

# Anouk Verviers

## *Qu'est-ce qu'on peut construire sur un sol en mouvance*



Anouk Verviers, *Tu m'as donné ton pot à bines (lettre à ma grand-mère)*.  
Exhibition view at Deptford X (London, UK), 2022.  
Video installation. Plywood structure, raw clay pots, projection on wood.  
4K video and sound for headphones. Photo credit: Anouk Verviers.  
Courtesy of the artist.

OPTICA  
CENTRE  
D'ART  
CONTEMPORAIN

### Opening

Saturday, April 22nd, 2023, 3 pm to 5 pm

### Exhibition

April 22nd - June 17th, 2023

Tuesday to Saturday, 12 pm to 5 pm

### Public Discussion Between Anouk Verviers and Didier Morelli at OPTICA

Saturday, April 29th, 2023, 3 pm to 4 pm

### Reservations is recommended

for your group exhibition visit through this form:

<https://form.jotform.com/202475220037243>

### or reservations at:

[communications@optica.ca](mailto:communications@optica.ca)

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*Qu'est-ce qu'on peut construire sur un sol en mouvance* interweaves several narratives belonging to the same story. The first is that of a ceramic bean pot given to the artist by her grandmother, which prompts a reflection on the significance of collective projects across generations. The second is that of the industrialization of butter production on the territory we call Canada, from homestead production, mostly carried out by women until the 19th century to mass production in the 20th. There is then the closely related story of commercial relations between Canada and the United Kingdom in a colonial context, the products of Canadian agriculture being rationalized for profit, thus eroding a subsistence economy. The exhibition delves into the workings of an "economic system that divides us" by traversing the layers of time and the articulations of the single history of dispossession. By interconnecting different perspectives on a rapport to the land and the relationships this generates, Verviers works through a series of tensions in which we must learn to live.

### Repetition | Transformation

Inscribing words into substance, performing malleability, telling with gestures, reflecting, building, deconstructing, reconstructing, holding nothing as definitive, in search of transformation, of repair. The forms, gestures, and narratives that intertwine in the exhibition space work on the transformative power of repetition. They embody the possibility of articulating our relationships to history, identity, and territory differently, inscribing the narratives in the very presence of a thinking body: the artist's own. Architectural forms frame the space while finding new extensions in their dislocated rearrangements. They conjure the Canadian Pavilion at the 1886 Colonial and Indian Exhibition in London, which was covered with jars containing "the fruits of Canadian agriculture." Here, the displays support replicas made of wax, earth, and cob, powerful yet precarious due to their degradable properties. Revealing the gestures of their handmade, the artist proposes objects—pots, bricks, octagonal units, a cloak—that invite us to both recognize and reinterpret the stories that run through them.

### Subjectivity | Dispossession

The narrative substance of this project is also rooted in the individual experiences of people met in Haute-Yamaska as part of a residency at 3e Impérial conducted between 2020 and 2022, as well as in reflections the artist develops from her own history. This narrator, who confides that "I ended up being afraid of collective project," investigates the challenges faced by people who initiate, lead, or maintain collective initiatives. Based on an intimate experience of recent history, her project attempts to embrace the complexity of colonial forms of oppression. It connects current lifestyles with the mechanics of extractive thinking, which reproduces oppressions on the very people complicit in its reproduction. However, these encounters are not made visible or explicit. The works betray few traces of the conversations, rather taking the form of memory in the making. The artist undertakes the subjective rewriting of a shared experience, expressed in a different space, whose codes and dynamics of exclusion are simultaneously put into play. She therefore refuses to objectify the subjectivities, or to extract artistic material from them. Her narrative device avoids exposing those who interacted with her in a social space other than the gallery's or in a reciprocal relationship that was not meant to be public. She therefore chooses to draw the gaze upon herself and to inhabit the story with her own presence.

### Exhaustion | Care

The foundation of this project is the materiality of the body: its work considered a form of engagement, its exhaustion a form of dispossession. Reciprocity, sustenance, performativity, and power are intertwined to both celebrate and mourn parts of the world as we believe it to be.

Author: Véronique Leblanc

Translator: Ron Ross

The artist acknowledges that her research was conducted on the unceded territories of the W8banaki and Huron-Wendat Nations and realizes that, while colonial structures have contributed and still contribute to the oppression of women, they have, through a system that persists to this day, resulted in the particularly systematic oppression of First Nations.

**Anouk Verviers** is developing a socially and environmentally engaged artistic practice through non-systematic, intuitive research processes. She creates interactions, conversations, installations, videos, performances, and sound pieces. Her work has been shown in Canada, Switzerland, and the United Kingdom. She will be completing an MFA at Goldsmiths (UK) in 2023.

**Véronique Leblanc** is a curator, an author, and a teacher. She sees curating, writing, and the pedagogical adventures in which she is involved as shared learning opportunities. Her current work focuses on the commoning imaginaries in contemporary art.