



“To understand water is to understand the cosmos,
the marvels of nature, and life itself.”

MASARU EMOTO



“Water is sometimes sharp and sometimes strong, sometimes acid and sometimes bitter, sometimes sweet and sometimes thick or thin, sometimes it is seen bringing hurt or pestilence, sometimes health-giving, sometimes poisonous. It suffers change into as many natures as are the different places through which it passes. And as the mirror changes with the colour of its subject, so it alters with the nature of the place, becoming noisome, laxative, astringent, sulfurous, salty, incarnadined, mournful, raging, angry, red, yellow, green, black, blue, greasy, fat or slim. Sometimes it starts a conflagration, sometimes it extinguishes one; is warm and is cold, carries away or sets down, hollows out or builds up, tears or establishes, fills or empties, raises itself or burrows down, speeds or is still; is the cause at times of life or death, or increase or privation, nourishes at times and at others does the contrary; at times has a tang, at times is without savour, sometimes submerging the valleys with great floods. In time and with water, everything changes.”

LEONARDO DA VINCI

Cover Image: Tomonari Nishikawa, still from *sound of a million insects, light of a thousand stars* (2015)



subtle technologies



— A Special Thank You to our Beverage Sponsors —



UNIVERSE IN A GLASS

MAY 17, 2017

A CO-PRESENTATION BY TORONTO ANIMATED IMAGE SOCIETY (TAIS),
THE GARDINER MUSEUM & SUBTLE TECHNOLOGIES

featuring the work of:

Eli Schwanz
David Buob
Kamiel Rongen
Kelly Zantingh
Pedro Ferreira
Sandra Eber
Tara Dougans
Tess Martin
Tomonari Nishikawa

A part of: subtle technologies v.20

WATER, WATER EVERYWHERE

According to a study published by the Census of Marine Life in 2010, it is estimated that there are over 1 million living cells per millilitre of seawater. Not only is this astounding in terms of density-nearly half the human population of Toronto living in an area the size of a corn kernel-but also startling that this organic richness is either taken for granted or goes completely unnoticed. Water, water everywhere and yet we rarely acknowledge its sublime ability to sustain an entire universe of life within its malleable bounds. This was the starting point for this screening and continues to be an almost intangible thought.

Science continues to contribute to animation and vice versa. Perhaps the most famous example is the series of anatomical studies by Eadweard Muybridge in the late 19th Century. His invention of the zoopraxiscope-a predecessor of the film projector-allowed him to demonstrate the physiology of humans and animals in motion. In terms of ecological studies, Jean Painlevé was both a zoologist, surrealist and an advocate of filmmaking in science. Beginning in the 1920s, he created a series of documentaries on marine life, which incorporated techniques such as time lapse and slow motion effects, which gave his images an unworldly quality.

Today, the 21st Century animator's relationship towards ecology has progressed into something more complicated with our rapidly changing planet. While we may know more about our rivers, lakes and oceans, many of us continue to be in denial about humanity's negative impact upon them. Artists and scientists alike have to continue to confront these overwhelming issues, such as global warming, over-farming and deforestation, to name a few. In the study of ecology nothing is left out, everything is included. This body of work depicts the natural phenomena of water upon multiple universes but also how human intervention impacts them as well.

Universe In A Glass presents viewers with an engrossing aesthetic and conceptual collision of different takes on the power and symbolism of water. The scope of conceptual connections to be made between animation and ecology is too great to cover in the course of one evening. However, we hope that this event leaves the viewer inspired to spend more time considering the universality of water and the changes necessary to help preserve our planet.

—Ben Edelberg & Zach Pearl,
Programme Co-Curators

ORGANIZATION PROFILES

Toronto Animated Image Society (TAIS)

TAIS is dedicated to the art of independent animation. As an artist-run non-profit production centre, TAIS supports animation art making, with a focus on skills development. We provide affordable access to studios and equipment for artists, and we hold regular community-based and educational workshop programs for those just starting out. Our membership includes classical and digital hand-drawn, stop motion, 3D and VR animators, who work in narrative and/or experimental forms, installation, web-based, and animation as craft. Annually, our public programming presents animation to audiences via screenings, exhibition, web, and through artist talks and studio visits with guest artists. We regularly partner with other groups and organizations to connect with new audiences and to inspire artists to explore animation in their artistic practice.

