

# SNAPLINE

2024.3 — LABELS EDITION

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FEATURED ARTIST

**Brianna Tosswill**



**SOCIETY OF NORTHERN ALBERTA PRINT-ARTISTS**

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**COVER:** Brianna Tosswill, labels (detail), linocut, 2024.

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**COMMITTEE/  
BOARD MESSAGE**

We live in a complex world where information overload is a state of being. To cope, our minds categorize things so we can learn and navigate our environments. We simplify and organize to make sense of things. We catalogue large amounts of data to make it easier to parse through. We use entire systems of reference to create archives and libraries. But what happens when our categories, taxonomies, and rankings obscure reality? How do we flatten complexity and nuance to serve quick communication? What happens when we simplify ideas and concepts to make them fit into particular boxes? What does it mean to connect art-making and labels? This edition of SNAPLine asked artists to share their connections to, and interpretations of, the label.

As a new SNAP member and board director, I have added two more labels to my identity. In addition to now being part of the SNAP community, I am an artist, student, and community member, and many other identities. SNAP is a wonderful place to identify oneself. I was drawn to SNAP after my very first interaction as a MacEwan BFA student during a gallery tour. I then decided I needed to be part of this place. Starting something new is exciting, it can also be a little scary and intimidating—finding your place, learning where you can

add value and more. Still, I jumped in, and the result was finding myself welcomed and celebrated. I love meeting new people, seeing new perspectives. What a feeling to be wholeheartedly welcomed into a new community! As a print-curious artist, the print-making world intrigues me. The beautiful work I've seen from the amazing artists within this community, in the gallery, in this edition of SNAPLine, and beyond is inspiring. At Print Affair I was able to witness and observe some of the beautiful relationships that exist within this community. It's easy to understand why SNAP still exists after 43 years and why so many people have labeled themselves as a part of SNAP's wonderful community.

It is exciting times for SNAP as we get ready to launch a new strategic plan, membership perks, fundraising strategies, and fee structures (happening in early 2025). These changes will help to support our staff members, which in turn supports our programming and membership.

Thank you for welcoming me into this community. I'm forever committed—after all I did get tattooed at Print Affair ;)



**MICHELLE GOULET**  
Committee Member /  
Board Member

# Labels

## Contributors



**BRITT DORLAND** is a Queer, Trans\_artist living and creating on Treaty 6 Territory. Their art is a sanctuary for them to navigate the complex landscape of religion, identity, and societal expectations.

Through multimedia expressions they challenge preconceived notions of “otherness”, inviting viewers to question, explore, and empathize. The canvas becomes a sacred space where the struggle, joy, and resilience of navigating the world as a Queer and Trans individual are laid bare for contemplation.

Themes of self-acceptance, self-discovery, and the pursuit of an authentic life are interwoven in a narrative that speaks to the hearts of those who exist within the margins..



**LIUBA GONZÁLEZ DE ARMAS** (b. 1994, Ciudad Nuclear) is an arts worker who curates and writes. She holds an MA in Art History from McGill University (2020) and a BA from the University of Alberta (2018). Her recent exhibitions include *There’s no work in the arts, but so much to be done* (Latitude 53, 2024), *Tropical Gothic* (with Excel Garay, Khyber, 2023), and *Tactics for Staying Home in Uncertain Times* (MSVU Gallery, 2021). She edited *Beyond the Gallery: An Anthology of Visual Encounters* (Laberinto Press, 2021) with Ana Ruiz Aguirre, and serves on the Board of Directors at Eyelevel Gallery.

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**JACKY TOLLESTRUP** is an artist based in Edmonton. She enjoys a multifaceted artistic practice, including painting, printmaking, film, writing, performance, and pedagogy. Her visual art employs both abstract and representational forms, and often explores playful intersections between culture and the body.

Jacky holds a Master’s degree, and a Bachelor of Education from Queen’s University, and has participated in fine arts programs at Capilano University and the University of Alberta. She is dedicated to her artistic development, and enjoys multi-disciplinary engagements like her arts presentation for the Alberta Society for the Promotion of Sexual Health conference. Jacky has and exhibited in the Brighton Rocks Film Festival in Brighton, England, the Sex Workers Art Show in Olympia, Washington, Union Gallery in Kingston, Ontario, and will be showing work at SNAP this May as the fall 2024 Emerging Artist in Residence.



**ALLISON TUNIS** (she/they) is a visual artist and community arts facilitator living and working on Treaty 6 territory, in amiskwaciwaskahikan (Edmonton, Alberta). She holds a Bachelor of Fine Arts degree from the University of Alberta (2008) and a graduate diploma in Art Therapy from the Vancouver Art Therapy Institute (2013). Tunis’ works seek to explore themes of personal and community healing through the art process and look to challenge norms and expectations around marginalized bodies – with a specific focus on queer, fat, and disabled experiences.

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FEATURED ARTIST:

# Brianna Tosswill

**MY CREATIVE PRACTICE** is called "Penrose Press" in the grand tradition of singular printmakers taking on entire imprints. I use linocut printmaking, bookarts, and installation to unpack themes that flow into each other: from Comfort to Friendship to Romance. My approach is earnest and bitter-sweet. My art is richly coloured, achingly detailed, and loaded with easter eggs. When I present my work in person, and in full storytelling mode, I am likely to bring you to tears. It sounds heavy, but it is so so soft.

