

2015

A Gust of Wind

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A GUST OF WIND

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Francine Savard

October 3 - November 14, 2015

Organized by Patrick Mahon with the cooperation of
the Boundary Layer Wind Tunnel, Western University



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Katsushika Hokusai, Ejiri in Suruga Province, ca. 1830. Hokusai and Hiroshige, Great Japanese Prints From the James A. Michener Collection, Honolulu Academy of Arts. San Francisco, CA: The Asian Art Museum of San Francisco, 1998.

MOVING PICTURES

Tell me the difference between soul and wind. Michel Serres, The Five Senses (2008: 172)

The 'wind' has been treated by artists, both historically and more recently, to draw attention to a weather phenomenon that poses questions about representation and representability, often through works which invoke a fleeting quality or a sense of danger. Important among such images is Jeff Wall's large-scale photographic transparency, *A Sudden Gust of Wind (after Hokusai)*, (1993), which plays off of the Japanese ukiyo e woodcut, *A Gust*

of Wind at Ejiri, (ca.1832), by Katsushika Hokusai. Together the two works describe a small and particular history of modern picture making, while seeming to 'discuss the weather.'

From a scientific and engineering standpoint, the wind is also important; it is regularly subject to 'testing' which involves attempts at making the invisible visible for pure research purposes and to ensure the structural integrity of proposed buildings and other constructions. One might speculate that the latter practice is increasingly necessary in our times.

The exhibition, "A Gust of Wind," brings



Tegan Moore. *Everything but free air itself*, video still, 2015

together a group of Canadian artists and one Norwegian artist to highlight ideas and approaches that engage with wind via the metaphorical, the physical, the phenomenological, and the poetic. At the conceptual centre of the exhibition is a selection of artifacts that help to locate the project in proximity to a nexus where artistic concerns and technological experimentation meet. A vast archive of miniature plastic and Styrofoam buildings used at the *Boundary Layer Wind Tunnel* at Western University are installed here to educate us, while also producing an inanimate spatial poem. Gathered together on large tables, the installation suggests two unlikely if geometrical

'islands' that point to human aspirations and vulnerabilities regarding powerful physical forces—the wind and the weather—that bear on life on the planet.

In this brief commentary, I want to consider the idiosyncratic collection of art and artifacts in the exhibition with reference to Jeff Wall's photograph, in light of the ideas foregrounded in Laura Mulvey's article, "A Sudden Gust of Wind (after Hokusai): from After to Before the Photograph," (2007).¹ Here I am responding to the fact that in the article Wall's picture is examined partly for its relationship to the Hokusai print as a pictorial antecedent, and specifically because the author sees



Francine Savard. *Le Devoir*, Montréal, samedi 18 septembre 1999, 2015. Photo: Guy L'Heureux. Courtesy Galerie René Blouin and Diaz Contemporary

