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ONE HOUR EMPIRE

Publisher
**IMPULSE | B | AND THE MUSEUM OF
CONTEMPORARY CANADIAN ART**

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DAN BERGERON was born in Toronto in 1975. His work exists as life-size or large-scale figurative portraits, cut to shape and adhered to the architectural forms of the city, as fake advertisements appearing on reclaimed billboards or as three-dimensional photo sculpture. Dan studied film and sound design at Carleton University in Ottawa but credits graffiti and his passion for skateboarding and its creative use of urban architecture for heavily influencing his re-purposing of public spaces. Dan has completed commissions for the Art Gallery of Ontario, The Royal Ontario Museum and the Luminato festival. His work can be spotted in public spaces in Toronto, London, New York and Paris. He is represented by Show & Tell Gallery in Toronto.

JODA CLÉMENT W/ NIGEL CRAIG Toronto based artist Joda Clément has been performing and composing experimental music in Canada for over 10 years, developing a unique repertoire of methods and techniques for working creatively with sound. His first album, *Movement / Rest*, released by Alluvial Recordings in 2005, was followed by the collaborative *Cherry Beach Project*, in 2006 with Nigel Craig on the Belgian Mystery Sea label. Transcending a distinction between audio sources, his work incorporates analog and acoustic instruments, found objects and audio recorded from the natural and urban environment to create a landscape of sound that unites properties of both musical and everyday contexts.

Nigel Craig works with sound recordings, photographs, installation, and mixed media. He began experimenting with sound recording in high school, often teaming up with Joda Clément. The two friends continue to collaborate and currently are gathering resources for their next project, recording in subterranean spaces.

LIAM CROCKARD was born in Kitchener, Ontario in 1986 and currently lives and works in Toronto where he received his BFA from the Ontario College of Art & Design. He has organized exhibitions and shown his work in Toronto while exhibiting internationally in Chicago, Los Angeles and Berlin. His sculptural practice is defined by materially-inspired gestures that explore the collision of industry-driven hometown nostalgia and modern art fetishism. Ultimately this conflation of the personal and the referential sits at the core of his explorations articulated through collage, video and sculpture.

FRONT COVER: Alex McLeod, *Terror Twilight*, 2010. Courtesy of the artist and Angell Gallery.

INSIDE FRONT COVER: Josh Thorpe, *Subtractive Mural for MOCCA's (detail)*, 2010. Photo: Thomas Blanchard. Courtesy of the artist.

INSIDE BACK COVER: Josh Thorpe, *Two Subtractive Stripes for MOCCA's Title Walk*, 2010. Photo: Thomas Blanchard. Courtesy of the artist.



PHENOMENOLOGY OF THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT

TEXT BY DAVID LISS

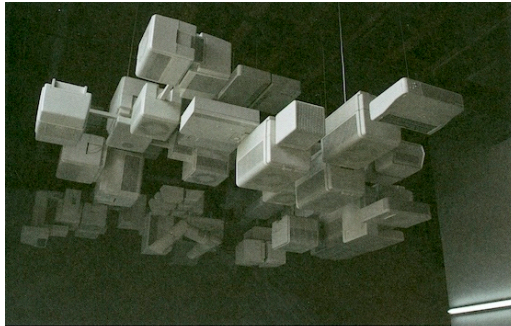
*Dan Bergeron/ Joda Clément with Nigel Craig/
Liam Crockard/ Dorian FitzGerald/
Alberto Guedea Zamora/ Sara Graham/ David Han/
Janet Jones/ Yvonne Lammerich/
Tristram Lansdowne/ An Te-Liu/ Samina Mansuri/
Alex McLeod/ Jade Rude and Bruno Billio/
Lisa Steele & Kim Tomczak/ T&T (Tyler Brett and
Tony Romano)/ Josh Thorpe/ David Trautrimas*

THE TITLE OF THIS PROJECT is borrowed from *Empire of Dreams: the Making of the Star Wars Trilogy*, a 1988 documentary on the Hollywood blockbuster movie series, *Star Wars* whose epic tales related an ongoing battle for control of a futuristic intergalactic empire. Battles over empire, territory, ideology and identity, for control of wealth, technology and destiny, are deeply embedded in our instincts to protect and survive.

Empires are built for longevity, to last forever, to defy mortality. They embody our highest aspirations, our dreams and our will to find place and forge identity. Empire, the dominant structures of a civilization, manifest through the physical – the built environment – and also through intangible and arbitrary structures and systems: economics, politics, and the social and cultural constructs that influence identity and our subjective

perceptions of our place in the world. Empires and civilizations may be intended to be permanent and fixed yet each is built upon the ruins of another, in a perpetual condition of flux, of transformation, bound to cycles of birth, growth, decay and death. Empires, love, money and our mortal lives come and go, ever in a state of dynamic transformation; the natural cycles of creation

and destruction, as it always has been and will be into the unknowable future. *Empire of Dreams* looks at ways in which we exist within our built environment – the phenomenon that is our experience and interaction with the physical and ephemeral structures and architectures that shape complex sensory and cognitive relationships to our surroundings. In our time we are evolving rapidly



An Te Liu, *Cloud* (2008). Courtesy of the artist.

into a deeply interconnected global world (that now even extends beyond our planet) unprecedented in our history and experience. Battles for control abound as we continue to transform, dream, build and create habitable environments for survival, protection and to live our lives.

