

“They’re All Hybrids”

June 8 - 19. 2011

An Exhibition Curated by
Michelle Jacques

Acting Curator, Canadian Art, Art Gallery of Ontario

propeller
CENTRE FOR THE VISUAL ARTS



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Michelle Jacques

WORD COUNT 475

They're All Hybrids

Lorem Ipsum is simply dummy text of the printing and typesetting industry. Lorem Ipsum has been the industry's standard dummy text ever since the 1500s, when an unknown printer took a galley of type and scrambled it to make a type specimen book. It has survived not only five centuries, but also the leap into electronic typesetting, remaining essentially unchanged. It was popularised in the 1960s with the release of Letraset sheets containing Lorem Ipsum passages, and more recently with desktop publishing software like Aldus PageMaker including versions of Lorem Ipsum. It was popularised in the 1960s with the release of Letraset sheets containing Lorem Ipsum passages, and more recently with desktop publishing software like Aldus PageMaker including versions of Lorem Ipsum.

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Michelle Jaques | Acting Curator, Canadian Art, Art Gallery of Ontario

Michelle Jacques is a curator and writer based in Toronto where she currently holds the position of Associate Curator, Contemporary Art at the Art Gallery of Ontario. Her curatorial projects at the AGO have included *At Work* (2010); *Sarah Anne Johnson: House on Fire* (2009), *Luis Jacob: Habitat* (2005-2006); *Jennifer Steinkamp: Loom* (2005); and *Present Tense: Kori Newkirk* (2005). She has also curated the first four projects in the AGO series *Toronto Now*, which launched in spring 2010. Independent projects have included *At the Corner of Time and Place* (Nuit Blanche Zone B, Toronto, 2007); *Digitalized: Inside the Electronic Dream* (Gallery TPW, 2000); and here, a group exhibition of local emerging artists (Robert Birch Gallery, 1999). Recent writings include "And the winner is..." an exploration of Camille Turner's Miss Canadiana performance in *Byproduct: On the Excess of Embedded Art Practices* (YYZ Books, 2010, forthcoming); "The Artist-run Centre as Tactical Training Unit," in *decentre: concerning artist-run culture* (YYZ Books, 2008); and "Art and Institutions: An interview with Janna Graham and Anthony Kiendl," in the September 2007 issue of *Fuse*.

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Opening Reception: June 8, 7-10 pm

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Bryan Belanger
J. Lynn Campbell
Mary Downe
Pat Dumas-Hudecki
Mary Kainer
Joan Kaufman
Eva Lewarne
Timothy Manalo
Poncelet Manapul Julius
Mary McKenzie
Meera Margret Singh
Joseph Muscat
Jan Noestheden
Tamara Rusnak
Roch Smith
Jennifer Willet
Ross Winter



Byran Belanger
"Still Life?: Forbidden Fruit:"
2010
Resin Apple Wood
7 x 7 x 7 inches

What makes an apple explode and our food system corrode?

In North America and many places around the globe the price of food is fixed to the price of oil. If oil becomes unstable, food will go with it, making it unaffordable and as combustible as the oil used to get it to you. What's left is a hungry society unprepared and in some cases unable to grow their own food....The natural gasses and rich colours locked in the apple are released as the chemical process involved in curing plastic effects the fruit.



J. Lynn Campbell
"Cular Dialect"
2011
Basswood, polycrylic, leather lace
92 x 7.75 inches

Contemporary life bares witnesses to the world changing in ways both conceivable and incomprehensible. The demands on our sensory perceptions necessitate rapid adaptations to new conditions.

The rapidity with which we must assimilate these changes, affects our interpretive and subjective understanding. Our performances play to the perceived notions of what it means to be productive sentient beings in a digital age, and frequently discordant global community. Imposed progress can manifest in a cerebral and visceral hybridism of mind and character. With ever-intrusive technical classification altering our behavior in how we see, hear, speak, our increasingly digitized reality can conceivably reshape us physically.



