

Kids these days

Jo-Anne Balcaen

Sarah Febbraro

Kerri Flannigan

Emmanuelle Léonard

Kyla Mallett

Helen Reed

Guillaume Simoneau

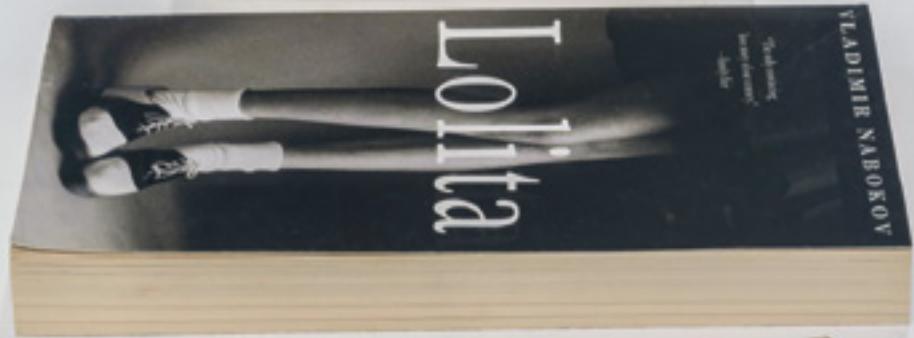
Althea Thauberger

msvu art gallery

Kids these days



Small informational cards or labels placed on the table to the right of the books.



Kids these days

Essay by Zoë Chan

MSVU Art Gallery, Halifax, Canada

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Foreword

This catalogue represents a greatly expanded version of the bilingual folder-catalogue published by the Foreman Art Gallery of Bishop's University, where *Kids these days* was initially presented in 2014. The current format allows greater scope for the substantial research completed by the curator, Zoë Chan. It offers fuller documentation of the artists' works and didactic components of the exhibition, such as questionnaires completed by the artists and a list of the exhibited twentieth-century books that helped to form the discursive field of 'youth studies' as we know it today.

Kids these days includes works in graphic media, photography and video by young artists, predominantly women, from various Canadian cities. Only one of the artists, Kyla Mallett, has previously exhibited at msvu Art Gallery. The seven artists making their debut in our program are Jo-Anne Balcaen, Sarah Febbraro, Kerri Flannigan, Emmanuelle Léonard, Helen Reed, Guillaume Simoneau, and Althea Thauberger. In their documentation of adolescents, youth scenes and subcultures, the artists borrow techniques from the disciplines of anthropology, sociology, ethnography, and documentary cinema. Inevitably, the artists tend to affiliate themselves with the values typically associated with adolescence, such as idealism, freedom, escape, authenticity, creativity and rebellion.

Further aspects of the exhibition's format highlight existing discourse around youth. Each work of art is exhibited alongside a questionnaire filled out by the artist explaining why he or she is interested in this subject matter, preferred strategies for representing youthful subjects, her related experiences as a young person and what youth signifies to her in general. Visitors to the exhibition are also encouraged to reflect actively on youth by responding to the question "What comes to mind when you think of youth?" and pinning their answers to a board provided for the purpose. The exhibition includes tables displaying influential coming-of-age novels and other books on youth, providing context for the contemporary categorization of adolescents as 'youth.'

The exhibition is relevant to msvu Art Gallery's mandate in several ways. Our emphasis on women as cultural subjects and producers has expanded to include girlhood, as a reflection of the University's faculty expertise and academic programs in this area. Past Canadian exhibitions on the topic of youth have often centred on depictions of young masculinity in the work of artists such as Steven Shearer or Jason Fitzpatrick. *Kids these days* privileges the presentation of issues and experiences of interest to girls and young women, reinforcing themes treated in previous msvu Art Gallery exhibitions of works by Kyla Mallett (*Marginalia*, 2008), Marnina and Noam Gonick (*Voices in Longitude and Latitude*, 2014) and Bridget Moser (*Is this Thing On?*, 2015).

For her cooperation with the remounting of *Kids these days*, I thank the Director/ Curator of the Foreman Art Gallery, Gentiane Bélanger. And, for his work in granting the exhibition a weightier documentary legacy, I am grateful to our graphic designer, Robert Tombs.

It has been an honour and pleasure to work with the independent curator Zoë Chan on this well-conceived and carefully realized project. I also appreciate the cooperation of the artists in making available their imaginative and empathetic works responding to the cultural practices of Canadian teenagers. The Art Gallery is also grateful to the following private lenders: Howard and Coleen Nemtin; Torys LLP, Toronto; and Susan Hobbs Gallery, Toronto.

Finally, financial support from the Canada Council for the Arts and Arts Nova Scotia has been indispensable in the preparation of this publication.

Ingrid Jenkner

Director

msvu Art Gallery

Acknowledgements

I am very grateful to Ingrid Jenkner for the opportunity to remount *Kids these days* at the msvu Art Gallery and for all her hard work in bringing this publication to fruition. Of course the exhibition and publication would not have been possible without the thoughtful and inspiring contributions of the artists.

Huge thanks to Antonio Loro and Ingrid Jenkner for their valuable feedback on my essay. I thank the Foreman Art Gallery of Bishop's University, in particular former directors Vicky Chainey Gagnon and Karine Di Genova, for their support in first presenting this exhibition. Finally, I would like to acknowledge the Canada Council for the Arts for funding the research behind this project.

Zoë Chan

Curator

Kids these days

Kids these days¹

Youth Studies 101

With its underlying links to idealistic notions of progress and utopia, youth may be the ultimate Modernist project: youth as *tabula rasa*, 'father to the man', the promise for the future, the foundation of a nation, the hope of a generation, and so on. At the same time, young people are often viewed as not yet fully socialized, but still ineluctably ruled by their hormones and emotions, and therefore unable to control their behaviour or properly take care of themselves. For these reasons it is commonly, if not unanimously, deemed important in Western culture not only to educate and cultivate youth, but also to protect them from themselves as well as others. During a prolonged period after childhood, young people are typically expected to explore and experiment with their identities in preparation for adulthood, within the formative and protective structures of family and school. Though this conception of youth is widely regarded as axiomatic today, it is a relatively recent one.

Many still-pervasive ideas about youth grew out of psychology, anthropology, and sociology, fields that became influential in the twentieth century. Within the social sciences, young people became a category to be studied, understood, and conceptualized. G. Stanley Hall's *Adolescence: its psychology and its relation to physiology, anthropology, sociology, sex, crime, religion and education* (1904) introduced the influential notion of adolescence as an inevitable period of 'storm and stress'. According to this perspective, youth is the pre-socialized, 'wild' precursor to the 'civilization' of adulthood. Margaret Mead refuted Hall's essentializing portrayal of youth as universally tumultuous in *Coming of Age in Samoa: a psychological study of primitive youth for Western civilisation* (1928). Mead argued that young people in non-industrialised societies serenely underwent specific rites of passage that marked their entry into adulthood. Though Mead's study is criticized for glossing over existing intergenerational conflict and for romanticizing so-called 'primitive' peoples, her argument that the supposed turmoil experienced by youth in North America was in fact due to *social* rather than innate factors—namely, that industrialised societies no longer had collectively agreed-upon rituals marking the passage from childhood to adulthood—remains an important one. Erik H. Erikson contended in *Identity: Youth and Crisis* (1968) that youth was marked by a search for authentic personal identity. According to Erikson, it was important that parental and societal structures provided a sympathetic and unrestrictive context for these explorations in order for young people to avoid lasting identity confusion. In his writings on the psychology of the child around the same time, Jean Piaget described adolescence as a necessary cognitive stage in which the capacity for abstract thought is developed—in particular, the ability to consider a reality removed from one's immediate and concrete present—which produces a capacity to consider the future, hypothetical situations, and oneself in relation to others. In the wake of such studies, the notion of youth has become tenaciously linked to conflict, authenticity, personal exploration, and idealism within the collective imagination. These perspectives

on youth would eventually shape ideas around the needs of young people, and consequently influence the legal, social, and institutional structures that were put into place for them, one of the most influential being school.²

