

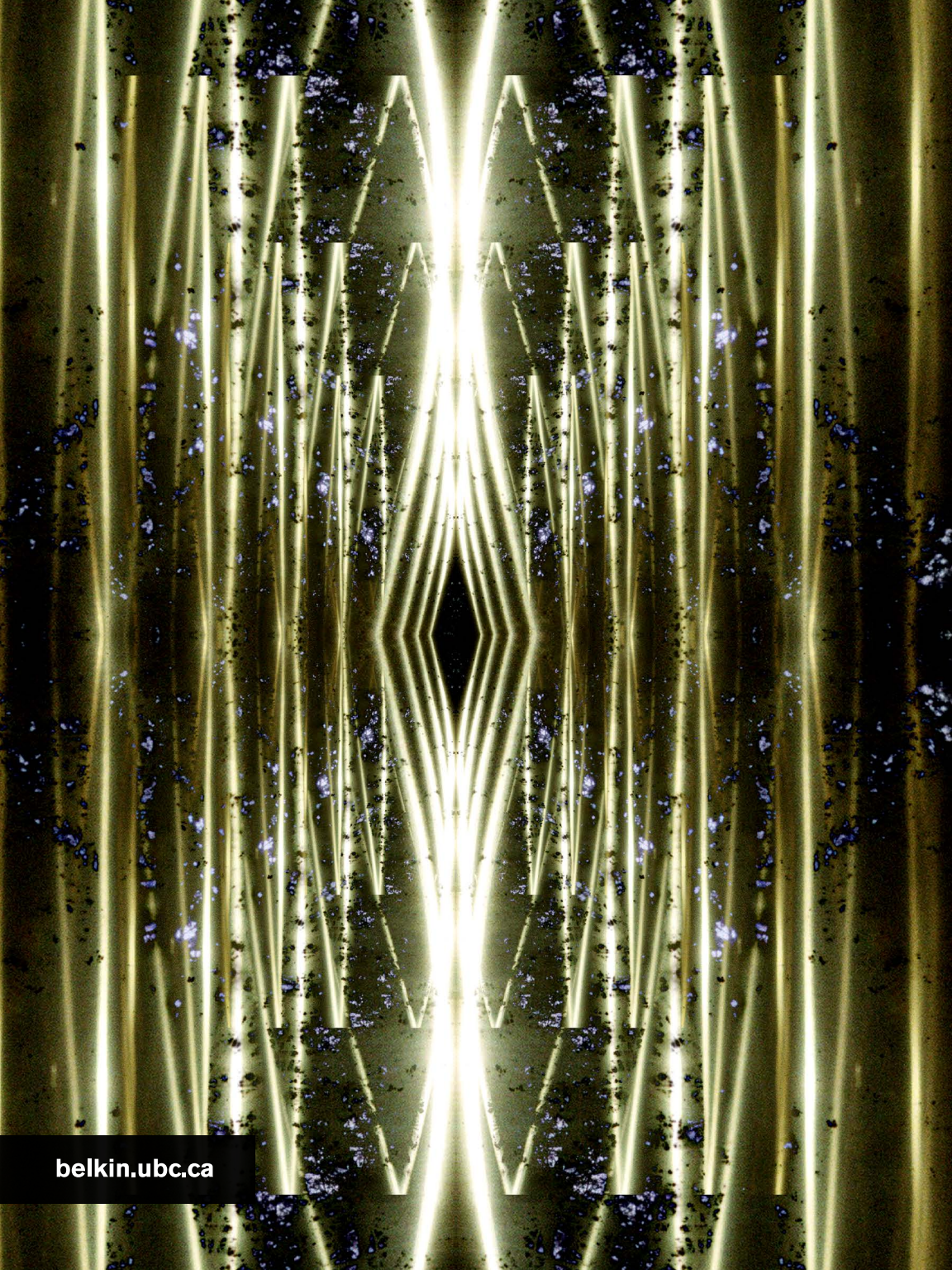


PROTEAN LATTICE

UBC Master of Fine Arts Exhibition

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Russell Gordon
Romi Kim
Hannah Möller
Ido Radon
Arti Struyanskiy



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Introduction

Marina Roy

“To be entangled is not simply to be intertwined with another, as in the joining of separate entities, but to lack an independent, self-contained existence. Existence is not an individual affair. Individuals do not pre-exist their interactions; rather, individuals emerge through and as part of their entangled intra-relating.”¹

Protean lattice. These combined words have a bit of a talismanic ring to them, evoking something at once ancient and “to come” (*à venir*).

One might imagine a hybrid network, shapeshifting, having the ability to carry out any number of specialized, absurd or unknown functions. (For what is life for, after all? What is the point of its unregulated expression?)

