Andy Everson

ARTISTS / PARTICIPANTS

Andy Everson – Public Art Site Work
Tom Partridge (Valley Prototyping and Custom Cutting)
Installation/finishing crew Jess Lewis, Glenn Partridge, and Mary Partridge

PRODUCTION

Tom Partridge (Valley Prototyping and Custom Cutting)
Installation/finishing crew Jess Lewis, Glenn Partridge, and Mary Partridge
Saleem Khan (Ocean Pacific Abrasive Blasting)
Kevin Boily (West Coast Home Theatres)
John Cripps (Industrial Plastics)
Phillipa Atwood Architect

WITH GRATITUDE

CVAG team of staff and volunteers:
Sita Then, Renee Poisson, Tyler McLachlan, Cassidy Gehmlich, Jeanette Reinhardt, Nadine Bariteau, Alun Macanulty, Chorise Neadeau, Tyler McLachlan, Zoe Klassen-Sommerset, Angela Somerset, Denise Lawson, Sharon Karsten, Glen Sanford, Sam Patterson, Colby O'Neill, Wedlidi Speck





ON THIS DAY

TRADITIONAL INDIGENOUS FULL CIRCLE TEA GARDEN – Planting Day
April 9, 2020

As a land-based practice, the evolving full-circle tea garden replaced the urban decorative landscaping on the gallery's plaza with traditional Indigenous food and medicine plants. Traditional Knowledge Keeper and Elder Barb Whyte has guided the planting and harvesting of the garden since 2018. The garden holds traditional indigenous plants, including: oregon grape, wild strawberry, nootka rose, yarrow, huckleberry, and lemon balm. The plantings are in beds on the plaza that surround the base of the public art installation CROSSROADS and the Traditional Welcome Poles.

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

WITH GRATITUDE

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. 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.





L-R:

Toxic Drug Awareness
August 2021

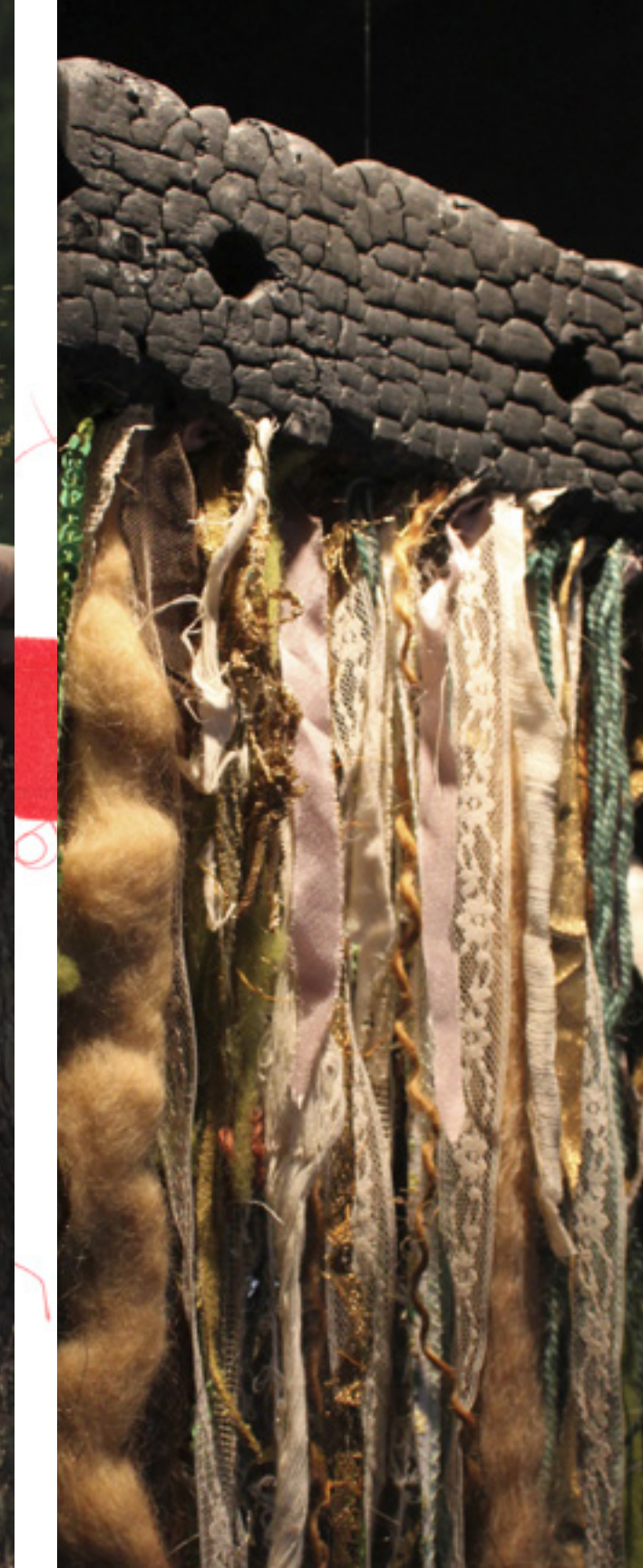
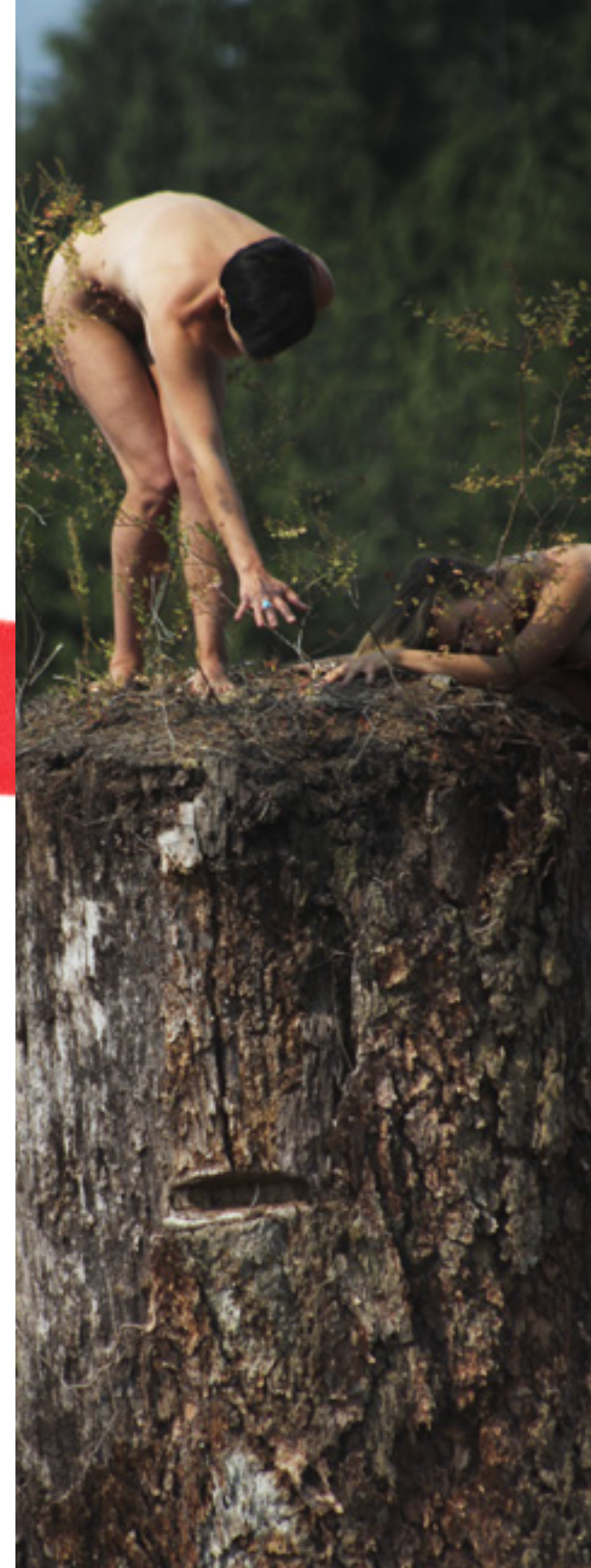
Womens Memorial March/"Noojim Owin" Closing Ceremony
February 2022



TOUCHING EARTH BODIES *In Defiance* (Delaronde)
In the Shadow of our Own Dust (Salez)
Touching Earth Bodies (Delaronde and Salez)

ARTISTS LINDSAY KATSITSAKATSTE DELARONDE
VALERIE SALEZ

GUEST COLLABORATING CURATOR TOBY LAWRENCE



TOUCHING EARTH BODIES

ARTISTS: LINDSAY KATSITSAKATSTE DELARONDE

VALERIE SALEZ

GUEST COLLABORATIVE CURATOR: TOBY LAWRENCE

Touching Earth Bodies offers a dialogue between three bodies of collaborative and individually-produced work by Victoria-based artists Lindsay Katsitsakatste Delaronde and Valerie Salez. The three projects, *In Defiance* (Delaronde), *In the Shadow of our Own Dust* (Salez), and *Touching Earth Bodies* (Delaronde and Salez), explore the power of self-representation, rejuvenation, and healing, through ceremony and connections to the land. The central focus of the exhibition and the referent for the overall title, *Touching Earth Bodies*, addresses interrelationships between the human body and the land, while considering the history and ongoing practices of deforestation across Vancouver Island’s rainforest and the resulting environmental and social impact. These works additionally confront issues around representations of women’s bodies and sexuality in art and popular culture within the current social and political climate. In dialogue, the three bodies of work establish the depth within Delaronde and Salez’s collaboration and provide an opportunity to learn more about the breadth of the individual practices of each artist. This exhibition developed out of the ongoing dialogue between guest curator Toby Lawrence and Angela Somerset, curator at Comox Valley Art Gallery, focused on collaborative creative practices.



Touching Earth Bodies
LINDSAY KATSITSAKATSTE DELARONDE
AND VALERIE SALEZ

Touching Earth Bodies is an ongoing collaboration that seeks to engage one’s body with the land, simultaneously addressing contemporary environmental and social/political issues with ancient teachings and understandings of Mother Earth. The intention of *Touching Earth Bodies* is to explore the body’s connection and/or disconnection to land. Through the process of public calls, the artists invite participants to bravely engage their bodies, minds, and spirits in different landscapes. Ceremonial circles, mindfulness practices, and social/political discussions prepare participants to be able to fully immerse themselves into often physically, and emotionally, charged environments. The images projected at CVAG are the results of a three-day creative workshop in August 2017 in T’Sou-ke and Pacheedaht territories on southern Vancouver Island. This workshop and photographic series focused on the Islands’ rainforests and the ongoing deforestation practices and impacts. The group also focused on the similarities of trauma to the land and to women’s bodies.

