



Detail of *within reach ; out of touch (ix)* , Katie Bruce



Detail of *Unfolding Series I* , Christie Kirchner

surface to surface

Katie Bruce & Christie Kirchner

EXHIBITION: JANUARY 05 - FEBRUARY 16, 2018
OPENING RECEPTION : JANUARY 05, 2018, 7:00PM - 9:00PM



Alberta Printmakers Gallery
4025 4 Street SE, Calgary AB

surface to surface

Essay by Amanda Clyne


With every touch, we leave a trace of ourselves, intentionally or not. The trace may be so slight that we fail to notice the change we've triggered. Whether recorded deep in the annals of memory or physically in the minute wear of the surface we've encountered, our touch never lands without reverberation. Sustained by our material nature, we imbue our lives with rituals of touch. Personal and unremarkable, these rituals may grow out of habit, out of a kinship with the familiar, or out of struggles with distress. But with each repeated touch, changes to a surface begin to accumulate, and the one that touched and the one that submitted both enter a process of transformation.

The stark and fragile forms that populate this exhibition were born from such instincts. During a period of grief, Katie Bruce found herself folding and re-folding her fabric handkerchief. While undergoing a cross-country move, Christie Kirchner noticed that she was absent-mindedly folding and re-folding discarded papers left in her pocket. Both were captivated by the stories embedded in these intimate gestures. What they could have dismissed as a nervous tic, they adopted as a source of insight. With each print, their meditative, reflective actions became fossilized in the tight grip of the printing press, delineating the surviving traces of their hands' (and minds') occupation on the paper's thin skin. As printmakers, they adhered to the wisdom of Agnes Martin who once wrote: "Experiences recalled are generally more satisfying and enlightening than the original experience."¹

By re-enacting the simple process of folding and unfolding, Bruce and Kirchner have transformed small sheets of paper into implicit bodies. Bruce's figures fold inward, as fragile walls shield against the viewer's gaze. In Bruce's piece "alternatively", they seem to float inside an ethereal force. Each fold results from a protective instinct, yet with each new edge stressing the delicate surface,

the whole begins to weaken. As if to assess the damage, Kirchner performs a post-mortem, unfolding blackened sheets of carbon to reveal dissecting paths. These fissures slice through the dark void, cracking open the black depths. The fold's mark is made monumental.

The principles of printmaking lie at the heart of this exhibition. Paper is both subject and medium, each print existing on the threshold of object and image. The repeated act of folding and unfolding echoes in the recurring cycles of the printing process. Shadowy planes and incised lines harken to a prior state, just as the print testifies to the now lost referent. In form and substance, the artists harness the generative power of repetition. Every fold, every line, every print brings surface to surface.

When words fail and reason abandons us, our body can lead us toward renewal and reflection through the smallest of gestures. Guided by the sensations of rhythm and touch, the body seeks to leave its mark, to expel and expose a world trapped within. Bruce and Kirchner's work tells the story of this quiet, revitalizing process. Gazing into the web of their frail lines and sheer structures, we witness the passing of time, the instinct to rebuild, and the grace and grit of the pursuit of intimacy. 

¹ Briony Fer, "Drawing Drawing: Agnes Martin's Infinity," in *3X Abstraction: New Methods of Drawing*, ed. Catherine de Zegher (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2005), 191.

WRITER BIOGRAPHY

Amanda Clyne is a Toronto-based artist. Through digital and material processes, she responds to representations of the feminine in art history and contemporary culture. Her paintings have been featured in many publications and blogs, including New York's Hyperallergic, Canada's Akimblog and Italy's L'Espresso. She has exhibited in Europe, the U.S. and across Canada, and her work is in the permanent collections of such companies as Mercedes Benz, Holt Renfrew and Astra Zeneca.

ARTIST BIOGRAPHY

Working primarily in printmaking, Katie Marie Bruce is an artist and educator who recently relocated to Lethbridge. She received her MFA from York University in 2015, where her thesis work on empathy, "felt knowledge" was supported by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada. In January, she will be speaking about her practice at the University of Lethbridge program ArtNOW, and has presented her work across Canada and in the UK, in exhibitions, residencies, and projects.

www.katiemariebruce.com

Christie Kirchner received a Bachelor of Fine Arts Degree in Drawing from the Alberta College of Art and Design in 2009, and completed a Master of Fine Arts Degree in Printmaking at York University in 2014. A dedicated arts administrator as well as a practicing artist, Christie is the former Director of the Alberta Printmakers' Society and Artist Proof Gallery in Calgary, and is currently the Manager, Grants and Philanthropy at the Museum of Contemporary Art Toronto Canada. She has exhibited in Eastern and Western Canada, and internationally in Europe.

www.christiekirchner.com

Alberta Printmakers (A/P) is a non-profit, artist-run centre founded in 1989 in Calgary, Alberta, Canada. The organization's goals are to increase public awareness of print media, to engage a diverse audience, to provide resources for the artistic community and production facilities for printmaking.

A/P has an open membership, and is governed by a board of directors. Management and administration of A/P's activities are the responsibilities of its Directors, who reach out to volunteers in accomplishing A/P's goals. A/P also hosts residency and summer student programs.



albertaprintmakers.com | 403.287.1056

A/P thanks its funders:

