

EVERY
MAY THE
LAND

THE
CAMP
MARKS

**Ba'oya Hubuk'esi
(I Love Them By the Edge)**

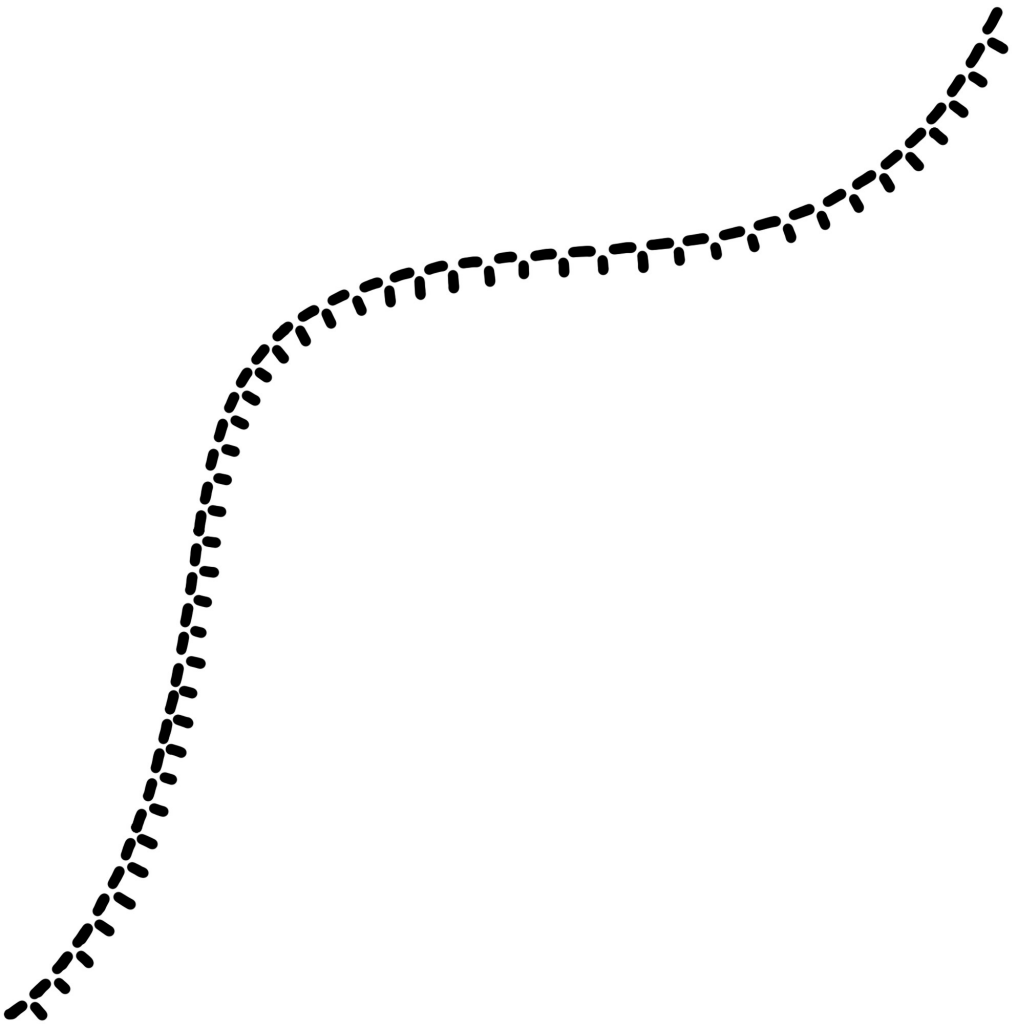
Vance Wright

Curated by

Jenn Jackson

**22 January–
2 May 2026**

Or Gallery



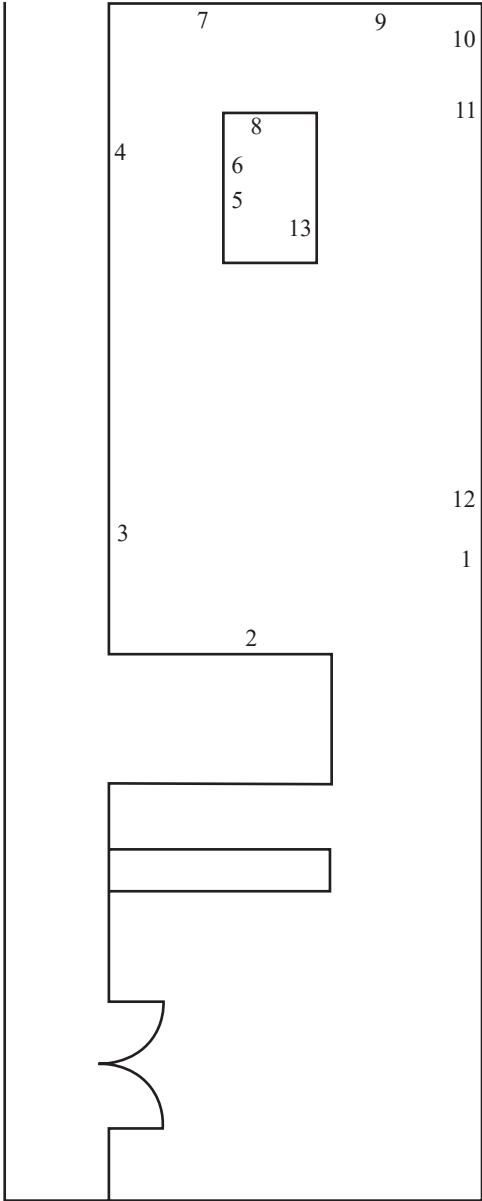
Ba'oya Hubuk'esi (I Love Them By the Edge)

Ba'oya Hubuk'esi (I Love Them By the Edge) is an exhibition that explores the plurality of queer Indigenous intimacy and erotics alongside connections to family, community, and territory. The exhibition features four interrelated filmworks and a series of photographs that document multiple activations of place through co-authored performances with the artist's collaborative partners. The performative activations expand across media—through film, photography, language and sound—to address the ways in which relations to territory and community shape Indigiqueer identity.

As a registered reconnecting two-spirit member of the Tl'azt'en Nation, Wright engages plurality on multiple fronts, exploring what it means to cultivate relationships with territories that are beyond what is known as one's home or homeland, feeling familiarity within and beyond the contours of biological familial connection, and investigating the expanding bounds of queering land-based Indigenous art.

Ba'oya Hubuk'esi (I Love Them By the Edge) is the first solo presentation of all artworks within the exhibition, including the premiere of a newly commissioned filmwork, *Keyoh; Beneath the Feet*, a walking performance, photographs, and several sculptures that invite future audience activation.

