

Large Text

Variations in Black, Queer, and
Otherwise: Works by Abdi Osman

Recent Acquisition: Jalani Morgan,
The Sum of All Parts, 2017

In & Out of Saskatchewan

Common Place: Common-Place

June 5 – July 27, 2019

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University of
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Variations in Black, Queer, and Otherwise: Works by Abdi Osman

“To begin with the otherwise”, writes Ashon Crawley, “is to presume that whatever we have is not all that is possible.” The otherwise provocation opens the possibility of what can be represented, seen and thought about African-ness and Black-ness as it intersects with Muslim, queer and trans identities as they travel through and dwell in the diasporic location of the city we now know as Toronto. Crossing hard borders and elusive waters, landings are soft, tactile, even sensual. Beautiful fabrics gesture variations conjured in dreams, draped on bodies, and negotiated as we move through space. Always becoming, the process of discovery is an otherwise encounter - by way of the senses - and against colonial logics of looking, knowing and controlling.

—

Curated by Dina Georgis and Sara Matthews

1. Ashon Crawley. 2016. *Otherwise*, Ferguson.

Exhibition Essay:

As a Somali-Canadian artist based primarily in Toronto, Abdi Osman's work offers visual engagements with diasporic movement, settlement, and emplacement through a nuanced documentary portraiture practice. Using the photographic, and at times, filmic, image to speak back to colonial histories of cultural mis-representation, Osman simultaneously employs and beckons a Black feminist, trans, and queer gaze in his multi-disciplinary works.

In the *Discover Me* (2007) series, where we see images of the artist as subject—posed as himself in casual contemporary clothing, in drag as a veiled Muslim woman, and in traditional Somali male attire—Osman strategically uses the triptych form to convey complex queer visualities that refute constructions of Muslim-ness with solely Brown and heterosexual bodies. Osman's work consistently complicates singular representations and readings of cultural identities such as Black, queer, trans, and Muslim subjectivities, challenging viewers to imagine other ways of seeing and relating to the world. This is especially important given photography's close relationship to racist state, criminal, and anthropological identification practices used throughout history, wherein Osman's contemporary reclamation of the photographic gaze unsettles how we approach reading photographs, as we do bodies, as static objects with singular narratives. Osman expands on this unsettling in his related *Discover Us* (2008) series, in which he documents Black, queer, and trans individuals in similar triptych form, offering multivalent portraits that importantly belie traditional understandings of gender, queerness, and faith.

The *Passport* (2017) series also features portraits of the artist, alongside his passport, printed on large-scale scores of linen one must move through sequentially. Their fragmented spatiality evokes memories of checkpoints and border crossing, similar to what Osman might endure crossing a border as someone who is a Canadian citizen and who immigrated here as a Somali refugee many years ago. The immersive installation underscores the performativity of the passport to both engender as well as inhibit one's transnational movement and sense of national belonging.

Supposedly representing his citizenship and thus “belonging” to Canada, Osman's passport is notably a ten-year visa that is “affixed to a Canadian passport that enables but does not guarantee entry into the USA,”¹ explains scholar-critic Rinaldo Walcott. This is especially heightened by the States' recent implementation of the xenophobic Executive Order that targets and spectacularizes Muslims (particularly from Somalia) as “dangerous” in spite of the fact that it is Muslim, Brown, and Black people who face real danger—that of increasingly organized white supremacy.

Surveillance technologies such as the passport or the photographic portrait have long been deployed against Black people. In fact, “surveillance is nothing new to Black folks, it is the fact of antiblackness,”² explains scholar Simone Browne. It is also, then, Islamophobic, as the recent “Muslim ban” in addition to accumulative rhetoric since 9/11 makes undeniably clear. Yet, Osman's photographs tell a different story of close human observation, revealing intimate scenes of friendship, family, community, and belonging that resist cultural and racist assumptions about Black and Muslim identities. They also complicate notions of queerness in the context of “multi-cultural” Canada, Islam, and the African diaspora, wherein works like *Labeeb* (2012) and *Plantation Futures* (2015) portray multi-

faceted individuals such as the late Sumaya Dalmar as well as offer intimate glimpses into encounters of queer and trans friendship and family. These images portray “everyday love scenes,” as I like to think of them, that reflect ways in which individuals partake in loving relations that importantly counteract some of the harsh realities with which they continue to be unjustly faced.

Rather than focusing on common photographic narratives of historical or contemporary oppression that fetishize trauma and pain—and that have particular relevance to representation(s) of Black life—Osman’s work portrays seemingly simple yet incredibly nuanced scenes of joy, belonging, and re-discovery. His images demonstrate writer-organizer adrienne maree browne’s belief that “we must imagine new worlds that transition ideologies and norms, so that no one sees Black people as murderers,” nor as victims, “or Brown people as terrorists,”³ and so on. Instead, Osman depicts Black, Brown, queer, and trans individuals as his friends, family, colleagues, and community; and ultimately, as the co-creators of his work and of more caring worlds.

