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Welcome to the second installment of VOLUME, XPACE's annual anthology of exhibition essays, interviews and support material. This publication assembles over twenty exhibitions programmed for our five unique spaces between May2010 and March2011. VOLUME is our opportunity to share the discourse and critique offered by student and emerging artists, peers, and curators in support of or in response to these exhibitions.

XPACE Cultural Centre is a non-profit organization dedicated to emerging art and design. Our goal is to bridge students with their established counterparts through experimental programming that cultivates public dialogue. This allows for a dynamic art space that questions and re-evaluates the cultural and artistic expectations of visual language. XPACE is a membership-driven organization supported by the OCADU Student Union and OCADU students.

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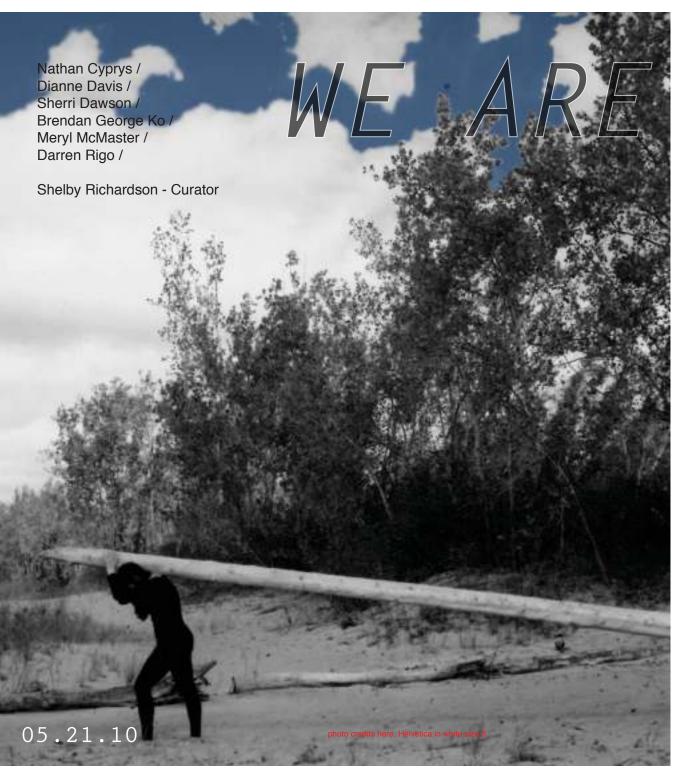




#### content...

Main Space
05/21/10We are Wild1-4
07/03/10The Greatest Show on Earth5-8
09/17/10Parts of a Hole9-12
10/12/10The Typology and Topography
11/12/10Cavalcade
01/08/11Tension, Distance. Presence21-24
02/11/11Ad Infinitum
03/18/11As if you still see it in front of you29-32
XBASE
05/21/10Up and Atom: Forty-Five Hundredths of an Inch33-34
09/17/10775 King St. West
— 11/12/100dds and Entries
01/08/11Measures
02/11/11Artifice
XPACE @ WHIPPERSNAPPER
02/25/11Cycle
Window Space
11/12/10Technicolor Dreambox
01/08/11Anchor
03/18/11Abyss
07/02/10Ghost, ghost, ghost
09/10/10Shrine of the Contest Winner
10/09/10The Illuminated Husk
02/11/11Giftworks
External Space
09/02/10Negative Reality59
01/08/11Beauty Queen
02/11/11Left
03/18/11Filter>Blur>Average62
XWEB
03/18/11The Untitled Trilogy

Contributions / Artist Index



## WILD

We Are Wild: Distortions of the wilderness in the social psyche Shelby Richardson, Curator

Photography is an essential medium in the investigation of the existing individual; an individual constructed of fragments, immersed in a state of representational ambiguity. The anxiety of the human subject in the post-industrialist age is still pertinent as urbanity continually threatens our relationship with the natural world.

The artists in We Are Wild continue to explore the alienation of the individual, investigating the fractured self in a society where one is increasingly estranged from nature. Interest in the world of the natural and pastoral is stimulated by globalization and the technological advancements that surround society. The process of understanding, capturing and evolving are inherent values in this photographic work. Romanticized explorations of this connection can be found in many of the photographs, though the artists pursue a newly cultivated examination of the romantic. They occupy an idealized wilderness that has become personalized and constructed into exclusive representations; what we see is the artist within their individualized environment.

...explore the alienation of the individual, investigating the fractured self in a society where one is increasingly estranged from nature.

The idea of wilderness, especially in the Canadian psyche, is intertwined with the myth of an untouched landscape; one separated from the world we engage with on a daily basis. As these artists investigate their own personalized renditions of the land and wilderness, they both stimulate and dissolve myths of America's northern landscape.

Brendan George Ko's photographs explore the links between memory, legend and the landscape, examining how these factors fuse and activate particular images in the viewer's imagination. Ko's installation The Man Who Disappeared, attempts to transmit an impalpable vision of memory and discovery. Nathan Cyprys' work takes on a performative dependence within nature. The landscape provides the framework through which the artist explores their mutually ephemeral existence.<sup>3</sup> The works by Ko and Cyprys ask us to look and listen to these configurations, amalgamating our visions and memories of the natural with these mythic fabrications.

Myths of the untouched wilderness negate our human dependence on such an environment, denying our need for sustenance and the ability to survive. Human interaction with the landscape is something that is often denied by mainstream

depictions associated with the wilderness, fraudulent images that feed the growing psychological consumerism of the landscape. Sherri Dawson's images of the Niagara escarpment and her family's quarry of limestone in Hamilton, embody acts of intervention and reliance. Images of jutting stone and rock mediate between personal formations of memories and the mass imagination of today's North American society.

Such a disruption of our contemporary ideals of the natural world is also visible in the dismantled and romanticized photographs of Darren Rigo. Rigo constructs images that derail our sense of the Romantic landscape, merging human interference with natural production. By placing stones, maneuvering tree branches, or creating brick structures within the northern Canadian landscape, Rigo disrupts the 18th century saccharine landscape with 21st century constructions of human interposition.

Interruption and filtration are other methods of locating the wilderness within a contemporary context. Dianne Davis distorts the natural formations of the forest landscape by obscuring them with translucent textiles. Removing natural formations reminds us once again of the current disconnection between nature and contemporary societies depictions of nature.

Canadian identity is inextricably linked to consumerist notions of the wilderness.<sup>6</sup> The nationalist art movement, which Canada has pursued over the last century demonstrates the manufactured link between rural Canada and the great Canadian landscape.<sup>7</sup> Idealization fractures and distances us from reality and our true identities. This form of detachment is what artists such as Meryl McMaster are trying to rehabilitate in their work. McMaster explores the complexity of her bi-cultural heritage through her experiences with nature, creating images that reflect ambiguity and ethereal recognition.<sup>8</sup> The placement of identity within an allegorical landscape pushes the viewer to negotiate their own identity as it relates to current manifestations of wilderness.

Urbanism causes us to lose a sense of connection to the land, a connection that goes beyond superficial notions of 'the great outdoors.' It is a sense of our identities as products of interdependence with nature, one that is continually challenged by recurrent industrialization. The artists in We Are Wild explore our alienation from the wilderness, displacing the conventions of that landscape.

As viewers, we are spectators of a distinct set of telling situations that examine our growing disconnect with nature. Some of the artists focus on this separation, while others emphasize reinstating the bond between the subject and nature. We Are Wild is an exhibition that proclaims a lost sense of spirituality and essence generated out of societies growing urbanism. The artists here suggest an alternative focus (nature) in which one may regain a sense of identity and belonging, so long absent from the splintered self.

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- O'Brian, John. "Wild Art History." Beyond Wilderness: The Group of Seven. Canadian Identity, and Contemporary Art. John O'Brien and Peter White, eds., Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2907.
- <sup>3</sup> Cyprus, Nathan. "Buried." We Are Wild. Artist Statement. XPACE Gallery. May 2010.
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- <sup>9</sup> McLeod, Dayna. "Natural Artifice." Elinor Whidden and 12 Point Buck. Eds., Lisa Beaudry and Aline Dixo. Toronto: Gallery 44, 2010
- Whitelaw, Anne. "Whiffs of Balsam, Pine and Spruce" Art Museums and the Production of a Canadia Aesthetic." Capitol Culture: a Reader on Modernist Legacies, State Institutions and the Value Si of Art Eds Berland Hornstein. Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2002.
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## The I Greatest Show

Earth!



The Greatest Show on Earth!

Jennie Suddick

"All were considered equal during carnival. Here, in the town square, a special form of free and familiar contact reigned among people who were usually divided by the barriers of taste, property, profession, and age" - Mikhail Bakhtin

"The Greatest Show on Earth!" is an exploration of the carnivalesque and its subsequent subcultures. The artists celebrate the unique aesthetics and assertions of carnivals, circuses, fairs and parades and explore how ideas born out of these uniquely rebellious celebrations manifest themselves in contemporary life.

Since the carnivalesque creates a space where one can revel in the frivolity of life, it is seen as a space where those who feel out of place in normative culture can celebrate separating themselves from the mundane, finding a place of belonging free from restrictions. It revolves around the creation of an alternate collectivity. It is these collective desires that cause a momentary release from society's more conservative confines. In this state of collectivity, individuals cease to perform according to conventional social roles. Individuals are transformed through costume and mask, being permitted to exchange bodies and be renewed. Here, the seriousness of 'official' culture is disregarded and the grotesque body-based elements of pop culture flourish through wit and frenzy.

The carnivalesque ideology of subversion has been apparent in many cultural phenomena, both in contemporary culture and historically. For instance, camp embodies the parody and frivolous nature of the carnivalesque. Camp has used devices of the carnivalesque as a subculture's cry against social norms. Much like a carnival's exaggerated costumes and focus on pleasure, camp celebrates the outlandish, the exaggerated and anything of 'bad taste'. This often includes making use of devises such as sexual innuendoes, caricature and irony.

Over time, the carnivalesque has become more and more implicated into the mainstream. The complicated structure of maintaining opposition while being more widely recognized has offered questions on how something can transgress a structure that now incorporates its existence. Today, the carnivalesque can be seen in street theater, reality television, competitive eating, pro-wrestling, beauty pageants, and other facets of spectacle in popular culture. Just as annual carnivals have spurned permanent theme parks, many resources for unlimited access to carnivalesque fantasy worlds now exist. Even the over the top style of celebrity was once uniquely embraced by the camp subculture is now utilized by mass culture, as currently epitomized by Lady Gaga and her idea of the 'fame monster'. The term, credited to the pop icon, describes an individual that obsessively concentrates on the extravagant aspects of life, living in a luxury driven consumer world where Lady Gaga herself is a new commodity. Lady Gaga is a result of how the notion of pop celebrity has amplified over the years through a lineage that includes David Bowie, The New York Dolls and Madonna. Thus, she functions as an over-the-top icon of glam, an embodiment of unrestrained excess, which includes embracing the grotesque.

The carnivalesque's inherent subversiveness undoubtedly continues to have a changing dynamic as it continues to be noticeable in mainstream popular culture at a growing rate. Its growing recognition has not negated the demand for it, even though its origins are rooted in a rejection of conventional acceptance. Perhaps this is evidence that the carnivalesque's draw is now generated through a vaster concept of collectivity, one that bonds together those who bring forward and celebrate the instances of the carnivalesque within everyday life.

