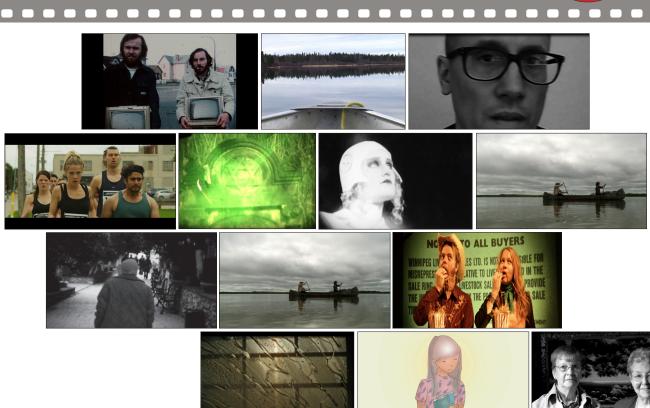


moving limages an exhibition of film and video









allery 1Co3 is proud to issue this on-line pdf format publication in conjunction with *Moving Images*, an exhibition of short films and videos created by the University of Winnipeg community that was presented in the Gallery from January 12 through February 18, 2017. *Moving Images* was co-curated by art historian and film critic Alison Gillmor and me to mark two important milestones: Gallery 1Co3's thirtieth anniversary and the University's fiftieth anniversary.

UWinnipeg's campus art gallery opened its doors in the fall of 1986 with an exhibit that showcased artworks from the University's small, but growing, collection. That first exhibition featured paintings, drawings and prints – traditional two-dimensional artistic methods – made by artists with a connection to the city of Winnipeg. Since then Gallery 1Co₃ has presented more than 130 shows on campus in all manner of media, primarily featuring contemporary pieces by Canadian artists.

Over the last five decades, works created by Winnipeg artists for the screen – whether independent film or video – have flourished. A good deal of credit for the development of these art forms locally should be directed to artist-run centres the Winnipeg Film Group, which was established in 1974, and Video Pool Media Arts Centre, which opened nine years later. The Universities of Winnipeg and Manitoba have also nurtured the production of screen-based work through their film programs; UWinnipeg's started in 2000.

For *Moving Images*, Gallery 1Co₃ was transformed into a micro-cinema where short pieces screened on a loop in one of five programs. For each of these programs, shown in the gallery for one week only, Alison and I gathered several pieces into loose conceptual themes that served as entry points to explore different aspects of Winnipeg's film and video scene. Alison provides succinct introductions to the programs which include "To Make a Prairie", "The Personal is Political", "The Haunted Cinema", "Women's Pictures, Women's Lives", and "Funny Haha and Funny Peculiar". She also offers insightful interpretations of the twenty-three distinctive shorts included in these programs.

Moving Images was complemented with supplementary programming in the form of a second, smaller show in the University Library's Hamilton Galleria space. This intimate exhibition, titled "The Tender Fragments", aimed to highlight the multi-disciplinary nature of work by the University's most famous filmmaking alumnus, Guy Maddin. "The Tender Fragments" contained a selection of Maddin's cinematic collages as well as two computer stations dedicated to his on-line film project, Séances, which he produced with Evan and Galen Johnson and in partnership with the National Film Board of Canada. Séances pays homage to lost films of the silent era by generating countless unique short works; once viewed on-line, these pieces can never be seen again.

The title for the main exhibition – *Moving Images* – has a double meaning of course. Film and video consist of images that physically move across a screen (or in this case, across the wall onto which they were projected in Gallery 1Co₃). But film and video also move us emotionally, and I would argue that they do this in ways that art in other media cannot. Their ability to affect us is heightened through their enveloping confluence of image and sound. The works in this show moved their viewers and listeners to laughter, to tears, to anger and outrage, to empathy, to fear, to astonishment, and more. With this thought in mind it seemed natural to invite two writers -- Roewan Crowe and Jonathan Ball – to offer creative responses to the works of *Moving Images* (Roewan) and "The Tender Fragments" (Jonathan).

In addition to being a writer, Roewan is a video artist and her short *Queer Grit* is included in *Moving Images*. For her poetic prose work "How We Move with *Moving Images*", Roewan invokes the personas of Guy Maddin and Eileen Myles to offer readers a layered and subjective response to each of the twenty-three works in the exhibition. Roewan's writing reflects her position as a queer/feminist/settler/artist/educator/activist who aims to participate actively in the process of decolonization.

Jonathan's passage, "Tender Fragments", is a tight textual montage of haunting images that grip the reader with simultaneous clarity and obfuscation. Its tone and style are apt complements to Maddin's distinctively surreal approach which infuses not only his films but his collages as well.

As co-curators, Alison and I wanted to offer the artists in this exhibition opportunities to speak about their work and, equally important, a chance for the public to engage with them in this discursive exercise. To that end, *Moving Images* included three public discussion events. The first was presented in partnership with the University Library and featured Alison in conversation with Guy and Evan about the process of creating *Séances* and the influence of the archives in their film work. A second panel discussion, titled "Cinematic Experimentalism", was moderated by UWinnipeg English Studies professor Andrew Burke and included experimental filmmakers Mike Maryniuk, Sol Nagler and Rhayne Vermette. Together they explored handmade, handcrafted and hand-processed filmmaking, and the persistence of the analogue in a digital age. A third discussion called "Unravelling the braids of colonialism, gender and the body" was facilitated by UWinnipeg/Winnipeg Art Gallery Chair in the History of Indigenous Arts in North America Julie Nagam. Participating artists were Jaimie Isaac, Niki Little and Jenny Western of The Ephemerals collective, Danishka Esterhazy, and Freya Björg Olafson. This panel considered the ways in which the body both performs and records experiences of gender, voice and stereotypes.

The experience of carrying out research for *Moving Images* made me more deeply aware of how tightly knit and supportive Winnipeg's independent film and video community has been and continues to be. I felt as though I began to know personally, if not the film and video makers themselves, then at least the artists that appear on the screen (who sometimes are the makers, or are close friends or relatives of them). On this note, I wish to close by expressing my gratitude to the artists for bringing to life the diverse stories that were included in this exhibition. The University of Winnipeg is fortunate to have, in some way, been affiliated with your work over the last few decades whether as current or former students or faculty. The local, national and international film and video community is so much richer for your contributions!

Jennifer Gibson Director/Curator Gallery 1Co3, The University of Winnipeg

oving Images, an exhibition of film and video by alumni and professors from The University of Winnipeg, has been organized to mark the 50th anniversary of the university and the 30th anniversary of Gallery 1Co3.

Beyond these celebratory reasons and the calibre and creative ability of the artists involved, there is no overarching theme to this exhibition. The backgrounds of these filmmakers are diverse; their experiences span decades. Most of them went through the U of W before the official film program developed in 2000. At the same time, watching these 23 works reveals unexpected commonalities and illuminating reverberations.

While each work resists easy classification, we have organized them into five groupings that centre around overlapping ideas and shared approaches.

To Make A Prairie:

These works combine powerful evocations of place and time with an acknowledgment that there is no "one Manitoba" but rather a complex terrain thronged with overlapping histories, subversive mythologies and personal narratives.

In *Cattle Call* (2008), U of W film instructor Mike Maryniuk, along with co-director Matt Rankin, explores a Manitoba livestock auction through amped-up experimental animation. The extravagantly performative work of veteran auctioneer Tim Dowler is paralleled by the filmmakers' crackerjack timing, trippy imagery and jittery, funny stop-motion effects.

University of Winnipeg professor of Women's and Gender Studies and interdisciplinary artist and writer Roewan Crowe upturns wild west icons in *Queer Grit* (2004). Asking "how to be Queer on the prairies when your dad is John Wayne," Crowe crafts a neo-Western using autobiography, cowgirl comedy and surprisingly expressive dolls.

