

How can

I know

you ?

Introduction

Using materials sourced from the earth, the artists in *How can I know you?* work to share site-specific knowledge about kinship and generational relations, industry and settlement, social and political histories tied to settler nationalism and institutions, and about Indigenous territories in dialogue with one another.

How can I know you? is a question that comes from a comment artist Panya Clark Espinal shared during a studio visit with curator Suzanne Morrisette. It is a question that Clark Espinal asks of her materials, both as a way of coming to know them, as well as coming to know people, place, and history through the act of engaging with materials. It is a question that supposes the liveliness and agency of these materials and their capacity to share and convey knowledge.

AGB holds a special relationship to clay – the Gallery revolves around the preservation, exhibition, and education of clay-based arts and we are privileged to see the shores of Lake Ontario from our entrance doors. It serves as a daily reminder to respect the raw material we shape and form, and to give thanks to the water protectors and land stewards of many Indigenous nations on the treaty lands and territory of the Mississauga of the Credit for our ability to continue to make and learn in this place. *How can I know you?* is an opportunity to deepen our knowledge in understanding what clay we are from and on.

Both the exhibition and extended programming supports Morrisette's ongoing research into and representations of colonial power and the intersections of contemporary art with geopolitics, decolonization, and social justice. *How can I know you?* is accompanied by a rich public program featuring talks, workshops, and performances in connection with a range of citywide collaborators and partners.

How can I know you?

by Suzanne Morrisette

*At least I have her love, the city, she loves me
Lonely as I am, together we cry.*

—Anthony Kiedis, Red Hot Chili Peppers,
excerpt from Under the Bridge

Walking the snow-filled streets of Winnipeg as a young person, the slush used to creep up the bottom of my unhemmed pant legs, which would drag on the ground. I recall how, by the end of the day, my calves would be cold and wet. With my feet, I would slide along sidewalks while watching air bubbles move under sheets of ice that would crack to expose trapped air or whatever water lay beneath. I would play “chicken” with the ice in the streets, creating beautiful cracks on its surface. At times I lost the game, getting a “booter,” a shoe filled with snow or icy water that I would have to walk around with for the rest of the day.

When someone asks me where I am from, I tend to answer by saying that I am from Winnipeg. It is the truth, though it is not always the answer to what is being asked. Within Indigenous communities, it is customary to be asked where you are from or who your relatives are. This serves a number of functions. It situates you contextually, with reference to a family and history that is rooted in a particular place and/or nation. Some will talk about this as a kind of belonging based on who claims you. At the same time, it is also a framework for understanding. In other words, it can be a way of asking a similar question: “Who are you accountable to?”

As a citizen of the Manitoba Métis Federation, my patrilineal family descends from Métis communities within the Red River region and in the central Manitoba community of St. Laurent. I grew up visiting St. Laurent often, where my Michif-speaking grandmother was raised and where she left at a young age, in search of something else. There I would play in the forests, dip my hands in the earth, and listen to the aspen song as their leaves blew in the wind. I am bound to our families’ histories and the intergenerational impacts of colonization, and I contend with this in my own way when thinking about my role as a mother and as someone who now carries certain privileges—which need to be put to good use.



Panya Clark Espinal, *Pillar of Eight*, 2022.
Relief monoprint made with powdered, reclaimed brick. 66 × 45 cm. Edition 1/1.
Courtesy of RBC Collection. Photo Credit: Smokestack

At the same time, I am accountable to the city too. It is where I learned about racism, and how to hold my body to appear confident when, in reality, I might be afraid. It is where my cousins died (too young). It is where both of my families wound up, through the related histories that promised opportunities to white Canadians which continue to dispossess Indigenous peoples.

