



Natural. *Disaster.*

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Barbara Astman

Carl Beam

Ron Benner

Susan Dobson

Murray Favro

Elle Flanders

Wyn Geleynse

Frances Leeming

Gwen MacGregor

Dennis Oppenheim

Heidi Schaefer

Jamasie Teevee

curated by **Jessica Wyman**

Contemporary Curator-in-Residence

4 March to 24 April 2010

McIntosh Gallery

Whether it is genetic modification, climate change, habitat destruction, or myriad other issues, the discourse on human interaction with nature is pervasive. The twelve artists in *Natural. Disaster.*—Barbara Astman, Carl Beam, Ron Benner, Susan Dobson, Murray Favro, Elle Flanders, Wyn Geleynse, Frances Leeming, Gwen MacGregor, Dennis Oppenheim, Heidi Schaefer and Jamasie Teevee—bring unique perspectives to ongoing debates. Taken together, they illuminate something of the increasingly complex and often troubled relationship between nature and culture.

While in many respects the developed world has evolved strategies to control and exploit nature, there are times when unexpected and calamitous events overwhelm our inherent adaptability. The results, as exhibition curator Jessica Wyman points out, are natural disasters. With this in mind, the exhibiting artists address the need to achieve balance between nature and

culture, a growing challenge in the face of technological advances that continually alter our relationship to the environment. According to Wyman “nature may produce disasters, but it is in the encounter with human will that the meaning of the disastrous can be discerned.”

There is no single or common position adopted by the artists in this exhibition. Each provides a unique perspective on often complex and nuanced issues based on research and acute observations of daily life and the way in which such human activity impinges on global phenomena. And while the topics addressed are particularly salient today, they are by no means only recent concerns. Wyman’s remarkable selection of works both from the McIntosh collection and other sources were produced over the past forty years in Canada, the United States and the UK, demonstrating the sustained engagement of contemporary artist in the environmental movement and related social activism.

Natural. Disaster is the culmination of research undertaken by Jessica Wyman in 2009 during the first contemporary curatorial residency at the McIntosh Gallery. Given the currency of the issues addressed and the nuanced approach of both the curator and artists to their research, it provides a unique opportunity to engage an array of audiences at Western and further afield, while setting a high standard for similar projects in the future.

James Patten
Director/Chief Curator

I am grateful to the entire staff of the McIntosh Gallery, where my tenure as Contemporary Curator-in-Residence was not just productive but pleasurable. All were marvellously generous in their support of my residency, and were welcoming, informative and extraordinarily helpful. The faculty and graduate students of the Department of Visual Arts, especially Patrick Mahon, Chair, welcomed multiple visits and critiques, and helped ground me in my temporary role as a Western resident.

Most especially, this exhibition and catalogue are a tribute to the vision of Judith Rodger, Acting Director of the McIntosh Gallery from May 2008 through February 2010, at whose invitation I undertook this position. I have also appreciated the contributions of the new Director/Chief Curator, James Patten, to the realization of the exhibition.

This residency was generously supported by Fred Longstaffe, Provost and Vice-President (Academic), and Donna Pennee, Dean of Arts and Humanities, as well as Flora and Ian Tripp and two anonymous donors. I am also grateful to the Canada Council for the Arts, the Ontario Arts Council, The University of Western Ontario and the Friends of the McIntosh Gallery whose support is the mainstay of gallery activity.

Jessica Wyman

Natural. *Disaster.*

These two words are often strung together, naturalizing disaster through its linkage to that which is beyond control, that which exists a priori. Disasters are, in this configuration, beyond the capacity of humans to control, outside the realm of intervention or mitigation.

It is a human relation to events, however, that for some defines a disaster. Volcanoes, earthquakes, tornadoes on a pre-human Earth are not described as disasters, but as essential contributors to the geologic record of time, no matter the destruction that may have been caused. By this identification, human presence is essential to the constitution of disasters, irrespective of whether humans played any role in such an event coming to pass.

The writing of this text is inflected by the recent earthquake in Haiti in January 2010 that devastated much of that country, destroying infrastructure as well as people, communities, and systems of survival. While such a naturally occurring event could not possibly be claimed as a construction, the human factors that exacerbate the difficulties of recovery loom large

at the same time as the generosity of human response to the magnitude of suffering produced by this event continues to inspire and uplift.

This very tension between the capacities for innovation and those for destruction is at the centre of *Natural. Disaster.* This exhibition has been imagined as an exploration of the friction between intention and outcome, affinity and indifference in the human relationship to the natural world and to its usage, habitation, and systems of response to invention, innovation, and consequences that are both imagined and unintended.

The works selected for this exhibition address such persistent issues as cultural and linguistic colonialism, genetic modification and commodification, energy production and consumption, and forces of natural and physical science. The artists who have produced these works have done so through rigorous technical research and a deep engagement with the activities and repercussions of daily life: our energy needs, our waste products, the development of our domestic and urban landscapes, and our all-too-human impulses to record

and to create – even when those creations become instruments of disaster and destruction.

