



Carrielynn Victor, *Skw'á:lx Baby Badass* (detail), 2015, acrylic on canvas, 30 x 40 in.

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*A young eaglet, sitting on its feet, awaiting a dinner worthy of a top-predator. This little one knows someday it will fly the highest.*

-CLV



Carrielynn Victor, *The Journey Home* (detail), 2015, acrylic on canvas, 24 x 48 in.

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*A young woman is being carried home to the spirit world on the back of swan. The swan was chosen to carry her to mark her purity. She had done no wrong. She was a warrior in her time on earth, and she was struck from the earth in a shocking and hateful way. The mountains, the moon, and the darkness all conspire to assist her on her journey back to peace.*

- CLV

## Poison, Pattern, Paradigm

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# Poison Pattern Paradigm

Carrielynn Victor



Front cover: Carrielynn Victor, *Mimoqw Builds a Ladder* (detail), 2016, acrylic on canvas, 30 x 40 in.

## Poison, Pattern, Paradigm

**P**oison, Pattern, Paradigm introduces two recent bodies of work by Carrielynn Victor: a series of paintings originating from traditional Stó:lō design principles, and a collection of mixed media works inspired by cultural and biological dimensions of the stinging nettle. When taken together, these works recount aspects of Stó:lō stories and worldview, while also drawing on the artist's lived experience and our collective immersion in popular culture.

Victor's acrylic paintings merge Stó:lō oral, cultural, and pictorial traditions with contemporary visual language through the use of Coast Salish formal elements. Trigon, chevron, and crescent forms are the basis for these appealing, pop-influenced designs. The artist departs from the customary flatness of these shapes, using gradations of colour and conjoined geometric surfaces to achieve a sense of volume and depth. The effect is reminiscent of digital 3D modelling. Whether depicting a moment from an origin story as in *Mímoqw Builds a Ladder*, or experimenting with tattoo aesthetics as in *Ts'ésquel*, the principles of Coast Salish design provide a cogent foundation from which Victor's distinct style emerges.

Stinging nettle, which has nutritional, medicinal and material applications, also produces both male and female flowers. Victor's mixed media works are an exploration of the many facets of this plant, including its symbiotic relationships to other species, and its androgynous or two-spirited character. Striking figures painted on maple panel depict the plant in precocious adolescence and splendid adulthood, while delicate ink drawings which incorporate the subtle colouring of nettle tea expand upon this study of gender. Maple, which has a symbiotic relationship with stinging nettle, was also used for the carved paddle. The artist's handmade nettle cordage adorns the neck, and trilateral patterns on the paddle convey the life cycle of the plant while also providing a stylistic bridge between the two bodies of work.

The breadth of ideas embodied in these works is woven together by notions of interconnectedness and transformation. Contemporary imagery flows from traditional iconography, materials that coexist in nature adopt a prominent place on the gallery wall, and slippages in identity remind us that there is no fixed state of being. These works challenge us to embrace the constant state of becoming and a world that, in the artist's words, "teaches us, nurtures us, and evolves with us."

*Carrielynn Victor is an artist, fisher, plant harvester and medicines practitioner of mixed European and Coast Salish ancestry. Her work fuses ancestral knowledge and a deep connection to her culture with contemporary techniques and styles. Her practice considers gender and sexuality, community, interconnectedness, land, and sustainability.*



Carrielynn Victor, *Ts'ésquel* (detail), 2016, acrylic on canvas, 30 x 40 in.

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*I love to play with pop culture and mix it with Coast Salish design. Eagles and roses are indigenous to Stó:lō culture and lands, but rarely are depicted together. In popular tattoo culture, they are seen together all the time. Strength can be both be hard and soft, eagles and roses carry each type of strength.*

- CLV



Carrielynn Victor, *Sassy Young Nettle* (detail), 2016, acrylic on maple panel, 12 x 24 in.

Carrielynn Victor, *TransNettle* (detail), 2016, acrylic on maple panel, 12 x 24 in.

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*The younger nettle exhibits androgynous features, vibrant eyes, and a bit of sway, while the seasoned nettle is comfortable in both its male and female traits. Carrying both male and female flowers, the mature nettle reminds me of a two-spirited or a complete being.*

- CLV



Carrielynn Victor, *Underbelle* (detail), 2016, Stinging Nettle tea and ink on watercolour paper, 12 x 15½ in.

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*Searching for the male and female traits in stinging nettle, images of the stinging hairs come across as phallic and represent the masculine aspect of the plant in this piece. The veins and plant cells are more subtle and complex, here they are depicted at a microscopic level to represent the feminine aspect of the plant.*

- CLV