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PAPERWAIT

VOLUME 13

2010 | 2011

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MANDATE

ace**art**inc. is an Artist-Run Centre dedicated to the development, exhibition and dissemination of contemporary art by cultural producers. ace**art**inc. maintains a commitment to emerging artists and recognizes its role in placing contemporary artists in a larger cultural context. ace**art**inc. is dedicated to cultural diversity in its programming and to this end encourages applications from contemporary artists and curators identifying as members of GLBT (gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgendered), Aboriginal (status, non-status, Inuit and Metis) and all other culturally diverse communities.

ace**art**inc. est un centre d'artistes dédié au développement, à l'exposition et à la diffusion de l'art contemporain par des producteurs culturels. ace**art**inc. maintient un engagement envers les artistes émergents et reconnaît son rôle à l'endroit des artistes par rapport au contexte culturel plus large. ace**art**inc. est dédié à la diversité au niveau de la programmation et vers cette fin encourage les inscriptions d'artistes et de commissaires qui s'identifient comme étant membre des communautés GLBT (gaie, lesbienne, bisexuelle et transsexuelle), Premières Nations (avec statut, sans statut, Inuit et Métis) ainsi que toute autre communauté culturellement diverse.

FORE



C clamp



WORD

TWELVE MONTHS OF UNUSUAL THINGS happening within a 5,000 square foot room in an old warehouse with wonky walls and a warped wooden floor, located in a city that squats in the heart of the North American continent. Poking and lounging and tip-toeing and stomping and mulling and loudly parping at/with/for/despite contemporary art and artists. Full fat, sunny side up, with all the trimmings, ace's 2010/11 program has been another many-hampered, year-long picnic.

Our eclectic Regular Program proudly stuck its chest out with five superb exhibitions by local and national artists who were selected by the ace jury in 2009. We opened the program with a mixed media, double exhibition by Jessica MacCormack and Elisabeth Belliveau. Their experimental videos and poignant drawings and watercolours created a welcome space for contemplation in the gallery. Lots of special programming occurred before the next Regular Exhibition: *Amygdala* by local artist Michael Dudeck. Dudeck's performance brought a huge crowd into ace and sparked some important dialogue some of which was addressed by Amber-Dawn Bear Robe in her Critical Distance essay. *My Life With Pamela Anderson & Other Works* by another local artist, Kristin Nelson, came next. Nelson's 8 foot high, cross stitched portraits of Ms. Anderson will, I hope, haunt the gallery for years to come. Jing Yuan Huang premiered *Confucius City*, perfectly transforming ace into a satirical, paper sculpture. The last show of the year was by Toronto newcomer, Lauren Hortie, who showboated that city's queer subculture to rip roaring-effect.

Paperwait primarily contains the Critical Distance essays which are written by local thinkers in response to ace's Regular Exhibitions. This is an important part of the Regular Program. The writers bring another layer of rigor to the shows we offer: they have conversations with the artists, spend time with the work, and place it in a wider discourse. We hope you enjoy their thoughts.

And of course there was all the additional programming—partnerships, special shows and events, and members' activities. As broad as ever—from the 2009 Venice Biennale artist, Susan MacWilliam, to the Eritrean Women's Photography Project—and finishing the year with a huge party and strip-hop burlesque performance as part of the *Gay & Night* exhibition. Not to forget the introduction of the Regular Exhibition Launch Night Cake as provided by the local purveyors of finest iced wonders, Cake-ology.

Our thanks and respect to our members, volunteers, supporters and funders. These are uncertain times for many arts organizations and we fully appreciate all of the people who finance us, provide discounts, offer in kind donations and volunteer—we wouldn't be here with out you. So thank you Winnipeg Arts Council, Manitoba Arts Council, Canada Council For The Arts, Winnipeg Foundation, The WH and SE Loewen Foundation, the Goodwill on Princess Street, Half Pints Brewery, the Sign Source, Designtype...

ace**art**inc. has a fantastic volunteer board- hard working, fun and inspired, the staff are very chuffed to be on the ace team with them. And talking of staff, Jaime Wright has been here for a year now and has heightened each and every exhibition's innate superbness to sublimity with his mastery of install while Moyes has carefully planned, smoothed and oiled another sound year of financial administration. The staff and board have been working together to ensure ace**art**inc. has a sustainable future location from which to continue supporting emerging artists and contemporary art. We'll keep you posted...

hannah_g



NATURAL DISASTERS, PETS AND OTHER STORIES

ELISABETH BELLIVEAU & JESSICA MACCORMACK

AUGUST 20 - OCTOBER 1, 2010

NATURAL DISASTERS, PETS AND OTHER STORIES
A RESPONSE BY LESLIE SUPNET

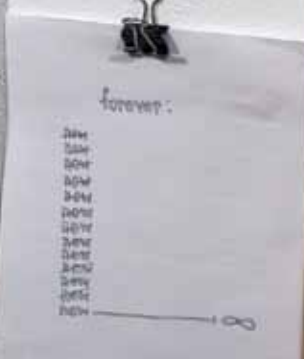
How many ways can one tell a story? With animation, the possibilities seem endless, opening up infinite ways to pursue meaning. A moving image form that is not a slave to representation or narrative, the ineffable complexities of human emotion can be given a new life in animation, freed from the confines of discursive language. *Natural Disasters, Pets and Other Stories* features experimental animated works and installations by interdisciplinary artists Jessica MacCormack and Elisabeth Belliveau that delve into loss, love, identity and relationships.

There is a convergence of Elisabeth Belliveau's artistic disciplines in *Margaret's Mountain* (2009) that utilizes embroidery, drawing, painting, paper cut-outs and poetry to depict a story of four female characters, all named Margaret, which were loosely based on the animator's grandmothers.

Elisabeth's work is grounded in a creative writing practice, which informs her other disciplines, and which structures *Margaret's Mountain*. With 10 years of producing zines under her belt and several published books, the spoken text in the animation is poignant and poetic, emoting the universal sentiments of longing



ALL PHOTOS: Karen Asher Installation views





and loss. The text was “...assembled from fragments of my writing that primarily centre on themes of biography, representations of women’s lives, poetry and romantic love.”¹

The Margarets in the story have their own histories and memories that become intertwined with each other, pointing to a common struggle with love. It is the indescribable quality of love that is visually explored with surrealism: hand-drawn, paper-cut mountains, forests, and familiar domestic spaces, are the backdrop to psychic human-animal interactions. With the simple gesture of playing with scale, Belliveau achieves a perfect dream-like state complete with larger-than-life white tiger, swan and pet dog. However, ‘real-world’ appearances of Leonard Cohen and Bob Dylan (who haunt the Margarets as romantic heroes) and self-reflexive references to poetry within poetry, causes a rupturing of fiction, creating an in-between space where the viewer is allowed to imbue their own history and memory with the Margarets to explore the multiplicity of human experience.

What grounds the viewer within the surreal world of *Margaret’s Mountain* is the tactile quality of Belliveau’s work. Her use of found papers, vintage string, and figurative drawings of objects and animals keep the story from floating off into a realm of animation that is inaccessible to the viewer. The scene within a forest of leafless trees (that have eyes!) in which a long piece of string grows from a seemingly disembodied hand, entangling itself in the branches as if playing cat’s cradle with the forest shows how Belliveau is able to marry the absurd with materiality. Belliveau’s installation for this exhibition further demonstrates her material based practice. Her assemblage of delicate drawings and text on a plethora of vintage papers, and a colourful string sculpture

(repurposing old coat thread and spindles) attest to the artists’ interest in re-imagining the everyday.

Human-animal relationships are also reconsidered. Referencing John Berger’s essay *Why Look at Animals?*, Belliveau’s animals in *Margaret’s Mountain* are messengers who hold particular powers.

*Ravens repeat what you tell them so that you can understand your own mind.*³

The animals take on a spiritual and meaningful place here, as they did in the past, in contrast to our modern-day hierarchical structuring, domination and consumption of animals. Belliveau asks the viewer to contemplate our relationship with nature by showing us imaginative possibilities such as those illustrated in *Margaret’s Mountain*.

Jessica MacCormack’s animals take on surreal hybrid characterizations in both *Love is a Hunter* (2010) and *Nothing Ever Happened* (2009). Utilizing collage-style digital animation, MacCormack creates fantastical animal-human hybrid forms whose identities are in a constant state of change, defying the tyranny of representation common in conventional cinema. While the girl-child creature in *Nothing Ever Happened* goes off to school to “reevaluate everything it has known.”⁴, viewers are also entering the realm of reverse pedagogy. When watching these animations, one instinctively tries to anchor the hybrid characters into representational categories: male or female, human or nature. However, these characters have identities that are on a mutable trajectory, having been something else in a different time.

The animated realm created in *Nothing Ever Happened* is claustrophobic with a satirical edge.

Nothing ever happened.

Now...what?

Is this real life?

I can't wake up.

Nothing ever fucking happened.

All the while things are constantly happening in the frame. Interactions, colour shifts in the walls, poppies popping out of nowhere, dog and cat heads interchanging on human torsos, fish floating all around. No instant is privileged over another as the scene is in a constant state of flux. The viewer is asked to watch the busy frame extra-closely as scenes of violence and strange sexual innuendo converge between the animal-humanoid creatures. Examples of this violence include a chihuahua with a gun, dead collies, and a cat-girl child creature that is shot in the head. *Are you blind?* The narrator asks the viewer to contemplate visible and invisible physical violence.

A body undergoes several transformations in MacCormack's video for Rae Spoon's song *Love is a Hunter* (2010). The hybrid bodies shift and change, and upon closer inspection it's revealed that the landscape is also a body that changes from black to flesh colour, with bleeding red poppies, implying a life-death cycle. The characters and themes in *Love is a Hunter* are similar to *Nothing Ever Happened*. Returning characters include the animal heads, poppies, and the androgynous child's head. But instead of a complete collage setting, *Love is a Hunter* features delicately painted scenes with a heavy, darker tone. The girl-child creature

also makes an appearance, now hand painted and in the form of a disembodied leg, with white sock and Mary Jane shoe. The leg, as well as being its own character, is part of other characters, and is also part of the landscape, with a dozen or so hanging upside down, floating in the background, bound together by the chains of a body gripping/conibear trap.⁵ The hybrid characters desire one another, set chase, intertwine, give birth. But the love here is complicated, violent, dark and creepy. They cry, bleed and die. The ending is left untied, with a live action scene, consisting of two people wearing paper-mâché replications of the animal's heads, communicating through online video chat.

MacCormack's installation component features paintings of characters from both animations, as well as paper-mâché painted sculpture of the disembodied leg, the cat, bulldog and chihuahua masks that are worn at the end of *Love is a Hunter*. The carefully crafted watercolors provide additional context to both of the animations' experimental narratives. One painting illustrates a naked, armless girl, save for the white socks and Mary Janes, standing on the shoulder of a hybrid bulldog creature that is wearing men's clothing. Shame is written across her body, starting from her vagina and running to her voice box. Within the fine and delicately painted scenes lurks sexual violence.

For MacCormack, animation was something she discovered later in her artistic practice as a result of a 2006 YouTube™ project aimed to highlight identity in the context of surveillance and online presence. MacCormack found that animation was a powerful tool to interact with the YouTube™ community. From then on, animation has been part of her interdisciplinary practice which



Installation view: Jessica MacCormack

“...examines the complex position of culture within neoliberal capitalism and critiques modes of social control, while exploring the potential for art to function as a site of resistance.”⁶ She is interested in community, and actively involves herself. In the past MacCormack has raised public awareness of human rights violations in a Weimar youth prison, participated in a collaborative art project with women from The Isabel MacNeil House,⁷ and was artist-in-residence in Winnipeg’s Crossing Communities, an organization that engages marginalized women and youth, to mention a few. MacCormack is interested in what we see, how we see it, and how to make the invisible visible.

Both Belliveau and MacCormack expressed a desire to continue to present their animated works in a gallery context.⁸ While both have had extensive play in the film festival circuit, they believe a gallery adds visibility to the medium in the world of contemporary art, and rightly so. According to some film theorists, animation has only recently been re-established as a part of cinema from a time in which it was ignored and denigrated, when cinema defined itself as a recording medium.⁹ While animation regains its footing in cinema, it is continuing to make headway in contemporary art outside of a cinema context with recent large scale exhibitions featuring the works of animators and artists across the globe. Belliveau and MacCormack’s works add to a growing movement of contemporary artists using animation to present new avenues in storytelling and personal expression that differentiates itself from the world of commercial animation in that its emphasis on narrative experimentation allows for the creation of new metaphors and meaning.

NOTES

- 1 Elisabeth Belliveau, *Margaret’s Mountain* Synopsis, “Margaret’s Mountain”, (Montreal: self-published zine, 2010) 1.
- 2 In *Why Look at Animals?* originally published in 1980 as part of the essay collection *About Looking* Berger examines how the ancient “unspeaking companionship” between man and nature has been broken. He contrasts this with an earlier period when human-animal relations were more integrated and meaningful. John Berger, *About Looking*, (New York: Vintage International, 1980)
- 3 *Margaret’s Mountain*. Dir. Elisabeth Belliveau. Canada. Animation, DV, 13:06 minutes. 2009
- 4 Jessica MacCormack, *Nothing Ever Happened Synopsis*, <http://jessicamaccormack.tumblr.com>. 2010.
- 5 A trap used in animal hunting.
- 6 Jessica MacCormack, *Artist Statement*, <http://jessicamaccormack.tumblr.com>. 2010.
- 7 Canada’s only low security federal prison for women
- 8 Elisabeth Belliveau and Jessica MacCormack, Artists’ Talks, *aceartinc*. August 20, 2010.
- 9 Steve Reinke, “The World is a Cartoon: Stray Notes on Animation.” in Chris Gehman and Steve Reinke, eds., *The Sharpest Point: animation at the end of cinema. The world is a cartoon: Stray Notes on Animation*. (Toronto: YYZ Books, Ottawa International Animation Festival, Images Festival, 2005) 11.

Leslie Supnet is a Filipino-Canadian artist from Winnipeg, MB. Her drawings and animation explore universal sentiment and emotion, giving voice to universal struggle while remaining deeply connected to her personal lived experience. Her animations have screened at various festivals, such as the Images Festival, International Film Festival Rotterdam, Signal & Noise, Image Forum Festival in Japan, and LA Film Forum.

Québec



Installation view: Jessica MacCormack



Installation view: Elisabeth Belliveau



AMYGDALA

MICHAEL DUDECK

JANUARY 15 - FEBRUARY 14, 2011

EVERYTHING IN MY LIFE IS APPROPRIATED:
A LOOK THROUGH THE WITCH DOCTOR, MICHAEL DUDECK
A RESPONSE BY AMBER-DAWN BEAR ROBE

aceartinc., an artist-run centre located in the Exchange District of Winnipeg, is animated with an entourage of the local arts hub. As a familiar cue to those who have attended previous Michael Dudeck performances, surgical white masks neatly stacked on a table are provided for the audience to wear during the happening. Two nude women, painted white, sit motionless on individual pedestals at the entrance of the pallid and brightly-lit main gallery space. Sound artist, Andy Rudolph, is situated by the mid-gallery wall, fully clothed and dressed in a pilot's black air filter mask. Adjacent to him lays a male body on a tall, metal frame and a woman sitting on a pedestal against the back gallery wall, both painted white and naked.

