

Traces Artist Talk

2 December 2021

In conversation with Alexis L. Grisé, Chukwudubem Ukaigwe, Tobin Rowland, Hanna Reimer, and Katrina Marie Mendoza. Curated and moderated by Tayler Buss and Meganelizabeth Diamond.

Tayler Buss: Hi everyone!

Meganelizabeth Diamond: Hi!

(applause)

Tayler Buss: Thanks for coming to our artist talk.

Meganelizabeth Diamond: So exciting to have so many people in the room! It's been a long time. We're excited to share with you five artists that we've curated in this show and thanks so much for coming.

Tayler Buss: To begin, I'll do a land acknowledgement. PLATFORM Centre acknowledges it operates on stolen land, Treaty 1 Territory. This is the original land of the Anishinaabeg, Cree, Oji-Cree, Dakota, and Dene peoples and the homeland of the Red River Metis Nation. While we recognize the stolen lands this event takes place on, we hope you will take a moment to reflect on these roots, as well as your own place on the land. *Traces* explores the translation, appropriation and rebirth of images through re-photography, collage and sculpture. The colour of what you were. An imprint of then, seen from here. Everything shifted, though nothing changed. Traveling to the view and onto one another. *Traces* are what's left, after. And the five artists featured in *Traces* are Alexis L. Grise, Chukwudubem Ukaigwe, Tobin Rowland, Hanna Reimer, and Katrina Marie Mendoza. So give it up for them!

(applause)

Tayler Buss: So the talk is going to be pretty casual. We invited our participants to also chime in with questions for each other, if they have any. But I'll start it off and I'll say just tell us a bit about yourself, introduce yourself, to the crowd and about your work and your practice. We can just start down the line. I'll start over with Alexis.

Alexis L. Grise: Hi my name's Alexis Lagimodiere Grise. I'm an artist based here in Winnipeg and Brooklyn. My work is primarily cyanotype. I'm sitting in front of my works conveniently. So currently my practice consists of analogue photography. I make an effort to print on different surfaces. These ones are watercolour paper and I also print on canvas, as well as darkroom paper. go outside a lot so I use the sun to make these images and I also use a camera. Works that you see here, they're film stills from a shoot I did in southern Manitoba in Emerson. So they're basically a film, a shot, an image of America but they're produced in Canada. And then the second one over here is a feather

and it's basically about flight. So my work is about photography and it is also about the production of how images are made, nationally and about the transformation of moving across borders.

Tayler Buss: Thank you.

(applause)

Chukwudubem Ukaigwe: Hello my name is Chukwudubem Ukaigwe. I am an interdisciplinary artist passing through Winnipeg. My interdisciplinary practice is really centred around positioning and relationship between works within space and also materiality. What else? The work I have here, they're kind of like photo-sculptural-paintings that are kind of a concoction of mediums to make a statement on development or under development of economic geographies using image transfer and painting over image transfer. First making these images in photoshop and then transferring them on wood and then adding sculptural elements that are from construction sites. To add a documentive index just like photographs are. In a way, these photographs are kind of, I don't know if they're still indexical because of the way they've started but yeah, that's what I have here.

Tayler Buss: Cool, thanks!

(applause)

Tobin Rowland: Hi, my name's Tobin. I use they/them pronouns. My work is mostly surrounded around creating different queer conversations. I usually work in image transfers. I use a lot of images - those are mine over there by the way- I use a lot of my own images I take but not all the time because I didn't take the picture of Dolly Parton. (laughter) I do try to make it easier to have those conversations about queer life because I think everybody partakes in it. Even if you don't think you are. And so, I think the images I use work well in this show because they are traces of things that have been or things to come and the images that I like to use are related to me. In storytelling.

Tayler Buss: Awesome, thanks!

(applause)

Hanna Reimer: I'm Hanna. I use she/her pronouns. My pieces are actually from my body of work that I completed for my honours year at the U of M. I've actually never considered myself a photographer. I'm more of a painter so, this is a really cool foray into digital art and photography for me. I'm really happy with how they came out. These are all throw away pictures that I introduced visual things like moray lines, blurry-ness and over saturation and pixelation. Things you would normally try and get rid of in your photographs but, I introduced them by means of naivety and tomfoolery with programs like photoshop and blender and regular photo editing programs. I have

no clue how to use these programs in the “proper way” but, living in that uncertainty- What does this button do? What does this mean to the piece of art I’m making? Not necessarily having a finish line. These are the pieces that I ended up with. I think they’re pretty interesting and I’m really proud of them. Thanks guys.

(applause)

Katrina Marie Mendoza: Hi, I’m Katrina. I work with drawings in the projection of space and the possibility of them becoming objects. All the work I have in the show, which is in that little room, is sort of portraits and pieces of my Aunts, at my Aunts houses, in the Philippines. I am always drawing from memory. Things like structures and the way they arrange things in their homes. I’ve tried to rearrange them here, as best I can. Yeah.

