



Atklokem

Contemporary Silyx Artists



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Barb Marchand
David Wilson Sookinakin
Mariel Belanger
Sheldon Louis

An exhibition at the Lake Country Art Gallery
August 16th to September 29th, 2019

Introduction

As part of the Lake Country Art Gallery's exploration of community, I recognize the importance of providing opportunities for a discourse with the Syilx – the Indigenous people of the Okanagan – and to facilitate discussions about the history and future of the people and this land.

My responsibility as the Curator at the Lake Country Art Gallery continues to evolve as the role of the artist morphs and responds to social and cultural needs. The Curator is an enabler who makes space for artists to share their voice, while at the same time researching and pulling together exhibitions that are stimulating, exciting, and thought-provoking to the public audience.

The role of a Curator is not a static one. It is prudent to invite others into the gallery and to step aside when they can offer more qualified and different perspectives. We can stay relevant, reflect the times, and make space for other voices by inviting supporting curators into the Lake Country Art Gallery. Those who can open up the conversation, break it apart and rebuild ideas. This process allows us to engage in conversations that are happening now, in and beyond the Okanagan Valley.

We must give voice to Okanagan artists and curators who create work intended to inform and challenge us. These exhibitions make us think about current art-making practice as it is informed by the history of the land and those who have come before us.

The Lake Country Art Gallery welcomes David Wilson Sookinakin to serve as a supporting curator for this exhibition. Atklokem features the artwork of Barb Marchand, Mariel Belanger, Sheldon Louis, and David Wilson Sookinakin.

~ Wanda Lock
Curator, Lake Country Art Gallery

Message from the Mayor

Okanagan Art and Culture

The District of Lake Country Mayor and Council were very pleased to attend a phenomenal display of Okanagan Art at our small gallery in Lake Country on Bottom Wood Lake Road. The show was arranged by the hard work of our local Public Art Gallery in collaboration with a number of Okanagan Artists.

The works exhibited were very diverse in the mediums used to create them. There were works of art formed from leather, antler, bone, feathers, charcoal, paint and plants. The Okanagan Nations have used the land for thousands of years and the natural materials are integral to their culture, as are the stories told in the gathering and use of natural materials for utilitarian, ceremonial or artistic purposes.

We want to thank all those who contributed towards bringing this gift to Lake Country.

~ James Baker
Mayor

Curatorial Statement

Sometimes life's little inconveniences lead you to the door of opportunity.

One morning I had made the bus trip from Vernon to Lake Country to take pictures of my collaborative mural project with some of the George Elliott Secondary School students that hung proudly on the wall beside the Creekside Theatre. I decided a beverage at the nearby Coffee House would be a good starting point, and it was there I noticed my phone was missing.

Wanda Lock, the Curator for the Lake Country Public Art Gallery, recognized me and after chatting she lent me her phone to see if I could relocate mine. Luckily, it had been turned in to the bus driver on duty. All I had to do was wait for the next bus loop.

This gave Wanda and me a chance to talk. She said she'd just been thinking about a possible First Nations focused exhibition to showcase our art in a meaningful form of reconciliation and mutual respect. This led to the exhibition called Atklokem: the place where wild carrots grow.

Sometimes these little inconveniences lead you to the path of golden opportunities.

~ David Wilson Sookinakin
Exhibition Curator

Barb Marchand

Barb Marchand is an interdisciplinary artist who works in both traditional and contemporary art form. She received her Bachelor of Fine Arts Degree at Okanagan University College, and has been a practicing artist for over 32 years and has worked as an art instructor at the En'owkin Centre - a post-secondary Indigenous education Centre - for 12 years.

Marchand has mentored many artists, passing on her knowledge of the land and the materials it provides. She explains that growing up in the Okanagan, "the land was [her] playground and was [her] earliest teacher and has remained [her] greatest inspiration and influence over the years". Although she is originally from Lake Country, this will be her first exhibition at the Lake Country Art Gallery. Here she will display a vast collection of her artworks created over her career, alongside artworks created by artists that she has previously mentored. These artworks are made from natural resources that Marchand has harvested from the area herself, creating a personal relationship with this land while telling a story.







Cattail Forms Collection, Tule Reed, Copperwire

David Wilson Sookinakin

Early in his career David Wilson Sookinakin learned through teachings and mentorship of Coast Salish and Haida artists and later began exploration of West Coast and Plains First Nations' art forms and furthered his studies in business at Vancouver's Langara College. He has since produced various forms of acrylic pieces on a large variety of mediums. His style of painting has developed through exploring Interior Salish pictograph art form, combining vibrant colours and linear forms within a circular picture format. Wilson brings together many years of evolving unique styles of form and technique, with the use of acrylics on 5.5 traditional canvas as well as community murals, traditional drums and canoes, prints, teepees, and various mediums on brushed metal.

David Wilson Sookinakin's work has been exhibited at contemporary and public art galleries throughout the Okanagan and displayed on numerous community locations in the Okanagan and Lower Mainland. He has fulfilled several private and public art commissions; BC Friendship Centers and Societies', Okanagan civic governments, First Nations' communities; Westbank First Nation, Okanagan Indian Band, Okanagan Nation Alliance, Vernon Public Art Gallery, Lake Country Public Art Gallery, Vernon Performing Arts Center, Kelowna Airport, and various school districts. He is also a recipient of the 2012 BC Creative Achievement Award.



