

ARTbeat

ART HISTORY & VISUAL STUDIES GRADUATE ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER

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*Emily Carr, Tanoo. Q.C.I., 1913, Oil on Canvas, 170cm x 110cm, Royal BC Museum, Victoria.
Read excerpts from Visual Impetus on Page 2*

A WORD FROM THE AHVS GRAD ADVISOR, Catherine Harding

Here we are, at the end of another interesting year of the pandemic. Let's hope that we are finally emerging into a newer, positive space of transformation as health restrictions loosen and we imagine a new 'normal'. It's been an amazing year. Our students, staff, sessionals and faculty have demonstrated great resilience as we conducted our research, probed new disciplinary perspectives and thought deeply and carefully about the discipline of Art History & Visual Studies in light of the recommendations of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, and the need to de-colonize our institutions and worldviews.

I'm so impressed with the graduate students in this department, with their commitment to creating the annual Visual Impetus conference, as one of the highlights of the year. I would also like to give a huge shout-out to the student team that is leading the work on the next issue of ARTiculate. I'm watching as this group of leaders imagines how to update the technological platform for the journal, as well as introduce new forms of scholarly contribution to make ARTiculate current, relevant and accessible to as many readers as possible. Although I haven't been able to attend many AHA events this year, I am also keenly aware of the wonderful work of our former alumni, who continue to bring extraordinary richness to our departmental culture.

It's time to recognize how important each one of you are to the shared sense of what the department can be, in terms of creating a vision together. You really are an amazing group of researchers and community-builders, and I am so proud of how you have made the department the best it can be in 2021-22.

My best wishes for a more 'normal' summer, filled with new dreams and research plans.

Dr. Catherine Harding, Grad Advisor | email: charding@uvic.ca



WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU

The ARTbeat Editorial Team is always looking for updates from the department to share with our community. Do you have an interesting project to share, has your research unmasked exciting new prospects?

Please get in touch with questions, comments or story ideas. Email the team at: artbeat@uvic.ca

Highlights from Visual Impetus: Witnessing Emily Carr

Professor Kerry Mason, MA Northwest Coast Arts, University Of Victoria | Edited by Sarah Roberts MA Student

In January 2022, we hosted our 25th annual graduate conference, "Visual Impetus, Art as Witness: Challenges and Opportunities". We were thrilled to welcome as our keynote speaker Professor Kerry Mason, an expert on Pacific and Northwest Coast Art, art consultant, curator and author.

When the ARTbeat team gathered to discuss the theme for our Spring edition, Mask/Unmask, Professor Mason's keynote address came to the forefront of our minds. In a captivating address, Professor Mason revealed a new vision of Emily Carr. The beloved artist was re-imagined as an intrepid explorer and bright, expressive, young painter. Professor Mason beautifully traced Carr's extraordinary voyage down the banks of the Skeena River and across the shores of the Haida Gwaii. Carr documented abandoned First Nations Villages, revealing the devastation of colonial practices and unveiling a new perspective of the Northwest shoreline. The following excerpts have been published here with the generous permission of Professor Mason.



Emily Carr, Skedans, 1912. Oil on canvas, 89.5 x 148 cm, Private Collection.

"Internationally significant artist and writer Emily Carr described her relationship with First Nations people as an honor and a privilege"

Carr's appreciation, deep interest and affinity for First Nations cultures remains strong from her earliest memories to her final canvases. Carr's passionate attachment to British Columbia includes the First Nations of it and her spiritual quest includes the understanding of First Nations peoples' relationship with the Northwest Coast environment.

Carr's summer trip to Alaska in 1907 was pivotal. Travelling by steamship she visited Alert Bay, Campbell River and Prince Rupert en route. The Kwakwaka'wakw culture in Campbell River and Alert Bay had a profound effect: "The people and their Art touched me deeply." Travelling down the Coast Carr committed to her artistic mission: My mind was made up. I was going to picture the totem poles in their own village settings, as complete a collection of them as I could."

In July 1912, with her favorite sketching partner, her dog Billie, Carr embarked on an ambitious sketching trip; not only to Alert Bay but further North to the remote (and in many cases abandoned) villages of Haida Gwaii and the Tsimshian and Gitxan villages of the Skeena River of Northern BC. Travelling back down the Skeena, Carr crossed the Hecate Strait to Haida Gwaii. From Masset she took the 5-day steamer tour down the East coast of the islands to Jedway in the South. Carr extended her trip from the base of Skidegate where she hired William and Clara Russ, a Haida couple from Qay'Innagaay to take her by boat to the abandoned villages of Cha-Atl, Heina, Cumshewa, Tanu, and Skedans. Carr also travelled across Masset Inlet to Yan and Ka-Yang by Haida canoe paddled by a Haida woman with her baby between her knees.