Tayler Buss: Alright, thanks. Thanks everyone.

(applause)

Tayler Buss: So, I’ll start off with an opening group question and you can chime in as you please. Feel free to keep the conversation going. If we get off topic, let’s just roll with it. Basically for everyone, because it’s called traces and we talk a lot about transformation and re-photographing/destroying in a way. How does the process of transformation affect your work in the show or just your practice in general? Anyone wants to go ahead.

Tobin Rowland: Hmm.. sorry...

(laughter)

Tayler Buss: Go ahead!

(laughter)

Tobin Rowland: I use image transfer and so it rarely comes out crisp. So, I think the idea of taking an image that is very clear and perfect on my phone or, something that is very perfect on the internet that I can manipulate when I transfer that, using modge podge, it rarely turns out good. It’s usually really bad. You can see it in the images if you look closer - they’re not good. But, you still get the jist of what’s going on. That allows me to have this moment that I am taking this image and by transferring it, of course I want it to come out crisp and clean but, ____ I am making the image my own. And curating it to my own story and giving it, not new life - I mean Dolly Parton is Dolly Parton and is never going to be anything else but, it does create that idea that it is an imperfect image. I think the idea of an imperfect image is almost more interesting than the idea of a perfect image.

Tayler Buss: I think that segways really nicely into - Hanna- your work as well.

Hanna Reimer: I'm not really good at image formatting. I don't know how to label my files properly and so all of these pictures are screenshots. All of the images, everytime you screenshot you lose a bunch of visual data. Similar to how, when Toby was transferring their image. If you want to relate, pixels are disappearing, physical pixels are being rubbed away everytime you transfer an image. Everytime I screenshot an image, because I can't export the file to whatever it's supposed to be, it loses data. I also play with thumbnails and taking pictures of something when it's a thumbnail when it's really small and blowing it up. Taking it through this process of when it's on the screen and transforming it into a physical thing. And how that adds some visual data to it and if I were to take it back and play a game of telephone with this piece of art I've made. What would it gain and what would it lose? There's information being lost and gained along the way. Even if you screenshot it. It's just a different kind of image, not a worse image, even though it technically is. Maybe more pixels is good to you but bad to someone else. This one in particular, this yellow one, I just upped the saturation on it and there became something just showed up, all of these rectangles and pixels and things I couldn't see in the image before I upped the saturation and I was wondering if that meant that, that quality of the image was there before I upped the saturation or if the computer introduced that itself. Kind of not understanding what a program is doing and being curious about it is really fun for me. For me it's all about having fun and all about figuring out what's going to make the silliest, most chaotic looking image. For me it's not knowing how to use a program at all and figuring out or finding something positive in being an absolute amateur at a program that many people - it's their vocation how to work it perfectly and I'm super jealous of that but I just do what I can.

Tobin Rowland: You're almost adding to the image when you're taking away.

Hanna Reimer: Scrubbin' it

Tobin Rowland: The more you screenshot it and screenshot it and screenshot it.

Hanna Reimer: It deteriorates it kind of like an old picture.

Tobin Rowland: But, on purpose.

Hanna Reimer: At first it wasn't on purpose. At first I thought you screenshot it and it's the same thing (laughter) but, now I know better and now I hopefully can explain it as I understand it.

Taylor Buss: Yeah I feel like Dubem, also yours, you're painting directly onto the photos as well. Taking this digital material and making it physical. Once again, taking it a step further and manipulating it even more with physical materials.

Chukwudubem Ukaigwe: Yeah I start with Hanna's piece and I really like the idea of - these are very abstract and come from photographs. When you think about it, I know they're photographs so I try to think about photographs but they're also abstract pieces to someone who sees them on the internet. It's interesting to see the process of work. I think I approach my work through strictly research and generative possibilities while working, decisions are made while working and thinking and questions are being asked and I'm answering some and living some and things like that. So yeah for me making these images and what do these images stand for when people see these. People might recognize that as Toronto, you know where that sign is, but people might not recognize it. People might recognize the Night in Delta, people might not recognize it. It's still the old image, the old image is a new image. There's still this tension between the familiarity and unfamiliarity that's quite uncanny or tricky in a way. And what happens when I print the image? Is the image complete on the computer? What happens when I transfer the image, or paint over it or add sculptural elements to it? What do all of those things add or take away from what I'm saying? I think over the years I've been more open to those generative qualities that the work gives as opposed to trying to go for something specific. Just like Hanna and other people here, what happens when I place that on the ground and what are those bricks doing there? These questions could be answered in totally different ways by totally different people and that's what I'm trying to get. I'm trying to have a very open space to open in your own doors.

Taylor Buss: Awesome, thanks, yeah. Questions from the panel to each other at all?

Hanna Reimer: Katrina, can you explain the process of setting up your room? I thought it was really interesting.

