Kin

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Abstract

The current ecological state of the world is a source of great anxiety — what seems to be missing is a sense of kinship, of how fundamentally interconnected human lives and the life of the planet are. I work across mediums to explore and elicit a sense that the boundary between the human and non-human is permeable, that it is not as locatable as it is often thought to be, that we are bound in a web of relations.

This work is situated within the context of finding myself displaced in Toronto and working to methodically attune myself to this environment. As I slowly and meticulously engage with drawings, pressed flowers, sculpture, and other creative processes, I am learning the details of this place and the life here. I cultivate an intimacy and sensitivity to the environment around me through imbedded ecological sensibilities, shared stories, and relayed connections.

Dedications

To Trillian, who sat with me and kept me company throughout this writing process and has made my days brighter; who gave me a perspective on what Derrida and Timothy Morton mean when they speak about *cats*; and who allowed me to relate to ideas of companion species and kin in ways that were closer than any of my previous experiences could have been. For becoming animal, human, and kin, with me.

To my grandfather, who wittily took advantage of his deathbed to extract ambitious promises.

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Today, the meeting place of Toronto is still the home of many Indigenous people from across Turtle Island and I am grateful to be within this community, on this territory.

Thank you Evan, Jessie, Johanna, Lev, Nick, and Taylor — I've never been doing this alone.

To my committee: Barbara, Marc, and Joan — you have not only supported me but challenged me, too, and for that I am grateful.

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Kin is an assembling sort of word. All critters share a common ‘flesh,’ laterally, semiotically, and genealogically. Ancestors turn out to be very interesting strangers; kin are unfamiliar (outside what we thought was family or gens), uncanny, haunting, active.

Donna Haraway, *Staying with the Trouble* (103)

Kin

preface: to constitute a shape

I am seeking — backwards and then forwards again. Looking at artists whose work has been intriguingly present during my research; theorists whose work stuns, overwhelms, and inspires me, who say what I have been unable to put words to; fiction, which seemingly becomes truth; notes written, lost, and found; recollections of intimate moments between myself, others, and my environment; and an ineffable sort of *already knowing*. From within this web of fragments, I find a sense of coherence in the preface to *Survival*.

In these opening pages, Margaret Atwood declares that she does not survey, evaluate, provide histories or biographies, or original or brilliant insights. She says that she instead attempts to do one simple thing: to outline key patterns like field markings in bird-books, which help to distinguish one species from all others. Key patterns that, taken together, constitute a shape. This exhibition and paper, too, delineate sets of patterns and, with these, constitute a shape — a semblance of something recognizable, perhaps even familiar. These patterns trace lines of theory like the edge of a pencil against a sheet of paper; outline the progression of this body of work as a thinking and reflexive act; follow the making of the work itself; and attempt to illuminate the entangled aspects of both research and creative practice.

This exhibition and thesis paper have developed in tandem and this paper should be read with this interrelated development in mind. As I research and write, the way that I create drawings and other works changes and shifts. As I engage with drawings, pressed flowers, sculpture, and other creative processes, the direction of my research changes. Understanding these processes and the sources of my research as diffractive is integral — they are entangled

and, read through one another, elicit new insights in differences which seem to matter.[1] Where there is relevance between aspects of my work and research, I seek and draw out these connections. Read diffractively, these key patterns (or field markings) reveal a shape that is not isolatable but, like ‘humans’ and ‘nature’, inextricably entangled.



Image 1 — *untitled studio experiment (larval)*

[1]Karen Barad explains diffractive methodologies as “reading insights through one another, building new insights, and attentively and carefully reading for differences that matter in their fine details[…] not predicated on externality but entanglement” (Dolphijn and van der Tuin 2).

1

There is fluidity in being. Being with/apart. We are apart insofar as there is "I" and "you." We are closely entangled. This paper/exhibition connects our bodies, our semiotics. Mine into yours. The thought of your eventual presence, present here. I am implicating my embodied knowledges within you.

We are apart from what we are not, only if we divide ourselves from it. I/you intimately declare close boundaries. Without this we could not determine: what is human? Are the bacteria in my/your stomach *us*? Is pollen, adrift in the air, part of us? Released promiscuously. Inhaled. Reacting to an allergic reaction, the immune system insists, "this is not of this body!" Still, the indication: one body's fragment, a body itself (pollen), came into the allergic body to cause this caesura and insists, "we are permeable, our bounds are immeasurable."[2]

Grounded in the necessity of cultivating alternative knowledges, I seek an intimacy and sensitivity to the environment around me through embedded ecological sensibilities, shared stories, and relayed connections. I have come to know plants and other bodies through gaze and fingertips. Bodies are embedded and overlap in drawings, connecting to places, geographies, or an intimate partner; lives remembered familiarly, or touched through a computer screen. Somewhere, in paper, the memory of a former body in a forest remains. In notebooks, bodies pulled apart, pressed, and brought together tenderly between pages become a new body, within which the spores of further bodies take form. Across unknown distances, I connect to a body alien to mine; I touch, dye, and wash hair that is not my own. The hair becomes an outgrowth of

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[2] Though he phrases it very differently, this insight is rooted in Michael Marder's reoccurring reflections on his own allergies (Irigaray and Marder 130).

another body, wax binding it to the form of tree and roots. Long since uprooted, the tree still spreads earth over the studio floor. “I was there, connected, embedded, now I am here, connected, embedded,” it says to me/you.

The word we call our world is *earth*.[3] The Earth is present here through roots laid and uprooted, past and future bodies, presence in absence. It is a hyperobject,[4] permeable, immeasurable. Bodies that pass near enact affect, are affected by one another, permeate one another in this way. Stained paper. Thin barriers. Peeling bark. Grains of earth. Dust. Spores. Pigment. Minerals. Earth. These materials and words permeate my/your/our body — what is touched, inhaled, seen, and read is now within you. A static charge, a connection of synapses, binds us. Us includes them.

I cannot disentangle us, though I say “I.” “I” is tenuous. It must be. We are permeable. Between us there are innumerable, unfathomable connections. We are small fragments of the shared body, Earth.[5]

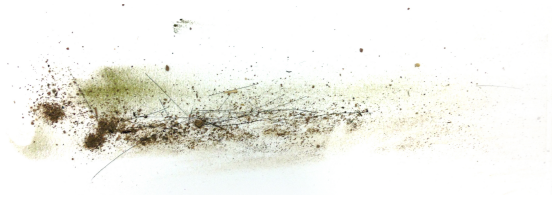

Image 2 — *studio debris*

2

‘Nature’ must be considered *differently*, redefined. “The ecological value of the term *Nature* is dangerously overrated, because Nature isn’t just a term,” explains Timothy Morton (*Dark Ecology* 59). The concept of Nature (particularly when capitalized as though it were a

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[3] A lesson learned through Ursula Le Guin’s novel, *The Word for World is Forest.*

[4] Timothy Morton’s term, in reference to “things that are massively distributed in time and space relative to humans.” Hyperobjects are so massive that they are invisible or unthinkable in most instances. (*Hyperobjects* 1, 2)

[5] I am situated, embedded within these relations.

proper noun; as though *nature* were a bounded, self-contained entity) allows us to set ourselves apart from an environment from which we are not, in reality, separate. Giorgio Agamben, investigating the boundary between animality and humanity, suggests that we, humans, are only separate from the animal (or 'Nature') because we set ourselves apart. "The division of life into vegetal and relational, organic and animal, animal and human," he explains, "passes first of all as a mobile border within living man" (15). In a lecture at Aleppo, Morton explains succinctly, "What ecological awareness forces us to notice, is that Nature is an anthropocentrically scaled concept that, to say the least, doesn't work anymore. Nature is how we've been talking to ourselves about what is in fact the case which I call the symbiotic real… When you scale it up enough, you see that the whole of the biosphere is symbiosis" ("Nature Isn't Real" 00:01:10 - 00:03:00). There is no distinction by which we can clearly separate ourselves from, and so define, the Earth's biosphere, this Other, 'Nature'. The border is mobile and internalized, a line drawn and signified. Unable to clearly define what is 'human,' we find that *nature* cannot be divided from us.

