

Dream Makers

AiRS Program Society Impact Report 2025/26



imagine the world together

airsprogram.org

A background image showing children's hands and arms as they draw on a large, light-colored sheet of paper. The children are using various drawing tools, and their drawings include abstract lines and shapes. The scene is brightly lit, and the focus is on the collaborative drawing activity.

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AiRS: a year and a decade

Dear friends of AiRS

This report, celebrates the creative possibilities that unfold when artists and schools work together to make space for children to develop confidence, resilience and belonging through art.

What began as a dream and artist/teacher collaboration 10 years ago with Colleen Mieczanec and the creation of the Art and Discovery Studio at Nightingale Elementary, has grown and expanded into a flourishing collaboration with the Vancouver School Board, a community of talented artists and our many donors and supporters.

Across 17 participating schools this year, 4,390 children engaged in artist led inquiry processes in diverse media from charcoal, paint, and clay to digital technologies, bodies in movement and the materials of everyday life, that explored the ideas, experiences and aspirations that shape their world.

Special highlights from this year include LIVING FIBRE, a public exhibition of student work at Access Gallery, and a Cross-Sector Roundtable that brought artists, educators and arts professionals together to inspire collaborative action towards equity in access to the arts in public schools.

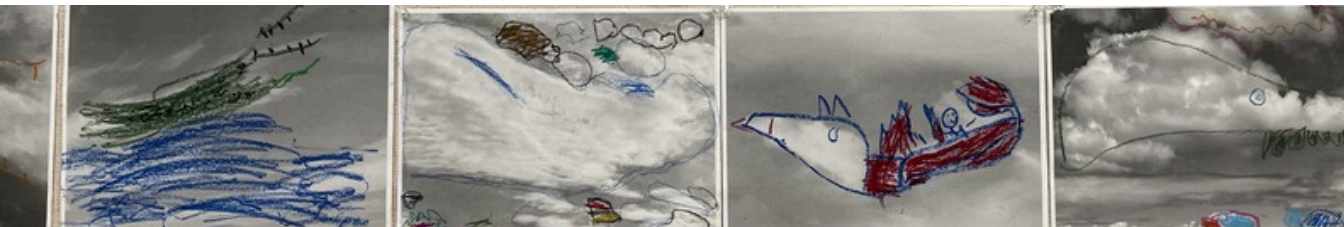
Dream Makers, the title of this year's review, and our year-end exhibition, is an apt theme that draws attention to the role of the arts in imagining otherwise. In an upended world, it is the human expressivity of the arts that allows us to hold both the beauty and the sorrow of all that is, and to live into the felt possibility of the world as it could be.

AiRS is a testament to the power of dreams and to the 'makers' that brought them into being! Thanks go to Yunuen Perez Vertti for her exceptional support of artists and schools throughout the year and to the lead teachers and administrators who played a pivotal role. We are grateful to the AiRS Program Society board and members for their council and encouragement. And finally, none of this work would be possible without our financial donors and partners. A special acknowledgement of thanks goes to Bob Rennie, who was the first to believe in our vision, and has faithfully supported AiRS over these past ten years.

In gratitude



Maggie Milne Martens
AiRS Artistic Director



"Through art I can have a new world" Maquinna student

AiRS 2025/26 by Numbers

17 schools

19 lead teachers

22 exhibitions

28 artists

44 student docents

89 teachers attended prod. workshops

195 classroom teachers

4,390 students

Background, student rain painting, Wə́kʷańəs tə syaqʷəm Elementary

Special Projects and Events



LIVING FIBRE at Access Gallery

Through a CoV CASC grant, 3 schools, Nightingale, Trudeau and Tecumseh Elementary participated in a multi studio residency with artists Amanda Wood, Sholeh Mahlouji and Yasaman Moussavi. Students explored slow making with paper in the form of pulp, paper and thread, creating hand-made papers, imaginative sculptures and a 4 m long collaborative weaving. These stunning works were showcased at Access Gallery on March 12-14 that hosted tours for three visiting classes and members of the public. Gratitude to Kitt Peacock at Access Gallery for hosting our AiRS pop up exhibition.



Waters Ebb and Flow:

A whole school Rain Garden residency at Cunningham Elementary sponsored by CoV's Green Infrastructure Team

Artists Yunuen Perez Vertti and Rebecca Heyl engaged students across Cunningham school in art processes that fostered connection with our local watershed environment in anticipation of the 4 raingardens that will be installed adjacent to the school. Older students engaged in garden dreaming and design through ink, photography and ephemeral installations whilst primaries used tactile, material process to map, draw and paint the interrelations of land and water around the school.

AiRS receives a Heritage BC Award

On May 5th, AiRS Program was honoured to receive a Heritage BC Award for outstanding contributions in Heritage Education, Community and Awareness through our [Revealing our Histories](#) residency project. This project, led by AiRS artist Julie McIntyre led students of Tecumseh Elementary on an exploration of the many layered histories of the school and Victoria Fraserview neighbourhood during the 2024/25 school year. The project resulted in 12 stunning collaborative screen printed banners installed at the school and is documented on the [Vancouver Heritage Foundation website](#).

