



Hammered tin hearts adorn a shocking orange wall. On each tin plate, a shadow of an animal is emblazoned. Hammerheads frolic with turtles and trouts. Elephants walk with flamingos and horses.

This is the art of resistance, of going back to the roots of creation and respecting the natural world of the animals. The exhibition, *Voz/Voice*, is the art of the LLAMA project, a collaborative group of Canadian and Mexican artists who spent the past summer at artistic retreats in the Yukon, joining forces to create the visually stunning display at the Yukon Arts Centre. They have also spent a previous residency in México.

Together, the eight artists from the Yukon and México have explored the theme of resistance and resilience as it pertains to the natural world as well as the human-centric world. Multifaceted as well as culturally diverse, the artists all relate to each others works through a shared understanding of nature.

In this show, nature is the animal kingdom, displayed prominently through shadow figures, brass etchings and a wall-length textile painting of a leopard dissolving into spots.

As well, the theme of human experience echoes through their works. Animal migration is linked to human migration in Lorena Silva's animal boats, like her hammered tin hearts with animals. The animals are migrating, like humans.

Can we claim to belong to a place when we have only migrated there? The human experience as a resistance movement also surfaces in photographer Cesar Damian's multimedia piece where a film of a blindfolded man is played in black and white.

A diptych of photographs of faces, broken into two pieces and backlit, line the wall of his exhibit. It is a powerful statement of the strength of culture and humanity.

Mass-produced work is the antithesis of the LLAMA project artists. Lorena Silva's tin hearts were handcrafted by artisans in México and she feels strongly about supporting the work of the local artists and embracing their crafts.

The art is meant to be powerful but not alienating.

Local printmaker and mixed-media artist Joyce Majiski invites hands-on activity with her display, a series of brass etchings mounted on poles. Crayons and rice paper are provided and the public is invited to make rubbings on the etchings.

The etchings are animal coats and make lovely patterns on the fragile rice paper. Majiski also welcomes the public to simply use the rice paper to create a message meaningful to them.

Respect for nature, the animal world and the human experience are all displayed in the art, and the effect is wonderful. The gallery is transformed into a space of acceptance and awe, and the opening on Nov. 5 was full of patrons. Clearly the LLAMA artists have developed a solid foundation upon which to build their art. And they have excelled.

Voz/Voice opened Nov. 5 and runs until Dec. 22. It also has Kidz Kreate, free family art classes in collaboration with the Yukon Arts Centre, including a "Mexican Christmas" on Dec. 13 from 1 to 4 p.m. For more information on the LLAMA project, visit its website: www.llamaproject.com.

