

**Wil Aballe**

1375 RAILSPUR ALLEY  
VANCOUVER, BC CANADA  
V6H 4G9  
+ 1 (778) 229 3458  
WWW.WILABALLE.COM

**RICHARD BOULET**

*If I May Digress, Part 1*

Opening at Wil Aballe: Fri, Sept 5, 6-8PM  
1375 Railspur Alley

Exhibition: Sept 5 – Oct 25, 2025

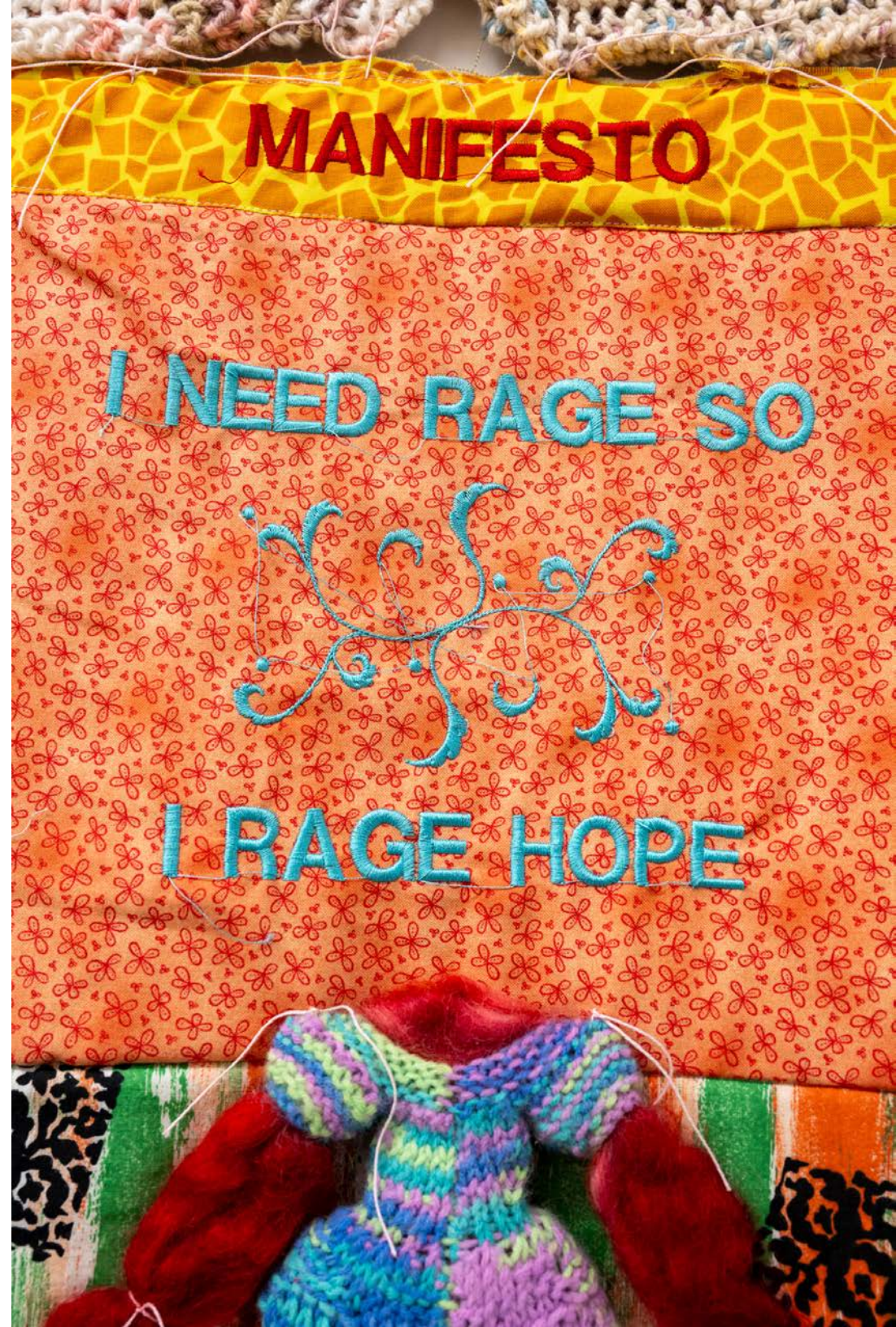
*If I May Digress, Part 2*

Opening at Canton-Sardine: Sat, Sept 6, 6-8PM  
Lower ground Unit 071, 268 Keefer St

Richard Boulet

*Manifesto*, 2015 (detail)

Textile, quilting, tatting, knitting, machine embroidery,  
carded silk, crochet





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***Richard Boulet: If I May Digress, Part 1***, opening September 4th at Wil Aballe and ***Richard Boulet: If I May Digress, Part 2***, opening September 6th at Canton-Sardine cast a spotlight on the extraordinary studio practice of Edmonton-based artist Richard Boulet. Boulet's visually arresting fine craft textile works feature a characteristic mix of figurative and abstract elements with an emphasis on concrete poetry.

Guest curated by Lam Wong, Matilde Nuzzo and Wayne Baerwaldt, the Vancouver exhibitions present a dedicated survey of Boulet's key works produced in various formats, from traditional cross-stitching to assemblage techniques and filaments of colour embedded in quilting. Boulet's lived experience has led him to pay close attention to building a base of knowledge that remains open to addressing a wide range of issues associated with social justice, well being, the omnipresence of poetic inspiration, and the need for psychic and physical space to accommodate an emerging queer identity. The characteristic markers of his investigation are complex and generally identified with autobiographical sources and the formal consequences of an evolving definition and making of art.