Touching Earth Bodies was produced through the support of Delaronde’s appointment as the City of Victoria Indigenous Artist in Residence, 2017 and 2018.



In the Shadow of our Own Dust
VALERIE SALEZ

“Perhaps it’s true that things can change in a day. That a few dozen hours can affect the outcome of whole lifetimes. And that when they do, those few dozen hours, like the salvaged remains of a burned house—the charred clock, the singed photograph, the scorched furniture—must be resurrected from the ruins and examined. Preserved. Accounted for. Little events, ordinary things, smashed and reconstituted. Imbued with new meaning. Suddenly they become the bleached bone of a story.”

– Arundhati Roy, *The God of Small Things*

The installation, *In the Shadow of our Own Dust*, represents an interest in burnt wood conjuring a personal, political, global feeling about things coming apart at the seams; things being burnt down to their essence. Like a field burnt to become fallow again, new potential is revealed. This work is about the basics of death and rebirth and plays with perceptions of dark/light and life/death, where the end of something signals the beginning of something else.



In Defiance
LINDSAY KATSITSAKATSTE DELARONDE

The sexualization and exploitation in the images of women in mainstream society disregard the rich cultural existence that Indigenous women have maintained through traditional knowledge, social roles, and power. This objectification of women demonstrates that in Western society there is a lack of understanding of, and relationships to, traditional teachings. It is time to push the continuum of these teachings forward to expose vulnerability, to celebrate sensuality and to reclaim eroticism through the matriarchal body. To this end, I originally conceived of “Squaw,” a series of photographs of Indigenous women in response to the derogatory usage of the word. Each woman was invited to stage a portrait reclaiming her natural sovereign powers of eroticism, sensuality, and vulnerability. Together, these women deconstruct and challenge mainstream ideas around sexuality. Their photographs dismantle negative stereotypes of First Nations women and portray more authentic truths of diversity, power and respect, through this project, each woman has found voice and a safe platform to stand *In Defiance* through the expression of her most private and sensual aspects.

I would like to thank my mentor in photography, Ellie Dion and all the women who bravely took part in the project. *In Defiance* was originally organized by and presented at the University of Victoria Legacy Art Galleries, October 8, 2016 – January 7, 2017.

L-R:

Touching Earth Bodies (detail)
Lindsay Katsitsakatste Delaronde and Valerie Salez
digital photograph
2017

In the Shadow of our own Dust (detail)
Valerie Salez
installation, burnt wood, textiles, feathers, fur, horse hair, sheep wool, bone
2012

In Defiance, Roseanne Supernault
Lindsay Katsitsakatste Delaronde
digital C-print
2016



Elder Donna Michell from the K'ómoks First Nation, Welcoming the community at the Art Opening and Artist Talk

TOUCHING EARTH BODIES

TOUCHING EARTH BODIES looked at collaborative art practice through three bodies of work (*Touching Earth Bodies*, *In Defiance*, and *In the Shadow of our own Dust*) by Victoria-based artists Lindsay Katsitsakatste Delaronde and Valerie Salez. This multi-media program explored the power of self-representation, ceremony, and engaging bodies in the land. These three bodies of work shared the dynamics of interconnection through installation, photography, performance, a creative residency. Experiential cross-cultural learning and sharing was the focus of the performances and the community Make Art event *Cornhusk Dolls*. In May 2018 the artists and guest curator participated in CVAG's Creative Residency 2018 Program, with a focus on reflection and discussion of the new work produced for exhibition and the development of new community collaboration. The McLoughlin Gardens Society was a community partner for the Residency Program.

Touching Earth Bodies,
Lindsay Katsitsakatste Delaronde and Valerie Salez
two-channel video projection, digital photographs
2017 - ongoing;
performance, fabric, wood,
2018 - ongoing

In Defiance,
Lindsay Katsitsakatste Delaronde
33 framed digital C-prints
2016

In the Shadow of our Own Dust, Valerie Salez
installation, burnt wood, textiles, feathers, fur,
horse hair, sheep wool, bone, performance
2012



CVAG GEORGE SAWCHUK GALLERY

3

1

CVAG CONTEMPORARY GALLERY

1

2



p 46-47 / Art Opening and Artist Talk, May 18, 2019, Comox Valley Art Gallery

TOUCHING EARTH BODIES

ARTISTS: LINDSAY KATSITSAKATSTE DELARONDE
VALERIE SALEZ

GUEST COLLABORATING CURATOR: TOBY LAWRENCE

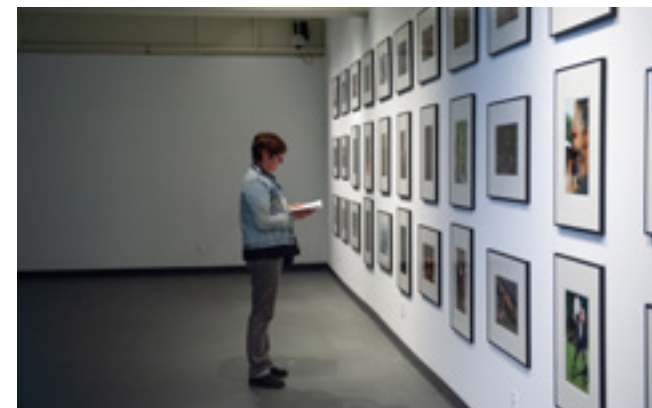
MAY 18 – 29 JUNE 29, 2018
MAY 18
JUNE 2

EXHIBITION
ART OPENING / ARTIST TALK
PERFORMANCES
Make Art Project: CORNHUSK DOLLS

We would like to express our gratitude and acknowledge that we are located on unceded traditional territory of the K'ómoks First Nation. We would like to acknowledge all of the women that participated in *In Defiance* and *Touching Earth Bodies*, and the T'Sou-ke and Pacheedaht First Nations on whose land the work was created.

This exhibition is dedicated to the Indigenous and non-Indigenous women, and the land, that have experienced trauma, loss, and grief in hope that this can be a platform for dialogue and healing for all.

- Lindsay Katsitsakatste Delaronde
- Valerie Salez
- Toby Lawrence





Touching Earth Bodies
Lindsay Katsitsakatste Delaronde and Valerie Salez
artist talk / art opening
digital photograph – Alun Macanulty
2018

Orientations, Part I: Positioning

In May 2017, I visited *Making Space: Women Artists and Postwar Abstraction* at the Museum of Modern Art in New York. The significance of a historical exhibition of over 50 women artists at MoMA cannot be understated. Nor can what it felt like, as a woman, to stand amongst this concentration of works, on a crowded Tuesday afternoon, without the looming frameworks of dismissal.

To fill MoMA's galleries with historical artwork by women is to directly confront [some of] the biases and prejudices of art and exhibition history. Perhaps essentialist in approach, the centralization and concentration of artwork by women is not to forever replace one body with another, but to make visible the sustained imbalance in order to imagine new and equitable modes of exhibition practices. Equally, to fill the Comox Valley Art Gallery with self-determined images of women by women, and significantly Indigenous women, asks us, as audience, to look beyond the sexualization and objectification of women's bodies. To think with deep seriousness about the systemic diminutization of gendered and racialized representation. Gendered and racialized value. Gendered and racialized labour. And to consider further the impact and effects that have shaped perceptions of self-worth, body image, and political/social/economic access and stature, as well as resulting violence against women, LGBTQ2 folks, Indigenous peoples, and people of colour.

For individual and collective healing to take place, space must be made for reclamation and self-representation. Space must be made to acknowledge the responsibilities of consent and the power—and empowerment—of authorship in the representation of Indigenous and women's bodies, specifically speaking here of the participants in the artworks in this exhibition. Shifting into a self-reflexive mode of thinking to identify the location and rational for our own biases, to "see" differently.

Traces of perceived pinup poses and stereotypes throughout the artworks cannot be disassociated from a discussion of consensual and self-actualized representation.

In North American popular culture, certain postures and cosmetic modifications and what they represent are ingrained within the socialization of conventional gender and racialized roles yet complicated by the extensive variation in how such representations make both the represented and the observer feel.

Coupled with the above narratives, healing is central to all three bodies of work — *Touching Earth Bodies*, *In Defiance*, and *In the Shadow of our Own Dust*. With pronounced vulnerability, the artists and their collaborators present their personal and collective explorations and processes of healing and self-representation undertaken through the production of the artworks. Salez's installation, *In the Shadow of our Own Dust*, builds out of a manifestation of her own personal healing, while the portraits in Delaronde's *In Defiance* were produced in collaboration with each of the women photographed to disempower negative stereotypes of Indigenous women by reclaiming and enacting their own self-image. The women selected the location, what they wore, and worked with Delaronde throughout the shoot. They each selected which photograph would be presented as part of the final project. By contrast, the directorial process was more explicit in Delaronde and Salez's collaboratively-produced *Touching Earth Bodies*. Together, the group engaged in a series of ceremonial circles and mindfulness practices, working through personal conflicts while addressing contemporary and historical connections and disconnections between peoples and land. These processes contributed to the establishment of trust between the artists and participants and ensured that personal agency was maintained while consenting to the direction of the artists.

Through three very different modes of production, all of the women in this exhibition are expressing that these conversations are important in their lives and they are sharing them with you.

