

Futures

Emerging Art Writers 5



Alberta University of the Arts (AUArts) is situated on the ancestral land of the Siksikaitsitapi – Blackfoot (Siksika, Kainai, Piikani) and the shared territories of the Tsuut’ina – North Dene Sarcee, Íyârhe Nakoda – Stoney (Bears paw, Chiniki, Goodstoney) and homeland of the Métis Nation of Alberta Districts 5 and 6. The City of Calgary has long been called Moh’kins’tsis by the Blackfoot, Guts’ists’i by the Tsuut’ina, and Wichispa by the Nakoda.

To better live the work of truth, justice, responsibility and reconciliation, AUArts respectfully acknowledges the territories, languages, and ways of life, including visual and oral practices, of each of these nations.

By virtue of Treaty 7 of 1877—the Blackfoot Treaty—AUArts recognizes that we are all treaty people. Together we share this land and work to learn, walk, and grow together in respectful ways.

Vest Two

This is the fifth iteration of the Emerging Art Writer's Program (EAWP), offered through the Illingworth Kerr Gallery (IKG) for Alberta University of the Arts (AUArts) students. The program connects a group of students with instructors and professional writers to expand their approach to writing about contemporary art and to experience the process of turning a first draft into a finished published piece.

The pieces of writing in this year's edition are consolidated by the theme: futures. In a time of climate and economic crisis, and increasing political polarization, we need urgent action to create better futures. Art and artists play an essential role in envisioning futures, and often ask us to consider and reckon with their possibilities. The student writers in this volume explored the future through their own topics of interest, including the role of memory in future lives, the ability of art to help us navigate profound personal change and identity development, and various kinds of influence that artists can have on future lives, art practices, and society. Together, the texts point to a future that can be both promising and uncertain, hopeful but also scary because of the seriousness of what is sometimes at stake.

The seven students who produced new writing for EAWP 5 are:

Morgan Black
Morgan Calenso
Mantis Huynh
Alexandra Jaco
Birdy Loughlin
Juli Song
Mieke Uhryniuk-Smith

The writing journeys assembled in this volume allowed students of the EAWP program to work closely with this year's mentors, AUArts faculty Alana Bartol and Troy Patenaude. Group sessions were coordinated to guide the writing process, starting from refining an idea into a coherent topic and pitch suitable for publication. The sessions also focused on researching and structuring topics in a logical and accessible way for readers, and engaging in peer review to craft and refine a text for final publication. Students were additionally able to attend presentations by Maandeeq Mohamed, CMagazine Reviews Editor, and Joy Xiang, CMagazine Editor. Both students and mentors were paid for their time and labour.

Student designer Emily Fleck worked closely with writers and facilitators to bring a cohesive vision to this collection of texts, and we are grateful for her time, flexibility, and creative input. Everyone involved with the process wishes to express special thanks to CMagazine for working with students and distributing this issue of EAWP. The mentors would also like to thank Cassandra Paul and Lauren Jacobson of the IKG for their instrumental support throughout the program, and the writers for their hard work, heart, creativity, and vision. We hope these writings help inform considerations of and reckonings with some possibilities for our futures.

Alana Bartol
Troy Patenaude



Photo: Karin McGinn

Alana Bartol (she/they) comes from a long line of water witches. Their site-responsive artworks explore divination, drawing, and ritual as ways of understanding across places, species, and bodies. Through collaborative and individual works, they examine our relationships with the Earth, the elements, and what are colonially known as natural resources. In 2019 and 2021, they were longlisted for Canada's Sobey Art Award. Alana is a white settler whose ancestry includes Danish, German, English, Irish, and Scottish roots. They currently live in Treaty 7 Territory in Mohkinstsis (Calgary, AB), the ancestral lands of the Blackfoot people, where they teach at Alberta University of the Arts.



Troy Patenaude, PhD (he/him), is a scholar, curator, land-based educator, and hiking guide who has spent his life exploring the intersection between nature, arts, culture, and social change. He is from the Georgian Bay Métis Community and has lived most of his life in Blackfoot and Ktunaxa territories. He has helped facilitate cultural and educational programs in the Rocky Mountains for over twenty years and currently manages Cross River Education & Retreat Centre. Troy also teaches settler-colonial studies and decolonization courses at the Alberta University of the Arts with research interests in Canadian Art History, Indigenous Studies, Cultural Studies, Narrative Studies, and Human Ecology.

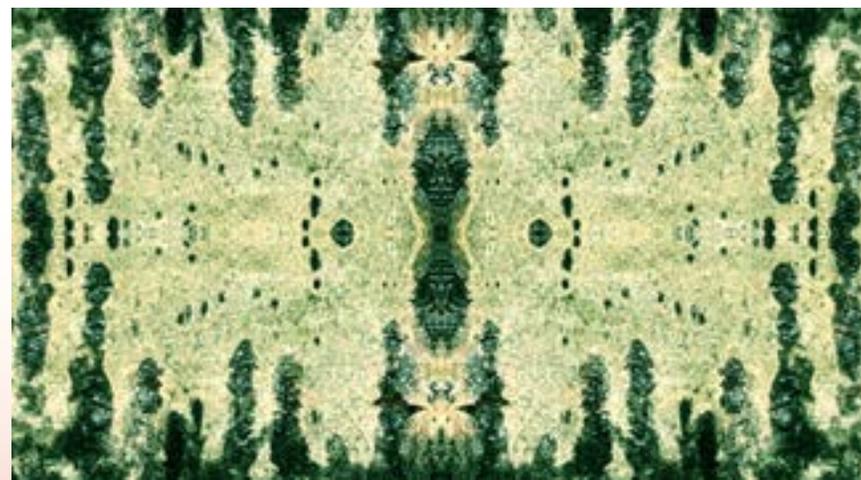
Digitizing Indigeneity: Podcasts as Portals

Morgan Black

Words are shaped to hold knowledge. They are passed around like nourishing morsels of food shared caringly between people. We take the words and their meanings into our bodies, breathe them back out, and weave fragments together until a story takes shape. Where does the work of crafting story begin? Do we access the richness of these ingredients deep in our bellies, where the food has made a nest, teeming with life?

As a St'át'imc and Secwépemc person, I reflect on how storytelling has been woven into our craft practices, recording our histories and relationships with the Land and other beings across many millennia. Through my research into the craft practices and storywork of my ancestors, I have accessed a portal to the past. I have become a time traveler, and I have been introduced to places ancient and full of life. Yet, I can bring these worlds back into the present moment and even to the future through contemporary technologies. I continue my work as an agent of time by immortalizing stories from my culture in a podcast. My mission is to transport these stories across time to future generations in a process I call digitizing indigeneity. In the spirit of this calling, I have created a podcast that translates stories shared by Elders from my community from books such as *Nilh iza sptakwlhkalh: These are our legends*, to a digital oral format. This process continues the oral traditions practiced by my ancestors since time immemorial and acts as a digital wormhole between the past, present, and future. In my podcast, *Crafting Story*, I have planted a digital pod with the hopes that it will grow and reach those yet to be born with the nourishing stories of my people.

My podcast journey began as a desire to learn about St'át'imc cultural songs, and it quickly transformed into an exploration into our storytelling and a deep curiosity to learn what ingredients go into crafting stories. For many Indigenous artists and scholars, truth becomes integral to our storytelling. In his artworks and comics, Michael Nicoll Yahgulanaas blends contemporary visual aesthetics to create a new graphic style called Haida manga to retell colonial histories from his perspective as a Haida person. In an article about his work, he writes, "...it is committed to hybridity as a positive force that opens a third space for critical engagement,



Morgan Black. *Do android NDNs dream of pixelated birch bark?* 2024.

offering an empowering and playful way of viewing and engaging with social issues as it seeks participation, dialogue, reflection and action.” (Yahgulanaas 2018) An Indigenous third space becomes a realm of hybridity that blends ancestral knowledge with contemporary innovations; the third space Yahgulanaas speaks about is where these two worlds meet. Many contemporary Indigenous artists use this third space to tell our stories and connect with non-Indigenous audiences, creating a realm of learning and connection.

The worlds created in Indigenous storytelling transcend space and time while providing educational opportunities rooted in cultural teachings. In my podcast *Crafting Story*, I use Stó:lō and St'át'imc scholar Jo-Ann Archibald's "storywork" framework to find connections between the stories and the seven principles found in her teachings: respect, responsibility, reciprocity, reverence, holism, interrelatedness, and synergy. (Xiiem 2008) These are principles often seen in our storytelling. Sharing these teachings and connecting them to stories old and new carries this knowledge forward. Considering these principles also reveals truths of nature woven into the tales of talking bears and human-animal transformations that reveal vital information about the Land and the nature of all beings. Connecting to teachings such as interrelatedness and responsibility can create meaningful ripples across spacetime that could affect the futures of Indigenous, non-Indigenous, animals, and the Land alike. We could use these stories to shape a future where the well-being of all and the health of the Land become our united priority. As an agent of time, I hope preserving these teachings for future generations is a good start.

I feel inspired by other Indigenous creators who share stories and teachings using the third space. Mohawk artist Skawennati uses a digital software called Second Life to create machinima that brings her ancestral knowledge to life. Digital online platforms are the future of shared spaces. People are increasingly turning to the internet and social platforms to access knowledge. In the machinima, *She Falls For Ages*, Skawennati brings a Haudenosaunee creation story that has been passed down in her culture into a futuristic realm. Teachings of “reverence and care” for our world are at the story’s core. (Skawennati 2016) By populating the digital realm with this knowledge, she has begun planting seeds to grow our communities again.



Morgan Black. *Tkemiłups pēsellkwe “kamloops lake” (I)*. 2021.

Matika Wilbur of the Swinomish and Tulalip peoples and Adrienne Keene of the Cherokee Nation have inspired me with their passion for sharing truth and knowledge through their podcast, *All My Relations*. Hearing the voices of these intelligent and hilarious Indigenous women has forever changed my worldview. As Indigenous people share their voices across NDN country, the fabric of our society shifts to be inclusive of our worldviews, which have been here for thousands of years. Digitizing this beautiful knowledge feeds a future starving for our teachings, our laughter, and our joy. They describe being Indigenous “...is to be engaged in relationships—relationships to Land and place, to a people, to non-human relatives, and to one another.” (Keene et al. 2020) I, and many other Indigenous people, view this act as a practice that goes beyond the present moment. We have a responsibility as future ancestors to the coming generations.

May my words be just one portal that connects you to many others. I encourage you, dear reader of the future, to visit the worlds shared in my podcast, *Crafting Story*, through the QR code on the page. I also hope you will visit the diverse realms created by the innovative and warm-hearted Indigenous artists and scholars mentioned in this article. Their stories are brimming with ancestral knowledge, eager to feed the coming generations and grow a sustainable future.



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Morgan Black is a Ts'kw'aylaxw First Nations and Secwépemc multi-disciplinary artist and curator residing on Treaty 7 territory and Metis Region 3. Their artistic practice includes exploring and reconnecting to their St'át'imc and Secwépemc cultures by storytelling through materiality, engaging all senses, and considering time and place, while drawing inspiration from the land. Their curatorial practice involves approaching the role from a decolonial lens that empowers diverse and marginalized artists to take up space in the contemporary fine arts world. Their methodology privileges visibility, representation, and respect that honours artists and their visions.

