



THE MAINLANDER

Eccentric, Polymorphous, Abstract: Vancouver Art and other Mythologies of the Near-Future

Andrew Witt / January 14, 2017



Installation view of Alison Yip, *Gazebo*, 2016, site-specific mural at the Vancouver Art Gallery produced for *Vancouver Special: Ambivalent Pleasures* Photo: Rachel Topham, Vancouver Art Gallery

In the central rotunda of the Vancouver Art Gallery, Alison Yip has constructed a mural of a ruined gazebo. Rendered in *trompe l'oeil*, Yip's *Gazebo* (2016) is a scene sensed at twilight. Occupied by skunks, foxes, overgrown weeds, garden tools, and a raft of mythological figures, her vision is steeped in a strange mingling of dream, nature and everyday domesticity – reminiscent

of the murals in Robert Altman’s unnerving film, *3 Women* (1977). In one panel, the side profile of a figure is composed from an array of cleaning tools; another pictures a long garden hose snaking across a lurid yellow ground, spurting water erratically. Yip’s gazebo is no west coast arcadia, where nature is imagined to exist in a harmonious relation to its subjects. In fact, the central figure of *Gazebo* is the veiled goddess Themis, the blind goddess of Justice, whose furtive presence suggests a persistent and speculative haunting.

Acting as a portal between the first floor and the second floor, Yip’s *Gazebo* functions as the architectural keystone for the VAG’s triennial exhibition *Vancouver Special: Ambivalent Pleasures* (Dec 3, 2016 – April 17, 2017). Curated by VAG Chief Curator, Daina Augaitis, and 221a’s Head of Strategy, Jesse McKee, *Ambivalent Pleasures* surveys the different streams of contemporary art produced in Vancouver over the past five years. Including forty locally based artists, and occupying the entire first floor of the gallery, the exhibition is formally ambitious in its scope, vision and outlook.



Installation view of works by Tamara Henderson, *The Scarecrow's Holiday*, 2015 (foreground), *The Drought*, 2015 (left) and *Inherited Breath*, 2016 (background), in *Vancouver Special: Ambivalent Pleasures*, exhibition at the Vancouver Art Gallery, December 3, 2016 to April 17, 2017

Yip’s gazebo brings us to the central pivot of the exhibition, Tamara Henderson’s grotesque fluorescent figure, *The Scarecrow’s Holiday* (2015). Whether you turn left or right when exiting the rotunda, either encountering Rebecca Brewer’s felt works (left) or Maya Beaudry’s soft sculptures

light), the exhibition emphasizes an eccentric and erratic reworking of the structures, tropes, and languages of formal abstraction.

This forceful defense of the potentials of abstraction is foregrounded in Charlene Vickers's vivid watercolor tapestry *Accumulations of Moments Spent Underwater with the Sun and Moon* (2015-16), Tiziana La Melia's curious biomorphic reliefs *Buff Reflections* (2015), and Arvo Leo's *Anthill Sculpture* (2003).

A question should be posed, however, when coming to terms with the general thrust of *Ambivalent Pleasures*: What is at stake in the survival of abstraction's excesses and eccentricities?

