

2011

Again, With Feeling! [Exhibition Catalogue]

Dave Colangelo

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OVERVIEW

Again, With Feeling! presents the work of artists whose visions are injected with properties of pattern, repetition, and appropriation. Taking cues from the everyday, the works displayed show new incarnations or morphs of their originals. This multi-disciplinary show explores the `re'-mixing, producing, or contextualizing of an original, whether through motif, object or experience. By re-negotiating the terms around their borrowed imagery or performance, these artists present us with a fresh composition of a thing we've seen before.

ARTIST BIOS



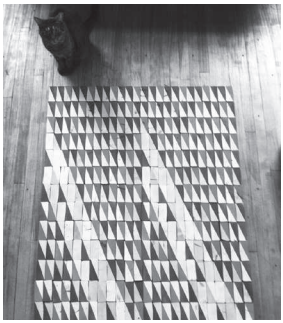
Jeremy Bailey is a Toronto-based new media and performance artist whose work explores custom software in a performative context. "His work is often confidently self-deprecating in offering hilarious parodies of new media vocabularies." (Marisa Olson, Rhizome) Recent projects include performances at the Tate Liverpool and the New Museum in New York.

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jeremybailey.net



Hester received her Bachelors in Creative Brand Communication in South Africa. She moved to Canada to complete her Master of Design at York University and recently attended the 3rd annual Summer School of the Werkplaats Typografie held in Urbino Italy. Currently, Hester is an editorial intern at FUSE Magazine. She currently lives and collaborates in Toronto, Canada.

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www.hesterbarnard.com



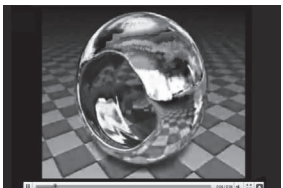
Doug Brown is a Toronto-based visual artist. He is very multi-disciplinary in his practice, working with an array of mediums and concepts. Brown is best known for his bold oversized graphics, which he renders through stencils, paintings, sculptures and mixed media. It is through these mediums that Brown's characteristic patterns and visual texture engage the viewer.

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www.dougbrownsart.tumblr.com



Miles Collyer is a Toronto based visual artist whose practice is motivated by photo-based sources. He studied at the Ontario College of Art & Design where he was the recipient of several academic scholarships and awards before graduating with a BFA in photography in 2006. After completing his undergraduate studies Collyer has gone on to receive further grants and awards for his work, most notably a Gold medal in 2008 from the Canadian National Magazine Awards in the category of Best Art Direction for a Single Magazine Article. His work has been widely published and exhibited across Canada, the United States, Australia, Switzerland, Germany and several curated exhibits online. Since 2005 Collyer has held the position of Shop Manager at the artist-run centre Art Metropole.

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www.milescollyer.com



Tara Downs currently lives and works in Toronto having received her B.A. from Queens University and recently graduating from Sculpture Installation at the Ontario College of Art and Design University. Using compositing, print, and installation she creates a hallucinatory glimpse into the inner workings of digital abstraction. Recent group exhibitions include, Barmecidal Projects, Butcher Gallery, and Candles In the Mind Game, Frankfurt. Tara is also the director of the project space Tomorrow Gallery.

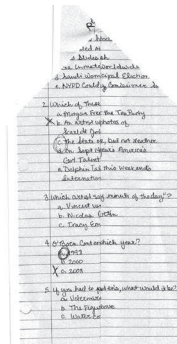
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www.taradowns.com



Lili Huston- Herterich's practice is fueled by new technology and media collage. As of April 1st, 2011 (read: a fool's day), all her work will contribute to a growing body of shouting impressions of: art and craft, the domestic home and the artist's studio, femininity and feminism, apathy and assumption, material connotations and the additive primaries. In an effort to produce works so shrill that together they transform into an inconspicuous drone, Huston-Herterich believes in quantity as a means of neutrality and dismisses the distinction between authentic forms and their imitations.

