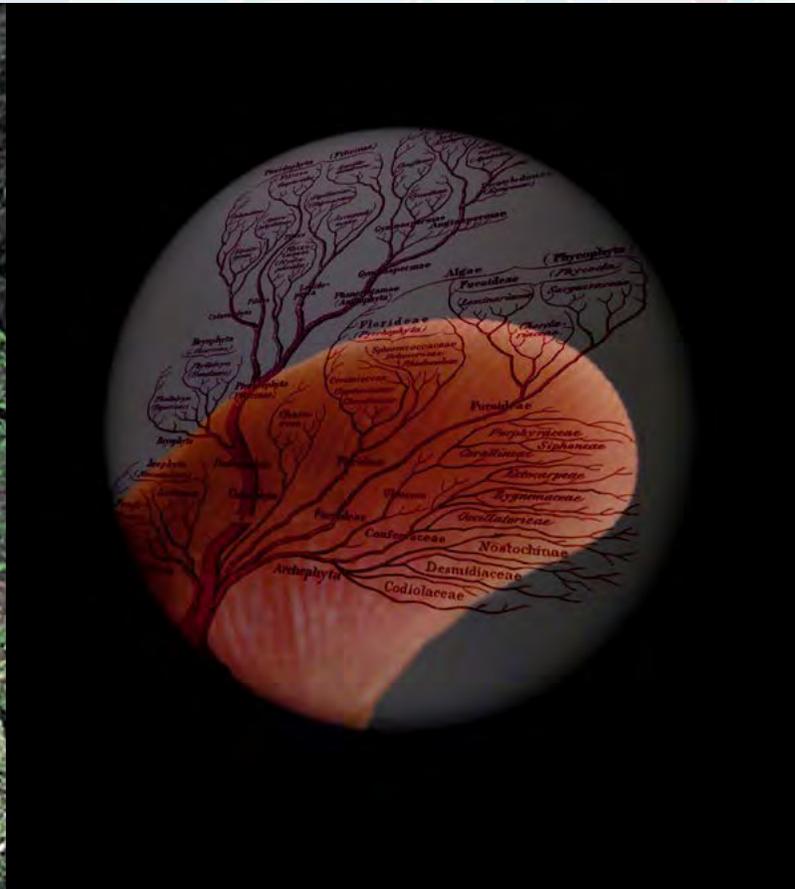


Vital Patterns

Exhibition Guide



Alberta
Foundation TRAVELLING EXHIBITION PROGRAM
for the Arts



Vital Patterns

Patterns are all around us. We are often enamoured with the beauty of the natural landscape that surrounds us, and artists are no different. Nature serves as a significant inspiration and when we look closer at the building blocks of the natural world, we often find similar interconnecting patterns; the roots of a tree system and our nervous system, the veins of a leaf and the veins in our own body, the pattern of bark and the texture of our own skin.

Some of the most common patterns are the driving force behind both humans and plants. These systems are vital to survival and there is beauty in the simplicity of these patterns and the complexity of these systems.

This exhibition features artworks from the Alberta Foundation for the Arts (AFA) collection and include artists Clint Wilson, Doris Freadrich, April Dean, and William Laing.



Vital Patterns

EDUCATOR'S GUIDED TOUR

When was the last time you noticed a cloud that looked like a familiar object? From childhood, humans are eager to recognize shapes, lines, and ultimately patterns in the world around them, including their own bodies. With an interest in exploring the significance of pattern in nature and humanmade designs, the Vital Patterns exhibition brings together works from four diverse artists that satisfy the eye's longing to find familiarity in surprising places. William Liang, Doris Freadrich, April Dean and Clint Wilson have created these works in a variety of media, including serigraph, silkscreen, photographs, metalwork, and woodblock printing. Through each of these media, the artists in Vital Patterns invite us to see the consistency, and even connectedness, in the aesthetic design of living things, the natural environment, and the environment of visual culture we create for ourselves through art.

The reason that we recognize shapes in the clouds, are able to learn written and spoken language, and can build social relationships is that our brains function on pattern recognition. Our brains are experts at fitting new information into the pattern of information we already know, so that we can understand, conclude, and make predictions about the world around us.¹ And that world around is truly filled with patterns! One of the most ubiquitous patterns in nature is a fractal design, meaning that the pattern is made of repeating self-similar but increasingly smaller parts, like the branches and twigs of a tree. Because patterns are so essential to our process of thought and expression, and so common in the world around us, it's no wonder that humans find patterns to be aesthetically pleasing.

In visual art, repeating shapes, colours, and lines can provide balance to a piece. A visual pattern can provide a sense of movement as the shapes and lines unfold, or it can lend a sense of stability. Pattern can also be presented in art through a thematic motif. Many artists use thematic motifs, referencing the same theme or idea multiple times in the same work or body of works, in order to create meaning, narrative, and unity. For instance, a common motif in European medieval designs is the symbol of the cross, meant to remind viewers that purpose of the work was to incite religious reverence. The works in Vital Patterns include both types of patterns; the pieces all include aesthetic reference to natural forms built on visual repetition, but they also often seek to use these repeating forms symbolically.

¹ For a breakdown of the patterned process of the human brain, check out this article from tech publication Praxis: <https://praxis.fortelabs.co/a-pattern-recognition-theory-of-mind/>

One symbolic use of natural pattern in Vital Patterns is the comparison of the bodies of animals and plants to the structure of the human body. Clint Wilson's photograph from his series SHADOWPLAY (MENISCUS) depicts a human hand that is seen through a fisheye lens. This close-up view allows us to see the direction of the hairs and lines on the back of the hand. Imposed on the hand to look almost as if drawn onto the skin is a delicate and detailed red ink illustration of a taxonomic tree.

Taxonomy is the branch of science concerned with classifying things; living things are classified in a hierarchical chart called a taxonomic tree that identifies them in broadest to most specific categories. In Wilson's photograph, the form of the tree is drawn in flowing lines that suggest it also serves as an illustration of the veins in the depicted hand. The many veins of the tree are labelled with the Latin names of different taxonomic Kingdoms and Phyla. By layering these images, Wilson suggests to our pattern-friendly minds that the biological structure of the hand, including the pattern of its skin and hair on the surface, and the red network of veins within, is akin to the flowing taxonomy of living beings. The suggestion is that, like a fractal, the shape of the whole (taxonomy of living things), can be found within the smallest part such as in the veins of the human hand.



Clint Wilson, *SHADOWPLAY (MENISCUS)*, 2004, Photograph on paper



April Dean, *SATIETY*, 2009, Woodblock, silkscreen, wax on rice paper

April Dean also calls viewers to consider the congruence between the human body and the forms of nature, though she does so with more subtlety, even describing her work as "explicitly vague"². The piece *SATIETY*, made from a silkscreened woodblock, is centered on an oval-shaped object: a textured whorl in high contrast shades of black and white. Viewed on its own, the piece might depict the burl of a tree, a topographical map, or a birds' eye view

of waves on a body of water. The ambiguity of the form forces viewers to consider the similar textures found in a variety of natural objects and landscapes; the series of mental images that our minds scan in an effort to identify the object create a motif of their own. Bark, mountains,

² April Dean, Wordpress artist's statement

waves – a pattern of micro and macro texture. Taken in the context of the series, however, it seems likely that the object April Dean portrays is a wasp nest, its papery layers torn to create high contrast texture.