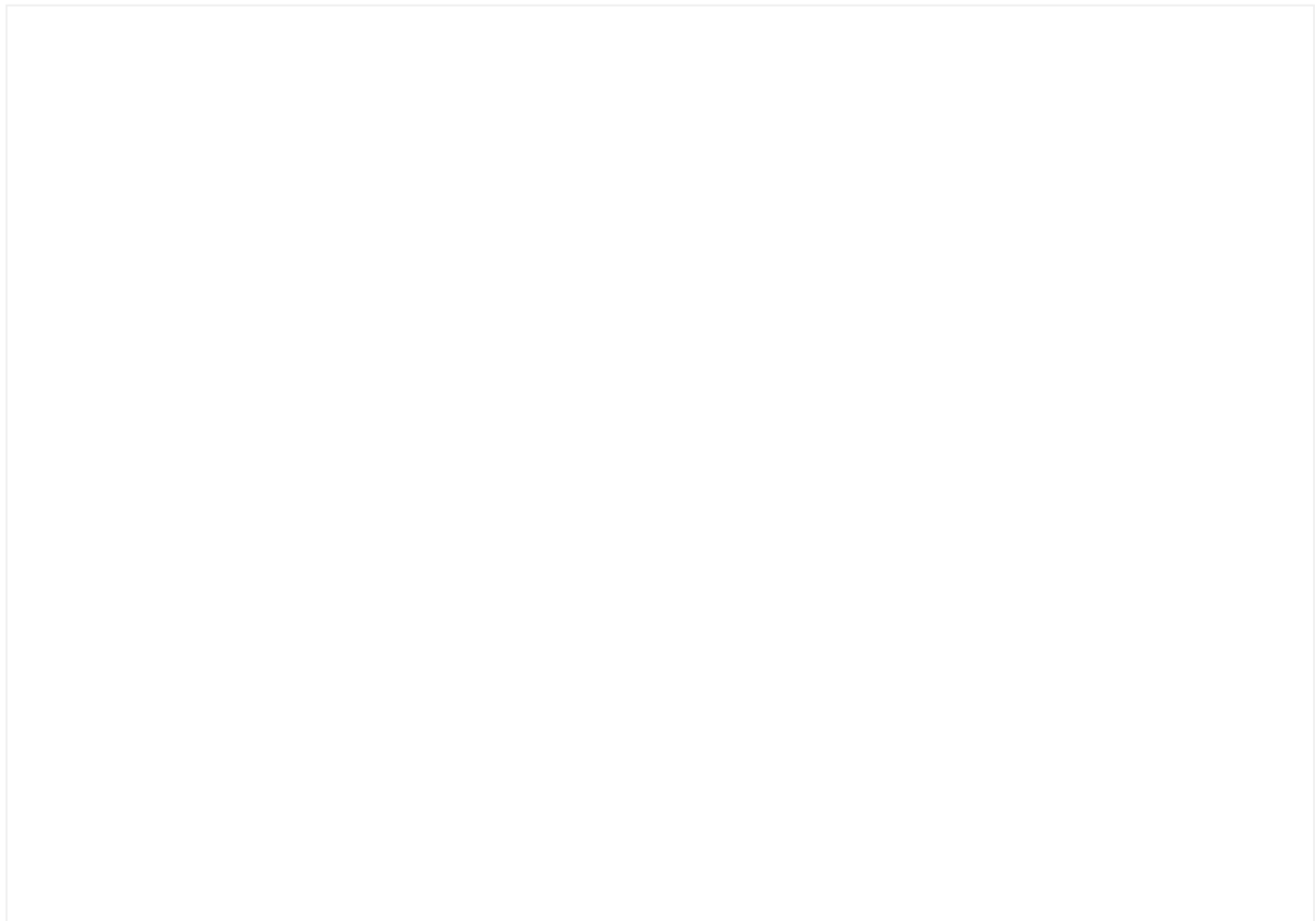


Charlene Vickers, *Accumulations of Moments Spent Underwater with the Sun and Moon*, 2015-16, watercolour, gouache, pencil crayon on paper, Courtesy of the Artist, Photo: Trevor Mills, Vancouver Art Gallery

Considering one of the strongest aesthetic currents of *Ambivalent Pleasures* is the emphasis on formal abstraction, it might be necessary to qualify and describe what type of abstraction is at play here. When encountering the work of Colleen Heslin, Jordan Milner, Barry Doupé, Krista Belle Stewart and the many others included in the exhibition, one could, perhaps, lump their work into a conversation about twentieth century geometric abstraction – a conversation that could include a collection of artists and works, such as the chance constructions of Hans Arp, the theosophical paintings of Hilma af Klint, or the more vivid colour fields of Helen Frankenthaler (all fellow travellers of a sort). And yet, when read in our current cultural climate, I feel that this

Historic descriptor of ‘geometric’ belies the complexity of these forms, especially when they are premised on unraveling and pulling away at the hard lines of geometry. Perhaps it might be better to describe the works as uniquely polymorphous.[1] This is certainly the case in the work of Henderson, Brewer, Vickers, Yip and La Melia. In the eccentric paintings, objects and reliefs of these five artists, color is mobilized as a transformative material – a material that holds the capacity to shift and move, where its formal substance cedes to its material unraveling. In his 2009 book *What Color is the Sacred?*, Michael Taussig has described this property as color’s “polymorphous magical substance.” This type of colour holds the capacity to transform the bodies it inhabits. He describes this property as a “medium that floats like the breath of dying sun,” a type of color that signals both a unique act and art of seeing.