Photos, drawings and sculptural art cover aceartinc.'s walls and the room is permeated with ambient sounds and audience chatter. Two by two, a procession of unclothed, white painted, female bodies enter the room. Marching rhythmically in black army type boots; the performers are expressionless and trancelike—methodically moving into and throughout the crowd. Following this parade is the Witch Doctor, Michael Dudeck, who



ALL PHOTOS: Karen Asher Installation views

Installation view



is also naked and covered in white paint. Playing the persona of a hermaphrodite figure, his torso is covered with six fake breasts, in-conjunction with wearing a long black unkempt wig, and attired in the same black mask as the sound artist. Several performers carry knives that conduct sound to speakers positioned around the gallery. Amidst the theatrical smoke that fills the air and a chant dialogue in Dudeck's invented language, the religious and ceremonial performance concludes for the night.

*Amygdala*¹ is the second performance of a ten year project called RELIGION, initiated by Dudeck in 2010.² A packed audience is magnetized by the artist, leaving many not able to actually witness the presentation. Critical conversation regarding cultural appropriation surrounds Dudeck's work, yet this is never seemingly addressed head on. Resentment is particularly directed to his use of and reference to First Nations iconography. As a means to approach the delicate issue of Dudeck's culture appropriation under the name of art, I have been asked to write, from a First Nations perspective,³ a response essay to his performance *Amygdala*.

Interestingly, thus far *Amygdala* is void of any explicitly particular religious or First Nations reference, it appears to be exactly what the artist intends: a fantasy female warrior culture centered on an invented religion and Queer prehistory. Dudeck's vision, a complicated mythological, divine framework, is an allegorical path that huge crowds are eager to pursue with him. The "Gay

Spiritual Leader," as Dudeck pronounced himself during his artist talk,⁴ is a constructed image, identity and avatar with which to enter his spiritual journey of self-discovery. "Being an artist," writes art historian Patricia Hills, "is a matter of trying to locate one's position in postmodern culture."⁵ This fabricated ritual, based on imagination, make-believe and make-up is void of any direct reference to my Blackfoot or other First Nations or Native American cultures. I see naked bodies in white paint following the new age beat of generic spirituality in the traditional format of performative art history and exhibitionism.

The questions become: why does Dudeck's performance work cause so much tension which results in attracting herds of people, even if their objective is to simply criticize his art? When his recent performance work is a generalized fusion of various customs, why are people annoyed by his admitted acts of cultural appropriation, specifically First Nations cultures? How do his performance works reflect western culture,⁶ society and performance art of the new millennium?

Neither appropriation nor the premise of a self-proclaimed religious leader is foreign to art history or performance art. The 60's introduced performance art, initially known as 'happenings,' as a method for the artist to deconstruct and disable barriers between life and art; a physical method to unify art with spirit. This is compounded with a *priori* knowledge being a foundational



concept for artistic history, which invites the artist to take a leadership role in connecting society beyond the physical. Some of the most notorious pioneer performers such as Joseph Beuys and Carolee Schneemann proudly announced the shamanistic role they personified when performing. Beuys believed that art initiated a healing process in which “he would assume the shamanistic role of exercising past horrors.”⁸ This was fused with an intent to generate personal and national rebirth. Schneemann, during the 60’s, explained how “in a kind of shamanistic ritual I incorporated my own naked body into the constructions-putting paint, grease and chalk on myself.”⁹ Dudeck’s self-proclaimed shamanistic/witch doctor role is an artistic declaration falling precisely in sync with preceding performance artists.

No distinct and obvious cultural iconography can be singled out here for discussion, due to the amalgamative artistic process employed. Dudeck selects ingredients from various religions, cultures, taboos and issues, stirs everything in a pot; what ensues is the invention of his own culture recipe. The result is a hybrid, hegemonic, religious and cultural vision to satisfy audience and artistic appetite.¹⁰ Theorist and scholar Ania Loomba, in her publication *Colonialism/Postcolonialism*, highlights how this selection, picking and choosing from multiple histories and cultures and forging a unified past is a Euro-centric concept. It imposes a duty, and a glorious pre-colonial past or traditions. “Nationalism,” Loomba says, “engages in a

complex process of contesting as well as appropriating colonialist versions of the past.”¹¹ North Americans starve for displaced, colonized, abandoned or forgotten cultural roots, leading western culture to pick concepts from diverse cultures, to then interpret or determine value in order to suit their immediate needs. And who better to take from than the romanticized culture and traditions of Native North Americans?

Beuys, in his performance *I Like America and America Likes Me* (1974), lived in a gallery space with a coyote to symbolize the American trauma of “the Red Man.”¹² His goal was to assume the role of Shaman for the purpose of healing American society and its traumas. Yet Beuys’ self-mythification and attempt to de-bunk old myths serves to create new, damaging, mythical strains that hide and breed among “modern” culture.¹³ His myth making, even if positively inclined, is still created from the white-male nucleus that perpetuates and idealizes the act of cultural appropriation for personal gain. Yet, does this insinuate a disrespect and lack of awareness on the artists’ side?

Current trends in western society to amalgamate diverse cultures under one generic umbrella of cultural hybridism are reflected in the performance art of Dudeck. His attempt and act of harmony between art and spirit through creating an amalgam religious culture, echoes a culturally lost and spiritually deprived society that collapses distinct uniqueness into a unified whole. “Everything in

Amygdala performance



my life is appropriated,” Dudeck announced during his artist talk. “I take respectfully from different ideas!” He takes from different traditions and sources while questioning what a sacred image is and who has access to them. “It’s the artists’ role,” he alleged, “to assemble new narratives with these ‘taken’ images.” Later, he added, “How do we police what’s sacred!”¹⁴ Poignantly, this question reiterates current trends and attitude towards distinct cultures and Native North Americans.

An accepted hybrid culture veiled by multi-culturalism remains a structure of European colonial reform, cloaked as being progressive but still based in racial hierarchy.¹⁵ Native North Americans are reduced to a generic cluster without distinction or respect to the vast differences among diverse Indigenous groups. Dismissing the importance and usage of cultural iconography is a social practice and method of continuing racial hierarchy and colonialism.¹⁶

While Dudeck is responding from his worldview, displacing responsibility onto the artist is too simple. Acts of cultural appropriation have been made into naturalized, internalized truth and normative practice. In the imaginative, artistic space, an artist can pick and discard various cultural segments, express a structured experimentation within the safe environment of the gallery, and return to everyday life with no intrinsic ties to content. Dudeck’s plight for social change, to de-centre the “normative” of a white, male dominated culture only works to magnify the hierarchies pervasive in western society. Distinguished theorist Michele Foucault writes, “Human beings internalise the systems of

repression and reproduce them by conforming to certain ideas of what is normal and what is deviant.”¹⁷ Suggesting that ideas about culture, race and sexuality are institutionalized and difficult, if not impossible, to disentangle from one’s ideology.

“What makes a great work [of art] ‘great,’” writes theorist Keith Moxey, “is what we bring to it when we come to it: the attitudes and values of our own culture and our own time which have taught us to organize and hierarchize the experiences that constitute the world in which we live.”¹⁸ Dudeck’s search for identity reflects the nation’s identity crisis, mirroring the reasons behind western society’s disposable attitudes towards cultural diversity and iconography. The artist holds a mirror to his audience and it is the viewer’s role as much as his, to question and examine issues brought forth and reactions to his work.

NOTES

- 1 The amygdala is a nucleus of the human brain responsible for processing memory and emotional reactions.
- 2 The first performance, *Ritualiz’d*, was held at Platform Centre for Photographic + Digital Arts, Thursday May 20, 2010.
- 3 I am Blackfoot from Siksika Nation, Treaty Seven of Alberta, Canada.
- 4 Artist talk at *aceartinc*, February 2011.
- 5 Robert C. Morgan, “*The End of the Art World*,” in *The End of the Art World*. (New York: Allworth, 1998) in Patricia Hills, *Modern Art in the USA: Issues and Controversies of the 20th Century* (Prentice Hall Inc. New Jersey, 2001), 351.
- 6 This term is used in reference to European civilization, cultures of European origin who base normalcy on their own traditional, religious, ethical, technical, political and epistemological belief systems, world-view
- 7 Schneemann is best-known for creating *Interior Scroll*, 1976 in which she stood naked in front of an audience while reading from a paper scroll that she was slowly extracting from



- her vagina. She was also concerned with reinterpreting women's role in western society, to commemorate the pre-history and history of female figures.
- 8 Irving Sandler, *Art of the Postmodern Era, From the Late 1960s to the Early 1990s* (Westview Press: Colorado, 1996), page.
 - 9 Sandler, *Art of the Postmodern Era, From the Late 1960s to the Early 1990s*, 131.
 - 10 In an email conversation between Dudeck and I, he said the name Witch Doctor itself is a term he chose because it is a fusion of concepts: "Both Witch and Doctor refer to practitioners who can assist in helping them through the complexities of the path of the human condition." He claims it is a "merging of gender roles."
 - 11 Ania Loomba, *Colonialism / Postcolonialism: the NEW CRITICAL IDIOM* (Routledge: New York, 1998), 196.
 - 12 Sandler, *Art of the Postmodern Era, From the Late 1960s to the Early 1990s*, 92.
 - 13 While artists such as Beuys and Dudeck are busy creating new worlds and myths through performance, Native North American artists are working intently to deconstruct myths. For example, performance artist James Luna confronts the Western viewer in a very subtle but powerful way. In *The Artifact Piece*, Luna lays in a museum specimen case as an "artifact" in the San Diego Museum of Man. He exposes the Western, anthro/ethno-pological construct of the Indian as a spectacle and object created for Western consumption. Many Indigenous artists focus on unearthing buried histories and constructed myths in order to make room for distinct, alive and wonderfully complex cultures of Native North Americans.
 - 14 Artist talk at [aceartinc.](http://aceartinc.com), January 27, 2011.
 - 15 Loomba, *Colonialism/Postcolonialism: the NEW CRITICAL IDIOM*, 172.
 - 16 No matter where Dudeck goes, he claims the burden and role of a politically engaged and active artist is getting in trouble for taking ideas and images. Dudeck is not alone in his dilemma of image use; the difference is that he has the luxury of choosing his quandary. Native North American artists are also caught in a "double bind." Karen Coody Cooper writes that once an artist is labeled Indian the expectation begins concerning ones work, "Native American artists can be criticized if their work does reflect Native life and themes, and they can be criticized if their work does not reflect Native life and themes." This can lead to Native artists being pigeonholed into a category of traditional or contemporary art. Karen Coody Cooper, *Spirited Encounters: American Indians Protest Museum Policies and Practices*. (Lanham: AltaMira Press, 2008), 49, 50.
 - 17 Michael Foucault, *The History of Sexuality*, trans. R.Hurley, (New York: Vintage Books, 1990), 93.
 - 18 Moxey, *The Practice of Theory: Poststructuralism, Cultural Politics, and Art History*, 98.

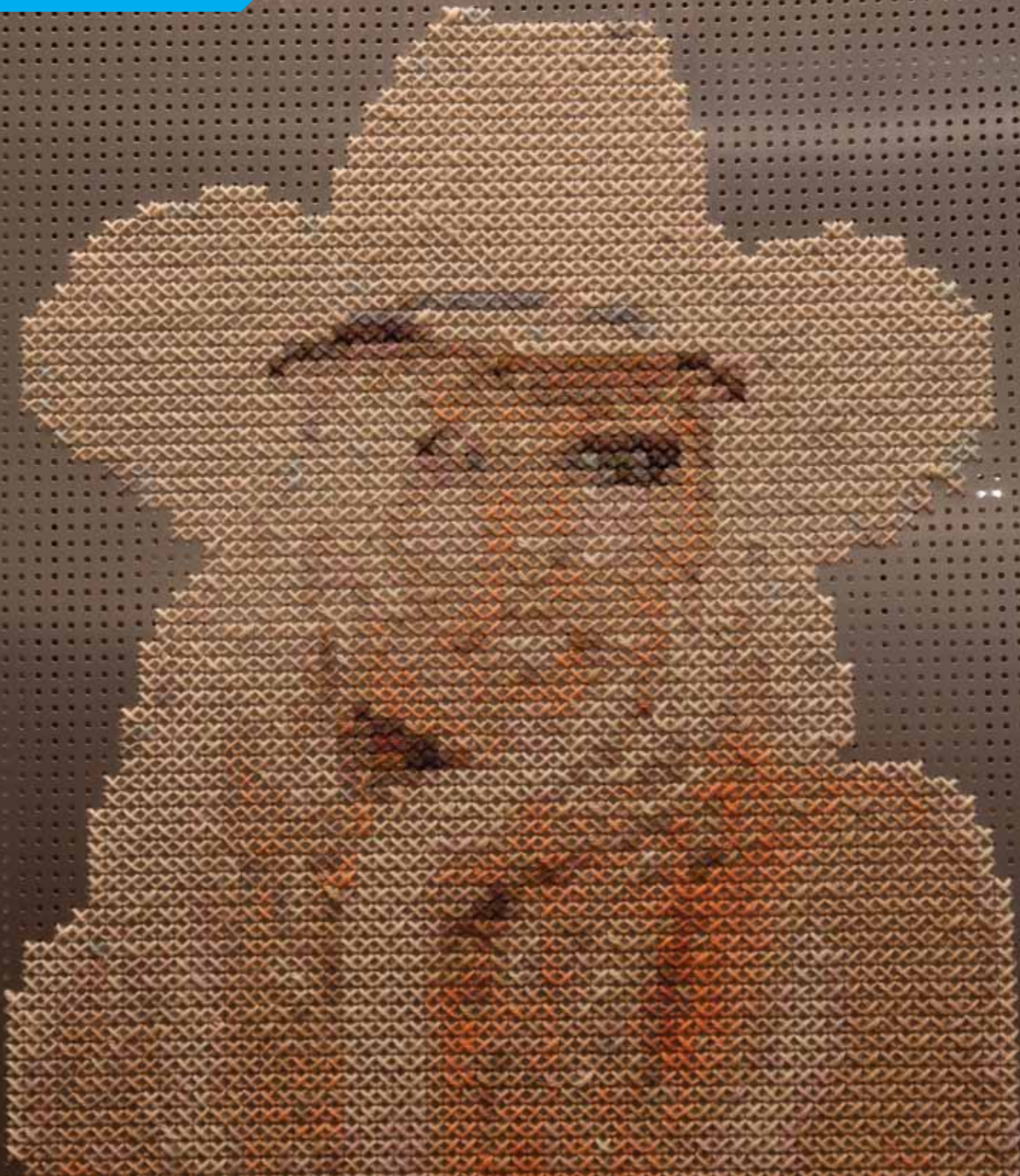
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- Cooper, Karen Coody. *Spirited Encounters: American Indians Protest Museum Policies and Practices*. Lanham: AltaMira Press, 2008.
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- Moxey, Keith. *The Practice of Theory: Poststructuralism, Cultural Politics, and Art History New York: Cornell University Press, 1994.*
- Sandler, Irving. *Art of the Postmodern Era, From the Late 1960s to the Early 1990s*. Colorado: Westview Press, 1996.
- Email conversation, February, 2011.
- Artist Talk at [aceartinc.](http://aceartinc.com), January 27, 2011

Amber-Dawn Bear Robe (Siksika), currently is the Director/ Curator of Urban Shaman: Contemporary Aboriginal Art. She completed an undergraduate degree in fine arts at the Alberta College of Art & Design, Calgary, AB, followed by completing a Master of Arts degree in American Indian Studies focusing on Native North American Arts from the University of Arizona, Tucson, AZ. Bear Robe is completing a second MA in art history also from the University of Arizona, with a focus on photographic history and contemporary Native arts and plans to pursue an Art History PhD in the near future. At The Banff Centre's Walter Phillips Gallery, Bear Robe was the Curatorial Work-Study, she interned at organizations such as the Tucson Museum of Art, the University of British Columbia's Museum of Anthropology and the Glenbow Museum.



the watermill center
a laboratory for performance



MY LIFE WITH PAMELA ANDERSON AND OTHER WORK

KRISTIN NELSON

MARCH 3 - APRIL 8, 2011

CONSTRUCTION ZONE
A RESPONSE BY TRICIA WASNEY

"The construction of gender is the product and the process of both representation and self-representation."

