



**RICHMOND
ART GALLERY**

FALL 2020





Prairie Invasions: A Lullaby, 2019, installation detail, photograph, wall, 126 x 96 inches. Photograph of sculptural intervention. Courtesy of the artist

IN THE GALLERY

EMILY NEUFELD

Prairie Invasions: A Lullaby

August 20–October 18

Curated by Nan Capogna

Prairie Invasions: A Lullaby is a solo exhibition of photographs and sculptures culminating from Emily Neufeld's exploration of abandoned farmhouses dotting the Canadian Prairies. Settler migrant farmers who came in waves during the 1800s built the homes which have formed part of the complex history of colonization in Canada.

Settler colonialism is a way of thinking about power and migration that allows us to better understand the nature of contemporary Canadian society.¹

A Dissonant Lullaby

Emily Neufeld has been performing interventions in houses slated for demolition in the Lower Mainland of British Columbia and in abandoned farmhouses across the Canadian Prairies since 2015. Combing through remnants of the empty sites, she probes for traces of the lives and histories of those who inhabited them to better understand the powers and influences shaping a place and the incremental changes that occur over time.

Neufeld travelled to a dozen farmhouses over the summer of 2018 as part of her research for the exhibition, *Prairie Invasions: A Lullaby*. These are a few of many deserted homes punctuating the Canadian prairies, built by Settler migrant farmers who came in waves during the 1800s and which form part of the complex history of colonization in Canada. As the decades passed, many of the family farms became conglomerates of larger holdings and farmhouses were left behind.

Neufeld's search for vacated properties was guided by friends, or friends of friends—even included a farmwomen's card night. When considering a house for an intervention, she attempted to meet each owner in order to gain permission to enter the farm and to learn something of the family's history. *Prairie Invasions: A Lullaby* focuses on six homes—four in Saskatchewan and two in Alberta. Once on a farm, Neufeld responds intuitively, attending to what catches her attention, to what gives her pause—it might be the faded and peeling flowered wallpaper; the open windows and ceilings, exposed and stripped of their coverings; or the floors nearly erased by the detritus that had either blown in or fallen through a failing roof.

Neufeld's interventions — the activities she undertakes and the sculptures she makes from the materials found within the homes and in the yards — she likens to “a funerary rite.” Before leaving, Neufeld documents the evidence of her actions in photographs and leaves the sculptures to follow the same fate as the house.

Born and raised in Alberta, Neufeld's engagement with the Canadian Prairies is genuine. Her great-grandparents, Mennonites, arrived in Canada in 1874 from the Russian Empire. Her grandmother, Mary Wiebe (maiden name Giesbrecht), was born in 1931 in Manitoba, and later moved to a farm in Alberta. Neufeld remembers her grandmother well

and recounts details of her life; she was farmed out at fourteen years old to work on another farm, later she married a farmer, Peter Wiebe, and bore six children. Mary Wiebe, like other Mennonite women living in spare homesteads and harsh conditions, found ways to beautify and soften their reality through expressions of pride rooted in their labour—glass jars of precisely cut peach slices lining a shelf; wallpaper - painted by hand; or planted flowers outside the door.

