



Detail of work etching #11, 2015

Stacey Watson / Field Work

EXHIBITION: OCTOBER 20 - NOVEMBER 30, 2017
OPENING RECEPTION : OCTOBER 20, 2017, 7:00PM - 9:00PM



Alberta Printmakers Gallery
4025 4 Street SE, Calgary AB

Field Notes - Stacey Watson


Essay by Andrea Williamson

...A series of book-sized etchings, true to techniques of the past, practices of making the past present. ...Their dark registers and diminutive humanoids approach and conjure some kind of back-looking vision of some kind of primeval action. Vibrational energies swell around a vortex, carry souls down a river, hover over a birth of an idea, assemble tools under a sharp cliff. We remember a time when we measured small and humble in the landscape, and when the art of technology was our hope of survival. Memories are shrouded in a fertile darkness, with glimmers and sparks that pierce the distance of time- a spritz of resinous powder on a metal plate. These memories are far away and in their place, separated by a perfectly achieved gauge, a threshold that sinks experience into its own place within an otherwise untouched paper. The illuminations hang on a wall above us out of reach like a misty sky of constellations. This dark place- dark skies, black water, unrecognizable forms, and crouching figures- this is where myth lives and works.

While vaporous, shadowy and shaky qualities of this art form give birth to myth, the myths themselves portray art making in content, creating a staircase from one process to another. This time, in the stories of the pictures, we're witnessing a very different kind or use for art, one that is very close. Stacey talks about living and dying with art pieces- allowing objects to affect us over time. Each framed story is a recollection, an echo, of a time when she and others brought alchemical, cinematic, otherworldly, magical art, directly into the everyday. Why not? The fabrication of a "well for bad wishes" out of paper and wheat glue, transforming ubiquitous cheap plastic cd covers into a crystal palace of fractal wonder,

reenacting trench warfare, being enveloped by the darkness of night skies under billowing sails... In these escapades with friends and places, the artist exercises making life more wonderful without reserve. Superseding everyday aesthetics, which looks for transcendence in the mundane, everyday activities such as chores, these projects say “to hell with the everyday”, and make each day an epic quest for the sublime. Living with the props and aids to these extra-quotidian experiences means carrying with us reminders of the potential for flight into other realms. Failure is a constant bystander, as it must be, when the utopic impulse reaches toward open play, collaboration and serendipity.

What we must talk about, or represent, is what we are not already living. These projects recognize and fulfill the desire to live within the messy blurring of art and life, of intention and process, of self and other. And that is where I believe myth comes back in.

Myths are needed to house everything that is bigger than our conscious understanding and individual lives. They pay tribute to all the experience Jungian’s place beyond or below the threshold of consciousness, which are deeply affective nevertheless. I believe the artist continually seeks encounters with awesome events and forces, as well as her own humility, situatedness, and embeddedness in something bigger. The artist’s printmaking practice extends this figuring of other forces into her process, in a careful and attentive orchestration alternating technical prowess and welcome surprises. But what the prints offer, among many things, is a necessarily distant or aerial view upon these lived events- one which opens up the space to observe the complete mystery and magic that is people sharing dreams. 

ARTIST BIOGRAPHY

Stacey Watson is a Calgary-based artist. She completed a BFA in Photography and an MFA in Printmaking at the University of Calgary. Her work in photography, print and sculpture deals with how human imagination is linked to landscape and weather.

She also has a collaborative practice with Vancouver artist Justin Patterson and their work was most recently exhibited in the 2017 Alberta Biennial of Contemporary Art. Stacey teaches at ACAD in Calgary.

WRITER BIOGRAPHY

Andrea Williamson is a writer, artist and plant appreciator living in Montreal, Canada.

Alberta Printmakers (A/P) is a non-profit, artist-run centre founded in 1989 in Calgary, Alberta, Canada. The organization's goals are to increase public awareness of print media, to engage a diverse audience, to provide resources for the artistic community and production facilities for printmaking.

A/P has an open membership, and is governed by a board of directors. Management and administration of A/P's activities are the responsibilities of its Directors, who reach out to volunteers in accomplishing A/P's goals. A/P also hosts residency and summer student programs.



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