While there is no single or common position adopted by the artists in this exhibition, nor do their works equally incite advocacy or activism, they all address the problem of achieving a fine balance between nature as it is and the world as it has been created through the development of culture and technology. Environmentalism, sustainability, climate change, water and soil health, food safety, species protection and related concerns are discussed every day in our news media and as topics of major local, national, and international conferences. These matters are not simply “academic”; they are fundamental to our social and cultural identities.

Jamasie Teevee’s work *Strangers in our camp* depicts the encounter of strangers with Inuit locals, a rendering which may not appear sinister but which, as history has shown repeatedly, often results in fundamental changes within societies. As a moment of encounter, Teevee’s print leaves much of the tenor of this exchange to the imagination of the viewer. Who are these strangers, why



Susan Dobson, from the series "Natural Law" 2001

do they come, and with what openness are they received? While the nature of this particular encounter may remain elusive, the implications of such moments of contact are far from imaginary. As argued by Joyce Green, "Canada is an evolving colonial entity created by colonial interests for the express purpose of extending and consolidating those interests at the expense of the indigenous peoples and their contemporary descendants". The domination and coercion that were used to produce such a national entity

have left long and deep scars from which indigenous peoples have yet to recover.

As expressed by Carl Beam in his screenprint works *Flux*, *Family*, and *2000*, these scars exist alongside and as part of the identity of aboriginal people living in the contemporary world. Beam's work insists upon the continuation of a bond with nature, even in an urban environment, as constitutive of a relationship to land and identity, even though such a connection to the land was often severed

as part of colonial subjugation and continues to be a matter of struggle with forces of government as they are externally determined and enforced.

It has been argued that exploration is an essential desire of humanity, a natural part of what it is to be human, to seek, to discover, to claim. The impulse may be legitimately natural, but the results of such exploration have resulted in a variety of disasters from which recovery may be near-impossible. In Elle Flanders' series *What*

Isn't There, the search for place engendered by the claimings of history is both metaphorical and literal. This ongoing body of work documents the search for Palestinian villages that no longer exist, erased in the redrawing of geopolitical territorial ownership that remains contested by both Israelis and Palestinians. Here markers of place are often faintly discernible through elements of nature – both indigenous and imported/naturalized – that have overtaken these locales.

In these works, nature is not so much a site of solace as it is a site of struggle. The legacy of romanticism is such that nature is often imagined as a respite from the harshness of modern life, a place for and subject of rapt contemplation and escape. Certainly, popular and media cultures are equally replete with images of nature as wild and untameable, its destructive powers always a threat to the impulses of civilization. The pitched battle between the desire to domesticate and the awe of the intrinsically powerful are exercised through observation of and succumbing to the powers of natural progress and change.

Barbara Astman's *Untitled #1 (the Fruit Series)* is a depiction of the effects of nature left unchecked: rot and decay. This photograph of decomposing fruit does not judge the rot, does not consign its lack of perfection to the garbage, but treats it as worthy subject, all the more so for the infrequency of our encounters with rot free from disgust. Indeed, the forces of decay, entirely natural as they are, are also constitutive of regeneration even as the processes of aging and change are fought at every turn by industries whose mainstays are the preservation of youth and the manufacture of flawlessness.

Dennis Oppenheim's *Reading Position for Second Degree Burn* depicts the artist's own body as the marker of change effected by the sun. The image of Oppenheim's burned body—only the book-protected rectangle on his chest remaining pale and unharmed—blends the fetishized worship of the sun with the damage that exposure to its rays can inflict on the body. This image, alongside Astman's, perhaps exemplifies the complexity of the contemporary human relationship to forces of nature: natural forces are to be mitigated in the interest of disaster-prevention at the same

time as they are to be marshalled to human interest and benefit.

It is just such concerns with the means of science and technology that come under scrutiny in the works of Ron Benner and Frances Leeming. Benner's project, *The Commodification of Life*, addresses directly the problems of the patenting of life forms and their deployment in the service of corporate interests. It is Benner's concern with the ownership of the very stuff of life, genes, that underlies this project, decrying the logic of business models that would allow the possession of human forms as easily as the ownership of seeds – themselves already modified to reproduce the logic of market capital and the reduction of biodiversity.

Leeming's film *Genetic Admiration* similarly contests the logic of scientism and scientific research that would technologize human sexual reproduction to the point of amusement park absurdity. Seen as a vessel for recreation, the feminized body is both coddled and prodded in equal measure, with Fordist production techniques applied to the more intimate business of making more people.

The human talent for discovery is matched only, perhaps, by the “natural” drive to invention. Just as Benner’s and Leeming’s works illustrate the upshots, both rhetorical and political, to the application of technology to the realm of the living, so too do the works of Murray Favro, Wyn Geleynse, and Heidi Schaefer address the ways in which militarism may also be a goal and a product of human innovation.

