



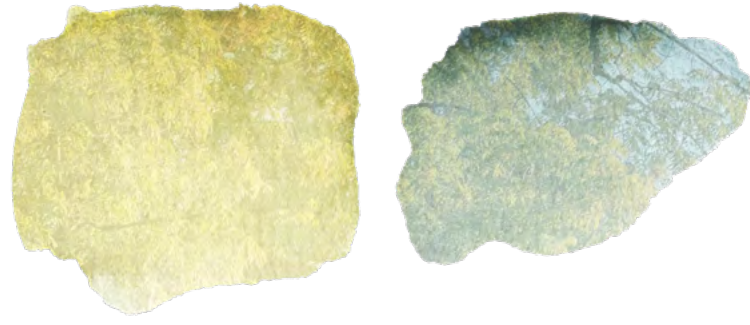
**Sharing Power:
Codifications and Collective Learnings from
Vancouver's Climate Justice Field School**





We are grateful to be on unceded and traditional
x^wməθk^wəy'əm (Musqueam), Skwxwú7mesh
(Squamish), and səlilwətał (Tsleil-Waututh)
territories.

We are working to innovate with and within a
colonial institution, and are particularly grateful for
the gifts of knowledge about Indigenous ways of
thinking, being, knowing, and doing that we have
received, and are doing our best to integrate these
into our selves and practices each day.



City of Vancouver Solutions Lab

The Solutions Lab (SLab) is a public sector social innovation lab inside the City of Vancouver that began in 2016. We work with greenest city, healthy city, climate emergency, reconciliation, and equity policies and programs. We are currently housed in the Sustainability department under the Climate Adaptation + Equity Team. Our approach draws from design, social innovation, systems thinking, equity, decolonization and visionary futures. We bring City staff and community collaborators together in creative, experimental, and learning-oriented processes to seek transformative solutions to some of the most complex challenges facing Vancouver.

Emily Carr DESIS Lab

The DESIS Lab at Emily Carr University of Art + Design supports research that advances design for social innovation towards sustainability. DESIS envisions a future of resilience, equity and diversity across human and ecological systems through social innovation, design and environmental justice. Emily Carr’s lab joined the DESIS network in 2012 and is the only DESIS lab in Canada.

Founded in 1925, Emily Carr University of Art + Design is one of B.C.’s oldest post-secondary institutions, and the only one dedicated solely to professional education and learning in the arts, media and design.

Covers: Designing Climate Justice Symposium visuals by Howsem Huang. Report written and prepared by Lily Raphael and Laura Kozak; with writing excerpts from Lindsay Cole, Sky Sage, and members of the Climate Justice Field School.

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Introduction

This is a gathering up of learnings, archival material and invitations from the Climate Justice Field School to re-imagine power-sharing with communities when it comes to implementing climate justice.



Welcome Circle, Strathcona Community Garden; image by Kamila Bashir.

About the Climate Justice Field School

Held through the summer and fall of 2023 in Vancouver, Canada, the Climate Justice Field School was a collective of 25 people made up of planners, policy makers, artists, community organizers, sustainability practitioners, activists, designers and academics that came together to learn in and from different places across our city. This project emerged following the creation of the community-written Climate Justice Charter, which is meant to provide high-level guidance, vision and accountability both for municipal actions as well as the community at large.

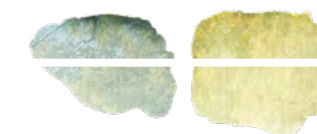
As a group, we were experimenting and learning our way into doing this work differently, deepening our understanding of what power-sharing looks like with communities most impacted by climate change and climate-related decisions.

Walks, site visits, immersive learning experiences, and co-design workshops took place across twenty sessions hosted at various outdoor sites, at Emily Carr University, and at community meeting spaces. In between these sessions, members of the field school were invited to engage in asynchronous learning activities and reflections.

For Field School members, we hope this document serves as a record and reminder of where we have been and what might guide us as we continue to stitch together our collective efforts. For the broader community of practitioners and visionaries who find their way to this document, we hope it may serve as a tool and resource for what to consider when re-imagining power-sharing with community as an important piece in enacting climate justice. At the end we have included some invitations for those interested in a similar process.

Field School Members

Adriana Laurent, Ajay Puri, Alex Barone, Amanda Mitchell, Ascher Goodman, Cathy Pasion, Chanelle Tye, Claire Brownlie, Connie Watts, Cynthia Minh, Dan Straker, David Chaney, Katia Tynan, Leona Brown, Leslie Ng, Lisa Brideau, Marga Pacis, Meghan Winters, Micah Lang, Navdeep Chhina, Paige Bennett, Rita Steele, Sarah Labahn, Zoe Laycock



Throughout this guide, we offer a series of invitations and codifications of our learnings from the Climate Justice Field School. These are notated throughout with this symbol.

Hosting Team



Lily Raphael
Solutions Lab Manager
City of Vancouver

Lily Raphael is guided by the question who + what do we as individuals, relationships, communities, organizations and systems need to become in order to cultivate well-being, joy and liberation for current and future generations of all beings? Drawing on her personal creative practices and her background in action research, design, transformative innovation and community development in the public/non-profit/academic sectors, her work focuses on designing spaces of dialogue, learning, and co-creation to navigate our communities' pressing complex challenges and imagine possible futures beyond them. More recently, she was the design + innovation lead for the Circular Food Innovation Lab, and co-authored [Step into the River: a Framework for Economic Reconciliation](#) with her dear friend and colleague Swxpilemaát Siyám, also known as Chief Leanne Joe, of Squamish Nation.



Laura Kozak
Design Researcher
DESIS, Emily Carr University

Laura Kozak (she/her) is a design researcher and community organizer. Her work focuses on relational, place-based ethics, asking how we look after and contribute to relationships with our communities, land, water and more-than-human neighbours. Through this question, she has collaborated with organizers, activists and social workers; gardeners, farmers and waste remediators; front-line workers in housing and harm reduction; advocates for cultural labour; ethnobotanists and artists engaged with land and material. She works as a mentor to students in the Social Practice and Community Engagement program at Emily Carr, teaches in the Jake Kerr Faculty of Graduate Studies, and is affiliated with the Emily Carr DESIS Lab. In 2021 she was honoured to receive the Ian Wallace Award for Teaching Excellence.



Sky Sage
Indigenous Process Lead
Sage Consulting

Sky is a Secwépemc/Dutch Indigiqueer who welcomes any pronouns used respectfully. Whether as a Community Psychology Practitioner, Registered Clinical Counsellor, SFU Ph.D. Candidate, Researcher, Educator, Artist, Human Connection Specialist, or aspiring Elder, she is passionate about co-designing experiential, shared learning experiences. She engages in action-oriented research, guides healing journeys through narrative, ritual, and somatic practices, and collaborates with allies to address eco-social justice issues and promote positive change. Her first mentors were her Kyé7es (grandmothers); Knowledge Keepers who instilled beliefs such as the power of gratitude, the benefits of transformation, and the significance of our interconnectedness - our responsibility to the people and ecosystems around us.



Lindsay Cole
Postdoctoral Research Fellow
Emily Carr University and UBC

Lindsay (she/her) is an applied and action researcher, civil servant, and parent grateful to be living in xwesam, shíshálh swiya (also known as Roberts Creek on the Sunshine Coast). She is currently a Postdoctoral Research Fellow where she is researching and teaching about transformative innovation toward social and ecological justice on a variety of initiatives. Her current applied and action research focuses on how cities can bring practices of social innovation, systemic and strategic design, visionary fiction, and others into their work on climate, equity, and decolonization challenges. Lindsay is currently an Adjunct Professor in both the Department of Educational Studies and the School of Public Policy and Global Affairs at UBC, where she is a member of the SSHRC funded Transforming Cities from Within research team. Prior to this, Lindsay worked with the City of Vancouver for 13 years on a variety of initiatives including the Solutions Lab, the Greenest City Action Plan, Healthy City Strategy, and Rewilding and Local Food work.



Kamila Bashir
Research Assistant
Emily Carr University

Kamila Bashir (she/her) is an industrial design student at Emily Carr, driven by a deep sense of purpose and a commitment to the community. As a research assistant, she engages wholeheartedly in two significant projects: the climate justice initiative and the improvement of the stillbirth journey project with the Health Design Lab at Emily Carr and BC Women's Hospital. In addition to her scholarly endeavors, she actively channels her passion for social change through student activism, serving as the Chairperson of the Student Union at Emily Carr and as a dedicated member of the Senate. With a keen appreciation for the transformative power of design, she delves into the complexities and nuances of social and ecological justice. She embraces the intricate interplay between participatory design, sustainability, and human well-being, seeking innovative solutions that harness the potential of design to shape a more inclusive, equitable, and sustainable future for our communities.



Eden Luna Goldet
Research Assistant
Emily Carr University

Eden Luna (she/any) is an interdisciplinary, social, and environmental designer. Following a Bachelor of Design at the Design Academy of Eindhoven, she is pursuing a Master of Design at Emily Carr University. Her research uses creative public engagement, looking into other-than-human and multispecies democratic participation, investigating how to shift our political systems to question scales, roles, and agency considering interdependency, rights, and representation. Aside from her role in the Climate Justice Field School, she is also involved with the Emily Carr Student Union as the Faculty of Graduate Studies + Research Representative, is a Research Assistant with the Health Design Lab, and a DESIS scholar for the year 2023-2024.

Context

Cities are facing increasing pressures to address complex challenges of climate change, equity, and reconciliation as intersecting issues. It is no longer good enough to work on these challenges discreetly, or solely within the dominant, western colonial paradigm and practices of governance.



From Climate Equity Working Group (2022). [A Climate Justice Charter for Vancouver](#). City of Vancouver.

Climate + Justice

Cities are facing increasing pressures to address complex challenges of climate change, equity, and reconciliation as intersecting issues. It is no longer good enough to work on these challenges discreetly, or solely within the dominant, western colonial paradigm and practices of governance. There are ongoing harms being caused by climate work when it does not embed justice, and there are missed opportunities for synergies across these domains as they have the same systemic root causes. Cities must adapt and transform the processes and practices that they use to work alongside community partners in order to work at these problematic roots. Enacting climate justice, and adaptation to changing climatic conditions through lenses of social and ecological justice, will require new processes that center collaboration, sharing power, and nurturing relationships.

Making of the Climate Justice Charter (CJC)

In 2022, the Climate and Equity Working Group (community members advising the City of Vancouver) produced the first ever Climate Justice Charter (CJC) for Vancouver. The purpose of the CJC is to provide high level vision, guidance, and accountability to the City of Vancouver, as well as to Vancouverites more broadly, by outlining principles, goals, and directions to create a climate just future for the present- and future humans and more-than-humans that call Vancouver home. The CJC situates this work in the disproportionate impacts of the changing climate on different communities, and in how the root of the climate crisis is in past and ongoing colonization. The CJC describes ten entangled facets of justice needed to move toward climate justice, including: disability; gender, sexual, and reproductive; migrant; health; racial; Indigenous sovereignty; distributive, procedural; restorative; and multi-species justices. You can read the Charter, and find out more about its development, [here](#).

Playing with Power in Implementing the CJC

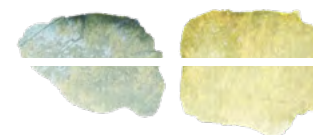
As the work of CEWG came to a close, the City staff team responsible for stewarding the CJC into implementation wrestled and reckoned with how to do this skillfully and well, and to hold to the vision, purpose, principles, and actions that the community-led CEWG set out for us. We noticed that many aspects of implementing this work would require shifts in the current ways that power is held, wielded, and expressed inside the colonial institution of a city government. We wanted to continue experimenting with and learning about practices of shifting, sharing, and relinquishing power, practicing different forms of accountability, and cultivating different types of relationships in service of climate justice. Through this exploration the idea for a Climate Justice Field School (CJFS) emerged as a collaboration between some of the City of Vancouver staff responsible for implementing the CJC, and Emily Carr University of Art + Design.

The Carbon Neutral Cities Alliance is a network-supporting organization that provided some resources from their Game Changer Fund to lift the CJFS off the ground, and Mitacs funding enabled us to add some additional big-hearted and minded folks to our team. This funding has been a critical part of the early story of the project, as it allowed us to create more abundant and spacious enabling conditions to explore and experiment, and to take time to create some different starting places and relationships for the work. We began the CJFS in early 2023, and we are excited to be sharing our learning journey with you as we travel along this pathway.

Enacting climate justice – adaptation to changing climatic conditions through foundations of social and ecological justice – will require new processes that center collaboration, sharing power, and nurturing relationships.



Playing with balance at the opening session of the Climate Justice Field School, Strathcona Community Garden; image by Kamila Bashir.



Matriarchal strategies open the space for tenderness and patience to interrupt patterns of hierarchical expertise, urgency and progress that members of the field school identified as major challenges in climate and equity work.

Inviting Matriarchal Strategies and Outdoor Field Work

The settings in which we gather to learn and build relationships matter.

Context gives our bodies and minds a rich set of cues about social dynamics, tells us how attentive we can be to physical or emotional needs, and provides a whole range of sensory stimuli. In our approach to hosting the Climate Justice Field School, we set out to be intentional and experimental with the context as a strategy to interrupt ingrained power dynamics. “Kitchen talk,” as characterized by Connie Watts, is a high-context, informal and matriarchal way of sharing knowledge, surrounded by wholly different conditions than the workplace environments that many of us have become accustomed to. We were curious about how contextual professionalism props up status-quo power dynamics, and whether gathering outside of those settings could help things to shift.

In experimenting with these matriarchal approaches, we’ve been circling back to Connie’s descriptions of kitchen talk; a roundtable discussion of [Matriarchal Strategies in Design](#) (2021); and to Aaron Nelson-Moody and Justin Wilson’s [Looking Back to the Potlatch as a Guide to Truth, Reconciliation and Transformative Learning](#) (2019). These are some of the contextual conditions we’ve been experimenting with in order to help nurture a matriarchal approach:

Soft Edges: There is a porosity to the way we can join in or step back; we attempted to collaborate in ways where no one feels pushed to do something they’re not ready for or obliged to stay longer than they want to. This consensual opting in or out is implicit, and contrasts with the expectations of transactional ways of working.

