

CONTEMPORARY ART WRITING

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Mark Neufeld

Jamie Wright

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The jurors were:

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Peter Morin

Jamie Wright

Dayna Danger

Helga Jakobson

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Foreword

Thanks for picking up this copy of *PaperWait*, the annual anthology of contemporary art writing published by aceartinc. Writers are commissioned to respond to ace's five Regular Exhibitions programmed via an open call and jury process and are published online and in a limited edition printed *PaperWait*. The publication also contains writing about this Artist Run Centre's special projects such as the Cartae Open School, Flux Gallery, and the Indigenous Curatorial Residency.

The board and staff of ace sincerely thank the Winnipeg Arts Council, the Manitoba Arts Council, and the Canada Council for The Arts for funding this program and all of ace's operations. The WH & SE Loewen Foundation has been the primary funder of *PaperWait* for many years and we are very grateful to them for this. These agencies' continued funding is vital to our own and other Artist Run Centres and galleries and we never take it for granted.

The 2015/16 Regular Program had some exceptional exhibitions by local artists. Andrea Robert's *The Yolk Of Menial Light* incorporated sound, sculpture, and installation to explore ideas relating to politics, affect, and being. The work was rigorous and witty, its seriousness segued with deadpan humour. Discordant and poetic, Andrea's exhibition ranks among the best this city hosted last year. Karen Asher's chaotically intimate photography in *The Full Catastrophe* brought Winnipeg out in droves. Seductively presenting the domestic grotesque, Asher's technical and humane skill was displayed in full force and to rapturous reception. Alexis Dirks' photography/sculptures in *Botched Fabrications On The Foggy Landscape* usurped the capitalist

‘aspirational qualities’ of materials created for fashion and interiors by placing them within a context of deep geological time. The strange and absurd mimetic forms critiqued high impact resource extractions for the purposes of luxury (and faux luxury) commodities.

The Program also brought Esther Simmonds-MacAdam to the gallery where she drew a huge and gentle sleeping horse in vine charcoal on the gallery’s largest wall to explore the relationship between this animal and masculinity within received Western art history. Simmonds-MacAdam’s research and practice made for a fascinating talk about this powerful trope in the establishment canon. Listening to it on headphones whilst contemplating her enormous beast in its unusual prostrate position made for a delightful, meditative experience. It (as well as all of our other artist talks) can be found on our website under the ‘Discourse’ tab. Colin Lyons’ *A Modern Cult Of Monuments* took a radical approach to printmaking to critique oil-based economies’ generative and destructive/nihilistic power. His installation played skillfully with museological modes of representation, their subtexts, and power dynamics. The colours of his materials- blue copper sulphate, zinc plates, copper plates, the greys and beiges of different stone, red and black wires, dark crumbling blacknesses on a brushed steel plinth- provided an attractive punctured harmony to the exhibition.

Outside of the Regular Program, ace facilitated an important project, The Indigenous Curatorial Residency. We partnered with the Aboriginal Curatorial Collective to realize the ICR, which was funded entirely by The Winnipeg Foundation, and we are deeply grateful to this organization for their support. The goal was to support an Indigenous curator to realize an exhibition within a six-month residency based at aceartinc. Niki Little was selected to be the curator and she created the exhibition, *enendaman | anminigook*, (Oji-Cree that translates into *intention* and *worth*), which investigated the complexities of authorship within contemporary Indigenous art with the intention to re-centre Indigenous women. This project has had a profound impact on ace. Niki has brought our artist-run centre to the attention of emerging contemporary Indigenous artists and curators whom we hope to exhibit, publish, and support for many years to come.

Writing and reading about exhibitions is as important as making them and so we thank you for reading this publication, supporting aceartinc. and the artists we serve. And if you’d like to write for us, get in touch.

hannah_g | Director



SEPTEMBER 4 - OCTOBER 12, 2015

Esther Simmonds-MacAdam

Separates the man from the horse

CRITICAL DISTANCE VOL 21:1

Esther's Horse

A response by

Christine Kirouac

*separates the
man from the
horse, 2015.
Charcoal, wall.*

All photos by
Karen Asher.

As much as Esther's horse embodies theoretical constructions connected to power, history and gender, it is equally an experience with the subject, material and manner in which it is rendered. MacAdam's exhibition is brave not only in her willingness to pose her horse in a position rarely allowed an audience, but also in her consent to reveal her own vulnerability as an artist. In this she sets up a dynamic where the viewer and the work have nowhere to hide, and it is this lack of a barrier between person and piece that is enticing and even a little dangerous.

The wall is lit by gallery spots, but I am searching for the light within the modeling that describes the details or weight of this horse. If light is what defines form, it is uncertain where Esther's horse is acquiring hers. The flatness and lack of varying values of the image suggests the artist revealed this giant fossil from within the gallery wall through some sort of rough mining process, as opposed to an in depth investigation of surface quality, texture, and muscles via charcoal.

MacAdam's challenges lie in the very foundations of drawing itself: scale, perspective, rendering, value, and the understanding of negative/positive space. Each decision is laid bare. Her horse lies pushed into the far corner, the



Installation view.

head and chest at eye level; the drastically foreshortened anatomy creating an unexpectedly compact shape that dissolves back into white space. The drawing's dramatic scale causes the image to grow abstract. Viewed closely, MacAdam's marks—which have the mysterious quality of being made by an object rather than a drawing implement—break apart into a relief of scars and edge shifts reminiscent of rock faces. The marks made by MacAdam's fragile vine charcoal make the form feel chiseled or excavated from the wall. The installation appears to be a series of territories, a landscape, as well as an animal.

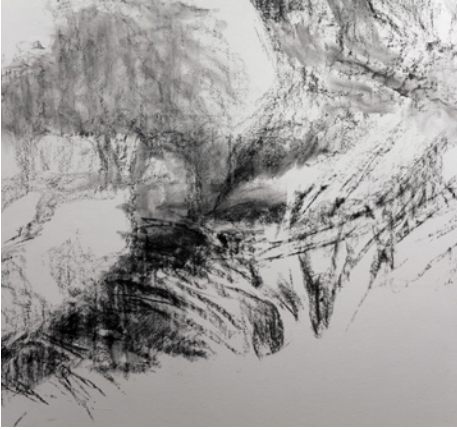
One is encountering the qualities of sculpture as much as, if not more than, a representational drawing. Without anchors or contours to the shapes and lines, there is a solidity that suggests bulk through scratch marks echoing planes much like Degas' exquisite bronze horse, which I frequently visit at the Palace of the Legion of Honor in San Francisco. At only 12 inches high, *Horse Trotting* (1885) is frozen in full physicality, the available light gently affirming each sinewy muscle and tendon as a small shift in plane. Degas considered his small bronze horses as "sketches or drawings" rather than sculptures, and are



far different from many of the representations of masculinity and equestrian culture within historical portraiture and traditional public sculptures that MacAdam cites when discussing her work.

One of MacAdam's previous artworks, *was it me?* (2012), is a tiny, brittle and ultimately gorgeous horse fashioned out of tin foil. Its front legs are elegantly drawn up towards its body, its back legs stretched out. There is a beautiful relationship between the construction of tortured foil—scrunched and twisted—and the sculptural qualities of her drawing. Although the two pieces differ greatly in scale, their relationship is evident and powerful. My secret wish would be to see MacAdam use this petite sculpture as the source of her next wall drawing.

For his famous paintings of horses, the great 17th Century British painter, George Stubbs, employed an intense observational practice of his equine subject's anatomy using a ready supply of cadavers from a nearby tannery. He suspended these horses in various positions from hooks in the roof, then carefully 'peeled' the creatures, removing layers of skin then muscles until only



their skeletons remained. At each stage he meticulously recorded his dissections from a range of different angles. Albeit extreme, Stubbs' process served him well, ultimately enabling him to express in oil what lay behind the 'effortlessness' of a horse's physicality. In contrast, there is something sad and unsettling about Esther's prostrate horse whose speed and movement has also perished. She has intentionally hobbled her horse. Horses often kneel to rest or sleep, their legs folded beneath them or to the side (actually appearing genteel or gracious); they rarely lie down if they are healthy. Many animals instinctively find a quiet place to privately draw their last breath, and the far corner in which Esther lays her horse seems to discourage prying eyes. However, its scale still dominates our visual landscape and there is little opportunity to escape for either the subject or the viewer. Her theoretical references are water tight, and we can all agree that history has loaded her horse with the burden of many layers of theory regarding European and North American colonization, gender politics, historical representations of equestrian culture, fantasy and mysticism—it is no wonder it wants to lie down. MacAdam insists her horse is "sleeping" and this supports her intention to unpack its heavy conceptual saddlebags, so to speak, but it could also be perceived as dead for the same reasons.

This drawing/installation was paradoxically inspired by MacAdam's lack of contact with horses and by an incident that involved her being close to them. Her drawing decisions reveal her own experiences and trepidations as much as the contradictions within the long history informing the symbolism of the horse. And personal experience is an unshakable influence when encountering art. My own mother grew up with horses in rural New Brunswick—one was named May (for her month of birth) and the other June (May's male colt born in his month). Their purpose was as practical as their names but they were loved, valued and cared for. June would wait spiritedly each day at the farm gate for my mother and her siblings to return from school. One day, while gallivanting in the back field, June stepped on a rusty nail and contracted lockjaw. He had to be put down, a devastating event for the family. It is these sentimental memories and stories that accompanied me into the gallery as opposed to colonial intimidation and patriarchal awe.

MacAdam's theoretical support system around meanings of the horse are tangibly present, but what intrigues me is her willingness to reveal vulnerabilities within herself and her practice. The questions I ask myself when formulating projects are often ones I am not always convinced I want the answers to, as they may expose unresolved problems. "Do my ideas live up to the physical work



presented?" "Does the physical manifestation support the weight of theoretical interpretations?" Often these are questions an artist is afraid to answer for fear of facing the profundity of failing to marry medium, form and message. The exceptional role of Artist-Run Centres dedicated to emerging practices (like [aceartinc.](#)) is to provide time and opportunity for artists to play out this daunting process to whatever end. In this case we are witness to the artist's struggle to "gentle" her great beast, using only the most frail of dry media evidenced by the crumbled charcoal twigs on the floor along the length of the animal's torso. Vine charcoal is very delicate, breaking under the mildest pressure, even on paper let alone against rough drywall, but perhaps it is a premeditated burden of evidence that the artist leaves on the floor for us to consider or witness or disregard.



