

New exhibition by acclaimed Canadian artist Rita McKeough takes viewers below the city to consider our vulnerable changing environment

## Rita McKeough

### *dig as deep as the darkness*

July 20 – September 15, 2019

Opening reception: Friday, July 19, 7:00 – 9:00 PM

The artist and curator will be in attendance

Guest curator Dylan McHugh



Richmond Art Gallery is excited to present a new media installation by Alberta-based artist Rita McKeough, guest curated by Vancouver artist Dylan McHugh. *dig as deep as the darkness* evokes an excavation site, revealing subterranean layers below an imagined city. Sound, video and interactive objects articulate the complex relations of land and human development, highlighting its impact on animal and plant species. The installation offers an immersive experience, depicting the vulnerability of the environment and the forces of resistance in the natural world.

The installation holds captivating and fantastical details that offer numerous entry points for visitors. These media elements include sword ferns standing guard, cranes ceaselessly working and a field of extraction towers. Excavators dig and bore, as tensions build, and plants and animals adapt in defence. "Set from the perspective of displaced local flora and fauna, you are immersed in their plight" adds project curator Dylan McHugh. "You are roused to consider our relationship to nature and the interconnectedness of life."

Over the past decade, Rita McKeough's practice has contemplated people's ethical and social relationship to the natural world. Featuring themes as diverse as the food we eat, the land we use or the gas we burn, McKeough builds situations and narratives that challenge the status-quo and champion change. Her work is playful yet poignant and sincere, cutting to the heart of Canadian society's deepest anxieties and challenges.

The exhibition, *dig as deep as the darkness*, will be followed by a second exhibition by Rita McKeough, *darkness is as deep as the darkness is*, curated by Jacqueline Bell and presented at Walter Phillips Gallery, Banff, February 1 to May 31, 2020. A catalogue on both exhibitions will be jointly-produced by the institutions, and is forthcoming in 2020.

**For high-resolution images or to arrange an interview, please contact:**

**Paula Hickey, Gallery & Exhibition Coordinator**

phickey@richmond.ca, 604-247-8312

# BIOGRAPHIES

**Rita McKeough** is an installation and performance artist based in Calgary. Her work incorporates audio, electronics and mechanical performing objects. McKeough consistently works from a feminist perspective, and her recent work demonstrates her desire to use sound to create a rhythmic voice of agency and empathy to articulate forces of resistance in the natural world.

McKeough's work has been featured in *Radio Rethink: Art Sound and Transmission* (Banff Centre for the Arts, 1994), *Caught in the Act: An Anthology of Performance Art by Canadian Women* (YYZ Books, 2004), and *Oh Canada* (Escher Foundation, 2015). She was the winner of 2009 Governor General's Award in Visual and Media Arts.

**Dylan McHugh** is a Vancouver-based interdisciplinary artist and curator. He received his formal education in visual art at ECUAD and NSCAD University and is one of the founding members of the artist collective DRIL.

## Events

### Artist Talk

Sunday, July 21, 2:00pm

Richmond Cultural Centre Performance Hall

### Free Multilingual Tours

in English, Mandarin or Cantonese

Saturday, July 27, August 10, Sept 14, 12:30 – 2:30pm

### Hands-on Art & Tours

at the Kwantlen St. Farmers Market

Tuesday, July 23, August 13 & 27, 12:00 – 4:00 pm

Located in Minoru Plaza, Richmond Cultural Centre

### Mask-Making with Natural Materials: Workshop with Nicole Dextras & Emily Smith

Saturday, August 17, 1:00 – 4:30 pm

Cost: \$5.00. Includes all art materials. Register at [www.richmondartgallery.org](http://www.richmondartgallery.org)

### Art History Lecture Series:

The Canadian Landscape

Saturdays, September 7 and 14, 2:00 – 3:30 pm

Cost: \$5.00 per session. Register at [www.richmondartgallery.org](http://www.richmondartgallery.org)

### Curator Chat with Dylan McHugh & Guests

Saturday, September 7, 1:00 – 2:00 pm

**RAG** RICHMOND ART GALLERY

[richmondartgallery.org](http://richmondartgallery.org)

*The only public gallery in Richmond, the Richmond Art Gallery (RAG) is a municipal gallery supported by the non-profit Richmond Art Gallery Association. In operation since 1980, the Gallery presents exhibitions by regional, national and international artists, maintains a permanent collection of over 400 works, and presents innovative and diverse programming for children, youth, and adults. Richmond Art Gallery is dedicated to promoting dialogue among Richmond's diverse communities through the presentation of contemporary visual art.*

### LOCATION

Richmond Cultural Centre  
7700 Minoru Gate  
Richmond, BC V6Y 1R9

### CONTACT

[gallery@richmond.ca](mailto:gallery@richmond.ca)  
604-247-8300  
[richmondartgallery.org](http://richmondartgallery.org)

### VISIT US

Monday - Friday: 10 am - 6 pm  
Saturday - Sunday: 10 am - 5 pm  
Free Admission

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Image: Rita McKeough, *dig as deep as the darkness*, video still image, 2018