The backgrounds of the artists included in the exhibition are diverse yet they all live in Toronto in 2010, at the dawn of the millennium, in an age of rapidly increasing urbanisation and globalization. It is in large cities like Toronto where the resonant implications of this evolution play out within the greater context of a new, rising global empire. From a range of perspectives the artists engage discourses around the physical and fluid structures of empire – architecture, urbanisation, technology, economic and cultural paradigms, utopianism, existing and imagined space – examining our ever-shifting relationships to them and how they define who we are.

Internationally influential Toronto urbanologist Jane

Jacobs said that our most direct connection to the city exists at street-level: to the sidewalks, the buildings and the storefronts that line them. As a "street artist," Dan Bergeron is closely attuned to street-level phenomenon. Similar to many in the recently designated genre, Bergeron sees public space, including privately-owned real estate, as an inspiration, source and theatre for creating works directly in, on and around the city that question and re-imagines the urban landscape in critical and unconventional ways. His activities have included unauthorised interventions into the cityscape in the form of billboard coverings and photo-based paste-ups that introduce unexpected encounters, readings and meanings into the stream and flow of everyday urban life. *Defiant Front* (2010), his false façade built onto the exterior of MOCCA, abruptly introduces the exhibition with accurately detailed recreations of empty storefronts in the neighbourhood, drawing attention to the constantly changing streetscape of the rapidly gentrifying Queen

Street West. Like similar neighbourhoods in other cities, Queen Street West has transitioned over decades from being a destination for waves of immigrants, young families and light industry to an arts district, which in turn is being displaced by high-end retail shops, restaurants and nightclubs. The cost of homes has also risen sharply. The building that MOCCA occupies was a functioning textile manufacturing plant until 2004. The area has been altered dramatically and irrevocably affected by shifting conditions of local and global economies and patterns of immigration and migration. Where there once was a manufacturing plant there is now an art museum and, as Bergeron's work suggests, that too is subject to impermanence.

Passing through Bergeron's façade into the gallery lobby, viewers enter beneath An Te Liu's *Cloud* (2008). Originally commissioned for the 2008 Venice Biennial of Architecture, *Cloud* is an arrangement of white-toned, functioning air purifiers, sterilizers and ionizers

suspended from the ceiling. The work refers to cycles of condensation and precipitation, as well as Modernist notions of purity of form that aspired through design and technology to create pure and hygienic environments. The work also resembles a floating city or a fictional spacecraft not unlike those portrayed in popular science-fiction genres, such as the 1960s *Star Trek* television series, or the *Star Wars* movies. Where those and other sci-fi utopian visions rely upon an unwavering faith in technology to liberate us from the limitations of our abject existence, *Cloud* questions the Modernist fascination with and reliance upon the machine in creating idealized environments for living.

From the streetscape and atmospheric references that precede it, Alberto Guedea Zamora's photograph directly refers to the city of Toronto, formerly a colonial seat of the British Empire in North America, and current home to all of the artists in the exhibition. Toronto is also known as one of the

world's most intercultural cities and City Hall is itself a Modernist architectural landmark that symbolizes for many a destination of hope, a beacon of global immigration, a possibility for a better life. The two towers suggest a genre of protective embrace but the building is also the site and symbol of political bureaucracy. And immigration to Canada, to North America, to the "free world" is becoming an ever-more complex entanglement of paperwork and bureaucratic procedure driven by suspicion, racism, fears of terrorism, of job loss; fear of the Other encroaching upon "our" territory. Highly educated immigrants are forced to work for years in menial and low-paying jobs. Are our political structures and shifting attitudes open and welcoming, or are they designed to protect the empire and its privileged inhabitants? Guedea Zamora is a recent immigrant to Toronto, from Mexico, via Vancouver. Posing on the plaza at Nathan Phillips Square in a generic grey suit, hair covering his eyes, and surrounded by pineapples, he stands in for the

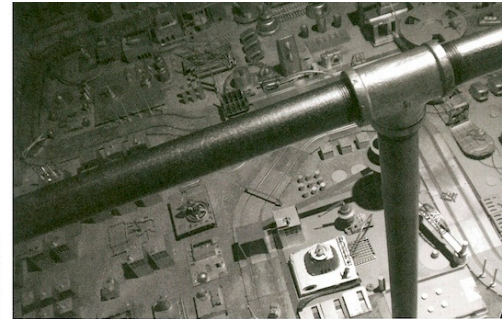
everyman. And like the fruit he is holding, he is displaced from his geographic origins in an environment at once welcoming, alien and unknown.

