

COOPER COLE

1134 Dupont St.
Toronto, Ontario, M6H 2A2, Canada
info@coopercolegallery.com
1.416.531.8000

There Andy Fabo
are Robert Flack
more Tim Jocelyn
than Chrysanne Stathacos
four

Curated by Jacob Korczynski

For me, life in this city begins and ends with artist-initiated networks, where energies and programmes are constantly opening and ending, keeping pace with the rate at which artist's studios are closed and relocated. These networks establish where work is developed, shown, or both, and they affirm what is missing as much as what is made. The affective affinities that enable these associations also produced this exhibition. More specifically, it is anchored upon the long-term friendship and dialogue between Andy Fabo and Chrysanne Stathacos, and expanded to incorporate the work of two artists who are no longer with us due to the ongoing epidemic of AIDS: Andy's lover Tim Jocelyn (1952-1986) and Chrysanne's close friend Robert Flack (1957-1993). The result is a kind of doubled portrait, like catching your own gaze on a reflective surface in close proximity to another.

From the earliest stage of his interdisciplinary practice, Andy Fabo has asserted his queer subjectivity in his work. *The Wild Ones* (1975) performs as a painting, yet acts as an assemblage with acrylic, velvet, leather and metal studs framing the troika collaged at its centre. Made in the aftermath of his partner Tim's death when Andy was facing an impasse with painting, *Sisyphus on the Plains* (1988) features the eponymous mythological figure exposed naked upon a landscape, turning upwards to face their burden. *Silverado* (2001), is a series produced with ink on silver card, and here the medium leads the image. Pooled or bubbled ink comes together to form moments of fluidity, at times contained, and at others nearly sliding off the surface.

In his practice, Tim Jocelyn developed a body of work for which textiles were the primary material. In doing so, his work was not so much medium-specific as it was subject specific: textiles always suggest bodies, either present or absent. He produced tapestries and garments alike and both are represented here through one of the many folding screens he produced in the early 1980s as well as two clothing pieces. The geometrical abstraction present on the three panels of the former foregrounds adored art historical references that Tim pointed to throughout his practice. With his Skyline jacket and Gordon's shirt, two opposite milieus of artistic production are contrasted: a rising cityscape made manifest in the hot, bright colours of neon lights, and pastoral elements of nature rendered in earth tone hues.

Throughout her practice, Chrysanne has expanded the medium of painting via printing. Take for example her *Broken Glass* series, in which the cracked remnants of a pane are transferred to the soft surface of canvas or linen, forming a new object. Her experimentation with printing on different surfaces with various objects is further demonstrated by *1-900-Mirror-Mirror* (1993). An interactive installation that can be physically entered by the individual viewer, this work invited viewers to ask a question about the future, as a way to look ahead at the height of the AIDS crisis. Through her groundbreaking use of early video communication technology, Chrysanne's engagement with the future also anticipated the current moment we find ourselves in, when we look towards the reflective surfaces of our screens not only to see one another, but also ourselves.

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Where Chrysanne considered the way the bodies of the viewers were reflected onto the surrounding surfaces, in his photographic works presented here Robert Flack took the body itself as a site of projection. All three were produced after he was diagnosed with AIDS and are inextricable from the psychic and physical transition he was undertaking at that time. With his series *Love Mind* (1992), he photographed multiple subjects as saturated coloured light was cast upon their chakra centres. Produced prior to the advent of digital photography, the two selections from this expansive series requires the viewer to look, and then look again, expanding an image of the body outside of the corporeal. In his earlier work *Etheric Double* (1990), a male nude is rendered in negative, suggesting a spectre. With both the body and the background pulsing with radiant auras, the inversion of the image suspends the figure between legibility and ephemerality, between the radiance of life and the threat of death. Faced with fragility, Robert and Tim posed a question, one that Andy and Chrysanne continue to ask: where do we locate the body and what lies beyond?

— Jacob Korczynski

Toronto

March 12, 2020

Andy Fabo (b. 1953, Calgary) is an artist, art critic, independent curator, AIDS activist, and art educator. He completed his undergraduate studies at the University of Alberta and the Alberta College of Art before moving to Toronto in 1975. He received his MFA from OCAD University in 2013. Fabo's paintings, drawings, and films have exhibited widely nationally and internationally. In 2005 he had a retrospective at the Museum of Contemporary Canadian Art that featured over thirty years of work. The exhibition spanned the first mixed media paintings that he exhibited in his 1979 A Space show, Studs- a landmark for Queer art in Toronto- through the paintings from his time as a founding member of the influential ChromaZone collective (1981-85), through his activist and memorializing response to the AIDS epidemic of the late 80s and early 90s. In the former period Fabo began to make collaborative videos with his late partner, Michael Balser, and also expanded his practice into digital media. The video he made with Balser, *Survival of the Delirious* (1988), won numerous awards including 'Best New Narrative' at the Atlanta Film Festival and Kijkhuis Festival in Holland. It is also included in the Art Against AIDS anthology that V Tape in Toronto and Video Data Bank in Chicago co-produced. A retrospective of their collaborative work mounted at Oboro, Montréal in 2003.

