

PRESS RELEASE

THE MACKAY CREEK SERIES

Ron den Daas

FOREWORD: DR BRIAN RIDDELL
ESSAY: BILL JEFFRIES

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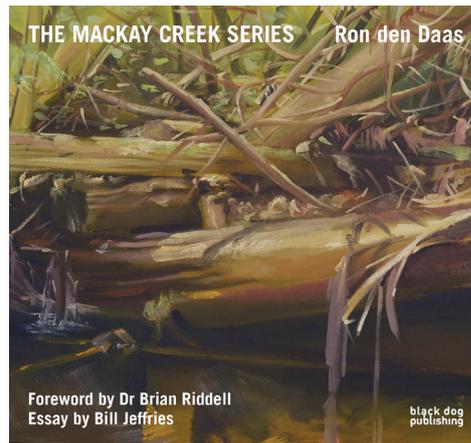
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In his Mackay Creek series, den Daas argues that the rhythms of a stream within easy walking distance of his studio can be taken as a meaningful sign of the state of the environment. His everyday images, seemingly of little consequence, forcibly reference much larger global phenomena...

... After looking at the sixty panel paintings of a small waterfall on a North Vancouver stream by Ron den Daas, I asked myself why art about 'the daily' is so often focused on the artist, rather than that 'other' that we call nature. What den Daas has done in this series of paintings is to turn his attention outward: in his art he has bypassed humanity's obsession with 'the self'. In The Mackay Creek Series he asks a question: can an artist focus on small changes in the natural world, rather than depicting oil spills, toxic sludge, clear-cuts or wetland draining, and in this way sensitize viewers to the precarious ecological state that humans have created everywhere?

—'Days in the Life of the Creek' by Bill Jeffries in *The Mackay Creek Series*.

The Mackay Creek Series is a diaristic and critical commentary on the artist's role in raising global ecological consciousness. By painting snapshots of the state of the creek over several years, Ron den Daas monitors and records the flux of one ecosystem through several cycles of the seasons. In the paintings, den Daas bypasses humanity's obsession with 'the self' and comments on the gradual changes in the natural world.

Ron den Daas (b 1961) is a Canadian artist who studied art in Canada before completing a degree in painting at the Accademia di Belle Arti in Rome, Italy in 1986. His practice includes painting, sculptural installation, new media, film and curation. Many of his exhibitions have been in non-traditional venues, partnering with an innovative mix of organisations including academic, cultural and scientific institutions.

Dr Brian Riddell is the President and CEO of the Pacific Salmon Foundation, an independent, non-governmental organisation dedicated to creating a sustainable future for wild Pacific salmon and their habitat. He worked for 30 years in various scientific research and management positions with the Government of Canada's Department of Fisheries and Oceans.

Bill Jeffries completed a BFA at the University of British Columbia, and a MA at Simon Fraser University. In 1983 he opened the Coburg Gallery in Vancouver. He was Director and Curator of the Contemporary Art Gallery, and was Director and Curator at Presentation House Gallery. He ran the galleries at Simon Fraser University until late 2012. In the mid-1990s he worked at a range of environmental organisations.