



# CUT-UP

Kelsey Braun  
Ming Hon  
Kristan Horton  
Lisa Stinner-Kun

A collaboration between PLATFORM & Courtney R. Thompson

## Cut-Up

The term collage originated from a specific moment in Western Art History more than a century ago. Associated with Cubism, collage demonstrated a new relationship to the artwork through a connection to collective material and manipulation of perspectival space. Torn papers, fabric, and objects of the everyday became surface; and this patchy, yet intermittently cohesive register would emerge across disciplines and influence the Dadaists, Surrealists, and Pop Art, among others. Photomontage, assemblage and the cut-up are indebted to collage, yet these terms were associated with particular mediums and technologies. Today this specificity may itself be lost in a cut-and-paste culture that flattens materiality and technique into a unifying rubric of remixed experience, one with seamless edges. In rereading Clement Greenberg's formal treatise, *Collage* (1959) he describes the ability to simultaneously undecieve and deceive the eye through a declaration and denial of surface using the term reality in quotation marks.<sup>(i)</sup> In our current state of consumption of pervasive mediated reality this description of an expanded field is worth returning to.

Artists exploit and complicate art historical terms so that collage becomes performative as it cuts across disciplinary boundaries. Cut-Up presents an opportunity to critically engage the relevance of collage and its permutations for contemporary artists that are indebted to but not immediately identified with its history. Art historical connections are recalled to illuminate diversions from the lineage of materiality and to reveal cohesion as an act amidst a chaotic influx of digital and analog realities with what is found, reconstituted, and re-presented. In examining the relationship between collage and lens-based images, the exhibition provokes discourse on the broader impact of technology on contemporary artistic practice.

Appropriation techniques employed by the Pictures Generation of artists actively engaged referents through photography in the mid 1970s to 1980s. More than twenty years later, sampling may more accurately reflect the nature of our own relationship to the proliferation of digital images that are cropped, culled, and disseminated without context and consumed across the screens we encounter everyday. Collage remains relevant to art and critical engagement as both conceptual and aesthetic frameworks inform perception through the layering of physical and ideological materials. The selection criteria allude to various commodities and currencies that are not always homogenously shared. Within this discord, a spectrum of experience is revealed in the edges marked by the possibilities of dis/associations.

The artists: Kelsey Braun, Ming Hon, Kristan Horton, and Lisa Stinner-Kun in Cut-Up are less wedded to the established roots of a collage-based practice. However, they are nevertheless purveyors of found image and experience as spatial and temporal citation where the cut functions as interlocutor. Group exhibitions can also flatten the work of artists to smooth them into a history or particular medium. Cut-Up proposes to leave the margins sharp.

Braun's filmic cuts of archival family film footage seek to capture the moments that precede and follow the frame. Represented as absence these are in turn visualized through tonal pulses that ripple the source material on the surface as it is projected.

This warped feedback loop offers a counter-sensory archive of the documented image that remains unstable, filtered, and layered. The process creates a physical dissonance under the visible surface negating the footage as a reliable document.

Hon cuts the gestures of habituation and the cumulative of the everyday. Through habit our patterns become fixed. Compulsions, comforting vices, and the order of routines provide a self-soothing performance. Hon's temporal shifts mar the sequence, revealing the familiar as a construct developed over time.

Horton's video continues the formalism of his *Animate/Reanimate* series exploring "haptic sessions". Influenced by Jean Piaget's experiments where objects were discerned through touch, Horton's video presents a mass of common items that lack fascination. The brevity of contact as they speed along barely registers like a tic of a finger scrolling through everyday content.

Lisa Stinner-Kun's nuanced photographs reveal opposing states in harmonious compositions. Her conceptual-based images are static spatial collages that refer to complexities involved in the conception of public space arrested but perpetually and immaculately maintained. By engaging with this ahistorical landscape of 18th Century gardens, Stinner-Kun reveals these democratic oases—once designated private edens of the elite—are now deemed public paradises of green space.