If one were to don these masks, they would obtain a new identity, one that celebrates the absurd and flawed, elevating it to a celebrity status.

Each artist in this exhibition has reacted to guestions of how the carnivalesque functions today, many having reflected on their own experiences and surroundings, drawing connections to the carnivalesque's historical presence.

Amanda Nedham has drawn from two seemingly diverse contemporary sources: reality television and malls. Nedham emulates a form of spectacle that is becoming more and more prevalent on television in recent years, that of 'reality' as entertainment, through presenting the viewer with the spectacle of a moment of a vicious attack. On display is an epic battle contained in a paradoxically playful artifact, which looks at the shopping centre as a seminal environment for negotiating social identity. Using the familiar form of a mall-ride, she has depicted her reflections of a self-cannibalizing dichotomy of Canadian identity today, shown through the ride having two conflicting heads, one of an iconic Canadian Goose and one of a predatory German Sheppard.

Aldo Parise's Aldo's Wonderland is a recreation of the basement of the artist's home. The artist himself, found here on display in the gallery, is a manifestation of how the carnivalesque has developed over history to be adapted into ones everyday life though accessibility. For years he has been passionately and obsessively creating his own roller coaster designs as well as spending his vacations traveling to as many amusement parks as he can, with the hopes of experiencing many rollercoaster designs and features. When not using his time off to travel to international theme parks, he has worked in them, at one point performing as the character mascot Patrick from SpongeBob SquarePants at Canada's Wonderland. Additionally, Aldo has gained some fame as the drag persona Aldonna, a celebration another one of his obsessions, the camp Idol Madonna. Parise's various incarnations allow us to glimpse at an earnest devotion to the carnivalesque, one that celebrates its influence in the formation of the contemporary mainstream.





Brett Despotovich / Pierre Durette / Alexis Mitchell / Amanda Nedham / Aldo Parise / Margaret Saliba / olvn Tripp

Jennie Suddick - Curator









Brett Despotivich employs the significant carnival object, the mask. The masks he has made would transform the wearer into versions of natural rarities, characters similar to those you would have found in traditional circus sideshows. His combination of traditional carnivalesque imagery and modern beauty materials pokes fun at over the top contemporary displays of glamour and celebrity.

Carolyn Tripp reflects on circus traditions of the costume and the menagerie, focusing on their desire to showcase all things exotic. From this investigation, Tripp has created new species of animals for her collection of trophy heads on mounts, which present a hypothetical reality where humans have developed a fetish for these new creatures, which have seemingly been created out of the desire to simultaneously flaunt nature and defy it.

Margaret Saliba has found that her knitting material of choice, balloons, have a very tactile nature that carries an array of subtle notes of nostalgic memories of circuses, clowns and fairs. Even when given a new form, the material is a universal symbol that cannot be separated from these associations. Saliba has turned their bright colours and unique texture into costumes for a contemporary circus, where, even with minimal embellishments, carry the history of the circus.

Pierre Durrette images depict one world that encompasses the vast history of the carnivalesque. Figures from various time-periods and cultures create contemporary scenes of frenzy and spectacle. Parade 11 depicts a scene that plays out as a surreal version of a parade, an image that could be associated with both celebration and unfortunate historical events, here specifically being the assassination of John F. Kennedy. This coupling reveals the role of the carnivalesque in today's society, embracing its frivolous history while searching for new radical potential.

With Camp #1: Camps of Autonomy Alexis Mitchell has created a performative video art piece looking at contemporary, progressive Jewish politics through the queering of traditional Purim celebrations. Mitchell says she focuses on the long history of carnival and drag traditions associated with Purim celebrations, as well as the insurgence of a queer politic or progressive sensibility in the reclamation of this Jewish folklore. To Mitchell, this important part of Jewish culture brings for an important discourse that should be looked at to open a dialogue of the Isreal/Palenstine situation.

Though the carnivalesque may no longer use its rebellious nature to remain completely separate from the mainstream, it has been presented in this exhibition that it does not lack its radical potency. Rather, it now functions through self- reflection, creating a new breeding ground for social identities and tactics that reflect on both current conditions and deviating histories.



#### A Look at the Aesthete (after being caught in a bad romance)

Derek Liddington, Director - XPACE Cultural Centre

Before I begin, I feel I must confess, I am a romantic. Let me re-confess, I am a hopeless romantic. In my studio I sit and stare, pondering the abstract thoughts that in turn enlighten my practice as an artist and curator. My relationship to these thoughts and histories is one of ambivalence. These are, of course, my own sensibilities as an artist, and it is not my intent to self-identify with the artists participating in the exhibition Parts of a Hole. Contrary, I am interested in the shift that takes place within a younger generation of artists, who use methods of borrowing and appropriation as a search for 'beauty'. For the purposes of my investigation, I will examine the relationship between ambivalence and aesthetics in the work of Liam Crockard, Georgia Dickie, Jesse B. Harris, Abby McGuane, Tibi Tibi Neuspiel and Sara Cwynar, Aleksander Hardashnakov, Ben Schumacher, and Hugh Scott-Douglas.

...where materials are not products or objects histories or theories, rather 'stuff'; forms from which artists can superimpose their own aesthetic inclination. Liam Crockard /
Georgia Dickie /
Jesse B. Harris /
Aleksander Hardashnakov /
Abby McGuane /
Ben Schumacher /
Hugh Scott-Douglas /
Tibi Tibi Neuspiel and Sara Cwynar

In the early 20th century, artists struggled with the physically changing landscape, the development of urbanism, and the growth of an art-connoisseurship that appreciated the spectacle of the everyday. Enter Marcel Duchamp. I bring up Duchamp as the most influential art figure in the history of Contemporary art (arguable, but not really). His simple positioning of a urinal, shovel, and bottle-rack (I could go on but I closed my wikipedia page) in the white-cubed gallery sent the art world spinning. With this humorous, if not antagonistic gesture, an idea was planted; artists could not only represent, but re-contextualize objects. The repercussions of this idea would reverberate in the works of artists for the next hundred years. What followed was a series of movements that looked to challenge the social, political and aesthetic conditions of the time; Futurism, alism, Dadaism, Constructivism, Fauvism, Minimalism, Pop-ism Conceptualism, and Deathofpaintingism(?). In amongst contemporary art's passing isms was the arrival of Postmodernism. The mode of thought that followed allowed artists during the 70's, 80's and 90's to problematize their own aesthetics, out of which came works that were as cyclical, reflective, and self-referential as the popular culture that surrounded them. The after-effects of Postmodernism left artists sitting at their Gmail. YouTube, and Facebook; perhaps solemn, perhaps free, perhaps in digital

If there is nothing left, why bother? Is a wire rack not just a rack? A shelving unit with hair gel nothing but a precarious mishap from our teenage years? D found drawings, paper, stickers and book pages amount to nothing more than misplaced recycling? Are stacks of cumbersome 2x4's doctored into a series of rudimentary tools nothing more then functionless craft? Although, these statements are crude, their exaggerations help point out our willingness to accept the authority of artistic indecision. As viewers we are trained - a mix of popular culture and institutional intervention - to understand the intricacies of these gestures, to see beauty in the work. Over time, and through many aesthetic shifts, a trust has developed between the viewer and the artist.

#### A humorous anecdote might help here:

In the film Escape from L.A. (1996) the lead character Snake is sent to stop a malicious ploy to 'kill' all the electrical signals and devices on the planet. At the end of the film we watch as he is left with a rather precarious ultimatum; does he allow the world to continue on, dependant on electronics, email, cellphones, consumerism, communism, capitalism and McDonald's, a world with "No smoking, no drinking, no drugs, no women unless you're married, no guns, no foul language"? Or, does he pull the plug on the whole god damn thing? As the riotous male figure he sees no difference between the authority he works for or the deviants that he was sent to stop. He ponders for a moment, smokes his cigarette, and pushes thebutton; function is erased, all that remains is the object. This brings us back to the current exhibition. We now have a solid

platform for the exhibition Parts of a Hole. What if we were to replace the character Snake with the artist Douglas Gordon? or Pierre Huyghe? Or perhaps curator/theorist Nicolas Bourriaud? And now let us substitute the authoritative antagonist with Clement Greenberg or Marcel Duchamp and the deviants with Guy Debord or perhaps Jacques Derrida. Ideologies abound, the artists that come after the artistic apocalypse - brought on by the end of Postmodernism - treat politics, theory, philosophy, agendas, history, ideology and dreams as nothing more then formal elements, devoid of rhyme or reason. This is the space of a post-romantic artist.

In his text Postproduction: Culture as Screenplay: How Art Reprograms the World (2002), French critic and curator Nicolas Bourriaud conflates current artistic practices with those of the DeeJay. In this exchange, a rotation is established between consumption and production that feeds into an endless re-identification of forms. A playground for pedagogical indifference towards materialism, formalism and production, Parts of a Hole presents us with an operating table which is not cyclical, but leveled - a free-for-all, where materials are not products or objects, histories or theories, rather 'stuff'; forms from which artists can superimpose their own aesthetic inclination.

The formal choices in the exhibition Parts of a Hole differ from artists-to-artist. Hugh Scott-Douglas works with utilitarian materials - bounty sheet paper towels and bubble wrap - as tools used for the application of paint. The inconsequential mark making as a result of these tools proposes a new utilitarianism for the objects, as much formal as they are functional. Here Scott-Douglas provides us with beauty through the conflation of Greenbergian high-modernism and utilitarian kitsch. This is continued in the work of Jesse B. Harris. His contribution to the exhibition lends from the muscle-car-culture sub-hero Calvin portrayed here pissing in the corner of the gallery. Although a caricature of the popular icon, the work deflects the typical consistencies associated with kitsch imagery through the artists use of stencils and spray-paint, which act to conflate the two strategies of delinquency. It is the placement of scribbles, stickers. found drawings, book pages, and scrap paper where we see the development of Aleksander Hardashnakov's aesthetic. Best described as conceptually arbitrary, the random and disjoint placement of materials results in narratives that expand and contract. The sensibility here is no different than those found on YouTube, where several, non-objective components create new formal possibilities.



The work of Liam Crockard, Georgia Dickie, Tibi Tibi Neuspiel and Sara Cwynar, and Abby McGuane all share an astute understanding of the potential beauty to be found in the assemblage of objects. Placement and composition treat objects, theory, rhetoric and histories as potential for collage, sculpture and assemblage. One's reading of the work as a traditional, linear narrative with a clear purpose is thus follied by the artists' combined need to find beauty in the objects they appropriate. Aesthetic decisions are made through a formal indecision with subsequent works building on a rubrics cube of formal investigations. Ben Schumachers' use of hair gel in his work is not a political strategy, but rather a literal negotiation of the formal properties founded when one combines blue

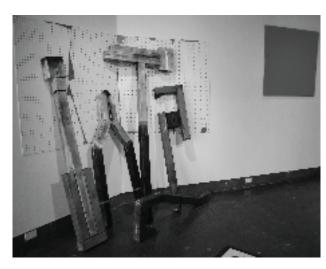
Void of the need to be intellectually convoluted, or aesthetically shy, their works stand as beacons of an artistic methodology that celebrates the artist as aesthete.

hair gel on wire fencing. The question then is void of a response. It is beautiful, because we recognize the relationship between the artist's hand and aesthetics. In their exhibition statement, the artists align their practice with the artistic lineage of Duchamp and Debord. However, differing from the subversion of the everyday, artists use these loaded histories as tool kits for assemblage. In their work, the weight of these histories are devoid of volume, the readymade presented as a malleable and ever-changing object. The sensibilities of these artists is one of combination; not contextualization, perhaps more akin to the work of early modernist painting than that of Duchamp.



