



ab NEXT

Contemporary Abstraction
by Emerging Artists

Colin Canary

Kelsey Galbraith

Gillian King

Caroline Mousseau

Sarah Pupo

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Curated by

Linda Jansma

Simone Wharton

The Robert McLaughlin Gallery, Oshawa

ab NEXT: Contemporary Abstraction by Emerging Artists
Colin Canary, Kelsey Galbraith, Gillian King, Caroline Mousseau, Sarah Pupo
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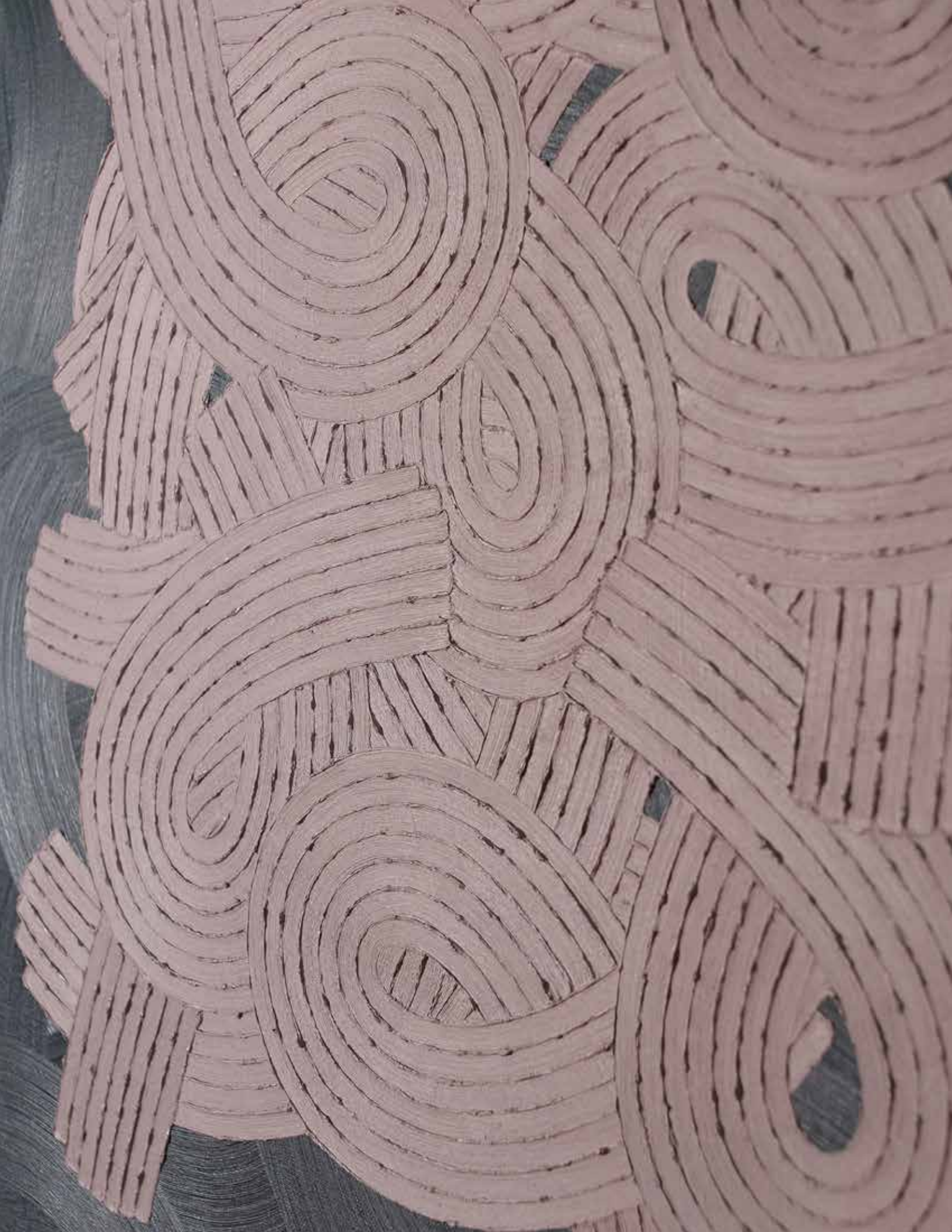
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Foreword and Acknowledgements

The Robert McLaughlin Gallery's 50th anniversary is an opportunity for reflection, as well as an opportunity to look to the future. The narrative that is abstract art practices in Canada is always a part of our institution: in our exhibitions, permanent collection, programming, and archives.

It may be considered easy to look to the past, assessing successes in hindsight. Looking to the future is a different thing: *ab NEXT* brings together five emerging artists from across the country whose practices explore abstraction in various ways. What connects them most concretely is their dedication to their own form, their own way of expressing themselves through a variety of medium and methods.

I would like to begin by thanking Colin Canary, Kelsey Galbraith, Gillian King, Caroline Mousseau, and Sarah Pupo for their contributions to this exhibition. It is exciting to share, with our various audiences, the voices of artists whom we see as particularly representative of contemporary abstract practices in Canada. Finding these artists and bringing them together in this celebration year for the RMG took commitment, perseverance, and foresight. I would like to thank RMG Senior Curator Linda Jansma, as well as independent curator Simone Wharton. Simone, like the artists in this exhibition, is emerging in her curatorial practice. A graduate of the University of Toronto, she is currently completing a MA in Art History and Curatorial Practice at York University. The dialogue created through Linda and Simone's co-curating has served to enrich the project.

I would also like to thank our supporters: the City of Oshawa, the Ontario Arts Council, and the Canada Council for the Arts. Finally thanks goes to Total Transportation Solutions Inc. for supporting this project.

Donna Raetsen-Kemp

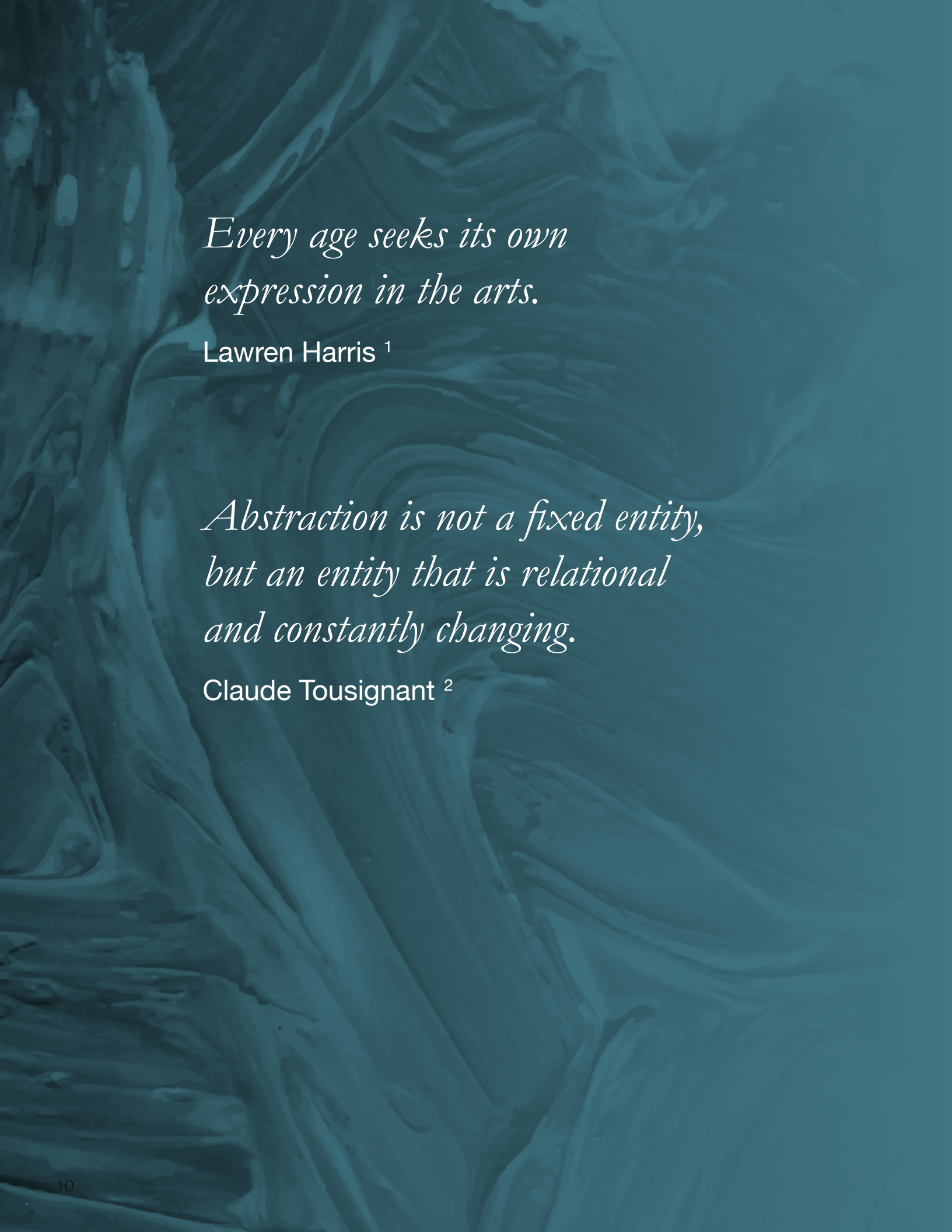
Chief Executive Officer

Caroline Mousseau
whirl (detail) 2016
oil on canvas
42.5 x 52.5 cm
Collection of Ron Holbrook
(left)

Sarah Pupo
Untitled (detail) 2016
mixed media
40 x 50 cm
Collection of the artist
(following page)







*Every age seeks its own
expression in the arts.*

Lawren Harris ¹

*Abstraction is not a fixed entity,
but an entity that is relational
and constantly changing.*

Claude Tousignant ²

The Shifting Face of Abstraction in the twenty-first century

Linda Jansma





Colin Canary
Panic II 2016
acrylic on panel
40 x 50 cm
Collection of the artist

The RMG's history is steeped in mid-century modernism.