Back to school

Before the twentieth century, Western conceptions of youth were very different. Young people were generally expected to become independent much earlier in life: working class and rural young people, in particular, were normally expected to work and start a family as soon as they were physically capable. If lucky, they may have learned to read and write in a classroom filled with students of varying ages, while those from the upper classes may have studied with a private tutor at home. However, with the rise of industrialization and urbanization, education became the responsibility of the state. Child protection laws meant that children and young people could no longer be exploited for their labour potential; instead, they would be schooled. By the 1950s, thanks to the flourishing economy of the post-wwii era, education for youth had become an institutionalized norm. The acceptance of the idea of compulsory education—that “all young people, regardless of their class, location, or ethnicity should have essentially the same experience, spent with people exactly their age”³—marked a radical societal shift.⁴ Today, the education of the young is an uncontested legal right. The impacts of this are profound: as one cultural scholar argues, “Education in late modern society is the singular most important social institution shaping children and young people’s everyday lives and identities...”⁵

Compulsory education meant that fewer young people were working; rather, they were exercising their minds and bodies through a range of educational activities—in the form of afterschool programs, hobbies, clubs, sports, etc.—considered beneficial to their overall development. Recreation, pastimes, and socializing also became more important for young people as their spare time expanded. The age-based segregation of the school system also meant that teenagers were spending more time with those their own age. As sociologist James Coleman points out in his book *The Adolescent Society* (1961), age-based schooling created the modern-day category of teenagers whose primary influential relationships were no longer with their elders but with their peers. Moreover, with the economic prosperity since wwii, young people were targeted as potential consumers and now had the means to buy the commodities being produced for their consumption—clothing, makeup, magazines, movies, and music. These factors contributed to the rise of pursuits, styles, and ways of speaking associated with and considered specific to youth.

In his book *The Forest of Symbols* (1967), the anthropologist Victor Turner speaks of the “liminality” associated with adolescence, describing its position between childhood and adulthood as “some in-between and nebulous social space whose rules were unclear and status uncertain.”⁶ The pedagogical framework of high school⁷ can be seen as containing and constraining this temporary liminality, with the dual objectives of protecting youth and protecting society from youth. At the same time, high school provided a physical space that permitted the development of a kind of separate world with its own internal rules, structures, hierarchy, modes of communication, and dress. *As young people were being schooled and socialized in*

preparation for adulthood, at the same time, they were schooling and socializing each other in how to be young. This official separation of young people from the responsibilities of work or family that typically come with adulthood paradoxically made them into a kind of 'marginalized' group within society. This sanctioned marginalization was in turn actively embodied by young people themselves as they participated in and contributed to various youth-centred groups and activities—whether these were directly affiliated with school or not. This would lead to the emergence of specific youth-affiliated identities, cultures, and scenes in or outside the school system as a lasting ramification of compulsory, age-segregated education for young people. In this way, what we consider iterations of youth culture and identity are largely contingent "on young people's isolation from the adult world."⁸

Youth documents

An interest in youth and youth culture is articulated, affirmed, and consolidated across a wide range of cultural fields including literature, film, television, advertising, music, and contemporary art, that goes well beyond the influential domains of the social sciences and education. It is interesting to note, however, that in their examinations of various youth-affiliated identities and activities, the artists participating in the exhibition *Kids these days* employ methodological strategies that evoke those used in the fields of psychology, anthropology, and sociology. These approaches may be understood as suggestive of the enduring impact of these disciplines on current perceptions of youth. In these youth-focused artworks, artists closely observe their young subjects or investigate existing ephemera as archival traces of youth subjectivities within the North American context. They display an interest in documenting young people—their bodies, expressions, and movements, as well as their tastes, thoughts, clothing styles, methods of communication, and leisure activities. As *Kids these days* presents works made in the 2000s up to the present,⁹ it perhaps inevitably reflects a range of existing communication media. This period is particularly interesting as it encompassed major shifts—namely the widespread use of the Internet and the emergence of social media. While these socio-technological phenomena are not a key focus for *Kids these days*, the exhibition does loosely track various types of expression popular with youth, ranging from note-writing to uploading self-made videos to YouTube.

It should be noted that *Kids these days* concentrates primarily on representations of young femininities, serving as a reminder that the period of youth is intrinsically inflected by gender.¹⁰ *Kids these days* offers various views on youth and gender as social, cultural, and discursive concepts that are nonetheless experienced as *lived* processes. In other words, youth, like gender, is not only constructed by those who study it but also by the young subjects themselves who, in various ways, actively perform, physically embody, and acutely feel it. *Kids these days* aims to explore this phenomenon as it is articulated within a selection of recent Canadian contemporary art practices.



Guillaume Simoneau *Untitled 31*, Lévis, Canada, 2004 from the *Between Grass and Steel* series, 2004–2011 (chromogenic print 1/6).

Artists and their young

Over almost a decade, Guillaume Simoneau has documented high school students from his hometown of Lévis, Québec on graduation night, resulting in a series of formally posed portraits that belie the emotional and alcohol-fuelled chaos of the actual 'bush party' event. Lit with the camera's flash in stark contrast with the nocturnal setting, Simoneau's visually dramatic black-and-white photographs highlight the liminal status of his teenage subjects who appear poised before a nebulous, uncertain future. Youth is perceived as a time so fleeting and precious that it becomes crucial to capture and pin it down. While abstracting this highly fraught event, the series also frames the small details that differentiate the girls—inward-turned toes, a beer bottle set aside in order to pose 'properly', the hands on hips of one, the awkward stance of another—offering hints as to their personalities and perhaps even their potential futures.



Guillaume Simoneau *Untitled 02*, Lévis, Canada, 2008 from the *Between Grass and Steel* series, 2004–2011 (chromogenic print, 1/6).

Other artists turn to the study of ephemeral traces of youth cultures, with a particular interest in self-expression. In *Screaming Girls* (2005), Jo-Anne Balcaen edits together archival footage of early rock 'n' roll concerts (primarily from concerts featuring Elvis Presley and The Beatles, though the performers are not shown) in order to explore female fandom, which is revealed as a highly performative ritual of an almost feral nature. These early demonstrations of fandom are emblematic of the phenomenon of youth culture, which emerged in the post-war era and marked a clear divide between the young and the old in terms of musical tastes and socially acceptable behaviour. In *Screaming Girls*, Balcaen removed the audio to better foreground the girls' gestuality, while in *Concert Posters* (2007), she alludes to the element of sound by showcasing the words cried out by fans. Her pastiche of the cheaply produced rock concert poster functions as a kind of mini-archive of

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Jo-Anne Balcaen *Screaming Girls*, 2005 (video still).

