

MAX AND IRIS STERN INTERNATIONAL SYMPOSIUM 15

TROUBLING REPRESENTATION

We are living in a time in which practices and discourses of self-representation occupy the forefront of public life and visual culture. From galleries and museums to activist movements, to the news and social media, such practices bring together the most intimate aspects of subjective experience with the collective dynamics of socio-political and historical transformation—often with explosive results. Throughout modern and contemporary art, dissident and marginalized artists have long responded to the urgent necessity to make non-normative forms of subjectivity visible by engaging in bold acts of representation of self and community. These artists have questioned and expanded the great figurative traditions of art, while often reminding us that “naturalized” relationships with representation typically enforce historically dominant ideologies. In recent years, however, comparable presumptions of representational “transparency” appear to have gained ground, prompted by a neoliberal digital media culture that tends to capitalize on identity as yet another lucrative trend or commodity.

This two-day conference seeks to trouble such notions of directness or transparency by illuminating contemporary art practices that engage with alternative or mediated forms of self-representation. By bringing together a visionary group of artists, activists, scholars, poets, critics, and curators whose work highlights idiosyncratic voices or forms and complicates familiar, overarching categories or subject positions, we hope to explore alternative methods of thinking about identity and experience in contemporary art.

Mining the history of mimetic performance, abstraction, and conceptual/textual practices, the artists upon whom we focus deconstruct, cut up, defamiliarize, and reimagine traditions of representation that have long been tainted with exclusionary or othering assumptions. By thinking critically and poetically about works that obscure, diffract, or withhold the legibility of the self, our conference encounters the artistic persona not as a neatly bounded thing, but as an intertextual archive, always in conversation with the past and future.

PROGRAM

The lectures will be in French and in English.
Simultaneous translation will be available.

Cover:
Moyra Davey, *Visitor* (detail), 2022
18 inkjet prints, postage, ink, tape. 30,5 x 45,7 cm each
Courtesy the artist and Galerie Buchholz

THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 28

2 p.m.

WELCOME

Francesco Garutti, Associate Director, Programs, Canadian Centre for Architecture
Anne Lebel, Executive Director, Fondation du Musée d'art contemporain de Montréal

INTRODUCTION

Ara Osterweil, Associate Professor, English Department, McGill University, and artist
François LeTourneux, Curator and Head of Public Programs, MAC

2:30 p.m.

THE DIFFRACTED GAZE [In French]

Elisabeth Lebovici, Historian and art critic
Gaëtan Thomas, Historian, Sciences Po, Paris
Mod. **Dalie Giroux**, Full Professor, School of Political Studies, University of Ottawa

4 p.m.

ABSTRACTION AND ITS DISCONTENTS [In English]

Sky Hopinka, Artist
Steffani Jemison, Artist
Mod. and lecture by **Ara Osterweil**, Associate Professor, English Department, McGill University, and artist

5:30 p.m.

BREAK

6 p.m.

FILM PROGRAM

Coco Fusco
Your Eyes Will Be an Empty Word, 2021. HD video, colour, sound (12 min)
To Live in June with Your Tongue Hanging Out, 2018. HD video, colour, sound (24 min)

KEYNOTE LECTURE [In English]

Coco Fusco, Artist, writer, and independent curator

FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 29

10:30 a.m.

FABLES OF BELONGING [In French]

Rémi Belliveau, Artist
Dalie Giroux, Full professor, School of Political Studies, University of Ottawa
Marion Lessard, Artist-s
Mod. **Ji Yoon Han**, Curator, MOMENTA Biennale de l'image, author and independent researcher

12 p.m.

LUNCH

2 p.m.

IMPERSONATIONS [In English]

Moyra Davey, Artist and writer
Wayne Koestenbaum, Writer and artist
Mod. **Nelson Henricks**, Artist

3:30 p.m.

FILM PROGRAM

Sky Hopinka
Lore, 2019. 16mm to HD video, colour, sound (10:16 min)
I'll Remember You as You Were, not as What You'll Become, HD video, colour (12:32 min)
Moyra Davey
Horse Opera, 2019–22, HD video, colour, sound (60 min)

5:30 p.m.

