

Detail of 15 minutes, University of Victoria, Maltwood Vault, Mountain Scene, Stella Langdale, 2022-02-02, T 14:30 -14:45, 2022
Digital print from 4" X 5" analogue negative
Collection of the artist

LATENT

Curated by Carolyn Butler Palmer

Lynda Gammon

Legacy Art Gallery



LATENT

is a state of being hidden, invisible, or present but not manifest or exhibited

CONTENTS

- Latent: A Meta ExhibitionCarolyn Butler Palmer
- Intervening in the Collections Vault Lynda Gammon
- . Meditation as Method in Lynda Gammon's Latent
 Haema Sivanesan
- 36. Lynda Gammon and the Archive of the Inbetween Christine Walde
- 44. **When You Expose A Problem**Anne Dymond
- 50. Women Artists in The University of Victoria Collection
- 60. **Biographies**
- 63. Latent: Critical Conversations about Collections Roundtable
- 4. Acknowledgments



Latent: A Meta Exhibition

by Carolyn Butler Palmer Curator

Latent is a meta exhibition — an exhibition about art museums and exhibition. As an exhibition, Latent fills the entirety of the public viewing space at Legacy Art Gallery. It is a meta exhibit in that it acknowledges different sorts of typically unnoticed museum spaces and functions: the vault and storage, the catalogue and registration, the accessioning room, and the development of collections. These spaces and functions are the bedrock on which the Latent exhibition is built. The exhibition aims, at least in part, to invite its audience to consider the flow between what is seen and what goes largely unseen within an art museum.

The exhibition's meta properties are embedded in the subject matter as well. *Latent* is an exhibition about a recent series of photo-based artwork, *Intervening in the Collections Vaults: The University of Victoria*, by contemporary artist Lynda Gammon (b.1949). Gammon's project began as a single self-portrait taken with her great aunt, Sylvia Sutton's painting, *Crystal Ash* c. 1960. The series grew out of Gammon's curiosity about other women artists working in Victoria around the time of her aunt and conversations with me about my curatorial program of research focused on women artists. *Intervening in the Collections Vaults: The University of Victoria*

eventually grew to consist of more than 50 long-exposure self-portraits of Gammon as she meditates upon the artwork of women artists that is held in public trust by the University of Victoria. Latent is also part of a larger curatorial project of solo exhibitions about women artists, exhibitions that include Ellen Neel: The First Woman Totem Pole Carver, Translations: The Art and Life of Elizabeth Yeend Duer—Gyokushō, and Urban Regalia: Yolonda Skelton. That Gammon's artwork engages with the work of other women artists in the University collection, including those of Neel and Duer, opens another path of meta inquiry.

The Vault

The Vault section of the exhibit features Gammon's Intervening in the Collections Vaults: The University of Victoria series. As the series' title suggests most of the photographs were taken in the vaults where the University of Victoria's collection of artwork is stored. Within the photographs, racks of paintings and boxes of artwork appear in the background, and Gammon has staged the artwork on top of stacks of boxes or between them on the storage shelves, inviting us to see artwork outside of the exhibition space, providing a glimpse into the vaults. Interspersed among these photographs are larger-scale, three-dimensional assemblages made by Gammon, evoking the fullness—the almost cluttered nature—of the vault space, as opposed to the exhibition space.

Installation photograph Legacy Art Gallery January 6 - April 6, 2024 The photographs are, however, hardly documentary. True to the properties of long-exposure photography, the photographs Gammon creates are blurry, only partly legible renderings of the artwork she sits in front of and considers. The University's collection of work by women artists is present in Gammon's work but is not entirely discernible.

"Latent" is a term used to describe a stage in the photographic process. Practitioners of photography use the term to reference an image that has been captured but not yet exposed through the developing process: in other words not made visible through the developing process. Although Gammon's images have been developed, the artwork depicted within is not fully visible due to the properties of long exposure photography. In this regard, they are latent in the more general sense of the term, as 'latent' is derived from the Latin word *latentem*, meaning lying hidden, concealed, secreted, or unknown. In this sense, the artwork that appears in Gammon's photographs is present but not exposed.

The "latent" concept is amplified by the exhibition's organizational structure, specifically that of the Vault section. Housed in the Legacy Gallery's L-shaped gallery space, the exhibition space allows viewers to enter only at the intersection of the two axes of the "L". To interrupt direct access to the exhibition, we inserted a wall that introduced visitors to the term

"latent" and to the exhibition as one in a series of solo shows focused on women artists. To see the exhibit, gallery goers had to physically move around the wall. Thus, the process of moving from the unseen to the seen was one of embodiment.

The Accessioning Workroom

Exhibition-making and the acquisition of art into the collection are inter-connected. As research institutions, art museums are obliged to research and publish the work in their collection. The relationship is not just one-way, however; exhibitions also provoke potential donors to think about gifting related works of art to the art museum. For example, *Ellen Neel: The First Woman Totem Pole Carver*, prompted one donor



to give the University of Victoria four hand puppets made by Ellen Neel. Likewise, Translations: The Art and Life of Elizabeth Duer—Gyokushō invited the addition of notebooks and paintings by Duer from the Christian Science hospital, where Duer spent her final days.

Crystal Ash, a painting by Gammon's great aunt Sylvia Sutton and owned by Gammon, also appears in this exhibit, wrapped in glassine. That Crystal Ash is wrapped and boxed while on display amplifies the sense of latency while evoking a process whereby works of art come into the collection, providing the very stuff from which exhibitions are made. The Accessioning Room is about the flow of one aspect of museum work to another.

Meditation upon *Crystal Ash* was the first photograph taken in Gammon's series *Intervening in the Collections Vaults: The University of Victoria*. Gammon is currently considering the gift of *Crystal Ash* for the University of Victoria, which holds no work by Sutton. Works from Gammon's *Intervening in the Collections Vaults: The University of Victoria* are also being reviewed by the University's acquisitions committee for acceptance into the collection.