– Toby Lawrence
guest collaborating curator



p 50 L-R Art Opening + Artist Talk, Toby Lawrence, Lindsay Katsitsakatste Delaronde, Valerie Salez, CVAG collaborative curators Angela Somerset, Denise Lawson, May 18, 2018

p 51 *Touching Earth Bodies* / performance sequence L-R top to bottom / Lindsay Katsitsakatste Delaronde, 30 min., June 2, 2018

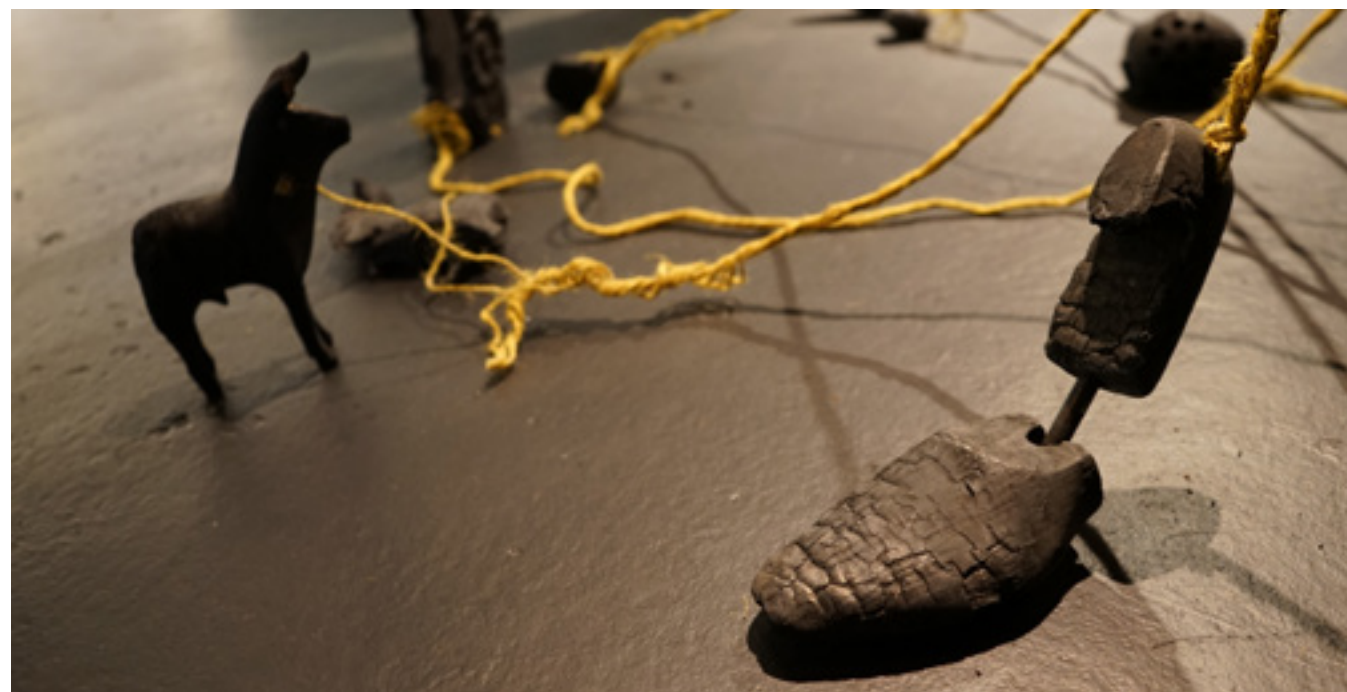




Touching Earth Bodies, (excerpts - video stills)
 Lindsay Katsitsakatste Delaronde and Valerie Salez
 two-channel video projection, digital photographs
 2017 - ongoing;



In the Shadow of our Own Dust, Valerie Salez
Performance
June 2, 2018



In the Shadow of our Own Dust, Valerie Salez
installation details
burnt wood, textiles, feathers, fur, horse hair, sheep wool, bone
2012



IN DEFIANCE



IMAGE KEY

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	32	33

1

AMANDA ENGEN

Dene Tha’/Métis
Transcendence

As Indigenous women we rise up the mountainside. We acknowledge the struggles life presents us, but to remain silent about violence will only continue to hurt our bodies, minds, and souls. To heal our hearts we must speak up, speak out, and share our truth. No longer will our voices be silenced by idle threats forcing us to remain quiet.

Alone we climb up the mountainside in search of our own voices. This is never an easy journey. We long to hear the wisdom of our ancestors speak through us from deep within our hearts - like a whisper in the wind. At times it takes us decades to hear them, but to know they are there is calming.

As Indigenous women we rise to transform our inner spirits. We are strong where silence has no more room to stay buried within our souls. Let us come together to climb the mountainside and stand strong, united, and proud. Only truth can set us free, because power, manipulation, and control is only hurting our spirits. No more. That is enough.

2

NIKKE GOODWILL

Nuu-chah-nulth/Dakota Sioux

3

ANONYMOUS

Reflecting on ASsets

Kiss my ass,
boys who called me fat
when I had a 26” waist.

Kiss my ass,
men who pinched my cheeks
when you should have pinched my cheeks.

Kiss my ass,
girls who wanted proof
when I was the evidence.

Kiss my ass,
women who painted masks
and taught me how to apply them.

Kiss my ass,
or I’ll bite your tongue.

4

BEE

Maternal: Lkwungen/Quw’utsun’/Lummi
Paternal: Irish/French/Euro descent

My name is Bee. I am Lkwungen, Quw’utsun’, and Lummi on my maternal side and mixed-Irish/French/ Euro descent on my paternal side.

This project came at a time when I was newly living with a chronic and invisible illness that had fully come to surface. It has touched every part of my life, my being.

I do my best to embrace the beauty and power of fragility, healing, and accepting the differently abled and paced lifelong journey that I am on. I wanted to share a brief moment in everyday life as a Coast Salish two-spirit re-connecting with sexuality in a crip* body and what it means for me to be held

by nature
by lover
by teachings
by forest spirits.

Surrounded by the magic of Devil’s Club, it was a change of seasons and the rain fell from the brightly clouded sky and I felt grateful.

*Crip= reclaiming of “cripple” as an inclusive term for all who live a differently abled and paced life.

5

CARRIELYNN VICTOR

Stó:lo Coast Salish
Fisherwoman

Cleaning a salmon, fresh from the river. Some days beautiful feels like the way the sun touches my wet skin, catching glints of fish blood after a long day on the river. I wish to encourage diversity in the ways we see beauty. I wish to share how beauty is more than a perfect set of eyelashes or flawless hair.

In this photo I am cleaning a fish to share it with my family, an act I have been taught is beautiful. From the fish that gave its life, to the gesture of sharing, all the way to the strength that fish brings to our bodies when we eat it, there is beauty. There are many ways to not only be seen as beautiful, but also many ways to project beauty.

6

KELLI CLIFTON

Gitga’ata Nation
Reflection

The ocean has always made me feel powerful. As a coastal woman, it is where I feel a strong connection to the land while remaining completely self-aware. When approached by Lindsay to take part in this photoshoot, I knew that in order to reveal my true self I would need to be surrounded by salt water waves. To me, this photograph is about feeling confident and beautiful while reflecting the beauty of your surroundings.

7

TUY’T’TANAT - CEASE WYSS

Skwxwu7mesh/Stó:lo/Hawaiian/Swiss
En Ha7lh Skwalewans (My heart is lifted)

I am a medicine gatherer of mostly Coast Salish descent. My upbringing has been focussed on indigenous medicines and walking through forests all of my life. Ceremonial Activism has helped me define myself as an empowered indigenous knowledge practitioner. My relationship to Mother Earth and to myself as an indigenous woman will not be compromised by others views of what is sacred and what is taboo.

I respect myself, my spirit, my body, and my mind. Sexuality and being sexy have been given negative connotations for women and I have stood up to those negative views and continue to allow myself to look and feel beautiful in my own unique ways. Our collective mother is beautiful and sexy. There is nothing wrong with feeling empowered in how we look and how we dress. This is a basic human right. I am a Lifegiver and I feel beautiful.

8

LINDSAY KATSITSAKATSTE DELARONDE

Iroquois, Mohawk Nation
Portal

“Sacred Fire, bring me home to the wild, connect me to the dark womb, where all creation is born. Light the inner knowing and truths that glow from within”.

Portal is an image that reflects how I experience and embody my sexuality. Fire is the divine energy that teaches me to establish a deep relationship with myself and this deep connection to my spirit is where the erotic lives within me. The tantalizing fire dances and lures for a deeper understanding of the life, death, life cycle of life. Fire creates a portal back to my home... back to my heart and soul.

9

ROBYN KRUGER

Syilx, Southern Interior Salish, Okanagan Nation
Extravagant Rhapsody

What is the ideology behind the perpetuation of sexualization of Indigenous women in Canadian Society? Public displays and misrepresentations made by the media promote violence against Indigenous women and devalue Indigenous women’s cultural roles. The media also promotes and normalizes the dehumanization of Indigenous women.

The photo art process extricates, enlightens, and empowers Indigeneity for the artist. Her contribution is an offering to the creation of the public inquiry into missing and murdered aboriginal women and girls. The discourse may promote discussions for social change and humanize, beautify, and acknowledge the Indigenous women’s concerns about their presence in Canada. She asks “Why am I here?” This is a taunting rhapsody to awaken the masses. It is time to make progress on this issue. We’ve had enough.

10

SABRINA WILLIAMS

Nuu-chah-nulth
Remembrance

This is what I hope for all our children: ties to land and culture will be mended through ancestral teachings and through invoking the inherent genetic memory that has been the root of our survival. I also hope that they will have the will to carry on despite the anguish and pain of a colonial world imposed upon us.

In the 1950’s, my grandmother Pearl Clutesi, one of the Robinson Girls (as they were fondly called) led by George Clutesi and members from Tseshah Nation danced for the Queen at Wawadit’la (Mungo Martin at Thunderbird Park on Belleville Street). Today, I bear witness to triumphant acts of remembering and honouring the legacy of our ancestors. To dance and to sing is integral to cultural survival, renewal and rebirth. It is our breath, it is our healing and it is our promise we make to unborn grandchildren.

In this image, Lindsay has captured all that I hold dear: the healing that is to be found in remembering and passing on the teachings embedded in song and dance; and the profound love of a mother and child.

Kleco Kleco!

11

KEILAH LUKENBILL-WILLIAMS

Nuu-chah-nulth (Tseshah, Kyuquot)/
Quw’utsun’ (S’amuna’)
I return, resting in our mother’s hands

I return to rest in your hands fertile with knowing, the unbroken bloodline of thousands of years of story pulses within them.

In the mist of your riverstone-green breath settled, nestled in moss and mist my bones, blood, sinew shift shape, once displaced, for now I am home.

We’ve been stripped our bodies stolen, eclipsed I begin to lift heavy bandages the skin is raw, I emerge and place my Self upon you.

The wound is deep, far deeper than the flesh and my fingers are thirsty roots searching in soil to draw in healing waters.

I return, resting in our mother’s hands I am held, reclaimed and in her embrace I hold firmly to what was always mine.

12

TEYOTSIHSTOKWÁTHE DAKOTA BRANT

Mohawk Nation, Ohswé:ken Territory

My vision for this photoshoot was to explore my power and to involve myself with self-discovery. My grandmother, “Mama” Eleanore Mae Brant, was a survivor of the Mohawk Institute Residential School; she left school at age 14 with an education and career opportunities limited to cooking, cleaning, and sewing. By age 15, she was pregnant with her first child and married to my granddad who was 9 years older. She lived to raise 9 children, and countless more as an adopted mother. Her own self-discovery began when she decided she wanted to go back to school to become a nurse. Only after she took care of everyone else was she really able to begin her own self-discovery. It makes me appreciate the life I have and the freedom I have to navigate my own self-exploration.

