

LOOT



TEN THIEVES ARTIST COLLECTIVE

LOOT

ORIENTING TO MATTER

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DEBORAH THOMPSON: HOW WE UNDERSTAND MATTER

The genesis of Ten Thieves Artist Collective can be traced to my visit to the Milk of Dreams exhibition at the Venice Biennale, 2022. Inspired by Cecilia Alemani’s curatorial vision based on post-human feminism, I gathered a group of peers to read and discuss the ideas and theories presented in the exhibition. Shortly into our gatherings, I was invited to guest curate an exhibition at the Langham Cultural Center. I knew immediately that it would be the perfect opportunity to bring the work of collective members together in an exhibition of new works shaped by the themes explored in our discussions.

The name Ten Thieves Artist Collective was inspired by Shakespeare’s writings, particularly his depictions of thieves during the plague. At the time of our first meetings, the COVID pandemic had just ended. Thievery is an enduring metaphor for the colonial-settler legacy. Extending that metaphor, the exhibition was titled *LOOT*, adopting a satirical and self-reflective gaze into colonialism. As the project evolved it became clear that the theme of the exhibition would be an investigation of new materialism, focusing on the artists’ relationships to matter.

Art has long stood at the forefront of new modes of thought and perception. The erosion of classical humanism, consolidated during the Renaissance, began in the late nineteenth century. The emergence of realism challenged idealized representation and class-centred hierarchies. This shift continued throughout the twentieth century in an explosion of artistic movements, each offering nuanced and radical ways of seeing, understanding, and rethinking matter itself. Today, artists of all identities, races, genders, and classes dismantle this restrictive and damaging paradigm inherited from humanist traditions. Their practices re-orient, reimagine, and speculate on futures that are inclusive, plural, and just. At the center of this revolution is matter itself: intelligent, vital, and self-governing—a living force.

How might artistic practices lead us in a necessary shift in how we understand matter? How can art tell a new story that moves beyond the narrative of matter as inert, extractable, and endlessly available?

The Ten Thieves Artist Collective takes up these questions in its inaugural exhibition, *LOOT: Orienting to Matter*. Rather than treating materials as passive resources, the artists in this exhibition engage with matter as a messenger, an actant, a presence, a language. Through their varied processes they challenge the dominant reasoning of classical humanism and propose new ways of working—ones grounded in reciprocity, accountability, and care.

LOOT asks how the choice of art materials and artists collaborating with matter can open up conversations that foreground ethical explorations and a reverence for materials beyond the studio. *LOOT* invites the viewer to reconsider their own relationships and understanding of matter, not just as materials but as the physical and spiritual substrate of life. *LOOT* re-imagines a posthumanism that is feminist where new alliances form between species in a world that is shaped by respect and connectivity and stewardship.

ELEMENTAL MAGNITUDE OF MATTER

Through studio visits and writing about each artist’s work, I came to see the depth of *LOOT: Orienting to Matter*. Unexpected connections and crossovers emerged from the artists’ varied practices and material use. Sub-themes engaged with the four elements—the transformative nature of fire, the ground plan of connectivity, the expansive language of water, and the transcendent time of flight—revealing the elemental magnitude of matter. This holistic view of matter wraps around each artist’s material choices and understanding of the agency of matter. The exhibition continues the conversations begun over the past three years of what it means to be human within a more-than-human world.

Susan Andrews Grace employs recognizable iron-rich objects taken from sources of gendered industrial and domestic work collected over many years and creates stains on canvas, which are abstract at times and at other times, strikingly graphic. *Glyphs and Grammar* are impressions that capture traces of the original object while resisting literal representation.

The work is guided by sensitivity to what Jane Bennett calls thingness: the embedded vibrancy of matter. In this way, the glyphs exude the numinous quality of a relic, holding both immanence and impermanence.

The glyphs do not read like written language but as painterly symbols, allowing the viewer’s gaze to wander. The work invites us to question how symbols become gendered and what kinds of language we bring to their interpretation.

The glyphs, by-products of metal’s entanglement with oxygen, capture metal’s return to minerals. The artist asks us to reflect on a broader material perspective: matter as a shared matrix for life and its enduring capacity for renewal.

Eimear Laffan uses “words as her matter”—an expression borrowed from Ursula Le Guin—by playing with the shape of the poem and the distances between words. Both *Sea Pot* poems stretch outward, from shore to shore, from horizon to horizon recalling the expansive water drawings of Vija Celmins, which capture the surface tension of the

ocean’s skin. Like Celmins’s drawings, these poems are both opaque and translucent, opening and collapsing as waves do, reflecting the animacy of a living body. What forces propel us to open and close? What is the nature of our own bodies that we come to be so akin to this watery body? If the nature of matter is to move, how is it we work with this constant in our lives, in our own bodies?

As I read the *Sea Pots*, I imagine my body floating in the water “navigating the cross stitch” of this moving form, a buoyant container, porous sieve of flesh—its salt content akin to the sea—yet dense enough to sink. In this recognition of the movement of kinship, a “needling of time”, the reader is asked to hold on, lest we slip into the water and disappear. The poems remind us that our bodies are also water, precariously suspended in it.

In *Little Swimmers*, **Maggie Shirley** explores connectivity with locally sourced materials—beeswax and forest lichen—proposing an unconventional pairing that departs from the heteronormative models of reproduction. New life driven by an instinctual drive often emerges from intimacy between strangers. These collaborations are symbioses that form the foundation of emergent forms.

