

"New Materiality", Artists Residency
Banff Arts Centre, Alberta, Canada
January - February 2016



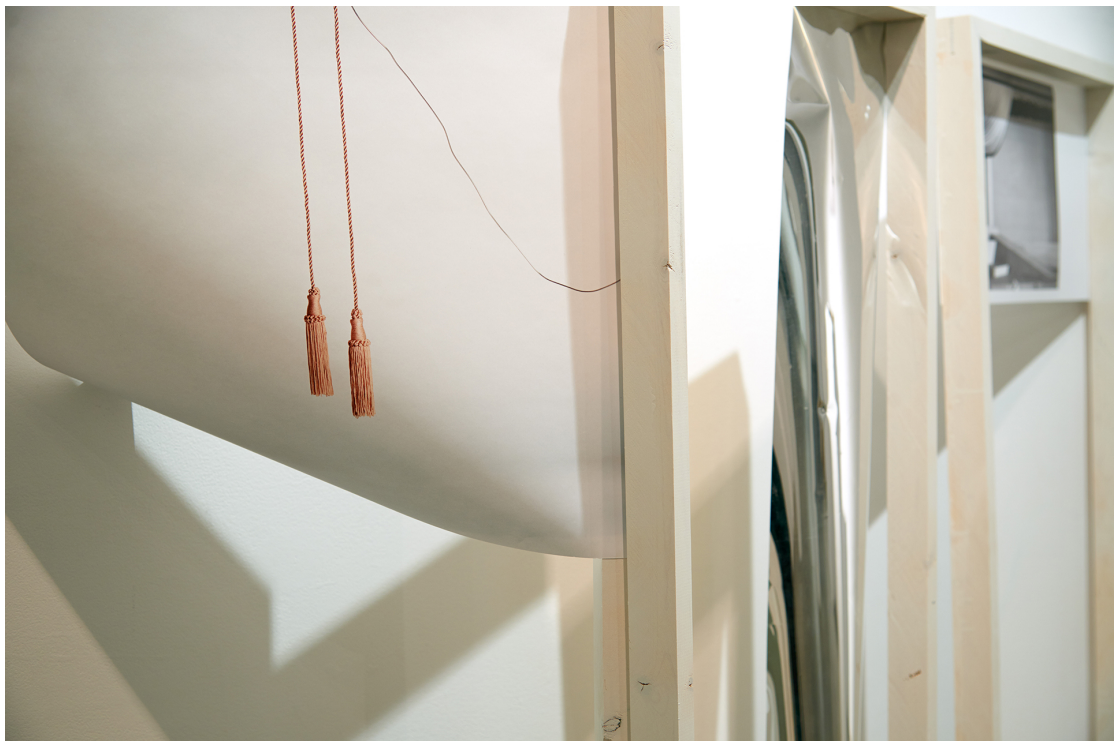
Tassels C, projected stage set, (2016) C-type digital photographic prints, 40x 40 cm



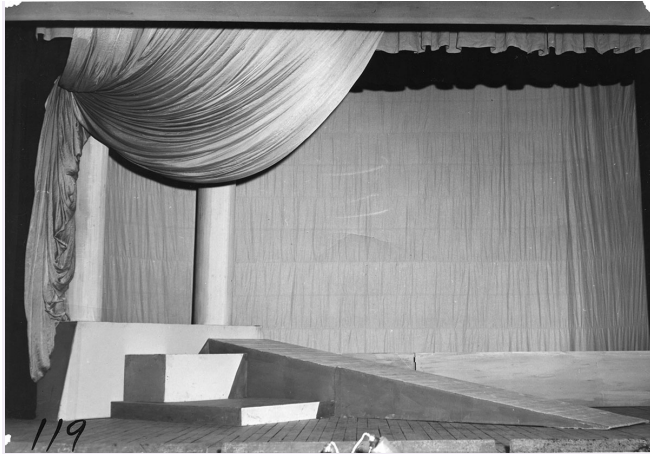
Tassels C, projected stage set, C-type digital photographic prints, 40x 40 cm



Stage Set: Cool Tone. photographic floor installation, Reclaimed wood, frames, 130x145cm, 2016



Close-up Stage Set: Cool Tone. photographic floor installation, Reclaimed wood, frames, 130x145cm, 2016



Stage Set: Unidentified, c.1952. . Archival Photograph from Banff Archives



*Mantle Vase: reversible
C-type digital print, laser-cut gold mylar, 2016*

Outline:

My selection for the “New Materiality” residency followed on from a selection as part of the Call for participation that I found through the Banff artists residency website.

The call was open to visual artists, curators, architects and designers working with materials in innovative ways. Participants were selected from a panel of impartial adjudicators, based on the artistic merit of the submitted materials and also in terms of how the artist would benefit from the specific residency.