Almost imperceptibly located between An Te Liu's *Cloud* and Guedea Zamora's photograph, is a discreet vertical line rising about four feet from the floor. Achieved with a palm sander, Josh Thorpe, exposes coloured layers of paint that lie beneath the gallery's white walls. He works in his usual site-specific approach, selecting three areas of MOCCA's interior to sand down, revealing astonishingly beautiful traces and tangible sites of memory inscribed into the architecture and the museum's history. Transforming conceptual thought to physical gesture and memory to artifact, *Subtracted Mural for MOCCA (after Acker and Haythe)*, provides an archaeological account of transient and mutable realms that lie beneath the limned surfaces of everyday existence; a dynamic play upon the material and the ephemeral, absence and presence, history and the present, and what is seen and what is not.

Tristram Lansdowne also explores relationships between realms of visibility and invisibility. His exquisite watercolour paintings on paper depict mostly abandoned or decaying buildings – warehouses, factories, a barn, houses – that appear to have been built atop mysterious subterranean worlds. By creating unexpected juxtapositions – a freight elevator dangling by its cables from beneath a barn – he mines archaeological layers and interstitial zones between the real and the surreal, the physical and the psychic, between surface and depth, the imaginative and the built world. Provoking our instinctive response to illuminate the unknowable void with the imaginary, Lansdowne engages our sense of wonder at what may have come before us and what may become of us in the future.

Expanding upon these notions, Samina Mansuri's sprawling installation, *After-Images: Cobblestone Reconstruction Site#9* (2009-10), is a miniaturised city resembling urban planning models. Constructed from

cast-off parts of domestic appliances, children's toys, rods made from race track, film sprockets, computer parts and other similar detritus, all painted a flat, silver-grey, Mansuri covers the whole in a mixture of concrete dust and ash. An atmosphere of ominous, post-apocalyptic gloom is dramatically enhanced by an overhead projection of vague, indistinguishable images that flicker over the city like a lightning storm or surveillance searchlights. The effect calls to mind the futuristic urban dystopia in the movie, *Metropolis* (1927). A viewing platform surrounds the parameters of the site evoking a similar one that lines the site in Lower Manhattan where the World Trade Centre once stood. Among the intricately designed set there are no living beings. Mortality permeates the air. The city is the corpse, an extension of our bodies and being, shaping and structuring who we are. Trauma is inscribed on the city, our corporeal and psychic selves, our very identities. Alex McLeod's densely detailed, virtual cityscapes,



Samina Mansuri, *After-Images: Cobblestone Reconstruction Site#9* (2009-10). Courtesy of the artist.



David Han, *Margaret Learns to Drive*. From *There to Here* (2009). Photo: Fyfe Churnak/AMCCA

Terror Twilight and Spectral (both 2010), fabricated entirely in 3D-rendering software programs, are printed to cinematic scale, mesmerizing in their graphic precision and infinite detail. The pictures are tightly controlled, claustrophobic and yet strangely seductive and inviting, ambiguously suspended between utopian desire and dystopic nightmare. Within the density of these built environments, the only sign of nature is a cluster of spindly, white trees uncomfortably squeezed into the composition; estranged, there is no place for these ghosts from a forgotten past. The images, otherworldly and foreboding, nevertheless draw us in – as cities do – with the allure of twinkling lights, activity and opportunity. Considering our increased migration as a species to urban areas, we appear to be turning to the promises of technology to provide, protect and ensure survival. Adept in the use of advanced digital technologies as McLLeod is, the distinctly apocalyptic character of these works seem not entirely optimistic towards our

unbridled faith and investment in technologies and the urbanization of our species. From the virtual worlds of McLLeod, the massive painting by Dorian FitzGerald, *VIP Room, Casa da Música, Porto, Portugal, Rem Koolhaas (Architect)* (2010), takes us into the privileged sanctum of a contemporary “signature” building designed by Rem Koolhaas, one of the most renowned superstar architects of our times. Referring to photographic sources, FitzGerald has depicted the room with accuracy but the impasto textures of his paint accentuate the over-the-top decadence to the point of kitsch. Koolhaas is known widely for his objections to the influence of capitalist and global forces that threaten to reduce the built environment to generic entities, where form is disconnected from function. Ironically, of course, mobilization of these same forces is necessary for the realization of his projects. Even within “public” buildings, such as museums and concert halls, access is limited as economic

equations blur boundaries between public and private space. Our world, as always, is divided between very important persons and those who are not. In this painting and his practice at large, FitzGerald draws attention to the beauty, seduction, decadence and absurdity of luxury and wealth. David Han's *Margaret Learns to Drive from There to Here* (2009), invites us to consider the suburbs: the wood-paneled Oldsmobile station wagon, a vehicle produced for family transportation in the twilight of North America's era of expanding middle-class. Projected onto the windows of the car are streetscape scenes that the artist video-recorded while driving around the Willowdale area of North York, one of Toronto's earliest suburbs. English subtitles supply an episode of *Father Knows Best*, one of many popular American television series from the 1950s and 60s that were set in idyllic suburbs. Audio tracks translate into the five most commonly

