



It's not easy being green

VISUAL ART EXHIBITION

CURATED BY

Jeffrey McNeil-Seymour
and SD Holman

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Queer Arts Festival 2021

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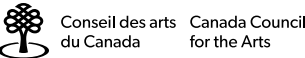
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The Queer Arts Festival takes place on the sovereign, unceded land of the **xwməθkwəy̓əm** (Musqueam), **səlilwəta’ ɬ** (Tseil-Waututh), and **Skwxwú7mesh** (Squamish) peoples. I ask you to join me in acknowledging the **xwməθkwəy̓əm**, **səlilwəta’ ɬ** and **Skwxwú7mesh** communities, their elders both past and present, as well as future generations. QAF also acknowledges that it was founded upon exclusions and erasures of many Indigenous peoples, including those on whose land this institution is located. This acknowledgement demonstrates a commitment to continued work to dismantle the ongoing legacies of settler colonialism.

It’s
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green:
Preface

CURATOR **Jeffrey McNeil-Seymour**

When not knowing what the future held with my forthcoming chemotherapy and radiation treatment, I accepted SD’s invitation to curate on the grounds that it was a joint venture and that SD could easily step in when I could not. Now, I draw strength from the example of one of our featured artists who, in an outstanding and incredible expression of authenticity, bowed out and centred the importance of their health and wellness. We have run out of time on several fronts, my health needs my complete focus, and I am unable at this time to offer up a curatorial essay. It’s not easy being green indeed—nor is one’s healing journey.

I would like to offer my deepest gratitude to the festival, to Ben for always being on the ball and to SD for seeing value in my work and my person. To our featured artists, thank you for your hard work and vision.

For a brief moment in time, our collected energies as they came together in the show created a space of healing. We indeed created something wonderful, something beautiful amidst all the stuff happening in the periphery. From the aforementioned to the missing and murdered in Colombia to the confirmation of unmarked Graves at sites of Canadian Indian Residential Schools, our hearts were heavy, and for a time—this time when we came together for this show—we reminded each other of our collective 2sLGBTQ resiliency as we witnessed ourselves reflected on the walls through the parallels and similarities that exist between our sites of resurgence and on our front lines of resistance.

Speaking truth to power is not easy—it comes at a cost. But together, when we do this work of becoming, we bravely imagine ourselves through the chaos and uncertainty of forthcoming post-post-apocalyptic and ongoing settler-colonial moments. Thank you all for agreeing to feature and bring this vision to life and for walking through on this journey. I love you all.

All Our Relations,
Kuk'stemc!
Jeffrey McNeil-Seymour

It's not easy being green

VISUAL ART EXHIBITION

INTRODUCTION SD Holman

Queer Arts Festival's 2021 curated visual art exhibition **It's Not Easy Being Green** showed artists upcycling apocalyptic fear and dread into art and social change. Green symbolizes our relationship to each other and the lands we occupy while also marking difference and marginalization, exemplified by pop culture queer green underdogs Elphaba, the Wicked Witch of the West, and Rainbow Connection, Kermit the Frog. It's not easy being Green—it's not easy fighting for a world that consistently rejects us. With imminent climate catastrophe upon us, we witness the world grappling with the end times.

In early 2019, when I initially drafted the theme for it's not easy being green, apocalyptic fear and dread referred to climate catastrophe. Later that year a young woman sailed across the world to bring a message to the UN. Indigenous-led anti-pipeline demonstrations #ShutDownCanada. The awareness that we are all interdependent and that our very survival relies upon the earth and the animals appeared to be cresting like a tidal wave.

Instead, we found ourselves engulfed by a different kind of wave. Thoughts about interconnection morphed into fear of contagion as "going viral" took on a whole new meaning. Ecological concerns got drowned in disinfectant and wrapped in plastic, so much plastic.

The pandemic pause of the 2020s has been wildly multivalent. Quarantines, distancing, sudden mass unemployment, and interconnected loss escalated mental illness. Here in Vancouver, overdoses far outpaced coronavirus as a bringer of death, claiming more souls each month than the virus did per year. Illness, death, and confinement induced so much fear-based lashing out, which was escalated and co-opted by the radical right, always ready to capitalize on shock and terror.

But if we look back to the pandemic's beginning, we can also remember a time when shutdowns upended plans, attenuated capitalism's hectic pace, and called compulsory busyness into question. Road and air and tanker traffic slowed. Streets and skies and seaways cleared. Southern Resident Orcas had a baby boom. A hush descended as the world took a long overdue exhale.

The centre slowed and warily looked around.

It was the mainstream's turn to learn about space and isolation: what it's like to feel unsafe in public, the danger of standing too close to the wrong person, the fear that stepping outside one's home/family/bubble could mean death. We saw wider acknowledgment that for too many, the public sphere never has been safe. The racialized, the queered, all of us at the margins—when were any of us privy to life outside the apocalypse?

QAF 2020 had been among the first festivals to move online. The internet connected us when we couldn't gather in person, and QAF introduced ourselves to audiences on six of the seven continents. But by QAF 2021, 18 months into Zoom fatigue, many of us viscerally felt the fundamental human need to meet as bodies in space.

I delayed QAF 2021 until public health orders would allow an in-person festival. But the planning uncertainty that has plagued the COVID era meant the festival's usual venue, Roundhouse Arts Centre, couldn't be confirmed in time. Unable to gather at our usual stomping grounds, for the first time in 20 years, we dispersed QAF across Vancouver.

QAF's curated visual art exhibition went literally underground in 2021, down in the basement of the Sun Wah Building, where our SUM gallery and offices occupy the fourth floor year-round. Arrows on the ground led exhibition-goers through a maze-like warren of rooms, giving a distinctly DIY feeling.

I first encountered the work of my lovely co-curator, Jeffrey McNeil-Seymour, when he curated the exhibition *Two-Spirit Sur-Thriving and the Art of Interrupting Narratives* at Never Apart gallery in Montreal in 2017. Jeffrey's polyvalent practice made him a clear choice for 2021's environmental theme. In addition to being an artist and Two-Spirit activist, Jeffrey is the nominated family member to the Traditional Family Governance Council for the Stk'emlupsemc te Secwepemc Nation and a designated spokesperson for the nation, as well as an Assistant Professor in the Faculty of Social Work at Ryerson University. As a land and water defender, Jeffrey has disrupted resource extraction by placing his body in its way, notably conducting a fast and vision quest on the route of the Transmountain pipeline. His practice speaks to the link between the land and the body and draws explicit analogies between the earth's struggle to survive ecological collapse to his own ongoing battle to sur-thrive with cancer.

Jeffrey asked me to co-curate this exhibition with him, and I was honoured to agree. The curated artists reflect Jeffrey's and my intersecting recommendations. Some worked with us individually, most with us both, and I thank them all for their meaningful and transformative contributions to this exhibition. Jeffrey, as an academic, always looks for who is not in the room, and on reviewing our artist list, he insisted we include some white voices, as I had not. He says we are all on the colour wheel, and not only was he conscious of honouring his matriarchal line as a fourth-generation English settler, but he also

noted that some ears can only hear from bodies that look like their own. Our co-curation has had a lot of interesting back and forth, and I'm grateful to have had this time with him.

Writing this, the word that keeps coming up about this exhibition and the artists in it is *interconnection*. Scholar Heather Davis has remarked that while heteronormative frameworks uphold anthropocentrism, queer love potentially awakens us to kinship ties beyond consanguinity:

"Queer theory, especially the realm of queer kinship, creates an incredibly important space for queerness not (just) as an identity, but as a politic. Queerness doesn't just question heteronormative practices, but asks to open up space for who our intimate partners can be beyond a binary gender system, the conventions of the couple, and the nuclear family... These questions are also tied to questions of inheritance and the sense of obligation and care that we have towards those who came before us and those who will come after us. The question of who we think our kin are, in part determines this sense of responsibility. This ties into ecological thinking because if we presume that our kin are not just human, then we have an obligation towards our companion species, including those we have unintentionally brought into being."¹

¹ Davis, Heather, "Queer Kinship: Interview with Heather Davis," by Rosa Menkmen, <http://sonicacts.com/portal/queer-kinship>, accessed April 8, 2022.

This exhibition brought together a rowdy confluence of thoughtful artists from Vancouver to Kolkata who use their queer subjectivity as a springboard into nonduality and a profound relationship with all forms of life with whom we share this fragile earth. As Jeffrey's health precluded a full-scale curatorial essay, I will briefly touch on a few of the artists myself by way of introduction as you begin your journey.

Beric Manywounds told us that *Tsanizid* (2019) erupted out of him in 48 hours. Danced in front of a green screen, this work melds traditional movement with contemporary styles like Voguing. Jeffrey proposed that it embodies the prophecy in which Two-Spirit people are chosen to walk the world through the upcoming transformation we face today.

Encountering mask maker and photo-based artist **Duane Isaac's** work *Ephemera* (2020-2021) was a watershed moment for Jeffrey and me. We winnowed it down to a mere 42 of our favourites and hung the show so it would be the first thing the public would see. Projected at 12 feet tall onto the wall, lit up larger than life, Duane's work cycled through embodied mythologies, art history, objectification, the eroticization of the other, protean iconography, pop-environmental commentary, and sovereignty, all wrapped up gorgeously in neo-Baroque queer detail on a massive individual scale.

India was hit particularly hard by the coronavirus, and **Falaks Vasa** spent a lot of her 2020 isolation period on her Kolkata balcony. She transformed her confinement into a shared solitude with *Nourish me balcony*, a gentle love song of life,

and plants, and cats, and survival through a tough time. In *Pillows for the Pandemic*, Falaks found another creative way to bolster herself, with cushions customized for each part of the body needing a buffer. She transmitted this comfort to us through a remote workshop from her apartment to our SUM gallery in Vancouver.

The exhibition featured two pieces by Vancouver treasure **Ho Tam**. *The Yellow Pages* (2017), which plays on the connotations of the colour yellow and the intersections between racism and homophobia, took on renewed relevance with the surge of anti-Asian racism during the Covid pandemic. *Isolation Journal*, created in the Spring of 2020, speaks the silence of the pandemic's early days with sly and astute humour, lusciously sketched out in a book and then filmed with gloved hands.

The women in **Kali Spitzer's** photographs *Bloom*, *Wordless* and *With Roses* (2019) resist objectification. Their nakedness is self-sufficient and triumphal, existing in front of the camera, but not for its all too often male gaze. The backgrounds invoke post-apocalyptic inferences, while the subjects telegraph an embodiment of radiance, hope and defiance in the face of it all.

Katherine Atkins is one of Vancouver's most exciting and unsung conceptual artists. In this painting, the title words *Self Portrait #18: It's Mine, It's Mine, It's Mine ...* (2021) blanket the background in retrograde. Her work is constantly self-implicating, often using her own blood. This piece incorporates her ancestral rather than her literal blood, as she interrogates her inheritance as a settler living on colonized land.

As queers, our closest ancestors and dearest descendants are often outside our biological genealogy; **Preston Buffalo's** magpie sensibility is inherently queer in his assemblage of imagery from many eras and traditions. He self-defines his work as Indigenous Iconography, and here, his collected emblems coalesce into *Repeating Patterns 1* (2021), where broken-down rez cars rub shoulders with Curtis-ean portraits, burning churches, syringes, and samples culled from the art canon, as Buffalo Jump meets Angel of History.

Tejal Shah's 5-channel video work *Between the Waves* (2012) addresses the nonduality of all things and love in the apocalypse. Deeply feminist, sexy and humorous, at turns hopeful and melancholy, these exuberant dances in a monumental garbage dump revel in the beauty of the discarded. Simultaneously beguiling and menacing, futuristic and archaic, with nods to mythology, spirituality, and religious symbolism, the piece spins out an aurora of cyclical rebirth.

Tsohil Bhatia's process-based work *Untitled (Ocean Water)* 2019 is deceptively simple: the tiny little jars evaporating water from the world's five oceans reflect extremes of scale, from the molecular to the global. For this exhibition, Jeffrey instigated a new edition with *Turtle Island (Ocean Water)* 2021, launching our team on a scavenger hunt to Nunavut, the gulf of Mexico, the Maritimes, and Haida Gwaii. No longer separated into discrete vessels, waters from four corners of a continent spilled onto four corners of a mirror, intermingling in the centre. Initially indistinguishable, the ocean waters reveal their specificity as the pollutants crystalize. *Sun Ritual* similarly telescopes time

and space, as the artist's swimming from one continent to another is projected on a rooftop screen at nightfall, and the sunset in the video merges with the IRL sunset.

I'd like to thank my fantastic staff team at Queer Arts Festival who made this exhibition possible, especially Ben Siegl, Programs and Curatorial Coordinator, and Graphic Designer extraordinaire Odette Hidalgo of Addon Creative for your work to make this catalogue a reality. And I lift my hands up to my Co-curator Jeffrey, whose perseverant, nay, joyful insubordination to his cancer diagnosis and sassy persistence to show up over and over despite the pain of loss is an inspiration to us all. Thank you to you and all the artists for believing in this project and bringing it to fruition.

Blessed Be.
Keep loving. Keep fighting.
—SD Holman

It's not easy being green

VISUAL ART EXHIBITION

CURATED BY
**Jeffrey McNeil-Seymour and
SD Holman**

Beric Manywounds
Duane Isaac
Falaks Vasa
Grace Howse
Ho Tam
Isaac Murdoch
Jay Pahre
Kali Spitzer
Katherine Atkins
Kathleen Elkins Ross
Manuel Axel Strain
Oluseye
pablo muñoz
Preston Buffalo
Tejal Shah
Tsohil Bhatia

CURATORIAL STATEMENT

Green. Ascribed with multiplicities such as spring's cyclical lush green rematriation: growth, hope, vitality, balance – health ... to spectrums of radioactive and toxic neons ... to pestilent dark greens symbolizing mutation, jealousy, greed and wealth. Green inhabits interconnectedness, relationship with the Other, the seen and unseen, as well as the very lands and waters the West—WE—continue to occupy. Green matures deviance, neuro-divergence, epoch and paranormality.

Strange pop-cultural oddities/underdogs/anti-heroes emerge from fantastically unconventional, metaphorical trappings of the colour green: Elphaba the Wicked Witch of the West; Rainbow Connection Kermit the Frog; Joaquin Phoenix's invocation of Arthur Fleck's becomings into The Joker; The Mandalorian's Groggu (Baby Yoda) taking the visual lexicon by storm—*It's not easy being Green*.

Was there a time of Utopic Queer being and doing? What are the implications of being privy to pre-apocalyptic hauntings? Post-apocalyptic expectations with an evidence base indicating we already have arrived in the end-time—we all have diverse ancestries of forced migration and forced dislocation/relocations along linear entry points, we remain, and WE are/can/could still be vanished at any given moment.

Green is linked to power. The currency of Green has the power to legally mark action and activism(s) as terrorism. Settler environmental ally/accomplices are marked deviant not only for their vote but, akin to Canadian news media's necropolitical castings of Indigenous land and water protectors, as violent.

We witness the world grappling with end-time realities, seemingly surreal and relentlessly coming into view, as we fight for a world yet to be realized, waiting to be seen—and by one that consistently rejects WE. Green, in its final transformation, exists as representing the supernatural, the great mystery—time and power intertwined. An apocalyptic green glows lasciviously as it courts both eschatological time (Philosopher Byung-Chul Han's naming of an apocalyptic/temporal endpoint) and the status quo's living in romantic despair that the end of the world in which the existing exalted beings. Green is the complex terrain of extended kinship ties between Indigiqueer/Two-Spirit and queer settlers. Green spectrals haunt the hyphenated margins of the subaltern, enduring perpetually frequent gaslighting of post-traumatic settler-colonial and concurrent disorders. Together/apart WE endure our own private Apocalypso, cataclysmic, temporal end-points that exist as seemingly fixed and an unavoidable global terminus, from which Indigiqueer/queer resurgence erupts relentless into the ongoing colonial.

