



RESEARCH IN VIEW

2023

MSVU Library & Archives

Organised by Tanja Harrison and Lindsey MacCallum



Introduction

The Research in View exhibition showcases scholarship at Mount Saint Vincent University through arts-informed representations of research from across disciplines. Dissemination of academic research in academia normally involves the written word via publication in books and/or journal articles. Most of the researchers taking part in the exhibition have created their own submissions using a variety of mediums such as mixed media, performance, painting, photography, textiles, sculpture, and video compilation to explore alternative forms of scholarly communication to connect audiences with their research.

Many of the works in the exhibition have a publication to match, and wherever possible a QR code is available linking to more information. RiV encourages intentional, arts-informed practices in research to enrich scholarship, encourage knowledge sharing, and enhance public engagement in academia through the creative process. Delayed for over two years due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the organizers thank the participants of RiV for their perseverance and dedication in remaining a part of the originally envisioned exhibition.

Tianyuan Yu, Department of Business and Tourism

Eating as a mindful Zen practice

Video, 30 minutes
2019

Discover Tianyuan Yu's research



The 30-minute video displays the whole process of a typical formal breakfast taking place at Dai Bosatsu Zendo, an American Zen Buddhist monastery, during a 7-day intensive meditation in June 2019.



The researcher (the female wearing a white robe in the video) was doing a participant observational field study at the monastery and joined the everyday meals with the meditation group. The recorded dining etiquettes, originated from ancient Japanese Zen Buddhist traditions, demonstrate collective mindfulness through coordinated movements and verbal/nonverbal expressions of the group members.

Researchers have suggested that management educators and practitioners can learn from Zen Buddhist practices which enhance one's emotional intelligence, spiritual well-being, creative thinking, and intuitive decision making in the workplaces. In modern American Zen centers, Zen training includes a combination of verbal (e.g., public lecture, private interview, koan study, chanting, etc.) and nonverbal practices (e.g., meditation, physical work, etc.). The nonverbal aspects, in line with feminist pedagogy, emphasize embodied experience, the aesthetic, spiritual aspect of learning, and the intuitive mode of thinking. These practices can be complementary to modern business school curricula which overly rely on verbal, logical, and analytical ways of teaching and learning. Recently, Zen meditation techniques have been used in some Western mainstream management education programs to enhance students' intuitive awareness. Indeed, Zen can be practiced not only when sitting, bowing, or prostrating, but also when cooking, eating, cleaning, walking, speaking, and mindfully living every moment.

Phillip Joy, Department of Applied Human Nutrition

Through the Looking Glass

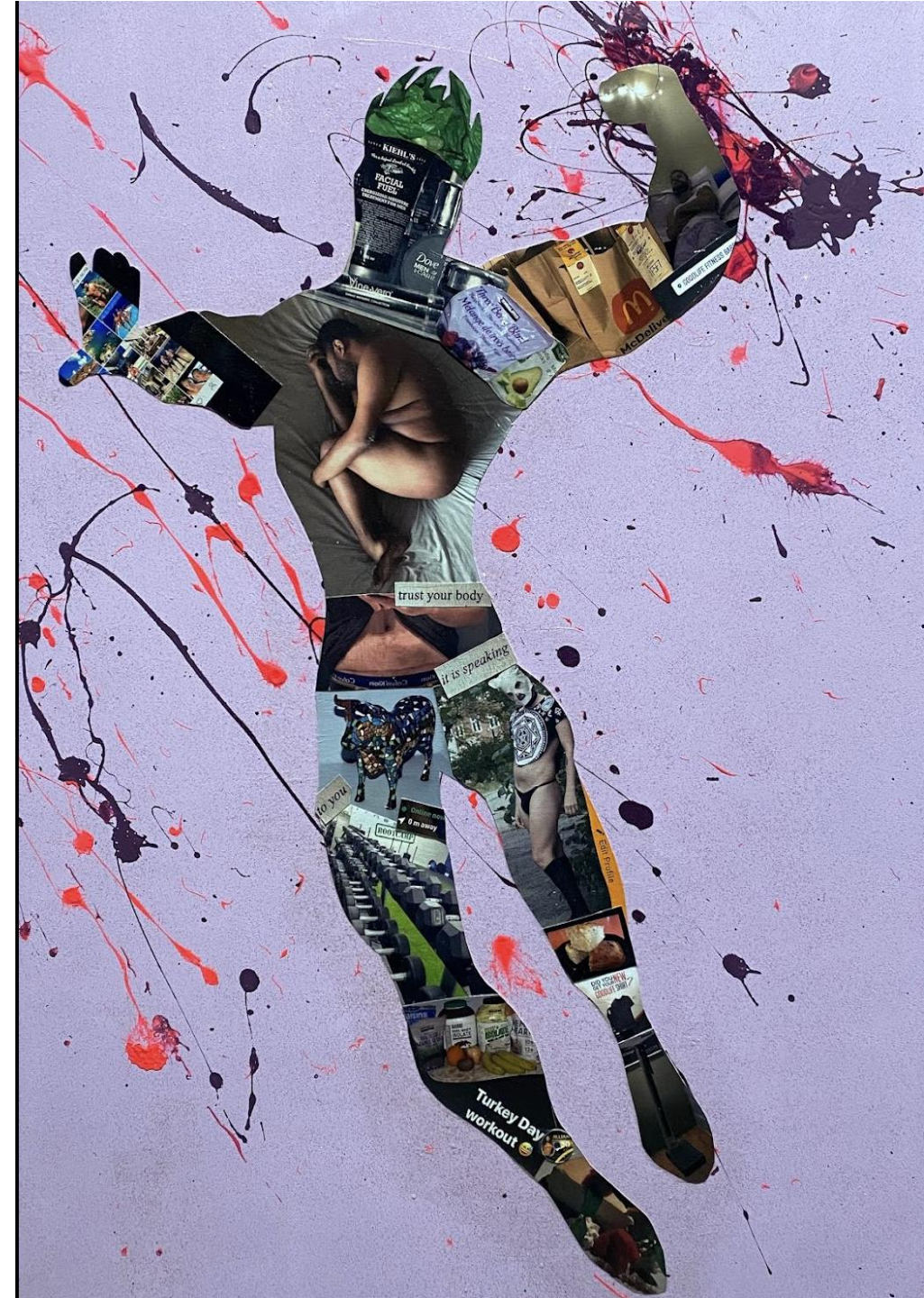
Mixed media

Discover Phillip Joy's research



My research explores body image and nutritional practices of gay men. The image we have of our bodies is an integral part of our health. Body dissatisfaction has been previously related to negative health outcomes and poor mental health for many gay men. Through a Foucauldian conceptual framework and employing an arts-based qualitative methodology that weaves together components of poststructuralism and queer theory, this research examines how gay men navigate the tensions to their health and well-being from competing discourses of gender, sexuality, beauty, health, and fat.

Using photovoice, nine self-identifying gay men in Nova Scotia explored their beliefs, values, and practices about food and their bodies. Discourse analysis of their interviews revealed that participants viewed their bodies as works of art that are shaped through many facets of gay culture, including dominant beauty ideals, social media, and hegemonic forms of masculinities. Tensions that influence their health and well-being were often experienced by participants when they felt their bodies were not aligned with societal body ideals and discourses. The findings of this study reveal that for many participants recognizing and challenging body ideals, connecting with other gay men, and compassion towards oneself and others can often help ease their tensions and positively influence their lives.





Reina Green, Department of English

Malvolia's Corset

Elizabethan-style corset, textile

Discover Reina Green's research



This research project focuses on the performance history of Malvolio, the Puritanical household steward in Shakespeare's *Twelfth Night*. In love with his mistress Olivia, he is tricked into believing his love is returned and is tormented and humiliated as a result. In Shakespeare's time, Malvolio's punishment would have been considered appropriate for a killjoy. However, more recently—since the early 1800s—there has been increasing emphasis on Malvolio as a tragic figure. This was particularly evident in the 2017 National Theatre production starring Tamsin Greig as a female Malvolia, making the steward's love for her mistress doubly transgressive, crossing class and heteronormative boundaries.

Malvolio is typically presented as wearing dark conservative clothing until he thinks Olivia loves him, when he appears in cross-gartered yellow stockings. Greig's Malvolia followed this tradition, but in addition to the yellow stockings, she wore a yellow bustier—a type of corset.

Stephanie Mason, Faculty of Education

*WHAT MATTERS: Material Object Interactions for Adults
Informal Learning in Public Places*

Installation, wooden blocks

Discover Stephanie Mason's research



My doctoral research used an arts-informed lens to explore material objects affecting adults' informal learning in public places. I asked participant-visitors to recall their interactions with material objects at the Halifax Central Library, Common Roots Urban Farm, Shubie Park, and Nocturne (Art at Night). During interviews, I found that, as research suggests, participants prefer to speak about people rather than describe objects.

Since “the language of the academy and all that it symbolized fell short in its ability to capture and communicate the complexity of human experience”, I considered other ways to realize material objects for informal learning.

Using multicoloured crayons, markers, and pens, participants were invited to draw material objects they felt were memorably related to informal learning in these public places.





I invite you to rearrange this material alphabet to show how informal learning 'matters' to you.

I asked participants to draw, not label, these objects, only representing them in line and form and colour. A total of 65 individual drawings were produced, in which I saw expressive possibilities showing the “shared energies that move us when we are in co-creative relationships with the nonhuman presences in the world.”³

Images were photographed individually and then digitally saved as single monochromatic images to heighten both differences and similarities in the pressure and sweep of strokes, an idiolect of iconography.

