



# OCADU 2023 Graduate Residency:

## Material Process

### MAIN SPACE



Mending the Craft: Sustainability in Contemporary Textiles, 2023. Exhibition view.

*Mending the Craft: Sustainability in Contemporary Textiles* curated by Cecily Ou

Holly Chang, Leah Defoort, Allie Davis, and Callie Legault

In September 2022, I supervised the installation of an exhibition at a small gallery in Toronto. I had stepped into a role that provided a new vantage point to the standard practices of exhibition cycles in the visual arts. Tasked with runs to Home Depots, media equipment centres, and paint suppliers, I compiled a list of items required for the exhibition: projector, monitors, paints, steel rods, HDMI cables, media players, AV cables, USBs, wall brackets, wall vinyls, wooden frames, track lights, and countless nails, magnets, staples, and tape. Installation aside, I also accounted for the materials utilized in the exhibited artworks, rolls of paper, inks, fabric, rubber, wood, cameras, graphite, paints. It was while—pacing up and down the aisles of a home improvement store—when I began to understand the environmental costs of my line of work.

As an emerging curator and textile practitioner, I understand the inherent need for materials in the creation and installation process. However, I rarely stopped to examine the ecological impact of the projects I encounter or produce. When forming exhibitions or artworks, so few take the initiative to account for their material use and fewer will reflect on the significance of it.

*With this in mind, what kind of relationship can we say exists between contemporary art and sustainability today? Do artists and curators respond to the environmental costs of art production and display, and if so, how effective are these responses?*

Up to this point in my career, these are questions I have never heard aloud.

*Mending the Craft: Sustainability and Contemporary Textiles* is a case study that responds to this line of inquiry. It is a focused examination on contemporary textile art production with works that not only speak of sustainability but consciously incorporate sustainable practices. Land and ecology are understood to be crucial to each artist's studio practice, at times explicitly through aesthetic means and other times, simply through a conscious use of materials; from botanical patterns to the literal use of local plants, the exhibited works meditate on the role of the environment in the life cycle of textile arts from beginning to end— from plant to dyes, dyes to cloth, cloth to garment, garment to installation, and its many subsequent iterations.

Holly Chang, Leah Defoort, Allie Davis, and Callie Legault propose a range of strategies that challenge the sanctity of the polished art object within the 'white cube'; their works are framed as a series of processes which respond to and counter the environmental impact of their artistic practices<sup>1</sup>. In effect, the art object is subject to various questions and environmental concerns. To begin, one might ask: *How are the artworks made? How were the materials sourced? How will these artworks live on after its display?* By prompting such questions, the exhibition accounts for visitors as active participants, and in a sense, active agents of choice and possible change. Above all, the artists create space to reflect upon the environmental costs of material use in the visual arts and envision sustainable forms of art production.

Leah Defoort's work is an investigation into weeds and plants found in Oakville, ON to harness their textile dye potential. *Gather: Oakville Plants on Textiles* (2022) is an accumulation of extensive research and experimentation with the likes of Queen's Anne's lace and hickory nuts to produce a series of screen-printed textiles echoing



Gather: Oakville Plants on Textiles, Leah Defoort.

the forms of twelve foraged plants<sup>2</sup>. Defoort's *Natural Dye Research Cards* are shown alongside the printed samples, explicitly illustrating the necessity of intensive material processes used in the development of a sustainable art practice. Her work demonstrates an explicit link between local ecology and her textile production, the latter of which could not exist without the former.



Ghost, Holly Chang.

*Ghost* (2022), a work by Holly Chang, continues Defoort's exploration of natural dyes. Her oversized patchwork pants are the results of an artist residency at the Banff Centre for Arts. Constructed from a series of samples and recycled cloth, Chang considers material use in her creation process and consciously transforms existing samples into a new artistic entity.

Suspended over a trail of soil, the pomegranate, walnut, and chestnut-dyed pants are accompanied by a bronze-casted foot—modelled after the artist's own; trace of the artist's body acts as a reminder of her positionality to the land on which she creates, contextualising her practice within its ecological impact.

Callie Legault's work, *Untitled* (2023) situates the ecological impact of the artist's practice differently. From fibre to thread to garment, she constructs an image of garment production to consider its expanded material process and the standard life cycle of garments. Remarkably, this process can also be read backward; Legault's use of recycled garments and yarn complicates the often-linear lives of textiles and presents new possibilities for existing materials. Transforming used yarn and thread into fibre and back again into garments, this work aims to unravel misconceptions regarding the limits of textile materials. In a way, Legault defies the assumed environmental harm of garment production and provides a revised ecological sentence to existing materials.



Untitled, Callie Legault.

Similarly, Allie Davis's work challenges the life expectancy of textile art. *Teaching sample* (2021-22) is a piece of fast fashion mended using a Japanese embroidery method referred to as *sashiko* or *boro*, in which the simple running stitch is used to create intricate patterns. Davis's careful stitchwork is echoed in her *Patchwork-in-Progress* (2023), made from naturally dyed recycled cloth and reinforced and decorated using *sashiko*<sup>3</sup>. Both works are presented in a stage of flux and change, subject to further mending and alterations to reimagine and extend the possibilities of the textiles. The artist's education-oriented approach encourages a natural curiosity in her material process, reaching outwards from the work to inspire engagement.

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Patchwork-in-Progress, Allie Davis.

Dyeing, patching, spinning, or stitching, the artists of *Mending the Craft: Sustainability and Contemporary Textiles* presents a series of actions to challenge the environmental harm of standard practices in contemporary textile arts— and broadly, contemporary visual arts. Their strategies are not large in scope, instead focused on individual impact and educational potential. Leah Defoort expanded my understanding of local ecology and natural dyes; my eyes now scan the plants along sidewalks for Queen Anne's lace and goldenrod to harvest for dyes. Holly Chang changed my perception of research materials, shedding new light on dye-cloth and knit samples in my research binders. Callie Legault taught me to push beyond the perceived limits of materials and inspired a new interest in spinning yarn from old fibres. Allie Davis introduced the art of *sashiko* and the idea of the ever-evolving cloth, which I incorporate into my day-to-day mending and work; the

exhibited works are opportunities for conversations, exchange, and a collective transference of knowledge— from practitioner to practitioner, from practitioner to viewer and importantly, from viewer to viewer.

● Cecily Ou

<sup>1</sup> The 'white cube' is a term coined by the art theorist Brian O'Doherty to refer to early twentieth century adaptation of white walls in art institutions to minimize distraction. O'Doherty problematizes the white cube and argues that it isolates artworks from its context and consequence.

<sup>2</sup> Other weeds and plant include, red pine, sumac, goldenrod, Black-Eyed Susan, Buckthorn Berry, European Common Reed, Jewelweed, Grey Dogwood Berry, black walnut, and Curly Dock.

<sup>3</sup> *Sashiko*, along with various other techniques such as *shibori* and indigo dye, incorporate Japanese philosophies associated with repair and care for materials to extend its life cycle and develop an appreciation for resources extracted from land on which one is situated. Davis's work borrows these techniques and embraces its respective philosophies.



Mending the Craft: Sustainability in Contemporary Textiles, 2023. Exhibition detail.

### PROJECT SPACE

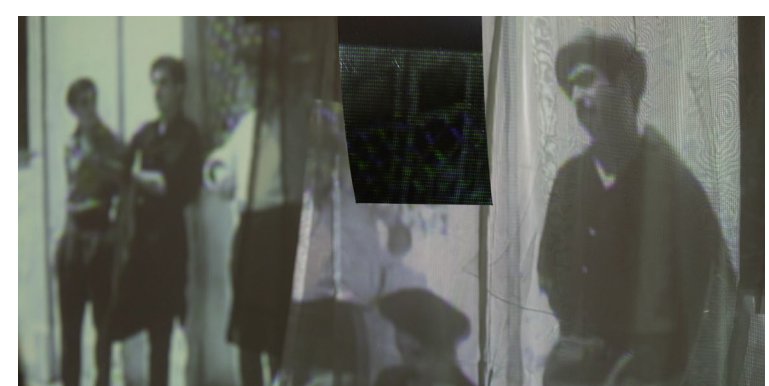


*ondan-bundan: inquiring on culture from this and that* Aydan Hasanova

The Azerbaijani phrase *ondan-bundan* (translation: "from this and that") answers the question 'what's this made of?' with nonchalant ambiguity. A first glance through the doorway into the space of Aydan Hasanova's installation reveals a fittingly miscellaneous arrangement. Projected video is cast across an array of panels, sheets, and scraps of various materials and sizes that hang clipped to cords which stretch and intersect across the room. The moving images dance across the walls and these suspended surfaces as they refract, diffuse, and fragment.