Sharing Food: Making sure everyone is fed means that no one is quietly fighting pangs of hunger while trying to focus on the intellectual task of learning. Food rearranges people, gives us something in common to experience and nourishes our body-minds.

Distributed Leadership: Everyone is given an opportunity to be a novice and to be an expert. Everyone is there to contribute, but no one feels pressure to know all the answers or get it right every time. There’s room for contributions to emerge when the agenda isn’t jam-packed with one person’s plans.

Informality: We’ve been noticing what parts of our stories can show up when we don’t lead with our job titles or qualifications. Letting humour, humanity and humility come into the way we gather is a strong determinant for relationship building, and something we can nurture through the ways we introduce ourselves, the pace and settings for our gatherings.

Setting as Teacher: Meeting outdoors in the company of earth relatives (plant and animal beings), with exposure to the weather — heat, smells, fresh air, smoke, sounds — means we are collectively experiencing the conditions of climate. These embodied and shared feelings of grief/discomfort and gratitude/ease catalyze a different form of memory and set of reminders that we are vulnerable to the impacts of climate change.

Learning Journey

Spring

Hosting Team Planning Sessions

How can we experiment with doing things differently?

What capacities, encouragements and permissions can we give each other to support each other as co-facilitators?

Summer

Opening Circle and Walk

What are the questions related to climate justice that you are currently wrestling with?

What is something that you want to move into a different relationship with, when you think about tensions and balance?

What story is the land telling? What agency do you have in your role/position/life to work with that story? What does learning from an earth relative look like for you?

Asynchronous Reflection and Writing

What ancestries, power, privileges, experiences, assumptions, values or other perspectives do you hold? How might this shape how you see, understand, experience, and “know” the problem space that you are working in?

Which moorings are you feeling pulled towards and why? Which feel less familiar and why?

Fall

Site Visits and Co-Design Sessions

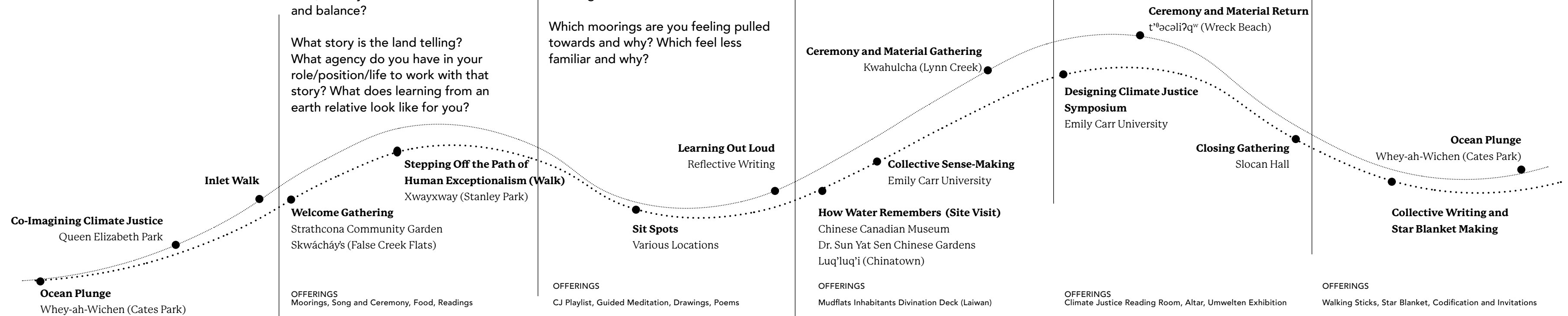
Who should be included in the community of practice? Who is currently included and who isn't?

What's an intention for the way you want to show up?

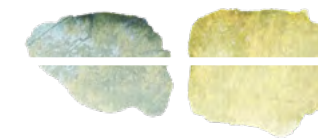
Winter

Closing Circle and Reflection

What did we learn as a collective? So what? Now What?



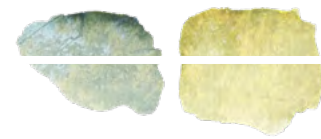
Place names from Squamish Atlas, Kwi Awt Stelmexw Language and Arts Society; Tsleil-Waututh Nation Interactive Map, and shared by Vanessa Campbell, Jill Campbell, Xwalacktun, Aaron Nelson-Moody and Carleen Thomas, [Building Relationships Through the Language of Place](#), Emily Carr AGP, 2022.



Throughout this learning journey, we chose many times to **gather outdoors** instead of online or inside. This was a small move that sharpened our attunement to weather and seasons, removed us from the strains and distractions of technology, oriented us more immersively to community, and centred feelings of joy in the ways we gathered.

Moorings

At the onset of launching the Field School, we were asking ourselves questions about how to begin well.



What sorts of forces, values, and principles could guide how the collective shows up in this experience?

What are the ways in which we are trying to do things differently from the status quo when it comes to enacting climate justice?

The idea to think about these as “moorings” arose during our hosting team dialogues with one another. The idea of moorings appears in many places. We are especially inspired by Resmaa Menakem’s use of moorings in his work on somatic abolitionism. He invites people to identify anchor points that they can stay grounded in and focused on to help with wayfinding when navigating and working to heal (from) generational and ongoing racialized trauma and the deep and widespread culture of white supremacy.

In the Field School we navigated big, complex, emergent and turbulent waters. The following moorings are what we stay tethered to, knowing that as we set out on the ocean there may be other moorings that show up that we want to tie onto, some that we might want to let go of, and ones that we may want to retreat to or reflect from.

With gratitude to the work of Resmaa Menakem, Gesturing Towards Decolonial Futures, Alexis Pauline Gumbs, Transforming Cities from Within, Bayo Akomalafe and the Aniwa Community for inspiring the development of these moorings.

Joy

As in orienting to joy for ourselves, other beings, our families, other members in the field school, our colleagues
As in choosing that which uplifts us, which makes us feel light and easeful

Embodiment

As in checking in with the body, using the body as a compass for how to relate to my inner and outer world
As in recording new practices with the body, deep in our bones

Depth

As in depth conversations, in which we “risk being changed by what we come to know” (Gesturing Towards Decolonial Futures)
As in seeing and acting below the surface

Accountability

As in taking personal responsibility for how you’re showing up
As in creating trust through reciprocal relationships and consistency of the alignment between our word and action

Agency

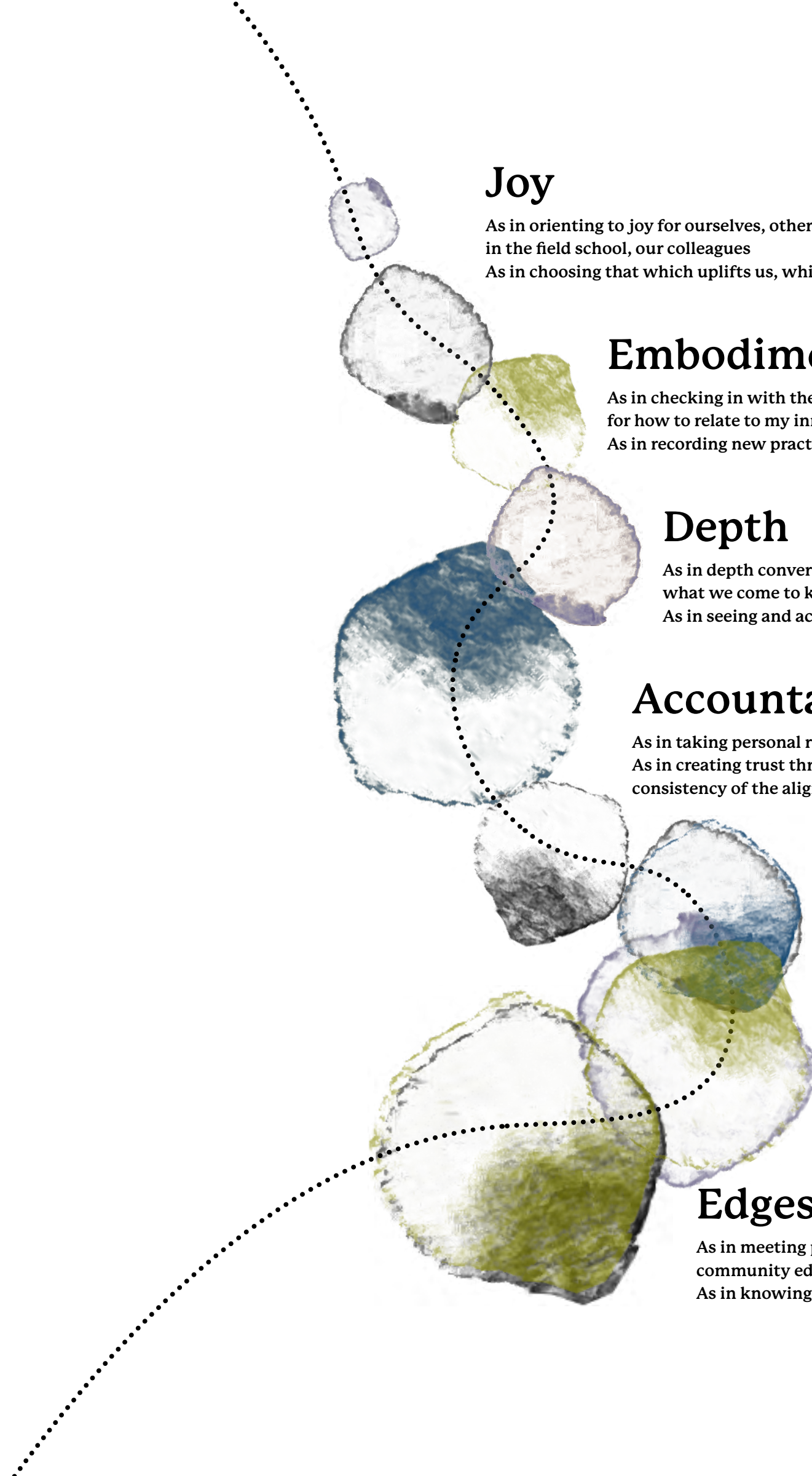
As in what do I give myself permission to courageously step into?
As in what is in my power at any given point in time?

Teetering

As in contending with how balance, how distribution happens
As in reckoning with the reality that many things are true at once

Edges

As in meeting personal, relational, organizational, systemic and collective community edges in order for growth and change to manifest
As in knowing and tending to what we need as we stretch ourselves





Welcome Circle

Session One

Skwácháys | Strathcona Community Garden, June 2023

Our first gathering took place in the shade of a crabapple tree within a space lovingly cared-for by the Environmental Youth Alliance and members of Strathcona Community Garden. Members of the Collective were asked in advance “what questions are you currently navigating related to embedding justice, equity, reconciliation and/or decolonization into your work?” The submitted questions were printed and placed in baskets: small groups formed and drew from these baskets as the starting place for discussions and getting to know each other.

We intentionally did not begin with introductions through our professional roles, instead inviting the group to greet each other in a more relational and informal way. A table of tea and snacks, a set of notebooks, and a game interacting with balance formed the backdrop for these conversations. Ceremony (Sky Sage) and song (Lily Raphael) formed the closing of this gathering, inviting cultural exchange as an important practice within climate justice work.

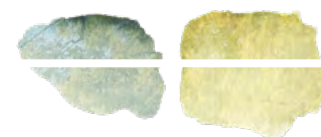
Lily Raphael singing *Wayra Shamuy* (Come, Good Wind) as taught to her by Kichwa language teacher Enrique Tasiguano (Kitukara) at the Welcome Circle; image by Kamila Bashir.



Signing in at the welcome table,
Strathcona Community Garden;
image by Kamila Bashir

“What does joy look like for communities? How might I show up differently to serve?”

“How might we navigate the tension between moving quickly to address near-term harms with the need for relational work that moves at the speed of trust?”



Begin with questions. Draw from these questions to open up different ways and depths of thinking about climate justice.

Collective Questions

At the beginning of the Field School, people interested in joining were asked to share questions related to climate justice that they were currently wrestling with. This surfaced the different experiences, depths of thinking, kinds of readiness for justice work, and perspectives that we were starting with as a collective. These questions were posed by planners, policy makers, artists, community organizers, sustainability practitioners, activists, designers and academics working in and around Vancouver and discussed around picnic tables during our first session.

How do we push staff to share power? I’m currently thinking a lot about displacement and climate change within the context of Vancouver. I wonder what the city will look like in 20 to 30 years – who will still be able to afford it? What neighbourhoods will still be liveable?

Can you dismantle the masters home with the masters tools and cause less harm or do you have to create a revolution and transformation for change to occur so that there is liberation for all? (Ajay Puri)

How might we embed climate justice principles into DEI work?

How do we create spaces of lateral liberation, and move away from lateral violence? (Ajay Puri)

How can we evaluate and measure equity in climate action?

How do we deepen justice work in the climate/eco space? i.e., Great first steps such as fee for single-use cups or bags, reusable bottles, EV cars, bike lanes, but try more systemic change such as #landback, co-stewarding the lands/public assets with indigenous and racialized communities and/or other marginalized communities (Ajay Puri)

What does climate justice actually look like at the local level?

Our engagement processes and systems are not equitable; what systems can we replace them with? How does this change happen? What’s our theory of change?

How could I, through my work with cities and elected officials, encourage them to be bolder in action towards justice and equity?

What does it cost us to be always the one calling out injustice? What does it cost us to be silent when there is injustice (cost to ourselves, to our future generations, mother earth, and our ancestors/elders)? (Ajay Puri)

How could I, through my research and teaching practice, better and more frequently build in questions around justice, equity and decolonization?

How do we prevent the dilution of climate justice and equity from initiatives over time?

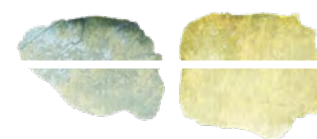
How can we build capacity among all staff to recognize their responsibility in embedding justice, equity, reconciliation, and decolonization into all stages at their work, without a feeling that this work is too daunting or time consuming, but rather necessary work with exciting and hopeful outcomes?

