

HOUSEWORK(S)

PAM HALL



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9 Bonaventure Avenue
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PAM HALL HOUSEWORK(S)

Pam Hall is not only a substantial figure in the Newfoundland and Labrador arts community; she has a long-standing relationship with The Rooms. She has been an instrumental part of our exhibition history, our collections, and our education programming. It is therefore an honour and a pleasure to present *Pam Hall: HouseWork(s)*—the culmination of ten years of the artist’s practice. The exhibition invites the viewer to consider the theme of the house as a place of unity, complexity, hopes, and memories. Hall extends this conversation to the various sites of our lives—to boutique stores, libraries, and fish plants—where art is not expected, but can exist. Her work reminds us that art is a process, one that begins with an invitation. It is a result not of, but *with* the artist and the public.

On behalf of The Rooms, I wish to thank all those involved in bringing this exhibition together. In particular, our sincerest gratitude to the guest curator, Dr. Melinda Pinfold, whose thoughtful attention and insights welcome the viewer to consider the breadth and intelligence of Pam Hall’s practice both in the exhibition and in this catalogue. Above all we thank the artist—truly a force in her own right.

The Rooms gratefully acknowledges the support of the Canada Council for the Arts and the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador.

Mireille Eagan
Curator of Contemporary Art
The Rooms Provincial Art Gallery Division

The Work House - interior



The artist building the Work House (photo by Ned Pat.)

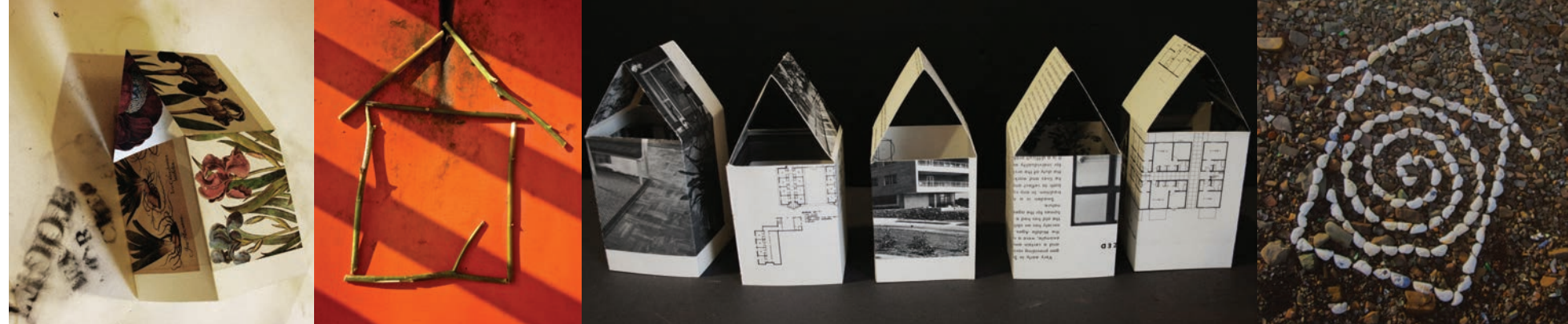
Collaboration, for Pam Hall, is about meaningfully accessing and integrating the knowledge and experience of others, such as the bakers from Auntie Crae's, into the world of the viewer *to* challenge everyone's *status quo* and encourage us to do better. Many purposes came together to collaborate with Hall in *HouseWork(s)*, such as the photographed bakers, the sewers performing in the gallery, the mapmakers, the housebuilders, and those documented in the *Encyclopedia of Local Knowledge* (2013). Of their overlapping purposes, one mobilized by Hall is the use of the tools and methods of the visual arts and hand-making practices to investigate what and how we know. What is 'place' in the move from art-making to knowledge-making? Hall's exhibition makes manifest that visual art can move into knowledge space and into social space to open a new set of knowing practices—from knowledge to know-how! She resituates where knowledge is: is a house of knowledge so different from a prayer house or a work house or a history house, and if so how are they connected? These works incite us to take responsibility for what and how we know. It celebrates and reveals the hidden know-how we rely upon. Know-how opens a way for humans to move differently with other humans, with the non-human, and with the more-than-human; we learn how to move attentively in the world and to respond more adequately to the vicissitudes it gives.

Hall worked alongside different people with various forms of knowledge, experience, interest, skill, and understanding to show this know-how. The creative reward of her collaboration is a politicized labour practice where Hall's artistry is not as a producer of discrete objects but a maker of situations; each artwork is an ongoing project that engages the viewer as a co-producer,

positioned within the work. Thus the 'Hallmark' of *HouseWork(s)* is that her art is a return to the social (rather than a social turn in art), joining a long artistic tradition of thinking about art collectively. Of course, one cannot grasp the participatory solely from images. Hall's photographs of people engaged in what they do or her fabric *Memory Cloths* created with Margaret Dragu are affective, but they do not tell of the context behind these projects. Rather, they act as evidence of the affective dynamism that inspires Hall to make art and that incites people to work with her. What I find most exciting are the conceptual and creative interconnections within and between each work. Hall makes visible the invisible: habitual social situations, a renewed awareness of something, the memory of a smell, a group energy, a change of mind, a change of heart. The individual works provoke affective interest; the connections between them reveal their worlds. She brings to bear in her art constructive social concern and active models of democracy. *HouseWork(s)* is about community, society, empowerment and agency, where social activity is symbolic activity that glances off the world and performs within it, demanding that we find new ways of analyzing visual art. In *HouseWork(s)*, Hall rejects the binary of artist and spectator to remind us that we are all continually indebted to others in what we do and how we do it.