spoken non-English languages in Willowdale: Cantonese, Mandarin, Korean, Farsi and Russian. Recognizing the unifying powers of the collective cinematic experience, and the automobile as the common lens through which these landscapes are perceived, Han weaves cultural multiplicity into the narrative, into the passing streets and the built environment. Once considered models of utopian living, the design of the suburbs, the sprawl, the largely pre-fabricated, generic architecture and the reliance upon the car, have contributed to our sense of isolation from the environment and from each other. We exist together but we live separately within our own languages, culture and identities. As the familiar streets and buildings pass repeatedly across the windows, we recognize that we are *somehow, here we never really arrive*. From the suburbs in the north of the city to the south of Toronto's waterfront on Lake Ontario, Joda Clément and Nigel Craig conjure the city's industrial past by creating site

specific sound pieces produced and recorded in 2004 inside a now-demolished waste oil storage tank that was located at Cherry Beach, an artificially constructed peninsula built before the middle of the last century to serve the city's industrial Portlands. Having gained unauthorised entry into the cavernous tanks, Clément and Craig set up their gear and produced sounds using materials mostly found around the site – broken bottles, tree branches, stones, and instruments such as finger piano, cymbals, water, plastic tubes and voice – electronically enhancing and modulating the reverberations unique to the rounded steel enclosure as they recorded them. According to composer and architect Iannis Xannakis (1922-2001), sound, ambient or manufactured, and though immaterial, carries abilities to shape and structure our experience within architecture and space. Listening to recorded sound is listening to sound from the past projected into the present – sound travelling through time and space while not bound by either. In some

of his most well-known sound and music experiments, notably, *#337*, composer John Cage drew attention to the omnipresence of sound, even interpreting its ability to transform time and space as evidence of its metaphysical properties. Sound is always present, most prominently in urban environments, drifting in and out of our range of consciousness. The tanks and much of the heavy industry associated with them now in decline, Clément and Craig's *Cherry Beach Project*, presented in 2010, evokes the power of sound and music to transport and transcend time and space, a haunting sonic echo of Toronto's past, a funeral soundtrack for a dying industrial age. Ambient urban sound is also an integral component of the 3-channel video installation *Beaming...* (2009-10), by Lisa Steele and Kim Tomczak. In a looped cycle of sequenced rotation, images of architectural structures in Toronto and elsewhere depict a seemingly endless account of buildings and sites of diverse vintage, in

varying degrees of construction, usage, decay, abandonment and demolition, each of them in various states of transformation. The images and the compositions are straightforward, almost banal and predictable, eventually inducing tedium until short texts – twists on familiar jokes – interrupt the monotony of the image flow and our complacent sense of expectancy. Passively immersed in the stream of projected images, the built environment passes by as we gaze uneasily, transfixed, dis-empowered, unsure of whether we should be amused or horrified by the cacophonous spectacle of this world forever in a transitional state of becoming. The digitally fabricated, photo-based architectural images in David Taurimas', *The Softfoot Project* series (2010), depict familiar domestic appliances situated in remote landscapes of tundra and forest, like sci-fi space vehicles or futuristic insects from an H.G. Wells novel. These iconic, menacing-looking architecture/machine hybrids call to mind secretive military

installations, satellites and surveillance technologies. The imagistic fusion draws parallels between the simultaneous advancements of post-WWII military and domestic technologies, identifying a disturbing paradox between the manufactured promise of leisure-based utopianism and the shadow of militarism. The contradictions embedded within these technologies also reflect contradictions within our own being, drawing unsettling parallels between tools of comfort, survival and protection and destruction. The duo T&T (Tyler Brett and Tony Romano) also fabricate worlds of unique invention from objects such as toy models and hobby kits – cars, towers, fences, trees – densely piled together on table-tops like overcrowded miniature dioramas ambiguously appearing to be in states of collapse or construction. A digitally rendered illustration included in their installation appears to clarify that these are future worlds being built of necessity from recycled and repurposed materials. The work



Installation view of works by T&T / Josh Theriot. Photo: Fyfe Churnak/AMCCA



Installation view of works by Sara Graham/ Yvonne Lammerich/ Liam Crockard
Photo: Fayaz Chumara/MOCCA

is at once playful, child-like in its imaginative conception, yet stark and serious in its survivalist strategies for a world collapsed under its own abundance and excess of stuff; suspended between destruction and utopian possibility.

In our times, it is becoming increasingly clear that the world of stuff, of the production and consumption of goods in abundance for purposes necessary and not, is driven by interests primarily motivated by power and economics. Janet Jones has derived the images for her paintings from photographs that she has taken of the over-lit lobbies of corporate office towers (power) and the casinos of Las Vegas (money). Abstracted beyond recognition, there is a surface tension residing in the phenomenological experience between the precision of hard-edge fabrication and the handmade, between the passive interface of computer and television screens and painting's traditional associations with human skin and our object being. The refracting light conveyed by her imagery also

evokes what she refers to as the techno-sublime, our awestruck fascination with technology and our increasing reliance upon mediated experience.