Here, *installation* is more a verb than noun – the arrangement is routinely dismantled and re-constructed during the exhibition's run, the components shuffling and the composition shifting with each reiteration. *ondan-bundan's* dynamic structure melds the immersion of a hybrid installation environment with the ephemerality of performance. In this playfully open-ended process, Hasanova physically enacts an interest in mutability and continual reconstruction – defining attributes of what the artist describes as a "textility of culture"<sup>1</sup>, the project's conceptual core.

Azerbaijani cinema as a site of construction for a hybrid and contested cultural identity. The clips are brief excerpts from three Azerbaijani films from across a 40-year period, each of which express attempts to maintain collective self-definition via gendered roles and social formations. From *Arşın Mal Alan*/"The Cloth Peddler"(1945), Hasanova has extracted a shot of a group of women dancing and waving billowing fabric sheets against a painted landscape backdrop. From *Bir Cənub Şəhərində*/"In a Southern City"(1969), a row of men lean against a wall to observe unseen passers-by. An excerpt from *Ötən İlin Son Gecəsi*/"Last Night of the Passing Year"(1983) features a holiday gathering around a family table, centering on the figure of the mother.





Hasanova selected films that are notable and enduring within Azerbaijani popular media, easily accessible online and still well-known to many Azerbaijani audiences. Encountered as fragments without prior context, these images become emblematic distillations that also invite a more universal recognition.

While these three clips remain the same across *ondan-bundan's* many reinstallations, the conversation Hasanova stages between these sources suggests culture formation as necessarily in flux, defined by tensions and contradictions. She further teases these themes through the interactions of these projected moving images with the installation's physical components, generative collisions that multiply as she continually alters their arrangement in the space.



Hasanova's methods of gathering the found objects were both spontaneous and deliberate. For the project's first public presentation<sup>2</sup>, she frequented the OCADU free bins for studio remnants of metal, plexi, and paper. During her residency at Xpace, she scouted for new additions in the constantly renewing resource of curbside discard piles in the gallery's surrounding neighborhood. This process of selection was guided by a set of material criteria – texture, transparency, surfaces that absorb light or refract it. These relationships with the projected media were strategically anticipated, but not entirely pre-determined, instead continually discovered through Hasanova's durational process of re-assembly, accumulation, and release.

Baku, Azerbaijan's central and capital city, is the site of all the films featured in *ondan-bundan* and the locus for the project's initial inquiry. Hasanova drew inspiration from their own photographs, notes, and memories of the city's textural and atmospheric specificity. The installation's industrial materials are dangled and scattered, transforming the gallery into a loose evocation of Baku's nooks and alleyways. Mass-produced curtains stand in for textiles draped from the clotheslines connecting windows and balconies and canopied alleyways, here in the gallery evoked by the criss-crossing cords hung overhead.

In an area of the floor tidily demarcated with black tape, unused materials are laid out and arranged in neat piles, hinting at the organizational processes and improvised parameters used to prompt and guide their many redistributions. The various functional tools that facilitate each install also remain conspicuously in this space – a ladder, a cart, a roll of tape, a bag of clothespins, a work light. Their presence seems to anticipate the next cycle of de- and re-installation, an expression of non-finality and reflexive interest in tactile, spatial exploration.



In *ondan-bundan*, the process is never finalized, and the outcome can never be precisely replicated.

Through successive re-installations, Hasanova creates new choreographies, placing intention and chance in cooperative tension. Apparent contradictions are simply material to re-purpose, juxtapose, overlap, and continually re-arrange. In any given variation, *ondan-bundan* does not overwhelm us – its elements are distributed with a careful carelessness, arranged through internal logics of inclusion that can be felt even when unapparent. Enveloped in the space, our bodies enter the interplay as new surfaces and shadows.

Perpetual motion invites contemplative stillness.  
Fabric flutters in the artificial box-fan breeze.

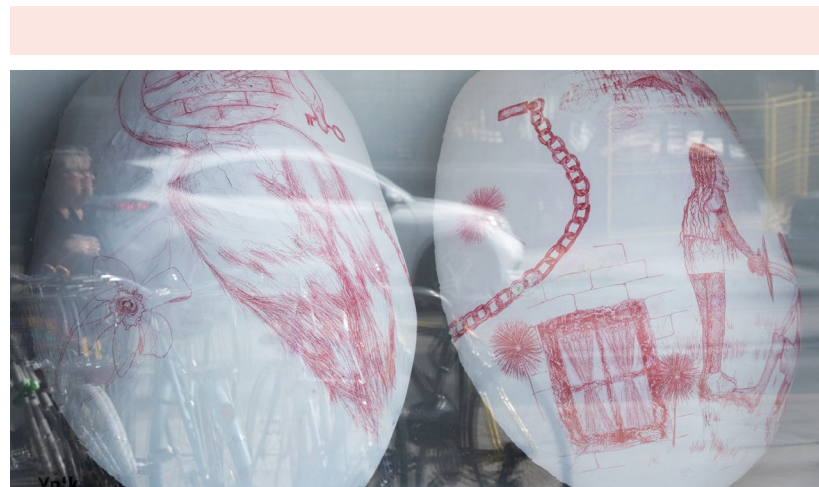
*ondan-bundan* is made out of heres and theres, thens and nows, eithers and alsos.

● Talia Golland

<sup>1</sup> Aydan Hasanova, *ondan-bundan: inquiring on culture from this and thats* (2023)

<sup>2</sup> Aydan Hasanova, *ondan-bundan: inquiring on culture from this and thats*. MFA Thesis Exhibition. March 1 - 9, 2023. Experimental Media Space, OCADU, Toronto, ON.

## WINDOW SPACE



Yolk  
Miao Xuan Liu

Chinese mythology tells us the story of Pan Gu, a primordial figure who emerged from chaos in the form of the cosmic egg. Upon realizing that he was trapped inside the egg, he swung his ax and broke the vessel open, separating yin from yang. Variants of the story say that Pan Gu soon died and fragments of his body became the earth. He gave his breath to the wind. His voice to the thunder. His eyes to the sun and the moon. Our fragments become the-work the earth.

Artist Miao Liu first told me about the legend of Pan Gu when we met via Zoom in late August. They are interested in the creation myth as a form, reflecting on how it “[p]oses an alternative comprehension around how worlds begin,”<sup>1</sup> especially for those that have been written into the margins of history. They continue, recalling a dream they had in which they laid an egg of their own. In their retelling of the dream, Liu emphasized the physicality and labor of the process. They liken the sensation of expelling the egg from the body to the process of defecating.

Dreams can function as mirrors; a subconscious poetry that can reveal our innermost desires and fears. This dream reflects Liu's fascination with the idea of primordial chaos, as well as speculating about the limits of the body.



During our video call, Liu turned the camera and showed me their latest work, *Yolk*. I was met with the fuzzy image of an approximately four-foot-tall sculpture of an egg made largely out of blue foam, cardboard, and joint compound. They turned the oval halves around so that I could observe the manipulated rods that make up its skeleton, holding it together. Liu has brought the cosmic egg from myth to dream to life.

Liu had considered including a figure to accompany the egg but ultimately, decided that the key symbol was the egg on its own. Even in its absence, Liu notes that the body remains represented through suggestion. I think of Pan Gu and the egg spawning from nothingness, and I contemplate the processes of invisible labor.<sup>2</sup>

I asked Liu about the physicality of the creation process: “How does *your* body feel?”