Girls learning traditional needle crafts are expected to work neatly and cleanly. With embroidery, I was taught to make the back of the work as neat and beautiful as the front. When knitting, ends are carefully woven into the work, seams are made as seamless as possible. Orderly construction is key.

In *My Life with Pamela Anderson and Other Work*, construction is also key, but it is not necessarily orderly. In the needlework pieces, Kristin Nelson subverts the tidy rule by exposing the needlework technique. The large cross-stitch portraits of Pamela are well executed on the front which is typically the only angle one views this kind of work. But Kristin allows us to see the back in all its messy glory as if to emphasize there is more going on under the surface. This is borne out by the titles of the works which are long descriptions of social causes that Pamela is concerned about while the images themselves are based on seductive photographs. In the smaller cross-stitch series of portraits entitled *youmeyoumeyoume*



ALL PHOTOS: Karen Asher ABOVE: Installation views LEFT PAGE: "I think [celebrity] is both as outrageous and as mundane...", 2002, aluminum, wool

youmeyoumeyoume; plexiglass, wool, bolt



we do not see the back, but the ends of the yarn hang beyond the frame of the piece, again drawing attention both to the work of the human hand and to a deliberate disordering of conventional thought. The “you” is Pamela and the “me” is Kristin; the portraits are hung in the order of the title which, written in lower case and mashed together, suggests an intimate and equitable pairing of the two women. But Kristin is not a fan obsessed with a star; she is an artist investigating her relationship to the world through contemporary cultural practices.

By using homey and imperfect techniques to conjure images of, and a relationship with, Pamela Anderson—arguably among the most recognizable figures in the world—Kristin plays with how we engage with celebrity culture. We admire (and condemn) celebrities from afar via images that are glossy and refined. In an excerpt from a review on Amazon.com, of a book entitled *Superstars of Film: Pamela Anderson Lee*, this is honestly (if disturbingly) illustrated. The review is called “don’t buy it for the pictures:”

I was very disappointed with this book. It is small, a little larger than a paperback novel. The pictures are poor quality. Poor quality meaning bad coloration, grainy, and uninteresting (most pictures are press or news type images).

I bought the book because I think Pam is beautiful, and I like looking at pictures of her. I think I would of liked this book more if I was interested in her life story, which seems to be the focus.²

The two-dimensional image is not just a representation of the person, it is the person, bypassing all that unnecessary (and unsexy) back-story. In *A Short History of Celebrity*, Fred Inglis discusses our culture’s fascination with celebrity:

This is the powerful contradiction of our phenomenon. It combines knowability with distance. Political leader and cinema star are intensely familiar (one of the family) by way of the cinema screen...but physically and in terms of how we all need to feel the directness of experience, they have the remoteness of the supernatural. This is the compound which makes for the sacredness of celebrity and may suggest the reason why people both worship and vilify the famous.³

Kristin, on the other hand, is interested in Pamela’s life story, she wants to get to know her, to use Kristin’s own words, to “personalize” her. And although Kristin also gets to know Pamela through images, the ones she produces are endearing, affectionate, and smart. The series of digital collages in the exhibition illustrate the relationship with Pamela she has constructed via photographs. In these Kristin walks, cycles, sunbathes, snorkels, snowboards and generally just hangs with her. And rather than insert herself into

Spinning With Pamela, Watching With Pamela: yarn, nail



Walking With Pamela, Snowboarding With Pamela; pigment on bamboo paper



Pamela's posh world, she gently pulls her into her own under a Prairie sky, in a beaver-dammed swimming hole, or on a snow-covered hill. The images are a little sassy but stop short of any sign of ridicule or disrespect. On the contrary, in her artist's talk, Kristin noted that it is important for her to have a "dialogue with the subject she is working on" and that respect formed a large part of that dialogue.

Other representations of Pamela are rendered in conventional craft materials that are used in unconventional ways. In the most tender of the portraits, Kristin has directly inserted Pamela into photos of herself as a child which she has rendered into yarn drawings. In these two separate but joined pieces, *Spinning With Pamela* and *Watching With Pamela*, Kristin projected images onto the wall of the gallery and traced the outlines with hammered nails. Two different coloured yarns are used—teal for Kristin, red for Pamela—to connect the points. The images span a large wall interrupted by a column but the yarn continues from one to the other with the unused skeins resting on the ground below as if to suggest the narrative also persists. Both the method and the content are poignant. In one of the images Pamela holds Kristin in her arms; in the other she lies near her. Pamela appears motherly, attentive and protective, a far cry from the elusive-bombshell-rocker-chick persona we "know". Inversely, through this pairing Kristin appears to be protecting Pamela (and maybe all women) from an objectifying gaze.

In her artist talk, however, Kristin discussed Pamela as a figure who is in control of her self-representation, a drag persona fully aware of her larger-than-life profile. Kristin showed an image of Pamela

from a fashion magazine shoot with the quote: "I am who I am. No apologies, no excuses. I'm not here for anyone's approval." Also in that fashion shoot, which is available to view as a video on the internet, Pamela declares

"I just like to perform. If I have any talent, it's for that."⁴ This ties the work in with the *Drag King Trading Cards* exhibited in the same space. In this work photos of drag kings along with their statistics replicate the well-known form of the sports trading card. Just as she does with the medium of craft, Kristin once again uses a modest and popular device to explore and honour the construction of identity and the performance of gender. With these trading cards, Kristin equates the celebration of non-mainstream drag culture with the ultra-mainstream worship of sports stars, making a connection similar to that of her imagined friendship with Pamela.

By employing DIY techniques, Kristin emphasizes the presence of the body in the making of the work as well as in its content. She explores complex ideas through deceptively simple means. In *By Hand: The Use of Craft in Contemporary Art*, Shu Hung and Joseph Magliaro discuss the work of artist Kiki Smith. The following quote can also be applied to Kristin Nelson:

This belief that humanity has a common goal, yet expresses that goal in a multiplicity of ways, helped define the theoretical backbone of the new approach to handmade art. Smith's methods deliberately lay bare the processes of fabrication as gestures of sincerity. They maintain that the physical body is the primary means with which to experience the world and the most obvious tool for the production of creative work.⁵

The absence of the body, on the other hand, is evident in Kristin's prints of parking garages and bare surface lots which are installed

Installation view, *Drag King Community Trading cards*



in ace's Flux Gallery, next to the main exhibition space. In these works, Kristin reverses the approach to materials that she used in the Pamela Anderson works. Etchings, typically employed to commemorate things of pride in a city, are here used to represent a somewhat shameful urban condition so obviously centred on the car. But one senses even a lack of condemnation in this work; the images are delicate and exquisitely drawn, iconic even. There is a beauty in the realistic recognition of the human activity in our city that the prints represent:

No group sets out to create a landscape, of course. What it sets out to do is to create a community, and the landscape as its visible manifestation is simply the by-product of people working and living, sometimes coming together, sometimes staying apart, but always recognizing their interdependence...it follows that no landscape can be exclusively devoted to the fostering of only one identity. Our imaginative literature abounds in descriptions of utopias where everyone is civic-minded, and there are many descriptions of the delights of living in harmony with nature as certain pretechnological societies presumably did. But we sense that these visions are not true to human nature as we know it, and that these landscapes can never be realized.⁶

Meditations on construction—of self, gender, craft, the built environment—are common threads that run throughout Kristin's work. She draws attention to the making of the object and pulls it slightly out of context by using materials in surprising ways. She democratizes the subjects she explores, elevating the mundane and making the extraordinary approachable, while intelligently and respectfully arguing for this equalization.

Installed at the entrance to the exhibition space are print-outs of the e-mail correspondence that documents Kristin's unsuccessful attempt to contact Pamela Anderson directly so as to invite her to

Parking/No Parking: pigment on Epson smooth paper, Various Winnipeg Parking Lots, etchings on paper



the exhibition. I think it is fitting that the meeting never took place; I rather fancy Kristin's life with Pamela Anderson just the way she imagined it.

NOTES

- 1 Teresa de Lauretis, *Technologies of Gender: Essays on Theory, Film, and Fiction* (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1987), p. 9.
- 2 Review by Christopher Ohlgren "chris", Portland, Oregon <http://www.amazon.com/Pamela-Anderson-Lee-Superstars-Film/dp/0791046478>. March 19, 2011.
- 3 Fred Inglis, *A Short History of Celebrity* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2010), pp. 11 and 12.
- 4 <http://www.elleuk.com/elletv/%28channel%29/inside-elle/%28playlist%29/ELLE-Magazine/%28video%29/behind-the-shoot-pamela-anderson>. April 1, 2011
- 5 Shu Hung and Joseph Magliaro, Eds. *By Hand: The Use of Craft in Contemporary Art* (New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 2007), p. 12.
- 6 J.B. Jackson, *Discovering the Vernacular Landscape* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1984), p. 13.

Tricia Wasney has a background in film, landscape architecture and visual art, and has published work in each. She developed, and currently manages, Winnipeg's public art policy and program through the Winnipeg Arts Council.



CONFUCIOUS CITY (WINNIPEG PROJECT 2011)

FROM THE COLLECTIONS OF THE PEOPLE'S MUSEUM OF CONTEMPORARY ART, CONFUCIUS CITY, ZHE XUE PROVINCE

JING YUAN HUANG

APRIL 20 - MAY 20, 2011

EMPYREAN LAUGHING GAS
A RESPONSE BY IRENE BINDI

Confucius City is an ongoing project taking as its subject the activities, events, and projects stemming from an imagined civic organization: The Municipal Cultural Export Department of Confucius City. "The Winnipeg Project" presupposes a cultural exchange program between this city and the city of Winnipeg for which Confucius City's MCED has brought an exhibition, "From the Collections of the People's Museum of Contemporary Art of Confucius City (PMCA)," to aceartinc.—Jing Yuan Huang

The above is an excerpt of text accompanying Jing Yuan Huang's photocopy, text and collage installation *Confucius City* at aceartinc., Winnipeg. The work is connected to, though an evolution from, an ongoing series around the concept of transmigration. *Confucius City* is the Winnipeg installment, incorporating imagery from Buddhism, pornography, Hinduism, Confucianism, and city, pastoral, and industrial landscapes. These are brought together in the creation of another, as yet unknown landscape, an imaginary matched city.

Opposed to being a reductive comment on struggles with tradition in contemporary China, the work embraces a broader

BELOW: Installation views



LEFT PAGE & ABOVE: Artist: Confucius City Citizen No. 345
Identity: Minority group No. 21, Half-human, Half-intellectual, Non Criminal
Title: 3 Portraits of Officials



ABOVE: Artist: Confucius City Citizen No. 141
Identity: Minority group No. 29, Human, Half-intellectual, Non Criminal
Title: 2nd Place Winner for Public Bench Design Competition

The Message from the Director of **PMCA**

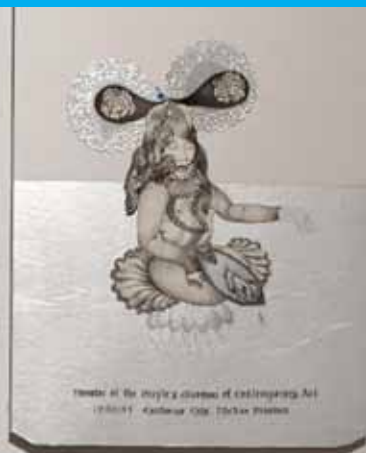
The exhibition tackles on many levels issues that have been actively debated within our contemporary art world. Go over the carefully prepared captions of each artwork selected for this exchange; the audiences will discover our well-known openness to sexuality, activism, film production, and religious freedom. Beyond the obvious exploration of theme-related content, artistically the works also pose some challenges to the present discourse in understanding art, for example: how to use artistic languages to find a way in dialogue with other exotic cultures; how to present the traditional culture and its aesthetic pursuit; how to strengthen the unique CC traditional spirit in the current context and how to represent the particular cultural logic in art created by minority groups.

As Museum Director, I notice that people around the world are getting more and more conscious of the value of art. This is so because we have seen the series of social evils resulting from unlimited technical-oriented expansion driven by utilitarianism. We have seen some psychological, moral, and inner-soul problematical phenomena that have run counter to building a harmonious world. Such phenomena are non-negligibly interconnected with the lack of fine culture and art nutrition, alienation from classic works and elegance, going after utilitarianism and secularism, all leading to mental degradation. Hence, people are increasingly eager for the nutrition of elegant art and calling for the return of human spirit with ever-greater urgency.

Art provides us the best soul-stirring forms. It is also the optimum channel to educate people in their growth and development. We sincerely hope that the works drawn from our collections will better serve the public, especially our next generation so that they will have a more enjoyable and brilliant life in their growth amid mounting economic and curricular pressures. This is a heavy responsibility that rests on the shoulders of people in our sector.

The splendid news coverage from Winnipeg City and their loyal platform ACEART adds luster to the success of the exhibition and the exchange. With the firm belief in trying to build CC Contemporary arts with the style of CC culture and the innovative spirit of the times, and with the goal of creating very a most favorable social opinion exchange environment for the people, I wish the best for this traveling exhibition.

Yours truly,
Director of **PMCA**



discourse on art and cultural bureaucracies, and further, on the fruits of chaotic engagement. In the exhibition's accompanying text three layers are identified "through which a societal entity might be understood: the civic life of a nation, the nation's art, and the material art distributing agency in its relationship with other official cultural powers."¹

By creating such a questionable delineation, *Confucius City* may be asking us to examine the very idea of structured systems for interpreting any "societal entity", in particular structures governing the entity called "art". Are we, through the guise of a "cultural exchange", poised for reflection on the emptiness of such formulated "exchanges", given the spectre of grand cultural experiences that were at one time foisted on the public by world's fairs and antiquated museum practices? Is this work suggesting that to an extent, these farcical exchanges persist in the world of contemporary art?

