

A person is holding a book with a vibrant, multi-colored cover. The cover is primarily pink, with a large yellow 'Z' shape on the left side. Below the 'Z' is a blue rectangular area. The text 'OPEN DOORS PORTES OUVERTES' is printed in a white, monospace-style font on the pink background. The book is held in front of a white, circular object on a wooden floor.

OPEN
DOORS
PORTES
OUVERTES

Open Doors for Open Minds: Contemporary art uncovered

Wonderful things can happen between disciplines, but you don't need to tear down the walls. There are doors. (Just leave them unlocked).¹

The works on view in *Open Doors* developed within a series of concentrations or cognate fields: notably, Film Production; Intermedia; Fibres and Material Practices; Photography; Print Media; Painting and Drawing; and Sculpture and Installation. These are not traditional concentrations in their purpose but, as cognate fields, I like to think, function as open spaces for multiple events to occur. Related through a common enterprise and not to a single history or common heritage, each grows independently of the other. Tradition, or heritage, is often thought of as a tree, with multiple branches connected to a single stem emanating from a common root. Here this is exchanged for a particular diversity of simultaneous actions, distinct but at least upright and pointed more or less in the same direction. In history, biology, language, and scientific fields, as a visual aid, the tree has a long and valuable tradition for describing evolving ideas and patterns of thought; still functional as an organizational and descriptive model - we are after all in our own 'vascular trees' this living embodiment - yet conceptually, it has long exhausted its purpose as a meaningful device for interpreting the place of art in culture and society, particularly in relation to the connection of artistic ideas transmitted through culture today.

In some way in our approach, at least described by discipline, art is still presented along these evolutionary lines, where each discipline is connected to the idea of a refined studio practice stemming from the common ancestry of our particular history of art and the academies' role in transmitting

the relevant techniques of art over time. Yet in practice, here in studio arts today, these cognate fields are precisely the flare that blinds this evolutionary light. The degree of both material and intellectual exchange is in a multitude of directions, simultaneously dominating contemporary art as well as the site of production—the studio, to the extent that one cannot define the content of art through precise material description alone.

Where art is made, the studio, is equally under review as that of the work presented in it. Since Carl Andre has claimed to be the first post-studio artist, the studio is one of the proactive spaces in the radical transformation of contemporary art. It too has turned the corner. We are now dealing with a workplace that has divided itself up into complex parts, often split into more than one location pertinent to its context. Not only is there a structural change, but a studio conceptually can be anywhere; production is already outsourced, now 'work' is able to be 'transported' digitally any place and be delivered anywhere in the world, materialized on site, and this is not hyperbole. This balance between systems of perception and refinement of techniques as central function of the studio has tipped completely, yet the nineteenth century idea of a studio for technical and perceptual refinement still persists. The influence of muscle machines able to print in 3D on the go, so to speak, with the ever-perpetual expanse of virtual space, contribute to the varied operations in this new studio work place.

In this respect, the separation into cognate fields provides, first, a conceptual space for shared concerns and, second, the potential for individuals to seek out new resources as well as develop new spaces for expression in real time. The distinguishing feature here is that there is neither a head nor is there a foot in each

of these fields. This does, however, raise the important issue of transformation of knowledge between artists and those whose expertise lies in these domains. Since questions arise about a generation of artists whose connection to history is probably estranged, since history appears to be useful only as an open resource to re-mix, makeover, re-position and re-interpret, everything about this attitude points to dramatic cultural changes in which the network of ideas and influences is measured only by the complexity of experience in one's unique cultural context. There is no single organized way to achieve one's goals: a paradox that forms the challenge to both teaching art, equally as it is a challenge to interpreting art through its convention and practice.

Therefore, each cognate field attracts up to twelve individuals who share in the common goal of focusing on a specific intellectual and material development, a community of like-minded peers one can say, engaged in familiar sets of issues and concerns in practice for developing a common language, or even shaping an artistic identity. Perhaps most significantly, a cognate field has the strategic function of being a point of departure into new areas of thought taking on new conceptual and theoretical challenges should students' ideas take them this route. The passage between these fields can be fluid and should, where possible, be kept open. The paradox here is where there is a higher degree of technical skill (programming, for example) the less likelihood corridors for communication are opened. The international scope of the artists currently in the program, from Iceland to Iran, Mexico City to Montreal - visibly exert their social and cultural presence, which adds to the complexity of the artistic community in its diversity and gives the program its particular edge.

There is no way out of it, "we are now in a material environment," says Jonathan Crary, "where earlier 20th century models of spectatorship, contemplation and experience are inadequate for understanding conditions of cultural creation and reception."² The tension expressed in these works on display is precisely because they teeter on the edge of these circumstances that dominate social thought between depletion and renewal, belief and reason, digital and analogue, living and dead. Each of these artists attached to one or the other cognate field, expresses in their work a sense of dissonance, a depletion of some form of social and cultural values embedded in history, while engaged in a kind of renewal based on completely different referent points. Up to a decade ago heterotopic space would feature as a topic in a course outline, introducing a new 'idea'; for this generation heterotopia is the practice of everyday life. If we love art and what artists make, we will always find ourselves on the edge in our respected places in society and culture.