← Jo-Anne Balcaen *Concert Poster*, 2007 (laser print).

the visual culture of rock, one that is instantly recognisable and evocative of specific bands for music fans simply through the choice of typeface.

Kyla Mallett documents written forms of self-expression by youth in her colourful large-scale photographs of notes composed by high school girls. In so doing, she examines a series of handwritten epistolary 'artefacts' from a time predating our present era, which is heavily dominated by communication through digital media such as texts and posts on various social media sites. The original writers in *Notes* (2004) offer their recipients (and current viewers) a series of aesthetic and textual clues to decipher who the author is, or at least who she wanted her reader to believe she is. Moreover, as records of *realia* that bear imprints inscribed by the teenage authors' hands, they also display the posturing, play, creativity, and strategic *craft* involved in the self-styled construction of youth identities among peers.

This interest in the performativity and creativity underpinning youth cultures is manifest in Helen Reed's *Blue Moon* (2014). Made in close collaboration with its young subjects, the documentary video shows a teen 'wolf pack,' with high-school-age members inhabiting the hierarchical roles of alpha, beta, and pups, from a small town in the American mid-west. Part subculture, part after-school club, part



HeLen Reed *Blue Moon*, 2014 (video still).

support group, part cult- or commune-in-the-making, this posse of teenagers have imagined and elaborated a collective peer identity that appears to be inspired by such sources as nature documentaries, animism, werewolf fiction, and other teen wolves whom they follow online. *Blue Moon* offers insight into this group's *modus operandi*, showing members animatedly discussing their beliefs and behaviours in what at times has the pedagogical bent of a 'how-to' video. This project speaks to the vivid explorations of identity and the desire for transformation and belonging that can characterize the experiences of North American teenagers.

Kerri Flannigan too is interested in the experimentation with identity that takes place during youth. In an ongoing exploration of coming-of-age stories (featured as zines, drawings, and animations), she asks people of her generation to share significant moments from their teenage years regarding their emerging sexualities. For this iteration of her *coming of age stories* series (2015), Flannigan writes out by hand, word for word, the stories sent her, with accompanying illustrations of key moments. While the other artists in the exhibition aim for distanced positions where their presence is erased, Flannigan creates drawings directly using an unpolished style that embodies the passionate, vulnerable, naive, or alienated perspectives of her subjects' young selves. The empathy of her drawing style and her willingness to enter into her subjects' intimate lives as a kind of observer-participant across time encourage the viewers to also 'cross the line' into these teenage worlds and draw parallels with their own experiences.

Shot in spare black-and-white, Emmanuelle Léonard's video *Le beau, le laid et la photographie* (2011) features students in an all-girls school in Montréal describing



HeLen Reed *Blue Moon*, 2014 (video still).

what they consider beautiful and ugly imagery. Extending the traditions of bust and photographic portraiture, the stationary video camera unvaryingly frames each girl seated behind a desk. In answering the artist's questions, the girls' individual personalities emerge. They display a range of facial expressions and body language that convey varying levels of self-consciousness and self-confidence, the challenge of communicating abstract thought, the desire to perform and please, the struggle to reconcile oneself with dominant discourses around issues of beauty, and so on. The improvisatory, often uncertain nature of their answers is indicative of each girl's process of figuring out her tastes and how to publicly express them. Leonard chose not to edit out the sound of announcements broadcast over the school's loudspeaker system that occasionally interrupt the interviews, a subtle allusion to the pervasive restriction and surveillance inherent to the educational system.

Althea Thauberger's *Songstress* (2002) comprises a series of music videos starring amateur female folk and pop singer-songwriters, each performing an original piece of music. Made in a pre-YouTube era, Thauberger eschews the typically slick, highly edited style of music videos in favour of capturing in a single take the singers' lip-synched performances of studio recording of their songs. Asked to perform in various lush green settings around Victoria, British Columbia, the performers emerge from the landscapes like exotic fauna. Thauberger foregrounds their specific subjectivities: the young women were responsible for their own hair, make-up, clothing, and choreography, and their individual choices create an overall stylistic diversity. Striking in the profound earnestness that permeates the performances, *Songstress* is a reminder that expressions of youth



Sarah Febraro *Minor Threats*, 2011 (video stills).

Kyla Mallett *Hello!!!* from the *Notes* series, 2004 (LightJet digital print). →

HELLO!!!

I'm so bored, do you like this sub. She's mean she keeps giving me really bad looks. HELP... I don't know what's going on with DUSTIN. I don't know if he likes me anymore, I like him. I'm scared he did talk to me, AND stared at me, but still what does that mean? Do you think he likes me? Grrr, why doesn't he just ask me out? I'm gonna go crazy!!! Adam just said that he called me a hoar. Oh my god! I feel like crying!!!



nice flower hey!

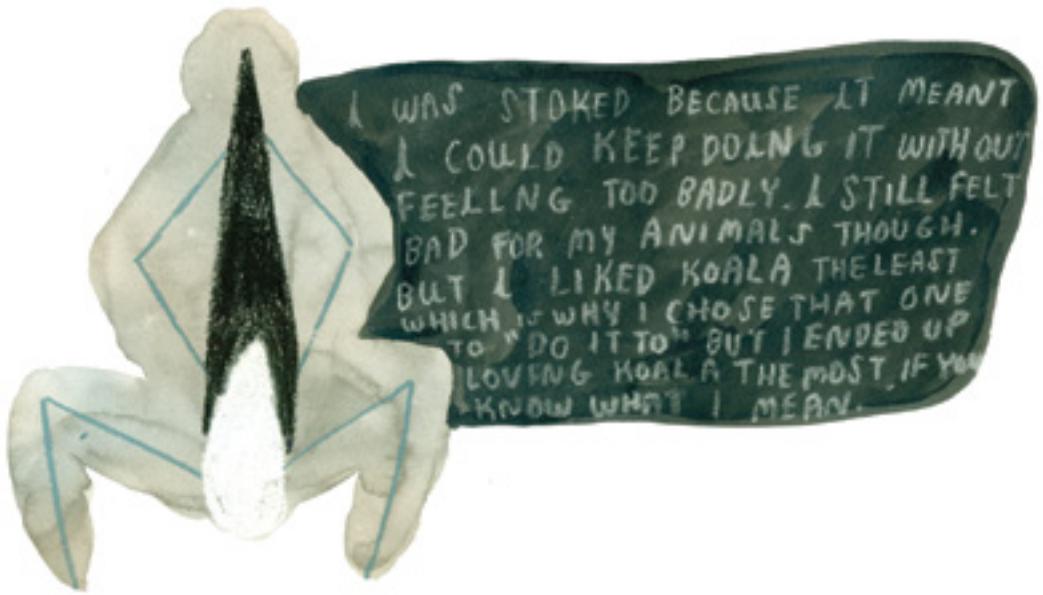
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Kerri Flannigan *coming of age stories 2: hooking up, 2012* (pencil and pastel on paper). 

culture within mainstream media are often packaged and presented to viewers only after aggressive editing, remixing, and marketing strategies. In the latter, any signs of difference and vulnerability are filtered out to create more spectacular, celebratory versions.

