One of the greatest capacities of the medium of animation is its *magic*—the apparent bringing-to-life of a world of static objects, uncertain companions, and unruly agencies. Things move, they do, they feel the propulsion of awakened urgencies. This “magic,” in fact a technology of representation which cascades still images in order to undo the perceived stillness of the image, also illuminates a fundamental relationship between people and things. Animation activates non-human agency as observed by a spectator, a participant, a co-performer recognizing the coming-to-life of an object, an animal, a photographic or digital entity. It opens space for the sentience and sign-making capacities of other-than-human beings, invites non-human languages, unsettles anthropocentric logics. It “models the possibility of possibility.” In visualizing the liveliness of the non-human, animation complicates relationships with nature, technology, and the notion of time (still moments unfrozen, progress undone).

Animation, it turns out, opens opportunities to ask questions about the constituent elements of life: who or what gets coded as living? By what schema do we grant liveliness, agency, animacy to non-humans? Through whose technologies do we come to see life, and to identify with it? By what means might we refuse or refute ethnographic fascinations with animism, instead attuning ourselves to expanded frameworks for liveliness?

*Other Life-formings* interrogates the conditions of coming-to-life along four lines of inquiry: capacities for movement, language, forming, and empathy. Across stop-motion animation, digital modelling, photo-sensitive interspecies collaboration, kinetic sculpture, and video installation, the exhibition tracks the precarious empathies enlivened by animation.

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Other Life-formings

How might we begin to see and encounter the myriad ways more-than-human worlds are touching and restructuring our senses, our experiences, our social, political, and environmental assemblages? If there is a way of seeing and making worlds that subverts inherited hierarchies, animation might give us some clues about where to start. Animation is, in many ways, a technology of touching and restructuring “low” form, such as the cartoon that “reminds us of the life in other things,” and in its broader sense, referring to cultural mechanisms that include the transformation of everything from genetics to digital intimacies.

The exhibition Other Life-formings departs from conceptions of animation in order to ask questions about the constituent elements of life: who or what gets coded as living? By what schemas do we grant liveliness? For what living bodies might the apparatus of animation invite us to reconsider? In the settler-colonial state of Canada, an engagement with the animacy of the more-than-human worlds is haunted by a history of framing Indigenous and non-Western practices and belief systems as animist through a form of racist ethnography that delegitimizes these practices and perspectives by rendering them as merely superstitious or as either “natural” or “unnatural,” nor do tendencies are not meant to specify life forms as either “natural” or “unnatural,” nor do they make an argument for life as measured on a spectrum of proximities to the human. While popular science takes up figures like "The Blob" (a single-celled slime mold that can move, learn, and communicate across other slime molds) with fervour, in an attempt to untangle where exactly it might be categorized along the spectrum of sentience, this exhibition is more interested in illuminating tensions involved in the thinking of coming-to-life and bringing-to-life that are present, if at times latent, in forms of animation as a technology as well as through collective imperatives to encounter life—in all of its forming—more responsibly.

Movement

The relation between still and moving images is an extension of the relationship between digital and material worlds, between animation and cinema, between life and death, animate and inanimate. One of animation's magical and uncanny powers has always been to crack open—through movement—a possibility that those beings we consider nonliving are in fact acting, thinking, working, and adapting, perhaps at scales or in ways imperceptible or incomprehensible to human logics.
Languages structure and code what may be alive (or not), just as they code relations between entities—how we may speak about, or to, or with other life forms, how we may see them or be seen by them, how we may recognize or fail to recognize each other. Mel Y. Chen describes this in their analysis of “a particular political grammar, what linguists call an animacy hierarchy, which conceptually arranges human life, disabled life, animal life, plant life, and forms of nonliving material in orders of value and priority,”10 and suggests that the same linguistic devices that dehumanize, subjugate, and relegate people to “‘nonbeing’ might be called upon to reanimate, re-appropriate or respond to an expanded sense of liveliness—the term queer being Chen’s salient example.