Currently artists Erika Adams, Jean-Claude Bustros, Geneviève Cadieux, Guylaine Dionne, Andrew Dutkewych, Eliza Griffiths, Emily Hermant, Richard Kerr, Louise Lamarre, Barbara Layne, Mitch Mitchell, Leila Sujir, Kelly Thompson, Bill Vorn, Janet Werner and myself lead these exchanges in each of these cognate fields. The questions of the studio, the practice and the presentation of art, form the keystones to this intellectual arch. Curators, critics, theoreticians, writers Stéphane Aquin, Ingrid Bachmann, Renée Baert, George Bogardi, Tim Clark, Lon Dubinsky, Nicole Gingras, J.P. Lefebvre, Laurie Milner, Catherine Russell and Cheryl Simon, complement them through their key seminars, engaging in theoretical debates on current topics in art and culture.

I could not say what the future of the university art program or art school might look like. Yet as we raise the curtain on these artistic practices, so to speak, we share in a kind of impending vision shaping our present, at the same time simultaneously unveiling a new attitude to graduate studies in the neighborhood of visual arts and culture at Concordia. Here in these works, in this visual record, is a clear indication of the transformation we either bump into or clash with in these unique world-views. I think Richard Rorty might have the last word with his rumination on *Bildung*³ or edification, where in my opinion, art as a branch of thought edifies in practice the experience of our daily lives. Education or self-formation Rorty says, is about “...finding a new and more interesting way of expressing ourselves, and thus of coping with the world. From the educational, as opposed to the epistemological or technological, point of view, the way things are said is more important than the possession of truths.”⁴ I like to think that good art gives us the opportunity for these reflections and where it can, script our thoughts.

Trevor Gould
Graduate Program Director

¹ Daniel Birnbaum “*The Art of Education*”. ArtForum. FindArticles.com. 20 Oct, 2009. Former Rektor of the Stadle Schule in Frankfurt am Main, Germany.

² De Oliveira, Nicolas. Oxley, Nicola and Petry, Michael. *Installation art in the new millennium: the empire of the senses*. London: Thames and Hudson Ltd. 2003. p 6a.

³ Rorty, Richard. *Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature*. Thirtieth-Anniversary Edition. Princeton University Press. 2009. *Bildung* is a complex word in German referring to both teaching as well as learning. For description p. 359.

⁴ *ibid* p. 359

Portes ouvertes pour esprits ouverts : l’art contemporain mis au jour

*Des choses magnifiques peuvent se produire entre disciplines, et il n’est pas necessaire d’abattre des murs. Il existe des portes. (Il suffit de les laisser deverrouillees.)*¹

Les uvres presentees dans *Open Doors* ont ete elaborees dans le cadre de diverses concentrations ou champs connexes, notamment ceux de la production cinematographique, de l’intermedialite, de pratiques en art et techniques textiles, de la photographie, de la gravure, de la peinture et du dessin, de la sculpture et de l’installation. Ces concentrations ne sont pas traditionnelles par leurs objectifs, mais j’aime penser qu’elles fonctionnent, en tant que champs connexes, comme des espaces ouverts ou peuvent advenir de multiples evenements. Reliees par une entreprise commune, mais ne relevant pas d’une seule histoire ou d’un patrimoine commun, elles grandissent independamment les unes des autres. La tradition, ou le patrimoine, est souvent vue comme un arbre dont les nombreuses branches sont liees a un tronc unique issu d’une racine commune. Ici, le modele a ete troque pour une diversite singuliere d’actions simultanees et distinctes, mais verticales et orientees plus ou moins dans la meme direction. Dans les champs de l’histoire, de la biologie, des langues et de la science, l’arbre a une longue et precieuse tradition comme soutien visuel servant a decrire le developpement des idees et des tendances de la pensee; encore fonctionnel comme modele organisationnel et descriptif (apres tout, chacun d’entre nous en est une incarnation vivante dans son « arbre vasculaire »), l’arbre a toutefois conceptuellement epuise son utilite en tant que mecanisme significatif permettant d’interpreter la place de l’art dans la culture et la societe, surtout en ce qui a trait a la maniere

dont la culture actuelle transmet ses idees artistiques.

D’une certaine facon, dans notre approche – du moins selon sa description par discipline –, l’art est encore presente en termes de lignes evolutionnaires, ou chaque discipline est liee a l’idee d’une pratique en atelier perfectionnee qui decoule de l’ascendance commune de notre propre histoire de l’art et du role des academies dans la transmission, au fil du temps, de techniques artistiques pertinentes. Pourtant aujourd’hui, en pratique, en Studio Arts, ces champs connexes sont precisement le signal lumineux qui aveugle cette lumiere evolutionnaire. Le degre d’echanges a la fois materiels et intellectuels grouille dans une multitude de sens, dominant a la fois l’art contemporain et le site de production – l’atelier – dans la mesure ou l’on ne peut pas definir le contenu de l’art par une simple description materielle precise.