Paula Kelly's work *Souvenirs: Watermarks* (2008), produced during a residency at the Winnipeg Archives, mixes historical photos and film footage with oral accounts of the city's 1950 flood, along with images of subsequent disasters. In Kelly's work, official records are given a poetic undertow, morphing into a lyrical, intimate collage of memory and meaning.

In the black-and-white *Bon Voyage* (2009), Ryan McKenna creates a completely idiosyncratic and slightly surreal homage to our province's Franco-Manitobain heritage, turning a prairie train journey into a hilarious, enigmatic intergenerational struggle among francophone oldsters, silent, sullen youngsters, and a trio of anglophone porters.

The Personal Is Political:

Several of these works use shifting experimental forms to suggest the complex connections between personal identity and larger social, political and historical forces.

In 504938C, a 2005 work by Métis filmmaker and U of W student Ervin Chartrand, Ryan Black plays a prison inmate, significantly known by an institutional number rather than a name. Reckoning with his past and preparing for his release, he must find the spiritual strength to choose between two families: his kin and his gang. Chartrand chooses docudrama-style realism to deal with this urgent material.

Former U of W student Kevin Lee Burton is a Swampy Cree artist and filmmaker from God's Lake Narrows First Nation. His *Nikamowin (Song)* (2008) is a rhythmic soundscape of raw and altered spoken Cree, in which an unseen narrator examines the role language plays in identity and cultural continuity. The extraordinarily supple sound editing pairs with evocative images that expand and contract, so that the aural and the visual, the language and the land merge into a living, breathing whole.

yaya/ayat, a 2010 work by artist and filmmaker Shimby ZegeyeGebrehiwot, tracks the complex development of identity as it navigates through multiple diasporas, cultural assimilations and language barriers. This experimental, experiential autobiographical work recounts Shimby's journey to connect with a loved grandmother in Greece, from whom the artist has been separated by language and geographical distance ("I long for you, but I cannot talk to you").

While some of these artists are dealing directly with autobiographical content, Leslie Supnet takes a political crisis on the other side of the world and works to make it personal. In the 2015 experimental animation *In Still Time*, Supnet takes images of atrocities in Syria and breaks them down to the point of abstraction, questioning our uneasy relationship with photographs of catastrophe. How do we become aware of what we are seeing — or not seeing — in order to act?

In Land Memories: Starlight Tours (2015), Scott Benesiinaabandan, an Anishinabe intermedia artist, references an unsanctioned police practice in which Indigenous men were driven outside city limits on freezing winter nights and abandoned, sometimes to death by hypothermia. The silhouette of a man, suggesting both absence and presence, is superimposed over urban streets and open prairie. Here the land is both a site of lonely suffering but also, potentially, a space for communal healing.

The Haunted Cinema:

This category started as a showcase of formally experimental projects, but we noticed that several of the works also share a certain uncanny quality. Drawing on cinema's past, they are haunted by the ghosts of lost films and archaic styles, by past psychic pain as well as the traumas of world history.

In *The Heart of the World* (2000), Guy Maddin, onetime University of Winnipeg economics major and the most influential filmmaker to ever come of the Prairies, mixes up comically exaggerated Freudian phantasms with a complicated nostalgia for the Soviet avant-garde. In this super-compressed saga of archaic melodrama and contemporary irony, the world is redeemed by film, as images snatched from the light and shadows of historical cinema break down and reform in front of our eyes.

U of W philosophy grad Solomon Nagler is now a film professor at the Nova Scotia College of Art and Design. Part of his self-described "cinema of ruins," *Perhaps/WE* (2003) is an experimental Holocaust film in which the scarred, scratched surfaces and hallucinatory images often seen in experimental film become metaphors for "the widowed landscape" of Poland.

Nagler also references spoken and written languages — English, Polish, Yiddish and Hebrew — and the work of Romanian-born Jewish poet Paul Celan, who believed that language, however deformed and transformed by the horrors of the 20th century, is also the only way through those horrors.

Intermedia artist Freya Björg Olafson, a U of W alum, often works with an expanded choreography that crosses through dance, performance, installation art and video. In <code>HYPER_(2012)</code>, the gorgeous gestural movements of dancer Matthew Waldie vibrate between life and death, 2D and 3D perception, body and image, all fused through the kinetic energy of dance and some throbbing electronic beats.

Rasguño (2006), by U of W graduate Matthew Kennedy and Connor Sweeney, evokes the nightmare tunnels of a mind descending into a psychotic break. Referencing avant-garde film with violently distorted and etched images – the title is the Spanish word for "scratch" – the filmmakers also draw on the pulpy, visceral effects of the extreme horror genre, cranking up the tension into a visual and aural assault.

Women's Pictures/Women's Lives:

These works deal with female identity, whether that involves sly, subversive re-workings of cultural images or intense autobiographical narratives.

In *Clean* (2015), University of Winnipeg alumna Danielle Sturk relates how a young girl's entry into adult womanhood comes not through growing autonomy but through an abrupt and unwanted push into shame and silence. This experimental documentary uses a simple setting and muted narration to convey an emotionally shattering story.

U of W grad Danishka Esterhazy has made several films that rework such fairy tales as Hansel and Gretel, Red Riding Hood and The Snow Queen. Adapted from a story by American writer Francesca Lia Block, *The Singing Bones* (2016), which makes its Canadian premiere at *Moving Images*, is a modern gothic take on the Bluebeard fable. Esterhazy explores male power – in this case, the wealth and status of a music industry mogul in Los Angeles – and the threat of violence toward young women and girls. But she positions this narrative not as a punitive cautionary tale, but as an assertion of female agency, female desire and the power of the female voice.

The Ephemerals are a collective of Indigenous artists and curators made up of Jaimie Isaac, Niki Little and Jenny Western. In *Maiden Indian* (2011), the three women cast a curious eye on mainstream culture's markers of Indigenous identity, first through fashion's penchant for "exotic" headbands and feathered necklaces, then through the ethnographic lens of museum practice. They end by constructing – literally, with sewing machines – and performing their own pastiche of this slightly surreal experience.

Sharon Alward, a graduate of the University of Winnipeg, is a performance artist who uses embodied rituals as a way to express and transcend suffering. *Zuma* (2011) tracks a journey of grief and acceptance, as Alward walks in bare feet over jagged rocks and freezing snow. The voiceover speaks of the Baby Scoop Era in Canada, when institutional coercion robbed young unmarried women of their children. The story is profoundly personal – Alward's own daughter was taken from her when the artist was a frightened, isolated 17-year-old – but it also speaks to a larger social fear of the unregulated female body.

University of Winnipeg film professor Shelagh Carter collaborates with U of W professor emerita in English Deborah Schnitzer on *Canoe* (2010), about a woman facing her husband's chronic and debilitating illness. In this tender, carefully crafted narrative, the outer landscape of Lake Winnipeg merges with an interior landscape of emotion and memory, all moving toward a release both imagined and feared.

Funny HaHa and Funny Peculiar:

Maybe it's the absurdity of living through -38 C weather. Maybe it's the underdog's instinctive distrust of pretense and pomposity. We see in many of these works, and in Winnipeg film and video in general, a tendency to weird, wonky surrealism and deadpan, self-deprecating humour. Guy Maddin's abiding influence is seen in both of these streams.

As professors in the University of Winnipeg's Department of Theatre and Film, John Kozak and Howard Curle have influenced a recent generation of student filmmakers. *Two Men in Search of a Plot* (1976) goes back to their own student days, when filmmaking tended to be a more cumbersome, complex and expensive process. With thrifty instincts and offbeat humour, the duo craft a beautifully timed silent-film slapstick comedy that works with its sadsack characters and grungy Winnipeg settings.