- Ellyn Walker

1. Rinaldo Walcott, “The Works of Contemporary Art (In Black),” in *Archi-feministes!; Art contemporain, théories féministes/ Contemporary Art, Feminist Theories*, eds. Marie-Eve Charron, Marie-Josée LaFortune, Therese St-Gelais (Montreal: OPTICA, centre d’art contemporain, 2019), 90.
2. Simone Browne, *Dark Matters: On the Surveillance of Blackness* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2015), 10.
3. adrienne maree browne, *Emergent Strategy: Shaping Change, Changing Worlds* (Chico: AK Press, 2017), 19.

About the Curators

Sara Matthews is writer, researcher, and educator based in southern Ontario. Working primarily in the field of research-creation, her projects explore the relations between visual culture, nation-building, colonialism, and martial politics. Her critical art writing has appeared in *PUBLIC*, *FUSE Magazine*, and in exhibition essays for the Robert Langen Gallery, Circuit Gallery, the Ottawa Art Gallery, the Doris McCarthy Gallery, and as a blog for Gallery TPW.

Dina Georgis is an Associate Professor at the Women & Gender Studies Institute at the University of Toronto. Her work, which is situated in the fields of postcolonial studies and queer theory, explores how aesthetic and cultural expressions are affective responses to political and social urgencies. Her writing appears in *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, *Psychoanalysis, Culture and Society*, and *Studies in Gender and Sexuality*.

About the Writer

Ellyn Walker is a writer-curator based in the place currently known as Toronto. Her writing has been widely published and can be found in *The Journal of Curatorial Studies*, *PUBLIC*, *Fuse*, *C Magazine*, *Inuit Art Quarterly*, among others; and in such anthologies as *Desire Change: Contemporary Feminist Art in Canada* (McGill-Queen's University Press, 2017), *Sonny Assu: A Selective History* (Heritage House, 2018), and forthcoming in *Craft On Demand: The New Politics of the Handmade* (Bloomberg 2020). In 2016, Ellyn's curatorial work was recognized by the Ontario Association of Art Galleries with the Thematic Exhibition of the Year Award for the project *CANADIAN BELONGING(s)* presented by the Art Gallery of Mississauga in 2015. Ellyn is currently is a PhD candidate in the Cultural Studies program at Queen's University where her research explores the shifting politics of curatorial practice and museological inclusion in the arts in Canada.

Gardens of the Mediterranean

in my dream grandma was washing pieces of fabric in the sea... when I woke up, I'd remembered her upright and tough as a tree trunk, her guntiino tight around her waist, a red handkerchief at the nape of her neck.

the sea swirled around her even though she hated the sea

the sound of the ocean, its roar, is the leitmotif of my childhood.

since the war and exile of 1991, Mogadishu, a city of dazzling lights and excavated walls, is a city whose streets I no longer remember. I didn't see the sea for many years. when I saw it again, it was in Sabaudia, south of Rome...

if you go to the waterfront many women will want to tell you their story... they look at the horizon and point out the sails or the passing motorboats to the swimmers. they want to know how big it could be, how many holds and decks will contain, of their children, their beloveds, their siblings.

the dhow was so full and there were people, dressed up, carrying all their riches. Dahabo knew them all and had told them to dress lightly. the boat capsized very close to the coast, and everyone yelled everyone else's name, grabbing hold of anything they could find to stay afloat...

Text excerpted from *A Dhow Crosses the Sea*, Ubah Cristina Ali Farah. 2017.

Translated from Italian by Hope Campbell Gustafson

Wall Labels:

Gardens of the Mediterranean, 2018

Video projection, 14 minutes

Collection of the artist

Passport, 2018

Four linen hangings

Collection of the artist

Plantation Futures, 2015

Four photographs

Collection of the artist

Labeeb, 2012

Five photographs and video (4 minutes)

Collection of the artist and private collections

Discover Me Series, 2007

Two photographs

Collection of the artist

Discover US Series, 2008-2009

Five photographs

Collection of the artist

Recent Acquisition

—

Jalani Morgan

The Sum of All Parts, 2017

The Hart House Collection is one of four distinct collections administered by the Art Museum. Inaugurated in 1922, and mandated to support living Canadian artists through the purchase of their work, today the Hart House Art Committee continues building the collection with increased dedication to representing the diversity of our communities.

In 2018/19 the acquisitions committee purchased a selection of photographs from the series *The Sum of All Parts* by Toronto-based artist Jalani Morgan. Capturing intimate and intense moments in the fight against anti-black racism catalyzed by the Black Lives Matter movement, these images offer a differential perspective from the news media record of the same events, by centering the experience and subjectivity of the organizers.

