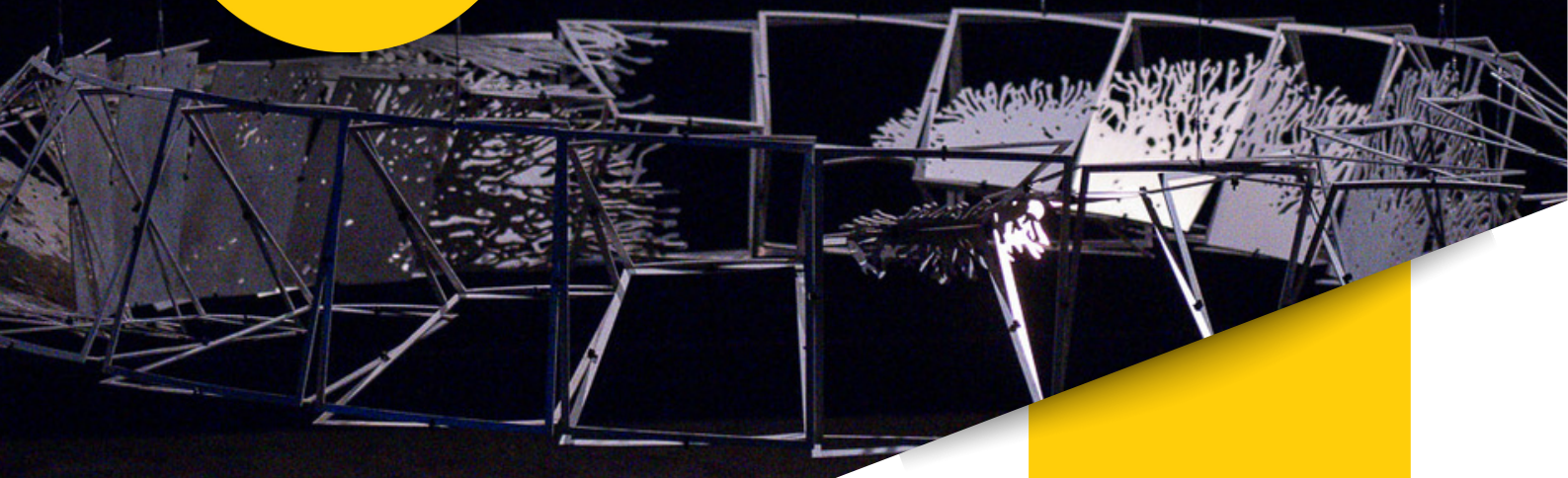


The logo for Nanaimo Art Gallery is a yellow shield-like shape with a rounded bottom, containing the text "Nanaimo Art Gallery" in a black, serif font.

*Nanaimo
Art Gallery*



*Charles Campbell:
An Ocean to Livivity*

**ACCESSIBILITY
GUIDE**

150 Commercial Street, Nanaimo BC, V9R 5G6

*Nanaimo
Art Gallery*

TABLE OF CONTENTS

<u>Description of the Gallery</u>	01
<u>Breath Portraits</u>	02
<u>Forest Paths of Ocean</u>	05
<u>Finding Accompong Reprise</u>	06
<u>Breath Cycle 1</u>	07
<u>Black Breath Archive</u>	08
<u>Exhibition Map</u>	09

DESCRIPTION OF THE GALLERY

Visual Description

Nanaimo Art Gallery is an old bank building that fronts onto Commercial Street. Upon entering the front doors, there is a small flight of stairs to your left, leading to a sliding glass door which is the entrance to Art Lab, our programming space, and to the right is a set of glass doors which bring you into the Gallery.

When you walk in, there is a wooden desk situated along the wall, where our Visitor Services team works, and there are clear plexiglass panels that line the desk. The room is divided by a large wall which creates a hallway leading into our exhibition space. In the same room as the reception desk, there is the Gallery store.