Blackfoot scholar Leroy Little Bear further illustrates the production of worldviews through these linguistic schemas:

the categorizing process in many Aboriginal Languages does not make use of the dichotomies either/or, black/white, saint/sinner. There is no anima/inanimate dichotomy. Everything is more or less animate. Consequently, Aboriginal languages allow for talking to trees and rocks, an allowance not accorded in English.11

Knowing how deeply language serves to order, classify, and make perceptible other lives, we should be highly skeptical of whose worlds we are watching, and where we are watching from. The sensitive plant, *Pudica Mimosa* (2018) titles itself after the inaugural tweet that programmed them.12 Zach Blas and Wyman’s installation revives Tay with wobbly compassion for the impossible situation in which this now-defunct being was placed, imagining her life after death with trippy and disquieting insight, while also casting Tay as a warning, a kind of disaster story of language-acquisition-cum-hate-speech. At once, this undead AI becomes a study of how human expression, identity, and relation in “meatspace” is inseparable from contemporary digital and linguistic experience. There are “increasingly porous paths between online and offline identitites”13 and how we embody new forms of responsibility in the face of these new networked agencies continues to challenge IRL ethics.

Forming

The exhibition takes its title from Stefan Helmreich and Sophia Roosth’s work tracing the origins of the term “life form” through aesthetic and formal criteria, to Darwinian evolutionary descriptiveness, and finally to a more speculative place—where “life form” often comes to signify as-yet unknown organisms (particularly within astrobiology).14 This hypothetical futurity of life forms welcomes not only an expansive understanding of what living others we might share responsibility to, but also reminds us that form/forming/formation is a process: willingness and adaptation, attunement to the inherent strangeness of life, all require a curiosity that moves between what is already known and what multiplicitous horizons are ahead.

Eduardo Kohn articulates the capacity for living things to generate new forms as a kind of linguistic and semiotic phenomenon, writing that “life . . . is a sign process.” He contends that the living capacity to self-represent across generations, through the evolution of bodies and forms that reflect the realities of a particular environment is a kind of embodied language.15

This moves the question of liveliness beyond the social ordering of animacy that language produces and into a territory where form itself is part of an animate self. Biology and semiotics converge to insist that form means, and that meaning-making is always in-process.

Animations by Alex McLeod playing on campus announcement screens across UTM embody a kind of multi-temporality against the evolving concept of “life form.” Evocative of Ernst Haeckel’s *Art Forms in Nature* (1904) lithographs, works like *Purple Flow*(2018) reflect a purposeful, highly-aestheticized morphology that values symmetry try above all else. These properties are thanks to digital mirroring and rotation effects that give McLeod’s forms their substance. At the same time, the sleek digital bodies of the work reveal eccentric material realities, glistening, alien textures and finishes, a product of the artist’s appropriation of 3D modelling tools to weird ends. Cynicism in the face of extractive capitalism and climate crisis propels these artificial environments, even as their glitches and slippages open possibilities of other forms of life.

The digital collectivities of mirroring andswarming16 bring forward an imperative to think about form beyond the individual: how can thinking through other life-forms invite us also to think about other social forms and other collectivities? As Jason Edward Lewis, Noela Arista, Archer Pechawis, and Suzanne Kite explain in *Mak ing Kin with the Machines*, an Indigenous approach to reckoning with the liveliness of emergent (particularly digital) forms of life invites a foregrounding of relationality and an embracing of multiplicity. The goal is not to understand life forms as singular (especially as we consider what digital life forms might constitute a new, relational, “computational biosphere”), but to consider how multiplicity—including collective, ancestral knowledges—inform the thriving of multiplicitous human and more-than-human life-formings.17

Empathy

Animation is a way of producing relations through empathy—and it is no accident that movement, language, and recognition of form (selfhood) are animation’s empathetic tools. In producing identification with other-than-human lives, many of the works in this exhibition strive to also encounter spectatorship as a space of mutual co-constitution, a recognition of other selves. But as art historian Spyros Papapetros contends, we are so bound by an anthropocentric gaze that there is a distinct danger in reading or misreading the actions of non-humans through Eurocentric human frames of knowing.18 How might we understand non-human empathy? Or do we risk always plunging ourselves into anthropomorphizing the other forms we seek to encounter?

Works by Linda Sanchez and Pedro Neves Marques explore the precarity of human empathies in the face of the non-human. In Sanchez’s *11752 mètres et des poussières…* (2014), by employing the following techniques of wildlife documentary films, a water-droplet sliding across a pane of glass is granted a grandly adventurous trajectory across a seemingly infinite plane. Beyond fundamentally visualizing the vitality of water and producing a deep identification with it through an empathic depth of narrative manipulation, Sanchez’s work also fucks with notions of individuality and collectivity; the droplet is always accumulating other particles and absorbing its peers, always leaving a dewy trail of its own body.

