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Abstract

This paper chronicles my thesis research into memory, place and painting. I focus my research on the disused homestead of Demetri Cabin on Saltspring Island, and use this paper to introduce the reader to the site. Using two distinctive voices, one narrative and one scholarly, my writing engages the reader in a lyrical tour of Demetri Cabin while simultaneously tracing my path between site and studio. In the first part of the document, I outline my early painted works and their connection to mediated technology. From here, I follow the conception and creation of *Walking in the Dark Paintings*, a body of work developed in direct response to Demetri Cabin. Finally, I end the paper by discussing my relationship to installation and theatricality, two elements that featured heavily in my thesis exhibition. Written from a reflective position, I use this paper to illuminate the network of references and meaning that brought together the mediums of sculpture and painting in my thesis installation, and ruminate on the success and intention of this gesture.

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Dedication

For my Mum, Dad, Zoe, Nanny, Paddy, Grandad and Pat.



Figure 1: Unknown Artist. *Archival Image a*. Date Unknown. Scan of Kodachrome Slide. Artist's collection.

1. ORIENTATION

Let me describe for you my house. To start with, I can't seem to give it a good name. My house, our house, the cabin, all of these things are embedded in context. A name is a way of referencing something when it is outside of its context, and so seems at odds with my experience of this place.

So what is it? At first glance, it's a one-room post and beam structure built on boggy lowland near Ruckle Park on Saltspring Island. To get there, you take the ferry to Fulford Harbour and head south down Beaver Point road, turning left onto the cul-de-sac Demetri Way, following it nearly to the end. Here you have two choices: you can take your chances driving down the steep dirt road to your right, which has been known to eat-up the most tenacious of vehicles and stubborn of drivers, or you can leave your car in the turnaround and walk (but everyone will know you are visiting). The road is damp, dark, steep and mucky. Halfway down you will come to a fork in the road. Take the right hand path past a small field and neatly groomed pond; soon you will pass under some low cedar boughs (I should cut those) and emerge into a field filled with feral irises and goliath thistles. Walk along the field's edge where the grass is knocked down from traffic. At the far end, hidden behind a stand of fir trees you will find the house.

The structure is a fair size, square at the back and pointed at the front, like the bow of some small earthbound ship. The exterior will be crusted in mould, fir needles, and a decretory collection of deer skulls, jaws, antlers and legs. Head toward the dark damp back of the structure where you will find an unfinished extension, covered by an improvised blue tarp roof. Past this room is the front door. At the top of the doorframe we keep the keys (this hiding place is no secret). Once inside you will be greeted by a spacious open room with floor to ceiling windows and massive cedar beams. The abundance of glass means it is often cold; find the wood stove to your right, and remember to open the flue in the chimney, there is no insurance here. In the kitchen behind the wood stove there is a long cedar countertop, and beside it a two burner propane stove. This will cook, but has to be connected to the gas tank outside. The hutch that keeps the tank from rusting is a favorite hangout for the hairiest of spiders; I suggest you wear gloves for this task. Water comes from the well at the bottom of the field. Use a wheelbarrow and fill a few blue buckets on each trip. You may want to boil it, but I always take my chances.

1.1 Introduction

My work investigates lived histories, place-based phenomena and the shifting, changeable nature of memory. My thesis research focuses on Demetri Cabin, a disused homestead on the Gulf Islands as a site of inquiry, and uses a practice of fieldwork to inform material led studio investigations. The resulting work combines the languages of painting, improvised construction and installation to orchestrate an evocative viewing experience, wherein the viewer enters into and interacts with an enclosed world. At stake in these works is the ability for subjective depictions of a localized context to invoke the viewers own relationship to place, calling on universal experiences of belonging and dislocation while probing at methods for re-connection.

1.2 Notes on Structure

In this document I provide two contexts for my artworks, each of which requires a distinct written voice. The first context is that of the academy, art history, and the network of scholarship that informs my thinking as an art-maker. Here, I use a conventional scholarly tone to trace the connections between my work and the academic conversations that inform it. The second context is that of the house, land, community and history from which my research originates. These are the factors that infuse Demetri Cabin with meaning, transforming it into a place; a location that houses and shapes a "rich and complicated interplay between people and the environment" (Cresswell 6).

My experience of place at Demetri Cabin is embodied; filtered through my senses and predicated on a durational relationship between my body and the site. Using anecdotes, descriptive tours¹ and storytelling, I introduce the reader to my embodied experience of place, and invite them to imagine maneuvering through the physical, historical and emotional topography of the site with me.

