

ESKER FOUNDATION
Winter/Spring 2022



WELCOME

With optimism and trepidation, we step into 2022 ready to adjust and shift with the inevitable changes the next 12 months are bound to bring. To account for potential disruptions to our opening hours, Esker will continue with just two main space exhibition seasons this year. We are hopeful these extended exhibition dates will allow more time for these exhibitions to be experienced and celebrated.

Despite the ambiguity of what 2022 will deliver, our colourful exhibitions and programs for this season are sure to rescue us from some of this persistent melancholy. Curated by Esker's Elizabeth Diggon, the three main space exhibitions with artists Farah Al Qasimi, Michelle Bui, and Veronika Pausova, all share an interest in colour and form, in histories and modalities of image-making, and the ways in which images and objects become imbued with meaning.

Farah Al Qasimi: *Letters for Occasions* speaks to the complexities of negotiating overlapping cultures and multiple contexts simultaneously. This exhibition brings together new and recent photographs that consider the story of her family's migration between Lebanon and the United States through an intimate focus on accumulations of everyday objects and ephemera. Michelle Bui: *Naked Excess* presents recent photographic work that reflects the processes of accumulation, presentation, and eventual decay that mark our relationships to seemingly mundane items. Sensual and sensorial, her images point to the negotiation between our understanding of ourselves and the objects that we accumulate. Veronika Pausova: *Fast Moving Sun* draws on figurative imagery to tell diagrammatic short stories that mine the territory between animation and stasis, with a unique visual vocabulary of objects and fragments that evolve between paintings with a logic specific to the artist.

In the Project Space, Vivek Shraya's photo installation, *Legends of the Trans*, continues this artist's contribution to larger conversations about representation and marginalization in both diasporic and trans communities. Best viewed after dark, *Legends of the Trans* remains on view through 6 February. Just in time for Valentine's Day,



a new installation by Ashley Bedet will open, with a focus on the particularly special quality of light in Mohkinstsis (Calgary) and Southern Alberta. This project will continue until 5 June.

In the Bridge Space *TIPI_LOOPS.dreamwaves*, a collaborative project led by writer, artist and community activator, Kaitlyn Purcell and emerging artists Brendon Many Bears and Joey Big Snake, with contributions from Purcell's UCalgary students Jeremy Bobosky, Maci Jordan and Laurencine Saddleback. This audio-visual digital art installation will continue until 1 May.

For updates and details on all of our programs and events, opening hours, and exhibitions please visit our website, Facebook, Instagram, or Twitter (all @eskerfoundation), or drop by the gallery—we look forward to seeing you soon.

All the best from the Esker team.

Farah Al Qasimi, *Majlis Goat*, 2021. Archival Inkjet Print. 30 x 40 inches. Courtesy of the Artist; Helena Anrather, New York; and The Third Line, Dubai.

Cover image: Michelle Bui, *Naked Excess*, 2022 (detail). UV print on vinyl. Dimensions variable. Courtesy of the artist.

Back Cover: Veronika Pausova, *Scent Charm*, 2018. Oil on canvas. 18 x 15 inches. Courtesy of the artist, and Bradley Ertaskiran, Montréal. Private Collection.

EXHIBITION

Farah Al Qasimi

Letters for Occasions

29 JANUARY – 26 JUNE 2022 [EXHIBITION LINK](#)

Farah Al Qasimi's photographs speak to the complexities of negotiating overlapping cultures and multiple contexts simultaneously. Her work considers the global circulation of popular culture and the process by which objects or images are coded with meaning. Lush and textural, Al Qasimi's photographs possess a heightened quality that veers towards the uncanny. While her subject matter appears legible and familiar at first, her images transcend the realm of the ordinary and confuse the boundaries between perception and representation.

Letters for Occasions, a site-specific, photo-based installation, brings together new and recent photographs that layer multiple personal and familial narratives through images of private spaces and material ephemera. The installation interweaves the story of Al Qasimi's maternal family's migration from Lebanon to the United States with images taken in the United Arab Emirates, where her father is from, and where the artist was raised and continues to live part-time.

Al Qasimi spent much of the 2020 lockdown in her aunt's home in the northeastern US. Delving into her maternal family's photo albums, material archive, and personal anecdotes, she researched their emigration from Lebanon in the 1950s and the contours of their lives in the US. She scanned and

re-printed photographs, postcards, menus, or translation book covers and physically collaged them together with objects and material fragments to create layered compositions that she subsequently captured photographically.

In her research, Al Qasimi paid particular attention to seemingly insignificant, everyday objects, mining them for insights into what her family cared about, what they chose to surround themselves with, and the cadence of their daily lives. *Kimball Hotel, Springfield*—named for the hotel where Al Qasimi's grandmother worked as a cook amongst other Lebanese women—offers a glimpse of a hotel dinner menu layered over a hand-written postcard. Strawberries and shrimp are scattered across a draped sea-foam tablecloth. Their presence alludes to her grandmother's discovery that she was allergic to both foods through her work preparing the lunch buffet, and to some of the dishes —shrimp cocktail or strawberry salad—that were popular with hotel guests at the time.

Farah Al Qasimi, *Kimball Hotel, Springfield*, 2021. Archival Inkjet Print. 70 × 50 inches. Courtesy of the Artist; Helena Anrather, New York; and The Third Line, Dubai.



Farah Al Qasimi,
*Anood in the Guest
Bedroom*, 2020.
Archival Inkjet Print.
40 × 30 inches.
Courtesy of the Artist;
Helena Anrather, New York;
and The Third Line, Dubai.



Interspersed are photographs taken in both the Emirates and the US that offer fragmented glimpses into private realms. These images explore the language of adornment and its relationship to identity, probing the ways in which we construct self-image through our surroundings. Conversations and commonalities emerge between photographs, evoking a visual language of domesticity, privacy, and interiority. This visual language is intensely unique to the artist and her family, but it also transcends geographic and temporal specificity. The psychedelic 1970s floral wallpaper backgrounding a partial image of Al Qasimi's aunt resonates with similar images in countless family photo albums.

Though the body appears rarely, and only in fragments, a ghostly human presence pervades *Letters for Occasions* through images of a residual handprint on an upholstered sofa, or a recently abandoned plate of chickpea shells. *Six Different Screams*, the installation's most visceral depiction of the body, began as a lockdown-driven attempt to spot signs of COVID-19 on Al Qasimi's tonsils and transformed into a documentation of the artist screaming into the camera. These images offer a brief glimpse of rage or desperation, most immediately about the uncertainty of the pandemic, but more significantly about Al Qasimi's urge to understand her familial history through her own biology and DNA. At the same time, *Six Different Screams* aesthetically echoes the pinks and mauves seen in the interior décor of other images, implying that these material fragments are as significant and revelatory as a biographical or indexical history. In this sense, *Letters for Occasions* can be read as Al Qasimi's

attempt to document the intangible and the ephemeral. The installation's component images and fragments together reflect the intergenerational reverberations of migration, the labour of women in establishing roots in a new place, and the complexities of intertwined familial narratives.

This exhibition is part of **Exposure Photography Festival 2022**.

Biography

Farah Al Qasimi (b.1991, Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates; lives and works in Brooklyn and Dubai) works in photography, video, and performance. Her recent commission with Public Art Fund, *Back and Forth Disco*, was on view on 100 bus shelters around New York City in 2019 and 2020. Her work has been featured in exhibitions at Jameel Arts Centre, Dubai; the San Francisco Arts Commission, San Francisco; the CCS Bard Galleries at the Hessel Museum of Art, New York; Helena Anrather, New York; The Third Line, Dubai; The List Visual Arts Center at MIT, Cambridge; the Museum of Contemporary Art, Toronto; and the Houston Center for Photography, Houston. Al Qasimi received her MFA from the Yale School of Art. She has participated in residencies at the Delfina Foundation, London; the Skowhegan School of Painting and Sculpture, Maine; and is a recipient of the New York NADA Artadia Prize, the Aaron Siskind Individual Photographer's Fellowship, and this year's Capricious Photo Award. Her work is in the collections of the Museum of Modern Art, New York; the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York; the Guggenheim Abu Dhabi, UAE; Tate Modern, London; Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago; Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Cambridge; Huis Marseille, Museum for Photography, Amsterdam; Bowdoin College Museum of Art, Brunswick; and NYU's Grey Art Gallery, New York.

