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Navigating and Creating Navigation et création

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Article abstract

During the various stages of the Covid 19 pandemic, artistic practices have become increasingly important in managing the complexity of the impacts of the pandemic (Sabol, 2022). From simple rainbow drawings to musicians performing from their balconies, creating art has been essential to navigating these unprecedented times as we encounter our lives through different lenses due to new and shifting realities. In 2021, Dr. Julie Ethridge, Vice President of the CSEA/SCÉA invited artists of all artistic backgrounds to submit work that was shaped and created during the first 12 months of the global pandemic that addressed how (if) the pandemic intersected with their artistic practice. The works that were included in the virtual exhibit that ran from July to October 2021 are shown here, with the artist's statements.

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Navigating and Creating

Abstract: During the various stages of the Covid 19 pandemic, artistic practices have become increasingly important in managing the complexity of the impacts of the pandemic (Sabol, 2022). From simple rainbow drawings to musicians performing from their balconies, creating art has been essential to navigating these unprecedented times as we encounter our lives through different lenses due to new and shifting realities. In 2021, Dr. Julie Ethridge, Vice President of the CSEA/SCÉA invited artists of all artistic backgrounds to submit work that was shaped and created during the first 12 months of the global pandemic that addressed how (if) the pandemic intersected with their artistic practice. The works that were included in the virtual exhibit that ran from July to October 2021 are shown here, with the artist's statements.

Keywords: Arts; Artistic Practice, Covid, Online Exhibitions, Creating



Figure 1 Entrance to the Exhibit

Introduction

Artists, educators and students have been turning to new and old practices of creating as part of navigating the past year, and its realities brought about by the Coronavirus pandemic. To help us, art has been at the forefront of navigating the sudden and dramatic changes in working conditions, everyday living, and relationships with self, other and community. News broadcasts have shared images and stories of musicians performing from balconies, and school children hanging painted rainbows in windows. Creating art has been

essential to navigating these times of intensified change in which current comprehensions, facets, and facts of existence, no longer work.

Dr. Julie Etheridge, curator of this exhibit has selected a group of Canadian artists whose artmaking reflects how creating always involves navigating amidst uncertainty. The contributions in this exhibit are a form of mapping that criticizes cartography as an instrument of settler colonialism and offers instead, navigations that help people determine where they are, who/what else shares that particular place, some impetuses to continue to move forward in the midst of uncertainty and realizations that individuals are not totally in control of their destinations nor their pathways. Some of the themes that the exhibition artists find themselves navigating include a sharpened sense of aloneness in one's isolation, as well as an increasing ecological realization of the intensity and breadth of interrelatedness.

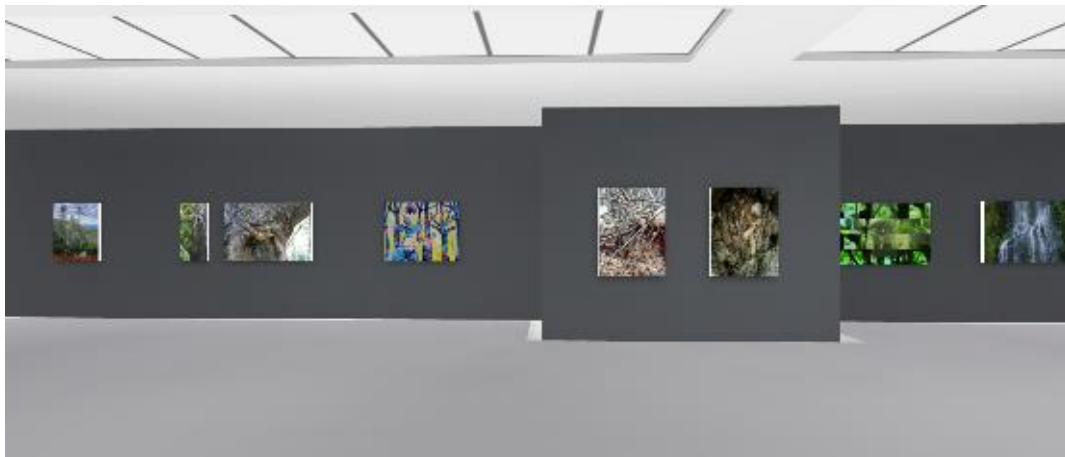


Figure 2 Exhibition Space

The first theme of pervasive feelings of aloneness involves heightened self-awareness, often producing anxiety as well as an increased awareness of the fragility of things including the fragility of being human. There are increased efforts for recognition, remembrance, solidarity and cooperation. Both fear and compassion loom large as people grapple with deeply unsettling sensations of stress and loss. Observations are noted, of increasingly polarized global thinking, politics, and discourse, in a world moving rapidly towards closer surveillance, amplified intolerance and more stringent censorship. New daily mannerisms such as constant sanitizing, social distancing and donning of personal protective equipment feel constricting and oppressive. Alongside these feelings, a need for connection to fellow educators and with students is emphasized and related more intensely to the current added stress for teachers and the importance of emotional, psychological, physical and social well-being for teachers, students and parents. The sum of these experiences becomes vicariously one's own, adding to our understanding and feel for surviving and thriving in each various location and time.

In the midst of forced isolation, quarantines, travel bans and cancelled plans, these artists map realizations of how the time alone often wished for, is not the same as the time alone that is currently prevalent. A different form of time has emerged: it's incohesive and offers a different

rhythm to everyday life. Past memories seem to produce wrinkles that allow inventive access from one dimension into others and there is a blurriness to these dimensions. The past registers as never entirely finished, the future indeterminate but hopeful, while the present, presents itself in more pedagogical vigour. The exhibition artists demonstrate increased realization of the ways in which pedagogy is a force already at play in the world (Ellsworth, 2005). In this realization, the second theme arises in the artists' work and this involves noticing the world in novel ways and seeking to learn from nature, the physical world and other species.

Waterfalls, bark, mountains and tree roots seem to have something to teach us about adversity. There is an awareness that humans are not the only ones on the planet and perhaps we are, after all, the slowest learners of change. Attuning to nature's creative processes and the resilience of other species in the midst of adversity and harsh environments is important in terms of pressing on with courage and determination. There is new mapping of relations with lakes and trees, gutted cars and wrecks, in ways that teach humans something about reacting to internal and external stresses and about exchanging experience and knowledge across social domains. The mapping encourages more thoughtful social accountability. Creative navigating seems to harbour its own realities in the artmaking so that becoming familiar with oneself in one's place and time is to actually navigate oneself into becoming part of it.

The exhibition artists are also more aware of the objects in their lives. One does not have to go outside to learn from nature. The materials and flows that compose cities and homes involve constant coexistence with colours, textures and substances that are material traces of geological actors (Ellsworth & Kruse, 2011). This attention to an ever-expanding and more interrelated present involves a stretching that sometimes results in discomfort, sometimes even pain. Realizations are indicated, of the impact everyday actions make on other times and places, for example the immediate need for collective inventions to address the new problem of the hundreds of thousands of polypropylene masks disposed of every single minute.

Art objects and materials used in the exhibit's artworks are significant to each artist expression. They contribute to the meaning and emphasis that is being communicated. Woven cartographic tapestry weaving, needle-punched entwined constructions, embroidery thread and faux leather, wet felted wool, sublimation dyed jersey, wearable performance garments, sacred threads, cotton t-shirts, knitted tea cozies, and dance encounters indicate interest in fabric, texture, skin, touch, and spirituality. Photography, hand-crafted gelatin-silver archival prints, digital photographs, unprocessed lumen prints on recycled photo paper, Go-Pro images overlaid in postproduction, video, and film work, offer technologies of entwined messages and modes by which one comes to know the world by knowing themselves in a particular place. Other materials used include dried flowers, flower garlands, pencil crayons, ink wash, alcohol ink, gold leaf, oil and acrylic paint, mala beads and birch panel, in both mixed media compositions and collages. Each contribution is a unique 'traverse' through the past year and each sustains the powerful forces of connection that keep us creating, engaging and learning from one another.

The curator wishes to thank the participating artists for their support and co-operation in providing works and images that communicate this wide and wonderful artistic mapping of creative navigations through a radically difficult year.

Exhibition Statement by Dr. Valerie Triggs

Naviguer et créer



Figure 3 Exhibition Space

Introduction

Artistes, éducateur·rice·s et étudiant·e·s se sont tourné·e·s vers des pratiques établies et inédites en termes de création pour s'adapter aux nouvelles réalités de la pandémie de coronavirus depuis les douze derniers mois. Véritable outil de soutien, l'art a été un chef de file dans la gestion des changements soudains et importants au niveau des conditions de travail, de la vie quotidienne, et des liens avec soi, autrui et les communautés. Les bulletins de nouvelles ont partagé des récits et des images de musiciens jouant sur des balcons et d'enfants d'âge scolaire apposant des arcs-en-ciel aux fenêtres. La création artistique a été indispensable pour naviguer en cette ère de changements intenses, où les règles ordinaires de compréhension, de circonstances et de réalités de vie ne s'appliquent plus.

