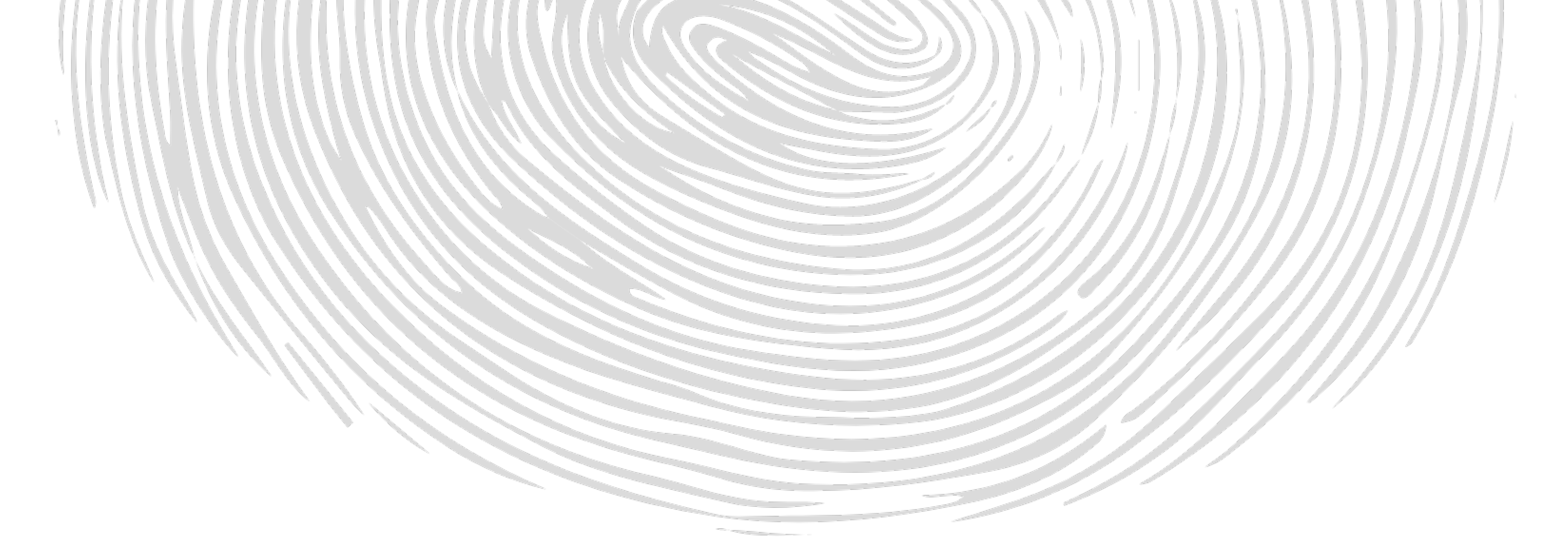




SPECULATIVE FICTIONS

TRAVELLING EXHIBITION FROM THE
ALBERTA FOUNDATION FOR THE ARTS
COLLECTION



SPECULATIVE FICTIONS

TRAVELLING EXHIBITION FROM
THE ALBERTA FOUNDATION
FOR THE ARTS COLLECTION

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The Alberta Foundation for the Arts Travelling Exhibition program
Curated by Ashley Slemming

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The Alberta Foundation for the Arts and the Travelling
Exhibition (TREX) program acknowledges that the artistic
activity we support takes place on the territories of Treaties 6, 7, and 8.
We acknowledge the many First Nations, Métis, and Inuit who have lived on
and cared for these lands for generations, and we are grateful for the
traditional Knowledge Keepers, Elders, and those who have gone before us.
We make this acknowledgement as an act of reconciliation and gratitude to
those whose territory we reside on. We reaffirm our commitment to
strengthening our relationships with Indigenous communities and growing our
shared knowledge and understanding.

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ABOUT

Travelling Exhibition Program (TREX)

Since 1980, the Alberta Foundation for the Arts (AFA) has supported a provincial travelling exhibition program. The TREX program strives to ensure every Albertan is provided with an opportunity to enjoy fully developed exhibitions in schools, libraries, healthcare centres, and smaller rural institutions and galleries throughout the province.

The TREX program assists in making both the AFA's extensive art collection and the artwork of contemporary Alberta artists available to Albertans. Four regional organizations coordinate the program for the AFA:

REGION ONE — Northwest: The Art Gallery of Grande Prairie

REGION TWO — Northeast / North Central: The Art Gallery of Alberta

REGION THREE — Southwest: The Alberta Society of Artists

REGION FOUR — Southeast: The Esplanade Arts & Heritage Centre

The Alberta Society of Artists (ASA)

The Alberta Society of Artists is a large part of Alberta's visual arts history, through its members, its exhibitions, and other initiatives. The ASA was founded in 1931, making it the oldest society of juried professional artists in the province.

The ASA is an active membership of professional visual artists who strive for excellence. Through exhibitions, education, and communication the society increases public awareness of the visual arts.

The ASA is contracted by the Alberta Foundation for the Arts to develop and circulate the TREX exhibitions to communities throughout southwest Alberta.

The Alberta Foundation for the Arts (AFA)

Beginning in 1972, the Alberta Art Collection was proposed as an opportunity to support and encourage Alberta artists by purchasing original works, as well as creating a legacy collection for the people of Alberta.

As a crown agency of the Government of Alberta, the Alberta Foundation for the Arts Act was later established in 1991 with a mandate to support the arts in Alberta. This mandate is accomplished by providing persons and organizations with the opportunity to participate in the arts in Alberta; fostering and promoting the enjoyment of works of art by Alberta artists; collecting, preserving, and displaying works of art by Alberta artists; and encouraging artists resident in Alberta to continue their work.



EXHIBITION STATEMENT

In today's contemporary society where divisions often seem to overshadow community connections and differences are commonly perceived as threats rather than opportunities for compassionate growth, the power of imaginative storytelling emerges as a beacon of hope. The exhibition *Speculative Fictions* draws upon themes present in the literary genre of the same name, where artworks prompt viewers to consider the transformative potential of wonder, awe, and mystery as we envision our collective futures. Viewers are invited to embark on a journey into the realm of imagination where limitations on what is possible dissolve, and multiple portals open into the speculative edges of our shared consciousness. If we approach each visual composition with curiosity, we are offered glimpses into alternate realities, technological abstractions, and primordial possibilities – prompting us to ask ourselves, “Where have we begun?” and, “Where are we going?”

Speculative Fictions features a curated selection of nineteen artworks from the Alberta Foundation for the Arts provincial collection, each encouraging the kind of regenerative curiosity needed in today's uncertain times. Audiences are invited to imagine each artist's vision and the possible stories behind mysterious landscapes, abstract forms, and playful compositions – many of which carry aesthetic qualities prevalent in visual representations of popular science fiction and fantasy worlds. Artists include Ernesto Bonato, Janet Cardiff, Wendy Ehlers, Nathan Grimson, Liz Ingram, David Janzen, Rodney Konopaki, Calvin Kruk, Amy Loewan, James McDougall, Leanne Olson, Jacques Rioux, Leonard Simpson, and Jim Westergard.

– Ashley Slemming, Curator



Jacques Rioux
Witness, Red Rock Coulee, Alberta, 1993
11 1/4 x 16 15/16 in
Silver gelatin, selenium toned on paper
Collection of the
Alberta Foundation for the Arts

Ernesto Bernato
Untitled (Dark Handprint), 2000
8 1/4 x 9 13/16 in
Etching on paper
Collection of the
Alberta Foundation for the Arts



ARTISTS and ARTWORKS



Liz Ingram
Aqueous Inception, 1997
Etching on paper
9 7/16 x 7 1/16 in.
Collection of the
Alberta Foundation for the Arts

Liz Ingram

Liz Ingram was born in Argentina and grew up in New Delhi, Mumbai, and Toronto. For over forty years she taught at the University of Alberta in Edmonton, Canada, and is currently Distinguished University Professor Emerita of printmaking and drawing/intermedia. Her artworks have been exhibited in numerous solo and duo exhibitions, and over 300 group exhibitions in North and South America, Europe, the Middle East and the Far East. She has participated in juried International Biennials and Triennials for many years and has received awards for her prints at juried exhibitions in Canada, Slovenia (Yugoslavia), Poland, Korea, Brazil, Estonia, India and Finland. In 1998 Ingram was elected into the Royal Canadian Academy of Arts. In 2008 she received the J. Gordin Kaplan Award for Research Excellence at the University of Alberta and was inducted into the City of Edmonton Hall of Fame, in 2009 she was elected into the Royal Society of Canada for her contributions to Canadian culture, in 2011 she was awarded the University Cup (the University's highest academic honour), and in 2016 she was appointed to the Order of Canada. She has been a visiting artist at various universities in North America, Japan, and Germany.

Her work represents an attempt to re-awaken our fundamental connections and our oneness with nature, and our awareness of the elemental aspect of water to all life forms.

"I am preoccupied
with the synthesis
of reality and
illusion, or
observation and
the imagination."
Liz Ingram

Ingram's 1997 etching *Aqueous Inception* alludes to primordial waters, waters that bring *beginnings*. The glistening liquid surface hints at movement, ripples of time, and yet we gaze at a frozen moment, precicely situated at the precipice of many possible futures.

