

Volume³

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Introduction

Welcome to the third installment of VOLUME, XPACE's annual anthology of exhibition essays, interviews and support material. VOLUME acts as a snap shot of the programming that happens every year at XPACE, a glimpse into the exhibitions and events that make XPACE a vibrant part of Toronto and OCAD University's arts community. We want to use this year's VOLUME to show off our many spaces, using the year's programming to take you on a virtual tour of the space that is XPACE. This publication gathers together documentation from our five different programming spaces dating from April 2011 through August 2012: our *Main Space*, *Window*, *XBASE*, *the External Space*, and our new and exciting *Library*.

XPACE Cultural Centre is a membership driven artist-run centre supported by the OCAD Student Union and dedicated to providing emerging and student artists with the opportunity to showcase their work in a professional setting. We program contemporary practices that respond to the interests and needs of our membership. As we program with shorter time-lines this allows for us to respond to contemporary issues in theory and aesthetics, keeping an up to the minute response to what is going on directly in our community.

XPACE Cultural Centre acknowledges the gracious support of the OCAD Student Union, Ontario Arts Council, Toronto Arts Council, and Cultural Human Resources Council.

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Main Space¹

In our Main Space we program group exhibitions that explore shared ideas and themes that show up in many artist's practices. Emphasis is placed on questioning the gallery's role as a passive part of the exhibition experience. Instead our artists are invited to consider the space as an active player in the way that their work is seen.

Like There's No Tomorrow

OCAD U Interdisciplinary Master's in Art and Design *April 13 –17, 2011*

Rebecca Baird, Lisa Binnie, Susan Campbell, Pedro Bonatto de Castro, Fareena Chanda, Keith Cole, Philip Cote, Gloria Caballero, David Clarkson, Benjamin Edelberg, Julian Higuerey Nunez, Rita Camacho, Po Chun Lao, Nermin Moufti, Rachel Pulfer, Frank Tsonis, Christine Walker, Marian Wihak

Curated by Mary McDonald

Mary McDonald

I was dreamin' when I wrote this/Forgive me if it goes astray/But when I woke up this mornin'/Coulda sworn it was judgment day (Prince, 1982)

Nineteen artists, five days and no more time to waste. *Like There's No Tomorrow* is a group exhibition featuring a diverse assembly of artists with just as wide-ranging practices. From a sculpture inspired by an early TV test pattern to an interactive attendance projection, this exhibition crosses boundaries and climbs over definitions. Here, artists cross breed drawing, painting and sculpture, new media and multi-media, sound, video, design and performance. Themes of immersion, dislocation, urbanization, censorship and reception run rampant through these works. Taking the exhibition's title as a starting point, if there were no tomorrow, what would today look like? Through both individual and collaborative practice, these artists wrestle their practices to the ground, challenging their constructions, pushing for answers and ultimately letting them go.

This is a limited time offer.

There is an implicit finish line even at the outset of graduate school. Two years and counting, the artists and designers represented here were brought together through a process of application, selection, acceptance and dislocation from their previous artistic communities. But through relocation their practices have come into contact, at times bouncing off one another, merging at others.

This is the way that a collaborative artistic community emerges. Pedro Bonatto de Castro and Ben Edelberg's film, *In Your Wake Others Like You Will Appear*, is remarkable in this way. Originally created for their class in interdisciplinary collaboration, this three-channel video features a whirling dancer. At times, black lace and hair conceals her face. She writhes to an insistent drumbeat that seems more present in the viewer's space than her own. This piece is anxious and unsettling, abrupt gestures in an industrial space.

While an expiry date is indeed stamped onto this constructed community, it is still

a real and immersive experience for the artists involved. This sense of immersion is translated through various experiments in perception. Rita Kamacho and Fareena Chanda's work comes to mind in this regard. Both are interested in how we see what we see and the relationship between light, lens, and image.

In Point of Convergence, Chanda relocates images of the forest stretched over wooden hoops in XPACE's window gallery. Circular in format, these hanging forms suggest the eye of the camera, or perhaps more specifically the lens through which our eye and the camera similarly bend and translate light. These hoops look out onto the street and function as windows or mirrors of an alternate landscape. Likewise, in her related piece, fragments of the landscape are viewable through a round lens in a wooden box. The light is refracted, and the landscape fragmented, a repeating pattern.

Similarly, Rita Kamacho's photograph series, *Yesterday*, also plays with our visual perception. Interested in optics, the artist holds up a magnifying sheet to the cityscape. Kamacho's visual experiments are performative documents, as the artist's hand is visible. This proposes a particular way of seeing and an acknowledgement of the artists' presence. Distorted and upside-down, these photographs invert our expectations of urban photography, intervening in the process of perception. Photos are supposed to be exact, to be evidential. Instead, Kamacho asks us to reconsider our preconceptions about seeing in a playful way.

Speaking of experimentation, graduate school is a natural testing ground. Each of these artists are participating in the Interdisciplinary Master's in Art, Media and Design Program at OCAD University. While many began with a particular media, they have been exploring the boundaries of their practice. Rachel Pulfer, for example, a journalist and painter, is interested in developing her portraiture digitally by combining painting, drawing and stop animation. Her video, *Metamorphosis*, is an experiment in narrative transformation, capturing a changing face over time perhaps better representing how our identities are formed through experience.

Tomorrow keeps turning around (Bob Dylan, 2006)

Also interested in the relationship between narrative, traditional media and video is Po Chun Lau in her work *Remembering Pouch Cove*. Experimenting with video, Lau records the writhing sea and windswept coast of Pouch Cove, Newfoundland. A small community at the edge of the world, Pouch Cove is constantly battered by wind and sea. Lau's images reflect this shifting landscape, merging various perspectives recorded both by video and by hand. It is here that we see Lau's interest in the human subject; her paintings are translations of the witnessed landscape of the artist's direct experience. The ocean is personified through an oral account by local resident, Mr. Gerald Noseworthy. In this case, living next to the sea is like an unpredictable neighbour, always dramatic and sometimes cruel.

While Lau's work regards nature as a volatile force, Lisa Binnie's *Seed Catcher Experiment* literally merges industrial and natural materials. Binnie's work repurposes discarded materials left to decay in the rural landscape. Various found objects, rusted steel and wire as well as beeswax, leaves and twigs are combined, proposing an inseparable link between human and nature. In this way, Binnie suggests an intervention into both the natural environment and the landscape of the gallery.

Considering further acts of intervention, Nermin Moufti's *T[ERROR]* explores the performative nature of language. Interested in how cultural assumptions are encoded in typography, Moufti draws attention to this often overlooked fact. Juxtaposing Arabesque pattern and a not so delicate combination of six letters an uneasy tension arises. Both intimidating and ornamental, threatening and aesthetically pleasing, this work confronts cultural preconceptions. If language is a part of the gallery's architecture as this work suggests, then it enacts a particular function, like a supporting beam.

Equally interested in disrupting cultural assumptions, is the fearless performance artist and provocateur Keith Cole. Enacted during the exhibition's run at XPACE, *Poo in the Sink* features Cole methodically washing, drying, washing and drying texts on the



Installation view, *Like There's No Tomorrow*, 2011

subject of women in film. Challenging passive viewership by satirical censorship, Cole is only visible via a surveillance monitor installed in the gallery. Here, Cole presents an updated Winston Smith, washing away subversive content. Separated from the action, we are rendered the helpless but knowing subjects of the act. In this way, Cole cleverly employs the panoptic gaze, wherein artist and viewers self-police in fear of being watched.

Surveillance is taken to a formal level in Frank Tsonis' piece *Ephemeros*, a small projection on plexi-glass. Tsonis has mounted a camera that records the movements of gallery visitors. Movement is transformed into abstract forms and gestures, which are projected onto the plexi-glass shelf. Taking the exhibition's title as a starting point, the stored movements exist only for a day before being erased. The outcome? It is as if XPACE's history is only one day old. Today is the only day that matters.

On the opposite side of the spectrum, Phillip Cote's piece *Return of the Buffalo* is an exercise of reparation with the past. Placed on a mound of earth, a buffalo skull is decorated with broken shards of bone china in the traditional Plains design of the Thunder. Here Cote reifies the relationship between past, present and future by returning the china, which was in part made from the same bone-dust of the animal. In this act, the buffalo is made whole and the artist an active agent in this transformation.

"Maybe tomorrow I'll want to settle down..." (Terry Bush, 1979)

In a related vein, Julian Higuerey Núñez's video *Stop Drop and Roll (How to start a fire)* explores a more personal act of restitution. In the short video, the artist rolls a ball of Valentine's chocolate along the sidewalk. What lucky lady will be on the receiving end of this gift? The process is slow and dirty, the brown ball of chocolate made inedible through its contact with the ground and the artists feet. The action is made even more pathetic in an unfortunate slip, where the artist falls, gets up and continues kicking. This journey is so anti-Hallmark, absurd and tragically humorous.

Unlike Núñez's playful take on failure, David Clarkson's *Malfunction* is a sound piece that mixes two streams of unaltered audio from the Challenger Space Shuttle explosion of January 1986. One is a home recording by Jack and Mildred Moss, the other, live radio transmissions from the control station. That's trouble George. An electronic score composed by Clarkson propels the piece forward. That's brighter than usual. Unsettling, the spectacle becomes rhythmical put to music, suggesting we are caught in the representation itself. That's an historical moment that we've got there on tape. Like car wrecks and

more recently, the Japanese tsunami, these moments become immediately historicized, turned into representations of the real, mediated images that elicit response only to themselves: Youtube comments and sound bytes.

Britt Wray is also fascinated in the interactions between science and art. Attracted in hybrid structures, biotechnology and the visualization of scientific knowledge, Wray explores the physical effects of withdrawal. Addicts makes visible the invisible, brain behaviors and neuro-chemical transmitters that must find new paths in the face of lack. The addiction, in Wray's case is not the obvious however, but love. The crisis, when relationships end.

Visualization of behavior takes on a quite a different look in Susan Campbell's piece in *Like There's No Tomorrow, Resistance Is Decidedly Mechanical*. I imagine this is how robots would construct a painting. The work is futuristic but yet somehow a throw-back to abstract expressionism. On a tin canvas, enamel and Duralar strips are held in position by small magnets suggesting the mutable. While Campbell is no robot, she does employ an altered drawing machine that has a distinct automatic gesture. Affixed to the surface this miniature robo-Pollock first drew the lines represented here in bright enamel. The overlapping threads also call to mind the tradition of mapping, another systematic act of visualization.

In a similar way Rebecca Baird's work also draws on historical visual culture. In *Continuity and Change*, a plexi-glass sculpture with colored transparent sections, the artist references the iconic Indian Head Television Test Card Pattern of the 1950s. Baird is concerned with the reclamation of manufactured Indigenous images and narratives. By combining the TV test pattern image with digital representations of traditional quill and beadwork, Baird proposes a new image, restoration through design. The shape of the sculpture, reminiscent of a TV monitor itself, also creates a mirror effect where one's face is visible in the gleam of the glass.

Hold nothing back.

Gloria Caballero purposefully employs the mirror and personal reflection in her video *Esa Foto (That Photo)*. This piece is simply and complexly about transformation. At the literal level, the artist's naked face is transformed methodically as she puts on make up. A night out on the town perhaps? However as the narration begins, a new story emerges, we come to understand that this is about another kind of transformation, life into death. The voice also acknowledges a large distance between the woman in the mirror and her loved ones far away, and this too is a transformative, one that happens slowly and over large distances. Without the photo, the touchstone, it is easy to get lost.

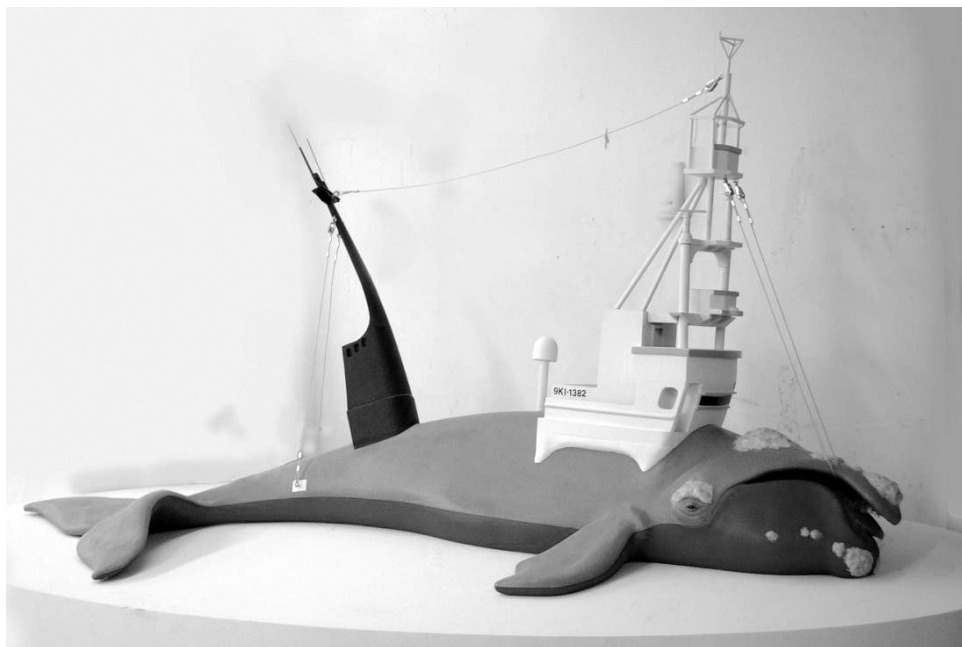
Under the great southern Saskatchewan skies it is also easy to lose oneself. Marian Wihak's *Delphos III* is an epic photograph. Overwhelmed by the vast grey and blue sky, Wihak pulled off the highway to capture this passing dramatic weather system. Here, it seems as if there are no boundaries. Wihak catalogued the passing system, noting the time, although even these are never quite adequate to freeze the moment or control the chaos.

Christine Walker also acknowledges the chaos and confusion in nature, although not from the human perspective. Walker is an avion advocate. Like many of her colleagues she too is interested in the relationship between the urban and the natural realms. Lamenting the city's impact on bird populations, in *Flinch* the artist mixes dry and wet media, as well as collage onto a mylar surface bringing to life these interests through bright colorful marks.

At first, a predetermined artistic community, today, the artists in *Like There's No Tomorrow* have formed an actual one. Displaced? Not anymore! Through collaboration, all the late night discussions, rapid-fire production, pushed limits and expanded boundaries have resulted in these artist's selections. The threads of these works intertwine, constructing an even stronger fabric. Each artist continues along their own personal journey while at the same time providing a context and reference point for one another. If indeed there's no tomorrow, then I'd say today looks pretty good.

Known By Traces

*April 22 – May
14, 2011*



Nicholas Crombach, 2011

**Alex Bowron, Nicholas Crombach, Shannon
Doyle, Lindsay Holton, and Ian Norton**

Alicia Nauta

In my first encounters with these works, I immediately thought of childhood expeditions in the old orchard behind my house. There were mysterious worlds to inhabit; the abandoned tree fort built by ‘The Bad Kids’, still smelling of stale beer and cigarettes, the rusted box spring mattress to jump on, the globs of sap with insects caught in them on the neglected cherry trees, and little rabbits that would appear out of nowhere, twitch their ears and then disappear again. There was a sense of chance and mystery that permeated this orchard that in truth had more to do with my imagination and the way I moved around the space, than the abandoned garbage that I was actually playing in.

In the works in *Known By Traces*, the artists seek to find glimpses into the otherworldly, through explorations of the everyday and the possibilities it may hold. Through repetitious retellings and symbolic acts and movements, they demonstrate the ways in which we learn to make meaning of natural phenomenon and strange occurrences. There is also an element of mysteriousness in all the works, which show the artists’ affinity for searching out and materializing the gaps in reality that are often fleeting. This materialization, which informs the creation of myth, has been a way for us to pass on lessons and establish models for behaviour. The works revisit old myths and their formation, as well as creating new ones.

In Shannon Doyle’s performance *Throw/Catch*, a medicine ball is thrown between her and another performer, until they are physically unable to continue the exercise. The simple gesture of catching and throwing a ball is taken to extremes and confronts our own physicality and its limits, and draws attention to inevitable human decay. This exercise parallels a gesture similar to storytelling, in which knowledge is passed between people and eventually becomes distorted, through slight changes in the act of retelling, and even deteriorates over an extended period of time. Doyle’s performance is also closely related to the Greek Myth of *Sisyphus*, who was condemned to repeat forever the same meaningless task of pushing a boulder up a mountain, only to see it roll down again.

The Steel Spinning Wheel, made by Ian Norton, shows a device traditionally used by women, but re-imagined and constructed out of steel. In his performance with the wheel, he sits down and spins, confronting past and present notions of male identity and ways that activities have been and continue to be gendered. It also suggests the act of “spinning a yarn,” of telling a story (or even a lie) in which the gestures he makes in creating the yarn describe a narrative.

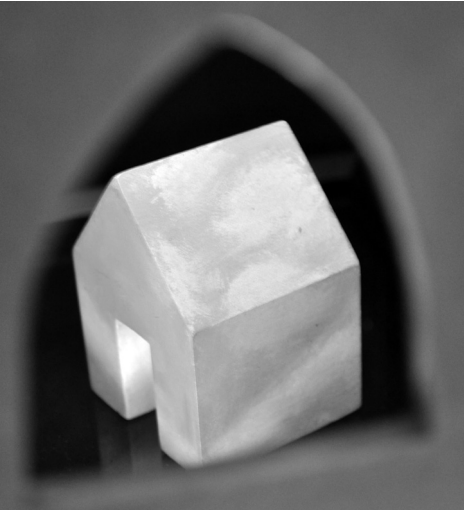
The whale sculptures of Nick Crombach explore familiar myth territory, as we are reminded of many stories in which the whale symbolized the great struggle between man and the natural world. In both *Moby Dick* and the biblical story of *Jonah* (swallowed by a whale), man is powerless to the force of the natural world and the ‘unseen hand’ of a deity. Crombach looks at this struggle in a contemporary sense, as he explores ideas of our increasing impact on the natural world, and our attempts to dominate nature. Particularly in his sculpture of a whale that is doubled as a Japanese whaling vessel, we see how he is negotiating between the two worlds and our conflicting viewpoints surrounding them. Questions of sacrifice, morals and shame are posed in relation to the world, which we utilize and often exploit for our own purposes.

Alex Bowron’s piece *The Void* also poses questions about our relationship to our surroundings. She attempts to subvert traditional ideas of the gallery as a white cube and draws attention to the structure of the space, by expanding the actual area in which the art can inhabit. Cleverly hidden, a small circular hole in the wall has black fabric stretched into a cone like shape behind the wall, which appears as a void or a black abyss. The work references the confines of our physical world as well as the many unknowns, such as black holes in space, as well as the idea that significance can be found even in non-places. Bowron shows us that the act of suspending our disbelief is sometimes necessary in order to appreciate the possibility found in the unexpected.

