art after dark

10 years of UrbanScreen

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CITY OF SURREY

surrey
art gallery

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Testing UrbanScreen projection equipment on the tilt-up concrete slab during construction of the Chuck Bailey Recreation Centre, 2009. Photography by Surrey Art Gallery.

UrbanScreen technicians Christopher Moreno and Eric Lowerison twinning the projectors for UrbanScreen, August 2012. Photography by Surrey Art Gallery.

Foreword

Since its origin, Surrey Art Gallery has been committed to presenting contemporary art. In order to meet the challenges of digital media in particular, it has developed new venues and strategies to share emergent forms of artwork. In 1998 the Gallery established the TechLab to support the production and presentation of digital media, at a time when data projectors were too expensive for most artists to acquire, and personal computers were rare in most studios. In 2009 a new challenge to the Gallery was posed by a team of artists in residence in the TechLab. *Glocal* involved the creation of a massive database of digital photographs; Sylvia Grace Borda, M. Simon Levin, Dennis Rosenfeld, and Jer Thorp speculated that these photographs should not have to conform to the conventional rectangle of the screen. As they built relational structures to organize and present the metatag-connected database, they instead imagined, with the increasing power of data projectors, a largescale, architectonic and interactive experience of their artwork. The Gallery responded to the challenge of these artists, and in 2010 established the UrbanScreen as a permanent venue to support artists and artwork that engages and connects audiences to interactive digital art.

Surrey is an increasingly important urban centre with a diverse, multi-ethnic, and young population experiencing exponential growth. Since 1975, at the initative of local citizens, the Gallery has continually served as an important venue for artists in Western Canada, serving the region with contemporary art exhibitions and education. Since its early years, the Gallery has maintained a practice of listening and collaborating with artists to anticipate and inform the development of its venues and future programming investment.

Inspired by Borda, Levin, Rosenfeld, and Thorp's vision, artists have been consistently consulted about UrbanScreen—from the original concept of its form and functionality through to its equipment rebuild and enhancements in 2015—and continue to advise on its ongoing operations. Artists specializing in new media technology form the majority of those serving on the UrbanScreen Advisory Committee. Because of this collaboration between institutions and artists, each project presented at the venue has left a legacy, building its technological capacity. Each artwork has the opportunity to stand on the shoulders of the artists and artworks that went before, as new code is shared, new equipment is added, and the user manual is updated with lessons learned.

UrbanScreen continues to call to the imagination and creativity of artists with its ongoing commissioning program for new projects. Each year artists experiment and test their ideas at the venue, and annually new artworks are premiered, often employing newly developed technology, and presenting projects made possible only because of the capacity of the venue and its context. Artworks have featured technology such as a virtual piano, gaming engines, unmanned aerial drones, and generative image and video databases. Interactive works have utilized text message technology to change projected language, while the gyroscope and accelerometer of mobile devices have controlled the movement of onscreen avatars. The motion of passing SkyTrains and the tidal levels of the Fraser River have also triggered content generation, and kinetic sensors located at the site have activated real-time sequences.

Art After Dark: 10 Years of UrbanScreen brings together writing by artists, scholars, critics, and curators to share the artworks and voices of the incredibily innovative artists and production teams, as well as the mentors and young emerging artists, who have contributed to UrbanScreen over the past decade.

Alison Rajah, Director, Surrey Art Gallery   Liane Davison, Manager of Culture, City of Surrey

(Spotlight on) UrbanScreen

Robin Laurence

Test projection of UrbanScreen during construction of Chuck Bailey Recreation Centre, 2009. Photography by Surrey Art Gallery.

Located at the Chuck Bailey Recreation Centre in central Surrey, UrbanScreen is Canada's largest permanent outdoor venue for new media art. Imagined by artists and built by the City of Surrey, UrbanScreen was launched in 2010 as an innovative addition to the City's Public Art Program. Through the fall and winter, when nights are long, it hosts changing digital works, including photographs, videos, films, text, and animation, projected after sunset on the Recreation Centre's west wall. UrbanScreen is a public art venue curated by the Surrey Art Gallery, and reflects the institution's leading-edge commitment to new media and digital art, as seen in the projects, exhibitions, and residencies generated through the Gallery's TechLab (1999-2020).

UrbanScreen is part of a contemporary worldwide movement that explores the ways in which digital technologies and ubiquitous media culture are changing our relationship with the built environment. In recent years, artists and activists have appropriated the forms and technologies of computerized commercial signage, converting them into platforms for cultural, political, and community expression, and into opportunities for viewers to reconsider their urban surroundings.

Mirjam Struppek is an internationally renowned urbanist and curator who has contributed substantially to our understanding of the social and creative possibilities of urban screens. She defines them as "various kinds of dynamic digital displays and visual interfaces in urban space," citing the examples of "LED signs, plasma screens, projection boards, information terminals [and] intelligent architectural surfaces."[1] Non-commercial media-art programming may intervene in existing commercial or civic sites with the cooperation of those who regulate them, or may be projected, sometimes guerilla-fashion, onto the façades of buildings and other large structures. As with UrbanScreen, programming may also occur independently of the commercial realm on venues dedicated to public art; in these contexts, artists and curators must navigate the channels of public funding and "cultural bureaucracy"[2] rather than those of commerce.

Through its use of projected images (sometimes with accompanying sound through a shortwave FM channel as well as a set of movement-activated speakers located underneath each of its two projectors, installed in 2015), UrbanScreen circumvents concerns about "the discrepancy between the durability of architectural material and the rapid obsolescence of technology standards."[3] Such projections mean that content is not bound to or integrated into any one structure, material, or technology. Projections may also accommodate irregularly shaped architectural surfaces, as in the non-rectilinear walls and curving roofline of the Recreation Centre.

The urban screen movement, as it has emerged internationally over the past 40 years, both exploits and examines "the growing integration of media into everyday existence."[4] As demonstrated most dramatically by the brilliantly illuminated (and illuminating) LED billboards and digital moving images in New York's Times Square, Tokyo's Shibuya district, and London's Piccadilly Circus, contemporary cityscapes have been dramatically altered by large screens and new technologies in the service of advertising, information dissemination, and entertainment. Our understanding of the ways in which the built environment reflects cultural values and directs social relations has also been shifted by digital screen culture, which comprises everything from miniature displays on handheld devices to billboard-sized screens that dominate their urban locales. The pervasiveness of digital media and its attendant hardware has brought about "a new urban paradigm produced by the layering of physical space and media space."[5]

Sylvia Grace Borda, M. Simon Levin, Dennis Rosenfeld, and Jer Thorpe: Glocal

February 11 – April 30, 2010

In Surrey, the idea for the creation of an UrbanScreen was first broached by artists working on the *Glocal* project in the Surrey Art Gallery's TechLab (the TechLab project and residency took place between January 1, 2008 and March 15, 2009). *Glocal* thus became the launch project for the City's new UrbanScreen in 2010. Open source, collaborative, contributive, and multifaceted, it examined the making, sharing, and display of photographic images in the 21st century. Led by Sylvia Grace Borda, M. Simon Levin, Dennis Rosenfeld, and Jer Thorpe, it involved local and regional youth and thousands of online contributors. It also posed seemingly simple questions such as, "What is a photograph?," "What is a camera?," and "Who owns a photographic image?" Responses to such questions have been greatly complicated by the digital revolution, especially the worldwide proliferation of image-taking devices and image-sharing networks.

At the TechLab and subsequently on UrbanScreen, hundreds of diverse photographic images were assembled, montaged, and projected in different, non-traditional, and non-rectilinear configurations, often according to their formal relationships with each other (*Glocal* images were also seen online through an interactive website). In a sense, the idea of multiple small screens (such as the handheld digital devices, digital cameras, and personal computers that stood behind the production and dissemination of the photos) was posed against the large UrbanScreen, suggestive again of the complex integration of media culture into everyday life and its "layering" within the built environment. Shifting ideas of community were also explored: as *Glocal*'s UrbanScreen projection was seen by residents of the area around the Recreation Centre and by those who used or passed by the surrounding youth park. At the same time, its content resulted from engaging online "communities of interest," that is, communities that come together in virtual rather than physical space, through shared affinities and values.

Flicker Art Media (Aleksandra Dulic and Kenneth Newby): Transience

September 18, 2010 – April 30, 2011

This site-specific and site-responsive new media work was created for UrbanScreen by artists Aleksandra Dulic and Kenneth Newby, collaborating at that time under the title Flicker Art Media. In its shifting flow of video imagery, including silvery and abstracted shots of train travellers, the work both addressed and referenced commuters passing by the Recreation Centre on the nearby SkyTrain tracks. This site-responsiveness drew attention to the movements of people through urban space as well as to the different kinds of dynamics, physical and virtual, that factor into the construction of a sense of place. Through rapidly changing montages of disparate facial features, it also addressed Surrey's cultural diversity. The open-source software underlying *Transience* drew from a database of thousands of images and sounds created by the artists. The work, which included animated letters, numbers, and abstract shapes, was programmed so that the images on the screen broke up, collapsed, and then reassembled themselves each time an elevated train passed by. An additional feature of *Transience* was its eerily beautiful soundtrack, which could be accessed nearby by tuning into 89.9 on FM radio.

Urban Visuals, *Fiction Façade*, 2011. Photography by Brian Giebelhaus.

Urban Visuals (Konstantinos Mavromichalis and Nathan Witford): Fiction Façade

August 26 – November 13, 2011

Fiction Façade was a site-specific artwork created for UrbanScreen by Konstantinos Mavromichalis and Nathan Whitford, working together as Urban Visuals. The digital animation of this piece was designed both to evoke old-fashioned arcade games, such as pinball, and to work with the architectural attributes of the Recreation Centre's façade, specifically its windows. Activated by the movements of visitors in front of UrbanScreen, multiple abstract geometric shapes shifted and changed, appearing to articulate, pile up on, or bounce off the perimeters of the windows on the west wall, and then to accumulate below. This metaphor of channels in a pinball game was further enhanced by speedy white tadpole shapes, which zipped around the space like moving metal balls. A complementary soundscape, inspired by console-based video games and responsive to the movements of the work's animated visual elements, could be accessed by MP3 players or car stereos when viewers were positioned in front of the artwork.

Through its interactivity and its references to gaming and entertainment technologies of the recent past, *Fiction Façade* drew attention to the ways in which rapidly evolving digital culture is changing not only our understanding of what constitutes "play" but also our relationships with the built aspect of the spaces in which play had previously taken place. Architecture has long been understood to describe social space and direct the movements and interactions of people; in the past, traditional art forms, such as sculpture and murals, have often acted as decorative elements attuned to those functions. As seen in *Fiction Façade*, the layering of media culture in urban spaces has greatly complicated the relationship between visual art and the built environment. This work stressed the ways urban screens and digital media enable the incorporation of moving images and viewer-interactivity into architectural contexts that were previously fixed or static, thus shifting ideas of power and authority. *Fiction Façade* also spotlighted another aspect of media culture: instead of seeking out the physical spaces of gaming arcades, community members carry their arcades around with them.[6]

Mouna Andraos and Melissa Mongiat, Jeremy Bailey, Will Gill, Jillian McDonald, and Jon Sasaki: Electric Speed

Part One: December 2, 2011–January 15, 2012

Part Two: January 28–March 31, 2012

Curated by Kate Armstrong and Malcolm Levy for Revised Projects, Electric Speed was a series of new UrbanScreen commissions premiered by the Surrey Art Gallery in association with its group show, Vague Terrain. Conceived as part of the New Forms Festival, Electric Speed reconsidered the thinking of media theorist Marshall McLuhan on "the subject of accelerated culture."[7] In 1964, McLuhan wrote about the ways in which then-new communications technologies (such as television) were affecting our perceptions of time and space. He proposed the idea that "the instant speed of electric information…permits easy recognition of the patterns and the formal contours of change and development."[8] The participating artists in Electric Speed— Mouna Andraos and Melissa Mongiat, Jeremy Bailey, Will Gill, Jillian McDonald, and Jon Sasaki— were asked to create works that acknowledged the evolving impact of 21st-century media and technologies, and that addressed speed as a "subject, mode, effect or relation."[9] At the same time that the artists were to re-examine McLuhan's ground-breaking but now decades-old ideas, they were also invited to confront such theory in the contemporary context of global media culture and urban screen phenomenon.

In Part One of Electric Speed, Melissa Mongiat and Mouna Andraos invited the public to use UrbanScreen as "a site for public debate that addresses the screen as a networked phenomenon, and which echoes the global Occupy movement."[10] Responding to the Occupy movement's "human microphones," the artists collected worldwide newspaper headlines of 2011 and encouraged participants to rewrite, rearrange, or reinvent them on a website dedicated to the project. The newly rewritten headlines were then projected as a kind of textual collage onto UrbanScreen, enabling participants to interject their own voices or to enact a sense of agency within the mainstream media's reportage of a tumultuous series of events. These included the early manifestations of the Arab Spring, the Occupy Wall Street movement, and what appeared then to be the threat of widespread economic collapse.[11] This UrbanScreen project also sought to use digital means paradoxically, to "turn our accelerated culture back onto itself."[12]

Hunger, Jillian McDonald's contribution to Part Two of Electric Speed, reimagined popular culture tropes of longing, desire, and dangerous sexuality. In this video work, the artist digitally inserted herself into scenes from three contemporary vampire productions for television or cinema: True Blood, Twilight Saga, and Being Human. In each instance, McDonald engaged in a silent "staring contest" with the male protagonist of the story, exchanging smouldering, smirking, snarling, grimacing, and entirely wordless looks with him. While addressing the contemporary popular culture fixation with vampires, Hunger inverted the idea of electric speed, pressing us into an engagement with protracted inaction, a kind of enforced stillness. (Another paradox here is the use of prolonged digital media scenes versus the reputed short attention span of contemporary digital media users.)

Among its other aspects, Will Gill's video Firefly was a new media take on traditional landscape art. Gill recorded the shooting of illuminated arrows into the evening dimness and nighttime darkness of a Newfoundland outport community. Poetic flashes of light sped like meteors past fishing boats, house fronts, church, fields, woods, and a stretch of grey ocean. In their initial stillness and subject matter, the images were reminiscent of the cool, cerebral realism of Newfoundland artist

Christopher Pratt. Yet the painting-like stillness of each image was suddenly animated by the streak of light across the screen,[13] that is, by a speedy incursion of pop technology into a rustic setting. "[T]hese points of light seem like a metaphor for information, travelling in all directions with unspecified urgency…".[14] The images produced are inexplicable, unsettling, and yet remarkably beautiful.

Jon Sasaki's video Gravity was a slow-motion take on an extreme sport—a sport that is made possible by speed and centrifugal force. Alex Fox, the supposed subject of Sasaki's work, road a vintage motorcycle and performed death-defying, dare-devil stunts on a vertical racetrack known as a Wall of Death. Contradictions abounded: the extreme slow motion of the video contradicted the real-life speed necessary to keep Fox's motorcycle from falling; the documentary element was thrown into doubt by our over-familiarity with computerized special effects in contemporary film; and the question of authorship was challenged by the existence of a number of amateur Wall of Death videos posted to YouTube.[15]

Explore the Future of Creativity, Jeremy Bailey's video, was less about the idea of technological speed than it was about the commercial origins of urban screens. Taking the form of droll (or perhaps cynical) self-promotion, the work functioned as an advertisement for the "Famous New Media Artist Jeremy Bailey." It showed him standing alone in his studio, dressed in geeky clothes and gesturing with digitally-created apparatuses that were attached to his hands and lower arms. These futuristic devices, evocative of weapons in anime or video games, enabled him to "draw" a colourful yet banal array of cartoon visual effects in the air around him, including ribbons, dots, checks, and pyramids. Bailey's UrbanScreen video project was accompanied by a parallel campaign of paid, online ads. Together, they critiqued the commercialization of both public space and media culture. In the weapon-like appearance of Bailey's drawing apparatuses, they could also allude to the military origins of many mainstream computer technologies. The adaptation of these technologies to popular culture in the form of violent, militaristic entertainments, such as computer games, is understood to further entrench military-industrial values and behaviours.

Julie Andreyev with Greg Snider, Tom, and Sugi during installation of Bikeride, 2013. Photography by Surrey Art Gallery

Julie Andreyev, Josh Hite, Mark Lewis, Gabriela Vanga and Mircea Cantor: Taking Time

September 14, 2012–January 6, 2013

This group show, composed of four short video works projected in looping sequence on UrbanScreen, employed imagery of everyday activities, small rituals, repetitive actions, and ordinary journeys, all reflecting upon our daily experience of time. Curator Alison Rajah brought together new and recent videos by both local and international artists: Julie Andreyev, Josh Hite, Mark Lewis, and Gabriela Vanga and Mircea Cantor.

Andreyev's 2009 *Bikeride*, excerpted from her "Animal Lover" series, depicted her two small dogs, Tom and Sugi, running on a series of bike paths through a sequence of distinctive scenes in her hometown of Vancouver. Shot from an HD camera mounted at dog level on Andreyev's bicycle, the video (with sound) focused on Tom and Sugi while significantly registering the passing urban landscape, including industrial, residential, and recreational areas. Railway tracks and warehouses, vacant lots and construction sites, parks, and playing fields, low-end apartment blocks and high-end condominium developments, mountains and harbour, all spoke to both the general and the specific within Metro Vancouver's built environment. These scenes also addressed "the dog as an urban animal, and the landscape of the city as continuously in flux."[16] The urban soundscape fluctuated, too, ebbing and flowing until eventually the rumble of a freight train drowned out all other noises.

John Hite's video, *Repeats and Attempts*, was created in collaboration with 23 skaters and riders at the Chuck Bailey Youth Park, which is adjacent to the Recreation Centre and UrbanScreen. The artist attached a GoPro camera to the participants as they took their scooters, skateboards, and BMX bikes through a succession of manoeuvres and challenges in the asphalt plaza and bowl. Through this means of capturing imagery which he then edited and projected (with sound) on UrbanScreen, the artist created a sense of the dizzying movement and physicality of the skaters' and riders' activities, as well as conveying the driven (and almost vocational) nature of their sports. The finished video work focuses on the obsessively repetitive rhythms and movements created out of the drive to realize and perfect certain stunts. As with Hite's other video and photographic works, *Repeats and Attempts* examines human movement within the context of local urban space and seeks out the creative possibilities inherent in confrontations with everyday obstacles.

Mark Lewis, an internationally acclaimed Canadian artist based in London, England, captures daily pedestrian traffic in a district of that populous city while also examining the history, aesthetics, and conventions of filmmaking. His luminous 2005 work, *Rush Hour, Morning and Evening, Cheapside*, reinvents the everyday urban imagery of passing crowds of people going to and from work by turning his camera upside down and focusing on their upright, elongated shadows. The resulting imagery, shot on 35mm film in sunny, summer weather and played back in slow motion, is paradoxically ghostly, as if these individuals were wraiths. At the bottom of the screen, the camera cuts off the heads of the inverted figures; the entirety of their heads and bodies is found, instead, in their upright shadows. These shadows, however, are not complete representations either because they lack colour and articulated details, such as facial features. It's as if daily travels to and from work had erased individual identities.[17] Again, the imagery spoke to commuters passing by UrbanScreen on the SkyTrain specifically, and to the routine and unexamined movements of people through urban spaces generally.

By contrast, Gabriela Vanga and Mircea Cantor's 2005 video, *The snow and the man*, seems to capture a moment of individual whimsy, wrestled "tentatively" from constrictions of time and social expectation. Shooting from an upper window, these Romanian-born, Paris-based artists recorded an unidentified man building a miniature snowman during an unusual snow fall. His commitment to his time-consuming endeavour is punctuated by his occasional wandering off to find forms and materials to accessorize his little snowman and, more significantly, by his frequent checking of his watch and his occasional, somewhat furtive looking around him. The tension in this work is between the routines and conventional behaviours of urban life and the breaking of those routines in a spontaneous (yet guarded) response to fleeting weather conditions.

Paul Wong, *Year of Gif*, 2013. Photography by SITE Photography.

Paul Wong: Year of GIF

January 23–April 28, 2013

In this video work created for UrbanScreen, Paul Wong drew from his personal archive of hundreds of smart phone GIFs.[18] Created by the pioneering media artist during the 2012 calendar year, the images were presented in a fast-moving, animated montage[19] against a ground of shifting and shimmering colour and colour bars. They included everything that caught Wong's eye: patterns, textures, colours, friends, architecture, scenes of travel, landscapes, digital displays, fruit, flowers, animals, satellite dishes, art exhibitions (of his own work and that of others), and found images of politicians and celebrities. With its flipbook-like animation of still images, Wong's piece pulsed with life—and again spoke to the integration of media culture and the proliferation of photographic images in our daily lives. Again, too, a significant contrast existed between the scale and function of small, mobile, hand-held devices and the monumentality of UrbanScreen. Wong brought these two extremes of digital imagery together in a complementary, entertaining, and illuminating fashion. *Year of GIF* reflected on how we make meaning out of a ceaseless and sometimes chaotic stream of experiences, images, and media technologies—and how we choose to preserve memories in the form of digital imagery.

Josephin Böttger: Trapez

September 6 –15, 2013

Presented by Vancouver's grunt gallery, Jospehin Böttger's projection work *Trapez* was shown on UrbanScreen as part of the 2013 New Forms Festival. It is based on documentary footage the German artist shot during the demolition of an old building in the Hamburg neighbourhood in which she lives and works and the subsequent construction of a new office building over a period of a year. This footage is supplemented by hand-drawn animation whose geometrical shapes reflect construction materials, scaffolding, and emerging architectural forms. It also includes the dance-like movements of a spotted creature, one that possesses both animal and human qualities and is imposed over the urban imagery through the use of blue screen technology. Employing time-lapse imagery along with these animation techniques, both blended into her video footage, *Trapez* seeks to disrupt both temporal and spatial realities, while also drawing analogies between the built environment and the living human body. A sense of what the artist calls "urban absurdity" emerges, revealing her perception of the relentless process of demolition and re-development in urban centres, and her observation that many of the newly constructed office buildings in Hamburg sit empty for years. Viewers at UrbanScreen venue were able to tune into FM89.9 on their MP3 players or car stereos to access the work's soundtrack. Designed by Felix Kubin, it echoed the demolition and construction imagery.

Sylvia Grace Borda: Aerial Fields

September 21, 2013 – January 19, 2014

With *Aerial Fields*, photographer and media artist Sylvia Grace Borda broke new technical and perspectival ground. Her video projection of farmlands and working farmers in the Surrey region and Fraser Valley basin not only revealed aspects of 21st century rural life little explored by contemporary artists, but also employed a remote-controlled low-altitude aircraft or "video drone" to shoot most of its scenes. Often associated with military and other government surveillance activities, video-equipped drones have a somewhat sinister connotation for the general public. Borda's UrbanScreen work, however, appropriated this technology for creative and social purposes. Through it she introduced us to up-tilted planes and exhilarating bird's-eye views of farm fields, agricultural buildings, grazing animals, and crops in various stages of planting, growth, and harvest. She honoured the work that local farmers and agricultural labourers perform in order to bring food to our tables, while also illuminating some of the threats to local food production. Long panning shots revealed the steady encroachment of residential development: tracts of suburban housing surround much of the fertile and productive farmland depicted here. In addition to her screen-filling aerial videos, Borda also employed split-screen technology, juxtaposing still photographic images of farms and farm buildings, shot from an artist's more traditional perspective (standing on the ground) with moving aerial imagery, shot using a video drone.

In her statement for *Aerial Fields*, Borda discussed the impact of digital recording devices on the traditional landscape art practices of making sketches as a way of registering aspects of the surrounding countryside. Digital technology, she wrote, alters our understanding of the durational element of art making. Borda also discussed the advent of "new platforms of knowledge and spatial understanding."[20] The subject matter, too, advances our philosophical understanding of the crossover between agricultural labour and art: Borda sees her project as "exploring farming production and crops as a cultural endeavour."[21] Simultaneously, the video projection spoke to the

market stresses to which agricultural lands are subject, and the pressures on farmers to give their lands over to residential development interests or to invest in hybridized and/or monocultural crops rather than maintain the mixed-use farming of the past.

Part of Borda's objective was "to engage and celebrate suburban and rural audiences and producers who are rarely directly involved in contemporary art delivery."[22] Her project was both indexical and collaborative, depending on the cooperation and collaboration of farmers. In creating *Aerial Fields* (part of her opus titled "This One's for the Farmer"), she worked closely with several local agricultural agencies, foundations, and cooperatives.

Matt Gingold, Philippe Pasquier and Thecla Schiphorst: Longing and Forgetting

January 24 – April 27, 2014

Longing and Forgetting involved two distinct forms of collaboration. The first was the primary collaboration among the three media artists who created the work: Matt Gingold, based in Melbourne, Australia and Philippe Pasquier and Thecla Schiphorst, based in Vancouver at the time. The second involved what Schiphorst described as "public collaborative choreography using mobile devices controlled by participants to gesturally interact with video characters."[23] The HD video projection was directed by Gingold and produced by Pasquier and Schiphorst. Schiphorst also choreographed the dancers' movements.

During most of its run, *Longing and Forgetting* consisted of a generative video, in which images of dancers, dressed in white, were projected moving up and around the façade of the Recreation Centre. Preoccupied with their own somewhat precarious movements, all of them keyed to the building's architectural components and visible from the SkyTrain, the dancers seemed to slowly and tentatively scale the façade, searching for hand-holds and foot-holds. They also appeared to stand or sit on top of actual windows situated in the wall, as if balanced on their frames; to face outward, their backs pressed again the wall, inching their way along, as if on a narrow ledge; and to hang by their hands from the roof of the building, their bodies swinging and dangling. The artists' statement described the movements of the dancers as being "indicative of small daily efforts, of being or striving." The dancers' movements can be read as both individual and social, contextualized within the built environment and, beyond that, as expressive gestures towards an existential search for meaning.

The public interactive component of *Longing and Forgetting* took place on April 24, 2014. Members of the public were invited to attend UrbanScreen, download an app, and use their mobile devices to activate individual characters as they manoeuvred their way around the façade. Using game technology and the gyroscope capacity of smart phones, the interactive software enabled participants to explore the ways in which movement can be used "expressively and intelligently." Audience participation in the project also enhanced a sense of agency, a major consideration given the public's usually passive roles as receptors of large-scale digital messaging on ubiquitous urban screens. The artists also made the software available to a wider audience through open-sourcing it.

Installation view of *Longing and Forgetting*, 2014, Matthew Gingold, Thecla Schiphorst, Philippe Pasquier. Photography by Surrey Art Gallery.

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Sylvia Grace Borda, *Aerial Fields*, 2013. Photography by Brian Giebelhaus.

Operative Agency (Bryan Lemos Beça and Steve DiPasquale): The Space of Difference

September 13, 2014 – March 29, 2015

Created by Operative Agency, a "spatial-political research think-tank" founded by artists/designers Bryan Lemos Beça and Steve DiPasquale, *The Space of Difference* examined "biological and geological" aspects of the site of Surrey's UrbanScreen, that is, of the Recreation Centre near the Gateway SkyTrain station. For the purpose of this project, the artists defined the biological sphere as "the flow of organic mass/energy" and the geological as "encrustations of matter.… the biological can extend from the corn field to the movement of passenger mass on the SkyTrain, while the geological can extend from the railway ties to concrete skate bowls."[24] Using a grid format, Operative Agency juxtaposed twelve archival images (or "artifacts") with twelve contemporary video images within a grid format to investigate the relationship between spatial thinking and story-telling. Through their UrbanScreen work, they also proposed the possibility of individual "agency" in the ways we experience the spaces we inhabit, while highlighting the dynamics by which the past informs the present and the present anticipates or imagines the future.

The projected images, intended for riders passing by on the SkyTrain as an experience akin to viewing digital rollage art or rotating trivision billboards, included landscapes and streetscapes, the log cabins of early settlers and the glass and steel façades of recently built condo towers, grazing animals and transit passengers. A computer program keyed to the movement of the trains going by on the raised tracks generated the possibility of projecting some 144 different combinations of images.

According to the artists, "The interweaving of past and present speaks not just to a tale of days gone, but to a heightened understanding of the pluralistic reality of the place. Through this movement, a generative spatial story is told, one in which the SkyTrain passengers are simultaneously creating, reading, and interpreting."[25] By setting forth a framework or video matrix of imaginative connections, the work offered members of the public "a place of their own making."[26]

Julie Andreyev and Simon Lysander Overstall: Salmon People

October 23, 2015 – January 31, 2016

A recombinant video and audio installation designed for UrbanScreen by Julie Andreyev and Simon Lysander Overstall, in collaboration with Paolo Pennutti, Elisa Ferrari, and Jonathan Nunes, *Salmon People* consisted of images and sounds of the shared ecologies of non-human and human entities in and along the Fraser River as it runs through Surrey. The upper third of the video comprised views over the river and along its banks, and includes bridges, barges, thinning patches of trees and natural vegetation, and areas of industrial and residential development. The bottom portion of the screen presented an underwater or fish's view of the river and was composed of underwater video footage of sockeye salmon as they migrated upstream towards their spawning grounds, travelling against the current for some 40 to 90 miles a day. Separating these two realms was the rolling horizontal line of the river's surface, occasionally disrupted by waves or the flashing tips of salmon fins. It is the surface of the water, rather than the banks of the Fraser River, that becomes the "liminal" or threshold space evoked here.

The video component of *Salmon People* was controlled by custom software that constantly recombined images of land and water. The audio component employed non-human, human, recorded, and synthesized sounds.

In their project statement, the artists wrote that the Fraser River salmon depicted in their video had swum for three to four years, "making a counter-clockwise circular migration around the northern Pacific Ocean" before returning to their natal river or stream to spawn.[27] Each returning salmon, they added, finds its long way back to its birthplace using scent and other perceptual modes, including electromagnetic navigation. With their migrating, spawning, and then dying, the work's subtextual message included the assertion of the essential place salmon have in highly evolved ecosystems at sea and on the shores of rivers and streams.

Salmon People also reminded us of the significant role that salmon have long played in the lives and cultures of Indigenous peoples of the Pacific Northwest, and the reverence for these creatures evinced by those dependent upon them for survival. At the same time, it drew our attention to the extreme changes wrought on marine and riverine environments through colonization and industrialization, and the severing of the bond that recognizes salmon as sentient fellow creatures rather than as mere "resources" to be exploited.

Sonny Assu: 1UP

February 11 – May 8, 2016

Sonny Assu's site-specific video installation for UrbanScreen combined brilliant, pulsing colours with stylized graphic elements that riffed on northern Northwest Coast design. It also included documentary footage of still and roiling bodies of water, and references to popular and street culture, including video games of the 1980s and 90s and contemporary urban graffiti. The work's title *1UP* is a gaming term, meaning the granting of an "extra life" to a player who has achieved a certain level of achievement. It was both a personal reference to the artist's youth, when he was deeply invested in video games, and a metaphor for the process of decolonization, the gradual recognition of Indigenous land claims, and the power of cultural resurgence. The large, dominant foreground shape in the work, around which video-game iconography and documentary elements play, is an "abstraction of an abstraction," that is, a reworking of the highly stylized graphic design language of the northern Northwest Coast, with its characteristic formlines, ovoids, and U-shapes. The exhibition was featured in the 2013 Capture Photography Festival.

Sonny Assu is an artist of Ligwild'xw/Kwakwaka'wakw descent who grew up in South Delta and was based in South Surrey at the time of his UrbanScreen project. His address to UrbanScreen, on the traditional territory of the Kwantlen people, was therefore inflected by his own experience of displacement from and eventual reclamation of his cultural heritage and his homeland (traditional Kwakwaka'wakw territory includes north-eastern Vancouver Island and the north-central coast of the British Columbia mainland). In recognition of the precedence of local indigenous culture, Assu consulted with Kwantlen artist Brandon Gabriel during the development of the project.

His video installation "tags" the colonial landscape to draw attention to the histories of the Indigenous peoples of Canada. The documentary video images of moving water—rippling, surging, or smashing against a rocky shore—projected within floating circles in the video, reflected the importance of waterways as the major routes of transportation for the pre-contact Indigenous cultures of the Northwest Coast. They also suggested the means of arrival of colonial expeditions from afar, and the subsequent political delineations of colonial nations. With *1UP*, Assu asked us to consider the parallel narratives of original peoples and settler cultures in the place now known as Surrey.