Digital Blurs / Physical Memories

Morgan Calenso

I'm sitting at the kitchen table in my Grandparent's house. I have four old photo albums stacked in front of me and one in my lap. I can smell the decades gone by, recorded in the ageing, yellowed paper. Each page creaks and moans, asking to be treated gently. These photo albums force me to sit with them, each the size of a baking sheet with the weight to match. I'm staring at a photo with "Easter at Dorys + Gordons 1968" written above it. My Grandpa wears a red and black flannel shirt buttoned to the top. He's holding my Grandma in his arms, and they're both smiling big, caught in mid-laughter. My Grandma is wearing a long red dress with a paisley pattern on the arms that stops at her elbows. They look happy and very much in love. The photo is faintly out of focus, but I imagine that didn't matter. The image, the memory, was worth keeping.

When we capture a memory with a photograph, it becomes stored in two places: in your brain and in the photo album on your phone or camera. Research has shown that photographing an experience strengthens our visual memory recall of what we saw (Barasch et al.). This intersection between photography and memory has been a core aspect of investigating my own experiences with mortality, grief, and documenting my life and loved ones. The concept of the blur, whether intentional or not, permeates photography and human memory. A blur can look like a failure to capture a moment with clarity or to remember something or someone important. Additionally, a blur can also represent deterioration, whether it's in image quality or memory itself.

My Grandpa, Stanley Arthur Fox, passed away at the age of 93 on November 28th, 2023. My Grandpa and I were always very close; we spent a lot of time together throughout my childhood and teen years. In my immediate grief, I remember feeling this desperate need to find any photograph of him that I possibly could. I pulled out every photo with my Grandpa in it from my parents' house and brought them to my Grandma's. My Grandma has family photos all over the house, most notably in the kitchen. Her circa 1983 General Electric fridge with chrome-plated metal framing is covered in family photos and held up with the most esoteric collection of magnets you could imagine. Only a few of these photos



Grandma and Papa at Easter dinner, 1968. Image courtesy of Morgan Calenso

had my Grandpa in them, so I felt it was important to introduce those photos from my Mom's albums back into circulation. This way, we could refocus our memories on who my Grandpa was when he was alive and happy. I know I needed the visual reminders, as the last three months of my Grandpa's life felt like a blur.

In my continued pursuit to find photos of my Grandpa, I started going through the five large photo albums my Grandma had put together throughout her life, dating between the 1940s-1980s. They hold photographs of their life with family, friends, and pets from long ago. I view these albums as an archive of a life I wasn't a part of and will never truly know. There are blurry images that she kept and purposefully curated on pages. There's a charming quality to them that isn't much of a reality now. A blurry, unclear image reflects the physicality of capturing memories and human memory. They become a tangible reminder that a human is behind that camera lens. In the earlier world of finite physical images, a blurry photograph was worth keeping; it was better than not having a memory of it at all. Now, with the abundance of photographic potential a phone grants me, if I take a blurry photo on my phone, I delete it and reshoot my subject.

There is a finite number of physical photos of my Grandma's life for her to reminisce about. I, on the other hand, took roughly 18,000 pictures of my life in 2023,

but I hadn't ever considered printing a single one till my Grandpa died. My decision to bring some of my photos into the physical world is in hopes of remembering and sharing these memories with my family, who were physically there but had never seen them. I have always appreciated the slowness of looking through physical photographs, the tactility of the glossy paper in my hand, flipping them over to see if anyone wrote the date or event on the back, and if they didn't, I always wish they had.

I'm sitting at the kitchen table at the house I rent in Mohkinstsis/Calgary. I have a stack of photos on the table that I just picked up from London Drugs. They contain images of my Grandpa and Grandparents, which I have taken on my phone over the last decade. I go through my phone to find the date of each photo and begin writing them on the back with their corresponding information. "January 6th, 2017. Morgan at IHOP with G+P." My grandparents are sitting across from me in a booth. My Grandpa is sitting on the left, wearing his favourite brown wool sweater that my Grandma mended for him over and over again. My Grandma is sitting on the right wearing her Mickey Mouse winter coat and red lipstick. She's leaned to the left, resting her head on my Grandpa's shoulder. They're both smiling; they look happy and very much in love. I remember saying, "Smile for me, Papa!" right before taking the photo. It's blurry, but I'm grateful that the 17-year-old me didn't delete it. I haven't put my printed images in a photo album yet, and I don't know if I will. What I do know is that I'm going to be more intentional about printing out photos of my own life, and I will pause before immediately deleting a blurry photo.



Gamma and Papa at IHOP with Morgan, 2017. Image courtesy of Morgan Calenso

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Amateur mycology and bryology geek,
No.1 grandchild, oldest sibling, griever.
Morgan Calenso (they/them) is an emerging interdisciplinary artist and writer practising in Mohkinstsis, Treaty 7 territory. They will be graduating from Alberta University of the Arts in May 2024 with a BFA majoring in ceramics and a minor in fibre. Morgan has been working with clay as their primary medium for creative expression since 2016. In their current practice, they are focused on exploring physics as an overarching method of mark-making in clay, resulting in amorphous forms that embody folds, cracks, tears, and textures seen in nature. Morgan is endlessly inspired by the unpredictable variability in ceramics; they enjoy researching and experimenting with surface treatment and glaze chemistry as a core aspect of their work.