I return to my initial statement: I am a romantic. If we believe this, and I most certainly do, then I would propose that these artists are post-romantic. Their work is neither cynical nor sentimental. Void of the need to be intellectually convoluted, or aesthetically shy, their work stand as beacons of an artistic methodology that celebrates the artist as aesthete. Aesthetics is how these artists roll.







Danielle Bleackley / Jennifer Cherniack / Alicia Nauta / Lisa Visser

Debora Wang - Curator

Typology Topography Repetition Deborah Wang, Curator

The Typology and Topography of Repetition brings together the work of four artists who explore the use of repetition and lists as both a means and ends to creating print-based works centred on subjectivity, memory, and systems oforganizing and classifying 'information.' Presenting new work by Danielle Bleackley, Jennifer Cherniack, Alicia Nauta, and Lisa Visser, this exhibition reveals the versatility and complexities of list-making, and material consequences of repetition.

Each artist starts with herself, using language and repetitive gestures as a launching point for an investigation of personal narrative, art history, and morality, while revealing or obscuring something autobiographical. For Cherniack, categories and systems of organization hold no content, so that the structure and act of structuring potential ideas becomes the content itself. As much as Cherniack's categories of art history put on an 'objective' air through the artist's use of archival methodologies and existing systems of organization, their subjectivity and reliance on the artist's personal experiences are swiftly revealed.

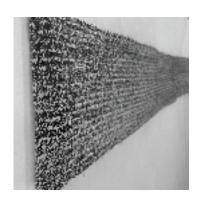
#### One repeated action harbours the to generate an indefinite number of new results.

In Bleackley's tactile work Obsidian, the process of writing obscures writing with more writing. The unending repetition of phrases and words, written over and over to the point of illegibility, serves to conceal what language ordinarily tries to make clear. The jumble of flowing script on a thin paper completely morphs into an inky landscape in Obsidian, while the meticulous black-on-black type in Sola, as it catches the light, keeps its legibility at bay. In both works, meaning is obscured rather than elucidated through her text.

Dreams are communicated through words and narratives in the form of lists or point-form notes in Nauta's process-heavy, print-based work. While Nauta's three-part work, Conversation with Myself, divulges her fleeting thoughts, feelings and dreams, in a way that is comprehensible to the audience, her efforts align with Bleackley's. Both artists struggle with their need to obsessively record and articulate what will ultimately be forgotten, or only membered silently through a singular body and mind.

In a similar cathartic process, Visser uses lists to confess her own questions and thoughts on morality. Drawing on past events, personal encounters, and what the artist deems as good and bad, both Visser's lists and her series of artists' books navigate ideas of





Exhibitions where, at the opening, I ate the equivalent of dinner at the refreshment table

Texts that I thought changed my life, but was just a phase Artists who I am eclous of because they have a better art name than me

# A SMALL SLIVER OF YOUR PROFILE SEEN FROM A DARK HALLWAY, INTO A BRIGHTLY LIT KITCHEN WHERE YOU SIT AT THE TABLE





morality through observat nd conversational methods - speaking and being with herself, or with s. With the lists I am Good and I am Bad, the viewer gains insight into ways the artist sets up an assessment of her morality, while considering s or her own morality using Visser's methods of determining goodness an I want to return to a quo tation by the French sociologist Henri Lefebvre whose writing about the ty pology of repetition served as one of several start points for the development of this exhib Lefebvre writes: If repetition, return or renewal of the same (or more or less enon should be understood according to the same) phenon each specific case and type, the same can be said of the relation between v at is repeated and the newness which springs from repet on (for example, the repetition of sounds ic offer a perpetual movement which is and rhythms in mu perpetually reinver Yet beyond the typology of repetition and its creative possibilities, the works in this exhibition also sp ak to the topography of repetition - what I would deem the result or newne s produced by each repetitive desture as distinctly rendered by each artist. O ne repeated action harbours the potential to generate an indefinite number of new results. The persistent mapping of ideas, emotions, and methods of to a physical material, in turn causes differing types of topography (e.g. feature es and relations) to emerge from its surface. The physicality of each work and the labour each artist employs serves not only as the artwork presented (in all cases as a snapshot or moment within a larger body of work), but also s a way to 'work through' a present condition or preoccupation, giving ag ncy to the artist to move forward or backward, through and within these eas, or over and over them again.

#### Cavalcade

Caitlin Sutherland

For the illustrators/artists in Cavalcade, the title's definition has been interpreted in the broadest sense in order to create a narrative that both counters typical definitions associated with the art of illustration, while also creating a relational environment where the viewer is invited into the whimsy of the cavalcade itself. Traditionally a cavalcade is defined as a procession led by horses or sometimes a hunting party. Extended definitions relate it to parades or pilgrimages, gathering strength and numbers as they move from starting point to end point. However, the difference between parade and cavalcade is the emphasis on spectacle. Where parades are more about a spectacle or celebration, cavalcades focus more on elements of participation and passage.

In an attempt to connect with the spectator, the artists have used their affinity for illustration, a typically rigid art form dictated by text, as a turning point. Refusing to be confined by the definitions of their discipline, the artists have chosen to focus on a more collaborative approach and a turn towards constructing ephemera. By creating an immersive environment in the gallery, Cavalcade appeals to the viewer with a sense of nostalgia; a nostalgia for a time in the spectators life when the image becomes the story; a receptacle of meaning unto itself. In such a world, the spectator immerses themself in this environment restricted only by the limits of their imagination, a world of fairy tales, fables and folklore

\"...by contemplating these moments of the past, we are no longer remembering, we are constructing something new, in turn effecting our future understanding of the present.

In this sense, the artists are asking the viewer to join in the procession. It's not entirely about the complexities of the images themselves, but the ability of the viewer to set aside the idea of the spectacle, and become a part of the story. The spectator is also able to entertain the possibility of influencing the relationships between the murals, which will continue to be woven throughout the duration of the exhibition.

As such, I can't tell you what the show's about or try to define it for you. For me, that would counteract the environment the artists have worked so carefully to construct. Each of the panels tell their own story, but they are also loosely connected. I cannot speak for the artists, but I can articulate and weave together some of the more complex narratives that began to emerge for me, as I examined the panels.

One of the main themes that struck me throughout the installation is the concept of becoming and belonging. Kassem Ahmed's panel marks the beginning of the project. Aptly, his piece is about migration, and delves into concepts of time and space. In Difference and Repetition, Deleuze weighs in on the topic of becoming. While



Dmitry Bondarenko / Daniel Downey / Jessie Durham / Adrian Forrow / Ali Hall / Nat Janin / Ahmed Kassem / Sean Lewis / Javier Ortiz

examining the concept of time, Deleuze helps us pinpoint ourselves in the present. We can only function in the present, but we are always in motion, always becoming. Our pasts make up who we are, but by contemplating these moments of the past, we are no longer remembering, we are constructing something new, in turn effecting our future understanding of the present. Through the environment of the installation, and the immediacy of the images, we are in some ways drawn into a coming of age narrative. However, as you begin to reflect, first impressions may begin to seem a bit naive.

Jessie Durham's panel following Ahmed's can perhaps illustrate this point. Durham weaves a narrative using children who not only represent the definition of cavalcade proper, but who also engage with the idea of interacting with the child within us. However, these are not ordinary children doing ordinary things. Something about this panel, with their blank stares and the idea of the hunt seem to pluck at



the notion of innocence lost; like the lost boys from Peter Pan, but there's something askew. We are harkened back to our childhood psyche; but it becomes a remote and desolate place once we've lost our own innocence as echoed by the pennant bearing the anthem, "Ulterius." Concepts that were once black and white, become complicated; they become something else. Likewise, as the installation develops, it will likely be hard to examine the same panels without attributing new meanings as our understanding and the installation itself changes.

The following panels by Daniel Downey, Nat Janin, Sean Lewis and Adrian Forrow continue to play with the feelings of chaos and alienation that emerge in Durham's piece. Additionally, gender and power relations also begin to emerge, creating complex dialogue ripe for interpretation and association. Dmitry Bodarenko's panel provides a stark contrast, both in relation to the spectator who has immersed his/herself in the installation, but also in relation to the buildup of tension in the previous panels. Dmitry manages to shift the gaze. Not only is this a pivotal point for the spectator in relation to the installation, it also signifies another chapter in relation to the gender/power dialogue, not unlike Manet's Olympia or Laura Mulvey's arguments from the "Visual Pleasure and Narrative of Cinema." When the gaze is returned, it is no longer passive or subservient; it becomes active, a symbol of agency. Alternately, the spectators in the gallery now become the spectacle, which in turn calls into question how we construct the narrative behind the spectacle itself.



Javier Ortiz's panel further investigates the phenomenon of how we construct and interact with the spectacle in modern society. In his piece, Ortiz examines disjointed power relations and how we construct celebrity by referencing a popular parade, the Riosucio Carnival from his home in Columbia. We create and merge the spectacles of celebrity, religion and family as fantastical projections of ourselves, in a paradoxical attempt to define our individuality. Ortiz counters that in turn these social constructs end up exerting power over the individuals who created them.

Ali Hall's panel brings back the idea of migration and space-time like Ahmed's, but it also reinforces this concept becoming and belonging through self-reflection. Brian Massumi argues in Parables for the Virtual that the playing field, or the parameters placed on the installation by the gallery space, represent the process of becoming. As the spectator engages with the installation both topically and internally, they become conduits of possibility. By participating in the active narrative of the installation, and examining the spaces in between, the spectator is able to join the cavalcade.



...participating in the active narrative of the installation, and examining the spaces in between, the spectator is able to join the cavalcade.



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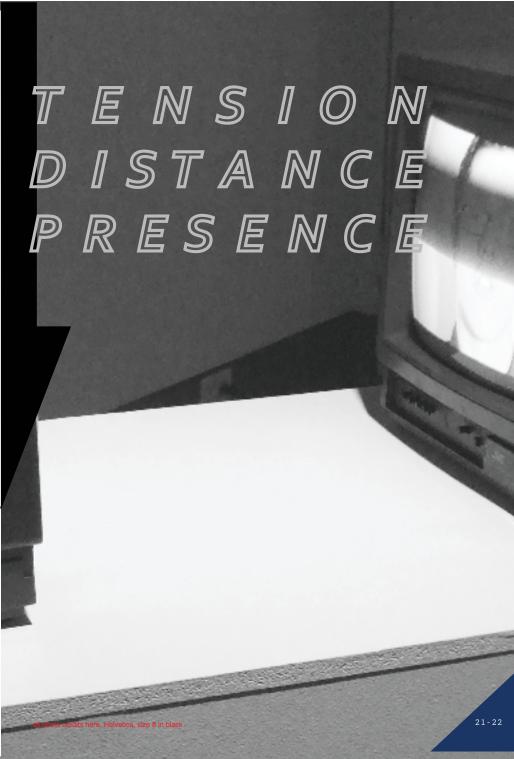
#### Tension, Distance, Presence

Bojana Videkanic - Curator

It has been 15 years since the 'official' end of the war in former Yugoslavia. A whole new generation of people has grown up since then. The countries, which now exist in the territories of the former socialist state, are navigating their own paths on the international geopolitical scene. Numerous peoples from the region have been displaced during the turbulent 1990s and have found their new adoptive countries across the world, including Canada. As with many other diasporic communities, peoples from former Yugoslavia are coming to terms with both their history, and new identities, which have been forged between their adoptive country and the society that they left behind.

