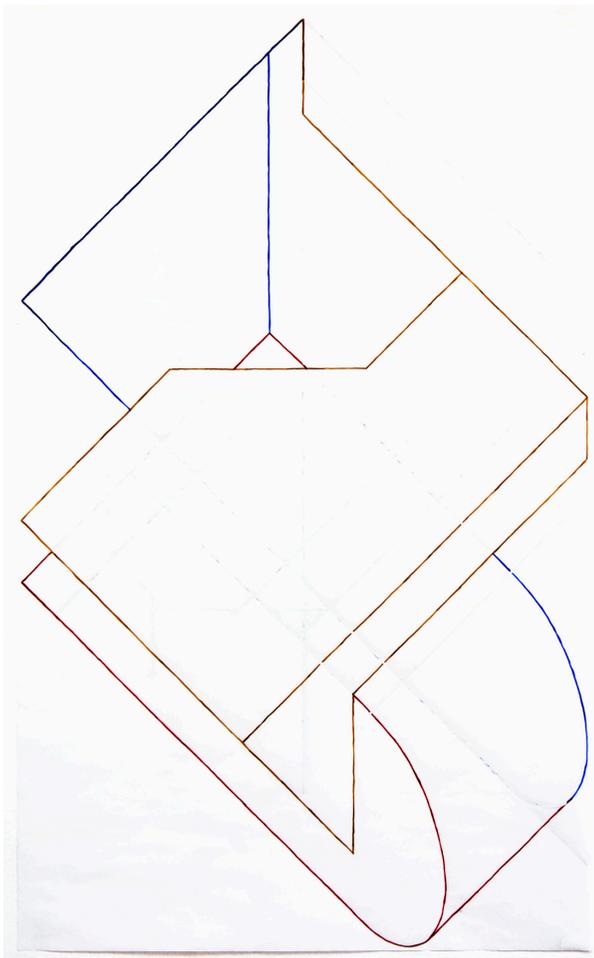


There is no There

Jen Aitken
Josée Aubin Ouellette
Liza Eurich
Jenine Marsh
Derrick Piens
Beth Stuart

Curated by Stefan Hancherow

May 2 - June 13, 2015



*They were all meant to do the same thing,
but they all were different*

Stefan Hancherow

When I travel between Hamilton and Toronto, I traverse two King streets. The streets are not the same, but have the same name. The streets are major causeways with respect to each city, and are differentiated by their inhabitants. Both are lined with sidewalks and buildings and are marked with signs bearing their title. Cars, pedestrians, and bicycles occupy them. Streets are important, as they enable us to identify and navigate our surroundings. It is reasonable to assume that there are many streets of the same name in many cities around the world. As Georges Perec notes, “the naming of streets is an extremely complex, often even thorny, topic, about which several books might be written.”¹ Yet the idiosyncrasies of location and context differentiate one from to the next. Where all streets have a beginning and an end, their surrounding environment is constantly shifting—in some cases decaying, others developing.

There is no There includes artists from a local, regional, and national scope. Jen Aitken (Toronto, ON), Josée Aubin Ouellette (Glasgow, Scotland), Liza Eurich (London, ON), Jenine Marsh (Toronto, ON), Derrick Piens (Toronto, ON), and Beth Stuart (Hamilton, ON) are aligned along a common avenue, where sculptural forms are subverted in order to make the invisible visible and vice versa.

1. Georges Perec, *Species of Spaces and Other Pieces*, trans. John Sturrock, (London, UK: Penguin Books, 1997), 46.

“Anybody can see by looking.”²

The artists' works hide in plain sight. They create and exemplify voids using material interjections that simultaneously illuminate and dissolve the viewer's perception of them. They embrace industrial materials such as plaster, concrete, plastic, latex, foam, textiles, paper, steel, and paint.

Aitken's *Potakin Min* (2015), made of concrete and foam and cast around the gallery's threshold wall, is like a Brutalist mollusk grasping onto the architecture. Eurich's *Two Components: Insert* (2015) surrounds a black and white image, framing it with a minimally painted wood form resembling an aerial view of a plot of land, quietly encroaching without making contact. The oblong shape and dimpled surface of Piens's *Hollow From The Inside* (2013) is suggestive of a geological crystal form, an inverse geode with its luminous surface hiding a gritty interior. Marsh's sculpture, *Dual Folly* (2014), is aesthetically dichotomous: one face is shimmering with a colourful floral motif, the other encapsulating decay and laying bare the artist's unique process of plasticization. The foam constructions comprising Aubin Ouellette's *BODY BLOCKS* (2015) are formed around body parts to support various positions and postures. The embodied sculptures offer comfort through a variety of uses presented in a series of posters strewn throughout the exhibition. Finally, in the fringes and beneath the surface of Stuart's *Mirror (Working Title)* (2015) lie rewarding intricacies and subtle gestures. A section of the gallery wall has been resurfaced with a marbled plaster, that, when buffed, reflects light. Stuart invited each of the artists in *There is no There* to make gestural interventions onto the mirrored surface. The collective metaphor draws attention to the viewer's surroundings, embracing the distinctive approaches of each artist's work, like streets of the same name.

2. Gertrude Stein, *Everybody's Autobiography*, (Cambridge, MA: Exact Change, 1993), 202.



Liza Eurich
It Frames Them (no. 2)
2015



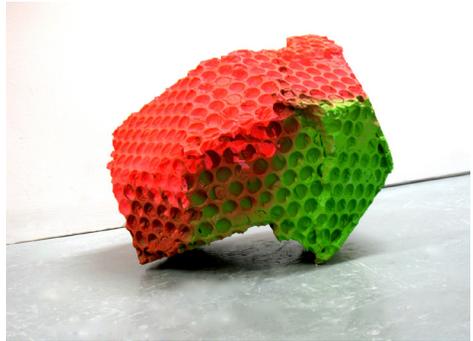
Beth Stuart
Study for an Interior (V.S.)
2014



Jenine Marsh
Skin Bathers
2015 (detail)



Josée Aubin Ouellette
BODY BLOCKS
2015



Derrick Piens
Hollow From the Inside
2013



View of Hamilton, Ontario from York Bridge. photo credit S. Hancherow

“There is no there, there” examines how personal relationships to place are metaphysical, rooted in memories once removed from their physical location.¹ At the end of the twentieth-century many industrialized North American cities experienced a loss of industry, leaving urban landscapes depleted or abandoned, primed for redevelopment. Hamilton, Ontario, being a former leader in the production of electricity, textiles, elevators, automobiles, chemicals, and perhaps most famously, steel, has earned its gritty reputation. Traces of those industries are omnipresent, but the city also provides a plethora of natural, cultural, and social histories. Hamilton is regarded as the waterfall capital of the world. It is connected to the Bruce Trail, a 1000-kilometer network of hiking trails. It is home of the Workers Art and Heritage Museum, which celebrates the history and current context of labour unions. One of the leading medical research universities in Canada, McMaster University, is located here. And, among the numerous cultural institutions that have blossomed, the Hamilton Artists Inc. celebrates its fortieth anniversary this year. With its rough exterior and vibrant inner activity, Hamilton manifests itself as a geode

1. This statement is in response to Gertrude Stein's unsuccessful search for her childhood home in Oakland, California, while on tour in the United States in the 1930s. The artists' works included in *There is no There* take up notions of locality without making a direct reference to the city of Hamilton. Here, there can be anywhere. Gertrude Stein, *Everybody's Autobiography*, (Cambridge, MA: Exact Change, 1993), 298.

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For exhibition documentation and extended biographical notes on the artists please visit theinc.ca/exhibitions/there-is-no-there/

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