

My current interests lie in the cultivation and maintenance of practice. Whether it is an artistic practice, a life practice, or otherwise, I am interested in the generative ramifications of honing a daily practice or ritual, be it individual and/or collective. A practice that I have recently incorporated at the beginning of each text I am asked to write is one of giving thanks. I thank Lisa Hirmer and the Art Gallery of Guelph for their invitation to write this text. Having lived in southern Ontario for the last seven years, I would also like to thank the many Indigenous folks I have encountered in my time in this part of the world, in particular the people of the Mississaugas of the Credit River and the people of Six Nations, for their generosity of spirit, space, and time, as well as for being very patient teachers and hosts. I would like to thank my mother, and my teachers from back home. And I would like to thank the non-human beings I am surrounded by – the earth, the water, the sky, and the multitude of others who call one or more of those realms home.

*We Are Weather*. I have been sitting with the naming and framing of this exhibition for the last several weeks. A few days prior to transposing feelings and thoughts to text, I had the opportunity to see how the work in the exhibition would be placed in dialogue with one another. I am quite fond of the process that informed this exhibition: Lisa's work and practice are placed in relation to works selected from the Art Gallery of Guelph's permanent collection, situating the concepts of weather and climate change in a subtle but rigorous and robust conversation that comprises different moments, world views, cultural perspectives, and ways of being that rarely respectfully and generatively co-exist in the same space and temporality. This particular way of creating and holding space for different sensibilities ignites a strong sense of kinship within the exhibition. Embedded within the visual imagery are varied practices of registering and cataloguing weather that give presence to this phenomena within our lives.

I look to *Everything We've Done is Weather Now*, a series of photographs of handwritten field notes documenting local weather over the last century, and to how methodical and meticulous the observations and records were. How this data was collected and recorded speaks to a deep relationship with the weather and to one's surroundings cultivated through this daily practice. As with any practice, this particular relationship to the environment would have refined and heightened a number of senses – many that are not privileged within contemporary culture and dominant ways of knowing.

Lisa's *Watching Dull Edges (the northern hemisphere of a 23°27' tilt)*, a series of photographs capturing increasingly depleted annual snowfall as shown through test tube samples, also represents a deeply intimate ritual revealing a monumental shift in climate. The photos are a profound exercise in making the invisible visible. When I encounter work like this, I often wonder if it has the same impact on other bodies. I think about the human population and how we have an overabundance of information available to us on any number of challenging and pressing issues like climate change, but somehow the dominant culture is not compelled to cultivate conversations or more generative practices and ways of being that centre the Earth in everything that we do. The depletion of snow within this series is a haunting image, one that sparks both a profound sense of what we have lost, and a clarity around the work ahead at an important moment in our shared experience.

Within the work selected from the gallery's permanent collection, there is a connective thread that gestures towards enlivenment and embodiment, and a sense of profound connection to the human and the non-human, and to the larger metabolism that we are all part of – one that is always present but invisible. In a world that thrives on certainty of sense-making and meaning-making, the practices reveal the culmination and cultivation of rigor, stamina, and resilience that are a requirement in encounters with the unknown and the unknowable.

Embedded within Indigenous culture(s) are a series of practices that hone such a deeper connection to the land, and to the non-human, to what my colleague Dr. Vanessa Andreotti refers to as exiled capacities. While everyone has a connection to these capacities, they are rendered invisible by a system that hones capacities for accumulation of knowledge and material wealth, with grave ramifications for the Earth, and for us. A couple of questions I now feel and think about quite often in my work are what does a recalling, a restoration, a recalibration of exiled capacities, look, feel, sound like, and what are the optimum spaces one needs to create for this work?

I don't have a definitive answer – I don't think anybody does at the moment. I would hope at this juncture in our evolution, or maybe more accurately, our devolution, that we have come to a point where we acknowledge that we have underestimated the problems that surround us and overestimated our capacities for coming up with solutions. I think of Lisa's project *Weather Watcher*, a large-scale windsock that was installed downtown near Guelph

City Hall in 2016. I like the idea of the wind – an element, a non-human life force – being a guide, a source of information, a source of re-orientation in terms of feeling our way out of the problems we as a species have created for the environment and climate.

I emphasize feeling in both this text and in my current work. Thinking is what got us where we are. Thinking will not get us where we need to be. We need practices of feeling, practices of humility, practices that regenerate and recalibrate exiled capacities that will allow us to really see and sit with each other for the long-term. These practices are not a sprint. They are a marathon – a lifelong one. And we have to start small. If one thinks about where we are in a linear timeline with regard to building generative relationships with each other and with the Earth, we are not even at zero. The first steps need to gesture towards getting to zero.

I want to end this text with a small story. Hopefully it is generative. A few years ago, my mother came to live with me in Toronto. We had not shared a home in many years. So many years had passed that we had become different people. Even building generative relationships with the people you are most familiar can be difficult; past emotional charges and histories are more difficult in some ways. So much care has to be put towards cultivating a space where the generative can flourish. Over the past few years, I feel we have both fought hard to cultivate a space where we don't fall back on old triggers or assumptions, or ways of being that might have been useful at one point, but no longer are. I notice we cultivate shared practices now. We both have practices of prayer each day that incorporate Indigenous medicines, and on days when I am not traveling, she reports to me on the weather. It is a small thing, a gesture towards holding space for building new relationships and ways of being, of reconnecting with that larger metabolism and finding opportunities for growth and learning that I don't think either of us could have predicted. In a way, in our own way, we are gesturing towards being the weather.

Elwood Jimmy