

INFLATABLE DEITIES: EYELASH WARS

Friday, April 26, 2019 to Tuesday, June 25, 2019



Modern Fuel is delighted to present **Eyelash Wars**, a video installation by artist duo **Inflatable Deities** in our Window Space. The installation will be on view from April 26 to June 25, 2019.

Eyelash Wars takes place in a small town in an alternate reality, where two femme entrepreneurs battle for supremacy in the false eyelash business. This epic experimental musical follows these characters as they compete for business with elaborate window displays that escalate in scale and symbolism. The work explores gender performance and the absurd spectacles of consumer culture.

Organized by Henry Heng Lu, this video installation is presented as an extension of Modern Fuel's upcoming issue of *Syphon*, 5.1: *My life is not your _____*.

Opening Reception: Saturday, April 27, 2 - 3 PM, in conjunction with the launch of *Syphon* 5.1.

Inflatable Deities is the collaborative duo, Jessica Mensch and Emily Pelstring. Their projects are expanded fictions in which stories unfold across multiple media including video, installation, and performance. They use this expanded approach to deal with the complexity of nightmarish situations, such as the true-story murder upon which the Amityville Horror fiction franchise is based, the rivalry between two small-town beauty supply store owners, and a scientific expedition to the future where a brain-eating virus has decimated humanity. Whatever the premise, their work incorporates a cast of characters that they have developed through improvised performance and the surrealist assemblage of costume pieces and props. These characters range from an enigmatic grandma, to a human-sized rabbit, to a skinny, haggard Santa Claus. They morph and reappear across multiple works, constituting an expanded mythology unique to their collaboration.

Inflatable Deities has received production support and exhibition opportunities from many institutions, including The Confederation Centre of the Arts (Charlottetown), the Judith and Norman Alix Art Gallery (Sarnia), the FoFA Gallery (Montreal), SAW Video Association (Ottawa), the PHI Centre (Montreal), Pop Montreal International Music Festival, Electric Eclectics Festival (Meaford), Suoni Per Il Popolo Festival (Montreal), Studio XX (Montreal), PDA Projects (Ottawa), Gallery Seleven (Toronto).

Emily Pelstring is an artist and filmmaker based in Canada. Her films, performances and installations have been shown internationally in galleries and festivals, including: Transmediale Berlin; Seoul International New Media Festival; Antimatter Media Art Festival; Ann Arbor Film Festival; Ottawa International Animation Festival; FOFA Gallery; Khyber Centre for the Arts; Judith and Norman Alix Art Gallery; Galerie La Centrale; Extrapool Centre for Sound, Art, and Print. She is engaged in two ongoing video and performance-based collaborative projects: Inflatable Deities and The Powers. She is faculty in the Department of Film and Media at Queen's University, and her creative work has been supported by grants from the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council and the Canada Council for the Arts.

Jessica Mensch is a Brooklyn/Montreal painter and mixed-media artist currently pursuing an MFA at Hunter College in New York, NY. Mensch received her BFA in Painting from the Nova Scotia College of Art and Design and has gone on to exhibit at institutions such as the Judith & Norman ALIX Art Gallery (Ontario), The Confederation Centre (PEI), PDA Projects (Ontario), The National Gallery of Canada (Ontario), the FOFA Gallery (Montreal) Art Toronto, Superchief Gallery (NY), SPRING/BREAK Art Fair (NY) and Pop Up Gallery PS1 MoMA (NY). Mensch was the recipient of a Canada Council Grant for Visual Arts in 2014, and a finalist for the RBC Painting Prize in 2013. She has participated in residencies at Extrapool (Nijmegen, Holland), The Banff Centre, Studio XX (Montreal), and Saw Video (Ottawa). Mensch works collaboratively with artist Emily Pelstring under the pseudonym Inflatable Deities, as well as with musician Katherine Kline and Emily Pelstring under the moniker The Powers.