

Electronic Thesis and Dissertation Repository

8-15-2013 12:00 AM

Following the Turn: Mapping as Material Art Practice

Kyla Christine Brown, *The University of Western Ontario*

Supervisor: Patrick Mahon, *The University of Western Ontario*

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Master of Fine Arts degree in Visual Arts

© Kyla Christine Brown 2013

Follow this and additional works at: <https://ir.lib.uwo.ca/etd>



Part of the [Art Practice Commons](#), [Contemporary Art Commons](#), [Fine Arts Commons](#), and the [Interdisciplinary Arts and Media Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Brown, Kyla Christine, "Following the Turn: Mapping as Material Art Practice" (2013). *Electronic Thesis and Dissertation Repository*. 1477.

<https://ir.lib.uwo.ca/etd/1477>

This Dissertation/Thesis is brought to you for free and open access by Scholarship@Western. It has been accepted for inclusion in Electronic Thesis and Dissertation Repository by an authorized administrator of Scholarship@Western. For more information, please contact wlsadmin@uwo.ca.

FOLLOWING THE TURN: MAPPING AS MATERIAL ART PRACTICE

(Thesis format: Dossier)

by

Kyla Brown

Graduate Program in Visual Arts

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of
Master of Fine Arts

The School of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies
The University of Western Ontario
London, Ontario, Canada

© Kyla Brown 2013

Abstract and Keywords

Following the Turn: Mapping As Material Art Practice investigates my artistic practice and MFA research based in London, Ontario. This dossier of research elements includes: an extended artist's statement, a documentation of artistic practice and development, and a selection of in-process and published exhibition reviews of contemporary artists' work; in Chapters 1, 2, and 3 respectively. This written document is in part intended to work as a specific accompaniment to my thesis exhibition. In the body of the thesis I propose that a project-based and embodied material art practice can *perform mapping* of negotiated experiences of the city. Dealing with ideas concerning 'knowing' the city, a series of conceptual and process oriented tactics are explored. Navigation, the *everyday*, and cumulative gestures help to ground a drawing-installation methodology alongside artistic activities that are initiated outside of the studio. I also consider interpretive theoretical and artistic influences such as the Situationist International, and Michel de Certeau's 'tactics' in relation to my practice and as aids in navigation, meaning making and ultimately mapping.

Keywords: mapping, community mapping, drawing, installation, navigation, space, place, location, negotiation, the Everyday, everyday practices, Michel de Certeau, Situationist International (SI), Francis Alÿs, Gwen MacGregor, *dérive*, performative art practice, home, cycling, London, Ontario, transcription, index, *flâneuse*, embodied.

Acknowledgements

I would like to express many thanks to a community of people, both in and outside of the university, who have supported, challenged and encouraged me, and to the city of London for providing me a home, frustration and inspiration for my research and studio work.

Many thanks to faculty members Kelly Jazvac, Chris Myhr, Kelly Wood, David Merritt, and Sky Glabush, for their interest, insights and exciting discussions. I am grateful for the support and encouragement of my supervisor, Patrick Mahon, who has been a navigator within the program, provided great insight, criticism, thoughtful editing, studio visits and some moments of much needed laughter.

Jennifer Slauenwhite and Julia Beltrano, my media heroes, have provided a wealth of knowledge, help and wonderful attitudes with regards to my video works. Joy James, Sarah Bassnett, Susan Edelstein, Andrew Silk and Brad Isaacs helped facilitate my thesis projects.

My colleagues within the graduate program, Thea Yabut, Anthea Black, Barb Hobot, Jennifer Martin, Neil Klassen, Kim Neudorf, Brad Isaacs, and Tegan Moore, have enriched this work through feedback, favours, and valuable shared experiences. Thank you Micah Lexier, Eric Woodley, Gwen MacGregor, Jeannie Thib, and Kevin Rogers for engaging my work through lively conversation and studio visits.

Map Librarian, Cheryl Woods, and Wes Kinghorn, of the Woodfield Community Association, have been generous with their time and support of my mapping projects. James Patten, Director of the McIntosh Gallery, offered much generosity, guidance and support of the McIntosh's 2012 artist in the community project *Lines of Desire: Community Mapping in London's Woodfield*, as well as Brian Lambert and Catherine Elliot Shaw. Many thanks also go to the community members who produced beautiful, thoughtful and surprising maps as a core part of that work. This project would not have been realized in a community setting without the support of the London Co-operative, and its managers, Loretta McHenry and Barb Deakin. Many thanks for housing the exhibition and providing an engaged and meaningful community hub, and much nourishment.

I would also like to thank my family for their love dedication and continuous support. And to Rob Bickford, my biggest support and love, editor and inspiration; I am grateful to be able to negotiate my work and future with you.

For providing a place to call home in London, that has become such an important part of my work, I want to acknowledge Pat and Penny Stone, the owners of the century old house in which I have had the privilege to live. I also want to acknowledge and give thanks to the original peoples of this region, encompassing but not limited to the Oneida Nation of the Thames, Chippewa of the Thames First Nation, the Munsee-Delaware First Nation, and the Six Nations of the Grand River. The air, earth, and life of this geography sustains, grounds and humbles my own explorations as an artist.

Finally, thank you to the funding bodies that supported my research, including the Ontario Graduate Scholarship, the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada and the Visual Arts Travel fund.

Table of Contents

Abstract and Keywords	ii
Acknowledgements	iii
Table of Contents	v
List of Figures	vi
Introduction	1
Chapter 1: Comprehensive Statement: Mapping Art Practice	5
1.1 Development of My Art Practice in Context	5
1.2 The Projects	12
Bibliography and Works Cited	25
Chapter 2: Documentation of Practice	28
2.1 Graphic Mapping	28
<i>Lines of Desire</i>	28
<i>Floor Plan</i>	34
2.2 Serial Episodes	39
<i>Road Kill</i>	39
<i>Road Work</i>	43
2.3 Moving Through Space	48
Video Works	48
Chapter 3: Reviewing Exhibitions as a Critical & Collaborative Writing Practice	51
3.1 Exhibition Review of Jennifer Murphy's Work	51
3.2 Exhibition Review of Peter Dykhuis's Work	56
Curriculum Vitae	61

List of Figures

1. Kyla Brown, *Lines of Desire*: Artist and residents working with base maps at community event. 2012. Photo credit: Diana Yoo. 9
2. Kyla Brown, *Lines of Desire*: Contributor map by Daniel Ansari. Pencil crayon on paper. 8.5x11 inches. 2012. 9
3. Kyla Brown, *Lines of Desire*: installation detail. Cast beeswax and pigment from contributor maps and project research. 2012. 9
4. Kyla Brown, *Floor Plan: kitchen & dining room. 518 ½ Dufferin Ave. (upper), London, ON*. Formed distressed paper. Approximately 19x10 feet. 2013. Photo credit: Jennifer Martin. 13
5. Kyla Brown, *Floor Plan: bedroom. 518 ½ Dufferin Ave. (upper), London, ON*. Formed distressed paper. Approximately 13x11 feet. 2013. Photo credit : Brad Isaacs. 13
6. Gwen MacGregor, *7pm II*. Split screen video still from installation at Jessica Bradley Art + Projects. 150 minutes, 2006. From Gwen MacGregor’s video project webpage: http://www.gwenmacgregor.com/seven_pm_ii.html 16
7. Francis Alÿs, “*The Green Line; Sometimes doing something poetic can become political and sometimes doing something political can become poetic*”. Screen shot of project documentation. 17 min. 34 sec. video, in collaboration with Philippe Bellaïche, Rachel Leah Jones, and Julien Devaux. 2004. “Public domain” project and image from Alÿs’s project webpage: <http://www.francisalys.com/greenline/> and <http://www.guardian.co.uk/artanddesign/2010/jun/14/francis-alys-story-of-deception> 17
8. Kyla Brown, *Road Work* process documentation video still. 2012. 19
9. Kyla Brown, *Road Kill: London fall 2012, Nov 18* detail. Ink on mylar. 12x12 inches. 2012. 19
10. Francis Alÿs, *Painting/Retoque*. Screen shot of project documentation. 8 min. 31 sec video. 2008. “Public domain” project and image from Alÿs’s project webpage: <http://www.francisalys.com/public/painting.html> and <http://avion.egloos.com/2624792> 20

11. Kyla Brown, *Walking: Block*. Video still. HD video, 8 min. 55 sec. 2013. 22
12. Kyla Brown, *Biking: Pedal*. Video still HD video, 43 min. 57 sec. 2012. 22

Chapter 2: Documentation of Practice, consists of detailed documentation of my own works and descriptions of these works. It serves at a further list of figures illustrated there.

Introduction

Content of the Thesis Dossier

Each of the three elements within the dossier of the written thesis – my comprehensive artist statement, the documentation of my practice, and the exhibition reviews I have written and the surrounding documents regarding publication– functions individually within this document. Because my practice as an artist is multi-faceted, operating within the studio as well as outside of it, I see each component working as an element in my extended artistic work, functioning specifically as part of my program at Western, but more importantly, contributing to my ongoing practice materially, theoretically and practically. Having said this, I also recognize that these components fit together as evidence of my professional development. Because I work in a way that is based in process and experimentation, performing and using material and media such as drawing/ installation/ sculpture, video, and working through ideas and hunches as stepping stones in my research, it makes sense that I pursue various material projects relating to similar ideas. This process helps me to take informed risks as I map out my practice practically and professionally. And because I am thinking of mapping within the context of my drawing-installation studio practice as both a means of working through problems and as source material itself, I use a multi-part format in my writing in a way that is similar to my practice in the studio. Inevitably, I see the constellation of elements working together to inform each other – if not directly, then within the framework of my practice as an artist

1. Extended Artist's Statement: Mapping Art Practice

Chapter 1 comprises my extended artist's statement, in which I situate my work within contemporary art practices and with reference to my artistic and theoretical influences. I ground my own practice within a conceptual framework that functions as a context for my overall work and also considers my motivations as a practicing artist. This section introduces my methodology and situates my material practice in relation to other artists and processes. Furthermore, I show theorists' ideas as jumping off points for my own relationship to historical projects, such as that of the Situationists.

As a main component of my thesis writing, I use the extended statement as a way to explore the uses of mapping as a research interest in itself, as catalyst for studio practice and a way to propose theory as a compliment to my work. I also see this writing as a type of mapping work in its own right, a way to chart my practice as a progression, and a means to trace the paths of my projects and the research that I have been engaged with over the course of the MFA program. In this way, the statement is an extension of some of the central ideas within my work. Thus the meandering quality of the writing becomes an important means to reflect my studio practice and the way finding process that happens therein.

My extended artist's statement focuses on the development of my practice, tracing my transition from working with maps directly to a practice of *performing mapping* in art works. It also outlines my interest and my use of everyday activities to come to know a place, and as strategies for theorizing about the value of such activities as work. Specifically, Situationist based ideas and the writing of Michel de Certeau are discussed in relation to looking at, and navigating city spaces. I also discuss the influences of the works of artists such as Gwen MacGregor and Francis Alÿs, and analyze their conceptual and material engagements with particular projects that I understand in relation to my own. As such, my three areas of artistic exploration involve *seeing, working and sensing* within various aspects of my artistic projects in order to describe experiences of the city. Cycling, and negotiated forms of mobility within the city figures importantly within each of these modes of engagement.

Thus, in my statement and in my artwork, I look at mapping as:

- 1) *Always representation.* What does it mean that to 'know' a place; must we prioritize representation over a lived experience?
- 2) *A tactic, or process, to find one's way through real and described space.* Here, markers of the city site are investigated and questioned materially and serially
- 3) *A negotiated navigation of a 'body' within space.* Here way finding, and relating to environmental concerns figure into my video practice that engages with local terrain and mobility.

These categories regarding what mapping *does* within my art practice help to enumerate my ideas around mapping overall and to highlight my methods and research interests dedicated to ‘place’. I have recently taken part of my research practice out of the studio to complete a more performative and community based practice of mapping. This practice feels particularly important to me in London, whereas in other cities /homes where I have lived it has not seemed as relevant. This exciting turn has helped to map out the city and to seek to understand how one negotiates possibilities within a city. Further, the process of developing an extensive artist statement has helped me to articulate ideas I have thus far largely intuited, and understood as part of a progression. Thus aspects of layering and navigation occur both within my studio work and in constructing this chapter.

2. Documentation of My Developing Practice

The artist’s statement in Chapter 1 relates directly to the content of Chapter 2, which is comprised of the documentation of my developing studio practice. Because I am working in a performative, or project based way, the documentation includes photos and video of interactions outside of the studio, as well as photos of works in progress and finished bodies of work. In my statement, I refer to aspects of my work, and components of my process. It is my expectation that, in referring to both chapters, the reader will be able to trace the trajectory of my works’ development and also attend to distinctions between specific projects in order to get a sense of the overall shape of my practice.