Originally from Winnipeg, CHRISTINE KIROUAC is back from a seven-year stint in the United States as an exhibitor, professor, and serving as art fair director/curator. Her projects have shown in Europe, the US, Canada, Middle East, Asia and span a wide range of media supported by numerous grants. Kirouac explores the “performance” of belonging using personal revelation and social observation.



OCTOBER 23 - DECEMBER 1, 2015

Andrea Roberts

The yolk of menial light

CRITICAL DISTANCE VOL 21:2

On Facing

A response by

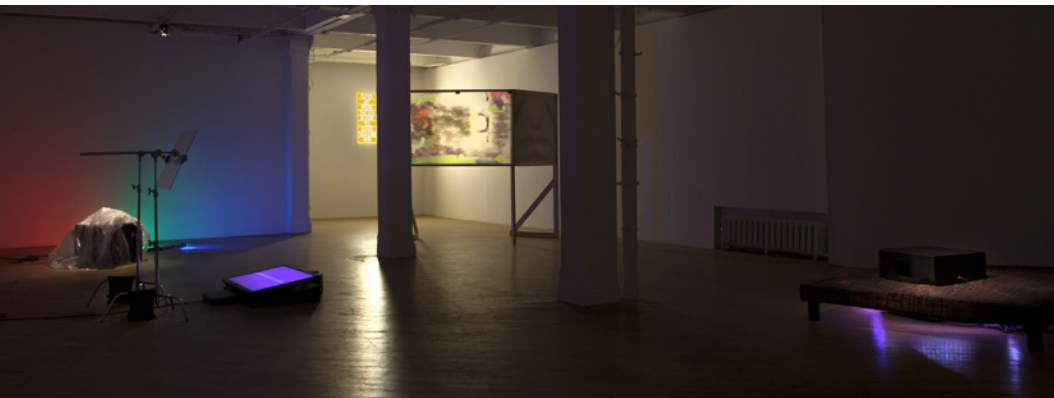
Cam Scott

*You can _____
your life (3MDR),
Subwoofers, carpet,
wood, sine waves,
trouble lights,
plastic.*

All photos by
Karen Asher.

A low thrum crescendos at the peak of the stairwell to the gallery. Inside, one hesitates before (stumbles upon) Andrea Roberts' motley sculpture: so many decommissioned satellites orbiting a cancelled appearance. In a corner a subwoofer sinks below a grotesquely carpeted stage, pulsing at intervals; its counterpart is placed diametrically and draped in plastic. A translucent screen, resembling a heat-map of indiscernible reference, makes a diptych with a half-portrait of a stormy face. Perpendicular to this, comically gnomonic overtures of apology scroll backwards across a television screen in eye-achingly saturated colour, reflected in a glass pane for legibility, if not sense.

In spite of the sparseness of the presentation, one's movement feels inhibited at every turn. Bare wood and exposed clamps suggest both work-in-progress and abandonment. An illumined sign in the far corner of the room declaims: "SUFFER ANY WRONG THAT CAN BE DONE YOU RATHER THAN COME HERE," a mantra concerning the fictional court case of Jarndyce and Jarndyce, from Charles Dickens' *Bleak House*.¹ To be indecently treated, one gathers, is nonetheless better than to be improperly judged. Facing and effacement are key themes here; the necessary risk of appearing before another, as an other, by oneself.



The sound portion of the installation, *You can _____ your life (3MDR)* (Subwoofers, carpet, wood, sine waves, trouble lights, plastic. 2015) pulsating symmetrically, is named and conceived in reference to Francine Shapiro’s Eye Movement Desensitization Reprocessing (EMDR) therapy, an experimental technique based upon the observation that traumatic memories may be ameliorated by distracting stimuli, such as light or bilateral sound. And as sound eludes any static conception of sculpture, Roberts’ installation, like Shapiro’s therapeutics, confronts onlookers as an organization of both experiential and physical material. Perhaps, to start, it is this sensitized threshold between past experience and present stimulus, pathology and process, where one may situate the face, refracting gaze.

Roberts’ sculptures utilize the radically (dis-)placed gaze, the feeling of being-seen-seeing. This transpires in the staging of a quotidian grotesque—a glimpse of the cord tailing a speaker, a smear blending floral carpet—encouraging a paranoid feeling that the work is never in front of you, but at once always behind and around you, sounding, glaring, glowing: the glower of a gaze without a face.

USES OF SUFFERING

“Suffer any wrong that can be done you rather than come here.” (*Absorption Costing*; LED Lightbox, vinyl. 2015) This performatively vexing signpost draws one forward only to ward away. But where in this exhibition is ‘here’? This is the sort of cautionary advice dispensed by Dantean shades, who say to the interloper, in essence, *change your life*. In Roberts’ version, backlit by menial light, the exhortation appears as both a curse and call to consciousness.

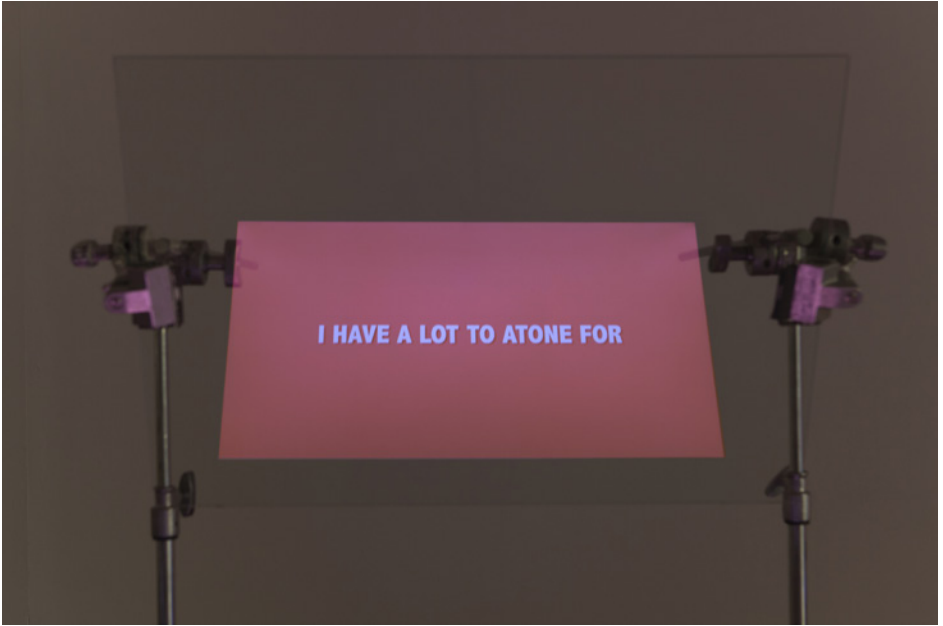
Installation view.

facing page: *You can _____ your life (3MDR)*, Subwoofers, carpet, wood, sine waves, trouble lights, plastic.



Philosopher Catherine Malabou traces the concept of neuroplasticity, the capacity of the brain to alter its structure, after injury or habit, by cortical remapping. Malabou is chiefly concerned with the negative implications of plasticity as it bears not only on repair, but on induced loss of identity. In the case of brain injury, for example, one is faced with “the plasticity of the wound through which the permanent dislocation of one identity forms another identity ... Such patients prove that destruction is a form that forms, that destruction might indeed constitute a form of psychic life.”²

Disasters of subjectivity are also acute in certain visual agnosias. Prosopagnosia, for instance, is the inability to recognize faces, including one’s own. Often the afflicted is able to recognize their photographic likeness but not their reflection. For these wounded, everything remains in place, perfectly responsive, except for the sighted centrepiece, themselves. “*All suffering is formative of the identity that endures it,*” Malabou asserts,³ a premise foreshadowed by Emmanuel Levinas, for whom suffering is pre-subjective, blotting consciousness, rather than an experience one has for, or as, oneself. Suffering, says Levinas, is useless, but where there is suffering, there is an opening toward the other who promises remediation.⁴



Taop and right: *Eye Dialect* (details), LED TV, C-stands, sandbags, glass, speakers.

Left: *Absorption Costing*, LED Lightbox, vinyl.

May we say that the face is originally affected? Malabou follows Deleuze, suggesting that the face, “as it coincides with the affect, becomes a pure quality or pure intensity,” amplified with the cinematic technique of the close-up.⁵ Emotional recognition tests exploit and reduce this intensity and Roberts’ work draws extensively upon these profiles, one of which, enlarged and partialized, glares from a wooden frame (*Cutting up Touches*; Ink on acetate, coroplast, vinyl, clips, wood. 2015). The image is a close-up of a tight-lipped mouth; the eyes are omitted from this panel only to be interpolated everywhere instead. Further, the iconicity of the test-face impels wonder, but it is no one’s face in particular. It is a topological map of a highly contagious emotion.

IMAGE FIXATION

‘Facework’ is a key component of presentation, where ‘face’ is a synecdoche of presentation more generally, an apparition to be groomed and guarded. According to sociologist Erving Goffman, presentation denotes all that activity which “occurs during a period marked by his [sic] continuous presence before a particular set of observers.”⁶ Here too one is at the mercy of the other who may redeem or damn an image by simply looking.

This crucially informs the Image Repair Theory of William Benoit, and its emphasis on the genre of *apologia*. “When faced with a threat to our image, we rarely ignore it, because our face, image, or reputation is a valuable commodity. We not only desire a healthy image of ourselves but want others to think favorably of us as well,” Benoit writes, understating the extent to which these are the same thing.⁷ This brings us to the text of Roberts’ teleprompter centrepiece, *Eye Dialect* (LED TV, C-stands, sandbags, glass, speakers. 2015) sourced from public apologies of various public figures (Tiger Woods, Reese Witherspoon, CEOs of Goldman Sachs, and British Petroleum). These scripts of cynical contrition, scrolling backwards and reflected on a pane of glass as though to work some restorative magic, were recited in the artist’s voice, then errorfully recorded by transcription software, rendering a failure of recognition, of shared reference, of climactic moment. Forgiveness is expedient here, qualitatively different from and unrelated to mercy. “Suffer any wrong that can be done you,” the abject apology implicitly declaims. This anguish is nothing like the primary expression of suffering that Levinas denotes by ‘face’: this suffering is far from useless, in fact, it has been monetized.