Katrina Mendoza: I kind of have a- like it's not an official library of parts but, all of these shapes - most of these shapes in the work I've used before in other drawings or other installations. Some of them are cartoon-y shapes that represent a feeling and others are structural and represent memories. Like a memory of loover windows. I never took a photo of them and then traced, like actually traced or drew them from there, or like simplified a photograph - I'm just trying to remember. Every time I remember you're like recreating something and it gets warped again. Every single time you try to remember something you and try to put the image together in your head the memory will change and again and again and again. You will never be able to go back to the original but then, I guess I'm just like exploring that when I make installations. I didn't mean for my work to be site specific but I think it always ends up being that way. All of these pieces come from a different space and time. I'm really trying to bring it into the present. They're kind of like icons that I want to

be a bit timeless. Or objects that the present space can flow around but still maintain the essence of the reference object from the past.

Hanna Reimer: That's awesome. I think a lot of us here, I mean, I can't speak for everybody but I know Toby and I for sure and it sounded like you two both recycle images or motifs in your work. I noticed I kind of just do one thing over and over again in multiple different ways but a lot of times those exact same iterations come back in different forms. Striped fabric specifically. I don't know where I was going with that. But - recycling an image and having it, it's almost the same as screenshotting it or image transferring it, it changes every single time.

Chukwudubem Ukaiwge: I like that you said site specific and it moves. So even if it's show it's going to change It's very performative in that way. When I first saw it, I was like this is very, I just thought about works in the bauhaus and constructivism and how people like Kandinsky were using paintings to translate sound and stuff like that and how this sculptural immersion is kind of a translation of memory that is quite specific but abstract so it's just that play on how that's quite open but abstract in very particular ways is very interesting to me.

Taylor Buss: Does anyone else have a question or I can move onto mine as well? Alexi, do you have a question?

Alexis L. Grisé: I just - I love the title *Traces*. What's that saying? Take only pictures, leave only traces? Is that?

Hanna Reimer: Footsteps.

Alexis L. Grisé: Leave only footsteps.

Hanna Reimer: I think sometimes that's what I've seen.

Alexis L. Grisé: ---

Hanna Reimer: Dubem's pieces also don't look like they've been assembled recently. Obviously they're contemporary works you've just made them but they look very like "this is how this image is supposed to be I've assembled this machine and everything is part of how it's supposed to operate." And they look like you've kind of just found them, you know what I mean? They look very— the image was supposed to be there and all those kites, the fasteners, and pieces of metal were built around it because that's what that machine does. It's an object and you've built the machine as a frame. It just looks like a very natural object to me.

Tobin Rowland: They're like future traces.

Hanna Reimer: Yeah.

Chukwudubem Ukaigwe: Yeah speaking of traces I think they trace somewhere so like take from construction sites and to me what I was talking about is very structural and architectural and building and geographical and I have been thinking about geographies and these geographies of building. That boils down to the idea of development and underdevelopment and how this tall building and all of this will equal to desecration of land and water and other places or quality of life. So kind of getting these materials from this construction site was very important for me, but they're not specific, they're just gathered and I think they're very organic the way the materials go with the image.

Meganelizabeth Diamond: When we had our studio visit with you, you kind of spoke a little bit more to these constructed landscapes and had narration of the exploiter and exploited. Can you speak a little bit more to that?

Chukwudubem Ukaigwe: Yeah I just kind of wanted to show how these are quite, I don't say symbiotic I say intertwined. You don't have crazy development without crazy underdevelopment of that place and these are things that are not really talked about. How we pick up a cup of coffee in the morning and drink, but we don't think about the genealogy of that material that's used in making the cup of coffee and how many hands have touched and whose hands have touched it and whose hands have been exploited. So speaking about accentuating things that are seen as everyday, ephemeral, or fleeting and accentuating the gravity of moments. What happens when I climb up the stairs? What am I thinking about and how does this moment of climbing the stairs speak to someone else in Africa or Asia? What happens when I put on a cotton shirt? What does that equal to somewhere in China? So it's accentuating that but talking about bringing that into one cup, which is the Niger Delta in Nigeria. And how crude oil has brought a lot of wealth to the West but has destroyed where it came from and there's no compensation for it or whatever there can be.

Tobin Rowland: I think that shows up in your work perfectly because these sculptures look so familiar. They look like the world in the sculpture around the image looks so familiar and it's so correct and it's so tight and looks like it's something from the future. So it really matches the image, but then you put them alongside these bricks, these old dusty bricks and they're all over the place. But it's just this balance of having this amazing sculpture with this horrifying photograph, but it's this amazing sculpture and then the bricks underneath that in some cases are actually holding it up. So it's very specific to what you just said. It's right on.

Chukwudubem Ukaigwe: Wow.