Right: Artistic Director Maggie Milne Martens, receives the award on behalf of Julie McIntyre, Tecumseh Elementary and AiRS



Dream Makers:

imagine the world together

AIRS annual exhibition at the VSB Education Centre celebrating student art and learning across all AiRS studios was held from May 19-June 4, 2026. The walls were alive with children's art including giant cloud puppets, nature inspired animations, a water installation, perfume concoctions, analogue portraits and a sea of plastic marine animals. As one guest wrote "It was inspiring to see creativity bloom so freely through these young artists' hands".

Opening night saw over 200 guests, teachers, artists, parents, students and members of the public fill the space. The student docents once again stole the show, as they passionately shared about the meaning and process behind their school's art work.

"Any school and every student that gets to experience airs is super lucky. This should not be an extra but a basic standard for learning." Gallery guest



"Every year I love coming to the AiRS exhibition - seeing kids excited and engaged about art and something they made; a gift to themselves and the world. It is so important for us all to get what is inside out. It's what will save the world."
L. Lautzenhiser, Youth Psychologist.

Teachers Reflect

Teachers from each school wrote their observations of AiRS impacts on student learning and their own teaching practice through a reflection questionnaire. Here are key ideas that were echoed by teachers across multiple schools.

How did students grow as learners?

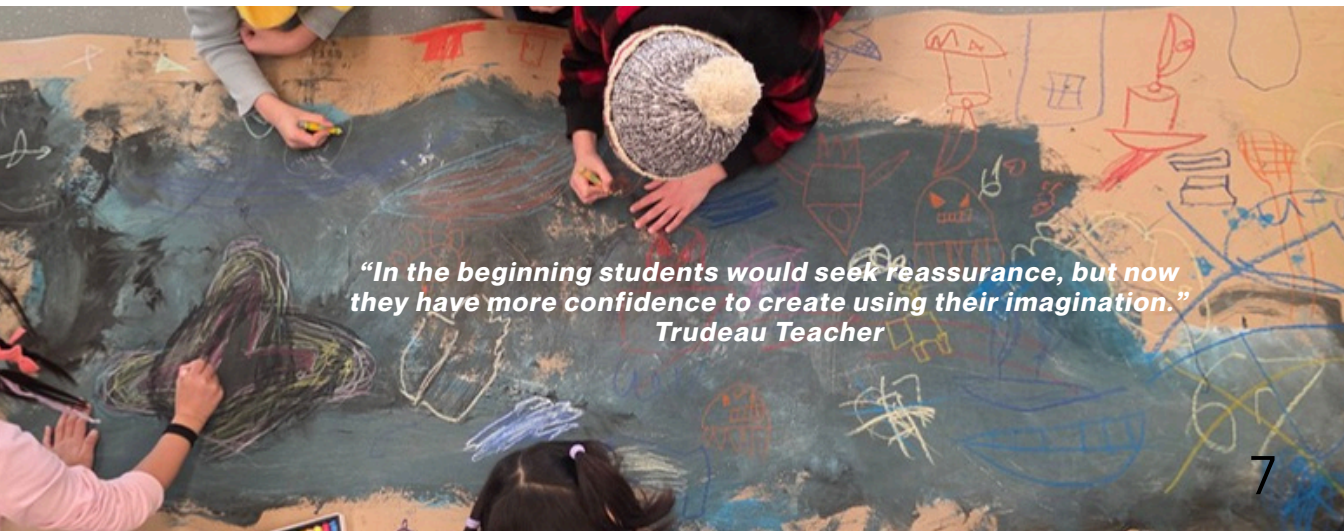


Working with an artist in the studio through AiRS offered students space to:

- **find confidence** working with new materials and hands-on techniques.
- **stretch their creativity** through open-ended invitations
- **trust** in their own ideas.
- **build independence** and **persistence** through problem solving individually and as a group.
- **grow resilience** by adapting when things don't go according to plan.
- **develop language** to share their creativity.
- **create collaboratively** by listening, being open to and accepting others ideas and points of view.

"The combination of open ended materials, collaborative spaces and a process focused approach has supported students in developing confidence, resilience and stronger relationships with one another."

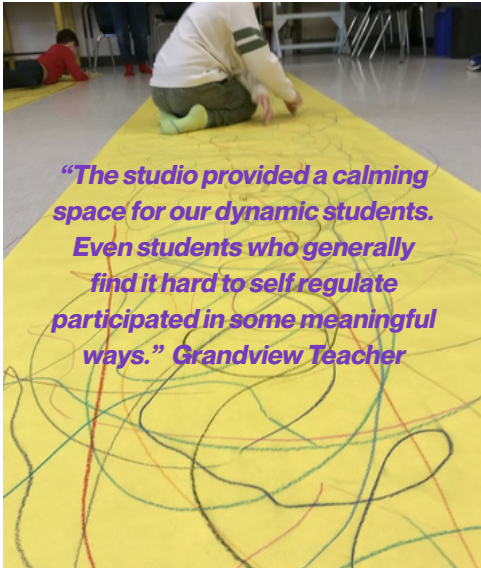
Teacher at Moberly



"In the beginning students would seek reassurance, but now they have more confidence to create using their imagination."

Trudeau Teacher

How did artmaking in the studio support social emotional development?



