

Fragments of a Former Moon

Galan Akin
Troy Grons Dahl
Christann Kennedy
Cadine Navarro
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Trevor Van den Eijnden

Emily Carr University of Art + Design
Low Residency Masters of Applied Arts
Interim Exhibition
Concourse Gallery
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In the weeks leading up to their summer residency in Vancouver, the eight artists whose works comprise this interim exhibition elected to read W.G. Sebald's enigmatic text *The Rings of Saturn*. Equal parts lyrical and brutal, the book charts a strange, elliptical course between disparate events, times and spaces, weaving a web of complicity, connectivity and loss that could be said to define our contemporary condition.

For this cohort, who will graduate from Emily Carr University of Art + Design's Low Residency MAA Program in 2015, Sebald's evocation of Saturn's rings—the particulate matter describing circular orbits around a celestial body of tremendous gravitational force—offered both a metaphor for their experience of graduate study and a lens through which to apprehend their distinct practices. These artists are drawn together from diverse backgrounds and life experience to explore and develop work within a collectively shared space and time. With media ranging from laser cut paper and wooden dowels to corrugated cardboard and hot glue, from oil on canvas and video to foam latex and gathered flora, they have strikingly different working methods and modes of visual communication.

What they share, however, is a concern for and acknowledgement of distance. These works consider the space between art objects, their makers and the embodied audiences who encounter them; they give form to longing, to time, and to the space of assembly itself. They acknowledge the gravitational pull of cultural histories, intellectual traditions and institutional paradigms—constellations both remote and proximate—in relation to and against whose persistent presence we work to define ourselves.

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Galan Akin

For Galan Akin, art objects are defined by their surfaces, by the lines that are drawn around them and by the walls that (temporarily) contain them. These walls may be physical, institutional, conceptual and perceptual. If we consider objects as temporal processes rather than static things, then their boundaries are always open to redefinition.

A Line in the Sand is the collective title of three distinct works, each with a different relation to the walls that hold them or lines that define them. By naming three works also as one work, the object takes on a fluid identity. This is accentuated in the framing of each work: the double monochromes of *Exposure* incorporate repeated sanding of the gesso surface every day they are on display. This slow transformation underlines the temporality of painting and implies the ultimate wearing through of the surface of the work to reveal what is behind. *Bob Rennie Painting* consists of a painting by another artist, placed for sale in the University's bookstore, adjacent to but just outside the bounds of the exhibition. If the painting titled Long Beach Breakers sells, the work titled Bob Rennie Painting is destroyed. *Still Life with Public Market* is a representational work, identical in format to *Exposure*, but remains in the artist's studio, outside the walls of the exhibition. It has been withdrawn by mutual agreement between the artist and the institution.

Galan Akin was born in Oakland, California and grew up on the West Coast of Canada. He attended the Nova Scotia College of Art and Design and studied animation and art history at Emily Carr University, graduating in 2011. He works with conventions of depiction, presentation and copying in order to examine the parameters and lines that define and contextualize art objects.

Exposure (to be sanded, with a single vertical stroke on the white line a number of times equal to the current day of the month, every day the exhibition is open to the public), 2014
canvas, gesso, sanding
approx. 122 x 152 cm

Bob Rennie Painting, 2014
purchased painting, wall label,
READ Bookstore, commerce
dimensions variable

Still Life with Public Market (to be looked at closely for almost a year in different similarity), 2014
drawing and sanding on canvas
approx. 61 x 152 cm
This work has been withdrawn from the exhibition by mutual agreement between the artist and the institution.

Troy Grons Dahl

In his sculpture, photo and text-based works, Troy Grons Dahl explores the complexities and contradictions of artistic practice with a dry wit. As an artist employed within a public art museum, he works in close proximity to art historical narratives and the sustaining myths of the institution. He situates his art practice within this context to inject variability and uncertainty into dominant cultural narratives.

Grons Dahl's artwork is activated by doubt; he engages with art history and museum convention to generate a space of ambiguity. His sculpture from *The Framework Series* shares the restrained ethos of minimalism, yet these provisional wooden structures are, by design, prone to collapse. Their structural instability undermines the gravitas of modern sculpture and the museological imperative to preserve and conserve works of art. The materials are readily available and inexpensive and, with the application of plastic clamps and gold spray paint, even cheap. The material poverty of the sculpture is a key value.

Through the use of oblique humour, Grons Dahl conjures up the inherent contradictions and ironies of art. Embracing conflation, contradiction and incoherence, he creates affectionate and pointed forms of criticism that test the stability of art's foundational myths and explore the possibilities of artistic work.