Path of the Sacred Tree, Acrylic on Canvas





The Sacred Clown, Acrylic on Skin
Thunder Beings, Acrylic on Skin
Salish Water Spirit, Acrylic on Panel
Water Carrier, Acrylic on Skin

Mariel Belanger

For her proposed plan to guide the creative process, Mariel comments, "I intend to display a moon lodge sculpture that reflects the isolation of a young girl entering her womanhood. It is the result of three years collecting paper rolls, reclaiming forest material. I created this piece as a direct result if my masters of fine art in response to the destruction of our habitat as a Syilx woman. Who are we without our own architecture? The pitiful ones. Crippled from our lack of capacity to access tule patches to recall gestures of self-governance because they are destroyed, paved over, or locked behind private property fences; our poles taken and made into toilet paper or match sticks. This sculpture represents everything I have been working towards as a Syilx woman reclaiming the village and harvest sites".

Mariel Belanger is dedicated to contributing in the growth of interdisciplinary arts as a method to engage Indigenous community, language, culture and act as a bridge to society telling stories of our time. Recently graduated with a Master of Fine Art in Interdisciplinary and Indigenous Studies, Mariel is a SSHRC, UBCO Aboriginal Fellowship, and Indian Brotherhood scholarship recipient who was recently awarded Outstanding Indigenous Graduate Student at the International Congress of Qualitative Inquiry held in Champaigne-Urbana at the University of Illinois, as well was nominated to the Canadian Association of Theatre Research board as graduate board member. As an artist scholar, her research is about Identity through the lens of Indigenous Ways of Knowing and Being, Customary Laws, Indigenous Feminism and Performance Theory, exploring how cultural identity is rebuilt through oral history and performance practice.

#WasteNothing

Carved lodge pole ends, recycled MFA essays and poetry with tule reed ends saved and weeping willows from my house and across the street from the gallery.

Assisted by Nde artist Maura Tamez in a shared learning environment.

Waste Nothing: tule tipi abstraction is about constructing, deconstructing and making from pieces of others, wasting nothing during and coming out of a manic episode. Recycling old lives bringing new stories and words to life. My work is about staying as natural as possible using what I have around me. I don't want to make future garbage i want to create something that makes your mind race with possibility and understanding. These tule tipi projects keep my math brain going like indigenous math. Doing as we've always done with materials found where we are when it is time for harvest.

In my undergrad painting class my prof labeled my efforts as rudimentary. Rudimentary is a label given to that which one considers the work to be child like. In my manic expressive play I have been building houses. At first I was offended but then I remembered, children are naturally inclined to want to do everything they feel good doing and if you praise them they will always strive to do better.

I am stuck there somewhere in my lived experience, childlike so my body is expressing this in many ways. This exercise is about reclaiming simple practices.

Tali Qsapi: a long time ago everyone knew how to make a tule mat tipi. We all should have done this stage by the time we were at least 14, sooner if we wanted to play dolls with our own house. These poles represent the territory. Three poles tell a specific story of landmark activities in height and symbol.



#WasteNothing, Video projection Performance





Sheldon Louis

Sheldon Louis is a multidisciplinary artist from the Okanagan Indian Band, which is part of the Syilx Nation. He sits on the Board of Directors for the Arts Council of the North Okanagan. His artwork has been published in the Arts and Council Guide for the North Okanagan 2016-2017 and he was a recipient of the First Peoples Cultural Council's, Emerging Artist Development Award in 2015. He has mentored with Barb Marchand as a curator visual artist, and has curated 7 exhibitions within the Okanagan territory and the Kootenay region. Louis also worked and continues to work under the mentorship of Michelle Loughery, a prolific muralist and multidisciplinary visual artist, who trained him to become a muralist, he was also mentored in the process of creating youth programs. Louis works with the youth often, creating a variety of murals and public art installations throughout the Okanagan area, including the Vernon Public Art Gallery, the Kelowna General Hospital, as well as his most prized piece of work, the "Ceremonial Mace of University of British Columbia Okanagan" which is a hand carve wood piece, which is carried in con-vocational.







Youth Banner Project

A component of the Atklokem exhibition is an 8'x8' outdoor mural in front of the gallery completed in collaboration with the OKIB youth. The creation of the artwork took place under the mentorship of Sheldon Louis. Sheldon is a Syilx artist and has recently work with Kelowna Secondary School grade 12 Honour students to create a mural exploring settler/indigenous relations.

The mural created for this exhibition will remain on display into spring 2020. The prime location of the mural will be clearly visible by vehicular and pedestrian traffic. Its proximity to a high school, senior's village and golf course allows for excellent exposure to a wide demographic.

The Art Alley Banner Project is a series of 28, 4x8' banners displayed in the alley between the LC Art Gallery and ArtHouse. This project brought together young artists from the OKIB and grade 7 students from George Elliot Secondary School. Mentors David Wilson Sookinakin, Sheldon Louis, Nicola Treat, Will Hoffman, NAV, Moozhan Ahmadzadegan and Rueben Scott provided support and guidance for this project.



Youth Banner Project (Art Alley) collaboration with Sylix Youth Artists plus George Elliot Secondary School students (Grade 7).
Mentor Artists Will Hoffman; Reuben Scott; Nicola Treat; David Wilson Sookinakin











The Lake Country Art Gallery informs and builds community through enriching and sometimes challenging exhibitions. It offers diverse and inclusive programming and gives space to artists in varied artistic practices. It is accessible, engages the local community and beyond, and fulfils its role with a strong, contemporary voice.

The Lake Country Art Gallery gratefully acknowledges the financial assistance of the Federal Government of Canada; Province of British Columbia; District of Lake Country; Central Okanagan Foundation; BC Arts Council; Lake Country Art Walk; Panorama Veterinary Services; Cultural Human Resources Council and the Faculty of Creative and Critical Studies.