3

> I'm merely pointing out that they are all interconnected… A linkage of incredible complexity and physical extent. Why, even the prairie grass-forms have those root-connectors, don't they? I know that sentience or intelligence isn't a thing, you can't find it in, or analyze it out from, the cells of a brain. It's a function of the connected cells. It is, in a sense, the connection: the connectedness. It doesn't exist. (Le Guin, "Vaster than" 262-263)

In Le Guin's short story, "Vaster than Empires and More Slow," a group of space explorers land on a planet that has only vegetal life upon it. After an incident where a crew member is wounded and bleeds onto the roots of several trees, the planet's consciousness (spread throughout each plant as a cell or node) becomes aware of the explorers. The plant-life of the planet, having never related to other life-forms prior to this, reacts with immense, powerful fear — a potent affect, which saturates the planet, and from which the explorers cannot escape. In response to this environmental affect of fear, the explorers can only experience and return fear. One of the explorers, Osden, an empath, finally identifies the source of the fear and immerses himself completely within the forest, embracing and connecting with the plant life. Through knowing him, through this connectedness, the boundary between them is overcome and the potent atmosphere of fear is eased.

4

I laughed, when the therapist I was seeing told me to imagine that I was a tree as a grounding exercise. "That's practically all I do!" I exclaimed. Following her directions, I stood from my chair and, feeling self-conscious, reached with my eyes closed, imagining my body extended skyward for nourishment and swaying in the wind, feet reaching through tendrils into the ground below.

5

This is how I imagine reading my exhibition: Osden is the viewer, me/you, or is looking with us. Empathic, he is well attuned to affect and attunes us to the same. (Osden who, in another

story farther into the future, is immersed in the plant life/consciousness of the planet.) The exhibition is spread across two locations. A main space, holding the larger body of the work and a set of three satellite spaces, one location perhaps trailing after the first or, at a distance, leading to it.



Image 3 — *Book One (excerpts)*

6

Seeking the main body of the exhibition, you/I/Osden feel(s) a slight surge of satisfaction as we spot it. There is a window into the space; objects, shelves, drawings, are in view. Across the window, a simple vinyl text reads *Kin.* Approaching the space, we notice that the window is intersected by a simple wooden table. Gazing at it, enticed, we approach the glass, looking down at items spread across the narrow table's length. Looking in on these objects, Osden imagines touching them, the soft, near weightless fragility of the flowers, the weight and history of the

paper. Glancing up toward the rest of the space, he/we pass(es) through the gallery doors and inside. We find:

7

A wooden table
Wooden shelves
A simple book stand
The shell of a small white notebook
Loose stained pages
Plant matter
Pressed flowers
Small white frames
A gray notebook, propped open
Loose flowers
An accordion-style book, stretched across a shelf
A branch, sprouting hair
A honeycomb with hair, small tufts of fur, and a dried flower imbedded in it
Plaster fragments of a body
Sheets of paper, five medium sized pieces, one very large
Smudges, fine indents
Pastel drawings
    Plants from the lakeshore
    Grass/hair
    Prairie crocuses
    A pelt
    Pollinators
    A traced body

Osden senses:

> Body as absence/presence, as in-between, as permeable and overlapping.
> Intimacy and the history of tactile knowing, touching, and caring.
> Sympoiesis.

8

"*Sympoiesis* is a simple word," says Donna Haraway, "it means 'making-with." It means that "earthlings are *never alone*… [it] is a word for worlding-with, in company"(58). Sympoiesis, in contrast to autopoiesis, means systems produced and maintained in entangled coexistence. My research and art-making are simultaneously a culmination *of*, and culminate in, a rich cross-pollination between theory, fiction, actions, experiences, exploration, and other forms of knowledge-making. Bridging the sources that feed into my art practice is not an illustrative act but a process of trying to cultivate connections that matter within art-making.

9

The items within the exhibition carry these (among other, innumerable) connections:

> Table and shelves: crafted by a close friend.
> The white notebook: the mould that unexpectedly began to saturate it.
> Loose pages: stained with traces of the flowers they once pressed so intimately close.
> Framed excerpts: each viewer seems to have a different favourite.
> The gray notebook: richly scented from the life it has contained.
> Loose flowers: lost and found again in forgotten pockets, or picked and brought to me as gifts.
> The accordion book: filled during a visit to a former home. The differences in climate linger in how little the plants stained, the absence of mould.
> A fourth book: not here, it is still only beginning.
> The branch: broke by someone else who left it split, hair-like.

Hair: from an unknown, globalized source, a distant body strangely present.

The honeycomb: found on the roadside, in the woods, near the town my family is from.

Plaster fragments: impulsive gestures, trying to become something else.

Paper: the history of my hands and body touching it.

Pastel drawings: unknown, known and touched, photographed and translated; drawn in meditative devotion.

10

Inside, the gallery has two distinct spaces. The smaller section of the room is immediately ahead when I/you enter. The space also extends to our right, forming a right angle. Ahead of us, on the far wall as we enter, is grid of frames. Several shelves which appear to be of the same wood as the table are affixed across the walls with objects upon them. To our right, at the farther end of the gallery, hangs a large drawing. There are moments of a dark blue (or black?) tone upon it, and just a faint hint of a figure-like presence. There are more drawings, each with a limited palette, leading across the wall toward it and drawing you/me/Osden in. But first the table, now familiar, is to our left and our gaze comes back around to it.

Able to look more closely, we inspect the contents of the table. Loose pages, startlingly vulnerable, lay upon it. The warping from moisture and the frail texture of the pressed flowers on them seems to almost necessitate this vulnerability. They could not be pressed under the weight of a glass or plastic protective layer and be the same. The pages are numbered, some in stacks, some in pairs, some singular. Looking at them, a sort of narrative is slowly revealed, an accumulation of stains and colours, as well as what may be spores of mould, evidence of rot. Each composition is different, but there is repetition to them, too. The same stain sometimes seems to accumulate and change as the page numbers count upward. At one end of the table are a

few objects, a gathered collection of white plaster fragments of a body. These fragments somehow feel parallel to the pages, a tactile, impulsive collection, a history of touching.

Continuing along the left side of the gallery, I/you/we approach the first shelf. This shelf is long, exactly as long as it needs to be. Across it stretches an accordion-fold book with flowers on and in it. Some have stained it, many have fallen into the valleys of the zigzag pattern of its folds. Nestled in crevices, these flowers are like a trailing history. Since we're looking at them together, I tell you (or perhaps you empathically know), "from Calgary."

11

At this moment I (and so perhaps you) realize something new. The shape of the folded book is like the gesture one would make to mimic mountains on the horizon. This had not occurred to me before. This simple yet unforeseen connection, is satisfying. *This* book is for *that* place.

12

On the phone, my grandmother asked how Toronto is. I told her about becoming used to the city, slowly getting oriented, about missing the mountains. She said she could never live here, never live outside of the Rockies again, that her heart and soul are there. I understand. I was young in the mountains, and when I moved back to the Rockies several years ago, I was stunned. I knew and understood myself in relation to that landscape in ways I hadn't realized that I had missed. When I first moved to Toronto, I felt more displaced than I could have imagined. In Alberta, I knew the plants, the territory, the people, and I began to try to conceptualize what it

would mean for me to relate to this new place, to a lake, a large body of water, and the geographic characteristics of Toronto instead.