Of the 37 works that began its permanent collection in 1967, one by each of the members of Painters Eleven was included. That collection and its donor, Alexandra Luke, was the impetus for the RMG's ongoing championing of P11 and interest in Canadian abstraction.

The exhibition *ab NEXT* serves to check in on the continuum of abstraction in Canadian art through emerging voices from across Canada. As P11 is part of the RMG's history, it is instructive to look at that group. Of the eleven members, four of them were under the age of 30 at the inception of the group in 1953 and were considered emerging. Their contributions to P11 were as important as those of its senior members—perhaps even more so when one considers that William Ronald's initiative to display contemporary abstraction in Toronto's Simpson's department store was the stimulus for the group coming together in the fall of 1953.

The expressions of emerging artists were also heard in Quebec in the artists of les Automatistes. A group with a stronger political and social agenda than P11, the majority of the painters were a generation younger than their designated leader Paul-Émile Borduas and enthusiastically embraced the liberation that they felt through both automatic and abstract expression. Other younger pioneers in Canadian abstraction included Lowrie Warrener and Edna Taçon, both of whom delved into abstraction as emerging artists.

-
1. Lawren Harris, *Abstract Painting: A Disquisition* (Rous & Mann Press Ltd.: Toronto, 1954), 13.
 2. Paulette Gagnon, foreword to *La Question de l'Abstraction* (Musée d'art contemporain de Montréal: Montréal, 2016), 54.



Gillian King
*Keep Your Attention Towards
the Lava (detail)* 2017
cold wax medium, oil and raw
pigments on canvas
240 x 150 cm
Collection of the artist

The work in this exhibition by artists Colin Canary, Kelsey Galbraith, Gillian King, Caroline Mousseau, and Sarah Pupo is part of a resurgence in painting of Canada. This is nowhere more telling than in the annual RBC Painting Competition that began in 1999—and is still going strong—introducing artists like Sasha Pierce, Mark Stebbins, Melanie Authier, and Vanessa Maltese to name a few, all of whom have embraced painting unapologetically. In his assessment of the important eras of abstract painting globally (that is 1912-15 and 1947-70), art historian Pepe Karmel concludes that “the golden age of abstraction is *right now*.”³ Artist and critic Pete Smith writes that this new generation of painters, “rather than having the intellectual pressure of defending their medium with every brushstroke, they could entirely focus their energies on the equally difficult task of making a good painting.”⁴ Indeed, these artists are in a position that is not oppositional to, for example, representational painting, Pop art, or Post-modernism, but rather can concentrate on their individual practices and how they fit into current artistic/political/social/formal/environmental issues.

Artists for *ab NEXT* were chosen based on geography: Mousseau representing British Columbia; Galbraith, Western Canada; Pupo, Quebec; King, Ontario; and Canary, Eastern Canada. None of the artists speak for their region, of course, or for a particular philosophy or school. Some have roots in the past, but not necessarily in abstract painting; there are regional as well as formal and existential concerns being drawn out in both large- and small-scale works.

Roald Nasgaard, in his book *Abstract Painting in Canada*, writes about the “heroic generation,” referring to mid-century modernist artists. This term is also often specifically referred to regarding the machismo surrounding Abstract Expressionism—not only the artists who took part, but the nature of the work produced and the physicality involved in the making of large-scale paintings (think Jackson Pollock and Willem de Kooning). Gillian King actively opposes “the ‘god-like’ heroism of many painters affiliated with these past movements, notably Abstract Expressionism.”⁵ Yet her work is created in a visceral manner: King uses her hands and nails to apply beeswax to her canvases and completes the work by throwing and pouring charcoal and raw pigments into the low relief that is created from the initial actions. The resulting work, as in, for example, the diptych *Keep Your Attention Towards the Lava*, exudes the energy with which it was made. The tactile surfaces are highlighted with areas of colour that flow from one canvas to the other. While acknowledging that her work may, at first glance, resemble twentieth-century modernism, King is deliberate in making the distinction between her practice and those of previous generations. She works to the “‘wingspan’ of a human animal,” motivated by her interest in the Anthropocene (a new geological era created by human impact on the environment). King’s relationship to animals and the natural environment is best expressed through abstraction, and as a female artist she makes a distinction between herself and her male predecessors. Of her various influences, she notes Ana Mendieta in particular—an artist who used her body to counter the “masculine-dominated expressions of modernism.”

3. Pepe Karmel, “The Golden Age of Abstraction: Right Now,” *ARTNews*, April 24, 2013, accessed February 9, 2017, <http://www.artnews.com/2013/04/24/contemporary-abstraction/>.

4. Pete Smith, “People Try to Put Us Down, Just Because We Get Around: 500 words about my generation of painters (with optional annotations),” *2014: Young Canadian Painters* (Cambridge Galleries: Cambridge, 2014), unpaginated.

5. All Gillian King quotes from an email to the author from the artist, January 20, 2017.

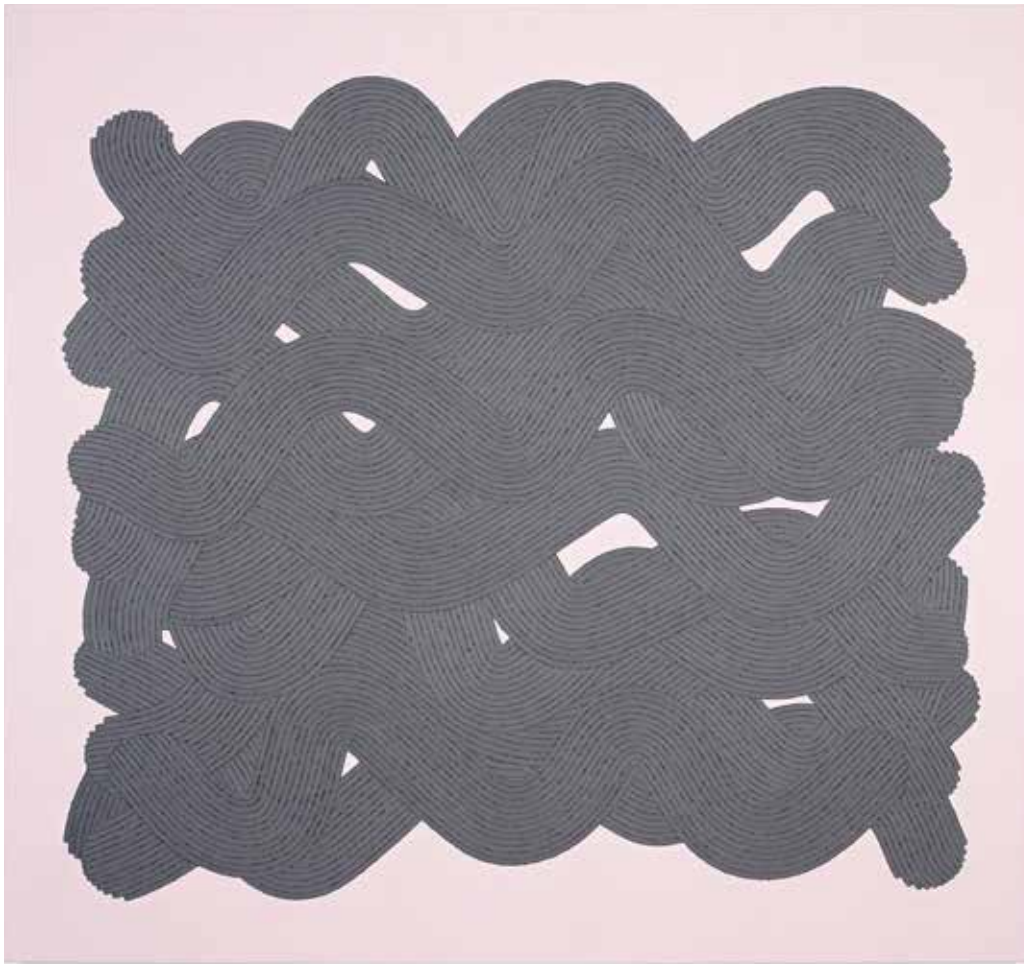


Kelsey Galbraith's relationship with the environment is also evident in her paintings, although fraught with mixed emotions. She notes that the intersection between abstraction and environmental issues happened organically:

While painting, I feel like
I am in a constant tug-of-war,
to manifest and represent the
content I am curious about,
and to get lost within the material.⁶

Galbraith lives in Alberta, a place where environmental issues, as she writes, are “deep, big, and complicated.” She credits a financially secure upbringing to the oil industry, yet the importance of conserving and protecting the environment is part of her personal narrative as well. She uses aerial photographs of industry infrastructure to inform her vision, noting that “as source material they reconnect me with the feeling of those surroundings—the sounds, smells, and space.” Paintings like *Coddle* and *Extraction* make physically visible the intricate webs that underlie the complex political, environmental and social underpinnings of living with industry. *Extraction's* divided areas are reminiscent of land masses viewed from above, rich colour woven together with delicate, organic lines. In her most recent 2017 painting, *Concerted*, Galbraith's colours flow more readily into each other, like a river pulling the viewer's eye around, while lines continue to divide space. Her commitment to painting environmental content in an abstract manner has evolved through her sense that parallels can be drawn between misunderstandings that abound between both.