My Mama was always excited to hear about my travels, my education, anything that was new. She wanted me to live my life to the fullest and she never made me feel confined by the same limitations she was. In fact, she went out of her way to make barriers seem as though they didn’t exist for me. I still wonder if she even knew they were there.

Mama passed away in 2010, one month before I was crowned Miss Indian World and traveled the world as an ambassador for Indigenous Nations. I received a towel that belonged to her from the give-away at her 10-day Death Feast, and I used it to wrap my Miss Indian World sash to keep it safe and to take her around the world with me in spirit. This photoshoot for me was about formally breaking those limitations my Mama had lived with; she can be free now.

*Mikisew Cree
Knowledge Written in Stone, Blood, and Bone
Prayer for the Whole of Creation as One*

Grandmother
I honour you by living from my heart
I honour you by speaking my truth
I honour you by trusting the wisdom of my body
I honour you by nurturing myself so that I may nurture others

Grandfather
I honour you by embracing my healthy warrior, the one who loves
fearlessly
I honour you by living with intention and purpose for the good of all
I honour you by respecting, supporting, and protecting

Grandmother
I honour my spirit in form and the Grandmother and Grandfather
within me
I live in gratitude for our Great Grandmother Earth and our Great
Grandfather Sun
I pray for the balance of all that is and the remembrance of what I am
to become

Nuu-chah-nulth

Deciding to do this project took a few months to fully commit to because I considered my family, my children, my nation, and most of all my father. What I really committed to was the essence of what it meant to me. I was born in Port Alberni, BC. I lived on a reservation off Somass River called Tse-shaht. We lived behind an old residential school. I used to run around in the forest. To me it was a place where I felt I belonged. It brought a sense of safety, of well-being, of not being alone. I grew up in a time when we were going to become survivors. So, to feel safe anywhere this was the place.

Participating in this Squaw project was fascinating. I did not think I would feel so comfortable. It was like reclaiming my innocence. Being a survivor, I became quite ashamed of my body and who I thought I was. At an early age I was an alcoholic, uneducated, and violent. I struggled with my sexuality and became a young mom.

When Lindsay presented this opportunity, I thought about what it would mean and how we are standing for those we lost to addictions and violence and for those who went missing. As women, we are the lifegiving force for Naas, our Creator. As women we are, like all of creation, to be respected, cherished, and honoured. This project gave a different perspective to my life and healed a part of my sexuality - to love what was created by Naas, the one who gave me life, and to cherish being a woman, a life giver, and to find purpose in my life.

The project brought forth the awareness of the attitudes that are still carried by those who continue to shame us. I am not an object or something to be objectified but I am a soul, who teaches, dances, and works with children. I am an artist, and a beautiful woman who lives in the gift of each day. Sober 26 years, away from violence, teaching traditional dance, and working towards having an education. I am a proud Nuu-chah-nulth woman.

(continued)

I was so happy when I did this shot with my daughter, Nicole, and granddaughter, Aiyanna. On that morning, I dropped something off at my daughter’s and she asked where I was going. When I told her about the project with Lindsay, she asked if she could come. What I didn’t know was that she and my granddaughter were going to become a part of it. If something was healed in me, it was the connection that I could have a relationship with my daughter. She encouraged me to go through with the project, and I felt as though she was proud of me. Her words guided me into healing deep wounds set off by the words instilled by residential schools. Words that were malicious, hurtful, and very damaging.

My relationship with my daughter and her becoming a mother brought me to a deeper meaning of womanhood and what it means to connect to who we are as three generations. This experience gave me the hope that when my granddaughter grows to become a young woman, those malicious words are going to be further away. I have never felt more honoured. I gained the courage to heal these wounds through becoming connected to my daughter’s courage to love, to raise her child differently, and to tell me it is okay to be a woman.

*Nahua/Mixtec/Welsh/Russian
Tonantzin*

Tonantzin has many aspects. She is a matriarchal term of honour and respect in Nahuatl and a name for our Mother Earth – mother, grandmother, lady, provider, nourisher. She is connected with goddesses like Chicomecoatl (Seven Snakes), a feminine form of Maize, one of the many gifts my ancestors shared. She is also connected with Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe, most revered incarnation of the Virgen Maria in Mexico. It is told that her vision appeared to an Indian man, Juan Diego, at Tepeyac on the grounds of a destroyed temple to Tonantzin in 1531. She asked him in Nahuatl to build her another in that same sacred place. For the Christians this would be a church. She imprinted her image on his tilma, his robe, as an enduring impression of her power.

Guadalupe is a complex figure, both Indigenous and European, somewhat like me as a woman of mixed-blood. I see in her the sexualized violence of the Conquest alongside Malinche, the disgraced so-called race traitor. Yet, I also see in her the tenacity of my ancestors who found ways to practice their beliefs under colonial rule by integrating Christian imagery and concepts in their ceremony, though this was a Christianity that did not hold women at its centre and divided our being, our maternal capacity from our sexuality.

Many of our women have Maria in their given names, like my Abuela Cipriana, who was a highly regarded traditional curandera but also lived a short life marked by all the gendered struggles of poverty. Maria/Guadalupe/Tonantzin is for me a symbol of birth and

(continued)

rebirth, sustenance, survival, and dignity. Tonantzin is the dignity that Indigenous women must claim for ourselves. My Abuela was an aspect of Tonantzin. I am an aspect of Tonantzin. We are all aspects of Tonantzin.

Métis

(continued)

my voice is dusty, my feathers charcoal
your wings are rusty, stained crimson and gold
you’re the owl, i’m the crow
you’re the pieces of me
i don’t show.

your owl eyes my crystal ball
our silent wings bring nightfall

when your big round eyes are worn and tired
don’t worry
my wild wiles are so hardwired
i’ll find the shiny fragments spilled from your chest
gather them
bring them back to the nest.
when our oil slick wings turn dull and gray
don’t cry, wish or bother to pray
with my talons so strong and so tender
i’ll carry you far
far away

hey small owl, beautiful bird
our wings are paper, but our song more than words.
shapeshifter
little sister
you’re in my marrow, my veins
my ferocious free spirit has you to blame

my four dimensional shadow reflects her intricate
feathers
we’re hunted and starved but she’s wise
and i’m clever
sundown at high noon will be your first clue
be grateful
be careful
we’re coming for you.

To my ancestors, mother, aunts, sisters, friends, lovers, and all the women who have contributed to the development and acceptance of my multidimensional identity. We are all branches of the same tree, feathers of the same wing, and raindrops of the same cloud. I stand in strong solidarity with you eternally as we climb together, soar together, and use our collective power to float gently through this world, taking it fearlessly by storm when necessary.

Haida
Sa'an n'ahn gu'as: singing girl

Face turned up to the sky
no shame for this body, this skin
I feel alive, in tune, connected with everything in me and around me
The water pours down
spraying my face, my neck...playing with the waves of my hair
bringing healing energy, bringing acceptance for this body, this face,
these curves
for my beauty, my strength, my power.

I stand firm
grounded, rooted in Spirit
I am free

Wet'suwet'en nation, Gitumden clan,
house of Anasaski
WILD

Moving with aggressive sensuality, Wild owns her body.
She has no shame in her passionate endeavors. She is the predator and you are the prey. Wild takes no prisoners.

Saulteaux-Cree/Métis
(continued)

When I learned about this project and the intent behind challenging indigenous women to reflect on and speak about their sexuality, I had so many truths unfold. I thought of my sexual feminine power and the beautiful experiences I have had. I also thought about experiences which broke me, as I learned in hard ways that we are left so much on our own to navigate the realms of our sexuality. I remembered being young and exploring myself the first times, feeling ashamed and that I needed to hide the urges I didn't understand. I reflected on the growth that has occurred, from a curious girl to a woman who is more self-aware.

In the photo, I picked up the flowers to represent the sacred aspect of my sexuality, one which has not always been understood or respected. I believe we are sacred and that our experiences of sex, both alone and with others, are sacred. In a time of great forgetfulness, this is a remembering that needs to be fed over and over again and it is one I am trying to cultivate now, as I walk forward with scars and stories and a hopeful heart.

As we were taking photos, the neighbouring dog, Henry, came bounding over and sat near me. There was something comical, natural and intrusive about his presence. I fed him oranges from my hands and welcomed him. Whether he was a reminder not to take things so seriously, a reminder of the organic nature of our sexual explorations, or a reminder of the waysin which our journeys are so innately connected, I wasn't sure. But his presence was light and one of companionship.

This image captures my vulnerable strength, one that I am not ashamed of. I am soft, passive, feminine, and serious. It is a rough and hard world and as women, we are exposed to so much: judgment, shaming, hyper-sexualization, exotification, taking, and devaluing of our sacredness. I have been lost, terrified, vulnerable, full of regret and confusion, both selfless and selfish. We are imperfect beings, navigating our own paths. In these steps to come, I wish for the wisdom to be gentle with myself and others; to honour my spirit, and to be able to gracefully journey from a state of vulnerable warrior strength. I am grateful for this opportunity to participate in a project which gives both voice and self-expression to women from all walks.

Michif (Saulteaux, Cree-Métis)
(continued)

The first sexual act in this life is the act of being born. We enter the world carried on a current of water, body and body. From the land that is our Mother. Birth is a representation of sexual power, strength, remembrance and ceremony. When fostered by cultural voice, language and song, it is a vibrant act of Indigenous governance.

Collectively, our first birth is from our Original Mother. Kā wee ooma aski.
Do we remember the act of being born from her?

Pikisiwiw. She remembers as she goes back. To her. A mindful return, and in turn, re-birth. The red river flows out of women. Women out of the land. To me sexuality is sacred. It is raw, organic, connected and original. It stems from our relationship to the Land, our Mother. And is reflected in our relationships with ourself, spirit and one another.

I chose to represent the sacred birth from Kā wee ooma aski.

