ARTIST BIOGRAPHIES

Shuvinai Ashoona was born in Cape Dorset in 1944, the daughter of artist Kaniehtiio and Shaaqa. She began to produce large-scale drawings in the Cape Dorset print workshop in 1971. Ashoona has exhibited widely across Canada and abroad, including at the 1992 Venice Biennale, the 44th Biennale di Venezia, Palazzo Grassi (1998), Jacques Baril Gallery (Quebec) (2000), The 18th Biennale of Sydney and Talca, National Gallery of Canada (2010), and IL陶瓷 (2016) international biennials, Santa Fe, New Mexico.


Vanessa Runions was born and raised in rural Nova Scotia, and began to produce large-scale works in the mid-1990s. Runions has exhibited widely across Canada and abroad, including at "The 2013 Alberta Biennial of Contemporary Art," Art Gallery of Alberta, Edmonton; "The 2013 Canadian Biennial," National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa; "Outfit for the Afterlife," Glass beads and nylon thread, 2010-2015, National Gallery of Canada, 2015-2016. Runions has also been included in exhibitions in Northern Alberta and Nunavut, including "Sikusiilaq," Toronto; "Situation Room," LEDGE Gallery, EPCOR Centre for the Performing Arts, Edmonton; and "Blinking and Other Involuntary Portals," Mercer Union, Toronto.

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York Lethbridge is the Director of Operations & Development at Mercer Union. He has served in various capacities with Creative Alliance, Baltimore; Mentoring Artists for Women’s Art (MAWA), Winnipeg; and Artscape Gibraltar Point, Toronto. He has held positions with the Kellogg-France Institute at the School of Oriental and African Studies in London, the University of Toronto; the Alberta Foundation for the Arts; the Minneapolis Institute of Arts; the National Gallery of Canada; and the Musée d’art Contemporain de Montréal. Lethbridge holds a BA from York University and an MA from the University of Toronto.

Astral Bodies
Shelene Ashauna, Karin Azoulay, Shayle Boyle, Spring Kurutz and Pamela Norman
Curated by York Lethbridge

This text has been commissioned as a contribution to Stellar Living 2017, Mercer Union’s biennial publication, which will be distributed to collectors, curators, dealers and artists at the 2017 edition of Art Toronto in October.

Shelene Ashauna, Karen Azoulay, Shayle Boyle, Spring Kurutz and Pamela Norman

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Astral Bodies

In "Astral Bodies," the French philosopher Plato sent us on an image of an integral humanity, trapped in the depths and unaware of its limited perspective. The rare individual escapes the limitations of that video installation – that recreated static works of visual art with live actors for the stage, studio, or private boudoir. Her tableaux vivant – the living pictures favored by Romantic artists of the 19th century – that linger at the margins of modern life. They evoke the subjective in relation to the vastness of the world and offer the imagination take form. In particular, they embody skepticism of empirical experience, delving into mysteries that linger at the margins of modern life. They evoke the subjective in relation to the vastness of the world and offer the imagination to take form. In particular, they embody skepticism of empirical experience, delving into mysteries that linger at the margins of modern life. 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