“Tired but exhilarated,” they shared, recounting their experiences lugging the two halves of the sculpture from place to place, biking heavy material through the city, and summoning manual dexterity in order to engineer a form. Their awareness around nourishment – eating, sleeping, and drinking water – heightened throughout the process, making care an essential aspect of the work.

“My artist body is at the center of this project.”

Western belief systems often cast the body off, privileging the capabilities of the mind. To interrogate this divide, Liu turns to Daoism, an ancient Chinese religious and philosophical tradition, as a source of guidance within their work. Daoism looks at the mind and the body as interdependent, challenging the impulse to arrange these parts of the self into a hierarchy. Following this more holistic approach, *Yolk* gestures towards the sacred intelligence of the body, framing it as both a knowledge system and a porous site of remembrance, refusing to position the mind as superior or separate. Their artist body continues to infuse itself into the work through ongoing acts of performance. What is unseen is as much a part of the work as what is seen.

I think about my own body and how it moves through the city. To think about the body is to think about how it breathes. To think about the city is to think about the many ongoing crises and how the breath attempts to transmute them: in silent meditation, while dancing, or in moments of attempted survival. This past summer has been a summer of compromised breath. So much hung in the air: sickness, smoke, and uncertainty.<sup>3</sup>

Lingering coughs and recurring nightmares stemming from ecoanxiety and climate crisis remind me that even as the seasons shift, the body remembers it all.

I text Liu about a nightmare and they respond: “The nightmare dream space. That’s definitely one of the places where the invisible archive [of the body] emerges.”

In the spirit of strategizing other ways to live, Liu references the French philosopher Édouard Glissant who first defined the concept of the “right to opacity” (le droit à l’opacité) in his seminal text, *Poetics of Relation* (1990). Glissant presents the idea of opacity as a framework for being, especially for marginalized bodies: “We clamor for the right to opacity for everyone.”<sup>4</sup> He identified the tyrannical impulse to surveil the lives of those who are deemed inherently suspicious solely on the basis of identity. To be known can mean to be contained. Liu notes that “[c]omprehension can be a violent thing,”<sup>5</sup> especially when the oppressor’s objective is to only produce a superficial understanding of one’s identity. The flesh is neglected if the goal is to see through the body. Opacity offers a strategy for preserving the preciousness of one’s own life while practicing discernment when determining where to break open, where to spill, and where to truly be oneself. In my fluctuating interpretation, it paves the way for a more holistic life when living in a body that is constantly being framed as untrustworthy, especially when considering how the voices of marginalized peoples are much too often disregarded or viewed as threatening.

Although you cannot see through the egg, Liu allows the viewer access to its contents through a process of symbolic inversion. Images produced with red oil pastel and pencil crayon are drawn onto the sculpture’s surface as if to offer glimpses of the universe within. The mundane and the mythological are patchworked in proximity, producing a geography of fragmentation that allows for both generosity and unknowability. A drawing of a hand marked with acupuncture pressure points is nestled into the long, curved neck of a swan. This juxtaposition reminds the viewer of the importance of multiplicity and of resisting the urge to reduce the body to a singular narrative or expression.

“This is the oppressor’s language / yet I need it to talk to you.”  
– Adrienne Rich<sup>6</sup>

Liu and I have been living and working alongside each other for years, across various iterations of our lives. It is a cherished friendship, largely shaped by our mutual desire for something outside of a language that so often feels oppressive. In writing this essay, I realize that many of our conversations have oriented around conspiring against intelligibility, trying to find ways to throw off stories that have been inscribed onto our skin since birth. A mutual agreement to rewrite ourselves, or uncover the stories underneath the muck, by any means necessary.

Through *Yolk*, Liu has engaged with the loaded symbology of the egg, creating a visual language that challenges violent processes of knowability that are enacted onto politicized bodies.

As our conversation came to its end, Liu playfully speculated: What if my dream were possible? The laying of the egg? Indulging, I silently wonder what it would take to bring this labor of impossibility into existence? Specific breathing techniques? Determination? Focus? Faith? We laugh but I catch something honest in the air.

With no desired result in mind, *Yolk* asks the viewer to suspend disbelief and look to the body as a potential site for the impossible. And for diasporic bodies, similar to Liu’s and my own, the notion of impossibility offers redemption: a symbolic way out of pre-determined narratives that exist solely to limit the bodies of those who do not reflect the ideal.

*Yolk* tells us a different kind of story, offering an alternative strategy for living. The egg, in its wholeness, is a sight to behold. In its grandness, I hear whispers of a nascent universe: a place in between what is real and what is imagined. A place in which other things – beautiful and terrifying things – shift from impossibility to possibility through the unification of the fragmented mind and body.

● Jessica Félicité Kasiama



<sup>1</sup> Miao Liu in conversation with Jessica Kasiama

<sup>2</sup> The term ‘invisible labor’ is used to gesture towards processes of labor, or making, that are unseen or unrecognized.

<sup>3</sup> A reference to recent events, including the ongoing pandemic and worsening air quality as a result of air pollution and wildfire crisis.

<sup>4</sup> Édouard Glissant, *Poetics of Relation* (The University of Michigan Press, 1990), p. 194. contained.

<sup>5</sup> Miao Liu in conversation with Jessica Kasiama

<sup>6</sup> Adrienne Rich, *The Buzning of Paper Instead of Children* (1968).



# Winter THEMATIC: Space/ Place/Environment

February 9 – April 6, 2024

## MAIN SPACE



*The Grotto*  
curated by Avalon Mott

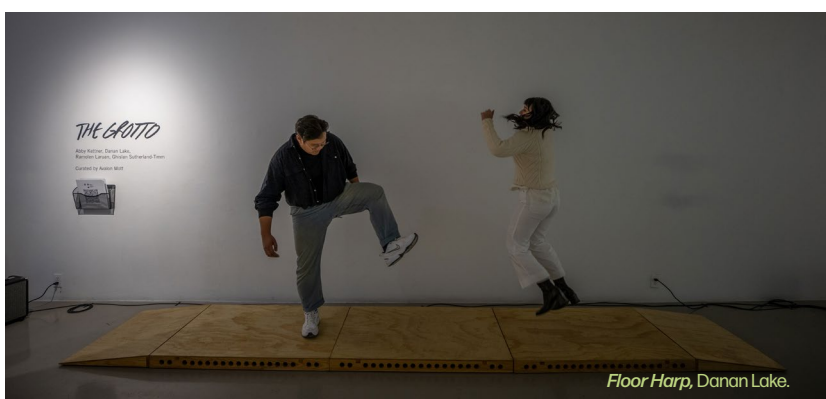
Abby Kettner, Danan Lake, Ramolen Laruan, and Ghislan Sutherland-Timm

Somewhere between here and there, near and far, north and south, east and west, nowhere and somewhere,  
*The Grotto* exists.

An obscured enclave cloaked in darkness, it is elusive, relying entirely on Soft Architecture<sup>1</sup> to gesture towards elements of life that feel familiar. A movement or form or sound or visual. It does not hold a solidified shape or form and does not have geographical coordinates that can be plotted. *The Grotto* begs to engage tension, the feeling of the uncanny that reveals itself when the intersection of waking life and a dreamed world is held in paralysis. Within this in-betweenness of a walking dreaming state, *The Grotto* can operate as a space of potential and play. It becomes an arena where we ourselves become questions rather than pillars, and curiosity and imagination are encouraged as thoughtful ways of evaluating our surroundings that prioritize curiosity over a definitive sense of knowing.

*The Grotto* is not a fixed event. It can reimagine and remerge in continuum, and reveal new questions and inquisitiveness with each unfurling. This iteration engages the works of four artists, Abby Kettner, Danan Lake, Ghislan Sutherland-Timm and Ramolen Laruan to provide a latticed network of anchor points that usher the viewer in their experience of *the Grotto* on display.

