



This catalogue presents the artwork of 17 individuals in the graduating class of 2021 at Kwantlen Polytechnic University. The works were made for the most part in the Fine Arts Studios in Surrey, British Columbia, despite the challenges of the Covid-19 pandemic.

At KPU, we live and work on the traditional and unceded territories of the Kwantlen, Musqueam, Katzie, Semiahmoo, Tsawwassen, Qayqayt and Kwikwetlem peoples.





Jude Campbell

@judeofarts

I have since early childhood succumbed to the lure of collecting found objects. My work explores their materials, and transformation into narrative installations. In recent work, marking my seventieth year, I held a residency in the university common area, our Spruce Atrium. This afforded an opportunity to archive decades of memorabilia. From 1969 to the present the oppressive weight of physical and emotional traces of my past – letters, photos and journals – have gathered dust and earwigs in my basement. Renewed forms were created from this detritus. In excavating the past, periods of lightness, joy and freedom were closely matched by moments of confusion, heartbreak and sadness.

The power of the physical presence of the original artifacts to embody history led me to elevate their accessibility by mounting them in a museum display setting where viewers could see excerpts and handle the documents. The residency proved rich in its ability to connect with viewers, who often shared stories of their own collections, personally amassed or bequeathed by relatives. Frequent conversations centred around comparisons of how communications have changed over time. In this residency I dove deeply into regular correspondence between my father and myself over 20 years, enriched by conversations with him over Zoom. This work continues to engage me as I search for traces of my mother, who died of Alzheimer's disease and whose physical marks are harder to find. Each step in the process enriches my understanding of life elements that have woven together to provide a stability and contentment I rest in at 70.

[Re]Collections

Mixed media installation



Melanie Costa
@textandcolour

I am a multi-disciplinary artist who is primarily working with the aesthetics and identity of the everyday. I wish to play with the illusions of monetary value we see in our culture. Today's society is dominated by consumerism. There is undeniable pressure to consume. I aim to capture the familiarity of these experiences that appear to visually repeat over and over. I chose to use repetition, in colours, forms, text and symbols, for a dual purpose: it is meant to deflate the notion of originality while elevating the mundane aesthetic experiences of our everyday lives. I wanted to speak specifically to consumerism and superficialities at the surface level in a confrontational, bold and crass approach to pop-culture; communicating these ideas through the use traditional sculpture and modern technology.

Monies
Mixed media



Allison Curtis
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These paintings explore the boundary line between landscape and abstraction, and amalgamate the two categories to create spaces that are neither interior nor exterior. I juxtapose naturalistic elements with geometric, pixel-like shapes, examining how we understand the world around us in the midst of an overwhelming amount of information. My heavy-handed layering lends itself to the idea of feeling overwhelmed.

Recently, I have been exploring the process of applying paint with the aid of tape, which allows me to get clean lines and rigid shapes. This also means that I do not see how each layer will react to the previous ones until I remove the tape. This forces me to relinquish control, and rely heavily on the process to produce patterns. I displace these patterns with biomorphic shapes containing changes in color, scale, and/or orientation.

Despite alluding to geographical iconography such as trees, rivers, and rocks, I do not consider myself a landscape painter. Rather, I am an artist exploring human perception, and the roles that colour and form play in tricking the eye, and fragmenting space.

Perennial
Acrylic on canvas
42" x 66"



Sheila Van Delf
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Home started out as way to document the land where I live, acknowledging the fleeting time I have here, and trying to record my feelings about it in a series of paintings and photographs. As I worked, and chose my images, and made decisions about what was most important to me. I realized that I was recording memories more than places. Each painting is a testimony to a moment that is important to me. This makes sense, of course, because our feelings about place are always connected to memories and experiences. Since they all make up a part of my story, I titled each painting as a type of narrative, part of an anecdote I might tell someone about where I live and why I love it.

This year, with its isolation and solitude, has been a time of contemplation for me, a time to spend a wonderful amount of time outdoors experiencing nature in this place. I marvel at the work of the Creator and his incredible design, and I am grateful for whatever time he gives me here. Instead of feeling loneliness, it's been a calming withdrawal from this anxious COVID world and also provides an escape from what has become an increasingly virtual life. I'm becoming more reconciled to the idea of this being a transitory experience living here because I'm being mindful of my surroundings and intentional with my time here.

Looking West from the Fire Pit (from my Home Series)

Acrylic on canvas
31" x 47"



Kia Eriksson

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My art practice centers around absurdity. Like melodies played out of tune, my sculptures speak to what is beautiful and nonsensical in everyday life. Louis Carroll's heroic character, Alice said, "If I had a world of my own, everything would be nonsense." Leaning into this irrationality, my art practice is a form of ritual and play, where reality and imagination collide. This allows me to explore dualities of tension and tranquillity, allure and ugliness, the ordinary and extraordinary.

