

Aug. 28 – Sept. 21, 2013:
Disorientations/Illuminations
MFA Graduating Exhibition

Audain Gallery

Disorientations

Opening: Sept. 4, 7pm

Exhibition: Aug. 28 – Sept. 7

Illuminations

Opening: Sept. 11, 7pm

Exhibition: Sept. 12 – Sept. 21

Disorientations:

Calla Churchward
Gabriel Saloman
Daisy Thompson
Alize Zorlutuna

Illuminations:

Hamidreza Jadid
Sydney Koke
Charlene Vickers

Events:

3 Respondents/3 Artists: In Consideration of Disorientations

Sept. 7, 2pm
Djavad Mowafaghian World Art Centre
Presented with the SFU Vancity Office of
Community Engagement.

Workshop: Axis of Agency With Gabriel Saloman

Sept. 3, 5:30pm
Audain Gallery

The Beast that Escaped and a Fine, Fine Flavour – A Play By Calla Churchward

Sept. 5, 6, and 7, 8pm
Rm. 4270, SFU at Goldcorp Centre for
the Arts

Audain Gallery is part of Simon Fraser University Galleries and a vital aspect of the Visual Art program in the School for the Contemporary Arts.

Encouraging conceptual and experimental projects that explore the dialogue between the social and the cultural in contemporary artistic practices, Audain Gallery's mission is to advance the aesthetic and discursive production and presentation of contemporary art through a responsive program of exhibitions.

Audain Gallery staff are Melanie O'Brien, SFU Galleries Director, Amy Kazymierchyk, Curator, and Brady Cranfield, Gallery Assistant.

For more information, please contact info@audaingallery.ca

Disorientations/Illuminations is presented with the School for the Contemporary Arts at SFU.

Disorientations/Illuminations

Disorientations/Illuminations presents the graduating projects of the 2013 MFA Visual Arts candidates at Simon Fraser University's School for the Contemporary Arts. Split into two parts, the exhibition showcases new works in various disciplines, including painting, sculpture, video, dance, installation, sound, and socially engaged practices. *Disorientations/Illuminations* is presented in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of the Fine Arts.

Part one: *Disorientations*

By asking how we mould ourselves in different contexts that refuse to be moulded in return, the works in *Disorientations* investigate embodied relationships with institutions, hierarchies, and systems, be they religious, academic, or normative. More specifically, each artist in *Disorientations* asks themselves this question: what is the significance of how the body figures in my work and what do I hope to address through its presence? Alize Zorlutuna deploys interventions in various tropes of Islamic aesthetics and spirituality as a means to explore the embodied experience of transcultural queerness. Calla Churchward examines the problem of defining and un-defining the self, using her own medical records as source material. Daisy Thompson challenges the conventional roles of choreographer, performer, and viewer, inviting relationships of co-authorship within playful, interactive installations. Gabriel Saloman documents a series of workshops exploring theories of agency and contingency through embodiment and physical practice.

Part two: *Illuminations*

Although thematically diverse, the works in *Illuminations* emphasize the potential for personal, social, and political meanings to become embedded in and revealed through material practices. Hamidreza Jadid's works metaphorically alter, embellish, and erode elements of Islamic culture and architecture, such as the dome and minaret, to analyze and question relationships between power, politics, religion, and history. Sydney Koke creates sculptures that aspire to monumentality, using cheap materials, crude construction, and sensational effects to generate cognitive dissonance around the issues of value and importance. Charlene Vickers focuses on the process and method of painting as an explicitly Aboriginal statement of presence and joy, offering luminous minimalist vertical lines as "punctures" in and "riffs" on the notions of memory and historical demarcation.

Disorientations

Calla Churchward

Gabriel Saloman

Daisy Thompson

Alize Zorlutuna



Calla Churchward:

The Impossible Project is about medicalized bodies. I began this work in the hope of finding personal agency outside of the dehumanization and objectification I have experienced at the hands of the medical system and our culture at large. The source materials for this work are 800 pages from my personal medical file. The more I examine this file, the more I notice that my language and way of talking about myself and my experiences are just as violent and damaging as the language and assessment tools clinicians have used to describe my body and mind. With them, I have learned to talk about myself and other people with illness in an objectifying way.