The Collections Catalogue

When Gammon began her series *Intervening in the Collections Vaults: The University of Victoria*, she

MARGARET ELLEN PETERSON

Installation photograph Legacy Art Gallery January 6 - April 6, 2024 Installation photograph Legacy Art Gallery January 6 - April 6, 2024

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asked me and others to indicate women artists in the collection we thought were important for her to meditate upon—artists with whom she should create self-portraits. Although I suggested a few names to Gammon, I was aware of the limitations of my knowledge in this regard, and I set about looking for other women artists, to learn who else was in the collection.

One of the challenges of raising the name of women artists is finding them within a collection. Although region, culture, and mediums are taxonomies within the University's catalogue, gender is not. The only apparent point of entry into the puzzle was to consider gender conventions of naming while going through the published list of artists' names in the collections database. This approach is not without limitations, as some cultures do not have genders, some names transcend gender, and concepts of gender change over time.

The Collections Catalogue section of the exhibition is in the small gallery just behind the intersection of the 'L'-shaped gallery's axes. The Catalogue section consists of a list of the names of women artists represented in the collection. The exhibited list, itself, is incomplete; it represents about one third of women in the collection and multiple months work carefully combing through the database. The names of each artist listed were cross checked against news



Installation photograph Legacy Art Gallery January 6 - April 6, 2024 reports, office records, and autobiographies for accuracy. Nevertheless, it remains a preliminary list to be built on, critiqued, and refined as part of a recovery process and for the development of other exhibitions about women—to bring them out into the light of the gallery space.

In Conclusion

Some may feel that *Latent* did not do enough to call attention to the works of women artists that are owned by the University of Victoria, as they remain alluded to but unseen. After all, the murky representations in Gammon's photographs, the hidden nature of the work presented in the Accessioning Workroom, and an incomplete list of women artists' names in the Catalogue only allow gallery goers to develop an idea about the treasures by women artists held in the University of Victoria's vaults. *Latent*, however, is part of a series of solo exhibitions that commemorates and honours women artists and their artwork. Seen from this vantage point, *Latent* is a meta exhibition about women artists as well.



Installation photograph Legacy Art Gallery January 6 - April 6, 2024



Installation photograph Legacy Art Gallery January 6 - April 6, 2024



Legacy Art Gallery Vault space with large format analogue camera 2024

Intervening in the Collections Vault

by Lynda Gammon

A painting by my late great aunt Sylvia Sutton hangs in my living room. It is an abstract work, modernist in style and colour, and I have always been drawn to it. The painting was left to me after she died in 1980. I remember, visiting her in Victoria in the 1950s as a young girl. Our family lived in Vancouver, and Sylvia was my grandfather's sister. I found her fascinating. She was an artist and lived in a small post and beam house filled with paintings. She was a single woman and lived what seemed to me at the time a somewhat bohemian lifestyle. I understood that she received a monthly living allowance from her British family estate as long as she remained single.

I later learned that she was part of the Point Group, comprised of artists including Richard Ciccimarra, Robert de Castro, Duncan deKergommeaux, Flemming Jorgensen, Nita Forrest, Virginia Lewis, Elza Mayhew, Michael Morris, Molly Privett, Herbert Siebner and William West. The Point Group pre-dated the Limners but shared many of the same members. Sylvia studied with Jan Zach, a Czech sculptor, one of the few artists teaching modernist artistic methods, and was close friends with Elza Mayhew. Beyond these sparse details, I didn't know much more about her life as an artist and wondered about her artist friends and colleagues. These questions led me to seek the work of women

artists in Victoria a generation before me and spend time with their work. This series, *Intervening in the Collections Vaults: The University of Victoria*, grew out of this exploration. It is comprised of documentary photographs of over fifty "sittings" with art-works in the collections vaults and three large assemblage works that attempt to give a sense of that experience.

17

(left top) 8 minutes, University of Victoria, Maltwood Vault, Untitled (Bottle Basket), Lena Jumbo (Ahousaht), 2023-01-23, T 1:40 – 1:48, 11" X 14", 2023 Digital print from 4"X 5" analogue negative Collection of University of Victoria

(left bottom) 13 minutes, University of Victoria, Maltwood Vault, Untitled (Mountain Over Water), Stella Langdale, 2022-02-02, T 15:00 – 15:30, 11" X 14", 2022 Digital print from 4"X 5" analogue negative Collection of the artist

(right) 12 minutes, University of Victoria, Maltwood Vault, Untitled and Stop (linocuts), Molly Privett, 2022-02-02, T 13:10 – 13:21, 24" X 28", 2022 Digital print from 4"X 5" analogue negative Collection of the artist



(left) 6 minutes 1129 Catherine Street, Gammon Home, Crystal Ash painting, Sylvia Sutton, 2022-07-23, T 14:20-14:26, 8" X 10", 2022 Digital print from 4"X 5" analogue negative Collection of the artist

(right) 10 minutes, University of Victoria, Maltwood Vault, Untitled Edythe Hembroff-Schleicher, 2022-02-02, 7 15:30 -15:40, 8" X 10", 2022 Digital print from 4"X 5" analogue negative Collection of the artist





15 minutes, University of Victoria, Maltwood Vault, Mount Temple, Ina D.D. Uhthoff, 2022-02-02, T 14:00 – 15:15, 8" X 10", 2022 Digital print from 4"X 5" analogue negative Collection of the artist

Meditation as Method in Lynda Gammon's Latent

by Haema Sivanesan

The vault of a museum or public collection is a beguiling space: at once storage and archive, a place where objects designated as having a cultural value are packed away safely, oftentimes so safely that they are almost forgotten, in a state of "suspended insignificance." The storage vaults of museums and public galleries are places of both memory and forgetting, where the potential of art works and artifacts remains latent, in a "temporal remission", a kind of oblivion.

In this compelling body of work, Lynda Gammon considers the vault as both a conceptual space of art, in this case, photography, and as an environment for meditation. In English, from the Latin, to meditate is to think deeply or carefully about something, to contemplate or ponder, suggesting an active state of mind. However, in Asian cultures, and particularly in Buddhism, meditation refers to a practice of Empty Mind, a practice of letting go of clinging thoughts and ruminations to prioritize stillness, a state of repose. That stillness allows the potential of another kind of awareness or knowing to emerge.