Placing these two modes of writing in conversation with one another creates a reading experience where each distinctive voice evolves and enriches the context for the next. I have chosen this format to mirror my working process, which operates via a cyclical relationship between life in place, material research² and academic inquiry.

The use of these two distinct voices also mimics the nature of my thesis exhibition, which combines the languages of painting, installation, and improvised construction. By highlighting formal similarities between these painted and built objects, and by creating a spacial interdependence between painted media and sculptural pieces, I seek to create a network of meaning between each work, suggesting the presence of an overarching narrative. This strategy allows the viewer to create connections between pieces according to their own internal logic, finishing the story I start. In his classic text, *Art and Illusion*, Ernst Gombrich introduced the concept of “the Beholders Share”, proposing that a work of art is not complete without the contribution of meaning by the viewer (Gombrich, 181). My installation follows Gombrich's concept, asking the viewer to become co-creator of meaning by building a story of connection between my paintings, my sculptures and my use of space.

1 In his 1984 book, *The Practice of Everyday Life*, Michel de Certeau states that “space is practiced place” (p117). For de Certeau, the transformation of place into space is carried out by the moving body, and extends into language and writing. In his chapter entitled *Tours and Maps*, De Certeau notes a study conducted by C. Linde and W. Labov, who asked New Yorkers to describe a lived space. The majority polled favored an enacted description, dependent on operations: “You come through a low door etc.” (pg 119). De Certeau names this mode of description the *Tour*, and connects it to a lived language of space dominant in common language (p 119).

2 Material Research refers to a process of experimentation with painting, drawing, sculpting, growing, building etc., that takes place in the studio. Over time these experiments build a bank of material knowledge that informs the development of my practice.



Figure 2: Artist Unknown. *Archival Image b*. Date Unknown. Scan of Kodachrome Slide. Artist's collection.

2. PLANTING, GROWING, SLASHING, BURNING

Outside the cabin is the place we call “down below”, in contrast to the drier part of the property, “up top”. In many ways, down below is a microcosm, with its distinct ecosystem (wetter, warmer) making it perfect for growing and gardening. The wetness of the land down here absorbs sound, and the air is close and thick enough to carry nutrients.

It is this potential for growing that attracted my grandparents here. They bought the land in the early seventies, built a cabin, cut down trees, pulled up stumps and dug out ponds: eight in total. My grandmother ran a business out of these ponds, supplying nurseries and private gardens with waterlilies, irises and other wetland plants. Now this business is shut down, but growth maintains its breakneck pace unsupervised.

If you stay down here for any length of time, you will form a relationship with the plants. Time is measured by their growth³. Cutting and burning, clearing and culling, working to make space is a

³ French anthropologist and philosopher Bruno Latour, argues that the division between nature and culture is a false compartmentalization specific to the modern era. In his book, *We Have Never Been Modern*, Latour calls for an “anthropology of science” (p ix), where natural phenomena and social phenomena are not considered separate discourses but in relation to one another. Latour states that contemporary issues such as global warming combine science, politics, and sociological systems, and therefore require hybrid responses. His claim that “we have never been modern”, that these divisions have always been constructed, resonates with the experience of living in partnership with the natural world in the contemporary era, as described above.

Sisyphean task. Burning slash is as tricky as growing is easy, even the driest wood is always wet at the center, requiring the use of gasoline as a fire starter.

2.1 From Place to Painting: A Way of Working

In the summer of 2015 I moved from Vancouver to Demetri Cabin, where I would live from May to August. The purpose for this move was twofold. Firstly, I wanted to capitalize on the growing solidarity between my peers, and experiment with art-making in an organized setting outside of the institution. This led to OPEN HOUSE⁴, an ad hoc residency I ran during the month of July in 2015. In addition to this social project, moving to Demetri Cabin was an opportunity to ground my practice in a localized context and a specifics of place. Most of my time was spent working, maintaining the building and surrounding land, and documenting my daily rhythms via the mediums of drawing, writing, video, and photography. This process of indiscriminate collection allowed me to capture the conditions of life specific to my experience, and provided the raw data that would inform my thesis work.