In my work and research I utilize natural motifs and materials to (re)consider the relationship between human, animal, and plant bodies; nature; landscape; the environment; and ecologies. Through moving back to the mountains and then to Toronto, I discovered that cultivating a sensitivity to the environment around me is a significant part of this practice. Art-making has been integral to my coming to feel at home in Toronto and this sensitivity is embedded within my research here. I strive to be attentive to the flowers growing on front lawns, to the deer I have passed (to my surprise) on the Humber River bike paths, to the unexpected ease with which I can grow a garden, to the beaches and rocky shores and more water than I can wrap my mind around. In return, this place has enriched my understanding of the theory that influences me, and has provided materials and inspiration for my thesis work.

13

Osden now stands at the wall opposite the doors, facing the grid of small frames. In these frames are more pages of pressed flowers and elaborate stains. A brief realization: these pages belong to the set we'd previously observed. Selected and separated, displayed in this way, they reveal intimate details. One, we note, has torn; the fibres of another plant on the back of the page can be seen through it. The white mounting emphasizes this layering. Beneath each page are the shadows of other flowers, other stains, even the embossed shapes of other plants from when the notebook was intact. This permeability, the way that each body has affected the next, feels like a suggestion: the barrier between these bodies is not finite.

On the next wall, to our right, is another shelf. On it sits the shell of the notebook that once housed the pages on view. Osden, in looking at it, feels the tactility and history of its holding and carrying; moments across the city, a growing familiarity. Next to it, a focal point, another notebook of the same size sits open on a stand. It is secured, revealing only two pages. Soft yellow staining and delicate remnants of flowers entice us to lean in for a closer look and, without realizing, we inhale a soft scent. We find floral fragrance and a musty, mould-scent in compelling combination. With this scent permeating our senses, lungs, and minds, we round the corner and enter the right side of the gallery carrying it with us.

Once again, we face the large, weighty paper at the far end of the space. The scale and arrangement of the drawing plays subtle tricks; for a moment, it feels figurative, looming. Then, it is flat again, only small areas of drawing spread across it. Though we are compelled toward it, a soft movement to our left distracts us. Hair, draping off of a final shelf, sways as we approach. We follow the trail of the hair and find a short branch, broken and split into small fibres. The hair seems, surprisingly, to belong, to be growing out of it. Also on this shelf is a pile of flowers, dried but not pressed, with no discernible consistency. This was not a bouquet. The pile looks as if it had been gathered and accumulated there, slowly, over time.

From here, we begin to approach the drawings spread across the rest of the gallery. Leading toward the large, hanging drawing at the back of the room, are drawings on both sides of the space. Their scale is bodily, the size of the paper relative to Osden's torso. On each of them is a mass, rendered in earthy greens and dark purple, with hints of other tones. The masses change from one image to the next, but the consistent palette suggests they are somehow the same form, shifting each time it is captured as an image. The content is rendered sensitively; in places, prints

of pigment from where my (I am looking with you) hand has rubbed and then rested elsewhere on the page are visible. Together, the drawings give a sense of hair decorated with flowers yet, simultaneously, of matted spring grasses or the trace of a deer bed with flowers sprouting from it. We recognize that they are crocuses, though perhaps not everyone will. They don't look quite like the crocuses in Toronto; they are prairie crocuses, familiar and distant. The bugs are pollinators. There is a large cluster of bees resting on and morphing into what appears to be a patch of grass or a rabbit's pelt. The connections represented seem to have their own uncanny logic. There's a sense of intimacy in the drawings, a closeness, but also a foreboding.

14

An unsettling familiarity lies beneath the lines drawn to separate the human from the non-human or 'Nature.' Morton points out that "the local" is often "far from the totally known or knowable. It is familiar, which also means that it is uncanny (German, *heimisch,* 'familiar' and 'unfamiliar,' 'intimate' and 'monstrous' at the same time)" (*Dark Ecology* 11). What seems to be foreign to us is connected more closely than we realize. Morton gives a clear example of this this: "As soon as humans know about climate," he explains, "weather becomes a flimsy, superficial appearance that is a mere local representation of some much larger phenomena" (*Hyperobjects* 104). The local, the familiar, even the intimate (a dwelling place, particular plant life, a lover's hair) then also becomes representative of, and inextricable from, unthinkably large and interconnected phenomena, hyperobjects. "We vaguely sense them out of the corner of our eye while seeing the data in the center of our vision" (Morton *Dark Ecology,* 11). According to Haraway, *kin* (the word we noted in vinyl on the window) "is an assembling sort of word. All

critters share a common ‘flesh,’ laterally, semiotically, and genealogically” (103). We and our environment, all earthlings, are inescapably interwoven and entangled. Though we cannot view or understand this in its entirety, this is what it means to be a part of an ecology.

15

Finally, turning to the end of the room, we consider the largest of the drawings. The scale is again bodily, but in a way that hovers above us. There is a lot of white space; the composition exists on the paper, but also on the white of the wall. Moving close, to about a metre away, we begin to see details of the drawn sections. Areas of grass, flowers, a branch or a root, sticks, and small sprouting plants reveal themselves. Again, the shadow of the hand that drew the piece is visible in soft smudges. There’s a faint hint of a sketch in orange under the dark blue drawing. Following this sketch and stepping closer, I/you/we can now see the outline of a body. The form, soft and curving, is traced as in a grade school craft. The plants drawn on the page mimic its shape. Not perfectly, and not fully, but enough. Getting even closer, we admire the details. Stepping back again, the figure which we had somehow, in an impression, through a faint affect, noticed before, is now present. The figure of the drawing is a looming presence/absence of human/nature in fragmented form.

16

The fiction of you/me/Osden allows me to describe an imagined experience of artwork and research that has been produced through an entangled process in a way that is reflective of

these processes. My thesis work is situated within a web of ecological and other concerns. Art-making is both closely connected to and yet separate from these concerns. It is an exploration that stems from how they are internalized. I find a succinct articulation of this in an interview between Wanda Nanibush and Rebecca Belmore for the journal *Decolonization*. In it, Nanibush asks Belmore whether she thinks her work is political; if that is a primary concern, or if her primary concern is something to do with art-making; and if this poses a false dichotomy between art that is political or art that is concerned with art-making. To these questions, Belmore replies "I care about what goes on in the world, is that political?" She continues to say that what artists do is simple: they are themselves, articulating where they are from, where they are now, and where they want to be going (216). This, in part, is what the entangled narratives in this paper are intended to do.

17

Within the realm of 'caring about what goes on in the world,' it seems increasingly desirable and even urgent to imagine *how else* things might be. As Morton explains in *Dark Ecology*: "Now that the globalization dust has settled and the global warming data is in, we humans find ourselves on a very specific planet with a specific biosphere. It's not Mars. It is planet Earth" (10). Humans have so drastically affected the planet that a new geological era has been declared: the *Anthropocene*. Though Haraway finds the term *Anthropocene* contentious and anthropocentric, she also acknowledges that it is useful as a point of reference to describe the current ecological reality of the Earth (47). The sixth mass extinction event is occurring, with even conservative studies estimating that species are going extinct at 100 times the normal

background extinction rate (Ceballos, et al). There is a 97 percent consensus among scientists that humans are the cause of climate change. The remaining 3 percent are unable to agree upon a cause (Cook, et al).

The world has been and will continue to be changed immeasurably by human activity. This knowledge can feel overwhelming, it can feel depressing; it is hard to contend with. However, "mourning is intrinsic to cultivating response-ability," as Haraway explains. "Grief is a path to understanding entangled shared living and dying; human beings must grieve *with*, because we are in and of this fabric of undoing" (38, 39). Haraway's insights are comforting in troubled times. In grief but also in an optimistic sense of possibility, I seek kinship and entanglement across species and environments.

18

Belmore's suggestion that art-making is a form of articulation fits compellingly with Linda Tuhiwai Smith's discussion of imagination. She explains: "The concept of imagination, when employed as a sociological tool, is often reduced to a way of seeing and understanding the world, or a way of understanding how people either construct the world, or are constructed by the world." However, as Belmore begins to indicate, and Tuhiwai Smith continues, "the imagination can be a way of sharing the world." Art-making, then, becomes aligned with what Tuhiwai Smith describes as struggling to find a language by which to share one's world and seeking the means to then "interpret and perform within that shared imagination" (37). As a creative process, this often seems to mean developing personal understandings of the world and

how people construct and are constructed by it; a process which then translates into world-sharing.