Inspired by the proliferation of self-made videos featuring young women playing guitar at home, Sarah Febraro asked six budding musicians from the Greater Toronto area to select a guitar solo from YouTube and learn to play it for the video *Minor Threats* (2012).¹¹ She then recorded them playing the solo in a public site of their choice; in this way, the girls ventured from the privacy of practicing in their bedrooms to the exposure of performing outdoors; for some that meant the backyard or front lawn, while for a bolder few, a mall parking lot or downtown intersection. By editing together each girl's public performance with her YouTube 'counterpart', Febraro reveals how this popular Internet site can function as an archive of amateur musical performances but also as a practical pedagogical resource where young people can learn from their online peers. At the same time, the prevailing tentativeness of the performances in the public realm, viewed in juxtaposition with the showy confidence of the online ones, evinces the concrete challenges experienced by youth as they negotiate the outside world.



Kerri Flannigan *coming of age stories 2: hooking up*, 2014 (ink and pastel on paper).

Youth code

Kids these days invites viewers to consider youth—a category often unquestioningly taken for granted—not only as embodied experience but also as a social and cultural construct. In this vein, the exhibition explores popular discourse around youth through its presentation of fiction and non-fiction in tandem with the artworks. A selection of English literature—primarily from the late nineteenth century to the present—is on display, including examples of the *Bildungsroman* ('novel of education or formation') or so-called 'coming-of-age' genre, YA (young adult) fiction, novels popular with young people, memoirs, books with youthful protagonists, publications on youth and youth development, and self-help books for teens.¹²

Continuing in this discursive vein, *Kids these days* also includes brief questionnaires answered by the artists via e-mail that aimed to illuminate the practices of the artists in their own words, offering access to their thoughts on youth, their interest in youth, their personal relationship to the subject matter, and their choice of methodology.¹³ Foregrounding each artist's perspective, these were presented alongside their respective works in lieu of didactic wall texts. For some, like Sarah Febraro and Guillaume Simoneau, the topic of youth is a recurring motif within their respective practices while for others, like Helen Reed and Emmanuelle Léonard, it is an interest among many others. The questions posed were: (1) What comes to mind when you think of youth?¹⁴ (2) What drew you to the youth-related



Emmanuelle Léonard *Le beau, le laid et la photographie*, 2011 (HD video still).

subject matter in this work? (3) Can you describe how and why you came to treat the subject matter in the way that you did? For example, why did you use this medium and approach? (4) What comes to mind when you think about your own youth in relation to this project?

The documentary and archival tendency of the approaches used by the artists in *Kids these days* often serve to create a categorization of youth, suggesting an underlying desire on the part of the artists to capture the 'essence' of youth in order to better understand it. Generally aiming for an objective viewpoint through the effacement of their presence from the artworks, many of the artists established pared-down formal and conceptual frameworks that let them observe how young people act within these frameworks. For instance, Febraro, Léonard, and Thauberger recorded their subjects with fixed camera perspectives or uninterrupted takes, and asked their subjects to respond to a single question or perform within a specific scenario. At times, individual particularities within the group of young people are highlighted while at other times, the universal is brought to the fore. Léonard writes: "Working with the same composition and a similar setting and lighting allowed me to create a typology in which the specific characteristics of each girl would become visible." Balcaen, Flannigan, and Mallett amass ephemera, stories, and found footage that despite the variety within their groupings, reveal recurrent similarities nonetheless. Flannigan's collection of specific stories around young sexuality surprisingly encourages viewers to feel part of a larger experience. She writes: "as a collection, they, to me anyways, transform into something empowering, they aren't isolated anymore. I think it's comforting to see a lot of us were going through the same thing" 

Many of the artists associate the experience of youth with having an "emotional



Emmanuelle Léonard *Le beau, le laid et la photographie*, 2011 (HD video still).

charge” (Simoneau) or as Flannigan vividly writes, “the feelings—all of the feelings!” that are remarkable for their visceral intensity and wide range. Some of that sentiment is inventoried as: “Excitability. Vulnerability. Impulsive behaviour. Self-consciousness” (Balcaen); “the excitement, the confusion, the embarrassment (Flannigan). “Awkwardness” and “alienation” (Febbraro) are also identified, along with “feelings of isolation in dealing with questions and experiences surrounding sexuality and body stuff” (Flannigan). This interest in youth emotionality plays a key part in Balcaen’s decision, for instance, to slow down the found footage of fans and remove the sound to better show “that confused moment of pleasure and pain” as well as “subtle shifts in emotion and intention.” While Flannigan considers surviving her adolescence in some ways as her “greatest accomplishment,” others like Mallett and Febbraro think of this period of so-called ‘teen angst’ with nostalgia.

Some clearly link youth with an overriding authenticity, a significant characteristic for many of the artists. Simoneau describes youth as marked by “an absence of irony,” suggesting that youth subjectivity is ultimately undergirded by a kind of purity, earnestness, or idealism. Balcaen is also drawn to what she views as the emotional honesty of her screaming fans—one that goes well beyond social norms: “The girls I wound up using in the video are experiencing a completely new and intense event that has the ability to provoke violent reactions from them. They’re stepping well outside the bounds of social decorum for that era.” Indeed, a heightened awareness of the potential for individual freedom, in tandem with the realisation of the potential of these societal constraints to restrict this freedom, are mentioned as a key part of the experience of youth—“all of the freedom and problems that come along with it” as Mallett succinctly puts it. Simoneau also touches upon this paradox, saying, “I felt invincible. At the same time, I was



Althea Thauberger *Songstress*, 2002 (video still).

terrified by the idea of becoming an adult and the inevitable dullness of day-to-day responsibilities." Reed describes the frustration that comes with this realisation effectively as: "Youth is a time when you consider your relationship to a broader culture, which can be very empowering, but you are also discovering the limits of culture—which can be quite depressing."

The subject matter of youth appears to often provide artists with the opportunity to explore concerns that they themselves may face artistically. Léonard, for instance, describes the difficulty that her subjects had in defining beauty as similar to her own: "Their hesitation, embarrassment, and candour perfectly conveyed and echoed my own doubts." Others were drawn to the bold creativity of their subjects in negotiating their own burgeoning identities in relation to society's dominant norms and expectations. Ruminating on her young subjects and collaborators' spirit of *bricolage*,¹⁵ Reed writes: "I am interested in the ways in which the wolf pack are rewriting the garbage culture that we are all swimming in (🗨️). They have created a kind of functional folklore through their collective beliefs and actions, which I think can show us how malleable 'the real' can be." Febbraro speaks of drawing direct inspiration from the "abundance of self-produced YouTube videos of girls playing electric guitar online"; the representation of young female musicians on social media was different from her experience as a young musician in a largely



Althea Thauberger *Songstress*, 2002 (video still).

male-dominated scene. These online videos moved her to try "to create a video that subverts those mainstream images and celebrates the teenage girl playing rock music on her own and in her own way" 

Even as these artists in *Kids these days* perhaps inevitably "ot  young people and youth cultures, at the same time, the resulting artworks often intimate certain parallels between the concerns of artists and the experiences of youth—in particular, the brushing up against the many restrictions and constraints that come with burgeoning adulthood and the expectations of society. Moreover, the works in *Kids these days* hint at an underlying desire on the part of the artists to affiliate themselves with the coveted characteristics typically associated with youth—ones often deemed ideally necessary for a rich and satisfying artistic practice—unbridled freedom, exploration, authenticity, expressivity, and creativity.