Farah Al Qasimi, *Joy*, 2021.
Archival Inkjet Print.
70 x 48 inches.
Courtesy of the Artist;
Helena Anrather, New York;
and The Third Line, Dubai.

EXHIBITION

Michelle Bui

Naked Excess

22 JANUARY–26 JUNE 2022

[EXHIBITION LINK](#)

Michelle Bui’s photographs reflect the processes of accumulation, presentation, and eventual decay that mark our relationships to seemingly mundane items. Sensual and sensorial, her images point to the negotiation between our understanding of ourselves and the objects that we amass. In the same breath, they cause us to question our appetite for these objects, this excess, in the first place.

Her materials are gathered primarily from the aisles of grocery, hardware, or craft stores; venues where a seemingly endless array of objects co-exist, ready to be purchased, consumed, and discarded en masse, ordered only by what the artist calls “the detached pragmatism of consumerism.” Once these objects find a place in Bui’s studio, she parses their formal or material kinships and assembles them into temporary, fragile assemblages that sometimes exist just long enough to be photographed before they collapse, disintegrate, or even decompose. Viewed through the lens of a camera, and subsequently printed at an enormous scale, Bui’s material subjects are divorced from their original purpose or context and distilled down to their intimate, sensory qualities.

In the East Gallery, a series of larger-than-life photographic images meet at the intersection between still life and commercial photography. Bui assembles objects and ephemera and photographs them against acidly colourful backdrops. In *Baby’s Breath*, delicate floral sprigs are placed among inflated latex gloves atop a blue shag carpet. The yellow daisies in *Happy Like Doris Day* co-mingle with intestines and bone-like ceramic against lurid red vinyl. These uncanny images are by turns seductive, repulsive, surreal, and humorous. Bui’s heightened use of colour, texture, and scale and the familiar visual language of commercial photography provoke desire before we fully comprehend the image, or even despite that comprehension.

Bui’s process of gathering and manipulating is heightened and abstracted in her “wet-cooked” photographs, or images that capture an arrested moment within a longer process of material transformation. She intuits the membranous, porous, formless affinities between flower petals, pig’s

Michelle Bui, *Naked Excess*, 2022 (detail).
UV print on vinyl. Dimensions variable.
Courtesy of the artist.



bowels, stone fruits, latex gloves, and other banal objects that elude recognition. These materials are combined and subsequently physically or chemically altered. They may be gently folded and intertwined, layered between panes of glass or sheets of plastic wrap, submerged in gelatine, or crushed beneath the weight of a rolling pin. Pearls, candies, or salmon roe are sometimes collaged above, serving as painterly punctuation. These assemblages are inevitably transient and precarious; the act of cooking hastens the decomposition of already fragile materials, and adds an element of unpredictability to Bui's process. Bui catches this transformation at an ideal moment of suspension, her materials teetering on the precipice of dissolution.

In *Naked Excess*, the exhibition's newest work, a series of composite images plaster the walls of the West Gallery like a billboard. The images offer a tangle of material fragments that walk an imperceptible line between organic and synthetic, real and artificial, familiar and alien. Printed on textured vinyl at a scale that matches the gallery's architecture, *Naked Excess* foregrounds the touch, smell, and sound of Bui's alchemical processes. Central to Bui's practice is the concept of haptic visuality, a theory developed by Laura U. Marks which describes the potential for a visual medium to appeal to the senses so strongly that "the eyes themselves function like organs of touch."¹ In a moment where the lion's share of our visual interactions are consumed

rapidly on hand-scale screens, the scale and sensory overwhelm of Bui's images is simultaneously seductive and unsettling. The fallible, malleable, sensorial body emerges as a throughline across Bui's work. Referenced, but never directly represented, our bodies are evoked within the ragged, translucent flower petals, fragments of white ceramic, and latex gloves that appear, transform, and degrade across each image. If what we consume serves as a reflection of who we are, then Bui's enmeshed compositions gesture simultaneously towards the precarity both of our vulnerable bodies and of the excesses of our habits of consumption.

Naked Excess was produced with support from the Canada Council for the Arts and the Esker Foundation Commission Fund.

This exhibition is part of **Exposure Photography Festival 2022**.

BIOGRAPHY

Michelle Bui is a Montreal-based artist working in photography and sculpture. Her work revolves around the inseparable conjuncture between material culture and identity, opening it to a shifted place where sensory identity can unfold. Recent solo exhibitions include *Spilled Plenitude*, Franz Kaka, Toronto (2020); *Centerfold*, Parisian Laundry, Montreal (2019); *Plein Soleil*, Circa, Montreal (2019); *Pool of Plenty*, Galerie de l'UQAM, Montreal (2018). Selected group shows include Maison de la culture Claude-Léveillé, Montreal; Paul Robeson Galleries at Rutgers University, Newark; Projet Pangée, Montreal; Vu Photo, Quebec City; Galerie Antoine Ertaskiran, Montreal, Galerie Nicolas Robert, Montreal. Bui completed her MA at Université du Québec à Montréal and at Beaux-arts de Paris, and her BFA at Concordia University.

Previous page, left: Michelle Bui, *Baby's Breath*, 2019. Pigmented inkjet print on paper. 90 × 60 inches. Courtesy of the artist.

Previous page, right: Michelle Bui, *Loop*, 2019. Pigmented inkjet print on paper. 90 × 60 inches. Courtesy of the artist.

Left: Michelle Bui, *Naked Excess*, 2022 (detail). UV print on vinyl. Dimensions variable. Courtesy of the artist.

¹Laura U. Marks, *The Skin of the Film: Intercultural Cinema, Embodiment, and the Senses* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2000), 162.

ARTIST TALK WITH MICHELLE BUI

Thursday 17 February, 6-7pm MST

Join us for an online artist talk and conversation with artist Michelle Bui, facilitated by Curator Elizabeth Diggon as they discuss Bui's artistic practice and her exhibition.

EXHIBITION

Veronika Pausova

Fast Moving Sun

22 JANUARY–26 JUNE 2022

[EXHIBITION LINK](#)

Painter Veronika Pausova draws on figurative imagery to tell diagrammatic short stories—hands grasping, noses sniffing, fruit flies teeming—that mine the territory between animation and stasis. These figurations form a cast of recurrent characters that evolve within and between compositions with a logic unique to the artist. Spiders with pearl-like bodies appear to be dancers in one painting, earrings in another.