There was a time when I thought that the city had made me, and that it continues to make me. This is an idea of place-based pedagogy where place inflects upon the living beings within it. But I am beginning to question that way of thinking. This fall, I taught Métis writer Katerina Vermette's recently published book, *The Circle*, to my class of second-year undergraduate students at OCAD University. The book is the third in a three-part series that follows a community who have been differently impacted by a gruesome attack on a young woman in Winnipeg's North End. Throughout the course of the series, we learn about some of the reasons why different characters make the choices that they do. The reach of those impacted in the story reveals the depth and meaning of the statement "all my relations," which radiates around an event in the present while extending backward in time through our histories. One place can therefore become a palimpsest of stories and people and of multiple truths. Based on these reflections, I asked my students: "Is the city a setting, or a character?"

It is like when Anthony Kiedis sings about Los Angeles in "Under the Bridge," a song from the 1991 Red Hot Chili Peppers album, *Blood Sugar Sex Magik*: he is singing about a place that carries history – an animate and lively place. I tend to think about history as that which is written on our bodies and that our bodies leave in their wake. It would seem to me then, that this would naturally lend to the reading of place as a character, and as a palimpsest of story, and that this would contain within it limitless possibility for listening and learning—not only about a place but about our relationships and accountabilities to the land as an animate force, and all that it has seen.

This question guides the exhibition with a suggestion that *the way we learn* imparts an opportunity of acquaintance with possibility. It suggests that one's *approach* to getting to know someone (or something,

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or someplace), can influence the nature of that future relationship. It suggests that the degree to which we are able to acknowledge and validate that which lies outside of our own experiences is bound up in how we go about knowing it. Thinking about art practices that highlight the animacy of clay and land-based materials can, in this way, support a discussion about how we understand relationships between human and non-human beings, and the unique social and political contexts in which we are not only situated but with which we are in relation. This is an ethic of learning that is rooted in understandings of the animacy of the land and of our own states of belonging, of being out-of-place, or, of being in complex relations of power and history in an ever-changing world.

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Suzanne Morrisette is an artist, curator, and scholar based in Toronto. Her father's parents were Michif- and Cree-speaking Metis with family histories tied to the Interlake and Red River regions and Scrip in the area now known as Manitoba. Her mother's parents came from Canadian-born farming families descended from United Empire loyalists and

Mennonites from Russia. Morrisette was born and raised in Winnipeg and is a citizen of the Manitoba Metis Federation.

Suzanne's artistic research includes family and community knowledge, methods of translation, the telling of in-between histories, and practices of making that support and sustain life. Her two recent solo exhibitions, *What does good work look like?* and *translations* recently opened in Toronto (Gallery 44) and Montreal (daphne art centre) respectively. At the same time, her work has appeared in numerous group exhibitions such as *Lii Zoot Tayr*, an exhibition of Metis artists working with concepts of the unknowable, and the upcoming group exhibition of audio-based work about waterways called *FLOW* with imagineNATIVE Film + Media Art Festival.

In recent years Suzanne has organized curatorial research projects to recognize and honor the legacies of artistic knowledge in her hometown of Winnipeg. One of her SSHRC-funded research projects, *Social Histories/Indigenous Art* examines the history of Indigenous visual culture in Winnipeg, with specific emphasis on visual art projects related to Indigenous-led social advocacy during the 1980s and 1990s. A related Canada Council for the Arts-funded project – Otakosiik Tapwa'win – involves working with artists who were active in Winnipeg between 1970-1996 to collect audio- and photo-based stories about Indigenous art histories in the city. This time represents a gap in recorded history related to Indigenous artistic production in Winnipeg, which the project will address. These stories will be shared through an interactive online platform that will launch in its first iteration in summer/fall 2023.

Morrisette is also leading a team of researchers on a partnership with artist run centres in Canada to examine questions about how to meaningfully implement Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion initiatives (EDI) and governance. Our collective work will address barriers and disparities within past and present governance models to inform future policy and program design within the arts.

Morrisette holds a PhD from York University in Social and Political Thought. She is Assistant Professor and Graduate Program Director for two programs at OCAD University: Criticism and Curatorial Practices (MFA) and Contemporary Art, Design, and New Media Art Histories (MA). In her spare time, Morrisette is developing a line of functional ceramic ware called sznnnz available at Craft Ontario and the Gardiner Museum.



