

*Interlocutrix*

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### **Abstract**

The research I performed during the MAA program was focused on establishing a theoretical framework for creative and collaborative participation, using dialogue and encounter in place-specific contexts. I discuss the development of this methodology through a narrative progression of four artworks. Performed over the course of the program, my practice-based research brought forward themes and questions related to institutional, public and social spaces as sites for dialogue and participation. For the graduate project, *Archive Encounters*, I worked with five community members inside the archive and collections of a regional social history museum. These individuals were associated with the Campbell River Arts Council in various ways, involved in public art, writing, education and community organization in the local area. In the archives, I played the role of *interlocutrix* to open up a space of dialogue with my participatory audience, responsive to each individual's living archive of memory. The interlocutrix is the feminine form of interlocutor, a theatrical term for one who initiates dialogue with an audience. Inside the collections room, the audience/participants were given access to the artifacts in storage and a projecting digital camera. Each person used the tool to capture and project a series of images onto the artifacts. Encountering personal and collective narratives in the process, we played with the surfaces of memory and form, exploring shifting and contingent meaning. The projections were documented, resulting in a collection of digital images that formed a secondary body of work. To support dialogical and participatory aesthetics with an audience, I look to the critical theories of Paulo Freire (dialogue) Grant Kester (dialogical aesthetics), and Pablo Helguera (participation). Doreen Massey, Michel

DeCerteau and Henri Lefebvre informed the development of a critical framework when working with the elements of space and place in an artwork. The writing of Liza Graziose Corrin informed a dialogical methodology for my artistic research performed inside the contemporaneous museum.

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*Dedicated to my parents, Geoff and Sharon Banting, for all of their love and support*



## **Introduction**

In this text I will discuss a chronology of artworks and investigations performed over the course of the MAA program in four sections: Storefront, Public Space, Institution and Archive. In each section, I will describe the artwork produced and the major themes that came forward, making reference to relevant theorists and artists that I encountered along the way. By analyzing the progression of those works through the lens of my research, I discuss the development of a theoretical framework that evolved over the course of the program. By critically reflecting on the significant challenges and questions that arose through that work, I seek to ground and align my methodology in contemporary art discourse, contributing to the field of socially engaged art practice.

In chapter one, I discuss the work performed for *CUBE: Action Research*, an investigation into site, dialogue and pedagogy in a vacant, downtown storefront. Working in the city of Campbell River, building on my previous experience in community-based art, my research turned to the development skills in leadership and group facilitation. The second chapter moves into public space where I consider the city as a studio space. *I AM HERE* was an exploratory work that used narrative and encounter to examine the lived spaces of the city. Chapter three discusses the interim exhibition and the installation of *Leisure State*, where I worked with directed audience participation in the gallery, using design and critical aesthetics to frame a social space inside the institution. I then introduce my graduate project, *Archive Encounters*, where I developed a framework for creative and collaborative participation inside a social history museum.

*Archive Encounters* took place in the Museum at Campbell River<sup>1</sup> for six months. During that time, I framed a series of dialogical encounters inside the public archives and collections, working with five community members. The goal was to produce a social space that was open and inter-subjective to the audience/participant, renegotiating the relationship between the artist and her audience, to discover new knowledge. In my narrative account, I describe the fieldwork performed in the archives, accompanied by a selection of images produced during those encounters. Through out this section, I connect my artistic research with theories related to social practice, dialogical aesthetics and participatory practice. The text ends with a discussion of the graduate exhibition, where I built an installation into the gallery space using structural elements, objects (props for museum displays) and documentation from the museum archives to generate critical insights into cultural systems of collection and codes of signification.

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<sup>1</sup> The Museum at Campbell River is a (Category A) regional social history museum whose catchment area encompasses the entire north end of Vancouver Island, starting from the Oyster River, as well the northwestern coastal region from Powell River to Bella Coola in British Columbia, Canada.



Figure 1. A downtown storefront was the site of *CUBE: Action Research, 2012*. Campbell River.

## **Chapter 1: Storefront**

In the first section, I introduce the practiced-based research generated in the second semester of the Masters of Applied Arts program (Fall of 2012). I will discuss themes and concerns that came forward, focusing on the theoretical considerations related to community-based art practice (Goldbard), dialogue in emancipatory education (Friere) and Youth engagement (Ward). This research uncovered a series of questions related to the role of the artist in community-engaged projects, the ethics of representation when

working with Youth and the aesthetic goals of an art & research practice that invites participation.

From September to December 2012, I performed *CUBE: Action Research*, a community-based investigation into dialogue, pedagogy and visual art. Action Research is “a form of self-reflective enquiry undertaken by participants in social situations in order to improve the rationality and justice of their own practices, their understanding of these practices, and the situations in which the practices are carried out” (Carr and Kemmis, 162). The site for my practice was a downtown storefront in Campbell River, a previously vacant space that was empty for a number of years, which the Arts Council acquired through dialogue with a local real estate agent. I worked with the site to develop my practice, growing a community-based methodology by working with groups.

The downtown site was intended to be an incubator for art and change (Fig 1). By working in a depressed inner city area, the intent was to occupy the vacant space as a creative strategy for urban revitalization. Many artists and organizations share this strategy by reframing commercial spaces as sites for artistic, cultural and community practice. Renew Newcastle<sup>2</sup> is an example of a community development organization in Australia that brings together artists, craftspeople and other creative entrepreneurs to regenerate fallow spaces- reanimating them through interdisciplinary methods and projects. One element of *CUBE: Action Research* was in addressing the potential for artists to activate empty commercial spaces, by using them as sites for community cultural

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<sup>2</sup> Renew Newcastle is a not for profit company that matches artists, cultural projects and creative entrepreneurs with vacant buildings until they become commercially viable or redeveloped. [www.renewnewcastle.org](http://www.renewnewcastle.org)

development, a process of growing community over time through cultural activities and employing collaborations between artists and community members (Goldbard 2005).

In the storefront space, I worked with a group of Youth<sup>3</sup> from a local high school. The group consisted of five senior students involved in the art department at Carihi Secondary. Their interests ranged from graphic novels to songwriting and political theatre. At the time, I did not know about the research ethics involved in writing a thesis, I was only made aware of these protocols much later in the program. Due to that oversight, I do not have informed consent to show my participant's identities or the contents of their work. Instead, I will focus on my own experiences and develop a critical reflection on my role as an artist in this context, where I worked with Youth to develop an interactive, visual storytelling methodology. We used drawing, painting and dialogue to inquire and reflect on the events of our lives, offering an alternative site for both creative development and critical reflection.

A significant challenge that arose was in translating the work to a wider audience, namely to the students and teachers at the university, who were critiquing my work. I later realized that this was a subject of significant debate in the critical writings of Claire Bishop and Grant Kester.<sup>4</sup> Addressing the ethics and aesthetics of socially engaged art, including the social, political and artistic dimensions, continues to be a valuable area for learning and future study. At the time, the challenge of addressing the secondary audience of teachers and students called for a mediated form of engagement. I started to record a series of short video summaries, working with the images produced during the storefront exchanges to

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<sup>3</sup> Youth is general term for people who are between the ages of fifteen and twenty-four.