Zoë Chan

Notes

1. The exhibition *Kids these days* was first presented in 2014 at the Foreman Art Gallery of Bishop's University, under the bilingual title *Bande à part/Kids these days*. The following essay is an expanded version of one first published by the Foreman Art Gallery of Bishop's University in the brochure that accompanied the exhibition in Sherbrooke, Québec.

2. See Appendix 1 for quotations on youth as expressed in key publications by Hall, Mead, Erikson, and Piaget.
3. Thomas Hine, *The Rise and Fall of the American Teenager* (New York: Avon Books, 1999), 11.
4. This shift was not always smooth or immediate, however. An infamous example is the segregation of black and white students in the US until 1954, when this was abolished by the Supreme Court in the *Brown v. Board of Education* case. In Canada, the segregation of black and white students continued until the 1960s in the provinces of Ontario and Nova Scotia. See Vappu Tyyskä, *Youth and Society: The Long and Winding Road*, 3rd ed. (Toronto: Canadian Scholars' Press, 2014). Another major example within recent Canadian history is the residential school system that was established in the 1880s by the federal government, the impacts of which continue to reverberate today. Aboriginal children were forcibly removed from their families and communities, and sent to residential schools as part of an aggressive assimilationist strategy to "kill the Indian in the child." The Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada has defined the residential school system as part of an overriding federal policy of cultural genocide in their *Final Report*, published in 2015. www.trc.ca.
5. Sinikka Aapola, Marnina Gonick and Anita Harris, *Young Femininity: Girlhood, Power, and Social Change* (NY, NY: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005), 59.
6. Quoted in Pamela J. Bettis and Natalie G. Adams, eds., *Geographies of Girlhood: Identities In-Between* (Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, 2005), 6.
7. This liminality has extended from high school into university as post-secondary education has often become necessary in order to find certain types of work in a competitive labour force.
8. Hine, 204.
9. Made in 2005, Jo-Anne Balcaen's *Screaming Girls* is composed of archival footage from the 1950s and 1960s.
10. Highlighting the intricate intersection of youth and gender, cultural scholars Anoop Nayak and Mary Jane Kehily propose the term "coming-into-being of gender," invoking the popular expression 'coming-of-age'. Anoop Nayak and Mary Jane Kehily, *Gender, Youth and Culture: Young masculinities and femininities* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008), 6.
11. The title is a play on the all male punk band Minor Threat from the early 1980s. Here, Febraro playfully reimagines the group as an all female band (the photocopied concert posters for which are hung around campus).
12. Taken from my personal collection, the selection of books does not pretend to be exhaustive but rather reflects shifting personal and generational tastes and of course the influence of my own coming of age within the Canadian educational system. See Appendix II for a list of the books featured in the library and vitrines of *Kids these days*.
13. Althea Thauberger opted not to participate in the questionnaire component of the exhibition.
14. Viewers were also invited to respond to this overarching question and to pin their responses to a wall in the gallery space. The answers at the Foreman Art Gallery of Bishop's University represented a wide variety of ages and perspectives, from the flippant ("Thinking you're smart but actually you're just being an asshole." – Sophie, age 20) to the more thoughtful ("The back and forth of pushing against the boundaries and feeling them push back against you." – Jacqueline, age 45).
15. Claude Lévi-Strauss' defines *bricolage* as a creative process where "the rules of [the] game are always to make do with 'whatever is at hand', that is to say with a set of tools and materials which is [...] heterogeneous" and "can reach brilliant unforeseen results on the intellectual plane." See Claude Lévi-Strauss, *The Savage Mind*, trans. *La pensée sauvage*, 1962 (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1966), 11.

Annotated list of works

Jo-Anne Balcaen

Screaming Girls, 2005

video, black-and-white, no sound

2 min. 28 sec.

Concert Posters, 2007

laser print

1. What comes to mind when you think of youth?

Trouble (getting into/causing). Potential. Excitability. Vulnerability. Impulsive behavior. Self-consciousness. Acne. Orthodontics. First crush, first heartache, and many more firsts.

2. What drew you to the youth-related subject matter in this work?

I didn't come to it through an interest in youth culture, but rather through my interest in music, and in particular an earlier audio piece I made using clips of pop songs with excessive vocalizations by female pop signers (*Machination*, 2002). I later wanted to compare these with the sound of women screaming. While researching these sources, I came across lots of images of screaming girls at rock concerts, which flipped the focus of my attention from the person on stage to the people in the audience, who were usually teenage girls.

3. Can you describe how and why you came to treat the subject matter in the way you did? For example, why did you use this medium and approach?

The more I looked at videos of girls screaming at rock concerts, the less interested I was in the sound they made. I was more drawn to still or silent images because they already communicated everything I was looking for in that confused moment of pleasure and pain. They offered far more subtle shifts in emotion and intention, especially slowed down. And in a way, the void left by those silent screams resonates louder because we imagine it in our minds.

I often work with found footage, and prefer to manipulate it as little as possible. So this video became an exercise in trying to evoke this emotional excess while stripping the footage down to its essence.

I initially wanted to include more contemporary footage along with the older clips, but at a certain point, around the late '90s, I noticed a real shift in awareness in the fans where they become hyper-aware of being filmed, and they enjoy the attention and begin to claim the role of pop star for themselves. I just wasn't interested in using that in the work because it transformed the rawness and innocence of that initial experience into something else entirely. The girls I wound up using in the video are experiencing a completely new and intense event that has the ability to provoke violent reactions from them. They're stepping well outside the bounds of social decorum for that era.

4. What comes to mind when you think about your own youth in relation to this project?

I never attended any rock concerts until I moved to the city at the age of 18, so any experience I had listening to music in my early teens was an entirely solitary one. Once I started going to concerts, I was too concerned with not wanting to appear too eager to let myself go like that, even though internally I was feeling just as hysterical. –J.B.

Sarah Febraro

Minor Threats, 2012
video, colour, sound
12 min. 18 sec.

Minor Threats, 2015
photocopy on paper

1. What comes to mind when you think of youth?

Malls, social media, pop music, high school, walking around, community centres, candy, being tired, binge eating, 'tv, tv, tv', drugs, fashion, beauty, awkwardness, *Rookie*, homework, fandom, fame, large cliques, alienation.

2. What drew you to the youth-related subject matter in this work?

My interest in working with youth stems from my experience as an art educator and community arts programmer. I realized from these experiences that youth are valid makers of cultural production, and that collaborating with youth complicates the validity of an actual work of art, thus challenging institutionalized ideas of authorship and expertise.

I am specifically interested in working with female teens, and examining and critiquing how girls are represented in visual culture. I enjoy exploring my own nostalgic viewpoints of female adolescence while also aiming to create complex and new representations of female identity.

I have always been drawn to images of teenage girls acting aggressively and was thinking of producing a video of girls shredding on electric guitars for quite some time. I think this was in response to not seeing many teenage girls play punk, rock or metal guitar, and I myself played guitar as a teenager. I wanted to create an opportunity for young girls to embrace their love of guitar and rock music.

3. Can you describe how and why you came to treat the subject matter in the way you did? For example, why did you use this medium and approach?

I decided to work with video after discovering an abundance of self-produced YouTube videos of girls playing electric guitar online. I loved the footage and wanted to edit these videos and juxtapose them with newly shot footage of teenage girls performing the same songs, but in public spaces that they hang out in. Video allows me to create new and complex representations of girls and screen my work in a variety of contexts.

