

LIVING

WITH

CONCEPTS



Jana Winderen conducting field recordings in Iceland. PHOTO: FINNBOGI PETURSSON.

Artists: Dylan A.T. Miner, Tania Willard, Jana Winderen

Three-year exhibition in campus spaces, 2021–2024

Presented by The Blackwood, University of Toronto Mississauga

Curated by Christine Shaw

Living with Concepts

The Blackwood is pleased to present *Living with Concepts*, the first cycle in an ongoing exhibition series presented in public spaces, primarily outdoors, on UTM campus. With the support of the University of Toronto Mississauga, over a three-year period installations by contemporary artists animate the campus. These artworks respond to the context of the site in Mississauga of the Credit territory (Treaties 22 and 23, 1820), engage the university community, and activate open spaces to foster educational encounters across disciplines.

First presented during the Blackwood's unprecedented 2018 contemporary art festival *The Work of Wind: Air, Land, Sea*, three installations have been reconfigured to span ten sites across UTM campus. Engaging themes of environmental crisis, climate change, and resilience, artworks by Dylan A.T. Miner, Tania Willard, and Jana Winderen provide multi-sensory experiences which attune us to the local environment; reflect on histories and futurities; and bridge international ecologies.

Throughout the three-year exhibition, each of the artworks are shaped by the campus: Miner's platforms will be used for regular public programs and events; Willard's wind poetry responds to local weather data; and Winderen's audio composition is played at different times seasonally to respect animal migrations and mating cycles.

In this publication, essays by Danielle Boissoneau, Ella Finer, and Nicole Latulippe expand on the contexts, themes, and sites that animate each of the artworks included in the program.



The Sea in the Forest

Ella Finer

[...] the desire to be able to encompass and explain everything constitutes a forfeiture of “the capacity to come into contact with the mysterious.” [...] Impossibility, in an ecological context, defines the paradoxical knowledge that life exceeds our capacity to understand it.¹

I have to ask myself (by asking you) why do I want to hear it in place? Because of course sound is never in place! And even the record is an approximation.²

I am in the curious, but not unusual, position of writing about a sound work I have never heard as intended to be heard. And I say *not unusual* because when do we ever hear something as intended to be heard? When we are listening in the live, or listening to records of sound—or when those records are composed, and then curated into further composition with live sonic environments—what has been produced as sound has already crossed a distance in which it has changed. Sound is always moving on; an impossible subject and brilliant because of it. So, whose intentions do we attempt to meet with/in our listening? This is an ethical and ecological question—taking in the word root of intend: “to turn one’s attention to”—when we listen, *to whose attention-giving do we in turn give our attentions?*

Jana Winderen’s *Spring Bloom in the Marginal Ice Zone: From the Barents Sea to Lake Ontario* (2018–21) is composed of recordings Winderen made with underwater microphones, hydrophones, in the Barents Sea, located off the coasts of

Norway and Russia. This work implicitly asks us, as listeners, to think about intention and attention because Winderen orients us by ear to an ecosystem vulnerable to the effects of the climate crisis, specifically to the contested edge of the ice zone: “an ecologically vulnerable, dynamic border between the open sea and the sea ice.”³ Her particular attention-through-composition to this water world of life and survival holds the space for *the capacity to come into contact with the mysterious*. Because to listen to the work is to plunge into a deep-space encounter with all kinds of acoustic bodies moving in and through dimensions only describable in sound. And this impossibility of reduction through definition is a part of the composition’s power. Through Winderen’s attention to a world of organisms we can never fully know, the work resists a game of resemblances always happening in our search to match sound to its source. This is no aquarium, what we witness through sound is not “on show,” does not feel public, but intensely and intimately private. Attending to sound always asks us to enter an ecological relationship with our surroundings, however near, however far.

This strange and beautiful work is now playing in the forest of the UTM campus—the sea in the forest. It’s such a wonderful proposition, and yet my desire to experience this meeting of two such distinct spaces is the longing that is now implicit in this response-from-a-distance to the work. I have never heard *Spring Bloom* playing through the four speakers into the campus forest, and so I offer this writing as a record of my long-distance listening, my attention through writing with all the

distances and impossibilities of listening, and the elements I have to imagine or fill with my own sited acoustics. In many ways, this practice exposes the very conditions of listening—in how we give attention, aware this can only ever result in a partial, incomplete understanding. Following Deborah Bird Rose, we might also recognise these conditions (of knowing the limits of knowing) as those defining “the paradoxical knowledge that life exceeds our capacity to understand it.”⁴ These conditions are critical undercurrents of Winderen’s project, because her composition—playing out into the university-owned campus forest—cannot help but provoke questions about the value of what falls outside the legibility of Western knowledge systems. Listening to the obscure and inaccessible auditory world of the marginal ice zone calls on us to consider the ways in which knowledge is produced and shared, by whom, for whom, in relation—through its installation on university grounds—to the institutions and networks of power that validate only certain kinds of knowledge.