For her installation *Rimner* (2010), Yvonne Lammerich has articulated a partially raised circle directly onto the surface of the gallery wall scaled to her proportions (the Vitruvian woman), with eight white rectangular foam protrusions emanating from its centre. An almost unnoticeable second circle of equal proportions has been subtly polished into the gallery floor. The effect of light and shadow activates a dynamic spatial interplay between surface and depth that complicates apprehension of the whole as the experience shifts subtly with each movement of the viewer. Viewers standing at different points will perceive the same object from their own perspective, their own experience. Notions of space, stasis, objectivity of truth are destabilized within the recesses between materiality and the intangible, presence and absence and what is seen

and what is not. There is a paradoxical tension between subjectivity and objectivity at play that questions phenomenological certainties in our encounter of the work and in our everyday experience of the world around us.

Conventional notions of spatial dynamics also appear to be confounded in Sara Graham's precisely rendered series of nine architectural diagrams, *Proposition for a New System* (2007 and 2010). Clearly though, the dense, interlocked forms are not intended to be read as plausible plans or proposals. Within the complex cluster of forms the outline of certain buildings may be identifiable or seem familiar or generic; a cacophonous hybrid of architectural eras and styles, driven by an internal, formal logic oblivious to human activity, functionality, coherence and the larger civic good. The built environment here appears to serve and perpetuate nothing other than itself. These are flawed structures and systems that by their very nature of excess, abundance and disbarment, seem from

the outset condemned to dysfunction and failure, bereft of utopian aspiration and potential. Cities, as empires, are ever-changing and are built upon the ruins of the past; one built upon the next, in perpetual evolution, each representing hopes of renewal and revitalisation but too often thwarted by political and economic interests.

The title of Liam Crockard's two-component sculpture, *All Things: Worktable and Stool No. 3* (2010), illustrates a contradiction between the jury-rigged approach to carpentry and implied functionality. Hastily cobbled together (or so it appears) from discarded materials found in his studio and the streets and alleyways of his neighbourhood, they suggest the provisional, the improvisational, and a resourceful, makeshift approach. Similar to the work of T&T, Crockard builds from the waste of a world that is choked in excess and abundance. While perhaps paying homage to the humble, the abject and the do-it-yourself approach to home building and renovation,

there is also an irreverent undercurrent that seems to mock Modernist notions of perfection and the uniformity of mechanization that devalues the handmade and the human. Crockard's Constructivist/ Fluxus position recalls Gordon Matta-Clark's 'cut-up' approach to the urban landscape, challenging assumptions and meanings between art, utilitarianism and the world around us.

In contrast to the provisional character of Crockard's work, the two elements in Jade Rude and Bruno Billio's *Russian Mountain and Yellow Black Mountain* (2010) are highly designed and professionally fabricated. Designers as well as artists (collaborating here for the first time), they are liberated in an exhibition context from client demand, instead working to identify relationships between functionality and contemplation. They draw elements from the built environment to create a unique vocabulary that resides between functionality and contemplation, form and function. Both elements look as

if they might be architectural proposals for some structure or other but clearly these could not be built for any pragmatic purpose. The highly polished mirrored surfaces of Rude's *Russian Mountain* reflects dynamic, disorienting views of its surroundings and the striped layers of Billio's *Yellow Black Mountain* evoke a bold, stripped-down aesthetic sensibility and a confidence in its own impenetrable character and solid construction. Despite radically different characteristics, set within a unifying black backdrop they exist in harmony, embracing diversity and dichotomies between function and form, the imagined and the built, the permanent and the ephemeral, lightness and gravitas, between human experience and the built environment.

From the long shadows cast by Modernism, by its utopian faith in technology, industry, architecture, design and social and cultural planning – the built environment – we emerge into the fractured light of a new century, our transition from a primarily rural-based species

into a closely interconnected urban one nearly complete.

Our relationships to our surroundings and each other are irrevocably in transition. Globalism and its emerging structures, although still not defined or fully known, have replaced Modernism. The economy that it spawned and had sustained it has melted down, exposed as an empty, flawed and falsified system. New economies, new structures, the built world and intangible forces are forming and our relationship to these structures and our relationships to technology, nature and each other is also evolving. Enter the new Global Empire. As always we dream, we build, we protect, we destroy we inhabit. *Empire of Dreams* considers and questions our complex interactions, our perceptions and our experiences within the principals and structures that characterize our existence: the streets, the architecture, the city, the technologies, the designs, the social and cultural structures, the environment that defines who we are. Artist's Lisa Steele and Kim Tomczak pose an essential question:

We are in a state of becoming, but becoming what?

As made clear during the concurrent meetings of G20 leaders in Toronto, the struggle for control of the Global Empire is on. A new empire, a new civilization, a new layer of history, another evolutionary step propels us, hurtling towards an uncertain future. In the *Star Wars* movies it is eventually revealed that arch-rivals in the battle for control of the galaxy, the Galactic Empire and the Rebel Alliance, are actually dual aspects of the same entity. Both are governed by The Force, a mysterious, unseen, phenomenological power that can be used for purposes good or evil. Empire is what we build; what we build is who we are, and perhaps more significantly, who we aspire to be, who we dream to be.