Upon entering the gallery space the viewer is immediately met with an ask for participation in Danan Lake's work, *Floor Harp*. This work consists of five constructed pallets laid in a line which form a nod towards a walkway or platform. The ramp of the first pallet invites the viewer on to the slightly elevated structure, and as the viewer moves along, the sound of their movements amplify and augment. Unknown to the viewer but hinted to by the three amps surrounding *Floor Harp*, Lake has strung the pallets as if they were a stringed instrument which allow the viewer's movements to 'strum' as they progress along the work. This relationship between full bodily movement and strumming is not something that is common-place, and therefore, the two gestures are perceived as non-relational during a moment of suspended reality for the viewer. In pairing these unlikely actions together – progression along *Floor Harp* resulting in strumming – Lake encourages the uncanny. As the viewer descends from the linear platform, they are greeted with an opportunity to stand on a dock constructed of one ramp and one pallet. From the dock the viewer's shadow becomes visible alongside Lake's video work, *An Excerpt of the Story of the Inexperienced Ghost*. In this piece, played on a loop, a turn signal of a motorcycle embedded in a pannier from a 1982 Honda Goldwing blinks the story of "The Story of the Inexperienced Ghost"<sup>2</sup> by H.G. Wells in Morse code. In contrast to *Floor Harp*, this video omits no sounds and gives the viewer nowhere to trace the blinking light as only the metal exoskeleton of the pannier mount accompanies the pannier and turn signal in the video. Whereas the sound in *Floor Harp* harnesses the uncanny, it is in the soundlessness of *An Excerpt of the Story of the Inexperienced Ghost* that it emerges. The video is projected onto the



*Floor Harp*, Danan Lake.

landscape of the gallery, across two bathroom doors and spanning a corner to fill two adjoining walls. This impedes the viewer's ability to view the video, as does their shadow which follows them as they move around the dock. They are never able to fully obtain an unobstructed view as the trace of the viewer is always present alongside the video.

In contrast to Lake's work which centers physical hints and gestures of the viewer – their weight and gate and shadow – Abby Kettner's work *The notion of memory* is a chimerical dream engages the viewer's memory in a task of reconciling. Her collection of bioplastic sculptures laid across the floor of the gallery provide an abstracted and distended outline of ubiquitous objects. As individual sculptures, these forms represent things that can be found in the artist's home and surround-



*The notion of memory*, Abby Kettner.

ing environments. As an entire collection they represent two years of the artist's life that is specific to them, but available to all that view the work as these objects may be found in the viewer's life as well. *The notion of memory* is a chimerical dream plays into the trope of memory and how it can reimagine things as they never were, or forget how they once existed. This is furthered by the secondary landscape of shadow that the objects form as they are lit directionally to encourage their trace. Kettner notes that 'forgetting is not a glitch in our memory, but a distinct and powerful force'<sup>3</sup>. The materiality of *The notion of memory* is a chimerical dream allows the sculptures to embody memory and act in a way that reflects it. Just as memories do, the bioplastics will eventually deteriorate into words and accounts of viewers that encountered the piece. The amalgamation of sculptures that make up *The notion of memory* is a chimerical dream will cease to exist taking their landscape of shadows along with them.

As the viewer progresses through the gallery's main space hallway, they are met with Ghislan Sutherland-Timm's series of ephemeral lens-based collage works, *your presence isn't here*. Adorning the hallway walls, the installation consists of a selection of twelve images of various sizes that depict obscured college bodies which have been wheat pasted to the gallery walls. For Sutherland-Timm, this act of wheat pasting entangles the wall as part of the installation, rather than allow it to act as a canvas, and implies site-specificity. The images have been further grounded in the gallery by Sutherland-Timm's intervention of overlaying the collages with ephemeral material such as salt, moss, sugar, and earth. The earth and moss, and branch, that have been brought into the gallery by Sutherland-Timm have all been organically collected rather than taken and therefore lend a direct trace to her body in the environments that they were gathered from; her presence was recorded by the materials collected. Like Lake's work which requires the viewer to move along *Floor Harp*, Sutherland-Timm is implicating the viewer's body by asking them to add their touch to the work. This gesture is asked for directly by the text 'touch me' stamped in fine font on to the gallery walls throughout the installation. The viewer's touch is linked to the fleeting nature of the series as its



*your presence isn't here*, Ghislan Sutherland-Timm.

chemistry, in tandem with the organic matter, creates a natural environment for undetermined decay. This temporal stability, along with the collaged images that do not give a site for the eye to settle as they are intentionally blurred and obscured, provide an apex of tenseness between the viewer and the work. It is in this intentional unease and holding of instability that a letting go occurs. The viewer is able to move past what they thought they originally saw to make way for a reimagined interpretation of their surroundings.

Past Sutherland-Timm's work towards the back of the main space gallery, cloaked in a corner of black against a wall-sized vinyl backdrop depicting lush foliage, Ramolen Laruan's water based sculpture *bomba/groundwater* trickles monotonously. The lush imagery on the vinyl backdrop presents as a unified image at a distance, but as the viewer moves towards it the image reveals that it is composed of multiple photographs of greenery from numerous depictions of a Philippine landscape that have been collaged together. The three fountains of Laruan's work, consisting of vertical arrangements of Tabòs<sup>4</sup>, draws the viewer towards it by way of the harsh direct super-ficial lighting mimicking a fountain lit at night. Spectacle is promised, but the ever constant movement of the water through the fountain provides a meditative space. This

*bomba/groundwater*, Ramolen Laruan.



misalignment between the desire of spectacle and call to tranquility, alongside the simultaneous flattening and dimensionality of the vinyl image, provides an ever present juxtaposition in the work that invites curiosity. And it is from this place that *bomba/groundwater* is able to offer a metaphorical space where the viewer can question reciprocity and exchange in relation to movement, power, resource scarcity and legacies of colonialism.

As the viewer has moved throughout the gallery, their interactions with the works on display have informed their experience of *The Grotto*.

It is not the intention of this exhibition to invite a fixed understanding of the works or a sense of stability, nor does it endeavor to provide a uniform experience for every viewer.

Rather, the ambition of *The Grotto* is to encourage a dynamic and ever changing relationship to the exhibition that is deeply personal. It seeks to acknowledge the individual and prioritize their own understanding and relationship towards space, place and environments. Over the course of the exhibition run viewers are encouraged to come back to the gallery to spend time in *The Grotto* on a different day, at a different time; what will emerge is a new movement or form or sound or visual. Be curious, ask questions, and explore all that is available in this effervescent site.

● Avalon Mott

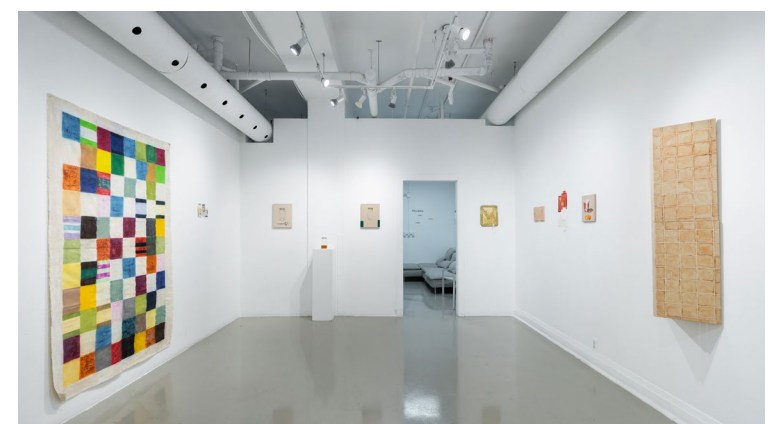
<sup>1</sup> Lisa Robinson uses the term soft architecture to describe the incorporeal aspects of architecture like memory, light, form, colour, furnishings, social space, etc, in her essay *Seven Walks from the Office of Soft Architecture*.

