

## EVENTS

### OPENING RECEPTION

Friday 20 January, 7 PM

### ARTISTS PIERRE LEGUILLON AND ANNIE MACDONELL IN CONVERSATION PRECEDED BY A SCREENING OF *NOSTALGIA* BY HOLLIS FRAMPTON

Tuesday 17 January, 7 PM

Jackman Hall, Art Gallery of Ontario, 317 Dundas Street West (use McCaul Street entrance)

### IN STUDIO VISIT WITH JENNIFER MURPHY

Thursday 23 February, 7 PM

Offsite location details will be confirmed on RSVP to [york@mercunion.org](mailto:york@mercunion.org)

## BIOS

**Jacob Korczynski** recently participated in the de Appel Curatorial Programme and is currently the Assistant Curator at the Art Gallery of York University.

**Pierre Leguillon** lives and works in Paris. His widely acclaimed recent project, *Pierre Leguillon features Diane Arbus: A Printed Retrospective, 1960–1971*, has been previously presented by the Kadist Art Foundation, Paris; the Moderna Museet, Malmö; the Centre Régional de la Photographie, Douchy-les-Mines and at De Hallen, Haarlem. Selected recent solo exhibitions, projects, presentations and performances have been held at Motive Gallery, Amsterdam; Musée du Louvre, Paris; Centre Pompidou, Paris; CAPC, Musée d'Art Contemporain, Bordeaux; Song Song, Vienna; Air de Paris, Paris; Artists Space, New York; Temple Gallery, Philadelphia; CNEAI, Chatou; École des Beaux-Arts, Bordeaux; Secession, Vienna and elsewhere.

**Annie MacDonell** is a visual artist whose practice includes film, photography, sculpture, installation and sound. Her work deals with exhausted ideas and images, and the conventions of display as they exist in relation to art and the space of the gallery. She earned a BFA from Ryerson's School of Image Arts, in Toronto and an MFA from Le Fresnoy, in Tourcoing, France. She has shown work and screened films internationally. Currently, she teaches in the photography department at Ryerson University.

**Sarah Robayo Sheridan** is Director of Exhibitions and Publications at Mercer Union.



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Annie MacDonell wishes to acknowledge the following assistance on her film shoot: Camera by Michael Leblanc, sound by Ian McGettigan, production assistance by Aaron Friend Lettner and Alex Geddie. "The Caption" played by Evan Webber, voice over by Liz Peterson, Bach's "Canon a 2 Partonos" from *The Musical Offering* performed on piano by Alex Geddie. Special thanks to Alex Geddie, Michael Leblanc, Michelle Irving, Jon Sasaki, Sarah Robayo Sheridan.

For the preparation of the exhibition *Pierre Leguillon features Diane Arbus: A Printed Retrospective, 1960–1971*, we wish to acknowledge the assistance of Sandra Terdjman and Emilie Villez at the Kadist Art Foundation, Paris; Joa Ljungberg at the Moderna Museet, Malmö; Claire Le Masne at the Consulate General of France in Toronto; and Matilda Pijel for the design of the accompanying catalogue.

Cover image: Detail from Annie MacDonell, *From the Picture Collection - 1*, 2012. Digital inkjet print.

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Hollis Frampton, *Nostalgia (Hapax Legomena I)*, 1973. Film still. 16mm, black and white, 36 min.

### CONVERSATION WITH ARTISTS PIERRE LEGUILLON AND ANNIE MACDONELL PRECEDED BY A SPECIAL SCREENING OF *NOSTALGIA* BY HOLLIS FRAMPTON

Tuesday 17 January, 7 PM

Screening on original 16mm!

Followed by an onstage conversation.

**Note off-site location: Jackman Hall at the Art Gallery of Ontario  
317 Dundas Street West (use McCaul Street entrance)**

Free

Join us on Tuesday 17 January at the Art Gallery of Ontario's Jackman Hall, for a discussion with our two featured artists Pierre Leguillon and Annie MacDonell, moderated by Mercer Union's Director of Exhibitions and Publications, Sarah Robayo Sheridan.

In the concurrently programmed exhibitions at Mercer Union, photography takes centre stage. Both featured artists are engaged with the status of the photographic image and exploring the nature of archives. As a point of entry into a discussion of their respective practices, we will screen Hollis Frampton's film *Nostalgia*, with voiceover by Michael Snow. A description by P. Adam Sitney offers the following:

"[T]he time it takes for a photograph to burn (and thus confirm its two-dimensionality) becomes the clock within the film, while Frampton plays the critic, asynchronously glossing, explicating, narrating, mythologizing his earlier art, and his earlier life, as he commits them both to the fire of a labyrinthine structure; for Borges too was one of his earlier masters, and he grins behind the facades of logic, mathematics, and physical demonstration which are the formal metaphors for most of Frampton's films."