How do we help institutions or entities that hold tremendous power in society distribute that power (share power) with those that are at the margins (giving agency, self-determination, moving away from tokenism, etc)? (Ajay Puri)



“What does it cost us to be always the one calling out injustice?”

What does it cost us to be silent when there is injustice – cost to ourselves, to our future generations, mother earth, and our ancestors/elders?” (Ajay Puri)



Gather in circles and share food whenever possible. These are both simple moves that signal a different way of coming together. Images by Kamila Bashir.

How do we navigate complex justice issues that leaders in power/community do not agree on?

How do we navigate when the equity equivalent of ‘greenwashing’ happens, when insincere concerns about equity are used as a reason not to make change?

How might we navigate the tension between moving quickly to address near-term harms to equity-denied communities related to emergencies, disasters, and climate change with the need for relational work that moves at the speed of trust?

How might we embed justice and equity into CEAP actions, accurately and properly conveying these connections to Amplifier members, and conveying the connection and importance to elected officials.

I have been thinking about the pace of learning and how urgency can often lead to further oppression, and how it feels so urgent to un-learn the colonial frameworks I have grown up in. How can we, in a fast paced learning environment, unlearn the colonial frameworks while making sure that this urgency doesn’t lead to further oppression?

How do we balance time/resources between adjusting the existing inherently broken system and enabling/pushing transformation change/new systems. Also, how to do the latter?

I’m navigating how marginalized individuals are expected to engage in conversations to avoid hurting the feelings of those with privilege, or hurting their own position/security in a complex bureaucracy, whereas those with privilege continue to benefit from engagement in these dynamics.

How is our organization allocating resources? Communities are on the front lines already of climate change - with extreme heat, wildfire smoke, increasingly violent winter storms, etc. yet the struggle to get resources for urgent care work is very real.

As staff, how “authentic” can we be in a space like this and how “safe” is it?

How might we challenge perspectives and shift our expectations and understanding of who we are in this world and the roles we play – at work, in creating policy, in co-creating a better future?

How have I been upholding certain beliefs or ways of working and how does that impact the communities I want to serve?

What does joy look like for communities? How might I show up differently to serve?

How might we develop an update to the City’s Climate Change Adaptation Strategy in a way that centres equity – a different approach?

What does a climate justice approach look like for developing green building regulations and support programs that impact multifamily buildings?

How can I fund the work I do in spaces that influence policy change with Indigenous views?

How might we move from metaphorical decolonization to true unlearning of colonial systems? I’m also really trying to find a nuanced balance between indigenizing systems and other forms of anti-racist justice for Black people, people of colour and other marginalized groups.



Stepping Off the Path of Human Exceptionalism

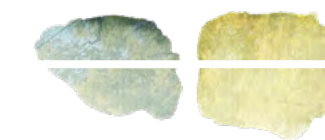
Session Two

Xwayxway | Stanley Park, July 2023

Led by Field School participant Dan Straker, this session moved the group from a hot, paved tourist site into the shade of the temperate coastal forest for a group walk. Dan has experience working with the urban coyote population, and we were curious how we might experiment with navigating a walk from an other-than-human perspective.

Building on Sto:lo scholar Lee Maracle's question posed in "Goodbye Snauq: How We Work With Story", this walk asked the group to collectively reflect on the question "what story is the land telling us" and "what agency in my role/position/life do I have to work with that story".

"I remember walking through Stanley Park hike trail, witnessing the colonized nature but observing human nature in the simpleness of walking at my pace, a couple of people took care to make me feel included; at the same time waiting for society to walk and care for nature with the same simpleness." (LAB)



Consider yourself as an active participant within your ecosystem with agency to make changes to it. Take off your human-centered glasses and listen to all the other beings around you. How are they impacted by the effects of climate change? What ways are they communicating, and what stories are they telling?

Group walk through Stanley Park trails, led by Dan Straker; image by Kamila Bashir.



Reflections from Sit Spots

Session Three

Various Locations | Asynchronous, August 2023

In August, the Field School Collective worked asynchronously from a consistent 'sit spot' to respond to a shared set of prompts. The intent of the sit spot was to create a place of relational connection, attunement to weather and earth relatives, and focused reflection away from conventional work spaces and technology. The hosting team sent weekly emails with questions, an invitation to do an activity, and a gift.

There were a few different approaches and learnings from the sit spot time. While some had a consistent sit spot, others folks in the Collective chose different spots or different activities other than sitting (walking, swimming, singing). Others found it hard to carve out that kind of time for themselves without the presence of the field school structure.

Example Gift:

[Field School Playlist](#)

“I reflected on relationship to place quite a bit. I’m usually in an office – muted colours and uniform. It’s a space so disassociated from the realities and communities we purport to serve in our work.

How can we do this work if we sever this connection and relationship to place?” (CP)

Sit spot image by Lily Raphael

Sit Spot Prompt

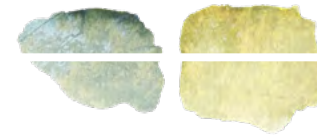
Choose an outdoor location to be your Sit Spot for the duration of the Field School. Some considerations for this:

- It should be a location that is accessible to you throughout the summer and fall and is convenient to return to regularly
- It should have a variety of other beings present: plants, animals, humans, fungus, etc. and some exposure to the weather
- It can be familiar or unfamiliar to you - a patio, backyard, park space, forest walk, tide pool or anywhere you would be comfortable visiting regularly to do some observation and reflective writing about what comes up for you in your sit spot

Reflection Questions

Reflecting on our two opening gatherings, write some responses to the following questions in preparation for our work in the fall:

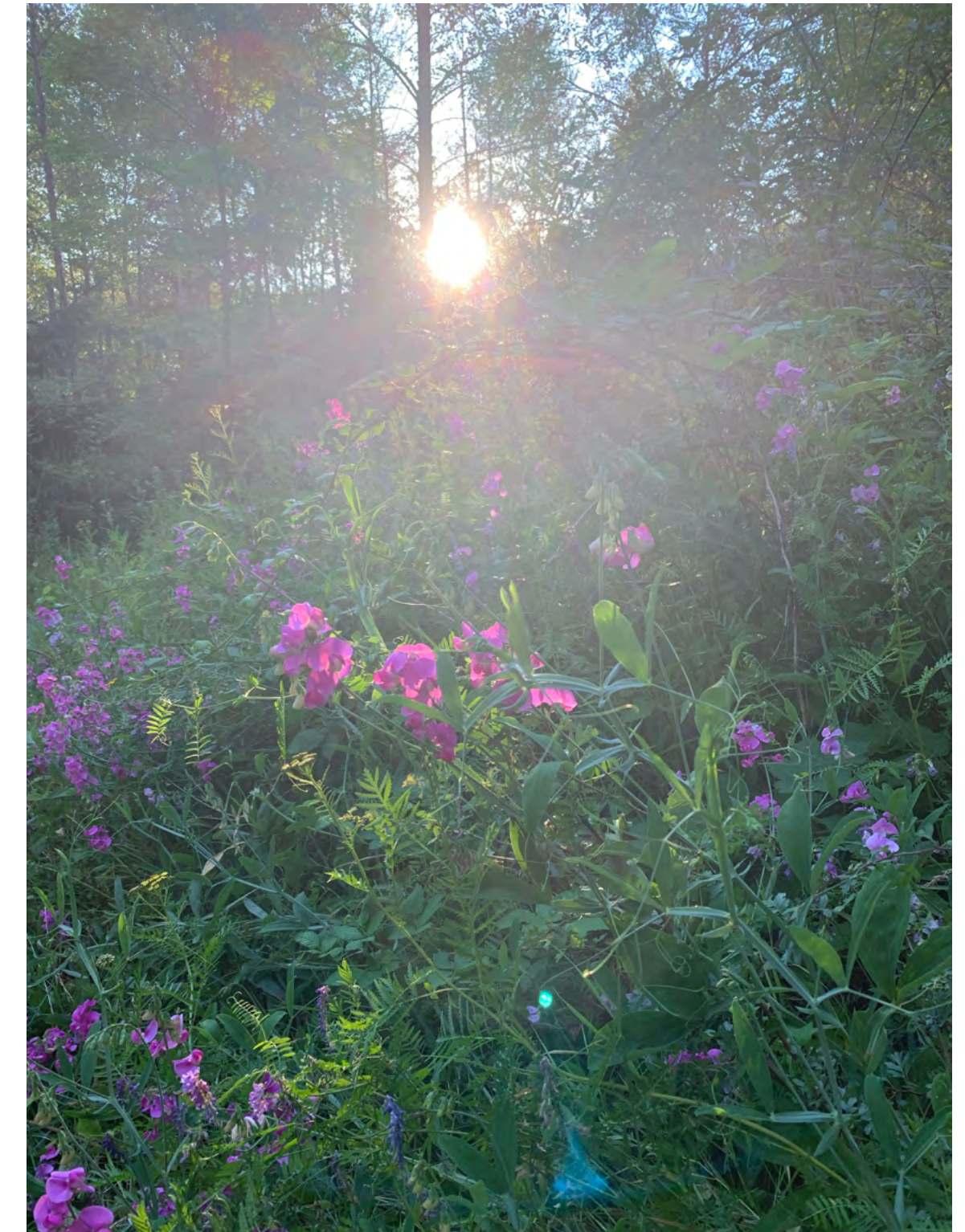
- Which moorings are you feeling pulled towards and why? Which feel less familiar and why?
- By the end of this field school, I want to be able to...
- What is something that you want to move into a different relationship with, when you think about tensions and balance?
- What ancestries, power, privileges, experiences, assumptions, values or other perspectives do you hold? How might this shape how you see, understand, experience, and “know” the problem space that you are working in?
- What does learning from an earth relative (plant, animal, mineral, fungi, water body, mountain, etc.) look like for you?



Connected to somatic practice, a sit spot offers an accessible and alternative way to notice change, to observe and relate to earth relatives, to rest and reflect in an intentional and uninterrupted way.

“I experienced rest, calmness, connectedness, care, and joy when gathering as part of the field school, and noticing how little these feelings are experienced in an office setting.” (SL)

“Work can look and feel very different in positive ways. Rest is productive; slowing down with others, listening, being present is productive.” (ZL)



Sit spot image by Lily Raphael

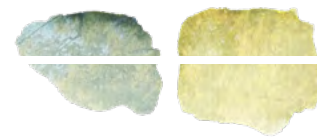
Personal and Collective Growth

An excerpt from *Community Engagement/Climate Action/Personal/Collective Growth (Things we see as inseparable)*

Sky Sage

What will the future look like if humans commit to positive change? Where are humans falling into the patterns/habits/trappings of our colonial institutions or narrow approaches to climate action? In this project, how can we attempt to do things differently? What is at stake if we don't engage in this kind of exploration?

This journey has required all of us to increase our ability to open, experiment, and observe.



Learning Out Loud: Midway through the Field School, the hosting team set up a blog space to document what we were learning from our time together. This served as a tool to help us make sense of what we were experiencing and integrate learnings while in process rather than solely reflecting at the very end. This is an excerpt from the blog.

We have been navigating new terrains, adjusting our map as we go. It has been a space to share our experiences and explore our curiosity, even if we end up with more questions than answers. This organic process helped us slowly increase our tolerance for ambiguity. What a potent gift during a time when uncertainty too often fills our bodies with fear. We acknowledge the bravery it takes to seek greater understanding, grapple with complex issues, and pursue change. Courage can manifest in various forms, both big and small. Minor acts of courage are as important as big ones, like speaking up for what you believe in, facing personal fears, or standing up for someone in need. In fact, these small acts of courage often lay the foundation for larger ones. Courage is about pushing past fear and taking action, regardless of the scale of that action.

Why do this personal/collective work?

The pandemic, extreme temperatures, wildfires, floods, rising costs, the list goes on. The pressing question is: what will happen if we don't do this work? While there may be disagreements on specific actions, there is a shared understanding that "we need to do something different." We need as many people as possible to feel this longing; to connect with others, and actively co-create our new normal.

To embark on a path of positive change, we must challenge entrenched systems and embrace new paradigms. We need to rethink our relationships — to ourselves, each other, and our Earth Relatives. This may include adopting regenerative practices, amplifying previously excluded voices, or valuing the wisdom of Ancestral knowledge. Collectively, we must explore how we perpetuate destructive patterns and social injustices. It has become painfully apparent that there is no neutral stance in these matters, and everyone has a stake in creating a better future.

The consequences of inaction are palpable, as the stakes keep getting raised. What are we waiting for? What will make it impossible to ignore? More frequent and severe climate-related disasters? Further displacement of communities, loss of biodiversity, social unrest? It is time to reclaim the truth of our interdependence. And how collaboration, empathy, and solidarity are key principles in doing things differently.

Exploring alternative approaches is essential for our survival and the well-being of future generations. Billions of people know we need to rebuild communities to be stronger, fairer, and more sustainable. How can we respond to this collective yearning?

Why we struggle with change (sometimes)

Humans can have multilayered and contradictory motivations when it comes to maintaining the status quo or desiring change. Here are some examples of why individuals might want change yet still feel reluctant to take action:

Lack of Resources: Practical constraints, such as a lack of time, money, or resources, can hinder individuals from taking action, even if they genuinely want change.

Fear of the Unknown: Change often involves venturing into the unknown, which can be intimidating. Humans tend to prefer certainty and predictability, even if the current situation isn't ideal. We tend to feel more comfortable when we know what to expect.

Loss Aversion: We are often more motivated to avoid losses than to achieve gains. Change can involve perceived losses, such as leaving behind old habits or routines, which can make people hesitant.

Psychological Inertia: It's sometimes easier to stick with the status quo because change requires effort, energy, and mental adaptation.

Social Pressure: Society and peer groups can exert significant pressure. Conforming to norms and expectations can hinder one's willingness to change.

Loss of Control: Change can make individuals feel like they are losing control over their lives or situations.

Overwhelm: The prospect of significant change can feel overwhelming. Individuals may desire change but feel unsure of where to start or how to navigate the process.

