

THIS IS THE ARTISTS' **OBJECTIVE**



This Is The Artists' Object(ive):

The Conceptual Display of The Object, The Thing, and Asserting Subjectivity Through

The Arts

By

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This Is The Artists' Object(ive): The Conceptual Display of The Object, The Thing, and Asserting Subjectivity Through The Arts

A curatorial thesis and exhibition paper by Emily Katherine Teresa Peltier

Masters of Fine Arts in Criticism and Curatorial Practice 2017

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ABSTRACT

This Is The Artists Object(ive): The Conceptual Display of The Object, The Thing, and Asserting Subjectivity Through The Arts is a thesis exhibition and curatorial paper that considers the ways in which personal and collective memory is determined through the presentation and representation of everyday objects, and the ways in which objects can be separated from their utilitarian purpose and re-contextualized to reflect conditions of subjectivity in the gallery space. The exhibition presents the work of three Toronto-based, artists, Esmaa Mohamoud, Erin Vincent, and Dana Prieto, all of whom display personal, and everyday objects in order to reflect on social issues including race, identity politics, colonial exploitation, and stigma associated with mental health. The artists make use of objects such as - tea cups, wall paper, basket-ball nets, pillows, hammers, etc - in order to move beyond ethnographic presentation, and to forward critiques of nationalism, idealization, and identity, which act as a type of *aesthetic de-pathologization*; in other words, the ways in which art can undermine an adherence to hegemonic determinations of subject-hood.

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Dedicated in memory of the lives of Teresa Peltier and Linda DePaoli Raco

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CURATORIAL ESSAY

This Is The Artists' Object(ive):

*The Conceptual Display of The Object, The Thing, and Asserting Subjectivity Through
The Arts*



“Activating the thing means perhaps to create an objective—not as a fact, but as the task of unfreezing the forces congealed within the trash of history. Objectivity thus becomes a lens, one that recreates us as things mutually acting upon one another.”

- Hito Steryl, *A Thing Like You and Me*

In 2011, author and historian Paul Koudanaris introduced the world to the mysterious, albeit lavish world of catacomb saints.¹ Koudanaris’s examination of these ecclesiastical phenomena provided a very shocking revelation. The “saints” in question, located contemporaneously at Christian sites across Europe, are in fact historically tied to ancient Italian corpses exhumed from the catacombs of Rome, and sent abroad across Europe passing as relics of saints from the 16th century to the 19th century (Geary, 1990). These findings were significant because they revealed that these “saintly” bodies and the material objects, (such as clothes, shoes, jewelry, etc), they were buried with, are not, nor have they ever been associated with the ecclesiastical iconography they were once, and are still attributed to, now. The understandings that emerge from the historical reality of catacomb saints is not exclusively tied to the history of Christianity. Koudanaris’s discovery exemplifies the ways in which Western ideologies are greatly influenced by physical things; some banal, others venerated, but all nevertheless, having a subjectivity determined by a dictated consensus of its significance (ie, Institutional

¹ The term “saint” is one that is familiar in the religious sect of Christianity and refers to an individual who has been deemed to have an especially holy connection to God, and has been canonized as a result. Due to their noted connection to such a venerated being with potential powers of healing, and fortune, these saints, and subsequently their body parts, clothes, shoes, jewelry, etc, have been worshipped by millions for centuries as having the ability to pass on these fortunes to the worshipper, through prayer, touch, etc (Abou-El-Haj, Barbara. *The Medieval Cult of Saints: Formations and Transformations*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994.).

religion). As such, the example of the relic plays a dual role in this upcoming examination - it is both a subject and an object, with it's determined and continued worship based on historical tradition and hegemonic interpretation. The notion of how subjectivity/objectivity is socially construction, as exemplified through the relic, is a key part of a larger social and theoretical examination in this paper and accompanying exhibition.

Using the object as a point of entry for the audience my curatorial project, *This is the Artists Object(ive)*, seeks to explore the ways in which the presentation of even the most banal can be elevated through the arts to reflect and make accessible social issues surrounding identity determination in society. As these artists are all Toronto-based and explore themes in relation to subjugation of citizens in a Canadian context, this exhibition takes its point of exploration from the perspective of individuals living in the multi-diverse community that is supposedly Toronto, and in a larger examination, Canada. The curatorial display methods use tableau, and story-telling through the artists' objects; thus both enacting an object-based curatorial methodology, often exclusively observed in ethnographic museums; while also problematizing this method. As such, this exhibition seeks to investigate the question of how subjectivity is removed from the object, and by extension the person to whom it's attributed to, when it is placed in the ethnographic gallery; and further, how the arts can play a role in reclaiming this subjectivity. The arts provides a special outlet or platform through which an individual can assert and/or

determine their subjectivity, and the exhibition of the works in *This is the Artists*
Object(ive) seeks to assert this fact.



Figure 1. *This Is Artists' Object(ive)*, 2017, installation view. Eric Chenyang.

This Is The Artists Object(ive) (Figure 1.) presents the work of three Toronto-based artists, Esmaa Mohamoud, Erin Vincent, and Dana Prieto. In their practices, these artists approach the banality of the everyday by presenting representations of, and personal objects. The purpose of the presentation of objects in this exhibition is twofold. First, the displays are intended to comment on the influence of the objects and the ways in which their value and significance can be dictated, not only personally, but also collectively. Secondly, the displays shed light on how objects can allow for individuals to reclaim and reveal contradictions and lapses in these determinations. Esmaa Mohamoud uses basketball and its related objects - shoes, nets, [etc.] - as a lens through which to problematize the stereotypes associated with Black male masculinity, futurities, and identity. Dana Prieto presents a tableau setting featuring a classic British tea scene - containing tables, chairs, and a fine China tea set - all surrounded by the backdrop of Victorian wallpaper designed around and drawing its aesthetics from the logos of Canadian extractive companies. This scene is intended to reference the historical and very contemporary conditions of colonialism including the various violences being experienced by Indigenous populations at the hands of contemporary settler resource extraction on their traditional lands. Erin Vincent juxtaposes her own personal possessions, a hammer from her family's farm, pillows, psychotropic boxes, and overlays most of her works with an embroidery pattern reminiscent of her grandmother's doily patterns to tell stories of her own past, but also underlying more complex issues

associated with mental health. These works each stand in a liminal² space between ethnographic presentation to embody what I refer to as *aesthetic de-pathologization*; or, in other words, works of art that problematizes hegemonic determinations of subject-hood (Thobani, 2013).

There Is No ‘I’ In Ethnography:

A Conceptual Discussion of The Object, The Thing, and Asserting Subject-Hood

“Things are what we encounter, ideas are what we project.”

Leo Stein

The intentions of this exhibition can be made apparent when considering the two-fold definition of the term “object.” An object is defined as a “material thing that can be seen and touched,” but also as a “person or thing to which a specified action or feeling is directed” (Websters, 2016). The former part of the definition is focused exclusively on the material thing, while the other encompasses an anthropomorphic relationship between a person and an object, interestingly now described as the “thing.” The relationship between an individual and an object is no greater observed than through the example of humanity’s relationship with material culture. Material culture is defined as being the physical evidence of culture related to specific objects, and the object’s function in society (Prown, 1982: 2-4). The term material culture, however, as historian Jules Prown asserts, is a combination of two apparently dichotomous terms, “material, is a word we

² The context of the term liminal is derives from Carol Duncan’s reinterpretation of ecclesiastical “liminality,” which is defined as the transitional phase of a rite of passage, which she applies to various forms of interactions within in the Museum. (Duncan, Carol. *Civilizing Rituals: Inside Public Art Museums*. London: Routledge, 1995.)

associate with base and pragmatic things; culture is a word we associate with lofty, intellectual abstract things” (Prown, 1982:2). The pragmatism to which Prown refers is the utilitarian and performative nature of objects as needing to have, or having some form of functional purpose, as opposed to their subjective interpretation. Take the shoe, for example: by construct, the shoe as a material object serves the function of protecting the person’s foot from the environment, and allows for greater comfort when walking. The shoe, regardless of its appearance or construction will always have an intended relationship with an individual’s body - to the foot, where it is intended to be worn. However, alongside the shoes basic function, the variety of shoe forms and purpose in different cultures illustrates how objects can play a role in the formation of personal, social, and theoretical framing of identity (3).

Prown’s discussion of material culture within an ethnographic framework was discussed in its infancy in the 1980s, during which time the study of material culture was being established as an academic field. Although Prown’s view of the relationship between culture and individuals is useful it reflects a very narrow cultural scope of investigation, as per the (problematic) Western perspective within the study of ethnography and museum collecting (McMaster, 1995:15). Nevertheless, Prown’s ideas have laid groundwork for contemporary critiques of the relationship between people and everyday objects, a topic that has been further taken up by scholars such as Professor Gerald McMaster.

McMaster, an Indigenous scholar, curator, and professor at OCAD University, proposes a way in which objects – in particular, objects made by Indigenous people – can be read more closely within the cultural sphere from which they originated, as having discrete identities which are in dialogue with the broader contexts in which they have been circulated and displayed (McMaster, 1995: 13). McMaster proposes that Indigenous objects contained within museums curated and run by non-Indigenous peoples have much larger social, cultural, and traditional contexts that is not reflected when they are interpreted or displayed in an ethnographic mode (15-16).³ In regards to the object's relationship with the subject, McMaster suggests "that an object has a history or biography further implies that an object must begin with a discrete identity;" (13) and most importantly an identity that has ascribed and determined by the individual to whom it once belonged, and not the secondary or tertiary re-interpretation of the white person, as often is the case within the fields of Anthropology and Ethnography (21-22). As stated in the title of this section, there is no "I" in ethnography, thus subtly noting and highlighting the problematics of the determination of what is deemed significant, both historically and contemporaneously, by another person privileged because of their academic credentials. Thus drawing from the notion of how objects can indeed reflect

³ McMaster's discussion is placed with the context of the cultural museum, and nuances the ways in which the ethnographic practice of display of Indigenous objects takes place in these institutions. The study and practice of ethnography has for the most part been contemporaneously rejected by Indigenous peoples who's traditional practices and ways of life were, and still are in some cases, censored and attempted to be destroyed by contemporary settlers. Please refer to Gerald McMasters *Object (to) Sanctity: The Politics of the Object*, "Aboriginal Peoples And Canada" in the International Journal of Canadian Studies.



Figure 2. Salcedo, Doris. *Atrabilarios*. Merrvyn Horton Bequest Fund 1997. Timber, gyproc, cow bladder, shoes and surgical thread

unique and personal human conditions, when self-determined by the individual and groups by whom they are attributed to, this exhibition, and curatorial paper, takes it start.