In 1978, Ulrich Weisstein penned "Collage, Montage, and Related Terms: Their Literal and Figurative Use in Application to Techniques and Forms in Various Arts", an essay dedicated to ordering what he perceived was a chaotic scattering of terminology and methodology surrounding the term collage. His honorable yet dogmatic dedication to dictionary definitions, rooting about in word origins, and stream of consciousness quoting of literary, theoretical, and visual art examples is an exhaustive register. However, his conclusion buried in his final lines is clear, "collage should be limited to cases where art and reality intersect."<sup>(ii)</sup> Returning to Greenberg's formalism and "reality" that resists the outside world it would appear that reality and collage had come full circle. *Cut-Up*, reflects a contemporary intersection of art and reality in the work of these artists who manifest, frame, and cut our mediation of the world. Ultimately begging the question: whose reality?

Courtney R Thompson

(i) Clement Greenberg, "Collage" (1959) in *Art and Culture* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1961), pp.70-83

(ii) Ulrich Weisstein, "Collage, Montage, and Related Terms: Their Literal and Figurative Use in Application to Techniques and Forms in Various Arts," special issue in honor of Calvin S. Brown, *Comparative Literature Studies* 15, no. 1 (March 1978): 137

**Kelsey Braun** explores a variety of landscapes using both contrasting and complimentary aural and visual elements to construct alternative realities from within which the viewer can either escape to, or reflect on our own from. These worlds are translated into sound performance and recording, single channel video, and installations using both. Braun holds a BFA from the University of Manitoba's School of Art.

**Ming Hon** is an independent dancer, choreographer, and performance artist based in Winnipeg. Her practice looks into themes of work, labour, capitalism, and the economy and politics of the female body. Her most recent works of note include 'Forever in Blue Jeans' a commission from Winnipeg's Contemporary Dancers/Prairie Dance Circuit, 'The Exhibitionist', and 'Clever Piece'. Hon's works have been performed and exhibited locally and internationally, including at The Taipei Artist's Village in Taiwan, as part of the National Art Gallery's Prairie Scene events in Ottawa, Surrey Art Gallery in B.C., Art Gallery of Mississauga, and at Plug In Institute for Contemporary Art in Winnipeg and more. Her practice has developed to include installation work in galleries and she regularly collaborates as a performer/collaborator on projects with visual artists such as Sarah Anne Johnson, Rebecca Belmore, and Noam Gonick. As a dancer she has studied with Tedd Robinson, Peter Boneham, Susie Burpee, and is a graduate of The School of Contemporary Dancers in Winnipeg.

**Lisa Stinner** graduated from the School of the Art Institute of Chicago with a MFA in Photography, and has shown her photographic work in exhibitions locally, nationally and internationally. She has received numerous grants and scholarships for her photographic work, and in 2013 was awarded a grant from the Canada Council for the Arts. A recent exhibition (titled Second House First, a collaborative project with the AA School of Architecture in London), was shown at RAW Gallery in Winnipeg, and is now travelling to the AA in London. Stinner-Kun has taught at the University of Manitoba's School of Art, where she received her BFA.

**Kristan Horton** studied fine art at the University of Guelph and the Ontario College of Art and Design. He currently resides in Toronto. Horton's multi-disciplinary practice includes sculpture, drawing, photography and video. Using layered processes of construction, both material and virtual; he has produced several long-term projects linked conceptually by their serial and episodic structure. Horton researches and creates his subjects in an intensive studio practice, ultimately realizing his artworks through inventive and experimental uses of digital technology.

**Courtney R. Thompson** is an independent arts professional living in Winnipeg, Manitoba. She has written for publications such as ArtSlant, Art in Print, and Border Crossings. She graduated with an MA in Art History, Theory & Criticism from the School of the Art Institute of Chicago in 2011.

#### EXHIBITION

17 April - 23 May 2015

#### OPENING RECEPTION

Friday 17 April | 7 PM

#### DURATIONAL PERFORMANCE BY MING HON

Friday 17 April | 8-11 PM

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