tais.ca

Gardiner Museum

The Gardiner Museum is an inviting destination that inspires and connects people, art and ideas through clay, one of the world's oldest art forms. Year-round the Museum mounts special exhibitions, events, lectures and clay classes to complement its permanent collection. The Museum also features a bistro that serves delicious local fare prepared by à la Carte Kitchen Inc., and the Gardiner Shop, which specializes in artist-designed, artist-made merchandise.

gardinermuseum.on.ca

Subtle Technologies

Subtle Technologies is an annual program providing a public platform for conversation and community-building at the subtle intersections of art, science and technology. Founded in 1998 and built upon a sharing ethos amongst the arts, sciences and technology, Subtle Technologies serves diverse audiences, creators, technologists and social innovators. Our annual festival and special projects direct public attention to emergent practices while cultivating dedicated audiences and committed local, national and international contributors who share values of generosity and curiosity. The festival partners with individuals, community organizations and cultural institutions in the spirit of collaboration and experimentation.

subtletechnologies.com

PEDRO FERREIRA

Pedro Ferreira, born in Portugal in 1988, is a media artist based in Berlin. He works in documentary and experimental film, video installation, sound, performance and photography. He explores post-digital concepts concerned with tactile approaches to technology. In 2013, he received his masters in multimedia arts and culture from the University of Porto. He was selected for the European Media Arts Residency Exchange program Move On at the Images Festival in Toronto in 2014 and for the Traidhos Artist Residency Thailand in Chiang Mai in 2015. In 2016 he was selected for the Artist Residency AV Espaço Montepio in Porto, Portugal with a subsequent group exhibition. He has presented his works internationally in festivals, galleries, museums and alternative spaces. Most recently his works have been presented at L'Alternativa in Barcelona, Porto/Post/Doc in Porto, Werkleitz Festival in Halle, Entropia Gallery and MWW in Wrocław, Toronto's 8Fest and Museum Of Contemporary Canadian Art, Montreal's Festival du Nouveau Cinema and Festival International Du Film D'Environment in Paris. His works are distributed through Video Out, part of VIVO Media Arts Centre.

SANDRA EBER

Sandra Eber is an animation filmmaker with multidisciplinary interests. With her degrees in both anthropology and animation and a minor in computer science, she's enjoyed an extensive career as a software developer. Currently, she teaches in the film animation program at the Mel Hoppenheim School of Cinema in Montreal. In her practice she is particularly drawn to experimenting with technologies whether high or low.

TARA DOUGANS

Tara Dougans is a writer and artist currently based in Toronto. Her work explores the relationship between inner and outer reflections of the natural world.

TESS MARTIN

Tess Martin is an independent animator who works with cut-outs, ink, paint, sand or objects. Her most recent award-winning films are *The Lost Mariner*, an animated interpretation of an Oliver Sacks case study, and *Mario*, a paint on glass film based on an Italian folk song. Her films have displayed at galleries and festivals worldwide. She is the founder of Haptic Animation Amplifier, a Seattle-based non-profit that supports independent animation from the Pacific Northwest of the USA and runs a monthly animation event in the Netherlands called Manifest: Animation Show & Tell. She also occasionally writes about the world of independent animation.

TOMONARI NISHIKAWA

Nishikawa's films explore the idea of documenting situations/phenomena through a chosen medium and technique, often focusing on the art making process. His films have been screened at numerous film festivals and art venues, including Berlinale, Edinburgh International Film Festival, International Film Festival Rotterdam, London Film Festival, New York Film Festival, Singapore International Film Festival, and Toronto International Film Festival. In 2010, he presented a series of 8mm and 16mm films at MoMA P.S.1 Contemporary Art Center, and his film installation, *Building 945*, received the 2008 Grant from the Museum of Contemporary Cinema in Spain. He served as a juror for the 2010 Ann Arbor Film Festival, the 2012 Big Muddy Film Festival, and the 2013 dresdner schmal-filmtage. He is a co-founder of KLEX: Kuala Lumpur Experimental Film and Video Festival, and *Transient Visions: Festival of the Moving Image*. He teaches in Cinema Department at Binghamton University.

