

Upstream Benefits

Artists: Susan Andrews Grace, Ian Johnson, Boukje Elzinga, Deb Thomson, Natasha Smith, Rachel Yoder, Brent Bukowski, Amy Bohigian, Courtney Anderson, Maggie Shirley (10)

Susan Andrews Grace: Tattered Spine, a Proposal

The piece I'm going to work from is the first Ironing Board Hologram I made, in my South Slokan Studio in 2002, a year after moving to Nelson. I'd found an old wooden ironing board in a second hand goods store (where Itza Pizza now exists), covered in layers of cigarette smoke-infused sheets, which when washed, turned into exquisite tatters with water stains that looked like topographical maps. Of the Kootenays, I presumed. I made many compositions of this tattered cloth contained by wooden boxes I constructed for them.

For Upstream Benefits I propose to interrogate a tattered quilt that is over 100 years old, made by my grandmother. I want to make that quilt either stand on its own (ergo the spine of the title) or make a piece that is an elegy to that quilt and its maker. Or both.

Ian Johnson: Tangible Shadows



Yes I'm interested in participating in the exhibition. I would propose to use some of the pieces created for my body of work, Tangible Shadows: Intersections, created in 2005.

Tangible Shadows represents a transition in my practice from production ceramic ware to sculpture that would go on to larger installations and currently video installation work.

"a wet sheet of porcelain, the thickness of a piece of cloth, is thrown over the side of a tea cup. Like cloth, it drapes, creating a shadow of the article being sheltered. When the porcelain is separated from the object it represents it becomes a three dimensional or tangible shadow of that object. The idea of creating shadows from simple sheets of wet clay is the origin of Tangible Shadows. The first pieces work with the idea of Milagros and so the human body is the subject of choice. Simple expressions of a multitude of body parts are formed in porcelain and fired to a soft gunmetal gray colour. Like the Milagros these pieces are meant to be presented on a vertical surface. The forms for the most part are unmistakable and have remarkable coincidental formal relationships with one another hence their presentation in a group."

That text from my 2006 statement at Oxygen describes the intention of 26 piece wall installation called Outbreak. The evolution of my practice has coincidentally brought me back to this work and the roots of my practice in an exploration of a secondary layer or shadow on related work from that time that are still in my collection. This second layer is being created with the Cerra Colla technique of painting with a mixture of wax and cottage cheese. The idea of reuse that has been an underlying concept in most of my work is the impetus for this new exploration that seems to fit well to the idea of Upstream Benefits.

I've attached two images of Outbreak (porcelain, 2005, 92" x 45' x 5") but I could include any number of works from the Tangible Shadows project depending upon how they fit with the other work and space of the exhibition. The pieces that I have been re-examining are primarily wall works.

Boukje Elzinga

I would be very glad to take part in the group exhibition "Upstream Benefits", thank you for inviting me, it is a great idea. The importance and benefits created by artists for the community by developing an art culture is vital. I think it heals, teaches, creates serenity and gives direction and understanding of the world around us.

As my early "instrumental piece" I have chosen a painting I call At the Palace Steps, Amsterdam which I made just after I graduated from Emily Carr Institute of Art and Design and arrived at the Kootenay School of Art to teach art history, anatomical and figure drawing, mixed media and oil painting. Having returned from a trip to the Netherlands, I immersed myself in the subjects I taught, rented studio space in the Old Brewery in Nelson and created a series of works about people as reflected by their location in specific spaces.

Life in the West Kootenays soon reinforced my awareness of the power of nature and the art began to examine plants, snow, water, creek and lake edges, animals, their remains and skeletons and the impact of climate changes.

The new work starts a series of still life's showing nature and instruments, reflected onto silver containers. It still deals with nature but only as a reflection. I have been thinking a lot about this new Anthropocene era we are in and how to talk about it so nature becomes a reflection on man made

objects within a traditional still life. The images may have human figures but also as reflections in the silver. The pieces will be oil on wood.

Deb Thompson - Note of commitment to Upstream Benefits group exhibition.