The images are hard to identify, yet tempt us to do so: there is more to the shape and curve of marks than can be uttered. “*We know more than we can tell*”⁴ is an oft-repeated hardship of learning, but, given that research indicates speaking tells only part of the story, the materiality of these images fills in the spaces between words. Gathered together, the images look like an alphabet—our first building blocks of language—depicting how, in our production of knowledge, we try to recreate the world. With these drawings, singly and collectively, we began to understand the endless combinations through which adults’ informal learning is realized.

[M]atter and meaning are...inextricably fused together, and no event, /no matter/ how energetic, can tear them asunder.⁵

Atlantis: Critical Studies in Gender, Culture & Social Justice / Études critiques sur le genre, la culture

Prints of four publication covers

Top left: 'Stuffed Sculptures, 1972-1982' by Paige Prichard Kennedy

Bottom left: 'B(e)aring' by Dianne Pearce (graphite, turpentine on matte film, collaged with acetate, beeswax)

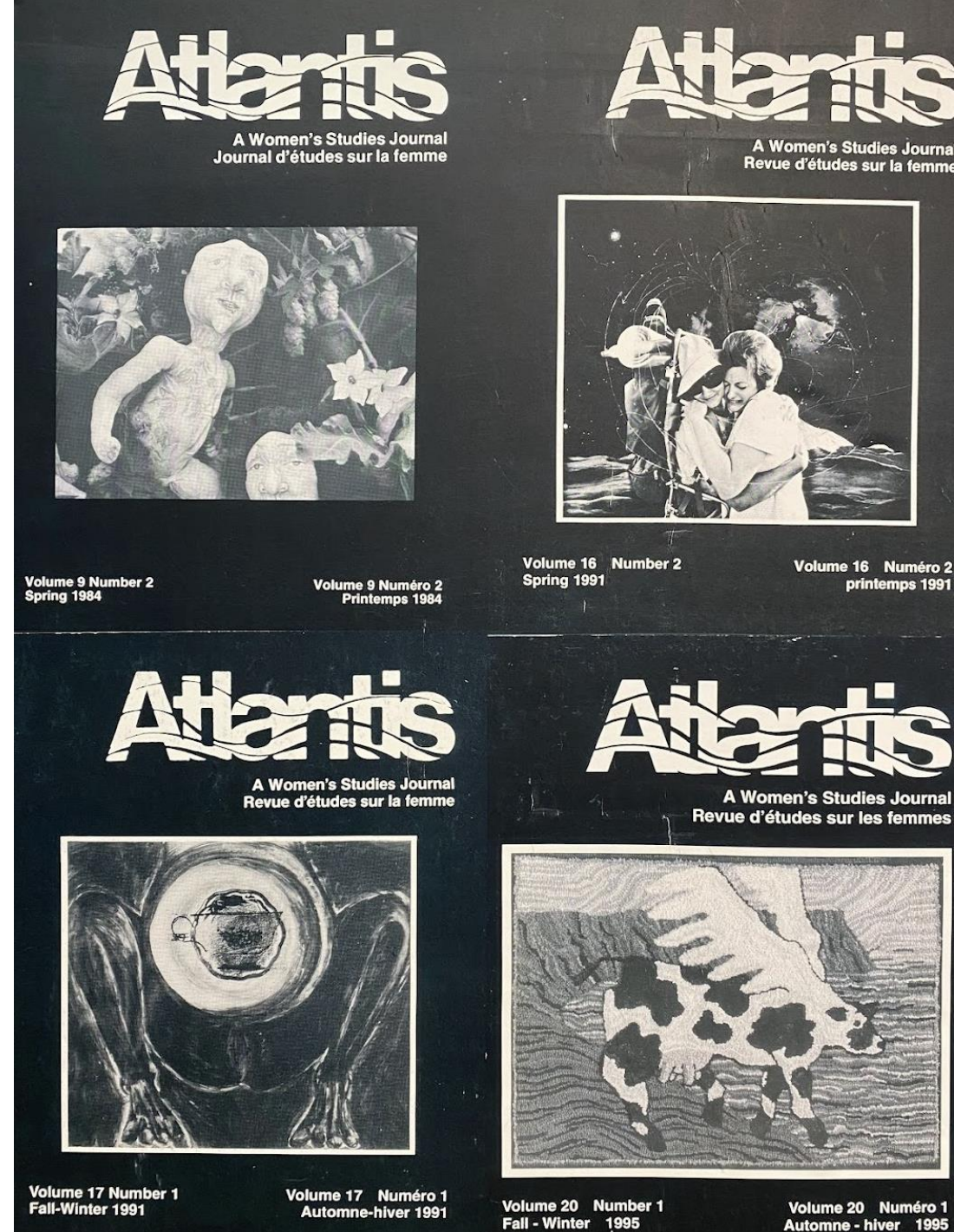
Top right: 'Untitled' by Roxanne Smith (photography, mixed media)

Bottom right: "Blomidon Cow" by Nancy Edell (yarn, burlap)

