

Salmon Arm Art Gallery Presents

environments for reading

A collection of sculpture enclosures by mixed-media artists Barbara Adler, Myrna Button, Anne Long, Melissa Nasby, Carol Schlosar, and Patricia Smith. Featuring collaborative works by 20 fibre-arts enthusiasts. Bring a book and take time to read.

January 27 to March 23, 2024

Hours Tuesday to Saturday, 11am to 4pm

Opening Reception Saturday, January 27, 11am to 1pm

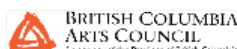
Coffee Break & Artist Talk Thursday, February 15, 2pm

Silent Book Club Thursday, February 29, 5pm to 8pm

Generously Sponsored by



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Felted Forest by Anne Long

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 Secwépemc people for nearly two centuries.

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 Indigenous voices, as well as guiding the education of settler cultures by including Indigenous perspectives in every exhibition and program.

Curator Tracey Kutschker wishes to personally thank Secwépemc Knowledge-Shareer 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.

The Art Gallery supports the implementation of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's 94 Calls to Action, and specifically works to advance Calls #14 (support the revitalization and preservation of Indigenous languages), #80 (honour and recognize Residential School Survivors with a public commemoration), and #83 (collaborative arts projects that contribute to reconciliation).

Curator's Statement

Tracey Kutschker

A few years ago, I saw Evelyn Roth's *Environment for Reading*. The diverse skills, dedication to sustainability, and imaginative spirit of the work reminded me of recent Salmon Arm Art Gallery exhibitions that similarly showcased the incredible talent of fibre artists in and around Salmon Arm; *The Knitted Tree* in 2016, *The Little Lake* in 2019, and *The Pollinators* in 2022. This inspired me to do our own version of *Environments for Reading* to further highlight the vibrant imagination within our community, and the enthusiasm for fibre arts.

Some gallery guests may remember that the building we call home was once the town's library. The memories of residents reading in quiet tucked-away spaces within these walls are very much part of the story of the building and we look to honour these experiences in this exhibition.

To further explore this fusion of art, story and place, we invited individuals to participate in the narrative and help bring these memories to life. The collective stories of the community, told through salvaged yarn and thousands of stitches, have converged to create five collaborative enclosures. This narrative tapestry fits beautifully into this historic building, creating a perfect backdrop for artistic exploration.

Community Collaborative Environments

1.	Dream Pod	\$200
2.	Pride Pod	\$200
3.	Forest Pod	\$200
4.	Storyteller Pod	\$250
5.	Storytime Pod	\$250

At World Wide Knit in Public Day, one of our members asked if there was a way she could contribute to *Environments for Reading* without committing to creating an entire reading pod. This sparked the idea to open the exhibit up to anyone with enthusiasm for knitting, even if they could not commit a lot of time, and the collaborative pods project was born. Twenty-one knitters and crocheters created and submitted panels in a wide array of colours and patterns. The panels were then stitched together to create five beautiful environments, complete with crocheted lampshades and floor rugs for extra warmth and comfort.

These collaborative reading pods are for sale, and we hope they all find their way into local homes. All proceeds support Arts Centre programs.

Panel Artists

Emilie Aeyelts
Julia Armstrong
Wendy Charlebois
Noelle Cox
Emily Dechant
Kari Dukeshire
Linda Franklin
Kay Grabowsky
Gudie Hupfauer
Anne Long
Kimm Magill-Hoffmann
Miki Mann
Vivian Morris
Wren Rathbone
Jackie Schumacher
Cindy Sholinder
Myrle Testart
Emily Valentini
Vernon Secondary School Textiles Class

Sculpture Stitchers

Carolyn Campbell
Wendy Charlebois
Linda Franklin
Ursula Gall
Ellen Gonella
Gudie Hupfauer
Kimm Magill-Hoffmann
Miki Mann
Delores Mori
Wren Rathbone

Patricia Smith

6. The Great Escape

mixed media

\$7000

The inspiration for this installation came from the the Irish movie *The Banshees of Inisherin*. Seeking an escape from daily frustrations, the protagonist throws a circular willow basket on his back and stomps off to fish. What? Yup. It was a boat – a coracle. Cultures throughout the world have invented variations of woven coracles from grasses, reeds and saplings – bamboo and willow being the most common. Infant Moses floated in an oval papyrus coracle waterproofed with asphalt and pitch. Young Jim Hawkins escaped Treasure Island by stealing marooned Ben Gunn’s coracle.

Imagine a child seeking a secret oasis in which to escape (from annoying siblings, parents, chores & responsibilities) into an alternate literary world in the warmer months. What better than to sneak away in a coracle – and nestle up to the water’s shore beneath a curtain of willow fronds for a private, sun dappled read. The water is crocheted of sanitized, upcycled covid masks. In this time and place, we all deserve a lovely temporary escape into a more fantastical world.