— Jeffrey McNeil-Seymour and SD Holman

Beric Manywounds



Plates 1 - 3:
Beric Manywounds, *Tsanizid*, 2019, Video projection
installation, 7 minutes



**Plates 4-5:**

Beric Manywounds, *Tsanizid*, 2019, Video projection installation, 7 minutes



Artist Statement

Tsanizid means “Wake up” in the Tsuutina Dene language. In this new contemporary dance work, Beric presents a moving image journey through sound and metamorphosis. Situated amidst the moon, the night, and the first thunder storm of Spring, the dancer ventures into the unknown in search of new beginnings by exploring the spiritual terrain of being a multi-gender being. — Beric Manywounds

Duane Isaac



Pages 14- 19

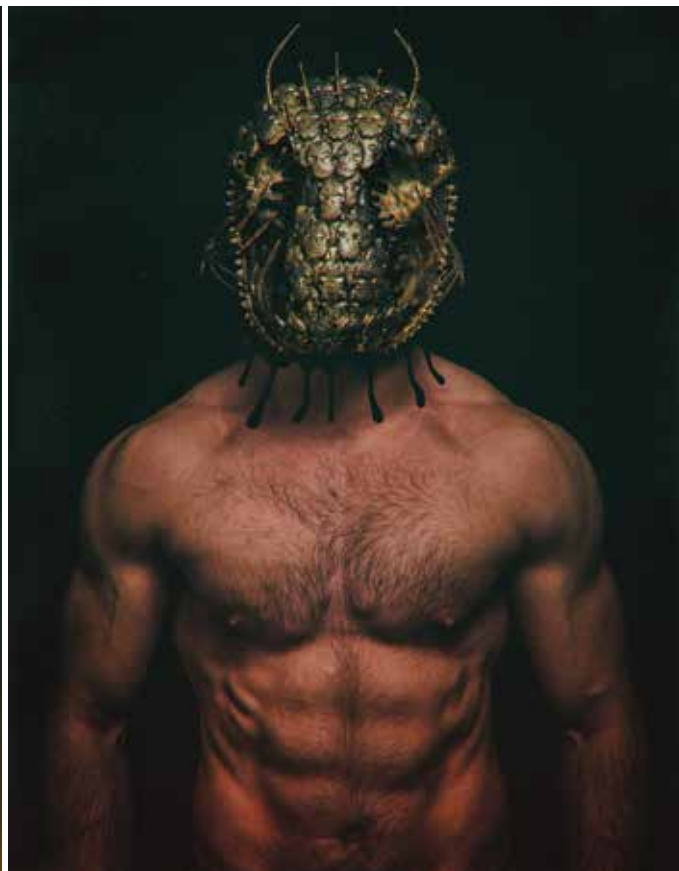
Plates 6-43:

Duane Isaac, *Ephemera*, 2020—2021,
Photographic series







**Plates 44-45:**

Duane Isaac, *Ephemera*, 2020—2021,
Photographic series

Artist Statement

e·phem·er·a

/ə'fem(ə)rə/

Plural noun: ephemera; things that exist or are used or enjoyed for only a short time. items of collectible memorabilia, typically written or printed ones, that were originally expected to have only short-term usage.

Early 16th century: plural of ephemeron, from Greek translation of ephēmeros that means 'lasting only a day'. As a singular noun the word was applied (late 18th century) to a person or thing of short-lived interest. Works of art that only occur once, like a happening, cannot be embodied in any lasting object as the majority of the masks and headpieces in this collection that spans three years of work no longer exist.

This ephemeral collection is made manifest from previously enjoyed and other collectible memorabilia found garage saling, thrifting or the local dollar store. These icons inhabit alchemical as response to surveillance capitalism. Canadian corporate consumer culture keeping Canadians Conveniently complicit.

Each direct conscious/subconscious response to cosmological stimuli is imbued with the spirit of those that have been here longer than us (and will be here long after we are gone). The imaginative capacity is a prophetic glimpse of an indigenous futurity. Precognitions of things yet to come: immortal Tricksters and transformers – herald the return of starpeople – Seduce. Us.

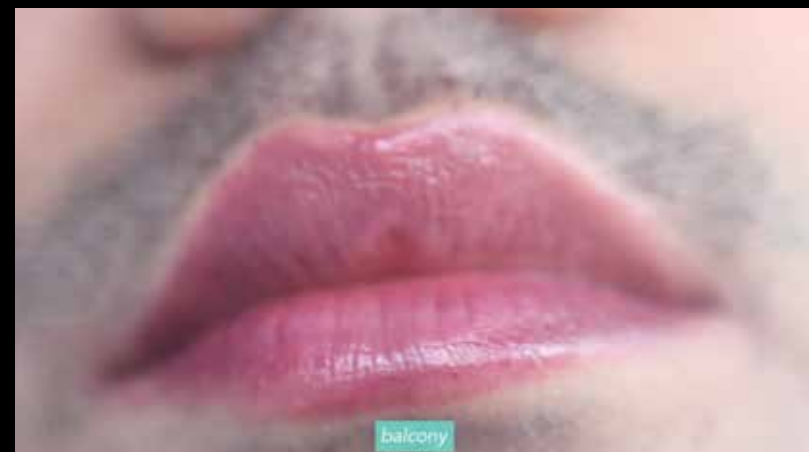
Ephemera – something of no lasting significance; items meant to be discarded after one use. These artifacts were intentionally made to last if only for a transitory moment of self-expression aesthetic value of that moment of production: iconography becomes lasciviously immortalized. An Ephemeral life lived leaves only a relatively small impact on those around them. The torsos are salacious, the masks are opulence – complete stands of otherworldly perfection. You are not the same after the first moments of contact – close encounters indeed.

— Duane Isaac

Falaks Vasa

**Plates 46–53:**

Falaks Vasa, *Nourish Me Balcony*, 2020, Song, music video, 3 minutes

**Plates 50-53:**

Falaks Vasa, *Nourish Me Balcony*, 2020, Song, music video, 3 minutes

Artist Statement

My body (of work) is a decolonizing and queering of power structures that uphold colonial logics of binaries (nature/culture, man/woman, self/other). It is interdisciplinary, using video, photography, installation, writing, 3D animation and so on, but is always performative and of/for/against the body – my body.

My body (of work) disrupts and resists the 'other-ing' of non-humans and the exoticizing and marginalization of 'international' bodies and queer/trans people of color. I use humor as a strategy to both invite and disarm, slowly revealing layers of meaning within and beyond laughter.

My body (of work) rests between these intersections of (post)human and (post)colonial discourse. Yet it comes from a place of wanting to live my truths and create work that mumma has access to. From this place of deep personal and critical investment, I search for joy in myself and share it with those (humans, non-humans alike) whose joy has been systemically stolen.

— Falaks Vasa



On being actively invisible

by Falaks Vasa

Plates 54–61:

Falaks Vasa, *Nourish Me Balcony*, 2020, Song, music
video, 3 minutes

There wasn't much left to say, so I screamed. I yelled with rage—a singular, unending, uncompromising, unbearable, all-encompassing rage, until I lost my voice. Yet, there was more, always more, to screech about. Where do we go when our voices cannot sustain themselves, turn into a whimper, require of us: warm honey, ginger-infused balm, tender tending, radical care? In my brown, trans, femme, lesbian body, the voice moves—concertines between skin, bone, history, and lands often, but not always, at the pussy. The pussy is a place of reckoning, and my voice reckon(cile)s.

In the midst of the pandemic, the re-rise of the Hindutva state in India, and with it, the cishet brahmanical tyranny, my voice brought me to those most insignificant of sites: pillows and balconies. And there, I whimpered, drank chai, slept, wrote, listened, loved, healed.

I borrow the term 'sovereignty of quiet' from Black scholar and writer, Kevin Quashie¹, to frame my

¹ Quashie, Kevin Everod. *The Sovereignty of Quiet: Beyond Resistance in Black Culture*. New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2012.

work, hidden within a balcony few will see, and pillows obscured by the heads that sleep on them. There is power in invisibility, and in the reckonings of the voice with its own distension, its own injury, its own incapacity to win all the time. In coupling invisibility and the 'sovereignty of quiet', I am arguing for a state of being unknown that is active, rather than passive or isolating. What does it mean to be actively invisible? What does it mean to claim a position that is inherently obscured from view? What does it mean to shapeshift so constantly as to forget my original form? What does it mean for colonial Eurowestern concepts like 'originality' and 'essence' to dissipate? While these questions may seem disjointed, they come together in my works 'Nourish Me Balcony' and the workshop, 'Pillows for the Pandemic', for 'it's not easy being green'.

The balcony is a liminal space where visibility operates on a valve I can control. It is easy to duck, to evade, to not be there altogether, to obfuscate my position from the gaze. It is easy for my voice to whimper in peace, and to heal. So here, I sing, I dance, and as often as I like, leave. Here, I am in touch with the sun, with my plants, reconnected in quarantine. Here, I invite witnessing, but never

intervening. Here, I pet my cat. Here, between an internal healing, and an external screaming, my quiet is sovereign. When I first wrote and sang *Nourish Me Balcony*, my audience was singular: the balcony itself. I think of letters we write to the spaces in our lives that have felt safe, fraught, important. Our closets, our homes, our childhoods. I think of singing those letters, celebrating them, because it is not about what is said, but that it is said. I think of what it takes for queer and trans people, people in the margins, to arrive at their own balconies, their own centers, their own sovereign quiet. What does it mean to ask of those spaces: nourishment?

Pillows are made soft by what is inside them. Pillows, therefore, are vessels of softness, at the same time as they are agents of comfort. In the writing and pillow-making workshop, 'Pillows for the Pandemic', which emerged from a body of work by the same name, I asked participants to 'write about transformation. How do you make harsh things soft? Is there a part of your home that has been unkind to you? What affirmations would you like to offer your home/yourself?' In another way, I was challenging us to transform harsh spaces into a version of what the balcony

has meant to me. Pillows have a transformative power—their presence evokes rest, and conjures a resting body. During the first lockdown in the ongoing pandemic, I turned to pillow-making as a practice of inviting myself to rest, with embroidered affirmations, and pillows specific to sites in my home where they lived. In the workshop, I turned to participants to invite them to explore, expand, reject, remake this practice to arrive at their own understandings of rest. A queer and trans body of color, sleeping on a pillow made of their own labor, is as sovereign a quiet as I can imagine.

I return to screaming, yelling, screeching, from a different perspective now—that of a communal whisper. The pandemic taught me the value of

community more than anything. Now, I work with a labor union, organize with people for changes I want to see, contribute in ways that feel small, like a whisper. Yet, when we whisper together, it is a yell louder than I could've ever conjured from the balcony or my pillows. I'm left asking: How do we organize, agitate, overthrow, sustainably and effectively? How do we care for those who have been yelling singularly, not out of choice but necessity? How do we obfuscate our individual positions within groups of whisper? How do we make room for exhaustion, healing, breaks, within our movements? In this sovereignty of quiet, this actively invisible position, how do we prepare for the worlds we dream?

— Falaks Vasa

Plates 62–64:

Falaks Vasa, *Pillows for the Pandemic*, 2020, Workshop



Grace Howse



ARTIST: Grace Howse

Plates 65–66:
Grace Howse, *Wasbison*, 2021,
Mixed media installation,
Dimensions variable



Plate 67:
Grace Howse, *Wasbison*, 2021, Mixed media installation,
Dimensions variable (detail)

ARTIST: Grace Howse

Artist Statement

The Bag

The Plains Cree are akin to the Wasbison (MossBag). It is the external Womb, designed to transition the infant from Woman to World. Also known as a child development tool, the Wasbison holds the infant in an upright position allowing the learning to be through observation – this forms the basis of their cultural socialization. Furthermore, strapped to the Mother's back, this position allows for extensive travelling and observing the landscape. It is a piece that provides warmth, protection and self-discipline. The exterior adornment of Wasbison tells us much about the infant's identity from Tribal group to status.

The Moss

Every morning Moss (sphagnum) was gathered, washed, cleaned and dried. It was then placed in the Wasbison (MossBag) to catch the baby's discharge, much like a diaper. FYI, Moss contains a natural antiseptic to prevent diaper rash.

The Moss is our Ancestor who has been with us since time immemorial.

The Moss is our Grandmother who helps us with our children.

The Moss is our Mentor who strengthens our relationship to the Land.

It ain't easy being green.

The Art

...represents four genders that are talked about in Neheyawin culture.

Female
Male
Female-Two Spirit
Male-Two Spirit

The BlueBag, the LoveBag is hung for all the conversations yet to come.

Upon the closing of the show the install will be taken back to its original home in the forest on the beautiful lands of the unceded, yet stolen territory of the Squamish people as a gesture of gratitude and respect.

The Resistance

The colonial lens viewed the Wasbison as heathen and unfit for an infant, yet it was gifted to us by our Chapan's and theirs. They knew the importance and teachings of the Wasbison. For children are so sacred we must treat them that way.

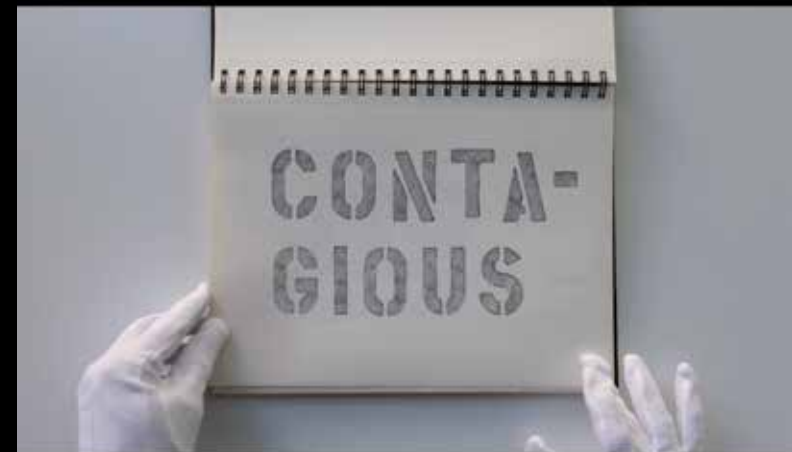
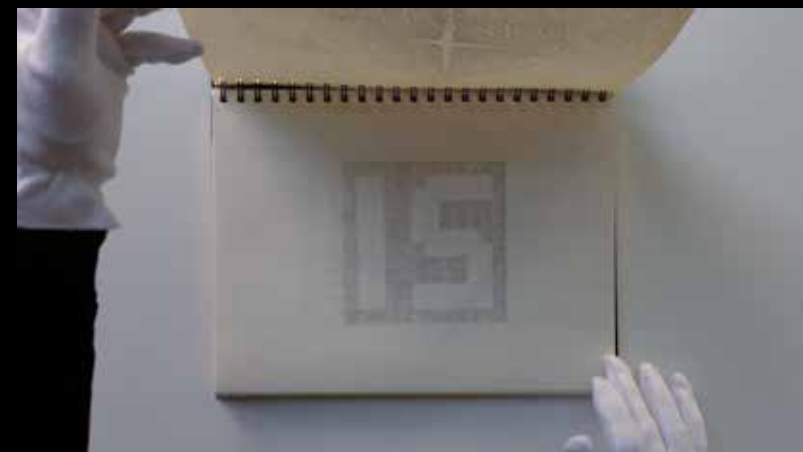
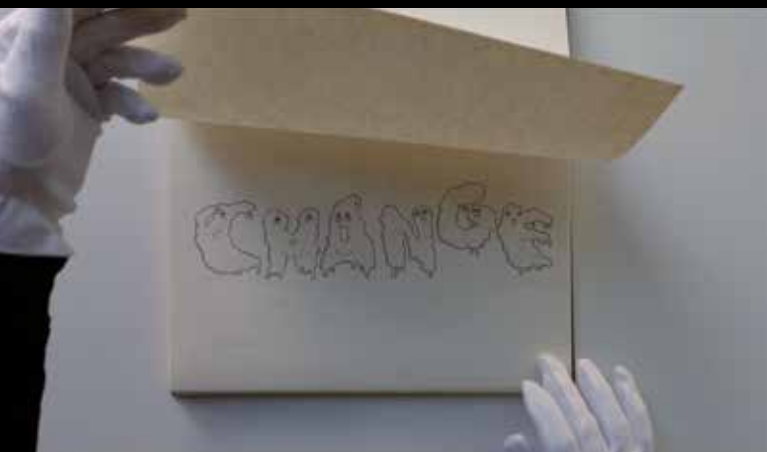
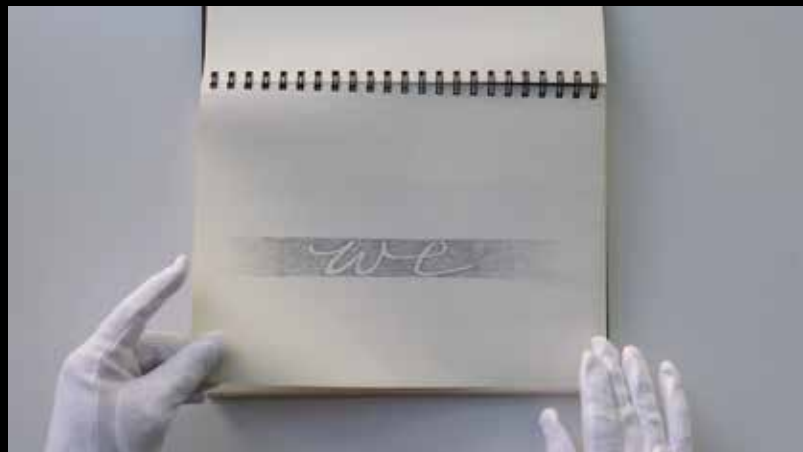
Ribbon (Waybinawsinen) is used as protocol in many of our Neheyawin ceremonies. It is sacred fabric. The Wasbison has a very important and sacred role with NewLife. Ribbons are the blessings, the offerings for a beautiful Life, a gift to the Creator.