Ever-present through the installation's text and publicity, is the satirical language of a cultural bureaucracy, developed by a person very familiar with the bureaucratic languages of English and Chinese cultures. Mingled with this farrago of rhetoric, the MCED & PMCA logos are present on all promotional materials, beside those of the Canada Council for the Arts and the Province of Quebec; both institutions of which had a very real role in bringing the exhibition to fruition. So we enter into a conglomeration of interpretive cultural paraphernalia, a place where truth is of no import, and where the relationships between art and its systems are laughable.

A STRUCTURAL FILAMENT

Huang's employment of paper photocopies seems to have had several inherent purposes: practical, conceptual, and aesthetic. The paper she uses—compact, easily attainable, and inexpensive—holds two traditions: its birth in China, and its identity as the traditional material vehicle of bureaucratic language. It is also a material over which Huang has gained a certain technical mastery. Meticulously working on each sheet, joining them, and forming curves and angles at well-considered junctures, she has—in *Confucius City* and earlier works—formed new corners of the world, tapestries of xerography.

Her earlier *Transmigrating Inadequacy*, exhibited in several locations in several different permutations, focused on, among

other things, the figure in abstraction. The installation in all its incarnations was formally experiential; a contemplative spatial study. Huang's hallways and amorphous ceilings of paper, derived from enlarged and tiled paper photograms of her small paintings and drawings, created less an expansion of those drawings than a shrinking of the audience, and their subsequent immersion into a glowing world based, contrary to expectation, more on its own physical structure than on the drawings from which it was derived.

Paper's translucence, its ability to transmit light in all directions, lends a cinematic quality to these works. Their balancing point is the strategically positioned cloud of light that they inhabit. The



lighting of *Confucius City* was designed and implemented before other materials were installed. In what seems to be one of Huang's typical gestures, an unexpected reordering has taken place. This lightness and light heighten the airy tone of the exhibition, the dismissability and collapsibility of its meanings.

In the concise view of David Bordwell, "[t]he artwork does not exist simply to transmit a message, if it did there would be no difference between art and ordinary informational discourse. Art is primarily an engagement of ourselves with materials and forms [...] The artwork utilizes representation but also sensitizes us to its limits."² And such is the case with *Confucius City*, whose cultural references expand its aesthetic explorations, and whose parameters are primarily set not by its self-description, but by its forms.

LEFT: Details from:
Artist: Confucius City Citizen No. 725
Identity: Minority group No. 35, Half-Human, Intellectual,
Non Criminal
Title: Movie still (From Film "The Founding of a Republic")



MIDDLE:
Artist: Confucius City Citizen No. 725
Identity: Minority group No. 35, Half-Human, Intellectual,
Non Criminal
Title: Movie still (From Film "The Founding of a Republic")



RIGHT:
Artist: Confucius City Citizen No. 345
Identity: Minority group No. 21, Half-human, Half-intellectual,
Non Criminal
Title: 3 Portraits of Officials



Dedicated to no particular medium, Huang has a style that emerges more in the work's progressively more complex tones and the intricacy of her labour than anywhere else. The meticulous crafting results in a beautifully cohesive, and resultingly immersive aesthetic. Within this physical landscape, the icons she uses relate to one another as such, playing gently off of each other's identities. Representations of power—gods and pornography, industrial cityscapes—exist together in dreamy harmony, merging the visual patterns of possible power structures.

ADVANCING PEACOCKS AND GOOD-LOOKING ALIENS

Hollis Frampton, whose own work was ever aware of the connection between the comedic and riddles of perception, spoke thus on the mind's navigation of discourses:

I have all the time the sense that there are perilous random seas that surround all our discourses. We really are on little rafts, and maybe we make it to the Fiji islands and maybe we don't, but in trying to bring back something of the quality of the journey, we have got to talk about more than the raft... If there is not in the tale something of the quality of the random seas as well, then you have essentially falsified it... You have, in the phrase of an old friend of mine, snipped off all the necktie ends to make it look as though the suitcase closed neatly.³

Huang's willingness to engage the random seas, the confusion that is to be part of the process toward interpretation (as opposed to understanding), is part of what affords *Confucius City* its fascination and mystery, as well as its humour. We are left with strong statements, none of them facile. How does *Confucius City* convey the confidence to play these mysteries out, without question of roving into meaninglessness?

On the one hand, Huang's incorporation of meaningless bureaucratic language floats the exhibition in ridicule. But the inclusion of her invented icons alongside those that we readily recognize expands this ridicule to the ridiculous. According to Peter Marteinson in his exploration of comedy, the natural structure of human thought associates "acculturated concepts and biases with percepts of natural states of affairs" which are then accepted as truths.⁴ When these "truths" come into conflict with one another, comedy is born. In the most epistemological sense, *Confucius City's* combination of recognizably diverse cultural and religious icons is enough to create comedic engagement. However, Huang takes us further. Her additional characters, created through colourful collage and comic labels, have an even more prominent place in *Confucius City* than Buddha.

Among rambling text that speaks of "art nutrition" and "soul-stirring forms", *Confucius City's* invented characters and locales reign. Some of those which literally mark the city's geography include: "Street of the Best Thieves 1", the "District of Good-Looking Aliens", the "Head of policy office for Half-criminals", "Manager of hospital Full-human" and the formidable "Director of the People's Museum of Contemporary Art (PMCA), Confucius City, Zhe Xue Province", whose image presides over the exhibition with a message of greeting describing the exchange in terms of the conservation of "cultural heritage" and promoting a "core system of values".

It is the characters attached to these labels who are our guides. With them we move through the "city", and the underlying comedic significance of their presence emerges even as we wonder at the beauty of the exhibition's configuration. Situated as they are in an uncertain space, the eyes of borrowed icons



Installation view from "Welcome to Confucius City"

and of Huang's own mythic creations invite and challenge us to inquiry. The sheer potential in the multiplicity of concepts, and the comedic disarray they produce also functions in reverse, and comedy begets contemplation.

"Confucius City", the fictional exhibition presented by the People's Museum of Contemporary Art of Confucius City, seems committed to delineating and solving a cultural conundrum, while the exhibition of *Confucius City* at **aceartinc.** is committed to questioning the idea of cultural knowledge, and to exploring the comedic chaotic.

We are not meant to enter into an inquiry of what Winnipeg's role in the exchange might entail, only to regard the possibilities of the contributions of the People's Museum of Contemporary Art, while breathing in the laughing gas that is floating through the air. So the nature of Winnipeg's contribution to this farcical "exchange" remains unknown, becoming one part of the imaginary narrative of an imaginary exhibition.

NOTES

- 1 Installation text from *Confucius City*, **aceartinc.**, Winnipeg 2011.
- 2 Bordwell, David. *The Films of Carl Theodor Dreyer*, University of California Press, Berkeley and Los Angeles. 1981. p.7.
- 3 Field, Simon and Peter Sainsbury. "Zorns Lemma and Hapax Legomena, Interview with Hollis Frampton." *Afterimage* (London), no. 4, autumn, pp 44-47.
- 4 Marteinson, Peter G., *Semiotics of the Comic*. 2001.
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accessed May 15th

Irene Bindi is an artist and filmmaker living in Winnipeg, MB. She received an MA in Film Studies from York University, is a member of the sound/installation group Blind Squab, and is a programmer for the WNDX Festival of Film & Video Art.

Québec 



GAY & NIGHT

LAUREN HORTIE

JUNE 3 - JULY 25, 2011

IF YOU BUILD IT, THEY WILL CUM
A RESPONSE BY CAM BUSH

It's a good time to be gay. What greater testament is there to the LGBTTQQ* community's burgeoning clout than the aggressive proliferation of lifestyle products and designer goods marketed directly to the rainbow wallet? Beer! Marriage! Inspid children singing top-40 pop hits on American television! Anal bleaching! The Canadian Military! Vodka with appetite suppressants! Pink dollar, take thy rightful place in the pantheon of target markets!

Unfettered access to this cornucopia of social and consumer delights has increasingly become the litmus test against which the mainstream gay and lesbian movement has measured its success, and by that reckoning it has triumphed almost unequivocally. So it's a good time to be gay, but mostly if you're an urban-dwelling, Canadian gay with not-insignificant disposable income; it's also to your distinct advantage to be a gay of the cisgendered, white male variety, (and it definitely doesn't hurt to have a Prius and a personal trainer), but no matter.

It's a more confusing time to be queer. With a rapidity that would have been hard to anticipate even ten years ago, the gay community's access to the official channels of power has, in



ALL ARTWORK: Lauren Hortie unless otherwise stated. ALL PHOTOS: by Karen Asher unless otherwise stated. Installation views

Gay Refugee All-Star Choir, charcoal and metallic paper; 2011.



largely superficial ways, been parcelled out by the powers that be within the condescending rhetoric of ‘tolerance’. For better or worse, however, it seems that the neo-liberal manifestation of the LGTBTTQQ* campaign for hearts and minds (to say nothing of that for self-determination) exists primarily in and through popular culture. And while it’s true that self-appointed queer icon Lady Gaga has succeeded in making the world safe for those inclined to arrive at events in egg-shaped chariots, her ostensible and much-touted ‘activism’ doesn’t hold up to even the most cursory scrutiny: listen to the lyrics of her ubiquitous gay anthem “Born this Way,” which stops just shy of apology in its situating of queerness as an intrinsic, (and therefore unfixable) condition; “We Are Family” this isn’t. This is a politics of aesthetics, and only of the most transparent and materialistic variety.

If this brand of whiny (and ultimately conservative) conformity has become the face of the contemporary mainstream gay and lesbian community, who is left occupying the margins, and what are they doing out there beyond the edges of assimilation in the promised land of desirable queerness? As the political trajectory of the gay and lesbian mainstream completes its inevitable transition from bars to boulevards to ‘burbs, queerness has in many ways doubled back upon itself and, in at least its urban hipster social incarnation, relocated to the DIY party scene—to some degree by choice, but also in response to exclusionary pressures placed on it by respectable gays (who would prefer that outlandish and non-normative queers refrain from frightening the squirrelier heteros too much).

Lauren Hortie’s *Gay & Night* gives a full-frontal and cheeky peek at these rougher edges of queerness and the loveable freaks and

Fay Slift, charcoal and metallic paper; 2011



weirdoes who dwell there. The exhibition is comprised of drawings, costumes, party posters, random bits of glittery detritus, video documentation of the *Steers & Queers* third-anniversary party, and an opening weekend packed with irreverent artist talks and raucous parties-as-parallel programming. An artist, educator and DJ situated primarily in Toronto's Queen West underground queer art/party scene, Hortie celebrates and anthologizes the participatory performativity of this lo-fi, sticky community.

There's more at stake here than a first glance might suggest. The LGBTTTQQ* community reflects in microcosm the same layers of subjugation that exist in the broader society, and access to modes of self-representation are similarly concentrated (if on a much smaller scale) in the hands of a select few. In this context, where a paucity of images of the queer fringe are available, self-representation becomes

synonymous in part with self-determination; to unapologetically claim the margins of an already marginalized group can be a catalyst—and particularly in a community that has historically been anchored around nightlife—for activism. Two of the central talking points from *Gay Headquarters* posit that “queerness isn't all about sex” [it isn't and it is], and that “We aren't fundamentally any different from You” [kind of, but not really]. Hortie's community isn't squeamish in the least about being sexy, weird or, most fruitfully, both simultaneously.

Drawing extensively on a distinctly queer reading of popular culture, Hortie focuses in particular on the hoary and familiar old master narratives of classic country music, which shouldn't come as a surprise: this brand of Americana, with its rhinestones, tear-in-my-beer melodrama, and hyper-inflated performance of gender roles is ripe for deconstruction. In her lecture on art and queer activism that she delivered at Mentoring Artists for Women's Art during her stay in Winnipeg, Hortie identified the parameters of popular culture as extending to everything that exists in the popular zeitgeist; she suggested that this “wallpaper for our lives” becomes a screen for the projection of our collective desires, interests and fears. Situated somewhere inside the intersection of art, queer and popular cultures, (and requiring no specialized knowledge of any), Hortie's country-themed work interrogates, subverts and reclaims these familiar clichés.

Nine large-scale charcoal drawings on paper ring the main gallery at *aceartinc*, each collaged with passages of gold and silver metallic paper highlighting items of significance (booze, panties and tassels among them). These drawings, whose graphic lines and flat planes recall the aesthetics of self-published DIY comics and zines, are all based on photographs taken at the recurring *Steers & Queers* party that Hortie co-founded with Josh Goodbaum. The event's country singers, burlesque artists, party-goers and genderfuck performers are all here and rendered larger than life both in scale and as subjects. These portraits isolate the human figures from their surroundings and set them against an empty backdrop; when removed from their original context they become almost iconic—each individual a performer of and a performer for, seeing and being seen in a manner that is deliberate and idiosyncratic.

In *Gay Refugee All-Star Choir*, three performers who appear to have taken their fashion cues from the Mormon Tabernacle Choir, exhort from the stage like proselytizers for the queer cause, while two western-clad figures in the foreground fall out of the frame in a lusty embrace, still admirably clutching their beer bottles. A young Patsy Cline-type femme with a single strand of hair loosened from her

LEFT: Installation view from left to right: *Hallo Kitty* (Trash, Toronto), Andrew Lee, plush, ribbon; 2010. *Colonel's Crown* (Fly Night Club, Toronto), Keith Cole, cardboard, turkey feathers; 2009. RIGHT: *Rob Ford for Terror* (Trash Halloween), cardboard, acrylic; 2010



upswept 'do occupies the lower right-hand corner of *Snowball Dance*, her down turned eyes and bashful smile enough to break any heart as she offers her hand upwards to a lucky suitor out of frame.

Hortie's frequent collaborator and 'boylesque strip-hop' performer ManChyna is immortalized in *ManChycken*, wielding a microphone and clad in the same vaguely terrifying rooster mask he performed in at the show's opening night party. In the performance I saw, ManChyna, with the head of a rooster and wearing sports socks over sparkly black tights, stripped to the beats of Hortie's DJ alter-ego, Sigourney Beaver, before cracking eggs on his naked torso and slathering himself in feathers. Immediately next to *ManChycken's* avian vision in gold pants is the flipside of the same drag coin, *Faye Slift*, a bearish, bearded queen smiling coquettishly at the viewer while fanning out the skirt of her barmaid's dress, the gigantic gold bow hanging from her neck echoed by a mammoth bouffant wig.

Elsewhere in the gallery a collection of single-colour, photocopied party posters is staple-gunned to the wall, each created by Hortie to promote an event she's produced. These posters drip with in-jokes, and recast celebrity icons (queer and otherwise) into unlikely roles: John Wayne is reimagined as a dog collar-wearing BDSM bottom; Kenny Rogers tenderly embraces Willie Nelson's exposed belly from behind while astride a mechanical bull; Miley Cyrus and Hannah Montana brawl in the parking lot of a saloon while a mulleted banger in a PFLAG shirt looks on; and a nativity scene reimagines Garth Brooks, Johnny Cash and Taylor Swift in the roles of Joseph, Mary and Jesus.