Texture seems to be a central element of the design, and yet, if the eye of the viewer flattens the texture into a pattern of inky, black and white lines and whorls, the object looks like a symbol of human biology: a fingerprint. The most micro of all the likenesses seen in the object, a fingerprint reinforces the idea offered by Wilson's photograph of the hand and taxonomic tree: the whole of nature (sea, topography) can be found in the smallest part (human fingerprint).

While some pieces suggest kinship in the aesthetic of the human body and other biological structures, other works in *Vital Patterns* use pattern to blur the dichotomy of natural and human made environments (a dichotomy is created when two things are established as opposing or completely different than one another). William Laing states this theme clearly by naming his colour serigraph, "Terrain of the Domestic".



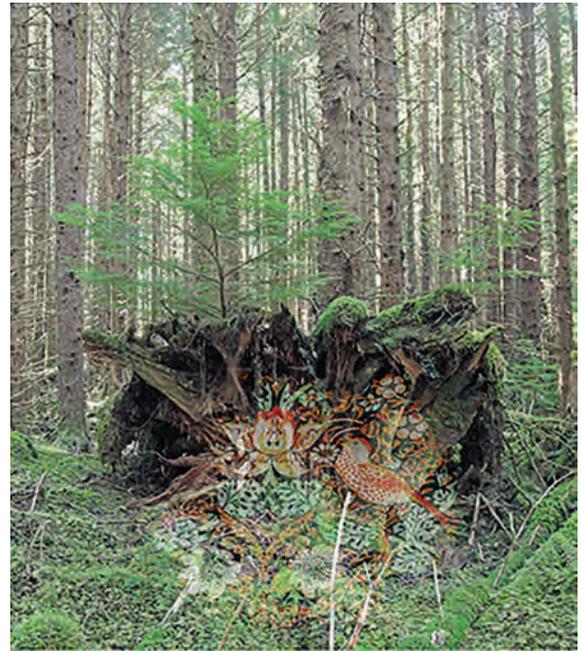
William Laing, *TERRAIN OF THE DOMESTIC #10*, 2006, Colour Serigraph

This elegant serigraph shows two different patterns; one is human drawn and looks like the design of lace fabric, the other is a high contrast rendering of a light-dappled forest. The eye first sees the colour tones of the individual halves; the lace is coral and gold in sharp contrast to the pale green and black forest. The dichotomization of the halves is also instantly noticeable; despite the similarities in form, the halves are contained in their own boxes

and in no way intertwined. Upon looking closer, the viewer will notice that the coral and gold pattern, though it is representative of leaves, stems, and flowers, is human drawn, and likely references the lace of a doily or other table decor. The design created by the light and dark shapes of the forest, although formed by similarly delicate shapes, is naturally occurring. By creating a strong dichotomy between two obviously comparable designs, Liang seems to suggest the futility of dividing our concept of human visual culture, and of ourselves, from that of the natural world. The forms that we surround ourselves with in our homes, through art and craft, mimic the forms of the natural environment long habited by our species. In questioning the dichotomy between the "terrain of the domestic" and the outdoor terrain, we pull at threads of

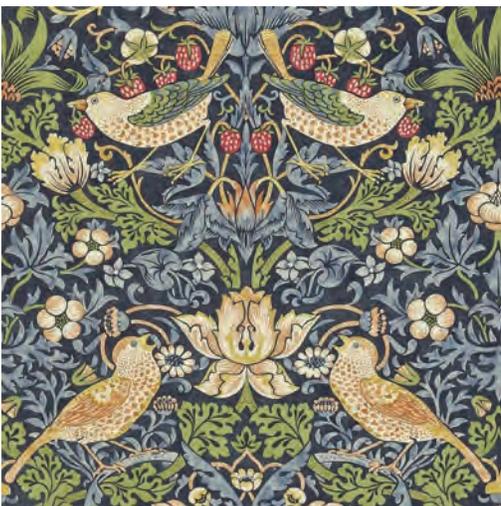
other deep and loaded issues, like the way that gender plays into the dichotomy of spaces. The lace square contains many elements that are traditionally associated with the feminine and women: lace suggests the women's "domestic" environment in the home, and pink colour and floral patterns have long been associated with a feminine aesthetic. Meanwhile, the dark depths of the forest in tones of green and black create an aesthetic traditionally associated with masculinity and depict the traditionally "masculine" environment outside the home, a place of adventure, danger, and reward. By demonstrating the similarity in both environments, Laing seems to suggest that this dichotomy is false, and that we cannot divide beautiful design and the natural world into gendered categories.

Clint Wilson fully embraces the blurring of natural design and human-made designs in his *Second Growth* series. Wilson was inspired for this series while walking through a formerly logged and replanted forest in Kunexalas reserve lands on South Moresby Island, Haida Gwaii. Struck by the way that the old growth stumps provided opportunities for the growth of new trees, Wilson found himself imagining "pre-industrial, impossible utopias"³ in which this sort of revitalization was universally possible. He envisioned the designs of artist William Morris, leader of the anti-industrial Arts and Crafts movement, spread over the forest growth as if by graffiti. With this idyllic imagery in mind, he created the photographic series by superimposing



Clint Wilson, *SECOND GROWTH: N5890322 m E318097 m*, 2018, Photograph on paper

Morris's designs onto photographs of old and new growth in the forest. William Morris and



William Morris and Co, *STRAWBERRY THIEF*, 1883, 216476 Indigo/Mineral wallpaper

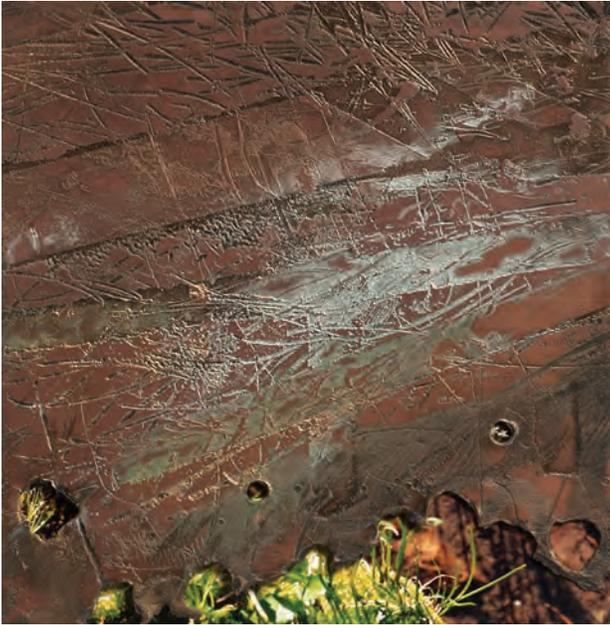
his contemporaries in the Arts and Crafts movement sought a utopian standard for production of human material and visual culture; they desired to return to traditional forms of production and harmony with the designs of the natural world. By grafting Morris's rich, nature-themed patterns into the rich, patterned chaos of the forest, Wilson creates for us tiny moments of visual utopia – the complete integration of the human romantic ideal of nature with the natural world itself. However, the imposition of art from a utopian movement into spaces that have been

³ Clint Wilson, statement on *Second Growth: Kunexalas*

industrially logged also presents a contradiction, and a reminder that our idealism still exists within what Wilson refers to as the “real world cycle of production and consumption”.

In her series *Ardent Fragility*, Doris Freadrich goes beyond commentary on the patterned similarities between the natural and human-made world, seeking to explore the interplay of natural and manufactured materials. Her goal, she states, is to let her images “portray erosion, growth, harmony and friction that are both natural and man-made in origin”.

