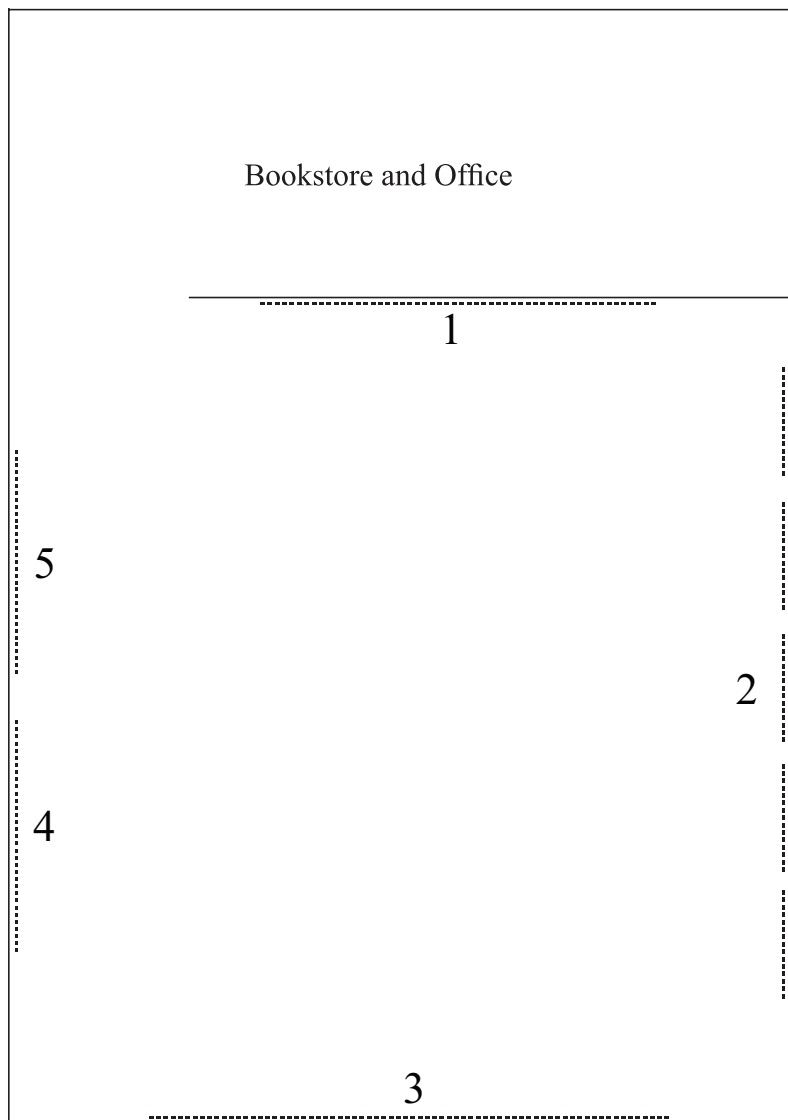


**Coursing:  
Ana Valine, Karen  
Zalamea, & Sidney  
Gordon**

**Curated by Katrina  
Goetjen  
May 11 – June 30, 2023**

**Or Gallery**



- 1 Ana Valine**  
*Oceans 14 (Self Portraits)*, 2020 - 2023.  
 Seaweed, Ocean Water, VitC, Washing Soda, Steel, 8x12 feet.  
 Digitized 16mm film, 18 minutes.  
 Courtesy of the artist.
- 2 Sidney Gordon**  
*Oregon Grape & Red Flowering Currant 1 - 5* from the  
*Xá7elcha (Lynn Creek) Watergrams Series*, 2023.  
 Silver gelatin Watergram on sheet film, 20 x 24 inches.  
 Courtesy of the artist.
- 3 Karen Zalamea**  
*Taro*, 2023.  
 25 archival inkjet prints, 65" x 85".  
 Courtesy of the artist.
- 4 Sidney Gordon**  
*Spring Passage* from the *Xá7elcha (Lynn Creek) Watergrams Series*, 2023.  
 16mm film strips, 29.75x144 inches.  
 Courtesy of the artist.
- 5 Sidney Gordon**  
*Spring Passage* from the *Xá7elcha (Lynn Creek) Watergrams Series*, 2023.  
 Digitized 16mm film, 6 minutes and 25 seconds.  
 Courtesy of the artist.

