

HAND-PICKED
OK



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HEADBONES GALLERY

Exhibition Catalog: Hand-Picked Okanagan
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This catalog was created for the exhibition "Hand-Picked Okanagan"
at Headbones Gallery, Vernon, BC Canada, August 3 - October 20, 2017

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Doug Alcock, David T. Alexander, Glenn Clark, Carin Covin, Briar Craig, Robert Dmytruk, Jen Dyck, Leonard Epp, Diane Feught, Johann Feught, Joice M. Hall, John Hall, Fern Helfand, Angelika Jaeger, Byron Johnston, Ann Kipling, Patricia Kushner, Mary Smith McCulloch, Steve Mennie, Rhonda Neufeld and Rodney Konopaki, Herald Nix, Julie Oakes, Gary Pearson, Stephen Lee Scott, Heidi Thompson, Laura Widmer and David Wilson

Hand-Picked Okanagan - Commentary by Julie Oakes
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Micro Publishing

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Commentary by Julie Oakes



Headbones Gallery, Vernon, BC - 2017



Hand-picked Okanagan

Hand-Picked Okanagan, Headbones' annual exhibition of Okanagan artists is like a high-wire act where the performers have had another year to hone and tone disciplines that were already top grade. *Hand-Picked Okanagan* is muscular and balanced, an act that is responsive to the times while maintaining a level of aesthetic veracity – an 'act' that is professional in both body and spirit. With a call for the artists to bring forward and choose what they wanted to present, the resulting group picture of 'now' is reassuring.

The line-up is stellar - Doug Alcock, David T. Alexander, Glenn Clark, Carin Covin, Briar Craig, Robert Dmytruk, Jen Dyck, Leonard Epp, Diane Feught, Johann Feught, Joice M. Hall, John Hall, Fern Helfand, Angelika Jaeger, Byron Johnston, Ann Kipling, Patricia Kushner, Mary Smith McCulloch, Steve Mennie, Rhonda Neufeld and Rodney Konopaki, Herald Nix, Julie Oakes, Gary Pearson, Stephen Lee Scott, Heidi Thompson, Laura Widmer and David Wilson.

The landscape is unavoidably featured in *Hand-Picked Okanagan* but the take on the 'scape is varied. This has been a year where the elements have exerted a pressure on the Okanagan with insistence. Waters rose in the springtime to near biblical proportions and as smoke from fires raging nearby fills the valley and the season is dubbed “the summer of fire”, artists have both reflected the changes and maintained place. Not only nature but

also the political climate has been torrential with an unfriendly cold front blowing up from the south, the threat of larger disturbances coming from as far as Korea and intermittent confusing turbulence from Russia.

Joice M. Hall's painting *Epiphany* shows a strip of Okanagan Lake with the Mission Hill Winery tower in the foreground. It captures the wonder of the valley as a beam of winter sun illuminates a strip of land. There is a near divine aura of equity between the billowing clouds, the magnificent sun with the mirrored reflection on the lake and the human dwellings that rest on the rolling hills. In 2003, Hall painted this same vista ravished by fire and yet even with the knowledge of advancing destruction, the beauty remained uppermost, ART being the common denominator. *Epiphany*, 2015, is a reminder of nature's resilience.

Laura Widmer's tiny intaglio *Solitude* echoes



the mightiness of nature by reducing the large landscape to a minuteness that was achieved by a finely tuned human hand with the informed perspective of being a practiced printmaker and able to bring to this diminution the attention and skill that the very grand subject commands. *Solitude*, reinforces the absolute individuality (and solitude) of nature through Widmer's practiced sensibility proving that both, the landscape and the artist, are intimate with big and little.



Through many seasons, Herald Nix has been working on plein-air pieces focusing on the same Okanagan vista, painted hundreds of times that show atmospheric and aesthetic changes registered over differences of time and weather. His recent paintings depict the sun turned red through the smoke scrim with shrouded skies and indistinct yet rich variations. The mood is sublime, impressing the mind with a sense of grandeur. Kant suggested that the sublime can embody attributes that cause arrest (the virtuosity of the high-wire act). Supreme and outstanding, the sublime associates with beauty but remains unattainable. Kant cited Francisco Goya's painting *Colossus* (or *Panic*), a giant passing behind a mountain whose presence is too far distant to truly *be known* while still being impressive. Nix's interpretation of the landscape allows the entire surround to speak as if he has opened a conversation

with the landscape which we too are able to join as we view the pieces and their relationship to one another.



Ann Kipling's engagement with landscape shows the results of her workouts with the outdoors. Having observed and recorded the shifts and bends of seasons with an attention to detail that has at times consumed the page with the thoroughness of her gaze, these August watercolors with charcoal done in 2002 suggest a mature understanding of nature. They are robust and energetic as if she has tumbled or wrestled down mighty ebullient forces.



Rodney Konopaki's and Rhonda Neufeld's collaborative woodcut *Buffalo Pound Lake* has an investigative and meandering flow to the mark-making. Done by walking the landscape in tandem, their practice researches the sharing of human expression and brings a double depth of understanding to the imagery. The dark ground is serene and the relationship between man and nature appears to coexist with harmony.

Nature Scape 1 by Angelika Jaeger has a surface delicateness that suggests oriental ink drawings or treasures from other generations with an ever



present birth and death implied. Part of a series where she explored the affect of time upon substance, after painting the image she buried the canvas in earth for months. Like a body exhumed, there is a musty aura but like a smell that carries the freshness and promise of the earth within it, this was a positive transformation where the great act of distancing from her own creation lent an 'otherness' to the imagery as if a rare foundling had been



substituted for the original. Jaeger has managed to deal with the unsettling discomfort of "ashes to ashes, dirt to dirt" by elevating the process to an aesthetic experience.

David Wilson's landscape series addressing water uses signs and symbols derived from his Okanagan Nation's heritage in combination with his bright pop style but these four new works have skipped out like a rock on a smooth lake showing the skill of his hand and renewed flight of artistic spirit. From micro to macro, through tonal bands of color, with precision and finesse, ancient tales are revived and new meanings from trajectories into contemporary concerns. Wilson, with eyes of an eagle, renders the environment with a clarity both lyrical and prescient.



