

**vapours
opening for**

**emily hill
looks**

**featuring
feminist land
art retreat**

Tonight make it magnificent

Tonight

Make me tonight

Your hair is beautiful

Oh tonight

Atomic atomic

- Blondie, 3:36 Atomic on Eat to the Beat, 1979, written by Debbie Harry & Jimmy Destri

Looks defies distinction.

What is in a look? And what of pluralistic *looks*? What is the marker between takes, of a double take that does not stop looking?

At first glance, a 'globber' (pictured right) seems very strange.

This mass washed on to the beaches of the Philippines earlier this year and was declared to be a decomposing whale carcass. Although globbers of this sort have been known to wash ashore since the nineteenth century, they remain only viewable in rare instances and therefore consistently confound audiences.

This fibrous stage of decomposition reveals the hidden make-up of whale flesh. The image gives direct form to the figure of speech 'every fibre of that being'.

The exhibition *Looks* presents an installation of new dyed rug paintings by Emily Hill and features Feminist Land Art Retreat's 2015 film *Heavy Flow*.

In dialogue with curator Julia Prudhomme, Emily Hill produced an environment for her dyed rug paintings by layering them over rented fabric room dividers. This temporary foundation acts as a fluid layer between the pre-existing gallery walls and the exhibition.

When looking at a dyed rug painting's shifting surface, an opportunity for observation from all angles is presented. This shifting quality is emphasized in the surface of the wool that has gestures brushed into the pile, resulting in another layer of unstable marks held in place with hairspray. Both the image and the manipulated surface have a hazy and distorted logic that reinforce one another. Each work presents a series of variations; static colour is set in motion on unstretched shag fabric, simultaneously referring to its own substance and to illusionistic space. Each work wrestles with the contradictions between actuality and suggestion.

- Emily Hill, 2017

The layered bands of translucent colour in the paintings are made by pouring and smearing dye while the rugs are horizontal on the floor. The resulting marks and traces infer the absent body



Source: thesun.co.uk/scientists-identify-strange-white-blob-monster-that-washed-up-on-a-beach-in-the-philippines, 2017

that made them. Prudhomme has noted Ana Mendieta as a model for performance painting. Her smears of red in *Body Tracks*, 1982 turn surface into documentation. Before her, Lynda Benglis' use of pigmented latex in her piece *Contraband* (1969) defined an approach for working on the horizontal plane. Before Benglis, Helen Frankenthaler's solvent-thinned stain paintings asserted horizontality, transparency and fluidity as material concerns in the 1950's. Hill's gestural textile works created for *Looks* intercept these parallel material histories of performance, fabric and painting.

Screened for the first time in Canada, Feminist Land Art Retreat's (FLAR) film *Heavy Flow* is presented in tandem with Hill's installation. The film features a woman's monologue layered with mumbled environmental noises over a montage of moving images of volcanic lava. The lava erupts, surges and flows hypnotically to cover the earth's surface, indifferent to the controlling directions of the female voice. Her voice is at once educational, business-like and informative in tone, moving encouragingly with the montage's cadence.

The film's sound permeates throughout the gallery and becomes a presence in the exhibition. As a non-cohesive soundtrack it posits a situational environment for Hill's dye-drenched rug paintings, and conjures a range of references to film, land art and self-help literature. Using the vernacular "featuring" in the exhibition title, as is often used in pop music to note a guest appearance, FLAR's *Heavy Flow* acts as a re-mix of Hill's solo-exhibition.

At the opening reception for *Looks*, a subtle performance will occur. A hired actor will wear a synthetic leopard fur coat and imitate Hill's gestures while a second actor will wear an ocelot fur coat and imitate the other's gestures. This chain of imitation ties figures to the dyed rug paintings as temporary compositional elements, connected to the gestures in Hill's panels by her movement.

The beached 'globber' looks like it could be a manifestation of Chimera. Described by Jaishree K. Odin in her book *Hypertext And The Female Imaginary*, "Chimera, the fire breathing she-monster in Greek mythology, possesses the head of a lion, the body of a goat, and the tail of a serpent. Chimera is also the name given to an individual or an organ that is constituted of diverse genetic material, especially at the graft site that marks the joining of tissues from two different genetic sources" (67). Odin looks to the Greek myth of Chimera to describe the process of re-constructing the continuity of women's contributions in history, too often over looked in a patriarchal society. She states,

...women's tradition, when seen in the historical context, has been dis-continuous, assuming different guises and forms. A woman writer or artist can connect to this tradition only by a deliberate act of "grafting" recollected lives. This recollection is not a search for a direct line of descent but rather a unraveling of a patchwork of connections that have been the fabric of the lives of women, both literary and non-literary, throughout the centuries. Then again chimera is also a mental construction that does not have a basis in the real world; it is the stuff of dreams and myths. Literary monsters and hybrids might not be real; they can however, serve as dream symbols for empowering women's lives of the material world.

