

WITHIN TENSIONS

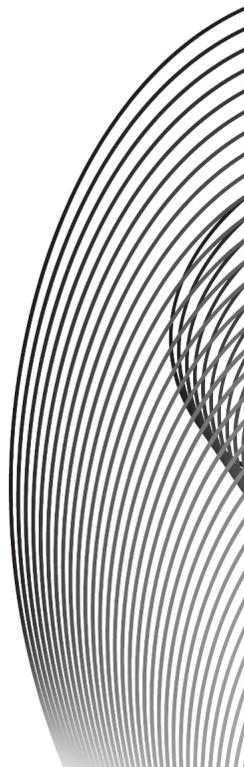


vol.10

SPECTRE



WITHIN TENSIONS



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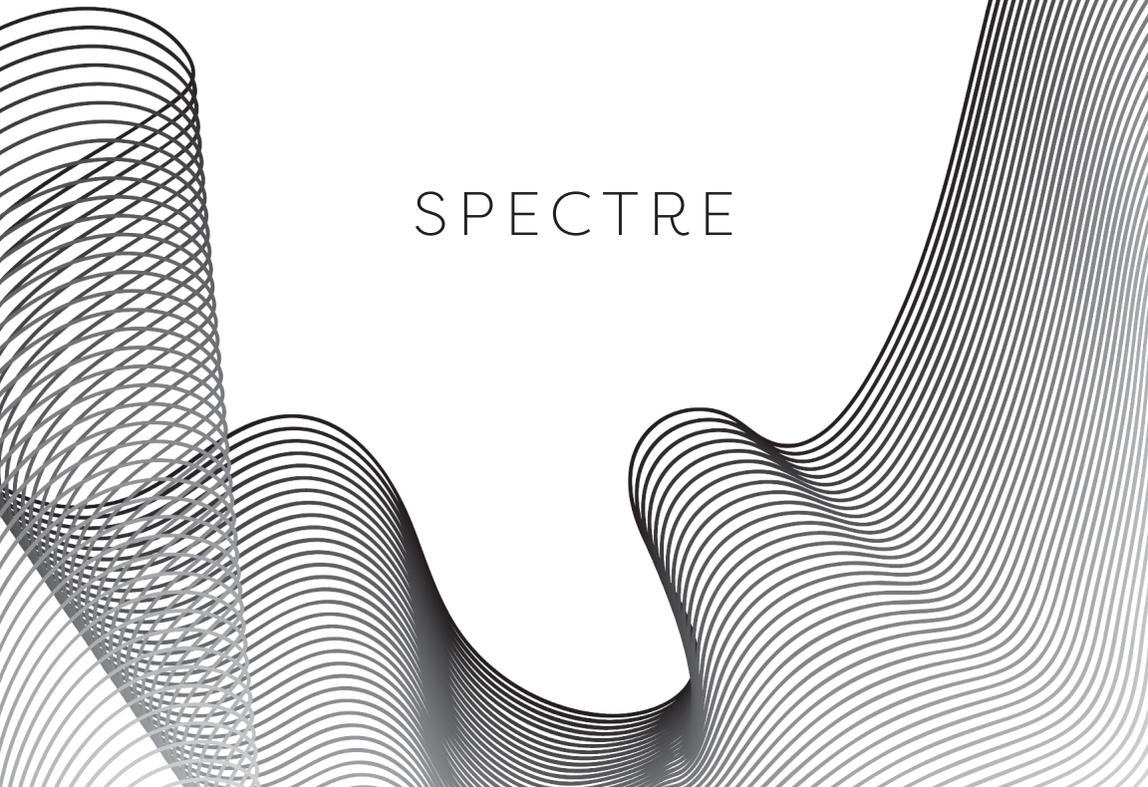


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We at Withintensions want to acknowledge that our work takes place on the unceded territories of the Skwxwú7mesh (Squamish), xwməθkwəyəm (Musqueam), and Səlilwətał (Tseil-Waututh) peoples. We want to recognize that these lands belong to the Indigenous peoples who have lived here far before the arrival of settlers. We also want to push beyond land acknowledgements to further encourage acts of reconciliation. Recognition is great but it is nowhere near where we need to be. Reconciliation is comprehensive and takes more than an acknowledgment for occupying land. We always support marginalised peoples right to protest.



Rachelle Tjahyana, *Spectral Si(gh)tings... the (g)host is a fabrication* (2018)

Spectral Si(gh)tings... the (g)host is a fabrication (2018)

Rachelle Tjahyana

Spectral

Si(gh)tings... the (g)host is a fabrication is a spatial-
visual

intervention on Woodward's as a site of haunting.