## Coursing

By Katrina Goetjen

The exhibition *Coursing* probes the interconnected nature of the hydrocommons, exploring emulsion-based practices and their compounded effect on our waterways alongside other industries of production. Considering the cyclical nature of water and our coastal city's site-specificity on the Salish Sea, the included works contemplate our bodily relationship with water as one that is permeable, delicate, and intrinsic to humanity's survival.

Within the artworks by Karen Zalamea, Ana Valine and Sidney Gordon, these themes are placed in relation to the artists' own bodies, practices, and histories. Each piece has been created in co-authorship with a naturally present and proximate water source, along with one or more plants that depend upon it. Through the artists' collaborations with these organic forces, the works in *Coursing* highlight the liquid intelligence

and authorship of this miracle compound, reinstating our reliance on it and humbleness in its wake.

While protocols to dilute and dump are accepted across our globe<sup>1</sup>, analogue film processors may find a moral dilemma: what are the exacerbated effects of putting used chemicals down the drain, and what are our eco options<sup>2</sup>? Cities such as North Vancouver<sup>3</sup> and San Jose<sup>4</sup> have issued condensed guidelines on darkroom chemical disposal (the latter encouraging anthotypes made from organic matter), while Toronto has published comprehensive photo finishing

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1 Dennis Normile. "Despite opposition, Japan may soon dump Fukushima wastewater into the Pacific." *ScienceInsider*, January 24, 2023. <https://www.science.org/content/article/despite-opposition-japan-may-soon-dump-fukushima-wastewater-pacific>

2 Kathy Kinakin. (2022). "April 2022 Newsletter: The Green Issue." *Beau Photo*, April, 2022. Pages 24-28. <https://www.beauphoto.com/wp-content/uploads/newsletters/news2022/april22news.pdf>

3 City of North Vancouver. "Recycling or Garbage: Photo Finishing Chemicals". City of North Vancouver, Canada, 2021. <https://www.cnv.org/Home-Property/Garbage-Recycling-Green-Can/recycling#!rc-cpage=83223>

4 City of San Jose. "San Jose Recycles." San Jose, United States, 2023. <https://sanjoserecycles.org/guide/photo-chemicals/>

protocols<sup>5</sup>, accessible online. Vancouver — known in the media arts community for its film industry and contributions to photoconceptualism — has yet to share robust guidelines on darkroom operations. However, the by-laws call for a diluted ratio of 1mg of silver per litre of water before being disposed into the sewer<sup>6</sup>. Digital documentation is sometimes offered as an alternative to analogue processes, but it carries its own perils of waste and extraction<sup>7</sup>, not only for camera production, but also for data storage.

Considering this treatment of the hydrocommons and its repercussions on our own physical health, I am reminded of the invaluable lessons

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5 City of Toronto. "Environmental Best Management Practices for Photo Finishing Operations in the City of Toronto." City of Toronto, Canada, 2017. <https://www.toronto.ca/wp-content/uploads/2017/11/96c6-photo-finishing-bmp-AO-DA.pdf>

6 City of Vancouver. By-law No. 8093, Section 3.1. <https://bylaws.vancouver.ca/8093c.PDF>

7 Devin N. Perkins, BS, Marie-Noel Brune Drisse, MS, Tapiwa Nxele, MS, and Peter D. Sly, MD. "E-Waste: A Global Hazard." *Annals of Global Health*, Vol. 80, Issue 4. November, 25, 2014. <https://annalsofglobalhealth.org/articles/10.1016/j.aogh.2014.10.001>

within Astrida Neimanis's *Bodies of Water*. In attempting to understand our delicate relationship to water, Neimanis insights captivated me from the first page of her introduction:

"Blood, bile, intracellular fluid; a small ocean swallowed, a wild wetland in our gut; rivulets forsaken making their way from our insides to out, from watery womb to watery world:

*we are bodies of water.*"<sup>8</sup>

While her insights reach far beyond the book's introduction, these ideals commemorate the labour and positioning of Valine's, Zalamea's, and Gordon's embodied practices. To insert one's own bodies in the art making process—in the creek, in the ocean, in the downpour—requires a level of fortitude and commitment that I'm honoured to celebrate in this exhibition.

In Jeff Wall's 1989 essay, *Photography and Liquid Intelligence*, he suggests that

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8 Astrida Neimanis. "Bodies of Water: Posthuman Feminist Phenomenology." *Bloomsbury Publishing*, January 26, 2017.

“some scientists are studying an oceanic planet. Their techniques are typically scientific. But the ocean is an intelligence that is studying them in turn.”<sup>9</sup> This concept speaks to Ana Valine’s *Oceans 14 (Self Portraits)* beautifully—in her process, Valine documents wave patterns along various shorelines on 16mm film, which are eco-processed with seaweed and seawater. In this specific rendition, Valine selected industrial and sewage output sites including Iona Beach (Richmond, British Columbia) and New Brighton Park (Vancouver, BC). Through their site-specificity, Valine’s videoworks serve as a litmus test of how we are impacting our coastal waters, exemplifying that the ocean not only notices, but responds to our activities.

Valine’s work illuminates these intertwined systems of the human and non-human and showcases our oceans along with other bodies of water, as their own archives. While

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9 Jeff Wall. “Photography and Liquid Intelligence.” Jean-François Chevrier and James Lingwood, *Un Autre Objectivité/Another Objectivity*, exh. cat. Idea Books. Milan, Italy, 1989. Pages 231–32.

the standard photographic archive demands dry conditions following the processing phase, our waterways are creating a wet archive of their own; collecting data from various happenings, on and off land, and carrying them across time and space. These wet archives depict what Timothy Morton calls “hyperobjects”<sup>10</sup>—compounds such as pharmaceuticals<sup>11</sup>, pesticides<sup>12</sup>, and plastics<sup>13</sup> can be found in such quantities across our globe that they defy the temporal understandings we usually equate to standard objects. They are dispersed, yet their impacts are magnified

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10 Timothy Morton. “Hyperobjects”. University of Minnesota Press, 2013.

11 Douglas Broom. “Pharmaceuticals May Help Us but They Are Harming Our Rivers. This Is What Needs to Change.” *World Economic Forum*, February 17, 2022. <https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2022/02/pharmaceutical-pollution-health-drugs-rivers/#:~:text=80%25%20of%20the%20world's%20wastewater,the%20environment%20and%20human%20health.>

12 Nicole Hancock. “Pesticides and Water Pollution.” *Safe Drinking Water Foundation*, September 29, 2021.

<https://www.safewater.org/factsheets-1/2017/1/23/pesticides#:~:text=Water%20from%20excessive%20rainfall%20and,over%20a%20large%20geographical%20area.>

13 Art on Water Pollution. “Mandy Barker - *Penalty, Shoal, Soup*.” *Art on Water Pollution*, June 6, 2019 <http://artonwaterpollution.altervista.org/en/mandy-barker-penalty-shoal-soup/>

through abundance, combination and maturation.

While these considerations of liquid intelligence materialise in a chemical sense in Valine’s work, the genius of water’s movement is reiterated in Sidney Gordon’s *Spring Passage from the Xá7elcha (Lynn Creek) Watergrams series*. The selected film strips and sheets highlight the non-human intelligence of water in capturing their flow’s pattern and structure.