Discover Atlantis



Atlantis: Critical Studies in Gender, Culture & Social Justice / Études critiques sur le genre, la culture, et la justice sociale was established in 1975 at Acadia University in Wolfville, Nova Scotia. In 1980, the journal became a publication of Mount Saint Vincent University. The journal has been published continuously for 45 years, first in print and, since 2011, as a digital and fully open access publication. As a scholarly research journal, Atlantis is devoted to critical work in a variety of formats that reflects current scholarship and approaches in the discipline of Women's and Gender Studies (WGS). It incorporates a diversity of feminist, anti-racist and critical identity, intersectional, transnational, and cultural studies approaches to a wide range of contemporary issues, topics, and knowledges. Atlantis is dedicated to the ongoing growth of the WGS field as well as critical reflections on the field itself.





Karen MacFarlane, Department of English

Island of the Dolls

Photographs, various sizes



Discover Karen MacFarlane's research

Over and over again, when people are trying to explain away their fear of the doll, they say that it is “just a bit of plastic”, “just a thing of porcelain.” Insisting that the doll is just a “thing” is a useful way into thinking about how dolls can be thought of as part of a powerful narrative about our relation to objects. Through a series of photographs that I took during a visit to the Island of the Dolls in the Xochimico canals in Mexico City, I argue here that dolls never satisfactorily shift from object to thing, even when they are most removed from their proper context. My point is that it is this incomplete transition that makes dolls — and these dolls in particular—so disturbing. Dolls tap into layers of equally insubstantial, unstable definitions of cuteness, of thingness, of association and of clear and stable meaning. Dolls tap into layers of equally insubstantial, unstable definitions of cuteness, of thingness, of association and of clear and stable meaning. They participate simultaneously in a series of “iconic signs” that solidify their position as objects: signs like vulnerability, innocence, future maternity, and most significantly, and most iconically, childhood and its connection with the cute.

The Cute is a look with a very definite style that can be easily identified through a very distinct set of characteristics that can be easily replicated in inanimate objects and demand a predictable emotional response from anyone who encounters them.

When these characteristics appear in a doll, they trigger the same physiological responses that a human infant would cause. The doll, then, even though it is clearly a “piece of plastic” is “sending out social signals” (McAndrew) and these signals demand a response from the human viewer. But with the doll, the chain of call and response ends with the demand. The doll’s immobility and silence, its inability to do more than set the chain of meaning in motion triggers “discomfort, unease, disgust and terror.” In this sense, the doll always inhabits a place of uncertainty: disturbing but not threatening. Creepy.

This is perhaps best explored through an examination of the dolls on the Island of the dolls. The Island is a space where these dolls perform that creepy inadequacy to its fullest extent. The dolls on the Island are, in the terms of Thing Theory, “not in common use”. Hanging in trees and attached to the walls of buildings, they should be things. But they are not. Because the doll is, ultimately, unsuccessful as a thing.

The doll defies any attempts to shift from object to thing by embodying the persistence, the insistence, of the cute. In this photo essay, I trace the trajectories of attraction, abjection, neglect, decay, and naturalization that characterizes this assembly of dolls.

Tamara Franz-Ondendaal, Department of Biology
Larval seahorse stained

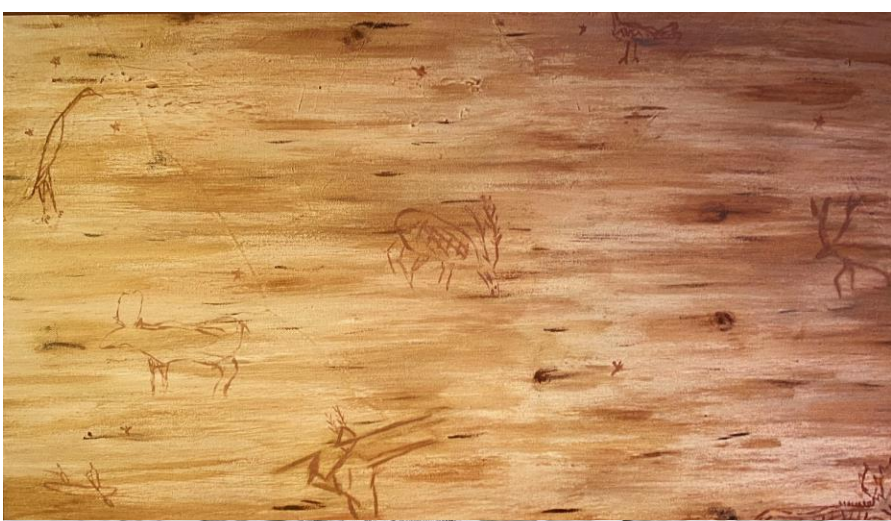
Photograph, 8.5x 11"

Discover Tamara Franz-Ondendaal's research



This larval seahorse is about 9 mm in length and about 24 days old. The specimen has been cleared and stained to reveal the bones (in red) and the cartilages (in blue). The bone elements in the jaws and neck are visible as well as the start of ossification (bone development) of the skull. The cartilage elements within the eyeball and gills are visible. This image was part of a comparative study in collaboration with the University of Ghent in Belgium, which compared skeletal development of a dwarf seahorse to a non-dwarf form of related species.