### NO READING AFTER THE INTERNET

Tuesday 31 January, 7PM

On site at Mercer Union

Free

Cheyenne Turions brings another module in her series "No Reading After the Internet" to Mercer Union in conjunction with Annie MacDonell's exhibition *Originality and the Avant Garde: On Art and Repetition*. Join us for a collective reading and discussion. The chosen text will be made available to all participants. For additional information on the event, contact: [c.turions@gmail.com](mailto:c.turions@gmail.com).



Toronto Artist Jennifer Murphy at her studio.

### IN STUDIO: JENNIFER MURPHY

Thursday 23 February, 7 PM

Free and guaranteed to Sustaining Members on RSVP to [york@mercunion.org](mailto:york@mercunion.org)

Refreshments will be served

Join in this exclusive opportunity for Mercer Union Sustaining Members to meet over drinks with artist Jennifer Murphy!

Murphy is a Toronto-based artist. Working mainly in collage, she uses different materials ranging from cut and sewn images from books to garbage bags, velvet, silk and gold leaf. She has shown nationally and internationally, including the Contemporary Art Gallery, Vancouver; Mercer Union, Toronto; White Columns, New York; and Art Forum, Berlin. She was on the long list in Ontario for the Sobeys Art Award in 2006. She is represented by Clint Roenisch Gallery in Toronto.



Artists Bojana Stacic and Alex Wolfson entertaining at their Spiked Tea table in 2011.

