

MFA ROUNDTABLE PRESENTATIONS

FRIDAY, JANUARY 15, 2021

1:00-5:30PM | ZOOM

1:00 – 1:40 PM

DION SMITH-DOKKIE

3:15 – 3:55 PM

BREAK

1:45 – 2:25 PM

NATALIE PURSCHWITZ

4:00 – 4:40 PM

SOL HASHEMI

2:30 – 3:10 PM

MARTIN KATZOFF

4:45 – 5:25 PM

XAN SHIAN

We acknowledge that the UBC Point Grey campus is situated on the traditional, ancestral and unceded territory of the x̱m̱ə̀ḵʷə̀y̱əm (Musqueam).



THE UNIVERSITY
OF BRITISH COLUMBIA

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ART HISTORY • VISUAL ART • THEORY

MFA Roundtable Presentations

Friday, January 15, 2021, 1:00–5:30pm

Zoom:

<https://ubc.zoom.us/j/67780591427?pwd=Z043bHROZTZuQkR5ei9aaFIWMllpUT09>

Meeting

ID:67780591427

Passcode: 723134

1:00 pm Dion Smith-Dokkie

Paintings that breathe

Moderator: Jay Pahre

1:45 pm Natalie Purschwitz

Geomatrix: A Guide to Making Sense

Moderator: Rosamunde Bordo

2:30 pm Martin Katzoff

Unfixed Horizons

Moderator: Bryan Meador

(3:15pm Break)

4:00 pm Sol Hashemi

On the Artwork as Ecotone: Towards Gaia Photography

Moderator: Matthew Ballantyne

4:45 pm Xan Shian

On speculative memory and re/orienting the in/between

Moderator: Jay Pahre

Dion Smith-Dokkie (they/he)

Paintings that breathe

Moderator: Jay Pahre

Starting from recent writings about volume in political geography, I outline a number of key concepts/figures that in-form the intermedia dialogue between painting and video I've been pursuing. The presentation centres on four pairs in my practice: arcs and prisms, windows and membranes, envelopes and analogues, and colour-information.

1. Trying to ground myself with the painting, I start by sketching out a structure. The most exciting I've found is the arc produced when I hold prisms up to my webcam, which can mutate into so many other things. I think Deleuze calls this a diagram, Minh-ha the "d(é)-passage" (Deleuze 1981; Minh-ha 2013)?
2. Screens project light outwards; one can see both in and out through windows; my skin is, like the aforementioned, an interface, not a contour but a field (Friedberg 2006; Irigaray 1974; Marks 1998; Shildrick 2001). Each of these models can inform how to work with the surfaces of images: propulsion, flux, interface, nebulization, for instance. Paintings are solar sails.
3. *Envelope* describes the interface between myself and an image (Anzieu 2013). Images ["paintings"] are another membrane/envelope. *Analogue* is another word for empathizing with another, like when, as Marks writes, one encounters the video's skin—the basis of her *video erotics* (Marks 1998). These covalent units—surroundings, environments, envelopes—are what Sloterdijk terms *angels* or *bubbles* (2011).
4. Paintings transmit assertions of physical fact, in my opinion. Beyond a generic curiosity or genealogical resemblance, cloudscapes compose a nebular field in painting, a meteorological "genus" (see Rist 1992) where 'clouds' aren't something in the sky, rather something "in between us" (Esmeijer 1977; Gedzelman 1991; Irigaray 1976). How's the weather on Zoom?...I'm interested in chromatic-fibre-optics, which is to say the

fantasy that the wavelengths reflected by the surface of a painting might, given appropriate conditions, mimic-intensify-environmentalize what I crudely represent on the surface (Claus 2017; Cornum 2017; Johnson 1993). A little world for you and I.

The main focus is not a scientific method or theoretical apparatus; I am looking for ways to name things I see happening/want to see happen in my work...*flights of fancy*, connections that co-carnify (Shildrick 2001; Sloterdijk 2016). In conference with examples of recent artworks and drawing on a range of texts, I would like to share with you the foundations of the painting and video practice I am working to establish.

