

Mercury, Water, PCB, DDT

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Beluga whales living in the St. Lawrence River estuary are so contaminated with toxins that their bodies, when they wash ashore, are treated as toxic waste. They are exposed to industrial pollution from the Great Lakes region, which empties into the St. Lawrence. Using the chemical formulas and symbols for mercury, PCB, DDT, and water allowed me to depict the primary toxins found directly in this animal's watery habitat. These chemical structures render scientific information and knowledge visible, which highlights the impact that we, as a species, have in the environments and the lives of other animals.

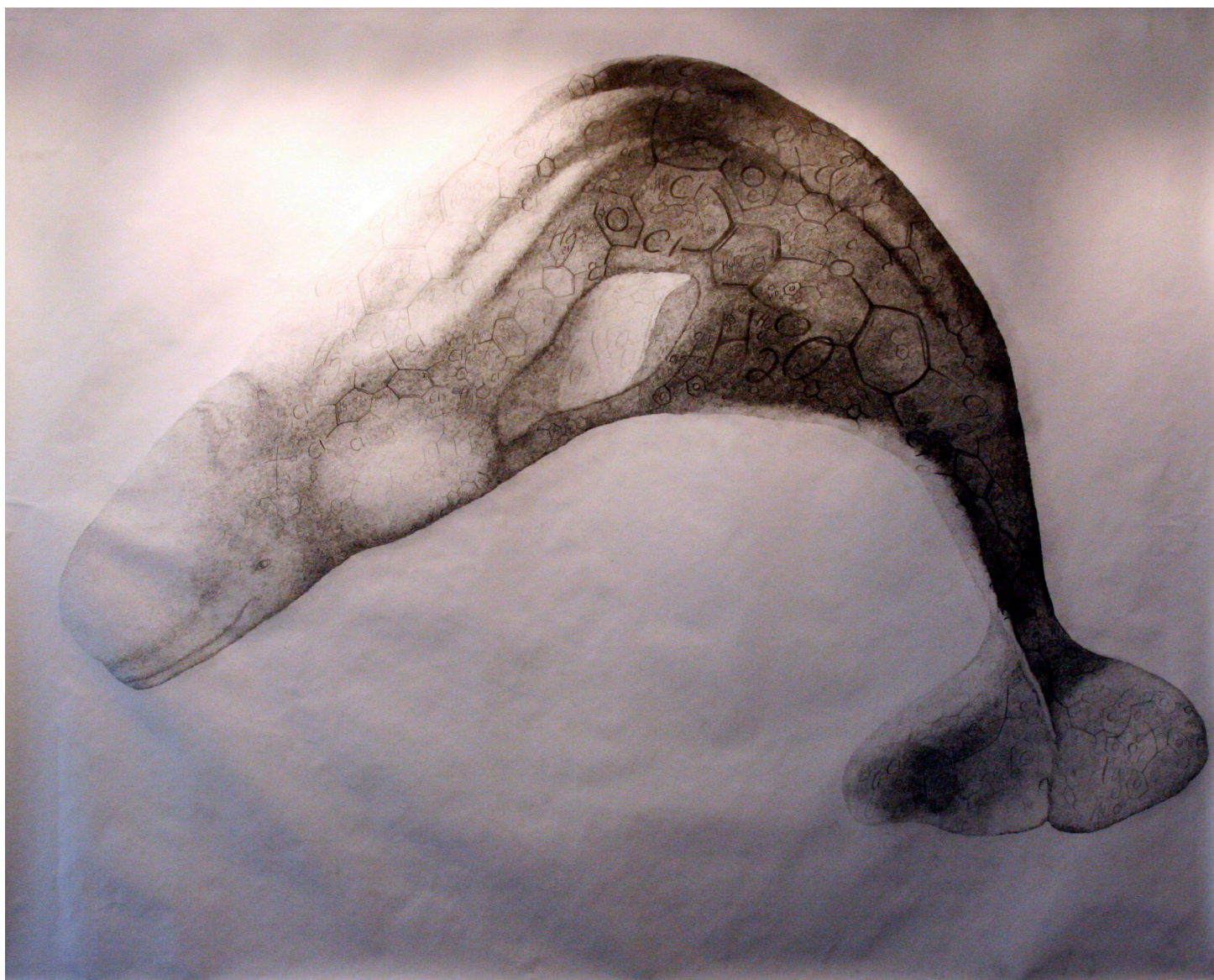
Artist Statement

My work documents the loss of other animals, records the last vestiges of their lives, and highlights the significant ways in which our lives, human and other animals, are bound and entangled.

Earliest known images by our human ancestors are found on the walls of ancient caves and the subjects often depicted are those of other animals. From this point onward animal subjects have been visual themes for a myriad of human cultures. Through time the changing relationships between humans and other animals, from magical integration, balanced existence, subjugation, exploitation, sentimental attachment, and marginalization, have been represented through our art. These stories archive our cultural interpretations, observations, beliefs, and assumptions about animals.

Recent contributions in art are expanding, challenging, diverging, and repositioning animal subjects; posing new questions, and examining futures in which we are inextricably linked.

In this context I work to see, understand, and draw awareness to their lives. Each of my works commemorates a specific animal—that I honour, that I want people to see and to remember. This piece is part of a body of work that explores the concepts stated here, and focuses specifically on animals endemic to Canada suffering from the impacts of human activity.



Media: Graphite on Paper
Dimensions: 108" x 144" (actual size of adult beluga whale)