6. All Kelsey Galbraith quotes from an email to the author from the artist, January 20, 2017.



Caroline Mousseau
swell 2016
 oil on canvas
 115 x 107.5 cm
 Courtesy of the artist
 and CYDONIA



Sarah Pupo
Untitled 2016
 mixed media
 40 x 50 cm
 Collection of the artist

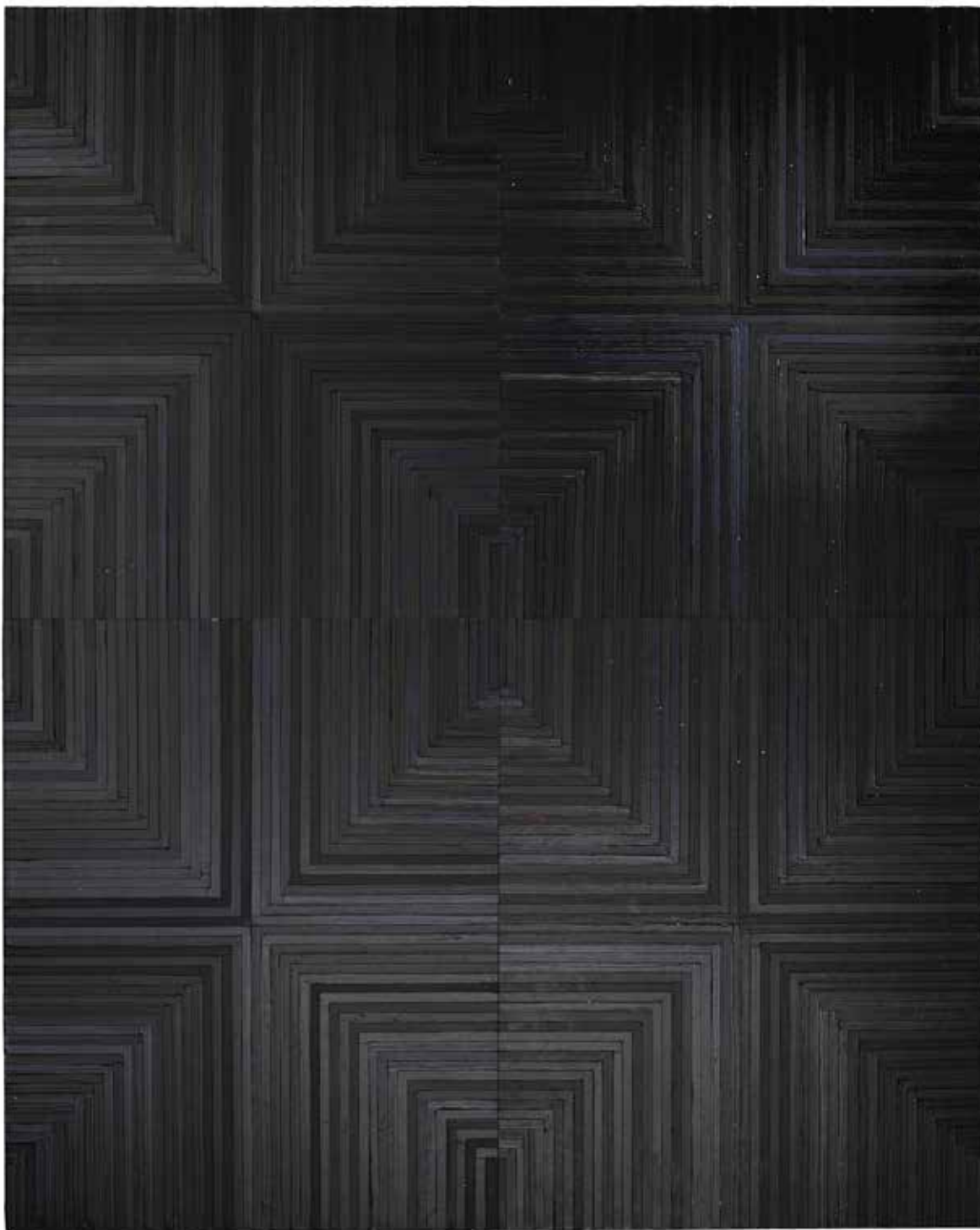
While Caroline Mousseau has made the West Coast her home for many years, she credits her unique sense of colour to the Prairie landscapes of her youth dominated, as she notes, “by large swaths of colour.”⁷ Her move to Vancouver resulted in a different palette that reflected cooler tones and heightened contrasts noticed particularly after rain. Mousseau’s source material comes from small observations of her environment during routine walks, a way to observe patterns and repetition. She sees her mark-making as consistent with traditional methods of making: “knitting, crochet or other craft, and contemporary digital technologies that are driven by pixels and mathematical patterns.” Not unlike King’s paintings, Mousseau uses texture to draw the viewer into her canvases. *flock* shows a series of overlapping, yellow boomerang shapes—a simple bird form—that shift on a taupe background, ambiguous forms that are at once familiar, but not. Each painting, including *whirl*, *cloud*, and *swell*, is made of a single stroke, wave pattern, or loop, repeated and overlapped as a central motif—an obvious manifestation of the author’s hand—lying on a flat ground of black, blue, and pink. One thinks of P11 member William Ronald, whose international fame was made with his central image paintings. But his were images of power and masculine strength, while Mousseau’s painting exudes a refined authority with its central motifs. Citing artists such as Agnes Martin, Lawrence Paul Yuxweluptun, and Pia Fries, as well as Impressionists, Post-Impressionists, and Abstract Expressionists, Mousseau sees her work as “subtly political in its use of abstraction, colour and process. Painting is a negotiation, a slippery field providing ground for the fleeting passage of a large sum of influential moments.”

Montreal-based artist Sarah Pupo feels that her decision to combine abstraction and animated video was a natural progression away from the figure to finding a language that made the intangibility of memory and trace manifest. The animations are intuitive, representative of the automatic techniques of the Surrealists—unconscious marks that, while influenced by historic abstract practitioners, find meaning in the “deep personal stories/psychological drives”⁸ of artists such as Georgia O’Keefe, Eva Hesse, Arthur Dove, and Hilma af Klint.

Pupo’s animation—a medium in which she is self-taught—derives from her drawing practice. It invites viewers into a world of movements that continuously morph from shape to shape and colour to colour. Pupo works with both elements made by hand and those that are constructed with digital technology and computer software. One of the two resulting animations included in this exhibition—*drawing down*—shows hints of a hand, autobiographical mirco-seconds within continuous movement. Her watercolours on silk are luminous works of layered medium. One colour bleeds into the next, creating lyrical compositions that speak to her desire to find a language to “make the intangible physical.”

7. All Caroline Mousseau quotes from an email to the author from the artist, February 6, 2017.

8. All Sarah Pupo quotes from an email to the author from the artist, February 10, 2017.



Colin Canary
Poison VI 2016
 acrylic on panel
 60 x 75 cm
 Collection of the artist

Sarah Pupo
Burning Through the Body 2017
 animation
 1:29
 Collection of the artist
 (following page)

Colin Canary works to a smaller scale by comparison to Galbraith, King, and Mousseau. His works are subtle treatises on geometry and tonal variations and presented in the *ab NEXT* installation in salon style. In visiting his studio, this was how Canary showed his work—out of necessity rather than choice due to limited space. But the presentation was serendipitous as it afforded the viewer an opportunity to take in everything simultaneously, which then drew one in to observe the fine detail of individual works. This series is a shift for Canary, who began his meticulously taped paintings in bright colours, reminiscent of Guido Molinari and Claude Tousignant. He describes his work:

...the simplified yet convoluted compositions become an abstract materialization of the representational dimension, shaping spatial cues alluding to portrayal of perspective and depth. Allegorical repetitions utilize chance and chaos to disseminate expressions on structure and equilibrium in painting.⁹

The images, built by taping and then painting areas as he progresses through and around the composition, are intuitive rather than mathematically precise. In *Plague IV*, two chevrons glide by each other, their lighter interiors vibrating the progressively darker bands. *Poison VI* shows a series of black, shifting rectangles, akin to a print with a skewed register. Yet seen on an angle, these rectangles change perspective into diamond shapes that are remarkably still. His use of simple tonal variations within each work allows for contemplation of shape and the fine buildup of paint from the tape/paint/tape process. As he notes, he wanted to see if “the motifs could stand alone without the presence of the colour distracting the eyes.”¹⁰ Canary’s work harkens back to the golden age of geometric abstraction.

9. “Delineations – Colin Canary,” *Visual Arts Nova Scotia*, October 8, 2013, accessed February 15, 2017, <http://www.visualarts.ns.ca/delineations-colin-canary/>.

