

creative futures
start here



2025 / 26
annual review

FINE ARTS BY THE NUMBERS: 2025/26

RAISED FROM DONORS: \$2.5M+
AWARDED TO STUDENTS: \$1.2M+
AWARDS DISTRIBUTED: 279
CURRENT FINE ARTS DONORS: 477
FACULTY GRANT FUNDING: \$3.46M
NEW ALUMNI: 200

ANNUAL EVENTS: 300+
PUBLIC ATTENDANCE: 20K+
VISITING ARTISTS & SCHOLARS: 25
CAREER & CO-OP PLACEMENTS: 13
EARNED MEDIA STORIES: 100+
SOCIAL MEDIA FOLLOWERS: 25K+

Director Yasmine Kandil brought to life the stories of six newcomer immigrants & refugees in her celebratory production *The Salty Scent of Home*, mounted at our Phoenix Theatre in October 2025



@UVicFineArts



@UVicArts



@UVicArts

AN ARTS LEADER TO ADMIRE: OUTGOING DEAN ALLANA LINDGREN

The end of the 2025/26 academic year brought a profound change to our Fine Arts community, as Dr. Allana Lindgren stepped down from her role as Dean during what has likely been the most tumultuous era in our nearly 60-year Faculty history.

Dean Lindgren's time in the position started dramatically, as she became Acting Dean a month prior to the COVID-19 outbreak in 2020 — but her formal appointment in 2022 coincided with multiple social, racial, financial, medical, environmental and mental health crises. "This extraordinary barrage of challenges has been the backdrop to my tenure," Lindgren says. "It has been a life-changing experience to serve in a leadership role during this incredibly complex moment in history."

It's a testament to Dean Lindgren's patience, tenacity, creative resilience and inspired leadership, however, that Fine Arts was able to not only endure but also grow during this period of "polycrisis," thanks to her open-minded approach to problem solving. Even with two punishing back-to-back university-wide budget cuts, under Dean Lindgren's leadership we were able to hire 29 new staff and 22 faculty members: with four Indigenous and Black scholar positions successfully filled, Fine Arts had the highest number of equity-focused hires on campus during this period, advancing our commitment to both Indigenization and the Scarborough Charter.

"For more than six years, Dr. Lindgren has served the Faculty and UVic with dedication, integrity and compassion for students, faculty, and staff," says UVic's Vice-President Academic & Provost Elizabeth Croft. "Fine Arts

has rightly become recognized as an institutional and national leader in reconciliation and decolonization, with both Indigenous faculty and staff complement and Indigenous student enrollment growing significantly during Dr. Lindgren's tenure."

Other highlights during her time in office include supporting the creation of the s̓x̓w̓i?e'm "To Tell A Story" Indigenous Writers & Storytellers Series, initiated by Writing professor Gregory Scofield, and hiring Karla Point as our Indigenous Resurgence Coordinator — making us the only UVic Faculty to have an IRC position.

Fine Arts also saw remarkable achievements through the appointments of Carey Newman (Visual Arts/AHVS) as UVic's Impact Chair in Indigenous Art Practices, Heather Igloliorte as UVic's only Canada Excellence Research Chair and Joel Ong as a Canada Research Chair (both in Visual Arts).

Dean Lindgren also oversaw the creation of a number of new financial awards, including the annual Student Community Impact Award and Indigenous Student Awards, and greatly expanded our relationship with the Jeffrey Rubinoff Foundation and Sculpture Park on Hornby Island, as well as initiating unique creative opportunities like the 2022 collaboration between Ballet BC and School of Music composers, and hosting Canada Council for the Arts CEO Michelle Chawla in 2025.

During an era when the idea of community was often frayed, if not outright abandoned, Dean Lindgren's desire, ability and drive to put community first will surely stand as her most remarkable achievement.



At the Greater Victoria's Regional Awards in 2021 (above) & joining in 2022's Indigenous Honouring Ceremony

Thank you, UVic donors!

Participating in UVic's annual Thankathon (above) & moderating the Ballet BC/School of Music collaboration, both in 2022

CANADA EXCELLENCE RESEARCH CHAIRS
CHAWLA
EN RECHERCHE

At Heather Igloliorte's CERC announcement in 2023 (above) & signing the JRSF gift with Betty Kennedy in 2024

Hosting Canada Council CEO Michelle Chawla in 2025 (above) & attending a Black History Month celebration in 2026

Hosting Canada Council CEO Michelle Chawla in 2025 (above) & attending a Black History Month celebration in 2026

Hosting Canada Council CEO Michelle Chawla in 2025 (above) & attending a Black History Month celebration in 2026

Music's Adam Con takes the UVic Chamber Singers to the Sicily Music Festival, where students perform at prestigious landmarks around Noto, a UNESCO heritage city — also in attendance were Voice professors and invited jury members Benjamin Butterfield and Anne Grimm.



Kirsten Sadeghi-Yekta (Theatre) mounts her second Indigenous theatre festival — the free, two-day *Staging Our Voices* — at our Phoenix Theatre, showing how theatre can be a powerful tool for cultural transmission, language revitalization and community healing.



As this year's Department of Writing Southam Lecturer, award-winning political journalist Stephen Maher spent his time on campus speaking to students about the role reporters play in an increasingly fractured society and by offering a public talk aptly titled "Journalism in Polarized Times".



2025

JUNE

JULY

AUGUST

SEPTEMBER

OCTOBER



The Climate Disaster Project and alumni-run Newworld Theatre win Silver in the "Environmental & Climate Change" category at the Canadian Association of Journalists Awards for *Eyes of the Beast: Climate Disaster Survivor Stories* — the first play to win a CAJ Award!



Kelly Richardson, Paul Walde and MFA alum Rande Cook (all Visual Arts) present *Ax'nakwala (Part 1)*: a series of open-air performances and media installations highlighting the need to save old-growth forest and return unceded lands to Indigenous stewardship.



Merrie Klazek (Music) travels to Korea to be a judge at the prestigious 30th Jeju International Brass and Percussion Competition and Wind Ensemble Festival in Korea, where an unprecedented 110 contestants participated.



Student Melanie Golder (Visual Arts) joins CBC's Gregor Craigie at the Belfry Theatre's *B4 Play* talk show series ahead of the play *Burning Mom*, speaking about the many years she participated in the Burning Man festival (where she also took her own mom).

Thanks to the Swiss Embassy, we were able to host University of Zurich glaciologist Andreas Linsbauer for his “Science + Art = Action” talk with UVic’s KULA and the Department of Geography, bridging the fields of art, science, technology, education and climate change.



In a story that made national news, a Métis model dog sled was repatriated after a century in the Vatican collection, with Writing professor Gregory Scofield (L) — seen here with Governor General Mary Simon (C) — as the lead expert on its identification and return to the community of origin.



UVic Workstudy students Claudia Phillips (Writing, L) and Shay Ball (Visual Arts) are just two of nearly 75 Fine Arts students hired annually to learn professional skills outside of their classes — so we decided to include some of their stories and photos in this issue: watch for their bylines!



NOVEMBER

DECEMBER

JANUARY

FEBRUARY

MARCH

APRIL

MAY

2026



Artist, author, art historian and longtime *Times Colonist* art writer Robert Amos was presented with an Honorary Doctor of Fine Arts during fall convocation, acknowledging his nearly 40 years of documenting Victoria's visual arts scene in words and images.

As part of the inaugural Sounding Grounds festival, new professor Sarah Belle Reid (Music) demonstrates her unique musical voice, which explores intersections between contemporary, classical and noise music, via experimental, improv and interactive electronics.

New Fine Arts Development Officer, Theatre alumna and actor/playwright Sydney Hunt wins the Belfry Theatre's Annamaria Bamji Award for Emerging Playwrights, shortly after her new play *Great American Ski Patrol* was read at their SPARK Festival.

Liya Tensae was just one of six Visual Arts students interviewed by CHEK TV during their three-hour live broadcast from our annual BFA graduation exhibition in May — which also hosted a special alumni reception that saw nearly 200 grads return to campus.

Movement in our five units — Art History & Visual Studies, Theatre, Visual Arts, Writing and the School of Music — always offer exciting opportunities for growth: here's who we welcomed between July 1, 2025 and June 30, 2026

ADMINISTRATIVE



Danielle Geller
Associate Dean,
Indigenous



Lee Henderson
Chair,
Writing



Mark Cacovic
IT support,
Fine Arts



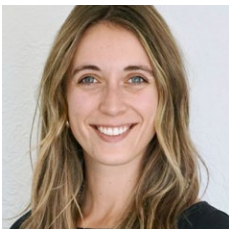
Rebecca Clausen
Administrative
Assistant, Music



Kirk McNally
Associate Dean, Creative Activity,
Research & Administration



Liam Elliot
Technology
Assistant, Music



Stefanie Hedler
JRSP Coordinator,
Fine Arts

NEW FACULTY



Sarah Belle Reid
Assistant Professor,
School of Music



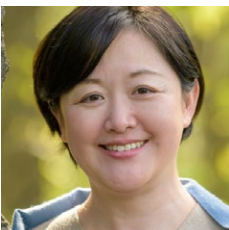
Joel Ong
Associate Professor,
Visual Arts



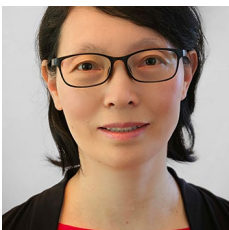
Sydney Hunt
Development
Officer, Fine Arts



Shoshana Schwebel
Grants Officer,
Fine Arts



Ayako Thiessen
Secretary,
Theatre



Lynn Yang
Assistant to
the Dean



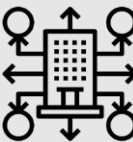
1969

Year
established



4

Purpose-built
buildings



5

Academic
units



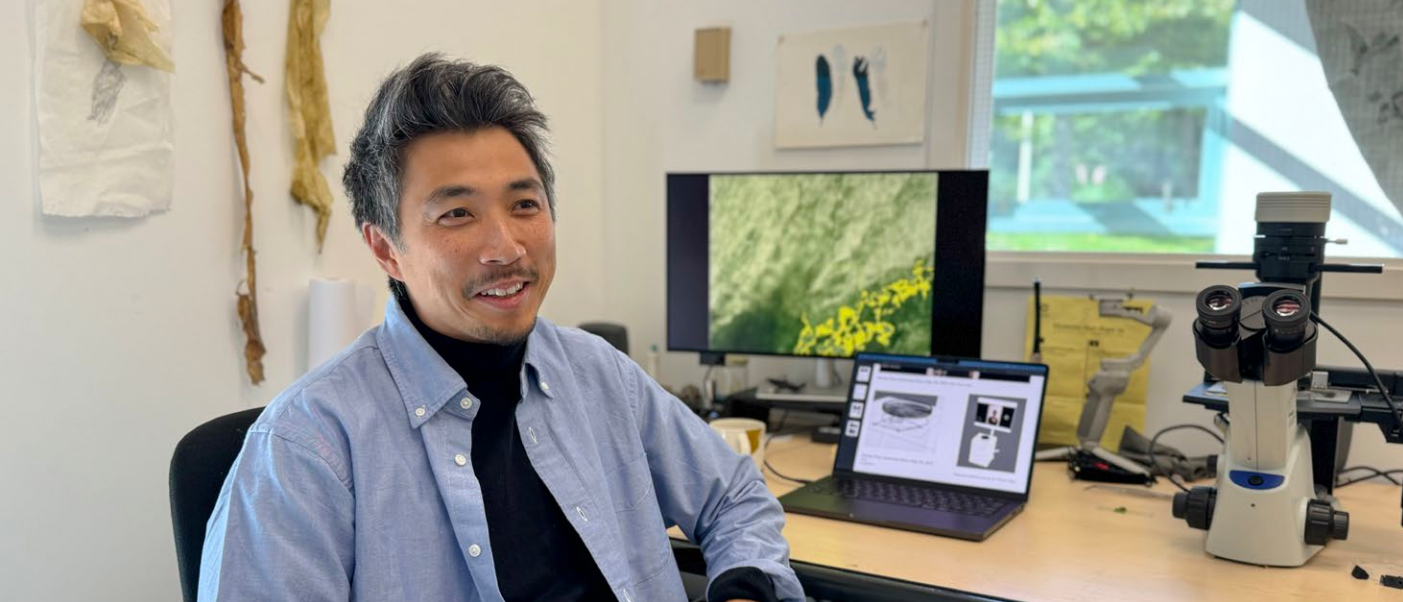
150+

Teaching &
support staff



1300+

Students



IMAGINING CREATIVE APPROACHES TO THE ENVIRONMENT

By its very definition, ArtScience is an inherently collaborative field. Integrating arts practices with scientific knowledge requires a fusing of the subjective with the objective and the emotional with the analytical, creating an exploratory community founded in research and innovation.