The ambiguity of this image allows viewers to dwell in a space of wonder, and to consider their own participation in the meaning of the work. What kind of 'inception' or 'beginning' might you, as a viewer, find yourself contemplating?

Artist biography sourced from her website: <http://www.lizingram.com/biography.html>

Quote sourced from an article in the Alberta Foundation for the Arts' artist archive:

Ross Bradley. "Liz Ingram: Etchings Blur Distinction Between Reality and Illusion." From *Inner Landscape* solo exhibition article, 1988.



Born in Brussels, Ontario, Janet Cardiff received her Bachelor of Fine Arts from Queen's University in Kingston, Ontario in 1980 and her Masters of Visual Arts from the University of Alberta in 1983. Janet also studied at the Malispina Print Shop in Vancouver and the Banff Centre for the Arts and completed a media residency at Western Front. Previously based in Lethbridge, Janet and her family now split their time between Berlin and rural British Columbia.

A conceptual and installation artist, Janet regularly works with her husband, George Bures Miller. Their installation pieces combine visual and auditory elements to surround the viewer, enveloping them and creating an otherworldly experience. In her solo work, Janet has moved to using physical elements to create a more immersive experience for the audience.

Janet Cardiff

Drought 1989 from Tableau, 1989

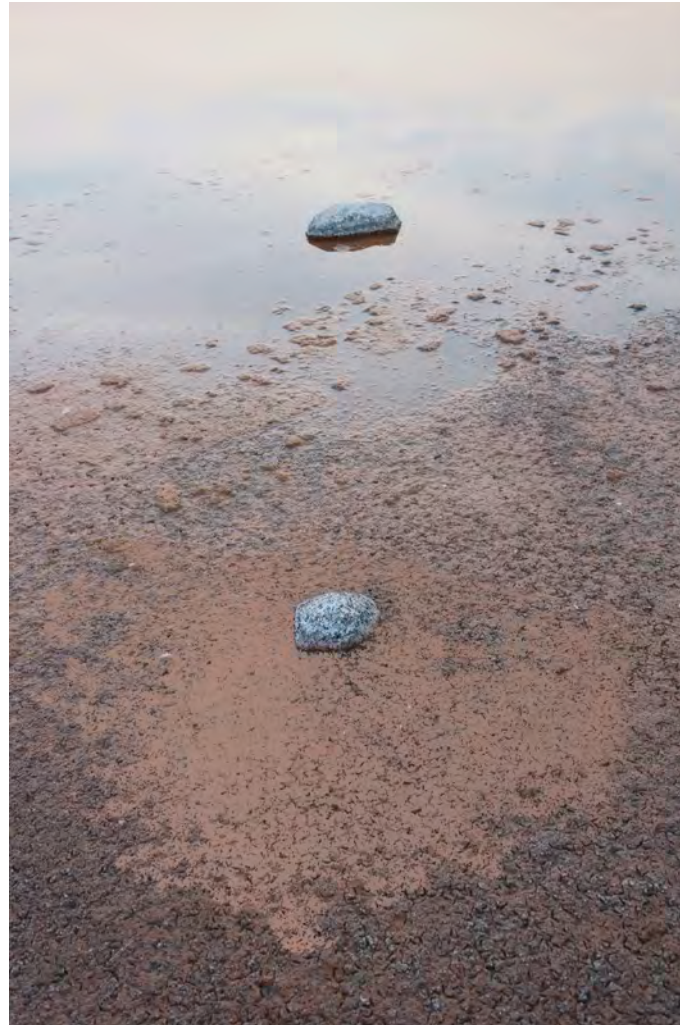
Colour photograph on paper

8 7/16 x 11 in.

Collection of the Alberta Foundation for the Arts

"I've always loved to escape, whether it was through walks, books, films or dreams, and it's only now I realize what I've been doing... I've been creating portholes into my other worlds." - Janet Cardiff

Janet's work has been shown in solo exhibitions throughout Canada, the United States and Europe. She has also participated in group exhibitions in North America, Europe, and in Australia, Japan, Hong Kong, Brazil and Chile. Janet's work is held in numerous public collections, including Air Canada, the Canada Council Art Bank, Hart House, Musée D'Art Contemporain and Toronto Dominion Bank. She has also received numerous grants and awards and has given lectures and workshops throughout Canada.



Leanne Olson
Where a Lake Once Was, 2015
 Mixed media photo and serigraph on paper
 9 13/16 x 6 9/16 in.
 Collection of the Alberta Foundation for the Arts

Leanne Olson

Leanne Olson holds a BA in Film and Media Studies from the University of Alberta (2003) and an MFA in Visual Arts from the University of Victoria (2021). Olson has completed artist residencies at the Banff Centre for Arts & Creativity (2021, 2017), the Museum for Future Fossils Summer School (Western University and New York University, 2019), and the Edmonton Waste Management Centre for a year (2018). Olson has exhibited at Mitchell Art Gallery (Edmonton), Deluge Contemporary Art (Victoria, 2020), Artlab Gallery (London, Ontario, 2019) and SNAP Gallery (Edmonton, 2017). She lives and works on the unceded territory of the ləkʷəŋən peoples in Victoria, BC where she is Curator at The Vault Gallery and a Sessional Lecturer at the University of Victoria.

"I am intrigued by land and water bodies that are adapting to all odds and surviving where impermanence is the norm, places where the message of the magnitude of change and uncertainty eventually start to feel familiar."
 - Leanne Olson



Nathan Grimson
Soft Rock, 2009
 Digital print, chine colle on paper
 6 3/4 x 4 13/16 in.
 Collection of the
 Alberta Foundation for the Arts

Nathan Grimson

Nathan Grimson graduated with a Master of Landscape Architecture degree from the University of British Columbia in May 2015. Nathan has a diverse background of working with printmaking, design, and landscape gardening. He has collaborated with Kris Fox in the past researching the material aspects of playgrounds and the history of materials in Landscape Architecture. During his time at UBC, Nathan took pride in organizing brown bag events in the past on numerous issues regarding landscape and encourages dialogue among all professions to push the importance of play.

Leanne Olson Artist biography sourced from: <https://capturephotofest.com/artists/leanne-olson/>
 Leanne Olson quote sourced from a tumblr blog post by yegarts, February 5th, 2018:
 "Edmonton Waste Management Centre welcomes their first Artist-in-Residence, Leanne Olson"
<https://www.tumblr.com/yegarts/170537687363/edmonton-waste-management-centre-welcomes-their?source=share>
 Nathan Grimson artist biography sourced from: <https://outdoorplaybook.ca/about-us/nathan-grimson/>



"I began to gather visions of the world: landscapes, first; then bodies and objects. Through a silent language, I have sought to communicate something that lives inside objects, that hides beneath an apparent reality and that also manifests itself in each one of us."
- Ernesto Bonato



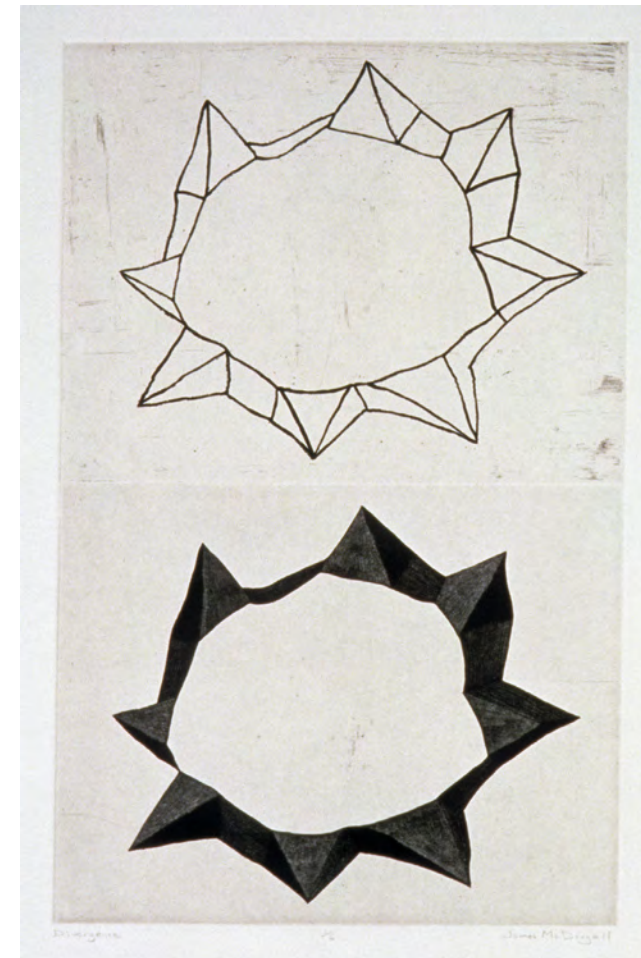
Ernesto Bonato
Untitled (Dark Handprint), 2000
Society of Northern Alberta Print (SNAP)
Autumn 2000 Newsletter Print
Etching on paper
8 1/4 x 9 13/16 in.
Collection of the
Alberta Foundation for the Arts

Ernesto Bonato
Untitled (White Spot), 2000
Society of Northern Alberta Print (SNAP)
Autumn 2000 Newsletter Print
Etching on paper
8 1/4 x 9 3/4 in.
Collection of the
Alberta Foundation for the Arts

Ernesto Bonato

Ernesto Bonato was born in São Paulo, in 1968. He works with painting, drawing, engraving, photography, video, performance and urban intervention. Bonato has exhibited in around 200 solo and group exhibitions in Brazil and in more than 28 countries. He graduated with a masters degree from Escola de Comunicações e Artes da Universidade de São Paulo (ECA-USP).