La Dre Julie Etheridge, curatrice de cette exposition, a sélectionné un groupe d'artistes canadien·ne·s dont la création artistique reflète à quel point créer implique systématiquement de faire face à l'incertitude. Les contributions offertes dans le cadre de cette exposition constituent une sorte de représentation critique de la cartographie comme instrument du colonialisme des pionnier·ère·s. En lieu et place, elles proposent des modes de navigation pour aider les gens à établir leur identité et découvrir avec qui ou quoi ils partagent un espace donné. Les contributions offrent aussi des incitatifs pour avancer malgré l'incertitude ambiante et des

postulats voulant que les individus n'aient pas le plein contrôle de leur destination ni de leur cheminement. Parmi les thématiques abordées par les artistes dans le cadre de cette exposition, notons un sens aigu de la solitude au cœur de l'isolement et le constat écologique croissant de l'intensité et de l'envergure de l'interdépendance.

La première thématique du sentiment envahissant de solitude implique une prise de conscience de soi aigüe, souvent source d'anxiété et de sensibilisation accrue à la fragilité des choses, y compris la vulnérabilité de l'être humain. L'on note toutefois des efforts redoublés en termes de reconnaissance, de souvenir, de solidarité et de coopération. Peur et compassion sont au premier plan tandis que les gens apprennent à gérer leur sensation de stress et de perte. L'on dénote une polarisation exacerbée des politiques, des raisonnements et des discours généraux dans cet univers qui s'oriente rapidement vers une surveillance de plus en plus étroite, une intolérance accrue et une censure sans cesse plus stricte. De nouveaux manières quotidiens dont la désinfection constante, la distanciation sociale et le port d'équipement de protection individuelle semblent contraignants et oppressifs. Parallèlement à ces sentiments, le besoin de connecter avec des consœurs et confrères d'enseignement ainsi qu'avec étudiantes et étudiants, si intimement lié au stress accru chez les membres du personnel enseignant et à l'importance du bien-être émotionnel, psychologique, physique et social des enseignant·e·s, des étudiant·e·s et des parents, est mis en évidence. Par procuration, nous faisons nôtre la somme de ces expériences, ce qui améliore notre compréhension et urgence de survivre et de prospérer, en tout temps et lieu.



Figure 4 Exhibition Space

Dans ce contexte de confinement forcé, de quarantaine, d'interdiction de voyager et de plans annulés, ces artistes nous font réaliser que le temps de solitude si souvent souhaité ne correspond en rien aux périodes d'isolement qui prévalent aujourd'hui. Une notion différente du temps est apparue et qui, sans cohésion aucune, dénature le rythme de la vie quotidienne. Les échos de la vie antérieure forment des rides qui constituent un portail inédit entre cette dimension et les autres, par ailleurs floues. Si le passé nous semble non abouti et l'avenir indéterminé mais plein d'espoir, le présent annonce un nouvel élan pédagogique. Les artistes participant à cette exposition nous font réaliser, plus que jamais, à quel point la pédagogie est d'ores et déjà une force active au sein de notre monde (Ellsworth, 2005). C'est d'ailleurs ici qu'émerge la deuxième thématique inhérente aux œuvres de ces artistes, fondée sur de nouvelles perceptions

de notre univers et l'importance d'apprendre de la nature, du monde physique et des autres espèces.

Chutes d'eau, écorce, montagnes et racines arboricoles, semblent avoir des choses à nous enseigner sur l'adversité. Nous prenons conscience que l'être humain n'est pas seul sur la planète et que nous sommes peut-être les plus lents à nous adapter au changement. S'harmoniser au processus créatif de la nature et à la résilience des autres espèces, face à l'adversité et à des environnements rudes, est indispensable pour faire preuve de courage et de détermination. Une nouvelle schématisation des liens avec lacs et arbres, voitures éviscérées et accidentées, permet à l'être humain d'apprendre à réagir aux facteurs de stress internes et externes, et à partager expériences et connaissances entre les différents registres sociaux. Cette nouvelle cartographie favorise une responsabilisation sociale davantage réfléchie. La navigation créative semble avoir ses propres réalités en termes de production artistique. Ainsi, apprendre à se connaître soi-même, en un temps et un lieu donné, revient à naviguer pour s'y intégrer.

Les artistes qui participent à cette exposition sont aussi plus conscient·e·s des objets de leur quotidien. Il n'est pas nécessaire d'aller dehors pour apprendre de la nature. Les matériaux et flux qui forment les villes et les foyers impliquent une cohabitation constante avec couleurs, textures et substances, vestiges des acteurs géologiques (Ellsworth & Kruse, 2011). Cette attention portée à un présent en constante expansion et toujours plus interdépendant, exige une adaptation parfois inconfortable, voire douloureuse. Les réalisations sont indicatives de l'impact des actions de tous les jours sur les autres instants et lieux, par exemple la nécessité d'inventions collaboratives pour s'attaquer à la nouvelle problématique des centaines de masques de polypropylène jetés à chaque minute.

Les objets d'art et matériaux intégrés aux œuvres d'art exposées sont lourds de sens vis-à-vis l'expression de chaque artiste. Ils contribuent à l'idée maîtresse et aux sens communiqués. Tissages-tapisseries cartographiques, constructions entrecroisées à l'aiguille, fil à broder et faux cuir, laine feutrée mouillée, jersey teint par sublimation, vêtements de performance portables, fils sacrés, t-shirts de coton, couvre-théières tricotés et rencontres de danse, témoignent de l'intérêt pour les tissus, les textures, la peau, le toucher et la spiritualité. Photographie, épreuves d'archives à la gélatine argentique faites à la main, photographies numériques, épreuves lumen non traitées sur papier photo recyclé, superposition d'images Go-Pro en postproduction, et œuvres vidéo et sur film, proposent des technologies basées sur l'entrecroisement de messages et de modes, par lesquels l'on apprend à connaître le monde en se connaissant soi-même, en un lieu donné. Parmi les autres matériaux, notons des compositions et collages multimédias regroupant fleurs séchées, guirlandes de fleurs, crayons graphiques, crayons de couleur, lavis à l'encre, encre à base d'alcool, feuille d'or, peinture acrylique et à l'huile, perles de mala et panneaux de bouleau. Chaque contribution est une « traversée » de l'an dernier qui souligne la puissance de la connexion qui nous incite à créer, à s'impliquer et à apprendre les un·e·s des autres.

La curatrice souhaite remercier les artistes qui participent à cette exposition pour leur soutien et leur collaboration relativement à la soumission d'œuvres et d'images qui illustrent ce vaste et magnifique mappage artistique de la navigation créatrice au cours d'une année plutôt difficile.

Énoncé d'exposition de la Dre Valerie Triggs

Works of Art and Artist Statements

Bob St.-Cyr

Ephemeral Compositions?

Lumen prints

My pandemic artistic practice addresses ecological awareness using the alternative photographic process of recycling old photo paper into lumen prints. Through my work, I explore how pieces of our local environment can be used to illustrate delicacy and beauty which is as ephemeral as the unprocessed lumen print itself. Thus, without care and attention to the print it will fade away, just like the ecosystems of our beautiful country, IF we do not take steps to protect them! Thus, I hope my work can stimulate the conversation of conservation.



Figure 5 Ephemeral Compositions?

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Photography for me, is a whole and therapeutic experience, from the smells in the air to the sounds of nature, to the wind in my hair or the excitement of sharing my work and techniques with others. I'm motivated by the "doing" of my photographic practice, getting out ... just out and about with my camera(s) and rolls of film in my pockets or loaded film holders in my bag. I'm motivated by the interplay of light and subject and the blessed opportunities to capture some of this on film and then interpret the negatives into hand-crafted gelatin-silver archival prints in a darkroom.

Bob St.-Cyr
Getting to the Roots
Photography



Figure 6 Getting to the Roots

Christine Arbour
Trois véhicules (Three vehicles)
Huile sur toile

Dans ma pratique artistique, je suis préoccupée par l'avenir de notre planète et par la transformation des matières qui composent notre environnement. L'observation des carcasses de voitures éventrées dans des champs, sur la route, et plus tard dans les parcs à ferraille m'a fait observer cette transformation. Souvent dans mes œuvres les objets semblent flotter dans un univers chaotique, alors qu'ils sont solidement ancrés et reliés. Dans cette œuvre intitulée « Trois véhicules », les contrastes accentués de couleurs et de valeurs illustrent le drame humain. Ils rappellent un abyme initial dans les valeurs sombres et la lumière salvatrice dans les claires. Certains éléments du tableau demeurent dans l'abstraction et se mesurent aux autres parties plus définies.



