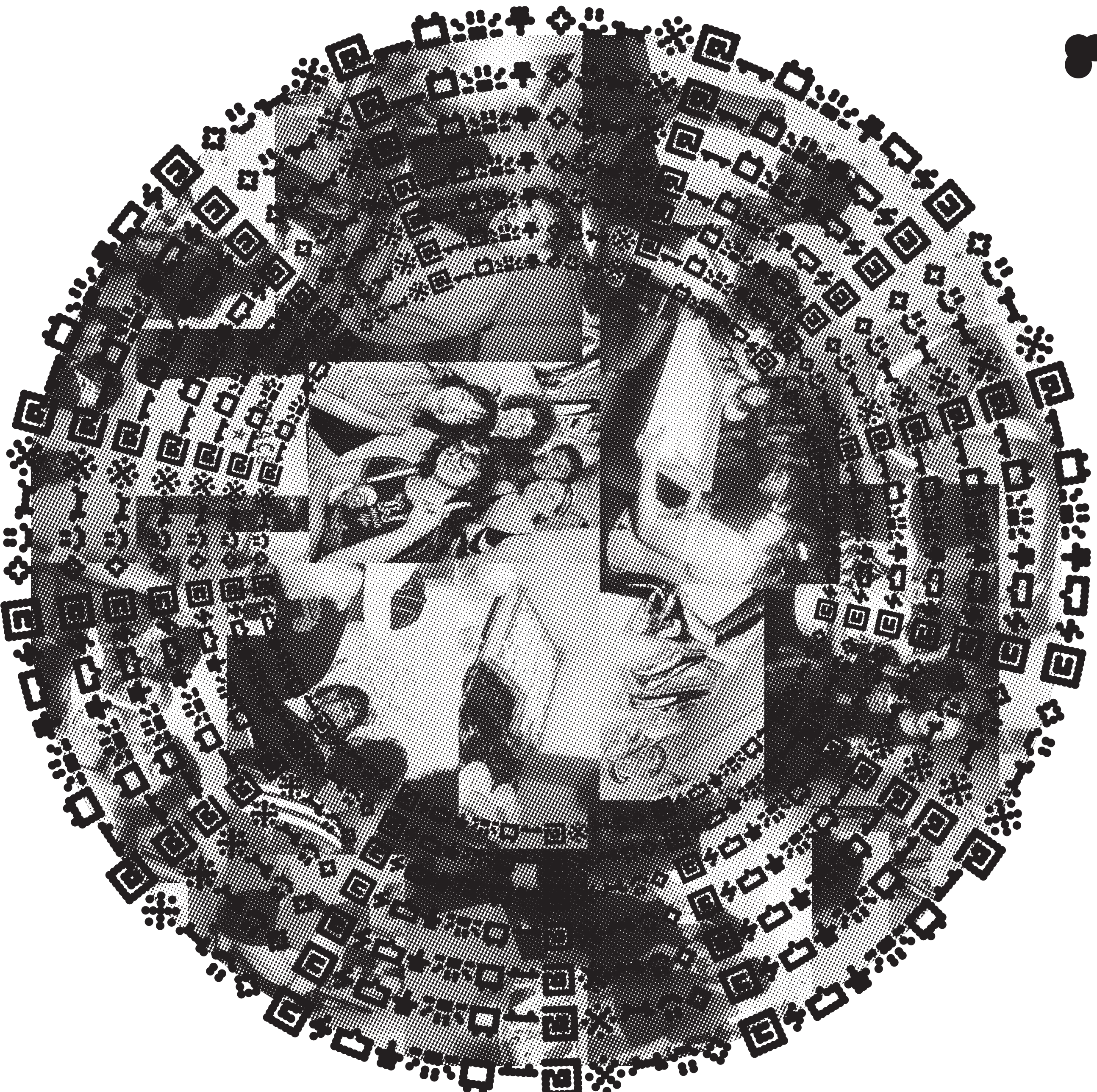
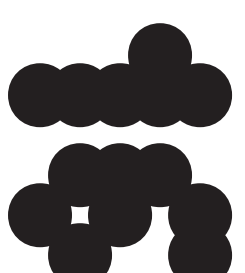


MISSISSAUGA



We wish to acknowledge this sacred land on which Xspace Cultural Centre operates. It has been a site of human activity for 15,000 years. The territories include the Huron-Wendat, Anishinabek Nation, the Haudenosaunee Confederacy, the Mississaugas of the Credit First Nations, and the Métis Nation. The territory is the subject of the Dish With One Spoon Wampum Belt Covenant, an agreement between the Iroquois Confederacy and Confederacy of the Ojibwe and allied nations to peacefully share and care for the resources around the Great Lakes. Today, the meeting place of Tkaronto is home to many Indigenous people from across Turtle Island and we are grateful to have the opportunity to work in the community, on this territory.

Xspace Cultural Centre is a not-for-profit artist-run centre dedicated to providing emerging and student artists, designers, curators and writers with opportunities to showcase their work in a professional setting.



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Xspace Cultural Centre is committed to maintaining an anti-oppressive, queer positive environment, prioritizing marginalized, racialized, Black and Indigenous folks.

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Volume is Xpace Cultural Centre’s annual anthology highlighting our exhibitions, exhibition essays, and extended programming. The exhibition essays demonstrate the breadth of artists, designers, and writers that contribute to Xpace, and situate us as a prominent space in the OCAD University’s community as well as the Toronto Arts community at large. This publication includes programming across all three of our exhibition spaces, as well as workshops and special projects, from September 2024 - July 2025.

DIRECTOR
Avalon Mott (she/her) (b. 1990) is an arts administrator, curator, and photographer originally from Vancouver, British Columbia, now calling Toronto/Tkaronto home. She graduated with her BFA from Emily Carr University of Art + Design, and her MFA in Criticism and Curatorial Practice from OCAD University as the recipient of the Presidential Scholarship and Ontario Graduate Scholarship.

Avalon was a founding member and the co-director of FIELD Contemporary (British Columbia), and is a member of The Plumb (Ontario). She has curated for numerous spaces and festivals in British Columbia and Ontario, and public art installations for the City of Richmond, the City of Vancouver, and Capture Photography Festival among others. Her curatorial work explores the curatorial methodology of exhibitionary affect and how, when applied, can heighten moments of feeling in the gallery space through individual relational experiences of the works on display.

PROGRAMMING COORDINATOR
Philip Leonard Ocampo (b.1995) is an artist and arts facilitator based in Tkaronto, Canada. Ocampo’s multidisciplinary practice involves painting, sculpture, writing and curatorial projects. Exploring world-building, radical hope and speculative futures, Ocampo’s work embodies a curious cross between magic wonder and the nostalgic imaginary. Following the tangents, histories and canons of popular culture, Ocampo is interested in how unearthing cultural touchstones of past/current times may therefore serve as catalysts for broader conversations about lived experiences; personal, collective, diasporic, etc.

He holds a BFA in Integrated Media (DPXA) from OCAD University (2018) and is currently a Programming Coordinator at Xpace Cultural Centre and one of the four founding co-directors of Hearth, an artist-run collective based in the city.

GALLERY COORDINATOR
Abby Kettner (she/her) is a multidisciplinary artist and arts administrator based in Toronto. Kettner graduated with a BFA in Cross-Disciplinary Art: Life Studies from OCAD University, and her artistic practice continues to evolve as she explores concepts of memory and loss through her unique visual language. Recent exhibitions include Niagara Artists Centre (2024), and Ignite Gallery (2023).