Installation view of works by Jade Rude and Bruno Billio/ Liam Crockard/ T&T. Photo: Fayaz Chumara/MOCCA

DADA DELIRIO

EVERYWHERE, NOWHERE ...

My paintings emerge from black and white photographs I take in such seemingly public spaces as the lobbies of multinational corporations or hyper-lit passages on the Las Vegas casino strip. These photographs are psychological impressions rather than actual documentation.

DELIRIUM!

I travel through cyber-cities...sprawling, colossal spaces where the real and the virtual mingle, becoming immersive, destabilizing and ecstatic.

DO WE CARE?

Increasingly we are shutting out the real world – real experience, real sex, real travel. We know ourselves and the Other through mediated or simulated experiences on the screen. What is 'real'? What is simulated? Can we tell anymore?

ABJECTNESS?

The medium of painting itself critiques the virtual through the implied touch of the artist's hand, and the materiality of the paint and the canvas. To paint is to be human, to be messy. The surfaces hover somewhere between skin and screen, caressed by my touch, but with no visible tracking of the hand / brush.

BEAUTIFUL BUT DEAD...

The colours are purposefully fake...video blue radiates, blood red mutates into neon pink. Life has become 'still-life', frozen on the screen...observed, recorded, duplicated, transmitted, digitized, coded. Seductive in its Virtual Perfection. Luminous layers of colour act as barriers and filters that position us as surveyors, looking out from 'windows' in the imagined viewing chambers.

TRANSGRESSIONS...

I have always loved to roam the streets alone in the core of a big city - Montreal, New York, Toronto - preferably around dusk. From the time I was 'let loose' as a young woman, it was my first mode of freedom. I was unreachable; my coordinates unknown. There was a perverse pleasure in testing the limits of safety, in the arenas of public space.

I HAVE EVIDENCE!

Visiting Paris, the city of the original *flâneur*, I learned 'how to watch back' with my camera. With the camera I could record and therefore remember. From then on I was watched with suspicion or curiosity, but little desire.

VECTORS OF THE GAZE...

Woman, myself, empowered as a *flâneuse* of the present urban environment. The gaze and the object of the gaze; woman viewing/ desiring/ consuming the commodity landscape and woman as viewed/ desired/ consumed; consumed by visible/ invisible avatars of the gaze, in a complex public theatre of contrivance.

OVER-EXPOSED...

Today in the city, all of us are exposed. The surveillance camera, the postmodern *flâneur*, does not distinguish whether you are male or female, young or old. Tracking us, cataloging our images, sometimes reflecting them back to us and, present or not, we have internalized a presumption of watchful gazes.

HIDING IN THE LIGHT?

Panoptic vision, formerly reserved for the architecture of places of incarceration – the prison, the mental institution – has spread to the transparent enclosures of office towers. I look at the woman behind her desk. She looks at me. Reflected in the glass, I see me looking at her.

PASS THE POPCORN, PLEASE...

The private, the home, these were once woman's enclosures. The public, the city, the entire world, was the roaming space of men. Women heard of 'the world' through 'second hand' accounts. Now we all see the world second hand, as recorded, edited, enhanced. As we cozy up on the couch we become voyeurs, the public becomes private, televised atrocities blend with the decor.

COLLIDING SPACES / PLACES...

I visualize this new globalized space, so layered and so fluid, merging impressions of my present environment with TV images of bombs exploding in remote villages, or memories of living four months in a tent on Meares Island, B.C., or looking out a train window, travelling across Siberia.

EVEN IN THE WILDERNESS!

Beyond the urban gaze of the surveillance camera, we can now be tracked and positioned by satellites. Space has collapsed, fusing the near and the far. "Objects in the mirror may be closer than they appear."

MARY SHELLEY'S DR. FRANKENSTEIN?

Extreme contrasts of light and dark evoke the sublime, but not the sublime in nature seen in the work of the 19th century painters such as Friedrich and Turner. Now that nature has been observed, measured, subjected to experiments and tabulated as part of the Enlightenment Project, it only remains to be consumed by us. Nature may retain its beauty, but in our arrogance we assume that it has lost much of its terror intrinsic to the sublime. Within the contemporary world, our technological achievements have become 'the new sublime.'

THE TECHNO-SUBLIME ...

Janet Jones, DADA Delirio #2, 2009. Oil and acrylic on canvas, 54" x 96"
Photo: Cassandra Wesenagen. Courtesy of the artist.



DAN BERGERON

Defiant Front, 2010. Mixed media, 423" x 138" Courtesy of the artist.

JODA CLÉMENT WITH NIGEL CRAIG

Cherry Beach Project, 2004. Performed and recorded by Joda Clément and Nigel Craig inside an empty waste oil storage tank, direct to DAT, June 4 & 5, 2004 at Cherry Beach, Toronto. Sound, c-prints. Courtesy of the artists.

