

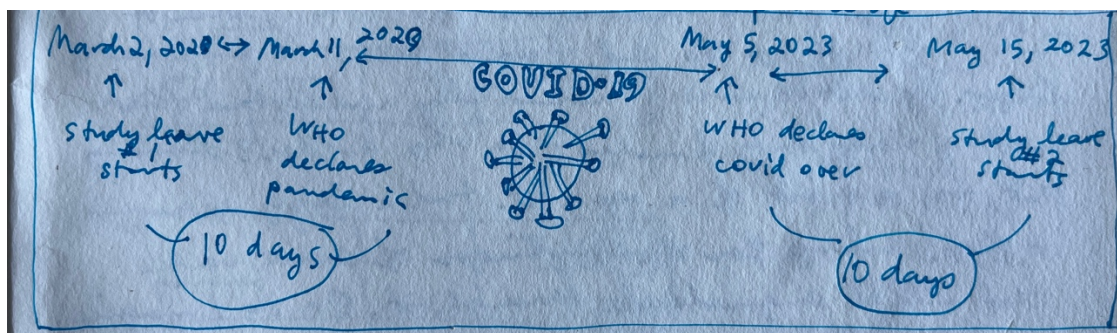
And hopefully, by the time of my next leave, in 2023 or 2026, it won't be during a pandemic and I will have the opportunity to travel for work and pleasure and connect with other people from around our planet, unmasked, and in close conversation, less than six feet apart.

- Screenshot taken from the last page of my last study leave report, 2020

Dear Jonathan,

At the time of writing this study leave report, I am currently 35,000 feet up in an airplane, travelling back to YYJ via YVR. The plane is late, and so is this study leave report, which should have been submitted (by my calculations, excluding weekends, statutory holidays, and the annual university closure) on January 15<sup>th</sup>, 2024.

As the screenshot above testifies, when I submitted my last leave report, in January 2021, I was already anticipating when my next leave might be and how I might engage in a post-Covid world. I had not intended to take a leave in 2023, but when the opportunity to take three months came up, I couldn't refuse the opportunity to focus on my research-creation again and the activities of scholarly and professional development I had been denied in 2020.



Interestingly, when I took my study leave in March 2020, it was exactly 10 days from the start of my leave to UNESCO's official declaration of the pandemic; and in May 2023, it was again, exactly, 10 days from the start of my leave to UNESCO's official declaration of the pandemic as being over. It was a curious pair of book ends to a story that continues to evolve, since at the time of writing this, Covid-19 is still out there.

So what was it that I said I would do this time, understanding I only had three months (not six) to spend on my study leave?

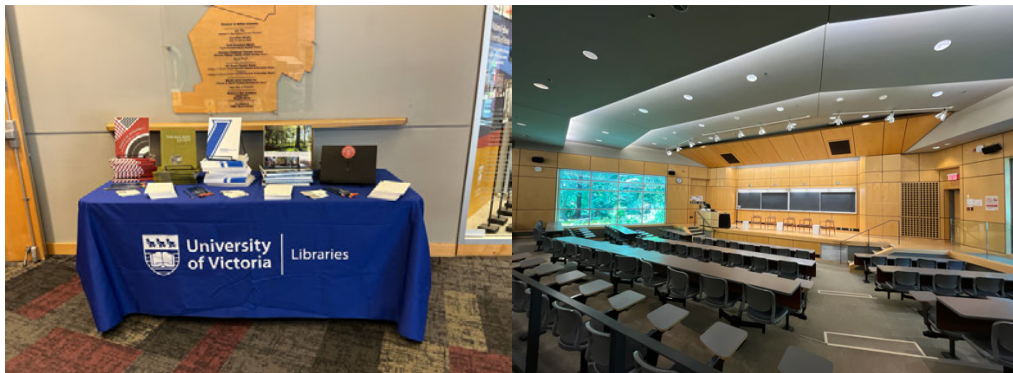
As the Fine Arts Librarian, I would like to focus on updating LibGuides for all my Fine Arts subject areas, as well as developing lesson plans and instructional nodes for my subjects in Art History and Visual Studies, Theatre, Visual Arts, and Writing. Relatedly, and in alignment with my role, I have applied to participate in a Rare Book School course in New York City, from July 16-22 on Artist's Books. Insofar as my scholarly contributions are concerned, I have also been invited to present an exhibition at the GVPL Bruce Hutchison Library branch in September by the Victoria Arts Council and need to prepare for that exhibition. I also have an outstanding UVic IRCPG grant project that needs to be completed. Taken as a whole, these proposed projects would not only improve the experience of our Fine Arts students, but contribute to my duties at the University.