Teachers observed:

- **engagement, excitement** and **joy**.
- a **calmness** with a **buzz of energy** and **sustained focus**.
- **slowing down, attention** to detail and working with **care**.
- **connection** to their own culture, experience and identity.
- sense of **belonging** fostered through sharing and celebrating the process together
- **inclusion** and **successful participation** of students who often feel left out, are shy or disengaged in the classroom.
- Art is a **safe space** to express their feelings and emotions without judgement

Teachers noted that safety is not found in predictable outcomes, or in art 'turning out,' but rather through the kind of environment AiRS fostered, where risk taking and mistakes are embraced as an integral part of the creative process.

How did AiRS inform your professional teaching practice?

Key teacher take-aways included an invitation to:

- **take time** for **exploration** and be in the **process**
- **trust student's own voice and creative freedom** in art
- **expand materials** beyond painting and drawing
- see the art potential in **nature** and **everyday materials**
- do more art **outside**
- embrace the **messiness** as part of the **journey**

Lead Teachers for 2025/26

AiRS would not be possible without the dedication of Lead Teachers at each school: Much gratitude goes to our AiRS Lead Teachers for the 2025/26 school year: Vanessa Callaway (Bruce), April Huang (Cunningham), Tiffany Gee, Andrea Brown, Pat Treacher (Douglas), Shirley Huang (Grandview), Katie Smith (Henderson), Erika Wilson (Maquinna), Gabi Lutynski (Moberly), Treena Sly (Mount Pleasant), Colleen Mieczanec (Nightingale), Julie Gelson, Rubina Franko (Queen Alexandra), Jenna Elliot (Renfrew), Natasha Burditt (Seymour), Tom Larson (Tecumseh), Terrie Low (Thunderbird ᓂᓄᓐᓂᓄᓐ), Nancy Bourke (Trudeau), Sara Jarvis (Waverly), Renata Caverzan (Wəᓕᓄᓐᓂᓄᓐ te sequam).



Students Share



Student reporting process

This is our 3rd year collecting student responses to open-ended questions on their AiRS experience and why art is important to them. We received student feedback from all participating schools, collecting 1,500 reflections in total: 640 from primary students (K through Grade 3) and 860 intermediate (Grade 4-7) students. Reflections were read, collated and analyzed for word prevalence and emergent themes. As in previous years, responses were remarkably consistent across diverse schools and projects.

Primary Students (K - Grade 3)

For primary students, *happy* was 3 times the most prevalent feeling associated with making art in the studio, followed by *calm* and then *excited* (sometimes simultaneously).

There was a significant increase in frequency of identified feelings of calm or peacefulness over previous years with 20% of young children noting this. One student explained;

"Doing art makes you happy in a different way because art is a way to make your body - and muscles feel calm."

Exuberant written and drawn reflections on process showed how children experience agency in *"learning new things"* through hands-on making and mastery including *"building, painting, drawing, clay, printing, cutting, tracing, mixing"* and *"getting messy."*

"Art is healthy in so many ways such as communication, social interaction, critical thinking and even a little hand eye coordination." (Grandview)

This year, primaries also focused on creative expression through art. They shared that Art is where *"I can just be free"*, *"express my own ideas"*, *"let my creativity loose"*. *"use my imagination"* and *"create my own world."* In art you can *"break rules."*

"I can crumble up paper because you can't crumble up your home-work." (Wəkwañ əs tə syaqwəm)



Intermediate Students (Grade 4-7)

For Intermediate Students this year, feelings of calm surpassed happiness as the predominant felt experience. Self identified feelings in order of prevalence were calm including peaceful and relaxed (29%); happy/joyful (26%); creative including artistic or inspired (12%), excited (7%), good (5%), free (4%) and proud (2%) with a broad range of other descriptive feelings including focused, neutral, curious, nervous, elated, proud, and safe.

Why art matters: Emergent Themes

Students self-reflections revealed the following common interrelated themes about Art's importance to them.

Express feelings and emotions

Art is a place to express their emotions, *"let my feelings out without words"* and sometimes, *"make them go away."*

"Art matters because sometimes I don't share my feelings and sometimes I show my feelings with art and without it I may not be happy or myself." (Queen Alex)



Relief from Stress

"It soothes me and takes away stress." (Moberly)

"It relieves my stress and anger." (Bruce)

"When making art in the studio I feel calm and all my problems disappear." (Henderson)

"Art makes me feel good about myself." (Grandview)



Freedom to be and express who I am

Freedom of expression in the studio, was strongly correlated with a sense of identity, a safe place to be themselves without judgement.

"Art matters because I can show the world ME." (Wəkwaḥ əs tə syaqwəm)

"I felt like I could actually express myself, let my creativity and feelings out in a way other people might enjoy looking at." (Grandview)

"Art describes my personality" (Douglas)

"Art matters to me because it's good for everyone's mental health and sanity. It's a subject where people can be themselves." (Moberly)





Unlocking Creativity

Creativity emerged as a major theme this year. Art was felt to be a place not only to express creativity, but to grow and generate it. Art *“lets my imagination come out”* and when I am doing art *“my creative brain explodes with freedom.”*

“When I am making art I feel creative because I’m a big brain.” (Grandview)



Fostering Dreams

When children exercise creative freedom through the arts, it awakens them to their own creative agency in the making and shaping of their world, fostering dreams and aspirations of who they could be.

