

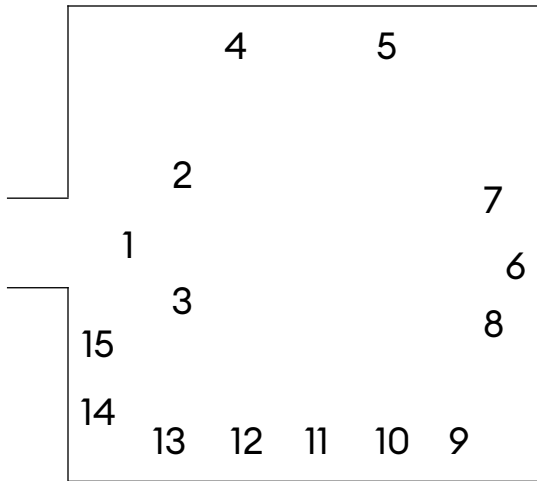
Douglas Watt

Mayor of the Village



CAG

Alvin Balkind Gallery



- 1 *Gels, 2026*
coloured gels, scotch tape, thread
- 2 *Pendant, 2026*
tissue paper, masking tape, incandescent bulbs, wooden skewers, glue, paint
- 3 *Pendant, 2026*
tissue paper, masking tape, incandescent bulbs, wooden skewers, glue, paint
- 4 *Back Rest, 2026*
quilt batting, faux fur, jacquard fabric, drapery fabric, printed cotton, metallic tinsel fabric, wool blend coating
- 5 *Menu, 2026*
chalk board paint, chalk, sewing pins, paillettes, embossed plastic letter labels

6 *Painting, 2026*
paint on wall

In *Mayor of the Village*, Watt stages the gallery with the trappings of a café, referencing the international coffee house aesthetic popular in the 1990s and 2000s. A patchwork of booth-backs rendered with patterned and novelty fabrics; a chalkboard menu adorned with paillettes, themselves bearing a crossword of food items; a pair of softly glowing pendant lights framing the entryway; traces of luminescent rainbow reflecting on the floor. The materials reference a design both dated and comforting, one that signals the café as a natural gathering place, a seemingly uncomplicated site of community and camaraderie.

7 *Mug, 2026*
plywood, MDF, plaster, enamel paint, wire mesh, mat board, cotton velvet, thread, popsicle sticks, faux fur, wire, duct tape, paper, cardboard tube, cotton string, rope, silk organza, shoe lace, glitter paper, hot glue, feather, sequins, nails, muslin, rhinestone trim

8 *Mug, 2026*
plywood, MDF, plaster, enamel paint, wire mesh, mat board, cotton velvet, thread, popsicle sticks, faux fur, wire, duct tape, paper, cardboard tube, cotton string, rope, silk organza, shoe lace, glitter paper, hot glue, feather, sequins, nails, muslin, rhinestone trim

On the east wall of the gallery, Watt renders a crude mural of a coffee cup, a design traced from the back of a café chair found in a Davie Street laundromat (itself depicted in *Laundry Valet*). On top of this work, he has installed a pair of sculptures taking the form of mugs. Watt describes these as imageless artworks, the void of their dark interiors framed neatly by white enamel-painted rims. The exterior mesh of the sculptures, however, reveals a tangle of Rube-Goldbergesque forms, gesturing both to coffee's propulsive social force, as well as the persistent machinations – economic, aesthetic and otherwise – that structure even the most casual of communal interactions.

9 *Laundry Valet*, 2024
archival cardboard, graph paper, construction paper, oil pastel, mat board, vinyl cupboard liner, wire, sequins, duct tape, aluminum tape, acetate gels, feathers, acrylic plastic, lint, quarters, stickers, crystals, doily, pipe cleaner, silk organza, bristol board, window mesh, lamé piping, acrylic paint, string, thread, glitter paper, carpet, cardboard tube, popsicle sticks, sand paper, straws, wire mesh, chain, fabric, leather, grommet

Within the environment of the café, Watt hangs a show-within-a-show, bringing together a selection of the intricate model works he has come to be known for over the past several years. In these works, Watt contends broadly with the question of how to make art that addresses queer life absent the inevitable shortcomings of representation. Turning to the spaces and places that ostensibly sustain a queer public sphere, Watt creates dense, memory-laden reconstructions of these sites, at once methodical, critical and tributary. Rendered with materials largely available in the neighbourhood he depicts, the intensely detailed works consider the ways in which these spaces organize and are organized – what they make possible and what they foreclose.

For *Laundry Valet*, Watt has recreated a laundromat on Davie Street. Pushing at the idea of what makes a space queer, Watt reflects on the laundromat as both an erotically charged place – one that both features prevalently in gay pornography and lore – and a kind of regenerative space, washing away stains both physical and psychic.

10 *Bath/SRO*, 2018
corrugated cardboard,
butcher tape, scotch
tape, hot glue, linen,
cotton, polyester, leather,
garbage bag, glitter
paper, popsicle sticks,
bristol board, plasticine,
galvanized wire mesh,
fiberglass mesh screen,
LED lights, vinyl sticker,
plastic straw, paper, cling
wrap, postcard, vinyl
tube, spring, linen tape,
latex tube, metallic card-
stock, rubber stopper,
wire, aluminum tape, gold
metal leaf, latex condom,
foam core, adhesive vinyl
bumper sheet, inkjet print
on paper

Bath/SRO is one of the first
models Watt created. Looser
in style and more abstracted
in form, Watt based this work
on a bathhouse located
above a Davie Street dollar
and party supply store, one
where he sources many of the
supplies he uses in his work.
The title of the work nods to
the bathhouse's role not just
as a site of sexual exchange,
but of low-cost accommo-
dation, often serving as the
cheapest room in Vancouver
on any given night.

