

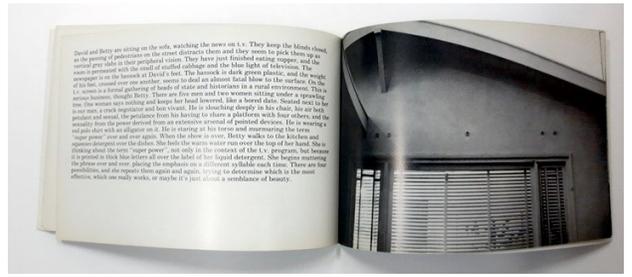
Absence/Presence

CONTEMPORARY WORKS IN DIALOGUE

Absence/Presence explores the spaces between viewers and works of art that appear empty, but are filled with ideas, memories and emotions. These spaces are points of contact between human bodies and objects that we cannot touch but may be *touched by*; things we cannot feel that produce *feelings*. Each of the works assembled here withholds or conceals part of its subject to draw attention to the role of the intangible in the creation of meanings. They foreground what is absent to explore the limitations of the material, pointing beyond visible representation and making space for myriad understandings.

We imagine the gallery as being crisscrossed with multiple associations and identifications, activated not only by people or objects, but also by the interactions between them.

Curated by the students of Contemporary Art and Curatorial Practice in the Department of Art History & Art Conservation: Emma Doedens, Boris Eng, Katie Haas, Elizabeth Handley-Derry, Siobhan Handley-Derry, Maddy Huber, Eunice Kim, Parker O'Connor, Zoë Richards, Jillian Sanders, Katherine Walker, and Rui Jie Wang with Professor Jen Kennedy.



White Building



Mike Bayne

born Ottawa, Ontario 1977

2007

oil on masonite panel

10.2 x 15.2 cm

Purchase, Donald Murray Shepherd Bequest Fund, 2012

55-002

Reminiscent of 17th century Dutch genre scenes, Mike Bayne's photorealistic paintings render seemingly banal subjects in extraordinary detail. *White Building* depicts a typical unassuming building in downtown Kingston and asks the viewer to look at it closely. The same dimensions as a common snapshot, at first glance this intricate painting is easy to mistake for a photograph. This initial discrepancy between what the work appears to be (a photograph) and what it is (a painting) corresponds to the difference between seeing and noticing the commonplace objects and spaces that make up everyday life.

Researched by Maddy Huber

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Mister Luna



Rebecca Belmore

born Upsala, Ontario 1960

2001

painted leather shoes, vanity lights, feathers, electrical cords, and hardware

228.6 x 152.4 cm

Purchased with matching funds from the Canada Council Acquisition Assistance Fund and the Chancellor Richardson Memorial Fund, 2013

46-005.01

A portrait without a person, this work evokes Rebecca Belmore's mentor, Payómkawichum and Mexican-American performance artist James Luna, through an assemblage of found objects: flashy yellow shoes, bright vanity lights, and turkey feathers. By representing Luna through emblematic objects, her portrait subvert's Luna's emphasis on the body as subject and material.

Belmore met Luna in 2005 when she was the first Indigenous woman to represent Canada at the Venice Biennale. Through performance art, they both engage in cultural decolonizing, interrogating, and unraveling the ways that settler knowledge and systems of representation have circumscribed Indigenous identities.

Researched by Siobhan Handley-Derry

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Support for a Blue Heart



Betty Goodwin

born Montreal, Quebec 1923; died Montreal, Quebec 2008

1996

pigment, oil stick, wax, steel

216.0 x 35.0 x 19.0 cm

Purchased with the help of the Gelmont Foundation in Honour of Janet M.

Brooke, Director, Agnes Etherington Art Centre, 2002

45-007

This work confronts the viewer with the visceral. It exposes an image of “viscera” through a disembodied wax heart suspended between two metal rods at roughly the height of viewers’ hearts. The heart as a symbol for love implies a ground for feeling that conflicts with the abject presentation. During the 1990s, Betty Goodwin explored how individual elements of the human body can stimulate dialogue concerning universal human experiences such as pain, loss, and suffering. Here she reduces the human form to its physical and symbolic core, calling attention to its vulnerability and mortality.