<sup>2</sup> In speaking with Lake, he noted that he read ghost stories as part of his research for *An Excerpt of the Story of the Inexperienced Ghost*. He was drawn to "The Story of the Inexperienced Ghost" by H.G. Wells specifically because of the ineptitude of the ghost. The story centers on the prospective haunt-ie comforting the ghost and giving him advice on how to be a better ghost because the ghost is terrible at haunting and unable to produce a reaction of fear.

<sup>3</sup> Abby Kettner. Avalon Mott. Toronto. January 2024.

<sup>4</sup> The Tabò is a traditional tool used primarily for cleansing and cleansing in the Philippines. The modern Tabò is a part of the Americans' introduction of plastic to the Philippines. It has since become mass-produced and sold everywhere from the market stalls to stores, both in the Philippines and around the world.

## PROJECT SPACE



*Seeking something missing, missing something left behind*  
Ariana E. Fraser

You show yourself, to yourself – in doubles.

In the packing of plastic Tupperware –  
canning solution  
and pissing on moving territory.

It wasn't yours,  
but you've oriented yourself to it.

When a body moves, we hoard the past in our long arms, curling and fingering a point of belonging, a place to put a memory. Objects reappear, becoming vertical and learning how to walk again, bidding blindly to an augmented backdrop of unremarkable shadow puppets – tying string too tightly and watching the blood go bad on the tip of her finger. There is something behind it, something under it, and around it – on a dancing grid – making snow angels on unruly carpet, dusting up something worn, something reanimated.

*Seeking something missing, missing something left behind* is a point of intersection, a shrine of the mundane, positioning the space in worship of the worn, the before, or the left behind. In a conceptually rich body of installation work, Ariana E. Fraser pays credence to the hyper-normal, exhibiting the object in multiples, continually capturing the ephemeral in mourning of passed places and the people who inhabited them.



As particular objects come in and out of focus throughout the gallery space, the artist walks an intermediary between the thing-itself and its recollection by committing her personal possessions to installation, and then repainting them with a different sense of corporeality. Through this cycling and shifting of the object, Fraser creates a dialogue between her sculptures, paintings and found object installations, turning her belongings on different sides, and making present the weight of tactility — looking to tattoo the hands and reach behind herself for what is no longer moving. There is a command to keep it all with us, grasp it, or sift through the clutter for it — creating language so as to always preserve one's experiences.

“What is left? And what remains? Ephemera remains. They are absent and they are present, disrupting a predictable metaphysics of presence.”<sup>1</sup>

In Fraser's work, the home and the harshness of its memory is held open in the permeance of the static object — its original context dismembered in an act of contemplative reorganizing. Fabrication of the art-object becomes both literal and metaphor as Fraser reconstructs subtle moments of intimacy through an enmeshing of the real and the reassembled. For Fraser, the object becomes witness, its value dematerialized and transformed into symbol — where microplastics embed themselves in warm bellies, undigested and outlasting their utility.

Stationed between two points, the liminality of a moving possession is a reminder of a nagging question:

What do you take with you when everything is left behind?

Following Sara Ahmed's *Queer Phenomenology: Orientation, Objects and Others*<sup>2</sup>, the reader is confronted with how one orients themselves in relation to an object or pre determined space. It matters where it's located, the context changing and shifting plains. Repetitive actions can turn the body in previously marked directions, making the existence of queerness a sight of reorientation, where the queer body is pulled towards objects and others deemed “non-perceivable.”<sup>3</sup> Her work makes present a queer consciousness, where an object's purpose can become ambiguous and less defined, reordering the world, and seeing it anew.

“Becoming reoriented, which involves the disorientation of encountering the world differently, made me wonder about orientation and how much “feeling at home,” or knowing which way we are facing, is about the making of worlds”<sup>4</sup>

Ahmed's writings emphasize the ways bodies shape and are shaped by their surroundings. The queer body cuts through previously established ways of being, a breaking with normative patterns — a moving away from prediction or the horizontal.

Where the home functions as a resting place, designed with cohesion and conventionality in mind, objects or persons who survive the schism are made to be confrontational, moving in a different direction and shredding skin between narrow openings.

For Fraser, the home can be an anchor, providing a sense of stillness while simultaneously displacing or suffocating the Queer body. When one chooses to leave a familiar place seeking something better, the body is destabilized, always in motion — walking the line between belonging and non-belonging. With each installation, Fraser's work confronts this intermediary asking the viewer to rethink what an object is used for. Her work persuades the viewer to the floor, where we squat down low, watching the aftermath of release — bending the back forward in order to see, where her waste rests between two created points, jarred as evidence — a wet specimen in place of her previous lives.

In white space the body of the home is shorn bare to skin — a tension buzzing in the abdomen, twisting the waist into shapes.

Where she's breathing through cheap bottles and drying up bouquets — brought into animation, continually jumping between yesterdays.

She'll search for lost jewelry under waterbeds, feeling it pop and laying low.

Feeling it deflate and spreading open her paper legs.

Inside, she's made of faux fur and soggy tissue, All desire.



Made of porcelain and dried orange peels, All desire.

Made of glass and polyester, wool, and foggy plastic containers.

With the body gone, they'll see you in everything you've carried on your back,

they'll see you weeping women's names and forgetting your shoes at the last place you stayed,

they'll see you in a child born to memory — just for a moment before she's quilted,

just for a moment before the bedroom forgets its function.

In all the things you've thrown away,

in coffee rings and empty vessels, fermenting above the eyes on a too tall shelf,

following brandings left in various places.

A collection of moving parts, circling in-between, every pocket opened when they investigate the scene.

Just for a moment, she's a dripping beauty asleep,

early light always edging towards the ends of her feet.



He collages photographic excerpts against the installation's back wall in *Gather Grasping*. These scattered images are fragments from archival condition reports, and each image gestures toward the physical condition of the artist's collected records. Klie obscures the markings. He positions a harsh reflective light over the

initial prints and reimages them. We can find abrasions, tears, wrinkles and losses layered within the new textures created under Klie's light. Generally, these markings signal damage, but they are also touch points. From this perspective, a condition report not only documents damage but also records physical touch over time. It uncovers moments of contact and human connection.

Klie's image-based practice addresses similar emotive yearnings for connection. Five inkjet prints on organza are suspended in front of the viewer. These images document mass gatherings, people uniting together, reaching hands that come to touch. The subjects want to be physical with us. However, they are obstructed by a shifting moiré pattern. This fluid visual effect creates a misaligned grid that masks the characters underneath, morphing the subjects into obscure shapes. Klie's intentional error resists the archive's inherent order. It rebels against the didactic nature of historical images—teasing the viewer with moments of familiarity and connection before suddenly disturbing them. He intentionally queers our gaze, creating fluid and ineffable gestures through misalignment and error.

Photography collections are fluid beasts within themselves. They are valued because they quite literally allow us to suspend time and capture impressive historical moments or deeply personal memories. Yet, like memories, photography is unstable and fleeting. Some exposures easily deteriorate. Others more simply feel incomplete—like shards that are impossible to put back together again or mend without input from larger bodies of images or communities. These fragments accumulate. They build like sediment that Klie can examine and sift through. Perhaps his gridded modifications shield us from these losses. Or maybe they protect us from more painful tensions between sentimental analogue experiences and mediated recordings.

In other ways, I think Klie's images and archival investigations are a resistance. Dominant political and social forces inevitably shape archives. As a Queer researcher, it can be difficult to find myself reflected in Canada's historical collections. Our local histories are rich and vibrant, but in the best case, our stories are masked behind the archive's historical boundaries, taxonomic codes, and heteronormative frameworks. In the worst cases, the archive is outright hostile.

For example: I recall Steven Maynard's early investigation into the Toronto Police Museum—exposing unsettling trends related to the Toronto Police Service's (TPS) historic misuse of community surveillance to suppress and persecute significant portions of the city's Queer community before the 2010s.<sup>4</sup> Maynard's investigations revealed a troubling lack of accountability and little documentation of the city's infamous Morality Department, which spearheaded many of these investigations. He noted extensive censorship within the existing records, erasures and taxonomic imprecisions that could otherwise uncover wrongdoing. Evidently, there are widespread access issues regarding Queer histories alongside generally fragmented or otherwise limited collections. Klie's work dances among these tensions—activating a compulsion to gather and preserve archival materials while pushing to reconstruct dominant political, social, and commercial narratives from the record.