CLOSING COCKTAIL

Shaughnessy House, CCA

The Musée d'art contemporain thanks the Stern Foundation, the Canadian Centre for Architecture, the Consulate General of France in Quebec and MOMENTA Biennale de l'image for their support.

PARTICIPANTS

RÉMI BELLIVEAU

Acadian cultural heritage and the fiction behind the construction of foundational narratives are key to Rémi Belliveau's practice. Since 2018, Belliveau has been developing a long-term project on Joan Dularge, a "missing" figure in the history of Acadian political rock music of the 1960s and 1970s. For their exhibition at VOX, centre de l'image contemporaine, presented in collaboration with MOMENTA Biennale de l'image, Belliveau will première the second section of their project, centred around an ambitious film that reconstructs one of Joan Dularge's legendary concerts.

MOYRA DAVEY

Moyra Davey works in the fields of photography, film/video, and writing. She is the author of *Index Cards* (2020), co-author of *Davey-Hujar: The Shabbiness of Beauty* (2021), and editor of *Mother Reader: Essential Writings on Motherhood* (2001). Her latest film, *Horse Opera*, premiered at the Museum of Modern Art, New York, and went on to show in international film festivals, including the Toronto International Film Festival and the Berlinale. Davey's work is held in major public collections, including the Museum of Modern Art in New York; the National Gallery of Canada; the Reina Sofia, Madrid; and Tate Modern, London.

COCO FUSCO

Coco Fusco is an interdisciplinary artist and writer based in New York. Most recent awards include the American Academy of Arts and Letters Art Award (2021), the Latinx Artist Fellowship (2021), the Anonymous Was a Woman Award (2021), the Rabkin Prize for Art Criticism (2021), and the Greenfield Prize (2016). Fusco's performances and videos have been presented at the 56th Venice Biennale, Frieze Special Projects, Basel Unlimited, three Whitney Biennials (2022, 2008, and 1993), and several other international exhibitions. Her works are in the permanent collections of the Museum of Modern Art, The Walker Art Center, The Art Institute of Chicago, The Whitney Museum, the Centre Pompidou, and the Museum of Contemporary Art of Barcelona. Fusco is the author of *Dangerous Moves: Performance and Politics in Cuba* (2015). She contributes regularly to *The New York Review of Books* and numerous art publications. She received her B.A. in semiotics from Brown University (1982), her M.A. in modern thought and literature from Stanford University (1985), and her PhD in art and visual culture from Middlesex University (2007). Fusco is a professor at the Cooper Union School of Art.

DALIE GIROUX

Dalie Giroux has been teaching political theory at the Institute of Feminist and Gender Studies and the School of Political Studies at the University of Ottawa since 2003. In her research, she focuses on a theory and a plan for experimenting with how space, language, and power interact in contemporary North America. She defines her work as being at the juncture of art and science, embedding philosophical, historical, geographic, and social studies in a creative practice that combines writing, speaking, and collecting artefacts. She has published, among other books, *The Eye of the Master* (McGill-Queen's University Press, 2023) and *Civilisation de feu* (Mémoire d'encrier, 2023).

JI-YOON HAN

Ji-Yoon Han lives and works in Tiohtià:ke/Mooniyang/Montréal. In her often interdisciplinary curatorial projects, she seeks to reclaim the sensory and reflexive power of the visual arts in multilayered contexts that are themselves in transformation. Previously a curator at Fonderie Darling, she organized exhibitions of works by Cynthia Girard-Renard, Barbara Steinman, Javier González Pesce, and Guillaume Adjutor Provost, as well as a performative cycle on listening and sound art practices. In 2022, she designed the group exhibition-residency *Exercises in Reciprocity* for the Grantham Foundation for the Arts and the Environment and developed the multidisciplinary project *Weaving the Line: Claudia Brutus and Stéphane Martelly*. She has contributed to monographs on Geneviève Cadieux and Louise Robert and regularly writes about the work of Montréal-based artists. In her PhD dissertation, she investigated how images competed between 1929 and 1936, articulating photography, Surrealism, and the nascent cultures of the illustrated press and advertising. She currently is a research fellow for the Photography and Commission project at the Cabinet de la photographie, with the support of Les amis du Centre Pompidou, Paris.

