



the dark arts: [magic + intuition](#)
curatorial incubator 6

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january 9 - january 29, 2009 /
trickx of light curated by darryl bank

january 30 - february 19, 2009 /
where the wild things are curated by erik martinson

february 20 - march 12, 2009 /
marvelous! ruin! collapse! curated by leigh fisher

march 13 - april 2, 2009 /
life on venus curated by matthew hyland

lisa steele

“any sufficiently advanced technology is indistinguishable from magic.”

With a nod to Arthur C. Clarke's so-called third law, thus began Vtape's *Curatorial Incubator v.6 : THE DARK ARTS: magic and intuition*. With an aim to uncover the hidden connections between video artworks that speak to the unknown, the uncanny, the other worldly, we put out a call for proposals and were flooded with many excellent applications. From these, four participants were selected – Darryl Bank, Leigh Fisher, Erik Martinson and Matthew Hyland. Throughout the late summer and early fall, they scoured the Vtape archives and beyond, seeking works that employ the surreal, that evoke voodoo, that address the unknown. It was a rich and varied journey for each of our incubatees.

Each has responded in unique and highly individualized ways to this challenge. With *Trickx of Light*, Darryl Bank approached the subject through an examination of the "hoax" and the paranormal. Erik Martinson's *Where the Wild Things Are* lays bare the dynamics that exist between parent and child with poignant effect. Leigh Fisher's *Marvelous! Ruin! Collapse!* starts with a consideration of an idea from surrealist Andre Breton's – the *fixed explosive* – the experience of disbelief that is constantly suspended only to appear again.. And finally Matthew Hyland's *Life on Venus* poses questions about the gendered nature of the uncanny.

This year's Incubator provided participants with an intricately engaged workshop on the subject conducted by art historian, critic and curator Jennifer Fisher, editor of *Technologies of Intuition* (2006), an anthology of texts, interviews and artists' projects on the theme of intuition and assistant professor at York University in the Department of Visual Arts. And again this year, we connected each of the participants with an experienced writer to provide editorial feedback on their essays. We extend our appreciation to Jennifer Fisher for her input and editorial skills (in addition to the excellent workshop she delivered), as well as to Michelle Jacques, associate curator of contemporary art at the Art Gallery of Ontario, Marnie Fleming, curator of contemporary art at the Oakville Galleries, and assistant curator of contemporary art at the Art Gallery of Ontario Ben Portis.

The Curatorial Incubator v.6 has an added feature this year: on February 28, 2009, we will host a symposium on issues facing emerging curators of media arts. Participants will include past Incubator participants Emelie Changgur (CI v.1 2003), Jennifer Matotek (CI v2 2005) Jon Davies (CI v.4 2007), Jean Paul Kelly (CI v.5 2008) as well as this years' participants.

Lisa Steele, Vtape Creative Director

darryl bank
trickx of light



In 1967, an unemployed Chicago bellhop named Ted Serios achieved fleeting infamy for his apparent ability to project mental images onto the unexposed film of a Polaroid Land camera. Serios' so-called "thoughtographs" featured a variety of subjects, ranging from local architecture, to far-flung tourist sites, to Russian *Vostok* spacecraft - each surrounded by a characteristic halo of blurring and distortion.

Jule Eisenbud, a Colorado-based psychiatrist, closely analyzed and studied Serios' abilities over a two-year period, culminating in the 1967 publication of *The World of Ted Serios: "Thoughtographic" Studies of an Extraordinary Mind*. Despite rampant scepticism and contrary evidence from the medical and scientific communities, Eisenbud maintained that Serios' abilities were subject to rigorous, highly-controlled experimentation, and there was simply no way that his "thoughtographs" could be a hoax. Eisenbud died in 1999, unwavering in his support of the veracity of Serios' ability. Serios passed away in 2006. All that remains are Serios' strange images, which are not only significant for their purported representation of Serios' ability, but also for the fact that they were never categorically debunked, nor were they absolutely proven and verified. Serios' ability will remain in stasis, stuck between the far-fetched truth claims he made, and our understanding of the laws and limits of physics, optics, and technology.

The paranormal is inextricable from the shadow of skepticism and doubt it elicits. In fact, the very idea of the paranormal requires an analogue "normal" through which it can be defined – one cannot exist without the other.

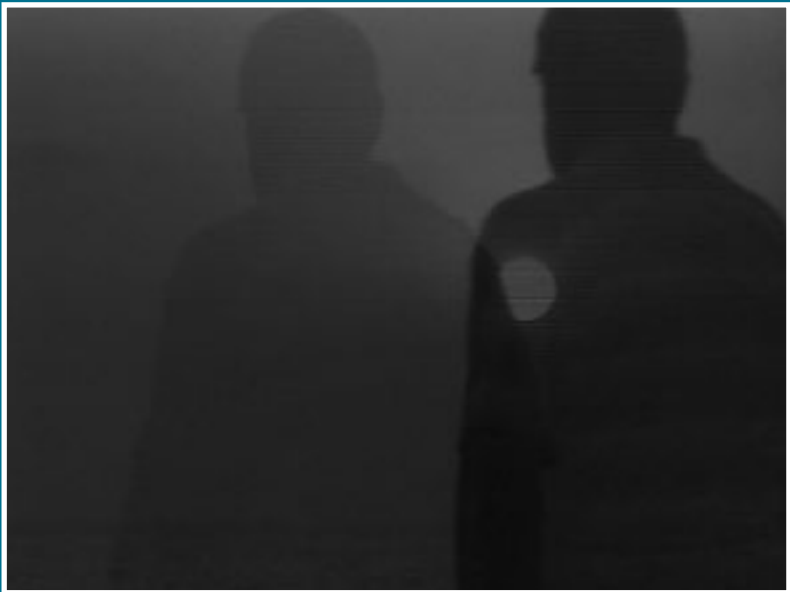
So when we call something a "hoax", we're making an implicit normative judgement. A hoax can only be understood as such after it has been debunked – or, to take the opposite position, after the veracity of the analogue "normal" has been reaffirmed. It's a post-mortem designation. Before this, hoaxes are merely truth claims, assertions, attempts to supplant one reality with another.

But what happens when a truth claim is never debunked, but also never verified? Is it possible to conceive of a paradoxical "non-hoax" – a truth claim, perhaps grossly dubious – but nonetheless unverified, or unverifiable?

The three videos in this program function via this static position – between the para-normative truth claims of the hoax and the analogue “normal”. They collectively argue for a third category that extends beyond mere “truth” or debunked hoax. For now I’ll call them “unverifiable assertions”, for lack of a better phrase.

In Walid Raad’s *The Dead Weight of a Quarrel Hangs* (1999), the viewer is presented with a series of episodic segments that each loosely resemble a documentary film in their combination of moving and still images, captions, and voiceover. Broadly, the video deals with the Lebanese civil wars of 1975-1991, but specifically focuses on a number of surreal events that are said to have occurred during this time. A group of historians meet every Sunday at a racetrack to stand behind the official race photographer, placing bets not on which horse will win, but on whether the photo in the next day’s newspaper will show the horse before, after, or during its passing of the finish line. Large photographic prints of a flat blue tone are revealed, after scientific analysis, to contain hidden images of men and women from warring militias who disappeared during sea voyages, drowned, or were found dead in the Mediterranean. Every day for an entire year, the operator of a security camera post at a busy pedestrian boardwalk turns his camera away from his intended target, and instead, focuses it on the sun as it sets. When he thinks the sun has set, he returns to his duties.

At face value, the events detailed in *The Dead Weight of a Quarrel Hangs* can be summarily dismissed as fantastic, fallacious allegations – as hoaxes. But to view them through those terms is to miss the agency and scope of Raad’s project. The segments in *The Dead Weight of a Quarrel Hangs* are truth claims of an alternate, unverifiable history of the Lebanese civil wars. They suggest that “history” – even recent history - is limited, and the result of considerable editing and authorship. The magnitude of the Lebanese Civil Wars – their violence, their length, their internecine complexity – renders them ultimately unverifiable and unknowable, which Raad mirrors in the episodic truth claims that comprise his work.