Landscape veers into abstraction in a large David T. Alexander painting, *Smoke on the Water*, completed just two weeks before he had to leave his home in the Okanagan when a fire blazed nearby. Alexander captured an uncanny beauty, nuanced from the smoke drifting in. It is as if he has trapped images of the powerful fire in direct confrontation with living, growing nature, as if memories of the tremendous force hover over the painting raising

thoughts as to whether the piece was an unconscious prediction that bubbled up while he was processing what to make of the heavily laden air, smoky from further afield.



The cognoscible push and pull between process and result, shattering and coalescing, reduction and addition, falling and rising, expanding and contracting of Heidi Thompson's work draws together worlds that are often dissonant without pinning down. Because her process is so endemic to the work, it enters into the viewing like spice into taste, a hint of 'how' adding to the sensation of seeing like science explaining matter. Forming a part of the material world and immeasurably extended in time and space, the cosmic reference is unavoidable.

Doug Alcock celebrates a larger perspective with a sculpture to acknowledge Canada's 150th, Nick



of Time inspired by the building of the Kettle Valley Railroad. Laying down the rails that joined the nation from coast to coast was toil that demonstrated the powers of man as the iron horse astonished native populations, upturned ecology and broke through strictures of time and place. But it came with a heavy price. Alcock makes monumental the workers exploited for progress, salutes first nations and with the very material that strung a line across prairies, valleys and mountains, has created an Iron Being with the head of a raptor and the body of a man who carries within him not only his ever-present human skull (symbolic of his inevitable end) but also the skull of the dignified raptor. Criss-crossed with barb wire there is an opening where his backbone would be so that the word 'spineless' creeps into the story.

Carin Covin's abstract circular composition brings to mind the essential elements of Okanagan sun and sky but the frontal scrim, light and airy, is like



domesticity overlaying the wild as the careful handling brings to the fore an intricacy of relationships between the patterned rows, suggesting lacey curtains, macramé dishcloths or baby christening dresses. The tracing, trailing drawing that loops and connects furthers this



reading as her command of the territory makes the point of view determined - front, center and yet permeable.

Mary Smith McCulloch strikes a sympathetic chord between history and immediacy in the monoprint *Juxtaposition*. The imagery was sourced during a visit to Krakow. McCulloch has cross-referenced a graffiti image of a Russian singer who defected from the Soviet Union to pursue a career in Paris (nicknamed Trololo because of his trilling voice) with a statue of the Virgin Mary. Although it is currently less of an argument than a conversation, the relationship between church and communism set in the context of the disintegrating building becomes a symbol of current struggles.



Robert Dmytruk's earlier works had been prompted by an aerial view of his family land where powerplants had caused toxicity. Although the lot number 52 is still apparent, the images are more akin to a party than a recrimination and speaks of the rejuvenation that is part of Okanagan living. His colors, bright as a beach, and the innovative use of collage and resin where the surface slick keeps his hand at a slight distance brings about a contemporaneous stance revealing yet shielding.

Add to the mix Dmytruk's personality that swerves naturally towards showmanship and *Exotic Elsewhere to Dream* and *Elegant Prose* captures 'the good times'.



Glenn Clark a resident of Penticton shows a high class view of a tired old building in his city because once he had rendered it in his super realist style, the subject gained status. The familiar old diner sign reads as an emblem of good living with the



crown on top reinforcing the illusion to wealth and position when in actuality the neon relic melts into the chaos of its urban environment with humility. Only a visual connoisseur such as Clark could have isolated this flotsam and 'brought it home' to grant it renewed resonance.

John Hall takes another turn on super realism with his painting *Rattle*. With a slap of over-the-top sweetness and a visual sugar rush big enough to satisfy a serious choc-a-holic, Hall doesn't miss a step as he dances between realism and abstraction. As if the size (gigantic) dissembles the subject matter, one vacillates between chocolates and *shapes*, icing and *light*, a treat and the sense that one doesn't know chocolate at all for the painting brings the pure realm of visual being into the artistic field and this insert belies the commonality of a confection. As with Glenn Clark, Hall has honed the initial choice of what to paint down to a fine point.



In an era when much of art is political, polemical or a comment on social norms, the psychological kaleidoscope of humanity is seen from a variety of artistic interpretations. Jen Dyck, like McCulloch, also turns her head to the intersection

between church and state though Dyck's take could be interpreted as the influence of the church on a state-of-mind. Always left of center, her strange combinations of settings and characters are dramatic with a mimicking resemblance to the mixture of tragedy and comedy found in every-day life. The women in these collages seem on the edge of falling to pieces before the specters of the female mysteries around which the Christian pantheon circles. *Nothing* is normal, not the old or the new as seen through Jen Dyck's oeuvre.



Briar Craig's text based silk screen pulls the most talked about contemporary politician into the fray. In his latest work *Post Truth*, the reading suffers from interference as if the message has been stopped mid tweet or blurred by static. Craig's biting

rehash of Trump is as current as a turntablist's creation, where in the re-mix the initial elements are revived in a combination where although there is a relationship to the original recording, the artistic manipulation furthers the perception. As Trump interference denies the objective and relies upon the subjective, the reading of Craig's piece, garbled through the text's graphic placement, captures the absurdity of our times.

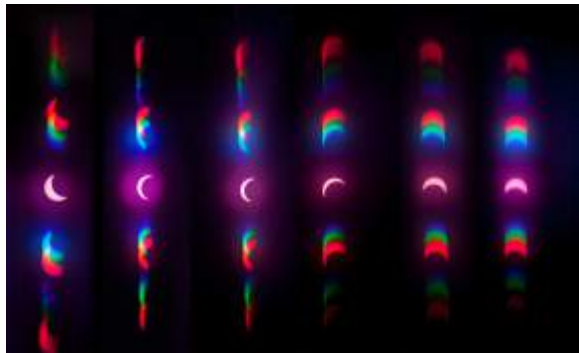


Gary Pearson's thick impasto painting *This Old Heart-ache, Man Reading* ties into a variety of concerns in the current political climate through a poignant image of vulnerability. It is difficult to ascertain if this is the intimate weight of a broken heart that has given reason for the hand on his heart or a more general pang at the loss of reading books that the digital age has brought into play but since grayscale carries anguish well, Pearson's confidently stated rendering sets a scene conducive for contemplation.

Stephen Lee Scott turns the tables as well within the contemporary context of tattooing. The symbols that emerge with the necessary strength to be etched onto the human body are loaded with significance although the meaning may not be



intended to communicate but to obfuscate when the secret recognition of cult, club or lover is the object of the imagery. With sufficient import to warrant branding while longevity relies on the stability – or instability – of a biological surface (the skin) the graphic impact of both *Shrike* and *Tattoo Study #1* where a white monkey cavorts are memorable images.



