

## **Works by**

Emily DiCarlo

Chris Mendoza

Brandon Poole

Jordan Elliott Prosser

## **Essays by**

Dehlia Hannah

Nadim Samman

# Foreword

*“First there is nothing, then there is a deep nothing, then there is a blue depth.”*

—Gaston Bachelard, *Air and Dreams*, 1943

As part of his many immaterial, and sometimes, apocryphal gestures, Yves Klein would recite this line from Bachelard at exhibition openings as his contribution to the show. While a philosopher of science, Bachelard was just as interested in the poetics of our dreams. Klein recognized Bachelard’s unique sensibility and was inspired for an entire career, culminating in his long-term research project *Air Architecture*—a utopian plan confronting the earth’s climate. As we move deeper into the twenty-first century, Klein’s legacy will grow as artists attempt to wrestle with the intersections of science and art, the environment and the gallery, the material and the virtual. Whether simulating far oceans, intervening in the hydraulics of a river, automating patriarchal labour, or processing atomic time, the revelries of this year’s MVS graduating exhibition meld both a *technē* and a *poesis*.

Composed of four individual exhibitions, the collective show opens with Brandon Poole’s meditative reflections on the simulation of water, suggesting the atomic image was the precursor to the autonomous image. With a set of twin projections, Poole begins by revealing the first haunting computer-generated images of ocean waves were made on a nuclear laboratory’s super computer, which in turn leads into the post-apocalyptic future of drone shipping vessels navigating the seas based on simulated models—reminiscent of ghost ships from a bygone era.

In the following room, the virtual ghost ship has materialized into a mirrored vessel, ambiguously a canoe *and* a coffin, pulled out of the Don River Valley. Chris Mendoza, inspired by a black-and-white photograph of a 1960s protest procession for the polluted

Don River, has carefully attempted via several interventions to resuscitate a community of river spirits—both human and non-human. Resisting an easy morality, Mendoza’s project navigates the post-industrial landscape of the river during its neoliberal renaturalization for leisure and real estate.

A left turn in the gallery takes the visitor into Jordan Prosser’s immersive video installation showcasing the banal reality of the city of Oshawa and its legacy of a declining automotive industry. Retracing the artist’s own biographical cul-de-sacs, the video conflates subjectivities and relationships as it explores downsized middle management in the shadow of a patriarchal tycoon. The workers are leaving the factory; the founder’s mansion is now a movie set.

In the final exhibition, Emily DiCarlo performs a time-motion study that instead of optimizing Fordian labour, occupies the National Research Council to protest against the incessant standardization of time. Drawing attention to the network of 82 atomic clocks, DiCarlo crafts an experiential feeling of temporality as contrasted to the official “post-real time” analysis that underwrites our lives. In the precarious labour of our time, are we burnt out? Like the Vietnam War vets, is the best protest not to fight more but to enact the protest of falling asleep?

I close this foreword by introducing the inaugural Visual Studies Scholars-in-Residence—Dehlia Hannah and Nadim Samman—who wrote this year’s catalogue essays. Hannah is a philosopher of science and Samman a curator; together their collaborative writing—and constantly cross-pollinating roles—has plumbed the depths of the students’ research and speculated upon their poetics, revealing a deep blue hue.

Charles Stankievehc  
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