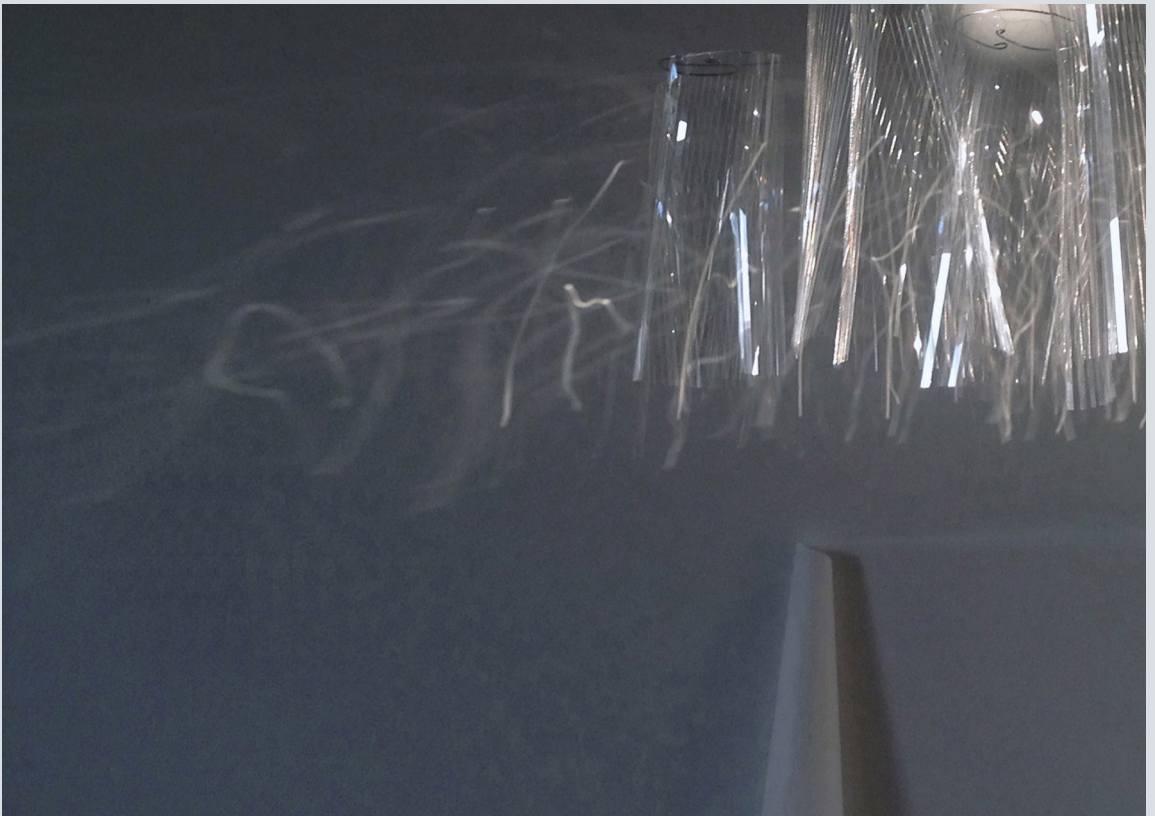


David Merritt. *untitled (oh)*, 2013. Photo: Dave Kemp

Wall's wind image alluding to a history of analogue photography in anticipation of the digital. In context of this, and also because I do not want to disregard the simultaneity we observe concerning dramatic shifts in communication technologies and contemporary climatic conditions, a curious question arises. It asks whether contemporary digital and digitally inflected artworks about the weather should be understood to operate according to new paradigms of representation and viewership, in the twenty-first century.

In response to the query, I want to suggest that the works of the artists in "A Gust of

Wind," speak from within a (digitalized) world marked by movement and flux, offering us an analogous relationship to the one linking Hokusai with Wall. Utilizing apparently familiar art mediums – painting (Savard), video (Linge; Merritt; Moore), printmaking (Caulfield, Mahon), and sculpture (Fuglem), the artists nevertheless propose shifts and disruptions that invoke the feel, the pace, and the texture of the contemporary world—hovering as it does betwixt the touch of the analogue and the zeros and ones of the digital. Taken together, their works show that picturing the wind today calls up a lineage that Hokusai and Wall helped to establish, showing



Karilee Fuglem. *I find it so natural not to think, that I sometimes start laughing all by myself* (study), 2015. Video still: the Artist. Courtesy Pierre-François Ouellette art contemporain

contemporary visual art expression as ever in transition. These artworks image the weather in ways that are novel and necessary, offering complex and sometimes new perceptual experiences consciously situated amidst the gusts of our times.

FLEETING IMAGES²

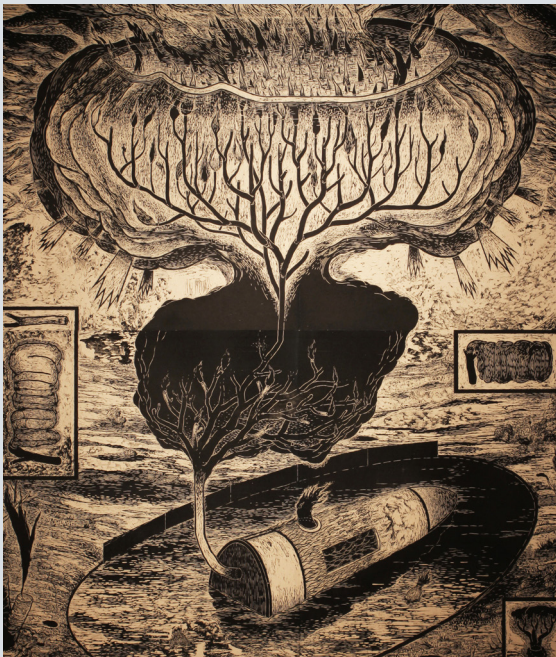
Sean Caulfield: “In my graphic woodcuts, I draw on a passage of text from Dante’s *Purgatory* that describes earthquakes as ‘wind’ below the ground...this was a common belief in medieval Europe.”