My intention for the exhibition would be to reflect on a body of paintings, *The MaternalBody*: the paradox of desire that I exhibited in the Oxygen Art Centre in 2005. This body of work consists of 12 paintings, 6 of a mother squirrel found dead on the side of the road and 6 of my own body naked as seen in a mirror. This body of work was the first inclusion of an animal in my painting, since then my work has included many animals and their assorted attributes. In fact, I soon after created and exhibited a body of paintings, *HIDE* that was based all on animals as the central protagonist. Animals have held symbolic importance for me in the development of my narrative, in particular in accessing my unconscious material. There is a long history of human animal related imagery. One era that interests me greatly is the Paleolithic peoples depiction of animals on cave walls. Poet and art historian Clayton Eshleman who has studied and recorded the cave paintings of many significant caves in Southern Europe considers this convergence of animal - human glyphs to be the expression of a psychological crisis, that of human's fundamental separation from animal, as people moved from nomadic hunters to agrarian societies. Of course, this transformation unfolded over thousands of years and can be seen in its various stages in the hybridized art of the Egyptians and the zodiac signs of ancient Greece. By the Renaissance very little animal symbolism existed. The human animal relationship had transformed.

Today, there is a resurgence of animal imagery in contemporary art. David Altamirano and Shari Boyle are two examples of artists whose work explores the human animal psyche or what I like to think of as the animal body.

I am proposing to work with this animal body in a small series of new work that some of which would then be available for exhibition in Up Stream Benefits.

What I would like to do is to work with Rabbit Skin Glue. The 6 paintings of my self naked from the Maternal Body where painted on canvas soaked or sized in Rabbit SkinGlue. This ancient sizing material is semi-translucent with a slight flesh tone. I would like to explore a layering process of drawing overlaid with glue repeated many times. I would play around with various thickness of the glue, various drawing material and alsosupports. Potentially, the pieces would be hung from scaffolding (I would build) so thatthey can be viewed on both sides and receive light from both directions. I imaging creating the work on the horizontal and then exhibiting in a vertical orientation.

I am still asking myself what I am questioning here in these materials and processes,certainly my own understanding and relationship to instincts, to my body its animalnature. More than that I don't know at this time.Contemporary relevance? I think if we are to begin to turn this climate change crisis around we better re-connect to nature and that includes our own animal bodies.

Natasha Smith



Over the last 15 years the local landscape and an investigation of the primitive mark has informed my practice. In my proposed work for *Upstream Benefits* I will create a series of landscape reference works that incorporate and reference recurring marks, images and symbols that were uncovered in my 2009 body of work *Joining Worlds*. I will be responding directly to one of the collaged doors created as part this body of work.

Joining Worlds investigated the development of my son's visual language and identified hieroglyph like imagery and mark making. Rhoda Kellogg's research (*Analyzing Children's Art*) suggests that the expressive gestures of the infant evolve from certain basic scribbles towards consistent symbols. Every child, in their discovery of a mode of symbolization, (no matter where they are from in the world) follows the same graphic evolution. I want to return to these essential basics of expression. In the words of Cy Twombly I want to project myself "into the child's line"

By working intuitively with a "childlike" approach this series of landscape based works will directly reference physical locations in the Nelson area while incorporating iconography of past work; mapping experience and place, reconstructing symbols and connecting with an older knowledge in pursuit of the new.

Maggie Shirley - Foundations

Proposal for *Upstream Benefits* by Maggie Shirley

One of my interests in my practice is examining the evolution of the human body. In my residency at Oxygen (*travelfreetravel*), I looked at creating virtual experiences and connections, using both new and old technologies. Another interest is in exploring materiality – finding new forms and creating new objects from familiar (usually domestic) objects. In *Peacing*, I created figures from recycled paper.