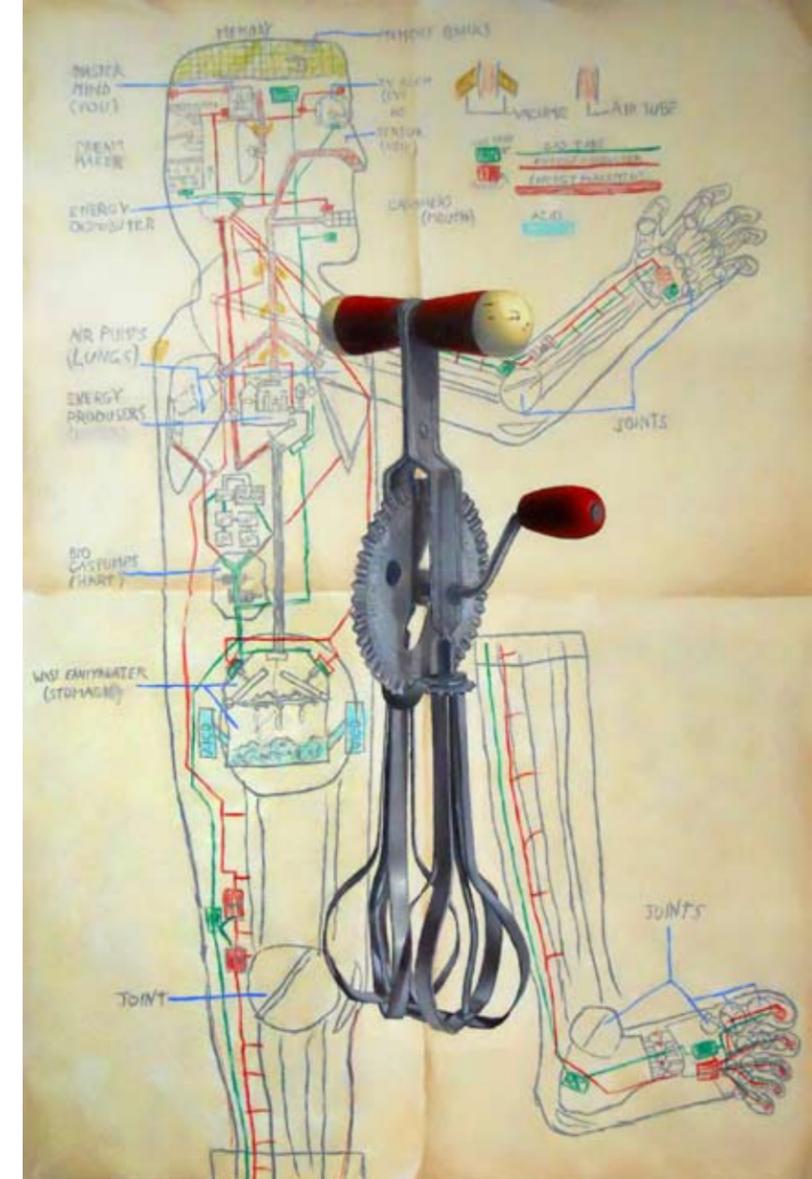
Mary Downe
 "Fuzzy Orifices"
 2011
 Wood and Acrylic Fibres
 46 x 10 x 5 inches

Fuzzy Orifices combines both knitting and crochet. The work is a hybrid of crocheted flowers with forms that evoke body parts, both phallic and vaginal, combined with shapes that reference plant forms and organic growth.

Fuzzy Orifices depicts the exuberance of forms springing to life - of parts emerging from and transforming into other forms - a fusion of dangling bits and more tumescent shapes. It contains a mixture of colours, bubble gum pinks and bright reds suggesting the body, combined with the darker greens and blacks of the natural world.

The piece is meant to be slightly critical but also playful, something of an ironic commentary on crocheted granny squares, which have always seemed to me to be a bit too fussy and cute.

I want the effect to be a little grotesque and yet funny at the same time.



Pat Dumas-Hudecki
 "Evolution: Man and Machine"
 2011
 Acrylic on Canvas
 32 x 26 inches

"Evolution" is the latest painting in my series "In Transition". In this piece I blend the child's art (a complex mix of body/machine) with the adult art (a simple mechanical device). The subject matter, as in each painting in the series, juxtaposes two related but sometimes contradictory images. The realistic "foreground" object is an iconic kitchen tool designed for a simple task - an egg beater. The "background" drawing is a schematic blueprint-like representation of a human body.