Brianna has been living at SNAP and working out of Edmonton since 2019. She acquired her BFA at OCADU in 2017, and has been pursuing Art wholeheartedly ever since. She has had the pleasure of collaborating with, borrowing inspiration from, and sharing community with many local artists and creatives in the last five years.

RIGHT: Brianna Tosswill, *Crushing Softly* (detail), linocut, 2024.

## Artist Statement

Two labels that I have big feelings about claiming are artist and queer. One I claim easily and invite others into without restriction. Within the other I feel like an imposter, although I've never been excluded from it.

This comfort and discomfort will be more overt depending on where you encounter me in the world. In my furthest-reaching representation, I don't lead with my queerness. Not because it's secret, but because in my worst fears, half the people who read the word will reduce me to it, while the other half will roll their eyes at another white bisexual woman who has only dated men. I have been made to feel a part of the queer community for years even before I came out to myself. This is thanks to the many amazing and inclusive queer folks I have encountered, and I recognize my statement above is unfair...and yet. Conversely, the word artist has become so natural as to be almost non-existent. I've been claiming



it unselfconsciously for a decade and it feels like home.

I'm slightly more open in more intimate groups of people. I first called myself queer in my email list a few months after I first felt it was true. Also within that space, I encourage people to casually claim the label "artist" in a post-subscription survey. I think I use the word "creative" (noun) because it's slightly less scary to many folks, but I mean artist, haha.

And in personal interactions, I don't even have to use the word "queer" because it's understood so easily by the people to whom it matters. We know, while speaking about anything else, that queerness is a lens through which all of this creativity is filtered. In personal interactions, I'm very likely to encourage people to claim "artist" for themselves, and I occasionally do it for them. I feel so secure in the label of artist that I don't understand why anyone who makes anything shouldn't feel welcome to claim it. "That counts!" I hope one day to feel that same security in queerness.

Until then, I'm enjoying claiming a variety of easy and complicated labels (extrovert, poet, neurodivergent?) in personal interactions that are fleeting but meaningful like a finger doodle on a foggy window.



ABOVE: Brianna Tosswill, *The Bitch Who Broke His Heart*, linocut, 2024.

# What's in a job title?

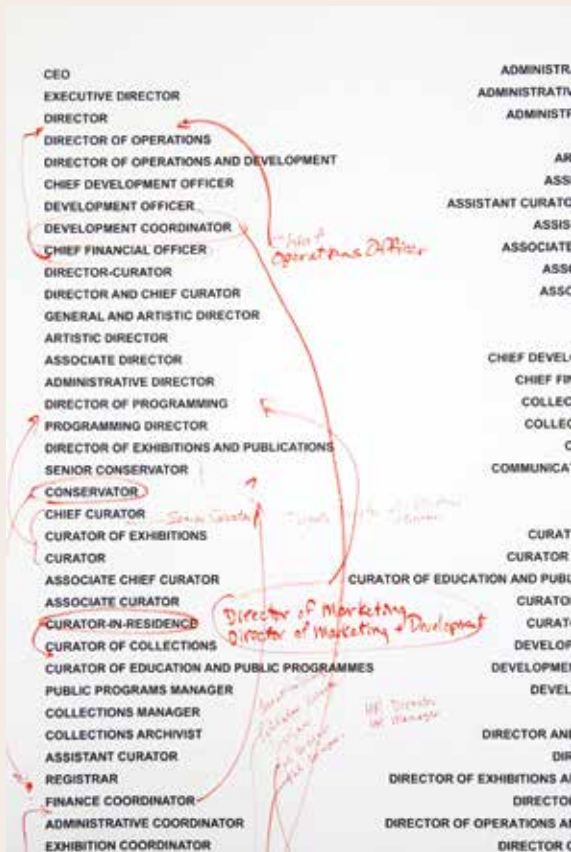
## A livelihood

By Liuba González de Armas

**CAN YOU CALL YOURSELF A CURATOR** if your last successful exhibition proposal was over a year ago? Are you still an artist if your arts administration job leaves no time for your own studio practice? How is an art preparator different from an art handler or a gallery technician? At what point can one shed the humbling modifier (e.g., *emerging*, *assistant*, *junior*) and graduate into a full-fledged role? A job title is a label that describes what a worker does. With this label come expectations about an individual's education and training, material circumstances, and identity. Yet the process by which job titles are assigned is often opaque and arbitrary, and varies with each workplace. This is particularly true for arts workers, whose work demands fluidity by nature, and whose industry's chronic underfunding results in fewer workers being forced to take on a wider range of responsibilities.

While Canadian Artists' Representation/le Front des artistes canadiens (CARFAC) strives to set standards for minimum compensation arts workers can expect for their services, there is no equivalent scheme that outlines job titles and their corresponding responsibilities and wages. With few exceptions, job titles in the art world are not protected by colleges, guilds, or trade unions. Most of us acquire the specialized skills we need on the job and are constantly learning, re-training,

*The process by which job titles are assigned is often opaque and arbitrary, and varies with each workplace.*



LEFT: Jo-Anne Balcaen, *List of Job Titles*, Inkjet on paper, 111.76 x 330 cm, 2014. Photo courtesy of the artist.

artworks address the particularities of labelling labour in the arts sector: Jo-Anne Balcaen on her annotated inkjet print *List of Job Titles* (2014), and Camille-Zoé Valcourt-Synnott on her participatory installation *Job titles and positions* (2024). Both artists take the job title as the central object of inquiry and use peer consultation and the list form to prompt discussions about power and mobility in the art world.