The work seeks to unsettle 'Urban'

myths about the specific place by disrupting how
we view

the space and its spectres. The photographic
installation

acts as a screen, or filter, for the (un)seen, and
(in)visible figures that haunt and inhabit the site,
street, neighbourhood and margins; an uncanny
transfer, uncovering, living memories that linger,
and dwell, between li(n)es--



A Scent I Remember and an Essence of Citrus

Francisco Berlanga

My family does not usually set up an altar for day of the dead. Our house goes without an ofrenda and absent of marigolds, at most on all soul's day -November 2nd- we attend a mass for our family. However, one vestige of tradition still makes an appearance. Every year my mother makes pan de muerto, a citrus based bread, made in a large bun shape usually decorated with bone shaped pieces atop it.

For the sweet bread to be made, my mother begins preparing the ingredients. She zests oranges for the dough and the aroma travels throughout the house. The essence of orange still lingers for hours as it develops with the yeast. She lets the bread rise for several hours, the dough lays in wake as it prepares for what's to come. Once it has risen, she kneads it and begins to form the buns, each one decorated subtly with exquisite corporal forms. The gluten in the bread tears and regenerates as it's handled, continuing to grow even as she molds it, giving it a sense of what it felt like to be alive.

After this -usually late at night at this point- it finally gets put in the oven. I can smell it from my room, the scent slowly creeps in. At first, it is not too noticeable but as the

bread cooks it becomes overwhelming. The room fills with it and I feel it, like an undeniable presence, despite being two floors away, the bread is in the room with me. Just behind my shoulder, peering out of sight. I can feel the spice of anise dissolving on my tongue before I've even tried it. In the oven it continues to rise, developing tender hues of gold around its bone filigrees and spreading even beyond where the pan ends.

The growth of it is hard to predict; some years it rises to twice its size and overtakes the dish it's laying on but some years the yeast fails and it does not rise. Even in those years where the bread does not rise, we will still try to cook it. It might come out dry or hard, maybe some years it tastes bland but we always try. The bread is the final Spectre of the traditions my parents once practiced. If we don't at least try, then perhaps it too would pass away when we are not ready to let it go.

I think it's better to eat while it's still warm.



To the Stars (2020)

@creamyskeletons

Ghosts as stories and memories: To find yourself daydreaming and carried away by a memory or thought. There are stories and thoughts of ghosts in our lives that uplift us even when things felt different during the time that we lived through them.



Works Sited and Unsited: A Manifesto

Rachelle Tjahyana

[It is funny how schools first teach you about dead white artists. They are half right.]

An artist must see, record, and place--sightings, citations, and sites. Like the spectre in a room, the artist haunts. In turn, these 'hauntings' manifest themselves in the work, the site.

What makes a haunted house; is it the ghost, or the halls, attics, crawl-spaces in which it roams? I am for both, and the dissolubility between seeing and believing. Do we see/believe the ghost itself, or do we see/believe sightings of the ghost? The ghost is dead to the living, just as the artist is dead to the viewer. Even in the case of performance art, the artist--still--cannot trespass that (super)(preter)natural realm. In the same way the ghost can possess a body, so too can the artist possess their human body, fill in its space, and perform in its place. The artist does not have the luxury to trade places; they can only look, and leave memory of what they've seen. The ghost cannot choose whether they are seen or

unseen. The ghost does not need to be seen to exist. Art is never the artist. The artist is dead...

...And art is not dead. Art is alive in the creaky floorboards that squeak and squelch, in the peeling wallpaper that tear like healing scabs, in the dim yellow hum-glow of a flickering light bulb (still swaying from a sudden draft). Art is alive in the traces of the ghost, and the traces of the ghost is enough. It is enough to pray about. Yes, art needs prayer. No, it is not religion. But, it is divine, and otherworldly. Yes, I believe in art, but this art is not meant for worship. Art does not need your blessing. They say that “they exchanged the truth about God for a lie, and worshiped and served created things rather than the Creator” --- and so, do we believe (in) the artist or do we believe (in) their work?

I have not seen God. And yet I trust/believe in His Word. Therefore, if I trust/believe the Artist, I must also trust/believe in their Work, which is their Word. (Frankly, I must always carefully decide whether or not to trust the artist; the artist can lie. This ghost is a shapeshifter.)

I have not seen God. And yet I trust/believe in His existence. I have seen and heard and felt and smelled and tasted traces of God. I have sensed His presence, lingering in a room.

(Or was it the presence of a ghost?) I can cite God on my fingertips. An artist can cite their fingertips. Do not mistake the artist for God. The ghost will never meet God; they are neither condemned nor embraced. So too, does the artist wander from place to space--mediating the fragmented memories, senses, and stories that linger in some uncanny in-between...

The fragments, remnants, ruins, and traces are proof of existence. As the viewer, I can prove the artist--the ghost--exists. The evidence is in the site (for all work is site specific). Look, there was a ghost in the basement, I know by the faint sound of scratching on cement walls at the stroke of midnight. Look closer, the evidence is

in the scratches of canvas, the stroke of a brush. I see Manganese Violet and Prussian Blue hiding underneath the covers of Burnt Umber.

