

Celebrating Angela Bouras-Somerset | A Legacy of Curatorial Innovation and Programming Excellence | 2014 – 2024



The Comox Valley Art Gallery expresses its deep appreciation to Angela Bouras-Somerset, who is concluding her decade-long tenure as CVAG's Program Director and Co-curator. Her transformational guidance has left a legacy characterized by curatorial excellence, meaningful community collaborations, and significant enhancements that have amplified the Gallery's spaces, initiatives, and identity. Angela started as Program Director and Curator in January 2014. Since 2019, she has shared the curatorial role with Denise Lawson. Throughout her tenure at CVAG, Angela has been a driving force in shaping the Gallery's creative direction and evolution.

Programming convergence has been at the heart of Angela's methodology, centering thematic exploration and inquiry through 48 curatorial programs since 2014, including exhibitions, residencies, publications, media productions and rooted community collaborations. Angela's approach to programming has encouraged relationships among a diverse array of participants and contributors, including artists, curators, researchers, communities, sponsors, and audiences, creating a vibrant and enriching exchange of ideas and practices. The archive of Convergent Programs can be viewed [\[here\]](#).

CELEBRATE AND CONNECT:

View the web article celebrating Angela's work and explore the archive of programming during her tenure | 2014 – 2024:

EXHIBITIONS

CONVERGENT PROGRAMS

PUBLICATIONS | PRODUCTIONS

RESIDENCIES

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Angela has led the development of a variety of physical and virtual platforms to create opportunities and pathways for the Convergent Programs, such as Project Room Studio, the Hub and Community Gallery, Student Incubator Labs, Make Art Community Projects, CVAG Productions and Printed Matter. Through annual collaborations with the McLoughlin Gardens Society and CVAG's Next Door extension space, she has helped foster CVAG's Creative Residency program since 2016, attracting regional, national, and international participants. Through this program, artists have been supported to create new work for exhibitions as well as to engage with the community through their projects. The archive of Curated Residencies can be viewed [\[here\]](#).

Angela's commitment to decolonization and fostering inclusive cultural dialogue has been reflected in her collaborations with Indigenous Elders, Knowledge Keepers, artists, curators, and community groups. She has been dedicated to respecting and honouring Indigenous knowledge systems, perspectives, and cultural practices within the Gallery's programming. Her focus on socially responsive and place-based practices has inspired and deepened wide-reaching community collaborations.

Angela supported numerous projects that expanded the Gallery's presentation of contemporary art into public spaces. These include the *Public Place: Sacred Space* exhibitions, the public art and publication projects at the Gallery and North Island Hospital, and the *Honouring: Project of Heart / Speaking to Memory* Legacy Public Art Project in partnership with Indigenous Education. Other notable projects include: *Hiltsista'am (The Copper Will Be Fixed)* as part of *Potlatch 67-67* led by the Kumugwe Cultural Society; *MAP (Make Art Place)* program; multi-year festival/event/exhibition programs with local and international

participants for virtual and site-responsive residencies and installations; *We Don't Know / Don't Know*, an art installation and community maker space led by artist Michael Fernandes; and the culminating *Upholding One Another* and *What Happens When* art and community programs.

Engaging with learning communities has been a cornerstone of Angela's work. Providing leadership and collaborating with both the CVAG team and community, she played a key role in shaping experiential and thematically-connected initiatives with learners and educators from a wide spectrum of programs and institutions. These included Early Learning Centres, North Island College Fine Arts and Digital Programs, School Districts 71 and 72, Comox Valley Indigenous Education, the STEAM (ENTER) program, the Fine Arts eCademy (FAE), Beachcomber Academy and other independent school / homeschool networks, Make-It-Zone MakerSpace and Wachiy Studio. She played a lead role in facilitating and supervising professional development, mentorship and skill-sharing opportunities at CVAG, including early career internships, student placements, post-secondary co-ops, and staff training programs. These initiatives enhanced community engagement, fostered educational growth and nurtured future talent, ensuring a lasting impact on the arts sector and wider communities.

Throughout her tenure, Angela has provided curatorial vision and design leadership for a sequence of three gallery renovations, creating inspiring and welcoming facilities for production, presentation, and engagement. Through her curatorial guidance and collaboration, she has cultivated opportunities for creative experimentation, exchange, and artistic excellence across multifaceted spaces and programming. This vision has included well-equipped and adaptable gallery spaces such as Gather Place, which has connected the Gallery's interior with the outside plaza and in-situ *Public Place: Sacred Space* projects, and the George Sawchuk Black Box Gallery. She has played a key role in developing and leveraging digital platforms for programming like the Window and Plaza Media Gallery, featuring an outward-facing digital screen and exterior multichannel audio playback to animate ideas and integrate the Gallery with daily life on a 24/7 basis.

Angela has advanced the Gallery's dissemination of contemporary art and ideas through analog and digital platforms, collaborating on accessible e-publication projects, public media screenings, and printed matter. As part of the Gallery's digital pivot, she has worked closely with CVAG staff as well as with photographers, videographers, and editors to expand the Gallery's visual identity, ensuring cohesive and thoughtful editorial and marketing communications, and providing extensive witness practice documentation, throughout her tenure. Notably, Alun Macanulty has served as a dedicated photographer for the past ten years, and sound designer/videographer Tom Elliott has collaborated with artists through CVAG Productions over the past four years.

"Her programming and curatorial vision are complemented by exceptional dedication, extensive knowledge, and a unique breadth of expertise," said CVAG Executive Director Glen Sanford. "Angela has inspired creative excellence, and we are profoundly grateful for all she has accomplished at CVAG and for her ongoing contributions to the arts and our community."

CVAG is pleased that its curatorial direction continues to be in strong hands. Denise Lawson, who received curatorial mentorship from Angela through a BCAC Early Career Development Internship in 2016 and has served as Co-curator since 2019, is now the Director of Curatorial Programming at CVAG. "I want to thank Angela for her years of service at the Gallery and especially for her mentorship. Angela leaves a lasting legacy that will benefit the Gallery, the community, and artists for years to come," said Denise.

Reflecting on her time at CVAG, Angela said, "Working at the Gallery has been a journey filled with joy, fun, and excitement. The anticipation of new projects, the camaraderie, and the shared inspiration have all been incredibly rewarding. We embraced creative challenges, supported each other, and celebrated our successes, all with a shared vision and a collaborative, hands-on spirit that has been truly special. It has been a privilege to witness artists, curators, students, educators, and community members flourish and form meaningful relationships. I am profoundly grateful for the opportunity to work with such curious and dedicated individuals. The creative intersections have forged deeply rooted connections that highlight the beautiful and transformative power of collaboration."

By instigating and guiding an adaptable space for reciprocity and exchange, Angela's holistic and integrated approach to program and curatorial leadership has deepened artistic and experiential practices, expanded the boundaries of art and culture, and prioritized public accessibility. This philosophy and methodology will continue to guide Angela as she embarks on a new chapter, focusing on her interdisciplinary professional practice as an independent curator, community collaborator, arts advisor and artist, while continuing in her faculty role at North Island College.