



NADINE BARITEAU

Nadine Bariteau is interested in water, particularly its commodification. In 2008, she made a piece called *Couverture d'eau* (*Water Blanket*), for which she bound together 3,000 plastic water bottles culled from a neighbour's recycling box over a ten-month period. The resulting raft of bottles was floated on the surface of several bodies of water and photographed. In 2010, she created a six-pack of hugely oversized plastic water bottles under the brand name *Crown*. This blow-up of the ubiquitous package of water bottles spawned several performances – the artist loaded the package into a shopping cart and pushed it through the city of Halifax from shopping mall to dock front. These earlier pieces were subversively political, and drew attention to the absurdity of the commodification of water and the negative impacts on our environment of the packaging of water.

In 2011, on an icy winter road, Bariteau was involved in a catastrophic car crash that took the life of her mother. The ensuing years have been a journey through grief to healing and wholeness. The power of the ocean has been a force the artist has returned to again and again for solace. Bariteau acknowledges that in the French language, the word for sea, *la mer*, is similar to the word for mother, *la mère*. In one of the text panels that forms the photo series *Âme et océan* (*Soul and Ocean*), she writes: “the sea calms me. it refocuses my will and gives me strength. it fills my being and feeds me. it heals me.”¹

Protecteurs des mers (*Protectors of the Seas*) by Bariteau was an installation of hand-built ceramic fish heads situated in the Project Space at Rodman Hall – the former window casings of the historic mansion's bay windows that overlook the gardens and Twelve Mile Creek. The ceramic forms were glossy white against a black wall, which made the forms seem to hover, as if emerging from the surface of dark water. Each fish head had a gaping maw and spiky teeth that was both sinister and humorous. Each was unique, with unusual fins,

eyes, teeth and markings. Flanking the central vitrine, an oversized metal fish hook was installed on the right and a giant fishing lure with hooks on the left. Coated in a highly reflective silver finish, the hooks dangled sinisterly at the height of the viewers' heads. Carefully placed mirrors situated behind the hooks invited passersby to catch a glimpse of their own reflections.

In the video work called *Guérison en quatre saisons* (*Four Seasons of Healing*), the artist acted as performer and director, piecing together actions performed against landscapes from different parts of Canada in each of the four seasons. In each action, Bariteau utilizes two large fish hooks (seen in the vitrines), both attached to a long line and a body harness. On a partially frozen river in Banff during springtime, the artist is hooked onto a downed tree, pulling and tugging the immovable trunk. In deep winter on the icy shore of the Toronto Islands, the artist hooks herself onto a towering ice face and tries to propel herself forward, but constantly loses her footing on the sheer surface. Another sequence finds the artist cantilevered out over a still lake near her father's Quebec cottage in autumn, hooked to a tree on the shore. Here she doesn't pull, but hangs in stillness above her reflection. In the final chapter, the artist walks the ocean shore south of Halifax – the hooks drag behind her latched on to a beach rake that gathers up seaweed, driftwood and sticks. The artist writes about the piece: “These actions permit me to imagine an eventual life beyond death while practicing a certain level of resilience. This piece resonates with an echo of what all human beings must confront at some point in their lives: the inevitable passage of mourning.”²

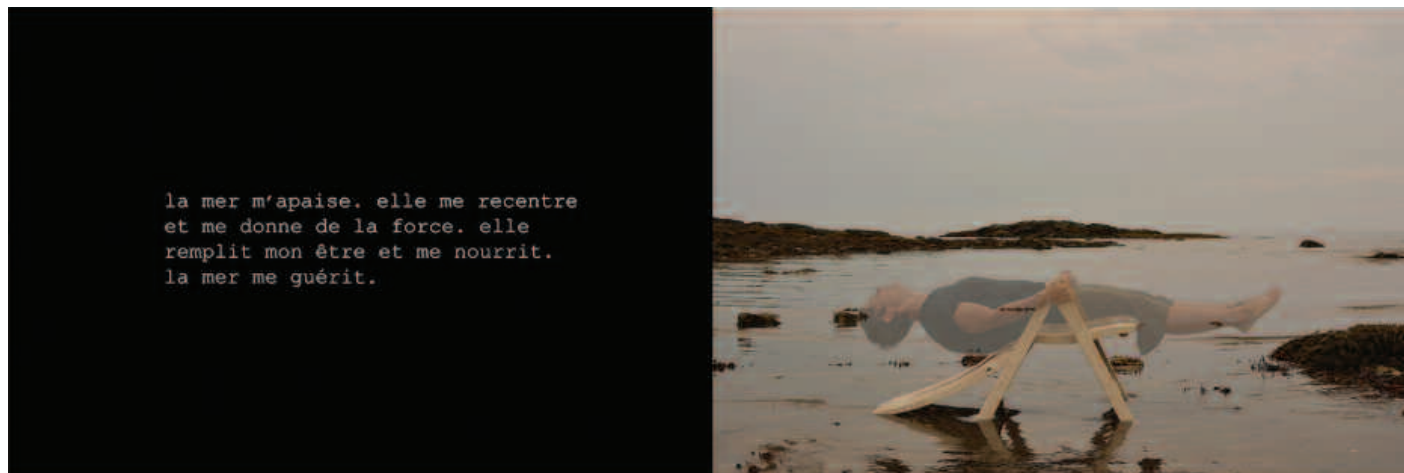
¹ Artist statement, 2014.

² Ibid.





12/25/2011, 16:00 ma vie prend une tournure inattendue en raison de conditions de verglas et d'un conducteur distrait. ce jour marque le début d'un voyage pour guérir mon corps et mon esprit du traumatisme et de la perte.



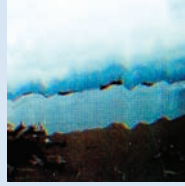
la mer m'apaise. elle me recentre et me donne de la force. elle remplit mon être et me nourrit. la mer me guérit.