“Art makes me feel free and like nothing is in my way anymore.” (Henderson)

“Through art I can do anything, explore the world, draw, and colour and use my imagination.”

“Through art I can believe in myself.” (Trudeau)

“Art matters to me because it has been my long-time everything and of how it could impact my future and everyone else’s. I would love to continue my art skills and improve them.” (Henderson)



Human Connection and Identity

Notably this year, children connected the value of their creative freedom to the value of their unique human identity and to meaningful felt connection.

“Art matters to me because it is not AI.” (Grandview)

“Art connects to memories and shows you are unique.” (Tecumseh)

“Art matters to me because I made it by hand and everything that is made by a machine is still beautiful but it doesn’t have the touch of love in it, but when it’s made by hand it has that touch of love we humans’ have.” (Waverley)



Artists: Fostering a Community of Practice



AIRS Artists top L to R Amanda Wood, Isabelle Kirouac, Erin Ross, Aihblin Fowlie, Allison Chow, Nova Wiepart, Alysha Seriani, Han Pham, Grace Zhouhan Yin, Niloufar Samedi, Marzieh Mosavarzadeh, Yasaman Moussavi Nisha Platzter, Liz Oakley. Front Row Yunuen Perez Vertti, Augusta Lutynski, Tami Murray, Vanessa Mercedes Figueroa, Maggie Milne Martens, Sholeh Mahlouji and Laura Cisneros. Absent: Julie McIntyre and Rebecca Heyl. Bottom Photos Aaron Nelson Moody shares at orientation and Bruce students experience an installation staged by Vanessa Mercedes Figueroa in her mentorship residency

AIRS is more than a program, we are a community of passionate, dedicated, socially engaged artists who support one another in our shared journey to create spaces for meaningful artmaking in schools with and for young children. We make time to to learn and reflect together on our practice and pedagogy. This year, we were privileged to learn from Squamish carver Aaron Nelson Moody (top right) and art pedgaogista Maggie Chow at our orientation and a mid year artist discussion session.



Mentorship Program

The Mentorship program is a 5 week supported residency for artists thatt builds capacity and confidence in art facilitation in schools.. The artists participating in this years program were Jocelyn Gosling, (KPU sponsored) Niloufar Samedi and Vanessa Merecedes Figueroa.

"The mentorship program allowed me opportunity to feel supported within the school environment in cultivating a meaningful immersive authentic artist process with children and validated what I know to important about what I want students to experience through art."

Vanessa Mercedes Figueroa



Cultivating Spaces of Transformation:

An interview with artist Liz Oakley

Liz Oakley is an interdisciplinary artist with a background in puppetry. This was Liz's second year at Wəkw̓aḥəs tə syaqw̓əm Elementary where they invited students across the school to consider spaces of transformational possibility inspired by clouds. I had the chance to ask Liz about their residency and experience with AiRS. They shared:

This year, as a returning artist, I was grateful for the continuity of relationships with the community, It enabled me to be more open and experimental in my approach, more like research. I was able to intentionally design drawing, painting and collaborative processes that cut through controlled outcomes, that shifted judgements of good or bad to ones of curiosity, acceptance and surprise.

For me, AiRS has offered a stable space for artistic practice that has both continuity and flexibility. It is a place to engage in meaningful socially engaged art creation with children that extends and informs my art practice rather than as a separate workshop on the side. Working with a class community of 21 children, is a very unique space for engagement, where the implicit group relationship offers possibilities of scale and intimate collaboration that do not exist elsewhere.



When I invite friends to the year end exhibitions at the VSB I say “This is the best exhibition you are going to see in Vancouver this year.” And it really is because the work isn't operating in a competitive, performative space that often exists in the art world, but instead it is focused on what really matters—doing art because it makes you happy, and feel alive and being human and that is enough.

I appreciate being part of a community of artists who share the same values as you and see the worth in doing this work. There is an implicit trust with other AiRS artists that allows for deeper conversations about what matters and is meaningful.

The full interview with Liz can be found on our website



Students observing 'I' cloud puppet creations at the Wekwanas School exhibition.

Re-Imagining the Arts in Education

A Cross Sector Roundtable on Equity, Access and Reconciliation in Schools

On May 21, AIRS hosted 39 artists, educators, arts professionals alongside 20 sector witnesses for constructive dialogue about the systemic marginalization of the arts from public education and reimagining towards a renewed vision centring equity, access and reconciliation. Through an Indigenized approach guided by Skwxwú7mesh knowledge holders Yeltsilewet and Aaron Nelson Moody, diverse perspectives were brought forward. Michelle Buchholz, a Wet'suwet'en visual analyst created a graphic recording of the event. This document and the executive summary from the event can be found on our [website](#).



Key Takeaways

Participants affirmed the fundamental role of the arts for children's' creative and critical thought development and for their social and emotional wellbeing in a divisive and precarious world.

We re-imagined the arts as the living, vibrant heart of education, as a holistic process of learning through which diversity, inclusion, reconciliation and justice are practiced and celebrated.



We acknowledged the gap between dreamed possibilities and current realities. However, with shared vision and funded collaboration between teachers, artists and local arts organizations, an equitable, accessible and culturally inclusive arts education for all children is possible.