Fear of Failure: We can struggle with the possibility of failure or not meeting expectations. It is a powerful deterrent to taking risks.

Attachment to the Past: Individuals often have emotional attachments to the way things were or how they used to do things. Letting go of these attachments can be difficult.

Learned Helplessness: A psychological phenomenon where individuals who repeatedly face aversive situations or experiences may come to believe that their actions cannot change their circumstances. This perception can lead to a sense of helplessness and hopelessness.

Emotional Impact: Change can bring about a range of emotions, including grief, sadness, or anxiety, which can fuel resistance.

Habitual Behavior: Humans are creatures of habit, and breaking established habits can be difficult. Change often requires altering these routines.

Default Mode Network: Our brains operate on autopilot or default mode. Much of our daily functioning occurs unconsciously, driven by established neural pathways. This automatic mode can both streamline tasks and hinder our ability to embrace change.

Trauma: The impact of trauma on neural pathways is significant. Our experiences shape our brains and nervous systems, so dealing with trauma is crucial to fostering healthy development.

Keep these in mind whenever you are feeling frustrated by people's reluctance or your own resistance. Humans are social and emotional beings. We often benefit more from transformative processes when we have support, resources, and a sense of community. Talking to others who are experiencing similar challenges can be an immense relief. We need to remember that support usually means emotional, psychological, as well as practical.

Compassion, connection, and collaboration are emphasized in this care, which is in contrast to the idea of Rugged Individualism commonly associated with Western Culture. While self-reliance and individualism have their place, no individual exists in complete isolation. Interconnectedness is a fundamental aspect of our human experience — both internally and externally.



How Water Remembers

Session Four

Luq'luq'i | Chinese Canadian Museum and

Dr. Sun Yat Sen Classical Chinese Garden, September 2023

Vancouver's Chinatown is a site of complex ecological and social history; members of the Collective identified it as an important place for us to visit. For this session, we collaborated with artist Laiwan to visit the site of their work *How Water Remembers*, which speaks to these layers of change. A screening of *Summer Afternoon* (1956) surrounded by narratives presented in the Chinese Canadian Museum provided context for a walk through Chinatown to Dr. Sun Yat Sen Classical Chinese Garden to draw cards from a deck of mudflats inhabitants at home in this ecological area.

"*How Water Remembers* explores how biodiversity and cultural diversity remembers, a flow of a way of life, a return of ancestral worldviews, traditional knowledge and stewardships, training an agile consciousness. We can highlight and daylight other ways of knowing that had once been invisible underground networks, in the same way underground streams are daylighted and recovered for fish, phytoplankton and numerous critters to once again find their way home. Their arrival and return can be seen as embodying the role of future guardians led by the spectacular 龍母 [Dragon Mother]."

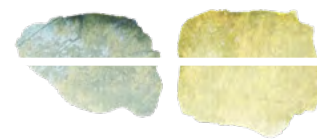
In the garden we encountered Heron, who, as noted in Laiwan's Divination Deck, symbolizes leadership: "with calm elegance and patience, you are watchful of the horizon. Stillness will bring you careful attention to lead the way. Lift off with powerful wings to carry others in flight."

Laiwan is an interdisciplinary artist, writer and educator with a wide-ranging practice based in poetics and philosophy. Born in Zimbabwe of Chinese parents, her family immigrated to Canada in 1977 to leave the war in apartheid Rhodesia. Her art training began at the Emily Carr College of Art & Design (1983), and she returned to academia to receive an MFA from Simon Fraser University School for Contemporary Arts (1999). Recipient of numerous awards, including the 2023 VIVA Award, 2021 Emily Award from Emily Carr University, recent Canada Council and BC Arts Council Awards, and the 2008 Vancouver Queer Media Artist Award, Laiwan served on numerous arts juries, exhibits regularly, curates projects in Canada, the US, and Zimbabwe, is published in anthologies and journals, and taught for twenty years at the MFA in Interdisciplinary Arts Program at Goddard College (VT/WA, USA). She is based on the unceded ancestral territories of the Musqueam, Squamish, and Tsleil-Waututh First Nations and currently works in the Department of Decolonization, Arts and Culture at the Vancouver Park Board.

Laiwan leading the group through Dr. Sun Yat Sen Classical Chinese Garden. Image by Laura Kozak.



From left: Great Blue Heron, Dr. Sun Yat Sen Classical Chinese Garden; screening of *Summer Afternoon* at the Chinese Canadian Museum; from the *How Water Remembers Divination Game*. Images by Kamila Bashir and Laiwan.



Design for flexibility: make time and provide invitations for decisions to emerge from the group. This session of the field school was added because the group was curious and interested to spend time learning more about Chinatown.



2.
領袖 LEADERSHIP
 Great Blue Heron (*Ardea herodias fannini*)
 大藍鷺

With calm elegance and patience, you are watchful of the horizon.
 Stillness will bring you careful attention to lead the way.
 Lift off with powerful wings to carry others in flight.

你優雅沉穩，注視著地平綫。
 以靜制動，你是敏銳的引領者，
 帶上同伴展翅高飛。

GROUP
16 TEAM

+ QUESTIONS
OR IDEAS (IF
YOU WANT)

AND WE WILL
FOLLOW UP WITH YOU :)

Cathy

leona - civic policies

How to bring our whole selves (feelings,
naps and all) to our 'professional' lives?

PLANNING
TO A
SYMPOSIUM

Collective Sense-Making

Session Five

Emily Carr University Board Room, September 2023

The intent of this session was to bring together reflections from the sit spots and their overall experience in the Field School so far, helping us to collectively orient towards deeper learning in preparation for the October symposium. This took place in the Emily Carr Board Room, with a number of paper stations surrounding an open circle of chairs. There was also a digital visual of the journey we had been on thus far. Members of the Collective were asked what they would like to contribute to next, as well as some questions they might be holding at this time.

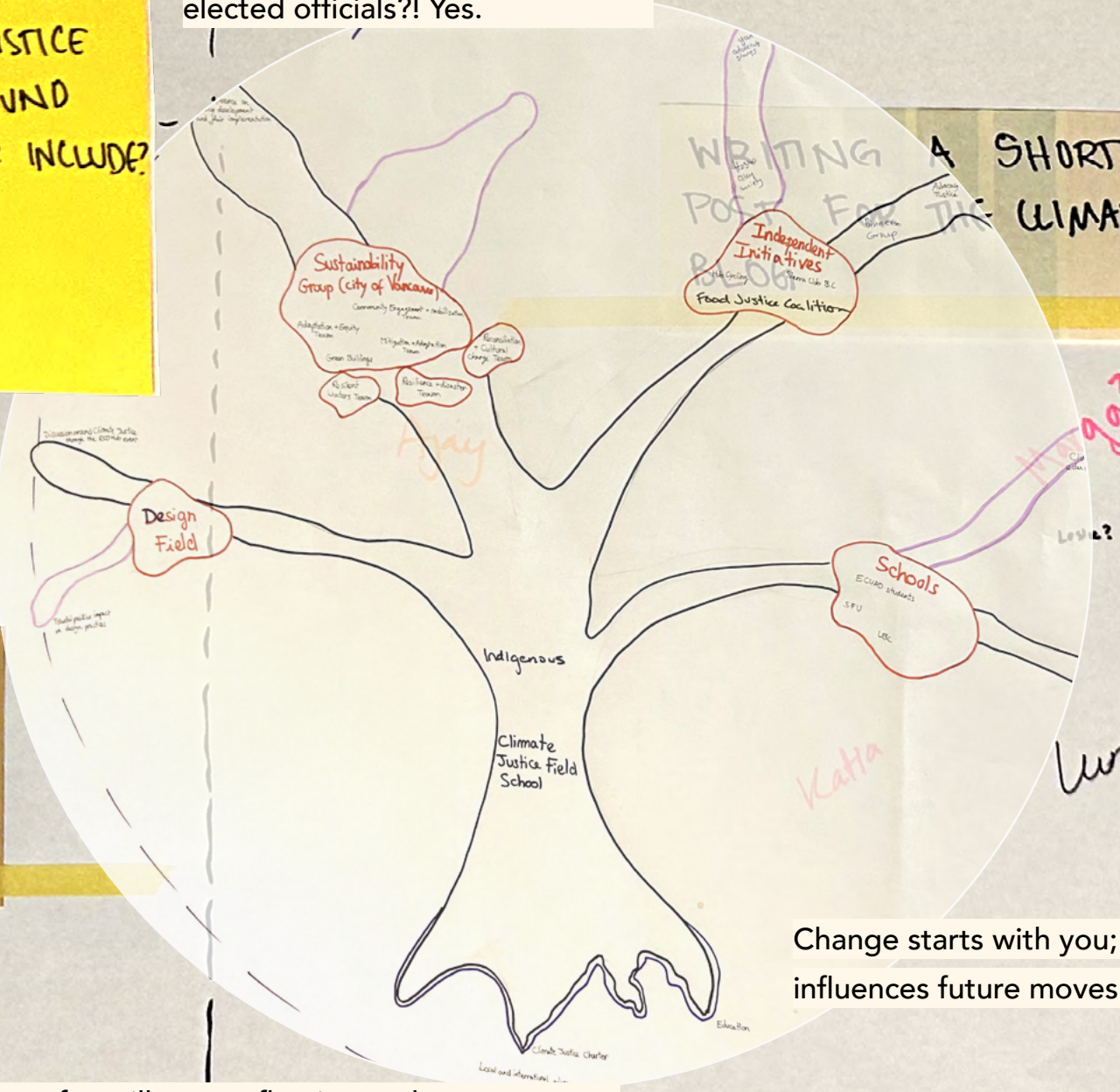
At this point in time it was challenging to know what we were ready for, if there was something specific to be co-designing or producing together. This session was difficult and a bit draining, and was a good reminder of how powerful the setting is in shaping the way we relate to each other. Meeting in a university board room felt like it reinforced power dynamics and made us all a bit uncomfortable. Conversation did not flow easily, and we struggled to find the energy and creativity to work collectively in anticipation of the symposium.

WHO SHOULD THE
COMMUNITY OF
PRACTICE AROUND
CLIMATE JUSTICE
IN AND AROUND
VANCOUVER INCLUDE?

How is government/civic policies
changed? Influence staff, educate
elected officials?! Yes.

More naps! <3

WRITING A SHORT BLOG
POST FOR THE
CLIMATE JUSTICE



Don't postpone joy

“We were challenged in navigating the urge
or expectation for something tangible and
outcome-focused to happen, and figuring
out how much to focus on sense-making
compared to creating next steps.

Do relationships feel solid enough to
continue deepening and evolving while this
version of a container has “ended”? Can
we trust longer timescales that might reveal
that to be true?”

STARTING WITH BRINGING
THE FIELD SCHOOL
INTO YOUR OWN
WORKPLACE / CONTEXT

Change starts with you; this move
influences future moves.

Create space for stillness, reflection and
relationships (even if it means using calendar holds :))

David
AI
& how that
could be
related to climate
justice?

Group notations from Collective
Sensemaking (Session Five); highlighted
text is 'a quote, phrase or reflection
you'd be willing to share'; ecosystem
map by Eden Luna Goldet; images by
Lily Raphael.



Designing Climate Justice Symposium

Sessions Six – Nineteen

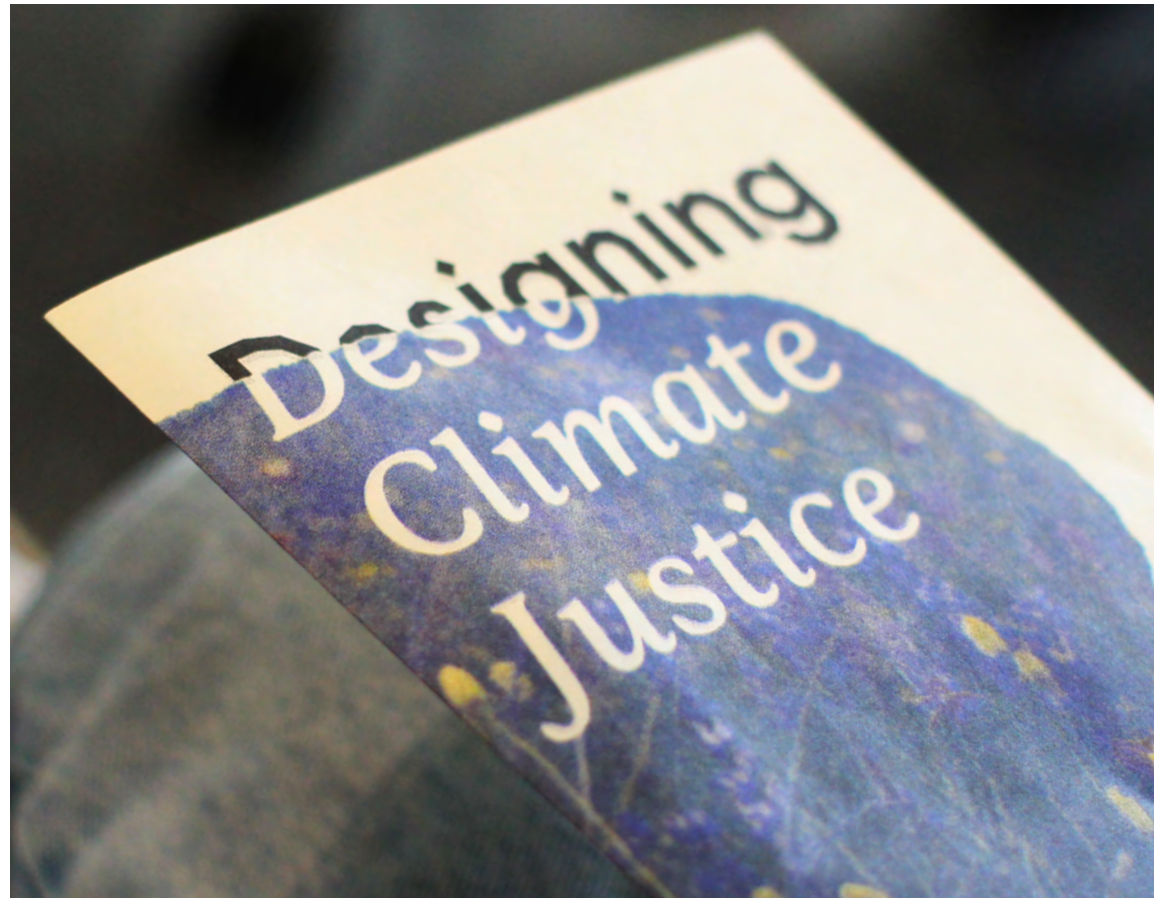
Emily Carr University, October 2023

To share the learnings and practices of the Climate Justice Charter and Field School more broadly, Emily Carr University and the City of Vancouver co-hosted a hub event with the Systemic Design Association's international gathering across 13 cities titled Relating Systems Thinking and Design (RSD-12) in October 2023. Our hub welcomed over 200 people: researchers, civil servants, design students and community members.