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Sonny Assu, *1UP*, 2016. Photography by Edward Westerhuis.

Scenocosme (Anaïs met den Ancxt and Grégory Lasserre): Rencontres Imaginaires

September 29, 2016 – May 7, 2017

Rencontres Imaginaires, which translates as "Imaginary Encounters," is a series of interactive behavioural video works, conceived and produced by the French artists Anaïs met den Ancxt and Grégory Lasserre, who collaborate under the name Scenocosme. Passionate about using art and technology to break down social barriers, the artists invited the public to engage in play through real-time interaction with pre-recorded "virtual friends" projected on UrbanScreen. During its fall and winter run, the work employed a custom-built digital kiosk system, designed by the artists and installed at the UrbanScreen site, to capture live video footage of the kiosk users and "beam" them onto the screen.

The software enabled viewers in the kiosk to interact with characters on the screen, using simple hand gestures and backwards and forwards movements to manipulate them. The pre-recorded characters were played by Surrey residents who had volunteered to take part in the project by being videotaped by the artists with technician Christophe Thollet during greenscreen production sessions at the Surrey Art Gallery prior to UrbanScreen exhibition. Their seemingly eccentric gestures translated, during real-time interactions with kiosk users, as perhaps touching a hand, patting a head, or tickling a chin.

Employing techniques that referenced and mimicked the illusionistic tricks of early filmmakers, *Rencontres Imaginaires* encouraged the public to engage in spontaneous play, to create a feeling of community, connection and sharing, and to experience a sense of agency or empowerment within the digital realm. The work was presented in concert with the New Forms Festival and the Capture Photography Festival.

Marianne Nicolson: The Way In Which It Was Given to Us

September 28, 2017 – January 7, 2018

Marianne Nicolson's animated video loop employed subtly shifting and changing pictographic imagery to address First Nations' unceded title to and forced dispossession from their traditional territories in what is now the province of British Columbia. Nicolson (Tayagila'ogwa), who is of Scottish and Dzawada'enuxw descent, has long used pictographic imagery in her interdisciplinary art practice, and describes pictographs as a way of "recording stories on the land." For her UrbanScreen exhibition, she drew upon her knowledge of her Dzawada'enuxw ancestors' pictographs at the mouth of the Kingcome River in central coastal BC as well her research into and with those of the Kwantlen and Semiahmoo peoples local to Surrey. *The Way In Which It Was Given to Us* is predicated on an understanding of shared Indigenous histories of colonization and dispossession.

Employing subtly ebbing and flowing pictographic images of humans and animals, articulated in brilliant red against a vivid blue ground, Nicolson conjured up Indigenous origin stories and pre-contact life on the land and sea. As the work proceeds, it then registers grief at the post-contact introduction of deadly diseases and the carving up of ancestral territories into land allotments for settlers as Indigenous peoples were forced onto small reserves. This imagery was accompanied by a soundtrack of running water, audible through the kiosk installed onsite. In her exhibition essay, writer and activist Siku Allooloo describes Nicolson's work as an act of witness and truth-telling.

Installation view of *The Way In Which It Was Given to Us*, 2017, Marianne Nicolson. Photography by Brian Giebelhaus.

As an interesting subtext, and having parallels with Sonny Assu's *1UP*, Nicolson's UrbanScreen work created metaphors with graffiti. An analogy was made between the "tagging" of the contemporary built environment by graffiti artists and the colonial "overwriting" of the histories and territories recorded in Indigenous pictographs through settlement, development and the reserve system. At the same time, *The Way In Which It Was Given to Us* used pictographic imagery to re-tag the site of UrbanScreen in a contemporary assertion of territorial rights. As with Assu's *1UP*, Nicolson's video celebrated the re-emergence of Indigenous peoples' voices and cultural achievements while insisting that there can be no true reconciliation without recognition of First Nations' displacement from their ancestral lands.

Alex McLeod: PHANTASMAGORIA

January 25 – April 29, 2018

Alex McLeod's lens-based animation comprises highly imaginative digital landscapes or "tableaux" that shift between the two-dimensional and three-dimensional, and between the geometric and the organic. Through his custom-designed, site-specific software, McLeod's work projects evolving forms and ever-changing fields of texture, colour, and light onto UrbanScreen. From multifaceted white orbs that float, bounce, and pop into and out of existence to pulsing metallic forms that resemble moving and mutating blobs of mercury, and on to fantastical, towering, multi-hued, and three-dimensional constructions that shift and bulge, occupying a visual plane that merges the architectonic and the organic, the elements in *PHANTASMAGORIA* draw us through altered realms of thinking and perceiving.

Some of the forms respond directly to the architecture of the west wall of the Recreation Centre, appearing to balance on and fall off the tops of the windows or to race downward through the "channels" created by them, like metal balls in a pinball machine. Other forms exist in their own imagined worlds, pulling long, colourful "tails" of light behind them as they travel across UrbanScreen and thus creating complex networks of colour and light. At times, too, the entire screen is covered with short horizontal bars of multi-coloured light, suggestive

of a pulsing, electronic mosaic. Rounder, multi-faceted metallic forms come and go and at one point; teddy bear-like creatures emerge from shards of silvery metal, suggesting familiar beings created out of unfamiliar elements, held together magnetically, and floating in indeterminate space. According to Surrey Art Gallery, McLeod's work invites us as viewers to sympathize with these creatures, reflecting upon our own "projected desires in the process."[28] This exhibition was included in the 2018 Capture Photography Festival.

Nicholas Sassoon: Liquid Landscapes

September 21, 2018 – April 28, 2019

Site-specific and site-reflexive, *Liquid Landscapes* consists of seven abstract digital animation works, one for each night of the week and each playing on a seamless loop of between six and twelve minutes. Through both his working methods and his resultant imagery, Nicolas Sassoon reflects on the ways in which the natural world is mediated by culture. In his UrbanScreen animations, he examines the impact of photography, digital technology, and online image-sharing on the evolving ways in which we understand "landscape." The exhibition was included in the 2019 Capture Photography Festival.

Sassoon sourced his images of different Surrey locations (Boundary Bay, Crescent Beach, the Fraser River, the Nicomekl River, Redwood Park, the Serpentine River, and Serpentine Fen) from photographs of these places found online. He then based the colour palette of each animation on that of the corresponding photograph, as well as on the colour palettes found in selected templates for early web design. Other compositional elements, including form and movement, evoke natural phenomena at each site, such as tides ebbing and flowing, sunlight reflected on water, and foliage moving in the breeze and changing colour through the cycle of the seasons.

In *Liquid Landscapes*, organic abstract forms rhythmically morph and undulate across UrbanScreen, their colours including plays of deep blues and greys, ochres and umbers, oranges and yellows, and sandy beige through pearly pink. Pixels are an intentionally visible and active element of each composition and allude to early computer art and web design, an enduring preoccupation of the artist. As curator Rhys Edwards has written, "…each animation deconstructs itself into its discrete elements, and we are slowly shown that what we have been looking at is not a truly figurative image, but is merely symbolic."[29] Sassoon's computer-art references parallel postmodern art's employment or deconstruction of art-historical tropes, such as those of early modernism. The effect is intellectually stimulating and visually mesmerizing.

CharBagh: Faisal Anwar

September 26, 2019 – January 5, 2020

Digital artist Faisal Anwar has created an interactive video projection that engages the community in a consideration of the interface between nature and culture, using the metaphor of traditional Persian gardens. From ancient times and through a succession of cultural and religious beliefs, Persian gardens employed architectural forms and geometric patterns to symbolize natural elements, such as water and trees. The overall design, within a walled or enclosed space, was intended to evoke paradise on earth. The *char bagh* ("char" meaning four, "bagh" meaning garden) is a private, formal garden originating in Persia (present-day Iran) during the Umayyad and Abbasid periods and seeking to emulate the Garden of Eden. Taken up in the landscape architecture of a

number of countries, including Anwar's birth country of Pakistan, its basic design is quadrilateral, divided by walkways or channels of flowing water.

The shifting and changing geometric patterns seen in Faisal's UrbanScreen work respond to data generated on social media and collected by the artist. Contributions by the community include images of flowers and flower gardens, leafy vegetables and food gardens, forests and streams, wintry beaches and grassy fields, all exploring the places where nature and culture intersect (some of the images projected address negative aspects of this intersection, such as pavement strewn with litter). Audiences at the UrbanScreen site may also interact with the work using cellphones to add new content in real-time.

CharBagh is produced and exhibited in concert with the Surrey Art Gallery's TechLab's 20th anniversary exhibition, Garden in the Machine, where a monumentally-scaled version of Anwar's work is also being shown. Again, through workshops with community groups, the artist employed the metaphor of the paradise garden to consider sustainable food production, climate change, and our shifting relationship with the natural world. The participants of these Surrey-based workshops took photographs of sites, plants, and wildlife in response to questions posed by the artist.

Visitors prepare a creative response during a preview night for *CharBagh* on September 18, 2019. Photography by Brian Giebelhaus.

Notes

1   Mirjam Struppek, *UrbanScreens Impressum*, http://www.urbanscreens.org/about.html. Based in Berlin, Struppek is the founder of the International Urban Screens Association.

2   Malcolm Levy and Kate Armstrong, "Introduction," in *Electric Speed* (Surrey: Surrey Art Gallery, 2011). viii.

3   Ava Fatah Gen. Schieck, "Towards an Integrated Architectural Media Space: UrbanScreen as a Socialising Platform," in *UrbanScreen Reader*, eds. Scott McQuire, Meredith Martin and Sabine Niederer (Amsterdam: Institute of Network Cultures, 2009). 251.

4   Scott McQuire et al, "Introduction," in *UrbanScreen Reader*, eds. Scott McQuire, Meredith Martin and Sabine Niederer (Amsterdam: Institute of Network Cultures, 2009). 9.

5   Ibid, 9.

6   The ubiquity of handheld digital devices is one factor in a profound shift in our understanding of the social, and of the divide between public and private. Instead of interacting with each other in public places or on public transit, many users focus entirely on the information and entertainment such devices provide, and exclude or ignore their fellow citizens. In a sense, urban screens serve to jolt the attention of passers-by away from the narrow focus of their handheld screens, toward a larger awareness of the built environment. At the same time, as observed, the handheld devices are an inexorable element of the "new urban paradigm," the "layering" of physical space and media space.

7   Kate Armstrong and Malcolm Levy, http://vagueterrain.net/journal21.

8   Marshall McLuhan quoted by Armstrong and Levy, "Introduction," *Electric Speed*, op.sit.

9   Ibid.

10 Kate Armstrong, "Electric Speed," in *Electric Speed* (Surrey: Surrey Art Gallery, 2011). 2.

11 Ibid, 3.

12 Ibid, 3.

13 Ibid, 7.

14 Ibid, 7.

15 Ibid, 6.

16 Julie Andreyev, *Animal Lover*, http://julieandreyev.com/bikeride.

17 Their ghostliness curiously evokes the angst-ridden modernism of T.S. Eliot's 1922 poem *The Waste Land* as the poet describes crowds flowing over London Bridge: "so many, / I had not thought death had undone so many."

18 GIF stands for Graphics Interchange Format. "GIFs are image files that are compressed to reduce transfer time." http://www.urbandictionary.com/define.php?term+gif.

19 The exhibition's brochure describes the work as functioning like "a mosaic of virtual flipbooks, simultaneously exploring themes of new media, the RGB colour model and colour bar test patterns, the formal shape of the circle, architecture and wall graphics, and the artist's friends."

20 Sylvia Borda, artist's statement, in e-mail correspondence with the author April 4, 2014.

21 Ibid.

22 Ibid.

23 Thecla Schiphorst quoted in http://www.artsy-dartsy.com/posts/1826-surrey-art-gallery-presents-u… (link no longer active).

24 Bryan Lemos Beça and Steve DiPasquale (Operative Agency), artists' statement, 2014.

25 *Canadian Architect*, March 17, 2015, https:www.canadian architect.com/architecture/the-space-of-difference=a-provocative-delight… (link no longer active)

26 Beça and DiPasquale.

27 Julie Andreyev and Simon Lysander Overstall, artists' statement, 2015.

28 "Alex McLeod: PHANTASMAGORIA." surrey.ca. Accessed October 21, 2019. https://www.surrey.ca/culture-recreation/25668.aspx

29 Rhys Edwards, *Dreaming the Pixel Imaginary* (Surrey: Surrey Art Gallery Presents, 2018).

Network Art and Re-visualizing the Digital Image

Heidi May

A visitor examines a data display at the Surrey Art Gallery's TechLab during *Glocal* opening reception, January 24, 2009. Photography by Sharon Doucette.

Understanding art today requires a shift away from the aura of the art object or image, to the encounter with the artwork and an acknowledgement of the social *relations* produced from this experience.[1] When curator and critic Nicolas Bourriaud published his theory of relational art from the 1990s, he described the human relations and social context of these types of art practices as the actual aesthetics; in other words, the viewer-participants' actions constituted the aesthetics and the form of relational art. However, when artists today incorporate digital media into relational art, the experience becomes affected by the networked processes of media resulting in what is understood as network art.[2] Network art is less about the individual objects or images and more about the larger collective, the relationships and processes between the various components and individuals of the work. The network(ing) process can become the artwork itself and can often lead to the potential for relational learning.[3] Encounters with these artworks can sometimes lead to self-reflective awareness about our individual and cultural relationships with new media and digital technologies.

Glocal (global + local), a relational and network art project commissioned by the Surrey Art Gallery and led by artists Sylvia Grace Borda, M. Simon Levin, Dennis Rosenfeld, and Jer Thorp, responds to the global expansion of millions of image-taking devices and the sharing of billions of images through online networks; the artists were interested in what this meant for the role of the photographic image and the resulting impact culturally. The intention of *Glocal* was two-fold: to embody a new way to engage with evolving digital and collective networked image-making processes, and to address concepts of urban definition through visual mapping. The project consisted of multiple elements at both Surrey Art Gallery and UrbanScreen. The latter site, an outdoor venue projecting works of art during evenings, was developed by the City of Surrey as a direct outcome of the former. These elements were united by the artists and the public in a contributory and collective process, where visualization techniques made the relations between different data apparent.

Glocal's UrbanScreen element—a digital artwork projection, an architectural intervention, and, as the artists claim, a "living public art form"—was one part of a collaborative and multifaceted project about the changing role of digital image making. The digital projection consisted of images produced by various communities and individual participants in the larger *Glocal* project, from youth in Surrey to professional artists around the world, and individuals of diverse cultural, economic, social, and educational background. The projection functioned as a visual representation of the encounters, relations, and processes that contributed to *Glocal*—an artwork that began in 2008 as an artist residency project at Surrey Art Gallery and ended in 2010 at UrbanScreen.

Working out of the Surrey Art Gallery's TechLab, the artists made custom software and hardware gadgets meant to foster an individual's thinking about making digital images. They facilitated

workshops[4] and events for students from local schools, wherein participants were invited to expand ideas around digital photographic imagery and contribute to the growing image archive. They made the project open to an online submission process using Flickr, where individuals across the world contributed to the network of images.[5] Throughout the duration of this network art project, over 50,000 images were contributed to *Glocal*. In the workshops at local schools and in the online forums, resources about image-making and narrative were provided to participants, both historical and contemporary; open source software toolkits were disseminated and made available to the public; and critical discussions took place about the impact of technology and culture on the photographic image, and ultimately on ourselves.

In addition to the full-scale architectonic projection, the artists and their team explored a variety of exhibition strategies, including lightbox installations, large-format prints, and web-based interfaces. One of these was an interactive table prototype that visitors to the art gallery could use to explore the many images. Another exhibition format was tested at the Vancouver Art Gallery when the *Glocal* team created a site-specific application for an all-night event in which live camera feeds of captured images were projected onto the architectural dome of the gallery's rotunda. Gallery visitors composed the projected images that were automatically generated into a narrative grid format, which played off of the content of a neighbouring gallery exhibition, while *Glocal* team members juxtaposed images from printed media against those of the gallery visitors. All of these processes and ways of working with the images can be understood as a relational network of art and learning that ultimately impacted the results of the UrbanScreen projection.

The artists developed multiple ways of presenting the images, often responding to their common visual properties and relationships. Through visualizing, constructing, and re-visualizing the digital photographic images, the combined mass of images and performative processes of *Glocal* began to form a new narrative or imagescape[6] of their own. When confronted with the challenging question of how to make sense of such a large collection of images, the artists experimented with mapping the image data—the compositional principles and the visual elements like colour, shape, and line—using a custom-written software tool. The UrbanScreen projection consisted of "similarity

Installation view of *Glocal*, 2010, Sylvia Grace Borda, M. Simon Levin, Dennis Rosenfeld, and Jer Thorp. Photography by Sharon Doucette.

maps" that illustrate the complex relationships between a single image and the rest of the images in the *Glocal* pool. On the *Glocal* website, the artists state the similarity maps were intended to change over time, as more images were added to the pool: "In this way, these maps can be thought of as temporal fingerprints of each image and their context within the pool."[7]

In a panel discussion that addressed *Glocal*, guest scholar Ron Burnett suggested that as digital culture gets more and more complicated, less becomes visible. He described visibility and visualization as verbs: "Visibility is about projection, about working outwards into, telling stories about, pulling stories out of. It's an extremely difficult work as opposed to simply a glance... Visualization is about inhabiting a space where you release the imagination to actually do its work as opposed to repressing it…" Burnett argued digital visual culture has become so complex and chaotic that instead of trying to make images representational, we should instead focus on our performance and relationship to the images, stating, "we are moving towards an oral culture that leaves its mark in different ways."[8] *Glocal*'s UrbanScreen component was a projected façade, both literally and figuratively, of a complex network art project involving layered processes of experimentation, learning, invention, and ongoing revisualization. The mapping of the digital images revealed only glimpses of the networked and relational processes that made up *Glocal*. The artists projected the visual maps and sequences back to the public who participated in the work, revisualizing their visualizations, attempting to make visible the invisible.

Sylvia Grace Borda, Jer Thorp, and M. Simon Levin in the Surrey Art Gallery TechLab during their *Glocal* residency, 2008. Photography by Surrey Art Gallery.

Sylvia Grace Borda, M. Simon Levin, Dennis Rosenfeld, and Jer Thorp. *Glocal*, 2010, detail. Photography by Sharon Doucette.
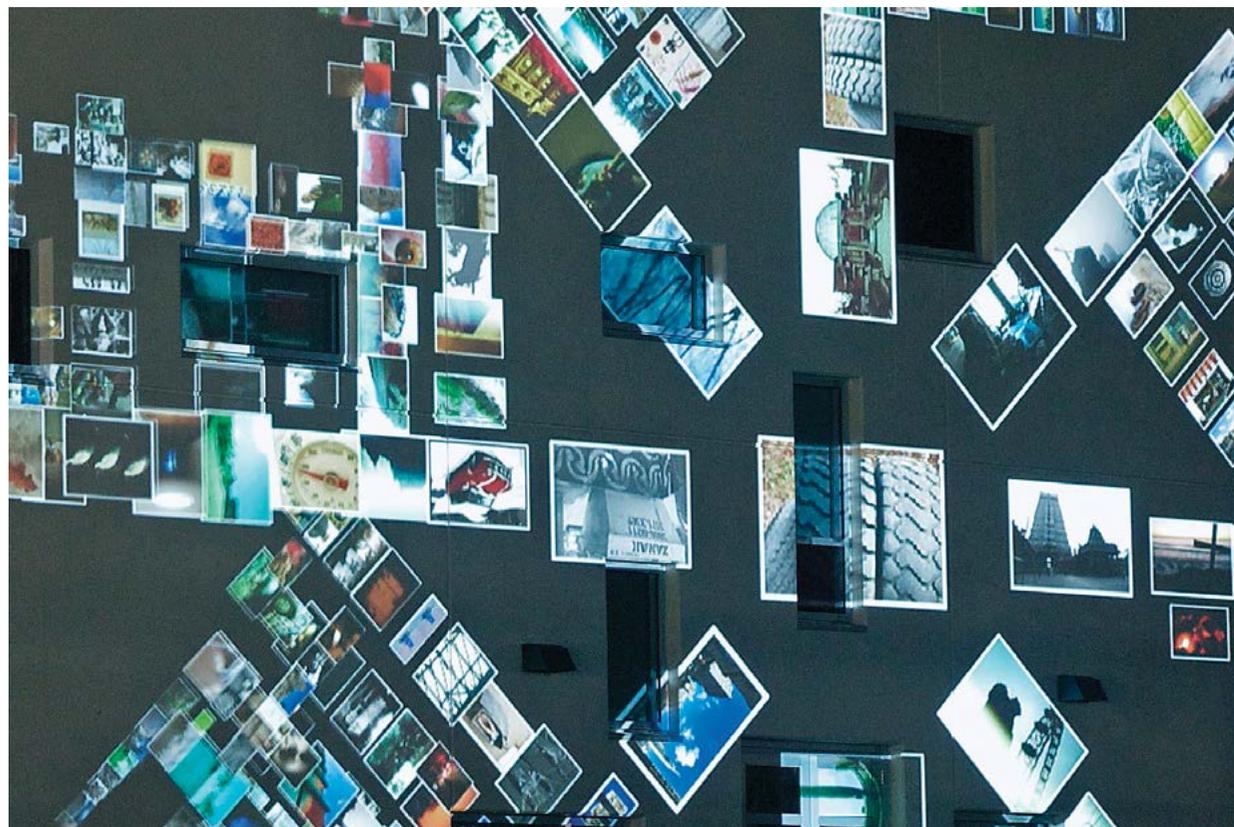
A young Gallery patron interacts with a data visualization prototype at the Surrey Art Gallery's TechLab, March 2008. Photography by Surrey Art Gallery.

Notes

1 See Claire Bishop, "Antagonism and Relational Aesthetics," *October*, No. 110 (Fall 2004): 51-79; Claire Bishop, "The Social Turn: Collaboration and its Discontents," *Artforum* (February 2006): 179-185; and, Nicolas Bourriaud, *Relational Aesthetics*. (Dijon: Les presses du reel, 1998/2002).

2 Contrary to Bourriaud's writings, which provide a rather pessimistic view of art that uses computers and ignores the net artists of the 1990s, 'network art' looks at relational and participatory art in the context of digital culture.

3 In this essay, the term 'relational' refers to the ways in which people, ideas, media, and experiences are connected, not necessarily Bourriaud's theory of relational aesthetics. The notion of 'relational learning' relates specifically to any knowledge or new understandings that may emerge from or with/in these situations. See Heidi May, "Educating Artists Beyond Digital: Understanding network art and relational learning as contemporary pedagogy," (PhD Diss., University of British Columbia, 2013).

4 The project was also highlighted abroad at the 2008 Baltics Triennale in Novi Sad, Serbia. This endeavour and several others led to international workshops, and calls for how people perceived the local and their position within a global framework.

5 See the Gallery page of http://www.glocal.ca for photo and video documentation of some of the workshops and student creations. See the Glocal Flickr photostream at http://www.flickr.com/photos/26891884@N03/.

6 Ron Burnett, *How Images Think* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2005): 40. Burnett discusses the move from images to imagescapes to broaden the cultural view of pictures and photographs as well as the roles of participants and viewers. Imagescapes "provide a way of mapping the relationship among a variety of different processes" acknowledging the combined different time experiences of creation and interaction.

7 See https://www.flickr.com/photos/blprnt/albums/72157606955337736 as well as http://glocal.ca/resources/toolkits/similarity-maps/ for more similarity maps and more writings about them.

8 Ron Burnett, "The Agency of Images: A panel discussion on the future of photography." Panel discussion at Surrey Art Gallery, Surrey, BC, March 14, 2009.

Everyday Gods

Laura U. Marks

As the Skytrain leaves the station in the gloomy dusk, dancing oblongs of yellow and rust get swept away by a human hand, following the train's rushing wake. Then across the building's curving wall float disembodied parts like hieroglyphs—an eye, an ear, a hand. From the darkness arises a fantastical composite face, blocky like a Mayan deity: its calm closed eyelids capped by two open, observant eyes, its two palms facing outward in a gesture of benediction, its chin and mouth seeming to speak. In a second, the face disperses. Moments later, a whole head rises up like a planet on the horizon. As it moves, different eyes blink in its face, different mouths speak, as though multitudes inhabit this puppet; then it too glides away on algorithmic strings. Now, a be-nose-ringed girl with brown hair falling across her face acquires two extra-large eyes, one black, one blue, and hands float at her temples like wings. Nearby, a face in profile bears a giant all-seeing eye and plump pink lips; the building's window decorates its head like an earring. Blink, and the hand-winged god now is a golden-skinned youth with one green and one blue eye; the profile figure is pale with an all-seeing black eye and beard-wispy lips. If you happen to be tuned in to FM 89.9 radio (as the long-term audience of residents of the apartment building opposite might have been), you can hear some lovely ambient music composed by Kenneth Newby. Voices interweave, their words not quite recognizable; a piano plays percussive rhythms and calm chords; chimes shimmer. Like the images, the sounds merge, separate, and recombine differently every time.

Behind these transient faces that preside briefly and glide away, the black squares of the Recreation Centre's windows show through. I start to think, these are deities I could happily put up with. Their huge calm eyes remind me of Sumerian stone god statues from 3000 BC, with huge, wide-open eyes dramatically lined in black: staring, all-seeing gods, benevolent but a little scary. The giant faces of Aleksandra Dulic and Kenneth Newby's generative artwork *Transience*, though, last only a few moments, composed of many parts and many ethnicities. Dulic designed dozens of these comely Frankensteins, building from a database she and Newby built of thousands of photographic portraits of students and faculty at Emily Carr University of Art & Design.

Transience also accentuates the big wall with colorful animations made of simple keyboard characters. Blue and green circles and curves, made of parentheses and Os on their sides, bob like waves on the sea, then draw back and disappear into the building's windows. They look like moon-eyed smiling faces, and I find myself smiling back. Immediately I feel like a fool, because I smiled back at some symbols; of course there is nobody there. This is often the way people respond to computer-driven interactive art: first we are seduced by their greeting to us, and then they do something to remind us that it's just a

Flicker Art Media, *Transience*, 2010. Photography by Sharon Doucette.

Production still from *Transience*, 2010. Image courtesy of Flicker Art Media.

Aleksandra Dulic and Kenneth Newby discuss their practice at Chuck Bailey Recreation Centre on September 16, 2010. Photography by Sharon Doucette.

program, there's no human presence. However, there are people inside *Transience*, deep down at the source of the images, music, and software: Dulic and Newby, designing potentials for shape and movement to appear. A red boat floats by, its jaunty sail made of a number 4. Passengers from a train in some other city, captured on video, ride along the Recreation Centre's wall.

Dulic and Newby have worked for years, independently and together, creating performances that incorporate a variety of elements and respond to their environments. Their inspirations include, for Newby, live improvised music, and for Dulic, live puppet theatre, especially the traditional Balinese shadow theatre called *wayang kulit* with its wonderfully expressive jointed characters. Both of these involve a large number of elements—instruments, sounds, heads, limbs, bodies, movements, and other parts—that the performers compose live, in response to each other and to the energies of the audience. An emergent form takes shape that is collectively created by the artists, audience, and materials, in space and time. Dulic and Newby have figured out ways to successfully translate these principles of live interaction to computer-driven interactive media.

In doing so, the artists step away from the live encounter with the audience and replace themselves with software. As with all computer-based works, this shift might make the audience suspicious, because the work isn't responding to you in particular, just to a general idea of "you" as the audience. Every day we interact with algorithms that, by definition, don't give a toss about us, but that approximate what their programmers think we want, or want us to want. This problem has been in the news lately, with revelations that social-media companies use algorithms to addict their users, then harvest and sell databases of information about them. To decide whether to trust algorithms and databases, we need to see through them to the people who made them. Software by artists tends to be less manipulative and more sensitive and interested in creating an experience that is satisfying in itself. I find it easy to trust *Transience* and enjoy the everchanging forms and rhythms, the bright moments of resolution and bittersweet feeling of evanescence, that Dulic and Newby's creative decisions generate.

As the train passes, the wall fills completely with one enormous eye, tiled together from parts of many eyes. At this enlargement, you can really see the fleshy detail of many different faces: the

glistening skin of the eyelid, the wetness in the corner of the eye, the tender whites of the eyes, the protective eyelashes, and of course the different shades of skin colour. It is moving to see this most precious and vulnerable part of the body at such a large scale and with, literally, so many facets. It's one of the easiest ways to understand our shared humanity. More than any other body part, eyes combine power and openness in equal measure. Distance vision allows us to quickly assess and understand our environment; it gives us the autonomy and mastery we need in an unfamiliar place. Close vision allows us to scrutinize the faces of our dear ones and of people we meet for the first time, and to communicate without speaking. In the fact that this image is not a single eye but a mosaic, there is a beautiful metaphor for shared vision. Everybody sees a little differently, and so when we put our eyes together, we can see more, and in more different ways, than each of us would singly. The giant composite shows how physically vulnerable the eyes are, how fleshly and moist; and also, as these strangers' eyes gaze out anticipating this anonymous contact with us, how brave they are. In some cultures it's important to look deep into one another's eyes, in others it's more respectful to glance briefly. These eyes are open to any kind of encounter with the people passing on the Skytrain, but it will be brief.

Later, an enormous multi-face mosaic spreads across the wall: along the top, blocks of eyebrows, two rows of eyes, then blocks of cheeks, noses, mouths, more mouths. It is monstrous but beautiful. I think, Yes, I would be fine with having a god like this, a transitory, ever-changing god cobbled together from the many humans that come and go.

Fiction Façade and the Zero Player Game

Cindy Poremba

In videogames, an attract mode is an animated segment, typically an automated gameplay demo, meant to lure players to the game. An attract mode was (and is) a common feature of games designed for public spaces, such as arcades. *Fiction Façade*, in a sense, presents us with an attract mode of sorts: a piece drawing us in to a work that seems to be playing itself. And like the best attract modes, it has a spectatorial quality that invites passers-by to get swept up in its visual rhythms, emergent patterns, and cheerful blips.

Fiction Façade is a 2011 outdoor installation for UrbanScreen by Urban Visuals' Konstantinos Mavromichalis and Nathan Whitford. Its colourful, geometric animations recall early computer visuals, notably arcade games (including non-digital arcade games like pinball) and first-generation console games. Select visual elements, and the soundscape for the work (accessible by tuning in to a radio channel) are generated through collisions between the projected virtual objects seen in the animation and the physical architecture, such as the windows and wall edges of Surrey's Chuck Bailey Recreation Centre. Simulated physics allows for emergent images, such as an object rolling atop a window, or another bouncing off a wall edge. A camera detects people passing in front of the installation, and their position also triggers various generative aspects of the projected content; so, for example, if a passer-by was to walk across the front of the work, the origin of an effect could change and follow them along the path. This creates variation in the animated sequences as the work responds to its environment, reacting not only the building itself, but an entire situated context that includes humans: one playful system.

"It is reminiscent of early video games, with a kind of retro-futurism,"[1] say artists Mavromichalis and Whitford. On one level, this is self-apparent: the work's abstract shooting geometries, flashes, and physics collisions present a generalized reference to games like *Pong* [1972], or *Tempest* [1981]. Mavromichalis and Whitford note the soundscape is informed by older console-based 8-bit video games.[2] But both the retro and the futurism here are significant: *Fiction Façade* both calls back to a generalized digital past, and anticipates a non-human future.

The aesthetic of the early video game, or retrogame, is often contextualized within the framework of nostalgia; in triggering memories for a generation who had grown up playing games like *Pac Man* (1980) and *Space Invaders* (1978). But this broad framing may obscure reasons why it proves popular as a public art aesthetic. Theorist Brett Camper sees retro, in the context of game aesthetics, as a particular type of artistic reference, noting it "carries with it a source of discontinuous influence, resemblance coupled with temporal distance."[3] Stacey Menzel Baker and Patricia F. Kennedy describe this as "simulated nostalgia," specifically, a "bittersweet yearning for a past indirectly experienced,"[4] as opposed to one anchored to direct experience. The value of this reference is not necessarily in accurately recreating these early game forms in the present day, or even triggering specific memories for game players (although it can still do this, in honesty, very few people have fond memories of playing *Pong*). Instead, as

Urban Visuals, *Fiction Façade*, 2011. Photography by Brian Giebelhaus.