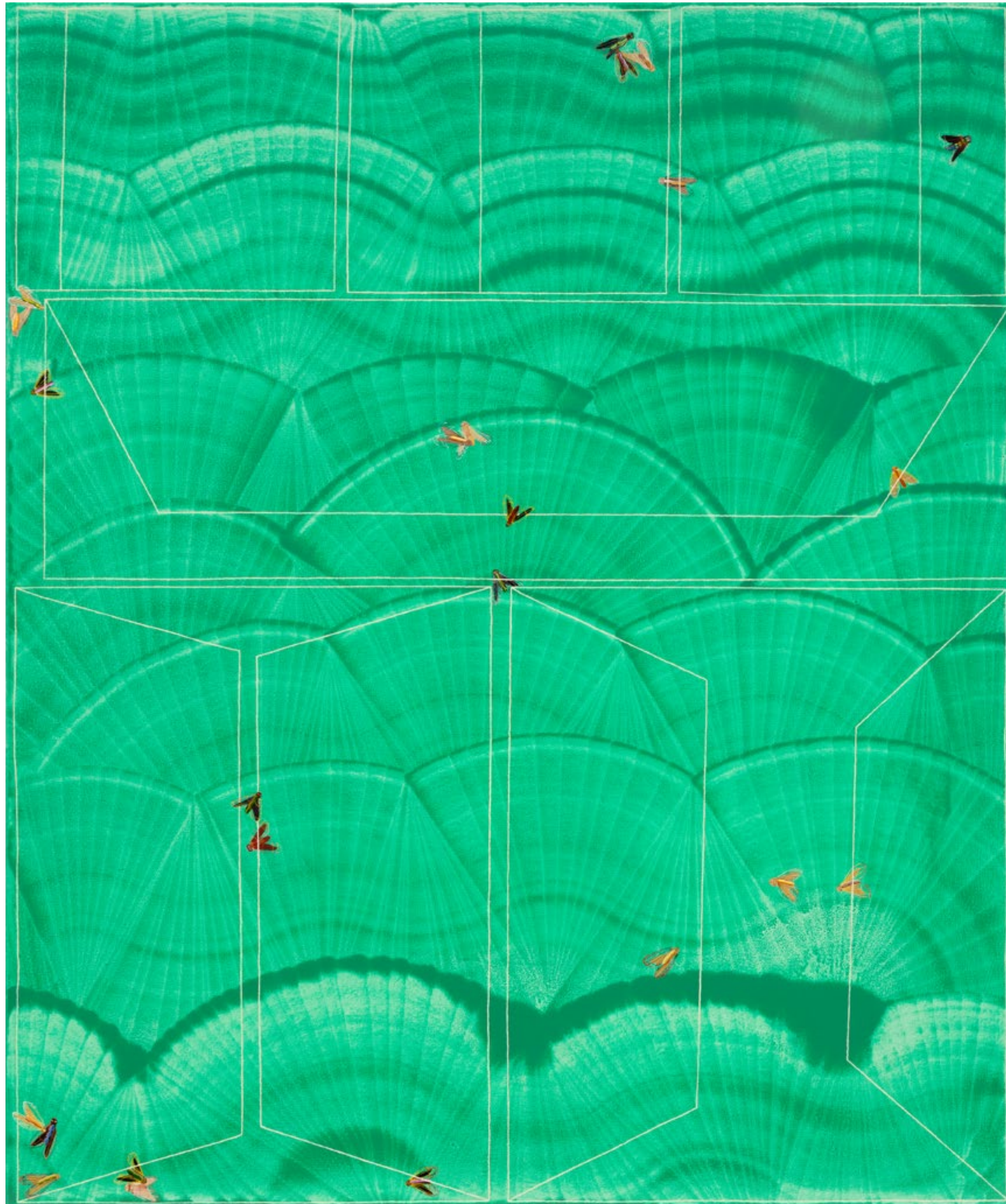
In *Flaneuse*, these spider legs devolve into a frieze of walking boots, each of which is punctuated with a single, photo-realistic big toe. A nail-bitten finger parts an unseen curtain, or emerges from a garden hose. Sun-burnt legs pace across a painting, or rest against the edges of the canvas beneath a gushing shower head. The elements of Pausova's visual vocabulary are in perpetual transformation, existing across a continuum of possible states, places, and times.

Her paintings deftly intertwine these figurative elements with surreal abstraction and graphic surface detail. The many disembodied hands in *Partly Cloudy* pull on slated shades to block the light from a fast moving sun. Several hands have dropped to the bottom of the frame, grasping at nothing. Pausova's use of repetition warps our sense of time—is this the same hand, grabbing incessantly at different moments? The shades and sun are both abstracted

with geometric surface detail so as to meld into one another; architecture and atmosphere becoming one. The alchemy of these combinations destabilizes the spatial and temporal logic of Pausova's paintings and complicates the relationship between seeing and knowing.

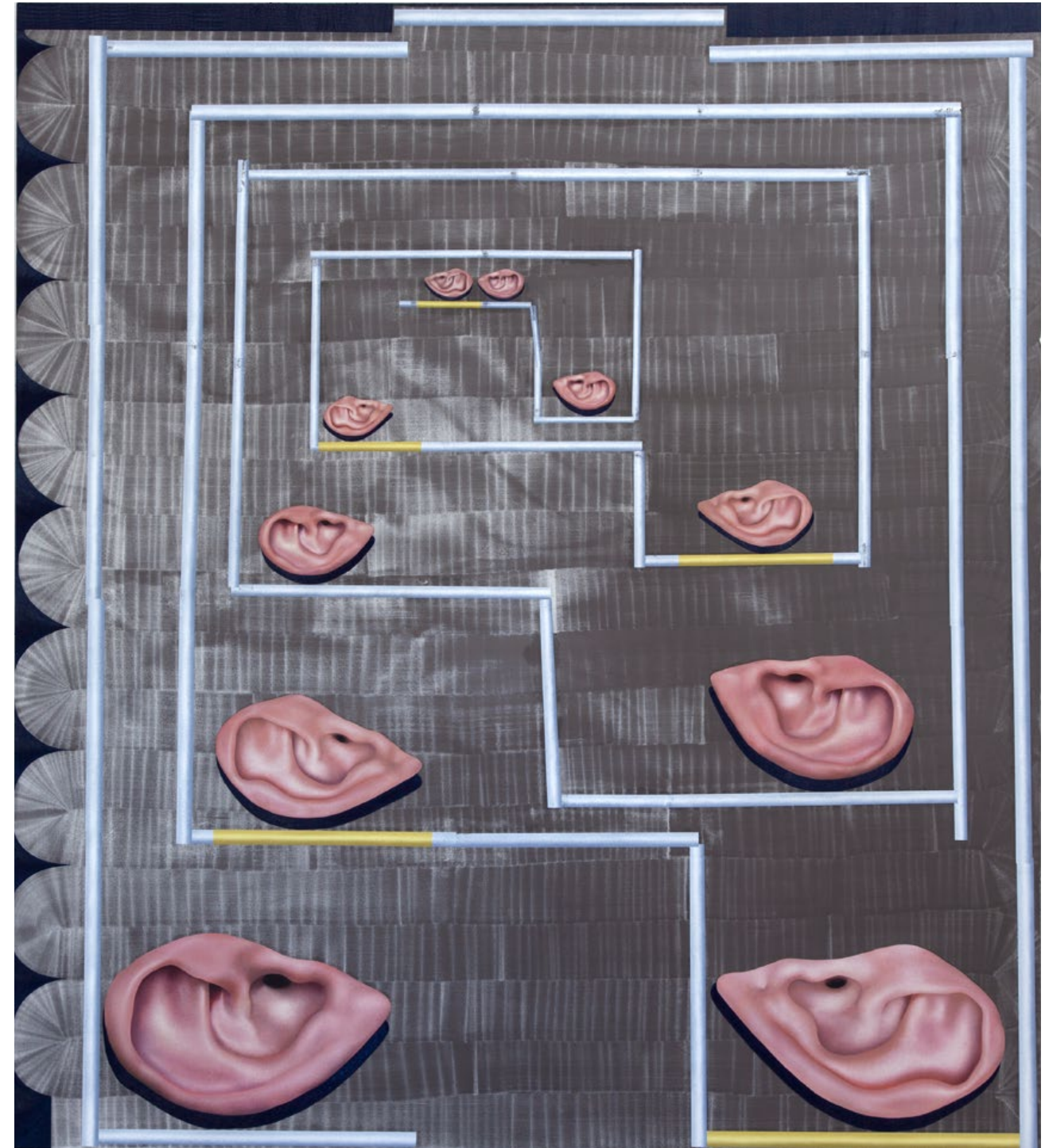
Pausova's paintings are the result of a process of slow observation, experimentation, and problem-solving. In her newest work, oil- and turpentine-soaked fabric is pressed onto the canvas to create a residual surface texture—a strategy akin to surreal decalcomania, a transfer technique employed by early 20th century surrealist artists such as Max Ernst as a means of introducing an element of chance to a composition. The idiosyncrasies of the resulting surface detail inform the architectural logic of the painting and the selection and choreography of Pausova's figurative elements—each additive layer serves as a response to the last and informs the next.