Melissa General, *Nitewaké:non*, 2014.
Chromogenic print. Variable dimensions. Courtesy of the artist.

Exhibition List

1. Anong Migwans Beam, Beam Paints – *Ginii Miishijiimin, Peach Rose*, 2023. Hemp and stone. Courtesy of the artist.
2. Dana Prieto, *Dirt Allowance*, 2019. Bees wax, unpasteurized soil, red brick and anthracite coal found at University of Toronto Art Museum's grounds. 5 × 7 cm. Courtesy of the artist.
3. Dana Prieto, *Footnotes for an Arsenal*, 2022. Terracotta tiles, terracotta containers, fired soil. Variable dimensions. Courtesy of the artist.
4. Dana Prieto, *there is only dirt*, 2023. Digital print on mulberry silk. 61 × 122 cm each panel. Courtesy of the artist.
5. KC Adams, *Nibi Performance*, 2023. Seven Indigenous clay vessels, seven red willow wreaths, midi sound equipment, Bose speaker. Documentation Miles Rufelds. Courtesy of the artist.
6. Krista Belle Stewart, *A Guest A Host A Ghost – Seoul*, 2018. Clay and clay particles. 32 × 32 × 16.50 cm. Courtesy of the artist and Cooper Cole
7. Krista Belle Stewart, *A Guest A Host A Ghost – Toronto*, 2018. Clay and clay particles. 27 × 17 × 17 cm. Courtesy of the artist and Cooper Cole
8. Krista Belle Stewart, *A Guest A Host A Ghost – Vancouver*, 2018. Clay and clay particles. 27 × 17 × 17 cm. Courtesy of the artist and Cooper Cole
9. Melissa General, *Nitewaké:non*, 2014. Digital print on 3mm Alupanel. 109.22 × 304.8 cm. Courtesy of the artist.
10. Melissa General, *Kehyá:ra's*, 2016. Video. 00:19:51. Courtesy of the artist.
11. Panya Clark Espinal, *Material Redistribution*, 2018. Relief monoprint made with powdered, reclaimed brick. 46.5 × 68.5 cm. Varied edition of 8. Courtesy of Caroline Langill.
12. Panya Clark Espinal, *Material Redistribution*, 2018. Relief monoprint made with powdered, reclaimed brick. 46.5 × 68.5 cm. Varied edition of 8. Courtesy of Laine Groeneweg.
13. Panya Clark Espinal, *Material Redistribution*, 2018. Relief monoprint made with powdered, reclaimed brick. 46.5 × 68.5 cm. Varied edition of 8. Courtesy of Adam David Brown and Kristiina Lahde.
14. Panya Clark Espinal, *Material Redistribution*, 2018. Relief monoprint made with powdered, reclaimed brick. 46.5 × 68.5 cm. Varied edition of 8. Courtesy of Adam David Brown and Kristiina Lahde.
15. Panya Clark Espinal, *Pillar of Eight*, 2022. Relief monoprint made with powdered, reclaimed brick. 66 × 45 cm. Edition 1/1. Courtesy of RBC Collection.
16. Panya Clark Espinal, *Corner Meeting*, 2022. Relief monoprint made with powdered, reclaimed brick. 66 × 45 cm. Edition 1/1. Courtesy of RBC Collection.
17. Panya Clark Espinal, *A Wandering Path*, 2022. Relief print made with powdered, reclaimed brick. 73.5 × 95.5 cm. Varied edition of 2. Courtesy of Open Studio and the artist.

