

Untitled (eyelids)

Jordan Loepky-Kolesnik

Untitled (eyelids)

Jordan Loepky-Kolesnik

January 13 to February 24, 2018

Modern Fuel Artist-Run Centre

305—370 King St. W.
Kingston ON K7K 1W8

info@modernfuel.org

Gallery Hours

Tuesday-Saturday, 12-5 pm

www.modernfuel.org

Artistic Director: Michael DiRisio

Operations Director: Genevieve Flavelle

Intern: Jessica Lanziner

Board of Directors: Chris Ball, Leyla Chisamore, Adrian Deveau, Carina Magazzeni, Miranda Ramnares, Matt Rogalsky, Anna Elmberg Wright

Modern Fuel Artist-Run Centre is a non-profit organization facilitating the presentation, interpretation, and production of contemporary visual, time based and interdisciplinary arts. Modern Fuel aims to meet the professional development needs of emerging and mid-career local, national and international artists, from diverse cultural communities, through exhibition, discussion, and mentorship opportunities. Modern Fuel supports innovation and experimentation, and is committed to the education of interested publics and the diversification of its audiences. As an advocate for contemporary art, as well as for artists' rights, we pay professional fees to artists in accordance with the CARFAC fee schedule.

Jordan Loeppky

Kolesnik: *Untitled (eyelids)*

Interview by Michael DiRisio

Michael DiRisio: On entering the exhibition space I found that there is an intimacy to the work that seems to be disrupted by the way that the space is delineated; this delineation also runs through the video works, which speak of gates, fences and property lines. How is this breaking up of the space significant to your work?

Jordan Loeppky-Kolesnik: The gates, fences, and barriers referred to in the videos and physically present in the space relate to the imagined place where these videos take place, and also the barriers and limits to sensation and intimacy that I think this work is exploring. I imagined a small building surrounded by a garden, and this surround by a fence. This delimiting creates a secret place where intimate interactions can take place. The delimiting could also just be closing your eyes, creating that secret intimate place behind our eyelids in the dark. I created the fences to create small

little areas in the room for the viewer to enter, and to bring focus to certain objects or videos. But what interests me about the fence is that it is transparent; air and liquid moves through it, it can easily be usurped, climbed over, holes cut in it. It reminds me of a set of teeth.

MD: Yet fences cut up public spaces, representing the ownership or control of space.

JLK: Yes definitely. I think that presence of power / control is there when confronted with the fences. It definitely makes me uncomfortable and I'm not sure what it means, but I'm sometimes interested in things that make me feel that way.

MD: While the space is broken by the fencing, it is also significantly opened up by the removal of the ceiling tiles. I spent longer than I might have expected just looking up into the ceiling, a space that I did not know existed before this removal. What motivated your decision to remove the ceiling tiles?

JLK: I knew I wanted to play with the ceiling, but was pleasantly surprised when I removed the tiles to see how exciting the space above my head was. There are notes scribbled by the contractor, a patchwork of drywall tiles, and that large white tube moving

through like a serpent. When I think about an artwork, the space it's in always becomes part of the work for me. I have to pay attention to it, and I didn't feel interested in the quality of the low ceiling and foam office tiles, but I knew something would be above them and that the metal supports would create a kind of grid above my head, another type of filter. Maybe it makes us feel like we're at the bottom of a well or a fishbowl.

MD: The contractor's notes, unpainted drywall patching and network of ducts also seems to speak to a backstory, the otherwise unseen process of constructing and maintaining the facilities. It lends a further narrative, which resonates with your previous works where you reconstruct disused or vacant commercial spaces.

JLK: That's true, I hadn't thought of that link exactly. Those works a couple years ago were very much about catastrophe and entropy, precarity / economy, everything coming apart, and often in commercial or public spaces, as you said. It's interesting to consider the link to this work because I think since then I've been focusing much more on inner experience. Through this lens I think those hidden ducts and facilities could feel like the inside of a body. But it also reads as architecture, like some kind of hidden facility room, like when the door to a boiler room is accidentally left open and you walk by and see all the machines working away. MD:

The narrative in this work seems to evolve on a number of levels, some intersecting, some not. The line in the video “everything is punctuation, emphasis” in particular has really stuck with me. It’s so curious, it speaks of emphasis yet is spoken so calmly. It seems to speak well to the experience of a certain anxiety, where there’s no conscious thought, no words.

JLK: I think there is a tension in the work where the narrative is exploring experiences that are outside of language, and the inability of language to fully describe them is made plain. They can only gesture towards them or describe what it’s like, but then we have to imagine it for ourselves. Now that I read that line again, it’s like the narrator is imagining their body melting away into language, so it’s kind of the inverse of that. I’m interested that you see this wordless space as anxious.

MD: I suppose the anxiety comes in part from the snake on the person’s shoulders in the video.

JLK: I’ve had a couple people saying the snake makes them anxious, but I find it really intimate and tender. I think one’s personal relation to snakes will be very influential on how this work is received. I find that snakes have a strange intelligence that feels completely alien to me, like they know things we can’t comprehend. But there is definitely a tense and ambivalent relationship between snakes

and humans, this particular snake is a constrictor, and part of it's movement around the subject is testing weather or not they are suitable prey. The snake is literally squeezing and testing to see if it can kill them, but the experience is very much like cuddling.

MD: Was there a conscious strategy for associating the audio and video, or was it more intuitive?

JLK: This is a difficult distinction for me: conscious (or maybe rational / based on intellect?) vs. intuitive (based on feeling?). It's hard for me to separate out the feeling / intuition side of things, and I think this leads all of my "conscious" decisions. I would tend to say my practice is mostly based on intuition and my rational mind is off to the side screaming like "wtf is going on!?". All this to say there wasn't a conscious strategy for integrating the audio narrative and the video images. I was working on them simultaneously, and I separated parts of dialogue into two sections, one which is more of an interior monologue, and the other which is a series of events and interactions. One is the singular subject, the other people in relation. It feels to me like the images are sometimes closely related, and at other points they seem to float off in different directions.

Jordan Loepky-Kolesnik's installation projects utilize sculpture, architecture, and video to create a type of cinema, leading the viewer through a series of stories, affects, and sensations. They are interested in the breakdown of the art object, subjective emotional states, and melding with site and context. They are based in Montreal and Richmond, USA, where they are currently completing an MFA in Sculpture + Extended Media at Virginia Commonwealth University, and received their BFA in Intermedia from Concordia University. Recent exhibitions of their work took place at VALET (Richmond), articule (Montreal), and 8eleven (Toronto).

Michael DiRisio is the Artistic Director of Modern Fuel Artist-Run Centre.



Canada Council
for the Arts

Conseil des arts
du Canada



**STEAM
WHISTLE**
PILSNER



kingston
arts council



ONTARIO ARTS COUNCIL
CONSEIL DES ARTS DE L'ONTARIO

an Ontario government agency
un organisme du gouvernement de l'Ontario



Community Foundation
for Kingston & Area