

small  
things



**the earth  
whispers  
into nestled  
landscapes**

there are these small things  
that contain  
that envelop  
that come together  
to become material



A mass of wax drips coats a spoon;  
others form the empty shells of a pile of cast objects.

Fine dust covers the surface of an apple crate.

A seed  
carries within it  
the grand promise of a new life.



Pieces of wax, handfuls of dirt, piles of trinkets and twigs make up the creative worlds of Douglas Scholes and Maude Arès.

Scholes focuses his work on the seemingly trivial, on ordinary and sometimes abandoned objects, on pragmatic actions and the everyday. He sometimes wanders through abandoned garbage dumps, forgotten collections, roadsides and waterways. In the waste and objects we leave behind, he finds an inexhaustible source of wonder.

Arès pays particular attention to the different states of matter. From her deeply sensitive observational stance, she engages in a poetic relationship to the world, to material fragments, to bits of string, to weaving and mending and to the lovingly crafted “mystery tools” she keeps in her box collection.

At the crossroads of their practices is an interest in *small things*.



Those found by chance, gleaned from the street, encountered in collections, picked here and there; those that are cared for, maintained, patched up and fixed; those that seem banal, that escape our gaze, but which inhabit us; those that are precious, filled with memories, and which carry within them great emotional charges.

By setting up a cyclical residency over the span of one year, the intention was to create a dialogue between Arès' and Scholes' approaches, in contact with a rural site. In collaboration with RURART, an organization that works in the areas of art and agriculture, their residency took root in the countryside of the Eastern Townships. Arès and Scholes were invited to steep themselves in the rhythm of the seasons as they unfold at La Génèreuse farm, and to take on, each in their own way, activities of collecting and maintenance.

Four trips to the farm allowed them to discover the potential of activating what was there, on the land that has germinated so many projects, be they family-based, agricultural, artistic, nutritive, or educational. An exhibition that brings together the traces of this residency is taking shape between the three of us and many others; in the accumulation of objects, words and ideas, presences and relationships.

"The ground was not dry and solid but damp and rather springy, product of the collaboration of living things with the long, elaborate death of leaves and trees; and from that rich graveyard grew ninety-foot trees, and tiny mushrooms that sprouted in circles half an inch across."<sup>1</sup>

The words of Ursula K. Le Guin are on our minds from our very first conversations. Not necessarily those from her novella *The Word for World is Forest*, which come up later on in our discussions, but our project—whose porous nature only becomes evident as it takes shape—resonates with the poetic, Eco-Futuristic stories written by the famous feminist science-fiction author.

Between the two artists, or rather alongside them, I see myself as a collaborator, a companion. The deeply experimental format of this collaborative project leads me to untether my writing; to let words grow where they want to grow, to give rise to a sedimented narrative that follows the rhythms of the seasons.

This ground—neither dry nor solid, that carries both life and death—reminds us of the land Scholes and Arès have wandered through, season after season, at La Gënëreuse.

1. Ursula K. Le Guin, *The Word for World is Forest*, (New York: Berkley Books, 1976), p.36.



**a land  
like a territory**

**the earth**

**the one we dig  
the one we share  
the one that feeds us**

**the one we shape  
the one we turn  
the one we fire**

## fall

In September, Scholes grounds himself by lying down among the dead leaves on the maple grove—here and there, again and again—several times that week and the others that follow.

As for Arès, she rediscovers it.

This land where her friends have made their homes in the countryside. She has already visited it, collecting memories that lie dormant in her boxes. This time, *a collection of blades of grass knotted into a tiny bouquet and the pink plant I can't quite identify* are added.

Collections of gestures and objects are begun; they spread, grow, and expand through encounters with parts of the farm that the artists do not yet know.

walking together in silence  
sharing lunch in the orchard  
making simple gestures with materials  
drawing, reading

**listening to the land, the wind, the brook, the rain**  
**the tractors, the shooting range, Route 108**  
**the gnawing rodents, the laughing nearby**

lying in the dead leaves  
picking up fallen apples  
being content

## winter

Winter is timid this year;  
more wet than cold.

Another February rain and the light is slowly returning.

Arès and Scholes organize a meeting with the people who live on the farm and others around them. We share a moment in the greenhouse, which is filled with fragments of their material explorations—beeswax cauldron, ceramic pieces, seed dust, small watercolours, plaster molds, squash shells—and a meal in the barn.

The evening is lit by the glow of the mulleins that Francine had harvested in the hope of brightening up the cold season. The artists found them, dipped their stems in beeswax to make them last all evening.

## **spring**

Cosmic rhythms influence the plant world.

May 23: full moon day

The biodynamic calendar shows a leaf day and the lilacs are in bloom.

A gathering in the orchard has been planned, with food, “all-terrain” music, and a round of singing—arm in arm—in honour of the month of May.

## **in springtime**

### **lovely greenery**

In our heads, the angles of the gallery are becoming rounder;  
we cover them with paper fibres.

