Interview with BFA Graduates Lindsey Wilson and Dayna Riemland

Lindsey Wilson and Dayna Riemland are former Queen’s Fine Art (Visual Art) students, and are currently exhibiting work in the Union Gallery at Queen’s.

Rebecca: You’re both currently showing at the Union. Can you tell us a little about it?

**Lindsey:** The work I have at the Union Gallery is an immersive textile installation called ‘worked up/wound up’. I have suspended masses of wool from a fragile warp of cotton threads that has been suspended across the main space. The work draws on my interest in textiles, in particular wool as a material. I have also created plant-based dyes and colored some of the fibres with them. In particular I am really interested in the process of altering the materials and as the exhibition continues I will be making alterations to the installation: pulling the wool down, spinning it into yarn, and winding the yarn up into balls. Making the process behind the materials visible has become an important aspect of my work and this installation is a manifestation of that.

**Dayna:** My work, ‘no one lives here anymore’, currently in the Project room at the Union Gallery, is one of the largest projects I’ve ever stitched. Consisting of nine individually embroidered floral frames with portraits, houses, churches, eyes and hands inside them. This work forms a makeshift family tree, the repeating motifs of eyes, disembodied hands and the slightly unnerving repetition of a
young woman’s image hints at an oblique narrative that is simultaneously vivid from the use of colour and traditional floral embroidery and unnerving in its unexpected elements.

Rebecca: What does it mean to you to be exhibiting this work the Union? How did you past experiences with the Gallery benefit you?

Lindsey: It’s really exciting to be exhibiting at the Union Gallery again. As a student, I was a member of the student board of directors and also exhibited work in a group show at the gallery in my fourth year. Dayna was actually a part of this same group show, Absent Bodies, along with another classmate. The experience was a fantastic introduction to the workings of a professional gallery and it truly helped me to grow as an artist. Having the opportunity to exhibit my work in a professional context was an important step in developing my artistic practice. The Union Gallery was such an important part of my education at Queen’s and I am so happy to be a part of it again through this exhibition.

Dayna: It’s an exciting feeling to be returning to the Union Gallery as a ‘professional’ artist and feels particularly fitting to share this experience again with Lindsey. While in the BFA program, the Union Gallery provided me with that first opportunity to exhibit my work in a professional setting, the three-person exhibition that included Lindsey. It feels as if we’ve both come full circle, after graduating from Queen’s we kept in touch as close friends but headed in different directions to complete our Graduate degrees. Coming back to Union and showing together is a deeply rewarding opportunity to show how much we’ve grown and come into our own as artists.

Rebecca: You did your undergraduate in Fine Art (Visual Art) Program at Queen’s. How would you say that helped you become the artist you are?

Dayna: My experience with the BFA was a really wonderful combination of rigorous studio work and material freedom. I remember being taught and amassing all of these technical skills that gave me so much fuel to enter my studio with. The program instilled in me this desire to always be exploring and experimenting while I work while also providing me with a sense of confidence in what it was I was making.

Lindsey: It was during the BFA at Queen’s that I started experimenting with textiles as a sculptural material and the program really allowed me to explore my interest in a variety of different materials as my work evolved over the years. I really appreciated being able to work closely with each of the professors we had, especially towards the end of the program. Overall the experiences I had in the program and the friendships I made were so important to the evolution of my work. Dayna and I shared studio space in our fourth year and throughout the program we both worked with textiles in different ways. I definitely learned a lot from her, and I really relied on her feedback. Having the ability to supplement my interests by taking courses in art history and other disciplines outside of the visual art department was also really helpful for me. My work is often really tied to research and the BFA program helped me to develop my research skills alongside my creativity and technical skills.

Rebecca: What’s it like to be back visiting your alma mater? I know you’ve reconnected with some other graduates from your year who are living in or near Kingston. How’s that been for you? Do you maintain other relationships from the BFA Program and is that important to you and why?