Veronika Pausova, *Days*, 2020.
Oil on canvas. 36 × 30 inches.
Equitable Bank Art Collection.





Veronika Pausova, *Partly Cloudy*, 2021.
Oil on canvas. 75 x 67 inches.
Courtesy of the artist, and Simone Subal Gallery, New York.



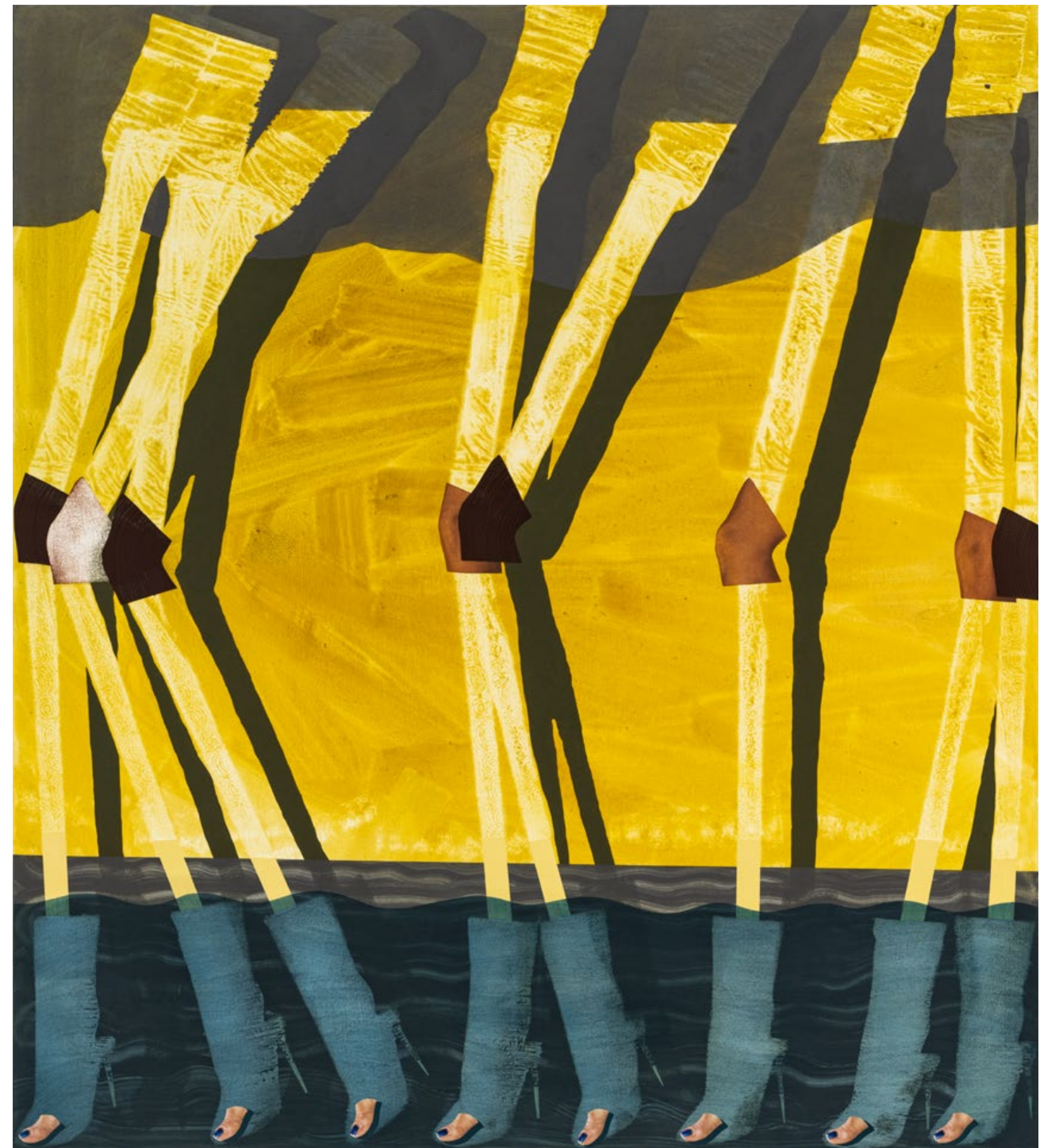
Veronika Pausova, *Playing the Organs*, 2021.
Oil on canvas. 75 x 67 inches.
Courtesy of the artist, and Simone Subal Gallery, New York.

Her vocabulary of recurrent figurative characters emerges from periods of intense, prolonged looking. Objects, images, or fragments are selected intuitively for their formal qualities and kinetic potential. A shoe might appeal for how it interacts with light and shadow, an ear for the way its edges and contours lend it a resemblance to a seashell or a mouth, a hand for its capacity to imply movement, anxious energy, or a tender gesture. After plotting out their placement by hand with cut-out maquettes, Pausova's photo-realistic renditions of these objects or fragments then animate the abstracted portions of the painting, lending narrative logic to the abstracted ground. Cumulatively, each painterly layer directs the action of the story, "character" and "set" serving as mutually constitutive parts of a theatrical whole. In this sense, each painting is both a formal challenge for the artist to resolve, and a visual manifestation of conversations between figure and ground, abstraction and figuration, improvisation and control.

In keeping with Pausova's process, her paintings demand slow and sustained viewing. Her work eludes a straightforward interpretation – our reading shimmers between her surreal short stories and her adept manipulation of colour and form. At the same time, the movement implied within each painting serves as an invitation for the viewer. We can feel the anxious impulse that leads to endless grasping within our own bodies, or the sensorial result of sniffing a flower or grabbing an orange at the bottom of a bag. While the body is never represented earnestly or in full, its many quirks and mannerisms, gestures and senses, desires and fetishes are a continual anchor point across Pausova's painterly universe.

BIOGRAPHY

Veronika Pausova was born in Prague, Czech Republic and lives and works in Toronto. She received her BFA from Glasgow School of Art in 2009 and her MFA from Virginia Commonwealth University in 2013. Recent solo and two-person exhibitions include *Playing the Organs*, Sunday Painter, London (2021); *A to C*, Simone Subal, New York (2019); *Busy Bodies* at Parisian Laundry, Montreal (2018); *drawing the curtain*, Hunt Kastner, Prague (2018); *Age me a Heavy Twig*, Franz Kaka, Toronto (2018); *Forest House* at Tatjana Pieters, Ghent (2017); and *Chests in the Current* at Motel Gallery, New York (2016). Select group shows include *My Cartography*, The Erling Kagge Collection, Santander Art Gallery, Madrid (2020); *If I have a body*, Remail Modern (2019); *On Anxiety*, Cleve Carney Gallery, Chicago (2018); *An Assembly of Shapes*, Oakville Galleries (2018); *Line and Verse*, Andrehn-Schiptjenko, Stockholm (2018); *RBC Canadian Painting Competition 2017*, National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa (2017).



Veronika Pausova, *Wading Sun*, 2021.
Oil on canvas. 75 x 67 inches.
Courtesy of the artist, and Bradley Ertaskiran, Montréal.