LIAM CROCKARD

All Thumbs: Worktable and Stool No. 3, 2010. Found materials and acrylic medium, 55" x 36" x 40" Courtesy of the artist.
Remedy Et Cetera, 2008-10. Mixed media, various dimensions. Courtesy of the artist.

DORIAN FITZGERALD

VIP Room, Casa da Música, Porto, Portugal, Rem Koolhaas (Arbitres), 2010. Acrylic paint and caulking on canvas, 102" x 156" Collection of Fasken Martineau DuMoulin LLP. Photo: Toni Hafkensheid. Courtesy of the artist and Clint Roenisch.

SARA GRAHAM

Proposition For a New System (18), 2010. Ink on vellum, yellow plexiglass, 24" x 30" Courtesy of the artist and MKG127, Toronto.
Proposition For a New System (01), 2007. Ink on vellum, yellow plexiglass, 24" x 30" Courtesy of the artist and MKG127, Toronto.
Proposition For a New System (05), 2007. Ink on vellum, yellow plexiglass, 24" x 30" Courtesy of the artist and MKG127, Toronto.
Proposition For a New System (02), 2010. Ink on vellum, yellow plexiglass, 24" x 30" Courtesy of the artist and MKG127, Toronto.
Proposition For a New System (03), 2010. Ink on vellum, yellow plexiglass, 24" x 30" Courtesy of the artist and MKG127, Toronto.
Proposition For a New System (14), 2010. Ink on vellum, yellow plexiglass, 24" x 30" Courtesy of the artist and MKG127, Toronto.
Proposition For a New System (15), 2010. Ink on vellum, yellow plexiglass, 18" x 24" Courtesy of the artist and MKG127, Toronto.
Proposition For a New System (16), 2010. Ink on vellum, yellow plexiglass, 14" x 18" Courtesy of the artist and MKG127, Toronto.
Proposition For a New System (17), 2010. Ink on vellum, yellow plexiglass, 14" x 18" Courtesy of the artist and MKG127, Toronto.

ALBERTO CUDEDEA ZAMORA

66807, 2009. Colour print, 12 1/2" x 19" edition 1 of 5. Collection of the Museum of Contemporary Canadian Art.

DAVID HAN

Margaret Learns to Drive from There to Here, 2009. Multi-channel video installation, car, video projectors, amplifier, computer, custom software. Courtesy of the artist.

JANET JONES

Projections #1, 2010. Oil and acrylic on canvas, 18" x 18" Courtesy of the artist.
Projections #2, 2010. Oil and acrylic on canvas, 18" x 18" Courtesy of the artist.
Projections #3, 2010. Oil and acrylic on canvas, 18" x 18" Courtesy of the artist.
DaDa Delirio #2, 2009. Oil and acrylic on canvas, 96" x 54" Courtesy of the artist.
DaDa Fines #1, 2006. Oil and acrylic on canvas, 96" x 54" Courtesy of the artist.
DaDa Fines #3, 2006. Oil and acrylic on canvas, 96" x 54" Courtesy of the artist.
DaDa Delirio #4, 2009. Oil and acrylic on canvas, 96" x 54" Courtesy of the artist.

YVONNE LAMMERICH

Rimner, 2010. Plaster, plastic, polish, Styrofoam and graphite, 144" x 144" Courtesy of the artist.

YVONNE LAMMERICH AND JOSH THORPE

Hole in the Wall, 2010. Removal of paint, drywall, steel and particle board, 1 1/2" diameter. Courtesy of the artists.

TRISTRAM LANSOWNE

Explosion, 2009. Watercolour on paper, 51" x 30" Private Collection, Toronto. Courtesy of the artist and LE Gallery, Toronto.
Bowen, 2009. Watercolour on paper, 27.5" x 43" Private Collection, Toronto. Courtesy of the artist and LE Gallery, Toronto.
Skeleton, 2009. Watercolour on paper, 46" x 43" Private Collection, Toronto. Courtesy of the artist and LE Gallery, Toronto.
Semi-Detached, 2010. Watercolour on paper, 38" x 54" Toronto. Courtesy of the artist and LE Gallery, Toronto.
Tomb, 2010. Watercolour on paper, 42" x 28" Private Collection, Toronto. Courtesy of the artist and LE Gallery, Toronto.

AN TE LIU

Cloud, 2008. Air purifiers, ionizers, sterilizers, washers, humidifiers, ozone air cleaners; running continuously, 205" x 146" x 83" Courtesy of the artist and MKG127, Toronto.

SAMINA MANSURI

After-Images: Cadillac Reconstruction Site 9, 2009-2010. Multimedia sculptural installation with a video projection duration of 2 min 20 sec, 180" x 228" Courtesy of the artist.

JADE RUDE AND BRUNO BILLIO

Russian Mountain and Yellow Black Mountain, 2010. Wood, gold acrylic, Styrofoam and lacquer, 120" x 120" x 192" Courtesy of the artists.

