



yet you dream in the green of your time:

featuring Jennifer Bonnell

August 27, 2022 2:00PM-3:30PM

Event Respondent Essay

Response to yet you dream in the green of your time

by **Katie Lawson**

We gathered at Governor's Bridge Lookout, perched on the edge of the Don Valley Brickworks Park. It is a site that has been subject to intervention, with the carving of informal trails and shortcuts up the steep hill. It is a scenic vista slated for a slick redevelopment from PLANT Architect Inc. but as it currently stands, it feels like a final gasp from the post-industrial grounds of Evergreen, the circular stone platform crumbling and in disrepair. The attendees as well as the speakers—Chris Mendoza, Parker Kay, and Jennifer Bonnell—organically settle in around the edges of the circle, our gravitational centre of the charred remnants of illegal bonfires. It makes me long for the time before this once-abandoned factory of tumbled down sheds was colonized as a high traffic bucolic eco-paradise, the in between time when the decommissioned brick buildings were host to raves and parties of the 1990s and early aughts, and provided shelter for the underhoused.

It is a place where the undulating and entangled nature of the city, the valley, and the river feels most palpable. The topography tells a story of millennia of geologic and more-than-human movement and change, time begins to shift and stretch, decentring the relatively short period of colonial settlement and development. As a Great Lakes city that is largely organized by the imposition of a cartesian grid (in terms of property development and infrastructure), I have always loved that the ravine and its river have resisted or even produced rifts in development, it is the foil that allows for what is around it to become more legible. This is a resonant point in Jennifer, Chris, and Parker's conversation.

We have come together as, I imagine, believers in the impact of the social imaginary on place and environment, and as people drawn to the oddities of urban place-making (particularly for those who come from away). Personal narrative, performance studies, and poetry are access points to learning with the land, an enactment of the ever

changing and living connection we each have with the place, with water. This is, as Chris would perhaps say, embedded in an active relationship to source and citation, if we understand this as a kind of expanded practice beyond what is textual.

Together we walked along paths of reflection. As I leave and begin my descent back into the valley, my skin tingling with the warmth held from a brilliantly sunny August afternoon, words tumble through my mind: refuge, dispossession, course, *cours*, source, corridor, place, plurality, attunement, narrative, reclamation, neglect, centre/periphery, and "yet" (there are other ways). I cradle Chris' publication, *yet you dream in the green of your time* and read the ground beneath my feet, imagining a world where a river might regain its soft edges.

About the writer:

Katie Lawson is a curator and writer based in Toronto. She was a curator for the Toronto Biennial of Art, working with Candice Hopkins and Tairone Bastien on the inaugural 2019 and 2022 editions. She has also curated exhibitions at Images Festival, Toronto (2023); MacLaren Art Centre, Barrie (2021); the Art Museum at the University of Toronto (2018); the Art Gallery of Ontario (2018); Y+ Contemporary, Scarborough (2017), and RYMD, Reykjavik (2017). Katie is a graduate of the Master of Visual Studies Curatorial program at the University of Toronto, where she previously completed her Master of Arts in Art History. She is currently working towards a PhD in Art and Visual Culture at Western University, with an interest in contemporary art and climate change. Lawson was awarded the Hnatyshyn Foundation Fogo Island Arts Young Curator Residency in 2023.

She contributes to a range of print and online publications. She was the Editorial Lead for the Toronto Biennial's double catalogue *Water, Kinship, Belief* (co-published with Art Metropole, 2022) and was the Art Editor for the *Hart House Review* (Coach House Press, 2016-2019).

About Pumice Raft:

A **pumice raft** is an ecological phenomenon that usually follows an underwater volcanic eruption. Amongst the lava, plumes of pumice stones slowly float to the surface of the ocean. If the wind is calm the individual stones form what some sailors have reported as floating islands that appear out of nowhere. The pumice raft has even been known to ferry flora and fauna to new shores. More than an illusion on the horizon, a pumice raft represents a vessel, a conduit, a vehicle; its very constitution cultivates an environment where things can come together in the spirit of collaboration.

Pumice Raft is also a federally registered non-profit organization in Tkaronto/Toronto ON, Canada. Incorporated in 2018, Pumice Raft's activities begin from an ecological activist approach to the display of visual art and the facilitation of related education. This means that the guiding principles of the organization are rooted in a conception of place that begins with the protection of people and the planet.

The physical space of **Pumice Raft** currently resides on the land of the Haudenosaunee, the Huron-Wendat, and the Anishinabewaki ᐱᐅᓂᓂᐱᐅᐅᐅᐅ. Located on the first floor of a light industrial building at **348 Ryding Avenue**, Pumice Raft sits in Toronto's present-day Junction neighbourhood. Nearby to the west, the Humber River (Niwa'ah Onega'gaih'ih) flows south towards Lake Ontario (Niigani-gichigami).