Haraway provides a useful analogy for the sharing of stories and imaginings, in the form of string figures (games like cat's cradle). She elaborates:

> Playing games of string figures is about giving and receiving patterns, dropping threads, and failing but sometimes finding something that works, something consequential or maybe even beautiful that wasn't there before, of relaying connections that matter, of telling stories in hand upon hand, digit upon digit, attachment site upon attachment site, to craft conditions for flourishing on terra, on earth." (10)

This description is particularly compelling because of the way it embodies the passing of narratives from one person to another as a tactile and engaged experience. The emphasis is that this sharing must be done as an act of both giving and receiving. Throughout my studio practice I try to cultivate an often very tactile receptivity to the environment around me, to other life-forms, and to both my materials and art-making. Through art-making I pass string figures, gathered and constructed, to the next set of hands.

19

At another time, Osden is walking east. He comes to the first of the vitrine spaces.[6] Node-like, the vitrine is a break within the geometric patterns of the coloured glass facade of the building, a white interlude, the first of three small viewing spaces.

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[6]Part of the thesis work *Kin*, the concurrent vitrine exhibition at the Art Gallery of York University (AGYU) is titled *Entangled Bodies.*

Against the white walls of this first node, an unusual log hangs silhouetted in the space. Hoisted high, it draws his eyes upward. It splits apart at the top into short, severed branches, and again at the bottom, though these branches are smaller, more entangled. They are roots, you/I/we realize, before we notice with alarm the draping bottom of the form. The log begins to transfigure into hair. There are clumps of dirt tangled between the roots, and drops here and there of a sap-like material. This same material (beeswax, Osden realizes) binds small rivulets, vein-like fountains of silt-coloured and near-black hair, which emerge from small roots and tendrils in varying flows, draping and lightly brushing the elevated floor of the space. These details occupy us momentarily, before we step back to consider the overall form, and begin to move onward.

In the next vitrine is a strikingly different form. There are several large pieces of bark, layered. Along the edge, where the bark has been rent from its former body, leaks a shapely flow. Resembling dried sap, the pale yellow wax forms peculiar knobs and swells. Looking more closely, we see that they are fragments of the human body, flowing outward. This bodily flowing occurs in a way distinctly separate from, yet somehow reminiscent of, the hair morphing out of the log in the previous vitrine. The moulded forms are uncanny, flipping between waxy flows and an emerging yet hidden life.

Approaching the final vitrine space, seeking, we find a piece smaller than the others. A dark branch leans against the back of the space. From the wounds where forking twigs have been severed, sprout flows of hair. Like a stilled visualization of sap or energy, these flows, more isolated than those of the log, are unnerving. Less bodily in scale than the other two pieces, the object looks as though it could easily be held, provoking a tactile curiosity. Reminiscent in scale to a walking stick, it brings to mind hikes, horse hair lichens, tufts of fur caught on branches in

the woods. A sense of symbiosis hangs about these works. Like the previous two vitrine pieces, this branch affirms and demonstrates one type of body growing out of or contained within another; it seems to suggest a sort of melding, life forms combined in entangled coexistence. *Sympoiesis*, thinks Osden.

I/you/Osden contemplate(s) human hair flowing out of the roots or broken branches of a tree and the wet, waxy, sap of life, metamorphosed into human form. Once we have viewed both parts of the exhibition, we consider the possible meanings of *kin* and find ourselves imagining entangled, permeable, and overlapping bodies.

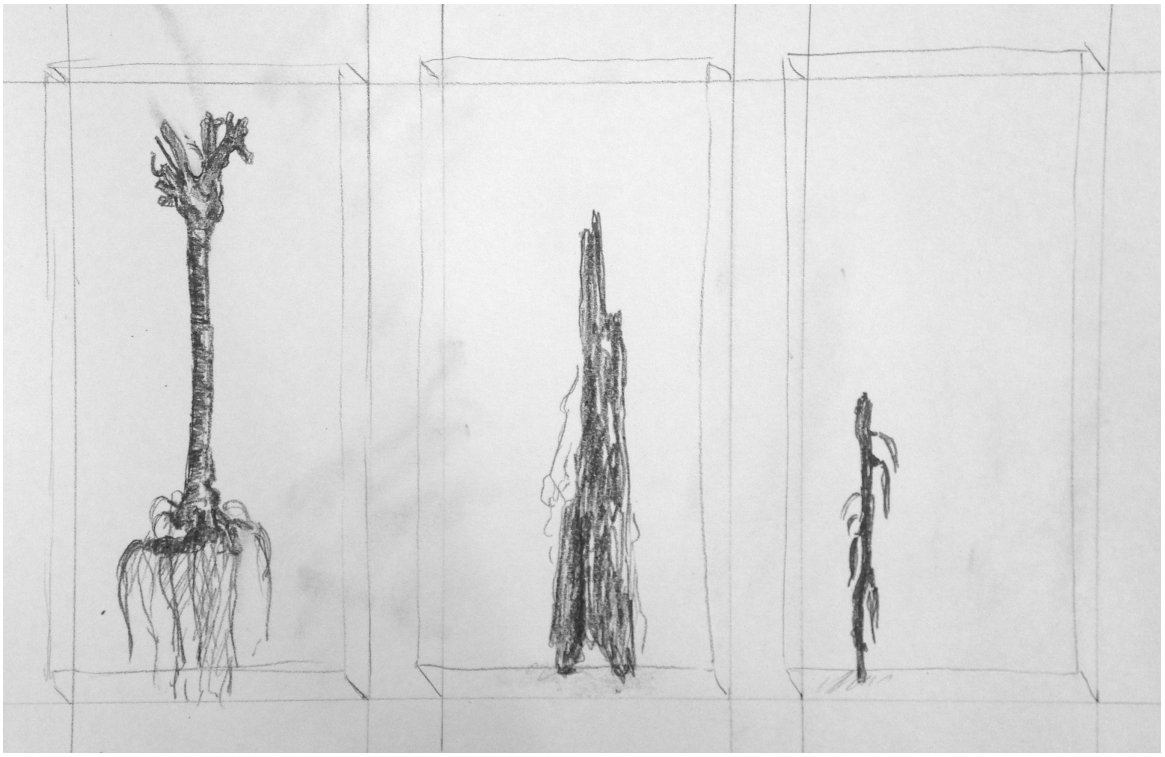

Image 4 — *Sketches for vitrines*

20

Haraway concludes *Staying With the Trouble,* a book that optimistically suggests that we must (and perhaps can) learn to live and die well together on a damaged planet, with a story of humanity beginning to drastically and positively shift its relationship to nature. Presenting and proposing stories of coexistence, connections, relationships, and multispecies flourishing within her own work and the work of others, she explains, "It matters what stories we tell to tell other stories with… It matters what stories make worlds, what worlds make stories" (12). It follows that it matters how we frame the narratives that we not only tell, but live and actualize.

Recognizing, respecting, and coming to understanding through different narratives of the world is necessary to acknowledge and consider multiple overlapping colonial (and decolonial) narratives. In receptiveness to stories of diverse shared worlds, Tuhiwai Smith resists the "desirability of being able to include absolutely all known knowledge into a coherent whole." This idea of a coherent narrative suggests that all facts can be assembled in an ordered way, so as to tell a singular truth (30, 31). However, diverse and contested narratives of the past originating in different communities are an important part of contemporary Indigenous life (33). Tuhiwai Smith continues, "To hold alternative histories is to hold alternative knowledges." The implication of these alternative knowledges "is that they can form the basis of alternative ways of doing things" (34). This is why *it matters what stories we use to tell stories* — as Haraway points out, *stories make worlds.* Thus, shared imaginings become potentially transformative conversations, a means by which to *imagine otherwise*.