Christian McCrea observes, why and how elements are mobilized can reflect a range of intentions.[5] In the case of *Fiction Façade*, the aesthetic connects with a generalized early computing nostalgia not isolated within game culture. Early game visuals here present an iconicity of the wonder and optimism of the early home computer age, untarnished by complexity and toxicity, for players and non-players alike, for viewers and for gamers. This is one of the qualities that makes this aesthetic particularly accessible, and compelling, in public pieces. *Fiction Façade* evokes this aesthetic with flashes, colours, and geometric shapes evoking visuals from early arcade and console games, presenting a generalized, and more inclusive, iconicity. This allows it to speak both to a spectator for whom a specific bar of 8-bit generated music evokes early Saturday console memories, but also still be parsable in recalling a moment of great techno-optimism of an earlier computer age: in some ways, a time when we were all gamers.

But beyond nostalgia, there are other aspects of *Fiction Façade* that resonate today with game spectatorships—in both visualist works and recontextualizations, and increasingly gameplay performance. We can watch performances of dance or theatre without judgement; the pleasures found in the spectatorship of playfulness are less often discussed. But games have always been both played and watched—sports being the most obvious example. Visualist works are a mainstay of game art, from the psychedelic hyperviolence of Brody Condon's *Adam Killer* (1999-2001), to the meditative simplicity of Cory Arcangel's *Clouds* (2002). Games have substituted for VJ work at club venues, and online digital game viewership platforms, the most popular being Twitch, have massive spectator audiences. The play of others, even when the other is not present, can be compelling, cathartic, tense, and beautiful. Games with emergent movement patterns, like pinball and *Pong*, *Galaga* (1981), or *Centipede* (1981), are mesmerizing to watch: the aesthetic of the play itself is rhythmic, steady, fluid. Arcade-style works are exemplars of single-player spectatorial experiences; visually interesting even without specialized gameplay knowledge, and accessible without demanding sustained, focused viewership.[6] In embodying these design qualities, the generative animations of *Fiction Façade* capture the spectatorial presence of these works.

Fiction Façade also has company in other low-interaction games, idle games, and zero-player games (for example David O'Reilly's *Mountain* (2014), or Ed Key and David Kanaga's *Proteus* (2013). Its close kin are what game theorists Staffan Björk and Jesper Juul would define as *setup only games*, including cellular automata like John Conway's *Game of Life* (1970). Like *Game of Life*, or even pinball, *Fiction Façade*'s pleasures lie in watching the unfolding, emergent work, with player agency constrained largely to the setup of conditions that are then played out. We are minor players in this unfolding, part of a playful system that includes the expanded architecture of a building. As Björk and Juul note, "players can use (setup only games) to challenge themselves to design certain patterns, but at the same time this contradicts the notion that a game is something that someone plays." People encountering *Fiction Façade* may similarly choose to "play" the work, by using their presence to generate particular patterns in response; or, they may simply take pleasure in the spectatorship of play. Where the zero-player game might not match the spectatorial appeal of some competitive multiplayer games, what they may give is more conducive to contemplation and a more subtle aesthetic experience of rhythms and recognitions, of submission to an almost ambient playful experience.

Fiction Façade is not explicitly positioned as a game; it is a responsive installation drawing upon videogame aesthetics. However, I think it is not unreasonable to view it through the lens of the zero-player spectatorial game, and this reading gives us insight into its role as both a retro and futurist work. We are increasingly cognisant of the space we share with non-humans: whether that be artificial intelligence, or our natural environment. Like watching an attract mode, or bots argue over Twitter, *Fiction Façade* is an experience of watching non-human play. As an audience we can be intentionally or unintentionally absorbed into the system—but as a generative element in a game we are not really playing. It offers for us a revisionist past ambivalent, but not hostile, to us. As we increasingly appreciate a world where our agency is shared with non-humans, *Fiction Façade* shows us how to find pleasure in these moments.

Notes

1 Surrey Art Gallery. "Projected outdoor artwork turns recreation centre into 100 foot wide arcade game: *Fiction Façade*." Surrey Art Gallery Press Release, September 22, 2011.

2 Ibid.

3 Brett Camper, "Fake Bit: Imitation and Limitation," in *Proceedings of the 2009 Digital Arts and Culture Conference* (UC Irvine, 12-15 Dec 2009). https://escholarship.org/uc/item/3s67474h.

4 S.M Baker and P.F. Kennedy, "Death by Nostalgia: A Diagnosis of Context Specific Cases." *Advances in Consumer Research*, 21 (1994): 380-387.

5 Christian McCrea, "Then, suddenly, I was moved: Nostalgia and the media history of games," in *Proceedings of the 7th International Digital Arts and Cultures Conference: The Future of Digital Media Culture* (Perth, Australia, 15–18 Sep 2007).

6 George Skaff Elias, Richard Garfield, K. Robert Gutschera, and Eric Zimmerman, *Characteristics of Games* (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 2012): 220-221.

7 Staffan Björk and Jesper Juul, "Zero-Player Games. Or: What We Talk about When We Talk about Players" (presented at the Philosophy of Computer Games Conference, Madrid, 2012). http://www.jesperjuul.net/text/zeroplayergames/

8 Ibid.

Electric Speed Part 1 opening night at UrbanScreen, December 2 2011 with *Rewrite the Year* by Mouna Andraos and Melissa Mongiat. Photography by Surrey Art Gallery.

Installation view of *Rewrite the Year*, 2011, Mouna Andraos and Melissa Mongiat. Photography by Bronte Taylor.

Art Beyond Time

Kate Armstrong

This exhibition was developed on the occasion of the Marshall McLuhan centennial in 2011 as a way to invite reflection on the state of accelerated culture. Six artists, Melissa Mongiat and Mouna Andraos, Jeremy Bailey, Jillian McDonald, Jon Sasaki, and Will Gill, were invited to create new work.

In 1964, McLuhan wrote, "Today it is the instant speed of electric information that, for the first time, permits easy recognition of the patterns and the formal contours of change and development. The entire world, past and present, now reveals itself to us like a growing plant in an enormously accelerated movie. Electric speed is synonymous with light and with the understanding of causes."[1]

The subject of speed runs like wires through the kinetic, aphoristic writing of McLuhan, and never more so than when he's urgently describing electric circuitry and characterizing the world as a giant central nervous system.[2] He asserts that "electric circuitry has overthrown the regime of 'time' and 'space'" and that it "confers a mythic dimension on our ordinary individual and group actions," where myth "is the mode of simultaneous awareness of a complex group of causes and effects."[3] We hear about a "clash of cataclysmic proportions"[4] and the "buzzzzzzzzzzzzzzzzzzzzzzzzzzzzzzzzzzing"[5] that accompanies, or perhaps creates, "dramatic or rapid changes."[6]

There are many dimensions to the fundamental query of how speed affects our perception and experience of the world. Among these are: how does acceleration relate to the concept of centre and how does this play out philosophically on a global level as well as in relation to an everyday experience of urban or public space? How does velocity change sense experience and the way we as a culture construct an understanding of what it means to be human? And how has this changed from McLuhan's era? In short, what have 50 years of "electric speed" produced?

Noticeable in this group of works is how the artists anchor their explorations in performative action and bodily experience: the experience of time and space in an accelerated culture is examined from a scale that is mindfully human-centred. We find the artists in conversation with popular culture but also with the material world. The effects and affects of technology are made a part of this dialogue, and are reviewed, and, perhaps, in some senses renewed. Though speed is neither celebrated nor rejected, we find in these works reminders of the slow. For example, for Melissa Mongiat and Mouna Andraos, the public screen is a site for public debate that addresses the screen as a networked phenomenon, and which echoes the global Occupy movement, inviting a measured reconception of news headlines. For Jeremy Bailey, this is an opportunity to critique the role of the artist in the radically commercial, global sphere of the urban screen. Jillian McDonald is locked in a staring contest with vampires, inserting herself into a dialogue with popular culture and raising questions about the position of the consuming subject and the speed of desire. Jon Sasaki considers speed in the context of a daredevil culture, raising the spectre of radical collapse. Will Gill flays a series of placid landscapes with light, which he produces using charming, low-tech methods.

In *Rewrite the Year*, Melissa Mongiat and Mouna Andraos position UrbanScreen as a site for global debate inspired by the human microphones of the Occupy movement. The "human microphone" is a method for transmitting human voices in the setting of a large public gathering. Here the words of a human speaker at the centre of the group are repeated, at intervals, in concentric waves by the audience, so that the words can be transmitted through the gathering without the use of projected sound.

This recalls McLuhan's idea of technology as an extension of human capacities or senses—but, in this case, the method invites an interesting inversion: it is a fundamentally technological but completely human activity; something we have learned from the machine but have taken back from it.

The project goes further, as it is structured around the idea of inviting the public to revisit the events of 2011 through the news headlines of the past year. The revolutions of the Arab Spring, the flourishing and as-yet-unresolved protests of Occupy Wall Street that have spread to hundreds of cities globally, the threat of collapse of the global financial markets and the cascading failures of banks—these events form the backdrop of the work. Here we are invited to revisit the headlines and to re-form them—to erase and rewrite them in the way we would like them to have been. *Rewrite the Year* is a hopeful message that transgresses the irreconcilable, linear advance of time and turns our accelerated culture back onto itself, using the tools and processes of instantaneous communication to revisit our mistakes rather than allowing them to fuel the conditions in which these mistakes keep happening.

In *Explore the Future of Creativity*, Jeremy Bailey takes a different approach to the form of UrbanScreen, addressing the radically commercial context rather than the possibilities the form holds for collective action. As a critique of this space, Bailey produces a commercial for himself. Bailey films himself alone in his studio—the solitary artist captured hard at work. But his gestures produce unexpected results: fantastical graphics and shapes; a cartoon gun shooting rays; rainbows flying from his fingertips. His performance-oriented practice centres around the use of custom augmented reality software that overlays graphics on top of the photographic image. The array of visual effects he produces is an innately silly and over-the-top extravaganza of internet aesthetics—a world of rainbow halos and rotating gifs. Soon a text crawls across the bottom of the screen: "Jeremy Bailey, Famous New Media Artist, Explore the Future of Creativity,

Still from *Explore the Future of Creativity*, 2011, Jeremy Bailey. Image courtesy of the artist.

www.jeremybailey.net." In addition to this video, designed for the context of a large public screen, Bailey's project includes an extended campaign of Google ads and paid promotion on YouTube that runs throughout the exhibition.

For McLuhan, one of the implications of electric speed is that it allows us to observe, chart, and ultimately cooperate with the massive, far-reaching patterns in culture that are created by communication technology. Electric speed marks the onset of an accelerated era that for the first time in human history allows cultural patterns to become clear. At the heart of Bailey's work is an interest in the absurdity of contemporary technology and media cultures. Perhaps a question becomes, then, is it a normal evolution of culture—or a stranger world than ever—when a Canadian guy in a turtleneck and denim shorts shoots rainbows from his fingers and has advertisements and guns and laser beams and multi-coloured .gifs and Google ads and a website?

Like Bailey, Jillian McDonald's video projects engage, on a fundamental level, with popular media culture, and depend on performance in that she appears as a character in her videos. In much of her work, McDonald explores the position of the subject in the face of contemporary popular culture, often filtering her explorations through the genre of horror. With *Hunger*, McDonald positions herself in a staring contest with a vampire—actually, with three vampires—famous, handsome vampires from contemporary popular culture.[7] The first from *True Blood*,[8] the second from the *Twilight Saga*,[9] and the third from *Being Human*.[10]

McDonald has stared in the past: she has stared at Billy Bob Thornton[11] and at Brad Pitt.[12] But there are reasons that the staring contest in *Hunger* seems stacked against her, not least being that the idea of a vampire depends on an inversion of timescale: a vampire is an instantiation of eternity who exists within, but is constantly at odds with, the linear continuum of historical time. There is also the issue of desire and the way the current vogue for vampires neatly dovetails with a puritanical pro-abstinence message delivered through novels and films to North American youth.[13] McDonald takes on the subject of longing and places it into a paralyzed, competitive moment between two subjects, writ large on an architectural exterior. The video addresses hunger, duration, competition, attention, desire: there is both a pull and a stillness alongside the irony. It is the frozen and extended outtake from an imaginary film. Here speed is addressed through slowness. We experience a stasis that is produced not by inactivity but by intense and focused concentration to not move, to not break the connection.

Still from *Hunger*, 2011, Jillian McDonald. Image courtesy of the artist.

Still from *Firefly*, 2011,
Will Gill. Image courtesy
of the artist.

A recurring reference for Marshall McLuhan and one that serves as a direct metaphor for the impact of electric speed is Edgar Allan Poe's short story, "Descent into the Maelstrom." In this story, a sailor describes how he was able to survive a hurricane that caused a gigantic whirlpool. After observing the action and effects of the whirlpool, the sailor opts to clasp onto a barrel, which prevents him from being sucked into the vortex that is swallowing the ship. Taking this narrative reference as a starting point in the making of *Gravity*, Jon Sasaki travelled to the U.K. to experience first-hand a kind of strange, real-world vortex—the Ken Fox Wall of Death.

A Wall of Death is a vertical racetrack where motorcycle and go-kart riders are suspended by centrifugal force as they race around, allowing them to obtain impossible angles. The Ken Fox Wall, which is 20 feet high and 32 feet in diameter, is made of Oregon pine and was built at a shipyard in New Brighton, U.K., in 1995.[14]

For the video, Sasaki filmed Alex Fox riding a 1920s Indian Scout motorcycle. Framed against a red and yellow tent and the impossible vertical of the wood frame, Fox circles the track, eventually standing up on the moving bike as it continues to circle.

The Wall of Death exists as a piece of popular culture—a recurring act at Glastonbury, a setting for an Oasis video, the subject of a short amateur video that is one of YouTube's top hits. It is a phenomenon that itself has a life within the whorls and eddies of information ecology and the culture at large. It is something we see but can't quite believe—a real-world marvel. On film we are conditioned to wonder whether the effect has been generated by computer manipulation, but this is part of the point. The Wall of Death is a marvel that depends on the physical laws of the world.

It becomes difficult to establish a clear notion of vertical and horizontal when watching Sasaki's video. Relationships between figure and ground are challenged: the daredevil's skill depends on and works directly in relation to speed as a force. Extending this further, Sasaki manipulates the footage to achieve extreme slow motion, creating new conditions for the action. The rider must accelerate or he will fall, yet here he is slowed.

In Will Gill's *Firefly*, we find his signature illuminations: this time glowing arrows are shot from house to house in the darkness of a Newfoundland outport town—across barrens, through forests, outside church doors, and into vast oceans. These classic landscapes are initially so still that they have the quality of photographs; then they give way to motion when they are suddenly sliced by mysterious, points of light. Each point is juxtaposed on this landscape—a kind of surprise lightning beam that interrupts what could otherwise be understood as a very traditional pictorial view.

We don't know how these points of light are being produced or what they mean; we don't know where they are coming from or where they are going. There is something of tracer-warfare in them: they are not necessarily benign. And yet there is something utopian about them as well. Fast, beautiful—they somehow reference both nature and technology.

In a world where it might, strangely, be easier or more predictable to produce complicated computer-generated effects than to shoot bows and arrows, the artist does just that: he straps glowsticks to arrows and, with groups of friends, blasts them over landscapes at dusk. This play with light depends on process and the hand-to-hand action of being in the world. Against the dusk and then the darkness, these points of light seem like a metaphor for information, travelling in all directions with unspecified urgency and proliferating wildly. They are a reminder of the world—the real world in which all of this perpetual information travels through, over, and within.

Notes

1   Marshall McLuhan, *Understanding Media: The Extensions of Man* (New York: McGraw Hill, 1964): 305.

2   Marshall McLuhan and Quentin Fiore, *The Medium is the Massage: An Inventory of Effects* (Berkeley, California: Gingko Press, 1967): 40.

3   Ibid., 114.

4   Ibid., 94.

5   Ibid., 11.

6   Ibid., 10.

7   *True Blood* began as a series of books and has become a TV series on HBO. *Twilight* also began as a series of novels and has spawned the four-film *Twilight Saga*.

8   Bill Compton played by Stephen Moyer.

9   Edward Cullen played by Robert Pattinson.

10 John Mitchell ("Mitchell") played by Aidan Turner.

11 *Me and Billy Bob* (2003).

12 *Staring Contest with Brad Pitt* (2009).

13 All three vampires are trying to abstain from blood and, in Edward's case, sex.

14 Walls of Death began to appear in the U.K. in 1929 and became widespread over the next decades, eventually diminishing in popularity by the end of the 1950s. By 2011, there were only two Walls of Death in the U.K., including the Ken Fox Wall.

Still from *Gravity*, 2011,
Jon Sasaki. Image
courtesy of the artist.

Installation view of *Rush Hour, Morning and Evening, Cheapside*, 2012, Mark Lewis. Photography by SITE Photography.

Installation view of *Repeats and Attempts*, 2012, Josh Hite. Photography by SITE Photography.
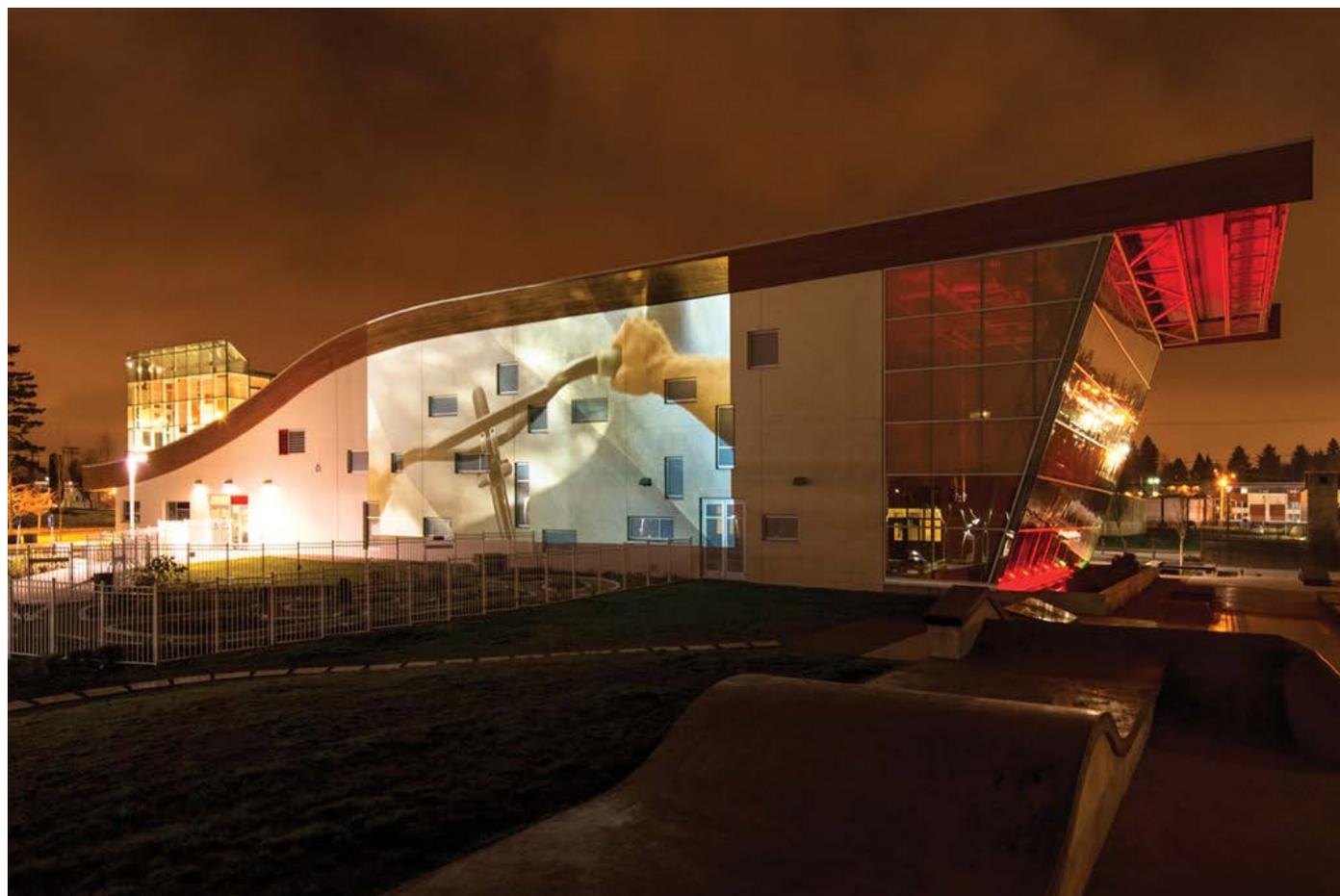
The Atemporal Everyday: Taking Time

pr0phecy sun

The twenty-first century has seen the extraordinary rise of the moving image. Moving images are a series of photographic images combined together which provide us with the optical impression of continuous movement. For most of human history, images were still, motionless, absent of breath and motion. The first major motion pictures forever changed our relationship to images by featuring domestic and everyday moments with workers leaving factories, performers juggling or dancing, and scenes of cars, traffic, trains, and animals.[1][2]

In the 1930s, thinker Walter Benjamin wrote about the power of photography and cinema to change perceptual limits and revolutionize a viewer's ability to see beyond what they inhabit. He popularized the idea of the "optical unconscious," saying that images speak to us at a level beyond their immediate face value. Today, scholars like Shawn Michelle Smith and Sharon Sliwinski describe lens-based artwork as having the ability to capture forward-looking moments in time, which are otherwise hard to comprehend in our increasingly hurried world.[3]

Taking Time, installed at UrbanScreen over the fall of 2012, invited visitors to witness a multitude of perspectives on how humans experience and reflect on routine, relationships, time, and everyday moments. The four moving image works were made by Canadian and international artists Julie Andreyev, Josh Hite, Mark Lewis, and Gabriela Vanga and Mircea Cantor. The exhibition re-contextualized how time and daily rhythms are experienced and viewed in new ways. Each work engaged with notions of the temporal in order to resituate the viewer within common events that become somehow strange and magical when experienced through a different lens.

Inspired by her continual interest in encounters with animals, plants, and other beings, artist Julie Andreyev's *Bikeride* (2009) tells a story from a canine point of view, shot with an HD camera mounted on her bike.[4] In the piece, her dogs Tom and Sugi run beside her bike through Vancouver's urban industrial landscape.[5] The accompanying soundtrack is composed of dog, city, and freight train sounds captured during the bike ride. While the dogs gallop across the screen, forward-looking moments in time are cultivated by the continual rhythmic sound of feet and bicycle making contact with the ground. The hypnotic imagery and sonic score provide viewers with an experience of a non-linear time, juxtaposed with the rhythmic loop of the video and the cadence of the viewer's own breath.

Josh Hite also challenges the viewer's relationship to time. As with his earlier works, he considers a variety of ways to document human movement through local spaces. Hite's *Repeats and Attempts* (2012) takes this process one step further, using GoPro cameras to magnify 23 skateboarders and bike riders as they move through and across surfaces of the Chuck Bailey Recreation Centre Youth Park.[6] What emerges is a first-person perspective showing unraveled and repetitive rhythms. The sound of the interactions between skateboard and concrete provide a visceral contact point through which the viewer is invited to consider the relationship between time, authorship, and everyday actions like skateboarding.

For over two decades, Mark Lewis has been exploring the experimental history of cinema and pictorial art, and inviting viewers to think about how our encounters in the visual world are worth more than their immediate face value.[7] In *Rush Hour, Morning and Evening, Cheapside* (2005), Lewis speaks directly to the idea of an "optical unconscious," by capturing shadows of pedestrians from a major intersection in London's financial district. Filmed by flipping the camera upside down, the work invokes a ghostly depiction of humanity where shadows randomly blend and collide into one another. The shadows, extracted from their common understanding, trigger questions about both the temporality of the human body and the ways in which it can be traced by media: never captured in full, just fleeting moments of optical illusion.

The interdisciplinary collaborative practice of Romanian/Paris-based artists Gabriela Vanga and Mircea Cantor includes video, photography, performance, and installation.[8][9] *The Snow and the Man* (2005) features the unusual subject of a man viewed from an apartment window in Paris. The man is slowly building a snowman out of freshly falling snow in the middle of the street. In between tasks, he looks at his watch and the viewer is reminded about time passing, and his futile, impulsive task at hand. By watching the movement of snow and the actions of the man from above, viewers gain a multi-layered, ephemeral perspective on different temporalities and how they are understood.

Collectively, Taking Time (2012) opens up a window into the social and cultural complexity of images and time. In each piece, visitors are invited to see and feel time passing and in doing this they engage in the history of the moving image. Just as Walter Benjamin wrestled with ideas of how film can shape our individual and shared perceptions, so too do these artists experiment with the ways that film can help us reconsider our world. Part of this reconsideration invites visitors to reflect upon how they experience the delicate transience and temporal nature of past and present everyday moments.

Notes

1   *Moving Image*, ed. Omar Kholeif (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2015).

2   In the 1890s, the Lumière and the Skladanowsky brothers explored a variety of urban and domestic scenes using wide-angle cinematography. The legacy of these experimental filmmakers has radically shaped and influenced contemporary culture and artists like Mark Lewis, Stan Douglas, Gillian Wearing, Rodney Graham and Edward Burtynsky. See History Magazine. "Lights! Camera! Action! How the Lumière Brothers Invented the Movies," February 22, 2019. https://www.nationalgeographic.com/history/magazine/2019/01-02/creation-of-the-motion-picture-lumiere-brothers/.

3   Shawn Michelle Smith and Sharon Sliwinski, *Photography and the Optical Unconscious* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2017).

4   pr0phecy sun, Kristin Carlson, Jim Bizzochi, and Thecla Schiphorst. 2017. "Urban Mesh: Exploring Data, Biological Processes and Immersion in the Salmon People." In *Bio-Creation and Peace Proceedings*, 47–56. Manizales: ISEA 2017.

5   Julie Andreyev, *Animal Lover*, http://julieandreyev.com/bikeride.

6   Tom Zillich, "'Taking Time' offers bike/skateboard thrills, more,' Surrey Now, November 15, 2012. Accessed October 1, 2019. https://issuu.com/pmcommunity/docs/srythu20121115.

7   Adam Harrison, "Mark Lewis' Moving Pictures," *Fillip*, accessed October 17, 2019. https://fillip.ca/content/mark-lewis-moving-pictures.

8   "GABRIELA VANGA - 3 Artworks, Bio & Shows on Artsy." Artsy. Accessed October 17, 2019. https://www.artsy.net/artist/gabriela-vanga.

9   Grassi, Palazzo. "Mircea Cantor." Palazzo Grassi. Accessed October 17, 2019. https://www.palazzograssi.it/en/artists/mircea-cantor/.

Installation view of *The Snow and the Man*, 2005, by Gabriela Vanga and Mercea Cantor, 2012. Photography by SITE Photography.

Digital Vagrants

Paul Wong's *Year of Gif*

Joni Low

There's a definite, if disturbing, rhythm to it. Against a backdrop of pulsing RGB colour bars, a mob of images take over the building's exterior side. Surveillance cameras, digitally manipulated selfies, and smart phone screen-grabs flicker silently alongside images of everyday life. Iterations of the eye and orifice masquerade within architecture and other psychedelic symbols, reminding us of the complicit and murky relationship between technological innovation, eroticism, and desire. A person sleeps, sharing a soft pillow with a family of screened devices. Bodies, youth, and transgression pulse simultaneously within a digital galaxy that reveals so much, yet infers so much more beyond the visible. Projected at night for encounters of different velocities, Paul Wong's *Year of Gif* is our contemporary, media-saturated, and increasingly screen-based existence writ large.

Year of Gif simulates the constant barrage of images in our emergent interactions with digital media. Culled from a year's worth of GIFs created spontaneously on his smartphone, the resulting composite—120 feet long and 35 feet high—captures the provocative spirit for which Wong is best known, and a mind that has been filtering and exploring the artistic possibilities of new media for over 40 years. Animated GIFs (Graphics Interchange Format), first invented in the 1980s, offer mere snippets of moving imagery and sparse narrative, leaving much to the unguided imagination. In 2012, the Oxford Dictionary declared GIF their Word of the Year, and officially a verb.[1] Now used widely across the web and messaging platforms, GIFs have become shorthand visual expressions for a range of human experiences.[2] Their humorous distortions, memes and titillation offer pleasure and relief: they bounce along the aether as we connect across space and time, as the impermanent icons and impulses of our continually shifting moods.

Wong's experimentations with new media began in the 1970s as a member of the Mainstreeters, a self-described 'art gang' of teenagers on Vancouver's Eastside whose activities included large-scale community art events, exploratory video workshops, and recording their lives as raw material for art.[3] A self-taught and prolific media artist, Wong utilized the energy of angst and rebellion—of being misunderstood—to create screen-based works that captured the world from his own perspective. Early video works demonstrate his appetite for risky self-exposure, and in pushing the boundaries of what can be recorded and shared to raise questions about performativity, cultural diversity and representation, and the construction of identity.[7] *Day Activity* (1977) captures Wong scrutinizing his own facial acne in a bathroom mirror, honest gestures much more vulnerable than the self-display exhibited in today's social media. *Confused: Sexual Views* (1984)—a highly controversial photo and video installation of individuals sharing intimate sexual experiences—reveals participants' uncomfortable transgressions beyond the invisible yet undeniably felt thresholds of socially-acceptable conversation.[4]

The thresholds have since shifted. Ten years ago, Wong re-emerged from behind the camera, re-activating his media savvy now through digital forms. Composing accelerated versions of our engagement with digital technologies, rather than pontificate he creates a space for us to

sort through potentials and pitfalls of incessant media production and consumption. *Flash Memory* (2010–2015), a video installation and image chronology of Wong's everyday life (over 27,000 digital images played at 15 images per second) and *#LLL Looking Listening Looping* (2014)—350 GIFs, Vine videos, and Instagram clips presented on an array of small screens across a gallery wall—call attention to the sheer volume, and particularly how personal content is becoming increasingly public and shared. No longer censored by or excluded from mainstream media, these new waves of micro media—and the shift towards personal channels such as Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, and Instagram—have created plural networks of interaction and, one would hope, more diverse representations of society. Media, in many ways, has caught up to his vision of what is possible. However, Wong warns that it's too early to draw conclusions about its full impact on art and contemporary life, particularly in dissolving the persistent hierarchies of representation: "We are very much in the early, primitive years of digital culture and its possibilities, the democratization of media and its expansion around creative, artistic endeavours: how it's made, how it's shared, how it is commodified, how it is distributed."[5]

Today, space is fraught and difficult to define. The boundaries between virtual and physical reality, and our sense of public and private, have increasingly blurred. While the privatization of much public good accelerates—land, natural resources, the social welfare, our personal data—we are deliberately distracted by projections of our virtual selves, seduced by the screen.

Yet the screen is also contested space: it is a key source for global breaking news, politics and revolutions, opinions, and the dispute of truths. It is frequently the primary interface for the flow of subjective desires, raw emotion, and political allegiances. Messages travel at lightning speed, faster than any major media corporation.[6] Yet despite the Internet's potential for freedom, activism, and subversion, digital communications are still owned by the world's most powerful corporations. These companies collect reams of personal data, and can shut down these electronic superhighways at will. Many forsake the ownership of personal content for the immediacy of self-expression, asserting what personal agency we can within regulated virtual zones (we know not where the algorithms will take us). There is a need to shield ourselves from this flow, while accepting our immersion and need to live with it. The screen connects us, sometimes to too much. In this playground of desire, Wong reminds us that we are but digital vagrants: "We are renters of virtual space without Tenants Rights Agreements. Yet we continue to pay a subscription; it's still very privileged access."[7]

In our networked present, the poor image—appropriated, re-edited, and compressed, ranked far below its high-definition relatives, and deteriorating as it accelerates throughout the globe— willingly sacrifices quality for accessibility. Much like the images of Wong's *Year of Gif*, their errant, amateur status permits them certain freedoms. The abundance of the poor image today communicates something beyond aesthetic criteria, towards circulation and persistent affect. Images are gathering places for digital vagrants, even if at different times; they mark shared experiences, whether personal or political, and they can gain traction. Artist Hito Steyerl describes how poor images move under-radar as political agents and carriers of non-conformist and political visual material.[8] To fully understand their value, she urges us to examine their ability to disrupt the logic of global information capitalism, and their potential to connect:

"The poor image thus constructs anonymous global networks just as it creates a shared history. It builds alliances as it travels, provokes translation or mistranslation, and creates new publics and debates. By losing its visual substance it recovers some of its political punch and creates a new aura around it. This aura is no longer based on the permanence of the 'original,' but on the transience of the copy."[9]

With the explosion of images in the 20th and 21st centuries, the value of the digital circulating image is premised less on quality than idea. Writing on the current ambiguous status of art, art historian David Joselit similarly describes how "the reverberations of images as they spread… as well as the patterns of circulations that emerge *after* images enter networks… *change* the potentialities and behaviours of art [emphasis added]."[10] If, as he suggests, we are in a situation after art, where the image no longer serves modern art's purpose as vanguard in the production of grand narratives, utopian promises or knowledge of self and of others, we must look at the reverberations of images within networks—their immaterial traces—to understand their full impact. Wong's *Year of Gif* sits at the crux of this shift, allowing us to become awash in the uncertainties that our future—and the future of art—holds.

