



Open Space Arts Society - 2023 Annual General Meeting

2022-2023 Program Schedule Overview



An overview of programming at Open Space from March 2023 back to April 2022:

Qaleidoscope: Queer Film on Tour

February 24-25, 2023

Open Space Collaborated with Queer City Cinema to host the Victoria dates of *Qaleidoscope: Queer Film on Tour*! *Qaleidoscope* was a two-day screening program, admission available by donation. It was a well-textured assemblage of images, ideas, and realities that collide in fantastical, personal, and playful ways to produce an ever-changing, multi-faceted queer film and performance art viewing experience.



Josh Tengan Curatorial Residency

January 27-February 4, 2023

Honolulu-based curator **Josh Tengan** was in residence at Open Space as part of *Wayfinders, the ones we breathe with*. Throughout 2023, Open Space presented a series of exhibitions, residencies and events under the title *Wayfinders, the ones we breathe with*. This series recalls ancient way finding practices utilizing the stars, wind, water and land markers to find paths across the sea and, through the work of artists from coastal neighbours and nations across the Pacific Ocean, considers intertwined histories, practices, migrations and contemporary lives of adjacent homelands. Breathing together across the shared ocean in cultural, environmental and molecular exchange. Residencies and artist projects with **Josh Tengan, Camille Georgeson-Usher** and **Tanya Lukin Linklater** anchored the series.

During his residency, Tengan connected with folks involved in *Tide Lines: Coastal Resistance of the 60s and 70s* and the *Indigenous Emerging Artist Program*, as well as presented the Orion Lecture in Visual Arts at UVIC. Tengan is a curator, cultural producer and arts administrator from Pauoa, O'ahu, Hawai'i. He is a generational islander of Kānaka 'Ōiwi (Native Hawaiian), Ryu-kyuan and Madeiran descent. His curatorial practice centers on art of Hawai'i and Moananuiākea.



[The Stories We Belong To](#)

Nov 19, 2022-Feb 11, 2023

The Stories We Belong To was an exhibition showcasing the work of the 2022 *Indigenous Emerging Artists Program* participants. The theme *The Stories We Belong To* frames the 2022 program, through which mentees were offered the opportunity to tell their own stories in a supportive and culturally safe environment, culminating in a group exhibition. Mentors include Open Space's Curator, Indigenous & Contemporary Art, Eli Hirtle, Elder-in-Residence Gerry Ambers, Elder Support Tyrone Elliott, Tah'lum Indigenous Artists Collective Administrator Jesse Campbell, alongside guest artists and cultural practitioners from local, national and international Indigenous communities. Participants were **Beth Watmough-Flanders, Eli Gloor,**

Jasper Pettman, Joshua Ngenda, Michael Gilbert, Sarah Jim, Tama Aisake, Tulah Patterson, Uumati Kisoun-Inuarak.