10. Colin Canary, email to author, March 1, 2017.





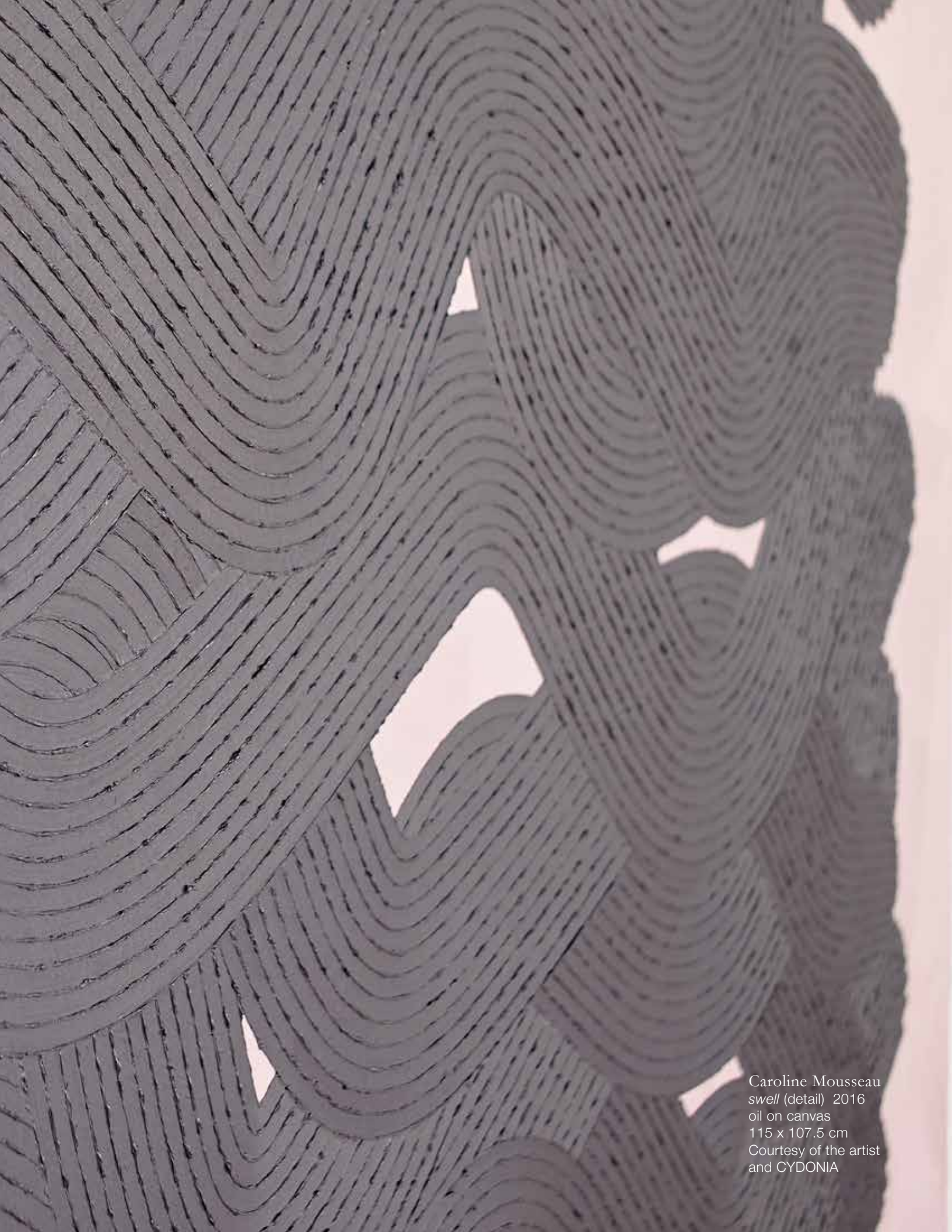
Prior to World War II, there were individual artists who were exploring abstraction as part of their personal journey. After the war, groups began to emerge in Canada, including les Automatistes, P11, and Regina Five. These groups existed, in part, as a support system at a time when abstraction was misunderstood and often rejected. Abstraction in the twenty-first century has come a long way. While painting was decidedly out of favour in the 1970s and 80s, a revival occurred that was felt across the country. Abstraction continues to push boundaries and address important personal, regional, environmental, formal, social, and political issues. The artists in *ab NEXT* represent part of an historic continuum of abstract painters that began to appear in Canada in the 1920s and who challenge us into this century.

Linda Jansma

Senior Curator

The Robert McLaughlin Gallery





Caroline Mousseau
swell (detail) 2016
oil on canvas
115 x 107.5 cm
Courtesy of the artist
and CYDONIA



Abstract Dialogues: Exploring the Contemporary Language of Abstract Painting

Simone Wharton





Sarah Pupo
Untitled 2016
mixed media
40 x 50 cm
Collection of the artist

With a myriad of media available to contemporary artists in the twenty-first century,

from new media to social media and digital works to 3D printing, more traditional forms of expression can seem antiquated, derivative, or lacking in complexity. The emerging artists included in *ab NEXT* defy this way of thinking and show how rich, varied, and flexible the medium of painting still is. Chosen from across the country, these five artists—Colin Canary, Kelsey Galbraith, Caroline Mousseau, Gillian King, and Sarah Pupo—reveal a diversity of painting practices and an independent search for new abstraction. They each stretch the definitions of painting itself by permeating their work with additional media like craft, photography, and digital technologies. Working in dialogue with performance, poetry, politics, and aesthetics and engaging with the history of abstract painting, these artists are shifting our understanding of the medium and what it communicates.

Caroline Mousseau finds inspiration in the writings of curator and academic Irit Rogoff, particularly her 2006 essay “‘Smuggling’—An Embodied Criticality.” Rogoff theorizes that learning to think critically results only in a distant observation or an “illumination of flaws,” and, so, in order for criticality to be a transformative power, we must learn to embody it in our lives, routines, and actions.¹ Each of these artists’ practices could be said to be working within this vein, approaching the medium and its history through various shifting modalities. Rogoff employs the term “smuggling” to describe the way in which embodied criticality is manifested in everyday life: “Smuggling operates as a principle of movement, of fluidity, and of dissemination that disregards boundaries.”² These artists and their works move through different thoughts, theories, and aesthetics. In particular, the environment, trace, interconnectedness, and slowness seem to pervade their practices, be it through an attempt at mediating between the oil industry and environmental advocates as in Galbraith’s works; Canary’s layered and meticulous process-painting; Pupo’s desire to render visible and palpable the intangibility of a moment or a feeling; King’s resuscitation of the connection between humans and non-humans; or Mousseau’s exploration of colour and line and their relation to embodied routines.

1. Irit Rogoff, “‘Smuggling’—An Embodied Criticality,” accessed February 6, 2017, <http://eipcp.net/transversal/0806/rogoff1/en>, 2006, 2.

2. Ibid., 4.



Living in Alberta, Kelsey Galbraith has found it difficult not to be caught up in the contentious conversations between the oil industry and environmental stakeholders. Abstraction of the environment has historically been entangled with a nationalism that is a single narrative construct. Contemporary artists' engagement with the Canadian landscape enables a communication of individual histories and personal relationships that serve to connect, inform, and affect their audiences. Galbraith discovered herself straddling two opposing sides, intimate with the stability the industry provides to Albertan families like her own and also sympathetic to conservation and environmental issues. She attempts to mediate the situation in her artwork, trying to find the balance and understanding that these two factions seem incapable of reaching.

Galbraith's boldly coloured abstract paintings are informed by photographs she has taken herself, or sourced from friends and family, of oil and gas sites, windmill farms, power towers, feedlots, agriculture, damming, and logging and mining sites surrounded by the towering mountains and the undulating foothills of rural Alberta. The use of photographs explains her gravitation towards the works of Canadian photographer Edward Burtynsky. In such series works as *Oil* and *Water*, Burtynsky's large-scale photographs hold the viewer in awe—of both our ecological impact seen in the footprint of logging, mining, and oil drilling, and of the power and beauty found in our natural resources. Galbraith captures in her own works this same encounter between the man-made and the natural world, the organic forms of her abstraction coming into sharp relief with lines and shapes that resemble cables, machines, and pipelines.

Galbraith's works, though stimulating in their colour, also ask the viewer to contemplate them through their meandering lines and subtle use of contrasting tones: "I aim for my work to slow people down, to notice the small details; to become aware again, and reconnected with materials, spaces, perspectives, and existence."³ These paintings do not necessarily offer a solution to the questions they respond to, but instead critically inhabit them, not accusing or placing blame, but offering multiple access points to the conversation.

3. Kelsey Galbraith, email to the author, January 20, 2017.



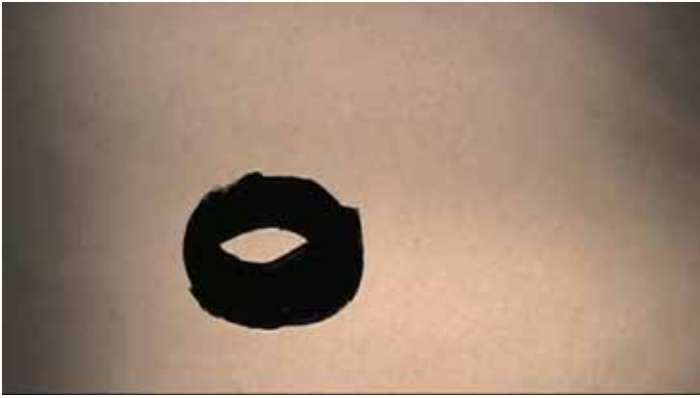
With Colin Canary's works, I am also reminded of the aesthetics of slowness and a desire for mediated contemplation. Theorist Lutz Koepnick describes in his book *On Slowness: Towards an Aesthetic of the Contemporary* how "to experience the present aesthetically and in the mode of slowness is to approach this present as a site charged with multiple durations, pasts, and possible futures; it is by no means hostile toward memory and anticipation."⁴ Canary's works contain all of these moments within the picture plane: the hundreds of moments they took to complete, the singular moment they hold as a completed painting, but also a sense of anticipation created by the illusion of movement. Canary's canvases, though small, take hours and days to complete. His paintings are densely layered and the monochrome palette does not mask their linear complexities, instead it requires that the viewer stop and look longer and closer at the canvas to experience the painting.