The interplay between the arts, the display of objects, and the humanizing relationship between the individual and the object is defined by Andreas Huyssen in his book, “Present Pasts: Urban Palimpsests and the Politics of Memory,” as “memory sculpture” (Huyssen, 2003:111). Huyssen elaborates that a memory sculptures, distinct from the determined memory of the monument, a site of collective significance in society, is described as “a kind of sculpture that is not entered on spatial configuration lone, but that powerfully inscribes a dimension of localizable, even corporeal memory into the work” (112). These works are engrained with the physical, temporal, and spatial presence of memory, eliciting a more personal, subjective resonance. As Huyssen's case study of the works of Columbian artist Doris Salcedo, highlights Salcedo’s decision to use found

objects that epitomizes the memory sculpture. Salcedo notes that: “I work with materials that are already charged with significance, with meaning they have acquired in the practice of everyday life...then, I work to the point where it becomes something else, where metamorphosis is reached” (Tate: 2007). This notion can be expressed through an exploration of the artist’s work *Atrabillarios*. This work seeks to highlight the unyielding violence wrought on innocent lives as a result of what is referred to as the “Colombian Conflict,” which involves an ongoing and violent war in the country in an effort to combat drug cartels (Bal, 2010: 31). This work is an installation piece that involves the presentation of shoes of women who have disappeared in Colombia, which are buried within carved indentations in the wall space of the gallery and covered with stretched animal skin (30). The example of Doris Salcedo’s work reinforces the notion that the singular object, can never be removed from a larger discussion of social and personal significance. This work and case study is relevant to *This is the Artists Object(ive)* because the manner in which Salcedo’s presentation of the shoe, as a utilitarian object is extended past the realm of the ubiquitous and instead functions within the life of the individual. Bill Brown asserts this function as the “thingness” (Brown, 2001: 4) of the object - a distinct realm that highlights its relationship to the tragedy of the situation of the women to whom the shoes belonged, thus highlighting the larger historical and cultural context of the shoe’s significance to the women, their stories, and Colombian history, etc (5).

The “thingness” attributed to Salcedo’s shoes is what Bill Brown describes as a story. Brown writes that “the story of objects as asserting themselves as things then is the story of a changed relation to the human subject and thus the story of how the “thing” really names less an object than a particular subject object relation” (4). The use of the term “thing” is an incredibly broad scope of investigation as “things” are so plentiful in their presence in the world; look down at your feet right now, you are undoubtedly wearing a shoe, if not socks, and if not, look around and notice the table, the chair, the bus seat, the park bench you are resting on to read these words (5). However, the conditions by which you interact with these objects, the personal relationship you attribute to them, to their subjectivity, “their force as sensuous presence or the magical by which objects become values, fetishes, idols” (Brown, 2001:7) is key in Brown’s use of the “thing,” and arguably for the formation of an understanding of human relations to the objects that people interact with daily. Brown distinctly differentiates the phonetic and dialectic relationship between the thing and the object for the purpose of unveiling the irreducibility of the metaphysical meaning behind the object, which he articulates to be the object’s “thingness” (3).

The choice by Brown to differentiate “thing” as opposed to object in his analysis, opens up a much larger interpretation, one which does not limit the object’s cultural, utilitarian, or purposefulness, but instead extends the object “at is most banal to index a certain limit or liminality to hover over the threshold between the nameable and the untameable the figural and unfigureable, the identifiable and unidentifiable” (5). Thus, the

“thing” in Brown’s terms is what connects the world - the animate and the inanimate - it is a space of connection in which the everyday becomes melded in to the experiences, the life of the person. Relating to Huyssen’s claim of Salcedo’s work epitomizing a memory sculpture, “if classical sculptures capture the salient moment of crystallizing an idea or ideal form from the flow of time, then Salcedo’s memory sculpture unlocks itself only within the flow of time because temporality itself is inscribed in the work” (Huyssen, 2003: 114). The significance of this understanding, the recognition of objects in relation to their “thingness,” is a means by which we can create an “awareness of the problem of one’s own cultural biases, and is the largest step in the direction of neutralizing the problem but material culture offers a scholarly approach that is more specific and trustworthy than simple awareness” (Prown, 1982: 5). Bill Brown assesses the way in which we “look through objects because there are codes by which our interpretive attention makes them meaningful, because there is a discourse of objectivity that allows us to use them as facts” (Brown, 2001: 4). Thus, there is indeed room for subjective interpretation that exists within a person’s interaction with objects, and the unanimous agreement by individuals regarding the “thing’s” universal, and furthermore, the personal, collective, and social significance, contributes to what is referred to as *social memory* (French, 1995:15).

The concept of social memory has been theorized as the process by which individuals self determine cultural and social relationships; what Scott A. French refers to as the “internalization of group identities” (9). This internalization process entails the self

determination of a group of individuals who decide on their subjective experiences and recognize them as being a universal, though varied, experience amongst individuals living in similar conditions. These types of collective memory making are influenced by experiences focused on the “construction of group boundaries, a process that reveals the multiplicity of meanings individuals attached to shared experiences and the intense struggles that take place within groups over what to remember and what to forget” (17).

As Richard Candida Smith asserts regarding the influencing potential of memory:

Memory exists in an ongoing process of performance and response. Traces of the past otherwise slip into the archive, an ever-present but usually ignored repository filled with the random survivals of antecedent social relationships stored in buildings, landscapes, libraries, museums, store windows, the electronic media, as well as in the everyday lives of the countless unknown people whose paths cross ours. One person’s memory is another person’s archive (Smith, 2002: 3).

The issue with this suggestion, however, can be revealed when one considers the prioritization of this history - often permanently engrained in the dominating narrative of the “white mans” history (as McMaster previously asserted within the framework of Indigenous objects and settler colonial idealizations of the past). As French asserts, “for too long historians had dismissed memory as a poor substitute for history, a partial or distorted version of what had really happened,” (French, 1995:9), when exactly the opposite should exist. What French is suggesting is precisely the necessity for the consideration of social memory when confronting the ideological make-up that is embedded within the social framework of history. French points to the historiography of the Southern United States during the Civil War years as evidence of what he deems as

ultimately racist, white-washed prejudice against Black people during this time, and states that such racism pervades into modern historiography:

The earliest scholarly analysis of the link between social identity and southern history focused on the willful distortion of the truth about the southern past, the self-aggrandizement of one group at the expense of another. Social critics with strong southern allegiances charged that propagandists had distorted southern history for their own selfish purposes...At stake they argued was the health and prosperity of region and its people (French, 1995: 11).

The “willful distortion of the truth” that French is referring to in this statement is indicative of the objective prioritization of ruling ideology within the hegemonic conditions that exists in most societies that are dictated by government, and other institutions containing authoritative positions. (Leitch, 2001: 1478). These positions of power allow prioritized histories that maintain a status quo of knowledge, and thus perpetuate the questionable historiographic conditions by which education and knowledge is shared and passed down in society. These hegemonic conditions are motivated and maintained through the continued reliance on and support of ideologies, a Marxist notion still very much engrained and evidenced within the framework of societies (Leitch, 2001:1478-1479).

The Marxist conception of ideology is defined as being, “the imaginary relationship of individuals to their real conditions of existence (1478),” with the inclusion of beliefs, ideas, ideals, principles, ethics, and morals. Louis Althusser defines ideologies in his Ideological State Apparatus theory as a significant component in the hegemonic conditions by which individuals are ruled in a society. These ideologies influence a type

of personal regulation or collective indoctrination produced within “specialized institutions” (1503). Although Althusser focuses heavily on the ecclesiastical influence of the church in this critique, (referencing the hierarchy of god to the church, to earthly worshippers (Leitch, 2001: 1507), he also cites the home, the school, and other institutions in place within society for the purpose of maintaining a status quo of social regulation, serving a powerful indoctrinating function within society by playing host to the information deemed pertinent to maintaining a collective consensus of history based on the determination of an influencing power (Leitch, 2001:1505). Although history is undoubtedly engrained in the social order of a society, the establishment of ideology, as French asserts with his social memory theory, is not as clear as Althusser’s definition suggests. There are a number of ideological influences and state-run institutions that are associated with these means of indoctrination. The state run institutions (school, the hospital, etc.) which are run and ruled by a determined consensus of what is deemed acceptable in society are clearly insidious in their design as they perpetuate questionable and strategic narratives passed on as historical fact (Nakayama, 1995: 293).

On one level Althusser’s theory of the ISA is a generalized analysis of the ways in which individuals remain complacent within a particular social order. According to Althusser the individual is always internalizing and influenced by ideology, and thus one’s subjectivity is interpolated by the ISA. In a more specific way Canadian nationalism exemplifies this fact. Sunera Thobani suggests the national identity of Canadian citizens is comprised of “communities of imagination” (Thobani, 2007: 7);

these communities adhere to the laws, ideologies, and myths that encompass the idealized Canadian subjectivity. Thobani posits that the imagination of the Canadian public is regulated and determined by governmental and legal forces in order to subdue and “other” individuals and populations such as Indigenous people, Black people, and Immigrants in the country (20-22). This distinction in society creates the notion of what Thobani refers to as an “exalted national,” (Thobani, 2007: 9), or in other words a citizen of colonial and settler ancestry whose histories, traditions, and livelihood are prioritized and upheld in the state. This suggestion is derived from Benedict Anderson’s argument that nations are comprised of the imagination, or standards, of a few dominating people, and thus an individual’s subjectivity is often at odds with what has been deemed to be the national character, fostering the perception that “the integration of first the British and the French, and subsequently various other Europeans in to the “imagined” national community as exalted juridical subjects” (Thobani, 2007:5). Therefore, the globalized colonial and hegemonic conditions through which individuals in Canada continue to conform to a specific social order forms and maintains the collective memory of history. Thobani claims that the assertion of national self-hood in Canada is a means of “othering,” as Foucault articulates, (8-10) and seeks to render invisible Indigenous people, Black people, immigrants, and other marginalized groups that are often at odds with the European settler narrative that exists in the country, thus identifying the systems that work in order to maintain this ‘otherness’ (10).