A reflection on the photo-process:
We met early in the morning and shared visions over coffee, talking through our nerves. We arrived at the site and smudged with sweetgrass. We found an owl feather. It was time.
I slowly took off my clothes and stood naked in the cool

air. I stepped into the mud and began to rub its thick fragrance over my body. I immediately felt safer in the mud. Stronger. I tied my sash around my waist. Red River. We began.
I brought important visions into my mind - birth. strength. sacred. gratitude. connection.
People passed by as we worked. Later on, deep into the process, a white man walked by and proclaimed "my dream come true!", as if this entire co-creative experience was for him. Lindsay asked for privacy and he immediately responded with "No! This is a public place, and you shouldn't even be here..." It was the perfect representation/contrast of the sacred Indigenous feminine and the white man's violent extraction, objectification and violence. We ignored him and vented later on.
The experience itself was so incredible. I have never felt so strong. So beautiful.
Nitataminan for this experience.
It felt like an honouring.
I felt re-birth.

Métis/Cree
(continued)

I am wild,
It's been said.
I eat dirt. I smoke cigarettes. I'll fuck you in the woods, and hold no regrets. I cry. I dance. I'm amused that you're ashamed of hard ons and wet cunts.

But I'll sing you to sleep with an off tune lullaby and draw pictures on your back at night.
I'll read your natal chart, tell you about your signs, and find your sensitive spots with it. I'll teach you how to make a woman climax. But I'm scared that you'll hurt me with it.

I learn fast and memorize well. I am educated by the college of life.
And I may not see all of my friends every day, but they are imprinted on my soul; I protect them like they are my kin.

Fuck with them.
I dare you.

I'll ruin you while wearing a pretty smile on my face and no one will know the better.

I'll call you on your shit. I can't stand a fake. Not pretty girls with make-up, and spray tans who revel in their beauty. That's not a fake, you fool. They don't scare me. I call many my friends.

But I despise the two-faced, the ones who think they can destroy me then turn around and act like my friend.
I see you from a mile away.

And still, I'll hold you in your darkest hour, even after you've stabbed me in the back... Then pull the knife out and lay it back on the ground where it belongs.

I'll heal your wounds while mine are bleeding.

Like I said. Wild.

Stó:lo/Métis/Ojibway

(continued)

I arrived in Winnipeg to perform for a music festival the day after the city had marched in the streets after Tina Fontaine’s body had been found in a garbage bag on the bank of the river. I was horrified that these #MMIW cases kept happening over and over. To my dismay, my hotel was a stone’s throw from where Tina’s body was discovered. I was terrified every night in my room repeatedly checking the locks on the door and the windows. I lay awake in bed, vulnerable and scared. Why was this happening?

In my music and stage presence, I promote positive expression of healthy sensuality and sexuality for Indigenous women to reclaim their rightful identities as women. This is my current journey in life. In the hotel room, I questioned myself. The very messages I fought against in my family and community - “cover up,” “don’t ask for it by dressing that way,” “don’t wear makeup or you will be judged as a dirty Indian girl” - were coming back to me and I wanted to hide any attention I would attract to myself or any other potential #MMIW victim in an effort to protect our existence. But, what is our existence if we cannot be ourselves in a safe and nurturing society? It all looped back to the colonial environment we are living in. I was so frustrated. I was angry. I was enraged. I was crushed. I felt defeated.

For this photoshoot, I chose to expose the darkness that was churning inside of me and the emotional rollercoaster that I was on. I wanted to make people feel the discomfort I was experiencing. This photo shows that part of me is stronger to be vulnerable, honest and

Haida

(continued)

When Lindsay approached me about the project I was both honoured and a little terrified. I have had a long and complicated relationship with my body, sexuality and confidence.

Being a survivor of sexual assault I have a very sordid and arduous relationship with my own sensuality. I have been triggered more times than I can count by sexual experiences with loving and respectful partners, simply because the act of sex, and the motions that lead to sex are directly connected to traumatic events that have led me to hate my body, and view it as a prison instead of my home.

Examining my body and sensuality in this way was a very important healing tool. For the first time I experienced that my body and my sexuality could be an enriching and fulfilling entity, and that loving myself would give way to unpacking some seriously painful memories. I fought long and hard with the idea of being completely candid about the reality of my body, but in the end I sought comfort from the ocean. A place I found safety, a place I went when my anxieties bubbled over. A place my ancestors fished, paddled, and washed themselves in traditional Lekwungen territory that dates back to 500 AD called ɿKwatsechɿ. The ocean was a womb for my insecurities, a safe blanket all around me, covering the places on my body thathatred had been etched into by my abusers, and at times – myself.

Kwakwaka’wakw

My body is not only a site of defiance, written on the skin and carried in my bones, but is also a site where I struggle for self-determination as I express myself in ways that are often contrary to colonial expectations. As a Two-Spirit woman, I seek to live and love in accordance with the laws of the water, land, animals and ancestors to whom I am accountable. Through my extended kinship network of rebels, resisters, and change-makers, I am reminded of our collective strength to hold one another up and to hold ourselves up.

As an Indigenous academic, I often feel my mind is being mined for the kinds of knowledge that others deem relevant, viable and measurable. Here, I seek to make visible the ways we embody our self-determination as Indigenous women and Two-Spirit people, vibrantly resisting the colonial metrics that attempt to box us in as we live far beyond, outside and beneath imposed ideas of how we come to matter.

Gilakas’la.

Migmaw/Polish/Irish/Ukranian
Seasons

My old apartment rooftop
I used to sit upon it and play my guitar down to the busy downtown streets below
There lived a season of which was sprung and fallen in this place
A honeybee in the centre of the hive with the ebb and flow of a thundering tsunami
In this lifetime I will bear yet another thousand faces
Yet this one I lay to rest, amongst a sepia sky and the seagull nests
And to her hungry skin I bid farewell

Blackfoot
AAKII (Woman/Queen)

Sex. Sexy. Sexual. Sexuality. Sensual. Sinful. Squaw.
Sexuality is feared like a black unknown.
Feared in a way that our lives can not be seen, let alone heard.
Racially spewed words spit in the face of our appearance.
Behind closed doors many cry in shame.
Never to be heard and never to be seen for who we really are.
Resilient but scarred.
Indigenous women are not even human to the majority population.
Colonization has changed how we see our women.
Discarded and washed away.
Murdered, Missing and taken for granted.
But who cares?
I care. I am worthy and so is she.
Broken at best but not defeated.
Our bodies are sacred, a temple of love.
When I look at the ocean, I see a strong and powerful woman, both mysterious and intense.
Water is life, and without water there is no you, me or them.
Creation comes from within and creation is a beautiful thing we take for granted.
The time is here to claim our throne, to toss away the empty rhetoric.
To prove to our own selves that we are beautiful, we are needed, but most importantly, we are wanted.
My mother once told me women were once the keepers of the tribe, held in high regard just like a queen.
I am a daughter first, a mother second, and one day a grandmother at last.
Aakii in Blackfoot has two meanings: woman and queen.
I am a woman and I am most definitely a queen.
Oki, niitaniko Pokaakii (Hello, my name is Little Woman)

I was given this amazing opportunity to showcase my own being, my own resiliency. I was scared but excited at the same time. As I get older the less afraid I feel to show my own self. At times, I feel shamed by ones I thought cared only to be shot down when I prevail. To be in this project has helped me to find my own sexuality and to not feel shamed or afraid.

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MARGARET BRIERE

Shíshálh Nation - Two-Spirit
In Body

I am a Two-Spirited Woman from Shíshálh Nation. My life for the past five years has been about healing from Historical Trauma. Through extensive mind-body therapy, I have unlocked unimaginable doors and gifts, and my true sense of self has surfaced. I have come to pursue my soul’s calling and passion through art. I have been a professional artist for the past three years and an artist in my soul my entire life.

The image before you is an expression of my sexuality through a transformation symbol. The vision of this symbol came spontaneously during a conversation with Lindsay. I had a memory of working with Medicine Horses where I learned about how animals bring messages from the Spirit World. The first image appeared as just my face, one half not painted and the other half painted. When this split presented itself, an image of a Turkey Vulture appeared which symbolizes transformation. All of this appeared very quickly. I was deeply moved and only then felt grounded in being a model for Lindsay’s project.

The image of my bare chest and hands down facing forward is the intentionality of revealing the level of openness in expressing sexuality as a Two-Spirited Indigenous Woman. The water symbolizes an honoring of Women’s life giving abilities while it also cleanses us spiritually in ceremonial practices. The location was in a public area of the urban centre in Victoria BC, where you would not typically see nakedness in this form. Breaking the status quo and re-exploring my sexuality through photo art has made me feel completely free to be the Indigenous, Two-Spirited person I am today..

28

KIM PAQUETTE

Cree
Cowichan Valley

My name is Kim Paquette, my paternal grandmother was Cree from the Lesser Slave Lake area in Northern Alberta. Being an admirer of Lindsay’s artwork, I was honoured to be asked to be part of the project. The photoshoot was a very positive experience for me. The request occurred after I had returned to the island following an emotionally trying year in Vancouver. When I look at the photos, I remember the heaviness of the previous year and the healing in starting to shake that heaviness off. I also see and remember being filled with hope and a deep gratitude for being back on the island and for all the things and people that carry us through when times are hard. Being amongst the trees in nature has always been a gift and solace for me. The rain that day was fitting, as it was quite literally a cleansing away of the previous year’s turmoil.

29

HANA GORDON

Métis

30

MADELAINE MCCULLUM

Cree/Métis

31

ALETHIA

Chippewa/Southern Ojibwe/Scottish
*“A native woman of mixed ancestry” in
Ojibwe wiisaakodewikwe*

32

NICOLE MANDRYK

Anishinaabe/Irish/Ukrainian

Boozhoo, my name is Nicole Mandryk, I am an Anishinaabe, Irish, and Ukrainian kwe. I was born and raised on the traditional territory of the Lekwungen, Esquimalt, and Wsanec peoples. I participated in Lindsay’s ‘Squaw’ project as a form of healing to reclaim a part of my sexuality I suppressed due to being sexually assaulted three years ago. Lindsay created a safe space to reflect on recreating the part of my being which was taken, in turn supporting my journey of coming to fulfill my internal world of well-being and wholeness. I want to thank Lindsay for creating this project and for giving Indigenous woman an outlet to express themselves outside the gaze of a colonial lens.

Miigwech.