Vivek Shraya

LEGENDS OF THE TRANS

18 OCTOBER 2021 - 6 FEBRUARY 2022

[EXHIBITION LINK](#)

This photographic work, inspired by the 1994 film *Legends of the Fall*, continued Vivek Shraya's queering of performance, photography, and storytelling to reflect an open-ended and ever-evolving notion of herself and the immense value of non-conforming role models.

For Shraya, whose combined practices blur the arbitrary and limiting boundaries between music, literature, visual art, theatre, and film, making is a way to disrupt these hierarchies and break the rules.

Installation view of Vivek Shraya's
Legends of the Trans, 2021.
Photo by: John Dean.



Tristan Ludlow, the central character in the original film and the inspiration for Shraya's photographs, is an unpredictable and unreliable rule breaker. For a young Shraya, just 13 when the film came out, Tristan's flaws, his free-spirit, emotional depth, enviable long hair, and incessant lovability made a deep and lasting impression. While at first glance the filmic Tristan can be dismissed as a cis-gendered tragic hero whose toxic masculinity does only damage, Shraya's reading shifts this character into a more nuanced, fluid light. The re-imagining of him through her brown trans body celebrates the gender and socially non-conforming aspects of this character that a standard reading of this film misses, making Shraya's Tristan a more contemporary icon worthy of devotion.

Legends of the Trans consists of 22 photographs projected in an endless loop, accompanied by music from the original soundtrack, and vinyl text that fills a street-facing window. The quintessentially cinematic score combined with the photographs accentuate the romantic sensibility of both, but Shraya only allows this conventional love story to hover on the surface of the work. The text introduces the two characters: Tristan and the anonymous admirer, She, both played by Shraya. The queering of plot and character and the positioning of Shraya at the centre gestures towards the rejection of traditional gender

roles in favour of simultaneously presenting both feminine and masculine aspects of all three players: Tristan, She, and Shraya. The final words of the text supporting this parallel twinning and entwining of biographies; "She'd also lived somewhere between this world and others, one foot in, the rest of her out. But for now, she had returned to Alberta, wearing Tristan's hair."

Tristan wears a bindi in each photograph, a gesture that adds further complexity to the work and Shraya's reading of the original film. Frequently worn by South Asian women, the bindi is placed in middle of the forehead to represent the third eye, symbolically connecting the wearer to universal consciousness. Tristan's bindi stands in stark contrast to the work clothes and hat that the character wears throughout the photographs. In one of the most alluring images, Tristan appears up close, hat and shirt removed, hair damp, perhaps from swimming or sweaty from physical labour. The intimate focus on Tristan's face and blue bindi evokes the vulnerability of Shraya's initial encounter with the filmic Tristan in 1994, as a young person looking for love and acceptance. In drawing on a semi-autobiographical narrative, Shraya creates space for conceptions of self-representation, South Asian diaspora, and brown trans women that are fluid and endlessly open. Shraya's contribution to larger conversations about representation and marginalization in both diasporic and trans communities underscores the epic importance rule-breakers have in telling stories.



Above image from Vivek Shraya's *Legends of the Trans*, 2021. Photographic essay inspired by the 1994 film, *Legends of the Fall*.

Produced in part with support from the Esker Foundation Commission Fund.

Creative direction: Vivek Shraya.
Photography: Zachary Ayotte.
Styling, makeup & hair: Alanna Chelmick.
Set assistants: Adam Holman & Shauna McMartin.

The artist would like to thank Shemeena Shraya, Trisha Yeo, Shauna McMartin, Leanne Tomanek, Tomanek Farms (and the generous horses Judy and Twin Cyty), Morgan Vanek, Jacquelyn Cardinal and Naheyawin, and The Canada Council for the Arts for the support.

Music: *The Ludlows*, James Horner. From the Original Motion Picture Soundtrack, *Legends of the Fall*, 1995.

Vivek Shraya is honoured to acknowledge the Indigenous Lands that shared in the stewardship of this work, including those of Treaty 6 and the Métis Nation of Alberta.

Biography

Vivek Shraya is an artist whose body of work crosses the boundaries of music, literature, visual art, theatre, and film. Shraya's visual art practice includes the internationally acclaimed photo series *Trisha*, featured in *Vanity Fair*, *Village Voice* and *India Today*, and in solo exhibits in New York City and the Southern Alberta Art Gallery, as well as her recent photo series *Trauma Clown*, featured on the cover of *Now Magazine* and in the Patel Gallery. Her album *PartTime Woman* was nominated for the Polaris Music Prize, and her best-selling book *I'm Afraid of Men* was heralded by *Vanity Fair* as "cultural rocket fuel." She is also the founder of the award-winning publishing imprint VS. Books, which supports emerging BIPOC writers.

A seven-time Lambda Literary Award finalist, Vivek was a Pride Toronto Grand Marshal and has been a brand ambassador for MAC Cosmetics and Pantene. She is a director on the board of the Tegan and Sara Foundation, an Assistant Professor of Creative Writing at the University of Calgary, and is currently adapting her debut play, *How to Fail as a Popstar*, for television with the support of CBC.

Ashley Bedet

a rolled chord of sunlight unfurled

14 FEBRUARY – 5 JUNE 2022

[EXHIBITION LINK](#)

There is something particularly special about the quality of light in Mohkinstsis and Southern Alberta. Softly radiant or blindingly intense, the range of its luminescence is one of the most beautiful things about this place. Out of reverence and affection for the sun's refraction on our plot of rock comes a new body of work dedicated to investigating and honouring the different intensities, quivering and sublime, of our sun's rays.

Biography

In 2015 Ashley Bedet came back to Mohkinstsis/Calgary, where she was born, after studying art in some manner or another in Vancouver (Emily Carr University of Art + Design), Halifax (NSCAD University), and Amsterdam (Gerrit Rietveld Academie). Her work has been disseminated through sculpture, installation, publication, radio, and multiples via the 2017 Alberta Biennial; public commissions from cREative realm, Calgary; Contemporary Calgary; TELUS Spark Science Centre, Calgary; and The Bows, Calgary. Bedet is the product of many very different worlds reproducing, meeting differences, and then reproducing again. She is to a braid what string is to thread. Bedet's work has been supported through funding from Calgary Arts Development, the Alberta Foundation for the Arts, and private patrons. If you want to work together, she'd be happy to hear from you.



Ashley Bedet, *Broken Sunlight I.*
Courtesy of the artist.

PROGRAMS AND ENGAGEMENT

Esker Foundation's free programs create connections: with exhibitions, contemporary art, and each other. Through collaboration with artists, diverse communities, and partnerships we encourage engagement, creativity and belonging.

For the health and safety of our visitors and team, in-person family programs for February have been cancelled. Follow us on social media and subscribe to our e-list for updates on program announcements for March and April.

Below:
Beginner Vogue workshop, 2021.
In partnership with Calgary Pride.
Photo by: Elyse Bouvier.

Right:
RELATIONS Engagement Series/
Youth (EYE) workshop with Sydonne
Warren and Nastassia Aikman, during
the exhibition, *RELATIONS: Diaspora
and Painting*. Photo by: Elyse Bouvier.



ESKER YOUTH ENGAGEMENT (EYE) NEWS!

Flash Forward
Incubator Program

EYE has partnered with **The Magenta Foundation** to offer the **Flash Forward Incubator Program**, which will culminate in an exhibition of participating youth's work at the **Exposure Photography Festival** in February 2022.

The Flash Forward Incubator Program builds an inclusive arts community that fosters diversity in our future leaders and art stars. This dynamic, coast-to-coast program creates a vibrant and connected community, one that brings youth from

diverse backgrounds together to share their art with each other and the rest of Canada.

Through an online platform, hands-on mentorships and leadership opportunities, **Flash Forward Incubator** promotes specialized training in arts, culture, and new media, where unique voices are empowered and a sense of belonging and inclusiveness is cultivated.

