

Common Weal Community Arts Presents: *Axenet'i Tth'al*

by artist Michèle Mackasey and guest artist Manuel Chantre,
with members of the Patuanak community

Main Gallery: August 20 – October 19, 2019



Michèle Mackasey, *Axenet'i Tth'al* exhibition, installation view, Main Gallery, Mann Art Gallery

Axenet'i Tth'al or *Fringe* in English shares a Northern Denesuline aesthetic guided by community members of Patuanak Saskatchewan. This transporting, interactive fringe landscape is the product of long-term residency with English River First Nation, visual artist Michèle Mackasey, and guest artist Manuel Chantre. In 2014, the English River First Nation in Northwestern Saskatchewan, became the site of an elaborate fringe maze reminiscent of Denesuline lynx traps. Fringes were tied and draped through the bush by youth and artists with the guidance and remembrances of late elder Jacob Estralshenen. As people came to view and move through the fringes, experiencing its mesmerizing light effects and distinct chiming sounds, it became clear that something significant was occurring here, something worth sharing.

This August, actual trees, branches and moss have been transferred from Patuanak into the Mann Art Gallery recreating a northern terrain for the *Axenet'i Tth'al* Exhibition. Installers from Patuanak stayed in Prince Albert for a week constructing the exhibition alongside the artist Michèle Mackasey. Interactive audio-visual effects, projecting Patuanak forest imagery into the gallery structure creating an amplified sensation of live landscape. The effects of the immersive installation environment serve to convey elements of a Dene worldview and connection to their territory.



Michèle Mackasey's artist talk, opening reception, with SAB Board Members in attendance



Cheryl L'Hirondelle & Joseph Naytowhow sang songs from the *Why the Caged Bird Sings* project