When we bring an infant into this World through Wasbison teachings, we are blessing this newborn with unconditional Love and promising acceptance without judgment...regardless!

Ekosi.

— Grace Howse

Ho Tam



Plates 68–75:

Ho Tam, *Isolation Journal*, 2020, Video, 5:01 minutes



Plates 76-77:

Ho Tam, *The Yellow Pages*, 2017, Inkjet prints,
18" x 12" each (set of 26 prints)

Plates 78-79:
Ho Tam, *The Yellow Pages*,
2017, Inkjet prints, 18" x 12"
each (set of 26 prints)

Appendix	
Asian Crimes	Godzilla in Toronto
Beauty	Ads of whitening products in the Philippines, China and India
Choice	How to wear a hijab
Delicacy	Shark fin in the water
Empowerment	Heroes and heroines: Son Goku of Dragon Ball, Mulan, Bruce Lee, Astro Boy and Po of Kung Fu Panda
Fresh Off the Boat	Luxury car brands
Gourmet	Menu of the now closed Master Chef Cafe, Vancouver
Home	World map
Invasions	Front page, the New York Times, February 25 ,1945
Justice	Statue in memory of the Comfort Women during WWII, Seoul, South Korea
Kung Fu	Found drawings of squatting men
Liberation	Air strikes over Vietnam during the American War
M.S.G.	Movie posters of gangster films from South Korea, Taiwan, Hong Kong and Malaysia
North Korea	Peace poster for North Korea
Orientals	Pictorial symbols re-designed or appropriated from the handbook by Rudolf Modley

The Yellow Pages	
Patriarchy	Portraits on banknotes
Queer	European wigs and Chinese hairstyle from past centuries
Rouge	Victims of Khmer Rouge, Cambodia
Solidarity	Poster for Black Lives Matter
Transformers	Magazines and memorabilia of Takarazuka Revue, a Japanese all-female musical theatre troupe
Uprising	The Umbrella Movement, Hong Kong (source: the Huffington Post)
Visibility	Actors appeared on American prime time television
Whiz Kids	Words cut out from ads in newspapers
Xenophobia	Internment and refugee camps
Yellow Fever	Girls' Generations, a South Korean girl group
Zen	A-bomb explosion



Plate 80:

Isaac Murdoch, *Bears*, 2021, Canvas print, 24" x 36"

Jay Pahre



Plates 81-82:

Jay Pahre, *Studies for Flipping the Island*, 2021, Gouache on paper, 18" x 25"



ARTIST: Jay Pahre

Plates 83-84:

Jay Pahre, *Studies for Flipping the Island* 2021, Gouache on paper, 18" x 25"





Plate 85: Jay Pahre, installation of *Flipping the Island* and *Guard Hairs*

Artist Statement

My current body of work, *Flipping the Island*, centers around transness and queerness as they relate to the nonhuman, navigated specifically through the myriad ecologies present on the island of minong, also known as isle royale. Drawing from the way the ecologies on this island flip over on themselves, I speculate through art making what kinds of transformations might be possible when taking the ability to move, shift, or change radically, as a given for navigating precarity, rather than a distant possibility.

In *Guard Hairs*, one of the pieces from this body of work, these ecologies are touched on through the interrelatedness of settler copper mining and ongoing reintroduction of wolves to the island. This process of reintroduction reached a tipping point when, after decades of inbreeding and warming temperatures isolating the island from surrounding wolf populations, the last three wolves who could sustain a population on the island drowned in a copper mine. Approaching this through guard hairs, the part of the animal's fur which protects the animal from weather and UV rays, as well as signals affective shifts, I query these confluences of ecological crisis, tipping over, and transformation. *Guard Hairs* was made by cutting, folding and hooking pieces of steel-coated copper wire through gauze over and over. The repetitive, process-based approach, done with material which signals wounding and extraction as well as being precarious in and of itself, speaks to piecing out speculations that hinge on trans and queer formations of un-and-re-becoming, intra/action, and erotics.



Plate 86:

Jay Pahre, *Guard Hairs*, 2019, Copper coated steel wire, gauze, Dimensions variable (*detail*)

Nestled aside this studio work, my research and art practice is often guided by walking. Walking is fundamental to my practice as a way of navigating lived experience and generating long-term place and encounter driven exploration alongside a committed studio practice. My studio practice is responsive and often process-oriented, with engagements of speculation, uncertainty, and precarity informing how I move through making.

— Jay Pahre

Kali Spitzer

**Plate 87:**

Kali Spitzer, *Bloom*, 2019, C-Print from 35mm colour film,
16" x 24"

**Plate 88:**

Kali Spitzer, *Wordless*, 2019, C-Print from 35mm colour
film, 16" x 24"

**Plate 89:**

Kali Spitzer, *With Roses*, 2019, C-Print from 35mm colour film, 16" x 24"

Artist Statement

These photographs have been taken on the ancestral, unceded and occupied territory of the xʷməθkʷəy̓əm (Musqueam), Skwxwú7mesh (Squamish), and sel̓íl̓wítulh (Tsleil-Waututh) Nations. Here we witness depictions of the colonial violence that has occurred and continues to occur towards these lands and its peoples daily, against a backdrop of urban decay. The painful exploitation of the land in these territories transpires through the fabrication of urban sprawl, of literal structures being built from resources extracted from other lands.

The violent colonial systems that violate and assault the land perpetuate a similar violence upon the queer body. These crimes committed against our bodies are felt predominantly and disproportionately by BIPOC. The systems – and the people benefitting and upholding them – fetishize our bodies, other our bodies, deny our bodies access, violate our bodies, regulate our bodies and demonize our bodies. Our Bodies is a celebration of contemporary queer bodies. Our nudity is a reclamation of our representation in the face of adversity, in the face of systems created to smother our bodies as they have smothered the land. Our Bodies is the land as represented by queer bodies, queer bodies as a reflection of the land.

— Kali Spitzer

Kathleen Elkins Ross

Artist Statement

In some Indigenous cultures, warriors would adorn themselves in their finest, and paint their faces accordingly before warring with another nation. Adorning oneself in this way wasn't to impress their enemies or anyone else for that matter, it was to be fully prepared and entirely ready to meet the creator in such a way that shows the utmost appreciation for life.

For Indigenous people our colonial present is a daily battle, we never know what could happen in our Indigenous Post Apocalypse. With the ongoing issue and yet to be answered recommendations coming out of Canada's inquiry into the Missing and Murdered Women, Girls, Transgendered, and Two Spirit people, and the recent 215 unmarked graves at **Tk'emlúps te Secwépemc** Residential school, death has become normalized for the Indigenous body. Mainstream culture assumes we are prone to stereotype and ignorance and therefore deserving of it. With this in mind I prepare myself each morning, showing my utmost appreciation for my life, ready to battle another day. My warpaint accentuates my features. My blanket is my children, my husband, my community, my nation- it is my comfort and my protection. I complete this look with the sacred medicine I burn to clear my mind, to cleanse my spirit, to shield me from that which would seek to do me harm.

Plate 90:

Kathleen Elkins Ross, *Protector, Provider, Paternal*, 2019, Resin Coated Print, 3' x 4'

Too often I have seen Indigenous men portrayed from the settler gaze, that is antagonistic in such a way that romanticizes or ultimately dehumanizes them, forever relegating them as a kind of imaginary Indian. I question that when these matters don't affect you personally, how does one's humanity not stand out to you clearly?

The imaginary Indian man exists in the forefront of the settler imagination only as welfare bums, criminals, deadbeat dads, or raging alcoholics and every mainstream Canadian News media platform perpetuates this lack of vision and oversight. How then would your gaze of this image change if I tell you what I see? What if we attach new meaning to the various components that make up this image?

What is seen to 'the other' as a protestor, as confrontational, as troublesome, and degenerate, I see a protector, a provider, a lover, a warrior, a son, a father, and a best friend. I see a line of men, an unyielding and unwavering force. His very existence today, after everything his line has and will endure is captured in the bow's tension. The arrow meets its mark when the warrior sees his target clearly and has the heart to see it through.

— Kathleen Elkins Ross

Plate 91:

Image right: Kathleen Elkins Ross, *Modern WarPaint*, 2019, Fiber Based Print, 36"x48"





Artist Statement

From an environmental perspective, and even from a 'relative marginalization' perspective, it's not easy to be green while participating in settler colonial culture. Using self portraiture as a vehicle for social critique, *Self Portrait #18* portrays me as a Limousin breed cow, pumped up on self proclaimed God given Divine-roids, mobilizing my righteous knee, engaged in a demonstration of dominance. How can I be environmentally green when I'm busy upholding the colonial project that underpins the industrial complex of land-based resource extraction? As a privileged white settler, it's a stretch claiming green-kinship with Elphaba and Kermit.

Self Portrait #18: It's Mine, It's Mine, It's Mine ..., references the violent colonial project of clearing the land of the Plains Indigenous Peoples for settler agricultural activities, and the ongoing violent domination that is intrinsic to colonialism. It also references the murder of George Floyd by police officer, Derek Chauvin, with my cow-knee pressed into the Sacred Buffalo's neck. The privileges and benefits I enjoy are all linked to the expansion of settler culture, which was in part made possible through the violent kidnapping of Black Peoples from their homelands for slave labour here in the 'New World.' As we know, violence against non-settler bodies is deemed necessary as the go-to strategy in carrying out the settler colonial project.

The compositional device of a deconstructed square, a binary colour pallet, reference to Christianity, pattern and text are some of the strategies employed in my critique of colonialism in this work.

— Katherine Atkins

Plate 92:

Katherine Atkins, *Self Portrait #18: It's Mine, It's Mine, It's Mine ...*, 2021, Acrylic on panel, 24" x 24"

Decolonizing an unsettled Settler Body heals obstacles to being (W)holistically Green.

by Katherine Atkins

A decolonial healing practice might settle Settlers' bodies, thereby removing obstacles to *being* (W)holistically *green*.

I envision *being green* as engaging in a reciprocal, nurturing and supportive practice of respecting and honouring our interconnectedness with the Earth and all living things/beings, creating an environment where the wholeness of All can remain intact and thrive. For me, it is a (W)holistic way of *being*. One that mirrors and might well be achieved through what I am learning is a healing decolonial practice. A decolonial practice asks me to expand my previously held notion of what a holistic¹ concept of wellness entails by reframing the boundaries of the body within a somatic² healing process, to include the land and water. As Emma Battell-Lowman and Adam Barker point out, Settlers' historic and current relationship to the land is central to our resistance to decolonizing.³

The term “decolonizing” for many Settlers, even well-intentioned Settlers like myself, provokes difficult-to-manage feelings, such as confusion, anxiety, fear, and despair. For Settlers who are uninformed, a decolonizing process “means the Indians want us to leave or ‘go home;’ ... that there exists an Indigenous intention/desire to displace and reclaim for themselves Settler hard-earned equity and private property(s).”⁴ For those of us who know *those* are unfounded fears, still there is confusion and anxiety in relation to how decolonizing will impact our attachment to the land, and our Settler stories and identity,⁵ anchored in what once was pride but are now loaded up with negative feelings born out of realizing the injustices and atrocities our colonial culture has inflicted on Indigenous, Métis and Inuit Peoples. In addition, when considering/viewing the complexity of the wreckage that is the ongoing cultural project of Canadian Settler-Colonialism, it seems daunting to push-up against it and the ways in which police forces are

employed to enforce it. Yet, Indigenous, Métis and Inuit Peoples face this task every day. The notion of ‘Reconciliation’ for some Settlers is that only First Nations Peoples have healing work to do, equating the *Truth and Reconciliation Calls to Action*⁶ as the sole means by which decolonization will occur. Decolonizing, though, entails a decolonial practice of (W)holistic healing, including on the part of Settlers. Settlers have reconciliation work to do, as well, in relation to the many wellness-sustaining practices colonialism has robbed from us. Additionally, related to Settler healing, learning about our historical and current contractual obligations/responsibilities/relationships to, and with, Indigenous, Métis and Inuit Peoples is essential.

A vital first step, I posit, for individual Settlers and as a collective of Settlers to move forward with a decolonial practice of (W)holistic healing, is to address the somatically embedded historical trauma that dysregulates our nervous systems. Doing so will set the groundwork for enabling us to effectively quell the internal push-back when faced with our anti-Indigenous racism, our internalized rationale that makes excuses for colonialism, as well as productively dealing with the external systemic opposition to decolonizing. I suggest that healing our nervous systems will fortify us against the triggering of negative feelings when doing the work of decolonizing. Additionally, I believe that creating a decolonial Settler culture that fosters far-reaching changes in our relationship with the land is required for a holistic decolonial practice.

The groundbreaking work of Resmaa Menakem, directed at healing racism, sheds inspiring light

on the necessity of settling our dysregulated nervous systems as foundational for healing. Although his analysis does not speak directly to colonialism or decolonizing, I believe it offers an extremely useful lens by which we can make sense of Settlers' embodied unconscious resistance, individually and collectively, to decolonizing. Menakem's practice of Somatic Abolitionism⁷ is aimed at healing the effects of racism on, and in, People of Colour, police forces and white folks. He connects the historical trauma experienced by white people before they/we came to the New World—the centuries-long practices of powerful white bodies routinely brutalizing less powerful white bodies—with the perpetuation of oppression and violence, including racism. He says, this historical “trauma has yet to be healed among white bodies today.”⁸ Menakem suggests that most intentional immigrants who arrived on the shores of the New World came with unresolved PTSD.⁹ He, along with other somatic therapists, theorise that traumatised bodies have intense survival energy, which they call a “traumatic retention.”¹⁰ Menakem takes that theory further, asserting that if not healed, traumatic retention can be transmitted from body to body energetically and persists intergenerationally. He suggests it is this traumatic retention that is the mechanism by which racism continues to manifest, and is expressed in, and by, individuals, groups and cultures.¹¹

Given that race-based anti-Indigenous discrimination is intrinsic to, and justifies, Canadian colonialism, I suggest traumatic retention also transmits and perpetuates colonialism. Menakem disputes the effectiveness

of current efforts such as diversity training to resolve racism because of its cognitive nature. He believes that in real life situations an individual's cognitive executive functioning, along with training and knowledge, becomes sidelined to the survival energy in our bodies. Instead, he points to settling our “unsettled” dysregulated nervous systems as the only viable starting point for healing racism.¹² I suggest that learning how to settle our traumatic retention is foundational for Settlers to engage effectively in a holistic decolonial healing practice. To be clear, our ancestors’ and our traumatic retention may be a reason for our oppressive anti-Indigenous thinking and behaviour, it is not an excuse for it.

