

Salmon Arm Art Gallery Presents



A Pride Project exhibition, featuring collaborative community artworks and the Cultural Mapping Research Project

October 15 to 29, 2022

Opening Day Saturday, October 15, 11am - 1pm
Gallery Hours Tuesday to Saturday, 11am - 4pm
Open late on Thursdays until 7pm

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project
ARTS + AWARENESS FESTIVAL



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You are standing on the unceded and ancestral lands of the Secwépemc people.

The board and staff of Shuswap District Arts Council acknowledge that they have benefited from the systems and structures that have oppressed Indigenous people for nearly two centuries.

We apologize for the harms that have been inflicted upon Secwépemc people.

We endeavour to work in accordance with the 94 Calls to Action in the Truth and Reconciliation Report. We pledge to support reparations and reconciliation through our mandate, using the arts to build respectful relationships, create cross-cultural community engagement, and to make space for Indigenous cultural and artistic expression. Our policies reflect the importance of supporting authentic Indigenous voices, as well as guiding the education of settler cultures by including Indigenous perspectives in every exhibition and program.

Director/Curator Tracey Kutschker wishes to personally thank Neskonlith Band Councillor Louis Thomas, as well as artists and storytellers Dolan Badger, Mary Thomas, Delores Purdaby, Aaron Leon, Gerry Thomas, Kenthen Thomas and Geri Matthew for their generous guidance, advice and wisdom over the past 20 years. It is now time for settler cultures to take on the re-education of our collective history, and to make the changes that are needed to decolonize our systems and structures.

Curator's Statement

Tracey Kutschker

This is the third year of Salmon Arm Pride Project, a festival of arts-informed events and activities designed to bring awareness, visibility and acceptance to the 2SLGBTQ+ community. The committee that was formed four years ago probably never imagined that it would have grown to this size and this importance in Salmon Arm. We are now seeing significant shifts in inclusivity policies among organizations and businesses, and a new understanding within the general community. This is exactly what *A Place to Belong* is about – how we remake our small city so that everyone who lives here feels that they belong here.

The Cultural Mapping research project has completed its 3-year run, and we are pleased to be able to display 18 of the 25 maps that were created over this time. The analysis is complete and the final report is underway. The three main findings of the research are highlighted on the walls of this Gallery, a beautiful blend of art and science.

Two community collaborative projects are also a big part of this exhibition. The Progress Pride Flag Quilt was created by allies and 2SLGBTQ folks to highlight a loved one, a memory or a message in their own sewn colour block. Behind the stitches are a shared story, sometimes heart-wrenching, sometimes uplifting, and all of them held together by a few threads that represent warmth and belonging. Things I Wish I Could Tell You was an invitation to 2SLGBTQ folks who wanted to share those things difficult to say out loud, especially at a time of societal polarization, anti-trans sentiments and homophobia. While only a few of the hundreds of distributed postcards came back to the Gallery, these words give us a small insight into the every-day experiences of the 2SLGBTQ community.

This exhibition is just one of the many offerings of Salmon Arm Pride Project, and the Arts Council continues to prioritize inclusivity and diversity goals within its mandate and strategic planning. It is crucial that we continue to expand and promote social issues through this Gallery. Art is a way of doing things, and can be used as a tool for social change. It communicates and connects us to our humanity. It is powerful and it is subtle. My hope is that visitors leave this Gallery changed – whether it be a new understanding of a topic or a new way of seeing things. This is how a community evolves – one person and one experience at a time.

Cultural Mapping Research Project

This project was conceived in 2020, at the early planning stages of Salmon Arm Pride Project. After establishing a diverse committee and identifying arts-informed goals for a festival to promote inclusivity, it was important that proper consultation was at the core of the festival. Director/Curator Tracey Kutschker and Manager of Visitor Experience Kate Fagervik noticed a lack of information and research about 2SLGBTQ safety and wellness in Salmon Arm. Kate's experience with Cultural Mapping through Thompson Rivers University in Kamloops led to the Art Gallery entering into an agreement with the Graduate Studies Research Department under the leadership of Dr. Will Garrett-Petts. Training of several members of the Pride Project committee began with enthusiasm.

As part of a vibrant and walkable downtown, the Art Gallery wanted to know how members of the 2SLGBTQ community navigated this area and where they felt a sense of safety and security. This formed the question asked in the mapping sessions, "As you move throughout downtown Salmon Arm, where do you feel most comfortable, and where do you feel least comfortable?" The answers were provided to us through the arts-infused mapping, where one draws their map based on experiences and feelings rather than the built environment. Members of the 2SLGBTQ community were invited to take part in small groups of four, mapping in the gallery space for 3 to 4 hours each session, through rigorous ethics and cultural safety protocols approved by TRU's Research Ethics Board. Mappers could complete their map in one sitting, or take it home and continue to work on it. Following the creation of their map, mappers were interviewed to take us on a tour of their map. These transcripts were recorded, and informed the analysis portion of the research.

