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Gussied Up

Michelle Sound

March 7, 2026 – April 25, 2026

Opening Reception: Saturday, March 7, 2026, 5–8pm

Artist Statement:

Gussied Up: as in decorated

to make more attractive by adding something that is beautiful or becoming

Two series of works that explore adornment and evoke of Indigenous aesthetics and material culture; referencing and inspired by beadwork and quillwork as ways of showing place, culture and community.

The photo series (*We Are Our Own Heroes*) depicts the relationships that we cultivate in urban centres, often far from our communities, a kinship that exists on concrete land. This series of images feature Indigenous presence in the city. Starting with memory, I am thinking about growing up in East Vancouver and what that experience was like for me. It feels like it could represent any of our aunties and this piece to me really feels like a way to take up space in places that were not always welcoming or safe for us.

The second body of work (*Floral Quillworks*) is a series of cyanotype on leather textile works, which reference porcupine quillwork zig zag patterns. A pre-contact art, Dyed and flattened quills are folded using a zig zag pattern to create geometric or floral designs. For this series, florals and traditional medicines are used to create cyanotypes that are then sewn together to create a large zig zag pattern, an inversion of florals instead being used to create a zig zag pattern.

Gussied Up explores my personal history and the continuation of beautifying objects and garments with beadwork, quillwork, tattoos, and fashion.