Robert Flack (b. 1957 Guelph, Canada; d. 1993 Toronto, Canada) was an artist based in Toronto. He received his BFA from York University in 1980 and attended Sheridan College in 1984. Flack's work was deeply concerned with internalized realms of psychic energy, the chakras, and the etheric body, which was influenced by the experience of his HIV seroconversion in 1988. In 1980, Flack began working at Art Metropole. Soon after, he began to exhibit at Toronto galleries and in 1982 was included in a two-person exhibition with Chrysanne Stathacos at Chromazone, a space co-founded by Andy Fabo. Flack was soon invited to exhibited nationally and internationally at spaces such as Das Institut Unzeit, West Berlin (1982); Artist Space, Sydney (1983); Contemporary Art Gallery, Vancouver (1989); the Wadsworth Atheneum, Hartford (1990); Rutgers University Museum, New Jersey (1991); and W139, Amsterdam (1993). Notably, his exhibition at the Wadsworth Atheneum was an iteration of Group Material's iconic AIDS Timeline exhibitions. He also lived and worked in New York, showing regularly in solo and group

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exhibitions with Hudson at Feature, Inc. Flack's work has also been posthumously included in noteworthy exhibitions including *Time is Thirsty*, Kunsthalle Wien, Vienna (2019); *Tributes and Tributaries 1971-1989*, Art Gallery of Ontario (2016); *Par Amour/Paramour*, curated by Jonathan Shaughnessy, National Gallery of Canada at the Museum of Contemporary Canadian Art (2014); *Standing Ground* (with Will Munro), Paul Petro Contemporary Art (2014); *The Temptation of AA Bronson*, Witte de With (2013); and *The Cold City Years*, The Power Plant (2005). Flack's estate is represented by Paul Petro Contemporary Art, Toronto.

Tim Jocelyn (b. 1952, Ottawa, Canada; d. 1986, Toronto, Canada) was an artist and designer. Jocelyn's primary medium was textile, in which he made clothing garments, tapestries and folding screens. Through his works' references to the body he was able to explore his own queer subjectivity. Jocelyn was a central figure in the 1980s art and fashion scene in Toronto's Queen Street West neighborhood. During his lifetime he exhibited internationally in both art and fashion contexts including Ontario Crafts Council, Toronto (1979); Julie Artisans Gallery, New York (1981); Olga Korper Gallery, Toronto (1983); and Galerie Walcheturm, Zurich (1985). He met Andy Fabo in 1980, and in 1983, they co-curated *Chromaliving* at Chromazone, Toronto. In 1985 he moved to New York City with Fabo and received the CIL commission for the Canadian Pavilion at Expo 86. Posthumously, his work has continued to be recognized through exhibitions at the Power Plant, the Textile Museum, the Art Gallery of Ontario, and Mercer Union in Toronto, as well as the Art Gallery of Mississauga, Mississauga; the McMichael Art Gallery, Kleinburg; and Visual Aids, New York. Jocelyn's work, specifically that which was presented in *Chromaliving*, was foregrounded in the exhibition *Chroma Lives* in Toronto in 2016.

Chrysanne Stathacos (b. 1951, Buffalo, USA) is a multidisciplinary artist of Greek, American, and Canadian heritage. Her work is heavily influenced by feminism, Greek mythology, the natural environment, eastern spirituality, and Tibetan Buddhism. Stathacos is widely known for her public interactive artworks which include *1-900-Mirror-Mirror* (1993) which was first presented at Andrea Rosen Gallery and traveled to Art Metropole, Toronto and Franklin Furnace, New York. The artist also creates performances—one of which was included in the public program *The Parliament of Drawings* in Documenta 14—as well as paintings and prints that have been featured in numerous exhibitions including *Gold Rush* at Cooper Cole, Toronto (2018). Stathacos has exhibited for over 40 years in museums, galleries and public spaces internationally, living and working in New York for much of that time. Stathacos will be included in the 13th Gwangju Biennale / *Minds Rising, Spirits Tuning* directed by Defne Ayas and Natasha Ginwala this fall. Most recently, she created a series of works from her *Rose Mirror Mandala Series* for exhibitions curated by AA Bronson at Witte de With Center for Contemporary Art, Rotterdam (2013); Salzburger Kunstverein, Salzburg (2015); Grazer Kunstverein, Graz (2015); and KW Institute for Contemporary Art, Berlin (2018). A major Installation "*Five Mirrors of The World*" is currently on view at The Sculpture Park, Madhavendra Palace, Nahargarh Fort, Jaipur, India. Her work is included in numerous public collections including the National Gallery of Canada, the Art Gallery of Ontario, the Art Gallery of Greater Victoria, Albright-Knox Gallery, the Burchfield Penney Art Center, and the Royal Bank of Canada. The Chrysanne Stathacos fonds is located in the Archives and Library at the National Gallery of Canada. Stathacos is represented by The Breeder in Athens, Greece and currently lives and works between Athens and Toronto, Canada.

Jacob Korczynski is an independent curator based in Toronto. He has curated projects for the Stedelijk Museum, Mercer Union, Western Front and the Badischer Kunstverein and his writing has been published by art-agenda, Flash Art, Frieze and Camera Austria. With curatorial projects taking the form of exhibitions, screenings and publications he is also the editor of *I See/La Camera: I (If I Can't Dance I*

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Don't Want to Be Part of Your Revolution), Andrew James Paterson's Collection/Correction (Kunstverein Toronto & Mousse Publishing), Jimmy Robert's Revue (Leopold Hoesch Museum), and Nour Bishouty's 1-130 (forthcoming).