As the artist, I cannot prove my work. All the artist can do is site their work. They can attempt to erect ruins, or pick a house and haunt it. That is all the artist can do. Those who enter these sites may see nothing; they may see everything. Those who see nothing may live all their life blissfully unaware of the ghost and its existence. Those who experience the haunting may not understand it and leave. Some may try to exorcise the house. The sensitive seer would notice the floorboards, and wallpaper, and lightbulb. They would let the sudden draft tickle their gooseflesh. They would acknowledge the ghost and linger in that liminal space a little longer...

Is this what they call a writer? Then perhaps the artist can trade places after all.

Crook (2018)

Kit Liu

Etching and aquatint. 11 x 17

Initially etched and printed in the autumn of 2018, long predating the world events of its republishing, Crook arises from the thought of home. A familiar landscape of closely gathered buildings; each house bent and curved, a crooked neighbourhood shrouded by stars and mist and, most peculiar, the inhabitants unseen.



Ghosts, finally at rest (2018)

Natalie Chan

Scrap pieces from my old notebooks and ripped pages of high school assignments hold my old drawings; a time capsule of inexplicably deep pain and trauma, pieces of my soul I never intended to share with anyone. I had cried until streams became rivers back then, where the currents grew so strong I thought to myself, perhaps it would be easier to give into the waves than treading endlessly in waters beyond my depth. In time, the ebb and flow of pain eventually steadied and slowly subsided; slowly but steadily, I had grown, too. Though life carried on and surely brightened, I held on tightly to the mementos of these darker times. I held onto them for years, despite the pains I was haunted with each time, I recalled those memories; it was not as though I frequently returned to these remnants, yet there was still an inability to properly let them go.

This work became a process of confrontation and signifies a hope of reconciliation, of finding peace in its presence. A cloudy veil was painted over to soften the image, to create distance from the undigested thingness of traumatic presence¹. A complete erasure would have rendered my gestures meaningless, so my brush went back in to remember; it traced over the most significant lines, with the limited paint it would hold at a time. The memory was given space to settle and dry before the process was repeated again. The abstraction in each consequential step became greater each time, yet the paint strokes remained just as prominent as the hidden forms underneath. Though the abstractions simplified as time passed, they gained a shared quality where they slowly became their own language - pieces shaped by what can no longer be known and remembered while it, in its ghostly delineation, can be known and remembered.

1 Griselda Pollock
(2009) *Art/Trauma/
Representation, Parallax*,
15:1, 40-54, DOI:
10.1080/135346408026
04372





Natalie Chan, *Ghosts, finally at rest*
(2018)



Preoccupied

Opal Mclean

My favourite thing to tell people is that I don't need to go to haunted houses because real life is scary enough. Yeah, this is technically a joke but, in the past few years, I have been haunted by a spectre that I never even thought of before. A spectre that many know well but I have barely even begun to get to know myself. It has turned daily tasks into something scarier than seen on any screen. Almost as if the haunted house is alive inside me.

I can never explain my anxiety to someone who has not experienced it. There is no way to stop it; even though looking away is the only way to find peace. If I did, I would no longer have control of what is happening inside this house. The only way to carry on is getting to know these ghosts that I have adopted over the years. Once they are heard, and cared for, they become a little less loud. They accept that I know what's best in this life. There is a trust that is gained as I begin to accept that I am not broken.

The spectres become less angry as I accept them for who they are. I simply have to take care of myself in ways that cannot be seen.

My care includes shining a light inside this haunted house. I take the time to sit with the spectres; give them their own light to see my reflection. I have to look internally with every action I make to be able to proceed. My energy is not entirely devoted to my goals but to myself and these ghosts that I cannot silence. Spectres that I have learned I do not need to silence. They are the parts of me that need healing and this takes more work than my goals ever will.

I no longer run through my personal haunted house with no direction. I take the time to turn on the lights and occupy my own space. Maybe this way, one day, I can say this house is free of the ghosts that lived there.