Figure 7 Trois véhicules (Three véhicules)

Kimberley Lewis
Social Distancing
Acrylic Paint on Canvas

This is one painting from my Pandemic Series. Inspiration came from how photographs take on travels around my home province of Alberta, related to Coronavirus influenced behaviours of the people around me.

The wisdom of the ages is represented through the lush grasslands of the prairies in the shadow of the steadfast Rocky Mountains, swayed by the winds of change that each Chinook brings. The monumental bison roam the land, ensuring they only take what they need, continuing to thrive despite almost becoming extinct due to human exposure. Like the resilient bison, we must navigate our new landscape, return and build on tradition while forever moving forward. With separation of the herd, the isolated bison maintain a social distance.

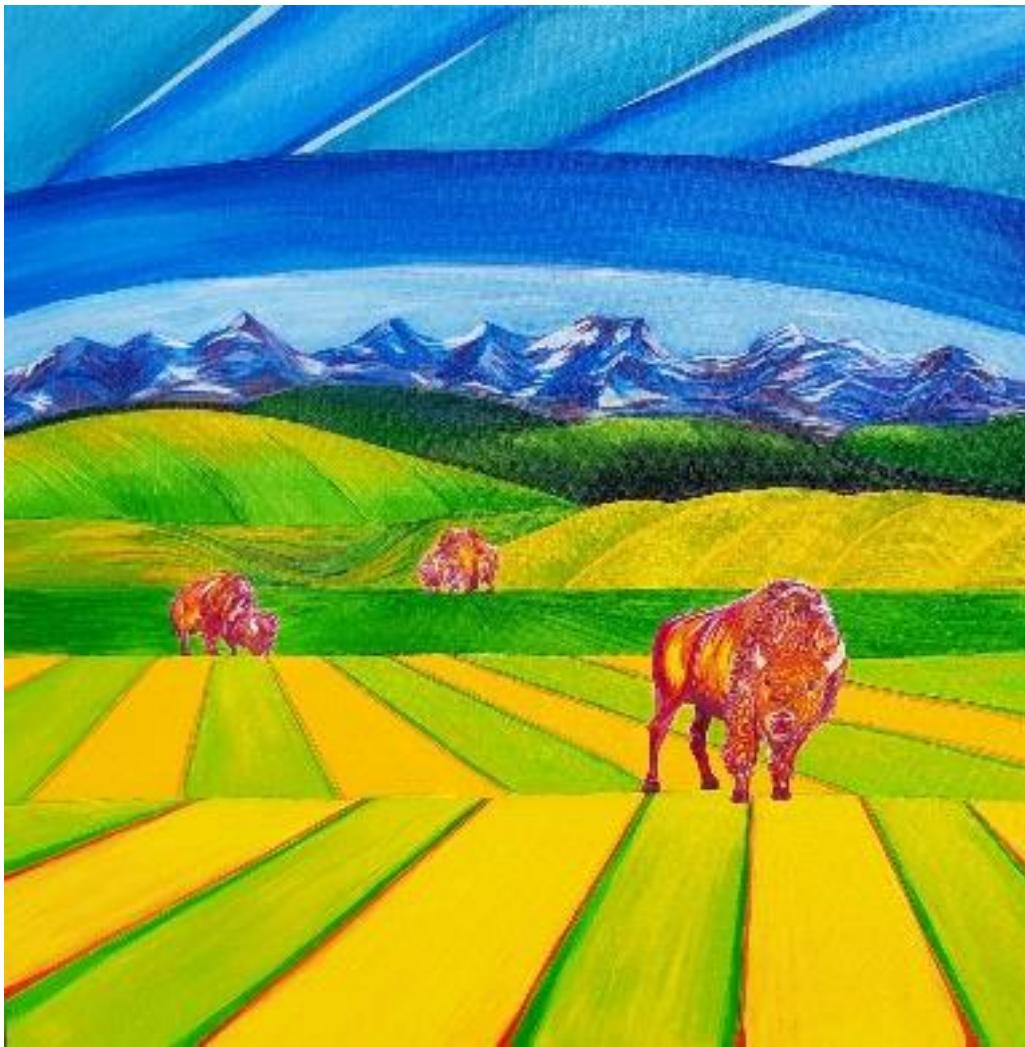


Figure 8 Social Distancing

Kimberley Lewis
Self-Isolation
Acrylic on canvas

The seven snails illustrated in the *Self-Isolation* painting, represent the number of pools on Sulfur Mountain where Banff Springs Snails can survive in their natural habitat. These pools are the only place in the world these tiny creatures can be found. The bubbles and currents represent, in tandem, the change and safety of these naturally created safe havens.



Figure 9 Self-Isolation

Kimberley Lewis
Gopher Broke
Acrylic on canvas

Not all is as it seems; our provincial economy has always had ties to the riches which lie in pipelines just below the surface. The lone gopher representing Alberta business, surveying the vast prairies isolated in pandemic purgatory. Currently destitute, the gopher while hopeful for the resurrection to favourable conditions, community, and most of all, the return to the rich pay dirt realizes it is all or nothing.



Figure 10 Gopher Broke

Colleen Hewitt
Broken Glass #1
Pencil crayon and ink wash

I like it when something has been around long enough that it becomes as beautiful and interesting as a piece of art. Its function as an object is no longer important. So, what do I want to say with my art?

I want to say that glass is both fragile and strong. Everyday objects are intriguing. Their worn spots, and broken bits and shattered parts make them more beautiful for having been broken. It is the same to be human, it is our precious scars that make us human and show that we have truly lived and tried to make a mark on the world.

I have worked with pencil crayons on this piece because I believe that drawing is the unique “handwriting” of the artist. I want the realism of the objects to interact with the mark making of the artists’ hand. I want to explore by drawing the concept around how we ground ourselves in the past and reach for the future with hope at the same time.



Figure 11 Broken Glass #1

Bill Zuk
Facing a Covid Storm
Digital stencil

How can we convey the feeling of being battered by the Covid virus? The answer may be found in Nature and a call upon metaphors. The event of the virus may be described as an endless barrage of thunder and fiery lightning, shaking us to the core. Earthquakes also shake us with a mighty force. Covid is brutal, a raging storm. But Nature teaches us lessons about overcoming adversity.

An owl beats its wings through ice and snow, feathers torn by howling gales, body beaten as struck by flying debris. Despite the fury, the owl presses on with courage and determination. If we can adopt those attributes, perhaps we will learn to overcome the deeply unsettling feelings associated with apocalyptic events such as the Covid virus.