*What do artists bring to the conversation about arts labour that only artists can?*

Jo-Anne Balcaen is an artist and translator from La Broquerie, Manitoba. She obtained her Bachelor of Fine Arts degree in 1994 from the University of Manitoba and her Master of Fine Arts at Concordia University in 2000, and lived and worked in Montreal for 25 years before returning to Winnipeg in 2021. While on residency at the International Studio & Curatorial Program in Brooklyn, New York in 2014, Balcaen encountered the practice of including job titles in work contract negotiations and with it the concept of “title fluffing.” The latter, also called “title inflation”, is where an organization and/or worker exaggerates the importance of a role by assigning it a grander title. An administrator may be called a “Director of Finance and Administration”, for instance. With this phenomenon in mind, Balcaen set out in an experimental exploration of job titles and power.

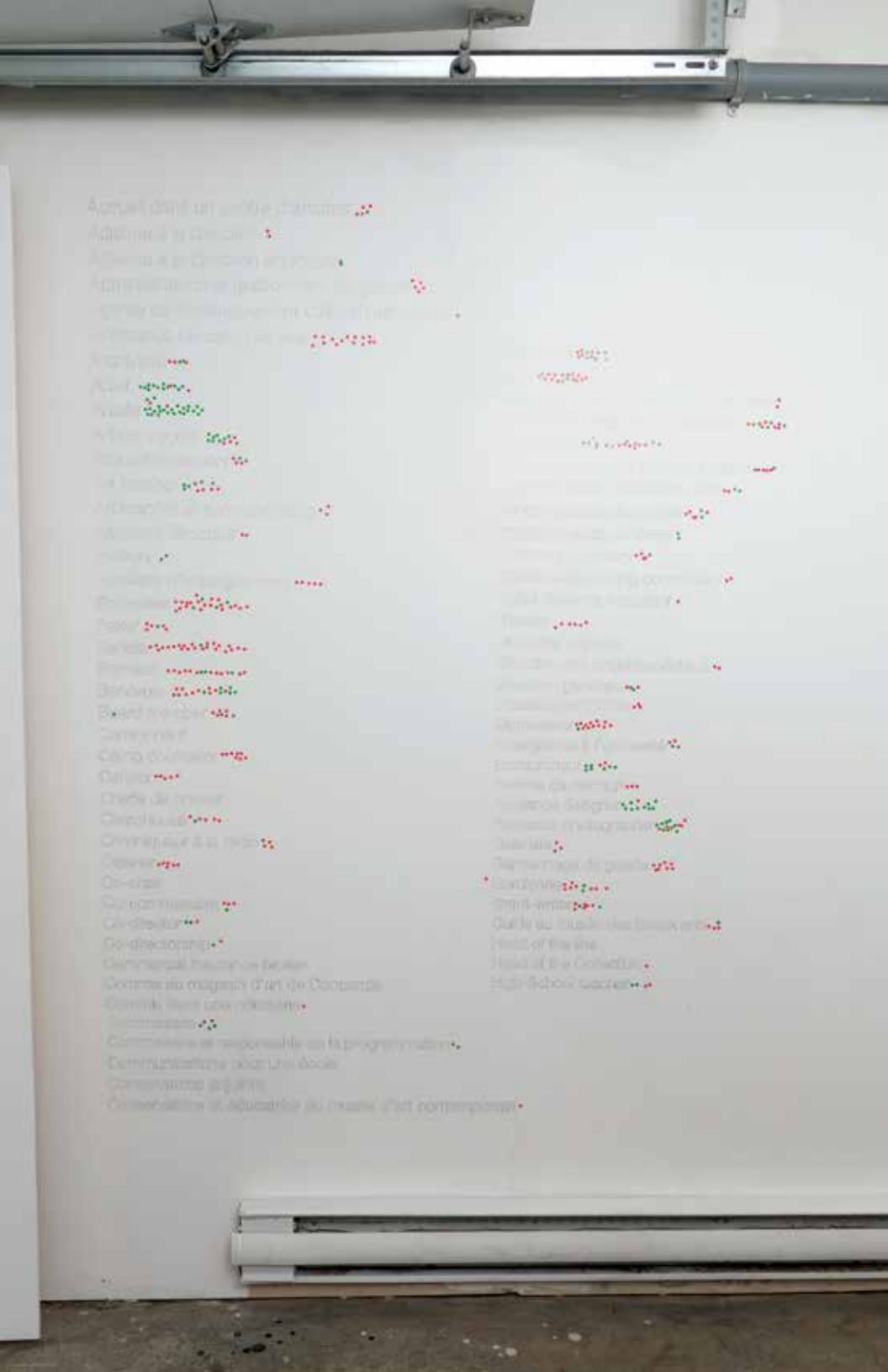
In *List of Job Titles* (2014), the artist presents a selection of job titles gleaned from the websites of various art museums and galleries in the US and Canada reproduced in inkjet print. The right-hand column lists the titles in alphabetical order. In the left-hand column, Balcaen replaced the traditional organigram (or organizational chart) model with a single-file ranking, inscribing an absolute hierarchy based on her estimate of each position’s power within an institution. The artist then invited art world professionals to adjust the ranking based on their own criteria and experiences.