Over the past fifteen years, Morgan has built an impressive exhibition history with platforms including Photoville New York, the Wedge Gallery, Art Gallery of Ontario, Art Gallery of Windsor and Scotiabank CONTACT Photography Festival. An established photographer who hails originally from Scarborough, Ontario, Morgan has also been dedicated to giving back to his community through mentorship and empowerment programs that have included The Remix Project, LAMP and We Are Lawrence project created in partnership with City of Toronto and Manifesto.

Wall Labels:

“Yusra Khogali, fist raised in front of Queen’s Park after a two-week encampment at Toronto Police headquarters.”

The Sum of All Parts, 2017

Black and white photographic print

“Hashim Yussuf of Black Lives Matter Toronto poses for a portrait after they ‘ran up’ on Mayor John Tory.”

The Sum of All Parts, 2017

Black and white photographic print

“Protesters perform a ‘die-in’ by laying on the ground at Yonge and Dundas Square in Toronto. This was in solidarity and in rage of the decision of the New York grand jury to not indict the police officers responsible for the murder of Eric Garner.”

The Sum of All Parts, 2017

Black and white photographic print

Hart House Collection. Purchased in part through the support of the Elizabeth L. Gordon Art Program, a program of the Walter and Duncan Gordon Foundation and administered by the Ontario Arts Foundation, 2019.

University of Toronto MVS Curatorial Studies Program Graduating Projects

Annually, the Art Museum at the University of Toronto presents a cycle of exhibitions and projects curated by graduating students as part of the requirements of the Master of Visual Studies degree in the Curatorial Studies stream.

Supported by interdisciplinary inquiries, and core work in curatorial and studio classes, the MVS degree focuses on the development of individual curatorial projects that range from traditional to experimental forms of exhibition-making and public conversation.

Advised by faculty and professionals in the field, this year's graduates each explore uniquely focused subjects. Pegah Vaezi's symposium, *What do we mean when we say 'content moderation'?* is concerned with artists' activism regarding surveillance on the internet. Multi-layered materiality gives evidence of cultural interconnectivity in contemporary art practices in Lillian O'Brien Davis' exhibition *Common Place: Common-Place*, whereas Kate Whiteway's examination of artistic traditions on the prairies, *In & Out of Saskatchewan*, suggests an alternative view of centre/periphery relations.

—

We gratefully acknowledge the continued support of the Reesa Greenberg Curatorial Studies Award and International Travel Fund.

These graduate projects are presented as part of the requirements for the MVS degree in Curatorial Studies at the John H. Daniels Faculty of Architecture, Landscape and Design, University of Toronto.

In & Out of Saskatchewan

Works by:

Pat Adams, Ryan Arnott, Tammi Campbell, Dagmara Genda, Roy Kiyooka, Kenneth Lochhead, William Perehudoff, Edward Poitras, Jon Vaughn, Theodore Wan

In & Out of Saskatchewan is an exhibition about Saskatchewan in Toronto, exploring artists' works that illuminate the conditions by which art from "peripheral" places is legitimized by travelling to and from "centres." The works offer alternate views on traditions associated with the prairies, namely colour field abstraction, landscape painting, photography, weaving and ceramics. The exhibition spans several decades, bookmarked by the internationalism of the Emma Lake Artists' Workshops in the early 1960s and the opening of the public art museum, Remail Modern, in 2017. These two institutions invited an international audience into the local context of Saskatchewan, shaping who and what is considered central to the imported and exported narratives of art in the province. Drawing from the collections of the Art Museum at the University of Toronto and the Saskatchewan Arts Board, and including works sent directly from artists and mailed through the postal system, *In & Out of Saskatchewan* activates networks through which art travels. It questions what we might know about "Saskatchewan art" and highlights some of the material and political conditions of the production and presentation of art from elsewhere, here. The exhibition posits art practices that are not defined by their distance from the "centre," but instead by correspondence, agency and travel.

—

Curated by Kate Whiteway

Generously supported by Lily Chin, Alison Colvin and Tim Hadwen, Alice Kuipers and Yann Martel, Jane and Terry Lidster, Ken Whiteway and Sheila Ann Whiteway

Exhibition Essay:

In & Out of Saskatchewan is an exhibition about Saskatchewan in Toronto, exploring artists' works that illuminate the conditions by which art from "peripheral" places is legitimized by travelling to and from "centres." Drawing from the collections of the Art Museum at the University of Toronto and the Saskatchewan Arts Board, and including works sent directly from artists and mailed through the postal system, *In & Out of Saskatchewan* activates networks through which art travels. It questions what we might know about "Saskatchewan art" and highlights some of the material and political conditions of the production and presentation of art from elsewhere, here.