Hortie cedes the center of the gallery to her collaborators and co-conspirators, showcasing costumes and party paraphernalia on the busted-up glamour of dilapidated mannequins: among them an embroidered gingham shirt that faithfully reproduces the cover art of the foundational *Hello, I'm Dolly* album; and the sublime *Colonel's Crown* which repurposes a KFC bucket, multicoloured feathers and bike streamers into a headpiece worthy of a low-femme empress.

I'll confess to often feeling had when artists who have consciously occupied the margins bring their work into a mainstream context—for the same reason I'm largely depressed by the recent establishment of a Riot Grrl Archive at New York University—these stabs at art world and/or academic acceptance often lead me to believe that ostensible subversiveness was merely a manifestation of radical chic, (or, at least, that the work's previous energy has been sufficiently diluted as to be non-threatening). Hortie's work doesn't feel like a grab for the brass ring of legitimacy however, perhaps because it reflects and celebrates a participatory and constantly evolving culture; perhaps because she invites her collaborators to share the gallery; or perhaps simply because she recognizes the periodic importance of sloppily staggering home, drenched in sweat and slathered in glitter, music reverberating in your ears.

cam bush is an artist and arts administrator from Winnipeg who does not own a Prius and grew up listening to old Loretta Lynn records.

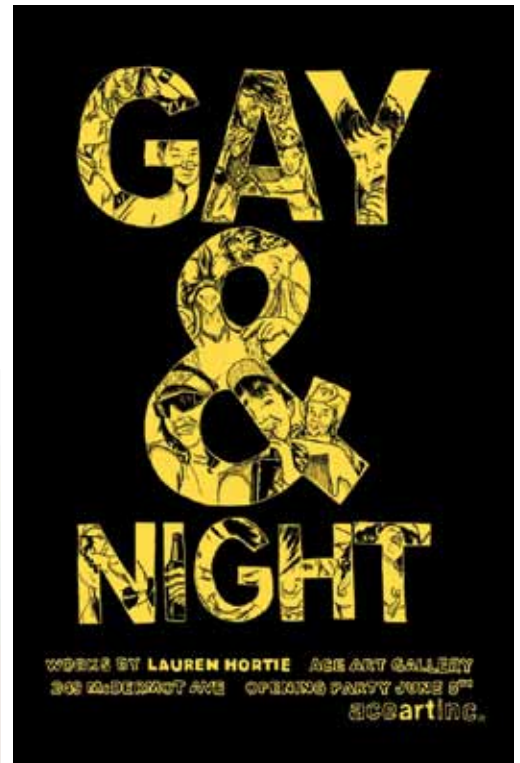
LEFT: Wanda Jackson (Steers & Queers, Toronto), Lauren Hortie, Liz Brandt; cotton fabric, embroidery thread; 2010. MIDDLE: *ManChycken*, charcoal and metallic paper; 2011
 RIGHT: *Double Moustache*, charcoal and metallic paper; 2011.



Installation view



Installation view



Gay & Night poster, Lauren Hortie; screen printed by Martha Street Studio; 2011.

All images courtesy of Susan MacWilliam. Stills from the *F-L-A-M-M-A-R-I-O-N* video; 2009, colour, stereo



F-L-A-M-M-A-R-I-O-N

SUSAN MacWILLIAM

MAIN GALLERY | OCTOBER 15- NOVEMBER 12, 2010

In 1931 a 'teleplasm' spelling out the name 'Flammarion' appeared on the wall of a cabinet at a séance in Winnipeg. Camille Flammarion (1842–1925) was a French astronomer and psychical researcher and his name appeared at Thomas Glendenning Hamilton's sitting of June 10, 1931.

F-L-A-M-M-A-R-I-O-N features a reconstruction of Thomas Glendenning Hamilton's séance cabinet, the Belfast poet and writer Ciaran Carson, Atlanta based Danish American poltergeist investigator Dr. William G. Roll and Arla Marshall, Canadian granddaughter of Hamilton's Scottish sitter Susan Marshall. Recorded in three cities across the globe (Winnipeg, Atlanta and Belfast) Carson, Roll and Marshall come together in *F-L-A-M-M-A-R-I-O-N* and respond to the image of the teleplasm.

In 2008 Belfast based artist Susan MacWilliam was awarded the Arts Council of Northern Ireland International Residency at *aceartinc.* During this residency she researched the

Hamilton Family fonds/TG Hamilton Spirit Photograph Archive housed at the University of Manitoba. This research directly informed *F-L-A-M-M-A-R-I-O-N*, a video created as part of MacWilliam's solo exhibition at the 2009 Venice Biennale where she represented Northern Ireland. *aceartinc.* was proud to bring MacWilliam back to Winnipeg to show work so intimately tied up with our city's supernatural heritage.

Using video, photography and installation MacWilliam has made work about materialisation mediums, table tilters, optograms, trance, dermo optical perception and x-ray vision. MacWilliam has worked extensively with historical archives, prominent parapsychologists and psychical research institutes. The use of interview and documentary processes as portraiture is explored and the work provides a historical visual record and interpretation of particular cases within the history of parapsychology and psychical research.



Canada Council
for the Arts

Conseil des Arts
du Canada

aceartinc. gratefully acknowledges the support of the Canada Council for the Arts' Visiting Foreign Artists Program for this exhibition.



FLAMMORION



Artwork & Photos: Linus Woods



MANITOBA ARTS COUNCIL
CONSEIL DES ARTS DU MANITOBA



HOBBS
AND ASSOCIATES

ALL MY RELATIONS

AKINA-NDENWA-MAKANAK

AN EXHIBITION BY LINUS WOODS, CURATED BY JAIMIE ISAAC

FLUX GALLERY

AUGUST 10-30, 2010

The artwork in this show connects Indigenous Peoples together with mixed media paintings in an installation symbolic of a family tree. The exhibition focuses on community and family, two cornerstones of traditional Indigenous values.

The show is reflective of artist Linus Woods' connection to his Dakota/Ojibway roots and affectionate interest in North American Indigenous Peoples. *All My Relations* transcends the cultural similarities and differences among the Indigenous Peoples represented, revealing a historical connection to spirituality, kinship, and common colonial experience.



No More Stolen Sisters Human Billboard Action #1 involving community members and Stop Violence Against Aboriginal Women Action Group. September 25, 2010.

Photo: M. Placentile

SHOWING UP, SPEAKING OUT

FEATURED ARTISTS: INGE HOONTE, TOMAS JONSSON, DEBORAH KELLY, KRISTIN NELSON AND STOP VIOLENCE AGAINST ABORIGINAL WOMEN ACTION GROUP INCLUDING LEAH DECTER

DIRECTED AND CURATED BY MILENA PLACENTILE

FLUX GALLERY

SEPTEMBER 3 - OCTOBER 5, 2010

Showing Up, Speaking Out was a four-week project offering Winnipeggers unique opportunities to speak out on important topics such as housing, poverty, and accessibility, by co-creating temporary art works in public spaces with local and visiting artists. The project was about the role of art in building community. It also emphasized the legitimacy of public space as a site for conversation about city life.

www.showingupspeakingout.ca

FUNDERS: Canada Council for the Arts, Winnipeg Arts Council, The Manitoba Government and General Employees' Union

PRODUCTION PARTNERS: Art City, Institute for Women's and Gender Studies at the University of Winnipeg, Mentoring Artists for Women's Art, Urban Shaman: Contemporary Aboriginal Art [each gave money as well as promotional resources]

IN-KIND SPONSORS: newwinnipeg.net, Akimbo, CKUW, Paul Phillips, Ragpickers Anti-Fashion Emporium

ADDITIONAL PARTNERS: Amnesty International, Culture Days Manitoba, RAW: Gallery of Architecture and Design, Social Planning Council of Winnipeg, The University of Winnipeg's Students' Association, Video Pool Media Arts Centre, Winnipeg Citizens' Coalition



Installation view



The Eritrean Women's Photography Project Quilt
Photos: Sarah Crawley

PICTURING A BRIGHT FUTURE: THE ERITREAN WOMEN'S PHOTOGRAPHY PROJECT

SARAH CRAWLEY AND PROJECT PARTICIPANTS

FLUX GALLERY

OCTOBER 3 - NOVEMBER 2, 2010

This exhibition of photographic works by members of the *Eritrean Women's Photography Project* and artist Sarah Crawley was the result of a year long WITH ART project, a Winnipeg Arts Council community public art program, additionally funded by the Winnipeg Foundation and supported by The Eritrean Community in Winnipeg, Inc. Spending time together in the darkroom, the digital lab and at community events the 13 participants created a body of work that revolved around their lives as recent newcomers to Canada.



CONSEIL DES ARTS DE WINNIPEG
WINNIPEG ARTS COUNCIL



Photo: Robert Szkolnicki

SEND + RECEIVE : A FESTIVAL OF SOUND V.12 OFFICIAL LAUNCH

MAIN GALLERY

OCTOBER 23, 2010

AMPLIFIED GESTURE (2009) PHIL HOPKINS | UK | 55 MIN

TRANSIENTS (2007) SWEDEN | 21 MIN | PERFORMANCE BY THE SONS OF GOD

send + receive is an international festival that advances the discipline of sound art, and is one of the few annual media arts festivals in North America focusing exclusively on sound-based work. It has become an invaluable opportunity for showcasing the innovative work of Manitoban, Canadian and international artists. **send + receive** addresses the need for a critical and intimate platform for audio based art.



CAN YOU HEAR THE CITY WHISPERING?

IMMONY MEN AND MAEGAN BROADHURST
FLUX GALLERY

NOVEMBER 5-17, 2010

Book Launch and short exhibition to coincide with *My City's Still Breathing: Symposium*

This project was an exploration of the cityscape within Winnipeg. Taking a tourist-like approach in their research process, Immony Men and Maegan Broadhurst asked the general public to locate a favourite and a disliked place in the city. The artists then visited the sites and documented them. They created a database of the spots picked by participants and out this information on a poster they pasted around the city. They also created a small 'travel guide' which they freely distributed in pubs, cafes and other public locations. Through sharing people's sites Men and Broadhurst gained a sense of shared intimacy. In this exhibition they explained how they used the city as a platform and its inhabitants as collaborators to gain a sense of shared intimacy and create art that reflects upon and explores a city's emotional landscape.

www.changeinplans.com



Photos: Immony Men & Maegan Broadhurst



Photos: Allison Cooper

NEW MINDS

BRANDON UNIVERSITY DEPARTMENT OF VISUAL AND ABORIGINAL ART
STUDENT THESIS SHOW

FLUX GALLERY

FEBRUARY 8-24, 2011

This exhibition showcased works by Ashley Heinrichs, Kate McDonald, Suzanne Debassige, Lauren Bell, Monika Sormova, Ann Rivera, Kristen Perrott, Anne Boychuk, Brandon Peloquin, and Alison Cooper.

With thanks to Steve Gouthro, Kevin DeForest, and Alison Cooper student coordinator.

Now in its sixth year, this BFA program located in Brandon offers an alternative rural perspective in the contemporary Manitoba art scene.



THY NEIGHBOR'S FRUIT

KATERIE GLADDYS

ATMOSPHERE - 2011

MEDIATED CITIES UNIVERSITY OF MANITOBA FACULTY OF ARCHITECTURE
FLUX GALLERY

FEBRUARY 5, 2011

This project explores the act of an exchange—asking for something that is free requiring no effort on the part of the owner other than access to their personal space, transforming fruit into jam (product) and finally returning the fruit not only to the owner of the tree, but to other neighbors who own fruit trees in the form of jars of jam.

The methodology that informs this piece explores and textualizes suburban space in terms of the production of food examining what constitutes decoration and utility in the ordinary landscape. This research serves to perhaps highlight the commodity/currency found in one's outdoor environment and how the sharing of that resource could create alternative awareness of community. The organization of these landscapes seen as atypical with respect to providing food revisits the idea of local vis a vis "homegrown" food. The project is a qualitative, poetic interpretation of social/environmental research and fieldwork.

Every year the University of Manitoba's Faculty of Architecture hosts a symposium in the series *Atmosphere*. The *Atmosphere* symposia explore the intangible and overlooked dimensions of architecture and the city: those difficult to pin down, document, record with conventional instruments and methodologies.



Photos: Katerie Gladdys & hannah_g



Photos: Rachel Schappart

FLUX IN FLUX

UNIVERSITY OF MANITOBA SCHOOL OF ART STUDENT THESIS SHOW

FLUX GALLERY

MAY 15-28, 2011

Following a winter spent with art, ideas and the creative process, the University of Manitoba School of Art Painting, Drawing and Sculpture Thesis students will presented a group Art show.

Jennifer Adams, Julie Coss, Megan Driedger, Gillian King, Geneviève Levasseur, Lauren McPhaden, Rachel Schappart, Ryan Trudeau, Philip Foidart, Vanessa Marginet, Jennifer Orr, Teresa Braun, Andrea Roberts.



NÚNA (NOW)

núna (now) is a series of Icelandic / Canadian music, film, dance, visual art, book and theatre events curated and produced by a group of local artists with ties to Iceland.

THE BIG PICTURE

SIRRA SIGRÚN SIGURÐARDÓTTIR AND ERLING T.V. KLINGENBERG

FLUX GALLERY

MAY 1-28, 2011

Sirra Sigrún Sigurðardóttir

Sirra Sigrún Sigurðardóttir (b.1977) graduated from the Iceland Academy of the Arts in 2001 and continued her studies in Art Theory at the University of Iceland from 2003 to 2004. She is one of the founders of Kling & Bang gallery in Reykjavik and has in that capacity organized a number of exhibitions and projects, including Jason Rhoades' and Paul McCarthy's *Sheep Plug* (2004), John Bock's film *Skipholt* (2005) and Kling & Bang's *Sirkus for Frieze* projects (2008). Sigrún Sigurðardóttir has exhibited extensively in Iceland and internationally.

Sirra's work often seems to find its footing on a thin line between art and entertainment, catching the viewer's attention without revealing careful artistic investigations into the color spectrum and principles of movement and space. Certain personal symbols bear reference to art history, the status the artist, statistical information, scientific theories and topographical contexts. work evokes a response similar to a child's sense of captivation by a magician's illusions.

Erling T.V. Klingenberg

Erling lives and works in Reykjavik and is co-founder of Kling & Bang Gallery, Reykjavik, Iceland.

Erling T.V. Klingenberg appears often in his work when he uses art history as a form of objective presentation and subjective images. His working methods fluctuate between the challenging and the sincere, while allowing obtrusive emotions to enter his work. Erling puts the concept of artist into an unexpected and humorous context, just like in his motto; "it's hard to be an Artist in a Rockstar Body". The metaphor that exists in the artist's endless chase for fame and fortune is at the root of Klingenberg's body of work. However, it is not in the final product but in the process that his interests lie. His obsession with defining the role of the artist in this "Rock Star" based society is what takes him to actually investigate not what the artist does but how he does it. At the end, does he actually want us to see him as a godlike creator rather than a Rock Star that has just left the building?