Natalie Purschwitz

Geomatrix: A Guide to Making Sense

Moderator: Rosamunde Bordo

poesis: to make

aisthesis: to sense

As an artist my inclination is to make things and to sense things, in other words to *make sense* of the world around me. My praxis is an enmeshment of poetic and aesthetic enquiry, continually seeking pinholes to understanding and connection. This paper attempts to use language as a material to generate a topology that illustrates my artistic research, practice and process.

Thinking about earth - as a material, a location, a temporal range, a perspective, an intelligence, a system within systems, a geometric configuration, an embodiment of motion and a life-supporting loam - has been the primary substance of my research.

Using a stratified system of organization as a ground, I draw from personal experience, daily practice and observation, and the works of historical and contemporary artists and writers in order to coax out relational clusters of meaning, legible correspondences, and visual strands to form a matrix of connected nodes.

Simultaneously an index and a scatter plot, this paper is a collection of thought fragments that I have sifted, nurtured, chopped, cooked, reduced, ingested, discarded, excavated, and reconstituted to develop a personal axiology from which to send out new neuronal dendrites.

Martin Katzoff

Unfixed Horizons

Moderator: Bryan Meador

Just as memories linger and shift, so do moments within the studio practice. If notions of time and space dissolve at moments while painting, then so might the rules and conditions of experiencing the present, dissolving solids into liquids pushes the practice of painting forward in time.

A Jade encrusted calligraphy brush slips and spills squid black.
Released from the wrenching of waters, iridescent brushed horsehair splits.
Mulberry paper becomes stained with force.

Sol Hashemi

On the Artwork as Ecotone: Towards Gaia Photography

Moderator: Matthew Ballantyne

All beings alter their environment in some way, and other beings respond to these modifications. Living through signs, in a world rooted in semiosis across species, it becomes difficult to distinguish boundaries between things. When a distinction between the self and environment collapses, what is a nature photographer to do?

The photographic process molts into a photograph of process. No longer depicting a landscape nor a topography, the photograph becomes a holographic fragment of Earth, not *land* or *soil*, and is devoid of a unifying perspective. A singular process is not represented and claimed as art. Instead, a shifting interface forms between webs of dynamic processes, which include the Gaia photographer. This zone can be called an *ecotone*, a word used in environmental science to refer to a transition area between communities of organisms. From this ecotone, artworks pop up, functioning as ecotones themselves, both localized in the particularities of how they form and yet holding the image of Earth processes within.

An ecotone is a place where organisms are in tension. Think of the string of a guitar: the finger moved to fret; a note gnawed into another. Each artwork is a unique interface between habitats - home to ideas, ideologies, references, and cultural niches that can all be foraged. The artwork holds these for one to return to when needed. These foraged items often require processing, needing to be fermented, macerated, braised, or perhaps dried. The windows that frame the harvesting seasons are short and often not in alignment. One must remember, or be reminded, of when and where to return.

Xan Shian

On speculative memory and re/orienting the in/between

Moderator: Jay Pahre

What does it mean for multiple worlds to unfold from multiple bodies within one person? Drawing on the experience of drowning as a suspension between worlds within the contingency of the life-death space, I use poetry and speculative memory to explore aspects of the subtle imaginary. Framed by Sara Ahmed's *Queer Phenomenology*, and considered through Vanessa Watts' writing on Indigenous cosmologies of *Place-Thought* and, the Scottish folklore of the Selkie, memory, states of matter, and encounter take on multiple roles in the disentangling of the other/self. Here, the other/self becomes the transient, mutable body, which articulates its being by holding within itself the possibility of facing multiple directions at once. As un/binaried, it is a body unaccounted for, liminal in both presence and absence. Materially, Eva Hesse's use of latex as liquid memory, and its relation to body as memory proposes latex as a soft-rigid metaphor for time. Throughout this work, place and displacing/ment pull at and dislodge my own body caught between the Scottish ancestral and the settler colonial in the lands some know as Canada. In the querying of such personal and geographical in-between spaces, the sea becomes what I return to.

NOTES

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