For me, art-making is a form of sharing imaginings of a world that exists *differently.* The work that I am creating, seeks stories of coexistence, connections, and cross-species

relationships. I tell the story of the exhibition as I imagine it *could* be. I tell the story of creating this work, charged with various memories and anticipations, to develop further connections.

21

In High Park, I mistook a flower called a scilla for the closest thing to a prairie crocus, a familiar sign of the rockies and Alberta that I missed as winter's snow began to melt. Compelled by my own misunderstanding and urged by a discontent sense of disconnect, I began to seek ways to familiarize myself with this place, Toronto. I did not try to learn names or taxonomies, but rather to know myself in relation to the other lives here. In a way similar to what Haraway describes as cultivating response-ability, I began "training [my] mind and imagination to go visiting… to meet unexpected, non-natal kin, and to strike up conversations, to pose and respond to interesting questions, to propose together something unanticipated, to take up the unasked-for obligations of having met" (130). This response-ability, intentional in that I knew I wanted to relate bodily, to touch, and to intimately learn this place, was unintentional in the openness of it. I did not know how these explorations would culminate. According to Chris Kraus, amateur collecting is "a naive experience of substance and the material world. The object forms a link between the collector and its origins" (111). I began to gather, seeking links or connections.

I picked flowers and pressed them in an ongoing collection of notebooks, in an attempt to become familiar with flora that felt alien to me. I documented the lake and the plants on the shore, and other aspects of my life here, and eventually began to draw them. I brought strange and interesting pieces of wood and other natural materials home and to my art studio. I began to collect fragments.

"Place has a strange loop form because place deeply involves time," says Morton. "Place doesn't stay still, but bends and twists: place *is* a twist you can't iron out of the fabric of things" (*Dark Ecology* 11). Having moved to Toronto in late summer, I'd been in awe of the flora. In the midst of a humid heat wave, I felt as though I had moved somewhere tropical, wholly unanticipated. Over the winter I missed the nature I'd become so used to being immersed in, living in Banff National Park, in the Rockies — an absence which slowly began to guide my drawing practice. The next spring, I began to gather and press flowers; trying to form a link, my fingers against stems and petals, searching out connections to the environment in which they seemed to flourish. This tactile connectivity was also sought through the pencil strokes in my drawings, and eventually through sculptural explorations too. This place is not definable, I cannot pin it down, it shifts and changes as I seek a sense of connection to it. This thesis project has become a *slow* chronology of these sought connections.

22

In Richard Sennett's *The Craftsman*, he suggests asking what the process of making concrete things reveals to us about ourselves. He explains that, "The slowness of craft time serves as a source of satisfaction; practice beds in… Slow craft time also enables the work of reflection and imagination" (295). Becoming absorbed in the process of art-making is meditative. It is a way to connect theory, tacit knowledge, experience, my self, and my subject matter.

Slowness necessitates and "demonstrates a special receptivity to the copresence of various memories and anticipations, narratives and untold stories, beats and rhythms in our temporally and spatially expanded moment" (Koepnick 14, 15). The materials that I gathered

were representative of the unfamiliar landscape of Toronto but also connected to narratives of history and place; Indigenous land; current politics; ecological concerns; my personal relationships; readings; and innumerable other stories. To experience the present in the mode of slowness is to approach it as "a site charged with multiple durations, pasts, and possible futures," explains Lutz Koepnick, eliciting "unforeseen interactions and relationships" (12, 17). Through these materials, I tried to cultivate a receptivity to these interactions and relationships. Like Morton's insight regarding weather and climate, when I saw something as simple as a flower, it represented a vast array of larger phenomena, a web of connections.

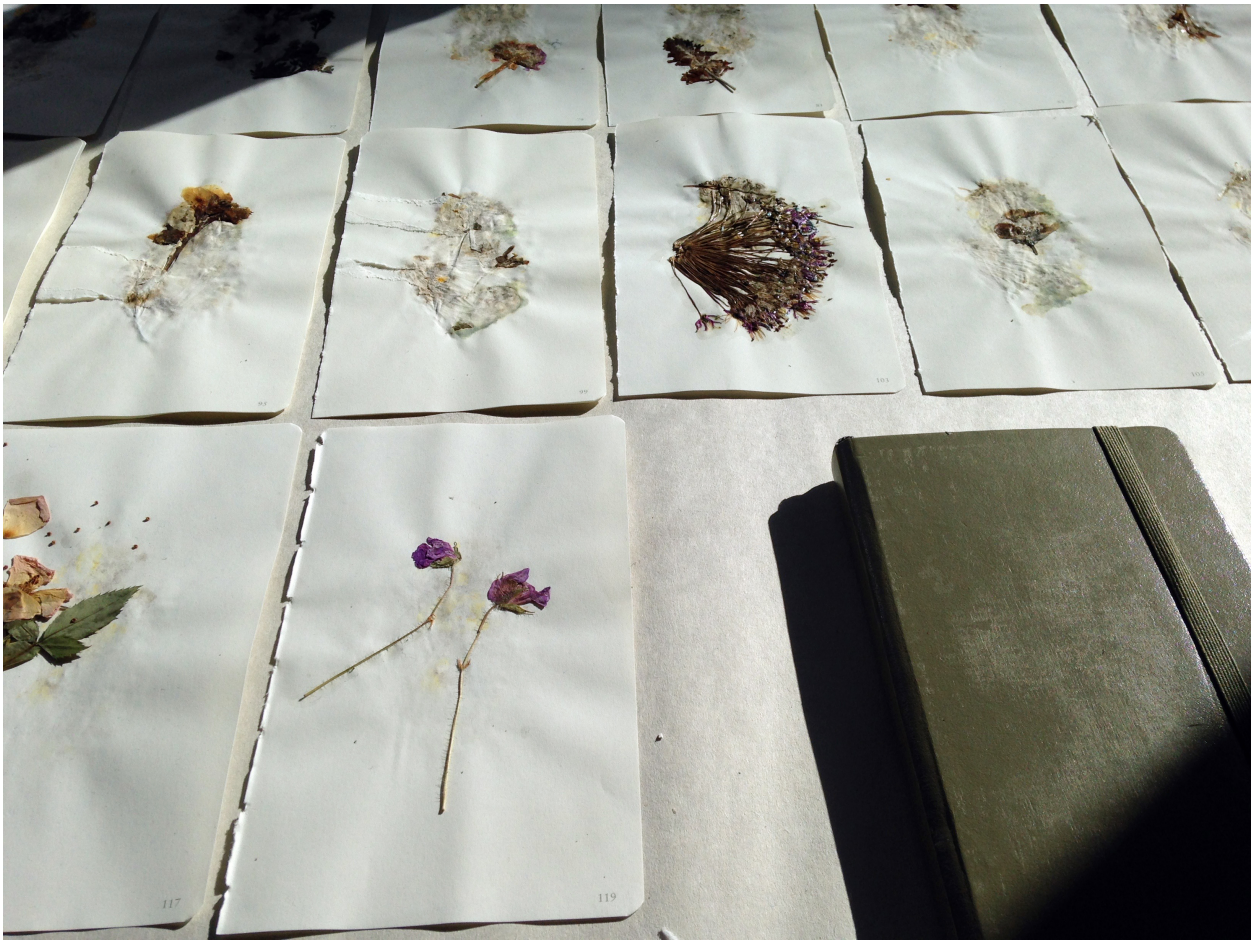

Image 5 — s*tudio shot with Book One (excerpts) and Book Two*

23

As I slowly and meticulously gather flowers, I am learning the details of this place and the life here, developing my relationship with it. I carry a small blank notebook with me and try to pick each unfamiliar flower I see, to press within the book. The gathering is based in imperfect memory and knowledge. The flowers I encounter change over the course of the seasons and as I travel. I try to pick each flower only once. I surely fail in this task of memory. The flowers pressed between notebook pages are juicy and leak onto one another, creating watercolour-like stains and overlaps. The moisture in the warmer months overwhelms the notebook. Mould begins to grow, new life which alters each page, creating deep and beautiful images.