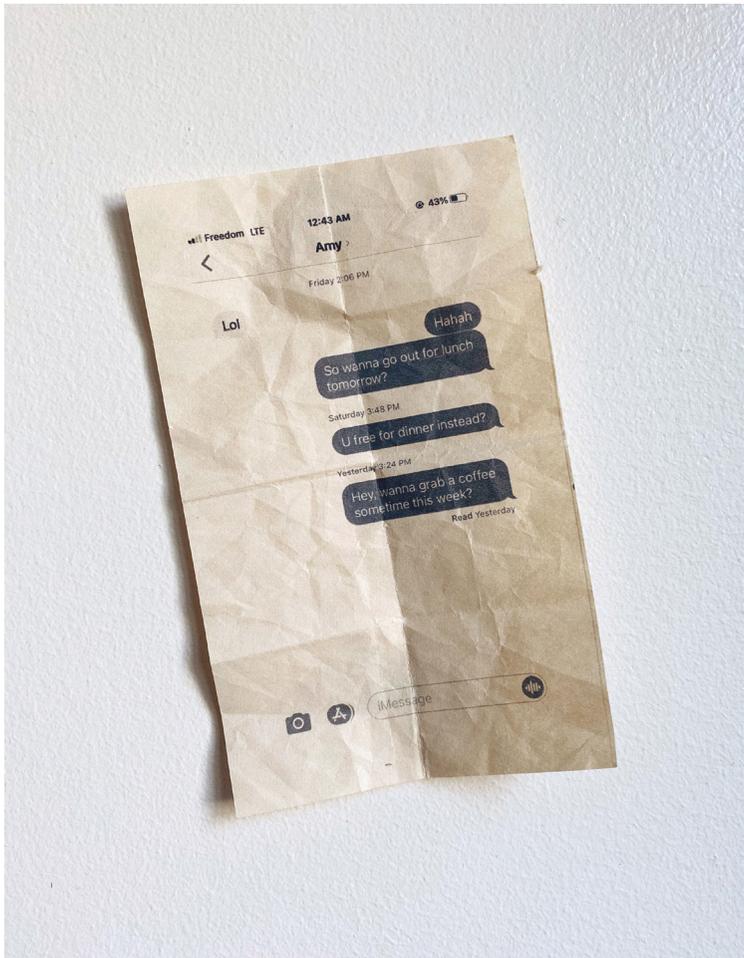
This Ghost Inside My Pocket

Mark Perez

I'm sure there have always been ghosts. But I don't imagine that the malicious ones, the ones that haunt and mock us from our bedroom shadows, have really been around until 1879. The latter half of the 19th century was shrouded in the morbid and macabre. It saw the inventions of gas masks, Gatling guns, dynamite. It brought about Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde, The Turn of the Screw, Dracula. The Canadian Pacific Railway crawled across the country to completion at the cost of an unknown death toll. But, on April Fool's of 1879, Royal Mail Canada had spawned an era of evil when they introduced the avis de réception or acknowledgement of receipt service. Registered letters could be packaged with a document to be signed by the recipient and returned to the sender as evidence of delivery.

It was a sick joke that has outstayed its unwelcome to this day. It was the dawn of read receipts. The ushering in of sadistic ghosts who feed off our unrequited words. These phantoms that come out of nowhere and envelope us in painful silence. They taunt us. They make us doubt our self-worth. I feel for that first sanguine epistler who must have been happy to learn that their letter crossed the country and was finally read. I understand their full-body decline as the weeks passed and the looming promise of a reply grew heavy and suffocating. My heart aches for the fools still peering at their mailboxes, at their phones, still waiting to hear back from the mute and missing. My heart aches for the ignored. My heart aches.

Why won't she text me back?



Works Sited and Unsited: A Manifesto

Rachelle Tjahyana

Vancouver is especially uncanny. In a city highlighted by green, reflective glass, and its labyrinthine streets, at once liminal and marginal, the consensus reality often gets blurred. Paired with the redevelopment and resistance of its most historic (and haunted) districts, it is hard to say whether or not the city is familiarizing the unfamiliar, or vice versa. This process can be attributed to the gentrification of Vancouver's lower-income neighbourhoods and historical sites in order to make room for consumerist lifestyles and the globalized market. At the same time, commercial developers and artisan coffee shops are not the only ones responsible for these changes. Artists and art institutions who appropriate these sites and buildings as studio spaces and galleries also play a part in this socio-economic problem. In turn, the marginalized groups of people who inhabit these spaces are pushed out and evicted, which further isolates the community and delineates where they can and cannot live.

Local art practices, including SFU's School of Contemporary Arts, cannot be disassociated from its place and role within the Downtown Eastside and infamous West Hastings street. The block has undergone major renovations over the past few decades including the closure of Woodward's Department

Stores in 1993 that correlated, if not contributed, to the neighbourhood's increasing decline. The building, heavily redeveloped and expanded upon, now houses the educational institution that spurred me to reevaluate our role as artists implicated in a complex history. To further explore what it means to live and work here, I look at Vancouver based contemporary artist Stan Douglas whose practice addresses these deeply rooted histories as 'local symptoms of global conditions.' In relation to this, I theorize that the hauntings and spectral returns sited in the Downtown Eastside and its living history are local symptoms of collective trauma. Specifically, I will analyze Douglas's 2001 photographic work *Every Building on 100 West Hastings* (a well known view from SCA's Audain Gallery window) and (re)situate its past and present context as ruins. I will also compare the local gentrification, social neglect, and symptomatic trauma that lingers within Vancouver's DTES as representative, and alluding to global conditions of systemic abuse, war, and the redevelopment and/or demolition of contemporary ruins. Other international artists such as Walid Raad (Beirut, Lebanon), and Rachel Whiteread (London, England) also conjure ghosts in their site-specific work haunted by previous or ongoing traumas (such as a civil, or world war). In this way, artists must operate like mediums within the urban frontiers or Toufican "ruins" that invite such spectres in order to redistribute the senses that make visible what is invisible.

