

**EXHIBITION TEXT WRITTEN BY
ALANNA THAIN AND ALEKS KAMINSKA FOR**

RÉELLES FICTIONS / REAL FICTIONS

**Aurélie Blanchette Dubois · Matthew Cangiano · Alex Coma ·
Philippe Léonard · Francis Macchiagodena**

September 12 – December 7, 2024

Dark Transits, Obscured Encounters

Alanna Thain and Aleks Kaminska

Electrification was a shock to our night senses. Since the pervasive light of industriousness flattened the folds of our nocturnal sensuality, we have sought to restore the potent opacity of the more hesitant renderings of the nightworld's metamorphoses. In the mingle between waking and sleep, edges frayed by exhaustion, the expanding dilation of low light vision, "night is a world lit by itself" (Antonio Porchia). Across *Real Fictions*, occulted perceptions explore the feeling of life at night in its freedoms, dodges, and potentials. Philosophies of slow exposures and awakenings reign: the rhythmic insistence of symbolism, the estranging of the everyday in its material refabrications, the urge of otherness pressing against the protective comfort of darkness.

Through light, touch, and movement, the artists of *Real Fictions* fabulate night's forms and feelings of a world in the process of revelation. In **Aurélie Blanchette Dubois'** uncanny fabrications, a curtain is a screen for mystery. At night, it draws the veil around domesticated privacy, but in its tenebrous folds objects are queerly animated by a curiosity for the secret life of things. Images of an everyday garden hose, redoubled and recirculated in advertisements and listings from Facebook marketplace, are printed and woven into composite fabrics. In this embellished matrix, the curtain is both screen and a world unto itself. Across this exhibition, thresholds of night make acts of passage into simultaneous acts of reworlding.

For **Matthew Cangiano**, paint and pencil gesture towards revelation. Cylinders become portals into and out of the unknown, a curved pipe might be the way underground or the way to peer out. Through the painted rendering of an abandoned urban lot, Cangiano estranges the artifacts of our own worldly ambitions and infrastructures. His drawing, like a diptych skewing perceptions, is a collection of precise traces of the imaginal and the subconscious over time. Tending to them over a long duration—in this case a year—the result is a radical encounter with the impossibility of knowing ourselves.

An enigmatic illumination charges the nocturnal visions of **Alex Coma's** images. Both the archive of a long process of spiritual study that began in documenting nightscenes through photography, the paintings condense sensation into singular encounters. At night, our eyes take time to soften into the shapes and tonalities of a darkened world, and we see and feel beyond our habits. Cloaked in their meaning, Coma's charged vistas sink into our gaze, inviting us into a meditative state of ambient introspection.

Francis Macchiagodena's *Æther* is a series of photographic murals that capture the volatility of a brief moment of illumination. Working in a darkroom, a flash of light leaves in the silver gelatin a liquid trace, when darkness was briefly revealed. Through the phenomena of apparition and dispersion, each exposure is a topographic study of light but also of chance as bodies, gestures, and shadows all make their mark in the dark. By adding a prism to his process of light capture in *n*, Macchiagodena has more possibilities for precision and control. The resulting image of scattered rays reveals the geometric shapes of the index of refraction—"n"—a reminder that while light continues to fuel our collective imagination, it can also travel and bend, be measured and manipulated.

Philippe Léonard's video installation *[T]* transmutes the everydayness of observation into an everynight wonder. A delicate slice of focus unveils a world of pure intimacy, between soft flows of bodies and suspensions in singular faces. Like a sensory palimpsest, night vision here is a perception doubled already by memory. Slow motion's expansive instance renders the banal of urban sociability—street food or a rubber mask of the Statue of Liberty—a thing of fleeting grace. *[T]* gives the feeling of a dream felt from the inside and witnessed from without; our gaze never meets the eyes of the people we watch for a small wave of time. Such suspensive speculations are the imaginative abundance of night— real fictions.

ABOUT THE CO-AUTHORS OF THE EXHIBITION TEXT

Aleks Kaminska is an Associate Professor in the Department of Communications at Université de Montréal. She primarily works at the intersection of media studies, material and visual cultures, and the history and philosophy of technology. From 2021 to 2023, she co-directed a collaborative research-creation project titled "The Sociability of Sleep" with Alanna Thain, aimed at generating new interdisciplinary knowledge and empathies to rethink sleep as a site of social imagination and its conditions in contemporary culture. She was recently appointed as the director of the scientific journal *Intermédialités: histoire et théorie des arts, des lettres et des techniques*.

Alanna Thain is an Associate Professor specializing in world cinemas and cultural studies in the Department of English at McGill University. She directs the Moving Image Research Lab (MIRL), which is dedicated to the study of the body in moving images and performance in a broad sense. She is the former director of the Institute for Gender, Sexuality, and Feminist Studies. From 2021 to 2023, she co-directed the collaborative research-creation project "The Sociability of Sleep" with Aleksandra Kaminska, aimed at generating new interdisciplinary knowledge and empathies to rethink sleep as a site of social imagination and its conditions in contemporary culture. She also leads the Collective for Research on Epistemologies and Ontologies of Embodied Risk (CORÉRISC), a research team interested in how the idea of embodied risk allows access to other ways of knowing and being in the world, in dialogue with intersectional queer and feminist theories.