

Mercer Union, a centre for contemporary art
1286 Bloor Street West, Toronto, Ontario M6H 1N9 Canada
T 416.536.1519 | F 416.536.2955 | www.mercerunion.org

Common Cause: before and beyond the global

Fayçal Baghriche, Sandra Brewster, David Hartt and Jeneen Frei Njootli

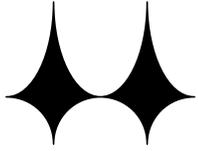
curated by Denise Ryner

16 February 2018 - 24 March 2018

Opening Reception Friday 16 February 2018, 7pm



Image: David Hartt, detail from *Adrift*, 2015. Film projector, projection screen, found chairs, carpet and speakers. Courtesy the artist. Photo: Denise Ryner.



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What's left is politics but even the politics of the commons, of the resistance to enclosure, can only be a politics of ends, a rectitude aimed at the regulatory end of the common. And even when the election that was won turns out to have been lost, and the bomb detonates and/or fails to detonate, the common perseveres as if a kind of elsewhere, here, around, on the ground, surrounding hallucinogenic facts.

Stefano Harney and Fred Moten, *The Undercommons: Fugitive Planning and Black Study*, 2013

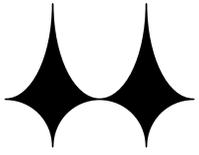
Installations by Fayçal Baghriche, Sandra Brewster, David Hartt and Jeneen Frei Njootli consider historical, present and speculative expansions on the global, as a permanently unfixed, interdependent but disordered whole. The global produced in their work is one borne of collective and underground actions that might resemble Harney's and Moten's 'elsewhere.'

Such observations of globalized entanglement were made by Vancouver-based theorist Denise Ferreira Da Silva who asks in her 2016 essay, *On Difference Without Separability*, "What if, instead of the Ordered World, we imaged each (human and more-than human) existent consisted not as separate forms relating through the mediation of forces but rather, as singular expressions of each and every other existent as well as of the entangled whole in/as which they exist?"¹

Ferreira Da Silva's questions were provoked by the popular, political and legal hostilities that have emerged in response to the influx and movement of refugees and immigrants following economic crises and armed conflicts around the world. However her examination leads her to ask how a modern imaginary, limited by fixed separations of place and time allows the idea of humanity to become an enclosed term, denied to those who are displaced in the Ordered World and therefore objects of cultural difference.

The artists in this exhibition mine transnational counter-flows, cultural dispersions from geographical or social peripheries and alternative representations. Emerging and

¹ Denise Ferreira Da Silva "On Difference Without Separability," 32a São Paulo Art Biennial catalogue: *Incerteza viva/Living Uncertainty* (November 2016).



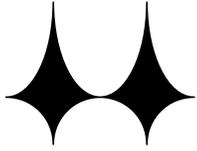
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reclaimed ecologies and sovereignties underline the narratives of colonial trade routes, rebellion and migration in Brewster's work, are the result of the entanglements that comprise Hartt's fictions, mapped out in Frei Njootli's soundwork and inferred by the visual dissolution in Baghriche's installations.

In featuring representations of a shared commons, a pervasive elsewhere to imagine globalized spaces of refuge, this exhibition responds to recent thinking by Moten, Harney and Ferreira Da Silva on how the global can be recuperated, identified and accessed beyond the mediating control of capital and the logic of the modern nation state.

– Denise Ryner



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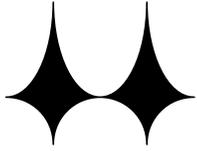
BIOGRAPHIES

Fayçal Baghriche was born in Skikda, Algeria (1972), and studied at Villa Arson, Nice. He is based in Paris, co-founding the La Villa du Lavoir artist residency in 2003 and the collective curatorial structure, Le Commissariat in 2006. Recent solo exhibitions include Le Shed, Centre d'Art de Normandie, France (2017); Human Resources, Los Angeles (2014); The Delfina Foundation, London (2012); Bielefelder Kunstverein, Bielefelder, Germany (2010); Centre d'Art Contemporain, and Le Quartier, Quimper (2010). Recent group exhibitions include Hammer Museum, Los Angeles (2018), Villa Arson, Nice (2017), Centro Pecci, Prato (2017), Malmö Konstmuseum, Sweden (2017); Utah Museum of Contemporary Art, Salt Lake City (2016); Arab Image Foundation, Beirut (2016); and the 54th Venice Biennale.