Performance and installation artist Glen Johnson graduated from the U of W with a degree in Classics. His *Whine* (2016) is a cuttingly intelligent update of Allen Ginsberg's *Howl*, the 1955 work in which the Beat poet recounts, with a kind of ecstatic fury, how "the best minds of [his] generation" have been burned out through oppression, insanity and excess. Johnson references the Beats with a retro black-and-white aesthetic and Ginsburg-y glasses, but in an age impervious to outrage he must make do with "the mediocre minds of my generation" threatened by apathy and conformity, by big box stores, credit card debt and TV binge-watching. *Whine* is both a brilliant bit of comic bathos and a dead-serious lament.

In *The Idea* (2012), Johnson's downplayed narrative delivery combines with limpid animation from fellow alumnus Leslie Supnet, a multimedia artist whose deceptively simple images convey complex undertones of alienation, isolation and longing. In this work, Johnson and Supnet illustrate a comically literal account of the origins of inspiration.

Recent works by young filmmakers, who were raised on a barrage of pop culture imagery, often employ postmodern pastiche, reshuffling the clichés of movies and television to comic effect.

BJ Verot is a graduate of the U of W film program. *Loss of Contact* (2014), which he directed with Brad Crawford, references the cinematic tropes of the inspirational sports flick but applies them to the vaguely goofy spectacle of race-walking. Solemn narration — race-walking is described as "the ultimate crucible and the pinnacle of human competition" — and Chariots of Fire-style slow-motion sequences collide with broad sight gags for sneaky-smart comic effect.

Fabian Velasco, Ian Bawa, Milos Mitrovic and Markus Henkel, a collaborative group that first got together in the U of W film program, deconstruct delusional machismo and the fleeting fame of the sports hero in *The Champ* (2015). The quartet references the Raging Bull boxing movie and the dead-man-walking prison film, replicating these sources with fluid cinematic elegance but simultaneously skewing them with dark deadpan humour.

Alison Gillmor

Alison Gillmor is a Winnipeg journalist and educator. After graduating from The University of Winnipeg with a BA in English and York University with an MA in Art History, she has written on arts and culture for the *Winnipeg Free Press*, *Border Crossings*, *The Walrus* and *Canada's History*, among other publications, as well as taught at the U of W as a contract lecturer.

Screening programs

January 12 - 21, 2017 - To Make a Prairie

- Cattle Call (2008) by Mike Maryniuk & Matthew Rankin (3:30)
- Queer Grit (2004) by Roewan Crowe (5:25)
- Souvenirs Watermarks (2008) by Paula Kelly (10:45)
- Bon Voyage (2009) by Ryan McKenna (5:37)
- TOTAL RUN TIME: 25:17

January 23 - 28, 2017 - The Personal is Political

- 504938C (2005) by Ervin Chartrand (6:05)
- Nikamowin (Song) (2008) by Kevin Lee Burton (11:00)
- yaya/ayat (2010) by Shimby Zegeye-Gebrehiwot (5:25)
- In Still Time (2015) by Leslie Supnet (10:23)
- Land Memories: Starlight Tours (2015) by Scott Benesiinaabandan (3:34)
- TOTAL RUN TIME: 36:27

January 30 - February 4, 2017 - The Haunted Cinema

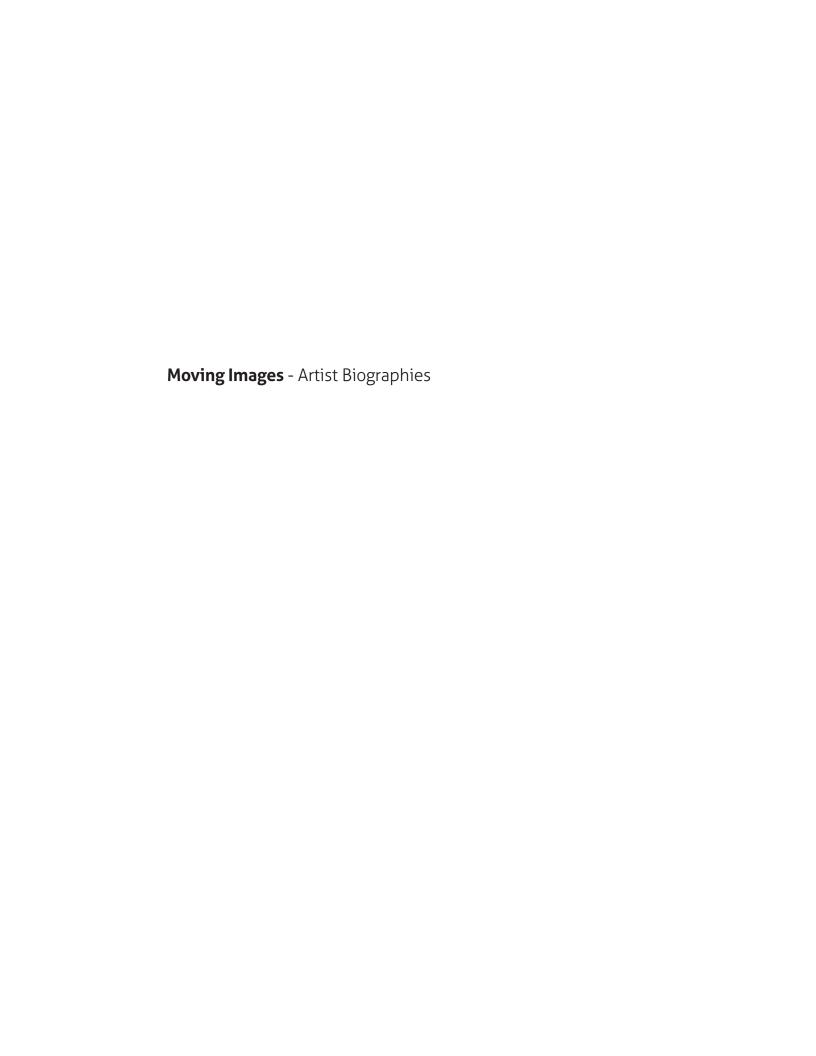
- The Heart of the World (2000) by Guy Maddin (6:34)
- perhaps/WE (2003) by Solomon Nagler (11:12)
- HYPER_ (2012) by Freya Björg Olafson (3:00)
- Rasquño (2006) by Matthew Kennedy & Conor Sweeney (8:25)
- TOTAL RUN TIME: 29:11

February 6 – 11, 2017 Women's Pictures, Women's Lives

- *Clean* (2015) by Danielle Sturk (2:44)
- The Singing Bones (2016) by Danishka Esterhazy (12:44)
- Maiden Indian (2011) by The Ephemerals (3:25)
- Zuma (2011) by Sharon Alward (12:26)
- Canoe (2010) by Shelagh Carter & Deborah Schnitzer (6:13)
- TOTAL RUN TIME: 37:32

February 13 - 18, 2017 - Funny Haha and Funny Peculiar

- Two Men in Search of a Plot (1976) by John Kozak & Howard Curle (6:00)
- The Champ (2015) by Markus.Milos.lan.Fabian (8:55)
- Loss of Contact (2014) by BJ Verot & Brad Crawford (4:38)
- The Idea (2012) by Leslie Supnet (2:55)
- Whine (2016) by Glen Johnson (3:57)
- TOTAL RUN TIME: 26:25





Zuma (2011)

Sharon Alward is a Canadian artist. Her performances, videos and installations use rituals to transcend suffering, provide opportunities for creativity, transformation and wholeness and as a process for healing. Cited as one of the 100 most innovative Canadians in MacLean's magazine, her works have been exhibited across the globe. She is a professor at the University of Manitoba's School of Art where she has taught for 30 years.



Land Memories: Starlight Tours (2015)

Scott Benesiinaabandan is an Anishinabe artist working in photography, video, audio and printmaking. His art focuses on cultural crisis/conflict and its political manifestations, contextualized around issues of Indigeneity from a global perspective. He has completed international residencies in Australia and Ireland and is currently based in Montreal. His short film *Land Memories:* Starlight Tours has been screened at festivals across Canada.



