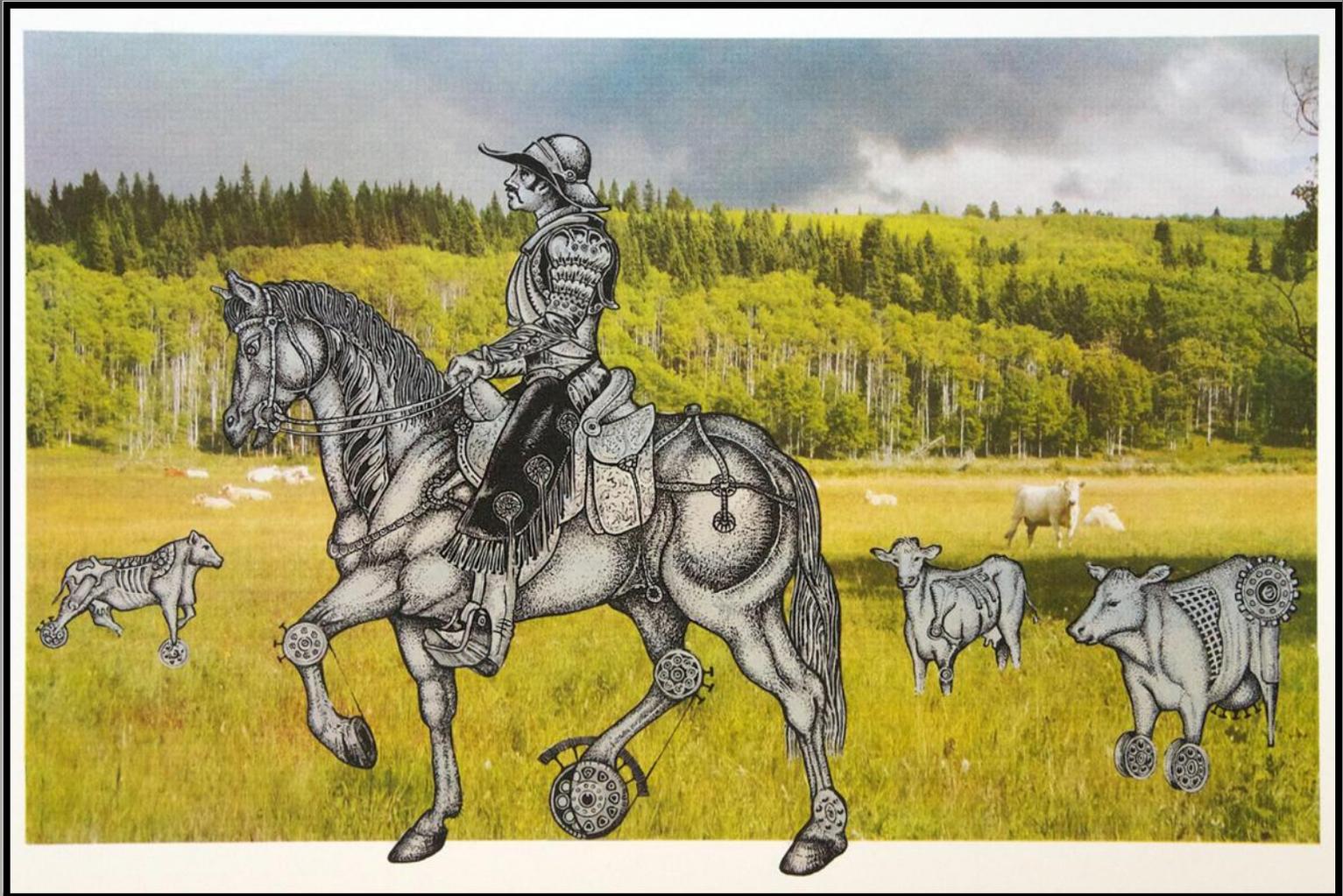


TRACE: Reflections on Landscape



Eveline Kolijn
The Western Rider, 2011
Screenprint
Courtesy of the Artist

An Alberta Foundation for the Arts
Travelling Exhibition (Trex)