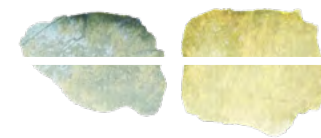
Facilitators were invited to curate fourteen experiential and experimental sessions across a range of justices. Rather than a lecture or presentation, our keynote took the form of storytelling and remembering with Splash/Aaron Nelson-Moody, Justin Wilson and Cai Brown. This session invited us to sit with story and engage with the role of witnessing when it comes to enacting climate justice.

“When we sit in a circle, it’s not to change other peoples’ minds, but to be changed ourselves.” (Splash)

Splash (Aaron Nelson-Moody) with Cai Brown and Justin Wilson at the opening session of the symposium: Recollections from Ut'sam. Image by Kamila Bashir.



From left: Symposium program, designed by Howsem Huang; Decolonizing Tea, facilitated by Leona Brown; Water Equality, facilitated by Bianca Del Rio Kodato



In programming the symposium, we were guided by eleven different facets of climate justice described in the CJC (shown p. 7). Facilitators were invited to work with one or more of these facets in their sessions, resulting in a lot of variety to the typologies of sessions, including walks, site visits, family-friendly workshops, circle discussions and teas.





Symposium Program

Recollections from Uts'ám

Splash (Aaron Nelson-Moody, or Tawx'sin Yexwulla) Cai Brown and Justin Wilson
10:30, Sunday, October 15, 2023, Rennie Hall (B2160)

The Uts'ám Witness Project began in 1997: Squamish Nation Hereditary Chief Bill Williams, photographer Nancy Bleck and mountaineer John Clarke convened to bring people out to the land in traditional Squamish territory to witness changes at "Tree Farm License 38" (TFL38). The public was invited to participate in summer wilderness camping weekends at Sims Creek, in the Elaho Valley, and to participate in a traditional Coast Salish Witness Ceremony. Originally meant to last one summer, the project ended up running for 10 years, involving 10,000 people, and ultimately was successful at preserving the area from logging, and bringing it under protection through the Squamish Nation Sacred Land Use Plan. Splash shares recollections from that time and discusses the role of intercultural exchange, land stewardship and the role of witnessing along with Cai Brown and Justin Wilson.

Aaron Nelson-Moody, or "Splash", lives and works in the Capilano Village on the North Shore of Vancouver, British Columbia, and spent the best part of his youth in the Cheak'mus Village in Squamish. Tawx'sin Yexwulla translates to "Splashing Eagle" in the Squamish language, so most people know him simply as "Splash." He also carries the name Poolxtun, from his adopted father Gerry Oleman, which translates as: "the spreading ripples from a splash of water." These days he is teaching Northwest Coast woodcarving at Langara College, and doing cultural presentations in the public school system. He has worked with community groups and students in a number of schools in the Squamish and Vancouver areas since 1995, as well as sharing in Japan and Scotland, and continues to research and teach Coast Salish art.

Decolonizing Tea: Indigenous Sovereignty and Climate Justice

Leona Brown
12:00, Sunday, October 15, 2023, Aboriginal Gathering Place (C2290)

Around a table sipping a cup of Devil's Club tea, Leona Brown will share with us how Indigenous sovereignty sits at the root of climate justice. By exploring different kinds of justices through topics of circularity, land, childhood protection, and access, we will sit down together to openly share and listen.

Leona Brown: "As an Indigenous Cultural Programmer healing through advocacy, I gained three years of training in Land and Lives around Indigenous Culture with the Resurfacing History Program Coordinated by Jolene Andrew. This work has become my Healing Journey, the grassroots teachings and knowledge is shared with my children. This knowledge is important to know who we are and where we come from and how we live with the Lands and Waterways around us. As a Gitksan Refugee in the unceded territories of Musqueam, Squamish, and Tsleil-waututh, I have been taking on land-based work here in the city and thrive as a great ambassador to the work Resurfacing History has taught me around Indigenous food, Sovereignty, and access to resources."

The Becoming into Loving and Radical Co-Existence

Mumbi Maina
12:00, Sunday, October 15, 2023, Room B3130

What is the place of courage, love, empathy, authenticity, and boldness in the climate justice movement? Amidst the ongoing climate catastrophe, it's a gift to take time to imagine ways of becoming that feel important to us and attend to the calls of racialized migrant communities. The answers are deeply embedded within us. This session is an invitation to journey into our collective being to envision what it would take to become vessels of courage, love, and authenticity for others, centering those with life experiences of exclusion.

Mumbi Naomi Maina, Ph.D. has spent the last decade working on social and environmental justice organizing, research, and governance, including anti-racist education and cross-cultural collaboration with immigrant and other communities across Turtle Island. In 2022 she was recognized as one of the 23 Black leaders in Vancouver by the Vancouver Economic Commission. Currently, Mumbi is part of the Diversity, Equity and Inclusion team at the Provincial Health Services Authority where she works to transform internal systems. She is also a member of Black CAN (formerly known as Black Voters Matter Canada), an organization working to build Black political power and community support by engaging, encouraging and empowering Black Canadians to get more involved in politics. Through the Transforming Cities from Within project, Mumbi co-facilitated a nation-wide community of practice for municipal leaders on equity, decolonization and climate change. She also worked with the City of Vancouver on climate and equity and led the development of the City's first Equity Framework.

Noticing Water

Bianca Del Rio Kodato
12:00, Sunday, October 15, 2023, Outdoors and Rennie Hall (Family Friendly)

This workshop engages people in conversations about water rights and equality through an experiential mapping activity. Participants are invited to walk around the Emily Carr campus noticing water's physical presence as well as signs of its past/hidden-present existence. By engaging in these conversations in an embodied rather than theoretical way, understanding how water moves and behaves in the world becomes a more intentional and compassionate action - supporting in the mediation of climate disasters and in the development of a reciprocal relationship with water.

Bianca Del Rio Kodato is an interdisciplinary designer with a focus in political design and art, specifically the politics of ecology and social structures. She engages in these conversations through a place-based and playful approach inviting community to occupy public space. Bianca recently graduated from the Industrial Design program, with a Minor in Social Practice and Community Engagement, from Emily Carr University of Art + Design.

Liberatory Practices: Rest and Imagination

Lily Raphael
2:00, Sunday, October 15, 2023, Room B2190

"Rest is my foundation to build, invent, restore and imagine the world I want to see." - Tricia Hersey

Drawing from the deep knowledge of Tricia Hersey (author of *Rest is Resistance*, founder of The Nap Ministry) and other Black feminist teachings, this session will invite us to sink in to rest as a pathway to justice and liberation from systems of oppression. In an easeful setting, we will create deliberate space for rest and daydreaming about climate justice, offering a variety of resources and tools to support us in building these practices. Rest soundscape by Max Raphael. All are welcome.

Awaken: Fight for a Life that is Creative, Harmonious, and Alive

Sky Sage
2:00, Sunday, October 15, 2023, Aboriginal Gathering Place, Room B2290

How do we stay heart-and-soul-connected while surviving the colonial project / facing unprecedented global challenges? Circle or Sacred Teachings invite us to harmonize the mental, emotional, physical, and spiritual parts of ourselves - what does science say about a strong spiritual core and when do we experience that in our lives? How can we feel alive or re-awaken during tough times? In what ways can radical self-love, belonging, or play be part of resistance and health justice? Through small group questions, larger group dialogue, and a little game-like fun, let's explore connection to ourselves, other people, nature, and/or the cosmos. We will follow some paths and see where they lead us, while sharing our survival tips along the way.

Relational Justice

Luna Aixin

2:00, Sunday, October 15, 2023, Room B3155 (Family Friendly)

There are creatures living in so-called Vancouver! Some of these creatures have lived here longer than we as humxyns have. Who are these creatures and what do they have to tell us about climate change and climate justice? There are so many stories to UNCOUVER (LOL). Join artist and community planner Luna Aixin to make, meet and interview the creatures that live in our communities and ask them to share with us their ideas for advancing climate justice. Participants will gather with Luna to make creatures, tell their stories, locate them within and around Emily Carr University Campus and learn from their quiet wisdom.

Luna Aixin is a multiracial, non-binary, neurodivergent, disabled settler, community planner, facilitator and artist, who has ties to communities in Southeast Asia and South Pacific Islands. As someone that was born into a colonized society, Luna has been researching, learning, understanding and working on creating cultures and communities that are decolonial - accepting, inclusive, celebratory and supportive of each other. As a neurodivergent person, Luna loves multimodal ways of creative expressions and experiencing the joy in witnessing others “play with imagination” on “very serious matters”. They work with local governments, non-profits, community organizations and projects through GaGiNang Productions (自己人创作) on ways to create equitable, just and safe systems and praises that can better serve our communities. They currently reside on the stolen and unceded traditional territories of the xʷməθkʷəy̓əm (Musqueam), Skwxwú7mesh (Squamish), and Səlílwətaʔ/Selilwitulh (Tseil-Waututh) Nations.

Entangled in Climate Justice

Lindsay Cole and Laura Kozak

10:00 - 11:00, Monday October 16, 2023 (Online Session for RSD12)

Cities, and systemic designers, are facing increasing pressures to address complex challenges of climate change, equity, and reconciliation as intersecting issues. It is no longer good enough to work on these challenges discreetly, or solely within the dominant, western colonial paradigm and practices of governance. Enacting climate justice, or adaptation to changing climatic conditions through lenses of social and ecological justice, will require new processes that center collaboration, sharing power, and nurturing relationships. Within Emily Carr University, and in Vancouver more generally, a unique and impactful relational systemic design practice is unfolding and making an important contribution to climate justice work happening in our community.

This presentation describes our entanglements with climate justice as designers, civil servants, researchers and citizens in Vancouver. Building on the work of the Climate Justice Charter for Vancouver (2022) and Climate Justice Field School, this discussion opens space for pluriversal questions and experiences of working with topics of climate justice.

Experiences of Climate for Low-Income Seniors in the Downtown Eastside

Yarrow Intergenerational Society for Justice

2:00, Monday, October 16, 2023, Reliance Theatre Room A1060

This session with Yarrow Society will bring the group into the experience of extreme heat for seniors living in Vancouver’s Downtown Eastside.

Yarrow Intergenerational Society for Justice supports youth and low-income immigrant seniors in Chinatown and the Downtown Eastside. We build power in our community through intergenerational relationship building, and by helping seniors overcome language and cultural barriers to services that meet their basic needs. We combine service provision and grassroots organizing, with a core belief that service work is political and that as a community, we have the tools we need to take care of one another. We empower seniors and youth to work together to improve their communities and tackle the difficult problems of oppression and violence. Our vision is of a Chinatown that is intergenerational and thriving, with accessible and culturally relevant services and an environment that cherishes our seniors and youth.

Beverly Ho is a second generation Han Chinese settler who grew up on Coast Salish lands. Her parents are from Guangzhou and Shanghai, with ancestral roots nearby. Her dad’s family first settled in the Chinatown community in the early ’70s, running Fung’s Grocery on the corner of Georgia and Jackson. She has a background in the arts and community organizing against gentrification and the ongoing poisoned drug supply crisis in Chinatown and the Downtown Eastside. Beverly enjoys crocheting and most hands-on activities, and is excited to continue to bring together different and intersecting marginalized communities like elders, sex workers, QTBIPOC, and people who use drugs together through her role at Yarrow.

Jin Li is an immigrant settler on the unceded ancestral lands of the Coast Salish people. With existing familial and ancestral roots in Toi San, she grew up as a 2nd generation Han Chinese in Belize, and moved to so called “Vancouver” in 2017 to complete her BA in media studies. She cares deeply about fostering community and interpersonal relationships within immigrant spaces especially. She tries to bring an anti-capitalistic, anti-growth and counterculture framework, within any work she is given the chance to contribute to. She is humbled and honoured to bring her administrative experiences to Yarrow’s programming, while learning diligently and carefully from the intersecting communities in Chinatown and DTES.

Celyne is a queer Cantonese settler born on the unceded territories of the Musqueam, Squamish, and Tseil-Waututh First Nations. She moved to Hong Kong with her family at the age of 4 and moved back to Vancouver when she was 9 years old. She continues to carry deep sentiments of these two places and often questions what it means to call a city home. She cares about food security in Chinatown and the Downtown Eastside, and wants to continue to support low-income seniors as the neighbourhood faces ongoing gentrification. Celyne holds a BA in Gender, Sexuality, and Women’s Studies from SFU. Being part Han Chinese and part Indian, she understands the complexity of identity and uses this understanding to navigate her queerness through poetry. She also enjoys writing short stories in Chinese that explore different themes.

Sunny Chiu is a multiply disabled queercrip from Taiwan; as an immigrant-settler, they currently reside on the unceded ancestral lands of the Coast Salish Nations. Sunny has a bachelor’s degree in communication design from Emily Carr University and strives to bring a critical design perspective to their work, while also acknowledging the ways art and design drive gentrification. As the DJAA Coordinator, Sunny aims to uphold disability justice and is passionate about accessible arts and disabled community. In their spare time, Sunny archives family recipes, practices textile arts and paints about illness and tenderness.