Canary's paintings are far from static—slowness does not necessarily mean stillness, and contemplation sometimes requires that we stay in motion, that we see how things are happening. Through subtle gradations, Canary enlivens the linearity of his paintings. Similar to Op art or a 4D graphic animation, the canvases draw the viewer in and hold their attention, moving inwards, outwards, backwards, and forwards. Though they seem to be created with mathematical precision, Canary places the tape intuitively: "I feel there is an emphasis on spontaneity and the unconscious in my works."⁵ This adds to his works a human madeness: the possibility of a mistake, a soft edge, or a slightly misplaced line. Though impossible to tell from a glance, it is an underlying quality that connects the viewer to the physicality of the painting and is a reminder of the consistent tension between the intentional and the accidental in abstraction.

4. Lutz Koepnick, introduction to *On Slowness: Towards An Aesthetic of the Contemporary* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2014), 7.

5. Colin Canary, email to author, March 1, 2017.

Colin Canary
Plague IV 2016
acrylic on panel
40 x 60 cm
Collection of the artist



Like Canary, Sarah Pupo's works unleash a latent movement in the medium, using both painting and video to create uniquely animated abstractions. Using stop-motion, she invites the viewer into the process of abstraction, the hand of the artist sometimes visible, flashing onto the screen. Pupo uses these videos to bring the medium forth into a world of digital technologies. There is a sense of D.I.Y. culture in her self-taught practice that she believes is particular to this time. Her works remain in between video art and painting: both are essential to the work, and her installations sometimes include projections of the animations onto the paintings themselves, or a display of her paper-cuts as archival fragments from the videos. In her newer abstractions on silk, Pupo explores how light can interact with the painted surface to create a luminescent brilliance that shares qualities with photographic lightboxes. She uses her abstractions to render visible feelings, moments, and spaces that are typically invisible or intangible, like the touch of skin on skin, the fading memory of a dream, or a moment shared between two people. The palpability of these human connections is translated onto her canvases.



Pupo finds herself drawn to fiction, poetry, and prose writers, such as Annie Dillard, Maggie Nelson, and Anne Carson. Recently she has also been reflecting on speed and time, specifically the ability of time to move fast and slow simultaneously: an instant that seems to last hours or an hour that passes in an instant. Koepnick's aesthetics of slowness resonate in Pupo's works as well: "Dedicated to mapping the experience of contemporaneity, aesthetic slowness registers and reflects on the coexistence of multiple streams of time in our expanded present."⁶ Pupo's paintings have a poetic ability to encapsulate a moment or multiple moments experienced. By combining her canvases with animation, Pupo shows the traces of these moments as well as the life of the paintings themselves—their creation, their movements, their erasure—her own form of visible memoir poetry.

6. Koepnick, introduction to *On Slowness*, 7.



Gillian King
Aska 2017
 cold wax medium, oil and
 raw pigments on canvas
 240 x 300 cm
 Collection of the artist
 (diptych, above)
 (detail, left)

In contrast with Pupo, Gillian King's abstract practice is more physical, though she also uses trace to aid her expression of the connection between non-human and human animals. King's works react to the idea that we are living in the Anthropocene era, where human influence has physically reshaped the geological world, resulting in extreme environmental effects and altering natural ecosystems. Although we tend to draw a strict distinction between animals and humans, both are part of the kingdom Animalia. King tries to reconnect this division through her use of raw materials—beeswax, pigment, and charcoal—and of her own body to throw, pour, spread, and mould the materials onto canvas. Like the chanced impressions of a forensic fingerprint, the settled dust of pigment and charcoal captures the traces her hands have made in the low relief beeswax. These marks are both human and non-human; clawing, digging, and scratching at the surface of the canvas, King disrupts the traditional hierarchies between species. Her gestural paintings oppose the Abstract Expressionist model of the heroic-male and the painter as genius. Instead, she uses her work to reclaim the sameness between humans and non-humans of all genders.

With her visceral and physical style of painting, King looks to the earth-bodyworks of performance artist Ana Mendieta. She shares similarities with Mendieta's statement that her "art is grounded in the belief of one universal energy which runs through everything: from insect to man, from man to spectre, from spectre to plant from plant to galaxy."⁷ King, like Mendieta, seeks to inform the audience of the interconnectedness of all Animalia through her body. She is also interested in the works of Spring Hurlbut, particularly in Hurlbut's explorations of death and the human condition in her series *Deuil*, in which she photographed and filmed billowing particles of human ash against a black background, exploring grief and mourning as well as death's spiritual remnants. King has also worked with non-human remains, exploring our "mutual fragility and mortality"⁸ in a way that is both personal and affective.

7. Ana Mendieta, artist's statement (1983) from 'Ana Mendieta, A Selection of Statements and Notes,' "Earth from Cuba, Sand from Varadero" A Tribute to Ana Mendieta," eds. Clayton Eshleman and Caryl Eshlemen, *Sulfur 22* (Spring 1988). 72.

8. Gillian King, email to the author, January 20, 2017.



Caroline Mousseau
whirl 2016
oil on canvas
42.5 x 52.5 cm
Collection of Ron Holbrook

Caroline Mousseau's roots in Winnipeg, MB, and her current home of Vancouver, BC, are revealed in her purposeful colour palette: soft pinks, red clay, and beiges of the Prairies contrast starkly with vibrant blues or greens of the West Coast seascapes and forests. Each is contained in its own space, like a single digital pixel within a complete image, indicative of Mousseau's interest in digital technologies, which create complex images from tiny squares of colour. Her titles also introduce a new meaning and ways of interpreting the abstract lines in her work: *flock*—perhaps v-shaped birds, flying high; *whirl*—eddies in the water or even traffic patterns in the urban landscape; *swell*—waves or perhaps distant mountains. Their ambiguity allows the audience to make associations with their personal understanding of their surroundings. These colours and patterns in Mousseau's works often evolve from routine walks through her environment, and subtle shifts in the visual landscape can be noticed over the duration of her journey or from day to day, which she then translates onto canvas. This reflects Mousseau's application of critic and art historian Barry Schwabsky's theory of painting as a medium continuously in flux, shifting between meanings and ways of being.⁹ It also returns us to Rogoff, who describes how embodied criticality "marries our knowledge and our experience in ways that are not complimentary."¹⁰ Visually, this reveals itself in Mousseau's work through its momentary embodiment of contradictory aesthetics: lines are either expressively painted or carefully knitted, and colours can be autonomous or part of a larger idea.

Looking to craft practices, such as knitting and sewing, Mousseau reflects the repetitive nature of these patterns both on the canvas and in the making of her works, which are derived from everyday routine. Her influences are also perhaps untraditional. With her paint, Mousseau is able to activate the same refractions of light as the reflective assemblages, made of bottle caps and cassava graters, created by Nigerian-based artist El Anatsui. The repeated, wide-painted lines in many of her works also tend to sit forward from the background, layered in a way that invokes the collage works of Pia Fries. Though Mousseau has many influences, she only takes what is necessary from each, a small moment from these practices that helps to clarify her own desired communication: the repetitive patterns and motions of Ida Ekblad, the mathematics of Agnes Martin, the observation of the natural world and shifting scale of Katarina Grosse, among others. Once again, we see Mousseau's reading of Rogoff come to the forefront, as "meaning is never produced in isolation or through isolating processes but rather through intricate webs of connectedness."¹¹ Mousseau's paintings have a simplicity of colour and form that still critically encompass her complex range of thought.