I am captivated by domestic and industrial materials – their mundane, inexpensive, and manufactured essence. Even when labeled as disposable, these materials can be reborn and transformed, emerging as something otherworldly. These anti-heroic forms are made in obvious ways, without mystery, allowing them to exist in authentic and awkward conditions. Their meaning resides in their rawness and vulnerability. They stay in a continuous flux of appearing both finished and under development.

The process behind the work is revealed through the traces of the body lingering behind in the materials. Evidence of past touch – drilling, wrapping, knotting, and tearing material – uncovers the anxieties left behind. Similar to a performance, this process embraces accidents and chance, without being exact or precise. My "de-skilling" approach speaks to approximation – I work quickly, without an established technique, seeking immediate solutions. Like Alice, my art seems child-like – ambiguous while free from limitations.

Tree House

Pallets, acrylic paint, and joint compound
53" x 48" x 112"



Theresa Hu
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As an international student from China, the experience of living in different countries gave me a chance to explore diverse cultures that in turn influenced my art. A lot of my work explores the cultural conflicts between the East and the West; the integration of these very different cultures is an emphasis in my creative process, focusing at the same time on issues of identity.

I like to use what I find to be gorgeous colours to create surreal narratives. I also like the challenge of combining traditional art forms with new media, often working with oil paints, digital collages, photography, and video editing.

The concepts in my artwork often come from significant memories and places I've been. The stories I want to tell come from my own emotions and the self-identity I've developed as a cultural traveler. For this graduating exhibition, I draw inspiration from Chinese mythology, with dominating themes of "dreams" and "fantasy." The awe-inspiring and sometimes bewildering stories I grew up with are like a fantasy world I sometimes escape to. In this series, I use female characters as a surrogate of myself, as well as drawing inspiration from my friends and traditional Chinese art. I like to bring my observations from everyday life into my artwork; I also like to express myself in different perspectives, which manifests as the contrast between the dream world and reality.

The Dream of Long

Oil on canvas
40" x 30"



Taylor Hudson

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In this series, I fragment the body and create large-scale oil paintings of viscera. Often my work is abstracted to the point where subject matter is unrecognizable but transcends into a state where the aura of a body is present. My work borders abstraction and representation – I look to historic painters for inspiration and visceral handling of paint, such as Maria Lassnig or Sohan Qadri. This work centres on the complex relationship between the external body and inner self. I use images of surgeries to inform my subject matter.

I use my whole body as a meditation throughout the painting process. I use colours that are aesthetically pleasing to soften what is dysphoric and to invite the viewer into the work. This dysphoric quality in my work relates to trauma and feeling separated from the body. At the same time, these two-dimensional works are physically separate from the viewer. The paint application and scale create a material separation while the subject matter and physical handling of paint bring the viewer into the embodied experience. The painting stands in its own space, which furthers this idea of disconnection and reconnection. Formally, these paintings repurpose physical trauma.

Me and My Void, We Got the Key

Oil on canvas

60" x 60"



Alex Jones

@ajartwork19

The psyche, the aspect of the self, comprising of the mind, the body and the spirit, has been at the center of my artistic practice. Often, during moments of heightened emotion we are reminded of the connection between these aspects, how each contributes to a whole. This body of work is an exploration of those moments, in turn creating an introspection of the self, and reconnecting the body to the mind.

Through a combination of abstraction and representation, my images are rendered to reflect back on these moments of heightened emotion. The use of colour, layering, texture and mixed media correspond each to respective emotion. Ideas of stress, anxiety, loneliness and euphoria are among some of those explored in this series. By conveying these moments, I am re-establishing a physical connection to them and to my mind, effectively expressing the self as a connected whole.

Echoes

Mixed media acrylic on canvas
60" x 48"



Karolina Kijanka
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My recent work with abstraction has been in analyzing and summarizing the current events of my past year. Fortunately, being able to explore the outdoors in the last 6-8 months, it's been an exquisite experience. The places I've visited have all been within the Vancouver region that have lush green forests and deep rich colors. On the other hand, while staying indoors, I've been exploring my own mind, feelings and emotions, leading to self-reflection in my artwork. Using a time line and expressive motion, I playfully record my emotional and physical experiences on the canvas. I am also very attracted to creating art pieces that hold presence and tell their own story. Using my personal energy I connect with the canvas to create a character within it. My paintings visually capture a dance of energy through my gestural strokes and experimentation with a range of shapes and colors. Oil paint and charcoal are the main mediums used, due to their flexibility and delightful contrast in texture. Color selection is focused on a neutral palette in order to reference body tones that also echo a calm sensation. The flexibility and pigmentation of these materials also allow me to achieve and explore, new concepts and ideas.