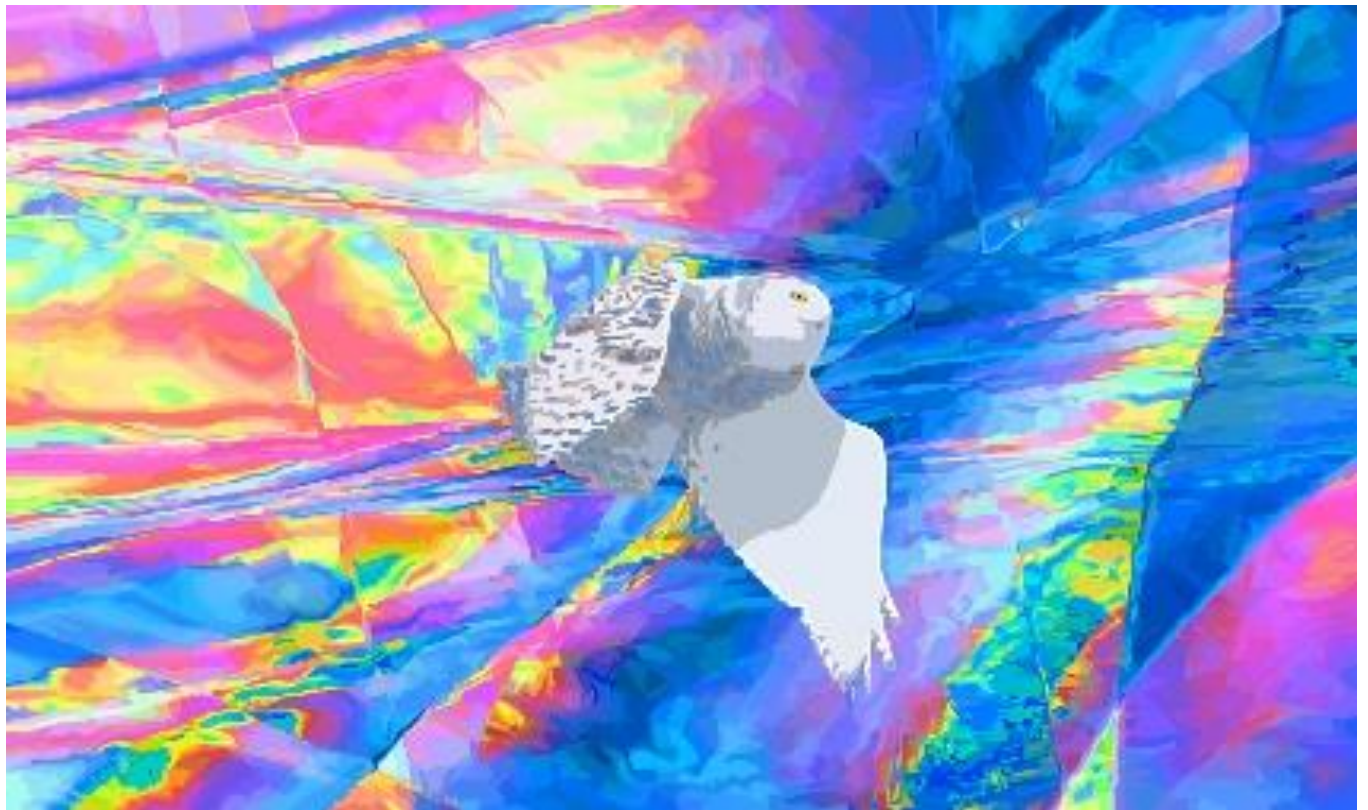


Figure 12 Facing a Covid Storm

Joanna Black, Pam Patterson & Daniel Payne
COVID-19 Anxiety: Location, Refuge and Loss
Digital Video

Since March, 2020 COVID-19 has impacted the lives of Canadians on local, national and international levels and changed our personal, working, political, emotional, and social lives. Three distinctive artist/collaborators, Pam Patterson, Joanna Black, and Daniel Payne have been experiencing in varying degrees, as have others, an “anxiety of dissolution” with an accompanying “state of indecisive agitation”. We produced a collaborative video as a “body of evidence” to address issues around “location”, “loss”, and “refuge” enacting this with an awareness of our individual and collective socially mediated and subjectively variable responses. We are grateful for support from Canada Council for the Arts, The Manitoba Arts Council, The University of Manitoba, and the Ontario College of Art and Design University.



Figure 13 Digital Still from Anxiety: Location, Refuge and Loss

Pauline Sameshima
Off Center
Wool

Social Accountability is recognized globally as a key value in the importance of educative community partnerships and knowledge brokering. A funded, interdisciplinary team studied the Partnership Pentagram model which is used to map knowledge exchange across social domains and encourage social accountability. This artwork uses a needle-punching technique to echo a methodical process of weaving and circuitous motion. The dynamic nature of relationships within the pentagram is reflected in the intricacy, connectedness, and moving Venn circle designs. Both sides of a needle-punched work differ greatly—a reflection of how unsystematic, yet acceptable, reciprocal learning processes can look. The design is overlaid with a disjointed pentagram, drawing attention to the “ground” where the people are more valued than the imposed organizer.

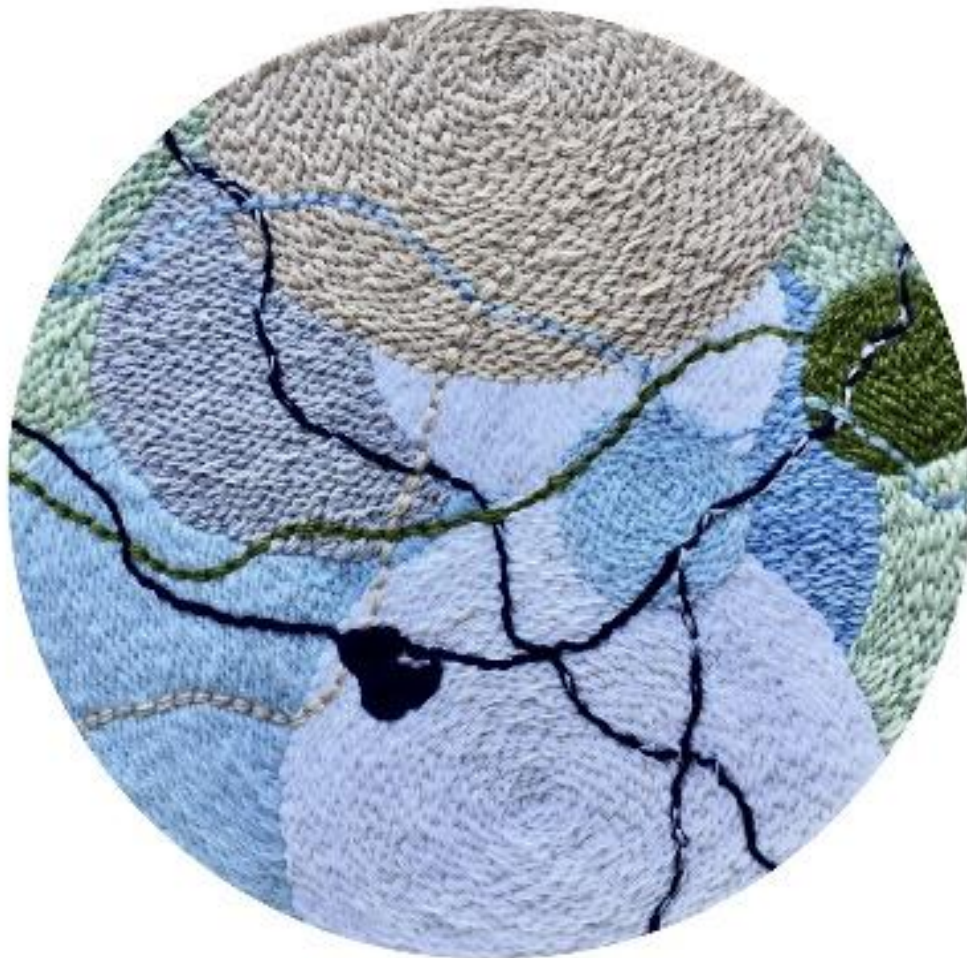


Figure 14 Off Centre

Zoe Compton
Unsettling Family History
Cartographic Tapestry Weaving

Using research-creation methodology, I critically contemplate my family history as United Empire Loyalists in Prince Edward Island. By creating woven cartographic tapestries of the land on which my ancestors first resided in Canada, I strive to understand what it means to be a white settler, while simultaneously criticizing cartography as an instrument of settler colonialism. With a background in environmental studies, I explore how white settlers have had an impact on the environment. At one time, the Comptons ran one of the largest sawmills on PEI. Depicting this land serves to present truths of colonialism in a way that is visual. The title “Pedagogy of Discomfort” refers to both the difficult knowledge of colonialism and to the physical demands of making textile art. Despite the discomfort, I find the process meditative, and an act of embodied decolonization. With this project, I strive to take responsibility and affect change as an educator.



Figure 15 Unsettling Family History

Pam Patterson
World Upside Down: Turning Blue
Digital manipulated photography

COVID-19 – as with other epidemics – has impelled us into a time when the oft-assumed securities, provided to those of privilege, have been inaccessible to others. Sites representative of former colonial rule are now emptied by past and present losses. Such images contribute to efforts for recognition, remembrance, solidarity, and cooperation as we navigate this changed world.



Figure 16 World Upside Down: Turning Blue

Duane Nickerson
Coast
Oil on canvas

This work was created following a week spent navigating one of Canada's northern national parks in Newfoundland. During the trek I made on-site studies and immersed myself in the unique sub-arctic coastal environment. The intense feeling of infinite complexity stayed with me for many months following this physically difficult trek. The harsh environment makes the processes of growth and decay difficult; trees that reach high die off, while those that hug the ground persist in tangles too dense to penetrate. Mosses and lichen thrive in the fog and rain and create thick carpets to cushion your steps. A different form of time exists in this place; a cold, wet and soft reality veiled by fog and wind.



Figure 17 Coast

Melissa-Ann Pereira Ledo

Polyptych: 1) Self Portrait 2) Who Will Survive 3) It Takes a Village 4) Space for Her Now
Embroidery Thread on Faux Leather

Forced to turn inward, the quiet space invites new practice. Picking up the embroidery thread, I think: Is this what they call blood memory? This polyptych explores change in my life during pandemic. 1) Self Portrait: learning my own power and magic (modelled on jellyfish from the land I am a uninvited guest on) 2) Who Will Survive: walking away from an abusive relationship (modelled on Samuel & Plumridge footage, Australia, of a fish stuck inside a jellyfish), 3) It Takes a Village: becoming a new single mom (modelled on a siphonophore jelly, a colonial organism) and 4) Space for Her Now: things naturally thrive when we relinquish control (modelled on a Jellyfish that appeared in April 2020 in Venice Italy).



