



Topsy-Turvy World

Text by J.J. Kegan McFadden

Today we can agree on one thing, things aren't what they used to be. This is in large part due to what has been widely acknowledged as climate change. According to the David Suzuki Foundation website:

In Canada we can expect climate change to bring an unprecedented warming of 0.2 degrees Celsius per decade. This may appear minor, but scientific analysis has shown that very profound changes will result from this steady rise in temperature. Rising average temperatures do not simply mean balmy winters. Some regions will experience more extreme heat, while others may cool slightly. Flooding, drought, and intense summer heat could result. Violent storms and other extreme weather

events could also result from the increased energy stored in our warming atmosphere.

To some, it seems, the world has been turned up side down. Such a sense of confusion is prevalent in the recent photographic series of Winnipeg artists Dominique Rey and Collin Zipp. Choosing to engage with the all-encompassing question of climate control, each artist has proceeded differently.

Rey offers a contemplative, yet disorienting outlook with her series of colour prints that comprise *Projections*. Shot from the seat of commercial airplane flights, these large-scale colour photographs recall the voluminous clouds and sunsets often depicted in the paintings of English artist William Turner (1175 – 1851), or more recently, German artist, Gerhard Richter. Yet these serene views are unnerving and uncanny — they are at once familiar and not so. In a recent statement, the artist muses:

In the expansive and serene images of the Projections series I navigate towards notions of solitude and reverie. These vast aerial photographic spaces offer the viewer an invitation to dive into their own projected landscape. Like many of my projects, I am interested in creating a reflective frame. Similar to my past projects, this work provides a meditation on the texture of slowness and the relationship between attention and time, creating a moment of stillness within the viewer.

In past photographic series, Rey has often sought to depict the serenity that one finds amongst the annoyances / realities of everyday life. From clear skies to images where the frame is practically obliterated by the fullness of the sun to grey clouds and just a shadow of urbanization to land masses parceled for farming, *Projections* offers perhaps the most

evasive, yet totalizing, perspective on Rey's search for reflection.

On the other hand, Zipp's work is the product of various experimental techniques in order to explore human perception and memory. In his recent series, *Surfacing*, the artist re-imagines the landscape by reworking existing commercial images torn from the pages of National Geographic and other similar sources of adventure-knowledge. Lush scenes from mountain ranges to deserts and lakes are all filtered through the artist's process of redux and reformation. He clarifies, *"The imagery within my work results as direct responses to my surrounding environments. I am interested in the ways in which technology can change our natural environments."* Zipp's work has reflected an engagement with, and concern for, rapidly changing ecosystems since his 2006 residency at the Living Prairie Museum -- a twelve-hectare tall grass prairie reserve in Winnipeg that is home to over 160 species of prairie plants and a great array of prairie wildlife. This residency resulted in a permanent installation titled, *lost_landscape* exhibited on an interactive plasma television comprising forty-two video loops that alternate in sequential order so the same virtual landscape may never be traversed twice.

In an unsettling echo of Rey's *Projections* and Zipp's recent series, it seems we are all in the midst of a landscape that is becoming increasingly unfamiliar with the added reality that may never be how we (begin to) remember it ... that is to say, rapid changes in climate and other factors have eroded the notion of familiarity in the landscape. What was once may never be returned to for a second time.

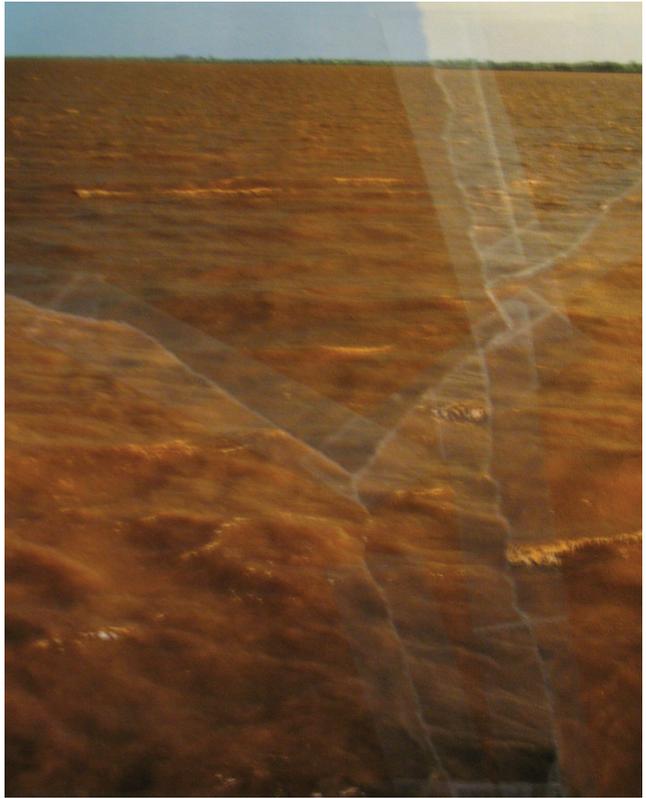
The location for this exhibition was chosen as much out of conviviality as it

was for its distinct surrounding – The Boreal Forest. As Suzuki's research informs us:

The boreal region is truly extraordinary and encircles the globe across the northern hemisphere through Canada, Russia, Scandinavia, and Alaska. This vast region is characterized by a mosaic of ecosystems, including forests, lakes, river valleys, wetlands, and peat bogs. The forest ecosystem of the boreal region is a green belt of conifer and deciduous trees that acts as part of the largest source and filter of fresh water on the planet.