Patricia L Smith has been living, teaching and creating art in the beautiful and bountiful Sxwetsméllp (Shuswap) since 1987. As an uninvited guest within the traditional and unceded territories of the Secwepemc Nation, she is very grateful to the Neskonlith First Nation. Patricia works both 2 & 3 dimensionally, choosing media that is best suited to the telling of each visual story. Whether rendered realistically or abstractly, in paint or pine needles, the common thread throughout her creations is that of textural investigation, captured light/cast shadow play, soft transitions and hard edges. A dedicated life-long learner within both the atelier and academic settings, she is motivated to add her settler ally ‘visual voice’ to the conversation along Canada’s reconciliation journey, therefore is currently studying in the Human Rights and Social Justice Masters program at Thompson Rivers University. She can’t wait to get back to her easel.

Anne Long

7. Joy and Peace of the Woods

wool and silk

panels \$75 each

With filtered light, the sound of leaves and birds, near a stream where there were fewer mosquitoes, Anne imagines herself reading in the joy and peace of the woods. These panels are gently wet-felted with images of trees and the forest floor, a blurry background when one is completely absorbed in a book.

Anne Long was lured into fibre arts by Polish weavers in 1970s. She is a sheep-to-shawl artist, with special interest in natural dyes and tapestry weaving. Anne believes life isn’t long enough to learn it all, but encourages others to treasure the creativity of the artists presenting here; “they’ve poured out their hearts for you.”

Melissa Nasby

8. Tactile Tales

mixed fibre media

In the intricate threads that bind the pages of a book, Melissa finds a universe waiting to be unraveled, where every word is a thread weaving a gorgeous tapestry in our imagination. This fibre art installation is a testament to the profound connection between literature and the boundless realms of creativity that fibre art can encapsulate. Inspired by the transformative experience of losing oneself in a captivating story, "Tactile Tales" invites viewers to embark on a visual odyssey with each meticulously crafted element serving as a chapter in the narrative.

Melissa is drawn to the profound parallels between the act of reading and the creation of fibre art. Both processes involve patience, exploration, and a commitment to discovery. Melissa felt this was the perfect project to delight the masses with the incredible versatility, practicality and pure awesomeness of fibre art. The installation features a symphony of mediums and techniques found within the fibre arts; traditional weaving, knitting, needle felting, wet felting, spinning, macramé and innovative textile manipulations. Just as a well-woven narrative captivates the reader through its nuanced details, this installation captivates the viewer through its rich textures, colours, and forms. By inviting the audience to immerse themselves in the fabric of stories, the installation becomes a living, breathing testament to the power of creativity and the inexhaustible inspiration found within the pages of a book.

Shuswap fibre artist Melissa Nasby specializes in needle felted masks, headdresses, puppets and sculptures. Her passion is driven by the texture and versatility of wool and natural fibres. She is heavily influenced by fantasy and nature, creating one of a kind pieces that have a sense of organic whimsy. In 2014, she received an Honourable Mention from The Jim Henson Company, and in 2015 was the recipient of the Marie Manson Memorial Arts Award.

Dark Crystal End Book	\$6000	Tree Scarf - Birch	\$150
The Raven End Book	\$6000	Tree Scarf - Peach	\$150
The Hobbit Book Spine	\$2000	Mushroom toque - Mustard	\$100
Alice in Wonderland Book Spine	\$2000	Mushroom toque – Spruce	\$100
Narnia Book Spine	\$2000	Mushroom toque – Whimsy	\$100
Raya Book Spine	\$2000	Mushroom toque – Bashful	\$100
Fairy Door Wall	\$5000	Mushroom toque – Candy	\$100
Mache Tree w/ hawk sculpture	\$2000	Tree Art Yarn (10)	\$75 ea
Satyr Sculpture	\$1500	Fibre foliage bundle (25)	\$50 ea
Hummingbird Sculpture	\$150	Art Batts (25)	\$50 ea

HOW IT WAS MADE Video, Digital download \$5

Myrna Button

9. The Explore Pod

mixed media

\$1800

The Explore Pod is inspired by the red colour block fabric. By imagining the blocks as books, Myrna undertook to open some of the fabric to reveal or add curiosities. In the interior, she imagined a universe full of tiny worlds.

When you open a book, what curious wonders do you find?

From talking animals to magic beings.

What epic journeys do you undertake?

From deep into the sea to flying to the stars.

What characters do you encounter?

From villains to heroes to damsels in distress.

What exploits do you experience?

From riding a dragon to following a sleuth.

What do you learn?

From the universe to great thinkers throughout the centuries.

All when you explore the world of books.