By exploring abstraction my playful production of restful and exciting energy in my paint strokes and composition, lead me to both showcase and reflect my own personality in a way that I see as brilliant. My work is structured on natural instinct, and therefore my work perhaps isn't immediately resolved to the viewer but invites the audience to create their own solution with some brief context. This leads a drive toward curiosity.

New Beginnings

Oil on canvas
240" x 180"



Jessica Leung

@NCJLeun

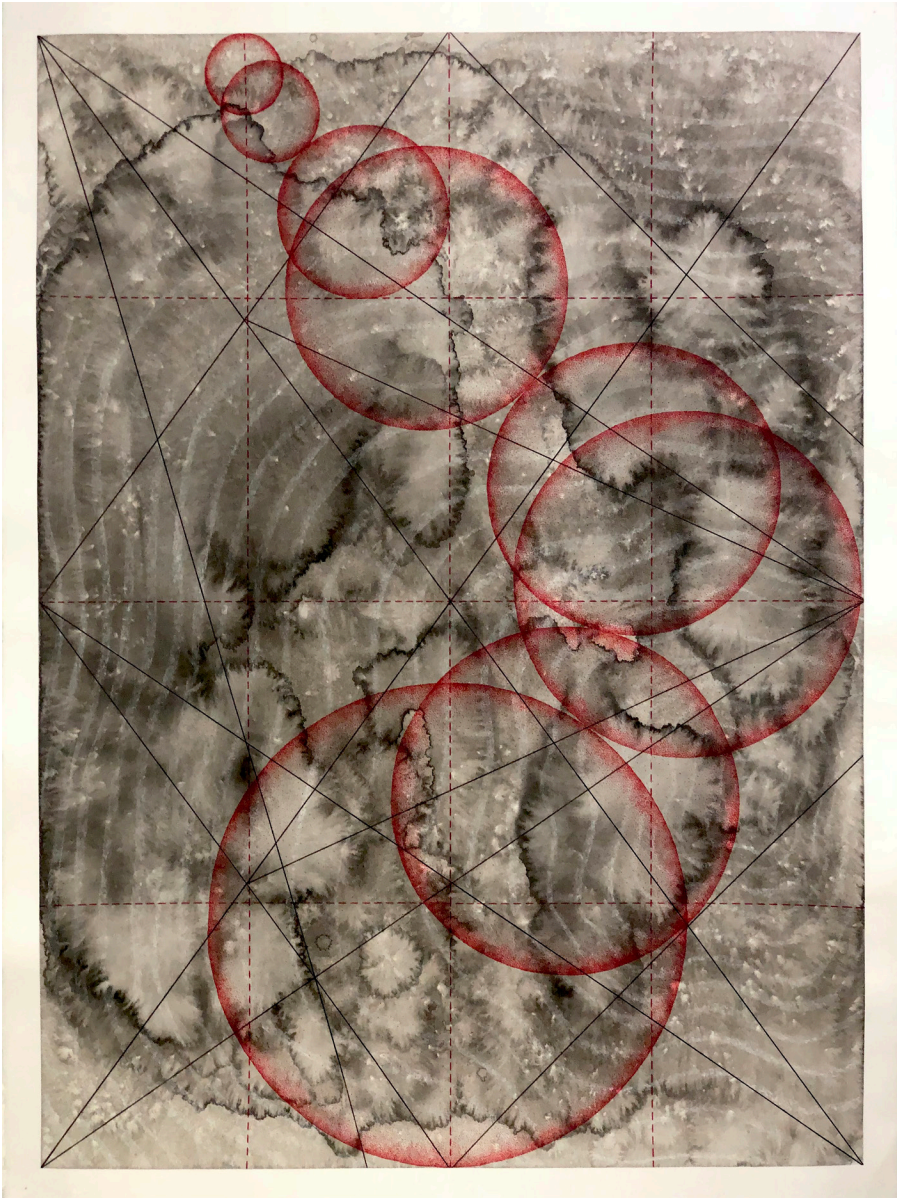
Self-Reflection is a series that explores a process of gained self-awareness. Through visual scores, I'm able to document my daily experiences and reflect back on the obstacles and emotions I have overcome. Similar to writing in a journal, this approach is a therapeutic way for me to express thoughts and emotions.