THE NON-FACE

The *non-face* affixes nothing: it refuses fascination, though its gaze gapes before us like a frame. If Levinas reminds us that being is primarily tied to suffering, he nonetheless allows for assistance in the inter-face. And Malabou, whilst emphasizing creativity and repair, acknowledges the chance that the very category of 'face' may be withheld a subject. Detraction-abstraction informs the colour-blotted vista of *Cutting Up Touches*, which superimposes two (non-) faces in different colour registers, RGB (red-green-blue) and CMYK (cyan-magenta-yellow-black), associated with web- and print-based media respectively. The combination of these different optics, additive and subtractive, aptly, abstractly, represents the uncanny feeling of glimpsing oneself as another, from without. One could describe Roberts' sculpture as an aesthetic frame by which to glimpse this destitution. Philosopher Peter Sloterdijk sketches the tendency, albeit for purposes of lapsarian elegy:

Where modern art does still depict faces, it keeps a figurative record of a constant interfacial catastrophe ... it shows faces that are no longer

Cutting Up Touches, Ink on acetate, coroplast, vinyl, clips, wood.

modeled within correspondences between intimate spheres ... Detraction and abstraction have won out over protraction as facioplasmic morphological forces It is no coincidence that the most distinctive new place in the innovated medial world is the interface, which no longer refers to the sphere of encounter between faces, but rather the contact point between the face and the non-face, or between two non-faces.⁸

What might it mean to suggest that the face today is threatened as a *category*? One may note a technologically vitiated abjection of the face, biometrically secured by techniques of long-distance surveillance and short-range profiling. Glaringly, Sloterdijk writes as though the interface had never malfunctioned before the advent of certain new media, while anybody with a politics, anybody with a history, knows of innumerable cases of prejudice and stigmatization where the face-to-face has failed and where evil has asserted itself in the guise of illegibility. Without pictorial platitudes, however, Roberts' work approaches the face as one must any sacred object, by allusion: as a multi-media production, subject to dis-closure, or an opening: as both a window and a wound.

CAM SCOTT is an itinerant poet, essayist, and improvising non-musician from Winnipeg, Canada, Treaty One Territory.

NOTES

- 1 Charles Dickens. *Bleak House*. (London and New York: Penguin Books, 1996), 15
- 2 Catherine Malabou, trans. Steven Miller. *The New Wounded: From Neurosis to Brain Damage*. (New York: Fordham University Press, 2012), 18
- 3 *Ibid*
- 4 Emmanuel Levinas, trans. Michael B. Smith and Barbara Harshav. *Entre Nous: Thinking-of-the-other*. (London and New York: Continuum, 1998), 78
- 5 Catherine Malabou and Adrian Johnston. *Self and Emotional Life: Philosophy, Psychoanalysis, and Neuroscience*. (New York: Columbia University Press, 2013), 46
- 6 Erving Goffman, *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life*. (New York: Penguin Books, 1978), 22
- 7 William L. Benoit, *Accounts, Excuses, and Apologies: Image Repair Theory and Research*. (Albany: State University of New York, 2015), ix
- 8 Peter Sloterdijk, trans. Wieland Hoban. *Bubbles: Spheres Volume One: Microspherology*. (Los Angeles: Semiotext(e), 2011), 189



MARCH 4 - APRIL 1, 2016

Colin Lyons

A Modern Cult of Monuments

CRITICAL DISTANCE VOL 21:3

Nostalgia ain't what it used to be

A response by

Alexis Kinloch

Automatic Ruins,
zinc etching plates,
copper sulphate,
galvanized steel;
2011-2013.

All photos by
Karen Asher.

Nostalgia was once considered an illness. The term *mal du pays* (homesickness) was coined in 1688 by a Swiss medical student named Johannes Hofer to describe a “neurological disease of essentially demonic cause”; a blind internal fumbling ignited by the inability to see beyond our tether to the past. The concept has no geographical or temporal boundaries, but rather thrives on being able to float, collecting and recombining meaning from times we have experienced, memories we have altered, and eras and places that we have never belonged to.

The idea of home is most often rooted in place. It belongs to the realm of land, of gathering-space. Memory of land is malleable, moving and changing based on the motivation for recollecting. It makes us long for what we believe we once knew, complicating and overlapping meanings that we never have to necessarily reconcile within ourselves because it presents as a *feeling*. A place can be conjured by the memory of a scent, particular objects, or people sharing their knowledge, and this synesthetic stew can support projections, false memories, and glossed-over concepts of *home*.

Petrolia. CANADA. Our home and Native Land. Through the works in the exhibition *A Modern Cult of Monuments*, Colin Lyons mines amorphous



collective national memory through highly personal childhood perceptions of growing up in a mineral-rich, industrial town in Ontario. The artist's harkening-back to the Arts and Crafts movement remains firmly rooted in the contemporary concept of planned obsolescence, with the many parts of this exhibition acting like a do-it-yourself archive of industrial ruin.

Archive,
photoetching on
paper; 2011-2012.

Facing page:
Installation view.

A shelf of plated flotsam, battery-operated chemical baths, highly polished chunks of concrete and granite: all play on ideas of means of production as means of destruction; what we use to sustain our Northern Hemisphere lifestyle simultaneously ruins that which underpins it. The medium looms heavily here. Lyons works with the historical, conceptual, and material meanings of printmaking, trying not to rest on a tired horizon line, mimicking industry through labourious processes and chemical reactions, standing on the history of method and bending it to act as a mirror for itself.

The very raw works in the exhibition evoke ruins—collected, preserved in a museum, elevated for a sense of history and class. *The Alchemist*¹ employs inefficient batteries created from copper wire, zinc and copper plates, and chemical baths chug away, creating polished lumps of detritus that are placed on a copper shelf throughout the course of the show, echoing the sometimes absurd pieces we elevate in places of cultural and historical worship. The result is a confusion of authenticity. The history created by Lyons over the course of a few weeks questions who creates the archive, and what systems of classification are used to determine value. By treating printmaking as ritual performance

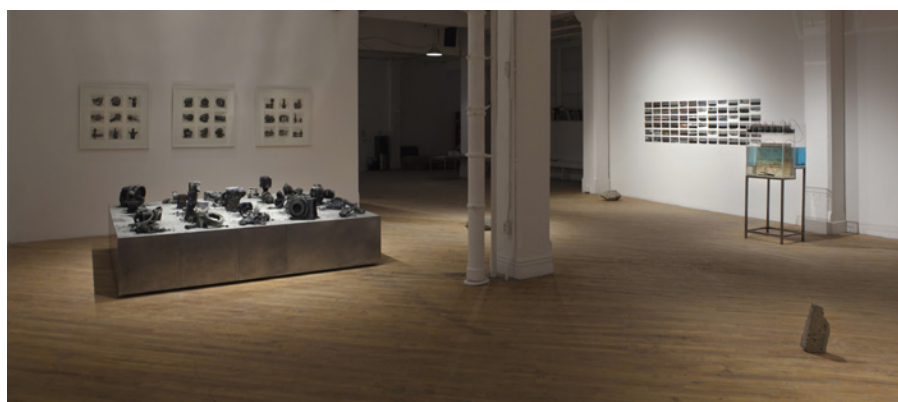


(wash, grind, etch, labour, rinse, repeat), warping meaning in repetition, Lyons highlights the history that certain objects are never allowed to represent within the land because they are removed and preserved.

Lyons *labours* over the work, causing a sense of exhaustion in the audience; not a feeling of empathy but of being overwhelmed. The plinth of *Automatic Ruins* that mirrors mapped-out grid roads and on which dozens of instant-corrosion “artefacts” are laid out², the repetition of tiny, post-apocalyptic landscapes called *Anode – Cathode*³ played out over and over on the wall, the endless neon blue baths of *The Alchemist*, made of batteries

and copper plates in acid, corroding things into and out of creation, and *New Monuments / Old Foundations*⁴ a looped video of the artist polishing a rock to a high gloss smoothness while a freight train chugs along behind... This creation of futile and banal monuments, acting-out a desire for the blue collar while simultaneously lamenting what it has created—this anti-modern modern—is surely the effect of our nostalgia oscillating against the inability to comprehend the overpowering, tipping-point times we live in.

Amongst the overwhelming in-your-face-ness of it all, there are beautiful and subtle moments. In the clear Plexiglas boxes of *The Alchemist* there is a series of copper plates standing on their ends. These printmaking tablets,





soaking in vertical pairs in neon acid, hint at submerged books. The colour of the liquid is unnatural and sickly. The connecting battery wire is an unraveled binding; a horizontal spine carrying weak signals, the “information” sliding down in clumps and sedimenting in a black cloud, like letters fallen off the page; the futility of old media to express our situation today; all our knowledge useless if we choose to ignore every sign and signal; our remembered history incapable of spelling out disaster.

What happens when you want to forget the terrible acts of the past but the landscape bleeds the scars of human damage into our collective disastrous future? What do you do when your homeward gaze looks like a failure of industrial proportions?

A Modern Cult of Monuments nods at our inability to control landscape, and the consequence of our meaning of home slipping from our hands, its shadow growing into a monster. It mocks and laments the short-sightedness of industrial crutches that, like Lyons’ corroding and regenerating chemical baths, are sucking as much life and energy as they produce.

We are a society Janus-faced, our gazes stuck, paying for our fixation on the past, vacillating between a bygone era that we are ever-hypnotized by and a future we want to have hope for (breathing out the airs of ironic detachment and breathing in the breath of unselfconscious hope). We can’t imagine the

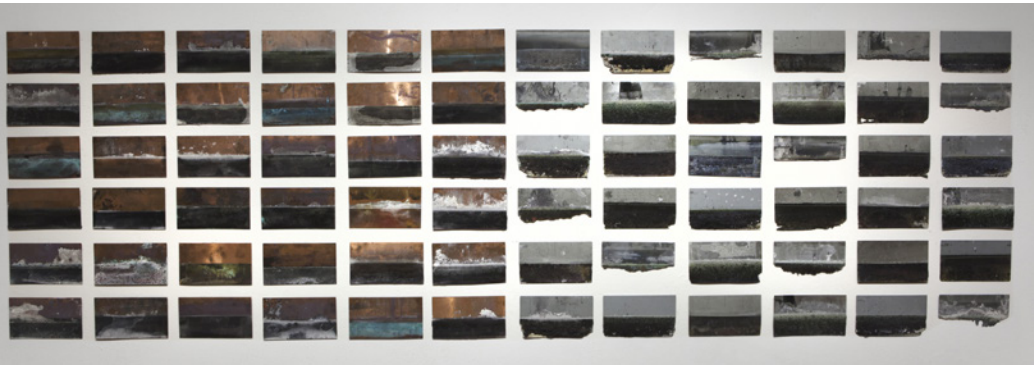
Automatic Ruins,
zinc etching plates,
copper sulphate,
galvanized steel;
2011-2013.