Fern Helfand sees beyond the truth through a series of photographs that she often stitches

together in order to bring to life a power-punched perception that can escape human comprehension in the immediate. Her logging series attributes individuality to each log as if they are asserting personal identities. Ever vigilant, she has captured the recent solar eclipse through a vintage exposed Polaroid slide film. The latent layers of dyes in the film broke up the white light into rainbows and the darkening of the sun gained an extension into another phenomenon.



Diane Feught's gouache is a fastidious portrayal of a scene from an earlier day, in another place where the drape and cut of a dress and a distant group of men gives clues to a narrative but leaves us hanging. Titled *Judgment* it is uncertain whether the men are conferring over a decision or the woman is mentally passing judgment on the men, self-absorbed below her on a street from an old country. The status between the characters is nebulous, their relationship to Feught is not made clear and yet the visual attention she has paid to rendering them lets it be known that without a doubt, the authority to form an opinion rests within the picture frame and the outcome will be transformative.

Humor, a distinctly human characteristic has many tones. Steve Mennie is the Master of Wry as well as a practiced master painter and printmaker. It is as if he is obligated to make a comment. Voraciously abreast of political and social issues, Mennie succinctly abridges content to present poignant, memorable critiques on culture without being didactic. *Head of the Class* is a simple equation with many answers. A head identified as a business man's head - in shirt and tie - seems an out-of-focus



everyman before the gestalt when the organized field (the face) becomes a crowd of military men of rank, themselves faceless and generic. The message may be in relation to the class struggle or a projection from a boy student's head but that is not all. Mennie suggests more behind the scene, irreconcilable un-knowables. His piece *Before and After*, too, is ambiguous. *What* is before or after and *what* has changed besides the font? Yet there *is* a change in dots, a vague mask, a darkening round where the eyes should be. Mennie has said it all with very few strokes, perhaps those of genius.



Byron Johnson's humor is a wink-and-a-nod with a tip-of-the-hat to formalism. He too has his eye open for the object that needs reformation and uses a wide variety of both found and manufactured components. *The Byro Ball* has a performative aspect built in, suggested but not evident. Performance art seeking an object other than documentation in which to further the life of the work often relies on props or costumes from the performances as art objects after the fact. Not *The Byro Ball*. *The Byro Ball* **is** the art – *and* it's a local golf trophy! It is strictly 'hors de commerce' for the only way it can be obtained is to be won. And to further obfuscate the messy game of art commerce- Byron Johnson is also a contender for the coveted trophy. Hung low to help with the reference, there is no question for those who know Johnson's work, as to the artist of *The Byro Ball*.

German born printmaker and painter Johann



Feught's *Self Portrait Painted in my very own Colours in my 66th Year* is witty. In 1500 Albrecht Durer, the German Renaissance painter and printmaker painted *Self portrait at the age of Twenty-eight Wearing a Coat with Fur Collar*. It is often titled *Self Portrait as Christ* because of the similarities between the pose with the hand raised as if in blessing and the concentrated gaze of the serene face against a dark background. Feught differentiates himself not only by age (and this was Durer's last portrait) but also with the phrase "painted in my very own colors". Feught's palette as a master printmaker, while using presses and techniques that would have been contemporary to Durer, has been distinctive. Richly saturated with puce, fuschia, pthalos, and other intense tints that are identified with a contemporary range of pigments, his subjects have been spiritual, romantic and historical with soaring architectonic spatial compositions usually associated with religion. Feught's is a wit that invokes a warm human smile and an affirmation of human love.



Julie Oakes' quirky character with a funny title has a past. It is both a joke and a truism. Women, most usually allocated house tasks (the *pink jobs*), wash, clean and cook. Plant-managers-of-the-home, women deal with the creation and deconstruction of domesticity including dealing with food waste. Recycling is an obvious solution for some things and composting with a garden is the sensible way for food waste but as animals and birds are being pushed to scrounge, whether in cities where squirrels and raccoons beset the trash cans or rurally where deer forage gardens, coyotes prowl for meat scraps and magpies scatter eggshells and orange peels, chicken bones are problematic. Too smelly to sit long in the compost or an outdoor can without attracting animals, Oakes, who often uses birds as a stand-in for the female has this bright blue character titled *Travelling with Chicken Bones*.



When the word 'play' means 'to jest' while in the same breath to call up 'a dramatic composition or piece' Leonard Epp's *The Martian Sandboat* could have blown on stage with perfect timing to delight the audience. Impeccably aesthetic with the mustard green pyramidal slab atop which flies a delicately painted boat that can be powered by a wind should it waft the feather, *The Martian*

Sandboat is as sophisticated as the practiced unconcern of a gentleman. It speaks powerfully of the moment where creativity lays waiting to be used, when the artist moved objects with the intent of making something more than the sum of their parts, added a little magic wisdom and voila! – art that holds testament to the amazing diversity of material existence comes into being.



Although the materials differ (paint and collage) Patricia Kushner does as Epp and with an acceptance of a common chord, probably as all artists do – she arranges physical pieces of reality, paint, media, scraps, colors, shapes, sizes in a manner that is informed by practice, unique to sensibility and influenced by experience. Organizing sounds, a musician 'arranges' a piece that communicates the inner life of the musician to his audience. Kushner's *The Arrangement* could be a gesture of appreciation towards the musical 'arrangement' for there are visual clues as to the orientation including the photos of a musical instrument and 'The Musi' as if mid phrase time jelled to become a visual momento, a piece, artwork.



Hand-Picked Okanagan runs August 02 until October 20, 2017. Interrupted by the solar eclipse and captured by Fern Helfand on August 21, this exhibition marks time and indicates the cultural temperature. It has been made by hand and picked with care.