One might imagine something in the realm of that living fungal text which was found scrawling itself along the wall in that sunken tower in Area X.²

To be sure, the title sets the tone. It is the first filter that the viewer crosses through, before encountering a gathering of artworks, each *radically* different in artistic approach. Radically, as in “at their root.” (Don’t get me wrong; this does not fix things once and for all. Once one enters, everything shifts.)

Over time, as roots find themselves proximate to the roots of another, a mycorrhizal network may come to join them. This happens subvisibly, underground, automatically, as different living organisms, that have come to live side by side, send out signals, exchange nutrients, living symbiotically. The earth is their aether.

But for the longest time so many roots were ignored. Trees cut down. Indigenous wilderness management ignored. Because certain knowledge systems were considered insignificant. The colonizer unable to fathom a convergence of paths, favouring the nobility of invasion and exploitation instead. And so, and so... Now, after all of this time has passed, after the genocides, the traumas, the resistances... the extractivism, the bingeing, the pine beetles spreading, the difficulty of climbing out of this disaster-capitalist trap.

Who or what will inherit the earth? What will be inherited exactly?

(But I have let these thoughts run too far ahead, latching onto the connotative, before attending to the denotative.)

Protean. This word speaks of variability and adaptability, and shares its root with the name of the Greek sea god Proteus, who could change his form at will, or assume different shapes. This god's name is derived from *proto-* meaning earliest form, first source, original, basic. It is the basis for all difference. It is perhaps similar to what is studied in morphology: how the structure of an organism comes to branch off evolutionarily resulting in other variations on a type. The same could be said for the evolution of words across eras and geographies.

Lattice. As in lathe. As in wood plank or board. Something living becoming thing. A building-block. To support new life. A part of a greater whole. In ordinary parlance, a lattice is a crisscrossing of laths (slats of wood) to create a support onto which something grows, onto which things attach. More commonly, a scaffolding for plants. One life form has been sacrificed for the other in order for the latter to proliferate.

A lattice offers the possibility of climbing vertically, but also horizontally; but then why not diagonally as well? One could imagine a lattice of n dimensions in fact. There is nothing in the definition that limits the expression, the form.

Can a wall be a kind of lattice? Or does it have such potential only when it reaches a state of ruin; when more-than-human lifeforms are allowed to crawl in, reside and proliferate? It requires multiple openings and pathways. Can animal cells be the lattice, as in when a virus or parasite latches on, and in turn proliferates? How far should a metaphor go before it becomes meaningless?

A scaffolding of life, at the hands of humans, gave rise to artifice (root **ar-* "to fit together" + *facere* "to make, do") – what the mind-body could dream up, to support the existence of new worlds.³ The natureculture hybrid.

One fears a tipping away from diversity, symbiosis, the accidental, toward what is invasive and controlled – the idea that only those able to adapt to the most abstracted of conditions will survive; only those ideas and things that support this goal, will do.

Of course, a protean lattice is ever-changing, not predictable. This offers hope. Including hope that artworks can support new visions of a world that can resist dominating, capitalist, cartesian and monocultural systems of value. While the lattice can translate into tool or prosthesis, the protean points to how forms can be resilient and build off one another, to how a nurturing ground of discourse and engagement can be conducive to new sympathies and entanglements.

There exist lattices of solidarity in the making. Ones that privilege care over competition, that strive for inclusivity, liveability and diversity.

These artists are protean, grounded in the commons, while adapting to daily and epochal shifts. Their work, entangled within the contemporary moment, also bears roots in historical memory... and a future anterior. Their work shares in the responsibility of imagining and constructing future worlds, and relations, growing against the grain of a speculative yet looming techno-totalitarianism.

- 1 Karen Barad, *Meeting the Universe Halfway: Quantum Physics and the Entanglement of Matter and Meaning* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2007), ix.
- 2 That lush alien biosphere in Jeff VanderMeer's *Annihilation* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2014).
- 3 At the hands of the dominant, "artifice" has all too often expended the earth's standing reserve toward wasteful humancentrist worldlessness; now that the world we have known is ending, is there time to re-activate the worldviews of those whose world has for centuries been on the brink of ending (and, in many cases, has already ended)?

RUSSELL GORDON

The Fugitive and The Persistent

Leanne Warawa

The tide turns at Musqueam where the Fraser River meets the Salish Sea. Here, a transformation occurs between the two bodies of water – the downstream freshwater meets the sea in a powerful embrace where their very essence is altered while appearing to remain the same. This synthesis of relentless change within an enduring cycle generates hope, opportunity, life and necessitates a look below the surface. We are shaped by the circumstances of our time and place in this world; our environment made up of the specific currents and subtle happenstances swirling around us. What appears on the surface as permanent is in flux, being constantly remade. As we live through an age of precarity and precariousness, what meaning will be ascribed to our attempts to navigate our present when viewed from the future? Change and changelessness coalesce to form the foundations of our life. How do we see ourselves or understand our own experience, form our own precarious relevance, question assumptions that constrain us?