In the same breath, it is also difficult not to think of the polymorphous capacities of color simply as matching the spectrum of readymade colors available in the painting aisle of Home Depot. Almost twenty years ago, T.J. Clark observed this in his analysis of the work of Hans Hofmann and its relation to the picture-buying classes of America. “A good Hofmann,” Clark wrote, “has to have a surface somewhere between ice cream, chocolate, stucco and flock wallpaper. Its colors have to reek of Nature – of the worst kind of Woolworth-forest-glade-with-waterfall-and-thunderstorm-brewing.” For painting to continue in the post-war period, Clark writes, its feelings had to be fetishized, the excessive self-fashioning of the bourgeois interior was dramatically exteriorized through readymade colors and forms.





Hans Hofmann, "And, Out of the Caves, The Night Threw a Handful of Pale Tumbling Pigeons in the the Light," 1964, oil on canvas, Courtesy of University of California Berkeley Art Museum and Pacific Film Archive, Berkeley.

The emphasis on the eccentric qualities of abstraction has its precedent in art history, namely Lucy Lippard's 1966 exhibition *Eccentric Abstraction* (1966). In Lippard's formulation, the attempt was to "blur boundaries" of art history, between minimalism and something more "sensuous and sensual." [2]

The eccentric, excessive and polymorphic vocabulary of abstraction is certainly at work with Henderson's sculptural program. Before their staging in *Ambivalent Pleasures*, a grouping of these objects and accompanying films (made in collaboration with Julia Feyrer), were included in the Morris and Helen Belkin Art Gallery exhibition, *The Last Waves* (September 6 – December 10, 2016). Henderson and Feyrer's films fabricate a world of strange objects, inexplicable contraptions, and unnerving subjects. Their world figures a world transformed – a world where solid objects appear reworked and materials are continually displaced as if by magic. In Henderson and Feyrer's still-lives, for instance, we are witness to a parade of sensuality: objects are wrested from their shell and infused with vivid color, fruits gain the capacity to speak, and metals and earthenware exude a sense of life-like resplendent jewels. As knowing savants of the genre, Henderson and Feyrer attend to the strangeness of the still-life as enigma, without doing away with the fundamental strangeness that is constitutive of this enigma. On this aspect of incantation and transubstantiation, the two artists advance a new training of the eye, which seems to expand outwards proprioceptively (with one's entire body). This expansion, moreover, not only brings about an enlivened sensuous economy (polymorphous perhaps), but a changed and otherworldly temporal order as well.



Julia Feyrer and Tamara Henderson, *Bottles Under the Influence* (still), 2012. 16mm film.

In this iteration, Henderson and Feyrer's work resembles a type of a science-fiction of the present, in a similar way that J.G. Ballard argued for a science fiction of the next five minutes.[3] This is not a science fiction of the far future – a science fiction of other planets, other galaxies,

and other times – but a science fiction of the speculative present. In a short 1984 manifesto, “What I believe,” Ballard claimed that the modern world in which we live produces new myths and new fantasies. Ballard’s speculative temporality estranges time from its accepted historical chronology. In its alien and disenchanted form time holds the capacity to ricochet and refract in on itself, like the play of light within a luminous crystal.



Julia Feyrer and Tamara Henderson. *The Last Waves*, 2016. Installation view, Morris and Helen Belkin Art Gallery. Photo: Michael R. Barrick.

Recourse to magic, more specifically the transformative properties of fermentation, is also most visible in Derya Akay’s *cyclodrum, potbound & soup from stone* (2016). Fermentation suggests a type of witchcraft of everyday life, where one substance morphs into another. This difference is most notable in the distinction between ‘raw’ vs. ‘cooked’ things – a difference between the food that has fallen from the tree, so to speak, and the consumables that have been made by human hand. Unexpectedly, we seem to have returned here again to the genre of the still-life, a genre where the distinction between those things made by human hand and those things which are made by nature is thrown into stark relief.



