

Wil Aballe

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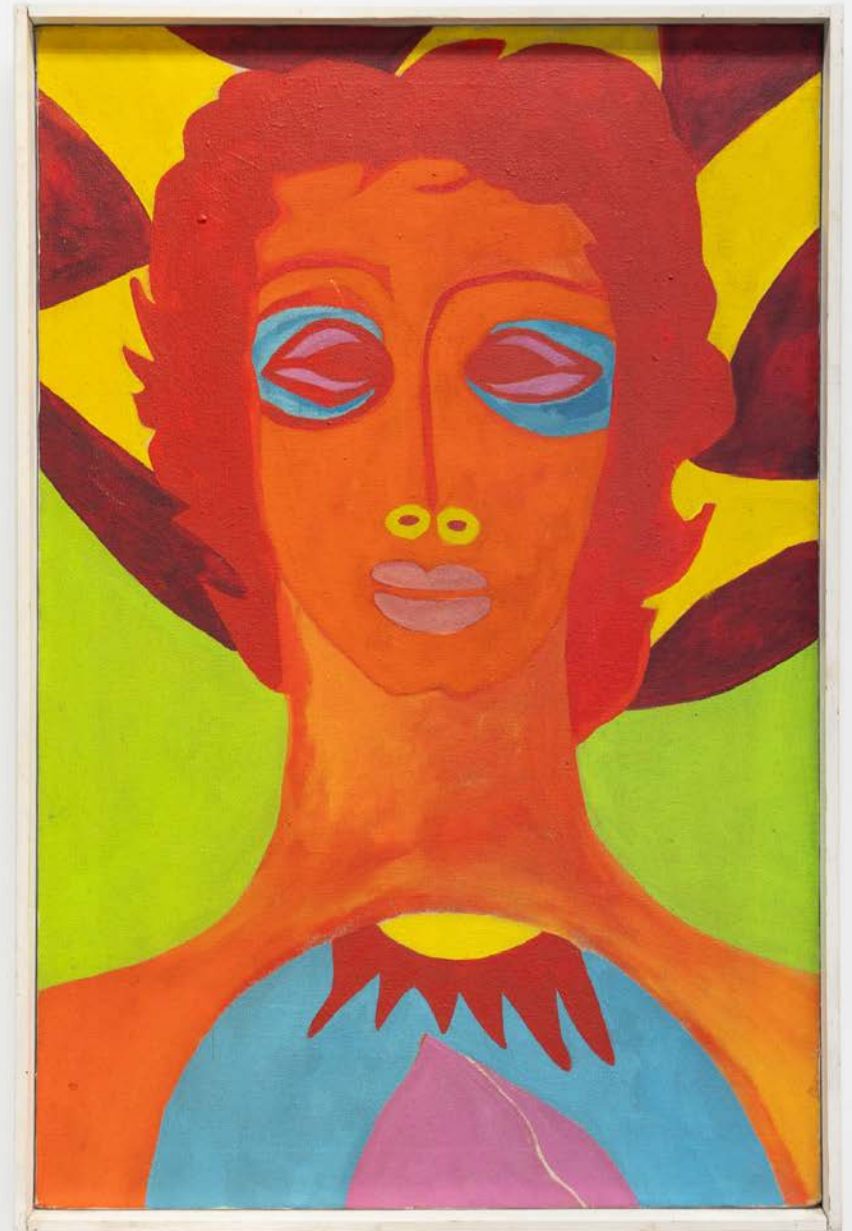
bill bissett

Over 40 Years of Art 1963-2021

Opening: Wed, July 22 at 6-8 PM
rare live performance by bill bissett: 6:30 PM

Image:
bill bissett
Morocco, c. 1970
Oil on canvas; Exhibited at the Vancouver Art Gallery, 1984
30.75 x 20.75 in (78.1 x 52.7 cm)

All images courtesy of Michael Love



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bill bissett

Over 40 Years of Art 1963-2021

An Order of Canada recipient and one of the most vital, brazen, and unapologetically queer voices in Canadian literary and artistic history, bissett is a foundational figure in both poetry and visual art. Now 86 and based in Toronto, he appears only rarely on the West Coast. For Vancouver audiences, this is an exceptional chance to experience him perform in the city that made him.