In the work *Ardent Fragility #9*, Freadrich depicts the correlation of erosion and growth; the



Doris Freadrich, *ARDENT FRAGILITY #9*, 1991
Photograph, ink on copper plate

worn copper plate appears to be in the process of disintegrating, revealing a startling shock of green growth beneath. The plate is distressed by a multitude of thin scratches worn into its surface; the scratches are illuminated with ink. They serve both to suggest that the plate is aged and battered by time, and to mimic the spiky shapes of the grass growing beneath the copper. The suggestion, it would seem, is that the scratching and destruction of the copper are united with the new growth of plant life. The plate is also shaped along its bottom edge by a pattern of half-circle cut-outs, and full holes are formed within the lower half of the plate. It looks as if the copper itself is melting away, being evaporated to reveal the new life below. In an era of environmental concern,

the destruction of the manufactured copper plate to make way for the growth of grass sends a message of hopefulness: the soft forms of the living world can overcome the weight of human imposition.

In creating their works, the artists in *Vital Patterns* draw on an element fundamental to human cognition and biological structure: the pattern. In doing so, their works become part of the vast number of designs created by human beings that mimic or are inspired by the patterns that exist everywhere in the world around us. These patterns are aesthetically pleasing to our senses of artistic beauty (in no small part) because pattern is the essential structure of the living world – of “vitality”. The networks of cells, veins, roots, branches, neurons and myriad other systems in the bodies of living things are all built upon repeating, often fractal-like growth.

In *Vital Patterns*, artists like Clint Wilson and April Dean seek to demonstrate the commonalities between the bodies of living things, while William Laing, and Wilson in his *Second Growth* series, show that the designs created by humans for aesthetic pleasure can not be separated away from the natural world that is often their inspiration. Doris Freadrich speaks to the vitality of the living world, suggesting that the wild patterns of life are a force against the weight of environmental damage. As a whole, these works are an invitation to see what may have been too ubiquitous to notice: the vital patterns in and all around us.

The following are questions that may be asked for different ages and abilities when looking at the *Vital Patterns* exhibition.

Accessible Questions:

- » What is a pattern? Why might artists use patterns or motifs?
- » Where in this image do you see two shapes or lines that are similar? Do you think they make a pattern?
- » What are all the objects/shapes you see in this piece? What do you think they are supposed to be? What other things have the same shape or design?
- » Have you ever seen a similar design? Where did you see it? Outside? Inside? In a book? In another work of art?
- » How does the title help you to figure out what the work might be about?
- » Do you like this piece? Do you think you will remember it? Why or why not?
- » Which piece is your favourite? Why?

Activity Suggestion: If pieces are arranged on a wall, ask students to stand next to the piece that is their favourite. Give the groups corresponding to each “favourite” piece three minutes to discuss amongst one another why they like the piece, and then explain its strengths to the class.

A CLOSER LOOK AT...

PATTERNS IN NATURE

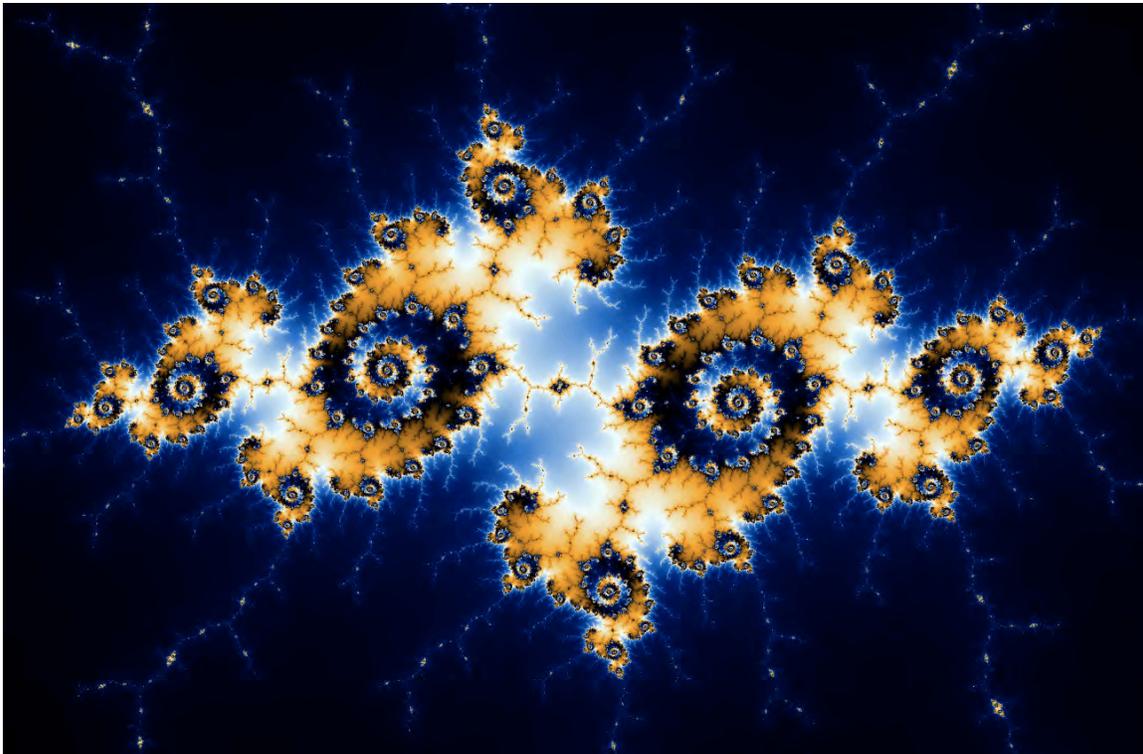
Patterns are the most ubiquitous design in the world around us. In fact, they're so common that when we identify the patterns in our homes, we might select only the most complex designs, like the exciting prints on our bedding or clothing. It may go unnoticed that nearly every object in our homes displays some element of patterned design: the scalloping on a bedframe, the tile on the bathroom floor, the border on the edge of a plate. With so many eye-catching designs to fill our minds, we might not even consider that perhaps the richest patterns in our homes are even closer at hand – literally in our own bodies. Repeating rows of cells, networks of neurons, and geometric criss-crosses across the backs of our hands are just some of the intricate patterns decorating and – more importantly – structuring the human body.

There are a couple reasons why human beings choose to surround ourselves with patterns. One reason is summed up by tech productivity expert Tiago Forte, who explains that, “the human brain has evolved to recognize patterns, perhaps more than any other single function.” Our brains operate on a structured system, sorting segments of information into hierarchical categories. What we do best is recognize the patterns within these categories. Our brains are experts at fitting new information into the pattern of information we already know, so that we can understand, conclude, and make predictions about the world around us. The ability to compare thousands of patterns and process multiple pieces of information at once is called massively parallel processing, and it's what allows our brains to compete against even the much faster “thoughts” of computers. Our knack for predicting pattern also shapes what we see and experience; our brains are constantly searching for recognizable information and will tell us that we are seeing a pattern, even when that pattern is not quite complete. This is why we might misread words if we are expecting a certain word order, or why we might recognize animal shapes in the clouds. The human tendency to interpret a vague stimulus as something familiar, like hearing an expected phrase in a song or thinking a car looks like it has a face, is called pareidolia.