The exhibition spans several decades, bookmarked by the internationalism of the Emma Lake Artists' Workshops in the early 1960s and the opening of the Remai Modern, Saskatoon's \$100-million public art museum, in 2017. These two institutions invited an international audience into the local context of Saskatchewan, shaping who and what is considered central to the imported and exported narratives of art in the province.

The works offer alternate views on traditions associated with the prairies, namely colour field abstraction, landscape painting, photography, weaving, and ceramics. Dagmara Genda's *Limp Landscape* (2010) references the beholden relationship of prairie artists to the landscape. The orange vinyl material may be indicative of the mid-2010s economic boom driven by the province's non-renewable natural resources sector; at the same time, it represents a tattered vision of landscape and abstraction, in marked contrast to painting of the past. Pat Adams's weaving *10:00 am Any Morning During the First 10 Days of New Spring Growth in Saskatchewan* (1983) is shaped by the experience of

living and working in Fish Creek, the aspen parkland biome of central Saskatchewan and a significant site of Métis resistance to Canadian Militia during the Northwest Rebellion of 1885. Edward Poitras's photographs *Offensive/Defensive* (1988) record a "land transposition" where the artist swapped a rectangular patch of prairie grass from George Gordon First Nation with a patch of cultivated lawn from the Mendel Art Gallery, predecessor to the Remai Modern, in Saskatoon. The work, with lead cast leaders buried beneath the grass plots, offers a literal take on colour field painting, suggesting that this imported style is implicated in questions of land and colonialism unaccounted for within the modernist paradigm.

Some works deal with epistolary networks—a sculpture of an envelope by Ryan Arnott titled *Emma Lake Letter* (2001), and a postcard by the conceptual artist Theodore Wan (c. 1979) created as an appendage to the work Theodore Saskatchewan Wan, for which the artist changed his name to that of a town of 300 people along the Yellowhead Highway. Other contemporary works perform gestures alongside the generation of artists associated with Emma Lake—Roy Kiyooka, Kenneth Lochhead, and William Perehudoff. Through the material of paint, Tammi Campbell operates directly on modernist paradigms of truth and authority. *What You See Is What You See (After Stella), 01, for SPM* (2018) references the Notched-V series by Frank Stella, who led the workshop in 1967, thirty-four years before Campbell attended.

Artists from the prairies devote extensive time and resources to transporting works to and from major coastal cities, thousands of kilometres away. Hence, Campbell's *Monochrome with Bubble Wrap and Packing Tape* (2019) is a painting of a packaged painting. Jon Vaughn has been a key figure in the

underground music and visual arts scene in Saskatchewan for several decades. New works on paper continue his exploration of abstraction and auto-generation. The wheat sheaf-like figures and perforated holes of Narrative response (second page) to poster by Marc Hennes, *Colorama Clubhouse 6 Residency Berlin* (2017) signal the marginalia of the publishing process, suggesting an undoing of the fixity of artistic narratives and location.

Recently, austerity has strained existing infrastructures, increasingly restricting mobility and ease of access within the province and beyond. In 2012, the facilities of the Emma Lake Artists' Workshops closed due to lack of funding. In 2017, the government terminated all bus routes operated by the Saskatchewan Transportation Company, making mobility in an already sparsely served province and shrinking economy impossible for many, the same year the Remai Modern opened in Saskatoon. In 2018, the Provincial Archives of Saskatchewan closed all branches throughout the province to centralize in one Regina facility, and the government instigated \$4.8 million in cuts to the public library system.

In & Out of Saskatchewan springs from these recent cuts to flow-and-exchange to explore the agency of artists in a globalized context shaped by existing infrastructure as well by the exhibition and collection priorities of prominent art institutions. This exhibition posits art practices that are not defined by their distance from the "centre," but instead by correspondence, agency, and travel.

Wall Labels:

Dagmara Genda

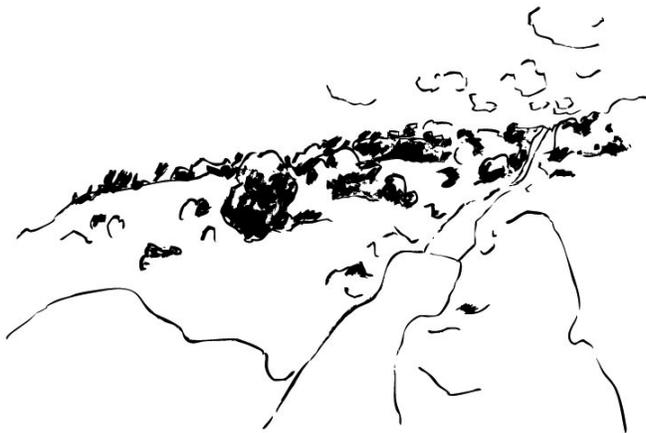
Limp Landscape, 2010

Cut vinyl

Collection of Saskatchewan Arts Board

—

“Limp Landscape is a large-scale installation composed of 60 years of prairie landscape paintings collected by the Mendel Art Gallery throughout the 20th century. Iconic forms and shapes are silhouetted in cut vinyl and hung in the gallery as a means of reconceptualizing how the landscape has been represented. The result will be a skin, as if a landscape drawing peeled off its canvas.”¹