Taylor Buss: I have a question for the whole group as well and we can see where that goes. So I think especially now, living amongst Instagram and just even smartphones, everyone's a photographer. But I think image making has become so varied and widespread and you can make an image however you want. Whether it be painting, cyanotype, even sculpture can be images in their own right. So I would like to hear more about image making and what it means to your practice and works that you've created. Not just here, but maybe in the past, and how it relates to your practice in general. But image making, speak on that.

(laughter)

Hanna Reimer: I can say that a lot of these images, how they started not how they are, what I ended up building are a bunch of weird layers of goofiness on top. I recently put all of my photos onto Google Photos and they have this thing that filters out the bad photos or blurry photos so you can delete it to make more space, to make more good photos. And that's where I sourced all of these. So there's a bit of programmed bias in terms of what Google thinks is a good picture or I guess what a lot of people think is a good picture. I think the good in these come from the time that I put into them. There's a sense of intentionality and these could be throw away pictures that I put in the trash bin and then clicked delete and they would've been gone forever? I'm not a huge computer person so I don't know if pictures on the Internet are on there forever, but I don't know what that means still. But now they're printed in real life and it's almost like I swiped it from online or from my computer drive and just put it in the real world. So, in a way, it's taken a kind of "anyone can take a picture." I took a picture, I don't know what it is, but I made it look a little sillier than it was before and now it's here and you can touch it. I don't know it's just giving it space and time.

Taylor Buss: Yeah it's almost like taking something, I guess what Google Pictures would call trash, and making it. I guess the process of taking it out is a form of image making in itself in a weird way.

Hanna Reimer: Yeah, just picking it out from a bunch of pictures is image making a picture that's already been made and just being like "I'm gonna use this one now." By picking it it made a new image.

Katrina Marie Mendoza: There's a lot of value judgment, like yes or no value judgements in your process. That's really interesting.

Hanna Reimer: Yeah it's like undo or do it again kind of thing.

Katrina Marie Mendoza: What's the criteria for an image being bad?

Hanna Reimer: Yeah I don't know!

Katrina Marie Mendoza: It's really related to— well you said something about nature, just like human nature, and what we consider aesthetically is good or bad. I don't know! Sorry it's just making me think of the aesthetics of different economies.

Hanna Reimer: Like what we assign value to.

Katrina Marie Mendoza: Yeah and also everything that's happening on social media and the Internet and the value judgements we make there. Even that, the aesthetics there affecting our actions and choices of when we think about what to do with resources. Whether to extract them or not, or how to take care of them.

Taylor Buss: Alexis, can you speak on, I feel like yours is very much image making because it's literally something on a piece of paper and making it an image. So can you speak about your process with cyanotypes and the general thing?

Alexis L. Grisé: Yeah I guess with social media or the screen— I did study a lot of media studies at school and I was in admin for awhile and I was on screens for a long time. I am addicted to social media, so I try in my practice to be quite organic or to be quite analogue. I do value the analog process of photo and so these images are basically cyanotypes. For those who don't know, it's a basic darkroom chemical that you coat onto a surface and you expose to UV light and the sun makes the image. So there's technically not a lot of screen time involved, which is for me, a really fun process. I get to go outside and sit on a sidewalk, and I put a timer on and it takes about half an hour. I'm suntanning and the images are suntanning, and that's a nice process. There's a joke about suntanning: if you put a book on yourself and you lie on the beach, you get this farmers tan of a book and so a lot of my process is about taking a break from screens.

Audience Member: Can you do it on a cloudy day or a sunny day?

Alexis L. Grisé: Right yeah, there's different exposures so yeah it does get cloudy, and this one was a bit cloudier. But Tobin, I do look at your process and I do feel a very social media presence and an embracement for appropriation of culture and appreciation for pop culture with Dolly Parton and-

Hanna Reimer: Godzilla.

Alexis L. Grisé: Yeah and the stickers, the hearts and everything. There's an environment there for images.

Meganelizabeth Diamond: The never ending birthday party.

Alexis L. Gris : There’s a celebration there for the pop culture image and I think that’s very happening in your works. Do you want to speak about that?

Tobin Rowland: Yeah, it’s good. I am again, like you said, addicted to social media and I’m making my whole life about that now and I’m just stealing images. I just screenshot it off of Instagram. That (pointing to work) I got from Instagram, the Dolly Parton image. I do find this whole Instagram– it’s so pretty and it’s so fake and vibrant. To be so specific, the hearts on my painting are the ‘like’ buttons on Instagram.

Chukwudubem Ukaigwe: They also look like emojis because they’re different colours, right?

Tobin Rowland: Yeah emojis! They’re different. There’s a lot of technology, I haven’t really thought of it. But there’s a lot of technology behind my work because I do go and get these images and I photoshop them. I make them super sharp and crisp, and in other cases I have to blow them up. I do a lot of work on these images in Photoshop before I start to work with them on my canvas. So it’s just this complete divide between where I get the images from versus where I’m actually putting them on my canvas. It’s so different. I’m just on my computer getting these images and photoshopping. I’ll have like a big ass canvas and I’m scraping the paper away for like, two hours trying to get the image out so it’s like that divide–

Alexis L. Gris : Where does the archive come into that when you collect images from social media?