Thobani's claims regarding the nationalistic determination of self-hood can be contextualized as a forceful inclination of certain members of society. This method of determination and exclusion is arguably a means of pathologization, and can be examined through the ways in which narratives of history, or social memory, are prioritized and engaged within the present. Pathologization is a psychological term that is defined as "the practice of seeing a symptom as an indication of a disease or disorder. In regards to mental health, the term is often used to indicate over-diagnosis or the refusal to accept certain behaviour as normal" (Good Therapy, 2015). The emphasis is on maintaining normality through this type of categorization.⁴ In relation to the erasure and exclusionary practices of hegemony, Andreas Huyssen describes how certain memories, histories and individuals are prioritized within a national narrative, contributing to an exclusionary practice of prioritization of history, and state of "pervasive amnesia" (Huyssen, 1995:17). The artists' featured in this exhibition are working against this notion. Each artist and their work utilizes the everyday object in order to move beyond ethnographic presentation of the physical object, and instead moves it to the realm of the "thing;" in order to forward critiques of nationalism, idealization, and identity. This movement through the arts, in the context of Thobani's work, acts as a type of *aesthetic de-*

⁴ The first application of the term pathologization in the context of social theory was by Judith Butler in 2002 in her writing "Is Kinship Always Already Heterosexual?" In this work Butler uses the term pathologized in reference to the oppressive measures taken towards marginalized groups at odds with determined notions of social and racial normality (ie. not White, not heterosexual, not monogamous, etc) and how views of kinship in these contexts are erased or dismissed as abnormal. Please see "Is Kinship Always Already Heterosexual?" *differences* (2002) 13(1): 14-44; doi:10.1215/10407391-13-1-14

pathologization, or, in other words, the ways in which art can undermine an adherence to hegemonic determinations of subject-hood, and work towards dwindling the “exalted.”

On considering how the example of the object plays a role in promoting this awareness Hito Steyerl questions the faculties by which we come to form the language that forwards our understanding and relationship to the everyday. Steyerl writes that, “to start listening to them [objects] again would be the first step towards a common language, which is not rooted in the hypocrite presumption of a unity of humankind, but in a much more general material community” (Steyerl, 2012). In the context of her article, Steyerl is referring to the feminist affirmation of women historically being defined as an “object,” with a determined and oppressive subjectivity, and instead re-asserting their own subjectivity by, as Steyerl asserts, becoming a “thing.” In Steyerl’s opinion the “thing” relates to the individuals self-determination of subject-hood. This self-determination of the ‘thing’ is not determined by the ideological and hegemonic faculties by which [women] have been historically oppressed by. She states: “traditionally, emancipatory practice has been tied to a desire to become a subject. Emancipation was conceived as becoming a subject of history, of representation, or of politics. To become a subject carried with it the promise of autonomy, sovereignty, agency” (Steyerl, 2012). In this analysis Steyerl makes the metaphorical connection between the concept of the thing, that which separates itself from the forced objectivity of the subject: “activating the thing means perhaps to create an objective—not as a fact, but as the task of unfreezing the forces congealed within the trash of history” (2012). Thus, the prioritization and

determination of certain histories over others as a strategy of maintenance of hegemonic conditions can be combatted, or at least re-considered, through methods of reclaiming agency through the arts.

This suggestion of self-assertion through the use of objects is present amongst the orientation of the works in *This Is The Artists Object(ive)*, as each work in some way challenges adherence to hegemonic determinations of subject-hood. The objects within this exhibition are not necessarily venerated to the degree of the Saint, nor fetishized, idolized, or purposed for tradition, as is the relic, but rather derive from the everyday and personal realm of the artist. The realm of the personal from which the objects derive thus is subjective assertion by which the artists' stories, experiences, and livelihood can and should be prioritized in the construction of history, and the present. Although Thobani's focus is on the racialized conditions of the Indigenous person, the Black person, and the Immigrant in Canada her analysis can be extended to other marginalized groups as well that are pathologized within the imagination of Canadian national identity (Thobani). In the case of Esmaa Mohamoud: of the Black man, Erin Vincent: of the mad, and differently abled person, and Dana Prieto: of an Indigenous person living through conditions of violence in contemporary settler-colonial states in the global North and South.

Esmaa Mohamoud's presentation of objects exemplifies how Black people in North American society, specifically Black men, are racialized by non - Black individuals. Racialization is defined in sociological terms as the process of ascribing an

identity based on social, traditional, and physical relationships that are not necessarily asserted by the individuals or group to whom they are being ascribed (Websters).

Mohamoud illustrates this through the example of basketball, which stands as a point of thematic departure in her work, and is used as a dialogical framework for discussing larger systemic disparities experienced by Black men as a result of stereotype and racism (Mistry, Fader:2016). Mohamoud's first work, *I Am Series*, consists of large-scale, hand made, basketball nets created out of chains and is situated on the floor of the entrance to the gallery space. This work has been removed from its original series as a part of Mohamoud's larger series called *#000000 VIOLENCE*, to be juxtaposed and thus re-interpreted with the accompaniment of the second piece entitled in this show *Strange Fruit*, which occupies the central space in the middle of Blank Canvas Gallery. *Strange Fruit*, a "sculptural sketch" (Mohamoud, 2017) according to Mohamoud, contains the layering of black earth soil, man-made grass turf, and a chromatic basketball shoe hanging from metal chain laces. The presentation of these "things" — the shoe, the grass, the turf — creates a layered narrative, synthesizing the man-made and the natural world; a play between the organic and the manufactured; what is, and what is fabricated. The inspiration for the work is drawn from the everyday occurrence of shoes hanging from telephone pole wires, an observance that can be made around Canada, but has a specific significance in some communities. According to Mohamoud (Mohamoud, 2017) this banal ritual has a two-fold meaning to some Black individuals living in what she refers to as "the projects," or communities that face economic and social disparities and require

government funded subsidized housing assistance. The meaning behind the shoes indicates that an individual has willingly left their home in these areas, to pursue a life elsewhere, or, on the other hand, has succumbed to the violence that is often also prominent there as well; which is often a result of gang-related violence, drug trafficking, etc. Thus, the chromed basketball shoe hanging from chained laces is a direct reference to the lived experiences and banal rituals surrounding objects that play significant roles in an individual's life, and further reflects the lived conditions of an individual or group of individuals.

Although two distinctive works, there is a clear relationship between Mohamoud's two works in the gallery space. Aesthetically, the metallic shoe is an extension of the chains by which the basketball nets are constructed from. Thematically this extension goes further; both the shoe and the basket-ball net are intended by the artist to be object-based representations of the Black male body in contemporary culture, and the disparities inflicted upon the body by non-Black individuals (Mohamoud, 2017). These disparities include racialization and stigmatization of the Black male. In her interview with Anupa Mistry for FADER magazine, Mohamoud asserts that Black men "can only exist in three sites-athletics, music, acting/comedy" (2016), within this racialized framework – constructed mainly by non-Blacks – that limits social expectations of the success of Black men to these occupations, but is hostile to their success in any other arenas (2016). This notion was addressed and observed through this work by the audience the opening night of the exhibition. An individual viewing the work

commented that the placement of the basket-ball net on the ground, in it's rusted condition was reflective of the ways in which basket ball nets in low-economic communities, (projects), are taken care of by the city, particularly in Toronto. What recreation is available in these areas is not up-kept like in wealthier (White)⁵ neighbourhoods, and as one individual commented the basketball nets are left to degrade, rust, and break — also noting the connections between the treatment of the nets and the apparent disregard to Black lives that exists in these parts of the city.⁶

Mohamoud's works are reflective of a specific familial and racial connection Mohamoud has to the subjectivity she is reflecting on. Though Mohamoud identifies as a woman, her work comes from a personal point of experience growing up and living as the middle child of four men. Mohamoud describes her work utilizing the “visual vernacular” (Mistry, Fader: 2016) of basketball, a career aspiration once held by her brother, to exemplify the racialization that comprises the expectations of Black masculinity. As such, Mohamoud's work can be read alongside Frantz Fanon's observations of the social conditions of Black men through the eyes of White society:

For not only must the black man be black; he must be black in relation to the white man. Some people will argue that the situation has double meaning. Not at all. The black man has no ontological resistance in the eyes of the white man. From one day to the next the Blacks have to deal with two systems of reference.

⁵ White is capitalized to indicate Whiteness in this context as both a racial but also social reality of having White privilege and thus the social privileges that go along with this. Please refer to Nakayama, Thomas L., Robert Krizek. *Whiteness as Strategic Rhetoric*. Quarterly Journal of Speech. August 1995. 10.1080/00335639509384117.

⁶ See Black Lives Matter Toronto, <https://blacklivesmatter.ca/>.

Their metaphysics, or else pretentiously their customs and agencies to which they refer, were abolished because they were in contradiction with a new civilization that they imposed on (Fanon, 2008: 56).

In the context of *This Is The Artists Object(ive)* the basketball net, and the shoe are positioned to refer to the experiences of the Black male upon whom these social conditions are imposed. This work confronts the racial and gender tensions in historical and contemporary North American society through the power dynamics that ground relations between Blacks and non-Blacks, both reflecting on these constructed conditions but also re-asserting the autonomy of the Black male in opposition of these oppressive determinations. The juxtaposition of these two works in the context of the theme and space of the gallery metonymically examines the Black male body's navigation within contemporary society, in this case the space of the basketball court, mimicking the observation of the real life, and symbolically encapsulating the historical and contemporary struggles of the Black man in North American society (Mistry, Fader: 2016).

Although not directly linked to the racialized experiences of the Black male, Erin Vincent's exhibit also provokes an intimate revelation of her own personal history, but also aspects of her history that are shared by many others. Her work, constructed using personal memorabilia, reflects on mental health challenges — conditions that thousands of Canadians face everyday. Vincent notes there is a very generalized, and problematic, connection between the arts and mental health in which arts are seen as a caveat, a form of reprieve or cure for the deviating conditions by which mental health issues; art

produced within the context of mental illness is often deemed as “art therapy.” This prevents individuals to recognize the person, and thus, their subject-hood, behind the work (Vincent, 2017). She states that the objects used in her practice “hold a power to trigger emotional responses and act as surrogate for events and individuals” (Wall Space, 2016). Vincent’s display of these objects seeks visibility and recognition of subjectivity separate from that of the de-humanizing qualities of an illness that occur within at the institutional level in the hospital. This can be linked to Michel Foucault’s theory surrounding the government and state regulated concept of the “medical gaze” (Foucault, 2003:14), in which the theorist posits that modernity’s dichotomous relationship between the physician (as authority) and the patient (as docile subject), by which the physician’s pragmatic and objective approach to the patient de-humanizes the individual. (15).

The three works, *Shrouded Pharmaceuticals*, *Pillow Talk 1-3*, and *Lace Forms*, are spread around the gallery and differ in presentation and curatorial orientation, but, like Mohamoud’s works, are nevertheless intertwined in thematic similarities. The first work hung on the entrance gallery wall is *Lace Forms* and features 3 hammers taken from Vincent’s family’s farm embossed with nails. The work, although completely different in object presentation actually mirrors the accompanying work, *Shrouded Pharmaceuticals* located closely to the work on plinths. The intricately patterned lace aesthetic featured in *Shrouded Pharmaceuticals* is instead carefully nailed into the hammer. *Shrouded Pharmaceuticals* features real psychotropic and antidepressant medication boxes used to treat various forms of depression, Bipolar Disorder (BPD), etc.