Russell Gordon's artistic practice encompasses technology, sculpture and image-making. His work in copper, seemingly foundational to his practice, emerged from his investigations of value, asking how it is ascribed and transferred between cultural and economic systems. While systems of economic value may appear to be authoritative and permanent, history shows us that these are in fact precarious, often ephemeral and subject to change. Gordon's work deconstructs these systems and creates the opportunity for the viewer to question the underlying assumptions about them: what is permanent and what is inevitably precarious? In this contemplative framework, one is called to question what one values. While money is often considered "the medium of exchange," Gordon's work positions people as *mediators* of exchange. The fusing of old and new, concepts and technology, to intervene into the histories of those yet to come.

One precedential work was forged in a backyard with an ancient smelting process made current. Gordon's copper ingots (from the *Good Delivery* project, 2011-14) made their way into the world through bureaucratic legal processes and artistic



Russell Gordon, *Temporary masks, for you and me (orange)*, 2022, copper, 22.0 x 20.0 x 6.0 cm. Courtesy of the artist

intervention. One of the ingots traversed the alternative economy of gifting and the exercise of agency in the transformation of value, as it travelled with exhibits by late Kwakwaka'wakw artist Beau Dick to Vancouver, Saskatoon, New York and Athens. As with legal precedents, aesthetic foundations are built layer upon layer. Facts must be formulated into recognizable concepts and reasons. The facts, often disputed, congeal into reasons but in order to be grasped these reasons must be translated into principles. It is with these principles that we structure our worlds and our own images. But we always need to look at what lies beneath the surface.

Gordon's studio appears part chemistry lab and part electrician's workshop whose practical purposes have become artistically entangled. Copper wire, electronics, buckets of chemicals and tool kits vie for attention but come together in some form of alchemic process. Industrial materials (discarded copper, excess sulphur, wax) are

turned metaphysical through a practice of experimentation and metonymic play; an integration of the fugitive and the persistent as they undergo transmutation both in form and probative value. An examination of Gordon's work begins from the precarity of its surfaces, to grow from the boundaries of current understanding.

Gordon's process involves the painstaking method of utilizing copper ions to build up a surface that is further subjected to artistic manipulation, the layering of material and meaning. There is a mutability in Gordon's approach as his sculptural forms emerge in an additive and unpredictable way. For example, the conceptual boundary of *Temporary masks, for you and me (orange)* (2022) is built upon with no mould to constrain the artistic process. The use of salvaged material invokes recognition of the physical processes of Gordon's work as well as the transformations effected by his artistic practice. These works reverberate with the process of their making, thereby creating their own logic of value while simultaneously retaining familiar forms and interrogating assumptions of identity.

What changes and what stays the same; what is hidden beneath the surface?
The tide turns at Musqueam as the Fraser River meets the Salish Sea.

ROMI KIM

Facing south facing you

Jeneen Frei Njootli in collaboration with Romi's practice

they are always like this.

This phrase is woven throughout their paper, *acknowledgement ethics*. Romi writes in the abstract, "I investigate how repetition within my practice expands upon more questions rather than understanding and what is revealed in the connections between the repetitions." ¹

Language slips at your fingertips

Omg have we ever met in person

You talk about a strategizing or strategic shuffle in relationship to disorientation by José Esteban Muñoz. A strategic shuffle feels like an apt way of talking about their work. And how you move through and with language and gender

It's been a good volley

I can see the facing, the mirroring they talk about in their thought-document play out in their work. I'm searching for the key, for the shape of the glass that will best bend the light so that I can help others see. But not to see your otherness in a way that makes you comfortable, safe or healed as you, they. They say "no" and at the same time, They give. The sounds of the word switch forms as they do. Bending a language, a character, shapes. They are looking at each other

Not wanting to have ____ pinned onto them, onto their work. How dare you come in here with that gaze. Scram to the bar to hide yourself and pretend you observe pronouns and equity. Take up space when you tell it. But you're not safe here either. House of Rice is on the roster and you didn't know what you had comin.

The screens fracture into fractals that Skim wields, enthralled and relieved at this interruption and disorientation. Their work is comprised of many. The many squares of fabric. The many rectangles of cards. The boob pillows feel like the 보자기 fabric to me.



Romi Kim, Untitled performance by Maiden China and Skim , 2021. Courtesy of the artist.
Photo: Linden Royea

Precious unprecious wrapped within the pillows. Maiden China removes the boob pillows from boxes and reorganizes these into purple spray-painted milk crates. They spoke of the strangeness of the gallery white. Of needing to put safety measures in place for themselves and their kin. Of the feeling of difference. For a space obsessed with a taxonomy of margins, of perhaps even fetishizing the margins, a practice that includes living in bars, venues and warehouses is still snubbed. Resulting in a need for doubling, echoes, a need for multiplicity in themselves, in the numeration of their materials, in the objects they hold, the screen then placed on a floor, or projections in each other's side eye, even in having more than one space of making. This multiple allows for a fluidity that is vital to their work, yet there is an invitation, even if their language is making the shape of the word "no" that falls like a blanket around your shoulders, as we sit, watching, and taking it in.