The other ‘hidden’ work in the show, Lindsay Holton’s train piece, addresses ideas



Shannon Doyle, 2011



Lindsay Holton, 2011



Alex Bowron, 2011

of truth and its distortions associated with memory. Through a small mailbox slot opening in the wall, you can see a model train moving around a track, where the reflection of its dim lights creates an almost dream-like atmosphere. A re-enactment of a memory she has since realized never happened, this 'fake memory' exists only in her imagination. Materializing this gap in reality, she brings to life something that is much like a shimmering mirage: short-lived, uncertain, and difficult to pin down. Memory can become mythical at times, highlighting events or places that are exaggerated, fragmented and sometimes, not even real in a physical sense.

From this exhibition, I got a sense of glimpsing into the unreal and unseen. Through ritualistic gestures and circumventing traditional symbols, the artists explored ways that we make meaning, pass knowledge, and catch traces of magic. Through these explorations into their own mysterious and mythical worlds, we are given the chance to use the works as a jumping off point to dive into our own unconscious, thus unearthing a plethora of personal narrative and mystical glimmerings.

What Goes Around Comes Around

*July 18 –
August 19, 2011*



Joshua Barndt and Daniella Bessada, 2012

**Life of a Craphead, Joshua Barndt, Geoffrey Pugen, Jeremy Bailey and
Danielle Bessada**

Curated by Derek Liddington and Jennie Suddick



Danielle Bessada, 2012



Jeremy Bailey and Geoffrey Pugen, 2012

In recent years artists, curators and critics have made attempts to document and capture Toronto's vibrant, energetic and rich visual arts scene, both past and present. This summer MOCCA's presents *This is Paradise*, a series of exhibitions which takes a nostalgic look at the Toronto's cultural milieu in relation to The Cameron House during the first half of the 1980s.

In response, *What Goes Around Comes Around* will offer a glimpse into artistic trends that utilize collectivity as not only the means of production, but a platform for political and social interaction. *What Goes Around Comes Around* presents Toronto based artists Joshua Barndt, Geoffrey Pugen, Melissa Fisher and Jeremy Bailey, as well as the collective *Life of a Craphead*. These artists use performance, video, installation and social media as tools for collaboration and engagement with their environment. *What Goes Around Comes Around* will feature three phases in which the artists will react, reshape and recontextualize each others' contributions, determined through ambivalence, antagonism and biography.

Shifting Identities From the Inside “Out”

SPARK Residency
September 9 – 24,
2011

Liam Wylie, Elise Victoria Louise
Windsor, Jillian Kay Ross

Cameron Lee

I was born and raised in a neighbourhood straddling the line that separates the City of Toronto and the City of Scarborough. In the early 1990's there was an amalgamation of several regions, including Scarborough, into what became one large and sprawling 'Megacity'. I have fond memories of my sister and I referring to the 'Me-gacity', our mocking mispronunciation of Toronto's attempts at forcing a city status onto what is actually a series of neighbourhoods. Our neighbourhood is the 'Beach,' or the 'Beaches,' depending to whom you are speaking. Apparently there was a vote taken among residents within the region, with street signs proclaiming 'The Beach' as the officially recognized name of the area. This is one of many minute details among the patchwork of politics, sordid histories, gossip and banalities: all of the plagues within a distinct bubble making up our fair Megacity.

All nostalgia aside, a place, and what a place can mean as approached by an outsider can offer insights that may be overlooked or neglected. Three emerging artists, with strong and distinct practices, coming to Syracuse, New York. XPACE Cultural Centre in collaboration with SPARK Contemporary Art Space, organized a residency for emerging artists from Toronto to work and live in Syracuse. Through their curiosity and vitality, the artists bring new life and interest to a quiet town.

Syracuse, or the 'Cuse as it will be referred to from here on, is a university city. It falls within the 'Rust Belt' region of the North Eastern United States. The artists: Jillian, Liam and Elise spent their 5 week residency at SPARK with accommodations at a local grad school student named Mike. I am a programmer at XPACE, and a friend to all three artists. Straddling the line separating the professional and personal, this was an opportunity for me to experience Syracuse based on the inside knowledge of my artist friends.

As an insider, you know who's who, when things are happening, and how to get there quickly. An outsider is at the mercy of GPS logic and comments on a message board. When looking up the directions to SPARK Contemporary from my hotel, I am given three options from Google for routes to follow. Each seems simple enough. When travelling toward SPARK and not knowing my way beyond a crude, hand drawn map on the back of a business card, a walk down the street can seem like an adventure.

The artists remind me that a small city remains a city. And what I mean by this silly wordplay is that despite a seeming placid or fallow bed, life remains, if less obviously conspicuous. We go out to some bars and clubs, the city's main square teeming with crowds of swaying middle aged couples and families. All seem to be drunk and jubilant; we've caught the fallout of a beer festival, complete with live bands playing some vague blend of top 40 pop and danceable Latin music. As provincial and corny as it all seems, my three



Installation view, 2011

guides, with Mike and another Toronto artist Brianna in tow assert that there is fun to be had. And we too drink and dance, despite the DJ at one club having no interest in playing our requested songs (who hasn't heard of R. Kelly?!) We eat tacos, and make fun of what the night has dealt us.

Nearing the end of our dance frenzy, we've lost a few members of our group to the tiredness of summer heat, booze and the late hour. Liam and Mike, Brianna and I walk up to check out a public sculpture by Sol Lewitt. A massive, white cubic grid of square modules greets us, which we promptly understand to be the adult equivalent of a school-yard jungle gym. Strange that a Modernist modular form is rarely referred to as playful within the academic writing of Modern thinkers. But perhaps it was the relief of serious thought that our Dionysian endeavors enabled. Slowly I come to realize that it is what you make of a place, and the people who share it with you, that can make even the most tiring experience transform into the worthwhile. This sense of levity and play run through the practice of Elise, Jillian and Liam.

Each artist involved in the Residency uses the tenets of Minimalist simplicity, but in a way that is playful and familiar, rather than cold and alien. The cool, flat exteriors of Liam's flags and sculpture belie comforting meditations, expanding awareness and perception. Jillian's paintings, sculpture and prints feel familiar and gentle, like traces left behind from lost experiences. Elise's photography transforms place from the banal to the weird and magical through simple arrangements and placement of reflective surfaces and composition. The artists are not entering the 'Cuse in an attempt to create a Utopian space, to be shaped according to their ideal. Instead I see this temporary experience as one of a nomadic studio.

Entering a place as an outsider could recall the idealism of not just Europeans seeking refuge from the inhospitable Europe of World War Two, but the mythologies surrounding the history of America and its beloved Pilgrims aboard the Mayflower. The peoples inhabiting upstate New York and Southern Ontario, through Michigan among other regions have within their histories a nomadic, reactive way of claiming place. You go with the vitality of the land, where the possibility of food, hospitable climate and respect for the limits of all of the above are understood.



Elisa Victoria Louise Windsor, 2011



Jillian Kay Ross, 2011

My ancestors are of both European and Iroquois origins, both maternally and paternally. A mixing of histories and politics within each respective ancestry are inherited. And thus it is an inheritance of Jillian, Liam and Elise, and all who live and travel and do anything whatever within North America. We have our rusted monuments to idealism and prosperity, and we have a constant influx of immigrants. In the case of Syracuse, and Buffalo among many other 'dying' cities, there is a diminishing of populations and interest. But the monuments, cities and peoples within all of the aforementioned among others remain. No amount of rust, dust or tumble-weeds can erase that inherited history. There is always opportunity for exploration and discovery of what the seemingly vacant has to offer. The history has been laid, now is our time to understand what that means to us, here and now.

Starting in 2010 XPACE has partnered with SPARK Contemporary Art Space to offer a residency program in Syracuse, New York .

XPACE sends 2 artists/ artist teams selected from the OCAD U Graduate Exhibition to create work in the Spark gallery space, with the residency culminating in an exhibition/open studio event. XPACE provides accommodations and a small per diem. This residency offers a unique opportunity to foster recent graduate practices in future years.

Between Cellar and Attic

October 14 –
November 5, 2011

Ryan Lord, Paola Savasta, Genevieve
Roberston

Elizabeth Underhill

In the starlit place

(for Genevieve)

Wallpaper
roses layered in
clouds. Ash cloaked
suitcases kept close for
wandering. Big gentle sleepy
blankets piled up to collect some
rest. Black silk panopticon shadow
cat tethered to shifty grinned somnolent
meditation. Musty moss woven bird made
nest thieved from a mud slicked wood beam
after its inhabitants took flight to search for a home
elsewhere. Perfume absent vintage mottled lead glass
vessels sweetened by memories of once near loved ones
a milk a pink a frosted white with touch-worn patches of handpainted
flowers cramped together securely in a Bermuda Triangle of sentimental
arrangement. Induction unravelled linen bound threshold navigation guide
books gathered around me like the crumbling ruins of a stone amphitheatre
on shelves table floor bed precarious stacks stuffed with pressed leaf love letters spilling
into an unknown river's waters that sweep buried bone words deep downstream to be sought
after gleaming in the starlit place I visit whenever there is an opportunity to take a little time to
look.



Paola Savasta, 2011

Rectangles of dysfunction that occupy my wall

(A semi-fictional list for Paola)

Painting of productive agricultural land sold
to industrial property developers.
Fastidiously organized to do list always
neglected to be read.
Love note on postcard of exceptionally
hideous Icelandic sunset.
Water-resistant found dog poster with high
res picture of a duck.
Counterfeit-proof train pass already
lost five times and counting.
Fortunes of prosperity from
inedible cookies.

Newspaper article on furniture shipment
sent straight to the dump.
Photo of university graduates destined
to lifetime of career insecurity, circa 2002.
Definition of some pithy zeitgeist word
no one will use in a year.
Self-portrait sketched on envelope orphaned
from proper identification papers.
Perfectly recorded full contact information
for person I will never call.
Award announcement for directional signs
designed for election nobody voted in.
“Bonne chance” stamped on metal keepsake
containing carcinogens.

Precious quote by esteemed dead intellectual
that derailed my art practice.
Coordinates of public space requiring
permits to use and patrolled by police.
Wise words from mother inadequately
recognized for her contributions.
Prescription for drugs to treat
the wrong problems.
IOUs from trusted friends with
no plans to pay back their debts.
Myspace user name and password.

Internal monologue for Mr Olympia's workout

(for Ryan)

Work that chest out
 Work it hard
 Pump it pump it pump
 Incline bench press
 Four times ten
 Burn hot to get big bumps

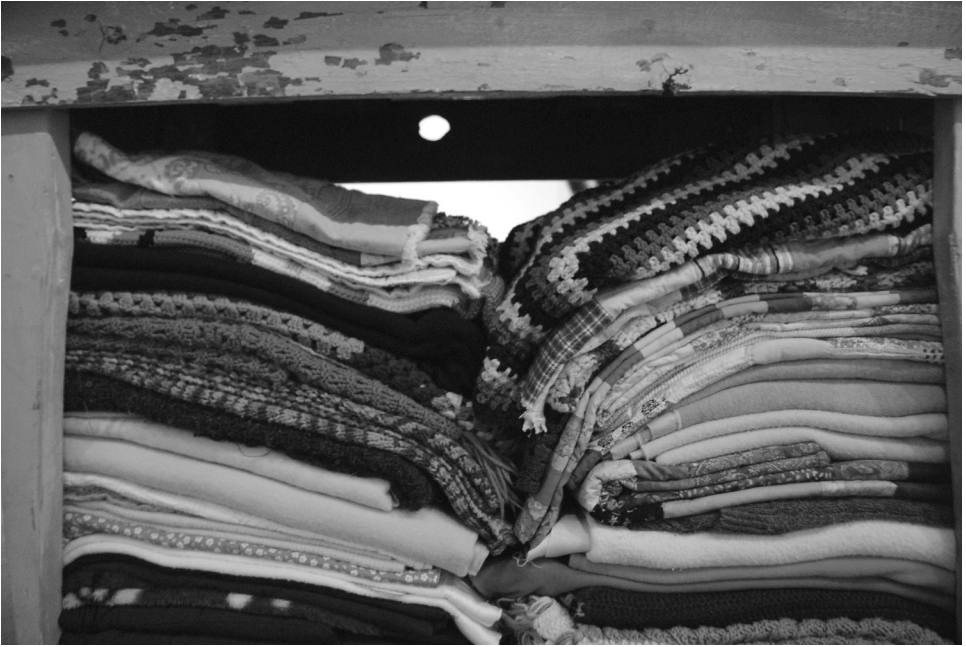
Now the biceps
 Incline curls
 Donkey kickbacks fast
 Rip, sliced, shredded
 Cut extreme
 Who cares about the rest

Deadlifts, pulldowns
 Build that back
 Rugged to the max
 Say you're unsure
 Kill that noise
 And get your body jacked

Don't you try to
 Hide from me
 Where you gonna go?
 We're not done here
 Flesh machine
 Until your mass gets grown

Feeling tired, wow
 Malcontent
 Think that's all you are
 Cardboard body
 Empty box
 You're void of any power

You're fucking weak
 Dead to me
 Call yourself a man?
 Just don't you dare
 Abandon me
 I don't know who I am



Genevieve Roberston, 2011



Ryan Lord, 2011

K-Town

*September 27 –
October 7, 2011*



Installation view, 2011

Amy Lockhart, Julian Higuerey Núñez & Keith Cole, Rita Kamacho, Philippe Blanchard, Edward Birnbaum & Michael Jacobs, Elise Victoria Louise Windsor, Matthew Williamson, Meredith Carruthers & Susannah Wesley, Luke Painter, Geoffrey Pugen & Tibi Tibi Neuspiel, Camilla Singh & Walter Willems, Alex McLeod, Jenn Norton, Jennifer Cherniack, Meera Margaret Singh, Winnie Truong & Darren Rigo, Laura Paolini, Jon Rafman, Brianna Lowe, Doug Buis, Lauren Pelc McArthur, Cry School Yearbook, Wrik Mead, Ryan Park, Kotama Bouabane, Elvira Finnigan, Faith La Roque, Joanna Householder, Paulette Phillips, Derek Liddington, Zeesy Powers, Evan Tapper, Lisa Visser, Collin Zipp

K-Town is a performance and video based work curated by Luke Painter and Meera Margaret Singh that transforms a gallery space into a karaoke lounge. Inspired by karaoke culture and the often disparate and melodramatic video content that accompanies singing in karaoke bars, artists have been invited to create video and animation content to musical hits of their choosing.



Cameron Lee singing along, 2011

Love in Translation

November 18 –
December 10, 2011

Steven Beckley, Lanie Chalmers
and Suzanne Caines

Lauren Bride

*“Oh! my creator, make me happy; let me feel gratitude towards you for one benefit! Let me see that I excite the sympathy of some existing thing; do not deny me my request!...
...my virtues will necessarily arise when I live in communion with an equal. I shall feel the affections of a sensitive being, and become linked to the chain of existence and events, from which I am now excluded.”*

The Monster, to his creator, Dr Frankenstein, from Mary Shelley’s *Frankenstein*

Before you decide anything, let me say first, none of the artists in *Love in Translation* (Steven Beckley, Suzanne Caines, and Lanie Chalmers) are a Victor Frankenstein, and no work in the exhibition is a Monster. Nor would the reference apply if the equation were inverted. No leveling action is required. Bear with me in a tiny act of sustained faith: payoff forthcoming. The creature that Dr Frankenstein electrifies into existence is miserable. His loneliness is of the amplified variety expressed in cartoonish proportion in story. It sticks with us because really, it is a familiar representation. At one time or another we have all felt like Frankenstein’s monster in love: confused, rejected, and misunderstood. Sometimes, though, we need the lines drawn big and bold sometimes to see clearly. Frankenstein’s monster wants to nurture some gentleness within himself by sharing kindness with other people. This is hard for anyone branded monster, and especially hard for one named “Monster” by his erstwhile dad.

So the monster asks for some help, for someone else who is like him, someone sympathetic or empathetic, who he can share his time, generosity, and intimacies with. It is this hope in the Monster that I want to point out. He believes that being received by another sympathetic soul and sharing his affections will humanize him and allow his virtues to furnish his being. He has some love in him set on growing, and wants to talk about it. He wants to play a role, to belong to something greater than himself. However; if he had a chance at it, would the Monster have seen that sometimes it gets a little tricky? (Note to the committed: payoff trickling out, starting now). The hope to love, and imagining love, is one gorgeous, blinding, thing. When it is translated into real life experience, playing the roles of love, surprises ensue.

I consider this hope of the Monster, and how a completely unfettered yearning for love might encounter the complicated expressions of the artists in *Love in Translation*.

Steven Beckley stages photos of a seemingly candid moment shared in a love relationship that draw the viewer into that most private world, making both an admirer and immediate voyeur of his audience. It is the repetition of an image taken at the moment



Installation view, 2011

the phrase “I love you” is expressed, degraded by photocopies of photocopies, all originating from the first most saturated image. A haze is subsequently cast over the figures and by effect, objects and bodies melt into an amorphous blur. The idea is that rote, reflexive repetitions of the symbolic phrase drain it of meaning, depth and vibrancy. However, in this photograph the utterance of “I love you” was actually a performative act. Steven and his partner staged the exchange of verbalizing their first “I love you” for the purpose of this image. By demonstrating the effect of photostatic reproductions on real-time moments, we are to see the effect that tokenizing declarations of love have on the meaning of the words. The statement, like the image, is a reproduction of the first time it was said. The candour of this photo is a red herring: the mere articulation of this phrase does not validate it. While they do love each other, it is the ritualistic act of the phrase being repeated, and thus degraded.