Jennifer Dyer, PhD
Assistant Professor
The Humanities and
Interdisciplinary PhD Programs
Memorial University
St. John's, Newfoundland

^ Excerpts from *Small Gestures* and studio research



^ The Marginalia room (Photo by Ned Pratt)



HouseWork(s) presents work from the past decade of my practice—bringing solitary and private practices into conversation with collaborative and public projects. As an interdisciplinary artist who works both inside of and far afield from the “studio” and the gallery, I engage with art-making as a research practice and as an intervention—as a way to examine, discover and reveal something about the world and to open a space for dialogue within it.

My solitary practices serve as both conceptual and material research—as ways of finding and figuring out how to make my questions and concerns visible and how and where to bring them into encounter with others. My collaborative and socially-engaged projects invite others into the process, acknowledging that at least some of what I long to make or make visible, cannot be done alone. Working *with* others and sometimes *about* and *alongside* others, I am interested in how we inhabit our place, how we work within it and how we know it.

The preoccupations I have been exploring in the last ten years remain rooted in longstanding concerns about embodied labour and “women’s work,” everyday contemplative rituals, local knowledge and the construction of community. Most of the work in *HouseWork(s)* has been exhibited or undertaken in other locations—in galleries or artist-run centres in Canada or the U.S., and in non-art spaces in Newfoundland that include a bakery, a fish-processing plant, public libraries and a range of community spaces in Bonne Bay and the Great Northern Peninsula. It is a great pleasure to share this work with audiences at The Rooms in St. John’s.

Pam Hall, 2014



Dressing Up Work: the apron diaries, in Port Rexton and Malabar, NL, 2006





< The Work House, the History House and The Knowledge House (Photo by Ned Pratt)

^ Towards a Newfoundland House of Prayer



The doorway into the Knowledge House

PAM HALL: HOUSEWORK(s) 2014

Melinda Pinfold, PhD 2014

ART DOES NOT REPRODUCE THE VISIBLE; RATHER, IT MAKES VISIBLE.

PAUL KLEE, *CREATIVE CONFESSIONS*, 1920¹

For Pam Hall, art's *work*, and thus *her* work, is *social* labour. In identifying her [art]work in this way, Hall signals her awareness of a given in the human condition: that, despite often strenuous, and even coercive efforts to silence, to mute, to marginalize or to ignore them, the voices of [all of the] *Others* are, still, always and everywhere present. Hall's social and inclusive praxis, her gestural *artworks*, are provocative, but more importantly they are also embarkation points, and they invite responses and engender candid conversations. Hall welcomes community interaction and community's collaboration in her social explorations. And, in direct antithesis to her concurrent and more solitary studio practice in St. John's, for the past thirty years Hall has deliberately and repeatedly shifted the locus of her work, and any residual complacency born of familiarity, to venues that are usually far afield, often remote, and physically or emotionally challenging.

HouseWork(s) represents a decade (2004-2014) of work: reflections, daily gestures (however "small"), and invitations to and exchanges with members of the Newfoundland and Labrador community. And most recently, Hall introduced a global collaborative construction project, *Building a Village* (2013-2014, ongoing).

Most prominent in the exhibition are four hanging five-pole "houses" that invade, inhabit, nest, in-dwell and reconfigure the floor plans of the gallery: *The History House* (2008); *The Knowledge House* (2014); *Towards a Newfoundland House of Prayer* (2013-2014); and the site-specific performance installation, *The Work House* (2014). The houses hover over the gallery floor, largely unanchored to place and lacking a physical "foundation." These works are grounded, instead, in human labour, grounded in memories, grounded in shared experiences, and grounded in human longing and hope.

¹ Gale, M. (Ed.). (2013). *Paul Klee: Creative confession and other writings*. London: Tate Publishing.

Tabernacles of Human Spirit, Sanctuaries of Human Effort

The word “house” here functions as *both* a noun and a verb—as both/either a structure and/or an action. As a structure, a house may be a shelter, a place of refuge, a dwelling, or a sacred space. To *house* is to hold, to encase, to collect, to protect or to accommodate. With *HouseWork(s)*, the artist investigates and visually unpacks these varied functions and layered meanings of “house.”

When Hall wrote about the structures and the objects she offers up to us in *HouseWork(s)*, she used the phrase “evocative residue” to describe them. This use of words suggests the generative and the experiential, as well as the spiritual or sacred natures of these trace reliquiae, these relics. The house-forms/tent-forms that both define and accommodate this residue, these evocations, are themselves *constructed of it*, and in their sheltering form each suggests the habitus of a sacred space—a sanctuary, or a tabernacle.

There are many traditions of sacred places and spaces throughout our history/*her*story, and among the most fundamental and primal of these is the generative shelter and the nurturing environment of the mother’s womb. Our move to house and to *shelter* is in part an effort to reclaim the safety and security we experienced *in utero*. In religious practices throughout history we have appropriated or constructed sacred spaces. In prehistory, the deep recesses of caves were chosen to house humankind’s earliest paintings—visual cosmologies, perhaps, that responded to the existential questions that we ponder still. The Druids signaled the oak tree as sacred, and they gathered within the shelter of oak groves to perform religious rituals. In ancient Judaism, a sacred area in the temple housed the tabernacle—a diminutive tent or shelter that purported to contain and protect the Ark of the Covenant. Later, a version of the tabernacle re-emerged on the altar with Christianity. But, it would be safe to speculate that every belief-practice features its sacred space for the sanctuary of the divine.