33

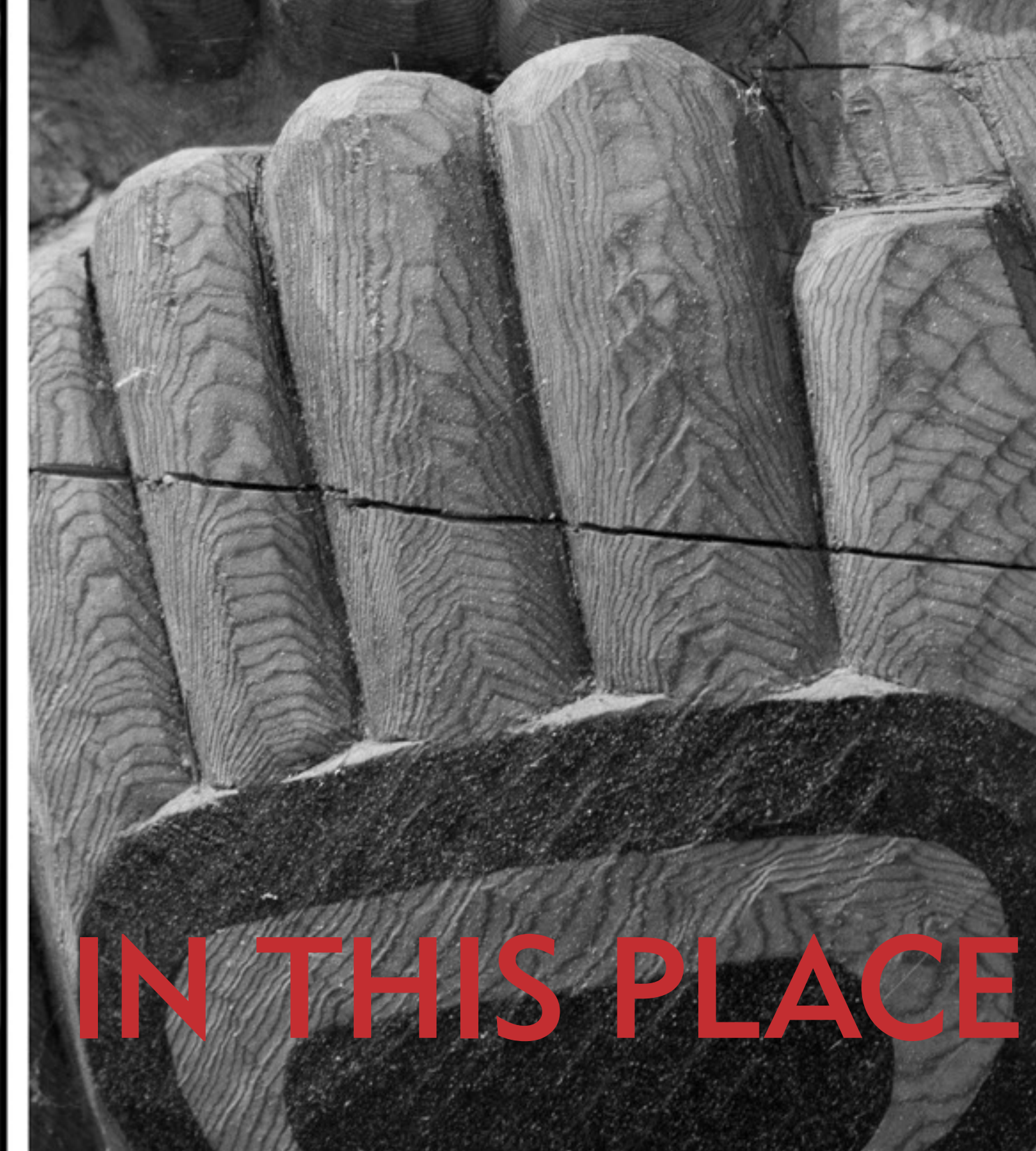
VALERIS SALEZ

Re:birth



Corn Husk Dolls – Community Make Art Project
Facilitated by Lindsay Katsitsakatste Delaronde
Comox Valley Art Gallery Plaza and South Gallery
June 2, 2018







JOHN POWELL / WINIDI

NUMP MA NOCHE GYAI YOO LAHSS / WE ALL COME FROM ONE ROOT

Photography, archive and memory are intimately connected. Memory and photography both involve the process of recording images that may be used to recall the past. Memory itself is often characterized as an archive: a store house of things, meanings and images. This gives the impression that one can appeal to memory in order to recover the past. Memory, however, does not take material or physical form in the way that photographs and archives usually do. It is not a photograph or a series of images to be gazed upon and it is not a library or database where records might be retrieved. Rather, memory, as we prefer to see it here, is mediation. It is the set of processes through which the past comes to us, but not just the uninterrupted transit of the past to the present. Memory is, in a sense, designed and shaped by the laws and practices of the present, which provide the structures for remembrance to take place.¹



As witness, orator, community knowledge carrier, and oral genealogist, Kwakwaka'wakw artist John Powell / Winidi, proposes *Nump Ma Noche Gyai Yoo Lahss / We All Come From One Root*.

The concept of 'One Root' is manifested in an extensive body of work that articulates the powerful interconnectedness of First Nations identities, embedded within cultural practices, diversity, ceremony, art and the everyday. At the 'Root', family lineages and origins are pulled, held, shared, transformed, and recreated through a rigorous art and cultural practice. The exhibition is materialized through the interweaving of exhibition components – oral and video storytelling narratives, archival documentation, family photographs, portraiture, and First Nations Regalia.

The exhibition offers a multiplicity of entry points. Guided by ancestral knowledge and teachings, historical stories and photographs serve as a way of remembering one another, honouring truths, and instigating a retelling.

The core of the exhibition is comprised of life-size and larger-than-life fibre-based and hand-tinted family portraits, integrated with a selection from John's elaborately crafted West-Coast Button Blanket Regalia. The work is further activated and deepened through a collection of video narratives in relation to the family portraits. As a result, identities are recorded, connected, reclaimed and redefined. Emerging from this transformation is a deep understanding of *Nump Ma Noch Gyai Yoo Lahss / We All Come From One Root*.

Nump Ma Noch Gyai Yoo Lahss was first co-curated for the Campbell River Museum (2016), by Liz Carter and Ken Blackburn. The project continues with an expanded iteration at CVAG, including local Kómoks First Nations connections as part of the presentation. It is important to note that George Littlechild has been instrumental in this project since its inception.

In their introductory exhibition notes, Liz and Ken brought our attention to the importance of the 'personal is political', noting that "it is evident the work draws from a collective past, resides in a personal present and questions the future." They elaborated on this perspective, and further stating how cross-cultural experiences unfold in the work, describing the exhibition as a "historical journey through Powell's family lineage – representational of his traditional First Nations background, combined with a response to his cultural diversity. Powell descends from two intriguing cultures: his mother was Mamalilikulla and Kwakiutl of Village Island and Fort Rupert. His father was Welsh/Irish and English. This diversity shows in Powell's manipulation of traditional forms, where hints of his Celtic origins mix with his Mamalilikulla roots." With gratitude, we receive the work that has been done to shape this exhibition thus far, and to hold its form, here at the Comox Valley Art Gallery, as part of its ongoing journey.

— Angela Somerset + Denise Lawson
Comox Valley Art Gallery
collaborative curators

¹ Karen Cross & Julia Peck (2010) Editorial: Special Issue on Photography, Archive and Memory, *Photographies*, 3:2, 127-138, DOI: 10.1080/17540763.2010.499631 <https://doi.org/10.1080/17540763.2010.499631> In a special issue of the online journal *Photographies*, Karen Cross and Julia Peck consider the intertwined relationship between past, present and future in which memory plays the important role of mediator within the intimate relationship between photographic image, archive and memory, proposing that memory can be seen as "the set of processes through which the past comes to us, but not just the uninterrupted transit of the past to the present. Memory is, in a sense, designed and shaped by the laws and practices of the present, which provide the structures for remembrance to take place." John Powell lays out his personal and collective memories and interconnections, and in doing so invites us to consider our own relational pathways.

I would like to take this opportunity to acknowledge George Littlechild for motivating this body of work. I believe his words were something like this – ‘you are always speaking of your ancestors and nobody knows what they look like. You need to make their images real through your art’ ...and so this journey began.

— John Powell / Winidi



GEORGE LITTLECHILD / NANEKAWASIS

I have watched John Powell’s journey through these incredible Honourings of his Ancestors – connecting the dots, the stories, moieties and his family standings within the Kwakwaka’wakw nation.

John is blessed to come from a strongly ranked seating position within the nation and he holds up these Ancestors with great esteem and pride. They are his tie, his connection to the land, sea and sky. His roots have informed him, nurtured him, allowed him to stand connected to the land and people of Village Island, where his people lived for thousands of years.

His gift to us is the body of art full of mystic mastery and brilliance. He has captured his ancestry so beautifully. Each portrait bursts, evokes grand lineage and strength while his regalia / button blankets tie into today’s traditions as they are danced at Potlatches and gatherings. When needed, John has freely lent out the crests from his own dance order and that of his ancestors. He honours home, lineage and the stories that lie within, which he graciously has shared in this exhibition.

I am proud to have witnessed this body of art being conceived, created, born. I “Stand John Up” and am content to act as a cultural witness to his art-making practice that connects him to culture. I am very proud of you Winidi.

JOHN POWELL / WINIDI

I have enjoyed art-making all my life. My usual inspiration is my mother’s First Nations culture. I have fortunately lived all of formative life in the presence of this great culture. I am a Traditional Regalia Maker. My other training comes from schooling in Costume, Fashion, Interior, and Graphic Design. I have worked in design for nearly 30 years.

My design education has enabled me to work in some very diverse areas: theatre, opera, residential design, graphic design, teaching, Northwest Coast design classes and Regalia-making. I have created costumes for numerous theatre productions, the most recent being “The Ecstasy of Rita Joe” at Firehall Arts Centre in Vancouver. I was co-costume designer for the Vancouver Opera Society’s rendition of Mozart’s “The Magic Flute” at the Queen Elizabeth Theatre in Vancouver. And in 2009 – 2010 I was the design coordinator for the Vancouver 2010 Olympic Opening Ceremonies.

One of my names is Winidi (fights wars for his people). I am a Mamalilikulla member of the Kwakwaka’wakw speaking people. In addition, I was trained as an oral genealogist from a very young age. My art practice generally carries with it a responsibility to educate the larger world about my culture and the belief systems associated with being from the Mamalilikulla First Nation.