Huston- Herterich graduated with a BFA in Fine Arts at York University in 2010, and has since exhibited in various virtual and physical spaces in Canada and the U.S.

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www.lilihustonherterich.com



Professor Schaffer attended public school in Silver Spring, Maryland and went on to receive her Bachelor of Arts from Whitman College in Walla Walla, Washington. From 2009-2011, she studied Painting and Fine Art Media for her Master of Fine Arts at the Slade School of Fine Art in London, England. She has been working as an artist in Toronto since July 2011.

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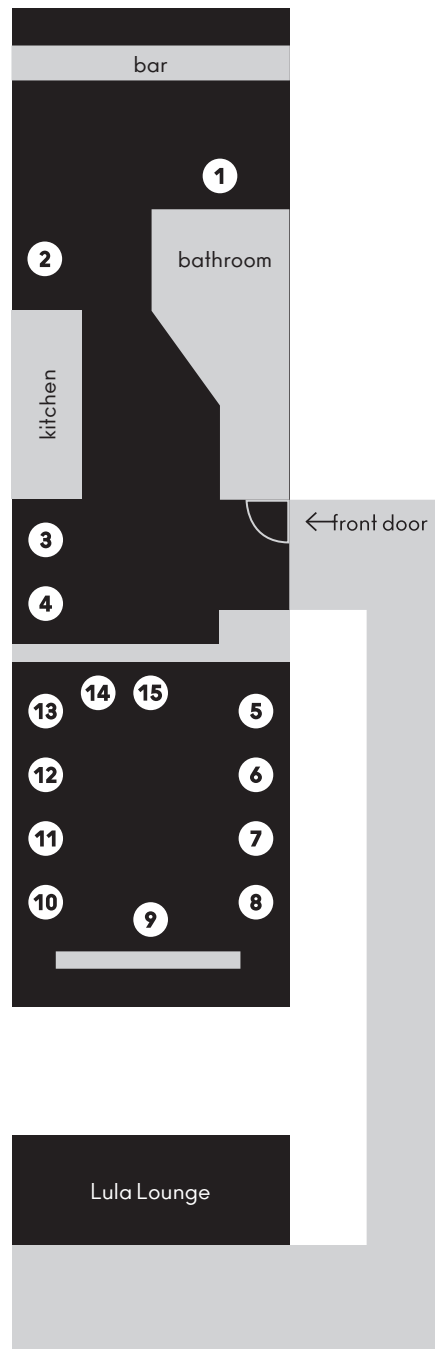
Hanna Hur received a BFA in Studio Arts at Concordia University. (2008) She was the recipient of numerous awards and scholarships. Since graduating, her work has been published and exhibited across Canada and most recently in Berlin, Germany. This year, Hur was awarded an Access and Career Development Grant from the Ontario Arts Council.

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Again, With Feeling! marks Hanna's first curatorial effort. She lives and works in Toronto.

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www.hannahur.com

STUDIOMAP

1. Hester Barnard
"Hallmark" 2011
2. Lili Huston-Herterich
"Ocean Fresh" 2011
3. Miles Collyer
"Flag of New France" 2011
4. Tara Downs
"Blender" 2010
5. Doug Brown
"Tiles" 2011
6. Doug Brown
"Untitled (2x4)" 2011
7. Professor Schaffer
"Pop Quiz" 2011
8. Doug Brown
"Slats" 2008
9. Tara Downs
"3D" 2010
10. Jeremy Bailey
"SOS" 2008
11. Hester Barnard
"Colour Matching" 2010
12. Lili Huston-Herterich
"God's Eye" 2011
13. Miles Collyer
"Char Facade" 2011
14. Miles Collyer
"Pulp Facade/Char Facade
(recto/verso)" 2011
15. Lili Huston-Herterich
"Ironing Board" 2011



AGAIN, WITH FEELING!

