



"Containers for Historical Instances and Potential for New Narratives", ink, watercolor and pastel on Arches paper, 35 x 55 inches, 2015.

Joani Tremblay / *Landscape Gaze and Breezy Erudition, and What About Formal Freedom?*

Exhibition: April 22 - June 4, 2016
Opening Reception: April 22, 2016, 2016 8:00pm - 9:00pm



Alberta Printmakers Gallery
4025 4 Street SE, Calgary AB

Joani Tremblay – Landscape Gaze and Breezy Erudition, and What About Formal Freedom?

Essay by Christie Kirchner, February 2016

Joani Tremblay's work is rooted in the creation of spaces – both external, physical spaces to be occupied, and internal, psychological spaces of experience. Working in embroidery, printmaking and drawing, she creates illusory multi-media environments that weave together imagined places and experienced places, leading us tenuously along and across the borderline between our outer and inner landscapes. Her installations – often characterized by suspended embroidered drawings interspersed with prints, sculptural objects, and even live plants – create spaces that must be physically occupied, but that also provide an ethereal, abstract environment, in which the viewer can project their own backdrop of memories, fixations, and fantasies.

Tremblay's exhibition *Landscape Gaze and Breezy Erudition, and What About Formal Freedom?* explores the transfer between the physical experience of a place and the imaginings it conjures by endeavoring to re-create the "feel" of an existing place. In this work, she is interested in how we connect to and experience the feeling of powerful, emotionally loaded places – landscapes that have a particular mystical, ritual or historical significance. This specific installation draws inspiration from the Untermyer Garden in New York state: an elaborate, century-old garden founded by Samuel Untermyer, then a prominent lawyer and Jewish-rights advocate, and designed in the Beaux-Arts style at the turn of the century. Upon Untermyer's passing, the gardens were endowed to the state, abandoned, and soon fell into neglect, becoming a neo-renaissance-styled shelter for transient people and a mystical site for conducting occultist rituals. For several days, Tremblay walked, sketched, photographed and collected minerals and flora from the park as source material for her work, while internalizing a distinct feeling invoked by the esoteric history, architectural details and abandoned, outgrown aesthetic of the gardens.

The resulting works seek to elicit this affective experience in the viewer – the layers of time, overgrowth, and mysticism – through the repetition and layering of imagery. Within her sketches and photos, Tremblay looked for interesting details and gestural marks that resonated with her inner experience of the landscape. She then reproduced these tiny pieces of the collected garden imagery and re-configured, repeated and collaged them over and over in her prints and drawings into larger images and onto objects that form the new landscape of the installation. The ore and foliage collected at the site were ground into pigments to make inks from which the resulting imagery is printed, creating works that capture the feel of the gardens through both formal reflection and materiality.

Re-contextualizing these elements from their original locale into the layered marks of a maze of drawings, prints and objects, Tremblay's installation creates a parallel space that exists somewhere in between the garden's actual landscape and its distinct emotional experience. From this distilled essence of its history, visual details, and natural elements, we as viewers are invited to construct our personal inner experience of the Untermyer gardens. By triggering a particular feeling or emotional response through our interaction with her constructed space, Tremblay seeks to explore our internal perception of and connection to the physical landscapes around us, and how we understand the notion of place.

Writer's Biography

Christie Kirchner is a Canadian multidisciplinary artist who is also interested in the meaning inherent in process and materiality. Working primarily in drawing and print-making, Christie recently completed a Master of Fine Arts degree in Visual Art at York University in Toronto, where she currently lives and works.
www.christiekirchner.com

Artist's Biography

Joani Tremblay is an artist and curator living in Montreal. She is an MFA candidate at Concordia University with an art practice based in print media, drawing and installation. Tremblay's work has been shown in Tokyo (3331 Arts Chiyoda), New York City (DRAFTspace), Denton, Texas (tAd Gallery) and throughout Canada in Toronto (Open Studio Gallery), Montreal (Parisian Laundry), Rimouski (Caravansérail) and soon in Calgary (Alberta Printmakers Gallery) and Edmonton (Latitude 53). Tremblay has also done artist residencies in Tokyo and Berlin. Her work is part of the Loto-Québec Collection and numerous national and international private collections. She is the recipient of the Vladimir J. Elgart Graduate Scholarship and a research grant from The Fonds de recherche du Québec - Société et culture.
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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.

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