Notes

1   Oxford Dictionaries, "Word of the Year 2012," accessed July 25, 2016, https://languages.oup.com/word-of-the-year/word-of-the-year-2012

2   Current popular applications include GIFboom, Cinemagram, GIFfer, GIFcamera, and Vine.

3   The widespread availability of the Portapak camcorder in the 1960s and 1970s allowed individual users to turn the cameras on themselves, establishing alternative personal narratives beyond those in mainstream television and film. For more information, see the the catalogue essay and website for the exhibition, "Mainstreeters: Taking Advantage, 1972 – 1982," co-curated by Allison Collins and Michael Turner: http://www.takingadvantage.ca/.

4   Confused: Sexual Views was banned from exhibition at the Vancouver Art Gallery and escalated to a national, albeit unsuccessful, court case. For a recent analysis of this work, see Alex Quicho, "Pure Disruption: Sex, Death and Postcolonial Identity in Paul Wong's Video Art," *Yishu* 13:5 (Fall 2014): 85-92.

5   Studio visit with Paul Wong, July 8, 2016.

6   The role of social media in the Arab Spring, Occupy, Black Lives Matter and other global grassroots movements are key examples. The live personal media footage of recent police brutalities in the United States, particularly the video capturing the shooting of Philando Castile, is another instance of this media's power to seek justice in representation and communicate expediently to a broad public. However, this raises questions around facebook or other corporations' transparency in maintaining or censoring content. For more information, see: http://www.wired.com/2016/07/philando-castile-social-media-911/.

7   Studio visit with Paul Wong, July 8, 2016.

8   Hito Steyerl, "In Defense of the Poor Image," in *Wretched of the Screen* (e-flux and Sternberg Press, Berlin: 2012): 31-45. Also, see full essay online: http://www.e-flux.com/journal/in-defense-of- the-poor-image/.

9   Ibid., 42.

10 David Joselit, *After Art* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2013): 88 (and corresponding footnote 83).

Paul Wong, *Year of Gif,* 2013.
Photography by SITE Photography.

Artist talk with Paul Wong,
January 23, 2013. Photography by
Enrico Bargados.

Paul Wong circa mid 1970s at Video
Inn, 261 Powell Street. Image
courtesy Paul Wong and VIVO media
arts centre.

Installation view of
Trapez, 2013,
Josephin Böttger.
Photography by
Brian Giebelhaus.

Re-Construction in Rhythm

Glenn Alteen

Josephin Böttger's media work *Trapez* focuses on images of demolition and construction in the life of the city. It looks at redevelopment as a physical activity devoid of the emotional responses that so often attend it. In Böttger's work, construction workers become ballet dancers as they perform the choreography of the building industry. Cranes operating in harmonious sequences perform the making of the city.

The project employs time-lapse video to tell its story, and you see the city taking shape; construction and deconstruction. Morphing in time and space. The cinematic work can't avoid the absurdist nature of the enterprise: the constant renewal, the endless development, people permanently displaced, replacement housing that does not fit the needs and budgets of the community. It's an old story.

These conditions are becoming worldwide as capitalism strives to wring more dollars out of every piece of real estate, and the new face of globalism highlights inequity between regions, countries, and classes. The building in the video houses artists' studios in Hamburg, and they are demolished to build office buildings. Böttger had a studio in the building across the street. Her narrative never highlights the politics, but only because they are so obvious. It's all about renewal, regeneration, and the city revisioning itself.

At grunt gallery we planned Böttger's visit to Vancouver to coincide with the New Forms Festival, where she would do the performance *Dynamo Lines* at grunt with musician Sergej Tolksdorf. Her performance was complemented by a series of projections at the Great Northern Way Campus and in other locations throughout Vancouver co-presenting with the festival. The final part of her work was the presentation of *Trapez* at UrbanScreen from September 6 to 15, 2013.

While many of Böttger's other works speak to industrialization and urban life, *Trapez* seems more ordered in its delivery. The graphic elements mediate between the video images, bringing us into them and linking them together. The images are like musical elements in how they are timed and orchestrated. The time-lapse sequences animate them. The cranes give way to grids of scaffolding being set up and workers' bodies, then in turn gives way to cement mixers being craned into space. Graphic elements assert themselves and then fall back, letting the video take over. Scenes of demolition alternate with construction. A dinosaur excavator rips windows out of an older building, its giant jaws eating through the concrete. Böttger gives the process life and shows it in all its monstrosity.

But *Trapez* isn't a set piece. Every rendition of it is adapted to the screen it's being shown on. At UrbanScreen this meant adapting it to the unique set up of the Chuck Bailey Recreation Centre. In Vancouver the images were mixed live in the outdoor projections. For two weeks they took up public space. *Trapez* spoke to the situation in the Lower Mainland perfectly at that present moment. Development had driven us to the limits, and in 2013 many people were leaving BC because they had no affordable place to live. Neighborhoods were being redeveloped so quickly that they became unrecognizable to the people who grew up there. The landscape across the region was marked by many cranes of construction.

Josephin Böttger performs at grunt gallery during the 2013 New Forms Festival. Photography by Glenn Alteen.

Josephin Böttger with technical advisor Patrick Daggit during installation of *Trapez*, 2013. Photography by Brian Giebelhaus.

Still from *Trapez*, 2013, Josephin Böttger. Image courtesy of the artist.

Trapez captures the franticness in the process of rebuilding the city. UrbanScreen was a perfect venue for this work as it used the landscape of the city to talk about the city. The work is immediately accessible. The casual viewer immediately "gets" the work; it is easily consumed. The rhythm pulls you in as you get lost in the changing images of bodies and machines.

Given how much time we in the Lower Mainland spend talking about housing (real estate prices, high costs of rentals, renovictions, foreign buyers, public space, mortgage costs), *Trapez* spoke completely to that moment and this. Its choreography gives it focus and distracts at once. While it was current then, unfortunately it still is, as none of the problems have been resolved in the time since. There's an inevitability here as well, time goes on; obliterating our past, complicating our present, and negating a future.

The time-lapse photography of *Trapez* provides the rhythm of the piece as we see the city constructed in fast forward. Time folds in on itself as it collapses and is rebuilt. As you watch, the rhythm takes over: Day-Night-Day-Night. The world moves at a quicker and quicker pace as the choreography speeds up the action. The hand-drawn elements work flawlessly with the video. It flows effortlessly. But there is no end and no beginning. There is building and demolition one after another in endless succession. There is something primitive in Böttger's modern city. Beneath it, in its urges to create and destroy, lies something distinctly not modern. It is as old as the world itself.

In *Trapez*, architecture and the body have an equal presence. The human body shapes the built environment. The built environment shapes the human experience. In the end Böttger's title gives us a clue. It isn't a dance as much as a circus act: the high wire and the trapeze. They require the same delicacy of movement as the dance, but with more risk involved.

Installation view of *Aerial Fields*, 2013, Sylvia Grace Borda. Photography by Brian Giebelhaus.

Development stills from *Aerial Fields*, 2013. Images courtesy of the artist.

The Apparatus, Labour, and Territories of Agri/ Cultural Production

Paula Blair

Like the produce it depicts, Sylvia Grace Borda's *Aerial Fields* was cultivated on farmland south of the Fraser River and brought to the City of Surrey for consumption. Made during her residency at Surrey Art Gallery in 2013, *Aerial Fields* is one of five works comprising Borda's *This One's for the Farmer* project, which foregrounds usually unseen aspects of agriculture both as part of society and as art subjects. Its largely split-screen format presents aerial views recorded from aerial working platforms and a camera-mounted drone, capturing tensions and slippages in the boundaries between the rural and urban and the organic and technological. The overall project acknowledges the strain that farming apparatuses, labourers, and territories are under in order to sustain growing populations as well as themselves. As visual arts practice facilitated by Google Street View and drone technologies, Borda's work encourages viewers to actively see and participate rather than passively look and consume.

The summery images of cultivation and harvest in *Aerial Fields* were projected on UrbanScreen in darkness during the fall of 2013, when the featured land just south of the Fraser River and a little north of Canada's border with the USA becomes unworkable. This spatiotemporal disruption evokes global increases in year-round, non-seasonal, industrial-scale food production that further pressurizes farmland and organic/mechanized workforces. To redress this and make the city environmentally sustainable, the City of Surrey encourages urban agriculture to reduce reliance on food transport and to support local food processing agribusiness.[1] The Chuck Bailey Recreation Centre, home to UrbanScreen, is built on land reclaimed from the river basin—an example of urban sprawl predating the suburban sprawl shown in the video.[2] The screening allowed the rural to momentarily regain a little territory and visualize the social imaginary of agricultural land reserves outlined in Surrey's charter of sustainability necessitated by its booming population.[3] By showing *Aerial Fields* on UrbanScreen, Surrey Art Gallery joined the city in its endeavour to re-centralize farming in culture.

In considering relationships between territory, technology, humans, and other organisms, cultural theorist Donna Haraway identifies "the relation between organism and machine" as a "border war," the stakes of which are "territories of production, reproduction and imagination."[4] Through its production using drone technology and its subject matter of mechanized agriculture, *Aerial Fields* demonstrates some of the ways such organism/ machine border wars have not only increased in volume and complexity, but how their boundaries—particularly when it comes to divisions of labour—are becoming more indistinct in the early 21st century. The drone, whose original incarnations in the early 20th century were emergent technologies for warfare,[5] can now assist and determine art production,

while the images produced show that despite the increased mechanization of farming, much work still must be completed by hand—and the use of those hands often involves another kind of border-crossing.

The human interventions on the land shown in *Aerial Fields* resist the notions of pastoral romanticism or the sublime typical to landscape art, which have historically erased from view the labouring classes and the industrial use and shaping of the land that keeps populations fed. Borda's re/presentation of farming processes in *Aerial Fields*—including technology reprogramming the codes of nature—relies on and is determined by mechanized, disembodied vision. Often appearing next to high, wide and dynamic images of the farms and surrounding areas are close, static, shallow-focus, low-level shots capturing individual stems blowing in the breeze or the labour of drones of the arthropod kind depended upon for the pollination and propagation of crops and natural flora. Both types of shot capture images beyond the capacity of unassisted, unmediated human vision, giving access to aspects of farming that are usually unnoticed or taken for granted.

Although an extension of the artist, the drone is nevertheless at the mercy of weather, natural lighting, climate conditions, legal restrictions (airspace and proximity to the US border) and technological limitation (a low-altitude model with modest battery life and range capabilities was used). The type of camera further affects the image and point of view; the recorded images are realist observations, but given the necessity of a wide-angle lens on a small, relatively cheap camera (due to the practicalities of cost and potential for damage), the appearance of the expanse within the frame is inevitably distorted in terms of shape, size and waving pixilation during recording. Due to the limited vision of what is captured while filming, Borda can only edit with the captured footage, which has been done in ways that reveal and compare connected micro and macro farming narratives. From this uncertainty emerges creativity and the artist and apparatus engaging in the collaborative labour of cultural production, mirroring as well as documenting the consolidation of efforts between animals, humans, plant life, and machines in the production of food for human consumption.

The drone's flight and the camera's wide-angle lens maximize what is contained within the frame, and draw attention to the off-screen space beyond the image as its boundaries shift with the drone's flying, hovering and swivelling movements. Every aspect of such shots appears in the same focus, and although it compresses the detail, the wide lens bulges distant objects into an arc, generating a distorted sense of depth as if the landscape is being condensed and squeezed forward at the same time, reflecting the farms being reshaped by the "technological curve." The mechanized view of the land and buildings as well as the nearby woodland and bordering housing developments further illustrates the forced squeezing and shaping exerted by the external economic agents to which they are all bound.

In addition to the divergent uses of the land vying for territory, co-existing differences in natural and human-constructed aspects of the landscape emerge in the images. These include elements such as ponds and river tributaries near the woodlands contrasted with irrigation and drainage ditches dividing one sort of cultivated crop from another. The differences between manufactured box beehives at the edges of fields and natural honeycombs spied through foliage are highlighted in the dual screen; the honeycombs appear beside aerial views of farm buildings, drawing a relationship between the bees' habitat-workspaces and those of the farm's human and mechanical labourers.

As well as production and reproduction, *Aerial Fields* reveals the farm's territories of imagination, namely a maize maze edging into the frame as the drone approaches the Fraser River, beyond which are more fields flanked by housing in the distance. In conventional framing such details glimpsed in the margins would lack importance, but in a work that does not adhere to convention, this invitation to witness and register that which emerges in peripheral vision generates value and meaning. The maze is as much a product of mechanical engineering combined with design and organization as every row of crops that make up the shapes of the fields and farms, not in a way dissimilar to the pixels in the digital video images of them.

Glimpsed in the frame's margins, the maze resists being romanticized while it can be appreciated from above as an aesthetic product of industrialized labour. It is positioned alongside the labour that created it and the housing developments putting pressure on that labour. The distorted but informative image defamiliarizes human vision; it is an unemotional drone's eye view rather than that of a human awed by the landscape, as is so often conveyed in pastoral art. From the partial view of around 15 metres above ground, the maze disrupts any assumptions urban consumers might make that farmland is outside, green, and "natural," revealing it instead to be nature harnessed and put to work. In redressing the exclusion of industrial agriculture in visual art, *Aerial Fields* responds to an urgent need for society to acknowledge, understand and engage with agricultural practices, their sustainability, and their survival.

The closeness of the housing to the crops visualizes the lack of—and evidences a need for—green belt legislation. Where the codes of nature have been technologized, industrialized and turned into capital beyond the point of no return, there is urgency to preserve and protect remaining resources. With interventional artworks like *Aerial Fields* and *This One's for the Farmer* providing visual evidence, and talking points around different ways of seeing that evidence, the public have an opportunity to become more aware of the implications of the intensification of farming and sub/urban sprawl to meet the needs of rising populations. Jostling for space to produce and reproduce cannot be sustained, and territories of imagination—such as UrbanScreen showing Borda's work—facilitate much-needed dialogue on policy and action.

Notes

1 Accessed 12, September 2019, https://www.surrey.ca/bylawsandcouncillibrary/R175-0F09.pdf.

2 It is also unceded land, as discussed in Siku Allooloo, *Bearing Witness: The Way In Which It Was Given to Us*, (Surrey: Surrey Art Gallery Presents, 2017), accessed 13 June 2019, https://www.surrey.ca/files/Marianne%20Nicolson%20(FINAL).pdf.

3 City of Surrey PDD.

4 Donna Haraway, Simians, *Cyborgs and Women: The Reinvention of Nature* (New York: Routledge, 1991): 292.

5 Imperial War Museum, "A Brief History of Drones," accessed 9 October, 2018, https://www.iwm.org.uk/history/a-brief-history-of-drones.

"Wine Preserved in a Dead Man's Mouth"

Muted Premonition and Anxious Query in *Longing and Forgetting*

Donato Mancini

If the development of an art form can sometimes be thought of as a step forward along a path, *Longing and Forgetting* steps off the path of the arts of moving pictures (film, video, cinema). For this reason, it may be best to think through what *Longing and Forgetting* is by talking about what it is not.

The language that artists Matthew Gingold, Thecla Schiphorst, and Philippe Pasquier use to describe their work marks the side-step off the path. According to their artists' statement, *Longing and Forgetting* is not a straightforward video installation, but a "generative + interactive video installation." That is, it is not video art, but "generative video."

What a viewer can guess from this futuristically attractive term is that something is being generated in the moment of its reception: the work itself. Rather than having a beginning and endpoint, as even the longest, most immersive film does, this work has the capacity to re-create or re-generate itself in perpetuity, without exact repetition. As the artists tell us, the movement of the figures "is generated in real time."[1] Although it can be installed anywhere, no two viewers will ever see the same sequence of events.

Where the figures on a movie screen are usually called "characters," here they are called "intelligent agents" or "generative agents." Characters in fiction film are involved in stories that they cannot opt out of. Their destinies—or paths—are etched into the hard substance of narrative. By contrast, intelligent agents can change paths in unpredictable ways. As essentially passive entities, characters are said to be "projected" onto a screen, or they are "represented" in a tale. These intelligent agents, instead, "inhabit" the screen. As beings that can make decisions in real time, the screen is their habitat, not their medium.

Just as characters in movies have no control over their narrative fates, a film or television audience is usually powerless to change narrative outcomes. *Longing and Forgetting* is "written," as it were, partly by the agents on screen, and is written partly by the audience. The audience can "control and disrupt the video agents' movements" with gestures made using their mobile phones. Instead of following a narrative arc, the agents display "emergent behaviours," such as pursuit, avoidance, cooperation, and competition. Their actions can be carried out autonomously, or change in response to audience-participant commands, as well as in response to encounters with each other within their screen-habitat.

All this makes the screen into an arena of action. In the process, the screen loses its compositional character. That is, the screen is no longer like a canvas on which pictures (moving or not) are composed. In movies and television, the audience watches movement within a "dynamic square" or rectangle. Here, the side of the Chuck Bailey Recreation Centre is mapped as a terrain across which the agents move. They encounter and respond to

Matthew Gingold, Thecla Schiphorst, Philippe Pasquier, *Longing and Forgetting*, 2014. Photography by Brian Giebelhaus.

A performer climbs a custom-built set constructed by Greg Snider during a videography session for *Longing and Forgetting*, September 2013. Photography by Surrey Art Gallery.

features in the architecture. The picture frame of the televisual square, or the cinematic rectangle, is dramatically swept away.

Having no beginning or end, *Longing and Forgetting* also dissolves the narrative frame. The story-arcs of fiction film are re-imagined as sets of independent goals that the "autonomous" agents pursue. Instead of a story, the individual paths of intelligent agents overlap, sometimes interacting, sometimes altered by the audience-participants' commands. And their habitat is crowded; a viewer can follow some of the agents' movements, but it is impossible to follow all of them at once. The individual paths sometimes lead to dramatic end-points but there are only traces of narrative, without any overarching story. Their end-points include sudden falls that, projected onto the side of a building, look alarmingly like suicides. But these automaton self-slaughtering agents always resurrect and walk again.

Embracing, falling, disappearing, longing, and forgetting—these creatures look just like us. They wear the sculpted bodies of human dancers, or "movement experts," and all-white clothing. Yet a wide distance separates. In interaction, these beautiful humanoid agents have something like the functional intelligence of simple insects. The experience of interacting with these human shadows, or shells, and the experience of watching them, is haunting. Observing their expressive gestures and gazes, as their vocabularies of action are endlessly recombined, their destinies re-generated, viewers may feel a longing to close the distance. I certainly feel that longing. In fact, I develop an acute compassion for the machine. No doubt, the artists want this. In order to compel emotional

investment and identification, they reward broader cellphone gestures with stronger impacts on the agents' behaviour. As the artists specify: "the larger the movement the greater the effect."

Each of the agents appears to be in involved in a particular life situation, many of which seem menaced or urgent. With their exposed skin, they appear vulnerable. From the black space of non-story around the agents, nothing emerges to reveal exactly what motivates this urgency. They are, like us, caught up in processes, systems and relationships larger than themselves. And it seems that they feel these frustratingly invisible processes, systems, and relationships inscribed at every moment upon their ghostly bodies. Some of the agents crawl along in constricted spaces that are only discernible from the way their bodies articulate those spaces. Others climb the wall precariously. One in particular wears high heels and a mini-skirt as she creeps sideways, as if along a ledge to escape a condominium inferno.

For all its sophisticated use of artificial intelligence in a contemporary artwork, *Longing and Forgetting* is an important work of 21st century "post-cinema"—the thing after cinema, cinema having been the key artform of the 20th century—partly because it is not blithely celebratory of the technologies it depends on. With the intricate ways that *Longing and Forgetting* cultivates tense emotional involvement of viewer-participants with the generative agents, it also reserves space to contemplate the unknown risks of saturating our living environments with AI. Our domestic robots won't resemble the droids of *Star Wars*. Everyday objects (fridges, lamps, ovens, etc.) with embedded intelligence will surround us—constantly thinking about us. The agents in *Longing and Forgetting* sometimes seem like refugees from a catastrophe, so that even within its technological optimism, the work makes space to consider the questions on so many peoples' minds: with AI, are we building an autonomous total system that will eventually not need human beings? Indeed, if artworks themselves are made up of and by autonomous agents, will they even need human spectators? Will humanity itself be marginalised by its own creations?

Writing this text in 2017, I think also of the filmmakers, the poets and the painters of the 20th century who could only use the syntax of their dreams to imagine artforms as dynamic as "generative video." In the early writings of the Romanian Jewish poet Paul Celan, fragments of seemingly autonomous sentences shuffle together, making a lonely noise in which I hear a muted premonition of the anxious questions of our current moment, the ones distilled in *Longing and Forgetting*:

> Wine preserved until now in a dead man's mouth
>
> will awaken the realm of footbridges, displaced in a bell
>
> ....
>
> Your hair streaming from mirrors will blanket the sky
>
> in which, with a frigid hand, I'll flame an autumn[2]

Notes

1 Matthew Gingold, Philippe Pasquier, and Thecla Schiphorst, unpublished artists' statement, 2014.

2 Paul Celan translated by Oana Avasilichioaei, in *Limbinal* (Vancouver: Talonbooks, 2015).
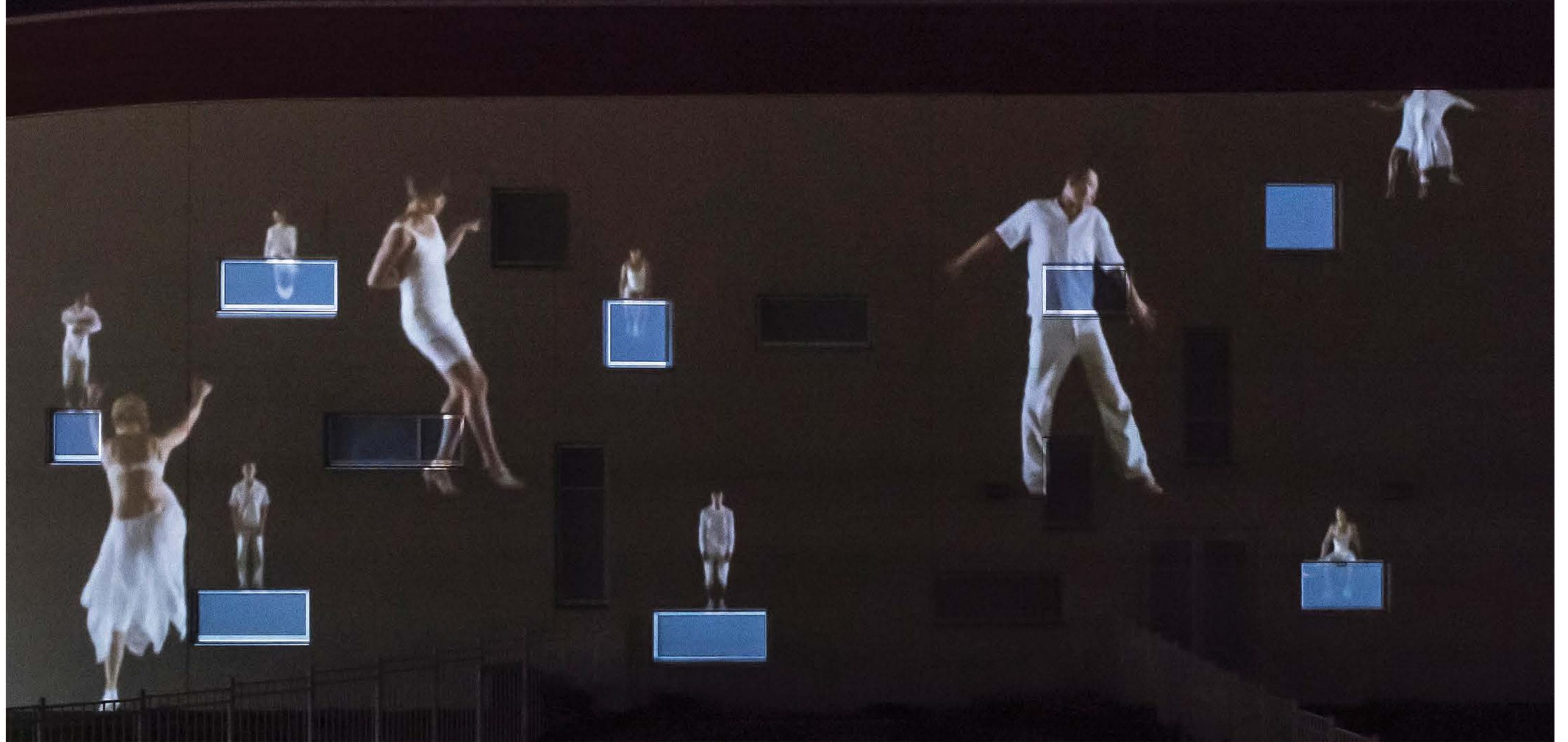
Matthew Gingold, Thecla
Schiphorst, Philippe Pasquier,
Longing and Forgetting, 2014.
Photography by Brian Giebelhaus.

Visitors participate in an interactive
version of *Longing and Forgetting*
on April 24, 2014. Photography by
Edward Westerhuis.

Bryan Lemos Beça and Steve DiPasquale deliver a lecture about *The Space of Difference* at Surrey City Hall for a PechaKucha event on October 16, 2014. Photography by Edward Westerhuis.

Parameters and Possibilities in *The Space of Difference*

Lisa Marshall

The first thing I notice about *The Space of Difference* is its intriguing rhythms and visual patterns, with videos combining and transitioning in alternating stripes to create newly merged moving images. The artist team, Operative Agency (OA), has expressed a desire to activate the audience—a process that begins in the imagination, catalyzed by the unusual and dynamic meshing of images. Behind-the-scenes databases and calculations conjure a continuous flow of such images; even though the audience has no control over the resulting combinations, it's the particular way the videos interweave that holds potential. According to OA, *The Space of Difference* is named for the radical opening that occurs when images mesh, making an unusual combination, or an allele—a mutation in what can be imagined.[1]

At the point I begin watching, the video viewpoint starts high up, perhaps from a drone camera slowly moving upwards at just enough distance from a set of concrete residential towers to capture the full width of their exterior. As video projected onto the Chuck Bailey Recreation Centre's exterior curving windowed wall, the regular grid of apartment windows contrasts against the organic arrangement of the windows of the background wall. Differences between public architecture and commercial building come to mind. Next, a vertical stripe pattern introduces alternating slats of blades of grass swaying in the breeze, the gently curving motion contrasting both with the strict verticals of the buildings and the hard-edge stripes of the digital effects—I think of the condo towers springing up like concrete grass. Recognizable images then give way to abstraction before images emerge again. A carver's hands move rhythmically back and forth, planing a length of wood. This image is interwoven with another: a long object that traverses the diagonal. Suddenly a train rushes along that vector and it becomes recognizable as video of the nearby concrete SkyTrain platform. Interlaced in alternating vertical slats, the two videos together suggest things that might be "carved"—wood, images, space, time—bringing up comparisons of woodworking, filmmaking, architecture, and urban planning, encouraging simultaneous perception of these modes of shaping the world.

The desire to activate the public by activating the imagination ties *The Space of Difference* to important aspects of twentieth-century avant-garde art, such as the Surrealists' unusual combinations of images and objects and Krzysztof Wodiczko's projections of evocative imagery onto architectural façades and monuments. OA has specifically linked *The Space of Difference* with Czech poet-artist Jiří Kolář's rollages. Kolář created compositions using numerous experimental collage techniques developed over decades, carefully selecting, cutting, assembling, and gluing images by hand.[2] *The Space of Difference* operates at a much faster pace; generated by computerized systems, it is programmed to deliver somewhat random combinations of videos. While chance was used by twentieth-century avant-garde artists as a way to disrupt conventions and to access the subconscious mind by introducing the unexpected, randomness in software programming evokes an organic feel that suggests an absence of intention, even though there remains some degree of authority in the design of the limiting systems and databases.[3] Pacing also affects how audiences may react to

the unexpected. In *The Space of Difference*, randomness is an effective method for producing surprising image combinations that spark the imagination. It is the question of the potential agency of the audience that becomes the most challenging one.

Operative Agency co-founder Bryan Lemos Beça describes OA as a "spatial-political think tank dedicated to enhancing the agency of the citizenry,"[4] and on the project website OA identify an "opportunity (that) lives when art demands the public address its participation in its own narrative."[5] Questions of the public and agency in this case intersect with questions relating to heavily mediated spaces. What were once questions for architectural theory, industrial design, or art history become questions contingent on media theory as it intersects with networks and software. Just what kind of difference is possible when it comes to computer code? What limits not only us, as audience, but anyone who uses such complex layered software systems? And what is the nature of these limitations?[6]

The twin problems of occluded possibilities and canceled agency are not new. The philosopher and social historian Michel Foucault studied language and systems of thought, uncovering hidden rules and taxonomies that foreground some aspects of a field while making other possibilities invisible.[7] If conceptual systems determine the boundaries of thought, limiting what can be understood, perceived or even imagined, then database structures, algorithmic controls and complex networks can serve to obscure possibilities in intensified and more difficult-to-detect ways.[8] The famous Facebook motto, "Move fast and break things," captures the ethos underlying much of our recently coded world. When rushing forward with complex systems, we fail to see the errors, biases, and limitations that are often inadvertent stowaways obscured under layers of logic. The surface flow give us feelings of empowerment, change, and possibility, but sometimes software holds hidden risks of perpetuating more of the same under the illusion of difference.[9]

The Space of Difference itself has a complex underlying structure. Organizing the ongoing pairing of the video clips are the categories: "Past" or "Present" and "Biological" or "Geological." Another layer of control uses a security webcam to detect the passing of nearby trains; the arrivals are then converted into digital events used to trigger video transitions. There are other aspects of the controlling system that are impossible to perceive through observation alone. For example, the artists have described how the density of the vertical stripe pattern is controlled by programming that uses historical data for the water cycles of the nearby Fraser River. In addition to OA's programming, there are a number of layers of code all the way down to the operating system and the machine-coded hardware, with each layer having limiting factors that affect the design.

Trends point to a future of ubiquitous computing—software will be everywhere. Artworks like *The Space of Difference* can be catalysts for imagining possible futures while questioning the logic of the past, how it is embedded in our software and other systems, and whether that logic blocks or enables our best possibilities. What codes shape how we live, and to what ends? What codes are best to bring forward and what do we change or toss out entirely? A good place to start is with a classic philosophical problem: "What is the good life?" By taking time to get past the marketing sense of "the good life," we may get at a more nuanced and profound sense that

connects with ethics and with the question of how to live well over longer arcs of time than election cycles, financial quarters, or newsfeed updates. And then, we might ask how our desired ways of life could be best enabled through what we make and how we relate to one another and to our surroundings. It is the openness of OA's work that enables the possibility of going beyond the limitations of its underlying code when pondering such questions. The peculiar moving images produced by *The Space of Difference* have the capacity to exceed both the projection's captivating surface and its programming, creating space for audiences to bring various lived experiences to the mix—this is where the opening to difference becomes possible.

Notes

1   Operative Agency, accessed October 7, 2016, http://www.operativeagency.com/.

Operative Agency is Bryan Lemos Beça and Steve DiPasquale. They formed OA in 2008 while students in the Master of Architecture program at the University of British Columbia. *The Space of Difference* is their first large-scale project as OA to be presented publicly. OA worked with Shelley Long, Ryan Nelson, and Ritchie Argue for this project.

