

CHRISTINA PARKER

GALLERY

RHONDA PELLEY CERTAIN STRANGE VISIONS

In this digital collage series, archival and contemporary media are woven together to blur the line between past and present.

Each image operates like a shifting lens where fragments of history, myth, politics, and personal memory collide and fall into new patterns. Power is broken into pieces, then reassembled with satire and sorrow. Sight is severed, ears are harvested, and tongues are locked in ice and salt. People are fused with elements of nature, and the skeleton of a caribou is wrapped in a body bag. There are headless birds, breached homes, thieves with rusted coins, a single boot pressed into the earth and a black dog lost at the edge of the colony.

I have used tarot in this series because it's a system full of rich visual and psychological symbolism. Each card holds layers of meaning: colours, gestures, objects, and archetypes. Tarot tells stories. It is a visual language of the psyche.



ACE of CUPS.

Ace of Cups, Archival inkjet print, 18.5 × 21.25", 2021



VIII of WANDS.

VIII of Wands, Archival inkjet print, 18.5 × 21.25", 2025

By using digital collage, I'm able to create compositions that are layered and fractured — much like looking through a kaleidoscope, where the view is constantly reconfiguring itself into new forms. Archival material, pop culture, photography, news media and historical iconography all intersect in ways that invite multiple readings.

This kaleidoscopic approach reflects the experience of living within overlapping settler histories — especially in a place like Newfoundland and Labrador, where colonial legacy, spiritual imagination, and working and governing class identity form a dense, multifaceted reality.

I wish to thank ArtsNL, the City of St. John's and Newfoundland Canvas for their support with this project.

I would also like to say that while this series focuses on settler histories I recognize Newfoundland and Labrador as the unceded territory and ancestral homelands of the Beothuk, Mi'kmaq, Innu, and Inuit peoples.



IV of Wands (detail), Archival inkjet print, 18.5 × 21.25", 2019

RHONDA PELLEY was born in St. John's, then spent her early childhood in Nelson, British Columbia before returning to Newfoundland with her family in the late 1970s. Pelley is a second-generation visual artist who employs photography, compositing, collage techniques and data projection to create surreal and evocative images that explore the political and psychological aspects of identity. Her artwork has been exhibited at the Rooms Provincial Art Gallery, Christina Parker Gallery, RCA, Headquarters 57 and Leyton Gallery (St. John's), Campbell River Art Gallery (British Columbia), Galerie Les Territoires (Montreal), the San Francisco Arts Commission, and the Musée de l'Elysée (Switzerland).

Pelley's artwork has been published in books and publications such as *Chatelaine*, *Room*, *Geist*, *Newfoundland Quarterly* and *Riddle Fence*, and she is the recipient of the Rogers Communication NL Book Writing Award for Non-Fiction for *Island Maid – Voices of Outport Women* (co-created by Sheilagh O'Leary).

In 2018, Rhonda's Newfoundland Tarot project was showcased in *Canadian Art* magazine in a feature article by Leah Sandals. Pelley lives in downtown St. John's with her partner and their two cats.



Death, Archival inkjet print, 18.5 × 21.25", 2023