Until early winter, this collecting was near constant. Over the course of the summer and fall, three notebooks, titled according to the order in which they began, were filled. *Book One*, *Book Two*, and *Book Three* (an accordion fold book, documenting a brief trip) were completed. *Book Four* began late, and yet is a surprising thirty-two pages of flowers picked from November and later. When there have been flowers in bloom and the book currently in progress isn't with me, I have often picked them and put them in pockets for pressing later. About half of these are remembered. During the summer, friends began to bring me flowers, and my desk gradually accumulated a small pile of dried blossoms, duplicates from friends and those found forgotten in my pockets. This pile feels like a history parallel to the books. It documents the way this project also became social, through the times I would stop and tuck a flower into a notebook or pocket while with others, and the way they gradually began to repeat this behaviour in a gesture of participation, and for me.

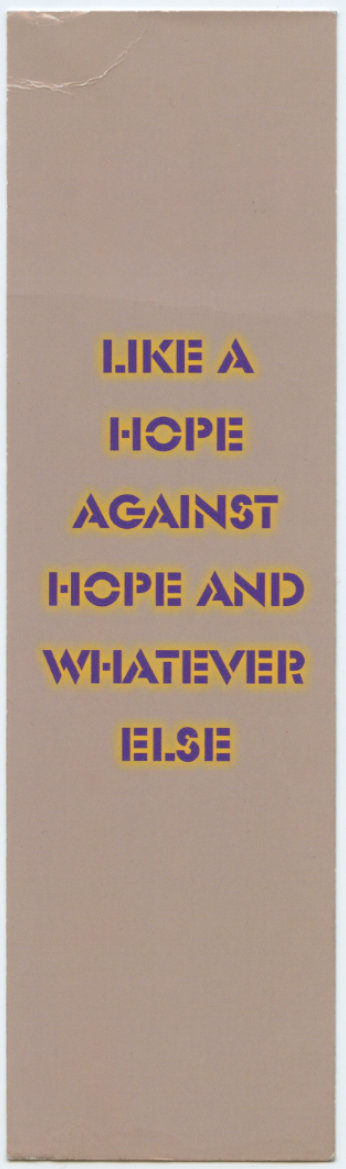

Image 6 — Raymond Boisjoly *Contingent Matters.* This artist's multiple bookmark, used throughout my research process, was gifted to me anonymously with the book *Decolonizing Methodologies*

24

"The pines," says Marder, " (and at bottom, all plants) not only *are* but also create a world; they *world,* in the verbal, active sense of the word" (Irigaray and Marder 121). Through cultivating an attentiveness to the details of non-human life and particularly through developing ways of relating to plant life, I (and perhaps others) begin to develop a greater sense of this

worlding. “To think and dream with and of plants is to delve into a profound source of thinking and imagination” Marder continues (Irigaray and Marder 208). To truly cultivate interspecies relationships of responsibility, I try to imagine *with* plant life, in cooperative co-worlding. Through representing plant life differently, or memorializing it in stained, beautiful books, I assert its liveliness as best I am able to grasp it. Unable to conceive of how plants may world, I cultivate sensitivity to them, and share these imaginings.

25

As the first of my notebooks filled, I began to notice a floral scent each time I opened it. One day, with alarm, I realized that it smelled musty and of rot instead. Over a hundred pages into the book, and thinking that it might be destroyed by mould, I took it to the studio and dismantled it. I call the pieces from this process *Excerpts.* The second book, too, eventually became overwhelmed by moisture and began to rot. I watched carefully, but allowed the process to continue the second time. What I had discovered in dismantling *Book One* was how incredibly beautiful and relevant to the project the mould was. These books documented not only Toronto’s flora, but the humid summer environment. Further, they became a gesture toward remembering, as Haraway says, ‘that we must live and die together.’ A gesture toward my intention to tell stories of interconnectedness, of bodies whose boundaries are permeable and overlap. To a degree that I could not foresee, this project memorialized, engaged, and brought this permeability into presence. The flowers within the books became a new body in the form of the book, while their own decay resulted in new life in the mould that grew upon them.

This was a present reminder of the permeability of my own body, as well, and I considered how much the simple act of picking a flower could — directly, immediately, tangibly — affect me. I had been warned, by another artist, of giant hogweed and in High Park there are warning signs, telling visitors not to touch poison ivy. Not only pages, but my fingertips, too, were stained with the scent, stickiness, and occasional colour of the plants I was picking. Though I avoided plants that I knew could harm me, I wondered about the other possible effects of the plants I touched as they permeated my skin.

I considered too, how my actions may have been affecting the environment around me. This collecting process cost the plants I was documenting more than it did me. Reflecting on this exchange, my memorialization in return for potentially life-giving flowers (for the plant or a pollinator), is also an important aspect of this project. "Critters—human and not— become-with each other, compose and decompose each other, in every scale and register of time and stuff," says Haraway thoughtfully, accurately (38). Though she is speaking about larger, ecologically-scaled human effects, the embodiment of these exchanges in this small practice is significant, too.

26

With the deaths of these small flowers in mind, you/I pause and imagine becoming with the non-human, with the seemingly alien forms which we have considered *Nature*, and read Sylvia Plath's poem "Mushrooms."

> Overnight, very
> Whitely, discretely,
> Very quietly

Our toes, our noses
Take hold on the loam,
Acquire the air.

Nobody sees us,
Stops us, betrays us;
The small grains make room.

Soft fists insist on
Heaving the needles,
The leafy bedding,

Even the paving.
Our hammers, our rams,
Earless and eyeless,

Perfectly voiceless,
Widen the crannies,
Shoulder through holes. We

Diet on water,
On crumbs of shadow,
Bland-mannered, asking

Little or nothing.
So many of us!
So many of us!

We are shelves, we are
Tables, we are meek,
We are edible,

Nudgers and shovers
In spite of ourselves.
Our kind multiplies:

We shall by morning
Inherit the earth.
Our foot's in the door. (90, 91)

27

As I began to gather flowers, collecting became more tangible to me as an ingrained part of my studio practice. I realized I had been keeping certain compelling objects for years, anticipating that they would one day (re)surface as relevant and meaningful. Here, my collecting began to expand. Desired, gathered, kept without exact or cohesive plans, interesting pieces of wood and other objects slowly accumulated in my studio. “Collecting, in its most primitive form,” according to Kraus, “implies a deep belief in the primacy and mystery of the object, as if the object was a wild thing. As if it had a meaning and a weight that was inherent, primary, that overrode attempts to classify it” (112). Objects are, for me, attuned to meaning in a unique and specific way.

While much of my practice, especially drawing, involves a slower, more ruminating process, in sculptural explorations I find an ontologically and materially charged immediacy. Without necessarily understanding why, how, or to what end, I experiment with collage-like, object-based works in the studio. Utilizing fake flowers; mosses; methodic, hypnotic, repetitive body casting with alginate and plaster; resins; wax; gathered woods; human hair; and other materials, I create experimental, hybrid bodies. Learning mold making and casting techniques has allowed me to duplicate parts of my own body repeatedly and to combine them with each other and other materials, imagining them (or, perhaps, myself) in new and unusual forms, including as fungus, lichens, and sap. These experiments become conceptual sketches, gradually evolving into fully formed works. Based in this sort of immediacy, these works tie significantly into considerations of the material body that occur throughout my work — as parallel, mutually interested, forms of research.