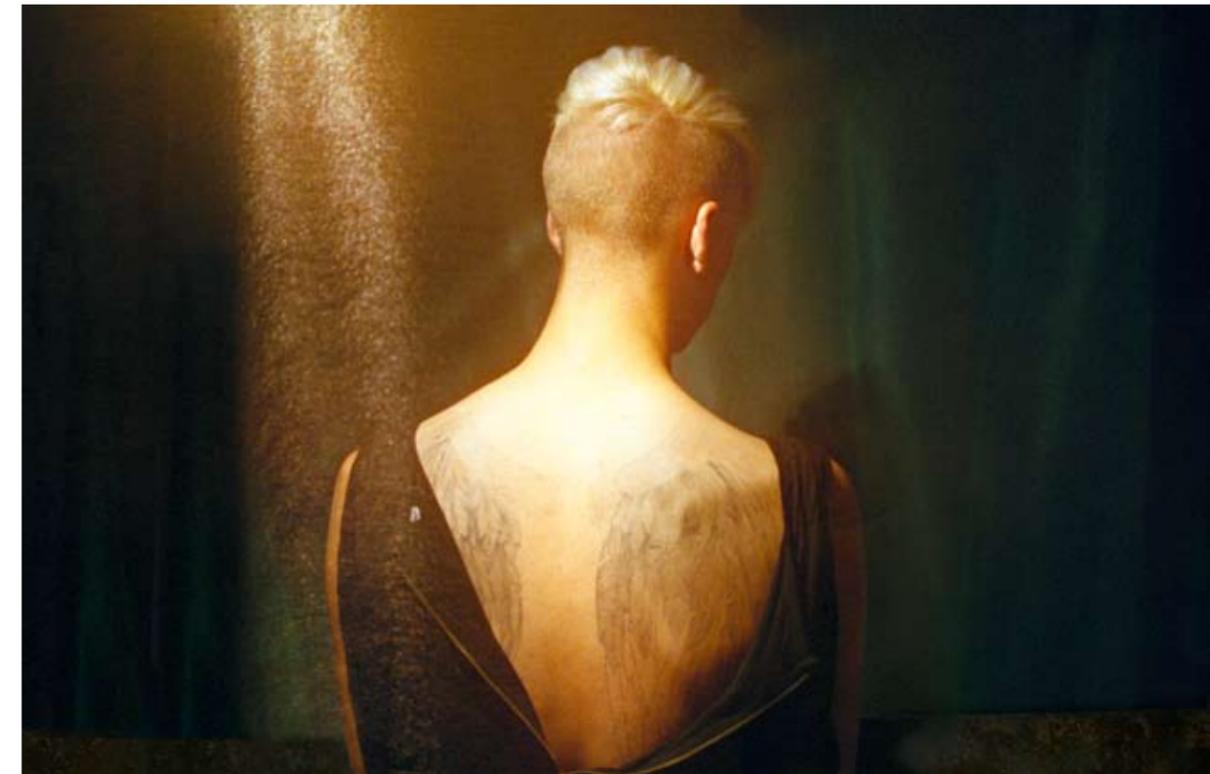
The child's image is a hybrid of mechanical devices, office technology, and industrial processes in an imaginative combination that resonates as a single whole: an automaton, a robot with human-like features. The adult image however, is a machine with an optimum functional design that has changed little since it was perfected.



Mary Kainer
 "Nexia"
 2011
 Med: CONFIRM
 40 x 29 inches

In this quartet of drawings I explore the world of transgenics as practiced by Nexia, a biotech firm that has created 'biosteel' a trade-marked and patented product that derives recombinant spider silk from goats' milk.

The quartet is part of a larger body of work called Corpo in which I address the environmental and social devastation of global corporate domination. These drawings reference maps, schemata and structural representations of companies and their practices. Building on my previous botanical painting, the images draw on biomorphic forms – vacillating between the real and the surreal. Data and information are simultaneously presented as text and as deliriously schematized images imbued with collage elements that contain informational fragments. The format and the hand-written texts have an irreverent allusion to school Bristol board projects but the mutant images and incendiary information are meant to disturb and challenge the viewer.



Joan Kaufman
 "Myles"
 2011
 Archival ink jet photo-based print
 48 x 32 inches

I was introduced to Myles when he came as a guest of my son for Sunday dinner. Myles arrived just as he is dressed in this photograph. My first view was of his winged back, as he turned and revealed the delicate lines of his tattoo: the perfect subject for my nearly completed body of work in which I juxtaposed themes of flight and collective flocking against social constraint and alienation. Myles became integral to the motif by presenting himself as a hybrid: a male/female with interspecies desires....

Myles' tattoo may suggest a similar attempt at transformation, and a desire to flee from restrictive dualities. Dramatic lighting and dark shadows become a means to communicate the harmony possible through supposed oppositions.



