PAVED MEANT

Vol. 1 (2012-2014)
Foreward

Fostering an environment for open critical discourse within our community is an essential function of PAVED Arts. As attested to by the writing included in this anthology, PAVED’s diverse programming continues to generate an equally diverse and rich interplay of ideas. Behind these writers’ various insights and observations is a very real engagement with the artworks they’re investigating. The feedback an exhibiting artist receives through such critical response is invaluable in evaluating and developing her practice. Revisiting these exhibitions in the writing and documentation included here provides us with the opportunity to experience an exciting array of art projects with fresh ears, through a new lens.

On behalf of the PAVED Arts Board of Directors, I would like to thank our staff for all of their hard work and dedication in making the exhibitions in this volume happen. Thanks also to our members, funders and partners for their important contributions and support. Special thanks to all of the artists who have exhibited at PAVED Arts for sharing your practice with our communities in Saskatoon. Finally, a big congratulations and thanks to all of the writers for bringing their own unique perspective in exploring our centre’s programming and inviting us along for the ride.

Tod Emel  
Chair - PAVED Arts Board of Directors
PAVED Arts Mandate

PAVED Arts is a non-profit, artist run centre for production, presentation, research and dissemination of contemporary media arts. The word PAVED is an acronym signifying the integration of media art forms addressed by our mandate: photographic, audio, video, electronic, digital. PAVED exists to support artists who work in these media.

Our mandate is to support local, regional and national artists working in the ‘PAVED’ arts by operating an access and production centre for media and new media creation, while simultaneously operating a presentation centre that exhibits and disseminates contemporary visual, media and new media art in time-based, gallery, and off-site modes.

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Glenn Alteen Interviews Adrian Stimson
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The Shaman Exterminator: On the Trail of the Woodcraft Indians with the Buffalo Boy Scouts of America

It’s hard to keep up with Adrian Stimson! You have to keep moving. Whenever you think you have a bead on him he shows up somewhere else doing something completely different. You never really know where you’re headed. It’s enough just to follow and keep up-if you can!

I’ve worked with Adrian three times in this past year: on the Ghostkeeper Project where he recreated a 1992 performance work of Ahasiw Maskegon Ikisew at VIVO/OnMain; last April on a project commissioned by grunt gallery; and (as of this writing) he is installing a show that reflects his stint as one of Canada’s official war artists, which brought him to Kandahar a few years ago.

Lately it’s The Shaman Exterminator, a project mounted both at Platform in Winnipeg and at PAVED Arts in Saskatoon. It started out being about the Spirit Sands but quickly morphs in other directions, changing in scale and scope. We conducted this interview in the dying days of 2012, just as the Idle No More movement was in its genesis, providing an important counterpoint to Adrian’s new work. As we talk back and forth the movement gains momentum. There is round dancing in the malls before Christmas, along city streets, and...
expression, which of course includes radical appropriation. I still need to think this one through as I am personally conflicted about it. I do realize that there are a lot of theoretical problems with Burning Man, yet it sure is fun.

So basically that was the journey. I videoed and photographed all these places, in hopes of somehow weaving a story together. Once back in my studio, I started to stalk the internet for regalia appropriations, to see how the Woodcraft could have manifested into other movements. This is where I started to make the connections to Germany, hippies, survivalists, Hollywood, politics and such. It just so happened that a number of fashion houses were being called publicly on their appropriations and had to make apologies – the timing was right as it seems to be a current trend. Several Facebook groups have formed to combat appropriations of indigenous culture. The journey was overwhelming as there was so much to work from; I tried to distill it, yet there are so many images to choose from. My use of the images is also an appropriation, without permission and blatant. Yet I hope it strikes a chord with viewers, so they understand the history and hopefully discover more, which of course is what being On The Trail is all about – discovery.

GA: One thing I notice, though, is how your interests fit into a trend of recent work around the appropriation and misrepresentation of First Nations in early 20th Century children’s education and literature. Your piece is at least somewhat about Ernest Thompson Seton and his Woodcraft Indians, an early version of the Boy Scouts. Recently I read about Kent Monkman’s work around Karl May’s characters Old Shatterhand and Winniout and just saw Terrance Houle’s exhibition on Indian Leg Wrestling, a practice invented by the Boy Scout Movement. It seems like there’s something in the air. I’m curious where that is coming from?

AS: I think it has always been there, simmering under the surface. All of our work has played with this subject and it also seems to be a big part of popular culture right now, with the emergence of the hipsters and the fake headaddresses, and various fashion designers ripping off indigenous designs, as well as in the movies. It seems now more than ever that indigenous artists comment. I just saw a trailer for the movie, A Glimpse Inside the Mind of Charles Swan III where I see indigenous artists come into play. It just never ends...

GA: The way this switches into the Seton stuff seems amazingly serendipitous, providing an amazing focus for all these divergent elements. Though I do understand what you say about it simmering under the surface. It seemed an earlier generation of First Nations artists were looking at the “disappearing Indian” through artists like George Catlin, Edward Curtis, and Emily Carr, who were presenting a colonial narrative of the fading and assimilated First Nations. This work seems aimed at the childhood education of that colonial history presented through children’s literature and different scouting activities. Both narratives present a romanticized and idealized vision of First Nations. Representations of the Hollywood Indian (or the Boy Scout Indian) seem to perpetuate heroic views of First Nations at the same time as legislators through the Indian Act are attempting their assimilation. And given the recent events this week around unilateral changes to the Indian Act by the Harper Government, those attempts at assimilation are ongoing. How do these appropriations play into these legislated attempts at assimilation and disappearance? It’s as if by mythologizing First Nations they can hasten their extinction. I remember an article in The Walrus a few years back where these German Karl May Indians were flying to Canada and being met by Cree elders. The Germans got off the plane in full Plains regalia to be greeted by the Cree in jeans and cowboy boots. The German’s questioned whether they were “real” Indians.

AS: I think in a weird way it legitimizes assimilation, kind of like we honour your culture by imitating it, therefore it’s okay to take whatever we want, only “the good parts” (in the settlers’ eyes) and the rest should be forgotten... especially the land and resources.

Yes, turning us into myths is a good way to promote extinction. When I think about what a “real” Indian is, I too have that colonial image seared into my mind, the first thing I think of is feathers and buckskin, the romantic ideal. I know first hand the tenets of brainwashing. I experience this every day, and it started in residential school. It’s diabolical really, subtle and constant. It has taken me a life time to what I like to call “change my mind,” kind of stalk it to notice when the colonial program kicks into action, then reprogram. This all kind of sounds like the plot of The Matrix, but I really do feel that we have all been programmed and duped into this Western experiment. Media is the pacifier and controller, constantly sending messages that keep us in our place, reinforcing colonial ideas, similar to the Borg, “resistance is futile,” which most of us believe. This is where I see indigenous artists pushing back or reprogramming, maybe even inserting a virus to crash the system. This is where the Shaman Exterminator comes into play. While he/she has parallels with Plains tribes buffalo shaman and dancers, the Shaman Exterminator is a “virus” inserted into the program to mess things up, to confuse, to scare, to intimidate and ultimately to laugh at. To expose that everything is a construction within the mind and that there are many programs to choose from, not just the colonial project.
GA: And of course this all plays out in Santa Fe and in Burning Man. While your re-appropriations are skillful at turning these images on their ear, is there a fear that it’s only the First Nations audience who get what you’re doing? Given how unconscious most North Americans are to these representations in the first place, one wonders if they will get what you are doing and why you are doing it.

AS: For a while I was concerned that non-indigenous viewers would not get it, that I am preaching to the converted or an art theory savvy crowd. Then something happened… I stopped worrying whether people got my work or not. This happened over a period of time of hearing many views of my work, convergent and divergent. I realized that I have absolutely no control over what and how people think, nor should I. I have confidence that the viewer, should they be interested, will find out more about the work.

Hopefully my work will trigger something inside, confuse the program and result in a disturbance that ultimately “changes their mind”. Yet I also know that the Colonial Project is a big monster that is relentless and that many people will never get it and that things will never truly change. I’m not naïve to this reality, nor do I have delusions of grandeur that my work will change the world. I am but a small story in a huge memory board, and perhaps one day that story will join others to become an agent of societal change. In the meantime, I will continue to play in my own way, and have fun doing it.

Notes
1. Platform centre for photographic + digital arts in Winnipeg hosted a residency with Adrian Stimson and co-commissioned this interview with PAVED Arts.

Images
Quietly at the Window

Sasha Opeiko examines the recent work of Laura Dutton
Laura Dutton’s exhibition Quietly at the Window is a humming tableau of temporal collapse. The word “quietly” is a likeness to silence, or absence, but as an adverb it also implies action, process, and presence. This is the kind of integrated duality that is embodied in this exhibition. Every “window” here is both an exposure and a fracture of that exposure.

The source images are cropped from larger urbanscape photographs. Low resolution and pixellated, it is as though the windows themselves were pixels of a larger whole, and likely the only origins of light in the source images. This residual imprint of light was digitally reversed into a negative and printed onto acetate, and was scanned and printed again on a larger scale. As a result, the enlarged pixels - now further deformed by the dots on the scanned acetate - become represented once more by a multiplicity of ink droplets. Because the sides of the “window” frame structures are exposed, the image becomes suspended, double-sided, and thin. It becomes evident that light was bent, folded, and collapsed over a duration of time into one palpable instance. However, this instance is not static, as it is again reactivated by the emission of light, while the light is again fractured by the objecthood of the printed microcosm.