Spanning nearly six decades, *Over 40 Years of Art* brings together paintings made between 1963 and 2021 from the private collection of Frances Long, daughter of Joy Zemel Long – bissett's close collaborator and co-founder of Th Mandan Ghetto gallery in 1968, as well as the private collection of Brian DeBeck and Karen Tallman, daughter of Warren Tallman, UBC literature professor and influential poetry figure in Vancouver. The exhibition includes six works from his landmark 1984 Vancouver Art Gallery solo exhibition, *fires in th tempul*, offering a rare view into the depth and continuity of his visual practice.

bissett's queerness is central to his work and legacy. Described as one of the most experimental queer poets to emerge from the sexual revolution and counterculture of the 1960s, his writing is sensual, funny, erotic, insightful, and defiantly resistant to convention. From his earliest blowointment press publications onward, his work has challenged literary norms and refused the constraints of dominant culture.

That refusal became nationally visible during the 1977 Parliament controversy, when Conservative MPs attacked the Canada Council for supporting his allegedly obscene poetry, a backlash deeply entangled with homophobic anxieties about both his art and his life. The widespread defense of bissett by the queer arts community, alongside writers such as Allen Ginsberg and Margaret Atwood, remains a defining episode in Canadian cultural history.

His place in the queer canon is secure. bissett was featured at the Vancouver Queer Film Festival in 2011, where more than eighty people gathered to hear him read with a new generation of queer poets influenced by his work.

He also appears in *Seminal: The Anthology of Canada's Gay Male Poets* alongside Robin Blaser, Brion Gysin, and Sky Gilbert. What is rare now is not his significance, but the opportunity to encounter him in person.

This exhibition is also an act of community care. Seventy percent of proceeds from artwork sales will go directly to bill bissett to assist with medical expenses, with the collectors generously waiving their share.

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bill bissett

medicine, 1973

Acrylic on wood, decorative frame

Exhibited at the Vancouver Art Gallery, 1984

27 x 18 in (68.6 x 45.7 cm)



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bill bissett

wings

Acrylic on canvas

11.5 x 10.5 in (29.2 x 26.7 cm)



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bill bissett

Untitled (Tray), 1964

Acrylic on wooden serving tray

16.5 x 21.5 x 1.25 in (41.9 x 54.6 x 3.2 cm)



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bill bissett

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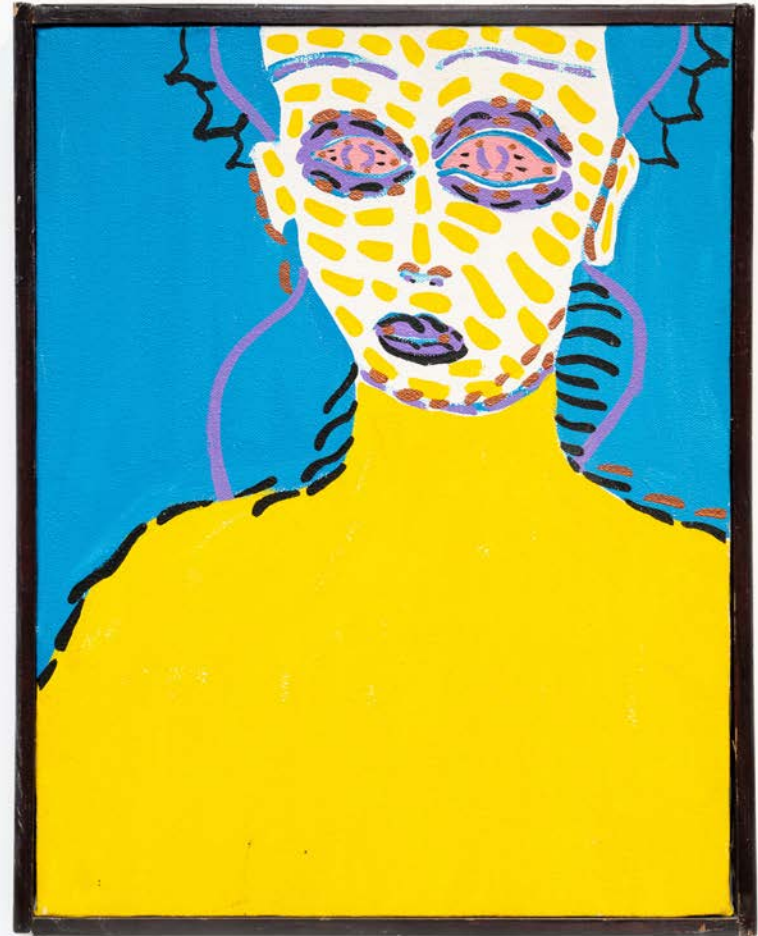
Acrylic on wood; Exhibited at the Vancouver Art Gallery, 1984
12 x 9.75 in (30.5 x 24.8 cm)