2   Jiří Machalický, "Artlist—Centre for Contemporary Arts Prague," accessed October 7, 2016, https://www.artlist.cz/en/jiri-kolar-103993/.

3   In "Scripting Misperformance, Misperforming Scripts," the writers question the assumptions surrounding "the scripting of randomness-as-intervention in aesthetic practice" arguing that it is a strategy that in some cases "ultimately serves to safeguard, rather than undermine, structures of control."

Byron Peters and Jacob Wick, "Scripting Misperformance, Misperforming Scripts," *Fillip* 19 (Spring 2014).

4   Bryan Lemos Beça, accessed October 7, 2016, http://bryanbeca.ca.

5   Operative Agency, accessed October 7, 2016, http://www.operativeagency.com/.

6   Media theorist Lev Manovich considers some of these questions while delving into historical shifts and underlying decisions behind the software we often take for granted. He contends that software is the metamedia over the images, text, audio, etc., that it contains.

Lev Manovich, *Software Takes Command* (New York; London: Bloomsbury, 2013).

7   Michel Foucault, *The Archaeology of Knowledge* (Paris: Éditions Gallimard, 1969).

8   Gilles Deleuze, "Postscript on the Societies of Control," *October*, Vol. 59 (Winter 1992).

9   In his essay, "Re-creation, Realism and Race in Post-Digital Photography," artist Evan Lee describes discovering what appeared to be a racist logic in the software he'd used while working on one of his projects.

Evan Lee, "Re-creation, Realism and Race in Post-Digital Photography," in *In the Wake of the Komagata Maru: Transpacific Migration, Race and Contemporary Art*, eds. Lisa Marshall and Jordan Strom (Vancouver: Surrey Art Gallery, On Main Gallery, Kwantlen Polytechnic University, 2015): 66.

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Installation view of *The Space of Difference*, 2014, Operative Agency. Photography by Edward Westerhuis.

Production still of Julie Andreyev and Simon Lysander Overstall, *Salmon People*, (detail), 2015.

Hard Destiny

Julie Andreyev's and Simon Lysander Overstall's *Salmon People*

Carol Gigliotti

Away with the superficial and selfish phil-anthropy of men, –who knows what admirable virtue of fishes may be below low-water-mark, bearing up against a hard destiny, not admired by that fellow-creature who alone can appreciate it! Who hears the fishes when they cry?
– Henry David Thoreau, *A Week on the Concord and Merrimack Rivers* (1849)

Salmon People—Wy-Kan-Ush-Pum in Sahaptin—is a combination of the word for salmon used in sacred ceremonies, 'wy-kan-ush,' and the word 'pum,' meaning 'people.' Sahaptin-speaking peoples include the Nez Perce, Umatilla, Tenino, and Yakama, who inhabit territory along the Columbia River in the Pacific Northwest region of the United States. It turns out that a number of societies around the world consider themselves Salmon People. Salmon have helped to form traditional cultures as geographically wide-ranging as the Japanese Ainu, Pacific Northwest Coastal tribes, the Norwegian coastal areas, and the Russian Far East.[1] Each of these cultures, however, share a reverence and gratitude for what they consider is the gift of salmon to their sustenance and flourishing.

Salmon People, a generative multi-channel audio video installation by Julie Andreyev and Simon Lysander Overstall, offers a distinct perspective on reverence for salmon throughout the world, one that builds on these traditions, while widening their scope. Here, we are witness to the salmon themselves as people, both collectively and individually with their own cultural traditions and specific birthplaces. Here, their underwater lives are not only visible to us, but eclipse the human world above. Separating these worlds runs the surface of the water, in this case the Fraser, British Columbia's longest river, in which we see the orange tips of dorsal and caudal fins of salmon swimming upstream to reach their spawning ground and hinting at the life below.

The Salmon's Journey

The top layer of video is of the land, a distant view of the human world and its imprint of logging, shipping, pulp mills, chemical plants, and fish farming. Its visual and aural remoteness compels us even more deeply into the underwater world filled with the journey of the salmon. These are sockeye—individual and groups of salmon fighting their way back upstream to their natal spawning grounds in Adams River, BC. Beginning in the Salish Sea, the labyrinth of coastal waterways of the southwestern portion of British Columbia and the northwestern portion of Washington State in the United States, they have travelled 434 kilometres inland from the mouth of the Fraser River. They have struggled past Mission, Chilliwack, and Hope, east up the Thompson River, through Ashcroft and Kamloops Lake, into the South Thompson River, Little Shuswap, then larger Shuswap Lake, and finally ascending west up the Adams River. Only the luckiest and strongest salmon complete this journey of fourteen to seventeen days. Generally, one in one thousand eggs will actually be able to return to its natal stream as a spawning salmon. Earlier, they made the reverse odyssey, from the freshwater Adams River down to the salty Salish Sea and into the Pacific where they swam for three to four years in a circular path north to Alaska, west to Japan, and back to the Northwest Coast.[2]

Former Director of Surrey Art Gallery Liane Davison introduces the artists panel at Surrey City Hall on October 23, 2015. Photography by Brian Giebelhaus.

Julie Andreyev presents a lecture on *Salmon People* during an artist's panel at Surrey City Hall on October 23, 2015. Photography by Brian Giebelhaus.

From left: Laura Lee Coles, SHARP representative Stephen Godwin, Polly Gibbons, Roxanne Charles, Julie Andreyev, and Jay White in discussion during an artists panel at Surrey City Hall on October 23, 2015. Photography by Brian Giebelhaus.

The recombinant video-audio panorama of these intertwined worlds of land, freshwater, and sea, of human and non-human, projected on Surrey's largest non-commercial outdoor screen, could be seen as yet another nod to revering salmon for their persistence and sustenance of our needs. The title of this piece, however, along with the visual emphasis upon each salmon's difficult swim against the current, and the audio that offers us both natural and synthesized sounds of birds, the water, and of the salmon themselves—this last an emphatic imagining of salmon communication—points to a reverence and awareness of the worth of the salmon for themselves, not as food or resource, but as beings who are subjects-of-a-life, in philosopher Tom Regan's famous phrase.[3] The fact that the salmon who succeed in reaching their spawning grounds die soon after they spawn or give birth[4] due to exhaustion does not in any way minimize their perseverance or their influence. For without salmon, who are what scientists call ecosystem engineers and a keystone species, the ecosystems of the Pacific Coast and all the animals that rely on the dead salmon for food would disappear.[5] Suddenly, our blinkered view of salmon as just food for humans changes. In their death, they contribute to the natural world, one that would continue if humans[6] disappeared.

Corrupted Reverence

As Rachel Carson says in *Silent Spring*, "For thousands upon thousands of years the salmon have known and followed these threads of fresh water that lead them back to the rivers."[7] Carson, arguably the person who ignited the environmental movement in the United States, articulates the sentience of individual salmon by recognizing their knowledge of how to find their way back to their natal river spawning grounds through smell and electromagnetic fields.[8] One wonders: how uncorrupted is the current reverence for salmon when warming sea temperatures, pesticides, chemicals, dams, toxic algae blooms, and risk of genetic changes from fish farming, among many other humanly created and induced obstacles, make what is already a tremendously difficult journey even more impossible?

As in Rachel Carson's writing, Andreyev's and Overstall's *Salmon People* offers a dissenting and empathic understanding of the lives of other species, one that speaks to current environmental challenges as well as a growing awareness of the agency and consciousness of other species. Andreyev's work since 2009 has placed these ideas front and center, often in collaboration with her two canine companions, Tom and Sugi. Within an ongoing body of work entitled *Animal Lover*, Andreyev has committed to focusing on our relationships with animals in order to shift our largely wrongheaded and often abusive behavior towards them. The fact that Andreyev points out that she is vegan on informational materials about her and her work is not an incidental comment, but one that indicates a position from which Andreyev develops her gorgeously produced and sensitively imagined art. *Salmon People* offers us an answer to Thoreau's question: "Who knows what admirable virtue of fishes may be below low-water-mark, bearing up against a hard destiny?"

Notes

1   Henry David Thoreau, *A Week on the Concord and Merrimack Rivers* (New York: Library of America, 1985): 80.

2   Columbia River Inter-Tribal Fish Commission "We Are All Salmon People," accessed November 10, 2015, http://www.critfc.org/salmon-culture/we-are-all-salmon-people/.

3   Daniel E Schindler et al., "Pacific salmon and the ecology of coastal ecosystems." *Front Ecol Environ* 1, no. 1 (2003): 31–37.

4   Tom Regan, *The Case for Animal Rights*, 2nd ed. (Oakland, CA: University of California Press, 2004): 171.

5   In addition to salmon, other animals die soon after fertilization, mating, or birth, among them octopuses, squid, and mayflies.

6   C. Jeff Cederholm et al., "Pacific Salmon Carcasses: Essential Contributions of Nutrients and Energy for Aquatic and Terrestrial Ecosystems," *Fisheries*, 24 no. 10 (October, 1999): 6-15.

7   Food for 'pet' consumption must be included here since the majority of salmon eaten by our constant companions are processed and sold to humans in pet stores. In other words, there are few dogs and cats roaming the rivers of the US hunting for salmon.

8   Rachel Carson, *Silent Spring* (Cambridge, MA: Riverside Press, 1962): 122.

9   Nathan F. Putman et al., "An Inherited Magnetic Map Guides Ocean Navigation in Juvenile Pacific Salmon," *Current Biology* 24, no. 4 (17 February 2014): 446–450.

Reading the Tide

Water and Land as Storytellers of Place

Ellyn Walker

Sonny Assu, *1UP*, 2016. Photography by Blaine Campbell.

The city now known as Surrey, BC, is a place of many histories, ones that are multiple, overlapping, and at the same time, contested. Incorporated in 1879, and named after the County of Surrey in the south east of England, Surrey represents a site of coloniality through its settler renaming of Kwantlen territory, which is land that many Nations make claim to, as its surrounding waters have served as critical trade routes for Indigenous peoples for thousands of years. Because of this complex history, Surrey's landscape holds stories that simultaneously cross cultures and span time, and that tell of important changes to a place that had been inhabited for over 13,000 years prior to colonial contact. Sonny Assu (Ligwilda'xw of the Kwakwaka'wakw nations), who is also a resident of South Surrey, reminds us of this in his latest work *1UP* for UrbanScreen, presenting a site-specific digital artwork that complicates the way place is read and by whom.

Featuring expansive and overlapping formline elements—which are continuous ovoid, S, and U shaped graphics specific to the Kwakwaka'wakw and other Pacific Northwest Indigenous nations —Assu constructs a digital landscape in his new work that extends outwards by way of animation. Containing bold colours, neon gaming pixels, and moving images of shimmering waters as their centres, each element is comprised of a different creative vocabulary: Indigenous, gaming, or documentary. More specifically, the subtle water animations featured within select areas of formline work to remind us of two things: the fact that land is a living relation, and, as such, is also one of our relations. In this way, the imagery of rushing waters, similar to the Pacific Ocean that indirectly surrounds the City of Surrey, reflects its transformation as a living relationship—a place that was at one time solid, when around the time of the last ice age Indigenous peoples first arrived in the area.[1]

What more immediately surrounds Surrey is Boundary Bay—an imagined political border between Canada and the US that imposes colonial practices of mapping, though, does so through a seemingly unfixed medium: water. Because water moves, expands, spills, ebbs, and flows, it can at times refuse certain kinds of containment. Yet, it also performs a strategic spatial divide between the two neighbouring nations, whereby the 'border' represents the violence that is invisible though always implicit in the act of dividing territory. Thus, Assu's installation highlights the complex role water plays in our lives, emphasizing the fact that while we all live on land, it was in fact water that brought us here, as for millennia Indigenous peoples have travelled the waterways in search of food and settlement. More recently, such as in the present day and over the past four hundred years, other bodies have arrived on this land, which can be attributed to such transnational practices as slavery, immigration, and now refugeeism. Accordingly, it is important to understand the mobilization of bodies through water as something that is hardly benign—rather, as something that implicates us all as *travellers* and also as *arrivants*.

Upon one's arrival on land begins a new relationship of guesthood, one that allows for opportunities for settlers to "learn more about their hosts and [an occasion for] hosts to know

more about their guests."[2] This relational impulse that Metis artist/curator/scholar David Garneau writes about is key to a conciliatory future for Indigenous/settler relations in Canada, where, as a nation built on unceded land, we are all implicated in the colonization and decolonization of territory. *1UP* points to the importance of such interrelationships and draws on different cultural references in order to do so. For instance, Assu's use of formline within *1UP* (as well as within many other of his works) makes reference to graffiti practices and the ways in which graffiti writers tag and thus (re)claim public space. The graphic layering of formline elements within *1UP* creates a hyper-visible amalgamation of Indigenous iconography that, like a graffiti tag, works to mark and reclaim the land on which the screen is situated as Indigenous. In doing so, Assu's gesture attempts to reorient Canada's longstanding settler colonial narrative that continues to unfold across the country, albeit, in different ways, and inscribes its location on the grounds of the UrbanScreen as Indigenous territory.

British Columbia, of which Surrey is a part, has recently adopted a provincial rhetoric of re-Indigenization alongside the national project of Truth and Reconciliation, where many British Columbian cities now officially acknowledge their location on unceded Indigenous land. While this act of recognition is an important gesture of reconsidering place, it can also run the risk of "performing" a kind of recognition that is inherently colonial, as it is defined by both the goals and gaze of the state. Indigenous scholars like Glen Coulthard,[3] Audra Simpson,[4] and Dylan Robinson[5] disavow these official practices in their work, explaining that state-based practices of recognition function as non-performative utterances, in essence, saying things they do not actually do. Instead, to recognize Indigenous sovereignty is to profoundly change one's relationships with others, the land, and with place, and as such, *1UP* proposes a reconstructed view of an immensely storied site. It gestures towards place-making as an ongoing process of reorientation akin to how the featured footage of water shows the tides in continuous motion.

Indeed, *1UP* tells a multifaceted story of place, one that gestures towards Surrey's complex terrain as a site that necessitates both re-reading and retelling. If we think about land as an archival site, or as a place that holds manifold histories at once, what can be gleaned from its close reading? How do we look for, listen to, and engage with the land's many histories, and how do these encounters complicate and potentially unsettle our understandings of place? By confronting the archive—what is in this case, land—new systems of knowledge and diverse ways of knowing are revealed. This impetus of 'revisiting' allows artists to "make historical information, often lost or displaced, physically present"[6] in ways that enable one "to probe a misplaced past, to collate its different signs, [and] to ascertain what might remain for the present"[7] and, more importantly, for the future. For Indigenous artists, in particular, this method allows for the unique opportunity to unhinge dominant colonial ideologies and to assert culturally-specific worldviews and ways of knowing, which, in the context of Assu's work, holds great decolonizing potential. *1UP* performs this archival re-orientation, layering distinct cultural iconographies such as formline, graffiti, and gaming through the use of artistic strategies like intervention, juxtaposition, and animation. Combined, these composite methods work to complicate the legibility of Assu's images in ways

Brandon Gabriel introduces a public talk by Sonny Assu at the Surrey Art Gallery on April 21, 2016. Photography by Edward Westerhuis.

Sonny Assu delivers a public talk on his practice at the Surrey Art Gallery on April 21, 2016. Photography by Edward Westerhuis.

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Sonny Assu, *1UP*, 2016. Photography by Edward Westerhuis.

that compel viewers to negotiate what they see rather than simply consume it—what can be understood as another subversive and decolonizing gesture.

Like the ongoing process of decolonization, Assu's projection requires work. There is a labour involved in making meaning from the disparate concepts he draws from and the ways in which they intersect, in particular, for different viewers. Reminding us that the land on which Surrey stands is hardly banal, *1UP* performs an archival re-orientation, and invites viewers to both remember and (re)imagine Surrey's past alongside its future.

Notes

1   Assu in conversation with Brandon Gabriel.

2   David Garneau, "Imaginary Spaces of Conciliation and Reconciliation," *West Coast Line,* 74, vol. 46, no 2 (Summer 2012): 35.

3   Glen Coulthard, *Red Skin, White Masks: Rejecting the Colonial Politics of Recognition* (Minnesota: University of Minnesota Press, 2014).

4   Audra Simpson, *Mohawk Interruptus: Political Life Across the Borders of Settler States* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2014).

5   Dylan Robinson, "Enchantment's Irreconcilable Connection: Listening to Anger, Being Idle No More," in *Performance Studies in Canada*, ed. Laura Levin and Marlis Schweitzer (Montreal/Kingston: McGill-Queen's Press, 2016).

6   Hal Foster, "An Archival Impulse," *October* 110 (Fall 2004): 4.

7   Ibid.

Screen Tearing

Imaginary Encounters in the Real World

Rhys Edwards

Scenocosme technician Christophe Thollet tests *Rencontres Imaginaires* at UrbanScreen. Photo courtesy of the artists.

Foregrounded within the work of artists Grégory Lasserre and Anaïs met den Ancxt, who collaborate under the name Scenocosme, is technological innovation. However, whereas for other artists technology becomes a principle unto itself, for Scenocosme technology is never more than a means to realize an idea that originates in a dream. In this way, technological innovation is not mere novelty, but required to experience the art.

Scenocosme's practice is always oriented toward the public realm. This is not because of a sense of duty to involve the public in all artmaking, which many artists subscribe to, but because the public is itself the perfect medium for artistic experimentation. Scenocosme works for the public because this mode of creation allows for the greatest degree of unpredictability and dynamism in the manifestation of their art.

Many of Scenocosme's previous installations feature formal and experiential elements that only appear upon interacting with the artwork or with other people in its presence. In *SphèrAléas* (2004), for example, a series of hand-operated sensors control a light and sound-emitting half-spherical structure inside of a tent. Groups of people can interact with the sensors to produce a magnificent sensory experience, composed by mutual collaboration. In *Alsos* (2006), a garden immersed in black lighting produces music when a flashlight is shone upon individual plants and flowers, thereby creating an organic symphony of sound.

Rencontres Imaginaires, installed at UrbanScreen over the fall and winter of 2016, invites visitors to play in a virtual world with a variety of eccentric characters. The artwork utilizes a newly-built digital kiosk system to capture live video footage of its users, and project them onto one of the largest outdoor screens in North America. Their hand movements can then be used to manipulate characters (performed by Surrey residents, whom were previously recorded by the artists in production sessions at the Surrey Art Gallery) that appear upon both lateral edges of the screen. This interaction occurs spontaneously, and different performers are dynamically generated by the artwork's software.

Although the way in which a visitor to the UrbanScreen site can directly manipulate the movement of the on-screen characters is limited either to "pushing" them away with their hands, or to making them appear and disappear by moving to and away from the kiosk, these elementary gestures permit endless variations to the artwork. The software that powers Rencontres Imaginaires complements the basically human tendency to play, and it is playing itself that fosters enduring fascination with the work — both for those who observe it and those who participate in it.

The simplicity of the technology underlying *Rencontres Imaginaires* ensures that clearly defined parameters for play-making are instantly apparent to anyone who approaches it, regardless of their familiarity with technology. This ease-of-access affects the experience of the work in two ways: first, there is a sort of identity loss, wherein participants adopt universal and playful mannerisms in order to respond to the characters they are presented with, dispensing with the self-consciousness that otherwise characterizes our personal life;

second, the simplicity of the work sets us up for surprise. In those moments where our own being and the character we are faced with happen to have a perfectly harmonious interaction—when a frown, a wave, or a smile is met with an immediate and intuitively correct response—we are brought briefly out of ourselves and into the virtual world that we have created. This form of interaction is intrinsically enjoyable and empowering because it happens in a space outside of our own life. We are literally able to witness ourselves—not an avatar—have an impact on another. Such an experience would not be possible if the range of interaction parameters were expanded, since the basic pleasure of playing—playing with no objective in mind—would be lost in the search for the apparently correct way to play.

The sense of universal childhood, and the possibility of surprise, are both united in a state of play. The British psychotherapist Donald Winnicott famously articulated the importance of playing, both for children and adults, by suggesting that it occurs in a world that is halfway between the inner reality of our own selves and the outer reality of the objective world; and that in the process of development, playing is a way to gain control over the world.[1] Critically, for this sense of control to emerge, it must be facilitated by others, whether by a mother or by one's friends. When a subject finds another being entering into their play space and responding to it affirmatively, they are surprised by the recognition of their own agency. In this way, the subject is empowered by play.

Winnicott even goes so far as to suggest that playing is essential to becoming a complete person: "It is in playing and only in playing that the individual child or adult is able to be creative and to use the whole personality, and it is only in being creative that the individual discovers the self."[2] Individuals who are unable to create in any way are, in one sense, not truly alive.

Opportunities to play are widely available in our current era. They are present not only in the multi-billion dollar gaming industries, or in the fields of sports; they may be witnessed in the widespread gamification of culture, which progressively invokes child-like language and points-based systems to reward travel and consumption,[3] and utilizes graphic design motifs derived from games to market virtually any service or product. Much of this playing occurs at a virtual level, via a screen interface. Access to games is widespread and instantaneous. Although screen technology has firmly cemented the place of social networks in everyday life, the artists of Scenocosme note that screens are also a means of alienating users from one another, as they promote interpersonal engagement at a superficial level while discouraging interaction within physical space.

The ethos of *Rencontres Imaginaires* is, in part, remedial—it is an attempt to reframe virtual interface technology as a means of encouraging interpersonal connection. The type of play which this interface enables is not mediated via graphics, avatars, or points. It is direct, manifesting only through the imagination of users, and rewarding them through the use of their imagination. In this way, it is more demonstrative of the variety of play that Winnicott discusses in his work, wherein playing is an extension of an individual's imagination into the tangible world, rather than a foray into a pre-arranged, determinate system. Further, playing within *Rencontres Imaginaires* transcends age, gender, or ethnicity, invoking the most simple and universal user interface in the world: touch. As such, the interactions that transpire during an experience of the artwork permit the generation of connections between individuals who might otherwise never communicate with each other.

Rencontres Imaginaires presents an alternative model of socialization, in which technology complements the natural compulsion to play. The latent desire to see oneself communicate, share, and learn from others is universally inherited; the artwork of Scenocosme provides a creative avenue for this desire to express itself, while enhancing the dimensions of this expression through virtual space. While virtual reality is in most contexts a means of escapism, it is here a means of connecting to an embodied, real world.

Notes

1   Donald Winnicott, *Playing and Reality* (Oxon, UK: Routledge, 2005): 55.

2   Ibid., 72.

3   For example, the widespread popularity of the apps FourSquare and its follow-up Swarm, as well as the colossal ascension of *Pokémon Go.*


Surrey Art Gallery Curatorial Assistant Claire Chupik during testing of *Rencontres Imaginaires* at UrbanScreen. Photography by Brian Giebelhaus.

Local artist Mandeep Wirk interacts with *Rencontres Imaginaires* through the kiosk at UrbanScreen. Photography by Brian Giebelhaus.

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Surrey Art Gallery Volunteer Coordinator Chris Dawson-Murphy poses for Scenocosme during a production workshop for *Rencontres Imaginaires* at Surrey Art Gallery. Photography by Surrey Art Gallery.
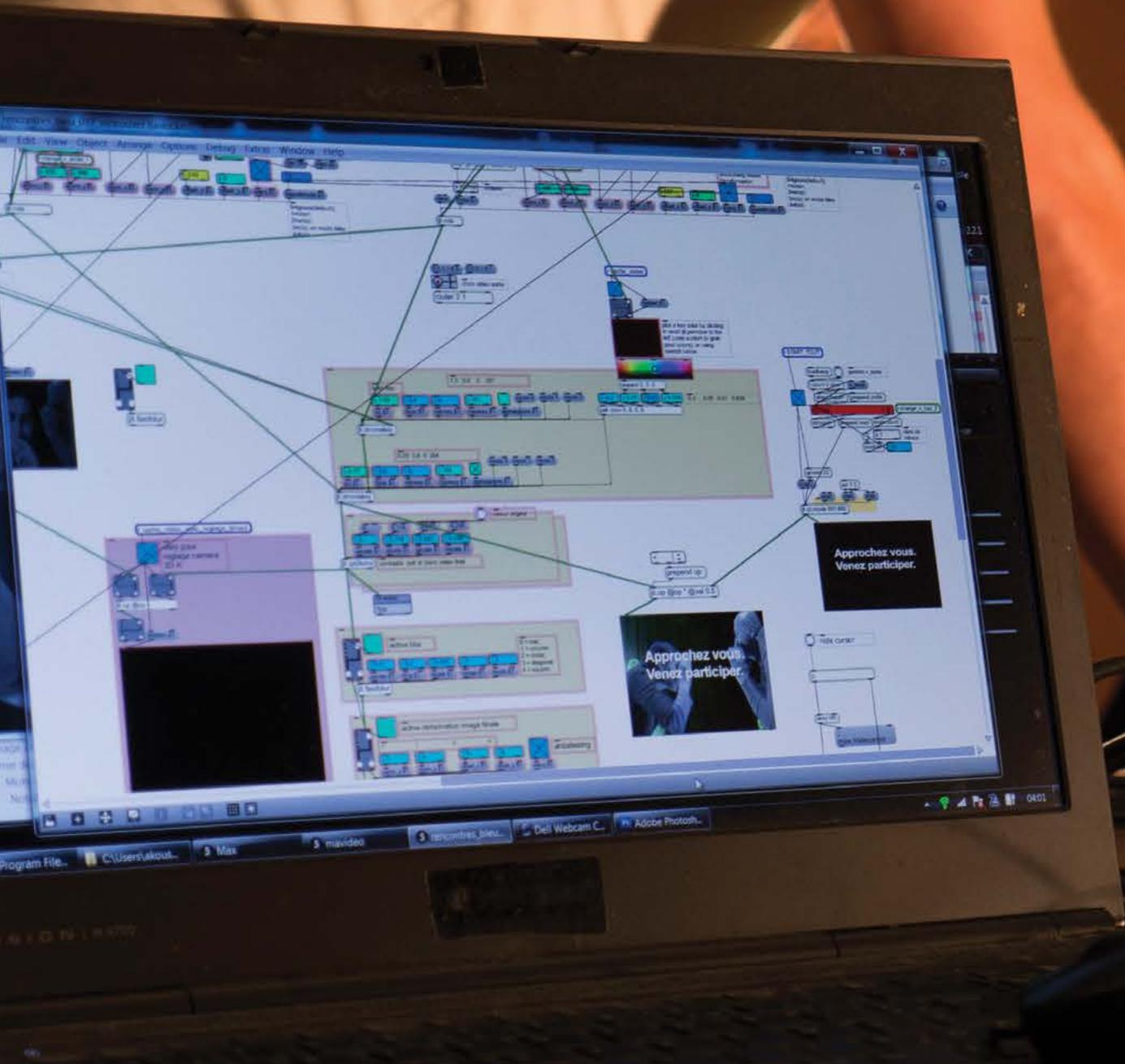
Bearing Witness

The Way In Which It Was Given to Us

Siku Allooloo

We hope that you will see yourself, our wants, and our desires, and you will remove that veil of sorrow which is spreading over our hearts…[1]
– Address of Ayessik, Chief of Hope, Chiefs of the Lower Fraser River and others to I. W. Powell, Superintendent of Indian Affairs at New Westminster, 26 May 1873

The Way In Which It Was Given to Us is a testimony of history and place, as well as a revelation of the present, through a Kwakwa̱ka̱ʼwakw lens.

Marianne Nicolson's animation draws upon different forms of archival references, including pictographs, oral history, and colonial mapping, to reveal the history of land dispossession in her territory and that of the Kwantlen peoples, wherein the work is situated. The form of the piece itself draws upon her ancestral practice of documenting stories directly onto the land through pictographs, though as a projected artwork it also holds an urban pop-culture aesthetic in the tradition of graffiti. Taken together, *The Way In Which It Was Given to Us* is an assertion of Indigenous sovereignty, ongoing presence, and a call for accountability. It is a re-presencing in the face of erasure, as well as speaking back in response to a history that has unilaterally silenced and imposed itself upon Indigenous nations and territories.

By projecting these images onto a building situated upon unceded lands, Nicolson reclaims control over the narrative of history and reflects it back through the visual language of her culture, onto something considered, like Canada, to be "fixed." This graceful work confronts Canada's willful denial of Indigenous land rights, by laying bare the means by which the Kwakwa̱ka̱ʼwakw and Kwantlen nations have been dispossessed of and erased within their own homelands, while giving voice to their resistance and resilience.

The animation begins with reference to Nicolson's Dzawada̱ʼenux̱w origin story, in which her people were placed on the land at "the beginning of light in the world." The projection is accompanied by the sound of water, wherein human and non-human relations appear throughout time and space.

Ominous red dots soon appear throughout the piece, followed by two crying faces (adapted from local pictographs in Kwantlen territory). Solid boxes depicting land allotments invade the spaces between pictographic forms, like a discordant and strangely arbitrary division of space. The screen goes dark and images of the Langley Farm emerge, followed by a wash of red. Text from Chief Cassimer's address to the Royal Commission in 1915 then appears on the screen, the pacing and simplicity of which holds enormous weight:

> The whitemen have taken our land and we have never got anything. During the time Simon Fraser came here my grandfather was up at Sapperton—when he came they were kind to him—was it because the Indians were too kind to him that the Government is not going to give us a square deal?[2]

> – Chief Cassimer's address to Royal Commission at McMillan Island, 1915

Marianne Nicolson discusses her practice at an artist's talk at the Surrey Art Gallery on September 26, 2017. Photography by Brian Giebelhaus.

Installation view of *The Way In Which It Was Given to Us*, 2017, Marianne Nicolson. Photography by Brian Giebelhaus.

Indigenous peoples throughout the continent have shared similar sentiments, right from the dawn of European conquest to many other nations to this day whose territories have become subsumed within colonies such as Canada and the United States. My Taino ancestors, for example, were the first to meet the conquistadores in 1492, in Kiskeya (now divided into Haiti and the Dominican Republic). They greeted the newcomers with generosity and graciousness, which was returned with acts of genocide and enslavement in the violent appropriation of land and lust for gold.

This is now an age-old story, shared by Indigenous nations worldwide who retain a similar inherent basis steeped in principles of dignity, generosity, and respect for the humanity of others—even in the face of gross and overt injustice. Colonial regimes have continually misjudged these principled manners of diplomacy as weakness and taken advantage of them in order to build their colonies upon us and reap wealth from our lands and waterways.

However, the great irony, and the great shame, is that true wealth—as embodied and extended by all of these Indigenous nations—exists only in the sharing. To objectify wealth, by exploiting material resources such as gold, is to miss the whole point. And as history proves, doing so leads not only to the objectification of the earth and also of people, but it culminates very dangerously into atrocities such as genocide, residential schools, environmental devastation, and, even now, the global climate crisis.

In this light, *The Way In Which It Was Given to Us* can be seen as an act of bearing witness, an important responsibility in Kwakwa̱ka̱'wakw practices of governance—a way of documenting histories directly onto memory the way that pictographs do with land.

As Nicolson's animation depicts, the release of a smallpox epidemic from 1862-3 decimated populations along the Pacific Northwest coast, including the Kwakwa̱ka̱'wakw and Kwantlen nations, and made way for the colonial acquisition of their lands. Within that year, and in large part due to the genocidal opportunism of colonial authorities, about 60 per cent of the Indigenous populations perished—"a crisis that left mass graves, deserted villages, traumatized survivors and societal collapse and, in a real way, created the conditions for modern-day British Columbia."[3]

This epidemic was the primary reason that virtually no treaties were made within what became British Columbia, as the self-fulfilling belief in a dying race and an empty land made treaty making seem like a non-issue.[4] Instead of negotiating agreements for coexistence, as colonial governments had done with Indigenous nations throughout the rest of the country, they divided up the land into allotments and simply gave it away. To be clear, this was illegally acquired land, which is why many Indigenous nations make a point to identify their territories as unceded, or illegally occupied.

Kwakwa̱ka̱'wakw and Kwantlen peoples were relegated to reserves on small fragments of their territories, while the best and largest allotments were given as farmland to settlers. As with every Indigenous nation across the country, their systems of governance, spiritual practice, oral history, cultural continuity, and distribution of wealth were outlawed, and their children were forcibly stolen and put into residential schools.