The process of re-representing the image could potentially continue forever. It is a back-and-forth game of reciprocity. Every image may still be rephotographed, rescanned, reprinted, shrunk and re-enlarged. However, the curtains are drawn, and the operation is paused, for no other reason than to signify that nothing is ever complete. The act of perception is always in progress, always a spiralling, plicating shift from moment to moment. The window becomes a stand-in metaphor for this passage. The etymology of the word “window” speaks of this very process. It comes from a compound of “wind” from Old Norse vindr and augs, “eye”1, intrinsically suggesting that visual observation is a framing of spatial transgression.

Our understanding of the function of light in this work may be enhanced through an example of James Clerk Maxwell’s electromagnetic theory, circa 1873. Maxwell proposed that a light wave consists of oscillating magnetic and electric fields, perpendicular to each other and continually exchanging sides.2 The two fields fluctuate in unison, as if shifting their weight so as to make room for the other, as if passing through each other, maintaining a constant balance. A ray of light acts as a trajectory of this liminality, moving ever forward through space-time. This phenomenon is not unlike the inconclusive nature of human desire, where the otherness in the desired object is virtually unattainable.

In effect, Lacanian psychoanalysis states that the imaginary identification with the “other” - the desire for something that is outside of oneself - is actually destructive for both parties. “The destruction is simply there in the form of transferance”, disguised under an invented artifice of otherness (thouness).3 Because the printed window is something that would not exist without the activation of light, it is possible to regard the ink as an object of light’s desire. Of course, this also means that ink, as image, desires the light in order to be seen and confirmed as entity. Both sustain the other, as counterparts, and through their mutual annulment can be regarded as one object. The cancellation, the collapse, creates an opening for the next motion of fulfillment, which would potentially be transferred from the next object of thouness - the viewer. In this way, Quietly at the Window reveals the synthetic materiality of perception, and the continuous drone that is artificially delineated by the mechanics of desire.

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Images

1. Laura Dutton, Untitled, 2012. 36 x 30 inches, photo mounted on light box.
2. Laura Dutton, Quietly At the Window, 2012. Installation view, PAVED Arts.
3. Ibid.
Matthew Hall analyzes the photographic practices of Evergon & Bart Gazzola

The Performative Lens
"People always venerate the wrong thing," writes Louis Armand, in his recent novel *Breakfast at Midnight*. In a discussion about the ubiquity of suffering, Armand punctuates the acid noir landscape, remarking “The crucifixion's beautiful because it's ordinary.” I am given to thinking about this quotation for the manner in which life engenders rituals into our everyday processes, in which the performative gesture is unified with the origins of the act. In PAVED Arts’ exhibition *The Performative Lens* the viewer can begin to question the rituals and the origins of the act of creation in apperceptive bodies of work from Montreal's Evergon and Saskatoon-based critic and artist Bart Gazzola. The works are apperceptive in that they seek to create a defined intersubjectivity which is constructed through the presence of an absent other in the body of the work. *The Performative Lens* combines three viscerally compelling images from Gazzola and eight photographs from Evergon, all of which demand that the viewer confront gradations of scale, a polyvalent layering of meaning, and the jouissance of bodily perforce, violence, and the queer politic enlivened by and captured as the commonality of flesh. The only of Evergon's photographs in the show which is not a self-portrait is titled *Dickie Doo* (Michael Venus), an image realised with impeccable formal constraints and which plays on the concepts of performed and assimilative masculinity. The image's character broods while clutching a worn teddy-bear, sitting awkwardly upon a child's yolk-coloured “Power Wheels” car, which is balanced on two wooden platforms at the image's lower level. The intentionality of highlighting the staging of the car, and the man within it, sitting as he is in crocheted shorts, performs a blending of masculine and feminine, and forces the viewer to address what must be a common criticism of Evergon’s work, that he is intentionally staging an infantilised version of desires. Moving beyond this, the photograph speaks more to the acquisition of social and sexual roles, wills and gestures. The abraded constructs of social roles in the image reflect a defiant criticism of masculinity as performed and hetero-normative, highlighting the acceptance and transgression of the assimilative modalities of masculinity in growth and development.

Five of the remaining images by Evergon stem from a series titled *Crossing the Equator; Going South*, *Pacific Rim* #01-05. In this series Evergon himself dominates the frame, wearing a grass skirt, often with a garland around his waist. Below a textured and toyed-with beard, a mermaid has been drawn across his chest and stomach, whose tail flits ponderously onto Evergon's right leg, which occasionally and flamboyantly parts the weathered grass skirt. The copulative embrace of the mermaid painted over Evergon's body, the garland, and the sailor's hat all have connotations which speak to the plurality of identity, and preconceptions of socio-sexual roles and characteristics of myth in image-making. The bodily contortions in the images reflect the eroticism of the camera, and the dominance of the gaze; they reflect an identity as repetition con différance, a gesture which is performatively instantiated, and which cuts across surface and deep agencies, performed and deferred subjectivities. The images collated for *The Performative Lens*, and specifically *Bottom Post Titania* and *Bully Bottom* bespeak of the artificiality and bestial revelry of the erotic gesture, a carnivalesque envisioning of the queer body politic.

The surface play in Bart Gazzola's three untitled photographs *From the Prophet Series* return to terrain familiar to the artist. They refract notions of both the substantive and the consumptive, and express concepts of bodily wounding and the excesses of corporeality, intrinsic to Gazzola's work from *Adam's Second Wife* (1999) to the present. The monumentality of these three untitled self-portraits depicts the naked body of the artist glistening, exposed, and vulnerable, luridly draped in incarnadine flesh which reflects a sardonic bestiality. The images speak to notions of loss, of woundinf, and of a reverence for loss which the artist aims to reveal in image-making. The bodily contortions in the images reflect the eroticism of the camera, and the dominance of the gaze; they reflect an identity as repetition con différance, a gesture which is performatively instantiated, and which cuts across surface and deep agencies, performed and deferred subjectivities. The images collated for *The Performative Lens*, and specifically *Bottom Post Titania* and *Bully Bottom* bespeak of the artificiality and bestial revelry of the erotic gesture, a carnivalesque envisioning of the queer body politic.

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Reflecting on the images’ title, *From the Prophet Series* has the artist posed as John the Baptist, “A voice of one crying in the wilderness”, in a position where he must bear the wilderness of sacral names. Stemming from the prophetic title is a precarious uncertainty, a bodily corporeality dealing with ontological loss. The images confront the viewer with a marked body: pierced, branded, wrapped in animal flesh-- which has also been marked, disseminated, torn from another body. The sensuality of the flesh-wrapped right arm, with its pleats and folds, luridly coloured and held across the chest, marks the images with the gravitas of a strained Catholicism. The concordant darkening of the genital in all but one image, expresses the pain of the performative gesture. The carnality of wrapping oneself in dead flesh-- and the ethic that an act of this type must entail-- shows the artist dealing with the materiality of familiar constraints, and expresses a groping interrogation of, and an incarceration within, performed acts of creation. In *The Prophet Series* the prominence of the open mouth, and the protrusion of the throat,
are details of the photographs that demand attention, and connote an apperceptive gaze on the failings and delimitations of subjective expression. The lesions on the mouth, the inexpressible words on the lips, bespeak of a performance of the wounded utterance. This unfulfilled evocation is matched in weight by the colouration, porosity, and immediacy of the hands in the images; hands which are grasping for remains, for armour, for a suture, for flesh. The title and the constraints of expression contain the deep play at work in the photographs by casting a self-interrogative eye on Gazzola’s role as artistic and cultural critic within the community, and may even speak to the loss of officialdom found in his exit from the local university. It is not without pain and tempered reflection that Gazzola enacts this performance; it is the act of binding flesh on flesh with which he seeks to find redemption, a suture for the wounded utterance, which remains the most haunting characteristic of his latest body of work.

Images
1. Evergon, Bully Bottom, 50” x 39” and Bottom Post Titania, 41” x 32.5, both are Chromira prints, 2013.
2. Evergon, Dickie Doc (Michael Venus), 2013, 50” x 40” Chromira print.
3. Bart Gazzola, Untitled (From the Prophet Series), 2013. Two of three large format digital prints, installation view, PAVED Arts.
4. Evergon, Crossing the Equator, Going South, Pacific Rim #07, 2006, 50” x 40” Chromira print.
Memories of a Naturalist

Curatorial Essay by David LaRiviere on the work of Maria Whiteman & Clint Wilson
How is it that the Memories of a Naturalist should relate to the work of artists Maria Whiteman and Clint Wilson? In order to address this question we will examine both of their respective art projects for a variety of concerns that pertain first to memory, then the soft science of the naturalist as related to the problematic concept of “becoming.” In the first case, how do the general conditions of memory operate in relation to the pursuits of a naturalist? The initial assumption pertains to memory as a construction, one that serves as an organizing principle for much of the taxonomies of the Naturalist, call it the “knowledge-base.” The specimen only becomes knowable in the course of memory setting out an array of points that construct diorama, hence memory is the constituent element of its construction and, as we shall see, a point of departure for both of the artists concerned. The title for this exhibition, as with its curious appearance in A Thousand Plateaus—found amidst a broader discussion of “becoming animal,” is here invoked not as a support, nor as a key or solution, but rather as a complex construct her system from memories, as a key or solution, but rather as a complex construction, one that implicates systems of knowledge that would subordinate affect to narrative. To be sure, a haunted sensibility cuts across both her photographic and video work, and it’s not surprising given the base line fact that these are dead things positioned as living nature. Relative to her interest in diorama, the photographic series develops a theme of capture: vitality as it comes to be fixed in time. With each of the museological specimens, a snarling coyote, a lynx, an owl, etc., Whiteman prints onto acetate transparency that is positioned on top of such materials as bubble wrap and corrugated cardboard. These everyday office supplies impact the work by effectively immersing her subject onto a tactile, grid-like substrate, an aggressive but well observed use of common materials. The animals photographed and presented in this way take on a heightened sense of capture, frozen not in amber but in packaging. Bestowed animistic postures of each subject in turn promotes a sense of pathos that carries throughout Whiteman’s project, the snarling coyote is trapped in a moment of death after all.