Facing page:
Time Machine
for *Abandoned*
Futures, industrial
artifact, copper,
zinc, steel,
plexiglas, soda ash,
copper sulphate,
wire; 2014.



future so we are tethered to the past, homesick for a time that our collective memory tells us was healthier.

The English version of *mal du pays*, etymologically rooted in the Greek language, suffuses homecoming (*nostos*) and pain (*algia*). Its meanings, much like concepts of land and home, are complex, multifaceted, and constantly shifting. Collapsed ideas of time, space, and place are viewed through the crooked and biased prisms of memory, skewing sentimentality, self-indulgence, nationalism, wistfulness, anxiety, ennui, and desire. In the centuries that have passed since its naming, “homesickness” has become romanticized. Each era has its sense of a real end, and an ability to amend history in a collective memory. When things become out of control, too new and too much to handle, when the anxiety of the

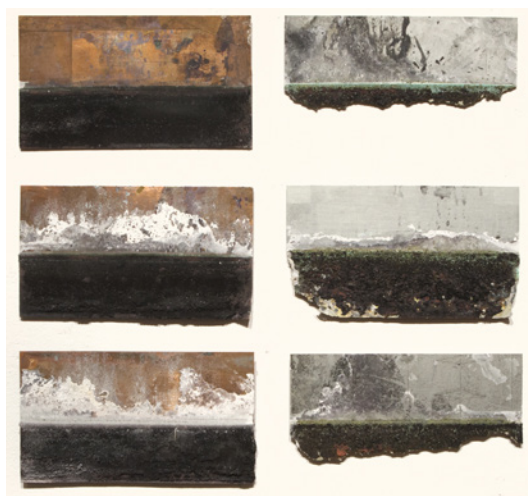


entire population is acknowledged, there is a sense of crisis, and nostalgia has become the balm rather than the symptom.

This exhibition makes me homesick for a time I have never seen, but I'm not sure it's the effect that Lyons hopes for. It exhausts me, turning my vision away from the presented romanticizing that simultaneously gnaws at and licks its own wounds to a time beyond that, where we explicitly and wholeheartedly acknowledge and apologize for the

crises we have caused on this land and continue to be complicit in. As I prepare to send this writing to print, the wildfires destroying Fort McMurray and the surrounding regions rage on, Shoal Lake 40 still has toxic liquid pumping out of their kitchen taps while Winnipeg slurps the clean drinking water out from under them, and the people of Attawapiskat are callously asked "Why don't you just move?" in the face of a sincerely horrifying suicide crisis that is rooted in colonialism.

Mal du pays—literally, *aching for country, sickness of land*—is the most obvious take-away from this exhibition for me, and yet the meaning here begins and ends with autobiography. And truly, nostalgia is inherently rooted in ego. It seems Lyons is trying, making an effort to make a statement about the hamster wheel of capitalism that we are stuck in, but it's just not enough. Work created



Anode - Cathode, zinc and copper etching plates, copper sulphate; 2014-2016.

Below: details



Left: *The Alchemist*, zinc, copper, plexiglas, steel, copper sulphate, cast tin, wire; 2012.



Right: Installation view.

about the fraught and complicated concepts of Canada, land, home, and the monumentalizing of our actions in this place can no longer rest on the laurels of slow-burning romanticized autobiography. What is needed now is constant vigilance to keep out of the fog of nostalgia that has blinded us for so long. In the continual attempt to control the meaning of land, to satisfy phantom limbs of connections we thought we once had and still ache for, we lose subtlety and depth. But then again, I guess sometimes a polished rock is just a polished rock.

ALEXIS KINLOCH is an artist and arts administrator who originally hails from Saskatoon. Beyond focusing on writing and art-making surrounding historical and contemporary visual cultures of science, death, and medicine, Alexis runs a public artist book library called *Also As Well Too* out of her living room.

NOTES

- 1 *The Alchemist*; zinc, copper, plexiglas, steel, copper sulphate, cast tin, wire. 2012.
- 2 *Automatic Ruins*; zinc etching plates, copper sulphate, galvanized steel. 2011-2013.
- 3 *Anode-Cathode*; zinc and copper etching plates, copper sulphate; 2014-2016.
- 4 *New Monuments/Old Foundations*; concrete foundations, levigator, carborundum. 2015. Video: Devon Lindsay.



APRIL 15 - MAY 20, 2016

Karen Asher

The Full Catastrophe

CRITICAL DISTANCE VOL 21:4

Karen Asher: The Full Catastrophe

A response by

Colin Smith

Peach Pit, 2015,
C-Print, 25" x 25"

All photos by
Karen Asher.

"Awkward Crossword" // the galaxy at large // To be loved in the 8th grade
// Later when the bell rings. / The interest is generated // meek in its
t-shirts. But clean / The separation is permanent. // poor folk, possessed
of shadow doubles ... ¹

— Kevin Davies, *Pause Button*, 1992

Karen Asher's second solo exhibition, *The Full Catastrophe*, was up for five weeks at aceartinc., radiating its complicated implications into the gallery air. Twenty-seven white-bordered, white-framed C-Print photographs, all some manner of portrait, all taken between 2014 and 2016, all 25" x 25"—a formal tidiness evoked. But to stand before them in contemplation was to reckon with images that seemed like bourgeois portraiture fused with funhouse mirror. What emerged?

Feeling conflicted. Happily and disturbingly so.

What is "the full catastrophe" anyway? Asher notes first coming across this plangent phrase in Jon Kabat-Zinn's 1990 book *Full Catastrophe Living*, which cites its use in the 1964 film *Zorba the Greek*. Basically, it means everything of import that can happen to a person.²

What is Karen Asher up to here? Well, observing the human body at home, mostly. Of this show's twenty-seven images (most in sequences), all but three are set indoors. Twelve of them are set in the arena of bed. A deep interiority and intimacy is happening. A lot of vulnerable *reclining*—beyond the bedded subjects, there are others in bathtubs and on couches. There's a fair bit of casually presented nudity and a good deal of underwear.

There's a lot of hugging and holding going on. Some of which is hilariously ungainly—the men in *Purple Martin* (2014) and *Tight Grip* (2014) almost essay the hug as Heimlich manoeuvre. Other photos present the hug as amorphous animal: difficult to figure out how many bodies are engaged, because they fuse into one another—the people in *Wallpaper* (2016) and *Arms* (2015) demonstrate this. Faces are often turned away from the camera, are covered by hair, have closed eyes, or are scrupulously neutral in expression (if not literally masked). It's a combination of intimate display with indifferent affect that can unsettle. *What are these people thinking, what are they feeling? Are they asleep? Are they ill?* An existential unease abounds.



Not monotonously so, though. As the body is at home in possible distress, it's at play as well. Subjects are caught in laughter as they fall backward out of bed. Some seem in happy repose. Some are simply getting things done—toting a blanket on one's head; helping dye a friend's hair.

Installation view.

The bodies of Asher's subjects are, by the whimsical tyrannies of commercial fashion, "non-standard". Of numerous sizes and with non-conformist hair. A face bears a port-wine birthmark or pimple bouquets. A viewer had best get over it. *All bodies are normal.*



Left to right:
Blanket, 2015,
C-Print, 25" x 25"

Pantyhose, 2015,
C-Print, 25" x 25"

Arms, 2015, C-Print,
25" x 25"

Masks, 2015, C-Print,
25" x 25"

While I'm carping about fashion, I'll add that the class of these bodies might well be "non-affluent". We see rips in some shirts, a black sweater enhanced with white hair (feline? canine? human? all?), an overall schlumpy style in duds that hollers "thrift store" to me. In conjunction with their possessions, which seem second-hand, simple, or makeshift, big money is not implied here. Viewers are hereby encouraged to burn their lifestyle magazines. *Poor folks have a right to exist.*

Let's consider sex.

The ambiguous *Balling* (2014) contains two figures who might be men. We see the back of one's head; the other is hair attached to an obscured face. The topward, clothed body is comically and awkwardly humped over the bottom one. A hand floats phantasmally. The composition begs and frustrates the question: What exactly is going on here?

Dog Days (2016) is more explicit, though no more explanatory. Here are two facedown, ambiguous-looking persons (they might be women). Only the forward-most face can be seen. They appear to be having rear-entry sex while sprawled on an enormous plush toy of a dog. Good grief, a livid joke!

Simulated or not, sex in photos can provoke extreme conflict for a viewer. One can get erotically aroused or suffer a baneful embarrassment running along the lines of *O my god, is this what I look like when I'm doing it?* Worse, one can suffer both reactions.

How comfortable are we with our animality?

It's important to know that Asher shoots on film, rather than digitally. This softens and thickens the lines and colours of objects and bodies in the photos while underscoring the harshness of their scenarios. A vice of aesthetic tension thereby tightened.

Celluloid is more skin-like.

Is Asher's work camp? Somewhat. Maybe not toting a platinum membership card, but making a frequent nuisance of itself inside camp's tent flap. (Her sincerity runs interference.)



Right: *Chairs*, 2015,
C-Print, 25" x 25"



There is consistent kitsch. Banal floral patterns in many shots; a ludicrously large piggy bank; an Opus T. Penguin plush toy. Most fabulously, the above-bed ornaments we see in both *Wolfman* (2014) and *Blue Boy* (2014). On the right is an elegant crucifix; to its left, a tacky clockstyle lamp featuring the Hindu deity Ganesha. The contrast is alarming and irreverent.



Top: *Queen*, 2015, C-Print, 25" x 25"

Left: *Wallpaper*, 2016, C-Print, 25" x 25"

Right: *Painting*, 2014, C-Print, 25" x 25"

Asher's gnomonic names for her photos abet camp affect. Often they're simply object and body-part names. This raises both a sexual and commodity fetishism that can remind us how owned we may be by our culture and our bodies.