Julie Oakes - 2017



Joice M. Hall- Headbones Gallery, 2017



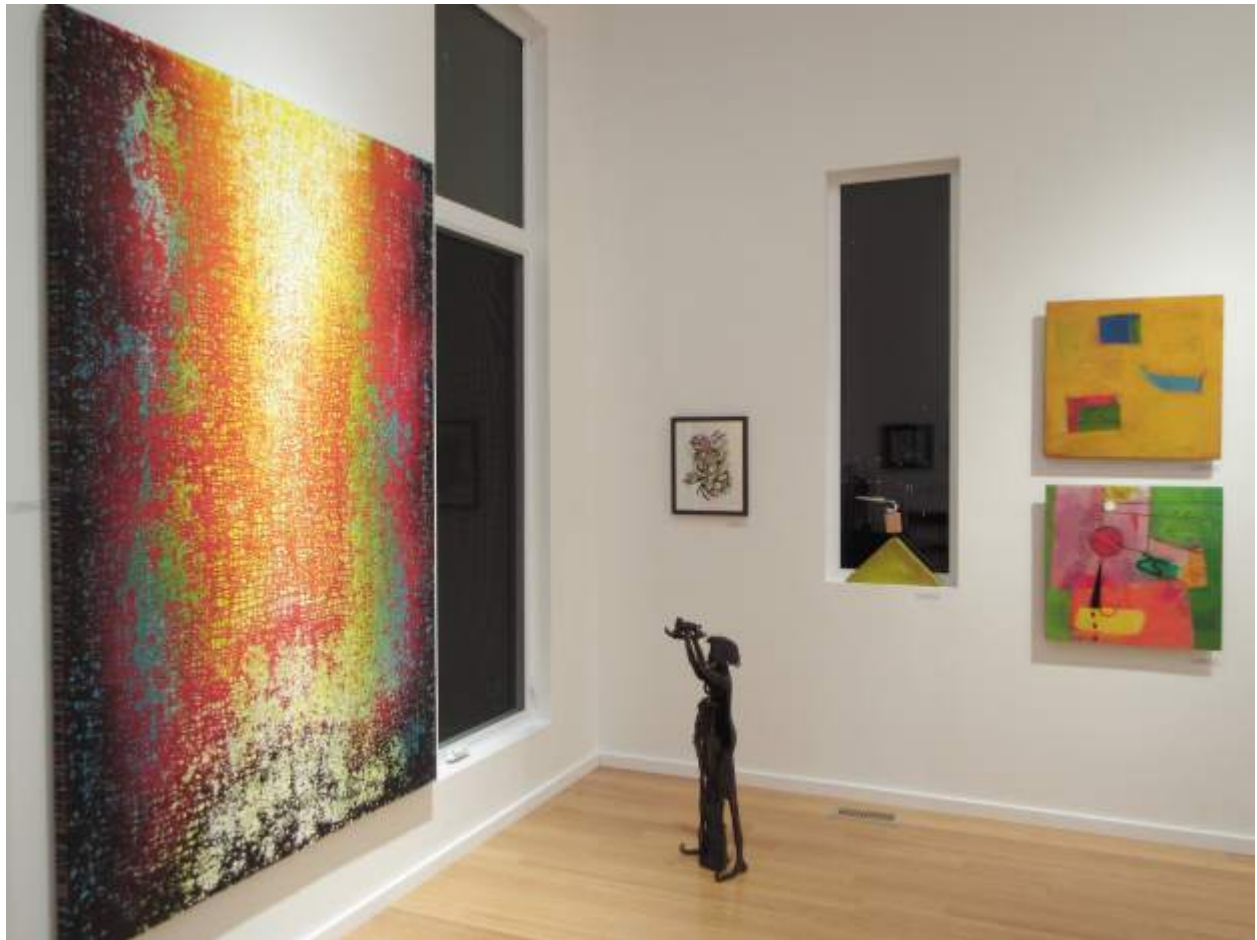
Headbones Gallery, Vernon, BC - 2017



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Joice M. Hall
Epiphany – 2015
Oil on canvas, 24x96 inches

JOICE M. HALL
West Kelowna, BC



Laura Widmer

Solitude – 2017

Intaglio, 1.5x2 inches, paper 13.75x10 inches, Ed. 3/15

LAURA WIDMER

Kelowna, BC





Herald Nix

Tappen Bay, Shuswap Lake (D) – 2017

Oil on panel, 8.5x10.5 inches

HERALD NIX
Salmon Arm, BC



Herald Nix
Tappen Bay, Shuswap Lake (K) – 2017
Oil on panel, 8.5x10.5 inches



Ann Kipling

July 27, 2002 (#4)

Watercolour, charcoal pencil on paper, 12x29 inches

ANN KIPLING
Falkland, BC



Ann Kipling
August 16, 2002 (#2)
Watercolour, charcoal pencil on paper, 12x29 inches

Rhonda Neufeld and Rodney Konopaki
Buffalo Pound Lake – 2013
Woodcut on paper, 29.5x55.5 inches, Edition of 7