A similar sense of bio-political pathos is explored with Whiteman’s video work, both pieces entitled I Saw You Standing There. The title refers to the artist’s recording of an encounter between herself and a series of larger stuffed mammals, specimens that are likewise kept in museum storage. Whiteman explained that a preliminary aspect of her process, before her performance, involves obtaining permissions, a matter that may be supported or justified by related academic and artistic activities, and one that entails navigating institutional authority. Suffice it to say that the project’s critical bearing must be carefully disclosed. Even at that, the permission that is granted only goes part of the way. Whiteman obtained general access to museum storage in order to photograph various specimens, but she only touched them when no one was looking. The camera tracks over the the body and face of the static animal in a slow, fluid motion, always at close range and following the artist’s hand (surreptitiously) raking with and against the nap of the animal’s fur. Around the edges of this interaction we catch snippets of the metal cage upon which a deer, for example, is hanging by an s-hook from its rump. The importance of such overtly violent edge-work lies in the way that the eroticism associated with stroking a fur coat. Especially where, for example, the grizzly’s face is concerned, the encounter that Whiteman stages implies a haptic2 communication, imbued as her action is with a close range, textural exploration. Empathy turns to pathos at the very moment that the intimate touch meets with an inert mass, an animal-become-prop for the memory of a naturalist. Whereas Maria Whiteman contemplates the capture and pathos embodied by the natural history specimen, the counter-attack staged in Clint Wilson’s project targets the what Deleuze and Guattari describe as a “Royal Science,”3 the science of establishment and control. A case in point is Wilson’s Untitled (Series), a grouping of nine colour photographs that feature labelled specimens, each named according to genus or species. The dictates of a taxonomy, a science of classification that assigns points and fixes the specimen, is also operative in a process that reduces a given animal to little more than a mnemonic device. As with Whiteman’s photographic series, Wilson deploys a shallow depth of field that mostly obscures its subject, drawing tiny areas into focus with a technique that resembles the tilt-shift lens effect. What is blurred in these photographs is precisely what ordinarily functions as an explicit relation, between the specimen and its corresponding name, the coordinates that locate this once-animal as genus and species. Wilson builds a tension between the label and the specimen,
playing with focus so as to post a purposeful ambiguity, a kind of mystery seeded inside of the declaration. *Untitled (Series)* was mounted in solid black frames of identical dimensions, foregrounding modular and interchangeable properties in the work. In fact with prior installations Wilson has configured the series in a grid, and in some situations edited out images for space. Between the hard, regular geometry of the thick black frames and the blury displacement of the subject photographed, another content emerges, that of an overwrought scientific determination, one that fails to grasp the complexity of the subject as a multiplicity, the mysterious subject that embodies an entire constellation of affects that enter into composition with an open, chaotic system. In Wilson's series, what escapes the taxonomic memory of the expert Naturalist is precisely this movement of becoming.

Up until now we have considered only photographs and videos of dead specimens, and as such both artists have imbued their respective frozen bestiaries with unexpected dimensions. In different ways, the diorama and other devices of museological "authority" are herein implicated as being little more than an obvious allusion to a fairground carousel. However, a more ominous association overshadows the relatively cheerful title of this work, as the arrangement likewise alludes to the Panopticon—the infamous prison design invented by 18th century British philosopher Jeremy Bentham. As with the Panopticon, Wilson places the "sentry" post at the centre. Consequently, everyone entering into the installation is compelled to adopt the warden's 360 degree vantage point in relation to the caged wolves. The projections themselves allude to cells, and their continuous back and forth tracking movements, which mechanically pan through a prison-in-the-round, double back at a certain point and intersect at times. Hence the movement of the video "cells" allude to the compulsive pacing of the wolves. With this work Wilson contests the fundamental assumption that in captivity we find timber wolves living, as it were, in a cross section of their "natural" habitat. The artist notes the pacing of the timber wolves fits a disturbing profile of animal mental illness sometimes referred to as stereotypy. Having said this, what is at stake in Caroussel goes way beyond a statement about animal rights. The wolves and their artificial habitat, like the museum diorama, are exposed as a Panopticism; a centralized form of surveillance and control, ultimately an expression of a disciplinary society that privileges a "Royal Science," and produces only the story of what is already established. In this way Caroussel makes legible a counterproductive scientific expression of power, one that brutally subordinates that which is a chaotic and unpredictable to a mere representation.

In part two of the three-part BBC series *All Watched Over By Machines Of Loving Grace*, documentary filmmaker Adam Curtis traces a brief history of the Naturalist and the popular notion of the "Ecosystem." Within this recounting there are episodes of falsifying data and other byproducts of spesious thinking, at one extreme leading to *The Use and Abuse of Vegetational Concepts* and subsequently the apartheid system in South Africa. Perhaps more interesting than all of the skeletons in the closet, Curtis also recounts the challenges that the projects that overturn controlling scientific orthodoxy. One such instance is the story of George Van Dyne, the first director of the "Natural Resource Ecology Laboratory." With only the best of intentions Van Dyne set out to build a comprehensive, cybernetic model of a complete ecosystem, painstakingly sitting open the bellies of insects, analyzing deer feces, etc. Upon entering an unprecedented volume of data Van Dyne discovered the opposite of what he was looking for, namely that the consideration of such comprehensive detail did not lead to a more comprehensive model but rather an increasingly chaotic one. While it is true that the system is rife with feedback, it is decidedly not closed, and the lines of escape will always overwhelm the model, increasingly so when it is rigorous. This is the point of departure for the art work in question, whether through paths and touch, or by counter-attack, Maria Whiteman and Clint Wilson engage is an artistic expression that is in excess of the diorama, of the zoo, in deference to a content and expression that overspills the semiotic bounds of the Memories of the Naturalist.

1. “Problematic” understood as the activity of a problem, or a problem that is in motion as opposed to a problem that is situated.
2. "With the haptic Deleuze argues that space becomes tactile as if the eye were now a hand caressing one surface after another without any sense of the overall configuration or mutual relation of those surfaces. It is a virtual space whose fragmented components can be assembled in multiple combinations.” http://blogs.warwick.ac.uk/crpl_art/entry/the_haptic/
3. In A Thousand Plateaus the concept of a “Royal Science” is opposed to "Nomad Science." Whereas the former procedure is based on defending what is "established," and is legislative in that its equations are invoked or privileged by the State apparatus. Nomad Science is predicated on "following" an uncharted course, inseparable from intuition, experimentation, and continuous variation. See http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Diagramm
4. Arthur Tansley, who coined the term "ecosystem," leveled this accusation of "abuse" at Field Marshal Smuts, who deployed a perverse version of ecological science to justify the institution of Apartheid in South Africa.

Images
1. Clint Wilson, Untitled (series), 2012. Two of nine photographs, 16 x 16 inches each.
4. Clint Wilson, Caroussel, 2013, video still, installation shot. (Pages 29-30)
OUTER SPACE

Justin Pfefferle probes the work of Jacqueline Hoang Nguyen & Ryan Park
Nguyen uses this minor event in Canadian Alberta, celebrated the national birthday—by a story about how the people of St. Paul, historical artefacts, and kitsch objects, to tell of government documents, cultural and archival materials, including reproductions of the Centenary. Her exhibit combines the national imagination in 1967, the year interrogates Canada’s image of itself as

In Space Fiction and the Archives, Nguyen interrogates Canada’s image of itself as a welcoming space by comparing how two different groups of aliens occupied the national imagination in 1967, the year of the Centenary. Her exhibit combines archival materials, including reproductions of government documents, cultural and historical artefacts, and kitsch objects, to tell a story about how the people of St. Paul, Alberta, celebrated the national birthday—by building “The World’s First UFO Landing Pad.”

Nguyen uses this minor event in Canadian history to challenge the official national discourse about immigration, the fiction of Canadian inclusivity and multiculturalism. Some aliens, her exhibit makes clear, are better welcomed than others. The Landing Pad, built as a monument to “western hospitality,” was meant to provide Martian visitors with an ideal place to touch down in Canada. Aliens from within planet earth have no such place to land: their access to national space is considerably more circumscribed than that of their extraterrestrial counterparts.

Nguyen highlights the functional, symbolic, and economic valences of the Landing Pad in order to make a subversive point about how the State views those who seek entrance into Canada’s so-called cultural mosaic. Prints of the St. Paul Journal underscore the multiple, sometimes contradictory, ways that the monument signified for the people of the town. The Landing Pad was counted upon to bring national, even global, fame to St. Paul. A headline from 25 May, 1967, reads: “St. Paul Landing Pad Receives World Wide Publicity.” As a tourist attraction, the Landing Pad created its own culture industry. Mass-produced trinkets, bought and sold in the town gift shop, indicate the financial legacy of the event. Pyramid, a mixed-media sculpture that displays a souvenir plate bearing an image of the Landing Pad, and The Centennial Star, two inkjet prints that represent, in diptych, either side of a commemorative coin, invoke capital as the primary motivator of the “Centenary Idea.”

So too, Nguyen argues, do economics govern how the State evaluates immigrants—as citizen-consumers, subjects who will (or will not) conform to the demands of capitalism. In Immigration Policy (point-based system), she duplicates the 1967 “Norms for Assessment of Individual Applicants” on a series six large acrylic plates. Categories like “Education and Training,” “Occupational Skill,” and “Knowledge of English and French” determine the degree to which an individual might be expected to contribute to the Canadian economy. Once their files reach the desks of government bureaucrats, immigrants aren’t people so much as they’re investments. The number they’re assigned corresponds not to the merits of their character, but to their capacity to buy and sell things like the souvenir plate.