Gretchen Sankey / *Dorothy Dunbar* / 1998

Lynne Kirby & Erika Suderburg / *Memory Inversion* / 1988

Gretchen Sankey's 1998 video *Dorothy Dunbar* tells the story of a Toronto waitress who captured local attention in 1957 when it was revealed that she was a "miracle healer" who was helping the "down-on-their-luck" patrons of Shopsowitz's Diner, where she worked. Soon, her story was featured in local newspapers, and hundreds of letters began to pour in from across the country, asking for her help. Cynics argued that Dunbar was motivated by greed, and was using the story to bring in more customers to the restaurant. Without warning, she fled the city, living out the rest of her life out in anonymity.

Much like Walid Raad's *The Weight of a Dead Quarrel Hangs*, *Dorothy Dunbar* can be taken at face value as a simple hoax, as the video's documentary-type structure works to substantiate a series of truth claims that seem wholly fictional. However, I would argue that Sankey's work functions as an "unverifiable assertion" because the aforementioned truth claims are empty – not so much pointing to a truth as they are pointing to an absence.

Dorothy Dunbar employs formal devices often used in documentaries, but stretches and distorts them to the point where they no longer serve as representations of objectivity. Primarily, the selective panning and zooming across still images (achieved through the use of a Rostrum camera – also popularly known as the "Ken Burns effect") is presented here as a dizzying signification of nothing. Conventionally, the effect "animates" still images when archival film clips aren't available. Select details of a photograph – e.g. a single person within a group - can be focused on, pointing to their relevance within the documentary's narrative. In *Dorothy Dunbar*, the camera seems aimless, even confused, when presented with a still image. It pans around a photograph of the titular individual's apartment, slowing down and speeding up, and eventually zooms in on a particular object in the room – but the zoom defies our expectations of this formal device. Instead of stopping and directing our attention to the object, the camera keeps zooming until the image breaks up into an undefined mass of pixels. Perhaps the camera is hinting at something – that there is no apartment, there is no Dorothy Dunbar – it's just information, it's just nothing. You cannot prove or disprove an absence.

Lynne Kirby & Erika Suderburg's *Memory Inversion* (1988) completes the program of videos, further extending the notion of the "non-hoax" through its investigation of a displaced, alien Los Angeles that oscillates between the real and the imaginary, the natural and the constructed. In *Memory Inversion*, L.A. itself is the "unverifiable assertion".

In the video, the city appears temporally dislocated. Many sites in the city seem free from human inhabitation, as if the artists have somehow filmed a post-apocalyptic, future version of the city, where only a handful of people remain. At another point in the video, high-rise office towers in downtown L.A. are presented alongside footage shot in a prehistoric cave. The video seems to be shot in the past and the future, simultaneously.

Several segments in *Memory Inversion* suggest a dislocation between the forces of nature in the city and the rapid development that attempted to constrain them – for example, the concrete flood channels that contain the L.A. River, or the Page Museum at the La Brea Tar Pits, where black asphalt still bubbles next to fake prehistoric mammals (and the neighbouring Los Angeles Country Museum of Art).

Late in the video, a woman speaks to the camera. She states, "you guys are treating me like a type...the city has always been different for us. It's not just different now." This woman's assertion of a separate Asian experience (and knowledge) of Los Angeles adds a cultural/racial dimension to the notion of Los Angeles as an unverifiable assertion.

Hollywood looms large above the city, a constant reminder of how reality can be constructed and edited. We know L.A. is "real", in the sense that it is a place on a map, which you can visit. People live there, businesses run there. But beyond that, is it knowable? Or is there actually no singular, monolithic Los Angeles, but rather, an infinite number of potential, unverifiable "Los Angeleses", each one equally valid/invalid?

The three videos in this program collectively argue for a "third category" between the debunked hoax and our understanding of an objective reality. Certainly, they raise more questions than they answer – but in these oblique, open-ended questions, they provide a means of exploring the limits of history, technology, and geography.

PROGRAMME NOTES

[Walid Ra'ad / *The Dead Weight of a Quarrel Hangs* / 1999 / 18:00](#)

Comprised of a series of episodic segments that unfold as a time-based archive, *The Dead Weight of a Quarrel Hangs* functions as an alternate, unverifiable history of the Lebanese civil wars.

[Gretchen Sankey / *Dorothy Dunbar* / 1998 / 14:00](#)

Dorothy Dunbar tells the story of a Toronto waitress turned "miracle healer" who rose to brief (and purported) prominence in the late 1950's.

[Lynne Kirby & Erika Suderburg / *Memory Inversion* / 1988 / 16:30](#)

In *Memory Inversion*, Lynne Kirby & Erika Suderburg investigate a displaced, alien Los Angeles that oscillates between the real and the imaginary, the natural and the constructed. The artists seem to suggest that L.A. itself is unknowable and unverifiable, comprised of layers upon layers of competing claims of being.

A pair of dark sunglasses is positioned on the right side of the image, partially cut off by the edge. The sunglasses have a thin frame and dark lenses. A soft, diagonal shadow or gradient runs from the top left towards the bottom right, creating a sense of depth and movement. The background is a clean, bright white.

erik martinson
where the wild things are

Where the Wild Things Are, the classic picture book by Maurice Sendak, speaks to a child's desire to be one with their parent, to consume and be consumed, despite the impossibility of this merger. It's a story of wild and youthful imagination and its eventual demise as the adult world seeps in. It's also about a struggle to be heard by the adult world, to be understood and recognized. In the story, a young boy named Max has been sent to his room without supper. Through an imaginative projection he turns his bedroom into a fantastic land where wild things dwell. Max colonizes the wild things, becoming their king. After a joyful, but ultimately unfulfilling reign, he leaves for home. Traversing his fantasy back to his room he finds his dinner, brought up by a now absent and never pictured mother. The last words of the story, "it was still hot,"¹ referring to his lonely meal, is the only tenderness in the book. The world presented in *Where the Wild Things Are* is one where children and adults are at odds. "Sendak dramatizes what children always already know to be true and only adults find difficult to remember: childhood is often a terrible, confusing time, made more so by an adult-centred ideology that implicitly requires the child to ignore his felt experience of this truth."² Max, in taming the wild things of his fantasy, has 'othered' and conquered himself to fulfil the adult demands placed on him.³ Sendak presents a dialogue breakdown between adult and child, while simultaneously highlighting that "the child does have a life inside of him or her that, while it lasts, is as big and mysterious as the universe itself."⁴

The three videos in the program *Where the Wild Things Are* approach parent/child dynamics with an eye for their complexity, dialogue miss-functions, and psychic traumas. The 'Wild Things' are not wholly lost; they lie beneath the surface to be accessed, summoned in the service of love, mourning, and transference. First in this trio, Tseng Yu-Chin's *Who's Listening? 5* is a variation on the 'primal scene,' Freud's concept of a child fantasizing or bearing witness to his or her parents' engaged in sexual activity and interpreting the act as violence.⁵ Against a heavenly, but sterile white background, a display of affection is taking place between a mother and son. They play through a series of kisses. With each kiss, one individual is in control; the other is the (often unwilling) recipient. Two views roll simultaneously, on the right the figures are framed against the white couch; on the left is a close up of their reactions and expressions. The repeated actions and phrases of the scene stretch and challenge the forms that intimacy takes. The familial roles and

expectations of mother and son, the ideologically separated adult and child, and the tension of taboo are all bound together in a white walled purgatory. The camera and the viewer are witnesses to the primal scene of affection/violence. What about the artist, the instigator of this project? Does he represent a father figure witnessing an Oedipal act? Tseng is not the father, nor the father figure. Perhaps he is more interested in representing the fissures in understanding between parents and children rather than Oedipal jealousy, and his sympathy lies with the child. Sandor Ferenczi compared the inherent misunderstanding in the classic psychoanalytic exchange between analysand and analyst to an abused child seeking tenderness from an adult. The child's needs are misconstrued and the adult administers a cold and clinical response. As a result the child identifies with the adult, suppressing criticism.⁶ The couch in Tseng's video is the stage for an experiment with the parent/child dynamic that plays with the terms of traditional psychoanalytic relationships. The boy accepts his mother's affections, with the occasional protest. His frustration appears when his attempts at reciprocation are blocked. He calls his mother a 'pervert,' expressing his frustration with the communication breakdown and the thwarting of his self-expression. A battle is waged in embraces. There is a sliding of roles: adult to child, giver to receiver, analyst to analysand, and vice versa. The experiment attempts to fuse the two figures together, to eliminate their need for dialogue, but ultimately it is the fact that neither figure is heard, neither is listening, that makes this 'wholeness' impossible. Ferenczi advocated that analysts be honest with their analysands, admit when they have made errors, extending the relationship beyond a mirroring and into trust and tenderness, toward therapy.⁷ In Tseng's experiment tenderness is exploited and what emerges is a complex portrait of what we wanted as children, delivered in a way that is unfulfilling and constrained by adult sensibilities and power.

