

Pam Hall

Paul Couillard

Number 98, Winter 2020

Savoir
Knowledge

URI: <https://id.erudit.org/iderudit/92568ac>

[See table of contents](#)

Publisher(s)

Les éditions Esse

ISSN

0831-859X (print)
1929-3577 (digital)

[Explore this journal](#)

Cite this document

Couillard, P. (2020). Pam Hall. *esse arts + opinions*, (98), 84–87.

Pam Hall

Pam Hall's ongoing meditation on the nature of knowledge comes out of a practice deeply invested in close looking and attentive listening. Framing art-making as a way of thinking, Hall offers a sustained consideration of how human knowledge is generated and retained in acts of doing—i.e. knowledge as a verb—undertaken by bodies situated in specific places.

Hall's projects often evolve through various iterations as image series, bookworks, installations, and encounters that reflect an acutely political commitment to valuing local knowledges and expertise. Her contribution to the interdisciplinary anthology *Just Fish: Ethics and Canadian Marine Fisheries* (1997), for example, was a set of digital images reflecting the viewpoints of fisherman in contrast to the writings of biologists, ethicists, and historians. This carries over into her installation *Fragments from the Inshore Archives* (1997–98), which mapped how knowledge is shared and physically passed between generations. Later works like Hall's series *Re-writing the Body: Towards the Reading Room* (2003–2007) included not only a reading table featuring collaboratively authored books explicitly aimed at gathering female knowledge, but also a series of writing workshops with girls and women who became contributors to the project.

This preoccupation with knowledge is most evident in Hall's ongoing work *Towards an Encyclopedia of Local Knowledge* (2010–present). The project features a growing series of visual/textual scores of making and doing, developed through encounters with holders of local knowledges. Hall's collaborative approach involves not only an in situ gathering of local, everyday knowledges, but also a commitment to returning her reflections to their sources for revision and enhancement. Installations of panels and boxed sets of unbound pages invite a process of call and response. At its core, Hall's practice challenges art's tendency to disengage from broad and non-specialized communities and seeks to redress art's absence from discourses on knowledge.

Paul Couillard

Avec une pratique reposant sur une observation vigilante et une écoute attentive, Pam Hall médite sur la nature de la connaissance. Concevant la pratique artistique comme une manière de penser, elle examine avec attention la façon dont la connaissance est générée et contenue dans des actes de faire (car la connaissance agit pour elle comme un verbe) accomplis par des individus dans des lieux déterminés.

Souvent, ses projets évoluent à travers des itérations variées comme des séries d'images, des livres, des installations et des rencontres qui reflètent un engagement politique profond envers la valorisation des expertises et des savoirs locaux. Par exemple, sa contribution à l'anthologie interdisciplinaire *Just Fish: Ethics and Canadian Marine Fisheries* (1997) consiste en un ensemble d'images numériques confrontant les points de vue des pêcheurs et les écrits des biologistes, des éthiciens et des historiens. Dans la même veine, *Fragments from the Inshore Archives* (1997–1998) témoigne de la façon dont, entre les générations, la connaissance est partagée et transmise par la pratique. Des œuvres plus récentes, comme la série *Re-writing the Body: Towards the Reading Room* (2003–2007), proposent non seulement une table de lecture regroupant des ouvrages collaboratifs explicitement destinés à rassembler le savoir féminin, mais également une série d'ateliers d'écriture avec des filles et des femmes devenues contributrices du projet.

Cette préoccupation pour la connaissance s'incarne dans *Towards an Encyclopedia of Local Knowledge* (depuis 2010), qui présente une suite évolutive d'éléments visuels et textuels autour de la fabrication et du faire, série développée au fil des rencontres avec les détenteurs de savoirs locaux. L'approche collaborative de Hall implique non seulement de rassembler in situ des connaissances locales quotidiennes, mais aussi de partager ses réflexions avec ses sources afin qu'elles les révisent et les améliorent. Dans les communautés, l'installation d'affiches et l'accès aux pages de l'encyclopédie invitent à ce processus de questions-réponses. Essentiellement, la pratique de Hall reconsidère la tendance de l'art à se désengager des grandes communautés non spécialisées et cherche à remédier à son absence des discours sur la connaissance.

Traduit de l'anglais par Catherine Barnabé



Pam Hall

161 Women Feel..., 2007, série de livres tirée du projet | book series from the project *Re-writing the Body: Towards the Reading Room* (2003-2007).

Photo : permission de l'artiste | courtesy of the artist



Pam Hall

Towards an Encyclopedia of Local Knowledge (ELK), 2010-2019,
vue d'installation | installation view, Fogo Island stadium, Fogo
Island, 2015.