- Jaishree K. Odin, 67, *Hypertext And The Female Imaginary*, 2010

Presenting a solo-exhibition featuring a variety of components, *Looks* creates an environment reflexive of the discontinuous history of women in art. Strength of individuality is manifest as parts of a larger being and social fabric.

Just before the opening reception for *Looks*, a beach performance by Vapours will take place at Big Rock, the landmark boulder south of Campbell River Art Gallery. Vapours will form as an imaginary dream band, joining together 5 artists originally connected through Vancouver, B.C. who are now based in different locations. Digitally and physically, they will reunite on the beach of the Pacific Ocean for this specific gestation. The performance will be staged as an opening act for *Looks*, to set a mood, a look, or a gesture that might diffuse throughout the exhibition.

Vapours experiments with an embodied history of performance and ritual, presenting bodies in the landscape. This performance will announce the exhibition to the public, with its first act occurring outside of the institution.

The band is a force of nature.

Artist Biographies

VAPOURS: Vanessa Disler, Emily Hill, Nicole Ondre, Sharona Franklin, Tiziana La Melia

Emily Hill (b. 1987, Vancouver, Canada) lives and works in Vancouver. She studied textiles at Capilano University and holds a BFA from Emily Carr University of Art and Design. Recent solo exhibitions include: Campbell River Art Gallery, Vancouver Island; Duplex, Vancouver; and Macaulay & Co. Fine Art, Vancouver. Recent group exhibitions include: Soloway, Brooklyn; Model, Vancouver; Macaulay & Co. Fine Art, Vancouver; VSA Gallery, Vancouver; and Concourse Gallery, Vancouver.

Feminist Land Art Retreat (FLAR) was born in 2010 with an advertisement. FLAR has recently exhibited at ACUD gallery, Berlin; Ginerva Gambino, Cologne; Kestnergesellschaft, Hannover; Kunsthaus Bregenz Billboards, Bregenz; Oslo 10, Basel; Kunstverein München, Munich; Studio For Propositional Cinema, Düsseldorf; JTT Gallery, New York.

Nicole Ondre (b. 1986 Ganges, British Columbia) is currently based between Vancouver and Berlin. She is a recent graduate of the Master of Fine Arts program of the Hochschule für bildende Künste, Hamburg. She has exhibited her paintings throughout Canada and internationally, including projects at Diaz Contemporary, Toronto; Or Gallery, Vancouver; CSA Space, Vancouver; Hayaki Arti, Istanbul; and Benzulli Ziegt, Dusseldorf. With Vanessa Disler she ran Exercise project space in Vancouver from 2011-2013. She was the winner of the Contemporary Art Society Vancouver's Emerging Artist's Prize in 2012.

Vanessa Disler (1987, Canada) is a visual artist based in Brussels, where she recently completed the WIELS Residency Programme. Disler's practice is centered around painting and is heavily informed by many of Modernism's preoccupations: the possibilities of abstraction, and issues surrounding authorship and signature. She engages with these concerns through the use of visual and processual tropes associated with feminism and psychoanalysis while employing painting as a tool for a direct physical processing of subjective experience. From 2013–15 she was a resident at De Ateliers in Amsterdam. Since 2010 she has also worked under the alias Feminist Land Art Retreat in collaboration with Nicole Ondre.

Recent group exhibitions include Damien and the Love Guru, Brussels (2017), CC Stroombeek, Brussels (2017), Evelyn Yard, London (2016), Soloway, Brooklyn (2016), Juliette Jongma Gallery, Amsterdam (2015). Disler is currently working on solo presentations this year at Pavilion der Ruhigen, Zurich and Wiels Project Space, Brussels.

Tiziana La Melia (b. 1982, Palermo, Italy) is currently working on a new book of poems. Recent exhibitions include Unit 17, Vancouver; galerie anne baurrault, Paris; Francois Ghebaly, Los Angeles; Mint, Columbus; Mercer Union, Toronto; Truth and Consequences, Geneva; The Apartment, Vancouver and Western Front, Vancouver. La Melia's writing has appeared in The Interjection Calendar, Night Papers V, The Organism for Poetic Research, Art 21 and The Capilano Review, among others. In 2014, she was the Writer in Residence at TPW R&D, Toronto and the winner of the RBC Canadian Painting Competition.

Sharona Franklin is an emerging artist, writer and graphic designer. She is currently attending Emily Carr University of Art and Design and The University of British Columbia. Recent solo exhibitions include; This Bod is Rental, Sweetpup, Vancouver; Thuddberries Berlin as part of a studio residency. She recently published a book of poetry; Rental Bod with Publication studios 2016.

Vapours beach performance at Big Rock, Campbell River is located along the 19A highway and will begin at 5 p.m. on Friday June 2, 2017.

Everyone is welcome to attend this performance and the opening reception afterwards held at Campbell River Art Gallery at 7 p.m.

Looks was curated by Julia Prudhomme and will be on view from 2 June–12 July 2017 at Campbell River Art Gallery.

The exhibition will release a text by Amy Kazymierchyk in conjunction with the new work.

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