Nowhere is that more evident than in the work of artist-researcher Joel Ong, whose practice connects scientific and artistic approaches to the environment. A professor in UVic's Visual Arts department since July 2025, he now holds a Tier II Canada Research Chair (CRC) in Emergent Digital Art Practices.

Ong is exploring the ethical and transformative influences of emerging technologies on artistic practices, including data storytelling, virtual archiving and community-engaged research. Collaborating across disciplinary and institutional boundaries, he uses data and digital fabrication creatively to imagine futures in which species interact in new ways.

He is interested in collaborations with machines and more-than-human species — such as microbes or organic materials — while thinking about art-making as improvisation and attempting to visualize relationships between them.

"Emergent technologies hold enormous potential," he explains. "Even within the arts, there is immense variety in the definition and use of technologies . . . but these fluidities and openness to emergent media is what makes our department exciting."

That said, Ong admits there's a challenge in keeping up with new technologies. "Our students have significantly more time exploring, troubleshooting and

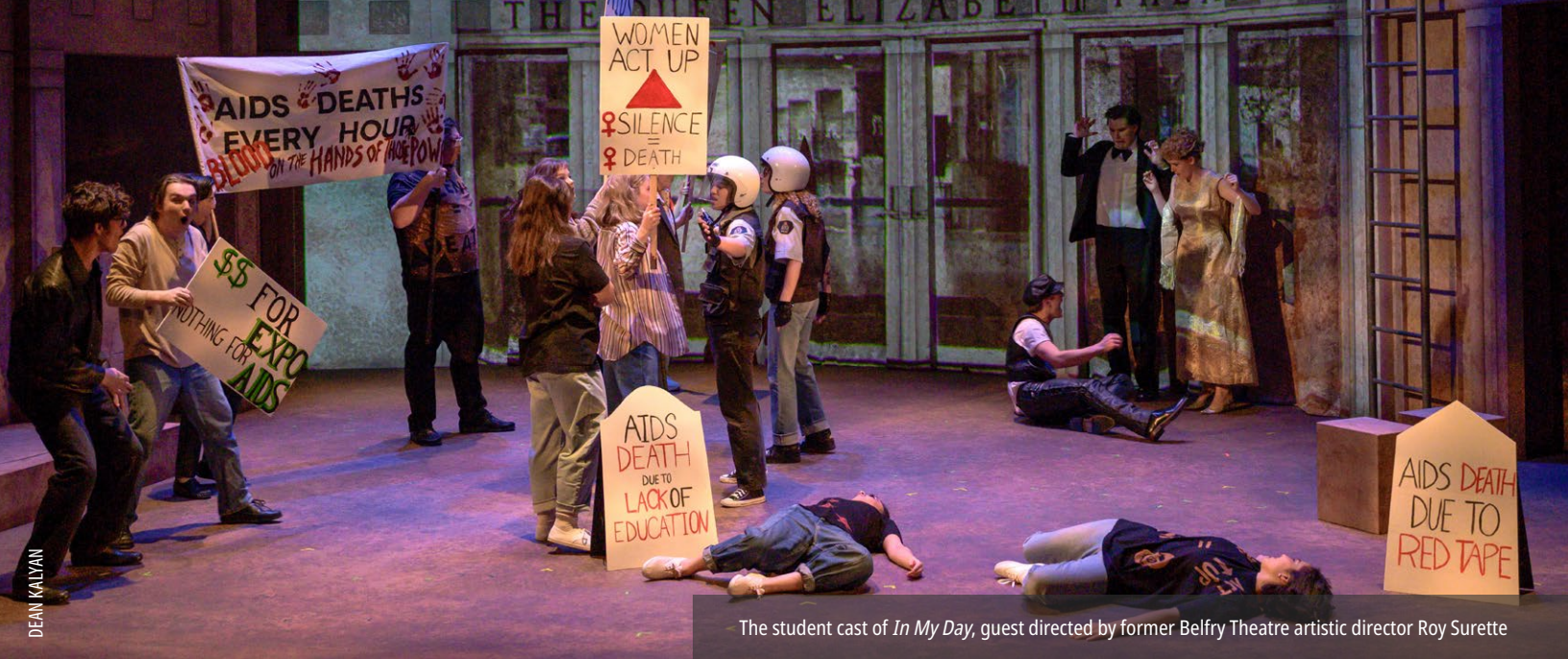
developing proficiencies in new technologies than we as instructors do," he says. The solution is to create a mutual learning process involving a combination of creative space, tools for experimentation and a self-reflexive forum to explore the positive and negative aspects of their art practices.

Even before joining Fine Arts, Ong was already engaged with SSHRC-funded interdisciplinary projects involving both the Climate Disaster Project and UVic's Ocean Networks Canada.

"Creativity at UVic is quite profoundly universal, I think largely due to our proximity to research and Indigenous teachings on the environment, and the resulting common respect we have for nature," he says. "It's hard not to be inspired when you see the abundance of colours, forms, cycles and metabolic systems around us, and pay attention to the stories and histories embedded within them."

Ong is excited to be working alongside the likes of Canada Excellence Research Chair Heather Igloliorte, Impact Chair Carey Newman and internationally recognized digital artist Kelly Richardson, among his other new colleagues in Visual Arts.

"The faculty here is uniquely productive," he says. "It's a real honour to be in this department where everyone has a pronounced commitment to research-creation and socially responsive practices. I think learning in this context is mutually sustaining — where the lines between artists and audiences, expert and amateur are blurred, and curiosity is shared. I'm very eager to learn from the well-established artists here and contribute to the growing expertise in digital arts."



The student cast of *In My Day*, guest directed by former Belfry Theatre artistic director Roy Surette

UVIC HIV/AIDS ARCHIVE FUELS NEW PLAY CREATION

Neon lights, club beats, a generation on the edge of disaster: when UVic's Phoenix Theatre staged the moving and dynamic verbatim play *In My Day* in March, it brought an essential chapter of Canadian history to life on the stage.

In My Day was both inspired by and based on the UVic oral-history research project "HIV In My Day", which was supported by UVic's School of Public Health & Social Policy, funded by the Social Sciences & Humanities Research Council and now housed in the UVic Libraries Special Collections & University Archives. Between 2017 and 2020, researchers collected sound and video interviews with long-term HIV survivors and their caregivers about their experiences living through the first 15 years of the HIV/AIDS crisis in Vancouver.

The play *In My Day* sees nearly 100 authentic voices drawn from the archival material brought to life by a cast of 19 student actors, using themes of joy, care and connection to tell the story of life in the queer community during the early days of the epidemic.

"What does performance do to both archival and oral histories, in terms of activating that material?" asks Theatre professor Sasha Kovacs, whose own SSHRC funding via the *Gatherings: Archival and Oral Histories of Performance* partnership also supported this production. "And what does it mean for a new generation of students to understand this particular moment in history, to hear these stories from those bodies and these perspectives?"

With that in mind, the show's student design team

spent time in the Museum of Vancouver's gay and lesbian archives to properly capture the period, and students also learned about the historical intersections of performance and health activism across our local 2SLGBTQIA+ communities. "We take for granted how progressive the work was in these communities at that time . . . the way they were talking about gender and sexuality was really groundbreaking," says Kovacs.

In My Day playwright Rick Waines is intimately involved with this story. A hemophiliac who was diagnosed with HIV in the 1980s at just 21, he was both one of the interviews for — and transcriber of — the original oral-history project; now, he uses the tools of narrative theatre to amplify his lived experience and challenge ongoing stigmas.

"This is a piece of memorial art," Waines says. "It's a powerful way of telling the stories of people who are no longer with us — it's a naming, like, 'Here we are, here are our stories.' Young queer folk don't always understand or know the genealogy of their history . . . You get to know some of the folks through the memories of those of us who survived."

Kovacs also sees how *In My Day* impacts the broader community: by dramatizing the oral history archive, the play provides an opportunity for students to understand how their work can serve larger goals and priorities. "Most plays and shows about HIV/AIDS focus on the American or British experience, so *In My Day* also gives us an opportunity to reflect on a more localized circumstance," she concludes.

— with files from Claudia Phillips



Students participating in an activism printing workshop with Hulleah J. Tsinhnahjinnie in March (L) & at Taqsiqtuut's weekly drop-in beading sessions

A BUSY YEAR FOR TAQSIQTUUT RESEARCH-CREATION LAB

Given the remarkable level of activity that's happened over the past year, it's hard to believe that Visual Arts professor Heather Igloliorte's Taqsiqtuut Indigenous Research-Creation Lab only opened in February 2025.

An integral part of Igloliorte's role as UVic's only Canada Excellence Research Chair in Decolonial and Transformational Indigenous Art Practices, Taqsiqtuut has been actively building community by hosting a wide range of workshops, gatherings, residencies, talks, exhibits and events, all designed to expand awareness of what Indigenous art is, was and can be. And that's on top of Igloliorte's curatorial commitments, including jurying the annual Salt Spring National Art Prize and curating Newfoundland's Bonnavista Biennale. "It's nice to see it all start to happen," says Igloliorte. "It's really been a building year for us, and we're making genuine connections."

One example is March's group exhibition *The Work Yet To Come* (seen on the cover), which offered contemporary art by eight early career local Indigenous artists, including a number of students. "Part of it is about making Taqsiqtuut feel like a home base — not just for Indigenous students, but also for allies who want to come in. And we're about to embark on two big grant-based projects, so there's a lot going on."

The first of those two Social Sciences & Humanities Research Council of Canada (SSHRC) funded projects is the \$2.5 million *Northern Indigenous Futures: Fostering Early Career Leadership and Research in the Arts*. "Not only have we been awarded the full funding for this research partnership, but we were also the number-one

ranked application," says Igloliorte. "This truly is a testament to the strength of our collaboration, and the significance and urgency of the work before us."

This spring also saw SSHRC fund the \$475,000 project *As It Melts: Northern Indigenous Artistic Perspectives on Plastics Pollution*. Co-led by Igloliorte and Western University's Kirsty Robertson, in partnership with the Inuit Art Foundation, this two-year initiative will bring together a diverse group — including Indigenous artists, Indigenous and settler scientists, plastics and arts-based researchers, students, museum professionals, community members, Elders and knowledge keepers — to create a series of new art-science collaborations while also increasing national awareness around the issue of pollution in rural, remote, Subarctic and Arctic regions.

"This will help people imagine cleaner, safer and more sustainable futures for our lands and waters," says Igloliorte. "We intend to dramatically shift both the awareness of and response to the impacts of plastic pollution on wildlife, the environment and humans in Canada."