9. Barry Schwabsky, *Words for Art: Criticism, History, Theory, Practice* (New York: Sternberg Press, 2013).

10. Rogoff, 2.

11. Ibid.

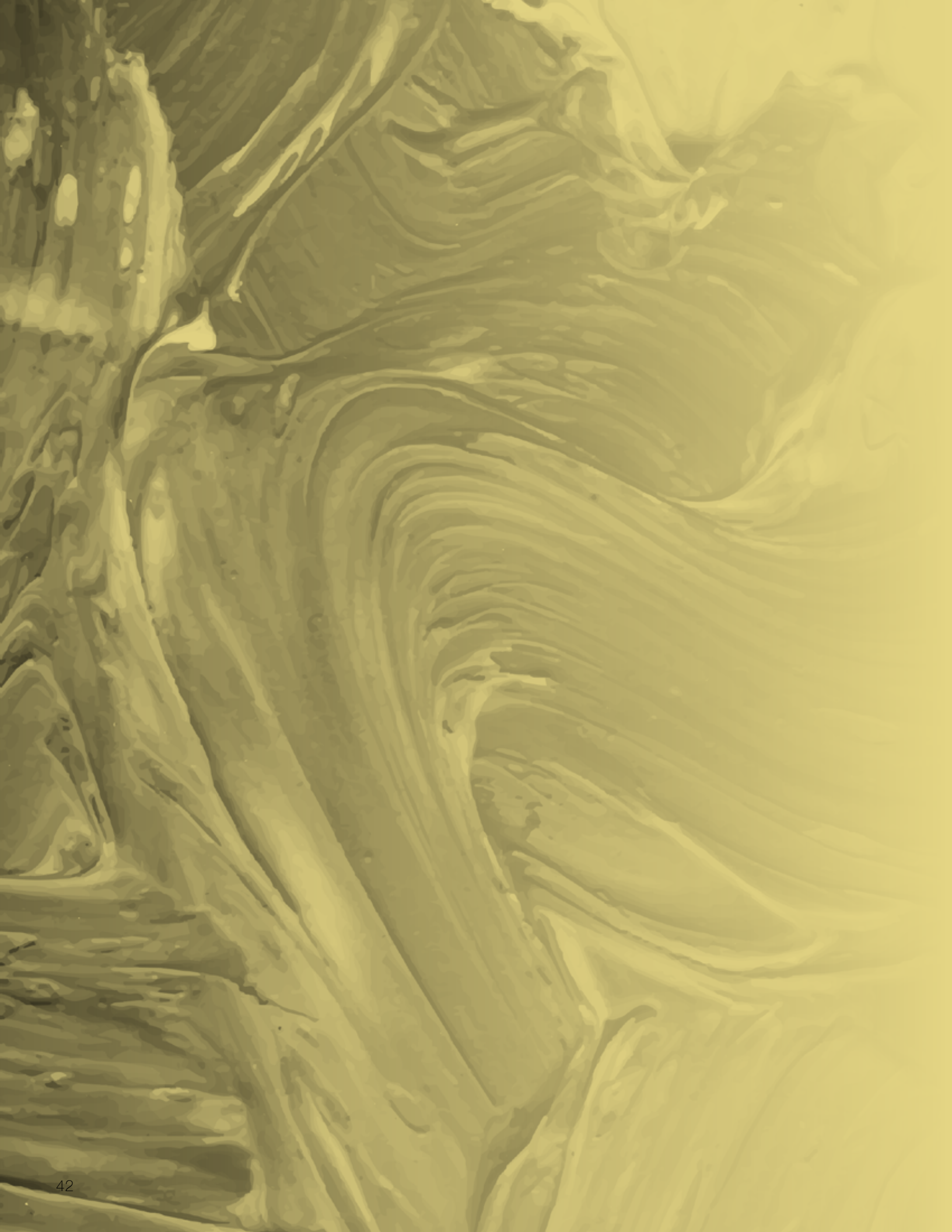


The interest these five abstract painters have in literature, theory, and historical and contemporary aesthetics informs what it is to be an abstract painter—to not be settled in a singular school of thought or political or social agenda, but instead to be open to changes and shifts in their practice, diverse influences, and criticality. The variety of contexts from which these artists draw—environmental concerns that are close to home, essential connections between people and between human and non-human, and slowness to achieve a new contentiousness and understanding—allow their works to traverse borders and boundaries. In doing so, they realize a new politics of abstraction—one that cannot be defined, but is recognized by its diverse origins, by an inability to be categorized into a school of thought; and by its expressive, contemporary language delivered through a very traditional medium.

Simone Wharton

Independent Curator

Colin Canary
Plague III (detail) 2016
acrylic on panel
25 x 25 cm
Collection of the artist



Plates

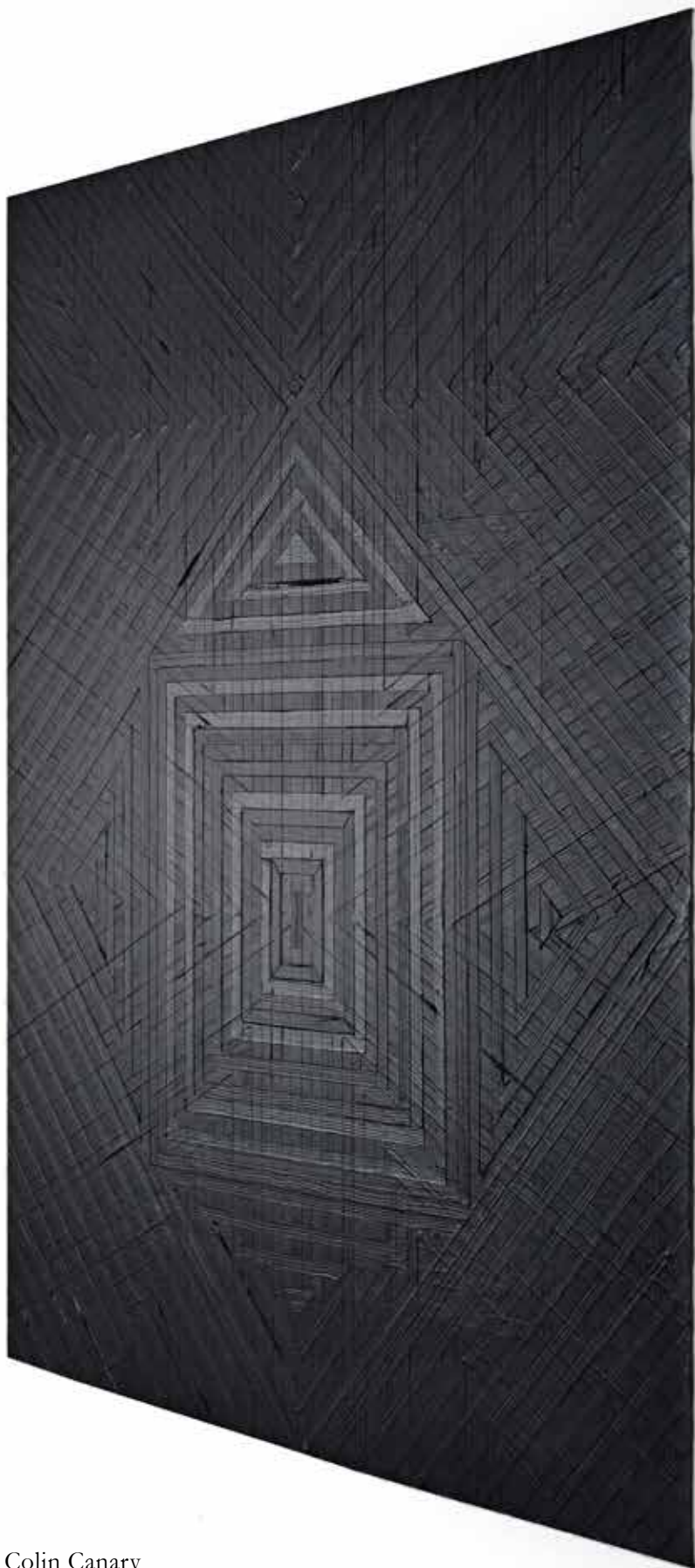




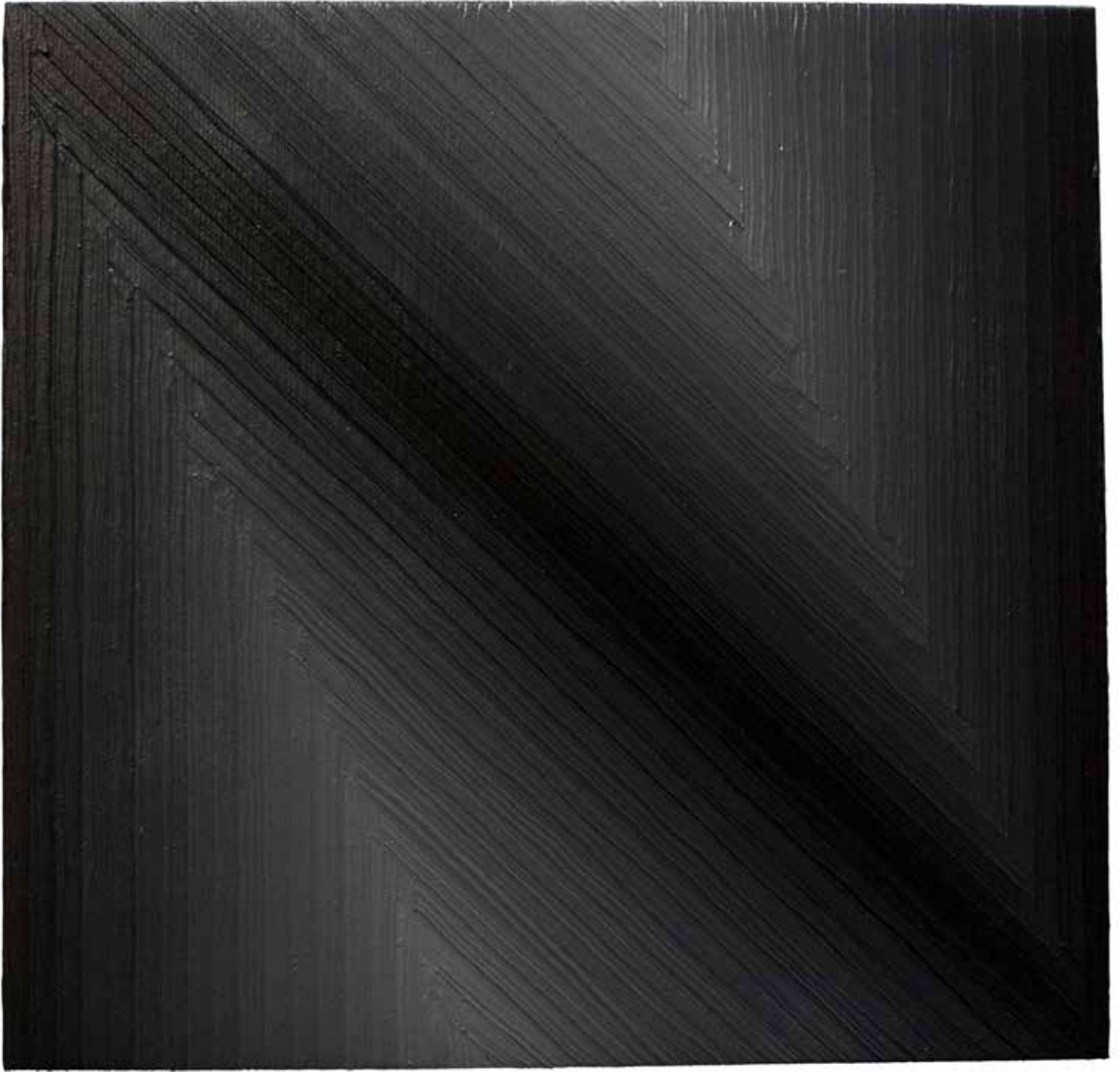
Colin Canary
Pretense III 2016
acrylic on panel
20 x 25 cm
Collection of the artist