The cut outs in the boxes are laser cut prints of Vincent's grandmother's doilies, thus Vincent is not only connecting the object to its medicinal purpose but also literally imprinting her own family history. Although there is a light-heartedness implicated by the lace aesthetic from both *Shrouded Pharmaceuticals* and *Pillow Talk* the aesthetic is masking the undoubtedly threatening objects in the display. The hammer and guns allude to a very literal potential for physical violence and harm. This harm, however, within the context of this exhibition and Vincent's conceptual relation to her personal experience to mental health, can also be read as metaphorical; referencing the underlying and often visible anxiety and uneasiness individuals feel when being confronted by discussions surrounding mental health. However, the hospital, as Foucault suggests, is not the only institution that enforces this negative stigmatization. Vincent's work displays the ways in which this pathologization reveals a determination of ableist standards for the position of disability within the arts. Vincent's work aligns with the goals of creating "crip futurities" (Rice, 2016: 2) within the arts and society in order to promote both dialogue and visibility for those differently abled, who have historically and contemporaneously been dismissed or overlooked due to a lack of adherence to an ideological "normality" (2).

Crip futurities is a broad term that encompasses these goals of overcoming and has been accompanied by a number of emerging social awareness initiatives such as Mad studies. Mad Studies, which refers to degrees and courses centred around the study of the historical oppressive biases about differently abled, mad, neurologically diverse individual, recently appeared at York and Western University (Sandals, 2016). The goals

of bringing in great awareness of these histories is for the promotion of what Carla Rice has described “crip Futurities” which seeks to contend “with an art history full of normative representations of mind/body difference; with an ongoing history of being on display, in freak shows, reality TV shows, and examining room tables” (Rice, 2016: 5). In *Shrouded Pharmaceuticals* the intricate lace patterns cut from psychotropic medication boxes for the purpose of managing symptoms of mental illness stands to negate the stigmas associated with them. The suggestive danger being in this work is not as obvious as in with the hammer, gun, and axe. The symbol of the medication box links to the misconceptions and pathologizations from who Thobani describes as the ‘exalted’ subject; being the subject who is deemed to adhere to an idealized social, mental, and physical ability. Vincent’s work aligns with the exhibition thematics, in the way she is utilizing her personal experience and materials from this experience, in an effort to create more visibility of these issues. Although not directly related within institutional Madness studies, her work never the less contributes to a “plurality of these varied and diverse articulations of difference that enacts the dynamic potentialities of crip futurity,” and creates a platform for these conversations to be had within the gallery space (Rice, 2016: 4).

In considering each of the works in this show as art pieces in a gallery setting, it is important to note how in Canada there is a very specific way in which the presentation of objects, particularly in the museum institution, can be linked to the exclusionary methods of keeping historical and contemporary social realities of groups from the public. As

such, Sunera Thobani's exalted subject can be further exemplified through the authoritative position of the contemporary curator. Museums are contemporary holders by which object veneration occurs, and in turn fuels a factory for subject making, as "retrospection becomes a way of decoding and naturalizing the present becomes the lens in which the past is constructed" (Root, 1995: 114). As Douglas Crimp suggests the museum has a clear role in this construction within history and the present, stating: "And the history of museology is a history of all the various attempts to deny the heterogeneity of the museum, to reduce it to a homogenous system or series" (Crimp, 1980: 50). More specifically in a Canadian context this homogeneity highlights and prioritizes North American relations to Western, or European histories; thus, creating a very limited, and problematic perspective, of the history of this country, an exclusionary practice that works to silence or erase the realities that Indigenous peoples have experienced historically and contemporaneously.

Dana Prieto's work, *Indulgences*, illustrates this. At first glance, *Indulgences* is a tableau display of a traditional British high tea ceremony inducing reclaimed English China, Gold leaf pattern, table cloth, table, chair, which are all set to the back drop of an equally adorned Victorian wall paper. Although the scene appears to be referring to a captured moment in British regal history, this display is intended to tell another, more insidious story. The display of the high tea ceremony references a cultural worldview, (British, imperial, colonial), that has worked to exclude and erase Indigenous subjects and sovereignty (Prieto, 2016). These acts of erasure are still occurring today, and is not

only affecting the land, but also has direct impact on the Indigenous people and populations still existing on the land today. The details of this work all relate back to this notion. Aside from the tea-related objects, the accompanying details in the work include a painting of Peter Munk, the founder of Barrick Gold, a small painting of Argentinian land that is currently the extractive site for Barrick Gold, pieces of hand made white chocolate formed in the shape of the Barrick Gold logo and wrapped in gold paper, and finally the largest aspect of the work is that of the hand printed wallpaper, which backdrops the scene and contains the logo's of Barrick Gold, Trans Canada, The Mining Association of Canada, HudBay and Canadian Oil Sands. The inclusion of all these details are strategic and illustrates the fact that Canada's settler population occupies and profits from vast territories of unceded, stolen Indigenous land, meaning that settler-colonialism is an ongoing condition for both settler and Indigenous populations (Tuck, 2012: 3). Each of the objects in Prieto's work provide further details to confronts this reality and attempts to open a dialogue about the impacts of (Canadian) extractive companies in Indigenous territories in the global North and South (Prieto, 2016); and specifically in this work, Argentina, Veladero, and the mining of gold on this land by the Barrick gold company.

On April 7th, 2017 the Canadian publication The Globe and Mail published an article about the conditions and harms of the Veladero site stating in this excerpt: "A pipe carrying cyanide solution ruptured at the open pit mine on March 28, the third incident at the mine in 18 months involving cyanide-bearing solution...The Toronto-based company, which counts Veladero as one of its five core mines, said no material impact was expected

on the mine's projected 2017 production" (Rizzi, 2017). The dirt-filled fine China cups in this work, thus links this reality to the present, the land, people, and history. The inclusion of the Victorian-style wallpaper sporting the logos of Canadian extractive companies, including Barrick's, who who are currently profiting from resource extraction at the cost of the health, wellbeing and livelihood of many Indigenous people further highlights this point. The spatial and temporal specificity of this work in the city of Toronto is significant to the works affect and resonance as well. Toronto is the location and the headquarters of a number of Canada's largest and oldest mining corporations, including HudBay Minerals and Barrick Gold, working, and extracting minerals nationally, and internationally for decades (MISN, 2015). In Toronto a group known as Mining Injustice and Solidarity Network, comprised of both Indigenous and



Figure 3. Allan Lisner, 2015. Mining Injustice Solidarity Network HudBay Protest. Toronto, Ontario.

non-indigenous individuals from both Canada and Central and South American countries such as Guatemala, Argentina, and Peru, have formed a coalition in order to advocate the specific violations and harms caused by these companies which include, but are not limited to, “murder, shooting-paralyzing, and the gang-rapes of 11 women villagers” in South American countries (MISN, 2015). As Glen Coulthard argues, “instead of ushering in an era of peaceful coexistence grounded on the ideal of reciprocity or mutual recognition in its contemporary liberal form promises to reproduce the very configurations of colonist, racist, patriarchal state power that indigenous peoples’ demand for recognition have historically sought to transcend” (Coulthard, 2014: 24). To combat the continued violence inflicted on Indigenous populations as a result of settler colonials, the goals of this activist group’s mandate is to make these corporations and individuals accountable and to mobilize for “justice and reparations for the crimes, violations and harms carried out by Hudbay Minerals, for the acts of colonization carried out by their mines” (MISN, 2015), and making aware these situations at the root of the cause by picketing in Toronto and outside of the headquarters. Prieto’s piece serves to exemplify these goals as well and assert through her own agency as an Argentinian woman and artist, that current industrial extractive activities are an extension of an ongoing settler-colonialism, and that through visibility in the arts these issues can be given further consideration and awareness. (Czikk, 2015).

On this note, there have been recent and significant efforts to empower Indigenous arts professionals and scholars within the arts institutional level in Toronto to

further provide visibility of Indigenous people and histories. This can be most recently observed by the Art Gallery of Ontario's appointment of Wanda Nanibush, an Anishinaabe scholar, activist and curator, as the new Assistant Curator of the newly-named Canadian and Indigenous Collections. The Art Gallery of Ontario museum is one of Ontario's most prominent cultural centres for the arts and is a cultural repository of thousands of "Canadian works of art," boasting in particular, "the Group of Seven... [which] continues to influence national identity" (AGO). The way in which this group of artists have been idolized by the Canadian public not only privileges a certain artistic genre, that of landscape painting, but the renown of the Group of Seven. A major criticism within these works, especially since they are upheld within the canon of Canadian art, is the lack of (Indigenous) people, culture, and, thus, invisibility of the historical realities happening during this time. The Group of Seven's works epitomizes what is most lacking in Canadian history and proposes the question of what does it mean to have a National identity in a country whose idea of "home and native land" has been fabricated based on predominantly colonial-centric narratives (Dawn, 2006:2-3)? This is highly reflective of the colonial tradition of exemption of historical fact to maintain and establish dominance.

In an effort to work against this, Wanda Nanibush uses her position and agency at the AGO to foreground the presence and power of Indigenous historical narratives, in many ways. In an interview with the Toronto Star, she commented on the current presence of Indigenous art works by artists' such as Carl Beam at the Art Gallery of

Ontario, which curators have juxtaposed and positioned near works of the Group of Seven in the Canadian and Indigenous galleries (Whyte, 2016). Nanibush points out that, “most important, though, is its position: Not just here, in the halls of official culture, but surrounded by its lodestones. It colours those things — Group of Seven landscapes, an image of the Crucifixion, Modern-era sculpture of mothers and children — with unsettling newness” (Whyte, 2016). This unsettling newness is visually reflected in the work of Carl Beam, particularly in works such as *Sitting Bull and Whale* one of numerous contemporary Indigenous inclusions in what was once a predominantly Group of Seven clustered Canadian Gallery. The work is an etch print featuring the historical Sioux Chief Sitting Bull who led a number of resistance movements and battles against the United States authorities attempting to forcefully remove the native people of the area and make claim to their traditional lands in South Dakota, in the Nineteenth century. This photograph is then juxtaposed with the image of a whaling boat and features a shot of the freshly caught mammal. This work can be linked back to the previous discussion of extraction by settler colonists, also observed in the work of Prieto, but also to a larger discussion of history and factuality that has been weaved throughout this paper and exhibition. Beam’s work, along with a number of other contemporary Indigenous artist’s now featured in the gallery spaces of the Art Gallery of Ontario, (including Shelly Niro, Lisa Meyers, Christi Belcourt, Bonnie Devine, Gerald McMaster, and Robert Houle to name a few others), literally inserts Indigenous presence through visual means into a gallery space that has historically upheld White-male interpretations of it’s landscape - a

barren landscapes, in fact, that illustrate an attempted colonial erasure of Indigenous life that existed and still exists in these areas today. The presence of Indigenous artists at the AGO, as well as the attempts of both Nanibush and Canadian Curator Andrew Hunter in their strategy of re-hanging the Canadian and Indigenous galleries is a physical act of de-centering the dominating colonial narratives that are perpetuated by the presence of the Group of Seven not only in the gallery spaces of the AGO, but in the visual history of Canada.⁷