Government
of Alberta ■

 Alberta
Foundation
for the Arts

Alberta ■

 The
Alberta
Society
of
Artists

MANDATE of the Alberta Foundation for the Arts

The Alberta Foundation for the Arts (AFA) was established under the Alberta Foundation for the Arts Act, September 1, 1991. Since 1972, the AFA and its predecessor foundation, the Alberta Art Foundation, have been collecting art work and funding a wide range of cultural programs.

The purposes of the Foundation are:

To support, promote and contribute to the development of literary, performing, visual and media arts in Alberta

To provide people and organizations with the opportunity to participate in the arts in Alberta

To foster and promote the appreciation of art works by Alberta artists

To collect, preserve and display art works by Alberta artists

To encourage Alberta artists in their work

The AFA has supported a provincial travelling exhibition program since 1981. The mandate of the AFA Travelling Exhibition (TREX) Program is to provide all Albertans with the opportunity to enjoy visual art exhibitions in their communities.

Three regional galleries and one arts organization manage the travelling exhibition program for the AFA:

Region 1 - Northwest

The Art Gallery of Grande Prairie, Grande Prairie (formerly the Prairie Art Gallery) / www.prairiegallery.com

Region 2 - Northeast / North Central

The Art Gallery of Alberta, Edmonton / www.youraga.ca

Region 3 - Southwest

Alberta Society of Artists, Calgary / www.artists-society.ab.ca

Region 4 - Southeast

Esplanade Arts & Heritage Centre, Medicine Hat / www.trexprogramsoutheast.ca

For more information visit the AFA website at www.affta.ab.ca

**Government
of Alberta** ■



Alberta ■



TABLE OF CONTENTS

Curator's comments	4
Artists Biographies	
Eveline Kolijn	6
Colin Smith	7
Leslie Sweder	8
Inventory	9
Educational Guide	10
Vocabulary and Concepts	11
Activity 1: Looking at Art: An Introduction	13
Looking at the Medium	14
Looking at the Message	15
Activity 2: Landscapes	17
Beginner: Creating Soundscapes	19
Intermediate: Altered Landscapes	20
Advanced: Natural Printing	21
Activity 3: Our Trace on the World	22
Beginner: How does a seed grow?	24
Intermediate: Leave No Trace	25
Advanced: Building Sustainable Communities	26
Further Reading	28

CURATOR'S COMMENTS by Caroline Loewen

Trace is defined as a mark, object, or other indication of the existence or passing of something. Implicit in this is the suggestion that the thing which left the trace no longer exists in the same capacity as it did when it left the mark; something has been lost. The original object has been removed, whether by time, distance or some other means. A footprint is a trace of a human because it represents something that itself is no longer visible. In a way, all art, and perhaps especially photography, is a trace of something that was once there.

In this exhibition, the trace represented is the trace of humanity. The three artists in the exhibition, Eveline Kolijn, Colin Smith and Leslie Sweder, all recognize that everything we do or make or say has an effect on our surroundings, whether that effect is purposeful or accidental, large or small, momentary or permanent. There are different themes apparent in all the artworks but they are drawn together by their insistence on an ever changing relationship between humanity and the natural environment.

One of the most apparent themes is mankind's destructive effect upon the landscape. **Eveline Kolijn's** prints are the most directly connected to this idea of a detrimental human trace. She references the effects of mechanization and industrialization upon the landscape of Alberta. Writing about *Digging Towards Extinction*, Kolijn states that "the landscape is created through use of the organic woodcut. The more industrial quality of etching in zinc is chosen to depict the dinosaur and the digging machine. The machine-like creature digs into the landscape in which a fossil is embedded, and we can ask ourselves if use of fossil fuels in our mechanized society is heading us in the same direction evolution led the dinosaurs."