Rhonda Neufeld & Rodney Konopaki
Spallumcheen & Vancouver, BC



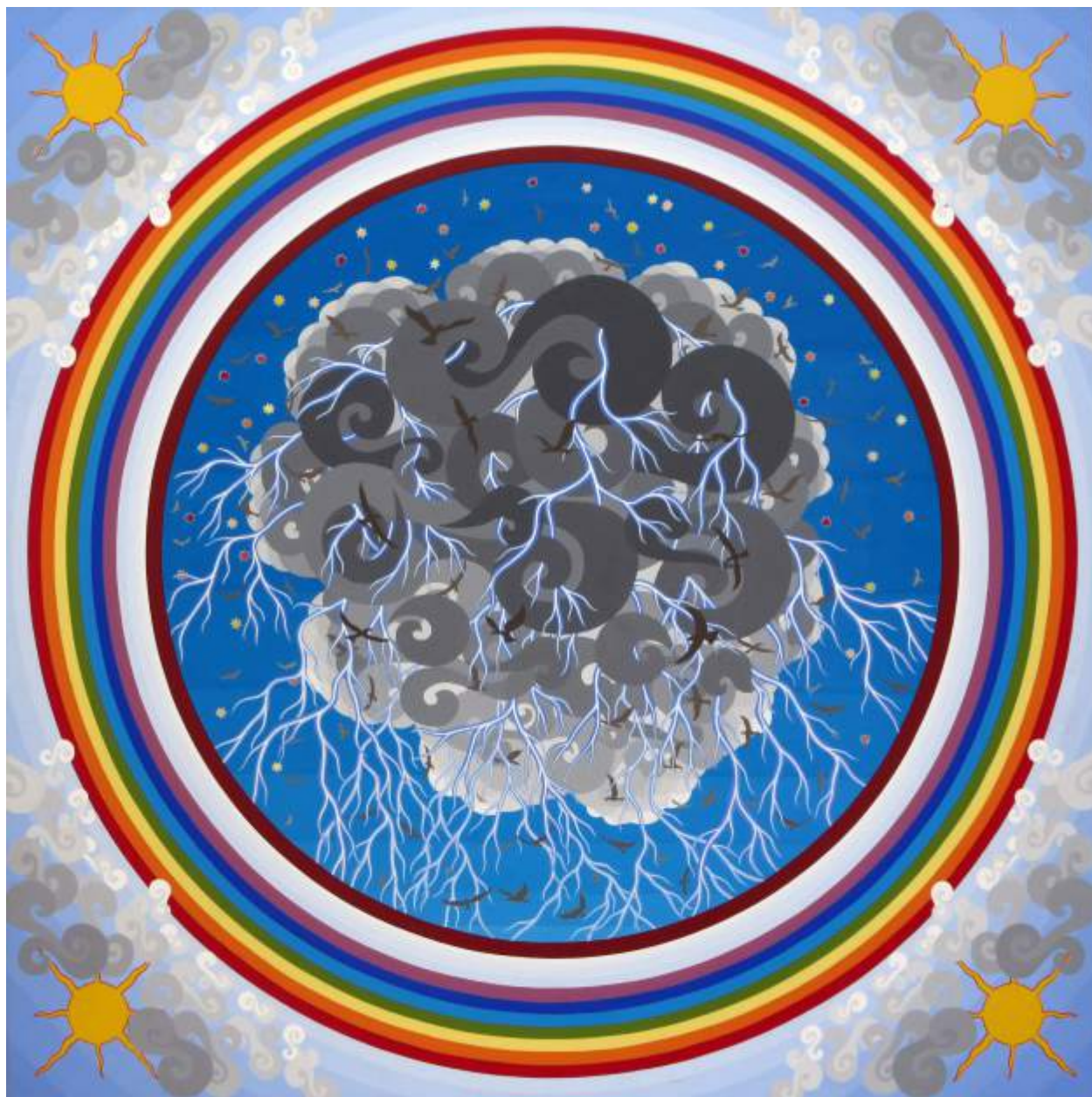
Angelika Jaeger

Nature Scape 1

Charcoal/chalk on buried canvas, 24x24 inches

Angelika Jaeger
Vernon, BC





David Wilson
The Gathering - 2017
Acrylic on canvas, 66x66 inches

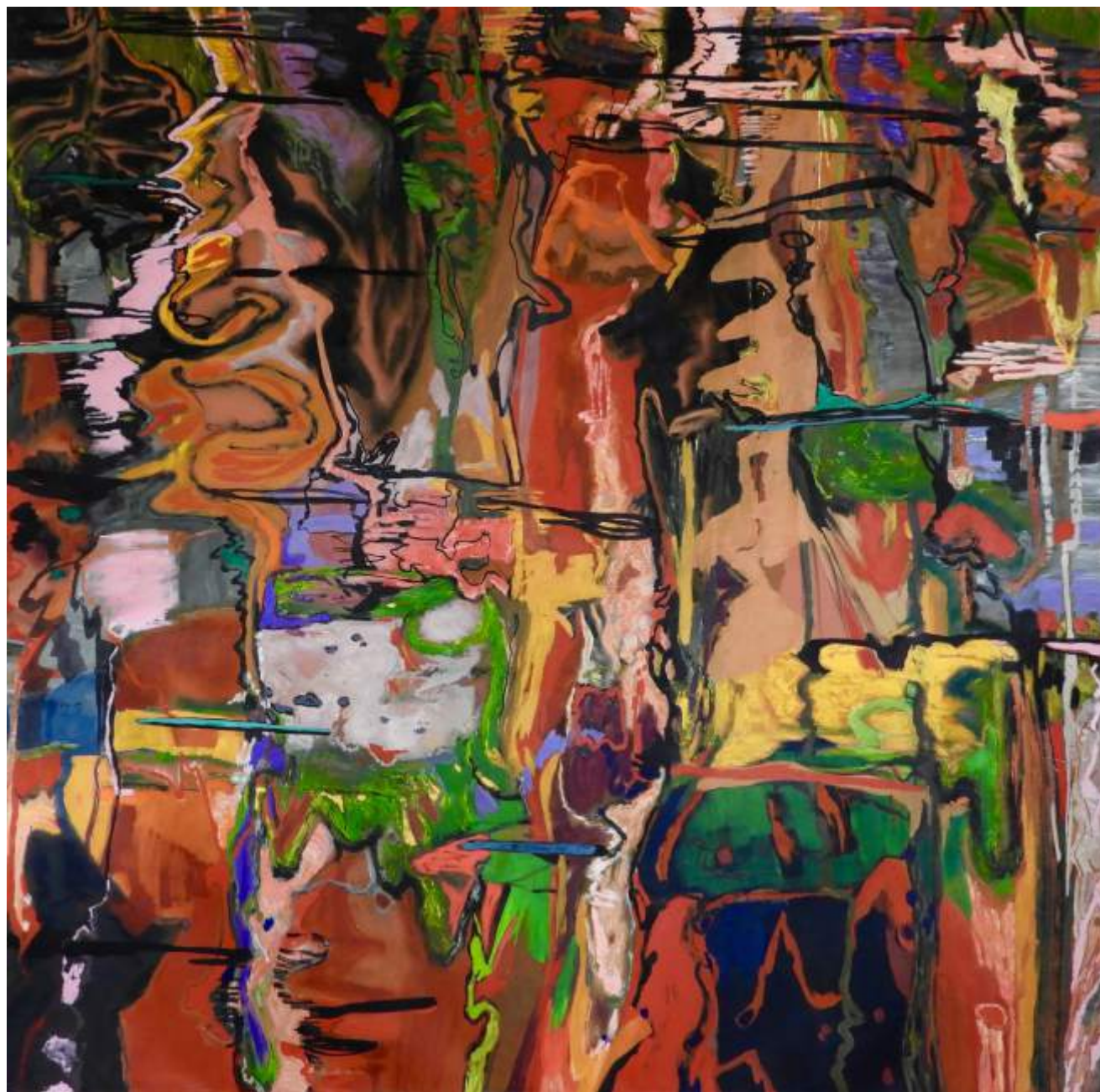
DAVID WILSON
Vernon, BC



David Wilson
Spring Salmon Harvest - 2017
Acrylic on canvas, 66x66 inches

David T. Alexander
Smoke on the Water - 2016-17
Acrylic on canvas, 78x79 inches

DAVID T. ALEXANDER
Lake Country, BC



Heidi Thompson