Shirley twisted and formed materials into small animated forms in a flocking pattern that suggests the flow of sperm towards an egg. They resemble a swarm, a pod, a herd—ribbons of energy—becoming, always becoming.

Lichen, perhaps one of the earliest colonizers of the planet, once covered vast expanses of Earth’s surface, converting bedrock to mineral substrates so as to allow other plants to take root. Its resilience lies in symbiosis: algae enable photosynthesis, while fungi provide the structural support needed to lift life up away from stone and toward the sun. Beeswax, produced collectively within the hive, forms the honeycomb that houses eggs and larvae, sustaining future generations.

Shirley’s combining of unconventional reproductive forces asks us to question what constructs and forces guide our chosen intimacies? And how do we form new alliances between our own species and another?

Hildur Jónasson contemplates rapidly disappearing old growth forests. Efforts to preserve them are overshadowed by profit-driven industries. Most Canadians have never stood beside an old-growth tree, yet the idea of one is mythic and lives in the collective psyche as a place of spirit and renewal, a monument of awe.

Hildur Jónasson engages this tension between reverence and loss, using all natural materials to make twenty-four prints from salvaged plywood. Jónasson calls her stitching the prints together “repair and care”, creating a suspended, multi-layered, quilt-like form. She made her ink from the charcoal of a fire-charred tree combined with a water-soluble binder. This considered sourcing of materials brings a personal narrative to the work, and a knowledge uniquely relevant to the area where she lives.

Old Growth Forest Meditation invites reflection on both the magnificence and ephemerality of old-growth trees. It asks us to pay attention to how we inhabit the world; its subtle tones of grey and delicate swaying give a ghostly presence. I am reminded of Jónasson’s Icelandic roots and how the work merges two disparate yet similar landscapes. Fragile, yes, but resilient too, the work reminds us that in the sixth extinction, it is we who will be gone.

Carol Wallace’s sculpture, *Seeing Through Stone* is an arrangement of delicate and translucent orbs, created through a process akin to casting. Beginning with the sewing of treated silk organza around small sacs filled with sand, the fabric is then steamed so it holds a rigid form. Once cooled, the sand is poured out and the sac removed, leaving behind a hollow orb as a vessel of memory.

Sand, granulated minerals of eroded rock, sourced from the beaches of Kootenay Lake, itself sourced from the surrounding mountains tells a story of container and contained. Wallace reflects on her own body, a casing, through which mineral nutrients move, forming an active interconnectedness with a place she inhabits and places beyond.

Wallace, a geologist and artist, invites us to reflect on matter. The phrase “rock solid” comes to mind, only to be undone by the image of sand released and the resulting hollow orbs—states of becoming that speak to impermanence. Time is Wallace’s material.

For **Jim Holyoak**, the imaginary is matter. Through fantastical images of the invisible, Holyoak draws the mythic realm into ecological discourse and material existence, recalling paintings by Hieronymus Bosch, shaped by stories carried on colonial ships returning from the so-called New World. The stories were speculative encounters with the Other, often imagined as monstrous. The meeting of the monstrous remains alive in Holyoak’s practice, inspired by what exists at the margins of natural history, science, and ecology. Creatures such as moths, micro-plankton, and bats occupy his most recent work.

Houses for Bat, two bat houses made from salvaged cedar, reference the ecology of home, the hibernaculum, as a site of refuge and protection. In light of the precarity of the bat population in British Columbia, threatened by habitat loss and white-nosed syndrome, this work functions as an act of care and compassion. The houses, intended for relocation into the forest, are adorned with pyrographic drawings of insects and moths—food sources for bats—to entice bat occupants. Holyoak proposes a world in which the monstrous is reimaged as a gift rather than a threat.

Marnie Temple’s *two sisters* tells a tragic story from the Middle Passage of the transatlantic slave trade: two sisters cross the ocean, one survives, the other dies. Because the ship must return with equal ballast, rocks are placed in the ship’s belly for return voyage, substituting human life.

In this installation, Temple begins with a base of rocks, gathered from her own land, part memorial, part foundation. The artist then works with a thin line of black fleece, entering into what she describes as a flow state, akin to automatic writing. The fleece moves across the rocks before it ascends to the ceiling to reach a disc of black fleece symbolizing the night sky—perhaps the sky that once guided ships in their passage. At this point, the fleece turns white, marking the sky with attentional drawings.

Earthen rocks and celestial sky, connected by a vertical line, reference a World Tree linking the underworld, earth, and heavens—or matter and spirit. Along this vertical axis, artist-like healers move between the unconscious and conscious realms. For Temple, the working of land-based and domestic materials into personal and ancestral stories creates a stream of connectivity in a passage of transformation and renewal.

Genevieve Robertson grew up living and working in forests of western British Columbia—an experience that continues to shape her art. She is drawn to the apocalyptic landscapes left by forest fires, sites of devastation, adaptation, and restoration. These environments exist in the liminal zone between life and death: a charnel ground from which new life emerges. It is here that Robertson sources her materials and aesthetic language.

Her process begins on site, and includes collecting, documenting, and recording of the burnt landscape. Returning to the studio, she mixes botanical and mineral materials she has gathered, with binders to make inks and paints.

The diptych, *Fireweed tətqmitp / tətqitəmlx*, (*Epilobium angustifolium*), emerged from this process. Fireweed, known for its resilience and adaptivity, thrives in disrupted and decaying soils across much of the Northern Hemisphere. A botanical shapeshifter, it alters its form depending on what is required by the environment in order to survive. By embedding parent material into the work as both actant and content, Robertson’s *Fireweed* celebrates what posthuman feminist scholar Rosi Braidotti identifies as the foundational qualities of matter—agency, intelligence, and self-governance—aligning her work with aspirations of new materialist thought.