Much as the deceptive history of the catacomb saint has been unraveled through the work of Paul Koudanaris, so to does the agency of the artist, as demonstrated in this exhibition, allow for reconsiderations of ideologies and knowledge that are prioritized within narratives of Canadian history, and the present. There is a number of thematic and dialogical webs that are weaved throughout this paper and the exhibition itself; and at the core of this web is the notion of “intervention.” As Andreas Huyssen was previously quoted on earlier in this paper, the monument and the memory sculpture are at odds with one another as the latter contains not only the autonomy of the artists’ own creativity, but also the artists agency, whereas the former is regulated or dictated by a chosen group of individuals (ie. the Government) (112). The personal touch of the artist’s hand,

⁷ It is important to note, as this article also identifies, that Gerald McMaster was also previously a part of the chief curatorial staff until 2012, and one of the first and key Indigenous staff within the Art Gallery of Ontario. McMaster’s presence and work in this institution contributed to the inclusion of Indigenous narratives very evidently lacking in this space during this time. (Whyte, Murray. The Star, “Inside The Walls With Wanda Nanibush, The AGO’s Agent of Change. August 15, 2016. <https://www.thestar.com/entertainment/visualarts/2016/08/15/inside-the-walls-with-wanda-nanibush-the-agos-agent-of-change.html>. Accessed February 17th, 201).

autonomous to the influences of hegemonic determinations, are hiding in plain sight in the works of *This Is The Artists' Object(ive)*. Each of the works indeed present the everyday through objects, however the subtle inclusion of the artists' influence can be seen in each: through the hand made pattern of Dana Prieto's wallpaper, the miniature cast pillow, guns, and axes featured in Erin's *Pillow Talk*, and the hand weaved basketball net in Esmaa Mohamoud's *I Am Series*. Thus, the synthesis of artistic intervention and display of found objects creates a unique form of presentation in this exhibition that provides a literal mimetic connection to the everyday, while also asserting that memory is formed through the process of representation and *re-collection* of things, and the knowledge and experiences derived from these things. This process of re-collecting knowledge can be asserted through the arts through means of self-determination of the artists to assert their own lived experiences through their work, but also to those experiences of others overshadowed or excluded as a result of as Sunera Thobani states, exaltedness, and as I have claimed, pathologization. There is an urgency in having these narratives communicated. The arts may be used to communicate how experiences of Blackness, mental health and settler colonialism can intervene in the normative social order. Esmaa Mohamoud, Erin Vincent, and Dana Prieto come together in *This Is The Artists Object(ive)* and bring their individual cultural backgrounds and experiences. The works present a type of social intervention through the use of the public platform of the gallery space to unsettle individual and collective states of social complacency. Thus, the artists and their critiques come together in the gallery space to reclaim subject-hood and

individual agency through the arts. In the show *This is the Artist's Object(ive)*, artists and curators work together in order to pave the way for a new and more nuanced understanding of the world in a shared and joined objective.

Exhibition Support Paper



INTRODUCTION

This Is The Artists Object(ive): The Conceptual Display of The Object, The Thing, and Asserting Subjectivity Through The Arts engages with individuals from a range of backgrounds and discourses to consider the way in which art may be used to communicate the everyday conditions and experiences of individuals. More broadly the project and curatorial paper investigates how personal and collective memories are shaped through racial and social conditions both historically, and today. The project uses the presentation of the everyday – a shoe, basketball nets, an axe, pillow, etc – as a metonymic means of reflecting on these conditions by re-contextualizing and separating objects from their utilitarian and capitalistic purpose and be used as a means of social dialogue within the gallery space. This method can identify the intersections between art, sociology, and identity politics, and the ways in which these subjects, and as the art works in the show exhibit, are linked. The project amalgamates theories and concepts from art history, sociology and critical race theory, and draws on the scholarship of Sunera Thobani, Bill Brown, Hito Steyerl, Scott A. French, Gerald McMaster, Glen Coulthard, Frantz Fanon, and Michel Foucault. My paper uses interdisciplinary approaches to similar topics in order to analyze how art and curatorial methods and can make sense of the conditions of everyday life. In a similar suit, curators and artists such as cheyenne turions, Sameer Farooq, and Mirjam Linschooten have formed curatorial methodologies that embrace the presentation of everyday objects in order to lend more nuanced perspectives of society, specifically within the multicultural metropolitan hub of Toronto.

Thus my conceptual framework has been drawn from the contributions of these scholars, as well as curators and artists. This project, was mounted on April 3rd-5th, 2017 at Blank Canvas Gallery, 890 St. Clair West Avenue, Toronto, Ontario, a space built for the use of the community of Toronto by artists, curators, makers, and musicians. The exhibit *This is the Artists Object(ive)* in sum reflects the personal and collective reflections of the artists Esmaa Mahoumad, Erin Vincent, and Dana Prieto on topics of politics of race, mental health, and settler-colonialism

LITERATURE REVIEW

The exhibition *This is the Artists Object(ive)* weaves together the personal accounts of a group of three multidisciplinary artists who also come from distinct, cultural, social, and physical backgrounds. The multiplicity of these artists' backgrounds and their work reflects the various socio-political, ethnographic, and artistic texts and theories that this curatorial paper and exhibition takes as a conceptual and theoretical framework. The theoretical framework of *The is the Artists Object(ive)* does not only derive from exclusively art-based theory, but rather is built primarily on critical sociological and theoretical discussions of race and identity politics in the work of Sunera Thobani and others. Scott A. French's theory of social memory, for example, and the distinction of an object's thingness related to human subjectivity are articulated by feminist artist and activist Hito Steyerl, and used to make sense of the ways in which the

definition of the object can be used as to reflect on the social, political, and historical conditions of an individual/ individuals.

On considering how the example of the object plays a role in promoting this awareness Hito Steyerl, in her e-flux article *A Thing Like You and Me*, questions the faculties by which we come to form a language and thus understanding of the everyday experience and our relationship with it. She uses the metaphor of the thing in relationship to the object in order to contextualize the feminist affirmation of becoming a ‘thing’ as opposed to a determined subject; or in other words, being objectified (Steyerl, 2012). In Steyerl’s opinion the way in which subject-hood has been elevated to represent a guild of being recognized as a person must be reconsidered when considering the ideological and hegemonic faculties by which subject determination occurs. She states that, “traditionally, emancipatory practice has been tied to a desire to become a subject. Emancipation was conceived as becoming a subject of history, of representation, or of politics. To become a subject carried with it the promise of autonomy, sovereignty, agency” (2012), however this agency was at the discretion and determination of men. In this analysis Steyerl makes the metaphorical connection between the concept of the thing, that which separates itself from the forced objectivity of the subject — and in Steyerl’s analysis being women in their demand for human rights. This analysis is applicable to each of the works contained within this show. These works serve as a self to reflect the self-determination of the artist to express their own lived experiences and history that is not necessarily reflected within a grander narrative of hegemony.

The choice by Steyerl to differentiate ‘thing’ as opposed to ‘object’ in this analysis opens up a much larger interpretation, one which does not limit the object to its cultural, utilitarian, or ubiquitous, associations, but instead extends the object “at its most banal to index a certain limit or liminality to hover over the threshold between the nameable and the unnameable, the figural and unfigurable, the identifiable and unidentifiable” (Brown, 2001:5). Thus, the thing in these terms is what connects the world together - the animate and the inanimate - it is a space of connection in which the everyday becomes melded in to the experiences, the life of the person. Bill Brown suggests that we tend to “look through objects because there are codes by which our interpretive attention makes them meaningful, because there is a discourse of objectivity that allows us to use them as facts” (4). There is indeed room for subjective interpretation that exists within cultural formation through objects, and the unanimous agreement by individuals regarding the thing’s universal, and further the personal, collective, and social significance, can arguably be linked to a larger understanding of what is referred to as social memory. (French, 1995:15).

Each of the works featured in the *This Is The Artists’ Object(ive)* relate to this concept. In his article “What is Social Memory?” featured in *Southern Cultures*, French theorizes social memory as the process by which individuals self-determine cultural and social relationships, what French refers to as an, “internalization of group identities” (French, 1995:3). This internalization process entails the self determination of a group of individuals who prioritize their subjective experiences and recognize them as

being a universal, though varied, experience amongst individuals living in similar conditions. These types of collective memory formation are influenced by experiences focused on the “construction of group boundaries, a process that reveals the multiplicity of meanings individuals attached to shared experiences and the intense struggles that take place within groups over what to remember and what to forget” (10). The issue with this suggestion, however, can be revealed when one considers the prioritization of this history - often permanently engrained in the dominating narrative of factuality.

Sunera Thobani in this curatorial paper provides both a contemporary and spatially specific voice to this discussion of social memory within a Canadian context. In her book “Exalted Subjects: Race Making in Canada” Thobani problematizes nationalism in Canada by suggesting the ways in which “communities of imagination (Thobani 2007: 13),” refer to the laws, ideologies, and myths that encompass the idealized “National identity” of Canadian citizens. Thobani posits that the imagination of the Canadian public in relation to their citizenry is regulated and determined by governmental and legal forces in order to subdue and “Other” both Indigenous people, Black people, and Immigrants in the country, thus creating the notion of an “exalted national,” or in other words a citizen of colonial and settler ancestry whose histories, traditions, and livelihood are prioritized and upheld in the state of Canada (Thobani, 2007:15). Therefore the globalized colonial and hegemonic conditions in which individuals nationally in Canada are influenced by in order to remain complacent to a specific social order; thus forming and maintaining collective memory of history within the present through the regulation of what is

remembered from the past, and more importantly, who is recognized in the present.

Thobani's analysis is extended and exemplified in all the presenting works of artists in *This Is The Artists Object(ive)*, as I have articulated, that are pathologized within the "imaginary" of Canadian National identity. However, these oppressive conditions created by the exalted subject, according to Thobani, can be combatted through the self-determination within the theory of social memory, and by asserting one's own history and subjectivity. This has been exemplified through the arts in this show to reveal the lived conditions and experiences of Black men, as seen in the work of Esmaa Mahoumad, for Erin Vincent, the mad and differently abled, and for Dana Prieto, the Indigenous person coping with the conditions of contemporary settler-colonialism.

