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<http://montreelx.tumblr.com/post/101587306843/bnlmtl-review-end-of-empire-2011>

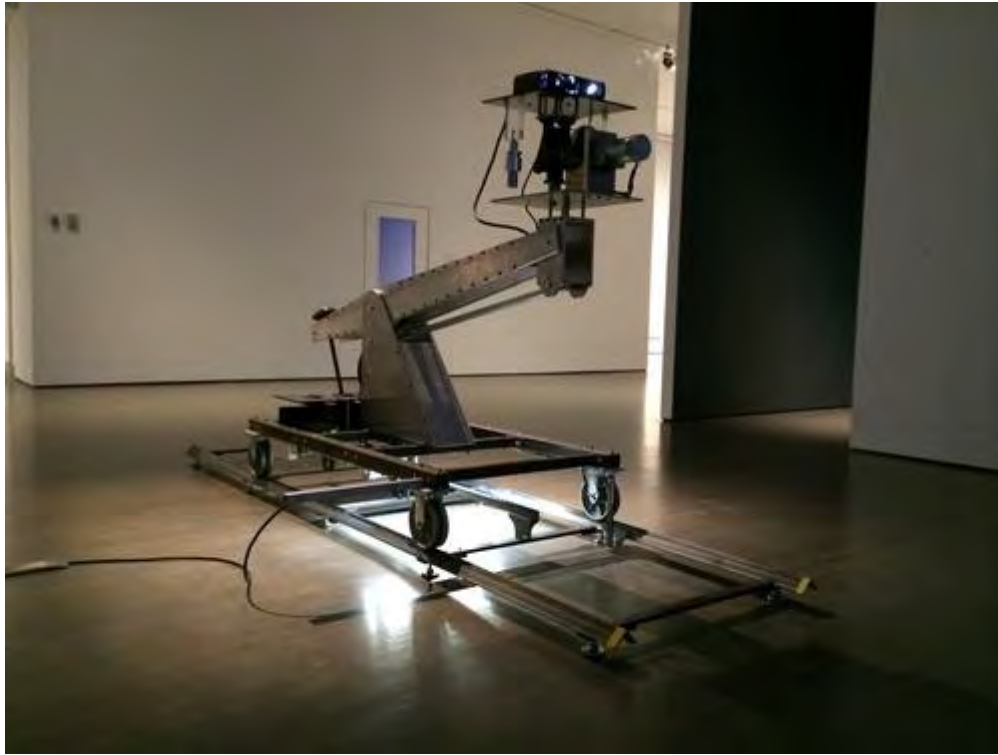
@ BNLMTL review: End of Empire (2011)



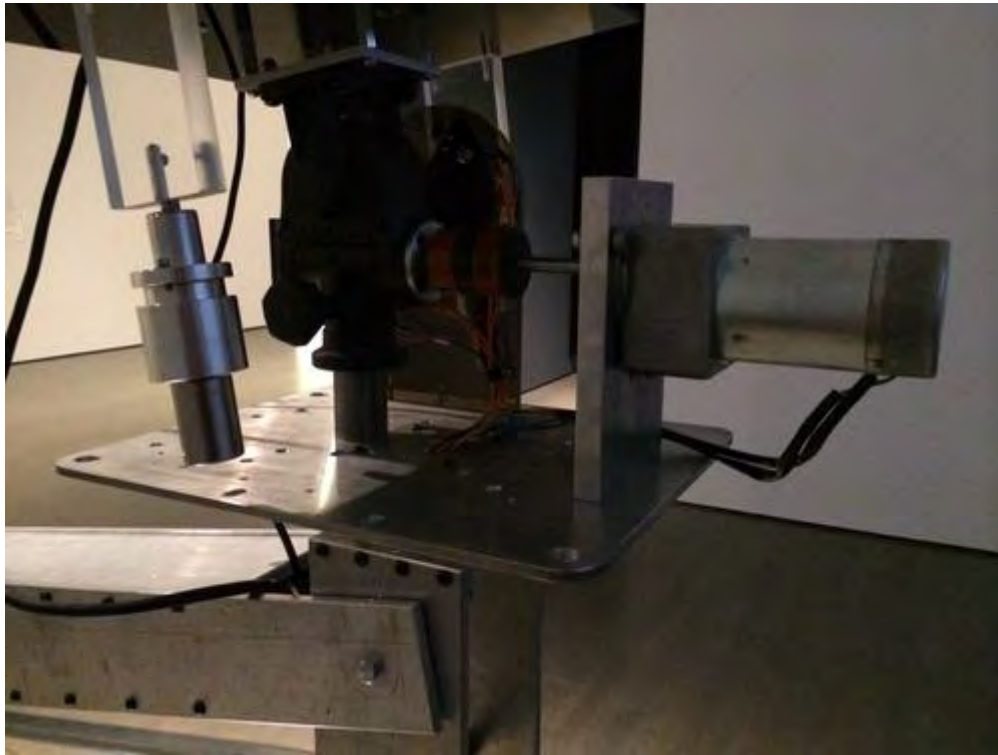
End of Empire (2011) by Simone James and Lance Winn is being presented as part of the BNLMTL exhibition at the MAC this year. This film installation features a custom-made dolly tracking device that is used as both a projector and sculpture. The robotic structure projects a 14 minute video inspired by Andy Warhol's 1964 film *Empire*. Nodding at the temporality in Warhol's eight hour static structural examination of NYC's Empire State Building, this looped projection continuously scans up and down the architectural space of the exhibition wall, ceiling and floor.

This year's biennial theme, *L'avenir (looking forward)*, is described as "examin[ing] the relationship of contemporary art practices to speculation, futurity and its history, as well as the currency of projecting into the future". [1] *End of Empire* explores these concepts in its textual repositioning of the "empire" in Warhol's film. In this installation, as the projector goes up and down the cityscape, it scans the wall in

relation to the architecture of the exhibition space. The narrow aspect ratio of the projection only reveals a tight frame of the Empire State Building, which eventually disappears as the dolly tracking projector retracts. The sudden disappearance of the building within the frame is unexpected, since it only happens after the second scan of the 14 minute loop. The slow temporality of the first loop led me to believe that the second pass of the robotic projection would show the same image of the building from bottom-up, except this time, it was blank. The sudden and mysterious disappearance of the building within the frame and the architectural space of the projection, is described as alluding to the future decline of the American “empire”. As a defining work of the American avant-garde, Warhol’s film is nodded here in relation to the history of contemporary art, and its speculative examination of the current state and its future. Warhol’s single-image slow motion observation of the Empire State Building is revisited in its literal and contemplative projection into the future of America.



The ambiguity of these references is heightened in the kinesthetic viewing experience of *End of Empire*. The custom-made robotic dolly tracking projector initiates this physical viewing relationship, in its manipulative movement of the projected image. When viewing the piece, I consequentially moved in synchronization with the projector to follow the scanning frame. As I stood beside the structure, I became aware of my monotonous movements as I followed its repetitive motions. The relationship between the moving image and the installation space adds to the physicality of this work, in its cinematic exchange with architecture. Camera movement is both projected and referenced with the use of the sculpture’s dolly track base. The architecture of the Empire State Building is scanned in the same way the projector scans the surface of the installation space.



The connections between moving image culture and architecture is a theme that runs throughout the biennial exhibition. Most of the works use the 1960s as a reference point, which was “a time when Montréal was being imagined as a future focused city, as suggested by the theme of its Expo '67”.[1] The contemporary re-appropriation of Warhol’s 1964 work, retreats from a utopian imagining of modernism [1], in its contemplative critique of the American “empire”. The city of New York, which is burdened by the insecurities of its future state, is paralleled with the 60s; a period marked by new imaginings of the contemporary world. This brings up important questions regarding the issues that arise with the shortcomings of the capitalist economic system, increased state surveillance, and the dystopian future imposed.

End of Empire is being presented at the BNLMTL exhibition until February 5th, 2015 at the Musée d’art contemporain de Montréal.

<http://bnlmtl2014.org/en/artists/simone-jones-et-lance-winn/>

Reviewed by: Maria Casale

Nov 02, 2014

All That Is Solid Melts Into Air: Simone Jones at Ronald Feldman

by Kris Scheifele

Simone Jones at Ronald Feldman Fine Arts

November 3 to December 23, 2011
31 Mercer Street, between Howard and Grand
New York City, (212) 226-3232



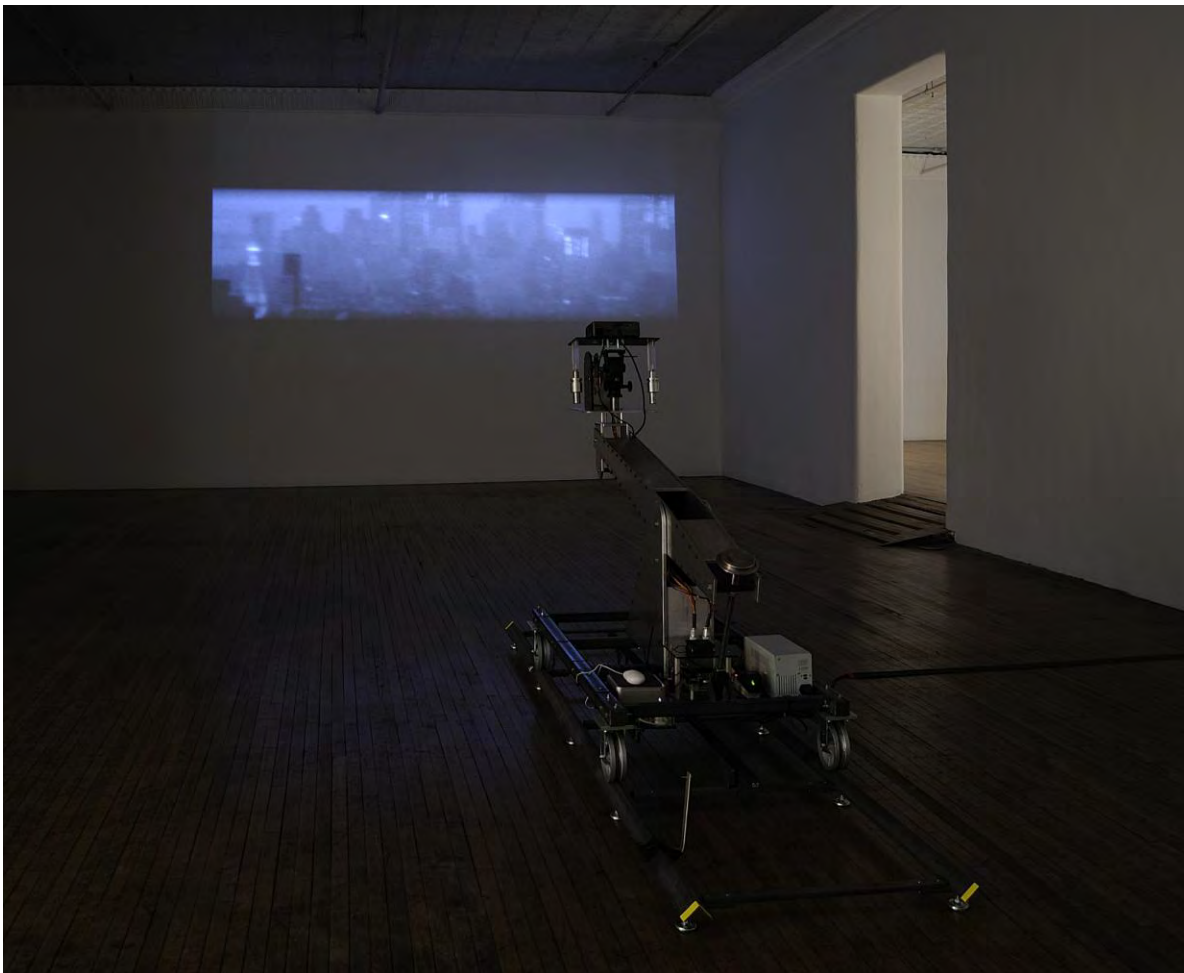
Simone Jones, *All That Is Solid*, 2011. Four-screen 3D animation, run time: 12 minutes. Edition of 3

For her first solo show at Ronald Feldman, Simone Jones claims Marshall Berman's book, *All That is Solid Melts into Air: The Experience of Modernity*, as thematic inspiration. Through diverse examples, from Goethe's *Faust* to Robert Moses' public works, Berman articulates modernity as "a maelstrom of perpetual disintegration and renewal." This duality causes an uneasy split—you can't have 'the good' without 'the bad.' Otherwise, creative energies are snuffed out with destructive ones. Berman's modernity is a balancing act and always on the move.