The focal piece in Space Fiction and the Archives is a nineteen-minute video called 1967: A People Kind of Place. Stitched together with footage transferred from Super 8, 16mm, and 35mm films, the video is, in part, a documentary about the Centenary and the unveiling of the Landing Pad. The disruptive form of the collage complements the subversive qualities of the narrative, which develops along a familiar logic of the alien invasion film. One scene, lifted from a singularly schlocky sci-fi movie, takes place in the office of an Immigration Agent, whom we see seated at his desk. Across from him (but, importantly, outside the frame), a Martian invader wants to know whether or not he will be permitted into the country. The Agent describes the quota system of Canadian Immigration, telling him that although the country has room for a certain number of black, brown, and yellow people, “we don’t have any quota at all for green people.” The scene provides a key for understanding the satire of the exhibit as a whole. The notion of Canadian diversity operates according to a rigidly enforced ideology of racial and economic superiority, not some benign ethos of universal inclusion. The Martian says that he intends to stay in Canada “until mankind learns to love his neighbour.” With his application denied, he returns home a casualty of a system of immigration that views some people as more desirable than others.

Ryan Park’s video installations foreground different sets of relationships between discipline, imagination, and space. Rabbit and Dark is the Night (Voyager) combine philosophical reflections about outer space with performances that highlight the physical and formal demands of interior space—both the space of the frame and that of the gallery itself. In Rabbit, Park contorts his hands into the shape of the titular animal and holds them before a projector, casting a shadow puppet onto the facing wall. Over the course of the roughly twenty-minute video, he struggles to control the involuntary movements of his fingers and hands as his muscles cramp under the strain of trying to hold still. The image that

Between 13 September and 19 October 2013, Paved Arts held Outer Space, a show that put Jacqueline Hoang Nguyen’s multi-media exhibit, Space Fiction and the Archives, into dialogue with Ryan Park’s video installations; Rabbit and Dark is the Night (Voyager). United conceptually by the artists’ similar concerns with relationships between imagination and space, the show invited gallery visitors to consider some of the most fundamental ways in which we interact with space, broadly conceived. In Nguyen’s and Park’s works, “space” didn’t refer just to the deep, boundless “out there” of extraterrestrial planets and beings. That sense of outer space is obtained, but the show examined local, boundaried spaces as well, from the disciplinary political space of the nation to the equally demanding formal and aesthetic space of the frame.

In Space Fiction and the Archives, Nguyen interrogates Canada’s image of itself as a welcoming space by comparing how two different groups of aliens occupied the national imagination in 1967, the year of the Centenary. Her exhibit combines archival materials, including reproductions of government documents, cultural and historical artefacts, and kitsch objects, to tell a story about how the people of St. Paul, Alberta, celebrated the national birthday—by building “The World’s First UFO Landing Pad.” Nguyen uses this minor event in Canadian history to challenge the official national
he creates, suggestive of the “moon rabbit” of East Asian folklore, is at once abstract and visibly corporeal. A gestalt that looks different to each viewer (and in each viewing), the rabbit draws attention to the living form as it writhes and crumples in on itself. As Park struggles, micro-details like the curvature of the fingers, even individual nail beds, become pronounced. The viewer’s focus is thus divided. On one hand, the video encourages us to think about the different, culturally conditioned, ways that we imagine outer space. On the other hand, it calls to mind the discipline required to maintain form within the circular boundary of the projection lens.

Dark is the Night (Voyager) manages several vectors of discipline, imagination, and space. The installation – a roughly two-hour, continuous, single-shot video in which Park faces the camera and cranks a handheld LED light into the lens – disciplines the viewer at the same time as it functions as a performance of discipline itself. The physical turning of the crank generates light and sound: as Park gains and loses stamina, the light becomes more or less intense, while the soundtrack, comprised of music and sounds recorded for the Voyager space probe, comes in and out of audibility. Like Rabbit, Dark is the Night (Voyager) renders the human form visible and invisible. Intermittently, Park’s torso appears behind the glow of the light, then disappears into the blackened, seemingly limitless, space out of which the light emanates. The viewer, standing or sitting in the pitch-black of screening room, occupies a similar space. With light shining into our eyes, we are immobilised and reminded of our immobility: What does it mean, Park asks us, to be singled out in (and of) the darkness, by someone – or something – on the other end of the light? What kinds of subject positions are available to those for whom the expansiveness of space becomes contracted to a single point of illumination?

For Nguyen and Park, the very notion of outer space entails an inner space within which things and people either do or do not belong. Whether imaginary or material, the boundaries that demarcate one space from another determine how we conceive of ourselves in relation to those on the other side of the divide. Access to space, perhaps the defining problem of our contemporary condition, carries certain privileges for some, and, of course, certain restrictions for others. To exist in space is to observe (and maybe to transgress) the limits of that space, to seek beyond where we are told not to travel. Some of us navigate space more easily than others. Those of us who attended Outer Space gained a new awareness of precisely how we move across and between the multiple, and multiplying, spaces that we inhabit.

Images
1. Ryan Park, Dark is the Night (Voyager), 2013. 72 x 48 inches, video projection.
Silence, Time and Dead Air

Ellen Moffat responds to Steven Bates’s *Dead Air*
On the radio silence is not permitted. Dead air - the absence of audible programmed material - suggests instability and disorder: warfare (an attack on a transmission tower), loss of revenue (advertising), human or technical error. A radio performance in 2005 of John Cage's 4′33″ required that the BBC disable a 'dead man switch' that would otherwise have launched recorded programming.1

By contrast to Cage's 4′33″ which frames silence to support listening, Bates uses silence to explore notions of time, transmission, silence/signal/noise, technological change, voice, authority, and the refusal to speak. Two short stories were influences: Walter Benjamin's On the Minute and Heinrich Böll's Murke's Collected Silences. Each story addresses aspects of silence in radio broadcasts. Benjamin depicts a scenario in which the demands for punctuality cause tremendous anxiety for the guest broadcaster who misreads the studio punctuality cause tremendous anxiety for the guest broadcaster who misreads the studio

A Minute for Walter Benjamin uses 24 clock radios tuned to the same FM frequency for transmission. ‘stop’… ‘stop’… ‘stop’… ‘stop’… ‘stop’… ‘ok, that's enough’… ‘ok’… is transmitted as polyphonic vocal sound. A period of dead air lasts for a measure of time equal to the sound. Then, the word ‘start’ breaks the silence spoken as a chorus followed by a lone ‘start now’. Then, dead air again. The cycle of spoken word and dead air continue. In reset mode, the 24 clock radios accompany the broadcast as a syncopated rhythm of blinking red and green quartz light. Clustered on the gallery floor, radio cables and electrical wires intersect and overlap as a tech-organic rizome.

Start. Stop. is a series of mediated performances of durational time presented as documentation. Participants are videotaped individually as they perform one minute of time for the camera using subjective awareness or guesswork as their internal timer. Performances range from 0′30″ to 03′00″ in duration. The video depicts varying states of concentration and psychological effort of the participants. Ambient sound from the recording sessions - music, coughing, and bodily shuffling - is the soundtrack for the video, heard on headphones.

The second video, To End, To Begin, is a projection, and its subject is the environment of the recording studio. The video is banal, subtle and (almost) monochromatic. Near-still images of walls, the texture of the wall surfaces, architectural details and peeling paint are accompanied by subtle shifts in light. The quietness of the video proposes a visual equivalent to the audible silence.

In Beacons, a snare drum functions as a signifying object and amplifier for recordings of radio broadcasts of international time beacons. The sound is low; audibility is difficult. As a symbol, the snare drum references colonization and the militarization of time and society.

*The art of our time is noisy with appeals for silence.* 2

Dead Air is a open work that requires active engagement by the viewer to connect the parts. For me, the exhibition was best experienced alone in the gallery. My desire for solitude was not nihilistic. Rather it allowed me to hear the nuanced sound of dead air.

Silence remains, inescapably, a form of speech… and an element in a dialogue.

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2. All quotations are from The Aesthetics of Silence by Susan Sontag, Styles of Radical Will, 1969.
3. Images
Justin Pfefferle explores the work of Manuel Chantre

Memorsion
“Buildings are received in a twofold manner: by use and by perception.”

When Marshall McLuhan wrote his famous aphorism, “the medium is the message,” he could have been predicting a show like Manuel Chantre’s Memorsion, which PAVED exhibited between 17 January and 21 February 2014. A feature exhibit of the first annual Saskatchewan Prairie Light Photography Festival, Memorsion creates an immersive, interactive media environment through a highly technical coordination of image and sound projection. It invites visitors into a fractured and fragmentary space. When you enter, you’re enveloped inside a labyrinth of translucent screens, surrounded by flickering, semi-random images, caught in the light of the projector. Memorsion washes over you, but your experience isn’t passive: through movement, you inscribe yourself on the environment, both by triggering a PS3-eye motion sensitive camera that tells the master computer to reassemble the visual loop, and by writing your shadow, however fleetingly, upon the polyester screens.

The screens are portals into the world of Memorsion. At PAVED, Chantre suspended eighteen panels in a T-configuration of two columns. Four projectors—one on each point of the T and one in the middle of the room facing the terminus—cast images through the screens, creating a three-dimensional visual environment. There’s no predetermined way to navigate the space, but the effects of optical depth encourage you move—or imagine moving—through the openings and corridors of Memorsion’s architecture. The panels are inviting and preemptive, points of access and barriers to motion. Just as they filter particles of light while allowing some light to pass, so they frustrate the illusion that you can enter the image-scape projected through them. You will have to contend, ultimately, with the materiality of the screens. Through physical contact, you’re given to recognize that your sense of immersion is a technological effect, an impression orchestrated by the media apparatus.