Troy Grons Dahl has a multidisciplinary art practice. He exhibits his art work nationally and releases independent hip hop music in Canada, Europe and Japan. His sculptures, texts and photographs work within the language of contemporary art to create witty and poetic meditations on art and culture. Troy Grons Dahl lives and works in Saskatoon where he organizes programs and exhibitions at the Mendel Art Gallery.

The Framework Series (fig. 2), 2014
wood, plastic clamp, gold spray paint
dimensions variable

Correspond closely to the rectangle (Specific Objects), 2014
digital print on paper
21.6 x 28 cm

Christann Kennedy

The history of Western abstraction is defined by instances wherein artworks were believed to possess special powers. Kasimir Malevich used rudimentary shapes to invoke non-physical realities, for example, and Piet Mondrian developed a geometric vocabulary to balance the fundamental energies of the Universe. There are few artists who are prepared to make such claims today. In her work, Christann Kennedy combines aspects of such histories in order to pay homage to the canon of Modernist abstraction while rethinking the conceits associated with the tradition.

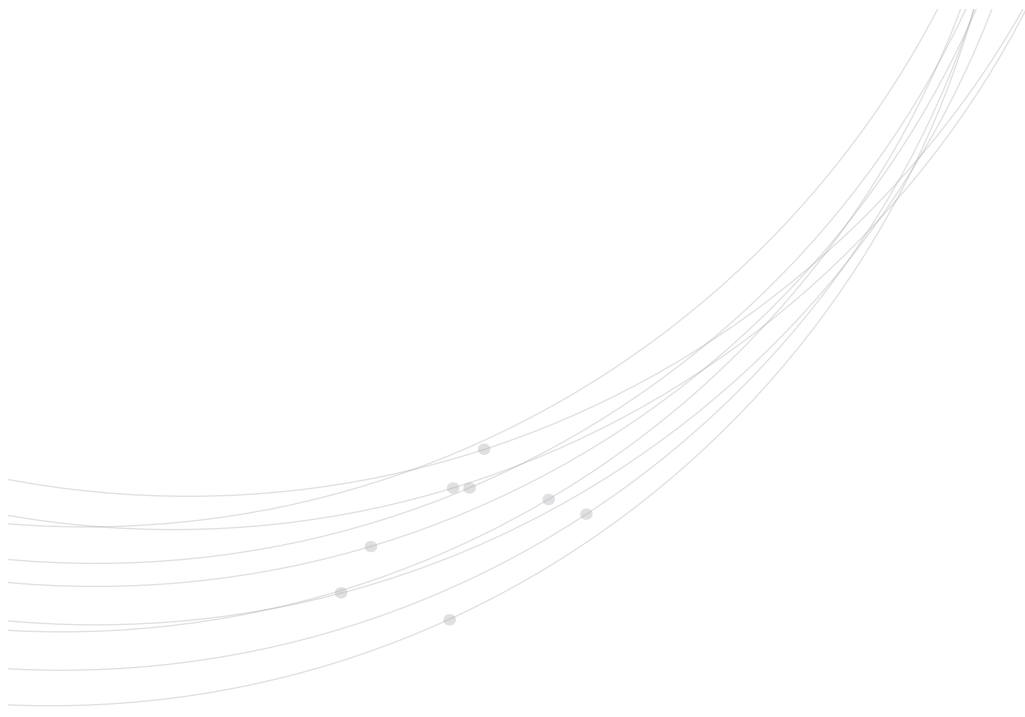
Kennedy develops simplified motifs through a distillation process that begins with the colours and shapes she encounters in everyday life. Blending these sources with asynchronous art historical references and an irreverent sense of humour, Kennedy instigates a level field where a patchwork quilt can rub shoulders with a road sign and a Colour Field painting. In contrast to the transcendent aspirations of earlier abstractionists, Kennedy strives to make works that assert their material presence and bring the viewer's attention to his or her embodied situation in a particular time and place.

stripe set is a composite piece that consists of multiple panels. It can be installed to respond to specific architectural conditions. Here in the Concourse Gallery at Emily Carr University, this work asks the viewer to look up and notice the very high ceiling. *loop* is a combined wall drawing and sculptural form that occupies a portion of the gallery floor. This work does not aspire to represent a non-physical ideal, but presents itself as a simple idea that has slipped into the room. One has to be careful not to step on it.

Christann Kennedy is a Vancouver-based artist whose work is rooted in the history of abstract painting, although she has recently expanded her practice to embrace drawing, sculpture and photography. Kennedy completed a BFA at Emily Carr University in 2012, earning the Governor General's Silver Medal for Academic Excellence and the Jake C. Kerr Chancellor's Award for Visual Art. She currently divides her time between her Vancouver studio and a tiny apartment on the Pacific Coast of Jalisco State, México.

stripe set, 2014
oil on canvas
14 panels, each 61 x 51 cm

loop, 2014
graphite, acrylic paint, MDF, wood
235 x 66 x 94.5 cm



Cadine Navarro

Cadine Navarro's investigations stem from an interest in how dispersion can take form. Her autobiographical story of living in fifty-five homes across three continents and growing up with three cultures—predominantly in countries where she would always be considered an outsider—provides a baseline for this research.

