

## Alyx Essers-Silverman – *Collecting*

### Visual Description

This exhibit is of 10 canvases of various sizes that feature acrylic and multi-media creations. They are hung mostly one to a panel, with one panel that has three canvases. There are four double sided panels, covered with a beige carpet-like material, stacked in a line, running north-south. The panel faces also point north-south. The panels are numbered 1 through 8, with 1 being the northernmost panel, 2 being the south facing panel on the rear side of panel 1, and so on, through panel 8 being the southernmost panel.

Alyx notes about her exhibit, “in this series or works I explore mark-making and the application of different collected materials both natural and un-natural. These collections of items and paint come together on the canvas to form landscapes that seem alien or dreamlike. Paint, adhesive glues, wall-putty, caulking, clear coat, natural items such as acorn hats, eggshells, moss, tree branches and beach shells adorn the surface and inform the landscapes’ formation and aesthetics. I apply natural materials to the painting’s surface and preserve or cover as if to freeze them in time preventing decay and rot, suspending them in time and in the painting. This series is a collection of my artistic style and signature texture obsession that developed after graduating from my BFA program at Kwantlen Polytechnic University and into my studies to become an art therapist. I invite the audience to experience my paintings visually and to enjoy the richness of the canvas surfaces I have created.”

In her life, Alyx combines her passion for art with a fascination with psychology, for a career as an art therapist. She thinks that the best life for her would be making art every day and having the opportunity to share that creative joy with others.

#### **Panel 3 – Primary Triad (three pieces, 48”x24” total, each canvas 16”x20”, mixed media on canvas)**

The left-most image on this panel is primarily red and is hung portrait-style on the panel. Along the top and cascading down into the body of the work are many attached materials – acorn caps, some painted white, some gold, some plain, half eggshells cupped toward the viewer with acorn caps in the middles, bits of dried seaweed and other materials. The natural materials are most heavily concentrated on the left hand side, and they are of varying sizes, the largest being the egg shells. Behind the applied materials, there is a neutral colour of greyish-brown, highlighted with metallic coloured paint, and highly textured. This colour extends down the right hand side of the image. From the bottom left and up into the middle of the piece is a vibrant red section, with some brighter and some darker areas, also highly textured. The contrast between the red and the mostly neutral sections (as well as the white of the natural applied materials) is highlighted by some bursts of yellow which appear like little fireworks or collisions, also echoing the tone of the dried moss.

The middle image (set slightly lower than the other two) is primarily in shades of pale yellow. Set out in a rough oval that takes up most of the space inside the bounds of the canvas, this work is grounded by several large chunks of wasp nest arranged on the bottom 1/3 of the oval with the cells facing out. They are highlighted with the pale yellow that is also seen along the bottom of the canvas. The top of the oval

is created with some thick texturized material under the paint in a random pattern. The top half of the canvas is mostly a creamy white, and the centre of the rough oval is mostly non-textured and shows a gradual change from the white of the top of the piece to the pale yellow of the bottom.

The image on the right side of the triptych has the main colour of blue, and is arranged in much the same way as the red image. Across the top and cascading down into the image, but much less thickly applied than in the left-most image, are eggshells, white painted acorn caps, both cupped out toward the front. There are also some seashells in this image, including a sand dollar and clam shell in the top right corner. Along the top and down the left hand side is a natural sand-coloured and textured section. In the bottom right hand corner and through the centre of the canvas is a deep vivid blue painted section. There is some overlap between the "sand" area and the blue area which is a textured turquoise section, reminding the viewer of the line between sand and ocean where the colour of the water is bright and clear.

#### **Panel 5 – Dreamworld (30"x24", mixed media on canvas)**

This canvas is hung in landscape formation, and features a busy, highly textured area across the middle of the canvas, with more blank space toward the top and bottom. The middle is defined by a few long strips of thick bark, some with moss attached. In the very centre, a fan shape made with mussel shells breaks up the pieces of bark. Behind these natural materials are painted areas – the top left has some cream and gold shapes on top of some greyish purple swoops. This leads to the right side of the painting which has a brief bright pink spurt, and then some turquoise and white and blue in long, textured brushstrokes. The blue shades suggest a stand of trees in front of some water. This extends to the right side of the work, and below the bark strips on the right side are some dark blue ovals reminiscent of the outside of mussel shells. In the centre, there is a sand coloured area with a nautilus spiral painted on. Along the bottom of the canvas are some pink drips which are mostly painted over with the iridescent sand-coloured paint. Along the length of the top of the work are big loops under the paint, possibly made of caulk, which reach up to the top of the canvas and beyond and overlap each other. These loops are echoed at the bottom of the work in the ovals of the painted shells.

#### **Panel 6 – Tofino (24"x36", mixed media on canvas)**

This image is oriented in portrait mode and is roughly divided horizontally in two which appears to suggest a horizon line. The top half appears to have some light purple mist curling up toward the whiter sky above. The white area has various shades of white that suggest movement and clouds. Below the horizon line, which looks a bit like a line of thick glue painted silver, there is a completely different feel. At the very bottom of the piece are several rows of mussel shells, aligned with the narrow end toward the bottom. They are cupped outward and most of the interiors are shades of white or grey, but some have a naturally rusty coloured interior. They are not in neat rows, but have a feeling of movement upward, as if they are rising from the depths. Behind them and reaching up in various peaks to the horizon line is a highly textured section of silvery grey with touches of turquoise. Some of the mussel shells also have bits of dried seaweed tucked in behind them and little touches of turquoise paint on the shells. Above that, along the horizon line and below in two big uneven dips is a deep navy blue in a thickly painted texture. Some drip lines can be seen in the blue that drip down toward the mussel shell section.

**Panel 8 – Under the Sea (30"x40", mixed media on canvas)**

This work is the final piece in the show. It is in portrait orientation, and features a large oval in approximately the centre of the work. Inside this oval are various shades of deep and vibrant blue, giving the shape a depth, almost as if it's the opening to an undersea cavern. The paint has various textures with drips and squiggles, brushstrokes and crackled surface, giving this section a real visual interest. Lighter shades of white, turquoise, light purple and grey surround the darker oval, with purple coming to dominate at the top of the canvas. At the top right corner of the oval, some darker blue leaps up in loops like a tiny explosion. Coming down the right side of the oval are about 10 small roundish blobs of sand (perhaps grout?) painted blue with gold highlight. They are strongly reminiscent of a stream of bubbles. In the bottom left corner and extending along the bottom of the canvas and up the left hand side, is a strong section of applied natural materials – sea shells, sticks, seaweed, eggshells, stones, glue squiggles that look like worms among other things. Some of the shells are painted, some are plain, and all are affixed on a textured background that looks a bit like sand and is painted golden and pink with iridescent touches.