

CURRENT & UPCOMING EVENTS (more overleaf)

Saturday Talks | Every Saturday, 2 PM | Free – All welcome

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

BIOGRAPHIES

Tiziana La Melia (b. Palermo IT) is an interdisciplinary artist working in painting, installation, film and writing. She received her MFA from the University of Guelph in 2011 and BFA from Emily Carr University of Art and Design in 2008. Recent exhibition venues include Macaulay & Co. Fine Arts, Vancouver; The Apartment, Vancouver; Xspace, Toronto; Western Front, Vancouver, and SBC Galerie, Montreal. La Melia's writing has appeared in *Night Papers V*, *Bartleby Review*, *Setup Magazine*, *Millions Magazine*, *Pelt and West Coast Line* among others. Selected readings and screenings of her work include Wendy's Subway, New York; Model, Vancouver, and The Banff Centre, where she participated in the residency *Figure in a Mountain Landscape*. In 2014, she was the Writer in Residence at TPW R&D, Toronto. La Melia is the 2014 winner of the RBC Painting Competition. She lives and works in Vancouver, BC.

Rachelle Sawatsky is a Los Angeles-based artist whose work spans a wide range of media from painting, drawing and ceramics to writing. Sawatsky's work has been featured in solo and two person exhibitions at Western Front Gallery, Vancouver; Or Gallery, Berlin; and the Finley Gallery, Los Angeles, and in group exhibitions at Galerie Mezzanin, Vienna; Night Gallery, Los Angeles; Presentation House Gallery, Vancouver; Public Fiction, Los Angeles, and as part of the 2012 *New Wight Biennial* at UCLA. Her writing has appeared in *C Magazine* (Toronto), *Happy Hypocrite* (London), *Art Papers* (Atlanta), and *Night Papers* (Los Angeles) amongst other publications. She graduated with a BFA degree from Emily Carr Institute in Vancouver (2005) and received her Master of Fine Arts degree from the Roski School of Fine Art in Studio Art at the University of Southern California in 2013.

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Mercer Union, a centre for contemporary art

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All images courtesy the artists.

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CELEBRATING 40 YEARS



The Grantchester Pottery: Artist Decorators,
Institute of Contemporary Arts, London (2013)



Trees on the shore of Lake Gein, 1908 (2014),
catalogue page with printed text

SPACE: Giles Round

28 November 2014 – 31 March 2015

Mercer Union has commissioned British artist Giles Round for the second billboard project at the corner of Bloor Street West and St. Clarens Avenue.

Giles Round looks to the language of modernism to explore the history of ideological positions that proposed methods for new modes of living and production, and the influence these have had on how we live in the present. His works trace alternative histories of British modernism – those that are often overshadowed by the canonical modernist narrative and particularly those relating to the decorative or domestic. As such, his work encompasses sculpture, architecture, typography, furniture and functional objects. Through these various forms, he engages with the discourse and ideas that dismantle the hierarchies between applied and fine arts and merge art and life. There exists an allusion to moments of collectivity, inherent within the history of modernism itself, hinting at past, present and future euphoria. Since 2011, he has been working on three conceptually driven long-term and large-scale projects: The Coniston Secession, The Grantchester Pottery and THE SHTIP. The Grantchester Pottery mimics the structure of historic artists' decorative arts studios such as Omega Workshops and Hammer Prints Ltd, to embrace and elicit collaborative anonymous artist design, producing utilitarian ceramics, alongside other decorative household items – such as printed and woven textiles, wallpaper, painted furniture and hand painted murals. Developed in close collaboration with Grizedale Arts, Cumbria, The Coniston Secession is a long-term project and meta-structure in which to produce works – Grizedale Arts acts as producer and skilled artisans as manufacturers. THE SHTIP is a collaboration between two artists, Giles Round & Sarah Staton; mutable in form, it has to-date operated as a gallery, architectural practice and artist.

Giles Round (b. 1976) lives and works in London, UK. Recent exhibitions include *Commons Room*, Grizedale Arts at Anyang Public Art Project Biennial, Anyang, South Korea, 2014 (collaboration with Grizedale); *Hey, I'm Mr Poetic*, Wysing Arts, Cambridgeshire, 2014 (group); *Zero Hours*, Art Sheffield Biennial, Sheffield, 2013 (billboard commission); *ARTIST DECORATORS*, The Grantchester Pottery, ICA, London, 2013 (solo); Studio Wares, The Grantchester Pottery, David Dale Gallery, Glasgow, 2013 (solo); *Décor*, The Grantchester Pottery, ROWING, London, 2012 (solo); *The Studio of Giles Round*, Serpentine Gallery, London, 2010 (solo).