COMMUNICATIONS LEAD
Agnes Wong (she/her) is a multidisciplinary designer, artist, and curator based in Tkaronto/Toronto and Hong Kong. She holds a BFA (Honours with Distinction) in Publications from OCAD University (2023) and has completed her propaedeutic studies at Design Academy Eindhoven, Netherlands. She is also the founder of FOREVER GIFT SHOP.

 RED/YELLOW/BLUE

MAIN SPACE

Living Palette

 RED/YELLOW/BLUE

PROJECT SPACE

blue raspberry

 RED/YELLOW/BLUE

WINDOW SPACE

Angel

 SOMEWHERE/NOWHERE/ELSEWHERE

MAIN SPACE

i want you to see this

 SOMEWHERE/NOWHERE/ELSEWHERE

PROJECT SPACE

persistent desires

 SOMEWHERE/NOWHERE/ELSEWHERE

WINDOW SPACE

Ocean Bed Melody

 RETROSPECT/MEMORY/RECOLLECTION

MAIN SPACE

*step into that place,
they remember*

 RETROSPECT/MEMORY/RECOLLECTION

PROJECT SPACE

Tender to the Touch

 RETROSPECT/MEMORY/RECOLLECTION

WINDOW SPACE

Lasting Impressions



Living Palette

September 14 - November 9, 2024
Curated by GAS Collective
(Gizem Candan, Ann Tong Li, Steffi Sin Tung Ng)
Works by Lisa Cristinzo 🐛, Camille Jodoin-Eng 📺, Julie Pasila ✨
Words by GAS Collective

Living Palette takes primary colours *red, yellow, blue* as a representation of the fundamental elements of life: *fire, earth, water, air (and aether)*. The exhibition juxtaposes primary colours as the foundation of creation and the fundamental elements as the basis of living, reimagining their interactions and their potential to achieve ecological balance. Featuring installation, painting and photographic works from three artists: [Lisa Cristinzo](#), [Camille Jodoin-Eng](#), and [Julie Pasila](#), the gallery space transforms into a living palette. Visitors are invited to grapple with the harmony and tension within and between the artworks. By weaving these fundamental forces in the gallery space, the exhibition asks: How can living entities synergize with the palette of elements, and envision more nourishing and sustainable futures?

[The following curatorial conversation takes place among the GAS collective (Gizem Candan, Ann Tong Li and Steffi Sin Tung Ng) on a sunny summer afternoon at Xpace Cultural Centre.]

Gizem 🐛 When talking about the thematic of this show - *red, yellow, blue*, it got me thinking about how these primary colours represent, or resemble, the classical elements of life that the ancient Greeks believed. Empedocles, a Greek philosopher, first proposed “The Four Roots” - fire, water, air and earth - as the building blocks of all matter.¹ By articulating the correlation between these “roots” and the primary colours, we could consider fire as red, water and air as blue, and earth as yellow.

Ann 📺 And I think aether as a fifth element, which was later introduced by another Greek philosopher, Aristotle, is transparent.² Being invisible and intangible, aether is considered more of a celestial spirit and mystical force. The desire to create in the arts, the collaborative spirit between our artists, Xpace and us as a curatorial collective, all counted as aether.

Steffi 📺 What both of you just mentioned reminded me of this concept of 五行 (Wuxing) (English Translation: Five Phases or Agents). It was coined as the elemental theory and foundational principle in ancient Chinese philosophy. While the included elements are a bit different; instead of air and aether, they are replaced by wood and metal, both inspire and speak to the making of the cosmos, the basis of our life, and most importantly, ways to achieve ecological balance.

Ann 📺 It is interesting to see how similar Chinese and Greek philosophies are in attempting to understand what and how the universe is made of. I believe our role as curators in this show also engenders a search for ecological balance. How do the artworks in the show embody the different elements and interact with one another? Moreover, Empedocles identified in his elemental theory that love and strife are the two foundational forces that influence the interactions between the “roots”. We, as a curatorial collective, have the agency to maneuver through these two forces while working among ourselves, with the artists and their artworks in this specific space.

Gizem 🐛 Totally! Being also an oil painter myself, this balance also applies to colours, i.e. creating a painting with a curated palette. By bringing together artworks created by Cristinzo, Jodoin-Eng and Pasila that foreground the different components of life, our curatorial work becomes a *Living Palette*, embodying an exploration of ecological balance and entanglement.

Ann 📺 I like the notion of *Living Palette*! If you look at Jodoin-Eng’s stone pieces from her installation, *Wires Webs Veins Nerves Roots Stems* (2018), it is a palette of living elements. On the carved stones which resemble the element of earth, moss could grow (and has grown) subject to the air, humidity and

sunlight where they are. And for Pasila’s work *A Puddle, a Pool* (2023-24), the artist uses materials gathering in puddles or pools of water as a visual reference of the bioplastic pieces, which sweat, melt, or harden based on the change of seasons. Living materials that continue to live in the form of artworks, and echoing one another, isn’t that the most perfect representation of a living palette?

Steffi 📺 I am also pondering our role as curators. In what ways, do our curatorial and artistic practices disrupt the journey of achieving ecological balance or harmony? Especially in this chaotic time under the immediate threat of climate change, inequalities and wars around the world. I don’t have a concrete answer right now, especially as we are still preparing for the show. However, I share Cristinzo’s deep grief for materialism (of course, also wildfires and damaged landscapes) in her large-scale painting *Two Years Lost, Marked Trail* (2023). How much waste did we create at this exhibition and cause a “chaos” to the nature that we lived in? How to balance our environmental responsibilities and curatorial duties?

Gizem 🐛 Ecological stress vs harmony... from my perspective, we could only sort out diverse ways to balance it instead of viewing that as a dichotomy. The tiny step we took in writing the exhibition didactics with homemade charcoal by burning willow branches serves as a good progress. Returning to the basics and considering nature while curating a show. There are many more curatorial recommendations we could take reference from the resource guide created by the Centre for Sustainable Curating.³

Ann 📺 Going back to Cristinzo’s painting, it also makes me think: while fire provides warmth and lighting, it can also harm the environment and become a mode of destruction. Just like the ancient Chinese saying about water: 水能载舟亦能覆舟 (*The water that bears the boat is the same that swallows it up*), fire, or any other element, becomes a double-edged sword in the cycle of life depending how it is used.

Steffi 📺 That is absolutely true...human activities are crucial in influencing this balance.

Gizem 🐛 I have to jump in because looking at the works here, the three artists animate these elements into something magical, inviting the audience to activate their five senses which also connect to the cycle of life, and contemplate on the meaning of ecological balance. Aristotle’s reimagining of the four elements as hot, wet, cold, and dry gives us an idea of how they interact with one another and transform something else. For instance, when we heat something, we eliminate water

from it, and vice versa; when we pour water on fire, we quench it.⁴ This helps us to see how everything in nature is about harmony and balance. Isn’t that beautiful?

Steffi 📺 If you look at Pasila’s work *Sand Sigh (Variation II)* (2024), you will see how sun, snow and water collectively disrupt the exposure process and create these beautiful works that bring the audience to an other-worldly experience. Once again we witness how these different forces interact with one another and create something different in a sustainable way.

Ann 📺 We are eager to observe the evolution of the *Living Palette*. This exhibition serves only as the beginning of this difficult search for understanding what ecological balance could mean within curatorial and artistic practice. It, of course, extends to ourselves as individuals. This journey, being both controllable and uncontrollable, realistic but also magical, points to a collective, mystical future that is refined from the fundamental forces of nature.

