

the fifth
parallel
gallery

The Things We Think With

September 6 - 16, 2022



Studies in Aluminum, Studies in Clay (Christine Ramsay, 2021-2022)

Photo courtesy of Ian Campbell

Emily Ashton · Crista Bradley · Stacey Bliss · Ian Campbell · Laurie Clune · Mel Hart
Esther Maeers · Joseph Naytowhow · Christine Ramsay · Kathryn Ricketts · Gale Russell
Gerald Saul · Amy Snider · Trevor Tomesh · Michael Trussler · Marcia Velez Caicedo · Ken Wilson

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MAKERS:

Emily Ashton

Crista Bradley

Stacey Bliss

Ian Campbell

Laurie Clune

Mel Hart

Esther Maeers

Joseph Naytowhow

Christine Ramsay

Kathryn Ricketts

Gale Russell

Gerald Saul

Amy Snider

Trevor Tomesh

Michael Trussler

Marcia Velez Caicedo

Ken Wilson

Several events and talks have been planned that animate the exhibition, and all are warmly invited to attend.

See the schedule inside the gallery or posted on The Fifth Parallel's social media sites and on the University of Regina's events page.

The Things We Think With

The Things We Think With reflects on our collective fascination with objects as important catalysts, tools, containers and provocations in our daily lives, and provides a collaborative space for their celebration.

The work in this exhibition investigates how we story the world according to our particular locations in relation to perceiving the objects around us, and further troubles the notion of objects as static by proposing that they possess the power to provoke the voicing of our individual and collective lived experiences. In March 2020, Kathryn Ricketts invited a collection of scholars and artful makers to explore objects of significance to us, and how and why we ponder them, at the symposium entitled *The Objects We Think With*.¹ Participants from all corners of the University contributed to this playful discussion of meaningful objects, which have been curated and displayed here. The library archivist, the scientist and the mathematician, the musician, the dancer and the registered nurse are only a few of the makers contributing to this eclectic installation of objects we think with.

We clearly understand the potency of the object—otherwise we would not have museums, or shrines, or junk drawers. Hannah Arendt writes of the *permanence* of objects as being critical to our sense of ourselves in relation to the world. She sees objects as important reference points in our ever-shifting lives, sustaining the space-time relations of humans as we come and go. In this endless flow, there is a sense of consequence created as objects gather, anchor and propel us. They are the reference points which outlast us, and thereby become vehicles for shared meaning and understanding: Arendt observes that people, “their ever-changing nature notwithstanding, can retrieve their sameness, that is their identity, by being related to the same chair and the same table.”² Likewise, for Graham Harman, there is an infinite depth in the life of familiar objects, from candles to stars. He urges us to unleash “the music in the heart of things.”³

In this way, objects are a critical piece in our storying ourselves into the world. This vital dynamic between subject, object, story, and audience, captivates us and is what Ricketts describes, after Merleau-Ponty, as *the event of the object*,⁴ in which our immediate encounters with the objects we live with involve a lively reciprocity laced with the tension of communication and comingling.

The Things We Think With has been a catalyst for a community of artful makers to share objects, stories, practices, subjectivities, voices. These subject-object encounters intend to transform the gallery into an intersubjective space for participating in the *eventfulness* of these objects. Beyond our individual lived experiences, we begin to see synergies between our storied objects, which then bring common understandings. By using objects to think with, we fracture their everydayness and disrupt our habitual patterns of perception, creating a community space of collective inquiry, where new meanings can be discovered in a matrix of shared practices and perspectives.

¹ See Sherry Turkle, *Evocative Objects: Things We Think With*, Cambridge, Mass. MIT Press, 2011.

² Hannah Arendt, *The Human Condition*, Chicago, Il., University of Chicago Press, 1958, 137.

³ Graham Harman, *Guerilla Metaphysics: Phenomenology and the Carpentry of Things*, Chicago, Il. Open Court, 2005, 110.

⁴ Maurice Merleau-Ponty, cited in Christopher McCann, *Four Phenomenological Thinkers*, London, UK: Routledge, 1993.