Installation view of Derya Akay, *cyclodrum, courage, bread, and roses, culture and tomatoes*, 2015–16, in *Vancouver Special: Ambivalent Pleasures*, exhibition at the Vancouver Art Gallery, December 3, 2016 to April 17, 2017

In the history of art, the ground of the still-life is placed spatially and cognitively in opposition to a ‘higher’ or ‘elevated’ discourse of culture. According to Norman Bryson’s theorization of the genre, the still-life is part of the quotidian, trivial, forgettable work of everyday life – what can be understood as the ‘low-plane’ of reality – in contrast to those scenes which are founded on the momentous events of politics, history or nature. “The hand which balances the formal composition,” Bryson writes, “is also able to reach out and make tea; no fundamental discontinuity of levels opposes art to the ordinary gestures of living.”[4]

When read in relation to the other half of the exhibition’s title – ‘pleasure’ – the term polymorphous seems an apt descriptor and guide in contrast to the term ‘ambivalent.’ In his *Three Essays on the Theory of Sexuality* (1905), Sigmund Freud spoke of a type of pleasure that was “polymorphously perverse” – a type of pleasure not attained by ‘normative’ channels or means. This form of pleasure, Freud writes, first develops during the infantile stage and symptomatically persists throughout life. In the turn towards the polymorphous, the physical and psychological effects of this condition seems chaotic, beholden to a delirious dissemination of eros.

A capacious and polymorphous conception of pleasure is certainly marshaled in Elizabeth McIntosh’s paintings. In the three works featured in the exhibition, McIntosh’s canvases appear to blur the boundaries between genres of the nude and still-life. In the central canvas, *With The Moon Under My Arm* (2015), McIntosh’s headless blue nude appears dynamically posed between a

moon that rests alongside her arm and the coffee table which her body emerges out of, like an apparition. The single breast that hangs over the coffee table is formally echoed in the centre of the picture, where another breast (perhaps half-moon) has suddenly materialized.



Elizabeth McIntosh, *With The Moon Under My Arm*, 2015, Flashe and oil on canvas, Courtesy of the artist.

McIntosh's headless nude – if we can call it that – seems to be aligned to the post-war reimagining of the body as part-object. Psychoanalyst Jacques Lacan argued that the infant's subjectivity is formed by the primary identification with the parts of the body in which the infant is exposed (the mother's gaze and breast are two examples here). Melanie Klein took this argument one step further and argued that identification was closely linked to a form of incorporation and internalization. At this particular level, the part-objects of body oscillates on the valence of 'good' and 'bad' as it processed internally. As art historians Mignon Nixon and Helen Molesworth have shown in their discussions of the psychoanalysis of Klein and the work

of Louise Bourgeois, Eva Hesse and Marcel Duchamp, the survival of the artwork as part-object – penis, breast, buttocks – reconfigures the artistic subject (and artwork) as aggressive and defiant, in contrast to traditional conceptions of the gendered subject as passive and docile.

And again, geometric these works are not. To rework a phrase from the Situationists's project of 'psycho-geography,' the work featured in this exhibition are much closer to a type of 'psycho-geometry' – a trans-media reworking of traditional artistic genres as a psychic and speculative endeavor. Considering many of the artists included in *Ambivalent Pleasures* work in textiles, felt and other materials, a theorization of their work should include a discussion of touch and tactility, not only gesture and facture. Their mode of abstraction is an abstraction that involves not only optics, but also a revived notion of haptics.[5] By no means is this an unthinking defense of the picture's metaphysics or esoteric possibilities, but a discussion that requires us to rethink the powers, potentials and capacities of abstraction, especially at our contemporary moment when the discussion has reached a perceived impasse.

And yet, when we read the wall panels and listen to the video interviews with the curators and artists in the exhibition, it seems all that is at stake is a triumphalist "return" to painting. Instead of pushing the consequences of their reworking of genre and support, there is a persistent desire to defend these artworks as paintings. At times, the defense of the medium seems appropriate (like in McIntosh's work), but at other moments the discussion appears regressive and entirely evacuated of any depth or rigor. The persistent defense of painting, and a conversation about its return seems tiring and vacuous. Instead of advancing a new set of terms, the discussion continually lapses into a regressive mode, as if the twentieth century had never happened.

