



# PAUL WALDE: WEATHER CONDITIONS

January 17- April 11th, 2026

Curated by Carolyn Butler Palmer

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Williams Legacy Chair in Modern & Contemporary Arts of the Pacific Northwest

## EVENTS

Saturday, February 28th at 2:00 pm:

Of Weather Movements: the pictures in the exhibition are activated by a team of art handlers in a performance based on motion-picture camera movements and techniques.

Saturday, March 28th at 2:00 pm:

Of Weather Movements: a second activation of the Cloudworks accompanied by a live performance of the *Of Weather* music score by a string quartet.

## OVERVIEW

This exhibition brings together two of Paul Walde's video installations: *Of Weather (for Geoff Hendricks)*, 2018-2024, and *Tom Thomson Centennial Swim*, 2017-2019, by interdisciplinary artist and University of Victoria Visual Arts Professor Paul Walde. Each artwork documents site-specific performances accompanied by original soundtracks also created by Walde. Prominent within the exhibition *Of Weather (for Geoff Hendricks)* are large-scale photographic prints of cloudscapes. Both installations transport weather conditions from their apparent distance in the natural world into the immediacy of the gallery space.

Image (Cover): Paul Walde, *Of Weather (for Geoff Hendricks)*, 2018, photo by Laura Gildner.



Image: Paul Walde, *Tom Thomson Centennial Swim*, production still, 2017, photo by Andrew Wright.

## PAUL WALDE

Paul Walde is an interdisciplinary artist living in Victoria, Canada, on lək̓ʷəŋən territory, where he is a Professor of Visual Arts at the University of Victoria. Walde is a graduate of Western University's Visual Arts program and received his master's from New York University.

For the past 30 years, his work has addressed environmental issues, including exploring non-human activity and communication, global warming, deforestation, land use, endangered species, and the art world. Originally trained as a painter, Walde's music and sound compositions have been a prominent feature in his artwork for over 25 years. He is best known for his interdisciplinary performance works staged in the natural environment, and documentation of these events is frequently used as the basis of Walde's sound and video installations, which have been the subject of exhibitions nationally and internationally.

In 2013, he completed his best-known work, *Requiem for a Glacier*, a site-specific sound performance featuring a 55-piece choir and orchestra, performed live on the Farnham Glacier in the Purcell Mountains. *Requiem for a Glacier* was subsequently developed into a multichannel sound and video installation, which has been widely exhibited across Canada, as well as in France and the UK. In 2025, he presented *Forestorium*, a full-length opera featuring eight soloists, an orchestra, and a chorus in a primary forest on Ma'amtagila territory on Northern Vancouver Island.

As a collaborator, Walde is a founding member of Audio Lodge, a Canadian sound art collective and LASAM Music's Experimental Music Unit, a Victoria-based sound and music ensemble. Since 2021, he has been a member of Awi'nakola: Tree of Life, an Indigenous-led research and conservation foundation dedicated to forest preservation and restoration through the confluence of Indigenous knowledge, scientific research, and the arts.

## MOVING IMAGE WORK NO.1: OF WEATHER (FOR GEOFF HENDRICKS)

This work was commissioned by the Blackwood Gallery University of Toronto Mississauga for the exhibition *Work of Wind*, curated by Christine Shaw, which took place in an active industrial zone in September 2018. Images of clouds were brought down to ground level using large-scale stretched photographic prints and animated by teams of performer/art handlers within the Southdown Industrial Area, responding to changes in the weather over the course of ten days.

Each day, the teams performed a choreography of image movements built upon standard filmmaking camera movements and editing techniques, including pans, zooms, tilts, wipes, and cuts. *Of Weather* touches upon themes of climate change, geoengineering, the mobile nature of the artworld, and our increasingly complex relationship with the weather.