Red Veils Over Light – 2017
Acrylic on canvas, 85x56 inches

HEIDI THOMPSON
VERNON, BC



Doug Alcock

Nick of Time – 2015

Found, forged and fabricated steel, 36x11x11 inches

DOUG ALCOCK
Vernon, BC



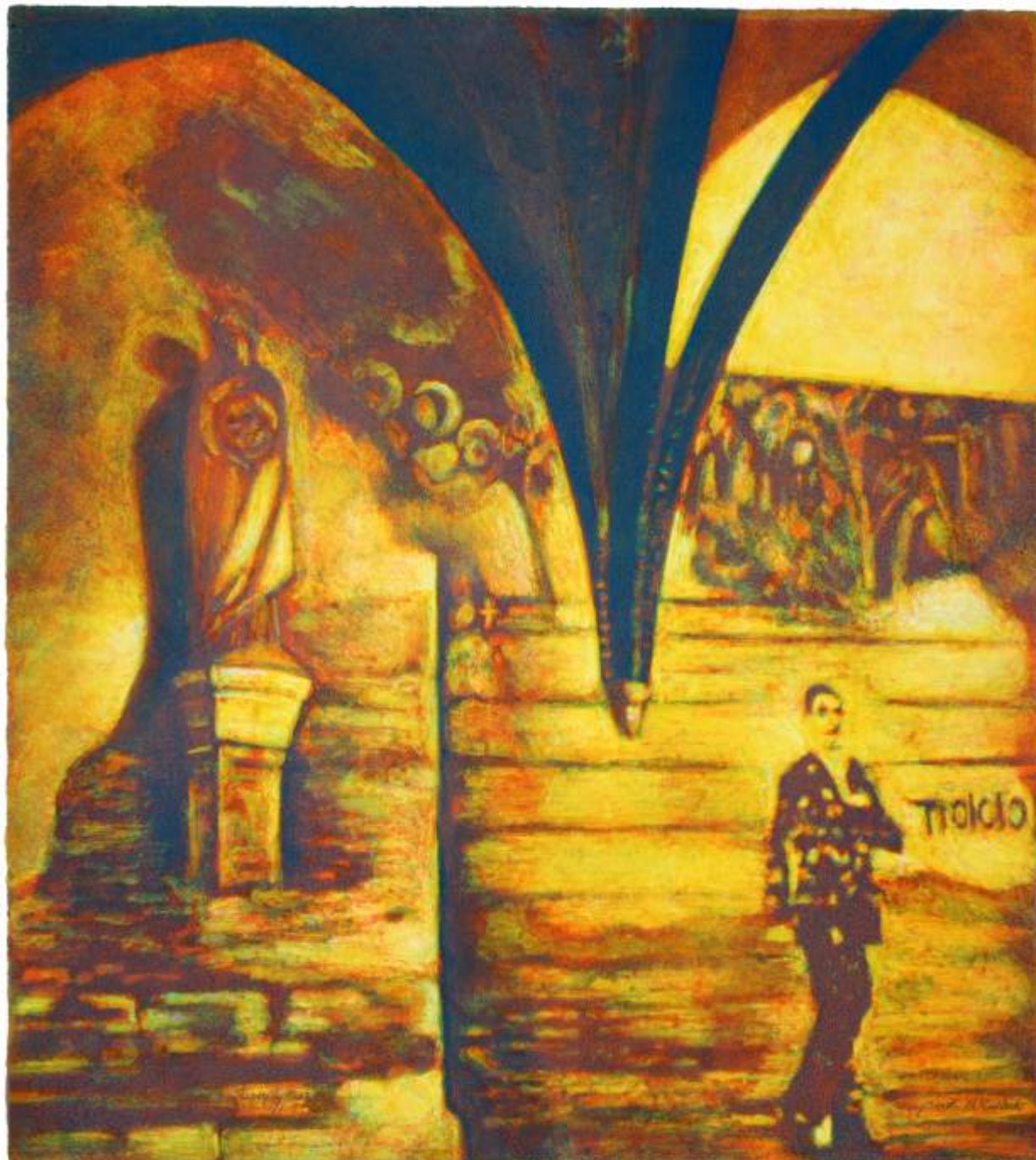
Carin Covin
It Starts with The Family – 2002
Oil, wax, spray-paint on canvas, 62x56 inches

CARIN COVIN
Vernon, BC



Mary Smith McCulloch
Juxtaposition
Mono-print on paper, 19x17 inches

MARY SMITH MCCULLOCH
Kelowna, BC





Robert Dmytruk
Exotic Elsewhere to Dream – 2014
Mixed media and resin on panel, 24x24 inches