But humans are not silly for wanting to see patterns in everything around us; we evolved that way because most things around us are part of a larger pattern. The familiarity of patterns in the natural world also contributes to our tendency to surround ourselves with pattern in our homes. Right down to the atomic level, all material on Earth exists according to a structured design, and, in living things, that design is often essential for survival. No wonder we find patterns aesthetically satisfying! Below are some examples of patterned design in nature that may be interesting to discuss with students.

FRACTALS

A fractal is a pattern made up of repeating, self-similar shapes which are increasingly smaller. In a fractal, the structure of the whole can be found in the smallest part. Because many natural and difficult-to-measure phenomena, like galaxies and coastlines, can be described as having fractal-like structure, fractals are sometimes referred to as the “patterns of Chaos”. The mathematician Benoit Mandelbrot contributed much of what is known in the field of fractal geometry, including the term “fractal”. He described fractals as the “art of roughness”, and the “uncontrolled element in life”¹. Mandelbrot created equations that could be used to create a potentially infinite fractals called Mandelbrot Sets. Because the Mandelbrot Set is infinitely repeating, aesthetically pleasing, and operates on the mathematic notion that the whole can be seen in the smallest part, some people consider the Set to be a spiritual symbol, akin to a mandala. Mandelbrot’s work has put the chaos of topographical forms like mountain ranges and river networks into mathematical language, allowing them to be rendered artificially with computer graphics for movies and video games.



This image shows a section of a Mandelbrot Set. Mandelbrot Sets are, in theory, infinitely repeating. To “zoom into” a Mandelbrot Set, watch this hypnotic video, created by YouTube user tthsqe12: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PD2XgQOyCck>

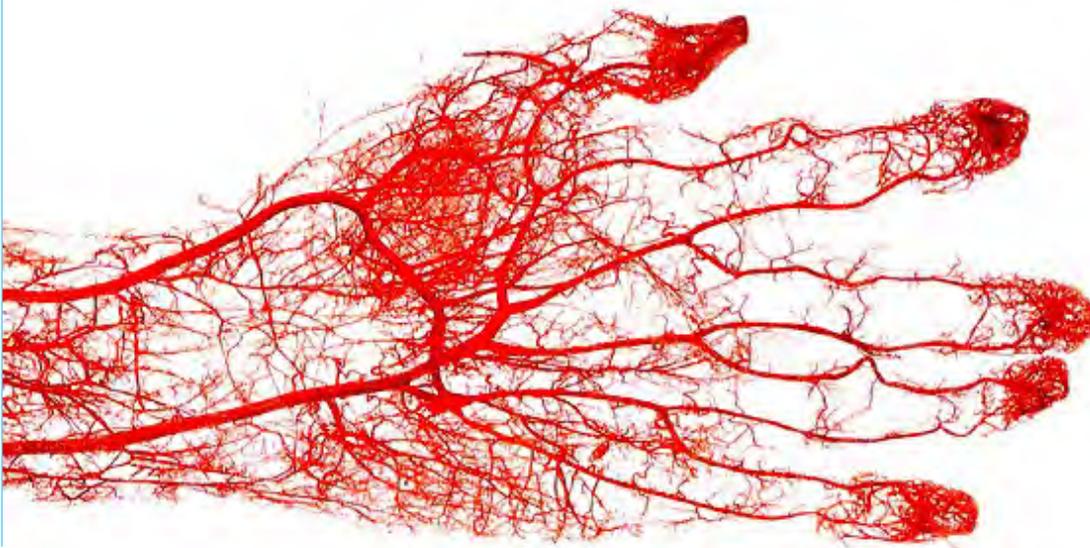
¹ Benoit Mandelbrot: Fractals and the art of roughness - Youtube video



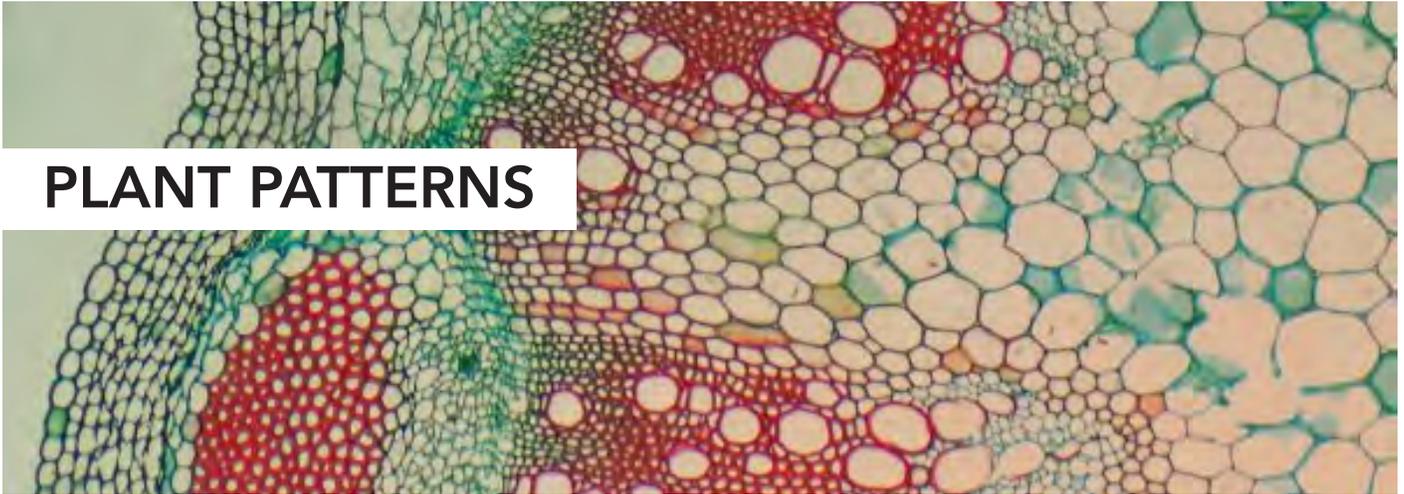
CIRCULATORY SYSTEMS

The venation pattern on this leaf is structured like a fractal. The veins of a leaf transport water, minerals, and food energy through the leaf and on to the rest of the plant.

Most multicellular creatures have a circulatory system that operates on a system of blood vessels. Blood vessels in the human body spread outwards from the heart with a fractal-like pattern; the vessels are similar in design but grow increasingly smaller as they move towards the extremities of the body. This patterned network of vessels makes it possible that every part of the body is delivered oxygen and nutrients, and that carbon dioxide and other waste products are carried away. Though all humans have similar circulatory systems, each person's blood vessel pattern is unique, like a fingerprint. A Swedish researcher, Fredrik Leifland, has even developed a way to pay at the store using a biometric scan of the hand's blood vessels to determine the identity of the shopper. Below is an acid-corrosion cast of the arteries (vessels

