

Finding ways to communicate is the conundrum that inevitably arises when one tries to build bridges between oneself and the outside world. This veritable feat of engineering by which the self is constructed is however what allows us to create anchor-points for the connections between these two realms. The multidimensional complexity of personality necessitates these many anchor-points and all they entail; we are simultaneously one and many, known and unknown. Fear of the other is always directed outwards, as we too often forget that otherness comes first and foremost from within. The real alien is, more often than not, ourselves.

Some spaces are more conducive than others for turning the other into an alien and alienating oneself from all the world has to offer. The suburbs are one of these spaces where the diversity of the world can only enter in infiltration mode, slipping in between the cracks in the pink brickwork. The suburb depicted in Matthew Brooks' modestly laudatory photo series *A Fading Summer* is a place of nostalgia for little things and simple pleasures. But it is also the suburb blind to other, parallel and interwoven worlds.

Obstacles to communication can take on as many forms as there are communicators. However, the disappearance of these communicating individuals does not diminish the number of obstacles, but rather reduces to nil the very possibility of communication. In the seclusion of the suburb, a desperate supplication resonates and fades into the empty firmament. Yvette Cenerini's polar bear (*Cessation*) doesn't even hear its echo from his cloud as an icon in danger of extinction. However, the problem is now not only the distance between life and death, but the obstruction of language itself as well.

Language indeed remains a major obstacle between humans and animals, a fundamental divide that no communicational tool seems able to close. D'Arcy Wilson addresses this gap with absurdist eloquence in the video work *Protect Your Love*. As humans, we aspire to connect with the (alien or animal) other, but are at the same time wary; perhaps it's wiser to keep a safe distance. Telecommunication devices allow for a tight control of this distance, and consequently of our relationship with the other.

The generation gap also comes into play in the distance between living beings, as if, by a twisted equation, the duration of a lifetime could be translated into kilometers, as if accumulated experience could form a wall of suitcases that, however, are begging to be opened, examined, retransmitted. This process informs Risa Hatayama's performative practice, where she takes on learning apprenticeships with senior citizens.

The other must become again a source of connection. We must move toward forms of exchange and imagine new myths whereby the basic nature of our human relationships might transmute, in a simplified space of contingency where we can communicate by way of metalanguages beyond desire and fear. In the meantime, try accepting a dance from the alien that lives upstairs, while the butterflies¹ look on from the ceiling above.

¹ referring to Emily Jan's installation *Before the Fall*.

Nathalie Bachand is an author and curator. She writes regularly on the visual and media arts and is in charge of development for ELEKTRA and the International Digital Art Biennial.

Translated from French by Simon Brown



Matthew Brooks, *Family Trailer*; Pembina, North Dakota. Archival inkjet print, 2014.

Artists: Matthew Brooks, Yvette Cenerini, Risa Hatayama, Emily Jan, D'Arcy Wilson

Sometimes with a dose of humour, the artists gathered in this exhibition dare to expose their own vulnerability in order to reach out to the other. Whether they are distant or close to home, of human or animal form, these artist's chosen subjects overturn the usual hierarchies to return a gaze that is at once strange, tender, and dramatic. The exhibition is composed of sculpture, video and photography.

Matthew Brooks is an emerging visual artist based in Montréal. He is the founder of Studio Matthew Brooks, a multidisciplinary creative studio. His work has been published internationally in online publications and he is the recipient of numerous scholarships and awards, including support from the Manitoba Arts Council and Concordia University.

Yvette Cenerini lives and works in Winnipeg. Her work has been included in several group shows and she recently presented her first solo exhibition at Maison des artistes visuels francophones. She has received grants from the Manitoba Arts Council and the Winnipeg Arts Council.

Risa Hatayama, originally from Japan, has been living in Canada since 1997. Her work has been showcased both individually and collectively in Canada, France, the Czech Republic and Japan.

Emily Jan is a Montréal-based sculptor originally from San Francisco. Her work has been shown extensively in Canada and abroad. She is a M.A.I. Mentorship Grant awardee for 2014-2015 and a Clipperton Project residency awardee for 2015. In 2011, she was recognized with an award at the 6th International Biennial of Contemporary Textile Art (WTA - Aire).

D'Arcy Wilson is an interdisciplinary artist. Her projects have led to collaborations with wildlife rehabilitation centers, natural history museums, national parks and choirs, and they have been shown extensively in Canada and abroad. Wilson has participated in residencies throughout Canada and is currently Assistant Professor at Memorial University of Newfoundland.

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SKOL

372, rue Ste-Catherine Ouest, Espace 314,
Montréal, QC, H3B 1A2
www.skol.ca / skol@skol.ca / 514.398.9322

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