Although the Canadian Settler population is not a monolith in that we did not all have similarly extreme survival challenges prior to our arrival, nor are we all white, over the decades tens of thousands of people(s) who have been dispossessed, persecuted, disenfranchised, etc., came here hoping, needing and/or expecting to create a new and safer Homeland. Settlers with ancestral or personal histories of being displaced by outside forces and having to move, sometimes multiple times, bring with them great anxiety around their precarious Settler status.¹³ This anxiety creates the need to shape a Settler identity in relation to the land that is indisputable.¹⁴ In other words, our attachment to the land works as an antidote for our anxiety around being uprooted again. In order to solidify this attachment, over time Settlers have produced powerful narratives of “personal and familial struggle and success,” of “potent stories about the land—as sites of conquest, and hard-won property,” devising Settlers’ right to be

here.¹⁵ Additionally, Settler attachment to the land is assumed through the “displacement” and annihilation of “Indigenous Peoples’ pre-existing relationships to place.”¹⁶

Decolonization, along with Indigenous, Métis and Inuit land claims put all of this at risk, as they can be viewed as competing with Settlers’ *right* to this land. Furthermore, the fact that it is difficult for Settlers to fully understand Indigenous Peoples’ relationship to the land, which I summarized by a ‘self imposed ignorance,’ Settlers experience this mysterious dynamic, as a “fear of the unknown.”¹⁷ I suggest that there is a strong likelihood that ‘traumatic retention’ is triggered in Canadian Settlers when we are faced with this ‘unknown,’ our rootedness feels threatened by land claims, or when the idea of decolonizing is broached. These scenarios prevent Settlers from engaging in a cognitive open-hearted process of comprehending the gravity of the negative impacts of colonization on the land, and on all the Peoples of this land, including ourselves. The exercises laid out in Menakem’s book, some of which are grounded in ancient ritualistic knowledge, similar perhaps to the rituals used by Settler’s ancient ancestors for the same purpose, specifically designed to recover from trauma, are meant to facilitate learning how to tune into and settle our individual nervous systems.¹⁸ In doing so, we will be able to transmit a ‘settling’ capacity to others, to harmonize with other bodies, collectively heal and create a decolonial Settler culture that is non-oppressive. Menakem’s group exercises are prescribed for use with policing forces, People of Colour and white folks separately, so creative adaptations might need to be made when using

them for decolonial purposes, as not all Settlers are white. Anti-Indigenous racism is not only held by white folks.

I now understand that our individual and collective Settler somatic healing must be extended to include our physical, mental, emotional and spiritual integration with the body of the Earth, the Land and Water.¹⁹ I believe that reconciling our relationship with the Land and Water is elemental to a decolonial practice. If at all possible, we must learn how to harmonize with the Land, not “impose upon it.”²⁰ Similar to how Canadian colonialism aimed to sever Indigenous, Métis and Inuit relationships to the Land and Water, I put forth that the historic violence, oppression and colonial practices that traumatized Settlers’ ancestors severed their and ultimately our own historic Indigenous relationships to the Land and Water, too. This broken and many generations forgotten understanding of the integral relationship between our well-being and the Land and Water is one of the factors, I think, that made our ancestors’ engagement with colonialism upon arrival in Canada seamless—they’d already accepted that capitalist-driven environmental destruction and resource extraction was normal and to be expected. Settlers have proceeded with these practices in ways that position us to dominate and commodify the Earth, and neglect the preservation of resources for future generations. Creating a holistic decolonial culture involves Settlers actively engaging with the Land and Water in a way that allows us to internalize the truth of the intelligence and Being-ness of these entities; of the deep knowledge and healing capacity held in these

Sacred Bodies; of the necessity to engage with Them in the spirit of respect, reciprocity, and relationality; of our obligation to protect Them as our family; of our interconnectedness with All. We must relearn what has been long forgotten—the relational nature of wellness, of how our true sense of be[long]ing is found in our unification with the Land, Water and All Beings.

In order to dispel our fears that decolonizing means losing something, Settlers must educate ourselves about the very long history of Indigenous Nations’ generous and diplomatic agreements and relations with newcomers to Turtle Island from the time the Dutch arrived until the late 1880’s before the *Indian Act* was instituted by Prime Minister J. A. MacDonald. These diplomatic relationships are codified through the pneumatic symbols represented in numerous wampum belts that were exchanged by all parties involved, and reflect an ongoing willingness on the part of the Indigenous Nations to share the land and its life-supporting resources, in a sustainable way, with Settlers. The integrity and honour of the Indigenous leaders who made these agreements to share with Settlers has not been disregarded, it remains at the heart of how Indigenous, Métis and Inuit Peoples engage and move forward with current land claim issues.²¹ The same can be said of the Treaty agreements. Settlers must learn about our contractual history, and lack of, with Indigenous, Métis and Inuit Peoples so that we fully understand what our individual and collective obligations and responsibilities are in upholding those agreements. Furthermore, this knowledge will soothe our fears of losing something – that, Indigenous folks are

attempting to execute some underhanded plot to uproot Settlers. Learning about this history will also work to dismantle the colonial narrative that the first Settlers found unevolved merciless *savages* here. Instead, our eyes will be opened to the true nature of Indigenous Peoples' humanity, generosity, humility and diplomacy, which was thoroughly evolved when Europeans first made contact.

Settler engagement in a (W)holistic decolonial practice can open space for a transformative process, one that holds the potential to create a decolonial Settler culture that is harmonized with the Land and Water and All beings. Here, Settlers will discover a renewed sense of community and belonging – one that is not predicated on the displacement of Indigenous, Métis and Inuit Peoples, but instead allows for their un-impinged sovereignty. In recovery we hear that when practicing a program of recovery positive change will manifest in ways “beyond our wildest dreams.” Similarly, engaging in a decolonial practice of holistic healing could result in positive world-wide socio-economic and judicial changes we cannot even yet imagine. I see a holistic decolonial cultural practice²² as a roadmap for Be[com]ing (W)holistically Green.

1. The Western holistic approach looks at the whole person and supports their physical, emotional, social and spiritual wellbeing, but does not necessarily include the land, water and environment, except perhaps in the context of the spiritual realm. But Indigenous Knowledge/Spirituality still is not validated in a Western Worldview.
2. Somatic healing or somatic therapy is rooted in a body-oriented approach to psychology. Somatic therapies work by addressing the feedback loop that continually runs between the mind and the body. It is proving very effective for healing PTSD. It is different from typical psychotherapy or talk therapy (which deals with the mind) in that the body is the foundational point for healing. Summarized from <https://psychcentral.com/blog/how-somatic-therapy-can-help-patients-suffering-from-psychological-trauma#what-is-it>, accessed March 17, 2022.
3. Emma Battell-Lowman & Adam J. Barker. *Settler Identity and Colonialism in 21st Century Canada*. (Blackpoint, NS & Winnipeg, MB: Fernwood Publishing. 2015), chapter 3.
4. Jeffrey McNeil-Seymour, suggested in an editorial conversation, March 2022.
5. My Settler heritage: Born on the sovereign and unceded territory of the Anishinaabe Algonquin *Nation*. Maternally, five and 4 generations removed from British colonized Irish Catholic potato farmers who cleared land for farming in the Kitchissippi (Ottawa) Valley & labourers who came to build the Rideau canal, respectively. Paternally, one generation removed from a British toddler abandoned to an orphanage upon arrival to Turtle Island (relatively recent investigation reveals my last name should be Trainor instead of Atkins), and two generations from a Home Child. *Home Children* was the child emigration strategy employed by the UK to relieve itself of the burden of caring for their impoverished citizens and to populate Canada, Australia, New Zealand and South Africa, between 1869 – 1970. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Home_Children, accessed March 17, 2022. All found relative safety there, displacing the original Anishinaabe People in doing so.
6. https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/british-columbians-our-governments/indigenous-people/aboriginal-peoples-documents/calls_to_action_english2.pdf
7. <https://www.resmaa.com/movement>, “Somatic Abolitionism is living, embodied anti-racist practice and culture building – a way of being in the world. It is a return to the age-old wisdom of human bodies respecting, honoring and resonating with other human bodies. It is not exclusively a goal, an attitude, a belief, an idea, a strategy, a movement, a plan, a system, a political position, or a step forward. [It] is not a human invention. It is the resourcing of energies that are always present

in your body, in the collective body, and in the world. Somatic Abolitionism is an emergent process. [It] is an emergent form of growing up and growing into a more fuller energetic human experience.”

8. Resmaa Menakem. *My Grandmother's Hands: Racialized Trauma and the Pathway to Mending Our Heart and Bodies* (Las Vegas, NV: Central Recovery Press. 2017), 62.
9. Ibid., 59 – 61.
10. Ibid., chapters 1-3.
11. Ibid., 9.
12. Ibid., 9-10.
13. Battell-Lowman & Barker, 54.
14. Ibid., 53-4.
15. Ibid., 53.
16. Ibid., 55.
17. Ibid., 93.
18. Menakem, 140-41.
19. <https://link.springer.com/book/10.1007/978-3-030-79622-8>, Miranda Field, Chapter 8: Decolonizing Healing Through Indigenous Ways of Knowing, Reimagining Science in the Anthropocene, ed. Maria F. G. Wallace, Jesse Bazzul, Marc Higgins, Sara Tolbert. Palgrave Macmillan, Cham, 2022.
20. Battell-Lowman & Barker, 53.
21. <https://indigenoustudies.utoronto.ca/news/video-alan-corbieri-on-the-treaty-of-niagara/>, accessed January 2022.

<http://mncfn.ca/elder-garry-sault-talks-wampums/>, accessed January 2022.

<https://ecampusontario.pressbooks.pub/indigstudies/chapter/wampum-belts/>, accessed Jan 2022.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SiU5uvGXhxA>, accessed March 2022.

<https://www.tvo.org/article/anatomy-of-a-first-nations-treaty>, accessed March 2022. Beware of government sites, as they tend to be biased towards downplaying the importance of the historical documentation of agreements between the Crown, the Federal gov't and First Nations, Métis and Inuit Peoples.
22. There are numerous elements to a holistic decolonial practice of healing, many of which I am still unaware. The limits on the length of my contribution to the catalogue informed the elements written about.

Additional recommended educational resources

https://www.coursera.org/learn/indigenous-canada?utm_source=gg&utm_medium=sem&campaignid=13440968592&utm_campaign=12-Indigenous-Canada-Alberta-CA&utm_content=B2C&adgroupid=130160700424&device=c&keyword=indigenous%20canada%20university%20of%20alberta&matchtype=b&network=g&devicemodel=&adpostion=&creativeid=526533617692&hide_mobile_promo&gclid=Cj0KCQjw29CRBhCUARIsAOboZbL25msLHXOONL_6nZAH03IS8rJgG-NkqYbQJg0YIUzW8M9JMG6TlAKaAtWUEALw_wcB, accessed 2019 – 2020

There is a relationship between the content of the 12 MOOC modules offered in University of Alberta's Indigenous Canada course accessed through the link above, and the 12 video sessions found through the link below, with the creators of the MOOC Dr. Tracy Bear and Dr. Paul Gareau and a variety of Indigenous guest speakers, recorded with Dan Levy.

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCrkqw94dlk3l5hzaCzbh4Qw>, accessed 2020

Paulette Regan. *Unsettling the Settler Within: Indian Residential Schools, Truth Telling, and Reconciliation in Canada*. (Vancouver, BC. & Toronto, ON: UBC Press. (2010).

Manuel Axel Strain



Plate 93:

Manuel Axel Strain, *qné7e says tá7a*, 2021. Stolen white picket fence, fake grass, photo my qné7e laser etched into birch and acrylic, deer hide, braided deer hide. Dimensions variable (*detail*)

Plate 94:

Manuel Axel Strain, *qné7e says tá7a*, 2021. Stolen white picket fence, fake grass, photo my qné7e laser etched into birch and acrylic, deer hide, braided deer hide. Dimensions variable



Plate 95:
Oluseye, *Demilade II*, 2020,
Beads, cowry shells, leather,
wood, synthetic hair, stripped
tire, found rubber and
metal artifact



Plate 96:
Oluseye, *Demilade II*, 2020, (detail) Beads, cowry
shells, leather, wood, synthetic hair, stripped
tire, found rubber and metal artifact



Artist Statement

In the ongoing series, “Demilade” (crown me in Yoruba), Oluseye weaves together the traditions of Yoruba masculinity and dominance while asserting and recentering Black women’s place and power in both contemporary and historical narratives of tradition and of rule. Using found objects and women’s hair, Oluseye remakes traditionally male-centered emblems, emblazoning them at their core with symbols and epitaphs of past and present Black womanhood(s). Thus, we are invited and indeed forced to contemplate a world where women stand at the center, as equal partners with power of their own. A power unbounded by time or place.

— Oluseye



Artist Statement

When I began working on this piece I wanted to explore the idea of creating something out of things that weren't there. I was thinking about 120,000 people that have disappeared in the 5 decades of Colombia's civil war. In thinking of police and state violence, and the blood that has been spilled, I dipped fabric in blood-red dye baths and used wax to resist the dye and create shapes, in essence bringing attention to what is not there.

Shortly after I began this exploration, millions of Colombians took to the streets to answer the call for a national strike. Colombians arrived with drums and theatre and were met with bullets, helicopters, tanks and state sanctioned militarized police and paramilitary tactics.

NOS ESTÁN MATANDO =
"THEY ARE KILLING US"

These words became the rallying cry of Colombians trying to bring attention to the violence. I painted them with white wax on textile, revealed by the blood dripping down the fabric as I pulled it out of the dye bath. This piece arrives at the Queer Arts Festival weathered, having been to protests all over Toronto. Having been used to express our grief and determination to have our humanity recognized. At the time I am writing this, it has been 41 days since the protests began. 45 people have been murdered by police and hundreds more are reported missing, presumably dead or in torture camps.

Plate 97:

pablo muñoz, *Die Bath*, 2021, Dye and wax resist on cotton, 7' x 11'

Die Bath

by pablo muñoz

I believe that my artwork emerges out of relationships, and is in relationship, with the people that I love. To tell the story about this art piece, I'd need to start with telling you about my relationship with Jeffrey, my comrade, my friend, my kin and the co-curator of the show that *Die Bath* was created for.

Jeffrey and I met on the sunniest day that Toronto has ever had, in the middle of summer, on a grass field, on Pride Sunday, brimming with people dancing as if we had achieved world peace. Jeffrey was my first friend in Toronto and a true pillar of guidance and support. As much as he was my dance partner, he was my artistic partner, my ideological partner, my academic partner and my activist partner. I came out when I was 16, I came home, came back into the circle, when I met him. I was forever changed. The years in which I was privileged enough to see him daily or weekly, were incredibly tender and incredibly fierce. When I learned he was moving to the West Coast under critical medical conditions, just mere weeks into the pandemic, I thought I would never see him again. My heart broke in a sharp, immediate and profound way. A schism.

Months later Jeff and I reconnected, his prognosis was more optimistic which was a brief breath of relief. He told me he was co-curating this show with SD Holman, and that he wanted me to have a piece in it. I didn't think I had anything to share, but talking to him regularly once again and having the opportunity to create something together, felt like what I wanted in my life. Especially during our second and lengthy Toronto lockdown.