Karilee Fuglem: “When I can’t trust words

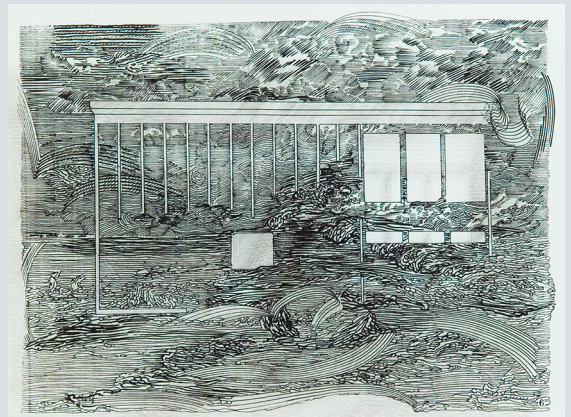
to convey meaning, gesture and touch fill in the gaps, deepening my trust in subtle clues. Coaxing me along is the ungraspable world that refuses to hold still.”

Elida Brenna Linge: “These fragments define my impression of my surroundings. It is the wind with its unpredictability that helps me try to get an overview. If it is strong, I see more. If it is weak, I see nothing.”

Patrick Mahon: “I situate a turning, Modernist house in a roiling nineteenth-century-like landscape that appears in a state of devolution. I want to envisage



Sean Caulfield. *Burning Cloud*, 2013. Photo: Akiko Taniguchi



Patrick Mahon. *Baker Lake House*, 2009. Photo: Kim Clarke. Courtesy Katzman Contemporary

the aspirations and histories connected with Modernism, and inherited ideas of 'nature' and 'the North,' together, in flux.”

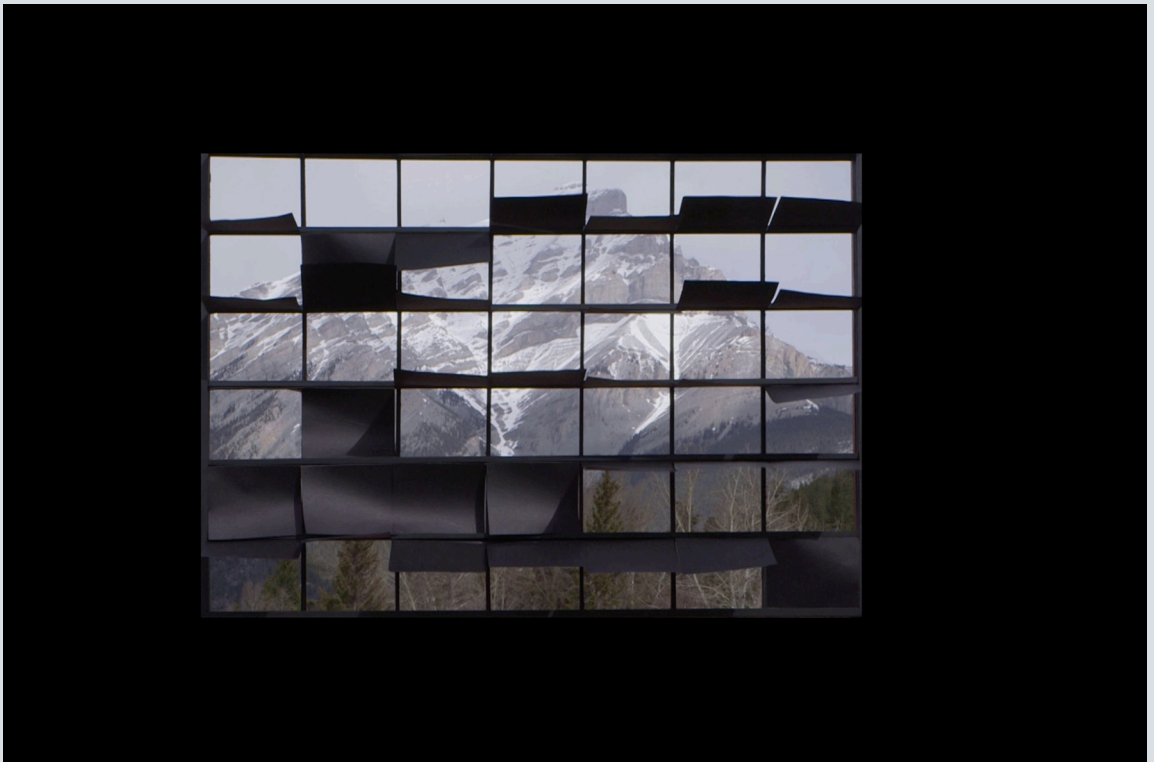
David Merritt: “Speech has been described as interfering with a moving body of air...I have offered (here)...a text drawing of an aspirating figure, rising and falling with the various intonations of the word 'oh,' traced from the titles of popular song.”