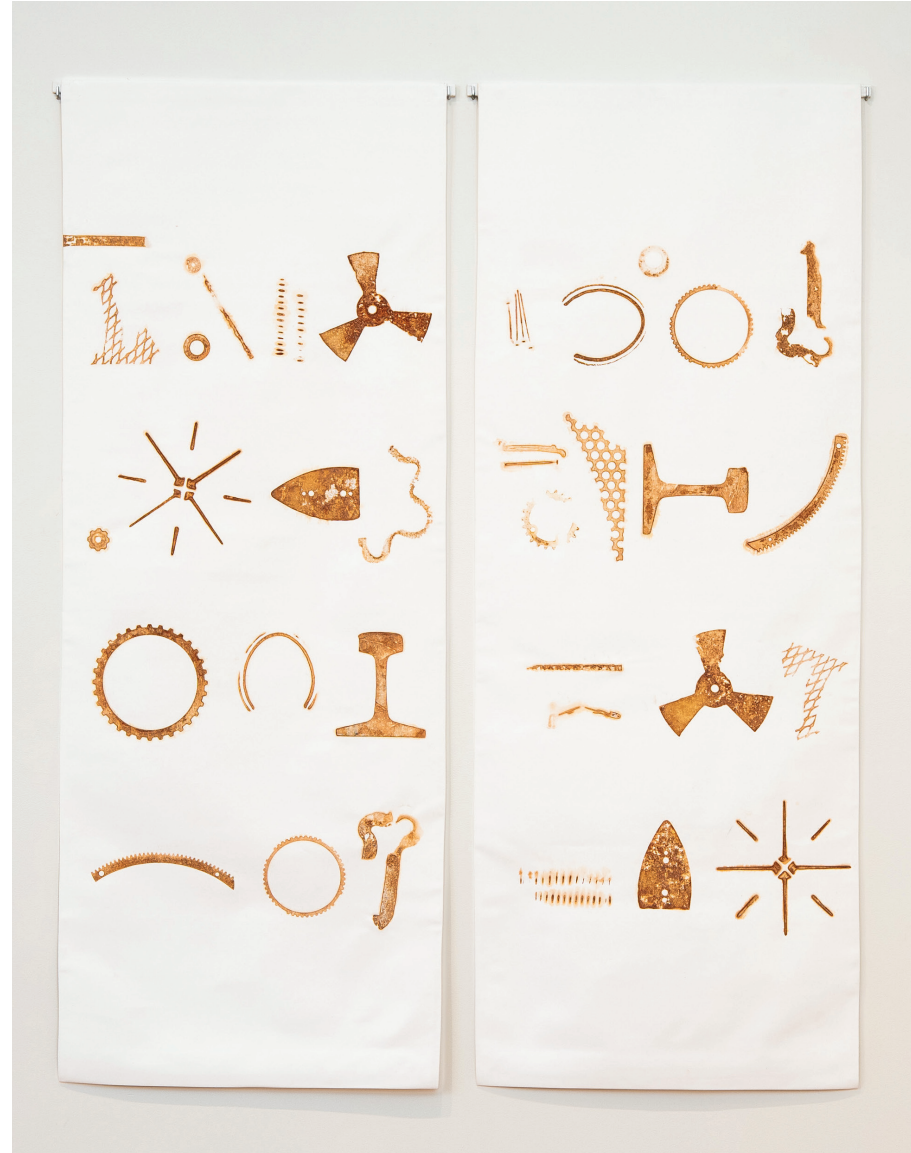
The artists in the exhibition *LOOT*, consider, how might we re-engage with matter in a world that is struggling to thrive under continuing colonialist agendas of power and wealth? How can we envision the materiality of art in a world on the brink of collapse? Can art with its intimate relationship to materials provide important new perspectives on matter?

—Deborah Thompson

Deborah Thompson is a visual artist living on unceded indigenous territory in the West Kootenay region of British Columbia. Her practice includes painting, drawing, sculpture, and stop motion animation. Through her work she investigates the agency of matter, somatic memory, and the mysteries that lie outside the birth-death spectrum.

She holds an Associates degree from the Ontario College of Art and Design (University), a B.A. in Cultural Studies from Prescott College, and an M.F.A. from the University of Montana. She has received awards for both her studio and curatorial work from the Canada Council for the Arts, British Columbia Arts Council, Columbia Kootenay Cultural Alliance, Osprey Foundation, and Canadian Museum Association.

Thompson has had solo exhibitions at Oxygen Art Centre (Nelson), Kootenay Gallery of Art (Castlegar), Langham Cultural Centre (Kaslo), Grand Forks Art Gallery (Grand Forks), Gallery Gachet (Vancouver), University of Nevada Art Gallery (Reno), and Nelson Museum Archives & Gallery (Nelson). She has been an artist in residence at the Banff Centre (CAN), Sitka Centre for Art and Ecology (OR), BoxoPROJECTS (CA), DRAWinternational (FR), and others. She is one of the founding faculty of the Oxygen Art Center (B.C.) and was the city of Nelson’s Cultural Ambassador for 2024.



Glyphs and Grammars
Rust on primed canvas, 2026
Diptych 23"x 60" each

SUSAN ANDREWS GRACE

If conventional writing demands that objects translate themselves into our terms, eco-asemics reverses that, demanding that we come to terms with a language that is to some degree familiar as a language—but it is not our language.