-screenshot taken of Study Leave application abstract, March 2023.

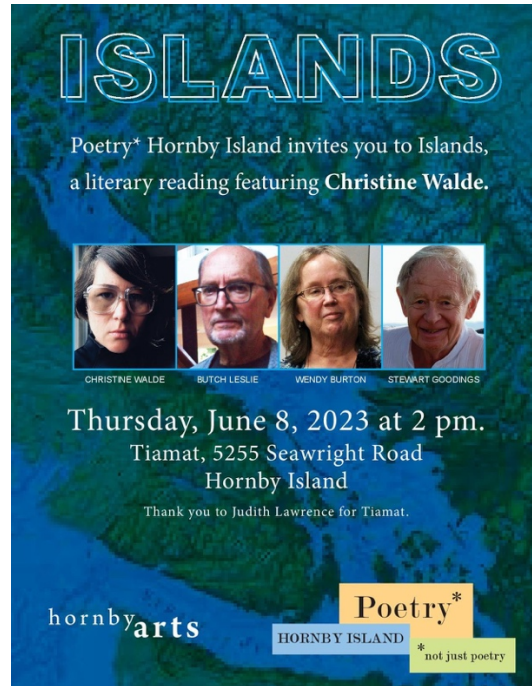
I spent the first two weeks of my study leave disentangling myself from my multiple roles and responsibilities in the Libraries, including helping to install the first-time exhibition of my Lowens Fellowship mentee, Sansal Güngör Gümüşpala, who re-created images from the scrapbooks of the Transgender Archives into multi-media visual collages using embroidery and applique, and installed a site-specific installation in Visual Arts, which I helped to coordinate and facilitate, using props from the Theatre Department, thanks to colleague Carolyn Choo and Hollis Blaine. Finding ways to engage with the departments I serve while also strengthening relationships with the Libraries and the faculty of Fine Arts was, and continues to be, centrally important to my role as a librarian.



Then there was the UL Lecture, in which I helped my comrades in the CECE-OG to dress the stage and prepare our publications table.



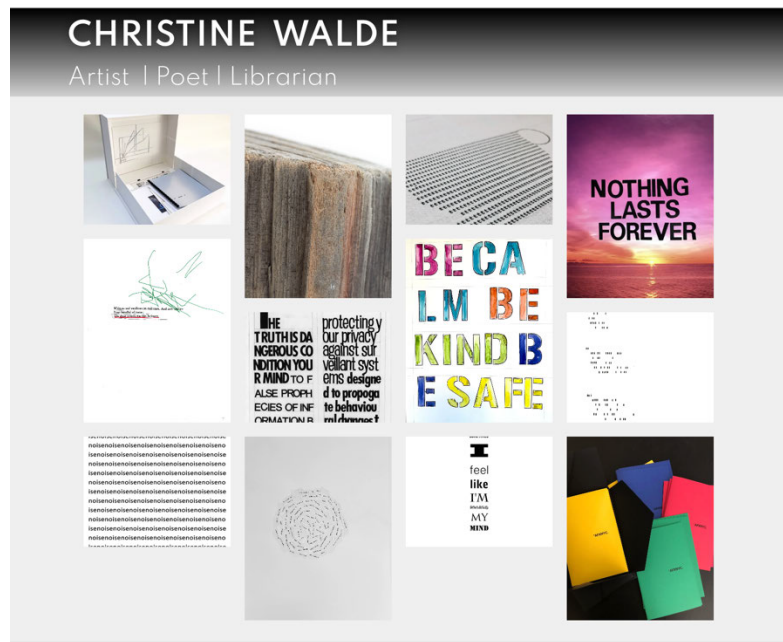
Following that, I was off to Hornby Island to do a poetry reading, *Islands*, and for my annual writing retreat, continuing to work on a few ongoing creative projects, as well as tending the rather weedy garden of my own archive, which continues to be neglected between study leaves and scholarly days, or when I can find the time.



These ongoing works include: *Data Poetics*, *Be Calm Be Kind Be Safe*, *Data Poetics*, along with a new work, *Mothership*. I also spent some time crafting the first draft, from other, disparate, drafts, what would become the false catalogue essay for *Salvage*, the exhibition I was invited to present at the GVPL Bruce Hutchison branch library in early September.