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bill bissett
the rivr is shaking, 1993
Acrylic on canvas
14.5 x 11.75 in (36.8 x 29.8 cm)



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bill bissett

th breath, c. 1978

Oil on wood; Exhibited at the Vancouver Art Gallery, 1984

48 x 23 in (121.9 x 58.4 cm)



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bill bissett
Mute, 1963
Oil on wood
48 x 24 in (121.9 x 61 cm)



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bill bissett
Untitled, 1978
Ink on paper
9 x 6 in (22.9 x 15.2 cm)



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bill bissett
time in the snow fields, 2021
Acrylic on canvas
20 x 16 in (50.8 x 40.6 cm)



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bill bissett

living being, 2021

Acrylic on canvas

20 x 16 in (50.8 x 40.6 cm)



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bill bissett
agenth first lite cum, 1996
Acrylic on canvas
12 x 9 in (30.5 x 22.9 cm)



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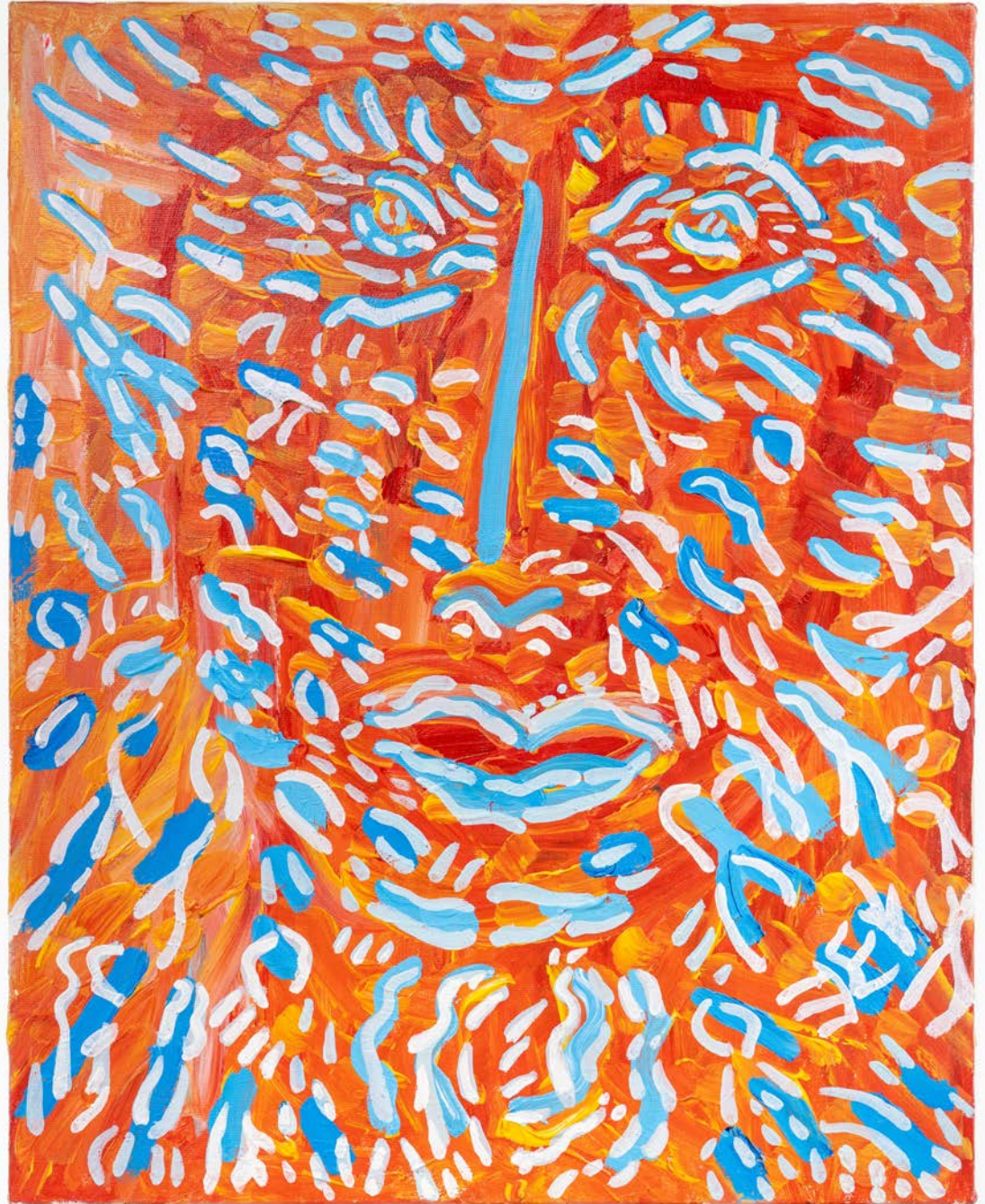
bill bissett
soon th summer treez will have leevs, 1998
Acrylic on canvas
9 x 12 in (22.9 x 30.5 cm)