Nikamowin (Song) (2008)

Kevin Lee Burton is an award winning director, producer, and editor who is Swampy Cree from God's Lake Narrows, Manitoba. In his directorial works he has designed a niche by specifically working in his ancestral tongue, Cree. He was awarded Best Experimental Video and Best Indigenous Language Production for *Nikamowin (Song)* at the 2007 ImagineNATIVE Film Festival.



Canoe (2010)

Shelagh Carter is a Lifetime Member of The Actors Studio, a Professor of Theatre and Film at the University of Winnipeg and a graduate of the Canadian Film Centre's Directors Lab. She recently received a Women in the Director's Chair Career Advancement Module 2010 award in collaboration with Women in Film Festival Vancouver. Selected films include Canoe, The Darkling Plain, rifting/blue, Is It My Turn, Rana Plaza: Let Not The Hope Die, Passionflower and Before Anything You Say. www.darklingpictures.com

Ervin Chartrand is an award-winning Métis filmmaker who resides in Winnipeg. He has directed multiple dramatic shorts, music videos, and documentaries, many of which grapple with pressing social issues. Prior to his career in film, Chartrand was a gang leader who reformed his life after being incarcerated. 504938C was his prisoner number while he was an inmate in Stony Mountain Institution. Chartrand's films include *Patrick Ross*, *Sister, FIGHT, Trafficking*, and *Other Side of the 49th*.



504938C (2005)

Roewan Crowe is a visual artist, writer and interdisciplinary scholar who blurs the boundaries between art, academic disciplines and writing. Energized by acts of disruption, she crafts together various media and irreverently tampers with traditional forms such as academic prose, qualitative research, theory, photography, fiction, and video.



Queer Grit (2004)

Howard Curle has an MA from NYU Graduate School of Arts and Science, Department of Cinema Studies, a BA from the U of W and further film training from U of M. Curle has extensive teaching experience and has worked on a number of film productions. He has delivered papers and lectures, served on film juries, edited, directed and published. He teaches Introduction to Filmmaking and History of Film at the University of Winnipeg.



Two Men in Search of a Plot (1976)



Maiden Indian (2011)

The Ephemerals are a collective of Indigenous women from Winnipeg interested in curatorial and creative based research. Collective members Jaimie Isaac, Niki Little and Jenny Western draw inspiration from their combined curatorial, multidisciplinary art practices, and mixed cultural backgrounds. The collective's projects are fueled by collaborative interventions and ephemeral affairs in order to the push the boundaries of perceived Indigeneity. Their interdisciplinary work exhibits an ethereal aesthetic that is transformative and often fleeting, based on their current interests, the spirit of the times, and what compels them to respond to contemporary visual and material culture. Their first short film, Maiden Indian, has been screened across Canada and internationally.



The Singing Bones (2016)

Danishka Esterhazy is a graduate of the Canadian Film Centre's Directors' Lab, the National Screen Institute, Women in the Director's Chair and the TIFF Talent Lab. Esterhazy's award-winning films have screened in festivals, theaters and galleries around the world and have been broadcast on CBC, Bravo, Super Channel and Movie Central. Celebrated for her female-driven stories, Esterhazy was part of the pUNK Films Femmes Lab and is a current member of Film Fatales - a collective of female feature directors dedicated to breaking down gender barriers in the film industry.



Whine (2016)

Glen Johnson is a Winnipeg-based writer and performance artist. He has delivered faux-lectures (e.g. Western Civilisation: What Went Wrong) and as "Uncle Glennie" he has hosted a number of storytimes for adults. Johnson wrote and narrated Leslie Supnet's animated films, A Time is a Terrible Thing to Waste and The Idea. He is also the author of Uncle Glennie's Stories for Childish Adults, Some Fairly Christmasy Stories and The Mystery of the Lost Lenore. www.persiflagepress.com

Award-winning Winnipeg filmmaker **Paula Kelly** has had works screened at festivals in the United States, Canada and Europe. She has more a dozen broadcast credits as a writer/director, including the CBC feature arts documentary *Appassionata*. Her short *Souvenirs — Watermarks* is one of a series of works that deal with local history. An alumna of the Women in the Director's Chair Workshop (WIDC), she is currently completing a Master of Arts in Cultural Studies at the University of Winnipeg.



Souvenirs - Watermarks (2008)

Matthew Kennedy and Conor Sweeney have been shooting digital shorts together since 2003. Their production company Greypoint Films focused mainly on dark comedy and horror of which *Rasguño* is a prime example. Subsequently, they joined forces with three other like-minded filmmakers as part of the Astron-6 collective who have produced, among other projects, the web series *Divorced Dad*. Kennedy and Sweeney both studied film and theatre at The University of Winnipeg.



John Kozak has worked in the film industry in Canada for over forty years. He has written and directed numerous short dramas, experimental films and two dramatic features. His films have been broadcast on Canadian television and have received theatrical and DVD distribution in Canada and the U.S. Kozak received his formal training in film production at New York University's Tisch School of the Arts. He has taught filmmaking at the University of Winnipeg since 2001.



Two Men in Search of a Plot (1976)



The Heart of the World (2000)

Guy Maddin, a 2016-17 visiting lecturer at Harvard, has created countless shorts and 11 feature films over the last 30 years. His latest feature, The Forbidden Room, premiered at the 2015 Sundance Film Festival. Earlier in his career he helmed U.S. National Society of Film Critics Best Experimental Film The Heart of the World (2000); Emmy Award-winning ballet film Dracula, Pages from a Virgin's Diary (2002); Genie Award-winning The Saddest Music in the World (2003); and the iconic My Winnipeg (2007). He is also an internationally acclaimed installation artist and the author of three published books. He is a member of both the Order of Canada and Order of Manitoba, and was awarded the Telluride Silver Medallion for life achievement in film in 1995.

Markus Henkel, Milos Mitrovic, Ian Bawa and Fabian Velasco are a film collective from Winnipeg. They have created a number of films including *Under the Neon Lights (2013)* and *The Champ (2015)*, which have earned them a favorable reputation in their city and abroad. Their latest film *Imitations (2016)* premiered at the 2016 Toronto International Film Festival



The Champ (2015)



Cattle Call (2008)

Mike Maryniuk was born in Winnipeg, but raised in the rural back country of Manitoba. A completely self-taught film virtuoso, Maryniuk's film world is an inventive hybrid of Jim Henson, Norman McLaren and Stan Brakhage. Maryniuk's films are a visual stew of handmade ingredients and are full of home cooked wonderfulness.



Bon Voyage (2009)

Ryan McKenna studied history at the University of Winnipeg. After graduating in 2005 he joined the Winnipeg Film Group and contributed to the art collective L'atelier nationale du Manitoba. In 2008 McKenna moved to Montreal, where he completed his award winning shorts *Bon Voyage* and *Chinatown*. In 2014 he began experimenting with incorporating archival materials into his work, which resulted in the short *Controversies* (MoMA, Hot Docs). The following year McKenna directed his French language feature debut *Le coeur de madame Sabali* which won the Grand Prix at Montreal's FNC.

Solomon Nagler's films have played globally at venues such as the Centre Pompidou in Paris and Lincoln Center in New York. His work has been featured in Retrospectives at the Winnipeg Cinematheque, at the Excentris Cinema in Montreal, the Festival des cinémas différents et expérimentaux in Paris, The Calgary Society of Independent Filmmakers and The Canadian Film Institute. Originally from Winnipeg, Nagler currently lives in Halifax where he is a professor of film production at NSCAD University.

Freya Björg Olafson works with video, audio, painting and performance. Her creations have been presented and exhibited internationally at festivals and galleries such as the Plug In Institute for Contemporary Art (Winnipeg), InterAccess Electronic Media Arts Centre (Toronto), Winnipeg Art Gallery, O.K. Centrum (Linz, Austria), Kling&Bang Gallen (Reykjavik, Iceland) and SECCA-South Eastern Centre for Contemporary Art (North Carolina, USA).