Holly Meuse

The Role of Mi'kmaw Art and Lifelong Learning in Sustaining Mi'kmaq Culture

Video, photographs, textual quotes
Two 20" x 30" canvasses
2019

Discover Holly Meuse's research



I remember living in a house with no running water, no electricity and only a wood stove in the kitchen. In late summer, just before I started school, we moved into a new home. In the new home, my father provided for his family by relying on his artist talents.

In my thesis, I discuss how artistic talents are innate for the Mi'kmaq but were suppressed or lost due to the injustices placed upon our people through the ethnocentric lens of the newcomer's government. However, these artist talents are being regained. My study demonstrates how the artistic knowledge and today's art reflect our ancestors, current issues, and self-reflection from a Mi'kmaw perspective.

Coming from an arts-based approach with a critical theoretical perspective, I explain how art is used as a strength for our people. It is an aspect of maintaining our culture. It has provided a livelihood since time immemorial, and it provides an underlying self-therapy towards addressing the injustices that had and continues to be placed upon our people. I argue that Mi'kmaq arts-based perspectives are needed in the lifelong learning for connecting our cultural past to enrich our present and future. I used qualitative methods, including one-to-one interviews, and a questionnaire.

Twenty-seven Mi'kmaw participants from all thirteen Mi'kmaw communities in Nova Scotia were involved in my study. I audio and video recorded some of my interviews with verbal and signed consent from my participants. The video compilation is part of my thesis and can be found at Mount Saint Vincent University Library, at Cape Breton University Unama'ki College, and in all of the thirteen Mi'kmaw communities in Nova Scotia.

Ardra Cole, Shirley Hardin, Margie Knickle, Beth McAra, Theresa Myra, Faculty of Education
Grow Old Along with Me: The Meaning of Dogs in Seniors' Lives

Photograph, 2018

Discover Ardra Cole's research



“My dog is my best friend.” “I don’t know what I would ever do without her.” “He gives me reason to get up and out every day.” “She is my constant companion.” These are statements often made by older adults who live at home with a canine companion. Canine companionship is important for people of all ages; for senior people, dogs take on a particular significance. Beyond the many positive physical, emotional, and social benefits dogs provide older adults, is the bond that exists between senior people and their dogs. This photograph is about that relationship.

As researchers, we set out to understand the meaning and significance older adults attach to their relationship with their dogs. What does that relationship look like? How does it help to define seniors’ lives? What is it about that relationship that communities need to pay attention to in order to foster positive aging? Over the course of a year, we spent time with 14 older adults and their dogs in four Nova Scotia communities. We observed their companionship at home, at work, on walks, and during organized activities. We listened carefully and took photographs to capture the nature and meaning of those relationships.

Four main themes emerged from the research: ‘Loving gaze’ witnesses the strength of attachment; ‘active in the out of doors’ acknowledges the joy that comes with the responsibility of care; ‘being with’ in moments of leisure and work is a reminder of the value of a steadfast friendship; and, the many acts of ‘tending’ to and receiving loving care depict the unconditional love that defines these special relationships.



As our population ages, it is everyone’s responsibility to better support the senior members of our communities. Acknowledging and fostering the vital role that dogs play in the health and well-being of seniors is an important part of that consideration.

Kenya Thompson (she/her)

Prefigurative Care: Everydayness and Activism in Nova Scotia's Childcare Deserts

Photograph, 2022

Conducted in partial completion of a MA in Political Economy at Carleton University's Institute of Political Economy, this project investigates care as an inherently political act, by exploring the experiences of mothers and caregivers in Nova Scotia's so-called 'childcare deserts', focusing on how they navigate childcare, and care for themselves and their families, when formal childcare options (and other supports for families) are unavailable.

I worked alongside participants over a period of two weeks, as they documented moments of caregiving in their everyday lives. In follow-up interviews, they expounded upon their entries, providing additional context and insight. Considering these experiences of care, as they captured them, reveals the dynamic, innovative solutions caregivers employ to navigate childcare, domestic labour, and other affective care, while they work to make ends meet in the face of various social and economic realities.

As the Canadian government develops its national childcare strategy, it is critical that existing strategies used by mothers and caregivers to meet their care needs are taken into account. Understanding these efforts as prefigurative activism—as enacting the future childcare and social policy they want to see, now—sheds light on the strategies that could be publicly supported to create an inclusive, accessible social policy framework that supports caregivers, families, and communities in a sustainable, holistic way, in Nova Scotia and across Turtle Island.





