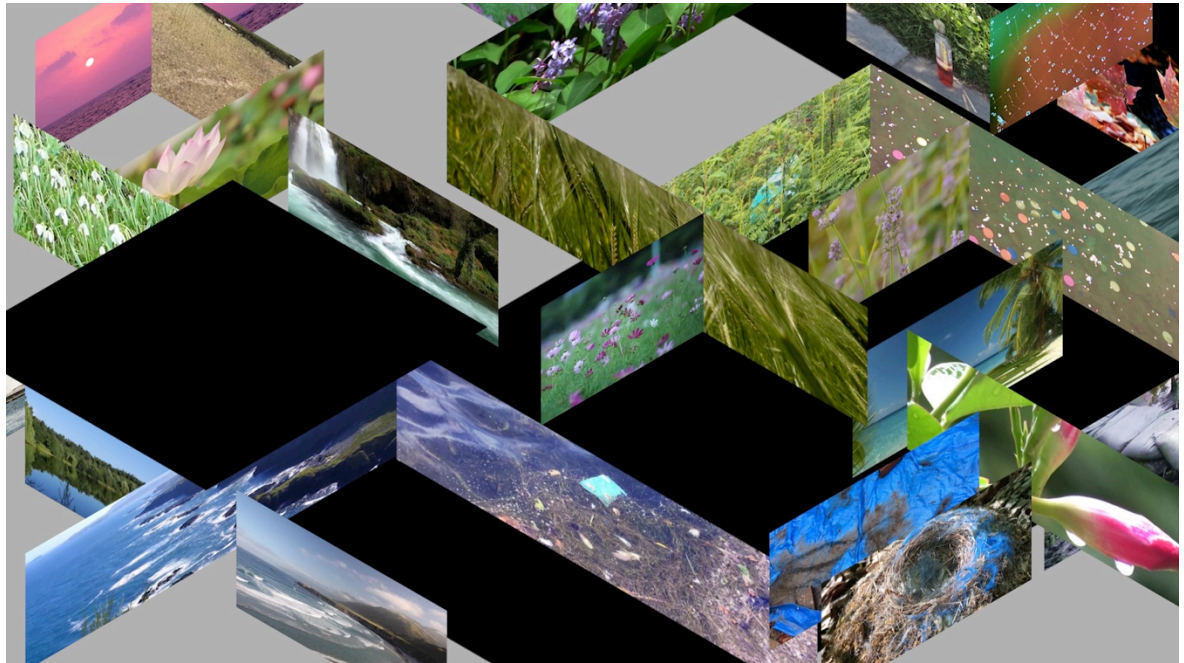


PHOTO, MEDIA AND DIGITAL ART

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For Immediate Release (September 21, 2020)



LYLA RYE COMPLICATES PERCEPTIONS OF SPACE AND TIME IN NEW EXHIBITION AT PREFIX ICA

(Toronto) – Prefix Institute of Contemporary Art is pleased to present *Mirage*, a solo exhibition of the work of Toronto-based artist Lyla Rye. Curated by Betty Julian and presented as a primary exhibition of the Scotiabank Contact Photography Festival, this exhibition features the Canadian premiere of *A Meditation*, a video installation that engages viewers in a play of images and sounds. Throughout the gallery, Rye uses still and moving images to offer a nuanced vision that allows the viewer to contemplate the influence of architecture and how it impacts living in the world. The exhibition actively engages viewers optically, physically and conceptually with these ideas, while aiming to complicate their perceptions of space and time.

Presentation Partner

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The exhibition opens on Friday, October 2, 2020 at Prefix, located at 401 Richmond Street West, Suite 124, Toronto, and continues until Saturday, November 28, 2020. The gallery is open to the public from Wednesday to Saturday, 12 to 5 PM, and by appointment. In accordance with provincial COVID-19 safety regulations, the gallery will be limited to six visitors at a time. Admission is free.

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A Meditation (2019) expands upon Rye's use of strategies referencing architectural scale, along with her focus on slowness, intricacy and material shifts in producing embodied encounters with space that unfold over time. This video installation reveals the contradictions inherent to the relationship between the real and illusionary qualities of still and moving images. The chaos of 21st-century life increasingly leads people to seek out various types of spaces, images, sounds and activities that reconnect them to nature, in order to calm their hearts and minds. *A Meditation* explores our ambivalent and complicated relationship to images that comment on the haphazard use and misuse of air, land and water. Pristine depictions of nature also form a part of everyday mainstream imagery, with nature videos even posted online as meditation aids. Rye considers the contradictory qualities of these two kinds of imagery.

