

Zabludowicz Collection

John Gayer

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C'est précisément cette identification de nos devenirs communs aux processus de la nature qui permet de dépasser l'anecdote individuelle. L'exposition n'offre pas de description exhaustive, elle semble plutôt vouloir nous rappeler cette évidence si souvent oubliée que l'ouverture et la pluralité des niveaux de sens ne sont pas des choix esthétiques anodins, mais bien une prise de position éthique, une manière de se donner l'image de notre rapport au monde : « si nous cherchions à supprimer de notre langage politique les métaphores aussi bien vives que mortes, nous obtiendrions un langage hautement formalisé incapable de transmettre aucun type de connaissance sur la collectivité, sur notre vie en société ». En ce sens, *Instinct* nous invite à la révision de notre ontologie commune : comment se construire collectivement, autrement que par adhésion à un seul territoire de pensée et d'action ? À quels types d'environnements tenons-nous réellement ? Autant de questions dont les réponses se laissent pressentir dans l'exposition par ses modes d'agencement du collectif qui échappent aux modèles et aux concepts élaborés par la philosophie classique.

1. Gilles Clément, *Manifeste du Tiers Paysage*. 2004, p. 4. En ligne. http://www.gillesclément.com/fichiers/_admin_13517_tierspaypublications_92045_manifeste_du_tiers_paysage.pdf
2. Dans *L'Archéologie du savoir*, Michel Foucault développe l'idée d'une archéologie non linéaire, basée sur l'analyse des savoirs et des discours dans leurs conditions d'apparition, leurs enchaînements, les règles de leurs transformations, les discontinuités qui les scandent. Cette approche constitue le point de contact entre les diverses références philosophiques, naturelles et esthétiques, mises en espace dans *Instinct*.
3. Jacques Rancière, « Le Partage du sensible », dans *Multitudes*, 1999, n° 2 : La fabrique du sensible. En ligne. <http://www.multitudes.net/Le-partage-du-sensible/>
4. José M. González García, *Métaphores du pouvoir*, traduit de l'espagnol par Aurélien Talbot, Paris, Éditions MIX, 2012, p. 12.

Cynthia Fecteau détient une maîtrise en arts visuels de l'Université Laval. Interpellée par les formes de connaissances sensibles en philosophie et en création, notamment les concepts d'écosophie, d'être-au-monde et de communauté, elle s'intéresse à leurs manifestations concrètes en arts actuels. Outre ses textes publiés dans *Espace, art actuel, ETC MEDIA, Zone Occupée* et *Le Sabord*, elle a poursuivi ses recherches en écriture lors de résidences au Québec, en 2014, à LA CHAMBRE BLANCHE, et en France, auprès de la communauté de Saint-Mathieu en 2015.



Philippe Caron Lefebvre, *Instinct* (détail), 2016. Sporobole, centre en art actuel. Photo : Tanya St-Pierre.

Zabludowicz Collection

John Gayer

**TAIDEHALLI
HELSINKI
MARCH 18 –
APRIL 24, 2016**

Founded in 1994 by Poju and Anita Zabludowicz, the *Zabludowicz Collection* operates as a philanthropic endeavour that supports and encourages contemporary artistic practices through programs mounted in the UK, USA and Finland. In Finland the organization's activities centre on a residency program at Sarvisalo, an island located about 100 kilometres from Helsinki. Visits occur rarely and are by appointment only. Thus, news of the *Zabludowicz Collection* on exhibition at Taidehalli was greatly welcomed, partly because of what it promised – “nature meets contemporary art” and “an exciting opportunity to see works from Sarvisalo in the city”¹—and partly because of the artists whose work would be shown. The news also caused speculation about the exhibition's purpose and content. While it obviously publicized Sarvisalo's activities, it also seemed compensatory. Was this an attempt to make up for the strictly limited access to the site? Impressions gleaned from earlier versions of the organisation's website intimated a focus on producing site-specific art. So, how would site-specific work be transferred to the gallery setting and would viewers be experiencing it vicariously through photo-documentation and preparatory material?