Ashwani Kumar, Faculty of Education Raag Yaman Kalyan

Video, 22 minutes 44 seconds
2022

An Indian classical music performance in raag (melodic structure) Yaman Kalyan by Ashwani Kumar (Co-composer, vocalist, and harmonium player), accompanied by Nayha Acharya on violin and Iknoor Singh on tabla.

Video Production: Iain MacLeod (MSVU PhD Student)
Audio Support: MSVU IT&S
Space Preparation and arrangement: MSVU Art Gallery



Watch the full performance

Discover Ashwani Kumar's research



My scholarly work exploring the interconnections of meditative inquiry and education and my pursuit of Indian Classical Music (ICM) have led me to develop a new program of research focused on understanding how ICM – one of the oldest and most complex forms of music – can inform curriculum theory and pedagogic practice. The theory and pedagogy of teaching and learning ICM are deeply interconnected with my meditative inquiry approach to understanding curriculum, teaching, and learning.

The main objective of my current research project is to answer the following question: In what ways can the philosophical, spiritual, cultural, sociological, and pedagogical foundations of ICM as an art form and education system inform culturally relevant and responsive curriculum theory and pedagogic practice in Canada and internationally?

To answer this question, I am utilizing three different, yet complementary, theoretical and methodological approaches, namely, autobiography, a/r/tography, and meditative inquiry. My explorations take place on three levels: theoretically, creatively, and experientially. Part of the creative component is to learn, compose, and share ICM in presentations and workshops, while part of the experiential component is to reflect on this process. In addition to the scholarly venues, knowledge mobilization will also take place through performances, workshops, and presentations.

In this way, when I play ICM, as you see me doing here in this video of my performance in the Art Gallery, I am simultaneously conducting research, creatively and experientially, and also undertaking knowledge dissemination and mobilization. I hope you enjoy this musical offering.

Daphne Lordly, Department of Applied Human Nutrition

Research Team: Daphne Lordly, Jennifer Brady, Kathryn Fraser

The Making of Sense and Self: Understandings of Compassion, Creativity and Coherence

Fibre on foam core, 19.75" x 29 7/8"
2019

Discover Daphne Lordly's research



The research team explored the experiences and learnings of nutrition students following a 3-week intensive summer course designed to enhance students' understandings of compassion, creativity, and sense of coherence as they applied to personal growth and socially just professional practice. Seven of fifteen students participated in one-on-one, semi-structured interviews. Data analysis was conducted using inductive thematic analysis revealing three meta-themes: 1) Personal meaning and sense making; 2) relational and power dynamics; and 3) disruption; these themes were contextualized through a dynamic interplay within and between the domains of self, pedagogy, and practice. As a result of taking this course, students appeared to develop an enhanced sense of coherence, self-compassion, well-being, and a more equitable understanding of health. This may have been achieved through a more relational, and explicitly social, pedagogical epistemology which allowed students to make personal, interpersonal, and systemic connections between their own subjective experiences, the experiences of their peers, and broader social impacts on health.



Given nutrition classrooms are largely positivist and non-relational, it is important to consider how those environments may support or undermine compassion, sense of coherence, and ultimately the health and wellbeing of students. The research was shared by the team through expected routes: oral presentation and a peer reviewed journal article. One researcher utilized an art-inspired representation of the research as an opportunity to engage the audience in a more visual experience. Narratively, the rich data had been very difficult to tease apart and put back together thematically. The visual installation enabled this representation, albeit in a different way.



Krista Ritchie, Faculty of Education
Latent Beauty

Oil on wood, 8x10"
2018

Discover Krista Ritchie's research



Researchers can see with greater depth and clarity when looking from multiple perspectives. Latent class analysis in multivariate statistics is one such way to identify meaningful patterns in data. These patterns can confirm hypotheses or glean new insights into constructs we study. Much like this painting of a picture of a shadow puppet of a lady, LCA might never capture the real thing, but it will give us perspective on constructs in psychology that are impossible to truly “see.”

What is more beautiful than that?

Zachary Zimmer, Department of Family Studies & Gerontology

Stories Stored in the Blood

Printed banner, 40x60"

Discover Zachary Zimmer's research



Dr. Zachary Zimmer, Canada Research Chair and Director of the Global Aging and Community Initiative undertook a research project that examined the long-term effects of the American War (1965-1975) on the health of people who lived through the war in Vietnam. This research is funded by the US National Institutes of Health through the grant, "Health and Aging Post-Conflicts: War's Enduring Effects among Survivors in Vietnam." The research began in January 2017 and completed in May 2022.

The first picture shows a Viet Cong prisoner captured in 1967 by the U.S. Army who is awaiting interrogation. The second picture shows a Vietnamese elder participating in the Hanoi Medical University blood collection sampling project for Dr. Zimmer's research project.

