



helen o'connor
salutation



March 6 to May 10, 2014

300 College Drive, Whitehorse, Yukon
Mon to Fri: 10 am to 5 pm, Sat: 12 to 5 pm, Sun: Closed
Open for theatre performances.

Gallery Director: Mary Bradshaw
Visual Arts Engagement: Jessica Vellenga
Preparator: Scott Price
Catalogue Design: Guiniveve Lalena

ISBN: 978-0-9879249-8-8 Printed in Canada by Integraphics Ltd.
© 2014 Yukon Arts Centre Public Art Gallery. All Rights Reserved.

INTEGRATED
SOLUTIONS GROUP

kobayashi+zedda



Canada Council
for the Arts

Conseil des arts
du Canada

Yukon
Tourism and Culture



salutation

A gesture of greeting indicating respect and affection; an act of reverence (a feeling or attitude of deep respect tinged with awe, a subjective response to something excellent in a personal way)



Hand papermaking is an age-old process that connects me physically and spiritually to the past and to my materials. The meditative and physically demanding process involves growing, harvesting and beating plant fibres (often by hand) to a pulp and finally forming sheets of paper for pressing or for my preferred technique, casting. Through the process, the paper, which can be delicate and transparent or tough and opaque, becomes significantly meaningful to me. Each sheet of paper or cast sculpture is a self-portrait, significant in process, form and ultimately content.

Fresh sheets of wet paper magically transform into the three dimensional form of the objects they are left to dry on. Imagery such as rocks, charred tree-like forms and fry pans are personal in that they are inspired from an incident or experience but they also signify layers of archetypal and symbolic meaning.

Upon contemplation the pieces take on a deeper symbolic significance. In a Jungian sense the rock is said to represent our spirit or consciousness. The variation in transparency as light permeates through paper articulates a reverence to the sun. The installation *Sun Salutation* comes to signify my own spiritual journey and homage to the sun; the sun being the source of all life and a symbol of life. Contrasting this effect, the opaque blackness of the suspended installation *Charred* suggests oblivion, the expiration of life. To me this represents the duality of nature's capabilities—both the destructive and regenerative qualities.

This exhibition is the result of working directly in nature where its elements impact both physically in the work and on my vision. The ritual of my process, symbolism of objects, and spirituality are all guiding concepts within my work. My goal is that the works be interconnected, creating a flow of concepts and imagery which is ultimately unified by the common medium of handmade paper.







BIOGRAPHY

Helen O'Connor is a Yukon visual artist who makes paper by hand using oriental and local fibres to create sculpture, assemblages and installation. Her works express a reverence to nature and are influenced by the unique atmosphere of the north.

Originally from Ontario, O'Connor studied visual art at the University of Western Ontario and at the Ontario College of Art. During her studies, O'Connor was introduced to techniques for oriental and western papermaking by professor, Helmut Becker. Inspired by Becker's work, which utilizes paper innovatively as a vehicle of expression, O'Connor began a journey of her own paper explorations.

This exhibition is the culmination of work that started in 2006 when O'Connor began the casting of Yukon rocks for installation and dance performance concept. Interest in working with multimedia began for O'Connor as a student, and in 1986 as a member of artist cooperative Gallery 44 (Toronto), where her photo/drawings were exhibited.

Recently O'Connor has been involved in collaborative video/paper projects with Yukon filmmaker Marten Berkman. Their short film, *Running with Paper* was featured at the Dawson City Short Film Festival in 2013. Their most recent video installation collaboration *Release* is featured in this exhibition. O'Connor is interested in exploring new ideas introduced by collaborations and is presently developing a dance/paper sculpture project with Monique Romeiko of Whitehorse.





