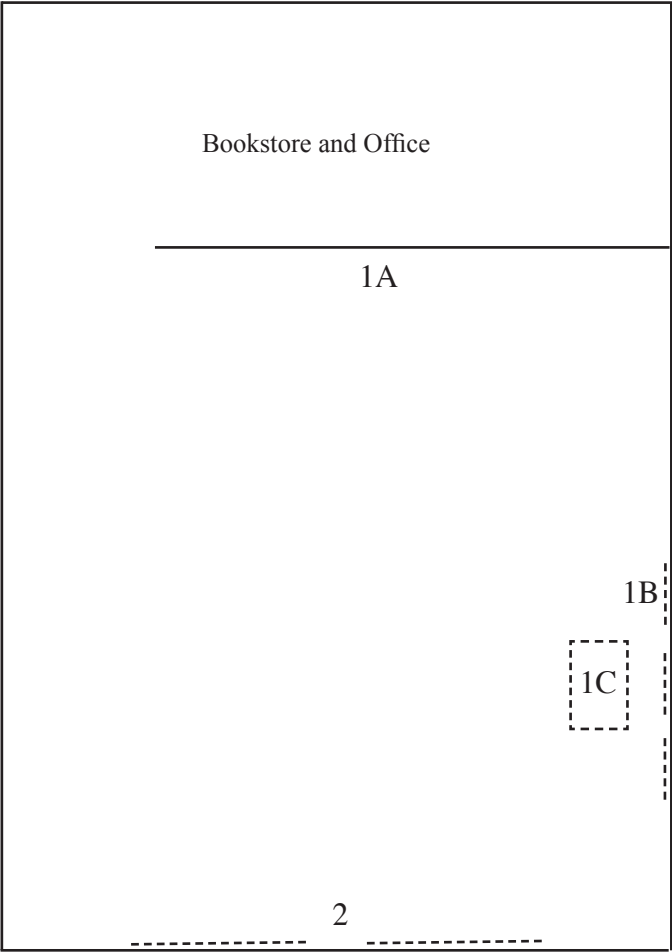


SENSING OF THE WOUND
WHESS HARMAN & PAMILA MATHARU
MARCH 5TH - APRIL 30TH, 2022



- 1A Pamila Matharu, *INDEX (SOME OF ALL PARTS)*
Looping Digital Video, 10:58
- 1B Pamila Matharu, *INDEX (SOME OF ALL PARTS)*
Laser on Newsprint
- 1C Pamila Matharu, *INDEX (SOME OF ALL PARTS)*
Digital Prints (to be taken)
- 3 Whess Harman, *CACHED MEMORY*
(left) boneheads, horse hair scalps,
shell buttons, seed beads, misc. textiles
(right) misc. textiles, studs

The wound is the yawning opening of what has been erased, eviscerated, dismembered. It calls for justice, for healing, for repair, for mourning. The wound's temporality that exceeds what is given, that precedes, harbors a principle of hope. The wound intimates the possibility of radical returns, of re-membering, of re-existence.

The consciousness of the wound, the sensing of the wound, unveils horizons of healing. Decoloniality calls for a turn in our disposition towards the real, from enunciation to listening, from extraction to cultivation, from appropriation to reception. Healing is a movement from possession to relating, from what has been dismembered to re-membering, from loss to mourning, from reduction to plenitude.

Rolando Vázquez, *Vistas of Modernity*

Through their combination of visual art and practices of convening collectives, artists Whess Harman's and Pamila Matharu's works configure DIY publishing, youth culture, and archival material into constellations that question that which dominant narratives and erasures have made invisible.

Harman, a devotee of punk, indie and underground music scenes, regularly engages the iconic multi-patched denim vest—long associated with counter and sub-cultures, including punk, Queer culture, working class and Indigenous activists—as a support structure for a referential, pictorial and textual community auto-poesis of sorts. In the past, Harman has taken the personalization of their own jackets, with patches and beading, as a way to make visible their Indigenous identity in spaces and land outside of their home territory. For Harman, these jackets are therefore a form of regalia that have the function of writing Indigeneity into the music and art venues that they enter. Denoting the presence of their double communities, Harman's banner series, *cached memory*, features

scanned and reprinted images of leather jackets overlaid with textile and other material accents, informed by the methods and forms used in Carrier Wit's regalia.