I now hear UTM’s motto—*so much has been entrusted to us*—as a ghost note in Winderen’s composition, an address-as-call to honour the wide plurality of the “so much,” to take care of knowledge entrusted in many and various ways. Her sound work asks us to listen through a complex of environments: that hold their own kinds of deep knowledge of Indigenous stewardship, that know their histories of colonial occupation, of trade and industry, of accelerated climate change. *Spring Bloom*—through the sea, through the forest—takes us to many other places besides, including to the river next to the campus, once the trusting creek:

UTM is situated on the traditional lands of the Wendat and the Seneca, on the territory of the Mississaugas

of the Credit First Nation. It stands alongside the Missinnihe, the trusting creek, called the Credit River by European colonists who traded goods on credit here, with Indigenous peoples who have travelled and cared for these waters and lands from time immemorial.⁵

The legacy of colonial violence in the transformation, through renaming, of *trust* into *credit* lingers in my thoughts as I think of the human impact on the fragile ecosystem enabling the seasonal emergence of the spring bloom. I am thinking of Winderen rowing her boat out, alone, trailing microphones behind in the wake. I am thinking about how she talks of the necessity to make audible the more-than-human agents whose lives we depend on more than we know, or, until we cannot help but know. And I am thinking about who *cared for these waters*—all these waters—who does, and who will.

Again, the work of listening does this: it takes us ahead of ourselves, takes us back, asking us to “become *by motion* aware” of our own present-tense realities.⁶ From here in London, in the hottest heat since records began, I am writing-through-listening to *Spring Bloom* as a psychoacoustic mix of correspondences across histories and futures of all these sites.⁷ From this distance, instead of standing in the forest to experience the work, I construct the environment through other means—through research and reading, through email conversations, through descriptions of the project in which I learn about what I will hear:

[...] listeners hear the bloom of plankton, the shifting and crackling sea ice in the Barents Sea around Spitsbergen (towards the North Pole), and the underwater sounds made by bearded seals, migrating species

such as humpbacks and orcas,
crustaceans and spawning cod.⁸

I have listened to the audio file of *Spring Bloom* twice, once in June and once in July—both times going to the inner-city woodland near my house where so much of what I know about this work has taken shape. Because everything I know about this work (a paradoxical knowing) is through approximation, through the meeting of my current experiences and what I can imagine or intuit of the sensory experience in the campus forest, surrounded by Winderen's sonic sea. And so, I am attending to at least two tangible distances in my receivership of Winderen's work: one, the distance between the Barents Sea and the UTM forest; the other, between the fusing of these two acoustic worlds and my location in East London. This meeting of acoustic spaces—the-sea-in-the-forest in Mississauga and the woodland in London—is infused also with the wider, more expansive contexts I have gestured towards above. And so, many more dimensions of time and space are opened up in the action of listening, because listening will always make the subject spill over itself, resisting attempts at containment in description, definition, or classification.

I hear sounds like fireworks, like rising comets, blooming as palm trees with glittering arms, birds loud behind rising sighs of submarine bodies, surfacing as daylight reddens the darkness I hold shut behind closed eyes. The air turns to water and the ground gives a little, and a breeze at my elbows moves on into trees,

then out over ice, and under, falling into an acoustic night with its large and limitless sky meeting the sea, the lake, the river, the forest...

The audio record does this—layering the sonic strata of there and here, then and now and then again—while displacing the listening body, with play-back always offering an invitation to wander in the audio mix of times, whether and however we give ourselves to the wandering. I offer my experience of *Spring Bloom* here for what I hope it further reveals of the implicit condition of listening I have attempted to draw out in this response: that when we meet in sound, it is always across distance, across a multitude of distances. And how, in the distances, sensation overlaps sensation, in waves, in the historical and anticipatory currents: as the call of seals and orca meets the air meets the ground, meets the breeze meets the large and limitless sky.