EMILY ASHTON, Faculty of Education



I do not think it too controversial to suggest that the very existence of early childhood education as we know it depends on the child. Taken at a surface level, such a statement probably seems unnecessary, but what I am interested in are the more subtle ways that this human-centric focus lends itself to a particular way of thinking and doing early childhood education. In this view, the materials of early childhood education are typically viewed as tools to help teach children about concepts, not as agentive objects to be valued in and of themselves; for example, dolls for symbolic play, water for conservation, clay for reversibility, paint for representation. Yet, I am interested in how the materials of early childhood pedagogies—in this exhibition, sand—are intimately entangled in relations of care with children in ways that might move us from *learning about* objects to *learning with* the world. These are minor moments of child-object-sand assemblage. How might children—and us—be(come) in relation-with sand?

Emily Ashton is an Assistant Professor of Early Childhood Education in the Faculty of Education at the University of Regina. Her interests include how children resist, refuse, and rebel against the ecologically damaged and colonial worlds they inherit.

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STACEY BLISS, Faculty of Media, Art, and Performance

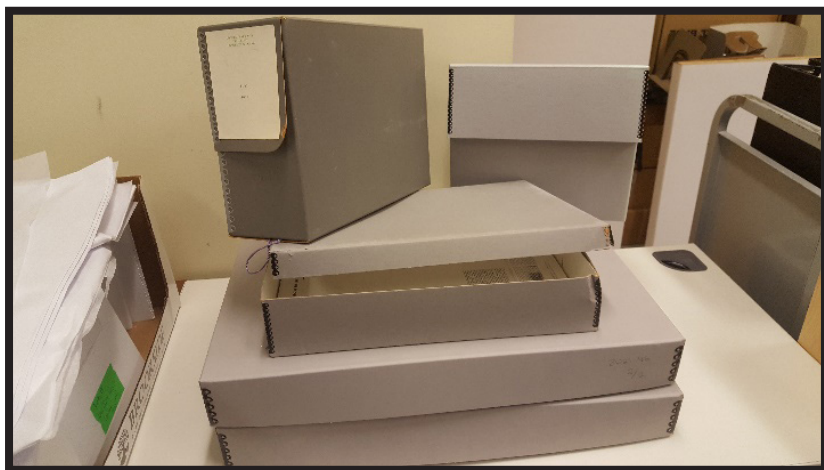


Gongs, bowls, and the Shruti box create a drone sound and unique meditative or relaxing environments. I am interested in how the gong culture (teachers and players) approach their curated sound events. Along with being a scholar and educator, I am a sound artist and improvise with gongs, bowls, and other percussive instruments. The gongs and bowls I work with allow thinking about non-thinking. Sound allows for what gong master Don Conreux calls “conscious dematerialization through sound saturation.” My research has involved working with gong master teachers in order to learn about what a curriculum of holistic sound might entail and to co-create a sonic ethnography of gong teaching. In my next project, I will co-create a mini documentary on sound healers in multiple provinces across Canada. Gong on!

Stacey Bliss is a Sessional Lecturer in the Faculty of Media, Art, and Performance. She teaches courses on topics such as meditation and art as a personal practice as well as social justice and art activism. She also has led Tuesday night meditation for the UR Community since November 2021.

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CRISTA BRADLEY, Archer Library Archivist



As storehouses for ‘one-of-a-kind’ primary sources, archives brim with ‘things to think with.’ As an archivist, I’m excited by the potential of archival collections and services to...

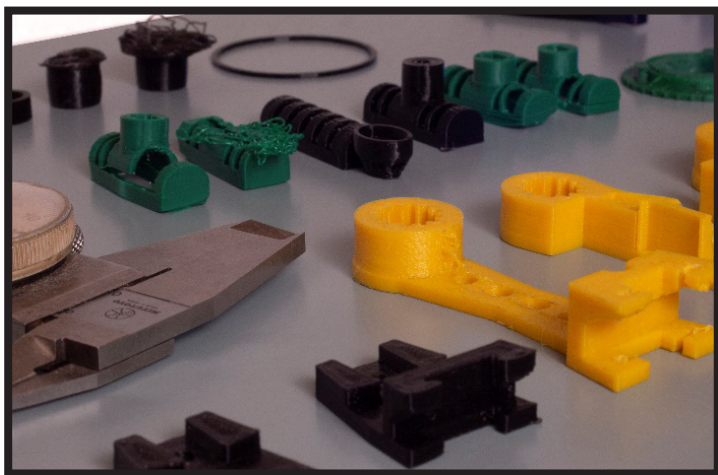
- Foster fresh connections with, and interpretations of, the past;
- Facilitate meaning-making for record creators and users when stories are told, heard and preserved;
- Re-imagine archives, in both traditional and non-traditional forms, so that they are more reflective and respectful of the communities they serve;
- Advance thinking about the complexities of ever-changing recordkeeping realities.