Fortunately, textual information that introduced the exhibition and offered clarifying details about the selections firmly dispelled such assumptions. The program's aims are much more open ended, for it enables the research, planning and/or production of work. These details, nevertheless, failed to squash my surprise upon finding booklets – cardboard boxes full of them—in the first room. These ruminations on physical transformation, written by Ed Atkins, approach nature from oblique perspectives, instilling a sense of absurdity: “You left the freezer door ajar. A careless act that forces the freezer to attempt the impossible feat of freezing the whole world”²—and—“How in earth would you describe it?”³—revel in portraying the smells of decay. In contrast, Erin Shirreff's hushed *Roden Crater* 2009 streams a constantly evolving string of images that bears the hallmarks of a time-lapse video. Close watching, though, reveals that it chronicles images of the crater, not the site itself. The fluctuating conditions also emphatically contradict the character of James Turrell's strictly modulated spaces.

Man's relationship to the landscape becomes more proximal in the work of Sarah Braman, David Brooks and Antti Laitinen. For *Good Morning (November)* 2011, Braman has spliced boxes of smoked plexiglass onto the fragment of a camper van to create an incongruous and decaying monument that merges the vocabulary of modern architecture with RV camping. Though Braman used her residency to complete work to be exhibited alongside this sculpture, their absence is unexplained and viewers have no way of knowing how they mitigate this pivotal element. The idea of blending disparate spheres also surfaces in Brooks' *Myopic Wall Composition* 2012. Seen from the 'finished' side,

Zabludowicz Collection at Tatehalli, 2016. Exhibition view. Tatehalli. Photo: Patrik Rastenberger.



Sam Falls, *Untitled (Boat House)*, 2015. Installation view. Photo: David Behber.



the walls' pristine whiteness and uniformity are disrupted by openings that offer alluring cross-sectional views of various kinds of wood and stone. The 'unfinished' backsides, on the other hand, reveal the specimens' actual size, texture, shape and give a sense of their weight, as well as the wonky network of tubing that holds them in place. This intersection of the natural world and the one construed by man speaks

about the indiscriminate ways man cuts into and through natural features, refines that which is desirable, and disregards or disposes of the rest. In contrast, Antti Laitinen seems intent on bridging the rupture between man and the environment by focusing his attention on the latter and going it alone. Though Laitinen utilised his residency to develop performances that debuted at 2013's Venice Biennale, his practice is typified by the inclusion of *Bark Boat* 2010, a small vessel that he built and the accompanying video, showing him crossing the Baltic Sea in it. Despite the calm summer waters, an unsettling mix of tranquillity and risk pervades the footage. Laitinen, like Richard Long, shows us that there are alternate ways of experiencing the environment. At the same time, he avoids subjugating the elements by arranging them into decorative geometric compositions.

Sam Falls is represented by 2 large photographic compositions. The mural-like *Untitled (Boat House)* 2015 documents his site-specific installation for a Sarvisalo boathouse. Here Falls replaced the upper triangular-shaped section of a wall with multi-coloured panels of water glass that, because of the material's use in church windows, imparts a spiritual aura to a structure serving recreational purposes. *Untitled (Boat House Photograms)* 2015, a series of photograms produced from the glass panels before the artist sent them to Finland from the United States, complements and contrasts the former image. The photograms document the panels' actual size in an arrangement that re-orders the

geometry of the boathouse installation and conveys senses of freedom and playfulness. These works demonstrate the multiple tangents an idea can spur as well as the artist's interest in photographic processes, which often form the starting point for his work.