You And Me Right Here Right Now: Theatre In The Post-Cinema Age

A performance lecture by Jordan Tannahill featuring Bridget Moser

Tuesday 9 December 2014, 7 PM - Free and All Welcome

Jordan Tannahill will be the fourth guest of our FORUM critical conversation series: a monthly program of talks, lectures, interviews, screenings and performances at the gallery. Tracing through the histories of cinema and theatre, Tannahill will explore representation, resistance and experimentation tackling the widely touted claim that “film has killed theatre” in an irreverent yet considered performance lecture featuring performer Bridget Moser.

Jordan Tannahill is a Governor General's Award-nominated writer, performance creator, and filmmaker. His work has been presented at the Art Gallery of Ontario, the Toronto International Film Festival, and the British Film Institute. He is currently an artist-in-residence at Canadian Stage, Tarragon Theatre, and Buddies in Bad Times Theatre. He runs Videofag, a hub for experimental/queer performance and video in Toronto with William Christopher Ellis. His book *Theatre of the Unimpressed* will be published by Coach House Press in Spring 2015.

Beyond Broadcast: Artists and the Future of Public Service TV

A lecture by Maeve Connolly

Wednesday 21 January 2015, 7 PM - Free and All Welcome

Since at least the 1960s, artists have been drawn toward broadcasting, sometimes seeking access to new technologies and broader audiences or opportunities to interrogate television as a cultural form. In recent years, however, collaborations between artists and broadcasters have changed, resulting in installation works or online projects in addition to, or instead of, projects for transmission. In this lecture, Connolly will examine new forms and contexts of art-TV collaboration, framing projects by artists such as Gerard Byrne, Kathryn Elkins, Luke Fowler, Liz Magic Laser and Katya Sander within an exploration of the altered economic, political and cultural status of public service TV.

Maeve Connolly is a writer, researcher and lecturer at the Institute of Art, Design & Technology in Dublin, where she co-directs the MA in Art & Research Collaboration. She is the author of *TV Museum: Contemporary Art and the Age of Television* (Intellect, 2014) and *The Place of Artists' Cinema: Space, Site and Screen* (Intellect, 2009), and her writing has also appeared in various journals and magazines, including *Afterall*, *Artforum*, *Art Monthly*, *Frieze*, *Journal of Curatorial Studies*, *MIRAJ* and *Screen*. She has contributed to publications on the work of Bik Van der Pol, Gerard Byrne, Phil Collins, Jesse Jones, Bea McMahon, Niamh O'Malley, Sarah Pierce and Susan Philipsz, among others, and has curated screening programmes at venues such as Darklight Film Festival, FACT, the Irish Film Institute, LUX, Project Arts Centre and Tate Modern.

FORUM is generously supported by The Hal Jackman Foundation



Tiziana La Melia

The Eyelash and the Monochrome

Circles and Sequences: Lis Rhodes and Elisabeth Subrin

28 November 2014 – 24 January 2015

Artist Talk Friday 28 November, 7 PM

Opening reception to follow





Tiziana La Melia *The Eyelash and the Monochrome*

Front Gallery

Tiziana La Melia weaves writing, sculpture, painting and performance in layered installations which speak to female archetypes, personal narratives, passions and teenage desires. Exploring the potentiality of slippages between language and form, her work seeps between figuration and abstraction, in all senses of the terms.

Canadian poet Daphne Marlatt has written about “the active intelligence of language;” for La Melia there is no distinction between the different art forms or objects, everything is a signifier. References are multi-faceted, from Greek tragedy, teenage obsessions, the writings of Joyce Carol Oates, Mark Twain, Gertrude Stein or Yvonne Rainer, the personal and incidental, to female icons throughout history and in the present, pushing and pulling in different directions. Writing is often the starting point, from poem to script to play. Poetry lines become work titles, transforming the written word into the physical space of the gallery, or walls become pages, unfolding narratives populated by objects and materials. The exhibition is a space in which hierarchies collapse, theatre, poetry, writing, mythological female figures, personal narratives and popular culture are combined and meaning becomes elastic in form. Transmutability lingers throughout the work, in a photographic collage, *Surface Instruction* (2011), a worn apron becomes an oversized handbag while a twin table with pink glass emerges and recedes as Janis Joplin’s rose-tinted glasses in *Aquarium Club Console (Janis)* (2014). And yet underlying, sometimes playful juxtapositions are historical instances and trajectories. Live snails drawing on plastic speaks to the use of their shells in making the colour purple for women-only manuscripts, becoming in and of itself purple prose.