ROBERT DMYTRUK
Summerland, BC



Robert Dmytruk
Elegant Prose – 2014
Mixed media and resin on panel, 24x24 inches

Glenn Clark

Elite – 2016

Oil on panel, 46x48 inches

GLENN CLARK
Penticton, BC



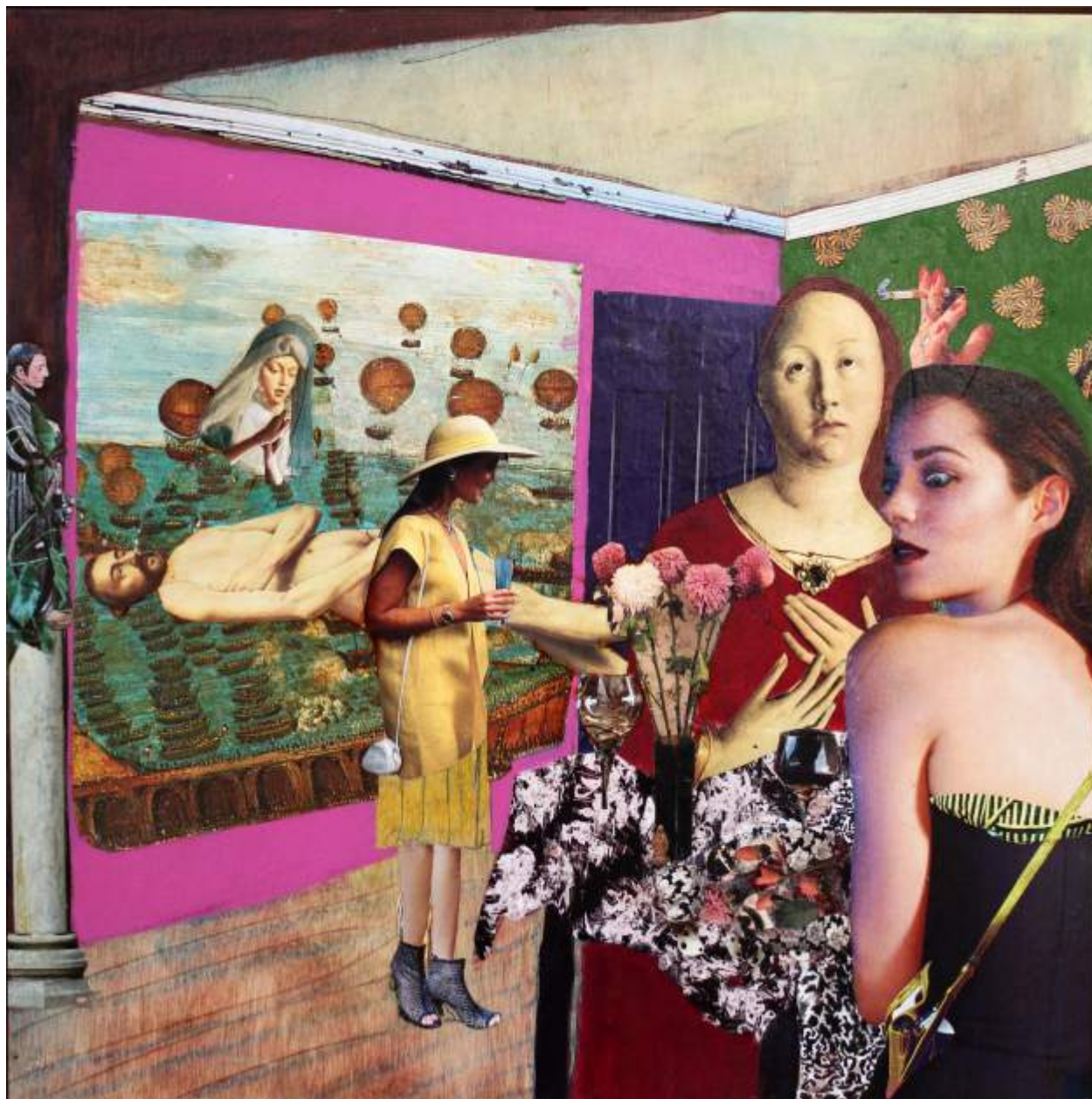


John Hall
Orbit – 2009
Acrylic on canvas, 12x12 inches

JOHN HALL
West Kelowna, BC



John Hall
Rattle – 2011
Acrylic on canvas, 60x80 inches



Jen Dyck
Confirmed Instances of Piety – 2017
Collage on panel, 16x16 inches

JEN DYCK
Salmon Arm, BC



Jen Dyck
Such A Pieta – 2017
Collage on panel, 12x12 inches

Briar Craig

Post Truth – 2017

Ultra Violet screen-print, 42x28 inches

BRIAR CRAIG
Kelowna, BC



Gary Pearson
This Old Heart-ache (Man Reading) – 2017
Oil on canvas, 26x26 inches