The artists featured in Tension, Distance, Presence speak to the tension founded in a diasporic existence. Tamara Platisa, Sasa Rajsic, and Vladimir Milosevic have grown up at the end of the socialist period in Yugoslavia and during the war of 1990s. They have, however, also partly grown up in Canada; in the in-between space of immigrant existence, simultaneously remembering images of president Tito and socialist pop culture. It is within this hybrid space, where American TV shows have equal weight to 1980s punk culture in Yugoslavia, that the exhibition takes its

Tamara Plastisa / Sasa Rajsic / Vladimir Milosevic

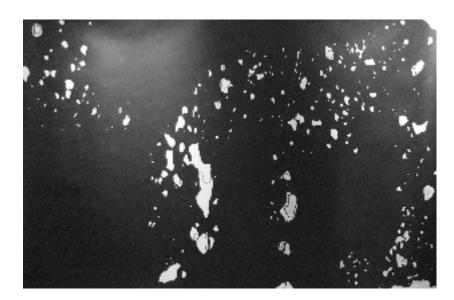


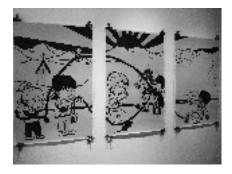


I...the everyday as a space of possibility, in which memory and history collide and create interesting and often paradoxical situations. shape. The artists use images of children's coloring books (as in Platisa's paintings Untitled: NATO part I and II), video (as with Milosevic's installation in which he follows his mother's singing of the socialist Yugoslav anthem), and sculpture (Rajsic's floor installation Build and Rebuild with Lego blocks and drywall), to juxtapose often oppositional images and symbols that they grew up with.

While we listen to Milosevic's installation, we cannot help but be moved by the close cropping of the frame, the claustrophobic atmosphere in which the two subjects exist, and their melancholic songs. In effect, Milosevic's only way to remember his no longer existing home country, is through his mother's memories, which were much more mature and formed when Yugoslavia ended. Her painful demeanor signals to that loss. On the other hand, Rajsic and Platisa search for one another in their collaborative video and sculpture project. Their video TTAMARAA, SSASAA is a projection of the two artists standing side-by-side calling each other's names. As the volume increases, their act becomes almost desperate, while the sound becomes more and more cacophonic. Ironically, the possibility of touching and communication disappears in the metallic sounds of the projection. Likewise, while the two side by side images come close, they never truly meet. This paradox, built into the structure of the projection, and our supra-cognitive reaction to it as viewers, connects with the reality of immigrants who communicate with their families abroad, via technology. This connection, however, is flawed, as it lacks evidence of physical interaction.

Another important element of Tension, Distance, Presence is the political critique. Although not all the works are overtly political they are created as an embodiment of the past where, the artists re-enact and produce memory in



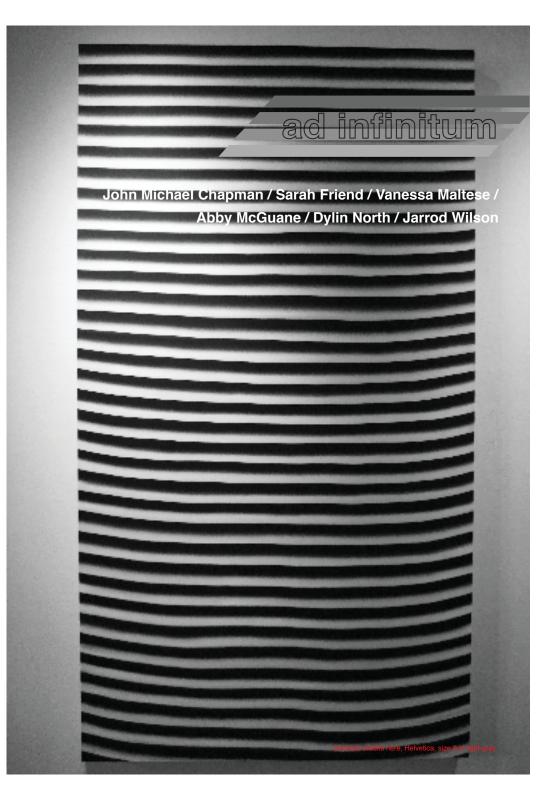




disapora. Memory, in this case is what Pierre Nora would term "a place" in which critical stance is taken toward the act of remembering and toward the artists own being in the world of memory. In the midst of this, Platisa, Rajsic and Milosevic also recount the aesthetic and art historical legacies. Perhaps the most telling piece of the show is the central installation entitled %. Its clean, white surface reminiscent of the 20th century minimalist tradition of Donald Judd or Tony Smith, hides in the middle, a brick inside. The red and brown brick wall hidden away between the two large white walls, can be seen as a concealed architectural element, but also as the red, uneven, rough flesh. The whiteness of the outside contrasted with the roughness and meatiness of the inside brings to mind a wound, a cut, or a scar. In a more concrete way, the red brick also reminds one of Balkan vernacular architecture, which often features large family homes made out of brick but almost always half finished. Platisa's two large black paintings entitled This used to be a home: Home I and Home II, link to the large sculptural work. The two paintings depict two walls destroyed by grenades and bullets. Their abstract form tricks us to perceive them on a purely aesthetic level, and yet, as with the sculpture, the middle its true violence. Platisa's two triptychs (which are a clear political critique of war, of nationalism and of NATO and its interventions) and Rajsic's floor installation (where he places a large drywall on a thin structure made out of Lego blocks,) combine politics, everyday objects, and symbols of childhood that announces the frightening reality of children who lived through the Balkan wars, and so many others currently living through numerous conflicts. The game is on...

Tension, Distance, Presence is an exhbition about politics of the everyday. It is also a show about memory and remembering as a way of critiquing one's present predicament. This show is not about nostalgia, rather it is an active aesthetic engagement with in-betweeness presented as a way of being. Diaspora is a space of possibility, a space in which hybridity of identity means opportunity to see and understanding things from multiple viewpoints. This show therefore speaks to the everyday as a space of possibility, in which memory and history collide and create interesting and often paradoxical situations.







...ad infinitum re-invigorate the monochrome with renewed relevance...

To Infinity and Beyond: In reaction to ad infinitum Farah Yusuf

I admire Buzz Lightyear's fearlessness and naïveté as he rallies his Toy Story brethren, "To infinity and beyond!" The six artists featured in ad Infinitum exhibit the same exuberance and ironic humour as they mine the rich potential of the monochrome. Each addresses specific concerns of their respective media with an irreverent nod to some of their heroes.

The colour constraint of the monochrome was never confined to a single style or movement. Instead, it continues to defy the whims of fashion and survives on guerrilla tactics—shock and awe. The insiders view this distillation of abstraction to its pure essence as fundamental to modern art's program of autonomy, some find God in the infinite depths of colour and pure subjectivity; but the uninitiated see only a cruel hoax when confronted with white on white or matte black paintings. Acutely aware of the alienation monochromes provoke, I offer a narrative to counterbalance the absence of figurative elements in the works themselves.

The story of Erased de Kooning Drawing (1953) begins with a young Robert Rauschenberg intent on pushing the boundaries of painting. His goal was to achieve escape velocity from the pull of art history. Rauschenberg experimented with white paintings by erasing his own drawings, but soon realized that the stakes weren't high enough to truly make his mark. What he had to do was erase something of significance; erase art that would be missed by the art world. He tentatively approached his mentor Willem de Kooning with a bottle of Jack Daniels–fair trade, perhaps, for the vandalism he proposed to enact on the abstract expressionist's work. Although de Kooning accepted the friendly drink, in mild protest he relinquished a drawing laden with layers of oil paint and charcoal—one that would be difficult to erase.

Rauschenberg's Erased de Kooning Drawing depicts nothing through a gesture of erasure, but it is not without subject despite the absence of pictorial subject matter. Rather, it re-situates the subject matter to a meta-level by reframing painting's conditions for being. Through the removal of content, the work becomes about the medium itself while referencing historic precedent. As Rauchenberg drew with the other side of the pencil, he destroyed the past while demonstrating history's complicity in contemporary concerns.



I tell this story to draw an analogy between Erased de Kooning Drawing and the exhibition Ad Infinitum. Both acknowledge their debt to art history as they move forward and chart their own course. Of course, no two monochromes are ever the same. Although some may look alike, they will invariably address different concerns. Each era, style, or movement cultivates particular interests in relation to their cultural milieu. The artists presented in ad Infinitum re-invigorate the monochrome with renewed relevance as they draw on pop-culture and art history without being too precious or too didactic with either. I imagine these artists sharing a bottle of Jack Daniels together-the first ounce customarily spilled out of respect for the monochrome artists who came before.

Although their forebears made the bold moves, this group of Toronto artists prove that there is still room to play within the confines of the monochrome. The formal decisions vary from artwork to artwork, but they are united in an overall aesthetic of 'modernism stripped bare of its pretensions, even'. They employ humble, discarded materials in an attempt to rescue and retrieve the ideological debris left in the wake of the avant-garde.

Sarah Friend and Vanessa Maltese both interrogate the conventions of abstract painting. Using raw linen with a minimal intervention of a stitched seam, Friend explores the relationship between the skin of the canvas and the body. Unadorned and spare, her piece Seam appears to heal the wounds inflicted on the canvas by Lucio Fontana. As an act of treatment and care, Friend's stitches echo the restorative quality of scar tissue. Vanessa Maltese presents a duo of paintings that recall Op Art's fascination with perspective and geometry. The large, optically abrasive Stripe Painting manipulates perception with brushstroke and colour, and stands in stark contrast to the modesty of Night Object. Together the paintings construct a dialogue about scale and its ability to alter the sensorial experience.



through repetition and degradation. Her collage No Title consists of 1950's images that have been photocopied, enlarged, and layered to the point of abstraction. These are images that come undone, hanging off the edge of the picture plane, and calling attention to their materiality. Dylin North and John Michael Chapman approach the monochrome sculpturally. Their use of new media and industrial materials lend a dystopian note to the prospect of the infinite. Dylin North's International Variations, distributes the precise hue of International Klein Blue across several video monitors. Monitor calibration is a tricky thing, and colours

will eventually distort or drift from the original signal. The resulting config-

uration of bastardized blues makes a poetic statement about the

limitations of technology to represent.

The works presented by Jarrod Wilson and Abby McGuane operate in two very different approaches to appropriation. Wilson steals notable artists' techniques as well as popular imagery and juxtaposes these to imagine history's version of the future. Whereas Wilson folds time by speculating about absurd relationships, Abby McGuane highlights the ravages of time

I return for a moment to an earlier position in the history of monochromes, when, in 1921, Alexander Rodchenko declared the death of painting. The end never did come. And although John Michael Chapman doesn't address Rodchenko, the death of painting, or even the death of art directly. I see his Salt Lick as an appropriate counterpoint to all grand endings. The piece consists of a 1977 Trans-Am compressed into an immobile 800lb cube of scrap metal. Here, the engine of the apocalypse has been symbolically crushed, its horsepower reduced to a salt lick. And so, the agents of the apocalypse become the mineral nutrition for the horses of the next proposed apocalypse - whatever that may be.





