

EXHIBITION

Mineral Matters

19 Nov – 12 Dec. 2014, Kimura Gallery, Anchorage

The works in the exhibition are inspired by debates concerning the socio-political, economic, and environmental changes brought about by the rapid expansion of Canada's oil and gas industries, and seek to contribute to this discourse by engaging with the interlaced terrain of traditional Indigenous trading routes and an ever-expanding network of oil and gas pipelines throughout Northern British Columbia. Both the unprecedented scale and potential consequences of these developments challenge a nuance perspective of the issues at hand, and offer a point of convergence for a timely dialogue about regional, national, and global futures.

At a liminal moment in Canadian history, vast swaths of unceded Indigenous territory – historically used as trading routes for oolichan oil ("grease trails") – are now proposed as transport corridors for millions of barrels of crude oil travelling from Alberta to the Northwest coast. As an increasing number of development proposals encroach upon this contested terrain, and as sustainable fisheries and cultural practices are put at risk by increased tanker traffic, it is in rural and remote regions where the impacts of changes to culture, water and land will be most directly felt. At once locally-rooted and globally resonant, these developments highlight the complex and inescapable relations between human beings and nature.

As an artist and art educator engaged in creative practice-based research, my approach to the questions these developments raise is through representation, through art production both as a material and socially-engaged practice. The works in this exhibition stem from my interest in the discourses, experiences, and future imaginaries emergent from the temporal and spatial change brought about by the exploitation of the region's environment, and include sculptures and weavings composed of copper, oil-based polyurethanes, aluminum, magnetic audio tape, video and photographs. These works are a component of *Trading Routes: Grease Trails, Oil Futures*, an interdisciplinary federally-funded research and creation project. Building on past research and creation projects, they aim to provoke thoughtful exchange and address issues of identity, cultural mapping, and environmental transitions related to natural resource extraction industries, including the fishing and canning industries of intercultural coastal communities.