1 Toufic, Jalal. 2010. "Ruins." Thinking: The Ruin, edited by Matthew Gumpert and Jalal Toufic, 37. Istanbul: Rezan Has Museum.

2 Oleksijczuk, Denise Blake. 2002. "Haunted Spaces." Stan Douglas: Every Building on 100 West Hastings, edited by Reid Shier, 97. Vancouver: Contemporary Art Gallery and Arsenal Pulp Press.

3 Sommers, Jeff, and Nick Blomley. 2002. "The Worst Block in Vancouver." In Stan Douglas: Every Building on 100 West Hastings, edited by Reid Shier, 19. Vancouver: Contemporary Art Gallery and Arsenal Pulp Press.

4 Oleksijczuk, Denise Blake. 2002. "Haunted Spaces." Stan Douglas: Every Building on 100 West Hastings, edited by Reid Shier, 99. Vancouver: Contemporary Art Gallery and Arsenal Pulp Press.

Recent Ruins and [Re]spectres Part I: Hauntings Here, There, and Elsewhere

What is more important than whether or not the ghost is seen or not seen, is that we recognize that the ghost(s) exists, and thereby haunts. Comparatively, writer and critic Jalal Toufic redefines ruins as "places haunted by the living who inhabit them," and by this definition, Vancouver's Downtown Eastside can be considered one.¹ As central, as it is ironically isolated, the neighbourhood contains the city's most neglected, and marginalized people.² Many of the Downtown Eastside denizens include homeless populations, drug and alcohol users, sex trade workers, immigrants, indigenous groups, people with disabilities, and people who live with mental illness. Although there have been efforts to destigmatize the district through community gatherings and events, the DTES is often still considered as "Vancouver's worst neighbourhood."³ And yet, this withstanding stigma that frequently presents itself to the public also hides the ones absent from our gaze; the area's ongoing history of missing and murdered indigenous women permeate the streets, storefronts, and SRO hotels.⁴ In turn, the women themselves return as spectres that haunt the neighbourhood they once dwelled. But perhaps what is more disquieting are the hauntings within the Downtown's insidiously liminal spaces; they are the blocks on the cusp of transitioning into, if not already, commercial units that are oblivious to the ghosts' existence.

Stan Douglas's *Every Building on 100 West Hastings* (2001) urges us to look closer, and pay attention to the disappearance of people and return of spectres. Over the span of Douglas's eight foot long image, the cinematically lit streetscape is void of any kind of human presence. Instead, we see rundown, and boarded up storefronts and studio spaces, for sale signs plastered on its windows, and a medley of convenience stores and pawn shops. The entire block emanates its own ghostly presence, and Douglas's intentional refusal to feature any of the neighbourhood's inhabitants (so often misrepresented or sensationalized) makes their absence significantly salient. These are Vancouver's ruins; they are contemporary, or recent ruins and unlike the ancient remnants that are archived and replicated in museums. Likewise, Walid Raad's documentary style photographs of 'Toufican ruins' that depict dilapidated, or demolished storefronts and buildings in Beirut, tell truthful fictions about the Lebanese War and its continuing traces and effects. In contrast, 100 West Hastings and the DTES are not devastated to that extreme, and their ruins are not caused by the brutality of a civil war. Alternatively, there are similarities to be drawn between both sites, such as the gentrification battles that continue to mark the city like topographical scars. For "a city, perhaps like a person, remembers the most when confronted with its destruction," and in this way, the city's memories and histories are most embedded in its recent ruins.⁵

5 Gilbert, Alan. 2016. "Walid Raad's Spectral Archive, Part II: Testimony of Ghosts." *e-flux*. No. 71. Accessed 28 November 2017. <http://www.e-flux.com/journal/71/60536/walid-raad-s-spectral-archive-part-ii-testimony-of-ghosts/>

6 Sommers, Jeff, and Nick Blomley. 2002. "The Worst Block in Vancouver." In Stan Douglas: Every Building on 100 West Hastings, edited by Reid Shier, 50. Vancouver: Contemporary Art Gallery and Arsenal Pulp Press.

Recent Ruins and [Re]spectres Part II: Symptomatic Trauma and its Uncanny After-Affect

Previously dubbed "the worst block in Vancouver," 100 West Hastings was once a bustling social centre that benefited from the Woodward Department Store across the street (the opposing block Douglas photographed from). Woodward's was a staple for all locals in the area, and its closure "took a large chunk out of the heart of the community and out of Vancouver's history."⁶ At the same time, the global, capitalist forces responsible for the rest of the downtown core's economic and urban incline are also responsible for the decline and displacement of residential, working-class, and often low-income neighbourhoods. Soon after the closure, property developers proposed to construct batches of new condos in its place and redevelop the space to house consumer industries. The DTES has long since remained resistant to the pressing gentrification and redevelopment of its buildings, but it has had its fair share of battles. The neighbourhood's local residents successfully opposed and resisted the destruction and reconstruction of the Woodward's building, however, global tensions still exist to further polarize the DTES from the rest of Vancouver's centre. (40) There is a striking social divide that is unique to Vancouver in that one block can occupy two opposite facades, such is the case with West Hastings and Gastown as both (ironically) tourist and heritage site. When does living history turn into heritage, and additionally, when does it become a ruin? According to Toufic, buildings and sites that are designated as