PREVIOUS PAGE
Guérison en quatre saisons (Four Seasons for Healing),
[video stills], 2013-14

ABOVE
Âme et océan (Soul and Ocean Series), 2013

OPPOSITE PAGE
Protecteurs des mers (Protectors of the Seas)
[installation detail], 2013



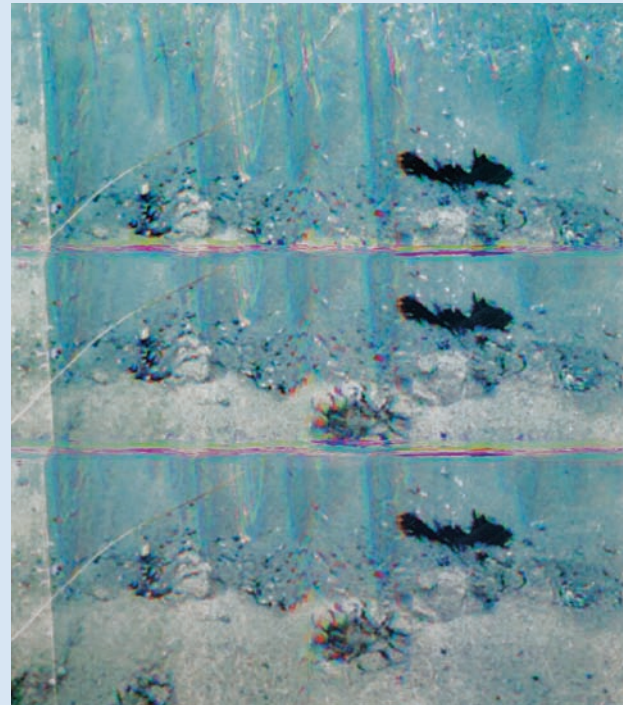


RAYMOND BOISJOLY

Raymond Boisjoly is an Indigenous artist of Haida and Québécois descent based in Vancouver. His contribution to *The Source* was a suite of mounted digital photographs that documented a disjointed conversation between two incompatible technologies, an iPad that captures video imagery and the raking eye of a flatbed scanner. Both technologies are recording devices; however, when meeting face to face, their conversation and the product created is fragmented.

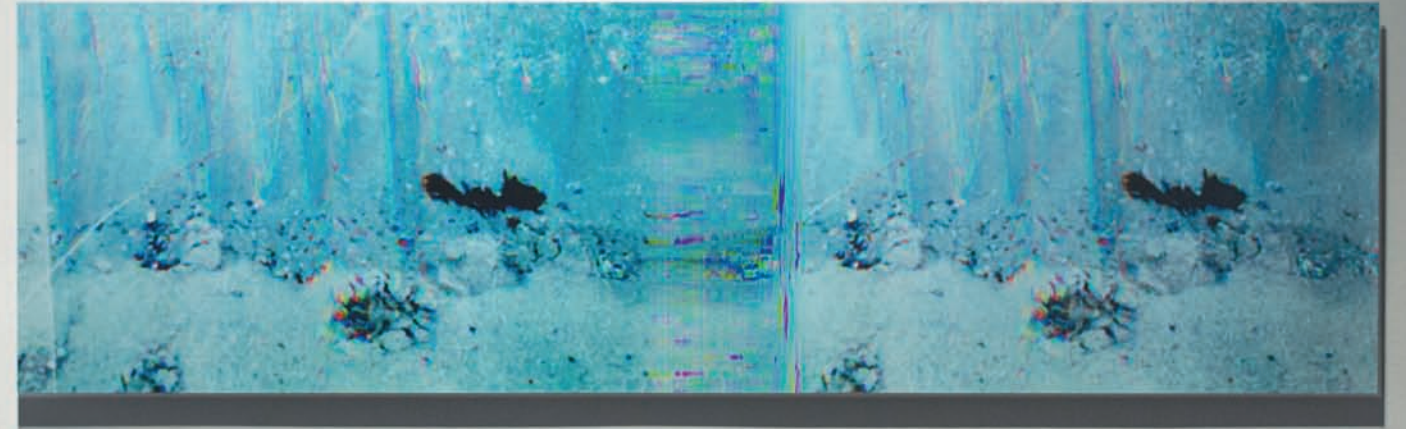
The works *Jericho (where there will be other places after)* and *This place (where there had been other places before)* took their source image from Jericho Beach in Vancouver. The artist produced a sequence of images in response to a poem by Daphne Marlatt called “this city: shrouded” from her book *Liquidities: Vancouver Poems Then and Now*,¹ which references Jericho Beach and the Musqueam village of Ee’yullmough that existed there before. Boisjoly created these prints by recording video imagery of the shoreline on an iPad. The moving images were then scanned on a flatbed scanner. The resulting images are distorted, unmoored from the logical reality of a linear reading. While the image is no longer representative of a specific place, it becomes another type of “found object” incorporating the scratches, imperfections, blurs and smears inherent in its making. The act of dislodging meaning from place draws attention to Indigenous peoples’ perspective on Jericho Beach as a culturally significant site, alienated from its traditional use and its displaced former inhabitants. The broken links between image and meaning allude to the effects of colonialism on long-held memory and human connection to place. The imagery Boisjoly has produced depicts the surface of water passing over the shore. Like the lapping action of a wave, which mimics the scan of the electronic eye, the artist draws attention to the fleeting nature of water, the washing away of imprints and the changing nature of shorelines.

