

# ART + ACTIVISM

Workshop by Perry Rath

## *Description:*

This 2-part workshop will begin with an overview of how art has been a key part of social & political critique and change. Art has been a potent vehicle to express dissenting ideas, protest, delivering subtle and overt critical views of dominant forces in the world, presenting creative alternatives to living, and ways to dismantle and look at power structures or unjust events. This art is sometimes created urgently to respond quickly to contemporary events, or is a longer investment of the artist's energy and community engagement to provide deeper investigation for a thorough critique. It can be hidden in beautiful art, or in disruptive, disturbing or conventionally 'ugly' art, but often the aesthetic is meant to draw in the viewer to the larger issues at play. So, we will explore examples of these ideas, which will lead to discussion, and then we will look at current issues as they affect us, whether on a personal or societal level, and look at ways we can express our opinions on this in a visual way, and finally how to disseminate the art for the general public to digest.

## *Short version:*

Art has played a key role in social and political critique, protest and change. In this 2-part workshop we will look at an overview of how artists have employed the creative urge to provoke thought and action from citizens to address unjust situations or increase awareness of issues. This will lead to further discussion of current affairs and issues as they affect us on a personal or societal level, and we will brainstorm ideas of how to express these visually, and then embark on our creative journey to making our own art piece reflecting your personal concerns.

## *Please bring if you wish:*

A passion or curiosity to engage in issues-based art. All supplies are provided but feel free to bring any materials that you would like to incorporate. For example:

- Magazines, newspapers, found images
- Scrap fabric/textiles
- Anything else that attracts your interests

*Presenter bio:*

Perry Rath is an artist and teacher, living on unceded Witsuwit'en territory of the Gidimt'en Clan near Smithers with his family. His diverse artwork of paintings, installations/objects, printmaking, collaborations and more has been exhibited in extensive regional, national and international venues for over 25 years, often created with an activist lens of bringing awareness to issues. He also is an organizer for several community action groups and events.

As the art teacher at Smithers Secondary School for nearly 20 years ongoing, he has received recognition for his innovative youth projects, presented at provincial and international art education conferences, and works with students on social justice, diversity and environmental advocacy. He is the 2023 recipient of the BC Premier's Award for Excellence in Education for Social Equity and Diversity, and the 2022 winner of the BC Art Teacher of the Year Award. He thrives on creating opportunities for all levels of developing art students.

Perry has established himself as a prominent artist, educator and advocate in his region.