Image 7 — *Entangled Body 1*

Through these processes, I am able to create surprising, lively new entities. They both are and are not what I desire, and I have began to seek this unsettling quality. My first hair and branch piece, *Entangled Body 1*, began with a found piece of wood, fractured and split into thin, hair-like fibres. These fibres led me to acquire human hair and begin to combine the two

materials, using tweezers to insert, remove, and insert again, hair into the fibre of the wood, teasing out the strangeness of the piece. The immediacy of the materials allowed me to reformulate this body in a way unlike other studio processes. In drawn works, for example, the drawing is the materially present object rather than what is depicted. A branch which morphs into hair is an unsettling object. The results of these processes are strangely uncomfortable for me.

The works in the AGYU vitrines are a larger culmination of these experiments. Through these works I have conceptualized new bondings and entangled bodily relationships between the human and non-human; reacting directly to the bodies of my materials. Due to the scale of these works, my sculptural experiments have also gradually become slower and more contemplative as they've necessitated repetitive labour. Still, they are not as preformed in my mind as drawn works or as slowly processed as my pressed flowers and their materiality, once I distance myself, is often unexpected and unnerving.

28

Material feminisms "bring the material, specifically the materiality of the human body and the natural world, into the forefront of feminist theory and practice," and inform the contemplation and gestures within my art practice. (Alaimo and Hekman 1). I am interested in exploring and considering the possibilities of bodies that are not "intertwined with another, as in the joining of separate entities," but that "lack independent, self-contained existence." Existence, Karen Barad elaborates, "is not an individual affair." (*Meeting the Universe* ix). Through pieces of wood which seem to flow into human hair, or sap-like wax forms seeping from bark, I find that I am able to suggest the intra-active entanglement of seemingly separate bodies. I seek an

effect similar to what Vicky Kirby describes as her intent to "complicate the locatability of human identity as a here and now, an enclosed and finished product, a causal force upon Nature." It is not my intent to create work that is about being "in Nature, as if Nature is a container" (Kirby qtd. in Barad "Posthumanist" 828, 829). Rather, it is my intent to elicit a sense of the broad and interconnected qualities of existing as an earthling, as entangled and kin.



Image 8— *Silhouette* (in-process detail)

29

In an old notebook, reflecting, I have written that *my methodology involves a certain fumbling. A touching, a building, a bodily relating and possibility of failure. Scale in my work comes from a bodily memory or relating to my body.* Drawing, for me, is a process of yearning and attempting to understand a complex relationship to my environment. Drawing represents an internalized ecology, ineffable feelings and compulsions, and a mimetic relationship that draws upon the unseen. Though present in other aspects of my art-making, these experiences of rich reflection are the most present for me in the creation of drawn works.

William Kentridge discusses the act of drawing, of seeing himself as drawing even when he writes words, potential and meaning moving through the pen into each scrawled word, moving through the line. He also discusses the invariably limiting qualities of this act, from all the infinite potential of the line to become or say anything, to making a single statement. Gosia Wlodarczak, too, reflects upon drawing, "Why do I do what I am doing?" she asks. "I draw because I need the proof of my existence and that's what I believe I am doing by converting the life energy and the time, when the energy is happening, into the material pigment of the line. I believe I am creating the most tangible proof of me being alive at all" (RMIT University).

Before it is laid to paper, a drawing has infinite potential. Rendered, a drawing becomes a reduction of my desire to view and represent the world differently, into an image that will hopefully communicate some portion of these energies. Drawing is an act that brings possibility, life energy, the tangible trace of an existence, and both the internal and external to a point, or a line, a mark on a page. There is a mimetic relationship elicited by artist when they draw, whether what is being drawn is something physically tangible, as in a still life, or a sense of the energies

and possibilities which go into a drawing. In *Rendering Life Molecular*, Natasha Myers describes mimetic rendering as "involving a form of 'copying' that does not rely on an a priori subject and object: model and modeller are mutually articulated in the act of mimesis" (210). The unknown is rendered and understanding is gained. Mimetic gestures are "sites where tacit knowledges, habits, and sensibilities are readily transduced […] an integral aspect of the rhythms of experimental reasoning" (208). Though Myers is speaking of the gestures of protein modellers, these observations have been made of drawing also. In Jean-Luc Nancy's *The Pleasure in Drawing*, he says that "Whether 'imitative' or 'representative,' 'realist' or 'abstract,' mimetic art is the technique that exposes what the given, as given, does not make manifest" (60). Mimesis, then, is not an act of representing something as it is seen but an embodied understanding which generates new knowledge that cannot be found or communicated without the mimetic act.

Seeking new forms of understanding, I have focused on drawing parallels between fragments of bodies, human and non-human. The imagery I choose to work with in my drawings is a culmination of a gathering-like practice, too. I work both with personally gathered images, which necessitate cultivating certain experiences and relationships as I seek them, and images found through research, often to describe a certain sense of something remembered or imagined, but not currently accessible to me. When referencing the human body, it is my preference to use my own, though this is not always possible. I become intimately familiar with plants and other bodies through these processes, connecting to them through the mimetic act of drawing.

When I am working through a drawing and touching it, the marks made by my hand, by the pigment, and the intimate relationship of making a mark on the paper, are all significant aspects of this. Nancy explains that "drawing unfolds a novel sense that does not conform to a

pre-formed project. It is carried away by a *design* [he also implies ‘designation’] that joins with the movement, gesture, and expansion of the mark” (22). My ideas and intent shift as a drawing progresses, and outlines of previously intended compositions remain. I do not remove the smudges and traces of my hand, except where it is necessary to form the image. These traces are the history of my presence and body, as well as theory and my thoughts, and they continue to allude to this connection after my gesture is done. While creating these works, I intuitively limit my palette. It is not my intent to create representations of reality in full colour, but rather to communicate imagined connections, to say something I lack the words for. A story of seeking a sense of kinship, passed through my hand, through pigment, and the paper.



Image 9— *Silhouette*

30

In his essay "What is Plant-Thinking?", Marder highlights observable thought and memory in plants, as a 'non-intentional consciousness,' a "kind of 'thinking before thinking," both inventive and independent from concepts of instinctual adaptation or formal intelligence (126). "Vegetal memory," he says, "arises at the site of material inscription on the body of the plant and contributes to the register of physical stimuli that, having already affected the plant, may be retrieved after a delay, when the actual stimulus is no longer present" (126). Marder goes farther to suggest a sort of 'soul-life' in plants, based on their having both consciousness and memory (125).

The involutionary explorations of Carla Hustak and Natasha Myers are attuned to the different ways of *being* in the world which Marder's observations exemplify.[7] In their essay *Involutionary Momentum,* the authors point out that plants are often "left at the bottom of those persistent hierarchies of living beings that identify outward movement and action as signs of agency and aliveness" (80). Taking orchids as an example, they highlight how naturalistic writing on orchids has often accused the plants (in a curiously lively way) of 'aggressive' mimicry, 'sexually swindling' male insects. These types of narratives of interspecies relations constrain any suggestion of intimacy, formulating an economy of exchange which "cannot admit pleasure, play, or improvisation within or among species" (77). In resistance to this, Hustak and Myers ask, what if these encounters were also conditioned "by an *affective ecology* shaped by pleasure, play, and experimental propositions?" They deftly point out that considering these

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[7] Hustak and Myers explain that they use the term *involution* to describe "the 'rolling, curling, turning inwards' that brings distinct species together to invent new ways of life" in contrast to evolution as "rolling outwards,' a kind of speciation through divergence" (96).

scenarios differently "draws attention to the *practices* that bring plants and insects together in an affectively charged, multisensory partnership… In an involutionary reading, mimesis is an effect and a constellation of affects immanent to responsive, sensing, sentient bodies" (76 - 78). These alternative narratives draw together difference, biology, responsibility, and affect to consider relations in new ways.

Rendering the lines, boundaries, and shapes of natural bodies into new, experimental propositions, I create mimetic gestures through which it is my hope that affective ecologies, present in tacit knowledges and sensibilities, will be transduced into mark and image.