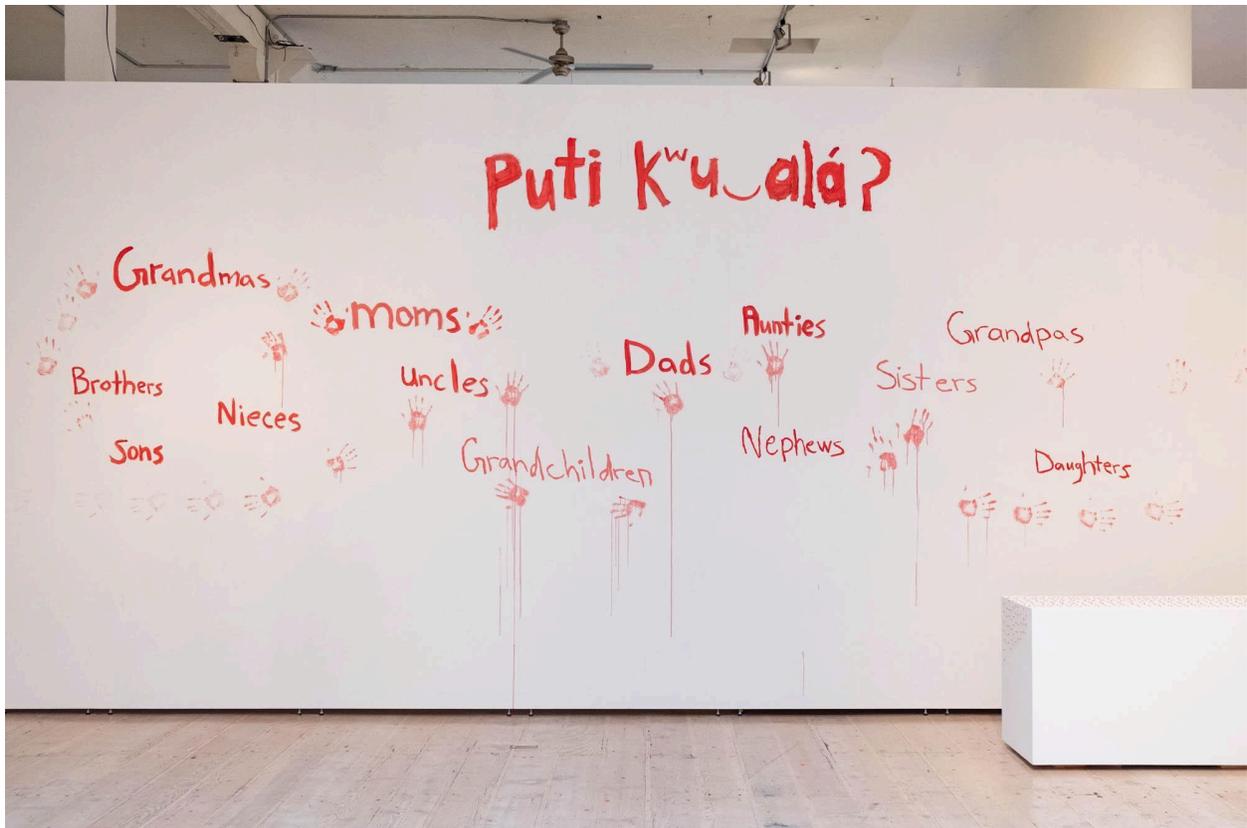
We Are Still Here

Saturday, October 22, 2022

We Are Still Here was a performance by **Manuel Axel Strain** with mother **Tracey Eustache** and **Lavatta Frank** as part of *For Love, Loss & Land* program. *For Love, Loss & Land* addressed ancestral homelands, territories of residence and global realities of the love and the loss of land. Considering these unfolding and developing histories alongside what it means to live on Indigenous lands in the wake of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, the ongoing, uncovering of children's graves at Residential Schools crime scenes, and expressions of love towards the lands on which we live and come from, this exhibition tenderly kept these conversations at the forefront through the works in the gallery by **Rain Cabana-Boucher** and **Jinny Yu** and performances by **Guadalupe Martinez** and **Manuel Axel Strain**.

Manuel Axel Strain is a 2-Spirit artist from the lands and waters of the x^wməθk^wəyəm (Musqueam), Simpcw and Syilx peoples, based in the sacred region of their q̓ič'əy̓ (Katzie) and q̓'wə:n̓'əñ (Kwantlen) relatives. Strain creates artwork in collaboration with and reference to

their relatives. Their shared experiences become a source of agency that resonates through their work with performance, land, painting, sculpture, photography, video, sound and installation. Their artworks often envelop subjects in relation with ancestral and community ties, Indigeneity, labour, resource extraction, gender, Indigenous medicine and life forces. Strain often perceives their work to confront and undermine the imposed realities of colonialism. Proposing a new space beyond its oppressive systems of power.



The length of my arms

Saturday, September 24, 2022

A performance by **Guadalupe Martinez** as part of *For Love, Loss & Land*. The length of my arms had evoked the complex relationships we hold with place and land, looking at how history and narratives intertwine through materiality, perception, memory and meaning-making. How do we engage with place and land? What are we giving? What are we receiving? What are we transforming? What are we forgetting or denying? What are we creating? How is this place an extension of my body? And how is my body an extension of this place? Through participatory ritual and durational gesture, *The length of my arms* brought together found objects from different landmarks around the region, with personal objects contributed by local participants,

to draw attention to the ways in which relationships to place are both within the material and the affective memories of its people and communities. This work further touched on how perceptions of a place are inherently messy, not perfectly organized or archived, while highlighting the complexities and juxtapositions of different perceptions and understandings.