18. Panya Clark Espinal, *As Below, So Above II*, 2023. Brick-dust silkscreen print with brick fragments. 49.5 × 42.5 cm. Courtesy of Smokestack.
19. Panya Clark Espinal, *As Below, So Above III*, 2023. Brick-dust silkscreen print with brick fragments. 49.5 × 42.5 cm. Courtesy of Smokestack.
20. Panya Clark Espinal, *As Below, So Above IV*, 2023. Brick-dust silkscreen print with brick fragments. 49.5 × 42.5 cm. Courtesy of Smokestack.
21. Panya Clark Espinal, *Bloom 1*, 2023. Brick-dust silkscreen print. 75.3 × 75.3 cm. Courtesy of Smokestack.
22. Panya Clark Espinal, *Bloom 2*, 2023. Brick-dust silkscreen print. 75.3 × 75.3 cm. Courtesy of Smokestack.
23. Panya Clark Espinal, *Bloom 3*, 2023. Brick-dust silkscreen print. 75.3 × 75.3 cm. Courtesy of Smokestack.
24. Panya Clark Espinal, *Horizon Turn-off*, 2023. Brick-dust silkscreen print. 38.1 × 38.1 cm. Courtesy of Smokestack.
25. Panya Clark Espinal, *Horizon Turn-on*, 2023. Brick-dust silkscreen print. 38.1 × 38.1 cm. Courtesy of Smokestack.
26. Panya Clark Espinal, *New Hamilton Weave*, 2023. Suite of four brick-dust silkscreen print. 60 × 60 cm. (each panel). Courtesy of Smokestack.
27. Panya Clark Espinal, *Old Hamilton Weave*, 2023. Suite of four brick -dust silkscreen print. 60 × 60 cm. (each panel). Courtesy of Smokestack.

Artists Biographies

KC Adams AKA Flying Overhead in Circles Eagle Woman is a Winnipeg-based Relational Maker, registered with Fisher River Cree Nation. Adams graduated from Concordia University with a B.F.A in Studio Arts and a Masters in Cultural Studies, Curatorial Stream at the University of Winnipeg with Graduate student of Highest Distinction. Adams has been in several solo, duo, and group exhibitions and was included in the PHOTOQUAL: Biennale des images du monde in Paris, France. Twenty pieces from the *Cyborg Hybrid* series are in the permanent collection of the National Art Gallery in Ottawa and Birch Bark Ltd., is in the collection of the Canadian Consulate of Australia, NSW. Adams received the Winnipeg Arts Council's *Making A Mark* Award, the Aboriginal Circle of Educator's Trailblazing Award, the Canada Senate 150 Award, and the University of Saskatchewan's inaugural Ohpinamake Indigenous Art Prize. Adams is also the author of the popular Perception Photo Series book that challenges people's biases towards Indigenous people.

Anong Migwans Beam is a painter from Mchigeeng First Nation on Manitoulin Island and is inspired by the physical history of place, the natural landscape, and the relationship between water and memory. Anong was born to artist parents, Carl Beam and Ann Beam, who encouraged her to develop as an artist. Anong has not only used her homeland as an inspiration for her work but also for creating her own oil paints, which are sourced from local pigments and minerals. From 2016-2017 Beam served as the Art Director of the Ojibwe Cultural Foundation and in 2017 she transitioned to become the Executive Director. Later that same year, Beam also launched her own line of watercolour and oil paints known as BEAM Paints. Beam has also been an outspoken advocate for the preservation of Indigenous archaeology and Indigenous ceramics within local communities.

Dana Prieto is an Argentine Canadian artist and educator based in Tkaronto. Her site-responsive work examines our deep relations with colonial structures and infrastructures through a careful attention to the ground, and the different forms of living and dying within it. Dana utilizes ceramic processes and soil-derived materials to reflect on the technologies of containment found in the places where she lives and works - looking at mines, bodies, nests, vessels, institutions, and land. Dana holds a Master of Visual Studies from University of Toronto and a Bachelor of Fine Arts from OCAD University. Her work has been presented in national and international galleries, public spaces and informal cultural venues.