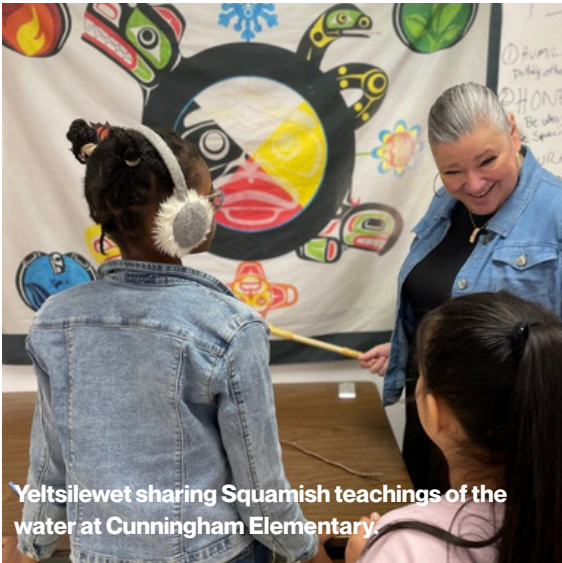
What is AiRS' role in effecting systems change?

AiRS program is proof of concept for what is possible when we bridge this gap, by creating a working model for meaningful supported collaborations between artists and schools.

We acknowledge the generosity of the Vancouver School Board in providing space, and the funding support of the City of Vancouver and Hawthorne Foundation in making this event possible.



Fostering Reconciliation Pedagogies



Yeltsilewet sharing Squamish teachings of the water at Cunningham Elementary.

AiRS is committed to developing inclusive pedagogies that uphold the TRC calls to action (2015), in relation to both the arts and education. Drawing on Martin Brokenleg's Circle of Courage, First People's Principles of Learning and teachings from local Indigenous knowledge holders, we have been challenged and inspired to reclaim art as a living practice in and for community.

We are 'unlearning' pedagogies of art to be more than technique, or even the making of beautiful objects, Art is a sacred space for sharing the authentic stories of who we are and how we aspire to live into the world. When children are invited into authentic processes that enable them to connect with themselves and honour the creative work of their peers, we cultivate culturally inclusive spaces of belonging in which all children can thrive.

Cultivating Authentic ways of learning and belonging through Art:

A Prod. D workshop for Teachers Professional Development Feb 13, 2026

On February 13, 2026, AiRS program facilitated an all day professional development conference for around 90 elementary teachers, weaving together Indigenous and artistic pedagogies to foster culturally inclusive, art learning. The event featured keynote addresses by Maggie Milne Martens and Yeltsilewet and providing 10 different hands on learning workshops facilitated by AiRS artists for teachers to choose from.

"I found the day incredibly inspiring and motivation. I loved how great the workshops were and how I could directly use the things I learned in my classroom." Participating Teacher



Tami Murray gives a clay workshop to teachers at the AiRS pro d day.

Financial Summary Report 2025/26

Expenses

Artist Fees	\$215,143.27
Materials	\$14,750.00
Program Support	\$66,536.29
Consultant Costs	\$4,562.50
Administrative Costs	\$7,572.39
Professional Development	\$626.00
Roundtable	\$8,971.02
Total	\$318,203.27

Revenues

Vancouver School Board	\$120,000.00
Private Donors	\$40,000.00
Foundations	\$29,375.00
Fundraisers	\$17,068.04
Partnerships	\$23,500.00
Grants	\$85,500.00
School Resource Fee	\$14,750.00
Activity Fees	\$33,120.00
Total	\$363,813.04

In gratitude

Recognizing our Donors for 2025/26

"I feel really happy that we were one of the lucky schools that gets to participate in the AIRS program."
Grade 6 Student, Tecumseh Elementary

AIRS is only possible through the generosity of the many hands and hearts, that contribute of time, passion, creativity and money, into making AIRS what it is today. This is a beautiful and joyful. collaboration of love Thank you for your part in turning AIRS' dreams into reality and; helping to awaken children's creativity and compassion through art.

Financial supporters for 2025/26 are:

David Alderdice and Ingrid Fleuvog

City of Vancouver, CASC grant

CLICK to kids

Wayman and Penny Crosby

Deux Mille Foundation

Green Infrastructure Team, CoV

Hamber Foundation

Hawthorne Foundation

Lilly Kazaz

Kwantlen Polytechnic University

Stuart and Della McLaughlin

The Province of British Columbia through
the Community Gaming Grants

Aswinee Rath

The Rennie Foundation

Telus Community Board

Vancouver School Board

Wind Sun Sky Entertainment

Canada Helps Donors - Gili Avrahami, Colene Bentley,
Leith Davis, Lynn Fels, Janet Fraser, Christopher Gora,
Anita Haidar, Carole Heyl, Rita Irwin, Hannah Jickling,
Victoria Jung, Steve Krehbiel, Mara Michielli, Susan
Rome, Sharon Spetz, Gina Wong & Sarah Wong

In kind Donations: Vancouver School Board, Wendy
Chang, Aaron Nelson Moody, Vancouver Art Gallery,
Access Gallery



TELUS Friendly
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Appendix

Studio Residencies



Studio Residencies encompass the main focus of AiRS' work with children in schools. This year we were able to offer embedded artist residencies at 17 public elementary schools in Vancouver. At each site, carefully matched artists, design and facilitate unique high quality and socially relevant art engagements for students that take place form a designated 'studio' space within the school. Students are immersed in authentic, real world artmaking processes for one hour each week for 6 weeks, encompassing up to 15 classes throughout the year. Projects are process driven and emergent, developing students' confidence in creative expression and honouring student voice. At the end of the year we host an on-site exhibition for students and their families that makes visible the value of each child's unique creative contribution within the life of the school. Lead teachers at each school site play a significant role in helping to support the program. The following pages present an overview of projects and impacts at each school. A more detailed summary with quotes and photographs can be found on our website.