Understand. To stand under. I cannot. Instead, I see the ways the ink fades as it is absorbed by the material. As the brush dries, the texture of the paper revealed. A main figure/ character/letter/Hanja looks back at me, head-on and upside down. Other figures emerge. A hand wearing two silver pieces and an elastic band continues to animate the page. Then all is torn away. This repeats as English is spoken, stories are told. They situate themselves and are adamant about this work across their works.

"It's something weird again, isn't it?" Romi's mom asks

I ask my dad, my auntie and my jah for translation labour. My dad is the first to respond. "we need to talk in person about that. There are too many subtleties in the language." I brace for taunts and gruffness while I access. ²

There are four lines, sometimes the edges are rounded, there are 2 pairs of kitty-corner 90 degree angles. At times, all 4 lines are the same length. Skim and Romi hold this assortment of lines and repeating angles in their hands, placing them down in new arrangements. Stiletto nails reach for how the form is presenting itself on the screen as three relatives visit. The bleach bin, with images slipping off where they ought to arrive. The mats on the floor, the monitors atop, with characters dancing across. Meaning is slammed down, the velvet absorbing, tiny bristles holding the imprint. Another image slips off glistening white. Some might call this a fugitive image.³

These notions of translation. Tania Willard spoke about her mouth making new movements as it wrapped around Secwepemctsin, her sons in a language nest. Someone recently asked me about giving birth to my son and why I am using the term chest-feeding. In the script Romi shared with me, Skim and Maiden discuss the boob pillows and relationships of surgery and perceived/felt transness.

I wish I measured the size of my nips before and after my baby was born.

The laptop folds. Goes in the teal towel. Goes in the backpack with snacks, notebook and sneakers. Suit up. Walk the 2k to the heritage building for wifi. It's -43 below and last week my friend's laptop cracked on her walk. Sophie. She's the one I ask to translate something Romi's mom said in their work **화투**. She asks them: "It's something weird again, isn't it?" Skim cackles. In responding to Romi's practice and walking along a neighbouring path of accessing language, I ask 3 language speakers how to say, "is it something weird?" In Gwich'in. The answer is still arriving.

- 1 Romi Kim, UBC Department of Art History, Visual Art and Theory MFA Roundtable presentation, Vancouver, BC, 26 November 2021.
- 2 Is that fish leather? Sun gleaming through the hole.
Thinking about Gloria Anzaldúa and her writing about *la facultad*, her early work making space for lesbian and queer writers, for talking about *la frontera*/borderlands. That brilliant text that offers so much yet also says no in a pitch that could register as welcoming if you were standing in the right place.
- 3 Thinking about Olivia Whetung's writing who is thinking about Fred Moten and Stefano Harney's writing on fugitivity in *The Undercommons*.

HANNAH MÖLLER

Hannah Möller prism-weaver

Dion Smith-Dokkie

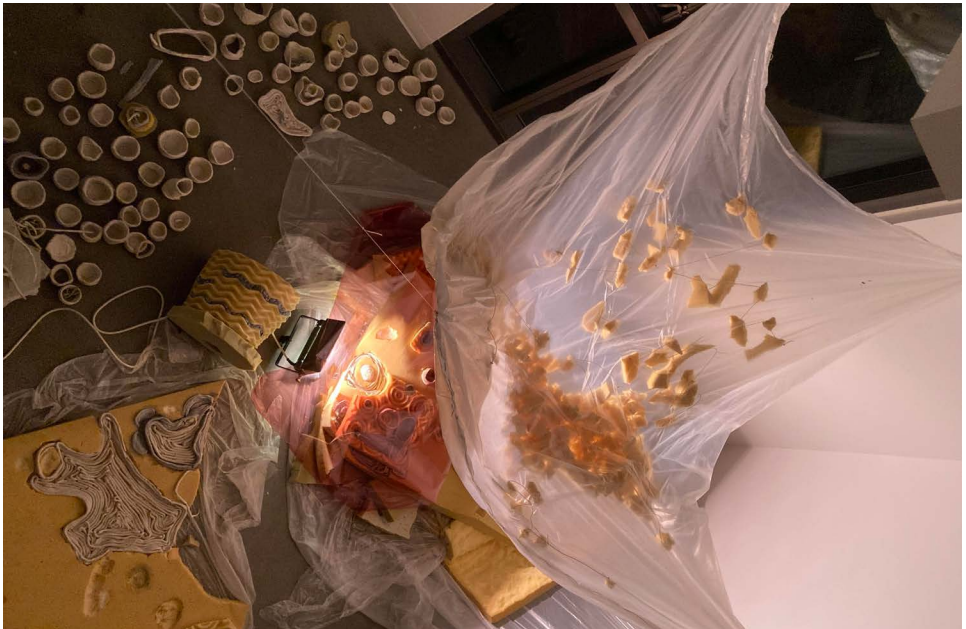
In Spring 2021, Hannah Möller and I collaborated on a multi-piece painting installation – the experience was a privilege and from it an electric and uplifting bond blossomed. It profoundly expanded my understanding of painting and friendship.