Lindsey: It has been really wonderful coming back to Queen’s and reconnecting with former classmates. Having shared a similar experience in the BFA program, it is always great to re-connect and hear their insights and hear about their experiences after the program. I have definitely stayed in touch with other graduates and I love seeing all of the exciting things people from our graduating class have been up to. Dayna and I have stayed in touch through both of our MFA programs. Having someone to talk to about the process of completing an MFA, and having someone whose opinion I could really trust was so important to me. Particularly because, going into a new program, the environment was so different, it was really helpful to be able to rely on the opinion...
Alejandro Arauz will be exhibiting two works entitled ‘Scanned Figures’ (CMYK and Digital Serigraph) and ‘Minor Forms’ (CMYK on Acrylic Light Box) at the 2018 Screenprint Biennial at the Opalka Gallery in Albany, NY. The Screenprint Biennial seeks to showcase a range of screenprint-based art applications, from framed editioned prints to installation, sculpture, video, ephemera, and posters. The show assembles an exhibition that is consistent in highlighting artists who utilize adventurous, relevant, and passionate takes on the screenprinted medium. The exhibition will run from October 30-December 14, with an opening reception Friday, November 2nd and one-day symposium Saturday, November 3rd. The Screenprint Biennial is the curatorial project of Nathan Meltz, printmaker and lecturer in the Art Department of the Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute in Troy, NY.

Alejandro Arauz’s print installation-based work, entitled “Choir Chant”, was accepted to be exhibited at the Mid-America Printmaking Council (MAPC) conference entitled ‘Go West a Collaborative Turn’ that took place October 3 - 6, 2018 at the University of Wyoming, Laramie. The exhibition ran from October 3rd to the 20th.

Choir Chant explores what it means to translate the Canadian anthem into other languages to then vocally perform the translation and create a new score. For this piece, Alejandro worked with Dr. Adam Adler who is an Assistant Professor of Music Education at Nipissing University and the Near North Voices choir.

The installation consists of nine pedestals, each has an LED matrix and a sound component that plays the vocal performance. Additionally, nine framed ‘frottage’ prints (14x10 inches each) and three framed waterless lithography prints (22x30 inches each) complete the installation.

Choir Chant challenges the one-way notions of anthems and print’s role in music. This work proposes that by translating the Canadian Anthem - a deeper understanding and appreciation can be gained when learning the English and French lyrics. Furthermore, Choir Chant goes beyond the experience of simply authoring translations, it references the history of the original anthems - its creation, the editing, the implications of personal/collective vocal performance and the dissemination of the anthem through print.
Erika Adams gave a public lecture on October 11th in the Fine Art (Visual Art) Program at Queen's University. She lives and works in Montreal, Quebec, where she runs Eating Dog Press, prints for Stinger Editions, and is an associate professor of art at Concordia University. Adams is a multi-disciplinary artist whose studio practice focuses on the exploration of locating the self within a larger context, particularly within social networks, family, and community. In her work, Adams investigates how power and meaning are embedded in text and form. The images and installations she creates have a sense of the social relationships, and are inspired by insect societies, flocks of birds, wrestlers, her familial vernacular, poetry and everyday interactions.

Erika Adams earned a BA in both Art and Anthropology from UC Santa Cruz, and an MFA from the University of New Mexico, Albuquerque. She studied at the Tamarind Institute where she became a Master Printer. Adams artist residencies include the Vermont Studio Center, Frans Masereel Center in Belgium, Penland School of Crafts, ‘Djerassi, AIR Serenbe, Atelier Imago in New Brunswick, and NSCAD in Nova Scotia. Her work is exhibited internationally.

Tau Lewis is a Jamaican-Canadian artist living and working in Toronto. Her work has shown internationally. Recent exhibitions include: Frieze New York, Atlanta Contemporary, Jeffrey Stark, NYm MoMa PS1, New York, Chapter Gallery New York, COOPER COLE, Toronto, Night Gallery, Los Angeles, New Museum, New York. Her work is currently on view at the Agnes Etherington Art Centre.

Tau Lewis’ self-taught practice is rooted in healing personal, collective and historical traumas through labour. She employs methods of construction such as hand sewing, carving and assemblage to build portraits. Her work is bodily and organic, with an explicit strangeness. Her materiality of Lewis’ work is often informed by her surrounding environment; she constructs out of found objects and repurposed materials, as well as live plants and organisms sourced from urban and rural landscapes. She connects these acts of repurposing and collecting with diasporic experience. Her portraits are recuperative gestures that investigate black identity and agency, memory and recovery.