The unique floating house-structures in Hall’s *HouseWork(s)* are sacred repositories in that they are tabernacles of human spirit, and sanctuaries of human effort. Just as the houses in *HouseWork(s)* are accommodated (or *housed*) by the expanse of the gallery they, in turn, accommodate the viewer and invite us to look closely—to contemplate, to consider, and to reflect. In these private acts of contemplation, in physical communion with others in the gallery who are also so doing, *our* bodies, too, become tabernacles of human spirit, and thus witnesses to and repositories of the sacred within us all.



The first house maquette from Marginalia

House. Work. House Work. HouseWork(s)

With the title of the exhibition, *HouseWork(s)*, Hall deliberately and explicitly elicits—*conjures*—visions of women’s work. *HouseWork(s)* is, itself, a labour-intensive body of work. Many of the works in the exhibition rely more upon traditional craft or domestic practices such as machine sewing, preparing meals, stitching, ironing, and quilting. Some of the installations—such as the *Dressing Up Work* series, present to us for our consideration through the visual the often hidden economic details and the impact of female commercial and industrial labour.

Voices from the Edge: Marginalia: correspondence(s) (2004-2010) and The History House (2008)

In 2004, Hall began an ongoing visual dialogue and four-year long collaboration entitled *Marginalia* with Vancouver performance artist, Margaret Dragu. An extended, bi-coastal conversation was made visible through the daily making and sharing, by each artist, of a soft and sometimes ragged “memory cloth.”



Three Memory Cloths from Hall's Marginalia Correspondence



The History House



Three Memory Cloths from Hall's Marginalia correspondence

During the period of the collaboration, Dragu and Hall each produced, every day, a 30.5 x 30.5 cm cloth work. Each memory cloth is then, roughly, one-foot square. This measure is only approximate, and it was chosen as suggestive of the natural measure of the human foot used in marking out distances. Step by step, day-by-day, through their work on the cloth carrés, Dragu and Hall “moved closer,” metaphorically, to each other despite the enormous geographic expanse that separated them. The techniques employed by the artists included (and subverted) the more traditionally female domestic skills of sewing, ironing, embroidering, and appliqué/collage.

The History House, exhibited in *HouseWork(s)*, is one small echo of Hall's side of this collaborative ‘conversation,’ this “soft history.” Exhibited now at The Rooms, *The History House* has become the emissary for the much larger project of *Marginalia*, where it was first exhibited in 2008. *Marginalia* has been presented to the public as installation, as performance, as long-term residence and short-term exhibition in Vancouver, Richmond, Sackville, and Montréal, but it has never been shown in Newfoundland. *Marginalia* is significant because this body of work offers a starting point for Hall's first intentional collaboration with another artist. It also marks the formalization of daily practice as foundational to all of Hall's work since that time.

The History House marks the first appearance of “the house,” writ large, as a significant form in Hall's work. However, there is a small hanging house in *HouseWork(s)* that is the *maquette* (2005) and the inspiration that undergirds Hall's creation of each of the five-pole houses in this exhibition. Stained and ragged, created from common cotton and bamboo skewers, this unpretentious house is both precious and significant. As a model, it signals the artist's creative process, as well as her resolution of the material and design issues that she would face in fulfilling her vision for the larger house-works.

With *The History House*, Hall opens up to discourse the extremely personal, yet universal, candid conversations and thoughts that many, if not most, women have about topics like family, aging, and sexuality. The personal nature of the commentary on each of the squares that make up *The History House* reveals and makes visible these conversations, and lets hidden thoughts and desires “out of the house,” and into the light of day.





Lois Brown, Pam Hall and Anne Troake—Building the WorkHouse in performance. (Photos by Will Gilh)

The Work House

The Work House (2014), which is related to the *Dressing Up Work* series in *HouseWork(s)*, was completed in the gallery, during the first two weeks of the exhibition. During the performance, *Building the Work House*, three women artists sewed, for four hours a day, silently fabricating the apron panels for this house. The hundreds of colourful and varied aprons that make up this house were either collected by the artist, or sent to her from women around the country. Many of these aprons are handmade, and they point nostalgically to a time and a sensibility when, after the housekeeping efforts of each day, mothers and wives would “freshen up” by changing into a gay, clean apron at dinnertime.

For its duration, the 40-hour performance inhabited and dominated the otherwise orderly space of the gallery. It confronted the exhibition’s system. The women’s work was made visible; the riot of piled aprons was stitched and structured into the vertical panels that would become the ‘walls’ and ‘roof’ of the final five-pole house in the exhibition. When it was completed and installed, *The Work House* introduced an undeniably female presence into the gallery. The gaily-coloured aprons of the exterior house a complex, soft, diaphanous and more-pastel interior. The languid weight of the aprons that form this house muffle the noise of the outside world. The inside *The Work House* is a safe space; a womb.

This house’s metaphorical meaning is polyvalent: “mother,” repetitive work, women’s work, housework, intensive manual labour, the “sweatshop” and “dressing up” are all at once acknowledged through the performance and captured in the finished house. No two aprons in this installation are the same. This variety underscores the individuality of those workers whom we tend to think of as part of the masses, rather than as individuals.



