'Earth Etchings' artist statement

My work focuses on our relationship to nature and the environment, in the context of North American history, colonization, and how the continent was originally travelled – in wood, skin, and bone crafts along the waterways, through seemingly endless rocks, trees, and lakes. Responding to contemporary issues of environmental change, the work explores global climate change issues, particularly connected to water, deforestation, species migration, and seasonal shifts. On a more personal level, it also explores human spiritual-emotional connections to each other and to nature.

In my practice I respond strongly to environment. In 2007 when I changed locations from an urban to a rural context, I became influenced by the Canadian wilderness landscape in a different manner. This change and the subsequent body of work has resulted in museum shows for *Earth Etchings*, including: MacLaren Art Centre (2012), Two Rivers Gallery B.C. (2014), Royal Botanical Gardens International Earth Art Exhibition (2014), Tom Thomson Museum Survey Exhibition (2019), Robert Langen Art Gallery (2021), and others. A triptych piece from the *Insect Writing* series – involving interwoven gauze layers, vulcanized latex rubber, cedar tree grain and tannins with imprinted chewed insect patterns, hung on rusted gas pipes – will be exhibited at the upcoming 13th International Fiber Art Biennale, *"From Lausanne to Beijing"*, to be held at the Art Museum of Tsinghua University in Beijing, China, starting December 6th this year to March 1st, 2026.

My studio is a newer barn like an overturned ship on the edge of wilderness, a developing Environmental Art Centre, art creation and gallery space, two hours east of Toronto.

The *Earth Etchings* involve a transformation process, going into a cocoon of sorts and using a moldmaking process to layer cocoons on various forms – the process a butterfly (and other insects) go through, as well as people during transitions in their own lives and consciousness. When the cocoons open, the forms become evocative of Canadian and global history, our life journeys, couples and relationships to each other, and the world around us. The patterns ants and beetles make on logs and trees when they chew or 'carve' around them, sometimes have the symmetry of their own self-portraits. This latest series, *Insect Writing*, involves imprinting these patterns, using the trees as etching plates; the resulting works look like musical scores, heart monitor graphs, and bear resemblance to ancient scripts… origins of our own languages.

I made the first *Earth Etching* from a rock surface in 2008. The "skin" of the etching is made with a type of latex derived from rubber tree sap – vulcanized to withstand heat and cold – "painted" on a chosen surface, with many layers of cotton gauze integrated in to create a "canvas" of sorts. Like our own skin, it is naturally mould and fungus resistant, and durable like leather. Geothermal heat from the ground, and sunlight, dry the works. After making this first etching, I took a walk through the woods, and found a young pine tree. A porcupine had eaten the bark around the base, and sap had come down to cover the wound: milky yellow and slowly hardening like our own white blood cells. This experience inspired early 'tree etchings' shortly after, from which the *Insect Writing* series later emerged.

At its core, I work with society and nature's hidden skin and bones, historical artifacts and present day objects, and thoughts of an unknown future. Etchings of the landscape surfaces around us; bones of the structures that make up our worlds. In some pieces the etchings are embedded with porcupine quills, leaves, and other materials evoking complex feelings and memories: perhaps the autumn of the human world, perhaps redemption and new beginnings.

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