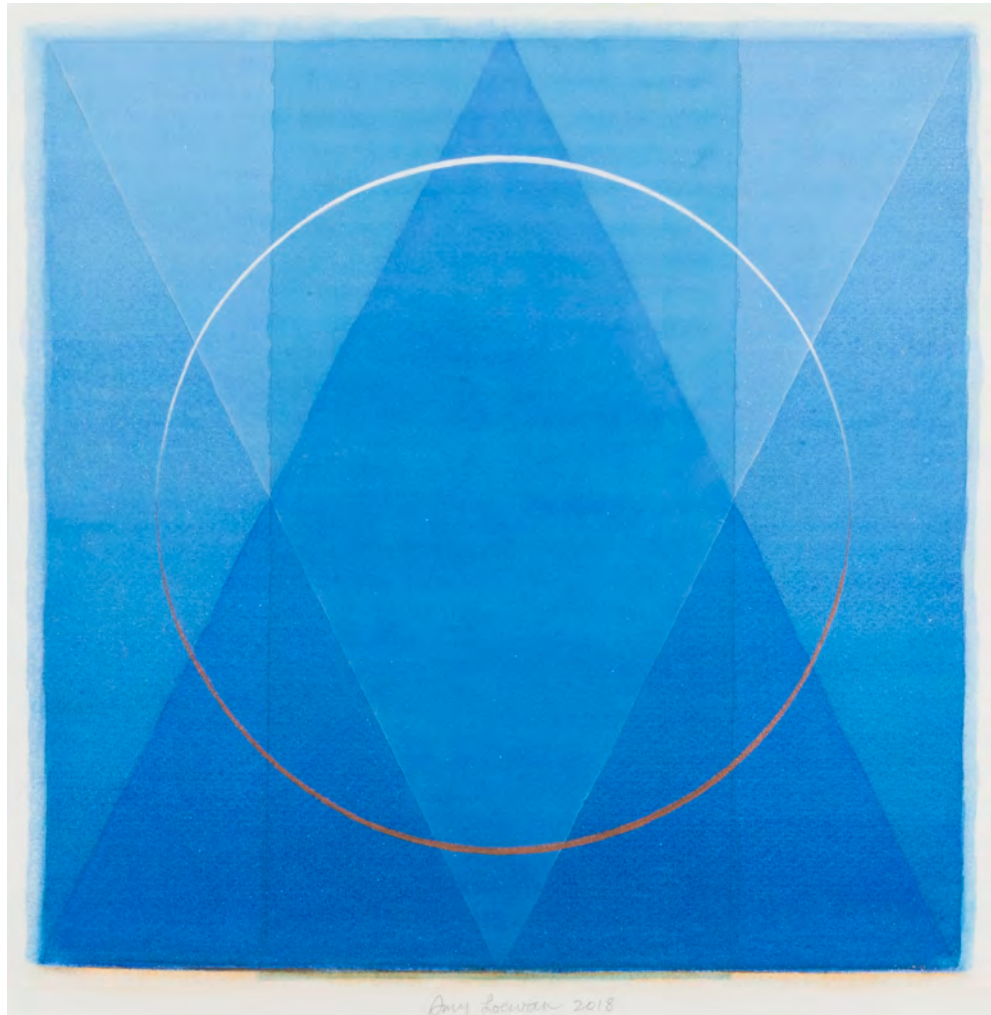
Bonato taught metal engraving at the Fundação Armando Alvares Penteado (FAAP) university and drawing and engraving at the Senac São Paulo private university. He is a founding member of Atelier Piratininga, a collective printmaking studio in São Paulo, from 1993 to 2013. Bonato continues to work independently as a creator and educator in his São Paulo studio, A Árvore.



James McDougall

James studied art at the University of Calgary and later at Concordia University in Montreal. Specializing in print media, etching was a favourite medium, as well as woodcut. Although much less involved with art today, James draws with oil pastels in his spare time.

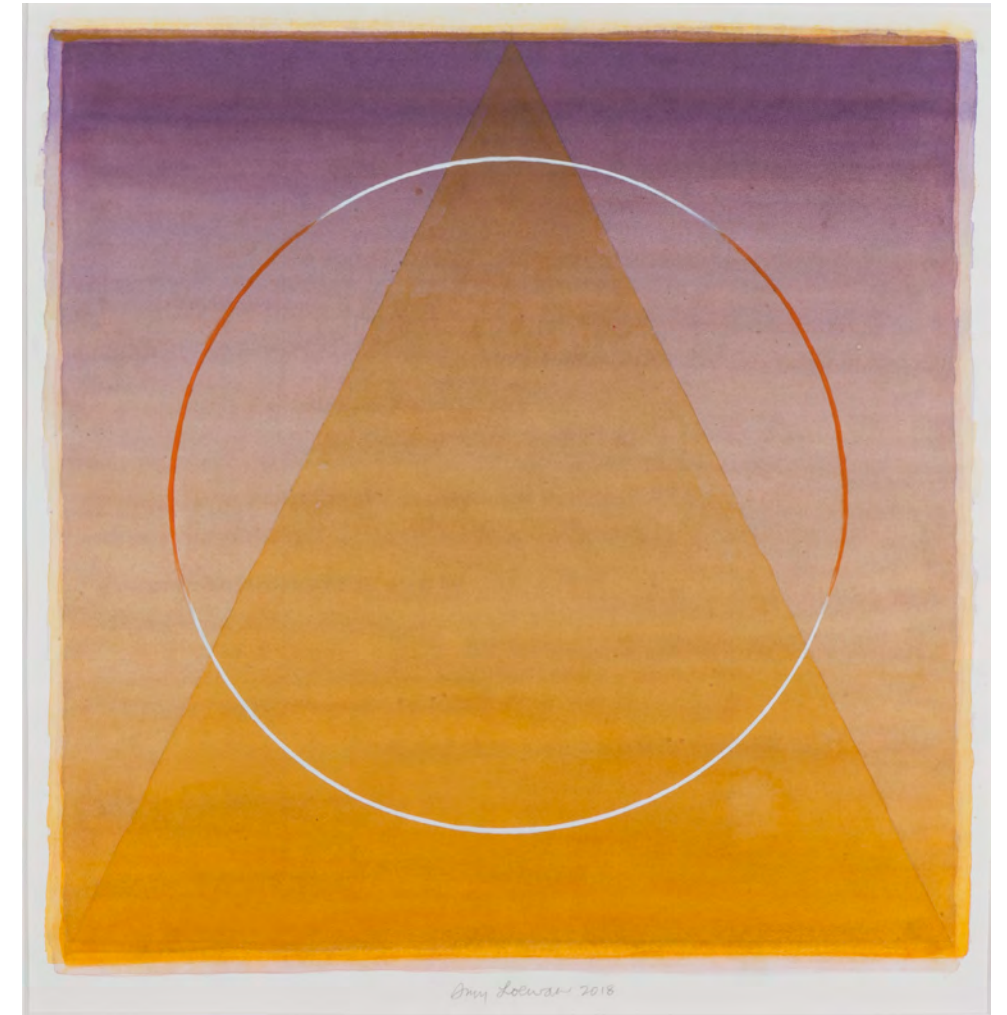
James McDougall
Divergence, 2001
Etching, aquatint on paper
17 11/16 x 11 5/16 in.
Collection of the
Alberta Foundation for the Arts



Amy Loewan
Contemplation in Blue, 2018
 Watercolour on paper
 14 7/16 × 14 1/16 in.
 Collection of the
 Alberta Foundation for the Arts



Amy Loewan
Contemplation in Purple, 2018
 Watercolour on paper
 14 3/4 × 14 1/16 in.
 Collection of the
 Alberta Foundation for the Arts



Amy Loewan

Having fused classical Chinese and postmodernist Western aesthetics in ink, watercolour, and woven paper installations, Amy Loewan has achieved numerous awards and international acclaim that magnify her goal: peace, harmony, and understanding via art.

Born in Hong Kong in 1945, Amy Loewan (originally Luk-Loewan) immigrated at age 19 to the U.S. After receiving a B.Sc. in Occupational Therapy at the University of Illinois in 1970, Loewan created art that joined group exhibitions in Melbourne, Australia (1976 – 1977). After moving to Edmonton in 1978 to continue occupational therapy, Loewan began twelve years' work as an art therapist (and in 1986 coordinated Alberta's first Art Therapy Conference). By 1981 she began joining scores of group showings across Western Canada, Ontario, and in New York, Shanghai, and Hong Kong.

It was not until 1988's inclusion in Edmonton's *The Works: A Visual Arts Celebration* that Loewan achieved the first of dozens of solo exhibitions across Canada. After earning her BFA with Distinction (1992) and MFA in painting (1995) at the University of Alberta, she represented Alberta at the National Forum on Culture and Diversity at the Museum of Civilisation in Ottawa, and as Edmonton Arts Council's visual arts representative in South Korea.

