

# Youth + Community Programming



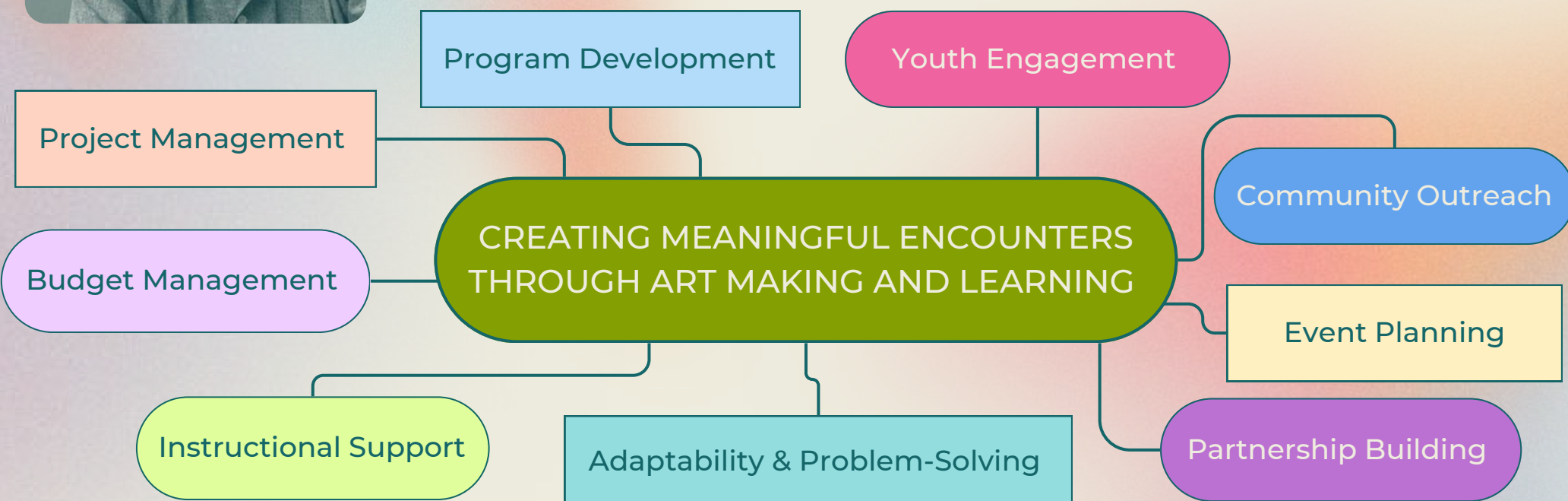
**Pietro Sammarco**

Program Manager | Education Coordinator | Youth Mentor



## PIETRO SAMMARCO

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# Select Projects

The following examples show my accomplishments in organizing youth and community programming.

These projects provided participants long iterative processes to work collaboratively on art projects that explore a topic over many sessions. Making up these sessions were a combination of workshops, field trips, discussion, and art production.

Mentorship topics were complex, allowing multiple points of engagement. Though artist mentors guided the projects, the projects were designed to encourage participants to learn from each other—questions and judgments are formed in conversation, diverse technical skills are shared, and practical problems are faced together.

Longer timelines slow down the process of researching, planning, creating, and evaluating what is being made. This gives everyone more time to reflect on the ethical implications of making art. Longer duration also allows for the bonds between participants to germinate, in ways not possible during short, individual workshops, so participants also learn about teamwork itself. The purpose of these mentorship projects is not to complete a masterpiece by the end, but to experience art-making as a process of learning about our complex world.



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2017

# The Reorganized Organ

A collaborative instrument-building project that gave space for young artists to consider the preponderance of e-waste in our culture by repurposing a discarded electronic organ to make an orchestra of experimental musical instruments.

The mentorship offered a fun and inviting approach to learning about the extraordinarily complex subject of wasted electronics, while learning skills like woodworking, soldering, listening, and improvisation.



## The Reorganized Organ



## HIGHLIGHTS

- **Managed \$18,000 budget**, secured through **BC Arts Council**.
- **Youth artists received a full artist fee** for presenting their final artworks, as well as **stipend** for participating.
- Complete **dinner** provided to participants for all 12 sessions.
- Team of **7 mentors** guided **10 youth artists** over 12 weeks. Final public showcase event hosted **100 attendees**.
- Forged new partnership with **Vancouver New Music, MakerMobile, MakerCube, and Free Geek Vancouver**.
- Included a **talk by leading e-waste geographer Josh Lepawsky** and field trips to e-waste recycling facilities.
- **Final event** hosted 100 attendees, comprised showcase of final instruments, presentations by two scholars, a documentary screening, dinner, and three musical performances, all of which were “waste” themed.