five more minutes by Dena DeCola and Karin E. Wandner captivates equally with its emotional vulnerability and bravery. The video follows the arc of a mother and daughter's evening routine. Dena plays herself as a child; Karin plays her mother. It is clear that a role playing exercise is in effect but it is not until the first rupture in the performance that the viewer realizes the emotional magnitude of what is unfolding. At the dinner table Karin proposes a toast to "Mommy and Dena forever." The first emotional fissure appears. Dena begins to cry, running out of the room. When she returns, out of character





Dena DeCola and Karin E. Wandner / *five more minutes* / 2005 / still photo credit: Star Barry
Mary J. Daniel / *Parenthesis* / 2003

Karin comforts her with a long hug. In a reflexive moment Dena addresses her, the camera directly, and the audience saying "try again." She quietly states: "she seems there." At this point the trauma beneath the apparently fictional narrative begins to show. In the bath scene Dena hops in the tub and playfully swims about. She asks her mother to come into the tub with her, to draw birds on her back with soapsuds. At first Karin is hesitant, but then Dena breaks the verisimilitude asking: "Karin please." The importance of this ritual to Dena is heightened by this request, and Karin disrobes and gets into the bath. The act of drawing the bird on Dena's back and then washing it off recalls the game of *fort-da* created by Freud's grandson Ernst.⁸ The game consists of two parts, 'fort', or 'gone', represented by Ernst throwing a wooden reel over the side of his bed, and 'da', or 'back', when he pulls his toy back in by the string attached to it. "Ernst was representing a mother who might go away but then would always come back."⁹ In Dena's case the bird has no string, her mother is not coming back. *five more minutes* can have a therapeutic function, much like the expression itself, repetition extends our moments of pleasure. The entire video becomes a game of *fort-da* through the posterity it achieves. Though there is no motherly return in the video, the possibility for repeat viewings becomes the game of flirting with disappearance and reappearance. While the bird is being traced on Dena's back she begins to cry, the motherly spirit comes and goes, hurts and heals. In the final segment, Dena runs ahead to her bedroom. Karin follows, playfully asking whether Dena has gone to the "imaginary forest or bedroom?" Finding her 'wild thing' under the covers and tickling her, she proceeds to tuck her in. When Karin announces: "Mommy has to go," the trauma and reminder of loss comes to surface once again. Dena pleads for Karin not to leave, but it has to be so. Karin visibly struggles with the idea of going, embodying the mother who won't come back but sympathizing with Dena's desire for her to stay. Karin leaves and Dena slowly regains composure. She gets out of the bed, puts on a robe, and heads back to the dinner table to have a glass of wine. She reuses Karin's glass, rubbing the lipstick smudge from its rim to her lips, one last kiss. The scenario is over; exhaustion has sunk in.

"Essentially, every trauma poses a threat of loss of dialogue. By repeating the situation of threat, we retain the hope of continuing the dialogue. Any dialogue, even one that entails fear, threat, suffering, and self-punishment,

is better than absence of dialogue. The trauma of loss often leads to a repetition of trauma in dialogues with the living.¹⁰

One of the end credits of *five more minutes* reads “written, directed, performed and lived by Dena DeCola and Karin E. Wandner.” “Lived by” is a statement of profound connection between the work and the lives of its creators. Though the work was a painful production, they conjure and confront trauma, live with it, in a dialogue.

Mary J. Daniel’s *Parenthesis*, a work from the series *Pictures of Things That Aren’t There*, presents a scene of apparent tranquillity. On a calm lake, in a canoe with her mother, Mary moves her camera/eye from one side of the vessel to the other, looking for something. It’s not clear what she is looking for. Something wild? The camera captures only ripples, reflections of the clouds in the water, and the odd image of vegetation or debris piercing the opaqueness. Mary’s mother sits holding a paddle, back to the camera, in the canoe that is bracketed by the water. The water seems to take on the parenthetical form of the work’s title as the camera’s gaze finally rests on her mother. The first work in the series, *This Time Last Year*, provides a hint to what Mary is looking for. In the earlier piece, composed of many still frames of family members attempting to form a portrait, Mary describes her mother:

“This time last year we knew my mother’s mind was going, but not how fast. This time last year I planned to capture what was still left of her as she had been but stopped because I only saw what was already gone, and then what would this time next year be lost?¹¹”

It is her mother’s decline that is in the boat with them, a third unwanted guest. With the camera in *Parenthesis* finally resting on her mother, Mary asks her to say “hi.” Her mother obliges without moving, still looking ahead. Mary asks her to turn around and say “hi,” but the video cuts to the next shot, chopping Mary’s sentence off. Though a peaceful scene, the trauma lingers as daughter becomes parent and mother becomes child. Their dialogue is fractured and lost. In many ways this video is about mourning someone who is still alive:

“The process of mourning is not only about detachment and the gradual

relinquishment of the lost one, it is also about a reconfirmation of our attachments. The *full* work of mourning encompasses the rebuilding of our inner world and the restoration of the beloved in the form of an inner presence - if not precisely a Spirit or a ghost, an aspect of ego or conscience, an ideal, a passion."¹²

The scene in the boat with Mary and her mother is a step in the process of internalizing memories and spirits. Through spending more time with a loved one in decline, one also spends more time with the memory of who they once were. It might be said that Mary's mother has become a parenthesis of her former self. As they take the canoe to shore, toward Mary's father, a certain calm is invoked. Mary looks back out onto the lake, trying to locate mother's spirit in mourning, to be internalized and forever with her.

Each of the three works in this program track different kinds of loss involving the mother. All three enact dialogue with a mother figure and 'wholeness' is the ultimate goal. *Who's Listening?* 5 examines the dialogue itself, the insufficient language used between the mother and son. The distance cannot be closed despite their embraces. *five more minutes* uses ritual enactment as a means of channelling a lost mother. The spirit of the mother is called back into being through a surrogate; a medium whose performance is comforting until the act is over or the script isn't followed through to the desired fulfilment. In *Parenthesis* the mother is almost 'gone,' but remains physically, a living flesh and blood ghost. Dialogue is all but lost and the internalization has already begun. The tragedy in all three cases is that social, physical, and spiritual divisions serve to obscure any true connection with the mother figure: intimacy is deeply flawed, and the search for it is traumatic. Still there is a trace, a fantasy of wholeness, and like the 'still hot' meal left for Max in *Where the Wild Things Are*, we need to eat while it's still warm, find nourishment in the glimpses of memories remembered in a better light.

- 1 Maurice Sendak, *Where the Wild Things Are*, Harper Collins Publishers, 1963, copyright renewed 1991, 37.
- 2 Joseph L. Zornado, *Inventing the Child: Culture, Ideology, and the Story of Childhood*, New York: Routledge, 2006, 189.
- 3 Ibid, 184.
- 4 Ibid, 188.
- 5 Sigmund Freud, *The 'Wolfman' and Other Cases*, Trans. Louise Adey Huish, Penguin Classics, 2002, 234-241.
- 6 Sandor Ferenczi, "Confusion of Tongues Between Adults and the Child (The Language of Tenderness and the Language of [Sexual] Passion)", trans. Jeffrey M. Masson and Marianne Loring, in *The Assault on Truth: Freud's Suppression of the Seduction Theory*, auth. Jeffrey M. Masson, Toronto: Collins Publishers, 1984, 284 – 292.
- 7 Ibid, 286.
- 8 Louise J. Kaplan, *No Voice is Ever Wholly Lost*, New York: Touchstone, 1995, 29.
- 9 Ibid, 29.
- 10 Ibid, 32.
- 11 Mary J. Daniel, *This Time Last Year* (video), 2002, 2 minutes.
- 12 Louise J. Kaplan, *No Voice is Ever Wholly Lost*, New York: Touchstone, 1995, 19.