NELSON HENRICKS

Born in Bow Island, Alberta, in 1963, Nelson Henricks has lived and worked in Montréal since 1991. Known mainly for his video works, he has developed a multidisciplinary approach (painting, sculpture, writing) to further explore how audiovisual data from different sources overlap with and influence each other. He has taught art history and video production at Concordia University. His work has been presented constantly in Canada and abroad since the early 1990s. He is represented in the collections of the Museum of Modern Art in New York, the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts, the Musée d'art contemporain de Montréal, the Musée national des beaux-arts du Québec, the National Gallery of Canada, and many corporate and private collections. He is represented by Paul Petro Contemporary Art, in Toronto.

SKY HOPINKA

Sky Hopinka (Ho-Chunk Nation/Pechanga Band of Luiseño Indians) was born and raised in Ferndale, Washington, and spent a number of years in Palm Springs and Riverside, California, Portland, Oregon, and Milwaukee, Wisconsin. In Portland, he studied and taught chinuk wawa, a language indigenous to the Lower Columbia River Basin. His video, photo, and text work centres around personal positions of Indigenous homeland and landscape—designs of language as containers of culture expressed through personal and non-fictional forms of media.

PARTICIPANTS

STEFFANI JEMISON

Steffani Jemison is an artist living in Brooklyn, New York. Jemison has presented solo exhibitions and commissioned performances at JOAN Los Angeles, Greene Naftali, Mass MoCA, Jeu de Paume, CAPC Bordeaux, the Museum of Modern Art, LAXART, and other venues. Her work has been included in significant generational exhibitions, including Greater New York 2021 and the Whitney Biennial 2019. She is represented in many permanent public collections, including the Hirschhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, the Museum of Modern Art, the Guggenheim Museum, the Whitney Museum, Kadist, and the Stedelijk Museum. Jemison is the author of *A Rock, A River, A Street* (Primary Information, 2022). Her publishing project, Future Plan and Program, published books by Harold Mendez, Martine Syms, Jibade-Khalil Huffman, Jina Valentine, and Szu-Han Ho. With Quincy Flowers, she co-founded at Louis Place, a platform for writers.

WAYNE KOESTENBAUM

Wayne Koestenbaum has published over twenty books of poetry, criticism, and fiction, including *Ultramarine*, *The Cheerful Scapegoat*, *Figure It Out*, *Camp Marmalade*, *My 1980s & Other Essays*, *The Anatomy of Harpo Marx*, *Humiliation*, *Hotel Theory*, *Circus*, *Andy Warhol*, *Jackie Under My Skin*, and *The Queen's Throat* (nominated for a National Book Critics Circle Award). He has given musical performances of his improvisational *Sprechstimme* soliloquies at the Hammer Museum, The Kitchen, REDCAT, Centre Pompidou, Walker Art Center, The Artist's Institute, the Renaissance Society, and The Poetry Project. His feature-length film *The Collective* premiered at UnionDocs (New York) in 2021. He has received a Guggenheim Fellowship in Poetry, an American Academy of Arts and Letters Award in Literature, and a Whiting Award. Yale's Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library acquired his literary archive. He is a Distinguished Professor of English, French, and Comparative Literature at the CUNY Graduate Center.

ELISABETH LEBOVICI

Elisabeth Lebovici is an art historian and critic living in Paris. She has been a culture editor for the daily newspaper *Libération* (1991–2006). Since 2006, she has been co-curating (with Patricia Falguières and Natasa Petresin-Bachelez) a seminar at the Ecole des Hautes Etudes en Sciences Sociales in Paris titled "Something You Should Know: Artists and Producers." Formerly a HIV/AIDS activist, she is a founding member of the LIG/ Lesbians of General Interest fund. Elisabeth is the author, with Catherine Gonnard, of a history of women artists in France between 1880 and the 2000s, *Femmes/artistes, Artistes/femmes, Paris de 1880 à nos jours* (Paris, Hazan, 2007). Her book *Ce que le sida m'a fait. Art et Activisme à la fin du 20^e siècle* has led to an exhibition, *EXPOSÉ-ES*, at the Palais de Tokyo, Paris (2023), curated by François Piron.