Exhibition Map



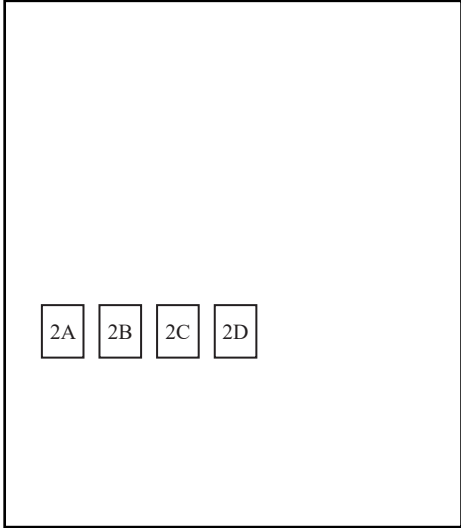
List of Works

1. **Keyoh; Beneath the Feet**, 2025, video with sound, 3:25 min. Courtesy of the Artist.
2. **Sock Photographs**, 2025, developed through a performative and reciprocal mark-making process, exposing the soles of Nike socks to different territories which develops a portrait of each specific land, 33 x 43cm each. Courtesy of the Artist.
3. **Need Some Land Between Our Bodies**, 2025, short film, 11:37 min. Filmed in UBC Okanagan, Okanagan Territories. Courtesy of the Artist.
4. **Ba'oya Hubuk'esi (I Love Them By the Edge)**, 2024, short film, 9:56 min. Performers: Justin Ducharme, Richard Yeomans-Richardson and Vance Wright. Filmed in the territories of the x^wməθk^wəyəm, S^kw^xwú7mesh, and səliłwətał Nations. Courtesy of the Artist.
5. **A Portal To Understanding**, 2024, Czech seed beads, Nike jockstrap, dimensions variable. Courtesy of the Artist.
6. **Kinda Miss Using My Body**, 2024, Czech seed beads, Nike jockstrap, dimensions variable. Made with the support of Jacqueline Morrisseau-Addison. Courtesy of the Artists.
7. **Uts'ut'en We Work Together Site/ations**, 2025, cyanotype records of plant medicines and kin that were harvested to eco-develop filmwork, 61 x 76cm. Gathered at Nk'mip in the Okanagan Territories with the guidance of Taylor Baptiste. Courtesy of the Artist.