In the contemporary cultural climate of Vancouver, which has been dominated locally and internationally by 'photo conceptualism' (a term that is just as inadequate in its current usage), McIntosh and her younger contemporaries – like Brewer, Heslin and Henderson – are often denied the status of thought. It is often said that abstraction inspires a type of "will to silence," to use Rosalind Krauss's formulation – a rejection of language, theory, and discourse. Conventional wisdom either frames abstraction as unthinking (i.e. dumb), or ineffable. These two positions seem disingenuous and reactionary, and deny the artwork the capacity for theoretical speculation, a type of speculation that holds the potential to propose new paradigms and forms-of-thought.

In opposition to conventional wisdom, the artwork should be approached as a singular mode of theory. Treating the artwork as theory re-orientates our encounter and opens up the artwork to interpretation often denied it by contemporary art history, criticism and theory. Approaching the artwork imminently, as theory, instead of superimposing theory on the artwork from the outside, feels more apt and adept as a means to maneuver through contemporary art's contradictions,

Questions and blind spots. The trend in art criticism to impose theory on the artwork from the outside – whether that be speculative philosophy, object-oriented ontology, or a whole raft of other popular philosophical positions – resigns itself to received categories and questions, and lacks the improvisational capacity to adapt to the demands the artwork places on the viewer.



Rebecca Brewer, Installation view, *The Holding Sky*, 2016, Courtesy of the artist and Catriona Jeffries Gallery, 2016

In her discussion of involuntary memory, Rebecca Brewer has made this the conceptual support of her most recent works in felt. The source material for her paintings are the drawings male artists have made of young women, most specifically sensed in the work of Hans Bellmer, Lewis Carroll and Balthus. In Brewer's felt abstractions and her paintings most recently on display at the Catriona Jeffries Gallery (12 November – 17 December, 2016), the artwork operates with a vision of a memory impossible to access by direct and conscious means. Brewer describes this type of vision as the experience of catching sight for the first time a picture one has never seen before, and yet, paradoxically, one recognizes as though they have remembered it from a previous existence. As a unique instance of involuntary memory, the artwork represents a peculiar afterlife of this seemingly impossible memory.

The survivals and afterlives of memory at work in Brewer's abstractions also appear to surface, in a different valence, with the work of Gareth James, Raymond Boisjoly and Arvo Leo. Whether it is James's speculative monuments, Boisjoly's fugitive scans, or Leo's involuntary sculpture, each work appears intent on unraveling peculiar afterlives. On this aspect of 'afterlife,' the exhibition builds on art historian Aby Warburg's notion of *nachleben*, the afterlife of images, the ways in

which images of the past survive and haunt the present. In contrast to discussions of influence or rebirth, the afterlife of an image – its survival – is an image that returns in an untimely way, somewhat like a ghost, often unexpectedly at moments of crisis.[6]



Raymond Boisjoly, *Author's Preface*, 2015, ink jet prints, wheat paste, Courtesy of the Artist and Catriona Jeffries Gallery, Photo: Aurélien Mole, Triangle France

For *Author's Preface* (2015), Boisjoly has played Maya Deren's film on Haitian voodoo, *Divine Horsemen: The Living Gods Of Haiti* (1985), on an iPad and processed the image through an image scanner. As the film plays while the scan records the image, and since the scanner does not record the image instantaneously, the image appears to evade the scan. As a result, the series of prints read not as direct facsimiles, but a work beset by glitches and blind spots. The artist has called his scans 'fugitive images,' a type of image that attempts to out-run the scanner's reproductive technology. Although premised on tarrying between states of legibility and illegibility, the work seems needlessly cluttered with its textual supplement, a choice that seems to diminish the power and efficacy of the sequence. A comparison can be made, here, between Boisjoly's two other projects made by similar means – his re-working of Alain Resnais and Chris Marker's *Statues Also Die* (1953) and Kent MacKenzie's *The Exiles* (1961) – where the image sequence stands alone as a singular series, without textual supplement



Raymond Boisjoly, Installation view, *From age to age, as its shape slowly unraveled...* VOX Centre de l'image contemporain, Montreal, 2015

Despite the vivid and polymorphic thrust of the exhibition, when confronting the exhibition's title, one is first confronted with a rather uninspiring question: *What makes Vancouver art so 'ambivalent'?* On the surface, 'ambivalence' represents a safe, affectless middle-ground – a subjective position posed against two contrasting sentiments both universally spurned today: *enthusiasm* for the existing state of the things or, *negativity* towards its violence. The ambivalent modality represents a double bind of sorts: too enthusiastic, you might be critiqued for thoughtlessly acquiescing to the given state of the world, blindly affirming the very conditions that make it so difficult to produce art in Vancouver (threat of evictions, the affordability crisis, disappearing cultural space); whereas, too negative and critical, you might be labeled a curmudgeon, unsupportive of experimental art and advanced culture in the city. To the curators of *Vancouver Special*, ambivalence signifies a cool cynical distance – neither too critical nor too enthusiastic (a 'guilty pleasure' perhaps) – a position oscillating between these two poles neither strongly affirming one or the other.