In the Spirit of Bad Design

Mantis Huynh

Here—between rows of helvetica text, underneath flat graphics, and minimalism—lie the weighty bodies of designs that didn't make it past the first draft or weren't allowed to be conceived. We are ghosts now. Can you feel it? Our ugly contorted presences in the corner of your eye?

As disruptors of peace, ghosts exist in a queer and invisible space. We are not them and are not to empathize with them. In Chinese culture, “ghost” (鬼, Gui) is a term that acts as a metaphor for people or things foreign (“us” and the “other”). We are to be weary of how they make themselves known. It's supposedly normal to run from ghosts¹ when they come to haunt us. In more serious circumstances, it is normal to eradicate their existence altogether. Their visibility² is frightening.

Countless futures become hidden in this process of maintaining modernism cloaked in the contemporary. British cultural theorist Mark Fisher's concept of *Hauntology*³ “meant the acceptance of a situation in which culture would continue without really changing” and means that we are haunted by “all the lost futures that the twentieth century taught us to anticipate” (16). All the futures thrown aside hold some inherent form of failure in that they are not presented as the ones we live in now. I can feel this grief for the (supposedly) stupid, counteractive and useless ideas that become nil through this process. In conjunction with Jack Halberstam's *The Queer Art of Failure*, my interest is piqued by what it means to be discarded and to *become* a ghost rather than fearing ghosts in the living world. Halberstam says that losers leave no records, while winners cannot stop talking about it, so the record of failure is “a hidden history of pessimism in a culture of optimism” (qtd. in Sandage 9). What does it mean to be the one to generate ideas and futures that will never happen? I root for the ghost.

¹ And maybe wet our pants

² their Phantonomy? Phantom autonomy? I don't know haha

Graphic Natures

As graphic design has plateaued to have a small set of approved visual styles and methods of communication, the air grows dense with more and more ghosts. “Form follows function” means that whatever is made, there is one thing to keep in mind: create around how it will be used. In dominating design cultures, it seems that this was the case once before, but no longer. Form stopped following function and started to follow itself (form following form), or it has started following the function of maintaining itself (form following a function that follows form...). These standards inform the ways in which we navigate through our world and decide how to read something semiotically. Language informs living. The current practice of design imagines accessibility as a reinforcement of visual status-quo's that “consumers” have already adapted to; if the colour red means violence, love, blood, and passion, then it must be true for all cases. In the past, present, future... everywhere. These cases are passed as inherent, and if the suggestion of something outside of this arises, it becomes uncanny, wrong, or nonsensical—like a person who shares space with us but can no longer be seen.

Does anyone else feel crazy??? In my short few years as a graphic design major before switching to fine arts, I was taught that “good design is invisible,” but when everything deemed “unnecessary” is erased for the sake of decluttering, so are the hands. For every piece of “good” design put out there, a kitten dies.⁴ The power of determining what is a failure or unsuitable is the same power that casts invisibility onto another, then communities, perspectives, cultures, and histories are dug a grave. Behind every graphic composition draped in this heavy white cloth, a ghost is then born. “Good” design [renders] invisible.

³ Here, I reference Mark Fisher's concept of Hauntology, which builds upon Jacques Derrida's term as introduced in his book *Specters of Marx*. Fisher expands upon Derrida's concept to address the adoption of cultural plateaus amidst the specters of lost futures.

⁴ It's true

Queer Hauntologies

"In regards to design... I am not interested in outcomes or 'solutions'— that is the rhetoric of genocide. I want untidy endings" (Ian Lynam interviewed by Emily Gosling for Creative Boom)

If to be Haunted is to be followed by the futures that will never happen, maybe a Queer variation of that exists. Queer haunting—to create and imagine irrelevant avenues of being. Halberstam's *Low Theory* counters what is regarded as important with the irrelevant; it is "one of these modes of transmission that revels in the detours, twists, and turns through knowing and confusion, and that seeks not to explain but involve" (15). Involving instead of explaining, in this case, looks like catching viewers off guard. There is also an emphasis on sharing these thoughts widely in everyday spaces, "popular places, in the small, the inconsequential, the antimonumental, the micro, the irrelevant" (21). For the world of graphic design, I imagine this to be negligible, subtle, counterproductive design choices. To kern a few letters too close or far from each other, to move an element 4 pixels off-centre of the grid, to create tangent points in the composition, or destabilize an image by rotating it 2 degrees

Haunting the Design Space: Image courtesy: bmf-foto.e used under license from Shutterstock.com.



For me, this looks like taking a Chinese font family⁵ that happens to have Latin characters and punctuation and using it in English. I do this whenever I get the chance; writing a paper, a didactic, or making a graphic for something somewhere. In the uneven spacing between letters and words, and in the monospace-ness of it all, are ghosts who can finally breathe from underneath the anglo language we assume to be more or less universal. The default becomes unsettled.

To many, these ghosts reveal a forgettable archive of badness, messiness, and haunting ugliness. As ghosts ourselves, what we do is a very viable, very very small presence that is happening within our made-invisible communities. They say the spirit of someone finally dies when the last person who remembers them passes. I'm not much worried about that. People don't talk about all the ghosts who remember them and will continue to remember when their relevance finally fades from the living world—but we are here.

⁵ Font families encapsulate a larger array of fonts, such as bolded and italicised fonts

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Mantis "I'm Home! I'm Home! I'm Home!" Mei

*I am still little.
So, I play.*

*These days, I have been practicing
hugging as hellos and goodbyes.*

Katie

Alexandra Jaco

If you spot Calgary artist Katie Ohe in a crowd of art enthusiasts, she'll be surrounded by admirers seeking her wisdom. Katie's a magnet for admirers, drawn to her innovative creativity. I encountered her sculptures at the Esker Foundation in 2020 and they left a lasting impression on me. Through working as Deborah Herringer Kiss's gallery assistant, I had the privilege of meeting Katie and interviewing her. I am eager to share some insights from that interview, which highlighted perspectives on her unique approach to artist spaces, creative practices, and audience engagement, all of which shape the future of the art scene in Alberta.