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bill bissett
looking at th magik rivr, 2020
Acrylic on canvas
20 x 16 in (50.8 x 40.6 cm)



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bill bissett

Untitled (Mattawa dream), 2020

Acrylic on canvas

10 x 8 in (25.4 x 20.3 cm)



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bill bissett
thunder skies over london, 1985
Acrylic on canvas
18 x 24.5 in (45.7 x 62.2 cm)



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bill bissett

Mattawa rainsong

Acrylic on canvas

12 x 9 in (30.5 x 22.9 cm)



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bill bissett
Untitled (happee evreething)
Acrylic on canvas
8 x 10 in (20.3 x 25.4 cm)



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bill bissett

3 Wizards, 1983

Acrylic on canvas; Exhibited at the Vancouver Art Gallery, 1984
18.5 x 24.75 in (47 x 62.9 cm)



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bill bissett
Untitled (Summer rain), 2020
Acrylic on canvas
10 x 8 in (25.4 x 20.3 cm)



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bill bissett
wind spirit ovr mattawa, 2020
Acrylic on canvas
9 x 12 in (22.9 x 30.5 cm)



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bill bissett

Mattawa dance, 2020

Acrylic on canvas

12 x 9 in (30.5 x 22.9 cm)



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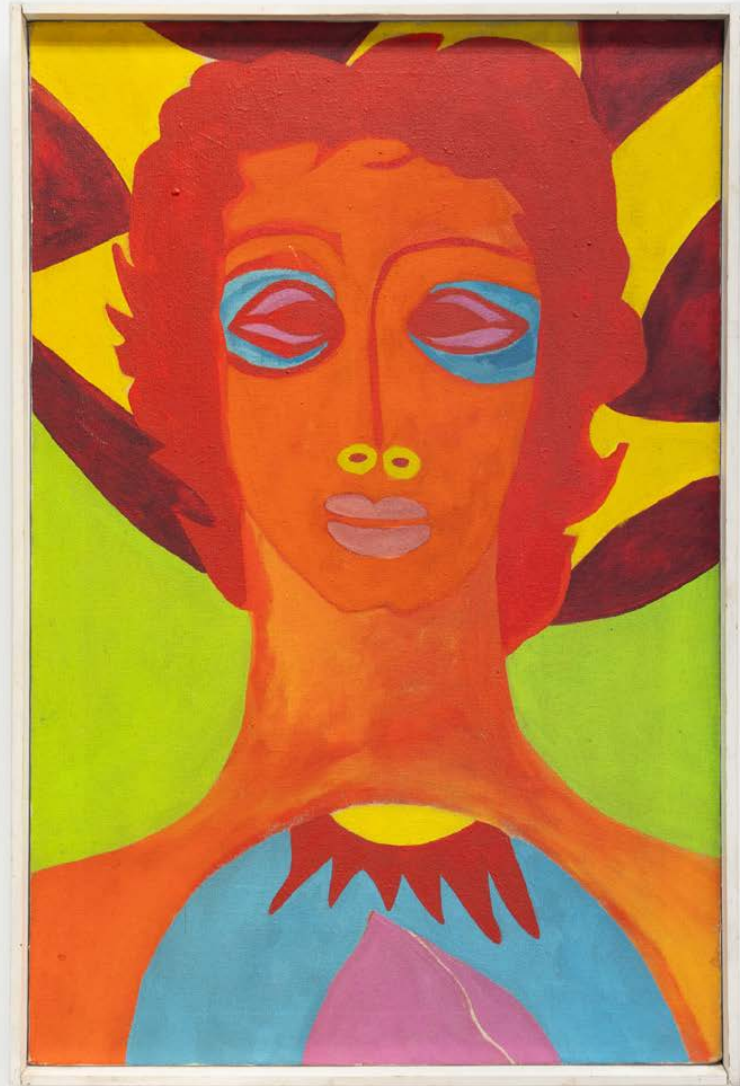
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Morocco, c. 1970

