



Zeigler, Barbara and Joan Smith. "Barbara Zeigler and Joan Smith: Earthmakers Photographs." *The Capilano Review*, 2.19 (Summer 1996): 32-58. Print.

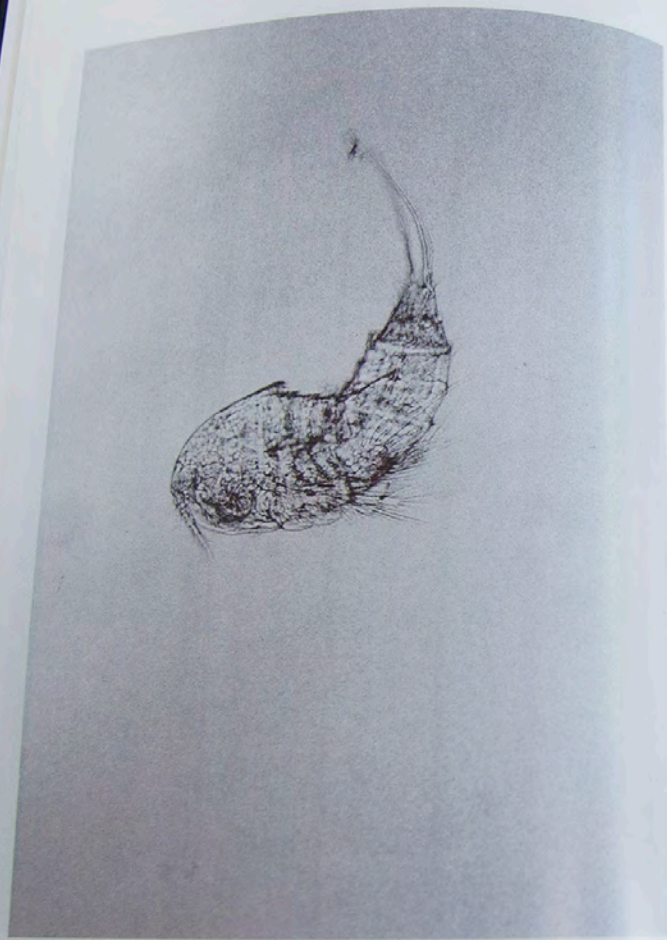
Barbara Zeigler and Joan Smith
EARTHMAKERS: PHOTOGRAPHS

