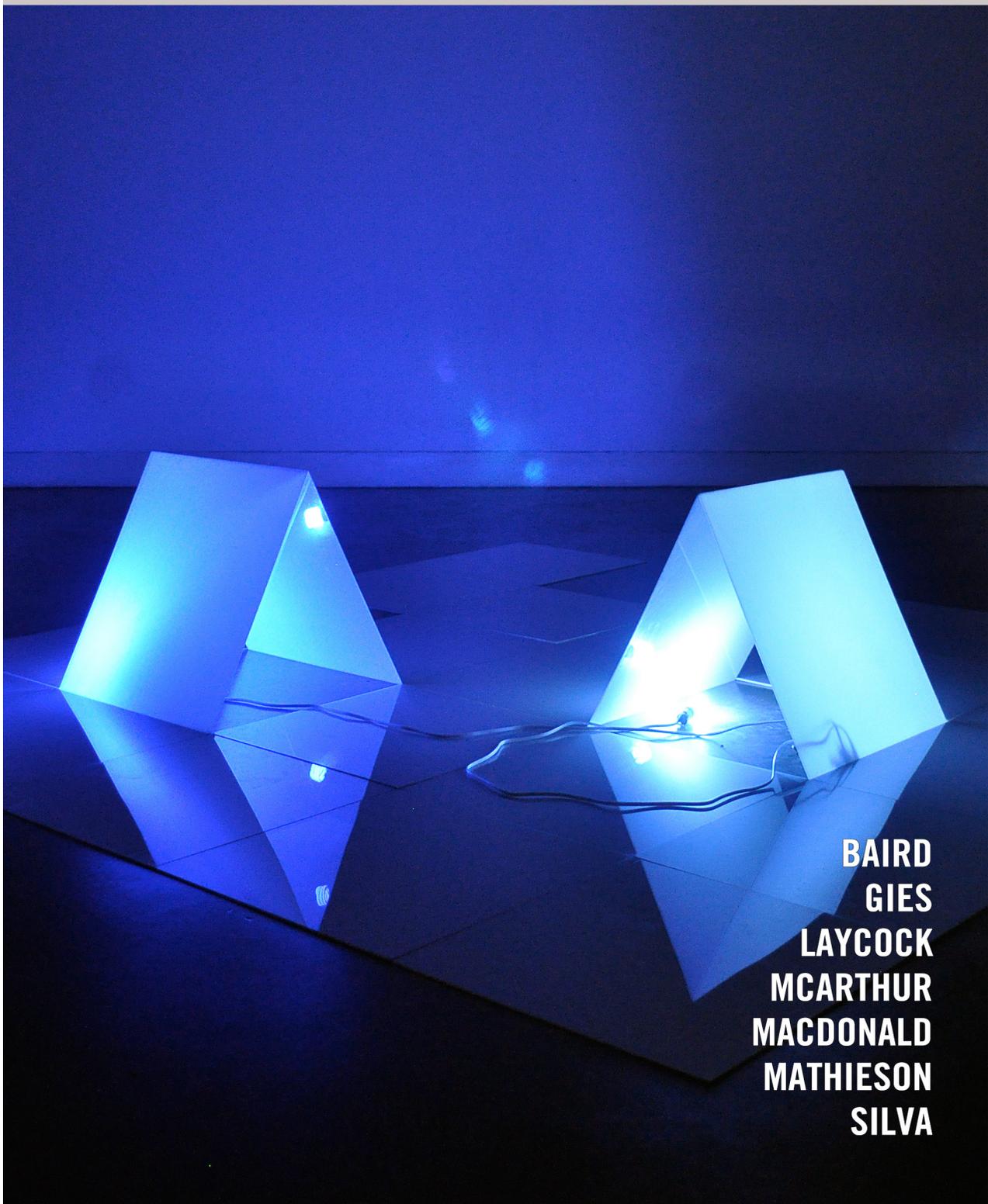




The Warren

UNDERGRADUATE REVIEW



**BAIRD
GIES
LAYCOCK
MCARTHUR
MACDONALD
MATHIESON
SILVA**

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The Warren Undergraduate Review is an annual publication lovingly compiled by undergraduates at the University of Victoria. Submissions must be made electronically at <http://thewarren.uvic.ca>.

All submissions are processed by an executive editor and then blind-read by the editors. With some exceptions, the work approved by the editors is printed in the journal. If you don't think the journal is good enough, it's your own fault for not getting involved.