Listening can be the most valuable kind of distance learning when we give attention to the complexity of where the record takes us, and *Spring Bloom* compels us to do such temporal shift-work in moving between times and places. Winderen's invitation to listen within the layering of fragile ecosystems urges us, in "sympathetic vibration," to practice a deeper listening, an attentiveness to what happens at a distance, to respond however necessary, to take care of what we might not immediately be able to perceive or experience, to trust that there will always be more than meets the ear.⁹

1 Deborah Bird Rose, citing the work of Lev Shestov, in "Recursive Epistemologies and an Ethics of Attention," in *Extraordinary Anthropology: Transformations in the Field*, ed. Jean-Guy Goulet and Bruce Granville Miller (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2007): 101.

2 From an email conversation about *Spring Bloom*, Ella Finer to Fraser McCallum, 27 June 2022.

3 Jana Winderen, *Spring Bloom in the Marginal Ice Zone: From the Barents Sea to Lake Ontario*, 2018–21, The Blackwood, <https://www.blackwoodgallery.ca/projects/spring-bloom-in-the-marginal-ice-zone-lwc>.

4 Rose, 101.

5 "UTM seeks to lives up to this place's name, through a commitment to truth and Indigenous reconciliation." University of Toronto Mississauga, "Strategic Framework," <https://www.utm.utoronto.ca/strategic-framework/contexts>.

6 P. A. Skantzé, "Shift Epistemologies: Gap Knowledge," in *Misperformance: Essays in Shifting Perspectives*, ed. M. Blažević and L. C. Feldman (Ljubljana: Maska, 2014). Accessed author's manuscript with kind permission. Italics my own emphasis.

7 This writing was composed in the summer of 2022, during which temperatures recorded in the UK exceeded 40°C for the first time.

8 <https://www.blackwoodgallery.ca/projects/spring-bloom-in-the-marginal-ice-zone-lwc>.

9 "Listening involves a reciprocity of energy flow; exchange of energy; sympathetic vibration: tuning into the web of mutually supportive interconnected thoughts, feelings, dreams, vital forces comprising our lives; empathy; the basis for compassion and love." Pauline Oliveros, *Quantum Listening: From Practice to Theory* (London: Ignota Books, 2022): 57.



Seeing and Remembering the Land: An Invitation to Curiosity

Danielle Boissoneau

It always begins with a story, a memory of coming together. As we live on these lands, Métis artists like Dylan A.T. Miner invite us to engage with the beauty of these places through pieces like *Agamiing – Niwaabaandaan miinawaa Nimikwendaan // At the Lake – I see and I remember*. Commissioned by the Blackwood for *The Work of Wind: Air, Land, Sea* and presented at the University of Toronto, Mississauga campus (2021–24), the piece is made up of seven platforms built with old-growth lumber and copper.

Through my involvement with the Relational Accountability for Indigenous Rematriation (RAIR) Collective,¹ I was invited to reflect upon Miner's piece. And through these reflections, I came to realize that in order to write, I had to root the conversation in the land. I think that's what the artwork calls for.

And so, where do we begin? Let's start with the land.

I grew up on the shorelines of Lakes Huron and Superior. I remember how my bare feet would glide over the gentle rockfaces that met the summer waves. Courageous and confident, I ran and ran and ran. The moss was often a welcome feeling between my toes, and I remember looking out over the tremendous waterways before me.

It seems like a lot for a young person to have such profound relationships with the land and the water. But I am Anishnaabekwe, these relationships exist in my DNA. These memories inform my actions to this day and probably forevermore. As I sit and

write, I remember the sounds of the waves and the way that I felt in those days.

Fast forward a few decades and here I am, hundreds of miles away from home, living in an urban centre. I'm still Anishnaabekwe and I still connect with the land, but these connections look different now. One of the ways in which I remain connected is by unconsciously emulating Miner's seven old-growth lumber and copper platforms. These platforms mirror my contradictory experience as an Anishnaabekwe living in the city: uprooted, displaced, and transformed. What's fascinating about Miner's work is the gentle invitation to curiosity and to lean into what that means for me, and for all of us.

Through *Agamiing* [...], Miner uses his artistry, and materials sourced from his home territories, to shake many of us out of the lull of colonial capitalism. Maybe you've seen similar platforms on the shorelines of waterways that you are familiar with. Maybe you are in a place to accept the invitation to use these platforms as a site of reconnection. Living in the hustle and bustle of cities like Mississauga, Hamilton, or Toronto can remove us from this connectivity with the land and the water.

