

March 10, 2022

Members of Peer Jury  
The 2022 Eldon + Anne Foote Edmonton Visual Arts Prize  
c/o CARFAC Alberta  
3<sup>rd</sup> Floor, 10215 – 112<sup>th</sup> Street NW  
Edmonton, Alberta, T5K 1M7

Re: Nomination of Tammy Salzl for the 2022 Eldon + Anne Foote Edmonton Visual Arts Prize

Dear Members of Peer Jury,

I am writing on behalf of the Harcourt House Artist Run Centre to nominate **Tammy Salzl** and her compelling, evocative exhibition project **“Emerald Queendom”** for the prestigious **2022 Eldon + Anne Foote Edmonton Visual Arts Prize**. Salzl’s exhibition project was **presented from April 30 to July 10, 2021** in the **Main Gallery of Harcourt House Artist Run Centre in Edmonton**.

Tammy Salzl is a mid-career, creative Edmonton-based visual artist, a graduate of the University of Alberta (BFA in 2000) in Edmonton and Concordia University (MFA in Painting & Drawing in 2014) in Montréal, and a sessional instructor of senior level painting at University of Alberta. I have known Tammy Salzl since viewing her solo exhibition, *“Storyland”* in 2016 at dc3 Art Projects in Edmonton. She has had solo and two person exhibitions of her work in Montreal, Toronto, New York, and Berlin as well as across Western Canada. Immediately following her exhibition at Harcourt House, Salzl had a large survey exhibition, *“Tales From the In Between”*, comprised of entirely different multimedia work at Gallery @501 in Sherwood Park. She has also participated in important group exhibitions in Edmonton such as: *“Simply Paint”* at dc3 Art Projects in 2018, *“Dyscorpia”* at the Enterprise Square Gallery in 2019, and *“Harcourt House: Art In Isolation”* at the Main Gallery of Harcourt House Artist Run Centre in 2020. I was extremely impressed with the level of craftsmanship and the strong conceptual caliber of the works showcased in these exhibitions.

I have observed Tammy’s progress through personal, professional, and artistic achievements, and I admire her enthusiasm, academic knowledge, and acumen as a contemporary visual artist. Tammy is a focused and considerate visual artist. She has developed strong, thematically compelling works and successfully exhibited them. She is organized and driven and demonstrates precise technical skills and conceptual resolve. She is firmly committed to her full-time art practice as evidenced in her impressive C.V. and is a proud member of Edmonton’s vibrant visual arts community.

Tammy Salzl’s multi-sensory, multi-media installation *“Emerald Queendom,”* was showcased in 2021 at Harcourt House Artist Run Centre. It is an immersive world built from Salzl’s imagination and the stories and myths she created to explain our current existence. Its content is universal and addresses compelling social issues of sensuality, the power of storytelling, contemporary existentialist questions, concepts of gender identity, a passion for the natural world and ecology, and a defined sense of place.

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Created during the isolation and social changes brought on by a global pandemic, *“Emerald Queendom”* was exhibited to isolated audience members in the height of the third wave of infections, by appointment and, later, for an in-person visit and individual exploration. Salzl’s mission is clear. She states, *“I believe in making personal work that resonates with the communities I belong to.”* This installation deserves not only this prestigious visual arts award, but also the curatorial attention of major international art galleries in contemporary art centres nationally and internationally.

*“Emerald Queendom’s”* magic character allowed visitors to be immediately immersed, upon entering Harcourt House’s Main Gallery, in an enchanted forest filled with fairies. Visitors were fully transported from the world outside the gallery into Salzl’s world, suspended between a life-sized forest realm and a miniature world populated by static humanoid creatures, animal and plant life both familiar and unknown, and video elements of a natural world seamlessly embedded into the sculptural diorama.