<sup>4</sup> Bishop claims that the failure of socially engaged art is in its lack of visibility and anti-art aesthetics, demanding a different set of criteria to form a critical analysis. Kester, on the other hand, claims that a dialogical aesthetic lies at the core of participatory work that is based on communicative exchange.

discuss the outcomes of the different group activities<sup>5</sup>. In future works, I continued to grapple with the challenge of documentation and the ethics of representing the work of others, while honouring the primary process of dialogical exchange that was central to the aesthetics of this community-based work.

In *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (1974), Paulo Freire, speaks about the significance of dialogue in emancipatory education. A revolutionary educator and philosopher from Brazil, Freire's early work focused on the emancipation of oppressed rural farmers through literacy education. Working with dialogue as a form of pedagogy, Freire emphasized the role of lived experience in teaching. He believed that education must be a mutual experience of emancipation in both teacher and student and argued against the banking model of education where students are empty vessels to be filled. According to Freire, entering into dialogue, as opposed to a monologue or lecture, is a political gesture that counteracts dominant forms of human aggression.



Figure 2. A young artist draws a picture beside the dialogue wall at the Youth Art Group.

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<sup>5</sup> Link to video summary of an interactive story map, [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HVrLZ2\\_sPrc](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HVrLZ2_sPrc)

Open to the Youth's concerns and experiences, my methodology emphasized mutual learning and self-discovery. According to Tricia Ward, an artist and community activist in Los Angeles, the significance of this type of pedagogy is that "the ultimate growth for these young people comes from the merging of youth's paradigm and the artist's learned paradigm, blended with knowledge of and from youth" (158). Away from their regular contexts the Youth were given the freedom to express their own knowledge. Further research is required to develop a framework for critical pedagogy within the work. Ideally, to shift participants away from the traditional roles associated with school systems and institutional ideologies that surround knowledge and power. In future works, I plan to build in aspects of pedagogy or andragogy<sup>6</sup>, such as in the work of Mark Dion (*The Tate Thames Dig Project*, 1999) or Tania Bruguera (*Cátedra Arte de Conducta- Behavior Art Department*, 2002-2009), where the experience of learning together is a significant part of the work's methodology.



Figure 3. Two people are in conversation after a group dialogue at the CUBE.

<sup>6</sup> Andragogy is the practice of teaching to adult learners, whereas pedagogy refers to teaching to children.

The work of *CUBE: Action Research* was an effort to build an environment of mutual trust and learning with my collaborators (Fig 3). By opening up spaces to speak through, the artist as *interlocutrix*<sup>7</sup> initiates dialogue, creating situations for people to name the world and reclaim it. I see the inherent similarity in both art and dialogue as the desire to shape and name our experiences of being in the world. By listening to my participant's responses and communicating through visual art and dialogue, we developed a new way of learning together. Further research is required to build a critical framework for pedagogical aspects to enter into the work, taking into the account the ethics of representation and the aesthetic outcomes of each project, as well as addressing the secondary audience.

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<sup>7</sup> The interlocutrix is the feminine form of interlocutor, or one who initiates dialogue with an audience.





Figure 4. View from the public square in downtown Campbell River.

## **Chapter 2: Public Space**

*Since social relations are inevitably and everywhere imbued with power and meaning and symbolism, this view of the spatial is as an ever-shifting social geometry of power and signification...such a way of conceptualizing the spatial, moreover, inherently implies the existence in the lived world of a simultaneous multiplicity of spaces: cross-cutting, intersecting, aligning with one another, or existing in relations of paradox or antagonism. Most evidently, this is so, because the social relations of space are experienced differently, and variously interpreted, by those holding different positions as part of it.*

Doreen Massey, *Space, Place and Gender* (3)

In the winter of 2013, the CUBE closed and my practice shifted. I entered a new position in my work, one where I was moving through public space, asking questions about identity and place. How is my identity being shaped by this place? What is my role as an artist in public spaces? One afternoon, I situated my studio practice in the downtown core to explore these questions, considering public space as a form of material for art making. Working with the interdisciplinary methods of psycho-geography<sup>8</sup>, photography and encounter, I drifted through the city square capturing images of public art and architecture (Fig 4), finding myself talking with people along the way. Through these encounters, I gathered a series of narratives that revealed some of the underlying socio-political realities that were attached to the structures that identified place.

As I looked at the art forms and architectures that identified the city, I started to see them more as a series of narratives and less as solid objects. Further inquiries into the concept of place lead my research to the writings of Doreen Massey, a feminist and post-modern geographer from the UK. She proposes that places are constructed out of networks of social relations that build up and decay over time. Places are connected to other places through wider and wider sets of social relations that link them together,

which have over time been constructed, laid down, interacted with one another, decayed and renewed. Some of these relations will be, as it were, contained within the place; others will stretch beyond it, tying any particular locale into wider relations and processes in which other places are implicated too. (Massey 120)

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<sup>8</sup> Psycho-geography is a playful form of urban drifting that was defined by Guy Debord in *Critique of Urban Geography* (1955), as "the study of the precise laws and specific effects of the geographical environment, consciously organized or not, on the emotions and behavior of individuals."

Massey's statement implies that places are constantly in flux, being continually re-shaped by the people and social relationships therein; a kind of social ecology that changes over time. As sets of social relationships, places are networks of power and meaning, influenced by other places and built out of remnants of the past. This is evidenced in the physical structures (architectural forms, monuments), or absence thereof, that communicate the dominant cultural narratives. Massey's ideas would also suggest that no place is unique or authentic and that places are continually being remade, displaced, or made out of date by the covering over and forgetting of previous memories and stories.

If the underlying material of place is social, then a place could be seen as a non-physical construction of social consciousness. The idea that social consciousness, which is inclusive of our relationships with economics and politics, is an inter-subjective form of material that constructs the future of place is a compelling idea in terms of socially engaged art. In future research, I seek to understand the ways that artworks function using social, economic and/or political forms to create situations that bring about new social consciousness. In the next section I will discuss *I AM HERE*, where I perform spatial research to move my methodology forward by considering public space as a material.

Looking through the lens of my experience walking through the city, the work examines public monuments, sculptures, buildings, and conversations encountered in the context of downtown Campbell River. Working in the vicinity of the public square, I took photographs and made observations about the fixed structural elements that I encountered along the way, framing my public conversations with questions related to the social aspects of those forms.



Figure 5. Public Art Work, *Logger Mike*.



Figure 6. Digital Clock Tower in Tyee Plaza

The two tallest structures in the downtown core are both monuments to time (Fig 6) and industry (Fig 5), making reference to the histories of logging and fishing. Considering the history of place, shaped by the elements of water and wood, logging and fishing symbols are found in almost every public sculpture. The livelihoods and identities of many local people are shaped and sustained by these materials, even though these industries are in rapid decline. I must note that the indigenous people of the area are not represented in the downtown core, even though three distinct First Nations live here: the We Wai Kai, Wei Wai Kum and Homolco First Nations. The land that the public square rests upon was once a large ocean inlet and was in-filled (1958) to create more commercial space. The intertidal

shoreline, an important area for indigenous people, was literally paved over to make way for future development and commercialization.