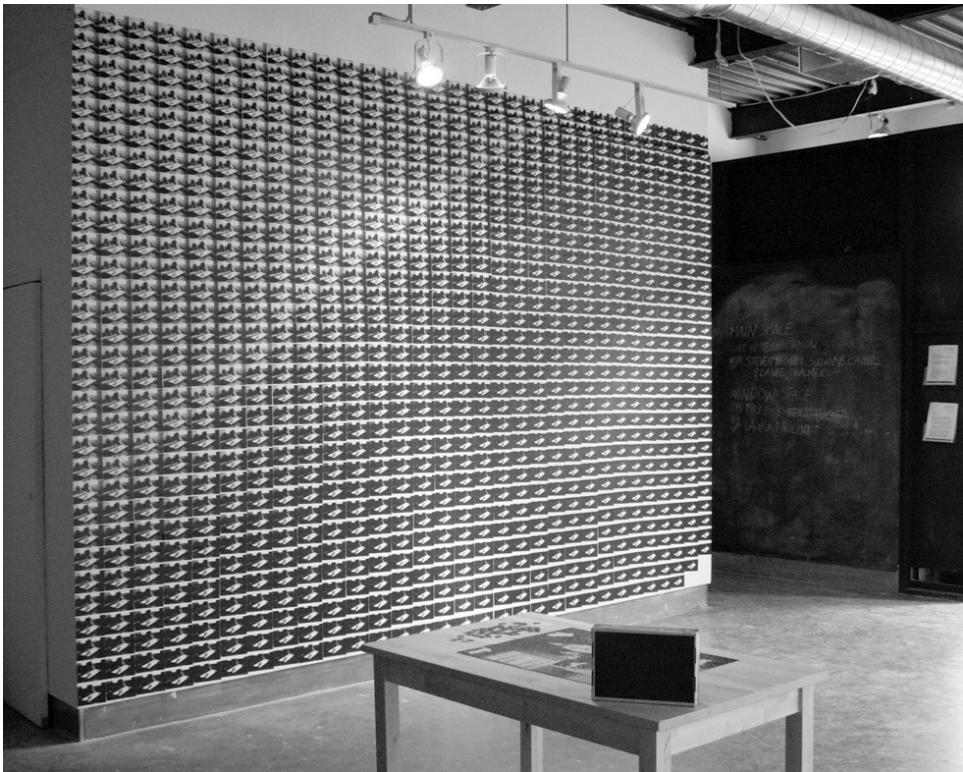
Lanie Chalmers’ *The Red House (Home Is An Intangible Place)* recalls her parents’ divorce through several retellings. In conversation with her mother, father, and brothers over Skype, Chalmers shows that there is not one truth, but alternate histories woven by the emotional memory of the person speaking. Details vary, and each family member retraces his or her own topography, swollen here and eroded there by memory. Chalmers asks questions and we watch as one moment in the retold conversation balloons up with importance, and is then deflated as another member brushes it off. Cooled with time, the pain of that moment shifts back and forth, from minor irritation, to deeply corrosive, to uncomfortable impediment. There is a space in the story, too, that we are left to fill in: hearing about the incident of disintegration, the family members are at the very least in different rooms, though we understand from the premise of video chat that they are in different houses, in different cities. The story is presented as inciting incident, and effect. The screens showing the speakers are set up to face each other, and while they sit around an imaginary table as they might have in the past, they are not speaking to each other. It is almost as though they describe the time that pushed them out of their bodies, and onto the screens.

Suzanne Caines’ *Romance* series takes imperative statements from canonized romantic movies and gives them to both actors and unknowing strangers, through a rotating cast of men and women, in several incarnations. Though the words are the same, the roles change. The sameness of the words highlights the uniqueness of the speakers, yet

this uniqueness is problematized through a careful post-production editing that replaces the many speaker's voices with Caines' own voiceover of the lines repeated in monotone. The resulting romanticism of the lines, uttered at swelling climaxes in romantic movies, becomes repetitive and clinical, an enactment and re-enactment that plays with mistranslation and misunderstanding, performance and reperformance of each instance.

The experience of playing roles is consistent with the pieces in this exhibition, as well as showing how love can change. I hadn't approached the pieces with Frankenstein's Monster in mind, but found I thought of him often as I viewed the work -- a very rational adult mind, articulating a desperate need for love against the portrayals of jaded love, awkward love, love gone wrong. There is space in between, though, for the qualities of changing love to be neither virtue nor flaw, and in this space there is room again for hope. Maybe not the Monster's raw vision of love as salvation, but a feeling with glimmer, at least. The blurred edges of Beckley's "I love you" images, while less defined, are warmer, with more room for light in the image. Chalmers' conversations with her family members have space for reconciliation, changed identities, and long stretching love unbroken by divorce. And Caines' *Romance* series shows that there is surprise to be found in the pop-cinema's lexicon, and exposes how a single phrase can have infinite interpretations.

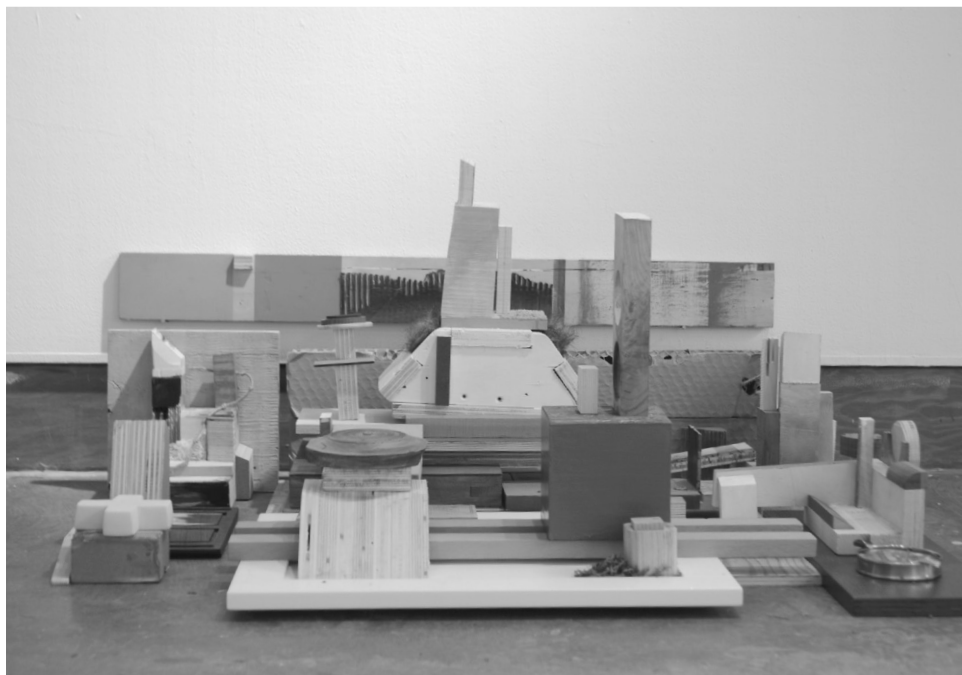
It might disappoint the Monster. But then again, he could do much worse.



Steven Beckley, 2011

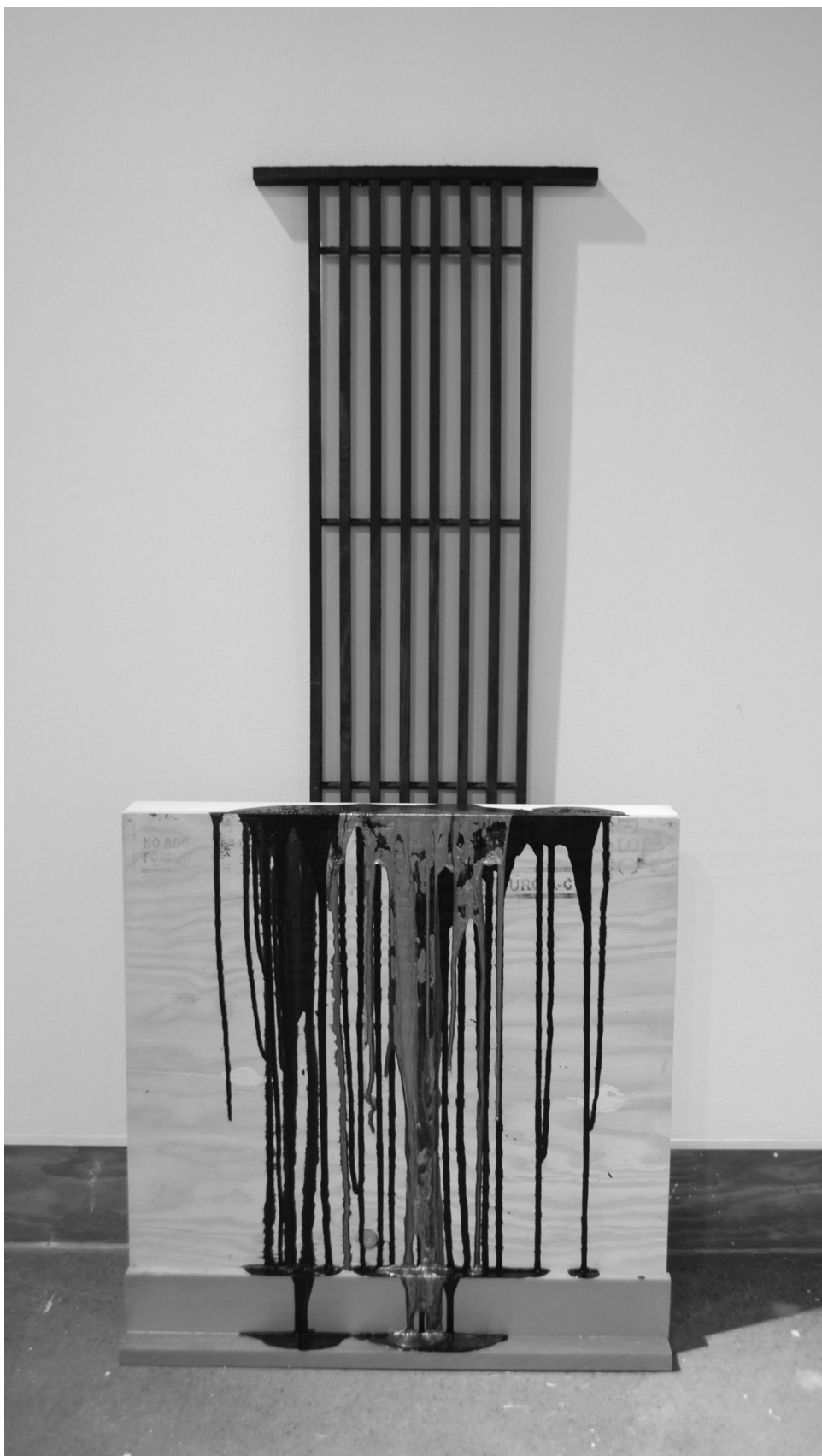
Magnetic Impulses

January 20 –
February 11, 2012



Ariel Kellett, *Magnetic Impulses*, 2012

Jaime Angelopoulos, Kali Fisher, Ariel Kellett, Derrick Piens



Ariel Kellett, 2012



Jaime Angelopoulos, 2012



Derrick Piens, 2012

Jonathan Ngo

Within *Magnetic Impulses*, artists Jaime Angelopoulos, Kali Fisher, Ariel Kellett, and Derrick Piens approach art-making through the exploration of natural and manufactured materials. Without a final image in mind, starting points of the art-making process are shared with the viewer through titling for Angelopoulos and Kellett, and through material exploration for Piens and Fisher. Colliding and juxtaposing materials, fragmented and ambiguous forms are created focusing on developing the language of tactility within the forms. The relationship between the works, the space it occupies, and the interaction of the viewer allows for different angles of viewing and modes of interpretation.

After Umberto Boccioni's *The Unique Forms of Continuity in Space* (1913), Jaime Angelopoulos' *Just Passing Through* emulates and references the dynamic figure in motion. *The Unique Forms of Continuity in Space* depicts a forceful yet fluid stride, portraying speed as shapes shift away from the figure similar to the flowing drapery of classical Greek sculpture. For Angelopoulos, the title, *Just Passing Through*, mediates the viewers' experience of the work by referencing the implied temporality of the sculpture, and the way its presence is animated within the space of the gallery. The sculpture consists of plaster, paint, vacuum tube, and refuse, and standing at approximately 6' x 3' x 2', the sheer monumental scale of *Just Passing Through* implicates the viewer in relation to the space the sculpture inhabits, and belies its materials of production into an anomalous art object.

Drawing inspiration from nature, specifically rock formations, geometric shapes are used as building blocks with the works of Derrick Piens. In a labour-intensive process, Piens develops objects, manipulating them through cutting, gluing, plastering, and sanding. In *Rosebud*, Piens has created a pink, monolithic mass of plaster. Using impasto, the painting technique in which large amounts of paint are applied thickly onto the canvas, *Rosebud* epitomizes Piens' process and artist's hand as trace of mark-making. Each application of plaster is seen as a gesture of that moment seen collectively as an ambiguous form suspended in a state of flux comparable to that of a melting ice cream cone.

Similar to Piens, Ariel Kellett explores the dichotomy between the use of everyday materials with the construction of ambiguous forms. However, Kellett employs assemblage, combining salvaged building materials and found objects as symbolic elements that together represent a single idea, message, or form. She creates a personal visual vocabulary, juxtaposing surfaces based on material and tactility, building onto itself. The viewer is drawn to touch. This is done through an intuitive process of accumulation: adding, arranging, removing, and changing and painting. Kellett's *theory 1-3*, subverts the original, utilitarian purposes of shipping crates and off-cuts of wood two-by-fours to create symbols of industry; the high-rise cityscape and the factory as minute vignettes with the gallery space. By reclaiming these materials, Kellett makes a statement of the materialistic, consumer-based, culture we live in, creating art from another's scraps.

In contrast, Kali Fisher uses acrylic and spray paint on stretched canvas. Fisher's paintings evoke an atmospheric perspective suggesting a moving, arctic landscape. However, her paintings also evoke an ominous duality, shifting between a positive and negative space. Depending on one's viewpoint, a void can be interpreted as an emptiness or lack of form. Conversely, these voids could take the form of a menacing black cloud. Fisher states that she works additively, striking a balance between light and dark to invoke an emotive quality. Similar to Kellett's assemblages, Fisher has reclaimed roof shingles as the canvas for one set of her material explorations, emphasizing the material's physical properties.

Magnetic Impulses represents the result of the endless, labour-intensive art making processes of these four artists that similarly, but uniquely explore material and form.

Cerebral Arena

February 24 –
March 17, 2012



Installation view, *Cerebral Arena*, 2012

Brianna Lowe, Graham Ruddy, Lauren Pelc McArthur

Philippe Blanchard

Assistant Professor, Digital Painting & Expanded Animation, OCAD U

Cerebral Arena, a show of new works by Brianna Lowe, Lauren Pelc McArthur and Graham Ruddy, considers digital culture's effect in mediating human experience. One point of entry into their work is to see it as problematizing how we relate to digital imagery: it questions how our relationship to reality is shaped by the ever-growing prominence of virtual experiences. Whereas digital imagery can be seen, culturally, as part of a forward technological thrust or a narrative of evolutionary progress, Lowe, Pelc McArthur and Ruddy's use of it proposes problematic scenarios without closure: empty landscapes seen by an aimless camera, unresolved amorphous shapes in ambiguous spaces, absurdist repetitive animations where the handmade is subsumed by the digital.

To create *Background Scenery*, Brianna Lowe pilfered movie landscapes, stripped them of human presence through meticulous digital doctoring and then re-animated them with a virtual camera. In doing so, she completely severed their connection to the actual time and space depicted: these images of landscapes can no longer be seen as indexical—recordings of real places—rather they become representations of cultural sites, shared pop-culture memories, slippery and shifting like online geographies.

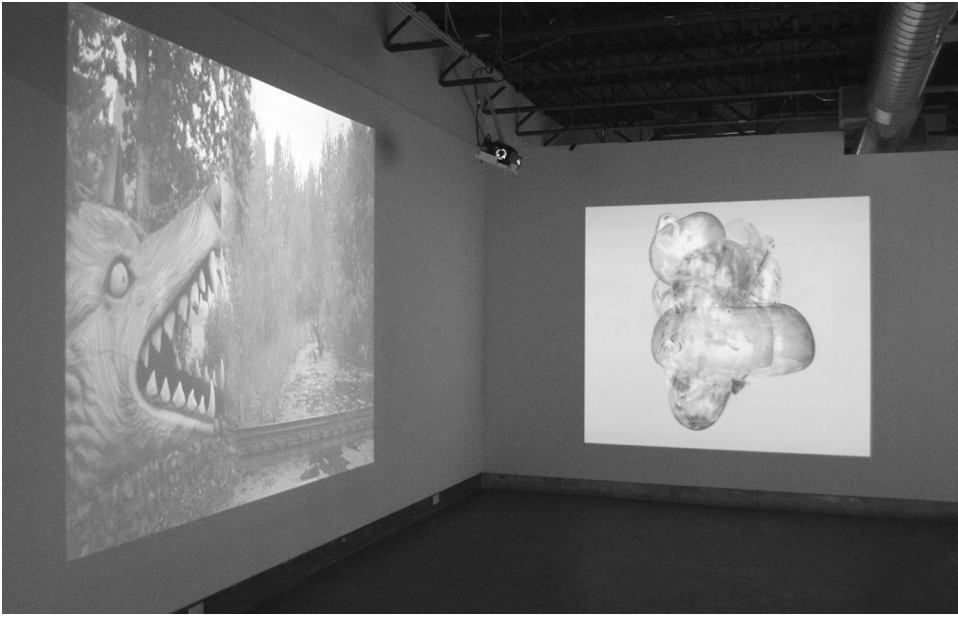
Lowe's use of the camera raises interesting issues: its aim and focus are unclear, it just travels incessantly. Her work begs the question: if all cameras imply a seeing subject, through whose gaze are digital images seen? By stitching together disconnected landscapes through a single point of view, she suggests a kind of subjectivity that is no longer rooted in physical reality. Furthermore, by squashing and stretching the image, she underlines the camera's digitalness: it's no longer tied to actual optics or mimicking how the eye actually functions. This reminds me of film theorist André Bazin's contention that cinema's use of the camera—Orson Welles' use of deep focus and camera moves for example—was symptomatic of a cultural push towards the "total and complete representation of reality", or greater and greater realism. Lowe's work suggests that digital media have upended that notion, replacing realism with complete fabrication.

Also working with virtual space, Lauren Pelc McArthur's work considers the effects of hyper-mediated and networked experiences on the formation of individual and collective consciousness. Suggesting that the internet is now experienced as real, Pelc McArthur's work can be interpreted as an attempt to take this collective hallucination and represent it visually. Passages from William Gibson's *Neuromancer* describe this experience, where he waxes poetic on what the flow of data through the net may look like:

"There was a gray place, an impression of fine screens shifting, moiré, degrees of half tone generated by a very simple graphics program. There was a long hold on a view through chainlink, gulls frozen above dark water. There were voices. There was a plain of black mirror, that tilted, and he was quicksilver, a bead of mercury, skittering down, striking the angles of an invisible maze, fragmenting, flowing together, sliding again..."

Manson Twins Mansion, a projected computer-generated animation, is comprised of an amorphous, vaguely organic 3D shape textured with ambiguous and complex video collages produced in part using a technique called datamoshing, which exploits the aesthetic potential of compression glitches. These textures underscore the material nature of digital imagery: their abstracting effect frustrates our expectations of pixels resolving as legible pictures or as real space. Pelc McArthur's work (especially her collaborative piece with Lowe, *Skinshot Prison Circuit 1 & 2*) suggests that identity involves a sense of place but that the notion of space itself is becoming relative. The doubling or mirroring effect of this piece does this to great effect.

With *Skinshot Prison Circuit 1 & 2*, Lowe and Pelc McArthur seem to work against the purpose of the tools they are using: 3D computer-generated imagery. Allowing



Installation view, *Cerebral Arena*, 2012

the “total and complete representation of reality”, 3D produces images that conform to a perfectly rational conception of space, where every point, every vertex is accounted for. But in Lowe and Pelc McArthur’s work, rational space is problematized, again, as their use of perspective is ambiguous, forms are vague and amorphous, the relation to reality uncertain. 3D images might have once been symptomatic of a cultural push towards greater realism, but they now articulate a reality all their own.