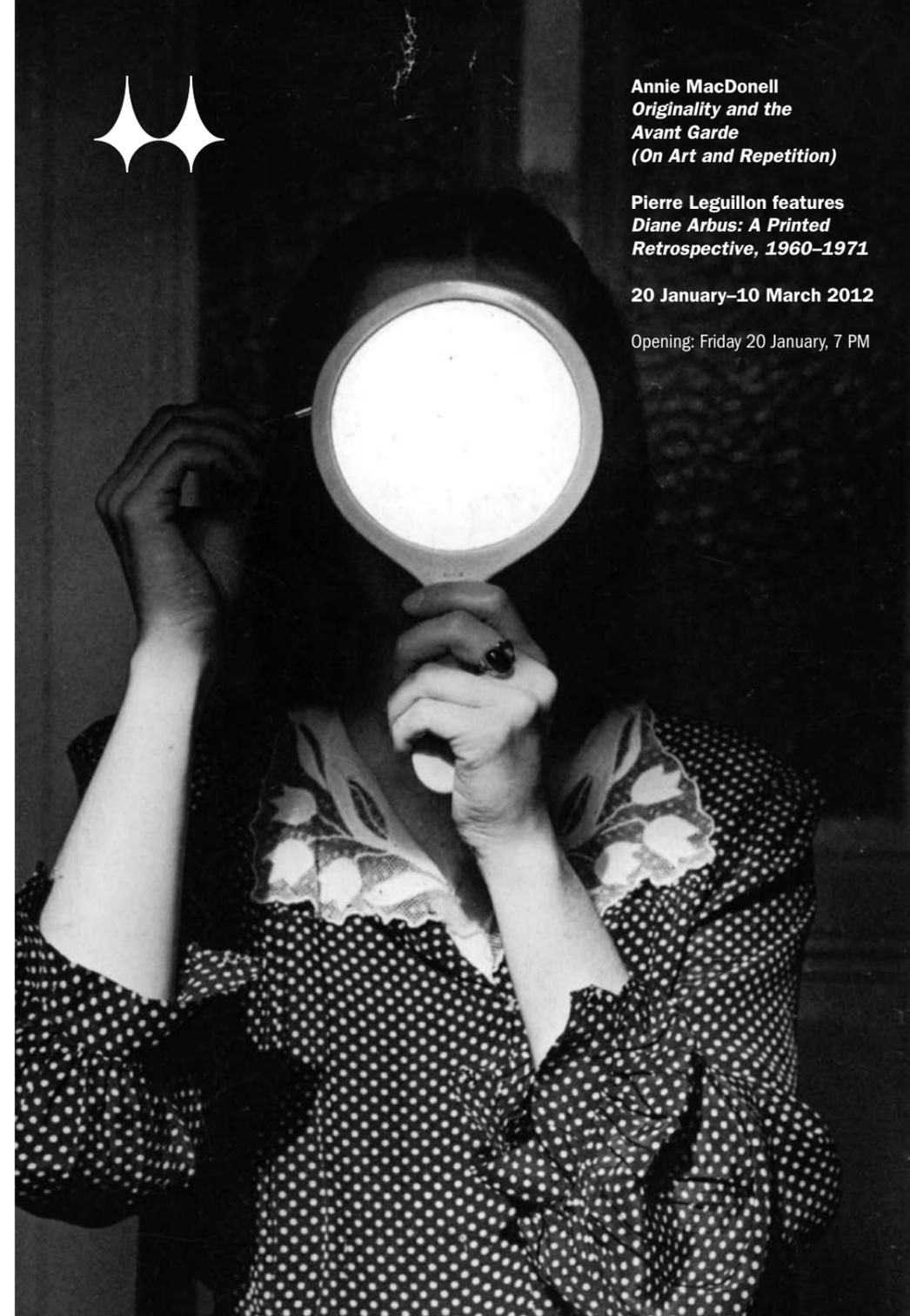
### SAVE THE DATE: SPIKED TEA

A Mercer Union Afternoon Social

Saturday 17 March, 2 PM

Following the success of Spiked Tea 2011, Mercer Union once again hosts the time-honoured ritual of high tea... with a contemporary twist! Engage in lively conversation with prominent Toronto artists as they host tables they have designed specially for the occasion. Enjoy our elegantly eclectic portfolio of teas with special cocktail accompaniments and assorted delicacies—a menu of scrumptious finger sandwiches and freshly baked pastries by local culinary creatives awaits! Bring your closest friends for some artful hobnobbing and fun-filled table-hopping.

Please visit [www.mercunion.org/spikedtea](http://www.mercunion.org/spikedtea) for more details.



**Annie MacDonell**  
*Originality and the  
Avant Garde*  
(On Art and Repetition)

**Pierre Leguillon features**  
*Diane Arbus: A Printed  
Retrospective, 1960–1971*

**20 January–10 March 2012**

Opening: Friday 20 January, 7 PM



Annie MacDonell, *Originality and Repetition*, 2012. 16mm film transferred to HD, 14 min.

## Front Gallery

### Annie MacDonell: *Originality and the Avant Garde (On Art and Repetition)*

The refraction (of an idea) begins with the reflection (of itself). A single reflection manifested via the materiality of glass, mirror, or water, refracted first as a photograph, is then captured again when re-photographed through the research of Annie MacDonell. She draws upon the Picture Collection of the Toronto Reference Library to source a range of *mise-en-abyme* images found across visual archives from advertising to art history. Assembled first into photo collages, these images echo in the front gallery via the mirrors that line the facing wall, forming the exterior of a structure built to the same dimensions as the artist's studio. The photographs then return twice to the interior of this structure, first as inverted camera obscura images pulled from the same gallery, and then in a film projected intermittently that takes the discourse of repetition enacted here as subject.

Upon entering the front gallery and encountering the five photo collages, divert your focus away from each of the carefully composed images and begin at the periphery. Here, on the far left of the frame, the flatness of the found images, amassed by MacDonell and later re-photographed from the wall of her studio, can be traced through a series of markings in pencil. These slight lines, organized by the artist, look back to the absent source for the image, now lost in context.

While the number 30, which has been visibly inscribed upon the wall, most likely refers to a unit of measurement and organization utilized during the photographic process, it also precisely measures the number of years between MacDonell's period of production and the writing of an essay that informed her exploration of mirroring and repetition via both the form and content of her project. In that essay, "The Photographic Conditions of Surrealism," published in *October* in the fall of 1981, Rosalind Krauss states:

But more important than anything else is the strategy of doubling. For it is doubling that produces the formal rhythm of spacing – the two-step that banishes the unitary condition of the moment, that creates within the moment an experience of fission. For it is doubling that elicits the notion that to an original has been added its copy. The double is the simulacrum, the second, the representative of the original. It comes after the first, and in this following, it can only exist as figure, or image. But in being seen in conjunction with the original, the double destroys the pure singularity of the first. Through duplication, it opens the original to the effect of difference, of deferral, of one-thing-after-another, or within another: of multiples burgeoning within the same.<sup>1</sup>

Doubling—and its formal rhythm of spacing is taken by MacDonell as the structuring principle of her exhibition, beginning with the four refractions enabled by photography, mirrors, a camera obscura and a film, thus allowing for two parallel encounters in the outer and inner space of the gallery. Resonant surfaces beget further images between MacDonell's series of collages and the mirrors but, multiply as they may, the frame of each form remains intact. The photographic border does not become more porous until you enter the second half of the same exhibition via the transposition of MacDonell's studio to the gallery.