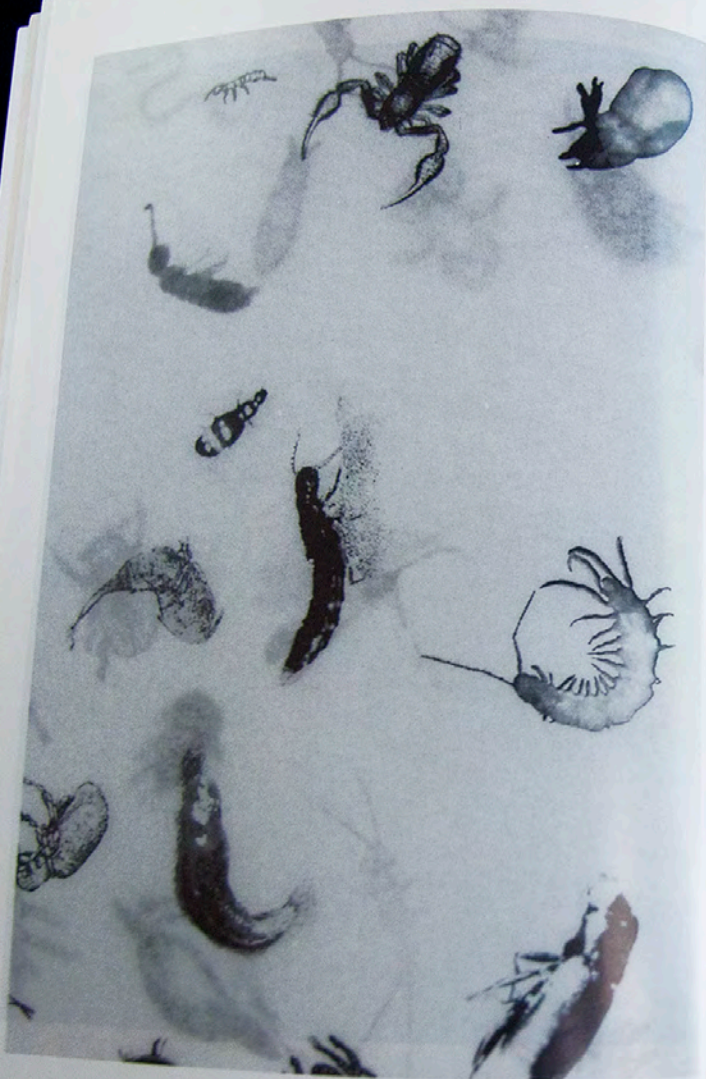












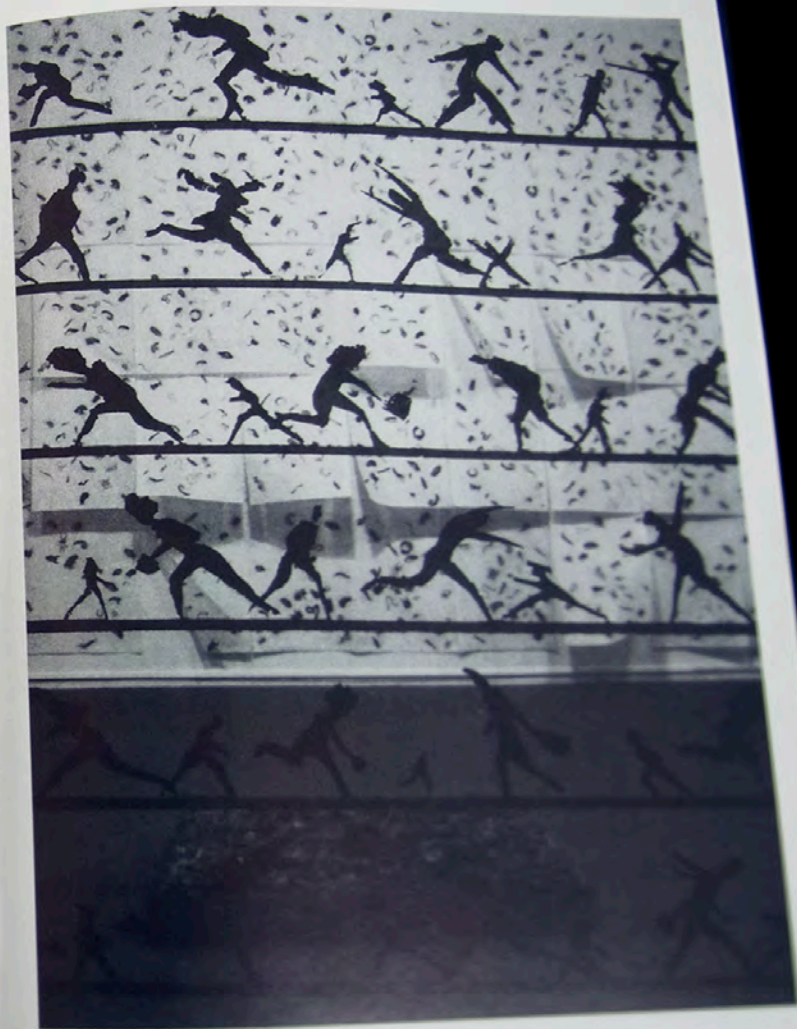
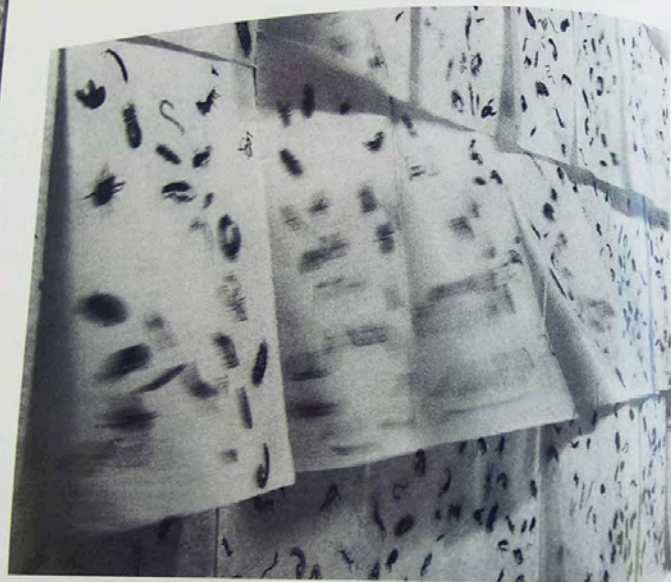












ARTISTS' STATEMENT

Earthmakers speaks of the passage of time and the natural cycles of life and death: the continual, the interrupted, the altered, and in some cases, the obliterated. Through this work we hope to activate a consciousness of the specific forest site referred to, and thereby serve increased awareness of the essential part soil fauna play in the delicate life-cycle of the forest and Earth's ecosystem.