Set in a post-human time, these tiny symbolic protagonists propose an egalitarian civilization and a reality beyond gender, where all creatures are kin, living in balance in a place where magic still exists. Salzl transformed the gallery space with a skillful and finely crafted blend of found objects, hand-made polymer clay figures of exquisite care and detail, crafted landscapes, and both projected and screen-based digital video. Beams of light filtered through trees and illuminated spiders, mushrooms, and fairies whose bodies were part flower and part female. But Salzl’s fairies were not idyllic renditions. They took the viewers back to the hearths of ancestral matriarchs who related life as it was: cruel and unpredictable, yet magical. Salzl brought us into this world to witness the love and fear, cruelty and nature possible in our wake. These intricate scenes drew the viewer in to examine the beauty and the interplay amongst figure and scene. The raw and discomfiting actions held within these scenes, and the relationship with the moving images inspired emotion and questions that lingered deeply within the viewers imagination. A 6-channel semi-generative soundtrack commissioned from Greg Mulyk – an Edmonton-based composer and sound designer – provided an impressive ‘sound illustration’ to accompany Salzl’s installation. Mulyk’s soundscape set the stage for Salzl’s table-top mixed-media installations of hills, lakes with videos of underwater life, and miniature houses inhabited by strange creatures. He responded to Salzl’s visuals with an immersive forest soundscape that carries the viewers from their empirically defined world into the artist’s imagination.

*“Emerald Queendom”* was driven by Salzl’s preoccupation with the power of storytelling and her passion for the natural world and ecology. The artist’s fascination is deeply rooted in the way fairytales and myths impact and shape the everyday stories we tell, especially those inherited from Euro-settler’s culture. This conceptually complex installation strived to address their codification of ideas of “femininity” and “nature” and their subsequent filtration through the critical lens of feminism.

Inspired by Christine de Pizan’s, *“The Book of the City of Ladies”* from 1405 – a proto-feminist tale about an allegorical city built on the accomplishments of women of history - and Donna Haraway’s 2016 book, *“Staying with the Trouble: Making Kin in the Chthulucene”* - Tammy Salzl has cleverly adopted both authors’ essential message into the lead theme of her project. *Emerald Queendom* is a call for kinship and joy through an allegorical ‘Forest of Ladies’. By constructively resolving the challenging formal aspects of these works, she turned them into a holistic and conceptually innovative multi-media installation. Folding moving images with still, sound with light, and invoking the element of time, Tammy Salzl’s desire, as a visual artist and conceptual alchemist, was to transport the viewer into her realm.

Similar in the concept and formal execution was Salzl’s *“Tales From The In Between”*, a multi-media installation accompanied by Greg Mulyk’s semi-generative soundtrack and presented from July 8 to August 21, 2021, at the Gallery@501 in Sherwood Park.

As in her previous project *“Emerald Queendom,”* the bodies of work presented in that exhibition offered the viewers a multi-sensory experience and conveyed a myriad of compelling tales, some brand new and others revisited and retold through contemporary eyes. They reflected the thoughts and worries of life, where conflict and division are the zeitgeist, and where escape to other worlds is a survival tactic.

Though I nominate Tammy Salzl and her evocative *“Emerald Queendom”* exhibition for the 2022 Eldon + Anne Foote Edmonton Visual Arts Prize, I truly appreciate Tammy’s works in both exhibition projects and find it thoughtful, conceptually, philosophically, and socially engaging, and of exceptional quality. Furthermore, her works have added a critical voice to the artistic debate on the profound events and experiences that are taking place not only globally, but immediately around us: in our families, neighborhoods, communities, and within ourselves. Salzl’s passion for art and her dedication to the communities of which she is a part, come together in her practice, making compelling works that address important social issues.

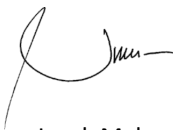
In sum, I highly recommend Tammy Salzl for the 2022 Elson + Anne Foote Edmonton Visual Arts Prize. I found her works, especially her impressive body of work from the *“Emerald Queendom”* exhibition, to be fresh, current, compelling, relevant, and worthy of your consideration and support. I strongly believe her impressive *“Emerald Queendom”* project demonstrates conceptual resolve and has potential for its presentation at any reputable major contemporary art venue around the globe. Tammy Salzl’s animating spirit and disciplined approach to creating along with her active academic and community engagement make her particularly well suited to take advantage of this prestigious Prize.

I do sincerely hope that Harcourt House’s nomination of Tammy Salzl for the 2022 Eldon + Anne Foote Edmonton Visual Arts Prize will receive a favourable review and acceptance.

The nomination package has been enclosed with this letter along with the support material on a USB flash drive. Every effort has been made to provide the submission material as per submission guidelines check list. I trust you will find the submission material in order.

If you have any questions regarding this nomination, please do not hesitate to contact me directly at Harcourt House, tel. 780-426-4180; email: [director@harcourthouse.ab.ca](mailto:director@harcourthouse.ab.ca)

Sincerely Yours,



Jacek Malec  
Executive Director/Chief Curator

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