Forefronting Indigenous knowledge and practices while also addressing environmental concerns is all part of the remarkable trajectory Fine Arts is on, notes Kirk McNally, Associate Dean of Creative Activity, Research & Administration. "This highlights UVic's commitment to Indigenous-led scholarship while creating an environment where Indigenous ways of knowing and being can thrive," he says, "as well as showing our deep engagement with the climate crisis."

EXPLORING WEATHER, ART AND THE ENVIRONMENT

Weather is one of the forces that shape our daily lives, yet we rarely think of it in terms of art. But for intermedia artist, composer and Visual Arts professor Paul Walde, it is also much more than the title of his latest exhibition, *Weather Conditions*.

With a four-month winter run at UVic's downtown Legacy Gallery, *Weather Conditions* — curated by Carolyn Butler Palmer, the Williams Legacy Chair with the Art History & Visual Studies department — featured two installations, "Of Weather (For Geoff Hendricks)" and "Tom Thomson Centennial Swim". Both reflected weather and art history in unique ways, and both connect with Walde's overall body of work, which has long explored unexpected interconnections between landscape, identity and technology — most notably in his 2013 site-specific sound performance *Requiem for a Glacier*, which featured a 55-piece choir and orchestra filmed live on the Farnham Glacier in BC's Purcell Mountains.

"As an artist, I'm interested in how cultural attitudes shape our relationship with the environment," says Walde. "I believe that culture comes from the land, where one is in the world that shapes who they are. By bringing obvious cultural activities like opera, classical music and art-handling into the natural environment, I'm essentially saying that these sites are cultural."

Walde feels art can offer information in experiential ways, including more emotional and spiritual dimensions. "Science and politics tend to tell people things but, as a professor, I've found folks really don't like to be told anything," he explains. "It's more

effective to create experiences that allow people to draw their own conclusions."

Both pieces in this exhibit also referenced the work of other artists, which Walde feels reflects how art history is happening all around us, all the time. "For me, art history is sometimes a scaffolding of ideas to build upon, and other times it's something to push back upon," he says. "For example, the work of the Group of Seven was very dominant when I was growing up in northern Ontario; as a young artist, however, their approach didn't connect with me. Since then, I've attempted to make alternative landscape art that deals with the complex issues that frame our relationship with the environment."

A highlight of this exhibit was the "image ballet" where Walde's own score — written in cloud-like shapes rather than traditional musical notes — was performed live by a string ensemble while gallery handlers moved the pictures around the space. This, he explains, acknowledges the unseen people who mobilize the international art world, and the "massive carbon footprint" connected with the now dozens of international biennials and art fairs.

"Behind the scenes at these events are armies of art-handlers who are moving, setting up and taking down the shows," he says. "By moving images of clouds around, I'm referring to how we as humans are changing the weather and are therefore responsible for it. And, on another level, because the 'image ballet' involves large canvases being moved by art handlers, I'm referring to the art world's culpability in all of this."



Walde and Visual Arts technician Carley Green installing his exhibit (L) & the "image ballet" in action at downtown's Legacy Gallery

CLIMATE RECITAL EXPLORES NORTHWEST PASSAGE

Sought for five centuries by European explorers as a sea route to China, the Northwest Passage was finally achieved by Roland Amundsen in 1906 and represented both a triumph of navigation and a shrinking of the globe. Today's situation is more ominous, with melting ice gouging unprecedented new "passages" through the Arctic, threatening ancient ways of life and signaling a global crisis.

Violist and School of Music professor Joanna Hood decided to address this crisis creatively by commissioning a new piece from American composer David A. Jaffe: the result was *Northwest Passages: Thirteen Alarms from the Arctic* — a musical soundscape that invokes the Arctic panorama and its contemporary disruption.

Specifically written for the unusual combination of 13 violas — often playing separate parts — *Northwest Passages* was performed in January at the prestigious International Viola Congress in Paris as part of a special day of music focused on environmental and climate issues.

"I'm not going to say this is a dream come true, because that sounds kind of hokey," says Hood, "but, in a way, it is, because climate change and environmental issues have always been passions of mine and to be able to bring them together with music is a perfect match."

The original commission had its world premiere at the 2024 SALT Festival at UVic, and the Paris performance featured Hood and 12 other violists —

including six Music alumni — led by conductor and fellow Music professor Ajtony Csaba.

"It's pretty thrilling to be selected to be part of this," says Hood, a longtime International Viola Congress member who has never before been able to attend the event. "This is the 50th anniversary year, so it was a very big festival with over 100 events happening across Paris."

Participating alumni violists include Julien Haynes (Vancouver Symphony), Clayton Leung (Edmonton Symphony), Calvin Yang (Prince George, Vancouver Island and Okanagan symphonies), Isabelle Rolland (Vancouver Academy, Vancouver Opera) and professional musicians Joshua Gomberoff and Andrew Loe (also a current Music student), plus members of the Victoria Symphony.

Composed in 13 diverse sections but presented as one continuous movement, the 13 distinct viola parts of *Northwest Passages* represents Jaffe's latest exploration of same-instrument orchestration: the unique timbre allows for musical texturing suggesting glacial layering, sliding, splitting, melting and deformation, while also offering a lone personal voice through solo passages.

"Music is unique in that anyone can identify with it, no matter where they're from or what their background or language is," says Hood. "So music can really play a part in bringing awareness to the climate-change issues we're dealing with on the planet, and this is a really wonderful way to support that."



School of Music professor Ajtony Csaba leads the Paris performance featuring Hood (L) & alumni



Theatre professor Kirsten Sadeghi-Yekta (R) watches students perform at Rotterdam's International Community Arts Festival

INTERNATIONAL FIELD SCHOOL INSPIRES STUDENTS

Thanks to its well-deserved reputation as an arts destination, Victoria has a big city's amount of culture tucked into a small town's space. But it's always good for students to get a more big-picture perspective, which is where international field schools come in. In March, Theatre professor Kirsten Sadeghi-Yekta took a group of students to the Netherlands to attend the 10th International Community Arts Festival (ICAF) in Rotterdam.

ICAF brought together artists from around the world who are using theatre as a tool for community building, education and social change; hundreds of participating students were then able to take part in workshops and panel talks, watch performances, build international connections and deepen their understanding of how community arts (or "applied theatre," as we describe it) is created in different cultural contexts.

"For me, it was about getting a new cultural perspective on the arts," says Anton Matsigura, one of 10 Theatre students who participated. "I was also excited to meet as many people as I possibly could to get perspective on theatre in their home countries." Fellow participant Savannah O'Heaney agrees. "I was attracted by both the idea of international travel and experiencing how different art can be in other places . . . I really wanted to see what else was out there," she explains. "This year's theme was 'space for imagination', so a lot of the workshops were about creating spaces for theatre and art to take place."

Matsigura describes ICAF as being "kind of a no-boundaries festival . . . a lot of the work really pushed artistic and political boundaries. We were there for less than 10 days, and every single moment

was just packed — there's beauty and also challenges in that, but it was a great experience." Describing it as "a bit of artistic whiplash," Matsigura says that by day four, he was "consuming so much vastly different art that it was kind of hard to let it all sink in."

As a self-funded field school, the students had to offset costs in a variety of ways, including mounting an online auction which raised about \$3,500. ("We reached out to over a hundred companies for items that we could put up for bids, and that ended up covering our entire housing accommodation," notes Matsigura.)

O'Heaney felt the experience offered her a radically different view on the practice of theatre. "Usually people get consumed with the idea of fame and celebrity, but this was more about how having an impact with your art was enough . . . it took away that toxic industry aspect of it and made it more about what the practice of art should be like."

"This trip definitely inspired me to continue seeking a different perspective in everything that I see," says Matsigura. "It may sound bizarre, but I really appreciated the Dutch directness towards their art: they didn't always make it easy for us to understand . . . it was okay to spend time figuring it all out."

Both students clearly appreciated the horizon-expanding opportunity of the field school. "It was inspiring to hear people's artistic success stories, which I honestly don't think we hear enough," says Matsigura. "Almost everyone there was practicing art as a profession in some capacity, making their life work around it. It was just nice to hear how this can all be made into a career."



NEW ASSOCIATE DEAN ROLE

While new hires are a regular part of faculty life, it's rare that we see the creation of entirely new administrative roles. One of this year's highlights was the creation of the Associate Dean Creative Activity, Research and Administration (ADCARA), held by School of Music professor Kirk McNally.

A professional sound engineer, McNally first joined Music as an assistant professor in 2006 along with the then-new Music & Computer Science program before being appointed a professor of music technology in 2016; his own research and creative work has been supported by the likes of SSHRC, the Canada Council, the Banff Centre and UVic's Learning & Teaching Centre, among others.

As our inaugural ADCARA, McNally's role focuses on a number of linked priorities, including external grants/awards support and advocacy, strategic positioning of faculty advocacy for Fine Arts via different UVic councils and committees undertaking various strategic initiatives around collaboration (on- and off-campus), and graduate student curriculum support and development of new initiatives and collaborations.

"I do a lot around representation and acknowledgment of how research is viewed and defined on campus, including creative activity and creative works . . . not everyone really understands what we do, how we do it and why it matters both on and off-campus," he says. "Not having had a role like this until now, we're playing a lot of catch-up to let people know about the amazing things we've done lately."

McNally feels this "exciting and very stimulating" new role is a logical step for him. "Recording engineers act as intermediaries between artists and their audiences — you're like a bridge between two worlds, making connections for a specific outcome. Because of that, I really value opportunities to work across units on interdisciplinary projects . . . it just feels natural to collaborate with different talent while also getting the opportunity to learn about their activities."

FUNDED RESEARCH (SELECT)

2025/26 saw \$3.46 million in grants awarded to faculty members from the Social Sciences & Humanities Research Council, the Canada Council for the Arts, the BC Arts Council, the New Frontiers in Research Fund, UVic's Research/Creative Project Grants & others

Sarah-Belle Reid (Music): UVic's RCPG for "MIGSI: Augmented Trumpet System"

Mo Bradley (Writing): BCAC Project Assistance for *Whatever Will Be*

Taylor Brook (Music): Canada Council to create, record, perform and tour new work

Megan Dickie (Visual Arts): UVic RCPG for "Fabric and Fury"

Heather Igloliorte (Visual Arts): two SSHRC grants for the projects "As It Melts" "Northern Indigenous Futures" (see page 11)

Sasha Kovaks (Theatre): a SSHRC Connection grant for "Inheritances in Transition: Rehearsing Institutional Change in Canadian Theatre and Performance"

David Leach (Writing): CEWIL 2200 iHUB General Project Stream for "STEAM Acting Out III PXR"

Kirk McNally (Music): Creative BC's Music Industry Initiatives for "Take Two: Expanding the Field of Music Production Research"

Katherine Mockler (Writing): BCAC Individual Arts Grants for "*One of These Days We'll Both Be Fine*: a flash memoir"

Carey Newman (Visual Arts) received a SSHRC New Frontiers in Research Fund Exploration grant for "Robotic Carving to Augment and Preserve Intergenerational Kwakwaka'wakw Knowledge Transfer" (see page 16)

Joel Ong (Visual Arts): NFRF Exploration for "Space Situational Awareness and Us", and SSHRC Insight for "Memory Machines: Emerging Practices in Environmental Sensing and Ecopoetics".



CAMOSUN COLLEGE


Carey Newman working with his spinning pole harness & the resulting pole *Kamtila* now standing outside POV's Baumann Studio (R)

ANCIENT PRACTICES, NEW TECHNOLOGIES

When Visual Arts and AHVS professor Carey Newman was announced in May as the recipient of new funding from the Social Sciences & Humanities Research Council of Canada (SSHRC) to develop a new robotic carving system to better preserve traditional Indigenous carving techniques, it wasn't the first time he'd been working with new technologies.