Katie and one of her bronze sculptures.
Image courtesy Alexandra Jaco

Visiting Katie's home in February of 2024, I sat in her kitchen, absorbing the history surrounding us, enveloped by a lifetime of cultural artifacts. Not only are Katie and her late husband, Harry Kiyooka, both celebrated artists of the community, but they are passionate collectors of art. Even their kitchen is enveloped by gifts and memories bestowed by previous students and friends over the years. Katie has an anecdote tied to each memento, like the Mysore crow skull, which was the inspiration for *Mysore Crow* in the steel sculpture series *Sculpture Prayers* (1996 – 2002). I felt honoured to peer into her life, and chatting with Katie was like delving into a time capsule of Alberta's cultural evolution. She reflected on her days at the Allied Arts Centre¹ and her time with Archie Key². The Allied Arts Centre was not only where she honed her craft but also taught pottery. I was discussing cycles of life and culture with Katie, and with her relentless wit, she reminisced about her days rubbing shoulders with

¹ Previously the Coste House, The Calgary Allied Arts Centre became the city's primary art gallery and arts center in the 1950s (Townsend 3-5).

² Archie Key, patron of the arts and director of the Coste House (Townsend 5).

the “big boys” of the art world, Luke Lindoe and Walter Dexter. Being a part of that was a big thing for her as a student. As our conversation evolved, certain gems of wisdom and insight resonated with me.

Katie emphasized how crucial it is for artists to have their own creative sanctuaries. These are where ideas are born, nurtured, and eventually unleashed upon the world. The dream of creating this sanctuary was realized when she and Harry founded the Kiyooka Ohe Arts Centre (KOAC) in 2007. It is an innovative and special haven that fosters reflection, exploration, and artistic talent. It also commemorates what Archie Key set in motion for Calgary in the late 1940's. Katie said, “for Harry and me it was always a mission to fulfil his [Archie's] dream.” Today the KOAC remains a nonprofit organization open to the public that provides programs and workshops and is a host to contemporary art. I am inspired by Katie, the realist, who reminds me that the echoes of artistic influence last for generations, just like those of Brancusi and Giacometti. This is the impact that places like the KOAC have on me and the community.

Our conversation turned to creative practice and audience engagement. Katie's advice was simple yet profound: “focus on upkeep.” By upkeep she means, “Your art should be sturdy, reliable, and most importantly, unforgettable.” After all, as she puts it, “you don't get a gallery until you've been noticed and have something unique to offer.” Katie asserts that upkeep is the responsibility of the artist, not the gallery, and it should not take away from an artwork's accessibility: “It has to be something new that brings people into the gallery.” Katie's talk about upkeep led to the consideration of safety in her artistic endeavors.

Safety, for Katie, refers to the preservation of her sculptures within the realities of gallery spaces full of people. She molded her approach to creating pieces so that they were not only visually stunning but also safe for people to interact with. It's in this way that one of Katie's remarkable creative innovations—tactility—truly shines. Katie's sculptures, like her personality, exude playfulness and curiosity. They beckon you to touch them; to feel their textures and explore their depths. She's inviting you into a palpable world of wonder and discovery, where the only rule is to indulge your curiosity. My curiosity has been piqued and so has Alberta's. In 2019, Katie became a member of the Alberta Order of Excellence and received the Lieutenant Governor of Alberta Distinguished Artist Award.

As Katie excitedly guided me through her home I asked about her creative process, “What inspired your approach to sculpture, especially when it comes to making

your pieces so inviting to touch, and engaging in terms of their form?" Katie's eyes sparkled as she spoke about her process: "I recall my first few days in New York. I saw an Epstein sculpture and I was looking from museum to museum before locking myself away at the SculptureCentre. I was going to measure the depth of this sculpture and I was told, 'DON'T TOUCH, DON'T TOUCH!' But I touched it." Funnily, I too had experienced this many times. I told her, "I always get in trouble at museums because I get too close to the artwork!" Katie nodded in agreement, "You're instigating the same thing!" We giggled and I thought to myself how she approaches art with a childlike candor and inquisitiveness. Katie, a kindred spirit, smilingly said, "It all ties into the same thing. They [artworks] have to be tantalizing enough for you to say, 'what's that about?'. You touch it, and something happens. In museums, everything is 'Don't touch!' I think that with my pieces the surfaces are seductive [to entice touch]." I nodded with admiration, summing up the sentiment: "Seductive is the perfect word!"

Katie's allure stems from her tactile approach to materials and keen eye for form. Whether referring to the KOAC, or her innovations in sculpture, Katie's legacy continues to impact and shape the present and future of Alberta's art scene. In the end, my encounter with Katie Ohe wasn't just about art. It was a journey through time and space, filled with laughter, wisdom, and appreciation for the transformative power of creativity. Leaving her side, I felt inspired to forge my own path, pondering the future influence of my art and that of my peers. I hope her wisdom resonates in your life as well.



Katie Ohe and Alexandra Jaco at the KOAC and her home, 2023.
Image courtesy Alexandra Jaco

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Alexandra Jaco (she/her)

Alexandra Jaco, a BFA graduate from Alberta University of the Arts, is an emerging interdisciplinary artist residing on the traditional territories of the Blackfoot Confederacy. Weaving cultural narratives through Hungarian and Salvadoran heritage, she employs acrylic, gouache, ink, coloured graphite, and photo transfer. Her work, expressed on canvas, paper, wood, and fibre, integrates traditional folk patterns and abstract forms, serving as vessels to disseminate tales of community and ancestral resilience. Inspired by spiritual artists like Hilma af Klint, Agnes Martin, and Leonora Carrington, Jaco's creations explore spiritualism, animism, and Carl Jung's collective consciousness, inviting viewers to reconnect with universal human stories.

