

*Always seeing something,  
never seeing nothing*

Chanelle Lajoie  
Michael Mogatas  
Michelle Panting  
Reza Rezaï  
Graham Wiebe

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PLATFORM





***Always seeing something, never seeing nothing*** looks at the varied practices of five emerging Winnipeg artists. This exhibition was comprised of photographic prints and sculptures by Chanelle Lajoie, Michael Mogatas, Michelle Panting, Reza Rezai and Graham Wiebe. The artists each approach their practices in unique ways, exploring a wide range of current concerns and practices in contemporary photography. Place, politics, mass production and identity are just some of the themes portrayed. The texts that follow were written by the artists and accompanied the work in the show.

**Works on wall, left:** Michael Mogatas, both *Untitled*, 2017, mixed media

**Works on floor / cover detail:** Reza Rezai, *gluing a cigarette to a tomato*, 2019, mixed media

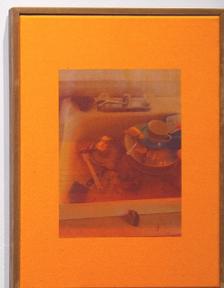
**Works on wall, right:** Chanelle Lajoie, both *Untitled*, 2017, C-print



Chanelle Lajoie, both *Untitled*, 2017, C-print

## *Chanelle Lajoie*

Aiming to pay tribute to the intricacies that comprise today's urban landscapes both locally and abroad, Chanelle highlights the raw, uncut, and often neglected realities of inner cities. More accurately, she focuses on the socio-economic repercussions faced by individuals forced within inner cities at the hands of capitalism and colonialism. She does so beginning with human interaction, developing relationships to later be developed onto film. With the consent of those in front of her lens, she shoots to create a tangible representation of their conversations acting as a bridge between those born and bred in peripheral spaces (let us refer to them as the suburbs, and cue Arcade Fire), rather than a strategically designed overpass enabling avoidance. Chanelle hopes that her work reminds her audience on the importance of human connection and its foundational role contributing to reconciliation.



Michael Mogatas, both *Untitled*, 2017, mixed media

## *Michael Mogatas*

Michael Mogatas' current work is a representation of his past and present processes of photography via screen printing and painting. His work focuses on image hyperactivity in modern culture. Most recently his work incorporates optical illusion motifs and the examination of the effects that mass-produced images have in his art practice.



*Petroleum Jelly + Plastic Wrap Self Portrait #1, #2, 2018, C-print*

## *Michelle Panting*

When Michelle photographs herself, she seeks to name and transgress the boundaries set around her identity and appearance by the religious, patriarchal community out of which she was raised. Working with found light and careful posing, she draws the camera and her viewer into intimate yet bizarre relationship with herself to create images that discombobulate and unsettle. It is through this confusion and discomfort that she seeks out new ways of being, drawing inspiration and hope from elements of queer futurism.



Reza Rezai, *gluing a cigarette to a tomato*, 2019, mixed media

## *Reza Rezai*

*To preserve the intended formatting of the artist's statement it is included on the next page.*

i was asked to talk about it.

i wonder if i can put my finger on it. take my index and push upon it.

to place it. to situate it. to put it into words. to make the abstract it into a more understandable it.

on what makes me do the things i do. why i break the flow of time into fragments of time and present that stillness on immovable walls and call it "art".

(once the walls are gone what will i have?)

a cut.

a slice.

(is the camera just an unassuming knife?)

what happens when i place that finger. to really take that index and press upon it. pin point it.

the brass tacks of *tell me reza just tell me*.

to really impress upon me. upon this persian skin. to divulge. to involve you. that other form of you. the "rational" you.

the "i need to understand this" you.

the "let me take chaos and give it some order" you

the "i might read this but i don't really care about this" you.

if i were to tell you that i do what i do because i want to make sense of my relation to you would that be enough.

or would you want more.

if i were to tell you that i am consumed with memorializing the harmless appearances of the everyday, the subtle gestures that go unnoticed because thoughts are elsewhere would that be enough.

or would you still want more.