PROGRAMME NOTES

[Tseng Yu-Chin / *Who's Listening?* 5 / 2003 / 24:20](#)

"If two people can distill out the nouns that represent each other, what is your feeling for the other? You love her because.... You hold on to her with.... Underneath it all, would you say what you've felt depends on vocalizing it with all the words that surround you? Or are your feelings automated by your body?" - Tseng Yu-Chin

[Dena DeCola and Karin E. Wandner / *five more minutes* / 2005 / 17:23](#)

five more minutes is an exploration of grief. Two women spend an afternoon recreating lost time. What begins as play-acting breaks open into a world where the tenderness and sorrow of having to say goodbye exist untempered.

[Mary J. Daniel / *Parenthesis* / 2003 / 3:55](#)

A simple inadvertent sequence of a few unassuming moments ends up feeling somehow sad and somehow beautiful. How this happens is hard to say. It has something to do with the interplay between what we can and cannot see, the incidental tensions underlying each small moment, the figures forming and reforming on the side.

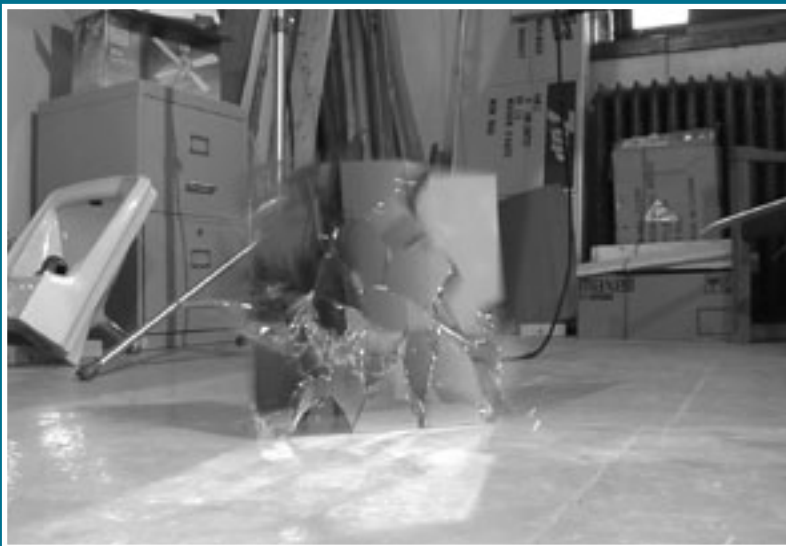
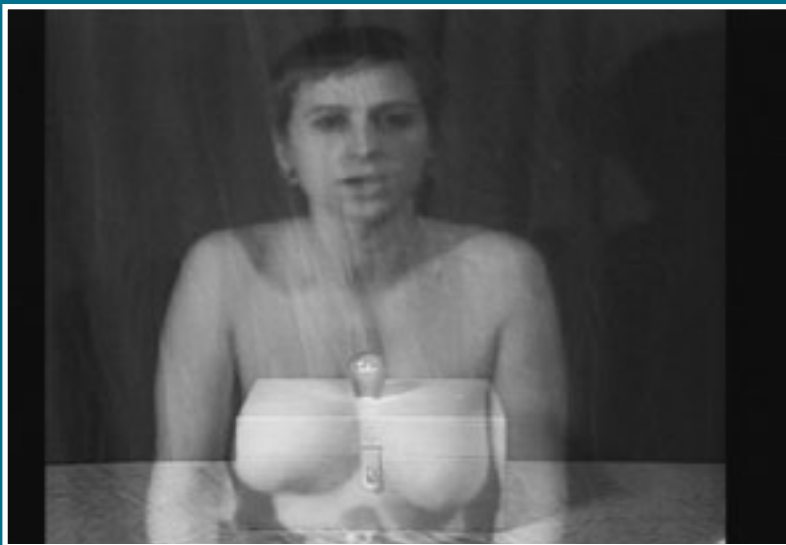
leigh fisher
marvelous! ruin! collapse!



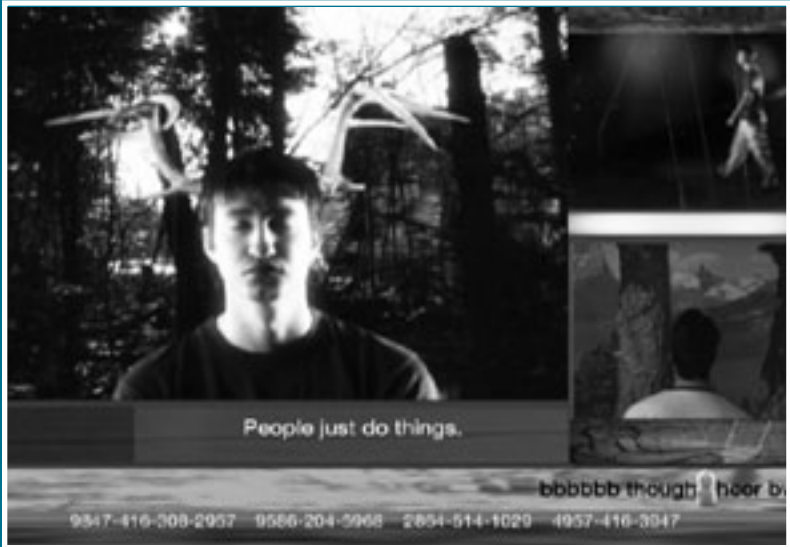
At a time of economic collapse, a consideration of magic brought to mind the provocative response to damage¹ wrought by a social order built upon speculative excess: André Breton's surrealist magic. The development of Breton's poetics of marvelous rupture through the fixed-explosive in photography² and the uncanny remnants and automatons of capitalist progress³ in the movement's early journals are my specific point of departure. In Breton's poetics, the juxtaposition of opposing forces, analogous to the conflict between life and death, animate and inanimate, and light and dark in animist ritual, can be held in a tension to produce the liberatory potential of the extra-rational.⁴ Breton called for a collapse of the domination of the rational and its excesses.⁵ He believed the process of juxtaposition could collapse the rigid categories upon which such dichotomies are based, the fixedness of what distinguishes them one from the other.⁶ The application of certain of these principles to contemporary film and video seemed to be a process full of potential for an embodied response to the work in this program.

"The marvelous as a rupture in the natural order, [...] a challenge to rational causality, [and] a re-enchantment of a disenchanting world..."⁷ operates as an unstable phenomenon that troubles fixed absolutes and rigid categories. Breton attacked the rationalism gone amok in early 20thC Europe that fixed the relationship of the body and imagination to technology, time and containment of the extra-rational in the social order.⁸ A re-enchantment through rupture threads through the program, troubling the fixedness of these relationships.

A rupture occurs of the authority of scientific and technical knowledge over the body in the works by Jennifer Reeves and Steve Reinke, destabilizing conditions of production. *Light Work I* is a hand-processed film of abstract painted chemical burns and stitched ruptures of the film emulsion. Industrial machines and the industrially manufactured social control that mood suppressant pharmaceuticals provide, index the domination of the human body by scientific and rational knowledge. The film connects these chemical processes through sewing incisions into the film surface, linking feminized labor of sewing, the filmmaker's own repetitive labor and the repetitive work of industry. Outmoded machinery emerges and disintegrates under the pressure of crystallization, stitching and cutting.



Steve Reinke / *The Watermelon Box* / 1996
Gwenaél Bélanger / *Le Tourmis* / 2008



Michael Stecky / *Magical Thinking* / 2005
Aleesa Cohene / *Supposed To* / 2006

Reeves' soaks and paints the film stock in a soup of mood-correcting medications that seep across the image. Images of industrial stamping and outmoded, churning turbines are soaked and burnt with the medication. The film stock is punctured and sewn repeatedly with a needle and jeweled thread. This rupture through puncturing and burning reveals an otherwise invisible inside of industrial processes and its requirements. These exposed insides reveal chemical transformations that stand in for the conditions of industrial progress and raise the questions about the extreme limits of its requirements at a material and psychological level.