The content of the visual loop conspires with the structure of the installation. It promises, then reneges on its promise, to guide the visitor across the threshold of the screen. The images invite and prevent the identification of the viewer by registering as familiar and unfamiliar simultaneously. Chantre’s footage, comprised of shots of human bodies and splintered architectural elements—concrete expanses, graffiti-covered walls, crumbling, abandoned buildings, and bridges—denote “what is normal for us,” what we take for granted “in our day-to-day lives.” The fractured, nonlinear quality of the loop estranges us from the images, prompting us to reconsider the built environment outside the lens of our regular experience. At PAVED, Chantre described choosing images that evoke a sense of timelessless: shots of a woman eating, brushing her hair, and washing her face depict common, culturally and historically indeterminate behaviours that he intends to resemble those of the viewer. Shots of urban architectures, although specific to Montreal, conceal their actual locations in ways that make them translatable as part of what Chantre called the “nowhere place” of cultural imagination. When you move through Memorsion, you project yourself into the visual world just as surely as you’re projected onto the screens. Your projection can never be complete, however. The images disrupt any effort that you might make to follow them along a through line or narrative trajectory.

In his artist’s talk at PAVED, Chantre said that although he shot all of his footage with a video camera, he thinks of the images that make up the loop in photographic terms. Instead of presenting a complete rendering of the world, his images embrace the fragmentariness of photography—its necessarily partial apprehension of silvers of time and space. Memorsion activates what Walter Benjamin describes as the “optical unconscious” of photography, the new arrangements of matter that the technology of the camera literally brings to light. Superior to human eyes, cameras record elements of reality that exceed the “normal spectrum of sensory impressions.” In The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction, Benjamin writes:

We have some idea of what is involved in the act of waking (if only in general terms),

[but] we have no idea at all what happens during the split second when a person takes a step. We are familiar with the movement of picking up a cigarette lighter or spoon, but we know almost nothing of what really goes on between hand and metal. This is where the camera comes into play.

Memorsion updates a Benjaminian theory of photography for a new media world. It disrupts habitual ways of looking, making possible other kinds of connections between self and other, subject and object. For Benjamin, “the optical reception of architecture […] spontaneously takes the form of casual noticing, rather than attentive observation.” Chantre makes inattention impossible. His installation overwhelms the visitor with the stuff of reality that tends to evade conscious experience.

The images, projected onto and through polyester screens, don’t resemble photographs so much as they resemble photographic negatives. Relics of an analogue world, negatives are as obsolete as the buildings that Chantre captures with his digital camera. Given that the screens are legible on both sides, they have a structural affinity with negatives, which harbour inverted images in translucent space until they emerge, developed, out of chemical vats. Prior to their development, negatives exist in a kind of archival limbo: they are indexical traces that haven’t yet become icons. As well as being
visual echoes of one another, the screens share with negatives a common semiotics. In the same way that negative images occupy a moment prior to their incorporation into the larger visual environment, the shots that project through the screens of Memorsion resist integration into any explanatory context. In an allegorical sense, Chantre’s images are undeveloped. They refer not to experiences but traces of experience, flash-moments that can’t be assimilated into a coherent and continuous pattern.

Memorsion adopts elements of photography to ask epistemological questions about images, memory, and subjectivity. The installation makes clear that the camera doesn’t fracture our perceptions of reality or ourselves. Instead, and as Ulrich Baer argues, it “[discloses] the world – the setting for human experience – as nothing but atoms moving in a void.”1 Photographs are aides-mémoire, but they also present history as unstable, a web of ruptures and bursts that undermines the notion of time as an uninterrupted, sequential, homogeneous flow. As the medium that bestows light waves and moving particles with an appearance of solid objects and events, photography embodies the psychic tensions at play when we stitch the flashes of images that comprise our memory into stories about our environments and ourselves. Memorsion frames reality as a jumble of isolated shards, which address the optical unconscious not only by drawing attention to what we might be inclined to ignore, but by doubling the psychological processes at work when we develop some experiences into memories and sublimate others in the basements of our minds. Architectural ruins and abandoned buildings function within Chantre’s media ecology as metaphors of personal and collective history. Evacuated of human inhabitants, they register as excess: part of and exterior to the lived experiences of urban dwellers. Instead of being blights on an otherwise pristine landscape, ruins become sites of projection, walls and girders that bear traces of contact, and upon which people write versions of themselves. Graffiti tags are material remnants of more ephemeral inscriptions—the psychic and psychological imprints left behind by human traffic. Because the buildings are abandoned, they make themselves available to modes of sensation and perception that exceed questions of use-value. As detritus, ruins disrupt the flow of bodies that cities aim to facilitate. They frustrate linear mobility. As allegories of experience and subjectivity, ruins describe what doesn’t fit, what can’t be contained within the perceptual apparatus, but which flash up every so often, demanding that we attend to them.2

5. Benjamin, 115.
7. Benjamin, 120.
9. More needs to be said about the aural dimensions of Memorsion.

Images
Bart Gazzola enters the fray of Anitra Hamilton’s *Town & Country*
Boris Groys’ writings on *The Art of Stalinism* have become an invaluable touchstone for much of my recent critical thought. Before I go yet again to his ideas to facilitate my own, let me explain that his insights into that period are easily applicable to other eras – like our own. We are, after all, doomed to repeat history like a failed grade. An idea he floats is that in those heady, uncensored early days of the Soviet revolution, artists eventually became overwhelmed by the endless possibilities. After all, to be able to do everything is almost to be unable to focus on anything. The scary thing that Groys points out is that many in the cultural spaces welcomed the stricture and rules of Stalinist socialist realism. Part of this is due to the aforementioned desire for a framework. It also could be seen as part of the still hopeful / delusional faith in that psychopathic mass murderer so many knew as “Uncle Joe,” a paternalistic Tsarist figure that we see revived in spirit by Vladimir Putin (ideologies, in art or politics, with their cults of personality, rarely die cleanly or easily).

So what are the rules of art making – and who says? Are there any? That word “meaning” is anathema to many, as bad a word as “rules.” And remember, many self designate as “artist” or “social prophet” whose response to your question about that is to accuse you of being a Stephen Harper supporter. If I could use the word “value,” but that’s even worse…. and art is so much like a religion that to even question is to be branded a heretic and shown the door. Be pleased you didn’t get burned for blasphemy.

This is why I enjoy the installation by Anitra Hamilton at PAVED Arts, called *Town & Country*: it is delightfully heretical, the type of thing that offends in “unsafe” and “unsanctioned” ways. And it makes me think of manure, by intent, as opposed to “unsanctioned” ways. And it makes me think of manure, by intent, as opposed to incidentally, as many “artists” do….

The space is minimal: two walls, facing, have speakers blaring audio. It’s a clean installation: black, box like speakers, on shelves, with the black cords only adding to the antiseptic nature of the space. (I’m reminded of Rutger Zuydervelt’s *Stay Tuned* – and like that audible art).

One audio sampling is somewhat coarser in its origin, the other contrasting with a more cultured and moneymed voice. The artist’s voice is almost purely descriptive and neutral: *Town & Country* consists of two companion audio digital recordings. *Country* features the sound recording of a “limousine cow auction” captured at the Royal Agricultural Winter Fair in Toronto. *Town* is an audio recording of a Sotheby’s contemporary art evening auction in New York city. Tobias Meyer was the auctioneer. (...) They can be heard separately at either end of the gallery, however when the visitor approaches the centre of the space the recordings begin to compete with each other and sometimes cancel each other out."

Nothing is spelled out for you, but you’d have to be a dullard – or so ideologically stunted that you are unable to see anything outside your own frame of “artistic” reference– to miss the implicit sarcasm.

But there is nuance; perhaps this has a comment on the art market. It’s finally begun to “bloom” in Canada with the “values” (money wise, I mean) we’ve seen elsewhere (like the referenced New York Sotheby’s as a standard).

Perhaps it’s a comment on how never before has it been so competitive, whether to get a job or a tenure position, and there is now an underclass whom will never be anything more than contract workers, waiting in holding pens for something better….

Never before have those that have gone before done so little, for so few, so often, while treating us like we’re being appraised for our parts to feed the system. I know I’m not the auctioneer in this scenario, I’m the beef in the abattoir – just like those who believe that their visual arts PhD program they worked so hard to get into, with strenuous inspections and grading and computerized ear tags, will guarantee them success. They don’t see that bolt gun leading them to the McJobs pen.

One might even postulate that the emptiness – the physical emptiness anyway, mimics the superficial façade of the “Art World.” Consequently, the space is rife with anxiety, like I’ve not seen since Steve Bates’ creeping army of LED clocks.

Groys also dangerously asserts how some see “the religion of the avant garde as false and idolatrous.” But we all know that a prophet is, of course, without honor in their own country…. and usually, when confronted with something genuinely groundbreaking or radical, most will fall back on the safe and secure haven that they don’t understand, and simply walk into the gallery space, and walk back out, not “getting it.”

Adorno highlighted this disturbing trend years ago. *Town & Country* can help you decide if that concern has been supplanted by Fredric Jameson’s *Postmodernism or, The Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism*, where an object of “value”, available to a select few, judged on its exclusivity, is now all that matters. His ideas of “late capitalist modernism” are more aptly described as “late modernist capitalism.”