Tegan Moore: “The video is a sensory inventory of the landscape of Southern Ontario’s wind turbines. The structure of the two videos elicits a tension that parallels the aural, visual, political, and

ecological tensions that have arisen out of the expansive new initiatives involving wind energy in the province.”

Francine Savard: “(A) long list of forecasts constitutes an evocation of the meteorological landscape from one spring season to another in Montreal... the weather that passes, passes and returns as almost-similar....Each painting becomes a lamelliform cutting in the infinity of time and weather, both being the ultimate and continuous accompanists of a human life.”

¹ See Mulvey, Laura. *Oxford Art Journal*, 30.1, 2007
² Selected from Artist's Statements shared with the author, August 2015



Elida Brenna Linge. *Drag It With You*, video still, 2015

BIOGRAPHIES

Patrick Mahon is an artist, a writer/curator, and a Professor of Visual Arts at Western University, in London, Ontario. Mahon's artwork has been exhibited in Canada at Museum London, The Hamilton Art Gallery, the Southern Alberta Art Gallery, McMaster Museum of Art, The University of Winnipeg, and at The Museum of Contemporary Canadian Art, Toronto. Internationally, Mahon has shown recently in China and France, and in numerous print biennales since the early 1990's. Among his curatorial projects, the exhibition, "Lines Painted in Early Spring: Ferguson, Reeves, Ruschiensky, Savard," (2003-04) was circulated to four venues in Canada by the Southern Alberta Art Gallery. "Gu Xiong and Xu Bing: Here is what I mean," (2004), originated at Museum London and travelled to the Doris McCarthy Gallery, Toronto. The exhibition "Hinterlands: Fastwurms, Glabush, Thornycroft, Urban," (2008) premiered at the McIntosh Gallery, Western, and travelled to Harbourfront Centre, Toronto, in 2009. Patrick Mahon is represented by Katzman Contemporary, Toronto.

Sean Caulfield is a Centennial Professor in the Department of Art and Design at the University of Alberta. He has exhibited his prints, drawings and artist's books extensively throughout Canada, the United States, Europe, and Japan. Recent exhibitions include: Perceptions of Promise, Chelsea Art Museum, New York, USA/Glenbow Museum, Calgary, Alberta; The New World, The Centre for Modern and Contemporary Art, Debrecen, Hungary; Imagining Science, Art Gallery of Alberta, Edmonton, Alberta. Caulfield's work is in various public and private collections including: Houghton Library, Harvard University, USA; Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge, England; Blanton Museum of Art, University of Texas, Austin, Texas, USA.

Karilee Fuglem produces works that takes the form of installations, drawings, photographs and artist books, through which she explores visual subtlety as a key to embodied perception. Originally from British Columbia, she has lived in Montreal since 1989, during which time she has presented solo exhibitions across Canada, notably at the Darling Foundry, Montreal; the Koffler Gallery, Toronto; Oakville Galleries, Oakville, Ontario; Rodman Hall, St-Catharines, Ontario; and in numerous group exhibitions, including the Biennale de Montréal in 1998 and 2011. Fuglem has also exhibited at the Musée national des beaux arts du Québec, and the National Gallery of Canada, who hold her work in their collections. A finalist for Montreal's Prix Louis-Comtois in 2010, Fuglem is represented by Pierre-François Ouellette art contemporain, where she has exhibited regularly since 2002.

Elida Brenna Linge makes work that spans installations, objects, drawings, artist books, photography and video. The last few years her practice has been rooted in her present location – the family farm in a fjord in western Norway. Her work is an ongoing investigation of structures, both physical and semantical, and aspects of control, intention and the lack thereof. She received her MFA from The Bergen National Academy of the Arts (2010), which included an exchange semester at the HGB Leipzig in Germany. In 2015 she finished a two year long cooperation with Andreas Siqueland, a residential art project located on the farm, with the exhibition Winterstudio/Hansplassen at KUBE, Ålesund. Other recent exhibitions include SALE, a part of the Manifesta 10 parallel programme in St.Petersburg; and Norske Bøker in Doverodde, Denmark, and Arnolfini, UK. Her work has recently been screened by the Walter Phillips Gallery as a part of the Video Art @ The Banff Centre series.