31

The drawn works in the exhibition *Kin* come from two different sets of explorations. The collection of smaller works, *After winter // signs of life,* rendered in an earthy green and dark purple, come from an ongoing translation of connections between, and continuously developing from, shifting imagery. The first of these works began with a photograph of my partner's hair. It was my intent to render the hair to look like a mass of roots. At a point of ambiguity in the development of the drawing, I found it instead began to resemble, compellingly, tangled spring grasses. From this, I imagined budding prairie crocuses. I attempt to cultivate a sensitivity to these impressions and compulsions which change my work as I create it, and the desire to connect to the now distant but familiar plant life of Alberta became evocative for me. With spring, and this growing of one body out of (or from) another in mind, each of these works continues this translation through a process of ruminating on connections both tacitly visible in the works, and made more freely through my own associative compulsions.

The larger drawing, *Silhouette* stemmed from my beginning to wonder what it would mean for me to relate to a body of water, Lake Ontario, as I do to the Rocky Mountains. At the Art Gallery of Ontario, I was struck by the briefest moment of Marie Menken's work *Go! Go! Go!,* when the stop-motion video captures the lapping waves of the waterfront. Fixating on this while biking and exploring the natural spaces of Toronto, I began to photograph the water's edge, trying to capture a sense of the particular plant-life growing there. Reminded by these thoughts of lapping waves and explorations of the lake shore, I found I was also ruminating on Ana Mendieta's *Silueta* series. I had a friend trace my own body and began to slowly render and situate the plants of Lake Ontario's shoreline around my own body. The devotion that I found in gathering flowers was reiterated here, as I closely drew each blade of grass, developing my familiarity with the lake through its proximate plant life and inserting myself in the stead of a body of water. The act of making this drawing was one of coming to know, seeking intimate and tactile familiarity with what seemed most foreign about the landscape here — the lake. Initially the work was intended to be displayed on the ground. However, as it developed and began to take on a certain, faint, embodiment, it became clear that it should be displayed on the wall, facing viewers — faintly hovering and lively.

These works are reflections on and responses to entangled being, embedded in a large, complex, and increasingly present ecology. They are not intended to illustrate these relationships but rather, serve to locate feelings of familiarity and foreboding through the act of art-making.



Image 10 & 11 — *After winter // signs of life* (1 & 2)

32

Imagine Tanya Tagaq's music. I have listened to her music often while developing this work. Asked once about the concept of animism, Tagaq stated with simple clarity, "Humanity has made a really huge error in thinking that we're above everything… It's us that belongs to the Earth, you know?" I imagine myself in the mountains, and I imagine myself near Lake Ontario. I am a fragment within these landscapes, affecting and affected by them.

33

With materiality in mind, it seems impossible to neglect the traces of human activity that exist around the globe. We and our environment, all earthlings, are inescapably interwoven. "A common livable world must be composed, bit by bit, or not at all," says Haraway. "What used to

be called nature has erupted into ordinary human affairs, and vice versa, in such a way and with such permanence as to change fundamentally means and prospects for going on, including going on at all" (40). This is what it means to be a part of an ecology.

As we begin to see ourselves as embedded in the Earth as a continuous web of relations, it becomes increasingly apparent that "to harm one section of the web may very well be to harm oneself." This elicits a sense of self-interest which Jane Bennett wittily points out, "is *good for humans*" (13). Morton refers to ecological awareness as *uncanny*. The Anthropocene, he explains, binds human history and geological time together in a strangely personal loop. A loop that because it is so personal, is uncanny. "I'm a person," he says, and "I'm also part of an entity that is now *a geophysical force on a planetary scale*" (*Dark Ecology* 8, 9). Thinking about this web of relations requires a different kind of terminology. It is useful to consider concepts of *sympoiesis,* our ecology being one of many collectively-producing systems which "do not have self-defined spatial or temporal boundaries that tend to be centrally controlled, homeostatic, and predictable" (Haraway 33). We are inextricably bound to this place and these relationships.

34

Through cultivating close connections to my immediate, local environment, I am also reflecting on the hyperobjects of ecology, climate change, and the Earth. It is difficult to conceptualize such large phenomena and yet, for coexistence and ongoingness, it is increasingly necessary to find ways to imagine them. As Haraway reminds us, "we require each other in unexpected collaborations and combinations… We become-with each other or not at all" in entangled and worldly material semiotics (10). These works and this thesis paper are a gesture

toward building, through engaging with my environment, through art-making, and through world-sharing, these kin-like relationships.

The material and discursive, as well as the human and the *natural,* are significant and intra-acting forces. Through the exhibition *Kin* and the auxiliary exhibition at the AGYU vitrines, *Entangled Bodies,* I try to create a space for openness to more-than-human ways of being in the world. I am seeking connections between my body and other bodies in my environment, and sharing the traces of these sought connections. Both how I begin and how I will continue within this work is with making *kin* in mind.



Image 12 — *Book One* (pages 6, 7)

Epilogue:



Image 13 — *Kin* (installation viewed through window)

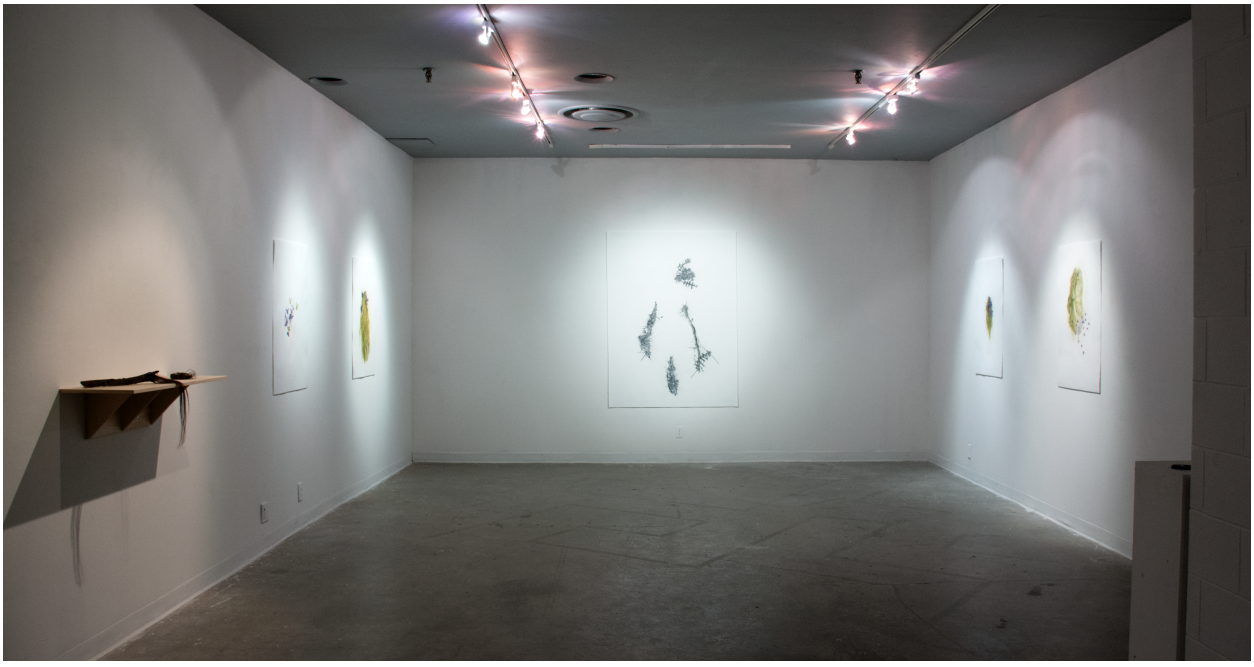

Image 14 — *Kin* (installation)



Image 15 — *Kin* (installation)



Image 16 — *Kin* (installation)



Image 17 — *Kin* (installation)



Image 18 — *Kin* (installation)



Image 19 & 20 — *After winter // signs of life* (3 & 4)



Image 21 — *Entangled Bodies* (installation)

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