In contrast to Lowe and Pelc McArthur, Graham Ruddy’s work deals with representation in a more pictographic way. Using Adobe AfterEffects, Ruddy animates and multiplies his hand-drawn images: unique marks are digitally repeated, divorced from the singular moment in time of their creation. Working in a pared-down style, his drawings oscillate ambiguously between representations of actual objects and more idealized forms, allowing the viewer room to project different meanings onto his deceptively simple scenarios. Playing with the viewer’s expectations, Ruddy’s hand-painted mural ties in with his animation work through his distinctive drawing style: the juxtaposition of the handmade with its own digital reproduction achieves an uncanny effect, a slight shifting of perception which never fully resolves. Ruddy’s approach asks us to consider the emotional or physical content of drawn marks, and how our relationship to these may change when drawings are reproduced digitally.

While it deals with the push and pull of the real and the virtual within the space of the screen, the work of Lowe, Pelc McArthur and Ruddy also addresses the physical space of the gallery. As such, their work can be read as a collaborative installation project where every element is in a symbiotic relationship with the rest. Their use of video projection mimics and echoes the projected textures present in some of their videos, creating a kind of conceptual feedback loop, as does the pairing of actual painted murals with digital reproductions of hand-drawn marks. Like a hall of mirrors, *Cerebral Arena* confuses and delights, overwhelms and enlightens in turn.

Discussed by Lev Manovich in *The Language of New Media*, p.169.

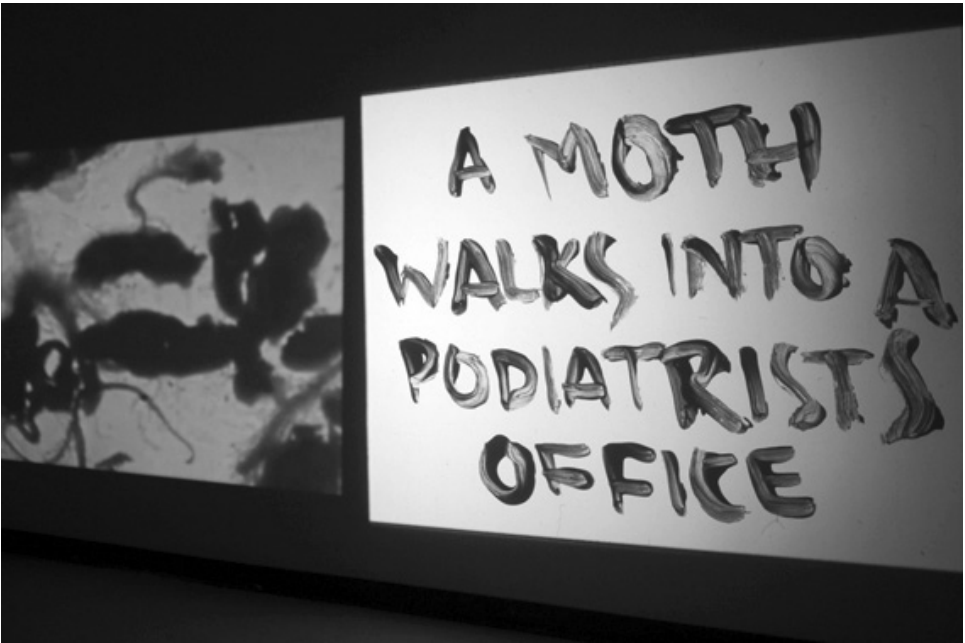
Manovich, Lev. *The Language of New Media*. Cambridge MA: MIT Press, 2001.

Gibson, William. *Neuromancer*, p.244

Gibson, William. *Neuromancer*. New York NY: Ace Books, 1984.

Yesterday's Today, Tomorrow

March 30 –
April 21, 2012



Aryen Hoekstra, *A Moth Walks Into A Podiatrist's Office*, 2011

**Brianna Lowe, Aryen Hoekstra, Tyler Muzzin,
Andrew Zealley, Nickey Runham, Aamna Muzaffar,
Susan Campbell**

Curated by Vikki Dziuma

Vikki Dziuma

The exhibition, *Yesterday's Today, Tomorrow*, investigates impermanence and a recontextualization of art and history through digital media. Featuring works by Brianna Lowe, Aryen Hoekstra, Tyler Muzzin, Andrew Zealley, Nickey Runham, Aamna Muzaffar, and Susan Campbell, each artist emphasizes the presence of historical documents, accounts, or methodologies in art and culture through appropriation or revisitation. Impermanence is demonstrated through the transformation of material into immaterial (or vice versa). On one hand, truth to material often becomes lost through technological developments; open source culture makes opportunities for manipulation endless through a digital interface. On the other, we are reminded that despite digital evolution, there are also endless opportunities to generate form out of that which is intangible. By surveying this disconnection of material versus immaterial, *Yesterday's Today, Tomorrow* considers what can be lost and gained through the temporal process of digitization.

Brianna Lowe's installation recognizes truth to materials and its current displacement in open source culture. In *Kidnapped/Tom Sawyer, Boy Detective - Hollowed Content* Lowe captures Google's endeavour to create a digital library. The textual and visual content from Samuel Clemens' *Tom Sawyer, Boy Detective* and Robert Louis Stevenson's *Kidnapped* has been removed and digitally manipulated to highlight the intangible properties of the printed word in the digital age. The two books have been amalgamated into one, enclosing two USB keys to initiate mobility and control. Expanding on this dialogue is a series of visual manipulations and textual reconfigurations that are collaged and exhibited above the modified remains of their source material. What's conveyed in the original publication becomes transformed by a lack of authenticity suggesting the endless possibilities through which digitization can liberalize truth.

Aryen Hoekstra's three-part projection investigates materiality versus immateriality in the ongoing conversation between modern and postmodern narratives. Central to this installation is a joke whose set-up begins with "A moth walks into a podiatrist's office." The text of the joke has been painted on slides thus giving materialistic form to an oral tradition. The joke is structured around a moth endowed with human characteristics, yet its essentialist punchline clarifies the inescapability of the moth's nature. Modernist essentialism is juxtaposed with existential flux because the moth can talk about and feel human emotions, desires, and existential crises but in the same token can't control its attraction to light. Using the process of gif animation, Hoekstra selects three still images from Stan Brakhage's structuralist film *Mothlight* to create moving images projected on each side of the joke. Viewers' attraction to the combination of moving images and light implies a corresponding framework between the punchline of the joke and the history and experience of film.

Tyler Muzzin's audio remake of Sol Lewitt's *Sentences on Conceptual Art* translates Lewitt's *Sentences* into Morse Code. Like John Baldessari's previous appropriation *Baldessari Sings Lewitt*, where Baldessari sang Lewitt's *Sentences* to the rhythm of pop songs, Muzzin's reappropriation creates a playful, though elusive, listening experience of the historically significant text. *Sentences on Conceptual Art* was first published in *0 To 9*, Vito Acconci and Bernadette Mayer's iconic magazine, in 1969 and later that year in *Art - Language*, a widely distributed publication in the 1970's. Muzzin's choice to translate this text into Morse Code is meant to suggest that the original journal, during its time, used distress to gain the attention of the largest audience possible. Since defining conceptual art remains a precarious task, Muzzin considers the discourse from which it developed by paying homage to the irony exhibited in Sol Lewitt's *Sentences* - where Lewitt's sentences were often blatantly contradictory - and the playfulness in Baldessari's remake, which transformed *Sentences* into statements recognizable to a broader audience.

Andrew Zealley's *Cienfuegos* is a silent video documenting the performative gesture of lighting one hundred wooden matchsticks, each lit from the previous. *Cienfuegos* departs from Zealley's past works through its forgoing of an audio component. Instead, he

states, “the fire takes the form of a visual mantra,” which invites the viewer to enter a serene meditative state. As a collaborator and friend, he is influenced by artist AA Bronson’s neo-shamanic healing practice. Zealley investigates hidden histories of queer culture by delineating accounts of gay men’s roles as healers and shamans. According to researcher Peter Savastano (contributor of *Gay Religion*, 2004), “by virtue of [gay men’s] exclusion from most of the world’s religious traditions, queer men find themselves in a kind of spiritual ‘Diaspora.’ [...] It is their outsider or liminal status that makes it possible and necessary for queer men to think about the spiritual life in new and inventive ways.” In light of these suppressed accounts as well as the traumatic effects of the HIV/AIDS pandemic, Zealley seeks to rediscover neglected roles by healing the present moment.

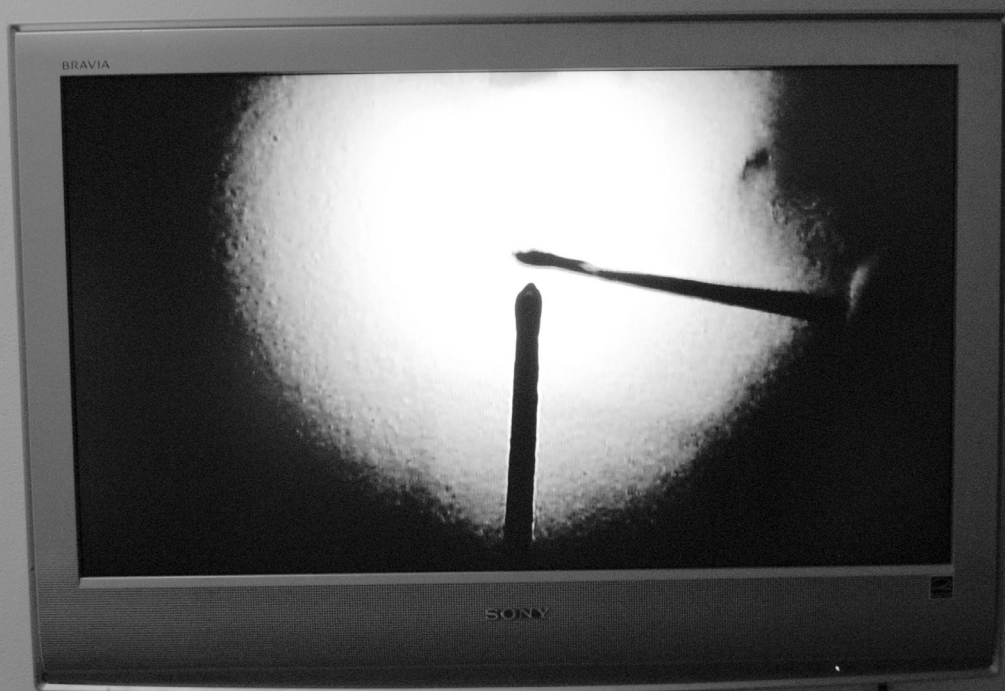
Nickey Runham’s silent video installation *Ka-pow!* is composed of two television monitors featuring dynamic collages of appropriated footage from 1960’s superhero cartoons. The opening credits of four television shows have been visually manipulated beyond recognition and any hints to their original content have been obliterated. One monitor, exhibiting primary colour patterns, represents the protagonists, all of whom are the “good guys”, while the other, exhibiting secondary colour patterns, represents the antagonists. The placement of the televisions in direct opposition to each other best embodies the genre-specific source material. In this work Runham investigates the association between behaviour and personality in childhood development through colour theory.

Aamna Muzaffar’s *Digital Entopic Graphomania* revisits entropic graphomania, a method of drawing created by surrealist Dolfi Trost in pursuit of automatism in which points are made at the sites of imperfection on paper and connected in a quasi-automatic fashion to form an abstract geometric composition. Her digital revisitation of this procedure is applied to the interface and screen of her computer, where points were made at the sites of blemishes on the screen and connected to create digital abstract geometric compositions. These blemishes are caused by external elements, similar to Trost’s imperfections on paper, however Muzaffar’s digital re-visitation establishes a consequential disconnection amongst surfaces. Imperfections on paper are permanent but can be disguised through mark-making. Due to the physical separation between a computer’s interface and screen, digital mark-making cannot disguise a blemish, though it can be wiped from the screen altogether. This separation illustrates the convergence of digital and physical “space” while maintaining and emphasizing their fundamental distinction.

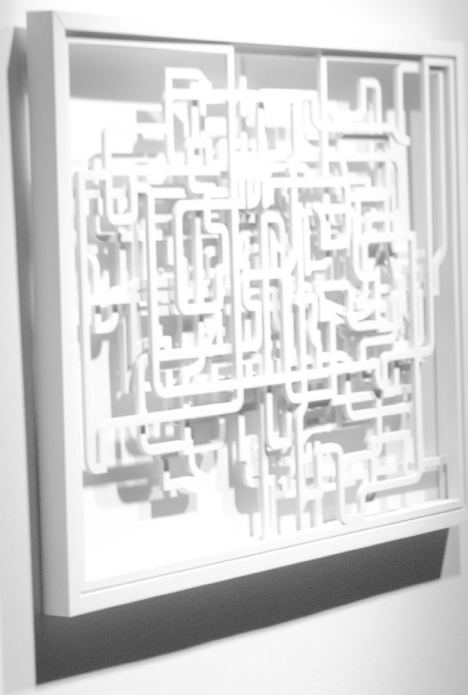
Susan Campbell’s *Two and a Half Hours of Parking Lot Patterns* is composed of fibreboard representing five layers of notational data, each simulating thirty minutes of traffic within a surface parking lot located outside her studio. Campbell imposes on public space by tracking data from her private studio, days before the parking lot’s demolition. Since completion, the parking lot has been demolished to make way for a high-rise condominium complex. The map’s white enamel fibreboard against a white wall is meant to subtly commemorate the parking lot in operation while justifying the meagre (though fulfilled) journey occurring within the space. The notion of journey in *Two and a Half Hours of Parking Lot Patterns* is applied to our movement in space, regardless of geographical significance or distance between destinations. By illustrating the universality of mathematical notation, she confirms that patterns are an unavoidable by-product of human nature.

Each piece in this exhibition instantiates a transformation between corporeality and ephemerality: data to object, object to data; text to sound, sound to text; action to silence; still to moving images. Through this analysis of form, the artists embrace the capacity of digital media while paying homage to the past. *Yesterday’s Today, Tomorrow* exhibits a body of work with qualities that are both transient and contingent, a precarious affiliation with both yesterday and tomorrow.

Andrew Zealley, *Cienfuegos*, 2011



Susan Campbell, *Two and a Half Hours of Parking Lot Patterns*, 2011



Denouncing Earthly Animal Desires

June 8 – 30,
2012

Kaitlyn Bourden, Nitasha Mcknight,
and Jessica Allen



Nitasha McKnight, 2012

Alex Lee

“I have given suck, and know
How tender ‘tis to love the babe that milks me.
I would, while it was smiling in my face,
Have plucked my nipple from his boneless gums
And dashed the brains out” (Mac.1.7.54-58)

“Thou shalt no sooner
March to assault thy country than to tread –
Trust to’t, thou shalt not – on thy mother’s womb
That brought thee into the world” (Cor.5.3. 123-126)

The female form has long been the muse or subject of many artists’ works of art. Shakespeare’s depictions of women (Lady Macbeth, and Coriolanus’ mother, Volumnia) consider both the violence that women are capable of and the violence that the female body is subject to.

Lady Macbeth asserts that she understands the tenderness that mothers feel towards their suckling babies. However, she proclaims she is not a proverbial mother. She destroys any maternal expectations that viewers and readers may have for her character by insisting that she would “[dash] the brains out” of a babe that drinks milk lovingly from her breast (Mac. 1.7.58). Lady Macbeth creates a horrific portrait of a mother committing

infanticide upon a smiling helpless baby. Her own earthly and ambitious desires take precedence over any natural maternal instincts she may possess.

Volumnia, from Shakespeare's *The Tragedy of Coriolanus*, makes her womb the site of a brutal attack. She likens her son's betrayal of his motherland to stomping upon her uterus – the same life-giving uterus that brought Coriolanus into this world. Volumnia is a vile, tempestuous mother that raises her son to be a fearless brute. She assaults him with violent imagery so that he may fulfill her wishes and desires. At the same time, that brutal imagery she spouts at Coriolanus is directed metaphorically towards her own body.

These examples can be particularly helpful in drawing out the complexity of how the abject female form is portrayed in the exhibition “denouncing earthly animal desires.” In the same way that Lady Macbeth asserts her power and dominance through a refusal of motherhood, and Volumnia uses her role as mother as a place of guilt, Jessica Allen, Kaitlyn Bourden, and Nitasha McKnight explore the site of the body as one that is simultaneously animal and powerful. The title of the exhibition focuses on the viewer's position as flesh and bones, rather than as rational beings. The emotional impact of this is that the so-called violence of ripping, tearing, flesh, rot, and secretions become the norm rather than something that is politely ignored.

Each artist in this exhibit has created fleshy sculptures that question the role of the body, its apertures, its senses, and its desires with regards to the human experience. Their pieces compliment one another through their strange, dysmorphic, and visceral nature.

Jessica Allen's *Accretion*, is a ceramic piece comprised of many tiny puckered orifices that are webbed together with wire. This piece takes the shape of a dark, bloody, fleshy cavity that opens before the viewer delicately; yet it is frayed and torn as if it were the victim of aggression. The corporal openings are objects that evoke pain and pleasure in the viewer. Jessica's second piece, *Void*, is a ceramic installation that addresses the vacuity of bodily crevices. Her final piece is a porcelain piece that examines the role of human orifices in relation to brutality and boundaries.

Like Allen, Kaitlyn Bourden sculpturally explores the concept of humanly cavities. In *the hollow colony*, a large beeswax paraffin sculpture, Bourden addresses themes of mortality, and primal desire by enticing the viewer with subtle colours and strange textures. In a manner similar to Allen, Bourden delves into ceramic sculpture with *void chasm II* (a hand-built paper clay sculpture) and *reduced to ashes* (a slip cast burn out of collected pods). Bourden interrogates societal expectations placed on women to procreate, settle down, and create a lineage. Her sculptures paradoxically contrast this by confronting the primal desire of humans to reproduce.

Nitasha McKnight's *The Sisters* is comprised of three mangled, dangling female forms that are suspended over her second piece, *The Tired Bride*: a disfigured sleeping bride. McKnight creates parallels between perishable beauty, the feminine mystique, and the ether of afterlife. McKnight's corpse-like sculptures appear infected and rotten, as if objects presented for dissection. Their presence simultaneously creates an infection, a tumorous affliction, a fungus, a rotten growth upon the gallery space. The sculptural apertures of Allen and Bourden lend to the sense of fragile corporality and abjection, which pervade the gallery.

The sculptures of all three artists in *Denouncing Earthly Animal Desires* show that we can be ruled by both mind and flesh, by both a desire to sexually reproduce and a natural progression towards the grave, by both senses and thoughts, by both suffering and jouissance, by both instinct and reason, by violence and submission, by disease and survival, by horror and beauty, and almost everything in between.

Shakespeare, William. *The Tragedy of Coriolanus*. The Norton Shakespeare, Based on the Oxford Edition. Eds. Stephen Greenblatt et al. New York: W.W. Norton, 1997. 2785-872.

Shakespeare, William. *The Tragedy of Macbeth*. The Norton Shakespeare, Based on the Oxford Edition. Eds. Stephen Greenblatt et al. New York: W.W. Norton, 1997. 2555-617.