Favro’s *Stealth Bomber* and *Canadian Stealth Flyer*, stealthily mordant drawings, imagine the maple leaf as a masking device for under-the-radar military aircraft. In addition to undercutting the notion of Canada as naturally peace-loving – a well-entrenched national myth – the deployment of the maple leaf as a symbol of furtiveness and aggression undermines the supposed facelessness of military presence.

Schaefer’s *Invention of Thaumatrope 1820’s/Invention of Machine Gun 1860’s* similarly takes aim at the nature of human inquiry that would extend the optical trick of persistence of vision produced by spinning a thaumatrope, invented as a child’s toy, to the automated repetition of machine gunfire. In this video, the

spinning thaumatrope declares, endlessly, *Shoot Repeat Shoot Repeat*, describing the function of the machine gun and flatly simplifying the technological innovation by which such a device operates. Reduced to an extreme simplification of action, this work makes plain the absurdity that so much energy, so many resources are devoted to technologies of destruction and disaster.

In his work *Flight Theory*, Geleynse makes use of an analogous lucidity whereby an airplane, made of metal and subject still to the forces of nature, floats in relation to a magnet, which could hold it aloft or pull it crashing to the ground. The advancements of human innovation are here illustrated as remaining vulnerable to the forces which have been aggregated in service of human exploration and domination. The straightforwardness of this relation is both humorous and awe-inspiring; that such technological capacity could ever have been imagined, and that it continues to be deployed with so little understanding of the magnitude of the gesture is truly astounding.

This naturalization of powerful forces is revealed over time in Gwen MacGregor’s work *Going*, in

which a leafy landscape retracts its foliage to reveal what has been hidden from view: industrial cooling towers. The presence of nuclear power stations, of hydro fields and the like, so defines contemporary life in the West that these non-sites often disappear into invisibility. Although they have become central to life in a post-industrial society, these monuments to industry and to domination of the elements and over natural surroundings remain distant and unknowable even as they emblemize human dependence on power, on non-renewable resources, and on the precarious nature of humanity’s very existence.

By way of producing space to become habitable rather than industrial, Susan Dobson’s photographic series *Natural Law* depicts the difficulty – perhaps the impossibility – of striking a balance between the natural and the manufactured landscape in the building of suburbia. While a domesticated form of nature is often prized as an enhancement to human domestic life, the construction of the domestic sphere in the contemporary world is almost entirely predicated on the subjugation, if not the elimination, of nature. In the building of desire,

that which is projected to the outer world as a concretization of aspiration and identification, nature is suppressed but also continues to assert itself in ways small and subversive.

Natural. *Disaster.* addresses nature in such a variety of configurations that it has become near-impossible to imagine a relationship to nature that is not challenged, not conditioned by the mark of humanity and the consequences of such an incursion. As a series of forces to be navigated and, variously, overcome or accommodated, nature may produce disasters, but it is in the encounter with human will that the meaning of the disastrous can be discerned. For all the deleterious effects that such disasters of encounter may produce, these, too, are in some respect part of nature. In Goethe's apt observation, "That which is most unnatural is still Nature; the stupidest philistinism has a touch of her genius. Whoso cannot see her everywhere, sees her nowhere rightly."

Jessica Wyman

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Barbara Astman, *Untitled #1 (the Fruit Series)* 1990



Carl Beam, *Family* 1996



Carl Beam, *Flux* 1996



Ron Benner, *The Commodification of Life* 1995-1996 Panel I

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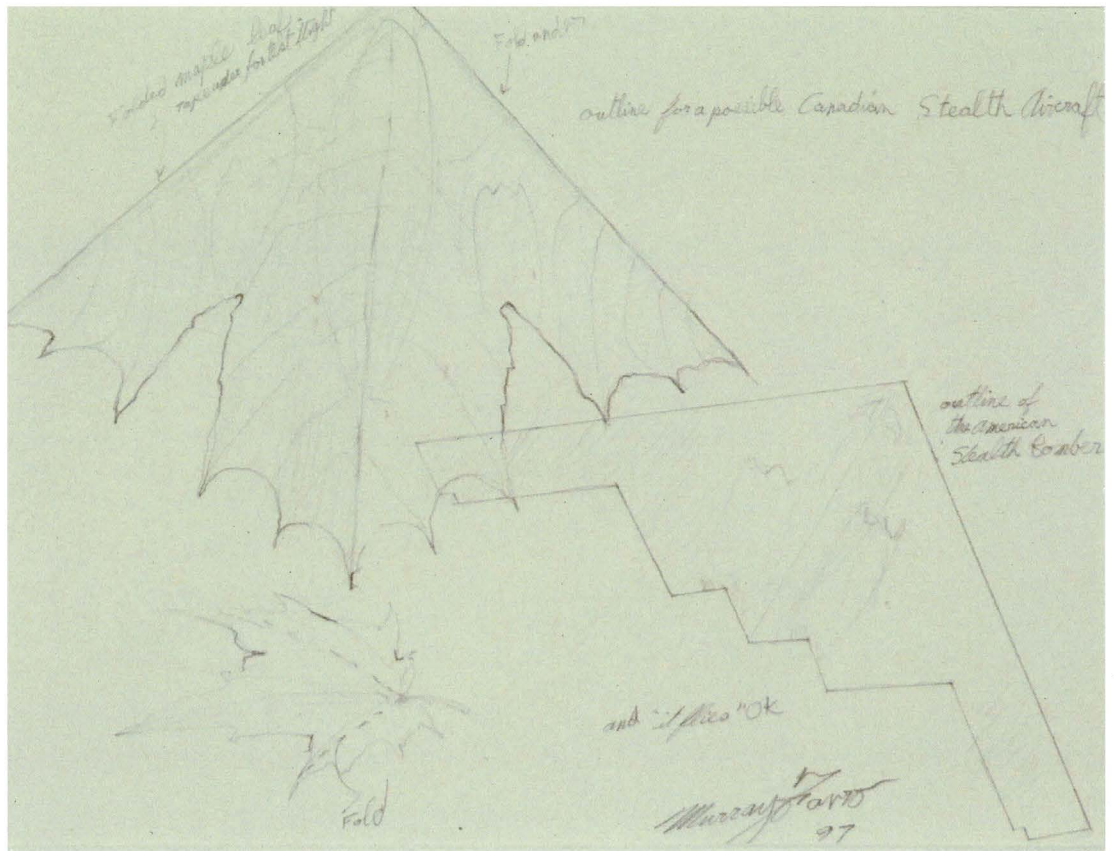
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Ron Benner, *The Commodification of Life* 1995-1996 Panel II





