

selsun blue

January 31 - February 14

Matt W. Brown, Kate Carder-Thompson, Jerome Conquy,
Sepideh Tajalizadeh, Yas Nikpour, George Kubresli,
Ramolen Laruan, Johnathan Onyschuk, Lydia Santia, Zhizi Wang

*Sense and selsun blue*¹

The exhibition *selsun blue* features work by current MFA students in the Department of Visual Arts at Western University. Stemming from a shared interest in the problematics of communicating with clarity, these works question the implications of our capacity to both transmit and receive information.

A mondegreen is simply the mishearing or misinterpretation of a lyric. This linguistic term was coined by Sylvia Wright in her 1954 essay, *The Death of Lady Mondegreen*. In this text, Wright describes how her mother would often read to her as a child from *Reliques of Ancient English Poetry*, a compilation of popular songs from the eighteenth century, compiled by Bishop Thomas Percy.

Her favorite verse:

Ye Highlands and ye Lowlands,
Oh, where hae ye been?
They hae slain the Earl o' Moray,
And Lady Mondegreen.

She recalls discovering years later that the line she had always remembered as “And Lady Mondegreen,” was actually, “And layd him on the green.” This misunderstanding shifts the lyrics context, positioning the narrative around a singular protagonist, the Earl of Moray alone. As misinterpretations, mondegreens point towards a misalignment between auditory perception and translation,² but often times the

thing we think we hear is in some way related to our own desires—a Freudian slip, a Rorschach test. In these instances, the authors intended meaning becomes disrupted, but a more personal or unexpected one might be formed. This error in translation opens up a space where miscommunication might become a field of potentiality, pointing towards new and unexpected connotations. Further, it questions the ways in which information is transmitted, whereby the politics and efficacy of these models themselves might become part of the conversation.

Each artist explores these ideas through a number of variable avenues that might be positioned within three subtexts: *speaking to yourself*, *speaking to others* and *speaking for others*. *Speaking to yourself* becomes about the dialogues and mantras we repeat internally, about psychological alcoves and unconscious propositions, as well as the problematics of remembering. *Speaking to others* might include the immaterial pursuit of séances, spiritual endeavors, and the encompassing world of social media and digital landscapes. Or it might be materially driven, as in object-oriented ontology. While *speaking for others* questions the power dynamics between those who have agency and those who are subject to censorship, misrepresentation, and propaganda.

Speaking to yourself

Situated within the realm of the bodily, **George Kubresli's** work navigates spaces of trauma and wellbeing. Further, his paintings often focus on the internal dialogues that manifest when bodies become unresponsive or untenable.

Jerome Conquy's video and photographic work considers conditions of mobility and the dialectics of objective versus subjective time. Temporal subtlety imbues his work with a

meditative quality, opening up spaces for self-reflexivity.

Zhizi Wang's work investigates the nature of memory through technological lenses. Juxtaposing found and constructed video clips, her films explore how our experiences of space and time are often fragmented and alienating.

Speaking to others

Matt W. Brown's recent work considers modes of representation and questions the capacity of painting to depict its subject with fidelity. Playing out as an investigation into notions of simulacrum, these works position meaning as something that is constantly shifting and in need of negotiation.

Kate Carder-Thompson uses wool as a transmitter to reach out into the spiritual realm. Through her performative endeavors she positions repetition and labour as a model for understanding, and as a means for connecting with those who came before us.

Johnathan Onyschuk's work negotiates the material properties of gaming interfaces and the paranoid virtual spaces of male fantasies. Onyschuk examines his own complacency and male identity within the emerging dystopian glut of war-based video games, wherein ancient patterns of xenophobia and conquest are enacted on loop. Entertainment technology merges with entropic cyborg bodies, acting out our primal code in the dark primordial landscapes of living rooms and basements.

Yas Nikpour's work navigates the relationship between virtual space and gender, as well the axis between agency and accountability. Pointing towards the amplification

and reinforcement of traditional gender roles in popular gaming culture, her work also considers how the prevalence of anonymity in these spaces is central to this dialogue.

Predominately based in sculpture, **Lydia Santia's** work is situated within theoretical discourses tied to object-oriented ontology. Her practice considers the functionality and autonomy of objects, that they might communicate and exist in configurations and amalgamations of their own making.