The architectural forms inevitably pointed to the social relationships and political realities that manifested in the city. Following the logic of Massey, the monuments and sculptures were produced by a set of economic conditions that influenced those social relationships. The architectural and artistic forms reflect the systems of power relations that have built up over time, becoming the dominant historical narratives that manifest themselves in the stories of place.



**Figure 7. The courtyard in front of the public library in downtown Campbell River.**

In front of the public library is a courtyard (Fig 7) that offers a place to sit under a tree. I've observed that people rarely sit or gather there, even though it presents itself as open. When I inquired about its lack of use, the woman I encountered there pointed to an indigenous family walking by and implied that only undesirable people lingered there. Her

story is an example of the endemic racism that exists in the city, an extension of a set of unspoken socio-political codes that govern behavior in public spaces.



**Figure 8. Public washrooms in front of the Campbell River Art Gallery.**

Adjacent to the library are a set of public washrooms (Fig 8) that were recently installed at great expense to the City. When inquiring about their placement outside of the art gallery, the security guard I met there said that up to eight people a night will sleep in the washrooms, only to be kicked out in the morning. The security guard spoke of how “bad it is here” compared to other places he’d worked. Neither the library courtyard nor the public washrooms were being used in a way that was originally intended. A wider set of social relations started to reveal themselves through the actual use of these public spaces.

These two examples are poignant, because they offer a glimpse into the political realities of place (Campbell River), created by a set of social relations that are linked to colonialism, racism and other attendant social issues, such as homelessness. Many of the

social issues that I have encountered in Campbell River seem to be a result of a variety of factors including economic depression, due to the closure of the pulp and paper mill (2010) and a decline in the primary industries of logging and fishing. Social injustices are still in affect, as the legacies of colonialism, residential school abuse and racism are still impacting the indigenous people in the area today. Beyond the scope of my practice, these issues require a wide scale shift in social consciousness and collective political action to address them in any significant way.

The dominant narratives of the city appeared in the fixed structures and architectures, while the micro narratives emerged in the ways that people interacted and moved in between those fixed elements. By letting it speak and show itself through the encounters, the city revealed a complex set of social relations. As I interacted with the people and the public spaces, I began to observe the complex narratives that make up a place, woven together by the social, political, environment and historical factors that have built up over time. Each element is a narrative structure that plays a role in the shaping of locational identity, as well as being potential material for art making.

Although this research did not result in an artwork, I consider it to be a form of spatial practice that generated important critical reflections. Learning to identify and analyze the underlying social relations of a place (race, class, gender) and to critically reflect on where I am positioned within that system seems to be a logical beginning. In future work, this research approach may be an effective way to synthesis ideas about space and place, forming a theoretical substrate for a durational project to unfold. In the next chapter, I delve into the construction of space and place in an artwork that was developed for the Concourse Gallery at Emily Carr University of Art and Design in Vancouver, BC.

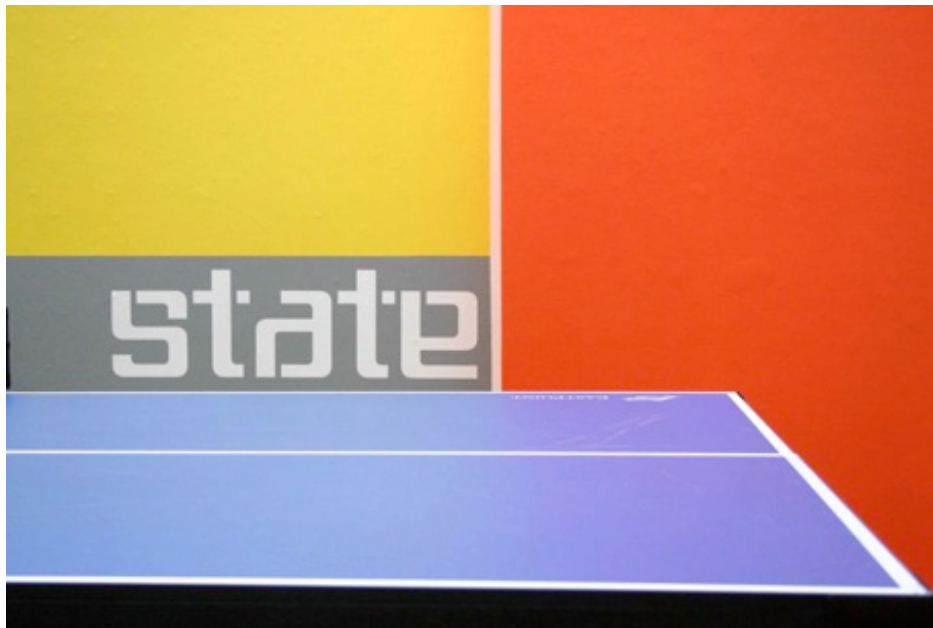


Figure 9. Detail of *Leisure State*, a participatory installation in the Concourse Gallery.

### **Chapter 3: Institution**

Entering the summer intensive and interim exhibition in July 2013, I was reading theories about space and place (De Certeau), the un-siting of community (Kwon) and the production of social space (Lefebvre). These authors challenged my ways of thinking about the role of the artist in community-based practice, the use of space and place in an artwork and the ways that commercial structures influence society. The main question that came forward was how do I bring together design aesthetics with social aesthetics to form a participatory artwork? In the following text, I will briefly summarize some of the ideas of DeCerteau and



Lefebvre in relation to my interim exhibition work, *Leisure State* (Fig 9), where I created a frame for a social space to form inside the gallery.

The MAA interim exhibition was staged in the Concourse Gallery, a large space in the centre of the university that doubled as a corridor through the building. As people walked through the gallery they would encounter the exhibition on their way to and from work or class. *Leisure State* invited the audience to participate in a simple game of Ping-Pong, providing chairs for spectators to sit in, converse and watch the game. The exhibition program advertised the space through a series of slogans:

*Leisure State is an institutional space of representational enjoyment. Become a part of the Leisure State and join in the pleasure. Play a game of Ping-Pong with a stranger. Sit together. Close your eyes and relax. Retreat. Become one with the Leisure State. Invite others into the Leisure State. Emigrate to the Leisure State. It is a place, a time and a state of mind.*

The sloganism was intended to be an expression of the work's purpose, advertising what it was promising to provide, while inviting the viewer into a *Leisure State*. I was using the power of suggestion in the gallery space and the exhibition program to direct the viewer's attention and participation towards a leisure experience.