Jones's video installation, *All That is Solid*, is an exercise in perpetual motion. Projected onto four screens propped against the wall, computer-generated 3D cubes, spheres, and reductive architectural models tumble vertiginously over film noirish photos of hallways and staircases. These uninhabited transitional spaces—facilitating movement from one thing to another—have the generic, institutional feel of school/office/hospital. Even if glimpses of this 'real' world did possess any distinguishing features, attempts to identify them are frustrated by the shapes, which continuously expand and contract, burst on the scene and disappear just as suddenly. While the photos of old, ossified modernity pan horizontally back and forth, the geometric avalanche only moves one way: right to left. There is, however, an exceptional moment of resistance: a small cube makes a slow break but quickly succumbs to the leftward momentum. Is this the maelstrom of modernity at work in our digital age? If so, it takes time and attention—both uncharacteristic of the current moment—to catch the breach. Accompanied by a sinister soundtrack, this piece is distinctly dystopic despite trading in a techno-pastoral currency.

End of Empire is also sinister. While this 14-minute video mimics the conditions of Warhol's eight-hour film, *Empire*, times have changed since 1964. Both pieces depict the Empire State Building, but Warhol's locked-down lens fixates on (what was) an emblem of enduring glamour and success. Jones sees the Machine Age icon differently. Her camera pans up the landmark while her crane-like robot tilts the projected image onto the ceiling. In this position, it's possible for viewers to assume the position of tourist—feet planted, head back—a stance rarely taken by locals who do not gawk at what they take for granted. The projector then tilts back down to the wall while the camera pans down to a murky, architectural thicket. Here, the grainy base of the city's tallest building melts into air. Supposedly, this Toronto-based artist isn't referencing 9/11—an impossible leap for any New Yorker. Rather, Jones shares Warhol's sentiment, "I like old things torn down and new things put up every minute."

Representative of quick, visually explicit turnover, Jones's piece does not illustrate Berman's split, it embodies it. When the video makes its second upward migration, the building is gone without a trace. Even Thomas Cole's *Course of Empire* (1836) left some remnants in the ravenous, vegetal wreckage. Jones's *End of Empire* is neither that literal nor is it as symbolically complex as Matthew Barney's *Cremaster 3* (2002). Jones's modernity—today's modernity—is digital dematerialization; it is both good and bad.



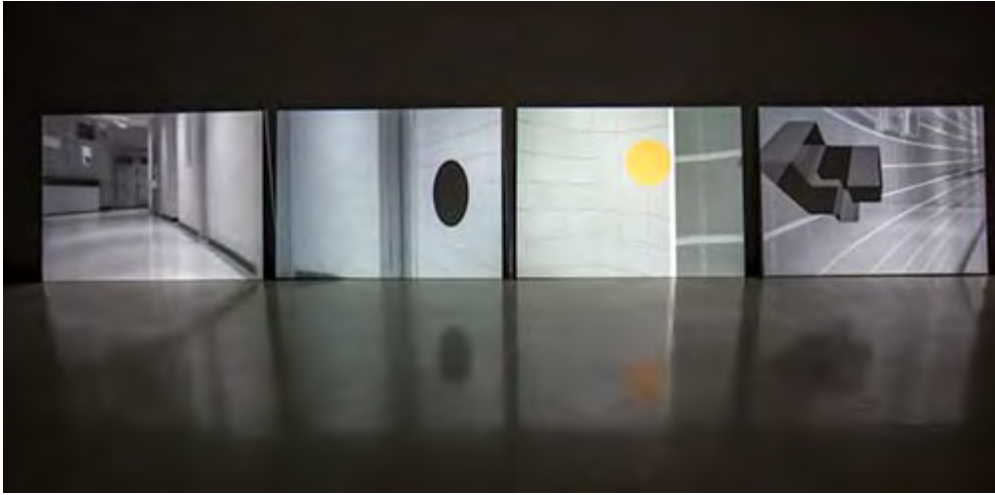
Simone Jones, *End of Empire*, 2011 (in collaboration with Lance Winn). Custom-made robotic dolly and track, digital projector, video run time: 14 minutes. Photo: Eleanore Hopper. Courtesy Ronald Feldman Fine Arts, New York

SIMONE JONES AT THE ROBERT MCLAUGHLIN GALLERY

BY GIL MCELROY

NOVEMBER 27, 2012

Think of the **Robert McLaughlin Gallery** in Oshawa and chances are the very first thing that comes to mind is painterly abstraction. That association comes courtesy of the fact that the gallery houses probably the pre-eminent collection of the work of the Painters Eleven, the post-WWII group of Canadian painters who helped define Canadian abstraction and put Canadian art on the international map.



Simone Jones, *All That is Solid*, 2011 (installation detail)

And as it turns out, it makes for an absolutely perfect context for the work of Toronto-based media artist **Simone Jones**. With this exhibition of new work, she looks into how we visually perceive things, and several pieces shown here – photographic and video – deal with our binocular or stereoscopic apprehension of the world.

But the star of her show is quite clearly the titular work, an enormous video installation that utilizes a single long gallery wall as a site to project imagery from four ceiling-mounted projectors onto four large, floor-mounted rectangular canvases leaning back against the supporting wall. *All That is Solid* gives us a multi-layered visual world that slowly drifts across the four panels, layers of imagery traversing the length of the piece from right to left. At its visual base is a layer of drab, monochromatic images of anonymous institutional hallways, staircases, and doorways that shift across the canvases and dissolve from one equally bland and uninteresting interior scene to another. But it grounds the amazing: contrasting overlays of blocks of colour that, almost cloud-like, intrude into this world of dull representation, geometric figures and shapes in blue, red, yellow, and gray that at times utterly obscure and visually obliterate the underlayer, at others frame and contextualize what lies beneath.



Simone Jones, *All That is Solid*, 2011 (installation detail)

The drift of shapes can be monolithic and singular: big and bold fields of shape and colour visually akin to, say, the dazzling geometric camouflage that adorned the sides of massive battleships during WWI. Or it can comprise the singular and small: single isolated circles, cubes, or more complex geometric shapes drifting into our vision, crossing the field of imagery, and disappearing again. With *All That is Solid*, the finicky world of the particular – the realm of dismal bureaucratic architecture that roots it all – is overcome, superseded by the simpler, but far more elegant and visually interesting, realm of pure geometric abstraction. There's something almost Platonic going on here, a kind of incursion by the abstract world of Forms fallen into the mundane.

Oh, and by the way, it's all real time stuff. While *All That is Solid* is based on a twelve-minute loop of recorded ground imagery, the geometric abstraction is generated in real-time by computer.

Oh, and another thing, it's absolutely riveting.

The Robert McLaughlin Gallery: <http://rmg.on.ca/>

Simone Jones: *All That is Solid* continues until January 13.

Catch & Release: An Interview with Simone Jones

Akimbo's Social Media Director James Fowler, talks perceptions of playback with kinetic artist Simone Jones, blogging from the corner of ART+TECH.

James Fowler - June 12th, 2012.



From advances in [nanobiotechnology](#) for extending life to drone surveillance and unmanned warfare, robotics is an area of science defined by constant innovation and ongoing debate. Robotics research and development is costly, and the biotech industry and military mainly pick up the tab. Yet, you can also find artists working on creative projects involving robotic applications. Robotic devices and interfaces have changed how we record and playback our lives, and there are artists who work in this medium to question our perception of these experiences. One such artist addressing this through kinetic artwork is [Simone Jones](#). She has been investigating the artistic application of robotics for over two decades, and now as a professor at OCAD University continues to push the boundaries of how we electronically mediate experiences and how we perceive the representation of those events. I visited her in her studio in Toronto to see what she's been working on and what winds her up.

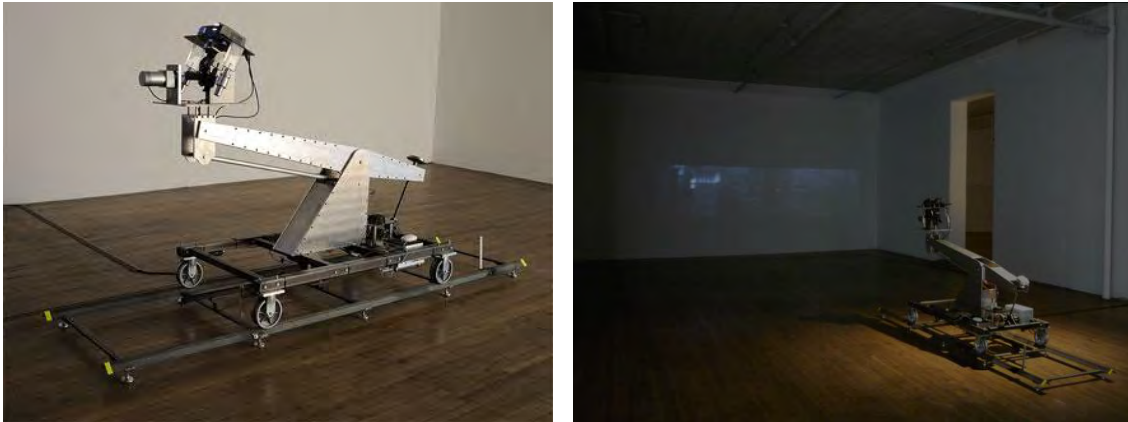
Tell us about your beginnings with kinetic art and robotics.

I became hooked on kinetic art when I took an Electronics for Artists course at OCAD back in the mid-eighties. At that time there were no microcontrollers (like the Arduino), so artists had to work with very simple on-off analog devices, like

solenoids and relays, to build machines. This restriction actually opened up my early work to experimentation with repetition and speed – these early concerns continue to inform the language and behaviour of my sculptures today.

What was your early approach to your work?