Susan Dobson, from the series "*Natural Law*" 2001



Murray Favro, Stealth Bomber 1997



Elle Flanders, *Bruyar* 2009



Wyn Geleynse, *Flight Theory* 1993



Frances Leeming, still from *Genetic Admiration* 2005



Gwen MacGregor, still from *Going* 2009 (detail)



Gwen MacGregor, still from *Going* 2009 (detail)

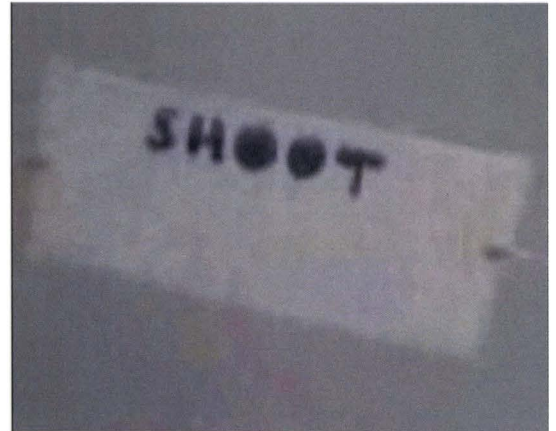
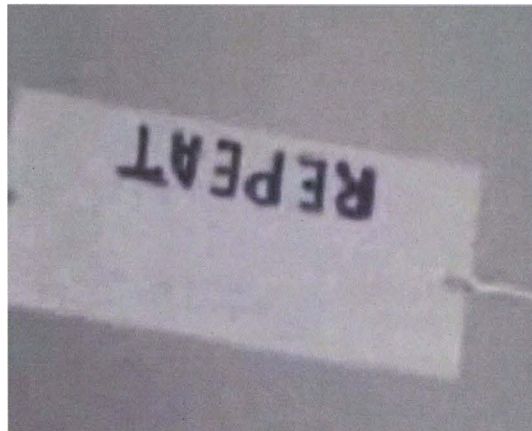
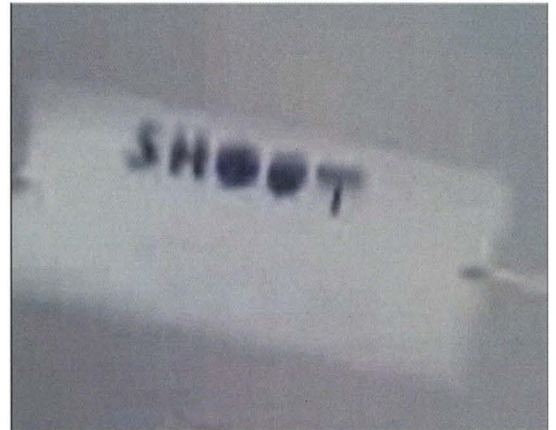
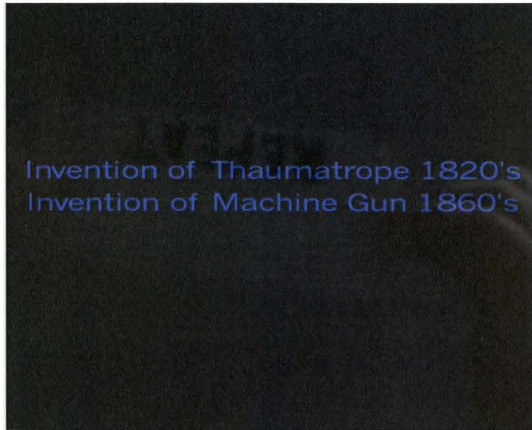