XPACE Summer Residency

*July 1 – August
4, 2012*

**Mason Mummery, Lee Aaron Wiesblatt
and Krystina Plante**



Mason Mummery, *Art Slingshot*, 2012

XPACE hosts a Residency for three recent OCADU grads for the month of July. Krystina and Lee are both Printmaking grads, and Mason is a Sculpture/Installation grad. They are using both the Main Space and XBASE as their studios, with 24/7 access. Studio visits, workshops and discussions serve to develop the XPACE SUMMER RESIDENCY as a developing dialogue with artists exiting their roles as students and XPACE as a site for resources, information and ideas.



Lee Wiesblatt, *Let's Hope We Don't Have Another Solaris Situation on Our Hands*, 2012



Krystina Plante, *Missing Links*, 2012



Window Space²

Our Window Gallery faces Ossington Ave and is open for viewing 24 hours a day. Artists that install in the window are asked to consider how a window space on a commercial street plays into an experience of their installation. Each installation is treated as site-specific and responds to the window's unique placement facing out onto the street.

Shoe Bomber

Kate McQuillen
April 22 – May
14, 2011

Hannah Myall

Chicago-based artist Kate McQuillan's works range in both material and subject matter. By drawing on inspiration from historical and political events, Kate's works invoke a sense of curiosity and concern, and expose the viewer to a new way of looking at moments of catalyst for social change.

Beginning in printmaking and proceeding into papermaking, Kate's works went through a two-dimensional to three-dimensional shift as well. McQuillan's works originated in papermaking, wood block printing and etching, and have evolved to incorporate photographic processes and installation projects.

Earlier projects dealt with ideas of historical events and technological change, though recent projects have found Kate focusing her work on issues around improvised weaponry and public threat. Her most recent project, *Shoe Bomber*, deals with a 2002 event, in which a member of the Al-Quada terrorist group threatened a commercial aircraft with explosives hidden in his shoes. A threat of such magnitude by the use of such common objects is highlighted by Kate's creation of a fireball out of a simple material like paper, and the high-top sneaker being engulfed by it, demonstrating the impact such a minute object can have. The attention to the materials used by the shoe bomber himself not only highlight the degree to which his physical actions have had, but also the psychological effects of improvised weaponry.

In exploring McQuillan's work, the opportunity arose to ask her a few questions regarding her subject matter and creative process:

Hannah Myall: How do you select which events you explore in your practices (for example, the moon landing, the shoe bomber)? Why do you think you are drawn to the events that become your subject matter?

Kate McQuillen: The moon landing was one of the most highly advanced technological feats of the past millennium, with enduring success; the shoe bomber was a low-fi act of warfare that failed miserably. They are quite different events, but I think I was attracted to them because they both are in some way fantastical, surreal, pseudo-military events. They both deal with technology and warfare, how the two are linked, and the extreme forms in which they both come. In my interpretations of historical events, I want to walk the line between true history, real threats and imagined fears.

HM: What sorts of creative process do you have when preparing and creating works? Do you go through a different creative process when making prints compared to when you are creating objects that are more three-dimensional?

KQ: I think inspiration for all of my works starts in the same place, namely hunting around on news websites for current events, or on Wikipedia for writings on historical events. From there, I seek out images that I feel somehow describe these ideas most dramatically. Usually, this will be in a photography book closely related to the subject. Once I have specific images in mind, I will try to find commonplace materials that could be used as stand-ins for what is represented in the photos.

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In my current projects, I use everyday objects as both materials and subject matter, creating sculptures, installations, and prints of real and imagined improvised weapons. By using familiar items and simplistic methods of construction, I address the power that terrorism has to provoke fears of the low-tech and the ordinary. In *Shoe Bomber*, I refer to the homemade nature of improvised weaponry through the overall scrappiness of the materials; the simplified forms of the fireball and shoe have a low-tech sensibility about them that I feel are appropriate for the story of a bomb made from a high-top packed with C-4 and a set of matches.

HM: What effect has exhibiting your work had on your practice? If there has been change, do think it's been for the better and how so?

KM: With works that are made on the spot in a gallery, like installations, you never know how things will turn out. This kind of pressure can be fun, and it occasionally will force me to come up with new solutions to visual problems.

Since I use such scrappy and commonplace materials in my installations on this subject matter, I have to accept that the work might not appear completely pristine. In a gallery setting, this can be worrisome, but overall, I feel that these materials are specific to the works and therefore a necessary part of them. I try not to focus on the idea that the work is going to be displayed and critiqued; I always imagine the installation space as though it were my studio, to try to keep the work as honest as possible.

HM: Your project *The Eagle has Landed* toys with the record of the first U.S. moon landing by introducing it's own narrative. Did your narrative unfold spontaneously? How much of your story was planned ahead?

KM: The narrative came about spontaneously,

in response to playing with the objects I created. In the first week of the project, I produced the raised-relief sheets of handmade paper molded to look like the moon's surface, and flat sheets of paper pigmented to portray distant views of the full moon. I also began collecting and creating objects that might figure in a lunar landing story, like toy astronauts and tiny flags. Fortunately, the toy astronauts that I purchased came with guns; having these objects on hand introduced all kinds of new possibilities for the story.

When I began photographing the objects, my idea was to create impossible scenarios, using technologies we know cannot function on the moon. The first photos I shot were of astronauts using semi-automatic rifles, and that set the tone for a lunar battle; from this point onward, the story became a Space Western. In the story, Neil Armstrong and Buzz Aldrin go from being carefree, rambunctious astronauts playing King of the Mountain on moon rocks, to being embroiled in a space shoot-out once they realize that the Russians have secretly beat the Americans to the Moon.

HM: Your work combines both papermaking and photographic processes, though it seems you're work is more rooted in the papermaking aspect of it. How has incorporating a photographic element changed your work? Do you think you will continue to experiment with photography?

KM: I focus a lot on materials and scale in all of my works, and photography has given me a whole new way to manipulate both of these things. It also has given me a way to make (small) installations and give them a finished form. I do plan to continue to experiment with it, though I need some time to teach myself the fundamentals.

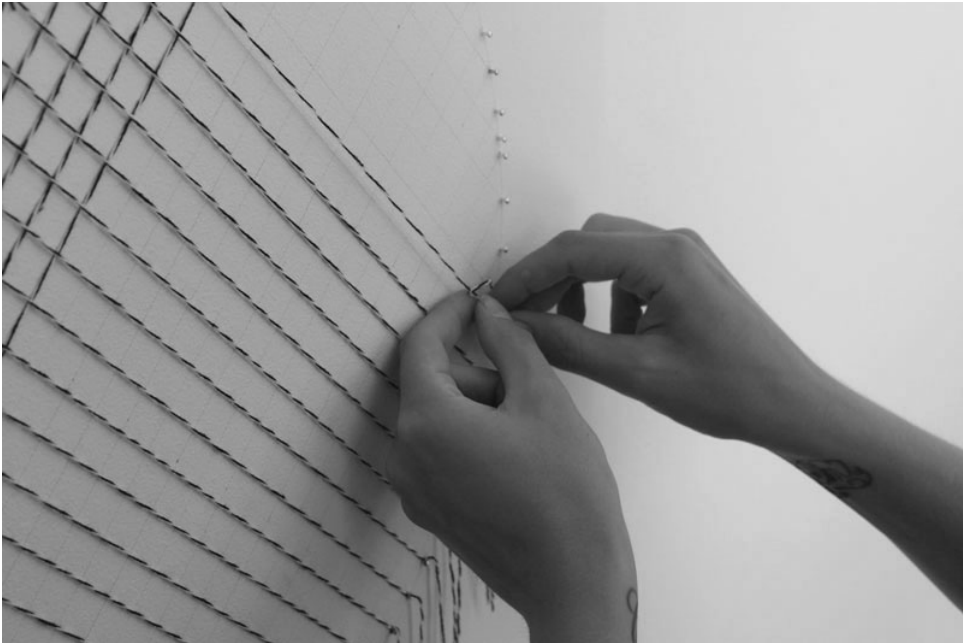
HM: What are some of your main influences? You touch on historical events, but do you have any artists or other figures that you feel influences your work or your process as well?

KM: There are a few artists in particular who have influenced current projects. Chinese artist Cai- Guo-Qiang often deals with explosives, smoke, and fire in his work, though he does so by using them as actual materials. The printmaker Swoon is of interest to me, as she uses paper and prints in an unconventional way. Tom Friedman's use of materials has been a big influence on my work for years.

Lately I've Been Wondering If You Feel It Too

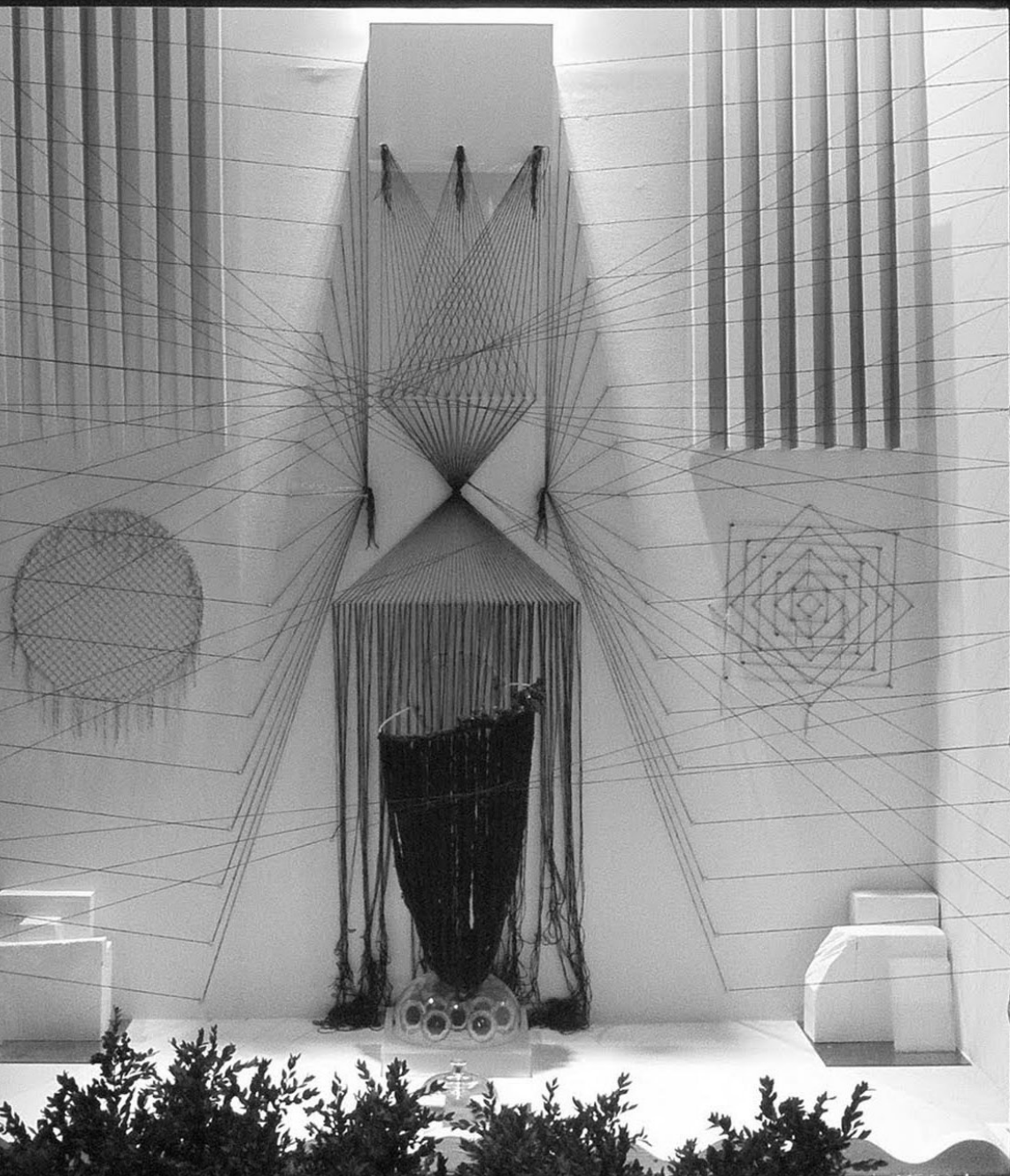
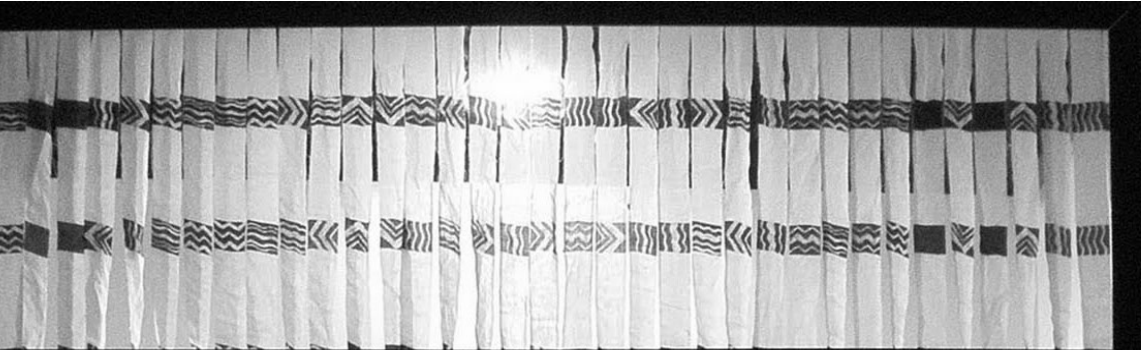
Melissa Fisher
*June 18 – August
19, 2011*

(As Part of *What Goes Around
Comes Around*)



Melissa Fisher, *Lately I've Been Wondering If You Feel It Too*, 2011

The stories behind the materials and objects Melissa Fisher uses in her installations will never be known to most of the people who view them. Such as, the group of pointed two by fours which were off-cuts from the floor built in XPACE for *Life of a Craphead's* movie set, and the dryer sheet embedded with kleenex taken from her grandparent's laundry. Creating objects and environments that illustrate autobiographical happenings through personally significant materials can not be fully translated to the viewer by simply looking. A stack of mauve plastic cups may not necessarily convey their origin (taken from a dentist's office during Fisher's first visit in six years). However, the aesthetic ploys of colour, shape, pattern and polished assembly of the installation's elements draw the viewer to it, like a personality, and regardless of whether the sporadic narratives are understood, some sort of engagement occurs. This engagement also roots itself in the nature of display windows, used to generate interest from the street and lure people inside, or simply facilitate window shopping. Naturally drawn to irregular exhibition spaces that expose art to a wide array of people, *What Goes Around Comes Around* serves as an excellent platform for the artist herself to be exposed to other artists' processes of making. Rather than physically reacting to the space that each phase poses, Fisher will just be around, taking it in. Simultaneously integrating herself into the communal qualities of this exhibition and segregating herself by focusing on the durational installation of *Lately I've Been Wondering If You Feel It Too*.



Installation view, *Lately I've Been Wondering If You Feel it Too*, 2011

Untitled 8-Bit

Carolyn Tripp
*September 9 –
October 8, 2011*



Carolyn Tripp, *Untitled 8-bit*, 2011

Keli Liu

Nintendo Entertainment System is an 8-bit video game console that entered North American homes in 1985. It brings to mind blocky start menu graphics, cheerful techno music and enduring thumb cramps; sitting in front of the television for hours as a dime size character moves through an endless horizon, dodging mushrooms and flying turtles. When saturated colors flash and pixelated humanoids explode, the quest to conquer evil can be exciting and fun. In this world people have multiple lives and evil is characterized by angry bushy brows. Jumping over others is expected.

The image of the “POW” bomb in Carolyn Tripp’s *Untitled 8-bit* borrows from this animated world. The blocky forms make strong reference to early game graphics, and call attention to the way reality is abstracted to pixels. Cubical forms are laid out irregularly to convey the idea of an explosion to the viewer. Tripp uses wood to give depth to a graphic image and conceals the natural material with saturated blues, oranges and whites. The basic color scheme gives accent to the onomatopoeic text. Together the representative forms, perceived sound and saturated colours in this work demonstrate an innocent illustration of violence. The artist uses mass and depth to construct a traditionally flat graphic from a virtual environment.

In her work, Tripp pays tribute to the techno game world she grew up with and the boxy graphics that are now nostalgic to her. Often at the core of these early video game narratives, the protagonist fights the bad guys and saves the distressed. They convey classic ideals of heroism, and clear division between good and evil. Today, explosions and actions seem cinematic in games like *Medal of Honour* (a game series based on major WWII battles) and their documentary like narratives adds to this realistic impression. In another more controversial game series, *Grand Theft Auto (GTA)*, players can carry out criminal missions, steal cars and execute pedestrians. Later versions of this game set their narratives in Liberty City, a fictional place that is heavily based on New York City. According to the New York Police Department’s statistics, there were 536 murders in 2010¹. The reality of criminal violence becomes the back-drop for complex narratives and environments in games like *GTA*. Since its release in 1997, several lawsuits have been made for *GTA*’s influence on teenagers who carried out shootings and other crimes. This is nothing like the flat world of happy mushrooms, evil turtles and exploding texts that Tripp returns to in her work. While one distinctly differentiates the game world and the physical world, the other builds on actual places and events to weave real and fictional narratives together. Games like *Grand Theft Auto* and *Medal of Honour* try to mirror aspects of war or crime.

The characters in these games are meant to be realistic. The collection of letters and biographies in *Medal of Honour* carry the eeriness of the deceased, and the cars in *GTA* all seem familiar. These role-plays no longer explore fantasies about princes and princesses, but instead insert players into fantasy versions of the lives of soldiers or criminals recognizable from reality. The lines between what is real and fake become blurred. In this way, fictional identities in games are tied to real ones, and our experience of them fall somewhere in between our imagination about reality and the game itself. *Untitled 8-bit* speaks to the entwined relationship between our fictional and physical realities, as Tripp elevates the confetti like animation of flying projectiles from her childhood out of the wall and into the world.

¹New York Police Department CompStat report, volume 18, number 34, for week ending August 28, 2011. Retrieved September 2, 2009

Dancing With Myself and Others

Lindsay Denise
October 14 –
November 12, 2011



Lindsay Denise, *Dancing With Myself and Others*, 2011

Inspired by Billy Idol's pop song, *Dancing With Myself*, Lindsay Denise's window installation acts as a segue into an illustrated short story, told with a wink and a nudge. Denise explores the concept of private moments exposed to the public realm, similar to neighbours who inadvertently catch occasional glimpses of one another from behind sheer curtains and fenced-in yards.

Dancing With Myself & Others, aims to flip feelings of awkward panic during brief "caughtcha" moments to a revelry of whimsy and sass, using comics as a storytelling vehicle. Viewers are invited to engage with the piece and follow the story as subsequent scenes unfold over a four week period.

I'm Tired of Being Fucked

Laura Paolini
*November 18 –
December 10, 2011*



Laura Paolini, *I'm Tired of Being Fucked*, 2011



Gwendolyn Bieniara

Situated on a low-rising plinth, two toy rabbits, a plush faux-fur and an inflatable cartoon-like rabbit, are engaged in simulated coitus. Powered by an Arduino board and an air pump, the faux-fur mechanized rabbit cycles through several motions of humping against the inflatable bunny as it deflates. After approximately five seconds the active rabbit stops as the passive bunny continues to deflate. Intended to articulate the negative features of the creative process, Laura Paolini's rabbits reveal a consequential multitude of meaning.