As a part of the team at the University of Regina Archives, I work to grow our collections and research base, guide university recordkeeping practices and further integrate our materials into the teaching life of the institution. Archives engage, challenge and connect us.

An archivist at the Archer Library & Archives, **Crista Bradley** has been working in the profession for over twenty years. With a research program focused on archival outreach, her most recent publication, *If These Places Could Talk*, is a book that brings Saskatchewan archival materials to children.

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IAN CAMPBELL, Faculty of Media, Art, and Performance



I am a media artist who works in film and other digital media. I am also a maker and I use a variety of materials from plastic to wood to electric circuits in my installation works. I also build objects that help me use cameras in more efficient or creative ways. These accessories have often been made possible using 3D printing. I purchased my first 3D printer in 2015. The advent of 3D printing has allowed me to make more refined use of materials (for instance, intricate parts that fit tightly over camera lenses). In order to make use of these materials I use basic measuring tools, such as the calipers pictured. These were handed down to me by my father and I like to think they form a continuous bond between us. The objects you see in this exhibition are based on years of development using the software (3D drafting software), the tools (calipers and 3D printer) and the materials (plastic filament). For this exhibition I want to reveal the processes that bring objects into existence and allow the viewer a peek into the underlying meaning bound in each piece.

Ian Campbell is a filmmaker and multimedia artist who works in video, installation and performance. His short films have been screened across Canada at film and experimental media festivals such as Festival du Nouveau Cinéma (Montreal), WNDX (Winnipeg), Antimatter (Victoria), the 8 fest (Toronto) and others. He is currently based in Saskatchewan where he teaches film at the University of Regina.

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LAURIE CLUNE, Faculty of Nursing



The COVID-19 pandemic caused the author to have flashbacks about the SARS crisis in Ontario Nursing in 2003. Some colleagues died from SARS. To work through this personal crisis Clune began to use fiber to create various viruses that nurses deal with in their everyday work.

As the COVID-19 pandemic began, nurses and other health professionals were celebrated. The media deemed us heroes. A hero is one who is admired or idealized for courage, outstanding achievements and noble qualities.

What nurses have done during the pandemic is not heroic. We have done our jobs. We work with multiple viruses, bacteria and germs each day. We use our scientific knowledge obtained during our nursing degrees to navigate a broken health care system lacking proper human and physical resources.

Laurie Clune is an Associate Professor in the Faculty of Nursing at the University of Regina. Her research focuses on nurses' work in academic and community practice settings.

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MEL HART, Faculty of Science



The coyote here represents the first in a line of independent research projects where students work with a donated deceased animal to clean the bones, rearticulate the skeleton, and research the animal. Along the way, details of the animal's life become known—story fragments appear in the flesh, teeth, and bones. By the end of the project, students share as much of the story as they have been able to piece together, including the name they feel fits the animal, thus bringing new life and a new level of respect to one that has passed, often under traumatic circumstances. This piece was selected because it was the first of these projects to be completed. More projects have since been done, with the end presentation adding different elements—for example, pieces of the animal's natural environment, and variation in poses (sitting, howling, crawling, etc.). Each student brings their own vision to the work, and connects with the animal with which they work in different ways. The finished pieces become opportunities for learning for other students, as they see the bone structure, damage, and wear, and tear of the animal's story when they work with the preparations in other labs.

Mel Hart is a Biology Laboratory Instructor in the Faculty of Science. She feels privileged to work with deceased animals to uncover and share their stories, and give them a new life. Conservation officers, farmers, and trappers donate animals; she learns alongside students as they clear the bones and reassemble the skeleton.