PROGRAMME

Co-Curated by Ben Edelberg and Zach Pearl

Approximate Run-time: 43 minutes



DAVID BUOB (Germany)

I can't go back to yesterday—because I was a different person then, Ongoing (2009–Present), 4 min.

This animation shows micro-biological creatures like bacteria and plankton morphing into one another endlessly, recalling cycles in nature but also the fact that it's impossible to return to our past. This concept is also represented in the installation form of this piece. I reuse the same paper from previous versions to create the new animated sequences, and these papers are used to construct a sculptural form that displays the animation and is always unique to that moment in space and time.



KELLY ZANTINGH (Canada)

Seascape, 2016, 2 min. 27 sec.

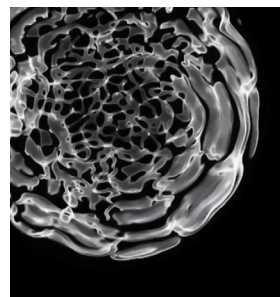
Seascape traces the movements and actions of an unseen human hand on a fabricated and malleable environment. The timeline combined with an invisible human presence examines our interference with an ecosystem's natural process of change over time.



KAMIEL RONGEN (Netherlands)

Waterballet, 2014, 8 min. 35 sec.

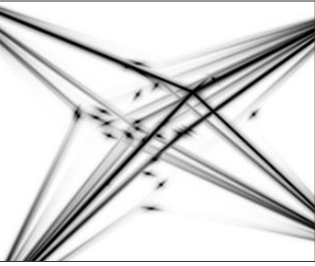
This piece predominately focuses on the balance between nature and toxicity. Colourful and mesmerizing landscapes can often be the result of unnatural materials and dangerous phenomena. I believe this is connected to our arrival in a digital age without physical consequences. I try to visualize this digital world in a visceral way by using simple chemistry and a fishbowl as a 3-dimensional canvas.



PEDRO FERREIRA (Germany)

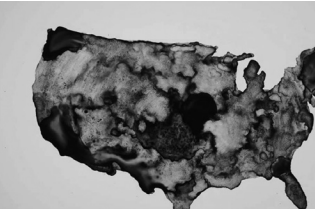
(UN)evenness, 2016, 3 min.

Genesis, the story of the origin of all existence, is visualized through the animation of water rippling to sound vibrations. Mirroring the cycle of mitosis, "cells" of water divide and multiply in a systematic process. Life itself creates. A cosmological examination of the origin, evolution and destiny of the universe, of the large-scale structures and dynamics within its chaos and randomness, moving towards annihilation and destruction. Rebirth. Ending with a close view of water, one of the most primordial elements and one of the most alien matters.



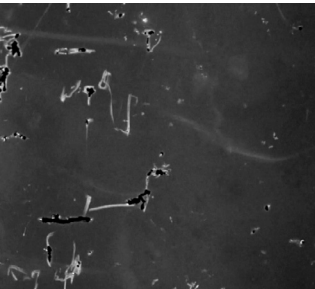
SANDRA EBER (Canada)
Dimensions, 2016, 5 min. 40 sec.

The core of *Dimensions* is the looped movement of one giant X made of 720 images. This loop was created one frame at a time to introduce slight imprecision in movement and fluctuations in shading. These variations reflect on infinite complexity created from a simple base unit and alludes to a core which is pervasive and upon which all patterns are based. *Dimensions* does not directly address water but rather questions the ways we are taught to compartmentalize the world in order to make sense of it.



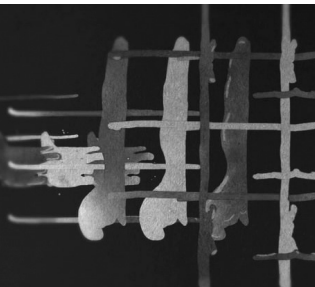
TESS MARTIN (USA)
Part of the Cycle, 2013, 8 min.

Our water use may seem very distant from the mountains, tributaries and oceans that make up nature's water cycle. But actually, we impact and affect the water cycle every day. This animated short uses ink and liquids to explain how water reaches our homes, how we change it, and how we clean it in the Seattle area. We are a part of the water cycle.



TOMONARI NISHIKAWA (USA)
sound of a million insects, light of a thousand stars
2015, 1 min. 51 sec.