Paolini's rabbits are a pastiche of referential concepts that work together to articulate the futility of achieving an ultimate ideal. First, the rabbit acts as a reference point to Jeff Koons. The iconography he uses is sought to highlight the ubiquity of mass-produced objects and their contributions to the banality of modern life. As an artist who works to re-contextualize found objects, there is little room for true ownership over these objects, as exemplified in his numerous plagiarism lawsuits as both plaintiff and defendant. For Paolini, Koon's struggle for ownership is translated into the impossible pursuit of an ultimate ideal. It is a futile endeavor that can and will never be achieved.

I'm Tired of Being Fucked is not a work about sexuality or gender, but contains a fascinating amount of sexual meaning worth considering. Upon first glance both rabbits are seemingly ungendered, but have been situated in such a way that draws a very clear line towards heteronormative sexuality, where female and male are given definition by their respective physical positions. In addition to this, in a state of passivity, the inflatable rabbit is almost appearing to be forced against its will to be humped by the active furry rabbit.

If the rabbits represent both a reference to Koons and a loss of innocence, it is their automated choreography that articulates the work's goal. As the active rabbit humps, a gesture for pursuit, the passive rabbit deflates, a gesture of loss and failure. The cartoon rabbit, in its pathetic deflated state stands for the loss of innocence and the impossibility of reaching the idealized ultimate goal. As the automated cycle begins and the inflatable rabbit is re-inflated, the active furry rabbit begins to hump in vain, only to experience the same result again and again. The goal is never actualized and remains only as an unsatiated need.

The impact of Paolini's rabbits form in the feelings derived when we watch the deflation. Nothing is ever achieved. The pursuit of something is stuck inside of an impenetrable and inflated toy rabbit feedback loop. Does this mean Paolini a pessimist or just pragmatically realistic? While common sense tells us that perfection is impossible, so many of us strive for it. And like that furry bunny, we're programmed to keep going.

The “RedOne” Project

Fabian Mosquera
*January 20 –
February 17, 2012*



Fabian Mosquera, *The “Red One” Project*, 2012

Reality versus Responsibility

Ellyn Walker

I remember the day, one summer afternoon, that my mother took me to visit the National Gallery of Canada to see Jana Sterbak's infamous work, *Vanitas: Flesh Dress for an Albino Anorectic*. As a viewer who at the time was admittedly extremely young and naïve, this piece shocked me in a way that I still haven't forgotten.

I spent most of our afternoon visit standing in front of the *Flesh Dress*, in awe of all of the sensory reactions it invoked – the smell of the drying, decomposing meat; imagining the feeling of fingering the decaying flanks; the rotten taste that it inevitably presented in my mouth.

I curiously asked my mother what the artist intended to say with this work, and she responded with the perfect motherly response, "Well, what do you hear it saying?" I formed my own conclusion that afternoon that would go on to influence the rest of my artistic career.

I remember formulating the opinion that the preciousness of life can become over-powered by consumption, indulgence and gluttony, and that it was up to us to take care of each other, our land, and our future. It greatly puzzled me why other visitors to the gallery were disgusted and outraged by being witnesses to this work. Why should we as citizens of our country be repulsed by our everyday practices of consumerism and waste? Why should we be disgusted when we ourselves are active participants in these processes, and thus, should take responsibility for our actions, both as viewers, and as consumers?

Combining sculpture, installation and intervention into one body of work, Fabian Mosquera's "*RedOne*" Project similarly posits ideas of consumption, waste and decay. First imagined as a dress-work originating from Mosquera's fashion and design education, "*RedOne*" becomes a physical metaphor for processes of degeneration that the artist observes around him in daily life. Moving him to imagine a work that would critically respond to such decadence and consumption, "*RedOne*" first materialized as a sculpted dress of garbage, stabilized by its internal bust and materialized with torn bedsheets, abandoned children's stuffed toys, and articles of everyday refuse.

Acting as a social commentary on practices of consumption, Mosquera's "*RedOne*" Project proposes a responsibility on its viewers in making thoughtful, ethical choices that relate to economies of production and consumption. Just like Jana Sterbak's infamous meat dress, *Vanitas: Flesh Dress for an Albino Anorectic*, Mosquera's decomposing dress comments more on our role as social consumers than it does of objecthood itself. Sterbak composed her fifty-pound dress of raw flank steaks and shocked the cultural audience, politicians and food advocates alike. Her work succeeded at bringing attention to the inevitability of aging, as viewers became active witnesses to the meat's evolution in both appearance and health. Similarly, Mosquera's piece is a meditation on cyclical time-based processes, particularly of 'want' and 'effect'. Mosquera views the physical environment of the dress as inseparable from the decaying form, an action that directly implicates our society of consumption as a cause for the deterioration of produced objects.

Here arises the implication on responsibility. Our role as viewers is greater than simply that of 'viewing'. Mosquera's work is representative of our common cultural practices of consumption and refuse, and requires us to respond critically to this visibility so that it can hopefully inspire concern and reconsideration. When standing in front of Mosquera's colourful, dramatic 'landscape of waste,' there exists an impossibility, in my opinion, to look at this work with uninterested eyes. Its striking visual display is aggressive and, in some ways, violent - consider the strong red hues of the dress that are inevitably suggestive of blood and gore. Returning again to my past confrontation with Sterbak's *Flesh Dress*, I do not remember being repulsed by the violence of decaying meat, but rather, was conscious of its origins, and simultaneously, of the outcome of its decay.

For the course of its exhibition, Fabian Mosquera's "*RedOne*" project acts as a reminder of the potential for consciousness, thoughtfulness and conservation within our

everyday lifestyle of consumption. Rather than underestimating Mosquera's work as a simplistic portrayal of waste, the "*RedOne*" project is in fact a complex foil, suggesting that positive steps can be made to maintain the health, endurance and vitality of our cultural agency, and that the responsibility is not simply yours or mine, but rather, it is ours.

Chose

Matt King
*February 24 –
March 23, 2012*



Matt King, *Chose*, 2012

Alicia Nauta

From time to time, I go and visit my favourite store in Toronto. Sometimes I go when feeling sentimental, sometimes I go because I want to laugh but mostly I go when I feel like a deal on something I probably don't really need (last purchase being a giant stale gummy worm in a faded and cracked neon package- \$1). That store is *Honest Ed's*: the store of Days Gone By. The whirling carnival lights, the giant outdoor signs claiming the best deals in the city in a series of awful (and brilliant) puns, the handwritten signage, the sun and water damaged celebrity photos amidst jumbles of havarti cheese for 59 cents... they all welcome me in a weirdly comforting way. I feel as if I am greeting an old friend each time I catch sight of that magical place.

Matt King's window installation *Chose* has captured those kinds of jumbled, funny and faded sentiments. He draws inspiration from local Portuguese churches where the exterior walls are decorated with large painted plywood cutouts depicting religious iconography. However, there are no baby lambs or disciples in *Chose*, but rather 'things' of varying degrees of function, things that are all recognizable, and most likely available at your local convenience or hardware store. The title itself, *Chose*, is a play on words from the English verb, to choose; and the French noun, thing.

In seeing the kinds of 'things' King has chosen, I get a feeling of familiarity- they have been painted with shiny sign enamel and some even have carnival-style rounded light bulbs incorporated in. There is an immediate and graphic aesthetic to King's cut outs as they are all painted in a simplified way, with bright bursting colours. Another avenue of King's practice is screenprinting posters and band merchandise, and I see this reflected visually in *Chose's* cutouts. They too are flat and opaque in colour application, and share similarly bold imagery to call attention and communicate a message.

Chose taps into the world of storefront signs and window advertising, where business owners display their goods through their own sets of symbols, sometimes even mixing up sale items with their own personal accumulations. *Chose* being set up in a window space in a commercial area (Ossington Avenue is made up of shops and restaurants) works to its advantage, as passersby are already used to seeing objects displayed and for sale in a window. The formula of King's installation is immediately understood as belonging to an everyday kind of consumerism, such as window shopping, but then within the confines of that form the meaning is all mixed up and in the wrong order. The collaging of disparate images thwarts the original or intended meaning of each of his symbols, and what follows is a series of small confusions and delights in trying to decipher the implicit or explicit meaning in seeing a lit up three-flavour popsicle next to a giant knotted rope cut out. There is a beautiful and simple kind of synchronicity to it, where unrelated things are paired in such a bizarre way as to give an entirely new meaning to the overall collection, and the absurdity in the pairing gives way to hilarity and one liner puns. I am also reminded of Claes Oldenburg's *The Store* (a storefront set up on New York's Lower East Side in the early 1960's) where he showcased a variety of objects made from mangled muslin, and painted sloppily with brightly coloured plaster. There, he removed the expected monetary value of each of the objects by creating them all of the same materials and pairing them side-by-side in his 'shop'. King similarly strips his cut outs of their symbolic or monetary value, and instead showcases his chosen objects as offerings of a 'simple pleasures' kind of beauty, inviting viewers to interpret the meanings of the cut outs for themselves.

Through *Chose* we are gently prodded to look up and around, to take notice of the vastly strange and friendly quality of aesthetics, particularly in places unexpected, like a church, independently owned hardware store, and yes, even Honest Ed's.

10 Second Objects

Nadia Belerique
*March 30 – April
28, 2012*



Nadia Belerique, *10 Second Objects*, 2012

Jennifer Rose Sciarrino

In Nadia Belerique's *10 Second Objects*, a photograph depicts a figure performing a bridge pose. The photo is re-photographed and rotated. This strategic alteration gives the appearance of an unattainable pose, a gravity defying performance on the wall. The photograph is mounted on a draped piece of white black out fabric, lending to the image's theatrical connotation. The viewer is invited to question whether the figure is practicing a bridge pose as a meditation, like in yoga, or if she is a performer, intending to turn her body into a shape, a metamorphic attempt to become something else. Belerique's title, *10 Second Objects*, echoes this by referring to an improvisational practice in theatre where artists are given 10 seconds as a group to communicate an object or idea with their bodies. The technique Belerique employs, bending the photographic surface, then re-photographing the light reflected on it refers to an object-ness or materiality in photography.

By playfully testing the limits of the photographic image, Belerique aims to bend and redirect the communication of the photographic form, without entirely breaking it apart. In her playing with image as performing object, Belerique connects ideas of what we see with what we know about the seemingly objective photographic medium. Using fundamental aspects of photography, such as lighting or image orientation, Belerique works to both literally and metaphorically confuse the viewer's perceptions, with a staged simplicity. Presenting an image of a person physically bending, then rotating that image beyond what a body can achieve, the rules of gravity are irreverently rendered unstable. Thus, the objective truth that photography seemingly contains is stretched beyond reason.

Belerique describes her attraction to categories of images, particularly the photographic snapshot: moments in time frozen with implied movement before and after an action is captured. This leaves us with a sense of ambiguity when confronted with an image without its original context. In *10 Second Objects* we see the subject manipulating herself into a bridge pose but are not given the events before or after the pose occurred. We are seeing a still image from a narrative to which we as viewers are not made privy. We are left to choose our own anecdote. By re-photographing the image with an imbedded glare from a bend in the original print, the focus adjusts from the bended subject to the bended surface on which it was printed. The category and identity of the photograph shifts from 'snapshot' to something else.

Belerique's work is photographic and sculptural, negotiating both mediums simultaneously. The subject within the photograph bends herself into a sculptural form, which Belerique repeats by photographing the surface of the image performing as an object. The paper, ink and how light reflects on the surface of the photo conspire in a revolving cycle: the work performs roles within photography to sculpture and back. The image of the past is coupled with a relevant materiality of the present; her sculptural sensibility includes images as objects themselves. In this case the bending of the body and the bending and rotation of the image's surface on photo paper.

In *10 Second Objects*, Belerique engages with the image making process, with many entry points left for the viewer to engage in the way they see. The piece is framed through a window where the viewer's reflection is inescapable in our field of view. The work bends our perceptions in the way we view photographs as both seemingly static images and dynamic objects. The single photograph posed on a piece of black out fabric, performs for us. Our elusive relationship with images stands to be examined.

**“Your Friend,
Freddie”**

Tonya Corkey
June 8 – July 6,
2012



Tonya Corkey, “*Your Friend, Freddie*”, 2012

Joële Walinga

Freddie has just been told a joke. He is posing for his school portrait, smiling appropriately, but broke it spontaneously just in time for the shutter click. His hair took one hour to style, which Freddie believes he carries as well as Frank Sinatra, with amazing, unrelenting weightlessness. Later Freddie will give me a copy of the photo, signed lovingly: ‘*Your Friend, Freddie.*’

If you could somehow put your face closer to “*Your Friend, Freddie,*” you would see that the lines that your eyes will fool you into seeing are in fact an elaborate and meticulous collection of lint. You will see the face of forgotten Freddie as those who remembered him might have seen it. The image is writhing with variation, each square inch on inspection so full of texture, tone and colour, however slight it may be. These variations in Corkey’s portrait are not merely formal. The collection of lint, despite being a symbol of discard, suggests the millions of fragments, which compose our memories of experiences. It emphasizes the complexity and subjectivity of our relationships and the role of memory in our individuation. Each piece of lint builds the image, an accumulation of material referencing memory.

“*Your Friend, Freddie*” poses the question: if memories function as a means of affirming identity, claiming experiences and simply being able to recall the influences of our being, our mannerisms, ourselves, what happens to the abandoned photograph when its owners or those who would remember have passed? Does the photograph itself somehow manifest the power of this memory, or does it function simply as a trigger, whose job loses relevance without the people who were there?

Tonya Corkey found this discarded photograph abandoned in a second hand store. Her recreation of the photograph brings to mind the power of memory in identity, but also questions the state of lost, residual memories. With lint, Corkey has both reconstructed and monumentalized these found photographs, offering a large-scale reproduction of another era.

Formally, the work is precise. The lint, drawing from grey and black to light shades of green and yellow, offers a livelier image than the photograph itself. A piece of straw protrudes from the chin, small pieces of brown hair sporadically grace this young Freddie’s face, and his white, smooth teeth are the absence of any lint, the untouched canvas. Her portrait balances delicately between two piles of lint. This is important. The lint could, if you were feeling reductive, easily have been placed in the window as a balancing effect, and also as a means of emphasizing the medium, which goes unseen in the distance between the window and the viewer. But instead, the pile of lint highlights the excess of our excesses.

Corkey’s work addresses the dispelling nature of our society by using both lint and discarded photographs as her media, but through her dedication to both material and subject, Corkey gives them function, a new life.

The Beat and the Chorus at the Same Time

Hanna Hur
*July 13 – August
4, 2012*

Adrian DiLena

Hanna Hur's work, *The Beat and the Chorus at the Same Time* attempts to stage an intervention into the process by which we read images. The work strives to push the viewer into a examination not of the content of the image, but the process of looking. In Hur's attention to the material architecture (the conventions of the object) that support the images, the work sets about interrupting a passive or unengaged viewing of the images. The work requires the viewer to take on an active role in the resolution of the work as their eye seeks to construct a coherent image from a series of fragments and obstructions to the whole picture.

More appropriately characterized as an arrangement of objects, the work presents the viewer with a system of interruptions. Just as in interventionist practices where the tactic of interrupting a routine or expected pattern of behaviour is key to developing a moment of insight, Hur seeks to interrupt the learned routines and patterns of viewership that we rely on daily to decode and make sense of images. By creating a series of objects disguised as images that constantly interrupt their own articulation of subject, the work forces a turbulent and hopefully more attentive, aware and engaged mode of looking.

A brief survey of the presentation space includes two identically sized images with white frames hung on the rear wall and facing the street. Within them are pencil drawn depictions of a hot air balloon suspended over a south western American desert, clouds hanging over a parched landscape. Each image is altered though; cut, offset, dissected and manipulated.

To the right there sits a pedestal with two smaller images standing on their sides. The two images depict details of the clouds, magnified to abstraction. These pictures are framed on three of four sides. The images appear incomplete and off balance - cut in half. Meant to evoke the ephemeral character of clouds, as depictions they are still and static; as objects they are fragments. They serve to interrupt the reading of the representation, to poetically remind us that the image is not object.

Finally, resting on the floor and stretching up above eye level, placed in front of the two hung frames, sits a large but nimble brass sculpture. Almost figurative, it conjures references to Miro or Kandinsky, with a somewhat jarring aesthetic clash. The considered arrangement of each of these components seems appropriately theatrical—suggesting a bodily presence in their reading, giving the space a foreground, middle-ground and back-ground in which each of the objects/images can act on, block or emphasize each other.

The images depicted in these works are necessarily easily consumable (landscape as a popular choice in decorative images). The tinny and hollow prettiness of the depiction reads like a stock photo; too manufactured and perfect; too much an obvious construction of picture. By using an image like this, Hur is able to act upon it like a specimen, to remove it from any sense of urgency (it is depiction, not document) and place it within a setting where the act of interruption is the central artistic instrument as opposed to the specifics of the representation. The placement of each picture within the frame, offset from its own background with an exposed and emphasized border seems to designate several



Hanna Hur, *The Beat and the Chorus at the Same Time*, 2012

levels of the picture plane and confront any reading of the work as a cohesive image; the viewer must work to assemble the picture, navigating through the obstructions Hur has placed within the frame. The focal point of the image is detached and pinned back on to the surface, creating slight shadows as it sits just above the rest of the image. Stark white lines dangle across the disparate layers of the picture plane like butcher's string, uniting the layers as though it were an assemblage while admitting the distance between.

Hur playfully juxtaposes the appearance of depth with the actual presence of it. Using relief in one area to slightly pop one surface from its background, while other times letting the bold white lines move over several surfaces and allude to a consistent plane. It is in this tactile play that Hur wants to solicit a visceral experience, a viewing that calls the body to participate in the experience of the work. In this immersion, the theatrical arrangement becomes crucial – providing a site for the body to situate itself within, to be physically present in the act of looking.

The piece is perhaps most enduring and poignant in its adherence to a material and representational honesty. Its construction is partly transparent, letting the viewer see the pins, papers and cut edge of the frames. There's a tension between a clear desire to make light of the pretension of the classical art object, and yet the glass of the window belies that desire. Similarly, though featuring a nearly photo-realistic depiction of a landscape, the work constantly and reflexively deconstructs its own portrayal of depth by manipulating the plane as a surface. This honesty is the most compelling reason to engage the piece; an arrangement of images that can only be resolved once the viewer is actively engaged in reflection of their own perceptual processes – a somewhat surprising, but welcome invitation in our culture of images.