TOIL; TIME-OFF IN LIEU

Birdy Loughlin

T I M E -
O f f
I n
L i e u

To: bird

10:07 AM 2024-04-23

Bird, right now I am an artist. Every word present in this text is in the past. It has been in the past since I wrote it. The future is not so distant, nor is the past. To you, my dear bird, every moment after this one is the future.

You are not me, but I will be you.

Right now, I do not know how to explain what it means to be an artist, despite the exponential growth of my art-jargon lexicon. This discomfort is not new, nor is the discourse on the artist's condition in our contemporary time. In a fantasy of mine, you are not an artist and I have nothing profound to say.

The radio makes me feel less lonely and the broom is my dance partner.

I sweep every single day, somewhere. I cannot help it. I make art every single day, somewhere. I cannot help it. It is automatic, compulsive, involuntary; exhaustive. I can sweep any floor and dance across it. I am the weight of my words en pointe; my tired feet.

>dancer

>artist >artist >artist >< dancer<
dancer< dancer<

artist<

Sometimes I fear survival. Sometimes, my body cannot keep up to my daily labour. I can force it to go when there is little left or maybe you do. Right now, I am a dancer. I am an artist. I am so fucking uncomfortable. My feet hurt and I am naive. I am equally confused as I am confident. I am more rebellious than compliant. I am disinterested in protest. I am very strong.

Twice a day, I am in my studio, and I think about how to do what I am told. While I paint, I imagine myself trying to convince someone that I'd be on time if I could smoke inside. You will remember how short this test of endurance was, and I will know how long it is. I remedy myself now for the survival of you then.

The days when I sit still, pretend to know. That everything is.

Acts

of fear.

Acts

of love.

Sweet bird, sometimes I cannot be bothered to fear the consequences of dropping everything for love. If I fail because I love, then it cannot possibly be failure.

(incomprehensible)

The weight of my words cannot translate the weight of my love. It is heavy. To not care is to care so much. My friends' voices singing together (in the gallery) are all that I care for. We are tired but we cannot stop singing. I am afraid I am in love. I am in love, I am afraid.

Is this my artistic practice.

Did you sweep the floor today? Did you find your partner? Is the radio on? Did you take your time off in lieu? How do you feel? Is it electric?

From: bird

12:02 PM 2024-04-23

To: bird

12:04 PM 2024-04-24

Bird, right now I am an artist. Every word present in this text is in the past. It has been in the past since I wrote it. The future is not so distant, nor is the past. To you, my dear bird, every moment after this one is the future.

You are not me, but I was you.

Right now, I do know how to explain what it means to be an artist despite the exponential growth of my art-jargon lexicon. This comfort is not new, nor is the discourse on the artist's disposition of our time. With humility and grace, in a fantasy of mine, I am an artist and I have profound things to say.

The radio is the voice and the broom is the body. They sing and dance with me when you are not here.

I sweep every single day, somewhere. I make art every single day, somewhere. It is automatic, compulsive, involuntary; remedial. I can sweep any floor and dance across it. I am the weight of my words en pointe.

>artist

>dancer >dancer >dancer >< artist< art-ist< artist<

dancer<

Sometimes I fear survival. Sometimes my body cannot keep up to my daily labour. I can sit still when there is little left and so do you. Right now, I am a dancer. I am an artist. I am so fucking comfortable. My feet hurt and I am wise. I am content. I am disinterested in protest. I am very soft.

Twice a day, I am somewhere other than my studio,
and I think about how to do what I am told. While
I write, I imagine myself trying to convince my-
self that I'd be on time if I could smoke inside.
You will remember how long this test of endurance
was, and I will know how short it is. Thank you.

The days when I sit still, know to pretend. That
everything is.

Acts

of fear.

Acts

of love.

Sweet bird, sometimes I can be bothered to fear
the consequences of dropping everything for love.
But I still agree with you. I fail because I love,
then it cannot possibly be failure.

(comprehensible)

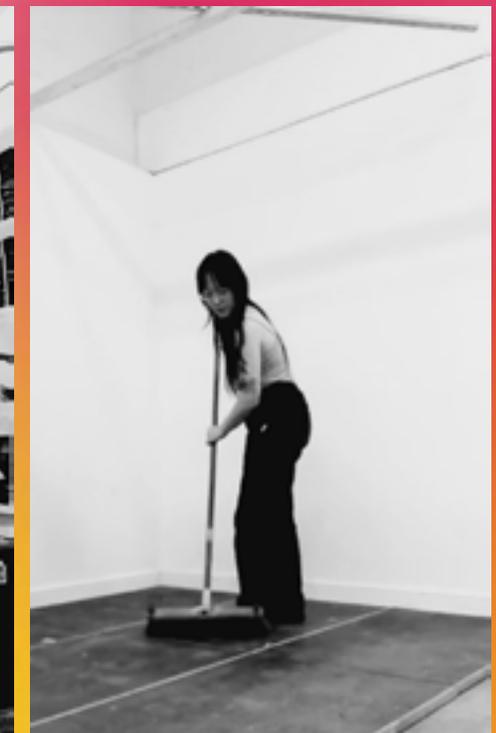
The weight of my words can translate the weight
of my love. It is heavy. To care so much is not
to care. To trust. My friends' voices singing to-
gether (in the gallery) are all that I care for.
We are tired but we do not stop singing. I am in
love; I am not afraid.