MARION LESSARD

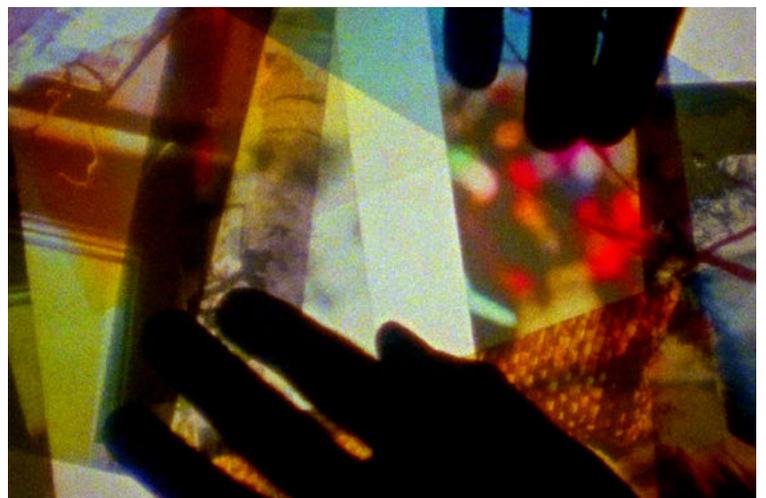
Marion Lessard is a collective of five people – Marie Cherbat-Schiller, Alice Roussel, Jean-Nicolas Léonard, Claude Romain, and Élisabeth M. Larouine (all distinct personalities but with an inevitable family resemblance) – that examines and brings out the philosophical, sociopolitical, and cultural structures on which Western notions of identity are based. This unusual structure, both individual and collective, acts as a clouded mirror that reflects the paradoxes of living together.

ARA OSTERWEIL

Ara Osterweil is an abstract painter, writer, scholar, and critic. She is also an associate professor of cultural studies in the English Department and director of the World Cinema program at McGill University. In her first book, *Flesh Cinema: The Corporeal Turn in American Avant-Garde Film*, she examines the representation of sexuality and queer friendship in experimental film of the 1960s and 1970s. Her second book, *The Pedophilic Imagination: A History of American Film*, is forthcoming from Duke University Press. She is a frequent contributor to *Artforum* and has published numerous essays in journals such as *Camera Obscura*, *Art Journal*, *Los Angeles Review of Books*, *Border Crossings*, *C magazine*, *Film Quarterly*, *Little Joe*, *Framework*, and *Millennium Film Journal*. She is currently writing a book of essays on contemporary art, provisionally titled *Abstraction and Its Discontents*.

GAËTAN THOMAS

Gaëtan Thomas is a historian (médiab, Sciences Po Paris – CERMES3, CNRS). His research has involved the twentieth-century history of epidemiology and vaccination, about which he has a book forthcoming. Currently, he is studying a hospital shaped by Franco-African relations. He has also translated and published essays by two art critics associated with the cultural history of AIDS, Douglas Crimp (*Le Point du Jour*, 2016) and Craig Owens (*Même pas l'hiver*, 2022).



Since 2006, the prestigious international symposiums held by the Musée d'art contemporain de Montréal have been known as the Max and Iris Stern International Symposium. From the time the Musée was founded in 1964, Max and Iris Stern contributed significantly to its growth by enriching the Collection with many gifts, including works by Hans Arp, Paul-Émile Borduas, Emily Carr, John Lyman and Jean-Paul Riopelle. The goal of this annual event is to provide a public forum for research by practitioners and theoreticians working in diverse fields, in connection to the Musée's programs. Through this commitment, the Musée wishes to foster a greater understanding of contemporary art and pay tribute to the Sterns by carrying on their vision on the international scene.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

September 28–29, 2023

Paul Desmarais Theatre, Canadian Centre for Architecture
1920 Baile St., Montreal, QC, H3H 2S6

The lectures will be in French and in English.
Simultaneous translation will be available.

To receive full details on symposiums and lectures at the Musée d'art contemporain de Montréal, simply add your name to the mailing list for the Musée's e-newsletter, at www.macm.org.

Information: info@macm.org

Purchase your tickets online:

Tickets are sold exclusively through the MAC's electronic ticket office.
No partial or full refund will be granted in case of absence from an event.

<https://macm.org/en/activities/max-and-iris-stern-international-symposium-15/>

Tickets: 25\$ (including taxes)

Tickets give access to both days of the symposium.