On the main wall in the lobby, there is the title of the exhibition, Charles Campbell: An Ocean to Livity written in vinyl.

The hallway leading into the exhibition space is painted a deep, dark, rich purple colour, and as you reach the end of the short hallway, the room opens up into a large rectangular space. There is a hallway in the far left corner which leads to our visitor washroom and the back room. The walls of the entire exhibition space are painted the same deep purple colour as the hallway. To your right, starting near the end of the hallway and spaced evenly along the wall, across the far back wall, and onto the partial wall created by the hallway to the washroom, are 12 narrow light boxes illuminating the dark room in rich variations of colour. Toward the centre back of the exhibition space are three bean bag chairs surrounding a low circular table with headphones on it. A large, circular installation is suspended in air, nestled in the left alcove of the exhibition space created by the hallway entrance. There is a grey, square carpet on the floor and several round speakers suspended above the circular installation. In the back corner of the grey carpet, near the left hand side of the end of the hallway, there is a plinth with a black square resting on it.

The entire space is quite dark, with only a few light sources coming from the artwork themselves or from the spotlights highlighting the art. The sound of various people inhaling and exhaling in a wide range of rhythms and cacophonies fills the space.

BREATH PORTRAITS

Visual Description

Breath Portraits is a series of 12 lightbox pieces, which span 3 walls. The walls the pieces are installed on are painted dark purple. Each lightbox frame is crafted out of black wood, and is approximately 15 centimetres wide and just over a metre high. Each lightbox or group of lightboxes are named after a person. The visual descriptions of each piece are from right to left, starting with the one closest to the entrance of the exhibition.

1. Charles:

A framed lightbox illuminates a vertical, abstracted strip of colour and line. This piece has a black background, and irradiating through the darkness are pixelated, horizontal lines in both light and dark blue. These lines are scattered throughout the image and are intricately woven with pink, yellow, red, and purple. Towards the bottom of the piece the lines are loose and there is more space between them. They slowly condense together toward the top. The ridged, rippling lines evoke feelings of science, data tables, and lo-fi graphics.

2. Odera:

A narrow, vertical lightbox in a dark frame illuminates hues of sky blue, melded together with a tie-dye-like muted green echo. The abstraction of colour is scattered with dark blue horizontal lines, in varying intensities. The colours and shapes are reminiscent of a warm lake on a sunny day.

3. Missla:

A narrow, vertical framed lightbox in a dark frame irradiates orange hues, a light, bright orange illuminates the top of the piece, and intensifies towards the bottom in shades of a deep, amber colour. The overall piece glows orange and the shades of amber do not overtake the overall solid colouration of this artwork.

4. Devi 2

A narrow, vertical framed lightbox in a dark frame shines in predominantly purple hues, illuminated with bright, bold lines of baby blue streaked horizontally across the piece approximately one-third of the way from the top. The baby blue lines are framed with lines of deep blue, and these lines appear in the second quarter from the top.

5. Devi 1

A narrow, vertical framed lightbox in a dark frame illuminates an outline of white that dissipates into rays of a rich indigo colour, which is a soft pastel tone around the edge and deepens in hue toward the centre of the piece. A deep purple line cuts through the centre of the piece, vertically. The purple tone seems to bleed from the centre the way ink would bleed onto fabric.

6. Valérie

A narrow, vertical framed lightbox in a dark frame illuminates a neon pink abstraction, scattered with ripples of soft purple that ebb and flow from the bottom of the piece toward the centre. Near the centre of the piece is a solid horizontal line of blue, and near the top, brilliant hues of red and yellow disperse through the pink. This piece is reminiscent of a fluorescent, tropical sunset.

7. Fran 1

A narrow, vertical framed lightbox in a dark frame illuminates horizontal lines of colour. The bottom half is a bright yellow with shades of green, scattered with lines of green and blue in varying thickness, starting from the bottom, condensing tightly toward the top as vibrant turquoise overtakes as the predominant colour. It evokes feelings of the late afternoon sun reflecting on the water of a marshland.