Most Canadians are unaware of this history. However, as Canada wraps up celebrations for its 150th anniversary since confederation,[5] the unjust means by which it has come into existence, as well as the ongoing domination and injustice bearing down upon Indigenous peoples and homelands to this day must also be recognized. Canadians too must be aware of the ways in which this land was handed over to them—though in this case, not by a creator at the beginning of time, but rather through the calculated theft of land and erasure of peoples already present, and whose presence, despite all odds, remains.

The erasure of this history from public consciousness is a great injustice to Canadian society, and it is the root of why most Canadians misunderstand Indigenous movements to protect the sources of life that we have left, and to assert our autonomy. In this way, Nicolson's work is a gift and an act of dignity in the right of her ancestral tradition of truth-telling and documentation of history onto the landscape, in order to provide a long-range perspective on what has brought us to this moment. It is also in keeping with many of her other works, such as her 1998 *Cliff Painting* (located at the mouth of the river in her home territory)—an emblem of continuity and assertion of presence and place, a powerful reminder to both Kwakwa̱ka̱'wakw and outsiders of unceded territories and time immemorial.

The sound of the water that plays with the projection artwork is from Great Slave Lake, one of the largest freshwater sources on the planet. The audio suggests a sense of timelessness (in that water has always been revered as an essential source of life) and also subtle urgency—as sources of clean water are increasingly threatened by extractive resource development. In the same way that the voices of local chiefs are brought to light in the artwork through direct quotes from land commission hearings, the accompanying audio of water enables the earth, which has beared witness to so much, to speak for itself.

I made this recording on the shore in my hometown of Yellowknife, Northwest Territories (which was built during the Gold Rush), just a few kilometers away from the defunct site of Giant Mine—one of the richest gold mines in Canadian history, and certainly the most toxic. While the water is still clean in many parts of the lake, this essential source of life has become a repository of lethal contamination brought on through the colonial invasion of land. The future survival of human beings everywhere demands that we begin to pay attention.

Presently, the Kwakwa̱ka̱'wakw are working to protect the salmon in their territory from fish farming, an extractive industry that is destroying a vital source of sustenance for their people as well as the whole ecosystem. Indigenous nations throughout the entire coast, and indeed the continent, are fighting to protect their homelands from oil tankers, pipelines, and tar sands. The stakes are incredibly high, but the cost of failure is devastating, not only for local nations and all of the life forms that depend on healthy homelands, but indeed for the planet. Climate change is the biggest global crisis of our time, and the rapid loss of biodiversity presents a glaring warning for the future of humanity itself.

The fundamental change so desperately needed requires that we face the tough truths about our history and present reality. Telling truthful history then, and bearing witness, is both an

honouring of place and ancestral experience that makes the present more tangible, and us more empowered within it. How else can we ever know where and who we truly are?

Just as neither the making of this country nor its future are inevitable or "fixed," *The Way In Which It Was Given to Us* is a powerful reminder of the importance of respecting how things have come to be, with the aim of attending to what now must (and can) be done. In this way, the Surrey Art Gallery's UrbanScreen exhibition of this artwork is a hopeful example of making space to illuminate different knowledge systems and possibilities, as well as a necessary willingness to face uncomfortable truths.

Notes

1   *Exhibit "J" to the Statement of Evidence of Marilyn Gabriel Chief of Kwantlen First Nation*, National Energy Board, Hearing Order OH-001-2014 (C198-11-7), evidence of Chief Marilyn Gabriel - Vol. 7 - A4L8K12015-05-27, page 7. Retrieved from: https://apps.neb-one.gc.ca/REGDOCS/Search?loc=2784857&txthl=marilyn%20gabriel&sr=1&filter=Attr_12629_16&dt=73.

2   Ibid., 5.

3   Joshua Ostroff, "How a smallpox epidemic forged modern British Columbia," *Maclean's*, August 1, 2017, retrieved from https://www.macleans.ca/news/canada/how-a-smallpox-epidemic-forged-modern-british-columbia/.

4   Ibid.

5. This essay was originally published in *Surrey Art Gallery Presents* in 2017.

Peter Morin, Siku Allooloo, and Marianne Nicolson in conversation at an event at an artist's talk at Surrey Art Gallery on September 26, 2017. Photography Pattie Petrala.

Alex McLeod,
PHANTASMAGORIA, 2018.
Photography by Brian Giebelhaus.

Looking to Connect

Alex McLeod's Protean *PHANTASMAGORIA*

Sky Goodden

Expanding and reducing, Alex McLeod's *PHANTASMAGORIA* pulsates, weaves, spins, and reaches. It is at once infinitesimal and universal, analytical and reflective. And in it, we see ourselves reflected.

Often considered an early contributor to "post-internet art"—a genre that self-consciously emulates the aesthetic and function of online media—McLeod stepped to the side of a limiting association, and freely embraced interpretive landscapes in the digital realm. His recent work has evolved his practice from "magic-eye" abstractions to 3D-printed installation and sculpture—and now, to the moving image. McLeod has established himself as a foregrounding digital renderer with a practice that consistently bends the tools of digital image-making to picture the splendor of fully-realized realms. What used to appear as diorama-like figurations and videogame landscapes transcended what he once laughingly referred to as "stoner art,"[1] and came to illustrate scenes of portent. Machinist, Kafkaesque dominions and industrial wastelands went vaguely evoked, as the artist "imagined what another world or space and time may look like." However, even when picturing his subjects in mid-render—some pixels poking through, and the focus pivoting between process and resolution—McLeod has always lent image to the activity of imagining something yet to come.

In McLeod's project for Surrey Art Gallery's offsite venue UrbanScreen, *PHANTASMAGORIA*, a loop of moving images emphasize the energetic locus of that imagining. Evoking themes as diverse (and comprehensive) as simulation, chance, evolution, and cellular diffusion, McLeod is both abstracting and literalizing the act of perception, and the source of existence. Taking his cue from motion-capture technology, he's creating photographic images that promote fictions on the level of fact. Isolating and zooming-in on unique particles (which, up close, take on the quality of protagonists in a story), his subjects are, at turns, curious-looking, friendly, shy, and mischievous. Indeed, these "particles" have the character of one who's "looking back." In this sense, even computationally, there remains a legible and empathetic gesture within these all-essential forms.

In *The Object Stares Back* (1997), art historian James Elkins writes, "The world is full of eyes, and sight is everywhere. But there is a special category, another kind of eye that is neither real (like my eyes) nor metaphorical (like the 'eyes' of rainbows and halos). It sees, and yet it is blind."[2] Here, Elkins is referring to creatures that grow fake eyes as a form of self-defense. Other creatures are fearful of the (perceived) eye, and would stay away if they thought their actions—i.e., preying—were being observed. However, this examination of the "blind eye" should extend to the non-organic among us, too. Because, "in most images from science and technology, the 'eye'—that is, the machine that helps out the eye—needs to send out something in order to make the object visible." So, like a photographer employing a flash, or a scientist charging a surface in order to view his sulfur atoms, there is, on a very basic level, the object's need for our vision in order to exist.

Even in an age populated by pedestrianized imagery and photographic editing, a "truth-telling status" continues to be applied to visual phenomena. Art historian and mythographer Marina

Warner reminds us that, despite the fact that "we cannot think without pictures, […] these do not always represent objects that exist in the sensory world."[3] As art historians can readily attest, generational instruments have been created "to analyze and reproduce vision." The camera lucida is chief among them. Like a photographic double-exposure, the camera lucida was a Renaissance-era optical device crafted to superimpose the artist's subject onto the plane on which he was drawing. Warner reminds us that parallel objects or optical strategies exist for every generation of observers, reflecting ideas about consciousness in any given period. These devices express "the potential of the inward eye for every generation, the concepts of cognition and mental projection, and the irrepressible tendency of the mind to assemble random marks into intelligible data."[4]

McLeod is a pioneer of image analysis and visualizing, himself, and deservedly holds a prominent position within the digital envisaging community, both in Canada and abroad. However, what elevates his work to the level of contemporary art—beyond mere technological design or experiment—is the level of *feeling* that he lines his subjects with. Whether his landscapes communicate humour, portent, or mischief, McLeod foregrounds an important—and even ominous—aspect of digital imaging: that we are creating something of *ourselves*.

In a 2015 text on McLeod, a critic references a specialized term, "cubusolus," which pairs the Ancient Greek "cubus" (a mass, quantity); and the Latin "solus" (alone, by oneself), to mean "an existential awareness produced in digital isolation," or "a sublime encounter from a solitary digital perspective."[5] It's hard to conjure a better term for the emotional tenor that McLeod imbues his digital imaging with. *PHANTASMAGORIA* reduces—or elevates—figuration to its essential parts, and, via the particle or the pixel, speaks to the connective tissue that exists between these forms, and also between us. Whether McLeod's subjects take the shape of golden amoebas congealing and separating from one another; ribbed globes emanating and pulsating data; or pebbled planes reaching out with string, his forms speak on the level of metaphor and existential motif. On the lids of our eyes, such images play out as if on an interior projection. On the petri dish, molecules perform a similar dance, telling us reams about both the micro and macro of organic existence. Across greenscreens and Bluetooths, data multiply, synthesize, and foretell. In this way, McLeod's formulation arrives in terms we can understand: we are so many protean particles, looking to connect.

Notes

1   Sky Goodden, "Alumni Profile: Alex McLeod," *Sketch Magazine*, Summer 2012, 22.

2   James Elkins, *The Object Stares Back* (San Diego: Harcourt Brace, 1997): 75.

3   Marina Warner in *Eyes, Lies and Illusion: The Art of Deception* (Aldershot: Lund Humphries, 2004).

4   Ibid.

5   Otino Corsano, "All That Is Solid …: Alex McLeod Taps the Cult of the Canadian Sublime and Explodes the Digital," *Momus.ca*, accessed October 7, 2015, http://momus.ca/all-that-is-solid-alex-mcleod-taps-the-cult-of-the-canadian-sublime-and-explodes-the-digital/.
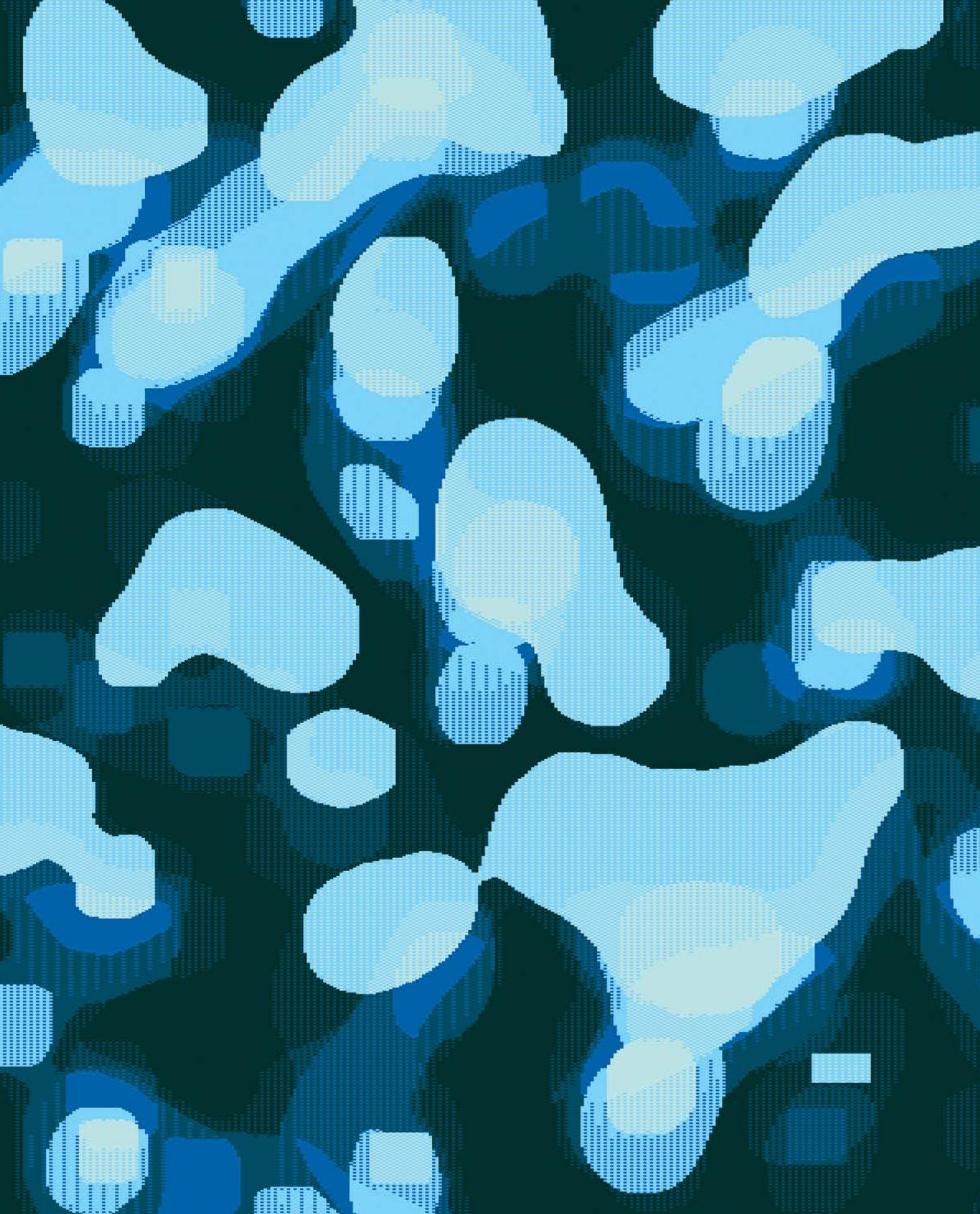

Alex McLeod delivers a lecture at Surrey Art Gallery on April 27, 2019. Photography by Surrey Art Gallery.

Detail of still from *PHANTASMAGORIA*, 2018, Alex McLeod. Image courtesy of the artist.

Dreaming the Pixel Imaginary
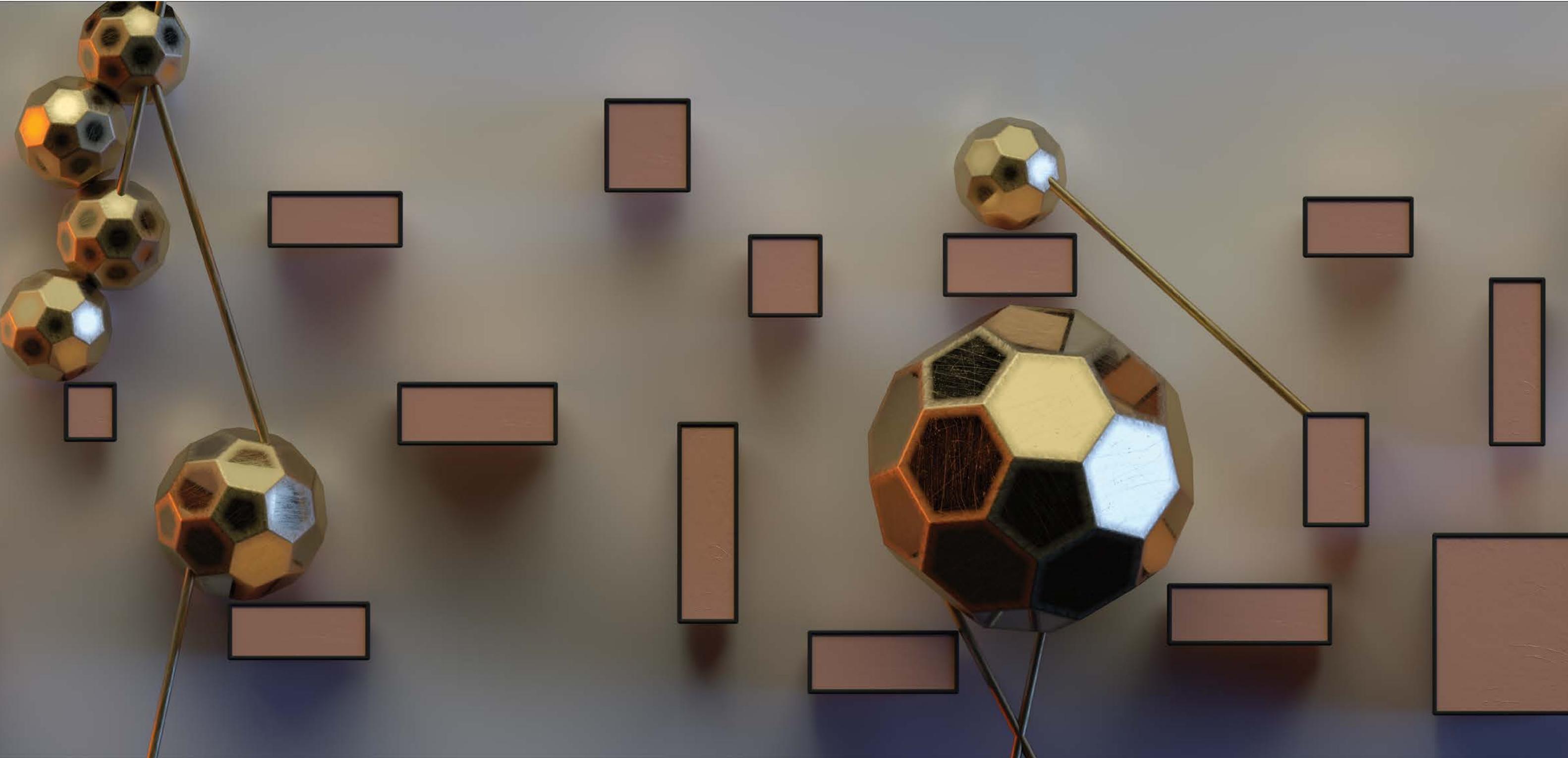
Rhys Edwards

Detail of still from Nicolas Sassoon's *Serpentine*, digital animation, 2 minutes 56 seconds, 2018. From the *Liquid Landscapes* series.

That pictures can be deceiving is a cliché today. Whereas we once perceived pictures to be an accurate record of the world, the ability to produce, manipulate, and share them across social networks is so straightforward that we know all too easily the ease with which it is possible to deceive. So, deception is impossible, since the subjectivity or outright falseness of the picture may be assumed in the first place. We have become too clever for our own good.

Our wisdom has produced a more complex relationship to pictures: though we have become skeptical of their truth, we nevertheless indulge in pictures more frequently than ever. With a kind of joy, we assiduously seek to reconstruct the world in image-form. At no point in prior history has the world ever been so saturated with images; indeed, it is more appropriate to say now that we live in an image-world of our own creation. Having untethered pictures from any indexical (i.e. directly connected) relationship to a previously distinct, autonomous reality, they now occupy a new realm for us. Regardless of any particular content, pictures have become suggestions: speculative forays into an attitude, an emotion, a politic, a taste, or activity.

The art of Nicolas Sassoon traces this movement from the indexical to the speculative. Using a pixel aesthetic originating from computer art and web design of the 1990s, his images of hypothetical architecture, reconstructed studio and gallery interiors, and imaginary landscapes all allude to an imminent reality that is never realized. Conversely, his ongoing *Patterns* series of pixel animations employ the use of movements inspired by sights, materials, and natural phenomena drawn from the real world in order to generate totally abstract compositions.

Liquid Landscapes, Sassoon's site-specific project for UrbanScreen, conjoins these two modes of making. The artwork consists of seven different animations, one for each night of the week. Each animation is inspired by a real-life geographic site located in the City of Surrey; locales include Boundary Bay, Crescent Beach, Fraser River, Nicomekl River, Redwood Park, Serpentine River and Serpentine Fen. The animations reference patterns of natural phenomena likely to be found at each site, such as the movement of waves upon the beach, raindrops landing on still bodies of water, the reflection of light, and the growth of plants throughout the seasons. The colour palette of each animation is derived from a single found photograph of each location.

Crucially, as each animation proceeds, its composition and movement pattern changes. Consortiums of pixels that had previously read as seeds, sunrays, or shadows begin to disperse and fragment; rhythms which had matched a single tempo speed up or slow down. Almost imperceptibly, each animation deconstructs itself into its discrete elements, and we are slowly shown that what we have been looking at is not a truly figurative image, but is merely symbolic—and always has been.

It is worth mentioning that a screening of *Liquid Landscapes* at UrbanScreen on April 9th, 2019, was complimented by a series of soundworks commissioned from local electronic artists. The lineup included Yu Su (You're Me), JS Aurelius (Ascetic House), Jean Brazeau, Scott W., Baby Blue (S.M.I.L.E), Betty Mulat / Venetta (NuZi Collective), and Veron X/O. At a sonic level, each piece expanded upon the themes and movements within each distinct animation, evoking the transition from figuration or narrative into the abstract expression of colour and pattern.
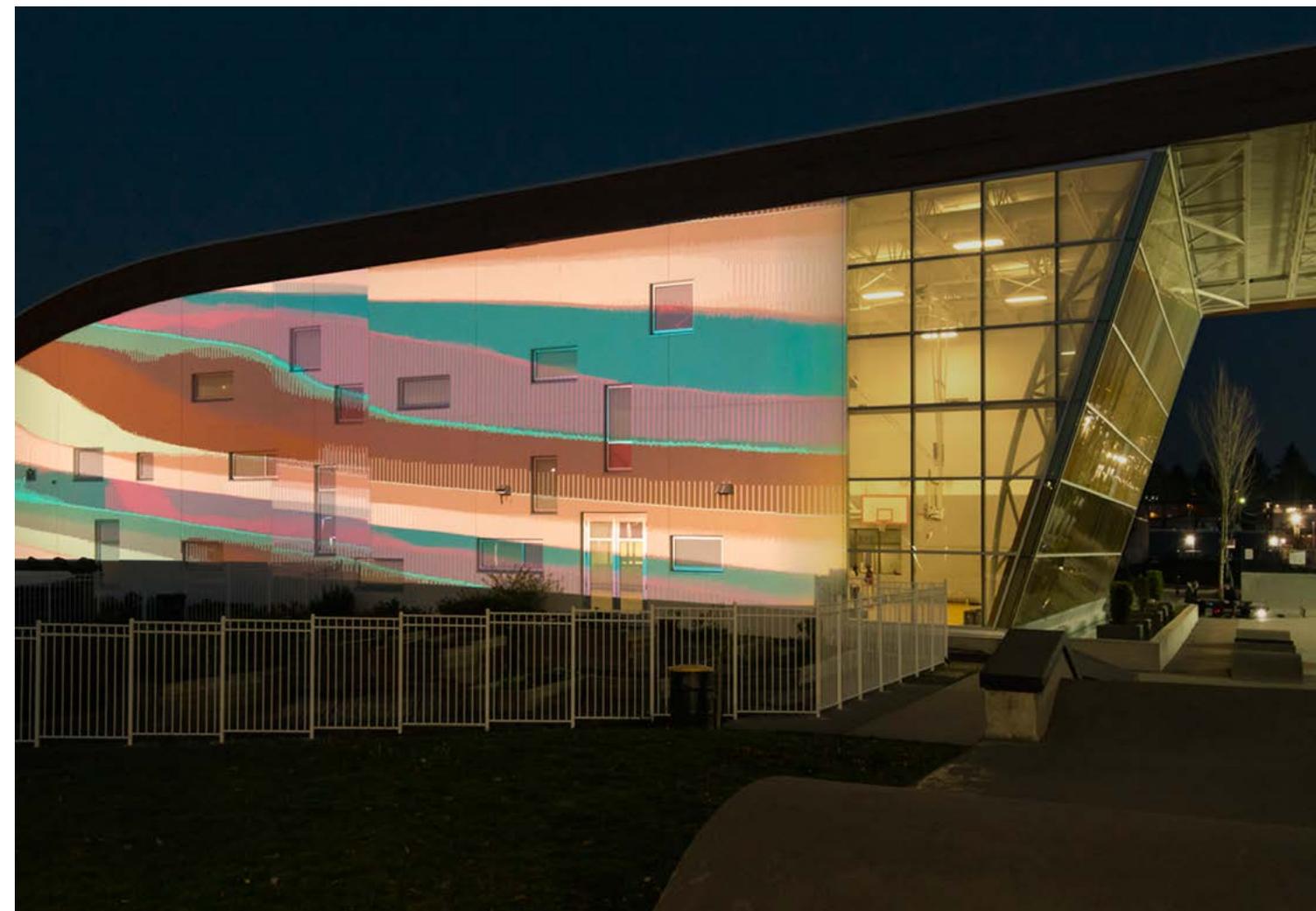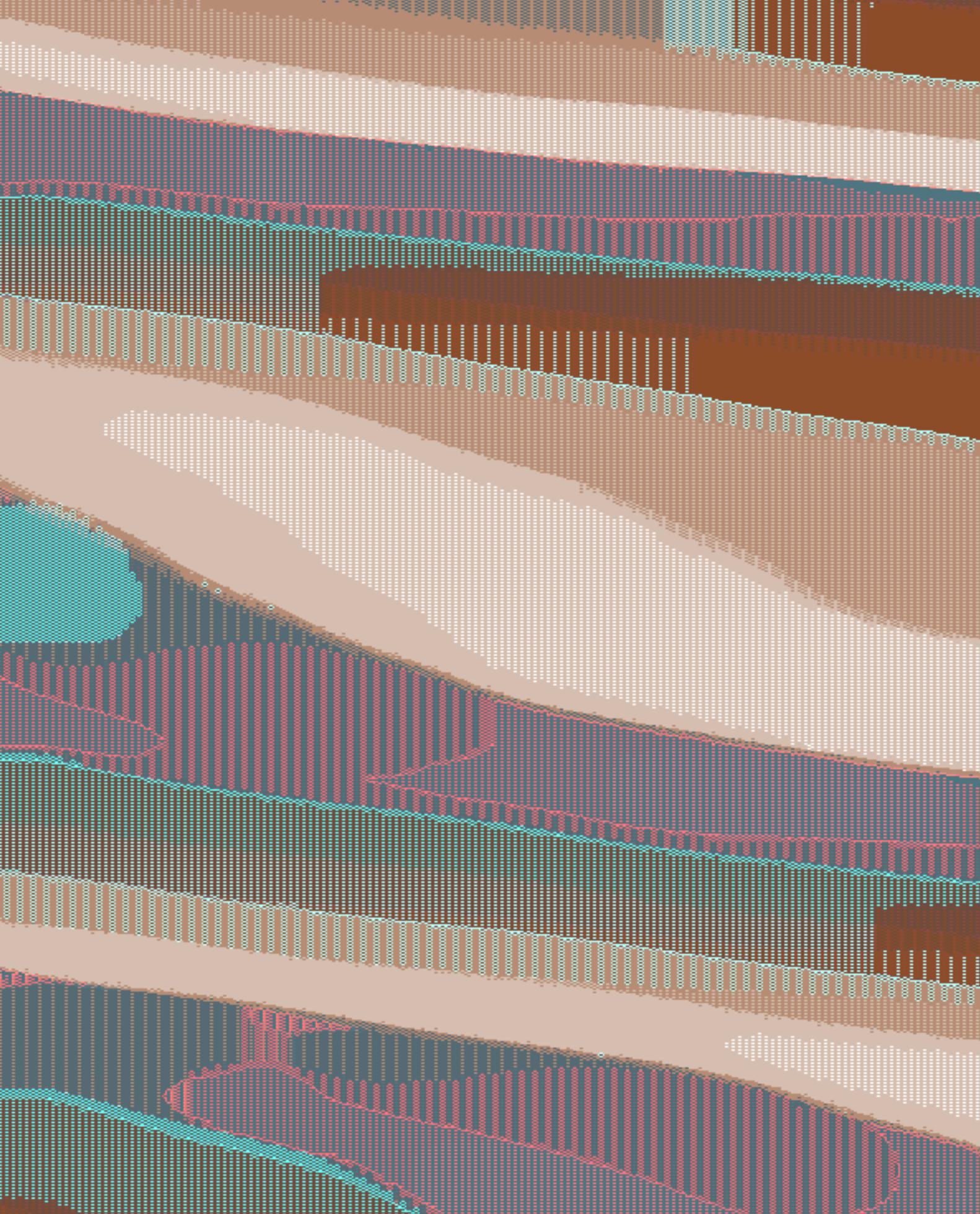
Detail of production still of *Boundary Bay*, from *Liquid Landscapes*, 2018, Nicolas Sassoon. Image courtesy of the artist.

Boundary Bay, from *Liquid Landscapes*, 2018, Nicolas Sassoon. Photography by SITE Photography.

It is telling that Sassoon's early digital works were intended to be models for three-dimensional sculptures that were never ultimately realized, such as his *PYRAMIDES* (2011), *GEODES* (2011), and *HOMES* (2014) series. Each animation in *Liquid Landscapes* captures something seemingly essential about an area of Surrey, and vividly helps to bring this aspect of local geography to life. But the gradual transformation of each animation, from a documentarian record of a real place and moment to a total abstraction, alludes to the subsumption of reality within picture-making.

Could Serpentine Fen, Nicomekl River, or Boundary Bay ever be "known"? We may certainly visit each location and glean something of its character, but the experiential element of nature walks is subjective, distinct to each visitor. As such, the pictures we take or make from each site become part of the composite assembly of documents (albums, portfolios, books, websites) through which we develop an understanding of place. Over time, these grand composites gain a life of their own—abstracted, universalized, and independent of origin. They become speculative models for a world which might exist, rather than the one we actually inhabit.

Sassoon's use of seemingly dated image-rendering techniques also compounds the effect of distancing from the geographic source. The shimmering pixels call to mind the screensavers

of a long-forgotten computer operating system, which primes us to perceive the subject as outmoded in some way—as if it is being transmitted to us from a prior era.

But pixel art also has a secondary, deeper meaning: unlike other art media, the figurative capacities of the pixel are limited only by processing power. Pixels are the palpable building blocks of computer software which, in time, may come to simulate entire realities. They hold therein the promise of unlimited possibility, of virtual utopia. Pixels connote more clearly than any other medium the modelling of reality. Thus Sassoon's use of pixels is not only visually appealing (although it is certainly that too), but a way of making explicit the underlying processes through which images transform the world in the digital era. In other words, the supposedly "kitsch" qualities of 90s web aesthetics are only the first primordial cries of the all-dominating graphics technology that powers the advertisements, sports replays, weather reports, games, and movies we consume today.

It is important to note that the distancing Sassoon introduces into his image-world, through the gradual shift into abstraction and the explicit use of pixel art, does not imply that his symbolic rendition of each site is inaccurate or misleading. Rather, it mirrors the "real-life" abstraction of Surrey. For many, Surrey itself is a speculative place. Rapidly shifting and growing, the City invites investment in its future. Further, as one of the largest metropolitan regions in Canada, the breadth of the City makes many of its parks and rivers accessible to the general populace only from a distance; citizens are more likely to identify with individual neighbourhoods than with the City as a whole. The pictures found upon UrbanScreen are further iterations of the same images found upon the internet; regardless of the source, they exist at a remove.

In this way, *Liquid Landscapes* captures the tensions underlying the continuum between reality, nature, place-making, and picture-making. Hypnotic and enticing, Sassoon's art does not show us the world as it actually is, but does disclose the means via which it is delivered to us.

Production stills from
CharBagh, 2019, Faisal Anwar.
Images courtesy of the artist.

An Emergent
Self-Organizing Garden

Jordan Strom

Faisal Anwar's *CharBagh* envelopes the visitor to UrbanScreen in a sprawling geometry of luminous pulsing colour. In the half-lit darkness beneath the twin projectors, a tilework of bright multi-hued diamonds spread interlocked sequences up and across the perforated wall of the Chuck Bailey Recreation Centre building façade. Rectangles and squares nest within other rectangles and squares. Photos of varying sizes and subject matter flash up and dissolve away in singles, pairs, and clusters.

Rooted in Islamic design, *CharBagh* is a cinematic spectacle that is also a meditation on the social construction of nature and the effects of climate change on the South of Fraser environment. It originates with the observation that many Canadians—while conscious of the effects of climate change at a global level (e.g., icebergs melting or the increased prevalence of hurricanes)—don't necessarily know the impact that the crisis is having on a local level.