There's fair affinity between Karen Asher's work and that of the late Diane Arbus. Both engage in the noble task of normalizing or de-demonizing the "freakish." Both use surrealistic strategies in their mise en scènes. Both have a bit of a thing about twins and mimicry.

They're not identical, though. Beyond the obviousness of Arbus's rigorous adherence to shooting in black and white and Asher's devotion to working in colour, they have tonal differences. Arbus is harsher, more aggressive, confrontational. Asher, while thoroughly bent and weird, is more playful, more humane.



I find it hard to imagine Arbus letting loose with a portrait as gleefully triumphant as Asher's *Queen* (2015).

Ultimately, Photography is subversive not when it frightens, repels, or even stigmatizes, but when it is pensive, when it thinks.³

—Roland Barthes, *Camera Lucida*, 1981

Maybe the most emblematic image of this exhibition is *Crying Baby* (2014). Another bed scene. A blond(e), blue-eyed toddler (gender indeterminate; though possibly naked) is getting a massive holler-on while perched partly on top of a supine male adult. This implied parent is clothed, and seems to be tenderly bracing the child with his right hand. His one visible eye is barely open and has a dopey mien about it, as though he's been caught in a flicker of consciousness before going under again. Clamped over his nose is a breathing mask, the type used to aid people with sleep apnea. Of course he also looks like he could be dying.

A very moving cognitive dissonance here. One is pinned between laughter and tears, being creeped out or feeling vitalized (or maybe both).

Here is *The Full Catastrophe* in a pulverized, metaphorical nugget. The baseline condition of existence as a checked kind of mortification or embarrassment

Left to right:
Dye Job, 2015,
C-Print, 25" x 25"

Bathtub, 2015,
C-Print, 25" x 25"

Right: *Girls On Couch*,
2014, C-Print, 25"
x 25"

Balling, 2014, C-Print,
25" x 25"



(we are not in control of our lives—political economy is—eventually we lose everything). What's worse, lifelong pain or Robed Death putting its filthy mitts across your face?

Yeesh—yowza—yuck.

All photos are memento mori. To take a photograph is to participate in another person's (or thing's) mortality, vulnerability, mutability. Precisely by slicing out this moment and freezing it, all photographs testify to time's relentless melt.⁴

—Susan Sontag, *On Photography*, 1977

COLIN SMITH is mostly a poet. Lives in Winnipeg, Treaty 1 Territory. Latest book is *Multiple Bippies* (CUE Books, 2014). He thanks hannah_g for helping keep callow stupidities out of this text, and Karen Asher for answering questions.

NOTES

- 1 Davies, *Pause Button* (Vancouver: Tsunami Editions, 1992): 65.
- 2 Culled and paraphrased from Asher's "Artist Statement" included as part of her application to aceartinc. for this exhibition.
- 3 Barthes, Camera Lucida: *Reflections on Photography*, trans. Richard Howard (New York: Hill and Wang, 1981): 38.
- 4 Sontag, *On Photography* (New York: Picador, 1990 [originally published 1977 by Farrar, Straus and Giroux]): 15.



JUNE 3 - JULY 8, 2016

Alexis Dirks

Botched Fabrications On The Foggy Landscape

CRITICAL DISTANCE VOL 21:5

1,030 Hours Per Year

A response by
Collin Zipp

*Billion Year Old
Rock and Wooden
Snakes (detail),
2016. Digital print,
wooden snakes,
plastic fishing
buoys, rock ore,
petrified wood.*

All photos by
Karen Asher unless
otherwise noted.

You take a deep breath and open your eyes.

It's 3 am and you're sitting in your small hotel room looking at the light of the bright moon reflecting on the old stained wallpaper. Or maybe it's 3 pm and what you're looking at is the afternoon sun. Or maybe it's both. You've been in Yellowknife for some time now, long enough to lose track of so many things—seemingly or once important things. How long have you been there, why are you there, what is day and what is night? Your experience of time has been transformed into something endless and murky. On top of this you can no longer separate truth from fiction or the real from the fabricated. A by-product of experiencing 24-7 daylight? Ah, Yellowknife—the land of the midnight sun, with glorious skies and summer light that just won't quit. A total of 1,030 hours per year. Two months of intense, constant daylight. June and July. They never seem to end.

As time moves or stands still—you can't be sure—things seem to materialize in front of you. Objects and images fill the room you sit in. Are these things really there? Disorientation, anxiety, and distress—this is your constant state. You look for a way out. A way to explain what is happening.

You take a deep breath and close your eyes.



Installation view.

You see a small, winding creek form before you. It's not too wide or too deep. You move further towards it. Wood, snakes, and bedrock lie waiting to be uncovered by your eye. The wood is petrified, the snakes are not real but wooden, and the bedrock lies in perfect cylinder cut-outs. *Billion Year Old Rock and Wooden Snakes*. Things are not what they seem—they are set like, definitely fabricated. You see that the creek is in fact an out stretched arm that has been deconstructed and adhered to the floor. The lines of the image resemble the ripples and echoes of small bouncing waves. Behind this floor

piece a picture stands out and grabs your attention. You move closer, being careful to not step on the wooden snakes. You stare at *Sculpture in a Granite Field*. You scan the image for the sculpture but only see a rocky terrain covered with lichen and loose stones. Are these the sculptures you are to look at? Or are they camouflaged—hiding in plain sight? Things are not what seem.

You move forward.

You see two women standing facing the wall. The first people you've seen in some time. *White Lady Slippers and the Changing of Seasons*. They stand still, silent. You can't make out their faces. They don't have faces. They look like they're right out of the 1970's. Is it the 70's? You were born in the 70's. That was close to 40 years ago. Where has the time gone? It feels like yesterday. You move around them to try to get a better look—but suddenly they are gone. Were they even there? You see no women—only pillars of what looks like rocks. Upon closer inspection they are only representations of rocks—simulations of rock. Fabricated rock. Faux rock spray paint, marble patterned kitchen laminate, carved and detailed plaster of paris, Polyfilla covered Styrofoam. You attempt to make connections between the authentic and the manufactured, balancing your

Black Storm
Formica and Poets
Celebrating Grottoes, 2016. Shell, formica on MDF, digital prints, found images, graphite on construction paper, mirrored 'Mexican Lace' agate, acrylic paint, digital prints on silk crepe de chine.





memories and current experience all the while. In front of you the monoliths stand silent. Are they symbols for time collapsing on itself? A celebration of something monumental? You look to decipher what is real and what is a replica.

Turn around.

Black Storm Formica and Poets Celebrating Grottoes. Suddenly it is night. You see darkness and feel the weight of the world lifted from your tense, tired shoulders. On second glance it is a black painted wall. The weight of the non-stop light returns. You move towards the wall cautiously seeing a pile of brush in front of you that resembles steps. Steps that lead towards a way out? You approach them, realizing they go nowhere. Again, you're trapped—stuck inside a place where things are not what they seem—and imitation and deception runs rampant. You move around the darkness looking for an exit only to encounter more rock. Or again what you think is rock. Part of the rock before you catches your eye—it looks different. It's not rock, it's fabric. A smooth, light fabric. A

Installation view.

Facing page:
Left: *Chevron Patterns and a Fossil on a Pegboard (detail)*, 2016. Pegboard, acrylic paint, fossilized minnow, found images, prairie grass, paracord, gold leaf, digital images, MDF. Photo: Alexis Dirks.

Right: *Illustrated Eggs on Mixed Grasses*, 2016. Digital C-print. Photo: Alexis Dirks.





contrast to the heavy object it shares a pattern with. Below you see a pair of hands reaching out. Are they looking for help? Are they pulling you in? Do they want something? As you stare at them quietly you realize they don't want or need anything from you.

You back away slowly and turn.

From across the room you see a blinding wall. *Two Months of Studio Light* burn a pattern into your eyes. Staring at the light—any light—this long will do that. The history of the sun's light has created images that will not go away. A geometrical grid remains, one created by constant and unforgiving light. Is it a pattern burnt into your eyes? Or is it 60 sheets of sun-faded construction paper. Similar to the layers found in ancient bedrock—these sun burnt patterns speak to a measurement of time and how slowly yet persistently it continues to move.

You look around. You are in a landscape filled with rock—or replications of rock—and images from another time. *Botched Fabrications On The Foggy Landscape*. A place where time and memory both collide and intersect. Again you close your eyes, trying to block out some of the constant light. Even a little would help.

White Lady Slippers and the Changing of the Seasons, 2016. 3 formica laminated MDF plinths, a collection of Roloff Beny photography books, quartz, digital prints, faux granite spray paint on MDF, found images, wall papered MDF box, acrylic paint, digital prints on silk crepe de chine, casters.



White Lady Slippers and the Changing of the Seasons, 2016. 3 formica laminated MDF plinths, a collection of Roloff Beny photography books, quartz, digital prints, faux granite spray paint on MDF, found images, wall papered MDF box, acrylic paint, digital prints on silk crepe de chine, casters.

passing of time? Yes. Can you understand such a passing a time? Probably not. Maybe it's better to think of the latter as a simulated environment that sits upon the evidence of time's slow, steadfast movement, layer upon layer upon layer. But here, in a place where the sun is in the sky for two months straight, a place where 3 AM is 3 PM... You close your eyes once again, trying to block out the light.

COLLIN ZIPP is a multidisciplinary artist who works with video, photography, sculpture, painting and installation. Zipp has exhibited his work widely both nationally and internationally in solo and group exhibitions and screenings. He is currently Director of PLATFORM centre for photographic + digital arts.

You collect your thoughts, and focus on the images and objects before you. Looking for meaning and answers. You see them as symbols of time passing. This particular passing of time, however, is not a constant or immediate one, instead it is one that is almost immeasurable. It is as difficult to conceive as the depths of deep space and its distance—it is a passing of time that is made up or imagined in a different way to the time not measured in days, months or years but in layers and layers of rock and sediment deposited over billions of years. You see these things as a framework for representing this passage.

You pause.

Can you measure such a large



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 women in the centre

JANUARY 8 – FEBRUARY 24, 2016

Enendaman | Anminigook

Curated by Niki Little

INDIGENOUS CURATORIAL RESIDENCY EXHIBITION

Wendy Red Star
Amy Malbeuf
Kenneth Lavallee
Jeneen Frei Njootlie

Clockwise
from top left:
Wendy Red Star,
Hot Dance, 2015,
cotton, satin,
metallic fringe,
bells.