A useful access point for these investigations stems from the notion of diaspora, however in this case the term is referred to not as a scattering but as a coming together to re-define and articulate a space-time entity. The three works that comprise *Outlandish* (*Open Book*, *Fifty-five Homes* and *Local Weeds*) consider a modern-day condition of rootlessness and a longing for tactility. Here an artificial kinship can be built from objects and ideas in a process of redefining our relationship to place.

Outlandish picks up on Deleuze's notion of a post-identity philosophy which is a constant becoming, re-working, consolidating. The act of journaling and mapping out different lived spaces or bringing an attention to local weeds—plant species that are often considered “outsiders” but have an ability to adapt and survive in diverse environments—are all processes that build around and question a logic of belonging.

Cadine Navarro is a French-American artist born in Japan and currently living in Paris, France. She holds a BFA from Rietveld Academy Amsterdam and an MFA in Curatorial Studies from Goldsmiths University in London, UK. A participant in Paris' all female performance collective TEN, her recent exhibitions include Cinémorphe performance at Galerie Le SeptCinq, Paris, Breath Performance at the American Foundation Paris, Le Site Matrixiel at Treignac Project Space and Snow-Ball Effect at Main d'Oeuvres.

Open Book, 2014
digital video loop projected on vellum, separate soundtrack and speaker
2:21, looped

Fifty-Five Homes, 2010-2014
55 digital prints and book
each 28 x 43 cm

Local Weeds, 2014
local weeds arranged in ikebana, single green brick floral foam
dimensions variable

Melany Nugent

By mining the social structures and the patterns of everyday routines, Melany Nugent addresses how one's presence is asserted in public space and how this may affirm or dilute a sense of identity and community. Through her research to date, she has privileged text and public interventions in various combinations, to create catalysts for people to give pause to the construction of their public identity.

Manifest/Manifesto represents one point at which the different streams of Nugent's research intersect. By leveraging the collective movements of individuals, the work makes public a manifesto that amplifies the unstable rhetoric of identity and the challenges of maintaining structures representative of diverse perspectives and values. *Manifest/Manifesto* is dependant on happenings and actions—the flow of individuals in and out of defined space within the gallery—to inform what aspects of the below text is projected:

Construction / Production / Reproduction
moral pollution / effective
progressive politics
neutral / boundaries
borders / defence
heat / crack
develop / perfect
practice / makes / perfect.

Exchange / Rearrange / Maintain
migration / be a tourist
migration patterns / mark the
world / mark the word
making place / taking space
origin / unity
simple / pure / (any adjective).

Elusive / Peripheral vision / Recognition
collective / counter
judgement of strangers / one size fits all.

Maintenance / Magic
erosion / power
assemble / disassemble / reassemble
reinforced plastics / concrete vision
balance / flinch / fracture
the future will always have / us in it
if you want it.

Melany Nugent is a Vancouver-based artist and has for the past six years maintained a career as Multiculturalism and Anti-Racism Public Education Coordinator for the Province of British Columbia. Her practice is heavily influenced by her professional experience, concepts of power and privilege, and the influence of institutions on identity. Her practice makes use of public spaces, readymade materials, text and narrative. Nugent holds a diploma in Digital Arts and Media at Grant MacEwan College, Edmonton, Alberta, as well as a BA in Communications from Athabasca University, Alberta.

Manifest/Manifesto, 2014
single channel video projection,
sensors, processing
ongoing

Dionne Paul

The locus of Dionne Paul's research is focused on unearthing traditional special effects employed in Potlatch ceremonies and intuitively redesigning then participating in new modalities of Northwest Coast culture and creative space.

In this exhibition, Paul exhibits a Nuxalk-inspired transformation mask in tandem with a Nuxalk-inspired transformation button blanket. The exterior of the mask is a collaborative work created with Nuxalk artist Lyle Mack. Mack carved a wooden portrait in the Nuxalk style and painted in colours associated with the sun. Referencing masculine energy, the sun mask physically opens in performance, metaphorically acquiescing to the female energy of the interior moon mask to complete the gentle ebb and flow of the infinite transformation cycle. The interior mask is a foam latex facial prosthetic, a material never before used in the creation of Nuxalk performance masks.