To describe my process on-site I turn to the word fieldwork. Fieldwork implies a physical and durational engagement with a site, as well as a process of collecting items and information for further study elsewhere. Though I acknowledge the established scientific practice of conducting fieldwork, as well as the term's contemporary use in the social practices⁵, breaking the word down to its component parts is most valuable to this discussion. By situating *work*: an action carried out by the body in the *field*: a tangible and dynamic place, the word fieldwork demands the researcher be physically present in, and interacting with her surroundings. This means that research conducted via fieldwork is filtered through the senses and experiences of the researcher. In my case, fieldwork conducted at Demetri Cabin is inherently subjective, and documents an experience of place

4 For more information and documentation visit www.bronwynmcmillan.com

5 Fieldwork is a term that has been adopted by multiple disciplines. At its core, fieldwork describes the process of moving outside the enclosed research zone such as the office or laboratory into the outside world to observe and gather information on the research subject. In disciplines such as geography, geology and biology this is usually a process of collecting samples and data for later analysis in the laboratory. For anthropologists, fieldwork can refer to a more interactive process, where the researcher works with the researched community over a long period of time. In contemporary art, fieldwork has been adopted to describe the collection that often drives research driven practices (Wetzler, p 1).

influenced by an existing relationship with the site.

Though my process inarguably begins with fieldwork, I do not seek to illustrate or document fieldwork in my final product. Rather, my work draws from the experience of living in place, and attempts to re-connect with that experience from the perspective of the studio. The distance between these two spaces, and my attempt to communicate that distance become central aspects of my practice; making my work as much about place as it is about the attempt to recall a specific experience of place from somewhere else. Painting provides me with the best method for this task, as it allows me to recreate memories, objects and experiences of Demetri Cabin with a degree of mediation, leaving space for my subjectivity to influence the work.

Acknowledging this subjectivity is key to my methodology, which can be described as a reflexive inquiry into the experience of place. In his 2010 article Graeme Sullivan identifies reflexivity as “...demonstrating a critical constructivism that affects the researcher and the researched” (p 24). I enact Sullivan's definition by conducting my work in a manner that materially and conceptually acknowledges subjective experience as its foundation. I do this by allowing my paintings to evolve away from their original reference points, and become influenced by my subjective memory of Demetri Cabin. As author, historian and activist Rebecca Solnit writes, “memory ... is a shifting, fading, partial thing, a net that doesn't catch all the fish by any means and sometimes catches butterflies that don't exist” (p 12). My paintings seek to visualize what Solnit calls “butterflies that don't exist”, namely, the aspects of memory that are in fact contaminants from other experiences. My paintings therefore document Demetri Cabin not as it is, but as I remember it, a memory that is warped and shifted by external forces.