Matthew Rankin studied Québec history at McGill University and Université Laval before burrowing into the artistic underclass of his native Winnipeg to become a maker of art films. Working in video and photochemical hybrids of documentary, experimental drama and animated abstraction, Rankin's films have been the object of both international acclaim and outraged corporate attack. He is the first Winnipegger in film history to be nominated for Québec's coveted Jutra award. Matthew works in French, English and, increasingly, Esperanto.

Deborah Schnitzer is a University of Winnipeg Professor Emerita of English and beloved teacher who has received several teaching awards on and off campus. Schnitzer has also earned several writing accolades. In 2011 she received Grand Remi Award for Best Experimental Film & Video with her colleague Shelagh Carter for Canoe which is inspired by Schnitzer's most recent novel, jane dying again (2016). She has collaborated with Carter on several other film projects that have been seen around the world, including rifting/blue, Is it My Turn, and Before Anything You Say.



perhaps/WE (2003)



HYPER_ (2012)



Cattle Call (2008)



Canoe (2010)



Clean (2015)

Danielle Sturk is an award-winning bilingual filmmaker with a BA in film and theatre from the University of Winnipeg. Her documentary and experimental films, television specials and children's series have been screened at over thirty film festivals and broadcast on most major Canadian English and French networks. A multidisciplinary artist, Sturk began her career as a dance artist and choreographer, and she collaborates as artistic director or director for multidisciplinary stage productions and special events.



The Idea (2012)

Leslie Supnet is a moving image artist who uses animation and found media to create psychological narratives and abstracted visions of a desired future. Her work has screened at international film festivals, galleries and microcinemas.



Loss of Contact (2014)

BJ Verot and Brad Crawford are proud Winnipeggers who have managed to walk the razors edge between killing each other and making films since the late 1800s. How old are they? How are they still alive? They'll never tell... More recently the duo have worked on television series, docs, and have created short films for the National Screen Institute and the National Film Board through their production company Strata Studios. Their hilarious short Loss of Contact has won multiple awards.



yaya/ayat (2010)

Shimby Zegeye-Gebrehiwot is an artist and filmmaker and the first in their family to be born and raised in Winnipeg. In February 2010 they went to Greece to be with and film their maternal grandmother resulting in the experimental documentary *yaya/ayat*, which was their first film. Zegeye's practice is experimental, diasporic and meditative. Their role as an artist is deeply vested in building community.

How We Move With Moving Images: Poet's Cut

Roewan Crowe

Guy, I'm going to call him Guy because when my poet friend Eileen Myles was coming to Winnipeg for a second time and I asked her what she wanted to do while she was here, she said, I want to meet Guy Maddin. Dave Barber gave me Guy's number and when I talked to Guy he quickly said yes, of course, I'd love to meet Eileen. We met at Cousins. Guy was charming and articulate and Eileen was pleased. She was here with *The Importance of Being Iceland: Travel Essays in Art* or maybe it was a different book. I was crushed out because I'd read most of what she'd written and she had run for President of the United States. Really. Her writing is rad and she is a hot dyke with grey hair. It feels like so long ago, like a dream, and Eileen has been back here since. I know she'll return yet again with *Afterglow*, her next book about a time-travelling dog, Rosie. Winnipeg has an unusual psychic pull. It's hard for Winnipeggers to leave this town for good but it's also true that people are drawn here from other places. I can't help but wonder when I'll see Eileen again because now Trump is the President and fascism is taking hold and Eileen is a poet who cares about being a good human.

Sissy-Boy Slap-Party (1995) was my first introduction to Guy Maddin's films. Sissy-Boy is full on camp. The gaze of this black and white film is on a group of shirtless, muscled men. The set is an intensely sexualized and racialized imaginary of a "tropical/exotic" island. There's an escalating sexual tension and few words, just a musical score from an old movie and the sound of slap slap slap until it sounds like a drum. It's strange to start writing about Moving Images, curated by Jennifer Gibson and Alison Gillmor, by including a film that wasn't selected as part of the exhibit. I guess this is my lost film. Watch it

When I saw *Sissy-Boy Slap-Party* it brought to mind some of my favourite gay filmmakers: Derek Jarman, John Greyson, and Bruce LaBruce. I guess I'm time travelling now. *My life as a dog*. Remember that film? Maybe I'm Laika, the space dog. I can see Eileen's dog Rosie and Laika sniffing butts saying hello. *Sissy-Boy Slap-Party* especially called forth Jarman's *The Tempest* (1979) and the scene when Elisabeth Welch sings 'Stormy Weather' to the sailors. Watch it. Sissy-Boy is like the morning after the after party, sailors shipwrecked in Guy's fantasy film. I thought for certain Guy must be gay and when I found out he wasn't, I shook my head and told myself that's what happens when you come late to the party.

I moved to Winnipeg in 2000; could this small city ever be my Winnipeg? If Guy was possibly queer in my imaginary then maybe I could be Guy, cause I'm queer. All of this was alive in my mind as I sat down in Eckhardt-Gramatté Hall to listen to Guy Maddin and Evan Johnson talk about their internet film intervention, Séances, with Alison Gillmor. I was at this talk with my longterm lover Jarvis and we were sitting with University of Winnipeg President Dr. Annette Trimbee. Annette delivered opening remarks and said something about the University of Winnipeg being proud to celebrate the small weird things that were made here. I'm likely misquoting her, but I couldn't have been happier, thinking the University of Winnipeg is a good place to be a strange artist, a maker of small weird things. Maybe it was in this moment that I fully realized what it meant for me to be a queer artist, a feminist professor at the University of Winnipeg, where Guy Maddin had studied as a young man. Guy's presence infuses the place, he's larger than life, as big as the silver screen and now I'm part of this mythmaking tradition. I'm doing my own séance, calling on Guy's presence. Moving Images, the exhibit, is moving this train of thought. One thing Guy said when he was being interviewed by Alison, and he might have been quoting someone else here, but he said, you are what you pretend to be. I thought ok, what if I pretend to be like Guy with a good dose of Eileen while I write about the films and videos in Moving Images. Let's call it a Poet's Cut.

To Make a Prairie

Cattle Call (2008) by Mike Maryniuk & Matthew Rankin

Amped-up animation. Gaze unsettled. Stop—motion, cut—outs, open—exposures, words&letters&symbols swirling psychedelic. Hole—punching, cattle punch memories, frenzy of electric prods, hooves hussle into the auction house.

Animal anxiety meets frenzy of the auction.

Thrill of late capitalism on the prairies for those who own land, for those with money in their pockets. Raise your hand everything can be yours.

He bought the farm. Is that cow looking at me?

Livestock auctioneer mesmerizing four-leggeds and two-leggeds alike.

Wait, I recognize a few folks, there's Dave Barber again and Darryl Nepinak and Jenny Western.

What's Jenny doing? She's keeping track of something, counting on a huge abacus.

Is she sliding plastic gambling chips? What's been gambled away here?

There's a sissy-boy slap too, and a punch. Now that's Winnipeg.

Queer Grit (2004) by me

This queer western about belonging. An attempt to undo Hollywood narratives told about the West. How to be queer on the prairies when your dad is John Wayne. Of course there is a showdown, a showdown with the Law of the land. But I want to tell you about this one moment of magic and intimacy. The magic of a plastic doll who feels sadness and loss through sound, image and gesture. If a plastic doll can feel, maybe humans can too.