EXHIBITION REVIEW

The curatorial display methods of *This Is The Artists' Object(ive)* enacts tableau, object displays, and story telling through the objects the artists have selected as part of their installations. These curatorial choices reflect an object-based displaying practice that is often mostly observed in ethnographic museums, but that which is also critiqued in the exhibit. The conceptual orientation of this exhibition has been influenced by a number of recent object based curatorial endeavours in Toronto, including the Museum of Found Objects, hosted at the Art Galley of Ontario in 2016, as well as the recent work of Toronto-based curator cheyenne turions, whose exhibition *Talking Back, Otherwise* mounted at the Jackman Institute of Humanities in February, 2016. The following section

discusses these two case studies in order to exemplify the social awareness that is brought forward developing exhibitions that challenge the viewers social complacency by paradoxically presenting the everyday in a new, and re-contextualized way.



Figure 4. The Museum of Found Objects: Toronto: (Maharaja-). Art Gallery of Ontario, 2011. Image from Art Gallery of Ontario Website. <http://www.ago.net/the-museum-of-found-objects-toronto-maharaja-and>.

THE MUSEUM OF FOUND OBJECTS, 2016, Art Gallery of Ontario

The Museum of Found Objects: Toronto (Maharaja and–) is an archive of everyday objects sourced from the Greater Toronto Area's South Asian neighbourhoods. The project, although mounted internationally and nationally, is site specific and a response to the AGO exhibition Maharaja: The Splendour of India's Royal Courts (Art

Gallery of Ontario). In this context the work aimed to make connections between the lavish historic objects of Maharaja and more ordinary, contemporary objects, such as mass manufactured goods found around Toronto, including China Town shops on Dundas Street West. Toronto-based artist Sameer Farooq and collaborator Mirjam Linschooten orient the objects in accordance with a typical ethnographic museum – collecting, objectively interpreting, and finally displaying within a institutional centre of the AGO. By introducing non-precious, and mundane objects into the gallery space – which is noted as a place of high cultural importance – their work challenges the ways in which museums typically portray “culture” (Museum of Found Objects). The Museum of Found Objects was first developed as a commission from the Turkish Ministry of Culture for the Istanbul 2010 European Capital of Culture, and is a continuing project both on an online platform, and around the globe as well. In contrast, *This Is The Artists’ Object(ive)* the features artists from a diverse range of backgrounds and experiences experimenting with the arrangements of objects, Esmaa Mohamuod, Dana Prieto, and Erin Vincent, through their respective practices utilize everyday and personal objects and push their interpretations past merely utilitarian purposiveness of the object in order to conceptually explore social, historical, and political issues in their respected countries and communities. The comparison between my exhibition and the Museum of Found Objects not only in aesthetic and media choices by artists, but rather both uniquely exemplify how materiality is universally engrained within the social order and traditions of individuals, globally. (Museum of Found Objects).

CHEYANNE TURIONS, *Talking Back Otherwise*, 2016, University of Toronto,

cheyanne turions' exhibition, *Talking Back, Otherwise*, which was featured at the Jackman Institute of Arts and Humanities at the University of Toronto from September 2015 to January 2016, exemplifies the way in which curators are effectively utilizing exhibition strategies outside of the cube of the institution, and instead incorporating art from the everyday and into the everyday. Mary Jane Jacobs asserts that the alternative spaces for arts display can provide a unique space for contemplation by the viewer suggesting that “instead of the quiet and removed exhibition space of the museum, it is equally possible to make an exhibition that presents art that is invisible, seamless with life” (Jacob, 2006: 134). Based on this notion the critical success of *Talking Back, Otherwise* arguably derives from the site specificity of the exhibition, featuring artworks literally engrained within the everyday activities of the University office space (Jackman Humanities, 2016). turions' rationale for exhibiting in the reused office space on the 10th floor of the University of Toronto's Jackman Humanities Institute building is to encourage audiences to “considers what things—objects imbued with social relations—can tell us about society and history when they operate counter to our expectations, elongating the contemplative space between appearance and performance” (Jackman Humanities, 2016). Thus, each of the works presented in some way explored contemporary societal issues such as racism, environmental degradation, etc. Although these art works remained static within the space, the criticality of a few of



Jennifer Rose Sciarrino's "At Your Fingertips" installation shot. Image credit: Yuula Benivolski.

Figure 5. *Talking Back, Otherwise* Curated by cheyenne turions. Installation shot, 2016. Marvin Luvulu Antonio, *Untitled*. Photo credit: Yuula Benivolski.



Bethany Collins's "Colorless Dictionary" detail. Image credit: Yuula Benivolski.

Figure 6. *Talking Back, Otherwise*. Curated by cheyenne turions. Installation shot, 2016. Bethany Collins, *Colourless Dictionary*. Photo credit: Yuula Benivolski

the works in particular, which blur the lines between reality, and in doing so question the everyday social conditions individuals are often ignorant to. The means by which this exhibition integrated social awareness into an institutional space was exemplified through presentation of found objects in Marvin Luvulu Antonio's *Untitled (concrete cushion)* (Figure 3), and Bethany Collin's *Colourless Dictionary* (Figure 4).

The effectiveness of both of these object-based works lies specifically in the unassuming presence they inhabit amongst other ordinary objects within the context of an institutional office space. For example, Collin's dictionary, which was created from a manufactured Webster dictionary, would otherwise blend in with the piles of books and papers spread out amongst the office spaces. However, an aspect that separates this dictionary and places it within the realm of artistic and social critique is how the artist has methodically and physically erased the term "white" on every page of the 1100 page book (Jackman Humanities, 2016). The rationale for specific removal of "white" is to bring attention to the historical and contemporary issue of racism towards people of colour that still perpetuates in society today by "questioning the racialized ideologies that play in seemingly objective reference material," (2016). Thus, the artistic strategy in this work is intended to comment on the literal and figurative erasure of the presence of people of colour from society and history.

Similar strategies of literally camouflage are noted in artist Marvin Luvulu Antonio's work, *Untitled (concrete cushion)*. As the title suggests, this work is a

constructed and highly realistic looking Keilhauer Filo 9411PA conference room chair.

Integrated within a lounge room space in the office, the cushion is surrounded by other regular chairs and a table, blending in unassumingly in the space. The distinctive difference between the artist's chair cushion is not necessarily noticed until an individual sits down on the cushion, whether by accident or curiosity. The object of a board room chair is temporally and spatially witness to the ever changing happenings within the research institute, and as turions describes "positioned to bear witness to the year's worth of collective discussions, amongst the research fellows and their guests, of how things come to matter" (Jackman Humanities Institute, 2016). The "things" turions is referring to in this description can arguably be attributed to research that is conducted through this institution, thus privileging information contained within the office space. The site specificity of using the Jackman Arts and Humanities Institute, which usually functions as a research institute and not an exhibition space, thus arguably subverts the viewers perception of the objects and world they take for granted by altering the functionality the audience and those individuals working in the space are accustomed to.

The effect of the object-medium of both of these works can be contextualized within the literary term of "ostranenie," a literary term coined by Viktor Sklovski's which means "de-familiarization" (Gun, 1984: 25), or a nuanced perspective of seemingly normal and everyday things. This term was first coined by Sklovski in his

essay “Art As Device” and although this term is derived from his criticism of literary Formalism it is never the less applicable and useful for considering the critical affect of *Untitled (concrete cushion)* and *Colourless Dictionary* (24-25). The effectiveness of the placement of mundane objects within the gallery space produces a critical intervention to alter the way in which individuals question and perceive the world. In similar suit the methods of display and integrating the everyday into the everyday by both the Museum of Found Objects and cheyanne turions been also exemplified within the exhibition *This Is the Artists’ Object(ive)*, through the presentation by the artists of the everyday, personal, and unassuming object.

METHODOLOGY

The curatorial project *This Is The Artists Objective(ive)* enacts ethnographic methods of having objects on display, while also critiquing the problematics of this method by prioritizing personal accounts of the artists, through the display of objects. As this exhibition is about the personal accounts of people, first and foremost, the methodology used to put on this exhibition involved interviewing the artists about not only their works and artistic practice but also the ways in which each of the works somehow tie in to their own life or reflect the human conditions of others. The interview process with the artists began with an investigative approach through online and word of mouth suggestions of artists utilizing everyday objects as personal memorabilia within their work. Artists were then approached via email with details regarding the show

thematics. Upon agreement to participate in the exhibition, the research process began to further contextualize each of the works within my proposed exhibition thematics. This involved intensive examination and research into a range of social and historical theory, following an outline from Sunera Thobani's text "Exalted Subjects: A Making of Race in Canada," which proposes the conditions by which Indigenous people, Black people, and Immigrants are subjected to by the "exalted national." My reading of this text led me to inquire further into the ways in which art and art history specifically tied to oppressive practices of exclusion. The additional theorists and authors contributing to this research all in some way linked back to the original point by Sunera of creating conditions by which one individual's history is prioritized within the larger narrative of a country, over another, and the methods by which this can be self-asserted and reclaimed within the space of the gallery. This methodological approach provided a theoretical, but also personal and historical background of which the art works in the show visibly and conceptually display. The art works combined with the theory exemplified how art can be interpreted, applied, and serve the goals of awareness of a range of interdisciplinary arts and socio- theoretical investigations in art history, curating, and museum collecting.

INSTALLATION CONCEPT AND DESIGN



Figure 7. *Blank Canvas Gallery*, 2016. Photo Courtesy of Blank Canvas Gallery Indigogo Page.



Figure 8. *Blank Canvas Gallery, 890 St. Clair Street West. 2017.* Photo: Emily Peltier.

There were a number of unforeseen circumstances that occurred and led to the presentation of this exhibition at the 890 St. Clair West. The original curatorial rationale to use the space of Blank Canvas Gallery, formally located in the West end of Toronto, was based on the adapted and reused quality of the original gallery. Blank Canvas Gallery once stood as a barber shop, and was refurnished to become what was originally opened and operated in 2016. Based on the reused aspect I felt it was an ideal space to mount a project containing art works displaying themes of memory, history, and asserting ones own story within history. Blank Canvas Gallery is an inclusive gallery built by and for the community of Toronto by artists, and projects that take place in this space are made

possible by the artistic contributions of emerging and established curators, makers, and musicians of all backgrounds and disciplines.