*Figure 18 Polyptych: 1) Self Portrait 2) Who Will Survive
3) It Takes a Village 4) Space for Her Now*

Tashya Orasi
Lessons from Grandfather
Mixed media acrylic collage on canvas, dried flowers

Lessons from Grandfather is part of an ongoing personal phenomenological inquiry into the personal learning made uniquely possible by the process of art-making during the COVID-19 pandemic. This multilayered piece contemplates how the changes brought about by the forced isolation of the pandemic have allowed me to notice the living world in new ways, to remember and understand important life teachings from my grandfather, and to explore how deeper forms of symbolism are enabled through my art making that offer lessons for moving forward with wonder despite the precariousness of current times.



Figure 19 Lessons from Grandfather

Emma June Huebner
L'étreinte des temps
Video Still

J'ai filmé mes rencontres dansées, chaque saison, avec la sculpture L'étreinte des temps à partir de deux perspectives : mon ressenti et le regard extérieur. La sculpture de branches en forme d'arcs réalisée par les artistes de la Société des archives affectives, située dans le parc de Tiohtià:ke Otsirà'kehne, donne la voix à l'héritage de la montagne afin de solliciter sa préservation pour les générations futures. Les images, prises à l'aide d'un GoPro monté sur un harnais et d'un appareil photo DSLR sur un trépied, ont été superposées en postproduction pour permettre au spectateur d'être à la fois témoin de la performance, à la fois dans la peau du danseur.



Figure 20 L'étreinte des temps

Daniel Payne

Vanitas painting: Homage to Clara Peters. A librarian seated at a table with precious objects in the time of COVID-19.

Digital photography

My homage to Clara Peeters explores our conflicted relationship with things. Her original self-portrait celebrates the lavish objects depicted in her still-life paintings, yet she looks away from them in a purposeful manner. In our current lockdown conditions, can I survive without the objects now defining my life? Strewn across my kitchen table are the new items of cultural value: toilet paper, cleaning products, PPE, and “flour” bags, used in lieu of the bouquet of flowers in Peeters’ original work. The laptop, however, is given prominence. These are the elements maintaining our lives during the COVID-19 pandemic, but at the same time I have a conflicted relationship with these things that blur lines between materiality and identity. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Clara_Peeters#/media/File:Vanitas_painting,_selfportrait_most_probably_Clara_Peeters.jpg



Figure 21 Vanitas painting: Homage to Clara Peters. A librarian seated at a table with precious objects in the time of COVID-19.

Sandra Johnstone & Tashya Orasi

Blue

Alcohol ink, gold leaf and resin collage on birch panel

While *Blue* originated as an artful inquiry into ways of knowing Lake Superior, the unexpected places and circumstances in which we found ourselves impacted our relationships with both the Lake and each other. We were stubbornly situated in the worlds of quarantine, travel bans and cancelled plans. Shipping the piece from our respective homes, *Blue* travelled more than 9000 kms, from Nanaimo BC to Neebing ON, back and back again, making the journey when we couldn't. Through the first year of the pandemic, as both of us navigated our longings, losses, and some painful work-life transformations, co-creating helped us to maintain connection despite our isolation. *Blue* gives tangible form to our resonant experiences, capturing waves of sadness and healing.



Figure 22 Blue

Amber Eden
COVID-Teacher's Brain
Digital photograph

This chaotic imagery provides a look inside a teacher's mind while teaching during COVID-19, and highlights the fact that life is stressful. There are many new precautions; so much so that the once-normal day in educators' lives is now blurred. Teachers and school staff have added stresses on top of their regular duties contributing to many educators becoming overwhelmed. In this work, I aim to promote mental health awareness for those working in education during COVID-19.



Figure 23 COVID-Teacher's Brain

Amber Eden
The New COVID-Life
Digital photograph

This chaotic imagery showcases the new daily mannerisms the world partakes in due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Constant sanitizing and personal protective equipment are used and worn now more than ever. Our once-normal life is now blurred.



Figure 24 The New COVID-Life

Meaghan Bissett and Selina Latour

Rainbow Garments

Wet felted wool, sublimation dyed jersey

Pinned in doorways and hung as banners, images of rainbows can be seen everywhere. They are beacons of our necessary resilience, empathy and optimism, throughout our personal struggles but as a global community. Drawing attention to the strengthening of our communities and our ability to be collectively hopeful and resilient, we made wearable performance garments that took the shape of wet-felted cloud sweaters and hand-sewn rainbow shirts. Through choreographed movements in public, the garments reveal a bridging rainbow arc. This is a reminder that we must all strive for a collectively safe, supportive world at this time. The arcs that form between us, even at a distance, are powerful enough to keep us creating, engaging, and learning from one-another.



Figure 25 Rainbow Garments

Natalie Pavlik
Reflected Rhythms
Acrylic Paint on Canvas

In this painting, I explore my self-reflective artistic practice during Covid 19 as an Art Education graduate student. While in spaces of physical confinement, I have used my artistic expression as a vehicle to delve into my internal creative realm. I illustrate this dichotomy in the sharp, emotive figures that are crowded yet dynamic and resemble fractals of light. The contrasting hues and shades allude to the in-cohesive passing of time I have felt while adjusting to this different rhythm of life. The animated movements of these figures reference my enthusiasm for my artistic growth that has come from my increased self-awareness in isolation.



Figure 26 Reflected Rhythms

Kathy Browning
Ghostly Waterfall
Photography

We have become ghosts of ourselves during the pandemic while keeping each other alive. We are living in a new reality of masks, hand sanitizers, and social distancing. Family ties can be strengthened while we are moving forward through this adversity. Nature can cleanse us and it is important that we get outside. Like the waterfall, we need to remain flexible and fluent during this downpouring of anxiety due to job and financial loss. Exercise, eat and sleep well. Take care of each other. Stay safe.