The transformation button blanket is designed and sewn by Paul and exhibits two crests, the one transforming into the other. The primary crest represents the sun and the secondary crest represents the moon. With its articulated panels, the blanket is remarkable and the first of it's kind: Northwest Coast regalia that transforms during performance has never before been actualized.

Dionne Paul is from the Nuxalk Nation and the Sechelt Nation. Before entering into The Low Residency MAA program at Emily Carr University, Paul worked as the Cultural Coordinator and First Nations Art History instructor for the Sechelt Nation, sharing and teaching her culture through First Nation art history lectures and fine arts studio classes. She is married with five children and currently works and resides in Sechelt, BC.

Button Blanket, 2014
melton wool, mother of pearl buttons
133.4 x 161.3 cm

Female Portrait Mask, 2014
foam latex, acrylic paint, abalone shell
20 x 30.5 cm

Lyle Mack (in collaboration
with Dionne Paul)
Male Portrait Mask, 2014
red cedar
25.4 x 30.5 cm

Dance Apron, 2014
melton wool, mother of pearl
buttons, copper jungles
60 x 60 cm

Valérie Tremblay-Blouin

At the origin of *Life Stills* and *My Life as a Spider II* is a personal reflection about time, motherhood, the domestic realm and women's work. This project began with the birth of Valérie Tremblay-Blouin's first daughter in January 2013. Experiencing daily life with a newborn gave the artist a different perspective on time, which no longer seemed linear but rather spasmodic. Confined to her house by the harsh winter, she needed to find a way to keep up with making art. She scattered stacks of corrugated cardboard tiles around the house so that whenever she had a minute of calm, she would grab a pen or a paintbrush and record what was on her mind at that time.

The result is a collection of disparate images: observation and memory drawings of portraits, interiors and still lifes, along with cartoons, pictures cut from the family album, intricate patterns reminiscent of lace. The visual disparity of the tiles, collectively titled *Life Stills*, is symptomatic of Tremblay-Blouin's chaos-based work method, which feeds on immediate material conditions as a source of renewal.

My Life as a Spider II was inspired by lace curtain as a traditional women's work as well as a mean to create an intimate, reclusive division in space. While it borrows the lightness and the intricacy of delicately crafted lace, it also challenges expectations with a deliberately deskilled aesthetic and coarse material. This iteration was made specifically for the current exhibition in order to provide an optimal environment for the viewing of *Life Stills*.

Valérie Tremblay Blouin is a multidisciplinary artist who works and live in Montréal, Québec. She draws on her personal experience to make paintings, drawings, zines, sculptures and installations. Her work addresses questions of transmission, transformation, memory and affect, in relation to identity. She works as an art teacher at College LaSalle, and is co-founder and coordinator at Rats 9, a feminist artist-run centre.

Life Stills, 2014
mixed media on corrugated cardboard
each 12 x 12 cm

My Life as a Spider II, 2014
hot glue
dimensions variable

Trevor Van den Eijnden

Trevor Van den Eijnden's current work investigates referents of the Anthropocene, our current global geological era born of the Industrial Revolution. These visual inquiries focus on the constructs of space versus place, where the former is a one-dimensional physical location and the latter is the overlapping subjective terrain. Current work has centred on collecting and comparing naturalist wallpapers for their romanticized illusions of nature, as well as grappling with the effects of global climate change in the extremes of plausible dystopic and utopic futures.

A historically rooted and popular format for interior décor, wallpaper presents a physical form to the conceptual process of burying nature behind mythologized façades of itself as they directly reference prevailing romanticized ideas of nature as subject. This way of thinking limits our engagement with nature and our understanding of it within our current epistemic conditions. As René Magritte remarked, “there's something else of an unfamiliar nature that appears at the same time as familiar things,” and here is a strangeness familiar to us all, which presents and acts more than as just décor: it points to its own strange strangeness. The resultant futility of these replicas of nature—and the failure of their referents to hold truth—is pertinent to their reading. Such as the romanticized notions they reference, they are shams at first sight.

Trevor Van den Eijnden is a visual artist, writer and designer who lives and teaches in Vancouver, British Columbia. Originally from Nova Scotia, he received his BFA in 2005 from NSCAD University. Raised near a coast frequented by hurricanes and sharp shifts in the weather, he developed early a desire for understanding how we understand nature. His childhood home was surrounded by rivers and marshland that had been studiously crafted by beavers. In emulation of these structures, his first artwork was a series of earthen dams built in autumn, that in spring caused a sizable ice dam that flooded a dozen acres of land, and his neighbour's basement. He was fourteen.

Familiar Strangers, 2013–2014
laser cut paper, wood-based glue
22 boxes, each 10x10x10 cm

In the Grass 8:54, 2014
video projection
1:00:26