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The mentors came and sat down with us and spent the time to show us things and asked what we wanted to get out of it instead of prescribing like here's what I'm gonna be teaching.

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When we're talking about making a musical instrument from an object like e-waste, and the act of reclaiming it, it sets up this relationship of responsibility for you to bring something to it and to and interpret it in a new way, it affords us kinds of creative liberties

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# Still Creek Salmon Sounds

Provided technical and conceptual support to create a sound-based installation artwork exploring the salmon spawning season in a local creek.



Participants wove together environmental sound recordings with a series of photographs taken on location in the creek. They also learned to sonify data about the creek's rehabilitation, as a way of listening for patterns otherwise hidden to the eye.



## Still Creek Salmon Sounds

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It was an excellent experience. I learned new technical skills (data sonification) and got fresh ideas and perspective on skills I have experience in (audio recording/editing). I really valued having Naxaxalhts'i speak to us about indigenous stories and also talking about his ethics when it comes to storytelling. It really opened my ears to the types of work and research that can be done using sound as a primary medium. Being able to collaborate with and create connections with all the folks involved was very enriching.

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## HIGHLIGHTS

- **Youth participants received a full artist fee** for presenting their installation artwork at final event, as well as **stipend** for participating.
- Complete **dinner** provided to participants for all 12 sessions.
- One-hour interview on Vancouver Coop Radio **CFRO 100.5FM**.
- Partnered with **Still Moon Arts Society**.
- Artist-mentors **Brady Marks**, **Helena Krobath** and **Jenni Schine** joined by Stó:lō historian **Naxaxalhts'i**, award-winning sonification researcher **Marc St. Pierre**, aquatic ecologist **Emma Atkinson**, and sound designer **Pietro Sammarco**.
- Funding secured through **Telus**.

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2019

# Vancouver Housing Stories

A team of young podcasters produced stories reflecting on Vancouver's current moment of large-scale housing insecurity.

Working with oral histories and recorded tenant interviews, the team examined notions of home, the right to belong, and community tenure. Participants received training in shaping stories by working with voices, recording and editing audio. They engaged local history, news, and policy about land and housing.



## Vancouver Housing Stories



## HIGHLIGHTS

- Brought together **8 young women artists** with **5 women mentors** over 15 sessions.
- **Participants received a full artist fee** for presenting and broadcasting their stories over community radio on **CFRO 100.5FM** and **CiTR 101.9FM**, and played at the **Vancouver Podcast Festival's Podfair**.
- Partnered with **Vancouver Tenants Union** for information and oral history support.
- Mentors: media artist **Helena Krobath**, housing and anti-poverty organizer **Kell Gerlings**; queer Filipino rapper-poet **Kimmortal** (a.k.a., Kim Villagante), journalist and radio producers **Alex de Boer**, **Madeline Taylor**, and **Alexander Kim**, and sound designer **Pietro Sammarco**.
- Funding by **BC Arts Council**, and **Frédérrik Lesage** of **SFU's School of Communication**.
- Complete **dinner** provided to participants for all 15 sessions.

“

They encouraged us to be playful with language and different vocal skills, which put me a little out of my comfort zone and was very emotional. I didn't really anticipate spending so much time getting in touch with the personal elements of what home and housing mean. It made me realize that a lot of my perspective has shifted on housing since becoming pregnant so I feel like I'm having a totally different conversation about housing then I was eight months ago.

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# Karaoke Video Pool

Provided high school art students the technical and conceptual support to explore the notion of identity formation by collaboratively producing their own karaoke videos.



Each group of students chose a song and then paired it with visuals that they created and edited to tell a story, starring themselves. The project included a common pool of video footage that each group contributed to and drew from. The mentorship ended with a karaoke party for all to enjoy the videos.



## Karaoke Video Pool



## HIGHLIGHTS

- Supported **42 high school students** over **12 sessions**.
- Connected to **BC provincial curriculum for drama**, using the production of moving image and sound to explore cultural identity and sense of belonging.
- Partnered **Alysha Seriani** with **Sepideh Saii**, instructor at **Vancouver Technical Secondary**.
- Innovative way to explore identity not as a pre-given thing, but as a complex process of **performing within a social context**. Students experienced firsthand the role that media producers play in reproducing or challenging stereotypes.
- Funding by **ArtStarts** Artists in the Classroom and **VIVO** Media Arts Centre



2025

# Where Does The Rain Go?

Students of University Highlands Elementary School explore the journey that rainwater makes from the peak of Burnaby Mountain, down across its face, into the numerous local creeks and storm drains.

Sixty students work with the rainwater and the creeks to create paintings and sonic compositions, thereby using art methods to begin experiencing the mountain as a complex and evolving place.

In progress...  
to be continued!