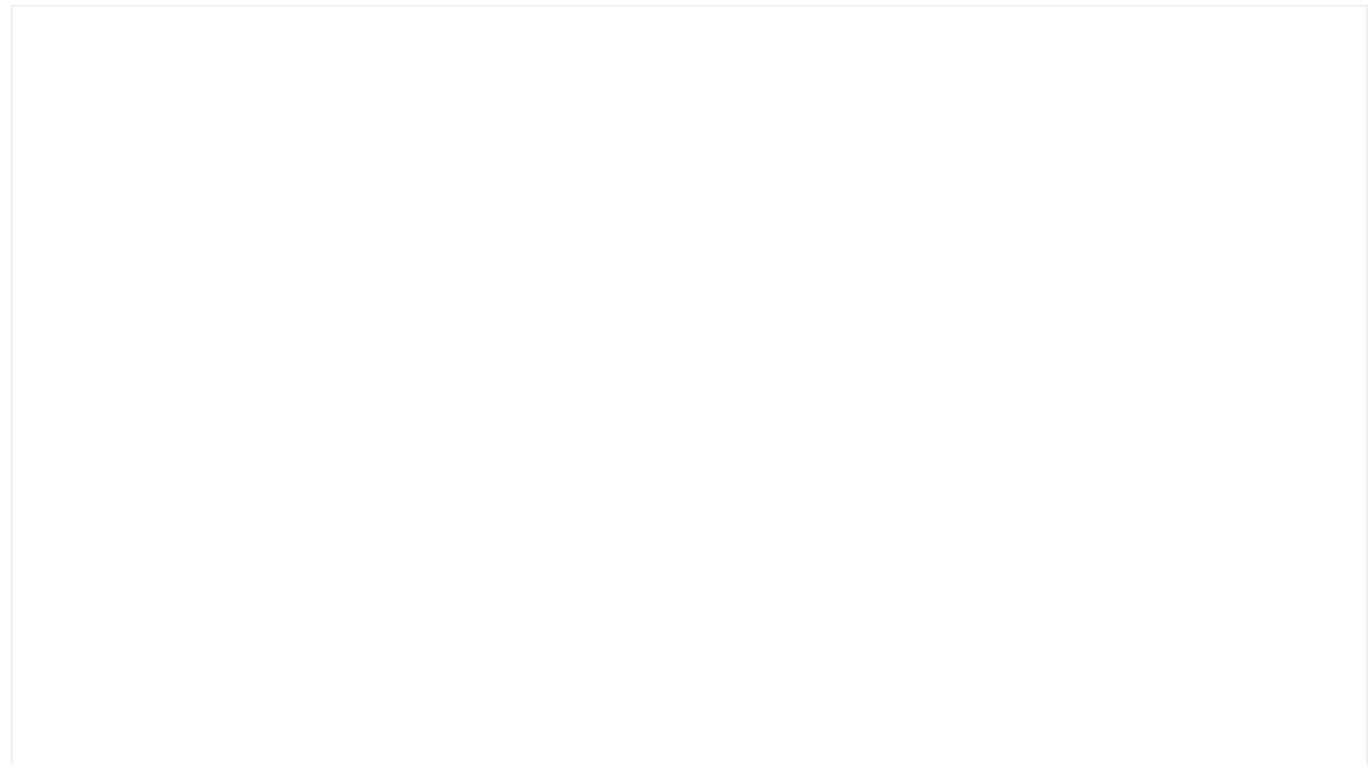
Ambivalence represents neither an aesthetic category nor an historical descriptor, but rather a subjective position – a position, we are told, that most artists have towards this city. Undoubtedly such a position holds sway in the present situation, but yet it falls short in marshaling an interpretative scaffolding – sentiment does nothing to illuminate the work's formal vocabulary, its social power, its historical import or political agency.