Asemic: The Art of Writing, Peter Schwenger, University of Minnesota Press, 2019

Over the last few decades, I've made a collection of rusty objects because I love to look at them. Lately, I've been making rust stains on cloth using these domestic and industrial objects to make glyphs or marks in a grammar of my invention, a sort of eco-asemic poetry on canvas scrolls.

In my practice, I often think of cloth as a stand-in for flesh. They are both tissues. In English the word tissue is used for the molecular construction of muscle or soft flesh in a slide dissection. In French, the word for biological tissue is tissu. Our animal tissues must have oxygen to live: without it we are dead in three minutes.

We combine the oxygen we breathe into our body's waters, blood, flesh, and bone. The corrosion of iron, and iron alloys such as steel, by oxygen and water to make rust, mimics what happens in our bodies over time. Our blood is reliant on iron mineral giving it a metallic smell and that rusty colour, especially when it stains cloth.

As we age, oxygen furthers corruption of our flesh. The longer we breathe, the sooner we die. In this work, I am coming to terms with life and death in Earth's language made by familiar and unfamiliar objects.

Susan Andrews Grace is a visual artist and poet of Irish settler ancestry, maintaining her practice in K̓y̓amlúp (Nelson, British Columbia) on S̓n̓s̓ay̓ckstx (sinixt) territory. Her visual art practice searches for the metaphysical in the ordinary, finding the poetic in the material; it includes textile installation, mixed media, and sculpture. Andrews Grace has received grants for her writing and visual art from B.C. Arts Council, Canada Council for the Arts, Saskatchewan Arts Board, and Columbia Kootenay Culture Alliance. Her work has been exhibited in public galleries in Canada over the last thirty-five years. Her seventh book, *The Waiting Bench*, will be released by Gaspereau Press, 2027. She was one of the founding faculty of Oxygen Art Centre in Nelson; she holds an M.F.A. in Creative Writing and a B.A. in Philosophy.

JIM HOLYOAK

I've included three discrete projects for the *LOOT* exhibition. I think of each of them as a gift.

Houses for Bats are a pair of bat houses to be donated to local parklands known to be frequented by bats in need of suitable habitat. These houses were constructed by Kenton Doupe (photographer/carpenter), with drawings burned into them using pyrography tools. Bats across Canada—including here in the West Kootenays—are at grave risk due to White-nose Syndrome, habitat loss, and other human-caused disturbances.

Baku & Bats are gargoyle-like, hand-drawn stencils that are meant to function in a similar way that decoy hawk silhouettes are used to protect birds from window collisions. The difference is that, rather than hawks, these images depict humanoid bats, moths, and my interpretation of baku (狨), mythic Japanese yōkai known to protect sleeping children by eating their nightmares.

Jim Holyoak's practice consists of drawing, ink-painting and writing, artists' books, and large-scale drawing installations. He received a B.F.A. from the University of Victoria, an M.F.A. from Concordia University, and was a student of master ink-painter Shen Ling Xiang, in Yangshuo, China. In parallel to his solo practice, Holyoak has orchestrated numerous collaborative drawing projects, often with fellow artist Matt Shane, and sometimes involving hundreds of people drawing together. His work has been exhibited widely, including at the Musée d'art contemporain de Montréal, La biennale de Québec, Tegnerforbundet (Drawing Association) in Oslo, KM21 (formerly the GEM Museum of Contemporary Art) in The Hague, the Latvian Centre for Contemporary Art in Rīga, the Carnegie Mellon International Drawing Symposium in Pittsburgh, and the Teckningsmuseet (Museum of Drawings) in Sweden. Holyoak has attended artist residencies in New York, Los Angeles, Mumbai, Banff, The Netherlands, Sweden, Iceland, Finland, and throughout Norway. His drawings and writing have also been featured in magazines *Dark Mountain* (issue # 26, 2024), *FUKT Magazine* (issue #21, 2023), *Esse* (2023 & 2017), and *Border Crossings* (2015). His work has also been included in books such as *Drawing in the Present Tense* (Thames & Hudson, 2023) and *Fire Season* (Anthology published annually by Amory Abbott and Liz Toohey-Wies, 2020). With flask publishing (Victoria), Holyoak recently released a 500-page, fully illustrated, fantasy novel entitled *Book of 19 Nocturnes*, as an alphabetized edition (26 / A-Z). Holyoak teaches remotely for Emily Carr University of Art + Design from the traditional, unceded territory of the s̓n̓g̓ay̓ckstx Sinixt Arrow Lakes peoples, in the town of Nelson, B.C.

The *Plankton of Coastal B.C. Colouring Book* is primarily intended as educational outreach material for distribution by marine biologists of the Hakai Institute. The drawings in this colouring book are based on photos of zooplankton specimens collected by research staff at the Hakai Institute using high-powered microscopes. Plankton are the foundation of the marine food web. Zooplankton are the ocean's infants; without babies, there are no adults. Studying—and drawing—plankton expands our imagination, because it is hard to care about what we cannot see or do not know exists.



Houses for Bats
Two bat houses built with salvaged cedar by Kenton Doupe,
pyrographic drawing by Jim Holyoak, 2026
29"x 18"x 2" each



Old-Growth Forest Meditation
Relief prints: foraged charcoal, starched Japanese paper,
waxed linen thread, 2026
112"x105"

HILDUR JÓNASSON

Plants are attuned to one another's strengths and weaknesses, elegantly giving and taking to attain exquisite balance. There is grace in complexity, in actions cohering, in sum totals.