Anita is an immigrant from Hong Kong with her paternal roots in Hetang, Xinhui/Sunwui. She studied comparative literature and worked as a reporter/editor in Hong Kong. She believes that we can build intergenerational and intercultural relationships and be healed through story-telling. Anita enjoys swimming, reading and chilling in the park or on the beach under the sun.

The Making of Reality and Multi-Species Justice

Leslie Ng

2:00, Monday, October 16, 2023, Room B3130

In this session we’ll explore the making of reality and how our perception is shaped by our focus and experiences; and how we can co-create multi species justice through the practice of magical thinking. This will be an engaging session with the invitation to embody and practice seeing things differently.

Leslie Ng is a first generation Chinese Canadian, she is a mother, wife, daughter and a sustainability practitioner with over 20 years of experience in climate change work. She has a special interest in ontology, liberatory leadership and transformational change.

Ecology of Skwácháy’s: Principles for Justice

Erick Jantzen

2:00, Monday, October 16, 2023, Room D2435

This workshop explores an ecological approach to place, using the local Skwácháy’s (False Creek Flats) as a guide. In this workshop, participants will uncover some of the fundamentals of ecology, and learn to ask questions that only other species can answer.

Erick Jantzen is an environmental artist and educator. Of settler descent, he received his training as an ecologist from UVic, and as an artist from ECU. His art and ideas are published in scientific and artistic spaces including Canadian Art magazine and the Salish Sea Ecosystem Conference. @erickjantzenart

We the Workers Walking Tour

Carla Pellegrini, Louise Schwarz and Christa Clay

2:00, Monday, October 16, 2023, Depart from Reliance Theatre

Who are the people and organizations working behind the scenes to redistribute food and process waste in our city? What is the experience of climate for front line workers doing this vital and largely invisible work? This walking tour will visit Food Stash and Recycling Alternative, both neighbours of Emily Carr in the Green Industrial Innovation District, for conversations with Carla Pellegrini, Louise Schwarz and others. Led by Christa Clay, this walk is approximately 3km with stops along the way, and will start and end at Emily Carr.

Christa Clay is a designer and circular economy specialist based out of Vancouver, BC. Her work is always place-based and rooted in the principles of the circular economy - designing out waste, keeping materials in use for as long as possible, and regenerating natural systems. Most recently, this has been expressed through her role leveraging systemic design and economic transformation, striving to support Vancouver's economy in building resilience, equity, and circularity. She is originally from Austin, Texas, but has lived in Vancouver since 2018.

Carla Pellegrini, Executive Director – Food Stash, has nearly 15 years of experience in non-profit and for-profit community development, social finance and operations management. Before joining Food Stash in 2021, she worked to help establish and grow New Market Funds, a B Corp-certified impact investing firm in Vancouver. Before moving to Canada in 2015, she worked abroad with One Acre Fund in Kenya, WorldFish in Zambia and the US Peace Corps in Nicaragua. She volunteers on the Board of Directors for BC Pets and Friends and Oikocredit Canada in her free time. She holds an MPA from Columbia University in New York and a BA from Boston College.

Louise Schwarz is the co-founder and co-owner of four local circular innovation businesses located in the False Creek Flats: Recycling Alternative, Terraforma Systems, Regenerative Waste Labs and False Creek Fabrication. Together with business partner Robert Weatherbe, through their 30+ years of work in the field of sustainable waste practices, Recycling Alternative has garnered a reputation for best practices innovation as well as community based collaborations and approaches to waste diversion and local recovery through models such as the Vancouver Biodiesel Co-operative (2003-2014), Food Scrap Drop Spots (2015-2018), Zero Waste Events (2015-current), Recycle In Strathcona (2015-current) and the greenHUB, Vancouver's first recycling co-location facility in 2014 with community partner, DTES non-profit bottle depot, United We Can. Louise is currently working with local, circular, innovators, community partners such as Emily Carr and local government to create Vancouver's first Green Industrial Innovation District (the GrIID), focusing on green, circular economy and inclusive employment.

Climate and Migration Justice

Kamila Bashir, Ece Arslan and Eden Luna Goldet

2:00, Monday, October 16, 2023, Library Mezzanine Room C2221

In this interactive and unconventional session, we will embark on a journey that explores the intricate relationship between climate justice, migration justice, and reimagining borders. Through a series of clues and discussions, we will delve into critical themes such as climate-induced migration, advocacy for climate migrants' rights and voices of youth, earth-beings and migration, and climate resilience. Leaving with newfound connections and transformative insights, we will continue the ongoing conversation on climate and migration justice, with a focus on taking action to address these urgent global challenges. The session emphasizes that 'climate has no borders' and inspires to envision a future where countries and humanity work together to combat climate change. So, as we contemplate the path forward, let us ponder on-How can we construct a paradigm that not only acknowledges the borderless nature of climate but also dismantles the borders within our minds, fostering an inclusive and collaborative approach to tackle the multifaceted challenges of climate change and migration justice?

Ece Arslan is a learner, researcher, and facilitator, and they work as the Project Coordinator for EDI Capacity Building at ECU. They navigate the intersections of power imbalances such as class, gender, race, and ethnicity, in both their professional environment and in their personal life, as a queer person and a racialized settler. They are passionate and motivated about actualizing structural change through increasing involvement by creating engaging spaces for learning and unlearning. They love poetry and trying out recipes- imagining our kitchens before colonization.

ONGOING PROGRAM ELEMENTS

Umweltens: Seeing Through Many Worlds

Visualizing Ecologies Exhibition – Jean Chisholm and DESN 350 Class

Umwelten is a word that describes the world experienced by a particular organism. All beings have their own subjective world that they perceive – their umwelten – which is made up of a series of elements, marks, or symbols that are important or relevant to that particular being. While multiple beings may live in the same environment, they all have their own umwelten, their own way of seeing and navigating the world around them. If we can understand what matters to us is often not what matters to other beings, we might better “expand the democratic imagination to include and represent animal voices in the decisions that affect them.” COMD 350: Visualizing Ecologies explored how we as artists and designers might express and communicate another being's umwelten. As a class, we researched the ecologies, needs, and interests of our more-than-human neighbours, and imagined how a human-centered design system or object might be redesigned to center their perspective of the world. Visualizing Ecologies is a third year Communication Design studio instructed by Jean Chisholm; this work emerged from a workshop with artist and ecologies Erick Jantzen.

Climate Justice and Land Relations Reading Room

Hosted by the Emily Carr library, this reading room and resource area was available to attendees throughout the symposium. A companion reading list is available through the Emily Carr Library website.

Altar

The immense changes taking place to our planet are causing grief to manifest in different ways, such as despair, anxiety, cynicism, depression, anger. We will have an altar to commemorate that which is sacred, that which has been lost, and that for which we are hopeful. It will be a small interactive space for solo time or intimate gathering to support processing of climate grief and connection.

Acknowledgments

Hosting Team Lily Raphael, Laura Kozak, Lindsay Cole, Sky Sage, Kamila Bashir, Eden Luna Goldet, and Yejin Eun

Hosting Support Yejin Eun is a graphic designer, design researcher, visible mending practitioner and advocate for low-impact living. During her master's at Emily Carr University, she explored hidden perceptions of time to empower people's ecological decisions in everyday life. Most recently, she worked on facilitating co-design research at the Circular Food Innovation Lab, supporting sustainable initiatives in collaboration with the City of Vancouver and food business participants. Yejin thrives on meaningful collaborations and purpose-driven challenges. Find her at @imyeyjineun.

Design Howsem Huang is a graphic designer, photographer, and multidisciplinary artist based in Vancouver, Canada. Holding BFA degrees in graphic design and photography, he is currently studying at Emily Carr University for his Master of Design degree. Book design and bookmaking are his main practices. Huang's works examine his intersecting identity of being a diasporic Cantonese-Chinese.

Special thanks to Lisa Brideau, Cheryl May, Evan Barba, Emily Carr Library staff, Alex Muir, Jean Chisholm and students in DESN 350, Yejin Eun, Kathleen Jacques, Eduardo Rodrigues and members of the Climate Justice Field School.

Wonderful food provided by Tayybeh and Machete Mexican and Healthy Food.

This gathering was made possible through support from Carbon Neutral Cities Alliance, the City of Vancouver, Emily Carr University of Art + Design, MITACS, and the Real Estate Foundation of British Columbia. It was produced in affiliation with the Systemic Design Association's [RSD12: Entangled in Emergence](#).



Closing Gathering

Session Twenty

Slocan Hall, November 2023

Centering gratitude and reflection guided our closing session, which was held in a small community hall. Branches and plant matter gathered from Kwahulcha (Lynn Creek) and Whey-ah-Wichen (Cates Park) supported two material activities.

Field School member Zoë Laycock (Anishinaabe Métis) engaged the group in the collective making of a traditional Star Blanket, a primary piece of documentation for the field school using a cyanotype printing process. While we visited and ate snacks, we also made simple walking sticks. These material activities provide a “third thing”, a proxy for ourselves in thinking about the past (where we’ve each come from), the present (a tool that would support us right now) and the future (where we are headed in our practices of climate justice).

“I felt a gratitude for the time and space made for these explorations and discussions. I appreciated the safety. It made me reflect on the boundaries and armour we place on ourselves in our usual place of work where you don’t feel that same sense of safety.

**How wonderful it would be, and how much positive and game changing work could we do, if we created this safety and welcoming in the bureaucracies many of us work in.”
(CP)**

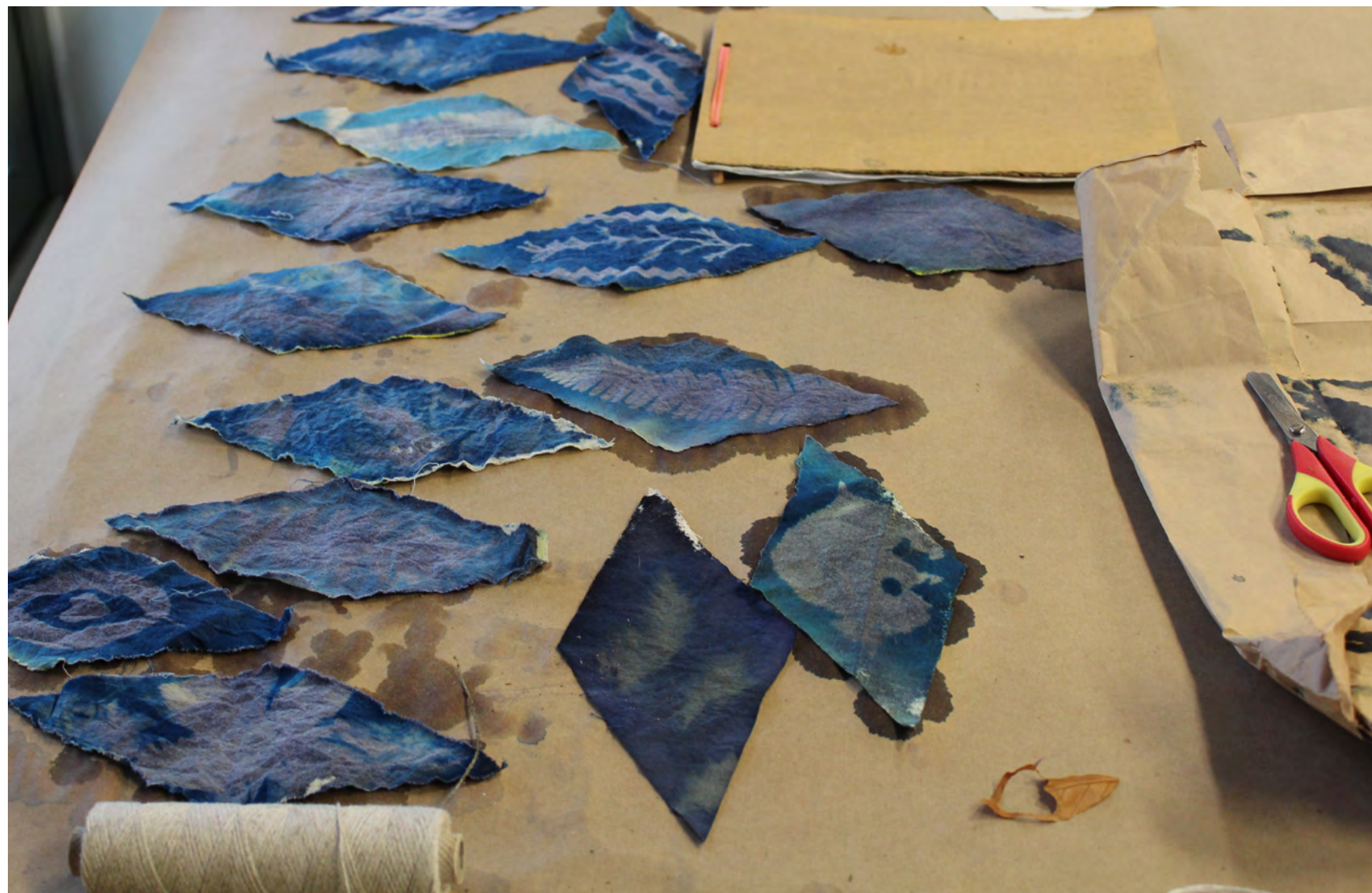
Walking sticks at the Closing Gathering, Slocan Hall; image by Kamila Bashir.



“The journey towards equity demands difficult conversations, forcing every individual to confront their own unconscious biases and challenge long-standing norms.” (Navdeep)

Left to right: material supplies; Field School members making walking sticks. Images by Laura Kozak and Kamila Bashir





The Making of a Star Blanket

Field School member Zoë Grace-Anne Laycock engaged the group in the collective making of a traditional star blanket, a primary piece of documentation for the field school, using a cyanotype process.

“This star blanket began as a conversation between two, as a reflection of many conversations between many different people. What came to mind was our perspectives as colours floating and morphing in a kaleidoscope, our conversations coming together pointed in the direction of understanding and progress, of growth together.

“By considering the questions, conversations, and perspectives throughout my participation in the Climate Justice Field School, I wanted to create a visual representation of those unique conversations, listening and perspectives shared.”