At the time, I was creating dyes out of Colombian coffee and purple corn and painting a series of portraits of activist men of colour, Jeffrey included. I enjoyed the process of harvesting pigments. Later I began using the pigments to dye textiles. I would apply hot wax onto fabric before dipping it into the baths. The wax would resist the dye, revealing shapes. I liked how figures would appear seemingly out of nothing when I pulled the fabric out. The process hit something in me. One of the dye baths looked and felt like blood. Red, viscous, dense, intense and infinitely pigmented. Growing up in Colombia at the height of the civil war, I have a funny relationship with blood. It creates a feeling

— in me — of horror. I began thinking about Colombia and the bloodshed over the last 50 years. I wondered how much blood was spilled in the country, not metaphorically but actually how many gallons, gallons like the gallons of dye I was making. Since the war started in Colombia, hundreds of thousands of people have been killed, the majority (81%) civilians, people, children. Though it would be important to acknowledge that many of the soldiers killed were also children. The average human has 1.2 - 1.5 gallons of blood in their body. That would mean that roughly 327,000 gallons (or 1.2 million litres) of blood has been spilled in the country due to war. At least.

A lot of that blood gushed and diluted into rivers. Rivers wide as oceans like the Magdalena, and the Cauca. There are shores where children are not allowed to play because of the amount of bodies that regularly wash up — bodies of people deemed missing, bodies being mourned upriver, bodies of people whose families were waiting for them to come home for dinner. The “lost wax” and dye process combined so many of these metaphors and imagery. It took me to a place

where I was connecting with, and processing something deep inside me. The pools of blood, the parts that were not there. I called Jeffrey and told him I knew what I would do for the show. I would draw bodies of people in negative space using the lost wax dye process dipped in blood-red pigments representing the hundreds of thousands of people missing in Colombia.

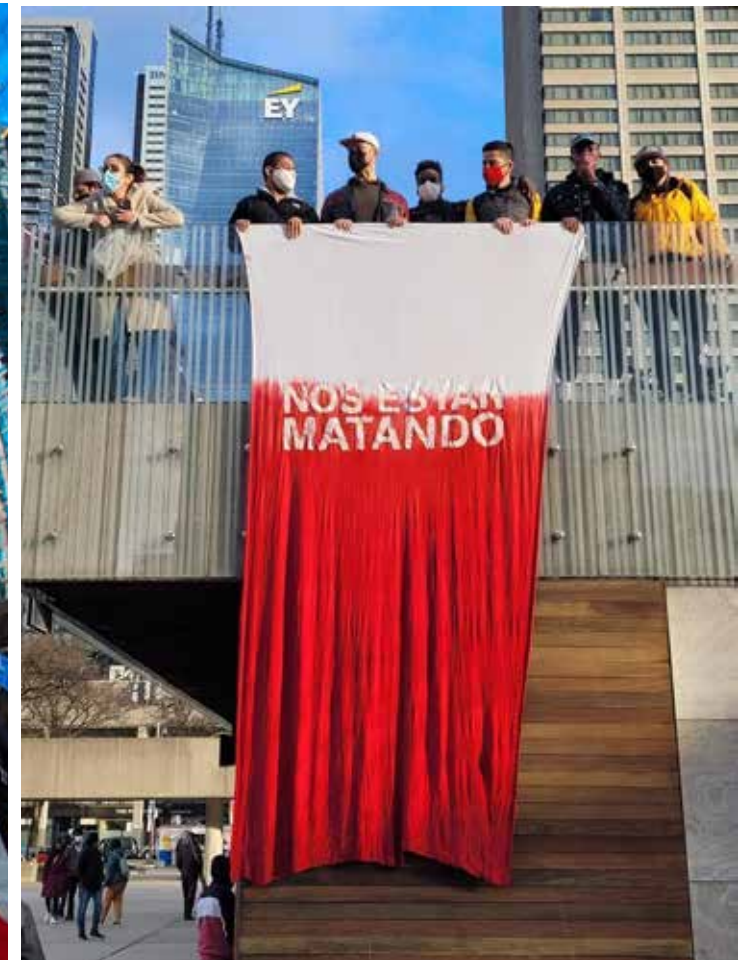
I have often thought about what it means to have a loved one go missing. In Colombia most murders go unsolved meaning that there really is no need to go out of your way to hide a body, so perhaps it is intentional. Chilean filmmaker Patricio Guzman, in talking about the disappearances during Augusto Pinochet's dictatorship, proposes that disappearances are intentional tools of war meant to destabilize entire communities often with the intent of pushing them out of their land. When someone goes missing, their community is unable to grieve and is unable to heal. There is a reason why truth and reconciliation processes around the world begin with truth. What happened? When? How? These questions need to be answered for there to allow for intergenerational healing to begin. When I first pulled some of the fabrics from

the red dye baths to reveal a human figure in the negative space I felt like I had seen a ghost. I fell back and dropped the fabric back into the pool of red. I had seen the missing.

Shortly after I began this exploration, millions of Colombians took to the streets to answer the call for a national strike. The pandemic had hit Colombia hard. More than half of the country contracted COVID. This country of 50 million people sat in the top ten list of countries with the highest death rate for months. During military curfews and lockdowns people started putting red rags on their windows to tell their neighbours that they had no food and they were hungry. Scandal after scandal broke of politicians stealing foreign aid money while people were left to die. It was a pressure bomb about to explode. While governments around the world were giving citizens tax breaks and incentives to stimulate economies, Colombia's right wing government took the pandemic as an opportunity to pass a package of neoliberal policies and new taxes. Colombians said, no. People arrived on the street to protest with drums, with theatre, with flowers, trumpets in an atmosphere that felt and looked like a carnival.

Colombians were determined and unified at a level I had never seen before. But the drums and songs were met with bullets, helicopters, tanks and state sanctioned militarized police and paramilitary tactics. I watched in terror as videos came across my feed of military helicopters descending into neighbourhoods shooting into buildings. When you tell Canadians about this there is the assumption that this type of thing happens all of the time "over there", what I emphasize is that this level of violence was usually reserved for the countryside, deep in the jungle away from cameras or witnesses. The entire country was protesting, in cities, towns and villages big and small, and the government had zero hesitation to turn the entire war machine it had accumulated for decades against civilians. I saw videos of anti-riot police pulling young men into unmarked vans, likely the last time these men were seen again.

NOS ESTÁN MATANDO
THEY ARE KILLING US



Plates 98-99:
pablo muñoz, *Die Bath*, 2021, Toronto

These words became the rallying cry of Colombians trying to bring attention to the violence. I saw protesters using blood in their performances and art pieces on the street. Colombian flags, people's hands, banners and sidewalks all got painted red to bring to light the blood that was being spilled. Having spent so much time in Canada I often feel like part of my Colombian identity is in question, and somehow our relationship to blood and our simultaneous utilization of it as an artistic medium made me feel connected to my people, albeit in trauma.

Like many Colombians I was doing a roll call of all my family members every few hours to make sure they were still alive. Some were barricading themselves in their houses with wet towels hanging from the doors and windows to prevent teargas from entering, others became human rights observers documenting and preventing the police's kidnapping of young protesters. Hundreds of people went missing during the strike, many washed up on river shores, others were presumed to have been sent to torture camps. Unable to sit back and watch, I got to work. I created videos explaining the situation and called on Canadian media to pick up the story, wrote press release after

press release and called every journalist that I knew. I called together a team of friends, artists and activists and we created virtual events and began fundraising for soup kitchens in Colombia keeping protesters fed. The Toronto Colombian community called for a protest at Nathan Phillips Square. In a few hours I wrote "Nos Estan Matando" with wax on a giant banner and dipped it in the dye bath. I dropped the banner from a platform at the square and all 20' of it unrolled. At protests, these symbols create a feeling of safety. It is a way of taking up space and of reclaiming space and reminding everyone why we are gathered and what is happening. I would end up taking this banner to dozens of protests in the course of a few weeks. While my initial intention was to depict bodies, artists working in rapid response mode don't always have the privilege of ambiguity. The message needed to be clear: they are killing us. When I saw the banner finished I knew this was the piece I would submit to the Queer Arts Festival.

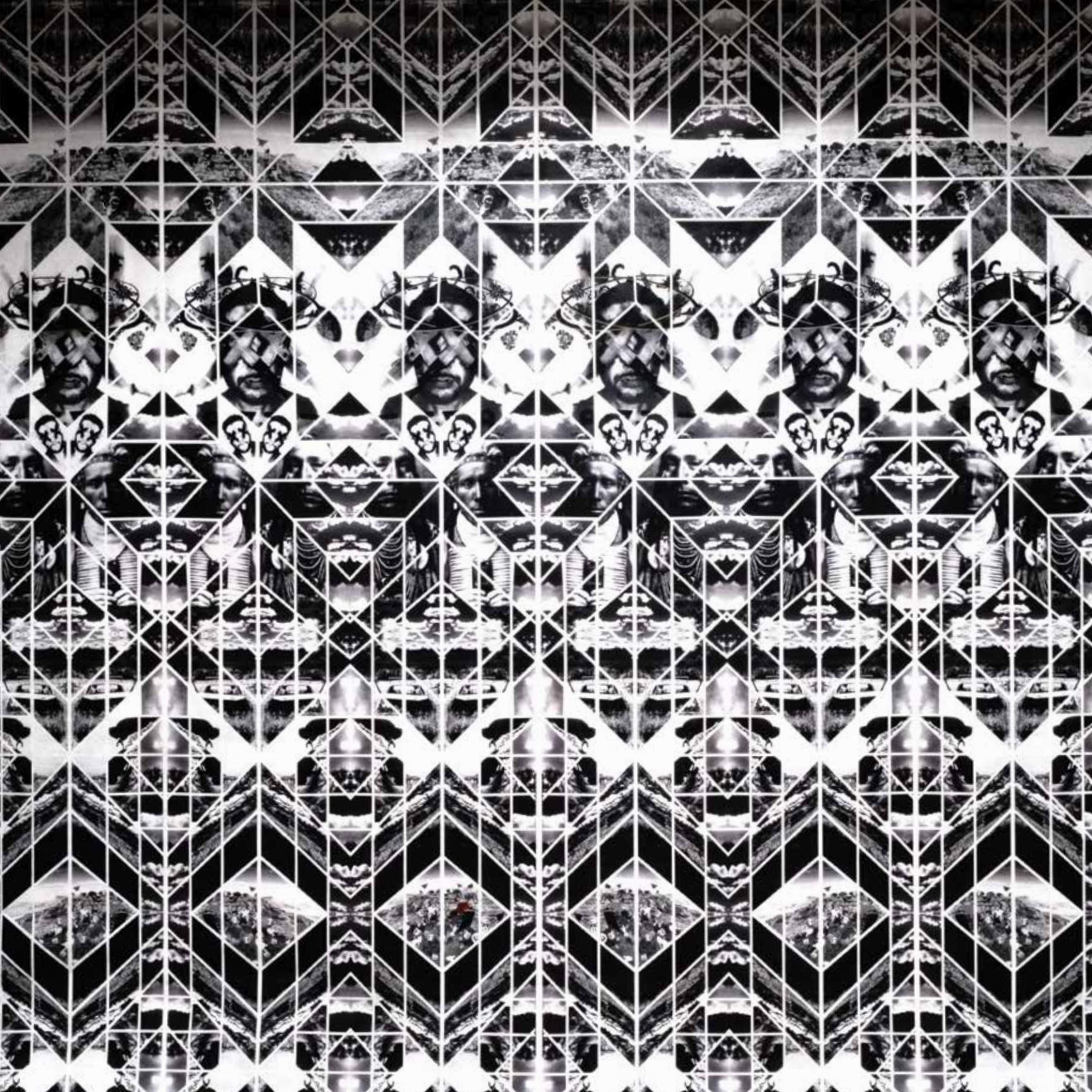
It is important for me to explain that my calls to action, and calls for attention from Canadians was not a simple call for solidarity, or an attempt to appeal to Canadian benevolence. It was a demand for accountability. Canadian mining

companies are littered across Colombia, raping the land, violating human rights and using paramilitaries to displace entire communities. For Canadians to turn their eyes as the country came to a boil is nothing short of negligent. It is also important to acknowledge that Canadians are the second highest consumer of cocaine per capita in the world, the cocaine that has been funnelling billions of dollars to the armed conflict. But lastly and perhaps most relevant, Canada's government has been providing training to the Colombian anti-riot police through the RCMP as well as providing the Colombian police light armoured vehicles manufactured in Ontario. The same vehicles that were caught on camera speeding into crowds and bulldozing people during the strike, and the same riot-police that were seen dragging protesters into unmarked vans. Though it should come as no surprise considering the RCMP are experts at kidnapping children, and were in fact created to displace and disappear Indigenous people in Canada. I have zero interest in empty displays of solidarity from Canadians, or Canadian queers. I need an acknowledgement of responsibility and a collective effort to rid ourselves of militarized policing and systemic

violence being inflicted on our siblings and on our kin everywhere.

By the time the art piece arrived at the Queer Arts Festival it was weathered, in places discoloured from the sun, stretched and cut but never the less imposing and defiant. It looked like I felt. I got to Vancouver and Jeffrey called me, I could tell he needed me at the gallery so I made my way down. I would put on my war paint and show up for him at the turn of a dime. There are two things that are completely indispensable for community organizers creating in the midst of pain and crises, loyalty and accompliceship, and from me Jeffrey has both. He met me at the entrance. We paused and we embraced for a few minutes. His arms draped around me and his head rested on my shoulders. I could feel his heartbeat on my chest. I could feel the journey he was traveling. I am grateful that I got to share this piece with him, and that our art work and activism always brings us back together and allows us to create something seemingly out of nothing. Like alchemy revealing things out of thin air. In a world committed to destruction we are committed to creating, to revealing the spaces in between, to bringing into the room the things that are missing.

— pablo muñoz



Preston Buffalo

Plate 100:

Preston Buffalo *Repeating Patterns 1*, 2021, Digital
Print, Tyvek, 144"x 168", Site-specific installation

Artist Statement

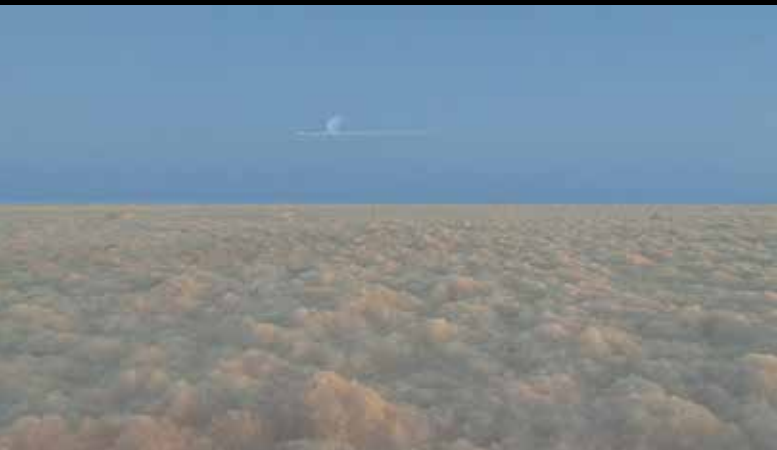
Repeating Patterns

The star blanket represents the agreement that sky woman made with grandmother spider to come down and live upon the Earth. It represents the journey from darkness to light, from ignorance to truth. I used the geometric design to contain the images and personal iconography that make up my artistic language. As someone who straddles many worlds but doesn't feel attached or a sense of belonging to any of them, my practice is about finding out where I belong, and part of that is knowing where I came from. I used images that I made during a road trip back to my home reserve (Maskwacis, Alberta) last summer. The expansive big sky and fluffy clouds contrasted with rotted vehicles. Although not on my home reserve, I included *Head Smashed in Buffalo Jump* as a place I feel an affinity to. Instead of Buffalos we see a stampede of my iconography being run off that cliff, being watched by a lone white Buffalo made of Cree Syllabic typography.

