

Artist's Statement: Plastic Ocean

Mindi Lee Meadows, University of Calgary, Canada

My artwork takes a critical view of social, political, cultural, and environmental issues within the Canadian context. Often referencing Canadian history, I explore the varying relationships between Canadian literature and landscape traditions by illuminating positionality and exploring the process of erasure within particular constructed social and ecological Place(s). I think of my artwork as unfinished inventories of fragments, glimpses of perspectives, and narratives informed by human and more-than-human relationships with land, as well as with each other. My art pieces are improvisational sites in which constructed and readymade objects, drawings, paintings, photographs, and other inventions are used to question our making of the world through language and knowledge. My arrangements are schematic, inviting the viewer to move into a space of speculation.

This particular image named Plastic Ocean, which will be included in an art installation linked to my doctoral dissertation defense, reflects upon the erasure of the lived experience of Polar Bears as icons representing the more-than-human life currently threatened by the dynamic processes constructing the Place(s) of the Canadian Arctic. This image intends to represent the Polar Bear simultaneously as a symbol of strength and endurance, as well as acceptance and surrender as the more-than-human world must increasingly respond to human presence and actions that are rapidly transforming ecological systems and socially constructed Places. This image is informed by postmodernist questioning of master narratives that were embraced during the modern period such as the notion that all progress, especially technological and urban, is positive. By rejecting such narratives, postmodernists reject the idea that knowledge or history can be encompassed in totalizing theories, embracing instead the local, the contingent, and the temporary.

Notes on Contributor

Mindi Lee Meadows is a humanities teacher currently residing in Medicine Hat, Alberta. She earned a Bachelor of Arts with a major in English and minor in Political Science in 2012 as well as a Bachelor of Education, Secondary English Education in 2014 from the University of Calgary. In 2016, she earned her Master in Education for Change from Lakehead University, specializing in Environmental and Sustainability Education. She is currently a doctoral student with the Werklund School of Education at the University of Calgary where she specializes in Curriculum in Context with a focus on the role of storytelling and visual literacies within STEAM education. Contact: mlmeadows@ucalgary.ca