This image is one layer of *Limp Landscape*, taken from a painting by Dorothy Knowles, the renowned Saskatchewan landscape painter. Knowles was married to the abstract modernist painter William Perehudoff.

—

¹Artist's statement, *Under Skirt: A Peak at the Institution of Art*, Mendel Art Gallery: Saskatoon, 2010.

Pat Adams

10:00 am Any Morning During the First 10 Days of New Spring Growth in Saskatchewan, 1983

Handwoven wool and linen

Collection of Saskatchewan Craft Council

—

Hi Kate,

Here I am at 10:00 p.m. to talk about the 10:00 a.m. wall hanging.

[...]

I was driving between Regina and Saskatoon one morning in early June. Many trees had leafed out. The ditches and other grassy areas had greened up. The planted crops were emerging and looking solid green. All this new green was wonderful. I decided that I would try to capture what I was seeing in one of my landscape hangings. My design process does not involve any sketching or drawing with coloured pencils or anything like that. I can see in my mind's eye what I want to weave.

[...]

My interest in my landscape-design rugs and wall hangings was two-fold: stripping the prairie landscape down to only land and sky; working with heavy-duty colour in my skies depicting prairie sunsets as they really are. Maybe there is a bit of philosophy – I do believe that on the prairie power resides in the sky and comes in several forms whether it be sunsets

or thunderstorms or whatever. So, the hanging you have selected is a bit of an exception for me because it is the colour of the land in morning light in spring, and not the sky, that is my focus.

[...]

It is getting late so that is enough for now. If I think of anything else I will send it to you. If there is any other info you want let me know.

Pat

Edward Poitras

Offensive/Defensive, 1988

Silver prints, lead, pastel

Collection of Saskatchewan Arts Board

—

“It is a work in two parts, viewed in two places.”¹

In 1988, Edward Poitras staged a land transposition. Cutting a rectangular strip of sod from his home on the George Gordon First Nation and another from the Mendel Art Gallery in Saskatoon, Saskatchewan, he then replanted the gallery lawn on the reserve and vice versa. Before replanting each strip, Poitras cast two words, “offensive” and “defensive,” in lead and buried them in the earth below. The cache is a reminder of the 1885 Battle of Batoche, which ended the Métis resistance led by Louis Riel. A metaphor for the relations between urban and rural life, the reserve grass flourished in its new home, while

the carefully tended gallery sod withered and died on the reserve.”²

—

¹ Matthew Teitelbaum, *Indian Territory*, Mendel Art Gallery: Saskatoon, 1988.

² Candice Hopkins, *Unsettled Landscapes*, SITE Sante Fe, 2014.

Roy Kiyooka

The Ring and the Window, 1966

Aquatex

Collection of Hart House



Roy Kiyooka at Emma Lake Artist's Workshop in 1961.
Courtesy of the University of Saskatchewan.

Canadian Art

Issue No. 84

March/April 1963

Courtesy of Artexte collection

Canadian Art

Issue No. 85

May/June 1963

Courtesy of Artexte collection

—

In 1962, Kenneth Lochhead, the Director of the School of Art at the University of Saskatchewan, invited the American art critic Clement Greenberg to lead the Emma Lake Artists' Workshop in the northern Boreal forest. Lochhead acted as workshop facilitator, while Roy Kiyooka and William Perehudoff were among the participants. The following year, Greenberg published a commissioned article in *Canadian Art* magazine, a longform exposé on visual art in the prairie provinces. "Painting and Sculpture in Prairie Canada Today" is a cartographical survey of Greenberg's favoured artists in the fields of abstract painting, landscape painting, and sculpture. On the second page of the article: a beautiful line map of Greenberg's 1,485-mile route across the prairies begins at Emma Lake.

Greenberg closes the article with the following words: "So much for contemporary art in prairie Canada as seen by this outsider. I know that my report is incomplete, and I am aware that it may seem distorted by favouritism towards Saskatchewan. I honestly don't feel that it is distorted in this respect, but I hope that those who disagree and those

better acquainted, in part of whole, with the ground I have tried to cover will not hesitate to make themselves heard from.” They did not. The following issue of *Canadian Art* is filled with letters to the editor that index some of the response to Greenberg’s position by the local communities of artists.