Researched by Katherine Walker

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Francine Russell

(from the Lives of Girls and Women series)



April Hickox

born Toronto, Ontario 1955

1988

photo etching on paper

47.0 x 37.2 cm

Purchased with the J. Stuart Fleming Fund, 1993

36-019.01

This photo etching is from a series of fourteen works that combine renderings of Barbie doll clothing with short, first person texts that reflect on the gendered social pressures experienced by Canadian women. While there are no actual Barbie dolls represented in the series, the presence of this former icon of femininity is evoked through items of clothing that hold the shape of her recognizable form.

The text is a composite of fragments of conversations that April Hickox had with several women. Weaving multiple voices into a single narrative, she explores how the same gender stereotypes and expectations can cut across and through the lives of many different women.

Researched by Zoë Richards

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CONFUSING YOURSELF IS A WAY TO STAY HONEST

(from Truism rubber stamp set)



Jenny Holzer
born Gallipolis, Ohio 1950
1991
rubber, wood
10.0 x 4.0 x 3.0 cm
Purchase, 1993
36-013.02

This work is from an artist's multiple comprised of five rubber stamps that Jenny Holzer commissioned as an inexpensive way of circulating her *Truisms*. *Truisms* is an ongoing series of text-based one-liners that riff on commonly held beliefs and clichés. With each use of the stamp, Holzer's work is translated onto another surface and transferred into another context—a connection between multiple spaces, objects, and bodies.

Researched by Emma Doedens

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Study for Helmets and Gasmasks #2



Sophie Jodoin
born Montreal, Quebec 1965
2007
oil on mylar
101.6 x 91.4 cm
Gift of Herbert Bunt, 2013
56-021

This painting is from a visual “diary” that Sophie Jodoin produced in preparation for a larger series reflecting on the subject of war. The highly worked rendering of a Medieval helmet sprouting a human ear transgresses the boundaries between the inanimate and animate, between protective armour and the bodies that wear it.

Researched by Eunice Kim and Zoë Richards

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YIPPEE

(from Little Red Folio, 2000)