*Leisure State* worked with directed participation inside the gallery to see how social codes and hierarchies shifted when an open space was made available. It was also attempting to shift the viewer's experience of the gallery, which was an established aspect of the building's architecture. Providing a site for temporary gathering, where different members of the university community could come together, I experimented to see what kind of social relationships would form through participation in a space that promoted

relaxation and game play. One of the reasons behind this gesture was that the social constraints of the institution did not encourage or allow these types of interactions to take place between teachers, students and staff, even though they are essential for building social bonds within a community. I was also responding to living in an economic structure that commodified space and time for commercial purposes and separated people into classes and positions. The gallery space became a site to break down these entrenched social constructs and I worked with a simple design aesthetic combined with everyday consumer objects, to frame a situation where participants produced a social space inside the gallery/institution (Fig 10).



Figure 10. Participants in the *Leisure State* playing a game of Ping-Pong.

The *Leisure State* colour scheme was appropriated from Emily Carr University and two other commercial sources: Lululemon Athletica and Home Depot. I chose these three references because they were in the vicinity of my movements through the city and they

represented lifestyle and leisure trends that are currently happening in popular culture. The middle grey floor tone was lifted up the wall to anchor the piece in the gallery, while the yellow and orange bands were extended to maximum scale. The colour design announced the work loudly to the audience, dominating the viewer's visual field. The walls were transformed into a flag-like banner, while the text elements designated the space as an official state. Working with colour, text, table and chairs, the gallery space was transformed into a game playing area and gathering place, not only by the aesthetics of the design, but also by the activity of the participants who established its use.

As a site, place and social space, the work functioned on a number of different levels: as a gathering place for people in the vicinity of the art gallery, as a critique of the gallery space and the established expectations of an artwork within that context, as a commentary on the commodification of time and space by market forces, and finally as a reclamation of the institution for playful forms of social co-existence. In the next section, I will discuss these reflections using the theories of DeCerteau and Lefebvre to establish a critical framework for synthesizing the elements of space and place in an artwork.

In *Space and Places* (1980), French philosopher Michel DeCerteau talks about place as stable, physical and relational. Composed of elements that are situated or placed in specific locations, a place is determined by the positions of distinct elements that define it and relate to other elements that locate it. Place is a distinct location within an ordered, stable co-existence, whereas space is determined by movement, speed, direction, velocity and time. Mobile elements determine space, as apposed to fixed elements that determine location (117-118). In *Leisure State*, the participants acted as the mobile elements in the work to determine the space, while the furniture and colour scheme acted as the fixed

elements to identify place. DeCerteau also refers to space as being determined by those who “orient it, situate it, temporalize it and make it function”, suggesting that space is social and is constructed and animated by people (118). This implies that spaces are continually being made and remade, shaped and changed by the people who move through them. Thus, space is contextual and unstable, more like an experience or phenomenon.



Figure 11. An empty *Leisure State* installation in the Concourse Gallery at Emily Carr University.

French Marxist philosopher and sociologist, Henri Lefebvre, writes in depth about the construction of space and specifically the production of social space. In *The Production of Space* (1974)<sup>9</sup>, Lefebvre moves the concept of space out of the realm of the geometric

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<sup>9</sup> Henri Lefebvre (1901-1991) and Michel De Certeau (1925-1986) were both prolific writers and theorists, who made considerable contributions to Marxist thought; the depth of which is outside of the scope of this thesis. Critical theories around the social dimensions of space and the production of space are the main focus here, for the purpose of developing a framework for working with space and place as material for art.

and into an expanded field that is political and ideological. He refers to space as mental, physical and social, shaped by language and ideology, and influenced by market forces that operate under the logic of capitalism. Both DeCerteau and Lefebvre refer to place as a *practiced space*, where people continually re-make social spaces by re-enacting sets of relations, directed actions and language. In *Leisure State*, the concept of *practiced space* was applied in a number of ways. The first relates to the *practiced space* of the gallery, where a predetermined set of relations influences the way that artworks and audiences function. *Leisure State* was directed towards a participatory audience comprised mainly of the university community (as opposed to a generic public) and by directing the work to this specific group, the *practiced space* of both gallery and institution were interrupted. Within the space of the artwork, the participants created a new *practiced space* through their presence, movements, gestures and social activity. By establishing an alternate function for the gallery space, the artist and audience take on new roles where different sets of actions and relations are produced.

The act of participation as an element in art relates to political movements of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century that changed the established social order, or *practiced space*, of a group or society. Artworks functioned in non-traditional ways to shift and expand the social consciousness of people living under oppressive state structures and political regimes (Bishop 2012). In this scenario, the audience as active citizen becomes a political agent in the remaking of society. This agency is reflected in the aesthetics of participatory art where the audience is a co-producer of the work instead of a passive spectator that is operating under the affects of ideology. To understand more fully the varying degrees of participation in socially engaged art, I turn to the writings of Pablo Helguera.

In *Education for Socially Engaged Art*, Pablo Helguera make a distinction between the different types of participation in art. He organizes them into four categories: Nominal, Directed, Creative and Collaborative. Each one requires different degrees of engagement by the viewer, starting with reflective and detached viewing (nominal), moving into scripted actions (directed), then into creative gestures by the audience (creative) and finally into full collaboration where the structure of the work is made in direct dialogue with the audience (collaborative). According to Helguera, “there is no complete agreement as to what constitutes a meaningful interaction or social engagement, what characterizes socially engaged art is its dependence on social intercourse as a factor of its existence” (2). *Leisure State* worked with directed participation in the gallery by setting up a frame for social situations to unfold, using a simple set of objects to direct the audience’s movements.

Many artists working with social engagement and participation do so to move the audience into an active state where their perceptions and experiences become a part of the artwork, an anti-spectorial gesture that is linked to political and community activism. Helguera explains that “the social movements of the 1960’s led to greater social engagement in art and the emergence of performance art and installation art, centering on process and site-specificity, which all influence socially engaged art practice today “ (2). Some examples of historical precedents for participatory art include: *Social Sculpture* of Joseph Bueys and *Happenings* of Allan Kaprow in the 1960’s, Feminist performance art and political activism of the 1970’s, the rise of the Community Arts movement in the 1970’s and 80’s, and the development of participatory and community-based public art in the 1990’s. Most recently, participatory art has morphed into Social Practice, a new iteration of the

participatory genre that blends together performance art, site-specific work and community activism to produce a broad range of creative gestures in real world contexts.

*Leisure State* demonstrated a form of *practiced space* by using the tactic of *directed participation* (Fig 12), designing a place for relaxation and game play inside the institution. Using social and artistic aesthetics to support the construction of place, I worked with mobile and fixed elements to create a situation where the *practiced space* of the university and gallery were interrupted. This allowed new forms of interaction and social relations to open up within the space of the work. *Leisure State* addressed the site of the gallery and the university community while offering a commentary on the commercialization of space and place by institutional and market forces.



Figure 12. Ping-Pong paddles waiting for audience participation to activate the work.



Figure 13. Tools and equipment found in the public archive used to do research.