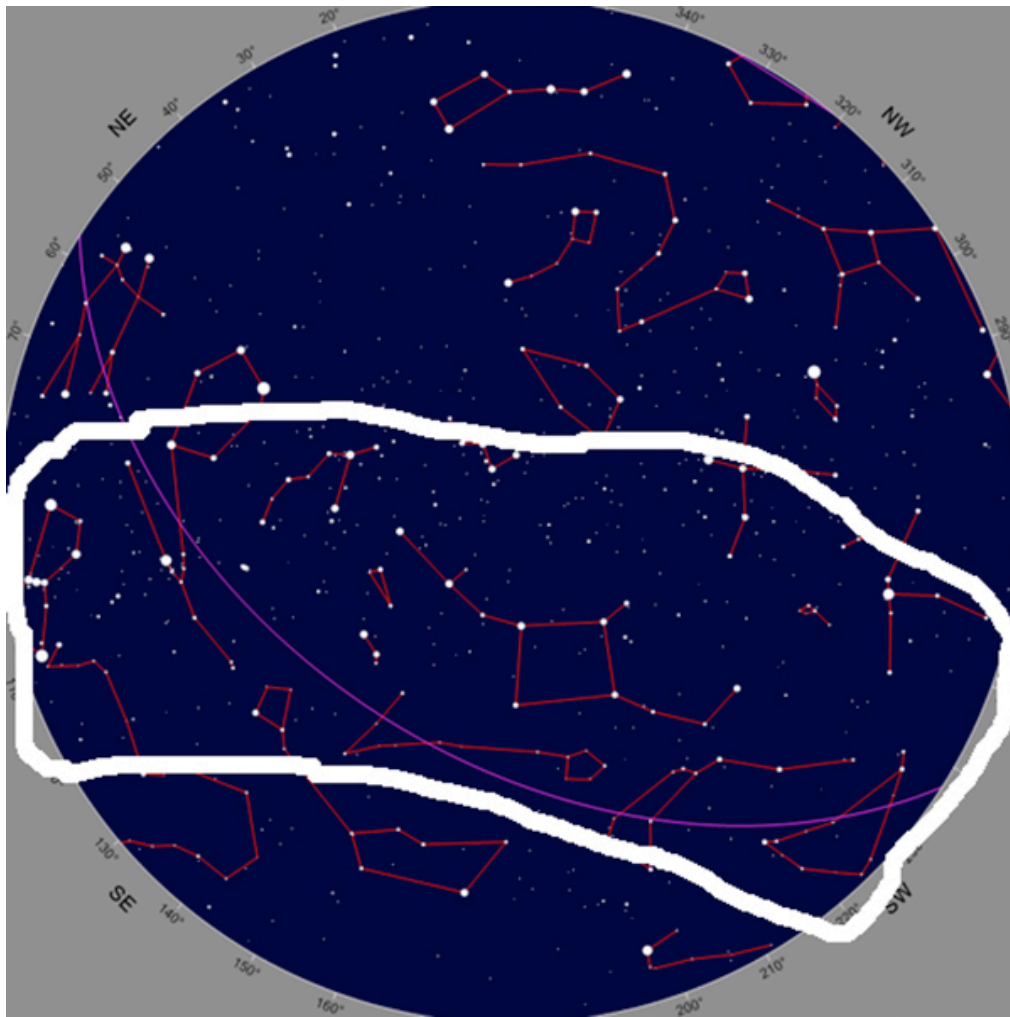


Figure 3: Doug McMillin. *Night Sky Screen Shot*. 2015. Screen capture of iPhone app “night sky”. Used with permission of the artist.

4. TRANSMISSIONS

I’ve just walked the dogs. The outlined part (of the picture) is what I see coming down the driveway on a clear evening these days. That is, the familiar Orion rising on the left, Capricorn sinking on the right.

The first rule of location by stars is: your latitude on earth can be determined by how high in the sky the North Star (Polaris) is. On the horizon if you are at the equator, directly overhead if you are at the North Pole. Southern hemisphere has something else. The second rule is: Your longitude can only be determined if you know accurately the time (day, hour, minute). That is why ships got lost before they had dependable clocks. Very interesting in this regard is one John Harrison.

Excerpt from email sent on November 12, 2015

4.1 Study for Distance: A Mediated Experience of Place

As my thesis work evolved in the hermetic realm of the studio, I began to question what constitutes an experience of place. Despite being physically separated from my home while living and working in Vancouver, mediated experiences of place transmitted via email, text message, and video chat allowed me to construct a hybrid relationship to site, one which supplemented the memory of physical experience with digital modes of communication. This caused me to re-evaluate my criteria for connection with place, bringing me to the following question: In the current globalized era, where diasporic communities are commonplace, does a relationship to place necessitate physical presence?

Key to this question is a consideration of the nature of place. Useful in this regard is feminist ethnographer Doreen Massey, who in her 1994 book, *Space, Place and Gender*, calls for a fluid, relational and evolving concept of place. Within Massey's framework, places are made specific not by their physical location, but by the particular types of social interactions that occur within their boundaries (p 121). Massey's theory challenges fixed notions of place, and replaces them with a "hybrid and provisional" (Massey, p 6) approach. This theory has implications for understanding place through mediated technologies, as it allows for an uprooting, a sense of place that is "...not necessarily spatially concentrated" (Massey 164), but resides in the continual changing present.



Figure 4: Bronwyn McMillin. *Study for Distance*. 2015-16. Oil on Canvas. 4'x5'

Study for Distance uses email, the iPhone and painting to consider how different technologies change perceptions of place. Using celestial navigation to reference an archaic technology of location, the work documents the constellations as they appear over Demetri Cabin during the month of November. As described by the above passage, charting the stars has provided a means of triangulating⁶ your location on the globe for thousands of years. Following this logic, the constellations depicted in *study for distance* act as an archaic form of GPS (Global Positioning System), and suggest a poetic means of precisely locating Demetri Cabin via the macro scale of the universe. The romantic nature of this gesture is complicated when considering the painting's source: an image of the stars taken using the iPhone app "Night Sky"⁷ (See fig 2), which was emailed from Demetri Cabin to my Vancouver studio. Painting this image allowed me to combine memories of looking at the night sky from that location with the digital map shown above, creating a final work that represents a hybrid between memory and transmitted image.