Work site of the 40-hour performance Building the WorkHouse



The completed Work House with Lewwater Seafood Work Portraits in the background.

Dressing Up Work: The Apron Diaries (2006-2009)



For over three years I collected used aprons as “material” for this large scale installation project, intended to investigate and honor “women’s work,” both domestic and industrial. In Newfoundland, aprons were installed to explore the work (both past and present) of women in the fishery, to mark female labour “in the garden,” and various other forms of “housework.”



In 2006, I began the “garden” installations at Port Rexton in Trinity Bay, Newfoundland. In that same year, I installed aprons on fish flakes, used for drying salt cod, at Cape Bonavista and Maberly.

In 2007, the work of women at *Auntie Crae's*—a 30 year-old bakery and specialty food shop in St. John's—formed the basis for the first indoor iteration of the project. It includes portraits of workers, and "data-mapping" to make visible female labor through story and statistics. Documentation and interpretative works arising from this process were installed in the workplace. The workers were themselves the first audience to their participation.

In 2008, I began work with women in the modern fish processing sector, exploring Icewater Seafoods in Arnold's Cove. This version of the project was installed in the workplace, and documented the work of 73 individual women through worker's portraits and a data map entitled "Preliminary Findings..."



Excerpts from the Work Portraits at Auntie Crae's

Pam Hall, 2014



Excerpts from the Work Portraits at Auntie Crae's



The Auntie Crae's Data Map



Aprons at Icewater Seafoods in Arnold's Cove, N.L. 2008



Excerpts from the Work Portraits :Icewater Seafoods

'Wordworks' / Words Work: Towards an Encyclopedia of Local Knowledge

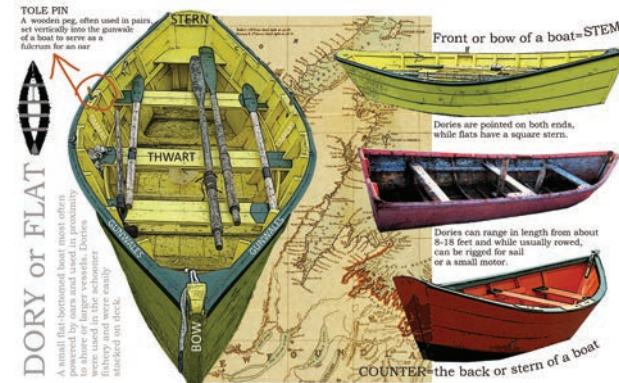
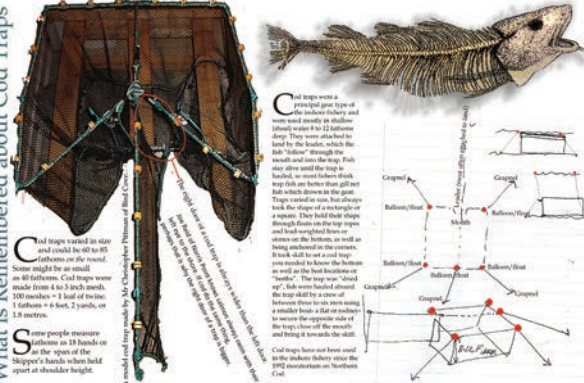
Towards an Encyclopedia of Local Knowledge (2012-2013) is the result of an interdisciplinary, collaborative community-dependent project. Through a layering of visuals and text this work queries the ways in which we have traditionally privileged science as the pre-eminent authoritative source of knowledge. Through this project, which is part of her dissertation, Hall achieved her doctorate. Hall's intention was to open and broaden the dialogue around what knowledge is, who holds it, and who gets to be included in dialogues and decision-making about the places we inhabit and how we live in them.

The genesis of *Towards an Encyclopedia of Local Knowledge* was Hall's *Fragments from a Reconstructed Gynaeopedia* (1995), among the earliest of Hall's 'wordworks.' With the *Gynaeopedia*, Hall slyly inveighs, visually and verbally, against centuries of the all-too-facile, misogynistic clichés and misconceptions that have dominated what has historically passed for learned discourse about the female psyche, and female anatomy. This series is in part, parodic, and Hall's fluid, punning prose and poetry, with its staccato rhythms, relentlessly tumbles across each page until her point is made. Hall appropriates, visually and without hesitation, the canonical imagery of Leonardo da Vinci, Andreas Vesalius, the ancients, and the indigenous. Hall re-creates the female **not** as object, envisioned by the male, but as who she **is**, unapologetic, and on her own terms.



From Towards a Reconstructed Gynaepedia, 1998

What is Remembered about Cod Traps

^ Excerpts from *Towards an Encyclopedia of Local Knowledge*

The Knowledge House

The Knowledge House (2014), another of the five-pole houses that anchor this exhibition, addresses in part the problems of what it is that we think we know, how this “knowledge” is formulated, and how it is presented to us for use or retrieval. Typically, an encyclopedia is understood to offer comprehensive, universal knowledge. Its series of volumes are, generally, arranged either alphabetically or thematically. In the deconstruction and the removal of numerous pages from vintage encyclopedias and atlases, and then recombining them in what seems at first to be an *ad hoc* manner, Hall coaxes us to consider new associations, informational alliances, and meaning pathways. The artist thus furthers a disruptive process of linguistic ambiguity. In the probing physicality of the stitching - the repetitive penetration of the machine’s needle, the threads that tether each of the pages together—the panels of this house metaphorically key us to the ways we make connections.