'heritage' and become officially archived often lose the "labyrinthine space-time" quality that make it a ruin. In turn, the physical demolition and destruction of ruins, especially war-torn ones, in order to redevelop over top it is "sacrilegious" in the way it "exhibits the same brutality [and unawareness] that was shown in the war."⁷ Toufic further claims that "the war on the traces of the war is part of the traces of the war, [which] signals the war is still continuing;" therefore, true ruins cannot be fully eliminated even when they have been redeveloped because its past traumas live in the traces that manifest themselves as memories in its labyrinthine space-time. Additionally, Raad's works *Let's be Honest the Weather Helped*, and *Sweet Talk: The Hilwe Commissions* also explore Beirut's urban landscape as layers upon layers of scabbing wounds. Raad doesn't "simply register damage caused by the war, but also the damage caused by the efforts to repair the damage caused by the war."⁸ It is a paradoxical system that causes more harm than healing, and in turn, the ones who must pay for it are the refugees and working-class others who inhabited what was deemed 'uninhabitable.'

Similarly, Douglas's seamlessly stitched Edwardian facade also alludes to the film and development industries that seek to eliminate any trace of homelessness and poverty in order to appease the globalized market. This type of documentary photography is common in "site scouting" for films, and Vancouver (also known as 'Hollywood North') is no stranger to the lights and cameras.⁹ However, to simplify the work this way would be a mistake; instead,

7 Toufic, Jalal. 2010. "Ruins." *Thinking: The Ruin*, edited by Matthew Gumpert and Jalal Toufic, 37. Istanbul: Rezan Has Museum.

8 Gilbert, Alan. 2016. "Walid Raad's Spectral Archive, Part II: Testimony of Ghosts." *e-flux*. No. 71. Accessed 28 November 2017. <http://www.e-flux.com/journal/71/60536/walid-raad-s-spectral-archive-part-ii-testimony-of-ghosts/>

9 Moser, Gabrielle. 2011. "Phantasmagoric Places: Local and Global Tensions in the Circulation of Stan Douglas's *Every Building on 100 West Hastings*." *Photography and Culture*, 4, no. 1: 63. doi: 10.2752/175145211x12899905861393

10 Moser, Gabrielle. 2011. "Phantasmagoric Places: Local and Global Tensions in the Circulation of Stan Douglas's Every Building on 100 West Hastings." *Photography and Culture*, 4, no. 1: 64. doi: 10.2752/175145211x12899905861393

11 Moser, Gabrielle. 2011. "Phantasmagoric Places: Local and Global Tensions in the Circulation of Stan Douglas's Every Building on 100 West Hastings." *Photography and Culture*, 4, no. 1: 69. doi: 10.2752/175145211x12899905861393

12 Oleksijczuk, Denise Blake. 2002. "Haunted Spaces." Stan Douglas: *Every Building on 100 West Hastings*, edited by Reid Shier, 112. Vancouver: Contemporary Art Gallery and Arsenal Pulp Press.

critic Gabrielle Moser asserts that Douglas's image covertly operates as a "social document with political potency while disguised as a spectacular panorama."¹⁰ By portraying this specific street as a movie set, in the way it was shot in a highly-controlled environment and further digitally enhanced in post-production, Douglas simultaneously disorients the viewer and refocuses their attention.¹¹ Because of its length and magnitude, we cannot fix our attention to one single point of the image. Instead, our gaze must carefully and intensely scan the entire block with close examination; the viewer participates in an active form of looking, and "frantic searching" as we try to find any presence of life. The set is missing its actors, and it is then that we start to mediate the tensions and traumas that are not readily visible. Through active looking, the viewer can step into the block itself and absorb its memories embedded in the facade, and in turn "remember those [missing] people's memories, identify with them, and thereby reassert their social value."¹² In addition, the neighbourhood/street and its inhabitants have a bidirectional relationship. The DTES as a phantasmagoric place penetrated by social and global forces continue to shape and influence the marginalized peoples who dwell here and have dwelled here. Yet at the same time, the "visible form of the locale conceals the distanced relations which determine its

nature.”¹³ Therefore, the movement or disappearance of unloved, or undesired bodies pushed dangerously towards the margin affect the city’s social borders and delineations. Moreover, our relationship to othered or abjected bodies, and the body’s relationship to the space affects our ability to “idealize, and identify with bodies we would otherwise repudiate.”¹⁴ Douglas’s image forces us to confront the unsettling social fabric made up of invisible bodies that often recede into the background. Everyday, hundreds of people can briskly walk past a figure wrapped up in a sleeping bag on a street corner, and by objectifying the homeless person we log them as another part of the street, like the awning on a storefront. Conversely, *Every Building on 100 West Hastings* is a site/sight that challenges viewers to be acutely aware of the silent violence and stalling neglect of missing and murdered indigenous women, and displaced peoples.