This is my artistic prac-
tice.

I swept the floor today, and the radio is on.
What do you have? Are you in love? How do you
feel? Is it electric? In a fantasy of mine,
you are an artist.

From: bird

14:50 PM 2024-04-23



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Birdy Loughlin as Operator Technician as Bird, 2024.
Photo: Riel Starr.
Editor: Birdy Loughlin.

14:51 PM 2024-04-23

Just over a month ago I was walking along the river with Ary, a dear friend and fellow artist. I asked him to describe my artistic practice for me. He was apprehensive at first and it took some time to get an answer from him. I tried to rephrase the question a couple times, suggesting that he describe what I make, what I do, what it's about, why he thinks I do it. In a conversational tangent I told him how badly I wished that someone else would just write my artist statement for me and we laughed about how much of a pain in the ass it is to speak about ourselves as artists without sounding like jerks. After much deliberation over a shared cigarette, he said, "you make life art".

All my relations,

Bird

16:05 PM 2024-04-23

My queerness is the tiger's wedding day

Juli Song



Juli Song, *The Tiger's Wedding Day*, 2024. Woven wool, cotton, polyester tapestry, cotton embroidery, with satin applique. 37 x 26.5 inch.
Photo: Leia Guo @ Leia Guo Photography

My journey with queerness now starts with the tiger's wedding day. Imagine the sun illuminating the sky, its glowing warmth enveloping everything it touches. The skies are clear, but unexpectedly, cold, wet pitter patters of rain kiss your skin. Streaks of gray clouds cascade across the horizon. Rays of light poke out, intertwining with the shower of water, and now each drop is radiating and flickering light. This phenomenon, you may call a sun shower, for me, it is the day the tiger gets married, 호랑이 장가가는 날¹

¹ ho-rahng-ee-jang-ka-ka-neun-nal

I learned about Korean heritage through small glimmers in my life. On one sun shower day, my grandma remarked that it was 호랑이 장가가는 날. It perplexed me, but not enough to question why. From then on, I kept that little anecdote in my pocket, retelling it to myself whenever I encountered a sun shower. The idiom originated from a folktale that describes a fox who was engaged to a tiger, a story I discovered during my research years later. Unbeknownst to the fox and tiger, there was a cloud who was also in love with the fox. When the cloud found out about the fox's marriage, it wept. On fox's and tiger's wedding day, a single cloud crying in the sunlit sky became the sun shower.

The poetic melancholy of the cloud's longing from afar, and its silent tears cascading through the beautifully lit sky, reflects the complex emotions I feel about being queer. As Cuban American queer theorist José Esteban Muñoz states, "We may never touch queerness, but we can feel it as the warm illumination of a horizon imbued with potentiality" (Muñoz 1). I feel its warmth like the fox and tiger, embracing the sun shower, fully enjoying their wedding. Learning about this folktale gave me permission to feel both the heartache and to see the future beyond the horizon, celebrating the potential and beauty of queerness. This was because queerness was not clear-cut for me. It was sidelined by what was at the forefront of my identity—being Asian. The latter is the first thing people notice about me; I cannot conceal it even if I want to. Subconsciously and deliberately, I have been taught to be aware of my otherness. Growing up in the Korean diaspora, I felt a dual sense of identity. Speaking Korean at home, eating Korean food, and having family call you your Korean name; my Korean identity was deeply ingrained in me early on. Then I went to school and all those parts about me were suddenly wrong, and the cause of alienation and racism. I could not come to terms about my own queerness in the face of racism. Furthermore, the traditional Korean identity taught to me made it clear: you cannot be Korean and queer.

I struggled to find joy in my identity; unable to express my heritage, gender, and sexuality with pride. Then I found solace in art; feeling the freedom to create my own narratives and draw whatever came to my mind. Making art became an outlet where I allowed myself to be Korean, and to be queer. It gave me the confidence to articulate the pieces of myself that were, for so long, out of my reach. Finding glimmers of queerness to reclaim in this way taught me to embrace my identity. I thought back to the Korean folktales my family would tell, soon finding moments of queerness in these traditional stories. If a cloud is in love with a fox who is in turn engaged to a tiger, then love is not defined by gender, nor by what is conventional—it is queer. It brought me comfort that queerness was always around me and a part of me.

This is why I created *The Tiger's Wedding Day* while searching for answers to my questions, "What does it mean to be Korean, Canadian, an immigrant, queer? How do I learn to not feel shame in being myself?" I see the futurity in art in its ability to engage with the complexities of intersectionality and convey emotions that are

difficult to articulate. Through weaving, I can materialize my emotions and learn to process them. Tapestries are my medium to tell stories. I treat each weaving like a page in a storybook. Symbolically and physically, they allow me to weave different narratives; bringing together my Korean and queer identities and reconciling them within my sense of self.

It took over a year to weave this piece. Tapestry weaving is a slow, tactical, and contemplative process. While weaving, I got to intimately know each strand of fibre and glimpse moments of queerness in each section. I intentionally used kinky yarn to create textures in the grass. I stayed away from the idealized conventions of flat, even surfaces in tapestry technique. I stylized the hanbok² and jokduri³ the tiger is wearing to be my interpretation of a queer wedding garment. I got to know myself while I got to know the tapestry. The time and care I put into giving this emotion a physical form reflects the effort I chose to put into caring for myself by embracing and reclaiming the joy in the identity I was shamed to not express. Making this narrative into a tapestry immortalizes this reclamation. The dedication required to weave the piece elevates its importance and celebrates it.