PAGE #1, BEACHING TOWARDS FOURTH DEGREE SUN, LONG ISLAND N.Y. JUNE 1970 MATERIALS: BOOK, SOLAR ENERGY, SKIN *Oppenheim* PHOTOS: PHYLLIS OPPENHEIM

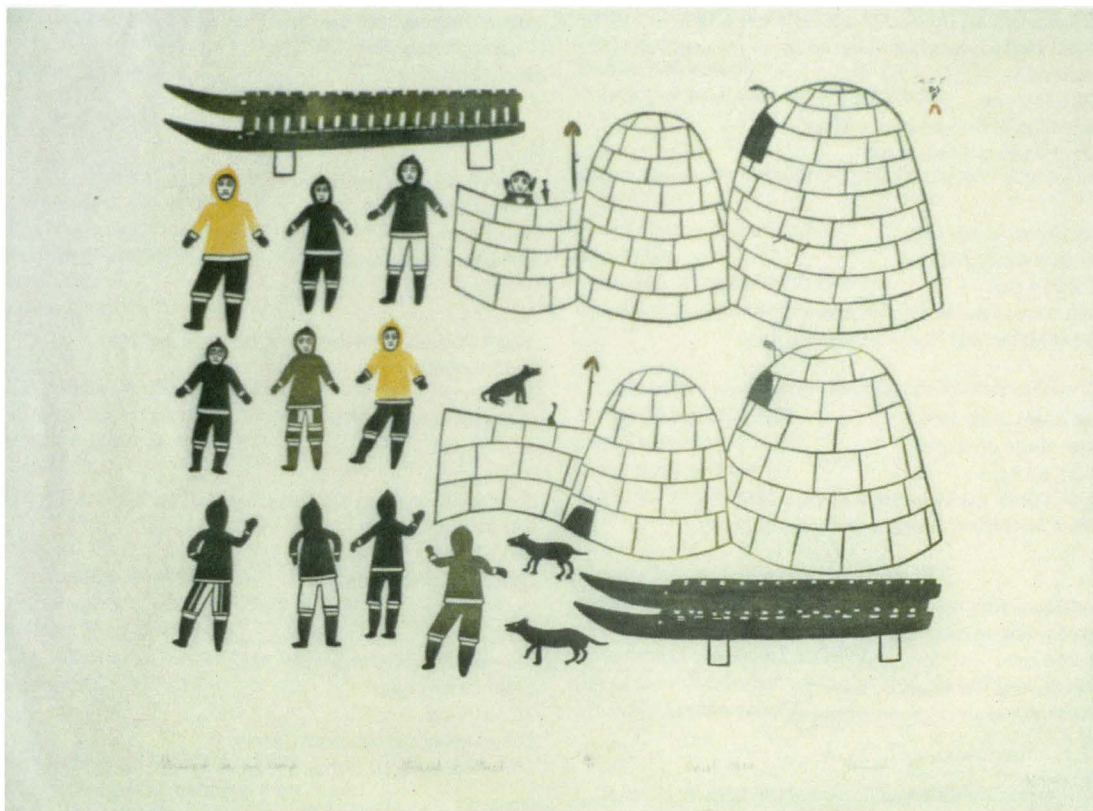


STAGE 27. READING POSITION FOR THE BURNED MAN, LONG ISLAND N.Y. JUNE 1970 MATERIALS: ROCK, CLOAK ENERGY, SKIN *William* PHOTOS: PHYLIS OPPENHEIM
 EXPOSURE: FIVE HOURS. TEMPERATURE: HIGH OF 84.

Dennis Oppenheim, *Reading Position for Second Degree Burn*, 1970



Heidi Schaefer, stills from *Invention of Thaumatrope 1820's/Invention of Machine Gun 1860's* 2009



Jamasie Teevee, *Strangers in our camp* 1977

Barbara Astman, *Untitled #1 (the Fruit Series)* 1990
Mixed media Ektacolour mural on paper mounted on masonite
122 x 119.4 cm
Collection of the McIntosh Gallery,
Gift of Barbara Astman, 2001

Carl Beam, *Family* 1996
Screenprint on paper
76 x 56.1 cm
Collection of the McIntosh Gallery,
Gift of Milton and Florence Winberg, 1999

Carl Beam, *2000* 1996
Screenprint on paper
76.5 x 55.6 cm
Collection of the McIntosh Gallery,
Gift of Milton and Florence Winberg, 1999

Carl Beam, *Flux* 1996
Screenprint on paper
76 x 56 cm
Collection of the McIntosh Gallery,
Gift of Milton and Florence Winberg, 1999

Ron Benner, *The Commodification of Life* 1995-1996 Panel I
Photo mural on cintra
174 x 142 cm
Collection of the McIntosh Gallery,
Gift of Leif and Karen Benner, 2007

Ron Benner, *The Commodification of Life* 1995-1996 Panel II
Photo mural on cintra
174 x 142 cm
Collection of the McIntosh Gallery,
Gift of Leif and Karen Benner, 2007