How do paintings re-member? The question is more complex than one suspects at first. To re-member is more than to represent, trace out, an instance of perceptual exchange with the world. Möller's work carries out eccentric and rare innate functions, functions to transform. She challenges painting, weaves together her own peculiar instruments for intertwining and interlacing – in this essay, we will call them "prisms."

To think through the paintings, start with another image: the moth inside the bubble-dome capsule. At once a toy and sacred reliquary. The moth in the capsule is a treasure – the next earth, distant satellite – the island where life will continue. Möller stitches together, leaf-by-leaf and layer-by-layer, somewhere to live: inside the work, the world, at the tip of a diamantine brush, a glistening needle, clay-caked fingers, feverish foam-dreams, polychrome sails.

What characterizes the moth is its status as a refractory lens – a prism, which takes on a function entirely unique to Möller's practice: a mechanism that cleaves, disentangles, evaporates. To heal the scar, rip it apart. A prism is reverence, an act of grace; a strange and personal futurism; a funerary rite; a quirk that giggles; a memory-daub. It is precisely the question of bricolage and fragility that Möller bids us witness: a thread that unravels the quilt, a hazy mountain path where I fall, the monster on the iceberg, a bramble that ensnares me.

Memories may approach us as images, though this forbids the potential each memory holds. Möller locates a special filament. The artist deals with mutations in space, which she splinters and refracts into manifold clay spirals and the pots they circumscribe, billion-year abrasions, numberless strata. Layers twist and fray, deform



Hannah Möller, *Here is there and there is Nowhere* (detail), 2021, vinyl film, plastic, memory foam, fallen butterfly, oil pastels, rock and mixed media, dimensions variable. Courtesy of the artist

and conceal, detach and inscribe, nuance and supplement. Time accretes and melts, trickles. Each gesture and event opens a manifold in time; these are thread-dimensions, fray-worlds. Each surface has its history and memory: Möller cherishes this.

We experience space through movement, voluminosity; we experience time through memory and imagination. In both cases, Möller warps our vision “in strobe” so that the celestial and microscopic appear in alternating proximity and density.¹ Each rip and repair produces an oscillation in time; space becomes an effect of temporal pulse and competing field-integrities.

A lattice is a weave-work. Möller projects space with captured-sunbeams and atmospheric films. She introjects space, passes it through compound-eye interiors and Mandelbrot zones. It is clear: her work occupies the intersection between immersive, speculative

environmental fabrication on the one hand and, on the other, memory-envelopment, temporal liquefaction, and the deployment of *history* as a textural-material concern.

If the translator deals in echolocation and echo-production, Möller goes further, taking up the prism as an aesthetic praxis.² Möller unravels and patches memory-events, weaves plastic spacetime. To mend the fabric, tear it. The artist dissects and deconstructs, decomposes the various event-bodies into component units: the reality of the patch and the need for cohesion in the face of disentanglement.

Möller's abstraction does not decontextualize or bleach the material and formal elements – the components do not cling to false novelty or the illusion of ahistoricity: look at the floor-unfurled canvas that you're invited to manoeuvre across and step on. In her commitment to history and texture, memory and material, Möller offers us radical and disarming lessons for living: everything unravels and frays, nothing is impermeable, safety and structure are urgent, constant struggles. Someday, all structures will become sand and waves: integrity and fragility provide the conditions for one another.

In front of the work, we confront contingencies that haunt and promise. Möller makes prisms that produce new chroma. Each chroma betrays its natal sun, whose rays plummet and course over newfound horizons. And through the interlace of Möller's prisms, treasures emerge: a moth's wing-dawn, a film to set my skin alight, life-support to save me.³

- 1 Gilles Deleuze, "Hélène Cixous ou l'écriture stroboscopique," in *L'île déserte: Textes et entretiens 1953-1974*, ed. David Lapoujade (Paris: Les Éditions de Minuit, 2002), 320-22.
- 2 Walter Benjamin, "The Task of the Translator," in *Selected Writings: Volume 1, 1913-1926*, eds. Marcus Bullock and Michael W. Jennings (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1921/1996), 258.
- 3 Éric Alliez and Jean-Clet Martin, *L'Œil-cerveau: Nouvelles histoires de la peinture moderne* (Paris: VRIN, 2007), 59, 95.