In this new body of work, a series of sequences are presented: hanging photographic collages, a metallic and purple bed, screens, paintings are no longer windows but doors, and a line is drawn along the gallery wall to stretch and physically push one’s limits. The potentiality of interplay manifests in the exhibition title, *The Eyelash and the Monochrome*. The line, a cursor with connotations of femininity and luck, is adjoined to the blank canvas. Rather than painterly in reference, it implicates the presence of absence, spaces in which there is potential for new narratives to be created.

—Georgina Jackson, Director of Exhibitions & Publications

Yellow Snail

Do snails eat lettuce

They eat vinyl, plastic, aluminum foil, anything that can float across the stage, drop heavy like a book or sink like falling paper.

They are like the rats of the ocean, they eat everything. Large cavernous stomachs, tongues like rakes.

Wait they don’t eat that, they are made of it. When you imagine them as beings

it is like reading a novel for hours and forgetting to eat. They are the paper that the words are printed on.

We talk about ego sometimes.

Some things just need to be in the world and we should let them.

Some things want to channel through you. It is very fashionable to draw lines between everything we said over fish tacos. It is a fantasy that everything makes sense.

There were bits of lettuce on the red metal table like the fashion show I saw of Eckhaus Latta. Models in platform sneakers walked a runway scattered with lettuce, not shredded iceberg but elegant greenleaf. Bright and regal.

That is so Tiziana, I thought. Lettuce, of course, obviously. All runways should be dotted with lettuce.

What is the evolution of snails?

First imagine slow lines moving across a page.

1, 2, 3, 4, slime arabesques from the Iron Age.

Stylized tracing, a line like a top stitch, a line on glass.

Drawing pants that suddenly become footed tights.

The first snails came out of the ocean with other beings that make drawings. Squids, cuttlefish, octopi and the sea hare, a relative of the snail, all release ink. The snail came with the Texas horned lizard who shoots blood out of his eyes. The verb we use is uncertain. Shooting is too violent. Slugs are slugs for single loaded pistols. Releasing is too passive. It implies that there is a mechanic or mechanism assisting that one releasing. Asserting what? A start, a flourish, a woman bending over a gun, the blackest ink seeping up white pleated pants. A line crossing out three words in a poem one wrote. The quality of the line is fast, equally sincere as what it is replacing.

If the line seems arbitrary, don’t worry it laughs. A letter becomes a character.

Copper conducts energy: taped on paper or a sculpture, it is strong but flexible enough to have been bent by hands or a tool. Each piece has a different beginning and end that you can see on the surface, like a poem rising to the top and giving itself room and white space. The whiteness is permission related to life, living, lively.

The nemesis of snails is salt.

Although they lived once lived in the salty sea, the ratio of the salinity of their body made sure they didn’t dry out and perish from the salty suck of salt. Now they are fragile, permeable things that come out only in favorable conditions like night or damp mornings. They avoid the day.... what do they do?

Snail drawings

MENSA patterns in a dark corner? Or just complete mid-afternoon absence, like heat emanating from the body that makes the brain feel like floating jello in a hot tub, shifting but immobile from 1-4pm.

Beauty error is slow.

The path of resistance is description.

I write ‘Relax’ in cursive writing on the cover of my notebook and then fill several pages, finding the looping R’s most satisfying. I imagine them in a curly mess of italic hair. I review the side bar ads from Gmail conversations with Tiziana:

Do you want A Peace of Mind and Men’s Jewelry

3D Lashes = money making scheme

Why is it they think we need to be healed

through Mystic Eye Replacement

Plaster Repair

and make wrong decision about Ceiling Popcorn Removal

we have honesty

Picture of my Evening

we don’t need that.

the popcorn was beautiful

stucco sparkle like Authentic Li Lash

Distance Healing in Edmonton.

Wonder if Snails are obsessed with their own ejaculate

They chart clear slime maps on mattresses.

And feel slightly guilty and but also satisfied by masturbating in public bathrooms like men. They play games. They make long videos with titles like “Mysterious Feminism.” You don’t even realize that the films are slowed down because the actions are so deliberate and careful.