*Language can command respect when deployed strategically*

The resulting work towers over viewers at 3.3 metres tall. The two lists, laid out in an authoritative all-uppercase Arial typeface, form twin vertical sawtooth forms. Annotations in bright red ink trace a busy network of intercrossing arrows, with handwritten additions and the occasional question

improvising, and problem-solving. While this is something we celebrate (*no two days at the gallery are the same*), this particular mode of working takes a toll on veteran workers and leaves room for labour rights abuses such as uncompensated training, excessive and irregular work hours, wage theft, etc. Working in the arts, some say, is a young person’s game. The arts worker is de facto a factotum. We do whatever needs to be done because we believe in the work; we derive profound satisfaction from making beautiful and meaningful things. In any case, we rarely have the means to refuse work that falls beyond the scope of our skills, training, and comfort. We are painfully aware of the dearth of stable employment in the arts. Our job titles do little to protect us on this front.

Beyond statistical, administrative, economic, or even activist logics, I wanted to understand how arts workers make sense of the industry’s labour taxonomy. What do artists bring to the conversation about arts labour that only artists can? I spoke with two contemporary Canadian artists whose



mark. The ranking presents a dynamic chaos made to seem all the more arbitrary by its juxtaposition to the indisputable alphabetical order of the list on the right. Is an “Associate Chief Curator” really ranked below a plain “Curator”?

In our discussion, Balcaen oscillated between criticism of what she sees as the corporatization of artist-run centres and genuine empathy for cultural workers whose corporatized job titles, while contrived, lend a well-deserved sense of dignity to the work they do. Language can command respect when deployed strategically and, in the face of insufficient material compensation, can arts workers really be blamed for aspiring to command more cultural capital? <sup>1</sup>

Following in the trajectory of Balcaen’s *List of Job Titles*, Camille-Zoé Valcourt-Synnott’s *Job titles and positions* (2024) shares an interest in art world job titles, emphasizing

*Both artworks rely on surveying techniques, whether by consulting organizational charts or by interviewing colleagues*

LEFT: Camille-Zoé Valcourt-Synnott, *List of Jobs*, 2024. Participatory installation, wall drawing (graphite), stickers. Résidence Céline Bureau, Montréal, QC. Photo credit: Pablo Pérez Díaz.

<sup>1</sup> While *List of Job Titles* does not seek to delve into the interiority of job title holders, a subsequent work by Balcaen titled *Survey for Cultural Workers/Questionnaire pour travailleurs culturels* (2015) picks up where the former left off by compiling 44 individual responses to an eleven-question survey about cultural workers’ working conditions and motivations, and makes for compelling reading.

mobility rather than hierarchy. Valcourt-Synnott is a multidisciplinary artist and arts worker from Québec City. She graduated with a BFA in Print Media from Concordia University in 2018 and an MFA from NSCAD University in 2020, and currently works as arts administrator (Administratrice et gestionnaire de galerie, to be precise) at La Maison des artistes visuels francophones in Winnipeg. Through a residency program at Céline Bureau this past summer, Valcourt-Synnott invited arts workers in Montreal to meet with her one-on-one to discuss their reality and working conditions. As the open call garnered attention beyond the city and province, she ended up interviewing artists across the country and identifying common concerns in housing, affordability, and barriers to accessing studio space.

For the residency showcase from September 26 to October 6, the artist compiled the job titles that emerged from these interviews in an alphabetical list under the name Job titles and positions (2024). Valcourt-Synnott reproduced these by hand using graphite pencil and stencils directly on a wall at Céline Bureau's studio space. She opted to keep titles as they had been reported to her, meaning the list includes both English and French language job titles, and otherwise omits repeating titles. Lastly, the artist invited visitors to place green dot stickers next to job titles they held and red dot stickers by positions they had formerly held.

The resulting installation loosely traces trends and movement across the industry without identifying the trajectories of individual contributors. Unlike conventional vinyl PVC decals, the hand-traced signage draws attention to the labour of its own production. Because the list includes job titles held by arts workers, not just art world jobs, curious confluences emerge: "Cook" sits next to "Consultant", "Gardiennage de galerie" (gallery guard) and "Grant-writer". The coloured stickers signal professional stages of each contributor's life, but give no further detail or duration. One is tempted to trace trends from more physically demanding or subordinate positions (e.g., Barista, Dishwasher, Camp Counsellor) to those that, at face value,

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the liberatory  
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sharing in  
the face of a  
byzantine labour  
taxonomy.*

afford their bearers a balance of economic stability and job satisfaction (e.g., Freelance Designer, Entrepreneur, Commissaire/Curator), but there is also evidence against this reading. Both "Director" and "Administratrice et gestionnaire de galerie" (Gallery administrator), ostensibly desirable art world positions, are riddled with red dots. The work effectively situates labour in the arts as concurrent with and embedded in labour in other sectors.

Despite the decade that spans between them, *List of Job Titles* and *Job titles* and positions are equally relevant to the contemporary working conditions of arts workers. Though their approaches differ, both artworks rely on surveying techniques, whether by consulting organizational charts or by interviewing colleagues, to identify landscapes of arts labour through job titles. They loosely untangle the mystique of job titles through peer consultation, hinting at the liberatory potential of collective knowledge-sharing in the face of a byzantine labour taxonomy.