Steve Reinke destabilized the logic of progress and production differently in *The Watermelon Box* and *Family Planning*. In *The Watermelon Box* the artist, naked from the waist up, stands behind what appears to be a homemade wooden box topped by a small light bulb and reads the story of little known and ill-fated invention. The box is an obsolete invention, a machine that can "hear" and identify a single word of human speech. It is an outmoded sensing machine. It is extraordinary in the audacity of its singularity and the homemade-ness of its limitations. It is without practical application or commercial value. There is an active juxtaposition between technological progress and the uncanny conditions of obsolete invention and its remnants. The rupture reveals "the other side of progress, [...] its flotsam, its discards, its rejects. It is progress as obsolescence."⁹

Steve Reinke's *Family Planning* considers the relationship of technologies and their implication within reproduction and the boundaries of the body. This video is a brief account of how Reinke's grandmother made atypical use of kitchen technologies accompanied by images of membranes and seeds bursting from fecundity or rot. Reinke describes his grandmother's magical thinking about the possibility of "air-borne sperm". He flatly describes her repurpose of kitchen objects to serve as IUDS in her vagina. There is an uncanny juxtaposition in Reinke's consideration of his grandmother's efforts that destabilizes fixed notions of historical progression normally attributed to our family origins. Her beliefs, her inventiveness and its possible motivations go unexamined but her production of the family is bound up with uncanny associations with the kitchen as a site of both control and sustenance of reproduction. The grandmother's extra-rational beliefs create a counter-narrative within linear progression of the family story. By functioning outside

the logical she exercises an agency that may go unopposed. *Family Planning* and *Watermelon Box* disrupt the authority of scientific knowledge and its fixed dominion over language and the body. They present a counter-history of the absolute conditions of production and reproduction, and the insides and outsides of bodies.

Material objects carry uncanny affect in the video *Supposed To* by Aleesa Cohene. Cohene reanimates, re-cuts and reassembles narrative fragments from an archive of outmoded films from a recent past. The people in these brief scenes are in vulnerable states, their gestures fumbling and desperate, moving through uncanny and chaotic domestic environments. These people appear to be operating under a sustained threat of mishap or violence. Personal effects get smashed, spill out in disarray or fall and shatter with relentless regularity. A breakdown in the order of the everyday domesticity appears to have either just occurred or is imminent.

Within the structure of the film there is a transmission of something shared and unstable: an intuitive broadcast from the just out of date. The weight of the return of the recent past is uncomfortably close and fertile with sources of shame. An authoritative voice-over describes a state of obligation, of suppression of individualism that is being expressed in "passive-aggression." The juxtaposition of an ashamed child's admission of wrongdoing with the mostly silent desperation of the adults seems to unleash a visually shocking succession of violent accidents and destruction. Human bodies hurtle through windows and drowned bodies wash up on the shore. The climax of this destruction seems to be followed by a kind of release. Following this visual and deathful collapse, new conditions appear to arise. A succession of people pick up their phones and are addressed by the authoritative voice who reminds them of a collective "deep wordless knowledge" that they all have and "must feel." What these innervated and emboldened people will do once in touch with this intuitive knowledge is unclear.

Containment and control of extra-rational states of mind thread thematically through this program. Collage and the fixed explosive are active phenomena in the final two videos by Michael Stecky and by Gwenaël Bélanger. There is an explicit broadcast and innervation at work in Michael Stecky's *Magical Thinking*, not found in the outmoded, but within a relentless digital cable

present. Time in this video is an electronic present that does not index the body but continually frames and contains it. *Magical Thinking* ruptures conditions of conformity as they are mediatized. The video is a hallucinatory nightmare, framed within the visual graphic structure of cable news.

Marvellous rupture is explicit in *Magical Thinking*. A drum skin is pierced and its innards are ripped out. Raw meat, viscous jelly and what appear to be sticks and leaves are pulled out and cooked in a frying pan. Scrambled syntax, prime numbers, collaged and absurd announcements rupture the logic of the news reports as they appear on the screen. Nature and the artificial are conflated. "Some birds and bees are fake," the screen announces as news, as kitsch ceramic birds rotate in the air attached to string. Stecky transforms into a creature with giant blurring eyes that gains large antlers on each side of his head. As his eyes squint and his image distorts, a text announces "catalyst to start a progressive collapse."

Gwenaël Bélanger's *Le Tournis* deals with materials and time within artistic production. Time is controlled in such a way as to bring a mirror into immanent life and destroy it in what appears to be a single process of transformation over repeatedly suspended action of falling to the ground. Through the manipulation of time, a mirror appears in shards of shimmering reflective glass and disappears. Manipulation of time ruptures the return and destruction of the object falling through space, creating the experience of Breton's *compulsive beauty*, which "...shakes the subject's self-possession, bringing exaltation through a kind of shock – an *explosant-fixe*."¹⁰ Light and dark, life and death are held in an irresolvable tension that collapses in glittering shards on the floor of the artist's studio.

There is a relationship between the fixed-explosive in the shattering mirror in Gwenaël Bélanger's *Le Tournis* and the collapse of plate glass windows by hurtling bodies, in Aleesa Cohene's *Supposed To*. Through the controlled duration of each shattering collapse of glass, the mirror is reanimated, lit from within, by an infinite number of its constituent reflecting parts. There is a relationship to the initial dazzling and shocking destruction of glass in a window and disintegration of the glass in a series of mirrors. This is not only inanimate material given life in its visual destruction through cinematic technology's mastery of time, but the destruction of a window and a mirror

as symbols of optical knowledge and mastery. In *Supposed To*, a catastrophic image shocks with the immanent death of a body hurling through plate glass. *Le Tournis* shocks with the embodied immanent death of the subject before an impossible mirror. It shatters repeatedly as it appears, destroying the possibility and authority of an optically mirrored individual subject in a looping multiple of instants. This shock of marvelous rupture is a momentary but compulsively repeated lapse, a brief opening to a potential for new extra-rational transformations.

The videos in this program destabilize fixed notions of historical progress, capitalist production and social control with disparate strategies. Marvelous rupture troubles fixed dichotomies of absolutes and allows for potent counter-histories and counter-narratives to emerge. Hallucinatory subjectivities rupture closed structures that cannot contain them. A longing for transformative collapse and the unstable power of its potential, drives repeated engagement with the uncanny returns of the projected image. Erratic reappearances of rupture and collapse in this program briefly expose a possibility for newness: a freed and unpredictable marvelous that closed systems and rigid categories cannot contain. It is in this opening that the potential for an intuitive and magical agency bursts through.

1 Foster, Hal. *Compulsive Beauty*. MIT Press, Cambridge, 1993.169

2 Ibid. 27, 28

3 Ibid. 21, 162

4 Ibid. 173

5 Ibid. 188, 189

6 Ibid. 16, 20

7 Ibid. 19

8 Ibid. 172

9 Krauss, Rosalind. *The Optical Unconscious*. The MIT Press, Cambridge, 1993. 34

10 Ibid. 59

PROGRAMME NOTES

[Jennifer Reeves](#) / *Light Work I* / 2006 / 6:12

Developed from expanded cinema performances of double-system 16mm film with composer Anthony Burr, *Light Work I* mixes direct-on-film process with HD video. Educational and technological films are manipulated with melted pharmaceutical medications and sewing dime-store necklaces into the emulsion. The effects of the century-old practices of physical treatment of the film are photographed in extreme close up in HD. The film unfixes the category of obsolescence in technology, if only briefly.

[Steve Reinke](#) / *The Watermelon Box* / 1996 / 0:46

Reinke reads an account of the invention of a language-sensing machine, standing behind it as the limit and potential of the invention is demonstrated. The brief video considers the origins of technological advance and juxtaposes a simple wooden machine against the inscrutably complex human bodies that loom in half-transparency behind it. A wooden box with its endearing light bulb is an unlikely source for the sleek digital sensing machines that we can so easily hold in our hands.

[Steve Reinke](#) / *Family Planning* / 1996 / 1:00

Family Planning considers the inventiveness and particularity of a grandmother's preventative cautions amidst bursting seedpods and oozing colanders. Uncanny relationships to kitchen objects and the role chance plays in familial origins are considered. This video suggests a degree of cover may be provided to those who indulge in the eccentricity of magical thinking.