"The studio is a space where curiosity, experimentation and creative risk-taking felt safe and exciting". Moberly Teacher

Bruce Elementary

Lead Teacher: Vannessa Callaway

Whole School - 272 Students



The Poetry of the In-Between: Exploring Nature and Transformation

Artist: Yunuen Perez Vertti

Intermediate students used Mixed Media, Photography, and Video Feedback to explore the real and metaphorical spaces of transformation in nature such as fractals and shorelines.



Emotion Cartography

Artist: Allison Chow

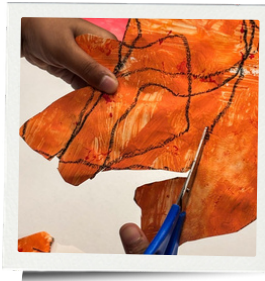
Students in grades 2 & 3 created collaborative maps of interlocking, nature inspired, shapes and texture rubbings gathered from objects around the school and grounds, to explore individual and collective relationships between feelings, memory and place.



Artist Books: On Inner Sacredness

Artist: Hân Phạm

A bookmaking residency for Grade 6/7 students integrating mapping, poetry, printmaking, cyanotype and collage, and inviting students to reflect on the quiet, enduring parts of themselves that hold resilience, wisdom, and care.



Mode of Action

Artist: Vanessa Mercedes Figueroa

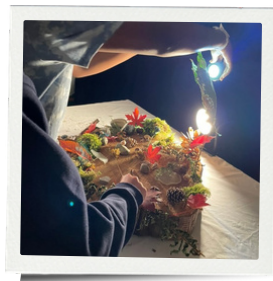
Young children were invited to explore and express their own intuitive gestures in art and movement through abstract painting, random contour, cutting, and installation experimentation.

Cunningham Elementary

Lead Teacher: April Huang

Whole School - 419 Students

The Water's Ebb and Flow



Artist: Yunuen Perez Vertti

Through ink designs and installation practices with fabric, natural materials, lights and photography, students created and documented evocative dream gardens to convey values and feelings through form, texture, pattern and design.



Artist: Rebecca Heyl

Through material practices such as nature rubbings, mapping, observational drawing and understanding the properties of water colours, students connected to the land and waters in the environment around the school grounds.

"Art matters to me because it allows me to express my emotions and let my creativity flow free. I can stay to my culture while also seeing what things I can make with art." Cunningham Student

Douglas Elementary

Lead Teachers: Pat Treacher, Andrea Brown and Tiffany Gee
15 divisions - 375 Students



Portraits of Connection

Artist Nisha Platzer

Using analog film, students composed unconventional self portraits using themselves, personal objects and the environment, discovering the magic of unexpected reveal when the film is finally developed.



AiRS Zine Club

Artist Aihblin Fowlie

A weekly sketchbook practice built drawing skills and techniques that were later collaged together with text and design to create their own personalized zine.



Wait, Where are we? and I'm Here! I'm Here!

Artist: Zhouann (Grace) Yin

Primary students showed their unique creativity through a kaleidoscope of mark making materials, discovering their own voice and discovering where they are in the world

"Making art makes me happy and it connects people and family it matters because we as humans need art to fill our souls with love and joy." Grade 5/6 student

Grandview Elementary

Lead Teachers: Shirley Huang
Whole School - 127 Students



Part of the Bigger Picture

Artist: Tami Murray

Students created individual clay vessel with a unique personal motif, as well as individual and collaborative paintings to represent how we are an important part of our community and how we too carry the stories and relationships of the community inside us.

"My favourite memory of being in the studio is making my mark" Grade 6 student



"The studio provided a calming space for our dynamic students. Even students who generally find it hard to self regulate participated in some meaningful ways. This is our second year in the AiRS program and it reinforces that our students value creating and experiencing beauty in art."

S. Huang, Grade 6/7 teacher

Henderson Elementary

Lead Teacher: Katie Smith

15 divisions - 375 Students



Before the Screen: Playing with Film & Memory

Artist: Monica Cheema

Exploring photo slides, printed photographs, and 16mm film, students scratched, painted, and manipulated found images to ask questions, imagine new possibilities, and think how documentary photography and film actively reinterpret our past, present and future



Part of the Bigger Picture

Artist: Tami Murray

Students explored their identity through colour, movement, shapes and symbols, creating individual and collaborative paintings and individually crafted clay vessels to represent their relationship to the community.