We met with 25 participants over two years who contributed powerful stories and maps within these sessions. The analysis session in 2022 welcomed back Dr. Garrett-Petts along with graduate students from TRU who were also being trained in the Cultural Mapping process, and members of the Pride Project committee. The team worked together to analyse the maps, and distilled the data to discover three significant findings.

Creative Self-Expression 2SLGBTQ folks feel safest and most able to be themselves in places that allow for creative self-expression, like the Roots & Blues Festival, Art Gallery exhibitions and activities, and, mentioned most frequently, Shuswap Theatre.

Nature and Green Spaces All the maps showed the importance of green space in the downtown, and small local parks like McGuire Lake and Little Mountain Park were frequently mentioned as places of calm and safety.

Familiarity Knowing business owners, staff and leaders in the community created safe feelings, because when someone knows your name and your story, there is a bond, and that person can come to your aid.

Take your time, read the maps, and let us know your thoughts.

Piecing It All Together

2. Progress Pride Flag King-Sized Quilt cotton, mixed media \$5000
100% of sale goes toward the Pride Project

This collaborative quilt, created by allies and members of the 2SLGBTQ+ community, was launched in 2021 welcoming people to make a block in one of the rainbow colours to signify an important person, event or emotion about the idea of belonging. What better item to give one a sense of comfort and safety than a beautiful warm quilt?

Once a wide selection of coloured blocks were submitted, local quilter Miki Mann pieced them all together, lovingly fitting the blocks to make one cohesive whole. The quilt was then handed over to Bill Fagervik, co-owner of Heather's Fabric Shelf in Kamloops, where he completed the long-arm quilting. Back to Miki for the binding, and the Progress Pride Flag quilt was complete. This was truly a gift of love and care for the 2SLGBTQ+ community, as all of these talented folks donated their time and skills to complete this work.

Gratitude is warmly extended to all of these folks who contributed to the project:

Miki Mann
Bill and Heather Fagervik
Donna Lessard and members of the Lakeside Quilters
Sue Ackerman
Damen Archard
Barb Belway
Pamela Dettwiler
Emily Dechant
Elaine Karpik
Layla Kutschker
Cheryl LeSergent
Monique Pharand
Sonya Rokosh
Megan Taylor
Debra Turner

Meg Froehler

5. To Be Home *photography* \$200 per print

To Be Home draws comparisons between the power of one's natural body and the beauty of the natural environment surrounding us. It allows us the space to feel held, seen and understood by Mother Nature. In Indigenous language, animacy is not defined by human life but rather by living beings. This self-portrait series pays homage to the connection that we share with those beings, the freedom that is felt when we exist exactly as we are. To be a tree, to be a creek, to be a human, the sentiments that have created an inner peace in knowing that we are all one and that we all belong. Maarsii Creator for your warmth.

Meg Froehler (they/she) is a Kelowna-based Queer, Métis photographer specializing in empowerment, and creating a safe space for raw, authentic and vulnerable photos of humans. The aim as an empowerment photographer is to allow people to see the beauty and light that she sees in them.

Bailey Morgan

6. Date Night *photograph* \$200

To capture queer joy is the ultimate goal. A moment where you just exist as you, alongside the rest of the world, seemingly doing it so peacefully. To dance in the street after dusk with the love of your life, to hold hands without looking over your shoulder, to share a kiss that isn't a secret, to drop into the moment without fear. Because ultimately, love is love. That is true belonging.

Bailey is a queer photographer who has been capturing the emotions around her since 2016. She always knew that her life would be centered around art from starting dance at 2 years old and playing Royal Conservatory piano starting at 3 years old. From the moment she picked up her camera, everything seemed to make sense. With a focus on boudoir, live music and couples, she finds the hunt for "the moment" to be the biggest thrill. Bailey resides in East Vancouver with her soon-to-be wife Jess and her Tabby cat Honey Bear.

Models are Nathan Fadear and Jakob Kopytko.

Things I Wish I Could Tell You

7. An interactive community collaborative postcard installation

Things I Wish I Could Tell You was created in response to thoughts expressed to the Pride Project by local 2SLGBTQ+ individuals from a variety of walks of life regarding feelings of isolation and reservations they might have when it comes to being visible and participating in events within the community.

Voicing deeply personal thoughts and feelings to even those closest to you can be extremely difficult, regardless of the level of support present in those relationships. Things I Wish I Could Tell You is an interactive and collaborative installation that invites 2SLGBTQ+ things they wish they could tell their friends, family and community but may not feel comfortable voicing aloud.

Things I Wish I Could Tell You seeks to provide space for 2SLGBTQ+ individuals to express things they wish they could tell you, and to allow viewers a window into some of the experiences of 2SLGBTQ+ individuals in Salmon Arm.