The Warren Undergraduate Review is graciously supported by the University of Victoria's Department of English, the Faculty of Humanities, the Faculty of Fine Arts, and the greater community.

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| <i>Cover Art</i> | Abigail Laycock |
| <i>Back Cover</i> | Owen Mathieson (detail) |
| <i>Staff Photo</i> | Heather Close |

From *The Warren* Team



All of our contributors are undergraduates who are creating their best work. All of our contributors are undergraduates making work that transcends the boundaries of “just undergraduate” work. All of our contributors deserve recognition for their work. All of our contributors are asked to create this work while balancing their reading schedules and working part-time jobs. All of our contributors have created work that is not only excellent but challenging.

Caitlin Baird and Ross McArthur challenge Canadiana, Claire MacDonald and Celina Silva reinterpret childhoods, Cody Gies refuses minimalism and disputes literary masculinity, Owen Mathieson re-imagines public and pictorial space, and Abigail Laycock re-examines logic and systems thinking. These are all areas of research that have been researched and researched. In some fields it’s all just buzzwords now, primed for uninteresting reflections and complacent work. But all of our contributors refuse to be uninteresting.

Thank you, thank you, thank you, thank you.

fiction

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Cody Gies

Always a Cherry Short

I wheeled the car into the station, an egg-white shack without the yolk, and parked away from the pumps. The gauge showed three-quarters of a tank. I turned to Ralph and said, "Give me a dollar." The two of us had decided on a whim to drive the day to the mountains: we didn't know why, and who could say what we'd do when we got there. We'd only gone a half-hour from town when I got the itch and had to stop.

"What for?" he said.

"I want to play a scratch ticket."

Ralph reached under his boots and plucked a fistful of losers off the floor mat and said, "Don't waste your money. You're always a cherry short."

"Oh God," I said. "Don't be so depressing."

He dug into his pocket and flipped me a loonie. "Heads," he said.

I didn't know why he called it, we had nothing at stake, but he liked to flip coins, so maybe for practice. I opened my palm to the Queen's stare. I hoped Ralph had lent his luck to the dollar. He said, "What is it?" and I didn't want to tell him, but of course he knew, so I left him to gloat alone in the car.

When I came out of the station, I found Ralph, cigarette in hand, leaned against the hood. He blew smoke from his nose. In those boots he looked like a prairie boy, like he should be riding a horse. "Here's your dollar back," I said and tossed it to him.

"What, you change your mind?"

"Didn't want to waste the money," I said.

"Bullshit." He stamped out his cigarette. "How much?"

"Five bucks."

He chewed it over and spat on the pavement and said, "Where's the rest of it?" Ralph had pulled this stunt two or three times, at least that I could remember, and in both cases he'd gone a bit dicey. This time was shaping up no different.

"Lost it," I said. "On more scratch tickets."

He pushed up from the hood, all forearms, and his body swelled as he sucked air. His nose said everything—how he boxed for money, how he fought for fun, and how he liked to smell roses and tulips and whatever other flowers he grew in his shop. He was a florist by trade.

He said, "You owe me four bucks."

"Get bent. It was my ticket."

"Bought with my dollar." His bent nose looked a threat, like a broken bottle, and I wanted to hit him square on it. So I fisted up and wheeled a swing and thought, Here we go again.

Claire MacDonald

I am a sticker book of bruises

so scratch me and sniff in the artificial
grape flavour of ow or like a pot of purple honey
sink your pinky in and roll it around your lips

to wonder why nobody knows how
those Southern bees shade their syrup lightening
then lick it it tastes like jelly and smells like soda

a fine tang for a wound if I could view
all layers of my injuries in one window
I would be all one stick-n-poke tattoo with maybe

just one unmarked space like the one square inch
of carpet in my room that my toes will never cross
this bruise is a Peruvian potato

sighing *dig me dig me* this bruise is a laminated
collage this bruise is a moulding onion this bruise is
a bowl of spaghetti this bruise is healing

like a foam-coloured fortune cookie this bruise
is a knock from the inside out this bruise is the Morning
Glory Pool in Yellowstone National Park

this bruise is a double spread Magic Eye this bruise's
centre sounds like a marble in a wooden maze
but its edges blow as quiet as a thunderstorm in timelapse

in September I bear ballet bruises like warm plums
I pick them and pit them and prune them for winter
let them beg me to holiday on your neck.