[Aleesa Cohene](#) / *Supposed To* / 2006 / 7:00

Supposed To samples fragments from an uncanny archive of corporate training videos, thrillers and melodrama to expose shame-based underpinnings of the obligations within capitalist society that dog individuals with misdirected guilt, aggression and exhaustion. The video exposes another collective phenomenon at work at the same time, as disparate characters begin to hear the same voice, that speaks to them of a shared potential and destiny.

[Michael Stecky / *Magical Thinking* / 2005 / 4:30](#)

The graphic and logical structure of a cable infotainment broadcast is overtaken and subverted as Stecky disrupts its conventions. He performs with electric knives and turns a drum into dinner as grandma claps along. Birds, meat and creaturely vision contribute to his transformation within the framed madness of a 24/7 media environment. Whether the hallucinatory media images are the cause of this transformation or the very structure that contains and limits this creature's power remains unresolved.

[Gwenaël Bélanger / *Le Tournis* / 2008 / 2:28](#)

In this video a mirror appears and falls in an artist's studio as the camera turns and turns. The sparkling beauty of its manipulated descent transforms its destruction. The mirror resists states of wholeness and debris until it finally ends in brilliant shards on the studio floor. This gesture references the destructive/creative process of artistic production and the resistant and unstable qualities of objects as end-products of creation..



matthew hyland
life on venus

“How are we to speak of [...] common things, how to track them down, flush them out, wrest them from the dross in which they are mired, how to give them meaning, a tongue, to let them, finally, speak of what it is, who we are.”

-Georges Perec, *Species of Spaces*, 1974

“It may be true that the uncanny is nothing else than a hidden, familiar thing that has undergone repression and then emerged from it.”

-Sigmund Freud, *The Uncanny*, 1919

In post-war North America, home economics curricula for young women were staples of secondary school education. Covering the basic domestic skills every young woman would require to ‘successfully’ run a household (from proper laundry techniques to effective entertaining strategies), home economics programs were but one facet of broader post-war efforts to refocus women’s attention away from the public sphere and into the space of the home. While the ‘private sphere’ as it is commonly understood predates this era to the industrialization of early modernity, it wasn’t until the mid-twentieth century that women of all classes were expected to systematically identify with and invest in domesticity.

This re-situation of women in the immediate post-war years as domestic consumers rather than economic producers abruptly and effectively de-skilled women who were quickly gaining political and economic clout. At the same time, it re-established expectations around civility, morality, and social decorum, quietly but successfully promoting an ‘appropriately’ docile feminine subject of both home and nation.

While the deeply marginalizing effects of such subjectivity would come to light in the mid-1960s -- perhaps most famously with the publication of Betty Friedan’s *The Feminine Mystique* in 1963 -- the widespread success (and lingering effects) of post-war domesticizing efforts are difficult to deny. In particular, the immersive nature of this discipline--encouraging women to establish strict daily routines, to focus on the details of the domestic, while reinforcing the importance of respectability--was significant for its ability to make expected and familiar otherwise disparate activities. In so doing, the architecture of the ‘feminine’ everyday was

rendered--and remains--largely invisible, the familiar comforts of hearth and home taken for granted by many as an entitlement of contemporary existence.

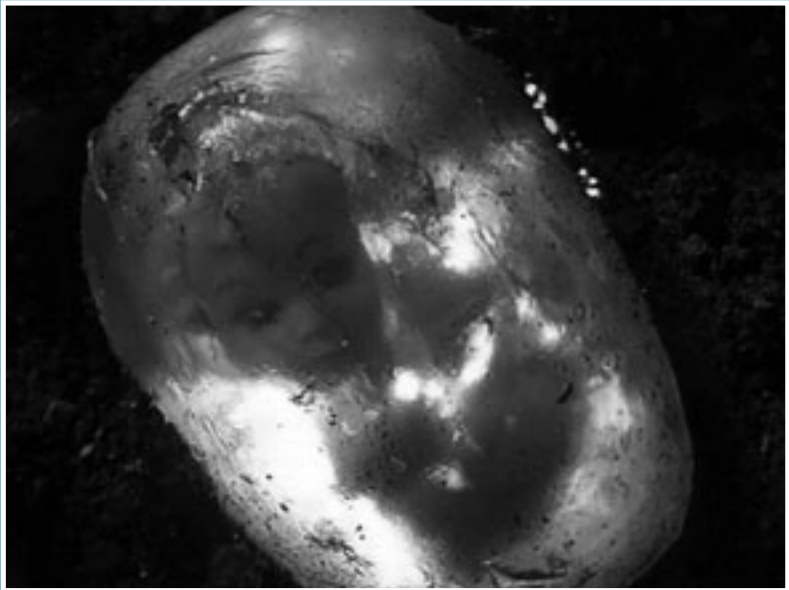
Over the past four decades, countless feminist artists have used a range of strategies to upend such conjecture, altering the threshold of the noticed to bring into view that which may, at first glance, seem unexceptional. In revealing crucial connections between private activities and gendered life in the public sphere, works such as Mary Kelly's *Post-Partum Document* (1973-1979), Mierle Laderman Ukeles's *Maintenance Art Performances* (1973-1974), and the various notebooks of Annette Messager (1971-1974) unseated the quotidian from the realm of the innocuous, instead raising questions about the structure and substance of 'ordinary' gendered existence.

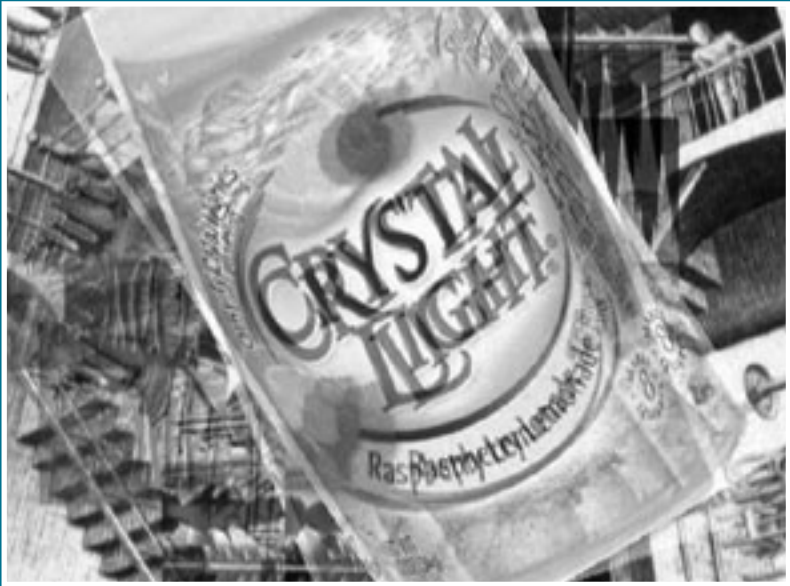
Life on Venus collects both recent and seminal feminist media works that have followed from these canonical projects. Read through their shared use of various estrangement tactics, these works use the distance afforded by the camera to present subtle (and sometimes not-so-subtle) refashionings of everyday situations that underscore the unbearable, the fantastic, and the disquieting in the most banal of activities.

Unhomely

In his 1919 paper, "The Uncanny," Freud deftly charts the semantic life of the German word *Heimlich*. Once near-synonymous with *Gemütlichkeit*—the security and reassurance of the domestic, the familiar—Freud notes that the connotations of *Heimlich* have wandered linguistically over time, often marking the concealed, secret, or strange. Accordingly, Freud suggested *Unheimlich*, or the uncanny, could capture just this turn—from familiar to strange (and vice versa)—and the cognitive dissonance that often accompanies it.

That *Unheimlich* translates literally to 'unhomely' is not without significance. The comfort secured by the home is done so only given its recess from view, its dependability. To bring to the fore that which structures the familiar is to threaten it, make it vulnerable and, as with most instances of the uncanny, arouse a faint sense of dread.





Shana Moulton / *Whispering Pines 8* / 2006
Deirdre Logue / *Eclipse* / 2005

Martha Rosler's classic *Semiotics of the Kitchen* (1975) is a prime example of such discomfort. Turning Julia Child on her head, Rosler brusquely presents us with an A to Z of domestic paraphernalia. While the words she speaks and the objects she presents seem harmless enough, her deadpan delivery into an unmoving camera beckons us to revisit their significance. Offering neither the instruction nor the encouragement characteristic of cooking programs, Rosler's near-violent gesticulations instead evince the stifling character of ordinary domesticities.