Blank Canvas gallery reflects the communal and personal reflections of the artists Esmaa Mohoumad, Erin Vincent, and Dana Prieto also imbue with their art. Blank Canvas Gallery is owned and operated by Black artists, and is an extension of a larger organization called Omit Limitation. Co-owner of both the gallery and founder of Omit Limitation, John Samuels founded Omit Limitation in 2013 as a creative collective to empower and cultivate communities in Toronto through the arts. The creation of Blank Canvas Gallery in 2016 became a conduit for this purpose and in its original location at 1190 Bloor street, and it did just that. A former barber shop front, re-purposed and redecorated as a multidisciplinary space, the space was small in size, but it nevertheless was the host and home to a number of artistic endeavours, from emerging to well established artists within Toronto (Blank Canvas, 2016).

Blank Canvas has been self proclaimed by the owners to be Toronto's first "DBC" spaces, or Done by the Community, with the goals of the space being to provide a safe, and most importantly inclusive space for all forms of expression (Blank Canvas, 2016). Blank Canvas Gallery during the course of the past few months has experienced a number of challenges, but also has documented the resilience of the arts and Toronto community in coming together to protest injustice, racism, and police brutality within the city of Toronto. Now located at current the exhibition site of 890 St. Clair Street West, the

cause for this move was forced rather than intentional.⁸ However, the new location allows for not only a larger space for creative exploration but also is promised by Blank Canvas's Indigogo to maintain the original curatorial mandate, while also providing a larger space for community endeavours.

The works in this show separate the gallery space into object-based narratives, creating sites of critique and discussion formed through the artists memory. As elaborated in the curatorial paper these works fall under the category of "memory sculpture" theorized by Andreas Huyssen. Huyssen elaborates a "memory sculpture" as art work, but also a site of collective and personal significance to the artist, audience, and society. Mohamoud illustrates this through the example of basketball, which stands as a point of thematic departure in her work, and is used as a dialogical framework for discussing larger systemic disparities experienced by Black men as a result of stereotype and racism. Although there is no necessary focal point in the orientation of the collective works in the show, Mohamoud's *I Am Series* has an undoubtedly a captivating presence in its placement on the floor of the gallery. Mohamoud's first work, *I Am Series*, consists of large-scale, hand made, basketball nets created out of chains and is situated on the floor of the entrance to the gallery space. This work has been removed from its original series where it hung as a part of Mohamoud's larger series called #000000 VIOLENCE, to be

⁸ On December 31st, 2016 Blank Canvas and owner John Samuels was the target of racism and police brutality and as a result was tasered, arrested, and detained. Blank Canvas locks were changed shortly after. Please see Leah Sandals article in Canadian Art article regarding the incident (Sandals, Leah. "Community Concerned After Toronto Gallery Owner Tasered By Police." January 2017. <http://canadianart.ca/news/community-concerned-after-toronto-gallery-co-owner-tasered-by-police/>. Accessed on January 20th, 2017.

juxtaposed and thus re-interpreted with the accompaniment of the second piece entitled in this show *Strange Fruit*, which occupies the central space in the middle of Blank Canvas Gallery. *Strange Fruit*, a “sculptural sketch” according to Mohamoud contains the layering of black earth soil, man-made grass turf, and a chromatic basketball shoe hanging from metal chain laces. The presentation of these “things” — the shoe, the grass, the turf — creates a layered narrative, synthesizing the man-made and the natural world; a play between the organic and the manufactured; what is, and what is fabricated. The inspiration for the work is drawn from the everyday occurrence of shoes hanging from telephone pole wires, an observance that can be made around Canada, but has a specific significance in some communities. According to Mohamoud this banal ritual has a two-fold meaning to some Black individuals living in what she refers to as “the projects,” or communities that face economic and social disparities and require government funded subsidized housing assistance. The meaning behind the shoes indicates that an individual has willingly left their home in these areas, or, on the other hand, have succumbed to the violence that is often also prominent there as well; which is often a result of gang-related violence, drug trafficking, etc. Thus, the chromed basketball shoe hanging from chained laces is a direct reference to the lived experiences and banal rituals surrounding objects that play significant roles in an individual's life, and further reflects the lived conditions of an individual or group of individuals. Although two distinctive works, there is a clear relationship between them in the gallery space. Aesthetically the metallic shoe is almost an extension of the chains by which the basketball nets are constructed from.

Thematically this relationship goes further. Both the basketball shoe and the basketball net are intended by the artist to be object-based representations of the Black male body in contemporary culture.

Erin Vincent's exhibit also provokes an intimate revelation of her own personal history, but also aspects of her history that are shared by many others. Her work, constructed using personal memorabilia, reflects on mental health challenges, conditions that thousands of Canadians face everyday. Vincent in her practice emphasizes and illustrates that there is a very generalized, and problematic, connection between the arts and mental health in which arts are seen as a caveat, a form of reprieve or cure for the deviating conditions by which mental health issues, often related to "art therapy." This pathologization is problematic as it refuses to acknowledge the person behind the work, focusing exclusively on the individuals mental health and capabilities in an attempt to classify the person's subjectivity. (Vincent, 2017). The ways in which she articulates this criticism is through a push and pull aesthetic, one which features found objects. Her three works, *Shrouded Pharmaceuticals*, *Pillow Talk 1-3*, and *Lace Forms*, are spread around the gallery and differ in presentation and curatorial orientation, but are nevertheless intertwined in thematic similarities. The first work, *Lace Forms* features hammers taken from Vincent's family's farm, is adorned with intricately patterned lace aesthetic mirroring those featured in *Shrouded Pharmaceuticals*. *Shrouded Pharmaceuticals* features intricately carved pharmaceutical boxes, but instead carefully nailed into the hammer. The final work, *Pillow Talk 1 -3* features the juxtaposition of pillows to that of metal guns

and axes. Although there is a light-heartedness implicated by the lace aesthetic from both *Shrouded Pharmaceuticals* and *Pillow Talk* the aesthetic is masking the undoubtedly threatening objects in the display. The hammer and guns allude to a very literal potential for physical violence and harm. This harm, within the context of this exhibition and Vincent's conceptual relation to her personal experience to mental health, can also be read as metaphorical; referencing the underlying and often visible anxiety and uneasiness individuals feel when being confronted by discussions surrounding mental health.

At the far end of the gallery, a scene has been frozen in time in Dana Prieto's *Indulgences*. *Indulgences* is a tableau display of a traditional British high tea ceremony including all the lavish adornments of reclaimed English China, Gold leaf pattern, table cloth, table, chair, paintings, are all set to the back drop of an equally adorned Victorian wall paper. Although the scene appears to be referring to a captured moment in British regal history, this display tells another, more insidious story. The display of the high tea ceremony references a cultural worldview, (British, imperial, colonial), that has worked to exclude and erase Indigenous subjects and sovereignty (Prieto, 2016). This is still occurring today, and is demonstrated through Prieto's references to the current occupation of Veladero, Argentina, by Barrick Gold mines. The extraction by this company is not only affecting the land, but also has direct impact on the Indigenous people and populations still existing on the land today. Canada's settler population occupies vast territories of unceded, stolen Indigenous land, meaning that settler-colonialism is an ongoing condition for both settler and Indigenous populations (Tuck, 2012: 3). Prieto's

work, thus serves to confronts this reality and attempts to open a dialogue about the impacts of (Canadian) extractive companies in Indigenous territories in the global North and South (Prieto, 2016).

CONCLUSION

This Is the Artists' Object(ive) demonstrates the potential for the display of objects, used in a visual arts context, to reflect the lived conditions of people and groups in society and utilizing the agency of the artist to reclaim subjectivity removed by institutional regulation. The formations of the past is very simply put a result of the amalgamation of both lived experiences and memories that individuals receive during their life. Together these memories frame our understanding of our past, present, and future – for each of us they create a vision of the world in which we exist. However, discussions of history over time as a means of constructing the past needs to be heavily scrutinized when considering the ideological and hegemonic forces that seek to maintain a dominating narrative of knowledge and understanding within a society. In considering this every aspect of the exhibition, the artists, the critique, the space, have been considered carefully and all come together to reveal one very important notion: subjective reclamation and assertion through the arts. This exhibition exemplified the ways in which objects in institutional gallery spaces can also be used to form and perpetuate prevailing social and historical ideologies, but also nuance them when placed back in the hands of those from which the object's came from. This form of re-collection is exemplified through the curatorial presentation of the works of Esmaa Mohamoud, Erin Vincent, and

Dana Prieto. Collectively, their works explore how art works using personal material objects can intervene in broader social orders. Such an intervention was done by confronting social issues using the public platform of the gallery space to unsettle individual and collective states of social complacency.

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APPENDIX A: Artists Bio's and CV's

DANA PRIETO

Bio

I am an Argentine artist and educator based in Toronto and I have completed a BFA in Drawing and Painting at OCAD University.

My work circles around the mundane through the creation of spaces, images and actions that propose uncanny participatory experiences. Using ordinary materials such as food, litter and kitchen cloths, my projects reflect on both intimate and social-political issues around migration, belonging, gender and power.

I have participated in several award-winning collaborative projects working within diverse communities in Toronto, Halifax, Buenos Aires, Rawson, Quito and Belize.

I am currently coordinating Critical Soup, an interdisciplinary food-art initiative that opens dialogues about the impacts of Canadian extractive companies in Indigenous and Global South territories.

CV:

Grants & Awards

- 2016 Walnut Studios Career Launcher
- 2016 OAC Exhibition Assistance Grant
- 2016 Sur Gallery Mentorship Program
- 2015 TELUS Newcomer Artist Award [Finalist]
- 2015 RBC Access Fund.
- 2015 Takao Tanabe scholarship.
- 2012 Jury Price in 31 Salón Estímulo de Cerámica, Buenos Aires

Residencies & Mentorships

- 2016 Xpace Cultural Centre, Summer Residency, Toronto
- 2016 Ryerson Image Centre & OCAD University, Art Camp, Toronto
- 2016 Sur Gallery, Mentorship Program, Toronto
- 2016 Carnívora, Lisa Myers & Neighborhood Arts Network

Projects & Collaborations

CRITICAL SOUP facebook.com/criticalsoup

Press & Media

- 2017 Interview with Alexia Bréard-Anderson for Lexiquette
- 2016 Article in Creating Momentum, publication by Impact Collective & OCAD U Student Press
- 2016 Interview with Karina Iskandarsjah for SITESPECIFIC Blog

Featured in CBC Exhibitionists with Amanda Parris, ArtWorks! by MadeleineCo and Movers and Creators by PaulSaulter.

