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## **MEDIA RELEASE**

### **For Immediate Release**

The Vernon Public Art Gallery welcomes 4 new exhibitions in May.

On from May 23<sup>rd</sup> – July 17<sup>th</sup> 2024, the VPAG opens four new exhibitions featuring recent Bachelor of Fine Arts Graduating Students from the University of British Columbia Okanagan, Robert Fee, Members of the VPAG Crit Club, and Members of the Teen Junction.

The exhibition *Emergence* features works of artists who have completed their studies at UBC Okanagan's BFA program in 2024. This exhibition showcases a range of hands-on approaches in research and studio practice, including digital technologies used in contemporary artistic production. The majority of works in the exhibition were hand-made, highlighting the materiality of the work, while exploring conceptual ideas of human experience, existence, and physical and psychological spaces. The works in this exhibit mark the end and the beginning of the young artists' journeys into the realm of individual creativity, critical thinking, and an active studio practice.

"On behalf of the Vernon Public Art Gallery, I'm pleased to have the opportunity to present this work from select students from the University of British Columbia Okanagan's BFA graduating class of 2024. This exhibition was developed by selecting pieces from the students' final projects prior to graduation and highlights some of the top work coming out of our neighboring University." – Dauna Kennedy, Executive Director, Vernon Public Art Gallery.

*Accidentals* by Robert Fee refers to the musical term indicating a temporary shift in a musical composition. At first this temporary change may be a mystery, but there is an underlying meaning: what might have seemed a random change always has a purposeful intention. These dynamics are explored in Fee's work through juxtaposed and shifting images, composed of overlapping abstract forms, creating tension within each piece. Fee draws on a range of influences including surrealism, pop art, and current post-modern paradigms in his work. Though predominantly surreal in appearance, Fee's works provide opportunities for the viewer to make meaning and compose their own narratives.

Members of the VPAG Crit Club are excited to present *An Eclectic Collection*, which will be on view in the Up-Front Gallery space. Crit Club was developed by VPAG Learning and Community Engagement Curator, Sierra Bronkhorst, who saw a need for a critique program within the community for aspiring young artists. Every month, the students gather to share their artwork for a group critique session, and partake in a workshop and presentation by an established guest artist. This collection will feature art pieces that have been workshopped through these sessions, now on display for the public to enjoy.



*Through Our Eyes* is a unique community-based project by the youth at the Teen Junction Youth Centre in partnership with the Vernon Public Art Gallery. The Teen Junction Youth Centre is an after-school drop-in program that offers a safe space for youth to relax, connect, and learn. They partner with community organizations to connect youth with additional resources, such as support from the VPAG for emerging artists working outside of mainstream production. The focus of this exhibition is to give voice to youth and make statements about their lives and experiences in Vernon. We all have a unique voice and presence in our community and *Through Our Eyes* is an affirmation of the importance of recognition, representation, collaboration, and the arts.

An Opening Reception will take place on May 23<sup>rd</sup> from 6-8 PM at the Vernon Public Art Gallery. The VPAG invites the community to attend this reception to celebrate the four new exhibitions, along with welcoming the exhibiting artists who will be in attendance and will give a short talk about their work. Light bites and drinks will be served and entry is by donation.



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