Interested in participating in programs like this one?

Connect with EYE via Instagram:
@eskeryouthengagement
or by emailing:
programs@eskerfoundation.com

Bridge

Bridge is for the young members of our community. It is a space to make visible the incredible work created by children and youth in programs, for youth-led curation, and a space to be claimed by young people for expressions yet to be imagined.

~~~~~ A space  
dedicated to young  
people





CURRENT BRIDGE EXHIBITION

# TIPI\_LOOPS.dreamwaves

22 JANUARY - 1 MAY 2022

Joey Big Snake  
 Jeremy Bobosky  
 Maci Jordan  
 Brendon Many Bears  
 Kaitlyn Purcell  
 Laurencine Saddleback



In late August, writer, artist and community activator, Kaitlyn Purcell met emerging artists Brendon Many Bears and Joey Big Snake at an Indigenous Science Telus Spark event where they were having an artist talk with their mentor, the astrophysicist Rob Cardinal. Big Snake and Many Bears had collaborated on the event's welcome banners, and Big Snake and Cardinal had collaborated on a featured digital painting titled *Morningstar (Venus Risen)*, which was further brought to life through stories of shared visions for its creation. Synchronicities abound, Kaitlyn was preparing to teach a first-year English class for Indigenous students at UCalgary with Rob Cardinal as the first assigned text on her syllabus; after this event, they shared a conversation which led to an opportunity for the students to meet Rob Cardinal.

This audiovisual digital art installation came together as a reflection by Purcell, Many Bears and Big Snake on themes from the fall 2021 exhibition *RELATIONS: Diaspora and Painting*, with contributions to their work from UCalgary students Jeremy Bobosky, Maci Jordan and Laurencine Saddleback—completing this constellation.

Above, left: Video still by Laurencine Saddleback.  
Above, right: Video still by Maci Jordan.

Next page: Clockwise, from far left: Joey Big Snake, Brendon Many Bears, Maci Jordan, Jeremy Bobosky, Kaitlyn Purcell, and Laurencine Saddleback.  
All images courtesy of the artists.

*TIPI\_LOOPS.dreamwaves* is an exploration of one's relation to place, and how the individual experience becomes constellations through the synchronicities that brought us together. We find our place through the land that nourishes us. We find our place through the stories and ceremonies that brought us here. We find our place through our dreams and the synchronicities that act like signposts—the guidance from our ancestors. The dreamcatcher, the spiderweb, and the stories in the sky; they remind us where we come from and where we ought to go. They remind us that we are all connected.





## COLLABORATORS

Top, left to right:

**Joey Big Snake** (Sako'yiina which translates to Hail Boy) is a Blackfoot First Nation artist from Siksika Nation, which is not only on Treaty 7 land, but is also a part of the Blackfoot Confederacy territory. He is a third-year student at AUarts, and also works with Siksika Board of Education on their STEAM program. He has works displayed at Bow Valley College, and the Telus Spark Center. The main focus of his process is to connect Blackfoot culture with emerging technologies/mediums to provide new perspectives on Indigenous ideas.

**Brendon Many Bears** is a Blackfoot artist from Siksika, Alberta. He specializes in graphic design and digital art, and works as a freelance artist. In the last year he has created and taught digital artforms for IndigeSTEAM and Blackfoot Crossing Historical Park. He also runs his own Etsy shop, where he sells his artwork as stickers or prints. He would like to become a tattoo artist someday and open his own shop back home in Siksika.

**Maci Jordan** is a first-year student at the University of Calgary, in the Indigenous Students Access Program. Her mother is from Six Nations, Ontario, and working as an RCMP officer relocated their family to Canmore. Maci was born in Canmore but raised in Calgary her whole life. Maci's education is inspired by the economic growth and business development within Indigenous communities and wants to pursue a business degree. Her passions include travelling to new places, learning about different cultures, and trying their traditional food.

Lower, left to right:

**Laurencine Saddleback** is Cree and a member of the Samson Cree Nation in Maskwacis (Treaty 6 Territory). She is an avid reader interested in reclaiming Indigenous histories and narratives. She is a student at the University of Calgary and plans to pursue a BA in Archeology. In her free time, she likes to travel and explore her relation with askiy.

**Kaitlyn Purcell** is Denesuline-Irish and a member of Smith's Landing First Nation (Treaty 8 territory). Kaitlyn is a PhD candidate at the University of Calgary whose research is structured through the four directions of the medicine wheel, meditating on recovery, grief, and intergenerational survivance. It will be presented through multi-modal creative productions such as storytelling, poetry, visual, digital, and installation arts. She is the recipient of numerous awards, including a doctoral SSHRC award and the Metatron Prize for her debut poetic novella ʔbédayine (Spirit).

**Jeremy Bobosky** is Woodland Cree-Polish/British and a member of Little Red River Cree Nation (Treaty 8 territory). Jeremy is an undergraduate student at the UofC, majoring in Philosophy and Political Science. He is interested in research around public opinion and restoring Indigenous land control, including replacing the Indian Act. Since age 12, for the past 10 years, he has been a video game commentator. He has achieved success, in particular his YouTube channel totals 140K and another at 50K subscribers. Jeremy seeks to present at an intimate level in which he takes an absurdist worldview to process personal and universal experiences.





## UPCOMING EXHIBITION

# Robin Arseneault

## Falling Off The Log

23 JULY – 18 DECEMBER 2022

Robin Arseneault's work fights with itself. It is performative, provocative, and luxurious one minute, and silly, self-deprecating, and raw the next. Layers of meaning are first constructed—often through sketches, small collages of found photographs, and ink drawings—then information is intentionally wiped away, removed, torn apart, or erased. The final work emerges from the tension between finding stability and the absurdity or inevitability of destruction that her process requires.

Central to this exhibition are 12 large sculptures that started from a set of small palm-sized pieces of driftwood purchased from an online estate sale of a recently deceased artist from New York City. Initially attracted by their individual shapes as well as their collective potential to signify a kind of language, after receiving the box of driftwood, Arseneault immediately wanted to push the boundaries of scale, to move them away from something precious to hold, to something more emblematic of or relational to the entire body. A parallel interest in choreography and the ways in which dance implicates our bodies into dialogue with one another found affinity with this new material. Arseneault takes the duet or dancing couple as a starting gesture, then conceives of a separation or more violent tearing apart, which highlights many of the artist's conceptual concerns: the imperfection of material, the instability of form, and the incongruous nature of relationships.

Much like the title of the exhibition, *Falling Off The Log*, Arseneault's work embraces failure—the shuffling, twisting, tripping-into-a-fall-as-one-exits-the-stage kind of failure that is equally pathetic as it is hilarious. Yet the work is also guarded, and carries an emotional depth that does not define nor reveal