[This conversation ends here as GAS needs to get back to installing the exhibition.]

As the gallery space is transformed into a palette of artistic intervention, it simultaneously becomes a playground. We encourage visitors to explore how the artworks/elements/colours echo with one another. Also, tune in with yourself at the space: How would you locate yourself as part of the ecosystem and contribute to achieving ecological balance?

¹ William Ellery Leonard “The Fragments of Empedocles,” The Monist 17, no. 3 (1907): 454. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/27900051>.

² The Centre for Sustainable Curating, the Synthetic Collective, Ioana Dragomir, and Noémie Fortin, *Using the Resources at Hand: Sustainable Exhibition Design*, last modified July 2023, accessed September 10, 2024, <https://sustainable-curating.ca/using-the-resources-at-hand-sustainable-exhibition-design/>.

³ Greek philosopher Aristotle introduced the fifth element of Aether as quintessence, completing the elemental theory that was developed by Empedocles.

⁴ Aristotle, *Meteorology*, trans. E. W. Webster, Accessed September 11, 2024. <http://classics.mit.edu/Aristotle/meteorology.1.i.html>; The Greek Elements (Aristotle). Accessed September 10, 2024. <https://chemed.chem-purdue.edu/genchem/history/aristotle.html>.



blue raspberry

September 14 - November 9, 2024
Work by Sal Lovink McKinnell
Words by EJ Kneifel

Mouth blue: Lips purse, soft pop. Tongue flickers, a readying kiss.
Now red: Tongue carnation, drawbridge, the patting thud of a door.

Mouth red: x
Now blue: o

*
In the third dimension, red and blue split. In a blink, at the edge of a movie goggle worn thin. The line between them is a seam: two arms touching. The wind, taken out of a coke can. Blood, rushing to a face.

In blue raspberry, flavours tangy clash. A chemically manufactured contradiction. A blue word coats a red tongue, intact.

In *blue raspberry*, Sal Lovink McKinnell weaves an infinite spin of intact-contact possibility. They pull the weft of ache to the warp of *yearn*, the x of x to the y of o, and red and blue become something like characters.¹ Lifting in, out, touching – not turning. Redblue, bluered, blurred – not purple. Their searching and reaching like two dogs’ eager greeting, bodies braiding in and out of knots.

Amidst relation turned geometry – red and blue emerging from the clear blank of an early morning (1),² two frail blues, pulling away from themselves, peeking through plaid to their reds’ frizzing bellies (2) – 3 and 4 face each other. Anxious, avoidant, returning, each the other’s “equal frequency,” they look forward and backward in time simultaneously, a string of spit between mouths.³

These living moments crosshatch with the emphases inherent to their making. Sometimes, as in 2’s mohair, the right-to-left talks itself into fuzzy density.⁴ In 3, the up-down asserts itself – the left-right held, listening, in place.⁵ Nested in the red-blue of 3’s fairy thread, the warp-weft of 4 and 5’s boastful thick, are more concentric doubles: me-me, you-you, us-us.

In other words, in a woven relation, even as red and blue meet, forehead to forehead, at widening increments, in the thawed freezie of time, they are still, constantly, meeting themselves. Even as they co-form a surface, the shape of two, even as they text back and forth – *Winter red, cherry blue, berry flush, hatch?, hutch, hush, hush, blush, blushed, hue* – their own threads loop, x, x, pinkie promise.

¹ The **weft** describes the x-axis/left-right threads in a weaving, and the **warp** describes the y/up-down.

² This is a weaving technique called **overshot**, which has what’s called a weft-emphasis – the left-right threads are visually emphasized by allowing them to skip longer over their up-down counterparts.

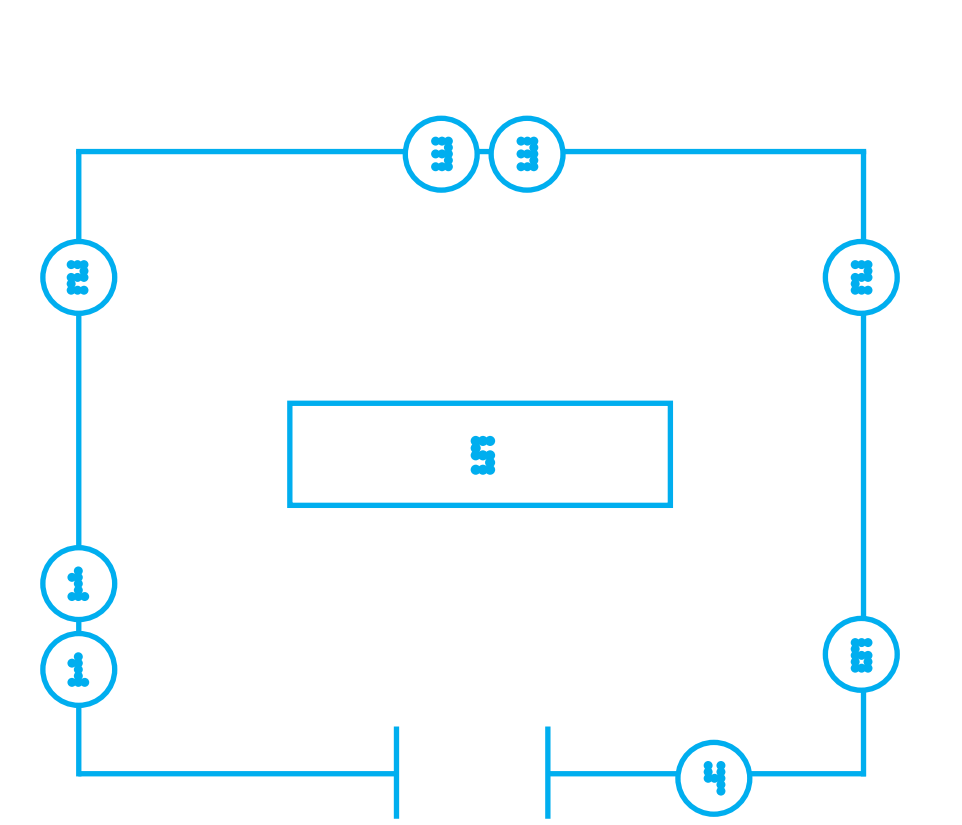
³ The poet **Dorothea Lasky** likes to imagine “red objects as their equal frequency in a blue shade” – “Could it be that all beings meet their match in a place of colour intensity?” (Lasky, Dorothea. “What is Color in Poetry or is it the Wild Wind in the Space of the Word,” in *Animal*. Wave Books, 2019. 42.)

⁴ This is called a **weft-faced cloth**.

⁵ This is called a **warp-faced cloth**.



ALL IMAGES COURTESY OF POLINA TEIF



4’s plain weave, in particular, is the structural-visual interlock of red and blue’s standing date.⁶ Tucked just right of the doorway, it was made in a C weave, the loom’s movement, usually circular, folding back in on itself — creating a natural seam at the centre — so that when it’s opened up, it doubles in size.⁷ An August harvest: a shape that folds into its double. (5, quiet seam of its room, its own promise for visitors’ folding, unfolding.) Pulled to pucker, shy to kiss.

*
In their practice of living and making, Lovink McKinnell, a weaver and gardener, is driven by the pull to proximity. What can be nearer, closer, stroked, brushed. An eyeless thread’s ready splitting. A blanket, nuzzling into the scrunch of a fist. A hand, planted deep in the earth.

With the water jug’s thud, with the loom’s repetitive hunk, Lovink Mckinnell insists: this contact is constructive. What we touch, we can make. What we touch, we can grow.