3. Exhibition Reviews

Chapter 3 includes two published exhibition reviews from *Canadian Art Magazine* and *C Magazine*, respectively. The reviews of Jennifer Murphy’s solo exhibition, *Monkey’s Recovery*, at Clint Roenisch Gallery, and Peter Dykhuis’s solo show at Redhead Gallery, entitled *Inventories & Micro-mapping*, are included in a series of versions (i.e. longer drafts and the shorter published versions). In as much as working and writing in this way is a new practice for me, it has allowed me time to read, reread and think through not only several exhibitions of contemporary work, but also to think through particular galleries’ mandates as well as about particular artists’ larger oeuvre. This includes research of previous work of the artists under review, and other reviews of their work that have been published. In saying this, however, when

reflecting on my experience of an artist's exhibition I purposefully made my initial assessment before looking into some of that earlier writing, so as not to be overly influenced.

Each exhibition held some specific interests for me; in discussing Murphy's and Dykhuis' work, I was aware that materiality and some specific research interests are somewhat akin to my own. Murphy's work was important for me to write about because of its intriguing material qualities, and its spirit of experimentation; and because of my own sense that a type of mystical work is emerging as a trend within contemporary art. It also enabled my critique of beautiful work that may seem somewhat superficial rather than being deeply engaged and critical in some way. These are important issues for me as a writer, in order to evolve my own professionalism as well as a sense of criticality.

Peter Dykhuis has been an extremely important artist for my own practice. His use of mapping methodology is different from my own, but the questions and problems brought up in his work hold importance for my interests. Particularly in the exhibition I reviewed, the personal and *the everyday* were central components within Dykhuis's work with "micro-mapping". While this show may not have comprised of the most exciting of his works, it was an important exhibition in that it is a transitional body of work for him. And within the review I was able to consider his practice in context of past works. Again, as a professional practice, reviewing a contemporary exhibition such as this one helped me articulate my readings of work, and to participate in a discourse. Additionally, the practice of 'reading' contemporary work, and writing about, is an important part of my professional development as a contemporary artist, resulting in a richer engagement with exciting artists and their practices.

1. Comprehensive Statement: Mapping Art Practice

My current art practice involves investigations into mapping the places I call ‘home’ and negotiating the city through material explorations informed by social experience. This practice is directly influenced by my own engagements with ideas of place and my everyday negotiations living in a city. Moving to London, Ontario, and transitioning from life in Toronto, has been a continuous process of negotiation that has engaged my thinking as well as my art practice.

My experience of London, as a new place and as my current home, has often confused and challenged me. I perceive conflicting dynamics within the city itself –in its infrastructure and amidst its class divide that complicates the experience of the city, and reflects a dynamic historical past. Notably, I had not spent time here before moving to attend graduate school, and upon doing so, ideas of navigation have occupied me in an investigation of city spaces as the subject of my own art practice.

As I have proceeded through the MFA program, my work evolving, I have asked myself how much of my daily living activity is my practice itself, and vice versa. In light of this, getting to know London, and moving throughout the city have been central to my thesis research and studio work. Mapping as material practice is the methodology with which I am investigating and invoking both perceived and underlying tensions. I am fundamentally questioning how my practice can invite nuanced considerations of a personal and shared experience of a city.

1.1 Development of My Art Practice in Context

Working with ideas of mapping has been the sustaining impulse for my body of work. Overall, this work has evolved from working with maps directly and making map-like works, to operating within an embodied experience of space and an intuitive material language. While this trajectory has been important to the progression of my thesis work, it has also necessitated that I depart from thinking strictly about maps. This shift has acted as a point of departure, and has suggested an important place to begin again. Thus, I have come to look at maps as historical documents and forms of representation that relate to lived experience: they promote way finding and a process of reflecting how one understands navigating the place in which they live.

Several of my recent works have included drawing/ installation pieces – representing map-based images of the city invoking a physical material process. With this in mind, the literal translation and the highly charged vocabulary of ‘the map’ is all too often caught up in tropes of the colonizer or conqueror with respect to land ownership. This Western history is not a central concern within the gestures and investigations of my research and practice. I am more interested in such constructions as appear in “The Map Room”, Robert Storr’s essay in the MOMA exhibition catalogue *Mapping*, in which the author speaks of the knowing/seeing power of using the map like a board game, to make relationships and take in a whole as an organizer, through the act of “placing”.¹ These relationships and connotations regarding mapping are negotiated by a variety of artists in the exhibition about which Storr writes.

In another text, Christopher Norment also alludes to this interaction in his introduction to *In the Memory of the Map, a cartographic memoir*. “Maps are solid things. They depict particular pieces of geography, suggest where to travel, position us in space. But they may also tell us much more.”² Using a map, any kind of map, as a way to visually understand (conceive of and gain knowledge about) a place, and potentially one’s experience of that place is particularly useful to me. This is especially true regarding mapping as an art practice, as opposed to what might be considered the “objective” potential of maps to function according to sanctioned means.

When I initially began the MFA program, direct reference to (archival) maps were often perceived as too wrapped up in the language and rules of the map, rather than directed towards a consideration of ideas of the city of London within the context of ‘home’. Because of the ubiquity of the term to ‘map’- often used as a ‘buzz word’ pertaining to many activities that artists and writers explore- I found I needed to be very specific and careful about how I was using the term as well as how I integrate mapping within my artistic practice. I thus allowed for a ‘turn’, letting go of ‘the map’ as a specific object, and moving to a project-based, embodied material practice *doing mapping*. This includes working outside of the studio, and using performative and time based conceptual strategies that become methods/ tactics for navigating London.

¹ Storr. “The Map Room: A Visitor’s Guide” *Mapping*, exhibition catalogue, (New York: Museum of Modern Art, 1994), p. 10.

² Norment, “Introduction”, *In the Memory of the Map; a Cartographic Memoir*. (Iowa City: University of Iowa, 2012), p. 3.

Because I work materially and intuitively as an artist, I allow for my initial impulses and ‘hunches’, and I am open to looking productively at where the next turn in my projects will lead me. I have therefore learned that it is important to trust a process of wandering and finding my way through the work; that to follow a hunch and to search is a way of interpreting a tactic of the *dérive*. It also enables a reflexive mapping of my practice itself. So stopping, turning and exploring tangents are important to my research and to my way finding. In considering the act of mapping as a studio practice, drawing methodology has figured prominently, though my projects are ultimately determined via project-specific media.

Using Drawing

In the introduction to *Vitamin D*, Emma Dexter speaks of the drawing process in a way to which I can relate. She touches on the notion of drawing as a process of working through an idea, as a way of figuring something out, or even learning. She quotes sculptor Henry Moore, who asserted “[d]rawing is a means of finding your way about things, and a way of experiencing...”³ In this conception drawing methodology is translatable, and unfixed. It is an interpretive and open act that always involves searching.

This (drawing) practice of *following and figuring* has been a very important strategy in working through my conceptual concerns. As well, by observing and experiencing the city, *the everyday* has come to play an important role, turning the acquisition of empirical knowledge into a process for evolving critical meaning within the work itself – a central tenet of my research method. Instead of taking a line for a walk as Paul Klee would have it, I have become more interested in how Francis Alÿs and Gwen MacGregor might *make* a line from a walk. Both artists’ practices have been critical to my thinking of mapping and negotiating space. I will revisit their importance to my practice later in this paper.

The Dérive, Situationalism and the Everyday

My reading of Michel de Certeau’s “Walking in the City” has provided a site of ‘opening up’ for me and has helped me to solidify my engagement with art theory. This text has been a central one for my thinking about mapping as way to figure out, or gain understanding and take meaning

³ Dexter. “To Draw is to be Human”, *Vitamin D; New Perspectives in Drawing*, (London and New York City: Phaidon Press, 2005) p. 8

from a place; it has informed my investigations in how we navigate and use a shared place or part of the city. It has also helped me to differentiate my practice from the ideology and intended practices of the Situationist International. My reading of the SI is that it functioned as a highly reactive and politicized rebellion against the modern capitalist society of the spectacle, and sought to critique the alienation resulting from modern industrialization and mass consumption. In my work, rather than recapitulating Debord's *dérive*, I have been concerned with how real people, including myself and those in London communities, are actually using city spaces. My approach is in part a response to the fact that I realize that many people take for granted the city plan, its infrastructure and its embedded politics, as they move through space and negotiate their home context. While I appreciate the SI's reading of these types of frameworks, I am less interested in a wholehearted dissent from such structures in my practice, than in looking at how we can work within and subtly oppose those structures.

Arguably, Certeau's tactics (as opposed to the overtly political strategies of the SI) were meant as more subtle, realistic and meaningful within everyday contexts and are thus more sustainable. That is, they propose we exist within the given city infrastructure, and use it in a way that is not prescriptive, but is (subtly) subversive. Having said this, I acknowledge the importance and wider influence of SI strategies within critical theory and that my own engaged practices are indebted to them.

With this in mind I will now speak about one of my works and some central research as an example in the shift with my practice that has grounded the process of my larger thesis project. These ideas will be picked up again in more depth in relation to specific works.

Lines of Desire

In employing creative 'tactics', it is never my goal to 'fix' the city, but to encourage that one might recognize small gestures as personally and politically important. In my community based art project *Lines of Desire: community mapping in London's Woodfield*, I enlisted collaborators in a process of drawing maps or travel routes within the city. This was done with direct community engagement at a variety of public venues and events, with the intention to connect with and learn from the diverse communities around the Woodfield (residential) neighbourhood near downtown London. I was most interested in how other people 'use' the city and how these

uses might overlap and accumulate to propose a new kind of representation of the ways people navigate the city of London; and by navigating residents inscribe upon their city.

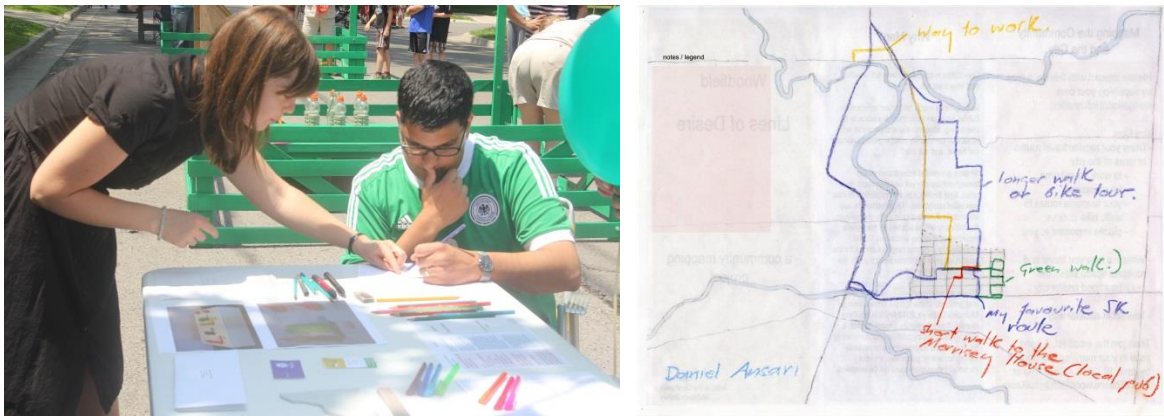


Fig 1: *Lines of Desire*: Artist and residents working with base maps at community event. Photo: Diana Yoo.

Fig 2: (above right) *Lines of Desire*: Contributor map.

Fig 3: *Lines of Desire*: installation detail. Cast beeswax and pigment from contributor maps and project research.



This project was implemented as part of a residency I was involved in through McIntosh Gallery's *Artist in the Community internship*. Engaging the local public in this way has also been employed in mapping projects by various groups, such as AREA Chicago⁴, and Gwen MacGregor and Sandra Rechico. While there are evident pitfalls in such community projects which are often established through institutional art centres, I view my project as an important gesture to gaining insight into the city; how to represent it and 'map' a place through localized accumulation. Having said this, I acknowledge that it is a difficult and often dubious endeavour to carry out community-based art works, or to attempt work that is meant to function to produce a meaningful social change. Art that asserts it is intended for a community to engage can be presumptuous, so I approached this project as a way to research, connect (however slightly),

⁴ See AREA Chicago's Notes for a People's Atlas: People Making Maps of Their Cities. (Chicago Illinois: AREA Chicago, 2011).

learn about and represent, with a modest desire to *inflect* the city and the varied neighbourhood in which I live.

Given this development in my practice, it became clear to me that it is essential to examine the experience of a city in relation to the act of looking at a map. In works such as mine, there is the implication of a distinct difference between living within a city, and viewing a city, as if from above. This analogy and distinction is explained by Certeau regarding a view from New York's former world trade centre, as if taking in the totality of a map according to the ideas of an 'all seeing power' of a medieval spectator's celestial eye. This creates a "fiction" of representation that is always already an abstraction, in contradistinction from the bodily, less clear experience of those who "live below", and intuit their navigational patterns.⁵ Employing this approach means that a so-called lived urban experience establishes city users as "readers" of these spaces who function differently from those who engage with the city's "text" as "they write without being able to read it."⁶ This disconnect of reading over navigating is how my work has taken me along a different route of movement and material interventions to distinguish between what are ultimately two kinds of knowledge sets regarding place.

