

# AGNES ETHERINGTON ART CENTRE AT QUEEN'S



## Teachers' Notes

*Planet Protectors and Eco-Expressions*

## Teachers' Notes for 2014–2015 School Programs

### *Planet Protectors and Eco-Expressions*

Pat Sullivan, Public Programs Manager  
Agnes Etherington Art Centre  
Queen's University  
36 University Ave.  
Kingston, Ontario, Canada K7L 3N6  
(613) 533.2190  
[www.agnes.queensu.ca](http://www.agnes.queensu.ca)

Cover image: Douglas Coupland, (Royal Canadian Air Force Base, Germany, 1961), *I hope humanity somehow changes quickly and that we become able to protect ourselves from what we are now*, 2011, Acrylic and latex on canvas, 182.9 cm x 182.9 cm, Collection of the Agnes Etherington Art Centre, Gift of the Artist, 2012 (T12-015)

### Introduction

Our school programs challenge students to develop critical thinking. We ask questions and set tasks that call for:

Observing  
Interpreting  
Comparing  
Creating  
Flexible and imaginative thinking

The first half of the visit, which takes place in the gallery space, establishes key ideas. These ideas are developed in the second half of the visit through a creative hands-on project in the studio. We encourage you to use this booklet to prepare your students for their visit to the Art Centre, and to extend the experience in your classroom.

A recent study by the University of Arkansas found that art gallery field trips are valuable for the development of critical thinking skills, historical empathy and tolerance of other viewpoints. For more information please see: [www.educationnext.org/the-educational-value-of-field-trips/](http://www.educationnext.org/the-educational-value-of-field-trips/)

## Focus Exhibition

*I hope humanity...*, our focus exhibition for 2014–2015, provokes investigation of art and the environment through works by Canadian contemporary artists. The exhibition draws its title from a painting by renowned Canadian artist and author Douglas Coupland that prompts viewers to engage with its QR-code function and prompts contemplation of the status of humanity and its potential to transform in the future. Here are brief descriptions of the works. All of them are in our collection and most can be seen on our website: [www.agnes.queensu.ca/collections](http://www.agnes.queensu.ca/collections)

Eleanor Bond

Winnipeg, 1948

*Later, Some Industrial Refugees Form Communal Settlements in A Logged Valley in B.C.*

1987

Oil on canvas

240 cm x 370 cm

Purchase, Chancellor Richardson Memorial Fund and Canada Council Acquisition Assistance Fund. 1996  
39-018

In this huge painting, Bond depicts an altered landscape that is taking on a new purpose. The mobile homes are representative of people forming new communities within an exploited and abandoned terrain. The clear-cut mountain terrain, has been devastated by the logging industry, but the barren land assumes a new identity as a home and refuge for these transplanted groups.

Eleanor Bond is a Canadian painter and teacher, educated at the School of Art, University of Manitoba. Her paintings, like this one, are informed by utopian traditions, ideals and impulses for the collective good.

Carole Condé and Karl Beveridge

Hamilton, 1940 and Ottawa, 1945

*The Fall of Water*

2006/2007

Light jet print

121.9 cm x 168.8 cm

Purchase, J. Stuart Fleming Fund, 2011  
54-002.02

Condé and Beveridge express activism and concern for social justice in all their work. Their digital photo-collage intrigues viewers through its highly detailed portrayal of the battle over water rights and pollution taking place today. See page 8 for more information on this work, related to the Intermediate curriculum.

For more information on the artists, see: [www.condebeveridge.ca](http://www.condebeveridge.ca)

Douglas Coupland

Royal Canadian Air Force Base, Germany, 1961

*I hope humanity somehow changes quickly and that we become able to protect ourselves from what we are now*  
2011

Acrylic and latex on canvas

182.9 cm x 182.9 cm

Gift of the Artist, 2012

T12-015

In one sense, this Vancouver artist's painting is a colourful abstract, but as a functional quick response (QR) barcode it leads the viewer, with the help of a smart phone, to view the title. Coupland expresses concern for our future, and a belief that there is time to change our fate.

For more information on the artist, see: [www.coupland.com](http://www.coupland.com)

Robert Fones

London, Ontario, 1949

*Ethos/Nomos/Physis*

1987

Framed black and white photographs mounted on masonite with matt-laminate coating with UV filter

3 parts, each 121.4 cm x 129.3 cm

Gift of the artist, 2006

49-024.01a-c

Each man depicted in these photographs has a direct association with the land: Lyman Chapman, who co-authored *The Physiography of Southern Ontario*, an orchard keeper with an old apple tree in one of the few remaining orchards in that area, and a potato farmer standing in front of his field. The work speaks to the interdependent relationships between humanity and the living non-human world. It points to our dependence on the land for food and raises questions about changing agricultural practices over the past generation.