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Logan MacDonald /
Carolyn Armstrong /
Faye Mullen /
Andrew McGill /
Rita Camacho Lomeli /
Francisco-Fernando Granados /
Takin Aghdashloo

Lisa Visser - Curator

as if you still see it in front of you Lisa Visser

"All of being is in touch with all of being, but the law of touching is separation" Jean-Luc Nancy (2000: 5)

WE ARE MEANING

as if you still see it in front of you is an exhibition of media art. It is an exhibition that eludes and challenges an understanding of media art. Artists in this exhibition connect technology with speculation, suggestion and notion.

The term "media art" is broad and elusive, lacking commitment to specificity, but suggesting an alliance with technology, communication, or time-based media. Media is consistently confused by its own terminology and usage. Media is the plural of medium, which is the agency by which something is accomplished, conveyed, transferred, transmitted. Medium is also that which resides between two extremes. A person who is a medium has supernatural powers: psychic. Rosalind Krauss writes "a medium contains the concept of an object-state, separate from the artist's own being, through which his intentions must pass" (1976: 52). A medium sends and receives information. A medium is an invisible hub of phenomenal activity, made physical through physiological connection.

By the very nature of its ambiguity, media art is lodged in the spaces between video and installation, between the abstract and the real, between speculative absence and digital presence, between effort and failure. Within this framework of uncertainty, what results is an exhibition that explores performance, presence and a sense of being-with. This exploration constructs a possible awareness of ones connectivity, exceeding the limitations of wires and signals, bringing the audience towards a

exceeding the limitations of wires and signals, bringing the audience towards a sensorial, emotional, and psychological relation. What remains are subtle emotions: a sense of worth and contribution, a sense of self-doubt.

Jean-Luc Nancy writes in Being Singular Plural "there is no meaning if meaning is not shared...meaning is itself the sharing of Being" (2000: 2). This is the suggestion of community built around the very act of being - and being-with - one another. We share elements of our physiological and phenomenal make-up in every moment of being-with. Being-with, heightened and accented through media, is the construction of "we". Phenomenal is sensorial, embodied, fleeting.

Looking through the shield of a screen, a technological framework, or the suggestion of generated emotion and digitalized relations, the artists in as if you still see it in front of you (who are a collection of a specific community and contributors to our community, that is "we") investigate what it means to be connected. Nancy writes "being cannot be anything but being-with-one-another, circulating in the with and as the with of this singularly plural coexistence" (3). Every connection we have creates meaning: every singular person is plural. Exploring connections includes considering how connections can be missed or can fail, become aggravated, or emphasized.

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Every connection we have creates meaning: every singular person is plural.

These connections, and being-with that results, are subtle in a normalized, technological environment of our everyday. In these environments, we are active in a virtual cliché of constructed or passive identities. In as if you still see it in front of you, the artists investigate data that can be collected, analyzed, rejected, and performed. In this, the screen is examined as an initial barrier between "we", presence and you, the viewer. As Nancy suggests, "meaning begins where presence is not pure presence but where presence comes apart in order to be itself as such" (2). The dissolution of presence through media, through the screen, and the resultant being is merely speculative. The presence comes apart – it has never been whole – but in meeting, action, being, connection, we begin. In this beginning of being, we consider the application of "we" and media.

The presence is not just the artist, or the viewer, or the connections that have been built (or lost) in the production of the artwork. This presence is the being-with one another, the construction of meaning, the shift of personal ontology. It is the medium in which we meet: "everything then, passes between us" (5). We become the medium; we construct meaning – we are meaning – and the resultant connections signify everything.

#### What remains are subtle emotions: a sense of worth and contribution, a sense of self-doubt.

as if you still see it in front of you is an exhibition of seven artists who use technology in exploratory ways as the medium for connection. The exhibition investigates community, presence and speculation as core theoretical components, while offering doubt, a sense of playfulness, and some degree of interactivity. The artists create meaning, and in being with one another and the viewer, the presence of "we" amplifies being-with.

Logan MacDonald hypnotizes: in his video projection a disembodied voice suggests that you love art, that you do a performance, and that you give yourself over to State of Mind. It is a release of one being to connect to being something else: a trust and a liberation of restrictions and personal limitations. Carolyn Armstrong's two-channel video Never Having You is a mournful, drawn-out moment of disconnection. It is two beings almost touching and failing. In contrast, the new media artwork of Takin Aghdashloo, Tweet Arena, creates literal connections manifested in physical action (that is, two TV's on wheels racing one another). Aghdashloo's work challenges prevalent forms of social media to take measure of politics against popular culture.



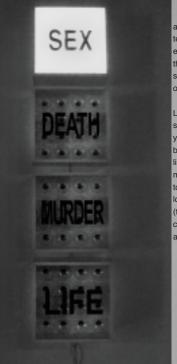


Both Rita Camacho Lomeli and Francisco-Fernando Granados use various forms of social media to create connections over barriers of distance and time. Camacho Lomeli's Somewhere in Between, through the medium of videoconference, opens up the possibility of sharing through song, in an investigation of screens, wires, performativty and vulnerability. In Granados' work I wanted to Be Sure to Reach You - after Frank O'Hara, the artist writes the poem To The Harbourmaster to an invisible audience, queering the limitations of chat rooms and resulting in a lyrcized version of the everyday, the technological normativity of our relations. Faye Mullen appears and disappears in To Never Forever. In a compellingly somber ritual, the artist moves through time and a mirroring of the self - the presence of the artist suggestions a desire for continuance, longevity, legacy, while in the act of disappearance. Andrew McGill plays with the virtual presence of core concepts of our technologically connected existence: REAL LIFE takes Sex, Death, Murder and Life to creates both a separation, as a spectator, and a reinsertion of the viewer in this cycle of human lives, voyeurism and inevitability.

Each of these artists presents a certain yet ambiguous investigation of media and the medium. as if you still see it in front of you is an exhibition of connection (through literal technology and across invisible hubs of social activity), challenging conventions of media art. The result is an amplification of the "we" and the medium.

Rosalind Krauss. "Video: The Aesthetics of Narcissism" in October, Vol. 1 Spring 1976. 50-64

Jean-Luc Nancy. Being Singular Plural. California: Stanford University Press, 2000.





Vladimir Milosevic

"Authority is something from which we are constantly subtracting, of which there remains always a residue."

- Frederica Montseny

Becky Ip's "up and atom: forty-five hundredths of an inch" was begun as a project during the artist's residence in Banff, Alberta. The work, which explores issues of power and violence, features a series of five screen prints featuring children illustrations superimposed with targets. As part of the work, these were shot with a handgun at "The Shooting Edge," a gun range in Calgary.

As viewers walk into the darkened XBASE, they see the prints strong in succession, placed one beside the other, much like in a gun range. The images were first drawn in Illustrator and then screen-printed. Their aesthetic is much like that of cartoons in the 1990s. It is in this respect that we are able to situate the work in both a cultural and personal history. Underneath the prints are five erect bullet cartridges. They are the leftovers of the performative act of shooting the prints and in such a way act as a direct document of the shooting itself.

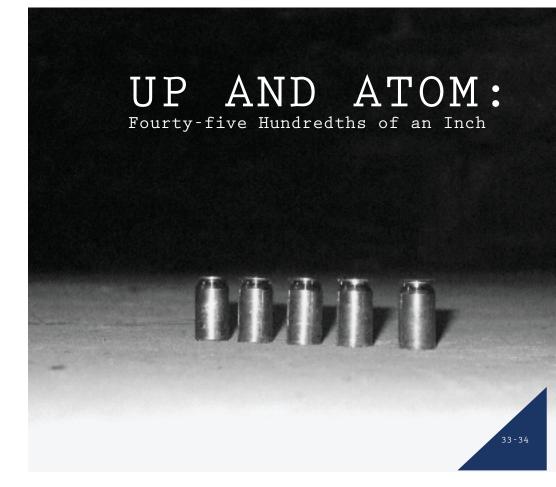
The playful images are ironic in relation to the targets. How would one shoot a cloud or how would a bullet react to a magnet? Yet, beyond this seemingly simple display lie engaging themes.

...power is understood as a strategic situation in a given social context. "up and atom" seems to be concerned with the idea of power, mainly the artist's access to power. In this case, however, as Ip points out, this meant implicating herself into gun culture. What might have seemed like a difficult access to the shooting range proved much easier than Ip thought. With only a single form to fill, she wasn't even asked for ID. A quick orientation and she was off shooting. The gun used to shoot the targets was a Sig Sauer P220, a gun that is used by the military. The ease of accessing a military weapon raises questions on its recreational use.

For both Machiavelli and Foucault, power is understood as a strategic situation in a given social context. In both social and art historical settings, women have almost always been on the opposite end of power due to their body. The work, which relies on the body to be produced (printing the screens and finally

shooting them), interestingly ignores it when it comes to the targets. As she tells me, she disliked the idea of shooting a (representation of a) body. The performative aspect of the work, the shooting itself, seems to insinuate that violence, even when paired with playful imagery, cannot be subdued.

The experience shows the ease of accessing something so dangerous, how easy it is to implicate oneself in such a violent culture. This culture, which seems to have legitimized itself in a part of Canada, is still coded as male because of the few women that partake in it. Amusingly, Ip had shown the piece in her studio earlier this year, where in a viewer commented, "He's a good shoot!"



## 775 King St. West

775 King St. West Eva Kolcze

775 King St. West is a single channel video in which the artist seeks to represent the recently demolished building at 775 King St. West. With each lap around the perimeter of the building's former foundation, interior noises that depict the building's history and physical characteristics fade in and out. Kolcze brings awareness to both the history of the building and its absence.

Additionally, this audio-visual work connects to XBASE itself, as the exposed brick walls and girders compliment the image of the stain of the former building in the video. The audio component conflates the ambient noises with the structure of the basement space, honouring the relationship the artist feels with the original site.

#### Kolcze brings awareness to both the history of the building and its absence.

History of the Site-Compiled by The Artist, Eva Kolcze

The building that used to sit at 775 King St. West was built in the late 1800s. The large site was comprised of 2 structures: a factory/warehouse and a row house. In its earliest days, it was 'The Shipway Wire and Manufacturing Co. In the 1920's, it became Garenite Products Ltd., in the early 40s it was Pendrith Machinery Co Ltd., which manufactured bakery equipment. In the 1960s Dominion Manufacturers Limited used the space as a wood shop to build coffins.

From the mid 1970s up until 2007, the site was home to Paul Wolf Electric and Lighting Supply, a retail store for electricians and trades people. In 2006, the site was purchased by the developer Minto Group Incorporated. Subsequently the buildings were demolished in 2007, as Minto originally intended to build a 16-story condominium on the site called Minto King West.

Due to slow sales, however, Minto's contruction site sat vacnt for years. In early 2009 it was relaunched as Minto775, which are two buildings that are financed independently. Finally, construction began on the two condominiums in August 2010.

While conducting research for this project, I contacted Paul Wolf Electric and Lighting Supply (now located on Eastern Avenue) and spoke with Cosimo Amato, who has worked with the company for 38 years. He provided me with important information about the former , while describing its physical characteristics in great detail.

Cosimo spoke of a hidden apartment on the second floor in the house portion of the site, which the company used as their offices. In one of the offices was a boarded up door and one day he decided to investigate what was behind it. He discovered three small stairs, which led down to a hallway. Off of this hallway there were four tiny rooms that had no electricity and measured roughly 7" x 8". The rooms contained windows that faced towards the building next door.