IDO RADON

Frames, Filaments, Flows, Futures

Laurie White

"... the first gesture of art, its metaphysical condition and universal expression, is the construction or fabrication of the frame." ¹

"... the 'formal framework' of science fiction is the encounter with radical difference: it is the form, the testimony, and the imagination of the struggle and the conflict between differing natures and cultures, different worldviews and cosmovisions." ²

"Towers and fields of it ranged in the colorless nonspace of the simulation matrix, the electronic consensus-hallucination that facilitates the handling and exchange of massive quantities of data." ³

"Information is never immaterial. Information cannot not be embodied. It has no existence outside of the material. It is not an ideal or a ghost or a spirit ... And yet, information's relation to the material is radically contingent. This contingency is only now starting to be fully realized." ⁴

"What undergirds and drives the system of abstraction is the ambition of thought to liberate itself from the tyranny of the here and now, which is represented as thought's attachment to a particular material substrate, a specific intuition or a limit posed by imagination. But in order for thought to liberate itself from material entrapment, it must utilize and manipulate the material that holds sway over it." ⁵

"... digital sampling has not created a new class of instruments, it has created the possibility of an infinitude of instruments." ⁶

"Transcendence is not of interest. Not a getting out of or over, but a getting deeper in. This deeper in is the embrace, is the hum, is what I am trying to tell you ... Machines hum like this as they transform energy into something else." ⁷



Ido Radon, *Untitled* (detail), 2022. Installation view, Veronica, Seattle. Courtesy of the artist. Photo: Ripple Fang

“Adrift in the doped lattices of a silicon crystal, a hole is a positive particle before it is the absence of a negatively charged electron, and the movement of electrons toward the positive terminal is also a flow of holes streaming back the other way.”⁸

“The logic of a door that is closed while it is open is the logic of the symbolic.”⁹

“... cybernetics was supposed to be introducing unprecedented opportunities to regulate, anticipate, and feed all unwelcome effects back into its loops. It also exposed the weaknesses of all attempts to predict and control ...”¹⁰

“... a second of second sight, just enough to catch the lines assembling themselves, a glimpse of the hole flow running away – fine filaments running into nets with a feeling for connection – synthetic fibers switching into a

network of cables, plugs and sockets, wires, meters, and dynamos, the fusions and distributions of a new electrical web, ... interconnecting lines, repeating operations, patterns, and networks spreading like weeds.”¹¹

“We can no longer make sense of the present in terms that we have inherited from the past. Things are happening before they make sense and therefore the only way to truly engage with the present reality is to project forward and to think back from the future.”¹²

“Experiments in every discipline are born out of the unanswered questions, the unfulfilled improbabilities of the past, but also out of the radically unintelligible nature of the contemporary.”¹³

“The virtual, on the other hand, does not have to be realized, but rather actualized; and the rules of actualization are not those of resemblance and limitation, but those of difference or divergence and of creation.”¹⁴

“... the street finds its own uses for things.”¹⁵

- 1 Elizabeth Grosz, *Chaos, Territory, Art: Deleuze and the Framing of the Earth* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2008), 10.
- 2 Pedro Neves Marques, "On Colonial Power and Science Fiction," in *Futurity Report*, eds. Eric C. de Bruyn and Sven Lütticken (Berlin: Sternberg Press, 2020), 196.
- 3 William Gibson, "Burning Chrome," in *Burning Chrome* (Westminster, MD: Arbor House, 1982), 197. This short story contains the first appearance of the term "cyberspace."
- 4 McKenzie Wark, "Information Wants to be Free (But is Everywhere in Chains)," *Cultural Studies* 20:2-3 (2006): 173.
- 5 Reza Negarestani, *Torture Concrete: Jean-Luc Moulène and the Protocol of Abstraction* (New York: Sequence Press, 2014), 6.
- 6 Douglas Kahn, "Audio Arts in a Deaf Century," in *Sound by Artists*, eds. Dan Lander and Micah Lexier (Toronto and Banff: Art Metropole and Walter Phillips Gallery, 1990), 324.
- 7 Lisa Radon, *Age of Sand* (Los Angeles: PANEL, 2019), 358.
- 8 Sadie Plant, *Zeros and Ones: Digital Women and the New Technoculture* (London: Fourth Estate, 1997), 57.
- 9 Bernhard Siegert, *Cultural Techniques: Grids, Filters, Doors, and other Articulations of the Real*, trans. Geoffrey Winthrop-Young (New York: Fordham University Press, 2015), 194.
- 10 Plant, *Zeros and Ones*, 159.
- 11 *Ibid.*, 115.
- 12 Robin Mackay, "Robin Mackay: A CCRU Retrospective," 14 February 2022, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jgUkQTRtagc>
- 13 Joan Retallack, "The Experimental Feminine," https://www.asu.edu/piperwcwcenter/how2journal/vol_3_no_1/inconference/retallackexperferm.html
- 14 Gilles Deleuze, *Bergsonism*, trans. Hugh Tomlinson and Barbara Habberjam (New York: Zone Books, 1998), 97.
- 15 Gibson, "Burning Chrome," 215.