When I began to make kinetic sculpture all of my materials came from [Active Surplus](#). This Queen Street store was much bigger than it is today, and I used to go there on an almost weekly basis to sort through their bins of surplus technology. Often ideas for artworks would emerge from an item that I found in the store. Found objects would suggest movements or behaviours that would later make their way into my sculptures. This was a very rich way of working because it actively engaged my imagination and curiosity about "how things work". Nowadays my work is often planned out in advance and I find that I spend less time at Active than I used to, but my days of working with surplus technology played a very important role in the development of my early work.



End of Empire, 2011 (with Lance Winn). Installation view.

Your work has changed and evolved over time. What has it taught you?

I am largely self-taught so my technical skills have emerged from a "need-to-know" process. Skills gained from one project feed into the development of each subsequent project. All of my machines employ simple behaviours and mechanisms that can be traced back to my first kinetic sculptures. I would probably be making the same version of my first sculpture today if I hadn't begun teaching electronics and programming in the late nineties. Helping students solve a wide variety of technical problems has actually expanded my technical skills in a very broad sense – more so than if I had just remained focused on my own practice.

One of the most important things that my kinetic sculptures have taught me is the importance of perception in our reception of an artwork. My early kinetic installations were very much informed by a 1970s aesthetic/interest in the relationship between the body and vision in perception. The intention behind this early work was to create an environment where your act of observing the kinetic sculptures was an integral outcome of the work itself. In this regard, the temporal nature of kinetic art led me to the creation of these durational viewing situations.

While your work is created using high tech, there are distinctive analog or low-tech narratives in your work. How intentional is that?

I have always been interested in paradoxes so when I first began making machines I used non-machine-like materials such as wood in their construction. It is easy to wow people with over-built, shiny mechanisms but I very consciously design my machines to always be in service to the intention of the artwork – not to impress the viewer as an object that sits outside of the role of the work of art. I build all of my circuits and mechanisms by hand – each work is unique and I think this again contradicts the way that we currently experience off-the-shelf technologies as mass-produced widgets with unknown, and sometimes dubious, origins.

Can you talk about the technologies at play behind the work?

I have recently begun working with film and video to create installations and machines that attempt to investigate the nature of the frame and its role in our perception of images. These kinetic film and video installations attempt to push the two-dimensional image into three-dimensional space by freeing up the image from its traditional static position. I have built machines that capture a moving image that is then played back by the same machine. The machine's movements produce a trace of the camera's original movement. What emerges in the final installation is a failure of the two-dimensional image to "fit" into three-dimensional space. This failure of representation is very important to me because I am interested in the nature of representations themselves. I think these questions are especially important now because we currently occupy a hybrid space where digital representations can no longer be directly linked to an original source.



Knock, 2006 (with Lance Winn). Installation view.



Knock, 2006 (with Lance Winn). Video still.

You often work in collaboration with other artists. How has that impacted the work and you as an artist?

Collaborations are great for getting you to work outside of your normal mode of production. My collaboration projects emerge from shared interests with other artists. These interests have a conceptual focus – the technologies I employ in the works are used to illuminate and investigate the conceptual ideas behind each of the pieces. Collaborations give me the opportunity to build work that I may not otherwise have had a chance to create.

What's next for you?

I am currently working on a script and a motion control circuit for a new film that employs a robotic camera. I hope to shoot in early September. I also have a digital animation installation that is opening at the [Robert McLaughlin Gallery](#) in Oshawa in November.

In addition to finding out about Jones' art practice, I asked her ten rapidfire ART+TECH questions:

Favourite exhibition from 2011: Richard Serra Drawing: A Retrospective alongside Alexander McQueen: Savage Beauty at the [Met](#).

A future technology you are most excited about: [Nano](#).

An artist using new technology you think is interesting: [Bjork](#).

A tech gadget you would like as a gift: [Asimo](#).

Given an unlimited budget, an art project would you like to initiate: Something to do with architecture, cameras with motion control, lavish sets, and really good-looking actors.

Favourite social media platform for personal use: N/A

A social media trend or behaviour you find irritating: The risk of commentary becoming a substitute for reportage.

The first command you would give to a personal assistant robot: I can't say it in print.....

Coffee or tea: Coffee

Three things you love about your job: Talking about art, making art, thinking about art.

Simone Jones' installations featured at Soho Gallery

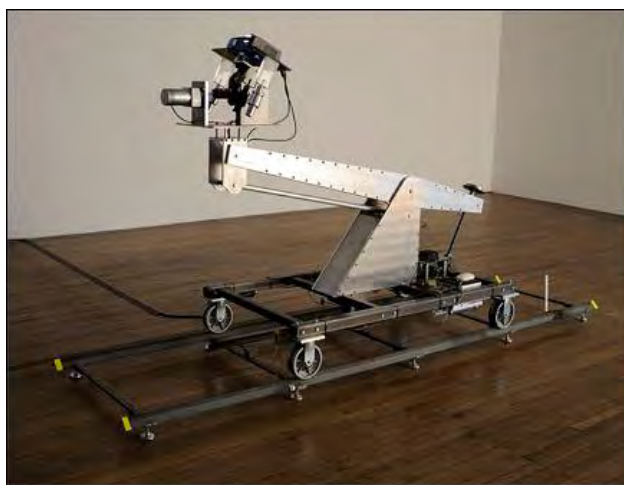
Alison Martin
Chelsea Fine Arts Examiner
November 10, 2011



"All That is Solid" (2011) by Simone Jones
The Ronald Feldman Fine Art Gallery

All That Is Solid, completed earlier this year, is a 10 minute 3D animation piece shown on four screens that combines computer generated cubes and other shapes with black and white photographic images of corridors and staircases illustrating both representational and imaginary space. The screens cover the entire length of the gallery's walls.

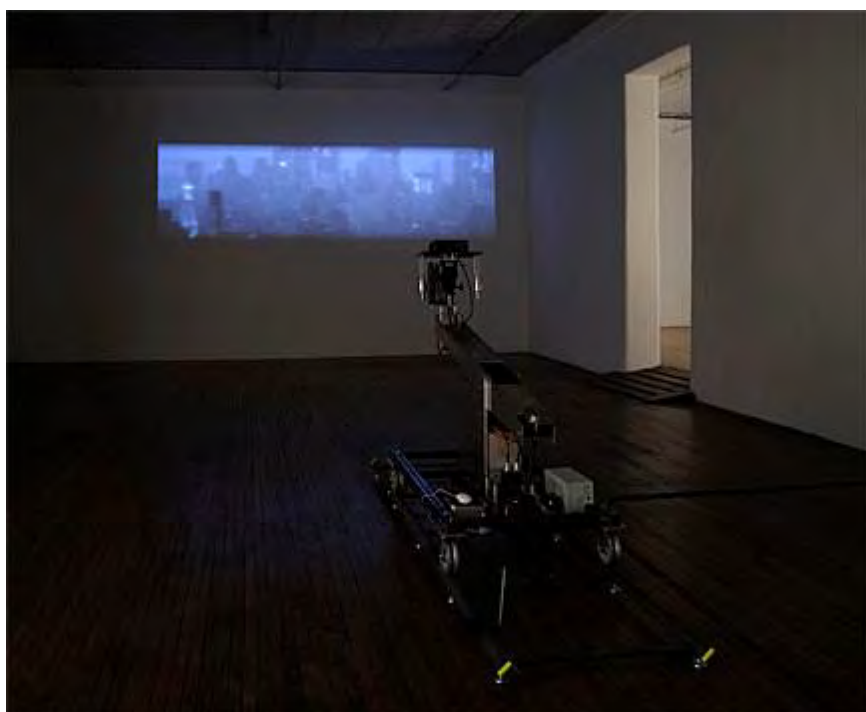
End of Empire, also completed earlier this year, is a nearly half hour long video inspired by Andy Warhol's 1964 film *Empire* which consisted of eight hours of slow motion footage of the Empire State Building. *End of Empire* depicts a robot style camera arm designed by Jones that projects a black and white video of the Empire State Building covering the gallery's walls and ceiling. This short film revolves around the theme of a possibly declining American empire by portraying the iconic building as a symbol of loss rather than promise.



Jones has been experimenting with kinetic sculpture for over 20 years and is an associate professor of Art in the Integrated Media Program at the Ontario College of Art and Design in Toronto. At [The Ronald Feldman Fine Arts Gallery](http://www.ronaldfeldman.com) (31 Mercer St.) through December 23. The gallery is open from Tuesday through Saturday from 10 a.m. until 6 p.m. and Monday by appointment.



Simone Jones' short films at Soho Gallery *Credit: The Ronald Feldman Fine Art Gallery*



INSTALLATIONS » DECONSTRUCTING GRAVITY

Many ways to become airborne

FALL IN/FALL OUT
Blackwood Gallery
University of Toronto
at Mississauga
Until Dec. 13

BY LEAH SANDALS

With trees putting on their yearly show of vibrant golds, scarlets and oranges, one might think that the ideal point of departure for a seasonally themed exhibition would be colour and hue.

Not so at the Blackwood Gallery, a rigorous academic space housed on the leafy campus of the University of Toronto at Mississauga. Its two-part autumn group show, *Fall In/Fall Out*, was sparked not by fall colour but by the tumbling, mulch-ward destiny of that foliage, bringing together works that riff on gravity and downward motion.

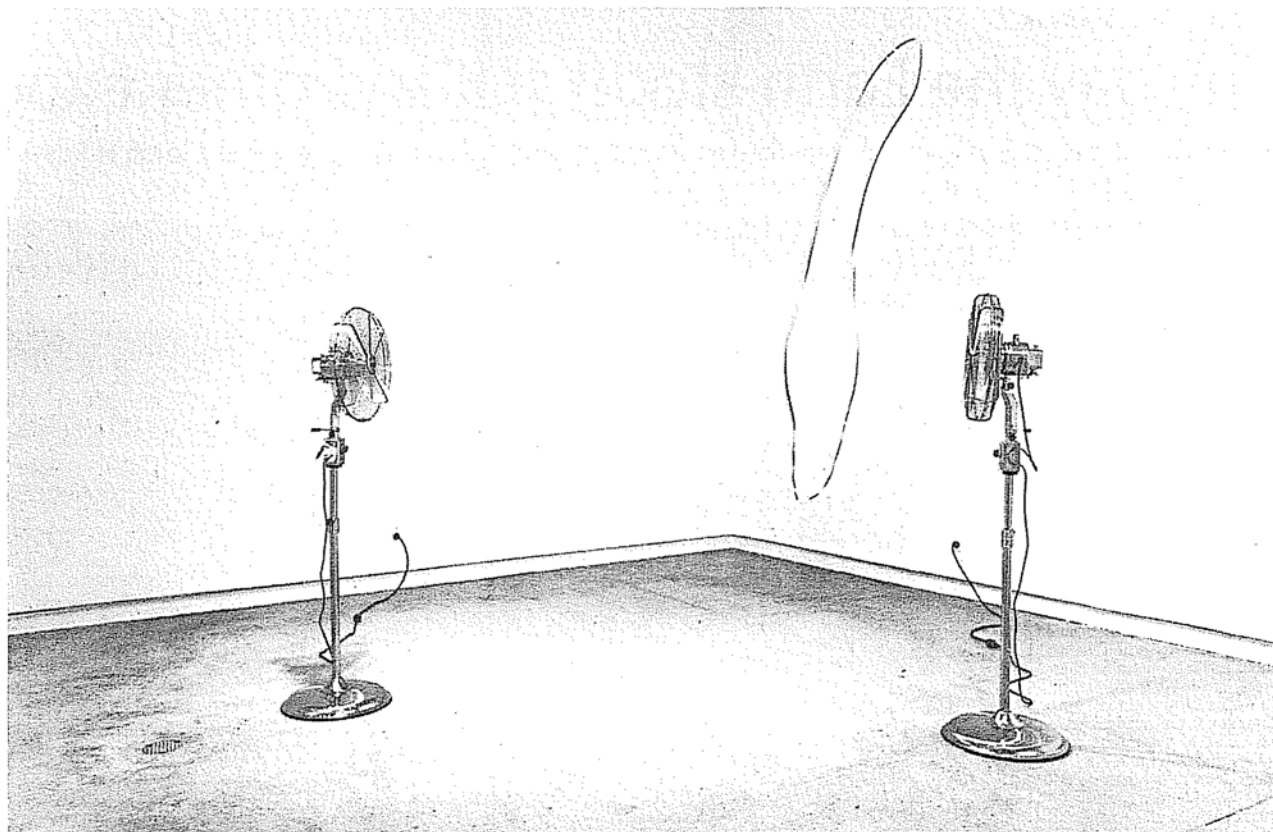
"I like themes that are somewhat redundant, like falling in the fall," explains Christof Migone, director and curator of the Blackwood. "Everyone has an image of falling. But how to amplify that and make it more complex, that was the challenge."