Bon Voyage (2009) by Ryan McKenna

What's happening on this train? There's two older francophones, white women, talking in French about the opera. One of them is a purist, seems like they both disapprove of black folks in operas. Not so subtle racism. An old, dead white guy being lifted from his private car to the baggage car. The two women follow his dead body, walking through the chaotic public car. It's like a bar fight in the Wild West. A young woman reacts with anger against an unauthorized picture, a man is pissing out of the window, two people are fighting, some gay boys having sex. There's a heavy trace of settler history here, the trains of white men that rode across the plains massacring entire herds of buffalos. Hundreds of thousands killed. A young woman tries to leave from the baggage car. She's pushed back. Wait that's Leslie Supnet. She's being held in the back there, captive with the dead white body and her baby. Why is she being held in the back of the train? Is it because this character isn't white, because she is a young woman, alone with a baby? The old women walk in and find this young woman taking the ring and wrist watch off of the old dead man. They all sit together in the back car. The older women talking again about opera. More people gathering. There's a cut to a photo of a man I don't recognize, they adore him, this man I don't know and they start singing in French. Call grit a souvenir, making it here in the prairies, it's a voyage, a new opera.

Souvenirs - Wa termarks. (2008) by Paula Kelly by Mike Maryniuk of Cattle Call. Same Mike. 1950 Winnipeg flood. Hand-developed Water rushing by me on the screen, moving through the streets, flooding entire communities. I can't help but think of resilience, wet boots and devastated homes. Lost memories. After Cattle Call and Queer Grit I'm thinking about global warming what it means to raise beef, to be a farmer on stolen land. Thinking about the excess of the West, the ravages of the weather, this particular place marked by the flood of When the river ran through the streets. The water keeps rushing, memory. flowing on the screen. We're moving with memory and the river, both flooding our banks. Sand-bagging against memory, against knowledge of what's coming. What are we trying to hold back here on the prairies? Working together, residents move heavy bags of sand and there is a shot of someone paddling down the street in a canoe and I hear PM Trudeau who recently said Indigenous kids just needed a place to store canoes & paddles. He actually said something like that. Callous disregard. Current reality for Indigenous kids on reserve lands and in the cities dealing with the flood of violent histories of residential schools, institutionalized racism. It goes on. This history flowing. Indian Act. 60's scoop. Resource theft. I'm thinking all of this in the guiet space of my mind that is made by watching films in a darkened room, someone in the film says, "It's crisis time." It's always crisis time. Manitoba Hydro flooding Indigenous communities throughout the province. So many without clean water for drinking, without access to water for everyday use. Water is life. #nodapl What happened when the floods hit white communities happening to Indigenous communities. in Manitoba is still The happened is still happening. This river of memory, this river of history running across the page. "The damage was horrific." "People aren't handling it well at all with this devastation." "The women making food for everyone." What if settlers showed up for Indigenous communities to shore up, pitch in with the spirit of care, with food,

shared music?

sandbags and

The Personal is Political

504938C (2005) by Ervin Chartrand

This is real. Hugs and family and self-medicating with alcohol. Absence.

504938C, barbed wire tattoo on his brown arm, small feather on his neck.

Sage smudge in a prison cell.

Healing from the violence of the past. Leaving prison with a smudge bowl and a feather.

Drumsong walking him to the outside, men chanting and drumming at the round drum.

He's going home. Prison gates open – he's met with two kinds of belonging –

his family and his gang. There's Darryl Nepinak and Wab Kinew.

Movement. Camera circling 504938C with choice.

Nikamowin (Song) (2008) by Kevin Lee Burton

Experimental film as song.

I am moving through water, sometimes in a canoe, moving through landscape.

Trees reflected in water look like visualized sound waves.

I am blinking through language, listening to sounds of Cree as we circle with

the narrator in a canoe. They're learning Cree phrases.

Rhythm of Cree sets a beat synced with visual abstractions.

I am listening through a Cree story, through reverberations, waves of sound and water, over frozen land.

I am moving with a gift of love, to Gods Lake Narrows, visual screen doubling,

home doubling, strong beats running.

I am travelling though bush and snow to water lilies and lake, this quick shift:

"What happens when you start to speak Cree?"

I am thinking with the narrator, touching land with rhythm, grooving with a mesmerizing soundscape, listening as much as I am looking,

I am deeply moved by this film in ways I cannot follow.

"You cut my tongue, now only my heart speaks." Tania Willard

vava/avat (2010) by Shimby Zegeve-Gebrehiwot

Artist travelling the distance of diaspora with poetic and visual language, with super 8 as witness. They ache for multi-generational contact, for understanding across languages, risking failures in translation. Artist brings us to Greece, to an ancient home. Makes beauty with rich images, documents longing and their reconnection with grandmother, their camera lovingly embracing her. These shared *Moving Images*, a gift over tea, the soft sound of men chanting.

In Still Time (2015) by Leslie Supnet

Patterns of holes as if a screen was held over the image, a man walking, a man chanting, the image flickering and moving downward, not right to left. Break to blue and back to patterned screen, to the voice of a newscaster telling of arid, drought-stricken lands and dislocated Muslims. This catastrophe, this climate story of drought. What is left of Arab rebellion? What is tyrannical machine, plundering and terrorizing the country? What is happening in Syria? Accelerating death toll, sounds of gunfire. Is this what has shot through the image? Has the film dried up? Shift to red. Soldiers and militants. Killing. Soldiers and protesters. Killed. Red running though the images like blood being spilled through narrative. Shift to green. More accounts of what is happening in Syria. And now I am thinking about Trump and Trudeau and government policies. Where will the refugees go? Where will they be welcomed? Shift to blue, my ears straining to hear, difficult to keep watching. The devastating image of the dead child on the beach, his father in anguish. We watch, we witness. The artist moving us to look, listen. We are held in time, this moment in history, with what is happening in Syria, still.

Land Memories: Starlight Tours (2015) by Scott Benesiinaabandan

An abstract telling. Looks like a storm trooper busted through the door of house #310. Lines of electricity passing behind and through. Hydro towers moving by as if I was sitting in a car, in the back seat watching the landscape shift from inside to outskirts. A flash back to the house, to an image of a child standing alone with their back to us, face toward a closed door, long braids falling down their back. The image from the car window shifts to a prairie field with white butterflies. This is an ominous field, this visual field of starlight tours, this punishing field where Indigenous people are left outside of the city limits by police, made to find their way home through the dark and the cold.

The Haunted Cinema

The Heart of the World (2000) by Guy Maddin

Anna has stolen my heart. Anna, brilliant scientist who studies the earth's core, the heart of the world. Nikolai (assembly line worker, mortician) and Osip (method actor learning the passion of Christ) are brothers who are both in love with Anna too. How desperately we need Anna in the current climate of fascism, alternative facts, and science deniers. The heart of the world is failing under the weight of the machine. Again. Giant wheels are turning. From the underbelly of capitalism I am thinking about Maria of *Metropolis* and the heart machine. Maria has also stolen my heart but wait... Anna is being put under the spell of the evil capitalist. Panic and mayhem ensue. A wild orgy of passion is being whipped up by Christ (played by Osip, played by Caelum Vatnsdal). The other brother, Nikolai, is filling up a large dildo-like object on a cart. Are they fuelling it with coal? Is this a big neo-colonial white supremacist capitalist heteropatriarchal ejaculation in the making? Anna, our heroine scientist, is being seduced by the wealthy industrialist, his heightened arrival on the scene of this fast-paced melodrama is causing the world to have a fatal heart attack. This is no little death. Is all lost? Wait! Even the dead rise! Anna, my heroine, chokes the industrialist and returns from the den of capitalism to save the world. Anna's light grows, until she becomes light, is she becoming film? Kino, is this film truth? I am moved by the sound and speed of this film grounded in the material realities of the heart. Viva the revolution of light!

perhaps/WE (2003) by Solomon Nagler

This experimental montage, this hand tinted dreamscape opens with a man who says, "Every time I dream I lose half of my body." It seems as if light is being pushed around the image or light lifting off of reality into the night. I could watch these colourized dreamscapes for a long time, step into history with traces of Judaic text, stone angels, forests and gravestones. There are scratches and ripples of colour moving me into the past and the abstract dreams of a painter, who steps into the liminal in the middle of the night. This particular haunting calls forth mysticism that floats to the surface of film.

