

For Immediate Release

Mercer Union Announces Summer 2022 Group Exhibition

In *Evidence*, contemporary artists bring art by children to the forefront

June 8, 2022 (TORONTO, O.N.) — Mercer Union presents *Evidence*, a group exhibition curated by Amy Zion, from 24 June – 20 August, 2022. *Evidence* features contemporary artists who highlight the unique and alternative perspectives of the world that can be found in art by children. The projects in *Evidence* by Brian Belott, Frequencies (Oscar Murillo and Clara Dublanc), Petrit Halilaj, Ulrike Müller, and Alanis Obomsawin, draw art by children into the framework of contemporary art, from which such cultural production has been historically excluded.

“We are excited to bring Amy Zion’s ongoing curatorial research to Toronto audiences,” says Julia Paoli, Director and Curator at Mercer Union. “The artists she has brought together see the importance of children’s voices, despite them having long been excluded from institutional recognition. The artists in *Evidence* show us that works by children can offer a unique perspective, and help make sense of a world turned upside down.”

Evidence is anchored by Alanis Obomsawin’s debut work *Christmas at Moose Factory* (1971). A distinguished Abenaki filmmaker, the artist has worked closely with children throughout her decades-long career. *Christmas at Moose Factory* was filmed at a residential school in northern Ontario and is composed entirely of the stories and illustrations of young Cree children living on Moose Factory Island in James Bay’s lowlands. From this work onwards, Obomsawin has used documentary film as a medium that allows people, specifically members of Indigenous communities, to tell their own stories.

The contemporary works on view use similar strategies. For his first exhibition in Canada, Petrit Halilaj continues his project *Abetare* (2013-ongoing), where the artist recreates drawings he found etched onto the desks of the elementary school in his home village of Runik, Kosovo, as a series of large-scale iron sculptures. This newest iteration of *Abetare* has been specifically made for the exhibition at Mercer Union. Similarly, Ulrike Müller has reimagined her large-scale mural of interlocking animal-like shapes that act as a backdrop to children’s drawings sourced from collections and historical archives. In Brian Belott’s installation, he incorporates drawings by children from child psychologist and educator Rhoda Kellogg’s collection into an installation of his own works.

The exhibition also marks the Canadian premiere of *Frequencies*, an ongoing project by contemporary painter Oscar Murillo in collaboration with political scientist Clara Dublanc. The duo have partnered with schools around the globe to document desktop drawings by adolescents in a cross-section of class and cultural backgrounds. To date, *Frequencies* has collected roughly 40,000 canvases from 34 countries. As part of this exhibition, *Frequencies* will begin collaborating with schools in Canada.

Evidence opens with a free reception on Thursday 23 June, 2022 from 7PM – 10PM. A cash bar will be available.

Amy Zion is a curator and writer living in Paris. Previously based in New York, she was the organizer of the *Talks Program* (2018–2021) at Frieze NY; and held a teaching position at the Center for Curatorial Studies at Bard College (2016–2021). Her writing has appeared in *Frieze*, *Art-agenda Features*, *Art in America*, *Flash Art*, and other publications. Recent exhibitions and curatorial projects include *Petrit Halilaj: Very Volcanic Over This Green Feather (Papagall)*, galerie kamel mennour, Paris (2022); *Closer to Life*, Hessel Museum of Art at Bard College, New York (2020, co-curated with Tom Eccles); and *The Conference of the Animals*, Queens Museum, New York (2020, in conjunction with a project by Ulrike Müller). From 2007 to 2015, Zion was an Associate Editor with the Vancouver-based publishing organization *Fillip*.

Christmas at Moose Factory by Alanis Obomsawin is made available courtesy the National Film Board of Canada.



Evidence is made possible with Leading Support from RBC Insurance.



2021-22 Online Engagement Supported by TD Bank Group.



About Mercer Union

Mercer Union is a non-profit, artist-centred space for contemporary art in Toronto established in 1979. The gallery has a unique track record of presenting innovative exhibitions by diverse Canadian and international artists in formative and established stages of their careers. Mercer Union is dedicated to supporting the production of new and experimental work, assisting artists in realizing ambitious projects. By fostering an intimate and supportive space for artists to develop and take risks with their work, the gallery's exhibitions play a pivotal role in shaping the cultural landscape of Toronto, Canada, and beyond. Mercer Union's exhibitions, educational programs, artists' talks, events, and publications — both on and off site — encourage critical inquiry and conversation.

Press kit

tinyurl.com/MercerUnionEvidence

Press contact

Beatrice Douaihy, Digital Communications Assistant

416.536.1519

press@mercerunion.org