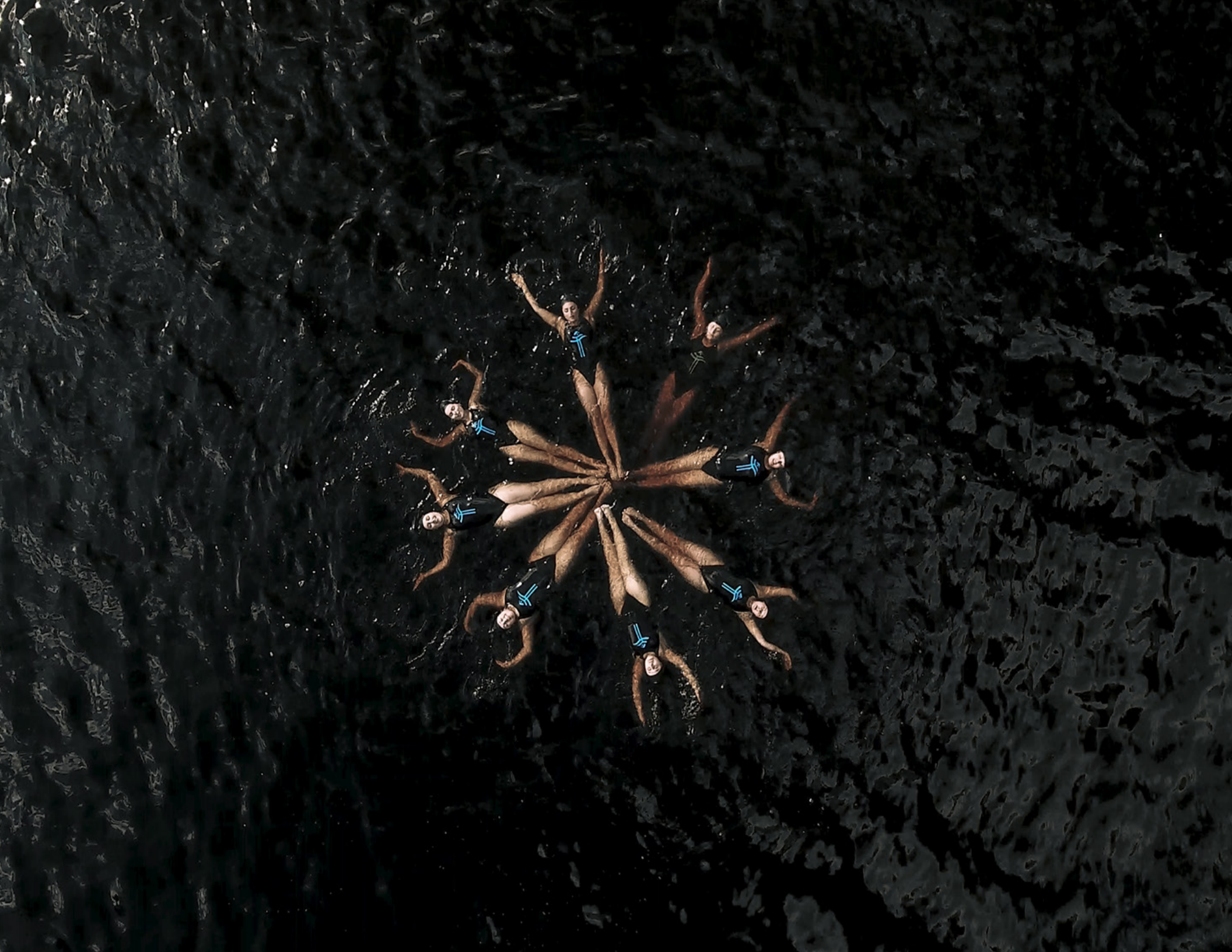
The *Of Weather* video installation (2024) combines footage from the first performance with a subsequent musical composition written using the edited video documentation as a guide. The score, written for violin, viola, cello, and double bass, is comprised of eight ‘bowing figures’ derived from each cloud image. The performers were assigned between 1 and 3 of these figures to memorize which essentially ask the musicians to “draw” the shapes of the clouds upon the strings of their instruments with their bows.

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This exhibition also features all eight *Cloudwork* stretched photographic canvases from *Of Weather*, rescaled for the gallery and performed twice during the exhibition.



Image: Paul Walde, *Of Weather (for Geoff Hendricks)*, 2018, photo by Laura Gildner.



## TOM THOMSON CENTENNIAL SWIM

On July 8th, 1917, Canadian painter Tom Thomson set out on a canoe trip on Canoe Lake in Algonquin Park. He did not return. That same day, what turned out to be his canoe was spotted floating upside down. Eight days later, his body was discovered floating in the lake.

One hundred years later, on July 8th, 2017, Paul Walde swam the length of Canoe Lake accompanied by a synchronised swimming squad, a brass ensemble performing a new composition by Walde written for the event, and a flotilla of canoes.

The music's tempo and time signatures were adapted from Walde's own swimming stroke rate and the rhythms of his kick and arm strokes, which alternate from 6/4 in the first half to 4/4 in the second half. Walde explains,

“I wanted the score to be something that could have been created at any time in the past 100 years. Erik Satie's timeless work was an inspiration for this undertaking, particularly *Vexations* and the *Gnossiennes* (both c.1893). Distance swimming is a very repetitious, rhythmic, and meditative activity, so this score attempts to create a work that is at once dirge-like, hypnotic, yet transformative. One of the limitations of the piece was to compose a work over 45 minutes long that could fit on marching band lyres, the miniature portable music stands that clip to instruments, so that musicians could perform from canoes. This was accomplished by writing a modular score in which repeated sections and elements are interleaved sonically.”

Image (previous page): Paul Walde, *Tom Thomson Centennial Swim*, video still, 2019. Courtesy of the artist.

The video installation, completed in 2019, is based on documentation of the performance, but also features footage taken from multiple points of view, including underwater; that of the swimmer; mobile units from boats, drones, and stationary positions along the route, all of which are combined with shots of the lake and locations featured in Thomson's paintings.

Synchronised swimmers who signal the passage of time provide a connection between the swim and Thomson's death through a choreographed routine that was performed at several locations along the swim route, but also restaged for the camera.

The soundtrack features recordings of the brass ensemble from the performance, combined with additional studio recordings, binaural audio from the swimmer's perspective, field recordings of the site, and a mysterious hydrophonic recording made at the bottom of Canoe Lake. The piece's duration mirrors the event, which lasted approximately 50 minutes.

## LIST OF WORKS

Tom Thomson Centennial Swim  
2017-2019  
4k single channel video installation with stereo sound.  
Run time: 52:48 mins.

Moving Image Work No.1: Of Weather (for Geoff Hendricks)  
2018-2024  
4k single channel video installation with stereo sound  
Run time: 38:03 mins.

Of Weather Cloudwork Nos. 1-8  
2018  
8 inkjet prints on stretched canvas on custom-made hollow stretchers.

Booklet design by Katie Hughes