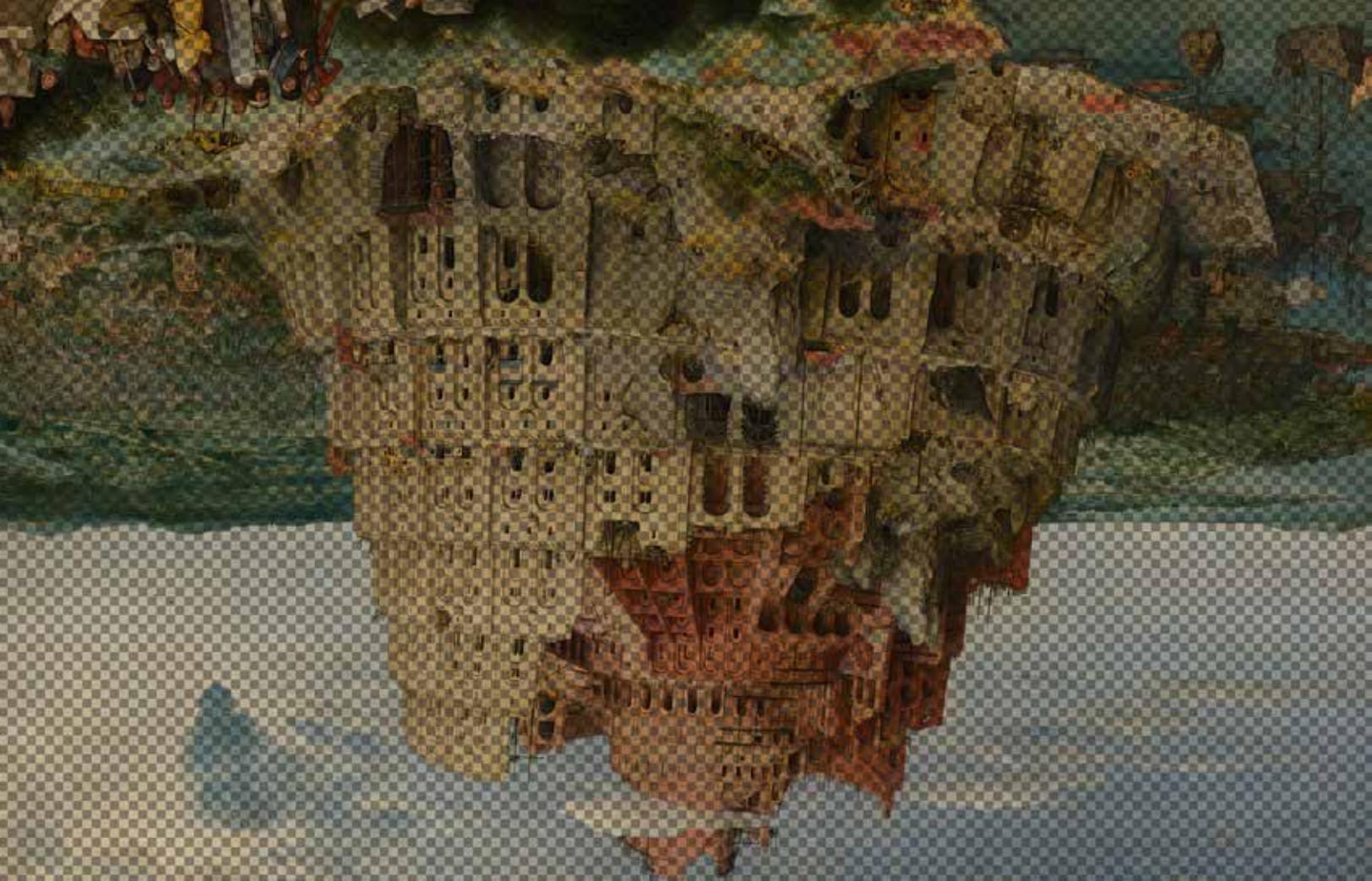
Neufeld asserts that she takes a Mennonite approach to making art. If she is not “sweating, hurting and exhausted, it doesn't count as work” and justifying it is difficult. Though she may be hefting clods of dirt and grasses under a hot sun there is a tenderness in the curious efforts she makes within the houses - moving a barn swallow's nest to an alcove, tacking a bedroom wall with dozens of native Brown-eyed Susans from the ditch by the highway, or mounting a shelf as a final repository for the bulrushes gathered from outside.

As Neufeld walks through the remains of a deserted farmhouse, she wades through Canada's colonial past. Gathering barn swallows' nests to use in her interventions, she draws comparison between the migration of her Mennonite ancestors and the displacement of Indigenous peoples to the European barn swallow that forced other birds out from the land cleared for farms. Emma Battell Lowman and Adam J. Barker in *Settler: identity and colonialism in 21st century Canada* speak to the attachments and different relationships that Indigenous and Settler people have to the land— *the land is what sustains Indigenous communities and identities. The land is what Settler people need in order to have a home and economic stability.*² *There is a simple but important difference in the ways that Indigenous and Settler identities operate with respect to place: one integrated into the land and one imposed upon it.*³

In her investigations to better understand the powers and influences shaping a 'place' — the prairie farmhouses and land — Neufeld assumes the role of Settler, granddaughter and artist. Her title for the exhibition, *Prairie Invasions: A Lullaby* expresses the tensions of an unsettling reality and a sweetness residing in personal memory.