Drawing on a Buddhist approach to meditation, Gammon coordinates photographic time with the

duration of her meditation. Like photography, meditation is bound to time — they are both durational practices. In this body of work, *Latent*, 2024, Gammon performs the latency of the vault, describing it as a place in which to "be with" the past, to be "actively resting with" a purposefully researched and chosen list of art works that point to a specific engagement with the past, documented through photography.4 The purpose of this body of work is to be with history and the inheritances of the past, and to acknowledge it as existing simultaneously in the present, even if its legacies remain unacknowledged. This approach to art practice, drawing on meditation as a method for the exploration of the simultaneity of past and present, is not new for Gammon. Previous work, including Studio Pictures (Fisgard), 1983-89 and, more recently, Meditation on a Studio Wall, 2016 contributed to developing the approach for this body of work.

The history of photography has been closely tied to practices of documentation through the creation of a range of representational materials (for example, catalogues, atlases, surveys, archives, collections) that appear to represent the scope of human knowledge and by extension, power. As an artist who is critically engaged with this history of photography, Gammon's practice is concerned with, as she states, challenging archival and museological methodologies that were inherently political

23

and never neutral. These archives/collections have formed the way 'our' memory and history are shaped. But this 'our' is not actually mine nor is it yours of course.⁵

Collections are a product of the specific people and institutions that produce them, according to the versions of history that they wish to promote. Therefore, archives are inherently subjective, producing biases, absences, false truths and fictions. Accordingly, artists concerned with the history of photography and the nature of the archive have brought a criticality to these uses of photography, questioning the truth of the photograph by working against the grain of the archive to draw out histories and content that may not be readily apparent.

A public art collection is also a type of archive representing the cultural history of a place. In this body of work, Gammon enters into the collection storage of the university art collection to consider artworks that have been sitting forgotten for years, if not decades. Gammon's objective is not to study these paintings or to undertake an art historical reading but to simply be with these artworks and to document that experience as an artistic intervention and performance. Through this process, she develops an inquiry that transforms an absence into a presence.

Gammon writes

The fact that my great aunt Sylvia Sutton's work was not included in the collection points to an absence in my own very personal way. Then looking at, looking for... the work of her friends only some of whom are in the collections, exposed the incomplete and fragmentary nature of the collection/archive in general. I was interested not only in this particular version of history but also in 'where' it is manifested... in the dark depths of the vault spaces where we are generally excluded. So, this project creates a counter narrative in a small way that points to a larger issue of absence. Obtaining access to the archive/ vault is a slow process. It is not public... one goes alone and not without an endless series of emails making appointments etc. By spending time with the work of these women artists, I was interested in exploring what slowing down means for 'knowing' ... slowing down and focussing differently. Listening [and] experiencing carefully and in a more fulsome wav...6

A conceptual starting point for Gammon's work, as she explains above, was a painting by her great aunt Sylvia Sutton in the artist's personal collection. Through her initial inquiries, Gammon came to realise that her great aunt's work was not

represented in the university's art collection and thus absent from history. She writes,

I asked them who might have been a woman friend of my great aunt's... whose work did they have that would have been made around that time here in the area of the south Vancouver Island.⁷

In this way, Gammon raises a broader set of questions as to the nature of the collection, undertaking a personal, intuitive, relational, and ultimately feminist exploration. She continues,

So this list grew in its own organic way through the memory bank of these individuals who are in the vault working with it....and in so doing my list of 'sittings' has its own gaps and its own concentrations and particularities (i.e., I would get absorbed in one person's work and end up doing a few sittings). But these gaps and particularities and concentrations always existed in the collections without being acknowledged.⁸

Considering meditation as an artistic method, Gammon explores what it means to "sit with" and (re) visit an almost forgotten legacy of women artists in Victoria; to be present with, and in the presence of, the art works of women who forged an artistic life for themselves some two generations prior. Each meditation that Gammon undertakes in the vault is documented by a carefully titled photograph, which records details of the duration of the meditation, the location of the artwork, its title, and the artist's name. as well as the date and time of the visit. This meticulous approach to titling is a kind of cataloguing in itself. It produces its own taxonomy: the taxonomy of a set of meditative experiences that offers a counter-archive with its own flaws, conceits, and biases. As the theorist and curator Okwui Enwezor notes, the critical interrogation of the archive "may result in the creation of another archival structure as a means of establishing an archaeological relationship to history, evidence, information, and data that will give rise to its own interpretive categories."9 In this way. Gammon uses the methodology of the archive against itself, to bring a forgotten history and its legacy to presence, indeed occasioning its reincarnation.

Through her meditations and through the production of her own counter-archive, Gammon reveals how certain histories and experiences of the world, as recorded through these artworks, can easily be overlooked or elided until they are brought into relation with oneself, and thereby into a relation with present-day society, and in turn, back into public memory. Thus, this project is also about memory and remembrance — not history as such, because history refers to mechanical time whereas memory relates to human time. In Buddhism, time is an illusory dimension or frontier that conditions the material



world. One seeks to push through and transcend this frontier through the practice of meditation.

Accordingly, there is a sense in which this body of work seeks to destabilize concepts of history and the present and show their simultaneity, both as image and as experience. Gammon's body of work thereby shows us a diachronicity, whereby the historical object or artwork is brought into presence by being placed in relation to the present.

Photographs inherently suspend time, requiring us to consider each photograph in this body of work as a conflation of various points in time—the historical time of the artwork, the durational time of meditation, the present-time of the photographs. Each photograph is created by the layering of time and duration: the duration of the camera's exposure. the duration of the meditation according to a precise measure of time. The accumulation of a series of such photographs over time creates both a chronotope, coordinating periods of time past and present in a specific place, and a chronology, documenting the repetition of a meditative performance, a serialized gesture taking place over a period of time, underpinning the artist's inquiry. This layering of time through performance and photography activates the historical artworks, drawing the works held in storage out of their temporal remission. Ironically, this body of work will, no doubt, over time, also enter into its own space of temporal remission — whether in a

collection vault or personal archive, waiting for the time of its own reincarnation. This truth of the work bears out the reality that no material object or artwork can transcend the flow of time to become immortal. But our lived experience, the events and questions that shape our lives, comprises a non-linear constellation of past and present moments.