—Suzanne Simard

Old Growth Forest Meditation is an installation constructed of starched Japanese paper printed with foraged charcoal and salvaged plywood. The sheets of paper are hand-stitched together using waxed, linen thread. The artwork is monolithic in its size and demanding presence, yet, also fragile in its transparency and weightlessness.

If you have ever visited an old growth forest, you will know that there is something inspiring and magical, giving one a sense of awe as well as a connection to nature. A quietness and stillness among these ancient giants can distort our sense of time and place. As humans, we are just beginning to understand the intangible powers of trees that speak beyond their harvest and utilization.

Analogue printed wood markings echo the forest industry (resource extraction) and emanates a sense of both industry (man-made) as well as the natural (wood grain of trees). The grid-like, serene quality of the work brings to mind artworks by Agnes Martin but also cutblocks—a defined area of forest where tree harvesting occurs. The stitching is the care and repair, an attempt to restore something broken, helping to heal.

Hildur María Hallgrímsdóttir Jónasson (she/her) was born and raised in Reykjavík, Iceland.

Hildur holds a Bachelor of Design from Alberta University of the Arts and a Post Baccalaureate in Studio (Printmaking) from Nova Scotia College of Art and Design University. In her art practice, Hildur investigates her relationship to nature at the intersection of the climate crisis, natural phenomena, and her Icelandic culture.

Jónasson self-describes as a “print centric”, multi-disciplinary artist. Her love of printmaking informs her art practice as she approaches her work with a printmaker’s eye. Jónasson’s work can range from small, jewel-like sculptures to large ephemeral print installations of ghostly glaciers.

Hildur has exhibited in Canada, Iceland, England, and the USA. Her work is held in private and public collections. Hildur has participated as artist in residence at The Banff Centre, The Arctic Circle Artist Residency, as well as SÍM (Iceland).

Hildur resides on the traditional, unceded territory of the s̓íŋəy̓ckstx Sinixt Arrow Lakes people, otherwise known as Nelson, B.C.

EIMEAR LAFFAN

long lines

of light

on the horizon

drift

inflect

stretch

rush

the ongoing splatter

the sea lion screed

the read

of water

on the wave

an enjambed hour

an amber wash

a grammar

needling time

sea pot no. 3, 2025

nomadic

barnacles

foam tides

footnote

navigate

cross-stitch

the long durée

the spindrift

an argot

the quotidian

attach

conjugate

theatre

like verbs

variables

in fog

sea pot no. 5, 2025

Eimear Laffan is the author of *[about]ness* (McGill-Queen's University Press, 2023), nominated for the Gerald Lampert Memorial Award. She has been a finalist for the Bronwen Wallace Award for Emerging Writers and the CBC Poetry Prize. With support from the Canada Council for the Arts, she is completing her second poetry collection. Her work appears in *Geist*, *The Ex-Puritan*, *Funicular*, *Scrivener Creative Review*, and the League of Canadian Poets' anthology *Spectral Lines*. Her writing explores language, perception, and the textures of lived experience.

GENEVIEVE ROBERTSON

On my first visit to Monument Creek Wildfire (cut block R14738E) in fall 2022, the steep slope was still smouldering. Stumps logged several years earlier were charred, and the seedlings planted to replace towering fir trees were burned completely, their slender black sticks poking out of ashen earth. All I could see was human-produced devastation from 135 years of industrial forestry and climate-induced wildfire. Over four seasonal cycles, I continued to visit Monument Creek Wildfire, located in the heart of ḥṣ̓əy̓ckstx (Sinixt) territory.

Fireweed, ṭəṭq̓m̓itp / ṭəṭq̓itəmlx, (*Epilobium angustifolium*) is one of twelve botanical paintings depicting plants found in *Monument Creek Wildfire*, each made with botanical and mineral inks from the site. While the landscape's biodiversity has been impacted by anthropogenic pressures, these plants helped me imagine time stretching beyond the current moment: a time scale that allows for ecological adaptation, restoration, and return. The titles include the plants' English and Latin names, to acknowledge the traditions of botanical drawing and classification. These terms are entangled with histories of British imperialism that partly shape the landscape's current condition. Each plant's ḥṣ̓əlx̓c̓iḥ

(Southern Interior Salish language spoken by the Sinixt) names and associated meanings honor human-plant relationships that go farther back and farther forward than any exploitative land management could. The Sinixt names speak to a specific place and its people, cultural resilience and language revitalization, and the practicality and wisdom in respectful, essential ecological relationships.

I learned these names under the thoughtful guidance of Christopher Parkin, Principal of the Salish School of Spokane, WA, assisted by Eileen Delehanty Pearkes, author of *Geography of Memory: Reclaiming the Cultural, Natural and Spiritual History of the Ṣiṣ̓əy̓ckstx (Sinixt) First People* (2022), and reviewed by Sinixt elder Shelly Boyd. I am thankful for their openness and support when I became interested in learning about Sinixt relationships to these plants. While my time visiting the fire was relatively brief, it was enough to expand my perspective beyond the desecration. These plants gave me insight into the balanced and sustaining ethnobotanical system that remains within this profoundly extracted place.

Genevieve Robertson (she/her) is an interdisciplinary artist of mixed European settler ancestry. Her practice is grounded in drawing/painting, and extends to video, installation, and various forms of collective work and collaboration. Often through place-based and materially engaged projects, her work explores the vulnerability, intelligence, and interconnection of the life systems of which we are part. Genevieve holds a B.F.A. from N.S.C.A.D. University (2009) and an M.F.A. from Emily Carr University (2016). She teaches part-time, and her work has been supported through exhibitions, publications, conferences, and residencies internationally. She lives and works in K̓y̓ṣ̓əml̓up (colonially known as Nelson, British Columbia) on Ṣiṣ̓əy̓ckstx (Sinixt) territory with her partner and twin four-year-olds.