The deliberate self-reflexivity of that [representing representation] gesture draws attention to the contexts at work, the context of virtual global imagery (of Google Earth) and the context of painting [read as art practice], both of which portray three-dimensional space on a two-dimensional plane. For all of their recognizable illusionism, these common means of picturing the world are radically different than the world they reference. Yet humans negotiate their environments using these tools in quite matter-of-fact ways. It only becomes strange when we think about it too hard, otherwise we take the tools for granted.⁷

This divergence in viewing/ experiencing will be taken up further, in relation to some of my other projects.

⁵ de Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life*. Translated by Steven F Rendall. (Berkeley, LA and London: University of California Press, 1984), p. 92

⁶ de Certeau, p. 93

⁷ Estep, "Other Positioning Systems" In Exhibition catalogue *David Lefkowitz, Other Positioning Systems*. (Rochester, MN: Rochester Art Centre, 2010) p.11-12

In my work as an artist I understand that through using a knowledge of the city layout, and engaging my own cognitive mapping as a base of information, everyday uses of movement through city spaces can become productive gestures for mapping the city of London. In this sense, mapping always precedes the map.⁸

Mapping as an Artistic Methodology

Mapping has come to describe a broad set of actions in my practice. Methodology and content coming together simultaneously has become an important facet of many of my works. For example, by using an art practice to speak about my home, London –which I am attempting to describe by the experience of navigating –I become aware of particular components of my process I must think about and address. Accordingly, one of my central research questions considers how a material art practice performs a ‘mapping’ of particular place established through negotiated navigation within that place. So while my work makes direct reference to London, Ontario, and is made about London as the site of specific urban investigations, it is not my intention to make authoritative comments about the city of London –to Londoners –or to resolve city problems. The specificity of London’s sites does not necessitate that meaning can only be found there. My intention is that this work can speak to possibilities, problematics and commonalities within other city spaces in Canada.

Moving outside the studio to perform art works that may be read as interventions and which involve documenting and negotiating movements within London, is a direction that my most recent studio work has taken. The majority of my current work has originated outside of the studio.

With respect to the thesis exhibition, I am approaching this undertaking as a site where actions within my work regarding the city and diverse, even seemingly disparate projects, can come together to describe a *place* and also highlights research questions. Thus ‘tangents’ in my practice form a type of *dérive*, or a meandering path that brings one to the place they anticipated reaching, despite the lack of a (conventional) ‘map’.

As I am working in several communicative modes, where the project’s conception necessitates particular material treatments, distinct methodology is not only determined by the project, but is

⁸ Abbas, “Introduction” *Mapping Michel Serres*. (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2005), p. 5

also at the core of the work. Specifically, the three areas of practice that demonstrate this are: the graphic representation of place, a mapping that unfolds through a direct ‘drawing’ procedure; investigations into episodic or serial moments within the city; and a navigation or negotiation of embodied movement within the city. In other words my mapping project is threefold: exploring how seeing, working and sensing can come together to describe place.

1.2 The Projects

Graphic Mapping

The graphic depiction of an aerial matrix charting a place is often a default signifier for a map, which in turn comes to represent a place. As such I have attempted to rethink this system within my practice, concluding that graphically, mapping does not necessitate that one must default to conventional map making. The project, *Floor Plan: 518 ½ Dufferin Ave. (upper), London, ON*, is where my discussion will now focus in this regard, having already discussed another work within this mode, *Lines of Desire: Community Mapping in London’s Woodfield*. I have made the *Floor Plan* work by ‘wallpapering’ the floor of the majority of my apartment, and then continuing to use my space as I regularly do. I am interested in proposing the trace of my daily activities as a graphic representation of use and lived experience. This work is an index of the everyday activities of my home space and a visual depiction of my own personal actions. Here I aim to preserve the topography of the floor plane through tracking my walking, cooking, sitting etc., navigating around furniture and via the doorways throughout my flat. The domestic context whereby ‘high traffic areas’ and desire lines are demarked and reinforced by the accumulation of activity in the specific terrain is an index of my own daily behaviours. While proportionately, this work represents a small section of the (city) place I inhabit, it follows a similar process of route making as some of my other works. The scale of this project is, of necessity, 1:1, insisting that the drawings be very large. However the scale of the environment being mapped is small in comparison to my overall geographic movements in my daily life.

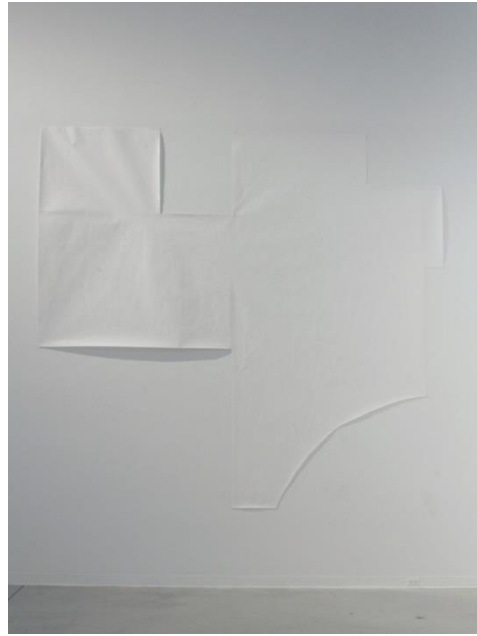


Fig 4: *Floor Plan: kitchen & dining room. 518 ½ Dufferin Ave. (upper), London, ON. 2013.*

Fig 5: *Floor Plan: bedroom. 518 ½ Dufferin Ave. (upper), London, ON. 2013.*

Looking to theories concerning *the everyday* (daily routines, route taking, and making the personal important politically), I am thinking conceptually about the small often repeated gestures that inform one's knowledge of a place, especially as part of the assemblage of information that comes to constitute the 'feeling' of a (city) space. In Michael E. Gardiner's, *Critiques of Everyday Life*, the author offers readings of various theories regarding the everyday, including that of the SI and Certeau. Referencing *The Practices of Everyday Life* specifically, Gardiner presents a succinct reading of Certeau's "transcription", the process by which 'users' or 'readers' (of the city) make their own meaning in unexpected ways, establishing a form of creative appropriation of rules in ways that work best for the user. City dwellers do this continuously, and even unconsciously, in simple actions such as taking short-cuts, or jaywalking. To describe the importance of this kind of behaviour more clearly, Certeau uses the analogy of renters in flats, who make their own uses of what was once part of a larger (single occupant) house now being let.

While I am aware of the multiple references to this type of analogy as well as of Borges' poem, *Exactitude in Science*⁹, my engagement with pertinent theories involves a kind of absorption and

⁹ Borges, "Of Exactitude in Science" in *A Universal History of Infamy*. Translated by Norman Thomas di Giovanni. New York: E. P. Dutton & Co., Inc. 1972

digestion within my body and in my practice; and is not illustrative or didactic. My work is about its own physicality and is a form of conceptual material engagement with representation. I see this project as a sign for mapping *the personal*. Tracking and indexing human movements invested in use, and producing meaning occurs in my domestic, personal and everyday space due to its own material and spatial qualities, as well as its importance as a ‘home’.

Tracing my movements to describe usage and produce a topography is not intended to situate me as an authority, but to offer the possibility of knowing a place that can then become a indexical subject of speculation, especially through the interpretation of viewers. My physical embodied practice necessarily involves my own body; however, it is an *interpretive body* that moves through space –and the ‘body’ of the material –that are of most importance.

In as much as I am transcribing experience into/onto the material ‘body’ of this project through process, I am also aware of the importance of the distinction between *looking* and *experiencing*, so I want to further elaborate on their importance to my work. Certeau sets up the chapter, “Walking in the City”, in *The Practices of Everyday Life*, with this very distinction, looking at a city from above, (or at a map), as a facsimile of what is “down below”, lived by “[t]he ordinary practitioners of the city... These practitioners make use of spaces that cannot be seen”.¹⁰ Here, the differences between viewing and experiencing are distinct in ways that are similar to how one might recall being sure of a route while looking at a map, or hearing directions, but then being bewildered by having to navigate the real spatial environment.

Certeau separates his subjects’ encounters in this analogy into those of voyeurs and walkers, readers or practitioners. But I wonder if these encounters must be either/ or. Because, while I am not contesting the map as a “fiction”, one that involves the pleasure of power as all knowing/ seeing, the graphic mapping projects I aim to create are not about authoritative knowledge or power. These mapping projects instead intend to turn the walkers *into* voyeurs, encouraging reflections on their own ‘picturable’ use, or ‘writing’, as Certeau might have it. These ‘maps’ are not the sanctioned, ‘objective’, or published images we find in our cars or as we search for routes digitally. These projects are maps that can trace experience, that have a body of their own; producing signs or indexes of the personal and spatial. Here, the represented (experience) can

¹⁰ de Certeau p. 93

become more about the real than maps or images that already exist. Thus, I see the objects of my graphic mapping practice as signs of looking *as* experience.

With *Floor Plan*, I invite viewers to negotiate their own reading of this work, and put themselves figuratively in this space. Then, they may work through the peculiarity of these drop-sheet-like pieces of paper that are exhibited out of their created context and in the space of the gallery; that they might perform a transcription in the gallery setting. Encountering this work in my home, as it collects stains and memory of practice/ use, and experiencing it in a gallery are very different, but are important counterparts. One encounter seeming somewhat overwhelming and the other being sanitized creates a set of experiences in dialogue.

Speaking conceptually, my transcription of use is important to my thinking and ‘mapping’ of the city –as an art practice that focuses on site and material interventions. Gardiner speaks in reference to Certeau’s likening of “wandering lines” to the practice of “transcription”.

Consumers ‘produce’ through the adoption of ‘errant’ or non-formalized practices, which obey internal logic that are unintelligible to an outsider. Although these practices must ultimately utilize the vocabularies and resources proffered by elites, the actual trajectories adopted reflect the ‘ruses of other interests and desires that are neither determined nor captured by the system in which they develop’.¹¹

Notably, this system of ‘emergence’¹² is based on accumulation, where meaning is made in repetition of the many, not through the authority of the few. My acts are small, and imply greater possibilities.

Serial Episodes

As noted earlier, I am interested in thinking of everyday practices, and utilizing ‘tactics’ over ‘strategies’ within my work, not to illustrate or engage with theory directly but to inform my creative process. When thinking through the ‘life’ and everyday efficacy of a project, I intend to employ tactics as Certeau describes them having to do more specifically with *location* and my

¹¹ Gardiner on Certeau, from “Michel de Certeau: the cunning of unreason” in *Critiques of everyday life*. (New York and London: Routledge, 2000), p. 170

¹² In a general sense, Emergence theory makes meaning, or patterns out of what seems to be chaos or randomness through accumulation and repetition. Some of this, in relation to social and spatial organization of (city) spaces, can be found as an introduction in a Radio lab podcast: <http://www.radiolab.org/2007/aug/14/>

reading of city usages. The sites I engage with can speak to political issues in London, and though this is not my end goal within the work, these are important connection for my work to make. I have focused on the practical uses of routes as well as the method employed to travel. In this regard, I have been looking at Gwen MacGregor’s GPS drawings and as well as her collaborative work with Sandra Rechico.

These Toronto artists have also done community based mapping projects such as “You Are Here”, Berlin’s “Saturday”, and other individual mapping projects, including “Smooth Sailing” and “7pm II”¹³ In these works, a system has been established to examine a journey, or community experience of a place. In “7pm II”, Gwen MacGregor and her partner, Lewis Nicholson, were living apart for a five month period in different cities. To produce an iteration of “7pm”, a one minute section of video was recorded by each of them at 7pm each day, so that the eventual two channel video installation reflects a section of life “split between two cities”¹⁴ by two people connected. In the resulting work, a tension ‘stretched’ across a physical and psychological space is produced. Here one minute video clips of daily life act as markers of routine, depicting mundane activities and a layered representation of dual presences as well as absences in city sites.



Fig 6: Gwen MacGregor, *7pmII*, split screen video still. 2006.

MacGregor’s use of serial reflections of sites, and acts of moving through and experiencing urban space, are important to my own work in that she is performing a ‘mapping’ through a variety of means and practices in subtly political, and personally poignant ways. While these

¹³ Gwen MacGregor website: <http://www.gwenmacgregor.com/home.html>

¹⁴ From text on “7pm II” project access on webpage: http://www.gwenmacgregor.com/seven_pm_ii.html

practices may seem simple they suggest important and complex structures and experiences that can be shared and felt by others.

In my research, I have also been looking at work by artists Julie Mehretu, Mark Bradford, Gabriel Orozco and Sara Graham, but in this paper I am limiting my focus to Gwen MacGregor, and Francis Alÿs. Alÿs' "Sometimes Making Something Leads to Nothing", "The Leak" and "Painting/Retoque"¹⁵ are some of the projects to which I have been particularly drawn. In "The Leak", one of his most well-known pieces, Alÿs has worked on more than one iteration of the project walking through the streets of Sao Paulo (1995)/ Paris (2003) and Jerusalem (2004 "The Green Line") respectively. In "The Green Line; *Sometimes doing something poetic can become political and sometimes doing something political can become poetic*", a can of green paint leaks a line, a route marker of a walk. The route takes on wholly different connotations in different cities and with different itineraries.¹⁶ Furthermore, the encounter takes on different meanings whether by 'experiencing' this work on site or through encountering its documentation and interviews. Alÿs' work may seem conceptually cool, or perhaps silly, but it relates in often subtle ways to political and physical actions larger than itself. I am also very attracted to Alÿs' propensity to have one project lead to the next, following through on odd and simple actions.