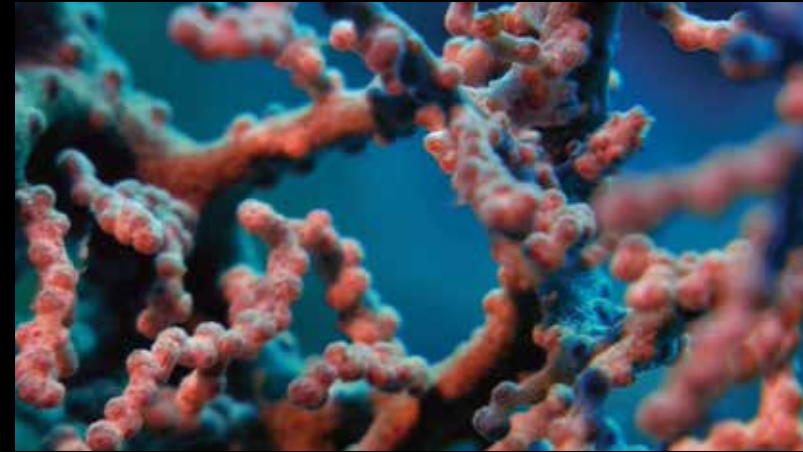
Plate 101:

Preston Buffalo *Repeating Patterns 1*, 2021, Digital Print, Tyvek, 144"x 168", Site-specific installation

Tejal Shah



Plates 102-109:
Tejal Shah, *Between the Waves* – Channel 1, 2012,
27.56 min.



Artist Statement

Between the Waves is a vivid and lush *5-channel video installation. Shah creates sensual, poetic, heterotopic landscapes within which she places subjects that inhabit personal/political metaphors—embodiments of the queer, eco-sexual, inter-special, technological, spiritual and scientific. Their activities feel archaic and futuristic at the same time, primitive but filled with urgency and agency. How did they arrive in these immersive environments, which surround them and also us? Both seductive and visceral, they could be spaces of refuge or expulsion.

Multiple historic and mythological references are layered, woven and problematised. That which is perhaps most obvious is the reference to Rebecca Horn's *Einhorn* (Unicorn), which in turn references Frida Kahlo's painting, *The Broken Column*. Horn has described the subject in *Einhorn* as "very bourgeois", the (female) creature walks elegantly, more like a mythical creature than an animal, naked but asexual. Shah's subjects, however, are neither bourgeois or asexual. They are base and unselfconscious, embodying a ritualistic and intuitive exploration, unapologetically seeking closeness.

Shah's work becomes practically and publicly political through its situated context. The making and dissemination of radical works such as *Between the Waves* is a real challenge for artists in India where freedom of speech and creative expression all too often face serious censorship from state and non-state actors. Actions of love, sensuality or sexuality being performed by her subjects can be read as assertively political—articulating the right of a subjectivity beyond the scripted gender binary enforced through various expressions of social as well as state repressions in contemporary democracies.

— Tejal Shah

Plates 110-113:

Tejal Shah, *Between the Waves* – Channel 1, 2012, 27.56 min.

*This installation is a unique configuration of channels 1, 2, and 4, completed with permission from the artist.



Plates 114-121:
Tejal Shah *Between the Waves* – Channel 2, 2012,
Landfill Dance, 5.02 min.



Caress

The Bodhisattva¹ Artist and Art that Heals

by Tejal Shah

In the summer of 2012, I had a queer interspecies encounter which transmitted a deeply felt experience of gentleness, care, and dare I say, love, for ‘the other’. In the ensuing decade, I have been invited by the Buddhist principle of bodhicitta² to repeatedly behold each and every sentient being as my lover, my sibling, my primary caregiver – a kindred spirit. Many wisdom traditions echo the cultivation of universal love as an integral part of healing our individual and collective psyches. In the wake of this, pertinent questions need to be answered – how can a people so wounded by complex trauma³ begin to do that? How can those filled

1. *Bodhisattva* is a Sanskrit term that combines the words *bodhi*, which means “awakening” or “enlightenment” and *sattva*, which means “essence”. As a noun, it points to “one whose essence is enlightened existence”. For more refer to the next footnote.
2. Etymologically, the word bodhicitta is a combination of the Sanskrit words *bodhi* and *citta*. *Bodhi* means “awakening” and *citta* derives from the Sanskrit root cit, and means “that which is conscious” (i.e., mind or consciousness). *Bodhicitta* may be translated as “awakening mind” or “mind of enlightenment” and it is a spontaneous wish to attain full awakening, motivated by great compassion for all sentient beings and is accompanied by a falling away of the attachment to the illusion of an independently existing self. It necessarily involves a motivation and a felt need to replace others’ suffering with bliss by helping others to awaken (to find bodhi). A person who has a spontaneous realisation or motivation of *bodhicitta* is called a *bodhisattva*. Generating such a mind is central to Mahayana Buddhism.

3. Complex trauma usually occurs as a result of repeated trauma experienced by a child or young person, although it can also occur as a result of experiences as an adult. It may include developmental, shock, intergenerational or other kinds of trauma.

Plates 122-125:

Tejal Shah *Between the Waves* – Channel 2, 2012, Landfill Dance, 5.02 min.

with rage do that? Or those unwittingly gripped by intolerance in the face of difference do that?

Love takes off the masks that we fear we cannot live without and know we cannot live within. I use the word “love” here not merely in the personal sense but as a state of being, or a state of grace—not in the infantile American sense of being made happy but in the tough and universal sense of quest and daring and growth.

—James Baldwin, THE FIRE NEXT TIME

In the great traditions of the east, this love is also known as basic goodness⁴ and the potential to be and act in the world soaked in such goodness is ever present. In fact, the consequences of such radical love are so feared by the unwise that they have been working very hard to indoctrinate us out of it. But as the poet Pablo Neruda reminds us, “You can cut all the flowers but you can’t keep the spring from coming”⁵. Moving forwards, past the impulse to merely fix things outwardly or materially, we⁶ urgently need to recuperate

love, care, trust, vulnerability and gentleness in order to massage our intersubjective, mutually co-constituted relational fields back to the realm of the sacred, the holy. I am proposing that apart from the usual suspects of healers – shamans, spiritual teachers and psycho/therapists – art and artists too, play a vital role in healing. They always have, and now, they have an ever greater imperative to do so⁷.

Art that heals operates from a different paradigm that honours the interconnectedness of all beings and things and is beyond ‘for and against’. It can be counter-intuitive and challenge some of our most deeply held beliefs. It helps us lean into our discomforts and aversions and demands that we stop running away, pause pushing and pulling and show up with full presence to whatever it is that is arising⁸. Seeing the primary role that our perspective plays in shaping our feeling tones, we don’t easily hold others responsible for how we feel. Gradually, we become less fearful in experiencing the bare energy of our emotions. We separate observations from judgements, make requests instead of demands and hold

everything more lightly. With skilful means, we communicate with greater authenticity. We feel good about taking responsibility for our actions and close the gap between our intentions and their effects. Art that heals affords us the safety to mourn that which continues to remain ugly, unjust, and unfulfilled. We are invited to tap into fierceness, not shying away from protest or the protective use of force⁹ when necessary. Good art distinguishes wise compassion from idiot compassion and by disengaging from ego battles, we are invited to forgive others, knowing that people are not inherently bad and that ignorance too can be transformed. We distil the essence of letting be.

And like this, we begin to get clarity and spaciousness around our experiences. We are no longer caught in the incessant ebb and flow of the fear of not getting what we want or the

fear of getting what we don’t want. Repeatedly, we recall, relish and steep in the simplest experiences of pleasures and joys. We celebrate with gratitude and enjoy serving life. And then, in communal settings, we don those special pair of glasses impressed with the words, “Just Like Me”, and with this newly-found vision, we are invited to tremble with others – our human and more-than-human-kin – in recognition of our shared desires and fragility. And in so doing, rather than looking away or flinching, we start getting the hang of leaning into the suffering of others (beloved, stranger and enemy). In mutual vulnerability, we touch and we are touched despite our contrasting differences. We begin to tap into the deep reservoir of wise love and compassion within ourselves.

When we trust that we are being seen as a whole and all parts of ourselves are held in safety and care, our nervous system regulates, our resilience expands, and we start to relax deeply. And so begins the long journey home to loving ourselves and loving others, unconditionally. The embodiment of nonduality is necessary for profound healing, an experiential insight into the interdependence of all that exists in the universe¹⁰. Meaning making only happens in relation to.

4. Basic goodness is a term coined by Tibetan spiritual teacher Chögyam Trungpa and is now in common use. It is used both to discuss the experience of reality and also basic human virtue. “Basic” as indicating the primordial, self-existing nature and “goodness” as a faultless aspect.

5. From the poem, *The Portrait in the Rock* by Pablo Neruda, written in honour of the Peruvian poet, César Abraham Vallejo Mendoza who became a victim of the dictatorship of the state.

6. I am aware that there is no homogenous “we” and there are many peoples and cultures where these values are both intact and being actively practiced. The “we” here only refers to those who have lost these basic values of goodness.

7. The imperative is urgent because our current planetary circumstances entail rapidly increasing human-caused climate catastrophes, greater fossil fuel addiction, largest forced displacement of humans and animals, fastest extinction of species and ecosystems and war-fuelled economies etc., all of which are leading to greater strife and suffering amongst all beings.

8. For example in the field of our bodily sensations or our thoughts, feelings and emotions.

9. The protective use of force is a principle well explained in NVC, a system of Non-Violent Communication developed by Marshall Rosenberg. It differentiates between the protective and the punitive uses of force. The intention behind the protective use of force is to prevent injury or injustice. When we exercise the protective use of force, we are focusing on the life or rights we want to protect without passing judgment on either the person or the behaviour. (For application of this kind of force in social and political conflicts, see Robert Irwin’s book, *Nonviolent Social Defence*.) The assumption behind the protective use of force is that people behave in ways injurious to themselves and others due to some form of ignorance. The corrective process is therefore one of education, not punishment. Punitive action, on the other hand, is based on the assumption that people commit offenses because they are bad or evil, and to correct the situation, they need to be made to repent. In practice, however, punitive action, rather than evoking repentance and learning, is just as likely to generate resentment and hostility and to reinforce resistance to the very behaviour we are seeking.

10. Ironically, the independence we so desperately seek comes from fully inhabiting our interdependence. For a detailed understanding of the seamless compatibility of interdependent existence as the very absence of independent existence, a detailed study of the ontological view as presented by the Consequentialist Middle Way philosophy school is a must. For a non-technical explanation of this, read *Interconnected: Embracing Life in Our Global Society* by Ogyen Trinley Dorje Karmapa.

*Are you sure, sweetheart, that you
want to be well? ... Just so's you're sure,
sweetheart, and ready to be healed,
cause wholeness is no trifling matter.
A lot of weight when you're well.*

—Toni Cade Bambara, *THE SALT EATERS*

Coming back to the aforementioned interspecies encounter – while snorkelling off the Egyptian coast, I chanced upon two octopuses playfully chasing each other in the coral reefs of the Gulf of Aqaba. I had heard so much about them but this was the first time I was meeting them in the wild. Mesmerised I found myself tailing them. Soon, my mollusc companions sensed my presence and tried to escape my gaze but we were naked in crystal clear open waters and there wasn't a place to hide. Moreover, not only had I seen them but I had also been seen by them and in being seen, I felt revealed as a voyeur. Voyeur indeed because not only did the octopuses appear to be engaged in an exuberant foreplay but I had

also recently discovered my own ecosexual inclinations. (Stumped is how I felt when I found myself amorous in the company of corals). Once again, I am reminded of the astute remark made by the influential evolutionary biologist JBS Haldane, “The universe is not only queerer than we suppose, but queerer than we can suppose.”

With nowhere to hide, finally the octopuses descended one on top of another as I quietly hovered nearby. Rooted to one spot, they embarked on a remarkable shape-shifting show as they changed their texture, colour, shape and patterns in quick succession. As if a single octopus isn't mysterious enough, two of them intertwined made for the most curious creation I had ever laid my eyes upon¹¹. Then they became very still, without any visible movement for what felt like an eternity. We all seemed to be suspended in that liminal space where all borders blur and in that moment, I became acutely aware of our difference and also equally aware of something deeply shared and common

11. I cannot help but mention the documentary film, *My Octopus Teacher*, 2020, directed by Pippa Ehrlich and James Reed in this context.

between us. And then, in what seemed like the final point of this transmission¹², one of the octopuses, with utmost gentleness, delicately caressed the other's cheek with its tentacle. Were these two octopuses artists? And if so, what art were they relaying?

Is a caress good enough¹³ to start with?

— Tejal Shah

12. I'd like to bring your attention to esoteric transmission in the context of Tantric Buddhism, which is the transmission of certain teachings directly from teacher to student during an empowerment (*abhiṣeka*) in a ritual space containing the mandala of the deity. Many techniques for such transmissions are also commonly said to be secret, and the secrecy of the teachings was often protected through the use of allusive, indirect, symbolic and metaphorical language (twilight language) which require interpretation and guidance from a teacher. The teachings may also be considered “self-secret”, meaning that even if they were to be told directly to a person, that person would not necessarily understand the teachings without proper context. In this way, the teachings are “secret” to the minds of those who are not following the path with more than a simple sense of curiosity.

13. The principle of “good enough” in psychotherapy is based on D.W. Winnicott's (1968) concept of the “good enough mother”. The “good enough” philosophy has applications beyond the parent-infant relationship and is suggesting that perfectionism is not actually the point.



Plates 126-133:

Tejal Shah *Between the Waves* – Channel 4, 2012,
Moon burning

Tsohil Bhatia

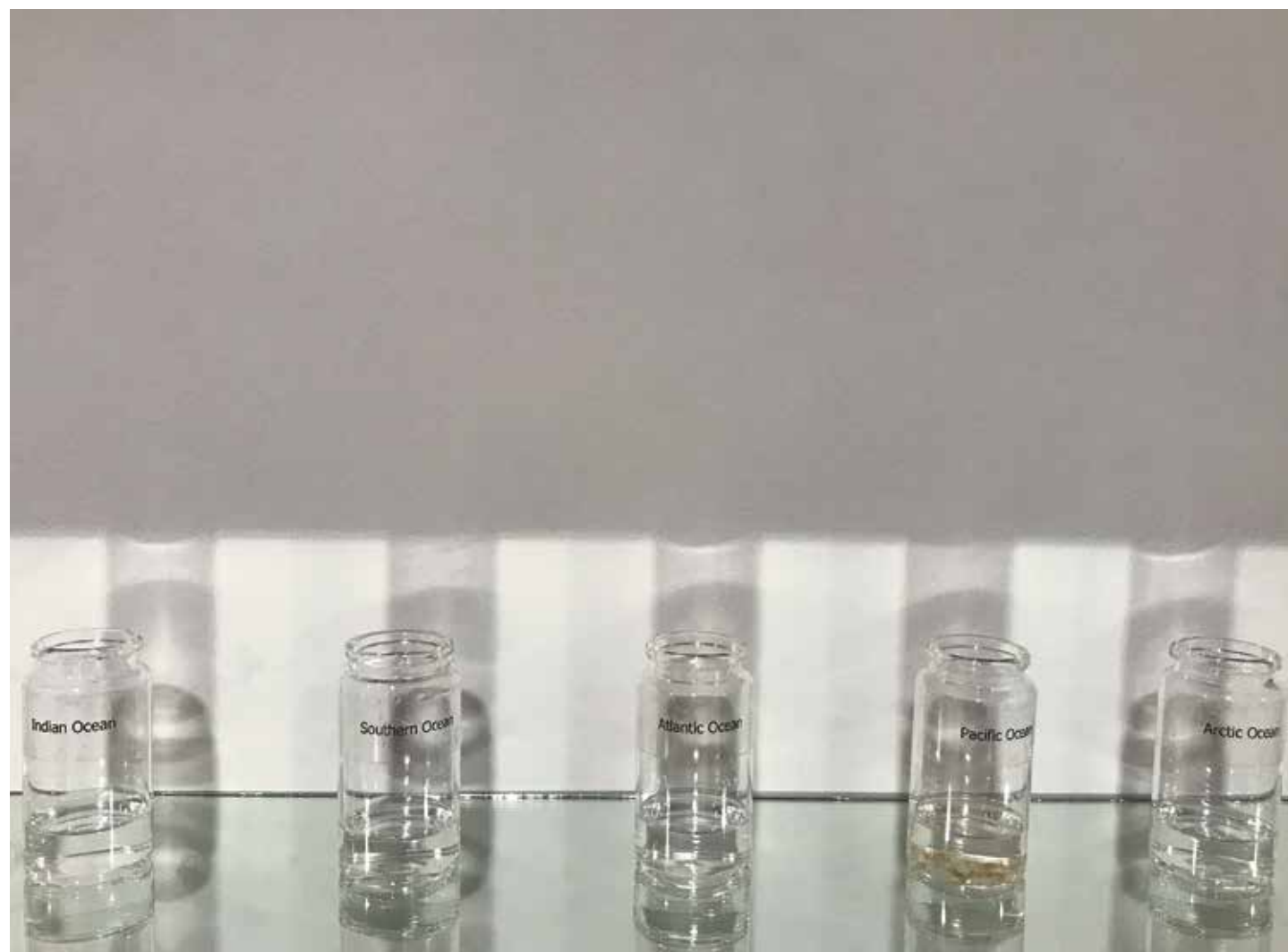


Plate 134: Tsohil Bhatia, *Untitled (Ocean Water)*, 2019, Waters from the Pacific ocean, Atlantic ocean, Southern ocean, Indian ocean, and Arctic ocean, glass vessels, mirror