For my birthday cake this year

I would like you to buy me the zeal of all the people
who are good at what they do
and run it through
an icing bag that gobs
out hot pink florets, furthermore

I would like you to take out the collection
of my chilled twelve-and-under tears
palm them into silver and gold dragées
and stud out my name
in a suite of itty-bitty bawls

Caitlin Baird

1996

see, Wikipedia says it was the wettest year
your town has ever seen. i imagine the
lake fuller, holiday dinner stomach. i
imagine the grasses greener, your
mother in a rain mack, your father in
plaid. did the valley smell like spring?
how strange to see you rained on, hard
to picture you untanned, impossible to
think of you as a child: i can soften your
hands but i can't shrink your shoulders,
the strength loose in your arms when you turned
your face.

1996

where was i? well we sold everything.
my brother vommed on the plane so the
lady shook coffee beans down the aisle.
Mum took us to the Nature Park to
touch banana slugs. red-booted in my
first ocean. the wet wasn't new to us but
the snow was a shock: convinced the
cold was forever i cried in a tree well. oh,
Canadiana makes me tired. i didn't know
then how north the north could go,
how long it takes per pound to
roast beef.

Caitlin Baird

estuary

this is flatland.
in earlier springs the sea
flooded the farms
good for the potato crops
says your neighbour
with the drooping eye.
the settlers dug ditches
in circles
and circles
to stop their cows
from drowning.
he points out seedlings
in your inherited garden,
flirts with your mother
over the fence. she is having
none of it. down
at the boat launch
your father sits
Bible in hand.
you go wading
and your feet are as sick as
celery. the water here is
thickly green. it smells
like dead fish. you
and your water
are clear and rainbow-slick
with tourist's petrol.
valley-cradled,
you can see through
yourself and the water,
see the wonder
of mud-skinned bottom
of tiny fish
of your own face.
but through this green you can see
only brightness above
and darkness below,
your father's world
in a wet binary.

he is looking out
past the little islands
to the further islands
and the further islands
blue with distance.
you poke at stones
with a stick, searching
for crabs. you find
nothing you recognize
as life. on shore
the grasses still purple-brown
lift a little
from the drying earth.
you find the bird
(this is how you tell it)
you find the bird broken
beneath the willow,
its wing feather-stripped
so similar in bone
to your own elbow,
to the whale's flesh-naked frame
in the library book
that used to frighten you:
each animal split neatly
like a peach
so one juicy 2-D side
showed the dark wetness
of the pit
and the other side
was empty. and your father,
palm cupped
about the grey breast,
broad thumb stroking
the black neck, smiles
a little
as the bird bites
his fingers, says
a feisty little thing
with the same pride
as when he lifted you
in front of the congregation
and smoothly
he breaks that black neck
with the broadness
of his thumb.

CelinaSilva

My life is marked by cats

“God oh God, what a zoo.” – Grandma

Checkers, Kit-Kat, Fudge Kelly-Pop, Oliver, No-Paw,
Sneakers, Sophie, Solei, Snow Ball, Sylvester,
Speedy, Blackberry, Marmalade, Moo, Puma,
and my first, Mean Kitty.

Mean Kitty was, really, a nice guy, but he was Dad’s cat. The two,
rough to love. When I cried he would curl his body,
the colours of a watercolour raccoon, under my chin,
push his whiskers against my flushed cheeks.
But he got meaner. Cornered the babysitter
in the kitchen. Electrocuted tail. Furious purr like a furry turbojet.
When Mom and Grandma got home she quit. After,
Dad quit too, took Mean Kitty. His whiskers never tickled
me again. Dad, a stranger—

It’s always after someone’s left that you
play fairytale family. Start to love them, even if
they weren’t that nice.

Is Puma my favourite because he was the last
or was it his groovy orange dreads?
And I suppose picking favourites is not nice
but you have to favour a cat when he thinks he’s a dog.

Puma’s everybody’s best friend.
Sauntering with the chatty Cathys as they stroll
their mutts at seven o’clock one o’clock six o’clock.
Hanging with Hero the dog, chasing away cats at the gate.

*Puma’s the man, what a laid back dude, what a sweet
sweet darling don’t fret, I’ll take care of you.*

Sometimes they’d have babies and I could only keep one. Look Grandma,
I have to show you something, something sort of human. Look, under
the bed, hear the purr, see—the mound of fur, how happy they are
together. I can’t bear to say goodbye.