Speaking for others

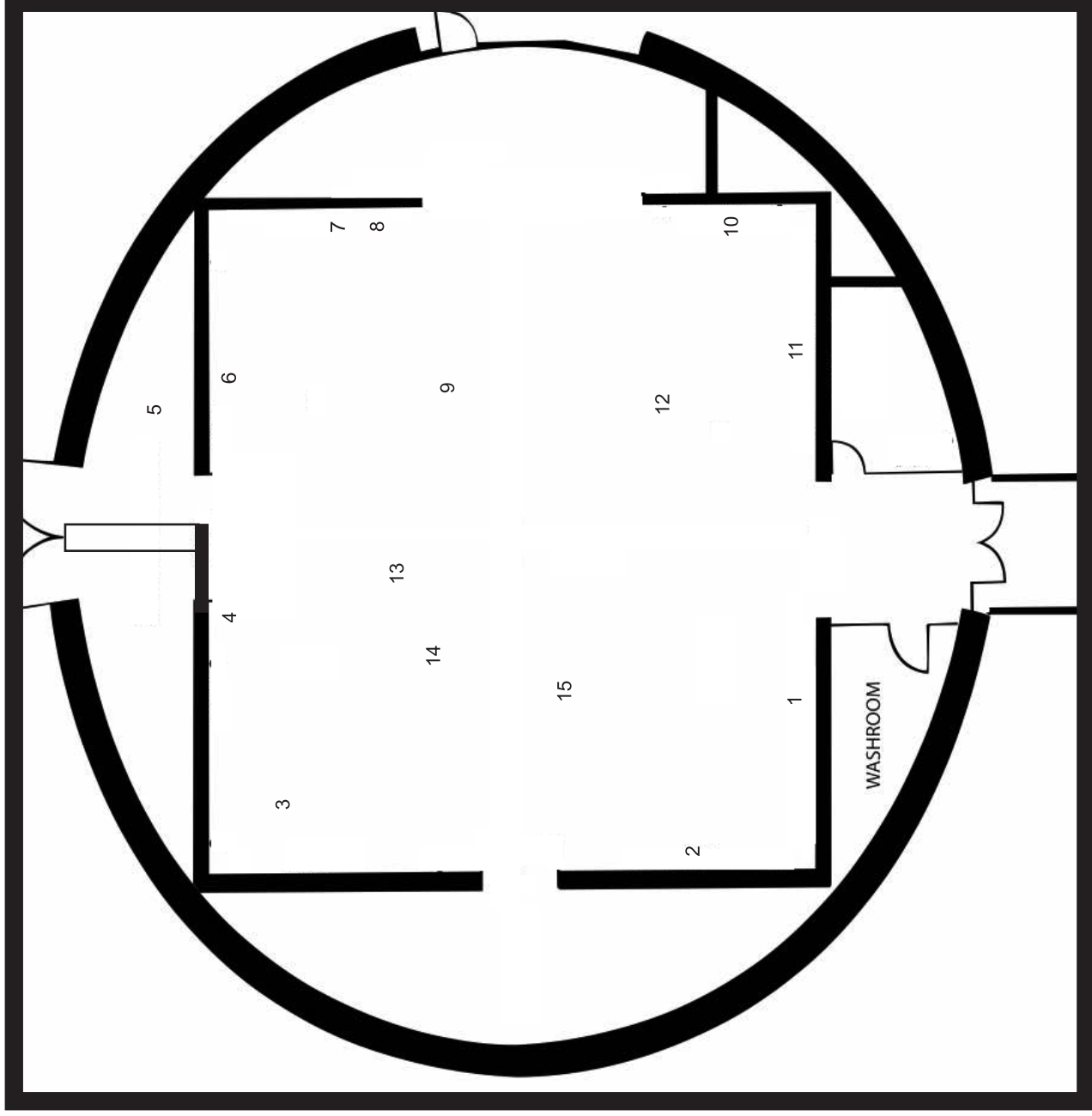
Ramolén Laruan's interdisciplinary practice focuses on materiality, cultural hybridity and constructions of memory in relation to displacement and migration. Collapsing the space between personal narrative and media reportage, her works question the politics of belonging, as well as narratives of truth.

Navigating the complex realm of identity, **Sepideh Tajalizadeh's** practice focuses on how external forces often impose unwanted restrictions on our bodies. Her video works explore narratives that challenge standard social conventions, pointing towards alternative paths.

Endnotes:

¹ selsun blue is a mondegreen for "Song Sung Blue" by Neil Diamond.

² Konnikova, Maria. "Excuse Me While I Kiss This Guy." In *The New Yorker*, December 10, 2014 < <https://www.newyorker.com/science/maria-konnikova/science-misheard-lyrics-mondegreens>>



- | | | |
|---|---|--|
| 1. Jerome Conquy
<i>Chronomorphosis II</i>
video
3:45 minutes | 6. George Kubresli
<i>Appetite Loss</i>
oil on canvas
59 x 47.2 inches | 11. Zhizi Wang
<i>We Become Aware of the Void as We Fill It</i>
single-channel video
9:45 minutes |
| 2. Matt W. Brown
<i>Sanguine</i>
conté on paper
30.25 x 88 inches | 7. Johnathan Onyschuk
<i>independent fingers // nesting trophies</i>
silicone, pigment, foam
6 x 11 x 4 inches | 12. Kate Carder-Thompson
<i>Mesmerplies</i>
found objects, wool yarn, graphite on onion skin, plexiglass
dimensions variable |
| 3. Ramolén Laruan
<i>flutter</i>
mixed/multimedia (video, textile, print, acrylic paint, mylar)
dimensions variable | 8. Johnathan Onyschuk
<i>dipshit haptics</i>
steel, foil, rubber glove
17 x 10 inches | 13. Lydia Santia
<i>"kit"</i>
clear vinyl, sleeping bag, astroturf
dimensions variable |
| 4. Zhizi Wang
<i>Whisper</i>
single-channel video
2:33 minutes | 9. Johnathan Onyschuk
<i>unboxing overwatch</i>
polystyrene foam, oil, para-cord, soapstone, silicone, WW1 barbed wire
40 x 32 inches | 14. Lydia Santia
<i>"platform for plastic and metal"</i>
floor tiles, seat holder, bicycle pedal
dimensions variable |
| 5. Yas Nikpour
<i>Untitled</i>
mixed media
dimensions variable | 10. Sepideh Tajalizadeh
<i>Made up</i>
video
6:42 minutes | 15. Lydia Santia
<i>"wet floor sign"</i>
wet floor sign, green vinyl
dimensions variable |



ArtLab Gallery
John Labatt Visual Arts Centre
Western University
London, ON N6A 5B7