

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 un-  
stretched 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](https://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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