Warning Confidential, part one of the project, peeks into my source material and into the futility of escaping the violence of the system. Part two, *The Beast that Escaped and a Fine, Fine*

Flavour, is a play that attempts to reveal the profound senses of suffering, loneliness, humanity, poetry, and love that are missing from my medical records. There is no cure for this illness – or for this society. Freedom is impossible; struggle is not. Struggle is what makes us alive to ourselves and to each other. In this case, struggle happens through the process of making and performing the work with my collaborators and with the audience.

Gabriel Saloman

In the discourse of academia, the body is ignored as a rigorous source of knowledge and comprehension; in the practice of contemporary art, participatory bodies are viewed as generic or even neutral. I want

Gabriel Saloman, *Contingent Sculpture Workshop (Barricade #002)* (detail), 2013, mixed media, various dimensions. Courtesy the artist.

to challenge both of those assumptions. I'm interested in embodied intelligences that critically engage theories of art and politics through material and collaborative practices. A premise of *Axis of Agency* (and *The Contingent Sculpture Workshop*, if less explicitly so) is that we always have agency as we choose to position ourselves in relation to others. The fact of this agency is as true in a participatory artwork as it is in the streets – or any other space of engagement. By working with trained dancers, my work explores a spacialized model of this theory, accentuating the spontaneous affective interactions of a number of bodies actively choosing different positions. While providing the constraints that make it possible, what destabilizes this same dynamic is the very contingency of the dancer's positions. In this way, the principles of “agency” and “contingency” support and necessitate one another. This condition can open to radical transformations of space and the interrelationship of the bodies within it; at the same time it also induces a constant state of precariousness.



Daisy Thompson

The gallery creates possibilities for different interactions with my dance works. Exploring alternative contexts outside of the theatre for dance and the forms of kinesthetic understanding it provides is an important aspect of my practice. This focus is important in relation to my interest in examining the influence of structures of power on the body, especially within the discipline of dance. Exterior environments bring the body into motion, shaping its structure and subtly forcing its behavior. In the works shown during this exhibition, the viewer is a contributory creator of the work through their active participation. When engaging in these works, the body becomes a decision maker, empowering itself to take action and to “press” back at the environment it is surrounded by.

Alize Zorlutuna

By critically engaging tropes from Islamic aesthetics and culture (i.e. architectural geometry, crocheting, carpets, and the Ezan – the Islamic call to prayer), and combining these with abstracted and figurative representations of the body, this body of work suggests the forbidden nature of queer desire and its relationship to Islamic culture and spirituality. Focusing on skin, textiles, texture, and touch, the work invokes the sensuality of experience.



Inheritance attempts to capture the complex and nuanced negotiations involved in the embodied experience of transcultural queerness. In this work, an attempt to express is extended in time, becoming a deep drone of stifled desire, resistance, longing, and love. A tablecloth – a grandmother’s labour of love in which tradition is twirled into every loop – and the artist’s body are transformed through their encounter: they speak to the manner in which queer bodies are continually transgressive, simply through desire. In *Forbidden My Lips*, crystalline shards surge and ripple across the frame, as geometry and the body move between representation and total abstraction. Entering the frame, hands caress skin, geometry, and lips. Fractured and broken, the constant flux of the visuals disorients. The Ezan beckons. The allure of its call is transformed through an intimate encounter with a mouth forbidden to speak its message –

a woman’s mouth, a queer woman’s mouth. The breath and feedback created in the reverberant space between lips transforms the call into something else: a call back.

While the body figures heavily in this exhibition, the work also examines queerness through non-representational means, exploring the notion of queerness as an experience of disorientation through strategic interventions in abstract patterns, as well as with objects.