Top: Installation view

Middle: *The Big Picture* by Sirra Sigrún Sigurðardóttir - the print is based on an old map visualising relative powers of contemporary states, nations and empires. Digital print on canvas, 666cm x 120cm, 2011

Bottom: *Sur-face* - portrait of the artist made from clay by Winnipeg artists Erika Henserson, Rachel Schappart, Susan Magnusson, Susan Ayden, Sara Perkins, Tyler Ross; Erling T.V. Klingenberg, 2011.

Photos: Bryanna Stafanson

Photo: Lisa Wood/MAWA



MAWA

(PRESENTED IN PARTNERSHIP WITH ACEARTINC.)

FIRST FRIDAY LECTURE WITH LAUREN HORTIE

JUNE 3, 2011

Queer Art Activism: My First Lesbian Colouring Book: the importance of pop culture for a queer experience

Pop culture is something that surrounds us all, sometimes as invisible as wallpaper, and yet the images that we absorb “without thinking” can tell us much about our individual and collective fears, desires, motivations and concerns. Lauren discussed the power of role models found in popular culture and their possible “readings”. She also talked about queer visual culture, the power of visibility and the importance of creating imagery that represents the queer experience.



Photo: Fiona Jackson



RAINBOW RESOURCE CENTRE

LAUREN HORTIE WORKSHOP WITH PEER PROJECT FOR YOUTH

MAY 30, 2011



AMY SIMOES

HOOPIN' N MOVIN' WORKSHOP

JUNE 29, 2011



Photos: Ted Martin

PEGJAM 2.0

MAIN GALLERY

JULY 15-17, 2011

Another fun and creative Winnipeg game jam took place in July, thanks to the BitCollective, New Media Manitoba and aceartinc. What's a game jam you ask? It's an event where creative folk of all stripes get together to make brand new games over the course of a weekend. Never made a game before? That's totally cool! Game jams are a good place to start messing around and learning how to do new things. Not a programmer? Also cool! Artists, musicians and other creative types who can contribute to the game making process are welcome.

<http://bitcollective.ca/>

<http://newmediamanitoba.com/>

Sponsored by: aceartinc., New Media Manitoba

THE CENTRAL CANADIAN CENTER FOR PERFORMANCE (CCCP): PERFORMANCE ROULETTE

MARCH 18, 2011

The Central Canadian Center for Performance called for performance artists from across Canada and around the world to join in an un-juried international performance festival: Performance Roulette. In this event performers could perform from the comfort of their own home, in front of a web cam in a ChatRoulette style environment. They became part of a network of other performers and audiences.

www.cccponline.net



Performance by Liz Garlicki



Performance by Ian Mozden & Doug Melnyk
Photos: Tim Thompson

ARTIST-LED CULTURAL ACTIVITY AS RESISTANCE TO CAPITALISM: PUBLIC LECTURE GIVEN BY MILENA PLACENTILE

JUNE 17, 2011

Growing pressure to frame the value of cultural activity insofar as it serves the dominant economy makes it all the more important to think about the ways in which artist-run culture can demonstrate resistance. Introducing the collective practices of Not an Alternative (New York), PLATFORM (London), and VIVO Media Arts (Vancouver), Milena Placentile shared thoughts on the nature of radical practice within and beyond recognized non-profit structures with the hope of catalyzing discussion relevant to the interests and desires of Winnipeg-based artists.



Image: Internet scavenged

PROJECT ROOMS

are a service to ace members to utilize the available space and resources of aceartinc. for artistic development, such as documentation, research, installation practice, private studio visits, etc. Written requests for Project Rooms are considered by the Programming Coordinator, on an ongoing basis. No fee is paid nor charged for this service; and it is not for public exhibition or performance.

This is a list of who used the space during the 10/11 year...

ANDREW RABYNIUK

AUGUST 11, 2010

Photo documentation of *Weather Station: An Almanac and Topography in Two Rooms*



Hanging Room Divider, 2010.

CHANTAL MIERAU

JANUARY 28 - FEBRUARY 4, 2011

Documentation of a performance



Hymning; still from video 2011

SHAUN FINNEGAN

MAY 27 - MAY 29, 2011

Installation of work, private studio visits, critical feedback



Installation views

GARLAND LAM

JUNE 7-12, 2011

Installation and photo documentation



Title: *Here/There Now* Media: fabric, coloured thread, glue and textile medium. Date: ongoing since 2010. Photos: Billy Fung.



CAKE-OLGY

weddings

party fun

special orders

get in touch

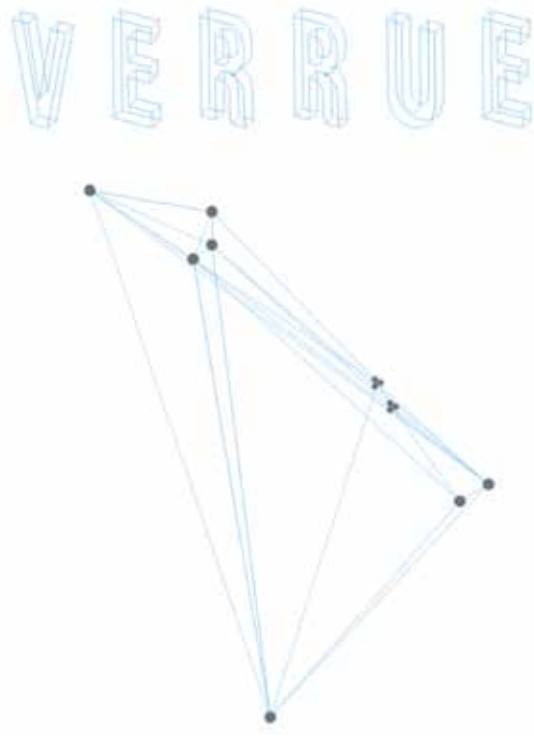
about us

We like to think of ourselves as the little bakery that could. From our modest beginnings, working from home, to renting shared space with a restaurant and to our latest endeavour: our very own shop. We're down in the heart of Winnipeg's historic exchange district serving up sweet treats for you as you browse the shops. Classic flavours, unique designs and sweet treats.

204.612.yumm (9866)
 cakeolgy.cakes@gmail.com



Canadian Goodwill Industries
 70 Princess Street
 Winnipeg, Manitoba
 R3B 1K2
 (204) 943-6435



VERRUE was founded in 2004 and advocates on behalf of Manitoban Artist-Run Centres and other non-profit arts organizations. The members meet regularly to share information, coordinate events, and work towards strengthening the arts in Winnipeg and Manitoba.

VERRUE is a member of ARCA, The Artist-Run Centres and Collectives Conference.

www.arcc-ccaa.org

VERRUE a été fondée en 2004 et défend les intérêts des Centres d'artistes autogérés du Manitoba ainsi que ceux d'autres organisations artistiques à but non lucratif. Les membres se rencontrent régulièrement pour partager des informations, coordonner des événements et travailler à renforcer les arts à Winnipeg et au Manitoba.

VERRUE est un membre de ARCA, la Conférence des collectifs et des centres d'artistes autogérés

www.arcc-ccaa.org

aceartinc.'s **turnaround** is a series of events/performances/installations that occur on a single night between the strike and install of regular strike exhibitions in the gallery. Operating on a fly-by-night ethos, **turnaround** enables performers to take advantage of a large space to experiment with and test ideas. Preference is given to projects which are innovative, mischievous, passionate and enthusiastic. It is also an opportunity for community building between various artists and audiences in Winnipeg.

turnarounds put on a nocturnal performance or throw a party etc. in the main gallery of ace. ace does not pay any fees to the participants but instead asks them to charge admission, half of which is kept by them, the other half goes to ace as fundraising for our programming and operational costs.

MORE INFO @ www.aceart.org/turnaround

PRIVATE DANCER, DANCER FOR MONEY | MING HON

APRIL 14, 2011



CLEAVER PIECE

(2010)

Choreographed and Performed by: **Ming Hon**

Costume Design by: **Jill Sawatsky**

Set Design: **Tomek Jazieckweiz**

The butcher's cleaver as an ancient/violent/seductive implement, distributing fresh, raw, 'choice cuts' of exotic delicacy. The fine art of butchery—usually performed behind swinging doors in buildings outside city centres, in rooms with walls and floors which are easily sprayed down. Here in the performance the cutting room is exposed to the consuming public; death and animals are quite literally the absent referent. Blade on stone, leg, thigh, and breast, the Butcher is in fact the meat she is selling. Toying with tension, and mastering control, the Butcher, she executes for the audience a simultaneous experience of horror, seduction, and appetite, an offering of cultural, societal, and economic status. On the chopping block, in black dress, she is the *bête noire*, your beast of burden, refashioned and transformed into the most sensuous, unctuous, and toothsome consumable accompanied with, of course, *la petite mort*.



NUDE IS IN.

A work in progress

Choreography and Concept by: **Ming Hon**

Performed by: **Hilary Bergen & Ming Hon**

Music Composed and Played by: **Tim Church**

Costume Design and Backstage Dresser: **Jill Sawatsky**

Set Design: **Tomek Yajibobo**

With Much Love and Thanks...

Hilary, Tim, Jill, Sarah Anne Johnson, Alexandra Elliot, Tomek, Eton, Gregor Krammer (My Mama from 'House of Gregoire'), the staff at *aceartinc.*, The School of Contemporary Dancers, The Free Associates, ..

This work was made possible with the generous support of the City of Winnipeg through the Winnipeg Arts Council, and the Manitoba Arts Council.



CONSEIL DES ARTS DE WINNIPEG
WINNIPEG ARTS COUNCIL



MANITOBA ARTS COUNCIL
CONSEIL DES ARTS DU MANITOBA

**ROLLERSKATE 'TIL LATE
NICOLE SHIMONEK**

JULY 28, 2011



Roller skates, skateboards, etc. whooshed around the gallery for a coupla hours—go-faster tunes were provided by DJ Stagpanther.

**BUSKER DERBY
PETER BEACH**

JULY 30, 2011

aceartinc.'s **TURNAROUND PRESENTS**
a BUSKER DERBY
an open mic card-game show
FUN! PRIZES!
B.Y.O-INSTRUMENTS
ALL AGES!!
@ THE ACE ART GALLERY
SATURDAY JULY 30TH 7PM
www.myspace.com/bossbass
 questions?email : brotherust@hotmail.com

THE **aceart**inc. INTERNS 2011



EMILY SIROTA

University of Winnipeg

OCTOBER 6, 2010 – APRIL 1, 2011

Finished updating our archives.
Winnipeg Goldeyes Liaison Manager.



ANDREW BUDYK

University of Manitoba

MAY 11 –24, AUGUST 24, 2011

Storage management.
Install and strike of exhibitions.
Emily's Cove Programmer
Super-human feats of strength and speed.



SHAUN MACDONALD

The Winnipeg Foundation's Summer Internship Program 2011

JULY 6 – 25, AUGUST 25, 2011

Fundraising Coordinator-
Soap Box Derby and Raffle.
Soap Box Crash Test Pilot.

THE MIDNIGHT **PIE FIGHT** FUNDRAISER



Photos: Courtesy of Steve Ackerman.

aceartinc.

annual call for submissions

2nd August 2012

visual art: video, installation, painting, drawing, sculpture, performance, photography, other stuff

www.aceart.org/submissions

Image: hannah_g

ANNUAL CALL FOR SUBMISSIONS TO **aceartinc.**'S REGULAR PROGRAM

DEADLINE: AUGUST 2, 2012

aceartinc. is dedicated to cultural diversity in its programming and to this end encourages applications from all contemporary artists and curators, including those identifying as members of GLBT (gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgendered), Aboriginal (status, non-status, Inuit and Metis) and all other culturally diverse communities.

Regular Programming is created through a general, annual call inviting submissions from visual artists in all media for public exhibitions and performances within aceartinc.'s gallery spaces.

The Regular Programming Jury reviews submissions within the context of aceartinc.'s mandate and goals. The Regular Programming Jury is comprised of the Program Coordinator, 2-4 Board Directors, and 2 Community Members.

PLEASE VISIT www.aceart.org/submissions FOR MORE DETAILS. OR GIVE US A CALL. OR POP IN.

MEMBERSHIP

Your support assists in the research, development, presentation, dissemination and interpretation of contemporary art in Canada. Members receive for one year:

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- Access to staff for advise about grants, exhibiting, and installation.
- Entitlement to apply for a Project Room.
- A free copy of our annual, limited edition publication, *PaperWait*.
- The opportunity to put on a **turnaround** event.
- A page on our member's wiki.
- Invitations to events, exhibitions and workshops.
- Regular (but not annoyingly so) email updates.
- Our quarterly calendar of art events around the city.
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MEMBERSHIP IS A FLAT RATE OF \$20.
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THE ACEART WIKI

Wikis are participatory web forums that allow multiple users to write, edit, and collaborate on content.

The **aceartinc.** wiki encourages communication between artists involved with the gallery, stimulate dialogue about art and art-related issues, and spread the word about the fantastic artists living and working in the city.

We are striving to create an online hub for Winnipeg's artists and cultural producers.

The **aceartinc.** wiki was conceived and designed by Jo Snyder with the generous support of Manitoba Culture, Heritage, Tourism and Sport. Tanya Tran managed the wiki last summer when participating in the Winnipeg Foundation's Youth in Philanthropy Summer Internship Program.

The wiki is available to members and alumni.

If you would like a wiki page please get in touch and we'll be happy to set you up.

www.aceart.org/thewiki



OFFICE PLAYLIST 2010/11 (incomplete)

GRAND OL PARTY

Bad, bad man
Look out young son

STROUD FM TALKING HEADS

once in a lifetime
this must be the place

JAMES BLAKE

limit to your love

NICHOLAS JAAR

space is only noise

WANDA JACKSON

honeybop

CROOKED BROTHERS

sweet lemons

DOLLY PARTON

potential new boyfriend

Jolene

Tennessee Mountain Home

LOVE

and more again

que vida!

AUSTRA

the future

lose it

THE ANTLERS

parenthesis

SHUGGIE OTIS

aht uh mi hed

PRINCE

uptown

when doves cry

DAVID BOWIE

ashes to ashes

kooks

john

I'm only dancing

LOU REED

satellite of love

walk on the wild side

JOHN COLTRANE

Giant Steps

CHARLES MINGUS

Better get hit in your soul

MILES DAVIS

Ife

DUKE ELLINGTON

oclapaca

ART BLAKEY

like someone in love

ARCHIE SHEPP

Attica Blues

THE COOL KIDS

one, two

Black Mags

BILL WITHERS

ain't no sunshine

lonely town

lonely street

CHARLES BRADLEY

why is it so hard?