Susan Dobson, from the series "Natural Law" 2001
C-print photograph
36 x 72 cm
Collection of the Artist

Susan Dobson, from the series "Natural Law" 2001
C-print photograph
36 x 73 cm
Collection of the Artist

Susan Dobson, from the series "Natural Law" 2001
C-print photograph
32 x 70 cm
Collection of the Artist

Susan Dobson, from the series "Natural Law" 2001
C-print photograph
36 x 67.5 cm
Collection of the Artist

Murray Favro, *Stealth Bomber* 1997
Graphite on paper
23.1 x 29 cm
Collection of the McIntosh Gallery,
Gift of Anonymous Donor, 1997

Murray Favro, *Canadian Stealth Flyer* 1997
Graphite on paper
23.1 x 29 cm
Collection of the McIntosh Gallery,
Gift of Anonymous Donor, 1997

Elle Flanders, *Sataf* 2005
from the series "What Isn't There" (ongoing)
Widelux photograph
24 x 48 cm
Collection of the Artist

Elle Flanders, *Umm al Zinat* 2007
from the series "What Isn't There" (ongoing)
Widelux photograph
24 x 48 cm
Collection of the Artist

Elle Flanders, *Arab Suqir* 2008
from the series "What Isn't There" (ongoing)
Widelux photograph
24 x 48 cm
Collection of the Artist

Elle Flanders, *Bruyar* 2009
from the series "What Isn't There" (ongoing)
Widelux photograph
24 x 48 cm
Collection of the Artist

Wyn Geleynse, *Flight Theory* 1993
Magnet and small metal plane on paper
58.4 x 43.1 cm
Collection of the McIntosh Gallery,
Gift of Barb and Jens Thielsen, 2003

Frances Leeming, *Genetic Admiration* 2005
16mm collage animation
Dimensions variable
Courtesy of Vtape

Gwen MacGregor, *Going* 2009
Digital video
Dimensions variable
Courtesy of Jessica Bradley Art + Projects

Dennis Oppenheim, *Reading Position for Second Degree Burn*
1970
Toned photograph on paper
39 x 39 cm
Collection of the McIntosh Gallery,
Gift of John Labatt Limited, London, 1994

Heidi Schaefer, *Invention of Thaumatrope 1820's/Invention of Machine Gun 1860's* 2009
Digital video
Dimensions variable
Collection of the Artist

Jamasie Teevee, *Strangers in our camp* 1977
Stonecut and pencil on paper
63 x 86 cm
Collection of the McIntosh Gallery
Gift of Munich Reinsurance Company of Canada and Temple Insurance Company, 1998

After completing her studies at Rochester Institute of Technology, **Barbara Astman** came to Canada in 1970. She has been exhibiting in public galleries and museums across Canada and abroad since 1975 at venues such as: the National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa, ON; George Eastman House in Rochester, NY; the Canadian Cultural Centre in Paris, France; and Galleria Luca Polazzoli in Milan, Italy. Astman has produced numerous public commissions; some of the most recent include the Canadian Embassy in Berlin, in 2005 and the new Loblaw Headquarters in Brampton, Ontario, 2006. Barbara Astman is also an art professor who has mentored numerous emerging artists at the Ontario College of Art & Design in Toronto where she has been teaching since the mid 1970s.

Astman is represented by the Corkin Gallery, Toronto, Ontario. A catalogue of her work, *Barbara Astman: personal persona*, a 20-year survey, documents her 1995 retrospective at the Art Gallery of Hamilton. She is also featured in *The Maclean's Companion to Canadian Arts and Culture*, and *Canadian Art in the Twentieth Century*. Her work is found in important public collections including the National Gallery

of Canada in Ottawa, the Art Gallery of Ontario in Toronto, the Bibliothèque Nationale in Paris, France, and the Victoria and Albert Museum in London, England.

Carl Beam (1943-2005) worked in a variety of media to explore the tensions between Western and Aboriginal relations, bringing to attention problems that affect contemporary Native cultures and showing, through his juxtaposition of images, how these concerns relate to larger world issues. Through his work Beam integrated personal memory with issues related to the environment, brutality, and a rethinking of the ways histories are told.

He obtained a Bachelor of Fine Arts from the University of Victoria and also did post-graduate work at the University of Alberta. His work, executed in diverse media such as drawing, watercolour, etching, non-silver photography, photo transfer, installation and ceramics, has been exhibited throughout North America as well as in Italy, Denmark, Germany and China. It is found in major Canadian and international collections including the National Gallery of Canada, the Art Gallery of Ontario, the Vancouver Art Gallery and the Albright-Knox Gallery in Buffalo, N.Y. In 2000, Carl Beam was

inducted into the Royal Canadian Academy of the Arts. Prior to his death in July 2005 he resided in M'Chigeeng.

Ron Benner was born in London, Ontario, where he lives and works. After a year studying agricultural engineering at the University of Guelph, he switched to the visual arts and went on to develop a practice that combines photography, installation and gardening. An internationally known artist and social activist, he collaborates regularly with organizations involved in the defence of the environment.