Do we not, in fact, “stitch” or otherwise cobble together what we know? The resulting crazy quilt of facts and information in the interior of *The Knowledge House* reflects and makes visual the ways in which we truly learn to understand – through layerings of meaning and the serendipity of experience.



Towards an Encyclopedia of Local Knowledge and The Knowledge House



The Knowledge House (Photo by Ned Pratt)

[illegible]

A photograph of a hillside covered in prayer flags and a wooden fence, with a clear blue sky in the background. The hillside is covered in dry, brownish grass and small shrubs. A wooden fence runs along the top of the hill. Several tall, white prayer flags are visible, some standing upright and others hanging from poles. The sky is a clear, bright blue.



In effect, and through Hall's physical manipulation, this house emerged as a very personal homage by the artist to her late father, and to Eli Tucker, the skipper Hall describes as "another 'father figure' in my life." The house and the process of its construction became a "way finder" of sorts for Hall, and moved her towards the larger works. This little house is displayed adjacent to *Towards a Newfoundland House of Prayer*. Hall's modest daily practice in *32 Days towards a Newfoundland House of Prayer* cleared the way for a larger scale collaborative project, *The Providence Wishing Wall*, in 2008 at the Brown-RISD Hillel Gallery in Providence, Rhode Island.



Excerpts from *32 Days Towards a House of Prayer*

I Pray for...

The Providence Prayer Blanket is a traditional patchwork quilt. The guild community of quilters has stitched together and created a powerful unity in the prayer blanket that they have fashioned from the Providence prayer strips. In addition to their labor of love, the women of *The Helping Hands* have added their own voices, **through** their labour, to the voices of all the others who have offered their wishes and their prayers.

MORE PATIENCE

HE AWESOME PEOPLE
 I HAVE YET TO MEET
 I PRAY EVERYDAY TO LEARN HOW TO HAVE
 new every day.
 GRACE AND GENEROSITY IN FAILURE and IN SUCCESS
 The Beloved Community
 non violent as we strive for a world
 STRENGTH ENOUGH TO FACE THE
 I wish u success
 PEOPLE TO LISTEN TO EACH OTHER
 FOR ALL OF US - EVERYWHERE -
 A FAIRER, MORE PEACEFUL WORLD
 A GOOD SING-A-LONG SONG ON THE RADIO
 FREEDOM FROM AGGRESSION
 FOLLOW THE MAXIM "LOVE THY NEIGHBOR"
 THE STATEMENT - LOVE THY "WHITE" NEIGHBOR
 LOVE THY "STRAIGHT" NEIGHBOR, LOVE THY
 HAS NOT PREREQUISITES
 I WISH FOR PCL. TO TAKE DEEP BREATHS REALLY
 Thanks for my security (hoping everyone else can be so fortunate)
 I PRAY TO FOR GL
 CONSTANT AWARENESS OF MY PRIVILEGE
 A MORE UNDERSTANDING WORLD
 GLOBAL LITERACY OR
 TO HOLD THE ANGER IN THE WAKE OF UNTIMELY DEATH
 IT GO -
 TO HELP YOU BEFORE THE DRUGS DID. I WOULD
 I WISH SOMEONE WHO KNEW WHAT TO DO
 AS WELL, DEAR SISTER.
 TO HOLD THE ANGER IN THE WAKE OF UNTIMELY DEATH
 IT GO -
 TO HELP YOU BEFORE THE DRUGS DID. I WOULD
 I WISH SOMEONE WHO KNEW WHAT TO DO
 AS WELL, DEAR SISTER.
 FROM SUFFERING AND THE ROOT OF
 HAVE COMPASSION
 AND...
 THE ABILITY TO LISTEN WELL AND DEEPLY AND THE DESIRE TO USE IT
 TO DO, PRAY, AND WISH FOR THINGS OUT OF FAITH INSTEAD OF FEAR.
 SELF DESTRUCTION MAY ALL KNOW
 I WISH
 FOR REVER
 IN REVER
 LITTLE BITE-SIZED PIECES OF PERFECTION
 IN
 OPEN BORDER

Towards a Newfoundland House of Prayer

The heart of the larger five-pole house that is *Towards a Newfoundland House of Prayer* (2013-2014) is a hand-wrought twine net, fabricated by Eric Snelgrove, a retired fisher. Individual wishing walls for the *House* were displayed, throughout about a year, in various public places in locations in St. John's, Stephenville and Corner Brook. Wishes were also solicited from further afield. Anyone who wished was invited to write a prayer or a desire on a strip of cotton, and affix it to the netting. The result is the light-filled and ethereal large-scale prayer house. Its net roof is open to the light, and smooth sea rocks and twine are employed to tether this airy structure within the confines of the gallery. The elements of this house shift slightly in the ambient breezes in the gallery. Their movements echo the just audible sounds of murmured prayers.

Towards a Newfoundland House of Prayer is one of the most visually subdued and monochromatic works in the exhibition. But this house, covered as it is with wishing rags and prayers, physically brings to form, makes visible our human hopes and aspirations. This house is like a choir, and its fluttering white rags hold, and give voice to, our wishes and our desires. With *32 Days Towards a House of Prayer*, *Towards a Newfoundland House of Prayer* and *The Providence Prayer Blanket*, our litanies of hope and longing are made real, exposed, ragged and raw. Through these works, we may find community and a knowledge that we are trusting in that which is at once within us and yet beyond us.