One of my understandings of the teachings of the star blankets is that the intricate pattern is representative of the eye of the creator, of the universe, watching and taking care of whoever that blanket is gifted to. It was the opportunity to take each of these pieces, as our conversations and perspectives, and bring them together as an eight pointed star. We all share similar goals to make our earth better for ourselves, for our beyond human relatives and for our future ancestors.

Each of the pieces of the star blanket pattern is each of our thoughts and goals and ideas pointing inwards, and outward to each other: they are all-encompassing. By considering the questions, conversations, and perspectives throughout my participation in the Climate Justice Field School, I wanted to create a visual representation of those unique conversations, listening and perspectives shared: each individual coming into the discussion carries worlds of learning as we move through place and events. The star blanket lives as a representation of not only the whole of the Climate Justice Field School, but also of all the experiences, communities and those who make up each of us as individuals coming together.

In the beginning, when the star blanket was forming as a thought, yet to materialize, there was a reluctance to use the written word in the fabric – that text may be too finite for such an amalgamation of time, beings and fluidity to adapt to best describe the moment of action and care we are engaged in. Fluidity being one pinnacle of climate justice, this field school had been beautifully guided by six moorings: Joy, Embodiment, Depth, Accountability, Agency, Teetering, and Edges.



At this point, the star blanket pieces have been within the hands of many who have shared time, place, perspectives and care throughout the past seasons with the Climate Justice Field School. Through a communal process of cyanotyping, we captured a moment of light on a fortunate sunny day in autumn 2023, gathering to reflect on our learning and kinship built together towards our common aspiration. There are imprints of natural materials we chose on the surface of the diamonds making up this star blanket. There are images of our coming together, of songs and of witnessing, of hands and of the land, of a kaleidoscope of minds coming into a place of hope, of thought and of action.

The large eight pointed star pattern gives moments of rest, reflection, and consideration all while having each outermost point highlighting one of the moorings that guided our sharing and the relationships built during this time. This star blanket is a living document, it is a place of comfort for those hard hitting questions and conversations that we must continue to have to grow. It is a place to rest, reflect, and make time to maintain the community connections, and foster positive impacts for those around us. I am learning from all of you, we are all learning from each other and this star blanket lives as a reflection of our diversities coming together and organizing in many harmonies.

Kitchi Miigwetch!"

"I remember the slow-bustling of making walking sticks and star blanket pieces together, feeling the joy and the loss of this last day of gathering together, and also knowing the work will continue to shift and change afterwards."

Zoë Grace-Anne Laycock (she/they) is Anishinaabe Red River Métis, born and raised in Calgary AB and on the land in the surrounding Rockies. She holds a BFA with a minor in Social Practice and Community Engagement and, during the Climate Justice Field School, was completing her Master of Fine Arts at Emily Carr. She is a place-based multidisciplinary artist working with sound, installation, video projection, textiles, printmaking, indigenous & natural material practices. She engages haunting, interdimensional communication & broadcasting and exploration of cyclical time, well informed by her lifelong immersion in Saulteaux ceremony and culture. She expresses visually through means of pop culture and pseudo-theatrical representations of the paranormal – mindful to preserve protocol, forefront holistic reciprocity and to actively refuse the appropriation of all that she holds sacred.

Zoë Laycock - star blanket in progress;
image by Laura Kozak.



Throughout the field we school we attuned ourselves to the weather and seasons, and were gifted with this sunset at the end of our closing session.

Collective Learnings

What did we learn as a collective? Members of the Field School share their insights and learnings from our time together.

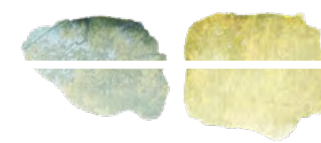
Following the framework of Developmental Evaluation, the learnings gathered here are oriented around the main questions of “What?; So what?; and Now What?” with the purpose of helping us recall significant moments, make sense of challenges, feelings or insights, and adapt to what is emerging as we move forward. This evaluation is therefore not the sign of the end of the work, but rather a moment in time in which we pause before carrying on in deeper and more intentional ways.

Opening circle at Session Two;
image by Kamila Bashir.



“I remember the recollection of a question posed by Squamish Chief Bill Williams:

“When are you going to start acting like you’re going to be here for a while?”



All members of the Field School were invited to co-author these learnings. They are included in their original form and attributed by name, initials or left anonymous as per the writer’s preference.

What happened?

Key Moments that I remember:

- The richness of questions posed by the group in the first session and the earnestness or resilience of the group in keeping on working on this.
- Shoo-ing the heron away as we enjoyed a moment of peace and reflection in the beautiful Dr Sun Yat Sen gardens, seemed like such an analogy to this work and the work to change systems/perceptions
- This didn’t happen during the field school, but I felt it important to share and it came from a colleague: “Be hard on systems, not on people.” (DC)
- During our last session, when a fellow field school member said in her reflection “we were working with each other, rather than frameworks or indicators.” (LR)
- Beautiful moments of openness and reciprocity being shown by people within the group working so genuinely to show up differently: to walk at a slower pace, to share snacks, to surface feelings of grief and loss and be met with listening and recognition, to engage in something new without knowing where it would lead, to demonstrate the practice of gratitude (LK)
- The recollection of a question posed by Squamish Chief Bill Williams “When are you going to start acting like you’re going to be here for a while?”
- Discussions with colleagues under the sun in the beautiful Strathcona Community Garden, reflecting on climate justice and equity and the colonial systems we work and live in.
- Spending time in Dr. Sun Yat Sen garden, listening to Laiwan talk about the Dragon Mother: the serpent living in intertidal tunnels under this part of the city. Thinking about past-present-future lives in and alongside this place that was once at/below the water’s edge, is currently covered-over with city life, and will likely return to intertidal again as sea level rises.
- Learning about the hardship faced by marginalized populations, especially Indigenous community members. (Navdeep)
- Walking through Stanley Park hike trail, witnessing the colonized nature but observing human nature in the simpleness of walking at my pace, a couple of people took care to make me feel included. At the same time waiting for society to walk and care for nature with the same simpleness (LAB)
- The slow-bustling of making walking sticks and Star blanket pieces together, feeling the joy and the loss of this last day of gathering together, and also knowing the work will continue to shift and change afterwards.

“The shared commitment of our group to fostering equity in every aspect of the city’s work created a strong sense of camaraderie among us. I cherish the collaborative endeavour of this dynamic group and have forged meaningful relationships that transcended professional boundaries.” (Navdeep)

Relationships that were important:

- Relationship to the history of the land – re-meeting the water in Chinatown and the beings that used to inhabit the wetlands. (LR)
- Between activists in the public on the “one side” and bureaucrats and academics on “the other side” it’s important to mix and work together and learn from and speak with each other. (DC)
- Meeting community and the diversity of folks and perspectives
- The journey (long or short) to each site, the relationship of my body (our bodies) traveling in different ways across the land. The relationship between time:body/ mind:physical place. The transportation time, the senses (smell, light/sight, sound), traveling. (ZL)
- I reflected on relationship to place quite a bit. I’m usually in an office - muted colours and uniform. It’s a space so disassociated from the realities and communities we purport to serve in our work. How can we do this work if we sever this connection and relationship to place? (CP)
- Relationship to place: sitting and walking in, listening to, being with the city that we work for and serve - moving through it in a tangible way
- Relationships are at the base of all the work we do – it’s necessary to cultivate these relationships (and not just for working opportunities).
- The shared commitment of our group to fostering equity in every aspect of the city’s work created a strong sense of camaraderie among us. I cherish the collaborative endeavour of this dynamic group and have forged meaningful relationships that transcended professional boundaries. (Navdeep)
- All Relations are important, human, animals, species, land, water, air, earth. Building a bridge to our youth, and the massive struggles of how to create climate change. Action starts with you and your surroundings, your carbon foot print starts with what we consume and what we waste. (LAB)

Insights or learnings that I had:

- Indigenous knowledge that challenges western colonial logic needs amplification. (DC)
- There are lots of stories to listen to but you need to get close to the people and the land.
- The stubborn and deep-rooted biases we have are harder to give up when under duress. We all need opportunities to practice (really practice) other ways of doing things if we want to change ourselves and our relationships.
- The ignorance and privilege we hold when we don’t know the history of the land and the impacts it’s had on the community and people there

- “Work” can look/feel very different in positive ways. Rest is productive, slowing down with others, listening, being present is “productive”. Meaningful>“Productivity” (ZL)
- The brutal destruction of Indigenous languages and culture to colonize these lands. (Navdeep)
- Pace is a major and largely unacknowledged driver of power dynamics: the privileging of speed and efficiency is systemic and very difficult for any one person to challenge on their own. I notice contending with my own feelings that slowing means I am being lazy or not taking my job seriously.
- Listening is vital. Listening to Indigenous POV...but also your surroundings. At the hike I learned that not every conversation needs to be so serious, the interruption of the flute playing broke our conversation.

Feelings that I experienced:

- Range from curiosity and optimism after learning, either from each other, or from those who presented and spoke, to frustration with the state of the world as it is. (DC)
- Hope and frustration, hope for the gathering and meeting of people doing this work and frustration for the nebulousness of how this change can evolve
- I felt a gratitude for the time and space made for these explorations and discussions. I appreciated the safety. It made me reflect on the boundaries and armour we place on ourselves in our usual place of work where you don’t feel that same sense of safety. How wonderful it would be, and how much positive and game changing work could we do, if we created this safety and welcoming in the bureaucracies many of us work in. (CP)
- The journey towards equity demanded difficult conversations, forcing every individual to confront their own unconscious biases and challenge long-standing norms. (Navdeep)
- Rest, calmness, connectedness, care, and joy when gathering as part of the field school and noticing how little these feelings are experienced in an office setting. (SL)
- Felt very much heard. The experiences of these sessions should be a direction work life goes. I felt very much cared for with my physical disabilities in walking, it was great to have someone check in. Its been great to go from feeling awkward and out of place at the Strathcona garden to by the end feeling a part of a very passionate group. (LAB)

So what does that mean?

I started paying attention to:

- Locating the reciprocity at play within given moments - e.g. between facilitators/ session hosts and participants; between the land and us as witnesses; between what we're all able to contribute/give and what we get out of this experience and the work that we do. Also understanding when reciprocities are/have been out of balance, when some might be overextended, extracted from, under-attended to, and the awareness and will that's needed from those in places of privilege and power to tip those scales the other way. (LR)
- The stories behind the place
- How much I've swallowed down despair, hopelessness, fear for so many years and hidden it away so that I could keep doing this work. Realizing that I have the strength and courage to start to resurface this and be in a different kind of relationship with these feelings and experiences.
- Looking for the places with energy/possibility and experimenting there
- Just acknowledging our privileges is not enough, we also must speak up for underrepresented populations that don't have a voice on the table.
- New understanding of the adaptive and panarchy cycle to better situate where myself and others are sitting in moments of growth, conservation, release, renewal, remembering, and revolt; and why we're in these specific areas in different moments of time; and what it means to move between moments.
- Youth and their feelings, their thoughts, expressions and even the silence was loud. (LAB)

Things that surprised me:

- There wasn't as much self-centring in regards to the experience, as I expected, which was refreshing and inspiring. (DC)
- How much I apparently, without realizing, discounted work done outside an office environment. I was halfway through the asynchronous prompts before it occurred to me that this could be done during work time, not awkwardly crammed into my fragments of free time. I had no idea I had this built-in judgment about what counts as 'work'.
- Youth voices are important and older adult voices are too. I forgot how huge the world seemed as a youth. At the U Symposium I was reminded my vision has grown since my youth. (LAB)

Challenges that I noticed or experienced:

- Navigating the urge or expectation for something tangible and outcome-focused to happen. Figuring out how much to focus on sense-making compared to creating next steps. Do relationships feel solid enough to continue deepening + evolving while this version of a container has "ended"? Can we (I) trust longer timescales that might reveal that to be true?
- We are so oriented toward producing, and I wonder if the group felt lost or let down that the things we made together were quite intangible (would doing more collective making have helped strengthen our relationship-building?) (LK)
- It is unclear what tangible benefits will come from equity work for those who are denied equity. It is important to ensure that this work is not extractive. For example, will those with an opportunity to push for policies, projects, and programs to be inclusive and lead to tangible benefits do so? To what degree will the work to do so benefit those who are equity denied vs those who are fairly privileged already? (DC)
- Making things tangible, while the gathering was useful in that it was a supportive reflective space, there were less 'tools', even if just personal development ones, to bring forward, like learning about an Slab tool. Maybe even just capturing the personal transformation that happened in some other way.
- Interpreting tasks and expectations - at times language used to describe and explain activity was academic and less accessible for those without a background in systems theory and other relevant fields, leading to uncertainty
- Difficulty engaging in this topic or prioritizing reflection about the field school between times that we gathered together. (SL)

New questions that arose for me:

- How does one take these learnings and apply them on an on-going basis? (DC)
- How do we create the space/time to do these deep dives into place, with community and build those relationships?
- How can we structure relationship-building time/activities that are meaningful/ impactful/non-extractive? Is there risk of harm if not done well, with intentionality?
- For participants who are there as part of their job (vs community members) - does the employer have the right to ask/expect them to show up and emotionally engage as part of their job or does that go beyond what is appropriate for an employer to expect? This work requires people to connect relationally as whole, authentic people; but does an employer have a right to require that of someone or must people self-select to join this work?
- How do we take the learnings from the CJFS and move them into our daily work and lives?

“I started paying attention to how much I’ve swallowed down despair, hopelessness, fear for so many years and hidden it away so that I could keep doing this work, [and] realizing that I have the strength and courage to start to resurface this and be in a different kind of relationship with these feelings and experiences.”

“I felt very much heard. The experiences of these sessions should be a direction work life goes. I felt very much cared for with my physical disabilities in walking, it was great to have someone check in. It’s been great to go from feeling awkward and out of place at the Strathcona garden to by the end feeling a part of a very passionate group.” (LAB)



Walking Sticks made by Field School members at our closing session; image by Kamila Bashir.

Now what happens next?