Ultimately, this project relates to a process of the artist putting herself in the liminal space of the collection storage vault to find her relations. Through this series of meditations or awareness practices, the artist seeks the evidence of a particular and personal history. And, by sitting with the latent energy or aura of her great aunt's artistic milieu, Gammon locates a lineage in which she can be comfortably Empty, that is to say, in a state of active rest or peace, in the company of these women, where the meaning of this body of work resides.

27

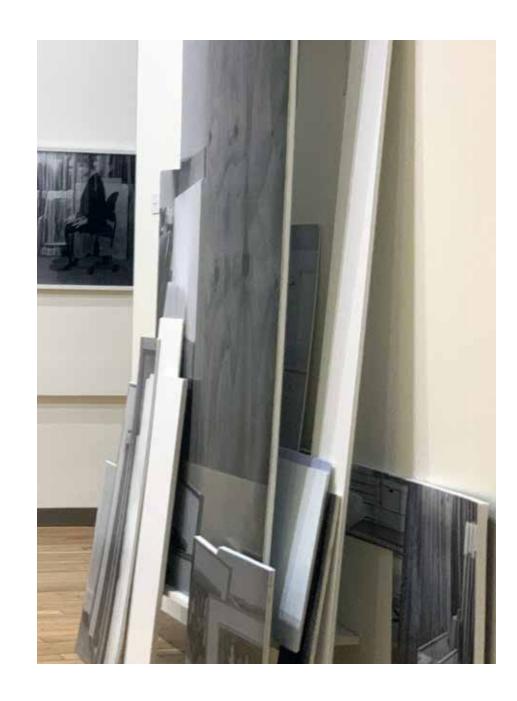
16 minutes, University of Victoria, Special Collections, Untitled (serigraph), Elza Mayhew, 2022-07-21, T 16:24 -16:40, 8" X 10", 2022 Digital print from 4"X 5" analogue negative Collection of the artist



15 minutes, University of Victoria, Maltwood Vault, Mountain Scene, Stella Langdale, 2022-02-02, T 14:30 -14:45, 8" X 10", 2022 Digital print from 4"X 5" analogue negative Collection of the University of Victoria



15 minutes, University of Victoria, Maltwood Vault, Mother, MyFanwy Pavelic, 2022-02-02, T 13:40 -13:55, 8" X 10", 2022 Digital print from 4"X 5" analogue negative Collection of the artist



(left and right)
Collections Vault #3,
8'W X 12'H X 16"D, 2023
Assemblage of large format digital
prints mounted on foam core with
wood shelves
Collection of the artist





(left) 10 minutes, Legacy Gallery, Vault, Untitled (Mount Fuji 1), Elizabeth Duer--Gykushō, 2021–12-08, T 13:20 –13:30, 8" X 10", 2022 Digital print from 4"X 5" analogue negative Collection of the University of Victoria

(right) 13 minutes, University of Victoria, Special Collections, Painting of Howard O'Hagan, Nita Forrest, 2021-11-23, T 16:32-16:45, 8" X 10", 2022 Digital print from 4"X 5" analogue negative Collection of the artist



33





(left and right)
Collections Vault #2,
8'W X 12'H X 12"D, 2023
Assemblage of large format digital
prints mounted on foam core with wood
shelves
Collection of the artist

Lynda Gammon and the Archive of the Inbetween

by Christine A. Walde

Representation is never the goal. Why would it be? The job of the artist, and the pursuit of the meditation, is not to capture anything the eye can already see or what the mind might remember but rather offer a glimpse at the spaces inbetween each.

Kegan McFadden from Lynda Gammon's Studio Practice Meditation Practice

Archive fever, the archival impulse, the archival turn. These are theoretical terms confluent in contemporary art that resonate with our current understanding of the archive and how it has been utilized in theory and practice. As we purvey our analogue past and look to our post human future, the archive has acted as a site of invention and interrogation and continues to be an important locus of history, information, ideas, and in the work of artist Lynda Gammon, a critical place of repose and intervention.

Through the act of meditation, Gammon's repeated captures of herself in the archives and collections vaults of the University of Victoria Libraries' Mearns Centre-McPherson Library and the University Art Collections echo the same multilayered composition that comprises a series or subseries of records. Just as an archival fonds has the potential to 'capture' a subject through its accumulations of accessions

and accruals, so too is Gammon 'captured' in a composition of layers of time and space that transforms our understanding of her presence in the archive.

Through her 4 x 5 camera, Gammon is not only seen to be meditating, but by extension, inserting herself into the body of the archive, confronting the complex contradictions of collections— the problems with arrangement, cataloguing, and description, but also the histories of women artists and how they have been collected — or not. While Gammon's aunt Sylvia Sutton may have been the catalyst to her initial vigil, it is also a Guerilla Girl tactic against collecting practices that have controlled institutions' collection development policies for decades, favouring male artists over women artists and other historically marginalized creators.

Gammon's silence reflects the absence of those collections. But it is her observance of what she is looking at and what we are looking at in looking at her that is most interesting. As Gammon's "gaze" is directed at the artwork that holds her attention, so too are we transfixed by the space in the archive where we observe her, and she directs us where to look or not to look, what to see or not to see. We are implicated through our

participation, in the very act of looking. We, too, are inbetween.

Orderly rows of archival boxes stacked on metal shelves. Artworks wrapped and filed into painting racks. The innocuous aura of order, the hierarchy of information. Left alone in the vault, under the canopy of fluorescent lighting and in the temperature-and-humidity-controlled airlessness that characterizes such spaces, it seems there is a strange stasis in Gammon's silhouette, but as one looks more closely at her profile one can see she is not static at all, but is in fact, as she herself describes it, "actively resting". Poised on the edge of her chair, she seems able to stand up or leap or just choose to lean back and grow comfortable in the stillness.

This modality is reflected in the curator's choice of the word 'latent' for the title of the exhibition, implying a power or quality that has not come forth but that may emerge and 'develop'. In libraries and archives, and in collections of all kinds, it is the same. A book may spend years on a shelf — decades, even — waiting for its reader. And just because it has not been accessed does not mean that it has lost this emergent power. It is a latent subject whose meaning has yet to be determined, its potential existing beyond what we think we know and have yet to learn.