In these villages Emily Carr gathered a wealth of material which would be a recurring focus throughout her prolific career. They are confident paintings; oils composed of thick, rich strokes of color from a loaded brush. Carr gives us what no historic photographs from 1912 can: the color. Bold composition, assured technique and vibrant color characterize Carr's 1912 art.



Emily Carr, Totem and Forest, 1931, Oil on Canvas, 129.5 cm x 56 cm, Vancouver Art Gallery.

Excerpts from Mason, Kerry, "Emily Carr, an Honor and a Privilege", Art History and Visual Studies Graduate Conference Visual Impetus 2022, Art as Witness: Challenges and Opportunities, 22 Jan. 2022, University of Victoria, Victoria, B.C.

Professor Kerry Mason is the author of two volumes *Sunlight and the Shadows: The Landscape of Emily Carr*, and *The Life and Art of Arthur Pitts (1889-1972)*. To date she has curated twenty-seven exhibitions on the work of Emily Carr and has contributed to numerous exhibition catalogs.

View Professor Mason's teaching profile at the School of Continuing Studies.
<https://continuingstudies.uvic.ca/instructor/71217>

Despite dreadful weather in the summer of 1928, Carr revisited Skidegate and Skedans. En route she had returned to several Kwakwaka'wakw as well as other Haida villages. From Haida Gwaii Carr again traveled the Skeena to Gitxan communities and for the first time reached the Nass River and Nisga'a villages. Works from this period, indicate she is consulting both the 1912 and 1928 sketches, incorporating all she has learned along the way from the Russes, Newcombe, Lawren Harris and her own extensive reading.

In *Totem and Forest*, Carr's passion for both the landscape and First Nations culture is clear. This painting of the frontal pole, which she had first sketched in Haida Gwaii and then revisited in Prince Rupert in 1928 after its relocation, is a legible record of Charles Edenshaw's family pole in which the Birth of the Bear clan is clearly articulated. Carr juxtaposes the pole with its natural environment, the forest, and invites us to consider the opening of the pole as the door into the forest, uniting First Nations subject matter and the environment in which it arises. Stylistic changes, especially the handling of light, reflect the influence of Mark Tobey as well as Lawren Harris.

Carr's paintings of 1928 show a strengthening of her main purpose. Capturing the essence of her subject with smooth, sweeping brushwork she emphasizes the important and eliminates the extraneous details. Employing an expressionist style, she concentrates on volume and form.

Other major works of 1929-1931 include *Vanquished*, a strong statement of the abandoned village of Skedans, Haida Gwaii. Here is more evidence of Carr integrating her passion for First Nations cultures and the landscape of BC. It is a political statement about the realities facing Haida people. The Haida mortuary poles are being reclaimed by Nature, the village in mourning. Smallpox had virtually wiped out this village. It is an homage. Through the symbolism of the powerful landscape and beams of light shines a message of hope for renewal.



Emily Carr, Vanquished 1930, Oil On Canvas, 92x 129cm, Vancouver Art Gallery.

Faculty Spotlight: Dr. Carey Newman

AUDAIN PROFESSOR OF CONTEMPORARY ART PRACTICE | IMPACT CHAIR IN INDIGENOUS ART PRACTICES

By Rashana Youtzy, MA Student



Screenshot of Newman detailing the experience of meeting Nulis in Germany.



Screenshot of Newman discussing two iterations of the Nulis mask during the webinar.

Unmasking Meaning: Culture, Collection and Family

With Kim Dhillon, Carey Newman and Monika Zessnik

On Wednesday, January 26, 2022, art theorist and writer Dr. Kim Dhillon moderated a conversation between multidisciplinary artist and educator Carey Newman (Impact Chair in Indigenous Art Practices at UVic) and curator Monika Zessnik (North American Collections, Ethnologisches Museum in Berlin). Newman and Zessnik had explored the history and understandings of the Nulis mask.

Newman detailed his first encounter with the Nulis mask at the Museum of Ethnology Dahlem in 2012 (now housed at the Humboldt-Forum building). The experience was one of joy from meeting an ancestor accompanied with the deep sadness of disconnection as a result of seeing them behind glass. Within Western institutions, masks have been conserved out of care for their aesthetics, rather than their spiritual and cultural meanings. In Newman's community they are animated; they are active, they engage in dance, and can rest after being sung to sleep. However, in the setting of museums, they are rendered static and contained, unable to participate with their community.