As Stan Douglas’s work suggests, Vancouver’s spectres are recurring, and returning symptoms of a global condition. *Every Building on 100 West Hastings* cannot be indexical because it is inherently site-specific. The image holds the city’s collective, and local traumas, but also points to the inevitable link between local and global issues in Vancouver’s late capitalist, urban society.¹⁵ Today, the 100 West Hastings block looks much different than

13 Moser, Gabrielle. 2011. “Phantasmagoric Places: Local and Global Tensions in the Circulation of Stan Douglas’s *Every Building on 100 West Hastings*.” *Photography and Culture*, 4, no. 1: 64. doi: 10.2752/175145211x12899905861393

14 Oleksijczuk, Denise Blake. 2002. “Haunted Spaces.” *Stan Douglas: Every Building on 100 West Hastings*, edited by Reid Shier, 100. Vancouver: Contemporary Art Gallery and Arsenal Pulp Press.

15 Moser, Gabrielle. 2011. “Phantasmagoric Places: Local and Global Tensions in the Circulation of Stan Douglas’s *Every Building on 100 West Hastings*.” *Photography and Culture*, 4, no. 1: 66. doi: 10.2752/175145211x12899905861393

16 Moser, Gabrielle.
2011. "Phantasmagoric
Places: Local and
Global Tensions in the
Circulation of Stan
Douglas's Every Building
on 100 West Hastings."
Photography and
Culture, 4, no. 1: 64. doi:
10.2752/175145211x12899
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it did in 2001. The streetscape no longer looks like a tumble-weeding ghost town, nor is it as concentrated with drug users or sex trade workers. Again, the block undergoes another 'uncanny' process as it shifts from a state of economic sufficiency, to languishing, and back to stability. West Hastings can perhaps be considered liminal in the way it skirts in between the economically booming downtown core, and the still socially marginalized DTES. Redeveloping the 100 West Hastings block over the past few years has brought on a medley of different demographics. The block is now an amalgamation of trendy cafes, hip diners, furniture stores, and a kickboxing and yoga studio. Longtime residents of the DTES mix with young millennial yuppies, business owners, students, and professionals. And additionally, the Woodward's atrium has been renovated into an open space with a basketball court, piano, and lounge areas open to the public (there will almost always be someone playing the outdoor piano). The inclusive concept is one step towards compromise and mediation between differing parties. However, the block's economic boost also further marginalizes the socioeconomic minorities towards East Hastings and Main Street. Moreover, artists and artistic works are more than ever "implicated by an interconnected world cultural system."¹⁶ Hinted in Every

Building on 100 West Hastings are empty spaces that could potentially be redeveloped into studio or gallery space. However, there is also hope for new systems to arise that help to support the “local structures which produce histories rather than simply yielding to History.”¹⁷ In turn, it is important that we recognize spectral symptoms within our own locale, before it spreads more insidiously. Rachel Whiteread’s works *Ghost and House*, also explore displacement and repressed domestic and collective traumas that “will not stay dead.”¹⁸ Alison Ferris theorizes that the “appearance of the ghosts can be viewed as a symptom of the dominant regimes of the “real,” and as symptoms they direct us to social, cultural, and psychological phenomena that are otherwise obscured.”¹⁹ As artists, thinkers, and writers, it is important for us to intercede the hauntings and examine the way we operate within our locale. As a result, works that redistribute the sensible like Stan Douglas’s *Every Building on 100 West Hastings* direct our attention to the hidden narratives and social issues embedded in our own contemporary ruins.

17 Moser, Gabrielle. 2011. “Phantasmagoric Places: Local and Global Tensions in the Circulation of Stan Douglas’s *Every Building on 100 West Hastings*.” *Photography and Culture*, 4, no. 1: 66. doi: 10.2752/175145211x12899905861393

18 Ferris, Alison. 2003. “Disembodied Spirits: Spirit Photography and Rachel Whiteread’s *Ghost*.” *Art Journal* 62, no. 3: 53. doi:10.2307/3558520

19 Ferris, Alison. 2003. “Disembodied Spirits: Spirit Photography and Rachel Whiteread’s *Ghost*.” *Art Journal* 62, no. 3: 53. doi:10.2307/3558520

SPECTRES OF MARX (2020)

Aidan Branch

The photo series, Spectres of Marx, is a response to a misreading of multiple essays, lectures, and texts by Jacques Derrida alongside the psychic photography of Hans Holzer. By focusing on a stuttered reading - i.e. a reading that accepts the rhythm of hands and the exhaustion of eyes, that allows the text to slip and fall. Aidan Branch works to conjure forth absent spirits and commune with empty headed ideas that are present within the messy lineages of philosophy. Simply, Branch is concerned with how to read a book and grab hold of its gist, essence, or even its ghost.