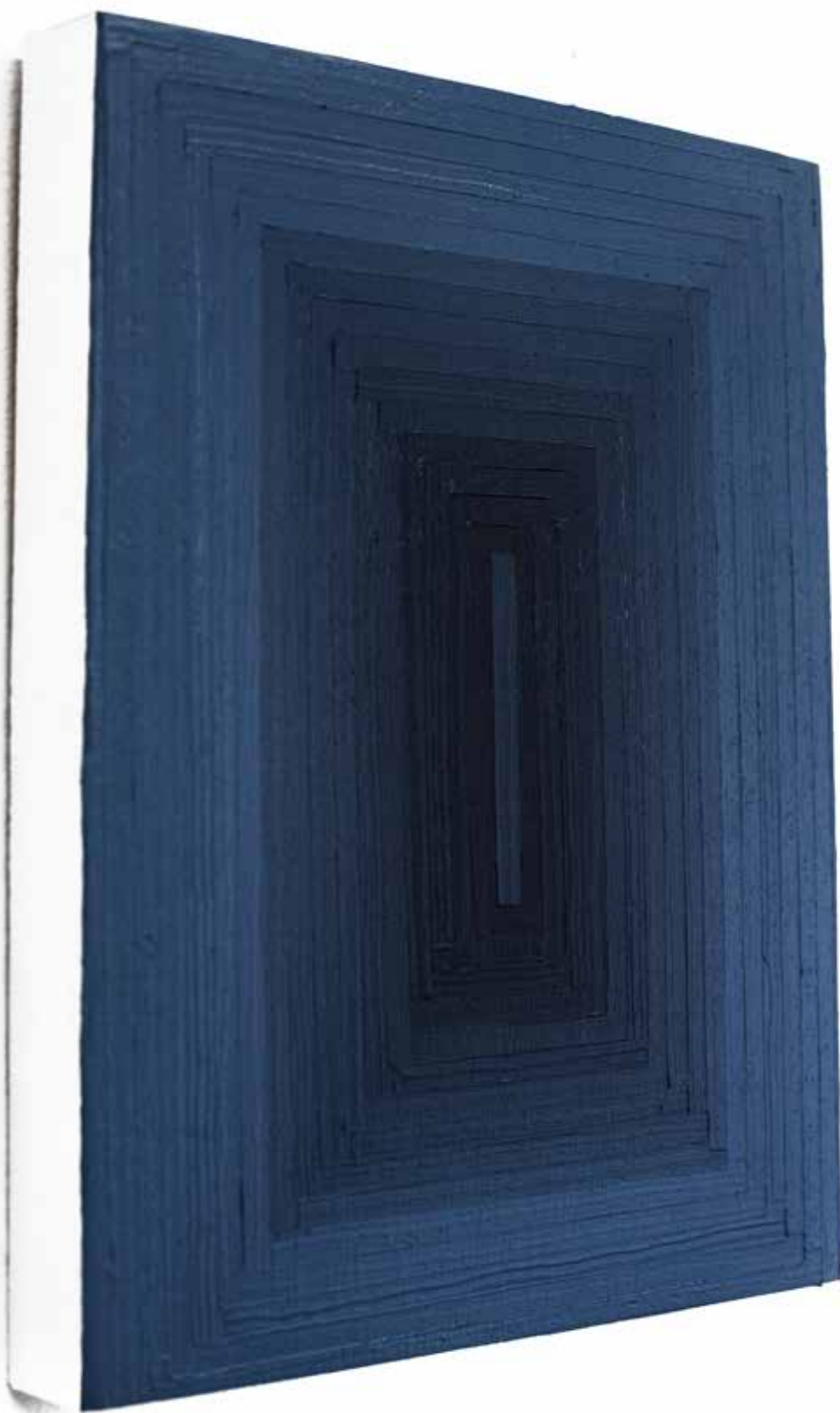
Colin Canary
Pretense II 2016
acrylic on panel
20 x 25 cm
Collection of the artist



Colin Canary
Prison 2016
acrylic on panel
40 x 50 cm
Collection of the artist



Colin Canary
Plague III 2016
acrylic on panel
25 x 25 cm
Collection of the artist



Colin Canary
Panic 2016
acrylic on panel
20 x 25 cm
Collection of the artist





Kelsey Galbraith
Coddle 2014
oil on canvas
120 x 150 cm
Collection of the artist





Kelsey Galbraith
Reach 2014
oil on canvas
120 x 150 cm
Collection of the artist





Kelsey Galbraith
Unknown Allies 2017
oil on canvas
120 x 120 cm
Collection of the artist





Gillian King
*Keep Your Attention Towards
the Lava* 2017
cold wax medium, oil and raw
pigments on canvas
240 x 300 cm (diptych)
Collection of the artist





Gillian King
*Keep Your Attention Towards
 the Lava I* (detail) 2017
 cold wax medium, oil and raw
 pigments on canvas
 240 x 300 cm (diptych)
 Collection of the artist
 (left)

Gillian King
Aska (detail) 2017
 cold wax medium, oil and raw
 pigments on canvas
 240 x 300 cm (diptych)
 Collection of the artist
 (above)





Caroline Mousseau
flock 2016
oil on canvas
42.5 x 52.5 cm
Collection of Shaun Moore and Todd Caldwell



Caroline Mousseau
cloud 2016
oil on canvas
115 x 107.5 cm
Courtesy of the artist and CYDONIA

Caroline Mousseau
float (follow) 2013
oil on canvas
120 x 180 cm
Courtesy of the artist and CYDONIA
(right)







Sarah Pupo
Untitled 2016
mixed media
40 x 50 cm
Collection of the artist
(left)

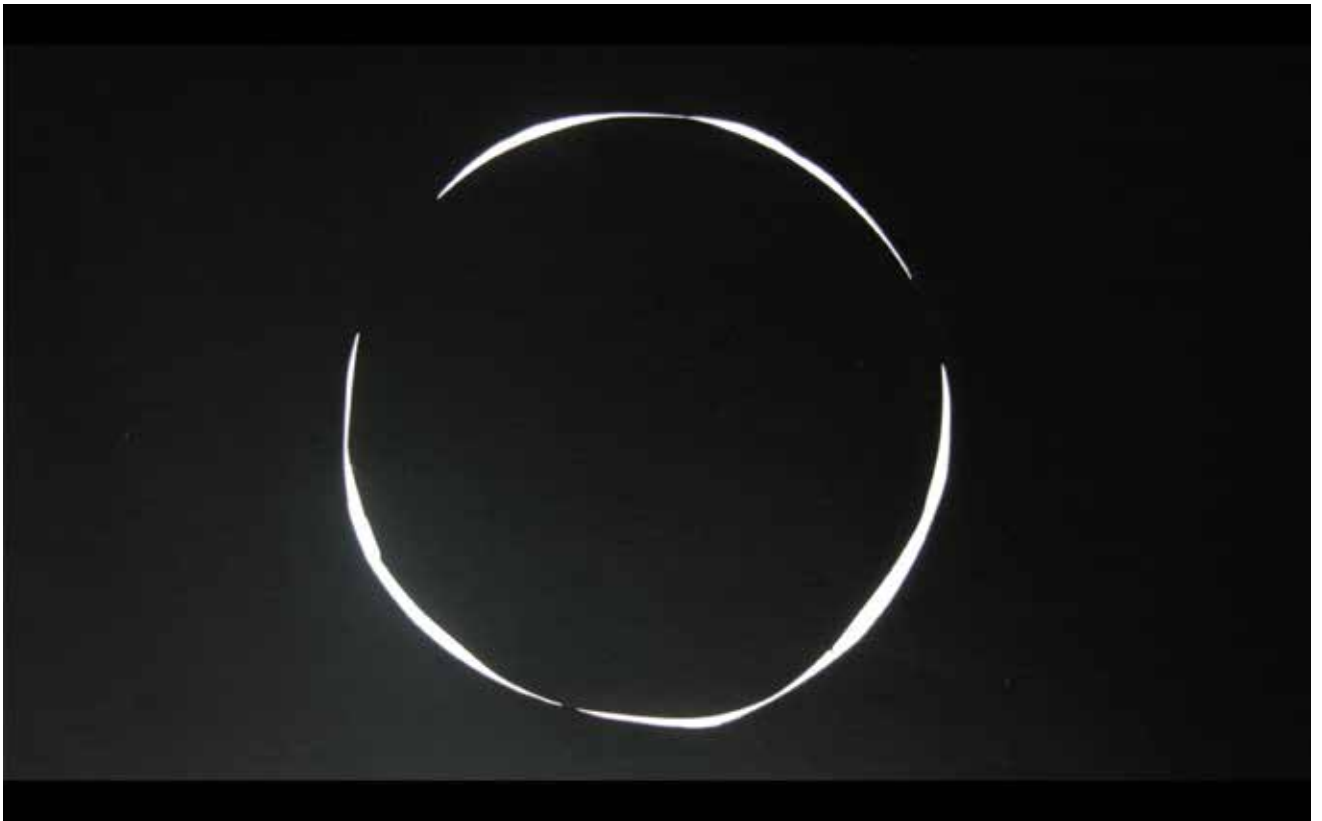
Sarah Pupo
Untitled 2016
mixed media
40 x 50 cm
Collection of the artist



Sarah Pupo
Untitled 2016
mixed media
40 x 50 cm
Collection of the artist



Sarah Pupo
Untitled 2016
mixed media
40 x 50 cm
Collection of the artist





Sarah Pupo
Burning Through the Body 2017
animation
1:29
Collection of the artist



List of Works



Colin Canary
Panic 2016
acrylic on panel
20 x 25 cm
Collection of the artist

Colin Canary
Panic II 2016
acrylic on panel
40 x 50 cm
Collection of the artist

Colin Canary
Plague III 2016
acrylic on panel
25 x 25 cm
Collection of the artist