Panya Clark Espinal is a Canadian artist/curator with a diploma in Experimental Art and Sculpture Installation from the Ontario College of Art (1988) and an MFA in Criticism and Curatorial Practice from OCADU (2019). Her thirty-year practice as a multimedia artist has explored mechanisms of representation and their influence on perception. She has attempted to bridge a gap between the world as seen in images and that of tangible experience. Through site-specific installation, exhibitions, and public commissions, her work has focused on bringing renewed intimacy to the act of looking while raising questions about perspective, physicality, and memory. Clark Espinal sees her creative practice as an engagement with memory. Through it she attempts to reconnect or re-member that which has become disconnected or forgotten. Concurrently, she recognizes the power of material engagement to make memory—to manifest a spatial and temporal connection between her physical surroundings and her intellectual, spiritual, and sensual self. For Clark Espinal, acts of making are a form of ancestral and relational maintenance.

Krista Belle Stewart is a citizen of the Syilx Nation currently based in Berlin and Vienna. Stewart works primarily with video, photography, sculpture, and performance, drawing out personal and political narratives inherent in archival materials while questioning their articulation in institutional histories. Her work has been shown as solo exhibitions at Kunstverein Grafschaft Bentheim, Neuenhaus (2022); Goethe Institut Seattle, WA (2021); MOCA, Toronto (2020); Nanaimo Art Gallery, BC (2019); Kunstlerhaus Bethanien, Berlin (2019); Teck Gallery at Simon Fraser University, Vancouver (2018); and Mercer Union as part of the 28th Images Festival, Toronto (2015). Group exhibitions include Kunstverein in Hamburg (2021); Eva International, Limerick (2021); Bonniers Konsthall, Stockholm (2020); CTM Festival, Berlin (2020); ISCP, Brooklyn (2017); Musée d'Art Contemporain, Montreal (2017), and Vancouver Art Gallery (2016). Screenings and performances include, MoMA's Doc Fortnight, Manhattan (2021); UnionDocs, Brooklyn (2019); 221A, Vancouver (2018); Plug-In Institute, Winnipeg (2017); and Haus der Kulturen der Welt, Berlin (2017). Stewart's work is currently part of Galerie Barbara Thumm's online platform New Viewings. She is an MFA graduate from the Milton Avery Graduate School of the Arts at Bard College, Annandale-On-Hudson, NY and is presently a PhD in Practice candidate at the Academy of Fine Arts in Vienna, Austria.



Dana Prieto, *Footnotes for an Arsenal*, 2022.

Terracotta tiles, terracotta containers, fired soil. Variable dimensions. Courtesy of the artist.

Photo Credit: Rebecca Tisdelle-Macias

Public Programming

Performance



KC Adams, *Nibi Performance*, 2022. Seven Indigenous clay vessels, seven red willow wreaths, midi sound equipment, Bose speaker. Courtesy of the artist. Photo: Jonathan Ventura

KC Adams, *Nibi*

Thursday January 18, 7:00 pm

KC Adams brings together seven water carriers who each bear one hand-built pot made of wild clay by Adams and filled with water from Lake Ontario. Seated in a circle on the floor of the gallery the performers touch their bare feet to the ankles of the performer next to them creating a circular circuit channeling the energy in each performers' body and the lake water contained within the pots to resonate sound. Using an electronic device called a musical instrument digital interface, or MIDI, Adams connects the vessels which carry a unique, pre-programmed sound. Then, when prompted, the performers activate the audio component by placing their hands on and inside of the pot they hold. Together these sounds create a sonic score connecting people and place through the life-giving element of water.

Workshops

At the AGB, learning is in the making. Through hands-on workshops and courses, clay artists can build a greater personal connection to their craft and experience professional growth by learning new techniques, discovering other artists' practices, and understanding contemporary art in greater depth.

Go to www.agb.life/learn to read more about the programs and to register.

All workshop fees include material and equipment; registration required.



KC Adams

Pottery Workshop with KC Adams

Saturday January 20, 1 – 4:00 pm

M \$60 and NM \$65

KC Adams will lead participants in a smudge bowl-making workshop using commercial clay combined with ground grandfather rocks used in sweat ceremony and raw clay harvested from Manitoba to create a clay body suitable for cooking over an open fire. Learn about Indigenous pottery and why it is a superior cooking vessel compared to metal pots.



