

BIOGRAPHIES

Aryen Hoekstra (b. 1982) was born in Edmonton, Alberta. He has an MFA from the University of Guelph and received a BFA from the University of Alberta. Hoekstra has exhibited across Canada, including recent shows at Blackwood Gallery, Mississauga; and XPACE Cultural Centre, Toronto; and previously at Olga Korper Gallery, Toronto; Boarding House Gallery, Guelph; G Gallery, Toronto; Latitude 53, Edmonton; Harcourt House, Edmonton. He has been written about in numerous publications, most recently *Border Crossings* and *Towards*. He currently lives and works in Toronto.

Laurent Montaron (b. 1972, Verneuil-sur-Avre, France) is an interdisciplinary artist, working across film, photography, installation, sound and performance. Key solo exhibitions include: Pigna Project Space, Rome; SCHLEICHER/LANGE, Berlin; Kunsthaus Baselland, Basel; Institut d'Art Contemporain, Villeurbanne; FRAC Champagne-Ardenne, Reims and Kunstverein Freiburg, Freiburg. His work has been included in significant international exhibitions, most recently the 19th Biennale of Sydney; the 55th Venice Biennale; Haus der Kunst, Munich; Centre Pompidou, Paris and *Performa 11*, New York. Montaron lives and works in Paris.

Rosemary Heather writes about art, the moving image and digital culture for numerous publications internationally. Curated exhibitions include: *Screen and Décor* (Justine M. Barnicke Gallery, Toronto; Southern Alberta Art Gallery, Lethbridge; Illingworth Kerr Gallery, Calgary 2013-2014). Formerly the editor of *C Magazine*, Rosemary Heather is currently Director of Publications for Fogo Island Arts (Fogo Island, NL), and Editor-in-Chief of the new digital publishing venture Q&A (qqqandaaa.com). An online archive of her writing can be found at: rosemheather.com.

Georgina Jackson is Director of Exhibitions & Publications at Mercer Union, a centre for contemporary art.

Aryen Hoekstra would like to thank the OAC for their generous support as well as Jesse Boles, Jennifer Carvalho, Rachele Leblanc, Dimitri Levanoff, Hank & Janice Hoekstra, Vanessa Maltese and Niagara Custom Labs. Produced with the assistance of the Liaison of Independent Filmmakers of Toronto (LIFT).

SEE OVER FOR CURRENT & UPCOMING EVENTS

Saturday Talks | Every Saturday, 2 PM | Free - all welcome

Join Katie Lyle or Joan Wilson for an introductory talk on the exhibitions.



Mercer Union, a centre for contemporary art
1286 Bloor Street West, Toronto ON M6H 1N9 (Canada)
(1 block east of Lansdowne Station)
T 416.536.1519 F 416.536.2955

Director of Operations & Development: York Lethbridge
Director of Exhibitions & Publications: Georgina Jackson

Gallery Hours: Tuesday – Saturday, 11 AM – 6 PM
office@mercerunion.org www.mercerunion.org

Gallery Administrative Coordinator: Liana Schmidt
Curatorial Assistant: Katie Lyle
Gallery Attendant: Joan Wilson

Board of Directors: Joseph Banh, Joseph Borowiec, Meagan Campbell, Rochelle Chung, Miles Collyer, Lyndsey Cope, John Hampton, Lili Huston-Herterich, Charlene Lau, Heather Nicol, Kristen Schaffer, Jennifer Rose Sciarrino, Jessica Vallentin and Negin Zebajrad.

Mercer Union acknowledges the support of its staff, volunteers and members, the Canada Council for the Arts, the Government of Ontario through the Ontario Arts Council and the City of Toronto through the Toronto Arts Council.

Cover image: Laurent Montaron, *Nature of the Self* (film still), 2014
All images courtesy the artists.

ISBN 978-1-926627-26-7 Printed by Sonicprint.ca © Mercer Union, the artists, the authors, 2014

SONIC PRINT.CA

To receive future publications by mail, please become a member of Mercer Union.



Canada Council
for the Arts

Conseil des Arts
du Canada

CELEBRATING 40 YEARS



Left: Liz Knox, *SPACE: Posted: 978 days ago*, 2014

Right: Hazel Meyer, *Muscle Panic*, 2014



SPACE: Liz Knox Posted: 978 days ago
Saturday 21 June – Tuesday 6 October 2014

Liz Knox uses conceptual strategies, examining systems of interpretation with an emphasis on strategies of irony, primarily working with text. This new work engages with 'missed connections' from the Occupy movement in North America acknowledging the complexities of personal and political subjectivity.