In *Humpty Dumpty Fracking*, referencing the well known children's rhyme, Kolijn demonstrates her concern for the irreparable damage that may be occurring due to fracking, a relatively new and unknown technology. She states that "*Humpty Dumpty Fracking* addresses the current debate on the consequences of a new and wildly spreading natural gas extraction-technique called hydraulic fracturing or fracking. Through this technique, geological layers containing dispersed gas are mechanically fractured to extract the gas trapped in the shale. Opponents claim that groundwater supplies have been polluted by fractures connecting the gas reserves with groundwater reservoirs. Many unregulated toxic substances are injected in the wells to flush out the gas and there is little oversight on proper treatment of waste material. Much is evaporated into the air. Whatever the truth, there is no defense for the fact that 'fracking' in the United States enjoys exemption of the Clean Water act. This technique of extracting shale gas should be done within the confines of all laws protecting water and air quality. Once the ground is fractured by this technique and injected with toxins, it cannot be undone."

Visually Kolijn's prints "create a dialectic between natural structures and man-made constructions. This opposition appears formal in contrasting organic shapes against Euclidean [geometric, linear], rigid structures, but underneath is often a commentary on the relationship between human society and the natural environment." This dialectic is also apparent in Colin Smith's photographs, in which he shows abandoned man-made structures being reclaimed by nature. Visually the images contrast the decaying manmade structures of wood, metal and glass with the natural environment of sky, mountains and forests. Many of the natural resources represented have their manufactured counterparts also represented. Forests become lumber, the mountains are mined for metal and quarried for stone. But the manufactured products are abandoned and decaying, unable to renew or sustain themselves, whereas the natural world is self-sustainable and endures indefinitely. In his imagery, Smith addresses the insignificance and impermanence of man when compared with the enduring strength and beauty of the natural world. But in a dialectical argument, there is always a move towards reconciliation. The conflict does not result in one side winning over the other, rather

CURATOR'S COMMENTS

there is reconciliation between man and nature. In all the artworks, the opposition of man and nature is not really an opposition at all, but an interdependence. Man is part of nature.

As stated before, a trace is left by something that is lost and so along with the idea of irreparable changes comes the theme of nostalgia for a time before the loss. Both Smith and Koliijn's work contain nostalgia towards the way things used to be but also a knowledge that the past is irretrievable. In Koliijn's *Western Rider* and *ATV Bull*, Koliijn represents a longing for the days before industrialization. Even the rider, clad in the trappings of modernism is reminiscent of times past. He is based on the knight in Albrecht Dürer's print *Knight, Death and the Devil*. The print is a large engraving completed in 1513 and represents a Christian Knight riding through a valley followed by a pig-snouted devil and flanked by Death on a Pale Horse. Interestingly, some viewers have noted that there is a sense of obsolescence about the knight. The rider too seems doomed to a future obsolescence, his animals and way of life being replaced by technology (as represented in both *The Western Rider* and *ATV Bull*).

In **Colin Smith's** photographs, many of the constructions of man - the car, farm, grain elevator, church and house - have already been destroyed and replaced by newer, more technologically advanced versions. In his technique, as well as in subject matter, he draws from technologies of the past. The camera obscura is an optical device predating photography that projects an inverse image of the subject without actually capturing the image on a film. The device itself consists of a box (or room) with a pinhole in one side. Light enters the box through the hole, strikes the interior surface upon which it reproduces the external scene where the light originated, upside down but with colour and perspective preserved. It has been in use since at least the 5th century BCE. Colin Smith uses this ancient technology to project external scenes of nature into the interiors of dilapidated structures. This juxtaposition of the timeless natural world and ephemeral human constructions invites questions about our own significance and the futility of attempting to control nature. Funnily, there is a notice in the trolley asking for information about any person damaging or defacing transit property. The irony is that the property had been damaged and defaced by time and the forces of nature.