Not unlike Lawrence Weiner's phrase that greets visitors to MoMA's PS1 in New York—a bit of matter and a little bit more—*Again, With Feeling!* begins to describe the practice of artistic augmentation through the repetitive performance of appropriation and translation. The artists in this show exhibit a particular relationship with the everyday, with the objects and interfaces that approach us again and again, material or otherwise—often both—becoming part of our vernacular through compulsive repetition. The materials used here—IKEA slats, paint chips, an ironing board, felt, packing foam, data, screens—are asked to go beyond their alienated equivalence. They stand before us as propositions, as vehicles for belief—as matter that matters and might be made to matter a bit more if we take another look.

Repetition and compulsion lies at the heart of what is happening here. Cut, copy, paste: repeat. To this, today we might add pinch, tap, zoom, click, paint (with the paint tool), print, project (with a data projector), and send. These are compulsions specific to our time—digital automatism, as theorist D.N. Rodowick notes¹—built into the very fabric of our digital life. These systems, these functions that have become embodied through habituation, must be seen as intertwined with what it means to be human today. As such, they are among the very functions we must examine and question. Our rituals, repetitions and compulsions, the very mechanisms of belief—of feeling—are controlled in many ways with and through these interfaces and the expressions they permit.

In *SOS* (2008), Jeremy Bailey takes us through his own version of the graphical user interface. Using humour and absurdity, Bailey's *SOS* operating system draws attention to the constructedness of the desktop interfaces that we have become acclimatized to—the surfaces that, in their "user friendliness," do their best to get out of our way. What is hidden in this disappearing act? As it seems, the very things that help us give shape and form to expression.

Similarly, Tara Downs foregrounds interface, citing Adobe products in her list of materials as a painter might cite watercolour, acknowledging the centrality of this tool that becomes the site for repetition (with its attendant disorders) and compulsion. Yet, lifted from these processes, the material substantiation that she presents us with in *Blender* (2010), with its sloping, interlaced, lenticular form, militates against the on-screen flattening that lends itself to a singular, optimal viewing position within the confines of said interface.

And so *Again, With Feeling!* asks questions of the tools we have laid out before us: what do we want from them, what are their limits, and what are

the consequences? This, of course, as the physicality of Bailey's interface experiments with real-time motion sensors (via hacked from Nintendo Wii controllers), and Downs' post-net art demonstrate, is the insistence that the interface no longer resides—and never has—solely within circuitry and screens. The digitization of image, voice, and text does not lead to a virtual world of surfaces, as theorists such as Friedrich Kittler have noted.ⁱⁱ We have not renounced the material world for Second Life. What we have, though, is a second life of material, a mixing of material and data, and the algorithmic manipulation of material that asserts its birth in a world suffused with data.

As such, our terms of reference in art have shifted. Instead of the readymade or *objet trouvé*, we have sampling. More than the readymade, which worked quite well for products of the warehouse and factory, and the detritus of overproduction and material excess, sampling evokes digital processes that are both algorithmic and repetitive—processes suited to a life lived with pervasive computing. While Hester Barnard's photographed paint chip pairings in *Colour Matching* (2011) are sampled from this long established material reality of manufactured forms, they perform a comparison that might, without much thought, be left to Google Image Search or some proprietary colour-matching software at a paint store. Performed and presented here, they are lifted up and out of this.

In Miles Collyer's *Flag of New France* (2011) we see a different kind of sampling. In translation from photograph to felt, Collyer must reduce the sampling rate already performed on the computer to one that befits his material. In a sense, he creates his own software that selects, averages, flattens, and combines. This, as it may seem also in Barnard's work, is not a disavowal of the digital interfaces that, for better or worse, permeate artistic production. It is, instead, quite the opposite. It is a foregrounding of this extension of vision and selection that we have extended into our thinking machines brought back out and through the body to be performed again (with feeling).