Miner's work has a quiet, unassuming nature, reflective of the land. Some choose to live in relationship with land and *Agamiing* becomes integrated with that which we've always known. As Anishnaabekwe, I am privileged to have thousands of years of connection with the land running through my veins.

The unconscious, the magical, the unseen have all informed our lives as Anishnaabek on these lands. We were interrupted by colonialism, but Miner's platforms exist to remind us of these sites of connection. Miner describes the importance of "people, ecology and worlds"²—however my greatest site of reflection remains within collective displacement as Anishinaabekwe. The artwork's materials: the old-growth cedar, the copper; my brown skin and the misplaced language that falls from my tongue—we've all been displaced.

Colonization has displaced people across the globe. Like the old-growth lumber,³ I too have been removed from my home. Like the copper,⁴ I am also medicine used to protect and uphold connectivity. I've been installed in a distinct place called Hamilton, Ontario. When I look at the platforms that Miner created, the invitation to sit and reflect is literal and apparent. The non-linear aspects of *aanikoobijigan*⁵ remind me that there is more to the world than this, but it doesn't remove me from my responsibility to act, to continue creating and building community.

Working with the RAIR Collective is one of the ways in which I am doing this work. As a displaced Anishnaabek, an urban NDN, I get in where I fit in. Sometimes it's on the frontlines,⁶ and sometimes it's over Zoom. Sometimes it's learning my language, and sometimes it's planting heirloom seeds. All the time, it's with the mindset and intention that things have got to change. It's how our collective emerged, we found the (figurative) platforms and gathered round to decide how we can effect change.

The land and the water remain true. What has changed is the manner in which humans relate with these life forces. Trees, copper, water, land, and life have

all been commodified. As such, we lose our connection with the beauty of these places and life forces. Miner's seven platforms highlight the contradictory nature of displacement and transformation and invite us to live in relationship with them, whether it's by sitting on them, or using them as surfaces for writing poetry and dancing. Through art, we're being invited to transform the ways we relate. This is also reflective of my work within the RAIR Collective.

There are seven of us in RAIR, as well. We all come from different places, but we all meet in the same spot. This spot can be described as a place wherein we are seeking a deeper connection with the land. According to our website, our vision is:

[...] to support grassroots Indigenous rematriation and (re)connection to land. We seek to support the convergence of food sovereign peoples in ways that advance dialogue and action for Indigenous land rematriation. This work aims to centre Indigenous women and two-spirit presence, experiences and relationships to land and traditional territories.⁷

The collective is made up of various cultures, genders, and perspectives. Some of us are farmers, most are academics, but we are all driven by the desire to cultivate creative and loving responses to the questions that drive the essence of our humanity.

When I was invited to be a part of RAIR, I knew this could be a platform. This could be medicine. Despite my own displacement, I was still finding the ability to create change from the places where I stood. And so, when I think about Miner's platforms and their ethereal displacement, I can't help but reflect on how, once again, the land leads.

Many of our visioning sessions with RAIR revolved around the importance of accountability, as well as our own social locations. How do we maintain balance within an ever-changing world? Where do we find the grounding to stay rooted and passionate? We looked inward and outward, we held space for each other, and we realized that our ways of building with each other were part of the methodology, they were part of letting the land lead.

RAIR's methodology involves working together to take accountability and ownership over the direction of our work as researchers and collaborators. Like the platforms, we encourage the experience of place, the soil, and the seeds. We talk with the people whose hands lovingly plant these seeds of change and ask, "what are your methods?" Collectively, we re-imagine our responsibility to the land, and we discuss how our responsibilities are different. Then we gather at the figurative platforms within our practice to see and to reflect.

What does it mean to be human in a world that doesn't centre the land?

Our collective also values the art of storytelling. Miner shares the artistic practice of inviting curiosity through these platforms and this is a place of recollection for me. As I see and remember the waves crashing on the shores, I sit and wallow in the misery of living a displaced life. Where once there was water, waves, and glorious air, now I sit surrounded by pavement, screens, and an endless hustle. I wonder if these platforms feel the same as I do.

Agamiing – Niwaabaandaan miinawaa Nimikwendaan // At the Lake – I see and I remember gives voice to the displaced parts of us all. We can learn to recognize the life force within the land and water. There are ways to work towards living in better relation with each other, the land, and the water. Through this, our aanikoobijigan will also see and remember, and we can be moved to action beyond what we believe possible.