The strongest works from the first half of the show, *Fall In*, which opened earlier this fall, well exploit those tensions between simple and complex.

Torontonian Simone Jones's film, *Perfect Vehicle*, shows a futuristic, speedy-looking machine advancing at a funereal pace across desolate salt flats. With observation, it's revealed that the machine is moved forward by the rise and fall of the passenger's chest as she breathes. It's an absurd, yet humane, gesture – sci-fi light-speed fantasy on a slo-mo biodynamic timetable.

Zilvinas Kempinas's *O Between Fans*, like similar works by this Lithuanian-born, New York-based artist, is a delight, with two fans keeping a plastic loop perpetually dancing in the air, seemingly freed from gravity. Kempinas's installations are as direct and naked as a science-museum set-up, but are also oddly spiritual and poetic.

Montrealer Paul Litherland is represented by two remarkable skydiving videos, *Force of At-*



Two fans keep a plastic loop perpetually dancing in Zilvinas Kempinas's *O Between Fans*, an installation as direct as a science set-up.

A recurring thing in stuff I do is this element of failure, not failure in a derogatory way, but more in being vulnerable.

Christof Migone, curator of the Blackwood Gallery

traction and *Freefall Fighters* – films that marry macho adrenalin with sobering intimations of mortality and fear.

Force of Attraction in particular yields this uncanny mix, as the camera focuses on Litherland's face as it morphs during a few minutes of free fall. Seeing the artist's skin and cartilage turn to mere putty in the atmosphere's hands is by turns amusing and anxiety-provoking – Cindy Sherman-esque self-portraiture meets extreme-sports risk.

Interestingly, the second half of the exhibition, *Fall Out*, which opened in late October, courts risk in a different, rather self-reflexive way. For it, nine new artists were matched to respond to the nine original

Fall In artists.

"A recurring thing in stuff I do is this element of failure," explains Migone, "not failure in a derogatory way, but more in being vulnerable. I was also thinking of dominoes, of cause and effect, of one thing or fall triggering another."

Indeed, some of the *Fall Out* artists undermine the works they were ostensibly inspired by – albeit in a witty, open-ended fashion. Roula Partheniou brings slapstick to Kempinas's science with a well-placed replica of a banana peel, suggesting there's more than one way to become airborne. More pointedly, Josh Thorpe adds a viewer-activated on-off switch to Don Simmons's *Bachelor Forever*, a

fascinating vertical-line-tracing robot that Simmons initially argued was completely self-contained. With the flick of a finger, Thorpe's addition converts Bachelor's proclaimed solitude into something intrinsically relational.

Unfortunately, experiments in failure sometimes turn out to be just that. Some viewers may have been put off, for instance, by the exhibition's installation procedure, which continued a couple of weeks into each half of the show. The result: ladders and power-drill noise that interrupted and obscured viewer experience.

Migone explains that what some might see as poor planning was actually intended as pedagogy. "I wanted to focus

on the installation as a process," he says. "We're a university, so I also saw it as a way for students who come by the gallery regularly to see how an exhibition goes up, to demystify it." Migone admits that in future he might make that choice more clear.

Installation quibbles aside, the Blackwood's current project delivers a stand-up effort – even if it is about falling down. With eclectic program events like astronomy lectures and breakdancing sessions, *Fall In/Fall Out* rejects autumnal cravings for conceptual comfort food. The result is uncertain, yet enjoyable: a walk through a different kind of changing autumn woodland.

» Special to The Globe and Mail

VISUAL ARTS REVIEW

A superartificial take on Hobbes



GARY MICHAEL DAULT
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www.olgakorpergallery.com

Robert Fones is not only a very good artist; he is also a remarkably exacting one, undaunted by the prospect of protracted research or of endless labour.

To visit his latest exhibition, at Toronto's Olga Korper Gallery, is to bear witness to the Toronto-based artist's apparent glee at conducting careful if virtuoso raids on the unlikely of sources. I remember his exhibiting a painting in 2002 titled *Iron Bridge*, based on an obscurely located oil painting from 1780 by English painter William Williams called *Cast Iron Bridge Near Coalbrookdale*.

In 2004, Fones exhibited a suite of fastidious watercolours derived from the 1958 Calypso typeface by French graphic designer Roger Excoffon.

Fones's current exhibition appears to begin and end with the strident, and nowadays almost indigestible treatise called *Leviathan* (1651) by philosopher Thomas Hobbes (1588-1679). In *Leviathan*, Hobbes, writing at the time of the English Civil War, promoted the necessity of a social contract that, with all the citizens playing their proper, hierarchical parts, would presumably result in the establishing of a stable civil state. Otherwise, Hobbes wrote (in the only phrase anyone remembers from *Leviathan*), human life was inevitably going to become "solitary, poor, nasty, brutish and short."

But it doesn't seem to be Hobbes's promotion of central authority that interests Fones. Rather, he has based his entire exhibition upon *Leviathan*'s opening sentences: "Nature (the art whereby God hath made and governs the world) is by the art of man, as in many other things, so in this also imitated, that it can make an artificial animal." Hobbes begins, then argues that since life is but "a motion of limbs," so also can automata ("engines that move themselves by springs and wheels as doth a watch") be said to possess "an artificial life."

Artificial life is something Fones knows quite a lot about. And what happens with Hobbes, in Fones's hands, is wildly artificial: He breaks the 17th-century writer's prose into small, seven-letter fragments and uses these fragments - which are stacked three high - as the basis of a series of seven large colour photographs. For the picture called *Leviathan #1*, for example, Fones arranges the first part of *Leviathan*'s first sentence so that it looks like this: Nature i he art wh ereby Go

The writing - which, I suppose, you could now argue has devolved into lettering - is suddenly so artificial it has come to resemble something almost architectonic. Indeed it turns Hobbes into something like clockwork - into Hobbesian machines, in which words and ideas are mixed up and repositioned, although never really lost.

But here comes the intensely laborious part: In order to make his big Hobbesian photographs (which are laminated onto aluminum panels), Fones had to devise a certain kind of lettering style for Hobbes's text. And for some reason, he chose to design letters for the purpose that look silky-smooth, soft, fatty, fleshy - like "modern" kidney-shaped swimming pools and olive dishes from the 1950s. And if they look volumetric, it's because they are: Fones has cut each of his letters from wet modelling clay, let each one dry into a gently curved con-



The text of Thomas Hobbes's *Leviathan*, broken into fragments, serves as the basis of Robert Fones's photographic series.

figuration, sanded it and photographed it, after which, with the aid of his computer, he has carefully placed the photographed letter into its proper place, onto a ethereal, sky-like background. The result is a soft, evanescent (and therefore curiously non-Hobbesian) text work. The letters in the image reproduced here, by the way, are "in this a / so imit / ated tha."

But is there a relationship between *Leviathan* and these rows of bulbous, pneumatic letters? Maybe. And maybe it's about Hobbes's own statement that nature (God) creates a world of living things, and man, as a pale, shadow-creator, makes artificial things - which, nevertheless, possess a kind of new nature, an artificial naturalness - like Fones's odd-looking but highly compelling texts.

RON MARTIN AT THE
CHRISTOPHER CUTTS GALLERY
\$14,000-\$30,000. Until Nov. 8,
31 Morrow Ave., Toronto;
416-532-5565,
www.cuttsgallery.com

I don't suppose there is a painter working in Canada today who is more utterly serious about his art than Ron Martin. Martin has worked diligently for decades, showing up his restless but relentless forays into the nature of abstraction with reams of critical analysis, speculation and justification - much of it so exhaustively and exhaustingly prolix as to weary all but the most determined of his readers.

Not the least of the paradoxes surrounding Martin; and his art is that his position papers and philosophical posturings have never compromised the beauty and forcefulness of the paintings he has always made as a result.

This is the case, big-time, with the two bodies of work making up this fresh, exciting and deeply enjoyable new exhibition: his *All in One* series in the Cutts north gallery and his *Flower* series in the south gallery.

The *All in One* series of works, his latest, are maniacal, slapstick constructions that appear to entertain the fiction that a number of conventional paintings - consisting of can-

vas, paint and a wooden stretcher - have somehow bowed to pressure (physical pressure, as well as any critical, metaphysical stresses they may have undergone) and imploded/exploded into wildly destabilized, wall-mounted, canvas/paint/wooden-lath constructions.

Deliciously complex, these juttingly aggressive entities come on like paintings that are so angry they are lunging out at their viewers from the gallery walls. And yet the tented shape of each of them is so satisfying, the blusterings of paint slashed onto them so invigoratingly intense, the writhing and cabling that yokes them together so structurally honest and pleasingly upfront that the distress of each work is exquisitely balanced by the almost carnal pleasure they give. There is no room here to give equal time to Martin's fine *Flower* series from 2005-6. Suffice it to say that each of these 16 brushy little oils on canvas - Martin's homage to Paul-Émile Borduas - is an understated delight.

OTHER WORLD
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Architect Johnson Chou not only designed the Red Bull offices at 381 Queen St. W.; he has also curated this exhibition (with Ananda McCavour) of work by five artists "at the cutting edge of animated machinations."

Much of the work is small and even jewel-like in scale - such as Jennifer Cherniak's *Stamp* and the subtle and remarkably entertaining *Unprepared Architecture* by Simone Jones (with Julian Oliver) - and these are the pieces that come off best. The other works - by Ingrid Bachmann (*The Portable Sublime*), Laura Paolini (*Crocodile Tears*, *Crying Cat*) and Brandon Vickard (*Bionic Forest*) suffer from the bathos that often afflicts work like this: The electronics are so sophisticated that the piece's aesthetic/philosophical payload - what the piece is actually about - is numbed into anti-climax.