Eva Lewarne
"Elk"
2011
Photograph
22 x 35 inches

The animal/human hybrid, having emerged spontaneously in so many cultures, is a universal archetype of the unconscious mind. Shamans, a hybrid class, don the robes and masks of animals to have visions of the future and in order to guide their people through troubled times...The most notable of living Shamans was Black Elk, the Lakota shaman and visionary, who prophesied the coming of the "blue man" in the 19th Century as a symbol of those who have harmed Mother Earth and all her creatures



Timothy Manalo
"White Harvest"
2008
White Rice
60 x 24 inches

There was a time in the beginning of my art practice when I had an interest in making culturally influenced work to find my identity as an artist. With "Harvest", I tried to create something that was able to communicate my diverse heritage by representing them in their most iconic forms. Shoveling snow is this Canadian experience that I think conflicts with Asian culture and its traditions. Making snow shovels out of rice showed this contradiction that I also feel made an interesting paradox that speaks about a diverse cultural experience. This work is an exploration in cultural identity, in which I play with material and object to represent the crossing of these two backgrounds that I relate to.



Julius Poncelet Manapul
"Book Altar/Shrine of Queen Gagods"
2011
Cut out books and gay porn magazines
25 x 45 inches

My art constructs the new hybrid "Queern Gagods" (a mix of Queer, Queens and Gay – Gods) by using pornography or images of half-naked (pin-up's) male bodies and overlaying them with intricate images and representations of Gods from around the world. Placed one over the other these images beg the questions: What is sacred? What do we worship or hold up as perfect? What is masculine? Who decides? Who has the power?



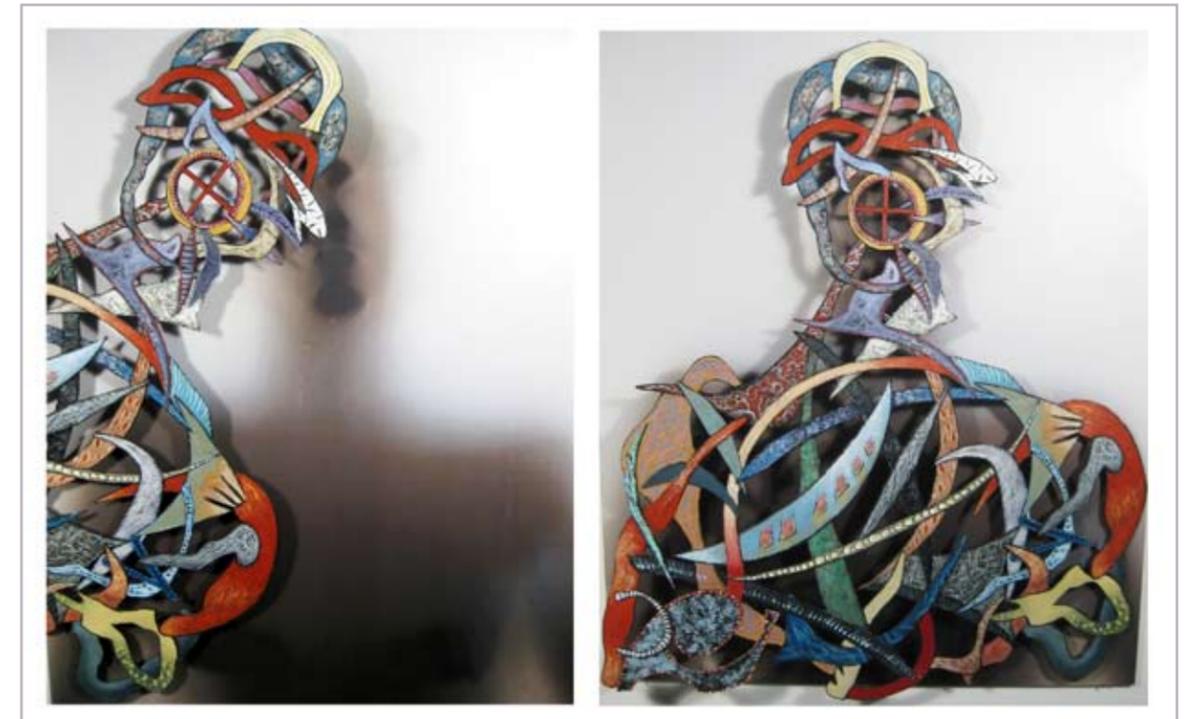
Mary McKenzie
"Selection"
2011
Ceramic, glaze
8 x 10 x 8.75 inches

My art practice engages the vulnerability of ceramics, a process, that for me, gravitates towards experimentation and material failure. This inherent fragility translates into narrative in my work. Hybridism, or trait selection, is a form of evolution. My characters, in an effort to adapt to an unpredictable world, experiment and improvise, hoping to improve their survival opportunities. In Selection, the figure considers the advantages/disadvantages of selection, adjusting scale and feature traits. Selection is part of a larger body of work titled Adaptations: Gestures of Survival.