Video works by Corin Hewitt, Josh Tonsfeldt and Laura Buckley rounded out this survey. Whereas Hewitt overlays idyllic views of a forest cabin with the din, stemming from unspecified tasks happening inside, Tonsfeldt documents a bird that has found its way into his lodgings and outwits the artist's attempts to get close. Unfortunately, both these paradoxical scenarios induced a claustrophobic sense of discomfort. They also felt uninspired, even trite. Confirmation of these impressions came in the form Buckley's *Shields* 2012, a pair of films made in collaboration with musician Andy Spence. Projected side-by-side, they combine diverse forms of macro- and microscopic imagery, with sound to produce a strikingly complex and evocative visual work.

The meeting of art and nature typically turns to a consideration of landscape painting, land art or more recent interests in environmental projects that form a response to the onset of global warming. This exhibition avoids reducing the focus to a singular assumption. Nature is not idealised, nor does the exhibition harp on about threats to its existence. Rather, the work indicates that nature can be encountered in many ways and locations, that it exists at various scales and in multiple contexts, that it is subject to being altered, but also capable of reclaiming

those alterations. The work also reflects our knowledge. At best our understanding of nature is partial, faulty and subject to revision. To be confronted by these selections is to have that knowledge amplified. They posit nature in a new light.

1. <http://taidehalli.fi/en/nayttelyt/zabludowicz-collection>, accessed 18 March 2016.
2. Ed Atkins, *Air for Concrete*, 2011.
3. Ed Atkins, *A Primer for Cadavers*, 2011.

Born in Leamington, Ontario, Canada, John Gayer studied art at the Ontario College of Art and in the Banff Centre's Winter Studio Program before completing a degree in art history and anthropology at the University of Toronto. His artwork, which has encompassed painting, sculpture, photography, artist books, mail art, performance and installation, has been exhibited in Canada, Finland, Ireland and Sweden. Also active as a writer, his texts have appeared in *Art Papers*, *Paper Visual Art Journal* (papervisualart.com), *Sculpture Magazine*, *this is tomorrow - Contemporary Art Magazine* (thisistomorrow.info) and the *Visual Artists' News Sheet*, among others. He is currently based in Helsinki, Finland. More info at johngayer.weebly.com.

Patrick Bérubé : *Around 3:59*

Julie Alary Lavallée

**ART MÛR
MONTRÉAL
5 MARS –
23 AVRIL 2016**

Sur l'ensemble du vaste deuxième étage de la galerie Art Mûr, Patrick Bérubé fait montre d'un usage réfléchi de l'espace, où se déploie le vocabulaire d'un monde conceptualisé et construit jusque dans les moindres détails. L'exposition *Around 3:59* nous entraîne au sein d'un marathon créatif ambitieux et d'une narration complexe, à la fois fictive et ancrée dans le réel, dans laquelle s'enchaînent des œuvres sculpturales et installatives réalisées pour la plupart en 2016. Grâce à une riche combinaison de signes et de référents, l'histoire qu'il assemble contribue à faire de cette exposition un objet d'art à part entière. Ponctuée de références religieuses, *Around 3:59* relie des œuvres qui rappellent l'univers des bars et participent à l'élaboration d'un tout adroitement ficelé. Patrick Bérubé y porte un regard décliné en chapitres, à la fois continus et indépendants, sur de nombreux sujets dont le cycle de la vie et son perpétuel recommencement, le pouvoir, le capitalisme et ses produits de consommation, ainsi que les événements terroristes commis en novembre 2015 à Paris.



Dès l'amorce de l'exposition, l'atmosphère s'ancre dans l'ambivalence, créant des états contradictoires où l'espace intérieur et l'espace extérieur deviennent difficilement différenciables. L'usage de couleurs allègres ainsi que les références à l'alcool et au divertissement des tavernes occasionnent des contrastes forts lorsqu'ils côtoient des éléments qui, avec ironie et astuce, abordent la violence et l'impossibilité du dialogue. En guise d'exemple, l'œuvre *Sans reflet*, deux vitraux fracassés, ne