#### **Chapter 4: Archive**

*Visualize the contemporaneous museum as a structure within a structure, an autonomous entity within the rubric of the existing collecting institution with discrete but complementary activities that may or may not take place within the museum walls... Thus, the museum as repository would continue to flourish as artifact and purveyor/preserver of objects, while a second invisible museum within its structure would work independently and form collaborations internally and externally, changing its shape and redefining itself with each new project.*

Lisa Graziose Corrin, *The Contemporaneous Museum*, 174



*Archive Encounters* posits a different kind of relationship with the museum, one where the artist and her audience reclaim the public archives as a site for collaborative art practice. Instead of being anonymous visitors in the museum, the artist and a participatory audience engage in inter-subjective exchanges within its public spaces. The artist acts as the *interlocutrix* (in-ter-lo-cu-trix), facilitating dialogue with the audience to create a dialogical space that informs an aesthetic experience; synthesizing the materials held in the archives with the lived experience of the participants to find new knowledge. In my previous research I investigated site, place and public space to develop a theoretical framework for my practice. In those situations (a downtown storefront, the public square an institution/art gallery), I worked with interdisciplinary methods. The graduate work furthered this interdisciplinary approach, by integrating social practice and digital technology as methods of encounter. In the following section I will introduce the site of *Archive Encounters*, the Museum at Campbell River.



Figure 14. Exterior view of the Museum at Campbell River

The Museum at Campbell River (Fig 14) is the largest institution for social history in the North Island region. First Nations Art and cultural artifacts are on display in the main gallery, ethnographic and anthropological research are contained within its archives. Histories of early European settler populations and the development of industry, resource extraction, including logging, fishing and mining are highlighted. My previous research in the CUBE indicated that the museum was a potential site for an artwork, engaging with an audience through storytelling or interactive, educational experiences.

In January 2014, I started a dialogue with Museum staff to develop my graduate project, receiving support and input from the Associate Director, Public Programs Coordinator, Curator and Collections Manager. I was interested in using the archive as a space for dialogue within the museum, because of its status as both a research area and a public space. Open four days a week, the space was available without any lengthy negotiation. It was through my presence in the archive that I built relationships over time with the museum staff, eventually gaining permission to work with artifacts in the collections. As a pre-existing situation, the museum provided ample materials and I was interested in the ways that social histories were represented through narrative, sound, photography and other forms of documentation. As a social practice, *Archive Encounters* emphasized dialogue to open up a social space inside the archive, creating a situation where the audience was brought into a personal encounter with aspects of individual and collective memory.

Meeting in the archives at a designated time, I introduced the concept of the work to my five participants. I met each person individually, so as to create a direct and immediate

experience, where we entered a discursive space that allowed conversations to emerge in a natural and unscripted way. In participatory practice, “opening a discursive space gives others the opportunity to insert their contents into the structure we have built. As this structure becomes more open, more freedom is given to the group to shape the exchange” (Helguera 48). Opening a simple structure for participation through the discursive space of inquiry, themes and stories emerged from the participant. These would branch out, leading into a creative dialogue or material investigation in the archives.

A dialogical aesthetic considers communication and the aesthetic experience of dialogue between the artist and the audience/collaborators to be the artwork. In this process-oriented work, the audience becomes an active collaborator in shaping the artwork through inter-subjective exchanges within a situation or context (Kester 2005). Intent on creating new consciousness in both artist and collaborator, dialogical aesthetics require an openness and willingness to exchange, listen and be shaped by the experience of communication (Kester 2005). *Archive Encounters* looked at the archive through the lens of social experience, where self-curated conversations, informal learning processes and independent thought were privileged. Through that inter-subjective process, knowledge and experience were exchanged, unconstrained by an institutional visitor or spectator paradigm.

The inter-subjective exchange between the artist and audience is a gesture that echoes the aesthetics of feminist artists in the early 1970's, who created consciousness raising groups and social networks for women to develop knowledge and experience. These practices have evolved into various forms, such as activist art, community based public art, socially engaged art, relational art and social practices. Emerging in the 1990's,

relational aesthetics considered social situations, relationships and contexts, as the medium for art (Bourriaud 2006). The audience becomes a part of the aesthetic experience that is created through psychological encounters with the other participants. The artist orchestrates the work and invites the audience into a context or situation that creates an experience, potentially modeling new ways of being together in the world. Relational artworks usually take place within a gallery context, whereas social practice artists tend to work in real world contexts. The material of the work is the social, cultural, political and/or environmental happenings of contemporary life. Projects take on a variety of forms, such as interventions, activist projects or alternative schools.

Working in the archives with social practice was a way of addressing a place-specific cultural context. Social practice is interdisciplinary in nature and crosses the boundaries between disciplines and areas of knowledge<sup>10</sup>. Building on my previous research, the social practice aspect of this work was in the presence of the interlocutors inside the museum, working in collaboration and navigating their own knowledge experience. Combining social practice with the elements of space, place and dialogue resulted in a participatory framework for a creative process to unfold inside the museum. As a structure within a structure, *Archive Encounters* acted as a contemporaneous museum that produced, documented and collected its own social knowledge.

In the next section, I outline the fieldwork done in the archives, summarizing the dialogical encounters with the five participants and museum director. The text is written in an auto-ethnographic narrative form and works from field notes, photographs, videos,

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<sup>10</sup> In *Artists Reclaim the Commons*, Patricia Phillips describes socially engaged art as having “conceptual and theoretical affinities with a wide range of disciplines, including education and pedagogy, anthropology and ethnography, performance and theater, philosophy and ethics, sociology and communications theory” (28)

audio recordings and personal memory. As I proceed through my narrative account of the weekly *Archive Encounters*, I will discuss some of the relevant theories related to dialogical aesthetics (Kester) that draw from feminist epistemologies concerned with women's ways of knowing<sup>11</sup>. The most significant being *connected knowing*, or the ability to take into account other peoples ideas, socio-political contexts and frames of reference in the development of a knowledge experience.

### Week One: Connected Knowing



Figure 15. A projection onto an artifact, performed by Libby King in the collections room.

In the first week, the participant was Libby King (Fig 15), a writer who was originally from Adelaide, Australia. The dialogue began with Libby expressing how much she loved the archives, because it was an open space for the public to study, much like a library. The discussion shifted to the process of writing, spaces to write in, the importance of a good writing utensil and working with un-lined paper. "You have to invite the words in,

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<sup>11</sup> Two books that Kester draws from are, *Women's Ways of Knowing: The Development of Self, Voice, Mind* (Belinky, Clinchy, Goldberger and Tarule 1986) and *Knowledge, Difference and Power: Essays Inspired by Women's Ways of Knowing* (Goldberger, Nancy Rule 1996).

by making space for them to enter". She made a gesture with both of her hands to illustrate opening a space for the words to land. Handing me a piece of paper, she invited us both into a space of silence to write. During that time, I clarified the scope of the project. She then invited me to read the words back to her. This encounter points to the importance of listening, being open to the interlocutor's responses, so as to be shaped and changed by them. Libby's knowledge of writing and her willingness to share and practice that knowledge, informed the project. Opening the work for this kind of connected knowing to take place, is a part of a dialogical aesthetic, effectively summarized in the following statement by Kester,

In attempting to present our views to others, we are called upon to articulate them more systematically, to anticipate and internalize our interlocutor's responses. In this way we are led to see ourselves from the other's point of view and are thus, at least potentially, able to be more critical and self aware about our own opinions. This self critical awareness can lead, in turn, to a capacity to see our views and our identities, as contingent and subject to creative transformation. (110)

## Week Two: *Empathic Identification*



Figure 16. A projection of Mr. Tyee onto a buoy from the Elk Falls Mill, by Kristen Carlson.