Tobin Rowland: If I brought my computer I’d show you guys. I have a reference folder of images. I’ll even just be watching a YouTube video and it’ll be a really shitty image, like somebody will turn their head really fast and it’s all blurred, but the colours are sweet and the image, it’s not showing anyone’s face, so I can use it. So it’s not like I’m putting someone on blast or anything, but I have this archive of images. From there, it’s just these images I have in my reference folder. I liked the images obviously. It’s very face value and once I have all of these images, the way my paintings begin is usually because of my writing. I’ll do a lot of writing and so I’ll make most of my pieces come from my writing. It’s not good writing. I don’t write anywhere, just for myself. But then these images are now, as I said earlier, they’re my images right? Because now that I mod-podged them onto my canvases, they’re no longer what they were. I don’t know anything about law or me getting sued–

Hanna Reimer: Copyright.

(laughter)

Tobin Rowland: Copyright! But I like to believe that since the images turn out so shitty that no one’s going to be like, “that’s my image!”

Hanna Reimer: You also have a pretty good book of royalty free images, like a vintage book.

Tobin Rowland: Oh yeah, I have a copyright free vintage book and it's just shit that people used to put on their menus and stuff. But it's just copyright free, so yeah I think that's where. I leave a disgustingly large footprint. We were talking about that before.

(laughter)

Tobin Rowland: It's insanely big. I have big feet I guess.

(laughter)

Tobin Rowland: But yeah, I don't know. The work, again, comes from a queer perspective. After all that nonsense and bullshit of me on the computer and putting the image down, it does just come down to a simple sentence that I had in my head. For that one back there, that's called *Phase* and the reason that it's called *Phase* is the image, if you look at it closely, it's just a really shitty image that's just glitched out. But I liked it and I wrote a little piece about it. It's just the idea about phasing out of your body, sort of a little bit like body dysmorphia, if you want to stretch. But everything comes down to a single sentence and so the trace that I leave. Yeah I don't know. I'm starting to feel bad but I do take a lot.

Chukwudubem Ukaigwe: I was going to ask you that question if you feel like you own these images now, but you already answered that you said you're interested in when does the photograph become yours. I also work with found footage and found photographs and I think about that too. The fact that you changed the image, is that the money you pay to buy the image yours? When does that even become yours? .

Tobin Rowland: It's like some NFT shit.

(laughter)

Meganelizabeth Diamond: Have any of you embarked on NFTs yet?

Chukwudubem: No but it's everywhere.

Hanna Reimer: It's bad for the environment.

Tobin Rowland: No they're getting better.

(laughter)

Tobin Rowland: I'm just trying to make a quick buck so I might get into NFTs.

(laughter)

Chukwudubem Ukaigwe: I think about repurposing images as kind of just like recycling. I feel like there's so many images in the world so we don't need to make more images. Too much images! The monopolies to do with those images already exist.

Tobin Rowland: There's so many images and, I don't know how anyone else here feels, but when I post an image on Instagram I'm like, "these guys are gonna think im so fucking annoying."

(laughter)

Tobin Rowland: Taking another image and it's just so many. You could really go on that explore page forever and you would never run out of shit.

Hanna Reimer: How long would it take to see every picture ever?

Tobin Rowland: I'll find out for you.

Hanna Reimer: Yeah there's too many we should stop.

(laughter)

Katrina Marie Mendoza: I don't think we can stop.

Tobin Rowland: No, I don't want to.

Katrina Marie Mendoza: Me too.

Tobin Rowland: It's fun,

Tayler Buss: Katrina, I actually have a question for you. In our studio visit we spoke about these false spaces or false hiding places because of the structures you make and especially blinds as well. I remember speaking a lot about blinds so can you talk about this false sense of security and also being vulnerable but hiding at the same time in your work?

Katrina Marie Mendoza: I guess the structures I end up suggesting in my installations are always meant to not make the person looking at it feel completely safe. That sounds kind of mean.

Hanna Reimer: They're precarious.

Katrina Marie Mendoza: Yeah they're precarious and they have to move. They can't stay there. But then I always want to add some space that gives a momentary cover like the feeling of, oh I can just pause here for a moment but then I need to leave. It's kind of like a bus shelter: the sides are all clear but it's warm for a little bit of time. I do assemble them so that they feel like they can hide. I think we were talking about watching. You can also watch people through the installation not literally, but you feel like you could be watching someone through it.