Gordon’s work uses a similar method of eco-processing as Valine’s, but they work with plant botanicals sourced from the creek beds in place of seaweed. This pairing, of liquid’s physical structure and the flora’s chemical structure, reminds us that life on our planet is intrinsic to water, its health, and its migration. In learning to appreciate the physics of waters’ movement, I am reminded of the “Water Tank Test” on *Canada’s Worst Driver*<sup>14</sup>; this challenge, featured in every season, attempts to teach the drivers

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14 *Canada’s Worst Driver*. Seasons 1-14. Proper Television. Toronto, Ontario. 2005-2018. [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cng-pE1impZg&list=PLHB4WuM7Y\\_eP-PFv5F6ToaafqEziG-5cb](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cng-pE1impZg&list=PLHB4WuM7Y_eP-PFv5F6ToaafqEziG-5cb)

in rehabilitation pedal control by mounting a water tank to top of their car. Sunroof open, the drivers are sent through a multifaceted obstacle course. As the inertia of the vehicle sloshes the water around, the drivers are asked to respect their cargo’s unique physical needs, and are evaluated on how much liquid they retain in the tank.<sup>15</sup>

This sense of inertia, of movement, can be felt within Gordon’s watergrams, especially in their video rendition. As a segment of the flowing water is captured on film, their unique compositions are celebrated. This shared authorship between human and non-human, highlights a liquid intelligence essential to photography, but also to life itself. As modern governments across the globe recognize the significance of bodies of water<sup>16</sup>

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15 *Canada’s Worst Driver*. “Ups and Downs”. Season 14, Episode 6. Proper Television. Toronto, Ontario. December 3, 2018 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Kj09Ohkxeas>

16 Chloe Berge. “This Canadian river is now legally a person. It’s not the only one.” *National Geographic*, April 15, 2022. <https://www.nationalgeographic.com/travel/article/these-rivers-are-now-considered-people-what-does-that-mean-for-travelers>

for their structure, migration, and chemistry, Gordon's collaborations with these watery bodies honour their laws of nature, capturing a site- and time-specific fingerprint of the Xá7elcha creek.

In further conversation with water's kinetic intelligence, Karen Zalamea's *Taro* explores the structure of a unique leaf, which works with physics to wick away water droplets. Taro, one of the earliest cultivated crops<sup>17</sup>, has been increasingly studied for its superhydrophobic foliage built by interwoven honeycomb-like structures<sup>18</sup>. In considering taro's unique relationship with moisture, Zalamea's work offers a space of reflection for how water ought to move within a biodiverse world.

The grid of images presented by Zalamea have been produced through both analogue and

digital technologies, originally printed as a small scale cyanotype that was exposed using sunlight and processed in rainfall. The resulting digitally printed archival photographs creates an immersive look at these superhydrophobic structures, offering insights into organic waterproofing.

As humanity often attempts to restrict water's movement, whether through dams, dykes or artificial bodies of water, we are left vulnerable to a backlash of flooding, drought, and other disasters. On a consumer level, producers like Gore-Tex<sup>TM</sup> have saturated the rainwear market, and consequently have contaminated our waterways with microplastics and toxins, such as per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (AKA: PFAs, and "forever chemicals")<sup>19</sup>. As many communities continue to fight for pollutant control, specifically

in the wake of environmental racism<sup>20</sup>, the state of California announced plans to ban textiles containing PFAs, taking effect in 2025<sup>21</sup>, due to their associated health risks<sup>22</sup> and ability to travel through our shared waters. As I hope that other jurisdictions will follow suit, Zalamea's work is a reminder that while we can reroute water, we have a lot to learn from these natural systems—studies have already commenced attempting to mimic the microscopic structures of taro leaves in an effort to create eco-friendly superhydrophobic textiles<sup>23</sup>.

