

**Raymond Boisjoly: (And) Other Echoes**  
SFU Gallery April 27 – August 2, 2013

**Further Reading**

**Jonah Gray, *Studies in Decay: Raymond Boisjoly, Jordy Hamilton and Laura Piasta* (Vancouver: Or Gallery, 2011).**

*Studies in Decay* is a group exhibition, including Boisjoly's *The Writing Lesson*, that considers experience, change and reality. Gray's poster publication accompanies the exhibition. The exhibition comments on contemporary experience rather than simulates what is seen on the surface. In his work, Boisjoly fuses together two contemporary subcultures: black metal music and indigenous geographic names. Following the style of the black metal band scripts, Boisjoly blends this with location names (such as Chilliwack and Spuzzum). Much of Raymond's work deals with symmetry and here he continues that tradition, however, with an uncanny unnaturalness.

**Makiko Hara, Annabel Vaughan, et al. *To/From BC Electric Railway 100 Years*. (Vancouver: Centre A, 2012).**

In honor of the last exhibition held by Centre A at the BCER building, Hara and Vaughan curated an exhibition considering historic moments, personal stories and some of the contradictions of that history. The artists in the exhibition are Raymond Boisjoly, Stan Douglas, Ali Kazimi, Vanessa Kwan, Evan Lee and Cindy Mochizuki. In the accompanying catalogue, an historical context is presented for the Japanese and South Asian communities at the time of Vancouver's initial growth. The catalogue texts further comment on the racism Aboriginal communities experienced and the residential school phenomena. Boisjoly made new text work for the exhibition titled *Real Regret and Not Just Wishful Thinking* that operates as a "poem" about displacement through varying educational practices of language and social relations. He touches on the historic occurrences of the 'milk-train' (the train that connected New Westminster and Chilliwack) and the contradictory symbols it holds for South Asian and Japanese farming communities; the contradictions being that this same train, while helping many make their way in a quickly urbanizing city, sent others (from the Aboriginal communities) off to Residential schools. Boisjoly's Chilliwack upbringing and his experiences in middle school prompted his interest in the contradictory symbolism. A symbol of hope for some was a symbol of destruction for others.

**Paul Kajander. *Transcontinental Divide* (Vancouver: Helen Pitt Gallery, 2009).**

This publication was produced in relationship to an exhibition in which artists from Vancouver and Ottawa were undertaking an exchange: artists from one city were instructed to produce instructional documents for the production of an artwork in the other city and then criticize the other's first step, and vice versa. The Vancouver artists in the exhibition were Raymond Boisjoly, Steven Hubert, Sara Mameni, Isabelle Pauwels and Ron Tran. The artists from Ottawa were Karina Bergmans, Jen Cook, Roy Lu, Minh Nguyen and Stephan Thompson. Boisjoly's *The Alleged title wrapped around itself again and again...* is the result of one of these exchanges (from Karina Bergmans).

**Kathleen Ritter and Tania Willard, *Beat Nation: Art, Hip Hop and Aboriginal Culture* (Vancouver: Vancouver Art Gallery, 2012)**

This exhibition looks at hip-hop and its influential dialogue with politics, activism in the Aboriginal communities, and self-empowerment. Presenting the work of twenty-eight contemporary Aboriginal artists from across North America, the exhibition spans a wide range of popular culture. It is an important look at the adoption of hip-hop into Aboriginal culture as a natural cultural evolution rather than nostalgic look at the past: contemporary culture is full of remixes and mash-ups. The exhibition is divided into four sections that reflect First Nations issues. Taken as metaphors from hip-hop culture, the curators decided upon the sections are the beat, the stage, the street, and the tag. Boisjoly's work in the exhibition, *an other cosmos: genesis, departure, trouble and disaggregation*, is a series of ink jet prints on the front and back of Plexiglas. The blend of astronomical imagery and culturally constructed imagery contests the weight of tradition. In his work in *Beat Nation*, Boisjoly considers the First Nations use of symmetry with the use of light and photography, resulting in work that promotes the idea that nothing is static.

**Kathleen Ritter, *How Soon is Now* (Vancouver: Vancouver Art Gallery, 2009).**

As an exhibition, *How Soon is Now* addresses the notion of *present time* surveying thirty-four Vancouver artists and how their work speaks to an idea of "now." In this exhibition catalogue, curator Ritter considers the individual artists' works through philosophical references in order to activate critical approaches to viewing. Boisjoly's works question the notions of tradition and materiality. *Beginners and Latecomers* is a reproduction of a reproduction and was inspired by a totem pole souvenir trinket. It is comprised of an upright log encircled in Christmas lights that spell out the work's title on the wall above the "totem." The Christmas lights distract from the object itself as well as outline the animal being represented. It presents a dialogue of the commodification and exploitation of Aboriginal cultures and customs.

**Kevin Rodgers, "Raymond Boisjoly: The Work That Work Leaves Undone," *C magazine* 116, (May 2012).**

This magazine review gives a substantive background to Boisjoly's previous works in order to pave way to understand the current piece in question, *The Work that Work Leaves Undone*, exhibited in the Forest City Gallery. Rodgers explains how and why this work comments on itself through the juxtaposition of paper and text, and considers the administrative work that went into its creation. Rodgers indicates that the success of the work is in the stimulation of thought.

**Henry Svec, *To Haunt All That Might Yet Come To Be: Raymond Boisjoly's Noises. The Work That Work Leaves Undone*, London: Forest City Gallery, 2012.**

In this exhibition catalogue, Svec takes a communications oriented approach to deciphering the work of Boisjoly. He refers to Claude Shannon's definition of communications. Communication being that which occurs between one machine to another machine. The message is often disrupted and fragmented due to the technology used to encode the message, never to be delivered in its entirety. Svec describes these undelivered bits of the message as looming and threatening. The message/text is

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conjoined to a physical item, in order to communicate it. The overabundance of information one gets from technology, and the chaotic sense it creates can be seen in the mass of office papers with text used in Boisjoly's work.

## **Related source:**

Crosby, Marcia and Smith P.C. *Nations In Urban Landscapes* (Vancouver: Contemporary Art Gallery, 1997).

The effort of *Nations in Urban Landscapes* (the exhibition and accompanying catalogue) is to dispell stereotypes, fetishized images of Aborigines, and the compartmentalization people. Through the presentation of work by Faye HeavyShield, Shelley Niro and Eric Robertson, the exhibition addresses the Aboriginal peoples that have been affected by colonialism and secondly it focuses on the issue of urban 'Nativity'. Following displacement and readjustment, many Aboriginal people now face rejection and skepticism on whether they are Native enough. These artists' works relate to that of Raymond Boisjoly's in that they collectively comment on Aboriginality as inflected through broader contemporary culture.

Annotated bibliography research by Alina Radinsky.