ARTI STRUYANSKIY

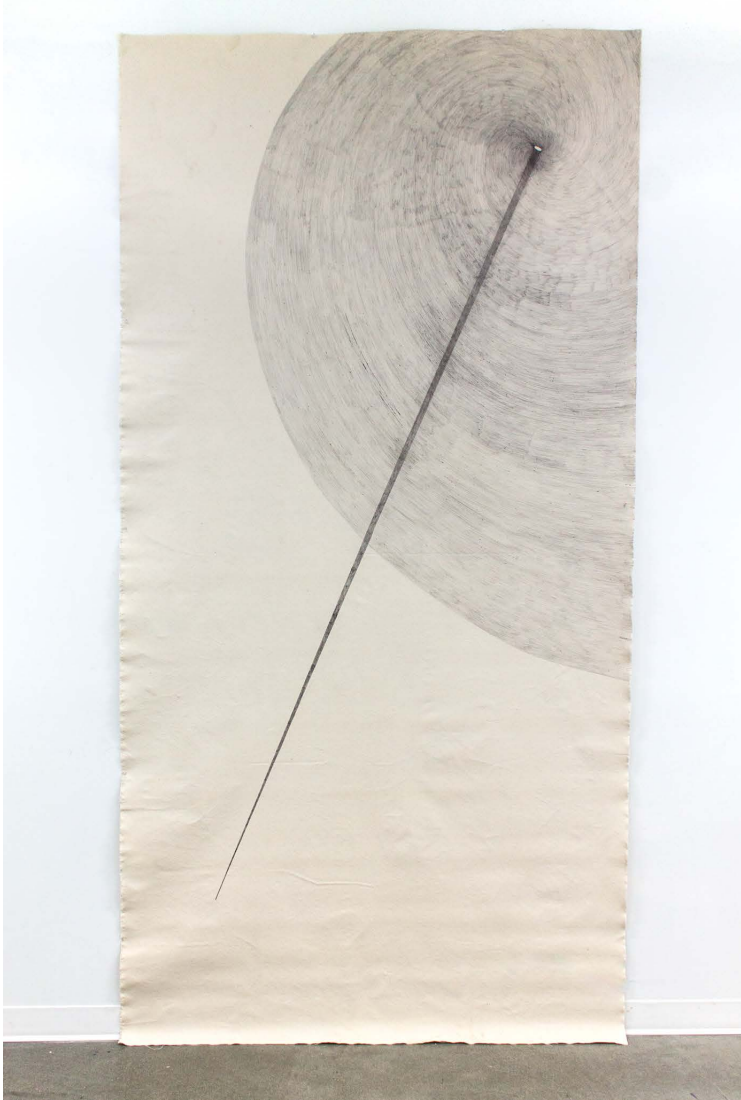
Void Diver

Ogden Huntington Olivas

I had gone cliff diving once or twice. In particular, at one alpine lake in the Adirondacks. The fall was a relatively mild 35 feet and I'll always remember it. First, going through the air and feeling the pressure of that. Then, the impact of the water – swimming suddenly in darkness and seeing ribbons of light, odd squiggles in the dark liquid; many sounds, temperatures and impressions against my skin and eyes. I imagined at once that I was floating in distant space. Still, soft oxygen wrapped itself around me and I was on earth. There was darkness below and light above. There were bubbles and sounds – nonetheless, I was floating in a place without time.

You might be thinking that I had been concussed when I smacked the surface of the water or that my head had been filled with microbes from the disturbed sediment, blooming a rush of aquatic grass and bacteria in my noggin via my nostrils; maybe so, and that is exactly what viewing Arti Struyanskiy's work reminds me of – diving into dark water from a cliff and the impact that it makes on one's head. The work itself is reminiscent of the very matter around us only in so far as it cannot be easily explained. The paintings are small universes and the paint mere chemicals represented by colour, density and mercurial darkness – the odd ribs of a continuum in space.

A gravitational singularity is the point formed by the product of a dense star in its collapse, producing a black hole. It is a condition in which gravity is so intense that space and time break down. Simulating eXtreme Spacetimes is a collaborative research project specializing in depicting events in spacetime such as these in simulations. In conversation, the artist expressed a certain scrutiny towards the supercomputer used in producing simulations. In particular, footage of simulated events which utilize the binary simulation of black holes depicting results formed either as the remnants of high-mass binary star systems or by dynamic processes and mutual capture through a galactic merger; the merging of two black holes in spacetime. In other words, a representation of something possibly real. There are some similarities here to art. Some similarities, likewise, between the computer and the



Arti Struyanskiy, *No-Boundary*, 2021, ink on canvas, 300.0 x 160.0 cm. Courtesy of the artist

artist, both focusing on interpreting the other side of something apparent. The relationship between the artist and a simulation developed by a computer was curious to me.