Oil on canvas; Exhibited at the Vancouver Art Gallery, 1984

30.75 x 20.75 in (78.1 x 52.7 cm)



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vowl man, 1980/2026

Ed. 25 + 5 AP + 1 PP

Photocopy on cardstock; Unframed

17 x 10 in (43.2 x 25.4 cm)



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The Tueson Only

Monoprint on cardstock

15 x 10 in (38.1 x 25.4 cm)



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The Tueson Only

Monoprint on cardstock

20.25 x 12.75 in (51.4 x 32.4 cm)



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Earth gives you Breath

Monoprint on cardstock

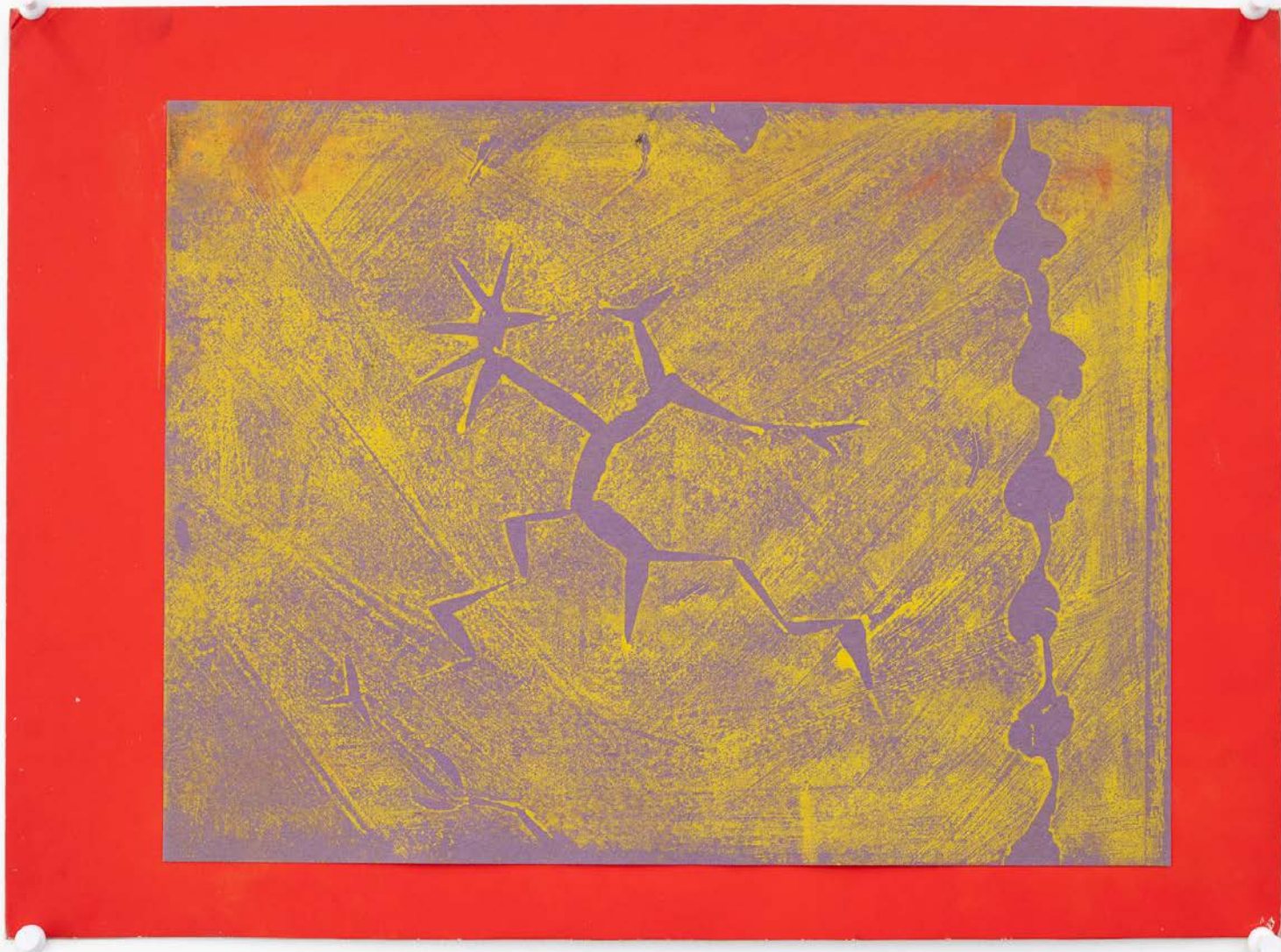
14.75 x 10.5 in (37.5 x 26.7 cm)