Smith also uses windows in his compositions to show the juxtaposition of humanity in nature and nature in humanity. Framed by the window of the abandoned house in *St. Henry*, the viewer can see the church, still standing and functional, that gives the image its name. The truck and barn in the photograph of the same name are also external to the abandoned building. The barn still seems functional although the truck has been long abandoned. Colin uses this combination of imagery like Koliijn, to show that man and nature must attempt to live in harmony.

Leslie Sweder takes a different approach from both Koliijn and Smith. In Sweder's case, the artwork itself is the trace. She uses improvisational drawing to translate urban commotion into visual imagery. She records both the auditory and visual sensations that she hears and observes into single line drawings. The drawings become the only record of what she experienced at that particular place at that particular moment. Although significant things may have been occurring, the events themselves are lost. All that remains are the effects of those events. Sweder tries to remedy this by finding a visual way to record them. The title of the work *I Saw Nothing Coming Up the Road: Notes On the Self Centered Universe, the Big Bang and Other Eruptions* seems to indicate the indifference of the universe, and the insignificance of man. But Sweder counters this by recording a seemingly insignificant moment and, by making it visible and permanent, imbues it with meaning.

As we have seen all three artists comment on the transitory nature of life and of the self. Themes of extinction and the insignificance of man are balanced by knowledge that while life and influence is temporary, we do have the power to control our actions and to have an impact, positive or negative, on the earth.

ARTIST BIOGRAPHIES

EVELINE KOLIJN

Biography

Eveline Kolijn is a Calgary-based printmedia and multidisciplinary artist. She experienced an international childhood and received a Master's degree in Cultural Anthropology from the Rijksuniversiteit Leiden, The Netherlands. She graduated from the Alberta College of Art + Design with a BFA in print media in 2008 and is the recipient of the Governor General's Academic medal. She has exhibited nationally and internationally, most recently in Ireland and China. She is a boardmember of Alberta Printmakers Society and the THIS IS MY CITY art society. She is currently an Extended Studies instructor at the Alberta College of Art + Design and a teacher for the Royal Conservatory's Learning Through The Arts program.

Artist Statement

My art evolves out of my interest in the diversity of human culture and my fascination with patterns and processes found in nature. I often set out to express the relationship between humanity and nature in a visual dialectic of natural organic shapes and artificial, Euclidean constructions. Through this opposition, I pose questions about our increasingly artificial society and a growing alienation from our natural origins.

My interest in the sciences of natural history, biology and complexity theory is expressed through printmaking and small, sculptural installations made from found synthetic materials. By constructing organisms from plastic and Styrofoam, which share the same source as petroleum, I connect consequences of the consumption of fossil fuels in our society with the beauty and fragility of the natural world.

Inspiration for my work flows from exploring the concepts of *Evolution* and the *Biosphere* - living matter being inseparably connected within the geological envelope of the earth. Current rapid changes to the Earth's climate, land, and oceans invited debate whether a new geological epoch should be defined. Labeled the *Anthropocene*, it is the most recent epoch in the history of the planet, during which human activity has caused fundamental changes to the biosphere.

ARTIST BIOGRAPHIES

COLIN SMITH

Biography

While he did study at the Alberta College of Art + Design, Colin received the majority of his education while travelling abroad and from mentorships with fellow photographers. He travelled throughout Asia, the Americas and the South Pacific, always accompanied by his camera. His images starting making their way into magazines and newspapers and now his work hangs on the walls of private, corporate and government buildings.

Artist's Statement

Early family vacations began an insatiable appetite for the open road. Heading out at every opportunity to explore the lifelines of an industrial landscape. From weekend excursions to a yearlong motorcycle odyssey across the Americas. Taking photographs of places left behind, abandoned churches, industries and towns I found beauty in the faded memories of those that came before me. After years of working in the high tech motion picture industry I began an exploration into the low-tech origins of photography. Uncovering the magic of the Camera Obscura my photography was instantly altered. With digital failing to capture my vision, large format film has become my technology of choice.