Theodore Wan

Name Change, c. 1979

Postcard

Collection of Kate Whiteway

—

During the 1970s, while he was a student at NSCAD, Theodore Wan would take the Greyhound bus from Halifax to Vancouver. It was during one such trip that he came across the town of 300 people along the Yellowhead Highway called Theodore.¹ In 1977, the artist Theodore Wan officially changed his middle name from Fu to Saskatche. The name change was recorded in the local newspaper. The artist then produced a postcard with a photograph of himself standing in the field in front of the grain elevator inscribed with his namesake. The postcards were sold to tourists in a shop operated by the mayor of Theodore, Fred Dowholis.

“I think Wan identified Saskatchewan as a non-place that calibrated to his state. Hence the supine (flat, in the middle of nowhere) and abject position of a dead piece of (land/”meat “without agency) ... There were contradictory motivations there in the name change and making of the postcard. Aside from identity issues, he wanted to mortify himself in this vulnerable position (Wan came from a devout Christian background), for the reason that he was also fascinated with the body (his own

and others’). All in good humor... conceptual art is a great tool to hide and transfer existential crises.”²



¹ Email correspondence between Christine Conley and Kate Whiteway, April 8, 2019.

² Email correspondence between Yam Lau and Kate Whiteway, March 31, 2019.

Tammi Campbell

Monochrome with Bubble Wrap and Packing Tape, 2019

Acrylic on linen

Courtesy of Tammi Campbell

Artists from the prairies spend a great deal of time and resources transporting their work eastward to Toronto, Montreal, or New York. *Monochrome with Bubble Wrap and Packing Tape* (2019) is a painting of a packaged painting that refers to this consumptive process. Campbell creates facsimiles in paint of the vernacular materials of

fine art transportation: bubble wrap, corrugated cardboard, green painter's tape. Campbell attended Emma Lake Artists' Workshops in 2001, 2003, and 2007. By the 1990s, the University of Saskatchewan had taken a hiatus from the modernist art practices and theory propagated by the workshops. Campbell was among the few women artists in the region who took up abstraction around this time.¹ *What You See Is What You See (After Stella), 01, for SPM* (2018) references the Notched-V series by Frank Stella, who led the workshop in 1967. Through her meticulous practice of crafting facsimile and homage, Campbell operates on modernist paradigms of truth, authority, and lineage.

—

¹ April Britski, "The edge of painting: the Emma Lake Artists' Workshops and the politics of location," Carleton University: Ottawa, 2006.

Jon Vaughn

Purgatory of Co-operative Dependence, 2019

Oil pastel, acrylic on canvas window blind

Courtesy of Jon Vaughn

—

New works on paper come from larger series' that continue Vaughn's exploration of abstraction and auto-generation. *Purgatory of Co-operative Dependence* is, in part, a reflection of the effects of the end of a long-term relationship. The horizontal plane is divided into two grounds that awkwardly share the space: rolling hills of a faux-landscape on the left, and fragmented body parts in profile doomed to incompleteness on the right. Both grounds are, in the artist's words, "trapped in the

space of their own making, mutually reproducing each other's confinement." Narrative response (second page) to poster by Marc Hennes, Colorama Clubhouse 6 Residency Berlin (2017) has been taken from a book. The wheat sheaf-like figures and perforated holes along the left side of the work signal the marginalia of the publishing process, suggesting an undoing to the fixity of artistic narratives and location.

Pat Adams

10:00 am Any Morning During the First 10 Days of New Spring Growth in Saskatchewan, 1983

Handwoven wool and linen

Collection of Saskatchewan Craft Council

Ryan Arnott

Emma Lake Letter, 2001

Acrylic on twig pencil, stone and grass paper envelope with twig and acrylic leaves

Collection of Saskatchewan Arts Board

Tammi Campbell

Monochrome with Bubble Wrap and Packing Tape, 2019

Acrylic on linen

Courtesy of Tammi Campbell

Tammi Campbell

Paper Series 07, 2014

Acrylic paint, folded

Courtesy of Tammi Campbell and Division Gallery

Tammi Campbell

What You See Is What You See (After Stella), 01, for SPM,
2018

Acrylic on museum board

Courtesy of Tammi Campbell and Division Gallery

Dagmara Genda

Limp Landscape, 2010

Cut vinyl

Collection of Saskatchewan Arts Board

Roy Kiyooka

The Ring and the Window, 1966

Aquatex

Collection of Hart House

Kenneth Lochhead

Emma Lake Trees, 1962

Pastel

Collection of University of Toronto Art Centre

William Perehudoff

AC 76-21, 1976

Acrylic

Collection of University College

Edward Poitras

Offensive/Defensive, 1988

Silver prints, lead, pastel

Collection of Saskatchewan Arts Board

Jon Vaughn

A Place to Hide, a Chance to Give, 2019

Oil pastel, acrylic and paint pen on Stonehenge paper

Courtesy of Jon Vaughn

Jon Vaughn

Narrative response (second page) to poster by Marc Hennes, Colorama Clubhouse 6 Residency Berlin, 2017

