

Juno Avila-Clark – Visual Description

This is an exhibit by Juno Avila-Clark with 12 multimedia artworks. The works are mostly hung 1 or 2 to a panel and are matted and framed in black frames. There are four double-sided panels, covered with a light grey linen, stacked in a line, running north-south. The panel faces also point north-south. The panels are numbered 1 through 8, with 1 being the northernmost panel, 2 being the south-facing panel on the rear side of panel 1, and so on, through panel 8 being the southernmost panel. I will describe five of the works.

Juno Avila-Clark is an emerging multimedia visual artist and settler on the unceded and ancestral lands of the Coast Salish and Qayqayt First Nations. His work focuses on community, belonging, and imagining a brighter future for all. Juno was the Artist in Residence at the Gallery at Queens Park in 2022, as well as one of the 100 artists selected for the Greenhouse Project, a cohort who came together September 2021 to consider how creators from different disciplines have a unique understanding that can be brought to solving the climate crisis. He is a current student in the Langara Fine Arts Program, where he has been exploring new techniques, such as lithography. Most recently, Juno's work has been informed by his fascination with urban planning, and how our built environments impact our ability to connect with one another and our natural world.

Juno says, "I am interested in exploring how the urban spaces that we build for ourselves shape how we move through our world. New Westminster in particular is a place so full of history and potential, and living here has absolutely shaped my experience in a way that I'm intent on investigating. While I create, I'm less focused on the specific mediums or techniques I'm utilizing and more engaged with the questions I'm trying to answer.

"I've been wondering: how can we build vibrant places that encourage connection – with ourselves, with the environment, with each other? The shape of the sidewalk and the pattern of the metal grids over tree planters are not permanent or set in stone; everything you see when you walk down the street is written down somewhere in a city department's document. It is subject to change. How do you want your home to look? How do you want it to feel? And will you share those dreams? Is it possible to speak those dreams into reality?"

Panel 1 – Tree_Planting_Master_Plan.pdf (mixed media on sandpaper, 40" x 26")

This is a diptych of two equally-sized, complementary pieces. On the left, in the foreground is a complicated silhouette of a tree without leaves surrounded by a construction fence. The tree is dark in the centre and the branches get lighter as they get further out. In the centre of the tree, an anatomical line drawing of a heart is nestled in the branches. The branches of the tree mirror the branching of the arteries in the body. This tree is cut out of paper and is overlaid on cutouts of charts and images of computer files. At the bottom of the frame is some dark rocks and scrubby plants, and in the upper right-hand corner is a dried leaf in what appears to be a plastic bag, labelled Fig. 2. The edges of the image are blended together with paint that is white and grey, almost smoky looking. There is some colour in the image, but not much – the overall image is a dark grey day in winter with many clouds.

The right hand image similarly has a background of text, files, charts and maps. In the foreground, there is construction fencing in white, and beyond the fence are some low buildings and piles of gravel or sand. Dark rocks and plants are right along the bottom edge of the frame. As in the left-hand image, there is some plant material (likely moss) in a plastic bag labelled Fig. 3. The sky is more prominent on this side with white smoky-looking clouds drifting all the way down the page. On the far right corner is a drawing of some thin tree branches reaching toward the middle of the page. The tree itself is obscured by a dark pattern reminiscent of pine cones or ivy covering a tree.

Panel 2 – Visit the graveyard (lithograph, 11" x 16")

This image is of four scenes of tree stumps in black and white in quadrants on the page. The top left is a bird's eye view of a stump on which the rings are clearly visible. It looks like it was a large, somewhat irregular-shaped tree. Behind it rises some fencing and it is surrounded by grass. In the top right, a taller stump of a smaller tree, seen from the side. The trunk has moss or vines growing on it, and there appears to be a few large cracks on the top of the stump. The background is more textured and abstract, but the stump itself looks like it has more movement in it. In the bottom right is a shorter stump, cut off almost to the ground. The outline of the trunk shape is very wavy and irregular, and there is some overlapping fencing in the background. The final image in the bottom left is of a tallish stump with lichen or fungus growing on the outside. It is a smaller tree and deeply etched. There is some grass around the tree, and in the background is the road with a car travelling past. The work on these lithographs looks almost like charcoal drawings.

Panel 4 – Meet the neighbours (lithograph, 11" x 9")

This small work shows a figure wearing a medical mask, crouched down at the bottom left corner. The person has long hair and is holding out their hand toward a small flock of pigeons which are on the ground in front of them. It looks as though there are crumbs or small stars in the figure's hand. Some of the pigeons are looking toward the human figure but not all have noticed yet. Above these creatures and rising from the point of contact (the outstretched hand) is a tangle of curved lines. These lines are adorned with a few leaves, some stars, and some of the spaces are filled in, looking like balloons.

Panel 6 – Find where you belong (multiple lithographs, 15" x 17", 16" x 17")

This is 2 images in separate frames that are complementary. On the left, is a vertically oriented piece that is divided roughly in half. On the right hand side, is an old map of New Westminster with a title of "Plan of New Westminster City and suburban lots". The map section looks very old, and the folds and holes in the original paper are visible. On the left hand side is a very fluid ink print that runs down the left hand side of the image. It has varying textures and treatments that make it look something like a bone, or a bird's eye view of a river, or a branch covered in different mosses and lichens. In between the map and the print is a blank white space. In the right-hand frame is a similarly divided image, but this time horizontally. On the bottom is another (the same?) old map, but with more missing areas and folds and holes. These holes look to be more intentionally removed, but with frayed edges, not cut. On the top of the image is another print of the living form as described above, but this time arrayed across the top of the image horizontally. In between the two parts is white paper which is glued in a wavy pattern to look like a river.

Panel 7 – Slipping through the cracks (pastel on newsprint, 36”x 24”)

This is the largest image in the show and is very colourful. The background (paper on which the work is created) is a large scale road map with place names like Idaho, Washington, Saskatchewan and British Columbia visible. Along the top are advertisements for hotels and tourist attractions, as one would see on a tourist map. In the center of the image is a small blue car, heading toward the right hand side of the image. An array of red roads leads out from the car. On the left and side, a blue and green For Lease sign is curved down the side of the work, and in the middle of the piece, a street sign indicating no parking is right in front of the car. In the bottom right, a Sale sign on a sandwich board leads the eye off the page. The pink, yellow, red and green background is filled with movement.