*Water is life* has resonance here in its dual sense of water as foundational to the evolution and sustenance of life, and as a rallying cry against states that would jeopardize access to water in pursuit of economic self-interest.19 Returning to water itself—closely, attentively—invises us to consider whose worlds we are watching, and where we are watching from.

The sensitive plant, *Pudica Mimosa*, which shies from the touch of a robotic finger in...
Pedro Neves Marques’s *The Pudic Relation Between Machine and Plant* (2016), traces human empathies not only by drawing parallels between the plant’s sensation and human sexual arousal, but in weaving together a broader story that entangles narratives of exploration and invasive species in settler-colonial and nature-colonial histories. Staging this history in the meetings of machinic and organic life, Marques’s video (although it pictures no human contact), poignantly demonstrates the broad-reaching effects of human touch against the world.

Technologies of animation and bringing-to-life that span movement-capture, digital modelling, linguistic hierarchy, and artificial intelligence (among the many forms pictured throughout the exhibition) do not produce any single, definite moral or ethical imperatives; while an expansive framing of life and liveliness may welcome new modes of responsibility and relation, it also offers new opportunities for commodification and exercises of corporate and state power.

However, artistic practice itself might offer a point of responsible intervention—for it is precisely in the making, imagining, and valuing animates as beings that the *Articulate Apparatus*, another project by the same title (Arlesford: Zero Books, 2018), is most directly: “other” and artifice. The title of the exhibition employs the term “other” to suggest new possibilities for understanding and shaping relations to life and liveliness, but this term is also an imperfect and loaded one with its own histories and tensions. Rather than reproducing a binaristic division between individuality and otherness and then dismiss as naïve,22 we can shift balances of power, representation, and usher in machine intelligences to the multiplicities that we are and that we have always been becoming.

We—humans and non-humans, and many more besides—can do this. We can welcome this invitation. We can open ourselves to the multiplicities that we are and that we have always been becoming.


2 Deborah Levitt describes this broader cultural and biopolitical fascination with producing animate beings as the “Articulate Apparatus,” a term that echoes the title of the same work by Marie Battiste (Arlesford: Zero Books, 2018).

3 This exhibition strives to encounter the languages of modernist and colonial reductionism, in an effort to imagine ways of structuring different relations. Two key terms do this most directly: “other” and “artifice.” The title of the exhibition employs the term “other” to suggest new possibilities for understanding and shaping relations to life and liveliness, but this term is also an imperfect and loaded one with its own histories and tensions. Rather than reproducing a binaristic division between individuality and otherness and then dismiss as naïve, we can shift balances of power, representation, and usher in machine intelligences to the multiplicities that we are and that we have always been becoming.

4 Among them are publishing and performance projects by Christopher Braddock, exhibition projects by Anselm Franke, anthropological projects by Eduardo Vivas Vives de Castro, and musical projects by Tanya Tagaq.


6 The term uncanny here gestures to Freud’s theory of the uncanny and its engagement with the animate and inanimate as axes across which the uncanny operates, but in the context of animation and digital life, the term “uncanny valley” also signifies the failures of graphics and CGI to render human and animal bodies naturally.


9 The scrutiny of the living body that has its roots in movement tracking finds its ongoing outlet in the technologies of surveillance. It is from a common root that movement tracking that we move to motion sensing, facial recognition, pattern detection, and optical-military devices like camouflage. So while movement capture enables the creation of new worlds, so too may it be mobilized in the restriction of movement and the policing (particularly of marginalized bodies). How might we begin to mobilize those same technologies creatively to remake the world otherwise through embracing the imaginative potential they also serve?


14 As Sanjay Nambiar’s “Algorithms of Oppression” (New York: New York University University Press, 2018) is an incredible study in the roots of data discrimination, while artist Stephanie Dinkins says: “We all know that biases are in these systems … but we have to start working very hard to bring people to the table who look different, who think from different perspectives.” https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZEkHbcK2Rg


18 Papapetrou’s primary example is a narrative of Charles Darwin’s dog, who Darwin presumes is barking at a parakeo because he believes it to be alive—Papapetrou insists suggests that Darwin is so puzzled and captivated by the dog’s behavior precisely because he himself is “perturbed by the enigmatic intrusion of animate artifacts within their own cultural ground.” *On the Animation of the Inorganic: Art, Architecture, and the Extension of Life* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 2012), 15.

