



**RICHMOND
ART GALLERY**

**DECEMBER 2020
JANUARY 2021**



IN THE GALLERY

SCOTT BILLINGS

pseudo-here

December 11, 2020 – January 16, 2021

Hoaxes, falsehoods, and fictions are at play in Scott Billings' new body of work, *pseudo-here*. The Vancouver-based artist draws from a seemingly fathomless pool of popular culture, mathematics, physics, and art to make and fake meticulously constructed objects embedded with intriguing histories and questionable truths.

A teeter-totter outfitted with the seats from a 1992 sports car owned by Billings' father, who purportedly once held the world record for longest continuous time on a teeter-totter, rises and falls subtly; an industrial robotic arm gripping a narwhal tusk performs an uncanny choreography; a video depicting Billings walking across a perilously busy street in Paris is scarcely missed by speeding automobiles (the very location where the artist Alberto Giacometti was struck by a car and broke his foot in 1938); and two data generated 3D prints, both seen

and made by light. One feigns a perpetual escape from its grounded material state using a motor, a strobe, and a little Fibonacci trickery; and the other descends from the heavens, materialized by the LHC particle collision data that (un)earthed the *God Particle*.

Billings suggests that the substance of a hoax resides not in the perpetration of the falsehood nor in the material presence of the false artifact—it *lies* at the surface. A good hoax is materialized by us: the storytellers of the (un)believable story.

Concrete and cerebral, Billings' objects possess a poetic and humorous edge that provides colour to a really good story. In the current climate of fake news and science naysayers is it such a leap to accept narwhal tusks as unicorn horns and lenticular clouds as flying saucers?

Scott Billings is a visual artist and designer based in Vancouver. His sculptures and video installations frequently centre on issues of animality, mobility, and spectatorship. Billings holds an MFA from the University of British Columbia, a BFA from Emily Carr University, and a BASc in Mechanical Engineering from the University of Waterloo. He teaches at UBC and Emily Carr.

Billings is represented by Wil Aballe Art Projects.

UPCOMING EXHIBITIONS

BRENDAN FERNANDES *INACTION*

January 29 – March 28, 2021

Presented in partnership with Wesleyan University

Inaction is a new sculptural and performance-based installation by Brendan Fernandes. Working in collaboration with the architecture and design firm Norman Kelley, Fernandes designed mobile dance supports and platforms for activation by the audience and dancers. In public performances throughout the exhibition, his choreography guides dancers to interact with the minimalist sculptural installations, giving them agency to rearrange the sculptures and allowing for new spaces in which to create movements.

UNION KARIN BHUMBER & NANCY LEE

April 16 – June 13, 2021

In partnership with Cinevolution Media Arts Society

CINEVOLUTION
Media Arts Society

Left page: Scott Billings, *Still from Giacometti's Foot*. Courtesy of the artist. Below:
Brendan Fernandes, *Free Fall for Camera*, 2020, film still detail. Courtesy of the artists.



LOSING RIVERS KIM NGUYEN

This essay was commissioned as a response to Scott Billings exhibition pseudo-here.

For a period of time, perhaps still, actually likely still, or let's be honest maybe for my entire lifetime, I would be what you would consider a pathological liar. As a child I was fearful of being reprimanded and became secretive as a result. There were special codes, locks, and hidden possessions, things tucked inside and behind other things to keep one life from another. I became adept at minimizing my cultural difference with friends, I was expert at concealing my social difference with family. Suffocation will do this to you when you are not given permission to be your own person. You create many versions of yourself, duplicating and mutating each iteration to get closer to the you that is desired but never achieved. The lies emulsify until they become you and you them, burrowing into whatever semblance of truth stitches this body together.

I was a liar before I was a writer and I am a writer because I am a liar. What is narrative really, other than the elaborate development of half-truths? Fictions gleaned from our lives, abstracted to obscure our insecurities, to protect our relations while revealing ourselves under the softness of prose. How many threads can be removed, how many details must be gathered, for this to be convincing? How little do you get to have of us, how much must we hold back, to tend to everyone we love? How many layers below this veneer is the version of you that you have long forgotten? Who can remember anymore, who we were or who we were supposed to be. Who can remember anymore, when we started this and when we thought we would be out of it. What is narrative really, other than all the savage lies of this universe enveloped around us, a slow and lustrous brutalization until we become it and it becomes us?