I buried a 100-feet of 35mm negative film under fallen leaves alongside a country road, about 25 km away from the Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear Power Station, from sunset on June 24, 2014 to the sunrise of the following day. The night was beautiful with a starry sky, and numerous summer insects were singing loud. The area was once an evacuation zone, but now people live there after the removal of the contaminated soil. This film was exposed to the possible remnants of the radioactive materials.



ELI SCHWANZ (Canada)
Flash Splash, 2015, 3 min. 41 min.

Flash Splash reveals the underlying materiality of video, visualized through the splashing red, green and blue of the RGB parade—a scope or tool of analysis used to evaluate the balance of colours fundamental to the video signal. It introduces us to a single cycle then begins to layer them on top of each other. Their interconnectedness becomes a predominant concern and then, just as the chaos has risen, it recedes again leaving three discreet channels. *Flash Splash* contains internal loops, intensities and interplay. Even when the sequence becomes calm or tranquil, it remains in motion.



TARA DOUGANS (Canada)
White Shadows, 2015, 4 min. 18 sec.

White Shadows was researched and developed in Berlin in 2015. The accompanying orchestral track, 'White Shadows' is from Canadian artist/composer Lydia Ainsworth's debut album *Right from Real* (2015). The use of water as a visual metaphor for interconnectivity and as a symbol of life speaks to the unseen physical ecology of this planet, and, on a micro level, to the teeming inner workings (the subconscious depths) of the human mind.

BIOGRAPHIES

DAVID BUOB

Studied architecture in Kassel from 1992-94; 1994-97, vocational training as stonemason in Kassel; 1998-2005, studied Fine Arts at HfBK Dresden with a diploma and a masters degree. Lives and works in Dresden and Berlin.

Filmography

2016—*Me by You*, 5:00 min, DCP (hand-drawn animation, watercolor on paper)
2014—*UTÖ*, 7:38 min, DCP (hand-drawn animation, watercolor on paper)
2011—*Das Haus*, 6:48 min, 35 mm (hand-drawn animation/3D computer)
2009 (ongoing)—*I can't go back to yesterday—because I was a different person then.* Loop, full HD (installation with hand-drawn animation on paper)

Awards

2016—Special Mention I Kurzsuechtig Leipzig, Germany
2012—Golden Horseman / best national animation I Filmfest Dresden, Germany
2012—Jury Award I Ann Arbor Film Festival, USA
2012—Special Prize—ZOOM I ZBLI?ENIA—Jelenia Góra, Poland
2011 – Special Mention I Animasyros, Greece
2011—1st Prize, Best Short I vilsflimmern Amberg, Germany
2011—Jury Award, Best Animation I Kurzsuechtig Leipzig, Germany

ELI SCHWANZ

Eli Schwanz is an artist, animator, director and designer living in Toronto. He received his BFA from Ryerson University and MFA from OCADU, with a focus on animation in the Interdisciplinary Arts, Media, and Design program. Eli continues to work as a director for MTV in Canada. His practice, working through media theory and animation methodologies, explores short, looped, experimental animation, installation, sculpture and patterning. His work seeks to open up conceptual spaces for viewer engagement with media through subtle and often passive interactivity.

KAMIEL RONGEN

For a long time, Kamiel Rongen has been interested in music and sound. After using techniques such as stop-motion to make film, he began exploring materials and now always uses a fish tank as his canvas. Here, he likes to experiment with materiality, colour, structure and movement in playful ways. In his work, visuals and audio are balanced to construct specific feelings and atmospheres that submerge the viewer in an abstract landscape. In a society that is becoming increasingly fake, it is difficult to understand what is real. Rongen tries to communicate the essence of a digital world through the use of physical materials, and is fascinated by the contrast of nature and toxicity.

KELLY ZANTINGH

Kelly Zantingh's work explores the passage of time and its inevitable association with loss. She examines the fragile and complex structures of natural ecosystems, specifically how they are instrumentalized by humans. Using stop-motion animation, sculpture, and photography, she works with malleable materials that offer endless possibilities in their potential for change and adaption. Zantingh graduated with a B.A.H in Studio Art from the University of Guelph, ON in April 2016. She is currently based out of Toronto and Montreal but spends the spring and summer tree planting in British Columbia. She has recently co-founded the Carrying Root Collective with Allison Henry.