HYPER_ (2012) by Freya Bjorg Olafson

Skeletal image, UV light, multi-coloured xray, following and haunting the dancing body. Body haunting the screen. Bones dancing, stripped of flesh infused with rainbow gestures. Fleshy body returns and disappears again with the stripping away of skin. This body shifting between flesh and image creates illusion, magic. The third technologically manipulated body appears. Surreal. Psychedelic somatic travel through multi-dimensions. This is the performer's cut.

Rasquño (2006) by Matthew Kennedy & Conor Sweeney

Darkened train tunnel, light in the far distance.

Flicker and switch to a crawl space of a house.

Clear plastic vapor barrier and the pink insulation underneath.

Wrapped shape in the corner. Body bag.

Rapid shift to the inside of the house, creepy and vacant.

There's an empty couch and a kitchen sink, the faucet dripping.

Rapid shift of images. Poltergeist. How quickly we can be moved to horror.

A single chair in the corner of a room. I hear Edgar Allen Poe in the basement.

Rapid shift to hooded captives below, arms raised above their heads.

This the terror of image, of torture.

Channels switching on and off.

I can't make out what the narrator is saying but it's ominous.

Bodies with bandages and bleeding eyes. Zombie whispers?

I shut my eyes before the film ends, wait for the sound to fade.

Open my eyes to the welcome darkness of the blackened screen.

Women's Pictures, Women's Lives

Clean (2015) by Danielle Sturk

A woman drives through a carwash, water pounding as she tells a story of being violated on a bus. The car, the carwash, site of telling, of memory, of coming clean. She was alone, her young body, his large white hand on her girl thigh. There's no moving with this image. She can't move. She can't speak. How this story moves us to feel what it is like to be frozen, silenced, a young body trying to move but paralyzed with fear.

The Singing Bones (2016) by Danishka Esterhazy.

Bluebeard. Blue light. Blue fingernail polish. Blue Martinis. Blue painting of a woman screaming. The stories young women whisper to each other when they think you aren't listening. Overheard stories about dangerous parties in Winnipeg, hosted in mansions owned by notorious men who lure young women and girls, plying rape-drugs into their bodies. Stories that call to mind everyman who's sure he's going to get away with rape, not to mention all of his buddies who keep the secrets safe, locked behind closed doors. The men who are loyal to rapists. These are the hushed horror stories of this fairy tale, but this time there is no final girl. Only a heroine, a dead man, and the chorus of dead girl bones electrifying her guitar.

Maiden Indian (2011) by The Ephemerals

Artists move quickly through histories of appropriation, one hundred and fifty years worth of being ripped off. I remember when The Ephemerals, aka Trio – three Indigenous artists and curators – Jaime Isaac, Niki Little, and Jenny Western, were in residence at Gallery 1Co3 (2011). A four-day long performance on campus bringing attention to Indigenously-inspired trends taken-up by the white mainstream. They gave artist talks, performances, and claimed an anthropology exhibit window for works they had produced themselves. These friends, tight knit. Travel through consumer spaces, collect mass-produced and heavily marketed beaded and feathered accessories. Headbands, belts, necklaces and earrings. They gather fabrics by corporations that shamelessly reproduce historic Indigenous patterns for profit. They visit museum exhibits and dioramas, salvaging history and materials for art-making. Sewing machines revved up to recreate their own-sewn Indigenous fashions to take to the street on bikes. I move over, move back, move closer to an understanding of what it means to reclaim what was taken from you, and do it with style.

Zuma (2011) by Sharon Alward

A frozen prairie lake, a white woman wandering barefoot at its edge, making her way through snow, climbing over ice-cold stone. Her simple white dress the gown of her younger self, seventeen, pregnant, and unwed. Forced to go to a rescue home for the fallen and falling. Forced to take the cure. Forced to give birth alone without help, care or relief from the pain of labour. Forced to surrender her child. Forced to forget. Her feet are reddening, freezing. I wonder what she can feel. Her performance ritual, she of pure heart, is one of mourning and truth telling. Memory carried us with her to Zuma Beach, the California sun and surf bringing sun-drenched moments of revelation and peace. Her performance is durational, a lifetime of carrying shadow mother knowledge.

Canoe (2010) by Shelagh Carter & Deborah Schnitzer

Minimalist piano, an unsettling buzz, this is a restrained, premeditated act of love and loss. Arresting final images, small poems: a woman at the kitchen window, her one arm clutched around her waist, sometimes she's stroking her cheek gently with a paring knife; a canoe in the kitchen, floating memory and last considerations; a dying man's straw hat in the refrigerator; the shimmer of sun hitting the lake. Memory holds images from the past in black and white. Chilling, contemplative last moments gather around the woman with the colours of summer at the cottage: green, white, blue. Imagine her there alone as she takes her beloved husband on a last canoe ride. She rocks the boat, tips them both into the watery depths of death.

Funny Haha and Funny Peculiar

Two Men in Search of a Plot (1976) by John Kozak & Howard Curle

Made in the seventies. You can tell by the cars and the suits and the streets of the city. Two men trying to dispose of a dead body. Are they murderers? In the first instance while dumping the body in a birch grove they are seen by a girl. The plot thickens. The girl disappears, another white body bag appears. A cop, a dumpster, two dudes, a construction site, a worker at lunch, a skating shack, dudes getting high, and finally they retreat to a park with the mound of dead bodies behind them. No witnesses. Here's the plot. They make their get away. A violent action film without the action — no blood, no guns, no car wrecks, no sound, only a pile of dead bodies. If only the action film genre could have taken this plot turn in 1976. Might have changed the history of Hollywood filmmaking.

The Champ (2015) by Markus.Milos.Ian.Fabian

Show more aggression if you want to win.

Dinner is served to the Champ, now prisoner in the clink.

Guards place bets, watch a fight. New champion declared.

Prison press conference with the jailed Champ.

Everyone wants him to know there's a new champion.

I am the Champ, jailed Champ says. Until I die.

No one is taking my belt.

You can have my balls.

He's shining his gold belt in the dark, eating his last pizza before being executed.

Seems like you can choose how to die here in this prison.

The Champ is woken in the middle of the night.

Walked into his death ring.

In one corner the jailed Champ, still in handcuffs.

In the other corner the State.

The State pulverizes the Champ. He's down for good.

Time of death: 12:23. Gloves and gold belt dumped in the trash.

Who's going to contend with the State?

(I wonder why the State boxer is black & the only black character in the film)

Loss of Contact (2014) by BJ Verot & Brad Crawford

Is that cum on your face Virgil.
This ain't tombstone, that's for certain.
You're the last one standing?
Feel lucky to be alive.

(she wiped away the light film on his face)

The Idea (2012) by Leslie Supnet

Ideas travel in mysterious ways but there's no mystery in how ideas are stolen. Here's the moral: do not share your good ideas with people who don't have any good ideas of their own. Go ask Dolly: "It's enough to drive you crazy if you let it."

Whine (2016) by Glen Johnson

A funny and peculiar thing happens with Whine, this contemporary black and white remake of Ginsberg's Howl.

Artist Glenn Johnson appears as his writer self, performing Ginsberg beats with heavy black glasses.

This film, a poem, placed at the end of Moving Images.

It's as if the history of film has burst into flames of poetry.

I stifle laughter, release a deep chuckle while hipsters with dull eyes wait for irony.





















Guy Maddin, selected collages (2016)

Tender Fragments

Jonathan Ball

The nets drag through the landscape like tendrils. From the gown of a monstrous bride. Clones beside her, in formation, in stride. They will never reach their altars. They collapse into wet piles instead.

In the background, in an empty park, the world awaits the arrival of new things. The world a picture that we set ourselves against, collage ourselves inside. Four horses with no horsemen clatter over the din of a rough crowd, a splash of sepia above fists flashing black-and-white. We are the horses, we seek horsemen, we must ready ourselves to unglue when the end times come.