DIRTY PROJECTORS

remade horizon

stillness is the move

DONNY HATHAWAY

jealous guy

ROXY MUSIC

jealous guy

EVERYTHING EVERYTHING

two for nero

FEIST

gatekeeper, Do Right Mix

my moon my man

FINAL FANTASY

none of you will ever see

a penny

BEIRUT

untitled 17

FINE YOUNG CANNIBALS

not the man I used to be

GIL SCOTT-HERON

I'm new here

HALL & OATES

I can't go for that

LOCH LOMOND

elephants and little girls

JACKSON C. FRANK

just like anything

JANELLE MONAE

oh, maker

JUNIP

rope and summit

JUNIOR BOYS

in the morning

KATE BUSH

running up that hill

KEN NORDINE

brown

green

THE KNIFE

pass this on

LCD SOUNDSYSTEM

north American scum

LIFE WITHOUT BUILDINGS

new town

LOCAL NATIVES

shapeshifter

MICHAEL JACKSON

the way you make me feel

rock with you

THE PRETENDERS

back on the chain gang;

message of love

MOS DEF

quiet dog

N.E.R.D.

yeah you

PEACHES

lovertits

QUIET VILLAGE

too high to move

ROYAL CANOE

me loving your money

fabulous mess

RUSH- SARAH VAUGHN

you're not the kind

SHARON JONES AND THE DAP KINGS

I learn the hard way

one hundred days, one

hundred nights

SERGE GAINSBOURG

melodie nelson

bonnie and clyde

SUGAR HILL GANG

rappers delight

GRAND MASTER FLASH

the message

TIMBER TIMBRE

magic arrow

bad ritual

TWIN SHADOW

tyrant destroyer

WAR PAINT

undretow

WAX MANNEQUIN

the price

THE WEEKND

house of balloons

WILD BEASTS

all the king's men

THE XX

vcr

YEASAYER

2080

KIM MITCHELL

might as well go for a soda

TROOPER

boys in white cars

TENDER FOREVER

the soft and the hardcore

MIRAH

share this place

FERN KELLY

baby, can I kiss you

LITTLE BOOTS

poison

VARIOUS MIXTAPES

FOUND

IN THE ARCHIVES

PREMONITION -

CHIC GAMINE

paper heart

VANILLA MUFFINS

sharing song

RACHAEL DADD

following the geese

WIG SMITH

FREEZE PUPPY

my best friend

SCHUBERT

PUCCINI

LA BOHEME

FLEETWOOD MAC

ELVIS PRESLEY

Animal instinct

THE EX GIRLFRIENDS

viva la ventura

NOTORIOUS B.I.G.

Hypnotize

WAILING JENNYS

THE BLOW

parenthesis

EDWARD DEE

why can't there be love?

KASAM PAIDA KARNE

WALE KI

Come closer

KYLE FALCONER

spank rock

MARK RONSON & THE BUSINESS INTL'

The Bike Song

DOUGLAS WOOD

icides

THE SIMONSOUND

Bakers Dozen

GAL COSTA

Miho Verde (folklore

portugues)

JIM SULLIVAN

Roll back the time

PASTOR T.L. BARRETT & THE YOUTH FOR CHRIST

CHOIR

Like a ship... (without a sail)

THE BEATLES

in my life

BALANESCU QUARTET

Model

R. TISLEY (QUIETLY WITH JOHANN)- RACE

WITH BA

PRAB AUR PACHIM

Twinkle Twinkle little star

PRINCE BUSTER

sit and wonder

DESTROYER

Kaput



MONSTERRRRS:

ARTISTS' AND WRITERS' PAGES

Winnipeg, like every urban centre, has several monsters, (the weather, its supernatural history, urban sprawl), that dominate the landscape and its inhabitants. Artists and thinkers encounter monsters in many guises—one's personal demon can be an uneasy source of inspiration. We wanted to present a cross section of local, national, and international takes on this theme to explore what scares and inspires us.



Image: hannah_g

CURATORIAL COMMITTEE:

Emily Doucet, hannah_g, Helga Jakobson, Laura Magnusson, Josh Ruth

INHABITING THE SPACES OF HENRY DARGER'S MONSTERS

BY EMILY G. DOUCET

Henry Darger Room Collection: Full Room



Underneath a neon green sign that punctuates the brick storefronts of Chicago's West Town neighborhood, sits a gallery called Intuit: The Center for Intuitive and Outsider Art. Drawn there by the promise of viewing what is known as the Henry Darger Room Collection, I meandered my way through the first two rooms of the gallery, which were stuffed to the gills with an exhibition curated from

the center's permanent collection. Humbly located in a small area near the back of the building, the semi-permanent installation of a large portion of Henry Darger's former home lay in wait. Alongside several key architectural elements and furnishings from the original Webster St. apartment, hangs artwork as framed by Darger himself as well as his massive collection of scrapbooks, comics and art

supplies. Here, the curators devote less attention to representational accuracy in favor of creating a visceral statement on Darger's habitat. In the didactic panels accompanying the display, the curator's state that they have strayed away from placing objects and furnishings in the places and positions they occupied in the original space, to make a new arrangement, ordered instead to evoke the 'feeling' of the original space. After viewing this installation, I was struck by the question: does the display of the contents of Darger's apartment alongside several examples of his work cause the viewer to equate the value of his art with his possessions and biography, that is, his personal monsters? The following thoughts should not be regarded as an attack on the validity of the Henry Darger Room Collection exhibition. Nor do I wish to undermine the importance of the display and curation of historical spaces. Rather, I wish to think

about a few of the difficulties (the monsters, if you will) that arise in curatorial interpretations of biography.

From the beginning the curators did not aim for this to be a project dedicated to constructing an exact replica of Darger's apartment; rather they wanted to give a deeper sense of the frenetic and disordered environment he occupied throughout his incredibly prolific lifetime.

This glimpse into his working life [was] not intended to explain away or demystify his work (or to fetishize his belongings), but rather to amplify the reality of its creation, the tremendous amount of time and energy that had been poured into that room, the tangible link between his epic *In the Realms of the Unreal* and real life.²



Henry Darger Room Collection: Table and Chair



Henry Darger Room Collection: Table

Henry Darger Room Collection: Mantle



The 'amplification of reality', versus more traditional preservation of the working and living spaces of artists, nonetheless highlights our preoccupation with the suggestive power of 'real-life' creative spaces and, the psychological insights we hope they afford. This tendency is well illustrated by the popularity of famous work spaces such as those belonging to Frank Lloyd Wright and Ernest Hemingway, to name a few. What interests me here is how the exhibition of the Darger Collection speaks to the new ways in which an artist is brought into a gallery, whether in Artist-Run Centres or institutes dedicated to historical preservation. What ensues when endeavoring to exhibit artistic process and psychological identity by curating the spaces that have been witness or currently house their occupant's creative practice? Most importantly with this exhibition is whether it strays far enough from the traditional model to represent a new method of display or is simply a jumping off point for understanding ways in which the biographical exhibition of personal possessions contributes to how the artwork is valued and/or criticized.

In order to understand the ways in which The Henry Darger Room Collection explores the psychological nature of the physical spaces of artistic identity, a brief discussion of Darger's life and work proves necessary. In fact, this necessity highlights the ways in which the monsters of biography continue to shadow and haunt our interpretations of artwork created by artists with known trauma in their lives³. In order to demonstrate precisely how the politics of display perpetuate this cycle, I shall divulge the biographical details that have set me upon this path whilst

Henry Darger Room Collection: Typewriter



hopefully avoiding the sort of reductive biographical detailing that often takes the place of critical analysis of "outsider" artists⁴.

Born in Chicago in 1892, Darger's mother died in childbirth when he was four years old⁵. At this point, Darger's father could no longer take care of him, so he was sent to a Catholic home for boys. Due to his 'misbehavior', often understood to have been masturbation, the young boy, at the age of 12, was sent to the Asylum for Feeble-minded Children in Lincoln, Illinois. At the age of seventeen, and after several attempts, he finally managed to escape from the asylum and return to his hometown of Chicago, where he promptly began his visionary work, an epic novel which, at his death in 1973, numbered 15,145 pages and included at least 300 large scale illustrations. An extraordinarily prolific writer and visual artist, Darger also produced a 5,084-page biography simply entitled *The History of My Life*. This included a scrupulous record of Chicago weather that he maintained for over thirty years, often with several entries daily referring not only to meteorological events but also his emotional responses to them. The Collection also displays many of his numerous scrapbooks. These volumes contain large numbers of cuttings of images of young girls, disastrous weather events, as well as newspaper clippings about devastating house fires. These collections hint at both Darger's artistic processes as well as the emotions, imaginings and fears that inspired his work.

Gloriously colourful yet psychologically haunting images accompany Henry Darger's science fiction epic, *The story of the*

Vivian Girls, in what is known as the realms of the unreal of the glandeco-angelinian war storm, caused by the child slave rebellion. Often referred to simply as *In the Realms of the Unreal*, this is the magnum opus that has brought significant posthumous fame for Darger. *In the Realms of the Unreal* is the age-old but still harrowing struggle between good and still evil, which in this case, takes place on a planet that is home to the land of Abbenia, whose inhabitants are being challenged by the evil Glandelinians. The Glandelinians make slaves of little children but are frequently and avidly challenged by the courageous Vivian Sisters, who - while being only children themselves- battle the Glandelinian forces in order to protect the lives of the other children. Photographs of Darger's home show portraits of the Vivian Girls framed above and around the mantle of his fireplace, which also held numerous religious idols. The central placement of the portraits suggests both a semi-religious reverence for his young heroes as well as a tender, familial empathy for their struggle. Many of his illustrations depict large battalions of identical, archetypal, prepubescent girls, uniquely transfigured by roughly sketched male genitals. These pictures were often created by enlarging the young female figures in comic books or children's books that Darger had traced at his local drug store.

Upon viewing the mundane, physical context of Darger's work one questions whether the preservation of such an environment serves to cement our understanding of him as a psychologically unstable man with obsessive collecting tendencies or simply monumentalizes one artist's devotion to creation. Exhibition displays like this often push us to choose between psychological profiling and monumentalising rather than even handedly accepting the symbiotic relationships between biography, creativity and art-making.

Did this pilgrimage to Darger's possessions simply cause me to forge a fantastical narrative that combined the history of Darger's life and his art within a spectacle facilitated by contemporary museological practice? In many ways this exhibition simply functions as a conceptual text that reads as a somewhat tired psychoanalytical reading of Darger's work. Instead of challenging these presumptions, the display of Darger's belongings underlines the chaotic nature of his psyche and its attachment to his art, which has often been used to justify critical interest in his work. While the curators' self-reflexively acknowledge that the display of personal effects can be interpreted as the fetishized

worship of possessions, their claims to having established something different here have perhaps missed the mark. The success of this exhibition lies in the complementary curatorial texts about the processes of preservation and display rather than the physical installation itself. Darger's richly complex drawings and paintings do not depend upon his personal monsters for their aesthetic and emotional power. And yet the practice and politics of traditional modes of display have again perpetuated the confessional/biographical approach to an incredibly large and diverse oeuvre of work by a gifted artist at the expense of letting the merits of the work speak for themselves. Darger's status as an artist occupying the fringes of society as well as contemporary art criticism is subsequently cemented.

- 1 The curators, Jessica Moss and Lisa Stone, describe this installation as a work in progress.
- 2 Lisa Stone, "From Webster Street to Milwaukee Avenue: Preserving a Place for the Appreciation of Henry Darger at Intuit," *The Outsider* 13(2008): 13.
- 3 One particularly troubling and misleading interpretation of Darger's life, are found the comments by John M. Macgregor, author of an unpublished monograph on the artist, that Darger "psychologically, was undoubtedly a serial killer... though he never acted." No other author or scholar working on Darger's work has uncovered any indication that Darger had any desires to harm anyone, children or otherwise. In fact, most of his writing and imagery represent stories of children triumphing over the threat of imminent danger and violence.
- 4 Darger is almost exclusively referred to as an "outsider" artist due to the lack of public knowledge or recognition of his work during his lifetime as well as his lack of formal artistic training. This term in and of itself is contentious, however, I repeat its use here in order to contextualize how Darger is most commonly understood today.
- 5 There is a lack of consensus regarding what happened to the child that would have been Darger's younger sister, however, in this case it is simply important to note that Darger did not have any contact with his sibling during his lifetime.

Emily G. Doucet is a writer, student and cultural worker living and working in Winnipeg, Manitoba. Her current research involves an exploration of the intersections between art, psychology, sexuality and medicine throughout the ages.

Photo credit:
Henry Darger Room Collection at Intuit;
The Center for Intuitive and Outsider Art, Photo © John Faier.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

BY WHITNEY LIGHT



Temple #1 from 'Photogenic Drawings' – Andrew Milne; 36"x36"; photographic emulsion and graphite on tempered glass and cotton rag; 2011

Winnipeg is “a supernatural city of enchanted palimpsests, stories and memories piled one on top of the other.” It is “like a ghost town lacking winds strong enough to really blow us away, we float over the prairie, tethered to farms and reservations and other ancestral outposts.”²

Like all places on the water, Winnipeg soaks up the myths and metaphors of the Assiniboine and the Red. It is early July and both rivers are swollen with floodwaters and their spoils of livelihoods and homes: linens and clothes, furniture and heirlooms, photographs and books sucked down by the current or floating among the lacey trees

that stand to their waists in water. Watching this, one can't help but think about those lost objects of memory, ghosts sinking into fresh watery graves. Or the remains that are stirred up. These rivers and their people seem to navigate the tenuous edges between nature and culture, past and present, this world and another.

At least that is how our writers and artists help us see it, and this inspired in me some informal wondering about why we make monsters and what they do. Monsters (and ghosts, a subcategory) are manifestations of issues that disrupt our self-perceptions. As such, I'd suggest we go beyond the outward shape of werewolves and wendigos and revisit a fundamental Canadian monster: our much written about lack of a coherent national myth and identity. It seems to be the one from which all others grow.

In Gothic literature, grotesque stories and images often have been interpreted as a rendering of some unresolved issue of national history. Literary and cinematic works of this sensibility present the nightmarish aspects of our selves and nation that nonetheless defy presentability by involving the strange or uncanny³. Andrew Milne's series *Images for the End of an Age*, combine pinhole camera photographs and drawings to do just this. Evoking Susan Lord's interpretation of the Gothic sublime, they inspire "falling into history."⁴ In the bubbles and smears of liquid photo emulsion, the city's edifices appear animated by spirits, the streetscapes teem simultaneously with loss and potential. Quickly making both pencil tracings and hazy prints of the street by operating a handmade, larger-than-life *camera obscura* from its inside, Milne effectively depicts both past and future citizen-less architectures on one plane.



