

Mercer Union, a centre for contemporary art • 1286 Bloor Street West, Toronto, ON M6H 1N9 Canada
T 416-536-1519 • F 416-536-2955 • www.mercerunion.org

Astral Bodies
Shuvinai Ashoona
Karen Azoulay
Shary Boyle
Spring Hurlbut
Pamela Norrish

25 November 2016 – 4 February 2017

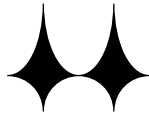
The group exhibition *Astral Bodies* brings together works that imagine spaces beyond the physical – emotional, mythological, cosmological – tracing efforts to understand the nature of divinity and how we fit into the universe. Featured practices connect to ideas of being, animism, and the power of making the imagination take form. In works that span drawing, sculpture, and video, these artists court intoxicating historical visions that haunt modern imagination in our perpetual quest for knowledge and enlightenment. Here, the night sky recreated with candle flame, hypnotic swirls of human ash, and daydreams on eternity evoke personal positions in relation to the vastness of the world. They also offer fantastical reflections on the juncture between reason and dreams, existing at the meeting point of perception, awareness and philosophy. In the context of *Astral Bodies*, this assembly of viewpoints results in an exploration of contemporary Western pathologies, contradictions, and anxieties about what lies beyond our immediate reality.

Curated by York Lethbridge

Artist Biographies

Shuvinai Ashoona was born in Cape Dorset in 1961, the daughter of artists Kiawak Ashoona and Sorosilutu. She began drawing in 1996, and was first included in the Cape Dorset annual print collection in 1997. Ashoona's work has appeared in exhibitions including: *Three Women, Three Generations*, McMichael Canadian Collection (1999); Toronto's Nuit Blanche (2008); Justina Barnicke Gallery, Toronto (2009); The 18th Biennale of Sydney and *Sakahans*, National Gallery of Canada (both 2013), and *SITELines 2014: Unsettled Landscapes*, Sante Fe, New Mexico.

Karen Azoulay is a multi-disciplinary artist working between sculpture, performance and photography. Her solo exhibitions include: CUE Art Foundation, New York, curated by Glenn Ligon; Four Gallery, Dublin; Mercer Union, Toronto; Primetime, Brooklyn; and Dose Projects, Brooklyn. Recent group exhibitions include: Palfyho Palace, Bratislava, Slovakia; The Islip Art Museum, East Islip, NY; Stichting,



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Eindhoven, Netherlands; Lamp Gallery, Tokyo; Art & Idea, Mexico City; Galerie Kunstbuero, Vienna and White Columns, New York among others. Upcoming projects include a solo exhibition at Drew University, Madison, NJ and a commission for The Kitchener Waterloo Art Gallery. Azoulay is a Canadian artist based in Brooklyn.

Shary Boyle works across diverse media, including sculpture, painting, installation and performance. In 2013, she represented Canada at the 55th Venice Biennale with her project *Music for Silence*. In 2015 Boyle performed at Toronto's Luminato Festival and the National Gallery of Canada in Ottawa, as well as creating a commissioned sculpture for the Musee des Beaux Art Montreal. In 2016 she was awarded a public art commission for the Gardiner Museum in Toronto, and participated in *Ceramix, Ceramics and art from Rodin to Schutte* at Cite de la ceramique Sevres, and la Maison Rouge, Paris, France. In 2017, Boyle will premiere the touring exhibition *Earthlings* at the Esker Foundation in Calgary, as well as presenting new work at the *Gyeongchung-daero International Ceramic Biannual* in Korea, and the Suzanne Biederberg Gallery of Amsterdam. Boyle lives in Toronto.

Born in Toronto in 1952, **Spring Hurlbut** studied at the Ontario College of Art and the Nova Scotia College of Art & Design. Since her installation, *A Wall on Location*, at P.S.1. Long Island City, New York (1981), Hurlbut's work has been included in National and International exhibitions including: The Power Plant, Toronto; Royal Ontario Museum, Toronto; Musee des Beaux-Arts de Montreal; Contemporary Art Gallery, Vancouver; Manchester Museum, Manchester, UK; Wurttembergischer Kunstverein, Stuttgart, Germany; The Institute of Contemporary Art/Boston, USA; Creative Time Inc./The Municipal Art Society, New York, USA; and MOCA, Cleveland, USA and most recently The New Orleans Museum of Art, USA. Hurlbut's work is represented in the collections of numerous institutions including the Albright-Knox Art Gallery, USA; the National Gallery of Canada; the Art Gallery of Ontario; and, the Musee d'art Contemporain de Montreal.

Pamela Norrish studied at the Alberta College of Art and Design, the New York Studio Program at Parsons The New School, New York City, and the Ontario College of Art and Design, Toronto. Her work has been featured in *Pamela Norrish: Magical Thinking*, Glenbow Museum, Calgary (2016); *Color Me Calm*, Torrance Shipman, New York (2016); *Voted Most Likely*, C2 Contemporary Calgary, Calgary (2014); *Screen and Décor*, The Illingworth Kerr Gallery, Calgary (2014); *The News from Here: The 2013 Alberta Biennial of Contemporary Art*, Art Gallery of Alberta, Edmonton; *Little Truth*, Haight Gallery, Calgary (2011); and *being-there/there-being*, LEDGE Gallery, EPCOR Centre for the Performing Arts, Calgary (2011). Norrish has also attended artist residencies at The Banff Centre for the Arts, the Ledge Gallery, Calgary; Mentoring Artist's for Women's Art (MAWA), Winnipeg; and Artscape Gibraltar Point, Toronto.

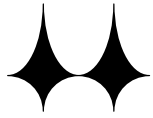
Ongoing and upcoming programming at the gallery:

fORUM: Fan Wu | *Ancestral Inheritance, Queer Unbecoming*
Tuesday 25 January at 7PM

For further information:

Contact: Katie Lyle, e.press@mercerunion.org t.416 536 1519

All images courtesy of the artist and Mercer Union, a centre for contemporary art.
Photography by Toni Hafkenscheid.



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