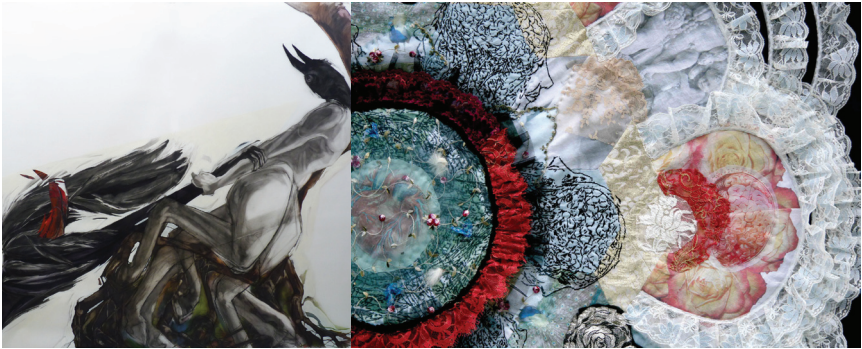


[becoming] The Logic of Memory

Corinne Duchesne, Peter Horvath, Anna Torma

January 23 - March 1, 2014

Opening Reception: January 23, 7 - 9:30 PM
Art Crawl: February 14, 7 - 11PM



(L) Corinne Duchesne, *Sybil*, 2013, mixed media on mylar. Image courtesy of the artist.

(R) Anna Torma, *Paris Sample* (detail), 2013, mixed media textile installation. Image: Istvan Zsako



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You Can't Step in the Same River Twice

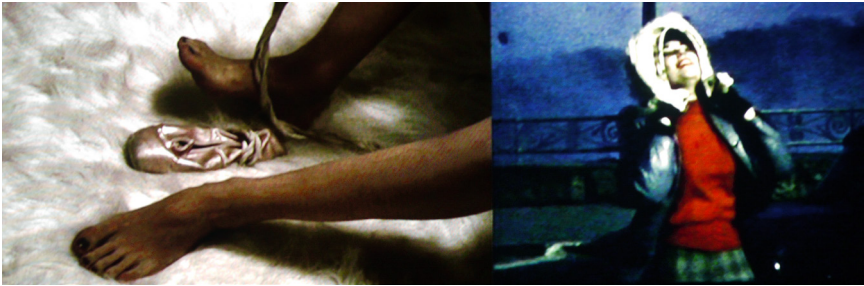
Yesterday I was thinking about a photograph of my grandmother, who passed away in 2006. It shows her holding a bag of Tsoureki (Greek Easter bread) up next to her head in a mock-triumphant way, standing in the driveway of the bungalow I grew up in. This photograph reminds me of specific things that I wouldn't have remembered otherwise, like the way her nose turned down when she smiled, and how her bare feet had a cracked, dusty look to them. It is uncanny how much of her this photo managed to capture—her generosity manifested through food, her cultural identity, her strength and her good humour.

Memories of people and places are generally far less clear-cut than this. While photography is a common aide of memory, memories themselves are comprised of flashes of scent, texture, sound and image that are variably vivid and distant, fragmented and layered. Memories can be haunted or contented, elevated by love, or steeped in a sense of personal or cultural trauma. Because memory is porous, memories shift and change as we ourselves do.

The artists in, [*becoming*] *The Logic of Memory*, employ the device of layering across media to represent lived experiences of memory, migration and transformation. While artists Anna Torma and Peter Horvath use static and moving images respectively to address emotional dimensions of the immigrant experience, Corinne Duchesne's drawings on Mylar interrogate the emotional, physical and philosophical dimensions of grief. The works in this exhibition are united under the fundamental idea that *change is our only constant*.¹

The musical term *parlando* refers to a singing style that is suggestive of speech. Anna Torma's work *Parlando* (2013) is a lyrical installation combining textiles and photography that could be seen as a conversation between the artist and the photo archive of a Croatian friend about the experiences of immigrants—specifically those who settled in Hamilton from Central European countries.² In this installation, images from the Royal Botanical Gardens, family photos, and glimpses of European embroidered motifs blend quilting and photomontage. According to Torma, the use of another person's family archive allowed her to address her own diasporic experience as a Hungarian immigrant, creating a portrait of work, domestic and community life that combines fragments of old and new worlds.³ A diagram of bone and organ systems embroidered in black thread maps the body over the patchwork of people and plants, connecting universal human experiences of migration and change with our biological interconnectedness as living things. Two smaller works, *Baie Verte* (2013) and *Paris Samples* (2013) allow the viewer to follow Torma to new locales, viewing her memories and experiences of place through evocative combinations of material and image.