Anitra Hamilton’s *Town & Country* deserves a bit more consideration than the dismissal Adorno laments, and I’m hopeful it will get that. Or maybe I can’t see the holding pen I’m in, either…
A Well Fitted Suit

David LaRiviere reflects on Yam Lau’s *Inaugurations (Two Instances of Illumination)*
I first met Yam Lau in the second year of our respective undergraduate studies in Fine Art, some 28 years ago at the University of Alberta. Reflecting on those early years seems like contemplating another life, and as with so many of the students and faculty in Edmonton at that time, we eventually went our separate ways. To be sure, Lau has since developed many formative artistic experiences, just as he has initiated important collaborative projects and artistic alliances from points elsewhere. It would be fair to say that Lau has traversed an expanse, having completed graduate work, later becoming a faculty member in the Fine Art department at York University, and most importantly having continued his pursuit of an artistic practice in rigorous ways, along both formal and conceptual lines. It is to be expected that Lau’s experience has intensified his artistic concerns, and yet at heart there remains a certain quality in his projects, a remarkable consistency that I recognize from all those years ago, a kind of sensitive yet remarkable consistency that I recognize from many formative artistic experiences, just as he has developed his students and faculty in Edmonton. Reflecting on those early years seems like contemplating another life, and as with so many of the students and faculty in Edmonton at that time, we eventually went our separate ways. To be sure, Lau has since developed many formative artistic experiences, just as he has initiated important collaborative projects and artistic alliances from points elsewhere. It would be fair to say that Lau has traversed an expanse, having completed graduate work, later becoming a faculty member in the Fine Art department at York University, and most importantly having continued his pursuit of an artistic practice in rigorous ways, along both formal and conceptual lines. It is to be expected that Lau’s experience has intensified his artistic concerns, and yet at heart there remains a certain quality in his projects, a remarkable consistency that I recognize from all those years ago, a kind of sensitive yet remarkable consistency that I recognize from many formative artistic experiences, just as he has developed his students and faculty in Edmonton.

Entering into Yam Lau’s exhibition at PAVED Arts, entitled Inaugurations (Two Instances of Illumination), one is immediately reminded of the precise intuitive method developed by Bergson, a procedure that works towards a complex understanding of differences that live within composites. For Bergson all of experience is bound up in composites, variable compositions of perception and memory, space and time, and of past and present. Without being illustrative, Lau’s work shares certain pronounced affinities with this philosophical method named intuition. His approach to media art is one that expounds upon the time of the image, drawing out or delineating elements of the composite. For Bergson, in a like manner, the important role that intuition plays has to do with drawing out differences in kind that exist within composites, qualities that are often conflated in experience and thereby mistaken as mere differences in degree. Thus intuition does form a method with its three (or five) rules. This is an essentially problematizing method (a critique of false problems and the invention of genuine ones), differentiating (carvings out and intersections), temporalizing (thinking in terms of duration).1

In order to better understand the play of forces that constitute experience, an exacting, precise analysis is required, one that Bergson contrasts to a sloppy (over-generalizing) dialectic and conversely likens to “a well fitted suit.” In thinking about Yam Lau’s project the image of the “well fitted suit,” which the artist cited during his talk at PAVED Arts, seems well formulated to relate to both “instances” contained in Inaugurations.

Of the two discrete, single channel video works on view, the earlier work, simply entitled Room (2008), holds up for consideration a furnished apartment space with its occupants, notably the artist himself, engaged in a quotidian moment. As such the work operates on a rather intimate level, privileging the quietest of moments rather than any kind of dramatic flourish, crisis point or building narrative device. The feeling of intimacy is further enhanced by the (literally) transparent nature of the “walls” that inscribe the space, underscoring the generalized context of Room as that of the artist’s own lived space. While Rehearsal was presented as a large projection that dominated the majority of the gallery space, Room was positioned near the entranceway of the gallery on a flat screen monitor. As with an earlier presentation of Room at the Musee d’art de Joliette, the “furniture” of the 36” flat screen monitor was covered and thereby neutralized by a plinth-like wall construction with a cut-away hole placed directly over the screen. This was undertaken not only to tidy up the monitor, but to heighten or emphasize the planar aspect of the screen, an element that is mirrored by the “walls” of the ever-rotating room. In fact the cubic nature of the rotating room is not due to the shape of the architectural space that is captured or represented, but rather by the planar screens that take up the quadrilateral and rotating vantage points onto an otherwise irregular architectural space. It is a rotating cube of screens that we peer through, capturing the same figure moving through the same time but from different yet overlapping perspectives. One might venture at this point that Lau’s interest in the planar has certain affinities to the cubist program of examining the object from multiple perspectives at once. However, where cubism is ultimately concerned with extension, in particular the intersection of perspectives as they reiterate the extension of a canvas surface, towards a kind of flatness that is decidedly static, Lau’s construction is entirely open to the possibilities of duration. In Lau’s Room, everything that is expressed as a spatial extension is in perpetual movement, always in a process of becoming different even from itself. This is the very capacity of time, philosophically considered apart from space, drawn away from the composite of “spacetime,” that is traced in order to apprehend which that is ever-changing.

In contrast to the video screens of Room, the large scale single-channel projection of Rehearsal is drawn much more aggressively out of 3-D imaging software. Many of the elements of Rehearsal retain the undisguised look of computer generated imagery. Virtual rain, itself an overt computer graphic, veils all of the parts of this video as it unfolds within an inscribed space. Two considerations immediately come to the fore in framing...
Rehearsal as a project that occupies “virtual” space: first there is the formation of abstract “potential,” and then, with this potential, the development of a composite (assemblage) as it comes to occupy a duration. To begin with Lau gives us the term “rehearsal,” denoting a practice run that eventually comes to produce a certain potential. The video begins with component structural parts that look like ubiquitous framed sections of a wall from before it is sheeted with drywall. Revolving around a sheer (virtual) table top, pieces fly in the rain as if caught in a spiral vortex, eventually self-organizing into an ordered architectural space, then a living space, and ultimately a window onto a very particular interior space, one that reveals a small but intimate drama. Moving more slowly onto the frame of the window, Lau integrates actual video that he captured of a woman within a typical dwelling from Beijing, China. Potential is produced on a couple of different levels: first as raw structural components which, operating very much as would a diagram, constitute abstract forms that may be carried off in any direction; and second in the coalescing development of virtual potential that becomes a certain reality, and in this movement an entire social and cultural assemblage is conjured. There is a woman at the window, anonymously observed in a private moment, quietly smoking a cigarette and weeping only to herself. Almost as soon as the subject is developed and given a certain time, she is whisked away and the assemblage disintegrates back into its abstracted component parts. As with Room, the drama that is produced in Rehearsal is restrained to a sense of the everyday, but also as with Room, the architectural space and the rigidity of its component parts give way to an assemblage that is subject to a duration. The table top exercise of Rehearsal (all rehearsals being exercises) occupies a creative space that ultimately, inevitably becomes involved with the real.

Lau’s exhibition juxtaposes presentations of Room and Rehearsal as two discrete instances that illuminate the artist’s ontological interest in the “image.” Whereas Room expresses a time that unfolds around interleaving perspectives, lending its quotidian subject multiple simultaneous dimensions, Rehearsal exercises the integration, coalescence and disintegration of the image in time. Both cases lend a virtual metaphysics to space and time that corresponds to an image in movement. Ultimately it is the coalesced image of the woman in the window that haunts us, as but one instance of a multiplicity set into motion but never concluded.


Going Off-Route

Justin Pfefferle contextualizes Amanda Dawn Christie’s *Off Route 2*. 
What does it mean for a film to reveal its apparatus and betray the constructedness of the illusions that it projects? What’s at stake in moments where you see the image in process, as with Amanda Dawn Christie’s film installation Off-Route 2?

Exhibited at PAVED between 12 September – 17 October, 2014, Off-Route 2 refers implicitly to a history of filmmaking that wonders if self-revelation might be integral to cinema as a media and form. Yet while the installation invites being situated on a lineage of films that reveal themselves, it also occupies a contemporary moment in which cinema’s past is being resuscitated through increasing translations from celluloid material to digital immateriality, hasn’t necessarily shifted the ground beneath what qualifies as cinema qua cinema. When we encounter Christie’s installation, we’re confronted with a harbinger of cinema’s future and a disclosure of the image of an inert vehicle, flipped upside-down in the aftermath of a crash, represents a challenge to the fetishising of movement that provides motion pictures with their raison d’être. In contrast with the tracking shot that begins the loop on a note of boundless mobility through uninhabited space, the car that greets the viewer raises the spectre not only of human encroachment, but of a stillness that carries with it connotations of death. Motionless, the body inside the car invites the kind of concentrated attention to which Maysles and Jagger pay the body of Meredith Hunter when they freeze the frame in moments where you see the image in slow-motion, then in freeze-frame. In the editing room, Mick Jagger has Albert Maysles hit the pause button at the precise moment at which the knife of a Hells Angel enters Hunter’s ribcage. The move literalises the metaphorical alignment between death and the stillness of the photographic image. According to Mary Ann Doane, “photography is inevitably in the past tense, evoking the recognition of a ‘having-been-there,’” while “the cinema makes an inexorable appeal to the present tense.” If this is the case, then the cinematic image frozen onscreen occupies a temporality poised uncertainly between the irrecoverable past and its filmic enlivening.

What kind of pressure does such an incursion of the technological put on the frame? Indeed, on the very concept of the cinematic?

Cinema’s tendency to reveal itself—its foundations in technology; its embeddedness in networks of labour; its dialectics of stillness and motion; its obsession with death and the body as a site of duress—gets articulated in Off Route 2 in ways that reiterate and complicate extant notions of what constitutes the cinematic. For although it situates itself as part of a tradition of films that disclose the apparatus behind their various fabrications, it does so in the context of an art gallery, not a movie theatre. A semiotics of exhibition displaces attention from the individual screen as the sole object of spectatorial regard, while the loop mitigates the kind of surprise that typically accompanies revelations of the machinery of filmmaking in linear narratives. Shot in 35mm before being transferred into digital, the installation belongs to both an old and new media world. Despite not calling attention to its celluloid composition and photographic pre-history, it uses contemporary technologies to re-invoke cinema’s past: the viewer who enters the loop mid-way through, even past the moment of the climactic reveal, participates in the kind of spectatorship that prevailed in movie theatres until Alfred Hitchcock insisted that audiences show up “on time” for Psycho (1960).