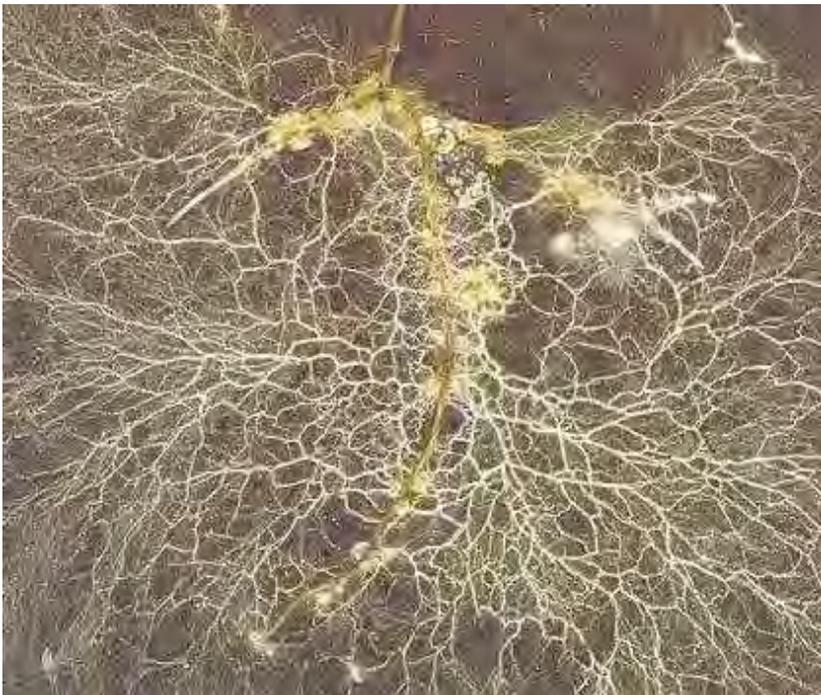


that carry oxygenated blood) in an individual's hand and forearm. Note the fractal spread of the arteries and the locations where the network of vessels becomes denser to allow for more sensitivity.



PLANT PATTERNS

Plants do not have blood vessels like humans and other animals. Instead, they transport food, minerals, water, and gases through a vascular system – a network made of fibres and tissues that runs up and down the tree. Within the roots of the plants, as well as its leaves, stem, and branches, are a system of “veins” called phloem and xylem, which sit close to one another in a “vascular bundle”. Phloem is responsible for transporting food produced by photosynthesis, and xylem transports water and minerals. A cross section of a plant reveals the open tubes of phloem and xylem, which, especially when seen in colour, appear as an aesthetically pleasing pattern.



An essential part of the vascular system are the roots of a plant, which spread outward into the ground in a fractal pattern of increasingly smaller roots. The pattern of roots is not unlike the pattern of blood vessels seen in the human hand; by spreading out in smaller and smaller rays, the roots are able to maximize their access to water and nutrients in the soil.

This outward spreading pattern is seen in multiple parts of the plant: in the root system, the venation pattern on the leaves, and in the branches of trees, with each branch holding more smaller but self-similar branches. This form of growth is stable; it ensures that each small component, whether root or vein, is supported by a larger, albeit similar component in order to keep the plant, or person, healthy and alive.

TOPOGRAPHY

Topographical forms like river systems, coastlines, and mountain ranges are in many ways unquantifiable. How long is a coastline, really? While walking down two kilometres of beach, you walk past a near infinite perimeter of jagged rock, mussels, seaweed, and grains of sand which make up the true distance of the coastline. Using fractals geometry, humans can begin to describe the natural “chaos” of topography in mathematical language – at least enough to create likenesses of it using computer graphic technology. While the phenomena of the natural world are grand and, in some ways, defy measurement, they are also patterned and form by repetitious systems and cycles.

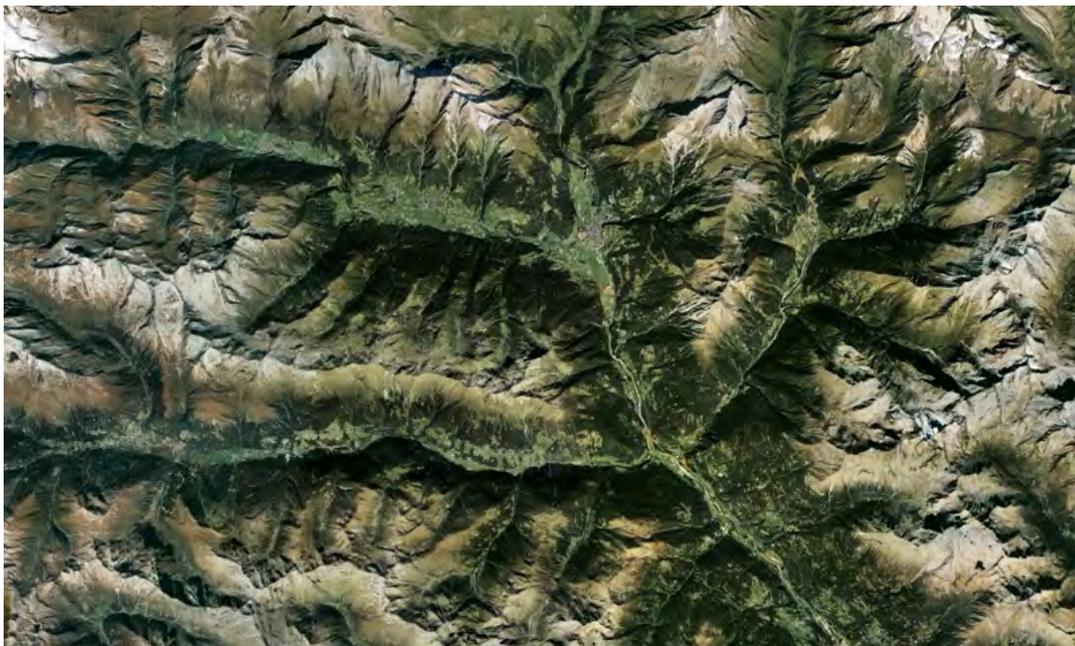
The pattern of the water cycle is fairly simple: water is evaporated out of water bodies, it forms into clouds, and then falls as precipitation from the sky. This pattern creates extraordinary topographical features on the landscape, shaping mountains, canyons, valleys and of course river and lake systems themselves. River systems flow downhill, and streams join creeks, which join larger rivers, until the water reaches lakes and seas, creating a fractal-like effect when seen from above. Satellite technology allows us to see the patterns of water systems with a bird’s-eye view. Artist Paul Bourke scours Google Earth to find striking images of river systems; see a satellite image of a Canadian river system below. Consider the similarities and differences in pattern between river systems and the circulatory system of an animal, or the vascular system of a plant.





While mountains are shaped, and sometimes even formed, by water systems, most mountain ranges are created from the collision of tectonic plates, which are pieces of the Earth's crust. Some mountains are formed by volcanic activity. Young mountain ranges, like Himalayas and the Andes, are also the tallest and craggiest because they have not yet been rounded by erosion. Although collisions of Earth's crust, volcanic activity and erosion by wind and water may seem like a chaotic process for the formation of mountain ranges, a birds' eye view of different mountain ranges reveals that mountains form in a recognizable pattern.

Patterns are ubiquitous in nature – they are found in the materials and structures of topography, of living things, and even in the way that our brain processes its understanding of the world. It is no wonder that humans find patterns to be aesthetically pleasing and seek to surround ourselves with them in our homes both for functional and decorative purposes. To be patterned is, really, to be a feature of the magnificent natural world.



GLOSSARY OF TERMS

Aesthetic:

- » (adjective) referring to how something looks, often with regards to beauty
example: "the car had aesthetic detailing"
- » (noun) a set of principles underlying the stylistic appearance of an artistic work, artist, or movement
example: "she expressed herself through a punk aesthetic"

Contemporary:

(adj) belonging to or occurring in the present. In the art world, contemporary art refers to works produced in recent years.
example: Banksy is one of the most widely known contemporary artists. His work has been produced in recent years and his artistic practice is ongoing.