Fig 7: Francis Alÿs, *The Green Line; Sometimes doing something poetic can become political and sometimes doing something political can become poetic*, screen shot of project documentation. 2004.

¹⁵ Francis Alÿs website: <http://www.francisalys.com/>

¹⁶ The Green Line here represents a military border drawn on a map; however, that line on a map represents a comparatively large real space. So how does that space exist in real life negotiations? The video project can be accessed online: <http://www.francisalys.com/greenline/>

Roads as Sites

In looking at these artists, I am interested in an action, a site, a walk or ride and a conceptual underpinning –linked to those in my own projects: namely involving expanded mapping that comes together in material processes to speak to experiencing the city. I have worked on two projects that are particular to the road as a site. These projects have involved, respectively, ink drawings done from memory on mylar, then formed into a book in *London Road Kill, fall 2012*, and the application of plasticine in *Road Work* used to fill cracks in the asphalt on particular sites in city streets.

Road Kill documents and catalogues one cycling season, a three month period from September 4, 2012 to December 4, 2012 as a type of calendar concentrating on all of the road kill I encountered while moving around the city on my bicycle. These abstract, Rorschach-like ink blot images describe a temporal mapping of the city, particularly focused on the portions of the city I frequent. Being the ‘forest city’ London has many city dwelling animals, including skunks, possums, racoons, and squirrels, and these animals live amongst our human infrastructure and are regularly killed in the city’s streets. When living elsewhere, I have never seen as much road kill as I have encountered in London, and I see these remains acting as loaded markers of place and signs for tension between ‘natural’ and vehicular infrastructure; the latter privileged in very specific ways in London, Ontario as well as elsewhere.

The *Road Kill* work came about from observing the number and variety of road kill in London while also noticing that, depending on the neighbourhood/ location, the carcasses remain for a certain amount of time and are then removed from the street, undoubtedly by a city implemented (sanitation) system. Consequently the practice of observing this type of ecology from the street became an aspect of the project. And I noted that, by frequenting sections of roadway, a memory of the marked animals and their visual traces as corpses produced another form of index. So, recording these objects was a daily task: to watch for, document, and translate encounters in experience and material expression. These processes suggest larger connotations regarding city infrastructure and the politics of relating to the ‘natural environment’.

Choosing to translate these (approximately life size) drawings into a smaller photo book allows for a time-based reading of the work that is sequential and relates to another type of experience

besides that of looking at a large series of drawings. Because viewers ‘take books in’ as individuals, there is a cerebral and personal opportunity that exists in encountering a book that becomes important as a further translation of an aspect of the urban reality.



Fig 8: *Road Work* process documentation. Fig 9: *Road Kill: London fall 2012, Nov 18* detail, 2012.

Within the *Road Work* series, I have also engaged directly with selected places where cracked and potholed asphalt exists, enacting a performative and time based project. With this work, I operate in a way that responds to the road as a site for drawing. These cracked and fissured locations are like maps in themselves, showing how infrastructure has failed. My work highlights as well as ‘heals’ some of these areas. These imperfections are continually formed by weather changes, wear, construction, and from the land shifting underneath the asphalt. In this way they become sometimes dangerous obstacles in everyday navigation for cyclists, and consequently, they preoccupy me as I ride through the streets. These are markers, curiosities and warnings. It is absurd for me to repair these cracks and potholes in this way; however the act of working in the street to mark and, in a way, remedy a problem is perhaps the means by which the work aims to question the relationship between user/ vehicle and surface conduit.

In this work, the road site continues to be used in between my working sessions. The brightly coloured material that fills cracks picks up the dirt and other material on the road and fades away. In this way, these works act as sites for ongoing encounters and intervention is made visible. Though there is little road maintenance used to actually fix these sites, the futility of this ‘drawing’ tries to speak to material mapping as a tactic that works with and subtly intervenes in the road and in its direct relationship to the landscape. There is also a likeness here to a

cartographic practice, digital or otherwise, where once a map is created it becomes almost instantly outdated, due to the ever changing terrain, landscape and usage of a place.

In terms of the components of my practice, the (performative) work used to make these ‘drawings’ is important, but it is also seemingly absurd –I am operating here in a manner similar to Francis Alÿs in “Painting/Retoque”. In this video work documenting the project, Alÿs retouches, or repaints one of sixty single yellow median lines demarcating the faded lanes of a street in the former US base in Paraiso, Panama.¹⁷ Importantly in my practice, action leads to the site coming to exist as a document of work. It is also the site that continues to exist as the (new) work itself, and to function as a marker and sign for another ongoing encounter. These sites are locations of (literal) tension in the road’s infrastructure, acting as legible material and in relation to what the asphalt covers over. These ‘drawings’, like maps themselves, mark the process of decay of the streets’ terrain, and they mimic the water systems obfuscated by the road system itself.



Fig 10: Francis Alÿs, *Painting/Retoque* screen shot of project documentation. 2008.

My two road/site projects work to highlight, interact with, and relate experiences of urban negotiation that takes place at their respective sites. It could be argued that drawing attention to the site proposes a stand-in for experience. And while these sites are spaces of encounter I happen to engage with daily in my everyday practice of cycling as a means of transportation, it is important to contextualize cycling itself as an aspect of my art practice.

¹⁷ See the video project at <http://www.francisalys.com/public/painting.html>

Theoretical tactics and the bicycle:

Many of my projects involving a collaborative and performative way of working outside of the studio have been influenced by my main mode of transportation, the bicycle. Using a bike to get around affects one's perception and experience of the city greatly. While it is clear that bicycles propose particular political relationships to equalize opportunity for transporters, are self-powered, environmentally friendly, better for road wear conditions and congestion, it is not my aim to romanticize cycling. Instead, I want to speak to the bike's potential to offer an important alternative for viewing, living in, experiencing and mapping one's city.

Cycling is a personal, political and financial decision that informs who I am as a city dweller. Strategically, within city infrastructures, riding a bike is arguably an ecologically sustainable and humane way to negotiate the city, especially given its ties to the feminist movement, and its history of equalizing travel for many with respect to economic efficiency.¹⁸ Furthermore, the bicycle has an important corporeal relationship to the body.¹⁹ The machine is distinctly human sized, in both its physical and mechanical workings. Not only do we 'ride' a bicycle in a physically connected way, but as riders we also directly connect our bodies to the mechanics of moving ourselves forward. The one who rides powers the mechanism.²⁰ However, it must be said that it is a constant struggle to assert oneself safely within existing city infrastructures not designed to support this advantageous travel method.²¹

Moving through space

This aspect of my work involves video projects documenting the mechanics of walking and cycling over the weathered and potholed terrain of London's city streets and bike routes. In particular I am interested in documenting the experience of navigating the road's surfaces, and

¹⁸ Roberts, "Blazing Saddles & Appropriate Technology; the Bike Path to a Green Economy" and "The Auto Free Cities Movement: It's Everyone; A discussion with Olivia Chow, Joan Doiron, Jane Jacobs, Marilou MacPhedran, Lisa Salsberg and Sue Zielinski" in *Beyond the Car; Essays on the Auto Culture*.(Toronto: Steel Rail Publishing/Transportation Options. 1995), p. 103.

¹⁹ From conversation with Jason Hallows and Anna Madelska, February 1, 2013.

²⁰ There is some limitation here in locating cycling as (wholly) equalizing considering whose bodies may power a bike. However, for the purposes of this paper I am focusing on cycling as a generally accessible method of transportation.

²¹ In speaking about cycling and engaging in (community-based) art practices in London, Greg Curnoe's influence must be taken into consideration. And while I am aware of and respect his practice and contributions in relation to my own concerns, my conceptual interests -that inform my material investigations in negotiating city space- lead my research in a different direction.

recording specific kinds of movement through the city's roads as a cyclist and pedestrian. Exploring the materiality and embodied strangeness through video documentations of these gestures, including presenting what could not be beheld normally as one travels, is an essential part of this work. Because the video camera is mounted directly onto the 'body' that is performing this navigation (be it a bicycle or my own body), the relationship to the ground's surface, and the kind of sounds that seem to fully locate one within one's own body are communicated corporeally. A sense of proprioception within these video projects is important, producing a strange or unfamiliar experience of navigation that is almost *more real than real*. Proprioception is the manner by which we know ourselves as ourselves because we can feel it in our bodies. More specifically, it is how we orient ourselves in space through sight and with our bodies.²² This is how one is able to perform a sobriety test by touching one's nose, or feel seasick while viewing a moving image with an unstable horizon. These senses allow us to 'know' movement and place. They also accumulate to thicken an experience of space.

Duration is also an important element in the video works. These are generally a single shot format, where the duration of each work lasts as long as the journey or task takes. For example, in *Walking: Block*, I walk around the city block in which my house is located without crossing any streets at a 'strolling' pace and continue back to my home. Incidentally, this is a walk I sometimes take as a short break from writing.



Fig 11: Video stills: *Walking: Block*. 2013. Fig 12: *Biking: Pedal*. 2012.

²² online Encyclopedia of Perception, *Sage Knowledge*. Ed: E. Bruce Goldstein, 2009.
<http://knowledge.sagepub.com.proxy2.lib.uwo.ca/view/perception/n74.xml?rskey=Axi3Qc&row=3> and
<http://knowledge.sagepub.com.proxy2.lib.uwo.ca/view/perception/n126.xml?rskey=Axi3Qc&row=8>

In relation to this video and bicycle oriented research, I am concerned to continue to engage with integrating every day practices as a form of questioning; walking vs. biking vs. public transit. With respect to these SI derived tactics, I am interested in how biking (and documenting this act) can serve as a somewhat marginalized and in-between act of the flâneuse – especially related to bicycle transit – versus goal oriented and isolated driving in a car, or as a passenger on public transit. In this way, the bicycle becomes a kind of perambulator, in an abstract sense.

Arguably, the bicycle acts as an in-between mode with respect to overly mediated speed driven car travel and the movements of the meandering walker, who may perhaps walk for the purpose of walking. With respect to speed and manoeuvrability, bicycle transport is intermediary in that cyclists move quickly enough to efficiently travel from place to place, but are directly connected not only to the terrain that supports them, but also the environment around them while travelling. This connection to one's direct and larger city context occurs in a distinctly different social and intermediate way to that of a pedestrian or driver. Here cycling is a way to 'use' a city, to travel in a goal oriented fashion at a pace and a direct engagement, in a similar way to how walking has been use by the SI and other artists. Thus biking can become an instrument for a direct mapping process to occur.

Within the videos, I want to document, question and make strange the timing and movement through London's city streets and pathways. While travelling frequented routes, the simple camera situations have the ability to relate details, traces and subtleties of experience getting around the city. Seeing, hearing and feeling the camera shudder because of uneven pavement puts the viewer in a different place in relation to the work; not within, but outside, and affected by encounter. So the space and time of viewing the installed video works proposes a site for a nuanced reading of a hybrid materiality and daily practice.

More specifically, in *Biking: Pedal*, the regular movements that occur while cycling look and feel strange, ominous or off-putting, in the mediated representation of video. Because of the simple documentation method of mounting a camera on to the pedal of my bicycle, the heaving, rocking motion of cycling destabilizes the horizon, which one generally knows as fixed. Affective, political and embodied encounters are encouraged with the installation of these works, so that a seemingly simple conceptual gesture has layered implications as to who might be

travelling, in what environmental context, and to what ends. These suggestive and open ended activities are important to my practice as I aim to create space for meaning making in the gallery.

Conclusion

It is not my intent to draw definitive conclusions here concerning my studio practice, which remains purposely interpretive, but to draw attention to the intersecting conceptual and experiential qualities of my projects. Throughout my MFA research, I have been addressing a mapping practice partly through drawing installation as a way of thinking through my understanding of London, the city, and home. I have been exploring how an embodied and material art practice can perform a mapping of place. In this way, I envision my three respective tactics or practices – graphic representations, serial episodes and moving through space – as different branches of a river or paths that lead to an opening for convergence and interpretation.

Understood broadly, drawing has been a process by which I negotiate my questions. *Following, figuring, turning and interpreting* are essential methods within my studio practice; to help me to understand the city, my own intuitive approaches and theoretical influences. In this way a major part of my project has been working as an artist and London resident to get to know a city that seems sometimes confusing, and difficult to navigate, but continues to be a place that is intriguing and special to me.

These tensions in (unfamiliar) city dwellings are common to experiences living in many Canadian cities, especially as many cities have developed and changed their infrastructures. Thus, my attempt at ‘getting to know’ a place necessarily developed into mapping practices, informed by an interpretation of SI interests, theory and tactics related to Michel de Certeau and the everyday. *The everyday* in particular functions as both a theoretical model, and as a means of relating to the specifics of my own activities.

Using these research components I employ mapping as a process of layering, and making meaning from experience. Negotiating these practices, the projects relate and respond to one another, and propose a sensitivity for navigating and locating oneself within a place.