1 Learn more about our work at <https://raircollective.squarespace.com/>.

2 Dylan A.T. Miner, *Agamiing – Niwaabaandaan miinawaa Nimikwendaan // At the Lake – I see and I remember*, 2021–2024, *The Work of Wind: Air, Land, Sea*, Blackwood Gallery, <https://www.blackwoodgallery.ca/projects/agamiing-lwc>.

3 Miner's platforms are built from old-growth lumber salvaged from lakebeds in Southern Ontario.

The lumber would have sunk after falling out of log booms used in the first wave of industrial-scale logging by white settlers.

4 For more about copper, see Tasha Beeds, "Walking Through Mishibizhiw," *SDUK 11: PACING*, <https://www.blackwoodgallery.ca/publications/sduk/pacing/walking-through-mishibizhiw-challenging-the-measured-pace-of-colonization>.

5 *Aanikoobijigan* is defined as "an ancestor," "a great-grandparent," and "a great-grandchild." *The Ojibwe People's Dictionary*, <https://ojibwe.lib.umn.edu/main-entry/aanikoobijigan-na>. Miner points out that this sense of ancestry extends to both past and future.

6 Because colonialism pervades all the systems we navigate, everything is a frontline—not just public protests.

7 RAIR Collective, <https://raircollective.squarespace.com/>.

FIGHT

THRASH

WATER

CLAIM



Sunlight

6/15/2021

Offering tobacco languages
Life-giving force flows of ecological services
The role of water the concept of
Balance sheets human needs

To forgo tied to
Can continue concentrations of
Medicines protect
Atmospheric health of the community

Unextinguished aboriginal title Credit
River Watershed
To forgo distribute
Comparable sites protection of
Without nature connections

Patterns that abandoned
Wetland services water governance
in Canada
Faces threats currently free
Concentrations of its ability



Further inland

9/23/2022

To plant trees in total cost
Protection of drained by a river
In fact an initial step
Increasingly uncommon to many

An initial step based on the
Indigenous people revitalization
Clean water flows of ecological services
Ancestors foundation

Around water life-giving force
Wide variety of is possible
Environment benefits the value of
Our vision the stock of resources

Abstract millions of dollars
Relationship the concept of
In four areas fresh drinking water
to protect patterns that

To Visit with “a tension”

Nicole Latulippe

In *Liberation of the Chinook Wind* (2018–21), artist Tania Willard uses live wind speed and direction data to generate poems that update regularly on site at the UTM Davis Meeting Place and can be accessed online at windpoetry.ca. In Secwépemc territory, Willard’s nation, Chinook Wind is an animate being. Wind brings news of ancestors, weather, migration, and trade.¹ Gesturing to Wind’s agency through data visualization, Willard shares Indigenous concepts of interrelatedness which she feels are essential to counteracting our human-centric worlds. As we move out of settler colonialism, she explained to me in conversation, it becomes more important that all of us engage with the world as a being with agency.

She asks:

How do we do that?

How do we start to see what is around us—the relationality in our environment?

How do we see that we are part of it, and relate to it as a person?

And when we contribute to that agency and animacy, what do we become responsible for?

As a visitor and treaty person, I see an entry point in *Liberation*. In the work, Willard centres herself in her home territory and uses Chinook Wind, language, and salmon to build good relations as a guest to Mississaugas of the Credit treaty territory. She promotes a profoundly relational and intentional engagement with Place.²

Take Wind: While Chinook Wind is an animate being in Willard’s territory, in the Great Lakes, the four sacred winds are

acknowledged in the Haudenosaunee Opening Address and four directions in the Anishinaabe Creation Story.³ They are integral to the original instructions, protocols, and laws of this land.

Or Chinook language: It’s a hybrid of Indigenous and settler languages that mediated trade and livelihoods in the Pacific Northwest region. Here, I recall artist Bonnie Devine’s emphasis on the economic layer of reconciliation in her narration of the remarkable Indigenous trade networks of Tkarón:to and Turtle Island.⁴ I’m also thinking about scholarship detailing the magnitude and ongoing significance of Indigenous law, language, and diplomatic protocol in the treaty relationships that ground Canada’s constitution.⁵

And Chinook salmon: Pacific salmon were introduced to Lake Ontario in the 1960s because they “thrash” and “fight” on the sports fisher’s line. While the Chinook variety causes damage to Atlantic salmon spawning grounds, in speaking with traditional harvester Waawaashkeshii Nini Henry from Michi Saagiig of the Credit First Nation I found out that even introduced species are treated with respect and as relatives. It is not just about harvesting, according to Henry: “We’re in ceremony because we’re in connection, these relatives offering themselves to us.”

