
"When you get involved or help to grow the arts community, it's helping everything grow." John Devereaux, Perfect Day

Interview with Kailey Bryan: Part Two

by Pepa Chan



Photo Credit: Jen Cake

What project/s are you currently working on?

I have just come off the tails of a huge undertaking, the Elbow Room residency at The Rooms. Currently I am in sponge mode – absorbing information to carry forward and transform my practice. I recently began sewing lessons to learn new ways to use my weaving practice both practically and sculpturally. I am looking forward to focusing on my craft for a while, designing and weaving a variety of wearables. I am reading *The Poetics of Space* by Gaston Bachelard, and *Island of Decolonial Love* by Leanne Simpson, and lots of other books, and thinking about ways that my art and activism can work together moving forward.

Your installation, *Nervous Whether*, is currently exhibited at The Rooms Provincial Art Gallery. What is this piece about? How did your work develop since your last exhibition?

Nervous Whether works to express the experience of anxiety as a tangible form. The work is a massive, handwoven "hive", suspended so the viewer can enter from below. Projected on the front is a looped video of my own wringing hands. The nervous gestures reference the repeated action found in the textiles – a motion performed over and over to generate 80 yards of woven cloth. The work manifests the experience of being overwhelmed, and then soothes it by swaddling you in a nest crafted with intense and visible care.

My most recent exhibition before this was *Ingrown*, part of a month long performance art series at Eastern Edge Gallery. It was also an interactive installation that focused on the body, on repetition, and on the creation of space. *Nervous Whether* was a definite departure from this type of work, but maintained certain key themes. My earlier strategy involved setting up a series of symbols or cues in physical space that set the parameters of a conversation. This is still apparent, but the emphasis has shifted to the delineation of physical space and creating the emotional environment with the materials rather than the body. My work often has to do with anxieties and the way the body is limited or controlled. Part of my own anxiety has to do with visibility, and in acknowledging mortality. In previous work this has manifested with performance. In my current exhibition the video and the weaving both serve as records of my physical presence, even if my body remains absent.