

Contact + Requested Information – Amery Sandford

Bio

Realizing parallel issues that arise in tourist spaces across Canada, Amery Sandford's work focuses on regional identity and public understanding of Canadian history. She graduated from the MFA Print Media program at Concordia University in 2019 where she worked mostly in printmaking and installation. Her experiments in those mediums have led her to animation, music, illustration, as well as running a small risograph press out of her Montreal home studio by the name Amery Press.

Artist Statement

Amery has always been interested in manicured spaces that are used for the purpose of leisure or entertainment. Her work contemplates the ways Canadian history and contemporary society are fabricated through master narratives and nationalistic storytelling. Attitudes that are embedded in youth culture and acts of celebration inform the overall tone of her work, while considering the colonial implications that are attached to representations of Canadian identity. The research often begins by conducting field work within tourist spaces and large group events, considering how these places inspire both skepticism and sincerity in their audience. She is most interested in moments within these constructed spaces that elicit cuteness, humour, or absurdity. The images in her work draw from amplified versions of cultural symbols that might be trying too hard to convey authenticity or tradition – potentially rendering themselves underwhelming. For instance, finding herself at the entrance of a lakeside festival, on a littered path that draws a dusty line between the edge of a graveyard and a wall of a penitentiary.

Description of the artwork – *AMERBAR*

Expanding from the flatness of printmaking to a digital realm, *AMERBAR* is a further experiment into the idea of constructed environments. Since relocating to Montreal, I have become more aware of the conception of Québec that I developed growing up Anglophone in Alberta. With *AMERBAR*, I wanted to reflect on the narratives and pop cultural reference points that contributed to this construction. The piece focuses on songs like rock legend Gerry Boulet's "Toujours Vivant", that I remember hearing as a teenager and associating with an idea of both Québec and, more broadly, Canada. The clips from these songs are situated in a karaoke bar: a popular social destination in Montréal and a unique site where Anglophones and Francophones convene. Working on this project has led me to question the idea of "Canadianness" that is projected onto artists who get recognition outside of their cultural region, and how this contributes to the deceptively benevolent national imagery of Canada.

Youtube Embed Link:

<https://youtu.be/LuINDE0vYxY>