These vignettes demonstrate legal principles, priorities, and values that animate proper conduct in this territory: respect for all entities and beings of Creation; the return and restoration of Indigenous lands, resources, and other

aspects of nationhood; and reciprocity in our interactions with the Earth and each other. They suggest a powerful network of material and spiritual relations that settler colonialism attempts to erase and replace.

This kind of engagement is not a symbolic land acknowledgement, nor a “sorry tale” of loss, but a reckoning.⁶ It’s a careful deliberation and relational practice. In these times of cumulative, interlocking crises, Indigenous peoples continue to defend lands and bodies, protect the sacred, and restore relations. The work is technical, grounded, and material (#landback, #cashback).⁷ It demands restitution and recognition of sovereignty and jurisdiction, not only for human beings.

Willard exemplifies this in her practice. She considers her positionality as an artist invited to work on the territories of other Indigenous peoples and she problematizes the invitation issued—not by host nations, but by settler institutions. In turn, she promotes accountability to specific peoples and Place. For non-Indigenous people, this is instructive. Entangled histories or “uneven terrains” of Wind, language, and salmon across Willard’s territory and that of the Michi Saagiig (Mississaugas) invite the audience in *Liberation* to consider movement and migration, alongside forms of crossing, relation, story, and conflict through an ethic of guest-host relations.⁸

In other collaborative work, Willard draws on the metaphor of host and guest obligations present in an early twentieth-century land rights document issued by the Chiefs of the Secwépemc, Syilx, and Nlaka’pamux Nations. Together with Leah Decker, they propose visiting “as a non-colonial/decolonial activation.” It begins with a disruption:

Firstly, you must know where you are at: You must know who you are, where you are, and how you got there. [...] What are the intergenerational responsibilities that flow from these positions?

From your relations? [including the more-than-human]

What lands, territories, migrations, and journeys do you carry with you? What privileges and benefits? What struggles? [...]

Once you know where you are starting from you can begin your trip planning. Note whose land you start from and will be moving through.

Consider the Indigenous histories, stories, and knowledges that are unmarked in the everyday descriptions of those territories.⁹

As an invitation to practice travel and residency with humility, respect, and accountability, visiting and guesing entail an obligation of reciprocity. This kind of relationship reflects the late Gidigaa Migizi (Doug Williams) on agreements made by Michi Saagiig Nishnaabeg and other Indigenous nations to share land on the north shore of Lake Ontario. It resonates with Ruth Koleszar-Green and the late author and activist Lee Maracle (who taught for many years at the University of Toronto), on host and guest responsibilities; Robin Wall Kimmerer, who urges non-Indigenous society to live as good neighbours by learning “to become naturalized to place”, and with my own experience building relationship through Nbwaaach’ding (visiting together) on Anishinaabek territory.¹⁰ That this activation takes place on campus extends what bell hooks calls the space of transgressive pedagogy, a space of possibility, beyond the classroom. It carries the potential to expand the university’s

mandates, commitments, and values in relation to those expressed by host peoples, the inherent rights holders. For instance, what if universities respected the rights of Indigenous nations to govern research within their territories, and non-human actors figured meaningfully in ethics review processes?¹¹ What if Indigenous Water Walks, Declarations, and Claims inspired new ways of working in relationship, in order to respect and protect the waters? And what if urban land reclamation sites were sufficiently resourced as vital hubs of Indigenous-led training and innovation?¹²

Such possibilities are intimated through contrast in Willard's work. Wind-generated poems are sourced from historical and environmental policy documents, the Mississaugas of the Credit Title Claim to the Waters, and other texts. They highlight competing jurisdictions, worldviews, and values. An excerpt from June 29:

*Ancestors wetland services
The cost of water for which we take
It is the giver of life assigning value
Natural credit is possible*

Bridges are there too—across territories, host/guest relations, and hybrid languages. For example, in conversation Willard described trade as a way of creating relations and interterritorial governance.