List of Works (cont'd)

8. **Uts'ut'en We Work Together; Process Residue**, 2025, remnants of the plants used for the eco-development process in the bentwood box they were harvested in, 24 x 27 x 27cm. Courtesy of the Artist.
9. **Uts'ut'en; We Work Together 1, 2 & 3**, 2025, eco-developed film on matte archival paper, 40 x 67cm. Made in the Okanagan tmx^wulax^w with support from the Indigenous Art Intensive at UBC Okanagan. Courtesy of the Artist.
10. **Polaroid Transfer**, 2025, polaroid emulsion lifts on cedar paper, 38 x 91cm. Made in the Okanagan tmx^wulax^w with support from the Indigenous Art Intensive at UBC Okanagan. Courtesy of the Artist.
11. **Polaroid Transfer**, 2025, polaroid emulsion lifts on cedar paper, 38 x 91cm. Made in the Okanagan tmx^wulax^w with support from the Indigenous Art Intensive at UBC Okanagan. Courtesy of the Artist.
12. **Fringing; Finding The Edges**, 2026, short film, 3:20 min. Filmed in ǰ'wáyǰ'wǰy' at Third Beach, in the territories of the x^wmǰk^wǰyǰm, Sǰwǰwú7mesh, and sǰlilwǰtǰ Nations. Courtesy of the Artist.
13. **From Both Sides Now, From Up and Down, and Still Somehow**, 2026, Czech seed beads, Nike jockstrap, dimensions variable. Made with the support of Whess Harman. Courtesy of the Artists.

North Wall



2A. ǰʷayǰʷəy̓ in xʷməθkʷəy̓əm, Sk̓wx̓wú7mesh, and səliwətəl Territories.

2B. Nk'mip Cultural Centre, Okanagan Territories.

2C. Bush Gallery, Neskonlith, Secwépemc Territories.

2D. UBC Okanagan, Okanagan Territories.

YOU GET TO USE ONE (1) PUN

Whess Harman

It's an unfair light to cast across all of Indigenous art, but I'll start with this statement: Indigenous art isn't horny enough. Sure we talk about snagging but when the topic of sex comes up it's often in the purview of comedy not eroticism or health. It's not that people haven't tried; the 2014 Gwaii Edenshaw and Kwiaahwah Jones co-curated exhibition, *Rez Erect: Native Erotica* focused in on this underexplored topic but fell victim to our incessant need to create punny exhibition titles and also predominantly featured work that fell into comfortable binaries of sexuality and gender. Not that I wouldn't buy a functional formline geoduck dildo, if offered. I am also not unaware of ndns making hot art like Rachel Martin and Brandon Hoax, and mentioning Kent Monkman is inescapable however you feel about his work. But looking through the majority of Indigenous exhibitions, we're...very *demure*, very *mindful*. Or just haven't had many opportunities to think through and present this type of work.

I don't think this is an unsurprising state of (very demure, very mindful) affairs when we look at the overall mental and sexual health of our communities. Domestic violence and sexual abuse still plague our kinship systems, and intergenerational trauma following abuses of the church, residential and day schools and the ongoing violences of the foster care system have shamed us and robbed us of the tools to speak frankly and safely about our sexual experiences and desires. It is also still not an uncommon story for one's first experience of being sexually desired to have been received in ways that cannot be separated from sexual, gendered and racialized stereotypes.

These are difficult realities to navigate when creating work about Indigenous sexualities. As with many difficult questions in our communities, *Ba'oya Hubuk'esi (I Love Them By the Edge)* turns

to the land, in search of, if not answering for, a place of solace for desire. If you cannot be held by the unprovoking embrace of the land, where else is there?