Loewan has won a range of civic, national, and international honours including the Canadian Artists and Producers Professional Relations Tribunal's Award for Excellence in the Arts (1998) for works honouring the United Nations' Universal Declaration of Human Rights.



Jim Westergard
Foil Helmet II, 1984
 Coloured pencil on paper
 29 3/4 x 22 5/16 in.
 Collection of the
 Alberta Foundation for the Arts

Jim Westergard

Jim Westergard is well known for his crisp, realistic drawings and his sharp and detailed wood engravings. His imagination thrives on humour, and his works often portray a tongue-in-cheek exploration of the weird and the odd. He is meticulous in his rendering of portraits not only of people, but of insects and animals as well. He is fascinated by various textural and surface qualities, and his love of drawing comes from being challenged by this manipulation of surface illusion.

Westergard often draws the beautiful and the unusual found in the natural world. He started a series in 2014 called *Aliens of Planet Earth*, featuring freakish but remarkable animals who live reclusively. In this series, the artist asks viewers to consider the “alien” life forms that dwell right here among us, on planet Earth. These stranger-than-life creatures are portrayed with a sensitivity similar to the more traditional subjects of portraiture, and are thus given their due glory.

Westergard’s artwork has been widely exhibited in dozens of international group exhibitions in Canada, United States, Europe, and the United Kingdom. He is an award winner and an elected member of the Royal Society of Painter-Printmakers (UK), Society of Wood Engravers (UK), the Wood Engravers Network (US), Fine Press Book Association, and the Boston Printmakers Society.

Westergard graduated with a BFA from Utah State University in 1967, and then an MFA in 1969 from the same institution. From 1975 until his retirement in 1999, Westergard taught printmaking and drawing at Red Deer College. He continues to live and draw in Red Deer, Alberta.

Artist biography sourced from: <http://alberta.emuseum.com/people/2816/jim-westergard>



Leonard Simpson

Len was born in the municipal district of Pincher Creek. He was raised together with his three sisters, Norma, Helen and Gwen and his brother Ron on the family farm. As a boy he enjoyed working with the cattle and participating in all other farm chores. His postsecondary education began in the newly formed Lethbridge Community College, where he enrolled in the Bachelor of Science program. After one year he transferred to the University of Edmonton where he completed his degree. He then continued on and obtained his Bachelor of Education degree.

His first teaching position was in Grand Prairie High School where he taught Mathematics and Science. After teaching there for two years, he moved to Lethbridge and started teaching at LCI. He taught Chemistry, Physics, Biology and Mathematics there until his retirement in 1995. He loved teaching and his career lasted 35 years.

Len married Donna in 1979. They moved into the house Len had built in Coalhurst and raised their son Ryan. Both Len and Donna enjoyed and practiced in Art. After his retirement Len devoted his time to Photography and Gardening. They moved back to Pincher Creek and built a home with an Art Gallery attached on land bordering the Waterton Dam. (The Dam Gallery) They ran the gallery for ten years.

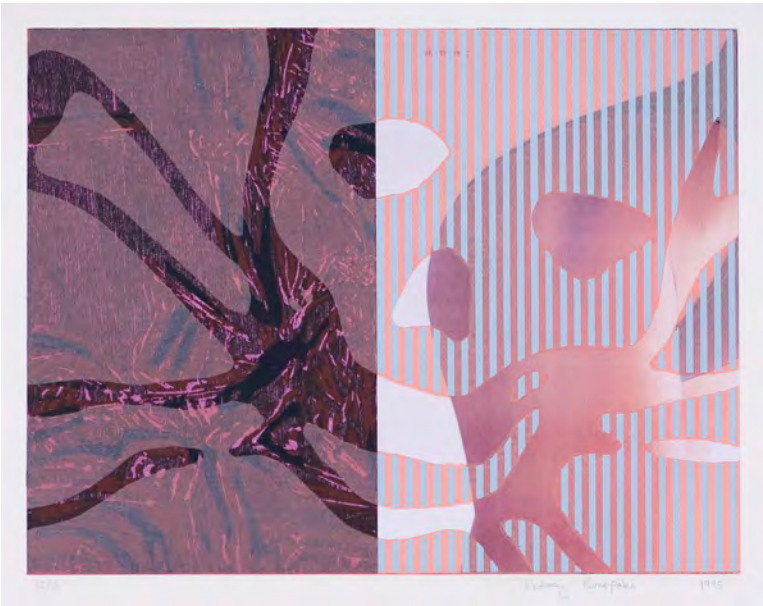
Artist biography sourced from: <https://pinchercreekecho.remembering.ca/obituary/leonard-simpson-1087009485>



Leonard Simpson
Chinook, 1985
Gum bichromate on paper
7 13/16 x 9 11/16 in.
Collection of the
Alberta Foundation
for the Arts



Rodney Konopaki
HIS, 1995
Relief/screenprint, colour
copy, collage on paper
15 3/16 x 15 1/16 in.
Collection of the Alberta
Foundation for the Arts



Rodney Konopaki
Skull and Hipbones, 1995
Relief/screenprint, colour
copy, collage on paper
17 3/16 x 20 1/16 in.
Collection of the Alberta
Foundation for the Arts

Rodney Konopaki

Rodney Konopaki was born in Moose Jaw, Saskatchewan. He received his Bachelor of Fine Arts Degree and Master of Fine Arts, both from the University of Saskatchewan. From 1976 to 1987 he was a Master Printer at Tyler Graphics, Mount Kisco, New York, where he collaborated with artists including Helen Frankenthaler, Roy Lichtenstein, David Hockney and Frank Stella. In 2005, he accepted a Faculty position in the Print Media area at Emily Carr University. Previously he held teaching positions at The University of Saskatchewan (1989-1990) and Keyano College in Fort McMurray, Alberta (1990-2004). He continues to explore new possibilities in printmaking, painting and drawing through a diverse range of solo and collaborative projects.

"...he leaves interpretation up to the viewer... Rather than carefully selecting images that have meaning, he prefers to explore a stream-of-consciousness image bank..."
- Robert O'Flanagan on Rodney Konopaki's work

Artist biography sourced from:
<https://www.konopaki.com/about/cv/>

Quote from an article in the Alberta Foundation for the Arts' artist archive:
Robert O'Flanagan."Rodney Konopaki: The Big Bang Theory and Other Possibilities." Exhibition pamphlet.



Wendy Ehlers
Gothic Tomb, 1996
 Silver gelatin print, selenium
 toned on paper
 13 7/8 x 10 5/8 in.
 Collection of the Alberta
 Foundation for the Arts



Wendy Ehlers
Capstone, 1997
 Silver gelatin on paper
 13 3/4 x 9 1/8 in.
 Collection of the Alberta
 Foundation for the Arts

Wendy Ehlers

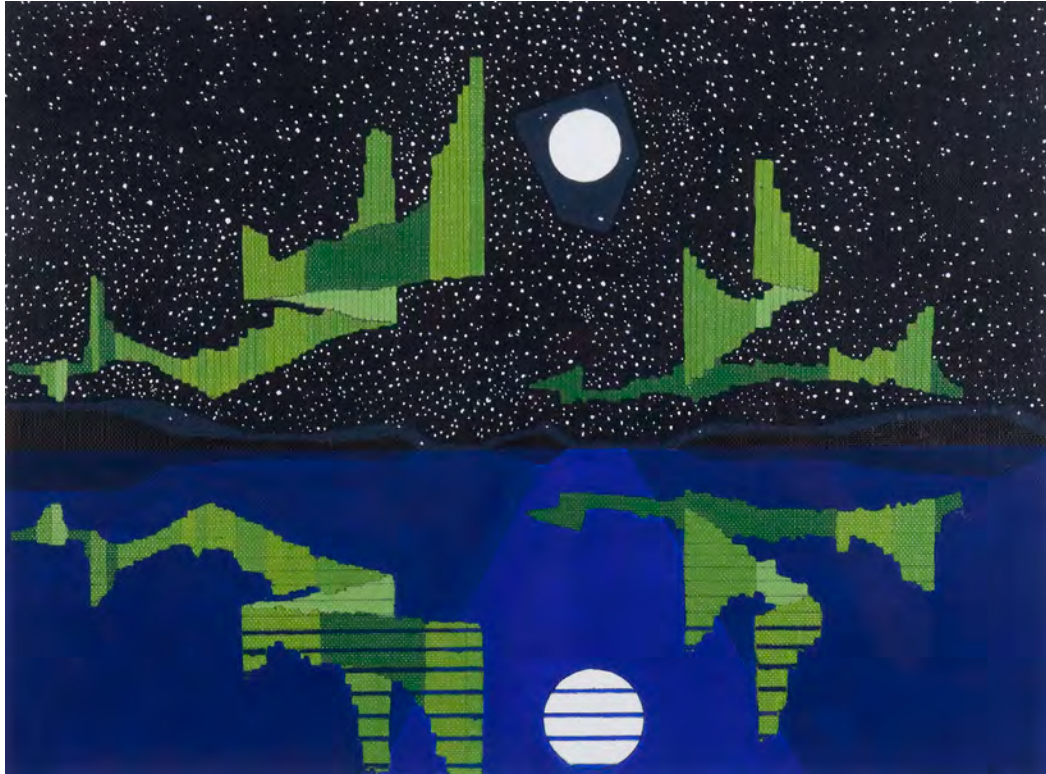
Photographer Wendy Ehlers earned her Fine Arts Diploma at Okanagan University College (1977), her Bachelor Degree of General Studies at Simon Fraser University (1986), and her M.Ed. in Arts at the University of British Columbia (1989). She continued her training at the Alberta College of Art (1991), the Rocky Mountain School of Photography (1998), and courses with Bruce Barnbaum (1995, 2002).