Canada's boreal forest is the largest contiguous intact forest left on earth, covering 35 per cent of the country's land mass and stretching across the north from Newfoundland to the Yukon. These northern forests are the breeding grounds for over 60 per cent of Canada's bird population with approximately three billion birds nesting there annually. The boreal is also home to the world's largest caribou herd, the second-highest wolf population, and polar, black, and grizzly bears.

An alternator is a device for converting one form of energy into another, from mechanical to electric. It seems as though Rey and Zipp are engaged in a similar process of converting images of our once-familiar landscapes and vistas into the new reality of the ever-changing ecosystems. This idea is further mirrored in the fact that PLATFORM has converted energy from our space in downtown



Winnipeg into an exhibition in Wasagaming Community Arts. All of this overlaps with Suzuki's call to action for a new kind of alternator... one that repurposes energy with conservation in mind.

J.J. Kegan McFadden is a Winnipeg-based cultural worker. His curatorial interests lie in the realm of divergent photographic practices, installation, and the questioning of memory. McFadden holds a BA (Honours) in Art History from the University of Winnipeg (2005) and an MA in Art History / Critical and Curatorial Studies from the Department of Art History, Visual Art & Theory at the University of British Columbia (2007). He is the Director/Curator of PLATFORM: centre for photographic + digital arts.

Working in photography, video, and painting, **Dominique Rey** completed an MFA in photography in 2006 at Bard College (New York). Her exhibition *Selling Venus/Vénus au miroir* was shown at Plug In Institute for Contemporary Art (Winnipeg) in 2005 and through 2007 traveled to Clark Gallery (Montreal), Michael Gibson Gallery (London), Alternator Gallery (Kelowna), and Gallery TPW (Toronto). Rey has been awarded grants from the Canada Council for the Arts, the Manitoba Arts Council, the Winnipeg Arts Council, the Elizabeth Green-shields Foundation, and the Ricard Foundation. Her work has been reviewed in the *Globe & Mail*, *Frieze*, *Canadian Art*, *Border Crossings*, and the *Winnipeg Free Press*.

<www.dominiquerey.com> **Collin Zipp** is a multidisciplinary video/digital artist who obtained his BFA from the University of Manitoba's School of Art in 2005. His work uses experimental techniques such as scratching, hand processing, and digital re-touching to push the capacity of the video medium into uncharted and unfamiliar territory. Zipp has exhibited his video work widely throughout North America and overseas in both gallery exhibitions and video screenings. His video work will be included in the three-person exhibition, *f o u n d*, in October 2009 at the Art Gallery of Southwestern Manitoba. <www.collinzipp.info>

Dominique Rey + Collin Zipp

ALTERNATOR

curated by J.J. Kegan McFadden

EXHIBITION

12 June - 8 July 2009

RECEPTION + ARTISTS' / CURATOR'S TOUR

12 June, Friday 6 - 9 PM

WORKS EXHIBITED

Dominique Rey

Projections series (2007)

archival inkjet prints on cotton rag

35" x 40" each, framed

Collin Zipp

Surfacing series (2008)

digital inkjet prints

15" x 12" each, framed

Untitled [bird] (2006)

video

7:33, loop

ALTERNATOR is organized by **PLATFORM** centre for photographic + digital arts and co-presented by Wasagaming Community Arts Inc, as part of PLATFORM's new series of sporadic off-site projects loosely organized under the designation **f_l_o_a_t_i_n_g** in honour of our antecedent, The Floating Gallery (1981-2003).

PLATFORM centre for photographic + digital arts is a not-for-profit artist-run centre in Winnipeg. PLATFORM strives to showcase the scope of photographic and digital art practices, from innovations and re-discoveries arising from the traditional print, to advances stemming from digital photographic techniques, to the outer limits where photography dissolves into other media classifications.



PLATFORM
centre for photographic + digital arts

121 - 100 Arthur Street (Artspace) Winnipeg
Manitoba, Canada R3B 1H3
204.942.8183 FAX 204.942.1555
info@platformgallery.org www.platformgallery.org

Wasagaming Community Arts Inc.

110 Wasagaming Drive Box 98 Wasagaming
Manitoba, Canada ROJ 2H0
204.848.2993 FAX 204.848.2993