In Rye's own words, "*A Meditation* has many depictions of nature in the video and the architectural scene depicted resembles office cubicles with landscape footage replacing the walls. The scene is rendered in isometric projection so the space extends systematically in all directions, in contrast to the photographic perspective of the videos. Much of the imagery comes from found meditation videos of overly idealized images of nature, often computer enhanced. Over the duration of the loop, cellphone videos, revealing a different relationship to nature, slowly infiltrate the scene. As they proliferate, the digital illusion of space breaks down."

Expanding upon these visual manifestations, *Suspended Meditation* (2020) takes two still photographic images from *A Meditation* and presents them in our surround gallery, bringing another visual dimension to the experience of space by playing with the tension between stillness and the mediated image. Further merging the space between digital and physical, *Fluid Anomalies* (2020) is a series of 36 translucent silk squares printed with digitally manipulated photographic images of water, each of which is overlaid with an embroidered black shape. The embroidery's substantial materiality optically alters the photographic imagery, creating the impression of piercing the fluid pictured, playing with notions of labour and intervening on assumptions about photographic imagery. Extending the exhibition out into the world, Rye has produced *Mini Fluid Anomalies* (2020) in an edition of 100, which are available for purchase on site from *The Magic Gumball Machine of Fate*—an artists' multiple distribution project.

Mirage is a glimpse into the artist's exploration of and fascination with the diversity of spatial representation, such as digital effects, isometric shapes and optical perspectives. It functions as an encounter with architectural space where angled forms, slow time and layered imagery are catalysts for active viewing.

About the artist

Lyla Rye is a Toronto-based visual artist who works in installation, sculpture, video and photography. For more than thirty years, she has concentrated on exploring the experience of architectural space. Her dynamic artworks call attention to the ways in which we perceive space and time. Her work has been featured in numerous exhibitions, including the Power Plant Contemporary Art Gallery (Toronto), the Whitney Museum of American Art (New York), the Southern Alberta Art Gallery (Lethbridge) and, most recently, KB19, the Karachi Biennale (Pakistan).

About the curator

Betty Julian is an off-reserve citizen of Sipekne'katnik First Nation (Indian Brook First Nation) in Nova Scotia. A curator of contemporary art, she was a founding member of the advisory council for *Prefix Photo* and, from 2004–18, a member of the curatorial council for Prefix Institute of Contemporary Art. In the latter capacity, she curated the group exhibitions *Movers and Shakers* and *Trade Marks*, as well as solo exhibitions by Renée Green and Lorna Simpson. Currently, she is the adjunct curator at Prefix ICA, where, most recently, she curated *Listen, speak and sing*, a solo exhibition by Nadia Myre.

About Prefix

Prefix Institute of Contemporary Art is a public art gallery with the distinguishing features of publishing an art magazine and presenting an international lecture series. A registered charitable organization, Prefix fosters the appreciation and understanding of contemporary photographic, media and digital arts through exhibitions, publications, public programmes and related activities.

Acknowledgements

For their support of *Mirage*, Prefix gratefully acknowledges the Scotiabank Contact Photography Festival. Prefix also gratefully acknowledges the assistance of the Canada Council for the Arts, the Ontario Arts Council and the Toronto Arts Council with funding from the City of Toronto.

The artist acknowledges the following individuals for their contributions to *A Meditation*: Aurelie Collings, Lisa Cristinzo, John Dickson, Catherine Heard, Lee Henderson, Jacquie Jacobs, Yifan Liu, Pam Patterson, Leena Raudvee, Heather Riley, Lena Rye, Ellen Samler, Rachel Sekler, Nava Waxman and Termeh Yeghiazarian for their videos; and Debashis Sinha for the audio.

Photo: Lyla Rye, video still from *A Meditation*, 2019. Courtesy Lyla Rye

For more information, print-ready images or to schedule an interview with the artist or curator, please contact the director of programmes at 416-591-0357 or programmes@prefix.ca.