Photo : permission de l'artiste | courtesy of the artist

WHAT MARTHA KNOWS ABOUT BEADING ON A LOOM

Marttha Drew learned how to bead from her mother. She taught her own daughters to bead and also how to use a beading loom. Beading on a loom is different than beading on rings or into a shell or fabric, since you are sewing the beads together, rather than attaching them to another surface. Martha makes patterns on graph paper to work out her colours and patterns. You must pass the thread through each bead hole. The first time connects the beads to one another in a line or flat thread to under the long threads on the loom. In weaving fabric, these long threads are called the warp. The second time the thread goes through the beads it goes over the warp threads, securing the beads in place.

TAN TELI KJIIJITQ MARTHA TELI EYWMK LOOM

Marttha Drew's mother taught her to bead on a loom. Her mother's mother also taught her to bead on a loom. Martha's mother's mother taught her to bead on a loom. Martha's mother's mother taught her to bead on a loom. Martha's mother's mother taught her to bead on a loom.

CONJURING A BASKET FROM MEMORY

Rosky's father did some training many years ago in traditional Mi'kmaq basket-making. It was taught by George White from Bay St. George. When asked today, Rosky could still remember how to make the baskets, where to harvest the materials, and how to prepare them. Memory is a good thing.

The basic form of the basket is made from wet withered held in place by spruce root. The root makes a diamond and, holding the ribs together and also forming the means with which other ribs are secured. The number of ribs depends on the shape and size of the basket under construction but on each side of the bottom rib, there will be an equal number. Once the withered structure is complete, wet spruce root is woven over and under each rib until the basket is done. The root ends are inter-woven without being joined and separate ends are used where ribs are closer together or further apart. The basket will dry in 3-4 hours before it is ready for use.

It might take three hours or more to complete a small basket if all of the materials have been gathered and properly prepared. Many ago, different shaped spruce root baskets were in everyday use to gather berries, eggs, and to carry fish, shellfish and vegetables.

ELTU'N PA'SKIT TAN TELMUKWITE'TMNN

Rosky's father did some training many years ago in traditional Mi'kmaq basket-making. It was taught by George White from Bay St. George. When asked today, Rosky could still remember how to make the baskets, where to harvest the materials, and how to prepare them. Memory is a good thing.

The basic form of the basket is made from wet withered held in place by spruce root. The root makes a diamond and, holding the ribs together and also forming the means with which other ribs are secured. The number of ribs depends on the shape and size of the basket under construction but on each side of the bottom rib, there will be an equal number. Once the withered structure is complete, wet spruce root is woven over and under each rib until the basket is done. The root ends are inter-woven without being joined and separate ends are used where ribs are closer together or further apart. The basket will dry in 3-4 hours before it is ready for use.

It might take three hours or more to complete a small basket if all of the materials have been gathered and properly prepared. Many ago, different shaped spruce root baskets were in everyday use to gather berries, eggs, and to carry fish, shellfish and vegetables.

SNACKING IN THE WOODS ON BUTTER AND CREAM

Wrong Fern: *o'planniksik ma'ssus*
Right Fern: *te'paqamuksik ma'ssus*

Kids growing up in Come River years ago spent lots of time in the woods on their own and on the country with their allies. This is not as true today as it was then. They learned a lot in the woods and knew how to find things to eat there when they got hungry. This included berries, of course, but also other plants that were not so easily spotted. One was called Butter and Cream because of its taste.

You had to know the right ferns to pull, since there was only one that had the Butter and Cream root. It grew round when it was young and was full of light, sometimes out on the open bog and barrens. The other ferns had raggedy petals on its fronds with edges that were serrated, whereas the Butter and Cream fern had smooth, rounded petals on its fronds.

Once you pulled the root out, you cleaned away the outer layers until the inside bulb-like section was revealed. It looked a bit like garlic cloves or as Quailbert says, "the little white bananas." It tasted great.

Most kids would know exactly where they grew and when we were looking for them, Edwin Wetzel told me exactly where to find them on a path near the river. Once you had seen one plant, it was easy to identify them.

AMALATALMK NIPUKTUK

Most kids would know exactly where they grew and when we were looking for them, Edwin Wetzel told me exactly where to find them on a path near the river. Once you had seen one plant, it was easy to identify them.

Pam Hall & Jerry Evans

Towards an Encyclopedia of Local Knowledge, 2010-2019, détails tirés du chapitre 3 Miawpukek - The Middle River | details from chapter 3 Miawpukek - The Middle River. Photos : permission de l'artiste | courtesy of the artist