In week two the participant was Kristen Carlson (Fig16), an early childhood educator and student of social work, originally from Campbell River. Our dialogue began with a general introduction to the project where I tell her that I am interested in the ways that individuals come to find local knowledge and use the archives to establish a relationship with place. That led to a dialogue that revolved around place-based knowledge where we spread out books, examined diagrams, photographs and read stories about local knowledge systems. Some of the topics that we traversed included: food foraging, seaweed gathering, wild crafting and developing skills in relation to local ecologies.

One of the many images that appeared in our archival research was of the water sluice (a device used to divert water and separate minerals), which Kristen associated with the experience of sifting through information and finding knowledge. I was drawn to the images of stone mallets, used by early indigenous people to pound cedar roots for woven clothing. The information that we gathered was a combination of First Nations and European knowledge systems. When we combined the different sources together, a

juxtaposition of economies was created. The technologies of resource extraction (European) were placed beside those of gathering and harvesting (First Nations). As we contemplated the different qualities of these cultural practices, I identified with Kristen's desire to know more about local, ecology-based knowledge systems. In reflection, there is much potential in social practice works that result in place-based knowledge, learning to respect different cultural system, values and economies. This sense of identification with my interlocutor's responses is central to the aesthetics of dialogical practices that bring together the audience/participant and artist into close proximity:

The second characteristic of connected knowing involves the redefinition of discursive interaction in terms of empathic identification. Rather than enter into communicative exchange with the goal of representing "self" through the advancement of already formed opinions and judgments, a connected knowledge is grounded in our capacity to identify with other people. It is through empathy that we can learn not simply to suppress self-interest through identification with some putatively universal perspective, or through the irresistible compulsion of logical argument, but literally to redefine self: to both know and feel our connectedness to others. (Kester 113)

In that space of empathic identification we shared both thoughts and feelings, generating relational insights into place-based knowledge. Building trust and developing a field of social interaction over time is key to this work, having the potential to lead to a more expanded field of social practice<sup>12</sup>. In the future, projects could be developed to address

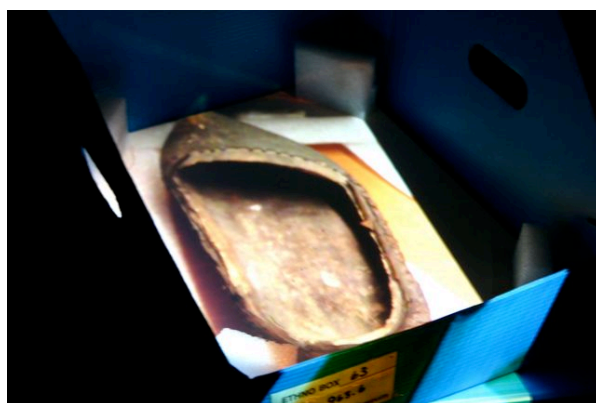
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<sup>12</sup> In his book, *What We Made: Conversations on Art and Social Cooperation* (2013), Tom Finkelpearl puts forward the idea that art involving social cooperation is an aesthetic form of community development.



local knowledge systems and grow awareness about the different cultural forms of economy that are practiced in the region.

### **Week Three: *Systems of Representation***



**Figure 17. A projection of a wooden shoe into a blue ethnography box, by Ken Blackburn.**

In week three, the participant was Ken Blackburn (Fig 17), an artist and administrator who is originally from Ottawa, Ontario. Immediately upon introducing the concept of the work, Ken invented a number system for the selection of research materials. He proceeded to rip up several small pieces of paper and write a series of numbers on them, choosing a random sequence to select books from the library. Enacting the process again to choose a random page in each book, I photocopied them and set up four quadrants on the table in front of us. As this process unfolded the Collections Manager, Sandra Parrish, was drawn to our activities and entered into the conversation. She described the systems of organization used in the archives: the political history of the archives as a *right of the citizen* and the Dewey decimal system that organizes the archives alpha-numerically in order of subject.



Figure 18. A projection of two participants onto a blue ethnography box, by Ken Blackburn.

Taking some time to look at the selections, we discussed how each page depicted or represented knowledge in a different way: chart, diagram, photograph, recipe, story and illustration. Considering the different type of depiction on the table, Ken made a comment, “text and image...given these random situations do have an internal dialogue between them, as to how it is that we are systematizing what they represent.” I then ask him, “So, once you set up a relationship between different groupings, an internal dialogue automatically begins? Dialogue seems like a natural way of knowing about the relationships...or the differences?” He replies, “ I guess ultimately it’s about the relationships, whether they are similarities or differences, it would be the same thing.”

The process of deciphering the visual languages and the relationships between the different systems of representation is a departure from the previous encounters, moving towards a more analytical approach to the work. Ken describes the experience as a form of mining, where the objects of extraction are thought. According to Graziose Corrin<sup>13</sup>, quoted at the beginning of this section, the contemporaneous museum is continually

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<sup>13</sup> Lisa Graziose Corrin is an art historian, author and current Museum Director at Northwestern University. Her writing on the Contemporaneous Museum appeared in the book, *Conversations at the Castle* (1995).

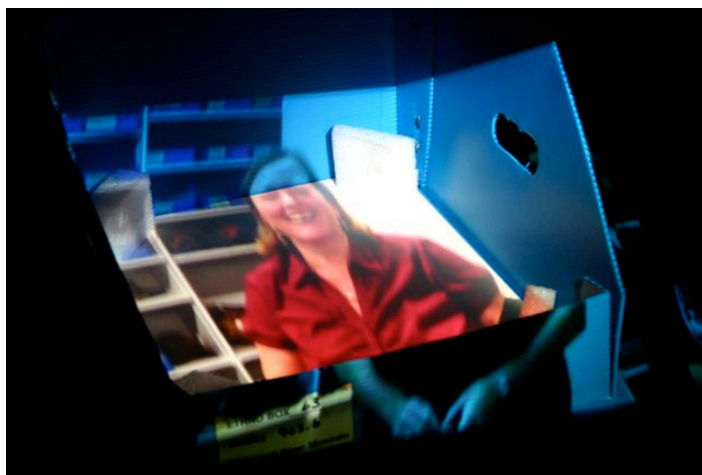
changing its shape and redefining itself with each new project... the artist produces nonhierarchical visual culture and the past, as it is embodied in the museum, is like an infinite archaeological site where disembodied fragments are unearthed and preserved for what they evoke subjectively without being classified according to a specific value system that maintains a universally accepted definition of art. (158)

An example of an ethnographic museum working with contemporary artists in this way is the *Open Lab* at the Weltkulturen Museum<sup>14</sup> in Frankfurt, Germany. Artists of all disciplines are invited to work with museum staff to perform investigations into the ethnographic collections and reassess historical artifacts through the lens of contemporary art. A post-colonial gesture, the intention of this type of work is to renegotiate the systems of meaning that are represented in the collections of institutions of social and ethnographic history.