Stories Stored in Your Blood

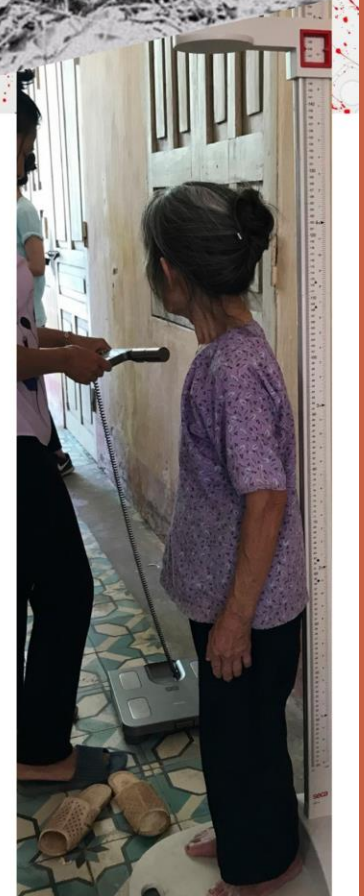


Dr. Zachary Zimmer's research project examines long-term outcomes of the American War (1965-1975) on the health of people who lived through the war.

The U.S. National Institutes of Health provides the funding through a grant titled, "Health & Aging Post-Conflict: War's Enduring Effects among Survivors in Vietnam"

Top Photo: A female Vietcong Guerrilla in the American War (1965-1975). Credit: Vietnam War Chronology.

Pictured Right: A Vietnamese elder participates in the Hanoi Medical University blood collection sampling project for Dr. Zimmer's NIH research grant.



Jeff MacLeod, Department of Political Studies

Mother of Wild Things

Images from graphic novel
2018

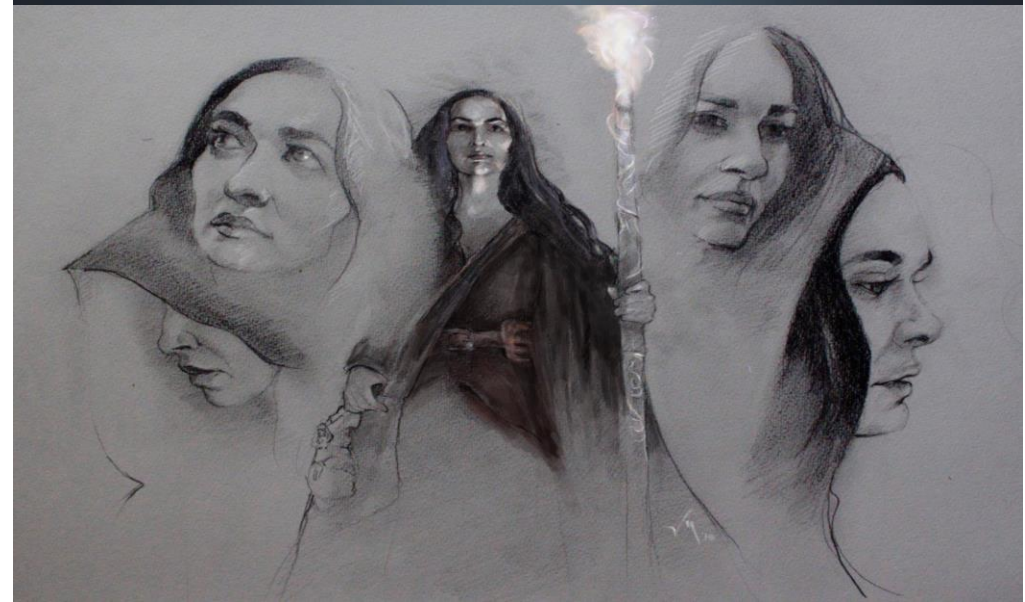
Discover Jeff MacLeod's research

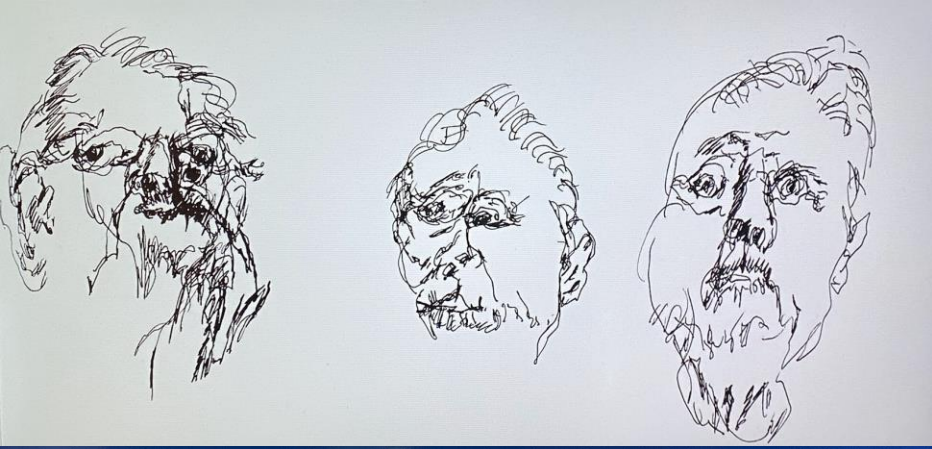


The human experience is defined by the narratives we create; culture (including politics and ideology) is formed by the presentation of stories; at its most basic level stories are expressed through word, picture and sound (what I describe as an image). When imagery becomes so affecting that it moves significant groups of people it can become part of our collective identity. Conversely, stories which are not nurtured, or are even actively suppressed, can be distorted and made so obscure that they fade from collective recall. There is some evidence that most human settlements were once informed by a 'goddess origin story/myth' – it seems for around thirty thousand years daily life was influenced by imagery that included some sort of divine mother-earth figure.