Study for Distance used technologies of communication as a starting point for making a painting, however, the presence of these technologies was not visible in the final version of the work. This was not always the case, as in previous iterations of *Study for Distance* I paired the painting with a printed booklet chronicling the genesis of the painted imagery, and later with a sound piece describing the stars as tools for navigation. Choosing to exclude these additional aspects of *Study for Distance* was a result of my commitment to Ernst Gombrich's concept of the "Beholders Share", introduced above (p 181). When considering my installation as a wholistic experience, it was important to leave space for the viewer to develop her own interpretation. The booklet and sound work both worked at cross purposes with this goal, acting to influence the viewer into a specific reading of the installation. In retrospect, this was due to the didactic nature of these companion pieces, rather than an incompatibility between the mediums of painting and sound, or painting and

⁶ Triangulation is a navigational method of finding a distance or location using the distance between two existing points whose location is known, to calculate the location of a third unknown point. In social sciences, the term triangulation refers to the use of two or more differing methods to test the validity of an existing subject. Each of these descriptions relies on the convergence of two known factors to locate a third unknown.

⁷ "Night Sky" is an iPhone app that allows you to identify constellations using the camera. The above image uses "Night Sky" to document and identify the stars over Demetri Cabin.

print, as I had initially thought. In future works, I am eager to re-evaluate my interest in print and sound medias, and to integrate them with my painting practice in a more productive manner.



Figure 5: Unknown Artist. *Archival Image c.* Date Unknown. Scan of Kodachrome Slide. Artist's collection.

3. WALKING IN THE DARK

One of the first things you will notice about the cabin is light, or the lack of it. Darkness descends quickly, leaving you unsure where your eyes end and the world begins. Flashlights are everywhere, and batteries are sloughed off like dead skin. You get to know things through a circle of white or yellow light that becomes the edge of your world. You recognize people by their flashlights. Whose is white, whose is yellow, and who doesn't use one.

Because batteries always die, kerosene eventually runs out, and candles don't grow on trees, you will one day be in the dark. Moving without seeing, the relationship between one thing and another is as important as the things themselves. Knowing where you are is a matter of finding edges, bumping around like a fly against a window, feeling your way through the world.

3.1 *Walking in the Dark: A Way of Painting*

As my thesis work evolved, I wanted to develop a framework for painting that directly reflected my experience at Demetri Cabin. *Walking in the Dark Paintings* are the result of this desire. Rather than illustrating a research process as *Study for Distance* did, these paintings display a history of material negotiation on their surface, and do not follow a plan or strive for a determined outcome. Instead, *Walking in the Dark Paintings* draw on the parallels between walking in the dark and constructing a painted image from memory. Just as walking in the dark required me to react to unknown surroundings as they unfolded before me, these paintings were made by negotiating the relationship between an evolving network of marks; bringing me to an unknown endpoint.

The inspiration for these paintings was drawn directly from my fieldwork experience. While living without power at Demetri Cabin, I became intimate with the heightened spacial awareness that characterizes navigating with limited vision. While walking in the dark, I came to understand my surroundings by orienting my body in relation to other physical objects. This process was often reactionary, where I would feel, or bump into something, note its location, and chart a new course. Teaching myself this process for way-finding⁸ I began to create a virtual⁹ picture of my environment in my mind's eye. As my body grew more adept at moving through darkened spaces, this virtual picture diversified, incorporating sound, smell, and spacial recall to create a multilayered mental reproduction of my surroundings.

Moving to the studio, I wanted to translate the experience of walking in the dark into a method for constructing paintings. My first attempt was a kind of blind contour drawing from memory, where my hand traced the path of my mind's eye as it toured through my recollection of Demetri Cabin. From here, I experimented with building the foundations of a painting using this method. *Barricade* and *Night Light* were painted in this manner, combining path based line-work

⁸ I define wayfinding as a process of spacial problem solving that relies on perception of and interaction with one's surroundings to move in the path of least resistance from point A to point B.

⁹ Much has been written about the word *virtual*. The term carries many connotations, from the current technological use, to the influential writings of French philosopher Gilles Deleuze. In his 1966 book *Bergsonianism*, Deleuze introduces the concept of *virtuality* as a generative space of infinite possibilities. Deleuze's concept of *virtuality* refers to reality, but is separate from the possible in that it exists outside the limiting bounds of actualization (Deleuze, 1966). Much like a picture of a cat refers to a real cat, but can be edited into infinite forms of hybrid animal, the virtual is essentially generative.

with a pictorial representation of the spaces I was imagining.