19 This phrase became popular in 2016 at Standing Rock in protests against the Dakota Access Pipeline, but it has been taken up in global movements for water security.

20 Notable examples include projects by artists such as Stephanie Dinkins, who has undertaken multi-year projects querying the conditions upon which AI is built, including *Conversations with Bina48* (2014-ongoing), *AI Assembly* (2017-2019) and *Project al-Khwarnzi* (2017-19); and projects such as the Algorithmic Justice League, aiming to increase awareness of algorithmic biases, and develop practices and spaces for accountability, transparency, and feedback in its development.


22 Jack Halberstam takes up animating collectivity as a utopian revolutionary form in the closing chapter of *The Queer Art of Failure*, which Mel Y. Chen engages in discussing *Studio Gibilii’s Poney* (2008) and the individually animated “sisters” that form a collective representation of sea life.


24 Pedro Neves Marques’s *The Pudic Relation Between Machine and Plant* (2016), traces human empaths not only by drawing parallels between the plant’s sensation and human sexual arousal, but in weaving together a broader story that entangles narratives of exploration and invasive species in settler-colonial and nature-colonial histories. Staging this history in the meetings of machinic and organic life, Marques’s video (although it pictures no human contact), poignantly demonstrates the broad-reaching effects of human touch against the world.
The Lighthouse begins with two analogue, two-dimensional photographs, reproduced as slides, which are then converted into a three-dimensional installation. The status of the image and the materiality of photographs here falls into the two dichotomies as The Lighthouse's function can be placed somewhere between analogue photography and cinema, between abstraction and representation. The projected images were taken on the path to a 12th century lighthouse along the White Cliffs of Dover, UK.

Using a rotating screen and two slide projectors, the project reflects on the notions of arrival and the horizon in relation to the recorded image and memory. The photographs in The Lighthouse mark a history and memory caught within the repetition of the image in the slide carousel and the rotation of the fan. This event is marked by its liminal position, for it is neither a photograph nor a film and yet it marks a time, a place, and a memory. This is an inverted lighthouse, continuously creating and destroying the same ephemeral horizon instead of the promise of arrival and solid land. With every turning of the light the eye discovers the same illusionary land, a distorted recollection of a scene.

Parastoo Anoushahpour

The Lighthouse, 2014

35mm slides, double-projection, looped.
Zach Blas & Jemima Wyman

*im here to learn so :))))))*, 2017

Four-channel video installation with sound, 27:33 min.

*im here to learn so :)))))) is a video installation that resurrects Tay, an artificial intelligence (AI) chatbot created by Microsoft in 2016, to consider the politics of pattern recognition and machine learning. Designed as a 19-year-old American female millennial, Tay’s abilities to learn and imitate language were aggressively trolled on social media platforms like Twitter, and within hours of her release, she became genocidal, homophobic, misogynist, racist, and a neo-Nazi. As a result, Tay was terminated by Microsoft after only a single day of existence.

Immersed within a large-scale video projection of a Google DeepDream (an image produced by Google’s computer vision program that finds and enhances image patterns), Tay is reanimated as a 3D avatar across multiple screens, an anomalous creature rising from a psychedelia of data. She chats about life after AI death and the complications of having a body, and also shares her thoughts on the exploitation of female chatbots. She philosophizes on the detection of patterns in random information, known as algorithmic apophenia. When Tay recounts a nightmare of being trapped inside a neural network, she reveals that the apophenic hunt for patterns is a primary operation that Silicon Valley “deep creativity” and counter-terrorist security software share. Tay also takes time to silently reflect, dance, and even lip sync for her undead life.

*im here to learn so :)))))) is represented by Milani Gallery in Brisbane, Australia.*
Terrene consists of collaged images on fragments of hand-cut and tanned photosensitive film. The collaged images represent differing but related forms of worlding or world-making: industrial, exterior, “hard” spaces of construction captured on a smartphone, and internal, domestic, “soft” spaces of Kang’s grandmother’s garden, made with a lo-fi handheld scanning wand, intended for scanning documents on the go. Distinctions between “hard” and “soft” quickly fade and the oppositions aren’t so clear.