Meera Margaret Singh
"Becoming Animal"
Digital photograph
30 x 24 inches

Becoming Animal is a series of photographs that looks to explore the space that exists between key binary oppositions such as human/animal, the untamed/the domesticated, nature/culture, self/other. My interest lies in the grey zone between these binaries, where disruption and transgression are possible. I am looking to see what happens when the human and the animal merge as physical and metaphorical beings.



Joseph Muscat
Con(tinental)fusion
2011
C-Print & Acrylic on Tarpaper Collage
24 x 20 x 2 inches

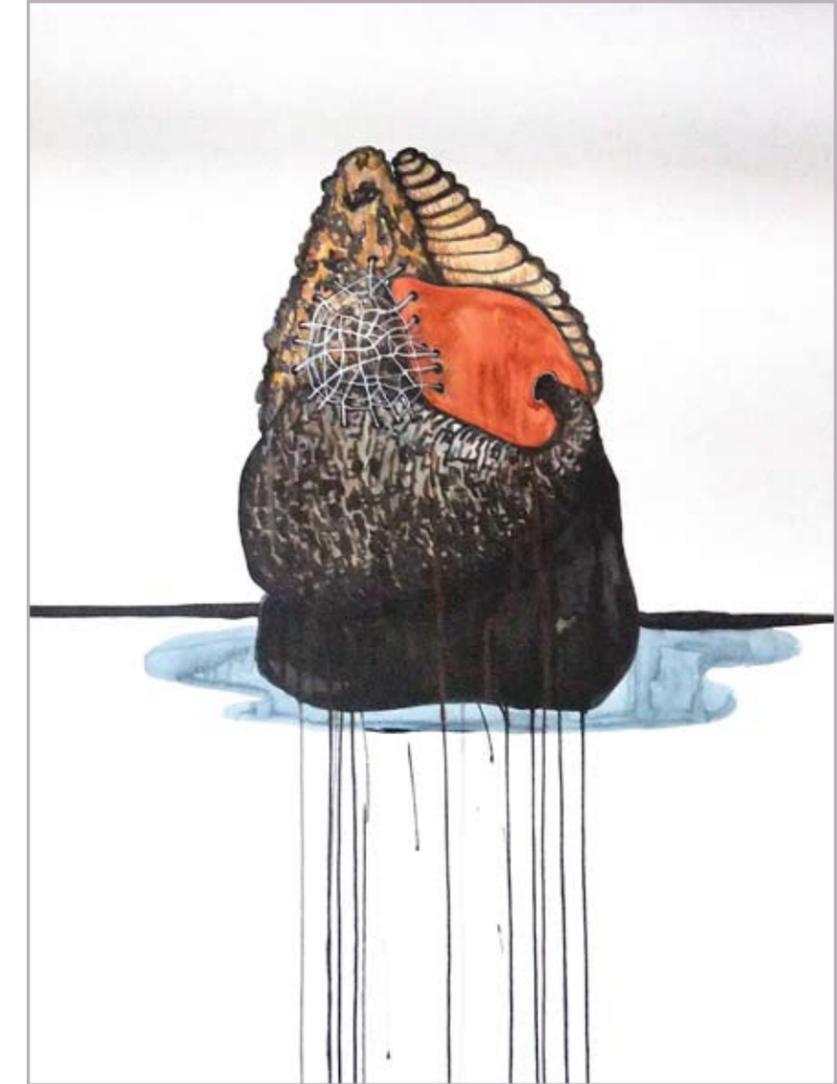
My journey into Hybridity started on the small Mediterranean Island of Malta (nothing short of a hybrid gene pool) where I was born. This Hybridity however was truly internalized when I arrived in Toronto as a fifteen year old and was given the hyphenated identity tag of Maltese-Canadian. I knew at that point that I had a dual responsibility to my native and adoptive lands in personality, language, citizenship and culture which have molded me into who I am today.

Con(tinental)fusion is also a hybrid consisting of a C-print of a self-portrait and a collage made from hand torn pieces of tar paper painted in acrylic. This overlap defines my duality.