XBASE³

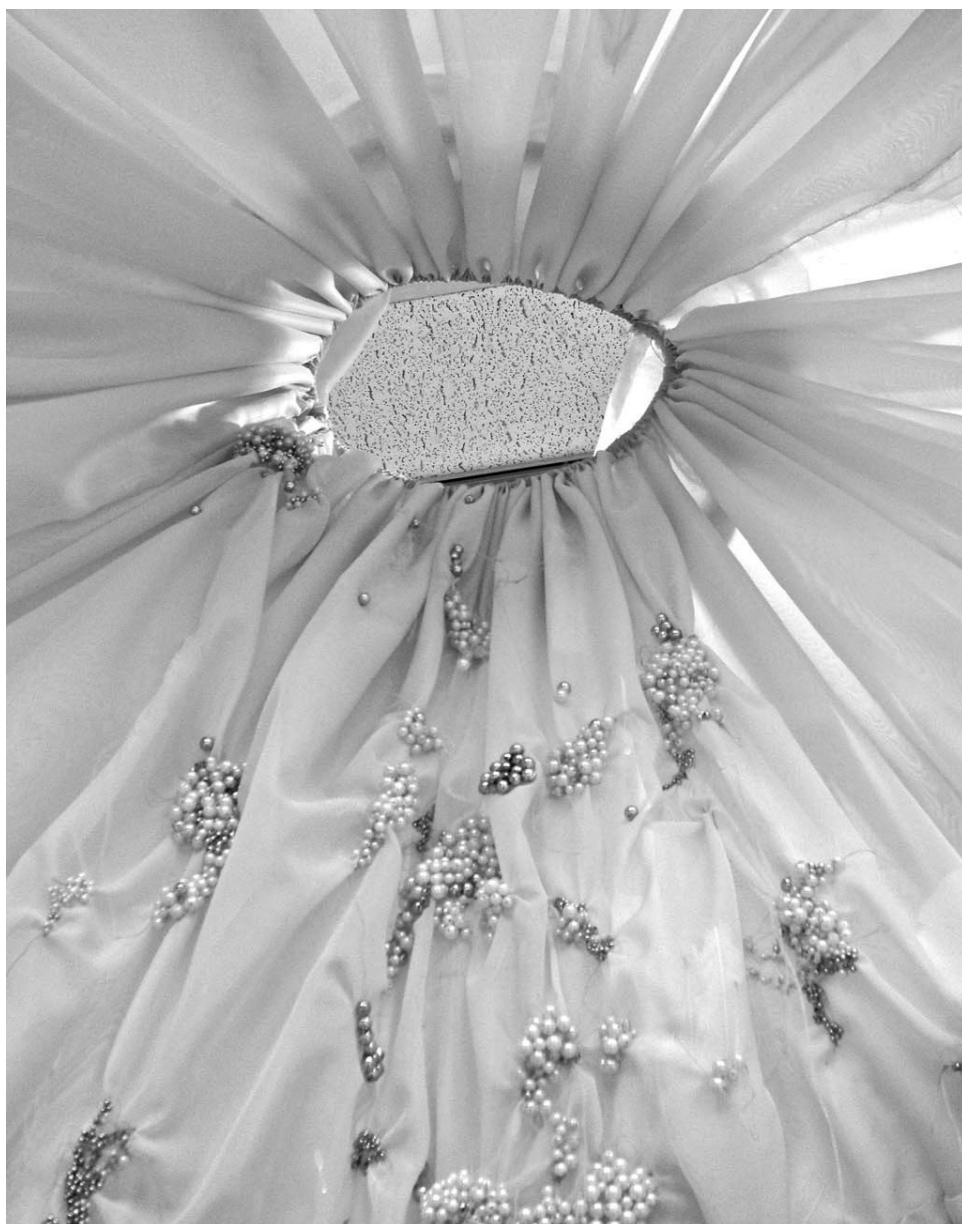
XBASE offers a different approach for site-specificity, presenting the artist with a raw basement complete with unfinished concrete floors, cinder blocks, exposed fieldstone walls and a low hanging ceiling. Artists that install in XBASE create installations that engage directly with the aesthetic of the basement space.

How I Got Over

Simone Aziga

April 22 –

May 14, 2011



Simone Aziga, *How I Got Over*, 2011

Ginger Scott

At times aggressive, exclusive, essentializing and deconstructionist, the history of feminist art is not something to fuck with. It will always be problematic to use imagery that explicitly references the visceral female body because of its strong associations with the legacy of second-wave feminism and feminist art practice. Simone Aziga's work, with its use of frilly pinks, piercing needles and flowing fabric resembling fleshy tissue, takes from this legacy. What I am hung up on, perhaps to my detriment, is that I assume contemporary feminist artists must also be angry so as to align themselves with this feminist history and practice. Then again, anger as a tool used to get over contemporary challenges in the third-wave (and beyond) is probably just as outdated as corsets and finishing schools. I don't want to say that feminist artists should reinforce the stereotype of the angry or hysterical woman, but I do want to say that there are still plenty of issues to be angry about.

The social and political conditions in North America have changed drastically since the Suffragette movement in the late 19th century. We are now in an environment that shifts between considerations of gender equality and specificity; where women have won the battles for the right to vote, for access to safe abortion and birth control and for the freedom to negotiate between having a family and having a career. However, women still get paid less for the same job, craft is still devalued as 'women's work,' and women artists are still under-represented. Regardless, there seems to be some space that has revealed itself as having an objective distance from the aggressive ideals of the more historical movements. There is respite for relaxation and objectivity on the matter of feminized art and feminized space. Instead of continuing to be reactionary, maybe we have moved to a condition of irony.

After getting over first-wave gender-essentialization, Simone de Beauvoir's gender-becoming, and Judith Butler's gender-performance, maybe it's time to pick up the pieces and work with the stereotypes that have persisted parallel to these shifting theories. We still recognize pretty-in-pink as feminine, hold disgust for the abject female body, and celebrate the more-woman-than-woman drag queen and suburban pop culture fag. Aziga takes materials that are in line with these consistencies and then shows them to themselves and to their public. Her installation, *How I Got Over*, is pink, girly, decadent, flirty and soft; but it doesn't own any of these traits. Just as the form of the installation references the sewing pattern of a skirt, but is functionless, so are the stereotyped cues that reference a legacy of femininity that can now be considered outdated. Aziga's visual tools - beads, thread, embroidery, crinoline, fabric, needles - do not adhere to a current reality but point to one that has been historically constructed for us (women) through institutions like the fashion industry. As fashion is inherently functionless, perhaps the gendered reality it has constructed has also been rendered functionless. Aziga's work is satisfyingly ludicrous and bit obscene if only because it presents ideals that have been fought against for so long by feminist artists who were looking to reconstruct a more realistic feminine identity. It's an indulgence to experience this installation of fabric, beads and fancy feminine packaging because it takes us down a nostalgic path. It's time to repurpose.

An inversion is played out through Aziga's purposeful use of materials that are readily recognized as stereotypically feminine. By appropriating the language that is given, one can then work within that system in order to build a critique. This is identified by Julia Kristeva as a tried and true tactic, specifically constructed as a battle between and mind (masculine) and the body (feminine). In placing herself into the symbolic order, which privileges the Father/rational thought, a woman can adopt a provisional identity within that structure by which she can invert it. The inherent danger with this placement into the symbolic order, and taking on male understanding, is that this privileged male role is reinforced. Aziga's materials and the playful up-the-skirt gaze of the installation evoke a humorous reaction in the viewer, which by Kristeva's ideas could mean that this work is solidifying a devaluation of what is considered feminine. On the other side, this humour is instead created out of a much more contemporary ironic stand point, by which young

women today find it ludicrous to believe in the binary stereotypes that these pretty pink materials once represented.

Think reality shows *Queer Eye for the Straight Guy* and **RuPaul's Drag Race**, **sitcom** *Modern Family*, **Tim Gunn on Project Runway**, **reality show**, **Jay Manuel and J Alexander on America's Next Top Model**, **talk show** *Steven and Chris*.

The Reading Cave

Monica Laflamme
September 9, 2011



Monica Laflamme, *The Reading Cave*, 2011

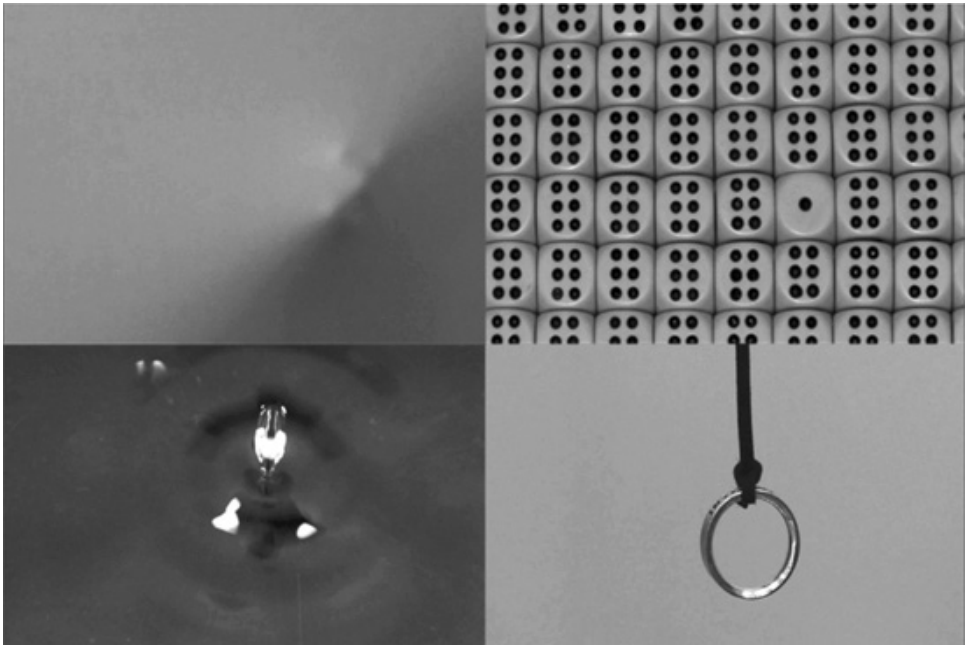
XPACE presents the launch of VOLUME 2: an annual print anthology of over twenty exhibitions programmed for our five unique spaces between May 2010 and March 2011. Artist Monica Laflamme designed a cave-like environment in Xbase, one of the five mentioned spaces comprising XPACE. XBASE will host the launch of VOLUME 2.

THE
READING
CAVE



Gaze Into the Moment

Yoon-Jin Jung
*October 14 –
November 5, 2011*



Yoon-Jin Jung, *Gaze Into The Moment*, 2011

Gaze Into The Moment, is about a way to see things. From where, how, and what one would see the world, oneself, the stories hidden in all relationships around us, and the essence of life. With 4 video works as individual stationary images, the installation presents a message: carefully examine and gaze into the situations presented.

Stop breathing.

Concentrate.

Attempt to grasp the infinite that exists in every moment.

Watch carefully for the short moments that pass by.

In those moments, one will come across an awareness that we didn't realize before.

Artist Yoon-Jin Jung focuses on an understanding of experience and its relationship to ideas of philosophical, cultural, and social issues. Yoon-Jin poses a challenge: to subvert conventional ways of thinking in the hope of finding a clear and more balanced perspective, absolving awareness from the purely logical. The artist suggests alternative ways of perceiving the world around us, where the simplest gesture can open the consciousness of the viewer to further awareness and perception.

Synthetic Phenomena

Kuh Del Rosario
*November 18 –
December 10, 2011*



Kuh Del Rosario, *Synthetic Phenomena*, 2011



Stacylee Turner

The creation of stalactites and stalagmites is a marriage of binary form through tandem energy. Time, gravity, water and mineral sediment create fantastic caves, thick with spikes and spires: incomplete labyrinths with infinite solutions.

Artist Kuh Del Rosario has captured the marvel of the natural world here with *Synthetic Phenomena*, the enforced naturalization of a man-made space. Using Styrofoam and other artificial materials, XBASE has been transformed into a cave of wonder, with speleothems growing up from the ground and dripping out of the ceiling. It is an immersive representation of nature, contradicted by the synthetic materiality of the artists' choosing.

Del Rosario's synthetic speleothem (cave deposits) are a result of building on top of one another Styrofoam and wood off-cuts in resemblance to the natural layering of lime as it gradually produces stalactites and stalagmites. It is an additive process, much like an urban area builds on top of its past self. It is a constant restructuring of man and nature that Del Rosario channels here.

Del Rosario's imersive space is a visually contrasting experience to the urban world under which it resides. Synthetic forms, made to look organic, encompass the visitor with growths that appear to have reached out of the building's framework. All man-made structures are truly synthetic in their construction, whereas nature is the result of organic adaption to a framework (natural or otherwise), such as coral growing along a copper wire. Del Rosario's work is a reversal in the urbanization of natural habitats; it is the naturalization of synthetic media.

Stacylee Turner: Can you speak to your interest in creating these immersive spaces as opposed to freestanding sculpture?

Kuh Del Rosario: In this particular show, I really wanted to take advantage of XBASE's low ceilings and overall feeling of rawness. I wanted to push this characteristic further and create a kind of urban chasm, hidden beneath the gallery floor. To achieve this, I decided to re-interpret naturally occurring speleothem of stalactites and stalagmites using my sculptures. It was an interesting thematic condition, which resulted in very subtle nuances new to my work. I have adopted a darker palette (though still very colorful) and have utilized steep angles to reference geological structures.

In my practice, I tend to switch between large-scale installations and small sculptures. It is either a matter of necessity or occasional luxury. I have a natural tendency to contain and compact my work. And ever so often, when I get an opportunity to play with a space it's always a pleasure to spread out, to change the way my sculptures engage with the viewer.

ST: Your work seems to have a very playful element to it, is your intention to make an otherwise

unappealing place more appealing?

KDR: Play is definitely an integral factor in my process and it is important to me that translates to the viewer. To me, that means leaving evidence of the process, to keep the mark making and to utilize the happenstance and mistakes as part of the visual narrative. In the case of the sculptures I've made for *Synthetic Phenomena*, I've incorporated a lot of painterly gestures, and very wet paint. The sculptures are adorned with a lot of dried drips and splashes of paint. I suppose it is how I imagine stalactites are formed. When I think of caves, I think of undiscovered magical worlds, unblemished by modern life bustling hundreds of feet above. And in most of these types of environments, stalactites and stalagmites grow incredibly slow, like a dynamic stillness. I associate this with peacefulness and a place for contemplation.

But aside from caves, stalactites and stalagmites also occur in urban environments, and in these situations, they grow incredibly fast; under bridges, in sewers, in basements, but the conditions need to be right. This fact excited me most when learning about speleothems, and I thought it would be fun to recreate this phenomena in a gallery space.

It Happened in the Woods

Patricia Beattie
*January 20 –
February 11, 2012*



Patricia Beattie, *It Happened in the Woods*, 2012

Amber Landgraff

Come away, O human child!
To the waters and the wild
with a faery hand in hand
for the World's more full of weeping
than you can understand.

The Stolen Child, WB Yeats

I spent my childhood in a suburban dream world complete with large grassy backyards and quiet streets where kids rode on bicycles and played catch in the road. I lived about a fifteen-minute walk away from my grade school. Everyday on my walk to and from school I would pass a small grove of trees. Living as I did amidst suburbia, that little grove of trees was like a wooded forest, dark and deep. There was no such phrase as old growth in my vocabulary. To me, growing up as I did, the illusion of a forest was more real than an actual forest. I would dawdle on my way home from school, exploring the creek that the trees hid from view, jumping from one side of the thin stream of water to the other. My little woods offered a place for the imagination to run wild, with twisting roots peeking their way out of the ground to trip up and trick you. As in fairy tales, it was easy to imagine that monsters hid in the woods of my childhood.

Suburbia only offers the illusion of safety, in the same way that my collection of trees offered the illusion of a forest. While I, with all the impetuosity of youth, imagined children stealing goblins inhabiting my forest, around the corner from where I lived a young woman was taken in the middle of the night off of her own front porch. The whispered rumour throughout the neighbourhood was that her parents — fed up with her tardiness at curfew — locked her out and went to bed, on the very night she forgot her keys, that night that she was taken.

After that, I remember my parents developed tight, pinched looks of concern if I took too long walking home from school. That fifteen-minute walk that I had always stretched out to half an hour, or forty-five minutes — those stolen moments of youthful independence — took on a different meaning when compared to the very real experience of the missing girl. Of course, my experience of those events are clouded with the safe fear of a child — of still believing that there was no such thing as monsters that my parents couldn't soothe away. I was not quite old enough to understand that the real monsters in the world were not to be found in the woods. In all the stories I knew about children being kidnapped and taken away, there was always an element of the story that depicted the stolen child as better off, protected and suspended in youthful innocence where they would never have to learn about the real dangers that could be found in the world.

Patricia Beattie's installation, *It Happened in the Woods*, conjures up the illusion of a forest. Beattie's stage, built through a combination of clay and trees, transforms the space into something both sinister and romantic. Beattie's forest should not be mistaken for the real thing, but rather a complex set inviting the viewer to explore. If I close my eyes I can imagine myself into someplace else, the forest of my childhood. Breathing in deeply I find myself surrounded by the smell of the woods. The sound of water running through pipes becomes a trickling stream, the concrete floor feels like soft rich earth, and the cracks in the floor become gnarled tree roots poking through the ground. The idea of walking through crooked pathways, unsure of whether the creaking of branches is due to the wind or because of something more dangerous lurking in the shadows gives me a delicious thrill that creeps up my spine. Of course, the deliciousness of the horror is tempered by the fact that there is really nothing to fear in these woods, no skulking dangers and no real monsters.

Speaking to Beattie about the installation she comments on this mixture of fear and play, describing the moment right before you start running because you are so scared, and how in that moment you find that you can't help laughing. It is that exhilaration that

this installation is meant to invoke — that strength and overwhelming belief in your own safety. We laugh when we run because always, at the back of our minds, most of all, we believe in our own ability to get away. In the woods monsters aren't real, they are only as strong as we imagine them to be. The forests of our childhoods are romantic, dark and deep. The trees envelop us and we relax with the knowledge that sometimes we are safer in the woods.



Both images: Patricia Beattie, *It Happened in the Woods*, 2012



Apartment Series

Catherine Polcz
*February 24th –
March 17th, 2012*



Catherine Polcz, *Apartment Series*, 2012

By Faye Mullen

In a desolate parking lot in the center of the American landscape, there is a camera that has been capturing for the past fifteen years. The camera has witnessed and documented the events in the parking lot, but retains no memory of the specifics. For instance, there is a man who, every morning, arrives to work in his new and progressively rusted Ford. Over time, his stomach line slowly feels the weight of gravity and his hair erodes follicle by follicle. After a decade and a half, the oxidized Ford can be found, not in the parking lot, but stationed still in the man's driveway three blocks away. He will not be going to work today or tomorrow, nor ever again. The camera, although it has lost its aging subject continues to capture without resistance.

The moving image.

Our desire to endlessly capture - to make moving images, runs parallel to our desire for continuance; as a collective body, we wish to remain in existence. *Apartment Series*, with its lack of significant narrative and its void of any climax, stresses the essential desire to make moving images.

The term moving images is somewhat deceptive, since the images themselves are not moving. The art of making moving images is driven more so by the compilation of images in sequence over time. The question remains, what is moving in the moving image? By allotting duration to images, we invite thought. Duration is the medium that allows thought to become possible; duration is to consciousness as nerves are to touch. Therefore, is the moving image the movement of consciousness itself?