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ESTHER MAEERS, Faculty of Education



I think most of us have childhood memories that involve a backpack, a container for school objects, sleepover essentials, or holiday clothes and toys. At what point does a backpack become a story bag, the objects inside transforming into things that hold special meaning, giving a glimpse into experience? My interest in backpacks and their contents as things with agency—as more than mere inanimate objects but as storytellers—began once I started to really delve into my journey as a teenage mother. Through the work of coming to terms with who I was and who I am, I began to see some important pieces that were missed, that are missed: the parent knowledge and family stories contained in a child's school backpack. Along with parent knowledge, backpacks and their contents also hold many stories and much meaning for children. Beginning my work with backpacks by speaking with children was an exciting starting place and an interesting pilot study. I approached the families of six children in the summer of 2021 just after school had gotten out, just after a year of turmoil and pandemic. I was interested in hearing the meaning that these six children placed on their backpacks and the objects carried within them.

Esther Maeers is a PhD student, Sessional Lecturer and Research Assistant in the Faculty of Education at the University of Regina. Her research interests are focused on early childhood education, parent engagement, teenage parents and object stories. Prior to beginning her doctoral studies, she was a Prekindergarten teacher for over 12 years.

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JOSEPH NAYTOWHOW, Faculty of Education



I am exhibiting some of the objects that I use in traditional and spiritual practice that have and continue to sustain me over time. Some of these objects are gifted to me from friends and institutions and others are found from the land and even garage sales.

LⁿPⁿqΔ-Δ-ⁿ [maskihkiwiat] - medicine bag. A bundle that contains sacred power objects.

Joseph Naytowhow is a gifted Plains/Woodland Cree (nehiyaw) singer/songwriter, storyteller, and voice, stage and film actor from the Sturgeon Lake First Nation Band in Saskatchewan. As a child, Joseph was influenced by his grandfather's traditional and ceremonial chants as well as the sounds of the fiddle and guitar. Today he is renowned for his unique style of Cree/English storytelling, combined with original contemporary music and traditional First Nations drum and rattle songs. Joseph is an Emerging Elder and Knowledge Keeper in the Faculty of Education.

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Studies in Aluminum, Studies in Clay is a series of ceramic sculptures which reproduce, in clay, Italy's famed aluminum Bialetti coffee pot. My artistic process is inspired by the work of chemist and prize-winning writer Primo Levi and his memoir of his family's experience in the Holocaust, a tale told through the elements. In *The Periodic Table*, he talks about the profundity of the carbon atom as the key particle in the hundred-million-year chain of humanity's "long cosmic history." For me, carbon and aluminum serve as elemental launching points for representing Levi's idea of matter in infinite transformation. In roughly adapting the stylishly octagonal Art Deco form of the Bialetti in Alberta Plainsman stoneware clay, I am juxtaposing the disparate origins, contexts and traditions of the material object. In firing the work in the extreme heat of the wood-fired soda kiln, a form of alchemy takes place. Carbon from the burning wood, falling ash, darting flame and strategically timed and thrown salt create unpredictable aesthetic effects in which, as Mark Hewitt observes, the pots become "dusted by chance and painted by atmospheric turbulence." In the science, art and alchemy of the wood-fired soda kiln, Levi's beloved chain of carbon atoms in cosmic motion may blaze an arresting aesthetic trail, a nice bit of visual poetry, on my studies in clay; or it may burn and crumble them to dust, beyond all recognition.

Christine Ramsay is a Professor of Film Studies and Creative Technologies at the University of Regina. Her research includes Canadian and Saskatchewan cinemas, curating expanded cinema, the culture of small cities, and philosophies of identity, as well as an interest in painting, drawing and ceramics. She is the President of the Art Gallery of Regina, and serves on the editorial boards of *Topia: Canadian Journal of Cultural Studies* and *Imaginations: Journal of Cross-Cultural Image Studies*.