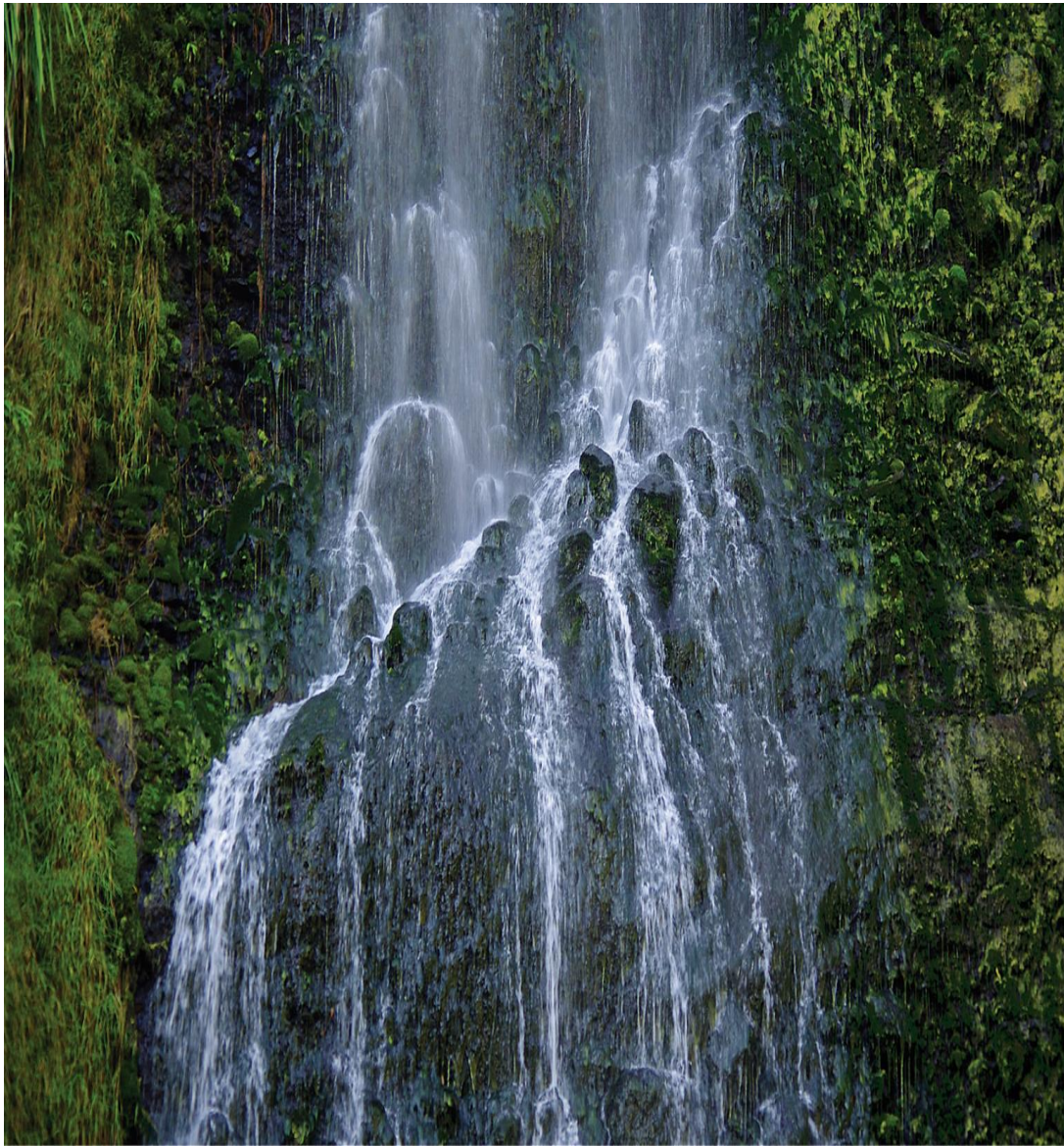


Figure 27 Ghostly Waterfalls

Kathy Mantas
Dendro Series: On Bark and Burl
Photography

Through my in-progress and site-specific photographic exploration entitled, *Dendro Series: On Roots, Barks and Burls*, I engage in acts of *wandering* (while walking), *noticing/gazing* (in wonderment), *attending* (as a caring response but also an act/practice of listening), *being/becoming and living* (in the present moment), and “*trusting*” (in co-creative/becoming processes, defined broadly) as sacred, contemplative and aesthetic practices. Specifically, through my tree series I attempt to gain deeper insights into co-creative processes, nature’s artful forms (for me, trees have memory of the past, exist in the present and foster our future imagination), and learn more about how trees respond to/are shaped by/change/transform (by creating/forming burls, for example) to internal and external tensions. Additionally, I explore concepts of (dis)place, (dis)connection, (dis)location, (be)longing, and home(less) through this series.



Figure 28 Dendro Series: On Bark and Burl

Kathy Mantas
Rizoma: Tree Roots Series
Photography



Figure 29 Rizoma: Tree Roots Series

Vicky Talwar
Willing Release
Acrylic and Mixed Media on Canvas

Reflecting on life's transitoriness and the need to accept change and release trauma during this pandemic, I fuse the material and the spiritual using flower garlands, mala beads, and sacred threads to purify body and soul and demonstrate my unique experiences of double consciousness and cultural disruption.



Figure 30 *Willing Release*

Nancy Long
Migraine Cozy
Crocheted Cotton t-shirts

How do I navigate through the hours of pressure behind my eyes while carrying on with my day? I need a hug for my head; a nice, cozy hug. Countless hours of screen time for me means more migraines than ever before, but no extra time to nurse them. They come in my sleep and promise a grey day ahead. I can't let them win.

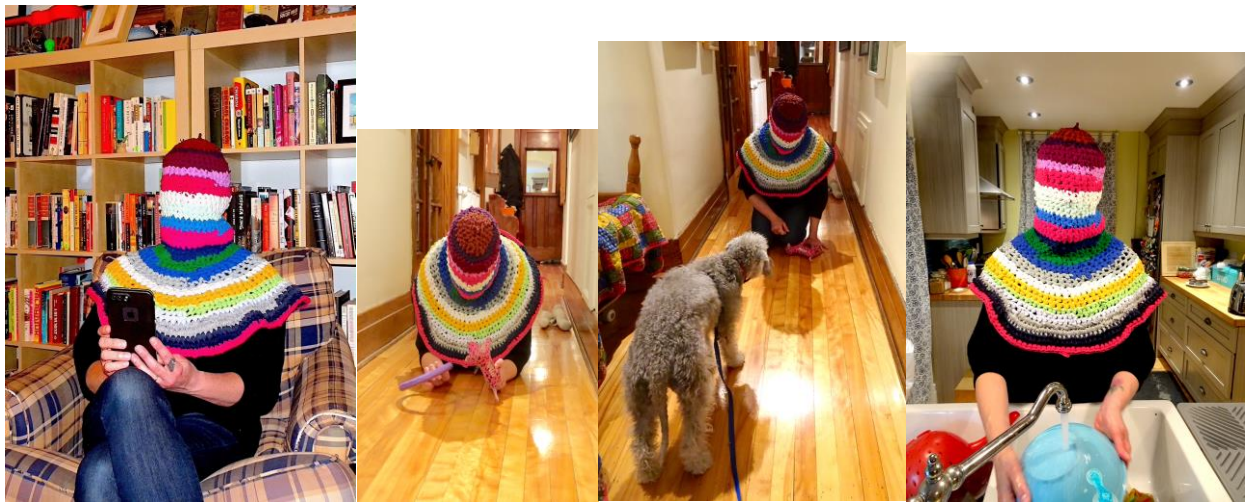


Figure 31 Migraine Cozy

Patti Pente

Mask_1

Watercolour on paper

With the extraordinary shifts in our lives due to the pandemic, I remind myself that my local actions are also global. I respond to the images of masked populations everywhere. It is this connection of the mask among all of us that allows hope, compassion and responsibility to grow. Each mask I find is an inanimate witness to the breath of a stranger and I consider my allegiance through my own filtered breaths. However, these are masks as litter. Intimate histories are disregarded, thrown out along with the mask itself, and I think of suffering and fear flung out there as well. This Janis-faced mask litter represents more than the usual debris: there is fear and compassion. Fear and compassion in every unknown story.



Figure 32 Mask_1

Patti Pente

Mask_2

Watercolour on paper

With the extraordinary shifts in our lives due to the pandemic, I remind myself that my local actions are also global. I respond to the images of masked populations everywhere. It is this connection of the mask among all of us that allows hope, compassion and responsibility to grow. Each mask I find is an inanimate witness to the breath of a stranger and I consider my allegiance through my own filtered breaths. However, these are masks as litter. Intimate histories are disregarded, thrown out along with the mask itself, and I think of suffering and fear flung out there as well. This Janis-faced mask litter represents more than the usual debris: there is fear and compassion. Fear and compassion in every unknown story.



Figure 33 Mask_2

Charity Brown
Alone
Acrylic on canvas

In such a strange year of educating, with the constant switching between teaching online and in person, connection with my students and colleagues has been more important than ever. The memory from my university years: of a little boy left alone on the sidewalk outside a movie theatre in my hometown, has stayed with me for over 20 years. I remember watching to make sure he was safe. These feelings of aloneness, heightened awareness, and anxiety, combined with the text are all very much what my students, myself, and our larger school community are feeling as we navigate the pandemic together. This year has emphasized for me, just how important it is to build connection with my students and fellow educators. It's integral to our well-being.