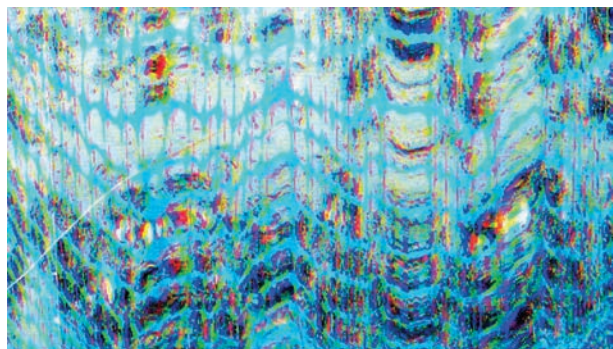
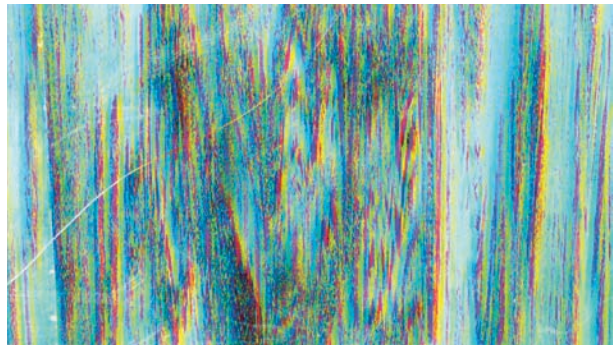
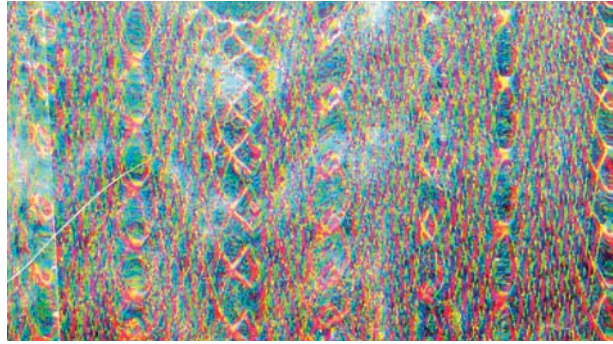
¹ Published by Talonbooks, Vancouver, 2013.



ABOVE
This place (where there had been other places before) [detail], 2014

OPPOSITE PAGE
Jericho (where there will be other places after), 2014





LEFT
From the series *Jericho (where there will be other places after)* 2013-14
screen resolution LightJet prints
mounted on Dibond
91.4 x 61 cm

OPPOSITE PAGE
Jericho (where there will be other places after) [installation view], 2014





ELIZABETH CHITTY

Elizabeth Chitty has long been engaged with the power of water, particularly as it relates to Ontario's Niagara watershed. Born in St. Catharines, she has travelled Canada in her career as an artist and performer, and returned to live in this community in the late 1980s. Her most recent body of work incorporates performance, social activism, film, video, audio and installation. It excavates the region's histories, focusing on the way humans have relied on water to build their communities, contrasting recent history with pre-Settlement times.

Her contribution to *The Source, Streaming Twelve*, is a multilayered video installation that incorporates image, sound, and text. It investigates notions of governance over water, particularly Twelve Mile Creek, which flows behind Rodman Hall. The artist writes: "I have long been interested in the interplay and interdependence of nature and human culture. In this work, my research was focused through the lens of ideas about ownership and governance. In Canada, no one can own water but of course it is not that simple as anyone who has ever seen a bottle of water knows. Ideas of ownership are themselves cultural."¹

Chitty's installation incorporated two large-scale projections and a smaller projection cast on a sculpture plinth with a soundtrack. One of the large projections in *Streaming Twelve* depicts recorded imagery shot by an aerial drone flying over Twelve Mile Creek, travelling upstream from the Burgoyne Bridge to the Glendale Bridge. The footage shows the creek from a low-flying perspective, just above the water and treeline. The imagery reveals that surveillance over water is a type of ownership; the authority of the aerial view is all-encompassing, and even captures images of the artist and drone pilot as they control the shoot from the shore.

On the adjacent wall, another projection of a real-time video stream of the creek's flow is captured by a camera secured to the roof of Rodman Hall. The image varies greatly according to the time of day and the angle of the sun. Bright summer morning shows the waters flash silver behind the trees; late afternoon plunges the shoreline into deep darkness.

The camera not only records the flow of water past Rodman Hall, but also the life that takes place along the creek: joggers, dog-walkers, people exploring the Walker Botanical Gardens seeking shade on a hot summer day. On one evening in May 2014, the resident groundhog in the gardens made an appearance, meandering across the screen, asserting dominion over his turf.

The third element in *Streaming Twelve* is projected on a short plinth next to a bench for close viewing, where headphones stream an audio track. The projection features archival still images detailing the construction of DeCew Generating Station #2, a hydroelectric power station just upstream from Rodman Hall built as part of the war effort during World War II. Cropped images focus on human work and activity, showing people making use of the force of water, building a city, powering a nation. While temporally specific, Chitty's piece, through its use of audio, broadens the scope to shift understanding of water among various peoples that have interacted with it over a vast expanse of time, reaching back to the treaties that define the relationships between Indigenous peoples and settlers in this part of Ontario. The audio track accompanying the moving image streams braids three sources of sound: the noise of electricity being generated in DeCew #1 (the oldest continually running hydroelectric station in Canada), excerpts read by the artist from the annual reports of the Hydro-Electric Power Commission of Ontario for 1942-44 and a translation of the Nanfan Treaty of 1701 governing this region of Canada, spoken in the Mohawk language.

A text available to visitors also addresses notions of ownership and governance over water from historic, contemporary and Indigenous perspectives. In it, Chitty writes: "I am interested in the local in a global context. Our enjoyment of abundant water, good infrastructure, and responsible government does not exempt us from the urgent global issues about water ownership, use and protection. This view from here resonates with water issues."²

¹ Artist statement, 2014.

² Ibid.