Ehlers describes her work as searching “for elegance, purity, and mystery in organic structures,” and says that because she is “seduced visually by natural subjects that possess qualities ranging from subtle, undulating, surfaces to alluring curvatures and curls,” she attempts “to isolate and preserve these attributes in photographic form with the intention of triggering a response to the metaphoric potential that lies within them.” One iconic Alberta location that has seduced her is Writing-On-Stone Archeological Preserve, for which she produced a rare (for her) series of black-and-white photographs depicting the provincial park’s primordial petroglyphs and rock formations.

Ehler has mounted a dozen solo exhibitions, including *Written on Stone* at the University of Victoria’s McPherson Gallery, *Gray Matter* at Victoria’s Community Arts Council Gallery, and *Ice and Stone* at the Kootenay Gallery of Art. She won four scholarships and several project and travel grants from the Alberta Foundation for the Arts and the Canada Council, and served two residencies at the Brewster Programme at Columbia Icefields in Jasper National Park (1998, 1999). The Alberta Foundation for the Arts has collected nine of her prints from the *Writing-on-Stone* and *Ice and Stone* series.

Artist biography sourced from: <https://alberta.emuseum.com/people/692/wendy-ehlers>





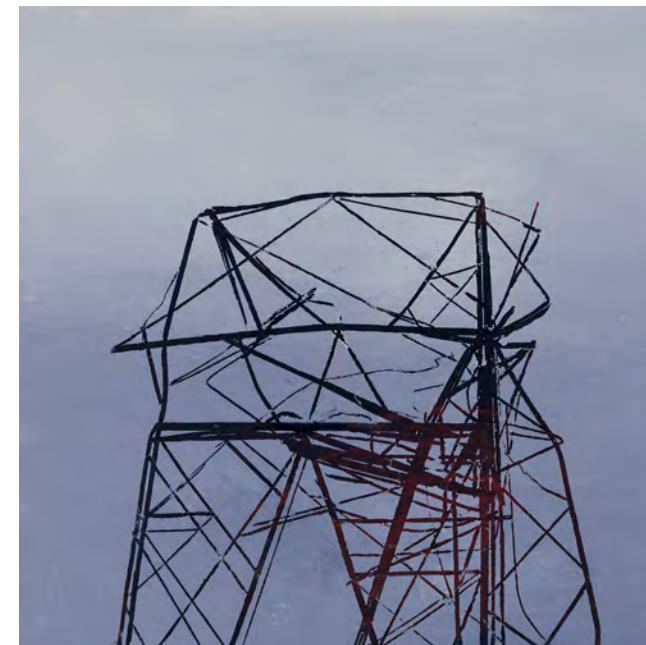
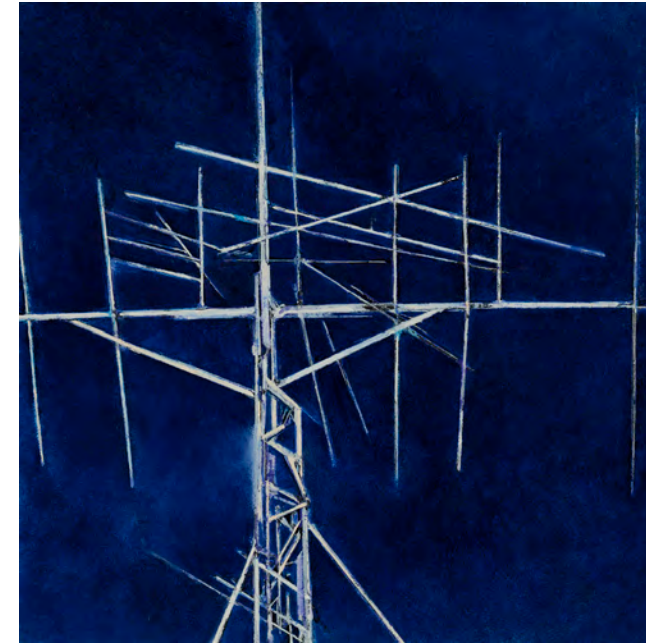
Calvin Kruk
Dancing in the Moonlight,
1993
Acrylic and ink on paper
12 x 15 15/16 in.
Collection of the Alberta
Foundation for the Arts

Calvin Kruk

Calvin Kruk was born and raised in the lower mainland region of British Columbia. As an artist, he made use of bold clean lines, and bright colours – often depicting explosive sunrises, dancing northern lights, and the landscapes along Peace River in British Columbia and Alberta. He also became a mayor of a small BC town called Dawson Creek. Calvin Kruk was a big advocate of green energy. He was active with the Peace Energy Cooperation started by local photographer Don Pettitt. It was their dream of profiting from local, renewable energy that led to BC's first big wind farm being built in Dawson Creek. Dawson Creek's historic Calvin Kruk Centre for the Arts is now the Kiwanis Performing Arts Centre, but as a tribute to Kruk who died from cancer in 2008 the city renovated the heritage federal post office building with state of the art green technology as part of Dawson Creek's commitment to becoming carbon neutral.

Artist biography sourced from:

<https://www.greenenergyfutures.ca/episode/08awesome-dawson-creek-northern-oil-and-gas-town-bets-big-renewable-energy>



Top image

David Janzen
Shortwave, 1998
Alkyd, oil on hardboard
12 x 12 in.
Collection of the Alberta
Foundation for the Arts

Bottom image

David Janzen
Walker, 1998
Alkyd, oil on hardboard
12 x 12 in.
Collection of the Alberta
Foundation for the Arts

Artist biography sourced from: <http://alberta.emuseum.com/people/1258/david-janzen>

Quote sourced from an article in the Alberta Foundation for the Arts' artist archive:

David Janzen. "In / Here / Out / There" Alberta Biennial of Contemporary Art 1998. Glenbow Museum & Edmonton Art Gallery.

David Janzen

David Janzen is a landscape painter, but his works are painted from more unusual perspectives, drawing witness to our dependence on technology and infrastructure now an integral part of our world. He paints upwards glances at radio towers and security cameras, downward, aerial views of urban sprawl, and twisted vistas disconnected from their horizon. His imagery addresses settlement, industry, and the effects of human habitation on the natural world.

For Janzen, respect for innovation, development and progress is intertwined with dread. He tries to find visual poetry in that which might be odious.

David Janzen was born in Ontario and moved to Alberta in 1966. He graduated in Painting and Drawing from Alberta College of Art and Design (now Alberta University of the Arts) in 1983, and is an artist/facilitator at the Nina Haggerty Centre for the Arts. His work can be found in numerous public and private collections including the Art Gallery of Alberta, the Canada Council Art Bank, the Edmonton International Airport, the Royal Bank of Canada, the University of Lethbridge, and the Calgary Petroleum Club.

"This focus on our imposition on the land
- our poking into the atmosphere -
is an effort to know it,
to seek meaning in it,
and recognize its wonder."
- David Janzen



Jacques Rioux
Witness, Red Rock Coulee, Alberta, 1993
 Silver gelatin, selenium toned on paper
 11 1/4 x 16 15/16 in.
 Collection of the Alberta Foundation for the Arts

Jacques Rioux

Jacques Rioux is a photographer who has been based in Calgary since completing a Diploma in Applied Photography at the CÉGEP du Vieux Montréal in 1979. In Calgary, he participated in various photography and multi-media workshops. He has practised technical, commercial and fine art photography throughout his career. He is perhaps best known for creating extensive photographic series, such as *The Calgary Picture Project* (late 1980s-1990s) and *Western Badlands* (1990s).

The Calgary series, in black and white, describes different aspects of the city – whether of urban scenes, or of green spaces – which are both documentary and subjective in approach. Rioux also makes his own presence subtly evident in shadows and shop windows, a self-conscious reference to the genre of portraiture and to the perspective of the photographer.

He has also made photographs that seek to reveal the mystical qualities of Alberta’s Badlands, and to share his own sense of discovery when he first saw this landscape. His black and white, high-contrast photos evoke the eerie qualities of the ancient geological formations, located “at the frontier of the real world,” in his words – spaces sacred to the Indigenous populations. Big skies with dramatic cloud formations and textures, and empty roads leading to vast horizons communicate Rioux’ sense of connection to the past. He has also photographed similar landscapes in the Southwestern United States.

Rioux’s work appears in permanent collections in Canada and Europe, including at Red Deer College, the University of Lethbridge Art Gallery, the Glenbow Museum, Calgary; the National Gallery, and the Canadian Museum of Contemporary Photography, Ottawa; the Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris; as well as in galleries in Luxembourg and Belgium.