In both my digital and mixed media pieces, I incorporate various lines and shapes to express different movements of the energy of an emotion. Like the organic shapes scattered throughout a few of my pieces – they represent calm and controlled emotions, whereas the shapes that are more ridged represent unstable and or anxious feelings. Playing with stucco, textural elements help embody further emotions in the piece. Other shapes, symbols, and colors help reinforce the experiences and thoughts I may convey in the image.

The goal isn't to display a clear story for others to read but to express yourself, and recognize why you did it, or felt that way. The main audience is me, but I hope to inspire others to gain self-awareness and create their own visual scores.

Expectations

Acrylic and stucco on canvas
18" x 24"



Ashley Manning
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My work explores science, astronomy, the process of making art, and the layering of different materials to create abstract drawings. My goal is to create mixed media pieces using asymmetrical patterns and textures. The sources of interest I use to guide my work are the concepts of space, planets, constellations, viruses, mapping, and the phases of the moon.

The themes in my work are scientific concepts in astronomy and biology. Experiences that have influenced my work include COVID-19 and the closest non-impacting asteroids to Earth in 2020. The research that I reference in my artwork comes from NASA's website as well as global news and articles. My artwork references influential artists Yayoi Kusama, Agnes Denes, Sandra Duran, and Wassily Kandinsky. I am currently working with ink wash, ballpoint pens, sharpies, salt, acrylic paint, soap, and chalk pastel. In my drawings, I use spheres, pointillism, and repeated and broken lines. The loose quality of the ink wash background contrasts the controlled and intentionally placed lines and spheres. My process includes the planning and layering of materials, lines and shapes, from loosely placed to intentionally placed. I experiment with the layering of various materials to create different effects and textures on paper. The placement of the ink wash with the layering of salt creates an uncontrolled reaction. The spontaneity of the ink wash creates a balance with the controlled placement of lines and pointillism. The repetitive acts of layering materials, spheres, lines, and pointillism are very meditative and calming processes.

Linear Connection with Spheres #2

Mixed media
22" x 30"



Morgan McClean
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My work as an artist is based on different aspects of human perception, whether this be the perception of nature, mental illness, dreams, or personal beliefs. I focus on one aspect of human perception that is important to my life and that I feel knowledgeable about, and use various mediums and techniques to create a series based on that aspect of perception. The reason I have chosen digital art as my main focus is I find in today's society it is the easiest way to spread information. For my animation stylistically I am inspired by Shadow Theatre, a group of shadow dancers who perform narratives in the shadows casting silhouettes. For my paintings I am inspired by digital artists Kaya Oldaker and Jeszika Le Vye. Oldaker's work stylistically looks more painterly than typical digital art, this inspires my own digital art style. Le Vye's palette is on a darker, more emotional scope. This has inspired me to use colour to convey mood and atmosphere in my paintings, not just use colors that are realistic.

The purpose of my current artwork *Positive Interactions* is to start to reverse the negative perceptions towards sharks in today's society that are heavily influenced by the media. My goal is to open people's eyes up to positive encounters with sharks. My work has stemmed from my devotion to protecting and researching sharks, ever since I was a child I have loved these animals, and disliked the inaccuracy of information about them. Popular informational shows such as *Shark Week* promote fear of an animal that, while requires caution and respect, does not need to be feared. I intend to show sharks in a positive light, to help erase some of the negativity the mainstream media has used to skew viewer's perspectives.

Safety
Digital painting



Adam Plottel
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A feeling of melancholy; the simultaneous appreciation and guilt of creating art in a world fraught with injustice and inequality. Why bother painting at all? Plagued by existential ennui, creating art in this new decade demands a certain level of introspection – an acknowledgement by both artist and viewer that art needs to exist as not just a commentary on the world, but to serve a function to facilitate change, or at least contribute to the discourse. To this end, I make art that critiques tropes surrounding more traditional art forms, to adapt them to a modern setting.

While I have explored a myriad of mediums, painting is the one I most often come back to, landscape being my subject of choice. The works of the Group of Seven, particularly J.E.H. MacDonald, are the inspiration for my work. His paintings are void of human subjects, despite the landscape being very much inhabited. This helped reinforce colonial efforts to assert the white settlers as the first and rightful inhabitants of Canada. While the traditional landscape attempts to portray the artist's view as a factual representation, my work attempts to reconcile my own gaze with the landscapes I paint. The presence of human intervention is an important facet of my work, and this has two purposes. The first is to force the viewer to acknowledge the inherent biases in portraying landscapes, and the second is to bring into conversation the human influence on the landscape. It is important that human structures become a standard in landscape if the medium is to continue, lest the colonial gaze continue to permeate our understanding of the world.