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<sup>14</sup> The Weltkulturen Museum is an ethnographic and natural science museum founded by citizen of Frankfurt in 1817. Holding a collection of more than 67,000 objects, an image archive of 100,000 ethnographic photographs and films, and library holdings of 50,000 international books and journals. The museum links scholarship, research and artistic practice through residencies, exhibitions and the online interface of Open Lab, offering virtual access to artifacts.

### **Week Four: *The Collections Room***



**Figure 19. Projection of the Collections Manager inside a blue ethnography box.**

In week four, Sandra Parrish (Exhibits and Collections Manager, Fig 19) showed me around the collections room, where museum artifacts and the bulk of the archive materials are stored. Sandra is the Associate Director of the museum, after working there for over twenty-five years. She provides assistance to people who are searching for research material and is also responsible for the artifacts in the collection. During that encounter, I captured a series of photographs, as I became fascinated by the juxtaposition of objects that were loosely organized in storage.

Using the photographs to frame the artifacts in unexpected relationships, the images point to a relational aspect of meaning. The artifacts take on other narratives when dislocated or disorganized from a system of chronology or categorization. Further dialogue with Sandra established a protocol for working with the artifacts and opened up the collections room for future artistic inquiry. In this way, dialogue was a methodology for negotiating with people and systems within the institution.

### ***Week Five: Loss, Collection and Recollection***



**Figure 20. A projection of the McDonald's logo onto a First Nation's carving, by Liz Carter.**

Week five brought together two participants, Ken Blackburn and Liz Carter, in an effort to move the project towards further collaboration. Liz is a First Nations artist originally from Alert Bay. A few years ago she was in a car accident where she suffered a traumatic head injury. Since that time, she has lost a lot of her memories and tells us how the memory loss has affected her life. Surprisingly, she describes the loss as a gift, saying that she doesn't have to "remember all of the garbage that happened". She speaks about the freedom that comes with being herself. Unconstrained by family expectations, she does what she wants now. The question arises after Liz shares her story, "where and who would we be without the archive of memory?" There is a desire in the group to erase the archive, as a type of performance piece. Then we ask permission to go into the collections room, where we examine some of the artifacts in storage and speak to the Collections Manager about the ways that the artifacts are stored. Liz has questions about the way that the First

Nations masks are stored. Sandra explains the protocols around their storage, telling us how some of the masks have come to the museum to be kept in the safety of public trust. She said that families would come in to visit their masks and borrow them to dance in potlatch ceremonies. During her next *Archive Encounter*, Liz worked with First Nations artifacts, projecting commercial logos and advertisements onto souvenir totem poles and carvings made for the tourist trade (Fig 20).

### **Week Six: *Individual as Archive***



**Figure 21. Alex Witcombe and Ken Blackburn collaborate on a projection.**

The sixth *Archive Encounter* was with Alex Witcombe (Fig 21), an artist and illustrator from Comox, BC. He was working in Campbell River on a series of public art works that addressed place-specific themes. We jumped into a dialogue about subjectivity in art and the way that personality filters our experience and perception. Then we move into symbolism and imagery, where Alex describes the ways that he uses historical photographs in his drawings and paintings. I ask him, “Does the past speak through you when you make an artwork?” We discuss the possibility of influencing the past by make

artworks about specific events. Our conversation then shifts towards time and genetic memory and the inheritance that we receive from our ancestors. Are there ways to connect with the ancestors, to open our perceptions to them? Although this *Archive Encounter* did not involve a material exploration of the archive, the subject of the conversation pointed to an invisible aspect of our experience; a layer of consciousness that transcends space and time, where each person is a living archive of memory and their ancestor's memories are hidden.



**Figure 22. Projection onto archives of Elk Falls Mill by Ken Blackburn.**

Generating insight through the discursive space of interaction between the archives and creative participants, the work explores elements of dialogical aesthetics (empathic identification and connected knowing) within the frame of an existing site (Fig 22). Both a literal and metaphorical site, the museum acts as a container for our experiences, where the participants mine both individual and collective memory. Developing a structure for creative and collaborative participation within the museum, a flexible framework was set up for experiential and spontaneous insight. In this methodology, the emphasis is placed on the participant as a living archive of memory and co-creator of the work.



Figure 23. Projection onto a Hudson's Bay blanket by Libby King.

In the next phase of *Archive Encounters* the participants were introduced to the collections room, where the bulk of the archival materials were stored. In general, this area of the museum is off limits to the public and we gained access to the space through dialogue with the Associate Director of the museum. After negotiating with her to establish an ethical protocol around the use of the artifacts, we began to explore this space as a site for artistic production. I invited each person to move through the collections room and gravitate to the artifacts that attracted them. I showed them the functions of the projecting digital camera, and they would capture a series of objects. After these images were taken, the projecting camera allowed them to transfer the images onto other artifacts. The participants played with surfaces of meaning, as I facilitated communication and documentation during the process (See Appendix A for further documentation). The following images were made in collaboration with Ken Blackburn at the Museum at Campbell River Archives and Collections. This first collection of images conjured forth specters of the past, including the tactility of labour, ceremony and utility.





Figure 24. Pepsi logo projected onto a First Nations woven basket



Figure 25. Pepsi logo from a pop bottle projected onto a historical clock face.





Figure 28. Hands projected onto the floor between a collection of chainsaws.



Figure 29. Projection of Ken Blackburn's hands onto a chainsaw engine.

## Conclusion

In this text, I discussed the role of the artist as interlocutrix in a series of participatory and collaborative art works undertaken during the Master of Applied Art Program. Beginning with *CUBE: Action Research*, I developed a community-based methodology that was both pedagogical and dialogical, involving a storefront space as a site for engagement. The paradigm of my Youth collaborators informed the process, and through that research I learned alongside Youth to create an interactive, visual storytelling process. In the future, I would like to continue working with Youth, developing a framework for critical pedagogy, where the participants co-facilitate the production of a public artwork.

The next stage of the research moved into public space, by situating my studio practice in the downtown core. *I AM HERE*, asked questions about the relationship between identity, narrative and place. I examined the non-fixed nature of spaces and places, working with the theories of Massey in conjunction with the information gathered during dialogical encounters with people in the city. Through that research, I learned about a larger set of socio/political realities at play and by analyzing the visual environment that I encountered, I found myself at the interstice of place and space. Here, I learned to identify a series of social relations that were connected to the public spaces of the city.

