Making Media Matter
6:00 - 8:00 pm Wednesday May 22
Shwayder Art Building C-Cubed Studio

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Presenters, Presentation Titles, and Abstracts

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Jessica Comola
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"Trying to Show the Mind":
Rethinking the Text/ile Metaphor in Disability Poetics

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Texts and textiles share the same etymological root—*texere,* to weave together. "Trying to Show the Mind": Rethinking the Text/ile Metaphor in Disability Poetics, discusses what can happen—personally and pedagogically—when we swap interpretive methodologies in order to rethink materials for which we might not have a readily available approach. Texts become tactile, tangible, while textiles become readable and expressive objects. This work grows out of my multimedia dissertation project situated at the coming-together of health/medical humanities, disability studies, and experimental feminist poetics. I look at a textile called the *Glore Embroidery* alongside poet Hannah Weiner's *Clairvoyant Journals* to see how two women rework diagnoses of mental disorder into expressive tools. As a writer, these "disorderly" objects open possibilities for multimedia exploration that can disrupt conventional I-based poetries. As a reader, they are sites for inquiry into what constitutes the "read*able*" textual body to critique where ableism and interpretability intersect. I'll discuss the results of bringing this textual-textilic approach into the classroom and into my own writing practice. Then, we'll "rewrite" the *Glore* and *Clairvoyant Journals* by creating a large-scale, collaborative textile from their words.

Christina Kreps
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Museum as Method

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Drawing on Nicholas Thomas' idea of "museum as method," my presentation explores the ways in which museum collections and objects can be deployed for generating new knowledge and for creative praxis. In contrast to other research methods that may begin with a discourse or theory, with a problem inherited or framed, the entry point for research in a museum setting can be an assemblage of things, an artifact, work of art, or specimen. To Thomas, museum collections are things that we can work with "prospectively" as a technology that sparks curiosity and enables activities of knowing and discovery. Museum objects are not only evidence of past human creativity, ingenuity, and intentions, but also catalysts for the creation of new things, intentions, and ways of seeing and being in the world. In this presentation, I will illustrate these and other points with examples of recent approaches in anthropology to the study and use of museum objects that focus on their materiality, multisensory dimensions, and generative qualities. Especially important is how museums have become spaces of critical inquiry and reflexive practice that disrupt conventional, colonial museum methods and narratives.

Adam Loch
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Remediations of Urban Spaces: Greening in the Chthulucene

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The metaphor "concrete jungle" has sadly come to denote the ruthlessly fast-paced, noisy, and densely populated environment of large urban cities. What has been dropped in this association between jungles and cities is the organizational aptitude for living organisms to become-with each other. Greening "immersive machines" or "G machines" are a creative media strategy in response to the Cthulucene, to the need for competently "making-with" other humans and non-humans alike in an increasingly precarious and complex world. As a verb, "to green" is defined as "to intensify relations with indigenous-ecosystem-species" and such restorative or recuperative work does

not discriminate against the use of digital technology. In fact, the stewardship of and participation in green urban spaces would very much involve cultivating plants native to the region as much as architectural and soundscape installations—an open-ended naturalcultural remediation project of "getting on together". Inspired in part by Brian Eno's work on ambient music, G machines are understood as part of a slow city urban planning strategy that generates a mood or atmosphere conducive for "deep listening", sitting quietly, or taking refuge from the noise pollution of city life. By focusing specifically on soundscape ecology, this presentation will explore the possibility of green sonorous ambience to attune denizens to different modalities of being in the world, create a refuge from noise pollution in the city, and afford opportunities for kinnovation with unexpected others.

Julia Madsen
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Home Movie, Nowhere

This project is rooted in documentary poetics and includes a triptych of three video poems entitled "Home Movie, Nowhere." These videos engage with the documentary poetics of place, focusing specifically on documenting the American Midwest through the aesthetic lens of the Midwestern Gothic. As such, these videos attempt to reimagine or re-vision the idea of the Midwest in American culture through presenting a hidden or unseen, disappearing, haunted, and in-between landscape. The first video poem incorporates archival and found footage alongside my own images as a way of collapsing temporalities while building a haunting tone, mood, and atmosphere through montage and juxtaposition. The second video centers on personal and family history, specifically with respect to socioeconomic class, working-class labor, and isolation/alienation. Finally, the third video engages with the visual lyrical epistolary mode through a series of letters that meditate and reflect on landscape, mortality, language, and creative praxis.

Pauline Reid
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Enchanted Interfaces:
Actor-Network Theory in Old Media and New

My presentation will seek to discover the enchanted interfaces of the early print book: visual elements which act as lively features of a reading process that co-creates meaning between reader and text. I argue that the visually rich media of early print books – such as illustrations, paratexts, typefaces, and arrangements – actively respond to historical controversies of cognition and sight. While this presentation will draw from my recent book, *Reading by Design* (U Toronto P, 2019), I plan to extend this research into current concepts of new materialism and actor-network theory, in which non-human elements such as objects, materials, and designs inhabit a larger network and act as relational, even sentient agents. Further, I will theorize connections between the eras of early print and our age of new media as historical moments where the certainty of knowing by seeing (or reading) has been disturbed – where the central assumption of what visual scholar Chris Jenks calls the "doctrine of immaculate perception" does not hold. In other words, we can explore how online visual materials act as agents and read *us* as we read them, as apps, cookies, and observational networks shift visual observation from human agent to material object. I will contend that our current reading and observational processes have again newly transformed and destabilized the relationship between viewer and digital text, between observation and the quest for knowledge, in a post-Cartesian, post-truth era that presents us with both troubling and promising possibilities.