Exhibitions

2017 There is Bread and Salt Between Us, Open Space Gallery, Toronto

2017 Eating Rituals, OCAD U Graduate Gallery, Toronto

2016 Exist Resist, Studio 223A, Pendulum Project, Toronto

2016 Traces, Ryerson Artspace at the Gladstone, Toronto

2016 Outof Place, Xpace, Toronto

2016 Carnavalismo, Sur Gallery, Toronto

2016 Mestizaje, Cieslok Media Billboard at Yonge & Dundas, Toronto

2016 Interstices, Sur Gallery, Toronto

2016 Art Works!, Madeleine Co., Digital Series

2016 Grad Juried Exhibition, Walnut Contemporary, Toronto

2016 We are symbols, Ada Slight Gallery, OCAD U, Toronto

2016 IntraAction, Xpace, Toronto

2016 Video Fever, Trinity Square Video, Toronto

2015 We Wish We Caught This Rabbit For You, 26, Toronto

2015 FUGUE, Artscape Youngplace, Toronto, Scotiabank Nuit Blanche

2015 re:GENERATION, Harbourfront Centre, Toronto

2015 Solos y Solas, XXIV Jornadas Anuales EOL, Buenos Aires

2015 Black Siren: Women in Music and Arts, Emmanuel Howard Park United Church, Toronto

2012 Salón Estímulo de Cerámica, at Escuela Municipal Emilio Villafañe, Buenos Aires

2011 IX Encuentro, CASA VIVA Centro de Actividades, Buenos Aires

Dana Prieto ©

Erin Vincent

CV

SOLO & 2 Person EXHIBITIONS

2016 *After great pain a formal feeling comes*, Gales Gallery: York University, '
2015 *Vices*, Nuit Blanche, 401 Richmond, Toronto ON
2015 *Fabricated Memories*, Nathaniel Hughson Gallery, Hamilton ON
2013 *Nostalgia*, Wall Space Gallery, Ottawa ON
2013 *Memory Glyphs*, Nathaniel Hughson Gallery, Hamilton ON
2012 *Heavy Weightlessness*, Alison Milne Gallery, Toronto ON
2012 *Socius* A.W.O.L. Gallery, Toronto ON

GROUP EXHIBITIONS

2013 Colour, Renann Isaacs Contemporary Art, Guelph ON
2013 Pairings, Nathaniel Hughson Gallery, Hamilton ON
2013 JETSET, A.W.O.L. Gallery Toronto ON
2012 Year End Show, Nathaniel Hughson Gallery, Hamilton ON
2012 Small Works NYC, Jeffrey Leder Gallery, New York NY
2012 Summer Solstice, Wall Space Gallery, Ottawa ON
2012 – 2007 Square Foot Show, A.W.O.L. Gallery, Toronto ON
2011 Once Upon A Time, Alison Milne Gallery, Toronto ON
2011 Seeing Red, Renann Isaacs Contemporary Art, Guelph ON
2010 Plane Installation, Art Spin, Toronto ON
2010 Pop, Parts and Pieces, Beverly Owens Project, Toronto, ON

ART FAIRS

2016 - Art Toronto, Renann Isaacs Contemporary C77
2015 - The Artist Project, Installation Zone, Toronto On.
2014 - 2012 Aqua, Miami, Fl.
2012 – 2009 The Artist Project, Toronto On.
2011 Art Toronto, Toronto ON
2011 - 2010 AAF NY, New York NY.

SOLO EXHIBITIONS

2013 Memory Glyphs, Nathaniel Hughson Gallery, Hamilton ON
2012 Heavy Weightlessness (3 Person Show) Alison Milne Gallery, Toronto ON
2012 Socius (2 Person Show) A.W.O.L. Gallery, Toronto ON
2011 Fight or Flight, 99 Gallery, Toronto ON.
2008 Shrines, Icons & Sanctuaries, A.W.O.L. Gallery, Toronto ON.

Esmaa Mohamoud

Bio

Esmaa Mohamoud is a 24 year-old visual artist and sculptor from London, Ontario, and is currently located and practicing in Toronto, Ontario.

Artist Website:

<http://esmaamohamoud.com/projects>

APPENDIX B: EXHIBITION DOCUMENTATION of *This Is The Artists' Object(ive)*



Figure 9. *This Is Artists' Object(ive)*, 2017, installation view. Eric Chenyang.



Figure 10. Esmāa Mohamoud, *Strange Fruit* (2017), installation view. Photo: Eric Chengyang



Figure 11. Esmāa Mohamoud, *I Am Series* (2016), installation view. Photo: Eric Chengyang



Figure 12. Erin Vincent, *Lace Forms* (2016), installation view. Photo: Eric Chengyang



Figure 13. Erin Vincent, *Lace Forms* (2016), installation view close-up. Photo: Eric Chengyang.



Figure 15. Erin Vincent, *Shrouded Pharmaceuticals* (2015), installation view. Photo: Eric Chengyang.



Figure 14. Erin Vincent, *Shrouded Pharmaceuticals* (2015), installation view. Photo: Eric Chengyang.



Figure 16. Erin Vincent, *Pillow Talk 2* (2016), installation view. Photo: Eric Chengyang.



Figure 17. Erin Vincent, *Pillow Talk 1* (2016), installation view. Photo: Eric Chengyang.



Figure 18. Dana Prieto, *Indulgences* (2017), installation view. Photo: Eric Chengyang.



Figure 19. Dana Prieto, *Indulgences* (2017), installation view close up, Peter Munk painting. Photo: Eric Chengyang.



Figure 20. Dana Prieto, *Indulgences* (2017), installation view, close-up, painting of Argentina land mass. Photo: Eric Chengyang.



Figure 21. Dana Prieto, *Indulgences* (2017), installation view. Photo: Eric Chengyang.



Figure 22. Dana Prieto, *Indulgences* (2017), installation view. Photo: Eric Chengyang.

APPENDIX C: Copies of Media Material

THIS IS THE ARTISTS' **OBJECTIVE**



CURATED BY EMILY PELTIER

OPENING DATE : APRIL 3 2017, 7PM

ESMAA MOHAMOUD | DANA PRIETO | ERIN VINCENT

BLANK CANVAS GALLERY

890 ST CLAIR AVE. W. | YORK, ON | M6C 1C5

Figure 23. Front, Meloche, Kait, *This Is The Artists' Object(ive)*, Exhibition Postcard.

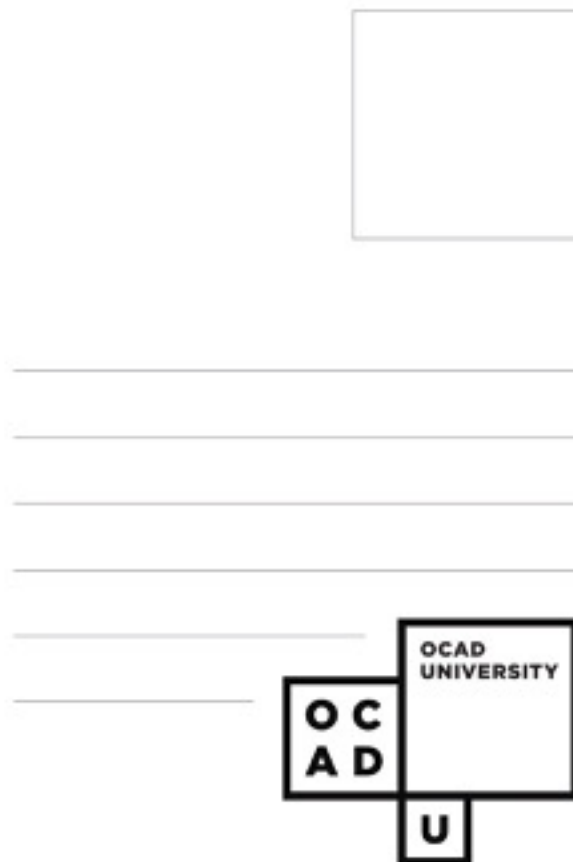
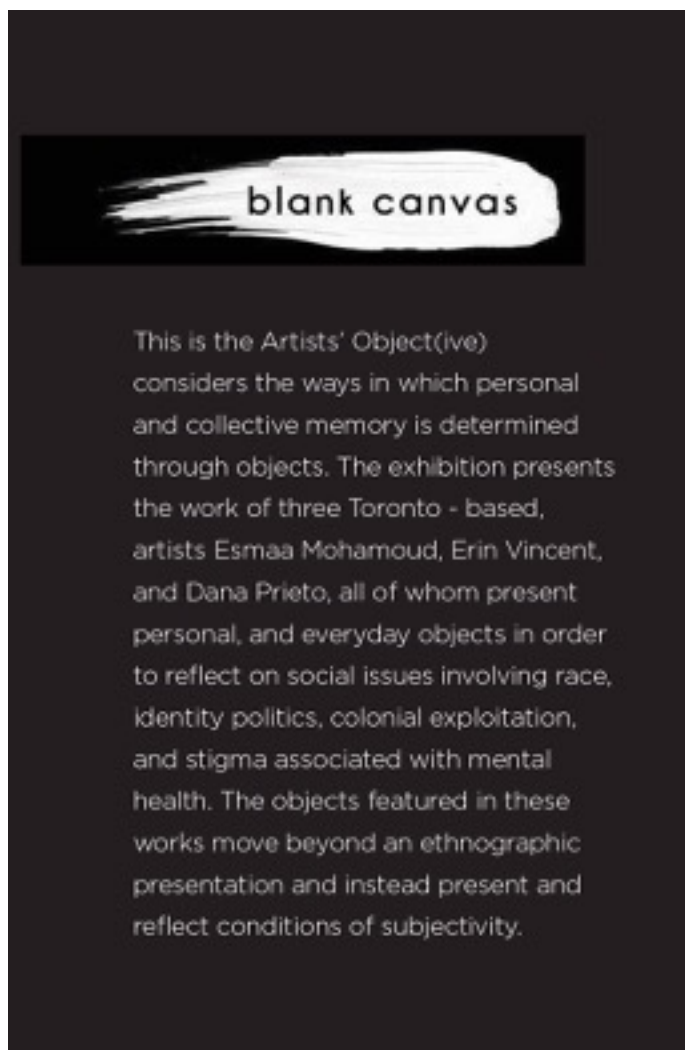


Figure 24. Back, Meloche, Kait, *This Is The Artists' Object(ive)*, Exhibition Postcard.

APPENDIX D: List of Artworks

Mohamoud, Esmaa, *Strange Fruit*

Black Earth soil, Basketball shoe, metal chain, faux grass turf.

(2017).

Mohamoud, Esmaa, *I Am Series*

Metal chain and hoop.

(2016).

Vincent, Erin, *Lace Forms*

Axes, metal pins

(2016).

Vincent, Erin, *Shrouded Pharmaceuticals*

Various pharmaceutical boxes, laser cut doily patterns.

(2015).

Vincent, Erin, *Pillow Talk 1, 2, 3*

Plaster pillows, metal guns, axes, hammers

(2016).

Prieto, Dana, *Indulgences*

Tea set, table, chair, lamp picture frames, gold wrapped chocolate, wall paper, carpet.

(2017).