Daydreaming Tea Service

Saturday, September 17, 2022

Daydreamer's Tea Service by **Tania Willard** was an affirmation of plant relations and an assertion of anti-capitalist time mismanagement through the intentional disruption of daydreaming expressed through Indigenous plant knowledge and the making of tea. The piece was developed in response to the [*Dreaming the Land Residency*](#) (zoom-based) led by **France Trépanier**. The plants in the tea were harvested and prepared from plants in Secwepemc and Lekwungen territories and collected with prayers and offerings. Brewing the tea in an oversized

handmade tea bag and tea cup modelled after distinctive archeological Cahokia black drink cups, the tea referenced a decolonial approach to the colonial culture of tea. Through an attentive process of non-monetary labour and knowledge values the work explored the potential of committing to the time and resources needed to manifest Indigenous resurgence. *Daydreamers* decolonial tea service considered ideas around the right to harvest the forest understory and Indigenous authority as well as relationality with plants and territories.



[this dying body](#)

Thursday, August 11, 2022

this dying body was the release of **Serena Lukas Bhandar's** debut chapbook. Bhandar is a writer, educator, MA student, and witch of Punjabi Sikh and Welsh ancestry. "The poems in the book examine the tensions between transcendence, substance abuse, and self-harm by remixing the themes and characters of the novel *The Last Unicorn* by Peter S. Beagle with my own experiences of self-medicating and struggling through chronic illness and the isolation and

stress of the pandemic. What is lost when a mythical creature becomes a mortal woman? And what is created when we accept that our chronically ill bodies possess inordinate beauty, and deserve to be loved and cared for?”

Tide Lines: Coastal Resistance of the 60s and 70s

August 9, 2022 - March 4, 2023

Beginning August 2022 and continuing into 2023, Open Space Elder-in-Residence **Gerry Ambers** led *Tide Lines*, a project focused on the intersections of Indigenous art and activism across the Pacific Coast region during the 1960s and 1970s, and how these two realms continue to influence each other. Significantly, *Tide Lines* supports the Elder-in-Residence’s long-standing desire to bring together a group of Elder artists activists from this time period and who were active in the [Native Alliance for Red Power \(N.A.R.P\)](#) between 1967-1977; increases the visibility of the important political and artistic contributions from this cohort; and documents these histories for current and future generations to learn from. The central focus of *TIDE LINES* was a one-day gathering, supported by an exhibition and documentation.



For Love, Loss & Land

August 6 - October 29, 2022

For Love, Loss & Land addresses ancestral homelands, territories of residence and global realities of the love and the loss of land. Considering these unfolding and developing histories alongside what it means to live on Indigenous lands in the wake of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, the ongoing, uncovering of children’s graves at Residential Schools

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Prompting reflection and offering space for remembrance and respite, the gallery has been set to observe the care and attention needed to support the sensitive nature of the exhibition content, as well as the folks who come to see the show and those directly impacted.



Fire! with Thus Owls

Friday, July 1, 2022

An evening of Nordic Canadian Jazz Experimental Music featuring *FIRE! with Thus Owls*. **Fire!** is a Nordic experimental supergroup formed in 2009 by the core trio of **Mats Gustafsson** (sax), **Johan Berthling** (bass guitar) and **Andreas Werlin** (drums) who joined together to develop a

fresh approach to improvised music drawing on influences from free jazz, psychedelic rock, and noise. **Thus Owls** is a Swedish-Canadian experimental indie rock band based in Montreal, Quebec, consisting of husband and wife duo **Simon Angell** (guitar) and **Erika Angell** (vocals/keys) joined with **Samuel Joly** (drums) and Lisen Rylander (sax). One of Canada's most creative acts that are always evolving with fresh musical language.