Fig 6: Bronwyn McMillin. *Barricade*. 2016. Oil on Canvas. 4'x6'.



Fig 7: Bronwyn McMillin. *Night Light*. 2016. Oil on Canvas. 5.5'x4.5'.

As British Anthropologist Tim Ingold writes, drawing "...has everything to do with wayfaring- with breaking a path through a terrain and leaving a trace, at once on the imagination and the ground" (p179). Though *Barricade* and *Night Light* are painted rather than drawn, Ingold's ethic applies equally to the function of the brushstroke as it does the pencil. As Ingold suggests, the brush acts as a means of feeling a path through virtual space in these paintings- from the initial line-work, to the description of forms. Just as in the dark things cannot fully be seen, memory does not capture every aspect of an object or space. Painting from spacial memory therefore encourages a kind of mark-making that will always be incomplete and suggestive. *Walking in the Dark Paintings* operate in this way, prioritizing some forms over others, and often leaving things incomplete or undefined. In her essay *Ontology of Identity and Interstitial Being*, indigenous feminist philosopher Anne Waters names the unknown and undefined, "The Land of Uncertainty" (p 153). In this land, no aspect of experience is ever fixed, instead the only constant is a continual "coming into being something" (p 153). Considering the act of painting as a kind of material "coming into being"; where marks interact to create a unique whole, *Walking in the Dark Paintings* take on what I call a shifty sensibility. Here, not everything can be described, the image slips in and out of focus, and paint is applied in a manner that reveals its relationship to the hand.

Walking in the Dark Paintings were notable in the development of my practice for two reasons. Firstly, these works established a connection between my painting method and my experience of place. Secondly, these works used positioning and perspective to orient the viewer in a dream or memory space. Much like Peter Doig's *Okahumkee (Some other Peoples Blues)*, 1990, or Karin Mamma Andersson's *Traveling in the Family*, 2003, both *Night Light* and *Barricade* actively position the viewer outside and above the picture plane.

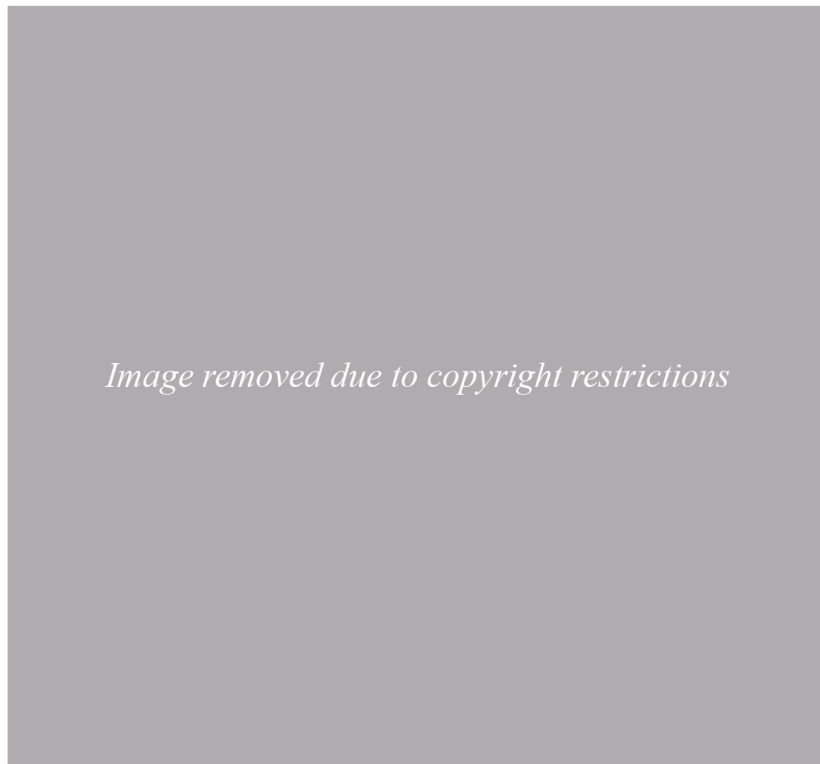


Fig. 8. Peter Doig. *Okahumkee (Some other Peoples Blues)* 1990. Oil on Canvas. 79' x 94'



Fig 9. Karin Mamma Andersson. *Travelling in the Family*. 2003. Oil on Board. 36.22' x 48.03'

This omniscient perspective, combined with the use of a dominant foreground form such as the painted stripe in *Barricade* or the spray paint gesture in *Night Light*, create the feeling of looking onto or into something one is not part of. I adopted this strategy to directly reference the feeling of distance between studio and place from which my paintings evolve.