For me, exploring this question of Indigenous sexuality and land begins the video work, *Need Some Land Between Our Bodies*. When Vance was first telling me about creating this work, I wasn't sure what to expect because usually when people tell me they're thinking of taking feet pics it's in an exasperated "and I should sell them on OnlyFans (to escape whatever fucked-up precarity I find myself in)." To which I say, make sure you are at least passionate enough about it to make doing the editing and admin tolerable. However, when Vance described our feet as being our most direct connection to the land, I had an easier time starting to see the vision of the work.

The video begins with Vance walking into frame, shoes on, and choosing a position far from the camera lens; it's not private because this is still a performance work, but it is discreet. In preparing for this exhibition, they told me that cruising was also on their mind, and as they lay down a blanket, you can see them looking around to see if they're alone. When I first watched this video, I had chalked it up to the nerves that come with being on camera and hoping that what you're making is art. As they take off their shoes, kneel and begin to make an offering and smudge themselves, a pair of white socks and then their bare feet, it begins to read instead as tact and preparation; the land is the partner in this performance and this ritualized approach is done to name that this relationship and the action that takes place here is sacred.

It's no secret that the land is sacred to Indigenous people; our art is not exclusively, but often feels synonymous to that relationship. How close we are in our understanding and relationships to land often becomes the barometer of our authenticity, both imposed by ourselves and others. When the land comes under threat, we are quick to put our lives on hold and our bodies in the line of fire. If there is no land left, we lose who we are when we have lost too much already. Whether you live on or away from your territories, this is a deep and at times devastating love.

Vance pulls the white socks onto their bare feet and begins walking on the land, pausing in places to firmly stroke the surface of dry earth and sparse cover of grass with the soles of their feet. They take their time in slow, attentive regard of where they are with this being, crouching down to touch the underbrush and smell the scent that comes off of it. They lay down, at rest, until they get back up and reposition closer to the camera. From here, laying again on their back, they take off the socks and begin smelling them, draping them across their face and inhaling deeply. They massage their feet and eventually, unhurried, stand and exit the frame.

Is the ritual foreplay? Is this cruising but only with the land as your partner? Is it foot fetishism with a decolonial angle? I think it can be all of these things if you want it, but to me this is especially a personal expression of one's intimacy with land and being able to come to the land as your whole, queer Indigenous self.

The shadowboxed pairs of socks with the smeared remains of the land on their soles bring a touch of sentimentality to this repeated act of mark-making from different locations. These remains bypass the connotation of trophies and are rather more like the practice of keeping a lock of hair from a lover. The cyanotype records of the

medicines gathered for the photoworks that were eco-processed in a bentwood box and the cedar paper that carries the polaroid emulsion lifts function similarly while, through their framing within fields of red, they invite another voyeuristic insight to an intimate relationship with the land. As though passing by a sexual act in the woods and being both curious and trying to keep a brief and respectful distance.

Sex is or can be intimacy, and while I stand by my disparaging of Indigenous sexuality being a topic too quickly relegated to comedy, I don't want to discount that *good sex* is often also playful. The arrangements of jockstraps look not unlike an array of toys placed out with choice and mood in mind. Play and vulnerability are much closer partners than are often given credit, but being able to say "play with me like this" and "don't broadcast or morally judge me for it," is an act of trust; trust is where sacredness makes itself home. These embellished, often fetishized items are made sacred by not only the love and care put into their making, but also by their deification in the title video work of the exhibition, which shows that their making was also ritualized in the slow work of edging the straps with beads while Vance's partners wore them. If the video work wasn't so hot, I'd accept accusations of hypocrisy for giving a pass on the double entendre of edging, but considering we've been impulsively beading everything in sight the last ten years, I'd say it's underutilized. Fight me on this hill.

This exhibition is horny. It's intimate and playful and each of these pieces lean comfortably towards eroticism without getting lost in extractive exhibitionism. When I'm looking at and thinking through this work, I am thinking about my own queer Indigenous identity and how land can, again, be a successful mediator in finding understanding when I allow it to be as active in those parts of my life as it is in those artistic, spiritual and political.