Family tree:
 Shy Sophie
 birthed siblings Furball and Speedy.
 Furball, one full moon, became pregnant.
 Now a momma to the missing-a-paw No-Paw,
 to Blackberry the witch cat, all black, and crescent moon on collarbone.
 No-Paw, a momma now too, had little Moo, whose left eye twitched,
 so I kept him. Moo's wee paws padded through snow
 onto Highway A, just like Sylvester
 hit by a car. Mom's boyfriend, the guy
 who did improv dance and made tiny bikes out of wire, cried
 for the first time. A couple days later—
 he clambered off his branch,
 past Dad's and far from this family
 tree.

Will we, the children who grew up with cats as kin, remember these companions
 when we're old, will they become simply a list of names scribbled in crayon? I can't say
 I'll remember these names forever
 but I promised them I would
 'cause when I was young I would whisper secrets
 into their wide ears and they would reply *it'll be fine.*

And I was powder-painting watery cats into family portraits,
 Mean Kitty and I perched on Grandma's lap rocking rocking rocking
 when Dad, eyes this strange wild, burst
 through the door, plonked a wiggling bundle onto my lap to keep.
 Exclaimed, "*You're a big sister now!*"

And they are here when Dad, fifteen years following
 presses his grief through my door
 insists, "*Do you even care that I love you?*"

And when I'm sad they know what to do
 sprinting across the long grass
 chasing
 some angel.

Owen Mathieson

The Condition



60" x 60"

Acrylic on canvas

The Strategy



35" x 47"
Acrylic on canvas

VISUAL ARTS

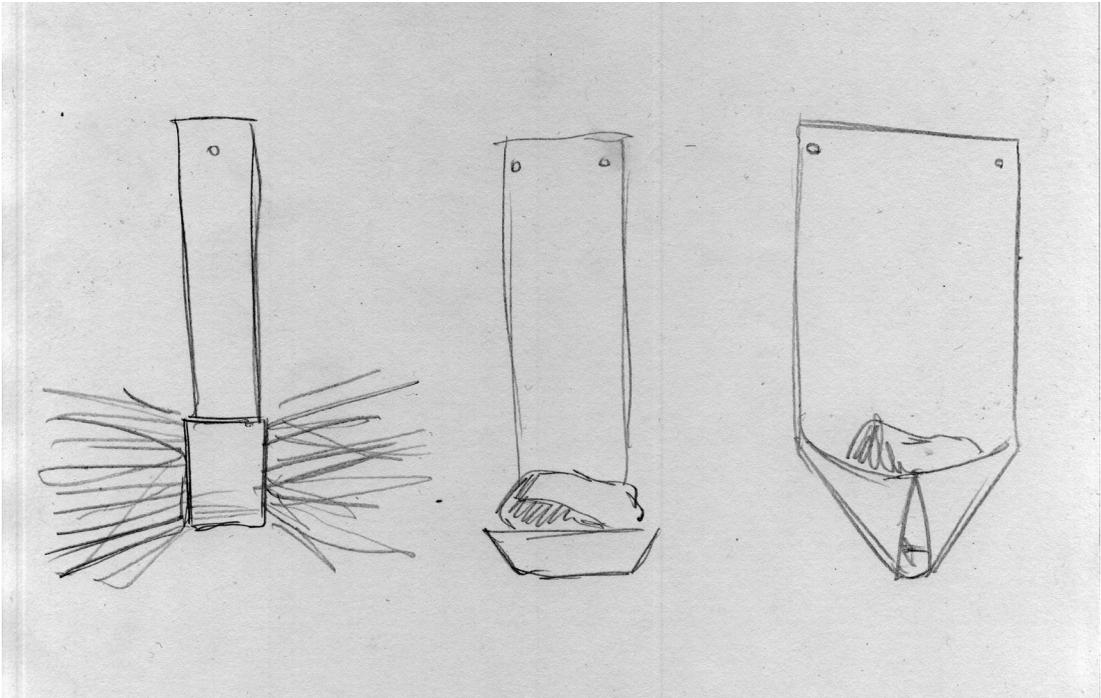
RossMcArthur

Keel



9' x 2' x 2'
Steel & rope

Concept Sketch



8.5" x 11"
Graphite on paper

VISUAL ARTS

RossMcArthur

Sink



4' x 1.5' x 1'
Metal & stone

Colony



1' x 1' x 4'
Wood

RossMcArthur

Artist's Statement

My sculptural work is the product of multiple layers of subjectivity. First is the subjectivity of my relationship with the industries and cultural identity of western Canada. The objects and motifs that I represent in my work are those that I associate with Canada. It is Canadiana mediated by my experience of it.