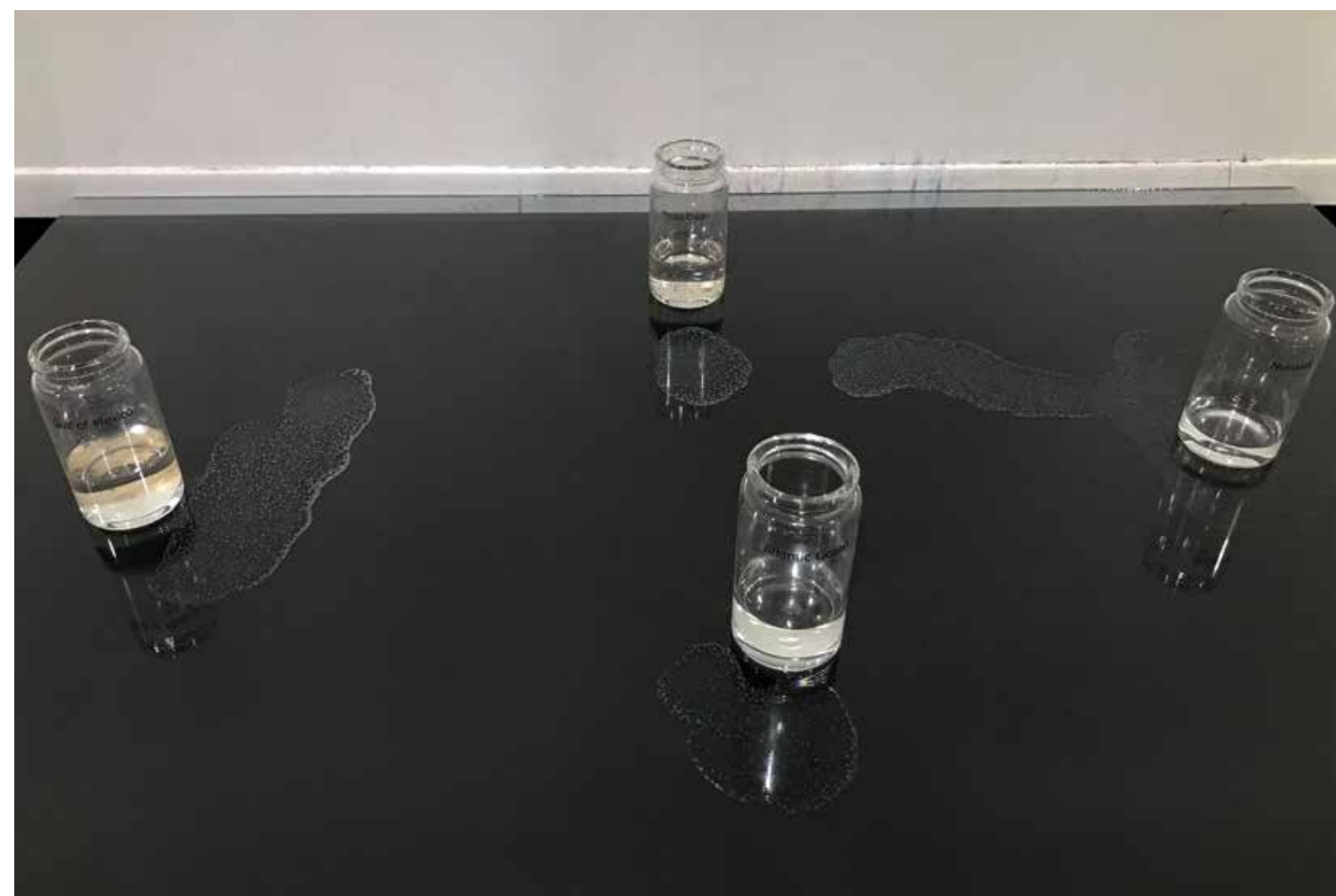


Plate 135: Tsohil Bhatia, *Turtle Island (Ocean Water)*, 2021, Waters from the Atlantic ocean, Gulf of Mexico, Haida Gwaii, and Nunavut, glass vessels



Plate 136: Tsohil Bhatia, Site-specific installation

Artist Statement(s)

Untitled (Ocean Water)

In the fall of 2018, I asked five people to donate water from the five oceans. The water was then couriered and shipped across other oceans. In the spring of 2019, the water is air-dried in glasses and the residual salt and minerals are collected. The evaporated water then makes its way back to the ocean.

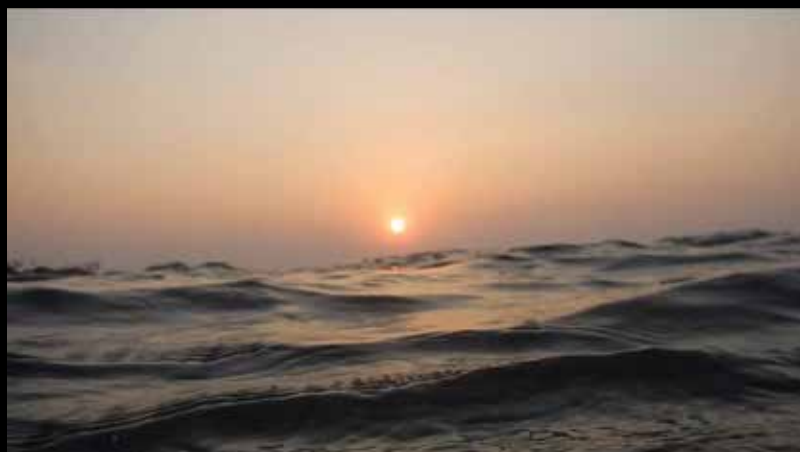
Turtle Island (Ocean Water)

When we consider water through the lens of western constructs or schools of thought like or akin to geography, typically we think of it as a barrier — that which separates us. It forces a dislocation. An interruption to being in relation to. Curator Jeffrey McNeil-Seymour, informed from the teachings and life work of Anishinaabe Grandmother Water Walker Josephine Mandamin (1942 – 2019). Josephine walked a bucket of water from all four corners of Turtle Island back to Lake Superior (where they were ceremoniously poured in) many times over the course of her lifetime. The artist and curators felt for the work to be shown here meant to honour her and her work. Water from the Pacific, Gulf of Mexico, Atlantic and Nunavut Waters were gathered and flown in for the work — water isn't what divides us, it's what connects us.



Plates 137-144:

Tsohil Bhatia, *Sun Ritual*, 2017, Video projection,
15 minutes



Sun Ritual

A performance document of a walk and swim towards the sun nearing sunset. The performance of an unanticipated duration starts on the coast of Maharashtra, IN and continues in the water of the Arabian Sea.

Plates 145-150

Tsohil Bhatia, *Sun Ritual*, 2017, Video projection, 15 minutes

Curator Biography

Jeffrey McNeil-Seymour

Jeffrey McNeil-Seymour – a Two-Spirit Tk'emlúpsenc and fourth generation English Settler – is nominated to the Traditional Family Governance Council for the Stk'emlupsemc te Secwepemc Nation, and is an appointed speaker by and for his Secwepemc Nation. He regularly contributes to the international two-spirit community through writing, art and other activism(s). He is an Assistant Professor at Ryerson University and was a Lecturer for three years at Thompson Rivers University school of social work in Kamloops, BC. He specializes in Decolonizing Social Work Practice as informed by his nation's teachings, and contributes (most recently as an expert witness at Canada's MMIW Inquiry hearings held in Iqaluit, Nunavut) to the ongoing issue of missing and murdered Indigenous women's, girls, trans and two-spirit peoples. Jeffrey's classroom inextricably links land and water defence to social work research, practice and pedagogy.

Artistic Director Biography

SD Holman

SD Holman is an artist and curator whose work has toured internationally. An ECUAD graduate in 1990, Holman was picked up by the Vancouver Association for Non-commercial Culture (the NON) right out of art school. Holman was appointed Artistic Director of Pride in Art in 2008, spearheaded the founding of the Queer Arts Festival, now recognized among the top 2 of its kind worldwide, and SUM, Canada's only queer-mandated transdisciplinary gallery. Curatorial highlights include *TRIGGER*, the 25th anniversary exhibition for Kiss & Tell's notorious *Drawing the Line* project, Adrian Stimson's *Naked Napi* solo show, and Paul Wong's monumental multi-curator *Through the Trapdoor* underground storage locker exhibition. A laureate of the YWCA Women of Distinction Award, one of Canada's most prestigious awards, Holman's work has exhibited at Wellesley College, the Advocate Gallery (Los Angeles), the Soady-Campbell Gallery (New York), the San Francisco Public Library, The Helen Pitt International Gallery, Charles H. Scott, Exposure, Gallery Gachet, the Roundhouse, Vancouver East Cultural Centre, Artropolis, and Fotobase Galleries (Vancouver). Holman's portrait project *BUTCH: Not like the other girls* toured North America and is in its second edition, distributed by Caitlin Press Dagger Editions.

Artist Biographies

Beric Manywounds

Beric Manywounds is a Two Spirit writer, filmmaker, and intermedia performance artist from the Tsuutina Nation of Treaty 7. Taking a special interest in the genres of fantasy, horror, and magical realism, Beric's storytelling often reflects an exploration of post trauma consciousness and spiritual transformation. Now soon to be graduating from the Intermedia Cyber Arts program at Concordia University, Beric is now giving shape, form, and voice to their futurist visions of Indigenous resurgence and decolonized gender in new works of cinema, performance, and contemporary dance.

Duane Isaac

Duane Isaac is a First Nation Mi'gmaq from Listuguj, QC. He is a contemporary artist who uses the photography medium in combination with his mask making. His work has been featured in multiple online publications, most recently Canadian Art Magazine. He currently resides in Listuguj, QC.

Grace Howse

Grace Howse is a Cree Master weaver and Knowledge Keeper.

Falaks Vasa

Falaks Vasa (they/she pronouns, b. 1995) is an interdisciplinary artist, writer, and educator currently based in Bhawanipur, Kolkata. They are an MFA candidate in Literary Arts at Brown University, and have attended artist residencies at the Skowhegan School of Painting and Sculpture, and ACRE. Her practice is a decolonizing and queering of oppressive power structures through gesture and language, always filtered through humor. But Falaks, you may ask, where is the humor in this bio? Well friend.....good question.

Currently, Falaks works as a freelance educator and writer, waters her plants daily, and showers sometimes. Or so she claims.

Ho Tam

Ho Tam was born in Hong Kong, educated in Canada and the U.S. and worked in advertising companies and community psychiatric facilities before turning to art. He practices in multiple disciplines including photography, video, painting and print media. His first video, *The Yellow Pages*, was commissioned by the public art group PUBLIC ACCESS for an installation/projection at the Union Station of Toronto in 1994/95. Since then Tam has produced over 15 experimental videos. He was included in the traveling exhibition *Magnetic North: Canadian Experimental Video* by Walker Art Center, Minnesota. His feature documentary film “Books of James” was awarded Outstanding Artistic Achievement (Outfest, LA) and Best Feature Documentary (Tel Aviv LGBT Film Festival). He also publishes several series of artist’s books and zines. Tam is an alumnus of Whitney Museum Independent Studies Program, Bard College (MFA) and a recipient of various fellowships and artist’s grants. Since 2019, Tam has been running the Hotam Press Bookshop/Gallery in Vancouver.

Isaac Murdoch

Isaac Murdoch, whose Ojibway name is Manzinapkinegego’anaabe / Bombgiizhik is from the fish clan and is from Serpent River First Nation. Isaac grew up in the traditional setting of hunting, fishing and trapping. Many of these years were spent learning from Elders in the northern regions of Alberta, Saskatchewan and Manitoba. Isaac is well respected as a storyteller and traditional knowledge holder. For many years he has led various workshops and cultural camps that focuses on the transfer of knowledge to youth. Other areas of expertise include: traditional Ojibway paint, imagery/symbolism, harvesting, medicine walks, & ceremonial knowledge, cultural camps, Anishinaabeg oral history, birch bark canoe making, birch bark scrolls, Youth & Elders workshops, etc. He has committed his life to the preservation of Anishinaabe cultural practices and has spent years learning directly from Elders.

Jay Pahre

Jay Pahre is a queer and trans settler artist, writer and cultural worker currently based on the unceded territories of the **xʷməθkʷəṽəm** (Musqueam), Skwxwú7mesh (Squamish) and **Səlilwətaʔ/Selilwitulh** (Tsleil-Waututh) peoples. Weaving between drawing, sculpture and writing, his work queries trans and queer nonhuman ecologies as they intersect with the human. Originally from the midwestern US, Pahre has turned his work back toward the shifting ecologies of the Great Lakes and Great Plains regions. Recently, this has been navigated with a focus on the myriad ecologies present on the island of minong or isle royale, an island located in northwestern lake superior. Pulling from personal lived experience of walking the island, shifting geographies, and queer/trans ecologies, he pieces apart the moments when these different trajectories begin to fold in on themselves and open other ways of being, knowing, and moving. The uses of metal, electricity, and heat has been instrumental in his work to think through conductive and transforming ecologies. Leaning on these moments of conductivity and transformation, his work ferrets out alternative formations and futures of what queer and trans ecologies of being might look like while slipping through moments of temporal, embodied, and environmental precarity. He received his BFA in painting and BA in East Asian studies in 2014, and his MA in East Asian studies from the University of Illinois in 2017. He went on to complete his MFA in visual art at the University of British Columbia in 2020. His work has been exhibited across the US and Canada. He was selected for the 2020 Transgender Studies Chair Fellowship at the University of Victoria, as well as the Helen Belkin Memorial Scholarship (2020) and Fred Herzog Award in Visual Art (2019) at the University of British Columbia.

Kali Spitzer

“Indigenous Femme Queer Photographer Kali Spitzer ignites the spirit of our current unbound human experience with all the complex histories we exist in, passed down through the trauma inflicted/received by our ancestors. Kali’s photographs are intimate and unapologetic and make room for growth and forgiveness while creating a space where we may share the vulnerable and broken parts of our stories which are often overlooked, or not easy to digest for ourselves or society.” — Ginger Dunnill, Creator and Producer of Broken Boxes Podcast (which features interviews with Indigenous and other engaged artists).