If the automobile occupies a special place in cinema because, like movies, it enables a specifically modern (not to mention mechanical) contraction of time and space, the image of an inert vehicle, flipped upside-down in the aftermath of a crash, represents a challenge to the fetishising of movement that provides motion pictures with their raison d’être. In contrast with the tracking shot that begins the loop on a note of boundless mobility through uninhabited space, the car that greets the viewer raises the spectre not only of human encroachment, but of a stillness that carries with it connotations of death. Motionless, the body inside the car invites the kind of concentrated attention to which Maysles and Jagger pay the body of Meredith Hunter when they freeze the frame in moments where you see the image in slow-motion, then in freeze-frame. In the editing room, Mick Jagger has Albert Maysles hit the pause button at the precise moment at which the knife of a Hells Angel enters Hunter’s ribcage. The move literalises the metaphorical alignment between death and the stillness of the photographic image. According to Mary Ann Doane, “photography is inevitably in the past tense, evoking the recognition of a ‘having-been-there,’” while “the cinema makes an inexorable appeal to the present tense.” If this is the case, then the cinematic image frozen onscreen occupies a temporality poised uncertainly between the irrecoverable past and its filmic enlivening.
world must exist a technological apparatus
and network of human labour that combine to
make what we see and hear available. There’s
no magic in cinema, no projection—however
fantastic—that isn’t bound to the media and
conditions through which it was produced.
When Amanda exits the car and reclaims
her real-life identity, she inverts the familiar
trope of woman in trouble; she is, manifestly,
woman in control. But in the same way that
Laura Dern’s character Nikki Grace struggles
to recover from the ordeal of portraying Sue
Blue in the film within David Lynch’s Inland
Empire (2006), Christie leaves Amanda
behind with difficulty: visibly weakened by
the physical exertion that her endurance
performance required, she stumbles out
of the vehicle with the assistance of the
firefighters. One of them asks her: “You all
right?” The question registers in the fictional
and non-fictional narratives simultaneously. It’s
a genuine expression of concern, predicated
on Christie’s having adopted a role, yet
motivated by a sense of the actual perils
involved therein.

Immediately following Nikki’s scene on the
Hollywood Walk of Fame, she enters a nearby
theatre where she watches herself performing
the role of Sue Blue. Like a traumatised
patient, she seems compelled to return to the
site of a traumatic occurrence and repeat the
event in order to provide it with a meaning
within narrative. For Nikki, as for many of
Lynch’s female characters, there’s no getting
outside the loop that connects real life with
its various mediations and fictionalisations.
In Off Route 2, Christie, after discussing the
next shot with her assistant director, tells
the camera operator: “Alright, you can cut.
That’s good.” Instead of releasing her from
the narrative in which she’s at once in trouble
and in control, the loop begins again; through
media, she’s doomed to live and relive the
fictional car crash and her re-emergence into
actuality over and over again.

According to Walter Benjamin, “the most
important social function of film is to establish
equilibrium between human beings and the
apparatus. Film achieves this goal not only in
terms of man’s presentation of himself to the
camera but also in terms of his representation
of his environment by means of this
apparatus.” The radical political function that
Benjamin assigns to motion pictures renders
unimportant any question as to whether they
record the world or create a multiplicity of
worlds. For him, the crucial point is that all
films occupy social, political, and economic
contexts, and that to obscure this fact is
to misunderstand the role cinema ought to
play in culture. Any meaningful experience
of cinema entails being aware of the
technologies and networks of labour that tend
to reside off-screen. Off-Route 2 suggests
that what defines cinema—whether fictional,
documentary, or some hybrid combination of
both—is that it must reveal itself in the act of
revealing us to ourselves.

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Images
1-2: Amanda Dawn Christie, Off Route 2, 2011. Installation view,
PAVED Arts.
Testimony
A Curatorial Statement by Felicia Gay on the work of K.C. Adams and Terrance Houle
Testimony is a powerful way in which Indigenous groups can speak to difficult knowledge, taboo or subverted topics, exposing them to air.

When engaging difficult knowledge in curatorial praxis—such as Canada's missing and murdered Aboriginal women, a topic in which PM Harper has publicly stated is not high on Canada's priority list—the primary goal is to allow space for visual testimony and, within that, a voice. As an Aboriginal woman I wanted to speak to this topic in a multi-faceted way. Missing and murdered Aboriginal women and girls goes beyond a societal issue, it is not a civic or provincial issue; it is entrenched in all facets and inner workings of our country and needs to be addressed in unique and powerful ways. Testimony featured artists K.C. Adams and Terrance Houle; their work marked a declarative visual statement concerning difficult knowledge, with a focus primarily on the testimonies of Indigenous women. Both artists, through the mediums of video and photography, narrate experiences, working from acts of subtle silences—the murmuring that contributes to the marginalization of Indigenous women. Her Cyborg units wear and display on their T-shirts stereotypes which are lateral types of violent naming that Indigenous women face on a day to day basis. The Cyborgs are not a reality; the “half human and half machine” represents the disconnected reality of Indigenous representation in Canada. The glamour shots of the Indigenous cyborgs reflect the glamourization of the woman as image and not as an actual person. She is far from reality, beautifully labelled and ready to use. The Canadian government has a long and sordid history rendering Aboriginal people as both a commodity (land and resources) and a strain. No matter how long and hard the media pegs Aboriginal people as a fantastical race, the fact remains that there is always resistance from those who require change to survive.

The women who modelled for K.C. are primarily highly respected women involved in the arts community or cultural workers. When they don t-shirts with stereotypes beaded on, with sayings like ‘welfare mom,’ ‘F.A.S.,’ or ‘dirty little Indian,’ it shows the viewer that no matter who the woman is in her community, or in society, when she wears the label she is not real, she is fantasy. The disconnect between label/stereotype and reality contributes to how Indigenous women are treated by those in power and how they are treated by the West as a whole. It is why, for many generations, women have disappeared from society, often forever lost, and why there is, more often than not, little justice for women murdered by predators.

With her cyborg series, K.C. Adams skillfully speaks to current and historical labelling and whispering of who Indigenous women are in society, when she wears the label she doesn’t wear the traditional type of clothing he had them dress up in. The video alludes to someone faceless directing and posing the women who all model the same blanket. A particular point in time from someone in a position of power. The same can be said for Indigenous people as a whole within the media. Once a people are deemed static they cannot exist in the present time.

Within this exhibition I wanted to have a male perspective in relation to testimony and women. Terrance Houle is a talented artist who works through many mediums, but this particular work went beyond humour or colonial naming via visual testimony. Terrance looks to testimony through a Blackfoot worldview and represents it through the medium of video. For me personally, the work reveals a gentle reverence and respect that Houle has for his matrilineal past and for those females in his clan that come after him. The video performance, Aakaisttsiinaakii: Many Snake Woman, The Daughters after me, touches on many topics and begins with his Grandmother May Weaselfat, who was once painted and interpreted in the romantic European style by Reinhold Reiss. From that portrait Terrance begins to ‘talk back’ through the use of performance and video. In Linda Smith’s, Decolonizing Methodologies she says testimony is a form in which the voice of a “witness” is accorded space and protection. In the gallery space all who enter become witnesses to their testimony, and in doing so there comes an opportunity for change. Along with Houle’s grandmother, his mother Maxine Weaselfat-Sacred Soaring Woman, sister Jolane Houle-Three Suns Woman and daughter Neko-Peace Keeping Woman are all situated to sit as if for a portrait; just as Terrance’s grandmother would have been asked to sit for Reiss. The politics behind creating Indian Portraits in the States and Canada during May Weaselfat’s youth becomes necessarily associated with the colonial trope of the ‘vanishing Indian.’ Many Indian portraits and souvenirs were collected in order to preserve the memory of the “noble savage.”

Viewing Houle’s video brought to mind the artist Edward Curtis, and his famous black and white portraits of Indigenous North Americans. What is not widely known about him is that he had him a wide array of costumes and props to which he had Indians model for his photographs. During the time period he was creating his work, many Indigenous people adopted westernized clothing and did not wear the traditional type of clothing he had them dress up in. The video alludes to someone faceless directing and posing the women who all model the same blanket. A blanket is a popular symbol of Indian culture and can also allude to other meanings which I will not go into. Each woman represents a different generation in Houle’s family. Each woman is representative of a particular generation and time but always depicted in the same costume. They are relegated to a particular point in time from someone in a position of power. The same can be said for Indigenous people as a whole within the media.

Testimony

November 7 - December 12, 2014.

Testimony

Testimony

Testimony

Testimony

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Testimony

Testimony
The Core Series

November 23, 2012: *Hear, See, Think*
March 22, 2013: *Surround Sound*
November 29-30, 2013: *Process/Failure*
April 4-5, 2014: *Re-Imagined*
November 7-8, 2014: *In Transformation*
March 20-21, 2015: *Futures Past*

An interview between composer Lia Pas and series co-founder Erin Brophy
Lia Pas: So, tell me a bit about how the idea for the Core Series came about.

Erin Brohey: I guess it was sort of twofold. When I first moved to Saskatoon, I was looking for things in the city to do when I wasn’t working, and one of the things I love is New Music. So I was looking for some New Music concerts and I was sort of puzzled as to why there wasn’t really a New Music scene here. It seemed like there were a couple of concerts a year with the composer’s society but that was the extent of it and there wasn’t anything really happening at the University. Then I discovered PAVED Arts and started going to their programming and I really enjoyed what they were doing. I thought they were pursuing some really innovative programming, and I just really enjoyed going to their events. That’s also how I got to know Billiana Velkova, who was the Executive Director of PAVED at that time. So, one time I was at an event and I said to Billiana, “You know, we should do something!” and she said, “OK.” and that’s exactly how it started. The idea of taking all the cool things that PAVED was doing, trying to get the Saskatoon Symphony involved, and playing New Music just seemed a really natural fit.