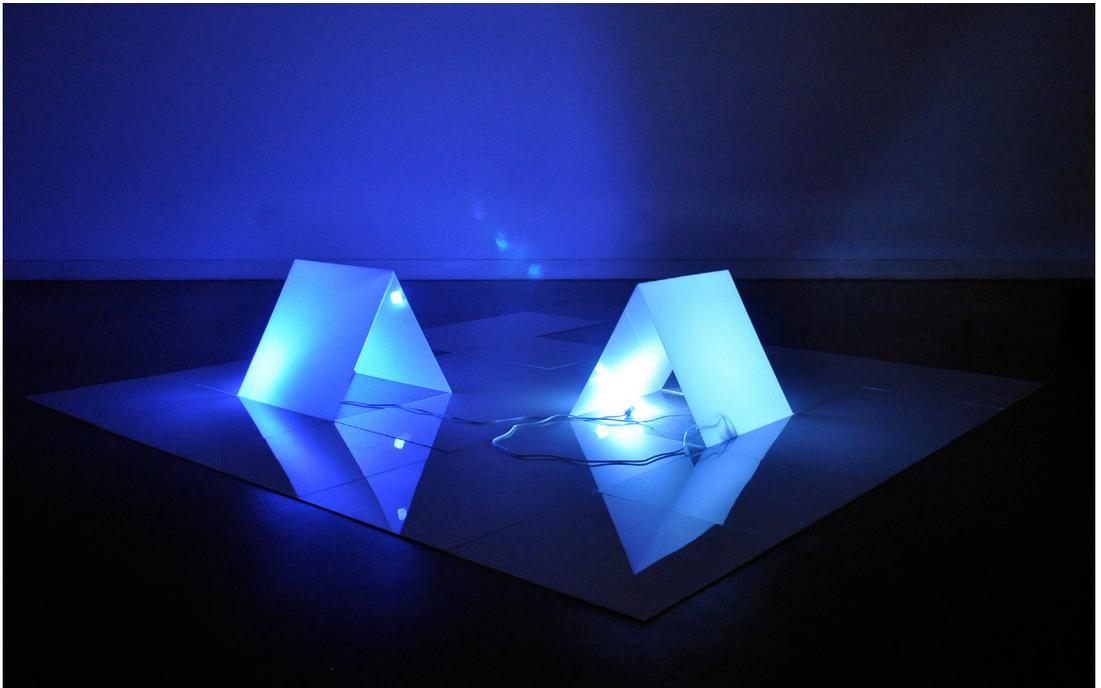
The second layer of subjectivity is that of the structures themselves. My work regularly begins with a set goal that I then build a structure to achieve. The goal of holding a rock above my head or keeping a surface parallel to the ground gives me a defined starting point to build a process and structure. The resulting framework is what I find to be the best or most logical or simplest solution to the problem. So the final form ends up being the product of my imagination from several sides. The authority of history and of the object in equilibrium is disrupted by the subjectivity of the form.

Practical solutions to strange problems.