Fireweed ṭəṭq̓m̓itp / ṭəṭq̓itəmlx, (*Epilobium angustifolium*)
Ink and paint made from magenta, fireweed, charcoal, carbonized soil, ochre rich soil, and saddened goldenrod on rag paper, 2025
Materials collected at Monument Creek Wildfire (cut block R14738E)
Diptych, 30"x 44" each



Little Swimmers
Old Man's Beard, beeswax, 2025
Dimensions variable 6'x6'



MAGGIE SHIRLEY

Evolutionary biologist Lynn Margulis is noted for, among other things, identifying and naming the process of symbiogenesis. Symbiogenesis describes a long-term relationship between organisms that results in evolutionary change. Margulis noted that the process of symbiogenesis is overshadowed in importance by the primacy of and favour given to hetero reproduction theory. David Griffiths, author of *Queer Theory for Lichens*, states that this lens has led to biases against queer bodies, practices, and communities.

Colonial capitalist culture has hand-picked a few ideas from Darwin's theory of evolution to justify itself. Competition triumphs over cooperation. Survival of the fittest is the chief rule. The winners in the evolution game are bigger, stronger, faster. This thinking ignores other possibilities in both evolution and in contemporary culture for the poetics and the efficacy of change created by the introverted, the soft, and the queer. Can we collectively envision a way forward that includes rather than holds power over?

Maggie Shirley (she/they) is a poly-media artist and curator. Her art work is based on thematic research into the human body, environment, and technology, primarily taking the form of installation and socially-engaging projects. Her work has been exhibited in Ireland, Canada, and Spain.

In 2007, Shirley was honoured to act as an Invigilator for the Irish Pavilion at the Venice Biennale. After obtaining an undergraduate degree from the Limerick School of Art and Design, Shirley returned to Canada and worked at the Banff New Media Institute (The Banff Centre). They graduated with an M.F.A. from UBC Interdisciplinary Graduate Studies in 2013. Shirley worked as the Curator at the Kootenay Gallery of Art for seven years and continues to do independent curatorial and writing projects.

Maggie Shirley is grateful to live in unceded s̓iŋač̓k̓stx (Sinixt) territory, (West Kootenay) where she currently works as Executive Director for the Castlegar & District Heritage Society. Shirley's art practice is both a sporadic and essential part of their life.

Little Swimmers imagines forest organics (bees wax and lichen) creating mutualistic relationships and interdependencies that evolve into new biological species. At the centre of the artwork is a lichen known as Old Man's Beard. Griffiths identifies lichen as a very queer organism. As a hybrid colony of algae and fungi, lichen teaches us new ways of creating with not just other species but with organisms in other kingdoms. Perhaps, as Griffiths proposes, we are all lichens. If so, does this give us the capacity to reach beyond our humanness to be a part of the evolution and growth of all beings?



two sisters
 Stones, fleece, thread, chloroplast, 2026
 Dimensions variable



MARNIE TEMPLE

I am a multidisciplinary artist who works primarily with textiles. I am biracial of African and European descent. My current research primarily focuses on the Transatlantic Slave Trade and how it intertwines with my lived experiences. The Middle Passage—the journey taken by 12.5 million Africans who were forcibly transported across the Atlantic Ocean to the Americas—is traced throughout many of my installations.

I also have a creative letter writing practice that I use to connect to the paternal side of my family and ancestors. This engages me with an examination of enslaved life. The process culminates in large-scale drawing installations that mostly use textiles to interpret a history that is new to me. I have arrived at a time where I see a different world - and specifically what it means to be living in the Black Diaspora.

Being the firstborn of a teenage mom, who was given no choice to raise me, led to my adoption. With adoration, I acknowledge and honour my first mother of European descent, who endured extraordinary circumstances that led to my birth. I recognize and accept my biological father who is of African descent and a descendant of the Transatlantic Slave Trade. As a biracial woman, adopted and raised in a white family, it is vital to explain my genealogy because it has been a process of discovery that informs my work deeply and is ever-unfolding.

Marnie Temple is a multidisciplinary artist based on the traditional and unceded territory of the Ktunaxa Nation, a.k.a. Creston, B.C. Her practice draws from lived experiences and engages the viewer in a process of self-exploration with otherness and attitudes around racism. Temple constantly looks at ways to interrupt current thinking and investigate the interconnected ways we harm each other or leave each other behind. Temple received a B.F.A. from the University of Calgary and is a recent M.F.A. graduate of Emily Carr University. Her artistic practice is at times shared with her responsibility as a Director at the Empire of Dirt Residency.

CAROL WALLACE

Silk organza sewn into translucent cobbles suggests multiple iterations of matter. In looking at stone one sees the past, the present, and the future. Stone tells a story of a time that is not ours; like the 200 million year old volcanic island that is now folded into a mountain belt just west of Kaslo, or the fifty million year old fault, a conduit for hot mineral-rich fluids which cooled into silver that lured settlers to the area. The rocks that surround us today are in the process of becoming other rocks, well beyond our time here; eroded, transported, buried, solidified, melted, and folded over and over again.