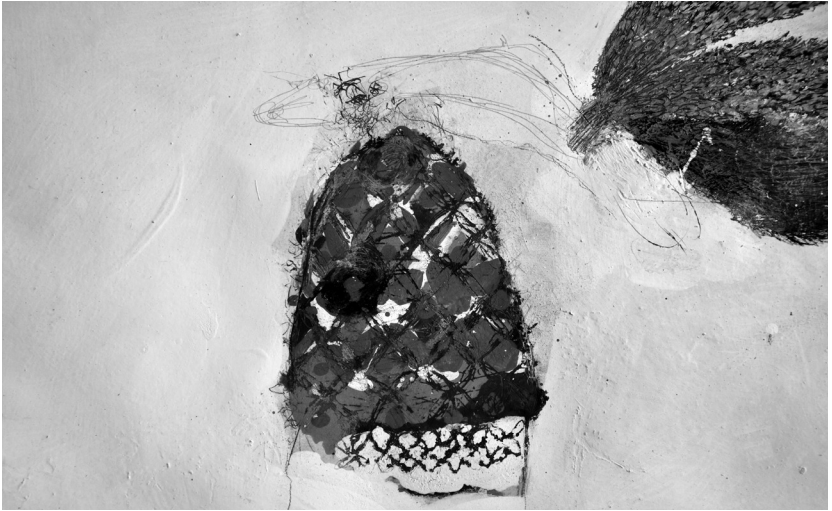
Alize Zorlutuna, *Inheritance* (detail), 2013, digital video, various dimensions. Courtesy the artist.

Illuminations

Hamidreza Jadid

Sydney Koke

Charlene Vickers

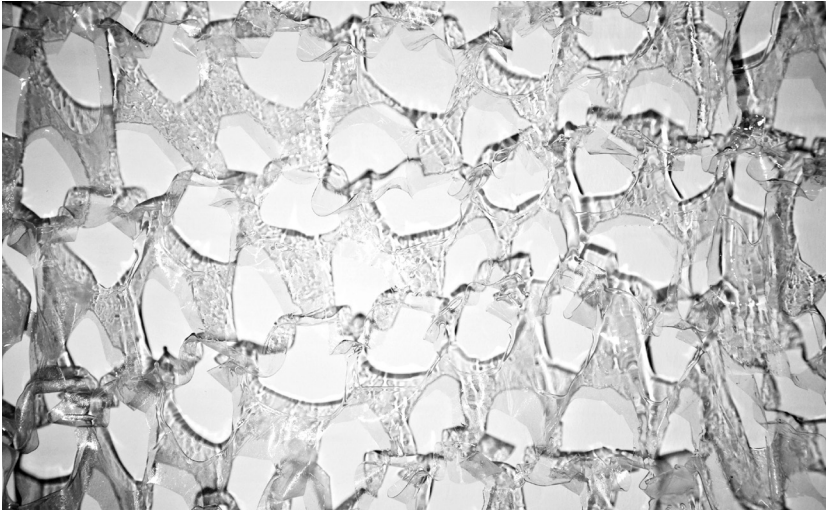


Hamidreza Jadid

Islamic religious leaders in the Middle East proclaim that the legitimacy of their place at the center of political and social power is due to a connection with a Divine Source, and thus their position is pure, inviolable, and absolute. In many works of Persian literature, there are numerous attempts to represent religious figures as divine and pure, notably in *Mantegh-o-teir* and *Tazkarat-owlia* by Sheik Farid-o-din Attar. The temporary marriage of politics and religion has been a tool of the clergy, who were previously only religious and mystical proselytizers, but now rule as an army of political ideologues. Holding sustained social significance, the visual and conceptual signs of divine power and legitimacy are embedded in the architecture of religious monuments and in Persian literature, becoming a kind of visual and literary propaganda integrated in all aspects of daily life.

In his works, Jadid explores and analyzes this power. In his paintings, he depicts elements of Islamic culture and architecture as a means of metaphorically dealing with the central themes of religion and history. By applying multiple layers of paint and then scratching through the surface they form, a sense of erosion and the symbolic passage of time resonate. At the same time, Jadid challenges the role of the clergy by referring to the history of mysticism and its literary stories, which are mixed with romance and eroticism. In his sculptures, he further points to the transmutation and deterioration of this power by altering the shape of domes and minarets, using everyday materials such as metallic stickers to embellish their surfaces and destabilize meaning.

Hamidreza Jadid, *Untitled* (detail), 2013, mixed media on paper, 58 x 77 cm. Courtesy the artist.