*Taro*, along with the other works in *Coursing*, remind us that water has a kinetic intelligence that can not be permanently ignored, rerouted, or leveraged.

This collective understanding of the hydrocommons, as well as the presented exhibition itself wouldn't have been possible without the Unmoored, Adrift, Ashore symposium (co-organized by Or Gallery, Emily Carr University of Art + Design, and Haus de Kultur der Welt, Berlin). Through my work as a UAA research assistant, and then watching<sup>24</sup> and rewatching<sup>25</sup> this brilliant series of talks, I found myself in a company of brilliant water stewards. While specifically looking at the potentials for Pacific Ocean protection, these talks served as the foundational research for this exhibition. My sincerest thank you goes to all the participants

17 Denham, Tim. "Early Agriculture and Plant Domestication in New Guinea and Island Southeast Asia". *Current Anthropology*. University of Chicago, October, 2011. S379–S395. <https://www.journals.uchicago.edu/doi/pdf/10.1086/658682>

18 Kumar, M., & Bhardwaj, R. "Wetting characteristics of *Colocasia esculenta* (Taro) leaf and a bioinspired surface thereof". *Scientific reports*, January 22, 2020. <https://doi.org/10.1038/s41598-020-57410-2>

19 Toxic Free Future. "Gore-Tex manufacturer announces availability of new PFAs-free membrane but still uses forever chemicals to make its outdoor apparel and gear." *Toxic Free Future*, September 30, 2021. <https://toxicfreefuture.org/press-room/gore-tex-manufacturer-announces-availability-of-new-pfas-free-membrane-but-still-uses-forever-chemicals-to-make-its-outdoor-apparel-and-gear/>

20 Dr Thom Davies. "Toxic Geographies: chemical plants, plantations, and plants that will not grow." *Toxic News*. November 7, 2017.

<https://toxicnews.org/2017/11/07/toxic-plants-in-the-deep-south-chemical-plants-plantations-and-plants-that-will-not-grow/>

21 Rachel Deeley. "California Bans Toxic 'Forever Chemicals' Used by Many Brands." *Business of Fashion*, September 30, 2022.

<https://www.businessoffashion.com/news/sustainability/california-regulation-pfas-pfcs-for-ever-chemicals-pollution-harmful/>

22 Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry. "Toxicological Profile for Perfluoroalkyls." *Centre for Disease Control and Prevention, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Public Health Service*, 2021. <https://www.n.cdc.gov/TSP/ToxProfiles/ToxProfiles.aspx?id=1117&tid=237>

23 Manish Kumar & Rajneesh Bhardwaj. "Wetting characteristics of *Colocasia esculenta* (Taro) leaf and a bioinspired surface thereof". *Scientific reports*, January 22, 2020. <https://doi.org/10.1038/s41598-020-57410-2>

24 Or Gallery. "*Unmoored, Adrift, Ashore* Symposium Event." *Or Gallery, Emily Carr University of Art + Design, and Haus de Kultur der Welt*, May 10, 2022. <https://orgallery.org/events/unmoored-adrift-ashore/>

25 Or Gallery. "*Unmoored Adrift, Ashore*." *Or Gallery, Emily Carr University of Art + Design, and Haus de Kultur der Welt*, May 20-21, 2022. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=X0FVOK-K8Duo&list=PLVbwlaga2fps6GWjnx-8uf0KnH-B5SRDn0>

who shared about their practices and experiences with such grace, passion, and empathy.

I also extend my gratitude to many amazing artists and curators who have publicly shared their insights on water stewardship, and therefore provided inspiration and guidance for my research. This list includes, but is not limited to Siku Allooloo, Paula Booker, Mandy Barker, Sam Kittner, Uriel Orlow, Christine Hansen and Iona Kirk. Jeannette Armstrong has also greatly influenced this project, through her stewardship, as well as her poem *Water is Siwilkw*<sup>26</sup>, from which our exhibition's title came.

