

Arts

Unearthing: art by Valérie Chartrand, Robert Morris, Ben Oswald, Suzanne Paleczny, Jennie Vallis, Carollyne Yardley

By Steve Newton on December 11th, 2020 at 5:23 PM



Carollyne Yardley: Remnants 1, 2020 Potting soil, oak planter (formerly a sherry barrel with metal hoops), used nitrile examination gloves, squirrel tail, human hair, 15" x15" x9"

The Emily Carr University of Art & Design's *Unearthing* exhibition, featuring artists from the Low-Residency Master of Fine Arts (MFA) program, runs virtually through this Monday (December 14).

"Presented at the midpoint of graduate study," reads the event info, "the interim thesis exhibition demonstrates a culmination of a full year of artistic research, critical exploration, and making."



Artists displaying their work are Valérie Chartrand, Robert Morris, Ben Oswald, Suzanne Paleczny, Jennie Vallis, and Carollyne Yardley.

Here's a sampling of their work, with artist statements taken from the [ECUAD website](#).



Carollyne Yardley: Remnants 5, from Pandemic Sculpture Garden series, 2020 Mirror, mannequin hand, used nitrile examination glove, false nails, squirrel hair, 36.5" X 32" X 4"

**Carollyne Yardley:** "Due to Covid-19, many patterns have changed in our lives, including an increased number of humans planting urban gardens. Additionally, the lockdowns in city centres—and the attendant quiet on normally busy streets—have created an unprecedented chance for non-domesticated animals to roam. Pandemic Sculpture Garden (2020) explores how human and nonhuman systems intersect, by intertwining materials found in my urban garden. Chicken wire, for example, is normally used to protect particular plants from being eaten by urban animals. Human hair is used in composting, and was collected from home haircuts post-coronavirus shut down. I also gathered up the discarded blue nitrile gloves from my recycling bin, now a source of global litter due to the pandemic. This unconventional sculpture garden invites diverse publics (human and nonhuman alike) to experience a utopian/ dystopian future of remnants and hybrid-relations who emerge from damaged worlds."



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Robert Morris: Balance Forms, 2020, Red cedar, brass, carnauba wax

**Robert Morris:** "The polished blackwood and red and yellow cedars of my recent kinetic sculptures were created as Covid 19 arrived. In their exploration of space and movement, Balance Forms, Tentative Distance and Red Cedar Balance Form (2020), examine the tension between our desire to touch and our apprehension of physical contact. Tentative Distance, in fact, explicitly addresses social distancing. Delicately balanced, they tremble and swing, responding to the lightest breath of air."

Valérie Chartrand

**Valérie Chartrand:** "My artistic practice focuses on the loss of biodiversity and reduction in insect populations due to climate change and human interference in insect life cycles. I explore the decline in species primarily through imprint techniques using found insects and non-toxic materials. Research, process and experimentation are at the core of my practice. Medium-specificity is an important consideration as I select materials and techniques based on their characteristics and relation to the explorations I am pursuing."

Benjamin Oswald: Ear Trumpet Headset #3, 2020, porcelain, plastic, pvc, 27" x 30" x 12"

**Benjamin Oswald:** "My work situates itself at the intersections of art, design, and contemporary craft. I am drawn to phenomena that relate to the human condition and take inspiration from the natural and physical sciences to generate new forms and conceptions. While several of my previous works focused on design-based conceptions of motion, rhythm and repetition of form, my current work is an investigation of the phenomena of sound and manifests itself as non-auditory sculpture. This series of six featured works titled *Selective Hearing* is inspired by Victorian ear trumpets, listening horns and human physiology. In these works, I call upon the medium of ceramic porcelain for its sonic qualities, characteristic translucency and fragility to ask broader questions about "Who gets heard?" or "Who is listening?" and touch upon socio-political and environmental themes probing communication sensitivities and inter-relational frustrations."

Suzanne Paleczny: Willow Sculpture (right, front and left side views), 2020, willow cuttings, wool and cotton yarn, 180 cm x 60 cm x 60 cm

**Suzanne Paleczny:** "My practice is propelled by my desire to understand the human condition; to investigate and contemplate our experience as embodied beings in the contemporary world. I experience the world through the lens of my gender—as daughter, mother, sister and now grandmother. Influenced by my current role as caregiver/witness of elderly parents with dementia, I am particularly preoccupied with identity as related to memory, family and loss. I paint in oils and create assemblages using materials that are close at hand, often incorporating textiles and other media that are traditionally associated with women's work. I am interested in the notion of the 'self-made' (how we 'create' ourselves through the labour we do and the possessions we acquire), embodied memory, and the outsourcing of memory to others and/or artifacts. These most recent works were also informed by the scientific description of memory as electro-chemical pathways or traces. While my art is based on practices of looking, I aspire to interrogate the intersection of representation and abstraction, presence and absence, open and closed. I use saturated colours and tend towards a maximalist aesthetic, perhaps because it speaks to me of the vibrancy, chaos and complexity of the human subject."

Jennie Vallis: Tomoe Armours and Kitty Katanas (In Progress), Birch, Resin, Paper, Mica, Found Katanas, Found Obijime (Kimono Ties), Acrylic, Nylon, Thermoplastic, Mixed Media

**Jennie Vallis:** "My work examines my own identity as a *Yonsei* (Fourth-Generation) *Hapa* (mixed-race) Japanese-Canadian woman and leader of female-identifying arts collective Big Kitty. Feminisms, BIPOC intersectionalities and the intergenerational impact of the Japanese-Canadian internment are driving forces in my practice. Upon learning of the archaeological proof of existence of *Onna-Bugeisha* (female samurai), I began to question the dominant narrative of history and research lesser-known stories either overlooked in colonial histories or intentionally erased. Collaboration and mentorship hold a significant role in my practice and this sharing of knowledge is a form of protection, for a modern warrior."

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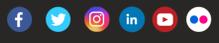
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