The actual sex between snails involves the sound of slapping on damp skin. It is abstract; it is figurative. It doesn’t really matter if you do one or the other at any one time. You just have to trust that there is a relationship between the two; you think it is related to risk. You trust beauty. Few people have written about it because few people have even seen it. Writing about it is a practice of experimental ethnography. Tree brush. Scallop shape. Meandering dark line on pavement. You know there is a reason for it and you trust and believe that it exists. You buy a Gore-tex jacket and visit cool climates in damp seasons. You get up early in the morning and walk for hours. Eventually you can feel dew coming on like as if you were allergic to it. In the morning, you say to yourself. And you look and write and draw as if you were the only one who has ever thought to look and observe this one particular thing. In the morning, you say to yourself. In the morning, the morning says back to you, blushing yellow then pink.

—Rachelle Sawatsky

Circles and Sequences: Lis Rhodes and Elisabeth Subrin

Back Gallery

Taking its starting point from the name of the first British organization to distribute women artists’ film and video works, Circles, co-founded by Lis Rhodes in the 1970s, this series of film screenings engages with questions of representation, politics, language and perception.

Friday 28 November – Saturday 13 December 2014

Lis Rhodes *Light Reading* (1979) B & W, 16mm transferred to video, 20’

A key experimental feminist filmmaker, Lis Rhodes fuses political intent with material means to question the ideological underpinnings of the language of cinema, culture, society and politics. Breaking down formal cinematic structures, disconnecting sound and image, narrative and conclusion, and alluding to photography, writing, performance, collage and political analysis, she explores the authority of language. In this key work *Light Reading* (1979), Rhodes creates a space between language and looking. A litany of words, excerpts from Gertrude Stein, questions of ‘she’ and descriptions of moments and acts of looking and reading, plays out against a black screen and juxtaposed with fragmentary letters and numbers, collages, measurements and images. The film insistently addresses questions of female representation, personal drama and female subjectivity.

Lis Rhodes (b.1942, lives and works in London) is an artist and filmmaker. Her films have been screened internationally since the 1970s. Recent exhibitions include: *Light Magic*, The Tanks, Tate Modern, London; and *Dissonance and Disturbance*, ICA, London (solo), both 2012. Select screenings include: *In person: Lis Rhodes*, Film Museum, Vienna, 2009; *Essentials: Expression: The Secret Masterpieces of Cinema*, Tate Modern, 2008; and *WACK!: Art and The Feminist Revolution*, Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles, 2007.

Tuesday 16 December – Saturday 10 January 2015

Lis Rhodes *A Cold Draft* (1988) B & W/Colour, 16mm transferred to video, 30’

A Cold Draft (1988) engages with the rights of women and broader civil rights in the increasingly privatized environment of Thatcher’s Britain in the 1980s. The voice is employed, in contrast to fragmented collages of still and moving images of landscapes, streets, interiors, industrial exteriors, as well as words and drawings, to speak of the conflicts and uncertainties of a universal female experience.

Tuesday 12 January – Saturday 24 January 2015

Elisabeth Subrin *Shulie* (1997) B & W/Colour, colour, video, 36’ 30”

Elisabeth Subrin seeks intersections between history and subjectivity, investigating the nature and poetics of psychological ‘disorder,’ the legacy of feminism, and the impact of recent social and political history on contemporary life and consciousness. In this work *Shulie* (1997), Subrin remade, almost shot for shot, a rediscovered 1967 film made by four male graduate students about a young female art student in an attempt to create a portrait of the ‘Now’ generation. Then aged 22, Canadian-born Shulamith Firestone would later go on to write the radical feminist text *The Dialectic of Sex: The Case for Feminist Revolution* (1970), but there are few traces of this future act and the documentary remained unfound until the mid-1990s. In this layering of the past, 1967 in 1997, and re-presenting this film, Subrin addresses the legacy of the past within the present moment: has progress been made, and if so to what extent? As Kristin M. Jones writes “Shulie is a portrait of one young woman, but it ripples with ghosts and reflections.”

Elisabeth Subrin engages in a wide range of genres, forms and contexts to create conceptually driven projects in film, video, photography and installations. Select recent exhibitions include: *Lost Tribes and Promised Lands*, Vox Populi, Philadelphia (solo), 2013; *Anti-Establishment*, The Hessel Museum at Bard College, NY; *Henceforth and Forever Free*, The Haggerty Museum of Art, both 2012; *Neighbo(u)rhood*, The Mattress Factory Art Museum, Pittsburgh; *Shulie: Film and Stills*, The Jewish Museum, New York, both 2011. She lives in Brooklyn, New York.