In the darkness, we sit and we don't breathe. We wait still in the room for the light. A rectangle of silver flashed into the blackness before us, pasted where it does not belong. Where nothing belongs, where it spoils the purity of the picture, of these shadows we take for the world.

Flashing silver, ghosts congeal in inky mists. So much has been lost. So much screams to be seen once again. So many hold hands in the darkness. We summon them, summon them onto the screen, summon dark souls to silver, to digital approximations of silver. Shadows that approximate souls. They appear once and then dissolve forever, into a forever held static inside code.

Collaged into the bright world, a dark room. Inside which everything is forbidden, all these vicious, vivid ghosts. A room haunted by horrors, filled to bursting with their depthless smiles. Collaged into this darkness, their light. They shiver, you can see through them, see the world behind them. They stay locked inside the dark room's senseless light. Smiles flashing like knives in this darkness, finally free.

The dead float through an afterlife of images, pinned like butterflies to magazine spreads, snipped out and glued into new nightmares. The Stooges hover, confused, above a roiling mass of whales. Kim Novak sinks herself into a vase, a well-wrought urn.

Behind one thing, always another — this is the lesson of collage, not to put one thing beside another but one thing over another. Not how the sewing machine and the umbrella meet upon the dissecting table, but how their presence obscures that table. How their dissections draw attention away from the horror of the table itself.

When our bodies come apart, what we should notice is the world without our bodies. The violence that rends us from the world pales beside the violence of being in the world, uninjured, the violence of our presence, how we spoil the picture's symmetry. Our light inside its darkness, our terrifying lives, how they frighten the darkness.

How we frighten the picture by looking, giving the image a reason to exist. The Stooges stare in horror at their missing bodies, while whales struggle to leap from the picture, beach themselves somewhere outside its frame.

The light layers over the darkness, ghosts layer their pasts over our present. The lesson of the séance is that nothing stops happening. The past infects the present. Bleeds across it, glues itself into the centre of our sky.

The séance does not summon up the ghosts, which were already there, but clasps them for a moment in the embrace of their deaths. Hauled into death for just one moment, out of their endless, timeless lives.

These dead, their loss, fill every room. They flicker, worlds fill with their flickering. The challenge of the past is how to have it. How to have it be the past. How to pay attention to the screen while the movie's playing.

If you dreamed, your horse would dream you, place its rivers in your eyes. If you drowned, a train would take you out across a fractured bridge. If you fell, the trees would gather and then sleepwalk in your shadow. All your shadows would disown you if they could. A new shadow born each time you step out from a shadow, into light, and then left, lost, wandering through the memory of the sun.

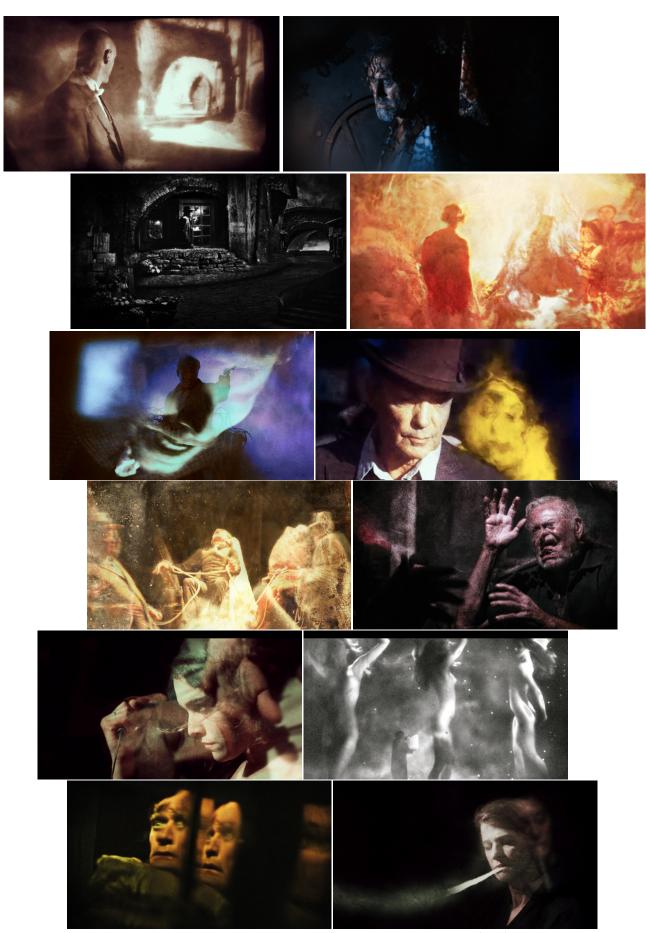
In the room with the light all your shadows reach, tortured, for the screen they cannot fill. Their fingers dissolve as they push into the projector's beam. They withdraw, cursing the light that they must love. They tumble to the floor in tender fragments, claw back together, hate you for their life.

We pile broken things, paste one world atop another. Ghosts carouse in us, in the chambers of our pixellated hearts. If we could scrape away these images, if we could scrape down to their backing, to the blankness of the nothing before pictures, maybe then we could know nothing, see God.

When you tell me to choose, I choose to sit inside the room. I close my eyes, close myself in my dream. I place this thing beside that, place myself beside its placement. I sit still in the room with the light.

. . .

Jonathan Ball (PhD, English) is the author of five books: *Ex Machina*, a poetry book about how machines have changed what it means to be human; *Clockfire*, a collection of 77 plays that would be impossible to produce; *The Politics of Knives*, poems about violence, narrative, and spectatorship, and winner of a Manitoba Book Award; *John Paizs's Crime Wave*, an academic study of a neglected Canadian cult film classic, which was launched at the Toronto International Film Festival and also won a Manitoba Book Award; and *Why Poetry Sucks: An Anthology of Humorous Experimental Poetry*, co-edited with Ryan Fitzpatrick. Jonathan has also directed short films (including *Spoony B*, which sold to The Comedy Network), served as the managing editor of *dANDelion* magazine, and founded the literary journal *Maelstrom*. Visit him online at www.JonathanBall.com.



Film stills from Guy Maddin, Evan and Galen Johnson's Seances (2016)

Print on demand publication of the exhibition *Moving Images* presented at Gallery 1Co₃, The University of Winnipeg from January 12 – February 18, 2017

Curated by Jennifer Gibson and Alison Gillmor

Images and text © Gallery 1Co3, The University of Winnipeg, The authors and the artists, 2017.

PDF ISBN: 978-0-9921187-5-4

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Graphic design: Ian Lark

Acknowledgments

Gallery 1Co3 is the campus art gallery of The University of Winnipeg and is grateful to the University for its ongoing operational support which has made this publication possible. The Gallery also acknowledges the financial support of the Winnipeg Arts Council and Manitoba Arts Council for Moving Images. Gallery 1Co3 wishes to thank the artists, Moving Images co-curator Alison Gillmor, writers Roewan Crowe and Jonathan Ball and graphic designer lan Lark for their contributions to this exhibition and publication. As well, the Gallery values the artists and academics who shared their work and their expertise with the public at the three panel discussion events affiliated with Moving Images. We wish to thank the University Library for their partnership on the presentation of "The Tender Fragments" affiliated exhibition and discussion. Gallery 1Co3 deeply appreciates the partnership of Winnipeg Film Group, Video Pool Media Arts Centre and V-Tape for providing many of the exhibited works as well as artist biographies and film/video stills. In this regard, I especially want to acknowledge Monica Lowe, Niki Little, and Stephanie Berrington of the Winnipeg Film Group; Jennifer Lee Smith of Video Pool Media Arts Centre; and Wanda vanderStoop of V-tape. In addition we thank Video Pool, Plug In ICA and the University of Winnipeg's physical plant and media departments for the loan of equipment for the exhibition. Thanks are due also to installation technician Glen Johnson and Bruce Hanks of the Centre for Academic Technologies. Finally, Gallery 1Co3 wishes to express its gratitude to the generous donors of this project.