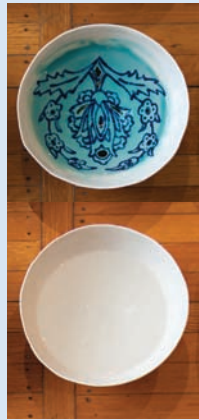


PREVIOUS PAGE
Streaming Twelve [video stills], 2014

LEFT
Streaming Twelve [video stills], 2014



ABOVE
Streaming Twelve, [installation view], 2014



SOHEILA ESFAHANI

Soheila Esfahani is interested in the sacred, sustaining nature of water. In her native Iran, fountains and water sources appear regularly in the city streets. For *The Source*, Esfahani created bowls in glazed ceramic, slip-cast forms. The decorations on the bowls reference the ornate decoration of the parlours of Rodman Hall. The Oriental decorations that Esfahani has used reference her own heritage and are evidence of colonial appropriation of those traditions, as apparent in the architectural decoration of the Victorian mansion. The Victorians borrowed heavily from the Middle East and Asia in decorative elements applied to furniture, textiles and architectural detail. The intricate articulated plasterwork on the ceiling of the parlours and the patterning that adorns the Italianate marble fireplaces are reflected in the delicate blue designs of 120 bowls laid out in a grid pattern on the floor of the Hansen Gallery. The patterns on the bowls compose an overall design that mimics that of a Persian rug.

Several of the delicate bowls were placed in the outdoor fountain of the Walker Botanical Gardens that surround Rodman Hall. The brightly coloured bowls were decorated with gold, a shimmering surprise that encouraged closer interaction with the bubbling surface of water and the cooling sound of the fountain.



ABOVE
Reflect, 2013-14

OPPOSITE PAGE
Wish on Water [detail], 2013-14





ABOVE
Wish on Water [installation view], 2013-14

OPPOSITE PAGE
Wish on Water [detail], 2013-14





GAUTAM GAROO

Gautam Garoo travelled to his native India as part of his research for *The Source*. His video piece *On the Water's Edge*: $25^{\circ}18'12.31''N/83^{\circ}00'27.58''E$ was shot in India in an alleyway near the ghats (steps leading down to the water) on the great Ganges River. This thirteen-minute video documents the relationship that exists between the people and the water in the city of Varanasi. Residents must use electric water pumps to push water upstairs to their apartments during the period of the day when electricity is available. The pumps often have to be primed by sucking the water through a tube. The video, shot at a low angle, shows the passing of life in this alleyway. An old woman sweeps the alley with a broom, a small dog passes by and a woman visits her pump several times, priming it and returning to check on progress. The comings and goings of people are directly linked to the necessity for access to water and how that relationship informs the actions of daily life.

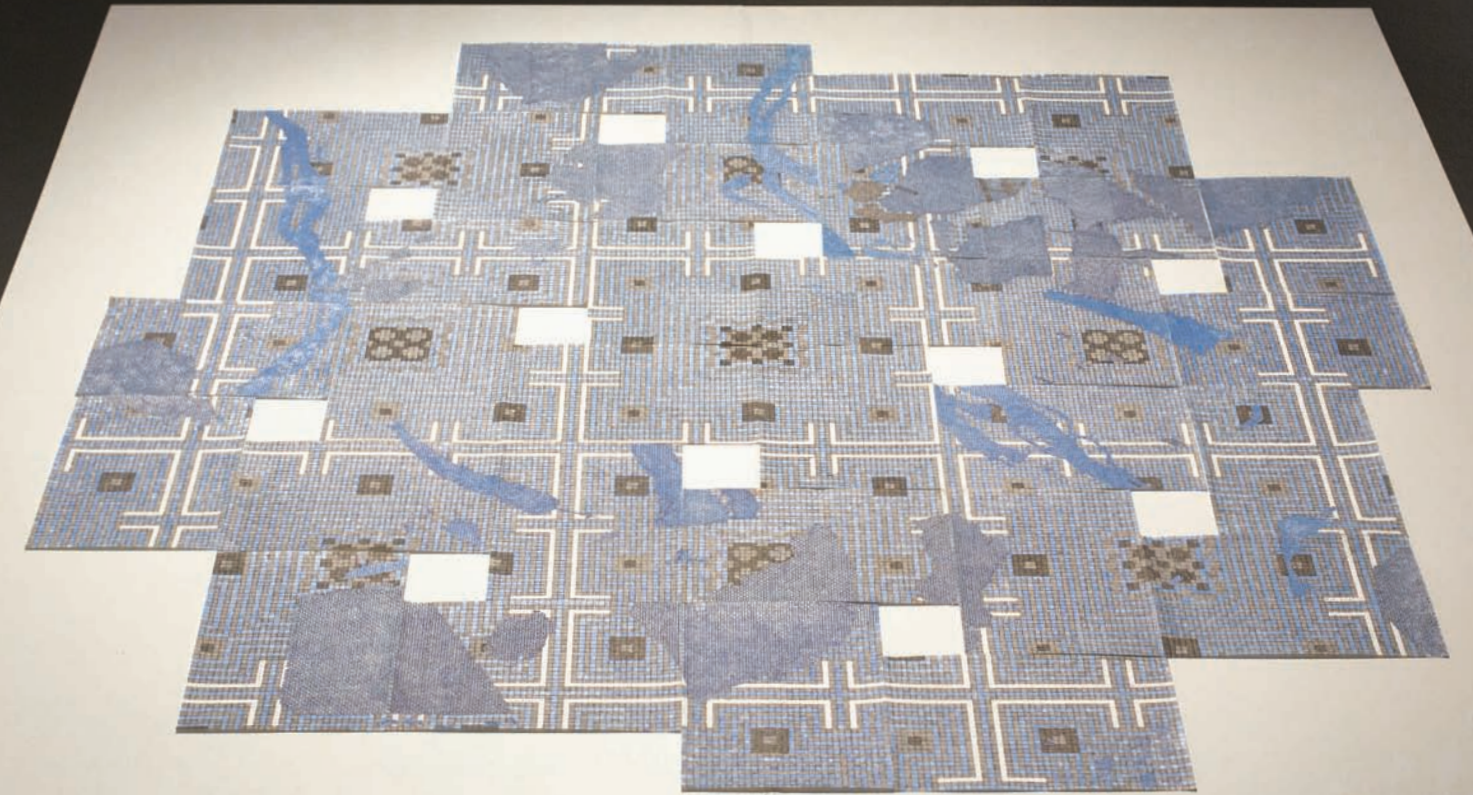
Garoo also created an ornate graphite-and-ink drawing on handmade paper called *On the Water's Edge*: $57^{\circ}00'13.98''N/111^{\circ}27'34.47''W$ that was displayed on a large plinth. The ornate geometric patterning of the drawing references the edges of water in both the ghats along the Ganges River in India and the tailings ponds of the tar sands in Alberta. There was a great tension in the drawing as two styles clash on the surface: the orderly geometry of the stepwells and the scarlike spatter of the tailings ponds. There is also a great contrast in how those two patterns reference