The five photographs produced by MacDonell trade in the refraction of the real, not only through their subject and source, but also through their 1:1 scale—the wall of her studio transposed onto the wall of the gallery. The



Annie MacDonell, *From the Picture Collection - 1*, 2012. Digital inkjet print.

same strategy of scale that led MacDonell to photograph the assemblages of found photographs has produced an enclosed structure based upon the dimensions of the same studio. It is a site that is also a device, one that projects twice: as both camera obscura and cinema.

While the return reflection echoes throughout MacDonell's images, the dual-purpose structure facilitates an encounter with the view beyond the immediate frame. As a camera obscura, the light from the gallery transposes an inverted impression of the five photographs seen outside, and as a cinema, the source images for the same photographs begin the film before it is mediated by a monologue delivered via the repetition MacDonell is rehearsing—a film that is in total folded upon itself three times. In his essay "Photography *en abyme*," Craig Owens identified a doubling, but in an encounter with the image that locates itself within itself:

The argument that the properties of the photographic image are derived not from the characteristics of the medium itself but from the structure of the real, registered mechanically on a light-sensitive surface, may describe the technical procedures of photography. But it does not account for the photograph's capacity to internally generate and organize meaning. However, it does seem to describe accurately the strategy according to which some photographs procure their authoritative status, those photographs in which a carefully calculated *mise en scène* mutely insists that the image is wholly dependent upon, since derived from, the external.<sup>2</sup>

Unlike the immediate real-time feedback of the mirrors and camera obscura, the filmic and photographic images in the exhibition are determined by delay, the sites of production and reception divided through the past-tense of their material manifestation. What MacDonell identifies in the film's monologue as our absolute ease in the contemporary context with practices of quotation and appropriation, of folding one idea into another, extends directly to the role of the actor as a cipher for MacDonell, reciting her words but only in its first cycle unencumbered by overlap. As MacDonell's film feeds back, the images are overlaid to move simultaneously but their double never dovetails—it refuses to synchronize even as the voice falls silent.

MacDonell reveals the image and its double to be only the first refraction in a series of returns. Here, repetition is no longer simply a strategy enacted by the artist, it is the very system of our exchange. One, two, three, more.

—Jacob Korczynski

Notes

- Rosalind Krauss, "The Photographic Conditions of Surrealism," *October*, no. 19 (Winter 1981), 109.
- Craig Owens, "Photography *en abyme*," *October*, no. 5 (Summer 1978), 84.



Installation views of *Pierre Leguillon features Diane Arbus: A Printed Retrospective, 1960–1971*. Left: Kadist Foundation. Right: Moderna Museet Malmö. Photo: Prallan Allsten.

## Back Gallery

### Pierre Leguillon features *Diane Arbus: A Printed Retrospective, 1960–1971*

Diane Arbus kept a collage wall where she would pin her trove of images—pages torn from magazines, post-cards, news clippings, and her own curled work prints. Reproduced within the chronology developed by Elisabeth Sussman and Doon Arbus for the exhibition catalogue *Diane Arbus: Revelations*,<sup>1</sup> we see different manifestations of this wall over time at different addresses, often with Arbus posed in front. The images appear well worn from handling, like cherished talismans guiding her craft. The collage wall offers a visual equivalent to the writing in her notebooks—jotted down inventories and passing reflections on subject areas under development such as the 1961 list: "the stuff of dreams, ritual, aristocracy, imposters, fame, anonymity, figments, real visions, american dreams, daily dreams, walking dreams, american hallucinations, real mirage."<sup>2</sup>

Collecting images is a practice common to many artists, and often the first starting point for production. At the Toronto Reference Library, there is a special collection that serves this need. Compiled by librarians cutting out images from magazines, calendars, books and advertisements, the Picture Collection is an archive for artists. The images are usually excised from their surrounding editorial, rendering them all the more enigmatic, and, exceptionally for a reference library, they are allowed to circulate to the studio for study and inspiration. Much richer than average compendiums of stock photography, the manila file folders hold a record of lived visual culture from fine art to serial advertising. Filed under 32,000 different subject headings, they are the type of ephemera Arbus might have collaged on her wall and exactly the type of printed matter that interests Pierre Leguillon.