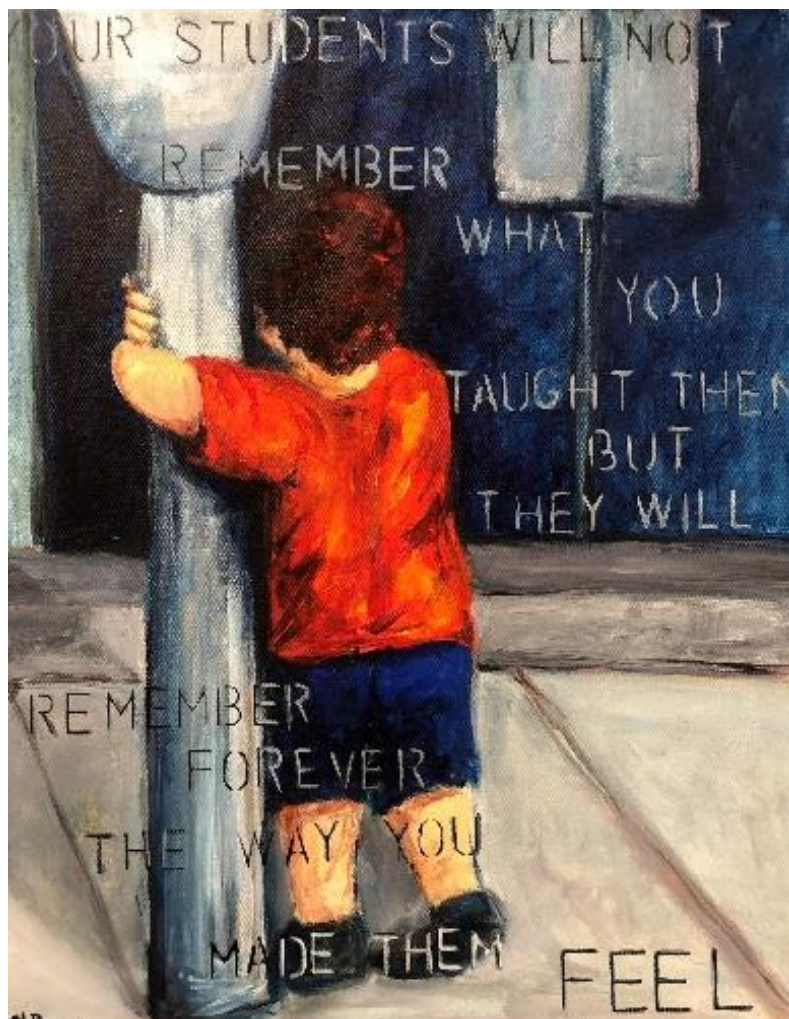


Figure 34 Alone

Karine Poirier
Série photographique

Au printemps 2020, notre quotidien a basculé. Alors que la vie allait souvent trop vite, nous rêvions d'un temps d'arrêt. Nous étions loin de nous douter qu'en la mettant sur pause, nous serions envahis d'angoisses parfois paralysantes. Cet état d'urgence m'a amenée à observer mon environnement de façon différente et à parcourir mon quartier pour constater qu'autour de moi, tout avait changé. La menace a perturbé nos repères, les lieux paisibles sont devenus menaçants. Nous n'avions pas prévu qu'en regardant le ciel, notre intérieur se ficèlerait à un point tel, entravant nos plus fragiles espérances.



Figure 35 Ceci n'est pas un film



Figure 36 Corona Clean



Figure 37 Paniers barrière



Figure 38 Côté passager



Figure 39 Solitude



Figure 40 Jeu dangereux



Figure 41 Balançoire interdite



Figure 42 Triage apocalyptique



Figure 43 Playground Closed

Tashya Orasi

The Consumption

Six ceramic hand built sgraffito 4' mugs, black slip

Titled for another devastating respiratory disease that ravaged the world a century ago, Tuberculosis, “The Consumption” series depicts my interpretations of the various stages of the disease at a cellular level. While this series started as a reflection on the pandemic, it also reflects a personal realization of the diseased parts of my personal and professional identities that have been weakening the most vital parts of my authentic self: my identity as an artist. Art making during the pandemic has enabled me to critically reflect on what it means to be diseased, to perceive our diseased ways of being in the world, and how artistic practice enables me to respond to and heal from this realization.



Figure 44 The Consumption

Scott R. McMaster
Panopticon Library
Photography

This ongoing series of diptychs explores a probable future where censorship is taken to extremes and we are forced to bid farewell to our most cherished books. After the passing of Hong Kong's National Security Law, the education bureau told schools to look for titles that could 'possibly violate' it and get rid of them. The vague, 'invisibility' of the law provoked an immediate chilling effect, the shift to self-censorship was swift and widespread. Here panopticism is reimagined as a library filled with illicit books yet ones which patrons would not dare to read. The patrons, who sit with their chosen texts, simultaneously become both censor and the surveilled, their identities erased, their backs turned, and their dyadic bodies fade into the deepening shadows. Yet these books, still shine as beacons for humanity in this ever-darkening library. The colours still speak of the wonder, imagination, and hope contained within their pages, and the things that lie in memory which cannot be taken away. For this series local artists and academics were asked to choose several books from the library that had meaning for them. They reengaged with the texts through careful selection, readings, and physically sitting for these portraits, a final bid to secure them in memory.

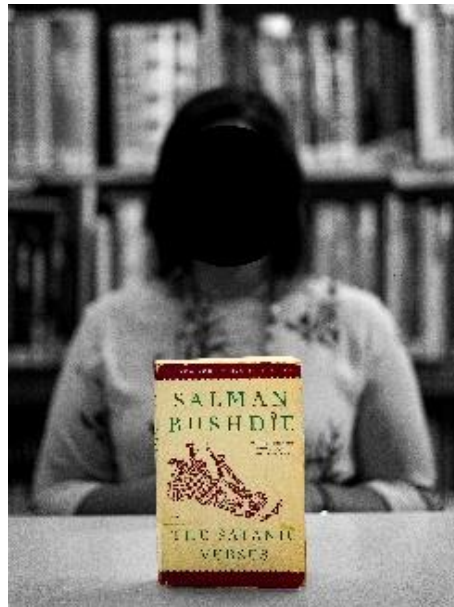


Figure 45 Satanic Verses. "Language is courage: the ability to conceive a thought, to speak it, and by doing so to make it true."

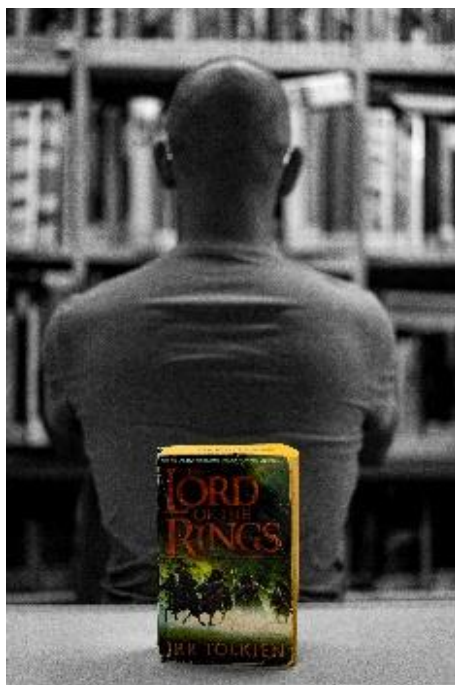


Figure 46 Lord of the Rings. “But in the end it's only a passing thing, this shadow; even darkness must pass.”

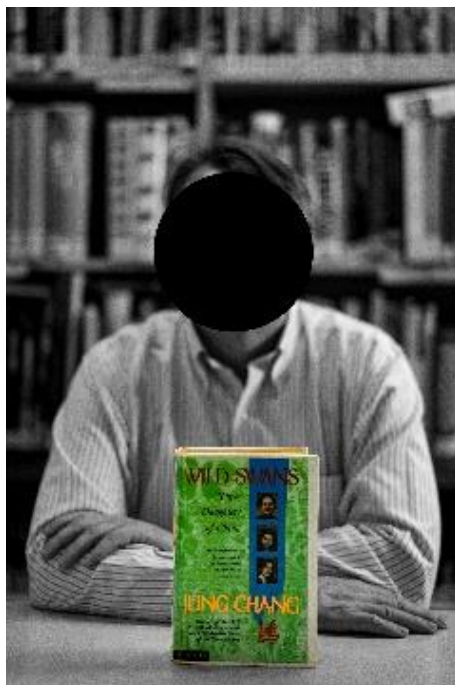


Figure 47 Wild Swans. “I could understand ignorance, but I could not accept its glorification, still less its right to rule.”

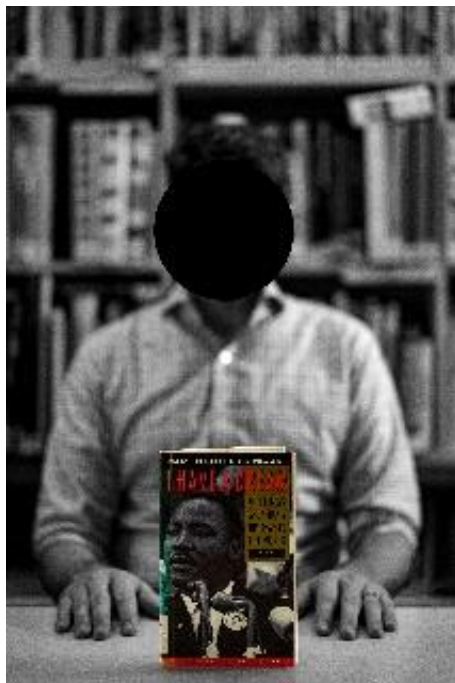


Figure 48 I Have a Dream. "Our lives begin to end the day we become silent about things that matter."

