

ROBERT KARDOSH GALLERY

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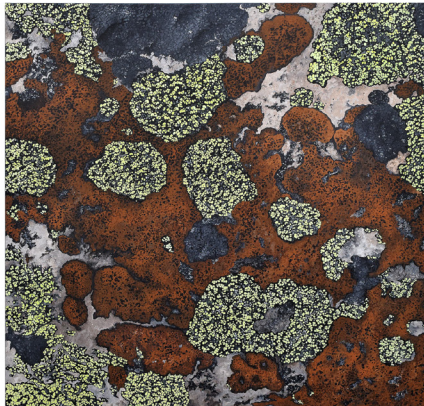
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S'olh xaxa temexw, Our sacred earth: Laura Wee Láy Láy and Jessica Bonnie Winters September 28th - November 9th



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Vancouver—Robert Kardosh Gallery is pleased to announce a two-person exhibition featuring ceramic sculptures by Laura Wee Láy Láy and paintings by Jessica Bonnie Winters. Opening September 28 and continuing through November 9, S'olh Xaxa Temexw, Our Sacred Earth brings together bodies of works by two Indigenous artists working on opposite sides of what we now call Canada. Of Stó:lo and Wuikinuxv ancestry, Wee Láy Láy's sculptural practice centres on the creation of medium- and large-scale vessels that she produces in kilns located on her property in Chilliwack, BC. Winters, an Inuk artist originally from Nunatsiavut (Labrador) and now based in St. John's, Newfoundland, paints images of ancient rocks covered in colourful lichens, resulting in works that manage to be both abstract and realistic. An opening reception will be held in the gallery on Saturday, September 28, from 2 PM until 4:30 PM, with an artist talk at 3:00 PM.

In a challenging process that entails burnishing their surfaces with stones, Wee Láy Láy's hand-built ceramics explore the beauty and meaning of vessels and vessel forms from an Indigenous perspective. Eschewing the use of a potter's wheel, Wee Láy Láy painstakingly builds her vessels by hand, using the technique known as flattened-coil to construct her fragile clay forms.

continued on page 2

After burnishing their surfaces with smooth stones, the works are then low-fired with sawdust. Instead of glazes, she relies on the smoke from the burning sawdust to produce the patterns that enliven the volumes, each of which is entirely unique.

Reflecting on the inherent unpredictability of her artistic process, Wee Láy Láy states that she is simply a conduit for other forces: “I don’t consider myself their author, even though I make them. I’m collaborating with other creative sources.” Although the majority of Wee Láy Láy’s forms are technically ollas (vessels for holding water), they are not intended for actual use but are meant to be contemplated as sculptures imbued with meaning and spirit. According to Wee Láy Láy, her vessels express a spiritual message about unity.

Based on her memories of growing up in Nunatsiavut, Winters’ paintings evoke nature’s complex forms and dynamic healing powers, affirming Inuit ideas about the importance of the land. Almost photographic in their attention to complex detail, these carefully executed works, the majority of which depict lichen-covered rocks, meld realism and abstraction, resulting in painted surfaces whose visceral presence only truly comes alive when they are viewed in person, experienced as physical objects in space.

By pushing attention to detail to the point of abstraction, Winters’ series of lichen paintings can also appear to be ariel views of topographic forms or depictions undersea plant life. Such ambiguity—or congruence—of perspectives expresses a deeply holistic view of nature’s influence. Winters says about her practice: “Through my painting I share my memories and experiences as vividly as I remember them: breathing, feeling, absorbing my life as an Inuk in Nunatsiavut. I’ve always had an intense curiosity and attention to detail, which I believe is why I gravitated towards painting. Painting allows me to achieve the realism, vivid colours and sharp contrasts that I remember.”

Of Stó:lo (Coast Salish) and Wuikinuxv (Oweekeno) ancestry, Laura Wee Láy Láy studied fine arts at Douglas College from 1970 to 1973. In 1977, she graduated with honours from the Vancouver School of Art (now Emily Carr University of Art and Design), where her teachers were Tam Irving and Sally Michener. In the late 1970s, she began studying Northwest Coast design with Chief Tony Hunt. In 2015, Wee Láy Láy was awarded the first BC Creative Achievement

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