At the present time I am working in a political world. I sit as chairman of the Executive Board for the Kwakiutl District Council, which oversees work with eight of our Kwakwaka’wakw bands, six of which fall under health transfer. In addition, I am an elected councillor of the Mamalilikulla First Nation. I also sit as the chairman for the Aboriginal Coalition to End Homelessness in Victoria and I am currently speaking with First Nations Health Authority to work in the capacity of Health benefits

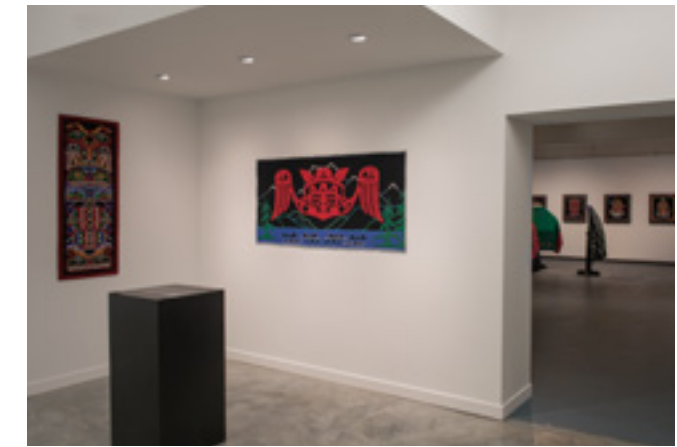
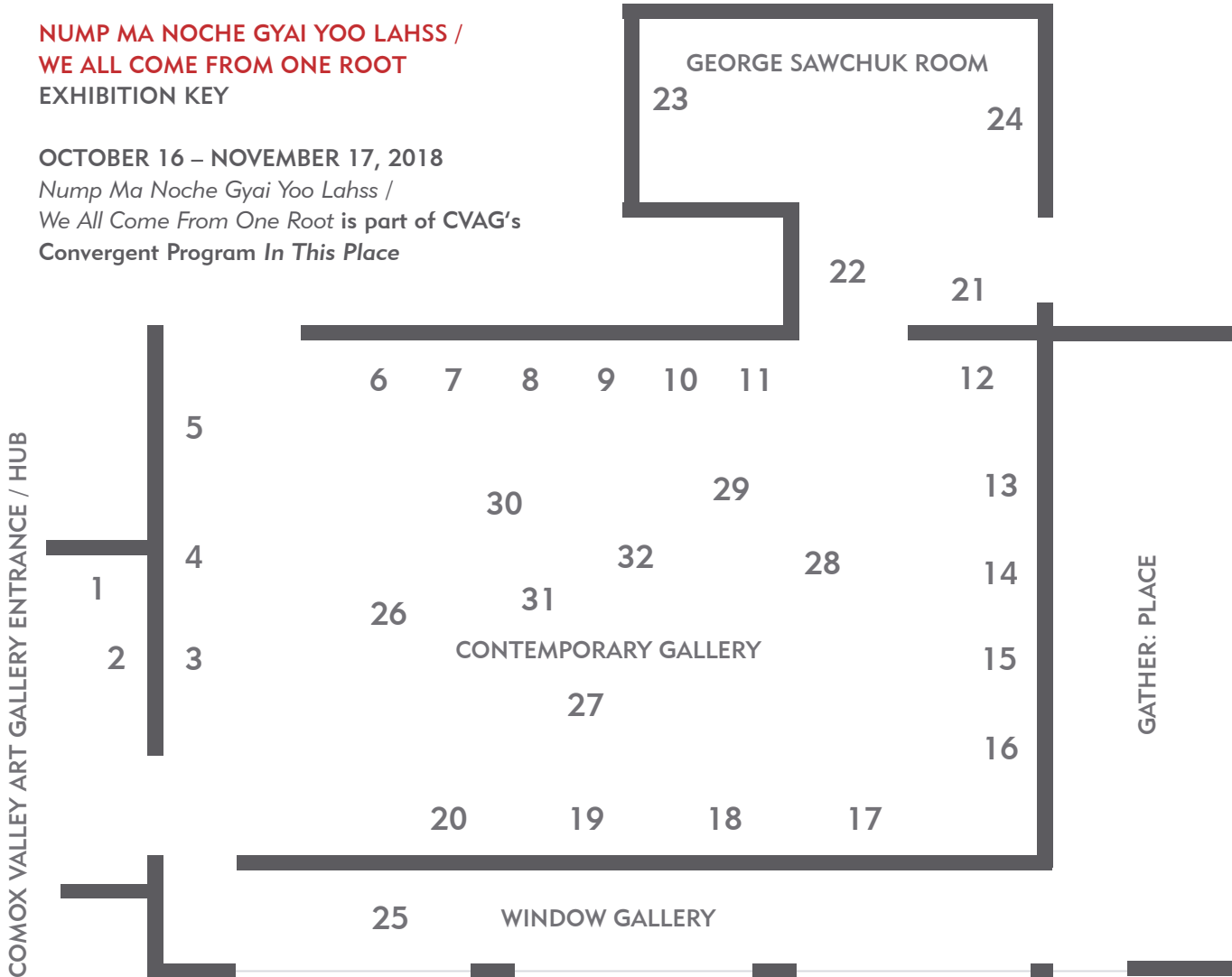


Figure 1: A small, rectangular artwork featuring a central figure with a face, surrounded by stylized elements like mountains, trees, and water. The colors are primarily red, yellow, and blue.

change champion for dental, vision and medical supplies roll out. All of this work is also motivated by my desire to bring about positive, healthy, growth and healing and to assist developing capacity for our First Nations people. In this way I hope to inspire through my work a gentle understanding of our people and the importance of connections and cooperation to enable of us to move forward with confidence and success.





NUMP MA NOCHE GYAI YOO LAHSS /
WE ALL COME FROM ONE ROOT
EXHIBITION KEY

OCTOBER 16 – NOVEMBER 17, 2018
Nump Ma Noche Gyai Yoo Lahss /
We All Come From One Root is part of CVAG's
Convergent Program In This Place

1. Welcome Pole
Thunderbird – Killerwhale
With Double Headed Sea Serpant

2. Ancestor in Flight Over Queneesh

3. Winidi / John Lawrence Powell
Alert Bay (Yalis) 1959 –
Materials: ultra-suede, cashmere, embroidery thread,
abalone buttons, mother of pearl buttons, plastic
sequins, velveteen.

4. John's Parents
Ah Nee Doo Gwa / Janet Caroline (Bell) Powell / Mother
Alert Bay (Yalis) 1935–1999
John David Powell / Father
Mission, B.C. 1930–1969
Materials: cashmere, Melton wool cloth, embroidery
thread.

5. Fort Rupert, 1881
Village of my maternal grandmother, her father's
and mother's great grandfather and great, great
grandmother
Image B-03566 courtesy of the Royal BC Museum and
Archives.

6. Gee Tlah Lah Gah / Grandparents
Eliza Lucy Bell (née Wah Lahss)
Grandmother (maternal) 1901–1970
Tlah Tlea Lee Dlah
Henry Abel Bell
Maternal Grandfather 1902 – 1983
Fort Rupert (Tsakis)
Materials: ultra-suede, cashmere, embroidery thread,
plastic buttons, metallic sequins.

7. Henry Abel Bell / Oo Dzee Sta Lees
Grandfather (maternal)
Village Island (Mim Qwam Lees) 1902–1983
Materials: ultra-suede, cashmere, embroidery thread,
plastic buttons, metallic sequins, velveteen.

8. Eliza Lucy Bell / Wa' dzi da' laga
Grandmother (maternal)
Fort Rupert (Tsakis) 1901–1970
Materials: ultra-suede, leather, embroidery thread,
plastic buttons, plastic sequins.

9. Mary (Speck) Wallas / Ah Dahqw'ih Nees /
Pa' ti la'enukw (heals with plants)
Great Grandmother. Turner Island 1861 - 1960

10. Walas K'yayu'tla'las
Great Grandfather. Fort Rupert 1853 - 1959

11. Ya m'gwas
Great, great grandmother's father's mother
William's Sound 1823-1910/12

12. Village Island, Village Island, Mim Qwam Lees
courtesy of Library & Archives Canada.

13. Dlah Kwa Gyee Lo Gwa / Whonnock(née Siwidi)
Married Dlah soo tee' wah lees
Great-grandaunt (maternal)
Village Island (Mim Qwam Lees) 1862 – unknown
Materials: ultra-suede, Melton wool cloth, cashmere,
embroidery thread, mother of pearl buttons, abalone
buttons, metallic sequins.

14. Goo Tlah' Lahss
Mamalilikalan / Jim Siwidi
Great-granduncle (maternal)
Village Island (Mim Qwam Lees) 1864 – unkown
Materials: ultra-suede, Melton wool cloth, cashmere,
embroidery thread, plastic buttons, plastic sequins.

15. Mah Q'wa Lah Oh Gwa
Married Dawson (née Siwidi) of Kingcome Islet
Great-grandaunt (maternal)
Village Island (Mim Qwam Lees) 1866 – unknown
Materials: ultra-suede, Melton wool cloth, cashmere,
embroidery thread, abalone buttons, mother of pearl
buttons, plastic sequins.

16. Dlah'Dlah Gwotl / Mary Bell
Married Jim Bell
Great-grandmother (maternal)
Village Island (Mim Qwam Lees) 1868 – unkown
Materials: Melton wool cloth, cashmere, velveteen,
embroidery thread, abalone buttons, mother of pearl
buttons, metallic sequins.

17. Family group circa 1870's
Tlah bah num / Robbie Bell (standing on left)
Emma Mabel Bell (standing in middle)
Married Aul Sewid

Rachel Constance Bell (standing on right)
Married Ed Wonnock
Henry Abel Bell (seated in front)
Married Eliza Wahlahss
Materials: cashmere, Melton wool cloth, embroidery thread.

18. Ax' Ah Wah
Granny Axu / Agnes Alfred (née Joe)
Great-grandaunt (maternal)
Numgis + Village Island 1889–1993
Materials: canvas, Melton wool cloth.

19. Noo Mahss / Jim Roberts / Cultis Jim
Great Grandmother's Brother Married Tattie Alfred
Turner Island 1870 - unknown

20. eWyai Yahtl
Great Grandfather's sister
Married Willie
Kingcome Inlet born circ 1843
Materials: canvas, Melton wool cloth.

21. Wah Dzee dah lah gah
John Powell's mother's mother
She is painted in the style in the style of pointillism,
composed completely of dots.

22. Eagle in Rays of Sun
It is said that when our people die they return in the form
of eagles.
When we perform ceremony, if what we do is done in a
good way and follows the protocol of our ancestors then
they will come and fly above us or roost and witness our
ceremony. When they are present it is said they sanction
our work.