For more information on the artist, see: [www.robertfones.com](http://www.robertfones.com)

Don Maynard

Toronto, 1955

*Smoke Signal #1*

2004

Copper and aluminum sculpture

121.9 cm x 104.1 cm x 55.9 cm

Gift of the artist, 2007

50-023

*Smoke Signal #1* is constructed from sliced industrial air conditioning units, which have been twisted to form a writhing organic shape. This contrast in formal elements evokes both the negative impact of industry and our hope for the future.

For more information on the artist, see: [www.don-maynard.com](http://www.don-maynard.com)

Rebecca Soudant  
 Chatham, 1970  
*A Tapestry of Birth*  
 2009/2011  
 Cotton and silk embroidery thread, marker and acrylic on cotton  
 30.5 cm x 1066.8 cm  
 Gift of Rebecca Soudant and Jim McCullough, 2011  
 54-016

Soudant’s work presents a narrative account of her pregnancy, in which she expresses anxiety about the health of her unborn child amidst news reports of toxic spills and illnesses. A personal story exquisitely executed in a traditionally female medium, the tapestry adds an intimate dimension to the exhibition and addresses hope for future generations.

Rebecca Soudant is a Kingston-based textile artist. A former member of The Artel collective, her work has been exhibited at the Union Gallery and the Agnes, as well as in Toronto, Montreal, British Columbia and Spain.

## Programs

Our programs relate to the Ontario Ministry of Education’s document *Environmental Education: Scope and Sequence of Expectations* (2011), which offers guidelines for using core curriculum subjects to foster students’ “understanding of their fundamental connections to each other, to the world around them and to all living things.”

### **Primary (Grades 1–3)** ***Planet Protectors 1***

The four elements of nature guide our exploration of the exhibition. Through dramatic activities and playful inquiry, students will identify environmental features and issues in the works of art. In the studio, they will create a clay figure that represents themselves in their environment.

#### **Curriculum Connections:**

**Visual Arts:** identifying and describing visual art forms; creating a three-dimensional work of art that expresses a personal theme.

**Drama:** engaging in dramatic play to explore the theme of water.

**Social Studies:** describing community; understanding stewardship and the relations between people and their environments.

### **Junior (Grades 4–6)** ***Planet Protectors 2***

Discussion in the gallery covers principles of design such as proportion and balance, as well as the elements of nature and environmental stewardship. Students will use sketches based on *The Fall of Water*, a digital photograph in the exhibition, to create a mobile sculpture that expresses aquatic networks.

**Curriculum Connections:**

**Visual Arts:** interpreting a variety of artworks and identifying the social concerns conveyed; analyzing principles of design, especially balance and proportion; creating a three-dimensional work of art that communicates a concept discussed in the tour.

**Social Studies:** understanding stewardship; understanding Canada and the global community.

Science: analyzing the effects of human activities on habitats and communities.

**Intermediate (Grades 7–8)**

***Eco-Expressions***

*I hope humanity...* draws its title from a painting by Douglas Coupland that queries potential for change. After discussion, and prompted by Coupland's work, students will compose their personal hopes for humanity in writing. In the studio, they will give visual form to their statements using acrylic paint.

**Curriculum Connections:**

**Visual Arts:** interpreting a variety of works of art; identifying and analyzing the social contexts of works of art; creating a painting that expresses a personal response.

**Language:** establishing a distinctive voice in writing a personal response to a work's theme.

**Geography:** analyzing interrelationships between settlement and the environment.

## Before the Visit

The following are suggested discussion topics and activities to help prepare students for their visit. Please note: we ask that students wear name tags during the program.

**Gallery Visit**

Discuss the nature of a public art gallery with your class. Art galleries collect, research, protect, preserve and display original works of art for the benefit of current and future visitors. Ask your students if they have been to an art gallery before. What types of art did they see at the art gallery? Why is it important to visit original works of art, instead of viewing reproductions or images on the Internet?

**Expectations**

Discuss proper behaviour and gallery etiquette with your class. The two main rules to remember are: Do not touch the art because oils on our hands can contain salt that can damage the surface of works of art. No running and no food or drinks (including gum) are permitted.

### **The Environment**

Depending on the age level of your class, discuss environmental concepts with them. Some questions to consider are:

- What do we mean by reduce, reuse, recycle?
- What do we mean by sustainability and stewardship?
- What does it mean to be “green”?
- What are some actions we do to protect the environment: at home? At school? On vacation?
- What are some environmental issues in our local area?
- How do you celebrate Earth Day (22 April)?

## **Extending the Visit into the Classroom**

### **Primary**

In the program, we look closely at natural elements portrayed in two of the works of art. Take students to a park or other natural setting for observation. They could list all the flora and fauna they see, and sketch their favourite item. The sketch becomes the basis for a painting back in the classroom.