## **summer**

The paintings on the walls of the farm’s cottages come to life before Scholes’ camera, like a collection marching between the pine trees, tall grasses, and sand craters.

The Moon’s axis knots itself;  
best to avoid garden work.

Arès explores the earth-sky connection and the force that binds them, that divides them. In India ink she draws an earth-body with its back against the sky; who carries the universe in its belly.

One last week.

Green tints the landscape right up to the exhibition space we’ve conjured up with large tarps the colour of frogs, fields and forests. Soon, the landscape-boxes, the beeswax casts, the resonances and vibrations that animate the farm will take place in the gallery.

we’ll have to let ourselves be carried  
by material tales

## **sense their fusion**

### **maintain their fragilities**

### **reconstruct the scales**

### **and deconstruct the works**

to create the common landscape  
of a shared experience  
in contact with the earth.

Noémie Fortin, curator

## artists

**Maude Arès** is an interdisciplinary artist whose practice encompasses installation, sculpture, performance, set design, and drawing to examine the sensitive relationships between found materials. By combining and configuring these materials in different ways, her artworks become the stage for vulnerable environments that invite us to pay close attention to the subtleties of the tangible world around us. Arès channels her reflections on the performance of materials and the gestures that animate them in projects that combine the visual and performing arts. By bringing attention to the charge and activities of materials, she observes the visible and invisible interdependent relationships that bind humans and non-human beings. Her personal and collaborative projects have been presented in Montréal and in Colombia in artist-run centres and theatres (Théâtre La Chapelle, Galerie B-312, Tangente, Théâtre Aux Écuries, Galerie de l'UQAM, Tangente, Campos de Gutiérrez, Circa, PHI Foundation for Contemporary Art, Adélar) and as part of events (OFFTA, Nuit blanche Montréal, ORANGE – contemporary art event in Saint-Hyacinthe, Chromatic, OUF! – Festival Off Casteliers).

**Douglas Scholes** studied at the University of Lethbridge (Bachelor of Fine Arts, 1999) and at the Université du Québec à Montréal (Master of Fine Arts, 2001). His projects have received support from the Canada Council for the Arts and the Conseil des arts et des lettres du Québec. His practice includes photography, video, and sculptures that stem from the sustained exploration of the pragmatic aesthetic (our current reality) during artist residencies and exhibitions in Canada, the United States and in Europe. His work has been exhibited most notably at DARE-DARE (Montréal, 2004 and 2011), the Art Gallery of Nova Scotia (Halifax, 2019), Sporobole (Sherbrooke, 2018), LandMarks2017 with Partners in Art and Parks Canada (Montréal, 2017), the Southern Alberta Art Gallery (Lethbridge, 2015), Space Studios International Residency (London, 2012), at 3<sup>e</sup> impérial (Granby, 2010-2011), at Maison Laurentine (France, 2011) and at Imagination Station (Déroit, 2011). Scholes is represented by Galerie Robertson Arès in Montréal.

## curator

**Noémie Fortin** is an independent curator, writer and cultural worker based in the Eastern Townships. She lives with her family on the unceded territory of the W8banaki Nation, the Ndakina, where she works with artistic, agricultural and community projects that focus on caring for living things. Attuned to forms and practices grounded in an ecofeminist approach, her research focuses on ecological art that moves out of the institution to engage with territories and communities, particularly in rural areas. Her most recent curatorial projects were presented at the Montreal Biosphere, Manif d'art II, the Foreman Art Gallery, 3<sup>e</sup> impérial, and RURART. Her writing has been featured in a number of specialized publications such as *Esse arts + opinions*, *Vie des arts* and *Le Sabord*. She holds degrees in art history from Bishop's University and Concordia University, and is now the co-director of the Rozynski Art Centre.

## credits

**page 5** Maude Arès, Summer 2024, Studio view.

**page 6** Douglas Scholes, Summer 2024, Being in touch.

**page 7** Maude Arès, Winter 2024, Ferme La Génèreuse, Cookshire-Eaton, Francine, Douglas, Farm community.

**page 9** Douglas Scholes, Summer 2024, Abstract and sandhill (Camille with Ginette Richard).

**pages 18-19** Maude Arès and Douglas Scholes, Summer 2024, Summer 2024, Mullein seed pod in beeswax (torch); Hand forged hook and ring (steel); Autumn landscape and christmas tree farm, Faustine with Mario Mauro (photograph); Greenhouse spoon with wax landscape (photograph); The tree frog that wakes up during the night practices walking on two legs; Winter 2020, Montréal, Cookshire-Eaton, Vincent; The spaghetti-case; Claw of a hermit crab; The Zygentome bell, Fall 2016, Montréal; Crumbs from a first loaf of bread; The beaver's case; My mother's glass case; For two mouths; Soil of La Génèreuse; Spring 2024, Cookshire-Eaton, Ottawa, Douglas, Noémie, Francine, Daniel, Sam.

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Pm8wzowinnoak Bishop's kchi adalagakidimek aoak kzalziwi w8banakii aln8baikik. Bishop's University is located on the traditional territory of the Abenaki people.

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