two divergent modes of human interaction with water sources. The ghats along the Ganges provide people access to sacred waters for bathing, ceremonies and celebration, and as cremation sites. The ghats are places of interaction and spiritual transformation. The tailings ponds are systems of dams and dykes that create a settling basin for the by-products of the oil-sands processing: a thick mixture of water, sand, clay and oil. These patterns of ponds are the spills of waste from the human activity of forcing hot water through the sand and clay to separate out the bitumen that will be refined into oil. The contrast of engagement with water for spiritual transformation and for capitalistic gain is emblematic of a much more complicated contrast between the West and the developing world in terms of culture, wealth distribution and economic development.

Garoo also collaborated with Nadine Bariteau as the cameraman who shot her video works. On a cold winter crossing to the Toronto Islands for one of Bariteau's shoots, Garoo filmed the five-minute loop *On the Water's Edge*: $43^{\circ}37'55.26''N/79^{\circ}21'19.56''W$. The mesmerizing video showed the ice breaking as a ferry boat passes. The loop creates a sense of danger and cataclysm, watching the solid state of water cracking and overturning, much like the video footage of the calving of the Arctic ice shelf that ricocheted across social media, heralding foreboding record-breaking temperatures in the Arctic.

BELOW

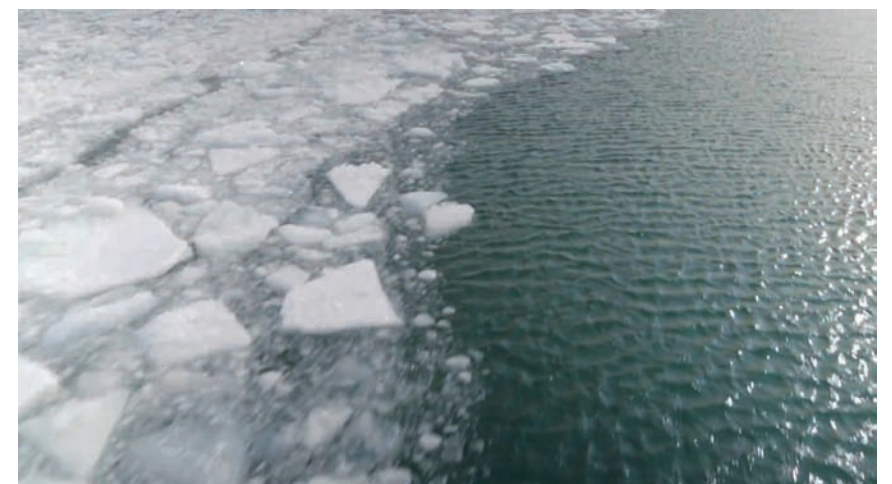
On the Water's Edge: $57^{\circ}00'13.98''N/111^{\circ}27'34.47''W$, 2013-14





ABOVE
On the Water's Edge: 25°18'12.31"N/83°00'27.58"E [video still], 2013

OPPOSITE PAGE
On the Water's Edge: 43°37'55.26"N/79°21'19.56"W [video stills], 2013





PATRICK MAHON

Patrick Mahon has addressed the idea of drawing water in an extensive artmaking practice over the past ten years. He works in a varied multimedia format incorporating drawing, printmaking, sculpture, installation and video. He is also a generous collaborator, interested in forging broader dialogues on seminal topics with groups of makers. The collaborative residency model for *Immersion Emergencies* (which led to *The Source*) was similarly employed by Mahon in *Art and Cold Cash* (2004-2008), a SSHRC-funded exhibition that examined the way capitalism was introduced to the Canadian Arctic, spawning markets for Inuit art. That project brought together three senior Canadian artists who had lived and worked in the Arctic to collaborate with an Inuit artist and an Inuit writer/curator. This fluid way of working inspires meaningful exchange and gives rise to projects that are multi-dimensional and probing in their summary treatment of various subject matters. Shared experiences create dialogue among makers that forges new pathways and experimentation in each practice.

Figuring prominently in *The Source* were several of Mahon's screen-printed balsa-wood constructions that appear as low-relief drawings hung on the gallery walls. The pieces appear as three-dimensional drawings in perspective, manifest as a frail lattice of wooden lines. His work *Water and Tower Allegory #4* sat in the ornate parlours of Rodman Hall, its intricate wooden construction echoing the marquetry in the detailed floors of the historic home. The artist writes: "In the series *Water and Tower Allegory*, printed wall sculptures based on images of water towers and pictures of coal mining tipples advance abstract arrangements where structures and flowing patterns comingle, suggesting human enterprise as filled with contradiction – with both failure and promise."¹

In another space, Mahon presented three "shipwreck" pieces, two entitled *Submersible (Hogarth) (#1 & 2)* and a third, *Bounty (Submersible)*. The idea of redrawing these historic vessels in distress is a potent allegory in a discussion of contemporary issues around water. The loose drawings of ships are open to the viewer's interpretation and reading; the ships exist as historic references that portend an uncertain future.