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KATHRYN RICKETTS, Faculty of Education

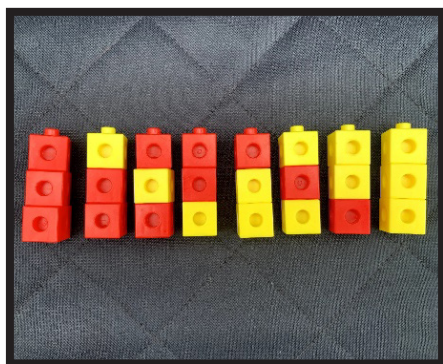


It is through stories that we come to understand our curriculum of the world. My work with objects evidences my curiosity with stories and place and the ways in which we intervene, interject and integrate with the natural environment through de-habituated perceptions of image, language and the body. When we work from a conglomerate of objects, as opposed to just one, we begin to understand how our stories intertwine with others and how this reminds us of our connected humanity. To this end, I have been fascinated by the wall of Value Village where conglomerates of second-hand objects hang in plastic bags for the standard price of \$2.99. I collect these bags that are ‘bulging’ with compelling possible narratives. This exhibition illuminates the saliency of objects as triggers for storytelling. It is also a display of artifacts as emblems of lives lived, and lives that refuse to be seen in isolation from each other. This part of the exhibition will display some of the ‘best’ bags retrieved from Value Village, which then serve as placeholders for gallery viewers to make a personalized junk bag as an emblem of their own personal narrative.

Kathryn Ricketts is an Associate Professor in Arts Education and the Director of Professional Development and Field Experience at the University of Regina. Her work is focused on developing ‘voice’ through performance and exhibitions using artifacts and personal narratives. She runs The Listening Lab, a visual and performing arts ‘incubator,’ and presents exhibitions and performances in her loft.

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GALE RUSSELL, Faculty of Education



In mathematics education the term “manipulatives” is used for any object (concrete, visual, or virtual) that is used to create and explore mathematical ideas. Manipulatives are chosen or created by a person engaging in solving a mathematical topic and allow the person to externalize their internal thinking. The type of manipulative chosen and how it is used can reveal different characteristics and properties of the topic being considered. Consequently, the use of multiple manipulatives along with interaction with others also exploring the topic, allows for the development of a more expansive and rich understanding of the topic.

Highlighted in this exhibition is one of the manipulatives that I, along with my research participants, access frequently: Cube-a-Links®. The popularity of this manipulative results from its flexibility: multiple colours allow for representation of different attributes; the ease of separating or connecting the individual cubes; and the potential for 1D interpretations, and 2D and 3D representations. Over the past 10 years, using these manipulatives has uniquely transformed participants’ and my understandings of (as a sample list): addition, multiplication, statistics, polynomial expansion, probabilities, and calculus. How the manipulative is used, including vertical or horizontal orientations, can also be revealing of the users’ internal thinking.

Gale Russell is an Associate Professor of Mathematics Education in the Faculty of Education at the University of Regina. Her research focuses on expanding and working towards decolonizing mathematics, particularly the teaching, learning, representing, and understanding of it. The use of concrete and visual objects is embedded within this scholarship.

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GERALD SAUL, Faculty of Media, Art, and Performance



I work with cameras every day. Like any “everyday” object, I began to take them for granted. In 2018, when I took a painting class in my spare time to relax, I sought out something that I cared enough about to commit to canvas (or at least wood), and noticed how many cameras I had at my disposal. I keep them on shelves, in boxes, on desks, and everywhere one might store items of value or comfort. Looking *at* the camera instead of *through* the camera began a new path of discovery for me. The way every camera is designed takes the user into account, as can be seen in the surface wear that the operators put onto these well-loved objects. I paint from the real objects only, so that I can see the imperfections directly and I can handle the camera as it is meant to be handled. As my collection of images increased, my project led me to borrow hundreds of cameras, allowing me to re-connect with many old friends and colleagues as well as meet many new people. Each painting is 9x12 inches on Masonite. My goal is to complete 500 of these paintings by 2023.

Gerald Saul is a Professor in the Faculty of MAP where he has taught in the Department of Film since 1999. He is an active filmmaker and curator in the Regina community, a Saskatchewan Filmpool member since 1984, and a director of the multi-disciplinary Caligari Project in 2016.

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AMY SNIDER, Faculty of Media, Art, and Performance

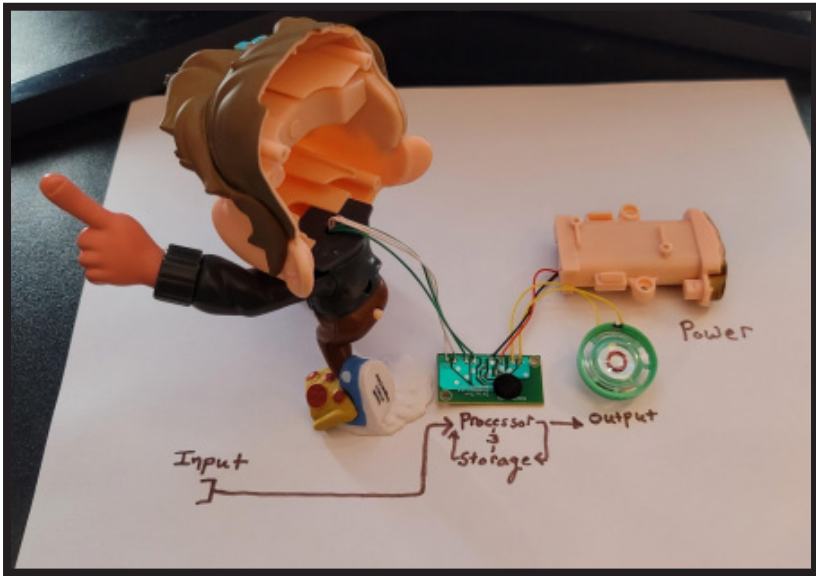


As a ceramic artist and someone who is deeply concerned about the environment, I take common household cups, bowls, and plates, and remake them as sculptures that embody climate change. While taking Sherry Farrell Racette's Indigenous Land Art course (for my MFA) in June 2021, I invited my professor and classmates to each construct a plate out of nothing but dust from clay I dug up in Regina. We installed these pieces on a bare spot of ground on campus and left them to erode and blow away. Through this project, I use an everyday object to think about environmental crisis and our relationship with the land. Enduring drought is likely to be one of worst consequences of climate change we will face here, and this will make it very difficult for us to feed ourselves. I imagine a correlation between the state of our ecosystems and the durability of our objects, such as plates. In that imagined space, the plates in *Dust* are the final pieces of ceramics; that they do not survive is their form and content, their fate suggesting our own.

Amy Snider is an MFA candidate in MAP at the University of Regina, Canada. Her conceptual sculptures and installations represent the effects of climate change. Current work includes a series of ephemeral cups, bowls, and plates that represent melting glaciers and drought as they dissolve, crumble, and blow away.

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TREVOR M. TOMESH, Faculty of Science



Internal components of electronic artifacts are rarely made transparent to their users. A *tear-down* is a common exercise amongst electronic hobbyists that shows the internal components of a system. By revealing and identifying these components, we can better think of systems as an amalgamation of individual parts that constitute a whole—and even consider ways of extending our concept of a system beyond the boundaries of their plastic husks. The teardown featured is a simple example of a single input-single output system. The user pulls the linear actuator (the finger) and a signal is received by the processor. The processor then calls an audio recording from a read-only-memory bank and the resulting output is played through a speaker. This is an example of a standard input-processing-storage-output system as defined by computing pioneer John von Neumann, which is central to my research in General Systems Theory.

Trevor M. Tomesh is a Sessional Lecturer in the Department of Computer Science at the University of Regina. His research interests include General Systems Theory, Complex Systems and Chaos Theory, DIY Computing Hardware and Embedded Computing, Unconventional Computing, Modeling and Simulation, and the Ethics of Technology.