Gunilla Josephson similarly responds to the intolerable nature of the domestic, but rather more explicitly: with violence. In *CRASHBANGSMASH* (2001), a simple white bench sits in an empty basement. A trumpet sounds, as if to signal a procession, followed by the appearance of an axe held by an unseen figure. Against a soundtrack of disquieting noises—braying horses, breaking glass, barking dogs—the bench is reduced to mere debris. Aside from the more apparent references to the violence of expectation, Josephson's use of the camera straddles the documentary of performance and the whimsy of fantasy, suggesting this as the artist's fanciful response to the severity of the quotidian.

Another place, not here

Violent fantasies such as Josephson's are common enough (Valie Export's *Genital Panic* (1969) is perhaps the most well-known example), but the fantastic is also frequently used to dissociative ends. Confusing the lines between the real and the imaginary is a hallmark of the uncanny, often deployed to revealing ends. In elevating the details of the ordinary to the realm of the absurd, 'rational' approaches to the everyday can be dispensed with, opening up new ways of looking at the otherwise unremarkable.

Jennet Thomas' *SHARONY!* (2000), for example, spins a wry bedtime story of two young girls who discover an embryonic plaything (Sharony) buried in the backyard. Nurturing their new companion as she develops, they innocently ply her with the troubling contradictions of gendered existence. Despite the girls' best efforts, Sharony proves unable to navigate such treacherous terrain, and falls victim to the Madonna/Whore divide from which she sprang. While the manner in which this tale unfolds begets

amusement, the nature of the story itself is unnervingly familiar territory, a classic, even if unspoken reality of contemporary femininity.

Shana Moulton's *Whispering Pines 8* (2006) presents us with a similar domestic backdrop, otherworldly in its familiarity. Overstuffed with faux-mystical tchotchkes and bric-a-brac, the home of Moulton's alter-ego Cynthia is a veritable hotbed for consumer objects charged with providing respite from the wearying effects of daily life. The artist's use of candy colours, quick edits, and cloying video effects heighten the everyday without dispensing with it—while we may see Crystal Light, bath salts, and electric frothers in a new light, the objects ultimately retain their pedestrian utility. Indeed, while Cynthia finds brief escape in her ornamentalized world, it is just that: brief. In the end, the numinosity of her carefully curated dominion reveals itself as empty and unfulfilling, an ineffectual distraction.

'Full of cracks'

The swiftness with which the works of Thomas and Moulton amplify the details of daily life to the realm of the unearthly reveals deep and uncomfortably familiar fault lines in contemporary feminine subjectivity. It seems almost moot to note that the psychic impact of such ruptures and fissures exacts a considerable toll. As scholar Kristin Ross has noted, "women 'undergo' the everyday--its humiliations and tediums, as well as its pleasures--more than men."¹ Here, the everyday takes on the character of subjection rather than mere experience, the quotidian itself an unending, discombobulating force.

In Deirdre Logue's *Eclipse* (2005), the artist tries in vain to verbalize the anxieties that structure her daily life. Appearing to us in the darkness of her studio, Logue leans in close to the camera, beckoning us to listen to the elusive sound of her jaw cracking (she is "full of cracks," she tells us), the most immediate of her concerns. Captured in night vision, we watch as her face is eclipsed by a black mass, this small worry (louder inside than outside) becoming synecdoche for all those other, larger troubles that lurk in the corners of the everyday, threatening to consume her, to consume all of us. While the artist is ambiguous about her relationship to her obsessions (source of anguish, source of strength, or both?), it is clear that a cultural framework through which to understand them fully is sorely lacking.

This dearth of space through which to grapple with the apprehensions of gendered being is further made salient in Eija-Liisa Ahtila's *Me/We, Okay, Gray* (1993). Drawing on the conventions of the television commercial, Ahtila presents three rapid-fire profiles of psychic unease, each situated against the backdrop of 'ordinary' family life. At 90 seconds each, the frenzied pace of these films reduces the anxieties of their female subjects to mere intermissions, adroitly capturing the fractured nature of the domestic, particularly its role in simultaneously manufacturing anxiety while manically denying its existence.

Want

At the heart of Salla Tykkä's *Lasso* (2001) lies a difficult tangle of voyeurism, desire, and exclusion. Gazing through a plate-glass window into a domestic interior, a young woman witnesses the feverish manipulation of a lasso at the hands of a shirtless man. Mesmerized by the frenzied, near-fantastic activity inside, the woman's response is stunted, confused--it is unclear if she is sweating, crying, or both. As the music builds to a crescendo, the lasso is cracked to the ground, abruptly confronting the protagonist with the divide that separates her (quiet, still) from her counterpart (engaged, alive). Skillfully manipulating the elements of melodrama, Tykkä produces a moment that subtly encapsulates the vulnerability, confusion, and isolation that tempers everyday gendered existence.

Tykkä's work, like most of the others in this programme leave one wanting -- of answers, of certainty, of comfort. These are unsettling works, to be sure, evoking a range of states from the absurd to the sinister. Their collected agonies and anxieties situate us on troubled terrain; the portrait of everyday life that emerges is far from rosy. The uneasiness engendered across these works isn't the product of fear or uncertainty, but of recognition; the true bastion of disquietude isn't the otherworldly, but that which we already know, and are unable to avoid or deny despite our best efforts to the contrary. It is here--in the dark underbelly of the 'innocuous' that a feminist uncanny of the everyday emerges, forcefully reminding us that the truly disturbing isn't the province of the supernatural or pseudo-human, but rather the very banalities that animate day to day life.

1 Kristin Ross, "French Quotidian," *The Art of the Everyday: The Quotidian in Postwar French Culture*, ed. Lynn Gumpert (New York: NYU Press, 1997), 24.



Salla Tykkä / *Lasso* / 2001

Eija-Liisa Ahtila / *Me/We, Okay, Gray* / 1993

PROGRAMME NOTES

[Martha Rosler](#) / *Semiotics of the Kitchen* / 1975 / 6:00

Semiotics of the Kitchen adopts the form of a parodic cooking demonstration in which, Rosler states, "an anti-Julia Child replaces the domesticated 'meaning' of tools with a lexicon of rage and frustration."

[Jennet Thomas](#) / *SHARONY!* / 2000 / 11:00

This is the story of two young girls who dig up a tiny woman from the back garden. They incubate her in their mouths, in their bed, they lock her in a dollhouse wallpapered with pornography to make her grow up faster, feeding her through a tube in the door. When she is life-sized and ready to play they take her to the disco.

[Gunilla Josephson](#) / *CRASHBANGSMASH* / 2001 / 3:00

Domestic violence: an axe, a bench, a basement, a crash, a bang, a smash....

[Eija-Liisa Ahtila](#) / *Me/We, Okay, Gray* / 1993 / 5:00

A short film in three episodes, *Me/We, Okay, Gray* offers rhythmic monologues that address identity, control, sexuality, and catastrophe, all amongst the trappings of daily life.

[Shana Moulton](#) / *Whispering Pines 8* / 2006 / 8:00

In this installment of Moulton's ongoing *Whispering Pines* series, the artist's alter-ego Cynthia continues to seek refuge in the alchemy of household objects. Cynthia's decorative dalliances lead her to a stimulating otherworld, albeit only briefly.

[Deirdre Logue](#) / *Eclipse* / 2005 / 5:00

In her studio, the artist fears the worst. Camera up close, we watch as she tries to determine the source of that strange internal cracking, all the while a sinister blackness descends upon her.

[Salla Tykkä](#) / *Lasso* / 2001 / 4:00

Lasso depicts a moment in a young woman's life, a moment at which one's inability to face the other--or oneself, even--culminates in a powerful sensation somewhere on the edge of the unreal.

artists and curators
biographical information

EIJA-LIISA AHTILA's multi-screen installations explore experimental narratives about the unsettling human dramas at the center of personal relationships. Her work has been exhibited widely, including presentations at Documenta II, Kassel (2002); Tate Modern, London (2002); the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art (2003); and the 51st Venice Biennale (2005). Ahtila lives and works in Helsinki, Finland.

DARRYL BANK is a Toronto-based artist and curator. Recent exhibitions include 'Every Stratified Thing on Earth: John Anderson and the "Kingston Tapes"' (artist, Kingston, 2008) and 'Ghosts of Presence: International Emerging Artists' Video' (curator, Toronto, 2007).