Nan Capogna, Curator

^{1,3}Lowman, Emma Battell and Barker, Adam J. 2015. *Settler: identity and colonialism in 21st century Canada*. (Halifax and Winnipeg: Fernwood Publishing) 24.



Alphabet Collection, A film in One Frame, 2020.

God In Reverse: When Wisdom Defies Capture

Ali Ahadi, Zach Blas, Alphabet Collection, Raqs Media Collective, Manuel Correa, John Gerrard, The Otolith Group, Lawrence Abu Hamdan, Patricia Reed, Tabita Rezaire, Francis Ruyter, Susan Schuppli, Slavs and Tatars, Andrea Taylor, Dan Young

Online until September 15 at
godinreverse.com

Curated by Mohammad Salemy

In anticipation of the exhibition *God In Reverse: When Wisdom Defies Capture* (Richmond Art Gallery, 2021) and in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, RAG is presenting the filmic contributions of the artists in an online platform. We are inviting you to take advantage of this opportunity and access works of fifteen contemporary artists from around the world, most of which are available for the first time. These works will appear, each for a limited time, on the platform godinreverse.com.

God in Reverse recalls the biblical myth of the Tower of Babel as narrated and depicted by Pieter Bruegel's paintings, considering these scenographies within the mythos of artificial intelligence. With the global actualization of AI, the shared experiences between humans and non-humans have become integral as we negotiate with these machines in symbiotic fashion. Human knowledge is thus cast into the tangible and

UPCOMING EXHIBITIONS

SCOTT BILLINGS *PSEUDO-PSEUDORAPIDITY*

Winter 2020

Vancouver based artist Scott Billings centres his attention on cultural hoaxes in this new body of work, *Pseudo-Pseudorapidity*. Working from local and historical hoaxes and deceptions. Billings' selection includes a bizarre mix of hoodwinking characters - John Hutchison and his electromagnetic experiments; Heaven's Gate cult leader Marshall Applewhite; and Yogic Flying Theatre illusionist turned politician Doug Henning. Billings contributes his own cinematic deceit with a remake of a previous video work, *Giacometti's Foot* (2010). His engineering background and ability to construct extraordinary functioning objects provides the gravitas that lays the foundation of any good hoax.

lasting body of machines. The filmic works comprising this exhibition survey various aspects of this metonymic relationship between the algorithmic synthesis of informational flow and the inconspicuous instability of knowledge as it is performed in action, highlighting the border between communication and knowledge.

By focusing on the interrupted flow of human knowledge and its peculiar disunities, the exhibition also sheds light on the reluctance of human knowledge to become captured as a "ghost in the machine," underscoring its propensity to dwell as a freely floating spectre. The works in the exhibit highlight instances of knowledge, historical and contemporary, fiction and nonfiction, which thus far have been next to impossible to "algorithmicate" within the confines of our existing AI technologies. Consisting mostly of various forms of time-based projections, the exhibition attempts to construct a novel form for reconfiguring the spatial and temporal dimension of moving pictures in their presentation exhibition forms.

This project is generously supported by the Canada Council for the Arts Digital Strategy Fund and sponsored by The New Centre for Research & Practice and Arts of The Working Class.



The New
Centre for
Research & Practice

Scott Billings, Still from *Giacometti's Foot*, Credit: Courtesy of the artist.



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

All events are free unless noted

Much of our public programming is currently hosted remotely.

Visit richmondgallery.org/rag-at-home to stay connected with the gallery

Missed an event?

Don't worry, archives are being hosted on our website.

Check out RAG@Home on our website for virtual tours of our exhibitions, interviews with artists, seminars to help your practice, art making activities for children and much more!