We are all liars so we can sleep at night. How else can our bodies carry so much simultaneous rage and ambivalence? It is inconvenient and crushing to dwell on the truth from sunrise to sundown, when truths that are leaden to us are fluid to others. We are lying ourselves into submission, that tomorrow is better, that this is the depression & anger & fear & & that comes with revolution and before complete collapse. Exhausted, we tell ourselves that our efforts are not wasted, that all the lives before us were not squandered, that morning signals another day not another horror. As those lies settle into our bones we also deceive our loved ones via text and video calls that we will find our way back to each other again, when we know there are no returns.

We lie to everyone to do our jobs, which humiliate us with regularity, because we want to believe our existence is more than unnecessary social expenditure or extensions of institutional violence. For the record, *your deadlines are a lie your timelines are a lie your committees are a lie your qualifications are a lie your titles are a lie your archive is a lie your aesthetic contracts are a lie your institution is a lie* and yet we still show up every day.

We lie to our bodies that living in a fascist nation state is not wearing our skin down to the bones.

We lie to our friends through omission, ignoring their questionable politics and minimizing our own resentment because we are lonely.

We lie to our lovers about our happiness because it is a miracle they tolerate us at all.



We lie to the sky that this is the year we untether ourselves from the sun.

We lie to ourselves about our own weaknesses, suppressing what may just be the best parts of us, the sad vulnerable unimportant quiet and slow slivers.

We watch legal dramas to observe and study subjects who do not believe the truth is relevant. A man kills his wife and the wife before that and their deaths are not the priority but instead their perceived greed or their "inappropriate" sexual proclivities. A couple contests the malicious legal loopholes of healthcare and sues a predatory pharmaceutical company but none of it matters because their acrimonious marriage positions them as toxic and unreliable.

There is what happened and how we contextualize how it happened. There is what happened and how we aestheticize what happened. There is what happened according to you and what happened according to everyone else. There is what happened to the unicorn and why we have its tusk. What happened becomes theoretical, hypothetical, pliable. Stretched within an inch of its life.

Studies have determined that an astonishing percentage of our memories are false. We misremember and re-remember, the memories doubling over themselves with each pleat accruing new observations and pieces of information. *Recollection is reconstruction*. Events are misrepresented and distorted and erroneous facts are committed to our already perforated memories. What a relief that things flow so freely in and out of us. All that I have learned that I wish I could forget, I already am simply through remembrance. All the absolutes that my body refuses to accept as finite, as fact, as *authority*. A hull is created inside of me and I will spend the rest of this life filling it with fabrications I desire to be true.

What if our lies are how we resist possession, how we stay evasive, how we operate out of a perpetual and productive state of mistrust? How far can we bend what seems heavy and burdensome, how many ways can we deny all the forces that are ironclad and impenetrable, how do we undo what we have for as long as, forever, understood as the way it is? How do we propose & commit & construct a lie for another us that is beyond us?

A fraudulence that takes care of *you* as much as it destroys me.

Kim Nguyen is a writer and curator based in San Francisco, where she is the Curator and Head of Programs at the CCA Wattis Institute. Recent and upcoming exhibitions include Maia Cruz Palileo: Long Kwento, Jeffrey Gibson: Nothing Is Eternal, Cinthia Marcelle: A morta, Akosua Adoma Owusu: Welcome to the Jungle, and Abbas Akhavan: cast for a folly. She is currently completing her first collection of writings.

1 A language and a life shaped by your knowledge, your care, and your love, Alex Da Corte, Amy Fung, Aaron Flint Jamison, Eunsong Kim, Kegan McFadden, Divya Mehra, R & R.



Narwhal tusk, formerly from Richmond Art Gallery Collection. Photo: Josh Hite.



SPECIAL EXHIBITION & FUNDRAISER

PIERRE VASSURA *FLOWERS*

November 14, 2020 – January 2, 2021

For the first-time senior Richmond artist, Pierre Vassura, is offering a series of original hand-painted works for sale. All proceeds from sales will go towards the production of a future monograph publication of the artist's work and RAGA's continued outreach/educational programming in Richmond.

For this special presentation both online and on display at Richmond Art Gallery, Vassura presents *Flowers*, a new body of work created in isolation during the COVID19 Pandemic. Responding to this world event the artist states:

"It is with empathy for the great loss of lives and sorrow of the world that I attest my feelings and emotions to the victims of this great calamity. I worked with my formalistic style on floral analogies and as a statement of participation to the happening I have produced and I present to you *FLOWERS*."