11 *Little Sister's*, 2023
archival cardboard,
archival glue, hot glue,
laser prints, popsicle
sticks, acrylic paint,
carpet, acrylic velvet,
cotton string, coloured
gel, holographic foil,
glitter paper, faux fur,
window mesh, wire, gems,
sequins, lame, aluminum
tape, thread, mat board,
cardboard, paper, tack,
wire mesh, spray foam,
rhinestone trim, mirror,
plastic coil, glass beads,
jewelry chain, lined paper,
cotton, metallic pipe
cleaner, duct tape, band-
aid, rope, plastic bag
Collection of Jeffrey
Boone & David Wong

This work sees Watt memorialize famed Vancouver bookstore Little Sister's. Rather than its current home on Davie, however, Watt takes on the original Little Sister's

space at 1221 Thurlow, where it occupied the second floor of a now-demolished house from 1983 to 1996. Recreated entirely from images seen in the 2002 Aerlyn Weissman documentary *Little Sister's vs Big Brother* – which traces the bookstore's landmark twenty-year legal battle with Canada Customs over the seizure of books deemed “obscene” – this model is the only work in the exhibition Watt created without visiting the site. The books that appear in the work are a speculative recollection, drawn from multiple imperfect archives, including a trove of used books donated to Little Sister's, internet searches and images saved to Watt's phone.

12 *Pumpjack*, 2019
cardboard, gold leaf,
glass, popsicle sticks,
vinyl, velvet, card, plas-
ticized wire, inkjet print,
tin foil, beads, chiffon,
gaffer tape, mirror, lycra
micromesh, newspaper,
construction paper,
upholstery material, can-
dle, matboard, leather,
glitter, tissue paper,
ball chain, fishing line,
metallic paper, necklace
chain, velvet, terry cloth,
beads, sequins, ribbon,
chalk, embroidery floss,
hot glue, plastic gems,
organza, dowel, window
screen

13 *Numbers*, 2022
archival cardboard,
archival glue, hot glue,
sand paper, butcher
paper, tooth picks, wire,
bristol board, construc-
tion paper, metallic print
lycra fabric, metallic

paint, popsicle sticks,
sequins, crystals, felt,
terrycloth, laser print
on paper, holographic
paper, foam balls,
wooden beads, glass
beads, mirror, thread,
embroidery floss, leather,
elastic bands, paper
clips, mat board, led
lights, tissue paper,
electric tape, gaffer tape,
straws, aluminum tape,
plexiglass, canvas, laser
print on acetate, plastic
letter stickers, metallic
foil, metal stud, rhine-
stones, window mesh, silk
organza, graph paper &
business card

Collection of Jeffrey
Boone & David Wong

This pair of works catalogues two bars located a block apart on Davie Street: The PumpJack Pub and Numbers Cabaret. Where Watt's earliest model works saw him recreating spaces entirely from memory, *Pumpjack* is the first time he began documenting a site in order to recreate it. Three years later, *Numbers* was produced amidst COVID restrictions, when many of the spaces captured in Watt's works were closed to the public. Working from a combination of recall and a private tour arranged during the bar's closure, the resulting work at once traces the labyrinthine building's idiosyncratic history and architecture – built around an old home, the space previously served as a brothel and an army housing facility – while capturing the spirit, if not exactitude, of its current life as a gay bar. Here,

a maze occupies the dance floor, while much of the decor is drawn from memes, images from TV and unrelated photos from the artist's archive.

14 *Clinic*, 2019
foamcore, textured spray
paint, stir sticks, carpet,
paper, cue cards, plas-
ticine, coloured pencil,
health & community
information cards, metal
mesh, leather, tule, inkjet
prints, window screen,
clothing tag, acrylic,
beads, sequins, vinyl shelf
lining, lycra micromesh,
string, pencil, popsicle
sticks, hot glue, vinyl tube,
wire

In this early work, Watt takes on the former Bute Street Sexual Health Clinic. Much like *Bath/SRO*, this work enacts a more truncated approach to its namesake space, with a composition anchored in rhythm and symmetry rather than spatial verisimilitude. Watt extends, for example, the carpeted hallway that sits between the waiting area and clinical spaces, suggesting a longer, more doomful trek between the two than the facility actually afforded.

15 *Café, 2026*
cardboard, archival glue,
hot glue, metallic foil,
mat board, acrylic paint,
pipe cleaner, sequins,
wooden popsicle stick,
aluminum tape, cotton
lace, string, glitter paper,
feather, stickers, gems,
wire, coffee beans, tissue
paper, laser jet print, toi-
let paper, window mesh,
wooden skewer, coloured
gel, acrylic fabric, cotton
fabric, holographic foil,
diffusion gel, plaster

For his most recent model, Watt recreates the Davie Street café on which the elements in the exhibition at large are based. Evoking the self-reflexiveness at the heart of Watt's project, the artist engages here the café as both an idealized site of social exchange – a space to congregate, debate, eavesdrop, and otherwise perform socially – and a densely layered system that can never be perfectly captured, occupied or known. The scene Watt presents in the work is an unruly one, replete with animals on the furniture (a nod to the café's wildlife-themed table numbers), a jumble of storage and a fully visible back-of-house, with the machinations of the space's operations on full view to its patrons.

Hanging System, 2026
wooden dowel, acrylic
paint, nails, dyed cotton
string

All works courtesy of the artist and
Unit 17, Vancouver unless otherwise
indicated.

April 17
→ September 13,
2026

Contemporary
Art Gallery

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12 pm → 6 pm
Admission always free