For the past 10 years, Newman and Camosun College's Camosun Innovates team have been developing the Totem 2.0 project: a spinning harness that allows him to carve a pole using 14 beams rather than a single cedar. The resulting pole — formally named "*Kamtila*: To write a new song" (above) — was installed in September 2025 outside Pacific Opera Victoria's Baumann Studios.

Newman will now be receiving \$250,000 over two years from SSHRC's New Frontiers in Research Fund and the Tri-agency Institutional Programs Secretariat (TIPS) for his project "Robotic Carving to Augment and Preserve Intergenerational Kwakwaka'wakw Knowledge Transfer." By exploring the interconnection between Indigenous knowledge, technology and art, this innovative technology will ethically embed robotics into education and creative practice while offering new ways to access, interpret, preserve and teach traditional knowledge.

"Traditionally, carving is passed down through close, hands-on mentorship, often within families or communities, but current efforts face increasing disruption due to climate change, cultural shifts, land and language loss, legacies of colonialism and

urbanization," says Newman. "This project offers new ways to enhance generational continuity and help young people engage and learn using novel digital collaboration technologies designed to protect and strengthen carving knowledge."

This interdisciplinary project will see Newman join with UVic researchers from Mechanical Engineering & Computer Science (notably professor Keivan Ahmadi), plus off-campus partners including Camosun Innovates and the Royal BC Museum, to design and build an adaptive robotic system which will operate in collaboration with a master carver to augment and preserve the intergenerational knowledge transfer of carving practices in Northwest Coast Indigenous art.

Carving is core to Pacific Northwest Indigenous Peoples' social, legal and cultural orders. From the ornamental to the utilitarian, minuscule to monumental, carvings — be they drums, masks and rattles or canoes, poles and structural support for big houses — are integrated into every aspect of coastal Indigenous life.

"This work will provide a careful, respectful approach that upholds the integrity and sovereignty of Indigenous knowledge systems while utilizing advanced computational models and processes," says Newman. "Creating a robotic carving system will allow new technologies to promote, respect and strengthen cultural resilience, as well as explore the reciprocal benefits of interdisciplinary collaboration in areas like robotic surgery and advanced manufacturing.

GUEST PROFESSORS CREATIVELY ENGAGE WITH AI

Faster than many predicted (or wanted), Generative Artificial Intelligence is upon us. It brings a mix of emotions, a shared sense of uncertainty and a persistent question of what we can and should do about technological change that feels powerful, inevitable and beyond our control.

This year, we brought in two guest professors to offer ways to define and reckon with GenAI that can help navigate controversies, intervene with integrity at different scales and explore the perils and promises of “good enough” technologies.

Presented by the Orion Series in Fine Arts plus UVic's KULA: Library Futures Academy and the Office of the Vice President Research & Innovation, visiting lecturers Mike Ananny and Philippe Pasquier held a series of workshops and guest lectures for students, faculty and staff. Topics included “Reckoning with Generative AI”, “Crafting Your Own Perspective on GenAI”, “Journalism and GenAI”, plus workshops on small data Gen-AI for artistic practices.

Mike Ananny is an associate professor of journalism and communication at the University of Southern California, where he is co-director of the AI for Media & Storytelling initiative. As such, he studies how people build digital infrastructures, algorithmic systems and artificial intelligence that create public life — and he tries to intervene to make cultures of production, regulatory initiatives and system designs better serve public interests.

“We’ve been through moments like this before, where inventors have had big ideas about what new technologies are going to do,” Ananny said during his Orion lecture in March. “In some sense, this future is ours to invent — it’s going to be a struggle and it’s not always going to be easy — but we need to push back against this idea of inevitability, that we’ve found ourselves with something that can’t be changed.”

Philippe Pasquier is a professor at Simon Fraser University's School of Interactive Arts and Technology, where he directs the Metacreation Lab for Creative AI and leads a research-creation program around generative systems for creative tasks. As such, he is a scientist specialized in artificial intelligence, a software designer, a multidisciplinary media artist, an educator and a community builder.

“The rise of AI generates hopes, fears and angst,” says Pasquier. “You can think about AI as a way of simplifying a complex task: before the calculator and the modern computer, only our brains could accomplish these kind of operations. But we don’t think of calculators and computers as being amazing anymore . . . these kind of automations just mean we’ve moved forward as a society.”

This series of free workshops offered alternative approaches to using large-scale corporate platforms trained on massive, opaque datasets. By focusing on small-data, artist-centered methodologies that emphasize control, transparency and cultural specificity, participants learned to work with their own datasets, gaining creative autonomy while learning ethical and technically accessible AI workflows grounded in personal and situated artistic practice.

Pasquier’s workshops specifically looked at Autolumé software, a visual AI system developed at SFU’s Metacreation Lab designed to redefine authorship, cultural specificity and artistic agency in AI. Ananny helped participants understand when to use — or refuse — Generative AI in their practice, and how to describe themselves and their work in relation to synthetic media. All were well-attended and attracted students and colleagues from across campus to discover more about the challenges, and opportunities, presented by Generative AI.

You can watch both talks on Youtube @UVicFineArts



Mike Ananny (L) & Philippe Pasquier lead AI workshops



SHAY BALL

Graduate student Justin Swanson in *Dido and Aeneas*, presented by the Voice Ensemble & BOMP Baroque Collegium, directed by professors Benjamin Butterfield & Joanna Hood + Early Music Vancouver's Chloe Meyers

AWARDS

Carmen Alatorre (Theatre) won a Jessie Richardson Award for "Outstanding Costume Design" for *Two Gentlemen of Verona* at Bard on the Beach. Crookes Professor Sean Holman (Writing) received the 2025 Bill Good Award and his Climate Disaster Project-led live play *Eyes of the Beast* won Silver at both the 2025 Anthem Awards and Canadian Association of Journalists Awards. The "Totem 2.0" project by Carey Newman (Visual Arts/AHVS) and Camosun Innovates won a 2026 Land Awards for "Land Use & Innovation". Ambreen Shehzad Hussaini (AHVS PhD) won UVic's Andy Farquharson Teaching Excellence Awards for Graduate Students, and this year's Fine Arts Teaching Excellence Award winners are Laura Dutton (Visual Arts) and Michael Reed (AHVS).

Music students had a strong year for awards, including the string chamber music ensemble Controlled Demolition, who won first prize in the Federation of Canadian Music National Festival, and Carey Wang, who also won first as Emerging Artist at the same festival. The King Rosie Quartet won the 2026 Vancouver Friends of Chamber Music Chamber Competition; this year's Concerto Competition winners were Tamsyn Klazek-Schryer, Olivia Pryce-Digby and Ethan Page; and Masters candidate Samantha Fullerton won the Annamaria Bamji Award for Emerging Artists from Pacific Opera Victoria.

On the alumni front, Tania Willard (Visual Arts, Distinguished Alumni) won the national \$100,000 Sobey Art Award, while Fine Arts Development Officer Sydney Hunt won the Annamaria Bamji Award for Emerging Playwrights from the Belfry Theatre, and Mark Leiren-Young (Writing/Theatre) was among the 2026 Forest of Reading's award winners. It's also been a strong year for alumni from our Writing MFA program: Melanie Siebert won the inaugural DC

Reid Poetry Prize at the City of Victoria Book Prizes; Adrienne Wong picked up \$10,000 as a Siminovitch Prize finalist and graduated with UVic's Lt. Governor's Silver Medal; Stephanie Harrington won the *Malahat Review's* 2026 Open Season Award (CNF); Martin Bauman won the Margaret & John Savage First Book Award; and Scott Amos and his team at Monkey C Interactive's downtown Artcade was named one of *Douglas* magazine's "10 to Watch" winners.

INTERNATIONAL

Visual Arts professor Joel Ong presented new work at a Canadian Cultural Centre group show in Paris, chaired panels at SIGGRAPH Asia in Hong Kong, exhibited at the 18th Triennial on Arts & Technology in Connecticut and was part of the 2026 Asia Digital Art Exhibition in Beijing. Kelly Richardson had two UK openings at the Expo Sunderland Pavilion and London's BLEUR Gallery, as well as work in a group exhibition at England's Northern Gallery for Contemporary Art. Carey Newman unveiled his Brost Foundation commissioned sculpture, "WHAT REMAINS?", created with contemporary artist Marcus Kiel in Germany.

School of Music professor Lauren McCall is the sound designer and composer for the Graham Shelor Dance Company based in Atlanta; Joanna Hood took her commissioned work *Northwest Passages* to the International Viola Congress in Paris; Anthony Tan had a new piece performed by musical group Bricolage in Oslo; Merrie Klazek was guest faculty for both the Jeju International Festival in Korea and the MasPalomas International Trumpet Festival in the Canary Islands; and Virginia Acuña presented a paper at the Sixth Biennial Transnational Opera Studies Conference at the University of Cambridge.

In AHVS, professor Dennine Dudley spoke to the School of Arts at China's Yunnan University; Erin

Campbell presented at the Renaissance Society of America conference in San Francisco; Mique'l Dangeli did the choreography for the Canada/Greenland/Norway Northern Lights performance *Kiuryaq*, seen at the PuSh Festival; and Allan Antliff was a keynote speaker for Vectors 2026 with the Moscow School of Art and Economics.

After a very successful two-month run in Toronto, Writing instructor (and alumnus) Mark Leiren-Young saw his hit show, *Playing Shylock*, move to Off-Broadway in New York City, where it ran for an additional six weeks.

NATIONAL

In Music, Patrick Boyle performed in Calgary, Anthony Tan had a composition performed in Toronto, and Arthur Rowe offered his final concert as artistic director of the Jeffery Concerts series in London. Benjamin Butterfield sang the *Messiah* at Ottawa's National Arts Centre, with the Hamilton Philharmonic Orchestra and appeared at the Off Centre Music Salon series in Toronto. Marion Newman sang with the Grand Philharmonic Choir in Kitchener, performed at the premiere screening of the concert film *The Road to Hasalala Danxalax* in Vancouver, and had the lead role in the Kent Monkman/Dustin Peters opera workshop *The Miss Chief Cycle* in Montreal.

Theatre's Carmen Alatorre designed costumes for both Vancouver's Electric Company Theatre and Bard on the Beach; Kirsten Sadeghi-Yekta and Indigenous PhD student Tara Thorne offered their performance *OPENING* at UBC and Douglas College; Development Officer (and Theatre alum) Sydney Hunt was in the cast of *Climate Play* at Whitehorse's Awaken Festival; and Sasha Kovacs led the 50th anniversary conference of the Canadian Association for Theatre Research at the Phoenix in May.

In AHVS, Erin Campbell organized a panel on AI for the Universities Art Association of Canada conference in Toronto (chaired by Catherine Harding), and Mique'l Dangeli and Lindsay Delaronde (Visual

Arts) created a new piece for Vancouver's Talking Stick Festival. In Visual Arts, Kelly Richardson's IMAX short film *Embers and the Giants* screened in Edmonton and Heather Igloliorte curated Newfoundland's fifth Bonavista Biennale and was one of four jurors for the Salt Spring National Art Prize.

Writing's Shane Book was the featured reader with *Portal Magazine* in Nanaimo; Wayde Compton offered the fourth annual Phyllis Webb Memorial Reading at SFU; Mark Leiren-Young participated in Vancouver's 25th anniversary Chutzpah! Festival. Gregory Scofield hosted an emerging Indigenous writer's workshop in Vancouver and made the news with the announcement that the Manitoba Métis Federation had acquired his 142-piece collection of Métis history artifacts.