23. John Powell Speaks Remembers Ancestors
(to view individual videos, touch icon on the screen
Courtesy of Museum at Campbell River.

24. Maggie Frank
Married Andy Frank of K'ómoks in 1940's
Fort Rupert 1897 – 1997
Lived in K'ómoks until her passing at 100 years less
twenty three days.

25. John Powell with Ancestors and Their Crests
Left of centre window:
Fort Rupert, Grandfather with Thunderbird Crest
Grandmother with Killer Whale Crest, Great Grandmother
+ Great Great Grandmother with Raven + Wolf Crests.
Centre Window:
K'ómoks and Fort Rupert
Maggie Frank, Father, John Powell with Double Headed
Sea Serpent Crest, Mother with Thunderbird Crest.
Right of centre window:
Knight Inlet, Great Great Aunt with Five Pointed Sun
Crest, Great Great Uncle with thunderbird Uncle, Great
Great Aunt with wolf Crest, Great Grandmother with
Thunderbird Crest.
All windows:
Salmon Crests represent the 29 sets of Twins born into
family since 1890.
(Salmon Dance is the exclusive birthright of twins and
does not require initiation. Twins in family are considered
good fortune.)

26. Thunderbird Sequin Button Blanket
/ Goo Tlah' Lahss
This blanket features a Thunderbird design representing
the first ancestor of Powell's grandfather, Maliqalla. On
the breast of the Thunderbird and grasped in its talons
are copper designs signifying the wealth and nobility of
the wearer. A wave design at the bottom of the blanket
symbolizes a connection to water. The three stars resting
above the Thunderbird represent the house of Goo Tlah'
Lahss Lee Ch'eetl (Powell's great-granduncle), was the
highest chief to rank in his time at Village Island. On
the front of this house there were no painted designs or
carved figures, only three cut out stars. At night, the light
of a fire in the house gave the appearance of twinkling
stars to passers-by. Along the border of the blanket
are designs of fiddlehead ferns and four-leaf clovers,
representing Powell's great-grandfather and great-
grandmother, respectfully.
Materials: wool gabardine, plastic and metallic
sequins, cotton.

27. Abalone Button Blanket / Lee Ch'eetl
This button blanket, lavishly embellished with abalone,
is a traditional wedding blanket. Abalone was the
prerogative of highranking individuals and they wore it
when they married. The blanket features the design of
two Thunderbirds facing each other. At the centre are
the three stars representing the house of Powell's great-
granduncle in Village Island. The name for the house
was Lee Ch'eetl meaning 'a broad floor to spread your
wealth'. The house is also referred to as "Star House".
The designs along the border of the blanket symbolize a
connection to plant life, as well as the Tree of Life, and a
connection to the land.
Materials: wool crepe, wool Melton cloth, abalone
buttons.

28. Plastic Button Blanket / Tree of Life
This blanket features the Tree of Life design, or the
cedar tree. The circular patterns around and on the tree
represent the seeds of life, or cedar. Along the border of
the blanket are designs symbolizing plant life, the Tree of
Life, and the four-leaf clover. The layering of buttons on
a blanket is a symbol of wealth and high rank. The use
of large buttons layered with the smaller attests to the
high nobility of the wearer.
Materials: cotton, wool Melton cloth, plastic buttons.

29. Trade Bead Blanket / Copper T-Bird
This blanket features a copper with a Thunderbird
design representing Powell's grandfather, Henry Abel
Bell. The two 'T's on either side represent the hearts
of coppers. At the base is a Sisiutl design. The designs
bordering the blanket represent a connection to plant
life. The floral-patterned fabric used at the top not only
represents a connection to plant life but also represents
the smoke hole of a house, through which our voices are
carried to the spirit world. The button blanket as a whole
represents the house. While dancing, the dance spirit
enters the dancer at the base and exits freely through
the top of the blanket as it would through the smoke
hole of a house.
Materials: wool crepe, wool Melton cloth, glass beads
(replica trade beads).

30. Mother of Pearl Button Blanket / Sisiutl
This blanket features a copper with a four-rayed sun
design. The sun represents the ancestor of Powell's
grandmother, Sint Leh, who was absorbed by the
sun. At the bottom of the blanket is the design of the
double-headed sea serpent, Sisiutl. The tongue of the
human and both sea serpents are copper; a total of
seven coppers are stitched into the blanket. The four
'T' shapes represent the hearts of coppers. Bordering
the blanket are designs of mountains, symbolizing a
connection to the land; four-leaf clovers, representing
Powell's great-grandmother; and the Tree of Life, or
cedar tree. The floral-patterned fabric used at the top of
the blanket symbolizes a connection to plant life.
Materials: Kasha lining material, Melton wool cloth,
mother of pearl buttons, abalone buttons, Abalone and
tortoise shell buttons, copper.

31 + 32. Twin Button Blankets
These two smaller button blankets featuring salmon
designs were worn by Powell's great nephews. Born
twins, the nephews automatically inherited the salmon
dance. The first blanket features a standing salmon
design with symbols along the border representing plant
life. The second blanket features a salmon swimming
forward design. The symbols along the border indicate a
connection to the land and plant life.
Materials: cotton, wool gabardine, plastic buttons,
metallic sequins.





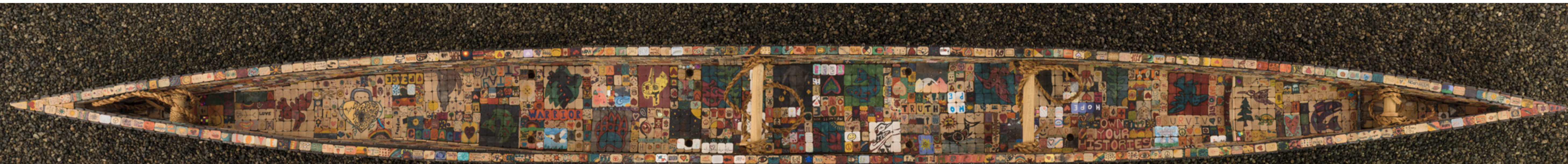
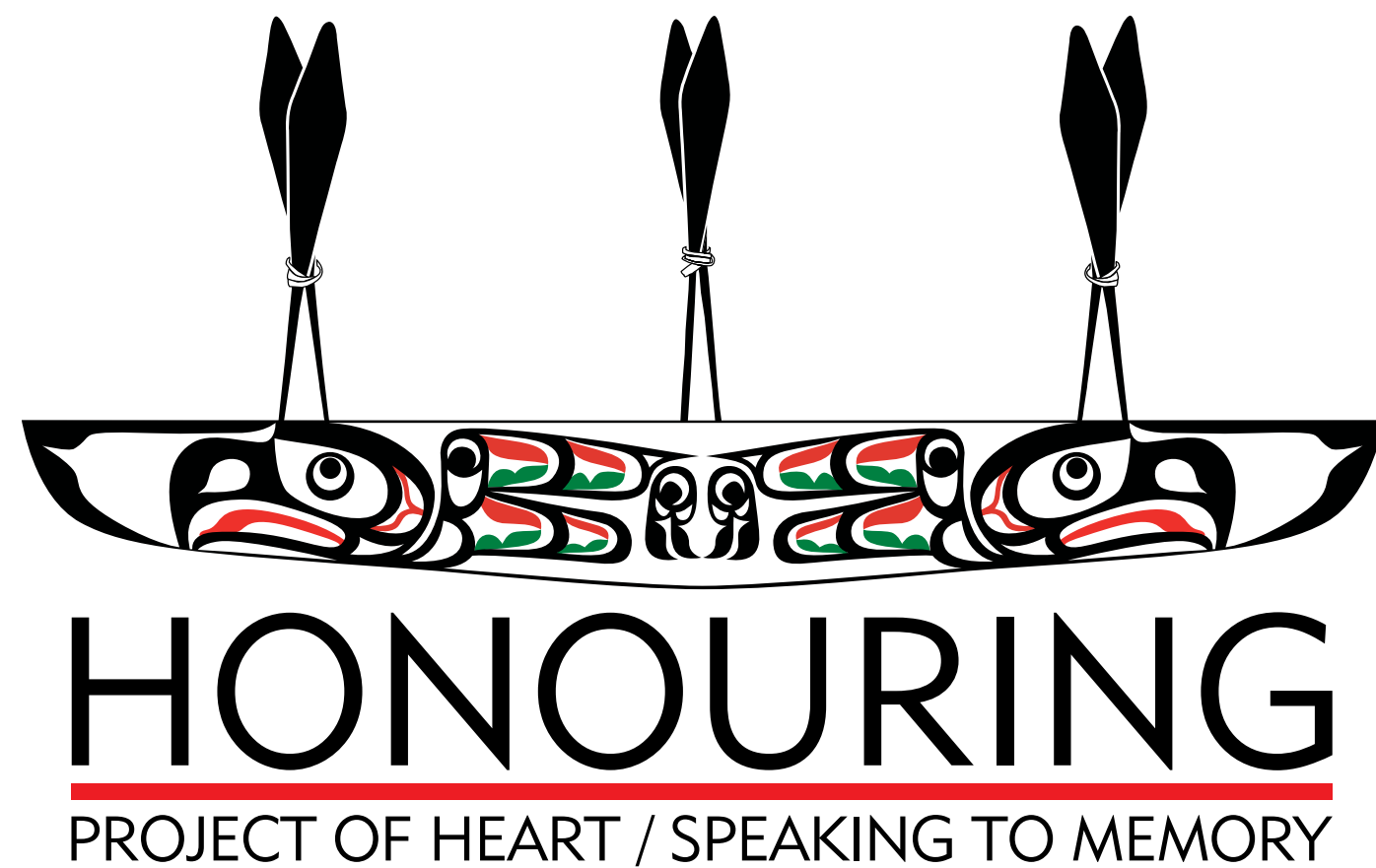




OOP MAH GYAH LEES









MAKE:SPACE – ONE ROOT (CVAG PLAZA)

MAKE: SPACE was an all ages drop-in art making station set up on the CVAG Plaza, in conjunction with *Nump Ma Noch Gyai Yoo Lahss / We All Come From One Root*.

The community collaboration was inspired by the West Coast form-line and the vibrant colour palette found in John Powell's extensive fibre and mixed media portrait series (South Gallery) and bold graphic cutout installation (Window Gallery). Participants were invited to create portraits using a variety of fibre and paper materials provided by the gallery.





Gilakas'la

WITH DEEP GRATITUDE FOR ALL THAT
MAKES PUBLIC PLACE SACRED SPACE

