



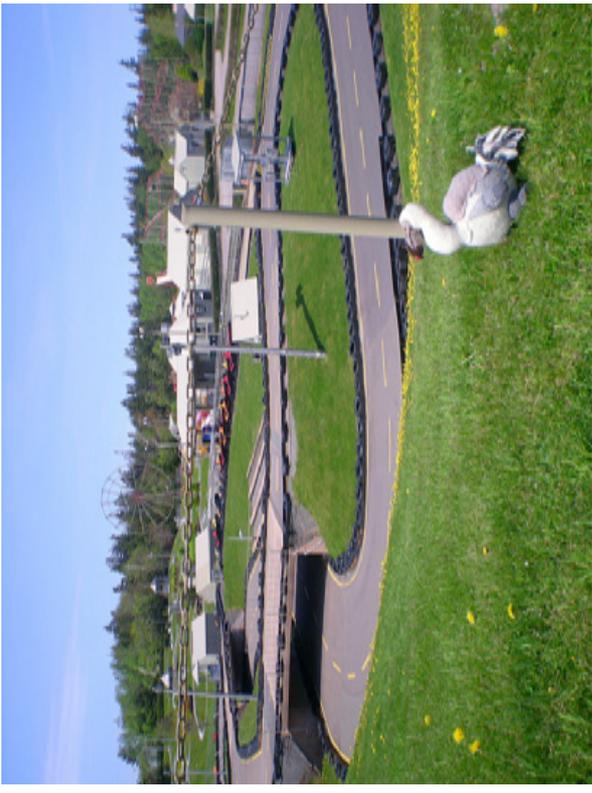
Dodolab - Andrew Hunter & Paula Jean Cowan

Dodolab: Island Studies (Book 1)



Dodolab: Island Studies (May 2010)

Yesterday, artist Paula Jean Cowan gave DodoLab a dodo bird to accompany us on our ongoing creative research work on Prince Edward Island. We decided to take it out with us today on a brief tour of the island, to release it and follow its wanderings. As the bird probed and prodded around, looking for food, testing out nest sites in its new surroundings, and showing the kind of inquisitiveness it was once known for, Shauna McCabe and I chatted about what an island is and what it means to belong or to be “from-away” as they like to say in PEI about those not born here. Lisa Hirmer and I have been thinking a lot lately about what makes and defines an island, not just physically determined places, but social and cultural spaces as well. We have become more and more interested in this topic as it relates to our core interests in resiliency and the barriers to adaptation and change and it echoes with our investigations in other communities. Our work in PEI last year was informed by local debates about the future of the *Experimental Farm* (a government and university agricultural research site in Charlottetown)



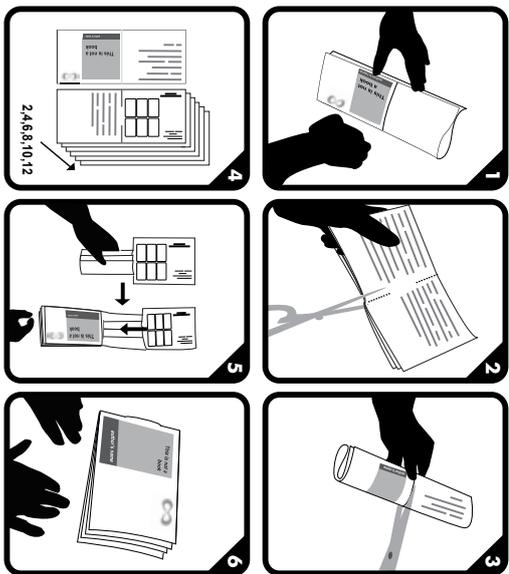
Paula Jean Cowan lives in Sackville, New Brunswick. She works in a variety of media including drawing and video animations. Along with her partner artist Chris Down, she will be part of the 2010 PEI DodoLab residency in July. She is currently working on a series of hand-made fauna of PEI based on indigenous species no longer present on the island and introduced species. In addition to these new creatures, she is creating patterns to be shared with the public during our residency and online through the DodoLab website.

DodoLab's 2010 team will also include Laura Knap and Maggie Hunter along with Lisa Hirmer and Andrew Hunter. While not in PEI this summer, Alice Angus and Giles Lane of Proboscis and Shauna McCabe (now Executive Director, Textile Museum of Canada) will continue to contribute to the program. This project is a continuing commission of the Confederation Centre Art Gallery (Kevin Rice, Director).

2010-05-23

The first in a series of publications in a series titled Island Studies generated from work done as part of DodoLab's ongoing residency with the Confederation Centre Art Gallery in Charlottetown, Prince Edward Island (Canada). Book features photographs of work by artist Paula Jean Cowan photographed by Andrew Hunter.

made with www.bookleteer.com from proboscis



Lisa Hirmer's dirt pile photographs) to rest at the base of a large mound of typical PEI red earth. A good sign, and so Shauna and I retrieved the bird and brought him back to Charlottetown for a solid meal of day-old cinnamon buns. Considering its propensity for resting on dirt piles, it seems appropriate to leave the bird in Lisa's care and to have it accompany us on our future travels.

-Andrew Hunter, DodoLab
May 2010

* In addition to myself and Lisa Hirmer (DodoLab Principal Researcher and Designer) our PEI team last summer consisted of Barbara Hobot, Laura Knap, Alice Angus and Giles Lane (proboscis), Shauna McCabe and students from Mount Allison University (Sackville, New Brunswick) as well as staff from the Confederation Centre for the Arts.

and while that multi-faceted program led our team* to various explorations of farming and the transformation and defining of a place, this was all firmly grounded in an awareness that these explorations were taking place within a very specifically defined place with distinct boundaries. So, while our focus here is shifting a little, we feel it is becoming richer and more relevant to the DodoLab activity that has been emerging over the past year. Like our new feathered friend, we continue to prod and probe our surroundings.

As can be seen in the series of images here, the dodo explored a variety of sites and locations on the island today but found little food or sustenance (nor did it find any others of its species, although it did encounter a few seagulls, starlings and crows, and was threatened by a large hawk). The last location the dodo visited was an old church and the cemetery that surrounds it. After rummaging around in the bushes, it became attracted to a fresh grave where it proceeded to poke in the dirt (which frankly seemed a bit ominous) but then (thankfully) wandered over to the adjacent property where it settled down (in a happy nod to