4. What comes to mind when you think about your own youth in relation to this project?

As a teen, I learned how to play guitar in high school and remember being inspired by '90s Riot Grrrl culture; specifically Hole and The Breeders. Even though these bands were a direct result of the '90s Riot Grrrl feminist movement, I still felt that rock music was dominated by men. Today, tv shows like *American Idol* create mainstream representations of female identity that saturate our collective consciousness. I wanted to create a video that subverts those mainstream images and celebrates the teenage girl playing rock music on her own and in her own way, like the videos I found on YouTube. –S.F.

Kerri Flannigan

coming of age stories 2: hooking up, 2015

Kinneret; Rea; Carly; Daniel; Brandon; Anonymous; E.J.; Cee
ink and pastel on paper

1. What comes to mind when you think of youth?

Ah, so much! I think about the intensity, the isolation, the excitement, the confusion, the embarrassment, the '90s and the feelings—all of the feelings!

2. What drew you to the youth-related subject matter in this work?

I would say it was reflecting on my own feelings of isolation in dealing with questions and experiences surrounding sexuality and body stuff while coming of age, like having sexy exchanges with strangers in Internet chat rooms or feelings of shame for having body hair. I wanted to create an anthology of individual anecdotes of adolescent sexual and gender-identity-forming epiphanies from a group of people reflecting on past experiences (generally from the same era I grew up in around 10–20 years ago). And something interesting happened in putting the collection of stories together: while individually some are funny, many are heavy, but as a collection, they, to me anyways, transform into something empowering, they aren't isolated anymore. I think it's comforting to see a lot of us were going through the same thing, but also kind of sad that I haven't been able to relate to these experiences with other people until many years after they happened.

3. Can you describe how and why you came to treat the subject matter in the way you did? For example, why did you use this medium and approach?

I wanted the story to carry the drawings so I used text alongside some fairly illustrative, child-like drawings, which fits the subject but is also just the way I draw, and which I think in its simplicity can engender empathy.

4. What comes to mind when you think about your own youth in relation to this project?

In some ways I think my greatest accomplishment was surviving 'growing up'. I feel like some of the zines I have written have been done with my teenage-self in mind. I'm mostly talking about this project, which also exists as a zine, in addition to another zine about anxiety. I think about making things that I would have wanted to be exposed to when I was younger. I often wonder what kind of difference it would have made. –K.F.

Emmanuelle Léonard

Le beau, le laid et la photographie, 2011

high definition video, black-and-white, sound
16 min. 20 sec.

1. What comes to mind when you think of youth?

Actually, not much ...

2. What drew you to the youth-related subject matter in this work?

When you talk about photography in very general terms—what you find beautiful and ugly—you experience the difficulty of formulating and justifying an opinion. In this project, I completed the exercise with young teens who were fresh out of childhood. Their hesitation, embarrassment, and candour perfectly conveyed and echoed my own doubts.

3. Can you describe how and why you came to treat the subject matter in the way that you did? For example, why did you use this medium and approach?

The project involved creating photograph-like portraits—static shots over time. Working with the same composition and a similar setting and lighting allowed me to create a typology in which the specific characteristics of each girl would become visible. To my mind, this answered the question they were asked: what's beautiful in a photo lies a little in the details unique to each person ...

4. What comes to mind when you think about your own youth in relation to this project?

The same as my answer to the first question: not much. My own youth, like that of other people, is kind of hazy and blurred around the edges. It's fading, but still present. —E.L.

Translated by Vanessa Nicolai

Kyla Mallett

Notes series, 2004

LightJet digital prints

Hello!!!

Collection of Howard and

Coleen Nemtin, Vancouver

See Ya!

Collection of Torys LLP, Toronto

Your Pal Alicia

Private Collection

1. What comes to mind when you think of youth?

I think of that in-between time in life and all of the freedom and problems that come along with it. I also think about teen angst (but at this age I think of it in a nostalgic way), among other things ...

2. What drew you to the youth-related subject matter in this work?

I worked a lot with youth culture as a subject when I was starting out as an artist. When I was finishing art school, I was excited about the idea of 'studying' youth culture (through my exposure to Cultural Studies), in part because I was young and I felt like it allowed me to make work about something I knew. When I made the *Notes* work, I was writing my MFA thesis on language and communication in adolescent girl culture so it was very closely related to that research.

3. Can you describe how and why you came to treat the subject matter in the way you did? For example, why did you use this medium and approach?

I was collecting notes from high school, and decided to document some of them. It made sense to me to take these 'artifacts' that exposed something about high school girls' culture, and to photograph and blow them up, like they were evidence of something. I wanted to lend importance to these otherwise devalued objects.

4. What comes to mind when you think about your own youth in relation to this project?

I think about the practice of note writing back in high school. I also think about collecting all of the notes from other women to do this project—most women I asked had a shoe box full of them from high school that they couldn't bear to throw away or to re-read. It makes me think about that feeling of ambivalence we associate with our own youth ... —K.M.

HeLen Reed

Blue Moon, 2014

Video, colour, sound

10 min. 57 sec.

Blue Moon, 2014

Silk-screen print

1. What comes to mind when you think of youth?

I think about my youth as the time when my life was becoming more and more my own responsibility. I think about rapid change—when I was younger, I remember that a year felt like forever, and I felt as though I would completely transform from one year to the next. Youth is a time when you consider your relationship to a broader culture, which can be very empowering, but you are also discovering the limits of culture—which can be quite depressing.

2. What drew you to the youth-related subject matter in this work?

I am interested in the ways in which the wolf pack are rewriting the garbage culture that we are all swimming in—they are finding a way to make meaningful mythologies out of pieces of popular culture, earth-based spiritualities and embodiment of animal behaviors. They have created a kind of functional folklore through their collective beliefs and actions, which I think can show us how malleable 'the real' can be.

3. Can you describe how and why you came to treat the subject matter in the way you did? For example, why did you use this medium and approach?

I approached the alpha of the wolf pack, and said that I was interested in learning more about them. He was happy to email back and forth and to answer my questions. I then suggested that I come and make a short video with them. The video ended up being in a documentary style—since I was very much an outsider to the culture they had to show and teach me about themselves. The documentary form worked well for this, and they were very interested in being subjects of a documentary, to further disseminate their beliefs.

3. What comes to mind when you think about your own youth in relation to this project?

There are some things that I relate to, for example the queerness of this subculture where everything shifts and changes. I can also relate to the environment, as I grew up in a suburb seemingly as lifeless as their hometown. So I very much relate to this void of culture and looking to create meaning from whatever is available—the natural world, popular culture, etc... —H.R.

Guillaume Simoneau

Between Grass and Steel (selection), 2004–2011

chromogenic prints (1/6)

Untitled 31, Lévis, Canada, 2004

Untitled 25, Lévis, Canada, 2005

Untitled 26, Lévis, Canada, 2007

Untitled 02, Lévis, Canada, 2008

1. What comes to mind when you think of youth?

An absence of irony and sarcasm.

2. What drew you to the youth-related subject matter in this work?

Definitely its emotional charge and polarizing nature.

3. Can you describe how and why you came to treat the subject matter in the way that you did? For example, why did you use this medium and approach?