8. Fran 2

A narrow, vertical framed lightbox in a dark frame illuminates beautiful yellow tones. Abstract ridges of rich orange vertically divide the piece in soft edges of colour. Green bursts of colour appear randomly toward the top of the piece. It reminds one of a heat map of the body.

9. Fran 3

A narrow, vertical framed lightbox in a dark frame illuminates a soft turquoise abstraction, rippling with soft deep blue moments, a thin strip of violet subtly rests an inch from the bottom. The dark blue fades into light blue toward the centre of the piece, and a green haze emerges in the upper half of the installation. The top is highlighted in a bright shock of yellow, which fades into green, and dissipates into teal below. It is reminiscent of a close up of Monets Water Lily's.

10. Chipó

A narrow, vertical framed lightbox in a dark frame illuminates a piece with a black background, while pixelated horizontal lines scatter across the piece tightly, rippling in colours of orange, yellow, and royal blue. It feels like looking at a topographic map of heat signatures of varying intensities.

11. Jim 1

A narrow, vertical framed lightbox in a dark frame shines blue. The blue is interspersed with pixelated abstractions in shades of hot pink and purple. Baby blue weaves into the dark blue on the bottom, creeping up into the bottom third of the piece. It is reminiscent of a lava lamp.

12. Jim 2

A narrow, vertical framed lightbox in a dark frame illuminates a yellow panel, edged in green lines that reach horizontally toward the centre of the piece, not touching each other - rather leaving space for ridges of orange which highlight the centre of the piece, vertically. It reminds one of a warm morning sunrise reflecting on the water.

BREATH PORTRAITS

Wall Text

A lightbox series, 2023

Breath Portraits translate the transient idiosyncrasies of breath into glowing reflections of the body and the world that body inhabits. Each work features a spectrogram (a visual representation of sound) of breath recorded for the Black Breath Archive project, also exhibited in this gallery. Like a photographic snapshot, the final spectrogram captures a brief moment of breath (less than one one-hundredth of a second). Tuning the colour temperature and pattern of each spectrogram, Charles Campbell portrays a variety of breath forms, attempting to find the livy of the subject embodied within their breathing. In the artist's words: "Collectively I think of them as a gathering of the spirits that were invoked during the recording sessions: the spirit of the artists, activists and community leaders in front of the microphone and the ancestors they brought forth in their recollections."

FOREST PATHS OF OCEAN

Visual Description

3 square bean bag chairs are on the floor, positioned around an orange circular table. On the table are 4 cylindrical poles. Each pole holds a pair of headphones hanging on a hook.

FOREST PATHS OF OCEAN

Wall Text

4-channel audio artwork with bean bag chairs, 2023

The Forest Paths of Ocean audio installation is an invitation for visitors to imaginatively embody an ancestor figure through breath. Taking its title from a line in Edward Baugh's poem *Sometimes in the Middle of the Story*, Campbell attempts to tap into unbroken currents between our unknown past and our present embodied selves. Through the same audio prompts used in the recording of the *Black Breath Archive*, you are invited to reflect upon and engage with breath as a means of exploring memory and ancestral spirit. In this space, breath functions as an embodied link between the realms of past, present, and future.

FINDING ACCOMPONG REPRISE

Visual Description

An orange rectangular plinth stands at the edge of a gray carpet. Atop the wooden rectangle is a black square box, with a tree shape cut out on one side of it. From inside the box, a flashlight casts a shadow on the far wall across from the piece. The trunk of the tree-shaped shadow starts on the floor, and climbs the wall. The tree-shaped shadow splits into branches halfway up the wall with its tallest limbs cast upward, onto the ceiling.