Artist Statement

Vance Wright

This body of work aims to explore Audre Lorde's writing on the erotic through Indigenous and queer ways of being—how can the erotic help us relate to one another and to the land, especially in territories we are not Indigenous to? How can we queer our relation to other beings in a way that feels not only right, but also good? In my foray into creating this work, I initially spent a lot of time thinking before doing, but when the time for doing came, I treated the process similarly to José Esteban Muñoz in *Cruising Utopia*. By using cruising as a methodology for creation, I aimed not to spend excessive time analysing each subject or action, but to centre proliferation and creation rather than forethought, allowing new erotic ways of being with materials and subjects, and allowing meditations to emerge. *Edging* is also a central part to the work, playing with the viewer's expectation of fulfillment, revealing some things and hiding others, and opening up spaces for negotiation and collaboration with other beings.

The erotic lies within oneself, and is also generated when the boundaries between beings are agreed to be lowered or dissolved, and when the edges between stable, discrete subjects become consensually blurred. I believe death is a complete dissolution of boundaries, and thus the erotic is shied away from because it draws us close to the edges of our own being. As we feel truly alive, we also feel the punctum of time passing. Western philosophers have defined desire as coming from an ontological lack. Thinking of desire as *a lack of something* is dangerous, as it will always focus on *not-having-enough-of*, and never being satisfied. Colonization thinks in this way, as *something-not-yet-ours* and so does Capital, as *that which is in excess of the land*. With this work, I wanted to create something full of a desire not born from a lack, or from a fear of death, but from an abundance to share. A basket may be defined by its void, by a lack

or hole, but a hole does not necessarily need to be filled, rather it is a capacity to hold.

In *Ba'oya Hubuk'esi (I Love Them By The Edge)*, edging is beaded onto a jockstrap that my two partners wear interchangeably, capturing our negotiations, collaboration and consent, and the lasting effects, latent danger, and the responsibility that comes with any action in relation to others.

The new film works, *Keyoh; Beneath The Feet* and *Need Some Land Between Our Bodies*, explore connection to land mediated through the Dakelh language and the sole of the foot. The film captures a reciprocal mark-making process between myself and the land in various territories, including those of the x^wməθk^wəyəm, Sk̓w̓x̓wú7mesh, səlilwətał and Okanagan Nations. The making of these works refers to the foot as fetish, not in typical Dom/Sub or hierarchical terms, but as an exploration of being in right relation—relishing in the part of our body that connects us directly to the land.

Each pair of socks operates as a site/ation, a term coined by the Indigenous artist and curator Tania Willard, of the territory that I performed upon—an exposure to the land resulting in an impression, a residue of intimate connection. I think of them as portraits of each territory, developed through exposing the sole of the sock to the land. During my time in May of 2025 at the Indigenous Art Intensive held at UBC Okanagan where two of these performances were created, Willard generously noted the ways in which this work also participates in the land as a pollinator, picking up and dispersing seeds as the performance unfurls.

The film *Fringing; Finding the Edges* focuses on a jockstrap with beaded fringe, one side a complex pattern and the other rendered with beadsoup. In an essay for *Dana Claxton: Fringing the Cube* from Galleries West, Beverly Cramp wrote that “fringes on traditional clothing worn on the Great Plains not only dispersed rain, but caught the wind and reminded people of their immediate environment.” With this in mind, I began thinking through fringe as a queer way to encounter the edges of my surrounding, much like Donna Haraway’s “Tentacular Thinking,” in which she talks about the non-localized brain of an octopus and how they follow along the agency of each tentacle and how an encounter of the surrounding in turn becomes a navigational compass. Furthermore, much of the athleisure wear popular in cruising, and in these film works, wicks water from the body much like fringe.

When producing the short film works, I took process photos of myself in Polaroid film. The Polaroid film was then freed from its protective casing, no longer a discrete single object but in flux, and then gently lowered into a water suspension. I viewed the water as a material partner, an agential force or intelligence, collaborating in how the Polaroid film was composed on the cedar cardstock substrate. Marks of this collaboration are left behind in the form of water stains and wrinkles atop the surface. The installation of these works also plays with the idea of edging, as leaning into the edges of the gallery space, acknowledging the constraints of the room and working with them, or even highlighting them as boundaries for engaging.