Rachelle Viader Knowles

born Bristol, UK 1969

2000

graphite on paper, 5/6

20.4 x 25.4 cm

Gift of Paul Petro, 2010

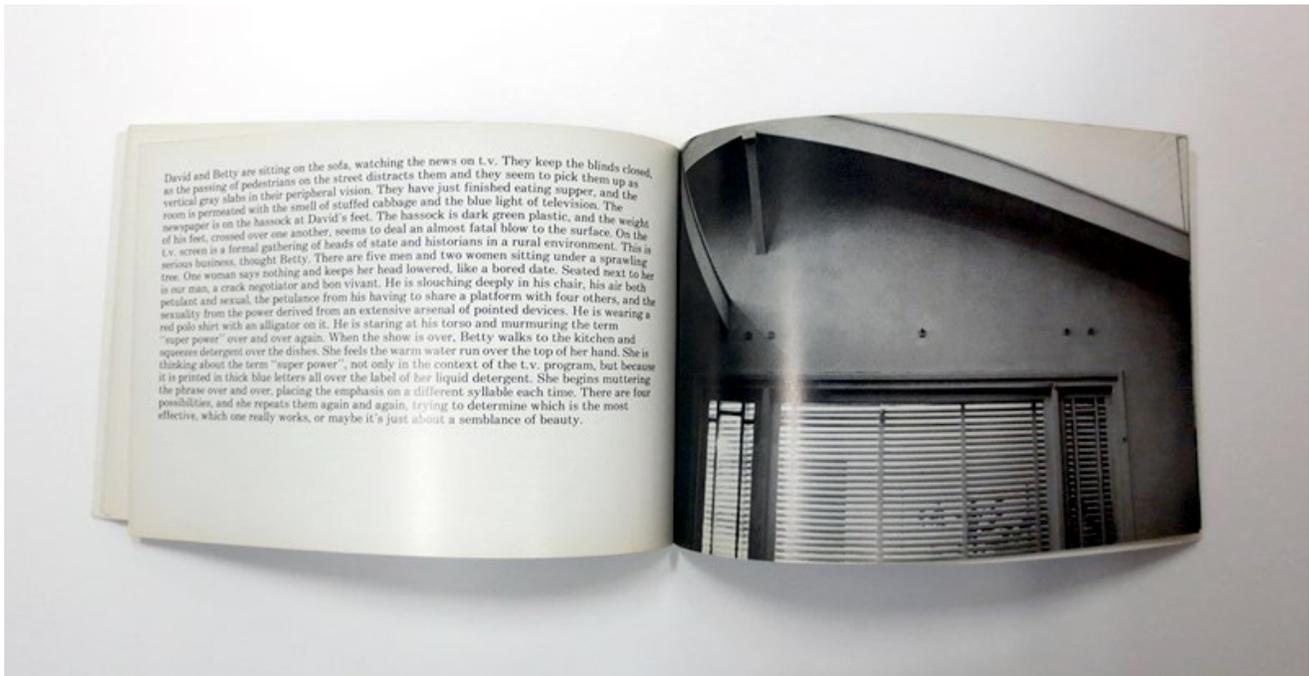
53-054.18

YIPPEE could be interpreted as an attempt to make a tangible document of an ephemeral experience—a moment of glee or delight. The exclamation “yipee” appears to have been blasted off the page with only its graphite shadow, or trace, remaining, like the after effect of fireworks or the celebratory feeling that lingers in a room after a party. This work explores the challenge of putting experiences into language, playfully rebelling against the unrelenting passage of time and fleeting nature of experiences and emotions.

Researched by Rui-Jie Wang

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Picture/Readings



David and Betty are sitting on the sofa, watching the news on t.v. They keep the blinds closed, as the passing of pedestrians on the street distracts them and they seem to pick them up as vertical gray slabs in their peripheral vision. They have just finished eating supper, and the room is permeated with the smell of stuffed cabbage and the blue light of television. The newspaper is on the hassock at David's feet. The hassock is dark green plastic, and the weight of his feet, crossed over one another, seems to deal an almost fatal blow to the surface. On the t.v. screen is a formal gathering of heads of state and historians in a rural environment. This is serious business, thought Betty. There are five men and two women sitting under a sprawling tree. One woman says nothing and keeps her head lowered, like a bored date. Seated next to her is our man, a crack negotiator and bon vivant. He is slouching deeply in his chair, his air both petulant and sexual, the petulance from his having to share a platform with four others, and the sexuality from the power derived from an extensive arsenal of pointed devices. He is wearing a red polo shirt with an alligator on it. He is staring at his torso and murmuring the term "super power" over and over again. When the show is over, Betty walks to the kitchen and squeezes detergent over the dishes. She feels the warm water run over the top of her hand. She is thinking about the term "super power", not only in the context of the t.v. program, but because it is printed in thick blue letters all over the label of her liquid detergent. She begins muttering the phrase over and over, placing the emphasis on a different syllable each time. There are four possibilities, and she repeats them again and again, trying to determine which is the most effective, which one really works, or maybe it's just about a semblance of beauty.