PUBLICATIONS

In Writing, UK's *The Guardian* newspaper ran a series of Climate Disaster Project testimonials as part of the COP30 climate summit — five of which were taken by undergraduates Raamin Hamid, Ashley Ciambrelli and Fernanda Solorza. Mark Leiren-Young released a new book, *Greener Than Thou: Surviving the Toxic Sludge of Canadian Ecopolitics*, plus the youth science book *Octopus Ocean*, as did Neil Griffin with his *Bat Planet*. The documentary *Aisha's Story*, co-directed by Chen Wang and Elizabeth Vibert (History) won audience favourite awards at Hot Docs 2025 and DOXA 2025. Instructor and MFA alumna Yasuko Thanh worked with author Hassan Kanafani to shape for publication the stories in *Pizza Before We Die: An Eyewitness Account in Gaza*.

In addition to being the editor of *Anarchist Developments in Cultural Studies* Allan Antliff (AHVS) published an article on Italian artist Gianluca Costantini in *Anarchist Studies*; Mitch Parry (AHVS), released the chapbook *Red Bowls*; Virginia Acuña (Music) published "Minerva, the Queen and the Grandees of Spain" in the *Cambridge Opera Journal*; poetry by Katherine Mockler (Writing) appears in the new anthology *On Occasion: Poems for the People*; and Suzanne Snizek (Music) released the album *Music of Resilience*.



Carmen Alatorre's award-winning design for *Two Gentlemen of Verona*



Marion Newman (R) in Kent Monkman's *The Miss Chief Cycle*

Surviving the Toxic Sludge of Canadian Ecopolitics

Greener Than Thou



Mark Leiren-Young



Teaching Award winner Ambreen Shehzad Hussaini at convocation



Heng Wu leading her "Confronting the Object" AHVS class

AGGV CURATOR BRINGS EXPERIENCE TO THE CLASSROOM

Art History & Visual Studies students once again had the unique opportunity this year to learn from professional art curator and adjunct assistant professor Dr. Heng Wu.

Currently the Curator of Asian Art at the Art Gallery of Greater Victoria (AGGV), Wu oversees one of the premier Asian art collections in North America and the finest in Western Canada. Her teaching practice focuses on museum research, curation and Asian art. She places great importance on applying the experiences gained from museum work to her research and teaching, while simultaneously incorporating her research findings and thoughts back into her practical work.

Wu's course — "Confronting the Object" — brings real-world curatorial insights and experience into the classroom, showing students the professional side of museum work. "The course title may be 'Confronting the Object' but 'confronting' doesn't mean to argue," she explains. "I just want students to understand that objects are not neutral at all."

Objects are central to this course since Wu believes that

they are at the centre of museums and curatorial practice. "Behind any museum object is a series of decisions, and every decision is made with thoughtful, professional thinking," she says. "This is why I put objects as the centre of this course . . . looking at objects, describing objects, cataloging objects, handling objects: everything in this course is about objects."

Wu explains how she structured the course to reflect real curatorial work, since she thinks it's the best way for students to learn. "I want them to at least have a better understanding of museum work," she says. To accomplish this, Wu frequently brings actual museum pieces and objects from UVic's own 18,000+ art collection into the classroom and gives students real cataloging sheets to fill out, replicating the process of a professional curator.

"Every time I bring real objects from museum collections to the classroom and let students work with them, I can see their excitement," she says. "I think it's great."

Engaging with museums itself is also key to this course. Wu took her students out of the classroom three times



AHVS students engage with the local curatorial community behind the scenes at the Royal BC Museum (above) & the Art Gallery of Greater Victoria (below), contributing to a greater understanding of object handling, acquisitional practices & display techniques

over the semester to visit local art galleries and museums, letting them get firsthand experience in a these settings and ask questions of working professionals. "It's great experience for them. If you're only studying by reading textbooks, you don't really have a sense of the real world."

Throughout the semester, Wu found her two positions — curator and professor — to be the perfect mix. She explains how she'd bring current museum decisions from the AGGV into the classroom for discussion. "[They] let me know what they like or don't like, or what changes they want to see. I learn a lot from students, so I think this is perfect. I like the combination." This also gives students the chance to understand what challenges curators face and let them join the conversation.

"I feel really fortunate to have the chance to step into two fields," Wu continues. "I have felt inspired by the students and their responses to the objects many times. I enjoy teaching a lot!"

—Claudia Phillips



SCENES FROM A YEAR

1



4



5



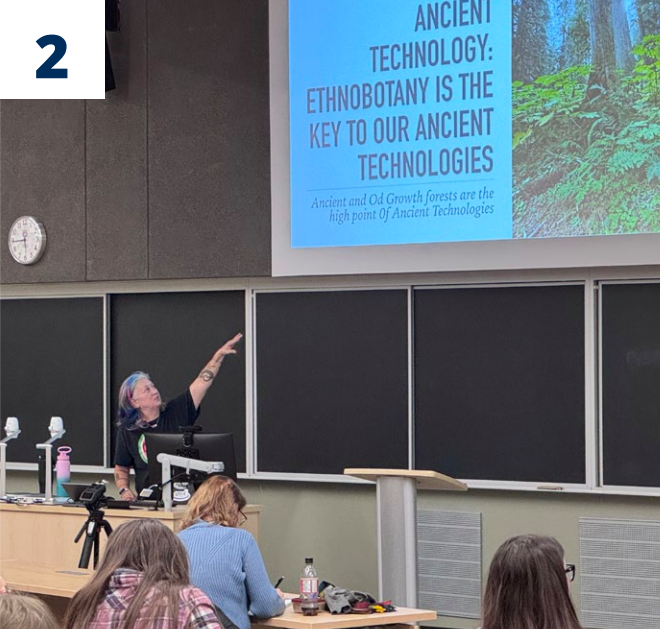
8



9



2



3



JOHN ROBERTS

6



7



KRISTY FARKAS

10



1. Anthony Tan (Music) performs at Music's inaugural Sounding Grounds festival
2. Artist T'uy'tanat-Cease Wyss was our 2026 Lehan Lecturer in Activism & the Arts
3. Mique'l Dangeli (AHVS) & her Git Hayetsk dancers created new regalia in our Taqsiqtuut Indigenous Research-Creation Lab then danced it to life on campus
4. AHVS grad students Farzaneh Moallef (L), Angela Osuporu & Ashna Kulshreshtha present at the 2025 Company of Ideas forum at the Jeffrey Rubinoff Sculpture Park
5. Noted Writing alumni Richard Van Camp (L) & Esi Edugyan at UVic's KULA launch
6. Acting President Qwul'sih'yah'maht Robina Thomas speaks at the *Haa huupa* talk series, organized by Fine Arts Indigenous Resurgence Coordinator Karla Point
7. Retiring piano tuner Jim Anderson has kept us pitch-perfect as an All-Steinway School
8. Kelly Richardson (Visual Arts) at the local debut of her IMAX film *Embers & the Giants*
9. Gregory Scofield (Writing) speaks with award-winning poet & UVic grad Karen Solie
10. Grad student Parvin Hasani (Visual Arts) explores deep-sea hydrothermal vents as 2025's ArtScience Fellow with Ocean Networks Canada

MUSICAL EXCELLENCE

During the five years of her Bachelor of Music study, award-winning performance major Nadia Lurie was busy both on-stage and off. In addition to her classes, Nadia took private lessons, engaged with mentorship programs, taught children's musical theatre, appeared with Pacific Opera Victoria and did a series of opera intensives in Salzburg, Sicily, Quebec and Edmonton.

Standout memories include singing in *Mansfield Park* with Nuova Vocal Arts (below) and with the UVic Chamber Singers at the Sicily International Voice Festival in July 2025. "That was a beautiful week of singing in gorgeous Baroque churches, delicious food and bonding over the experience of living in a working convent . . . with no air conditioning."

She also cites singing in Pacific Opera Victoria's chorus and winning POV's Annamaria Bamji Award for Emerging Opera Singers as professional highlights. "To be able to immerse myself in the professional world of opera and apply what I was studying at school to the work I was doing on stage was so inspiring."

Now off to Manchester's Royal Northern College of Music to start her Masters, Nadia gives special mention to voice teacher Anne Grimm. "Singing can feel so vulnerable but, for all her students, Anne creates an environment that inspires confidence on and off stage."

CREATING A MAGAZINE

What began as a seed project for the Art History & Visual Studies Student Association has now blossomed into a full-blown magazine, thanks to the efforts of AHVS student Defne Adyn. The first issue of her *Mouseion* magazine looks at the past, present and future of Victoria's arts community, showcasing working artists and emerging art spaces. "What better way to bring people together than to create an art platform?" she asks. "I've learned a lot from this experience."

The inspiration for *Mouseion* — an ancient Greek word referring to the space for inspiration and contemplation of the Muses — came in Defne's third year of study, when she noticed a disconnect between the many artists, musicians and poets she'd met in Victoria. "I wanted to create a project that would bring people together, give a platform to artists and make people aware of the cultural vibrancy of our city."

The 60-page magazine offered stories by faculty and students, edited and designed by Defne in our own computer lab (using industry standard InDesign software), and was launched — and sold out — at a downtown event in collaboration with local music producers Analog Burnout.

"Defne is one of those rare individuals who not only possess a deep passion for the arts, but who also understand how creative work can foster connection and build community," notes AHVS professor Eva Baboula. "Her dedication and enthusiasm is contagious."



STUDENT IMPACT AWARDS

Our fifth annual Fine Arts Student Community Impact Awards saw two student winners this year — Sophie Hillstrom (Music) and Sage Easton-Levy (Theatre) — each of whom received \$1,000 for their work with local community organizations, with the awards presented as part of the annual Greater Victoria Regional Arts Awards gala in November.

“The recipients of these awards are definitely talents to watch,” says Dean Allana Lindgren. “Over the past five years, it’s been exciting for us to see previous winners further their creative achievements locally, with some continuing their artistic development as graduate students farther afield.”

“I’m incredibly appreciative and excited by this opportunity,” says Sage, who won for her work as artistic director, choreographer and costume designer of the Sooke Youth Theatre Company. “This award is not only financially helpful as a student but speaks to the recognition that art and theatre are important and beneficial to communities as a whole.”

“Winning one of the Student Impact Awards is a great honour,” says Sophie, who won for her role as student director of the Early Music Society of the Islands. “I always enjoyed being an active member of the arts community in Victoria and never expected to be recognized for it . . . I’m incredibly grateful to all who have contributed and made it possible for me to win this award.”

Thanks to donor generosity, these awards have seen over \$15,000 given to 13 Fine Arts students since 2021.

OUTSTANDING ACHIEVEMENT

Each year, Fine Arts presents the Victoria Medal to the student with the highest grade-point average: in 2026 that accolade went to Caitlin Pierce (Writing), who graduates with a BFA and a perfect score of 9.0!

“This medal is a much-deserved and wonderful validation of all that Caitlin accomplished as an undergrad,” says Writing Chair Lee Henderson. “She has a wild imagination, a storytelling talent that is truly remarkable and her writing is unmistakable for its originality and depth.”

While Pierce excelled in her Writing courses, she also diversified her academic portfolio by taking electives in health, philosophy, visual arts and art history, reflecting her rich and thoughtful approach to life. In fact, this is her second UVic degree, having already earned a Bachelor of Science in Biopsychology back in 2017. A working phlebotomist with Island Health since 2019, she returned to UVic in 2022 after taking a Continuing Studies course in memoir writing.

“I figured now that I have a career to fall back on, it was time to chase my dreams,” she says. “I think that’s the difference between this and my first degree: I’ve really, really enjoyed this one and it felt like what I was supposed to be doing.”

Describing her as both a heartfelt, caring writer and a supportive, highly regarded member of UVic’s writing community, Henderson notes that Caitlin has consistently been a strong and passionate advocate for her peers: she always seeks to uplift, in both her writing and her community relations.