On a rise of land overlooking Willard's windsocks—emblazoned with the words *THRASH, FIGHT, WATER, and CLAIM*—sits another work from the *Living with Concepts* exhibition, *Agamiing – Niwaabaandaan miinawaa Nimikwendaan // At the Lake – I see and I remember*, by Wiisaakodewinini (Métis) artist Dylan A.T. Miner. Installed in various sites across campus, Miner's platforms also invite a turn towards the water, towards Lake Ontario: its tributaries, stewards, and Title and rights

holders. As a site for people to meet, one platform located in front of the Davis Meeting Place had me thinking of another "Meeting Place": the Humber River Valley and Toronto itself, an area that for thousands of years has been occupied and visited by many Indigenous peoples.¹³ It had me thinking of Anishinaabeg governance by council fire, of bulrushes and plant relations used to weave the mats depicted on Wampum Treaty belts to signify territory and upon which dignitaries sat to establish and renew relations.¹⁴

Liberation was installed at the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic and it resonates with stories of regeneration that emerged during lockdown.¹⁵ Monarch butterflies increased a hundredfold in Californian overwintering sites, while spring salmon were sighted in the so-called Columbia River for the first time since 1930. In Toronto, bulrushes sprouted from hundred-year-old seeds excavated from the site of a "new" river valley being constructed in the Port Lands, an area that was once the biggest marsh in the Great Lakes.¹⁶ This difficult period also saw the launch of Indigenous fisheries and continued innovation in fisheries stewardship.

Sitting with these stories, I consider Waawaashkeshii Nini Henry's description of Indigenous food sovereignty, sustainability, and harvesting as ceremony—of salmon as relative. Toxic runoff and heavy metals mean that they no longer eat the salmon belly fat, but Henry's vision of "doing the work and getting the people back to the water" includes measures to protect fish and fish habitats, prevent waste, and share both knowledge and the catch with community. I consider the resurgence of Land and peoples that is reflected in *Liberation*. Willard invites settlers to engage with these processes; that is, to visit with "intention [...] attention [...] a tension."¹⁷

Such decolonial land activations can deepen our sense of interrelatedness on the territory and the responsibilities these relationships entail.¹⁸

Many thanks to Tania Willard and Waawaashkeshii Nini Henry for sharing knowledge and time with me.

1 *Secwépepmc Lands and Resources Law Research Project*, eds. Jessica Asch, Simon Owen (Victoria: Shuswap Nation Tribal Council and Indigenous Law Research Unit, University of Victoria, 2018): 14.

2 Some Indigenous scholars use capital-L Land and capital-P Place to signify in English Earth's agency, sacredness, and animate being. See: Lorelei A. Lambert, *Research for Indigenous Survival: Indigenous Research Methodologies in the Behavioral Sciences* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2014); and Sandra D. Styres, *Pathways for Remembering and Recognizing Indigenous Thought in Education: Philosophies of Iethi'nihestenha Ohwentsia'kekha (Land)* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2017).

3 Nicole Bell, et al., *The Ways of Knowing Guide*. Toronto Zoo Ways of Knowing Partnership Turtle Island Conservation Program, 2010, https://www.torontozoo.com/pdfs/tic/Stewardship_Guide.pdf.

4 Bonnie Devine, "Tkarón:to & Turtle Island: The Remarkable Indigenous Trade Networks," Myseum of Toronto. Public talk, Toronto Media Arts Centre, November 22, 2018, <https://www.myseumoftoronto.com/programming/the-remarkable-indigenous-trade-networks/>.

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NORTH

A

B

C

D

E

Campus Map

ARTWORKS



GROUND



PARKING



ROAD



BUILDING



TREES



WATER



1

2

3

4

5

- X Blackwood Gallery, 140 Kaneff Centre
- Y elgallery, CCT Building
- ◆ Z 1-4 Lightboxes
- 1A-G Dylan A.T. Miner
Agamiing – Niwaabaandaan miinawaa Nimiwkendaan // At the Lake – I see and I remember
- 2A-B Tania Willard
Liberation of the Chinook Wind
- ◆ 3 Jana Winderen
Spring Bloom in the Marginal Ice Zone: From the Barents Sea to Lake Ontario

In addition to *Living with Concepts*, the Blackwood presents exhibitions and public programs at two galleries and four lightboxes on campus.

The galleries are FREE and open to the public.

Visit blackwoodgallery.ca for current exhibitions, programs, and publications.