Since the early 1970s, Benner has travelled extensively throughout North, Central and South America, Africa, Asia, Europe and the Middle East. A voracious reader, he consults and collects a broad range of texts and books, on themes such as agriculture, bio-engineering, capitalism, colonialism, history and politics, which in equal parts inform his practice. Together these experiences have shaped a unique body of garden installations comprised of plants, photographs and textual elements that question and critique industrial agriculture, embedded anthropology, euro-centric knowledge and the global economy.

Susan Dobson's work has been exhibited across Canada, as well as in the US, UK, Belgium, China, and Mexico. She is a contributing artist to the Vancouver 2010 Cultural Olympiad and her work can be viewed on the Olympic website as part of *CODE Screen 2010*, and on billboards in Vancouver as part of the exhibition *Endlessly Traversed Landscapes*. Other recent projects include *Rememory* at the Macdonald Stewart Art Centre in Guelph (September – November 2008), *Temporary Architectures* at St. Mary's University Art Gallery in Halifax (October – November 2008), and *Retail* at the Department Gallery in Toronto (May 2009 CONTACT photography festival). Dobson's photographs have been published in periodicals such as *Toronto Life*, *The Globe and Mail*, and *The National Post* and have been featured in *Carte Blanche*, a compendium of Canadian photography, and *Massive Change* by Bruce Mau. Dobson is the recipient of numerous awards and grants, including the K.M. Hunter award for visual arts from the Ontario Arts Council and two Gold National Magazine awards.

Dobson lives with her partner and two children in Guelph, where she is Associate Professor in the School of Fine Art and Music at

the University of Guelph. More information about her work is available online at www.susandobson.com.

For more than 40 years, **Murray Favro** has been one of Canada's most distinctive and influential artists. His multi-disciplinary practice has yielded a significant body of work that includes including drawing, sculpture, performance and installation, often incorporating slide and film projections, lighting effects, computer and electronic technology. Born in Huntsville, Ontario, Favro moved to London as a teenager and is an important figure among a significant generation of artists – Jack Chambers, Greg Curnoe and Ron Martin among them – who became active in that city in the early 1960s and drew national attention as the London Regionalist School of artists. His work is represented in every major public collection in the country, and has been exhibited widely in Canada and abroad for the past five decades. Favro is also well known as a founding member of the Nihilist Spasm Band, which was crucial to the development of his artistic approach. Favro was a recipient of the 2007 Governor

General's Award in Visual and Media Arts.

Elle Flanders is a filmmaker and artist based in Toronto. She was raised in Montreal and Jerusalem and holds both an MA in Critical Theory and an MFA from Rutgers University. Her work has been screened and exhibited at the Berlin International Film Festival, the MOMA, and festivals worldwide. Her most recent work includes: *What Isn't There*, a 15-year ongoing photo installation project that documents Palestinian villages that no longer exist; *Road Movie*, an in-progress 12-screen installation on the Apartheid Roads of Palestine; *Bird on a Wire*; *A Five City Symphony*, a dual screen projection and live music performance; and the award-winning feature documentary *Zero Degrees of Separation*. Flanders is a PhD candidate at York University where she also teaches.

Wyn Geleynse is a multimedia artist living and working in London, Ontario. Born in Rotterdam, Netherlands in 1947, Geleynse moved to Canada as a child and was raised in London, Ontario. Since 1969, he has exhibited extensively both in Canada and Europe.

Considered one of Canada's pioneer film and video projection artists, Gelynse's career spans a period of nearly 40 years. His work raises questions about self and identity, commenting on the human condition with a subtle blend of irony and humanity. Interested in the notion of film projection as a metaphor for projecting one's thoughts and desires, Geleynse has worked primarily with installation-based projections in the past. In 2009, he produced an outdoor DVD projection work titled "Wyn Geleynse: The Peel Projection" for the site that will become the Art Gallery of Peel in Brampton, Ontario.

Media artist **Frances Leeming's** performance and film projects explore the relationship between gender, technology and consumerism. Her work has been presented and exhibited across Canada, the US, Britain, Poland and Italy. Her collage animation, *The Orientation Express* (1987) has been screened extensively including the Festival of Festivals, Toronto (1992); Festival de Cine y Video Joven Cubano, National Gallery of Cuba, Havana (1990), Seattle Women's Film Festival, Seattle, (1990), Women in the Director's Chair, Women's Film and

Video Festival, Chicago (1989), and ASIFA Animation Festival, San Francisco, (1989). Selected film purchases include the National Gallery of Canada, the Women's Television Network, Cornell University, California Institute for the Arts, PBS, Channel Four (UK), and SBS (Australia). Leeming's recent collage animation, *Genetic Admiration* (2005) won the grand prize at Images Festival in Toronto and was nominated for Best Animation at the Syracuse International Film and Video Festival. Her experimental film work is featured in Jackie Stacey's *The Cinematic Life of The Gene* (Duke University Press), Jennifer Fisher's *Technologies of Intuition* (YYZ/MAWA/DISPLAY CULT, 2006), and Leeming's performance history appears in Johanna Householder and Tanya Mars' edited book *Caught in the Act - An Anthology of Performance Art by Canadian Women* (YYZ Books, 2004).

