

THE SHELL PROJECTS: I KNOW IT UPSETS YOU

Saturday, January 11, 2020 to Saturday, March 7, 2020



Modern Fuel Artist-Run Centre is pleased to present *I know it upsets you*, curated by The Shell Projects, with the works of Aleesa Cohene, Shannon-Garden Smith, Parker Kay, and Liz Knox.

Opening Reception on January 11, from 5 - 7 PM

I know it upsets you brings together work by Aleesa Cohene, Shannon Garden-Smith, Parker Kay and Liz Knox. The exhibition follows two strands of inquiry: how is information taxonomised to understand particular contemporary social logics, and what are the ways in which contemporary art visualises recent histories in an attempt to reach out from one's own experience. Experiential isolation within late capitalism is explored through the exhibition's varied approaches. Cohene deals with this most explicitly in *Supposed To*, the oldest work (dating back to 2006), by splicing thrillers, sci-fi, and corporate training videos into a loose narrative following a multitude of characters who are disillusioned with the contradictory states of limited individual agency and celebrated individual freedom, yet ultimately trapped within a sort of stasis. Similarly, Knox pulls large datasets from popular culture to inspect and lay bare the idiocracies in communication around content advisories and disclaimers. For Cohene and Knox, working from existing material culture, there is a strict yet playful commitment to method. Kay and Garden-Smith, whose personal documentary practices result in indexing, are engaged with process as practice: their work respectively catalogues the bricks and debris of Leslie Spit and cast footprints imprinted on sidewalks. In this work, collection is a tool to investigate the emotional geography of the architectural everyday. All works illustrate a striving to understand and connect particular elements of contemporary life. All the while, their distinct methodological focus may in fact be a coping mechanism for the reality that the works' respective inquiries may not actually have answers and that in capitalism isolation is ubiquitous.

Artist Biographies

Aleesa Cohene's work with video, sculpture and scent reshuffles, reconfigures and reframes cinematic material to investigate the clichés, codes and stereotypes that make up dominant cultural narratives. Her work has been exhibited in festivals and galleries internationally, with recent solo exhibitions at Gallery 44 Centre for Contemporary Photography (Toronto), Gallery Suvi Lehtinen (Berlin), Glasmoog Gallery (Cologne) and Reykjavik Photography Museum. She holds a Masters of Visual Studies from the University of

Toronto, and completed a fellowship at the Kunsthochschule für Medien (Cologne) under German experimental filmmaker Matthias Müller. She has participated in artist residencies in Canada, Denmark and the Netherlands, and has won grants and prizes in Canada and Europe. Her work is part of the permanent collection of Oakville Galleries and numerous private collections.

Shannon Garden-Smith is an artist based in Tkaronto/Toronto, Canada. She received an MFA from the University of Guelph ('17) and BA from the University of Toronto ('12). Working primarily in sculpture and installation, she has recently exhibited at TIER: The Institute for Endotic Research (Berlin), YYZ Artists' Outlet (Toronto), Art Metropole (Toronto), Cambridge Art Galleries (Cambridge ON), Birch Contemporary (Toronto), Erin Stump Projects (Toronto), and 8-11 Gallery (Toronto). She will be presenting a project at Untitled Art Society (Calgary) with Amanda Boulos in 2020.

Parker Kay is a multi-disciplinary artist and writer currently working in Toronto, Canada. As an avid urban explorer Kay has led experiential walking and cycling tours with the Jane's Walk Festival and the Ontario Association of Architects (OAA); he also has worked on projects with Myseum of Toronto and the Vancouver Biennale. Kay's recent exhibitions include Sibling (2019), The Loon (2018), Motel Brooklyn (2017), The Toronto Reference Library (2017), TOWARDS (2016), and O'Born Contemporary (2015)

Kay is currently a researcher and collections manager at The Archive of Modern Conflict and on the board of directors at Art Metropole.

Liz Knox uses conceptual strategies, examining systems of interpretation with an emphasis on irony. Language is the most common thread in her work, and a common starting point is found text. Synopses is an investigation of popular culture and the nuances of communication within it – text was sourced from the user-generated content advisories of imdb to generate synopses of classic films. All Persons Fictitious records all the disclaimers from seasons 1, 10 and 20 of Law & Order, as small obsessive drawings. Knox studied Studio Art at the University of Guelph and completed her MFA at Emily Carr University in 2013. Her work has been shown in exhibitions and film festivals across Canada including the Mercer Union, Toronto; Art Gallery of Grande Prairie, Grande Prairie; Access Gallery, Vancouver; Vtape, Toronto; Paved Arts, Saskatoon; WUFF, Winnipeg; and the Justina M. Barnicke Gallery, Toronto.

The Shell Projects is a collaborative curatorial collective led by Maegan Broadhurst and Barbora Racevičiūtė. Initiated in 2017, shell showcases contemporary multi-media artistic practices. It focuses on cultivating relationships between new-generation and mid-career practitioners, fostering dialogue between non-traditional art exhibition spaces, and in connecting locally situated cultural discourses to international contemporary art movements.

Maegan Broadhurst (she/her) comes from a Video and Media Arts background—as a practising artist and curator. Broadhurst holds an MFA in Documentary Media from Ryerson University and has previously completed her BA, specializing in Communication Studies at Concordia University. She has worked in programming, education and organizational support within organizations such as Seleveln, Canadian Art, Oakville Galleries, Vtape, Images Festival, The City of Toronto and The National Gallery of Canada.

Barbora Racevičiūtė (she/her) grew up in Šiauliai and Vilnius, Lithuania and then Montréal, and has been living in Toronto for almost a decade. She earned a Bachelor's degree from the University of Toronto and an MFA from the Ontario College of Art and Design. She is an independent curator and cultural worker, and works as an arts administrator at the8fest and Images Festival. Her recent work focuses on the imperatives and strategies for ethical contemporary curatorial practices.

Cover Image by Parker Kay.