QUEER FUTURITIES: holding area, gathering place

Friday, May 13 - July 23, 2022

How do we want to hold and be held? What do we want our communities to feel like? Using queer polyvocality as a framework for world-building, *Queer Futurities* created fissures in hegemonic ways of thinking about time, place, archive, and community. *Queer Futurities*

engaged the generative possibilities of collective knowledge and cared through two parts: *holding area* and *gathering place*.

holding area featured the works of **Kitt Peacock, Edzi’u, Cassia Powell, Florence Yee, Arezu Salamzadeh, Margaret August, Nicole Mandryk, Romi Kim** and **Kendell Yan**. Exploring what José Esteban Muñoz calls the “forward-dawning” potentials of queerness, *holding area* created a temporary but effective space which holds collective knowledge. Through a range of mediums, including audio-visual installation, textiles, beading, performance and painting, the artists’ works explored the tenderness and nuance of both ‘holding’ and ‘queerness’ through alternative forms of care, storytelling, commemoration and place/space-making.

gathering place activated Queer Futurities’ themes of collective knowledge and cared through skill-sharing and community gathering outside of the gallery space with workshops and performances. Programming included a weaving workshop by **Estraven Lupino-Smith**, a “Queer Calisthenics” performance by **keiko Hart**, and a mutual aid workshop by the **Community Fridge**.



The Art of with/holding: An Artist Talk with poet Chantal Gibson

Saturday April 30, 2022

Chantal Gibson returned to Open Space to discuss her latest poetry collection, *with/holding* (Caitlin Press, 2021)—a genre-blurring text that examines the representation and reproduction

of Blackness across communication media and popular culture. Written in the summer of 2020, the work was inspired by Gibson’s Open Space exhibition “A Grammar of Loss: Studies in Erasure” that closed three weeks after it opened in January 2020 due to Covid 19.

In this hybrid artist talk, Gibson discussed her use of literary and visual art and graphic design to grapple with the seemingly insatiable buzzing-clicking-scrolling-sharing appetite for Black suffering. Drawing on the visual language of tv news, brand marketing, social media, and Add to Cart culture—Gibson illustrated the ways her work challenges “the tyranny of copy and paste”—and confronted the new colonial machinery in its relentless consumption and commodification of Black bodies.



Fresh Fiss

Saturday April 16, 2022

As part of **Whess Harman’s** *chew the bones, they’re soft*, Open Space announced a special event *Fresh Fiss*. The evening began with a performance by the Ləkʷəŋən Traditional Dancers, followed by readings from **jaye simpson** and **Justin Ducharme**, ended with a solo performance by **Black Belt Eagle Scout**. We served bannock from Songhees Catering and light refreshments.

chew the bones, they're soft was an exhibition that began as an amorphous project looking at the parallels between potlatching and exhibition making. The works in the exhibition speak towards the cycles of yearning, patience and fixation experienced in the past several years. For Whess Harman, this exhibition is about their cultural ecosystem; a network of artists and friendships and care that has been integral to survival. As one would do in organizing a Potlatch, redistributing wealth through commissioning work for others in the form of writing, art and music to be given away to visitors through the course of the exhibition programming to point towards the fallacy of the formulation of a solo exhibition being entirely attributed to any singular artist.



Beyond Unsettling Speaker Series

Thursday April 7, 2022

Open Space co-presented the third online roundtable in the *Beyond Unsettling Speaker Series*, a conversation between previous Open Space board members and Open Space contributors **Charles Campbell**, **Yuxwelupton Qwal'qaxala** (Bradley Dick) and **Farheen HaQ**. Charles, Bradley

and Farheen talked about their collaborative work together exploring the intersections of their own experiences and the lands they inhabit.

This event was part of a series of discussions held in conjunction with the December 2021 issue of *PUBLIC 64 — Beyond Unsettling: Methodologies for Decolonizing Futures*, guest-edited by **Leah Decter** and **Carla Taunton**. “The artworks, conversations and texts in this issue of PUBLIC offer innovative perspectives in non-consumptive, collaborative, ethical and accountable, arts-based approaches to undoing colonial dominance.”