This photographic bookwork is an extension of *Earthmakers*, a collaborative project that we have been working on over the last five years. Combined here are layered, juxtaposed and montaged images derived from the *Earthmakers* installation, with images related to the making of that piece.

Earthmakers, the installation and the works evolving out of the project as a whole, pays homage to the approximately three and one-half million organisms that inhabit one square meter of B.C. forest soil. The installation, which provides the basic source for many of the images published here, depicts over 5,000 soil organisms (i.e., bugs, also referred to as soil fauna and soil animals), site specific to an old-growth forest site on Northern Vancouver Island near Port McNeill. The installation is comprised of two hundred and sixteen 24" X 36" photo-etchings printed on thin sheets of Japanese Kozo paper. The prints are pinned individually on gallery walls thereby allowing them to move slightly from air currents generated within a gallery space. The organisms are portrayed through the medium of printmaking, and combine drawn, photographed, photocopied, and computer-generated images in the making of the transparencies for the photo-etched matrices, making various levels of mediation in their presentation subtly evident.

The installation also includes a modular collage made of recycled forest products that refers to the litter layer of the forest floor from and beneath which the soil organisms originate. It is comprised of twenty-five 31" X 31" units that may be arranged in different configura-

rations on the wall or floor, or added to depending upon the place of installation. The remaining elements of the installation are a square meter of cedar, a sound-tape of rain mixed with the sound of footsteps and voices recorded underground in Grand Central Station in New York City, and an index. The index briefly details the source of the creatures shown and the processes employed to depict each one, and classifies the organisms in regard to scientific classification of Order and in some instances to those of Family, Genus, and Species.

Our collaboration on the *Earthmakers* project began approximately five years ago after we discovered we had many parallel interests. Independently, we each had been producing throughout our careers works focused on the physical landscape or on the evolving relationship between nature and culture. We were interested in finding a way to portray an aspect of the "natural environment" that would allow us to comprehend something that we had not yet understood, in a visual form that we had not yet explored or encountered. After considerable discussion, we decided to attempt to reframe our way of looking and sense of place through focusing on a specific site. We chose to investigate a square meter of B.C. old-growth forest soil and its inhabitants.

Out of necessity our work became increasingly collaborative and interdisciplinary. We sought expertise from the UBC Soil Sciences Department and Forestry Canada in Victoria, and enlisted the expertise of Peter Braune of New Leaf Editions who holds degrees in Forestry and Fine Arts in the printing of the etchings. We became fascinated by the diversity, complexity and multitude of the soil organisms we were researching. We were astounded by our ignorance of that which is literally right beneath our feet, and by the ramifications of the lack of importance given to that which is normally unseen yet essential to our existence. The collaborative dynamic initiated through this project has influenced our attitude as artists and thoughts regarding process as it relates to art production. Also, it has extended our conception of the depiction of landscape in art.

The large scale installation of *Earthmakers* was recently exhibited at the Edmonton Art Gallery and a smaller version at the Capilano College Gallery in 1995. Selected prints from the installation have been shown at exhibitions in the United States and Finland. Further exhibition of this work is in the planning stages.

Philip Russell / HALLOWEEN

The loneliness was there first, the void wanting to be filled. Before I even knew Alice's name I was waiting for her. I made the light that attracted her, and she came into it, the single worst thing that would ever happen to me.

I never saw her come up to the back porch that night; I jumped at the sound of her knock. When I opened the kitchen door it seemed she had just materialized there, formed out of nothing, black eye and all. Her eye wasn't magical, I'll be the first to admit. It was singularly ugly: purple turning to green and yellow, the skin all cheesy and dead looking in the bare overhead light. It was a revolting black eye. I thought it was a joke initially, a Halloween disguise, and I stood with my hand on the doorframe, trying to smile. It was hard to look casual, though; the wood was old and splintery and you couldn't comfortably lean on it.

Except for her eye she had a very elegant face — high cheekbones and a fine distinct jaw. "Guinevere did that," she said, speaking first. I nodded slowly. "My bitch," she explained, stroking her temple gently with long fingers.

She didn't wear any makeup. Generally I preferred women without makeup, but with an eye like that it was different. She looked straight at me with it. "I was just bending down to feed her, and our heads collided. Hers was harder." I had no idea what she was talking about. When she smiled her lips tightened, stretching back over the narrow arch of her teeth. That was nicer than her eye; she had a magnificent smile. She lowered her hand and held it out to me. "I'm Alice, I called about the apartment."

I nodded my head again. "Right." I'd forgotten about the rental ad. "Matt," I said, and I took her hand, of course, but I didn't believe her one bit. I was learning about this town, and I was pretty sure some boyfriend had ruined her eye. Now here she was turning up at my door. Great. If I rented to her there'd be fights on the porch, me in