Though these works prompt more questions than they resolve, they incite much-needed conversation about the names we give ourselves – and let ourselves be given – at work and the power and limitations of these names. Perhaps this is the most meaningful contribution artists can bring to the discourse on job titles: to name names, to identify power structures and to playfully but meaningfully challenge them. The list, whether in the form of the flattened power ranking of *List of Job Titles* or the frequency table of *Job titles and positions*, gives form to an art world community by invoking its constituent members through their assigned and adopted labels. Only once everyone in the room is named and accounted for can we ask: Who is missing, and why? Who holds power, and why? And most importantly, how can we share power equitably?

*Only once  
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# Pleaser

By Britt Dorland

**IN A PROVINCE** (and world) that has chosen to vilify Queer and Trans people, “pleaser” comes from a place of rage, exhaustion, and necessity.

This piece explores resilience, defiance, and complexity in the face of societal expectations amid environmental chaos. The figure—a trans person in a hazmat suit paired with towering pleaser heels—embodies the intersection of survival, self-expression, and rebellion. The hazmat suit, a protective barrier, symbolizes both the external threats we face and the internal strength required to navigate a world often hostile to trans existence. Yet, it is juxtaposed with the unapologetic glamour of the pleasers, a statement of unwavering individuality and joy amidst turmoil.

The broken protest sign, emblazoned with the phrase “*This is not a criticism!*” serves as both a plea and a paradox. It challenges viewers to confront their assumptions and to reflect on how protest, identity, and survival are often misinterpreted as acts of aggression or critique.

Its fracture is a reminder of the vulnerability inherent in resistance and the cost of asserting one’s existence in a world that seeks conformity.

This work is a celebration of the layered identities and the enduring spirit of Trans and Queer communities. It invites dialogue on how we navigate the delicate balance between self-preservation and radical visibility in a world fraught with both physical and ideological hazards.

The constant dehumanization of our communities that we have to endure and fight against can feel suffocating, but we are resilient communities and we are here to stay. We will continue to fight for our right to exist—and we’re going to do it our way. Queerness is sacred. Transness is sacred. We are not a hazard, we are beautiful, and we will persist.



# LABELS AND LIBERATION



By Jacky Tollestrup



ABOVE: Jacky Tollestrup, *Third Antenna*, Silkscreen, 2024.

**I AM ALWAYS THINKING** about words. I am thinking about the ways language is used in hashtags, news articles, art pieces, poetry, and cults. I'm digesting moments in time through language and relationships through words. I am rehearsing the things I want to say in my head, and I am wondering if I know just the right word. I am listening to see what labels you apply to yourself and wondering if they are affirming for you. I am thinking about the time I was hooking in Vancouver, and a guy yelled out the window of his car, "I can see your stubble, you fucking freak!"

I was a part of a lesbian softball team for a while and most of the team didn't like the word Queer. Most of them came from places where Queers were labeled as sexual deviants or perverts. They were pathologized, criminalized, and stripped of employment, housing, and healthcare by people using words like queer, anti-social, sick, mentally ill, or disordered.

When the AIDS crisis hit hardest, some of my fiercest friends started using the chant, "We're here, we're queer, get used to it, don't fuck with us." A lot of the softball players became a force in the activism in our neighbourhood and joined in with that chant. I think a bunch of us fell in love with the word. Queer started to be the word my friends used to mean everyone that falls outside of, or rejects normative gender and sexual values. Suddenly, Queer became a self-ascribed powerful label for much of the team.

I love the way my Queer friends take pleasure in labels, and subvert the power imbedded in them. If my friend Barb says, "Bitch, Please," I feel castigated, cherished, and recognised all at once. I love that I've been called gender nonconforming auntie, soft butch, and low femme. I enjoy calling my buddy Tristin faggot, and I love that my friend Freddie started every one of our phone calls with, "Hey, homo."

I want to seduce people with words. When I started writing poetry, I was such a little slut about it. I assembled contraband words, explicit words, indulgent words, and felt around in my body for words. I made out with poets. I filled spiral bound notebooks on every page.

**I love the way my Queer friends take pleasure in labels, and subvert the power imbedded in them.**

Ivan and I had English and Phys Ed together. Our PE teacher began sex ed with, "this is... ah... the, um... penis... and its role in... ah... reproduction..." The words compulsory heterosexuality, and

cis-normative come to mind. His words lacked grace and style.

The diagrams he was poking at on an overhead projector were of two pearly white sets of genitals. They looked like they had been manufactured with space age melamine. Ivan and I exchanged notes under our desks. We wanted to see cute little penises, hairy vulvas, skin colours, and working parts. I whispered to Ivan, "Why is he SO bad at this?"

I am comfortable with the label tranny whore, but I don't let everyone call me that, just friends.

I became a teacher. It might have been to make up for how bad my education was. I taught Sex Ed all year every year even though I was an English and Art teacher. I've had a number of different careers. I was a massage-parlour-bitch/street-walker, became a cabaret star, dabbled in construction, became a sommelier, wound up teaching middle school, spent years as a varsity athlete, hitchhiked around North America, went to grad school, and am an artist, writer, and filmmaker. When some-

one asks me what I do, or what I've done, I'm not sure what label to assign myself. I am comfortable with the label tranny whore, but I don't let everyone call me that, just friends.