Bibliography and Works Cited

Abbas, Niran. Introduction to *Mapping Michel Serres*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2005.

Abrams, Janet and Peter Hall, editors. *Else/Where: Mapping New Cartographies of Networks and Territories*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Design Institute, 2006.

Abumrad, Jad and Robert Krulwich, hosts. “Emergence” Radiolab podcast. Accessed February 23, 2013: <http://www.radiolab.org/2007/aug/14/>

Allen, Siemon, Rebecca R Hart, and Kinsey Katchka. *Julie Mehretu: City Sitings*. Detroit: Detroit Institute of Arts. 2007.

Francis Alÿs’ website. “The Leak”. Accessed March 11, 2013.
http://www.nytimes.com/2007/03/13/arts/design/13chan.html?_r=0

Borges, Jorge Luis. “Of Exactitude in Science” in *A Universal History of Infamy*. Translated by Norman Thomas di Giovanni. New York: E. P. Dutton & Co., Inc. 1972.

Caillet, Aline. “Detournement, Infiltration, Disruption—Elements for a New Situationist Practice” in *Places and Non-Places of Contemporary Art*. Montréal: Les éditions esse, 2005.

Cosgrove, Denis. “Introduction: Mapping Meaning” in *Mappings*. London, UK: Reaktion Books Ltd., 1999.

de Certeau, Michel. *The Practice of Everyday Life*. Translated by Steven F Rendall. Berkeley, LA and London: University of California Press, 1984.

Dexter, Emma. “To Draw is To Be Human” in *Vitamin D; New Perspectives in Drawing*, London and New York City: Phaidon Press, 2005.

Diack, Heather. “Mapping Conceptualism: The Centre Does Not Hold”. In *Hunter and Cook* 10 (2011): 32-37.

Doherty, Claire, editor. *Situation; Documents of Contemporary Art Series*, London and Cambridge Massachusetts: Whitechapel Gallery and the MIT Press, 2009.

Douglas, Kris, Exhibition Curator, *David Lefkowitz: Other Positioning Systems*, exhibition catalogue. Rochester, MN: Rochester Art Centre, 2010.

Godrey, Mark. "Politics/Poetics: The Work of Francis Alÿs" in *Francis Alÿs; A Story of Deception*. New York City: Museum of Modern Art, 2010.

Gardiner, Michael E. "Michel de Certeau: the cunning of unreason" in *Critiques of everyday life*. New York and London: Routledge, 2000.

Gardiner, Michael E. "The Situationist International: revolution at the service of poetry" in *Critiques of everyday life*. New York and London: Routledge, 2000.

E. Bruce Goldstein, editor. Online Encyclopedia of Perception, *Sage Knowledge*.: 2009. Accessed online through the Western Library database May 7, 2013:

<http://knowledge.sagepub.com.proxy2.lib.uwo.ca/view/perception/n74.xml?rskey=Axi3Qc&row=3> and

<http://knowledge.sagepub.com.proxy2.lib.uwo.ca/view/perception/n126.xml?rskey=Axi3Qc&row=8>

Heiser, Jörg. "Walk on the Wild Side" *Frieze Magazine* 69, (September 2002); Accessed April 1, 2013. http://www.frieze.com/issue/article/walk_on_the_wild_side/

Holubizky, Ihor. "Radical Regionalism, Local Knowledge and Making Places" in exhibition catalogue *Radical Regionalism, Local Knowledge and Making Places*. London, Ontario; Museum London. 2006.

Krauss, Rosalind. "Notes on the Index: Seventies Art in America." *October*, volume 3, (Spring 1977): 68-81.

Lévesque, Luc. "Between Places and Non-Place –Towards an Interstitial Approach to Landscape in *Places and Non-Places of Contemporary Art*. Montréal: Les éditions esse, 2005.

Gwen MacGregor's website. Accessed September 9, 2012.

<http://www.magentamagazine.com/7/features/canadians-in-europe>

Mapes, Jeff. Introduction to *Pedaling Revolution; How Cyclists are Changing American Cities*. Corvallis, OR: Oregon State University Press, 2009.

Martin, Arnold. "Pure Happenings: the Work of Gwen MacGregor" *C Magazine* 72 (Winter 2001/2002): 36-39.

Morgan, Jessica. *Gabriel Orozco*. London: Tate Publishing, 2011.

Myers, Lisa. "Gwen MacGregor and Sandra Rechico: *Backtrack*" *C Magazine* 112 (Winter 2011): 50-51.

Norment, Christopher. Introduction to *In the Memory of the Map; a Cartographic Memoir*. Iowa City: University of Iowa, 2012.

Roberts, Wayne. "Blazing Saddles & Appropriate Technology; the Bike Path to a Green Economy" in *Beyond the Car; Essays on the Auto Culture*. Edited by Gordon Laird and Sue Zielinski. Toronto: Steel Rail Publishing/ Transportation Options. 1995.

Salsberg, Lisa (introduction by). "The Auto Free Cities Movement: It's Everyone; A discussion with Olivia Chow, Joan Doiron, Jane Jacobs, Marilou MacPhedran, Lisa Salsberg and Sue Zielinski" in *Beyond the Car; Essays on the Auto Culture*. Edited by Gordon Laird and Sue Zielinski. Toronto: Steel Rail Publishing/ Transportation Options. 1995.

Storr, Robert. *Mapping*, exhibition catalogue, New York: Museum of Modern Art, 1994.

Thompson, M. J. "Francis Alÿs," *Border Crossings* 120 (Volume 30, no. 4): 113-114.

2 Documentation of Practice

This chapter consists of documentation of my studio practice. Included in my larger research project concerning mapping the city as a material and embodied art practice are three process categories, as outlined in Chapter 1: a graphic representation and drawing process related to ‘performing mapping’; serial or episodic investigations within the city; and videos related to negotiated and embodied movement within the city.

2.1 Graphic Mapping

Lines of Desire

Lines of Desire: Community Mapping in London’s Woodfield is a community based mapping project. As the McIntosh Gallery’s 2012 Artist in the Community I was interested in the accumulative navigation and ‘uses’ in the city of London and in the Woodfield neighbourhood. I was particularly concerned with working 'desire lines': the direct routes that people take from one place to another in a way that is collectively useful, rather than prescribed.

This body of work was a threefold process of interacting with community members, creating a base map and asking residents to respond to it by marking travel routes throughout the city; then using these drawings and research material I have interpreted and combined lines and shapes representing how contributors use space to make moulds and cast coloured beeswax into sculptural objects.

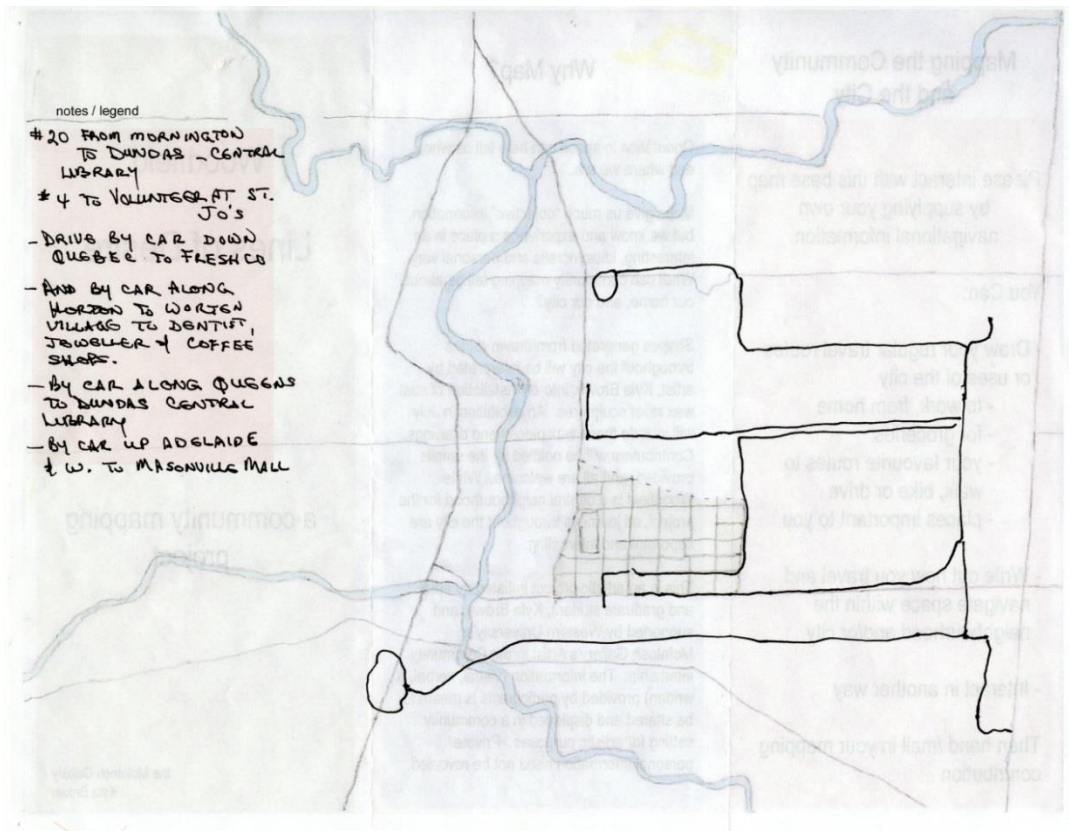


Documentation of process and community engagement: *Lines of Desire: Community Mapping in London’s Woodfield*

Photo credit: Diana Yoo



Documentation of contributor map in process. Photo credit: Diana Yoo



Contributor map, *Lines of Desire*. Based map with marker on paper. 8.5x11". 2012



Installation view,
London Co-operative.
Lines of Desire:
Community Mapping in
London's Woodfield.
Contributor maps, cast
beeswax with pigment,
& cardboard & carpet
cut outs. Dimensions
variable. 2012



Installation detail I,
London Co-operative.
Lines of Desire:
Community Mapping in
London's
Woodfield. Cast
beeswax with pigment.
Dimensions variable.
2012



Above and left:
Installation details, II,
III, IV, London Co-
operative. *Lines of
Desire: Community
Mapping in London's
Woodfield*. Cast
beeswax with pigment.
Dimensions variable.
2012



Installation view, ArtLab Gallery. *Lines of Desire: Community Mapping in London's Woodfield*. Contributor maps, cast beeswax with photo documenting community practice. Dimensions variable. 2012



Installation detail I, ArtLab Gallery. *Lines of Desire: Community Mapping in London's Woodfield*. Cast beeswax with pigment. Dimensions variable. 2012



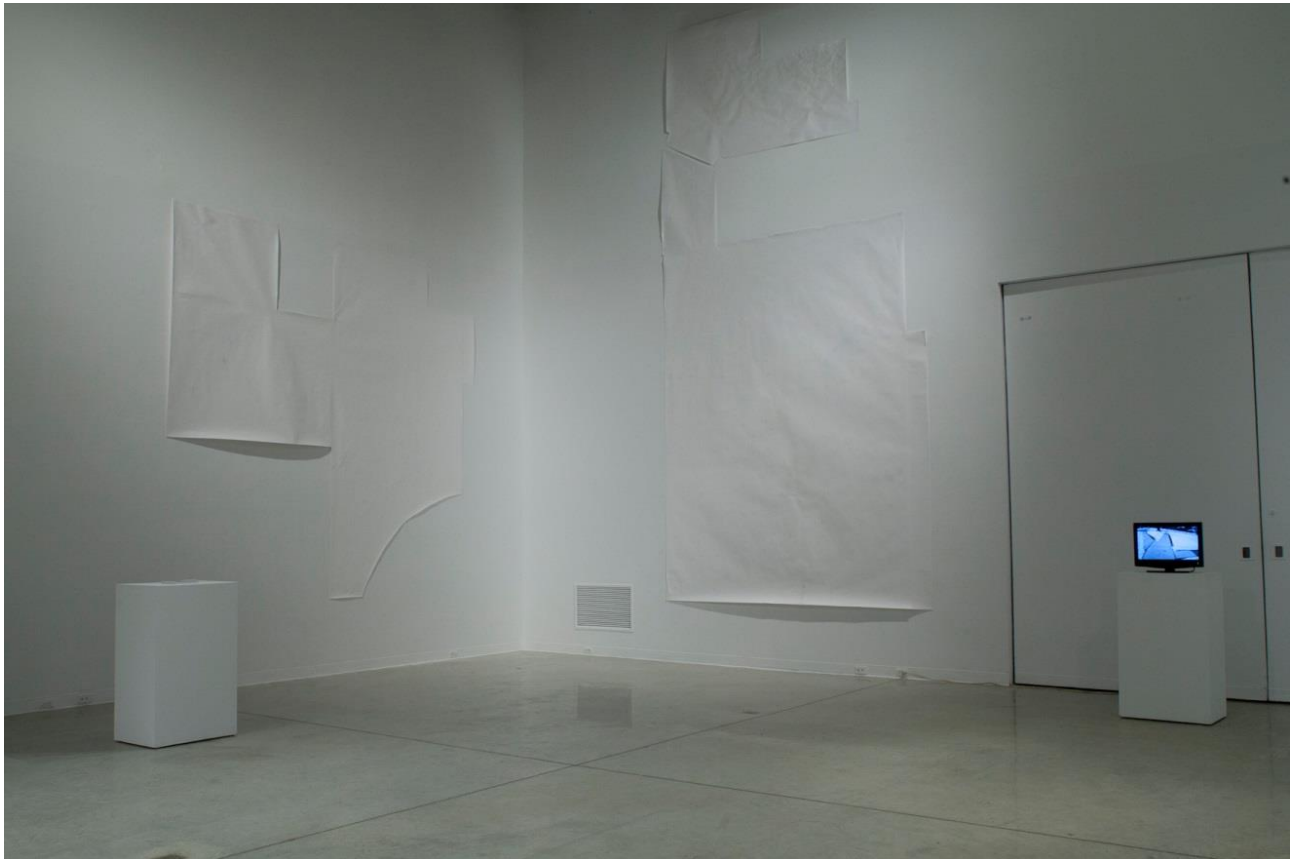
Installation detail II, ArtLab Gallery.
Lines of Desire: Community Mapping in London's Woodfield. Cast beeswax with pigment. Dimensions variable. 2012



Contributor Maps, ArtLab Gallery.
Lines of Desire: Community Mapping in London's Woodfield. Pencil, marker & pencil crayon on base maps. 6.5x5.5' Dimensions variable. 2012

Floor Plan

Floor Plan: 518 ½ Dufferin Ave. (upper), London, ON is a project that consists of a 1:1 ‘floor-papering’ of the majority of my apartment in London. Using photography back-drop paper to cover over and emboss the topography of the floor plane, I lived with this floor covering over several months as I enacted regular activities within my house. These ‘drawings’ trace the use I make of my domestic space. They capture the high traffic areas within my apartment and subtly mark –from both sides of the paper- the usages and movement within that space.