Dichotomy:

(noun) a division or contrast between two things that are or are represented as being opposed or entirely different. example: the dichotomy between light and dark

Fractal:

(noun) A fractal is a pattern made up of repeating, self-similar shapes which are increasingly smaller. In a fractal, the structure of the whole can be found in the smallest part.
example: in a snowflake, the formations of each branch of crystals repeat in smaller sizes to create the whole

Idealism:

(noun) the practice of forming or pursuing ideals, especially unrealistically
example: "university students who think they can end poverty should at least be admired for their idealism"

Motif:

- » (noun) a decorative design or pattern
- » (noun) a distinctive element or dominant idea in an artistic or literary composition.
example: medieval art used the cross as a motif to represent Christian ideology

Serigraph:

(noun) a printed design produced using a screen. The word "silkscreen" is commonly used interchangeably with serigraph, although the screens in most print production are not made of silk.
example: William Liang's work "Terrain of the Domestic" depicts two serigraphs

Symbolism:

(noun) the use of symbols to represent ideas or qualities
example: the scythe is often considered a symbol of death

Taxonomy:

(noun) the branch of science concerned with classification, especially of organisms.
example: in the taxonomy of living things, animals are classified in order of greater specificity by kingdom, phylum, class, order, family, genus and species.

Utopian:

(adjective) modelled on or aiming for a state in which everything is perfect
example: Plato believed a utopian society could be achieved through rigid social structure and the philosophical education of the ruling class

Visual culture:

(noun) visual culture is the aspect of human culture associated with images and design
example: billboard advertisements are part of the visual culture of capitalism

IMAGE INVENTORY

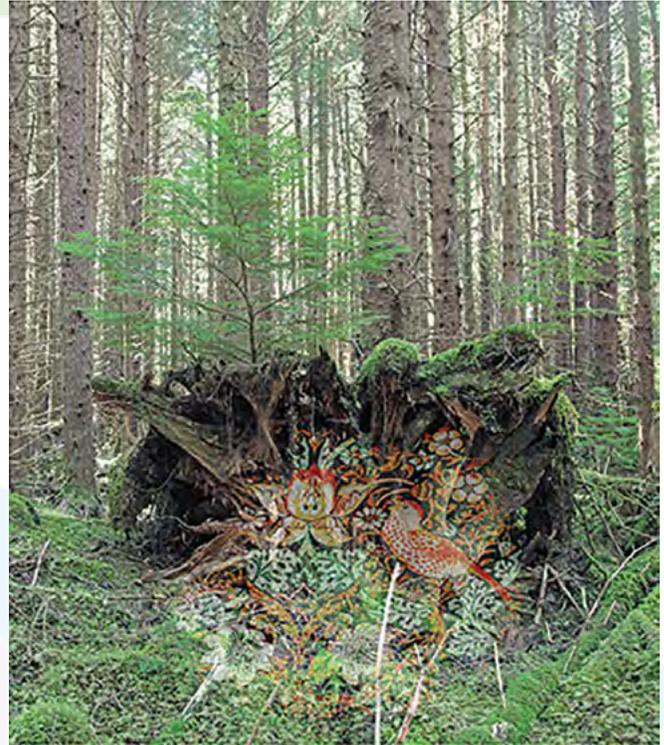
Clint Wilson

SECOND GROWTH
N5890322 m E318097 m

2018

Photograph on paper

17.3 x 13 in.
Collection of the artist



Doris Freadrich

ARDENT FRAGILITY #3

1991

Photograph, ink on copper plate

Actual: 15.2 x 15.2 cm (6 x 6 in.)

Collection of the Alberta Foundation for the Arts

Doris Freadrich

ARDENT FRAGILITY #4

1991

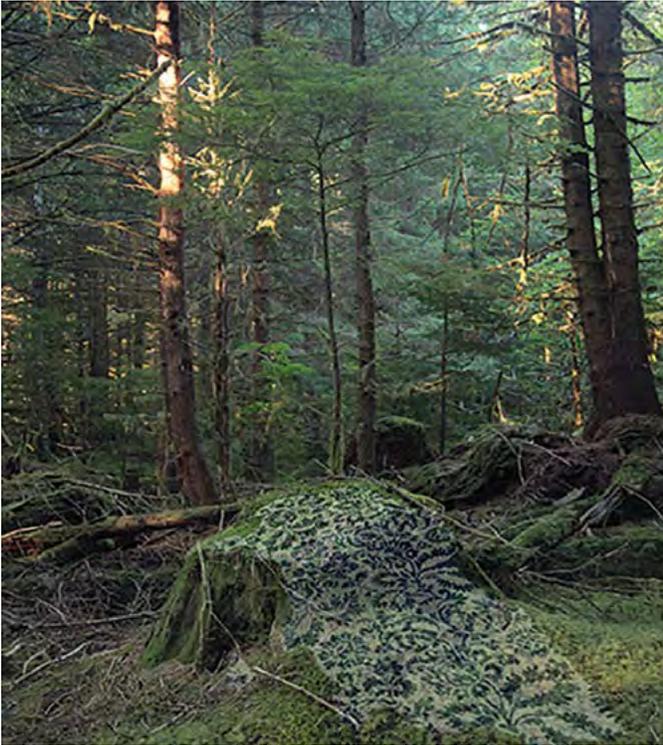
Mixed media, beeswax, photograph,
walnut shells on cardboard

Actual: 15.2 x 15.2 cm (6 x 6 in.)

Collection of the Alberta Foundation for the Arts



IMAGE INVENTORY



Clint Wilson

SECOND GROWTH
N5889703 m E320641 m

2018

Photograph on paper

17.3 x 13 in.
Collection of the artist

Doris Freadrich

ARDENT FRAGILITY #9

1991

Photograph, ink on copper plate

Actual: 15.2 x 15.2 cm (6 x 6 in.)
Collection of the Alberta Foundation for the Arts



Doris Freadrich

ARDENT FRAGILITY #8

1991

Photograph, paper, asphaltum on copper plate

Actual: 15.2 x 15.2 cm (6 x 6 in.)
Collection of the Alberta Foundation for the Arts

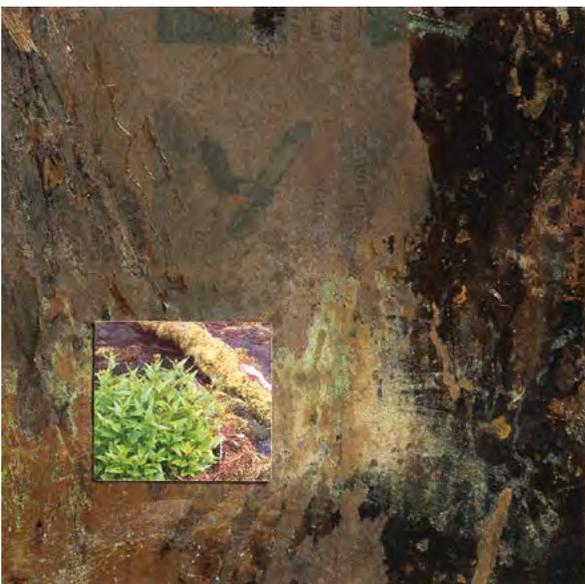


IMAGE INVENTORY



Doris Freadrich

ARDENT FRAGILITY #11

1991

Paper, photograph, ink, asphaltum on copper plate

Actual: 15.2 x 15.2 cm (6 x 6 in.)

