

Shannon Bool

Marlon Kroll

Élise Lafontaine

Kristine Moran

ear to the ceiling, eye to the sky

July 29 – August 26, 2023

Opening reception: Saturday, July 29, 3-6 PM

Daniel Faria Gallery is pleased to present *ear to the ceiling, eye to the sky*, featuring works by Shannon Bool, Marlon Kroll, Élise Lafontaine, and Kristine Moran.

ear to the ceiling, eye to the sky brings together works that explore the relationship between abstraction and the metaphysical. The evolution of abstract painting has historical links to spiritual and occult philosophies of the late 19th century¹. For instance, the Theosophical and Anthroposophical writings of philosopher Rudolf Steiner were influential to artists such as Wassily Kandinsky and Hilma af Klint (though Klint and Steiner had their disagreements). The artists in this exhibition also contend with the abstraction of architectural spaces, be those real or imagined. The relationship between bodies and their environments comes into play: the emotional and physical effects transferring from space onto body and vice versa. Distance is also a component: what it means to be *here*, as opposed to *there*. The exhibition's title suggests a contortion, a directing of one's sensory organs upward, perhaps in an attempt to find something beyond the physical, past the ceiling towards the sky.

Lafontaine's most recent works were made in response to her visit to Steiner's Goetheanum in Dornach, Switzerland, constructed in 1913-1919. Named after the German philosopher and poet Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, it was intended to be a total embodiment of Anthroposophical thought. Steiner believed that buildings should mimic the human form, favouring curves and organic shapes over straight lines and right angles. While Lafontaine's works stem from her visits to different architectural environments, they are not an attempt to depict the architecture as such, but rather the physical experience of those spaces that remains with her. Her body becomes the carrier, or translator, between building and painting. "As I've crossed through walls, archways, and airlocks, I've come to wonder about my own position," writes Lafontaine, "To inhabit both inside and outside, I place myself at the centre of spaces and try to embody their edges. A vision of the body open to experience and

¹ In 1986 Maurice Tuchman curated the exhibition "The Spiritual in Art: Abstract Painting 1890-1985," at the Los Angeles County Museum of Art, one of the first major survey exhibitions to look at the development of abstract art in relation to spiritualism. The exhibition included works by Wassily Kandinsky, Piet Mondrian, Kazimir Malevich, František Kupka, and a then relatively unknown Hilma af Klint.

change." Her works are created in a back-and-forth process of painting and erasing. The surfaces of her oil-painted layers are sanded down to create the blurred effect of an image just coming into, or pulling out of, focus, not quite graspable.

Bool's silk paintings are based on different architectural structures which are then abstracted by digitally "collaging" grids over them. "The Spine of Rome" references the ceiling of an abandoned project designed by architect Santiago Calatrava called "Città dello Sport," or "Sports City" outside of Rome. The stadium, comprised of two symmetrically arranged identical fan-shaped pavilions, was part of Calatrava's master plan for the University of Rome Tor Vergata campus, with the Sports City at one end and the university's rector on the other, linked by a sprawling urban park. Bool uses a batik technique of wax, oil, and textile paint on chiffon silk, which is then stretched over a mirror. The gridded, semi-translucent surface of the silk is doubled and tripled in the mirror, which also reflects hints of the painting's environment and brings the viewer's own body into the work. In Bool's hands, the static modernist grid is opened up to its environment, becoming unfixated and malleable.

Moran's abstracted landscapes often originate from quick line drawings made while moving through specific places, whether by car or foot. "Drawing this way urges me to stay present knowing that the moment will pass me by shortly," she writes. Moran spent the last year living in Bordeaux, France, and her new series of paintings on paper originates from drawings made during her frequent walks through the public gardens. Once in the studio, Moran uses the line drawings as a framework within which she can explore colour and texture, letting go of the original geography of the garden altogether and instead approaching the composition as an abstract painting. The repetition of her walks along the same routes and paths mimics the formal framework that Moran utilizes in her abstraction, both providing parameters as a tool for slowing observation.

Kroll's "paintings" are actually drawings: pencil crayon on a thin canvas stretched over board. A sketch is transcribed onto the panel and that base drawing is then covered in dots of different colours until he achieves what he refers to as "a moment of euphoria," where a relationship forms between the colours, lines, and what he is trying to represent. In the drawing's final form, these dots remain like "scars, constellations, or little birds." While formally abstract, Kroll's works make reference to architectural elements, organs, and bodies, sometimes folding the two into one another. In his recent works, the form of a trumpet or speaker horn often appears, bringing to mind larynxes, opened mouths, portals, passageways, or conduits that might pick up and amplify the voices of passing spirits. Approaching his larger drawings, which are 51 inches in height, the centre, from which energy radiates outward, lines up almost exactly with the centre of one's own body. This does not feel accidental.

Élise Lafontaine (Tiohtià:ke/Montreal, Canada) holds a master's degree in visual and media arts from the Université du Québec à Montréal (2020) and a BFA from Concordia University (2015). She has participated in artist residencies at the Fondation Christoph Merian / CALQ and Malévoz Quartier culturel (Switzerland), at the Vermont Studio Center (United States), and at the Leipzig International Art Programme (Germany). Her work has been presented in solo exhibitions at Centre CLARK, Montreal; Sothu, Zurich; Pangée, Montreal; and Galerie Nicolas Robert, Montreal. In 2023, the Centre CLARK published her first book *Archives*. Lafontaine is represented by Pangée.

Shannon Bool was born in Comox, Canada and lives and works in Berlin. Bool attended the Emily Carr Institute of Art and Design, Vancouver; Cooper Union, New York; and graduated from Staedelschule, Frankfurt in 2004. Recent solo exhibitions include: Museum of Contemporary Photography, Chicago (2022); Kaiser Wilhelm Museum, Krefeld (2022); Confederation Centre Art Gallery, Charlottetown (2022); Agnes Etherington Art Centre, Kingston (2020); Kunstverein Braunschweig (2019); The Canadian Cultural Center, Paris (2019); and Musée d'art de Joliette (2018). Bool is Professor of Painting at the Academy of Fine Arts Mainz, Germany.

Kristine Moran received her MFA from Hunter College in New York. She has exhibited in solo shows at Tom Thomson Gallery (Owen Sound), Nicelle Beauchene (New York), and Daniel Faria Gallery (Toronto). Her work has been included in exhibitions at: The Hole, New York (2023; 2022; 2020); Dianna Witte Gallery, Toronto (2019); Cuevas Tilleard, New York (2016); Nathalie Karg Gallery, New York (2015); and Sargent's Daughters Gallery, New York (2014). Moran was included in the Phaidon Anthology *Vitamin P2*.

Marlon Kroll is a German/Canadian artist living and working in Montreal. Kroll holds a BFA in Fine Arts (Ceramics concentration) from Concordia University. Recent solo exhibitions include: *Revelation* at the Fonderie Darling, Montreal; *Fireflies* at Parc Offsite, Eli Kerr, Montreal; *Receiver* at Galerie Acappella, Naples; and *Trees That Worry* at Pangée, Montreal. In 2020, Marlon Kroll received the William and Meredith Saunderson Prize for Emerging Artists from the Hnatyshyn Foundation.