Sandra Brewster is a Canadian artist and holds a Masters of Visual Studies from the University of Toronto. Her work explores themes of identity, representation and memory. Her recent solo exhibition *It's all a blur...* received the Gattuso Prize at CONTACT Photography Festival (2017). Recent group exhibitions including Brewster's work include *Un | Fixed Homelands*, Aljira Contemporary Art Centre in New Jersey; *New Found Lands*, Eastern Edge Gallery in St. John's, Newfoundland and *Performing Blackness I Performing Whiteness*, Allegheny Art Galleries in Meadville, Pennsylvania. Brewster recently received a resident fellowship at the Instituto Sacatar, Brazil. She is represented by Georgia Scherman Projects, Toronto.

David Hartt was born in Montréal (1967), and is currently based in Philadelphia where he is an Assistant Professor at the University of Pennsylvania. Recent solo exhibitions have been held at The Art Institute of Chicago, LA><ART, Los Angeles, and Or Gallery, Vancouver. Recent group exhibitions include *Ocean of Images: New Photography 2015* at The Museum of Modern Art, *America Is Hard to See* at the Whitney Museum of American Art and *Shine a light/Surgir de l'ombre: Canadian Biennial* at the National Gallery of Canada. His work is in public collections of The Museum of Modern Art, New York; Whitney Museum of American Art, New York; Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago; The National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa; and The Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam. Awards received include the Foundation for Contemporary Art Grant (2015), and United States Artists Cruz Fellowship (2012). Hartt is represented by Corbett vs. Demsey, Chicago; David Nolan Gallery, New York; and Galerie Thomas Schulte, Berlin.

Jeneen Frei Njootli is a member of the self-governing Vuntut Gwitchin First Nation and is a co-creator of the ReMatriate Collective. Based between the Yukon and unceded Coast Salish territories, she works collaboratively with artists, communities, youth and the land. Sound, performance, fashion, workshops and barbeques are some of



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the ways Frei Njootli's practice takes shape. She was the recipient of the Contemporary Art Society of Vancouver Artist Prize in 2017.

Denise Ryner is the current Director of Or Gallery in Vancouver. She has presented projects at the Haus der Kulturen der Welt, Berlin; SFU Galleries, Vancouver; VIVO Media Arts Centre, Vancouver; the Contemporary Art Gallery of Vancouver; Jackman Humanities Institute and 8eleven Project Space, Toronto.

PUBLIC PROGRAMMING

EXHIBITION TOUR: Denise Ryner

Saturday 17 February, 2PM

We are pleased to have guest curator Denise Ryner provide a free public tour and discussion of the exhibition.

ARTIST TALK: Sandra Brewster

Tuesday 13 March, 7PM

Please join us for a public artist talk by Sandra Brewster in conversation with Richard Fung.

ARTIST PERFORMANCE: Jeneen Frei Njootli

Tuesday 20 March, 7PM

Sound tools created by Jeneen Frei Njootli will be used in her performance to create a live soundscape in the gallery.

Admission is free and all are welcome.

For more information, please contact Cameron Lee:

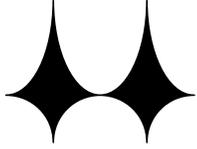
press@mercerunion.org

Denise Ryner would like to acknowledge support through Grants to Culturally Diverse Curators for Residencies in the Visual Arts from the Canada Council for the Arts.



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Mercer Union, a centre for contemporary art, Toronto

Mercer Union is a non-profit, artist-centred space in Toronto. We have a unique track record of presenting innovative exhibitions by diverse Canadian and international artists in formative and established stages of their careers. We are dedicated to supporting the production of new and experimental work, assisting artists in realizing pivotal projects.

Mercer Union has the will and flexibility to take on ambitious projects. We foster an intimate and supportive space for artists to develop and take risks with their work. In turn, their exhibitions play a role in shaping the cultural landscape of Toronto, Canada and beyond.

Art is crucial to expanding minds and pushing boundaries. Our exhibitions, educational programs, artists' talks, events and publications, both on and off site, encourage critical inquiry and conversation.

Mercer Union. Cultivating artists and challenging audiences since 1979.

Please send all requests for images and interviews to:

press@mercunion.org

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