Amy Malbeuf, *The
Length of Grief*,
2015, video, audio,
and the artist's hair
on buckskin.

Kenneth Lavallee,
*Peacock, Ram,
Hunter*, 2016,
plywood, shoe
polish.

Jeneen Frei Njootli,
Melanosite, 2015,
performance and
residue.

Downtown Winnipeg.

Winter.

A Cree woman fleshes a deer hide on her apartment balcony.

She says “My neighbours probably thought I was crazy.”

This small narrative was shared with me while making moccasins with youth in the North End area of Winnipeg, MB by wild iskew, Gloria Beckman. Gloria is wild, her spirit leads untouched. She lives with land based knowledge guiding her. Her actions have purpose, whether it is sharing cultural skills, wisdoms, or good humour. I began to think about the hide I was working with and the three generations making and spending time together. I thought about the traditional process of fleshing, tanning, and preparing that hide. It was at that moment the hide came to represent community, sacrifice, ceremony and the interdependence of Nature and its inhabitants; and in contrast how contemporarily the value, ceremony, and spirit of the animal had lost its presence within the production of the hide and the sense of community and legacy of the Teachings were no longer connected. The vision of Gloria fleshing a hide by herself on her apartment balcony is so politically charged for me. It is an

act of Indigenous Feminism. Thinking about the significance of this act, I started to consider my own cultural consumerism and that of those who I consider to be Knowledge Keepers and their resolution to practice Traditional knowledge within a contemporary urban landscape. *enendaman* | *anminigook* came from this small story and the work of contemporary Indigenous artists thinking about their process while utilizing cultural skills as motivated actions that honour the time and the politics Indigenous women gift them with.

enendaman | *anminigook* are Oji-Cree words, the language of my kookum Lucy Little. They translate into English as *intention* and *worth*. In attempting to create a project that recentres Indigenous women, I thought it would be best to think about my lineage and to have my kookum's language be at the heart. She passed when I was quite young but I still feel her connection. Megwetch to my parents and Elders Mordo and Alice Flett for the words that carry this idea.

enendaman | *anminigook* is an exhibition that investigates the complexities of authorship within contemporary Indigenous art. The exhibition features new works from: Wendy Red Star (PO), Amy Malbeuf (AB), Kenneth Lavallee (MB), and Jeneen Frei Njootli (BC) and spans cultural practices such as regalia, caribou hair tufting, mark making, and Ceremony, utilizing the mediums of sculpture, painting, video, and performance. Together the works act upon and expose a unique authorship/voice inspired by Indigenous matriarchy that is grounded in the artists' personal experience. The exhibition highlights elements of Indigenous social, political, Ceremonial, and physical territories that were passed on by Indigenous females. These territories are acknowledged by each artist as Indigenous knowledge bases that are composed of history, blood memory, stories, and matriarchy that transcend time. The authorship becomes shared: the artist remains central in the work but there is a sense of the continuum of Indigenous knowledge that celebrates recentring Indigenous women through actions of generative processes and resistance.

The exhibition is conceptually organized utilizing the Medicine Wheel as I have been gifted/taught. Each artist connects to a conceptual theory found in each of the four cardinal directions and their corresponding life stage.

enendaman | *anminigook* begins in the East.



Left: Wendy Red Star, *Hot Dance*, 2015, cotton, satin, metallic fringe, bells.

Right: Amy Malbeuf, *The Length of Grief*, 2015, video, audio, and the artist's hair on buckskin.

Kenneth Lavallee, *Peacock, Ram, Hunter*, 2016, plywood, shoe polish.

Jeneen Frei Njootli, *Melanosite*, 2015, performance and residue.



EAST
Hot Dance
 by Wendy Red Star
Adolescence

Adolescence is represented in the East quadrant of the Medicine Wheel. It is the direction that sun rises, bringing life in the spring and the next generation/birth. *Hot Dance* by Wendy Red Star is the first work in the show. It is a dress made for a young girl, specifically the artist's daughter. The piece is a confident shade of blue embellished with gold fringe and sewn together in a Crow-style silhouette. *Hot Dance* is rooted in foundations of Crow-style regalia passed down to Red Star from generations before her yet the process is subverted and a new familial-authorship is celebrated. There is an implied collaboration between mother/daughter, daughter/mother, artist/daughter, daughter/artist, Red Star/Crow Territory, and Crow Territory/Red Star resulting in a personalized contextualization of cultural politics. It is not merely a new rendering of a traditional design rather a new composition reverberating her direct maturation with her daughter and the landscape she comes from. Red Star utilizes colour to speak to

this continuity of spirit. The blue and gold in *Hot Dance* appears as if the colours were plucked from the sky in Apsáalooke Crow territory. The gold fringe moves and expands beyond the wearer and in this instance, Red Star's daughter. It is a strong statement. A young Indigenous girl moving through the world demanding and creating space for herself and that has been passed down by her mother, and echoes the landscape of her ancestry.

SOUTH

The Length of Grief

by Amy Malbeuf

Youth

In the southern direction of the Medicine Wheel life begins to thrive just as it does in summer. Youth reside here transitioning from child to adult. New struggles begin to happen in this stage and so the South is a reminder to be mindful and to cultivate the spirit. Amy Malbeuf's piece *The Length of Grief* speaks to this search for balance.

Two projections flank the south gallery walls accompanied with a soft sculpture of tufted hair. There are two sets of women on either wall. In the first projection, Malbeuf and her close relative sit side by side facing the camera, hair moving with the wind in a prairie landscape. The rhythmic movements of the breeze flow between the land and the women. The video is simple and quiet, revealing the unraveling and the release of spirit with grieving. The second projection is of Malbeuf and another relative, sitting in white shirts facing the camera. They braid each other's hair and pay homage to the grieving ceremony. They cut each other's hair in honour of the spirit of the person they lost and it signifies an outward acceptance of this struggle. It is an intimate action. Malbeuf creates a small, soft sculpture made of her hair on white buckskin that is mounted beside the projections. She tufts her hair in a similar manner as caribou hair tufting, a cultural skill Malbeuf employs elsewhere in her practice.

Time and ceremony are important themes of the work (the piece spans over two years). Through the action of cutting hair, Malbeuf portrays mindfulness around her use of ceremony, loss, awakening, and reclaiming. The women speak to a connection, a value in cultural practices, and the interconnection between them that reflects the growth of young adulthood in this direction of Medicine Wheel. In this piece, Malbeuf is acknowledging, claiming, and examining the expansion of Indigenous art's authorship after Canadian colonialism

marginalized the intellectual, manual and intentional labour found in Indigenous material culture, ceremony and identity politics. This claiming of ceremony and the sisterhood within the emotional labour in this piece locates the moment knowledge is transmitted in relation to the moment of conception, and the art of research itself is where Malbeuf activates a living history of those who passed on knowledge. Through her position as artist-with-lineal-relations and authorship, Malbeuf speaks to a new generation of young Indigenous women incorporating inflections of lineage, matriarchy, and cultural skills into expanded connections of authorship in ways that challenge, at key or sensitive points, the way the current mainstream capitalist public sphere circulates images and frames of Indigenous histories and cultural identity.

WEST

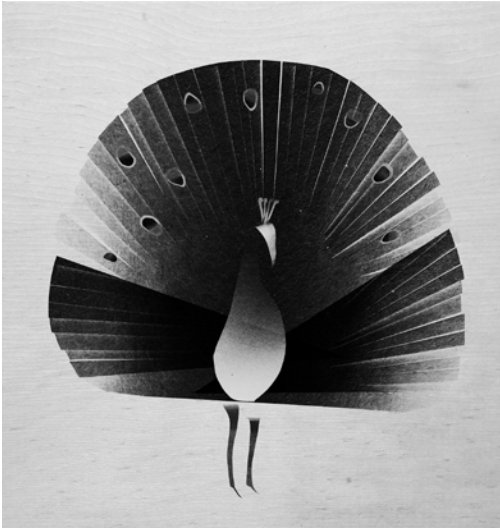
Peacock, Ram and Hunter

by Kenneth Lavallee

Adulthood

Turning to the West, the abundance of the South comes to harvest. The appreciation of what came before, accepting change and resolving the identity of self. It is here in the West Kenneth Lavallee's paintings speak to his mother and her mark on the changing landscape.

Three assemblages of reclaimed wood are mounted on the west walls of **aeartinc**. There is one large landscape of a man bow-and-arrowing a bison, and two square pieces: a peacock and a ram respectively. The marks on the reclaimed wood are made by the hand of Winnipeg-based artist, Kenneth Lavallee and were inspired by the shoe polish murals his mother created in the 1970's on structures in the surrounding area of her home is St. Laurent, MB. The insertion of one's identity in the landscape is a form of visual communication that can be found throughout Indigenous history. Sites of renderings/petroglyphs located in Manitoba, Saskatchewan, and Alberta indicate spaces of ceremonial significance, cultural memory, stored knowledge, and the desire to acknowledge one's presence in the landscape. These cultural spaces have created circuits of cultural lineage imparting knowledge to current observers: we have always been here. Marks made on rocks demonstrate the presence of a visual code authored by Indigenous peoples and, simply put, Lavallee is a mark maker whose work echoes that of the petroglyphs. Lavallee attributes the genesis of his artistic interests to his matrilineal lineage, and pays homage to the responsibility to recentre Indigenous women. Although



the specific lineage is lost from the petroglyph sites around the prairies, the sites of Lavellee's mother's mark making and her connection to environment and land sovereignty are not. As generations of Indigenous peoples interact and cohabit along the ever changing landscape, it is interesting to notice how Lavellee imbeds his mark making within contemporary land sites.

Lavellee's work is positioned across from Wendy Red Star highlighting the lineal-authorship of his work. Red Star's authorship is further contextualized through her collaboration with her daughter and the familial dynamic supports further the intention found in the work. Lavellee's authorship interacts his with role of son/mother, mother/son, artist/mother, mother/artist, artist/artist, and artist/artist and he positions himself as an Indigenous male respecting knowledge found within the mark making of his female kin. The reciprocation between the petroglyphs, Lavellee's mother's work, and Lavellee's pieces all reveal Indigenous visual communications and reinforces current states of Canadian indigenous politics within an Indigenous community-based practice.