In these thirty days, in this end-of-summer haste, Lovink McKinnell has bunched and culled the briefest bounty. Burnt their hands on it, kneaded it, known. They have worked up to the edge of incompleteness; they have understood with.⁸ And under Lovink McKinnell’s steady touch, even in their pop and frenzy, red and blue return to the loom’s ancient rhythm. The blue-with-red of vesicle. A relation of interrelation. The “grid above,” the “grid below,” the force that pushes underneath into life.⁹ The crumple of the ribbon, the pulling and pinning. A new moon casting a red shadow, blue season, a tender use to be made, and touched, and remade.

⁶ In a **plain weave fabric**, the threads of the warp and weft are equally distributed.

⁷ This technique is called a **C-weave**.

⁸ As **Paulo Friere** puts it, through a political education that understands reality as a process, people can be “aware of their incompleteness” and understand themselves as not merely in the world, but with the world (Friere, Paulo. *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*: 50th Anniversary Edition. trans. Myra Bergman Ramos. Bloomsbury Academic, 2000. 75).

⁹ “There is a grid above and a grid below,’ I said slowly, trying not to uplift my voice into a question.” (**Gladman, Renee**. *Calamities*. La Vergne: Wave Books, 2020. 35)



Angel

September 14 - November 9, 2024
Work by Connor Rothe
Words by Leon Hsu

*The body of a messenger, opened,
shared, loved, estranged:
What if the flesh of an angel is nothing
other than entangled wires?*

*Lovers—correct me if I’m wrong—insist on bringing the two perspectives
[emic and etic] together, a sort of double exposure. To draw into the
very inside of my heart the limit that was supposed to mark it on the
outside, your strangeness.
— Anne Carson, Plainwater ¹*

Drawing out of an interiority is a question of sharing with the corrupted other, whose point of origin, like you, is a matter of exposure. This is to say the idea of the self cannot be self-contained as an interiority; rather, to be, one must experience through the edge of the body in relation to an other as an other, which is a matter of exteriority, of parting oneself, of ex (out of)-posure (to place). Such a common exposure creates a spacing between us—oriented towards the outside—that is, the limit of our particular strangeness mirrored back to us, reminding us of the alterity of being, for the body— from which we sense—is exposed to its extremities.² For the French philosopher Jean-Luc Nancy, being/subject is a relational force predicated upon “the force from the outside, or more precisely, the force of sharing and opening between an *inside* and *outside* which refer to one another.”³ This is the pleasure of relation, which lies in the distance of this double exposure that takes place between you and I: the coming together [*con-venance*] to this ground of withdrawal, that is, exposure onto the outside, forming the ground of sensing a good fit [*convenance*] between strangers/lovers.

The outside, to put simply, is the world, whereby the symbolic boundary of self/other and association/disassociation is undone to assert being as relational, which is a recurring theme in Connor Rothe’s work. Often working in acrylic with the instrument of airbrush, traces of appearance takes shape through repeated alterations of proximity, which may be read as an act of undoing things in their given state. Or perhaps, his semi-figural blurry paintings, manipulated through close-ups and distortions, function as a visceral reaction to the atmosphere of a site. The radiance of light, as a result, emerges to the fore in the quietude of pictorial accuracy, recalling German-American photographer Uta Barth’s fleeting photographs of placeless places, whereby a scene is fixed to be felt. Between each sanded layer of colours lies a conjuring of a sensorial presence, conveyed through distance. Warmth, after all, is felt through the space between the source and its recipient, which we learned from Rothe’s *I Felt Your Shape* (2024): a spiritual pondering of origin.

*



What if to paint from a distance is to paint in the parting of the self?

Drawing upon the pleasure of coming together and finding harmony [*convenance*] between lovers and strangers alike, the question of connection through the spacing between us—that is, the relational tension between inside/outside, public/private—is magnified to the scale of Connor Rothe’s *Angel* in the symbolic mapping of sharing stretched between us.

Interwoven lacing of electrical wires sprawl from the edges of the canvas, gathering densely, edging closer and closer to drape a grid of electrical supply, whose organisational flow lies in the transitory movement of energy being spent outside of the visible network of cable lines. Such an expenditure must not be thought of in terms of lack. Rather, it is a transference of the surface, where the flow of energy establishes an infinite common that is radically othering. If we take each physical wire as a double exposure of an actual-virtual—a movement caught between wires and bodies—we might then consider the possibility of forging a relational force by way of distance.

Distance gives us the capacity to be virtually connected by way of sharing, of spending, of parting ourselves. And such a distance between us is the basis of our digital being: the possibility of being and coming together as an anonymous other in a realm that oscillates between closure and disclosure. Like our vascular system, whose containment rises to the surface with great pressure, and spills into the question of the liquescent body’s limit, or the lack thereof.

Perhaps, we can consider the telephone pole as an infrastructure of spillage, whose exteriority powers an interiority that is nonetheless connected to an outside orientation via the fact of the internet: singular plural sharing. Digital existence is not entirely corporeal, but it cannot be disassociated from the physicality of wires and bodies, for the pleasure of being online is contingent upon the sharing of alterity in form (bodies) and structure (wires), composed of their difference.



ALL IMAGES COURTESY OF POLINA TEIF

Between my Wi-Fi enabled device and yours is a rapport of displacement—a window— where we co-exist in close proximity to one another, but we do not touch. Conditioned by its positioning inside of the gallery’s window space, *Angel* parallels the schema of exposure/withdrawal, where the limit of the interior is pushed towards the common. We merely partake our pleasure, frustration, anxiety, boredom, strangeness, and a range of multitudes with-out, recalling what Carson alludes to when describing the double exposure of depth (self) and surface (self-as-other) in the peculiar congruence [*convenance*] of lovers.

The wire system makes possible the construction of an interior (private) and an exterior (public) that collapses onto one another, as input and output confuses *Angel*’s pictorial space, blurring the defined edges of a beginning and an end. The lack of spatial illusionism allows the gravitational pull of distance, rendered in uniformity and flatness. Rothe’s gesture of airbrushing seems to rapidly circulate as infinite replications onto itself. The body here, like that of a harp, is distanced and tensioned to reach pleasure. As such, the systematic movement of lines is given a sense of tender urgency, at once, abstract and physical.

*

*It is in fact upon the world of things needing to be uncovered that the
world of merely visible things keeps exerting its pressure.
—Simonides, Fragments ⁴*

¹ Emic in anthropological research refers to insiders’ perspective, while etic refers to outsiders’ perspective. **Anne Carson**, *Plainwater: Essays and Poetry* (New York: Vintage Books, 2000), 223.

² “A body’s always objected from the outside, to ‘me’ or to someone else. Bodies are first and always other—just as others are first and always bodies...”

An other is a body because only a body is an other...Why is this body thus, and not otherwise? Because it is other—and alterity consists in being-thus, in being the thus and thus and thus of this body, exposed all the way into its extremities.” **Jean-Luc Nancy**, “Corpus,” in *Corpus*, trans. Richard A. Rand (New York: Fordham University Press, 2008), 31.

³ **Jean-Luc Nancy**, “Pleasure of Relation,” in *The Pleasure in Drawing*, trans. Philip Armstrong (New York: Fordham University Press, 2013), 67.

⁴ *Simonides of Keos* fr. 598 PMG translated by Anne Carson in *Economy of the Unlost*: Simonides of Keos with Paul Celan (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1999), 60.