[illegible]



Housing Knowledge (2013-2014)



Details from *Housing Knowledge*

In tandem, somewhat, with the *Building a Village* collaborative project, and in direct ‘conversation’ with the five-pole *Knowledge House*, Hall constructed a series of folded “houses” utilizing the lush imagery of vintage botanical reference books. The artist photographed the completed houses in varying light conditions and angles. The five photographic images in this section of the gallery are selections Hall made from among the larger group. In each case, the house that served as subject for the large photographic image is mounted on a shelf before its own image, thus it is in dialogue with itself. The question of who is the observer and who is the observed becomes even more vexed as the gallery viewer’s own reflection in the glass of each photograph “looks back” at him or her, and enters into the conversation of a dialogic space.

Hall describes the small, folded houses in *Housing Knowledge* as “both working objects and studies in both real **and** symbolic **illumination**.” The houses are staged to capture daylight (day’s light as unfettered illumination, and thus, truth) within their interiors. For Hall, the tiny houses, and their larger scale photographic “portraits,” allude to the “enlightenment” that we demand of knowledge.

Building a Village (2013-2014): Collaboration with Friends, Family and Strangers

Building A Village began as a Facebook project in 2013. Hall, who has been an active user of social media for over five years, writes that she “realized that many of her closest connections existed in this far-flung virtual space that denies both geography, and proximity.” Hall began *Building a Village* on Facebook as a way to make these connections and this virtual “community” **visible** to itself and others.”

Hundreds of participants throughout Canada, the United States, and abroad responded (and continue to respond) to Hall’s call to collaboration, requesting that she send each of them a folded house plan. Hall’s instructions ask participants to customize the house, to manipulate it, to **person**-alize it as they will. Finally, Hall asked that participants return the embellished houses to her by post.

Ultimately, the installation of *Building a Village* has been a labour-intensive activity. Hundreds of participants have responded thus far. Each house is beautifully unique, despite the deliberate sameness of form. The first materialization of the virtual village was accompanied by the display of ephemera—all of the envelopes and their contents are pinned on the walls adjacent to the village. A time-lapse, animated video loop reveals the **building** of the village in the gallery. For this element, Hall collaborated with an award-winning young filmmaker on the video project—her daughter, Jordan Canning.



Details from Building a Village

The House Template from Building a Village



All images on this page are excerpts from *Small Gestures*

A Few Words, Small Gestures (2009 ongoing)

Since 2009, Hall's daily practice has taken the form of *Small Gestures*, humble actions undertaken each morning as calls to attentive presence. These performative-action-gestures remain the artist's ways of paying close attention, of stepping toward mindfulness, and of enacting an awakened gratitude for everyday wonder. Hall, who is an accomplished writer and crafty wordsmith, often includes text with the images that she shares each day on *Facebook*. Hall's *Small Gestures* may be pithy or provocative, but they are always downright beautiful, and that is enough.



LIST OF WORKS

Maquette, hanging house (working object), 2005
Cotton, bamboo, cotton twine
35.5 x 22.8 x 22.8 cm

Memory Cloths, 2004-2008
Mixed media textile excerpts from *Marginalia*
35.5 x 35.5 cm (variable)

Marginalia: correspondence(s), 2004-2010
Pam Hall and Margaret Dragu
Audio-visual presentation
Approx. 10 minutes, looped

Small Gestures: Excerpts from a Daily Practice, 2009-ongoing
Giclée prints on archival paper
35.5 x 35.5 cm

The Garden Houses, 2014
Daylily and Goatsbeard stems from Summer 2013, glue, thread
and twine
Dimensions variable

Dressing Up Work: The Apron Diaries, 2006-2009
Giclée prints on archival paper
Dimensions variable

Dressing Up Works site research—
Bonavista, Maberly, Port Rexton, 2006
Giclée prints on archival paper
27.9 x 35.5 cm

Work Portraits: Auntie Crae's, 2007
Giclée prints on archival paper
48.3 x 33 cm

Work Portraits: Icwater Seafoods, 2008-2009
Giclée prints on archival paper
27.9 x 35.5 cm
Auntie Crae's Data Map, 2007
Mixed media on rag paper
76.2 x 111.8 cm

The Work House, 2014
Nylon, aprons, thread, bamboo supports
243 x 243 x 366 cm (variable)

Building the Work House:
Live Performance, May 13-23, 2014
The Rooms Provincial Gallery
Pam Hall with Lois Brown and Anne Troake
Sewing machines, irons and ironing boards, pinning table,
aprons, nylon, thread

The History House, 2008
Mixed media Memory Cloths, bamboo supports
243 x 243 x 366 cm (variable)
Housing Knowledge, 2013-2014
Giclée prints on archival Hahnemühle paper
57 x 57 cm each

Five untitled folded houses, 2013-2014
Vintage botanical book pages, glue
8.9 x 8.9 x 19 cm each (variable)

Towards an Encyclopedia of Local Knowledge,
2012-2013
Giclée prints on archival paper, 92 of 94 folio sheets
27.9 x 43.2 cm each

The Knowledge House, 2014
Vintage encyclopedia and atlas pages, thread, fabric,
bamboo supports
243 x 243 x 366 cm (variable)