Figure 10: Unknown Artist. *Archival Image d*. Unknown Date. Scan of Kodachrome Slide. Artist's collection.

5. CONTRAPTIONS

A middle aged man rides a too-small bike down the road. He is wearing a plaid shirt, Green Dunlop brand gumboots and cargo pants held together with silver duct tape. He passes a roadside stand advertising in hand painted letters "muscovy duck: 5 \$". Unsure if this is the price for the living duck, the dead duck, or the eggs, the man keeps going. None of the above would fit on the bike anyways. Coming around the corner there's a Mitsubishi Delica parked under the trees, its brash red bumper sticker proclaiming: *Wild Salmon Don't Do Drugs!* Someone has strung up a threadbare blue tarp in the trees above, creating a makeshift car-park that could use re-engineering. When he passes the idle excavator on the corner, he doesn't notice the black dog who follows him, a rope collar bouncing with every step of his four legged trot. As he passes the beach, he doesn't notice the new addition to the haggard fleet of weatherworn houseboats, five in total now. He doesn't notice much, because it's 1:27 pm and he has three minutes to catch the ferry.

5.1 Installation: Material Vocabulary and Orchestrated Viewership

In the early 1920s French philosopher and sociologist Maurice Halbwachs began thinking about spaces, specifically homes, in relation to collective memory. Halbwachs proposed that specific objects when organized in a particular way formed a "silent society" (p 48), a spatial reflection of their

creator's social structure. It was Halbwachs' thinking that individuals familiar with these objects would associate them with a similar narrative, regardless if they had met one another or had seen the specific object in question before (p 49). As someone who grew up in close proximity to the distinctly improvised aesthetic of hippies, independents and eccentrics, I have always known this to be true. Encountering a lean-to woodshed made from blue tarp and yellow nylon rope, or a cedar shake roof covered in mould and lichen, I am instantly reminded of the social context those objects evoke, regardless of where I encounter them.

Many contemporary sculptors have taken advantage of the phenomenon of collective memory, however, it is those who use recognizable materials without becoming overly didactic that interest me most. Canadian artist Christina Mackie, whose sculptures draw from the material palette of her childhood on the Gulf Islands is one such artist. Mackie uses cedar planking, industrial fishing nets, earthenware pottery, and indigenous marine flora and fauna to construct her multilayered installations.

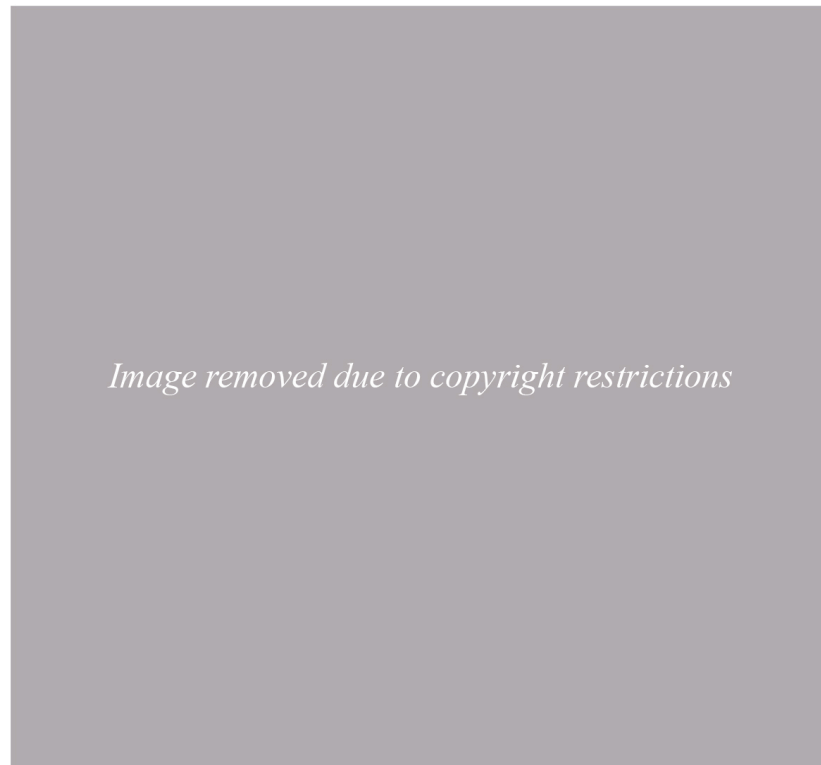


Figure 11: Christina Mackie. *Filters*. 2015. Mixed media, dimensions variable. Installation at Tate Modern.