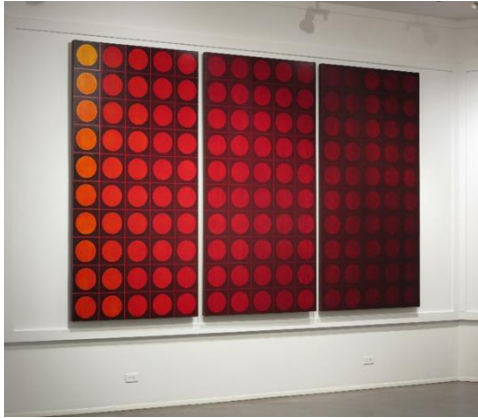
For *Upstream Benefits*, I want to explore the materiality of two domestic media – gelatin and panty hose. In my previous project *Peacing*, it was about connecting and creating a meditative practice in order to find calmness. This project will invoke instability and questioning. The theme of *Foundations* is to portray how much change and uncertainty there is at the moment, both negative and positive – climate change, democracy, news, gender identity, social media and technology, history, borders, life and death, etc. How do we adapt and respond to change? What is our response to uncertainty? What happens when the social, economic, environmental, cultural foundations crumble?

I've been experimenting with a robust gelatin in order to make a section of floor out of gelatin, draped in nylon, that people can walk on in their bare feet (a chair and wet wipes at either end). This would give people the sensation of walking on "shaky ground" - both strange and fun. The smallest size would be 4' x 4' but it would be preferable to do it larger, depending on costs.

Another association with foundations is foundation garments. Control-top panty hose can create objects that hint at the body and are both familiar and unknown. Nylon has contradictory qualities – it can be both tight and droopy. It is astonishingly strong but also fragile.

My vision is to integrate both materials together. The installation would consist of wall pieces as well as objects that occupy space near and around the "floor". The materials are associated as they are artificial and have an association with gender. There's a possibility of adding foundation make-up into the mix. It's another artificial gendered material that is a base but covers up what's real.

Rachel Yoder



The piece is called **The Years**, and is part of the group show 150 Creative acts. I completed the 3 large panels in May. Each of the three panels is 90" H x 45" W, for a total piece 7.5 feet by 12 feet.

The Years, is concerned with time and how as time passes everything changes. Memories recede and when you recall them, a different emphasis is placed. The present can be sharper, clearer. When you look to the past, details can be murky, shadowy, hidden or blurred.

For this work, I chose a circle within a square to repeat 150 times. I painted the circle yellow and around it black and then I painted over the whole square with a thin layer of reddish paint. I moved on to the next space, repeating the process and painting over that new square and the previous ones and continued that way through the entire 150 squares, starting at the other end, and ending here.

As I worked my way through the panels, bits of debris or flaws in the canvas accumulated paint in uneven ways as the layers developed. To me this illustrates the changes that time passing makes on memory.

When I answered the call for the 150 Creative Acts exhibit, I was responding to a work that I made in 2007 and which was exhibited in my first public gallery exhibit at Oxygen. The 2008 exhibit is Tracking Time and the piece I used in thinking of **The Years**, was called **Weeks 31**.

In that original piece, seen above, I also used a grid and placed a shape in it using a random choice method, circle or square, and then painted layers over it as many times as I could manage in the week, until the next week when I added a new shape. And every time I painted a layer, it was over the entire piece up until that point. In other words, I used a similar concept to the one in **The Years**. I had been waiting for an opportunity to make a new work based on **Weeks 31** for several years and when the call for that exhibit came, I was ready.

I would like to put this in the Touchstones/Oxygen Upstream Benefits for several reasons.

I really want to show **The Years** again. It is the largest, most unified work that I have done and I think showing it with the 10 years older work, would highlight the progress that I have made.

Also, that first exhibit at Oxygen, fits with your upstream artist run idea, because without that exhibit, I would most likely not have had the major exhibits I have had over the past 10 years, and the major project funding grant that I received.

I think these two works would fit totally with your invitation. The other reason I am asking to use this, is that I will be away for 8 weeks between now and the exhibit, making it will rather hard for me to manage any new work of this scale and complexity between now and then.

The Years, is concerned with time and how as time passes everything changes. Memories recede and when you recall them, a different emphasis is placed. The present can be sharper, clearer. When you look to the past, details can be murky, shadowy, hidden or blurred.