Knox studied Studio Art at the University of Guelph and received her Masters Degree in Visual Arts at Emily Carr University, Vancouver, in 2013. Her work has been shown in exhibitions and film festivals across Canada and internationally including the Charles H Scott Gallery, Vancouver; Access Gallery, Vancouver; G Gallery, Toronto; Eyelevel Gallery, Halifax; Lawton Gallery, University of Wisconsin; Vtape, Toronto; and the Justina M. Barnicke Gallery, Toronto.

SPACE is a new series of commissioned works for the billboard space at the corner of St Clarens Avenue and Bloor Street West.

MERCER Offsite: Hazel Meyer *Muscle Panic* as part of *Sunday Drive presents Warkworth*
Saturday 23 August – Sunday 31 August 2014

Mercer Union, is delighted to partner with Sunday Drive Art Projects to present a new solo project by Hazel Meyer in Warkworth, Ontario.

From the monumental to the modest Hazel Meyer's projects range from large installations, to small woven tags meant for an audience of one. She explores seemingly disparate yet overlapping preoccupations – intestines and athletics, feminism and the absurd, anxiety and textiles— using scale, language, play, repetition, gentle confrontation and ecstatic immersion. She has collaborated with teens, badminton players, composers, her mother, and artists for projects that are devoted to a forever shifting ratio of endurance, transgression, and laughs, as ways of being in one's body and the world.

For this project Hazel Meyer has turned the Cow Palace—the site of Warkworth's Agricultural Fair—into an after-hours sports club for Muscle Panic, a rogue girl's basketball team in need of a space in which to train, scheme, and otherwise spend time together, often at night. Mismatched banners and pennants hang by rafters nodding to the greater spectacle of gymnasium sports over a handcrafted, 14-foot basketball hoop, in a project that explores how we come together, how we sweat together, and how we build the tender, emotional spaces of sport.

Sunday Drive presents Warkworth is a three-week exhibition taking place in locations in and around Warkworth, Ontario. For further information on opening events and travel options on the 23rd August see: <http://sundaydrive.org>

Hazel Meyer holds an MFA from OCAD University, Toronto, a BFA from Concordia University, Montréal and coaches junior girls basketball at Queen Victoria Public School in Toronto. She lives and works in Toronto.



Left: Dan Adler

Right: Iris Häussler, *Accidental self-portrait in the studio with Sophie La Rosiere*, September 2013



FORUM: Dan Adler
Tuesday 16 September 2014 at 7 PM

In the second talk of the fORUM series under the title of "Tainted Goods: Contemporary Sculpture and the Critique of Display Cultures," Dan Adler will address large-scale exhibitions by Rachel Harrison, Isa Genzken, and Geoffrey Farmer. Consisting of sprawling accumulations of objects: some found, some modified, some handcrafted, Adler will explore how these expansive shows incorporate assemblage-based works which subvert display cultures by provoking viewing experiences that are neither seamless nor easily consumed.

Dan Adler is an associate professor of modern and contemporary art at York University in Toronto. He is the author of *Hanne Darboven: Cultural History 1880-1983* (Afterall Books/MIT Press 2009) and co-editor (with Mitchell Frank) of *German Art History and Scientific Thought: Beyond Formalism* (Ashgate Press, 2012). A former senior editor of the *Bibliography of the History of Art* at the Getty Research Institute in Los Angeles, he regularly contributes reviews to *Frieze* and *C Magazine*. He is currently working on a book manuscript on the aesthetics of recent assemblage sculpture. In addition to his formal university studies, he is an alumnus of the Whitney Museum's Independent Study Program. His curatorial credits include the exhibitions *Francis Bacon and Henry Moore: Terror and Beauty* (2014) at the Art Gallery of Ontario and *When Hangover Becomes Form: Rachel Harrison and Scott Lyall* (2006) at the Contemporary Art Gallery in Vancouver and LACE, Los Angeles. He was co-organizer of the DAAD-sponsored conference *Tainted Goods: Contemporary Sculpture and the Critique of Display Cultures* in Germany and Europe, held at York University and University of Toronto in May 2012.

fORUM is generously supported by The Hal Jackman Foundation



IN STUDIO: Iris Häussler
Tuesday 23 September 2014 at 7 PM

Join Mercer Union for a studio visit with Iris Häussler. Refreshments will be served. Free for Sustaining Members and above; open to other members and non-members for \$25.