I am continually reminded of José Esteban Muñoz's inspiring cultural theories while I explore archival images. The late Cuban-American academic postulates, “Queerness is that thing that lets us feel that this world is not enough, that indeed something is missing... it is not simply a being but a doing for and toward the future.”<sup>5</sup> He continues,

“Queerness is essentially about the rejection of a here and now and an insistence on potentiality or concrete possibility for another world.”<sup>6</sup>

We can continually revisit the archive, gather its collections, and activate its materials to challenge our world. Like Klie, we can use its materials to question and re-envision our histories.

In gathering the past, may we grasp upon new and hopeful futures.\*

● Francis Pitsadiotis

<sup>1</sup> Moñoz, José Esteban. “Gesture, Ephemera, and Queer Feeling.” Essay. In *Cruising Utopia: The Then and There of Queer Futurity*, (NYU Press, 2009), p. 70-71

<sup>2</sup> Ahmed, Sara. *Queer Phenomenology: Orientations, Objects, Others*. (Duke University Press, 2006)

<sup>3</sup> Kojima, Dai. “A Review of Sara Ahmed's *Queer Phenomenology: Orientations, Objects, Others*.” *Phenomenology and Practice*, Volume 2 (2008) No. 1, p. 88-91.

<sup>4</sup> Ahmed, Sara. *Queer Phenomenology: Orientations, Objects, Others*. (Duke University Press, 2006), p. 21

## WINDOW SPACE



*Gather Grasping*  
Jackson Klie

My grandmother loves to collect things. When she downsized years ago, we found a gathering of deteriorated cardboard boxes stacked high in her musty basement. We assumed the boxes were junk, like the knickknacks amassed throughout her home. However, hundreds of photographs poured out as we ripped into the containers: late nineteenth-century portraits, tintypes, unremembered trips, bygone celebrations, and unfamiliar faces. “What are you doing?!” she hollered as the images spilled onto the floor. “That's my family archive!” I had just finished my undergraduate thesis, which essentially found its legs in climate-controlled vaults and special reading rooms. I thought it was funny to have my understanding of collections suddenly flipped on its head. I realized no archive is an island. A grandmother's stockpile is not much different from a university's historical keepings. We gather our feelings and document our histories in community, creating a vast indexical network.

Wolfgang Ernst argues that the archive is a metaphor for all forms of memory and storage— it is a state of classifying, sorting, and storing human data.<sup>1</sup> Yet, we so easily project our mundane compulsions onto archival collections. Personal journals, political documents, love letters, photo albums, commercial advertisements. These objects can't inherently hold memory, but they feel alive because we use them to mediate our world. We gather our experiences through vernacular records and images. So, it becomes easy to find ourselves in archival collections because their stories are external—they come from within the reader, not the object itself. A problem arises, however, because this means we can also encounter our absences. We find tension in things that are lost, inadequately represented, or missing.

Jackson Klie and I spoke about fragments during a studio visit earlier this year. He explained how *Gather Grasping*, an exhibition in Xspace Cultural Centre's Window Space, partly found its origins at the Toronto Reference Library. He described a process of sifting through the Picture Collection.<sup>2</sup> Archivists allow researchers to loan out part of these holdings. Visitors can gather its materials, take them home, and meditate on its fragments. Klie described how he thinks

● Megan Kammerer

\*Works cited can be found on the following spread 1





# Summer THEMATIC: NOISE

May 10 - July 6, 2024

## Chaos/Excess



*Soul Jubilee*  
curated by Philip Leonard Ocampo

Dexter Barker-Glenn  
Ernesto Cabral de Luna, Ivetta Sunyoung Kang, chris mendoza,  
and Meghan Harder  
Bronson Smillie and Ron Siu

Additional writing by Dhvani Ramanujam and Omi Blue

Design by Agnes Wong

Sometimes I dream of gazing upon a sunset situated at the end of time. I'm ageless, looking out from the very edge of a precipice amassing the people I've loved, all the words I've ever spoken, the hours of television I've watched, and the sins and good deeds of my past, among many other things. After the long journey, the sunlight feels nice on my skin. It seeks to engulf me whole. At the absolute height of its majesty, all I can do is let out the deepest sigh. My final solace is *relief*.

That's *Satisfaction*, baby.

In the dreamscape, the complexities of my very being distill into a moment of simplicity, and my serenity is an aggregate of both ends. Dichotomies: Desirability and disposability. The Foliage and the Masonry. Music and noise. *Chaos and harmony*. The cold systems and the warm bodies that must somehow navigate it. All the questions and all the answers. *Soul Jubilee* sifts through the figurative quantity that constitutes "noise" within our lives as we interpret it. If existence supposedly operates at opposing poles, the artists of this exhibition seek a fine balance herein, attuning to the resolve of their own becoming in words, drawing, painting, photographing, and building.

Mired in the hustle of the street our Window Space faces, DEXTER BARKER-GLENN's three panel sculpture presents the fruits of an exchange of sorts: Dexter has bartered with Montreal dépanneur cashiers over the fates of the used lottery scratch cards. A fractal, stone-like sculpture erected in separate sections recreates a fortuneful scene. The symbolic providence of the harvest, its bountiful cornucopia and livestock grazing, is constituted in the window reflected by so many promises of wealth and prosperity. All carved in a dizzy technicolor. *The Abundant Loss* faces the street just like the stone bank facade it seeks to recreate.

I tried upon my own luck and placed a scratch card in the gallery;  
May whatever fortune awaits me be revealed in time. If any.

Through the gestures of pencils sweeping across pillar and paper, MEGHAN HARDER's lush drawing work riffs on archival materials reflective of memories found in public and private archives. From everyday images sourced from the vast community of social media to the words, sounds, and shapes found in Mennonite poetry, Harder translates it all past the silo of the individual and into a new commonplace.

To speak, to communicate, to connect, to commune

Folded sheets of stainless aluminum make up IVETTA SUNYOUNG KANG's *When The Others Lick Underneath Your Tongue*. These sculptures serve as containers for corresponding music boxes! Please play them with care. Seeking connection whilst acknowledging the diasporic limitations of language structures, here the aphasic tongue

stumbles and utters but also embraces a melodic transcendence. These phonetic sculptures transcribe the soundwaves of three phrases:

*I have forgettable borders / I neglect my deficiency / I objectify your tongue*

ERNESTO CABRAL DE LUNA transfers photographs onto corrugated metal and broken glass, abstracting images taken on a visit to Mexico across weathered and splintered surfaces. Alluding to how photography attempts to distill memory into a composition of grain and pixels mirrors the nostalgic impulse to utilize structural materials: Seeking to preserve moments of curious connection, memory then needs to rest on a surface strong enough to house or protect its joyous, fleeting weight. These works point to the cultural propensity of these materials to provide shelter, define geographic borders, and navigate the permeable limits of uprooted cultural identities.

The freestanding doors of chris mendoza's *a long cast shadow* are thresholds for the drawings, footage, and places they guide you to. Echoing the structural framework of an amorphous space, this installation combines imagery from personal photographs with dreamt symbology. mendoza muses that the dense quality of grain may elucidate a texture for memories; captured by lenses and drawn on surfaces. Doors inlaid with drawings become gateways to spaces inhabited and histories inherited. Here, we ask you to orient yourself within and around this exercise in placemaking.

There's something, somewhere, or someone in the air of RON SIU's monochromatic paintings. With hazy and lyric impulse, the painted gesture gives way to a flowering atmosphere that cloaks youthful bard-like figures, their instruments, and the music they're playing. Obfuscation waxes and wanes with flourishing if you stare long enough. I hope you find yourself becoming undone and done again as time passes; vision and psyche in use but at ease, all with hope abundant.