The artist writes: "The work *Bounty (Submersible)*, which is based in part on images of the wreck of the replica ship that sank off the coast of New York in 2012 during Hurricane Sandy, is a cacophony of signs that bring together historical references and present realities. Among them are details from a fourteenth century woodcut print by Titian, depicting the Biblical parting of the Red Sea, and a copy of a nineteenth century archival document reporting on the flooding of the Red River in Manitoba."²

Nearby, a video piece comprised of three monitors lying on their backs in a table format was like a glimpse into a reflecting pool. Entitled *Water Table #2*, the work incorporated the visual patterns referencing water that appeared as decorative surface on the series of *Submersibles*. The disparate patterns, each a drawing related to water, from Hogarth's etching marks to calligraphic script in a journal, appeared on the video screen as if glimpsed below the surface of the water. Periodically, a wave traversed the surface of the three monitors from end to end. Visitors to the exhibition, entranced with the illusion, would touch the screens to see if their hand affected the water's surface.

¹ Artist statement, 2014

² Ibid.



Water and Tower Allegory #4, 2013



OPPOSITE PAGE, TOP
Bounty (Submersible) [detail], 2013

OPPOSITE PAGE, LEFT TO RIGHT
Submersible (Hogarth) #1, 2013
Submersible (Hogarth) #2, 2013
Bounty (Submersible), 2013

RIGHT
Water Table #2 [installation view], 2014
Background: *Submersible (Hogarth) #2*, 2013





COLIN MINER

Colin Miner acknowledges that water has a constant presence in our universe in many physical states: gas, vapour, steam, fog, snow, and liquid and solid ice. For *The Source*, Miner painted the walls of the space a dark grey, creating a mystical, cavelike space where the mercurial, reflective and magical qualities of water align. Miner widens the viewer's gaze to encompass micro and macro views of water, looking at its significance within a controlled, contained space, but also within the infinite expanse of the cosmos. Miner created a suite of works in video, print, neon and drawing, taking on the subject of water as a fluid liquid presence that exists in relation to our vision, ultimately mediated by photography.

On a large video monitor, a luscious video called *RGB#4 (lava, ice cave, fall 2012)* depicted the passage of coloured light over the surreal landscape of an ice cave the artist shot in China. The scene showed water in the form of crystalline ice, shimmering and sparkling like a treasure box of precious jewels. The nature of the reflection and ambiguity of the surface of the ice, upon sustained viewing, became more amorphous and resembled a celestial cloud, perhaps of stars or other matter.

An adjacent installation, *Untitled (lynx)*, was comprised of a drawing of the cosmic black hole containing the universe's largest "water cloud," which exists in the Lynx constellation in outer space. The drawing was made by puncturing photographic backdrop paper. The paper was placed over the top part of a glass fire-exit door and allowed the bright summer sun to shine through the perforations, casting a moving light map of the constellation on the floor of the gallery, traversing the wall as the sun passed over the sky. The bottom of the door was covered in anti-glare window film, heightening the drama of the drawing's interaction with the light from outdoors. With such a simple gesture, Miner called to mind the otherworldly presence of water in sync with the movement of the planets and the energy of the sun's illumination.

Miner's dramatic installation within the dark space contemplated the mystical, transformative power of water. His chromogenic metallic print mounted on Dibond entitled *blue eye* documented the amazing colour of an exposed patch of ancient glacial ice on the Columbia Icefield near Banff, Alberta. This azure phenomenon has been uncovered by the rapid retreat of the icefield in this time of rapid global warming. Across from the photograph was another perforated work, *Untitled (heart of darkness)* – a unique chromogenic colour print hung loosely with aluminum push-pins on a painted corkboard. This dark, otherworldly object again contemplated water and light, but, in its very nature, nodded to the history of photography and the power of the negative.

Miner speaks and writes eloquently about his interest in liquid intelligence, a term Jeff Wall used in his brief 1989 essay "Photography and Liquid Intelligence." Miner writes: "I am interested in the qualities of lightness and darkness, and of our insistence of viewing water as a purity – both in form/structure and content. What happens when the impure is introduced, when its structure is made unpredictable? Further, what happens when we consider, and move towards, employing a liquid way of being/doing versus a dry and mechanical intelligence?"¹

In Miner's neon installation *Afterimage #21* and *Afterimage #22*, he brings the liquid nature of sight into the discussion of water. The two neon sculptures are coloured light drawings of the network of nerves and capillaries in the human eye. The term *aqueous humour* refers to the clear liquid that fills the space between the cornea and the iris and between the iris and the lens inflating the mechanism of the eye, allowing it to translate vibrations of light into visual images. Miner's glowing neon drawing in space pulsed brightly in cool blue and white light, burning a lasting impression into viewers' retinas that lasted long after they glanced away.

¹ Artist statement, July 17, 2014





PREVIOUS SPREAD
Untitled (heart of darkness) [detail], 2013

OPPOSITE PAGE TOP
Afterimage #21, 2014
Afterimage #22, 2014

OPPOSITE PAGE BOTTOM
RGB#4 (lava, ice cave, fall 2012) [installation view], 2013

LEFT
Untitled (lynx) [installation view], 2014



LUCY + JORGE ORTA

Lucy + Jorge Orta, who live and work in France, were special guests at the *Immersion Emergencies* residency at Banff, Alberta, in spring 2013. Their presentation at the Banff Centre about the history of their far-reaching international collaborative practice addressed a diversity of issues: political oppression, ecological sustainability, contemporary social issues related to water, food production and loss of biodiversity (after their recent visit to the Amazon rainforest). Their work so directly dovetailed with the issues emanating from the residency, they were invited to participate in the exhibition at Rodman Hall the following year.