FINDING ACCOMPONG REPRISE

Wall Text

Foam core, mat board, LED flashlight, 2023

Referencing locations near and far, Finding Accompong Reprise evokes the presence of its counterpart, a five meter tall tree-like sculpture, (not exhibited here) and suggests a space of shelter, and communal gathering. In part, this artwork is inspired by an ancient tree in a forest near the artist's home in Victoria BC, where he regularly walks. Additionally, the form references another tree in a village in Cockpit Country, Accompong, Jamaica. It was at this location that Maroons, who were escaped slaves, assembled to manifest allegiances, fight for freedom, and sign treaties. Simultaneously, this towering projection of light and shadow can be seen as the inverted bronchial structure of a human lung, as well as the forked shapes of slave yokes (forked wooden sticks used to tie captives together in a line). This multiplicity of meanings circles back to breath and the symbolic power of Black breath in particular. Finding Accompong Reprise echoes the original sculpture, which is a monument to Black breath that signals past and present, but also a future both hopeful and resilient.

BREATH CYCLE 1

Visual Description

A large silver, circular aluminium structure is suspended in the air, hanging approximately thigh high. This large metal ring is approximately 2 and a half metres across and has three sides twisting like a Möbius strip. The ring is comprised of a series of rectangular panels of aluminium, tied together to form a series of triangles. The panels are a rectangular frame, and some of them feature cutouts of tendril-like branches that look like lichen. The lichen-like pieces connect to give the illusion of a single existing form, resting on the aluminium frames. The structure is illuminated by 2 spotlights, which cast two separate, intertwining shadows on the grey carpet installed below the piece.

Around the structure, 6 black dome-like speakers are suspended from the ceiling, which feature the sound of various people inhaling and exhaling in a wide range of rhythms, sounds, and cadences. These speakers play the Black Breath Archive.

BREATH CYCLE 1

Wall Text

Aluminium, 2023

Breath Cycle 1 refers to the cycles of inhalation and exhalation: the production of oxygen through photosynthesis by organic life such as lichen—depicted in the metallic latticework—and its absorption into other forms of life, including the human. The Möbius structure refers to the cyclical aspects of life, while the lichen motifs point to the symbiotic relationship between different organisms. Simultaneously, they reference fractal geometric motifs that originated in Africa. Campbell sees this coexistence of the human and plant world as a metaphor for hybrid societies (such as those of the Caribbean and Americas) coming together, resulting in new cultures and language traditions. The form's organic latticework suggests a challenge to what Martinican philosopher Edouard Glissant calls the "totalitarian drive of the unique root." Placed in the centre of the room, surrounded by an orchestra of inhalation and exhalation, Breath Cycle 1 suggests a space of congregation, of presence against erasure.