Stuck patterns or mindsets that need shifting:

- Management and executives need to prioritize these types of activities for others. Those with power should be given space to engage in these forums. (DC)
- The idea that we can’t do serious and important work while experiencing joy, gratitude or nourishment (LK)
- Making this essential work and not side-of-the-desk, making space in people’s workplans so they could participate, many probably would have but just felt too busy to
- Care, joy, fulfillment, and relations need to be at the center of the work we’re doing

Intentions I have going forward:

- To have a clearer voice in amplifying equity and climate justice during tangible opportunities to make process. (DC)
- Creating supportive spaces for the personal transformation
- To carry forward this experience and let it flow into other things that I do/ways that I am, in other spaces
- To hold the new and stronger relationships to people and place close

Where can individual and collective points of agency or powers be harnessed to address climate injustices in our city?

- The power in the choice to center certain ways of being together and certain activities. The choice to refuse to fixate on outcomes that can’t be predetermined. (LR)
- During audiences with those in power it is important to amplify the voices of those without it, even if it feels repetitive. (DC)
- To live by and work with the teachings and gifts shared in the Field School
- Leading by example, in changing the way we approach things or hold spaces differently, experimenting when we can
- To tell the stories of the Climate Justice Charter and the Field School as real, growing, important truths even when the conditions for doing this work are hard. To live the vision into being.

Invitations and Resources

Codifying practices for sharing power feels less about finding definitive steps or ingredients that promise certain outcomes and more about how we might create conditions that let us centre and focus on nurturing relationships to each other, land/place, and ourselves.

If you are interested in trying out any of the things we were working with in the Climate Justice Field School, these are a series of invitations intended as gifts for future learning journeys and collaborations:

Invitations

Codifying practices for power-sharing feels less about finding definitive steps or ingredients that promise certain outcomes and more about how we might create conditions that let us center and focus on nurturing relationships to each other, land/place, and ourselves. If you are interested in trying out any of the things we were working with in the Climate Justice Field School, these are a series of invitations intended as gifts for future learning journeys and collaborations:

Experiment with introductions: when coming together with new people, set aside leading with job titles and professional credentials in favour of more flexible introductions that could include acknowledgement of ancestors, questions, stories, passions or experiences.

Pay attention to pace: notice what systems/people/conventions are dictating the pace and timing of your work, and work to see the power dynamics of pace. Notice the differences of where power is situated between engaging community and letting work be guided by community. Be aware of when activities are either defaulting to or actively choosing to cater to those who already take up space or are comfortable and familiar with these ways of interacting or learning. Allow for different starting points to be possible.

Adopt a practice of learning and sensemaking to accompany your climate justice work.

Extend the means of communicating to give space for different kinds of exchange to occur. Connection and expression in the form of ceremony, music, material making, rest and embodied learning offer different possibilities for culturally rooted relational work.

Identify your own moorings (Resmaa Menakem) for transformative work. Consider that the climate justice work you do has the potential to contribute to healing generational and ongoing harms brought on by colonization and racialized trauma. What is important to stay tethered to as you collectively sense into deep waters? What anchor points can you and your body orient towards? What supporting roles or resources does your group have in place?

Situate yourself intentionally in relation to land and place: step outside and greet the earth relatives that are your neighbours. Stay still and feel the weather on your skin and in your bones, taking time to make connections with and implicate yourself in the ecosystem around you. Count this as the work you're doing.

Resources

[A Climate Justice Charter for Vancouver](#) A guiding document for climate justice work in Vancouver written by the Climate Equity Working Group, 2022. City of Vancouver.

[Climate Justice Field School Outline](#) Includes Field School session details and key readings, resources and other links.

[Climate Justice Field School Blog](#) (Medium) A gathering up of our learning-out-loud

[Climate Justice Symposium Reading List](#) (Emily Carr University Library Webpage) This list of books, journal articles, podcasts and other resources related to climate justice is an ongoing resource for students, researchers and other groups interested in topics of climate justice.

[Climate Justice Field School Playlist](#) (Spotify) This collaborative playlist was generated by members of the Climate Justice Field School and provided a soundtrack for some of our gatherings.

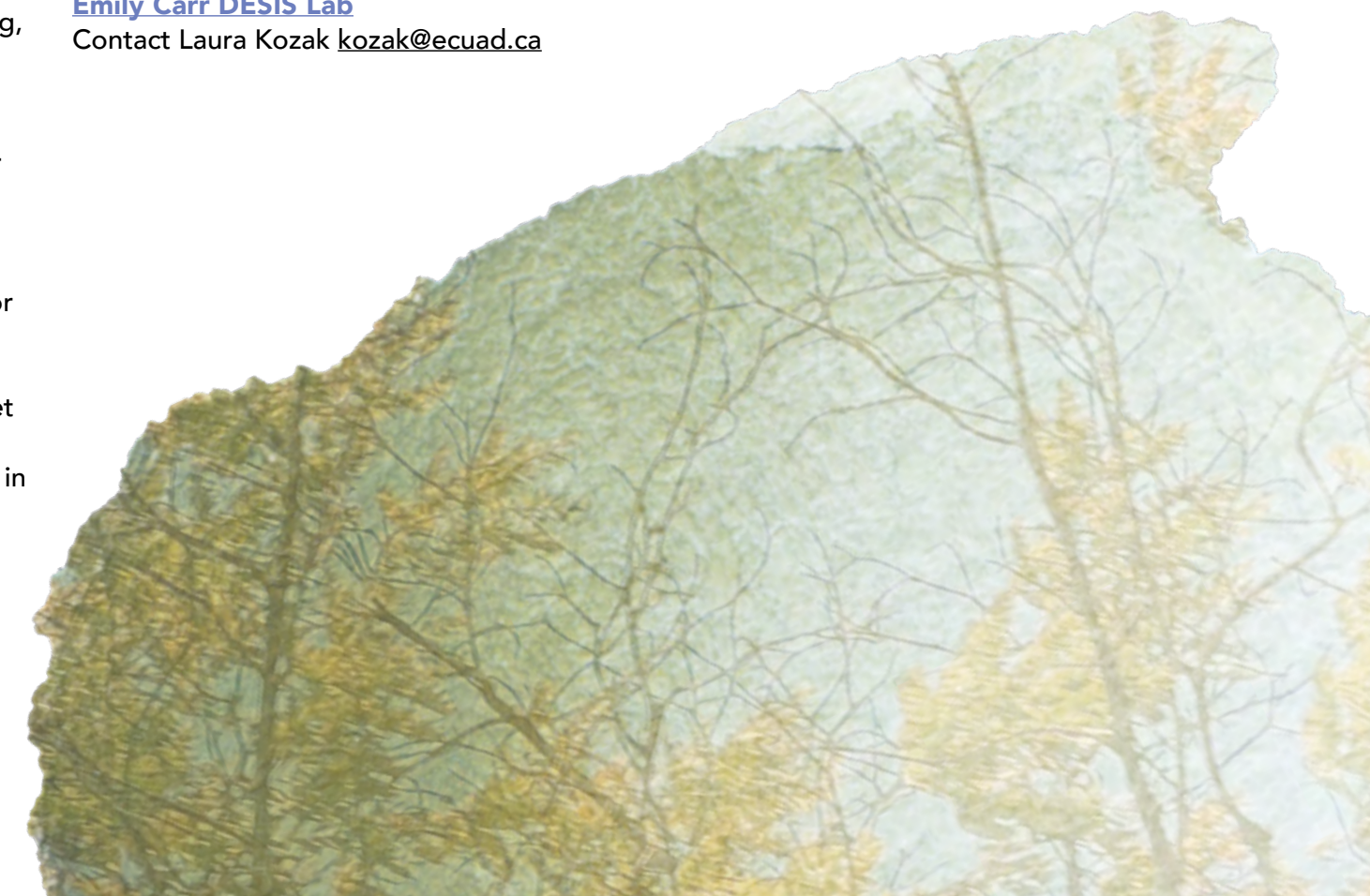
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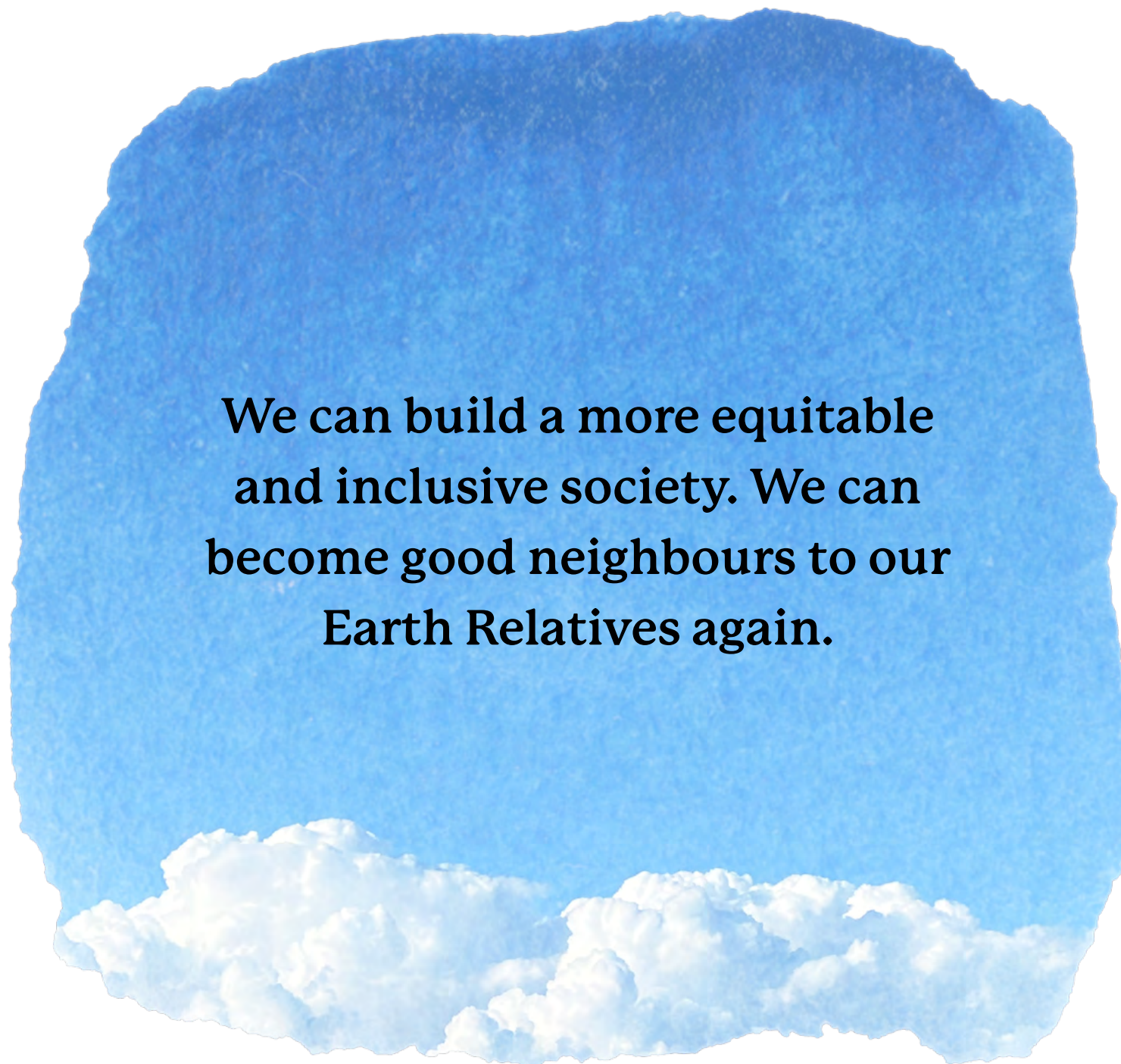
[City of Vancouver Solutions Lab](#)

Contact Lily Raphael lily.raaphael@vancouver.ca

[Emily Carr DESIS Lab](#)

Contact Laura Kozak kozak@ecuad.ca





**We can build a more equitable
and inclusive society. We can
become good neighbours to our
Earth Relatives again.**

We Can Do This

*An excerpt from **Community Engagement/Climate Action/Personal/Collective Growth (Things we see as inseparable)***

Sky Sage

To reconnect humanity, we are going to need more than a few Ministers of Loneliness. This task belongs to us all. We don't have to resign to a fate of white-knuckling through life, clinging to our own little rafts, drifting further apart due to perfect storms. Science has shown us why it may take a bit more effort to go beyond our comfort zones or nudge ourselves into the wild unknown. Now we need to practice admitting how much we rely on each other to show up in a respectful way.

Our brain/bodies are hard-wired for compassion, connection, and cooperation. What a comforting thought. We are made for this global challenge. Literally. In "modern" society, relationships have a profound impact on our well-being, regardless of our ability to accept this truth. We can still learn a lot from our Ancestors, who created habits, rituals, and ceremonies to honor humans as social beings. Even though change can feel uncomfortable, it is worth the risk. Positive experiences shape our brain/bodies and prime us to receive more good things.

If you want the world to be a little better, start with considering the effect you are having on those around you. Positive interactions benefit us both; they release "happy hormones" or neurotransmitters in our bodies, such as dopamine, oxytocin, and serotonin. When we connect, our body movements, heartbeats, breathing, and brain waves can synchronize.

Think about the significance of this for a moment.

What responsibilities do we carry when interacting with others and the natural world? How can we hold ourselves accountable? What are creative ways we can challenge ourselves and inspire each other to maintain a higher standard of relating?

This post didn't need to detail what will happen if we don't answer the call to transform. We can see the consequences in extreme, compounding disasters all around us. Remember that despair does not have to be a soul-death sentence. You are not alone. The capitalist idea, based on out-dated colonial logic, that all we need to do is buy our own little survival raft is an illusion. Whether we like it or not, all of humanity is on one big ship together. And we know it is not the one heading out to Mars.

It is time to transcend our fears, sprout, initiate — and find our way back to ourselves, each other, and the Earth.

We can build a more equitable and inclusive society. We can become good neighbours to our Earth Relatives again.

Not only can we do this. We are designed for it.

