

**Words to the Wise: Play with the Future**

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# **Words to the Wise: Play with the Future**

**by Shannon Rayne**

## **Project Description:**

“Words to the Wise” is a text based, interactive installation that invites the UBC community to manipulate phrases offering clichéd life advice to create new, surreal and playful phrases and poems. Lines of clichéd life advice, such as “Remember to breathe” are displayed on rails of a fence-like structure in pairs of two, or couplets. In each phrase, one word rotates to alter the meaning of the advice, providing three new options. “Life is a journey not a destination” becomes “Life is an outhouse not a destination.” The new phrases offer new wisdom, nonsense, surrealism or metaphor.

## **Background and Rational:**

University is supposed to be a time of growth, development and seeing the world in new and exciting ways. But the reality is that deadlines, academic pressure and financial constraints often interfere with that excitement and discovery for many students. During times of stress, too often we encounter well-meaning advice from friends, media and family like “Life’s a journey not a destination,” that over time becomes clichéd. This project was designed to take clichéd life advice, and alter it – creating new, surreal and playful statements that are arranged and created by those that encounter it.

The installation took it’s inspiration from “glamour bombing,” a guerilla art movement to encourage folks to lighten up and see the environment in new ways. And who better to inspire than students -- with their brains wired on coffee and text books, racing from class to class, with little time to contemplate the light and hope of life.

## **Interactivity:**

The installation was designed to be played with to encourage students and faculty to rotate the words, to create new phrasing. It is installed at a transportation hub, where many students and faculty walk past every day, or wait for their buses. The phrases on the fences can be changed, so that there are new phrases installed over time.

## **Artist’s Statement:**

Shannon Rayne is a writer, poet and journalist with a background in health promotion. She approaches her writing with a quirky sense of humour and research and loves to collaborate. Her work has been presented with visual artists, improv actors, contemporary dancers, and mixed media artists. Her poems can be found in Poetry is Dead, Filling Station and The Feathertale Review.