Catherine Polcz, in her work *Apartment Series*, portrays a visual articulation of existence for existence's sake. The subject, a girl in her young-twenties neatly proportioned and quite striking, seems to be the witness of duration's affect on consciousness. The precarious nature of time is evident in the unfolding of the subject's daily activities where moments are both dreadfully plenteous and terrifyingly lacking. Polcz questions, "How unfair it seems, that washing dishes cuts into... romanticized moments of stillness"¹. In these moments of stillness the subject becomes a portrait of an existence in waiting.

Existence in waiting.

The presence of death is perpetual; in each moment there is loss. Our struggle towards continuance is revealed through the atrophy of the moments passed. Time, the measurement of duration, is composed of an internal desire to remain in existence, to defy our limitation as aging bodies. An anticipatory lingering can be felt while the subject gawks at the water while waiting for it to boil or as she repeatedly checks the empty mailbox for something, anything. There is a heavy emptiness, a void felt throughout the duration of the film that there are no perceivable moments of any absolutes. Time is not, it's becoming.

A desire towards structuring time is witnessed in Catherine Polcz's sectioning of Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday and so on. Structure and a delineation of time haunts *Apartment Series* and yet, the trajectory is unwound within the moments of stillness. In particular, when the subject lies on her bed in a star formation there is a complete reversal of habitually successive modes of thinking, an expansion of the understanding of the metronome, the clock and the timer, into an intuitive experience of pure mobility (or immobility in her case). "A time of oblivion and thunder"², such is the place outside of time and through duration, where death can be denied. Through this, the view of duration, there is the slightest glimpse of an immobile moment where the successor is distanced, inhaled, denied, rejected. It is not about what was, or what will be, but the perpetual now. These insignificant moments of time seem to extend and last the longest, yet those are also the moments that we would like to move more quickly. One could say it is an act of wishing time away, which is also a way of beckoning death closer.



Both stills from *Apartment Series*, 2012



The distant autobiography.

Where death is denied in moments of stillness, it is reified in the moments the subject of *Apartment Series* gazes directly into and beyond the lens of the camera. All of fiction, composition, camera, character, narrative become jostled when her sight penetrates into the real. It is in the gaze that her week-long story unfolds. Telling and re-telling your story is a fundamental act to bear understanding of what it is that has happened. *Apartment Series* is able to deviate into a way of seeing, a way of knowing the self and the other in the same mode of consciousness. Existence, is in fact easy. Consciousness through the unsettled restlessness of duration is the architecture for living on.

The camera will continue to capture without its aging subject. It will soon be gifted with a new subject wearing tighter jeans who arrives five minutes earlier to work every morning; the camera hasn't knowledge of it.

¹Catherine Polcz from her artist statement of *Apartment Series*.

²Kristeva, Julia. *Powers of Horrors: An Essay on Abjection. European Perspectives*. Columbia University Press. New York. 1982

**Bending Over
Backwards
& Beating a
Dead Horse**

Hannah Hilary Enkel
*March 30 – April 21,
2012*



Hannah Hilary Enkel, *Bending Over Backwards & Beating a Dead Horse*, 2011

Janis Demkiw

Hannah Hilary Enkel deals in dirt. For the past two years, she has been cleaning houses professionally to make ends meet. And where these ends meet – in a folding together of workplace, studio and source material – makes matters interesting – and for that matter, makes matter interesting.

Bending Over Backward & Beating a Dead Horse is an installation comprised of the contents of vacuum cleaner bags accumulated on the job– which are then organized by house, bagged, dated, Dymo-labeled, and put on display for public scrutiny. The project is, literally, the cumulative by-product of the artist's grappling with the complex hierarchical dynamics she encounters in her profession as a housecleaner. More specifically, it is her response to the strange uneasiness of spending time privately in the intimate spaces of relative strangers which Hannah just can't seem to shake.

Enkel identifies the admittedly absurd project as an attempt to reconcile the fact that she spends much of her time each week investing a great deal of physical and emotional energy into an effort that ultimately produces "dirt bags". It can't be ignored that this also touches on basic class and/or labour issues, in that Hannah's clients, for a variety of their own reasons, decide to – and also have the means to – outsource their housework. The fact that Hannah enters into this contractual relationship willingly – or that she ultimately profits from it – doesn't make it any less freaky, and the unsettling power dynamic which results doesn't really fade with time. And with little exception, the intimacies that Hannah shares with her clients are relations largely bridged through their stuff.

In an effort to flip – or even just destabilize – this relational dynamic, Enkel indulges in the privilege that her position affords her to follow the irrepressible impulse to privately engage in a kind of illicit object-based voyeurism, where the material world of her clients – their things, their collections, their trash – become fuel for fantastic narrative speculations about their private lives. In their absence, the anxious inter-dynamic between Hannah and her clients becomes displaced and is ascribed instead to the matter that makes up their worlds. In this conflation of subject and object, these personal effects become subject to wanton conjecture, and are read like tea-leaves for clues that might reveal curious habits, desires, secrets and personal relationships.

There is a degree of perversity – and also transgression – to this enterprise. Through the collection and display of their debris, Enkel subjugates her cleaning clients by secretly preserving, and in essence distilling, their abjection. And the fact that these archived hoards are largely comprised of dust – of which skin and hair are dominant components – makes this abjection explicitly manifest. At the same time, this collected debris is to Enkel a reified embodiment of marginalization, where "margins" are themselves made manifest by the act of collecting and carefully preserving the dust that gathers in the corners, in the closets, and between the couch cushions as people go about their day-to-day business. In spite of this special attention, Hannah's pseudo-archive is comprised almost entirely of the stuff that most people don't want to acknowledge producing, let alone have displayed or shared with others – namely, their rubbish.

And Hannah Enkel not only deals in dirt; she dishes it too. The labels that are affixed to each bag of archived debris describe not their contents, but rather observations made by Enkel in the home of the corresponding inhabitant. The bags are indexed with statements like: "6/1/2012 - Used syringes filling a 1L Coca-Cola bottle on your kitchen counter" or "20/1/2012 - A combination lock bolted to the outside of your master bedroom door". Here, the subjective distillations become further concentrated, wherein the observations Hannah discloses are no doubt selected for their narrative salience or their potentially provocative potency.

In the installation itself, Enkel uses pervasive household and workplace materials – Ziploc baggies and Dymo-labeling tape – to produce an improvised cataloguing system to organize her secret hoard. Far from an objectively museological or austere display treatment, Hannah's hoard is more akin to the private recreational practices of collectors



Hannah Hilary Enkel, *Bending Over Backwards & Beating a Dead Horse*, 2011

of comic-books, coins, or all manner of collectibles, where rarity, fetish and highly-specialized knowledge or obscure details are key. Hannah treats XBASE much like a homeowner would use their basement; as a site for storage of semi-private collections, inviting the viewer into the realm of this uncanny archive.

It's a common maxim that a lot can be learned about a culture, or an individual, by examining its trash – a notion which is rote in the fields of Anthropology and Archaeology. But what comes as something of surprise from direct observation of Enkel's display is the relative homogeneity of the vacuum bag contents: when it comes down to it, everyone's filth looks more or less the same. And to put a fine point on it, as with most speculative endeavors, the matter that Hannah Enkel presents us with in *Bending Over Backward & Beating a Dead Horse* is ultimately as revealing about the artist herself – her aspirations and her vulnerabilities – as it is about the subjects who are purportedly being exposed.

Hopscotch

William Andrew
Finlay Stewart
June 8 – 30, 2012

Amber Landgraff

What is most necessary in politics today are precisely those powers of creation and imagination that can break through the barriers of this purported realism and discover real alternatives to the present order of things. Even artistic experimentation and creation that is not explicitly political can do important political work, sometimes revealing the limits of our imagination and at other times fuelling it.

- Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri

I would not start [a story] at the beginning or the end. I would need to work from some middle point, because the middle point, the ‘in between,’ is the space where I function the best.

- Francis Alÿs

A poetic meditation on the ward system of Toronto's city council, William Andrew Finlay Stewart's *Hopscotch* combines mediated footage of a woman skipping hopscotch with a carefully composed series of chords played for as long as the musicians in a horn section can sustain their breath. Every jump made on the hopscotch has been slowed down in the editing process to coincide with the length of each chord. The result is a hauntingly beautiful and layered projection. While the projection itself does not appear overtly political, Stewart's creative process includes an intriguing and complex look at the make-up of the ward system of Toronto's city council – composer John Spence used a custom scale based on the year in which each councilor was elected to develop the chords played, and a boundary map of Toronto's 44-ward system was the initial inspiration for the image of the hopscotch course.

Stewart's practice brings to mind the work of Francis Alÿs, an artist who consistently uses poetic gestures to intervene into the landscape (and politics) of a place. Alÿs uses his work to ask whether doing something poetic can be political and, vice versa, whether doing something political can be poetic. The question for Alÿs becomes, "Can an artistic intervention translate social tensions into narratives that in turn intervene in the imaginary landscape of a place?" What is significant here is not that Alÿs' gestures propose specific solutions or changes to a political landscape, but rather that they are meant to be used as a starting point for the imagination of an alternative political moment. As Mark Godfrey points out, "The most significant question [Alÿs] poses – to himself as well as to his viewers – is whether such poetic acts, while underlining the 'senselessness' of particular situations, can also create a space for new ways of thinking that will lead in turn to 'the possibility of change.'"

One of Alÿs' works that I find helpful to think about in comparison to Stewart's *Hopscotch* is *Railings* (2004). *Railings* began with the directive, "upon arriving in...[new city], pick up a stick, run it along the architecture and listen to the music of the city." The



Hopscotch, William Andrew Finlay Stewart, 2012

subsequent video documentation of these directions picks up different cadences depending on the distance between rails, the make-up of the building materials, and the speed of Alÿs' gait. While *Railings* appears to be one of Alÿs' less political gestures, the action performed simply and rhythmically draws attention to what is public and private in the city by pointing out the barricades built to keep those spaces separate. What these works share in common, aside from a similarity in aesthetics, is a reconfiguration of the political as a poetic gesture. In these works, the symbolic gesture redefines what is political and what is poetic as being the same thing.

In Toronto's current political climate we are faced with the most prosaic of leaders. A blustering huckster, Rob Ford continually embarrasses with his inability to imagine possibilities for change. Even when failure is imminent, Ford is unable to diverge from his party-line – a reality that became crushingly clear when, despite all evidence to the contrary, and a city council vote solidly against building a subway line to Sheppard, Ford continued to claim without pause that “folks want subways, subways, subways.” A refrain that becomes laughably sad because it points out Ford's sheer inability to think beyond what he believes to be the case. Perhaps this is just a sign that we, as artists, as activists, as Torontonians, need to imagine these possibilities for Ford. Perhaps our interventions into Toronto's politics need not be critical or crude but, like Stewart's, soothe with an uncanny poetry. To offer a starting point for meditation into the mundane, a reimagination of the symbols of the city – the boundaries of a ward system become a hopscotch that we can fly over with impossible beauty and grace while accompanied by an orchestra sustained by the length of our breath.



External Space⁴

XPACE's External Space is the only off-site exhibition space that XPACE hosts. A video monitor that screens student and emerging media work on OCAD University's Campus, the External Space offers the opportunity for direct communication between our membership and our exhibiting artists.

It Speaks to Me and Stormy Hands

Sarah D'Angelo
*October 1 - November
12, 2011 / November
12 - December 10, 2011*



It Speaks to Me, Sarah D'Angelo, 2012



Stormy Hands, Sarah D'Angelo, 2012

Xenia Benivolski

I was recently reading a study on linguistics and communications done by professor and researcher Jean Louis Dessales. The research team had studied the narrative habits of a middle class Parisian family by taping 17 hours of dinnertime conversations to see what sort of dialogue is shared between humans at times of leisure. Upon analysis, it was discovered that spontaneous storytelling took the lead at almost half of all conversation, followed by signals and utilitarian (ritualized) speech, opinion, advice, complaints, gossip, and then jokes (only 6.2%). The smaller percentages breaks down into interesting behavioral fragments, like singing to a child in order to get them to sing for example, or talking to inanimate objects. In this study, the researchers were attempting to understand how these narratives fill a biological purpose in our social life, and why narrative storytelling is so important to humans. One question that keeps coming up is this: why do we want to tell stories?

For her recent stop motion animation work, *Stormy Hands*, Sarah D'Angelo listens. The new work comes as a result of an open submission call for dreams from a variety of acquaintances. The dreams that poured in varied, from euphoric to horrific, realistic to completely surreal. One thing that stood out was people's general enthusiasm for dream-sharing, the sort of personal emotional impact that was felt through the submission process and how dedicated people were to the details. In an earlier work, D'Angelo's first stop motion animation *It Speaks To Me*, it seemed that the story was dictated by the nature of the characters and materials. The structure is similar in *Stormy Hands*: spontaneous narratives merging together through the medium of stop motion animation, morphing, melting and imploding into consecutive stories, like a dream.

People like to tell each other about their dreams. Often the information is vague and personal and bears little significance to the listener, and so the experience is hard to share; but we want to share it because it matters to us, because it happened on a different plane we all visit, and its chaotic structure is something that anyone could relate to without explanation. Why is it that the most unnerving dreams are ones where nothing particularly unexpected or alarming happens? Or is it that we just don't remember them, or want to share. According to Dessales' findings the universal sensitivity to unexpectedness is a fundamental component of narrative competence (Dessales, 2008 P. 5), crucial to social survival.

Our dream world is a shared universe with infinite possibilities and ideas. For the dreamer, there is a loss of control in the manufacture of the narrative that becomes a seductive venture point for our worldview. There is a therapeutic element in sharing the dream: People enjoy telling each other, and hearing of intense experiences even if they are painful or frightening, paradoxically, even though the telling evokes these feelings again, the pleasure of sharing these stories compensates for it (Rimé, 2005 P. 109). In Sarah's work, the loss of control that we experience in our dreams becomes occupied by her creative vision and the control is regained when she brings the dream to life.

Stop-motion animation has a particular history of giving life to the things that we cannot otherwise animate, with roots in Surrealism and Comedy. This history tends to lend the medium an air of magical naïveté, which sometimes makes it hard to give weight to its subjects. By approaching the subject with whimsy, Sarah D'Angelo owns up to the medium, fully committing these elements to the narratives she was given. There is something heartbreaking about the simple movements of her meticulously sculpted characters; a strange understanding that exists only between inanimate objects, which in turn seem all too aware of their short and doomed life. Mountains, deer and body parts collapse into each other and reform as new creatures, all made from the same material in this strange world. Because of this ongoing transformation, it no longer matters what the subject is. A deer for example, may not exemplify any particular qualities of the animal, but is present in a purely visual form like some sort of an essential Aristotelian model.

These aspects of the stop motion animation are magnified by the shifting frame of reality that surrounds dreamscapes. The work is committed to visualizing a fictional narrative based in a quasi personal experience. A curious effect that transpires when one tries to listen to another person's dream comes from a mismatched narrative function: when someone tells you of a dream, in terms of an experience and as far as their mind and body is concerned, the event really did occur, like a memory. However to the listener the dream is a work of pure fiction. Preece for example has found that only about 4% of spontaneous narratives told by children are original fiction or fantasy (1987), and things are not much different for adults, as most of the stories we tell are rooted in personal experience. The loose narrative that occurs in *Stormy Hands* fictionalizes the work, removing the personal experience to the point where it becomes a truly shared experience, entering the collective domain as a 'story.' When activated, the inhabitants of these tales are given agency and magical properties that puts our realistic worries to rest.

Preece, Alison. *The range of narrative forms conversationally produced by young children*, *Journal of Child Language*, 14 (2), 1987

Dessales, Jean-Louise. *Spontaneous Narrative Behaviour in Homo Sapiens: How does it benefit speakers?*, *Proceedings of the 7th Evolution of Language Conference*, Barcelona, 2008

Rimé, Bernard. *Le Partage social des émotions*. PUF, Paris, 2005



Library⁵

The Library is our newest contribution to our exhibition spaces and it focuses on the more social aspect of XPACE's programming. There are three parts to our library: the Boogie Woogie Mix-tape Library, the Curated Library, and our Zine Library. Each is an ongoing accumulation of books, tapes, and various zine projects all housed within an inviting bookshelf and comfortable bench in our Main Space Gallery.

The Library

Zines, Mixtapes, and Curated Texts



The Library, 2012



Anthology by Stefan Hancherow, part of Curated Library, 2012



Alien Invasion zine by Lala Albert, part of *Zine Library*, 2012



Mix tape by Andrew Zukerman, part of *Boogie Woogie Mix Tape Library*



Submissions

XPACE accepts proposals in all media from student and emerging artists and designers. We program through an open call for submissions twice a year, juried by our programming committee. We encourage curated group exhibitions for our *Main Space*, and offer solo or collaborative exhibition opportunities in our *External Space*, *Window*, and *XBASE* spaces.

Information regarding upcoming calls for submissions can be found on our website: **xpace.info/submissions**

Each of our spaces offers a unique exhibition opportunity and we ask that all proposals take into consideration which space you are applying for when preparing your application.

Feel free to discuss proposals or the application process with XPACE staff. Contact us at **cameron@xpace.info** or **alicia@xpace.info**

XPACE Cultural Centre
58 Ossington Avenue
M6J 2Y7
Toronto, ON
416.849.2864

Gallery Hours:
Tuesday - Saturday
12 - 6pm



¹ **Main Space:** Rebecca Baird, Lisa Binnie, Susan Campbell, Pedro Bonatto de Castro, Fareena Chanda, Keith Cole, Philip Cote, Gloria Caballero, David Clarkson, Benjamin Edelberg, Julian Higuerey Nunez, Rita Camacho, Po Chun Lao, Nermin Moufti, Rachel Pulfer, Frank Tsonis, Christine Walker, Marian Wihak, Life of a Craphead, Joshua Barndt, Geoffrey Pugen, Jeremy Bailey, Melissa Fisher, Alex Bowron, Shannon Doyle, Lindsay Holton, Nicholas Crombach, Liam Wylie, Elise Victoria Louise, Elizabeth Underhill, Ryan Lord, Paola Savasta, Genevieve Roberston, Jillian Kay Ross, Lauren Pelc-McArthur, Brianna Lowe, Graham Rudy, Aryen Hoekstra, Tyler Muzzin, Andrew Zealley, Nickey Runham, Aamna Muzaffar, Susan Campbell, Jaime Angelopoulos, Kali Fisher, Ariel Kellett, Derrick Piens, Steven Beckly, Lanie Chalmers, Suzanne Caines, Kaitlyn Bourden, Nitasha Mcknight, Jessica Allen, Mason Mummary, Lee Aaron Wiesblatt, Krystina Plante, Ian Nortan

² **Window Space:** Laura Paolini, Melissa Fisher, Kate McQuillen, Carolyn Tripp, Fabian Mosquera, Matt King, Nadia Belerique, Tonya Corkey, Hanna Hur

³ **XBASE:** Simone Aziga, Monica Laflamme, Yoon Jin Jung, Kuh Del Rosario, Patricia Beattie, Catherine Polcz, Hannah Hillary Enkel, William Andrew Finaly Stewart

⁴ **External Space:** Sarah D'Angelo

⁵ **Library:** Ongoing collection