ALEX MCLEOD

Terror Tainichi, 2010. Digital colour print, 48" x 96" Courtesy of the artist and Angell Gallery, Toronto.
Spectral, 2010. Digital colour print, 48" x 96" Courtesy of the artist and Angell Gallery, Toronto.

LISA STEELE & KIM TOMCZAK

Becoming B. Shot in Berlin in November 2007 and May 2008. HD video, duration 9:52.
Becoming V. Researched and shot in Vancouver, July 2006. HD video, duration 12:47.
Becoming T. Researched and shot in Toronto, July and August 2008. HD video, duration 12:14.
Courtesy of the artists.

T&T

False Creek, 2010. Digital c-print, 84" x 24" Courtesy of the artists and Clint Roenisch Gallery, Toronto.
Habitat, 2007-2008. Mixed media, model landscape, various dimensions. Courtesy of the artists and Clint Roenisch Gallery, Toronto.

JOSH THORPE

Subtractive Mural for MOCCA (after Aheba and Hayab), 2010. Latex paint removed by palm sander to reveal historical wall colours accumulated from 2005-2008. Various dimensions. Courtesy of the artist.
Two Subtractive Stripes for MOCCA's Title Walls, 2010. Layers of paint removed to reveal historical wall colours, 12" x 79" Courtesy of the artist.

DAVID TRAUTRIMAS

The Brilliant Destroyer, 2010. Digital print on archival paper, edition of 14, 20" x 30" Courtesy of the artist and LE Gallery, Toronto.
Radiant Proliferator, 2010. Digital print on archival paper, edition of 14, 20" x 30" Courtesy of the artist and LE Gallery, Toronto.
The Fragment Accumulator, 2010. Digital print on archival paper, edition of 14, 20" x 30" Courtesy of the artist and LE Gallery, Toronto.
Mesa Re-Investigator, 2010. Digital print on archival paper, edition of 14, 30" x 40" Courtesy of the artist and LE Gallery, Toronto.
Seismic Conduction Project, 2010. Digital print on archival paper, edition of 14, 20" x 30" Courtesy of the artist and LE Gallery, Toronto.
Storm Cross: Mathematics, 2010. Digital print on archival paper, edition of 14, 30" x 40" Courtesy of the artist and LE Gallery, Toronto.
Terra Thermal Insulator, 2010. Digital print on archival paper, edition of 14, 22.5" x 35" Courtesy of the artist and LE Gallery, Toronto.

EMPIRE

Our experiences in the built environment contribute to defining who we are and how we perceive our place in the world. *Empire of Dreams* considers our relationships to the tangible structures of our environment, but also the less visible and arbitrary structures that inform it, such as economics, politics and culture. Empires are built, maintained and transformed by these constructs in ways that are sometimes clear, but more often opaque. This exhibition and publication consider the phenomenology of the built environment - from the sacred and felt to the hypothetical and hyper-real.

The Museum of Contemporary Canadian Art and ONE HOUR EMPIRE are grateful to all contributors to the project for raising essential questions and providing timely insights into the world that we build and how we inhabit them.

The themes embodied in the exhibition - architecture, urbanization, economic and cultural paradigms, utopianism, existing and imagined space - are certainly relevant to our times and the project has been inspired by many recent exhibitions exploring similar disciplines, especially *Skyscraper City* (The Power Plant, 2001), *Constructive Folly* (Doris McCarthy Gallery, 2008), *The Legaspi Drive Project* (independent, Janine Marchessault and Michael Prokopow, curators, North York 2009), *Project* (Palais de Tokyo, Paris, 2010), and *Making Worlds*, the central exhibition at the Venice Biennale, 2009.

The Museum of Contemporary Canadian Art, ONE HOUR EMPIRE and all of the contributors to the project appreciate the crucial and generous support of the Michael and Sonja Koerner Director and CEO of the Art Gallery of Ontario, Matthew Teitelbaum; the RBC Foundation; artist David Blackwood; and the always enthusiastic and ardent philanthropic and educational group Partners in Art and their many sponsors.

The Museum of Contemporary Canadian Art would also like to thank ONE HOUR EMPIRE and their team for basing their latest issue on the exhibition, *Empire of Dreams*. May their empire flourish beyond an hour!

The activities at the Museum of Contemporary Canadian Art would not be possible without the extraordinary dedication and hard work of our Advisory Board and staff. In this regard we are particularly grateful to our educator, Carol Ann Ryan, who organized the series of public artist talks and discussions that were an integral component of this project, and to those who attended the events. Art cannot function without an engaged audience.

MOCCA is also grateful for the ongoing support that we receive for this and all of our programming and activities from TORONTO Culture, the Ontario Arts Council, the Canada Council for the Arts, BMO Financial Group, the Hal Jackman Foundation, our many private donors and members, and to the arts communities of Toronto and beyond for inspiring the dream and ensuring survival of the MOCCA Empire.

DAVID LISS
ARTISTIC DIRECTOR AND CURATOR
MUSEUM OF CONTEMPORARY CANADIAN ART

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