ANNE HATHAWAY

ROSEMARIE DeWITT

BILL IRWIN

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★ ★ ★ ★ ★

"ANNE HATHAWAY DELIVERS A REVOLUTIONARY PERFORMANCE...EXPECT OSCAR TO CALL!"

Rick Groen, THE GLOBE AND MAIL

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

"RACHEL GETTING MARRIED' HOLDS YOU SPELLBOUND!"

Peter Travers, ROLLING STONE

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

"A TRIUMPH FOR JONATHAN DEMME! HIS BEST FILM SINCE THE SILENCE OF THE LAMBS!"

Drew Gleiberman, ENTERTAINMENT WEEKLY

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

"THE BEST AMERICAN MOVIE OF THE YEAR!"

David Poland, MOVIE CITY NEWS

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

Roger Ebert, CHICAGO SUN-TIMES

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

"I LOVE THIS MOVIE!" "A MASTERPIECE"

Ty Burr, BOSTON GLOBE

David Edelstein, NEW YORK MAGAZINE

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

NOW MAGAZINE - EYE WEEKLY - THE NATIONAL POST

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

"SUPERIOR FILMMAKING!"

Rex Reed, NEW YORK OBSERVER

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

"PERFECTION IT WOULD BE A SHAME TO MISS"

A.O. Scott, THE NEW YORK TIMES

RACHEL GETTING MARRIED

A JONATHAN DEMME PICTURE

Exclusive Engagement Now Playing!

Showtimes: 12:30pm, 1:25pm, 3:20pm, 4:28pm, 6:30pm, 7:05pm, 9:35pm, 9:55pm

Artistic trio

The Regina Gouger Miller Gallery brings together three very different artists under one roof

By Kurt Shaw
TRIBUNE-REVIEW

Currently, the three floors of the Regina Gouger Miller Gallery in Carnegie Mellon University's Purnell Center for the Arts are filled with three disparate shows.

In the gallery on the second floor, Simone Jones, a Canadian artist and visiting assistant professor of art at Carnegie Mellon, displays three large works — "House," "Chatter" and "Splash." When entering from the elevator, the voluminous "House" greets visitors with a pod. "House" is nothing more than a large, burgundy house-shaped block on a rocking base that begins slowly rocking when triggered via a motion sensor. It is an ominous presentation of a simple idea — a stable icon on an unstable base.

As one moves further into the space, another sensor sets off a second kinetic piece titled "Chatter." More interesting than the first, "Chatter" is a 24-foot-long piece of driftwood suspended from the ceiling to which the artist has attached 150 mechanical solenoids. The solenoids are wired and programmed to tap on the driftwood in an alternating wave pattern. "The audio wave pattern is intended to be emblematic of water," says Petra Fallaux, director of the gallery, "referring to the actual water that once washed over the driftwood."

Although Jones has been making kinetic works like these since 1989, she has recently ventured into the area of video. And although most video art is usually plodding, Jones' "Splash" delivers. Projected on a large wall, the video is of a serene Canadian lake and promises a few surprises. The vantage point of the lake is as though one is out in the middle of it, almost at eye-level with the surface of the water. The audio of the ebbing and flowing water that surrounds heightens the effect. But the serenity of the lake is not the point, as one soon discovers when the darkened form of a body seemingly falls out of nowhere, disrupting the placid surroundings with a thunderous splash. It leaves one reeling.

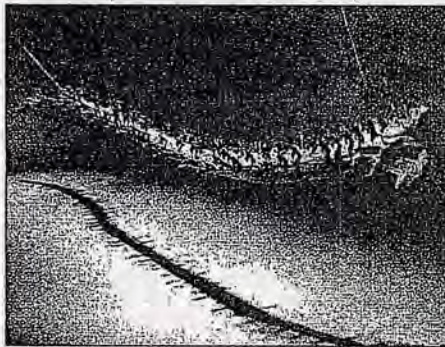
The figure never emerges to the surface, leaving the lake to slowly resume its calm until — out of nowhere, and from another angle — again comes another body splashing into the serenity. It can easily be seen as a metaphor for life — moments of calm disrupted by calamity.



Regina Gouger Miller Gallery

Above:
"Birdscape"
by Michael
Pestel and
Jeroen van
Westen.

Left:
"Chatter" by
Simone
Jones.



Much like Jones' driftwood "Chatter" piece, the installation in the third-floor gallery space utilizes electronic interaction, but in a much more sophisticated way. The piece by Michael Pestel, associate professor of art at Chatham College, and Dutch artist Jeroen van Westen is titled "Birdscape." It consists mainly of a large virtual garden space that is delineated by a pebble-covered floor and various bird-call recordings that emanate from eight speakers mounted at the corners.

When stepping onto the pebbles, the bird calls change, as though disturbed. When one walks around on the pebbled floor, the bird calls react to the change in location. The more people, the more agitated the birds become. This is accomplished through a rather sophisticated computer program that takes digital information from a video camera mounted high above the floor and

combines it with prerecorded sounds of 27 different birds.

"What makes "Birdscape" special is the subtlety of its digitally processed interactivity, and the way it reflects the workings of nature," Fallaux says.

The piece originally was presented in the spring at De Paviljoens, in Almere, the Netherlands, where a glass pavilion allowed for a more cohesive integration between indoor and outdoor space. Here, the artists tried to re-create the effect by attaching angled mirrors to the tops of clerestory windows, much like periscopes. It is a nice footnote to a touching and transcendent piece.

The first-floor gallery contains photographs by photographer William D. Wade in an exhibit titled "Pittsburgh's Spirit." Timed to appear at the same time as the Carnegie Museum of Art's "Dream Street," the incomparable exhibition of photographs of 1950s Pittsburgh by photo-essayist W. Eugene Smith, this exhibit is of 57 photographs that Wade has taken over the past 16 years he has lived in Pittsburgh.

"It's a little bit of a retrospective in one way, but it is mostly geared towards Pittsburgh people and their spirit," Fallaux says.

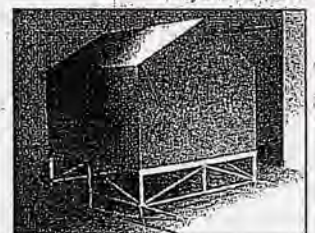
Wade admits that his project was destined from the beginning to be in the footsteps of Smith's masterpiece on Pittsburgh. The comparisons fall short, however, and only leave one wondering why, in a city with as much depth and breadth as ours, could it not be interpreted in a more personal way?

Kurt Shaw covers the art scene for the *Pittsburgh Tribune-Review*. He can be reached at kshaw@tribweb.com.

Regina Gouger Miller Gallery

- Exhibits:
 - "Displacement: Works by Simone Jones"
 - "Birdscape; Installation by Michael Pestel and Jeroen van Westen"
 - "Pittsburgh's Spirit; Photography by William D. Wade"
- Through Dec. 14. Hours:
 - 11:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. Tuesdays through Sundays.
- Regina Gouger Miller Gallery, Purnell Center for the Arts, Carnegie Mellon University, 5000 Forbes Ave., Oakland.
- (412) 268-3618.

"House"
by Simone Jones



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Regina Gouger Miller Gallery

Above: "Birdscape" by Michael Pestel and Jeroen van Westen.

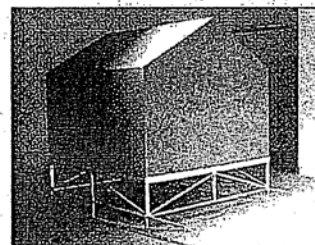


Left: "Chatter" by Simone Jones.

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"House" by Simone Jones



Bruitages incorporés

CLEAR AND DANGER

Simone Jones

Galerie Clark

1591, rue Clark, 2^e étage

Jusqu'au 17 juin

BERNARD LAMARCHE

À Clark, la fin de saison est placée sous le signe de la cacophonie. Une double exposition se lance tête première et oreilles bien nourries dans l'art du bruit ou des nouvelles sonorités. Dans la première salle de l'endroit, Simone Jones, de Toronto, qu'on voit pour la troisième fois depuis septembre dernier, la dernière fois en décembre à La Centrale dans l'exposition de groupe *Machines festives*, présente une pièce qu'elle a réalisée lors d'une résidence au centre Est-Nord-Est de Saint-Jean-Port-Joli. Il s'agit d'une sculpture cinétique, chorégraphique même, et tapageuse.

Suspendue au plafond, une structure molle de câbles d'acier retient de lourds clous de chemin de fer. Au-dessus d'elle attend un moteur, lui aussi retenu par le plafond. On se promène dans la salle d'exposition, puis rien. Rien ne se passe, les quelques sons que l'on entend proviennent de la seconde salle de la galerie où sévissent les collaborateurs de Gennaro De Pasquale, pour le projet Post-Audio-Esthetic. Donc pas de déclencheurs à distance ou de détecteurs de mouvements braqués sur nos moindres déplacements. Au nom de l'interactivité.

Une pédale nous invite tout de même à nous impliquer dans la menaçante chose. Et là ça déboule. Le moteur haut juché active les câbles qui s'emballent, se démentent et s'entortillent à qui mieux mieux, cassant l'attraction terrestre, envoyant virevolter dans les airs les clous. De facto, une polyrythmie s'engage dont le principe est aléatoire. Le tout est assourdissant. Les clous s'écrasent au sol, s'entrechoquent entre eux, menacent presque de se détacher; certains ont même visiblement heurté le mur derrière, à une courte distance de là.

La chose est violente. Comme un train qui arrive en trombe. La puissance de cette machine est palpable. Elle ne possède pas de qualités esthétiques singulières

mais fait retour avec amusement et stupéfaction (la nôtre), notamment sur les principes d'interactivité qui baignent une tranche des arts visuels en ce moment. Le visiteur est amené à produire, en appuyant sur le petit bouton de la pédale, une situation qui pour lui est carrément désagréable. D'abord, il provoque ce tintamarre sur une base volontaire et le son est réellement envahissant, à peine supportable. Or, pour réellement tester la machine, pour en explorer la rythmique, il faut la souffrir quelque peu.

Mais encore, peut-être encore plus intéressant que les sonorités qui sont avant tout répulsives, la chorégraphie de cette entité tentaculaire s'avère presque touchante dans sa mollesse désabusée. Les larges errements de la machine, ces gestes flasques qui s'élancent dans l'espace en font une marionnette nourrie par les contrastes entre le bruit et le roulis de ses membres câblés et souples. Dans cette pièce aux multiples dimensions, la métaphore du corps humain n'est pas loin. Celui-ci s'agite, retentit en vain, et la machine, pourtant si familière, cause l'effroi par effet de syncope. La rythmique est affolante dans cette salle saturée par le bruit, portée par les décibels.