VISUAL ARTS

Abigail Laycock

Juncture

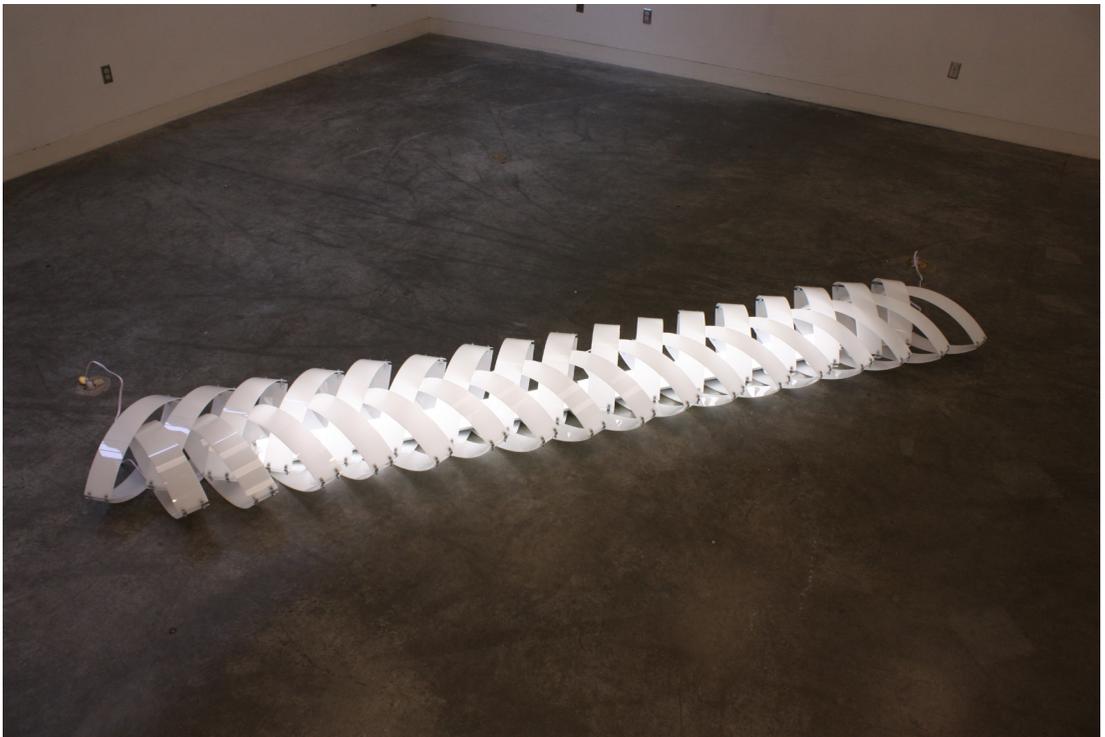


10' x 10' x 2'
Plexiglass & fluorescent lights

VISUAL ARTS

Abigail Laycock

Evert



10' x 18" x 8"

Plexiglass, hardware & fluorescent lights

Untitled



4' x 4" x 4" pieces (overall dimensions variable)
Plywood, plexiglass & fluorescent lights

Abigail Laycock

Artist's Statement

In my work I am interested in creating objects and installations that are physical manifestations of conceptual systems. I see the idea of the system as a method for forming structure and determining composition. These systems are flawless and complete in theory, but when created in reality they are imperfect and break down. In a work of art the point where such a system breaks down may leave the piece open, rather than closed as a finite system. I wish to experiment with these points through different forms of systems and materials, including light.

Mathematical logic and the laws of physics greatly contribute to the systems in my work. In order to create an object from materials, I find there must be a starting point to build from. In this sense, my work often references the Cartesian grid in its most basic means of defining two-dimensional space, starting from a definitive origin. My interest in systems derives from a binary understanding of language that defines 'system' as the opposite of chaos. From this, one can derive that everything is either in a system (order), in chaos (disorder), or somewhere between the two. I am not interested in the ends of this spectrum, but the various points in the middle and the entropy that occurs there. This grey area is where systems and order occur, but subtly and inevitably break down. In my work this concept is applied to physical materials, which speaks most to a scientific understanding of entropy, but is also apparent in any structure including ideological and philosophical systems.

The formations of the systems are often dictated by the physical qualities of my materials. By this I mean how these materials interact with themselves and other objects. I use a range of man-made building materials including plywood and plexiglass, as well as specific synthetic products to draw a parallel to the man-made conception of arithmetic, and henceforth man's ability to create, understand, and control systems.

Lastly, light has been introduced to my work as a means of transcending the space defined by the physical object. It works to break down the barrier between object and experience. It also serves as a material that is less easily controlled and therefore challenges any existing system. I aim to use this phenomenon as part of a system and discover how and why it breaks down in the same way that other systems do.

I am continuing to understand the nature of systems using commercial materials and fluorescent lights as a primary means of exploration.

Contributors

Caitlin Baird is the Lead Editor for poetry at *This Side of West*. She is working on a double major in writing and religious studies.

Cody Gies is a fourth-year creative writing major, professional writing minor.

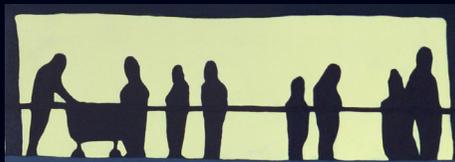
Abigail Laycock is a fourth-year visual arts student with a focus in sculpture. She is interested in making compositions with objects that are physical manifestations of conceptual systems.

Ross McArthur Borrowing material and method from the industries of western Canada, Ross disrupts the logic of industrial processes. He replaces the linear drive of production with equilibrium, creating unlikely static bodies and potential energy.

Claire MacDonald goes to movies and restaurants alone. Not because she doesn't have friends, but because she's a weirdo.

Owen Mathieson Currently in the fourth year of a BFA in visual arts, Owen's work within the department has predominantly focused on painting. After the completion of his degree, he looks forward to continuing his education in visual arts by enrolling in a graduate program.

Celina Silva is a second-year creative writing student in poetry and playwriting. She is from Nelson, BC.



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