The three eco-developed photographs were processed with plant relatives harvested at Nk’ mip Cultural Centre with the guidance of Taylor Baptiste. The development of the film happened here in

the territories of the x^wməθkwəyəm, Sk̄wxwú7mesh, and səlilwətal Nations. The initial roll of film contained photographs from various territories but only photos of my partners survived the experimental process, which were taken in Treaty One territory, in the Métis Settlement of St. Ambroise, where my partner Justin Ducharme grew up. The cyanotype works are held in relation to the eco-developed photographs, as they are a document of the plants used in the developer. I thought of these Cyanotypes as a form of Site/ation, creating portraits of the plants and land I was working with, and using the framing and red matting to negotiate boundaries with the audience.



Biographies

Vance Wright (they/them) is a reconnecting two-spirit member of the Tl'azt'en Nation, and was raised on the unceded territories of the Sín7aýčkstx, Okanagan, and Ktunaxa Nations in what is colonially known as Nelson BC. Currently residing in the occupied and unceded territories of the x^wməθkwəyəm, Skwxwú7mesh, and səlilwətał Nations in Vancouver, they are an emerging artist, curator and writer. They hold a Bachelor of Fine Arts from Emily Carr University, with a major in Critical and Cultural Practices and a minor in Curatorial Studies. Their art work has been exhibited in the Contemporary Native Art Biennial (BACA), as well as artist-run centres such as Massy Arts Society and Oxygen Art Centre.

Whess Harman (he/they) is a member of the Carrier Wit'at Nation, a nation amalgamated by the federal government under the Lake Babine Nation and currently resides on the traditional territories of the x^wməθkwəyəm, Skwxwú7mesh, and səlilwətał peoples. He doesn't like cops and believes in land sovereignty for Indigenous peoples all across the globe, including Palestine. In his arts practice he works primarily in drawing, text and textiles. As an independent curator and occasional editor and contributor to a variety of small publication projects, he prioritizes emerging queer and BIPOC cultural workers and artists.

While working through many mediums, Whess is often working with ideas of resistance, and from the foundation of his identity as a queer, trans member of Carrier Wit'at nation living away from his territories. He considers his Indigeneity to be both a cultural and spiritual reality, as well as a political identity. He's most interested in finding paths to liberated futures alongside the many who share rage and despair in the face of the seemingly unrelenting shit-storm of empire.

Public Programs

Opening Celebration

Thursday, January 22, 2026, 5:00pm-8:00pm
Or Gallery

Vance Wright Artist Talk

Thursday, January 29, 2026, 11:30am-12:30pm
Aboriginal Gathering Place (AGP), Emily Carr University

Date Night: Lines of Desire

Friday, February 6, 2026 6:00pm-9:00pm
Or Gallery

Creators Favourite Sluts Art Market

Friday, February 13, 2026, 5:00pm-8:00pm
grunt gallery

Queer Poetry Reading

April 2026
Online

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Artist Acknowledgements

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Thank you to Jacqueline Morrisseau Addison for your help with the initial short film for Response that started this whole body of work, and for your help beading the flat-stitch jockstrap.

Thank you to Serena Steel for your friendship during the Indigenous Art Intensive and beyond, your willingness to edit my writing, and

for your support in the first film work for Response as well.

Thank you to Taylor Baptiste for your guidance in harvesting plants in your territory, and for your never ending enthusiasm and support for what I'm up to in my practice.

All of your collective help is humbling, grounding and appreciated. Creating and supporting anything takes a village.

Thank you to the artists, professors, thinkers, and writers whose work and teachings have influenced me (In no particular order): Tania Willard, Christine Howard-Sandoval, Daina Warren, Cecily Nicholson, jaye simpson, Mercedes Eng, Lauren Marsden, Leanne Betasamosake-Simpson, Lee Maracle, Dana Claxton, Jeneen Frei Njootli, Mariana Muñoz Gomez, José Esteban Muñoz, Jack Halberstam, Lori Barkley, Emily Hermant, Arjun Lal, Natalie Wynn, Karen Barad, Léuli Eshrāghi, Donna Haraway, Wanda Nanibush, Rebecca Belmore, and many more.

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Snachailya.

Vance Wright

Or Gallery 236 Pender St East, Vancouver, BC V6A 1T7, Canada

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Open Wednesday to Saturday, 12–5pm

Or Gallery acknowledges its presence on the unceded territories of the xʷməθkʷəy̓əm, Sḵw̓x̓ wú7mesh, and səliwətəl First Nations, who have stewarded this land since time immemorial.

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All illustrations courtesy of Vance Wright.

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