Space is limited. To ensure your place RSVP to York Lethbridge at york@mercerunion.org or by calling 416.536.1519

Iris Häussler was born in Germany and moved to Canada in 2001. She studied at the Academy of Fine Arts in Munich and has exhibited widely throughout Europe. She is best known for her off-site installations in which she constructs fictitious personae through the material environment they live in. Locations have included rented apartments, hotel rooms, an entire residential house in downtown Toronto for *The Legacy of Joseph Wagenbach* (2006), and a major intervention into the Art Gallery of Ontario with *He Named Her Amber* (2008). Recent projects and shows include *He Dreamed Overtime* in the 18th Sydney Biennale in Australia (2012); *Ellen's Gift* in the group exhibition *More Real? Art in the Age of Truthiness* at SITE, Santa Fe (2012) and the Minneapolis Institute of Arts (2013); and *Also Known As...* at Daniel Faria Gallery, Toronto (2013).



Laurent Montaron
Everything is accidental

Aryen Hoekstra
Choreography for Screen

4 September – 25 October 2014
Artists' Talk Friday 5 September, 6:30 PM
Opening Reception, 7:30 PM

In November 2011, two large white kites ascended over the Manhattan skyline; one rose over the Socrates Sculpture Park and the other over Roosevelt Island near Lighthouse Park. This performance was a re-staging of the first experiment of wireless communication, re-enacting Mahon Loomis's test to transmit a signal between two Blue Ridge Mountains in Virginia, fourteen square miles apart, in October 1866. Two kites carrying grounded copper wires used the natural static electricity in the atmosphere to act as antennas, establishing a novel transmitter/receiver system. Loomis's experiment marked the discovery of radio waves, a transition from spatial distance to virtual proximity, and a signal to the modern age. And yet without any independent witnesses to the experiment, there is a literal, and ideological, distance in knowing the nature of this communication, or if indeed it did occur. In re-enacting this event, Laurent Montaron's *The Invisible Message* (2011)¹ re-inserts technological experiments of the past into the present, exposing systems of belief which underpin our faith in the 'tools' of communication and how they shape our understanding of the world. In the present day, the scientific significance of the two kites ascending across the skyline is lost in translation against a cacophony of signs and signals, both visible and imperceptible in the atmosphere.

For Montaron, a compulsive exploration of technologies and technological experimentation is a means to explore how we think through tools and objects, and find essence in the sense of things. Alchemy, childhood memories, astrology, pre-Socratic Greek philosophies, physical conditions and technological systems are combined, gathering the means of representation, photography, film, installation and sculpture, in considered installations which make evident the paradoxes of representation and thought. In an earlier work, *Pace* (2009), a carp heart continuously beats in a projection which slowly deteriorates as the exhibition time span unfolds. Capturing a natural phenomena whereby a carp's heart continues to beat for three days after its death, and contained within a vitrine-like structure, the 16mm projection extends the lifespan of the heart as the film slowly decomposes. In 1967, Marshall McLuhan posited "the older training of observation has become quite irrelevant in this new time, because it is based on psychological responses and concepts conditioned by the former technology-mechanization."² For Montaron the activity of projection is not enclosed in the black box space; this



Laurent Montaron, *Nature of the Self* (film still), 2014

projection is made visible in multiple modes which populate our everyday insisting "no image can be dissociated from the way it has been made."³

This new film work and installation, *Nature of the Self* (2014), shifts between light and darkness. Light plays against moving trees within a forest; a passage is made with a headlamp through subterranean tunnels; water flows through a stream and liquids transform from translucent to dark and back again; and there is an attempt to capture the real within the four corners of a photographic slide, to literally project the real. The accompanying voiceover describes an experience of self-realization in front of a mirror in which the self is not identified. This moment ushers metaphysical and existential uncertainty, questioning both the parameters of the self and the world. Here, the eye is both a physical and metaphorical construct, and the blind spot introduced in the opening passages denotes this paradox; it is "that which you do not see and you do not know that you do not see." The very act of recording is acknowledged as an attempt to render experience into information yet our experience is shaped by the conditions that surround us. There exists no absolute truth as we always experience through tools, the eye indeed is a tool. As the voiceover states "I am my world. The border of my language is the border of my world."

The mirror manifests in multiple forms; twin girls separated by glass; the episode of depersonalization in front of a mirror; a chemical formulation in a laboratory; the psychoanalyst's couch. The film itself is viewed through a window within the gallery space. Sound and image are disconnected where the space of the projection is not the space for viewing. While a certain duplicity exists, of what we see and don't see, what is obscured by the image and the nuances of perception prevail. As the voiceover states "Everything we see could be something else. Everything we can describe could be something else." Here the blind spot operates both metaphorically and physically. Within the projection space there is a mirror, and yet one's reflection is obscured. The canon of modernity, in which knowledge can be captured and enclosed, is problematized with the disjuncture between presence and the reflected image. The link between belief and perception untangles..."We do not belong to the world, rather our gaze draws a limit to it."

For Montaron the link between modernity and technology, between the body and the mind, perception and belief systems, and their inaccuracies, exposes the role of tools in conceptions of time and space, in our understanding and very being in the world.