This exhibition would not have been possible without the support of many mentors, colleagues and friends—to name a few: Jamie Hilder, Nya Lewis, Gloria Wong, Neil Popko, Anna Gorbounova, Liam Wright, my parents—Morrie & Debbie, Reiko Inouye, Kitt Peacock,

Laurie White, Raymond Boisjoly, Jamie Ward, & Jenn Jackson, in addition to the stellar artists I've had the privilege of including in this exhibition. Ana, Karen and Sidney made our show possible for this first-time curator with their patience, kindheartedness, and honesty. I want to express my gratitude for their hard work and emotional intelligence throughout this process.

Utmostly, I'd like to thank the previous Director/Curator of Or Gallery, Denise Ryner, who provided invaluable mentorship and support over the years leading to this exhibition. For her contributions to my development, her brilliant programming and her friendship, I'll be forever grateful.

As I offer this exhibition to the public, I hope that Coursing will remind us that, because of water's cyclical nature, everywhere is downstream. It may sound cliché, but we are all in this together, and therefore equally responsible. Within a similar ideology, I hope this exhibition encourages us all to be more thoughtful with our practices, generous with our

knowledge, and kind to our communities. The waters we release will return back to us soon enough.

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26 Jeannette Armstrong. "Water Is Siwilkw." Live reading, March 2003. <https://soundcloud.com/lamonte-204031754/water-is-siwilkw-poetry-jeanette-armstrong>

Since August 2020 my filmmaking practice has been centered around experiments in ocean plant film development. Eco-processing is a method of developing celluloid with non-commercial materials, often plant matter. It is categorized as experimental, and in the case of working with seaweed, is also unpredictable. It is this unpredictability in the film outcomes that is leading me to consider these works as conversations with nature, and a form of alchemy.

In this practice, I am making 16mm films of waves as the water rolls up onto land. I think of these films as oceanic self-portraits; the sea makes its own image. By that, I mean the elements we see in the frame are the ingredients that develop the film: seaweed and ocean water.

What the sea brings forward is unexpected and liberating. It's an emergent and embodied method of making. Depending on the weather and location, filming at the shoreline can be exhilarating or soothing, calming or precarious. The shoreline is a place where I feel a part of things, what Romain Rolland termed 'the oceanic feeling'.

—Ana Valine

In consideration of bodies of water and their significance as markers of distance and of connection, I reflected on what would be deeply rooted yet adaptive, from a trans-Pacific diasporic perspective. I focused on the taro, a staple crop in the Philippines dating back to 3900 BCE. The taro leaf, in particular, is known for its superhydrophobic or water-repellent feature. Starting from a scanning electron microscopic image of a taro leaf's surface topography, the work offers an expanded view of its honeycomb-like structure through a series of photographic processes—from digital manipulation, to production as a cyanotype on cotton sateen exposed to sunlight and developed in the rain, to a flatbed scan and its eventual output as a detailed large-scale photographic grid. The sourced scientific image was deliberately diverted through a course of image-based transmissions to give prominence to its structure of resistance.

—Karen Zalamea

The light-sensitive surface is a direct canvas for material collaboration. Across disciplines, Sidney's practice deals with this notion holistically; relying equally on intention, chance, and response. Xá7elcha (Lynn Creek) Watergrams uses this approach to give authorship to the river as they work in alliance with each other. Made at the turn of the spring season, Xá7elcha's evolving landscape is captured through a cameraless process of submerging sheet and motion picture film beneath the river surface and capturing direct prints of its refractions. Each work is then processed with location-sourced plant materials and stop-bathed in river water. Because of this, the photographs are irreproducible, and uniquely site and time-specific.