⁵ Here, my thinking is influenced by **John Paul Ricco**, *The Logic of the Lure* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2002).





i want you to see this

January 18 - March 15, 2025
Work by Megan Bierman-Brophy ♣, Angie Cabz :D 📠, Marisa Müsing 📠, Grace Wardlaw ➡
Words by Victoria Vyraeth + Agnes Wong
Curated by Agnes Wong

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TEXT PLEASE SCAN QR CODE



persistent desires

January 18 - March 15, 2025
Work by Eli Nolet and Ardyn Gibbs
Words by Casper Sutton-Fosman

Something jumps in my stomach when our eyes meet. The bass vibrates my sternum, and my eyes scan the walls for a shadow-draped doorframe. When I see it, I see it as a portal, a threshold – I cross the dance floor, brushing against other bodies, smelling of leather and sweat. I move propelled by desire.

To get here I had to take the subway to a bus, to the end of the line – the address is on Queen Street but it's around a corner, through an alley. On my way to the venue, I am thinking about the queer spaces lost – police raids on bathhouses and bars, rising rents, public health crises. Queerness is a movement *towards*, a community tethered together by a mutual wanting¹. We pass through something to get to queerness – an internal reckoning, a coming-out process, a bodymind transformation.

You cannot enter persistent desires without passing through an elsewhere.

Ardyn Gibbs and Eli Nolet's collaborative exhibition *persistent desires* envisions the Project Space as a queer backroom/dark-room – a site of hidden pleasure, anonymity, and connection. You cannot enter directly into the Project Space – you must first pass through the main gallery, past the bathrooms and the office door, seeking out a room with no windows and only one door. It is by reaching towards, seeking out, *desiring*, that one may be granted access into the space created by Gibbs & Nolet's work.

Inside the project space, the exhibition flickers into existence. Monitors glow in soft colors, light bounces off metal. Shadows soften the room's edges, offering spaces to hide, to be seen only in snippets; the work illuminates and obscures, reflecting the artists' musings on queer & trans visibility and selfhood.

Gibbs and Nolet both make heavy use of text in their work, dwelling on single words and short phrases that highlight tensions of shame and wanting, calling on bodily sensation and ways of seeing/being seen. Animated words shift and morph and turn, bodies unable (unwilling) to be defined or restrained. Yet the artists play with fetishistic restraint: Gibbs's monitors become body-analogues tied in rope bondage, traces of their intimacy with their own work lingering in the angles formed by the fibers. Nolet's chainmail functions as both fetish signifier and protective garb, altering, reflecting and obscuring the light emitting from the objects it drapes around.

As queers, our relationship to sexuality is already labeled deviant by a majoritarian narrative; we cannot follow the scripts laid out by cis-heterosexual romance for sexual encounters, relationship formations, the building of a family. Even a turn towards “respectable” queerness requires an assimilation that disconnects us from the possibilities deviancy has to offer. We forge our own path, make our own language – signalling each



other with glances, bandanas, nail polish. Shame springs out of our supposed deviancy, so we embrace it, play with it. If we are already unacceptable, we are free to explore sensation, difference, power.

Within this exploration, Nolet and Gibbs grapple with the fetishism of queer – and particularly trans – bodies: as the popularity of trans porn rises seemingly in concert with the rise of anti-trans legislation in the US and Canada ² trans relationships to queer cruising and backroom spaces shift by necessity. I think of Paul B. Preciado's description of his first sexual encounter with a lover – he is unknowable, shadows and light and testosterone rendering his naked form unpredictable. *Being reduced to one fixed image frightens me*, he writes ³. Schrodinger's cock. Gibbs and Nolet's use of darkness, flickering light, movement, and covered surfaces recalls this unknowability; they suggest a reflection of the desire that surrounds them, playing their own cards close to the chest.

At the core of *persistent desires*, I find a synthesis between the artists' process, the resulting work, and my own experience of it. In this amalgam, t4t – a category borne out of a miscategorization ⁴, meant to silo trans individuals away from cis spaces – becomes a powerful site of community care and praxis. Nolet and Gibbs's work resonates with Hil Malatino's description of t4t as “being with and bearing with”⁵, acknowledging difference and difficulty to reach towards a collective future. They leave us with plenty of shadows to hide in, refusing to define or flatten the spaces they occupy. Instead, they open towards new ways of being, of hiding and revealing and reflecting, offering us entry into their world – if you know where to look for the door.

¹ Drawing on ideas of queerness as horizon, as something not-yet-here, expounded upon by José Esteban Muñoz in *Cruising Utopia*
² James Factora for Them, <https://www.them.us/story/trans-porns-pornhub-popularity>
³ *Testo Junkie* (2013), page 88
⁴ Susan Stryker, *Transgender History, Homonormativity, and Disciplinarity* (2008)
⁵ *Future Fatigue* (2019), page 656



Ocean Bed Melody

January 18 - March 15, 2025
Work by Seden
Words by Jess Beketa



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Preface: a poem by Seden

A house made of everything,
swallowed in by the weight of its possessions,
became too heavy to stay afloat,
and sunk until it met the ocean floor.
From within, colonies and subcultures
emerged.
While they were forgotten, a whole city took
place...

–
The objects we encounter in our lifetime
come to us in different ways, often serving as
portals to another time or place—whether real
or imagined.. As Lidia Yuknavitch writes in
her book *Thrust*, “Objects were everything,
because they moved backward and forward in
time.”¹ One could hypothetically draw an out-
line of their life from the things they have kept
and held. Yet these objects inevitably take on
new meanings once we are no longer here. In
most cases, with climate change, ocean acidi-
fication, sea-level rise, and the associated
precarity of life on earth, every object we hold
has more permanence on earth than we do.

“Nothing that existed before isn’t something else
now.”²

CDs are estimated to take over 1 million years
to decompose in a landfill;
Foil helium balloons are estimated to never
decompose;
A plastic toothbrush will never break down
completely.

Reflecting on human fragility and the per-
manence of *stuff*, *Ocean Bed Melody* is a
snapshot of life as it once was. Artifacts are
transformed into delicate sculptures— re-
constructing narratives of daily rituals and
personal identity, while breathing a renewed
intimacy into mass-produced objects and
questioning the permanence of memory.

In Seden’s installation, the bottom of the
ocean floor becomes our bed moments
before we drift asleep, where we lay still
between waves of constant motion. Bring-
ing continuous movement into her instal-
lation daily scenes cycle by: a dog circles a
garden, family laundry is hung to dry, a music

box plays the melody of a childhood song,
thoughts linger...



–
* lay your head on the bed of the ocean, how
warm it feels to be rocked by the sea.
* i feel like i’m a rock in a river.
* moana and the helpful hand wave that
keeps her and her chicken safe.

–
A tiny hand with tiny fingernails grasped onto
the swaying seaweed, pulling on it just hard
enough that it wouldn’t break to use it as an
anchor to scrape the sandy bottom. Shards of
sand gathered in her fingernails, hues of pink,
blue and cream—a mix of microplastics, shell
and minute rocks. In her other palm, she held
a foiled pink and silver bundle tied with thin,
coarse rope with a buffed, quartz stone as a
weight—an offering to the sea. As she dove,
she noticed something shimmering beneath
the sand, an unfamiliar object, something of
intuited importance. She heard a melody; it
sounded like The Gentle Waltz by Oscar

Peterson, which she often practiced on her
keyboard at home. The sun was beaming
through the gentle wave crests, dappling the
ocean bed. She reached for the shimmer,
grasped it with her hands, plunged into the
tiny portal to see where it would take her.