—Georgina Jackson

Presented in collaboration with the Toronto International Film Festival as part of their 'Future Projections' series and in partnership with the Consulate General of France in Toronto.

tiff.



1. This performance occurred three times on Thursday 17th, Friday 18th and Saturday 19th November as part of *Performa 11* (2011).
 2. Marshall McLuhan, *The Medium is the Message*, (Penguin Books: London), 1967, 8.
 3. Daniel Baumann and Laurent Montaron, "Interview," in *Laurent Montaron*, (les presses du réel, Dijon), edited by Nathalie Erginio and Laurent Montaron, 120.



Aryen Hoekstra, *Choreography for Screen* (production still), slide projection, 2014

New technologies are often instruments of forgetting—for the most part, about why you once thought it was a good idea to use whatever technology preceded it. Think about this the next time you glance at your TV set gathering dust in the corner. Along with the resentment that lingers about the cost of past cable bills comes a twinge of embarrassment about the inconvenience of "appointment viewing", as it's now referred to, having to be at home at a specific hour to, say, watch the latest episode of *Seinfeld*. This, the encompassing rightness of the technologies we adapt to, is what McLuhan meant by "the medium is the message."

Within a culture that acclimatizes so readily to technological change, artists can take on a particular role, that of the forensic investigator of "past" mediums. This is a way of reflecting on how any medium can have the ability to fully captivate our attention. Aryen Hoekstra's *Choreography for Screen* (2014) undertakes a close examination of the apparatus of cinema. For Hoekstra artwork is a means to speculate about the cultural significance of film, its authority and why it has the power to affect us. To do this, he proposes uses for the film camera and the film still that are not immediately apparent. Instead, these 'tools' of the medium are hybridized within the circumstances and space of an exhibition.

Film, of course, is not necessarily a past medium so much as one supplemented by the digital to the extent that, as a specific technology, it is less and less necessary. Hoekstra explicitly acknowledges this contemporary status of film by looking at the apparatus through the lens of its cultural peak: Hollywood as it is remembered from its classic era in the 1930s and 40s. The artist chooses to focus on the image of Fred Astaire, as an icon of cinematic elegance that readily evokes the era.

Beyond his use of Astaire as a metonym for cinema, Hoekstra proposes a further meaning accruing to the star. The films of that period, *You'll Never Get Rich* (1941) and *Holiday Inn* (1942) among others, helped motivate audiences to become war ready—in their collective mind if not through an actual deployment to the battlefield. To make this connection, the artist asks us to take into account the culture as a whole

during the time of Astaire's fame. Underpinning the historical moment that produces Astaire as a cinematic idol is a country that is seeing its young men getting shipped overseas for combat.

Hoekstra suggests the analogies are direct. Astaire's choreographies mimic the logic of troop movements. Dance step precision equals the disciplined corps of the military in action. This characterization has often been made; that Hollywood film functioned as a tool of mass distraction, an indirect form of propaganda during wartime. Hoekstra pushes the idea further. Instead of presenting, say, a film essay about these ideas, he presents film technology broken down into some of the functions it can perform. The choreography of the work's title helps explain the decisions he makes with the work.

For instance, a film loop of a black sequined material seen in extreme close-up isolates the way the camera lens enhances the eye's ability to look at an object in detail; the camera allows us to see differently from what can be observed with the naked eye. As well, its framing function can allow the object in focus to work metaphorically. Becoming the context of what we see, the camera frame allows the sequined material to stand in for something else. Hoekstra creates the circumstances to suggest the sequins are like a topographical map, or a landscape surveyed at nighttime from the vantage point of an airplane.

In close proximity to the film loop is a slide projection in which a succession of views break down an image of Astaire, from illusionistic whole to fragmented abstract picture. The sequence reveals the image for what it is: mere light projected through a celluloid semblance of a known thing. Connecting to this film/war amalgam are eight drawings Hoekstra has made of curved arrows. These are rendered in the light-absorbent material known as Cinefoil, a malleable matte black aluminum that is typically used in film shoots to mask the camera and prevent light leaks. Hoekstra's drawings directly conflate dance and troop movements, but only in a notational fashion. Finally, four wooden "hat-rack" poles complete the scenario, inferring human presence within the artist's *mise en scene*.

Together, choices the artist has made regarding shifts in scale, selective framing, notational drawing, metaphorical suggestion and sculptural array, all help to position gallery visitors and their physical encounter with the work. His choreography of the screen directs viewer movement as a progression of material thinking, each gap in understanding resolved through the process of navigating the installation. Consider exactly how the two, body and mind, are indivisible and you get the poitic of this work.

—Rosemary Heather