BLACK BREATH ARCHIVE

Wall Text

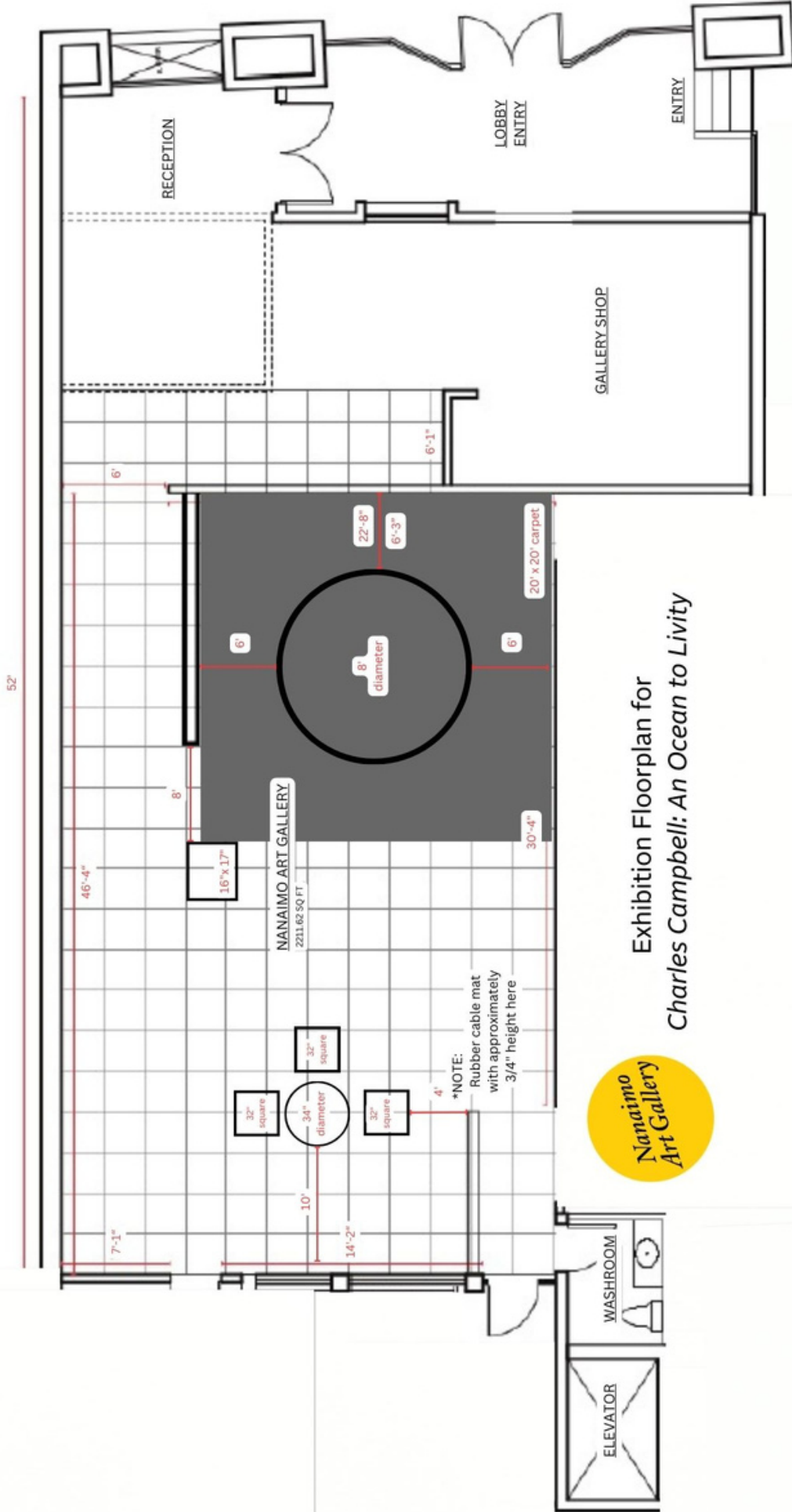
Made in 2023, Black Breath Archive is a 6-channel audio installation

Welcome to the Black Breath Archive

“There is a visceral knowing when we encounter another’s breath that makes their experience ours. A shallow breath, a gasping breath, a slow relaxed exhale; we know them in our bodies. This commonality is irreconcilable with the unknowable specificity of another person’s life, especially when we cross racial lines.” — Charles Campbell

The Black Breath Archive developed out of Black Breath Spectacle, Campbell’s 2021 performance and gathering at the Vancouver Art Gallery and his 2022 installation of the same name at the Surrey Art Gallery. Entranced by the subtle variations in breath and the intimacy of these first recordings with senior members of the Black community, Campbell expanded the concept to create an archive of Black presence as told through breath. The installation includes breath recordings from Nanaimo, Victoria, Surrey, and other Lower Mainland residents. Campbell strips away racial hierarchies and holds up Black breath as its own force—a carrier of ancestry and experience, a creator of community and something that, even in its most subtle presentation, changes the way we think, feel, and live. It is a work about presence and resilience, bringing the breath of a community— both current members and ancestors—literally and figuratively into the gallery in a non-spectacular way. It is also a reflection on the current moment of ecological and pandemic health crisis, when humanity has been forced to confront breath, breathing, and the interconnectedness of the world as never before.

EXHIBITION MAP



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