Dean Allana Lindgren with Sophie Hillstrom (L) & Sage Easton-Levy

CONDUCTING SUCCESS

It's been a busy year for Masters of Music student Taylor Takach: in addition to his studies with School of Music professor Steven Capaldo, he's been leading UVic's Concert Band, stepping in as conductor with the UVic Wind Symphony and participating in the annual Music Discoveries middle-school music education event.

An international music educator for the past 12 years, Takach has taught music at all grade levels in Canada and overseas. After receiving both his Bachelors of Music and Education from Ontario's Western University, he served as a school administrator in China during COVID-19, as well as the chair of International Music, Art and Drama Shenzhen (2022-2025): this non-profit organization of arts teachers and students represents accredited international organizations in the Council of International Schools and Western Association of Schools and Colleges.

During his first-year graduate recital in March, Takach selected two pieces to conduct with a small ensemble: contemporary composer Giovanni Santos' 2020 piece "Miniatures", which includes 10 short works, followed by Mozart's beloved 1784 "Serenade No. 10 Gran Partita", which he describes as "one of the masterpieces" of wind repertoire.

"Even for its time, this work featured unusual instrumentation — the requirement of 13 players is larger than Mozart's usual quintet or octet — and it is also unusually long," he notes.

THINKING CINEMATICALY

A PhD student in Art History & Visual Studies, Amy Anderson also holds the Jeffrey Rubinoff Scholar in Art as a Source of Knowledge Fellowship. No stranger to campus, Anderson was the programmer for UVic's legendary Cinecenta repertory theatre before getting her MA in Cinema Studies at the University of Toronto — and movies are still her passion.

"In my doctoral research, I examine how moving images continually influence our lived relationship to time," she explains. "Cinema is, at its heart, a medium of time, since its signature illusion of lifelike movement is created by displaying a collection of still images or pixels in a process of successive duration."

Her research draws upon previous film and media scholarship, exploring the unique way human bodies temporalize digital moving images in virtual mediums — specifically on films captured in 19th-century Canada. But it was Cinecenta that helped inform her *Conversation Canada* essay, "How *The Rocky Horror Picture Show* Reveals the Magic of Cult Cinema", which has been republished 15 times since October 2025.

"Cult cinema poses an intriguing paradox with regards to time," she writes. "At cinemas, we typically aspire to give films our undivided attention. We derive meaning — and hopefully, pleasure — through a concentrated and cohesive understanding of what is occurring on the screen . . . Perhaps the magic of cult cinema is formed where these two temporal frequencies meet: when *Rocky Horror's* cinematic time occurs in tandem with the delightful unpredictability of a live audience."



SHAY BALL

UVIC PHOTO SERVICES



WORDS OF POWER

A Haitian-Canadian poet, educator and community leader whose work bridges literature, social justice and community empowerment, Junie Désil is currently pursuing her Masters in Writing. A UBC alum and Dorothy Livesay Poetry Prize shortlister, Désil is also a graduate of Simon Fraser University's Writer's Studio, where she still serves as a poetry mentor and teaches in their Leadership Essentials Certificate program.

Over the past two decades, she has worked to uplift communities made vulnerable by structural inequities. From frontline support to executive leadership, she has held diverse roles in Vancouver's Downtown Eastside, advocating with and for women living and working in the neighbourhood.

Désil's second poetry collection was released in 2025: *allostatic load* (Talonbooks) is an exploration of Black identity, resistance and survival during our current tumultuous decade. Moving between diaristic intimacy and news reportage, *allostatic load* invites readers to navigate deep healing in a world that does not wish us well, that is inflamed and consequently inflames us, and where true restoration and health must co-occur with the planet and with each other.

Her poetry has appeared in *Room Magazine*, *PRISM International*, *The Capilano Review* and on Vancouver buses as part of the long-running Poetry in Transit series, and she continues to perform at numerous literary events and festivals — including a keynote Black History Month conversation in February with Writing professor Wayne Compton (below) for the BC Black History Awareness Society.

DIRECTING WITH PASSION

Originally from California but with the last 17 years spent in New York City, Sophia Treanor is a director, performer and educator working on her MFA in Theatre with a focus on directing — skills she brought to bear when she helmed February's mainstage show *A Sudden Violent Burst of Rain*, which also served as her thesis project. A bold and haunting piece of magical realism that confronts the systems shaping our lives today, Treanor describes the 2022 play as "a searing look into what the experience of an undocumented person is like."

"I found it really captivating and politically a very important story to bring forward," she says, noting the continuing issue of the US Immigration & Customs Enforcement raids. "ICE offers horrifying theatrics of terror . . . at this point, there's so much devastation, it's hard to wrap our minds around it."

A Sudden Violent Burst of Rain — written by British Palestinian playwright Sami Ibrahim following his own father's immigration journey — offers a haunting tale intertwining reality with myth. "Being inside of a situation, day in and day out, having to make something of your own experience of your life, is quite a heroic act on its own," she says.

Treanor was particularly excited by the scale of her Phoenix Theatre production. "It's like I got to experience my imagination expanding," she says, noting how she expanded the cast from three to 12. "My favourite thing about the performing arts is when something becomes much bigger than one person, and I'm really experiencing that in this process."



VISUAL ARTS PARTNERS IN NEW DOWNTOWN STUDIO

Much like our School of Music and Department of Theatre, UVic's Visual Arts department offers a unique, purpose-built facility designed with the needs of artists in mind. Yet the past few years of rapid growth has seen Visual Arts stretching to make room for new technological and creative needs, as well as space for Heather Igloliorte and her Taqsiqtuut Indigenous Research Creation Lab — part of her position as the Canada Excellence Research Chair in Decolonial & Transformational Indigenous Art Practices — and now Joel Ong, Canada Research Chair in Emergent Digital Art Practices.

A creative solution to these space requirements was found this year when Visual Arts became part of Victoria's newest collective studio and gallery space: The Hourglass. Developed by the non-profit Vancouver Island Visual Arts Society (VIVAS, who also run downtown's Rockslide Studio & Gallery) — with support from the City of Victoria's Storefront Activation Program — Hourglass is housed in an 8,500 square-foot former car dealership, now repurposed to house 18 private art studios and a central exhibition space. Among those spaces are dedicated studios for both Igloliorte and Ong, plus three graduate students, as well as a small project area to share work by Visual Arts students, instructors and community members.

"Having studio and presentation space at the Hourglass studios gives us a place to create and a place to connect," says Visual Arts chair Megan Dickie. "We're excited to build stronger ties with

the Victoria arts community and to see MFA students working alongside our new faculty."

Just as directors need a stage and scientists need a lab, professional artists need a dedicated studio to support their work. "Access to studio space is essential to a successful artistic practice, whether you're an established artist-researcher or an emerging one," says Dickie. "That's true for new faculty members like Heather and Joel, and it's just as true for our MFA cohort."

A non-profit organization committed to expanding Victoria's dwindling supply of art studios and exhibition spaces, VIVAS found great success with downtown's BC Power Commission Building: this 1949 Art Deco gem was transformed from a vacant derelict into the Rockslide, an 85-artist studio and gallery in 2022. But like so many arts spaces in Victoria — including Rockslide itself — the Hourglass location is destined to be short-lived, as the property is slated for redevelopment into a 21-storey mixed-use tower over the next few years. But until then, it will serve as the city's latest innovative arts space.

Hourglass has already hosted a pair of UVic exhibits: *The Work Yet To Come*, a group exhibition of eight early career contemporary Indigenous artists — including a mix of students and community members (see cover photo) — and *Passage*, an exhibition of work by 11 current and graduating MFA students, featuring diverse work across multiple mediums including sound, painting, sculpture, installation and fibre.



The Hourglass (above), where visitors examine work by MFA Moozhan Ahmadzadegan (R)





Project partners (from left) Chrystal Phan, Maria Metaphor Specht, Amanda Farrell-Low, Stephanie Harrington & Laura Dutton; exhibit visitors watch Dutton's installation (R)

COMMUNITY ART PROJECT ADDRESSES OVERDOSE CRISIS

April 14, 2026, marked the 10-year anniversary of BC's toxic drug crisis being declared a public health emergency. To honour those lost, the community art project *Naming A Crisis* was co-organized by Writing MFA alumna Stephanie Harrington and Amanda Farrell-Low, communications officer for UVic's Canadian Institute for Substance Use Research — both of whom have lost siblings to the drug crisis.

For the month of April, Harrington and Farrell-Low partnered with the Victoria Arts Council and a number of artists and community groups — including Moms Stop the Harm, heART Space, Solid Outreach, AVI Health, QomQem, and CISUR — to mount *Naming A Crisis* as a way to both honour the lives lost to toxic drugs and to show the scale of the crisis. "The strength of the show was that it really drew on people from the community with different skill sets," says Harrington. "This was a huge team effort, and it wouldn't have been possible without the various people in the show taking part."

An award-winning writer and communications officer with UVic's Faculty of Health, Harrington was happily surprised to find herself in the position of co-curator of such an emotional exhibition. "There's still so much stigma and shame about this issue, and I know my brother felt that for sure," she says about losing her brother, Ian, to an overdose. "I just want to push back against all the stigma and the silence."

With over 1,300 visitors over the 20-day run, part of the exhibition's success was their unique combination of art and events: as well as photos, workshops, guest speakers and Naloxone training sessions, a key part of the exhibit was a three-channel audio and visual

installation by Visual Arts MFA alumna and instructor Laura Dutton. While three screens looped 750 photos of people lost to toxic drugs, Dutton's voice could be heard speaking each name: many visitors sat and waited for over 45 minutes just to catch a glimpse of their loved one.

Dutton regularly works with photography and video, but hadn't created art on a topic like this before and found the process quite heart-wrenching. "It was really, really emotional going through all these images of these beautiful people because I also felt for the person behind the camera," she explains. "You could really feel the magnitude of the loss."

Ultimately, the exhibition was both an emotional and educational space, with visitors walking away with a new understanding of the issues. "Art offers another way to think and another way for people to engage through experiences," says Dutton.

Harrington agrees that art can reach people on a different level than facts alone. "There are so many ways you can connect with the issue, and I think that was one of the strong points of the show," she says. "I was amazed at how many people came through and the amount of time they spent here."

Looking ahead, the hope is that *Naming A Crisis* will continue to grow, offering other communities a place to grieve or learn new information. "There was a lot of gratitude for what we were doing: people left comments about how moving the exhibit was, calling it profound and powerful," Harrington says. "We're not done yet, not with this issue."

—Claudia Phillips



EEMAN MASOOD'S MONUMENTAL MOMENT IN NYC

New York City's "Midnight Moment" is the world's largest and longest-running digital public art program. Since 2012, over 100 contemporary artists have presented their work to millions of viewers on one of the most iconic public canvases: the electronic billboards of Times Square. For three minutes nightly and 364 nights a year (except for New Year's Eve), the ads on 95+ screens are dimmed and art takes over.

In February 2026, Visual Arts alumna Eeman Masood saw her MFA thesis project transform Times Square from one of the world's most technological and chaotic boulevards into a poetic, immersive experience exploring the emotional and spiritual connections between solitude and ecological awareness. Titled *There is a voice that doesn't use words, Listen*, her hand-painted animation asked viewers to reflect on the silent languages of nature and the endurance of the natural world. She describes seeing people literally stop and listen, as the title encourages, as truly a "magical moment."

"I feel very grateful to have had this opportunity," says Masood. "My work features the banyan tree, under which many gatherings and discussions used to take place. Bringing that tree to the busiest street in the world and projecting it above people kind of recreated the same sense of gathering — but in a very different way. I would go there every midnight to quietly stand among the audience and it was so moving to see people stop, sometimes filming at first, but then pausing and just absorbing the work fully."

As her thesis project, *Listen* combined environmental concern about the endangered banyan tree with spiritual elements inspired by mystic Sufi poet, Rumi.