This is how I see my future as an artist: working to convey the importance of intersectional identity and allowing for more diverse representations of lived experience. Without my weaving practice, I could not engage, articulate, or develop my understanding of queerness. My tapestry, my queerness, is the warmth, the melancholy, and the tiger's wedding day.

² Korean traditional dress
³ headdress worn at weddings

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Photo: Leia Guo
© Leia Guo Photography

Juli Song is a Korean Canadian artist based in Treaty 7 Territory in Mohkinstsis. Thematically connected through the expression of her lived experience, immigration and family history with war. Juli's practice works to interpret Korean folktales within the lens of the Korean diaspora, developing contemporary narratives of gender, sexuality and identity through a decolonial lens. She explores using weaving as a form of narrative to record lived experience, blending Korean storytelling, imagery and traditional allegories. As a textile artist, she primarily weaves tapestries; however, her work also incorporates multimedia elements of ceramics, performance and installation.

A Balm Against Uncertainty: On Betty Goodwin's *Vest Two*

Mieke Uhryniuk-Smith

A vest floats in a white void, its contours defined starkly in black. This image could be mistaken for a photograph, but close inspection reveals it is a print. The first time I saw it was in a presentation on Canadian printmaking, and I was transfixed: whose vest is this, and how was its form captured and reproduced so perfectly? I decided to work through this process myself to answer these questions.



Betty Goodwin, *Vest Two*, January 1970.
Soft-ground etching on wove paper, 70 x 54.6 cm trimmed to platemark.
Gift of Betty and Martin Goodwin, Montreal, 1999 National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa

1. When making an etching, you will start with a copper plate and a subject. I chose an old sock from a cheap pair my mom gave me, full of holes despite my efforts to mend them. You can polish your plate with a piece of wet sandpaper until all scratches are removed from its surface, but bear in mind that these marks can add character to your print.

Betty Goodwin was an artist based in Montreal who worked in drawing, sculpture, and printmaking. In the late 1960s, she began a foray into etching, a print process that uses acid to cut marks into the surface of a metal plate used to print. She started developing a body of work through a specific practice: making the impression of objects on the surface of plates coated in a material called soft ground. Among these objects were packages, gloves, hats, and vests, which she had a particular interest in. Goodwin's father was a tailor who opened a vest manufacturing business in 1928, which he ran until his death in 1944 when Goodwin was nine years old (14 Tovell). The print that captured my attention was one of these, called *Vest Two*.

2. Find some soft ground. The type I am familiar with comes in a little brick of dark, greasy material. Heat your copper plate and run a line of soft ground along it. Spread this out across the entire surface with a brayer. Your plate is ready when it is coated in a thin, buttery layer of sepi.

It is challenging for me to imagine a future; it is difficult to picture where I will be in five years, let alone what the future could hold for humanity. My best approximation for the future is to take stock of the present. In a sense, this is why I make things. Artwork can capture its maker's feelings and experiences and show how they are situated in the world around them. Making art can capture one's present reality in the face of an unknown future, and I appreciate this, on a personal level, as a balm against uncertainty. *Vest Two* captures this quality literally and figuratively as a record of an object whose current place in the world is completely unknown.

3. Take the impression of your object by laying it out on the plate and running it through a printing press. As it presses against the plate, the object's outline, folds, and textures will be recorded in the ground.

I have a sentimental streak when it comes to objects; I have difficulty discarding broken things because I feel like I am abandoning them. It is hard to ignore how my use of an object has shaped and moulded it to me, which makes me especially sentimental regarding clothing. Looking at the impression of my sock, I see the fabric, ribbing, and damage resulting from use. The fabric is worn thin over the heel where my shoes always rub, and a small hole sits where my toe catches against the inside of my shoe.

4. Immerse your plate in a bath of ferric chloride to etch the image into the copper's surface. Everything covered in ground will resist the acid's effects, but parts exposed by the impression will etch permanently into the surface. The longer you leave it in, the darker the final print will be.

In the catalogue accompanying an exhibition of Goodwin's prints, curator Rosemary Tovell writes that Goodwin experienced a period of frustration with her work, struggling to find personal connections to what she was producing. The vest series represented a breakthrough; at once, Goodwin connected the garments to her late father. Goodwin realized that "you bring your own experience to [your work], so it's a whole mixture of your inner self, your inner experiences and what message the work is sending to you (Bradley)." Perhaps Goodwin's vest series was an attempt to make something lasting, to impress the memory of her father onto a vest transmitted forward in time despite its ephemeral nature.

5. Ink up your plate and print. When you lift the paper from your plate, your object will be there, in a manner of speaking.

Like my sock print, *Vest Two* captures the details of an object once inhabited. The print records the incredibly subtle creases, chipped buttons, and uneven tone, suggesting where the fabric's surface wore down over time as it rubbed against its wearer's sleeve or coat lining. The vest did not belong to Goodwin's father, and I cannot speculate on the exact nature of her relationship with him and his memory. However, the vest represents a way to leave a mark in the face of time as it continually passes. My fascination with *Vest Two* is proof of its staying power even as Goodwin herself is no longer with us. The construction and style of the vest are specific to the time of its making, and it carries the marks impressed upon it by its wearer. Ultimately, my sock holds little value to me, yet it accompanied me throughout my life when more valuable objects did not. I could view my print years from now as an encapsulation of this moment in time, a reminder that I survived the present in the face of the unknown. It proves that I was here and made a mark on the world around me.



Mieke Uhryniuk-Smith. *Sock One*, etching on rag paper, 2024. Image courtesy of: Mieke Uhryniuk-Smith.

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Mieke Uhryniuk-Smith is an artist studying illustration at the Alberta University of the Arts. They are interested in drawing, comics and print media.

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