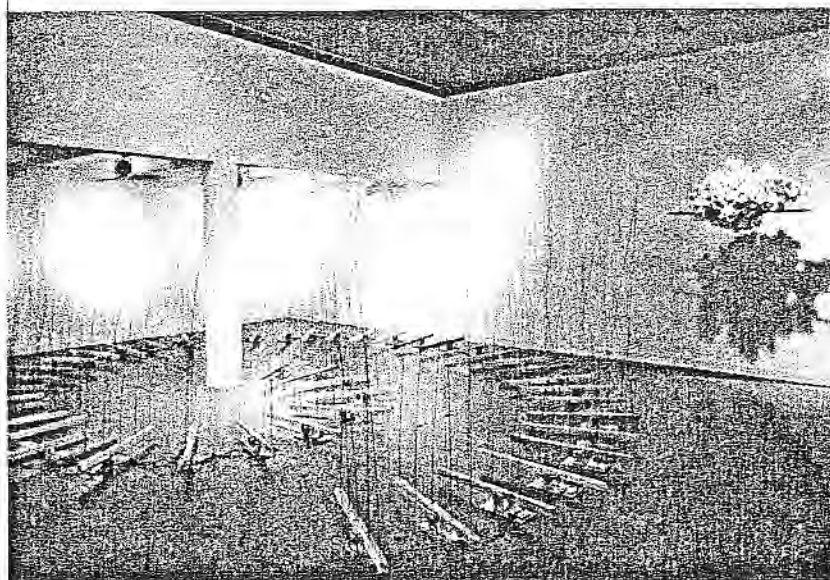
Post-Audio-Esthetic

Dans la seconde salle de la galerie Clark, un bizarre de salon attend les visiteurs, un petit fatras technologique, «à mi-chemin entre le pseudomagasin de disques et le salon d'art contemporain». Ce petit bordel contient une cynique murale, une vue en forêt, laquelle diffuse la musique des numéros de série des billets de banque, gracieuseté de Mathieu Beauséjour, des t-shirts hip, des machines, des disques, etc.

On en fait vite le tour, par contre, ce bazar tout en sons est le lieu de performances musicales et bruitistes où la technologie s'allie aux performeurs. La programmation fait relâche cette fin de semaine, mais vendredi 16 juin, Jimmy Brain, Alexis O'Hara et Rob Stephens, Pocket et Mutante avec Martin Tétrault, de même que Jean-Frédéric Messier seront de la partie, puis le lendemain, les Nocturnes de Clark (de 21h à 1h du matin) se terminent avec la clôture et Open Dex, une soirée «tables ouvertes».

Flux Machines

JOHN K. GRANDE



Toronto-based artist Simone Jones is getting a name for her particular brand of kinetic sculpture installation. One of her strange unsettling mechanisms was on view at Centre des arts contemporains du Québec à Montréal this autumn for Montreal viewers to witness firsthand. Entering into the gallery the first thing one witnessed was forty five blade-like sheaves of five foot metal rods arranged in a spiral on the gallery floor. These tentacle-like tendrils slowly rose to body height to create an entirely artificial landscape of forms. Jones' contemplative kinetic, three-dimensional genre created a hypnotic, mesmerizing, even Zen-like effect, so subtle and slow-motion were its movements.

The single most interesting aspect of Simone Jones' kinetic *Wave Machine #2* (1999) is the way it deceives us into believing that these movements and the collectivity of repeated forms are "natural". Sometimes the rising and falling patterns of movement are sensually evocative. Other times their animated effect is as much subliminal as physical. One feels and becomes aware of the rhythmic movement of *Wave Machine #2* (1999) over time. Jones' intention is phenomenological, to create contemplative work that is as about our own perception

Simone Jones, *Wave Machine #2*, 1999. Photo: courtesy of the Centre des arts contemporains du Québec à Montréal.

of the mechanical movements of the forms she has created. What looks natural is actually fabricated. As the clock motors that propel each of the rods turn, they rise ever so slowly one after another from the floor in an algorithmic way. At the endpoint of the sequence there is a forest of forms we can, if we choose, walk into. The effect is serene and sage-like, of blades of grass blowing in the wind. It is the viewer who establishes a personal bodily relationship to all this tendentious movement. The viewer becomes an actor/participant in the installation's movement. Jones' *gesamtkunstwerke* projects the feeling of a wholly self-generating live organism. Jones has commented that *Wave Machine #2* (1999) is one of her earliest investigations into the relationship between visual perception and bodily perception.

Accompanying Jones' kinetic installation is a hanging mobile of interconnected tetrahedron-shaped forms that look like a model for a scientific study. *Tetrahedron #1* (1999) is a micro-biotic module of four-sided solid triangular pyramids appended to each other. This organic construction made of

unpainted paper and wood overflows the rectilinear structure/frame it is appended to. The work evokes a sense of organic growth, that these "natural forms" that we do not see with the naked eye have outgrown the rectilinear man-made structure they are interconnected to. There is a sort of yin-yang, to-and-fro relationship between the natural and man-made in this piece that is fascinating. Simone Jones' art is a homage to nature that uses entirely artificial, even theatrical construction, to trick us into responding to them as we would when looking at a forest, a field, diverse elements in nature. As such, her art has to do with human perception and the way we respond to phenomena, whether they are self-constructed object illusions or elements in a natural setting. Jones' slow motion organic/mechanical machines thus raise questions about the proprioceptive perceptual and structural processes that are an innate part of "being a human". No longer merely object-oriented kinetic sculpture as in the days of Naum Gabo or Alexander Calder, Jones' art applies the kinetic dialogue between viewer and self-propelled artwork to make us think and contemplate the way things are. ■

Simone Jones, *Flux Machines*
Centre des arts contemporains
du Québec à Montréal
October 16–nov 12, 1999

MACHINES FESTIVES

La Centrale, Montréal, 13 novembre – 11 décembre

«Résolument tournées vers le mouvement, l'agitation et le bruit...» Voilà comment Pamela Landry nous introduit aux œuvres qui composent l'exposition «Machines festives». Elle en est la commissaire et y contribue également en tant qu'artiste aux côtés de Simone Jones et Marla Hlady de Toronto, et de Diane Landry et Diane Morin, respectivement de Québec et Montréal. Nous sommes certes tenus de reconnaître en ces œuvres la turbulence intraitable et jouissive dont elles font preuve. Nous sommes cependant tentés, empruntant au passage le très beau concept de *machines désirantes* à Deleuze et Guattari, d'insister plutôt sur la dimension relationnelle que ces détournements machiniques créent et sur la musicalité certaine qu'ils engendrent. À l'encontre des machines techniques

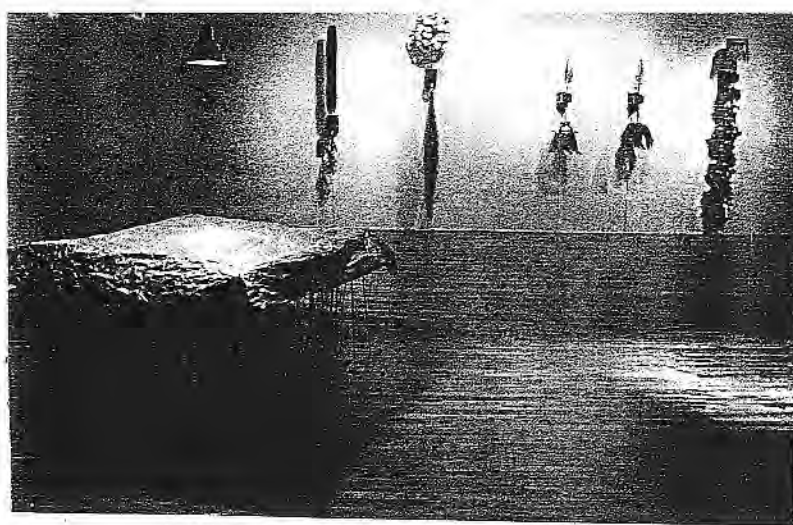
qui lentement s'usent, les machines désirantes, elles, se détraquent. Elles ne marchent qu'à cette condition et ne cessent de se détraquer en marchant. Les machines d'art ne fonctionnent pas autrement. Nous le savons, elles témoignent d'un long héritage allant de Duchamp et Tinguely au Survival Research Laboratory. C'est qu'elles sont, d'une certaine manière, irréductibles même abîmées ou détruites, même impossibles. Leurs mouvements marquent le temps de modulations infinies, fines, brisées, électriques. Discourant toujours un peu dans le dos des objets techniques, ces dispositifs nous intéressent parce qu'ils peuvent déplacer le sens et les sens. Il s'agit en somme pour ces femmes, toujours selon les paroles de Landry, de proposer «la réponse à un désir d'être davantage actrices que simple

utilisatrices de l'univers matériel et technique qui les entoure».

L'Engin à mobilité (1999) de Simone Jones s'arroge une incisive ironie. Suggérant à la fois la navigation aérienne et son impossibilité, cet appareil renvoie aux redoutables prototypes des débuts de l'aviation mais peut-être surtout, comme d'aucuns l'ont déjà souligné, à certaines inventions de Léonard De Vinci. Cet engin est formé d'une armature faite de bois léger, de contre-plaqué et de cuir. Ses ailes sont périodiquement articulées par un moteur électrique. Contraint à une activité stationnaire, ce bolide monoplace d'envergure humaine est prémuni d'un harnachement qui laisse entrevoir la possibilité utopique d'un usage performatif. On pensera à Icare qui, plutôt que d'être brûlé par l'astre solaire, se disloquerait en des battements stériles. On pensera également, et là, l'ironie cesse, à l'agitation paniquée du noyé. La défectuosité s'instruit ici comme la modalité basale de l'objet. L'envolée nous est exposée d'après la théâtralité même de son invraisemblance, son espace est virtuel aussi bien qu'insondable.

Le travail de Marla Hlady produit des dispositifs d'une dimension plus réduite. Elle aligne, parallèlement au mur, deux petits caissons sur pattes apparemment étanches dont l'intérieur est capoté par des cartons à œufs. Dans chacun de ces volumes, visible par une ouverture vitrée pratiquée sur le dessus, se trouve un petit automate réduit à sa simple mécanique. Il reproduit, d'une manière copieusement erratique, l'action de jouer de la batterie. À ces caisses se ramifient, par câblage interposé, des boîtes de conserve en verre laissant échapper des sonorités percussives et étouffées. Le titre de l'œuvre, *Drumming displaced into different sized jam jars* (1999), annonce d'ailleurs sans aucune ambiguïté le processus de déplacement et de relais auquel elle s'emploie. On remarquera le principe de rétention et de libération des sons ainsi que celui d'une dissection de la causalité. D'un côté, le son et, dans l'espace, l'élément déclencheur (le spectateur); de l'autre, son origine, petit objet fou furieux, enfermé dans un espace où la résonance est impossible.

Duhamel, Patrice. "Machines Festives," *Parachute Magazine*, Issue 98, 1999.



«MACHINES FESTIVES», 1999, VUE D'ENSEMBLE, PHOTO : PAUL LITHERLAND.

Les tables tourmentent (1999) de Diane Landry jouent de la rumeur, des sous-entendus, comme des jeux de sens sur le langage. Elles se révèlent tranquillement, par strates successives, montrant d'abord un grand plan de papier kraft froissé par l'usure qui vibre de manière intermittente. Sous cette page, invisibles si on résiste à l'effort de se pencher, des figurines animales d'un rouge sanguin forment une ronde. Des tourne-disques les entraînent. La feuille tremble, vibre, les animaux réapparaissent. Une forêt de tubes métalliques très fins, multiplient les parties de cette surface flagellante. À la racine de ces tiges, autant de petits bouts de crayons sont insérés et dressés vers le haut comme s'ils irriguaient une écriture. Mécanique, automatique, intérieure, cette inscription n'est visible qu'en vertu du froissement progressif de l'emballage de boucherie. Elle est une sorte d'écriture aveugle dont la prémisse est celle du tremblement.