I think about where the minerals that occupy and sustain my own body come from. I purchase food grown in soil from Mexico in the winter and the Slocan Valley in the summer. The geography and geology in my blood, bone, and tissue extends far beyond our local mountains, connecting me to other places.

Carol Wallace is a visual artist of Scottish ancestry, privileged to be living and working on the tum xula7xw/traditional territory of the sn̓c̓ay̓ckst̓x/Sinixt, otherwise known as Nelson, B.C. Her art practice includes drawing, painting, textile and sculptural installation informed by Earth's ongoing processes, unimaginable timescales, and the agency of stone. Carol holds a degree in Geology from the University of Calgary (1992) and worked as a geologist for twenty years locally, and in the Yukon Territory and Ellesmere Island. Since 2014, Carol has focused exclusively on her art practice and has been active in arts culture in her community, including six years as a board member with Oxygen Art Centre. She has received financial support from the Canada Council for the Arts and Columbia Kootenay Cultural Alliance.

Connection to place through stone is at the core of my art practice. The sewn "cobbles" in the *LOOT* exhibition are translucent, light, and fragile. Stitched veins, dykes, and fractures cross-cut topography and folds of fabric. These stones must be handled with care. The viewer is invited to see beyond the opaque, heavy, and dense rocks they are familiar with and reflect on the porosity, persistence, and possibilities in stone.



Seeing Through Stone
Silk organza, thread, 2025
30"x 30"x 10"

WEATHERING TOGETHER

ASTRIDA NEIMANIS & JENNIFER MAE HAMILTON

Adapted from *How to Weather Together: Feminist Practice for Climate Change*, Bloomsbury, 2026

If it feels safe for you to do so, close your eyes.

Take a deep breath in and out.

To whatever extent it feels possible, start to pay attention to your body.

Feel yourself grounded and in your body.

Notice what part of your body is in contact with the chair, the ground, or floor.

Feel yourself supported by this connection.

You are supported by the ground and the planet beneath you.

Now notice the weather. What is the weather in this room?

Where is the weather? Can you sense it on your body? How and where is it touching you? (Is it in your hair? Is it in your hands? Is it in your gut? Your feet?)

Notice as the weather swirls and rests, pulses and subsides—in, through, and as your body.

What does it feel like? (Is the weather hot? Is it cold? Is it moving? Is it dry? Is it damp?)

Notice the weather on, and in, your body.

How is this weather *you*?

Return to where you are grounded in your body (perhaps in your back if you are lying down, or your sit bone if you are cross-legged, or in a chair. Maybe it is in your feet).

Feel the weight of the weather. And as you feel this, perhaps you can start to feel yourself begin to fall deeper into that ground— through the floorboards of this built structure, through the foundation, and into the earth it rests on.

Remembering to breathe in, and out, as your breath allows you to drop more deeply into the ground.

You are falling into the dirt, other decaying matter, oxygen, nitrogen. Old leaves, and plants, insects and worms. You are falling into and past the traces of S̓iŋaŋckstx, Syilx and Ktunaxa lifeways, buried deep and also still here. Can you feel yourself falling deeper, feeling the cold, but also the warmth of the spirit of nupika wu'u? What is the weather here? How is the weather in and around you here?

Can you sink even deeper?

Can you sink into the complex tectonic and magmatic history of this place's deep time? Through lead-zinc carbonate-hosted deposits, past fingery veins and sparkling traces of copper, silver, gold? Can you find your way deeper still, into the tumultuous movement, tremendous heat, and massive pressure of the slow-motion collision that formed what we now know as the Omineca Belt? Can you sink into time immemorial, back to when this place was ocean?

Breathing deeper. Moving deeper. What is the weather? How is the weather of your body connected to this deep time weather of all the time and all the weather that has ever been?

Breathe in. Breathe out. Breathe in the weather of this Land, older than time itself.

How is this weather also you?

When you are ready, slowly open your eyes.

In a time of climate change, weathering means recognizing our own bodily vulnerabilities and working towards more equitable shelter for bodies, human and not. Weathering is feeling the weather change us—on and in our bodies—and noticing how we are changed differently depending on who we are, where we are, and what we have been asked to endure. Weathering is making it through, together. Weathering also means we, too, are weather-makers: we weather other bodies through the atmospheres we create.

Weathering as feminist practice for climate change is a life practice, and a commitment to a life of certain practices. We offer exercises like the one above (adapted from our script on “Cosmic Weathering”) as a way of building ephemeral, community-scaled infrastructures that we believe can help us both notice the weather, and the different ways it weathers all of us. Weathering together means seeking a different and better distribution of both shelter and vulnerability in these troubling times. These exercises are often quaint and playful, but taken further, weathering promises serious, large-scale, long-term change: a total revolution by bodies and slowness.

By weathering in this expansive way, we aim to sense which agencies need to be revered and which ones need to be resisted. From this place we can sense the heat and sense the cool, and ask what it does, while refusing the way powerful regimes try to mimic the weather, protect their interests, and oppress us in the name of nature. Some weather is nothing if not change beyond our control. Some weather is the effects of fascism. Agencies that seek to control change may say they have our best interests at heart because they care for our losses, while they might just be monetizing the chaos.