While the Museum of Ethnology Dahlem may have had the intent of showcasing a myriad of anthropological material, the reality is that best practices have not been applied to the objects in institutional care. For example, had Nulis stayed within its community, it would have participated in potlatches, been recognized and cherished by their family, and have the opportunity to return to the earth. Instead, Nulis is deprived of rest and has been conserved out of care of its aesthetic. As a result of conservation efforts, Nulis cannot be handled or make facial contact.

Through this conversation, we are reminded that decolonization is an ongoing project and not something that can be instantly rectified with people being appointed to institutional positions. Nulis' journey explores how museums regard objects as possessions, collecting cultures without taking into consideration the community from which they have been extracted. Further, the conversation pushes us to consider our responsibilities moving forward. How can we be respectful and maintain acts of care?

View the conversation here: <https://gatewaytoart.uvic.ca/2022/01/27/unmasking-meaning-culture-collection-and-family/>

Student Spotlight: Jessica Ziakin-Cook

AHVS MA Student Jessica Ziakin-Cook has been teaching post-secondary art and art history courses at the Vancouver Island School of Art for the past four years.

By Anna O'Meara, PhD Student

Jessica Ziakin-Cook has been teaching post-secondary art and art history courses at the Vancouver Island School of Art for the past four years. Students include a broad range of socio-economic and educational backgrounds. The Vancouver Island program strives for critical engagement and considers contemporary theoretical approaches to art and art history. Among Jessica's courses are a two-year survey course approaching art from the Baroque, late 19th and throughout the 20th century. In addition she teaches Figure Drawing and Creative Development. The latter was of particular interest, creative development, as Jessica defines it, is best explained as developing spiritual and meditative practices in order to foster the creative process. A course design based on Jessica's deeply personal experience of uncovering, "unmasking" the therapeutic power of art for herself.

Bringing the concept of spirituality into the discussion, Jessica understood that such a private and personal topic of exploration may make her and others vulnerable. This is especially true in the arts space, which so often

tells the story of Modernism as one of increasing secularization. Naturally, exploring art through such personal aspects of psychology would necessitate a nurturing environment. Cultivating this environment and a classroom persona, Jessica realizes that, in the past, she prepared material that would invite students to listen. However, in Creative Development, she truly allows her students to "unmask." Holding space through silences, encouraging tolerance for uncertainty, and facilitating discussion, she finds the classroom space can become its own social entity; a Zeitgeist that, ultimately doesn't entirely belong to her or her students, an organism of its own.

Historical topics seem new to many seeing them for the first time, and they flow in "a river we're still in": feminist thought, writings about the commercialization of war—what a privilege to provide students material to discuss for, sometimes, the first time! Sometimes, such conversations can be challenging, but "academic integrity is honesty," which has encouraged Jessica to embrace her own identity and ideas in the classroom as well as the identities of her students.

Nevertheless, Jessica recognizes the effect of the teacher/student power dynamic. Remembering when she was an undergrad, she finds herself in a new role where it can be confusing to not be perceived as a student among peers. This authority is a responsibility for Jessica; one that can be approached collaboratively, but also a role where she feels compelled to share valuable feedback and support, even if sometimes to give the best guidance you can't sugar-coat things. Students deserve more than to be treated like consumers, and Art History has more political and social weight than distant connoisseurship. Ultimately, Jessica is in the process of discovery, unmasking her identity as a teacher with the question: "How do I strive for integrity?"



Portrait of Jessica Ziakin-Cook. Reprinted with permission of Jessica Ziakin-Cook.

"Holding space through silences, encouraging tolerance for uncertainty and facilitating discussion, the classroom space can become it's own social entity."



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Visit Jessica's website to find out more about her current research activities and view her portfolio:
<https://onlineacademiccommunity.uvic.ca/jzcook/>

In Memoriam: A Tribute to Dr. Anthony Welch

By Behrang Nabavi Nejad, PhD, Art History Faculty, Capilano University



*Dr. Welch and me after my doctoral oral defence. December 8, 2017.
Department of Art History and Visual
Studies. University of Victoria.*

**My heart, sad hermit, stains the cloister floor
With drops of blood, the sweat of anguish dire;
Ah, wash me clean, and o'er my body pour Love's generous
wine!
The worshippers of fire
Have bowed them down and
magnified my name,
For in my heart burns a living flame,
Transpiercing Death's impenetrable door.**

Poem from the Diwan of Hafiz, translated by Gertrude Lowthian Bell (Heinemann, London, 1897), Poem XIII

Professor Anthony Welch, in opening his chapter on the allegorical representations of mystical love in Persian painting, embraces the words of Hafiz, quite appropriately, as any passionate admirer of Persian literature and art would do: his passion was transpiercing. As an undergraduate student of Persian art in Iran, I had read and admired Professor Welch's works of scholarship on Persian painting.