I have a clear explanation for that. I absolutely wanted to share the process with them. I didn't want to just arrive, take photos and leave. That's not how I work. I used Polaroid Type 665 PN film so I could give the students a black-and-white positive and keep the negative for myself. I suspected that once the Polaroids started circulating after the first photo sessions, they would quickly generate interest, attracting more students to the project. It was a fair, simple, and effective strategy.

4. What comes to mind when you think about your own youth in relation to this project?

I had just discovered Henry David Thoreau and I was head over heels in love with my first girlfriend. I felt invincible. At the same time, I was terrified by the idea of becoming an adult and the inevitable dullness of day-to-day responsibilities. This project accurately reflects my state of mind at that time. –G.S.

Translated by Vanessa Nicolai

Althea Thauberger

Songstress, 2002

Video, colour, sound

28 min. 21 sec.

Courtesy of the artist and Susan Hobbs Gallery, Toronto 

Songstress Production

Direction, editing and environmental audio: Althea Thauberger

Camera: Milutin Gubash

Cine film and digital transfer: Rainmaker Labs, Vancouver

All songs recorded and mixed at The Recordist's Workshop, Victoria

Recording engineer: Bill Crapelle

Audio Mastering: Hugh McMillan

Song Credits

REACHING OVER

Katrina Kadoski

Vocals and acoustic guitar: Katrina Kadoski

SUNSHINE

Julie Skagfjord

Vocals and acoustic guitar: Julie Skagfjord

LOOKING FOR SOMEONE

Kathryn Calder

Vocals: Kathryn Calder

Electric guitar: Luke Kozlowski

Bass guitar: Brooke Gallup

Percussion: Caley Campbell

DENIAL

Gillian Stone

Vocals: Gillian Stone

WHY

Marlene Battryn

Vocals and acoustic guitar: Marlene Battryn

TOMORROW

Leah Abramson

Vocals and acoustic guitar: Leah Abramson

Acoustic guitar: Gordon Breckenridge

GOODBYE LOVE

Elise Hall-Meyer

Vocals and acoustic guitar: Elise Hall-Meyer

THE JOURNEY OF SOUL

Sung Hee Park-Talbot

Vocals and piano: Sung Hee Park-Talbot

Percussion: Anthony Duke

Appendix I

QUOTATIONS

Adolescence is a new birth, for the higher and more completely human traits are now born. [...] Development is less gradual and more salutatory, suggestive of some ancient period of story and stress when old moorings were broken and a higher level attained. (p. xiii)

Youth awakes to a new world and understands neither it nor himself. The whole future of life depends on how the new powers now given suddenly and in profusion are husbanded and directed. Character and personality are taking form, but everything is plastic. Self-feeling and ambition are increased, and every trait and faculty is liable to exaggeration and excess. It is all a marvelous new birth, and those who believe that nothing is so worthy of love, reverence, and service as the body and soul of youth, and who hold that the best test of every human institution is how much it contributes to bring youth to the ever fullest possible development, may well review themselves and the civilization in which we live to see how far it satisfies this supreme test. (p. xv)

–G. STANLEY HALL, *Adolescence: Its Psychology and its Relations to Physiology, Anthropology, Sociology, Sex, Crime, Religion and Education* (1904) (New York: Arno Press & The New York Times, 1969).

The principal causes of our adolescents' difficulty are the presence of conflicting standards and the belief that every individual should make his or her own choices, coupled with a feeling that choice is an important matter. Given these cultural attitudes, adolescence, regarded now not as a period of physiological change, for we know that physiological puberty need not produce conflict, but as the beginning of mental and emotional maturity, is bound to be filled with conflicts and difficulties. [...] The stress is in our civilization, not in the physical changes through which our children pass, but it is none the less real nor the less inevitable in twentieth-century America. (pp. 170–171)

–MARGARET MEAD, *Coming of Age in Samoa: A Psychological Study of Primitive Youth for Western Civilization* (1928) (New York: Dell Publishing, 1972).

The adolescent mind is essentially a mind of the moratorium, a psychosocial stage between childhood and adulthood, and between the morality learned by the child, and the ethics to be developed by the adult. (pp. 262–263)

–ERIK H. ERIKSON, *Childhood and Society* (1950) (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1963).

[...] it is the ideological potential of a society which speaks most clearly to the adolescent who is so eager to be affirmed by peers, to be confirmed by teachers, and to be inspired by worth-while 'ways of life'. On the other hand, should a young person feel that the environment tries to deprive him too radically of all the forms of expression which permit him to develop and integrate the next step, he may resist with the wild strength encountered in animals who are suddenly forced to defend their lives. For, indeed, in the social jungle of human existence there is no feeling of being alive without a sense of identity. (p. 130)

–ERIK H. ERIKSON, *Identity: Youth and Crisis* (1968) (New York & London: Norton, 1994).

[...] the subject succeeds in freeing himself from the concrete and in locating reality within a group of possible transformations. This final fundamental decentering which occurs at the end of childhood, prepares for adolescence, whose principal characteristic is a similar liberation from the concrete in favor of interest oriented to the non-present and the future. This is the age of great ideals and of the beginning of theories, as well as the time of simple present adaptation to reality. This affective and social impulse of adolescence has often been described. But it has not always been understood that this impulse is dependent upon a transformation of thought that permits the handling of hypotheses and reasoning with regard to propositions removed from concrete and present observation. (pp. 130–131)

–JEAN PIAGET and BÄRBAR INHELDER, *The Psychology of the Child (La psychologie de l'enfant)* (1966), trans. Helen Weaver (New York: Basic Books, 1969).

Appendix II

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Biographies

Jo-Anne Balcaen was born in La Broquerie, Manitoba. She obtained her BFA from the University of Manitoba, before relocating to Montréal to complete her MFA at Concordia University. Her art practice extends across a variety of media including sound, sculpture, print, video, and text, bringing together references as diverse as popular culture, music, and cultural management. She has exhibited throughout Canada, the US and Europe, including solo exhibitions at venues such as Truck, Calgary; AceArt, Winnipeg; eyelevel gallery, Halifax; Galerie Clark, La Centrale, and Galerie B-312, Montréal. She has received several provincial and national arts grants, and has attended residencies at the Banff Centre, and the Canada Council's International Residency at the International Studio and Curatorial Program (ISCP) in New York. She lives in Montréal.

As a curator, **Zoë Chan** has focused on the topics of youth, food, documentary, and discourse around representation and identity. Her curatorial projects have been presented at Articule, Montréal; the Foreman Art Gallery of Bishop's University, Sherbrooke; and the MAI (Montréal, arts interculturels). In 2014, she was one of twelve curators selected by ICI (Independent Curators International) to participate in its Curatorial Intensive program in New York. As visual arts programmer at the MAI from 2006 to 2010, she worked on projects by several emerging Canadian artists including Brendan Fernandes, Reena Katz, and Karen Tam. Her writing has been published in *Canadian Art*, *C Magazine*, *esse arts + opinions*, among others. She recently co-founded the independent publisher Quiet Spell with Karin Zuppiger; their first publication *Secret Life* was launched in 2015. She is a two-time recipient of the Canada Council for the Arts' Project Grant to Curators and Critics, and in 2015, she received the Joan Lowndes Award in recognition of excellence in critical or curatorial writing. She has a Master's degree in Art History from Concordia University in Montréal.