Born in Pakistan, Masood came to UVic to pursue her MFA on a fully funded scholarship and then earned several notable awards, including the Elizabeth Greenshields Foundation Grant, the Jeffrey Rubinoff Graduate Scholarship, the Jessie Allan Forsyth Scholarship and the Canwest Global Scholarship in Video Arts.

"As an international student, it's very challenging to manage living expenses while producing work and investing in materials," she says. "These awards gave me financial relief, allowing me to focus on my creative practice without constant stress. I honestly couldn't have completed my projects without this support." She particularly credits supervising professor Kelly Richardson and the extensive facilities in Visual Arts as being "crucial" to her creative growth. "When I arrived here, I hadn't imagined moving from painting into animation, and much of that transition happened because of Kelly's encouragement and support. She always pushed me to do better, and her own work was a constant inspiration."

Masood plans to continue exploring animation and painting, expanding the worlds she's been building in her work. "It's an exciting time to experiment, take risks and grow my practice!"



Eeman Masood in New York City



FILMMAKER LYANA PATRICK FIGHTS THE GOOD FIGHT

These days, double alumna Lyana Patrick is a picture of success in multiple arenas. She's a lauded Simon Fraser University professor specializing in issues surrounding Indigenous health and justice. But she's also an award-winning filmmaker whose new documentary, *Nechako: It Will Be a Big River Again*, lit up screens across the country this year — including being the opening night of Toronto's Planet in Focus environmental film fest and Vancouver's DOXA fest.

But Patrick was once also a young journalism student struggling to land a UVic co-op position. "I couldn't get a job to save my life," she laughs. "I was very shy and nervous and interviewed terribly."

Patrick is a member of BC's Stl'at'en First Nation, near Fraser Lake, but mostly grew up in Vanderhoof. She was drawn to UVic because of the Writing department's co-op program. "At the time, you could still get a job at a community newspaper, so my dream was to be a journalist."

But, unable to secure that particular co-op placement, she fell back on her writing skills and secured a different position with the *Native Voice* — an acclaimed Indigenous newspaper. During that time, she wrote about the Kenney Dam and the efforts of the Aluminum Company of Canada (Alcan) to divert the Nechako River for the benefit of its aluminum smelter . . . at the cost of both Stl'at'en and Saik'uz nations.

Patrick went on to earn a BA double-majoring in Creative Writing and History in 1997 and later an MA in Indigenous Governance in 2004. Now, 30 years after that article, she returned to the topic of the multi-generational legal struggle to create her feature-length documentary, *Nechako*.

"For me, the most important thing is hearing voices that haven't been heard and telling stories that people want to tell," she says. "Those are my motivating factors in everything I do, and that's pretty much what *Nechako* was about — understanding what the community's priorities were, talking about the court case, showing that we're still here on these lands, living with love and strength."

The film is rooted in Patrick's experiences of resilience and adaptation, with her father — a former Stl'at'en chief — also featured in the documentary. *Nechako* follows both the flow of the river and the community's ongoing fight to restore their way of life amidst large-scale environmental destruction and corporate rule.

"There's an expectation of understanding and engaging with this Western system, on top of knowing your own traditions and cultures and histories," she says. "It's really hard work and I just wanted to show that kind of love and care and attention that I was fortunate to witness as I made this film."

While the story of *Nechako* is personal to her, it's also universal in the environmental and legal struggles it represents. "We're doing this for everybody, because we all impact each other," she says. "The whole idea is a holistic perspective of interconnectedness — that's the message most First Nations are trying to convey — and I feel like we're contributing to that."

She's also pleased that the documentary is being so well received. "It's had an excellent reception, especially from people who don't know anything about this story. It's been really affirming to discover that this is a story people want to know more about and are motivated to do something about."



Crookes Professor Sean Holman wins a Webster Award (L), Writing student Raamin Hamid & her *Guardian* story

CHEN WANG



The Guardian

Location Mumbai, India
Disaster Maharashtra floods, 2005

'The water came up to my waist but I carried on walking'

This is climate breakdown ☹️

This is Ruchira's story



CROOKES PROFESSORSHIP YIELDS ONGOING IMPACT

It's been another busy and highly effective year for Sean Holman, the donor-funded Wayne Crookes Professor of Environmental & Climate Journalism and founder of the Climate Disaster Project.

Not only was he announced as the leader of the six-year, \$2.5-million Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council Partnership Grant for the project *From Catastrophe to Community: A People's History of Climate Change*, but he was also named the 2025 recipient of the Jack Webster Foundation's Bill Good Award in November — honouring a BC individual who made a significant contribution to journalism.

"I've devoted my life to journalism because of the harms it can repair," he said at the Webster Awards. "As the Climate Disaster Project founder, I'm working with my colleagues and students to support the recovery of climate-impacted communities around the world by documenting and investigating their stories."

Holman's SSHRC project *From Catastrophe to Community* will train 500 post-secondary students and professional journalists to document the experience of 1,000 survivors around the world and share their wisdom. Additionally, the project will result in the creation of documentaries with *APTN Investigates*, news features, an anthology and a traveling museum exhibition that will launch at the Canadian Museum for Human Rights and the Museum of Vancouver.

In the process, Holman's team will also develop new trauma-informed, human-rights-based storytelling practices to support the recovery of communities impacted by climate change and other humanitarian crises. With project co-directors at Simon Fraser University, Trent University, the University of Denver Colorado, the University of Stirling, the Université du

Québec à Montréal, York University and the Museum of Vancouver, Holman's on-campus partners will include Fine Arts professors David Leach (Writing), Joel Ong, Kelly Richardson and Paul Walde (Visual Arts) and Patrick Du Wors (Theatre), plus Sarah Marie Wiebe (Public Administration).

Additionally, the CDP's play, *Eyes of the Beast: Climate Disaster Survivor Stories*, was honoured at the 2025 Canadian Association of Journalism Awards — the first play they have ever singled out. Most recently, Holman and his team have been doing field work with Scotland's University of Stirling, as well as offering training to reporters from Agence France-Presse, Aboriginal Peoples Television Network and Journalists for Human Rights.

Three Writing undergrads also published a series of their Climate Disaster Project stories in the UK's venerable *Guardian* newspaper: Ashley Ciambrelli, Fernanda Solorza and Raamin Hamid ran testimonials from survivors in India, Peru, Brazil and Maui as part of a continuing international partnership hooked to the annual UN Climate Change Conference. "Until I got involved with the Climate Disaster Project, I never realized that the majority of our planet's population has experienced a climate disaster — whether they know it or not," says Hamid. "The effects of a climate disaster can vary on a very long scale, and it is important to bring those effects to light to cultivate community and encourage action."

The impact of the many projects being developed by the Climate Disaster Project will be felt for years to come, all thanks to the visionary support of Vancouver philanthropist and donor Wayne Crookes. "Climate change isn't a threat tomorrow," Holman reminds us. "It's a trauma today."



THE STUDENT REWARDS OF DONOR AWARDS

Since coming to UVic from Saskatchewan to complete their MFA in Visual Arts, multi-media artist Edith Skeard has seen their creative work blossom thanks to numerous donor awards. During their two-year period of study, Skeard has received the Audain Foundation Travel Award, the Laura Carberry Scholarship in Fine Arts, the Robert W. Ford Graduate Scholarship, Audrey St. Denys & M.E. Johnson Scholarship, Helen Pitt Fine Arts Scholarship, Jessie Allan Forsyth Scholarship, John and Myrtle Tilley Graduate Scholarship, the Jeffery Rubinoff Art as a Source of Knowledge Graduate Scholarship and, most recently, the Ocean Networks Canada ArtScience Fellowship.

"I wouldn't have been able to accomplish my studies without this generous funding, which was in large part the labour and coordination of the graduate advisors in Visual Arts," says Skeard. "I'm very grateful to have been able to pursue my thesis with less friction and less reliance on external income. It is such a gift to be able to work freely towards research and making."

Working mainly with sound, sculpture and drawing, Skeard uses granulation software to modify a mix of field recordings, woodwinds and voice to compose their sound. "I'm interested in the ways that the body and materials intersect, and am very open to experimenting with materials when working in the studio," they say, explaining their work is often inspired by a fascination with labyrinths, translation, dreams, repetition and desired paths. "I often treat sound as tactile and materials as dense poetics — contemplating gestures of embodied time."

After earning both a BA (Philosophy, Honours)

and BFA (Visual Art) at the University of Regina, Skeard began considering how graduate school could blend their passion for music with more visual work: having previously collaborated with School of Music Masters alumni — who all spoke highly of their experiences here — and realizing that a Visual Arts MFA offered studio space and the chance to work interdisciplinarily, Skeard decided UVic was the perfect place to continue their education. "It's a rewarding process for those who want to be challenged and reflect on their work in a new context," they say of their MFA work. "The community it fosters is really a large part of the experience."

This past year, Skeard has been very busy mounting two solo exhibitions, participating in interdisciplinary showcases and activating their Audain Travel Award. In Belgium, they visited curators, galleries and the Orpheus Institute — a premier international center for advanced musical studies and artistic research — before connecting with the Bureau for Listening, a leading artistic research group in Copenhagen. Coming up next is a solo exhibition in Saskatchewan and their summer fellowship with Ocean Networks Canada.

Skeard says their ONC application centered on tsunamis and earthquakes, which were present in their MFA work, and aligns perfectly with both the ecological and technological aspects of their artistic practice. "I'll be observing microscope data, listening to hydrophone recordings and connecting it to composition, sculpture and video," they explain about their ONC work, which will be on view in UVic's donor-funded Audain Gallery in September 2026.

—Claudia Phillips



\$2.5M
Received
from donors



\$1.2M+
Awarded
to students



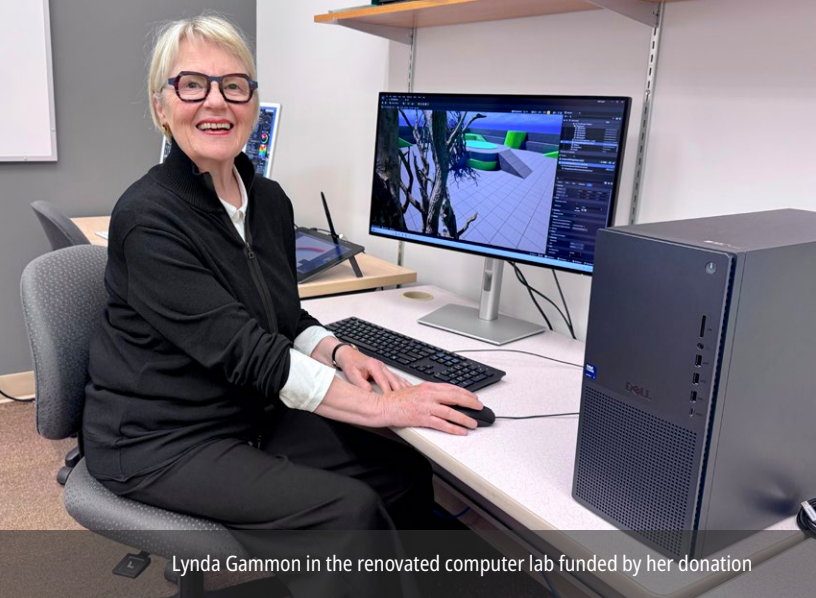
477
Overall
total donors



\$2M+
Received from
estate gifts



Doug Gray (C) with the student winners of the inaugural \$40,000 Eleanor Gray Prize



Lynda Gammon in the renovated computer lab funded by her donation

THREE WAYS DONOR SUPPORT CAN HELP

Not surprisingly, student support in the form of scholarships, bursaries and financial prizes is the most popular form of donor support we receive. Consider Doug Gray, who created the Eleanor Gray Memorial Piano & Voice Duo Competition Prize in 2025 to both honour the memory of his mother and support Music students in two of our strongest areas — voice and piano.