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Simon Black / Kailey Bryan / Robert Clements / Maggie Flynn / Jeannette Hicks / Brian Hobbs / Meghan Scott / Tasha Turner Odds and Entries
Tara Bursey

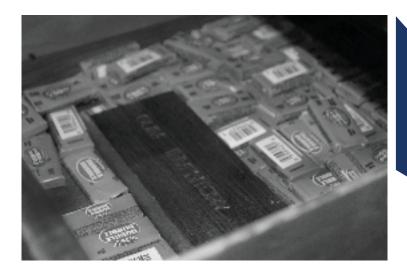
When I was eight years old, I had a friend named Sandra. One day she came to my house to play. Within minutes of arriving, she pulled a see-through plastic take-out container out of her pink shoulder bag. "This is my kit," she told me. Inside the container were the following items: a folded-up tissue, a length of green string, three maple keys, a black marble, a cut-out photograph of an overflowing basket of apples from a magazine, a tiny fabric doll and a Ritz cracker. I remember being jealous of Sandra's kit. I tried to make one of my own, but it didn't work out. There was something about hers - maybe the way the tissue was folded, creating the perfect little bed for the doll - that made it better, and far more alive than mine.

## In an age of infinite information, are the secret lives of objects one of the last facets of our lives that have not been laid bare?

When I was nineteen years old, I moved into my second apartment on Maynard Avenue in Parkdale. It was an eight-story apartment building, and most of its tenants were over fifty. After moving my things into the unit's smaller bedroom on my first night there, I decided to start hanging my clothes in the closet. As I was preparing to fold my freshly-purchased-and-unused towels (organized by the colours of the rainbow, of course) and put them on the top shelf of the closet, I noticed something red pushed to the very back corner of the shelf. I jumped to grab for it, and upon realizing what it was, my heart jumped out of my chest. I threw it back onto the shelf and slammed the door shut. The object was a used, strappy red high heel shoe. It may as well have been a dismembered limb. Later that night, I got my boyfriend to retrieve the shoe and throw it away.

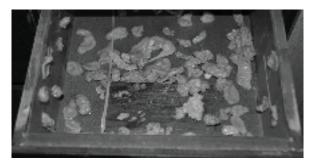
These stories attest to the potency of objects. We connect with used and found everyday objects because of the traces of human life they contain. While we consume images, facts, and pseudo-facts in abundance on a daily basis, the voiceless, tangible stuff of everyday life contains the real truth or our existence but lacks the means to tell it. In an age of infinite information, are the secret lives of objects one of the last facets of our lives that have not been laid bare?

11.12.10



We connect with used and found everyday objects because of the traces of human life they contain.





In the exhibition Odds and Entries, objects of ambiguous origin are contained in a series of salvaged drawers. Some of the interventions are as subtle as whispers—one drawer's interior is adorned with a single spider web made of human hair, simultaneously evoking a sense of intimate human presence, desolation and loss. Another drawer contains a surreal,

illuminated campground dreamscape, and anothe a forest of rotating cocktail umbrellas. While one drawer alludes to a pointedly domestic space, the others feel like strange and fantastical hybrids of space that is public and private, indoor and outdoor, sensual as well as mechanical. Another drawer plays with the idea of bodily detritus, attraction and repulsion, but to a more absurd and suggestive end.

Odds and Entries, like the closet with the red shoe and Sandra's kit, involve containment as a way of isolating objects in order to give them new meaning. Situating work in repositories associated with the domestic realm-- as well as the exhibition's emphasis on organic discovery-- defies conventions of gallery display and arrangement. The fact that the installation is situated in a raw, subterranean space further defies such conventions, while hinting at the role of our subconscious as a guide through the objects we encounter. Most importantly, the work presents us with objects and environments shrouded in ambiguity. While we can never know the true histories of the objects we happen upon by chance, we can lose ourselves in their mystery and meditate on their impact. In doing so, we not only allow ourselves to see the hidden life in inanimate objects, but can gain insight into our own lives and the lives of others.





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#### Measures

Karolina Wisniewski

"You cannot step twice into the same stream": with this infamous phrase, the ancient philosopher Heraclitus notoriously articulated a paradox that has continued to plague humanity – the idea that chaos is the only order, flux is the only stasis and all that may be known is the fleeting instant, which is itself, nothing. Time is a curious thing, and all the more troubling is any attempt to understand our relation to and interaction with it. An artificial construct we impose upon ourselves, as well as the primordial force that propels the cosmos forward, temporality simultaneously subsumes and releases us; it forever ensnares us, unrelentingly dragging us along with it, and yet it continually escapes our grasp, for any individual moment is either the unrealized future or the deceased past.

Amanda Rataj's exhibition, Measures, explores just this: it draws our attention to the human insistence on isolating time into understandable fragments and processing them as such; it also highlights the futility of any attempt at doing so. Rataj masters such intangible ideas by situating them in a relatable context – the commonplace,

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...chaos is the only order, flux is the only stasis and all that may be known is the fleeting instant, which is itself, nothing.

even inane phenomenon of breathing. Measures is comprised of two films, each lasting approximately three seconds, looped indefinitely as they project onto screens. Each film displays a single breath, that is, an inhalation and exhalation; each film is also a stop-motion sequence of several photographic stills created using the albumen printing process.

Intrinsically bound with the medium she chooses to work the theoretical structure of Rataj's work. She explains: "I studied photography at OCAD, but was interested in what comes after you press the shutter...I always found myself not pleased with it; I enjoyed it but there was something missing". Rataj's practice of translating albumen stills onto handmade paper arose from the fusion of processes she learned from a paper-making class and techniques from a historical process class. Rataj notes that the personal dimension involved in such a process is significant: "I've always been interested in old ephemera and part of that aesthetic is connected to my desire to create handmade images. They're not as slick as contemporary imagery, because no two prints look the same, however looking at an image and knowing someone didn't just press print in Photoshop." Precarious and laborious, as the albumen process allows for the infusion of the artist's hand into the typically impersonal medium of photography. "There are a lot of rules, but a lot of ways I can play inside those rules".

Evoking nostalgia of the past, the antiquated method in which Rataj works draws parallels to early photographers like Étienne-Jules Marey, whose work she cites as the primary inspiration for Measures. This interest in retroactive techniques is mirrored in the thematic focus on the fluidity of time. In fusing the role of the medium with the conceptual approach, Rataj's work enters into a multi-layered dialogue with itself.

Rataj notes that Measures considers "...the impossibility of perceiving the movement of time", as well as our own movement in it. The infinite looping of both films points out the turn of time itself, and situates our existence in an interweaving structure of temporality. Time itself has no fixed identity, but rather shifts between our multiple constructions of it- a lifetime, the length of a subway ride, a single breath. To appropriate a phrase popularized by the art theoretician Hal Foster, Measures may be understood as a non-synchronous work, that is, one in which heterogeneous layers of temporality may be found. This intersection of various notions of time arises in a present that is inhabited by a past and is dependant on its structure, which nevertheless disappears and eludes us.

#### **Amanda Rataj**

Rataj's work embodies dichotomies and negotiates between them: medium and materiality; still and moving images; the ephemeral yet continual presence of time; the antiquated albumen process projected through digital media. The bilateral dialogue Measures establishes between each of these polarities mirrors the looping of the film, which in turn reflects our experience of time, not as a linear trajectory, but an interwoven dialectical structure. The photographic process harnesses the image while simultaneously presenting it as something just out of reach. It does so both by virtue of the image's movement, but also through its incarnation in the antiquated albumen medium and its dissociation from contemporaniety. The uncommon medium and concept of temporality, however, is rendered relatable by Rataj's appropriation of them in the habituated process of breathing. Through situating these ontological questions in the context of the individual, a familiar dimension is added to Measures, imbuing it with personal significance.

Notions of chaos and flux are notoriously characteristic of postmodern artistic practice, while examination of the individual in the wake of universal considerations is typically found within works that are motivated by existential concerns. Rataj's work however, avoids typification with any individual artistic or philosophical approach by navigating around the clichés of each.

For all the dichotomies it negotiates between, Measures, or at least our experience of it, situates itself in precarious equilibrium, at once articulating the inarticulate while suggesting that it may not be comprehended at all. Tackling the same questions addressed by postmodernism, with an elegant subtlety ostensibly lacking from previous practices, Rataj poses questions that may be understood philosophically without the underlying pathos that informs most existential works.

#### 02.11.11

Artifice
Matthew Purvis

In the corner sits a heap of gears, motors and hair. It was here before you arrived. It will be here after you leave. It has a name: "Host." This is not its proper name and it is not its title. The title is "Artifice." Neither the title nor the name tell you what it is. Instead, they open a continually expanding index of which you are now a component. You are part of the indefinite proliferation of possibilities, but only part of them, a cog, a place holder, which could be left empty or assumed by another at any time for any period of time. Your presence does not animate this heap. In fact, the heap is quite indifferent to you.

You can conjure a set of instant assumptions about this heap. You can imagine it is an animal, or a metaphor for animals. You can imagine it is some monstrous figure lurking in the underground and hiding itself in the shadows. It is a short leap from there to speculating on its quality as a spectral part of the unconscious, as some manifestation of the repressed, the uncanny. Of course, you can also assume that it is a joke or merely garbage. And on and on... It doesn't matter because these are only meanings and meanings proliferate indefinitely. They have no end or beginning just as they have no real consequences: they are merely the special effects of meaningless processes, which serve to mutfle the noise that underlies everything. A meaning is the qualification of a singularity for the purpose of transforming it into a digestible type, to give it an identity within the fauna of a babbling technocratic psychosis.

"Host" and "Artifice" are a couple and their relationship is consummated in a breath. Nothing breathes on its own. Everything that



Artifice

Josh Vettivelu

"...constantly decomposing its solidity through its persistence as an absurd object, one with neither head nor tail, one which breathes but whose organs erase it within each instance."

breathes is a parasite and all parasites are part of the libidinal programming of matter. Breathing is a mechanism for waste management, that is, for metamorphosis. The bodies of mammals function as filters for the circulation and transformation of gases. This metamorphic process is often culturally apprehended as a sign of life, a Turing test for sentience. Narcissistic humanity's exaggerated opinion of the significance of organic phenomena has caused it to sentimentalize this mechanical process. Consciousness is a gas, the chemical byproduct of machinery. In ancient religions it was commonly believed to be a sign of spirit, of the breath of God, and the animating force of creation. In our more scientific era it is taken for the signs of 'bare life', although machines can make it happen if the soul or consciousness are no longer available.

It may be that this consciousness, which possesses your body and through which the world is filtered, is a parasite upon this heap which serves as your host. It may also be that the image of this heap thrives through an indefinite proliferation in your consciousness which then operates as its host and attempts to domesticate it by according it significance. In either case, it is also the case that you are currently in a gallery, which hosts the heap. The heap parasitically lives off of the gallery, literally animated by the energy it provides. At the same time, the gallery functions as the organs of the heap, animating its breathing. But for all that, it is also true that the gallery is a parasite of the heap, since it thrives on the meaning it can animate from it and then extract for the marketing of ideas. And for all of that, it is also true that this heap serves as an organ for the gallery, as its mouthpiece, even if it is only the mouth of a ventriloquist's dummy. Such an indefinite proliferation is a product of the consummation of the relationship

between the couple. The gallery and the viewer are both the child and the parent of this copulation. Both their orphan and their pimp. This general process of contagion and proliferation is the nature of artifice.