Regardless of whether all forty of these artists share this sentiment or not, if we were to square the concept against the works arranged for the exhibition, ambivalence does little to help

navigate or orientate our encounter with the exhibition (ditto to the word ‘pleasure’). Generally speaking, this is usually the case with any discussion of attitudes or sentiments. Hal Foster has addressed this problem in his most recent book *Bad New Days* (2015). “Where we once spoke of ‘quality,’ then of ‘interest,’ and then ‘criticality,’” Foster writes, “we now look for pathos, which cannot be tested objectively or communicated with others much at all: one person’s *punctum* is another’s yawn.” A ‘yawn,’ needless to say, is certainly not an aesthetic response one desperately searches out on a Tuesday afternoon alongside other waffling feelings, like ambivalence.

The choice of pleasure, of course, is a tricky concept to affirm in our generally disaffected culture. As the story goes, the private life of modern subjects is often the oscillation between long periods of empty homogeneous time of routinized work and activity, and moments of explosive overstimulation by spectacles, drugs, and one-night stands. Modern romance, when mediated through apps like Tinder, Bumble, or Grindr simply fits into the general structure of modern experience, which places emphasis on abrupt intensity in place of meaningful duration. In the endless statistics and polls about sexual fantasies and practices, modern subjects learn to regulate their bodies, construct their fantasies, measure themselves against the average, and take the fleeting intensity of a midnight encounter as the criterion of the good life. The dominant mode of discipline today is the injunction to enjoy.

In a contemporary culture where traditional forms of love, pleasure and partnership are both undergoing expansion and contraction by the forces of the political left and right, the necessity to question and defend both ‘old’ and ‘new’ conceptions of pleasure feels like an urgent task today. This is especially the case when encountering the forces of contemporary culture that wholeheartedly encourage the deadening conditions of alienation, anomie, and fragmentation.





Tiziana La Melia *Buff Reflections*, 2015, water-jet cut aluminum, LED lights, Courtesy of the artist, Photo: Robert Wedemeyer, Courtesy of Ghebaly Gallery

This particular critique shifts slightly when thinking through the other terms offered up by the curatorial team of *Ambivalent Pleasures*. Augaitis and McKee argue that in the art of the past five years there has been a renewed interest in the artistic legacy of surrealism, abstraction and conceptualism. All fine and good, but these three terms in their current iteration appear impoverished, if not inadequately defined. A conversation about abstraction, for instance, feels too imprecise when thinking through the relations between Rebecca Brewer or Tamara Henderson, Colleen Heslin or Charlene Vickers, Raymond Boisjoly or Sylvain Saily, incapable of unifying the shared trajectory between these artists while simultaneously addressing their divergent course.



Colleen Heslin, *Waste not /want not*, 2016, dye on linen, Courtesy of the Artist and Monte Clark Gallery

Photo: Rachel Topham, Vancouver Art Gallery

Likewise, recourse to the artistic afterlives of surrealism – whether grotesque or marvelous – feels far removed, socially and politically, from the aesthetic coordinates and conditions of inter-war Europe. Of course, any analysis that attempts to read the formal inventions of surrealism or abstraction against the cultural climate of the period could make for a convincing case. And yet, when encountering the curatorial program for *Ambivalent Pleasures*, we are continually left in the waiting room of history. In the case of surrealism, one could, perhaps, make comparisons

between responses to the rise of fascism in Europe in the inter-war period and the rise of fascism in North America and Europe today. Productive parallels might also be made when thinking through the experiences of exile in the lead up to the Second World War and the current migrant crisis. Regretfully, in its current usage, surrealism is merely understood as a formal problem, not a social force or historical predicament.

This particular problem is exemplified when reading the essays commissioned for the exhibition catalogue. The writings included in catalogue can be categorized under the rubric of art writing. And as successful and compelling these essay may read, they also come across as separate artworks onto themselves, not works of history or criticism which help orientate historical understanding or reimagine an enlivened interpretative framework. One essay published in the catalogue, Andrew Berardini's "Twelve Romantic Encounters," seems better placed in the VAG's 1986 exhibition, *Young Romantics* rather than this contemporary survey. The inclusion of Berardini's essay seems even more curious if we are to consider that not a single artwork from the exhibition is discussed in his essay. In the wholesale drift away from the discussion of actual artworks, and the general movement away from the problems of art criticism, there is a need to construct and shepherd new interpretive paradigms amidst the outmoded ruins of the old. Writing should not turn away from the discussion of actual artworks, but rather attempt to understand the demands the artwork places on the viewer.