Exploring as we Make Mentorship Residency

Artist: Jocelyn Gosling

Primary students explored mark making with charcoal and pastels to move, press and layer marks to show feelings and evoke personal memories. Students curated their drawings into a collaborative collage.

"The amount of laughter in the room is over the roof! Students are focused and concentrated. Some of my neuro-diverse students were able to work with the class through hands on learning." Grade 2/3 teacher

"My favourite memory was drawing and painting the film strips and using a dipping straw that was really effective and made me proud." Grade 6 student

Maquinna Elementary

Lead Teacher: Erika Wilson

Whole School - 238 Students



place: the space within and around us

Artist: fanny kearse

Older students wrote and performed poems and created collages connected to the lived and remembered places that shaped who they are, while younger students created a forest of poeTREES and collaborative poems about important places in their lives.



Cutting the Blue

Artist: Sholeh Mahlouji

Primaries became master craftspersons of scissors, building and refining skills to make different cut lines and shapes from blue paper that were combined into imaginative compositions and characters made from the play of positive and negative spaces.

"I felt focus, relieved, proud, calm and relaxed. All of these emotions are not lies, but actual feelings of what it is like. Art helps me reduce stress, be calm and most importantly be creative."

Grade 5 Maquinna Student

Moberly Elementary

Lead Teacher: Gabi Lutynski

6 divisions - 150 Students



Nature's Patterns

Artist: Rebecca Heyl

This residency invited students to slow down and observe closely the natural environment around the schools layering material explorations like graphite rubbings, stitching, and watercolour painting to discover nature's patterns all around us.

"The combination of open ended materials, collaborative spaces and a process focused approach has supported students in developing confidence, resilience and stronger relationships with one another." Grade 2/3 teacher

"My art makes me feel thankful and really really happy and it makes me want to do more art when I do art I feel really really joyful and happy and I like art." Student.

Mount Pleasant Elementary

Lead Teacher: Petrena Sly

Whole School - 235 Students



Journey of the Seeds

Artist: Laura Cisneros

This whole school residency connected students to seeds in their school garden and from around the world through their senses. Dreaming and co-creating with and about seeds, students drank tea, drew and painted seeds, made seed paper, and reflected on their seed's life journey of becoming.

"When I am making art in the studio, I feel like I am in the forest."

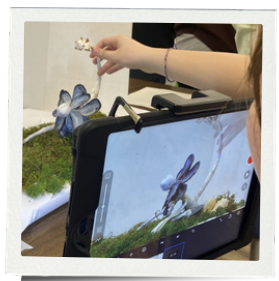
"Art teaches you that it's okay to make mistakes."

"Art is creative and it gets your brain going"
Grade 6/7 students

Queen Alexandra Elementary

Lead Teacher: Julie Gelson, Ruby Franko

Whole School - 155 Students



Nature's Muse

Artist: Erin Ross

Inspired by nature and the amorphous flow of ink students created characters from sticks, shells, seeds, paper and clay. These were brought to life through stop motion animation that incorporated morphing landscapes of paint and sand.

"Students who often have low self confidence were confident in the studio as they built on skills they learned over the sessions. Students who often shut down in class were more open to trying new activities and persevering even if they found something difficult at first." Queen Alex Teacher

"Through art I can just be free." Student

Nightingale Elementary

Lead Teacher: Colleen Mieczanec

Whole School - 301 Students



Art Against Waste: Inspiring Action

Artist: Maggie Milne Martens

Rethinking our relationship to plastic waste, grade 5-7 students carefully used garbage as a raw material for creating a marine ecosystem and artist works to draw attention to the impacts of plastic on living ecosystems.



Image without Camera: Touch, Light and Time

Artist: Niloufar Samedì

Grade 1 and 2 students created a series of image records without a camera through textural rubbings, monoprints and cyanotypes of natural and found materials, cutting and collaging them into unique character puppets that were animated into life.



LIVING FIBRE

Artist: Amanda Wood

A residency about care and resilience through the transformation of ordinary discarded paper, softened, twisted and spun into long strands of yarn, and woven on looms with patience and the collaboration of many hands into extraordinary woven cloths.



The 4 elements + Love

Artists: Maggie Milne Martens and Niloufar Samedì

In this multi sensory residency, Kindergarten students created soundscape and abstract marionette puppets evoking the colour and movement, of wind, fire and water. Together with paintings of earth and flowers, they staged an immersive puppet show for students and families.

"It felt satisfying to weave the paper through the loom. It made me feel calm. Seeing it spread out it made me feel proud. Every strand is someone's hard work and together it looks like a quilt. The texture feels like leaves, branches together." Grade 4 Nightingale student on 'weaving'

Renfrew Elementary

Lead Teacher: Suzanne Tracey Salter and Jenna Elliot

9 divisions - 225 Students



seeing double: holding complexity with lenticular images

Artist: Alysha Seriani

Explorations of simultaneous multiple perspectives occurred through improvisational play, writing, and the creation of kinegrams and agamographs leading to the creation of student photographed lenticular moving images.



Sensory Exploration through Papermaking

Artist: Yasaman Moussavi

Three classes engaged in the art of papermaking as an ecological, sensory, and collaborative practice, where discarded classroom paper was transformed through touch, experimentation, and embodied making into new artworks.