Biographies

Danielle Boissoneau is a 2spirit femme, Anishnaabekwe from Garden River First Nation. Currently on loan to Hamilton, Danielle seeks to embody her dreams of liberation and autonomy through her words and the sounds that accompany freedom. She invokes the practice of living artistically, by acknowledging miracles and then translating them into artistic projects. Danielle has performed her poetry at various venues, including Tipi Confessions (2019) and the Onkwehonweh Storytellers Festival (2020). Upcoming publications include a piece on Two Spirit Love for *The Languages of Our Love: An Indigenous Love and Sex Anthology* published by Abalone Press. Danielle is from the Old Turtle Clan.

Ella Finer's work in sound and performance spans writing, composing, and curating with a particular interest in how women's voices take up space; how bodies acoustically disrupt, challenge, or change occupations of space. Her research continuously queries the ownership of cultural expression through sound; often through collaborative projects centring listening as a practice of deep attention, affiliation, and reciprocity. Recent work has been presented at Onassis Stegi (Athens), Gasworks (London), FUTURA (Prague) and Ocean Archive, which has hosted her long correspondence project with Vibeke Mascini, *Silent Whale Letters*. She is currently finishing her first book *Acoustic Commons and the Wild Life of Sound*, a work considering the inherent power in/of that which falls outside of administrative control—a way of thinking through the sonic as critical agitator.

Nicole Latulippe is a guest and treaty person living in Toronto. She was born on Lake Ontario in Mississauga of the Credit treaty territory and grew up in a French-Canadian family on Nbisiing and Algonquin Anishinaabek territory. Nicole is a faculty member in geography and environmental studies at the University of Toronto Scarborough.

Dylan A.T. Miner is a Wiisaakodewinini (Métis) artist, activist, and scholar. He is Director of American Indian and Indigenous Studies and Associate Professor in the Residential College in the Arts and Humanities at Michigan State University. Miner sits on the Michigan Indian Education Council, is a founding member of the Justseeds Artists' Cooperative, has been featured in over twenty solo exhibitions, and been an artist in residence or visiting artist at institutions across North America and Europe. He holds a PhD from the University of New Mexico and has published more than sixty journal articles, book chapters, critical essays, and encyclopedia entries, and numerous limited-edition artist books/booklets. He recently commenced the Bootaagaani-minis ∞ Drummond Island Land Reclamation Project and is uncertain if he will return to academic writing.

Tania Willard, of Secwépemc and settler heritage, works within the shifting ideas around contemporary and traditional, often working with bodies of knowledge and skills that are conceptually linked to her interest in intersections between Aboriginal and other cultures. Her curatorial work includes *Beat Nation: Art Hip Hop and Aboriginal Culture* (2012-2014), co-curated with Kathleen Ritter. In 2016 Willard received the Award for Curatorial Excellence in Contemporary Art from the Hnatyshyn Foundation and a City of Vancouver Book Award for the catalogue *Unceded Territories: Lawrence Paul Yuxweluptun*. Willard's ongoing collaborative project, *BUSH Gallery*, is a conceptual land-based gallery grounded in Indigenous knowledges and relational art practices. Willard is an MFA candidate at UBCO Kelowna, and her current research constructs a land rights aesthetic through intuitive archival acts.

Jana Winderen is an artist educated in Fine Art at Goldsmiths, University of London, with a background in mathematics, chemistry, and fish ecology from the University of Oslo. Winderen focuses on audio environments and ecosystems which are hard for humans to access, both physically and aurally. Amongst her activities are immersive multi-channel sound installations and concerts which have been performed internationally in major institutions and public spaces in America, Europe, and Asia. Winderen lives and works in Oslo.

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Living with Concepts

Dylan A.T. Miner, Tania Willard,
Jana Winderen
2021–2024
Curated by Christine Shaw

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Image credits

p. 2–3: Jana Winderen conducting
field recordings in Iceland (detail).

Photo: Finnbogi Petursson.

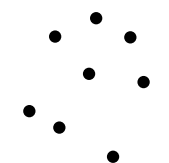
All other photos: installation views of
Living with Concepts on UTM campus, 2021.

Photos: Toni Hafkenscheid.

p. 6–7: Jana Winderen, *Spring Bloom
in the Marginal Ice Zone: From the Barents
Sea to Lake Ontario*, 2018–2021.

p. 12–13: Dylan A.T. Miner, *Agamiing –
Niwaabaandaan miinawaa Nimiwkendaan //
At the Lake – I see and I remember*,
2018–2021.

p. 18–21: Tania Willard, *Liberation of the
Chinook Wind*, 2018–2021.



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