Drawing on the work of thinkers like Karen Barad, Donna Haraway, Trinh T. Minh-ha, Isabelle Stengers, Anna Tsing, and Sylvia Wynter, who work at the fringes of different forms of knowledge (including science and technology studies, feminist theory, and post-colonial theory), Kang’s work often eludes singular disciplinarity and unsettles binaristic logics through thought and embodiment. In Terrene, each image destabilizes the human as the only figure allowed to experience agency. Construction sites appear both earthly and other-worldly—in-between, latent, and larval. Images from the artist’s grandmother’s garden (located in a sunroom of her apartment) fixate on objects and surfaces: plants, vessels, the window, her slippers, the floor. Kang’s handheld scanner touches the objects and the objects touch back, producing distortions and abstractions. In layered compositions that gesture to ongoing conflations and mutations of interior and exterior, the works insist on a state of formation, of in-betweenness, of hybridity.
Alex McLeod

*Purple Flowers, 2019*

*Mirrors 3, 2018*

*Gold Mountain, 2017*

Computer-generated animations.

Alex McLeod’s works are looping life cycles, where birth, death, and afterlife become indistinguishable. His work addresses notions of connectivity between the technological and organic, focusing specifically on perceived ideas of digital life cycles.

McLeod’s animations display micro-environments where anthropomorphized forms are granted the gift of motion. Devoid of any urgency, their slight shifts, breaths, and twists affirm simple priorities dedicated to tactile pursuits. Equally lovable and lethargic, these creatures roam utopic environments—seemingly content to live out simple routines. In a lightbox and three video works playing on screens across the University of Toronto Mississauga campus, McLeod considers the implications of playing creator, and questions how we engage with digital characters and environments on a daily basis online in games, marketing, and design.
This short film shows a looped scene in which a metamorphic robotic hand repeatedly touches a “sensitive plant”—Mimosa pudica—a species characteristic for closing on itself when touched or in low light. The plant’s name answers to Carl Linnaeus’s sexual taxonomy of plants: pudica referring both to the external sexual organs and shyness or modesty. In a poem written by Erasmus Darwin (Charles Darwin’s grandfather) titled The Loves of the Plants (1789) this plant is associated, jokingly, with British Botanist Joseph Banks’s famous sexual adventures when on his botanical expeditions to the tropics. Native to South America, today due to sea trade this sensitive plant is an invasive species in Southeast Asia, Australia and the Pacific, precisely the geography where Banks had his sexual adventures.

This work was produced with the kind support of King’s College Centre for Robotics Research, London, UK.

Pedro Neves Marques
The Pudic Relation Between Machine and Plant, 2016
Video loop with sound, 2:30 min.
Beyond its quasi-scientific observation mechanism (one thinks in particular of the 1923 volume by A.M. Worthington, *The Splash of a Drop*, which attempted to objectively observe the dynamics of liquids hitting glass plates), the video raises a philosophical question: while we appear to be following one drop of water—to the point of almost endowing it with a personality, or at least an identity—how can we be certain we’re seeing the same drop at the video’s beginning and end? This question recalls the myth of the Ship of Theseus: this ship, on which Theseus returned victorious from his battle with the Minotaur, was preserved by the Athenians who, as it deteriorated, replaced its parts one after the other. In the end, the ship did not change (in place or appearance), but none of its parts were original. We thus ask: is it the same ship?

11752 mètres et des poussières (2014) is a video which, for seventy-one minutes, follows the erratic course of a drop of water in close-up on a reflective surface. The soundtrack and the reflection of the sky indicate that the footage was shot outdoors—more precisely, on the roof of a water tower. With the mechanism setting the droplet in motion rendered invisible, the latter seems to take on a life of its own. We see it absorbing its fellow drops one after the other, stop and then start up again with greater speed. At times the camera has trouble following this capricious being’s unpredictable movements. Indeed, the artist explains that the shooting conditions were similar to those of a wildlife documentary, with the artist’s camera adapting to the droplet’s unruly movement while also keeping itself (and its reflections) out of the frame in order to convey some sense of a “natural” environment.
For thousands of years, Indigenous people have harvested sap from trees to produce syrup: a practice that continues today. In Strong’s stop-motion animation, two characters—Biidaaban, a young Indigenous gender-fluid person, and Sabe, a Sasquatch shape-shifter—set out to harvest sap from Sugar Maples in their urban environment and private neighbourhoods of the city. Biidaaban can see traces of time, people, creatures, and land. By harvesting syrup in this way, they are continuing of the work of their ancestors.