In the next piece, I constructed a social gathering place inside the gallery. *Leisure State* was based on a control script formulated out of a colour scheme, a series of fixed objects and a wall text. By inviting the viewer to become an active participant in a *Leisure State*, the work experimented with a form of directed participation inside the gallery.

Through that research, I learned that designing an artwork for a specific community context had the ability to bring about new social relationships and potentially break down existing social barriers or hierarchies. In the discussion of *Leisure State*, I work with the theories of De Certeau and Lefebvre to build a critical framework for the construction of social space, as well as introducing Pablo Helguera's four types of participation to establish a range of participatory gesture by the audience.

The remainder of the research is focused on the graduate work, *Archive Encounters*, a dialogical and participatory inquiry into the social experience of place. Situated inside the Museum at Campbell River, I worked with interdisciplinary methods of dialogue and digital image projection. *Archive Encounters*, explored connected knowing and empathic identification in the formation of a dialogical aesthetic. In this process-oriented work, I introduced the participants to the archive as a site for dialogical and material practice, leading to a series of creative gestures inside the collections room.

The text describes and documents the generative exchanges that were produced in the space of the artwork, where local knowledge was made in conversation, producing a collaborative framework for interactions in the collections rooms. In that framework, participants investigated the collections, using a digital camera to capture and project a selection of words and images onto the artifacts. The visual juxtapositions played with contingent identities and cultural meaning, as the participants reinterpreted cultural signifiers through the process. Documentation of those actions resulted in a series of digital photographs that were broadcast to a larger audience, forming a secondary body of work. At the end of this document, I discuss the graduate exhibition, where I translated the research performed during *Archive Encounters* into a gallery installation.

In this thesis, I establish a conceptual framework for a dialogical methodology, by tracking the narrative arch of my practice-based research. This methodology positions the artist as interlocutrix, or one who initiates, facilitates and participates in dialogue. By interacting with the audience as participant, the work is collaborative and inter-subjective, generating both content and process. Situating the work inside existing sites, a contemporaneous social space is formed where the audience explores divergent narratives.

*Archive Encounters* worked with collaborative and creative participation as a process-driven method that resulted in a series of dialogical and visual art experiences. The individual is a living archive for the encounters, as the work is experienced directly. The digital documentation of the work (see appendix A) could be considered as a site for further cultural analysis and critical reflection. In the future, this methodology could be performed in other place-specific contexts, using similar methods with a variety of different people. The challenge will continue to be that a durational methodology requires a significant time frame to fully form. The time frame being a major determinant in the development of a set of social relations that will live on after the work is over. Ideally, the echo effect of the work will lead to further local discourse into the ways that we learn, share and experience different forms of social, cultural and artistic knowledge.

### **Final Exhibition**

The final exhibition was held at the Charles H. Scott Gallery on Granville Island during the summer of 2014. During preparations for the exhibition, I was considering ways that I could continue the collaborative aesthetics of *Archive Encounters* inside the gallery. One idea was to create a collaborative exhibition design by facilitating dialogue with my participants, bringing them together to reflect on the work that was produced. Ideally, this would have happened in a downtown storefront in Campbell River, where the collaborative work could then be broadcast to a local audience. I took steps in this direction, but time restrictions and bureaucracy did not allow this process to fully form. I did have permission from the group to work with the material produced during the *Archive Encounters* for the final exhibition. One suggestion, made by Alex Witcombe, was to display the images in a three-dimensional form instead of a traditional wall display. I decided to build an installation in the gallery and re-enact the space of the archive, working with elements of space and place that were encountered inside the museum. I negotiated with museum staff to borrow a selection of materials (exhibition props, storage boxes and photographs) to build an installation, where I inserted the photographic documentation from the *Archive Encounters*.

In the gallery, two white industrial shelves created an interior space for the audience to enter into the work. On the left shelf, were the museum props and on the right were the storage boxes and digital projector. The storage boxes were labeled with the names of the five participants and presented to the viewer at eye level. Lining the interior

wall of each box was photographic documentation taken from each individual's *Archive Encounters*. At the opening of the exhibition, some of the audience members opened up the boxes and looked inside, while other people shone their cell phone light into the opening to see the contents. Documentation was also projected onto the outside of a storage box, reproducing a working process that happened during the *Archive Encounters*. I eventually turned the projector towards the wall, to interrupt the Hudson's Bay blanket motif.



Figure 30. An interior view of the installation in the Charles H. Scott Gallery. Photo by Scott Massey.

The Hudson's Bay blanket colour scheme was painted onto the wall of the gallery to designate the space of the installation. Much like in *Leisure State*, the colour scheme was appropriated from a commercial institution to make a comment about a *cultural state*. The motif was intended to frame the work and provide a cultural signifier that was encountered inside the social history museum. By amplifying this image, I was bringing awareness to



the underlying structure of social relations that are at play in the production of Canadian history. The Hudson's Bay Company motif is a cultural signifier that is used widely in the production of Canadian culture. The company is one of the oldest corporations in North America, having been in operation for over three hundred and forty years. Setting up fur trading posts in Western Canada and the US during the 18<sup>th</sup> century, the company was pivotal in establishing the economic state that supported the Dominion of Canada (confederated in 1867) and eventually became Canada's largest private landowner.



Figure 31. Second view of *Archive Encounters* inside the gallery. Photo by Scott Massey.

During the exhibition, one of the students in the MAA program responded to the blanket as a cultural signifier. She said that her people were given Hudson's Bay blankets before the white settlers came and that the blankets were inoculated with the smallpox virus. The virus killed most of her people and in Sechelt, where she lived, was a mass grave

for the thousands who died during the epidemic (1862-3). After the blankets came, the priests and nuns followed with religion and residential schools. The remaining children were taken away from their families and converted to Christianity in these institutions- an act that is considered to be a form of cultural genocide. I asked her if she wanted to do something with the blanket as a part of the work, or possibly tell her story in front of the Hudson's Bay blanket motif. The space of the work would then be set up for new dialogical encounters to happen inside the gallery context.

*Archive Encounters* demonstrated a template to explore the relationship between communities and the archive. The final exhibition opens up even more opportunities to enter into dialogue and exchange with the materials that were encountered in the museum. In a time of reconciliation, where many First Nations communities are calling for social justice and recognition of the ongoing affects of colonialism, this template could inform a series of working projects to address some of the more challenging questions of our time. By opening up spaces for people to speak through, engage with each other and learn about their local history, the work could lead to a greater social awareness about the ways that histories are formed. When social consciousness is shifted towards an emancipatory state, communities will shape and influence their future in ways that are informed by the knowledge gathered in the ongoing process of dialogical and artistic exchange.

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**Appendix A**



Ken Blackburn



Ken Blackburn



Ken Blackburn



Ken Blackburn



Liz Carter



Liz Carter





Liz Carter



Liz Carter



Libby King



Libby King



Libby King



Libby King



Alex Witcombe



Alex Witcombe



Alex Witcombe



Alex Witcombe



Ken Blackburn



Kristen Carlson