

January 14, 2020

## **Art to build our mutual survival**

Survival often depends on the relationships we build with each other. The Mitchell Art Gallery's newest exhibition, ***Grasping at Roots***, explores such interdependent relationships, taking inspiration from *mycorrhizae*, the science that studies how plants share nutrients for survival. The exhibition's artists directly confront the polarization of our world by exploring communities interconnected, messy roots that provide support and nourishment. The exhibition features video and audio work created with the participation of diverse communities and asks individuals to contribute to the experience.

"We are thrilled to share this exhibition with our community and grow mutually beneficial relations with visitors through its public programming," says Carolyn Jervis, director of the Mitchell Art Gallery. "The work of curator Christina Battle and the artists she's connected creates space for us all to reflect on how we can translate the reciprocity of these relationships into our own ways of being with each other."

Artists work directly with diverse communities of newcomers to Canada to create art representative of their stories. Local communities of newcomers to Edmonton and international students at MacEwan are invited to participate in furthering the conversation and collaborating with artists to express their own experiences through art.

Artworks include *The Dwelling Museum* by Debbie Ebanks Schlums featuring glass objects made by new immigrants—Syrian women—who also share their story in accompanying audio. The *Breaktime/Overtime* by Eugenio Salas interweaves stories of food, migration, and labour. Visitors can take home an apron, tea towel, print, or zine with a donation which will support a collectively produced cookbook. And *Doing the Dishes* features work Serena Lee derived from conversations with single mothers and their daughters while doing their dishes. Shawn Tse explores our relationship with protests in Hong Kong. Recent video work by Scott Portingale is also featured.

**Opening Reception:** Thursday, January 16, 7-9 p.m.

The exhibition is on view January 17 - March 28.  
Public workshops will continue throughout the exhibition to engage community. Schedule is attached.

Gallery Hours: Tuesday to Saturday, Noon - 5 p.m.  
The Mitchell Art Gallery is free and open to the public.

**For more information, please contact:**

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## Public Workshops:

### ***Doing the Dishes***, Serena Lee

Wednesday, February 26, 5 - 7 p.m.

Serena Lee's *Doing the Dishes* (2017, ongoing) translates the experiences and conversations she encountered while meeting with single mothers and the daughters of single mothers. On February 26, through an additional performative gesture, this time for an audience of many, Lee will recount her experience of doing the dishes in an activated artist talk featuring an overhead projector performance.

Lee provides insight into the responsibility and care involved in sharing and translating others' personal experiences and highlights invisible labour that we often take for granted. Through Lee's retellings, the women's stories become seen.

### ***The Dwelling Museum***, Debbie Ebanks Schulms

February 8, 9, 13

Artist Talk - February 12, 12 p.m. - 1 p.m.

While in Edmonton, Ebanks Schulms will lead a five-day workshop with newcomers, where participants will share stories and make glass objects to be included in the exhibition upon completion. By extending the project into communities in Edmonton, Ebanks Schulms connects participants in Edmonton with those in rural Ontario, making visible the breadth of experiences encountered by newcomers to Canada.

### ***Sharing Circle***, Shawn Tse

Wednesday, March 4, 5.30 p.m. - 7.30 p.m.

Amiskwacîwâskahikan/Edmonton-based artist, filmmaker and educator, Shawn Tse will lead a public sharing circle to discuss his work for *Grasping at the Roots* and the larger implications of the Hong Kong protest.

### ***Merienda (teatime)***, Eugenio Salas

Friday, March 20, 3 p.m. – 5 p.m.

Eugenio Salas will host a Merienda (teatime) — a tradition that came from Europe to the Americas via Spanish colonization — in collaboration with a local immigrant baker to provide another opportunity for audiences to engage in the complex political histories of food and food production. Through a series of prompts, Salas will help draw attention to these histories as we consider the role that contemporary food production holds in shaping our communities and experiences.

*Founded in 1971, MacEwan University inspires its students with a powerful combination of academic excellence and personal learning experiences. Offering more than 65 programs including undergraduate degrees, applied degrees, diplomas, certificates, continuing education and corporate training, the university provides a transformative education in a creative, collaborative and supportive learning environment where creativity and innovation thrive. Located in Edmonton, Alberta Canada, MacEwan University offers a unique student experience that opens up diverse pathways for achievement and growth.*

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