LP: How do you go about curating the music and the visuals for each show?

EB: In the spirit of collaboration. There are two people involved with the curation: there’s one person that chooses the music and one person that chooses the visual. Every time we’ve started with the music. I’m trying to turn the relationship between visuals and music a little bit on its head. Especially in film, usually the music is there to serve the visual, and in this circumstance we wanted the relationship to be more equal so that each medium in the performance was as important as the other. I felt that the way to achieve that was to start with the music. Once the music is selected we have a timing, and whoever is selecting the visual will take the timing of the piece and find a visual that works. That’s the tricky part of it. In terms of selecting the music I find that it’s easier to work within limitations. I find that more creative. We can only use ten players so we’re limited with orchestration: five strings, five winds. Finding a concert where everyone is involved and has music that has a thread that sort of runs through it–that’s a good limitation to set!

LP: When you are choosing the music, do you think about some of the music in terms of aesthetics?

EB: Yes, I try to think from the perspective of the audience. I want to have equal measure interesting and beautiful. A lot of New Music can be downright ugly and that is kind of its point – which is great, and I love that music – but a whole concert of that is difficult to digest. So it’s a matter of finding a balance between things that are interesting and things that are beautiful. I also loved being able to get to know Saskatchewan composers because before we moved here I wasn’t really familiar with the New Music scene here. So that, for me, was really awesome. To get to know, for example, you, and I didn’t know who David McIntyre was before I moved here, or Janet Gieck, and all of the other composers I’ve had the opportunity to meet since I started exploring the New Music scene here. We have a tendency - in the arts - to think that everything that’s interesting is happening elsewhere, and that’s not the case.

LP: Especially when we’re in Saskatchewan!

EB: Yes, that was very important to me. I wanted to play mostly Canadian music and have some masters from outside of Canada. But yeah, we should be playing Canadian music. It was something that the orchestra was not doing a lot of, so I felt it was really important that we do that.

LP: Yes, In terms of the visuals, most of the visuals have been film, some of it made...
before, some of it commissioned for the concert, some of it adapted. Have you worked with different curators?

EB: Yes.

LP: Can you talk a little bit about what it has been like to work with different curators?

EB: It’s been so fascinating! It’s been really interesting to see what each one came up with, and also how they interpreted the music. The most fascinating thing was that as a musician I’m so inside of the art form that sometimes it’s difficult to have perspective, and it was really interesting to speak to someone who didn’t necessarily have the musical language and the musical words. They would observe things about the music that were really interesting to me. Like what they would take away from listening to the piece and then apply to a visual or a text. What I found really interesting was how each curator had a different spin on how they worked with each piece. Some curators felt the aesthetic was more important than the rhythm of it. They would take the mood of a piece rather than trying to line things up. I found that fascinating; how they all weighed different priorities. Also, personality wise, who each person values is very different. I mean we all like artists for varying reasons, so it was really interesting for me to see a cross-section. I mean, there were some pieces where I was like: “I don’t really think that works.” But then I would listen to other people talking about it and I would think, “Oh, you know what? That really worked!” [Laughter]

LP: There have been a couple of collaborations. There was the collaboration that I did with Ellen Moffat. There was the collaboration that W.L. Altman did with David LaRiviere. Can you talk a little bit about those?

EB: I felt that one of the things that the Core Series should be doing is creating opportunities for artists to work together, both composers and artists. I think the opportunity for collaboration was really important, to actually create some new things. It was really neat to watch the process of two artists from very different mediums come together and put something together. That’s when I feel like a lot of great art happens, like The Rite of Spring. It was really cool to watch what people would come up with and also interesting to pair people together. We did a call for compositions where we discovered W.L. Altman, and once we got to know his work it was Billiana who came up with the idea of pairing him with David. They never met, but it was like they had the same brain. Yes, it was like two kids in a sandbox! It was so cool to watch them do something together. It’s very funny.

LP: I know there was the piece of mine that was done with Jennifer Sparrowhawk, and that was more of a traditional collaboration. I mean, the piece of music was already composed but a bit…amorphous. Then Jennifer went and did the film. That film!

EB: She is beautiful. It is gorgeous. I think that was another thing that was interesting: often the personality and the aesthetic character of the composer would very much match the personality and the aesthetic of the artist. In the end if I had the opportunity to work with both of them, I would think: “Wow. It’s like these are the same people!”

LP: [Laughs]

EB: And they’re creating very similar art just in different media, and we put them together, which is really neat. And different ages, and different experiences, (...) but there was something that was a common element between what they value as being beautiful, you know. It was really interesting to watch that come together. There were some collaborations where it was like: “You guys should go and have a drink and become lifelong friends because there is something between you two that you understand.”

LP: How do you feel about the response from the community with regards to the series?

EB: Oh, that’s what I think has been the most gratifying part. I feel like there was a hole in our scene here that the series has filled. It’s so awesome how people have responded and come to the concerts! To me, yes, it’s great to create art but I think that as two organizations, we are honestly serving the community and that, I think, is what we’re supposed to do. If we were creating these really cool concerts and four people were coming- although that would have been worth it on some level- I don’t think it would be as gratifying. I think it also speaks to the open-mindedness of the artistic community here in Saskatoon that they are willing to come along on the journey. Not every concert worked, and not every piece worked, not everything was perfect, you know. But to come in and just be willing to be open, to suspend that level of… disbelief?

LP: Yes. That’s it exactly. I’ve also noticed that, in terms of the audience, there are often a lot more writers and visual artists than musicians or music sort of people.

EB: That’s right. It’s not the orchestra audience member that usually has been to our shows. Which, I think, is great. Because it’s clear that there is a community here that craves new, interesting art. As a musician, I want to be part of that, I want to serve and help that happen.

LP: There is one more concert in the series planned right now. Future plans?

EB: Oh yes! Well, we’re in the planning stages of what we are going to do next because this was a three-year project. I think what we’ve
A lot of my students are really into things like soundscape is, with video games and such. What their music preference New Music to listening to Mozart. It just makes more sense. Especially with the things someone in their forties. In fact, I think they are so much more open minded about New Music than we were when we were young. So we’re going to see how that all works.

LP: High school or even University.

EB: I think eventually with the University, absolutely. But right now I think high school is where we can do something. There is a real gap in who we’re serving in the orchestra. We do a lot of education shows in primary schools and nursery schools, but we don’t do anything in high school.

LP: I find that very interesting because I got into New Music in high school and it really shaped who I am as an artist.

EB: I also think that this YouTube generation is so used to the visual with music. They are so much more open to New Music than someone in their forties. In fact, I think they prefer New Music to listening to Mozart. It just makes more sense. Especially with the things that “youth” listen to in terms of what their soundscape is, with video games and such. A lot of my students are really into things like Korean Pop or Japanese Techno. It’s not like what’s on the top forty, it’s the things they’re discovering on the Internet. They are a lot more open minded about New Music. I’d really like to help explore that with them.

LP: Yes, definitely! So, you talked about high school students. Any other ideas you’d like to explore?

EB: I would love to do more concerts, and continue to focus more on the creation side. However, we need to be able to pay people more. We’ve gotten to a point where we’ve used a lot of preexisting work, which has been really interesting, but to keep it progressing we need to be creating work. I’d really love to be involved with putting artists together, of bringing in a third art form too. Like involving dance, involving theatre. It would be really neat.

LP: In terms of either the whole series or just specific concerts or specific pieces, what really worked for you and what did not work?

EB: What really worked, I felt, were the moments when we would take two completely separate art forms, completely separate pieces of art, and put them together. There were moments when it would seem like the music, through sheer serendipity would line up perfectly with what was happening visually. Those moments, to me, were just totally magical. What I found really interesting is that those moments were different from performance to rehearsal, and that each time we performed there was different magic involved. It would be different because the musicians were not watching the visual or trying to line anything up. The music would organically move differently from night to night, and it would inform the visual and the overall performance in such a beautiful and interesting way. I loved being able to see the same pieces performed together four or five times. I never tired of watching them! For me it was really interesting to see when this particular swell would coordinate with this moment, or the intensity of the rhythm would coordinate with this intense moment in the visual. It would take my breath away. It was so cool to watch that happen. What didn’t work for me was that I had to perform in some of the pieces. [Laughs] There were some visuals that I did watch without any sound, but I didn’t get the same experience because I was busy performing. So that didn’t work for me.

LP: Well I’ve noticed that - because I am a performer and a composer - sometimes I’m performing, sometimes I’m outside the performance but I am still in the piece because I’m the composer, and for me that’s a really interesting space. Especially the one piece that was improvisational, which was totally different every single time.

EB: Yes, it was completely different every single time.

LP: But, like you said, there were those moments when everything would totally line up beautifully.

EB: Yeah, and it was magical when it happened. And there were other moments that didn’t work at all. There would be something happening in the visual that clearly needed something from the music, and it’d be silent because we’d be between movements or something.

LP: Is there anything else you want to mention or talk about regarding the Core Series?

EB: Yeah, I would love to sincerely thank both Billiana Velkova and Alex Rogalski for doing such an extraordinary job of administrating the project. I felt like I had all the fun parts, and they had the challenging task of putting things together. The amount of energy and time required - it’s not in their job description, so it’s really great. Really great.

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Summary: An anthology of critical essays that analyze contemporary visual and media arts exhibitions and events that have transpired at PAVED Arts in Saskatoon.

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