EDUCATION GUIDE

This Education Guide consists of activities to move audiences through the various themes presented in *Speculative Fictions*. The content of the exhibition and the following lesson plans have been carefully developed and designed to enhance the curriculum set by Alberta Education.

The guide includes questions for discussion, engagement activities, and art lessons designed for the level of ability, understanding, and complexity of the participants. Each of the activities and art lesson plans can be altered to suit the appropriate level of learning that participants are coming from.

Additional links, books, and other sources related to the themes in this exhibition can be found in the Resources section at the end of this catalogue. Definitions for thematic and art-based terms can be found in the Vocabulary section



DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Pick an artwork in the exhibition. What kind of stories does the artwork prompt you to *imagine*?

Do these artworks seem more *optimistic* or *pessimistic*? Can they be both at the same time?
What emotions come up when you view each of the artworks?

Think about other media you may have seen that tells us stories about the future (ie. movies, TV shows, science fiction books). What similarities and/or differences can you identify between the emotions/ideas evoked in those stories, and the emotions/ideas evoked in these artworks?

How can we use imagination to shape the future? How might imagining the future impact our lives in the present?

Many of the artworks share similar themes, concepts, and compositional techniques. Viewers may take note of recurring instances of *geological* forms and landscapes, bodies and *figurative* elements, *sacred geometry*, and *technology*. Why do you think these were important in this exhibition?

When you look at a landscape – at bodies of water, mountains, hills, or fields – how might you consider the landscape as an active character in a story? Either fictional, futuristic, or fantastical?

What does it mean to ‘*speculate*’? When do you find yourself speculating in life?

Can you imagine what you want the future to be like? What changes would you make today if you wanted to make that future different?

Different cultures tell various stories about what they believe happened in the past, and what they believe may happen in the future. How does your own culture influence the way you reflect on the past and how you envision the future?

What do you think would make the future a better place? Spend time thinking about this by yourself, and then discuss with a small group. Did other people have similar ideas? If other people had different ideas, how do we make room for collaboration to help each other understand difference as an opportunity to expand our viewpoints?

The artists in *Speculative Fictions* use a variety of art mediums (paint, photography, etching/print) to portray different kinds of stories in each *composition*. Are some of the narratives more *abstract* than others? Which ones? Why?

How does an artist using abstraction help us to ask more questions about the artwork to learn more about it?

How might questions help us be more imaginative?

GROUP ENGAGEMENT ACTIVITIES

Collaborative Storytelling Workshop

Leaders of group workshops can engage participants in a collaborative storytelling activity where the group collectively creates a narrative set in a future world. Each participant contributes a segment of the story, building on what the previous participant has written or said. This activity encourages participants to think about the future, imagine new possibilities, and work together to weave a coherent story. It also fosters creativity, teamwork, and the ability to think beyond the present, envisioning how society, technology, and culture might evolve.

For variation or to show different ways that collaboration can work, in one iteration of the activity parameters can be given that participants take turns where each contributes one or two sentences before the story gets passed on to the next group participant to continue. This may reveal that when we imagine individually, it may not always align with the way another person is imagining. Then try a second iteration of the activity where groups of five to seven participants work together, they each take turns sharing a broad overview of the kind of story they are envisioning, and then they must spend twenty minutes working together afterwards in whatever format they like, to try and come up with an imagined story that allows *all* the group members participating to feel included in the imagined narrative.

After trying both iterations of this activity, have the groups discuss why one way of building a collective narrative felt easier/harder than another way.

Future City Design Project

In this activity, participants will work in small groups to design a city of the future. They must consider aspects like *architecture*, *transportation*, *environmental sustainability*, and *social systems*. After designing their city, each individual group presents their ideas, explaining how they reflect future-thinking and allow for collective imagination. This project helps participants develop skills in creative problem-solving, critical thinking, and visual storytelling, while also encouraging them to think about how today's decisions impact the future. Afterwards, encourage the groups to create an artwork that depicts their future city.

Speculative Fiction Reading and Discussion

Select a piece of speculative fiction, such as a short story or excerpt from a novel, that explores themes of the future and collective imagination. After reading, the class can discuss the ideas presented, focusing on how the author envisions the future and what social, technological, or environmental issues are addressed. Participants can then write their own speculative fiction pieces, using their imaginations to create stories that reflect their thoughts on what the future might hold. This activity promotes literary analysis, creative writing, and deep thinking about the possibilities of the future.

When I imagine the future,
I like to think that...

Right now sometimes I
feel(____) but I think if
(____) changed I might
feel (____).

I wonder if in the
future there
will be....



Fill in the thought bubble
with a prompt from above

ACTIVITY: SOFT ROCK STORIES

In this activity, inspired by Nathan Grimson's playful print *Soft Rock*, participants will select a rock with a shape, texture, and/or colour that appeals to them, and they will give this special rock a story through play, photos, and some journal entries.

Rocks tell us many geological stories – stories layered in time, matter, and the shifting of planetary surfaces. If desired, this art activity can be adjusted to suit older participant groups with a discussion incorporated around geology, geologic time, and ancient stories of planet Earth and the cosmos.

From little rocks to big concepts, this activity can offer inspiration and learning to any age group! After all, stories both speculative as well as observational/scientific can tell us a LOT about each other, about the landscape and environments we live in, and about how we can care for the land for future generations.

Activity Objective: Participants will create a fun character out of a rock and document its adventure through photography, enhancing their creativity, storytelling, and observational skills. This activity blends art, storytelling, and a bit of adventure, making it engaging and educational for young children and adults alike, but the lesson plan is written to be accessible for beginner participants, approximately kindergarten to grade 4.

Materials Needed:

- Smooth, clean rocks (one for each participant)
- Googly eyes (various sizes)
- Glue (safe for kids, or a glue gun if supervised by an adult)
- Markers, paint, or crayons
- Small craft items (feathers, yarn, beads, pipecleaner, tiny hats, etc.) for decoration (optional)
- Digital camera, smartphone, or tablet for taking photos
- Printouts or a notebook for a photo journal (optional)

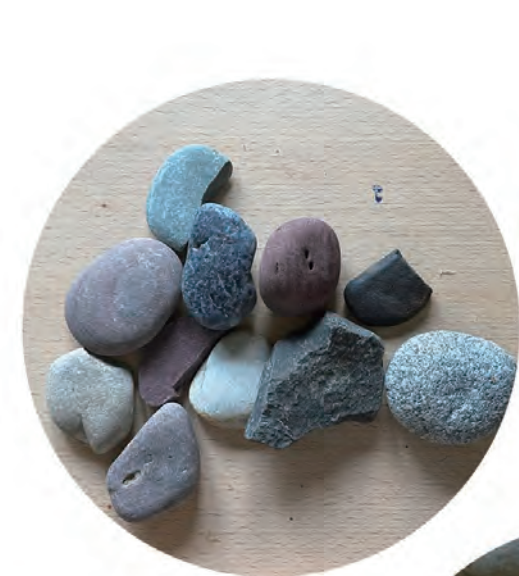
Instructions:

1. ****Pick a Rock**** Have each participant choose a smooth, clean rock from a collection provided. Encourage them to find a rock with a shape, texture, or colour they like.
2. ****Create a Rock Friend**** Distribute googly eyes and glue. Show participants how to attach the googly eyes to their rock and encourage them to give their rock character if they'd like – adding accessories, limbs, or other decorations as desired. Participants can decorate their rock with markers, paint, or crayons. They can add mouths, noses, hair, or any other features to give their rock personality. Optional: Provide small craft items for decoration (feathers, yarn for hair, tiny hats, etc.)
3. ****Introduce the Rock Friend**** Have each participant give their rock a name and introduce it to the rest of the group. This helps with developing storytelling skills, and can prompt participants to consider what gives their individual rocks character and personality.
4. ****Adventure Time**** Explain to the participants that their rock friend will go on an adventure around their school, home, or playground. Encourage them to think about interesting places and situations for their rock to explore, and tell them to bring a journal that they can write about some of the different parts of their rock friend's journey.
5. ****Documenting the Journey**** Using a digital camera, smartphone, or tablet, help participants take photos of their rock friends in different locations and situations. For example:
 - On a playground slide
 - Reading a book
 - Hiding in the grass or behind a leaf
 - Playing with other toys
 - Playing with other rock friends
 - Eating lunch
 - Napping under a tree

Make sure each participant takes at least five different photos of their rock friend.

6. ****Create a Photo Journal**** Print out the photos and have participants create a photo journal by sticking their photos onto the pages. Encourage them to write a sentence or two about each photo, describing what their rock friend is doing. For very young participants, they can dictate their sentences, and an adult can help write them down.
7. ****Share the Adventures**** Allow time for each participant to share their photo journal with the group. They can explain the adventures their rock friend had and why they chose those specific adventures based on their likes, dislikes, and personalities.





What did participants enjoy most about the activity?

How did the stories about other rock friends help to learn about their personalities, likes, dislikes, or interests?

What other adventures might their rock friend go on in the future?

What made the rock friends' adventures interesting?

What kind of adventures do you want to go on?