Colin Canary
Plague IV 2016
acrylic on panel
40 x 60 cm
Collection of the artist

Colin Canary
Poison VI 2016
acrylic on panel
60 x 75 cm
Collection of the artist

Colin Canary
Pretense II 2016
acrylic on panel
20 x 25 cm
Collection of the artist

Colin Canary
Pretense III 2016
acrylic on panel
20 x 25 cm
Collection of the artist

Colin Canary
Prison 2016
acrylic on panel
40 x 50 cm
Collection of the artist

Kelsey Galbraith
Reach 2014
oil on canvas
120 x 150 cm
Collection of the artist

Kelsey Galbraith
Coddle 2014
oil on canvas
120 x 150 cm
Collection of the artist

Kelsey Galbraith
Extraction 2014
oil on canvas
120 x 60 cm
Collection of the artist

Kelsey Galbraith
Concerted 2017
oil on canvas
120 x 90 cm
Collection of the artist

Kelsey Galbraith
Unknown Allies 2017
oil on canvas
120 x 120 cm
Collection of the artist

Gillian King
Keep Your Attention Towards the Lava 2017
cold wax medium, oil and raw pigments on canvas
240 x 300 cm (diptych)
Collection of the artist

Gillian King
Aska 2017
cold wax medium, oil and raw pigments on canvas
240 x 300 cm (diptych)
Collection of the artist

Caroline Mousseau
float (follow) 2013
oil on canvas
120 x 180 cm
Courtesy of the artist and CYDONIA

Caroline Mousseau
swell 2016
oil on canvas
115 x 107.5 cm
Courtesy of the artist and CYDONIA

Caroline Mousseau
cloud 2016
oil on canvas
115 x 107.5 cm
Courtesy of the artist and CYDONIA

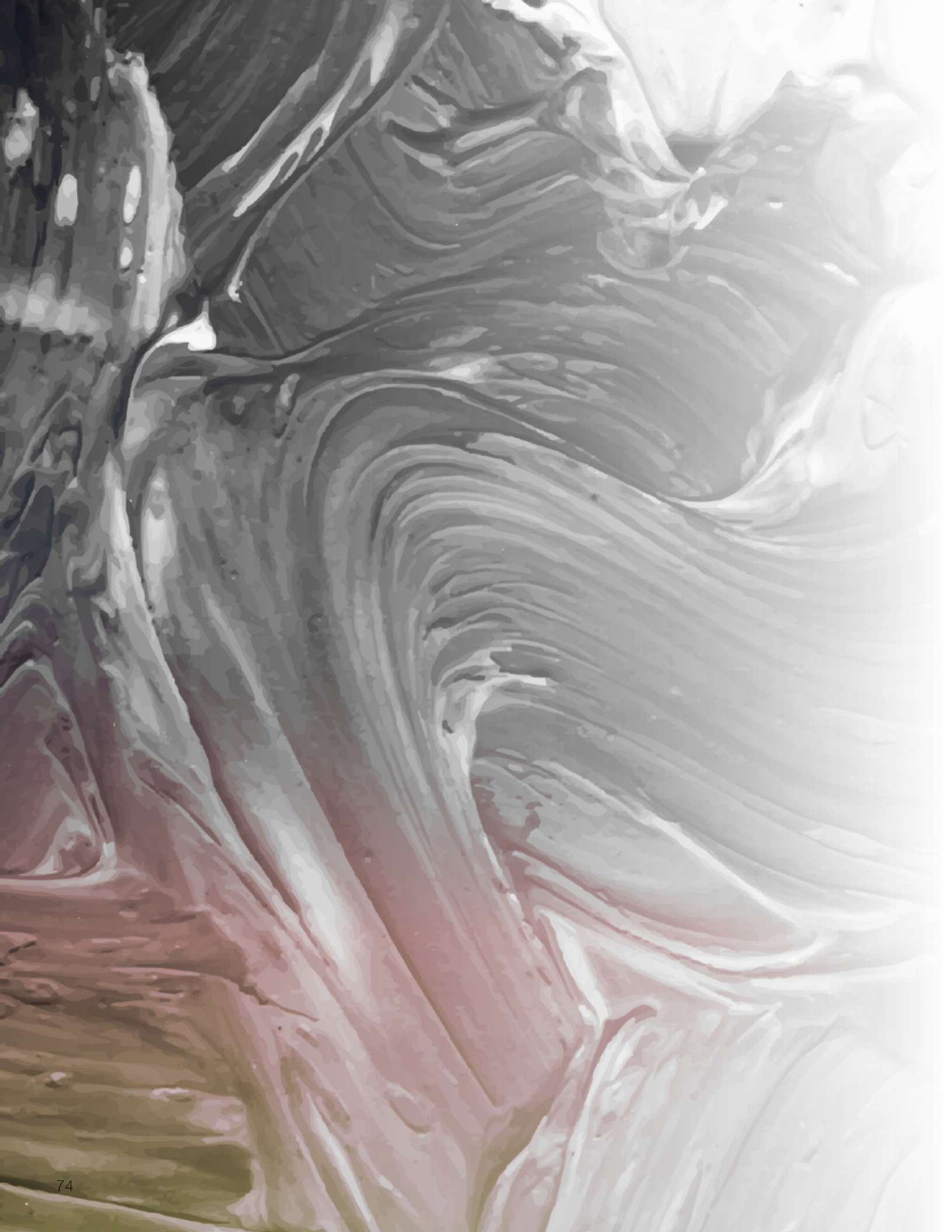
Caroline Mousseau
whirl 2016
oil on canvas
42.5 x 52.5 cm
Collection of Ron Holbrook

Caroline Mousseau
flock 2016
oil on canvas
42.5 x 52.5 cm
Collection of Shaun Moore and Todd Caldwell

Sarah Pupo
drawing down 2012
animation
4:37
Collection of the artist

Sarah Pupo
Untitled 2016
mixed media
40 x 50 cm (each of 6)
Collection of the artist

Sarah Pupo
Burning Through the Body 2017
animation
1:29
Collection of the artist



Artist Biographies



Colin Canary

Colin Canary (b. 1988) earned his BFA at NSCAD in 2013. His paintings have been shown in multiple group exhibitions nationally, including *Abandon Ship* (2013) at the Khyber Centre for the Arts (Halifax, NS), a juried exhibition showcasing top fine art graduates from Atlantic Canada. He was awarded a finalist in the CSCE Emerging Artist Competition (2014).

Kelsey Galbraith

Originally from Medicine Hat, Alberta, Kelsey Galbraith (b. 1989) is a painter living and working in the area of Pincher Creek, Alberta. She received her BFA and BEd from the University of Lethbridge in 2015.

While completing her undergrad, Galbraith was selected for the group exhibition *Conjugated* (March 2014) at the University of Lethbridge Art Gallery. As an emerging artist, Galbraith has shown her work throughout galleries in southwest Alberta. Her solo exhibition *Bounded* (May 2014) was held at the Lebel Mansion Gallery of Pincher Creek, as well as *The Entangled Argument* (September 2014) at the Trianon Gallery of Lethbridge. She was invited by the Leighton Art Centre (Millarville) to exhibit work at the *Emerging Artist Gala* (May 2014) at the Ranchmen's Club in Calgary.

Gillian King

Gillian King (b. 1987) is an Ottawa-based painter and multidisciplinary artist, curator, and art educator from Winnipeg, Manitoba. King is a recent MFA graduate from the University of Ottawa (2016). She has shown in various galleries nationally and internationally and has recently completed residencies at The Banff Centre and Sparkbox Studios (Picton, ON). In 2016, she exhibited her latest work at PDA Projects and Karsh-Masson Gallery for the City of Ottawa Annual Acquisitions Exhibition Souvenirs (November 2016) as well as for her own exhibition *The Full Catastrophe* (March 2016). King also exhibited a solo show entitled *Becoming Animal* at the Ottawa Art Gallery in August 2016.

In 2017, she has two solo exhibitions at the University of Marinette-Wisconsin and PDA Projects. King will also be participating in a group show entitled *Peau* at La Maison des Artistes (Winnipeg, MB).

Caroline Mousseau

Originally from Winnipeg, Manitoba, Caroline Mousseau (b. 1989) is a painter living and working in Vancouver, BC. She received her Bachelor of Fine Arts as Valedictorian from the Emily Carr University of Art + Design in 2012 and studied at l'École nationale supérieure des beaux-arts, Paris, France, in 2010. Mousseau has exhibited throughout Canada and was curated in the 2014 exhibition *100 Painters of Tomorrow*, accompanied by a book of the same title published by Thames and Hudson and launched in New York and London. Her work received strong support during her solo exhibition at Art Toronto 2016 and following group exhibition at Zona Maco 2017 in Mexico City. In 2017, her second international solo exhibition will be presented at CYDONIA Gallery in Fort Worth, Texas.

Sarah Pupo

Sarah Pupo (b. 1983) lives and works in Montreal, Quebec. Her work integrates aspects of painting and drawing, installation and self-taught, provisional animation techniques. Her approach to making things prioritizes intuition, ritual, associative thinking and the flux of chance and control.

A graduate of Concordia University's MFA program, Pupo has exhibited at galleries and artist run centres locally and internationally. Recent projects include a solo exhibition at articule (Montreal) entitled *In the Night Room* (2014), participation in the Symposium of Contemporary Art in Baie-Saint-Paul, and residencies in Iceland, Finland, and the Yukon.



The
Robert
McLaughlin
Gallery