For this work, I chose a circle within a square to repeat 150 times. I painted the circle yellow and around it black and then I painted over the whole square with a thin layer of reddish paint. I moved on to the next space, repeating the process and painting over that new square and the previous ones and continued that way through the entire 150 squares, starting at the other end, and ending here.

As I worked my way through the panels, bits of debris or flaws in the canvas accumulated paint in uneven ways as the layers developed. To me this illustrates the changes that time passing makes on memory.

When I answered the call for the 150 Creative Acts exhibit, I was responding to a work that I made in 2007 and which was exhibited in my first public gallery exhibit at Oxygen. The 2008 exhibit is Tracking Time and the piece I used in thinking of **The Years**, was called **Weeks 31**.

In that original piece, seen above, I also used a grid and placed a shape in it using a random choice method, circle or square, and then painted layers over it as many times as I could manage in the week, until the next week when I added a new shape. And every time I painted a layer, it was over the entire piece up until that point. In other words, I used a similar concept to the one in **The Years**. I had been waiting for an opportunity to make a new work based on **Weeks 31** for several years and when the call for that exhibit came, I was ready.

I would like to put this in the Touchstones/Oxygen Upstream Benefits for several reasons.

I really want to show **The Years** again. It is the largest, most unified work that I have done and I think showing it with the 10 years older work, would highlight the progress that I have made. Also, that first exhibit at Oxygen, fits with your upstream artist run idea, because without that exhibit, I would most likely not have had the major exhibits I have had over the past 10 years, and the major project funding grant that I received.

I think these two works would fit totally with your invitation. The other reason I am asking to use this, is that I will be away for 8 weeks between now and the exhibit, making it will rather hard for me to manage any new work of this scale and complexity between now and then.

Amy Bohigian

My first video installation 'Roundtable' was exhibited as part of the larger show entitled BOOM! at Oxygen Art Centre in 2008. As a documentary filmmaker, I was looking to break out of the box – literally – and create a new kind of dialogue using the medium of video. So, I interviewed six people I thought represented a range of lifestyles and perspectives about the changes Nelson was experiencing during that timeframe. I juxtaposed the footage of their talking head interviews with imagery of them working with their hands. Then, I placed a series of TV's in a semi-circle timed to construct a conversation amongst the subjects placing the viewer as a quiet observer at this roundtable discussion.

In 2016 I worked with Daryl Jolly (animation) and John Tucker (sound design) to create my latest new media installation, 'Arc'. Here, I worked to juxtapose historical images with modern day photos to create a series of 5 short meditations about how our region has evolved over time. This work proposes a certain social evolution, linking past and present – trying to create dialogue about where we may be headed into the future.

These two works, my first and latest installation pieces, when placed together, demonstrate my continued focus on how constructing dialogue between unlikely combinations of people and social groups, and even between past and present can re-shape our social landscape and offer new points of connection to place.

Brent Bukowski

The work I will provide for the upcoming Oxygen/Touchstones exhibition, *Upstream Benefits*, will include a sculpture from my *Piece of the Pie* series (2005-06). While this series did not exhibit at the Oxygen Gallery, it was the series created (and inspired) right after my exhibition there (*Circle(s), Straight line(s), and Intersection(s)*, 2005). The sculpture is a work in found metal and glass that examines the expansion of world consumption in a form that compares current statistical patterns to those of up to 50 years ago.

The new work I will provide (work in progress) will be a suspended sculpture from my Blunt Force Illumination series (2013-). The form of this sculpture is an orb constructed from 12 circular frames--- the theme, of which, illustrates instances of sustainable design and development that offer hope in the preservation of an inhabitable environment.

Courtney Anderson

Courtney began creating metal works when he came to the Kootenays in 1893, sometime after the Civil War, or in 1993 (depending on which version of 'reality' you prefer). The decision to focus on metal work was very much inspired by the proliferation of old metal roofing and reclaimed steel in/of the area. Courtney has included one of his very first metal pieces entitled *A Nationalist from France or some part of Southern Europe*. In response to this work Courtney has included the 2017 work *House Number 23 from Housing Project*. Prior to this form of expression Courtney focused primarily on painting and print-making.

DO NOT COPY