Some labels feel liberating. The first time my friend Sigmund used the term, polymorphously perverse, I squawked, "Ah, that's me!" Transvestite was a popular label for a while, I love and hate that one. At some point I noticed that if people used she/her for me, I would smile more. I've been told that my face relaxes, my cheeks and lips soften, and my eyes get extra gentle.

I like the mixed up artful milieu of codes that go into sex and gender terms. I explain gender as self-love, and sexuality as love for others. I try on labels to see what resonates with people. I was trying to explain my gender expression to a friend at a pub recently and he yelled through the clamour, "What the fuck are you?"

I paused and then yelled back, "I'm more lady than dude... but imagine that gender is language and I'm multilingual!"

I started dating this super gorgeous horse girl, Jalen. I don't know if that's the label she would have used for himself at the time, but she worked three jobs to pay for a dressage coach, a stable, and her beautiful sixteen hand horse, Cosmo. About a year into dating,

she came back from the barn to find me in stolen vintage lingerie. She was very excited. Over coffee the next morning she asked, "So, does this make me a lesbian?"

I said, "It might."

I asked her to call me Jacky and started the process of getting hormones from the gender clinic a few weeks later. I was never a floral print dress girl, except for my trips to the gender clinic. The medical establishment had very rigid ideas of what the label transexual meant in those days. When it came to the label woman, the gender clinic agreed almost entirely with the church my parents dragged me to as a kid. I learned a lot about power from trying to pass for a particular kind of feminine. Sexist, heterosexist, and cis-sexist oppression, violence, and the persistent threat of violence took new forms when I did and didn't fit the labels that were assigned to me.

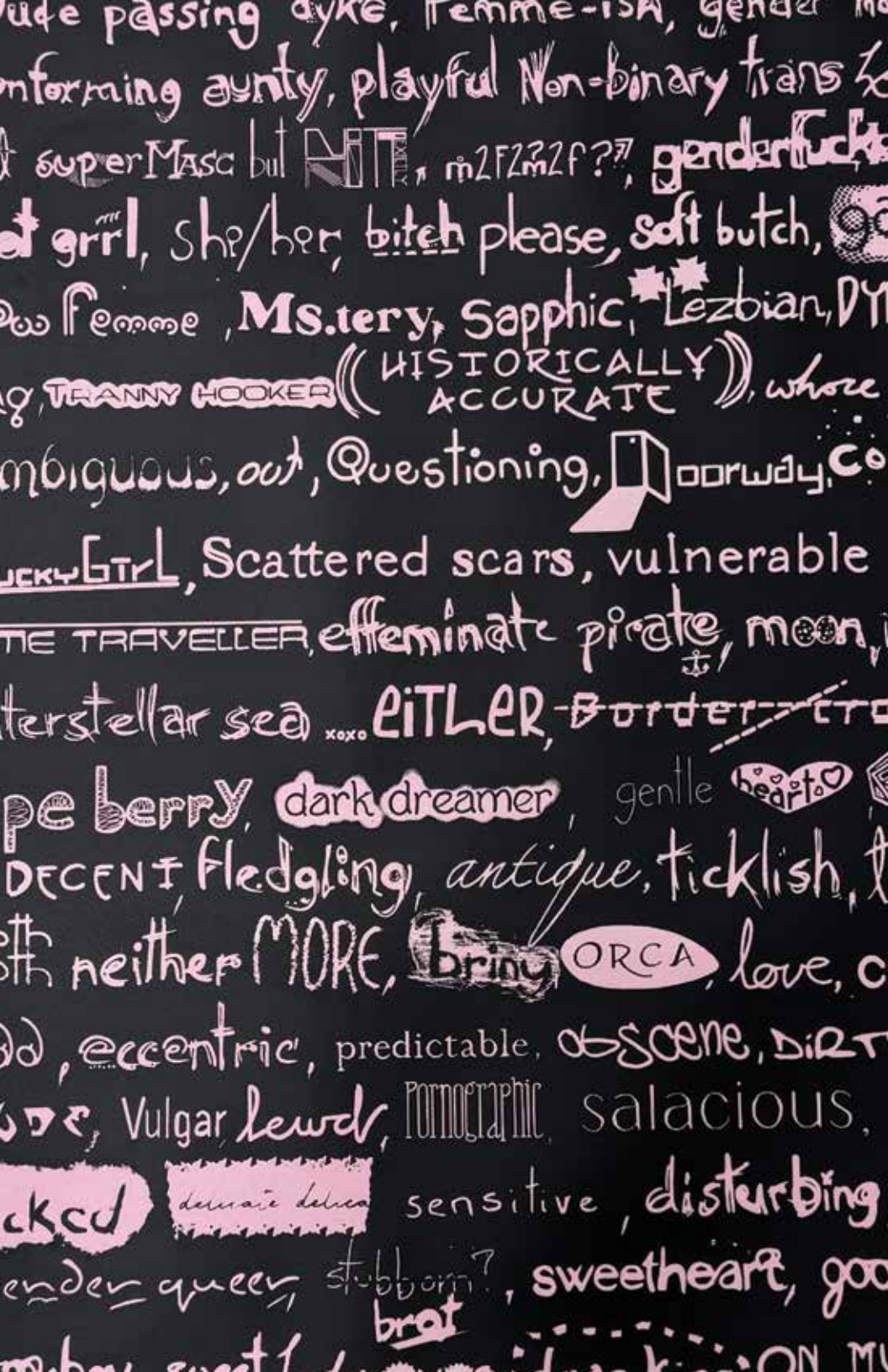
My genitals became a hot topic. Straight people are obsessed with genitals these days. Why do they throw genital reveal parties for their babies? I don't entirely mind talking about genitals as long as I get to choose the labels. I love the word vulva. I hate the word nuts. Cock-sleeve sounds kind of fun. I'd let the right person call me that for a weekend, but if someone made assumptions about me for the rest of my life based on that label, that would be fucked.