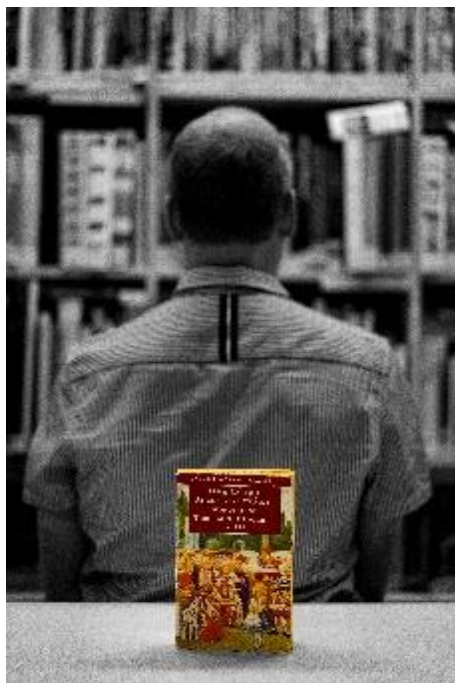


Figure 49 Alice in Wonderland. "How puzzling all these changes are! I'm never sure what I'm going to be, from one minute to another."

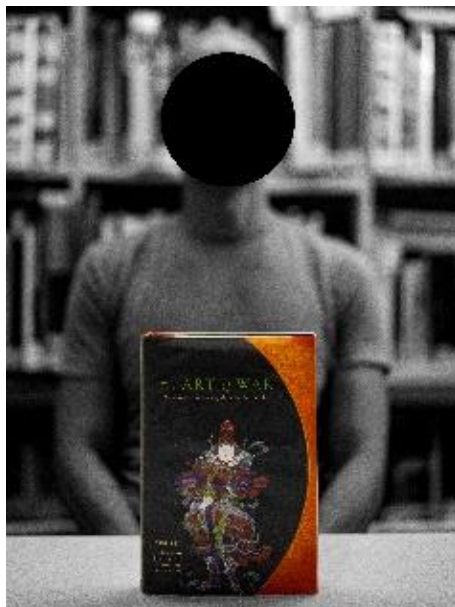


Figure 50 Art of War. "Supreme excellence consists of breaking the enemy's resistance without fighting."

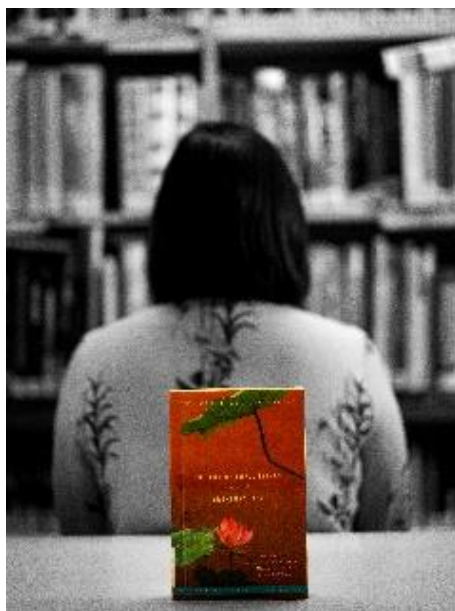


Figure 51 God of Small Things. "Change is one thing. Acceptance is another."

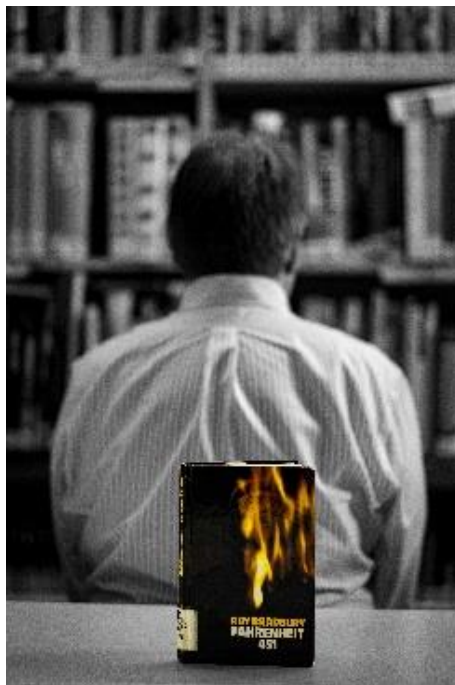


Figure 52 Fahrenheit 451. “We need not to be let alone. We need to be really bothered once in a while. How long is it since you were really bothered? About something important, about something real?”

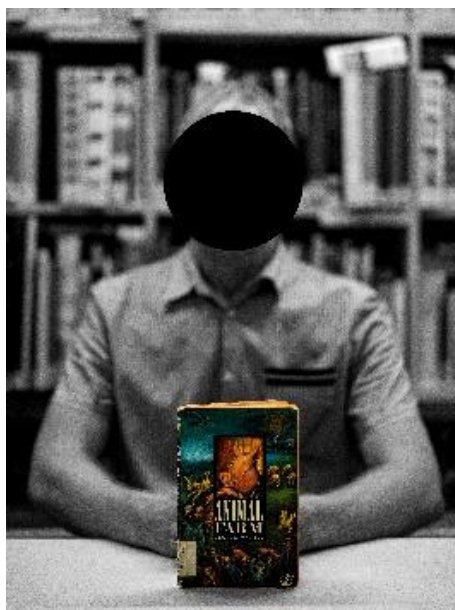


Figure 53 Animal Farm. “The distinguishing mark of man is the hand, the instrument with which he does all his mischief.”

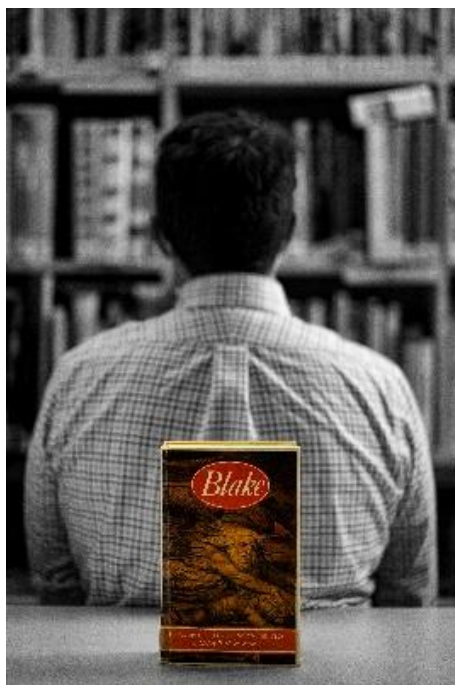


Figure 54 Blake. "The imagination is not a state: it is the human existence itself."

Amanda May
A Hallow Wound on a Tree
Digital Photograph

At the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, I returned to Nova Scotia from Ottawa to live in a small, off-the-grid cabin surrounded in a forest. While in self-isolation, I read the *Hidden Lives of Trees* by Peter Wohlleben, a German forester and was astonished by his description of how trees heal. It helped me reflect on woundedness in nature because of my own traumatic childhood experience that resulted in an eye injury that left me blind in my one eye. I realized that wounds come in all shapes and sizes: large and small. Just as humans have their own unique lived experiences, trees do too. We all, like these trees, weather many seasons and numerous storms throughout our lives.

Utilizing digital photography, my work is inspired by woundedness and healing in nature. As an artist with an eye injury, woundedness, healing and resiliency in nature is a source of inspiration. I hope that these digital photographs encourage viewers to observe the healing, resilience, and the transformational power of nature.

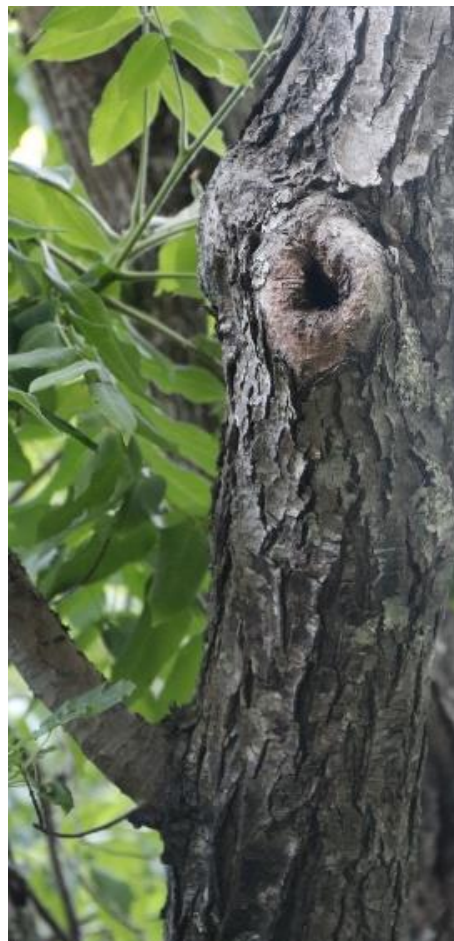


Figure 55 A Hallow Wound on a Tree

Amanda May
Wound with Fungus Growing out of it
Digital Photograph



Figure 56 Wound with Fungus Growing out of it.

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