Kali Spitzer is a photographer living on the traditional unceded lands of the Tsleil-Waututh, Skwxwú7mesh and Musqueam peoples. The work of Kali embraces the stories of contemporary queer and trans bodies and BIPOC, creating representation that is self-determined. Kali’s collaborative process is informed by the desire to rewrite the visual histories of indigenous bodies beyond a colonial lens. Kali is Kaska Dena from Daylu (Lower Post, British Columbia) on her father’s side and Jewish from Transylvania, Romania on her mother’s side. Kali’s heritage deeply influences her work as she focuses on cultural revitalization through her art, whether in the medium of photography, ceramics, tanning hides or hunting.

Kali studied photography at the Santa Fe Community College and the Institute of American Indian Arts. Under the mentorship of Will Wilson, Kali explored alternative practices to photography. She has worked with film in 35 mm, 120 and large format, as well as wet plate collodion process using an 8-by-10 camera. Her work includes portraits, figure studies and photographs of her people, ceremonies, and culture. At the age of 20, Kali moved back north to spend time with her Elders, and to learn how to hunt, fish, trap, tan moose and caribou hides, and bead. Throughout Kali's career she has documented traditional practices with a sense of urgency, highlighting their vital cultural significance.

Kali's work has been featured in several exhibitions at galleries and museums internationally including, the National Geographic's Women: a Century of Change at the National Geographic Museum (2020), and Larger than Memory: Contemporary Art From Indigenous North America at the Heard Museum (2020). In 2017 Kali received a Reveal Indigenous Art Award from Hnatyshyn Foundation.

Kali would like to extend her gratitude to all who have collaborated with her, she recognizes the trust and vulnerability required to be photographed in such intimate ways.

— Mussi Cho

Katherine Atkins

Of Settler heritage, born on the sovereign unceded territory of the ᐱᓄᓂᐸᑦᐱᑦᐱᑦ (Anishinabewaki Algonquin) Nation in Ottawa, Katherine has since lived for 40 years on the sovereign, unceded territories of the xʷməθkʷəy̍əm (Musqueam), sḵwǝ́wú7mesh (Squamish) and səíłwata? (Tsleil-Waututh) peoples in Vancouver. In 1993 she became active in the local artists community and went on to graduate from Emily Carr University of Art and Design in 2004. As well as being a founding member of the Pride in Art Society, which hosts the annual Queer Arts Festival in Vancouver, Katherine is also one of a group of local artist who founded the 901 Artist Cooperative and established Portside Artist Studios in 2009.

Katherine's artwork is both personal and political. One of the driving forces behind her interdisciplinary art practice is her desire to better understand the ways in which negative social conditioning, such as sexism, homophobia, colonialism and racism, has caused her thinking and behaviour to be incongruent with her values. As well as serving as a social critique, pointing out social dis-ease, Katherine's art work critiques her internalization of said social conditioning. Consequently, she often employs representational and/or metaphoric self-portraiture in her art. Coming from a 'recovery' perspective, Katherine holds the practice of not asking another person to go into emotionally, mentally, and psychically challenging places she is not willing to go herself. Implicating herself in social critique, then, is necessary. Katherine shares her internal excavation discoveries and intra-personal discord in an effort to create an intimate and empathic connection with the viewer, with the hope of promoting social healing.

Kathleen Elkins Ross

Kathleen Ross is a Tsilhqot'in from Yunesit'in. Her Maternal Grandparents are Jack (late) and Lila (late) Elkins, Adopted Maternal Grandparents Otto (late) and Theresa (late) Quilt. She was born to Joanna (late) Elkins, and raised by her Second Generation Irish/Scottish Settler Great Uncle/Father David Ross and Great Aunt/Mother Madeline (late) Myers.

Coming from a cultural upbringing, Ross gives thought to those that are yet to come through creating an archive of imagery of Indigenous people that is uplifting and entirely about resurgence. Thriving to leave an archive of knowledge to capture the hearts and minds of Indigenous people and to captivate the settler imagination through images of this time and the various facets of Indigenous cultures. She seeks to contribute to an already established creative culture and make a mark in the Fine Art world as a Deni Artist.

Manuel Axel Strain

Manuel Axel Strain is interdisciplinary artist of xʷməθkʷəy̓əm (Musqueam), Simpcw and Inkumupulux ancestry who currently lives on the stolen, sacred and ancestral homelands and waters of the q̓ícəy (Katie) and Kwantlen peoples. Strain uses their art practice to confront and undermine the imposed realities of colonialism, proposing a new space beyond oppressive systems of power. Creating artwork in dialogue, collaboration and reference with their kin and relatives, their lived experience becomes a source of agency that flows through their art practice, as they work with the land and across performance, painting, sculpture, photography, video, sound and installation. Strain attended Emily Carr University of Art + Design, Vancouver, but prioritizes Indigenous epistemologies through the embodied knowledge of their mother, father, siblings, cousins, aunts, uncles, nieces, nephews, grandparents and ancestors. They have exhibited work in Capture Photography Festival, Vancouver, and have shown work at the Richmond Art Gallery, Surrey Art Gallery, and Vancouver Art Gallery as well as at more distant places across Turtle Island.

Oluseye

Oluseye's work is a warm embrace of the magnitude and polyvocality of Blackness and of the ways in which it moves across space, place, and time, shaping and shifting the world. Centering Yoruba cultural references in an homage to his heritage, he bends the ancestral with the contemporary and rejects the binary distinction between the traditional and the modern; the physical and the spiritual; the past and the future; what is new and what is old. Imbuing the everyday with the mythic, his work reinforces African rituals and philosophies as living, complex, and valid traditions of Black consciousness. He has exhibited at The Art Gallery of Ontario, Toronto; Gallery 151, New York; and Art Twenty-one, Lagos. He is a recipient of the Canada Council for The Arts New Chapter Grant and the 2019 Toronto and Ontario Arts Council Visual Arts Grant.

pablo muñoz

Pablo Muñoz is a community organizer, designer and artist whose work extends from furniture design, video installation, murals and public art. Arriving in Canada as a young refugee in 2000, Pablo draws inspiration from Colombian magic realism and forced displacement. His work often centres the experience of the LGBTQ2s+ global diaspora as well as the stories of communities resisting war, occupation and western imperialism. Growing up in East Vancouver, he became engaged with immigrant/refugee organizing, advocacy and solidarity efforts with Indigenous communities in Colombia. He made his move to Toronto in 2015, the same year his piece No Walls Between Us won a national call for submissions from the AGO becoming a temporary mural installation at the entrance of the gallery.

He graduated from OCAD University with a degree in Industrial design in 2018. Pieces from his furniture collection Macondo were displayed at the Design Offsite Festival winning "Best of Design Week" by Designlines magazine for two years in a row. His video installation piece, Migrant Restless Syndrome, was featured in the Winter Vernissage of Montreal's Never Apart Gallery in 2020.

He currently works for the City of Toronto in public engagement where he facilitates collaboration between city officials, designers and architects and communities to create more equitable parks and public spaces. Since the protests erupted in Colombia in May of 2021 he has centered his efforts in bringing to light the unfolding atrocities being committed by the Colombian police. Particularly the dozens of people murdered over the course of one month, hundreds of people disappeared and Canada's complicity in this injustice through weapon sales and a bilateral police partnership with the RCMP.

Preston Buffalo

Preston Buffalo is a Two Spirited, Cree man who lives and loves in the unceded Coastal Salish Territories in British Columbia. His interdisciplinary work uses photography, print making, digital illustration and sculpture to create visual representations of personal Indigenous iconography and symbolism to explore issues such as addiction, mental health and the loss of culture and language , the journey to find connection often meets at the intersection of hyphenated identities.

Tejal Shah

b. 1979 in Bhilai (India)
Currently lives peripatetically

Tejal Shah's is a unique practice that consistently challenges the legible by occupying liminal spaces between fact, fiction and poetry. Working across diverse media such as video, photography, performance, sound, installation and educational projects, Shah positions herself at the intersection of queer ecology, feminism and Non-dual Buddhist philosophy. Exploring the notions of "trans-"—with regard to gender and sexuality, but also to national or cultural identity—Shah's work inhabits the position of the in-between as a means to destabilise the complacency of patriarchy and the "normative phantasms of a compulsory heterosexuality" (Judith Butler). The body as a gendered and sexualised entity is both medium and subject of their work that, though highly theoretically informed, operates on a very physical, performative level, stressing concepts of multiplicity as opposed to duality or singularity. Theirs is an invitation to examine the relationship between power and knowledge, learned social and political behaviour, and the construction of norms.

Tsohil Bhatia

Tsohil Bhatia is an artist and homemaker based in Lenapehoking. They work with their body and its ghost to contemplate the latencies of quotidian objects, images and phenomenon revealed in the quietude of their home. They studied Performance Art at Srishti School of Art, Design and Technology (Bangalore) and were awarded the Regina and Martin Miller Fellowship to attend an MFA at the School of Art at Carnegie Mellon University (2020). Their work has been shown at the University of British Columbia (Vancouver, BC), Bezalel Academy (Jerusalem), Hair+Nails (MN), Phosphor Project Space (PA) and the Andy Warhol Museum (PA). They've participated at Franconia Sculpture Park Emerging Artist Residency, Ox Bow School of Art (MI), HH Art Spaces Residency (Goa), Shergill-Sunderam Shanthi Road Residency (Bangalore) and will be at residence at the Chautauqua School of Art and MASS MoCA in 2021. They're represented by Blueprint12 Gallery (New Delhi).

It's not easy being green Plate List

Plates 1-5: Beric Manywounds, *Tsanizid*, 2019, Video projection installation, 7 minutes

Plates 6-45: Duane Isaac, *Ephemera*, 2020—2021, Photographic series

Plates 46–61: Falaks Vasa, *Nourish Me Balcony*, 2020, Song, music video, 3 minutes

Plates 62–64: Falaks Vasa, *Pillows for the Pandemic*, 2020, Workshop

Plates 65-67: Grace Howse, *Wasbison*, 2021, Mixed media installation, Dimensions variable (detail)

Plates 68–75: Ho Tam, *Isolation Journal*, 2020, Video, 5:01 minutes

Plates 76-77: Ho Tam, *The Yellow Pages*, 2017, Inkjet prints, 18" x12" each (set of 26 prints)

Plates 78-79: Ho Tam, *The Yellow Pages*, 2017, Inkjet prints, 18" x12" each (set of 26 prints)

Plate 80: Isaac Murdoch, *Bears*, 2021, Canvas print, 24" x 36"

Plates 81-84: Jay Pahre, *Studies for Flipping the Island* 2021, Gouache on paper, 18" x 25"

Plate 85: Jay Pahre, installation of *Flipping the Island* and *Guard Hairs*

Plate 86: Jay Pahre, *Guard Hairs*, 2019, Copper coated steel wire, gauze, Dimensions variable (*detail*)

Plate 87: Kali Spitzer, *Bloom*, 2019, C-Print from 35mm colour film, 16" x 24"

Plate 88: Kali Spitzer, *Wordless*, 2019, C-Print from 35mm colour film, 16" x 24"

Plate 89: Kali Spitzer, *With Roses*, 2019, C-Print from 35mm colour film, 16" x 24"

Plate 90: Kathleen Elkins Ross, *Protector, Provider, Paternal*, 2019, Resin Coated Print, 3' x 4'

Plate 91: Kathleen Elkins Ross, *Modern WarPaint*, 2019, Fiber Based Print, 11" x 13"

Plate 92: Katherine Atkins, *Self Portrait #18: It's Mine, It's Mine, It's Mine ...*, 2021, Acrylic on panel, 24" x 24"

Plates 93-94: Manuel Axel Strain, *qné7e says tá7a*, 2021. Stolen white picket fence, fake grass, photo my qné7e laser etched into birch and acrylic, deer hide, braided deer hide. Dimensions variable

Plates 95-96: Oluseye, *Demilade II*, 2020, (detail) Beads, cowry shells, leather, wood, synthetic hair, stripped tire, found rubber and metal artifact

Plate 97: pablo muñoz, *Die Bath*, 2021, Dye and wax resist on cotton, 7' x 11'

Plates 98-99: pablo muñoz, *Die Bath*, 2021, Toronto

Plates 100-101: Preston Buffalo *Repeating Patterns 1*, 2021, Digital Print, Tyvek, 144"x 168", Site specific installation

Plates 102-113: Tejal Shah, *Between the Waves – Channel 1*, 2012, 27.56 min.

Plates 114-124: Tejal Shah *Between the Waves – Channel 2*, 2012, Landfill Dance, 5.02 min.

Plates 125-133: Tejal Shah *Between the Waves – Channel 4*, 2012, Moon burning

Plate 134: Tsohil Bhatia, *Untitled (Ocean Water)*, 2019, Waters from the Pacific ocean, Atlantic ocean, Southern ocean, Indian ocean, and Arctic ocean, glass vessels, mirror

Plates 135: Tsohil Bhatia, *Turtle Island (Ocean Water)*, 2021, Waters from the Atlantic ocean, Gulf of Mexico, Haida Gwaii, and Nunavut, glass vessels

Plate 136: Tsohil Bhatia, Site specific installation

Plates 137-150 Tsohil Bhatia, *Sun Ritual*, 2017, Video projection, 15 minutes

The Pride in Art Society (PiA) presents and exhibits with a curatorial vision favouring challenging, thought-provoking art that pushes boundaries and initiates dialogue. As producers of the Queer Arts Festival (QAF) and SUM gallery, PiA brings diverse communities together to support artistic risk-taking, and incite creative collaboration and experimentation.

Pride in Art was founded in 1998 by Two-Spirit artist Robbie Hong, Black artist Jeffery Gibson and a collective of visual artists mounting an annual art exhibition in Vancouver, BC, Canada. Spearheaded by Jewish artist SD Holman and Nikkei-Danish artist Rachel Kiyo Iwaasa, Pride in Art incorporated as a nonprofit in 2006, mounting their first multidisciplinary Queer Arts Festival in 2008. In 2018, Artistic Director SD Holman founded SUM gallery as a permanent space presenting multidisciplinary exhibitions and events. At the time of founding, SUM was the only queer-mandated gallery in Canada—not the first, but earlier attempts had succumbed to gentrification, or exhaustion, or both.

QAF is an annual artist-run transdisciplinary art festival in Vancouver. Each year, the festival theme ties together a curated visual art exhibition, performing art series, workshops, artist talks, panels, and media art screenings.

QAF has incited dozens of artistic milestones, notably the commissioning and premiere of Canada's first lesbian opera *When the Sun Comes Out* by Leslie Uyeda and Rachel Rose in 2013; *TRIGGER*, the 25th-anniversary exhibition for Kiss & Tell's notorious *Drawing the Line* project; Jeremy Dutcher's first full-length Vancouver concert; Cris Derksen's monumental *Orchestral Powwow*; and the award-winning premiere of the play *Camera Obscura (hungry ghosts)*, Lesley Ewen's fantastical reimagining of multimedia titan Paul Wong's early career.

Recognized as one of the top 2 festivals of its kind worldwide, QAF's programming has garnered wide acclaim as “concise, brilliant and moving” (*Georgia Straight*), “easily one of the best art exhibitions of the year” (*Vancouver Sun*), and “on the forefront of aesthetic and cultural dialogue today” (*Xtra*).



QUEER ARTS FESTIVAL

The Queer Arts Festival (QAF) is an annual artist-run multidisciplinary arts festival in Vancouver, BC. Each year, the festival theme ties together a curated visual art exhibition, performing arts series, workshops, artist talks, panels, and media art screenings. Recognized as one of the top 2 festivals of its kind worldwide, QAF's programming has garnered wide acclaim as "concise, brilliant and moving" (*Georgia Straight*), "easily one of the best art exhibitions of the year" (*Vancouver Sun*), and "on the forefront of aesthetic and cultural dialogue today" (*Xtra*).



SUM GALLERY



BRITISH
COLUMBIA



BRITISH
COLUMBIA



BRITISH COLUMBIA
ARTS COUNCIL
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Hemlock



QUEER ARTS FESTIVAL



PRIDE IN ART SOCIETY
celebrating queer art and artists