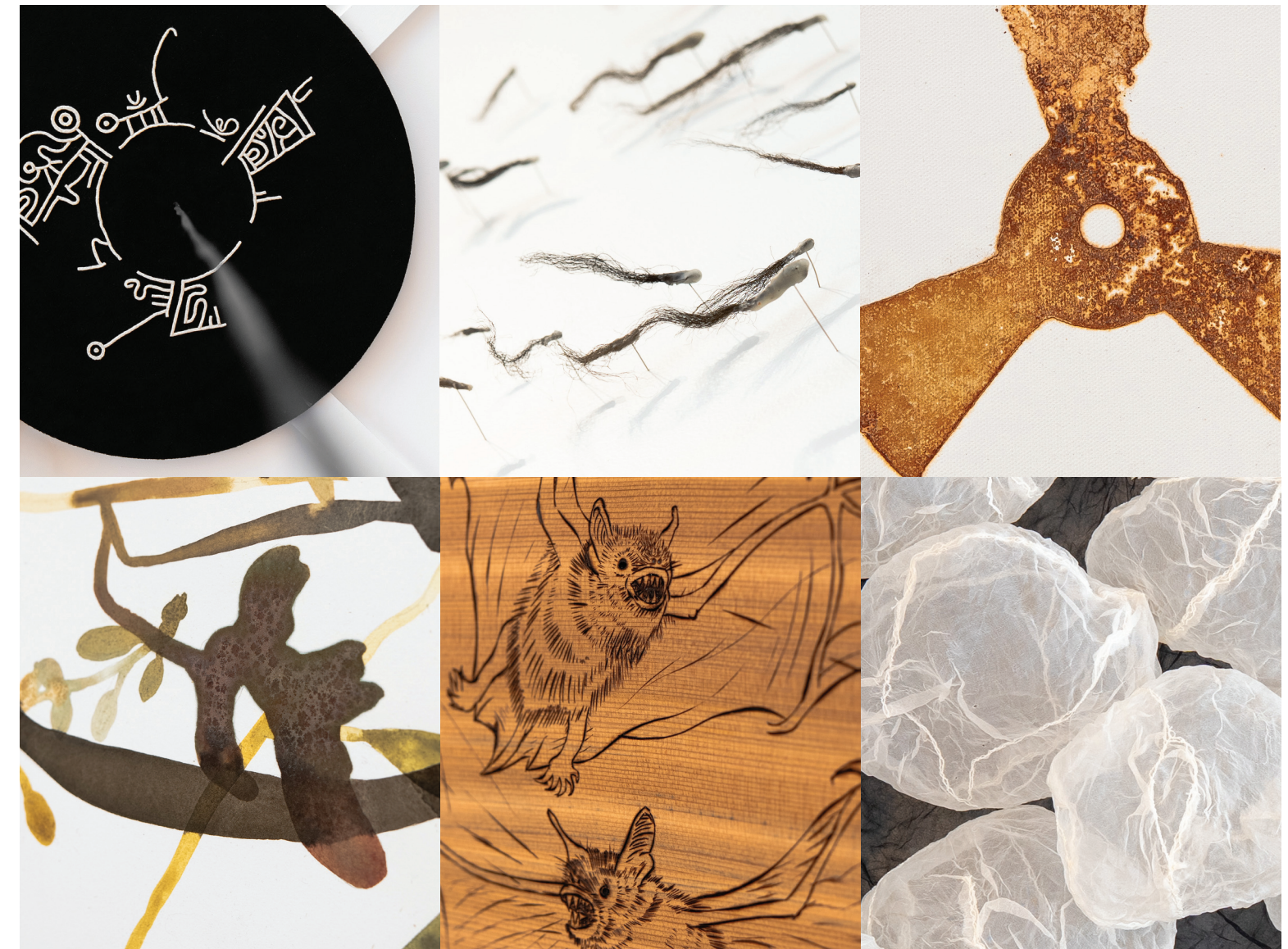
But some weather comprises community, beauty, and joy, as well. Weathering also means redistributing pleasure as a specific kind of shelter. In particular, we want a redistribution of ‘the pleasure of those most impacted by oppression’, but we don’t want disposable luxury. As adrienne maree brown clarifies for us in *Pleasure Activism*, ‘moderation is key.’¹ We need to ‘learn how to sense when something is good for you, to be able to feel what enough is’. If the weather were perfect all the time, we’d get bored. And anyway, too much heat causes heat stroke, and too much cold shuts down our vital systems.

Sitting in this room, with people and feelings and words and weather and histories that are new to many of us (at least on a cosmic scale), on lands and waters that will nurse us all if we let them, under a sky that can shelter us all if we let it, on a wildly spinning planet that will outlast us all, breathing in, sinking down, breathing out, floating up... we are all simultaneously big and powerful and small and insignificant. We pursue the pleasure of this paradox. Of breath entering and exiting. Of bodies sharing.

Of weather, of weathering, always.

¹brown, adrienne maree. *Pleasure Activism: The Politics of Feeling Good*. AK Press, 2019.

Astrida Neimanis is Canada Research Chair in Feminist Environmental Humanities and Associate Professor at U.B.C. Okanagan, on the unceded lands of the syilx people. As a practice-led, feminist theorist, Astrida writes about water, weather, and bodies, often in collaboration with artists, scientists, writers, and other community members. They are the author of *Bodies of Water: Posthuman Feminist Phenomenology* (2017), and co-author (with Jennifer Mae Hamilton) of *How to Weather Together: Feminist Practice for Climate Change* (2026). Astrida is also Director of The FEELed Lab—a feminist environmental humanities creative research lab in Kelowna, B.C.





LOOT: Orienting to Matter
Deborah Thompson, Curator

Susan Andrews Grace, Jim Holyoak, Hildur Jónasson, Eimear Laffan,
Genevieve Robertson, Maggie Shirley, Marnie Temple, Carol Wallace

Photos courtesy of the artists

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