As collaborators, the Ortas merge their diverse talents and experiences, drawing on shared roots in community activism as well as broad experience in architecture and fashion to create their works. The pair has come to work in a diversity of media, including sculpture, installation, drawing, painting, silk-screening, couture, video, performance and light. One of their many exhibitions at the world's great biennials and art fairs was at the 2005 Venice Biennale at the Bevilacqua La Masa Foundation, in which dirty water from the Grand Canal was pumped into the gallery, where it was filtered and purified, then issued as clean drinking water in an "OrtaWater"-branded bottle. This groundbreaking work resulted in the Ortas winning the 2008 Green Leaf Award "for sculpture with an environmental message by the United Nations Art for the Environment Program." The Ortas' practice had profound impact on discussions at the *Immersion Emergencies* residency in Banff.

Upon entering the Hansen Gallery at Rodman Hall, viewers were confronted with *OrtaWater – Life Line*, a hanging assemblage comprised of a handcrafted life jacket, a laminated photograph, silk-screened text on straps, all held together with rope and clips. The piece, essentially an

adorned life-saving device – figured prominently in the promotion for *The Source* – was a perfect metaphor for the precarious nature of the relationship between humans and water. The words EQUO, SURVIVE, VITAL, ECOSYSTEM, GLOBAL, PARTICIPATORY and CHALLENGE were screen-printed in bold graphics on the life jacket. The photo panel integrated into the life jacket depicted an ice-covered body of water in cold blue and white. The piece reinforced that issues related to water impact directly on human survival.

In the Harris-Godwin Gallery (mounted in its own room) was the Ortas' two-channel video work *Antarctica Village – No Borders*, projected as a diptych that wrapped around the room's far corner. In 2007, the End of the World Biennale in Ushuaia commissioned the Ortas to embark upon a remarkable expedition to ice-covered Antarctica aboard a Hercules KC-130 flight. Toward the end of the Austral summer, during the months of February to March, aided by the logistical crew and scientists stationed at the Marambio Base in the Antarctic, the artists founded their ephemeral *Antarctica Village*, comprised of fifty provisional handmade dome tents emblazoned with imagery related to the human body, and text and imagery from the flags of the nations of the world. The video depicted the Hercules flight, the landing on the barren land mass, the pitching of the tents and the full force of the dramatic weather in that part of the world. This placement of the frail tents on the windswept, snow-covered land evoked the precariousness of human efforts akin to Mahon's *Water and Tower Allegory*. The eleven-minute film also depicted the raising of the first *Antarctica Flag* created by the Ortas as a tribute to the Antarctic Treaty.

This Antarctic "métisse" flag represents a kaleidoscope of different nations, according to the artists: "As if through the filter of a prism, the flag concentrates all the national colours

into the sum of light.... All identities coexist, side by side, hand in hand. The edges blend, symbolising belonging to a larger common identity. This flag should become the flag of the new world community, to be raised as a supranational emblem of human rights."¹ During the run of *The Source*, the Ortas' *Antarctica Flag* flew proudly on a flagpole in front of the gallery.

The Ortas draw attention to the Antarctic Treaty, signed in 1959 by twelve countries; instituting the continent as common territory, it now counts signatures from fifty-three countries. The Madrid Protocol, ratified in 1991, preserves Antarctica from development by forbidding mining until 2048 and banning any corporate industrial research or exploitation for fifty years. Military activity is similarly prohibited. Since then, Antarctica has become a rare place of preservation, research and collaboration between nations. Outside the realm of the boundary disputes, capitalistic manoeuvring and militaristic posturing of the developed world, Antarctica holds hope for new modes of global cooperation.

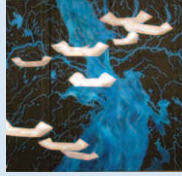
During the run of the exhibition, the public was invited to visit the operational *Antarctica Passport Office* in an office in the west wing of Rodman Hall. The office had hours posted on the door and a volunteer attendant; often services were available in English, French and German. The Ortas' project intends to mobilize the citizens of the world to protect the Antarctic and its unique status and to take action against global warming and for peace. Visitors were invited to register for an *Antarctica World Passport*, a precious, limited-edition artwork that marks the visitor's entry into the Antarctica world community. Visitors could take an oath and become a citizen of Antarctica and be issued a passport registered on a worldwide online database, www.antarcticaworldpassport.com, joining over 12,000 other recent applicants. The attendant stamped the passport with one of the specially designed stamps authenticating the participants' commitment to uphold the tenets of their passport: "to combat all acts of barbarity, to fight against intimidation and poverty, to support social progress, to protect the environment and endangered species, to safeguard human dignity and to defend the inalienable rights to liberty, justice and peace in the world."²

¹ <http://www.studio-orta.com/en/artwork/35/Antarctica-Flag>

² Lucy + Jorge Orta, text from *Antarctica Passport*, London, 2012, edition of 30,000.



ABOVE
OrtaWater – Life Line, 2005



GU XIONG

Gu Xiong was born in Chongqing, China, and now lives and works in Vancouver. Gu Xiong works in a diversity of media, including painting, sculpture, photography, video, digital imagery, performance art and installation. His celebrated work has garnered broad international attention over the past decades. It often returns to the concept of the river as subject matter, particularly the Yangtze, which flows through his home province of Sichuan in China, and more recently the Fraser River in British Columbia. Regarding rivers as inspiration, Gu Xiong has written: “For me, there were no bridges to help me cross these rivers. I learned that you have to jump into the river and swim a long distance to experience another culture, and to be open to benefitting from differences. There is conflict in that process. I have asked myself, How can I bring the two main rivers in my life together? The answer: I have to become like a river myself – a river of migration, a river of trans-cultural identities, a river of change and uncertainty – in order to bring these forces into a third space.”¹

For *The Source*, Gu Xiong contributed a spectacular installation called *Waterscapes*, comprised of a suspended “river” of small plastic white boats that sailed through the spaces of the galleries, down hallways, through a window and across the lawns of Rodman Hall, to finally flow down the hillside as if returning to the waters of Twelve Mile Creek. Indoors the boats were suspended from the ceiling with thin nylon filament; outside they floated atop small steel rods that maintained the continuity of the flow of the river from inside

to outside. The laborious installation of 1,000 of these boats was a community exercise that involved many volunteers over several days. All who participated were enthusiastically engaged with the mounting of an artwork of such scale and impact. The small white boats were about the size of a child’s toy boat, and their luminous white contrasted greatly with the lush green of outdoors during the late-spring installation. The white line of the boats could be glimpsed from nearly a kilometre away as it passed out through the building and down the hillside. This spectacle drew many visitors to the doors of Rodman Hall during the run of the exhibition.