Leeming has guest lectured throughout Canada and taught in the Communication Studies Department at Concordia University, Montreal from 1993-1999. She now teaches in the Department of Film and Media, Queen's University, Kingston.

Gwen MacGregor is a Toronto artist working in installation and video. Her art reflects her close observation of time and how its passage shapes small dramas or uncannily familiar situations. In 2001 her work was presented in the *Present Tense* project series at the Art Gallery of Ontario, Toronto. MacGregor's work has also been shown in many exhibitions across Canada and in Mexico City, London, Prague, Venice, Shanghai, Los Angeles, Paris, Madrid, Berlin and Sydney, Australia. In 2003 she was the recipient of the Friends of the Visual Arts, Toronto, Artist of the Year Award. In 2004 she participated in the Canada Council International Studio/ Curatorial Program in New York. Last year she participated in an artists' residency at CAMAC, France. Her work is in a number of collections including Artbank, the Art Gallery of Ontario and the Royal Bank Collection. MacGregor is represented by Jessica Bradley Art + Projects. Upcoming projects include a solo exhibition at the Kitchener/Waterloo Gallery and a collaborative project with Sandra Rechico in Berlin.

Dennis Oppenheim is an American conceptual artist, performance artist, earth artist, sculptor and photographer

who was born in Electric City, Washington in 1938. In 1964, he earned his BFA from the California College of Arts and Crafts in Oakland, California and an MFA from Stanford University in Palo Alto, California in 1965. Using his body as a site to challenge the self he also explored, through numerous gallery and museum installations, the boundaries of personal risk, transformation, and communication. He first achieved recognition for conceptual work in the sixties, traversing through Earth and Body Art, video and performance. In the early 1970s, he was in the vanguard of artists using film and video in relation to performance. He was included in both the Venice Biennale and the Johannesburg Biennale in 1997, and was selected to participate as an artist in the 2008 Olympics in Beijing. Oppenheim continues to be an influential figure in international contemporary art. He lives and works in New York City.

Heidi Schaefer explores how an artist can engage intimately with the issue of war from any distance. She is interested in how war is manifest in cultural and theoretical ideas and in the meaning and consequences of war in history and art production. For the past few years she has been making

a body of work that closes the distance between war production and cultural production by fusing familiar images or objects of war with moments in cultural and art history. She uses a range of media in her work: 3D, drawing, painting, artist's books, digital collage and video, with each piece developed by working through the materials, media and ideas. Her work has been shown in Europe and Canada. Since 2007, as a part of her practice, she has been curating a contemporary art gallery called twenty+3 projects in the converted front room of her house in Manchester, England. It has a mandate to show international and regional, non-commercial work. She divides her time between Manchester and Toronto.

Jamasie Teevee (1910-1985) was born in Kimmirut area, Nunavut, and began drawing in the early 1960s while living in an Inuit camp on the southern coastline of Baffin Island. He contributed to every Cape Dorset collection between 1964 and 1985. His work has been shown in Canada, the US, Italy, Switzerland, Sweden and Israel. It is included in many prestigious collections including the University of Michigan Museum in Ann Arbor, the National Gallery of Canada in Ottawa, the Royal

Ontario Museum in Toronto and the Canadian Museum of Civilization in Hull, Quebec. Teevee died in Cape Dorset, Nunavut.

Jessica Wyman is a writer, curator and art historian based in Toronto and teaching at Ontario College of Art and Design. She currently is a Contributing Editor to *FUSE Magazine* and sits on the Board of Directors of the Toronto Arts Council. In 2004, she was honoured with the Emerging Curator Award and a nomination for Best Art Writing by the Untitled Art Awards. Her writing on contemporary art has been published internationally in magazines and journals including *Springer Kunst*, *FUSE*, *Ciel Variable*, *Open Letter*, *Women's Art Magazine* and *Performance Research*, and she has contributed to numerous exhibition catalogues for venues across Canada and in the UK. In 2007, her three-volume edited book *Pro Forma: visual art/ language/text* was published by YYZBooks. *Natural Disaster* is the result of her 2009 position as Contemporary Curator-in-Residence at the McIntosh Gallery, the first such residency hosted by that gallery.

Library and Archives Canada Cataloguing in Publication

Natural, disaster.

Catalogue of an exhibition held at McIntosh Gallery,

Mar. 4-Apr. 24, 2010.

Curated by Jessica Wyman.

Includes bibliographical references.

ISBN 978-0-7714-2826-5

1. Human ecology in art--Exhibitions. 2. Nature in art--Exhibitions. 3. Disasters in art--Exhibitions.

4. Arts, Modern--21st century--Exhibitions. 5. Arts, Modern--20th century--Exhibitions.

I. Wyman, Jessica II. McIntosh Art Gallery

N8217.E28N37 2010 704.9'493042 C2010-902376-5



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