

between-ness

Hannah Petkau



ALBERTA FOUNDATION FOR THE ARTS TRAVELLING EXHIBITION PROGRAM

Curatorial Statement

between-ness is a solo exhibition of ten assemblages by emerging artist Hannah Petkau. In her twenty-six pieces, Petkau utilizes materials such as driftwood, woven wire, clay, fibres, seeds and rope to create works that are both corporeal and ephemeral. She explains, "I reserve an intentional ambiguity to the origin and intent of my objects. The collection is comprised of objects both found, transformed and constructed that realize the collaboration between human and natural actions." This collaboration may initially seem abstruse in intent, with contradictory components, but her approach is intentional.

Petkau has unique abilities. Clever, thoughtful and extremely creative, she also displays masterful craftsmanship. She can observe an object and envision its transformation, and she possesses the ability to intricately and expertly alter material to bring her vision to fruition. The outcome generates an intimate opportunity for the viewer to visually

engage with delicately woven fibers positioned beside a saw-cut shard of wood, or a knot of rope hanging from an antique railway tie placed beside a piece of a wasp nest. She works with found natural and manufactured materials, skillfully reconstructing them to change their purpose. Petkau finds materials everywhere. "I acquire items on walks, at a thrift store or in other day-to-day occurrences. They are artifacts of interactions. Shards of wood and fabric, fragments of wasp nest, rocks and pieces of metal and plastic are a few of the items that end up in my studio."

Originally from British Columbia, Petkau spent her childhood walking the shoreline collecting objects. This experience had an immense impact on her artistic practice and has influenced her aesthetic, processes and concepts. Petkau finds a balance between transformation and familiarity, creating a visually simplistic but complex fabricated body of work—one in which the natural world and the manufactured world intersect.

About the Artist



Hannah Petkau
CALGARY ALBERTA

Hannah Petkau grew up on the Gulf Islands of British Columbia and is currently based in Calgary, Alberta where she completed her BFA with Distinction at the Alberta College of Art + Design in 2015. Her affinity with materials began at an early age when the twice-daily tides washed up an endless source of inspiration, plastic, plywood and rope were collected and assembled with driftwood, rocks and shells.

Her practice continues to negotiate this interplay. The integration of found materials and objects, which are manipulated both by her hands and by previous unknowns, blur the differentiation of human and natural actions and exist in an intermediate space.



Artist's Statement

Much of the world in which we live has been touched, enlivened and reformed, leaving marks and traces of a previous existence. Perceptions of what is natural and artificial have become intertwined, a duality that can no longer be kept separate. I seek to exist in this intermediate space.

I reserve an intentional ambiguity to the origin and intent of my objects. The collection is comprised of objects both found, transformed and constructed, that realize the collaboration between human and natural actions. Acquired on walks, at a thrift store or in other day-to-day occurrences, they are artifacts of interactions. Shards of wood and fabric, fragments of wasp nest, rocks and pieces of metal and plastic are a few of the items that end up in my studio.

Then there are those artifacts that are a mystery to me... Some of these pieces are left to their own devices, and my hands further manipulate others. There are also those that do not yet have a prior existence, made for the intention of furthering the discourse between the counter artifacts. Intimate processes with thread, wire and clay, construct the imagined, or mimic reality.

The unusual forms and materials promote intrigue of all the possible interactions, both past and potential. I aim to create a balance between all of these components, each dependent on one another, while denying the impulse to impose a hierarchy. Individually they carry a certain duality or contradiction, which when combined, develops dialogs of how materials are perceived and interpreted.



1

between-ness #1
2017-2018
collected and modified
found materials and objects
17 x 18 in.



2

between-ness #2
2015-2018
collected and modified
found materials and objects
37 x 20 in.



3

between-ness #3
2018
collected and modified
found materials and objects
37 x 20 in.



4

between-ness #4
2015-2018
collected and modified
found materials and objects
26 x 19 in.



5

between-ness #5
2017-2018
collected and modified
found materials and objects
23.5 x 18 in.

LIST OF WORKS



6

between-ness #6

2018

collected and modified
found materials and objects

27 x 11 in.



7

between-ness #7

2016

collected and modified
found materials and objects

10.5 x 8.5 in.



8

between-ness #8
2017-2018
collected and modified
found materials and objects
31.5 x 18 in.



9

between-ness #9
2018
collected and modified
found materials and objects
32 x 11 in.



10

between-ness #10
2018
collected and modified
found materials and objects
24 x 19 in.





Acknowledgments

This publication was produced in conjunction with the TREX exhibition **between-ness** by the AFA Travelling Exhibition Program (TREX) Southeast Region 4, at the Esplanade Arts and Heritage Centre. **between-ness** will tour throughout Alberta to non-traditional gallery spaces August 2018 – February 2021.

Visit www.trexprogramsoutheast.ca to find out more about the program and locations of each exhibition.

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between-ness #6
2018

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About the Esplanade

The Esplanade Arts and Heritage Centre is where the stories of our great collective culture are told through music and dance, painting and sculpture, plays and concerts, exhibitions and installations, artifacts and art, education programs and private events. Featuring a 700 seat main stage balcony theatre which boasts superior technology and striking design, the Esplanade is where Medicine Hat celebrates arts and heritage.

A marvel of contemporary Canadian architecture on traditional Blackfoot territory just steps from the South Saskatchewan River, the Esplanade occupies an eminent position on downtown's historic First Street Southeast. From its rooftop terrace, you can see Saamis, the dramatic shoreline escarpment which is the setting for the story of how Medicine Hat got its name.

Inside, visitors discover the vibrant Esplanade Art Gallery, the prized Esplanade Museum, the Esplanade Studio Theatre across the lobby from the Esplanade Main Stage Theatre, the expansive Esplanade Archives and Reading Room, an art education space called the Discovery Centre and the catering-friendly Cutbanks Room.

In the northeast corner of the Esplanade grounds stands the oldest remaining brick home in Alberta, the Ewart-Duggan House. With its gingerbread trim and quaint heritage gardens, it now serves as a charming venue for select cultural events and a home away from home for artists in residence.

The Esplanade opened in celebration of Alberta's centennial in 2005 and ever since, Medicine Hat has welcomed a steady procession of artists and audiences, storytellers and story-lovers from around the region and around the globe. The celebration continues today.