Leguillon's art practice has evolved out of his keen attraction to image archives and he approaches these as a visual historian. His process of assembling and sifting through images is at the heart of the exhibition *Diane Arbus: A Printed Retrospective, 1960–1971*. Here, Leguillon has loosened the relevant pages from the original sources, framed these, and provided annotations on each in a separately printed catalogue available to visitors. The display consists of these pages, alongside a stack of the magazines from which they are extracted, along with custom designed crates. These traveling trunks also signal the transit of these images through their mass dissemination in serial publications, a capacity furthered by the portability of the display, which has to date traveled to points in France, Lithuania, the Netherlands and Sweden.

In addition to the incredible survey of Arbus's innovative portraiture—from anonymous subjects to well-known figures like Norman Mailer, Jorge Luis Borges, Mia Farrow, Marcello Mastroianni, and Coretta Scott King—the magazine spreads also supply a secondary experience—a key to innovative editorial and design strategies of periodicals in the 1960s. Tessa DeCarlo notes of this epoch that: "Some magazines were starting to publish a more personal, novelistic brand of journalism that needed a new, consciously artful kind of photography to complement it."<sup>3</sup> Arbus's photos are part and parcel of the new journalism and in the exhibition assembled by Leguillon, we glimpse the photographs here in situ, in their original layout with full captions often composed by Arbus herself.

In the mid-80s, Thomas W. Southall curated a survey exhibition of 75 photographs derived from the magazine work in order to demonstrate the importance of it in the development of Arbus's style, an aspect which had largely been ignored to that point.<sup>4</sup> Leguillon's project extends that first curatorial impulse, here highlighting the



Diane Arbus, "Affinities," *Harper's Bazaar* (April 1964). Left hand page: Lillian and Dorothy Gish in Central Park, N.Y.C. 1964. Right hand page: Erik Bruhn and Rudolf Nureyev, N.Y.C. 1964. The Estate of Diane Arbus, LLC.

magazines exactly as they ran the portfolios, typeset with the photographer's words. The writing rings clearly with the same delicate humour, empathy and wit of all the personal missives and notebook entries by Arbus. In groundbreaking portfolios such as "The Full Circle,"<sup>5</sup> Arbus's skill as a writer comes to the fore.

By painstakingly tracking down the original issues for the exhibition, Leguillon gathers evidence of Arbus's innovative contribution to the field of photojournalism. These commissions supplied needed support to her as an artist and shaped her method of image making. As Doon Arbus and Marvin Israel remark, "Like most photographers of her time, Diane Arbus looked to magazines as the sole means of earning a living taking pictures, which was not merely gratifying but essential. They offered her an opportunity to work and have her work seen, gave her access to people and events she might not have been able to photograph otherwise, and, perhaps most important of all, encouraged her to think of herself as a professional."<sup>6</sup>

Arbus's research methodology was strongly influenced by her experience with press assignments. Her artistic practice was propelled by her affiliation with publications; it was her press passes that allowed her entry into worlds she wouldn't otherwise have been permitted to photograph. Her process is also linked to the journalistic mode — Arbus would spend time with her subjects and interview them in order to decipher their stories. In some cases, she developed long-term relationships with them. Whereas her very first commissions with her husband Allan Arbus were in the realm of fashion photography, her later work aligned with a burgeoning sociological impulse of the era. Arbus rarely focused on news events, preferring instead to figure the events of daily life. Many of the photo assignments illustrate the clashing of wealth, power and ethics in post-war America, provocatively questioning how we constitute images of ourselves.

Pierre Leguillon's exhibition draws out Arbus's photographic legacy in relation to the prevalent use of photography in contemporary art and culture. Following the 1960s, a turn towards digital reproduction has only intensified the relationship of photography to the propagation of identity, heightening the interplay between author, subject and self. In this context, Arbus's contribution to the field is all the more valuable to review. To take a line from Michael Fried, "Photography matters as art as never before."<sup>7</sup>

—Sarah Robayo Sheridan

Notes

- Diane Arbus: Revelations* (New York: Random House, 2003). See photographs in the chronology on pages 197, 213, 220.
- Elisabeth Sussman and Doon Arbus, ed. *Diane Arbus: A Chronology, 1923-1971* (New York: Aperture, 2011), 39.
- Tessa DeCarlo, "A Fresh Look at Diane Arbus," *Smithsonian* (May 2004), 68.
- "Diane Arbus: Magazine Work, 1960–1971" curated by Thomas W. Southall and circulated from 1984-1986.
- Diane Arbus, "The Full Circle," *Harper's Bazaar* (November 1961), 133-137.
- Diane Arbus: Magazine Work* (New York: Aperture, 1984), 5.
- Michael Fried, *Why Photography Matters as Art as Never Before*, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2008).