ACTIVITY: ARTIFACTS OF MYSTERY

Speculative fiction and fantasy stories often explore themes of fear, apprehension, and suspicion, alongside bravery, wonder, and awe. After all, we have spent centuries exploring a planet teeming with questions, and the answers to these questions continue to expand our thinking. Mystery is the place where curiosity lies waiting, to show us the way forward.

Introduction and Activity Overview: In this activity, participants will delve into the world of speculative fiction and fantasy by creating their own mysterious *artifact*. Begin with an introductory discussion about the genre of speculative fiction and how its imaginative themes are often inspired by the mysteries we continue to unravel about our own ancient cultures and histories, through the objects we have discovered and learned about from *archeological* sites.

Many human-made artifacts and architectural or monumental forms that predate written records carry an element of mystery as to what their purpose may have been, or how exactly they were used. For example, structural monoliths like the large rocks that make up Stonehenge may signify some form of grand cultural meaning or purpose, and small sculptural artifacts like the Venus of Willendorf may have been used as a teaching model about the female form. And yet, because there is no precise proof of their use or significance, these objects remain subject to speculation and wonder for historians, anthropologists, archaeologists, and many others.

Before beginning this activity, show some visuals of ancient artifacts and structures. Some examples might include Stonehenge, Easter Island statues, Egyptian pyramidions, and smaller artifacts such as the Venus of Willendorf, the the Divje Babe Flute, the Mold Gold Cape, the Ur Ram, ancient quipus, instruments, and more. Discuss their mystery and the speculations about their purposes.

Visuals of some of these artifacts can be found on page 38. Make sure when you are pulling examples of artifacts for participants that you are being culturally aware, sensitive, and respectful.)

- Possible Materials Needed:**
- Shoeboxes or similar-sized containers
 - Clay, playdough, or air-dry clay
 - Recyclable materials (cardboard, plastic bottles, caps, etc.)
 - String
 - Glue, tape, and scissors
 - Paints, brushes, and markers
 - Decorative items (beads, fabric scraps, etc.)
 - Paper and pencils for sketching ideas



- Instructions:**
1. **Brainstorming and Sketching (20 minutes)** Ask participants to think about what kind of mysterious artifact they want to create. Encourage them to consider what story or mystery their artifact might hint at or hold. They can sketch their ideas on paper, planning out the design and details of their sculpture.
 2. **Building the Sculpture (45 minutes)** Distribute materials to participants. Guide them in constructing their miniature sculptures based on their sketches.
Encourage the use of different materials and textures to add interest and depth to their creations.
 3. **Painting and Decorating (30 minutes)** Once the basic structure is complete, participants can paint and decorate their sculptures. Provide various decorative items to enhance the mystery and uniqueness of their artifacts.
 4. **Presentation and Storytelling (20 minutes)** Have each participant present their sculpture to the group, explaining the story or mystery behind their artifact. Encourage them to share what inspired their design and what they hope others will feel when they see it.
 5. **Reflection and Discussion (10 minutes)** Discuss as a group the different themes and ideas explored through their sculptures. Reflect on the process of creating something mysterious and how it relates to the ancient artifacts studied at the beginning.



1. Venus of Willendorf statue, all four sides (25, 000 BCE). Credit: Bjørn Christian Tørrissen / CC BY-SA 4.0 / Naturhistorisches Museum in Vienna, Austria, 2020.
2. Ancient quipu (2600 BCE - 1600 AD). Credit: Claus Ableiter / CC BY-SA 3.0 / From the Larco Museum Collection in Pueblo Libre, Peru.
3. Mold Gold Cape (1900 - 1600 BCE). Credit: Wikimedia Commons user BabelStone / CC BY-SA 3.0 / From the British Museum in London, UK.
4. Ur Ram "The Ram in the Thicket" (2500 BCE). Credit: Wikimedia Commons user Benjamin82877 / CC BY-SA 4.0 / From the British Museum in London, UK.
5. Divje Babe Flute (50, 000 BCE). Credit: Petar Milošević / CC BY-SA 4.0 / National Museum of Slovenia, Ljubljana.



Participants can write a short story, poem, or description about their artifact, detailing its origins, purpose, and the adventures of those who discover it. These stories can be compiled into a class book or displayed alongside the sculptures for a classroom exhibition.



ACTIVITY: ART PORTALS FICTION AS FUTURE

Science fiction and other forms of speculative fiction are frequently obsessed with time travel, other universes, and imaginative portals. In speculative fiction stories, concepts like *portals* and time travel can sometimes be very abstract, and at other times, very literal or representational.

As an example of abstract portals, in the famous science fiction film *2001: A Space Odyssey*, large black rectangular prisms act as symbolic gateways to higher states of consciousness and serve as mysterious portals that catalyze human evolution. In the 2016 science fiction film *Arrival*, a mysterious alien language appears as cryptic circles, where each circle is an abstract portal into the alien's universe and way of thinking.



Representational portals in speculative fiction might look like literal gateways, doorways, or physical structures that characters pass through to travel between different worlds, times, lands, or dimensions. For example, in *Lord of the Rings* by J.R.R. Tolkien, the Doors of Durin open when the correct password, "Mellon" (Elvish for "friend"), is spoken. This magical element adds a layer of enchantment and mystery to the portal, but it still a more literal representation of a passageway.

Similarly, there are artworks included in the exhibition that are abstract, and some that are representational, but each of the artworks can be seen as windows into the artist's perspective. Visual art and storytelling influence the way we come to understand the world around us, and help us envision our future, individually and collectively.

In this activity, participants will be asked to look closely at each of the artworks in the exhibition *Speculative Fictions* as essentially 'portals' into the artist's world, inspirations, and stories.

Activity Overview:

Participants will engage in a creative exercise that bridges the gap between visual art and speculative storytelling. This activity will invite participants to view the artworks in the *Speculative Fictions* exhibition as 'portals' to their own imaginative worlds, sparking stories, dialogues, or scenes inspired by the artworks – or inspiring them to create portals of their own.

Materials:

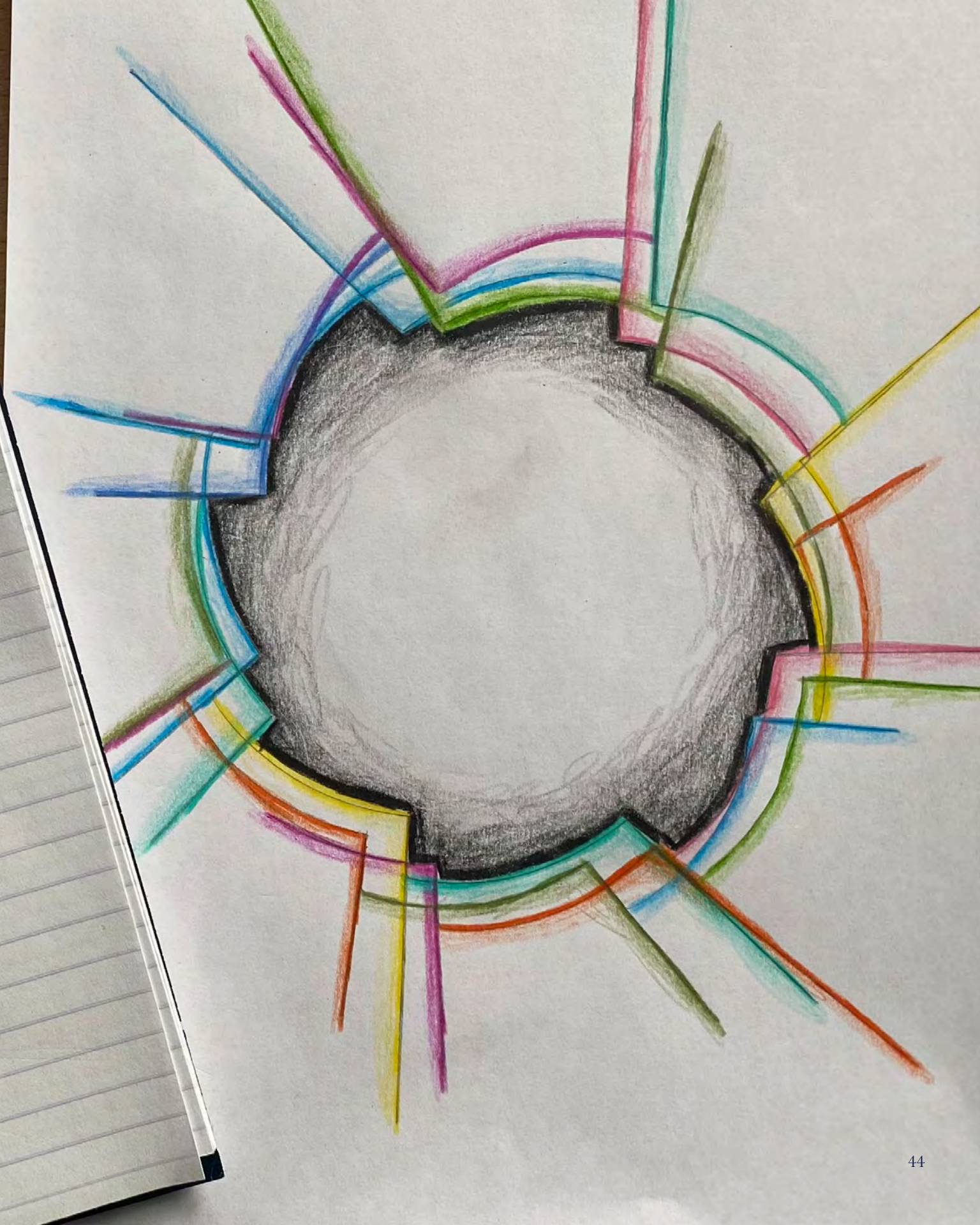
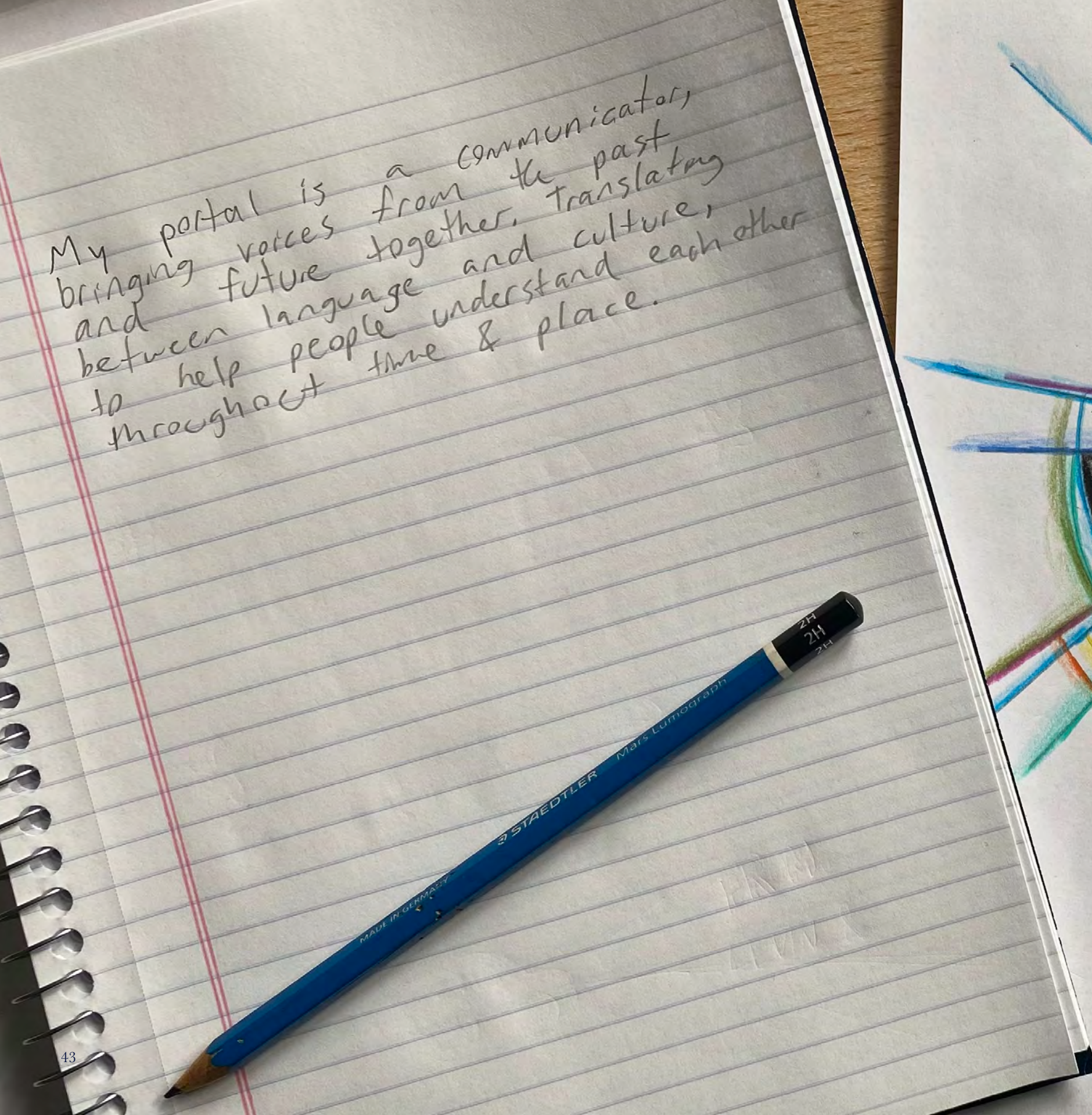
- Notebooks or sketchbooks
- Pens, pencils, colored pencils
- Tablets or smartphones (for digital storytelling or notes)
- Printouts or digital access to short descriptions of each artist and their inspirations (pages 9 - 28)

Instructions

1. ****Introduction and Inspiration**** Begin with a brief introduction to the theme "Fiction as Future." Explain how science fiction and speculative fiction often explore the concept of time travel. Discuss memories and imagination, and how both serve as our everyday portals to envisioning our futures by understanding our past and present through stories. Encourage participants to think of each artwork as a "time capsule" that holds stories from the past, present, and future.
2. ****Viewing the Artworks**** Invite participants to explore the exhibition and spend time with each artwork. Ask them to look closely at the titles of the artworks, as well as the details, colors, shapes, and emotions conveyed. Provide participants with descriptions of the artworks and/or artist biographies to help them understand the context and themes present in the exhibition's featured works.
3. ****Creative Prompt**** Once participants have had time to view the artworks, gather them in a central area and introduce two creative prompts they can choose from:

(1) Imagine that each artwork is a portal to a different world or story. Choose one artwork that particularly resonates with you, and write a narrative or sketch a scene inspired by it. The narrative should create more curiosity about the subject(s) in the composition. Think about what kind of world exists beyond the 'portal,' who the characters might be, and what events could unfold.

(2) Create your own portal, and describe what it's function is, where it goes, or how it works.
4. ****Creation Time**** Allow participants 30-45 minutes to work on their stories or sketches. Guide them in letting their imaginations run wild and not to worry about perfection. Facilitators can walk around to provide support, answer questions, and offer encouragement.
5. ****Sharing and Reflection**** After the creation time, invite participants to share their stories or sketches with the group. This can be done in pairs, small groups, or as a larger whole group.



VOCABULARY

Archeological – relating to the investigation of ancient cultures, artefacts, and remains through the excavation and analysis of sites and objects.

Architecture – the process, or profession, of designing buildings and their environments. Architecture also refers to the product of this design and work.

Artifact – a usually simple object (such as a tool or ornament) showing human workmanship or modification as distinguished from a natural object.

Environmental Sustainability – refers to the responsible management of natural resources to fulfill current needs without compromising the ability of future generations to meet theirs. It aims to balance ecological, economic and social goals, such as reducing carbon emissions, promoting renewable energy and ensuring equitable resource access.

Figurative – (used especially of art) consisting of or forming human or animal figures.

Future – time that is to come.

Geological – of, relating to, or based on *geology*.

Geology – a science that deals with the history of the earth and its life especially as recorded in rocks.

Imagine – to expect, believe, or suppose something. The word 'image' is a good clue to the meaning of imagine, a word for picturing or envisioning things. You could imagine you're a king, an astronaut, a firefighter, or a coyote. You could imagine the earth getting hit by an asteroid. If you can think of it, you can imagine it.

Optimistic – hopeful about the future or the success of something in particular.

Pessimistic – thinking that bad things are more likely to happen or emphasizing the bad part of a situation.

Portal – can be used to describe other types of doorways, both literal and metaphorical. For example, portal can refer to a web page that provides access to other sites on the web. If you enjoy reading science fiction or fantasy, you may be familiar with the use of the word portal to mean “a doorway to another world.”

Sacred Geometry – Even though sacred geometry is still a hypothesis per se, the concept, in itself, is pretty simple: everything in the universe, all the information gathered through the centuries, can be retraced and discovered from one single shape and the geometric constructions that can be derived from it. Concepts such as the Fibonacci sequence, the golden ratio, the notion of toroidal flows, as well as many derivations and shapes issued from 'the Flower of Life' are part of sacred geometry.

Social System – the patterned series of interrelationships existing between individuals, groups, and institutions and forming a coherent whole; the formal organization of status and role that may develop among the members of a relatively small stable group (such as a family or club).

Speculate – to think about something and make guesses about it : to form ideas or theories about something usually when there are many things not known about it.

Technology – the discipline dealing with the art or science of applying scientific knowledge to practical problems; Technology consists of all the things science allows people to make and do. New cars, new surgical techniques, new computers, and even robots are all examples of technology. Since science is always advancing, technology is too.

Transportation – the act of moving something from one location to another; Transportation can also refer to a formal system for moving things from place to place, like a public transportation system like the subway or public bus or a transportation company that specializes in moving goods from coast to coast.

Vocabulary Sources

Please note: definitions have at times been paraphrased or adapted for clarification.

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RESOURCES

The following listing of resources are either referenced in this catalogue, or influenced the development of this exhibition and some of the activity suggestions. Host venues of the exhibition *Speculative Fictions* are encouraged to review any of the materials listed that might aid in educating viewers about the artwork and themes.

Bishop King, Katie, and Julia Rose West. *Futures Thinking Playbook: What Might the Future Be like and What Can We Do to Shape It?* CreateSpace Independent Publishing Platform, 2 Mar. 2018.

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CREDITS

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