We are also fortunate to have more named professorships than most UVic faculties, thanks to the likes of the Audain and Rubinoff foundations, and generous philanthropists like Wayne Crookes and the Southam, Lehan and Wurlitzer families. These endowed positions ensure that recruiting top-tier research talent remains a priority in Fine Arts.

Another area where donors have a direct impact on the student experience is with facility upgrades. There's no question that our purpose-built facilities have long set us apart from other universities — yet those unique labs, studios, galleries and performance spaces also require constant technological upgrades to remain competitive.

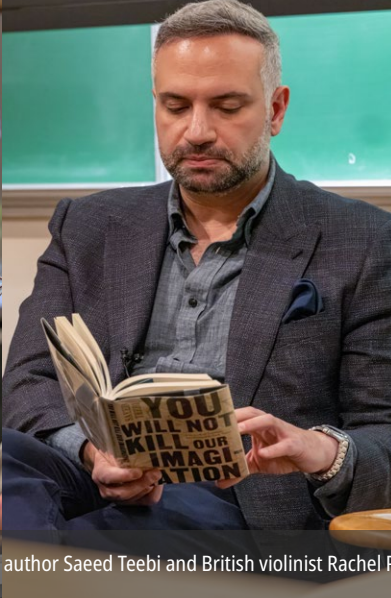
Longtime Visual Arts professor Lynda Gammon has remained engaged with both Fine Arts and Victoria's arts scene since retiring in 2015, now working with students as a Professor Emeritus. Realizing that one of the Fine Arts computer labs was in need of an upgrade, Gammon donated \$10,000 this year to assist with much-needed improvements and to finance a new computer system — a change she was happy to make, given her history with the space: Gammon was Associate Dean under former Fine Arts Dean Anthony Welch when the first Fine Arts computer lab was established in the early 1990s.

"There was a lot of contention back then about whether computers could even be used to make art and what their role in the Faculty would be," she recalls. "It took quite a bit of effort to push it forward — but once it was established, it quickly made such a huge difference."

With Gammon's assistance, the walls of our smaller computer lab — which serves as a digital photography studio with a large-scale printer and negative scanner — have now been changed from peach to gray (to better reflect the true colour of photography), a magnetic photo board has been installed and a new computer was purchased which can run 3D neural-net calculations to better manipulate digital imagery.

Gammon appreciates the unique contribution retired faculty members can make. "We're not your average donor: because we've been involved with the University and the students, we have a better idea of what's needed," she says. "I remember what it was like when we got a new piece of equipment — like the large-format printer — and how it not only allowed us to teach better but also helped my own art career. Incoming students are going to want to do things that are more than just traditional painting or sculpture."

Offering first-hand experience with cutting-edge technology is just another way for our students to gain a competitive edge. "Once they graduate, they get jobs because they've learned how to use our computer systems," she says. "It's so essential for artists to not find technology scary, to realize how it might fit in with their practice . . . if you don't take some of those fears away when they're students, then it becomes an unapproachable barrier."



Vancouver artist Paul Wong, Palestinian author Saeed Teebi and British violinist Rachel Podger were just three of many guests the Orion Fund brought to campus this year

ORION FUND MARKS 30 YEARS OF DONOR IMPACT

When it comes to ongoing donor impact, it's hard to imagine anything more lasting than the Orion Fund in Fine Arts. Named for the constellation whose visibility across most of the globe makes it a universal symbol of human connection to the cosmos, the Orion Fund is appropriately used to bring the world to UVic by making the talents and achievements of visiting artists available to both students and Victoria's wider community, who might otherwise not be able to experience their work.

Originally established with an \$80,000 investment from donor Josephine Berthier in 1996, the Orion Fund was then endowed by a further million-dollar bequest when she passed away in 2000. Today, it serves a variety of functions: the Orion Fund can finance short-term visits by distinguished guests from other parts of Canada and around the world, while the Orion Program for Visiting Artists & Scholars in the Arts is used for arranging longer visits, lasting up to a term.

The Orion Fund also makes it possible for Fine Arts faculty members to travel outside Canada to participate in the academic life of foreign institutions, establishing relationships that encourage and foster future exchanges. "I've witnessed first-hand how the Orion Fund enriches not only our faculty and the wider community, but also how time spent on our campus with colleagues and students, meaningfully shapes the visiting artists' and scholars' own creative and scholarly work," says Kirk McNally, Associate Dean Creative Activity, Research and Administration. "The fund allows us to build lasting relationships with a global community of thinkers and makers which is a remarkable gift and an enduring legacy of its generous donor."

We have also recently seen the creation of the Orion Incentivization Program, which annually provides extra Orion funds to our units if they invite scholars/artists who have lived experience regarding disability, racialization, gender and sexuality, and/or can help us to advance our commitment to equity, diversity and inclusion action. "It has been incredibly valuable for our students to interact and learn from visiting artists and scholars from a wide range of demographics and lived experiences," notes Dean Allana Lindgren.

Thanks to the Orion Fund, this past year saw over 15 international artists and scholars visit our classrooms and studios, including poets and authors Karen Solie, Saeed Teebi, Doretta Suk-Chong Lau and Kaie Kellough; AI scholars Phillipe Pasquier and Mike Ananny; conservator Helene Tello; musician Rachel Podger; Theatre artists Will Kilroy and Christie Maturo; and visual artists Allison Glenn, Meryl McMaster, Kristiina Lahde, Paul Wong, Hulleah J. Tsinhnahjinnie and Lan Yee.

And, over the past five years, we've brought in more than 70 guests solely as a result of the Orion Fund: that's a remarkable return of creative expertise and international experience resulting from a direct investment by a donor in student support. Considering that most of today's students had yet to be born when Josephine Berthier made her initial donation in 1996, it really speaks to the lasting, long-term impact of her gift.



279
Fine Arts
students who
received awards



184
Awards available
for undergraduate
students



141
Awards available
for graduate
students



9
New Fine Arts
awards created

MEDIA HIGHLIGHTS

CANADIAN NEWS Rare Métis Dogsled Model Repatriated From Vatican Museum

February 25, 2025 8:41 pm by Governor General of Canada



Gregory Scofield (Writing) joined Governor General Mary Simon for this national Papal repatriation event

SAANICH NEWS Indigenous Theatre Festival brings voices, stories and dance to UVic

Published: 2:30 pm Monday, September 8, 2025
By Staff reports



Indigenous Theatre Festival: Staging Our Wishes runs Sept. 12 and 13.

Kirsten Sadeghi-Yekta (Theatre) made the news for her latest Indigenous festival



NEWS - EVENTS - PODCASTS -

INTERVIEW | Canadian Opera: Marion Newman, Melody Courage & Timothy Long Talk About Missing At Toronto Summer Music

By Anya Wassenberg on June 16, 2025



Marion Newman (Music) earned attention and a Juno Award nomination for the opera *Missing*

Global NEWS Watch World Canada Local Politics Money Health Entertainment

50 years later, why the wreck of the Edmund Fitzgerald haunts us still

By Sean Raymon - Global News
Posted November 10, 2024 4:07 pm 8 min read



Virginia Acuña (Music) was quoted in this story about Gordon Lightfoot's classic song



Paul Walde (Visual Arts) earned media attention for his solo exhibit *Weather Conditions*

NEWS Local Watch Alberta Referendum In Pictures CTV Your Morning

Climate survivor stories spotlight in new Museum of Vancouver journalism project

By John Goss-Lessner
Published: August 16, 2025 at 12:07PM EDT



Sean Holman (Writing) & the Climate Disaster Project pulled headlines for his \$2.5 million grant

NEXUS

Phoenix Theatre's *Our Town* reminds us what's beautiful
November 13, 2025 Emily Welch, contributing writer



The Phoenix mainstage play *Our Town* received positive reviews during its November run

PLAYBILL A Theatre Guide to the Best Shows in Town

THE VERDICT Reviews Are Out for *Playing Shylock* Starring Saul Rubinek

The play, which draws inspiration from Merchant of Venice, is currently running Off-Broadway.

BY ANDREW GANS
OCTOBER 24, 2025



Mark Leiren-Young (Writing) had his hit show *Playing Shylock* open Off-Broadway in October . . . then wrote this *Tyee* story about why he wouldn't be attending the New York City opening due to the current US political climate



Music by Sarah Belle Reid (Music) appeared in the trailer for the latest season of the hit Apple+ show *Silo*



Mo Bradley & Chen Wang (Writing) at Vancouver's DOXA Festival, where his film *Aisha's Story* was the opening gala



Scott MacInnes (Music) was profiled in *YAM* about his Meridien Wind Orchestra



The Vocal Jazz Ensemble, led by Ariel Shetzen, performing in November 2025

ARTS & CULTURE KEEP CANADA STRONG

If you're looking for a quick indicator of the global, social and economic impact of Canadian arts & culture, look no further than *Heated Rivalry*. A Canadian TV series developed by Canadian creators, starring Canadian actors, filmed in Canada, soundtracked by Canadian bands and based on books by a Canadian author, *Heated Rivalry* hit the zeitgeist in a way rarely seen. With just six episodes, the first season generated over a billion dollars via the combined sales of books, music, tourism, fashion, streaming services and actual hockey tickets, which saw a whopping 40% surge in demand.

That it also managed to marry the seemingly disparate worlds of professional hockey and queer culture is as remarkable as the fact that Canadian arts & culture is still seen as expendable in times of economic hardship.

At the risk of repeating ourselves, the arts make a vital contribution to our economy: a 2025 report by the Canadian Chamber of Commerce found arts & culture contributed \$131 billion to Canada's GDP in 2024 and supported over a million jobs nation-wide. And, since 2011, arts-sector spending growth has outpaced all other sectors — including oil and gas, construction, agriculture, manufacturing and both wholesale and retail trade — generating \$17 billion in federal and provincial taxes.

As the popularity of shows like *Heated Rivalry*, *Schitt's Creek* and the Disney+ series *Washington Black* (co-produced and based on the award-winning bestseller by Fine Arts alum Esi Edugyen) continue to prove, it's our cultural icons who keep Canada strong internationally, with Canadian exports of cultural goods and services

hitting an all-time high of \$27.1 billion in 2023 — twice that since 2011.

Yet, as former MP and Deputy Prime Minister Sheila Copps noted in her April 2026 *Hill Times* opinion piece, the Federal government's economic conversation still primarily focuses on boosting Canada's fossil-fuel, auto and construction sectors. Ironically, this ensures jobs for primarily male-dominated industries, while government spending on arts & culture strongly benefits women, youth and IBPOC / 2SLGBTQIA+ communities. Numerous studies have also proven how participation in arts & culture boosts democracy and civic engagement, increases the academic performance of students, and improves the overall health and wellbeing of Canadians.

UVic remains an essential part of that story: home to BC's only stand-alone fine arts faculty, we've been training generations of arts practitioners, cultural leaders and creative researchers for nearly 60 years, equipping them with the skills and knowledge to succeed in our fast-changing world.

With political uncertainty south of the border, we do need to keep our elbows up . . . but it's also essential to drive home the impact and relevance of Canada's diverse and vibrant arts industry. UVic's Faculty of Fine Arts continues to bring over 20,000 people a year to campus thanks to our 300+ cultural and scholarly offerings — making us UVic's largest and most consistent academic unit for public engagement.

Keep up on our events throughout the year by subscribing to our monthly e-news via fincomm@uvic.ca



Visitors at *The Work Yet To Come* (front/back), a group contemporary art exhibition featuring early career Indigenous artists — including students — curated by Heather Igloliorte & organized by UVic's Taqsiqtuut Indigenous Research Creation Lab, held at downtown's Hourglass studio in March 2026