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## Bonavista Biennale Artist Spotlights

Facilitated by Katie Butler Major & Jane Walker

### **Pam Hall**

*Pam Hall's work includes painting, drawing, sculpture, textiles, performance and film. For more than two decades she has undertaken projects with communities. Towards An Encyclopedia Of Local Knowledge is a collaborative project with communities on the Northern Peninsula, Bonne Bay, Fogo Island and Change Islands. It explores art as a form of making and moving knowledge, and reveals ways of knowing that are local, living, and still in use. It works to expand, deepen and make visible forms of knowledge, other than science, that have been undervalued and often excluded from conversations about a sustainable future for rural communities. During the Biennale, residents on the Bonavista Peninsula will be encouraged to visit Hall on site to share their local experiences, knowledge and practices. Re-Seeding the Dream East (working title) is a site-specific outdoor installation "calling the cod fish home" and celebrating their historic abundance. This piece is the Atlantic echo of Reseeding the Dream, a 1997 Alberta installation.*



*Photo by Pam Hall*

### **What will you be exhibiting in the Bonavista Biennale? Where can we find it?**

I am sharing two major works during the Biennale. Re-seeding the Dream is a site-specific outdoor installation reminding us of the cod fishery 25 years after the moratorium which closed it down. Towards an Encyclopedia of Local Knowledge and The Knowledge Exchange is an ongoing community collaboration—gathering and revealing rural knowing and doing. It will be in Keels, where I will be in residence gathering new local knowledge for the first week of the Biennale.

### **What role does site-specificity play in your practice and in this work in particular?**

My work has almost always been site specific. I make work that emerges from specific places and spaces and these two pieces reflect direct encounters with particular geographies and communities and the individuals and practices that live within them.

### **How do you think non-gallery spaces can change the way we learn from visual art?**

I often work within non-gallery spaces, sometimes because there are no galleries in small, rural communities where I want to place my work into conversation, and sometimes because the work is created to be in specific conversations with specific viewers or audiences, for example a medical school or a fish processing plant. Work in these kind of places alters our relationship with contemporary art, simply by adding it to the conversations and experiences that take place in the world and by shifting those included in those conversations.

### **Have you exhibited your work in a rural context before? In what ways does it differ from showing in an urban art scene?**

I have been making and exhibiting work in rural contexts for decades... whether on fishing wharves here or in Japan, wheat fields in Alberta, community museums in Bonavista, or hockey rinks on Fogo Island. It is different from presenting work to urban art audiences who approach work from a more specialized position often informed by long experience as an art viewer. But it is similar in the way that most viewers are looking for significance, for some "way in" to the work, and for some element of its material or conceptual form that delights or provokes them. They may have very different experiences and vocabularies, but most audiences looking at art are eager to find something meaningful in the encounter.