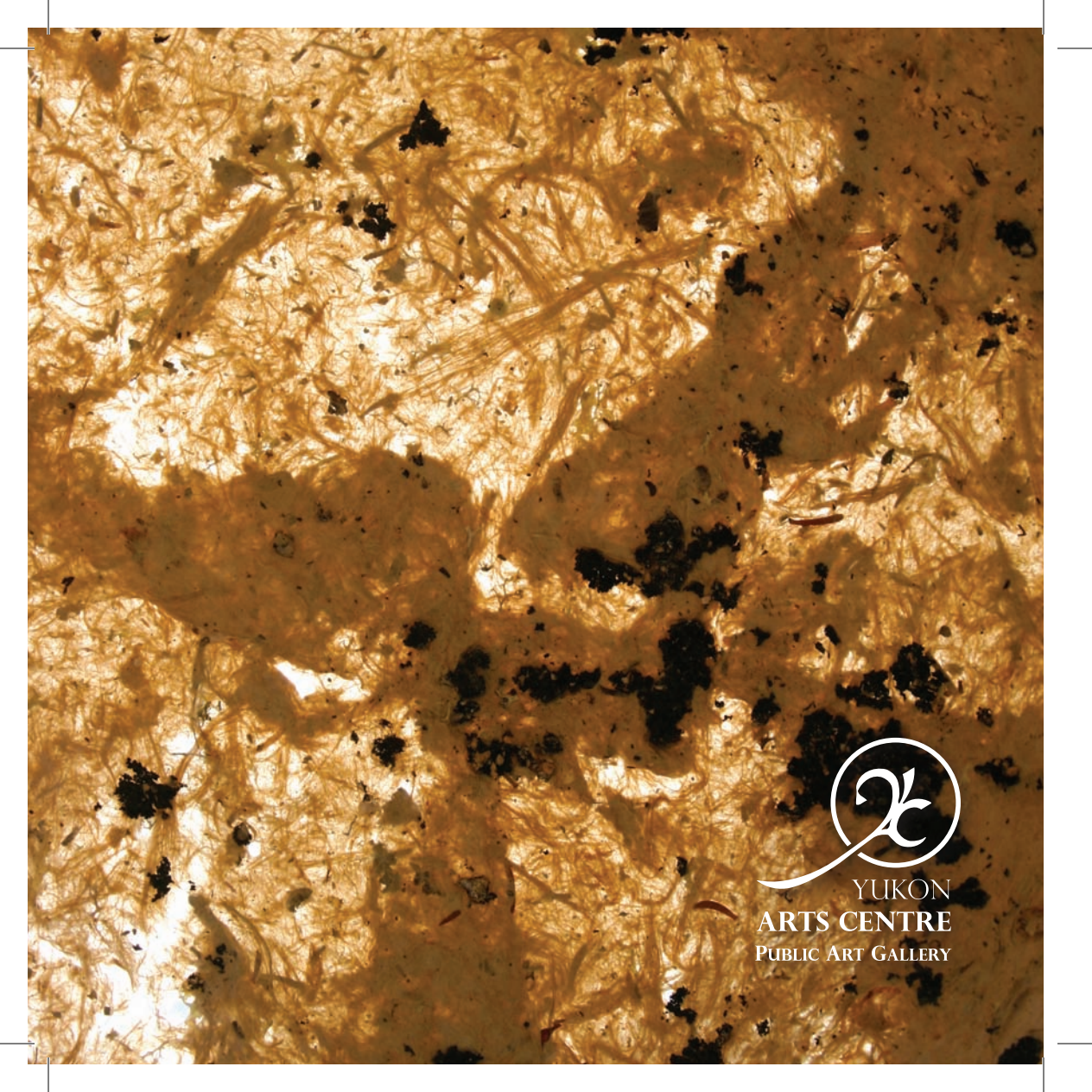
IMPRESSIONABLE EXPERIENCES INFLUENCING DIRECTION OF ARTIST'S WORK:

- 2009 O'Connor travels back to Ontario to mentor further with Becker reating two and three dimensional work with hemp and flax fibres.
- O'Connor joins the Friends of Dard Hunter Association and participates in conference for paper artists in Atlanta, Georgia.
- 2010 Creative Artist Residency at the Banff Centre, O'Connor develops a body of work that explores the effects of elements and the potential of light with paper. This work was show in 2010 group show, "Any" at the Other Gallery, Banff Centre.
- Solo show "Light, Wind and Water", Arts Underground/Yukon Art Society.
- 2011 O'Connor joins IAPMA, International Association of Hand Papermakers and Paper Artists and participates in 25th Anniversary Gathering at the studio of Joanne B Kaar Caithness, Scotland with 20 IAPMA participants.
- O'Connor's reflective article "Making Paper with Seaweed" is published in Scottish Arts News, Northings.
- 2012 Paper/Book/Print Intensive, Fabriano, IT (Pyramid Atlantic Program w/ Lynne Sures)
- Watermarks Juried Members Show, Collapsibility/Expansion and Conference, Morgan Conservatory, Cleveland, Ohio

FORTHCOMING:

- 2014 Artist residency at Tyrone Guthrie Centre in Ireland, O'Connor plans to explore ancient Celtic stone circles as well as family landmarks,documents and historical photos for installation and book works.

O'Connor's work has been exhibited in the U.S., Australia, Canada and the U.K.



YUKON
ARTS CENTRE
PUBLIC ART GALLERY