In the summer of 2019, Anwar worked with Surrey residents, including gardeners, artists, and naturalists. Working with local ecologist Nicole Tennant and artist Roxanne Charles, Anwar conducted a series of workshops and walking tours at three different Surrey locations, including the Chuck Bailey Recreation Centre Community Garden, the Plot Community Sharing Garden, and the Surrey Arts Centre. During these tours and over the course of the weeks following the clinics, Anwar invited the participants to take photographs in response to a number of questions: "What are the images that symbolize your relationship to nature? What are the images that stand for your relationship to sustainability? What are the images that capture the current moment of climate change? What are the images that represent better sustainable practices?" Each participant responded to these questions in relation to local Surrey landscape, flora and fauna. They were then invited to add their photographs to an ever-growing archive over the course of the exhibition's duration, by uploading them to Instagram with a series of meta-tags, including #CharBaghNature, #CharBaghViable, #CharBaghClimate, and #CharBaghPerform. The artwork was subsequently both at UrbanScreen and in the Fall 2019 Surrey Art Gallery exhibition *Garden in the Machine*, in conjunction with the 20th anniversary of the Gallery's renowned TechLab new media art program.

The title of the project refers to the classical Persian/Indo-Persian and Islamic-style gardens design known as *charbagh*. The layout of these gardens is quadrilateral (encompassing four square quadrants). *Char* means 'four' and *bagh* is 'garden.' These quadrants are often divided by a road or path, and will usually have a central building (often tomb) where the paths intersect. Historically, *charbagh* have been powerful methods for the organization and domestication of landscape.

In *CharBagh*, the horizontal space of the garden is projected onto the colossal space of the building facade. The pattern is abstracted. Anwar's software uses algorithms to translate the meta-tags connected to the crowd-sourced images into patterns associated with Islamic geometry. The result is an ever-evolving, dynamic, aerial view of a digital charbagh that grows
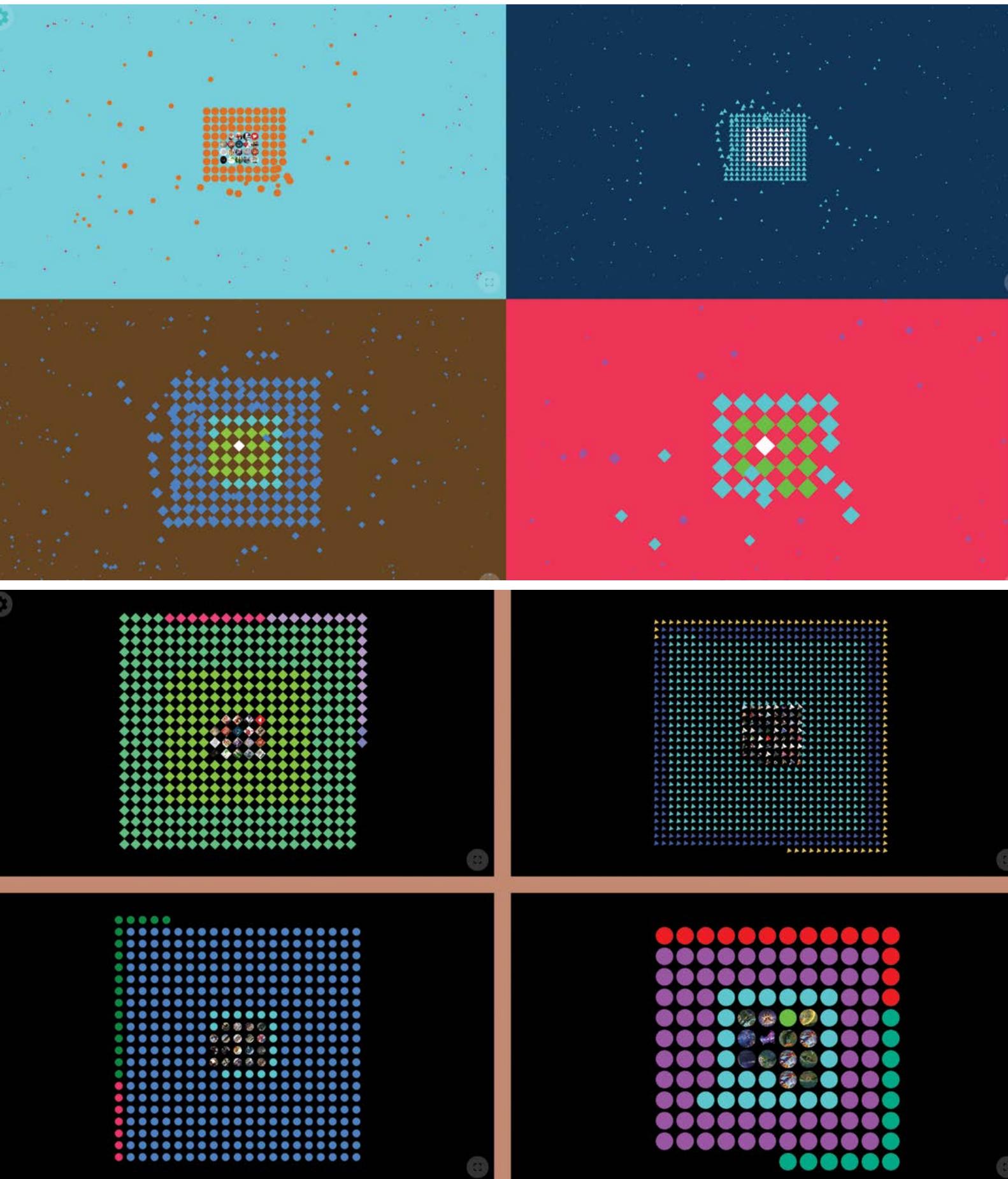
from incoming streams of data generated from members of the public. Visitors can explore the charbagh projections strictly by sight, or actively interact with the garden in using their cellphones or other portable smart electronic devices. *CharBagh* is, in effect, what Carolyn L. Kane has called an "algorithmic lifeworld," or a "system operating through the post-optic principles of informatic reduction, predictive scanning, and the allegorical presentation of data."[1] It operates on the margins of cinema, video art, and gaming. While it is similar to play, interactive art, such as Anwar's *CharBagh*, differs from play through its active engendering of "disruptions and frame collections as well as using different forms of self referentiality."[2]

The space of the garden is not unusual in digital media art. One can think of examples of past work such as Ken Goldberg's *Telegarden* (1995), or Jennifer Steinkamp's *Daisy Bell* (2008). Yet Anwar's work is distinct in its symbiosis of computer aesthetics and Islamic design—two areas that have a deep affinity, as media theorist Laura U. Marks has pointed out:

> Both new media art and Islamic art are, broadly speaking, aniconic. Art is aniconic when the image shows us that what we do not see is more significant than what we do. In both Islamic art and new media art, the most important activity takes place at a level prior to the perceptible image. The image that we perceive refers to the underlying cause—in ornament, geometry, pattern, text, and code-generated images. These are not artworks of the image but… of enfolding and unfolding.[3]

The floral motifs of much Islamic art (perhaps most famously captured in Persian carpet designs) can be viewed as generative. Motifs frequently found in carpets, such as flowers, palmettes, lotuses, and vines, are paralleled in Anwar's light projection—they are evident in the form of collective algorithmic sequencing of photographs of flowers and other botanical specimens that flash up against the mosaic patterning backdrop. *CharBagh* is a work that provokes thought and participation on many levels, from its imaging of the environmental crisis beneath our feet to its playful patterning of the mutually interpenetrated worlds of Islamic design and computational art.

Notes

1   Carolyn L Kane, Chromatic Algorithms: Synthetic Color, Computer Code, an Aesthetics of Code (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2014): 18.

2   Katja Kwastek, Aesthetics of Interaction in Digital Art (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2013): 261.

3   Laura U. Marks, Enfoldment and Infinity: An Islamic Geneology of New Media Art (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2010) 5.

Faisal Anwar guides seniors through the creative response process at the Chuck Bailey Recreation Centre garden, July 2, 2019. Photography by Surrey Art Gallery.

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Installation view of *CharBagh*, 2019, Faisal Anwar. Photography by Brian Giebelhaus.

Kamalpreet Kaur and Gulkirat Kochar work with My Name is Scot and Leannej during a workshop in a partnership project with Baobab in February 2016. Photography by Surrey Art Gallery.

Our Screen, Our Stories

Youth and Community Artwork Screenings

Alanna Edwards

As part of a dual channel video, the word *LOVES* is accompanied by a photograph of a small, joyful preschool-age girl named Anjni wandering the shelves of a local library. She glances back at the camera while continuing to explore her environment, surrounded by shelves of books she has read or one day will. The camera is low—her height—both at once allowing her to lead and forcing the viewer to see things through a child's perspective. *Learning new ideas* is the phrase that follows, next to a photograph of Anjni flipping through a pop-up book encircled by materials from a reading room. Here, Anjni is in the heart of the library and in the heart of her mother Glady Vij, the director of the film.

Anjni (2016) documents a mother's hope for her daughter by exploring Anjni's interests and joy for life and learning. It is one of many videos created by young people and local community members shown at UrbanScreen over its decade-long duration. Projecting moving images onto the built environment where one lives, works, and plays, is a powerful act. Images shown and stories told can reflect and strengthen community, tying together environment, art, and spectator in genuine and meaningful ways.

Urban screens are oftentimes transitory spaces with temporary audiences, spaces momentarily created through shared environments and experience. The public nature of UrbanScreen and its accompanying arts programming invites a range of audiences, some who may not otherwise step foot into a gallery, to watch and experience contemporary art and try their hand at creating. Racing by up above Chuck Bailey Recreation Centre is the SkyTrain, public transportation carrying an endless audience as commuters travel from Surrey Central to Gateway Station. After sunset they have an ideal view of projected artworks; commuters briefly transforming into gallery-goers in a 21st century way.

Providing UrbanScreen with one of its largest, youngest, and most consistent audiences is the skatepark next door. Without standing under one of UrbanScreen's speakers, the soundtrack becomes one of skate decks shredding and smashing the pavement, along with howls of pain and celebratory grunts of approval from missed and landed tricks, respectively. Originally constructed as a venue for the 2010 Olympic Winter Games, the Recreation Centre was redeveloped into a community centre to meet the needs of a growing city. As the city known as Surrey is built and rebuilt, it is the small gestures and connections between one another that shape community.

Visitors watch Roxanne Charles' artwork *Blanket Dance* (2015) during a screening of original artworks by local artists hosted by SOFIA (South of the Fraser Inter-Arts Collective) and the Surrey English Teachers Association at a community event on November 5, 2015. Photography by Edward Westerhuis.

Local skaters enjoy footage of their best tricks during the Summers Best Trick event on September 10, 2014. Photography by Edward Westerhuis.

Youth videos and community artmaking events have been integral to the programming around UrbanScreen, the first youth event being Freaks and Geeks. In part presented by Surrey Art Gallery and Chuck Bailey's Community Committee, the skateboard video premiere had live music, free BBQ, trick contests, and skate demos. Former Youth Park Coordinator and Surrey

local Mike Faux (otherwise known as Hippie Mike) proposed this event as part of the UrbanScreen Advisory Committee.

Faux's steadfast support and encouragement of youth and their interests led to a series of compilation video premieres. Featuring local skaters and BMX riders from the skatepark, skate videos accompanied most UrbanScreen exhibitions until 2015 when South of the Fraser Inter-Arts Collective (SOFIA) debuted videos created with young adults. As part of their project Dualities: Exploring the Hidden Narratives of Surrey, the artworks explored the diversity of cultural spaces and hybridity in Surrey.

The terms hybridity and diversity fail to encompass the actual lived and intersecting experiences of young people in Surrey. Like with *Anjni*, Fatima Musa's video *First Word that Comes Into Your Mind* (2016) explored the complexity surrounding place, an unfixed notion of what "here" means. Musa asked fellow high school students to respond to the question, "What is the first word that you think of when you think of Surrey?" Responses were more varied than she expected, addressing the array of experiences had in Surrey and personal understandings of place.

In an increasingly growing city, keeping and making space becomes paramount. Musa's and Vij's videos were two films created by community members from the Surrey-based non-profit Baobab Inclusive Empowerment Society in partnership with the Gallery. As part of the 2016 UrbanScreen exhibition project Stories from Here: Divergent Voices Coming Together, youth worked with mentoring artists over a period of several months, learning to use their voices as storytellers and to share ideas of what "here" means to them. In a city constantly shifting and expanding, notions of "here" are increasingly ephemeral and shaped by technology.

Connections to here, the traditional, ancestral, and unceded territories of the Coast Salish peoples, including the q̓ʷɑːn̓ƛ̓ən̓, q̓icə̓y̓, and Semiahma nations where Surrey Art Gallery and UrbanScreen are located, vary for different communities and individuals. Like with the Baobab partnership, the Indigenous Contemporary Art Intensive (ICAI) was a pilot initiative connecting emerging artists with established mentoring artists for a series of workshops over the summer of 2018. In response to their experiences, videos were created for UrbanScreen, a night gathering together family, friends, and colleagues to witness what these youth had to share.

Local skaters enjoy footage of their best tricks during a community youth art screening on November 5th, 2015. Photography by Edward Westerhuis.

Still from *Anjni*, 2016, depicting a mother's love and hope for her daughter. Image courtesy of the artists.
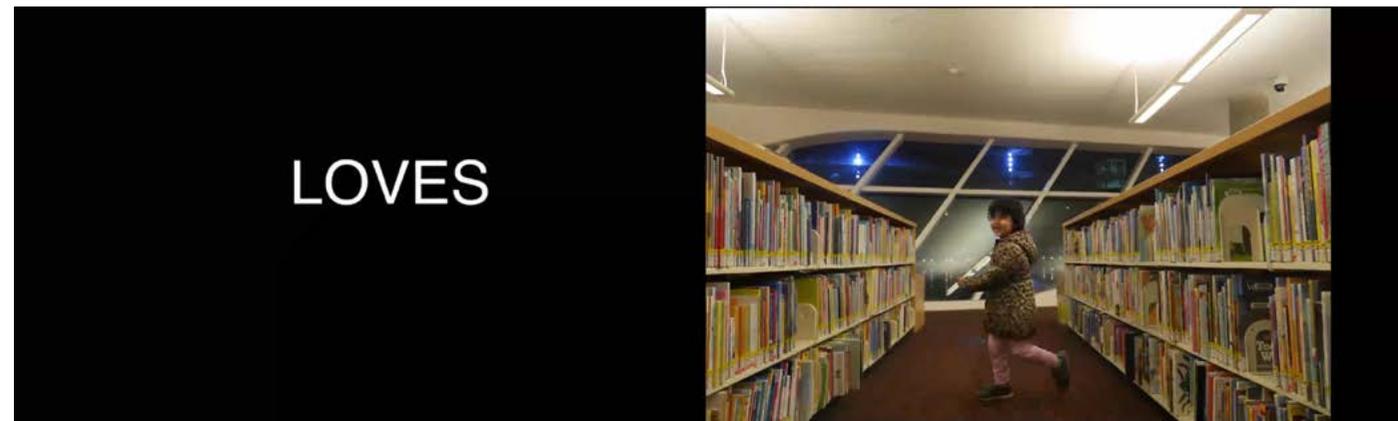
Perception, a video work by Tanvir Bhullar and Ravleen Brar, screens during Stories from Here, a youth media art project developed with Baobab, shown at UrbanScreen on March 10, 2016. Photography by My Name is Scot.

Gladys and Anjni Vij, artists from the project Stories from Here: Divergent Voices Coming Together. Photography by Surrey Art Gallery.

Avishka Lakwijaya and Atheana Picha, two of five members from the ICAI, created artworks referencing landscape, environment, and connection to place. *Change Through Stills*, Lakwijaya's experimental film referencing growth and transformation through portraiture, had trees emerge out of over 200 photographs of a portrait painting's process. Lakwijaya asks what growth means to the viewer, reflecting on the physical changes of the environment and internal growth experienced over time.

Complementing the themes of time and transformation in Lakwijaya's film, is Picha's video of brightly coloured abstract sun rays slowly enveloping a night sky. Repeatedly moving from darkness into light and back again, the sunrays reference elements of Coast Salish design. Picha's video quietly ties together personal and collective identity with connection to land and territory. Through time, the land returns to what it once was. Forever existing, becoming and unbecoming through the touch of human hands.

"To the ones who took my rights away," spoke the strong and unwavering voice of Naomi Kennedy, reciting a poem detailing her experiences with colonization as an Indigenous woman. "Who are you?" she asks, confronting the viewer, questioning their privilege, history, and connection to this land. Kennedy subverts the narrative where Indigenous peoples are viewed as Other, as mere second thoughts and not as original stewards of the land. With the words *resilience*, *warrior*, *daughter*, and *future mother* splashed across the side of Chuck Bailey, Kennedy ends her film as she asserts her power as someone who, as she recites, will never go away. By harnessing the power of her ancestors, she takes up space and allows herself to speak her truth. Kennedy asks the viewer to consider the land and territory where one lives, encouraging us to ask ourselves whose voices have been silenced for one's own voice to be heard.

Both seeing and hearing those powerful words from an emerging artist just entering her last year of high school reinforces the need for spaces and institutions to provide opportunities for youth to create and show their artwork. Continuing to work with local communities and with young people, Surrey Art Gallery's UrbanScreen remains committed to providing a platform for local voices. Few things are as powerful as seeing yourself, your community, and your stories reflected in one's environment.

Alanna Edwards, a member of the Indigenous Contemporary Art Intensive, also premiered her artwork piptugwagit *at UrbanScreen in 2018. Continuing as an Engagement Facilitator at Surrey Art Gallery, she focuses on museum art education involving Indigenous contemporary art initiatives.*

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Atheana Picha, from the Indigenous Contemporary Art Intensive, in front of her work screened on September 28, 2018. Photography by Pardeep Singh.

UrbanScreen
Art Production Teams

Glocal (2010)

Curator: Liane Davison

Artists: Sylvia Grace Borda, M. Simon Levin, Dennis Rosenfeld, Jer Thorp

Transience (2010)

Curator: Liane Davison

Artists: Flicker Art Media (Aleksandra Dulic and Kenneth Newby)

Fiction Façade (2011)

Curator: Liane Davison

Artists: Urban Visuals (Konstantinos Mavromichalis and Nathan Witford)

Electric Speed (2011)

Curators: Kate Armstrong, Malcolm Levy

Artists: Mouna Andraos, Melissa Mongiat, Jeremy Bailey, Will Gill, Jillian McDonald, Jon Sasaki

Taking Time (2012)

Curator: Alison Rajah

Artists: Julie Andreyev, Josh Hite, Mark Lewis, Gabriela Vanga and Mircea Cantor

Additional production assistance for Josh Hite's *Repeats and Attempts*: Mike Faux

Year of Gif (2013)

Curator: Alison Rajah

Artist: Paul Wong

Technical assistant: Patrick Daggitt

Trapez (2013)

Curator: Glenn Alteen

Artist: Josephin Böttger

Technical advisor: Patrick Daggit

Aerial Fields (2013)

Curators: Liane Davison, Alison Rajah

Artist: Sylvia Grace Borda

Production Team: Reiner Derdau, UAV flight operations | John Lynch, Google Street View photography | Roz McNulty, video editing

UAV Consultancy: Denis Bison | Peter Cox, Ministry of Transport Canada | Allison Dymond | Colin Laverty

Farms and Related Organizations: Adam Bongarzone & Samantha Lawler, Sundog Vegetables, Surrey, BC | Mike Bose & family, Bose Farm, Surrey, BC | Sarah Dent, Co-ordinator, Young Agrarians | Pat and Sue Harrison, Collishaw Historic Farm | Christine Koch, Director of the BCYFA | Peter Leblanc, President, Surrey Urban Famer's Market Association | Vernon Finley, Sue and Chris Klapwijk, Finley's Rhododendrons | Melissa Maltais, Market Manager, Surrey Urban Famer's Market Association | Cristina and Josef Molnar, Langley, BC | Ginny and Harold Fearing, Fearing's Farm - Species Rhododendron and Azalea Nursery, Abbotsford, BC | Ravi Bathe, R&R Farms Ltd., President of the BC Chicken Growers Association, and President of the BC Young Farmers Association | Mohinder Hansra, Hansra Farms, Pitt Meadows | Michael and Linda Steele, Clover Valley Organic Farm | Pam Tamis, Rondriso Farms, Surrey, BC | Ron Tamis, Vice President, Surrey Urban Market and Owner, Rondriso Farms, Surrey, BC | Nigel Van der Brink, Cedarbrink Dairy Ltd. | Doug Zaklan and Gemma McNeill, Zaklan Heritage Farm

Aerial Fields continued

International Support: Malcolm Dickson, Director, Street Level Photoworks Gallery, Glasgow, Scotland | J.Keith Donnelly | Dan Gilroy | Chris Hawkes | Dorothy Hunter | Sally Johnston and Staff, Starter for 6, Cultural Enterprise Office | Mima Sorocean, Lois Atelier & Centre for the International Book and Media Arts

Surrey Art Gallery gratefully acknowledges the financial support of the Province of BC through Creative BC and BC Arts Council.

Longing and Forgetting (2014)

Curator: Alison Rajah

Artists: Matt Gingold, Philippe Pasquier, Thecla Schiphorst

Associate Producer: Kristin Carlson

Set Design: Greg Snider

Lighting Design: Ben Rogalsky

Performers: Shannon Cuykendall, Matt Duncan, Sarah Fdili Alaouim, Meghan Goodman, Marcus Marshall, Joshua Ongcol, Priya Rajaratnam, Bladimir Santos Laffita, Nathalie Sanz, Cara Siu, Yawen Wang, Martin Wong.

The artists gratefully acknowledge the support of the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (Moving Stories and Mobile Presence), CANARIE (m+m: movement + meaning middleware), and the Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council.

The Space of Difference (2014)

Curator: Alison Rajah

Artists: Operative Agency (Bryan Lemos Beça and Steve DiPasquale, with assistance from Ritchie Argue, Shelly Long, Ryan Nelson)

Featuring: Barry Luger, Xwalacktun (Rick Harry), Chuck Bailey Recreation Centre Youth Park participants

Production: France Carriere, Brandon Flores, Bob McQuay, Rafael Santa Ana, Greg Zemrau

Locations: David Horn, David Jacobsen, Michelle Nelson

Research and support: Matt Elton, Thomas Heffernan, Moberley Luger, Kenneth Newby, Chris Rudden, Surrey Archives staff, Nathan Whitford, Joyce Wood, Laura Wood

Salmon People (2015)

Curator: Alison Rajah

Artists: Julie Andreyev, Simon Lysander Overstall

Cinematography: Paolo Pennutti, Elisa Ferrari, Jonathan Nunes

This project was made possible through the GRAND AD-NODE Project Fund, Emily Carr University of Art + Design.

1UP (2016)

Curator: Alison Rajah

Artist: Sonny Assu

Videographer: Mark Mushet

Recontres Imaginaires (2016)

Curator: Alison Rajah

Artists: Scenocosme (Anaïs met den Ancxt and Grégory Lasserre)

Production assistant: Christophe Thollet

Participants: Thomas Anfield, Charis Au, Karen Cancino, Elizabeth Carefoot, Clarissa Chupik, Amelia Davies, April Davies, Chris Dawson-Murphy, Amelia Epp, Rhys Edwards, Polly Faminow, Janis Foster, Polly Gibbons, Zoe Gibbons, Sean Kenny, Simran Kang, Anthony Mojuly, Ravneet Sandhu, Harry Singh, Amanda Thompson, Jennifer Uy, Tony Uy, Lyn Verra-Lay, Mandeep Wirk

Recontres Imaginaires continued

Surrey Art Gallery gratefully acknowledges Creative BC, the Province of BC through the BC Arts Council, and French Consulate Vancouver/Consulat général de France à Vancouver for their support of this project.

Marianne Nicolson: The Way in Which It Was Given To Us (2017)

Curator: Alison Rajah

Artist: Marianne Nicolson

Sound: Siku Allooloo

PHANTASMAGORIA: Alex McLeod (2018)

Curator: Rhys Edwards

Artist: Alex McLeod

Liquid Landscapes: Nicolas Sassoon (2019)

Curator: Rhys Edwards

Artist: Nicolas Sassoon

Audio responses: Yu Su (You're Me), J.S. Aurelius (Ascetic House), Jean Brazeau, Scott Woodworth, Baby Blue (s.M.i.L.e), Venetta (NuZi Collective), and x/o (Quantum Natives, Eternal Dragonz, s.M.i.L.e)

CharBagh: Faisal Anwar (2019)

Curator: Jordan Strom

Artist: Faisal Anwar

Participants: Elisabeth Schubach, Frank Delbaere, Fred Roessler, Elaine Raey, Brian Raey, John Cranswick, Chito Maravilla, Lisa Chen, Mandeep Wirk, Raouf Gomaa, Uma Sharda, Teresa Klein, Janette Maedel, Jasmeen Virk, Steve Webster, Heidi Greco

Community Art Screenings

Youth screenings (2012 – ongoing)

Part of the vision of the UrbanScreen venue was to engage youth who participate in recreation centre programs and use the youth park. Since 2012, the Surrey Art Gallery has partnered with Chuck Bailey Recreation Centre and Youth Park Coordinators Mike Faux, Erin Beynon and Mannie Deo, in conjunction with the Chuck Bailey Community Committee, to premier youth projects on UrbanScreen twice a year. As of 2016, partnerships have expanded to include the City of Surrey's Community Art Program and the Surrey Art Gallery's Art Together program. Mentoring artists have included Simranpreet Anand, Polly Gibbons, Cindy Mochizuki, Nicolas Sassoon, and Edward Westerhuis.

Dualities: Exploring the Hidden Narratives of Surrey (2015)

Artists: South of the Fraser Inter-Arts Collective artists (Charis Au, Roxanne Charles, A.S. Dhillon, Phinder Dulai, Polly Gibbons, TJ Grewal, Matt Smith, Edward Westerhuis, Sandra Wintner, Mandeep Wirk), Krishan Ajtony, Shafeena Ali, Davina Bains, Rosemary Burden, Geneva Charette, Wesley Chew, Isaac Crosley, Gary Dhanoa, Josh Dreger, Jackson Evans, Sydney Gorman, Robert Grant, Jacob Harris, Michael Hoven, Laila Khan, Steven Kobza, Ivan Krecic, Jordan Law, Emerson Marshall, Ben Marshall, Shakeel Patel, Sheral Prasad, Josiah Shew, Karandeep Singh, Alexander Suarez, Breanna Teichrib, Debbie Westergaard Tuepah, Jennifer Williams

Partners: South of the Fraser Inter-Arts Collective (SOFIA) with Surrey English Teachers' Association (SETA)

Artists and Contributors

Stories from Here: Divergent Voices Coming Together (2016)

Core Mentoring Artists: Sylvia Grace Borda, Leanne Johnson (Leannej) and Scot Keefer (My Name is Scot), Edward Westerhuis

Artists: Samah Bek, Sarah Bek, Malaz Mustafa, Sarah Mustafa, Tanvir Bhullar, Puneet Bhullar, Ravleen Brar, Rania Hasen, Kiranbir Sangha, Kamalpreet Kaur, Rawan Kawaiah, Noor Kawaiah, Gulkirat Kochar, Hannah Mirhashemi, Fatima Musa, Glady and Anjni Vij

Project Conception: Felix Kongyuy, Alison Rajah

Surrey Art Gallery Coordinators: Alison Rajah, Edward Westerhuis, Rhys Edwards

Baobab Coordinators: Samah Bek, Adelaide Kwabei, Felix Kongyuy, Maria Crisostomo, Emmanuel Shamatutu, Florence Etienne, Angela Gicho, Carol Magambo

Partners: Baobab Inclusive Empowerment Society, Surrey Art Gallery, Surrey Art Gallery Association, Chuck Bailey Recreation Centre, City of Surrey, Surrey Libraries, SFU Continuing Studies

Surrey Art Gallery gratefully acknowledges the production and presentation phases of this project were funded by the Vancouver Foundation, BC Arts Council's Youth Engagement Program, and Canada Council for the Arts' Artists and Community Collaboration Program.

Indigenous Contemporary Art Intensive (2018)

Mentors: Peter Morin, Marie Côté, and Ziya Tabassian (Land Songs, Water Songs / Chants de terre, Chants d'eau, Surrey Art Gallery); Ayumi Goto, Peter Morin, and Tarah Hogue (how do you carry the land, Vancouver Art Gallery); Joni Cheung (I know you are but what am I, Centre A); Brian McBay and Amy Nugent (221a); Denise Ryner and staff (Breaker of Horses and Crania, Or Gallery); Kimberly Phillips, Danielle Green, Emily Dundas Oke, Gabi Dao, and Melissa Woo ((untitled) a mountain bought but not yet named, Progression and Rhythms in Eight, my auntie bought all her skidoos with beading money, Contemporary Art Gallery); Bill Reid Gallery staff; Museum of Vancouver staff (Haida Now); Vancouver Mural Festival staff; Edward Westerhuis; Glen Chua; Jason Woolman (ćəsnaʔəm, the city before the city, Musqueam Cultural Centre); Debra Sparrow; Jill Baird, Pam Brown, and the Native Youth Program participants (Museum of Anthropology); leannej (Leanne Johnson) and My Name is Scot (Scot Keefer); Roxanne Charles and Debbie Westergaard Tuepah; Drew Atkins; Patrick Daggitt; Tawahum Justin Bige; Raymond Boisjoly; Jeska Slater; Nicolas Sassoon; and Surrey Art Gallery staff and community partners.

Artists: Alanna Edwards, Naomi Kennedy, Avishka Lakwijaya, Atheana Picha, Kelsey Sparrow

Project Conception: Roxanne Charles, Alison Rajah

Surrey Art Gallery gratefully acknowledges the funding support from the BC Arts Council, Heritage Canada, and the Vancouver Foundation.

Siku Allooloo is an Inuk/Haitian/Taíno writer, artist and community builder from Denendeh (NWT) and Pond Inlet, NU. She has been leading resurgence and decolonial projects since 2012 through both community/land-based work and Indigenous arts. Her creative non-fiction, poetry and other literary work have been featured in *Canadian Art*, *Briarpatch*, *The Malahat Review*, *The Guardian*, *The New Quarterly*, Nuit Blanche Toronto and *Surrey Art Gallery Presents*, as well as on display as part of HEXSA'AM: To Be Here Always (UBC Morris and Helen Belkin Gallery & Kamloops Art Gallery, 2019).

For over 30 years, curator, writer and Program Director of grunt gallery, **Glenn Alteen** has played a central role within the British Columbia and Canadian arts communities. Alteen has been active in creating sustainable administration practices through the purchase of a facility, the Blue Cabin Residency Program, and the creation of the grunt gallery Legacy Fund, an endowment held by the Vancouver Foundation. His writing on performance art was published in *Wordless* (grunt), *Unceded Territories: Lawrence Paul Yuxweluptun* (MOA), *Making Always War* (Stride Gallery), *Access All Area* (grunt), and *Caught in the Act* (YYZ Books). In 2018 Alteen received a Governor General's Award for Outstanding Achievement.

Julie Andreyev is an internationally recognized artist, activist, researcher and faculty at Emily Carr University of Art + Design. Her artwork *Animal Lover*, made with collaborative others, explores more-than-human ways of knowing to develop kinships with lifeforms and ecologies. Her artwork and research have been published in journals, magazines and books, and are supported by the Canada Council for the Arts and the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada. Andreyev enjoys walking with her canine collaborators, Tom and Sugi, paying attention to the liveliness of the local animals, trees and plants, and Earth forces.

Faisal Anwar is an artist, creative technologist, and interaction designer based in Toronto. Anwar has a keen interest in exploring sociopolitical spaces and patterns in ecologies that intrigue the mind through multilayered participatory experiences. His work is often interactive and uses public data and engagement to question how rights-of-access are blurring lines between private and public spaces. Anwar graduated from the Canadian Film Centre's Habitat-LAB Interactive Arts and Entertainment Program in 2004. He completed his Bachelors in Graphic Design from the National College of Arts in Pakistan 1996. His media installations have been exhibited across Canada and the world.