Left: Kenneth Lavellee, *Peacock, Ram, Hunter*, 2016, plywood, shoe polish.

Right: Jeneen Frei Njootli, *Melanosite*, 2015, performance and residue.

NORTH

Melanosite

by Jeneen Frei Njootlie

Elders

Elders and metaphorically those who came before are present in the North. The final piece of the exhibition is a performance by Gwich'in artist Jeneen Frei Njootlie. Her piece *Melanosite* is a performative exploration of Indigenous knowledges that are embodied in the cultural material she collaborates with. She uses her voice, contact mics, plexiglass, and a dehumidifier to create a soundscape. With the water from the dehumidifier she dyes her hair and makes marks in the space. Frei Njootlie utilizes these various materials as transactive memory devices to alter her position, to assert her presence and interact with the Indigenous stereotypes and various gazes that she is constantly in flux with. The devices and tones echo ancestral knowledge pulled from herself as well as from the devices she employs. It touches on ideas of sacredness and the right to know the knowledge bases found in these Indigenous materials, landscapes, and female makers. She reveals a different way of conveying information/knowledge. The work speaks to the wells of cultural information of those who came before and creates a personal connection with her Gwich'in landscape/language.

Melanosite is located across from Malbeuf's piece and both artists engage with the symbolism and sacredness of hair to Indigenous people in compelling ways. Malbeuf's piece is sincere and intimate while Frei Njootlie works with systematic stereotypes and gazes Indigenous peoples have encountered and continue to encounter. Frei Njootlie's intervention of the technical cultural skills and artistic labour from a capitalist-production based labour creates an access point for the subjective transformation of materials into stored knowledge bases. This transformation of traditional skill-bases does not necessitate a loss of artistic skill but recognizes non-linear knowledge pathways that parallel Western concepts of material. The forms of knowledge are sound, teachings, land politics, and lineage. The Indigenous saying *All of our relations* could also apply to the history mobilized within Indigenous materials, environment, and sovereignty. The work is providing alternative practices to rewrite dominant Indigenous paradigms including those surrounding gender and feminism.

Perhaps it is this place where I to start to interpret the concept of Matriation: acknowledging and understanding one's context in relation to the

past; respecting alternative knowledge bases; being mindful with intentions and actions; and creating concepts that move this continuum forward. This description of Matriation reveals a paradoxical assertion that in the current social-political climate Indigenous women have the power to realize and direct their voices but in locating this power one has to acknowledge that Indigenous women have been excluded from history and currently remain one of the most marginalized groups in the world. There is a sense of responsibility involved in positioning one's self in context to Indigenous feminism. Grounding for my argument in interpreting Matriarchy draws on the idea that the ethics and analytics of this practice are derived from a reading that is constantly being recontextualized. Recentring Indigenous woman can be a practice in recognizing historical context, acknowledging alternative knowledge stores, mindfulness in asserting these knowledges, intention in actions, and the continuance of this trajectory in changing social and political climates.

“Our hands live and work in the present, while pulling on the past. It is impossible for us to not do both.

Our hands make a future.”

—*A Gathering of Spirit*, Beth Brant, 1984

WABISKA MAENGUN | NICOLA MARIE LITTLE | NIKI LITTLE is a mother, softball coach, artist/observer, arts administrator and a founding member of The Ephemerals (random order). She is of Cree/English descent from Kistiganwacheeng, Treaty 5 territory (displaced from the beginning). Her interests lay in artistic and curatorial strategies that investigate cultural consumerism, gender politics, Indigeneity, cultural Diaspora with slightest hint of ambivalence. Little studied at the University of Manitoba (MB), the Banff Centre for the Arts (AB), the National Screen Institute (MB), the Camberwell College of Art (UK) and completed the Mentoring Artists for Women's Art mentorship program (MB). She recently finished her tenure as President for the Independent Media Arts Alliance (national); Vice President for Urban Shaman Inc (local); and currently, she is the Treasurer National Indigenous Media Arts Alliance (national). From August 2015 to January 2016, Little was the Indigenous Curator in Residence which is a partnership launched by aceartinc and the Aboriginal Curatorial Collective. The exhibition titled, *Enendaman | Anminigook* (Intention | Worth), is Little's first curatorial project.



Flux Gallery and The Cartae Open School

On a modest wall in my home there hangs a print. It occupies a third of said wall. On a toffee-coloured background are around 70 drawings of bits of kit you'll find around most art centres—RCA plugs, a wedge monitor, VGA and DVI adapters, various cables, projector bulbs: that kind of stuff. The print is called *Everything I know About Volunteering* and it's a love letter in technical picture companion form to learning how to use some of the things which facilitate the dissemination of art and ideas. Its passion is grounded in sharing skills freely and idealistically. It's a declaration of being involved and making shit happen.

A few years had passed since I last studied *Everything I know About Volunteering* by Ali Sparrow, an artist hailing from Bristol, England, and, on this particular summer night I spent a long time examining each object he depicted and its technical, sometimes colloquial, name. I began my career in visual art in earnest when I became a core volunteer with Ali at the Cube Microplex. Here I spent many hours amongst projectors, speakers, screens, monitors, tools, and, of course, artists, but it wasn't until I started working at [aceartinc.](#) that I realized how formative those learning experiences had really been.

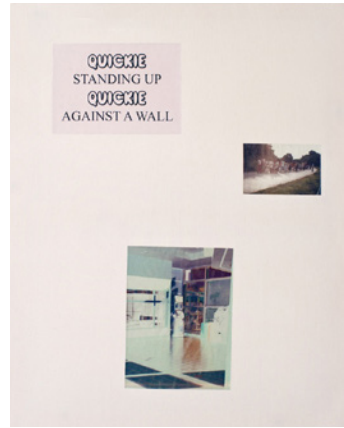
After getting home from one of the Flux Gallery's exhibition launches and after washing the un-air-conditioned evening from my face, I stood and

stared at Ali's print. It reminded me of how much I owed to a small, radical institution that ran on knowledge sharing, commitment, and working hard; one that showed me how to realize my own and other artists' ideas and visions. It instilled in me the value of institutional generosity, something that [aceartinc.](#) also has a long history of. Therefore, during a conversation with the artist Hannah Doucet about the lack of exhibition space for early-emerging artists in Winnipeg, it was a natural response to create a small space within ace to address this need. And so Flux Gallery was born, programmed by regular calls for submissions, managed by a committee of emerging artists, with guidance available from staff and board.

The Cartae Open School was formed in the same spirit. For two consecutive years, five young artists have spent eight months in the small studio we devised and constructed for them next to the main gallery. I'm pretty sure that the participants in Cartae 2015/16 had the experience that I and the rest of the staff and board, past and present, were hoping for: creative tension and growth, challenges, experimentation, research, collaboration, working alone, deepening ideas and the means of appraising them, forming friendships and networks, and having loads of fun (half of which, thankfully, I know I don't know about). Watching the development of these artists, the regular studio visits, learning from their research and putting my own to practical use, interrogating ideas with totally invested people: these experiences rank amongst the very best in my career.

The effect of Cartae and Flux Gallery has gone beyond the planned maximal utilization of existing resources and provision of support. They have been like a few chiropractic cracks that have recentered the centre, keeping the institution and those who work for it responsive, idealistic, pragmatic, and totally committed to making contemporary art shit happen.

hannah_g | Director



Flux Gallery

aceartinc. has transformed the Project Room space into a semi-autonomous exhibition space predominantly managed by a committee of young, local, emerging artists. Flux Gallery exhibits engaging contemporary art in any medium by early-stage emerging artists. Located in Winnipeg at 2-290 McDermot Avenue, within **aceartinc.**, Flux Gallery seeks to address the lack of exhibition space for this group by providing a 400 square foot gallery dedicated exclusively to the exhibition of work by early-emerging artists. Project Rooms are still available to members.

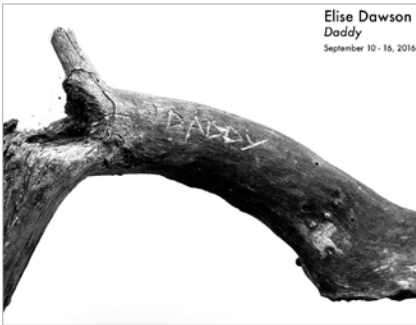
Flux Gallery is programmed by a committee of Winnipeg-based emerging artists/ Designers/ Curators, **aceart** Staff and Board. Shows have been programmed on a quarterly basis. Selected artist(s)/ curators have the gallery for two weeks; this period includes install, run, and strike of exhibition. **aceartinc.** is acting as an arm's length facilitator but is very pleased to provide support to more artists via this innovative project.

Flux also encourages written responses to the exhibitions and has an open publishing policy—every text will be uploaded onto the Flux web page.

The first exhibiting artists include: Michael Mogatas, Rachael Thorleifson, Nancy Nguyen, Graham Wiebe, James Malzhan, Elise Dawson, Bryn Vargas, Annye Ducharme, & Patrick Klassen.



Graham Wiebe
You Can't Call People Without Wings Angels
May 13 - 20, 2016



Elise Dawson
Daddy
September 10 - 16, 2016



Rachael Thorleifson
I dreamt [last night] my teeth were crumbling.
February 12 - 19, 2016

THE COMMITTEE (October 2015 – October 2016)

Hannah Doucet, Nicole Flynn (ace Board), hannah_g (ace Director), Julian Kirchmann, Sean McLachlan, Chantel Mierau (ace Finance & Admin Coordinator), Alena Reiger, Jeanine Saurette.

www.aceart.org/flux-gallery

flux@aceart.org

Cartae Open School

Cartae is an alternative learning space for the exploration of contemporary art modes, ideas and criticality, and their applications to individual practices. It is a site of experimentation, dialogue, creation, and research. Cartae is an initiative of *aceartinc*.

The Cartae Open School provides opportunities in the form of a shared studio, peer to peer and self-directed learning, studio visits/workshops from ace's exhibiting artists, screenings, artist talks, free access to all events that occur at ace during the Cartae year, and input from our sister Artist-Run Centres.