At the Agnes, students will create a clay figure representing themselves in their environment. We'll provide cardboard surrounds in which to place the sculpture, for rudimentary embellishment. Students could add more to the surrounds in the classroom, or work on new larger ones. They could paint their house, their yard, their community centre, their school or any other setting with personal meaning, and write a story about what their figure is doing.

Visit a farmer's market or look at photographs of one. Discuss where our food comes from and what crops and livestock are raised by Ontario farmers. Students could write a thank-you letter to an imaginary farmer, acknowledging how their work helps us.

### **Junior**

In *Planet Protectors 2*, students create a mobile that features the components of an aquatic ecosystem, such as the sun, water and fish. They could research the waters around Kingston: Lake Ontario, the St. Lawrence River and the Cataraqui River. What creatures live in these waters? Are any edible? What are the threats to these habitats?

At the gallery, the students will look closely at *The Fall of Water*, a digital photo-collage that depicts a battle between the forces of justice and exploitation. Have students identify and research an environmental battle that is important to them. It might concern threatened wildlife, or a polluted site, or a specific effect of climate change. Gathering images from magazines and the Internet, they can create a collage that expresses their battle. Depending on the resources and skill of your class, the collage can be made with paper and glue, or digitally.

## Intermediate

Students will write their own ending to the phrase “I hope humanity”, which they use as the stimulus for a painting. They could display their paintings with their written statements at school, and, if they are on Twitter, contribute them to the Agnes’s ongoing Twitter dialogue.

### In-depth Look at *The Fall of Water* by Carole Condé and Karl Beveridge:

For the *The Fall of Water*, which deals with issues of global water rights, Condé and Beveridge conducted extensive research. Two of the dominant figures in the digital photograph represent recent contested events. Investigation of these issues relates to the resource and economic development sections of the Geography curriculum.

Students could research one or both of the situations outlined below and discuss these questions:

- What are the pros and cons of privatizing a resource like water?
- How can dam construction affect settlement patterns of the local population? Is there a Canadian parallel to the Sardar Sarovar Dam?

### Situation #1: Central woman wearing yellow dress: Water Privatization in Cochabamba, Bolivia

At the end of the 1990s, the International Monetary Fund’s loans to Bolivia became conditional on the privatization of many of the country’s public services. In 1998, Cochabamba, Bolivia’s third largest city, auctioned off SEMAPA, the public water services provider, to the only bidder, Agua del Tunari, a subsidiary of the Bechtel Corporation (whose logo can be found in the bottom left of the work).

Many residents saw their water bills rise steeply, despite previous assurances from the government that increasing costs would be limited. Furthermore, several community-practised water collection systems, such as rain barrels and wells, became illegal as they violated Agua del Tunari’s contract. A grassroots movement to oppose water privatization quickly coalesced to form The Coalition for the Defense of Water, more commonly called La Coordinadora. The group organized large scale protests, which gained momentum, eventually putting enough pressure on the Bolivian government to re-nationalize Cochabamba’s water services, under the control of La Coordinadora. Agua del Tunari filed a law suit against the Bolivian government in the International Centre for Settlement of Investment Disputes (ICSID), for lost profits as a result of the termination of their contract, but never received compensation.

### Further Resources:

#### *Leasing the Rain*

[www.pbs.org/frontlineworld/stories/bolivia](http://www.pbs.org/frontlineworld/stories/bolivia)

Documentary on the issue by the PBS television show *Frontline*. The website includes a timeline, a report on the case, a quick facts sheet, a map and other resources.

#### North American Congress on Latin America

[www.nacla.org/blog/2013/6/5/water-wars-water-scarcity-bolivia%E2%80%99s-cautionary-tale](http://www.nacla.org/blog/2013/6/5/water-wars-water-scarcity-bolivia%E2%80%99s-cautionary-tale)

*From Water Wars to Water Scarcity*: article provides background on the protests, as well as information on ongoing problems since water services were re-nationalized

### **Situation #2: Woman in white sari at left: The Sardar Sarovar Dam on the Narmada River, India**

Exploratory studies on the feasibility of building a system of dams in the Narmada River valley, India, began as early as 1949. In the 1980s the controversy surrounding the project heightened, particularly with regards to the Sardar Sarovar, the largest proposed dam. Proponents argued for improved irrigation and potable water in the surrounding drought-prone region, but many feared environmental damage and displacement of thousands of people.

In the early 1980s, several NGOs formed the Narmada Bachao Andolan (NBA) to protest the project. Demonstrations regularly attracted thousands of participants and in 1985 the World Bank withdrew their \$450 million in funding for the dam, amidst mounting domestic and international opposition to the project. However, the Indian government proceeded with construction, prompting the NBA to take the issue to India's Supreme Court. Though initially the court established a maximum height for the dam at 88m, authorization to raise it has been granted several times. More than 300,000 people have been displaced to date. The NBA continues to fight against its increasing height, as well as other dam projects in the Narmada River basin.