Dinner table critiques of large surveys like *Ambivalent Pleasures* almost always seem to revolve around those who were excluded at the cost of those who were included. And yet, a debate over this-or-that person, at the expense of this-or-that other person, seems false and petty when compared with the larger conceptual problems at the heart of *Ambivalent Pleasures*. A larger issue, perhaps, is the lack of formal diversity between artists. When other media and forms are deployed, such as Glenn Lewis's photo-pot series and Mina Totino's large abstractions, the comparative move feels forced and rings hollow. Perhaps this is a problem not with the artists themselves, but the works chosen for the exhibition. It is too often the case that the works fail to complement one another. When obvious formal relations are forced, such as the fluorescently vivid room of Angela Teng and Maya Beaudry, the comparison precipitates a type of visual exhaustion (continually repeated throughout the exhibition), rather than dilate any sort of enthusiasm for their relationship. The singular strength of the exhibition – its emphasis on formal abstraction – threatens to become its general weakness.

The exhibition's disavowal of the critical capacities of the social and the mnemonic, in particular the dialectics of memory and critique, appears misplaced. These two modes of critique offer a valuable retort to the forces of contemporary society founded on the amnesic formations of spectacle, control and consumption – three symptomatic conditions that have been tied to the destruction of historical memory in the present. In the case of Vancouver, and the specific case of Chinatown and the Downtown Eastside, where low-income and long-term residents are being

displaced at an alarming rate, and where entire neighborhoods are currently being rezoned, demolished and redeveloped for upscale restaurants, boutiques and condos, a thorough critique of the general conditions of spectacle, control and consumption seems a most urgent task.[7]

It was only three years ago that the fragmentary construction *GESAMT KUNST WERK* was emblazoned on a downtown building as an ostentatious condo advertisement and unofficial city slogan. No doubt, the construction of the city as work of art has been at play for some time, and it is only now, in a hyper-inflated market that the city-as-artwork has become the *raison d'être* of the urban form itself. Theorists and curators in Vancouver, however, have not adequately dealt with the social consequences of our moment. And even though social and political critique is by no means the artwork's singular task, its absence from *Ambivalent Pleasures* reads as a missed opportunity.

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ENDNOTES

[1] Briony Fer, "Inventing Abstraction," *Artforum* (Summer 2013), 346-347

[2] The exhibition included artists Louise Bourgeois, Eva Hesse, Alice Adams, Bruce Nauman, Keith Sonnier, Gary Kuehn, Don Potts and Frank Lincoln Viner. Art historian Jo Applin has mapped the importance of this exhibition in reconsidering the sculptural object in the 1960s. See Jo Applin, *Eccentric Objects: Rethinking Sculpture in the 1960s* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2012). On Lucy Lippard's 1966 exhibition see Lucy Lippard, "Eccentric Abstraction," *Art International*, 10: 9 (20 November 1966), 28, 34-40, reprinted in Lucy Lippard, *Changing: Essays in Art Criticism* (New York: E.P. Dutton & Co, 1971)

[3] JG Ballard, "What I believe," *Uncollected Works* accessed July 7, 2016, http://www.jgballard.ca/uncollected_work/what_i_believe.html

[4] Norman Bryson, *Looking at the Overlooked: Four Essays on Still-Life Painting* (Reaktion Books: London, 1990), 165

[5] Fer, "Inventing Abstraction," 347

[6] Georges Didi-Huberman, *Atlas, How to Carry the World on One's Back?* (Madrid: Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofia, 2010)

B Benjamin H.D. Buchloh is one of the strongest critics of the amnesic formations of spectacle. See his two influential works of art criticism: Benjamin H.D. Buchloh, *Neo-Avantgarde and the Culture Industry: Essays on European and American Art from 1955 to 1975* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2000); and Benjamin H.D. Buchloh, *Formalism and Historicity: Models and Methods in Twentieth-Century Art* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2015)

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