Barbara Kruger

born Newark, NJ 1945

1978

Artists' book

22.3 x 14.5 cm

Gift of Ted Rettig and Alice Wong-Rettig, 2012

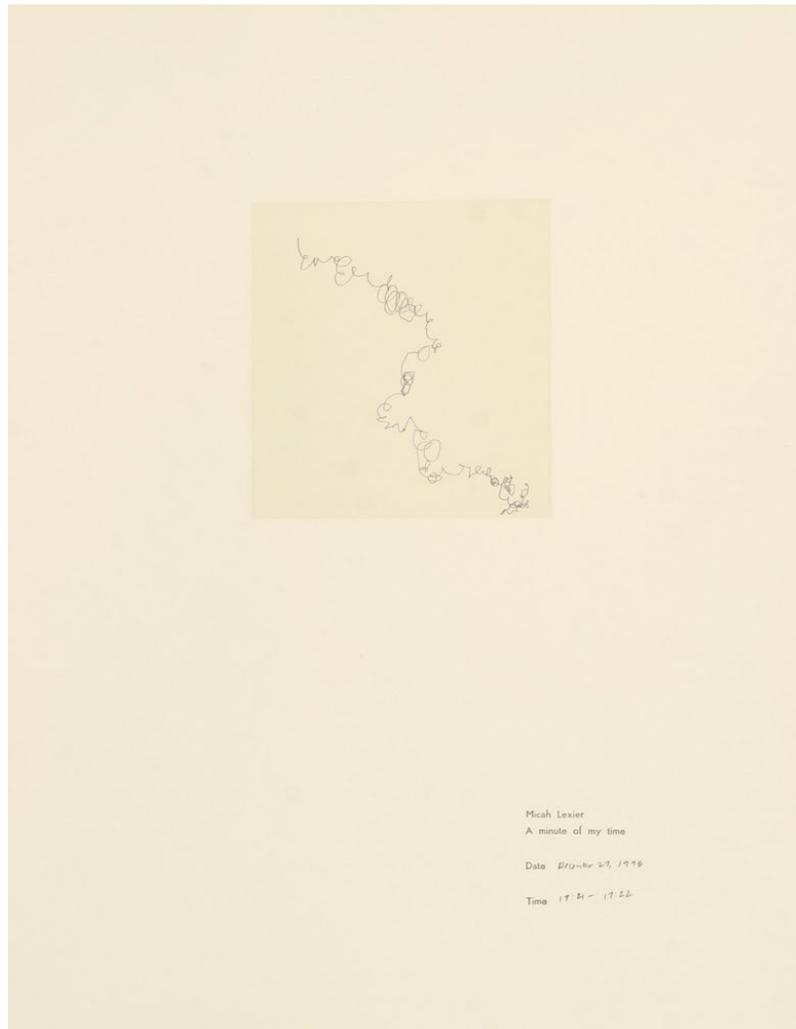
55-021.043

In this bookwork, Barbara Kruger pairs photographs of exteriors of houses with speculative narratives about the lives of their imagined inhabitants. *Picture/Readings* interrogates the truth value associated with documentary photography by drawing attention to the limits of representation and highlighting the role of the viewer/reader in the construction of meaning.

Researched by Jillian Sanders

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A Minute of My Time - December 27, 1998 17:21-17:22



Micah Lexier

born Winnipeg, Manitoba 1960

1998

letterpress and pencil on buff cover stock paper

38.2 x 28.0 cm

Gift of Heather Lawson, Eleanor Bothwell and Alice Bothwell, 2005

48-016.04

Influenced by Surrealist automatic drawings, *A Minute of My Time - December 27, 1998 17:21-17:22* is both a physical record of an immaterial phenomenon and an abstract self-portrait. This work is part of a larger series of one-minute drawings inspired by the Surrealist practice of automatic drawing that have been translated into sculptures and prints. Micah Lexier began the series in 1995 as a method of rendering the invisible (time) visible and marking his presence without using figurative representation. Each work in the series is titled with the time and date that it was produced. Taken together, they are an index of Lexier's continuing existence, and how his physical being, inscribed in gestures and marks, gives form to the passage of time.

Researched by Elizabeth Handley-Derry

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Invisible Sightings, No. 3



Edward Pien
born Taipei, Taiwan 1958
1997
serigraph on paper, 1/10
76.3 x 56.7 cm
Gift of Herbert O. Bunt, 2000
43-014.03

This work is from a series that Edward Pien produced during his first trip back to Taiwan after immigrating to Canada in 1969 at the age of eleven. During his four months in Taiwan, Pien researched national mythologies concerning ghosts. The silhouette form conjures a subject through absence, like a ghostly apparition that appears without taking fully-physical form.

For Pien, the visual tension between absence and presence that characterizes the silhouette and the material tension between absence and presence that characterizes apparitions are analogous to his own subjective relationship to Taiwanese culture, which he experienced as both an insider and an outsider, as both intimately familiar and unknown.

Researched by Boris Eng and Katie Haas

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News



Michael Snow
born Toronto, Ontario 1929
1959
oil on canvas
165.10 x 101.60 cm
Gift of Ayala and Samuel Zacks, 1962
05-076

Inspired by the pared-down visual language of New York School Abstract Expressionism and Michael Snow's fascination with the mass media, this work takes its composition from the form of the daily newspaper. However, in the place of articles and photographs, the artist fills the surface with gestural, sketchy blocks and columns of paint. By combining the journalistic form of the newspaper and the expressive form of the New York School painters, Snow explores both of these modalities as forms of communication and as representations of reality.

Researched by Parker O'Conner

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This publication documents the exhibition *Absence/Presence: Contemporary Works in Dialogue*, presented in the Frances K. Smith Gallery at the Agnes Etherington Art Centre, Queen's University, Kingston.

EXHIBITION :

Absence/Presence: Contemporary Works in Dialogue

29 April-6 August 2017

Frances K. Smith Gallery

Agnes Etherington Art Centre

36 University Avenue

Kingston, Ontario

Canada K7L 3N6

CURATORS :

Queen's University Art History & Conservation students, Emma Doedens, Boris Eng, Katie Haas, Elizabeth Handley-Derry, Siobhan Handley-Derry, Maddy Huber, Eunice Kim, Parker O'Conner, Zoë Richards, Jillian Sanders, Katherine Walker, and Rui-Jie Wang and Professor Jen Kennedy.

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