The video work *Memoir* (2009) by Peter Horvath draws parallels between the lives of two women: the artist's mother Eva, who left Hungary during a time of political upheaval and Denise, a 26-year-old dancer. These women are forced to reconcile their lives as performers (dancers) after leaving Hungary, and despite



Peter Horvath, *Memoir* (video still), 2009. 16 minute, 2 channel video installation.

an age difference of half a century, both carry with them legacies of war and violence. Horvath uses cinematic devices such as split screen and montage to give form to memory while exposing struggles that are common to those who are forced to leave their homeland. Both women touch on the role of change in their lives; archival newsreel footage and audio reporting on the violent Hungarian Uprising of 1956 is juxtaposed with intimate recollections of family members and moments of profound loss and fear. While Eva relinquishes her past in order to survive ("Close your life, close your memories"), Denise's transition from ballet dancer to burlesque dancer is indicative of both a dogged sense of determination and a need to adapt. Reciting in a singsong voice a Disney tune that draws from Heraclitus' aphorism *You can't step in the same river twice*,⁴ Denise alternates between a breezy acceptance of change and moments of intense remembrance, demonstrating that while change is inevitable, the weight of the past remains.

Corinne Duchesne's drawings on mylar reflect on emotional and philosophical facets of grieving and loss.⁵ Her drawings share with Torma an interest in the mutability of human, plant and animal beings, depicting catalytic moments of metamorphosis and self-preservation. In works like *Removing Her Head* (2011) and *Thrasher* (2011), time compresses through layers of frenetic movement and the evocation of emotions ranging from frenzy and fear to pathos, vulnerability, tenderness and release. In *Floating* (2011), a biomorphic cat, at once limp and muscular, sits above the surface of water in a vessel like a lifeboat adrift. The use of negative space in each of these pieces conveys a metaphysical space while featuring an assemblage of mythic, dream-like figures and scenarios that are both foreign and familiar. Duchesne's work is emblematic of our perpetual universal path of adaptation and change, and reminds us that death is but another facet of this process.

Images, whether located in a photographic archive or the mind's eye, can serve as portals to the past. Through their work, the artists in *[becoming] The Logic of Memory* use constructed images to make past and present coalesce, creating spaces for understanding life changes, and the joys, sorrows and ambiguities that accompany them.

Tara Bursey

¹ Graham, Daniel W. "Heraclitus." The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy. Web. 11 Jan 2014.

² Torma, Anna. Artist's Statement: Tangled.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Menken, Alan and Steven Schwartz. "Just Around the Riverbend." Soundtrack to the film *Pocahontas*. Walt Disney, 1995.

⁵ Duchesne, Corinne. Artist's Statement. Artist's website. Web. 14 Jan 2014.

Corinne Duchesne (Hamilton, Ontario)

An award-winning Canadian artist for over twenty years, Duchesne has exhibited extensively in Canada, the United States, South Korea, and Europe. A graduate from the Ontario College of Art (and Design), during her final year she studied at the Off-Campus Program in Florence Italy with Tom Lapierre. Duchesne is a fulltime Drawing Professor at Sheridan College, Faculty of Animation, Arts and Design, in the Visual and Creative Arts Program.

Peter Horvath (Toronto, Ontario)

Peter Horvath works in video, sound, photo-based and new media and is the co-founder of 6168.org, a site for net.art. Exhibitions include the Whitney Museum Of American Art's Artport, Museo Tamayo Arte Contemporáneo (Mexico City), The 18th Stuttgarter Filmwinter (Stuttgart, Germany), FILE Electronic Language International Festival (São Paulo, Brazil), Video Zone International Video Art Bienial (Tel Aviv, Israel), the Musée national des beaux-arts du Québec (Québec City, Canada), as well as venues in New York, Tokyo, London, and numerous net.art showings.

Anna Torma (Baie Verte, New Brunswick)

Anna Torma was born in 1952, Tarnaors, Hungary. Her interest in working with textiles goes back to early childhood when she learned to sew, knit, crochet and embroider from her mother and grandmothers. Torma graduated with a degree in Textile Art and Design from the Hungarian University of Applied Arts, Budapest, Hungary, where she studied from 1974-79. She has been an exhibiting artist since that time; producing mainly large-scale hand embroidered wall hangings. She immigrated to Canada in 1988.

Tara Bursey is an interdisciplinary artist and independent curator whose interests include sculpture, installation, performance, textile art and culture, food, contemporary craft practices, collaboration and publishing. She has exhibited her work across Canada as well as in Berlin, Copenhagen and Eye, Suffolk, UK.

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155 James Street North, Hamilton, ON L8R 2L1
905 529 3355 www.TheInc.ca

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