GARY PEARSON
Kelowna, BC





Stephen Lee Scott
Tattoo Study #1 – 2017
Ink on paper, 14x11 inches

STEPHEN LEE SCOTT

Kelowna, BC



Stephen Lee Scott

Tattoo Study #2 – 2017

Ink on paper, 12x9 inches

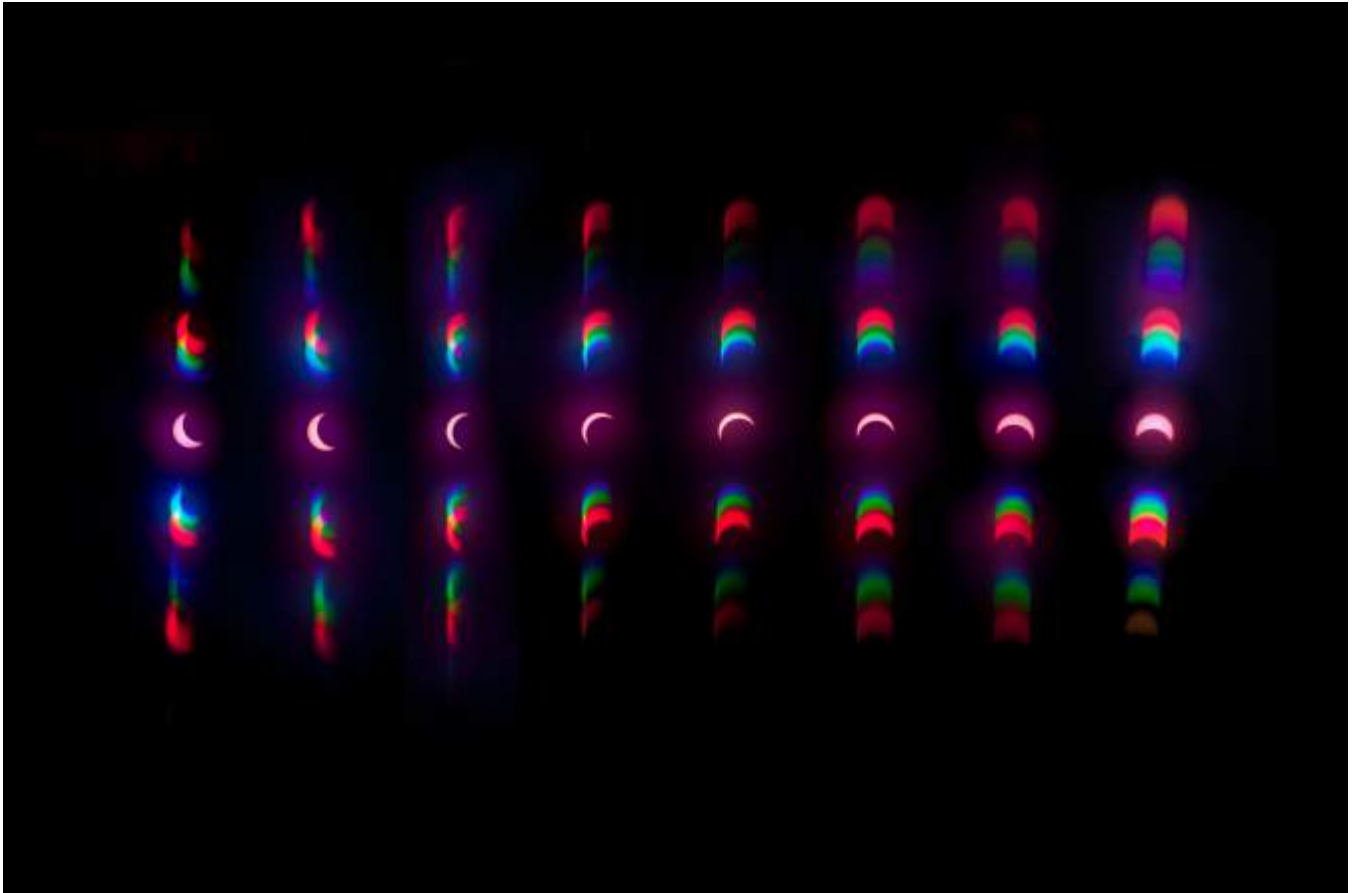


Fern Helfand

Northern Okanagan - 2017

Photo-montage, Archival Inkjet print, 11x18 inches

FERN HELFAND
West Kelowna, BC



Fern Helfand
Partial Eclipse Of The Sun - August 21, 2017
Archival Inkjet print, 14x21 inches

Diane Feught
Judgment – 2017
Gouache on paper, 15x10 inches

DIANE FEUGHT
Kelowna, BC





Steve Mennie

Head of the Class – 2016

Acrylic, charcoal on panel, 24x20 inches

STEVE MENNIE

Salmon Arm, BC



Steve Mennie

Before and After - 2016

Acrylic, spray enamel, vinyl film on panel, 16x20 inches

Byron Johnson

Byroball Trophy – 2016

Silver, stainless steel, 6x3x3 inches

BYRON JOHNSON
Kelowna, BC



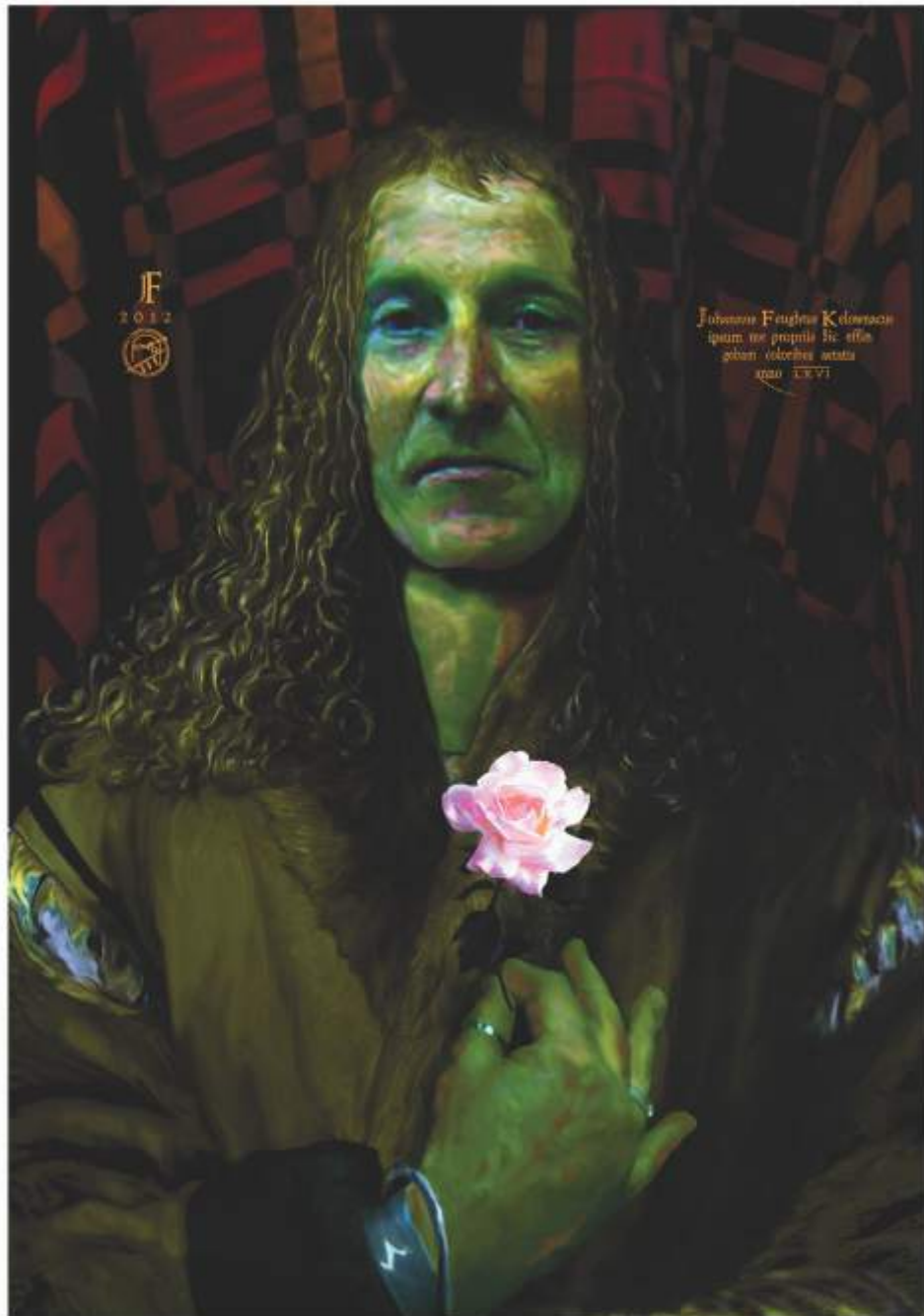
Johann Feught

Self Portrait Painted in My Own Colours in My 66th Year – 2013

Digital drawing and painting, 35x26 inches

JOHANN FEUGHT

Kelowna, BC



Julie Oakes

Traveling with Chicken Bones – 2016

Powder-coated stainless steel, 32Hx26Dx16W

JULIE OAKES
Vernon, BC



Leonard Epp

The Martian Sand Boat – 2017

Ceramic, wood, plastic, feather, steel, 15x16x2 inches

LEONARD EPP
Falkland, BC



Patricia Kushner

The Arrangement – 2014

Mixed media on canvas, 30x36 inches

PATRICIA KUSHNER

Penticton, BC





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