Building A Village, 2013-2014
Collaborative community-building project enabled by social media
Approx. 300 mixed media houses on card stock, envelopes and
miscellaneous contents
Dimensions variable

BUILDING (a Village), 2014
Pam Hall and Jordan Canning
looped video projection

Towards A Newfoundland House of Prayer,
2013-2014
Inscribed cotton strips, bamboo supports, hand-knit netting of
cotton fishing twine, sisal rope, leaded rope, beach stones, 3
tracks looped audio
243 x 243 x 366 cm (variable)

32 Days Towards a House of Prayer, 2007
Small Prayer House
Linen, permanent marker, bamboo supports, cotton, twine
30.5 x 30.5 x 35.6 cm

32 inkjet photographs
21.6 x 27.9 cm each

The Providence Prayer Blanket, 2007-2014
Collaborative quilting project with *Helping Hands Quilters' Guild*,
Plum Point, Newfoundland
Inscribed cotton strips from the *Providence Wishing Wall* (2008),
cotton, embroidery thread, batting, hand and machine quilted
182.9 x 243.8 cm (variable)



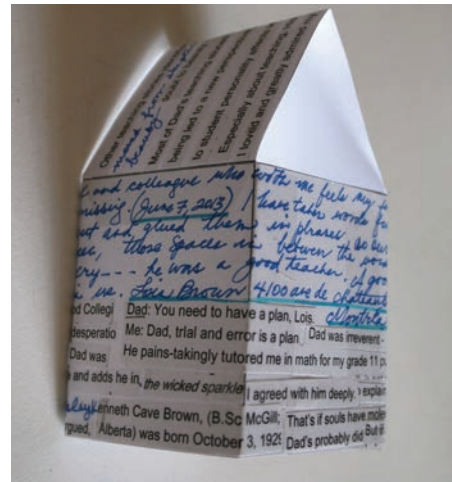
Excerpt from Building a Village

Pam Hall is a visual artist, filmmaker and writer, whose work has been exhibited across Canada and internationally, and is represented in many corporate, private and public collections, including the National Gallery of Canada. Her practice is interdisciplinary—including installation, drawing, object-making, printmaking, photography, film, writing, and community-engaged practice and performance. Her work has explored the fisheries, the body, female labour, place-making, the nature of knowledge and notions of the “local.” Hall was the inaugural Artist-in-Residence in the Faculty of Medicine at Memorial University and spent more than two years there pursuing her research into how doctors learn to see the body. Hall’s work is often collaborative, and for more than a decade Hall has undertaken socially-engaged projects with communities in locations distant from the pristine space of the gallery, the studio, and the museum.

In rural Newfoundland and Alberta, on wharves here and in Japan, in local fish plants and distant farmers’ fields, Hall has made work that involves many others as participants and collaborators. She has worked with many others in the research and creation of her work, including doctors and medical students, fishers on both coasts of Canada, workers in the food service and fish processing industries, and knowledge-holders in Western Newfoundland. Pam Hall was the only artist on an interdisciplinary team of scholars studying the crisis in the marine fisheries in Canada. Hall has also written and illustrated children’s books, and is an award-winning production designer in the Newfoundland film industry, winning the first Director’s Guild of Canada Award for Outstanding Achievement in Production Design for Hall was inducted into the Royal Academy of the Arts (RCA) in 1992, and has been teaching graduate students in the MFA in Interdisciplinary Arts program at Goddard College in Vermont since 1998.

The artist has lived and worked in St. John’s for more than forty years. Dr. Hall recently completed her PhD at Memorial University, undertaking research and creation that proposed visual art as a form of knowledge production.

For more about Hall and her work, see www.pamhall.ca



Dr. Melinda Pinfold is an independent scholar, educator, researcher, essayist/writer and art curator. Her educational background includes advanced degrees in Education, Special Education, the History of Art, Design and Visual Culture, and Psychology. She completed her doctorate in Psychology (History and Theory) in 2009, at the University of Alberta.

Some of Dr. Pinfold’s current research interests include the exploration of the conjunction of the histories of art and psychology in the late 19th and early 20th centuries; the interpenetration of the arts and the sciences as these disciplines inform creativity and creative productions; nonverbal metaphor; the social consequences of public art and design; and, advertising as visual culture.

Volunteering in and for the arts in the community has been and remains an important part of Dr. Pinfold’s life. She served on the Executive Board of Visual Arts Alberta Association for over a decade. Currently, she serves as Chair of the Arts and Culture Standing Committee for The City of Edmonton *Salute to Excellence Council*.

Dr. Pinfold is also Board Chair of the Friends of the University Hospital, a non-profit organization whose mandate includes enhancing patient, family, and hospital staff care and comfort through the arts. Art acquisition and installation for the Mazankowski Alberta Heart Institute, the University of Alberta Hospital, and the Kaye Edmonton Clinic are among the important mandates for The Friends. The programming for and financial support of the hospital’s unique, patient-centric McMullen Art Gallery is another.

Currently, Dr. Pinfold resides in Edmonton, and is a Lecturer at the University of Alberta, in the Department of Art and Design and the Department of Human Ecology.