Installation view, ArtLab Gallery. *Floor Plan: 518 ½ Dufferin Ave. (upper), London, ON*

Following pages (35-36): Installation view, ArtLab Gallery. *Floor Plan: kitchen & dining room. 518 ½ Dufferin Ave. (upper), London, ON*. Formed distressed paper. Approximately 19x10’, 2013. Photo credit: Jennifer Martin.

Installation view, ArtLab Gallery. *Floor Plan: bedroom. 518 ½ Dufferin Ave. (upper), London, ON*. Formed distressed paper. Approximately 13x11’, 2013. Photo credit: Brad Isaacs.







Floor Plan: kitchen. Detail of process documentation. 2013



Floor Plan: bathroom. Detail of process documentation. 2013



Floor Plan: dining room. Detail of process documentation. 2013



Floor Plan: dining room & bedroom. Detail of process documentation. 2013

2.2 Serial Episodes

Road Kill

In *Road Kill: London, fall 2012* I have documented all of the road kill I came across in London over the course of the autumn cycling season. This collecting activity ranged from September 4 to December 4, 2012. These drawings were done as I encountered the sites of the dead bodies of squirrels and other London dwelling animals, which in some case happened daily. Drawn from memory with ink on mylar, this 'calendar' was made by a process of focused observation and documentation of the markings of the 'Forest City' and its infrastructure.

After working with these drawings I created a bookwork of this project. This book allows for a different kind of encounter and a reading of this work that is more sequential and temporal. This type of engagement with the project proposes a relationship that is individual, and an experience that further translates the encounters and relationships between 'natural' and urban settings.



Road Kill: London, fall 2012, September working installation view. Ink on mylar.

Approximately 7.5x12.5', dimensions variable, 2012.



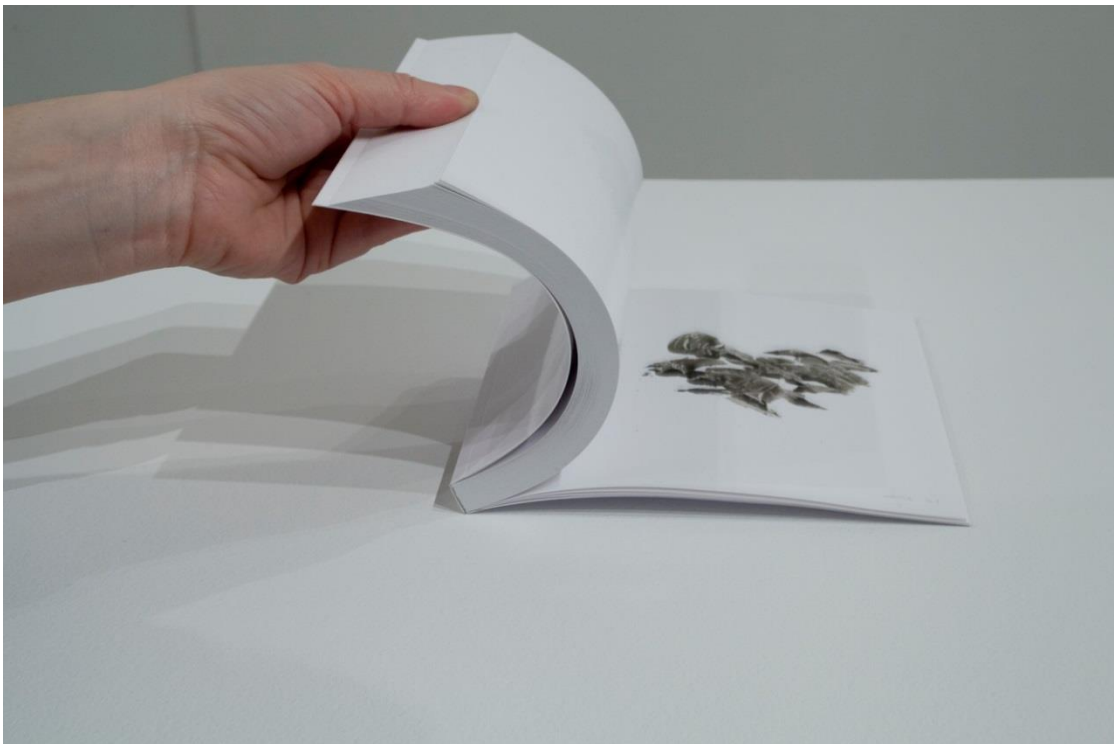
Road Kill: London, fall 2012, October working installation view. Ink on mylar. Approximately 7.5x12.5', dimensions variable, 2012.



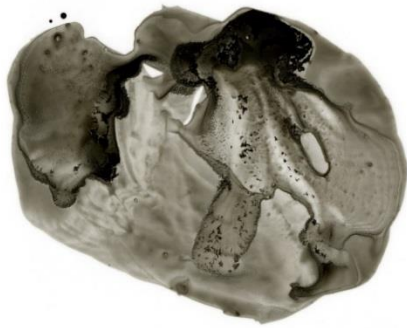
Road Kill: London, fall 2012, November working installation view. Ink on mylar. Approximately 7.5x12.5', dimensions variable, 2012.



Road Kill: London, fall 2012, December working installation view. Ink on mylar. Approximately 7.5x12.5", dimensions variable, 2012.



Road Kill: London, fall 2012. Installation view, ArtLab Gallery. Bookwork, 7x7", 2013.



Sept 25

*Road Kill: London, fall 2012,
September 25 detail. Ink on mylar.
12x12", 2012.*



Oct 9

*Road Kill: London, fall 2012,
October 9 detail. Ink on mylar.
12x12", 2012.*

Road Work

In *Road Work* I have engaged with four road sites within the city of London that I frequent in my everyday cycling activity. These sites are particular for their cracked and potholed surfaces, acting as obstacles and sites of navigation and tension. At each of the four road sites I filled cracks within the asphalt with different coloured plasticine, creating a drawing, or kind of map, and in a way, partially healing the road's surface.



Road Work. Documentation of process. William St. 2012

Following pages (44-46): *Road Work, Perth Dr. South* documentation of site. Plasticine in asphalt. Dimensions variable, 2012-13.

Road Work, Perth Dr. North documentation of site. Plasticine in asphalt. Dimensions variable, 2012-13.

Road Work, William St. documentation of site. Plasticine in asphalt. Dimensions variable, 2012-13.









*Road Work,
William St.*
documentation of
site II. Plasticine in
asphalt. Dimensions
variable, 2012-13.



*Road Work,
Colborne St.*
documentation of
site. Plasticine in
asphalt. Dimensions
variable, 2012-13.

2.3 Moving Through Space

Video Works

Within these four video pieces I investigate navigation, and negotiated movements within the city of London. In particular I am interested in describing a temporal traversing of city space, through various embodied means of walking and cycling. In this way, duration and the terrain are connected to the 'body' as it engages in performing movement. I have made these works by mounting the camera to my own body or to my bicycle so as to record movement and sound from a fixed perspective continually in motion.

Please see an enclosed DVD for a 5 minute and 30 second selection of excerpts of these works or visit <https://vimeo.com/71505779>.



Installation view of *Biking: Pedal* and *Walking: Block & Walking: Train Yard*. 2013. Photo credit: Jennifer Martin.



Video still *Walking: Block*. From HD video, 8 min 55 sec. 2013.



Video still *Walking: Train Yard*. From HD video, 8 min 44 sec. 2013.



Video still *Biking: Pedal*. From HD video, 43 min 57 sec. 2012.



Video still *Biking: Line*. From HD video, 32 min 07 sec. 2013.

Chapter 3

3. Reviewing Exhibitions as a Critical & Collaborative Writing Practice

The following work represents the practical writing component of my thesis dossier. This chapter includes two exhibition reviews that I have written and submitted for publication over the course of the past year within the MFA program.

These reviews – of Jennifer Murphy’s solo exhibition at Clint Roesnisch in May/June of 2012, and Peter Dykhuis’s solo exhibition at Red Head Gallery in September of 2012 - have been published in the 2013 winter issue of *Canadian Art Magazine*, and in *C Magazine*’s Criticism issue (no. 118) of summer 2013, respectively.

As this type of writing has been a fluid and somewhat collaborative practice, working with editors and publishers, I am including several versions of my reviews to demonstrate the process that the writing has gone through, as well as the development of my thoughts throughout this process.

While critically considering these bodies of work, there are particular material and conceptual practices that have engaged me within both exhibitions. I have chosen to investigate them to develop this relatively new writing practice for me. This is important as I move through the MFA program and build upon my professional practice. It is also a writing practice that is perceptual and creative, as well as involving research and a demonstration of engagement in contemporary art discourses.

3.1 Exhibition Review of Jennifer Murphy’s Work

Submitted for publication to *Canadian Art*:

Jennifer Murphy: Recovering theatrics

Entering through the thick wooden door of Clint Roesnisch Gallery, Jennifer Murphy’s *Monkey’s Recovery* greets me with a feather, a bright pink piece of tulle on a stick coming out of the floor. The walls are covered in a collection of intriguing objects: lace gloves, a starburst twig, leafy leather, decorative bowls, dried flowers, screens, disks and driftwood. The two main walls of Clint Roesnisch’s front gallery are lined with these clusters of low relief, everyday, and Craft

objects that create a crowd of simplified faces or masks (two eye shapes, a nose, and mouth).

Murphy's second solo exhibition at Clint Roenisch, *Monkey's Recovery*, running from May 17th to June 23rd, 2012, is paired down in comparison to her first show at the gallery. Her previous Roenisch show, *Twenty Pearls*, in 2010, though spectacular in scale, seems an overexertion when compared to the face configurations found in this exhibition.

Such past bodies of work by Murphy include collaged fragments that formed larger shapes of animals and skulls. A magic element with reference to the macabre emerged from the collage details of glittering jewels, skulls built from pansies, or large cats-eyes and bird assemblages. Actual objects from nature became material for their own subject matter. This alluded to decay, like an eerie vanitas still life painting that whispers a threat to the beauty one encountered in the work.

The front room of the *Monkey's Recovery* exhibition is comprised of visages on opposite walls of the main gallery facing each other. Closer to the window, behind the faces are two framed woodblock prints of Japanese artist Tsukioka Yoshitoshi, which act as reference points, a key but not an answer to reading Murphy's current work. I imagine Yoshitoshi's prints hanging on the wall of Murphy's studio, like magic mirrors, guiding her use of material and choice of content.

These historic prints depict nineteenth century fantastic and gritty imagery. What seems important is not the prints themselves, but the overall feeling of Murphy's phantasmagoria that exists alongside the everyday. Interested in restoring the Japanese art form of woodblock printing, straddling eras in Japanese and Western modernity, and experiencing personal hardships and violent influences, the content of Yoshitoshi's work is both troubled and painstakingly beautiful.

Yoshitoshi's lovely and sinister print oeuvre includes bodies of work with series titles like *One Hundred Aspects of the Moon* (1885–1892), and *New Forms of Thirty-Six Ghosts* (1889–1892). These print series use the imagery of the everyday, romantic or idyllic scenes of the natural world, but with a somber twist. By directly referencing Yoshitoshi in the show itself, Murphy is romanticizing the dark underlying demons that sit just under the surface of faces, a gesture, or the natural world. This subtlety, expertly executed in *Monkey's Recovery*, is what may have been lacking in Murphy's work up until this point.

