

Dawn Dudek: FAC Residency Outline

"As we spend more of our time staring into the frames of movies, television, computers, hand-held displays . . . how the world is framed may be as important as what is contained within that frame." Anne Friedberg *Virtual Window*

During my time at Fremantle Arts Centre, I will continue my current project 'Distance and Displacement,' in which I utilize the mediums of painting, photography, and animation within nature. At FAC, I intend to move my project from its current exploration within the known, blanketed Canadian boreal forest into the unfamiliar, exposed landscape of Western Australia, and, in particular, the terrain surrounding Fremantle and Perth.

Exploring and photographing the local terrain will be done prior to my arrival at the Fremantle Arts Centre, so I may fully utilize 3 months of studio time to create the paintings based on my gathered references. My process involves going outdoors to create reference material (using myself and my sister as the figurative subject matter) and then returning into the landscape to photograph the paintings on paper. In some of my pieces, I paint on boards with holes cut out of them. These painted boards, and their corresponding circles, become not only objects representing loss and absence, but also sculptural frameworks with their interpretation as found objects inextricably linked to their surroundings.

A life of duality—of experimentation and observation — has been a constant through my journey as an artist, merging technology with traditional mediums, motion and stillness, urbanity and isolation. It seems fitting that the continuation would evolve from living in France; to time back in Canada in the heavily wooded forest; to the bold, open territory of Western Australia . Having travelled as an art student extensively in Australia by bus from Sydney to Cape Tribulation, then to Darwin and down through the red centre, Adelaide, and Melbourne, Australia is not completely foreign to me. While more recently I have returned multiple times to spend time with my sister (who now lives in Australia) exploring local areas of NSW, Western Australia looms large as an enigmatic and undiscovered destination.

The programs at FAC have historically addressed themes of identity, history, and experiences when confronted by place and belonging. This project embraces those ideas while highlighting environmental issues through symbols that resonate with the language of technology. This project

started from the forests of Canada then will be interpreted through the backdrop of Australia revealing marked similarities and differences, producing art that resonates with the public and participants of the Centre.

The exhibition of the final project will show a combination of all the elements of the process created in their various locations in Canada and Australia, potentially pushing boundaries to transform the white walls of gallery spaces through collaborative installations.

On Distance and Displacement

Distance: how much ground is covered by an object, regardless of its starting or ending position.

Displacement: an object's change in position considering its starting position and final position.

This project is about boundaries, about striking out of the screened urban environment into the unknown...and yet the forest is familiar; there is a sense of return, of going back to something that was lost. The paintings seem to be about displacement, a figure holding a mirror, her eyes looking into the distance, and in others the physical removal of a piece of the painting directs our eyes beyond the frame. This aversion speaks directly to our relationship with our natural surroundings, ignoring issues that are critical yet so often ignored, instead focusing on the image of the self and the screen. I want to move from the reflection of Narcissus to reflection through retrospection, as this loss of one's self parallels one's disassociation from nature.

The paintings become “windows onto themes of presence and absence, matter and void,” to borrow a summary phrase from Julian Bell’s *Mirror of the World*. The mirror both sees and reflects, as eye and camera lens, allusion and illusion. The cut out paintings with their sculptural, dimensional quality and missing circle have a direct correlation with their environment. Enhanced and embraced by a natural setting or injured by the loss of it, these absences create negative space, as with a black mirror or a dark screen. The missing pieces of this project are the removed physical circles absent from the cut out paintings, their significance yet to be exposed as artifacts or found objects.

The photographs document something more than just the subject of paintings casually dropped on the forest floor (and the associated idea of our impact on the environment) as if caught by the wind. They raise important questions about originality and ways of seeing, so relevant in the age of Photoshop. Furthermore, they bring the whole journey of image making full circle and emphasise an enduring fascination with repeating images. In these photographs, we often see two almost identical paintings

of the same scene, a relevant language as we stare into multiple windows nestled into our various screens. By stepping out of the familiar, urban environment into the unknown, I start to tie dual aspects of my practice together--the painting with the digital image—and forge a more powerful whole, one that is deeply relevant to the issues we all face today.

About Dawn Dudek:

The idea of distance and displacement is central to my practice for many reasons, with one being geographical. Having studied fine art in Toronto, Canada, my work as an animator and art director led me to France to begin developing the formal aspects of my practice as a painter. Whilst my ability to work across all emerging platforms of new media dissolved borders and gave me a chance both to travel and work remotely, it was a disconnected experience. I occupied liminal spaces—not really belonging and yet fitting in politely through the international currency of form creation in the digital. A strong urge towards the physical act of mark making, of mistakes that are not erased, but buried in layers of paint, took hold of my imagination. It was a new kind of making, one that eventually drew me back into the Canadian wilderness, a place full of marks, which had marked me as a child and continues to propel me forward into the new unmarked territory of Perth, Australia.