However, over the last five thousand years, we've seen goddess imagery obfuscated and shattered in the Western world. Yet, fragments of Her stories echo through the ages to suggest what might have been (and what could be); indeed, there are still remnants of this imagery that exist just within reach, but subtle and elusive, calling for artistic activation. My hope in this arts-based research project is to gather a few of the Goddesses' fragments (as best I may) and refashion and re-present an aspect of Her story through the medium of a graphic novel.

This project is in "pre-production" and exists in sketchbook notes, some drawings, paintings, and digital pictures. These loose fragments of imagery I plan to add to my little garden of a story in the hope it will emerge as a coherent narrative which contributes to investigating the growing canvas of exploring the female as divine.





Michelle Forrest, Faculty of Education

20/20 : A Year of Drawing Blind

Video

21 minutes

Ink drawings and quotes from various sources

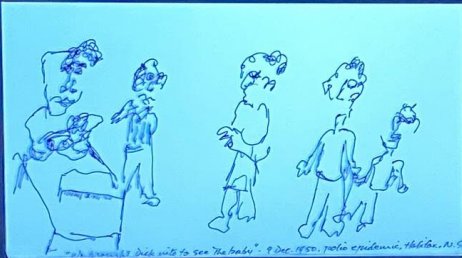
2022

Discover Michelle Forrest's research



“Directions are instructions about ‘where’, but they are also about ‘how’ and ‘what’: directions take us somewhere by the very requirement that we follow a line that is drawn in advance.”

- Ahmed 2006, 16



In ‘blind’ contour drawing, the pencil never leaves the page and the eye never leaves the subject. Without looking at the paper, I coax my pen or pencil to follow my eye ‘feeling’ its way move slowly over the subject, from outside edges to inner features, shadows, and textures. With practice, my hand and arm eventually become a tool of my eye and I begin to draw what I see, not what I think I see or know is there. This exercise raises questions about the dominance of prior knowledge and preconceived notions, and about the role of the taken-for-granted in biasing my capacity to be open or risk the unexpected in my interactions with the world.

Teaching is a process of drawing ‘blind’. A teacher doesn’t know how students will respond to what she says or if their reactions are honestly representative of what they think or feel. And, conversely, the student has little choice but to take a teacher at her word, be it apt or inept. Teachers and students bring their personal biases and tendencies to bear on these shared experiences, which may adversely affect pedagogical relationships. A precarious gap between a speaker’s expectations and a respondent’s reactions is always at play in teaching. Although trust helps bridge this gap over time, curricular aims demand fulfillment and hold all players in the pedagogical encounter to account. What practices might a teacher engage in personally or with her students to loosen the grip of expectation and unquestioned assumptions in order to supplement an outcomes-based pedagogy with one of exploration?

With an interest in shaking my own expectations by adopting a regular practice I will bring into my teacher-education courses, I resolved in January 2020 to do at least one blind contour drawing a day for a year. As I began, I came across Derrida’s *Memoirs of the Blind: The Self-Portrait and Other Ruins* (1993/1990) in a second-hand bookstore. Reading other theorists and Derrida’s book-length essay on self-portraits from the Louvre’s permanent collection, and drawing ‘blind’ from the plates in his book and from life around me, became my morning practice. The results thus far of this exploratory practice of ideas, images, objects, scenes, and imaginings is what you see in this slide show: a work in progress.

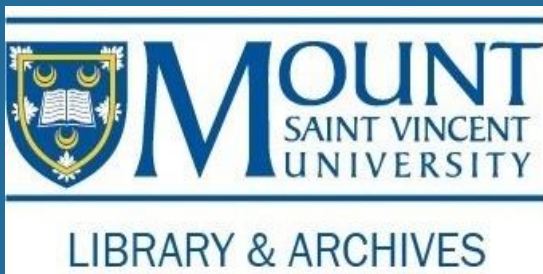
Acknowledgements



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Many thanks to the exhibition's participants for their patience and dedication through challenging times.

Tanja Harrison is the University Librarian at Mount Saint Vincent University. Lindsey MacCallum is the Scholarly Publishing Librarian.

Research in View 2023

Catalogue of an exhibition held at MSVU Library & Archives, Winter through Fall 2023.

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