Sarah Febbraro is an artist based in Toronto. She works in performance, video, documentary, installation, community engagement, social practice and drawing. Her projects aim to create innovative, social, learning opportunities for herself and her collaborators while giving visibility to those under-represented in mainstream media and/or institutional contexts. Mashing up pop culture and pedagogy, Febbraro's projects include neighbourhood talk shows, talent contests, dating shows, dance workshops, cooking classes, walking tours, video portraiture, and documentary-style interviews that often result in online and public video screenings, installations, and performances. She is currently making a film about a group of teenage girls living in an inner city Toronto neighbourhood. Febbraro has held solo exhibitions at the Art Gallery of Algoma, Sault Ste. Marie; La Galerie Centrale Powerhouse, Montréal; Queen Elizabeth Park Community and Cultural Centre, Oakville; and Spoke Gallery, Chicago. She holds an MFA from the School of the Art Institute of Chicago. She has previously worked as Youth Programs Coordinator at the Art Gallery of Ontario  Community Arts Programmer at Oakville Galleries.

Kerri Flannigan is a Victoria-based interdisciplinary artist, originally from Deep River, Ontario. Working in installation, video, drawing, print, and performance, Flannigan grounds her practice in making space for peripheral voices and articulating matters near and dear to her while traversing family histories, experiences of illness and disability, and teenage traumas and victories. Flannigan has shown locally and internationally, including

at ARTSPACE, Peterborough and La Galerie Centrale Powerhouse, Montréal. She received the CALQ Multidisciplinary Arts Grant in 2011 as well as the Best English Zine Award at the Montreal Expozine Awards in 2011 and 2013. She has been a guest lecturer in numerous studio classes at the University of Victoria.

Born in Montréal where she lives and works, **Emmanuelle Léonard** is a graduate of Concordia University and UQÀM (University du Québec à Montréal). Her work has appeared in many solo and group exhibitions, including the Musée d'art contemporain de Montréal (MACM); the Art Gallery of Ontario (AGO), Toronto; Galerie UQÀM, Montréal; Kunsthaus Dresden, Germany; Neuer Berliner Kunstverein, Berlin, Germany; Le Fresnoy, Studio national des arts contemporains, Tourcoing, France; Optica, Montréal; vox, centre d'image contemporaine, Montréal; Mercer Union, Toronto; Gallery 44, Toronto; Le Mois de la Photo, Montréal; L'Œil de Poisson, Québec City; and Expression: Contemporary Art Event of St-Hyacinthe. Her work was recently featured in the Montréal Biennial, *BNLMTL* (2014) and in The Québec Triennial (2011). She has been awarded residencies at the Villa Arson, Nice, France; the Christoph Merian Foundation, Basel, Switzerland; and the Finnish Artists' Studio Foundation, Espoo, Finland. Emmanuelle Léonard was the recipient of the Pierre-Ayot Award (2005). She also was nominated for the Grange Prize (2012), and was a finalist for the first Contemporary Art Award of the MNBAQ, Musée national des beaux-arts du Québec (2013) and for the Louis-Comtois Award (2014). She teaches photography at Sherbrooke University.

Kyla Mallett completed her MFA at the University of British Columbia in 2004, after earning her MFA at Emily Carr University of Art and Design in 2000. Her work consistently deals with the intersection of language and the social realm, utilizing pseudo-anthropological strategies of research, collecting and archiving. She has often focused on transgressive activities in such cultural arenas as adolescence, girlhood, feminism, academia and art, using interview/statistical research, installation, photography, sound, and video. Past work includes a series of photo works of schoolgirls' notes, a video work about girl bullying, a sound installation about gossip, a public art project and series on marginalia in library books, and a series of spirit photographs investigating an art gallery haunting. These works, along with current projects on parapsychology and self-help materials, focus on marginal and devalued forms of language and communication. She has received critical attention for both national and international exhibitions over the past decade, having shown at such institutions as the Canadian Cultural Centre, Paris; the Contemporary Art Gallery, Vancouver; Vancouver Art Gallery; the Art Gallery of Alberta, Edmonton; Presentation House Gallery, North Vancouver; Artspeak, Vancouver; Threewalls, Chicago; and the msvu Art Gallery, Halifax. Mallett is an Assistant Professor in Visual Art and Graduate Studies at Emily Carr University of Art and Design.

HeLen Reed's artistic practice explores her interest in participatory culture, affinity groups and fantasy-based subcultures. Her projects take vernacular form as television shows, publications, postcards and other forms of easily transmittable and dispersed media, so as to circulate back into the communities from which they are generated. Reed has exhibited work at Prefix Institute for Contemporary Art, Toronto; The Dunlop Art Gallery, Regina; The Foreman Art Gallery of Bishop's University, Sherbrooke; apexart, New York; Smack Mellon, New York; Portland Art Museum; Seattle Art Museum; and La Galerie Centrale Powerhouse, Montréal. She holds a BFA from the Emily Carr University of Art and Design in Vancouver where she currently teaches and an MFA in Art and Social Practice from Portland State University.

Based in Montréal, **Guillaume Simoneau** began his independent studies in photography after completing a diploma in applied science. Over the last decade, he has fostered a fascination for examining and documenting definitive moments of change, be they political, social, and/or personal. This obsession has led him to instinctively follow people, places, and events that inhabit for him an uncanny sense of strength and vulnerability, power and weakness. Simoneau has exhibited his photographs across Canada and internationally. His work can be found in a number of permanent collections including the  Museum, London; the SFMOMA, San Francisco; and the Museum of Contemporary Photography (MCP), Chicago. His latest body of work, *Love and War* was recently exhibited at the MCP and published in 2013 by Dewi Lewis Publishing, UK. The publication was shortlisted for both First Book Award and European Publishers Award for Photography.

Althea Thauberger is a Vancouver-based artist whose work comprises photographs, performance, video, and audio recordings. Thauberger's art typically evolves out of interactions with a community and thematizes individualism, collectivism, conformity, and power relations. She completed her BFA at Concordia University and her MFA at University of Victoria. Recent solo exhibitions include Audain Gallery, Vancouver; The Power Plant, Toronto; and VAK, basis voor actuele kunst, Utrecht. Numerous group shows include the  Biennial of Sydney; apexart, New York; The Liverpool Biennale, and the National Gallery of Canada. Her work is held in several public collections including MHNKA Museum, Antwerp; Mills College Art Museum, San Francisco; National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa; Vancouver Art Gallery; Mackenzie Art Gallery, Regina; and Remai Modern, Saskatoon; as well as private collections in Vancouver, Toronto, Montréal, New York, San Francisco, San Diego, Los Angeles, Trento, and Berlin. Recently, her work was included in La Biennale de Montréal 2014 *L'avenir (Looking Forward)* and *Shine a Light: Canadian Biennial 2014* at the National Gallery of Canada. She received the 2011 viva Award. Althea Thauberger is represented by Susan Hobbs Gallery, Toronto.

Kids these days

Catalogue of an exhibition held
at msvu Art Gallery, 16 January
through 6 March 2016

Editor: Ingrid Jenkner

Translation of Emmanuelle Léonard
and Guillaume Simone's responses
by Vanessa Nicolai, courtesy of the
Foreman Art Gallery of Bishop's
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except *Songstress* video stills courtesy
of Susan Hobbs Gallery and Althea
Thauburger

Frontispiece: *Kids these days/Bande á
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François LaFrance, courtesy of Foreman
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THURSDAY

AUG. 18 '06

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