

**Project Grant to produce a Solo Exhibition at The Mississippi Valley Textile Museum.**

**Project summary: To create a community-engaged, interdisciplinary installation on the power and presence of water at the Mississippi Valley Textile Museum, April - June 2018.**

Solo exhibition confirmed for Mississippi Valley Textile Museum (MVTM), Almonte, ON. My first large-scale exhibit in a museum, it will be an interdisciplinary art show exploring the power of water. A multi-year project, it will continue after June 2018: ongoing art production and creative workshops will engage the public on themes of water in interdisciplinary, innovative ways.

**The exhibition is composed of four elements (see image samples below):**

Part A - Five art installations occupy a 3000 square foot space (details below);

Part B - Artist talk;

Part C - 'Water' talk, partnered with river-keeper, scientist, artist (myself), and Indigenous elder, to sensitize the public on the power and presence of water;

Part D - Three public, creative workshops featuring living tapestries, cyanotype, and cedar tile drawings.

**Part A includes five art installations:**

**Wall installation, I. 400 cedar tiles (60' x 4'):** Inspired by the power of water for bringing people together, cedar tiles are offered – in a series of workshops, from an Algonquin reserve in Maniwaki to an Irish settler town, Almonte – to communities of diverse age, belief, culture, and identity to celebrate the power and presence of water, share stories, and commemorate the bodies of water that have influenced our lives. Participants draw the lines of a body of water they love on a cedar tile. For the exhibit, the tiles are arranged into a mosaic in which the water lines flow into one another as an interactive puzzle, the piece to be played with and rearranged by the public. All the waters will be named, and displayed on the wall.

**Wall installation, II. 200 cyanotype drawings (60' x 4'):** Cyanotype-based drawings incorporating flora and maps of the regional watershed. This photo process from the mid-1800s captures a reverence for aquatic life in a unique and haunting way.

**Sound piece above a living river/garden installation (60' x 4'):** Living garden shaped as Mississippi River occupies floor space; soundscape mounted above, where suspended textile mirrors the serpentine shape below.

**Eight living tapestries (4'x4'):** Sheep 'pelts' made of burlap and sprouted wheat will be stretched onto frames. The wheat's root system binds to fabric as living thread, as 'pelt' transforms from germinated to sprouted grain, then dries to sweet smelling grass, mimicking a texture of fleece.

**Eight paintings (4'x4'):** Action paintings layer colour, text, and maps to explore human relationship to memory, territory, and emotions.

My artistic choices are informed by accessibility and immersive artistic practice. My choices regarding accessibility are reflected in how diverse rural audiences can experience contemporary art in ways that uplift, enchant, and empower. Visitors of all ages, cultures and beliefs will appreciate works that are thought-provoking and materially rich. Workshops and talks promote the environmental theme, and make my art more accessible to members of the community through live demonstration and discussion.

My immersive practice is reflected in the way my installation engages the public in multi-sensorial, interdisciplinary ways by way of linking land/body/memory. The gallery is transformed into a place where one can call upon memory, and emotion to reflect on the role of water in their life. Sound, image, text, tactile objects and living plants become the carriers of story. Spectators become participants as they listen, touch, witness, participate, and explore their relationship to water and its relevance.

My immersive practice is also reflected in the way my installation engages the public in

multi-sensorial, interdisciplinary ways by way of linking land/body/memory. In recent years, the theme of water has shifted from the ecological realm to a more political and social domain (water sovereignty, concerns around its commodification, contamination, etc.). My purpose is to inspire dialogue and personal reflection about environment, and the ways we have related to water historically, challenging cultural values regarding our relation to water as resource.

My inspiration is informed by my own memories, experiences and ideas of waterpower, territory, and human settlement. This is reinforced by my thematic choice of the Rosamond Woollen Mill, a historic site, where the role of water has historic significance.

Inspiration for this project is informed by my broader artistic practice which has included living tapestry, multi-year Land Art project or electronic book made to be re-mixed. I follow the medium that suits expression. I experiment with ways of working/knowing that feed the commons, transform spectators into participants, and extend artistic production beyond rarefied spaces – into social, political and environmental action. I am concerned with the living systems of our world, both our cities and villages – natural, cultural, civic – especially as they relate to power and politics, and decisions that impact human development, ecology and land use.

**My activities will advance my artistic practice in the following ways:**

This is my first opportunity in a large, prestigious gallery/museum setting (3000 sq. ft. - please refer to floor plan for details).

The scale of this gallery is suited to my work because the work which invites an engagement with large-scale ecological forces can be showcased to greater effect. The venue is conducive to the organic nature of my work, because natural phenomena cannot usually be accommodated in most gallery spaces.

As an artist who tends to work outside of institutions (i.e. in public spaces/outdoors) – this venue, by virtue of its mission – will provide me with an opportunity to speak to a wider and more varied audience, thereby promoting and extending my practice.

The project will allow me to bridge traditional and experimental media (live garden

installation, interactive wall, living tapestries, soundscape), and to stretch my creative limits in terms of art production, audience, and venue.

My programming builds interest in my artistic practice through the participatory events slated to take place (talk and workshops) over the course of the three month exhibition.

The artworks are also vehicles through which the audience can imagine alternative ways of experiencing art - specifically as it relates to interdisciplinarity, non-traditional media, and land art within a museum setting.

My work is targeted to a general audience of all ages, some of whom are from around the MVTM, which is located in the rural area of Almonte, Ottawa residents, and visitors and tourists to the National Capital.

Although this is a textile museum, it is not confined to fibre artists and their community. My textile installations experiment with fibre as a living medium, and will build interest by demonstrating that textiles can exist outside of their traditional realm. The work comes alive through visitor interaction (i.e. watering the garden with Mississippi river water).

Because the mandate of the MVTM is to exhibit art and to educate the public (i.e. not focused on the sale of works), it is an excellent fit, and in line with my artistic practice.

This exhibit is firmly situated within my broader artistic practice. My ways of working encompass Land Art, in-situ installation, performance, drawing, painting: My art weaves into fabric something bigger than object – experience. I invite the public to participate in something natural, impermanent, to re-invigorate our sense of belonging. I work to collaborate with environmental and social forces greater than me, to eclipse cynicism, to take responsibility for the places we find ourselves in, to deepen our relationships with the landscapes in which we live. In these ways, I am exploring the realm of relational art. By merging life and art, I extend my creations beyond sole-authorship, into co-authorship.

















