In this knowledge transfer in which information is

imprinted and exchanged, Gammon directly references the process of photography. It too, has a latent quality and power in directing the eye to show what has always been there, to reveal what already exists. As such, Gammon's presence in the physical archive is an account of record-keeping, self-archiving, and documentation. Like the collections she is meditating on, Gammon documents her latent photographic image, literally what will 'develop'. Exposed to the same processes of storage and inventory, preservation and access, Gammon's meditation is also one of mediation with the camera, informing our understanding of the archive through the long exposure and the open capture of time.

Through her use of black and white photography, our eyes are slowed, calming our minds from the technicolour image-saturated world from which algorithms control our attentions. In our digital age, photos are nothing but just one digital file among thousands of other digital files in our bulging photo libraries on our iPhones. Are there even pictures, anymore? What is our relationship to the image now, and in time? Our current moment offers an unprecedented acceleration of digital tools through the promise of Al. But how can we trust what we see, and that what we see is "real"? From this perspective, the analogue technologies of Lynda Gammon's slow photography point to our documentary past while being both a reflection and affirmation of the origins

of the art form. It's an important exchange worth capturing, in the present, for the future.

Having read a little bit about quantum mechanics and superposition, I like to think that Gammon's photographs help to explain the double-slit experiment. Entangled in the embodiment of the archive, as both the observer and observed, her image acts in the same way as the waves that interfere with each other, creating a pattern of light and dark bands on a screen. The frame from which she sits across appears as a grey rectangular pool to another dimension, bent with the refracted light of the reflection of the other frames behind her. It is a confluence of lines, just one moment in time, a figure sitting poised in a chair. You can see it in the photographs, enmeshed in the blur that embodies her between states of past and present, its' impossible phenomenon. After all, what is photography but a composition of light?

Such a state of dynamic interpolation also exists in archives and collections' vaults. One loses track of time being in the present looking at the past, amidst a negotiation of futures, different paths. As places they are ephemeral and impermanent, never fixed. It is also a continuing theme that underlies and resonates throughout Gammon's art — as well as being central to Buddhist meditation and her meditation practice. Thoughts, like moments in the

archive, come and go. We must not be attached to them and instead, focus on our breath. Lynda Gammon's presence in the stacks may seem ghostly, impermanent. But she is human, and fallible. Through her long exposures, beyond subject and object, she is quietly, steadily breathing inbetween the spaces of the archive: in and out, in and out.







40

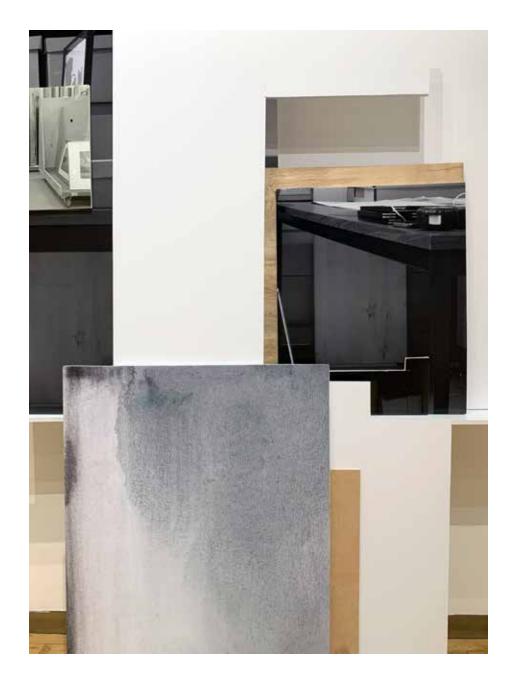
14 minutes, University of Victoria, Special Collections, Canada Awakening To Her Destiny, Katharine Maltwood, 2022-07-21, T 16:15 -16:29, 8" X 10", 2022 Digital print from 4"X 5" analogue negative Collection of the artist

Detail of
Collections Vault #3,
8'W X 12'H X 16"D, 2023
Assemblage of large format digital
prints mounted on foam core with
wood shelves
Collection of the artist





(left and right)
Collections Vault #1,
9'W X 14'H X 18"D, 2023
Assemblage of large format digital
prints mounted on foam core with
wood shelves
Collection of the artist



When You Expose a Problem

by Anne Dymond

"When you expose a problem you pose a problem. It might then be assumed that the problem would go away if you would just stop talking about it or if you went away" ~ Sara Ahmed¹⁰

Gammon's photograph 9 minutes, University of Victoria, Maltwood Vault, Untitled (Basket), Alice Paul (Hesquiaht) 2023-01-23, T 1:16-1:25 exposes a problem that just will not go away. The left third of the image is marked by strong horizontals created by storage drawers, their tidy linearity contrasted by a jumble of plastic bags, exhibition posters, and electrical fittings above. Most visually significant here is the illumination that comes from an inexpensive desk lamp, shining on nothing but a blank wall. In contrast to the busy left side, the right third of the image is mostly white space, a simple plinth in the foreground contrasted by a series of verticals above. Seated in the center is a blurred figure, Gammon, her thighs seemingly solid, resolved, but the shoulders and head indistinct. In trying to resolve the blur of the artist's head, the object of her focus rises to awareness: a small basket, barely visible, atop the plinth. The photograph poses problems about how we see and understand works of art.

When considered as part of the series *Intervening in*

the Collections Vaults: The University of Victoria and the other works in the exhibition Latent. the photograph also poses problems about the archive, the collection, and the possibilities and impossibilities of the construction of knowledge. Any system of organization and collection imposes an order that allows us to access information: the collection captures a record of the valued, limiting what can be considered. There are nearly 500 female artists on the list Butler Palmer and Gammon constructed from the Legacy Art Gallery collection database. As with this list, collections often overwhelm with a sense of totality; but that illusion of completeness disappears with close examination. Collections and archives are always fragmentary and fractured. Moreover, their organization inevitably directs and shapes our ability to access what's contained within. They shine light on some aspects, yet other components remain indistinct.