–
* that snow globe in the window of the sally
anne on bloor.
* is devotion an insane idea?
*un cœur brisé n’est pas un cœur cassé.

–
Scavengers were contracted to dive for CDs
in the ocean; landfills had been thoroughly
picked over; searching and mining the land
for objects became a rich person’s endeavour.
People had to resort to the sea to shop for
objects. Recently, CDs had become a coveted
object to ward off pests to grow crops on the
square-metres of land owned by smallfolk.
Much no longer grew on the now tainted land,
it was back to the age of the three sisters for
sustenance. A diver suited up to scavenge for
days in the deep; there were rest stops and an
underwater railroad that, although expensive,
would ease the journey. Descending into the
sea was like traveling to the moon. She kissed
the land goodbye, dedicating three days to the
sea. She loved letting her longhair flow free in
the water, its buoyancy and the way the light
caught the orange and blonde creating a light-

ness, closing her eyes to lessen the weight of
existence.

–
* the spoon. rum. bunny. raf. sue in japan.
* i think i’ve healed my attachment issues.
* laying awake thinking about love.

–
Sue moved to Tsubame-Sanjo in hopes of
becoming a metal artist. She forged half
teaspoons with a carved-out star at the end
of each spoon’s handle. A jewel was deli-
cately placed in the centre of the star. These
spoons made their way around the world.
Over 10,000 km away, a gentrifier made rum
and egg-nogs for her guests, one of which had
more than its fair share of rum. She decided to
spoon-feed her bunny the dense rum and
egg-nog in hopes that she could one day rove
the deep-sea. She called her “my little deep-
sea rover”. Bunny was evolving past her peers,
developing gills, living fast and eventually
dying young. She could throw her ass in a
perfect circle; the spoon was an emblem of
love. Bunny visited the gentrifier’s sister in a
dream, landing softly on her lap very early in
the morning on the first day of the new year.
Her gills folded perfectly into her ribcage so
she could touchdown on earth one last time.
A new figment for our memories.

–

* smoothing the sea with your hand as you
would a bedsheet.
* home as a sink / home as a haven
(l’ardèche). i go home and become barnacle.
* i left my lava heart on makalawena beach.

–
California was the last frontier, the mountain
dwellers stuck to their mountain tops. Even
the Netherlands succumbed to the dramatic
sea-level rise. The mountain-top dwellers
would contact each other using tin cans and
string like children in backyards used to.
Backyards no longer existed; land was scarce
and topsoil had completely disappeared. We
sucked on rocks to quell our hunger. On an-
niversaries, special outings were made to the
deep. We suited up, filled our oxygen tanks,
and dove. We visited cities and towns that no
longer existed. My favourite places to visit
were the homes of Silver Lake, a drowned
neighbourhood in Los Angeles, and the an-
tique shops in Carson, Nevada. I searched for
relics, guessed at what an object’s purpose
used to be, and imagined my life in a house
instead of a cave. In the deep, the colours were
warped, I wished to see things as they were.

1 Lidia Yuknavitch.
Thrust. Riverhead Books,
2022, p. 18-19

2 Lidia Yuknavitch.
Thrust. Riverhead Books,
2022, p. 26



step into that place, they remember

May 10 - July 5, 2025

Work by Shannon Sandwell ✳, Pixel Heller 🗨, Emerald Repard-Denniston ✳

Words by Serene Mitchell

There is a place where time doesn't follow but everything else resonates with great intensity. In this space, there are no boundaries; they are walking through a dream, catching a glimpse of the future, reliving a memory that belongs to someone.

This group exhibition, *step into that place, they remember* is a collection of portals to places where the familiar is imminent. The works of Shannon Sandwell, Pixel Heller, and Emerald Repard-Denniston guide the viewer through a landscape where time folds in on itself—where memory escapes its boundaries, and what one remembers becomes accessible to those who are attuned. These works beckon us into a realm that exists between here and elsewhere, where every image, every form, and every gesture offers a new question, a new way of seeing. At this intersection of remembering and reimagining, the exhibition becomes a space of curiosity and reflection, urging us to embrace the complexity of what we remember and how it shapes who we are. Through this dynamic interplay, *step into this place, they remember* reimagines what it means to exist within the ever-changing currents of memory, identity, and connection.

As soon as the viewer steps into the gallery they are met with Pixel Heller's collection of drums, *Ancestral technology*. The small, vividly coloured collection of drums draws the eye inward, inviting a physical closeness—an instinct to lean in, to contemplate at the first series of portals in the exhibition. Grounding their practice in Moko Jumbie—a stilt walking performance rooted in Afro-Caribbean Carnival masquerade—Heller naturally has an inseparable and sacred partnership with drums. At the top of their hierarchy of music, drumming opens a portal to the spiritual space they share with their ancestors. Through movement, sound, and repetition, Heller uses the drum to enter a deeper state—what they often describe as ancestral memory stored in the body. The sound from the drums awaken these memories, moving through the body and offering a communion between spirit, past, and present.

The ceramic drums are painted in bright colours inspired by the rich hues of Afro-Caribbean carnival—a palette that appears throughout Heller's work, reflecting a legacy of resistance and the celebration of freedom. The plinths ground the drums like altars, while the colours work to situate each drum within its own emotional and spiritual frequency. The form of the drums draw from the physicality of carnival figures, ancestral beings, and the diverse expressions of Black embodiment. The protruding points on the drums mirror the horns of Jab Jab—a masquerade character in which revelers take on the guise of devilish figures adorned with chains and horns. This figure symbolizes both the brutality of oppression and the triumph of liberation. Their horns serve as both a warning and a welcome. By placing them on the drums, Heller is fusing two ancestral practices, rhythm and masquerade. As sculptural shapes, they take on an otherworldly presence—at once protectors, spirit beings, and vessels of memory.

By creating a collection of hand drums, Heller has formed another bridge to their ancestors—this time through the transmission of knowledge by Jean Paul Mohammed, a traditional healer of the Ballacus people of Trinidad and Tobago, a master drummer, craftsman, and oral historian. Cross generational exchange engaged in strengthening cultural preservation has been a central aspect of Heller's practice, making the drums physical manifestations of these processes. Learning to make drums from Jean Paul was a transformative experience. Heller describes his generosity felt like a blessing—one that revealed drum making as an act of remembrance. The drum possesses a multisensory portal, not only creating the sound that brings Heller into an ancestral space, but also a sacred synchronized movement with their ancestors. Each step—from the movement of the hands shaping the drum's body to the stretching of goat skin across its base—is a ritual. Heller's use of Canadian goatskin expresses the resilience of Afro-Caribbean craft traditions alive throughout the diaspora. While the creation of the object itself releases rich physical and audio memory that exists in an enduring archive across generations of Afro-Caribbean people.

As viewers progress through the gallery, they are overtaken by the immense scale of Shannon Sandwell's paintings, *Sentimental Attachment*. Consisting of four large horizontally oriented paintings arranged in a two-by-two grid, they build an environment where the viewer is inhabiting the frame and becoming part of the ensemble. The interconnected body of *Sentimental Attachment* engages the viewer in an act of remembering, asking: *What do you recall from this place? Where were you in this moment?* The paintings are composed of images from photos taken by Sandwell, friends, and their extended community. The figures are anonymized by way of high colour saturation, altering scale, cropping, and reorientation.