In July 2013, as part of his research for the *Immersion Emergencies* project, Gu Xiong came to St. Catharines for a week-long residency to document the culture of the migrant workers who support the agricultural industries along the Niagara River in Ontario. With support from individuals in the Niagara Migrant Workers Interest Group, Gu Xiong made community connections that allowed him to visit migrant workers at their work sites and temporary homes in various locations across the region. Because the workers put in long days in the fields and orchards, his encounters and conversations happened later in the evening, at the close of the workday. While the many documentary photographs of the workers in *The Source*, seen at work in the fields, worshipping at their church or in their living quarters, could be perceived as voyeuristic, Gu Xiong asserts his authorship in his commentary, which draws upon his own experiences as a

OPPOSITE
Waterscapes [installation details], 2014



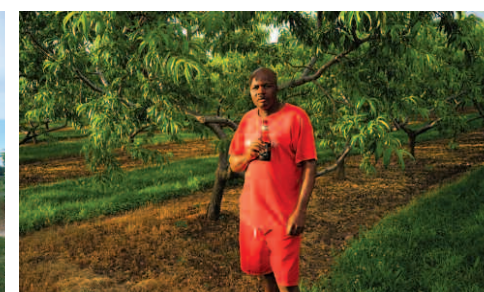
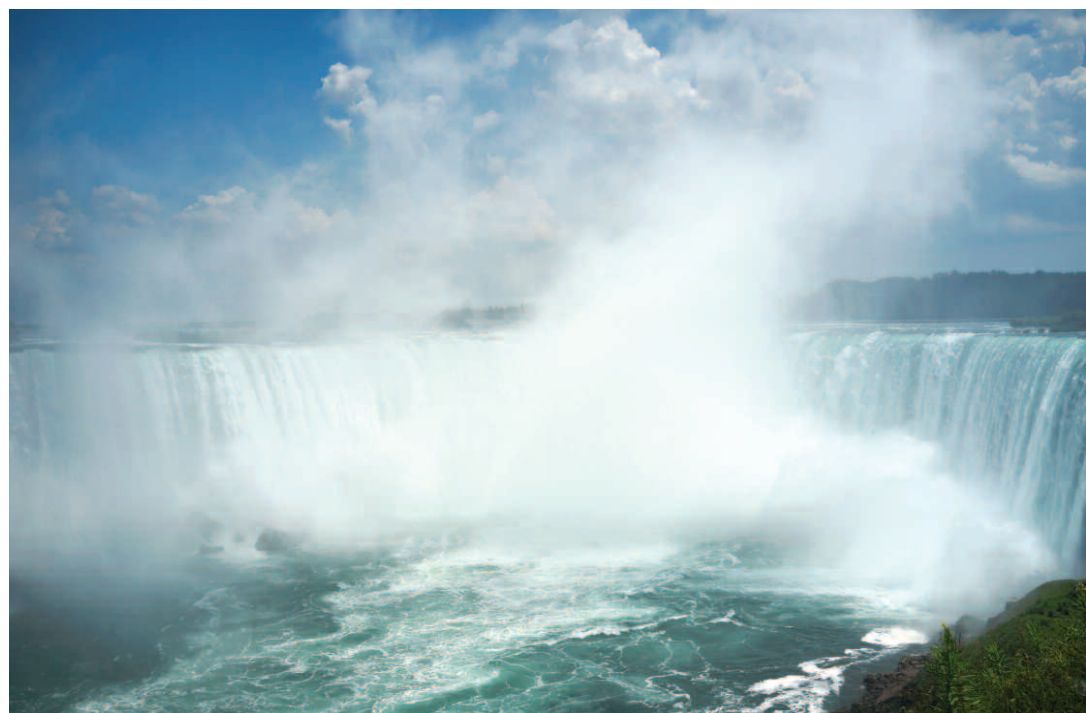
youth forced into farm labour in China (1966–1976) under Mao Zedong. Gu Xiong undertakes this project from a position of empathy and understanding. He writes: “Being with the seasonal workers reminds me of my time being an educated youth during the Cultural Revolution in China. We were urban youth exiled to the poorest villages in China, away from our family. Aside from the heavy labour, we could not see our future, and we lived in despair.”²

For *The Source*, Gu Xiong installed twenty images from his photo documentary of the lives of the migrant workers in Niagara in the ornate parlours and halls of the historic Niagara home. Rodman Hall as a community edifice speaks of the power, prestige and wealth of the Merritt family that built the house. It may have been an intimidating place to approach for the migrant workers, but several of the men photographed in Gu Xiong’s photos came to the opening reception of the show for a look and another talk with Gu Xiong.

Gu Xiong’s project acknowledges Rodman Hall’s association with the history of the Welland Canal and the former port of Shipman’s Corners. The canal was essential infrastructure related to water that opened up capitalistic trade and commerce to the rest of the Great Lakes and the development of Western Canada. Today, much of the world’s population live alongside waterways used to transport goods and people: indeed, in our age of increased globalization, migration and consumerism, rivers have become potent metaphors for global exchange.



¹ Gu Xiong, “The Invisible Group: Working Notes on International Seasonal Farm Workers,” July 2013.
² Ibid.



ABOVE
Jamaican Migrant Worker Series, [various images], 2014

OPPOSITE PAGE LEFT
Niagara Falls #1, 2014
Niagara Falls #2, 2014