Le lieu ou l’art se fait, l’atelier, est examine tout autant que les travaux qui y sont presentes. Depuis la declaration de Carl Andre a l’effet qu’il etait le premier artiste « post-atelier », l’atelier est devenu l’un des espaces proactifs dans la transformation radicale de l’art contemporain. Lui aussi a franchi un tournant critique. Nous avons maintenant affaire a un lieu de travail qui s’est divise en parties complexes, qui se partage souvent en plus d’un endroit dependant du contexte. Il s’agit non seulement d’un changement structurel, puisque l’atelier peut conceptuellement etre situe n’importe ou; la production est deja donnee en sous-traitance; et le « travail » peut maintenant etre « transporte » et livre partout dans le monde par voie numerique, materielise sur place – et ceci n’est pas une hyperbole. Meme si cet equilibre entre les systemes de perception et le perfectionnement des techniques comme

VICTOR ARROYO



My work is concerned with the changing nature of revolutionary praxis, what's often referred to as political and activist art. I developed a dialogue between overloaded categories such as political, oppositional and subversive art, to encourage reflection, not only about the efficacy of artistic forms of resistance, but also about the very nature of political filmmaking.

I am interested in transnationalism, displacement and ideologies of power, working with such notions as discursive diasporas, geographies of exclusion and structural violence. My research deals with the disappearance of collective memory and how novel configurations of memory can be re-instituted.

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Andréanne Abbondanza-Bergeron's art practice consists of sculpture and installation that reacts to everyday social interactions and the environment that surrounds us. Her artwork has been influenced by her training in the arts (BFA, MA in Art Education, MFA in Sculpture), architectural design studies, as well as by early exposure to psychological theories. Her installations, sculptures and performances have been presented in Germany, UK, Belgium as well as in the United-States and Canada. abbondanzabergeron.com

Born in Bogotá, Colombia, **Laura Acosta** immigrated to Canada in 2000. She began her Fine Art studies at Fanshawe College in London, Ontario, and accomplished her BFA in Interdisciplinary practices at NSCAD University in Halifax, NS. She completed residencies/self directed research in Argentina, Bolivia, Peru and Colombia. Laura has exhibited work in South America at SolangeGuez Galley and EGGO art fair (BSAS, Argentina), Residencia Corazón (La Plata, Argentina). In Canada, at The Arts Project (London, ON) and SSC (Toronto, ON). In the US, at Friends of Freiheit (North Adams, MA) and Art Basel Week: Aqua Hotel (Miami, FL). Represented by: Solange Guez Arte Contemporaneo Gallery, Buenos Aires, Argentina lauramariaacosta.tumblr.com

After graduating with her BFA from Emily Carr University in 2009, **Lesley Anderson** worked closely with artists at a collaborative printmaking studio for four years. She continued to develop her practice, showing at and writing for artist run centres in Vancouver. She exhibited during the Vancouver 2010 Olympics as part of a public art project in conjunction with TransLink BC. The following year her work was acquired by the Gordon and Marion Smith Collection and shown at the West Vancouver Museum. In 2011 she did a residency at the Banff Centre and exhibited in China as part of the Qijiang International Print Exhibition. Most recently, Lesley was a

recipient of the BC Arts Council Scholarship Award, and showed at the Surrey Art Gallery, in Vancouver. lesleyanderson.ca

Marilou André is a visual artist who uses urban intervention in order to produce sculptural installations, public art projects and writing. Her latest series of urban interventions to cast pot holes led to the realization of a participative installation for the exhibition "Enracinement" at Art Souterrain Festival in March 2014. She also participated to the exhibition "Eyes on Protest" at the AHVA Gallery of University of British Columbia in March 2013. marilouandre.com

Victor Arroyo

An experimental filmmaker, working with documentary filmmaking, video-art and video installation. He was born in 1977 in Mexico, from the marriage between Reynaldo Arroyo and Leticia Avila. Lives in Montreal, Canada, happily married to Anggie since 2009. Leonardo-Kai, his son, born in December 2011, calls him Papa every morning. victor-arroyo.com

David Arseneau is an Acadian artist. He is a member of The New Acadian Republic, Super Hell Society and co-founder of the socialist research platform Super Hellpress. His medium-unspecific approach to art and to research generates vast quantities of work involving painting, drawing, bookwork, installation and video. daarseneau@gmail.com

Based out of Moncton and Montreal, **Maryse Arseneault** combines intervention with print, drawing, and video, finding ways to activate space and spark critical dialogue. Since completing her BFA in 2006 (Université de Moncton), she has shared a studio in the Centre culturel Aberdeen (Moncton, NB),