Using the technique of *defamiliarization*, rendering the familiar, unfamiliar, Sandwell disrupts any clear narrative, prompting viewers to linger, to search. The images—depicting stuffed animals, pets, and tattoos, and portraits of queer friends—represent intimate moments and portrays platonic queerness in it's quiet and lived reality. The composition of these images, along with the presence of familiar cultural motifs—such as Charli XCX's *Brat* album or commonly worn shoes like Doc Martens, Crocs, and Adidas Superstars—helps to blur the boundaries between the personal and the universal. Even for those who were there, who recognize the people, objects, and places depicted, there is an uncanny sense of rediscovery—as if seeing these moments for the first time, refracted through the tender and thoughtful distortion. Sandwells intention is to illuminate, in both subtle and striking ways, how we can exist in vignettes of each others memories. In this way, *Sentimental Attachment* serves as a portal to and from a collective memory.

In Sandwell's work, the force of each brushstroke is unmistakable—marks that carry the weight of physical strength, yet emerge from a place of deep tenderness. This tension mirrors the body's own way of processing powerful emotion: the instinct to grip, to hold tight, or to clench as a way to try to make a special moment last a little longer. The marks are made even more clear by the vivid colours used by the artist. Despite the saturation of color,



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every scene is crafted from the same primary yellow, red, and blue, uniting them within a shared visual world. Earlier works by the artist in the gallery space employ the same technique, creating an assemblage of chroma that honors how connections can be reimagined and revisited—an ongoing, evolving process of remembering.

On the opposite wall, Emerald Repard-Denniston's body of work is spread across the bend of the gallery. The paintings' uncanny, sweeping scenes lure the viewer's eye, revealing endless plotlines on the horizon, ultimately bearing witness to the artist's traversal of psychological terrain following her first reunion with her birth family. Her collection of paintings—three large-scale works and three smaller pieces—offers visual expressions of a liminal space where her inner world meets, merges, and exists in unison with life-altering memories. Adopted from China as an infant, Repard-Denniston reflects on the surreal experience of meeting the family she had long envisioned—figures who, for much of her life, only existed in her 'ghost kingdom.' This term, coined by adoption advocate Betty Jean Lifton, describes the imagined world created by adoptees, where projections of lost or wished-for family members reside as unrealized figures, shaping identity in their absence. Now, a year after their reunion, Repard-Denniston's birth family have become real, formative presences—central figures in the ongoing

reconstruction of her self-understanding, both as a vessel and as a spirit moving through the many worlds she inhabits. The artist's body of work illustrate moments during her first return home, rendered with the emotional weight of memory—her family gathered around a lazy Susan sharing a meal, fireworks illuminating the sky before her childhood home, and intimate perspective of seeing the street where she was born for the first time.

Crossing Over depicts the artists family atop an iceberg adrift in a chaotic sea, creating a palpable tension in the painting: the world above, grounded in lived reality, hovers just shy of contact with what lies beneath—an equally consequential realm: the artists inner world, shaped by her ghost kingdom and the lurking persistence of her hauntings. These figures follow her into *The Lady or the Tiger*—her ghost mother, with an open wound, cries on the street where the artist entered the world. The apocalyptic darkness of the painting screams into a deafening silence, leaving a raw, unspoken grief that lingers like the shadows of creatures on the buildings. Many of these creatures and forms emerged directly from her sketchbook, drawn during the time of her reunion. The three smaller works, *Eating the Other, Eating the Self, and Betwixt and Between*, offer a contained space where these presences can exist in a kind of tangled convergence—ghosts interwoven with the emotional residue of retrospection,

fragments of lost lines, and unresolved shapes that Repard-Denniston is still in the process of placing in her memory.

In *Welcome Home To My Ghost Kingdom*, the artist's extended family is depicted in unison, brushed in golden yellow against a red backdrop—colours deeply ingrained in Chinese culture. The painting meditates on that first encounter, where the artist stands among generations of relatives on the land they have dwelled for generations. They imagined who she might be, just as many other Chinese families had imaged their lost children during the era of the One Child Policy. The dreamt versions of one another collide with reality, under the same sky, now filled with light, listening to the same sounds echo through the place that has awaited her return. As the viewer moves through the gallery, their interactions with the works carry them across an elusive landscape that connects individuals across time, space, and relationships. The artists invite us into places that honour the act of remembering, where stories are shared, preserved, and passed down, and the boundaries between past and present dissolve. The works urge us not merely to observe, but to feel—to inhabit the space between what is seen and what is remembered, discovering ourselves within the folds of these collective narratives.



Tender to the Touch

May 10 - July 5, 2025

Work by Alison Postma

Words by Flora May

To encounter the spaces created by Toronto artist, Alison Postma is to slip sideways into a softened near-future, where external reality wanes, and imagination is illuminated. The quality of fascination aroused is akin to visiting a friend’s home for the first time—where everyday objects are suddenly plim with speculation and inner tensions between formality and familiarity take over. Though Postma’s scope of work is as broad as can be imagined by a photographer, designer, video artist, and classically-trained woodworker, *Tender to the Touch* emerges from a dreamer in one mouthwatering bite on the importance of the abstract.

Postma’s craft is grounded in a strong conceptual foundation, shaped as much by open-ended inquiry as by a resistance to fixed conclusions. *Tender to the Touch* invites dreamers into an interior where meaning is felt more than stated—where the textures of ambiguity settle into the body so warmly it becomes its own kind of clarity.

“I think trying to find direct words would lose the point. I intend to spiral towards the point without arriving. I hope the view surrounding the point gives a clear picture.”¹

Each piece and each moment found within reach out to the dreamer and offer us something to lean into, to carry on the skin, by the eyes, in the gut. In this way, they offer an intimate unfolding—not a call for answers, but an invitation to linger, to attend, to dwell in the in-between, where imagination brushes against tactility, and understanding rises slowly, like breath. That spiraling approach pushes back against the way contemporary culture often flattens complexity in favor of quick comprehension.

“The things we make show the world what we are. The furniture of a period is a sure index to the ideals and aspirations of that period – or to the lack of them.” ²

It is a salve in these times, to visit work that holds space for the power of individual thought—those moments of wandering contemplation that resist easy categorization. By refusing to arrive at “the point,” Postma creates space for the vital act of seeing differently, of loosening fixed meanings in favor of expansive perception. Drifting... questioning... dreaming... are restoration processes for self-knowledge. When we are demanded speed, conformity, and constant reaction, self-knowledge serves as an anchor – internal reference points in a landscape that is lacking stability.

Jocular in some of their forms, it only takes interacting with these pieces to find they are generous with opportunities for constructive contemplation. You’ll find each piece can open independent portals into this inner terrain: the mirror reflecting not just the self, but our choices on what is hidden or revealed; the video suspending a moment in time to be lost in illusion; the chair engaging the body, asking us to feel rather than judge; photographs that sway with familiarity and oddity.

How does imaginative work hold a shape?



ALL IMAGES COURTESY OF ALISON POSTMA

Conceptual depth does not stand apart from the material world—it can be fostered by it, shaped through process, repetition, skilled hands, hands that are intimate with material.

I attended Sheridan College’s Furniture Craft and Design program for some of the same years as Alison: years that felt endless in, but were also a striking immersion into a world of structural and mechanical analysis. It was a pleasure to have watched Alison move through this distinct desire to honour intuition with a foundational knowledge that woodworking and digital media call for many such procedural requirements. It’s one thing to dream of *knob chair* on a Sunday, and a completely separate accomplishment to spend Monday through Saturday turning all 250 of *knob chair*’s knobs by hand on a lathe. In this way, the technical and the aesthetic are inseparable. What we are touched by as fellow craftspeople is just that: Alison’s bridging the knowledge of the machinist who respects their craft and the direction of the artist who trusts the image that came from a dream.