Central among these occlusions is the presence of women. Despite our wishes that the problem would go away, gender remains a potent and intersectional category of exclusion, in both historic and contemporary art collections. Significant work in the last few decades has made our public art collections more inclusive and more representative records of art production in this country; importantly, this means they become more truthful records. Yet, there

Installation photograph Legacy Art Gallery January 6 - April 6, 2024

























is often a belief that gender has been posed as a problem and that we can stop talking about it. because there are more pressing ways to think about inclusion, accessibility, and equity. Yet the facts make clear that women's work - and even contemporary women's work - has been, and continues to be, under-represented in art collections.¹¹ These issues are intersectional, and any social progress needs to factor gender as an important axis of inclusion. The equity gap is especially true at major galleries. At the NGC, just over 20% of solo exhibitions of living artists went to female artists in the 1980s, the decade when women artists surpassed 50% of the Canadian artist population. In the 1990s, the ratio rose to 31%. Any acclaim for this progress has to reconcile it with the fact that in the early 1800s, the most prestigious art exhibits in the world were the French Royal Academy's annual Salons, where female artists usually ranged between 20-30% of exhibitors. If this perturbs our notions of progress, how much more must the fact that in the 2000s, the percentage of solo contemporary exhibitions of female artists at the NGC slid backwards, lower in the 2000s than it had been in the 1980s, despite increasing numbers and seniority of female artists. In the 2010s, the percentage rebounded, rising to its highest record ever: 38% of contemporary solo exhibitions went to artists gendered female. Given the history, this is something to applaud, but it also still falls far short of equity, and the backsliding in the pre-

vious decade suggests we need to remain vigilant.

While exhibitions are the public face of institutions. collections are the base from which our future histories are written. People often assume that the bias towards white male artists is a historical fact, no longer actively shaping our current acquisitions. But research on the NGC's acquisitions of works by living Canadian artists from 2008 - 2010 showed that only 30% of the works acquired were by female artists. 12 This percentage remains somewhat of a sticking point: acquisitions of works by living artists comprised slightly more than 70% male artists in 2015 - 2016, both in terms of the number of artists and the number of works. Significant changes at the NGC in the last 6 years show some promise: in 2021-2022 the NGC acquired the work of more female artists than male artists, and the work of more racialized artists than white artists. However, even in their most equitable year as assessed by the number of artists whose work was purchased, the total number of works was still significantly inequitable. Indeed, in 2021-2022, more than 70% of the works acquired were still by male-identified artists. There is progress, but it is too early to celebrate.

Gammon's exhibition eloquently poses a series of problems. I keep returning to the illuminated back wall in 9 minutes, University of Victoria, Maltwood Vault, Untitled (Basket), Alice Paul (Hesquiaht) 2023-



9 minutes, University of Victoria, Maltwood Vault, Untitled (Basket), Alice Paul (Hesquiaht), 2023-01-23, T 1:16 – 1:25, 8" X 10", 2023 Digital print from 4"X 5" analogue negative Collection of the artist

01-23, T 1:16-1:25. In an archive, sometimes what is most brightly illuminated is not the focal point I seek. Instead, the areas that remain indistinct are the call to action. Gammon sits with the problems, refusing to go away and illuminating the work of women artists, their lack of visibility in collections, and how the very structures of knowledge used in archives make the work of women difficult to focus on.

48

Endnotes

- 1 International Council of Museums, ICOM, Code of Ethics for Museums, ICOM, 2017.
- 2 Ingrid Scaffner, "Digging back into 'Deep Storage' and Deep Storage", in *Deep Storage: Collecting, Storing, and Archiving in Art.* Munich and New York: Prestel-Verlag and Siemens Kulturprogramm, 1998, pp. 10–21.
- 3 ibid
- 4 Lynda Gammon, email message to author, March 28, 2025.
- 5 ibid
- 6 ibid
- 7 ibid
- 8 ibid
- 9 Okwui Enwezor, "Archive Fever: Photography between History and the Monument", in *Archive Fever: Uses of the Document in Contemporary Art.* New York: International Center of Photography, exh. cat., 2008, 11-51.
- 10 Sara Ahmed, "The Problem of Perception" Feminist Killjoys, http://feministkilljoys.com, Accessed July 4, 2025.
- 11 Anne Dymond,. Diversity Counts: Gender, Race and Representation in Canadian Art Galleries. Montreal/Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2019.
- 12 J. Zemans and A.C. Wallace, "Where Are the Women? Updating the Account!" RACAR: Revue d'art Canadienne / Canadian Art Review, 38.1 (2013), 1–29.

Women Artists in the University of Victoria Art Collection

Rosemary Abram Jane Adams Lilly Klengenberg Agnahiak Jocelyne Aird-Belanger Vikky Alexander Sandra Alfoldy Heather Allan Sabine Allard Helen Andersen Laura Anderson Mary Ayaq Anowtalik Peggy Arber Susan Arundel

Gilberte Bailey Elizabeth Ballam Donna Balma Joan Balzar Anna Banana

Gene Ruth Meecham Barker Anne Bateman

Hester Bateman Patricia Martin Bates Deborah C. Baxter Fanny Wright Bayfield

Jean Bavlis Patricia Beer Carol Bell

Irmgard J. Benedict Margitta Ben-Oliel Pauline Benwick Rachel Berman Margaret Berry Gail Biasby Lilian Bird

Patience Birly Viki Bierstedt Kathy Black Elizabeth Blackadder Mary Blaze Susanna Blunt Margaret Boan Lillian Broca Isolde Broedermann Diana Brooks Pamela Barlow Brooks Alberta Browne

Barbara Burns Anne Bushnell Janis Butler Sarah Butt Joan Byers

Ghitta Caiserman-Roth Lissa Calvert Eva Campbell Shelly Terman Canton Audrey Capel-Doray Susan Carr Emily Carr Lorraine Charlie Nan Cheney Jean Cherie Rosalyn Chodos Wina Chow Christina Clarke Clarice Cliff

Prunella Clough

Dot Comley

Lisa Cook

Susan R. Collinson

Installation photograph Legacy Art Gallery January 6 - April 6, 2024

ELZA MAYHEW

.Α DALE

DEBORAH KOENKER BERTHE KORFF OLGA TOMLINSON KORNAVITCH JEANNE KRABBENDAM REBECCA KRANTZ SARAH KUDLUROK MYRA KUKITYAT AGNES KUNNUK EVA KUPCZYNSKI MOLLY LAMB ROBAK LUCIE LAMBERT PEGGY LARSON ELIZABETH LAUDER NIKI LEDERER GERMAINE MAURIAUCOURT ELIZABETH MAYNE HEATHER MCALPINE