ART IN TIMES OF CRISIS, PART II

Tuesday, August 25, 7:00 PM–8:30 PM

Viruses, Plagues, Illnesses, and Pandemics in Art

In partnership with Mobil Art School, RAGA presents a second chapter of Jairo Salazar's exploration of the way artists have reacted to times of crisis. Join in the discussion at this free online webinar.

Cost: Free

Location: Online through Zoom

Register: richmondartgallery.org/toc2



PUBLIC ART UNVEILING by the RAG SUMMER YOUTH ART INTENSIVE PROGRAM

Saturday, September 26, 3:00 PM–4:00 PM

Visit the ponds in Minoru Park, Richmond, for the unveiling of a new public art installation created by nine Richmond youth as part of the Gallery's *Summer Youth Art Intensive* program. Students worked with artist Emily Neufeld, guest artists Holly Schmidt and Laara Cerman, and herbalist Lori Snyder over the course of three weeks this summer to develop a panoramic image of a Richmond landscape for ten lanterns to be installed in the ponds from September 26–October 25.

Participating artists: Byron Huang, Ethan Liu, Samantha Lu, Rachel Marliss, Nicole Villalon, Gabby Yan, Emily Yuan, Shirley Zhang, Julienne Zhao.

This event will take place rain or shine.

Cost: Free

Location: Ponds in Minoru Park, Richmond.

Note: Physical distancing protocols will be in place

Project sponsored by the BC Arts Council Youth Engagement Program and:

PUBLIC ART
RICHMOND



BRITISH COLUMBIA
ARTS COUNCIL
An agency of the Province of British Columbia



BRITISH COLUMBIA
Supported by the Province of British Columbia

PANEL DISCUSSION on PRAIRIE INVASIONS: A LULLABY

Saturday, October 3, 2:00 PM–3:00 PM

Exhibiting artist Emily Neufeld joins in a discussion moderated by Curator Nan Capogna with guest panelists Cease Wyss, artist and ethnobotanist, and Amy Norgaard, KPU Farm School Soil Science Instructor. Panelists will share their insights into themes of local land use, how humans impact the environment and how this relationship with a place informs art-making. Join in the discussion during this free online webinar.

Cost: Free

Location: Online through Zoom

Register: richmondartgallery.org/panel-discussion

ONGOING PROGRAMS

ARTIST SALON SERIES

Last Tuesday of each month, 7:00 PM–8:30 PM

The Artist Salon Series is a free monthly program for visual artists to connect, network, socialize, and learn from each other. This year, RAGA has launched this series online to encourage dialogue and connection in the era of physical distancing. Everyone is invited to join these sessions in their homes through the webinar platform Zoom. Visit the RAG website for presenter details and registration information.

More Info: richmondartgallery.org/artistsalon



YOUTH ART + CULTURE LAB: ONLINE ART COURSE / AGES 12–15

Alternating Sundays

October 2020–April 2021, 1:00 PM–4:00 PM

Youth Art + Culture Lab is an exciting partnership between Emily Carr University and Richmond Art Gallery, providing youth aged 12–15 an opportunity to build confidence and develop diverse creative skills through behind the scenes, hands-on and interactive sessions with local and international artists, art gallery professionals and Emily Carr instructors. For more information and to register, visit the ECUAD website.

Cost: \$454.00

Location: Online

Register:

<https://www.ecuad.ca/academics/teen-programs/y-a-c-lab>

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 two special members-only mixer events per 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



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.

FOLLOW

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Instagram [richmondartgallerybc](https://www.instagram.com/richmondartgallerybc)

VISIT US

Admission is free or by donation
NEW GALLERY HOURS
Wednesday – Saturday: 12:00 PM – 4:30 PM
Last entry: 4 PM
More info: richmondartgallery.org/reopen

LOCATION

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

CONTACT

richmondartgallery.org
gallery@richmond.ca
604-247-8363



Cover, top: Emily Neufeld, *Prairie Invasions: A Lullaby*, 2020, panorama photographic lightbox detail, photograph, wood, lights, 84 x 51 x 51 inches. Courtesy of the artist.
Cover, bottom: Tabita Rezaire, *Premium Content*, 2017. Above: *Savour High Tea* Fundraiser, 2019. Photo: Nimo Lai.