While Murphy seems to align herself directly with Yokitoshi, I would include her in a group of contemporary artists, some also represented by Roenisch, that use elements of collage, the dramatic, constructed fantasy, and super-natural qualities like David Altmedge, Wangechi Mutu, Jason Dehaan, Nick Bantock, Amy Swartz, and Maggie Groat. I often think of this new witchy and sophisticated work as “New Mysticism”. This trend seems to be about overall design and reliance on the cache of mysticism, the exoticism and visceral quality where convergence (the real & made up, natural & artificial, innocent & perverse) between “other” worlds in a collage practice creates a kind of uncanny or theatrical object.

It is important to note, however, that we can appreciate and absorb the theatrics of *Monkey's Recovery* because they are in play but with a light touch, pulling the viewer in slowly like a wave. While looking at the masks, I try to see faces I recognize. Standing there, one looks back and seems like my partner; I think which one could be me. The element of performance in masks harkens back to memories of adolescent pretense at high school dances. Are these faces from some sort of yearbook of the macabre? Audiences are called upon to act as players in Murphy's scene, though one is not instructed how.

A feather as a smile, a dish mouth, eyes are made of shiny pink iridescent circles, or thistles. These materials gesture at wide eyes, and tongues that tease, to quirky collections, craft practices, and how nature can fool us. Here, installation functions as a formal process to perform or display narrative material; and engages in a recent tendency toward “constellations” to create connections within the gallery. The objects in the gallery become part of an unknown ritual, or a document of a place's forgotten magic.

The back room at Roenisch holds works on paper, as if a separate show; framed collages of flora and fauna made from intricate, romantic arts and crafts elements and found materials, such as eel skin, cellophane, suede, butterfly wings, sequins, and fur. This is a more obvious progression from earlier work. The stand outs are the black bat in flight and a stalking fox on white in silhouette made from the shiny iridescent crinkly cellophane for wrapping flowers. The ambiguity of these two works, and another depicting an unknown plant, rendered from tiny scraps of puce coloured silk, is intriguing and strange. The blurry connection between the work of both rooms that I can perceive is Murphy's use of materials and interest in natural elements.

However, it is unclear how to read the work in the back room. Are these works studies? Do these creatures, real and make believe, exist within the same mystic world of the theatre of the crowded faces of the main gallery?

The design and craftsmanship of the work is exquisite, as in earlier bodies of work, and though this is a real strength of Murphy's, there still seems to be too much beauty and adornment in evidence rather than a real critical and personal engagement to these elements.

I wonder, for example, about Murphy's particular relationship to skulls, or 19th century printmaking, traditional Japanese art practices, or to the mysterious magic of the supernatural? Though there is an implied ritual process of collecting and building the collages and assemblages it doesn't describe the critical or juicy narrative I long for here.

Is this work an escape from everyday life, or a call for some sort of dark exoticism or spiritualism to city life? I wonder how Murphy views collage; as a radical practice for creative juxtaposition, as it has often been used historically, or perhaps a cumulative practice to create beauty?

I leave thinking I have seen to the end of *this* world, though I sense the true potential of the show might be that I leave haunted by a mystic narrative or some witchery, just out of reach. Perhaps this is due to the inclusion of the more "commercial" collage works beyond the main installation. If the work in the main gallery is meant as a taste, I would have expected more of an explosion of inspired strangeness to come creeping from the back of the gallery rather than what seems to be older work shown alongside this more successful mask/ audience/ face collective.

None the less, the strength of the best of Murphy's work is in the experiments with decorative craft based objects that perform further uses in grouping other worldly and odd combinations. The quirky inclusion of craft materials and practices brings more narrative to this work and opens up new connotations. With Jennifer Murphy moving away from earlier qualities involving repetitious glittering beauty, the artist offers us a body of work that is more strange, unsettling and stimulating. This less determined, material approach seems an important direction for Murphy's future work.

Jennifer Murphy is represented by Clint Roenisch Gallery. She is a BFA graduate from Queen's University, and exhibits widely in Toronto.

REVIEWS



Installation view of Jennifer Murphy's "Monkey's Recovery"
2012 PHOTO TONI HAFKENSCHIED

TORONTO
CLINT ROENISCH

JENNIFER MURPHY

by Kyla Brown

Jennifer Murphy's exhibition "Monkey's Recovery" at Clint Roenisch greeted the viewer with a stick rising from the floor topped with a bright-pink piece of tulle. On the gallery walls was a collection of curious objects that included lace gloves, a hawthorn twig, ceramic bowls, dried flowers, screens, disks and driftwood. Together, these clusters of low-relief, everyday craft objects created a crowd of simplified faces or masks, with the objects brought together to form eyes, noses and mouths.

Near the window, two framed woodblock prints by the Japanese artist Tsukioka Yoshitoshi served as reference points that provided a key, but not an answer, to reading the exhibition. While the prints may have guided Murphy's use of materials and content, what seemed most important was the phantasmagoria that Murphy brought forth.

The theatrics of "Monkey's Recovery" revolve around Murphy's impressive lightness of touch, which draws the viewer into the delicacy of the works. The materials—a feather serving as a smile or a dish that becomes a mouth—gesture

toward the quirkiness of craft practice and toward its propensity to demonstrate that nature can fool us with appearances. Murphy's installation functions as a formal process of material connections. At times, the objects become part of a shifting, unknown ritual, or the traces of the magic of a place.

The back gallery held framed collages of flora and fauna made from other intricate found materials, such as eel skin, cellophane, suede, butterfly wings, sequins, silk, gold leaf, lace and a first-place-horse ribbon. While the narrative aspect of the main space was not present here, the same ritual process of collecting and building forged a connection between these collages and the front-gallery assemblages. The collages seemed to function as studies—preparatory models for the mystic world of crowded faces in the main gallery.

"Monkey's Recovery" was a departure from Murphy's previous exhibitions, where her works showed off a more glittering, conventional beauty. The artist has moved into new territory this time. It is more strange and unsettling. It is also more stimulating.

3.2 Exhibition Review of Peter Dykhuis's Work

Experiencing working with various editors was interesting and quite different. This collaboration was slightly slower going and more involved. It consisted of more communication, working through the writing process, and suggested edits.

Submitted for publication to *C Magazine*:

Peter Dykhuis –Inventories & Micro-mapping at Red Head Gallery

Inventories, ephemeral map fragments, the personal and the everyday; these are what one encounters in Dykhuis's newest show at Red Head Gallery, Toronto. And clip boards. Dykhuis knows what he is doing. Working with mapping imagery and systems since the early nineties, he is experimenting with structural supports to suggest maps as personal narratives. The use of the clip boards as supports is the biggest move in Dykhuis's newest work.

The work is comprised of several multiples of collaged and reused paper from the artist's life. Each individual painting, being approximately 8 x 10 inches, is mounted or clipped on a bare, brown clip board hung from the gallery walls in groupings. Here envelopes, invoices, notes from family and colleagues, receipts for shoes and car repairs attach to watercolour paper to form mapped surfaces for circles, bull's-eyes, logos, map fragments, and close ups of Halifax city blocks.

Dykhuis's mapping tendency has moved from using overtly political imagery (of logos including the globe, weather or war radar) to a focus in this exhibition on the personal and the everyday; closer to home. Inventories of life's categories and roles: father, husband, artist, gallery director of the Anna Leonowens and Dalhousie Art Galleries, and a man who loves shoes are categorized in this show. These subjectivities, legible within the papered surfaces, suggest activities like family cooking, and attending to car payments while living in a suburb of Halifax, NS. These implied roles and how they become evident are used as markers within this system of indexing, placing and meaning making: mapping.

Mapping of the everyday is an important practice to locate oneself within a political framework, especially within the context of Dykhuis's past works. In *You Are Here* (2005), geographic and

personal place is located within envelopes addressed to the artist: “to Peter”, then administrative director of the Anna Leonowens Gallery, and through department mail as staff at NSCAD. Such paper documents, while displaying some very personal information, become gridded supports for a larger map of the region of Halifax and Bedford, Nova Scotia. They also locate Dykhuis’s correspondence as an index of work, of relations and activity in the world and the local art community. Here, formal and indexical qualities show themselves as continuous throughout his practice.

Dykhuis’s past works have used series multiples and grid structures to cultivate his mapped world. These pieces have often been on paper- whether envelopes, business cards, letters, bills and other personal ephemera. These have been mounted tile-like, to build a map, a flag, or checker board. Such substrates act as loaded surfaces of everyday life, while the grid structure suggests adaptability, the potential for rearrangement in their fragmentation.

While supports are always important, especially to an artist working with encaustic, as Dykhuis is, this move to the clip board seems somehow surprising in its everyday utilitarian quality. But as in *State Dinner* (2006), where states and provinces were silhouetted with watercolour on Royal Chinet paper plates; these supports frame the work as well as informing our experiential reading of it. As installed, the portal-looking surfaces of *State Dinner* represent a dinner service of red, green and blue states, based on their country’s predominant flag colour. While red vs. blue states have different partisan tendencies in Canada and the US, politics is key to Dykhuis’s work, influenced in *State Dinner* by the North American Free Trade Agreement, and now by contemporary communication systems.

Seriality and the grid structure are also crucial to Dykhuis’s installations. They work as tools in his practice using “everyday ephemera” as supports for mapping processes. Systems of collecting, categorizing and arranging documents of communication as an already activated visual substrate become grounds for various layers of encaustic, pencil crayon, marker and watercolour work to produce a multi layered and expressive account of his place within social systems. While the clip boards function as thematic and foundational or underlying organization tools to categorize and support the activities layered upon them.

Is aestheticization a tactic of Dykhuis's lighter, looser work as pure information, to de-personalize the highly intrusive knowledge of personal information, including a daughter's credit card number? The look of maps is present, but not necessarily the information within them. Circles do most of the work to highlight notes placed purposefully, to reveal, but also to do something "larger" that is not as apparent to viewers.

Knowing Dykhuis's work, this exhibition does not come as a surprise. Layers of personal correspondence remind us of how we negotiate life's roles, as well as how they situate us. This comes into play in this subtler work more than earlier work. *Inventories* reads horizontally as a part of a larger whole, with important details to get lost in. For example, the inclusion of reference to Sobey's grocery chain points to an infrastructure for selling and transporting food, a large national corporation, and is a nod to its role in the world of images through its logo, and a hint to the largest Canadian sponsored award for young artists. Arguably, this corporation is significant to his family's life, but also a "sign" that suggests larger ideas of demographics and subjectivity; how we might feed ourselves, literally and artistically.

Thinking of mapping as a layered process of representing geographic information, Dykhuis has shown us an objective and highly personalized account of his inventories through simple and familiar vocabulary. There are portions to be read into if one has a previous knowledge of specifics like Halifax's layout. While this work feels quite personal it also seems like a slice of something greater to which viewers cannot be privy. The work presents itself as familiar and even "comfortable", but perhaps not in a way that demands a longer reading. If communication is a primary itinerary or subject matter for *Inventories*, I look forward to seeing how this gesture further manifests and pushes forward materially.

The following are the published review pages from *C Magazine*, no 118: Criticism (Summer 2013): 45-46.

Blackwood's previous engagement with the theme. *Volume*, however, is on a clear path of its own. Where *Re-play's* focus was the influence of pop music on art, *Volume* investigates how artists work with sound, and how people perceive it, at a more essential level. Here, Migone—a recognized sound artist in his own right—brings together the work of 19 artists at the Blackwood and Justina M. Barnicke galleries, mixing the practices of musicians/composers such as Alexandre St-Onge, Chiyoko Szlavnic and Mitchell Akiyama with those whose practices aren't necessarily limited to sound-based work, such as Ryan Park, David Merritt and Sylvia Matas.

Migone's "Hearing Notes" that accompany the exhibition offer a succinct descriptive summary of the works:

A skull turntable, a turning bass floor, a paper bag breath, a graphited silence, a speaker igloo, drawings of the here and now, moiré pattern compositions, an amplified sweeping, a murmuring, a pair of feedback headphones, a wall in the middle of nowhere, a tarred instrument, a song

unsung, a cryptic monster music video, a box of hearing aids of the ocean, a set of bells triggered by television static, a sign language choir, a tale of acoustic architecture, a book-work tracking sonic movement, a cluster of ultra-sonic pest control devices, and a wireless headphone for head and mind.

At first glance, this cursory listing suggests a rather casual gathering of works, but the reality is far from this. The exhibition maintains a tightly-honed focus on how we understand sound in all its subtleties, playing with the delicate balance between its presence and absence.

More specifically, the artists' use of sound tends to adopt a subtle form of call-and-response. In the Barnicke space, this is reflected in Marla Hlady's *Basement Bass* (2013), where noises Hlady recorded in the gallery's sub-basement are amplified and played beneath a revolving floor/stage, creating deep reverberations that are felt from the soles of your feet up through your body. One could imagine that these subterranean sounds are being pulled up into the gallery, morphing and increasing in

complexity as they travel through the building's architecture. A comparable approach is evident in crys cole's *Sweeper* (2009), a video that documents the artist sweeping a cement floor using a broom installed with a contact microphone in its bristles. The resulting effect gives the sound emanating from this mundane activity an elevated presence.