Seymour Elementary

Lead Teacher: Natasha Burditt

Whole School - 144 Students



Seymour Eagle Installation

Artist: Christine Mackenzie

The eagle rises with strength and humility above negativity. In this installation he carries the silhouette self-portraits of each seymour students, holding their unique identities and picasso style multi faceted perspectives of who they are.

"Resilience was something that came through in a lot of students. Students made mistakes and instead of giving up/destroying their work they leaned into it to create something different than they had envisioned and honestly, they were happier with their outcomes in the end." Seymour Teacher

"Art gives me hope." Grade 6 Student

Tecumseh Elementary

Lead Teacher: Tom Larson

15 divisions - 350 Students



Papermaking: A Place for Dreaming, Learning Making,

Artist: Yasaman Moussavi

A multi-sensory exploration of papermaking, attuning to the rhythm of pulp and fibre in making, using embedded text, scents and natural materials to evoke our memories, and dreams.



LIVING TRACES

Artist: Isabelle Kirouac

students were guided through a series of embodied activities exploring the concept of living traces through movement, scent, and mark making, connecting memory to the body through maps, gestural contours and perfume smellies.



forms in perspective

Artist: Augusta Lutynski

Abstraction, imaginative transformation, and perspective were explored through draping, photography and mixed collage, asking questions such as: what can you see when you look at a cloud, a puddle, or a stain in a shirt? What happens when you shift your point of view?

"When I am in the studio I feel I am creating something that matters. The ripped pieces of paper seemed to have no more life in it, but our AIRS program was able to do something with it." Tecumseh Student

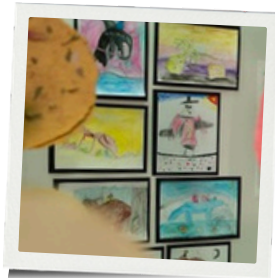
"I've never seen them so engaged this year." Tecumseh Teacher"

"Art matters to me because it gives me a chance to slow down and think in a different way. When I create something, I'm not just making an object, I'm learning to be patient, to observe details and to find meaning in small choices like colour and texture. It reminds us that everyone has a voice and something worth showing." Tecumseh Student .

Thunderbird Elementary

Lead Teacher: Terrie Low

Whole School - 170 Students



self-portraits

Artist: Christine Mackenzie

Using Indigenous formline design and mixed media techniques, each student transformed themselves into an animal that represents their unique identity and positive traits, moving beyond realism and into symbolic expression.



Embodying our Creative Selves: Mask making and Movement

Artist: Nova Wieper

Students cultivated brave spaces through play, movement and mask making to perform gestures that encompassed their unique identities.

Trudeau Elementary

Lead Teacher: Nancy Bourque

Whole School - 231 Students



Learning 'with' Paper

Artist: Sholeh Mahlouji

Using only hands, with touch as a primary way of knowing, students investigated tearing, folding, rolling, crumpling, molding, and pressing to create sculptures that respond to the material's resistance, tension, and memory. No tape. No glue.



CORE program

Sholeh created an adaptive program for CORE students creating an exploratory paper environment that allowed students with autism to experience the qualities of paper through play and sensory engagement.



"Hands were busy and there was a buzz about the room. I feel their confidence grew and they were proud of what they were able to create."

Trudeau Teacher

"The students jumped into a rumpled paper pool immediately we entered the art room. It was like a swimming pool. They had so much fun. Art making provided self regulation for my students. It strengthened their focus and they all played together fostering collaboration." Trudeau CORE Teacher

Waverley Elementary

Lead Teacher: Sara Jarvis
12 divisions - 300 Students



Planting our Feet: Exploring Victoria-Fraserview Natural Heritage

Artist: Julie McIntyre

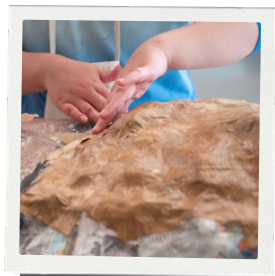
Through observational drawing, cyanotype and a variety of printmaking techniques, students explored the botanical and medicinal features of indigenous and introduced plants in their school neighbourhood.



"I can feel the nature, feel the art, feel the freedom, feel the peace" Tecumseh Student."

Wəkʷaḥəs tə syaqʷəm Elementary

Lead Teacher: Renata Caverzan
Whole School - 323 Students



Clouds of Possibility

Artist: Liz Oakley

Clouds were the inspirational doorway into uncertainty, fluidity, and possibility. Students across the grades created collaboratively-made paper mache cloud sculptures, watercolor ink raindrop painting and puppets, rain paintings and crumpled paper cloud forms.



"When making art in the studio I feel like everything about who I'm supposed to be and what I'm supposed to be doing goes away. Art matters because the studio is a quiet place where its easier for me to think."

Grade 5 student



Inquiries into the Self(ie)

Artist: Nellie Gossen

Exploring the long tradition of self-portraiture, from classical painting to contemporary art and social media, students experimented with photography, costume, hairstyles and performance as a way to explore identity expression, storytelling and social commentary.

"Making our self portraits, I felt like I can be someone else I will not know and in conclusion it feels very nice."

Intermediate Student



*“Making art makes me happy and it connects people and family.
It matters because we as humans need art to fill our souls with
love and joy.” Douglas student*