David Merritt is a producer of drawing and multimedia works have been exhibited in galleries nationally and internationally, including the National Gallery of Canada, Art Gallery of Ontario, the Textile Museum of Canada and TENT CBK, Rotterdam. A touring survey exhibition, shim/sham/shimmy was circulated by Museum London in collaboration with the Art Gallery of Hamilton, the MacLaren Art Centre and the Art Gallery of Windsor, in 2010. Between 2006 and 2015 his work was represented by Jessica Bradley Gallery, Toronto. Merritt lives in London, Ontario, where he teaches at Western University.

Tegan Moore works in sculpture, installation and recently video. She received a BFA from the Emily Carr University in 2008, and an MFA from the University of Western Ontario in 2014. Her work has been included in exhibitions at 221A, Equinox, Helen Pitt, and Access Gallery, Vancouver; in solo shows at MKG127, Toronto; DNA Artspace, London; and CSA Space (Vancouver). Concurrent with "A Gust of Wind," Moore is an artist in residence at Flaggfabrikken Centre for Contemporary Art in Bergen, Norway. She lives and works in London, Ontario.

Francine Savard is a Montreal-based artist. After studying graphic design at the Royal College of Art (London UK), she earned her Master's in Visual Arts from Université du Québec à Montréal, in 1994. Her practice is rooted in the Plastique tradition, and often draws on the realm of painting as her primary source. She incorporates various painting-related elements into her work, including the studio, and the history of painting. Savard's work can be found in the collections of the Albright-Knox Art Gallery, the National Gallery of Canada, the Musée National des Beaux-Arts du Québec, and the Musée d'Art Contemporain de Montréal, which presented a retrospective of her work in 2009-2010. Her work has been included in "The Painting Project. A Snapshot of Painting in Canada" at Galerie de l'UQAM (Université du Québec à Montréal), in 2013. She is represented by Galerie René Blouin in Montreal, and Diaz Contemporary in Toronto.

WORKS IN THE EXHIBITION

Sean Caulfield

Souffleur, 2015

linocut on kozo, 15" x 20"

Prairie Siren, 2015

linocut on kozo, 16.5" x 11.75"

Prairie Landscape: Black Wind,

linocut on kozo, 24" x 36," 2013

Burning Cloud, 2013

woodcut on gampi, 84" x 72"

Karilee Fuglem

I find it so natural not to think, that I sometimes start laughing all by myself, 2015

polyester, steel wire and rods, vellum, size varies

because something lightens in us, 2015

polyester, mylar, tissue paper, steel wire, size varies

Elida Brenna Linge

Drag It With You, 2015

Video and object made of wood and paper, 22" x 29"

Patrick Mahon

Baker Lake House #1-24, 2009

silkscreen on plexiglass with hardware, 20" x 28" ea.

David Merritt

parade, 2015

video, loop, 15:36 min, 1/3 + 2 AP

untitled (oh), 2013

graphite on paper, 85" x 61"

Tegan Moore

Everything but free air itself, 2015

digital video, 4:00 min

Relief Perf, 2015

flashspun high density polyethylene, 12" x 14"

Membrane for an Idea of a Gust, 2015

flashspun high density polyethylene, aluminum rod, grommets, variable dimensions

Francine Savard

Le Devoir, Montréal, jeudi 16 septembre 1999, 2015
acrylic on canvas, mounted on panel, 36" x 36" x 1½"

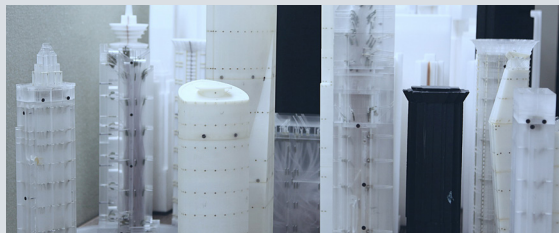
Le Devoir, Montréal, samedi 18 septembre 1999, 2015
acrylic on canvas, mounted on panel, 36" x 36" x 1½"

Le Devoir, Montréal, vendredi 5 novembre 1999, 2015
acrylic on canvas, mounted on panel, 36" x 36" x 1½"

Le Devoir, Montréal, vendredi 14 janvier 2000, 2015
acrylic on canvas, mounted on panel, 36" x 36" x 1½"

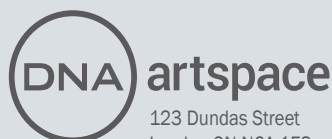
Weather Data, 2015

ink jet print on Ultratex. 72" x 9"



EXHIBITION ORGANIZER'S ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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