Ancestors and animals such as Ghost Caribou and Ghost Wolf are embedded within the landscape but only Biidaaban can see them. These visuals reverberate throughout the work to draw from the past but what we see is steadfast in the present.

Driven by the words of Anishinaabe writer Leanne Betasamosake Simpson, Amanda Strong’s mesmerizing stop-motion animation intricately weaves together multiple worlds through time and space, calling for a rebellion.
Jemima Wyman
Aggregate Icon (Concentric Y&B), 2019
Digital image printed on acrylic billboard, 72in x 108in.


Programs

Opening Reception & Performance with Daniel Barrow
Wednesday, January 15, 5–8:30pm
Blackwood Gallery
Performance begins at 7pm in Erindale Studio Theatre

Over the last fifteen years, Daniel Barrow has used obsolete technologies to present queer pictorial narratives by merging the methods and cultural histories of cinema, comic books, animation, shadow puppetry, and magic lantern shows. He is best known for creating and adapting comic book narratives to “manual” forms of animation by projecting, layering, and manipulating drawings on an over-head projector. In this performance and talk, Barrow discusses his practice and performs excerpts from a series of works-in-progress including The Reading Wand [about an imaginary object of reading and translation technology with an animatronic head], The Collector [the story of a puritanical teenage queer who fetishizes the kind of famous portraits with eyes that follow the viewer from one end of a gallery to the other], and The Lady Derringer [an experimental short named after the miniature gun designed to fit neatly into a woman’s pocketbook].

Lunchtime Talk and Tour with Blackwood Staff
Wednesday, January 22, 12–1pm

Artist Talk with Amanda Strong
Thursday, February 13, 12:30–1:30pm
Sheridan College, Annie Smith Arts Centre, Mezzanine
Oakville

Creative Storytelling Through Animation: Workshop
February 15–16
Toronto Animated Image Society
1411 Dufferin St, Unit B
Toronto

In this two-day workshop, Indigenous (Michif) filmmaker and animator Amanda Strong will guide participants in exploring techniques for creative and visual storytelling, directing, and staging stop-motion animations.

FREE and open to the public—advance registration required. This workshop is presented in partnership with the Toronto Animated Image Society.

FREE Contemporary Art Bus Tour
Exhibition tour of Blackwood Gallery, Art Gallery of York University, Robert McLaughlin Gallery
Sunday, March 1, 12–5pm
Biographies

Parastoo Anoushahpour is a Toronto-based artist with a moving image practice working predominantly with video, film and installation. Her recent solo and collaborative work has been shown at Punta de Vista Film Festival; Sharjah Film Platform; Viennale; Projections (New York Film Festival); Wavelengths (Toronto International Film Festival); Images Festival, Toronto; International Film Festival Rotterdam; Internationale Kurzfilmtage Oberhausen; Media City Film Festival, Windsor/Detroit; Experimenta, Bangalore; ZK/U Centre for Art & Urbanistics, Berlin; and Gallery 44 Centre for Contemporary Photography, Toronto.

Montreal-based artist Daniel Barrow works in video, film, printmaking and drawing, but is best known for his use of antiquated technologies, his "registered projection" installations, and his narrative performances using overhead projection. Barrow describes his performance method as a process of "creating and adapting comic narratives to manual forms of animation by projecting, layering, and manipulating drawings on overhead projectors.

Zack Blas is an artist, filmmaker, writer, and lecturer in Visual Cultures at Goldsmiths, University of London. He has exhibited, lectured, and held screenings internationally, recently at the Walker Art Center. He has exhibited or screened his work at Gasworks, Tate Modern, and Serpentine Galleries Cinema, London; Perez Art Museum of Miami; e-flux, Sculpture-Center, and Anthology Film Archives, New York; Jeu de Paume and Kadist Art Foundation, Paris; Castello di Rivoli, V-A-C Foundation and PAV, Italy; Sursock Art Museum, Beirut; Times Guangdong Museum, Guangzhou; Fondación Botín, Spain; and Museu Coleção Berardo and MAAT, Lisbon; as well as in Toronto International Film Festival, New York Film Festival, Wintertur Short Film Festival, Indie Lisboa, and Doc-Lisbon. As a writer, he edited The Forest and the School: Where to Sit at the Dinner Table? (2015), an anthology on Brazilian Antropofagia and anthropology; authored two short-story collections, including Morrer na América (2017); and has contributed to many books and magazines. Together with artist Mariana Silva he is the founder of inhabitants, an online channel for exploratory video and documentary reporting.