Collection of the Alberta Foundation for the Arts

Clint Wilson

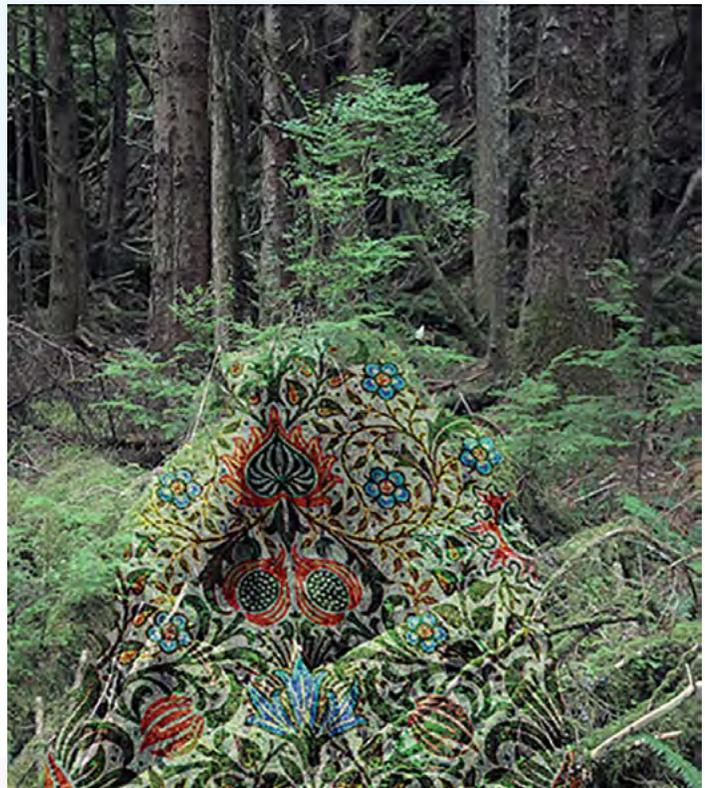
SECOND GROWTH
N5889701 m E319554 m

2018

Photograph on paper

17.3 x 13 in.

Collection of the artist



April Dean

SATIETY

2009

Woodblock, silkscreen, wax on rice paper

Image: 40 x 60.2 cm (15 3/4 x 23 11/16 in.)

Sheet: 57.5 x 76.2 cm (22 5/8 x 30 in.)

Collection of the Alberta Foundation for the Arts



IMAGE INVENTORY

Doris Freadrich

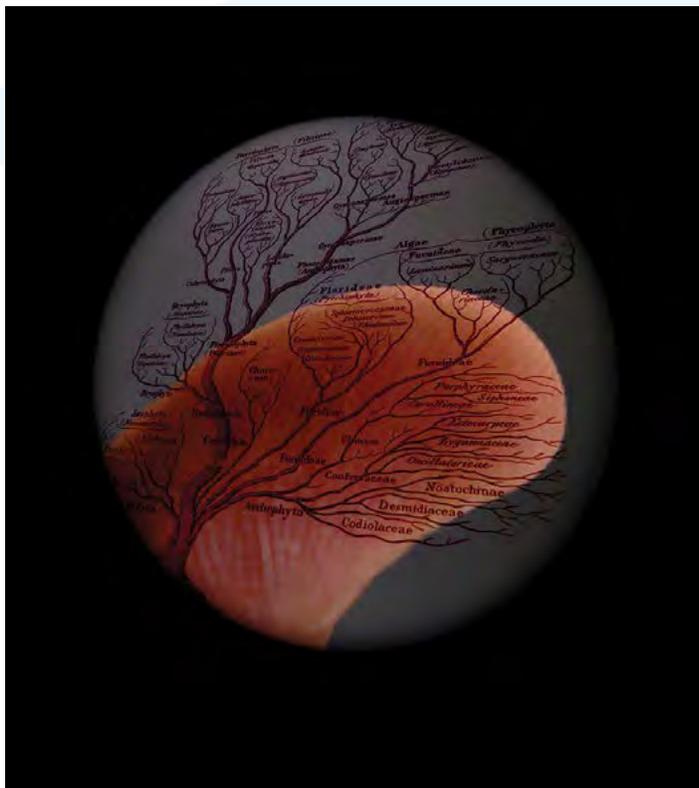
ARDENT FRAGILITY #14

1991

Photograph, ink on aluminum plate

Actual: 15.2 x 15.2 cm (6 x 6 in.)

Collection of the Alberta Foundation for the Arts



Clint Wilson

SHADOWPLAY (MENISCUS)

2004

Photograph on paper

Actual: 68.3 x 60.6 cm (26 7/8 x 23 7/8 in.)

Collection of the Alberta Foundation for the Arts

April Dean

THE RETURN

2009

Woodblock, silkscreen, wax on rice paper

Image: 39.7 x 59.8 cm (15 5/8 x 23 9/16 in.)

Sheet: 49.7 x 59.8 cm (19 9/16 x 23 9/16 in.)

Collection of the Alberta Foundation for the Arts



IMAGE INVENTORY



William Laing

BLUE PRINT

2000

Silkscreen on paper

Image: 57.3 x 38.7 cm (22 9/16 x 15 1/4 in.)

Sheet: 76.2 x 56.5 cm (30 x 22 1/4 in.)

Collection of the Alberta Foundation for the Arts

Clint Wilson

SHADOWPLAY (MENISCUS)

2004

Photograph on paper

Actual: 68.3 x 60.6 cm (26 7/8 x 23 7/8 in.)

Collection of the Alberta Foundation for the Arts

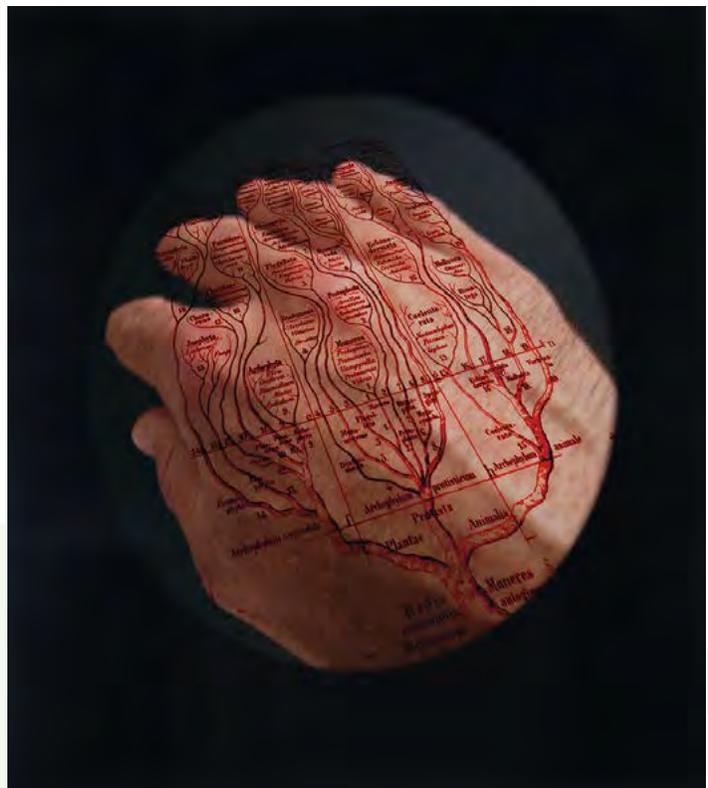


IMAGE INVENTORY



Clint Wilson

HORTICULTURE

1992

Mixed media collage, silver prints, leaves, twigs, wax, copper

Actual: 24.6 x 24.6 x 3.7 cm
(9 11/16 x 9 11/16 x 1 7/16 in.)