Untitled (Erking) - Dominique Rey; colour photograph; 24"x36"; 2011

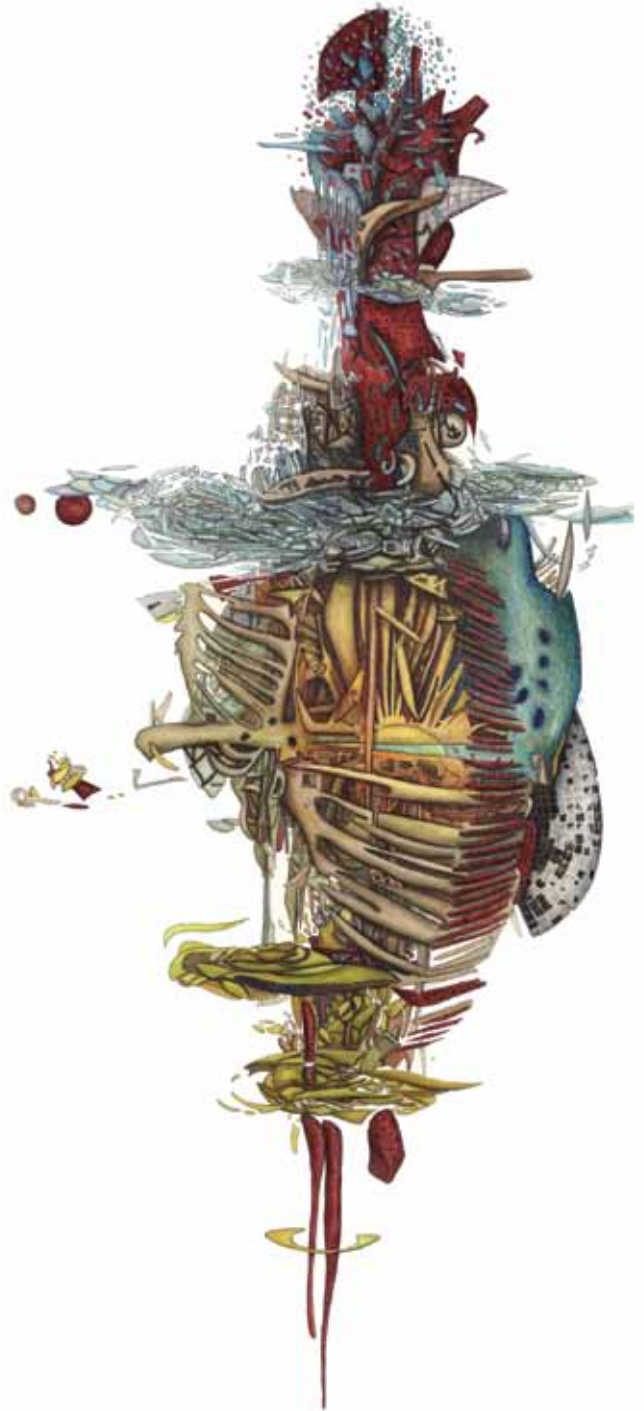
The long exposure time renders any passers by invisible. Disrupting the present, they evoke a troubled past of unfulfilled industry and commerce, as well as an inference of “unfinished” character in their gaps and model-like suggestion of architectures in progress.

Living along so many historical and political fringes, not really winners and not really losers, we are, in Penny Cousineau-Levine’s words, “borderland dwellers.” It’s a psychological spot from which one can see unusual connections, put a foot or hand in another realm and feel around.⁵ Unlike our neighbours to the South, with their national myth of the Frontier to sustain or subvert, the Canadian imagination is more nuanced and prone to existential thinking. It is a rich place for doubts, fears and ambiguities—monsters—to grow.

In a way, these are the monsters that Andrew Cohen pursues in *The Unfinished Canadian*. In his account, the “unconscious Canadian” is one who mostly doesn’t know the facts of his or her country’s history and perhaps doesn’t care to know, inured to the idea that it is not very rich and largely irrelevant. Margaret Atwood’s diagnosis seems to hold: “Canadians themselves feel threatened and nearly extinct as a nation, and suffer also from life-denying experience as individuals—the culture threatens the ‘animal’ within them... Extinction as a species is a distinct possibility.”⁶

Gaylen Johnson’s drawing series, *Extinction*, explores this conception of the Canadian psyche in detail. The infrastructure of our society—skyscrapers, bridges, factories, dams—is splintered into tiny pieces and reassembled upon the bones of animals and people as a work continually in progress. Turning the landscape over brick by brick, Johnson probes and critiques our investment here. He transforms the entire landscape into grand organism-like objects that suggest Manitoba is built by citizens who cannot, or perhaps refuse to, see their part in the larger scheme: we are equal parts constructive and destructive and yet we are bound for erasure by something we haven’t comprehended when all is said and done. Artworks such as Johnson’s remind us that the experience of borderland dwelling is amplified in Manitoba.

The more borders we deal with on a physical, psychological, social level, the more those borders enforce the idea of arbitrary barriers that only remain for as long as they are not challenged. To live along borders is to be unfinished, and while Cohen laments this Canadian situation, for others it’s seen as a productive state, especially when it comes to cultural production. If an unfinished character is morally advantageous because it checks unequivocal thinking Manitobans



Rapture - Galen Johnson; pen and ink; 2011

seem well poised for reflecting on self and nation. We live at the edge of two rivers and two countries; we know the inequities between the downtown and the suburbs, our First Nations people and the middle class, East and West, North and South, rural and urban. We are at the geographical centre of the country and yet feel ourselves almost invisible, like a black hole that could be a portal between this universe and the next, or just a place where things disappear.

Dominique Rey's recent photographic series, *Erking*, addresses this borderland through the myth of the Wilderness. The erking has its origins in Germanic folklore, and is a malevolent demon of the forest that preys on travelers and takes them away to their death. It's a monster that resonates in a Canadian context in terms of settlers' relationships to nature and the First Nations Other. But by playing the part of the seductress herself, Rey does something else. She stands amidst the Manitoba forest barely recognizable in masks and stuffed, coloured tights that make her body protrude unnaturally. The erking of these photographs takes on a peculiar and contemporary plasticity. Malleable and androgynous, it is neither human nor inhuman but a character that reveals "death, a dual sexual and gender identification, and an ability to 'cross over' into other realms."⁸ Extinction, taboos, anxieties, desires and fears about the integrity of the individual and national body—all resonate in Rey's self-reflexive images.

In all of the works I have discussed here, there's something—a shadowy doorway, a pair of bones, the strange glint in the eyes of a mask—that may haunt us. They are also all quite beautiful; there's much pleasure to be had in getting lost in such strange places. In these highly mediated representations of the world, we're pulled out of official versions of our selves and our history and landed somewhere else, where history and national and local myths are explored and engaged. As Avery Gordon writes, haunting is a far from romantic activity:

When you see, in a photograph or in a hat or in a foot print, the hand of the state, the other door, the water and what is down there, you have seen the ghostly matter: the lost beloveds and the force that made them disposable. When you have a profane illumination of these matters, when you know in a way you did not know before, then you have been notified of your involvement. You are already involved, implicated, in one way or another, and this is why, if you don't banish it, kill it, or reduce it to something you can already manage, when it appears to you, the ghost will inaugurate the necessity of doing something about it.⁹

As Canadians, we could stand to be more implicated, bolder in claiming our ghosts and then staking out a plan to deal with them. When Atwood went looking for Canadian monsters she suggested that the literary use of such supernatural actors "surely is a search for reassurance. We want to be sure that...we are not as flat and lacking in resonance as we were once led to believe."¹⁰

As a nation we still seem far from convinced. However, the artists mentioned here, and others besides, need no convincing. It is a political decision to work with monsters. Attending to and sharing our past and ghosts means investing in them. And from the observations here, perhaps we should not be surprised if it is our Manitoba artists in particular, working at the locus of historical, geographical, cultural and social fringes, who continue to analyse the course of the Canadian consciousness and mark it. Of course, it is never possible for a nation to be completely "finished." Nor would we want that to be the goal; chasing after unfinished business is all to the good, if it means our artists will incite some productive trouble in our sleep.

- 1 Robert Enright and Guy Maddin, "Winnipeg," *Frieze* 97 (March 2006). Accessed July 15, 2011. <http://www.frieze.com/issue/article/city_report_winnipeg/>.
- 2 Shawna Dempsey and Lori Millan, *Subconscious City* (Winnipeg: Winnipeg Art Gallery, 2008): 104.
- 3 Susan Lord, "Canadian Gothic: Multiculturalism, Indigeneity and Gender in Prairie Cinema," in *Canadian Cultural Poesis* (Waterloo, ON: Wilfred Laurier UP, 2006): 402.
- 4 Lord, 402.
- 5 Penny Cousineau-Levine, *Faking Death: Canadian Art Photography and the Canadian Imagination* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's UP, 2003): 221-229.
- 6 Margaret Atwood, *Survival: A Thematic Guide to Canadian Literature* (Toronto, Anansi, 1972): 76.
- 7 Ian Angus, *A Border Within: National Identity, Cultural Plurality and Wilderness* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's UP, 1997): 96.
- 8 Cousineau-Levine, 222.
- 9 Avery Gordon, *Ghostly Matters: Haunting and the Sociological Imagination* (Minneapolis: U of Minnesota P, 1997): 206.
- 10 Atwood, "Canadian Monsters: Some Aspects of the Supernatural in Canadian Fiction" in *Second Words* (Toronto: Anansi, 1982): 231.

Whitney Light enjoys looking at and occasionally writing about art. She studied art history at the University of Winnipeg and completed an MA in twentieth-century history at McGill. A native Winnipegger, she feels subject to the city's magnetism but will spend 2011/2012 as an English teacher in Paris, France.



DEREK DUNLOP
SMILE

24" x 30"; oil, pastel, pencil on canvas; 2009

"Lyndie Rana England (born November 8, 1982) is a former United States Army reservist who served in the 372 Military Police Company. She was one of eleven military personnel convicted in 2005 by Army courts-martial in connection with the torture and prisoner abuse at Abu Ghraib prison in Baghdad during the occupation of Iraq. Along with other soldiers, she was found guilty of inflicting sexual, physical and psychological abuse on Iraqi prisoners of war." (*Wikipedia entry 17 June 2011*)

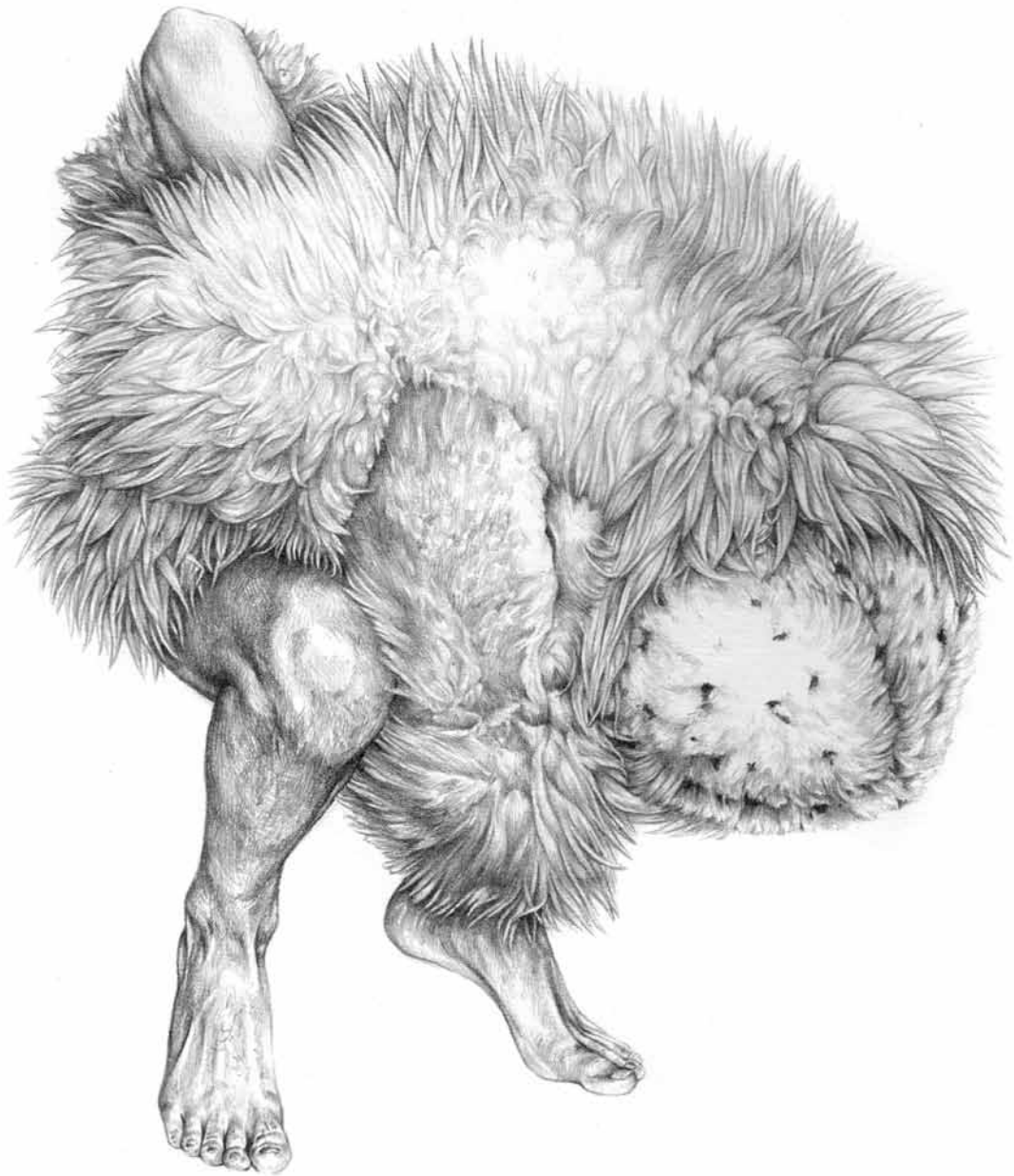
I think there are many images still lingering in the popular unconscious of everyone who viewed the notorious pictures of England and Iraqi prisoners. Like a monster, her images have haunted me for a long time — especially all of those horrible images of her smiling. I made this painting in response to them.



DAVID POOLMAN
GHOST IN THE WOODS
found image, unlimited multiple, 2010
www.davidpoolman.com



UFUK GUERAY
I'M COMPLICATED
26" x 40"; oil on canvas; 2011
www.ufukgueray.com



TED BARKER
UNTITLED

11" x 14"; graphite on paper, 2011
tedbarker.carbonmade.com

2011-2012

PROGRAMMING YEAR (REGULAR, SPECIAL AND PARTNERSHIPS)

This list is incomplete and subject to change

2011

HOVERCRAFT

MANITOBA CRAFTS COUNCIL

August 5-26 | Main Gallery

aceartinc.'s FIRST ANNUAL SOAP BOX DERBY

PARTNERSHIP WITH CICLOVIA & MANYFEST

September 11 | Broadway, Winnipeg

BRUCE-O-RAMA

CLAIRE HODGE

September 1-30 | Flux Gallery

DEAD AIR

STEVE BATES

October 6 – November 10 | Main and Flux Galleries

SEND + RECEIVE : A FESTIVAL OF SOUND V.13

October 5-8 | conjunctive programming

aceartinc.'s MEMBERS' SHOW

December 2

2012

HAUNTED/TALISMAN

MARIGOLD SANTOS

March 2 – April 5

UNIVERSITY OF MANITOBA SCHOOL OF ART

STUDENT THESIS SHOW

dates TBC

RIVERS; RIVERS & SKIES

LENKA NOVAKOVA

April 20 – May 25

GOOD WORK

SETH WOODYARD

June 8 – July 13

aceartinc.'s 2ND ANNUAL SOAP BOX DERBY

sometime in September

2012/13 PROGRAM

DOUG SMITH | ROSEMARY SCANLON | JD HOLLINGSHEAD | CHANTEL MIERAU | SUZIE SMITH

Thanks
Ace!