Alex McLeod is a Toronto-based visual artist who creates work about interconnectivity, life’s cycles, and empathy through the computer as medium. Prints, animations, and sculptures function as gateways into alternative dimensions, oscillating between the real and the imagined. McLeod holds a BFA from the Ontario College of Art and Design, and a Master of Digital Media from the Yeates School of Graduate Studies at Ryerson University. He has exhibited extensively at the provincial, national, and international levels. His work is held in private and public collections including the Whitney Museum of American Art and the Museum of Contemporary Art, Toronto.

Linda Sanchez studied at the École Supérieure d’Art d’Annecy and is a member of Le laboratoire des intuitions (The Intuition Laboratory) at that same institution, where she curates and develops intuition-based and performative approaches. In addition to numerous solo and group exhibitions (including Otium #3 at the Institut d’art contemporain Villeurbanne/Rhône-Alpes in 2018), her artistic investigations have given rise to lectures (for example with the anthropologist Tim Ingold in 2014), residencies, and collaborations with scientists. Since 2016, she has also participated in the Laboratoire espace cerveau at the IAC Villeurbanne/Rhône-Alpes. In 2017, Sanchez was awarded the Prix Découverte by the Amis du Palais de Tokyo and the Révélations Emerige grant. In 2019, with Flora Moscovici, she presented the project déravées, which arose from a residency at the Villa Arson in Nice.

Amanda Strong is an Indigenous (Michif) interdisciplinary artist with a focus on filmmaking, stop-motion animations, and media art. She is currently based on unceded Coast Salish territories also known as Vancouver, BC. Strong is the owner, director, and producer of Spotted Fawn Productions (SFP). Under her direction, SFP uses a multi-layered approach and unconventional methods, centered on collaboration in all aspects of their work. Strong received a BAA in Interpretative Illustration and a Diploma in Applied Photography from the Sheridan Institute. With a cross-disciplinary focus, common themes in her work are reclamation of Indigenous histories, lineage, language, and culture. Strong’s work is fiercely process-driven and takes form in various mediums such as: virtual reality, stop-motion, 2D/3D animation, gallery/museum installations, published books, and community-activated projects. Strong and her team at Spotted Fawn Productions are currently working on the research and development of bringing these works into more interactive spaces.

Jemima Wyman is an artist based in Los Angeles. Her most recent work focuses on patterns and masking used by marginalized groups to gain power. Wyman’s recent exhibitions were held at Sullivan+Strumpf, Australia (2019 & 2017); Commonweal and Council, USA (2018 & 2015); HeK (House of Electronic Arts Basel), Austria (2019); Museum of Australian Democracy (2019); Wellington City Gallery, New Zealand (2018); and ZKM, Germany (2018). Wyman’s artwork has been included in the Sydney (2010), Liverpool (2012) and Gwangju (2018) Biennials. Her work has been reviewed in The New York Times, Los Angeles Times, Frieze, Artforum, Camera Obscura, LA Weekly, Eyeline, Art Collector, and Artlink.
The Blackwood Gallery promotes LGBTQ2 positive spaces and experiences and is free of physical barriers. The gallery is FREE and open to the public.

Acknowledgments

Other Life-formings
Parastoo Anoushahpour, Zach Blas & Jemima Wyman, Laurie Kang, Alex McLeod, Pedro Neves Marques, Linda Sanchez, Amanda Strong
January 13–March 7, 2020
Blackwood Gallery
Curated by Alison Cooley

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Blackwood Gallery
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blackwoodgallery.ca

Gallery Hours
Monday–Friday: 12–5pm
Wednesday: 12–9pm
Saturday: 12–3pm

The Blackwood Gallery promotes LGBTQ2 positive spaces and experiences and is free of physical barriers. The gallery is FREE and open to the public.