NA SOFIA MEDINA AUDREY MEERE MARY MEIGS MORGAN MISS MOWAT SARAH MUSWAGON PATRICIA MURRAY S. MYLREA JOANASIE NANALYUK NELLIE NASTAPOKA T NAYLOR LOU-ANN NEEL KAY NEILSON DOREEN NEWEL

ELLEN NEEL (KAKA'SOLAS)

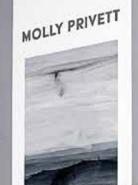


MYFANWY PAVELIC

EXISTRETERS HELEN V. PIDOINGTON WINGEN PLENTY MOORS

ALICE PAUL (HESQUIAHT)







MAUD SH

MARGARET ELLEN PETERSON

PHYLLIS SEROTA COROTHEA SHARP MALID F SHARP SYLVIA SKELTON ANN SMITH KARENSMITH SHELAGH SMITH

Joy Olesky Cowper Myra Eadie Una Cradock Nancy Edell Heather Cragg Victoria Edgar Jill Ehlert Nancy Craig Judy Cranmer Ikeda Eisen **Emily Crawford** Irene Eisenhoffer S.L. Crawford Joan Eldridge Brenda C. Crooke Alice Eqilaq Kay Cruickshank Verna Ermter Susan Currie Amber Escombe Gwen Curry Hannelore Evans Colleen Cutschall Gladys Ewan Daphne Daniel Nancy Faber Barb Dann Gathie Falk Valerie Faris Susan Davies Colleen Sue Davis Lynda Faulks Marlene Davis Susan Feindel May Davis Mary Fedden Carol Dawson Dorothy Field Stephanie Dean-Moore Monica Filderslave Sonia Delaunay Patricia Fisher Sandra Demidoff Susan Fisher Francis Dick Jocelyn Floyer Connie Dickens Rosemary Flynn Jennifer Dickson Nita Forrest Freda Diesing Doreen Forrester Tessa D'isle Michelle Forsyth Wendy Dobereiner Judith Foster Kathryn Dodd Elvera Frame Nora Drummond Gwen Frank Molly Duke Dianna Friedman Jane Duncan Stephanie J. Frostad Charlene Dyck Virginia Fry Judi Dyelle Daphne Fuller

Susie Cooper

Biddy Gaddes Lynda Gammon Audrey Garwood Luba Genush Annie George Rita George Herta Gerz Karen Gomes Tanya Goodlet Agnes Nanogak Goose Coco Gordon Nancy S. Graig Elizabeth Grambart Pnina Granirer Eileen Gray Torrie Groening Angela Grossmann Helga Grove Maureen Gruben Alrun Guest Babe Gunn Ramona Gus Fig Guthrie Atomi Gyokushi Elizabeth Yeend Duer — Gyokushō Florence Hadley Dorothy Haegert Alice Mary Hagen Sharon Halfnight Janice Halliwell Sue Hara Wendy Harawa Kay Fallows Hargreaves Karen Harris

Joan Harvey Eliza Hawkins Edith Kiertzner Heath Jennifer Heath Estelle Hecht Edythe Hembroff-Schleicher Katherine Hepburn Barbara Hepworth Kathryn Hershal Deborah Hertzberg Karen Hewett Sharon Hitchcock Faye Hoffman Honey Hooser Nora Horn Debbie Hunt Georgia Hunter Mary Hunter Mollie Hunter Janet Hurst Emily Pangnerk Illuitok Isobel Inglehart Mina Inuktalik Lorna Jackson Mary Jane Jackson Marian Jeffares Christine Jennings Sarah Jim Charmian Johnson Louisa Johnson Lynne Johnson Patricia Johnston **Edith Jones**

ROSEMARY ABRAM JANE ADAMS LILLY KLENGENBERG AGNAHIAK JOCELYNE AIRD-BELANGER VIKKY ALEXANDER SANDRA ALFOLDY HEATHER ALLAN SABINE ALLARD HELEN ANDERSEN LAURA ANDERSON MARY AYAQ ANOWTALIK PEGGY ARBER SUSAN ARUNDEL GILBERTE BAILEY ELIZABETH BALLAM DONNA BALMA JOAN BALZAR GENE RUTH MEECHAM BARKER ANNE BATEMAN HESTER BATEMAN PATRICIA MARTIN BATES DEBORAH C. BAXTER FANNY WRIGHT BAYFIELD PATRICIA BEER JEAN BAYLIS IRMGARD J. BENEDICT CAROL BELL PAULINE BENWICK MARGITTA BEN-OLIEL RACHEL BERMAN MARGARET BERRY GAIL BIGSBY PATIENCE BIRLY LILIAN BIRD

ELIZABETH BLACKADDER

KATHY BLACK

VIKI BJERSTEDT

Mimi Jones Lena Jumbo (Ahousaht)

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V Dorothy Vagts Ineke Vant'reit Karoly Veress Tineke van der Voort

W Edith Waelti Jennifer Waelti-Walters Amy Wallner Olive Wallof

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Andrea Walsh

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DIANA BROOKS

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JEAN CHERIE ROSALYN CHODOS WING CHOW

CHRISTINA CLARKE CLARICE CLIFF

Biographies

Carolyn Butler Palmer

Carolyn Butler Palmer is Associate Professor and Legacy Chair in Modern and Contemporary Arts of the Pacific Northwest in the Department of Art History and Visual Studies at the University of Victoria. The Legacy Chair is established in recognition of the creation of the University of Victoria's Legacy Gallery, in downtown Victoria, dedicated to the arts of the Pacific Northwest. As Legacy Chair, her program of research focuses on researching and exhibiting significant works of the Pacific Northwest owned by the University of Victoria. Over the past sixteen years, she has critically examined objects in the collection through exhibitions, publications, collection development, and teaching. She has led curatorial research projects on Kwakwaka'wakw carver Ellen Neel — Kakaso'las, Anglo-Japanese artist Elizabeth Yeend Duer — Gykokushō, Lynda Gammon, Yolonda Skelton — Suglit Lukxs, Nuu-Chal-nulth artist Art Thompson — Tsa Qwa Supp, and The Point Group, among others. Beyond collections research, Dr. Butler Palmer's research extends into questions about the arts of the Pacific Northwest, in general. She is currently researching an exhibition that focuses on Paul Walde's work and is compiling an anthology about art crime with Dawn Cunningham of Queen's University.