Alley
Acrylic on board
36" x 48"



Steven Robinson

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By inflicting pain and damage on the earth, we damage ourselves; geological features and landscapes are affected and eroded by humans. Representing a geological form that appears to be sick or wounded, from a human ailment, like a sickness or a wound, allows a new perspective of the geological form that can be comparable to the human body. Humans must keep their bodies safe and healthy to survive and thrive. Humanity cannot survive without a habitable environment, yet we seem oblivious to the fact that the environment is unhealthy and dying.

In my practice, the compositions rely on process. The surfaces are treated as landscapes and the processes that happen on each surface replicate the geological processes in the environment. Evidence of human infliction on the environment is represented by the artist's hand within the work. Using acrylic, a water-based paint, allows for the medium to be frozen and boiled and used as a tool to create. By using my hands, I take on the role of monumental geological processes and embody these tectonic forces by scraping the ice, or glacier, onto the canvas surface and allowing the painted ice to melt in order to simulate human infliction on various ecologies. The glacial erosion process is translated into my practice; scaled down to create these compositions. It is critical in my practice to alter the canvases by leaving a lot of the creative process to the medium itself. The artist's hand is evident in the work, but only to represent the traumatic overindulgence humanity has wrought over the environment.

Interminate

Acrylic on canvas
24" x 36"



Jessica Spanza
@Jessicaspanza

As humans, we have shaped our environments to suit our needs by affecting the natural resources available to us. In my work, I use a variety of organically sourced materials which I construct into forms that demonstrate human influence on nature. It is my goal to establish the human relationship that bridges natural and constructed environments. I am particularly interested in the life cycles of these materials; everything we construct has roots in natural elements, to which we apply processes of shaping (into forms that please us). In my abstract works, this occurs by structuring components into an aesthetic composition. But in our homes, we preserve the wood which would otherwise decay and shape it so that it may shelter us from its formational elements. Even substances that are deemed artificial originate from natural materials which we have processed.

The human hand interferes with the procession of decay so that materials such as wood undergo a second period of formation after their initial growth, but inevitably the materials succumb to their origins and once more dissolve back into the earth. We are not separate entities from this lifecycle. Despite the many layers of refinement, everything that surrounds us begins and ends in the earth, and so do we. It is easy to forget this one fact; we are from nature. Although there are serious concerns about humanity overwhelming its resources, I do not intend my work to focus on this excess, but instead demonstrate the nature of our existence. I hope that by making this point clear I can facilitate a greater respect for our environment.

Processing Landscape
Found material assemblage
3.5' x 3.5'



Jacob Strohan
@jacobstrohan

The interplay between the external and the internal – the physical environment and my psyche – has been the object of critical analysis throughout my visual arts practice. The exploration of this theme is fuelled by a desire to understand how the external environment affects my subconscious mind. With the tools of analogue photography, I navigate familiar and unfamiliar landscapes in search of imagery that is uncanny in its resemblance to my internal state. The atmosphere conveyed in the resulting images is effectively a manifestation of my psyche.

L20201028-02
Analogue photograph
20" x 16"



Mika Zhu

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The relationship between humankind and nature is constantly changing: from reverence for nature to development of land, from protection to destruction. For the sake of their material needs, spiritual enjoyment and interests, humans forcibly change the growth patterns of other animals, destroy animal habitats, and upset the ecological balance. Although people have begun to pay attention to the protection of the environment and to ecological balance, the moral consideration of animals has often gone unheeded. I believe humans and animals should be regarded as two equal subjects in ecology because animals possess the same advanced cognitive capacities that justify the attribution of basic moral rights.

My work emphasizes the more-than-human and conveys that these animals have not just instrumental but also inherent worth. Animals have basic interests and moral consideration – animals deserve recognition, acknowledgement, and protection. My work speaks against human-centered prejudice and encourages the equal interests of all morally considerate beings. My paintings are an emotional response to what I see in my daily life, and I try to show viewers what animals are going through during this era. I hope to convey my ideas about equal moral worth in all human and nonhuman individuals so that animals can live in safety and be treated with the same respect as humans, rather than endure lives filled with abuse and misery. Through my paintings, I emphasize that animals should have a right to life and a right not to be used by humans.

KFH

Acrylic on canvas
36" x 48"

JUDE CAMPBELL

MELANIE COSTA

ALLISON CURTIS

SHEILA VAN DELF

KIA ERIKSSON

THERESA HU

TAYLOR HUDSON

ALEX JONES

KAROLINA KIJANKA

JESSICA LEUNG

ASHLEY MANNING

MORGAN MCCLEAN

ADAM PLOTTEL

STEVEN ROBINSON

JESSICA SPANZA

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