Years later, one snowy afternoon at the University of Toronto, during a Persian mystical poetry class, Professor Maria Subtelny inquired about my unusual inattentiveness, and hearing about my future uncertainties, pointed out "Tony can help." As it happened, Tony was the great scholar whose work was for us, the students of Persian art, our companion. That introduction provided me with the honor of receiving Dr. Welch's inspiring and passionate mentorship and supervision for several years that were spent on examining the illustrated pages of Persian manuscripts, gazing at the vibrant palette of Sultan Muhammad, admiring the calligraphic lines of Reza Abbasi, piecing together the heads of monsters on the rocky formations of the Shah Tahmasp's manuscript of the Shahnama, and debating over whose Simurgh is the most glorious. Dr. Welch's most favorite was the second rendition of the mythical bird by Sadiqi Bek Afshar. At times, this quest appeared as an endless tangent, only conciliated by Dr. Welch who believed a hermit should wander in the valley of love, should be infatuated with the subject of devotion, with these paintings. To him, this was the beginning of the journey. This was how Professor Welch trained his students: unorthodox and impactful.



Dr. Welch was captivated by these paintings. The shiver of joy in his voice was undeniably recognizable at times when he recalled his firsthand examination of a sixteenth century painting of the Simurgh by Mir Seyyed Ali, or the four illuminating Simurghs on the Shamsa of the Shah Jahan's album at the Aga Khan Collection. His hearth burned with a living flame of love for these paintings, and he certainly passed down the flame to us, his pupils. As an educator, I cherish the love entrusted in me and strive to keep the flame burning; to be, within my limits, similarly inspiring to my students, as Dr. Welch was to his. When I was approached to write this note as a tribute to Dr. Welch's memory, I knew I could not possibly add any remarks to his scholarly achievements and invaluable contributions to the field of Islamic art, Persian and Mughal painting in particular. His colossal body of work is known and celebrated by his colleagues, contemporaries, and many generations of students of Islamic art. Thus, in my failing to illustrate a true scholar, I invite all the students and practitioner of art history to join me in raising our cups of love's generous wine, bow down, and magnify the memory of a great man, Professor Anthony Welch.

*Attributed to Sadiqi Bek, The Simurgh Carries Zal to her Nest, Shāhnāma manuscript of Shah
Abbas, Qazvin, 1587-97, 31 x 23.5 cm. Chester Beatty Library, Dublin, Ireland (Per 277.12a).*

Legacy Downtown Gallery Review

By Sophie Ladd, MA Student

BODY LANGUAGE: REAWAKENING CULTURAL TATTOOING OF THE NORTHWEST

Organized by the Bill Reid Gallery of Northwest Coast Art.

Curated by Dion Kaszas and the main exhibit on show at the Legacy Art Gallery unmask the topic of historic and contemporary cultural tattooing in the Pacific Northwest. The show consists of 5 Indigenous artists, examining regional tattooing practices. Body Language has created a space for artists to reflect upon how the practice of tattooing communicates cultural knowledge and belonging through connections to traditional art, clothing, and practices. This exhibit unveils to the world that cultural tattooing is still valued and is now actively being revived by a new generation of artists in Indigenous communities.

On a wall panel, alongside their image and Indigenous Identity, each artist has shared a quote to engage connections with their audience. As seen below, Artist Dean Hunt, (Heiltsuk), states his intentions for the work in this exhibit: to reawaken a tattooing tradition that has been forgotten for far too long.