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bill bissett
zt is not a perfect circle
Monoprint on cardstock
11 x 15 in (27.9 x 38.1 cm)



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zt is not a perfect circle

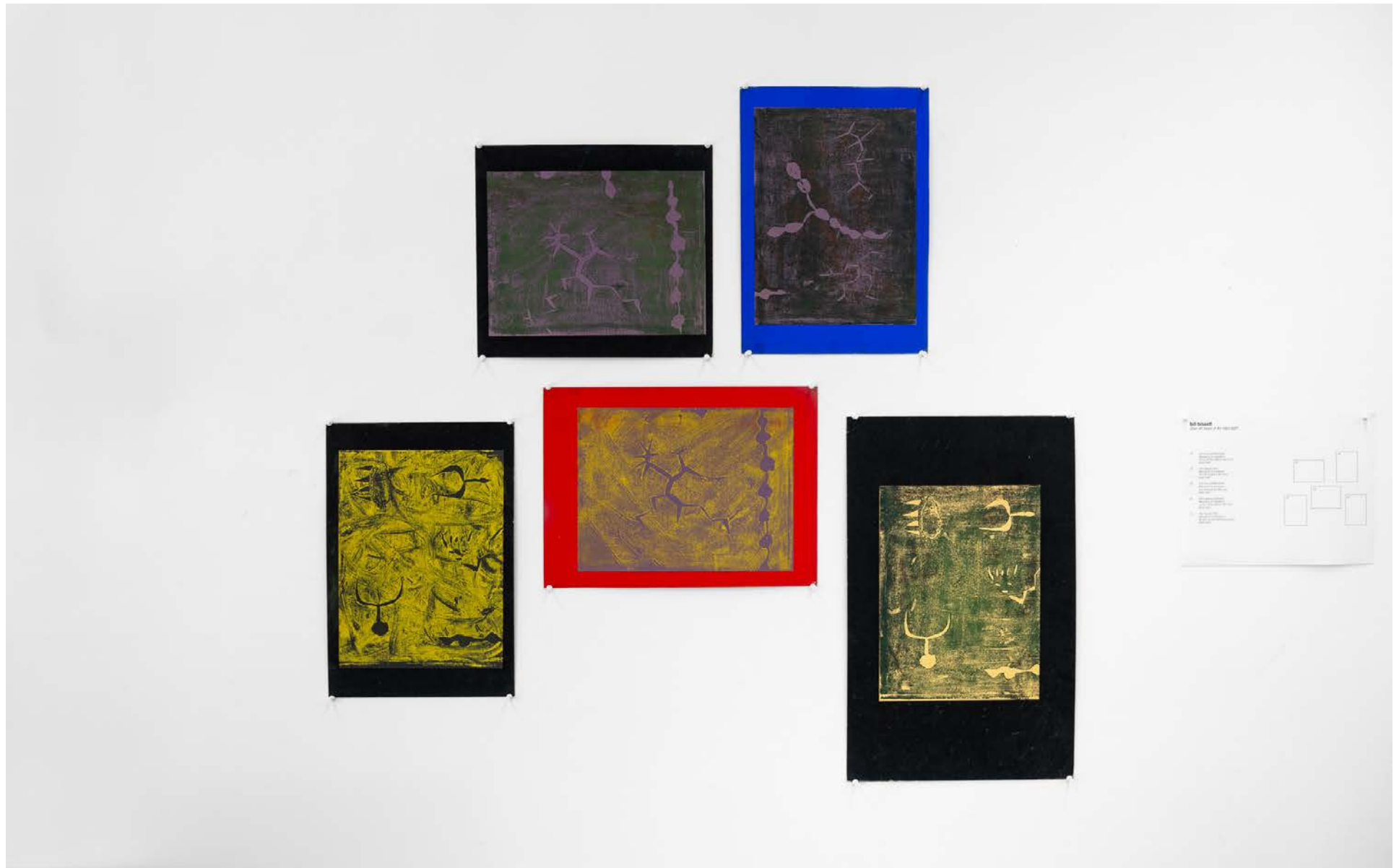
Monoprint on cardstock

11.5 x 12.75 in (29.2 x 32.4 cm)



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