

Fraser, P., Harrison, F. & Fels, L. Video Dispatch

A Walk, a Question, and Missives from the West Coast

[www.youtube.com/watch?v=xGDmgL7ynlY&feature=youtu.be](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xGDmgL7ynlY&feature=youtu.be)

## Abstract

This video thought experiment seeks to navigate a question posed in the call for

The *Performing the World Conference* held in New York City in the fall of 2016.

The conference invited presenters to respond to the question: *Can We Perform Our*

*Way to Power?* This question was inspired by the growing appreciation for

performance as an alternative modality to knowing in human development and

social justice issues. The question itself however became a point-of-departure for a

narrative walk and reflection into the possible understandings of performance as

performance relates to power and place. The video unpacks this troublesome

question in the light of research conducted for *The Art for Social Change Research*

*Project*<sup>i</sup> at Simon Fraser University. Through this research project funded by the

Social Science and Humanities Research Council of Canada, Patti Fraser conducted

of a series of conversations with socially engaged artists in the west coast of British

Columbia.

As an artist who shared a long history of practice in this field, Patti wanted to know

if there was anything from these artists' past experiences that they could offer

future practitioners? The initial question guiding the conversations between

individual artists with Patti, filmed by videographer Flick Harrison, a mid-career

arts activist, was borne of a brainstorming session between Patti and Lynn Fels, a

scholar in performative inquiry and arts education, in which we turned to a question inspired by our reading of scholar Hannah Arendt (1958):

*What needs to be preserved or held as a responsibility as socially engaged art is re-imagined in the future?*

Each artist interviewed brings to her or his work with community, values, perspectives, means of collaborative engagement, and arts execution that recognize the importance of individual and collective voice. What is shared in common among these artists is a deep commitment to social justice, a pedagogical stance, and an aesthetic commitment that the arts should be accessible to all; that through the arts we may identify, address, and create art that expresses individual and collective narratives; makes visible social injustices, individual, collective, and/or global; and finally, an understanding that all citizens, no matter who they are, have a right to creative expression and meaning making.

All of the artists featured in this video as well as the researchers live and work in the unceded territories of the Musqueam, Squamish and Tsleil-Waututh First Nations located in and around Vancouver, British Columbia.

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## Endnotes

<sup>i</sup> *Art For Social Change Research Project* is the short title for *Art for social change: an integrated research program in teaching, evaluation and capacity-building*, a 5-year SSHRC Partnership Grant involving six universities across

### **References to Abstract**

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### **References in Video**

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