Taylor Buss: I feel like the act is almost like blinds in themselves. The act of peering through multiple slats, but still having your view obstructed in a way. And even if you're behind these open blinds there's potential to still be seen from the outside so I think that's interesting. Bridging also on space, Alexis, I know the film stills are from the border town of Emerson, if I'm correct. So what does that border down mean to you and capturing that film?

Alexis L. Grisé: Yeah I think I've always been a bit obsessed with the relation between Canadian and American relationships. I've lived there for awhile but also like, in terms of photography, I think we consume so much American images but actually going to the town itself from a space that's Canadian then making an image that's about America I just like that. It's kind of funny. It's like no, I'm actually sitting in Canada taking a photo of America. It's kind of cute.

(laughter)

Alexis L. Grisé: At the time, I was very pleased with maybe a second thinking like I had a dual citizenship but I don't. So, in terms of space, I don't know, I think it's just such an extreme space. It's a full on border that you can't cross. In terms of photography, we get photographed when we're at the border and we're being watched. Photography has such a scientific view or such a something view of taking your picture and proving to you that you're a legal immigrant and then it's just a beautiful blue image of a landscape. So yeah that's my relationship.

Taylor Buss: It's interesting because I feel like America is so recognizable in imagery and there's certain motifs that others pick up on and you can look at these and they're kind of placeless in a way. There's no sense of geography in them so I think that's a really nice, interesting quality. It's very wishy washy of where it is and you wouldn't know unless you spoke about it.

Chukwudubem Ukaigwe: I think it's a good joke? It highlights the stability of borders. When we think about borders and crossing borders we think about particular places. We think about borders as something really real but they're places that just exist and can walk from one place to another. I think it highlights the artificial nature of borders. I have one question for you, Katrina. You said

something about the people in the space. They can see people. They feel like they can see people because they're looking at these memories because they are looking at these objects that are born out of memory. Do you think these people can look at them, the viewer also?

Katrina Marie Mendoza: I didn't mean to say that whoever's looking at the work can maybe glean something of the people. I'm referring to in the space before. I didn't intend for that but I think it's just a one way thing. But I've always been kind of obsessed with how I can never get back to that moment in time and then it's just like a warped tunnel and it only goes one way so the failure is important to the work. That's why it's so abstract. It's a little diagram and you can't get any further detail.

Tobin Rowland: I think your work is also the perfect work. I like everyone's work in the show but Katrina's work is the perfect work for this show just based off of the write up of the show. Because for me at least, it's the traces that you're forming and the imagery that your work is forming. While it's so subtle it's so powerful in the way that it, we talked about this before but, just the way that your work is almost like a map and it's almost like its tracing a map and there's different paths and different physical, I don't know if you folks have been able to see it yet but go look at it after. What material did you print the images on?

Katrina Marie Mendzoa: There's satin. There's poly crepe? There's minky, you know those fray blankets?

Hanna Reimer: That's the corrugated groove, is that what is it?

Katrina Marie Mendoza: Yeah.

Tobin Rowland: But there's the images that you printed on, the satin are the same as what you see as the sculpture. On the satin pieces, they're nailed to the wall in some cases, or strawn out on the floor and those are like physical maps, traces, and we talked and you explained to me that the one piece on the far wall is supposed to symbolize a roof and that in itself is like a map to your aunts house. Because it's your aunt's roof so it went deep into the idea of what *Traces* is.

Hanna Reimer: Like point A to point B of this one line.

Tobin Rowland: Yeah the roof and then there's the shingles on the side and it was re photography to the extreme.

Katrina Marie Mendoza: I actually do have a photo that's that angle of my aunt's house because the garage area has this sloping roof that covers it from the main house. I think that's the one thing where I actually have a photograph that I tried to remember as I put that piece together.

Tobin Rowland: Yeah you look at these things and it's like a possibility of going somewhere. These things are possibly leading you somewhere but it's a language that only you know because you made them so ur work–

Hanna Reimer: It's based off a space you've been in before so you can place everything.

Katrina Marie Mendoza: It's like a secret. The moment is secret to me.

Tobin Rowland: Exactly! You make me feel so close to that secret.

Katrina Marie Mendoza: Oh my gosh!

(laughter).

Meganelizabeth Diamond: Yeah it was so nice doing studio visits with all of you for Tayler and I. Seeing something in common because we approached this very openly and didn't really know how your work would connect but just seeing the translation of images amongst your work in varied ways has been very inspiring to learn more about.

Tayler Buss: Yeah I think we found more similarities than not. At first it was kind of this collage of everyone's work together because at first we were like, oh no everything is very visually different what are we gonna do. But no, it's nice to see this great thoroughline of re-photography, transformation, and collaging. I think with that I'll open it up for questions from the audience. If there's anything at all feel free to raise your hand if you have questions for anyone or the group you can go ahead and ask.

Audience Member 1: Visually there's also a really nice colour story in this room and I'm curious about curatorially how you set it up?