#### **Further Resources:**

##### **Global NonViolent Action Database**

[www.nvdatabase.swarthmore.edu/content/narmada-bachao-andolan-nba-forces-end-world-bank-funding-sardar-sarovar-dam-india-1985-1993](http://www.nvdatabase.swarthmore.edu/content/narmada-bachao-andolan-nba-forces-end-world-bank-funding-sardar-sarovar-dam-india-1985-1993)

The website documents various contentious cases: this page explains the issues relating to the Sardar Sarovar Dam.

### **Situation #3: Man in white shirt at right: A Canadian Environmentalist**

Students could find their own Canadian environmental champion and write a short essay explaining their choice.

## **Resources**

#### **350.org**

[www.350.org](http://www.350.org)

This activist website gets its name from the fact that many scientists, climate experts, and progressive national governments agree with Dr. James Hansen, former head of the Goddard Institute for Space Studies, that 350 ppm is the "safe" level of carbon dioxide in our atmosphere.

#### **Agnes Etherington Art Centre**

[www.agnes.queensu.ca](http://www.agnes.queensu.ca)

Search the Collections section of our website for images and information on works of art.

**Andy Goldsworthy**

[www.tate.org.uk/context-comment/video/tateshots-andy-goldsworthy-studio-visit](http://www.tate.org.uk/context-comment/video/tateshots-andy-goldsworthy-studio-visit)

British artist Andy Goldsworthy is perhaps the best-known among those who use natural materials in their work. While often ephemeral, his creations have inspired many. He does not have an official website but there is no shortage of information about him. In this short (4:26 minutes) video created by Tate Britain, he discusses his process and motivation.

**David Suzuki Foundation**

[www.davidsuzuki.org](http://www.davidsuzuki.org)

Informative website for the foundation started by a leading Canadian scientist and broadcaster.

**Earth Day Canada**

[www.earthday.ca](http://www.earthday.ca)

This site offers a wealth of environmental information and programs for teachers, kids, youth and communities.

**EcoKids**

[www.ecokids.ca](http://www.ecokids.ca)

Run by Earth Day Canada, the site has information for teachers and kids.

**Edward Burtynsky**

[www.edwardburtynsky.com](http://www.edwardburtynsky.com)

Toronto-based Edward Burtynsky is one of Canada's best-known contemporary artists. A photographer and film-maker, he has travelled the world to show the impact of industry on nature. Please see [www.agnes.queensu.ca/learn/teachers-resources/edward-burtynsky/](http://www.agnes.queensu.ca/learn/teachers-resources/edward-burtynsky/) for images from the Agnes collection, with information and teaching ideas.

**Four Directions Teachings**

[www.fourdirectionsteachings.com](http://www.fourdirectionsteachings.com)

A site developed by the Canadian Culture Online Program of the Department of Canadian Heritage, it features written and audio resources for learning about Indigenous knowledge and philosophy from five First Nations. A Teacher's Resource Guide provides information on the indigenous relationship to nature.

**Green Museum**

[www.greenmuseum.org](http://www.greenmuseum.org)

In addition to an online collection of environment-related art, the site has a good article on the profusion of terms in the field: environmental, eco-art, land art, etc.

**Hilary Inwood: Art, Education and the Environment**

[www.hilaryinwood.ca](http://www.hilaryinwood.ca)

Hilary Inwood teaches pre-service teachers at OISE/UT, specializing in art and eco-education. Her website has practical information for eco-art projects at the elementary level.

**Lake Ontario Waterkeeper**

[www.waterkeeper.ca](http://www.waterkeeper.ca)

This organization is dedicated to creating a swimmable, drinkable, fishable future.

**Shoreline Shuffle**

[www.wateraccessgroup.weebly.com/shoreline-shuffle.html](http://www.wateraccessgroup.weebly.com/shoreline-shuffle.html)

On 23 June, 2013, hundreds of people walked, paddled and cycled 7.7 km along Kingston's downtown shoreline to raise awareness about the need for better public access and better waterfront planning. This website documents the event, which included temporary works of art.

**Sierra Club Canada**

[www.sierraclub.ca](http://www.sierraclub.ca)

Sierra Club Canada empowers people to protect, restore and enjoy a healthy and safe planet.

**Sustainable Kingston**

[www.sustainablekingston.ca](http://www.sustainablekingston.ca)

Consult this local site for a good explanation of the four Pillars of Sustainability: Environmental Responsibility, Social Equity, Economic Health and Cultural Vitality.

**United Nations CyberSchoolBus**

[www.un.org/Pubs/CyberSchoolBus/](http://www.un.org/Pubs/CyberSchoolBus/)

This global teaching project of the UN has a wealth of materials: students can take the Water Quiz and the Curriculum section has Saving Tomorrow's World, information geared to Intermediate students.