CARTAЕ COMMITTEE

Seth Woodyard, Brian Hunter, Mark Neufeld, hannah_g, Chantel Mierau

2016-17 CARTAERS

Kelly Campbell, Briar Boyko, Sarah Epp, Jennifer Ilse Black, & Danielle Fenn

2015/16 CARTAERS

Jaz Papadopolous, Madeline Rae, Carol-Ann Bohrn, Beth Schellenberg,
& Talia Shaaked

2014/15 CARTAERS

shimby, Emily Sirota, Shelley Vanerbyl, & Reza Rezai

The Cartae Open School has run its second year of programming from November 2015 – June 2016. Five emerging artists with a range of practices participated in this peer learning program, immersing themselves in research, production and learning. The artists each contributed a question they would like to ask the Cartae team, what follows is a look at what they have to say about art practice, art importance, and the experience of the Cartae Program.



CAROL-ANN

Are there any specific themes or ideas you are trying to express through your work?

CA: I am curious about identity and society, the inner and outer self, trauma, morality, and the human condition. I am exploring the connection of my cerebral and emotional world with dance and performance. I find this work cathartic as it requires all of my faculties to produce something I believe in. I am fascinated by the experiences of the body.

My early twenties were marked by an insidious and chronic back pain that made even my simplest actions excruciating. I was desperate to continue dancing. Conventional therapies did nothing to address the root of my issue. The years I spent in aggressive training paired with my extreme ambitions had completely distorted my understanding of my own body in space. This led me to study the Bartenieff Fundamentals, Continuum Movement, the Alexander Technique, Mitzvah/Itcush Technique, Feldenkrais and Vipassana Meditation.

These psychosomatic practices have helped me repattern my movements as I continue to dance. A year spent in the Royal Winnipeg Ballet's Teacher Training Program reinvigorated my physicality.

Irmgard Bartenieff said, "Body movement is not a symbol for expression, it is the expression. Anatomical and spatial relationships create sequences of Effort rhythms with emotional concomitants. The functional and the expressive are one in the human being." This notion gives me the confidence to allow my discoveries to be expressed in the world. As I continue to delve into myself I'm inspired to create.

TALIA

Would you say you produce for yourself, or for an audience? Who is your audience?

T: I first and foremost produce for myself. Artists are stereotypically narcissistic, and my impulse to create stems from a place of granting self satisfaction. I find I have a need to constantly surprise and surpass myself. Art making is a way of always setting yourself new challenges, for processing, growing and evolving. A very influential artist and teacher, Daniel Oxley, once said to me "Making art is like putting yourself through therapy. You are always analyzing yourself, asking 'why?'" I have noticed a correlation between my production and my overall state of wellness.

Of course, there is validation that comes from having an audience too. My audience consists of the art community that is still interested in the tradition of painting and the contemporary discourse it produces, as well as anyone who is interested in the planning of urban space, landscape and architecture. The content of my work looks to colour, design, and built environments in regards to the imaginary futurism of inhabitable space.

Looking through the 'art for art's sake' lens it allows us to consider why painting is relevant beyond its genealogy or market value. My hope is that my work can contribute to a conversation held by builders and urban planners, showcasing all the possibilities of an urban future that lies at our feet.





MADELINE

How has Cartae affected your art practice? What is the most prominent lesson or growth you will take away from the program?

M: Cartae exemplifies the supportive art community that belongs to Winnipeg. [aceartinc.](#) was the first artist-run-centre I visited while a teen and I immediately knew that I wanted to be involved. I interned for a year, and the encouragement and kindness I experienced was a large part of my decision to pursue art in my postsecondary education. Cartae has been yet another way that ace shows its desire to help emerging artists achieve success and support. Having the space to create, as well as the ace family's guidance and feedback was crucial to the work I produced this year.

Cartae is set up as an Open School, which allows for growth, mentorship, and gently guided (and effective) learning curves; the end of year show serving as a goal for new work. Professionalism is expected and enacted. I was attending my third year in the BFA program at the University of Manitoba's School of Art this past year at the same time as the Cartae program, which allowed for me to bridge my academic education and my professional career.

If I had to narrow down one prominent lesson I learned this year, it would be the importance of selfmotivation and gumption for pursuing feedback. The critiques and studio visits that became possible through Cartae have helped me greatly to strengthen and tighten my work, as well as see what I need to continue to improve on. People respond to gumption and drive; it is essential to an improving practice to be communicating and creating dialogue with other artists and professionals in the community.

JAZ

Why is making art a necessity in your life, and on a broader scale, a necessity for the world?

J: I think a lot of people are drawn to artistic practices because they want to add something to cultural discourse, whether that be insisting upon a generally ta-

boo topic, or presenting new perspectives, etc. It's a way to challenge how we think... how we interact with people and spaces and concepts. Art is a huge component of the subnarratives (like Foucault's "genealogies") that consistently run alongside the dominant narrative, giving thought and documentation to subjects that are otherwise ignored.

In addition to being part of counter-narratives, I use my art practice as a way to process, to connect with others like me/ interested in similar things as me/who have had similar experiences to me. I often grapple with the topics of intimacy, gender and violence, and am often irritated by the way these topics are generally overlooked or mistreated. Happily, these are topics that



seem to be getting more airtime these days, and I'm super thrilled to be part of a growing community (locally and online).

When I went to clown school, it was therapeutic. When I started writing poetry, it was because I wanted to add to and change the topics and format of the dialogues around me. I started playing with video because it seemed fun and challenging, and I've learned some really neat things about indirect, abstract and visual communication. Art is fun! It's like a spiritual practice it changes how you live, how you grasp the world and what you believe is possible. I do think people would be happier and more interested in living if they practiced art more.

BETH

What inspires you to create art?

B: I am interested in how we are adapting to technologies that greatly alter our communications with one another, and our perceptions of ourselves. The immediacy of online image sharing has created this deluge of visual material that is actually endless, and plumbing the depths of it, or trying to, is an interesting, hilarious, and simultaneously depressing exercise. I am currently trying to depict the liminal moments of sortofsolitude we experience as we document



ourselves for the viewing pleasure of others, that moment of anxiety before posting when trying to decide on an appropriately ironic but still “empowering” caption. Social media is this bizarre and relatively new way of showing others who we think we are, and the milieu clearly displays our proclivities in terms of sexuality, self perception, and consumerism.

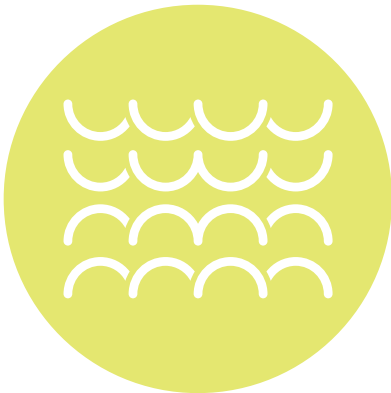
I am inspired by people, their faces, what expressions can say, or what might be hidden behind a look, how we read each other. Trying to translate an image as inherently digital as the selfie into a traditional medium (paint and canvas) is an attempt to see if it affects the meaning of the image, if it alters it somehow to view it hanging life sized on the wall rather than on a 2-inch screen. I am interested in the ruptures that occur between virtual and physical reality, and how these are made evident in our online self expression.

Each of the 5 artists leave Cartae with new projects on the horizon. They thank **aceartinc.** for the growth, opportunities and amazing support experienced throughout the program.

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www.aceart.org/submissions

MANITOBA ARTIST RUN CENTRES COALITION
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MEMBERSHIP

Your support assists in the research, development, presentation, dissemination, and interpretation of contemporary art in Canada.

For one year members receive emails regarding upcoming events and programs, notices of calls for submissions and other opportunities, invitations to events, a subscription to *PaperWait*, ace's annual publication, access to Project Rooms, turnarounds, our library and woodshop, and an annual studio visit from the Director.

Membership is \$25. If you volunteer for 2 hours you get a membership in return.

SUBMISSIONS

For information on submissions please visit:
aceart.org/submissions

ARTIST TALKS

ace records all of the artist talks we present. Access them via aceart.org and click on the discourse tab. You can also find the previous editions of *PaperWait* there.

GALLERY INFORMATION

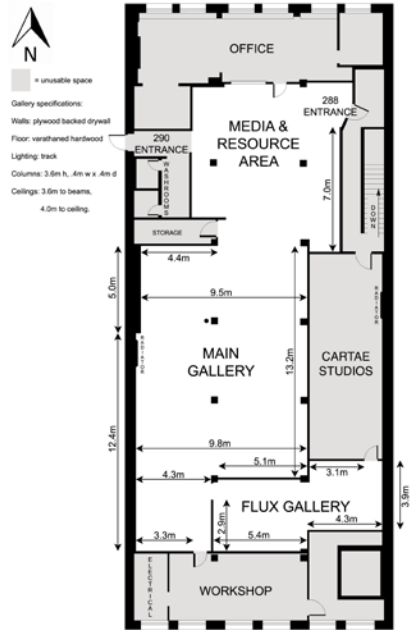
ace exhibits contemporary visual art in a 4500 square feet of gallery space—the largest Artist-Run Centre in Winnipeg.

We exist to help artists realize their ideas so we share our resources—both equipment and space—freely with artists and other like-minded organisations.

Since 1983 we have exhibited emerging artists—many of whom you will now be very familiar with and some will be exciting discoveries when you trawl our online archive. Each is an important part of Canadian art history.

Our jury selected, Regular Exhibition Program is the spine of ace—the deadline is August 1st of each year. However, we do lots of programming underneath and in between exhibitions. If you have an idea drop us a line: hannah_g@aceart.org.

If you happen to be an artist visiting Winnipeg, pop in and tell us what you're up to. We also have some bicycles we can lend you to aid your Pepsploration.



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UPCOMING 2016-17

Anna Eyler and Nicolas Lapointe *Beyond Différence, And Now*
AUGUST 19 – SEPTEMBER 23, 2016

Chun Hua Catherine Dong *Visual Poetics Of Embodied Shame*
OCTOBER 23 – DECEMBER 1, 2016

Michael McCormack *Station*
Indigenous Curator in Residence exhibition
FEBRUARY 25 – MARCH 31, 2017

Matthew Gardiner *You Can Never Go Home Again*
APRIL 14 – MAY 19, 2017

Jaymez *Prägnanz*
JUNE 16 – JULY 21, 2017

Jury that selected the 2016/17
Regular Program convened
on September 17 & 18, 2015:

Seth Woodyard

Praba Pilar

Niki Little

Shawn Jordan

hannah_g