Mackie minimally manipulates these highly contextual objects before placing them in the gallery, focusing more on controlling the relationship between objects and the experience of the viewer. By building tables, plinths and other specific supports, Mackie subtly divides the gallery space, and forces the viewer to interact with the work in a prescribed manner.

When considering the layout and spacial experience of my thesis exhibition, I was inspired to translate Mackie's command over space and colloquial use of material into my own work. I wanted to create an environmental alteration that added a bodily component to my installation, activating the senses on multiple levels. *Arch*, a thirteen foot structure cobbled together out of Oriented Strand Board, salvaged and B grade lumber, and the trunk of a fir tree, transformed the gallery into an environment the viewer entered into - literally crossing the threshold as they moved through the exhibit.



Figure 12. Bronwyn McMillin, *Arch*. 2016. OSB Board, Pine 2 x 4's, Fir Tree. 13'x 8'. 2016. ECUAD.

Building a structure that functioned in this manner directly referred to De Certeau's notion of the Tour mentioned above (p 119). As the viewer's body circled around and under the structure of *Arch*, they moved from painting to painting, touring through the memory space of the exhibition. Regardless of where the viewer stood, portions of *Arch* were always visible in the painting's sightline, suggesting an interdependency between built and painted works. *Night Light* furthered this cross media interdependence by balancing an oil painting on a salvaged cedar shelf, the corner of which was converted into a planter for a sapling cedar tree.



Figure 13. Bronwyn McMillin. *Night Light (Detail)*. 2016. Cedar Planks, OSB Board, Cedar Sapling, and Oil Painting. ECUAD.

In *Night Light*, the painting and the sculpture are physically dependent on one another, and echo the aesthetic of decor in a hastily constructed cabin or Planter's shack. This reference suggests a connection between the works in the exhibition and the home, as if each work was transplanted from a site and re-arranged as a tableau in the gallery. This strategy introduces an element of theatricality into the work, where the viewer becomes privy to the internal logic of a home or lived site. Transforming the installation into a set of sorts, the viewers then become actors, interacting with the work to complete the narrative.

6. REFLECTION

In the introduction to this document I outlined the cyclical manner in which my practice unfolds. In keeping with this mode of working, the artworks I describe in this paper are ongoing, evolving and in a process of continual coming into being (Waters, p 153). Even as I read through my writing a final time, new ideas and interpretations arise, and the whole churning cycle begs to begin again. This is the nature of artistic research, where there is no answer, no end, no objective, just a continual questioning. For the purposes of my thesis work I have focused my inquisitive gaze, using Demetri Cabin as a site for nuancing multiple relationships to place. By layering the mediums of painting, installation and digital imagery, I provide the viewer with multiple points of entry, allowing them to triangulate their own location in relationship to the representations of place I provide.

My thesis research started as an investigation into a sense of place at Demetri Cabin, however that is not where it has ended. Through a process that prioritizes experimentation, my work has evolved and changed over time, spilling into conversations around the nature of perception, the role of technology in forging new relationships to place, and the potential for materials to trigger collective memory. My thesis exhibition is therefore not an end, but a pause, a moment of stillness before I begin again.



Figure 14. *Archival Image e*. Scan of Kodachrome Slide. Date Unknown. Artist's collection.

7. STAINS, CREEKS, CRACKS AND LEAKS

Closing up the cabin you become more aware of the cracks. There's one, under the door, just big enough for mice to come and go at will. And another, above the armchair where the roof meets the window, the stain around it growing as the water pools, waiting on the other side. Things fall apart, they always do. Ants slowly gnaw at the ceiling beams, and the height of their conical dust-piles become a way of measuring time. There is nothing to count down to here, no event that will change things, just a continual sprouting and dying, like the see-saw breath of a sleeping dog.

T-10 until blast off-10 -9-8-7-6-5-4-3-2-1....1-2-3-4-5-6-7-8-9-10- ffo tsalb litnu 10-T

It's all the same to me: Going backward to go forward, rotting to grow, leaving to come back. Cracks open up, stains spread, leaks attract more and more water. Things change, things carry on.

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