Excentriques (1999) de Pamela Landry détourne en force les outils de la domesticité. D'un même soufflé et avec un humour que nous lui connaissons depuis *Tes yeux* en 1997, elle casse et retourne les archétypes de la femme moderne en les affublant de parures hautement comiques. Des instruments de cuisine, fous, passoirs, couteaux, auxquels sont adjoins des masses capillaires et des gerbes de fleurs de plastique, se superposent en des assemblages totémiques qui, accrochés au mur, virevoltent de manière inopinée et sans ménagement. Se faisant belles, ces figures anthropo-

morphiques, pour peu qu'on leur prête vanité, s'agitent à l'œil. Leurs attributs de plastique et de métal se substituent aux formes autrement normalisées par le regard de l'autre, masculin il va sans dire. Courbes ou minceur selon les époques.

Au premier plan de l'espace d'exposition, l'installation non titrée (1999) de Diane Morin est des cinq interventions, celle qui se livre malgré son caractère bruitiste avec le plus de retenue. Branchés en un réseau complexe et apparemment inextricable, de nombreux fils électriques unissent entre eux des globes laiteux partiellement translucides. Un jeu de minuscules ombres portées les habite. Des petits automates probablement semblables à ceux qu'utilise Hlady s'y laissent deviner. Des fréquences modulées, des grincements, des transmissions défectueuses nous informent des opérations qui s'y produisent. Notre regard, notre ouïe, bien qu'envoûtés, doutent pourtant de la correspondance entre ces morphologies nébuleuses et les bruits parasites que fait entendre leur petit baller fragmenté et chaotique.

John Cage a pu à sa manière détraquer la musique, l'accidenter, la fêler, parce qu'il a su mettre dans son écriture une grande liberté, aidé en cela par les opérateurs du hasard que sont ses interprètes. Toute chose fêlée peut rendre un autre son. Dès lors, émergent des résonances nouvelles entièrement redevables de cette sorte de préparation. Couplages, connexions, branchements de flux, prélèvements, écoulements et coupures; le piano préparé c'était quelque chose comme cela. Nous

préparés selon un principe double d'union et de disjonction entre le spectateur et l'exposition. Cette dernière fonctionne comme une machine de machine constituant une sorte de réseau ayant pour flux, les cinq œuvres hétérogènes. Le spectateur est donc tenu d'aller jouer de sa présence vers telle ou telle œuvre pour en déclencher le processus. Intervient-il ou est-il confronté à des automatismes qui lui sont indépendants et qui s'activent par sa présence ou en sa présence? L'espace sonore s'en trouve fragilisé et la perte des références réitérée à chacune de ses interventions.

Le détraquement mine, du moins comme potentialité, chaque œuvre d'art. Détraquement d'une fonction de machine technique, d'une fonction de machine sociale (un discours, des archétypes), détraquement d'image ou d'objet, détraquement des signes, dérèglement des sens ou déréglementation du sens. Lorsque la machine se fait

principe est immanent, elle ne se détraque, ne se saborde que de l'intérieur. On les croirait mal nommées ces «Machines festives» tant, d'une manière inlassable, elles travaillent. La plus incroyable musique se laisse certainement entendre parce que tout cela ne marche qu'en vertu de réglages tantôt excessivement rigoureux bien qu'impénétrables, tantôt dû à la pure contingence d'une présence humaine. Ces œuvres nous conviennent à une expérience pleine et toujours fluctuante du temps et de l'espace. Si justement détraquées, elles nous offrent un spectacle irrévérencieux bien que subtil et qui provoque une joie certaine. D'aucuns ont pu dire *du possible ou j'étouffe*, il est temps pour nous de retourner cette parole et de réclamer son exact contraire, puisque ces machines nous en font voir et entendre... de l'impossible.

— PATRICE DUHAMEL

CLAIRE SAVOIE

Galerie Axe NÉO-7, Hull, 7 novembre - 12 décembre

Le travail de Claire Savoie explore depuis quelque temps les propriétés physiques du son. À la galerie Axe NÉO-7, l'artiste a reconstruit une œuvre précédemment inaugurée à Montréal à la galerie Articule, une rotonde d'un blanc immaculé dans laquelle il est possible de s'introduire. Contrastant avec l'éclairage tamisé de la salle, l'intérieur du cylindre est baigné d'une lumière blanche soutenue, qui vient brouiller davantage les rares repères spatiaux que laisse percevoir la courbe blanche du mur. La lumière provenant d'un puits de lumière au plafond se répercute sur la paroi et sur le plancher de la chambre, unifiés par l'absence de couleur, et confond l'œil, prêt à jurer que la surface plate de cette plaque lumineuse est bombée.

Seul le positionnement du spectateur au centre de cette pièce affolante aurait pu permettre de rétablir l'équilibre entre ce non-lieu et sa perception. Or, un élément inat-

tendu occupe ce centre stratégique d'une présence diaphane mais non moins réelle, palpable, repoussant le visiteur sur les parois de la salle ronde où il lui est moins à loisir d'embrasser l'espace du regard afin de tenter de s'y situer. Par une petite ouverture pratiquée dans le mur arrondi, une pluie de bulles de savon est soufflée dans la chambre, et glisse dans l'air pour mourir au sol. Un monde complètement immatériel est créé, sans pour autant qu'il ne sombre dans un ton mièvre ou idyllique. Au contraire, cet espace est vertigineux, d'autant plus que chacune des bulles à sa surface le reflète, lui comme sa luminosité si particulière, le démultipliant par effet miroir.

Pour compenser cette mise en échec de la perception, pour pallier l'absence de matière et la perte de stabilité du spectateur, seule une présence, ne serait-ce que momentanément familière, instaure un autre mode de repérage. Deux voix, celles

Étrange ballet mécanique

Des automates, des sculptures cinétiques de tout type, voilà à quoi nous convie une exposition illustrant une étonnante conformité de signatures

MACHINES FESTIVES

La Centrale
60, rue Sainte-Catherine Ouest,
espace 506
Jusqu'au 11 décembre

BERNARD LAMARCHE

L'exposition organisée par Pamela Landry est réussie, mais son titre est paradoxal. Certes, ces machines offrent des chorégraphies agiles, mais quelques-unes font plutôt dans l'introversion. Pour la commissaire, l'accent est à mettre sur le plaisir à démonter et à retablier ces bidules mécaniques dans lesquels se spécialisent les quatre artistes réunies pour cette présentation, en plus de la commissaire: Marla Hlady, Simone Jones, Diane Landry et Diane Morin. Or, si nous n'avons pas de difficulté à imaginer l'extase du bricolage à l'œuvre dans ces machines, la question du faire mise à part, certaines des pièces de l'exposition introduisent des propos sensiblement moins «festifs» que le titre ne le laisse entendre. Ce qui ne revient pas à dire que l'ensemble est à éviter, c'est très exactement le contraire.

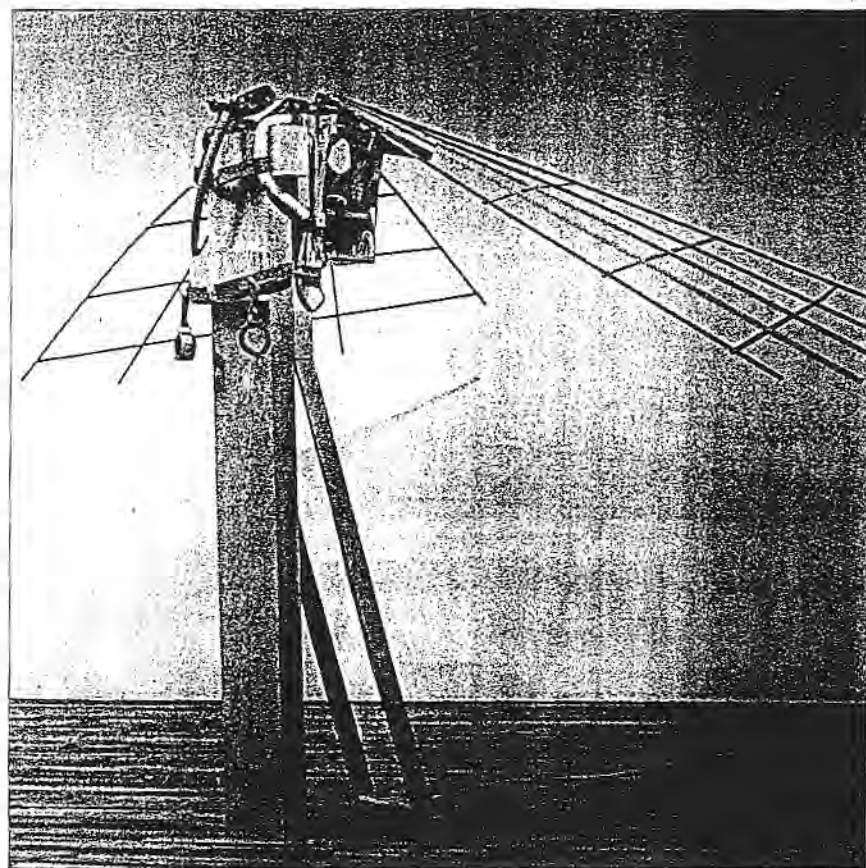
La présentation donne lieu à un petit ballet mécanique où des pièces virevoltent comme des toupies, une autre tente vainement de se soustraire à l'attraction terrestre, d'autres encore martèlent et rythment la farfalle, alors que certaines se font nettement plus mystérieuses.

Un effet étrange se dégage de cette festivité, dû au fait qu'à vue de nez, toutes les pièces sembleraient pouvoir être attribuées à une même signature tant elles se ressemblent. Mais au-delà de cet effet rapide, l'étude des diverses chorégraphies révèle des modalités singulières.

Des automates

La pièce de Diane Morin, au sol à l'entrée de la galerie, est des plus intéressantes. Sans titre, l'œuvre joue à plusieurs niveaux. Petits dômes sous lesquels remuent des automates frémissements — il nous est donné de surplomber cet univers lilliputien —, ces enveloppes que sont les globes blancs se métamorphosent en des écrans qui lient les mondes extérieurs et intérieurs par le truchement d'ombres portées. Ainsi peut-on seulement s'imaginer les activités qui se déroulent au regard, le manège de cette mécanique ne nous parvient qu'à travers ce théâtre d'ombres, puis à travers les sonorités gringantes qui en émanent, amplifiées par de petits haut-parleurs.

Une qualité affective indéfectible dérive de cette œuvre. Ces petits automates besogneux sont pris dans une boucle sans fin (à une autre époque qui n'est pas la nôtre, nous aurions parlé d'aliénation, mais les sympathies marxistes ne sont plus de mode), sont confinés à des tâches (ou peut-être des plaisirs?) inconnues de nous, mais qui fascinent. Sous ces petites nacelles — des éprouvettes? — se trament des fictions qui s'appliquent à nous captiver, par la gestuelle hésitante qu'elles abritent et par le côté mystérieux de ce dispositif représentant les théâtres d'ombres incarnés au XIX^e siècle par des automates.