BRONSON SMILLIE's trio of interactive plinth sculptures underscores an ongoing interest in the life cycle of novel objects; charting a journey all the way from coveted to disposable then right back again. Ruminating upon use value through material transformation, vintage electric pencil sharpeners are placed upon spectral plinths where its colorful shavings gradually accumulate below. Sharpen a pencil and watch the coloured lead dust splatter and splash along its sides. A pencil reduced to near nothing can remain as sharp as ever; It's rinds alchemized from waste to remnant.

And so attunement emerges as the guiding principle of this branch of *Soul Jubilee*; a fitting term also used as a title for a collaboration occurring between Siu and Smillie in our Project Space. A word beckoning something into harmony, Bronson and Ron attune a gaze, brushstroke or tool into affective focus. A brushstroke to add, a pencil to subtract from; gizmos used to draw out from within. Here, reaching past the literal, tuning an instrument heeds way for attuning one's soul, and it underscores the personal search for reprieve and serenity that permeates throughout this entire show.

☀️  
Godspeed you as you venture along on the pathways shaped by this exhibition, and through the havoc and stillness of your own life's becoming:

Frightful, gorgeous, *bored*, or overwhelmed.  
Somewhere in between it all  
In endless flux, always, always, always, always, always

● Philip Leonard Ocampo

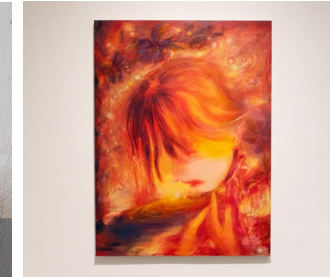
the One  
All  
in dimensions  
Formless and Shapeless  
Yet everything  
Entered

Then  
The first among us  
spring forth  
from dazzling deep  
Blue  
in soft, fleshy vessel  
Took sacred hands  
to shining Black earth  
And pulled forth  
Red Perfections

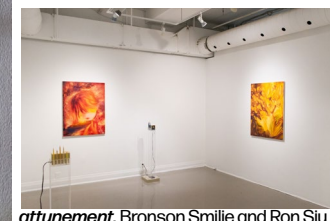
That time  
The earth with all its people  
spoke in low, husked tones  
of glittering silver  
To honor the arrow of time  
They built monuments  
From each breath  
the bridge  
Then Babal  
Everything a dedication  
of creeping, rhythmic  
Exploration

Flung far and wide  
They made this thing  
Then that  
They looked upon a thing  
and knew  
its True Name

Work by Ivetta Sunyoung Kang.



Work by Ron Siu.



attunement, Bronson Smillie and Ron Siu.



Work by chris mendoza.



Work by Meghan Harder.



Work by Bronson Smillie.

As a first for the gallery, *Soul Jubilee* encompasses all Xpace exhibition spaces and platforms!

### Red Perfection

By Omi Blue



Soul Jubilee Special Programming

Jasmine Yangqing Yu in *Rehearsals for Resonance*, June 13, 2023 at Xpace Cultural Centre.



# to be pricked by images

By Dhvani Ramanujam

## 1. CLOTHESLINES

I'm in San Francisco this week, and earlier today I was shopping for books. I usually try to avoid touristy landmarks, but decided to go to City Lights. On the store's third floor, I looked across the window and spotted a few articles of mostly white and gray undies, an orange shirt and a crisp black blazer hanging tenderly from a clothesline that poured out of the edge of a window sill onto the rooftop below. I then quickly noticed several other clotheslines with pieces of clothing coming out of several other apartment window sills, co-conspirators in the wind. I get an unusual delight from seeing clotheslines in a city. A fondness borne out of a nostalgia for an early childhood geography, where clotheslines draped across a terrace rooftop proved to be an intricate maze perfect for a game of chase — but also out of a desire to see them more often. In Toronto I feel as though I hardly ever see them anymore, an increasingly-disappearing form of urban architecture.

Anyway, I found this visible clothesline from the City Lights third floor window so mesmerizing that I took a picture of it on my phone. I almost posted it to Instagram before I stopped for a second and realized that I was about to post a stranger's intimates publicly. There's something funny about a clothesline of underwear. It's this proud display of a garment that is mostly socially barred from public space, that can cause a person embarrassment if it was inadvertently exposed in public, suddenly floating freely without scrutiny in the wind, above rooftops and streets and pavements, constructing its own ephemeral cartography.

## 2. OLD AND RECENT AFFINITIES

Old: touch-me-nots, treehouses, memory boxes, verandas, knee touches, cracked tiles, compressed air, puffy frocks, puppet shows.

Recent: postcards, smudgy pens, perfumes, parquet flooring, backyard screenings, physical ticket stubs, tangled earphones, clothespins, holes in shirts.

## 3. BODY ACHES

Lately, I am preoccupied by the limitations of my body, which I had previously found to be quite capacious. In these last few months: a bruised, permanent patch under my eye, burst capillaries decorating my cheeks, a dose of continuous dry heaving, a never-ending plague of mechanical back pain that has now infiltrated my ass and legs. After a mystery fainting spell in February, I called an ambulance. The paramedics found me on the floor sans pants and underwear and a chicken nest on my head, but I guess that's the way life goes. A few days after my release, an email from the hospital informed me of a \$45.00 charge for the ambulance to be paid within 21 days of my visit or it would be sent to collections. In San Francisco, my body spent an inordinate amount of time cursing the copious amounts of steep hills to traverse alongside pelting winds. Before the trip I re-read Peggy Phelan's short essay, "On Moving to a Hill," which aptly unfolds a shared struggle to navigate that city's sloping topography. In moments of somatic frustration, I try to think of her sweet and short reframing of bodily ache as a reenactment of memory: "Sometimes I think the injury recurs to remind me I have a history, even though so little of it is reflected in the landscape here."<sup>1</sup>

## 4. TEXT AS SECRETION

What words taste best in your mouth?

Bungalow,  
musculature  
porosity.

More.

Leaky,  
alchemic,  
punctual,  
corpse?

A few more.

Plump,  
suffuse,  
Excavation.

That's better.

## 5. INTIMACIES

I recently finished reading Carolee Schneemann: *Uncollected Texts*. I remember buying the book in a shop in Brooklyn in the fall of 2022 — one of those book purchases you are ecstatic for at first sight and don't actually get around to reading for a couple of years. I'm stuck on a phrase she uses in a passage to speak of her performances that casts her own body as the

porous, sprawling site of love and artistic unfoldings— as "fleshy jubilations," and in another passage I am struck by the earnestness with which she speaks of her lover James. I don't crave much more than the performance of having a crush these days, which sometimes feels like an increasing impossibility to find in this city, but after a long drought, I've found a face to look at that reminds me to love is to be embarrassed in equal measure.

## 6. INDEXES

I've been thinking lately about quotidian indexes of stars and machinery and bodies. The sticky residual colours of the sky after the sun departs behind the horizon, or the puffy, porous white streaks jet planes implant in the air, which I recently learned are called contrails. A few weekends ago, I watched Marguerite Duras' film *La femme du gâche* at the theater, and I can't stop thinking of this particular image: of the hotel's revolving lobby door still spinning, haunted by the push of limbs that disappears off-screen. At work the AC is broken, and the sweat of customers linger in the changing rooms after they leave, for a few minutes or longer. This used to bother me when I first started working there, but not so much any more.

## 7. FRIENDSHIPS

I made a friend last summer who lives in California. We text fairly frequently and have an idea for several exchanges that have not yet been actualized: the first, to mail each other handwritten letters, each one accompanied by different little vials of scents. I thought about the possibility of perfuming the paper too, even with no guarantee of the scent's duration over the course of its travel between Toronto and Santa Barbara.

Back in January, we also discussed the idea of reading a book together. I have a list in my notes app of suggestions of what we should pick— Hervé Guibert's *Ghost Image* and Ozlu's *Cold Nights of Childhood* are recent additions to a list that keeps growing whenever I come across a book I think he might like. It's Spring now and we still haven't decided if this will actually happen.