The Banff Arts Centre is a public, board governed institute providing programs in arts and creativity as well as in leadership development, it is a unique place drawing

artists and creatives from Canada and globally. Programs are characterized by applied research, independent study and collaboration and dissemination of new work.

Founded in 1933 as a drama school originally, Banff Arts Centre has developed and grown to become regarded as a global leader in creativity. Based within the national park of Banff, the scenery and mountain culture form the basis for the ethos of Banff inspiration and creativity. Many notable artists have generated original works, included Helen Chadwick who made her 1992 sculpture, "Piss Flowers" whilst on residency at Banff.

The call to explore "New Materiality" was connected to the curatorial intents of main curator Peta Rake of the Walter Philips Art Gallery. The Walter Philips Art Gallery is located within the main art premises, just above the workshops and artists studios.

During the residency, we had the opportunity for studio visits, including visits with Peta Rake and Candice Hopkins, one of the curators for the upcoming Documenta 14 (2016).

My residency was funded through University QR funding, which covered the costs of the residency as well as for materials and my airfare.

Research problems/Questions:

As stated in the title of the residency, "New Materiality" the artists selected for this residency were focused on exploring aspects of materiality in their work. The reflective Mylar that I use in the studio for lighting objects was the main catalyst for me to apply for this particular residency.

For the residency I proposed to explore it further and see if I could construct installations that go beyond its general properties as a material.

"The construction and theatricality is a large part of creating the installation, as is the journey of working with found objects. Objects that have a decorative and display value, like containers, vases and similarly, souvenirs, mementos from vacations or holidays are important. Brought back into the photographic studio and stripped from their natural environment, I seek to create for them a staging that will allow them the centre stage, in order to become animated, to allow them to tell their story. The reflective Mylar is a large part of lighting the object and setting the emotive mood or state, as it can be either cool or warm" the quote is taken from my artists statement when applying for the residency, August 2015.

In my submission portfolio, I also proposed to create the second part of my artists' book, "Container II", limited edition hand made booklets incorporating one photographic image and text.

Methods:

The studio working methods are deeply entwined: the artists book serves as a physical and literal "container" of my working methods and practices. The works themselves, reflecting the properties of the material I explored, are mirrored and reflected back onto each other. Therefore, the "Vase" photograph that I used in the artists book became part of the photographic installation "Mantel Vase: reversible". The very idea of the 'reversible' did indeed arise from the studio exploration of this material.

I see my practice as arising from an exploration of this particular material. The 'reversible' occurs when either side, gold/silver is used to light an object.

Similarly, the installation "Stage set: cool tone" was a direct reference to the cooler side of the reflective Mylar, its silver side. Sourcing a photograph of an empty stage set from the Banff Archives, I created the three-panel floor installation.

My working methods especially after the residency have expanded my practice into

further inter-disciplinary areas and not just photography. I found that through the various studio visits and artists discussions I was able to push the boundaries of the material further, aligning the principles of light as a primary form of photographic practice with process and transformation, rather than end product.

In this way I see my work now as a method of process based questioning of the photographic image. The role of the viewer is central in this as a different perspective can create a completely different view on the same work.

Significance, originality, rigour:

The final outcomes of the residency were exhibited as part of the Open Studio day, in February 2016.

These were in the form of two photographic installations:

1) *Mantle Vase: reversible*, digital photograph and Mylar sheet on plinth,

2) *Stage Set: Cool Tone* (2016), photographic floor installation, Reclaimed wood, frames, 130x145cm

I also hand stitched about seven copies of "Container II". The text was hand printed using Polymer press, which is a digital version of a letterpress using inks on a VanderCook 4T proofing press. The photographs of the "vase" (container) were also printed at Banff, in the digital suites. The covers I had with me from UK already embossed with foil.

The Open Studio day attracted a very large number of visitors, both internal as well as external, including Peta Rake and the curator of the Whyte museum at Banff. It was particularly the insightful comment from one of the assistant curators, Natasha Chaykowski, when discussing the "Mantel Vase reversible" piece described it as magic. It became unwittingly a precursor to my inclusion in the Aperture "Photography is Magic" summer show later in July.

Both my artists books, "Container I" and "Container II" were purchased by the artists book archive, the Paul D. Fleck archive and now sit within the prestigious collection of artists books, alongside Ed Ruscha and other conceptual artists work.

As a further outcome of the residency, we are working with the other fellow artists towards an upcoming group exhibition scheduled to take place in Athens, Greece, for October 2017. Working title "The conditions of production remain indefinitely reversible" and will include a range of international artists working across a range of media, such as sculpture, ceramics, photography, painting and video.