GWENAËL BÉLANGER lives and works in Montreal. His artistic practice explores the limits of our perceptions of the real through graphic and photographic processes. He exploits the interaction between vision, imagination and memory. His work has been presented in solo shows in Montreal at Centre des arts actuels Skol, the Galerie Graff and Engramme (Quebec City). He has also taken part in numerous group exhibitions, including the Art qui fait Boum! Triennial (2003) and the Manif d'art 3 (Manifestation internationale d'art de Quebec, 2005). An installation version of *Le Tournis* was featured at the 2008 Quebec Triennale at the Museum of Contemporary Art, Montreal and will be exhibited in April 2009 at Nettie Horn Gallery, London. Gwenaël Bélanger is represented by Galerie Graff in Montreal. [www.gwenaelbelanger.com]

ALEESA COHENE was born in 1976 in Vancouver and is now based in Toronto. Her work has shown in festivals and galleries across Canada as well as in Brazil, Germany, Holland, Russia, Scandinavia, Turkey, and the United States, and has won prizes at Utrecht's Impakt Festival and Toronto's Images Festival. She has participated in residencies at the Banff Centre of the Arts, Impakt Works in the Netherlands, Sølyst in Jyderup, Denmark and M4gastatelier in Amsterdam, Netherlands. Cohene is In-House Editor at Charles Street Video, a media arts centre in Toronto, and teaches courses and workshops on video editing and theory in diverse local educational settings. [www.aleesacohene.com]

MARY J. DANIEL has a twenty-year history of making hard-to-categorize works focusing on the artistry and poetry of mundane phenomena. Her work has shown at cinematheques, galleries, art houses and micro-cinemas, and traveled to festivals on the international, experimental, women's, and gay & lesbian circuits.

DENA DECOLA and **KARIN E. WANDNER** live in Los Angeles. They have collaborated since meeting at the University of California, Santa Cruz. Their work has shown nationally and internationally.

LEIGH FISHER is an artist and filmmaker based in Montreal. She grew up in Nova Scotia, graduated from Ryerson in film and has worked in media on both coasts. Her film and video have been exhibited extensively in Canada and internationally. Her practice considers performative agency and the sensory phenomena of cinema. Recently she curated a screening on alchemy at The Rooms Provincial Art Gallery in Saint John's and co-curated with Elizabeth MacKenzie and Marina Roy the Persistent Resistance series of screenings and exhibitions of early feminist video practice at VIVO Media Arts in Vancouver. She recently completed *Not Sure*, a three film series about the hierarchy of the senses. She is currently at work on the film *Array Broadcast* for live performance with sound-artist Anne-Francoise Jacques.

GUNILLA JOSEPHSON is a Swedish-born video artist with a BA in Social Sciences from Stockholm University and an MFA from The College of Art and Design (Konstfackskolan) in Stockholm. She lives and works in Toronto, Canada and in Montmartin Sur Mer, France, and exhibits extensively in Canada and Europe.

Since the 1970s, **LYNN KIRBY** has combined video and film to create disjointed representations of domestic and public landscapes by emphasizing the unique elemental properties of sound, light and space.

DEIRDRE LOGUE's film, video, and installation work focuses on self-presentational discourse, the body as material, confessional autobiography, and the passage of 'real' time. Recent solo exhibitions of her work have taken place at Images Festival, Toronto; the Berlin International Film Festival;

Oakville Galleries; Beyond/In Western New York, Buffalo; and Articule Montreal. She lives and works in Toronto.

ERIK MARTINSON graduated from Queen's University in 2004 with a BAH in Film. He has worked at Vtape since 2005 and serves on the board of Charles Street Video and A Space Gallery. He curates independently and as a member of the Pleasure Dome programming collective.

SHANA MOULTON works in video and performance to create evocatively oblique narratives. Moulton studied at the University of California, Berkeley and Carnegie Mellon University, Pittsburgh, where she received her MFA. Her video work has been screened and exhibited internationally, including at Rencontres internationales Paris/Berlin, Paris; Impakt Festival, Utrecht; Internationale Kurzfilmtage, Oberhausen; and Bellwether Gallery, New York. Moulton currently lives and works in Brooklyn, New York.

WALID RAAD is an artist and an Associate Professor of art in The Cooper Union (New York). His recent works include *The Atlas Group*, a fifteen-year project between 1989 and 2004 about the contemporary history of Lebanon.

JENNIFER REEVES is a New York-based filmmaker. Her subjective and personal films push the boundaries of film through optical-printing, film stock "mis-use", direct-on-film techniques including hand-painting film frames. Her work has been shown in retrospectives at Kino Arsenal, Berlin and the San Francisco Cinematheque, as well as performances and screenings at Rotterdam Film Festival, Wexner Center, American Film Institute Festival, Museum of Modern Art and the Contemporary Art Museum of Strasbourg. In the last two years Reeves has been performing live double-system film performances of *LIGHT WORK MOOD DISORDER* and *HE WALKED AWAY* with composer Anthony Burr. Reeves teaches film as part-time Visiting Professor at Cooper Union and the Bard College MFA Program. *LIGHT WORK MOOD DISORDER* won an award at the recent Images Film Festival in Toronto.

STEVE REINKE is an artist and writer best known for his monologue-based video essays, which are widely screened, collected and

exhibited. He lives in Toronto and Chicago, where he is associate professor of Art Theory & Practice at Northwestern University. In 2006 he was awarded the Bell Canada Prize in Video Art. He has edited a number of books, including, with Chris Gehman, the anthology "The Sharpest Point: Animation at the End of Cinema." Coach House recently published a book of his scripts "Everybody Loves Nothing." He is represented in Toronto by Birch Libralato Gallery.

MARTHA ROSLER uses video, photo-text, performance, critical writing, and installation to construct incisive social and political analyses of the myths and realities of contemporary culture. Articulated with deadpan wit, Rosler's video works investigate how socioeconomic realities and political ideologies dominate ordinary life. Since 1974, Rosler's work has exhibited widely in museums, galleries, and festivals around the world, including an international tour of *Positions in the Life World*, a major retrospective of her work. Rosler lives in Brooklyn, New York.

Born in Montréal, **GRETCHEN SANKEY**'s work has been included in numerous national and international group exhibitions, including the Robichon Galleries in Denver, Colorado (2004), and at the Rockefeller Arts Centre in Fredonia, New York (2003).

MICHAEL STECKY is a Toronto based new media artist who creates videos, audio works, web sites and installations that explore ideas of consciousness or perception. His videos have screening on Spanish Public Television's Metropolis, on CBC television and at international festival in North America, Germany, Japan, China, Mexico, Brazil and Australia. Recently Michael exhibited at the Wilde Gallery, Berlin and art fairs in both New York and Miami. You can see other video work by Michael by searching for DrGravelly on Youtube or visiting the Video Therapy Dispenser at [www.perfectlynormal.ca]. Michael is also represented by the Wilde Gallery in Berlin, Germany. [http://www.wilde-gallery.com/artist_stecky.html]

ERIKA SUDERBURG has playfully described her practice as including "films, videos, text, photographs, sound design, installation art, motion picture editing, songs, manifestos, *Wunderkammern*, rants, linkages, coping

mechanisms, and domestic arrangements to a discerning and much beloved few.”

JENNET THOMAS's work emerged from the anarchistic, experimental culture of London's underground film and live art club scene in the 1990s, where she was a co-founder of the Exploding Cinema Collective. It now screens extensively in the international film festival arena, with recent retrospectives at Anthology Film Archives in New York, and Rencontres Video Art Plastique in France. More recently her work has been appearing in the form of video installations in galleries across Europe and North America.

SALLA TYKKÄ has been working with photography, video, and film since 1996. Recent solo exhibitions include De Appel, Amsterdam (2006); Portikus, Frankfurt (2005); Fact, Liverpool (2004); and the 49th Venice Biennale (2001). Tykka lives and works in Helsinki, Finland.

TSENG YU-CHIN received a graduate degree from the School of Technical Art at Taipei National University of the Arts in 2006. Recently he received the award for Best Young Artist at the Chinese Contemporary Art Awards 2008. In addition to his art practice, Tseng is a writer of fiction and poetry.

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