Collection of the Alberta Foundation for the Arts

William Laing

TERRAIN OF THE DOMESTIC #10

2006

Colour Serigraph

24 x 34.5 in.
Art Gallery of Grande Prairie
Permanent Collection



ABOUT THE ARTISTS

CLINT WILSON

Clint Wilson is an Edmonton based multi-media artist and founder of Integrated Wilderness Systems, a platform for the development and dissemination of critical thinking about neo-ecologies, post natural wilderness and natural resource management. Wilson received his Master of Fine Arts from the University of Victoria and has had a productive career producing exhibitions for galleries, founding Artist-Run Centres across Canada and in the United States, serving on peer juries, and assisting artists from around the world in the production and realization of their work through his twenty-eight year role as Senior Preparator at the Art Gallery of Alberta. In his recent work, Wilson's fascination with late Victorian idealism and the life of designer William Morris have led him to re-imagine the potential of utopian ideologies to be subversive and to reform contemporary life. Wilson was inspired for his Second Growth series while walking in the replanted forests of Kunexalas reserve lands on South Moresby Island, Haida Gwaii. There he saw the dazzling green of new growth emerging from the old logged trees, and he explains that "confronted by this remarkable display of entropy in recession, these self spawning re-constructions coaxed me into a half conscious dream like state through which hallucinations of pre industrial, impossible utopias emerged in my mind." He explains that his Second Growth series "reconstitutes a Victorian garden within an old growth boreal forest. This new photographic ecosystem described in the project brings forward contradictions between romantic world views infused with denial of predatory states and the real world cycle of production and consumption. The images are in a state of flux, Victorian snapshots of idealic [sic] wilderness scared by the remains of the botanical harvest that took place there a few decades ago."

DORIS FREADRICH

Doris Freadrich was raised on her family's farm near Forestburg, Alberta, and moved to Edmonton as a young adult to pursue a Bachelor of Education degree through the University of Alberta. After completing her BEd in 1976, she shifted the focus of her studies to visual arts, completing a Bachelor of Fine Arts degree in 1979, and a Master of Visual Arts in printmaking in 1990. Though she has worked in a variety of printmaking disciplines, the materials that she has principally used in her exhibited work are copper, aluminum, and photographic film. Her prints have been shown in numerous national and international exhibitions, and are currently in many public and private collections, including the Canada Council Art Bank, Alberta Foundation for the Arts, Art Gallery of Alberta, and the University of Alberta. Freadrich now lives and continues a leisurely artist practice in Sechelt, British Columbia. She describes her Ardent Fragility series as follows: "Our existence is determined and sustained by a unity of cyclic and opposing forces. My artworks in this exhibition are an attempt at a personal excavation to reveal for the viewer an emotional sense of the fragility and power within these relationships. Allusions are made to the harmony and chaos around and within us, and to our corresponding struggle to maintain some kind of balance. There is no definite sense of scale; the imagery suggests personal psychological struggles as well as large scale environmental concerns. The images incorporate elements of found objects, photography, metals and drawing. The images portray erosion, growth, harmony and friction that are both natural and man-made in origin. A balance of physical and psychological tensions and rhythms is the ultimate goal."



ABOUT THE ARTISTS

WILLIAM LAING

William Laing is a Scotland-born multi-disciplinary artist with an impressive teaching career of forty-two years. Laing received his own art education at the Vancouver School of Art (now the Emily Carr University of Art and Design), Brighton Polytechnic in England, and the Royal College of Art in London, England. After moving to Alberta in 1974, Laing established a serigraphy and etching department at the Alberta College of Art and Design, then went on to become a professor at the University of Calgary in the printmaking department. His dedication to his profession and his students earned him the University of Calgary's Student Union Teaching Excellence Award in 1992/93. Laing's artistic work has been equally successful; his work has been shown in over forty solo exhibitions around the world and is held in many public collections, he has been commissioned to paint murals, create statues, and design a Canada Post stamp commemorating Canada's National Parks. Laing's contribution to art in Alberta was acknowledged by his appointment to the Royal Canadian Academy of Arts in 1995. William Liang's series Terrain of the Domestic is featured in the Vital Patterns exhibition. He describes his purpose as such: "This series of prints and constructions reflect on the experience of looking and looking through layers that combine to form complex images of nature. Interior space juxtaposes with exterior. Botanical patterns on lace are a veil through which the landscape appears. In the constructions, scale shifts into miniature: a branch cutting is an imagined tree against an etched detail of landscape while clear plexiglass becomes a reflective pool. These works ponder the question of how we see, imagine and respond to the natural world."

APRIL DEAN

April Dean is a drawing, video, installation and print artist working in Edmonton and teaching at the University of Alberta. She holds a Diploma in Photographic Technology from the Northern Alberta Institute of Technology, a Bachelor of Arts with Distinction in Art and Design, Printmaking from the University of Alberta, and a Master of Fine Arts from the Nova Scotia College of Art and Design. Her work has been shown in several solo exhibitions in Edmonton and Halifax and is included in the public collections of Alberta Foundation for the Arts, The University of Alberta's Printmaking Department, and the Provincial Archives of Alberta. In 2016, Dean was recognized as a Top 40 Under 40 Edmontonian for her revitalization of the Society of Northern Alberta Print-artists (SNAP) as the society's Executive Director. Under her leadership, SNAP has flourished as a centre for art creation and exhibition as well as collaboration with diverse community organizations. Dean's recent artwork explores themes of intimacy and isolation. In her artist's statement, she explains "the objects I represent, often photographically, are transformed by the processes of printmaking allowing these representations to read as both familiar and bodily as well as with aspects of estrangement and alienation. [...] I have an attraction to objects which seem worn and weathered by love. Objects whose fragile nature and delicacy force me to consider my own physical construction."



Alberta Foundation for the Arts

TRAVELLING EXHIBITION PROGRAM

The Alberta Foundation for the Arts (AFA) has supported a provincial travelling exhibition program since 1981. The mandate of the AFA Travelling Exhibition Program is to provide every Albertan with the opportunity to enjoy visual art exhibitions in their community. Three regional galleries and one arts organization coordinate the program for the AFA:

Northwest Region: The Art Gallery of Grande Prairie, Grande Prairie
Northeast and North Central Region: The Art Gallery of Alberta, Edmonton
Southwest Region: The Alberta Society of Artists, Calgary
Southeast Region: The Esplanade Arts and Heritage Centre, Medicine Hat



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ESPLANADE
ARTS & HERITAGE CENTRE

Each year, more than 300,000 Albertans enjoy many exhibitions in communities ranging from High Level in the north to Milk River in the south and virtually everywhere in between. The AFA Travelling Exhibition Program also offers educational support material to help educators integrate the visual arts into the school curriculum.

Exhibitions for the TREX program are curated from a variety of sources, including private and public collections. A major part of the program assists in making the AFA's extensive art collection available to Albertans. This growing art collection consists of over 8,000 artworks showcasing the creative talents of more than 2000 artists. As the only provincial art collection in Alberta, the AFA collection reflects the development of the vibrant visual arts community in the province and has become an important cultural legacy for all Albertans.