Lili Huston-Herterich's *Ironing Board* (2011) employs these extensions as well. The brushstrokes, with their fixed diameter and variable opacity, bring us back through a Photoshop CS5 interface but also remind us of the body moving and working over a surface. On this otherwise banal household object we see the movement of a mouse across a screen, not unlike the movement, or the shape, or the function, of what would normally grace its surface.

Thinking through this, one might recall the concept of remediation. As theorists Jay Bolter and Richard Grusin note,ⁱⁱⁱ following from McLuhan's dictum that the content of every medium is another medium, remediation is the process by which aspects of previous media forms appear in new media: principles of perspective appear in the construction of film and

photography, radio and film appear in the production of television,^{iv} and now, this all appears in digital media.

With the digital, it may appear as if we have reached the end of the road, that the digital is a kind of master medium that subsumes everything in its wake. Yet, that these works are digital or not, directly composed on or with computers, or not, is immaterial. The works on display in *Again, With Feeling!* can be seen to reflect what Lev Manovich calls post-media aesthetics, work that cannot be tied to a particular storage or communication media.^v With the intermixing of data, material, and media, it is impossible and perhaps foolish to attempt to disentangle these works into forms and practices. They exist for us, and for the artists—many of whom describe themselves (for lack of a better term) as multi-disciplinary—as works that must be appreciated and understood under different terms.

Manovich speaks of a post-media experience in which culture begins to appear as software. It is a culture that is always networked and concerned, first and foremost, with the experience of the user (i.e. interface). It is a culture that looks at its images and wants to find patterns in them, to make patterns on them, to sample and recombine repeatedly, and then repeat. For the artists here, it seems that the objects, images, and interfaces that allow for such acts are the ones that present us with the potential for value, emotional or otherwise.

In this, Doug Brown's *SLATS TO STACKS #1* (2011) and *SLATS TO TILES #2* are both an act of defiance and compliance: first in defying the conventions of the purpose-built mass-produced component, and second, in complying with and executing a program of algorithmic manipulation of his own accord. Vicious and virtuous cycles intersect here like layers of code with parallel ideological processors.

Kristin Schaffer engages with another kind of ideological process. Recreating awkward moments experienced in typical classroom situations, *Professor Schaffer* (2011) samples from familiar tropes, disrupting the pervasive interface of institutionalized education. Pedagogical planning, in many ways, is like designing an interface: it is a program that lays out a specific set of tools, techniques, and rules for understanding and manipulating content. Schaffer asks us, like Bailey does in *SOS*, to take another look at the tools we have set out for ourselves. What do we want from them? What do they want from us?

And so, as we move toward a material world suffused with data, and a world of data equally suffused with material, our second (third, and fourth) lives come to resemble our first. At some point they become indistinguishable. In all of this there is still feeling. It is to be found in struggling with what we decide to repeat, and how, and with whom.

— David R. Colangelo

David R. Colangelo lives and works in Toronto. He holds an MA in Cultural Studies from Goldsmiths College, University of London, and is in the process of completing a practice-based PhD in Communication and Culture at York and Ryerson Universities where he is investigating screen-based installations in public space and the impact of digital media on art, design, and scholarship. David is also a founding member of N/A.

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www.davecolangelo.com

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Notes

- i. D.N. Rodowick, *The Virtual Life of Film* (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 2007).
- ii. "The general digitization of channels and information erases the differences among individual media. Sound and image, voice and text are reduced to surface effects known to consumers as interface." From Friedrich Kittler, *Gramophone, Film, Typewriter*. (Stanford: Stanford UP, 1999), 1.
- iii. Marshall McLuhan, *Understanding Media. The Extensions of Man* (New York: Mentor, 1964).
- iv. Jay Bolter and Richard Grusin, *Remediation. Understanding New Media* (Cambridge, Mass: MIT Press, 1999).
- v. Lev Manovich, "Post-media Aesthetics," http://manovich.net/DOCS/Post_media_aesthetics1.doc

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