Kate Armstrong is a Vancouver-based artist and curator with 20 years of experience in the cultural sector with focus on intersections between art and technology. As a curator she has produced exhibitions, events and publications in art and technology internationally. Armstrong has written for P.S.1/MoMa, *Blackflash*, *Fillip*, *SubTerrain*, the *Kootenay School of Writing*, and recently contributed to *For Machine Use Only: Contemplations on algorithmic epistemology* (&&& c/o The New Centre for Research and Practice, 2016). Armstrong is the author of *Crisis & Repetition: Essays on Art and Culture* (Michigan State University Press, 2002) and edited *Ten Different Things* (2018), *Art and Disruption* (2015), and *Electric Speed* (2013). Other books include *Medium* (2011), *Source Material Everywhere* (2011), and *Path* (2012). Armstrong curated the 2011 UrbanScreen exhibition Electric Speed with Malcolm Levy.

Paula Blair is a researcher, writer and podcaster with interests in film and visual culture, particularly in ways that artists and filmmakers confront issues arising from conflict and slippages between different modes of image production. She is the creator and host of the Audiovisual Cultures podcast and the author of *Old Borders, New Technologies: Reframing Film and Visual Culture in Contemporary Northern Ireland* (Peter Lang, 2014). She holds a PhD in Film & Visual Studies from Queen's University Belfast where she also completed her MA and undergraduate degree. She is based in Newcastle upon Tyne, UK.

Sonny Assu is an interdisciplinary artist whose practice is informed by Kwakwaka'wakw and Western principles of artmaking. His work is often autobiographical, and explores his family's history as a way to shed light on Canada's treatment of the First Peoples. Assu received his BFA from Emily Carr University of Art + Design in 2002 and his MFA from Concordia University in 2017. His work has been accepted into the collections of the National Gallery of Canada, Seattle Art Museum, Vancouver Art Gallery, and the Art Gallery of Ontario. He currently resides in unceded Ligwiłda'xw territory (Campbell River, BC).

Jeremy Bailey is a Toronto-based self-proclaimed "Famous New Media Artist" and Head of Experience at FreshBooks. Bailey believes that technology done right empowers us all to be famous. Bailey is represented by Pari Nadimi Gallery in Toronto.

Sylvia Grace Borda received her MFA from the University of British Columbia and her BFA from Emily Carr University of Art + Design (ECUAD). She is internationally known for her pioneering photographic and video work, and for her writing. Recent awards include the Lumen Prize (2016) for web arts, an "EU *Frontiers in Retreat Arts*" Fellowship (2014-2017), and a residency with the City of Richmond Public Art Program (2018-19). She has been featured and reviewed in *Photomonitor* (UK), *photographies*, and *CBC Arts Canada*. Borda has held senior lecturing roles at the University of Salford-Manchester, Queen's University Belfast, and ECUAD.

Josephin Böttger is a video artist who lives and works in Hamburg, Germany. In her early career, she produced various short films such as experimental and drawn-animation works, shown at international film festivals. Since receiving her diploma at the University of Fine Arts of Hamburg 2002, she has worked on multi-channel video installations and single-channel videos, shown at international exhibitions and projections in public spaces. Her work examines the metamorphosis, chronology, and aesthetics of urban space.

Mircea Cantor makes work that centers around themes of cultural history, memory, and displacement, echoing his upbringing in Romania during its tumultuous transition from state socialism to liberal democracy. Cantor won the Marcel Duchamp Prize in 2011, awarded to a France-based artist considered to be at the vanguard of contemporary art practice. Cantor's work has been featured in solo shows at the Museum of the Moving Image, the Salzburger Kunstverein, the Musée Rodin, Kunsthaus Zürich, Modern Art Oxford, the Arnolfini in Bristol, the Camden Arts Centre in London, the Pompidou, and the Philadelphia Museum of Art, among others.

Daily tous les jours (**Mouna Adraos** and **Melissa Mongiat**) is an art and design studio that creates large-scale interactive installations driven by collective experiences. Daily uses technology and storytelling to explore collaboration, the future of cities and the power of humans. It is best known for its work in public spaces, where passing crowds are invited to play a role in the transformation of their environment and relationships. Daily's work has won numerous international recognitions including Best in Show at the IxDA Interaction Awards, the Grand Prize at the UNESCO Shenzhen Design Awards, and an Americans for the Arts Public Art Network Award.

Liane Davison served as the Curator of the Surrey Art Gallery from 1990-2008, and as its Director until 2018. During her tenure, she established multiple programs to support the production and presentation of digital art, including the TechLab in 1999, the UrbanScreen venue in 2010, and the Gallery's digital audio exhibition program in 2008. She has curated over 100 exhibitions on contemporary art practice, from digital media through to lawn ornaments. Her writing has been published in over 30 catalogues, and her work supporting digital art has been recognized internationally.

Aleksandra Dulic is a media artist, theorist, and filmmaker working at the intersections of interactive multimedia installation and live performance. She is also a researcher in cross-cultural media performance, interactive animation, and computational poetics. She has received a number of awards for her short animated films. Her artistic work across a range of media is widely presented in exhibitions, festivals, and television broadcasts across Europe, Asia, and North America. She teaches at the University of British Columbia, where she also directs the Centre for Culture and Technology—an interdisiplinary arts-research centre.

Alanna Edwards is an artist, curator, and educator of Mi'gmaq and settler descent. She has a BA in Political Science and Gender, Sexuality, and Women's Studies from Simon Fraser University, a Diploma in Fine Arts from Langara College, and a BFA from Kwantlen Polytechnic University. In 2019, she curated "Staring in Coast Salish" at Arbutus Gallery and "indigenous artists only" at Crescent Beach Pop-up Gallery, and has shown in group exhibitions at Dynamo Arts Association (2019), Centre A (2018), and Deer Lake Gallery (2018). Her work focuses on how Indigenous peoples and their work are viewed and consumed in art, politics, pop culture, and everyday life.

Rhys Edwards is a critic, artist, and curator. He has written for *Canadian Art*, *7x7*, *The Capilano Review* and *BC Studies*, along with multiple Vancouver-based art blogs. In 2014 he won the *C Magazine* New Critics prize. In 2015, he co-founded the Agent C Gallery with artist Debbie Tuepah in the Newton region of Surrey. As an Assistant Curator at the Surrey Art Gallery, he has developed several exhibitions, and contributed texts and design elements to many others. He also co-authored the City of Surrey's 2015 Surrey Operations and Civic Infrastructure Art Plan with artist Alan Storey, and has published several essays about the City of Surrey's Public Art collection.

Carol Gigliotti, PhD. is an author, artist, and scholar whose work focuses on the impact of new technologies on animals and their lives. She is Professor Emeritus of Design and Dynamic Media at Emily Carr University of Design, Vancouver, BC. Her newest work challenges the current assumptions of creativity offering a more comprehensive understanding through recognizing animal creativity, cognition, consciousness, and agency. She now lives in Eugene, Oregon. Her book *The Creative Lives of Animals* is forthcoming.

Will Gill earned a BFA From Mount Allison University in 1991. Gill has maintained a studio practice since graduation, evolving from solely sculptural exploration to a practice that encompasses painting, sculpture, photography and video work. He was named to the longlist of the Sobey Art Award in the 2004 and 2006 competitions. Recent career highlights include participation in Toronto's Nuit Blanche (2012), 55th Venice Biennale (2013), The Arctic Circle Artist Residency (2014), Scotiabank Contact Photography Festival in Toronto (2017), and the Bonavista Biennale (2017). His work is in many public, private, and corporate collections. He lives in St John's, Newfoundland.

Matthew Gingold is an audiovisual designer and electronic artist with over 15 years professional experience. His practice spans theatre, dance, museum, and gallery contexts. He is particularly interested in the social and cultural meanings that technology create in and of themselves—the visceral, social and political phenomena of technologies—and how these can be harnessed in the creation of unique, live(d) experience.

Sky Goodden is the founding publisher and editor of *Momus*, an international online art publication and podcast that stresses "a return to art criticism." Goodden writes for *Frieze*, *Art in America*, *Modern Painters*, and *C Magazine*, among others. She holds an MFA in Criticism & Curatorial Practice from OCAD University (2010), which presented her with an Alumni of Influence Award. Goodden is Artist-in-Residence at Concordia University (2018-19), and is based between Toronto and Montreal. In June 2019, she was given the J.E.H. MacDonald Award from the Arts & Letters Club of Toronto.

Josh Hite works with video, animation, sound, performance and photography, often creating reorganized archives of particular spaces, objects or behaviors. His practice leans towards an ethnography that acknowledges content and tactics for documentation as determinants of eventual form, rather than relying on art historical or cultural references as structural assistants. Hite also collaborates with Vancouver's theatre and dance communities, making projections for live performance. Hite has a BA in Philosophy, an MFA in Visual Art, and teaches with the University of British Columbia and Emily Carr University of Art + Design.

Robin Laurence is an independent writer, critic, and curator based in Vancouver. She is the visual arts critic for the *Georgia Straight* and a contributing editor for both *Canadian Art* and *Border Crossings* magazines. She has published essays in more than fifty books and exhibition catalogues, and has produced numerous reviews and feature articles for local, national, and international publications. She holds an MA in art history and a BFA in studio arts, and was educated at the University of Calgary, the University of Victoria, the Banff School of Fine Arts, and the Instituto Allende in San Miguel de Allende, Mexico.

M. Simon Levin is an artist, writer, and lecturer. He creates site-based systems that explore the aesthetics of engagement, using a variety of designed forms and tools that address our many publics. Recent projects include a user-generated 'sousveillance' system and a global contributive new media platform, both showcased for Vanvouver's 2010 Cultural Olympiad. He has been artist in residence for Emily Carr University of Art + Design (ECUAD), the Vancouver Parks Board, Surrey Art Gallery, the Vancouver Art Gallery (Public Programs), and at the International Art Space, Kelleberrin, Australia. He has taught with Vermont College, the University of British Columbia and ECUAD.

Malcolm Levy is an artist and curator. He was the Director of the New Forms Festival from 2001 to 2018, and the Curator of CODE Live, the Digital Festival during the 2010 Olympics Games. He was the co-Artistic Director for the International Symposium of Electronic Art in 2015. Levy completed an MA in Media Studies at the New School of Media Studies, and teaches at the Centre for Digital Media. His artistic practice focuses on abstract photography, video and contemporary image-making. He has shown his work internationally, most recently as the Artist in Residence at Summit on Powder Mountain in Spring 2016.

Mark Lewis is renowned for his investigation of the cinematic image and its representation of modernity. In his films, he investigates the construction, language and effect of the cinematic image, working within a parameters specific to filmmaking. Lewis trained at Harrow College of Art and the Polytechnic of Central London. He worked in Vancouver and Toronto before moving to the UK, where he produces his films, and is Professor of Fine Art at Central St. Martins College of Art and Design. He is co-founder and co-editor of *Afterall: A Journal of Art*, *Context and Enquiry* and editor of *Afterall Books*.

Joni Low is a curator and writer in Vancouver. Her curatorial projects include What Are Our Supports?, a series of artists' interventions in public space (2018: Cathedral Square Park), Hank Bull: Connexion (2015–2017: Canadian tour), and the symposium Underground in the Aether (2017: VIVO). As the 2017 Or Gallery curator-in-residence she organized the exhibitions Afterlives: Germaine Koh and Aron Louis Cohen, Charles Campbell's Actor Boy: Travels in Birdsong, and Chloë Lum & Yannick Desranleau's 5 Tableaux (It Bounces Back). Her essays appear in catalogues and publications including *Canadian Art*, *C Magazine*, *The Capilano Review* and *Yishu: Journal of Contemporary Chinese Art*.

Donato Mancini makes visual and procedural poetry, bookworks and visual art. His books and chapbooks include: *Snowline* (2015), *Loitersack* (2014), *Buffet World* (2011) *Fact 'N' Value* (2011), *Hell Passport no.22* (2008), *Æthel* (2007), *58 Free Coffees* (2006) and *Ligatures* (2005). Notable exhibitions of his visual artworks have included exhibitions through Artspeak, VIVO Media Arts, Western Front, Gallery Atsui, Malaspina Printmaker's Society, Open Space (Victoria), Plaza Projects, Duplex and CSA. *Same Diff*, his most recent book, was a finalist for the 2018 Griffin Prize. Having spent much of his life in Vancouver, Mancini is currently a post-doctoral fellow in the Department of English at Johns Hopkins University, in Baltimore MD.

Laura U. Marks works on media art and philosophy with an intercultural focus. She programs experimental media art for venues around the world. Dr. Marks' most recent books are *Hanan al-Cinema: Affections for the Moving Image* (MIT, 2015) and *Enfoldment and Infinity: An Islamic Genealogy of New Media Art* (MIT, 2010). With Dr. Azadeh Emadi she is a founding member of the Substantial Motion Research network, substantialmotion.org. Dr. Marks is Grant Strate Professor in the School for the Contemporary Arts at Simon Fraser University in Vancouver.

Lisa Marshall is a writer, artist, and graphic designer. She has collaborated with Surrey Art Gallery on numerous design projects and co-edited *In the Wake of the Komagata Maru: Transpacific Migration, Race and Contemporary Art* with Jordan Strom, co-published by On Main, Kwantlen University, and Surrey Art Gallery. Her writing has been published by *Artspeak, Canadian Art*, and *Fillip*, among others. She is a graduate of Emily Carr Institute of Art + Design and earned her Master's Degree in Art History from the University of British Columbia in 2008. Her book *Uncertain Futures Concatenation Machine* is forthcoming.

Heidi May is an interdisciplinary artist, researcher, and educator who currently manages curriculum development in the Faculty of Arts at the University of British Columbia, Vancouver. Her work often considers the overlaps between contemporary art practices and discussions of pedagogy, particularly those that encourage collaborative processes leading to emergent and ongoing learning. She was Assistant Professor of Art at Columbus State University (2012-16) and a Sessional Instructor in both studio art, primarily at Emily Carr University of Art & Design and Langara College (2001-11), and education at University of British Columbia (2010-11). She has an MFA in Visual Art and a PhD in Curriculum Studies.

Konstantinos Mavromichalis is an award-winning designer whose work explores how light can be used to manifest information in built form, architecture, and public spaces. His recent works utilise light and digital media to create permanent, interior, and street-scale responsive environments that explore ways in which human activity and emotion can be echoed by the built environment. Highlights include public art commissions, the MAI Media Architecture Award 2016, Vivid Sydney Arup No8 commission 2015, Miami Art Basel 2007, and the 2004 Emmys. His works have appeared at The Getty Museum, Sci-Arc Los Angeles, and Art in General New York.

Jillian McDonald is a Canadian artist who lives in Brooklyn and is frequently in residence across the global north. Her art has been exhibited widely across North America and beyond. A 2013 feature length radio documentary by Paul Kennedy on CBC's *IDEAS* profiled her work, which has also been reviewed in *The New York Times*, *Art Papers*, *The Globe and Mail*, *The Toronto Star*, *Border Crossings*, and *Canadian Art*. Critical discussion appears in books including *The Transatlantic Zombie* (2015) by Sarah Juliet Lauro and *Deconstructing Brad Pitt* (2014), edited by Christopher Schaberg.

Alex McLeod is a Toronto-based visual artist who creates work about interconnection, life's cycles, and empathy through the computer as medium. Prints, animations, and sculptures function as gateways into alternative dimensions, oscillating between the real and the imagined. McLeod holds a BFA from the Ontario College of Art and Design, and a Masters in Digital Media from the Yeates School of Graduate Studies at Ryerson University, Toronto. He has exhibited extensively at the provincial, national and international levels. His work is held in private and public collections including the Whitney Museum of American Art and the Museum of Contemporary Art.

Christopher Moreno (CPA-CMA, M.A.) has designed some of Canada's largest audio-visual systems for public art. His desire to give artists a unique canvas is matched only by his passion for creative and interactive technology. With his technical teams, Moreno has collaborated with the Surrey Art Gallery and artists at UrbanScreen from its initial concept through multiple upgrades, and has been intimately involved in the installation of every single art exhibit.

Kenneth Newby is a composer and media artist whose practice explores the use of computation to create music, media performances, installations, and experiences rich in aural, visual and cultural nuance. His work—premised on encoded artistic practices and the design of computational technologies as agents for intelligence amplification and design-space exploration—derives from the evolution of computer-assisted composition systems for music and animation. The musical outcomes of this work can be heard on the three volumes of his Emergence Trilogy. Newby resides at Frog Hollow on Mayne Island, BC where he is director of the Flicker Art Collaboratory (formerly Flicker Art Media).

Marianne Nicolson ('Tayagila'ogwa) is an artist of Scottish and Dzawada̱'enux̱w First Nations descent. Her training encompasses both traditional Kwakwa̱ka̱'wakw forms and culture and Western European-based art practice. She has a BFA from Emily Carr University of Art + Design (1996), and a Masters in Fine Arts (1999), a Masters in Linguistics and Anthropology (2005), and a PhD in Linguistics and Anthropology (2013) from the University of Victoria. She has exhibited her work and presented her research widely. Her practice engages with issues of Aboriginal histories and politics arising from a passionate involvement in cultural revitalization and sustainability.

Operative Agency (OA) is a spatial-political research think-tank based in Vancouver. With a critical disposition towards art and design, OA seeks to enhance public engagement with the built environment, excavating and teasing out new opportunities for interaction, play, and civic awareness. Central to this goal for OA is an understanding that the politics of the public realm are an embodied, lived experience, with critical design freeing the latent potential of the urban commons.

Simon Lysander Overstall is a media artist and composer from Vancouver. He develops works with generative, interactive, or performative elements. He is interested in computational creativity in music, immersive media environments, and biologically and ecologically inspired art. He has produced custom performance systems and interactive art installations that have been shown in Canada, the US, Europe, and China. He has an MA in Sound in New Media at Aalto University in Helsinki, a BFA in Music Composition from the School for Contemporary Arts at Simon Fraser University, and an Associate in Music (Jazz) Diploma from Vancouver Island University.

Philippe Pasquier researches creative processes and generative systems. He is a scientist with a specialization in artificial intelligence, a multidisciplinary artist, an educator, and a community builder. His contributions range from theoretical research in multi-agent systems, computational creativity, creative AI and machine learning, to applied artistic research and practice in digital art, computer music, and generative art. His artistic work has been shown at Ars Electronica, Centre Pompidou, ISEA, Mutek festival, and ZKM. Pasquier is an associate professor in the School for Interactive Arts and Technology, and is an adjunct professor in Cognitive Science at Simon Fraser University.

Cindy Poremba is a digital media researcher, gamemaker and curator. She is an Assistant Professor (Digital Entertainment) at OCAD University (Toronto, CA) and Co-Director of OCAD's game:play Lab. Dr. Poremba has written and presented internationally at conferences, festivals and invited lectures, on topics relating to game art and curation, capture in postmedia practices, and interactive documentary. Her award-winning game and "New Arcade" work as a member of the kokoromi experimental videogame collective has been featured in both international game and digital art exhibitions.

Alison Rajah was appointed Surrey Art Gallery's Director in 2019. Rajah has been a member of the Gallery's staff since 2009 and has contributed to all areas of its operations, including as Curator of Education and Engagement. Her curatorial leadership with digital art exhibitions and programs at UrbanScreen, and in the Gallery's Indigenous contemporary art education programming, has been recognized nationally. She studied in the Critical and Curatorial Studies graduate program at the University of British Columbia, is completing a graduate degree in Museum Education at UBC, and has taught in UBC's Faculty of Arts Humanities 101 program since 2008.

Dennis Rosenfeld is a Canadian artist and technology specialist currently living in San Francisco. His work spans a range of media including installation, sculpture, photography, painting, video, electronics, and software. He holds a master's degree from UCLA's Design/Media Arts program and has been involved in new media projects across the USA and Canada including Counterpath Gallery, Zero1 Biennial, UCLA New Wight Gallery, CAM Raleigh, Surrey Art Gallery, Vancouver Art Gallery and the Vancouver 2010 Cultural Olympiad. Much of his work focuses on the social and cultural effects of technology, precarity, global mobility, and life in the 21st century.

Jon Sasaki is a Toronto-based multidisciplinary artist whose practice brings performance, video, object, and installation into a framework where expectation and outcome rarely align. Charting territory between logic and absurdity, his work often stages inefficiencies or impossible tasks as prompts for ad hoc problem-solving, playing out in thought experiments that strive to find useful models. His work has been exhibited in solo exhibitions at the Richmond Art Gallery, the Ottawa Art Gallery, the Southern Alberta Art Gallery, and the Art Gallery of Ontario. Sasaki holds a BFA from Mount Allison University, and is represented by Clint Roenisch Gallery in Toronto.

Nicolas Sassoon employs early computer imaging techniques to render a wide array of forms and figures, encoded visually using pixelated patterns and animation. His work explores the contemplative, fantastical, and projective dimensions of screen-based space, and how the digital image can express dimensions of the physical realm. His practice translates ideas of materiality and immateriality into digital animations, installations, prints, and sculptures. Sassoon is a founder of the W-A-L-L-P-A-P-E-R-S and SIGNALS collectives, and is currently based in Vancouver. His work has been exhibited at galleries and festivals across the globe.

For **Scenocosme** (**Grégory Lasserre** and **Anaïs met den Ancxt**), interaction in their artworks emerges from multiple kinds of expression. They design interactive artworks in which spectators share extraordinary sensory experiences. Their artworks have been exhibited in museums, contemporary art centres, and digital art festivals across the world, including the ZKM Karlsruhe Centre for Art and Media (Germany), the Daejeon Museum of Art (Korea), the Art Gallery of Nova Scotia (Canada), NCCA (Moscow), Art Center Nabi/ INDAF (Seoul), BIACS3/Biennial International of Contemporary Art of Seville (Spain), Biennial Experimenta (Australia), and the National Art Museum of China (Beijing), among others.

Thecla Schiphorst has an Interdisciplinary MA in Dance and Computing Science from Simon Fraser University (1993), and a PhD (2008) from the School of Computing at the University of Plymouth. Her background in dance and computing form the basis for her research in embodied interaction, focusing on movement, knowledge representation, tangible and wearable technologies, media and digital art, and the aesthetics of interaction. She applies body-based somatic models to technology design processes within a Human-Computer Interaction context. Her research goal is to expand the practical application of embodied theory within technology design.

Jordan Strom is Curator of Exhibitions and Collections at the Surrey Art Gallery and a PhD student in Interdisciplinary Studies at Simon Fraser University. In addition to the over 45 exhibitions that he has organized in Surrey since 2009, Strom has also curated exhibitions for the Vancouver Art Gallery, Kamloops Art Gallery, Presentation House Gallery, Republic Gallery among others. Recent exhibitions include Land Songs, Water Songs: Chants de terre, chants d'eau (2018), Flow: From the Movement of People to the Circulation of Information (2018), Ground Signals (2017) co-curated with Roxanne Charles, and Nep Sidhu: Shadows in the Major Seventh (2016). From 2004 to 2008, Jordan was co-editor of *Fillip* magazine, an international journal of art writing.

prOphecy sun is an interdisciplinary performance artist, movement, video and sound maker, mother and Ph.D. Candidate at Simon Fraser University. She holds a BFA and MFA from Emily Carr University of Art + Design. Her practice celebrates both conscious and unconscious moments and the vulnerable spaces of the in-between in which art and life overlap. She performs and exhibits regularly in local, national and international settings, festivals, conferences and galleries. She is also the recent recipient of the Governor Generals Gold Award, the Lakehead Jurors Prize, the Hellen Pitt and Joseph Armand Bombardier Canada Graduate Scholarship, and has authored several peer-reviewed articles, book chapters, and journal publications.

Jer Thorp is an artist, writer, and teacher living in New York City. A former geneticist, his digital art practice explores the many-folded boundaries between science and art. Thorp is one of the world's foremost data artists and is a leading voice for the ethical use of big data. His award-winning work has been shown around the world and the web. He is best known for designing the algorithm to place the nearly 3,000 names on the 9/11 Memorial in Manhattan. Thorp is an adjunct professor in New York University's renowned Interactive Telecommunications Program.

Gabriela Vanga is a Romanian postwar and contemporary artist. Her work has been featured in several exhibitions at key galleries and museums, including the Dvir Gallery, Tel Aviv and the Galeria Plan B, Berlin. Vanga has been featured in articles on *e-flux* and *Saatchi Online*. She is the co-editor of *VERSION* artist-run magazine. Her education includes Le Pavillon / Palais de Tokyo, laboratoire de création, Paris (2002-2003); École des Beaux Arts, Nantes (2001-2002); and the University of Art and Design, Cluj Napoca, Romania (1997-2001).

Ellyn Walker is a visual culture scholar and contemporary arts curator based in Toronto. Her work explores the politics of cultural production, representation and inclusion in the arts and visual culture. Ellyn's writing has been widely published, such as within the *Journal of Curatorial Studies*; *Public Journal: Art, Culture, Ideas*; *Prefix Photo Magazine*; and *Inuit Art Quarterly*. She has contributed to the recent anthologies *Desire Change: Contemporary Feminist Art in Canada* (MAWA & McGill-Queen's University Press, 2017) and *Sonny Assu: A Selective History* (Heritage House, 2018). Ellyn is currently a PhD candidate in the Cultural Studies program at Queen's University.

Nathan Whitford is an award-winning artist, lighting designer, and co-founder of visual design firm Urban Visuals. He has created exhibits for science museums, designed and installed nightclub interiors, and developed innovative projects in experiential art and design for clients around the world. Much of his work explores how light, in its many forms, can be used to alter our perceptions and experiences. He often examines the relationship between the city and nature, using both light and shape to highlight the rhythms that occur in each.

Governor General award-winner **Paul Wong** is an artist and curator. He is recognized for pioneering early video art in Canada, founding several artist-run groups, leading public arts policy, and organizing events, conferences, and public interventions since the 1970s. In 2016, he received the Audain Prize for Lifetime Achievement in Visual Arts. His works in public collections include the National Gallery of Canada, the Museum of Modern Art, and the Vancouver Art Gallery, among others. Public art commissions have included the 2010 Vancouver Winter Olympics, and most recently, Five Octave Range, commissioned for the inaugural Vancouver Opera Festival in May 2017.

Acknowledgements

UrbanScreen was imagined by artists and built by the City of Surrey, but there are many more individuals and organizations which have made it a functioning reality for the past decade.

The opportunity to build an urban screen site came at a time when Surrey offered to be a venue city for the 2010 Olympics. Surrey proposed to expedite construction of a building that would serve as a volunteer resource centre and would reopen as the Chuck Bailey Recreation Centre (named after a much beloved coach of the Walley Little League Baseball team). One of the fastest methods of building construction is tilt-up slab concrete. Anticipating this would provide an enormous surface that would serve as a projection screen, the Gallery mobilized a proposal through the City's public art program: to support the investment of the building's public art budget into creating a venue that would have continually changing artworks. The architect of the building, Michael McNaught, collaborated on the idea, and recommended the projector's support structure be designed to blend in with the poles for the parking lot lights.

Christopher Moreno was brought into the project in 2009 to design and install the technical architecture of the projection system, first as a single projector, and then to twin projectors once additional funds were raised by the Surrey Art Gallery. Funding came from a grant sourced through the Vancouver Olympic funds, the Provincial Government through the Arts Council of British Columbia, the Department of Canadian Heritage, and the Surrey Art Gallery Association. Moreno has played a key role throughout the lifespan of the UrbanScreen venue, troubleshooting and supporting artists with their artwork installation. He was instrumental in 2015, when the equipment and its support technology was completely replaced and enhanced, including the introduction of a touch screen kiosk. This version of the UrbanScreen system was funded by matching funds from the City of Surrey and a grant from the Department of Canadian Heritage through the Canada Cultural Spaces Fund.

From its inception, artists have been central to envisioning and advising on the technology and programming of UrbanScreen. The Gallery convened an advisory committee and recruited stakeholders in digital technology, including faculty from Emily Carr University + Design, Simon Fraser University's School of Interactive Art and Technology, Kwantlen Polytechnic University, the University of British Columbia, and the Surrey School District. Additional support came from industry representatives and staff from the City of Surrey's Information Technology Department, including Don Kidd, who originally worked for the Surrey Art Gallery as its preparator and helped set up the original TechLab. The Gallery wishes to acknowledge members of the advisory committee over the past 10 years, including: Jim Adams, Elizabeth Anderson, Julie Andreyev, Kate Armstrong, Tracy Attieh, Erin Beynon, Jim Bizzocchi, Sylvia Grace Borda, Fiona Bowie, Tina Chahal, Barbara Cole, Mannie Deo, Heather Dunn, Mike Faux, Lorenz von Fersen, Polly Gibbons, Colin Griffiths, Peter Hohmann, Don Kidd, Vanessa Kwan, Maria Lantin, Gemma Lazarich, Malcolm Levy, Jannette Maedel, Paulo Majano, Scott McBride, Deborah Meyers, Christopher Moreno, Kenneth Newby, Steve Olderidge, Philippe Pasquier, Leonard Paul, Eileen Ryan, Thecla Schiphorst, Shaun Scott, Pierre Stolte, Brian Tattam, Baljit Thind, and Dominique Wakeland.

UrbanScreen continues to operate with funding support from the City of Surrey public art program, BC Arts Council, Canada Council for the Arts, and the Surrey Art Gallery Association.

We acknowledge the invaluable contributions of former and current staff of the Surrey Art Gallery to UrbanScreen over the years as well, including Liane Davison, Alison Rajah, Jordan Strom, Rhys Edwards, Christopher Dean, Scot Keefer, Suvi Bains, Claire Chupik, Charlene Back, Coriana Constanda, Chris Dawson-Murphy, Lindsay McArthur, Cecily Nicholson, Sophie Vandenbiggelaar, Simranpreet Anand, Alanna Edwards, Naomi Kennedy, Avishka Lakiwijaya, Atheana Picha, Kelsey Sparrow, Edward Westerhuis, and Charis Au.

We also acknowledge that our building is situated on the unceded traditional lands of the Salish Peoples, including the q̓ic̓əy̓ (Katzie), q̓ʷɑ:n̓ƛ̓ən̓ (Kwantlen), and Semiahma (Semiahmoo) nations.

Conferences and Awards

Surrey Art Gallery staff with exhibiting artists have been invited to share the UrbanScreen as a model at the following regional, national, and international conferences: ACM CHI Conference on Human Factors in Computing Systems (May 7, 2011), Creative City Network of Canada Summit (May 29, 2013), Public Art Network's Northwest Public Art Consortium (Fall 2013), 21st International Symposium on Electronic Art (August 19, 2015), Creative City Network of Canada Summit (October 29, 2015), British Columbia Recreation and Parks Association Symposium (April 27, 2016), Placemaking Leadership Forum (September 14, 2016), Lower Mainland Museum Educators Conference (January 9, 2017), and Ideas Digital Forum; Art Now + Art Next (October 12-13, 2018).

Surrey Art Gallery is especially honoured to be recognized by the Canadian Museums Association for excellence in our work as it relates to the UrbanScreen for new media and Indigenous contemporary art education, as well as the British Columbian Museums Association for community engagement.

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Art after Dark: 10 Years of UrbanScreen is a survey of one of Canada's leading venues for the outdoor display of projected new media art. The largest site of its kind in the country, UrbanScreen is internationally recognized for its award-winning program of site-specific, multimedia artworks that bring together community, commuters, and critics in conversation. UrbanScreen has provided a space for established and emerging digital artists to develop thought-provoking projects that actively engage with the world around us. This publication compiles insightful essays by scholars, artists, critics, curators, and poets on the subject of every exhibition to have been displayed at UrbanScreen over the past decade, and includes a lengthy introduction to the site's history by prominent art critic Robin Laurence as well as high resolution documentation of UrbanScreen itself. It is an invaluable resource for anyone interested in the fields of new media and visual culture.

surrey
art gallery

Featuring works by:

Julie Andreyev

Faisal Anwar

Sonny Assu

Jeremy Bailey

Sylvia Grace Borda

Josephin Böttger

Mircea Cantor

Daily tous les jours

Aleksandra Dulic

Will Gill

Matthew Gingold

Josh Hite

M. Simon Levin

Mark Lewis

Jillian McDonald

Alex McLeod

Kenneth Newby

Marianne Nicolson

Operative Agency

Simon Lysander Overstall

Philippe Pasquier

Dennis Rosenfeld

Jon Sasaki

Nicolas Sassoon

Scenocosme

Thecla Schiphorst

Jer Thorp

Gabriela Vanga

Urban Visuals

Paul Wong