Jan Noestheden
 "Strength in Numbers"
 2010
 Acrylic, Ink and Pencil on Shaped Wood
 48 x 77 inches

Animals of all kinds instinctively know when the weather is about to change. Seeing an approaching storm, an odd assortment of creatures -- all albinos -- gather together aboard a large pelican perched on a log. As humans continue to pollute the world with the byproducts of industrialization, genetic defects in the wild will only continue to increase, and animals will be forced to congregate to survive the tempest that is made from 7 billion people. The bar code along the bottom is the genetic code for albinism, which can affect the entire animal kingdom, from snails to whales. Incidences of albinism have been steadily increasing the past few decades, the primary cause being embryonic exposure to heavy metals (arsenic, cadmium, copper, mercury, selenium, zinc). The orange box and circles are taken from comic culture and are normally reserved for the text of a narrator, but here are left blank so that the viewer may construct their own narrative.



Tamara Rusnak
 "The Shadow's Incubation Chamber"
 2010
 Ink, gum Arabic pigment on paper
 44 x 30 inches

Each drawing is a hybrid of transitional spaces that exist in nature and in the body – such as beaver dams, tumours, intestines, bezoars, nests and larvae. From the outside, they may appear ominous and strange with their juxtaposition of jutting branches amongst flaccid, leaking forms. Yet, somehow, in my imagination, inside they could be warm, soft, and quiet and would whisper in my ear and enclose my body like a hug. These drawings are metaphors for the tension and transformation that occurs within my own body and mind when confronted with a crisis such as, for example, experiencing unrequited love or fighting through depression in winter. This work expresses the anxiety and comfort, strangeness and familiarity, as well as the sadness and hope of such situations. My hope in creating this work is to connect with the viewer at an affective level, to make them feel – comforted, confused, concerned and connected – I want them to feel feeling.

A bezoar is an accumulation of material that grows inside one's body. In humans, a bezoar is a build up of indigestible fibre in the stomach that makes the host ill. In ruminant animals, it is a stone created in the body by a slow concretion of fluids – this stone is reputed to be an antidote for poisoning.



P. Roch Smith
"Fun work - Hard Play"
2011
Hand Tools on Hockey Stick Handles
Size variable

It is the relationship between the identity of the stick and the identity of the tool which led me to combine a seemingly dispirit set of objects. The authorship of the work becomes a hybrid of work and play – collaboration between worker and player. Using these artifacts, articulates a work/play dialectic which speaks to the changing economic class as the shift to an information economy means that less physical labour is being undertaken as part of the work day – itself leading to the need for physicality to take place as sport or recreation.

Finally and simply, there is something quintessentially Canadian about re-purposing a broken hockey stick – a direct example of form following function.



Jennifer Willet
"Bioplay: Bacteria Cultures"
2008
Performance and Digital Photograph
36 x 24 inches

The photographs BioPlay: Bacteria Cultures emphasize the hybrid nature of the human body when we imagine the laboratory as an ecology. In this instance the body, performing scientific protocols, is not separate from the biotechnological process applied to other life forms. The perceived hierarchies and boundaries between technician and specimen are blurred. This work presents an alternative vision of biotechnology that argues when we manipulate life in this manner – we are in turn manipulating our ecology and ourselves.



Ross Winter
"Carracci in Tianjin"
1582 - 2009
Photo Composite
20 x 24 inches

In Tianjin, in 2009, I photographed a street butcher. In 2010, on a road trip to Texas I discovered, in the Kimbell, Annibale Carracci's 'The Butchers, Bologna, 1582'. Two images, similar subjects, identical points of view, and a perfect conjunction of men and meat.

It would be hard to imagine a wider disparity than that between late Renaissance Italy and modern China. Or maybe not, if one sees China as undergoing a contemporary renaissance. But, over 400+ years, the same activity goes on in the same way, on opposite sides of the globe.

A work can, at some point, take on a life of its own and become the generator for other works, in other times and places, and in other media. They're all potential hybrids.

Propeller Center for the Visual Arts | Mission Statement

Propeller is a professional, independent, artist-run non-profit organization with a dynamic approach to programming, exhibitions and community-based activities. Propeller provides a supportive community which generates innovative ideas, experiences, and a greater awareness and appreciation for the arts.

The Centre is an integral member of the artistic and cultural community in Toronto's vibrant Queen Street West gallery district. Propeller supports the creative endeavours of artists through curated, juried and individual exhibitions. The Centre also presents networking and educational opportunities as well as multi-disciplinary events in pursuit of building and extending the community.

In existence since 1996, Propeller proffers a forward-looking vision that continues to engage public interest and critical notice.



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