Lynda Gammon

Lynda Gammon is Associate Professor Emeritus in the Visual Arts Department at the University of Victoria. Her artistic practice has explored ideas of space and time through the disciplines of photography, sculpture, performance and assemblage. Her projects explore artistic production in relation to feminist practices and present alternative strategies for the representation of inhabitation through ephemeral, temporal and contingent conceptions of the spatial. The recipient of BC Arts Council and Canada Council grants, her work is in the collections of Canada Council Art Bank, The Musee d'Art Contemporain de Montreal, The Art Gallery of Greater Victoria, The Legacy Gallery and the Vancouver Art Gallery and has been exhibited in Canada and internationally.

Haema Sivanesan

Haema Sivanesan is Director, Visual Arts at the Banff Centre for Arts and Creativity. She has held leadership and curatorial positions in public art galleries, artist-run centres and arts festivals in Canada and Australia. She has consulted for arts and heritage organizations in South and Southeast Asia. Her curatorial work focuses on non-western, post-colonial and transnational art histories. She is the recipient of prestigious awards from the Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts, New York (2018) and the Robert H. N. Ho Family Foundation, Hong Kong (2016). Her most recent exhibition, *In the Present Moment: Buddhism, Contemporary Art and Social Practice* (Art Gallery of Greater Victoria and Walter Phillips Gallery, Banff, 2018-2023) inverted traditional exhibition-making methods to centre the artistic process.

Christine A. Walde

Christine Walde is an artist, poet and academic librarian whose practice combines library and archival research with interests in artists' books and multiples, experimental poetry, prose, poetry, visual poetry, performance, book arts and the visual arts. Her work has been published in print and online journals in Canada, the US, the UK, and Germany and she has exhibited both locally and internationally. Walde lives and works on the traditional territory of the Lek*energe Peoples in the Cascadia bioregion of the Pacific Northwest.

Anne Dymond

Anne Dymond, Ph.D., is Associate Professor of Art History and Museum Studies at the University of Lethbridge. Her book, *Diversity Counts: Gender, Race, and Representation in Canadian Art Galleries* (MQUP, 2019), was the first large-scale guantitative assessment of gender and ethnicity in Canadian art galleries and is "a path-breaking study and an invaluable contribution to our understanding of the contemporary art scene in Canada."



8 minutes, University of Victoria, Maltwood Vault, Untitled (Bottle Basket) Lena Jumbo (Ahousaht), 2023-01-23, T 1:40 -1:48, 8" X 10", 2023 Digital print from 4"X 5" analogue negative Collection of the artist

Latent: Critical Conversations about Collections Roundtable, January 27, 2024

Opening Remarks

Dr. Erin Campbell (Chair, UVic AHVS), Dr. Elizabeth Croft (UVic Provost) & Dr. Allana Lindgren (Dean, UVic Faculty of Fine Arts)

Distinguished Women Scholars Lecture '

"Getting the Keys to the Vault: How feminist, decolonizing and anti-racist work is changing collections" with Dr. **Anne Dymond** (Associate Professor of Art History, Department of Art, University of Lethbridge)

Orion Visiting Scholar Lecture[†]

"Curating in Crisis: Benin Bronzes to Extreme Weather" with Dr. **Alice Ming Wai Jim** (Professor of Art History and Concordia University Chair in Critical Curatorial Studies and Decolonizing Art, Department of Art History)

Roundtable Discussion

"Critical Conversations about Collections" with panelists **Lynda Gammon** (Associate Professor Emeritus, UVic Visual Arts), Dr. **Heather Igloliorte** (Professor and Canada Excellence Research Chair, Decolonial and Transformational Indigenous Arts Practices, UVic Visual Arts), **Ry Moran** (Associate University Librarian, Reconciliation), **Dorian J. Fraser** (PhD Candidate, Art History, Concordia University and UVic AHVS alum), Dr. **Alice Ming Wai Jim** and Dr. **Anne Dymond**.

Moderator: Dr. **Carolyn Butler Palmer** (Associate Professor and Legacy Chair in Modern and Contemporary Arts of the Pacific Northwest, UVic AHVS).

^{*}Financial support provided by The University of Victoria's Provost's Distinguished Women Scholars Lecture Series.

[†]Financial supported provided by The University of Victoria's Faculty of Fine Arts Orion Lecture Series for the Department of Art History and Visual Studies.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

As an uninvited guest on these lands, I want to acknowledge and respect the Lek*engen (Songhees and Esquimalt) Peoples on whose territory the university stands, and the Lek*engen and WSÁNEĆ Peoples whose historical relationships with the land continue to this day.

In addition, I want to publicly recognize that the *Latent* research project would not have been possible without the support of the late Michael Williams, the Faculty of Fine Arts Orion Funds, and The Provost's Distinguished Women Scholars Award.

I would like to thank Haema Sivanesan, Christine A. Walde and Anne Dymond for their contributions to the catalogue.

I also want to thank all of those who carefully helped shape this exhibition and bring it into three-dimensional reality, especially those named below.

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- DJ Fraser, Ph.D. candidate, Concordia University
- Lindsay Kaisla, M.A., Graphic designer
- Alice Ming Wai Jim, Ph.D., Professor and Concordia Research Chair in Critical Curatorial Studies and Decolonizing Art Institutions, Department of Art History, Concordia University
- Julie Albright, Writing Studio

With respect,

Carolyn Butler Palmer

Associate Professor and Legacy Chair, Art History and Visual Studies

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Firstly, I would like to thank Carolyn Butler Palmer for curating *Latent*.

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Lynda Gammon

 $_{65}$

LATENT

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Photographs: Lynda Gammon

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