I don't entirely mind talking about genitals as long as I get to choose the labels

When I was hanging out with my friend Leslie at a transgender conference. We were sitting at the registration table, and the table next to us was for an alien conference. They told us that they loved us transgendered folks because we had a "Third Antenna." Leslie leaned over to me and whispered, "I showed my girlfriend my third antenna last night." She smirked and then smiled. "What do you call yours?"

I held my hand up, with my index and middle finger stretched upward. I pointed to the outstretched fingers and said, "Clit." Then I pointed to the other gathered fingers and thumb, and said, "Folds." Then I pointed to the lower part of my palm and said, "Soft Spot... and below that, I just call it my ass."

She nodded and said, "Hot."



My friend Mira wrote a zine called Fucking Trans Women. It is full of great drawings, diagrams, anatomy, and detailed discussions about pleasure. I've been inspired by her, and I'm currently working on a series of prints that aim to capture how shifting and wonderful queer pleasure can be. I am looking for ways to represent different genders, different genitals, and different moods. There are many depths to probe; tissues to fondle, flex and fold; and pressure points to excite.

I love the word no. It's often been easy for me to find my no — no to televangelism, shame, oppressive institutions, and sketchy Johns. Having a strong sense of my no has led me to some moments of ecstatic euphoric yes. Do I want to date this person? Do I want to make this art? Do I want to spend my hours doing this work? Do I find pleasure in this label? It's not always easy to figure out where my deep erotic, orgasmic yes might live, or to hear the quiet whispers of yes humming in my heart, but nothing feels better.

There aren't only two options for standard issue genitals. I want an expanded library of vocabulary and representation for finding pleasure. I want signs of intersex, non-binary, trans, and non-conforming pleasure plastered everywhere. I love when I am talking to my people and howl with laughter because of the words we use, or because of the words we can't find.

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The tides of culture and time wash over language. Labels erode, tatter, flip, and provide mortar for the mosaic of redefinition. Each label I've adopted, discarded, or redefined has contributed to the way I think of myself. When we find more of ourselves, and more of our pleasure, we authorise our people to do so as well. I want to find more opportunities to subvert the order that keeps us hidden and trapped.



LEFT: Jacky Tollestrup, *On My Terms*, Silkscreen, 2024.

# NOT LIKE US

By Allison Tunis

**SIMPLY PUT**, labels are a way for our brains to categorize and make sense of the world around us. Much of our brain's labeling boils down to "Like Us" or "Not Like Us" — an important distinction that has kept humans thriving on what can be a dangerous planet for generations. Because of this, we can often forget that diversity itself is integral to our survival in that we can learn from those who are different from us new ways to cope with challenges that arise.



ABOVE: Allison Tunis,  
*Expect Variance / Respect  
Variance*, screen print on  
fabric, 2024.



IMAGES: Allison Tunis, Mairead Charles, and Rain Bossert, *Expect Variance | Respect Variance* group photo, 2024.

The world has largely been built within the confines of limited access. We live in a society built for certain people, and when someone doesn't fit in, the onus is placed on them to assimilate. Fat (the word 'fat' is used here as a neutral descriptor and not a pejorative) and disabled people are often cast into that category of "Not Like Us" due to stigmatization, when the truth is that fatness and disability are normal variations that occur in virtually every species. To continually treat people as if they are outside the norm leaves them unable to access spaces (both physical and metaphorical) that typical people are able to, therefore reducing their ability to participate in society. "Expect Variance | Respect Variance" demands that we reframe our world view to both ANTICIPATE and ACCOMMODATE difference, instead of separating and silencing those who don't fit into neat boxes.

The world has largely been built within the confines of limited access. We live in a society built for certain people, and when someone doesn't fit in, the onus is placed on them to assimilate.

"Expect Variance | Respect Variance" is an art piece created in collaboration with two local organizations — Weight Inclusive Alberta and Take A Seat YEG, who are both working towards creating more accessible and inclusive communities. This campaign was created to raise funds for the ongoing work of Weight Inclusive Alberta and Take A Seat YEG, and was brought to completion with additional support from artist Mairead Charles. Weight Inclusive Alberta (WIA) is an online directory and resource hub for Albertans to connect with weight inclusive healthcare providers, and learn more about weight inclusive care and fat liberation more broadly. Take A Seat YEG is a community database that houses accessibility information about spaces in amiskwaciwaskahikan (Edmonton) in order to share which spaces are safe and comfortable for underrepresented bodies.

To learn more visit:



Weight Inclusive Alberta



Take a Seat YEG

# Flash Fiction Winners



ABOVE:  
Lisa Murray, *Trawling*  
(*Flying Mouth-Cloud*),  
Etching, Photo Etching,  
Chine Colle, 1995.