its source; it only suggests that it lies somewhere in between the ripped seam that divides one into two, between the friction of two bodies, in the moment between balancing then falling.

### Biography

Robin Arseneault works and lives in Calgary and is a graduate of the Alberta College of Art and Design (BFA, 1998) and the Edinburgh College of Art (MFA, 2005). She was long-listed for the Sobey Art Award in 2007, received the Lieutenant Governor of Alberta Emerging Artist Award in 2008, and has been awarded grants from the Canada Council for the Arts, the Alberta Foundation for the Arts, and Alberta Heritage. Arseneault has shown her work in Canada, the USA, Scotland, Germany, Italy, and the Netherlands, and is in many private and public collections including the Alberta Foundation for the Arts, Art Gallery of Alberta, Edmonton; Nickle Galleries, Calgary; Scotiabank, Fairmont Hotel Group, and Simons Department Stores. Arseneault is represented by Norberg Hall in Calgary.

Robin Arseneault, *Dancing Men (mini troupe)*, 1 of 12. 2019. Collected sticks, Apoxie. Handheld dimensions, variable. Courtesy of the artist and Norberg Hall Gallery.





## UPCOMING EXHIBITION

# Chloë Lum & Yannick Desranleau

## The Garden of a Former House Turned Museum

23 JULY– 18 DECEMBER 2022

Much of the work produced by Chloë Lum & Yannick Desranleau requires active collaboration, not simply with each other, choreographers, musicians, and dancers, but with the objects they produce; objects that perform collectively as costumes, sets, noisemakers, and sculptures. Theirs is a performance and material heavy practice informed by their time in the avant-rock group AIDS Wolf—of which they were founding members—and the DIY, scrappy, screen-printed poster work made under the pseudonym, Séripop.



At the core of the meta-musical *The Garden of a Former House Turned Museum* are six original songs composed from a series of letters written by a fictional artist to deceased Brazilian novelist Clarice Lispector. Described as auto-fiction, the letters seek worldly advice and reveal Lum and Lispector's shared experience of living with chronic pain. Dramatic in tone, exaggerated when sung, these monologues feature several performers who, in an entwined choreography of semantics and movement, solicit guidance from the erudite and sly ghost of Lispector.

With every project, Lum & Desranleau create countless performance props (often made from a combination of papier-mâché, rubber, and/or fabric) which are firstly used as essential elements to affect the movement of the body within the choreography, then later as sculptures within immersive gallery installations.

In *The Garden of a Former House Turned Museum*, four performers wrestle, dance, hold onto, lean on, and play with these props. The forms of these objects challenge definition: in relation to the body they are prosthetics or mobility aids; when worn, internal organs, residual limbs, or strips of flesh; and when struck or activated, musical instruments.

Deeply experimental and ever inquisitive, the resulting work steps outside the material world and the flesh of our bodies to seek transformation and tranquility beyond the immediacy and limitations of pain.

### Biographies

**Chloë Lum and Yannick Desranleau** are multidisciplinary visual artists working across photography, video, installation, sound, text, performance, and print. In their practice, they engage with the nature of collaboration and relationships between bodies and inanimate objects. Recently, these subjects are examined through chronic illness as alterity.

They are based in Tiohtiá:ke/Montréal and have worked collaboratively since 2000. Their works have been exhibited internationally and are included in the collection of the Victoria and Albert Museum, London; Montreal Museum of Fine Arts; and the Musée d'art contemporain de Montréal.

Chloë Lum & Yannick Desranleau,  
*The Garden of a Former House Turned Museum*, 2021.  
HD video, colour, sound, 29 min. Still from the video.  
Performers: Ruby Kato Attwood, Sarah Albu, Talia Fuchs,  
Elizabeth Lima. Cinematography: Yasmine Amor.  
© Chloë Lum & Yannick Desranleau.



## UPCOMING EXHIBITION

# Gailan Ngan

## From The Studio Floor

23 JULY – 18 DECEMBER 2022

The seemly interchangeable right and wrong in the phrase, in the wrong place at the wrong time, or the right place at the right time, offers several ways to consider the role location has in fate. Regardless of interpretation, assigning value seems irrelevant; it is more interesting to be in a place for something to cross your path, recognize the significance of this, and alter the course of your movement through this world because of the encounter.

The work of Gailan Ngan makes these kind of fated connections, not in any linear way, but poetically, by crafting associations between herself, the objects she collects, and the material she uses, to larger ecological or industrial narratives. Her works serve as the end point to a sequence of events that Ngan has taken as an opportunity to observe, reflect upon, and realign the course of her practice. These events can be as small as finding a particular shaped stone on a beach, which connects her to the concept of geological time, or as literally universal as the story of a woman who was awoken by a crash, only to discover a meteorite had hurtled through her roof and landed on the pillow next to her head.

This exhibition features hand-built and cast ceramic sculptures that, while simply expressed, broadly explore shape, surface treatment, and colour. In addition, it will present a collection of industry by-products, organic and processed objects, and studio experiments—an extended narrative of material that is influenced by the historically resource-rich West Coast where Ngan lives and is central to her work.

**Biography**

Gailan Ngan works and lives in Vancouver and occasionally works from Hornby Island. Her practice involves pottery, sculpture, and co-managing the art estate of her late father, Wayne Ngan. Ngan collects material from many sources, including both commercial and natural. Her ceramic sculptures accumulate layers of fused surfaces into compositions of texture and colour.

She graduated with a BFA from Emily Carr University, Vancouver, in 2002. She has shown work at Cooper Cole, Toronto; The Apartment, Vancouver; San Diego Art Institute; Nanaimo Art Gallery; Art Gallery at Evergreen, Coquitlam; Kamloops Art Gallery; Unit 17, Vancouver; and Vancouver Art Gallery. In 2015, she received the North-West Ceramic Foundation Award of Excellence. Ngan is represented by Monte Clark Gallery in Vancouver.

**Footnote:**

<https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/british-columbia/meteorite-crashes-into-womans-bedroom-golden-bc-1.6207904>

In late October of 2021, Ruth Hamilton of Golden BC woke to an explosion. When she turned on the light, she was surprised to see a double-fist-sized rock on a pillow on her bed, inches away from where her head had just been. Authorities initially speculated it was a rock from a nearby construction site; however, scientists later confirmed it was a meteorite.

Courtesy of the artist.



# Permanent Collection

Esker is pleased to continue adding contributions to our online art publishing project Permanent Collection, with the recent addition of two text works responding to Katie Ohe, Liz Magor, Samuel Roy-Bois, and Jon Sasaki.