The spanning nature of Postma’s works track with their undulant physicality, offering cues devoted to each part of the body. Here, implementing our humanness, equal weight is given to the act of making, the visual storytelling, and the dialogues that emerge between the work and the brain, the gut, the skin, the bum, and the back.

Surrealist creativity is combined with sculptural sensitivities, offering pieces that are grounded by touch, structure, and in the undeniable sensuality of interaction. And in that grounding lies their generosity. They meet us where we are—then gently nudge us somewhere else.

“The chair is not passive, you sit in it and it touches you back.”³

“All that you touch
you Change.
All that you Change
Changes you.”⁴

¹ Alison Postma

² Elbert Hubbard (1856-1915), teacher, Anarchist, founder of the *Roycroft craft community*, a meeting site for “radicals, freethinkers, and utopianists”

³ Alison Postma

⁴ Octavia E. Butler (1947-2006) in *Parable of the Sower*



Lasting Impressions

May 10 - July 5, 2025
Work by Pegah Peivandi
Words by Harry Clarke

“Nothing distinguishes memories from ordinary moments. Only later do they become memorable by the scars they leave.”
- Chris Marker, La Jetee, 1962.



To explore the relationship between time and memory, film-maker Chris Marker tells the story of a man obsessed with an image from his childhood. Taking place in the fictional aftermath of World War III in France, scientists attempt to use time travel to discover how the past and future can save the present. They send the protagonist back in time to the moment he sees a beautiful woman on a jetty before a tragedy he can’t remember occurs. Marker uses conflicting methods of storytelling to demonstrate the transient nature of memory. Firstly, what the protagonist claims to remember versus what plays out when he returns is completely different. Although everything appears to be as it was in the past, the way he interacts within that space as a grown man shaped by years of experience distorts the original scene. For example, he takes the woman out on a date, initiates a romantic relationship with her, and the memory becomes a love story in the present moment. Secondly, the story is told entirely through photographs with editor Jean Ravel collaging the images quickly or zooming in and out of them to reveal more context. Only upon expanding the images of the jetty first seen in the beginning of the film can the protagonist and audience realize that he is the victim of the aforementioned tragedy. In both cases, Marker illustrates how memories are only fixed images within our minds and are contextualised by how they make us feel. It makes the audience wonder which is more real and more valuable: the events that occurred to make a memory or the ways the memory stays with and influences our actions.

With *Lasting Impressions*, Peivandi invites viewers to meditate on how time and memory both inform personal growth in unique ways, although they’re subject to change based on perception. From head-on, the work appears to be one fixed image of a lush and vibrant Ginkgo leaf standing proudly within an isolated frame. However, a look from a different angle reveals a multi-layered work comprising vinyl overlaid on top of a degrading matte print. The mirroring of these two materials echoes the formula of how a memory is created, allowing viewers to witness the inciting incident and the reflections that stem from it. Through repeated acts of layering and tearing tiles of the print, applied to the wall with wheat paste, the artist illustrates the eroding quality of memory and the foundational properties that remain. The erosion reflects the artist’s perspective on time as well as their commitment to allowing circumstances to unfold naturally within their daily life and their art practice. In the same way an event is only as good as we remember it, the Ginkgo image printed on the vinyl film is complete and lacks the abrasions seen on the acrylic print. The translucence of the film acts to remind us that memories are reflections of what remains. The vinyl also features small printed dots that texture the image in the foreground. The way those dots pepper the acrylic paper illustrates the way memory retains elements of the original event that inspired it. These ideas are echoed in the symbolism of the Ginkgo leaf in Asian cultures as a symbol of endurance and longevity. Some Ginkgo Biloba trees have been recorded to live up to 1000 years old¹ and have lived to witness centuries upon centuries pass by. In all that time all the naked eye is left with is a static image of a tree despite retaining ancient emotional history within its veins. Peivandi’s work allows us to witness these ghost-like impressions which we normally aren’t able to witness and asks to consider how they’ve shaped our lives.



ALL IMAGES COURTESY OF ALISON POSTMA

What’s fascinating about rendering the unseen into the physical is how it explores memory as an appropriation of reality. Peivandi does this in two ways, firstly with the mirroring of materials and secondly by reproducing a digital artwork in physical properties. To achieve this, Peivandi printed out several sections of the artwork and reconstructed them to create the image of the Ginkgo leaf. As the protagonist in *La Jetee* experienced, the same image can completely change when contextualized in different circumstances. By virtue of being reassembled in the artist’s image, the artwork itself becomes a literal manifestation of how time affects memory. While the large reproduction of a symbolic image is reminiscent of the pop art works of Richard Prince or Roy Lichtenstein, Peivandi’s works aren’t concerned with using product as conduit for accessing emotional history. They reject the capitalist notion of deifying industrialization, instead looking toward familiar symbols that are organic and inextricably intrinsic to our humanity. This has been a throughline in their works which often take inspiration from the Iranian art and culture they were exposed to as a child. In the digital illustration ‘*Shab-e-Yalda (Winter Solstice)*’ (2023) Peivandi depicts a pomegranate against an amorphous red background, a fruit that’s intricately weaved throughout Iranian traditions. In an effort to get closer to the feelings that Iranian arts inspire within them, which Peivandi describes to me as “balance, flow, dynamism, love [and] existentialism”, many of their artworks feature undefined shapes. By allowing themselves to let go of control and follow their muse, Peivandi plays with appropriated memory by creating forms that are reminiscent of images we’ve seen before while being notably distinctive. These shapes are a representation of liberating oneself from regressive structures and embracing your intuition. By removing judgement a third space between reality and the imagined is created where both can coexist, essentially connecting the dots between who we’ve become and how we got there.

Perhaps this third space where everything is in perspective is the only place where we can confront the traumas and triumphs of our past. What I find most remarkable about Peivandi’s work is the way it invites you to a place where all of you, your past, present and future is accepted.

A realm where you are allowed to be both whole and multifaceted. In Marker’s world, his characters face off against a world suffocated by voices commanding the public to fit themselves into shallow narratives. In Peivandi’s, they create space for us to consider that we have our whole lives to passionately decide for ourselves how we choose to live.

Klein, JoAnna. “*The Secret That Helps Some Trees Live More than 1,000 Years*” - *The New York Times*.” *The New York Times*, 13 Jan. 2020,

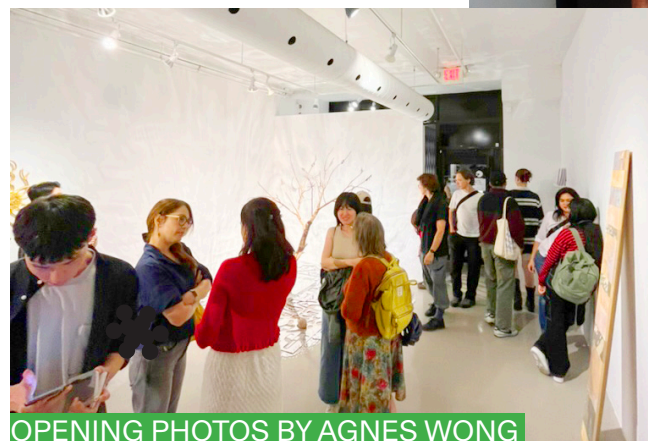




XPACE 20 SOMETHING PARTY PHOTOS BY YI SHI



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OPENING PHOTOS BY AGNES WONG