Meganelizabeth Diamond: Yeah we approached it pretty openly almost like a free for all. We kind of set up the space before you all (artists) came to install and had an idea of where we wanted to place people. As the work showed up, we saw certain moments happening. Over there, there's lots of good energy between those two pieces with the orange. Tobin's piece over here very seamlessly fit there, almost like a light switch or something quirky in a house. We also tried to mediate any kind of requests that you five made like I know a couple of people wanted corners. We thought your work, Katrina, would be really good in Gallery 2. So I think there's a nice colour story and a good colour flow going and we just sort of figured it out as we were installing together.

Tayler Buss: Definitely. It was very loose and just play as we go I think.

Chukwudubem Ukaigwe: I think it's a really great show especially with how these works interact in the space. I get sick and tired of a bunch of work hung on the wall and its kind of just flat but Hanna's work—

Meganelizabeth Diamond: You were very inspired by Hanna putting stuff on the floor when you came to bring some of your other pieces I was like, do you have any bricks? And I ended up bringing some of my bricks from home for you to use.

Chukwudubem Ukaigwe: Well apart from that I already kind of started experimenting with my work off the wall already so that's where I think I'm heading towards, but I like how it works in this show.

Meganelizabeth Diamond: Totally.

Chukwudubem Ukaigwe: It just works out like a very good rap song with great features.

(laughter)

Chukwudubem Ukaigwe: Different styles. You know you have Jay Z and it works.

Tayler Buss: I get that. Anyone else have any questions?

Audience Member 2: I got a question for Dubem. I'm just looking at your work specifically, and it's kind of like an interesting contrast of the architecture being destroyed and then also architecture, on the other hand, being used to build the frame. There's a type of recycling going on, but also destruction at the same time for the frame. Materials that were once used to build something destroyed the other and rebuilt again.

Chukwudubem Ukaigwe: Yeah I think there's a lot of tensions happening in the work like destruction and building and building from destruction and imperialism. When we're talking about imperialism, what's the perfect portrait that will push free? In one sentence, having development go hand in hand with under development in these images was perfect. Bringing things from construction materials, which is really interesting. That's interesting, what you said, because I'm constructing these things that are left out of construction. So there's things that were either destroyed or what not. But I also think that's what's happening within the images too, so there's that tension. It's push and pulls of ideas of things going both directions.

Tayler Buss: Anyone else?

Audience Member 3: More like a comment, I think all of your works kind of have that same theme, which is why the show goes really well together. Exploration of different materiality. A lot of have works where you're talking about some sort of tension. Like Alexis' work, you're talking about the borders and how there's tension looking at the border and not being able to go there. Dubem's work exploring development versus under development. Tobin's work as well with over saturation of social media and putting it out there. Also with Hanna's work, exploring a program you don't know. That's sort of tension and creating an image. And also Katrina's work as well. Exploration of space, but not being able to go back to that memory. So I think there's this similar theme of prompting the viewer to entertain questions and question things that they are seeing. It's really nice, I think, and it works really well.

Tayler Buss: That's a great theme that I didn't pick up on.

(laughter)

Katrina Marie Mendoza: it seems like we're all not describing the same whole but there's a whole that we're, not like a hole, but a whole that we're referring to and the accountability inside of that whole. The push pull thing. There's this or that. You could say, on your own, that this image is bad and this image is good.

Tayler Buss: (pointing to audience member) Yeah!

Audience Member 4: Great comments so far. My brain is exploding right now, great job so far. I'm just wondering, while you were talking about social media for a little bit, I can't help but think of memes. Especially on these comments of repetition, recycling and using a digital tool for that information. But also with the pandemic, I've seen it talked about through an Indigenous lens and how repetition and stories being told over again is how knowledge is passed. And it's directly related to that something is part of that whole system as well. I was just wondering if memes were something you were thinking about in either creating these works, or are they part of the show or even in the subjects of the show as well?

Tobin Rowland: A lot of memes, I mean like that image is seen as a meme so memes are prevalent. I think they're unavoidable at this point. There's no way you can't. Your friends are going to send you a meme or something. So I think without thought they're involved in my work. At least for sure they're very satirical. I think they're honestly an important part of our culture at this point.

Chukwudubem Ukaigwe: I think memes are like textbooks. They are the pinnacle of contemporary art right now in a very interesting way. I wish NFTs were around memes. But there's a lot of stuff that's packed into those images and one image to be repurposed to say different things. Memes are amazing.

Hanna Reimer: They can be co-opted and used by completely different ideologies and stuff. Like apparently Pepe is an alt-right symbol now and it used to just be this guy who's a frog. They just kind of get re-translated and switched around to be incorrect and messed up. What the heck.

Tobin Rowland: I think it's also easy to think of. Now that I'm thinking about it, it's pretty easy to relate my work to memes because, especially that one called *Tulips*, the green one. Those are little tulip flowers underneath Dolly Parton and she's holding a rifle. It's this idea of she's protecting her garden, but she's also this queer icon. She's protecting her queer babies, in a way. So it is like a meme that could easily be a meme and all you would have to do is add comic sans or whatever. No that's not what is it—

Hanna Reimer: Impact.