FIRST PLACE

## Yellow Fish

BY AMELIE SNOWDEN

She's the world's greatest biologist and nothing that moves is beneath her notice. She floats over vast fields of sand. Her shadow is bulbous, a product of the life-jacket insisted on by dad, who despite knowing full well that she's the best swimmer in her class is leery of the ocean and its fickle waves.

There are fish down there, the same colour as the sand, and they move in quick flickering bursts, like the tongues of the fire they light at grandma's house on Christmas. She wants to get a closer look but they're sensitive and frustrating and flee almost before she moves.

Her goggles are fogging up, which simply will not do- no self respecting biologist puts up with faulty equipment. She surfaces and pulls them off, rubbing breath away from the lenses. The sun is

bright and her lips taste like salt and she bobs up and down with the rise and swell of little waves. Dad is watching her while pretending he's not, peering over the top of some old-person book from the towels.

Equipment repaired, all systems go. She pushes the goggles into her eyes to seal them tight and goes under again.

The sand gives way to rough patches of dark vegetation, tangled and mysterious like witches hair. The ground is close enough to touch but she doesn't want the alien matter to brush against her feet so she floats horizontally, close to the surface. The little tan fish still flit through the weeds, in and out of view.

A sudden flash of yellow catches her eye and the tail of some larger creature vanishes into a particularly tangled snarl. She holds her breath and stares unblinking at the spot. No movement but the gentle undulations of the seaweed.

She's never seen a fish that colour before, not even in the book dad bought for her birthday, with its glossy pictures and fun facts.

Maybe it's a new species. She'll show it to some old professor with glasses and a cane and they'll confirm it to be an exciting new discovery and she'll get to name it after anything she wants.

She could name it after mom. Mom's favourite colour was yellow.

No movement. Her lungs burn but she can't risk losing the fish. She stays as still as possible. The pain in her chest is like a red-hot ball expanding but she can't move yet, not yet, not yet. Is that it? Is it there? Is it-

She's yanked up by the shoulders and the water breaks and crashes down around her. She sputters and twists and is released. It's shallow, and she finds firm footing before looking up and seeing dad.

His eyes are wide and he says, "You were just floating, I thought--"

The waves lap on. The fish has surely fled. She furrows her brow in mock disapproval but there's no real heat to her anger. The ocean is deep and she has all the time in the world.

## RUNNER UP

# 5:30 pm on a Friday Night

BY A. LYNN WARREN

They strolled around the liquor store as they had for eleven years. Eleven years, the same two guys were at the plexiglass checkout. Feeling a decade older themselves, actually two, these clerks appeared eternally young to them. Neither party said more than a greeting and neither knew more about the other than the first time they had discovered the store.

Brothers? They didn't match in a family way but they did go together.

Business partners? Aside from always being there, they behaved like employees, nothing above and beyond.

Friends? They probably like to talk about music, craft beer and skateboarding

They definitely grew up on the north side of the river.

Heavy metal screamed over the sound system. A biker in a crisp, new, white t-shirt approached the checkout and expressed his love for the song. Sharing concert notes, hoping to thrill the clerks with stories of a nowhere near close encounter with the now dead artist, he gazed dreamily out the streaky front window.

A Muslim family passed the window with full hijabs, carrying groceries. The flurry of children seen but not heard through the large, yellow-tinted, double-paned glass. Obscured by stacks of boxes, mix and an ancient ice chest, the chaotic mass soon disappeared.

Their attention turned back to the wine selections. The labels were the same as last Friday with an occasional new addition. Scanning the shelves they spotted one that caught their attention. They contemplated the picture. Was it a cocoon? The word reminded them of a terrible movie that was never

seen but the preview still haunted them. Cult classic. They read the name on the dark bottle. Trawling. Will it have notes of fish? Picking up the bottle and turning it around, the description was vague. No hints. Just the usual. Berries. Full bodied. Tannins. It meant nothing.

They stared at the image. Sorting thoughts to make a connection. It now looked like a cloud. A tidy storm cloud, high above a trailer park, about to suck you in and tumble you inside its messy center. Chaos and clutter and mayhem. Homes and pets and trampolines and cars and lightning. Thoughts and feelings and confessions and dreams and realities. All of it. Wound tighter and tighter. Crushing it all like grapes. Squeezing out everything until all that is left is something delicious and deadly.

They decided it looked like the winner this week. Approaching the counter, both clerks looked up at them. Eyes met. Everyone paused.

Everyone seemed about to say something. The music had stopped momentarily. The card tapped and pinged in the silence.

"Would you like the receipt?"



# SNAPLINE 2024.3: LABELS

FEATURED ARTIST: Brianna Tosswill

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## UPCOMING SNAP COURSE

### Building Community through Artist Books

1 Weekend | 10 am – 5 pm  
Instructor: Chelsey Campbell  
Saturday and Sunday, March 1 and 2

Engage your creativity in community through an exploration of simple artist book formats, silkscreen, and community-based practice with artist Chelsey Campbell! Over a single weekend, participants will explore the generative possibilities of creating a screen-printed Instabook zine. Beginning with a collaborative workshop, participants will build the visual foundation of their instabooks together through collage, drawing, and playing with the theme ‘In Community.’



Learn more and sign up at  
[snapartists.com/education/courses/](https://snapartists.com/education/courses/)

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