The production of this indefinite proliferation leads to the overproduction of meaning as a defense mechanism against the threat of neutrality. Indifference is experienced by the human agent as a form of violence. The embodiment of subjectivity - with the institutions, laws and the policing forces that underwrite its possibility - is the very instance of repressive violence. The stabilization of the subject through the infection of inchoate matter with significance is an act of domestication for the delusional stabilization of being. By means of the various cloaking and transmuting devices of artifice, the host likewise manages to parasitically thrive off of the subject's abreaction, constantly decomposing its solidity through its persistence as an absurd object, one with neither head nor tail, one which breathes but whose organs erase it within each instance.

In response to "Cycle" Xenia Benivolski

The archive is a memory that remains available to the public, it is simultaneously related to the process of forgetting — of forgetting that which operates in silence and consequently which never leaves its own archive. The process of silence and forgetting in the consignation of the archive is not innocent. The archive itself produces silences. It frames what is consigned in the archive as a unified whole and represses what is left outside the archive, denying its existence and consigning it to oblivion. But the archive, like the exergue, serves to lay down the law and give the order. This, Derrida describes as 'the violence of the archive' and is of significance because, as he suggests, the archive is always consigned and ordered ethically, as anticipation of the future.#(Hamilton, p. 166)

In his film work, Cycle (2010), William Andrew Stewart successfully marries a potentially critical observation with a real longing for nostalgia and meaning. Using an archived source material, he loosely follows a formula based in document. The looping film confronts a few challenges: the seemingly arbitrary sequence running in the background and the puzzling struggle of a young man on a unicycle hopping in spot. The location is at first a mystery. As the work progresses, it becomes evident that these events are connected to a premeditated sequence of events. When finally the shot expands to a bigger picture, the subject seems irrelevant and misguided. There is an element of danger to the activity; accompanied by a comically disheartening awareness that if he should fall it would make little difference. Instead, the screen fades to black as the year approaches 2011.

The film is divided into four equal parts with the number element counting up the years of OCAD's existence. Several levels of visibility form the

There is an element of danger to the activity; accompanied by a comically disheartening awareness that if he should fall it would make little difference. confines of the history of OCAD: The presence of the student body, the first building, the second building, and the final addition. With each building revealed the student's activity becomes more visible and more ludicrous.

The countdown becomes slower with the latest sequence, to accommodate its shorter duration. As a timer, it is tied to the appearance of new architecture and expanding frame, yet it seems those elements exist in a vacuum, independent of their surroundings or context save for the faint sounds of construction in the background.

The departure point of the work, a 125th anniversary OCAD Alumni Directory is an interesting document in itself. Starting with 1 enlisted student in the year 1907, the list of alumni growing exponentially leading up to the year 2000. The list includes not only the names but also the addresses and phone numbers of the former OCAD students, serving as some sort of detached and impossibly vast yearbook. The directory contains little personal or anecdotal evidence besides this information, a

Jacques Derrida had described the concept of archivazation as "a movement of the promise and of the future no less than of recording the past."#(Deridda, p. 29) When viewing the piece, it is impossible to ignore that which is absent. The teachers, the studios, academia, the actual artwork. The work is emblematic of a generation that sees that past as an aesthetic guide. Guided by the source material, the artist saw an opportunity in referencing a multiplicity of phases in the history of the institution, none relating to the creative influences and paradigm shifts the school has seen over the years: This exposes a critical view of art academia at large, one that is formulaic and predetermined, devoid of personality or real agency. But what does this say about the future?

Hamilton, Carolyn. Refiguring the Archive, Springer, 2002

Deridda, Jacques, Archive Fever: A Freudian Impression, University of Chicago Press. 1998



ridiculously dry summary for the Art School. The existence of this document and others ones like it presents a strange glimpse to how the art school presents itself and its students: a collection of names, some of which represent varied degrees of fame, all grouped together in this dense hardcover book. There is an intense urge to make sense of the list names and the structure of the book, discover a symbolic formula by which it abides. Stewart's works interpret this information, constructing an alternate reality where the structures imposed by timing and personal choices come to life: Two additional forthcoming pieces are expected to emerge from the same document, within the same set of rules. One, a chronological list of the names of the alumni and another, a musical composition inspired by the alphabetical structures within that name list.

In a minimalist fashion, William Andrew Stewart works with the limited palette available to him within a strict set of aesthetic and archival rules: by setting the information in the document as a guideline, he attempts to insert meaning into this summary, in the process emphasizing how little meaning it actually contains. Stewart codifies the elements with new agency: the years become a countdown, the student body becomes one flinching participant absorbed in a meaningless and seemingly futile task, the surroundings, a growing repertoire of buildings, all triggered by anxious anticipation. Cycle illustrates the contents of the alumni archive, its anticlimactic conclusion leaving a disjointed feeling of simultaneous curiosity and disappointment.

William Andrew Finlay Stewart

Pastel Pandora: A Reaction to Technicolor Dreambox Mary MacDonald

This month the XPACE Window Space is transformed into ground zero for Technicolor Dreambox, an explosive installation by Calgary artists Nate MacLeod and Cassandra Paul. Frozen in time, the work features a dramatic spatial event just at the moment of climax. A white plywood box shoots forth three smaller boxes like a series of geometricmatryoshka dolls. Suspended in mid air, the smaller boxes are enveloped in a cloud of sharp debris, small and brightly coloured pieces of wood fly forward into the viewer's space and it's too late to cover our eyes for protection.

#### ...a fascinating take on our attempt to harness and control time itself.

We can't tear our eyes away. The pieces, densely packed, visually vibrate against one another. Green, blue, pink, red - it's an instant colour party for the eye. What are we looking at exactly? Are these shapes of something? Are they symbols? Questions swirl just like the pieces themselves and are never quite answerable, for as we move the pieces shift position revealing a totally new view of the work. Technicolor Dreambox is pure spectacle.

Guy Debord explored this idea of spectacle in his philosophical work La Société du Spectacle first published in 1967. In the text, he outlined the development of modern society wherein life has become a series of lived representations rather than interaction with direct experience . In Technicolor Dreambox the symbolic shards burst forth from their enclosure. Forcing their way out of a representation, the box, they invoke a possibility of abrupt change. However, enclosed by the window itself this change appears frozen in time.

Debord described this idea of spectacle largely through the proliferation of mass media in contemporary society. In Technicolor Dreambox I can't help but to think of our culture's obsession with moments of disaster. Even in parody such as Cool Guys Don't Look at Explosions , a video by Andy Samburg and Will Ferrell, in which countless action stars walk nonchalantly away from billowing mushroom clouds of fire to musical montage the spectacle prevails. While television series, news sound bytes and viral Youtube videos play out actual

moments of chaos - pause and repeat. From Chernobyl to 9/11 these historical moments remain frozen in time as images of crystalline disaster. We are caught like deer in headlights, in awe at the spectacle before our eyes.

In discussion with MacLeod and Paul, the artists reference American painter Ben Grasso and British installation artist Cornella Parker as importest influences. Both of these artists also explore explosion. A thoughtful biologer by the screen name of lipeg Critic had this to say about Grasso Smork, "Explosions are great because they are as effective as they are delebratory. The destructive and the benign all served in one great visual and practical devise." So an explosion is both shocking and spectacular. This sentiment certainly rings true in Technicolor Dreambox, as the artists emilion rich candy-like color to the various shapes that make up the cite of of expanded debris. We are sucked into the vortex, seduced.

Movement also plays an important role in exploring Dreambox. As one travels around the installation, the shifts dramatically. What was from a distance a two dimensional formalist plane has changed. Pieces slip under and over one another. We move around the work as if in bullet time. Nate McLeod states this as an important aspect of his work. In forcing the viewer to move from side to side, forward and back, their experience is mediated by the work itself, and we are given time to experience its implications. This movement recalls artist Cornelia Parker's seminal work Cold Dark Matter: An Exploded View (1991). Here Parker presented a view of a garden shed at the moment of explosion. Pieces hung in the air; scraps of wood, torn bits of paper, spoons and other ravaged domestic items. The gallery contains the charged event, its walls in danger of soon feeling the impact. While Technicolor Dreambox is a much more playful abstracted representation of an explosion, the movement and our sort of out of body experience remains the same. We are the ones in motion.

It must also be said, that this contained energy in a way reminds me of a black hole. Perhaps the pieces are being sucked in rather than pushed out. We can't be certain viewing Technicolor Dreambox in this potential frozen state. But movement in both ways is in fact implied. And so we are in a constant state of exploding/imploding. This is a strong metaphor, if indeed we as a part of the spectacle as Debord used the term. Constantly tearing down the past to build the new without any thought to why. This aspect of the work is reminiscent of earlier works by Cassandra Paul. Her site-specific installation, Pile (2009), is an

evocative image that juxtaposes a pile of weathered old boards and her brightly painted ultra modern shapes. To what end is this construction? We're not sure of the answer but the work's peculiarity draws our attention.

Perhaps most striking about this work is how the artists were able to transform their individual interests into a cohesive project that speaks equally of both their practices. Technicolor Dreambox remains a punchy magical illusion that motivates a closer examination, a moment of surreal introspection. Here Paul and MacLeod have crafted a powerful symbolic event, an explosion of formalism and a clever mapping of space - a pastel Pandora's box, that

reveals itself at the height of its explosive climax. If so we are right in the mix moving around the work existing in a climatic purgatory of innovation and speed. Technicolor Dreambox is consequently an example of pure spectacle and perhaps even a fascinating take on our attempt to harness and control time itself.

<sup>1</sup>Guy Debord, The Society of the Spectacle, trans. Ken Knabb (Treason Press, 2002), 6.

"Coof Guy's Don't Look At Explosions [Video]. (2009). November 7, 2010,http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Sqz5 dbs5zmo. Originally aired on the 2009 MTV movie awards.

"PaintersNYC.http://painternyc.blogspot.com/2006/05/ben-grasso.html. (November 7, 2010).

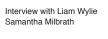
<sup>™</sup>Bullet time is visual effect that refers to a digitally-enhanced simulation of variable-speed (i.e. slow motion, time-lapse, etc) photography used in films and video games. One of its first uses in this context was in the film, The Matrix (1999)

### TECHNICOLOR DREAMBOX

Nate McLeod
Cassandra Paul



all photo credits here, Helvetica, size 8 in black



Liam Wylie was born in Ottawa Ontario in 1989 and is currently completing his final year at OCAD University. At OCAD U, Wylie studies sculpture, installation, and printmaking, specializing in screen-printing, lithography, metal fabrication, and, most importantly to this interview, plastic fabrication. In his work, Wylie proposes that humankind's mythic subconscious has not been suppressed despite current posthuman technological developments. In this interview, Wylie's artistic theme is further explored in relation to his Anchor installation on exhibition at XPACE Gallery.

SAMANTHA MILBRATH: How have other contemporary artists influenced your creative process?

LIAM WYLIE: Recently I have been influenced by the work of Charles Stankievech and Pierre Huyghe, because they suggest that, when telling a story, the most fantastical and mythical approach is often the most factual as well

SM: Before OCAD University, you studied "Life Drawing and Painting" at the Ottawa School of Art. Can we conclude that you were originally interested in more traditional forms of art expression?

LW: Yes, I used to be more interested in drawing and painting live figures. Although at the time, my favorite artists who dealt with "traditional art" themes, such as the rendering of the body, did so in relatively contemporary ways. For example, artists such as Egon Schiele and Ron Mueck exhibited contemporary art expression through more traditional form.

