

TRACELINES

Vance Wright

Residency: 26 April – 20 May 2023
Open Studio: Sat. May 6 + 13 2023, 1:00 – 3:00 PM

Exhibition: 27 May – 17 June 2023
Artist Talk: Saturday, June 10, 2023 @ 1:00 PM
Closing Reception: Saturday, June 17, 2023 @ 5:00 PM

All events are free to attend.

Oxygen Art Centre is open Wednesdays to Saturdays from 1:00 – 5:00 PM during the exhibition run.

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To trace a line; to leave something behind; to make a mark. Trace meets line through a series of actions—a light pencil line around the Dakelh phrase for “draw through,” sinew pulled through a string of pearls, czech beads highlighting camouflage pattern contours—they layer to form an archive of vulnerable actions presented together apart in the exhibition, *Tracelines*.

Vance Wright approaches their practice as co-creator. The materials and practices that they work with expand across ancestral, cultural, and familial lines, surfacing as traces that recede and emerge in each gesture. Traditional practices and natural materials are juxtaposed with newly industrialized and synthetic materials to create a sovereign space within the white cube for queer Indigeneity.

As a two-spirit reconnecting member of the Tl'azt'en Nation, Wright leaves traces of learning these practices and working with these materials in states of ectasis. Traces are remain in the green lake silt that fills Dakelh phrases for beadwork in ***bewhunuzguz, draw through*** (2023) and each bend in the lengths of cedar that compose a series of scaled down shipping containers in ***Lhk'elhahtulye, they are trading*** (2023). Co-created during their time in residence, Wright proposes these tracelines as assemblages, as gesturing to the processes in which they are formed. These works create a time warp where the artist enacts this learning, these practices, while also reaching backwards and forwards across temporalities.

The artist plays with these tensions materially in ***Culturally Modified Tree 1, 2, & 3*** (2023) where acrylic paint and flagging tape are contrast with wood and caribou tufts. The materials bring their own histories, but also the histories that are prescribed to

them as they are manipulated to function within hierarchical value systems. Installed on mirrored plinths with camouflage bases, the sculptures collapse artificial representations of nature and exhibitionary infrastructures meant to recede into the background here thrust into the foreground.

High visibility colours reverberate throughout the space and artworks. ***Proprioception 1, 2, 3, 4, & 5*** (2023) holds the centre of the exhibition, suspended by sinew, and arranged overhead. The bright orange flagging tape fringe adorn the five camouflage belts. Intended to be worn to fade into the background, camouflage is interrupted by brightly coloured plastic and beadwork. The artist enacts these forms of embellishment to disrupt the camouflage's function to recede and conform to normative patterns of colonial natural environments. Instead, the beadwork and hyper-visibility trace soft interventions to instead foreground the artist's queerness, their Indigeneity, in ways that trouble normative spaces, logics, and definitions.

These complexities are further blurred in the installation, ***inheritance/remainder*** (2023). Anchored by a poem written before the artist began making the sculpture, glass pearls and real pearls are held together with sinew in the form of a nervous system laid out on the floor. Concerned with the embodied process of working with these materials and the traditional processes of beadwork, the artist contends with intergenerational traumas with each thread so as to not leave it as a remainder for future generations to inherit. The materials spill at the top where porcupine quills, glass beads, pearls, abalone buttons, and a cedar coil create a swirling cosmos to transform this pain and healing.

Just as *Tracelines* reveals and disrupts violent colonial apparatuses, and embellishes and celebrates queer Indigeneity, there is much that is left unannounced, redacted. This is an intentional gesture to keep knowledges and experiences and joy sacred. Tracelines are at once revealed to you, hidden to you. It asks, how are you showing up to this space? This moment? This co-creation?

**Vance Wright** is a two-spirit reconnecting member of the Tl'azt'en Nation who was born on the traditional territories of the S'inix't Nation, colonially known as Nelson, BC. They are an interdisciplinary artist who is currently attending Emily Carr University of Art + Design with a focus in Critical & Cultural Practices, and Sculpture.

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Culturally Modified Tree 1, 2, & 3

Acrylic paint, caribou fur, driftwood, flagging tape, paracord, synthetic leather, tanned hide
2023

bewhunuzguz, draw through

Canvas, cedar, czech beads, natural pigments, sewing needles, sinew, thread
2023

Proprioception 1, 2, 3, 4, & 5

Camouflage fabric, czech beads, flagging tape, sinew
2023

Lhk'elhahitulye, they are trading

Cedar
2023

Acknowledgement

Acrylic on window
2023

inheritance/remainder

Abalone buttons, bone beads, caribou fur, cedar, glass beads, pearls, porcupine quills, sinew, synthetic pearls
2023