—Sidney Gordon

March 15 - Dog rose Berries  
& Autumn Leaves

March 22 - Osoberry &  
/ March 29 Salmonberry Brambles

April 27 - Sweet Cherry, Twinberry Honey Suckle &  
Saskatoon Serviceberry

April 25 - Dandelion & Pine

April 14 - Oregon Grape &  
Red Flowering currant



## Biographies

**Ana Valine** is an artist, writer, and director based in Vancouver, Canada, the unceded and ancestral territories of the xʷməθkʷəy̓əm, Skwxwú7mesh, and səlilwətał Nations. Her award-winning films have screened internationally in Spain, Russian, Indian, Busan, Turkey, Armenia, Iceland, and the USA. Her work has been presented at the Polygon Gallery, The Libby Leshgold Gallery, Paneficio Gallery and Modern Fuel. Valine's projects have received support from the Canada Council for the Arts and the Polygon Gallery Lind Prize. She is an alumna of the Canadian Film Centre, Women in the Director's Chair (WIDC), Toronto International Film Festival (TIFF) Talent Lab, Emily Carr University of Art + Design and is currently a Film Studies PhD candidate at Queen's University.

**Karen Zalamea** is a Filipino-Canadian artist, educator, and cultural worker based in Burnaby, Canada, the unceded and ancestral territories of the the hən̓ q̓ əm̓iṇ̓ əm̓ and Skwxwú7mesh speaking peoples. Her interdisciplinary practice is rooted in photography and critically considers methodologies, materiality, and modes of presentation. Zalamea's projects have received support from the Canada Council for the Arts, BC Arts Council, and Conseil des arts et des lettres du Québec. She has carried out artist residencies in the Philippines, Iceland, and Canada. Her work has been presented in solo and group exhibitions and as public art projects across Canada and internationally. She is the recipient of the third annual Prefix Prize in photography. Zalamea holds an MFA from Concordia University, and a BFA from Emily Carr University of Art + Design.

**Sidney Gordon** is a queer, non-binary, artist, born and raised on Treaty 4 territory. They are now situated on the unceded and ancestral territories of the xʷməθkʷəy̓əm, Skwxwú7mesh, and səlilwətał Nations. Their emulsion-based practice engages with socio-political subjectivity across themes of intersectional feminism, environmentalism, and identity. Gordon is co-founder and curator at XINEMA, a monthly experimental film program that showcases media artists at Vancouver International Film Festival (VIFF); and a collective member and co-curator at Liquidation World: a non-profit artist-run center, multi-use gallery and community space. They are the recipient of the Emily Carr University of Art + Design Chancellors Award for Best Experimental, and the VIVO Media Arts Centre Distribution Award. In 2022, they were short-listed for the Polygon Gallery's Lind Prize. They hold a BMA in Film + Screen Arts from Emily Carr University of Art + Design.

**Katrina Goetjen** is an emerging artist and curator, born and raised on Treaty 7 Territory—the ancestral territory of the Blackfoot Confederacy (Siksika, Kainai, Piikani), the Tsuut'ina, the Îyâxe Nakoda Nations, and Region 3 of the Métis Nation. They are now situated on the unceded and ancestral territories of the xʷməθkʷəy̓əm, Skwxwú7mesh, and səlilwətał Nations. Their multidisciplinary practice spans research, writing, photography, digital imaging, and arts-admin. Goetjen received a BFA in Critical and Cultural Practices from Emily Carr University, and now works as Gallery Operations Manager of Artspeak.

**Or Gallery**  
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**Open Tuesday to Saturday, 12–5pm**

Or Gallery respectfully acknowledges its presence on the unceded territory of the xwməθkwəy̓əm (Musqueam), Skwxwú7mesh (Squamish) and Səl̓ílwətaʔ/Seilwitulh (Tsleil-Waututh) First Nations, who have stewarded this land since time immemorial.

Director-Curator: Jenn Jackson

Programme Coordinator: Jamie Ward

Installation Technician: Patrick Bravo / Bravo Fine Art Services

Copyeditor: Jade Duncanson

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[orgallery.org](http://orgallery.org) & [@orgallery](https://www.instagram.com/orgallery)