Dana Prieto

Dirt-based Crayon Making Workshop with Dana Prieto

Saturday February 24, 1 – 4:00 pm

M \$30 and NM \$35

Led by artist Dana Prieto, this hands-on workshop will study soil as a complex material that tells us vital stories of the places and times, we are immersed in. Soil is always multiple, as it holds a variety of pigments, textures, chemicals, histories and forms of life. How does soil remember our times?

We will use dirt-derived materials to create a series of wax crayons that participants can take with them at the end of the event. No experience is needed to attend.

Panel Discussion

Free programming, registration recommended.

Artists' Talk

Thursday March 21, 2 – 3:00 pm (online)

Curator Suzanne Morissette talks to the artists in *How can I know you?* artists on how they have come to understand and know the materials they form and how it informs their practices. The group will discuss the significance of the natural materials they procure, harvest, form, and/or collaborate with, and how that relationship impacts the meaning of the work.

NFB Film Screening

Free programming, registration recommended.

The Colour of Ink

Sunday April 28, 2 – 4:00 PM

Join us for a free screening of *The Colour of Ink* (dir. Brian D. Johnson, 2022), a documentary that uncovers the mystery and power of ink through the eyes of Jason Logan, a visionary Toronto ink maker. Working with ingredients foraged in the wild—weeds, berries, bark, flowers, rocks, rust—he makes ink from just about anything. Jason sends custom-made inks to an eclectic range of artists around the world, from a *New Yorker* cartoonist to a Japanese calligrapher. As the inks take on a life of their own, his playful alchemy paints a story of colour that reconnects us to the earth and returns us to a childlike sense of wonder.

Guided Tours

Free programming, no registration required.

Gallery Tours

With **AGB Gallery Guides**

Sundays January 21, February 11, March 10 and April 14, 1–1:30 pm

Stroller Tours

Guided discussions and activities for preschoolers and caregivers with **Annie Webber**, Education Coordinator, AGB
Thursdays, 10–10:30am

Family Days

Free programming, registration required.

Family Open Studios

Sundays January 7th – April 28th, 1 – 4:00 pm

These are family-friendly activities that encourage building, learning, and creating art together, inspired our exhibitions. This intergenerational play allows families to investigate the themes and media that inform or make up the featured artists' work, to explore all the AGB spaces, and to leave feeling empowered to continue creating artwork at home as a family.

School and Group Programs

Wednesdays, Thursdays and Fridays, 9:30–11:30am,
12:30–2:30 pm, or 6–8:00 pm

Sessions are \$18/person with a minimum of 15 people
Contact Annie Webber annie@agb.life to register.

AGB is the ideal place to experience art outside of the classroom. Through the gallery's school programs, students can access artists and ideas as a vehicle for dialogue and become active thinkers in the creation of their own works of art. Students connect to professional arts studios, thought-provoking contemporary exhibitions, and a talented team of artist-educators. Our planned visits this season connect students with the concepts of land-based practices, site-specific ideas about kinship and generational knowledge, Indigenous territories in dialogue with one another as well as the social and political histories tied to our shared home - all made understandable for the learning needs of your group.

Acknowledgements

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We are grateful to the volunteer Gallery Guides for their exemplary dedication to bringing the exhibition to life and our members for their ongoing support to all the AGB's programming.

The Art Gallery of Burlington is located on the ancestral territory of many Indigenous Nations including the Anishinaabeg, Haudenosaunee, and Métis peoples. The territory is mutually covered by the Dish with One Spoon Wampum Belt Covenant, an agreement between the Iroquois Confederacy, the Ojibway, and other allied Nations to peaceably share and care for the resources around the Great Lakes. We acknowledge that the land upon which we gather, to create and learn, is part of the Treaty Lands and Territory of the Mississaugas of the Credit.

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www.agb.life

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