This creative work continued on and off, intermittently, through most of the summer and throughout my study leave, enhanced by the continuing development and expansion of [my personal website](#), including additional images and description of

all of my ongoing research-creation projects, and with thanks to the extension of my 2021 UVic IRCPG for this purpose.



In mid-July, I had the opportunity to attend the Rare Book School in New York City for the first time – something that I had wanted to do in 2020 but could not. The course I took was *The History of Artist Books Since 1950* with librarian Tony White. For five days, myself and a small group of librarians, museum directors, book historians, book enthusiasts and scholars met every day with Tony in a small, book-lined room, with Neo-Colonial mouldings and paisley wallpaper, curtains drawn, of the Grolier Club, a private library near 63<sup>rd</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup>, near Lexington Station, in New York City. Prior to being in the city, Tony had sent us an email, with a detailed agenda of the week to come. It was an intense week, starting at 9 a.m. every day, and ending as late as 7 or 8, with special library visits, studio visits, donor visits, artist talks, and even a risograph zine making workshop at a printshop on the Lower East Side.



We were even invited to make our own artist book. The heat was gruelling. The Tour de France was coming to its end on the Champs Elyseés, and I was unmasked, and in close conversation, for work and for pleasure and to connect, in one of the greatest cities on Earth.



When I went to NYC, I thought I knew a lot about artists' books. I learned I most definitely that I did not. And in the days that ensued, Tony showed us selections from his own collection, as well as those from other institutions, including the NY Public library, and those of a private collector who lived on the Upper East Side. It was a unique professional development and education experience as an Art Librarian, and one that I was grateful to attend.



When I came back in late July, the end of my brief 90 day leave was rapidly approaching its end. To prepare for the upcoming fall term, I brushed up on my LibGuide skills and took a workshop through SpringShare, as well as a video editing course through the DSC. The focus of the work on my LibGuides was about creating accessible, all-purpose guides to the resources within our libraries that I could use as teaching tools, and introducing a friendly, memorable face to Fine Arts students.

- [Art History and Visual Studies](#) ⓘ
- [Artists' Books](#) ⓘ
- [Education - Art Education & Research](#) ⓘ
- [Exhibition Planning](#) ⓘ
- [Images](#) ⓘ
- [Museum Studies](#) ⓘ
- [Theatre](#) ⓘ
- [Visual Arts](#) ⓘ

Subject Homepage: <https://libguides.uvic.ca/Arts>

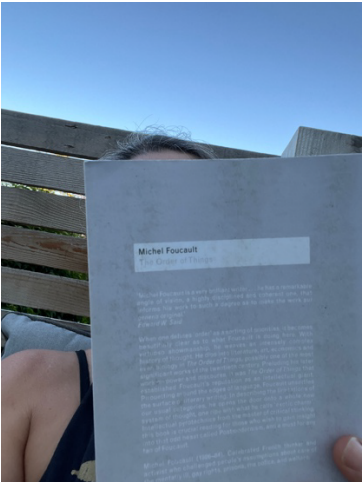
Subject Experts: [Christine Walde](#)

I also had the opportunity to finalize and prepare for the planned exhibition of *Salvage* at the Bruce Hutchison branch of the Greater Victoria Public Library (September – December 2024) which is an ongoing project that I started ten years ago when I moved to Vancouver Island, and began to collect pieces of found wood that resembled books, salvaging them as records of Deep Time. In the final days before I returned to work, I prepared the objects for the exhibition and finalized the writing of the catalogue, which I named a false catalogue, after Borges, from *The Library of Babel*.





Before I knew it, my planned vacation at the end of my leave in August was upon me, and I finally got the opportunity to close the page on another chapter of Foucault's *The Order of Things*, which I first began reading during my last study leave, and which I regard as an ongoing assignment to be pursued for the rest of my professional career as a librarian.



In retrospect, the three month time window went very quickly. But I managed to accomplish the goals I set out for myself in my study leave application, since I was able to both travel and participate in activities I could not engage with in 2020. And I am deeply grateful to my colleagues David Boudinot, Lisa Abram, Jennifer Wells, and Samantha MacFarlane for covering aspects of my portfolio while I was away on leave.

I was reminded of why it was important to take a break from the day-to-day of the busy-ness of the academic library and the academy; to refresh and recharge.

Thank you for granting me the opportunity to take a study leave in 2023.

Sincerely,

A solid black rectangular box used to redact the signature of Christine Walde.

Christine Walde  
Grants and Awards & Fine Arts Librarian  
(AHVS, Theatre, Writing & Visual Arts)