The idea felt completely natural. To create Camera Obscuras in abandoned places and photograph the cohesion of an interior haunting past with the imminent exterior forces. This evokes a human story about a place, time and set of circumstances that could have led to their abandonment and a witness to its reclamation.

ARTIST BIOGRAPHIES

LESLIE SWEDER

Biography

Leslie Sweder has spent seven years or so formally meandering through studies in sculpture, philosophy and comparative religions both at ACAD and the University of Calgary. A self proclaimed late bloomer, her innate resistance to modern commerce has caused her to show sporadically over the years, usually in fringe galleries -- or on very rare occasion at an artist run centre.

Her practice manifests itself as a ternion. It erupts on the street with unsolicited public installations. It morphs into a meditative practice in the studio. It engages community through collaborative drawings as part of a trio collectively known as 'drunken paw' (www.drunkenpaw.com).

Artist's Statement

I have always been most curious about that which we cannot see, those intangible energies that we only feel or sense yet which somehow manage to overwhelm us with information. Life, pared down to its essence, is pure energy -- a kinetic tapestry of information that we humans are but single elements of. It is the challenge of all living things to change what is around them and to be changed by it, both to move life's energy through them and to move with the energy that surrounds them. In experiencing either of these states we have experienced magic in its purest sense.

With a strong desire to capture the essence of life's energy and the way it moves, I took my practice away from the isolation of the studio, exposing myself to a busy urban street. This search for the larger patterns that shape us turned into a self directed two year residency at an artist run window gallery in Calgary called Museo Poco (recently renamed the Sugar Cube). I spent this time working on the street directly outside of the gallery, recording the rhythm, energy and movement of my surrounding urban environment. My time there culminated in the series *I saw nothing coming up the road; notes on the self-centred universe the big bang and other eruptions*.

INVENTORY

Exhibition Title: **TRACE: REFLECTIONS ON LANDSCAPE**
Total # of Art Works: 16 artworks in 12 framed units
Source of Art Works: Artist Inventories

<u>Artist</u>	<u>Title</u>	<u>Medium</u>	<u>Date</u>
KOLIJN, Eveline	ATV Bull	Screenprint	2011
KOLIJN, Eveline	The Western Rider	Screenprint	2011
KOLIJN, Eveline	Humpty Dumpty Fracking	Intaglio and digital print Chine-collé	2011
KOLIJN, Eveline	Digging Toward Extinction	Woodcut and intaglio	2005
SMITH, Colin	Truck and Barn	Lightjet print	2009
SMITH, Colin	56 Trolley	Lightjet print	2009
SMITH, Colin	St Henry	Lightjet print	2010
SMITH, Colin	Dankin Elevator	Lightjet Print	2011
SWEDER, Leslie	Movement 1	Uniball pen and india ink on paper	2010
SWEDER, Leslie	Movement 4	Uniball pen and india ink on paper	2010
SWEDER, Leslie	Movement 11	Uniball pen and india ink on paper	2010
SWEDER, Leslie	Movement 13	Uniball pen and india ink on paper	2010
SWEDER, Leslie	Movement 21	Uniball pen and india ink on paper	2010
SWEDER, Leslie	Movement 32	Uniball pen and india ink on paper	2010
SWEDER, Leslie	Movement 33	Uniball pen and india ink on paper	2010
SWEDER, Leslie	Movement 34	Uniball pen and india ink on paper	2010

TRACE: REFLECTIONS ON LANDSCAPE

is a presentation of the
Alberta Foundation for the Arts Travelling Exhibition Program



Developed by the **Alberta Society of Artists**
Exhibition Curators, Caroline Loewen & Les Pinter
Artworks from Artists Inventories
Interpretive / Educational Guide prepared by Natalie Marsh

FUNDING PROVIDED BY THE ALBERTA FOUNDATION FOR THE ARTS

**Government
of Alberta** ■



Alberta ■