Pierre Vassura was born Romagna, Italy in 1935. At age twenty Vassura moved to France in search of artistic experiences. He first secured work as a ceramic designer at the Faiencerie de St. Clement, and later a ceramic studio in Cote d'Azure, Vallauris-Juan les Pins. Vassura became a technical and production expert in several ceramic factories in Switzerland, France, Italy and Israel. With the Beit-Hagefen Art Gallery, Vassura first exhibited his paintings in Tel-Aviv and Haifa from 1963 to 1965. In the early 1980s Vassura and his family moved to Richmond, BC. Vassura has been producing work in Richmond for over 40 years. In 2018, Richmond Art Gallery presented his first major solo exhibition entitled *New Work: 1983 – 2018*.

Visit vassuraanalogart.com for more details.

Above: Pierre Vassura, *Flowers*, 2020, painted enamel on board, 17.5 x 23.0 inches.

Join us for a Season of Programs & Events for all Ages

EXHIBITION TOURS

Every Saturday
12:30 pm, 1:30 pm, 2:30 pm or 3:30 pm

English language tours are hosted every Saturday at select times for small groups of up to 6 people. Contact the gallery to book your times. Social distancing protocols in place, a face covering is required.

Location: Richmond Art Gallery
Cost: Free
Register: gallery@richmond.ca or 604-247-8363

ARTIST TALK WITH SCOTT BILLINGS

Saturday, January 16, 1:00 pm – 2:00 pm

View the exhibition virtually and then join an online discussion with artist Scott Billings as he discusses his work and answers viewers' questions. This conversation will be moderated by RAG Curator Nan Capogna.

Location: Online
Cost: Free
Register: richmondartgallery.org/billings-talk

STAY SAFE, STAY HOME

RAG @ Home is a way to enjoy the gallery online, from wherever you may be. Engage with us through live and on-demand digital artist talks, hands-on art activities, and exhibition tours for all ages.



Right: Karen Tam, *With wings like clouds hung from the sky* opening reception, May 2019. Photo: Melanie Devoy.

BECOME A RAGA MEMBER

Members are an important part of the Richmond Art Gallery Association and contribute to the Gallery's growth and vitality by supporting our educational and outreach programming. Join our growing membership and become a supporter of the visual arts.

Members enjoy the following benefits:

- Invitations to members-only events throughout the year
- 10% discount on Gallery programs and events
- 20% discount on Gallery catalogues
- And much more!

Cost: Memberships start at \$25.00
More info: richmondartgallery.org



WE ARE OPEN! VISIT US IN PERSON!

HOW TO VISIT US

There are two options to visiting the gallery:

- Enter through the Richmond Cultural Centre front doors (7700 Minoru Gate), and staff will direct you to the Art Gallery check-in.
- Book your visit in advance by phone or email. Call 604-247-8363 or email gallery@richmond.ca

CURRENT HOURS

Wednesday – Friday: 10:00 am – 6:00 pm

Saturday: 10:00 am – 4:00 pm

HOLIDAY HOURS

December 23, 10:00 am – 6:00 pm

December 24, 10:00 am – 3:30 pm

December 31, 10:00 am – 3:30 pm

January 2, 10:00 am – 4:00 pm

Closed: December 25 & 26 and January 1

COVID-19 SAFETY PRECAUTIONS

Our priority is the safety of all visitors and staff. Following government guidelines, protocols are in place to ensure that you have a safe and enjoyable visit. We are closely monitoring the situation and will adapt as necessary.

We thank you for your patience and cooperation. And, as always, we welcome your feedback. Check richmondartgallery.org/reopen for most up to date info.

- All visitors must self-assess before visiting. Please stay home if you are not feeling well.
- Face coverings are mandatory for all staff and visitors.
- All visitors and staff must social distance by maintaining a two-metre distance from each other.
- A hand sanitation station is located at the Cultural Centre and Gallery entrance.
- Stringent cleaning practices are in place throughout the Cultural Centre.

For more details please contact: gallery@richmond.ca

RAG RICHMOND ART GALLERY

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. We are 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
604-247-8300
richmondartgallery.org

VISIT US

Wednesday – Friday: 10 am – 6 pm
Saturday: 10 am – 4 pm
FREE ADMISSION

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