Granted, there are certain other spatial agents involved, but in general, we can admit that we don't understand the implications as they relate to our perceiving reality; only that they bend, crash and flatten perceivable spacetime when in proximity, probably. OK, no biggie. Let's admit, too, that existence in general can be quite confusing (albeit in a different way), and full of things which to us seem quite inexplicable. Perhaps, then, art can be an attempt to explore that; to explore the other side of matter and time without use of the empirical. That is a suggestion which I hope you consider in earnest.

When considering reality and perceiving reality, it is likely that we imagine different things. Here, both black paint and black holes can serve the same function – and to our interpretation, they are identical. They pull information briefly before the event horizon, they poke at mysterious concepts. Paintings, limited as all human faculties are, let us briefly float just as one would after a dive. Black holes and black paint obscure our own sense of things which we may or may not know. When one imagines a colour, that colour stretches as an infinite plane without specifications through the imagination for infinity. It is overwhelming, sort of like imagining a black hole. This mystery is what we are left with, the feeling of something we know having two sides. I'm sure you know the feeling. Just look up at the night sky and there is the same one.

The artist's scrutiny of the supercomputer was interesting to me. After seeing the work and speaking with him, it can be said that it is not Struyanskiy's disagreement with the supercomputer's simulations nor empirical data as a premise, rather his disassociation with a greater need to control these things whatsoever – to understand what we can't. It is the artist's work to explore the idea of a collapsing star, utter blackness, entropy and insignificance without intense attachment to control.

I think it is actually a rather serious question that we are toying with here: what part of this whole experience is indescribable by the empirical and the computer but is nonetheless present?

Something Struyanskiy had written: "I find the process of art making to be an endless back and forth between the submission to psychological time and its partial rejection. Following this process allows me for the tiniest split nano-second to feel that the reality makes sense before it all falls apart once again."¹ And what is an image but the vague impression of that feeling? What else is the contemporary image but the impression of a process – and most honestly as it appears to us at first.

I wanted to get a sense of what art is by studying these works. In them, Struyanskiy touches on something that we cannot know, briefly. Certainly, in people there exists the desire to overcome mystery, darkness and death, and then there is the quieter desire to jump into it and, say, make a painting.

It is hard to imagine moving through space and time. Despite that, we are always doing so, and that is the principle which the work most effectively illuminates. In short, we will be viewing the work, and I urge you to view it with me as what it seems to be quite plainly to myself: the field notes of an intrepid space explorer, a "void diver," as I have informally labeled the artist – touching on that brief moment in which one floats and the nature of things simultaneously disappears and makes sense; the underbelly of the perceivable world which we can collegially refer to as "the void." The last mysterious place. The home of art, thought, et cetera.

1 Arti Struyanskiy "Simulated image control" (unpublished paper, 26 November 2021).

List of Works

Russell Gordon

Landscape through two cameras, 2022

video

14 m

Courtesy of the artist

Russell Gordon

Temporary masks (for you and me), 2022

scavenged copper, used facial masks, steel, brass, nickel, gold, wood, stone, foundry wax, ratchet strap, rope and various hardware
dimensions variable
Courtesy of the artist

Russell Gordon

Untitled (Ingot tray 2013-14), 2022

steel and copper from Canadian pennies
25.0 x 8.0 x 4.0 cm
Courtesy of the artist

Russell Gordon

View from a rose garden, 2022

scavenged copper, foundry wax and steel hardware
3.0 x 60.0 x 32.0 cm
Courtesy of the artist

Romi Kim

보자기 만들기, 2022

video, raspberry pi, mic and old clothes from Skim, Umma and QBM studio
Courtesy of the artist

Performed by Skim at the Morris and Helen Belkin Art Gallery on Thursday, 28 April 2022.

Romi Kim

The Warehouse, 2022

video, performed by Continental Breakfast and Skim
18 min 48 s
Courtesy of the artist

Exhibited on the Belkin Screen

Hannah Möller

The Burrow, 2022

acrylic, string, clay, canvas and mixed media
dimensions variable
Courtesy of the artist

Ido Radon
ZERO GATE, 2022
mixed media
569.0 x 243.8 x 101.6 cm
Courtesy of the artist

Arti Struyanskiy
Structure, 2022
spray paint, sound, oil pastel, ink, graphite,
couches, canvas and acrylic paint
dimensions variable
Courtesy of the artist

Exhibited inside the Belkin Art Gallery and outside
on the west side of the gallery

The artists acknowledge that this exhibition takes place on the traditional, ancestral and unceded territory of the x̣ʷm̄əθk̄ʷəȳəm (Musqueam) people.

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