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MICHAEL TRUSSLER, Faculty of Arts



I use binoculars primarily for bird-watching, which means that they give me access to the beauty of the natural world. As important, they offer the immediate, addictive joy of seeing something that's normally inaccessible, but they retain nothing of what I've seen. By placing humans concretely within ongoing time as we observe what's happening, binoculars don't allow for the creation (and collection) of images; neither can we gain possession over what's far away. If binoculars allow the non-human world to move toward us, they also don't insert the self into the world the way a camera does (however negligibly in street photography or overtly with a Selfie). Binoculars expose us to the world's manifold temporal discontinuities. It's as though we're encompassed within time and yet simultaneously excluded from it. By connecting us to creatures living differently from us, and giving us access to the compressed sinuosity of colour as an event, binoculars show me a mode of being that, resisting codification, destabilizes vision and thought. The non-human looks back at us. Binoculars thus intimate an ontology that's volatile, making us aware of what passes between ecological and aesthetic experience, something rogue, something dynamic that can be sensed, but not conceptualized.

Michael Trussler teaches English in Arts. His work has been published in Canada and abroad. *Encounters*, a collection of short fiction, won the Saskatchewan Book of the Year Award (2006). He has three upcoming books: *Rare Sighting of a Guillotine on the Savannah*, *The Sunday Book*, and *The History Forest*.

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MARIA I VELEZ, Faculty of Science



This is a trilobite, a TRI-LOBE animal, long gone from Earth. They dominated the oceans from 545 to 240 million years ago and inhabited shallow coasts to abyssal depths, while recent investigations indicate that they incurred into very shallow brackish environments, such as bays and estuaries. They were everywhere! They laid eggs, they shed, they rolled up to protect their soft organs against predators, they fed on organic matter attached to grains in the bottom of the ocean, they swam in cohorts. They left behind shed shells, traces on the sand, and many other fossils of their behavior. Trilobites make me think about ancient worlds, and about tectonic forces that open and close oceans, that bring continents together. They make me think of a silent Earth.

Maria I Velez is a Geologist in the Department of Geology at the University of Regina who specializes in the reconstruction of ancient environments using fossils and sediments.

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Colonizing Basket 1 is made of invasive species, brought from Europe and elsewhere by settlers, which displace indigenous plant species, not unlike the way that settlers have displaced Indigenous Peoples. The basket is unfinished, since according to anthropologist Patrick Wolfe, settler colonialism is a structure, not an event, and its processes still continue long after the first contact between Europeans and Indigenous peoples living on Turtle Island occurred more than 500 years ago. I could continue adding to the walls of the basket, building them higher and higher, the way that the structure of settler colonialism continues, despite Indigenous resistance and resurgence. What looks like a simple object—a roughly made grass basket—is thus a response to the ongoing injustices of settler colonialism, which I am unavoidably implicated in, since I am a settler and live on Indigenous land myself.

Ken Wilson teaches in the Department of English, Faculty of Arts, and is a graduate of the PhD in Media and Artistic Research in the Faculty of Media, Art, and Performance. He has published recently in *The International Journal of Religious Tourism and Pilgrimage*, *Studies in Canadian Literature*, and *Performance Matters*.

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The Things We Think With - The Fifth Parallel Gallery Regina, Saskatchewan, Canada | September 6-16th 2022

This exhibition explores the celebration of the object as an important catalyst, tool, container and provocation in our daily lives. We are from all corners of the University, contributing to this playful display of the things that hold meaning for us. The library archivist, the scientist and the mathematician, the musician, the dancer and the registered nurse are only a few of the makers participating in this eclectic show and tell.

The Things We Think With - Extended Gallery Events

The Skeleton Tour with Mel Hart

September 8, 1:00-1:30PM (LB 419)

Step into a biology lab to see where students work with animals to create skeletal preparations for teaching and learning. A number of student projects will be on display. Please be warned that skeletons and discussions of dead animals will happen; this tour may not be ideal for everyone.

Maximum 10 People

Behind-the-Scenes with Crista Bradley

September 9, 2:00 PM

(meet at Archives Reference Desk, Archer Library, Room 107.4)

September 14, 9:30 AM

(meet at Archives Reference Desk, Archer Library, Room 107.4)

Discover the fascinating collection of the University Archives.

Junk Bags Bulging with Stories with Kathryn Ricketts

September 12, 2:00 PM (5th Parallel Gallery)

September 16, 10:00 AM (5th Parallel Gallery)

Drawing from a box of objects, we will create bags of junk (carefully chosen) that tell a personal or fictional story.