For each season of exhibitions, Esker commissions a response from compelling voices within or beyond the visual arts. We ask contributors to consider each of the current exhibitions together as a means of generating new ideas and connections about and between the artworks from a new perspective. Our contributors have ranged from poets, to neuroscientists, to design advocates, and art historians, who have crafted prose, poetry, letters, and musical scores.

As a non-collecting institution, Esker is defined by the conversations, ideas, and research that emerge around our exhibitions and programming—this is our model for a permanent collection. We see Permanent Collection as an expanded exhibition space that explores the latent connections and points of resonance between and within exhibitions and between disciplines. Permanent Collection offers a forum for experimentation, and for innovative, trans-disciplinary approaches to discussing art and exhibitions.

## RECENT TEXT WORKS:

**Karen Hines**

*MONOLOGUE FOR A DREAMING DOG*

A response to Liz Magor, Samuel Roy-Bois, and Jon Sasaki.

[permanentcollection.eskerfoundation.com/essays/monologue-for-a-dreaming-dog/](https://permanentcollection.eskerfoundation.com/essays/monologue-for-a-dreaming-dog/)

**Jacqueline Bell**

*Circling*

A response to Katie Ohe.

[permanentcollection.eskerfoundation.com/essays/circling/](https://permanentcollection.eskerfoundation.com/essays/circling/)

## UPCOMING TEXT WORKS:

**Ariana Reines**

In response to Louise Bourgeois, Chris Curreri & Fin Simonetti

**Sue-Shane Tsomondo  
& Suzanne Chew**

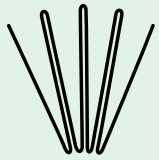
In response to *RELATIONS: Diaspora & Painting*

“To move, to spin, to revolve, to turn. What does it mean to circle? The eponymous exhibition by Katie Ohe was one of literal movement. A through line that relates much of Ohe’s works produced after 1970 is a kinetic element, where a work’s gentle rotation is triggered through human touch. There is a levity and sincerity to the invitation to physically engage the work that seems to invite a sense of good-natured irreverence towards the abstracted, often large-scale forms.”

– Jacqueline Bell

Discover and read from  
**Permanent Collection [here](#).**





## Explore the Bookshop at Esker

Visit the Bookshop at Esker - at the gallery, or online, to purchase your copy of these featured products. Browse all our art publications, limited edition artist totes, and pins at the link below. Shipping and local pick-up is available!

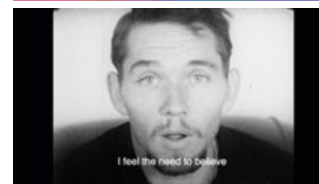
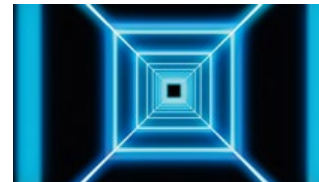
BOOKSHOP AT ESKER— & ONLINE:  
[eskerfoundation.com/bookshop/](https://eskerfoundation.com/bookshop/)

### RECENT ESKER PUBLICATION:

*Quantification Trilogy Reader* by Jeremy Shaw is an addition to the artist project, and installations of Shaw's exhibition, *Quantification Trilogy*, previously presented at Esker Foundation from 26 January to 12 May 2019.

# QUANTIFICATION TRILOGY

## JEREMY SHAW



### FEATURED PRODUCTS:

## ANGRY by TOO ATTACHED - Vivek Shraya & Shamik Bilgi.



*Too Attached* grew out of Vivek and Shamik's childhood history of singing devotional songs together in Edmonton, obsessing over pop and r&b as teenagers, and informal collaborations throughout their individual decade-long artistic careers. In 2015, they released their first EP, *BRONZE*, and toured across Canada while opening for Tegan and Sara. Most recently, Too Attached were listed as one of IN Magazine's 2018 Canadian Artists To Watch and their newest album, *ANGRY*, was described by CBC as one of "Canada's most incisive, radical and galvanizing albums." Cover art by hatecopy. Listen to the album on bandcamp [here](#).

\$25  
Red vinyl album, limited edition.

Vivek Shraya's exhibition *Legends of the Trans* was on view in the Esker Project Space from 18 October 2021 to 6 February 2022.

The Bookshop at Esker has several publications available by Vivek Shraya, find them for purchase online, and in our bookshop at the gallery, including:

*even this page is white*  
*Death Threat*  
*God Loves Hair*  
*She of the Mountains*

Explore our Bookshop for Vivek Shraya's latest 2022 publication, *People Change*.

## Jeremy Shaw Quantification Trilogy Reader

Jeremy Shaw's publication *Quantification Trilogy Reader* operates as an extension of the artist project and installation. It renders the narratives of the films through full-colour, full-bleed stills, which become immersive visual experiences. Each narrative is followed by the original voiceover transcripts, as well as critical texts exploring the questions the project provokes.

This publication accompanies Jeremy Shaw's exhibitions held between 2018–2021. Concerned with the shape of future societies, *The Quantification Trilogy* itself examines fringe culture, theories of evolution, virtual reality, neurotheology, esotericism, dance, the representation of the sublime, as well as the notion of transcendence itself. The trilogy comprises parafictional short films: *Quickeners* (2014), *Liminals* (2017), and *I Can See Forever* (2018). The works are set in the future and explore how marginalized societies confront life after a scientific discovery has mapped and determined all parameters of transcendental spiritual experience.

\$50 - 288 pages, hardcover, colour & bw illustrations, English, 17 × 24 cm.





In-conversation event with Vivek Shraya, Esker Foundation, 2021. Photo by: Eva Verity.

UPCOMING AT ESKER

All programs are free, and in-person at Esker with limited capacity, unless stated otherwise.

MARCH

**TIPI\_LOOPS.dreamwaves Artist's Talk**  
Thursday 19 March, 6-7pm

MORE INFO & REGISTRATION

**Curatorial Tour of Current Exhibitions**  
Thursday 31 March, 6-7PM

MORE INFO & REGISTRATION

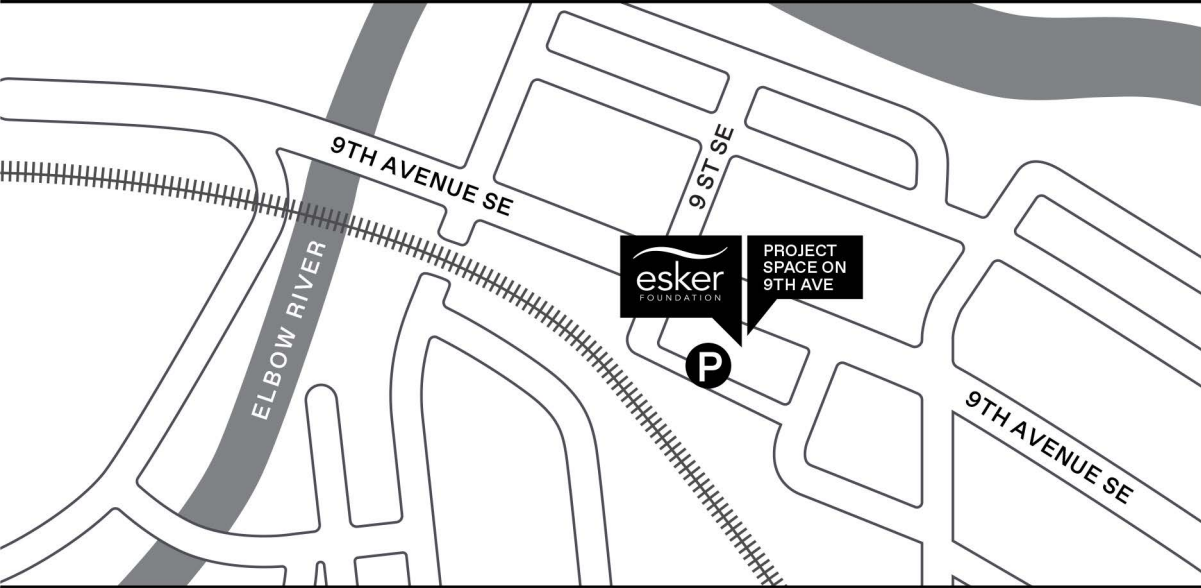
Explore all current and upcoming programs at Esker.

APRIL

**Artist Talk: Sunshine & the Attention Grabbers with Ashley Bedet**  
Thursday 7 April, 7-8pm

MORE INFO & REGISTRATION

INFORMATION FOR YOUR VISIT



HEALTH & SAFETY

Find the latest updates here:  
[www.eskerfoundation.com/visit](http://www.eskerfoundation.com/visit)

ACCESSIBILITY

Esker Foundation is accessible via elevator access up to the fourth floor, which is available on all levels of the building. A swing door with an automatic door control into the gallery is situated adjacent to the gallery’s revolving door. Wheelchair-accessible public washrooms are available inside the gallery, and on the fourth floor. There are accessible parking spaces at the rear of the building.

We all benefit from deeper, relational considerations of accessibility. If you have any questions or requests regarding access to the gallery or programs, please don’t hesitate to contact us at 403 930 2490 or by email at [info@eskerfoundation.com](mailto:info@eskerfoundation.com)

LAND ACKNOWLEDGMENT

Esker Foundation is located on the traditional territories of the Niitsitapi (Blackfoot) and the people of the Treaty 7 region in Southern Alberta, which includes the Siksika, the Piikani, the Kainai, the Tsuut’ina, and the Iyârhe Nakoda First Nations. The City of Calgary is also home to Métis Nation of Alberta, Region III. Esker Foundation extends sincere appreciation for the opportunity to live and learn on this territory in respect and gratitude.

FREE ADMISSION

HOURS

Wednesday to Friday **11 AM-6 PM**  
Saturday & Sunday **12-5 PM**

PARKING AND WIFI

Free

PROGRAM REGISTRATION


Programs are free and open to all.

Please visit:

[eskerfoundation.com/program/current](http://eskerfoundation.com/program/current) to register

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