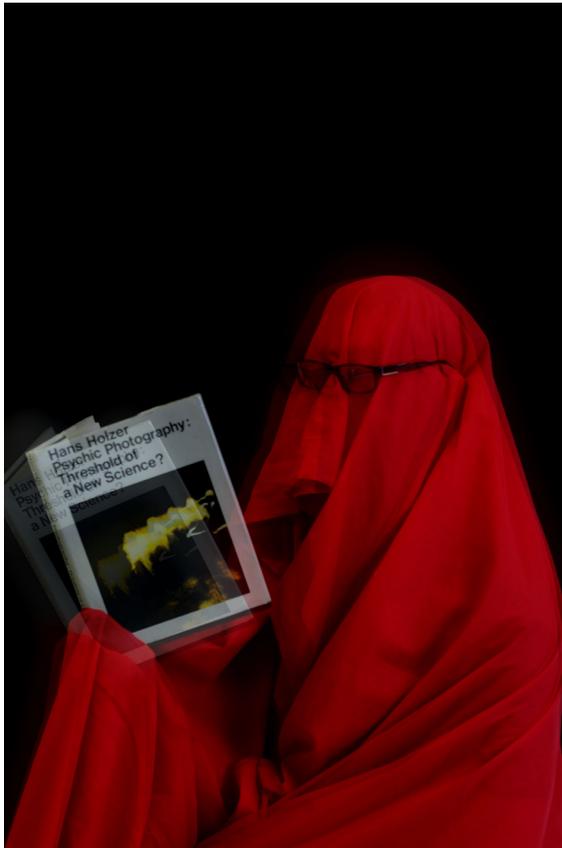
Aidan Branch, *(I'm--- Talking About Making a Porn About Hegel or Heidegger)* (2020)



Aidan Branch, *(EXPLAIN DELEUZE TO ME NOW)* (2020)



Aidan Branch, *(MAYBE THE SEQUEL WILL BE BETTER)* (2020)



Aidan Branch, *(THE HAUNTED TRAILER OF AN EROTIC DANCER IN BOSTON (NOT A DOUBLE EXPOSURE!))* (2020)



Aidan Branch, *(I'm--- Talking About Making a Porn About Hegel or Heidegger)* (2020)

Francisco
Berlanga



Meet the Team

We write with intention & dwell within tensions. We are artists who have been left without an aim for how to continue engaging with art in the absence of institution. Our goal is to provide a place where we can write about new ideas, old ideas, and bad ideas. We are by no means professional writers, we inhabit a place between the seriousness of academic writing and the frivolity of passing thought. We will often succumb to cliches and trends as they pass us as we all often must.

We hope to present unique thoughts for you to consider. Our writing speaks for no one but ourselves. We do not reduce the similar experiences of others to what we have experienced. We invite you to critically engage with the content, to challenge and be challenged, to test the tensions in question.

Francisco Berlanga is a contemporary artist who studied at Simon Fraser University. He obtained his BFA in Visual Arts with a minor in Interactive Arts and Technology. His practice is based on questioning identity, particularly his connection with his own Mexican culture and how one can inhabit a culture while being partially absent from it. He engages in discourses with his own identity through the creation of traditional Mexican “manualidades” or crafts, his work makes connections between traditional Mexican aesthetics and contemporary visual language. His practice engages with concepts of inaccessibility and the role memory and language can play when someone is distanced from their own culture. He attempts to bridge the gaps between his personal and cultural identities by forcing connections between them and by trying to understand the limitations that these identities impose upon each other.



Natalie
Chan

Natalie Chan recently completed her BFA in Visual Arts at Simon Fraser University. Her practice often focuses on the relational aspects of people & places, as well as the inner turmoils & complexities of the human condition. In the creation of her works, she aims to highlight the ideas of reflection, healing, and reconciliation as tangible possibilities in each encounter. Her latest interests include learning how to tattoo, in understanding both the technical skills & intimate relation between artist and the livelihood of their canvas.



Opal
Mclean

Mclean is best described as the “selfish artist” meaning her practice entirely revolves around herself. Her work often relates back to a mental psyche that cannot be described by words alone. Instead, it can be described by an action. A reference to a state of being or a performance that leads to the way her brain functions. This manifestation and documentation of different processes becomes her tool to relate to the outside world. Her own existence comes into question in a way that so many experience in their own daily life. This experience becomes a social, cultural, and political connection to her projects. Her work becomes both alienating but connecting in a shared experience that translates through different media.



We put out new issues every month with a different topic.

We are always looking for submissions and opportunities to collaborate so check out our social medias.

on instagram:
@withintensions

or email us at:
within.tensions@gmail.com

If you want more information, feel free to contact us.

Our next issue will be on the topic of “Borders“ and submissions are now open.

See you next month!

Acknowledgements

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We would also like to thank Francisco Berlanga for his design and social media contributions, Natalie Chan for her assistance in coordinating and Opal Mclean for her editorial work.

We are excited to share our future works with you and we hope to provide more opportunities for artists alike.