Myrna Button grew up on a cattle ranch in Saskatchewan. In her early twenties she moved to the Mackenzie Delta, Northwest Territories where she lived for the next 43 years. She traversed her environment by driving her own dog team. Reading her environment weaving contemplation and reflection into her artistic practice. She remains a lifelong learner, curious and experimental in multiple artistic practices which include pottery, stained glass, acrylic, resin, mixed media and more recently, 3D work and installation pieces. She now resides in the Shuswap where she continues to find artistic expression.

Carol Schlosar

10. Poetry and Purpose

fabric, graphite, crayon, silk screen ink

NFS

When Carol was a child, Saturday was Library Day. It was a luxury of time in a feast of books and she learned to love the quiet generosity of libraries. Once the treasured books were home, she'd curl up in her "table tent" and devour each one again and again. As an adult she encouraged her children to discover the same delight in libraries and to find magic in a quiet place where imagination is sparked. *Poetry and Purpose* is a tribute to both those nurturing spaces.

Stacked rocks, cairns, have been used as navigational aids and monuments through history on every continent. Cairns carried information and tradition. They marked trails, signified meeting places, commemorated events and memorialized individuals. A circle of cairns though, provided sanctuary and defense. Like libraries, cairns paved the way for those who sought information, inspiration, and community in a nurturing space.

This enclosure is fashioned from layered transparent material with frottaged, drawn and silkscreened illustrations. Like the pages and chapters of a book, the images are printed in black and white, and each layer tells a story. The boulders, stacked like guardians, speak to the wealth we mine from books - history, art, language, flora, fauna, technology, spirituality, enchantment and continuity. The small rocks ground the shore and the tiny figures inside celebrate knowledge and imagination.

This work whispers to the poetry, purpose and magic of libraries present and past - spaces worth protecting.

Carol Schlosar is an artist and musician living in Sicamous, B.C. She received her BFA from Thompson Rivers University (TRU) and continues her pursuit of knowledge and skill with 'Scholars without Institutions'. Currently she is exploring diverse streams: figurative work on the occupation and conflict of personal space, the changing identity politics for older women and our relationship with the increasingly challenged natural world. Her practice includes painting, sculpture, drawing, and printmaking. Her work, both solo and collaborative, has been exhibited in various galleries in B.C.

Barbara Adler

11. Slow Calendar, Cutblock Curtains *mixed media, red alder windfall* NFS

The *Slow Calendar* is a collaboration between Barbara Adler and emerging visual artists Kinar (Kira) Saragih, Sena Cleave and Megan Lane. 247 crocheted and knitted patches were stitched together in a hyperbolic crochet pattern, infesting the grid of calendar time with the uneven, expressive time of our bodies. When finished, the piece will use 366 patches – just over a year's worth of days. The *Cutblock Curtains* connect thread and yarn scraps gathered from past projects to evoke the textures and shapes of a replanted cutblock near Barbara's home. In many cultures, these clippings ('orts') are precious because they contain the energy of the maker. The public helped sort and knot the materials at The Only Animal's *Slow Socials* series, which featured live readings from *Learning the Grammar of Animacy* by Robin Wall Kimmerer, and *Freedom is a Constant Struggle*, by Angela Davis.

'Slow Calendar' and 'Cutblock Curtains' are components of *Slow Practice*, a travelling work-in-progress textile installation by The Only Animal that will gradually transform into the stage environment for Mermaid Spring - an original, place-based music theatre concert premiering in 2026.

Barbara Adler is an interdisciplinary artist and performer, whose practice incorporates text, music, event making and design. The daughter and sister of Czech immigrants, Barbara now lives in xwesam, colonially known as Roberts Creek, on the unceded territories of the shíshálh and Skwxwu7mesh Nations. Her recent projects centre slow and process-led creation, using intricate textile objects to put a wrench in productivity culture and focus work around relational time and seasonal cycles. She holds an MFA in

Interdisciplinary Studies and a BA in Art and Cultural Studies, both from Simon Fraser University. Barbara is the Artistic Director of The Only Animal Theatre, whose intensely local, site-based work is dedicated to bringing art and artists to the heart of the climate struggle. Our work prioritizes relationships to place alongside time for non-productive labour, celebrating the mutable rhythms of maintenance, mending, piecing-together and wandering. Full collaborator bios at www.theonlyanimal.com.

The Pollinators

12. A Place for the Pollinators *mixed fibre media* \$350

Some might recognize the beautiful green felted panels of this pod as the landscape from the 2022 collaborative installation in the exhibition *The Pollinators*. Initially created by Melissa Nasby, Anne Long, Tracey Kutschker and Wren Rathbone, these sections begged to be reimagined. The pod's structure was built by Eric Kutschker, and Tracey and Melissa created the panels to form the seat and the enclosure. The flowers were upcycled from the original exhibition, some of which were created by local community members. *A Place for the Pollinators* is a fitting conclusion to the process of educating folks about the important role of pollinators, to create a cocoon, a warm and safe place to cozy up and transform your imagination.