Engin à mobilité, 1^{re} partie, de Simone Jones

PAUL LITHELAND

À leurs côtés, on peut voir une pièce de Simone Jones. Reprenant le filon scientifique, l'œuvre se présente comme une prothèse ailée qui pourrait s'attacher au corps. Mécanisée, cette paire d'ailes s'anime et bat (de l'aile, il va sans dire) l'air de ses larges membranes de bois. Une compulsion à voler ébranle cette quincaillerie flexible de bois, alors qu'une quantité énorme d'énergie est dépensée en pure perte. Impossible devant cette pièce de ne pas penser aux fantasmes scientifiques poursuivis autrefois par Léonard de Vinci. Modèle archaïque d'une machine à voler, cet Engin à mobilité 1^{re} partie (1999) reprend à son compte l'imaginaire déployé par l'humanité (du moins une de ses parties) pour parvenir à calquer le vol des oiseaux. Jones joue par contre à l'échelle du corps cette chimère, en ayant bâti cette mécanique, avec ses harnais, pour mettre en relief sa nature performatrice. Or, cette performance épuise, tant les efforts de cet appareil sont palpables. Comme quoi les festivités possèdent leur revers.

Festif

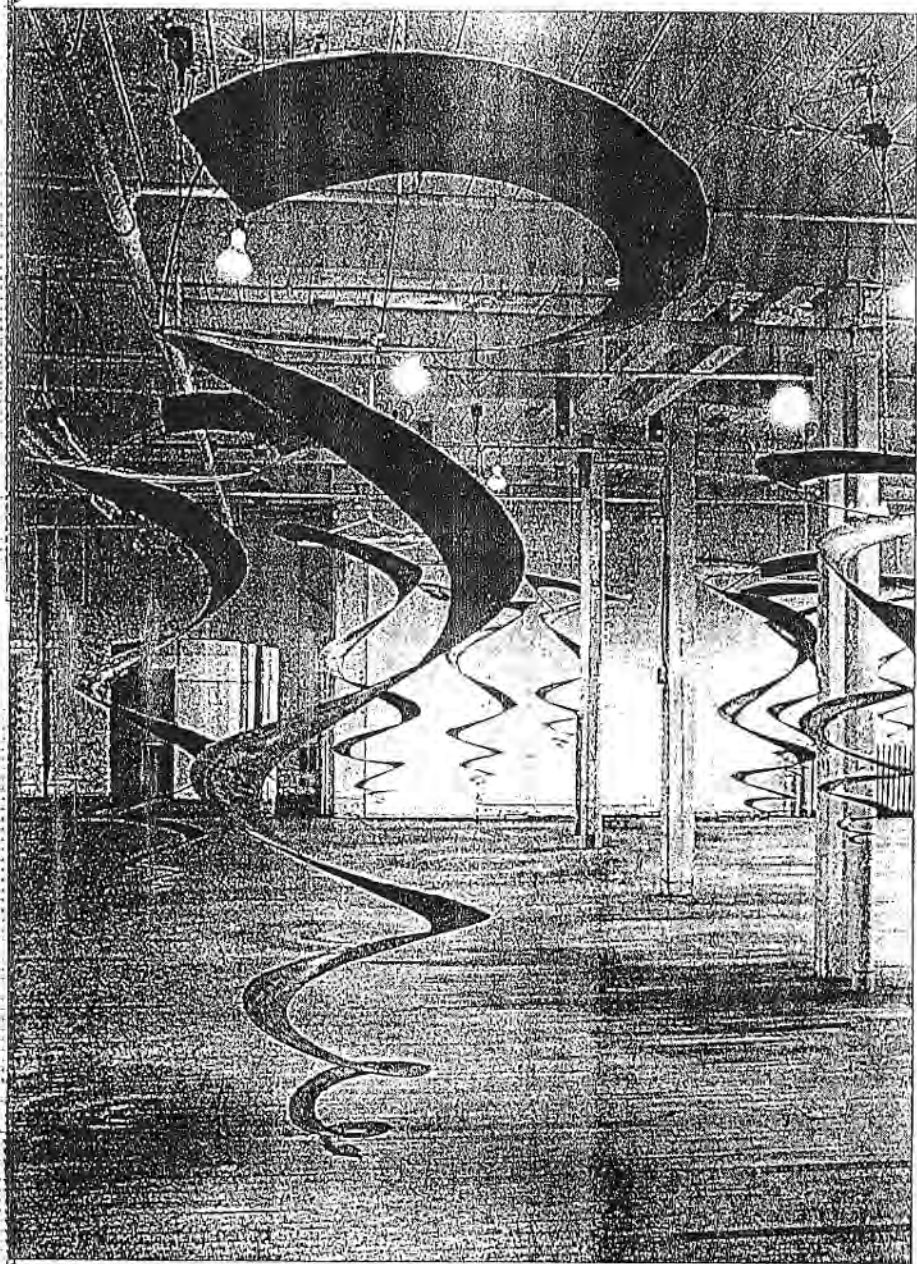
Plus grouillante est la pièce de Diane Landry. Sur un présentoir de brique et de broc, une feuille de papier s'active, sujette à une action, une poussée dont on ignore la source («C'est du

vent», pensera-t-on). Il faut se livrer à quelques courbettes pour découvrir la nature de cette affairement nerveux. On vous laisse à votre curiosité. Ici, Landry joue avec des appareils qu'elle a déjà exploités ailleurs, notamment en performance. Ici, à la curiosité scientifique s'ajoute une curiosité plus proprement scopique.

Sur le mur, Pamela Landry propose des sculptures cinétiques qui correspondent visuellement davantage au thème déployé par l'ensemble. Sortes de toupies virevoltantes, sur ces petites tours sont accrochés des instruments de tous les jours. Par exemple, à des fouets pour la cuisine sont associés des crins de longues tiges ou des bouquets de fleurs. Selon les déplacements du spectateur qui active les mécanismes, les toupies soulèvent les objets dans leur lancée giratoire, détournent leur fonction pour donner cours à cette frénésie domestique. Fort à propos, ces œuvres portent le titre d'Excentrique (1999).

En fin de parcours, Marla Hlady a enfilé ses petits robots-jouets dans un dispositif de présentation qui n'est pas inintéressant. Dans des caissons insonorisés, de petits robots bartent la cadence sur les couvercles de pots de verre. Ces pantins hystériques s'activent alors que les sons qu'ils produisent sont eux aussi mis sous

verre (tiens, tiens!, retournons à la pièce de Diane Morin), les étouffant quelque peu. Il en résulte un décalage notable entre l'agitation débridée des marionnettes technologiques et leurs bruits filtrés, lointains, détournés de leur source. Pas une des pièces les plus captivantes de ce lot, en ce qu'elle tient davantage de la démonstration, mais elle ajoute une dimension à l'ensemble, par son jeu sur la médiation, le transport du son et la séparation des sens que l'on expérimente partout entre le visuel et le sonore (notamment avec le téléphone, mais les guichets de toutes sortes, surtout celui, vidéographique, du centre Ex-Centris, une expérience en soi). Bref, nous vous suggérons sans retenue de mettre ce quintette d'artistes sur votre calendrier de visite.



Victoria Scott's *Coil Room* (1995): rooify surrogates for human movers and shakers.

Putting a new spin on kinetic art

ART REVIEW

In an age of megabytes and megahertz, more and more artists are embracing the crude mechanics of sixties-style wired art. It may seem downright old-fashioned, but that's part of its charm.

BLAKE GOPNIK
Visual Arts Critic, Toronto

Dipping into the past for inspiration is always part of making art. And these days, a number of young Toronto artists have wholeheartedly embraced the electric motors and whirring gears of sixties kinetics.

Walk into almost any gallery and you'll find work that moves and clicks and waves about for attention. And more often than not, these kinetic pieces win Best of Show. Earlier this fall, all eyes were on Toronto artist Lois Anderson's moving botanical sculptures; Alberta's George Bures Miller gave us an out-of-control dancing floor lamp that also pulled people in. Now there's a chance to see another couple of New Kineticians strut their plug-in stuff in a show called *Organic Mechanics*, staged in a fourth-floor loft on King Street West.

Victoria Scott, 31, has turned the wide open spaces of the warehouse's main gallery into *Coil Room* (1995), a giant array of 15 wonky springs, about man-high, that bounce and quiver as they hang suspended in mid-air. Roughly constructed and coarsely finished — each coil is just a circle of sheet metal cut in a spiral, pulled into a slinky spring, and then darkened with ox-blood shoe polish — the shimmying forms are goofy surrogates for human movers and shakers. The room feels more like a meeting of the worthies of your local Moose Lodge than a dark gathering of robotic conspirators. Here, the mechanical doesn't threaten or even impress; it evokes laughter and pity.

In fact, in this age of megabytes

and megahertz, the groaning motors and crude mechanics of Scott's work make it downright old-fashioned. And that's one of the charms that distinguishes new kinetic sculpture from its sixties ancestors. Back then, a lot of kinetic art seemed obsessed with hot new technology; after a "wow, cool, man," you had pretty much exhausted its content. (Some of today's cyber-art has a similar problem.) But the new, aggressively low-tech art of Scott and her fellows sits more comfortably within tradition — it's about the comfy, metaphor-rich mess of the past, rather than the gleaming, empty promises of the future. The primitive machinery doesn't distract from content; it helps build it.

Some of the pieces by Simone Jones, Scott's partner in this show, are a little more finished than Scott's. But they are about more than the technology she uses. Her *Transformation #1* (1995) is a family of three slickly robotic creatures, each about a metre across, that look like five-legged spiders flipped onto their backs in the slow throes of death. Over the course of a few minutes, the five mechanical "legs" slowly fold closed above the belly of the beasts, and then just as slowly open up again in splay-limbed repose. (Typically for kinetic art, one of the sculptures actually died while I was there: some crucial electronic gizmo failed, and the monster pulled itself apart before my eyes.)

We love machines, and can't help seeing them as somehow alive. And that's because our brains are almost certainly hard-wired to read certain kinds of movement as a sign of life — as a flag for something we

can eat or be eaten by. Jones plays on that, giving us obviously manufactured forms that seem paradoxically animate, yet are nevertheless stuck in a loop of mechanical, soulless action.

Jones's spiders flirt with preciosity — Jones herself describes them as "reminiscent of flowers, sea anemones, or crystals" — but another of her pieces in this show makes it clear that she's no artistic milquetoast. (In person, Jones, 32, is a similar mix of quiet and shy, rough and rambunctious. It's worth pointing out that some of the best new kinetic work is being turned out by hard-nosed young women busy reclaiming the form from guy artists frozen in Meccano-bound adolescence.) Jones's terrifying recent work called *Clear and Present Danger* fills the room with a roar whenever it's turned on: a tangle of railway spikes hangs from a heavy steel cable; at the push of a button, the spikes lash out against a sheet of plywood hung nearby, splinters flying in all directions.

If kinetic artists are usually eager to gear down their motors to mimic the restraint of other art forms, this piece shows off the brute, steam-engine side of mechanical advantage. It's aggression at its most pure, and it makes *Guernica* and other artistic ragings seem almost quietly artsy. Like the best of today's kinetic art, it's about using machines to do what paint and bronze can't; it's about taking advantage of a new medium to make art with old-fashioned potency.

Organic Mechanics continues until Dec. 19 at 469 King St. W., Toronto. Call 416-599-7206.