

## JENN THORNHILL VERMA—ARTIST STATEMENT

Clapboard saltbox houses, wooden dories and skiffs, crooked wharves and docks, rickety fishing stages and sheds, eroding coastlines, stunted trees and rocks—these are the visuals that Canadian landscape artist Jenn Thornhill Verma portrays of the coastal communities of Newfoundland and Labrador.

Jenn comes from a long line of fishers—settlers who voyaged from Europe to (what is now) Canada for the Northwest Atlantic ocean’s promise of plentiful cod fish.

But gone are those days. After decades of foreign and domestic overfishing, the Canadian government closed the commercial cod fishery in hopes of bringing cod back from the brink. Today, the 1992 “cod moratorium,” as it’s called, remains in effect.

The early nineties granted Newfoundlanders and Labradorians a frontrow seat as wharves and docks were left to rot, wood-siding on saltbox houses exposed joints, and schooners and dories sank into their surrounding harbours. After the cod collapsed, communities did too—with many people abandoning the outports to relocate permanently.

Attempts to capture these landscapes on canvas, especially as climate change threatens Canada’s vast coastline (the longest on the planet), are part of an important cultural and historical record. This is the focus of Jenn’s visual art as well as her investigative journalism.

Jenn predominantly paints in oils, but sometimes uses acrylic. Her art loosely combines realism and impressionism, wherein the primary subject is recognizable (realism, based on photographs), yet is depicted with bold shapes and colours (impressionism, using a variety of bold brush strokes, knife work and an equally bold palette mixed by hand).