if i were to tell you that i am trying to find solace within a divided diaspora that can't seem to get it right while dealing with the longing of a home that i have yet to know but will never know mixed with thoughts of my own hyphenated existence would that be enough.

or would you still still want more.

if i were to tell you that this is all there is. these are my reasons why. this is my *raison d'être*.

would you believe me.

and will you slowly and gradually and finally move away from these words towards what lies in front of you with a steady ease of "now i know".

as i sit here and ask myself

*is this good enough?*

and

*what will they think?*



Left to right: *A Car, A Home*, 2019, C-print; *Preteen Smoker (ADHD)*, 2015, C-print;  
*Crown of Thorns*, 2018, C-print, *Chantel's Mask*, 2019, C-print

## *Graham Wiebe*

Employing the snapshot as material toward a visual memoir, Graham's photographic work is a record of impulse and engagement. The fragmentary and still documents weave together to highlight an intersection of urban and suburban landscape, allowing confusion and irony to dismantle any kind of linear narrative. The photographs act as both mirrors and windows into his artistic practice, reflecting and accessing memories rooted in time, place, and personal experience. While engaged with a subject, he feels himself working in a realm more removed from the camera. This distance helps Graham see the images clearer and experience what is in front of him more fully.

# *About the Artists*

**Chanelle Lajoie's** perspective stands on a foundation of reaching equality through both creative and direct action, advocating in solidarity with marginalized communities. As a queer Métis woman living on Treaty 1 Territory, community building is her medicine. She roots and intertwines her academic studies, professional life, creative passions and personal politics to build a voice that echoes the importance of dismantling hegemonic identities, making space for those who have been silenced.

**Michael Mogatas** is an artist often working between the realms of photography, screen printing, and photography. Recent exhibitions of his work include Recent Works at Flux Gallery and Épuiser la batterie / Draining the Battery at Le Studio in 2016. Michael was a co-director of C Space gallery, which operated from 2013 to 2015.

**Michelle Panting** is a lens-based artist living on Treaty 1 Lands in Winnipeg, Manitoba. Her practice is rooted in the medium of photography, working in installation, etching, paint, and sculpture, exploring themes of gender, memory, and space. Michelle graduated from the University of Winnipeg in 2010 with bachelors in English and Education, and was a recipient of the Cartae Open School at aceartinc. She has exhibited her work in small-businesses and participated in gallery members' shows at various artist-run centres in Winnipeg. She was founder, writer, and photographer of Full Magazine, an online publication documenting art and culture in Manitoba.

**Reza Rezaï** is a Winnipeg born artist and writer of Persian descent. His work as a curator was the subject of a 2016 Vice Canada documentary. He recently completed his first collection of poetry titled *ishq* under acclaimed Franco-Manitoban author/ poet Lise Gaboury-Diallo. He is currently working towards his first solo show of conceptual art titled *mehmoon* to be shown at TRUCK Contemporary Arts (Calgary, ab) in September 2019.

**Graham Wiebe** is photo-based artist from Winnipeg, Canada. He received his bfa (hons) Degree at the University of Manitoba. Employing the snapshot as material toward a visual memoir, Wiebe's photographs are a record of impulse and engagement. These fragmentary and still documents weave together to highlight the intersection of the urban and suburban landscapes, creating an intimate portrait of youth culture rooted in time, place and personal experience. In 2015, Wiebe won the aimia ago Scholarship Prize, exhibiting a selection of work at the Art Gallery of Ontario (Toronto) and has since exhibited in alternative spaces, galleries, and artist-run centers both nationally and internationally. Wiebe most recently completed the BAiR Emerging Visual and Digital Arts Residency at the Banff Centre for Arts and Creativity (Banff, ab) and a duo residency at Celine Bureau (Montreal, qc) with artist Daniel Fernandes.

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**PLATFORM** is an artist-run centre dedicated to considering the expanded role of photography and lens-based work in contemporary art. We are a multidisciplinary centre that supports and showcases local, national and international artists. Through exhibitions, lectures, workshops, production facilities and publications – we are committed to fostering and sustaining a critically engaged community of artists.

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