Risograph print with Metallic Gold and Federal Blue

Courtesy of Jon Vaughn

Jon Vaughn

Purgatory of Co-operative Dependence, 2019

Oil pastel, acrylic on canvas window blind

Courtesy of Jon Vaughn

Theodore Wan

Name Change, c. 1979

Postcard

Collection of Kate Whiteway

Indian Territory

Mendel Art Gallery, 1989

Collection of Artexte collection

C Magazine

No. 89, Spring 2006

Collection of Artexte collection

The Flat Side of the Landscape: The Emma Lake Artists' Workshops

Mendel Art Gallery, 1989

Collection of Artexte collection

Pat Adams: Woven Skies

Dunlop Art Gallery, 1985

Collection of Artexte collection

*Emma Lake Workshops,
1955-1973*

Mackenzie Art Gallery, 1973

Courtesy of Artexte collection

Common Place: Common-Place

Works by:

Patrick Cruz, Erika DeFreitas, Walter Scott, Catherine Telford Keogh, Sojourner Truth Parsons

The common place is an island in an archipelago, a site formed as common ground. The gallery becomes a site of the common place for this exhibition—a laboratory of possibility where people and artwork are engaged in a constant exchange. The artworks impinge and affect each other and you, the visitor all the while unfolding in their own space and time. Traces of a previous exhibition remain in the gallery in order to acknowledge the continuity of the common place as a space in process, it never firms up into anything definitive but continues to shift and respond to multiple influences, never seeking to summarize. The common place is a space of relation—everything is tangled together and yet each specific part of the whole holds value. Welcome to the common place.

—

Curated by Lillian O'Brien Davis

Exhibition Essay:

This exhibition takes its name, *Common Place: Common-Place*, from the writings of Édouard Glissant, a poet and writer from the island of Martinique. Glissant's common place was characterized by the gesture of relation: between people, places, and things. He understood relationality as being enacted in a place that is common—common ground. An archipelago of islands was Glissant's metaphor of relation,¹ a site of generative exchange that does not homogenize people or cultures but produces difference from which something new can emerge.

This exhibition explores relations, contradictions, and the considered use of space as an examination of what it means to live together in a common place. Humans are messy and ungraspable, not clean and rigid. The common ground is a space of entanglement.² Within the common place existence is not fixed but mutable and articulated through movement as people and objects affect and impinge on one another. The purpose of this exhibition is not to reach conclusions but to explore possibilities.

The artworks included in this exhibition engage with notions of a common place through a variety of entry points to their conceptual and material presences. They are accumulations of interconnectivity—kinships within themselves, with each other and with us.³ Catherine Telford Keogh's sculptures contain data from previous moments; they include objects that are in and around us, deposits that slowly shift and change state over time, reacting in relation to each other. Erika DeFreitas's video depicts a figure in constant movement, resisting

a settled or permanent position. The sound generated by her presence permeates the surrounding space. Patrick Cruz's wall painting engages with the gallery as place, a site for experimentation and assertive gestures that push back against the power of white walls. Walter Scott's humanoid sculptures extend into the gallery; the vulnerability and humour associated with their forms is a variation of representation, proposing alternate possibilities of perception. Sojourner Truth Parsons's paintings work through the cacophony of existence. Acting as memorials or visual representations of an emotional process, each painting becomes a site of exchange with and in response to the activities of the world. We care where we put things and we care where we are put. *Common Place: Common-Place* looks at the structures that hold us,⁴ considering what it means to be in a state of constant exchange and the difficulty as well as the generative possibilities of that state.

Traces of a previous exhibition remain in the space—two small peep holes in one of the walls. They are a gesture acknowledging the life and continuity of thought in the gallery.⁵ According to Glissant, place functions as the model for the common—a model that is by necessity a work in progress.⁶ The not unwelcome ghosts of previous exhibitions echo through the gallery, reminding us that nothing has been decided yet, no conclusion has been reached—that we are in a place in process. Welcome to the Common Place.