Excerpt from *Small Gestures*

A lot of the work in *HouseWork(s)* has been shown out of the province, out of the country and in locations in Newfoundland that are all quite far from “town”, so I am deeply pleased and wildly excited to finally share this work here in St. John’s. Bringing together the work I do alone with the work I do “together”—in collaboration with others—opens a gratifying conversation between the range and diversity of projects that have preoccupied me over the last ten years—and I am grateful to The Rooms for this opportunity.

A decade of community-based work relies on many individuals who have contributed in many ways to the projects represented in *HouseWork(s)*. These individuals—a large community of collaborators and communities—are acknowledged by name throughout the exhibition and the catalogue, so they will not be listed again here. There was a great deal of other support that needs acknowledgement however. I am deeply grateful to the Newfoundland and Labrador Arts Council; the Canada Council for the Arts; the City of St. John’s; the Office of Public Engagement of the Rhode Island School of Design and the Goddard College Faculty Development Fund for crucial funding that enabled *A Wish and a Prayer*, *Dressing Up Work: the apron diaries*, and the video element of *Building a Village*. The research and creation of *Towards an Encyclopedia* of Local Knowledge was supported by funding from Memorial University (MUN) School of Graduate Studies; the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada (SSHRC); the Community-University Research for Recovery Alliance (CURRA); and the Trudeau Foundation Fellowship of Dr. Barb Neis at MUN.

I am also grateful for the non-monetary support provided by the Centre for Newfoundland Studies; the QEII Library and the Faculty of Medicine Library at MUN; the Newfoundland and Labrador Libraries (NLPL) in Stephenville and Corner Brook; Eastern Edge Gallery and Model Citizens in St. John’s; Auntie Crae’s in St. John’s and Icewater Seafoods in Arnold’s Cove; the Bonne Bay Marine Station and Town Hall in Norris Point; St. Anthony Basin Resources Inc. (SABRI); the French Shore Historical Society in Conche; the Port au Choix Heritage Centre; the Fifty Centuries Interpretation Centre in Bird Cove; and the Mary Simms All-Grade School in Main Brook.

I am deeply grateful to Dr. Melinda Pinfold and Dr. Jennifer Dyer for their thoughtful contributions to the catalogue, to Vessela Brakalova for her engaging catalogue design and to everyone at The Rooms Provincial Art Gallery who worked hard to install the show so beautifully.

Finally, I am profoundly grateful to the other artists that this work has given me the opportunity to collaborate with—Margaret Dragu in *Marginalia*, my fellow performers in *Building the Workhouse*, Lois Brown and Anne Troake, and my remarkable daughter, the filmmaker Jordan Canning, who co-directed and edited the video in *Building a Village*.

One never builds the house alone and it has been a privilege and a pleasure to make this work in such good company.

Pam Hall, 2014

Excerpt from *Small Gestures*

HouseWork(s), by Newfoundland artist Pam Hall, is a visually glorious, intellectually challenging, and provocative installation. Prominent through the exhibition at The Rooms are a number of walls, each with hundreds of names. These walls name, and the artist thanks, the many collaborators, (co-artists, really) from all walks of life, who have answered Hall’s “call out” to respond along with her in exploring art as a social process – one that is neither defined nor constrained by “art world” rules and regulations. Here, art finds its way into unabashedly celebrating community engagement, and gives voice to the creative impulses that are in each of us.

There are many people I must thank for their efforts and professionalism in making this complex exhibition so successful. Behind the scenes, the administration—most especially, Wanda Mooney—and the management of The Rooms have facilitated this exhibition more than I will probably ever know, and I thank them.

My warmest thanks are extended to Sheila Perry, for inviting me to curate the show, and for having the foresight to imagine that Pam Hall and I might be a good match. I include my gratitude to Denis Longchamps. As gallery manager during the initial stages of this project, Denis was an organizing principle and the gently guiding, optimistic force that propelled our early efforts towards this show forward.

My gratitude is further extended to Mireille Eagan. In her role as Curator of Contemporary Art at The Rooms, Mireille was the on-site manager for *HouseWork(s)* throughout every stage of the exhibition, and her ready assistance in facilitating so many aspects of the complexities of such a large installation is very, very much appreciated.

I also extend my sincerest thanks to the members of the Technical Services Unit at The Rooms: in particular, Tim Cohen, Barry Coish, Will Gill, John McDonald, and Bev Collett. Jason Hynes was invaluable in troubleshooting and resolving multi-media presentation glitches. Jamie Bennett, the Production Manager at the Rooms, oversaw the installation from beginning to end, and worked his legendary magic with the lighting. I am ever in awe of how you each resolve any and all of the myriad technical issues that could easily confound an exhibition.

I would also like to acknowledge Vessela Brakalova, the catalogue designer. Thank you for your sensitive efforts to capture both the essence and the aesthetics of this exhibition.

Thanks are also extended to Dr. Jennifer Dyer for her insightful introduction. It was important to the artist for a local critical voice to be included in this catalogue, and Hall’s choice of Dr. Dyer was a good one.

Finally, I would like to thank Pam Hall, the artist. It is not easy for me to capture, here, the fullness of my respect and affection for Pam, as these have developed over the years of our collaborative journey to this survey show. Your no-holds-barred clear dedication to your artistic vision, your organizational skills, your talents in catalogue design, and your hypervigilance to the tiniest of details have made my tasks as curator that much more interesting. Congratulations, Pam, on your well-earned, well-deserved success in *HouseWork(s)*!

Melinda Pinfold PhD, 2014



Excerpt from *Small Gestures*