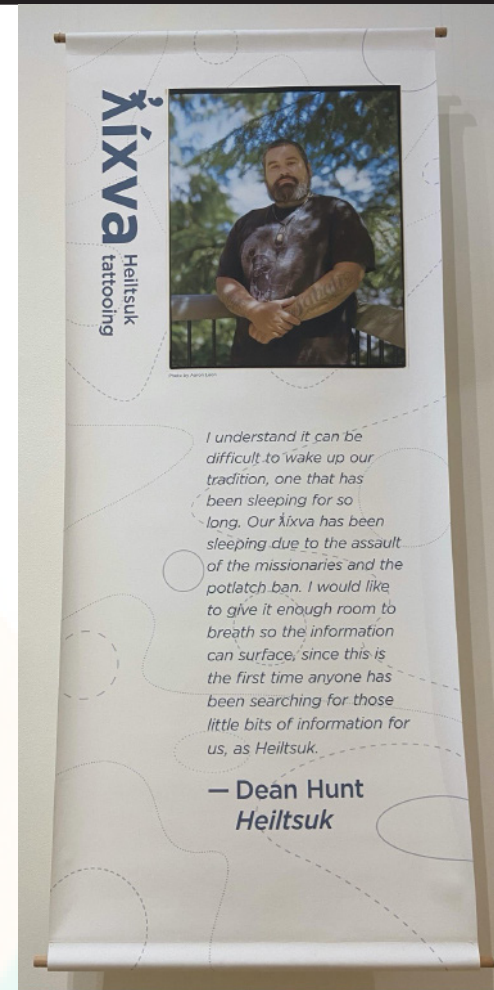
DERRUMBEAT: THE BEAT OF COLLAPSE

Derrumbeat surrounds your senses to bring attention to the traces humans leave behind in nature. The mixed media exhibit, housed in the second gallery, involves two sonic collages of natural noises and digital beats. Every round is unique, as the sounds run on individual loops. Along the walls are mounted photographs and a continuous video of abandoned buildings in Havana, Cuba. Derrumbeat surrounds your senses to bring attention to the traces humans leave behind in nature. The exhibit unmask these abandoned buildings to generate awareness of building decay and layers of cultural meaning that lay dormant within our communities, hidden in neglected spaces.

The exhibit offers visitors an opportunity to interact with a sound mixer situated in the middle of the gallery. Viewers can alter the emphasis of sounds in the audio, completely transforming the experience of the artwork.



"Body Language", 2022, Installation. Photography by Sophie Ladd.



"Body Language", 2022, Installation. Photography by Sophie Ladd.

Legacy Gallery Downtown
Victoria

630 Yates Street

online: www.uvic.ca/legacygalleries
contact: legacy@uvic.ca

Body Language was exhibited from January 22-April 9 2022.
Curated by Dion Kaszas
Organized by the Bill Reid Gallery of Northwest Coast Art.

Derrumbeat: The Beat of Collapse was exhibited from January 22-April 9 2022.
Curated by Dr Alexandrine Boudreault Fournier (UVic Anthropology)



Vol. 4, Spring 2022, University of Victoria



ARTiculate Volume 4 Now Available

We are very excited to provide an update on the latest edition of *ARTiculate*, our peer-reviewed graduate academic journal! With Volume 4, the Editorial Team decided to move from a single publishing date to a system of “continuous publishing”. This enables us to provide shorter academic pieces, including exhibition and book reviews in a timely fashion.

Recently, we published a book review by Katayoun Youssefi and an Account of Practice by Jenelle Pasiechnik. Access these texts at:

<https://journals.uvic.ca/index.php/articulate/index>

You will also find a recording of our recent workshop presented by Dr. Erin Campbell on crafting publishable book reviews for academic journals. In addition to smaller texts, the team is also busy revising a number of fascinating and thoughtful academic articles and preparing the papers for the peer-review process. Soon you can look forward to a bundled edition of Volume 4, including all of the aforementioned articles.

In other exciting news, the AHVSGA Board is Working with Dr Melia Belli Bose on a themed edition of *ARTiculate* based on an upcoming South Asian Art History Conference to be held in June, 2022. More announcements to come.

Terry Rodgers, Editorial Board (Volume 4)

COMING UP IN FINE ARTS

Exhibition. *Breaking the Mold*. Organized by Natasha Reid. Opening reception Wednesday April 20, 6-8pm.

Exhibition runs from April 16 - June 20, 2022. Legacy Downtown Gallery, 630 Yates St. legacy@uvic.ca

ORION Series Lecture. Steven Mannell, “*Living Lightly on the Earth*”: Building an Ark for Prince Edward Island, 1974-6.

Wednesday April 27, 11.30am. Zoom. Register online: https://uvic.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_t8cwaFcmT4O8ohC8zwSoNA

Workshop. *With the Seasons. A Storytelling and Drawing Art Hive*. Sponsored by McClure Gallery, Montreal.

Saturday May 28, 11-3pm. Stories and drawing with Inuk artist-curator Asinnajaq 11am-12pm. Drop-in multi-media art-making with Natasha S. Reid 12-3pm.

Legacy Downtown Gallery, 630 Yates St. legacy@uvic.ca | arthives.org

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www.finearts.uvic.ca/historyinart/graduateassociation

About ARTbeat

ARTbeat is created by the Art History & Visual Studies Graduate Association twice annually to share news and updates from our academic community. Questions or ideas? We'd love to hear from you! Email us at: artbeat@uvic.ca

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