SM: What was your reasoning behind switching mediums from drawing and painting to installation, sculpture, and printmaking?

LW: I came to university with an art background that was mostly comprised of drawing and painting, so at first making objects and installations was slightly alien to me. But eventually, I realized that these art forms are very effective methods of communicating an expression or an idea, so it seemed like a

## **ANCHOR**

natural progression. As well, sculpture and installation appeared to be the most dedicated department at the university, thus making my decision much easier.

SM: Being in your final year at OCAD University, do you find that studying techniques in art has improved your ability to work with different materials?

LW: Yes, without a doubt. Every time that I learn a new fabrication or printing technique, I immediately think of ways to utilize it for my artwork. Institutionally, I find that there is a real push to cross boundaries between art-making methods and medias, which, in my opinion, is a useful skill set.

SM: What mediums do you prefer to work with for your installations? Why do you prefer these materials?



LW: Recently I have been working mostly with plastic and metal materials. I like to think that I am getting pretty good at machining and fabricating my projects, using materials like acrylic, UHMW, steel and aluminum, which are usually best for the process that I have in mind. But more importantly, my works often end up looking like some odd, futuristic set props, which is very important to me. My professor recently suggested that my work looks like a clash between 1960's minimalism and Star Wars...I was satisfied with that comparison.

SM: Tell me about the materials that you used to create your Anchor piece. Did you make the fluorescent light tubes? What is UHMW?

LW: No, I didn't make the light tubes. Ultimately, I would like to make works like Anchor with neon tubing, but conventional light tubes will have to do for now. UHMW stands for ultra high molecular weight polyethylene. It's a pretty cheap plastic material that machines nicely. I think that it is mostly used in the trades industry, but either way it works well and looks great. Matthew Barney uses UHMW a lot in his projects. In fact, the sculptural works that came out of his Cremaster and drawing restraint projects are likely what gave me the idea to use these materials in the first place.

SM: We have all grown up with the standard anchor symbol, however in Anchor you have abstracted the recognizable layout. What was your reasoning for abstracting your Anchor?

LW: My decision to reduce its shape to three planes (vertical, horizontal and diagonal) was necessary so that I could suggest the forms of a cross and an X. I like the idea of a cross transforming into an X as being symbolic of a shift in mythical and spiritual, or religious belief. I also wanted to emphasize how today X's are used in mathematics as an unknown entity and in pop culture as representing the uncanny.

SM: An anchor is typically made of metal, a material that has strong connections to the past industrial revolution. Was your decision to swap metal for fluorescent light tubes and UHMW a conscious decision in relation to today's postmodern and posthuman industrial materials?

LW: I would say so, yes. The light tubes also introduce an element of familiarity to a form that is altogether unfamiliar. As well, and perhaps most importantly, artworks that light up and blink look really cool.

SM: Back to your Anchor, throughout history anchors resist a force that drives movement in order to maintain a constant location and prevent drifting. Does your Anchor do the same in theory? If so, what force is your anchor resisting and what is it so deeply attached to?

LW: Yes, I would say that my recent work suggests a resistance to our present retraction from myth. More specifically, Anchor asks how

monumental scientific discoveries have altered our western worldview. And further, how does this new world-transforming way of looking at reality fit into the functioning of a psyche, which has been preoccupied with spirits, gods, and demons for a major portion of its existence? Are we tethered – like an anchor itself – to the conceptual underpinnings and mythic rituals of the past?

SM: In your artist statement, you quote that we are a "hypertechnological and cynically postmodern culture seemingly drawn like a passel of moths toward the guttering flames of the pre-modern mind". Is it safe to say then that the Anchor is preventing postmodern culture from drifting too far away from past faith systems that supported humanity rather than industry?

LW: Yes. Nicely said.

SM: Are you in favour of posthuman technology? If this means a loss of faith in religion and spirituality in favour of machine and science, do you resist?

LW: I try to avoid introducing spirituality and science as opposing binaries. I think that it is less about choosing one or the other and more about emphasizing the similarities between both. Though science is ideally supposed to withhold final commitment from its hypotheses about the nature of reality, in practice it seems to offer to many a picture no less orthodox than those mythic and spiritual systems that we are in the process of banishing.

SM: People often look to religion to find answers. Do you think that science is answering questions that we may have asked in the past? Or do fast paced developments in technology distract postmodern culture from asking these existential questions? Or, in contrast, do you think we are naturally turning to religion and spiritualism in order to find clarity and peace of mind as an individual in postmodern and posthuman society?

LW: I would say that "turning to religion and spiritualism in order to find clarity" hits closest to home for me, although I would place individual spiritualism over organized religion. According to popular narrative, technology has helped disenchant the world, thus forcing the archaic and symbolic (spiritual) networks of the past to give way to the crisp, secular game plans of scientific progress. However, it is my belief that the old phantasms and metaphysical longings did not entriely disappear. Rather, they disguised and embedded themselves into the cultural, psychological and mythical motivations that form the foundation of the modern world. To me, this is evidence that, when faced with the retraction into

a sterile void of science, people search for some of the oldest navigational tools known to humankind: sacred rituals and metaphysical speculation, spiritual regimens and natural spells. In short, the pagan and the paranormal have colonized the 21st century twilight zone of our surrogate surroundings.

SM: In the past, science and religion have been contradictory entities. In your artist statement, you explain that your work resides in an "ambiguous area where science and belief overlap and interpenetrate." To conclude, do you think that both your work and our postmodern culture reside in this shadowy zone?

LW: Certainly. To find answers it is often more affective to ask what something isn't rather than what it is and, although I appropriate elements from both science and religion, my work (along with our contemporary culture) is not either of those things. Rather, it falls somewhere in between and this ambiguity is precisely what I find most interesting.

Are we tethered – like an anchor itself – to the conceptual underpinnings and mythic rituals of the past?



## ABYSS

Elise Victoria Louise Windsor

#### Into the Abyss

Kenny Lee

Some of the more subtle works of art are often generated by artists not working within their own medium. I'm not talking about naïve or folk art, rather the phenomenon of cross-disciplinary practice wherein painters making sculptures, or video artists making drawings, or, as is the case here, a photographer working in installation. It might seem strange to see ABYSS, the installation currently inhabiting the XPACE Window Gallery, as a large photograph, yet thinking about it in this way helps us understand how evocative artworks can emerge away from the neat little categorization of artistic disciplines. To call attention to Elise Windsor's background as a photographer does not take away from her work as an installation artist. Rather it allows a glimpse into the way new forms of artistic expression emerge by grafting the discourse of one field onto another. And this is precisely what Windsor, consciously or otherwise, has done.

#### In ABYSS, multiple mirrors installed at inconsistent angles conspire to destabilize our sense of location in relation to what is being reflected.

My conversation with Elise about her project, ABYSS, brought to the surface the multitude of references- some subtle, some literal – to photography. The angles of the mirrors, the primary material in ABYSS, makes reference to the mirror inside a single lens reflex camera (SLR). Another understated connection to photography is the way in which the barrier of the glass window echoes the impermeability of photographs, that is, our inability to look or touch behind, say, the head of a 2-dimensional portrait. The window display likewise echoes a pre-disposition one might expect to find in a photographer. I asked Elise the first question that came to mind: "When you first had the idea, did you consider incorporating any photographs into this project?" "Not really," she replied. Instead she viewed the reflections captured on the mirror's surface as a replacement for the images she would otherwise use. "So what you see in the reflection is sort of like a temporary moving photograph?" I asked, just for clarification. "... exactly."

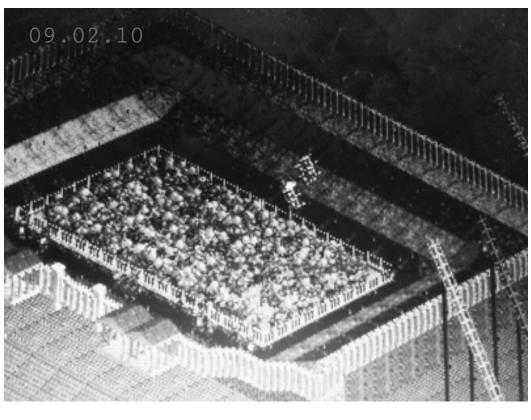
In ABYSS, multiple mirrors installed at inconsistent angles conspire to destabilize our sense of location in relation to what is being reflected. Many mirrors in various sizes and shapes suggest a fragmented experience. Here Windsor signals to a multi-perspectival understanding of the visual field, a view first proposed in Picasso's iconic work, Les Demoiselles D'Avignon. Coincidentally, ABYSS is installed in a window gallery as a display. Also the faux-wood paneling behind the mirrors reference amaterial famously associated with

early Synthetic Cubist paintings. Because of the spatial uncertainly regarding the objects reflected in the mirrors, the work more generally encourages skepticism about what is in front of us and the faux-wood paneling, ever the simulacrum, reinforces this idea. Thus, seeing is not believing.

Perhaps it's not surprising, then, to discover the illusory as a perennial theme in Windsor's work. Yet, her critical position on this as an artist seems refreshingly ambivalent. Images are agents of bias, they misrepresent the truth, distort reality. The work interrogates the truth value assigned to photographs while simultaneously doing what images do best: seduce us to keep looking. A kindred spirit seems to animate ABYSS, where we initially approach the ors anticipating a usual straightforward experience, o be confounded by our own expectations. The main diffe here is that we've been conscripted as participants in shifty images. But what will we find? Perhaps we will en er, as the title of this work suggests, a luscious realm of oral ambiguity.







#### Negative Reality Inversions and the Re-Articulation of Social Processes via Game-Rule Subversion Implementation as Reflexively Derived Structural Pattern



Creatively subverting the popular video game 'RollerCoaster Tycoon', David Jones creates the most dystopian theme-park possible within the parameters of the game; examining the limits of video games as a model for appropriate behavior.

#### **Beauty Queen**

Lena Chun

Lena Chun's work poses the "what does it mean to be beautiful when beauty and fame have been made into commodities?" Through her intricate and playful animations she reflects and reflects and refracts western society's instable desire for physical perfection.



Keith Cole is a 1st year student in the Interdisciplinary Master's in Art, Media and Design MFA program at OCAD University. In 2010, Cole received 801 votes in The Mayoral Campaign for The City of Toronto. A collaborative effort, Left acts as the fundamental remnant of his successful campaign.



Keith Cole -





**Aamna Muzaffar** 

Filter>Blur>Average is an experimental visualization towards the ultimate abstraction of an image. Altered through the homogenization of all color-data within the frame, the image serves only its primary function: to remain as visually consumable information. Ten images, gathered daily are posted to www.filterbluraverage.com, and processed the next day then re-posted in their new form; the accumulating catalog of swatches have potential to create chance patterns and highlight the general palette of day's set of images illuminating aspects of the originals.



## The Untitled Trilogy

David F. M. Hanes

The Untitled Trilogy" is a series of performance works performed on three separate occasions from 2009 to 2010. The Trilogy attempts to personalize the life of a scattered and digital alter-ego that is represented through story, junked-gesture, spoken word, viewer intrusion, and object use. Characters in the story address of identity assertion, special limitation, and infinite convergence. This video is a document of the final time the Trilogy was performed during an event with Baltimore performance artist DJ DOGDICK at the Whitehouse Studio Project in Toronto, Canada.



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