Boulet's conceptual process of making introduces fine craft textile art as part of an inclusive wellness program for community building. In addition, he extends the discourse around fine craft materiality via his exploration of more diverse elements including medical terminology (as either oblique/direct references), design strategies and performative sound.

**Richard Boulet** has two undergraduate degrees completed back-to-back from the University of Manitoba. The first is a Bachelor

of Environmental Studies in Architecture followed by a BFA. Richard later received his MFA in Drawing and Intermedia at the University of Alberta.

"Art to me is experimenting with how far my imagination can take me. I find that the process relaxes me and seeing my imagination come to life under my fingers amazes me. Creating is self-fulfilling. When I see something transformed to become a piece of art, I feel astonished that I made it. Art gives me the initiative to pass on my knowledge for future generations."

-----Richard Boulet

**Lam Wong** is a Canadian visual artist, designer, and curator, born in 1968 in Xiamen, China. He immigrated to Hong Kong at the age of two and later to Canada in the 1980s. Wong has lived and worked in Vancouver since 1998. His art is primarily rooted in regional West Coast art history, with an emphasis on the development of painting and its avant-garde narrative.

**Matilde Nuzzo** is a sinologist by training and an emerging visual arts curator by profession, graduating from Venice's Università Ca' Foscari. Nuzzo is co-founder of LensArt, an initiative to highlight neuro-diverse artists and inclusivity. She has organized numerous exhibitions, workshops and cultural events with project partners including Pistoletto Foundation, University of Verona, Fondazione Marchesani (Venice) and ArtVerona. Her residency in Vancouver is made possible with the generous support of Griffin Art Projects, Plug In ICA (Winnipeg), Dallas Loken, Lyn Goldman and anonymous donors.

**Wayne Baerwaldt** is an independent visual arts curator and producer. His best-known curatorial projects trace performative elements in artmaking with an emphasis on unstable, disputed

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identities and the language of their construction and presentation in public and private spaces.

**Hard-cover Publication:** *If I May Digress: Richard Boulet and Collaborators*

Richard Boulet's fine craft artworks feature an outstanding mix of figuration and abstraction with text fonts that vibrate via cross-stitch and assemblage techniques, filaments of colour embedded in quilting and visually startling drawings and prints. His creative process is invested within a dedicated craft materiality. *If I May Digress: Richard Boulet and Collaborators* enlightens readers with the passion and dignity of Boulet's autobiographical passages through an engaging queer lens shaped by concrete poetry and a studio practice committed to service, humility and generosity.

*If I May Digress: Richard Boulet and Collaborators* offers perspectives the growing influence of fine crafts in the making of contemporary and modern art history. In many ways the artworks by Boulet and his collaborators represent a unique inquiry self-consciously free from morphological constrictions. Remarkable outcomes and stylistic shifts are examined.

Contributors to the publication include:

**Dick Averbs** offers an interview with Boulet and Olson to provide contextual tenets relating critically to theoretical, formal and structural processes underpinning Boulet's poly-textural oeuvre.

**Wayne Baerwaldt** examines Boulet's art production uniquely tied to his lived experience as applied in visual art and language/concrete poetry and community.

**Dr. Michele Hardy** details an ethnographic portrait of Boulet and his textile work. Drawing on postcolonial textile theory this paper explores these potent tensions and reveals common threads.

**Dr. Steven Harris** writes about the intersection of language and fabric in Boulet's work, one that builds community in its collaborative nature and particularly in his collaboration with Edmonton collaborator, Marilyn Olson. Harris looks closely at the collaborative works of Boulet and Olson, drawing further context from the work of the art historian Julian Bryan-Wilson, the artist/poet Cecilia Vicuña, and the philosophers Jean-Luc Nancy and Jacques Rancière. Each has thought through issues of language, textile, and community in different ways.

Publication design by **Barr Gilmore**.

## **Publication specs:**

10x12" (WxH), 120pp., hardcover, 76 full-and-half-page colour reproductions of selected artworks, foil stamp, foil dies, 120pt board, cut&fold&sew text, litho wrapped case, 80lb rainbow endpapers. Three essays, two artist interviews and artist biography.

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Richard Boulet

*Scrappy and Keep Your Pulaski Sharp, 2023*

Mixed media fibre, cross-stitch

26 x 20 in (66 x 50.8 cm)





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Richard Boulet

*SO CLOSE (It Does Not Work That Way Anymore)*, 2016

Mixed media textiles

26 x 20 in (66 x 50.8 cm)





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Richard Boulet

*FLAG*, 2021

Cross-stitch, crochet, beading

10.25 x 8.25 in (26 x 21 cm)





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Richard Boulet

*See Self Hatred*, 2016

Textile, cross stitch, crochet, machine embroidery, quilting

pins

32 x 18 in (81.3 x 45.7 cm)





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Richard Boulet

*Manifesto*, 2015

Textile, quilting, tatting, knitting, machine embroidery,  
carded silk, crochet

45.5 x 12.5 in (115.6 x 31.8 cm)





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Richard Boulet

*The One with the Swans*, 2016

Mixed media fibre

68 x 58 in (172.7 x 147.3 cm)





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Richard Boulet

*Howl*, 2016

Mixed media fibre

29.5 x 19 in (74.9 x 48.3 cm)





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