(laughter)

Tobin Rowland: Yeah it's just like impact letters on the meme.

Hanna Reimer: The white font with the black outline.

Tobin Rowland: Yeah, so I think anything is a meme honestly.

Hanna Reimer: This show is a joke.

(laughter)

Tobin Rowland: This show is one big meme.

(laughter)

Taylor Buss: Any other questions at all?

Audience Member 5: So we've talked about time with Dolly Parton and especially the sense of time with Dubem's work. How intentional is inserting a time period in the work that you create and how much of it is time inserting itself?

Hanna Reimer: Oh you didn't address that to me, never mind.

Audience Member 5: To anybody.

Hanna Reimer: You guys speak first if you have something to say.

Chukwudubem Ukaigwe: Well I don't know. I think about relativity. The sun is shining somewhere right now what is time? Time can be important. History repeats itself. How we think things are timeless. Think of when you walk into the jean store and buy a pair of really nice jeans. I don't really think about who or what not. I think so much focus on time can either constrict in different ways. But yeah one thing about timelines, what's happening in my work, these are things that have happened back in the day, and these are things that are still happening right now. These are things that are going to happen tomorrow. I think about time a lot but in a very abstract way. I think sometimes it's useful to work and sometimes not as useful.

Tobin Rowland: It's also inherently in everything you make. This work and a year from now it'll be a year old. There's always going to be time involved in work.

Chukwudubem Ukaigwe: Yeah one question for you guys though. When you think about time and your work, have you made work you really love right now and over certain years it means something either different to you based on the time and the times?

Tobin Rowland: It's like that thing where you make something and it means something to you in that moment. It could just be months then and you look back and, maybe at the time you made that piece you were going through something you didn't know you were going through. Months later you look back and you're like, oh my god I was actually just screaming at myself to address this thing that was happening in my life. But then months later you're like, oh shit yeah. But I paint over all of my work pretty fast.

(laughter)

Chukwudubem Ukaigwe: Sometimes you believe change, and sometimes it's like, oh my god did I write this? Jesus Christ this is so cringe.

Tobin Rowland: Yeah a lot of cringe.

(laughter)

Hanna Reimer: What I was going to say earlier about time was that the photographs are these pieces or the origins of these pieces were all taken years ago as reference pictures. They kind of just get piled up or backlogged with a bunch of other pictures I intended to use for other things like future projects not really knowing where they would go. But in a way, these pieces that I just made maybe a couple of months ago, six months ago, maybe a little less, they're super old pieces because the pictures are the origins of these pieces of work are from 2015 to 2016. I just wasn't working on

them for that whole time. It was like I put this project on pause. This is the art that's taken me the longest to make, even though it took me like, ten minutes to botch them on Photoshop.

Audience Member 6: I have a comment. So you know how they say you kind of date your work? You date it when you finish it. So do you consider the process as the origins of the source is 2015? But then the work was completed in that group and you're not going to work on it, except you do. So maybe a question that has no answer?

Hanna Reimer: I guess. I don't know. I don't think I'm going to add anything else to them so I'll just say like this year. But it's also cool to be like, I remember when I took that picture, I remember who I was.

Chukwudubem Ukaigwe: It takes another life. The work doesn't end when you finish it, it continues. How you present it and who's looking at it and what context. So it's interesting, especially photography. When does work happen? When it's an image in the camera or when it's on a laptop? Or when it's printed? Or when it's in a show? A lot of places have an image.

Tobin Rowland: You had mentioned that these images are from 2015 and only took you like a couple clicks to make them now and to print them out. But I think that's a little harsh. A lot of people, especially myself, work pretty quickly, but what's important is the lead up to the work. So when it comes to dating a work I think it's dated as soon as it's either right now in this moment. In the show, my work is being dated right now or when it's no longer mine because for me, this painting will come back home with me eventually or just any painting that I think is finished. I'll probably end up painting over it again so there's never like an actual date until I think it doesn't belong to anyone. But when it's being presented is the date.

Hanna Reimer: Or like there's not a date until Meg or Tayler asks us for didactic information.

(laughter)

Tobin Rowland: Yeah exactly. So this idea of I don't think work is ever really done.

Katrina Marie Mendoza: So it's done when someone observes it in a certain way?

Tobin Rowland: Yeah and that work is forever theirs and then I'll take it and paint over it and you'll never never see it again.

Hanna Reimer: Same with titles. I can't do titles until someone asks me.

Katrina Marie Mendoza: Same.

Taylor Buss: Maybe we'll take one more question if there is any? That's a nice place to end I think. Good discussion amongst us. Thanks everyone for coming. Thanks to our artists as well.

(applause)