Matharu has developed a projection-based iteration of her ongoing work, *INDEX (SOME OF ALL PARTS)*. A work that initially emerged from a collection of archival videotapes destined to be discarded by the Art Gallery of Ontario prior to retrieval by the artist. The tapes were documentation of the 1993 literary symposium, *Identity In A Foreign Place*, that included the writer Lakshmi Gill, a Vancouver-based Filipina-Punjabi writer and poet. Identifying with the erasure of non-white cultural presences and influences that the discarded tape implies, Matharu continued to expand her examination of what and who is written into and out of our collective cultural memory through documents, broadly compiled from everyday media and ephemera, whether originally destined for collection, circulation or the dust bin. Additionally Matharu presents an archived selection of broadsheets highlighting the early colonial gaze

regarding South Asian communities, including the diaspora that arrived as labourers in BC.

The majority of archived images presented in the downward flow of *INDEX* confront us with images from advertising, broadcast, and print media that collectively border the inclusions and exclusions to both national and racial identities. Traversing this boundarying of ‘us’ and ‘them over there’ from without, Matharu includes counter-images produced from within; personal, community and familial archives through which non-white settler and immigrant subjectivity is projected, reflected and in flux. This embodiment of a double-consciousness that appears as frontal print and digital images in Matharu’s work, is also alluded to in the tactile banners by Harman, whose textiles embellished with the adornments connected to traditional Carrier Wit’at regalia such as bone heads, horse hair and shell buttons, refer to both an individual and communal body. Despite the harsh glare of the gallery light, *cached memory* teases with the offer of an intimate encounter of the sort that might happen in the corner of a club or off to the side of stage-left

while watching a favorite band. Slight, white highlights where the scanner catches the leather and beading in Harman’s prints combine with the artist’s stitched partial outlines of the wording *Our Blood Runs Redder*, which only becomes visible once we are drawn in for closer examination.

-Denise Ryner

ARTIST BIOS

Whess Harman (they/them) is Carrier Wit’at, a nation amalgamated by the federal government under the Lake Babine Nation. They graduated from the Emily Carr university’s BFA program in 2014 and currently live and work on the territories of the Musqueam, Squamish and Tsleil-Waututh as the curator at grunt gallery. Their multidisciplinary practice includes beading, illustration, text, poetry and curation. As a mixed-race, trans/non-binary artist they work to find their way through a tasty plethora of some kind of undiagnosed attention deficit disorder, colonial bullshit and queer melancholy. To the best of their patience, they do this with humour and a carefully mediated cynicism that the galleries go hog wild for. Their current projects include the Potlatch Punk series, various text-based works, zines, and comics.

Pamila Matharu is a settler of Panjabi, Indian descent (Jalandhar and Kapurthala), born in Birmingham, England, and arrived in Canada in 1976. Based in Tkarón:to (Toronto) - Treaty 13 territory - on the lands of the Mississaugas of the Credit, the

Anishinaabe, the Haudenosaunee, and the Wendat, she holds a BA in Visual Arts, and a Fine Arts B.Ed. from York University.

Approaching contemporary art from the position of critical pedagogy and using an interdisciplinary and intersectional feminist lens, her work culminates in a broad range of forms including: installation art, social practice, and experimental media art. Her 2019 solo exhibition debut *One of These Things Is Not Like the Other*, presented at A Space Gallery (Toronto), won the 2019 OAAG Award for Best Exhibition and the 2019 Toronto Images Festival Homebrew Award. Her project *INDEX (SOME OF ALL PARTS)* received the 2020 CONTACT Festival’s Edward Burtynsky Award. Her forthcoming monograph will launch at Brampton, Ontario’s PAMA (Peel Art Museum and Archives) in May 2023.

Please join the artists and curator for a talk at Or Gallery on Friday March 18th at 6pm.

Director/Curator: Denise Ryner
Programme Coordinator: Jamie Ward
Projects Assistant: Katrina Goetjen
Gallery Assistance: Reiko Inouye, Karry Hon (SFU SCA intern)
Installation Technician: Kiyoshi Whitley

Please sign up to Or Gallery's email list & visit our social media for updates on online talks and performances related to this project.

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Or Gallery acknowledges its presence on the unceded territory of the xwməθkwəy̓əm (Musqueam), Skwxwú7mesh (Squamish) and Səl̓ilwətaʔ/Selilwitulh (Tsleil-Waututh) First Nations.