1. Édouard Glissant, *Poetics of Relation*, trans. Betsy Wing (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1997).
2. Denise Ferreira da Silva suggests that current cultural discourse upholds the principle of separability, to which entanglement is its natural opposition. “On Difference Without Separability,” in *32nd Bienal de São Paulo: Incerteza viva* (2016), exhibition catalogue.
3. For Glissant’s definition of kinship, see Glissant, *Poetics of Relation*.
4. Pascale Guibert, “‘Common Place: Common-Place’ A Presentation of Edouard Glissant’s Poetics of the compounding of place,” *Commonwealth Essays and Studies* 39, no. x (Autumn 2016): 113–125.
5. The traces are from work by artist Dana Prieto’s *It’s only invisible when it works* (2019), part of the *2019 University of Toronto Masters of Visual Studies Studio Program Graduating Exhibition*.
6. Guibert, “Common Place.”

Gallery Map:

1. Erika DeFreitas

of relations and positions, 2017

Single Channel Video, 2:30 minutes, colour, sound

Courtesy of the artist

2. Walter Scott

Benevolent Replies, 2018

Wood, silicone, bag, metal rings, rope, cement

Courtesy of the artist

3. Walter Scott

Tonight, Today, 2018

wood, acrylic, spray paint, metal rings, cord, cement,
totebag, silicone

Courtesy of the artist

4. Walter Scott

Nadia, 2018

Tote bag, silicone, wood, metal rings, cord, acrylic

Courtesy of the artist

5. Catherine Telford Keogh

X Supplement Aggregate Simulator X (heap of human-junk piled mercilessly onto a green municipal bench against the bold, stencilled white letters that warned of the penalties of littering in a public park), 2019

Glass, Plexiglas®, Brite White Matte Formica®, Pigmented FlexFoam-iT! ® III, Dial® Omega Moisture Glycerin Soap with Sea Berries, Lasercut Deconstructed Plexiglas® Logos, Nature's Path® Qi'a® Superfood Apple Cinnamon

Chia Buckwheat and Hemp Cereal, Extra® Sugar Free Gum, Vinyl Digital Prints on Plexiglas®, Yankee Candle® Home Sweet Home® Fragrance Spheres™, Advil® Extra Strength Pain Relief, Betty Crocker®, Steel Bowls, OREO® O's, Bick's® Dill Pickles, Advil®, Nickel-Plated Chains, Hot Dog Trays 8-Pack, Smooth-Cast® 325, 326, IKEA Dog Bowl, Bio-Pure®, Deconstructed Lasercut Vinyl Logo.
Courtesy of the artist.

6. Catherine Telford Keogh, *X Supplement Aggregate Simulator X (Agatha knew that she was the kind of being that could survive at the bottom of the ocean in below zero temperatures for months or on a deserted planet in space. She had that kind of unbroken restraint and will.)*, 2019
Glass, Plexiglas®, Brite White Matte Formica®, Pigmented FlexFoam-iT!® III, Dial® Omega Moisture Glycerin Soap with Sea Berries, Lasercut Deconstructed Plexiglas® Logos, Nature's Path® Qi'a® Superfood Apple Cinnamon Chia Buckwheat and Hemp Cereal, Extra® Sugar Free Gum, Vinyl Digital Prints on Plexiglas®, Yankee Candle® Home Sweet Home® Fragrance Spheres™, Advil® Extra Strength Pain Relief, Betty Crocker®, Steel Bowls, OREO® O's, Bick's® Dill Pickles, Advil®, Nickel-Plated Chains, Hot Dog Trays 8-Pack, Smooth-Cast® 325, 326, IKEA Dog Bowl, Bio-Pure®, Deconstructed Lasercut Vinyl Logo.
Courtesy of the artist.

7. Sojourner Truth Parsons
She's got little bits of babies in her hand, 2018
Acrylic, flashe, archival glue and canvas on canvas
Courtesy of Daniel Faria Gallery

8. Sojourner Truth Parsons

Black and white bitches lose their minds, 2018

Acrylic, flashe, archival glue and canvas on canvas

Courtesy of Daniel Faria Gallery.

9. Sojourner Truth Parsons

I know for sure nobody should be poor (for everyone who died in May), 2018

Acrylic, flashe, archival glue and canvas on canvas

Courtesy of Daniel Faria Gallery.

10. Patrick Cruz

Step Step Mother Tongue, 2019

India ink, primer

Courtesy of the artist

Events and Programming

Opening Event

Reception

Wednesday, June 5, 2019, 6–8pm

University of Toronto Art Centre

Public Programs

Artist Talk

Christina Sharpe in conversation
with Abdi Osman

Wednesday, July 17, 6:30–8pm

Weekly Drop-In Tours

Exhibition Tours

Tuesdays, 2pm

Meet at the Justina M. Barnicke Gallery

Malcove Collection Tour

Last Wednesday of each month, 12 noon

University of Toronto Art Centre

Hart House Collection Tour

Last Wednesday of each month, 2pm

Meet at the Hart House information desk

For program details visit

artmuseum.utoronto.ca

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