Sydney Koke
Holographic Universe

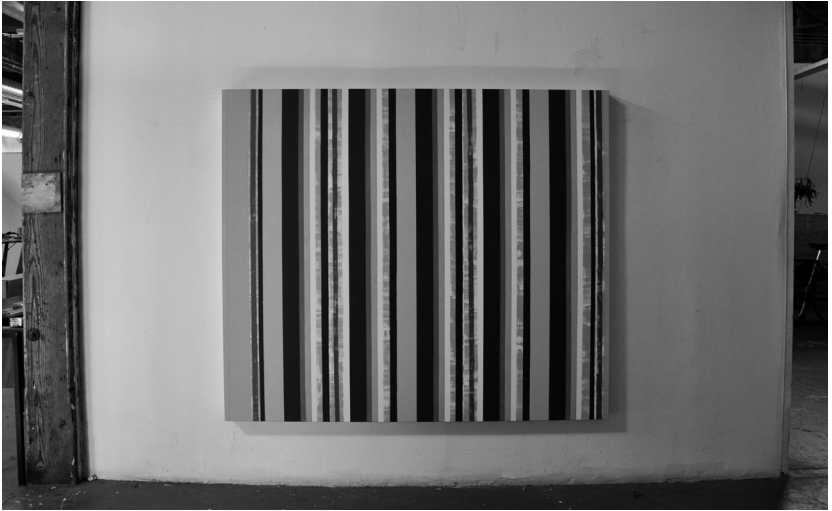
In *The Holographic Universe*, Michael Talbot explores the idea that the physical properties of the universe are directly influenced by our perception of them. For instance, an electron may appear as a particle only when we focus on it, and otherwise behave as a wave. Thus, there is no truly objective way to observe, as the subjective experience of perceiving plays a role in shaping reality. I am interested in the perceptual experiences that are revealed when one dismisses the illusion of objectivity, and allows subjectivity to guide perception. As hierarchy and learned systems influence even the most primary perceptual processes, disregarding these structures can result in a revitalized intimacy, a new awareness of the continuity between ourselves and our environment. Creating art from this place of confusion – of liminality between thresholds of

understanding – can produce new interpretations, as unexpected possibilities arise from familiar places.

Cheap but toxic materials, transient but sensational effects, and decorative elements all contribute to my exploration of art, the intuitive, and the threshold between value and waste: the signal and noise of human societies. My sculptures struggle to address themes of monumentality, importance, and permanence. At the same time, they betray the systems they depend on in their apparent inadequacy: they seem at first naive, feminine, pathetic, unrefined, and comedic. However, these are not artworks about failure: each piece has been imbued with the careful optimism that is associated with the formation of new perceptual and interpretive frameworks.

Talbot, Michael. *The Holographic Universe*. New York: HarperCollins. 1992.

Sydney Koke, *Camouflage* (detail), 2013, vinyl, resin, lacquer, various dimensions.
Courtesy the artist.



Charlene Vickers

My work for the exhibition is a series of abstract paintings of various dimensions composed of vertical stripes in oil, acrylic, and gouache on paper and stretched canvas. The process of how the paint is physically applied to the paintings' surfaces is the driving force of these works. Using brushes, Plexiglas, and scraps of wood, these strategies make a vital connection to my hand and to gravity. At first look, the large, vivid vertical stripes on canvas recall a kind of hard-edge minimalism, masked out in precise measure. Further looking reveals the stripes to be free floating and imperfect, with soft edges suggesting the gesture of my hand. My approach is not meant as a rebuttal of formalist expression or hard-edged methods but rather to infuse the presence of my subjectivity as a First Nations' painter into my work. Without visibly recognizable signs of traditional

First Nations' painting of the Northwest Coast or elsewhere, however, my paintings ask the viewer to engage with them through different methods of seeing and feeling. Presented three ways, the viewer has different opportunities to approach the paintings: works on paper are stacked on a table to look through, a smaller scale series is enclosed within a cedar house but can be handled, and a larger set of oil paintings are hung more conventionally on the wall. In each case, the viewer actively engages the work with their body.

Charlene Vickers, *Everything Is Broken Up and Dances*, 2013, oil on canvas, 152.4 x 182.88 cm. Courtesy the artist.

SFU

SIMON FRASER UNIVERSITY
ENGAGING THE WORLD

Audain Gallery

Simon Fraser University

Goldcorp Centre for the Arts

149 West Hastings Street

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Tue-Sat: 12pm-6pm

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