In April, I caught another Duras film *Le Navire Night*, and post-screening, the editor mused on a series of images in the film that comprised its 'outsides.' Afterwards, I remember frantically texting my friend to crystallize an idea for a set of experimental events, musing on our shared interest in the off-screen that could unfold across both of our cities.

I like the idea of these encounters taking place even if they never transpire. So much of a friendship seems to lie in its speculative potential, in the tentative plans to meet somewhere, to do something, to build something. The accumulative grain of forming plans. It's the shape of the plotting that matters, I think.

## 8. ON-SCREEN AND OFF-SCREEN SPACES

In March, a very close friend of mine left the city to make a semi-permanent move back to Grenada. My favourite photograph of the two of us is a screenshot I took of an Instagram video call, each of us lying down in our respective beds. My camera looked at me from above, while hers tilted in front of her as she laid on her side. The framing of this screenshot-as-photograph piques my interest. Spatially it's very tight, zeroing in on our faces as it dismembers the rest of our bodies. I went to a small screening in March, "The Body in Film," where the programmer proffered something along the lines of these opening sentiments to speak to the assortment of bodies that would soon flutter across the screen: that the camera does the cutting, and direction becomes dismemberment in order to scramble the body into bits on-screen.<sup>2</sup> Maybe our bodies aren't dismembered in this screenshot as much as they are engorged, threatening to engulf the entirety of the space available to us onscreen. Our bloated outlines compete for real estate with the objects that hover at the edge of the screenshot's frame, objects that allude to the fullness of a bedroom (and a life) that I'll never get to see in person. As the majority of my adult friendships seem to flourish spatially across park lawns, bar tables, coffee shop patios and dance floors, a peek into a friend's bedroom seems like a special kind of intimacy, all the more notable for its rare occurrence. I'm brought back to the sticky sweetness of sleepovers in my youth, which was always about the pleasurable exchange of secrets. Revisiting the screenshot, mundane objects sitting at the edge of the frame are renewed with a vitality: where the edge of these things no longer signals an enclosure, but a possibility.

## 9. LIST MAKING

Words to snack on, new and old penchants, and now a fragmented tally of sounds. Another unearthed list of things previously jotted in the note apps vault as both a coping mechanism for, and avoidance tactic to doing other work.

*Sounds I enjoy:*

- the click of projector slides
- the snap of pop rocks
- the pluck of scalp



The full exhibition reader and text can be accessed through scanning this QR code, or online at [xpace.info](http://xpace.info)

*Sounds I dislike:*

- the shake of an overhead fan
- the whirr of an overheated laptop
- the ping of an email.

## 10. PARKDALE

The faux license plate attached to the front of the lady's scooter read, "it's 4:20 somewhere."

<sup>1</sup> Peggy Phelan, "On Moving to a Hill," *Women & Performance* 14, no. 1 (2004): 22.

<sup>2</sup> Stephen Broomer, "The Body in Film" (film screening, University of Toronto, Toronto, March 20, 2024).



Work by Ernesto Cabral de Luna.

This exhibition is generously supported by the Ontario Arts Council and Partners in Art under its Artist-Direct Program.



*Soul Jubilee*, 2024. Exhibition details.

## XPACE CULTURAL CENTRE 2023-2024

DIRECTOR AVALON MOTT

PROGRAMMING COORDINATORS NATALIE KING  
PHILIP LEONARD OCAMPO

COMMUNICATIONS ASSISTANT, GRAPHIC DESIGNER AGNES WONG

<sup>1</sup> Wolfgang Ernst, "The Archive as Metaphor: From Archival Space to Archival Time", *Open* 7, 2004, 46. <https://s3.amazonaws.com/arena-attachments/542865/8b32821fe0174156942ede0cf145d55c.pdf>.

<sup>2</sup> The Toronto Reference Library's Picture Collection is a robust archive of magazine clippings and other printed ephemera compiled in a vast selection of folders publicly available to view and borrow.

<sup>3</sup> Jackson Klie (exhibiting artist) in discussion with the author, January 2024.

<sup>4</sup> Steven Maynard. "Police/Archives". *Archivaria* 68 (1), 159-182, 2009. <https://archivaria.ca/index.php/archivaria/article/view/13236>.

<sup>5</sup> José Esteban Muñoz. "Introduction: Feeling Utopia." in *Cruising Utopia: The Then and There of Queer Futurity*. 1-18. NYU Press, 2009. [https://warwick.ac.uk/fac/arts/english/currentstudents/undergraduate/modules/literaturetheoryandtime/lit-cruising\\_utopia.pdf](https://warwick.ac.uk/fac/arts/english/currentstudents/undergraduate/modules/literaturetheoryandtime/lit-cruising_utopia.pdf).

<sup>6</sup> Muñoz, 1.

\*Gather Grasping Works Cited, continued from previous spread

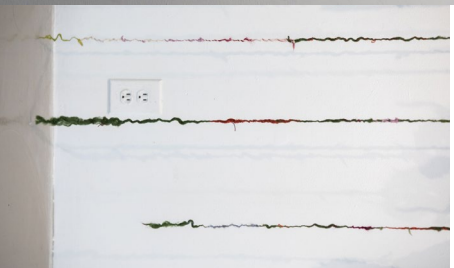
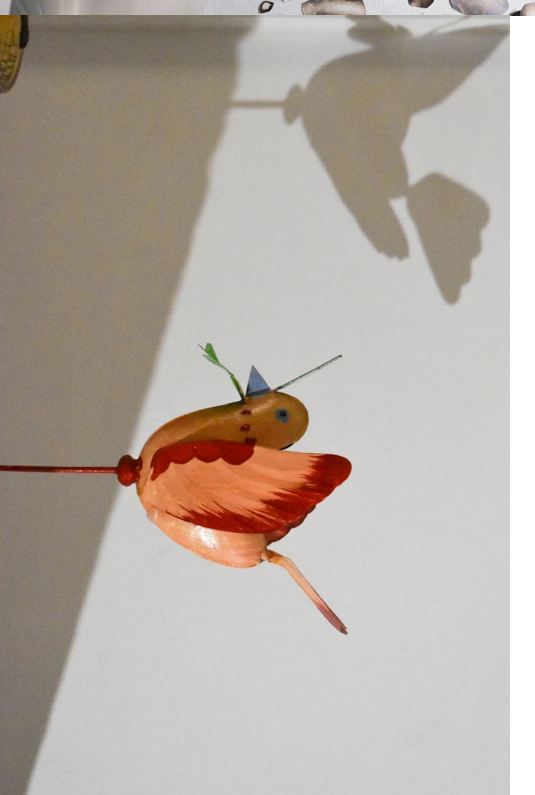
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# 15



## 2023 - 2024

**VOLUME** is Xpace Cultural Centre's annual anthology highlighting our exhibitions, exhibition essays, and extended programming. The exhibition essays demonstrate the breadth of artists, designers, and writers that contribute to Xpace, and situate us as a prominent space in the OCAD University's community as well as the Toronto Arts community at large. This publication includes programming across all three of our exhibition spaces, as well as workshops and special projects, from September 2023 - July 2024.

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XPACE CULTURAL CENTRE is a not-for-profit

artist-run centre dedicated to providing emerging and student artists, designers, curators and writers with opportunities to showcase their work in a professional setting.

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

We wish to acknowledge this sacred land on which XPACE CULTURAL

CENTRE operates. It has been a site of human activity for 15,000 years.

The territories include the Huron-Wendat, Anishinabek Nation, the Haudenosaunee Confederacy, the Mississaugas of the Credit First Nations, and the Métis Nation. The territory is the subject of the Dish With One Spoon Wampum Belt Covenant, an agreement between the Iroquois Confederacy and Confederacy of the Ojibwe and allied nations to peacefully share and care for the resources around the Great Lakes. Today, the meeting place of Tkaronto is home to many Indigenous people from across Turtle Island and we are grateful to have the opportunity to work in the community, on this territory.



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