Some works offer an aural response to the work of another artist. In *Ur-sound, or, the noise no writing can store* (2012), Mitchell Akiyama looks to a text by Rainer Maria Rilke that imagines the "primal sound" that would result from running a gramophone needle through the coronal suture of a human skull. Akiyama acted out the proposal, and his resulting recording emanates from a record player, a haunting sound that seems to follow the visitor throughout the gallery. In the Blackwood space, Charles Stankievec's *Get Out of My Head, Get Out of My Mind* (2008) is a play on Bruce Nauman's *Get Out of My Mind, Get Out of This Room* (1968). In Nauman's piece, the sound of the artist's voice echoes through an otherwise empty gallery; in Stankievec's piece, a headset is used to contain the sound, making the space between the ear pieces—occupied by the listener's head—the only echoing space, and thereby tightening the relationship between the voice and the listener. A thoughtful pairing to this is Dave Dymant's *Untitled (Headset)* (2007), a set of headphones sharing the gallery with Stankievec's piece. They were programmed to have a continuous feedback loop so that when the visitor dons the headset, the feedback loop is broken. Dymant sums up the effect: "The silence serves as a blunt metaphor for the inability to understand infinity (your head gets in the way)."

Silence plays a significant role

in *Volume*. Migone refers to it as "sound's rhythmic foil," and many of these works address sound without actually producing any, such as Neil Klassen's tar-covered trumpet [*Requiem and Ruin #1* (2011)], Ryan Park's completely graphite-covered copy of John Cage's book *Silence [untitled (433)]* (2006), and Chiyoko Szlavnic's series of moiré pattern drawings [*Moiré Series* (2010, 2012) and *Not yet titled* (2012)]. The significance of silence is most complex in Ian Skedd's *Sign Singing: Love Will Tear Us Apart, Joy Division, 1979, Deaf Choir* (2009). In this video, a deaf choir performs the popular Joy Division song through sign language. The piece may have been silent in theory, but for anyone familiar with the song, the music is inevitably produced in his or her head. Within the context of this exhibition, Skedd's piece points to the ongoing noise we produce in our own minds. It seems that many of the works in *Volume* tend to use the space of the visitor's head as an integral part of completing the loop, both sonically and conceptually.

It's worth noting that alongside *Volume*, the Blackwood also reissued a facsimile version of *Sound By Artists*, the out-of-print anthology of sound art edited by Micah Lexier and Dan Lander and produced by Art Metropole and the Walter Phillips Gallery in 1992. Word is also out that the Blackwood plans to produce its own anthology of writings by sound artists. An exhibition like *Volume* provokes the desire to see a wider survey of sound art in Canada along the scale of *Soundtracks*. Clearly, there is no shortage of material or history to mine. ×

Shannon Anderson is an independent writer, curator and editor based in Oakville, Ontario.

Ian Skedd, *Sign Singing: Love Will Tear Us Apart, Joy Division, 1979, Deaf Choir*, 2009, single channel video, 4:19 min
IMAGE COURTESY OF THE ARTIST



Peter Dykhuis: Inventories & Micro-mapping

Red Head Gallery, Toronto

September 5–22, 2012

by Kyla Brown

Inventories, ephemeral map fragments, the personal and the everyday are what one encounters in Peter Dykhuis' newest show at Red Head Gallery. And clipboards. Working with mapping imagery and systems since the early 90s, Dykhuis is experimenting with structural supports to suggest maps as person-

al narratives. The use of the clipboards is the biggest move in his newest work, with these supports suggesting an objective of gathering information, of fieldwork and utility. They are the props of surveyors, and of orienteering courses, but rather than being used by students on a field trip, these foundations hold inventories of personal and political life.

Several multiples of collaged and reused paper from the artist's life comprise the work in this show. Each individual work on paper being approximately 20cm x 25cm is mounted or clipped on a bare, brown clipboard, which are hung from the gallery walls in groupings. Here, envelopes, invoices, notes



Peter Dykhuis, *Inventories #4* (Sobeys), 2012, encaustic, mixed media collage on paper mounted on six commercial clipboards, 33cm x 149.8cm
PHOTO: DOUGLAS WALKER; IMAGE COURTESY OF THE ARTIST

from family and colleagues, receipts for shoes and car repairs attach to watercolour paper to form a backdrop for mapped surfaces. Drawn and painted circles, bull's-eyes, logos, partial maps and closeups of Halifax city blocks float in and out of the collaged ground in colour and distinctly fragmented map/drawings.

Dykhuis' map-based work has moved from using overtly political imagery (of logos including the globe, weather or war radar) to a focus in this exhibition on the personal and the everyday. Here, communication systems that are closer to home have larger implications in a politically-engaged practice. Inventories of life's categories and roles: father, husband, artist, former director of the Anna Leonowens Gallery at the Nova Scotia College of Art and Design (NSCAD University) and current director of the Dalhousie Art Gallery, and a man who loves shoes are considered in this show. These subjectivities, legible among the papered surfaces, suggest activities like family cooking and attending to car payments while living in a suburb of Halifax. These roles are visible as markers within a resulting system of indexing and place-making. With these maps, Dykhuis' aim seems to be to chart the implications of the "web" of interactions in which he exists, and to describe his place in the world.

In Dykhuis' past works, mapping the everyday was important for locating himself within political frameworks, such as Canada Post, or as implicated in the North American Free Trade Agreement. In *You Are Here* (2005), geographic and personal place was indicated

by envelopes addressed "to Peter," as then-director of the Anna Leonowens Gallery, and through department mail as a NSCAD staff member. Such paper documents, while displaying personal information, become gridded supports for a larger map of the region of Halifax and Bedford, Nova Scotia. They also locate Dykhuis' correspondence as an index of work, of relations and activity in the world and the local art community. These formal and indexical qualities show themselves as continuous throughout his practice.

Series and the grid structure are also crucial to Dykhuis' installations. His previous works have also used series multiples and grid structures to construct configurations that resemble maps. These activated visual substrates, made using envelopes, business cards, letters, bills and other personal ephemera, mounted tile-like, become grounds for various layers of encaustic, pencil crayon, marker and watercolour paint that provide a multi-layered and expressive account of his place within social systems. Such substrates act as loaded surfaces of everyday life, while the grid structure suggests adaptability and the potential for rearrangement.

For the viewer who knows Dykhuis' work, this exhibition does not come as a surprise. Layers of personal correspondence remind us of how we negotiate life's roles, as well as how they situate us in the world. This is more pronounced in this subtle new work than his earlier, more political works. *Inventories* reads horizontally as a part of a larger whole, where one can get lost in important details. For example, the presence of a Sobeys logo points to

an infrastructure for selling and transporting food, a large national corporation, and an important Nova Scotia business. It also seems to be a nod to its role in the world of images, as an emblem that is widely recognized. Encountering this direct reference to systems of commerce and visual meaning, I cannot help but also associate it with the largest award for young artists in Canada. Arguably, this corporation is significant to Dykhuis' family's life, but is also a "sign" that suggests larger ideas of demographics and subjectivity — namely, how we might feed ourselves, literally and artistically.

In this exhibition, Dykhuis shows us a systematic and highly personalized account of his own inventories through simple and familiar (visual) language. While the clipboards read as much more "objective" than those of past works, the information accumulated as grounds is far more personal and telling, even surprisingly so. In this way, Dykhuis has married what might seemingly be seen as paradoxical. The encaustic paint, both covering and revealing, is what holds together the highly personal and the subtly political, functioning as a third unknown. Though the vocabulary of this work looks familiar and even "comfortable," it appears to point to something greater, perhaps a place that has not yet been mapped. x

Kyla Brown is a visual artist who is focused on navigating city space, particularly in London, Ontario. She is a University of Western Ontario MFA candidate, writer and instructor.

Rebecca Belmore, Ken Gonzales-Day, Francisco-Fernando Granados, and Louise Noguchi: Invisible Violence

Artspeak, Vancouver
February 15, 2013
by Vanessa Parent

In *Regarding the Pain of Others* (2003), Susan Sontag declares: "Let the atrocious images haunt us."¹ However, what is left to haunt us if the atrocity is erased or concealed from view, when the violent act is at once present albeit not depicted in a photograph? Addressing the issue of concealed violence, *Invisible Violence*, curated by Liz Park in partnership with Artspeak, uses a publication and various discursive platforms such as blog entries, plus artist and curator talks, to create an open forum for discussion. Ultimately, the project seeks to spark individual reflection and to initiate conversations about the incongruence

between the felt and yet abstracted violence in photographs.

The publication component of *Invisible Violence* consists of 16 postcards — works by Rebecca Belmore, Ken Gonzales-Day, Francisco-Fernando Granados and Louise Noguchi — which are presented in a grey sleeve along with Park's curatorial statement. Unbound, the postcards allow for a more embodied experience, inviting the viewer to flip through the images without interruption from captions or didactics, and therefore allowing each image to be considered within one's own epistemological frame. To quote Judith Butler, these are "the frames through which we are able to apprehend, or indeed fail to apprehend the lives of others as lost or injured."²

The first set of images, by Rebecca Belmore, feature an Aboriginal woman wrapped tightly in yards of fabric. Her bound body, set against the white backdrop of a gallery space, appears contorted in some photographs, while in others it appears suspended in mid-air. While no violent act is depicted, violence is inferred from an awareness of Belmore's

CURRICULUM VITAE

Name: Kyla Brown

Post-secondary Education and Degrees: NSCAD University
Halifax, Nova Scotia, Canada
2001-2005 B.F.A. (Painting, minor: Art History)

The University of Western Ontario
London, Ontario, Canada
2011-2013 M.F.A. Candidate

Honours and Awards: Claude Watson Visual Arts Award,
2001

Imperial Oil Scholarship
2001-2005

Ontario Graduate Scholarship
Masters Research, University of Western Ontario
2011-2012

Visual Arts Graduate Travel/ Research, University of Western Ontario
2011, 2012, 2013

Social Science and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC)
CGS Master's Scholarship, University of Western Ontario
2012-2013

Teaching Experience: Instructor, Design Exchange, Toronto
2010-2011

Instructor, University of Western Ontario, Introduction to Drawing 2204
2011

Instructor, University of Western Ontario, Introduction to Painting 2216
2012

Teaching Assistant (to Sky Glabush), University of Western Ontario,
Advanced Painting 3310
2012

Instructor, University of Western Ontario, Image Explorations 2100B
2013

**Residencies
and Internships:**

Eye Level Gallery Intern: Printed Matter Collection and 30th Anniversary
Catalogue Research, Halifax, Nova Scotia
2005

McIntosh Gallery's Artist in the Community, London Ontario
2012

**Related Work
Experience:**

Education staff, Art Gallery of Ontario, Toronto
2005

Program Section Co-ordinator, Arts For Children of Toronto
2006

Graphic Design and Art Work, Early Enrichment Centre, Toronto
2010

Conference Juridification Committee, "(Re)Activating Objects: Social
Theory and Material Culture", Graduate Conference, University of
Western Ontario
2012

**Selected
Exhibitions:**

NSCAD Emerging Artists Argyle Fine Art, Halifax (juried)
2004

What's In A Story? Khyber Centre for the Arts, Halifax
2004

Installation Sketch Khyber Centre for the Arts, Halifax
2004

Printed Matter Anna Leonowens Gallery, Halifax
2004

Objecthood Anna Leonowens Gallery, Halifax (solo)
2005

Counter Impressions XEXE Gallery, Toronto (juried)
2005

Painting Landscaped open studio exhibition, NSCAD, Halifax
2005

NSCAD Graduation Exhibition, Anna Leonowens Gallery, Halifax
2005

Seventh Annual Annex Patio Art Show, Toronto (juried)
2005

Queen West Art Crawl Outdoor Art Show, Toronto (juried)
2005

Artists of the Gallery, Hang Man Gallery, Toronto
2010

Building Home; new landscapes, Private Showing, Toronto (solo)
2010

Fresh Paint: New Constructions, Art Mur, Montreal (juried)
2012

Lines of Desire: Community Mapping in London's Woodfield, London,
Ontario (solo)
2012

Make/Shift, ArtLab Gallery, London ON
2012

Following the Turn MFA Thesis Exhibition, ArtLab Gallery, London,
Ontario. (solo)
2013

Reviews: Carruthers, Dale. "Public Helps put Woodfield on Map", London Free
Press. July 19, 2012

Publications: Brown, Kyla. "Jennifer Murphy" Exhibition Review *Canadian Art
Magazine* (Winter 2013) p.144

Brown, Kyla. "Peter Dykhuis: Inventories and Micro-mapping"
Exhibition Review *C Magazine Criticism*: no. 118 (Summer 2013) p. 45-
46.

Commissions: Painting for private collection, Toronto. 2000

Painted series for private collection, Toronto. 2008

Mural for The Beverley School, Toronto. 2009

Drawing-Installation for Baxter family collection, London, Ontario. 2013

Collections: Artwork in various private international collections