

Aporia (Notes to a Medium)

JANUARY 12–APRIL 14, 2024

Colleen Brown
Azza El Siddique

Dani Gal

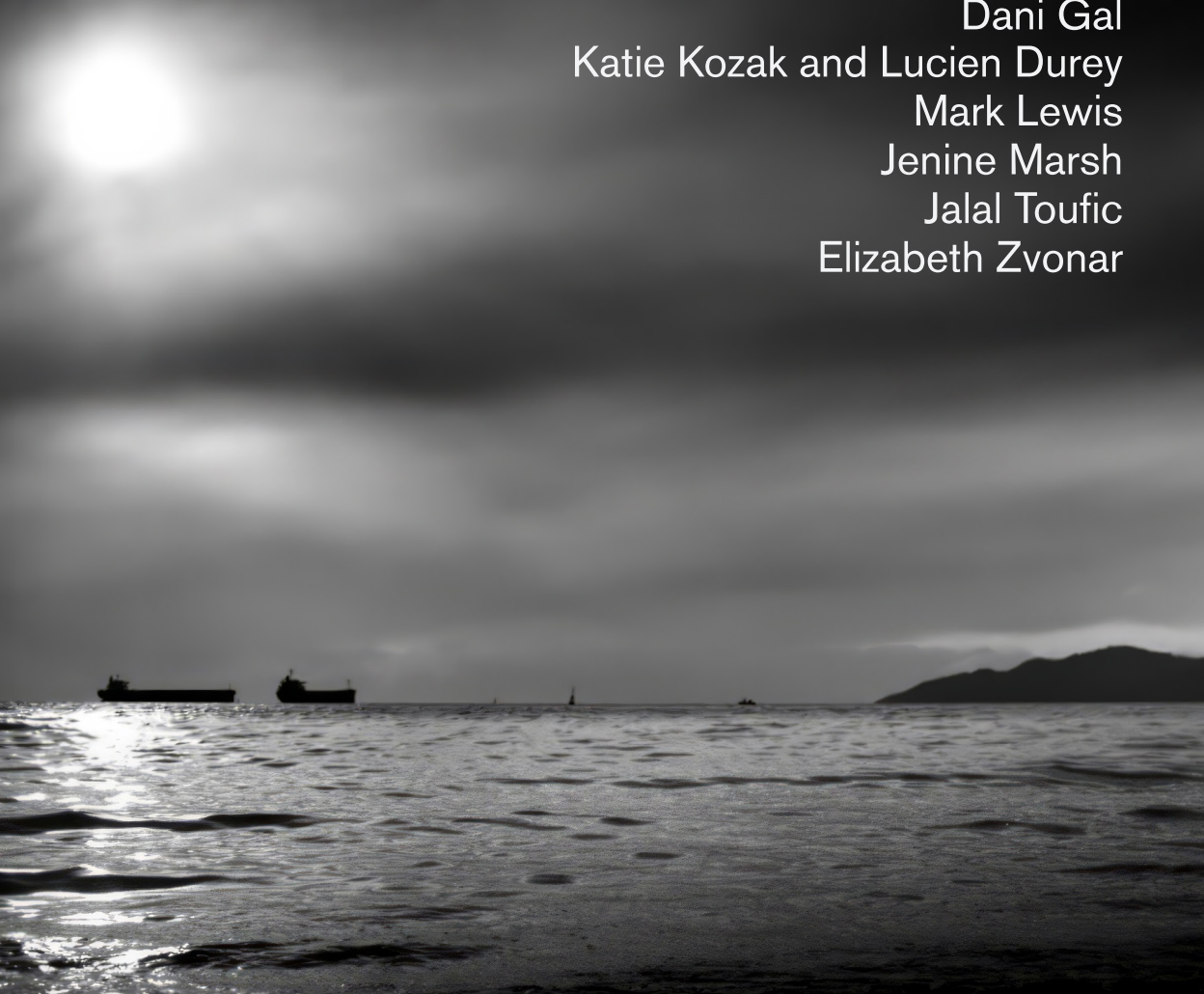
Katie Kozak and Lucien Durey

Mark Lewis

Jenine Marsh

Jalal Toufic

Elizabeth Zvonar



Aporia (Notes to a Medium) considers how history, mythology and wishful thinking entwine across media and through mediums. In this moment where faith in media, government and institutions is further collapsing, where binarization is on the rise, where expressions of doubt are tactical, this exhibition includes artists' works that contend with systems of belief and perception to trouble truth's material (and immaterial) forms.

Holding space for doubt—a space of critical reflection that contains multiple truths or exposes the limits of truth—is a self-articulated strength of contemporary art. Doubt is part of nuanced thinking and ambiguity may be fertile ground for possibility and otherwise thinking. But Janus-faced doubt is also a tactic. The exhibition's title engages the paradoxical or impassable from the Greek word *aporos*. This impasse functions as an expression of real or pretend uncertainty that the works in the exhibition collectively query and channel.

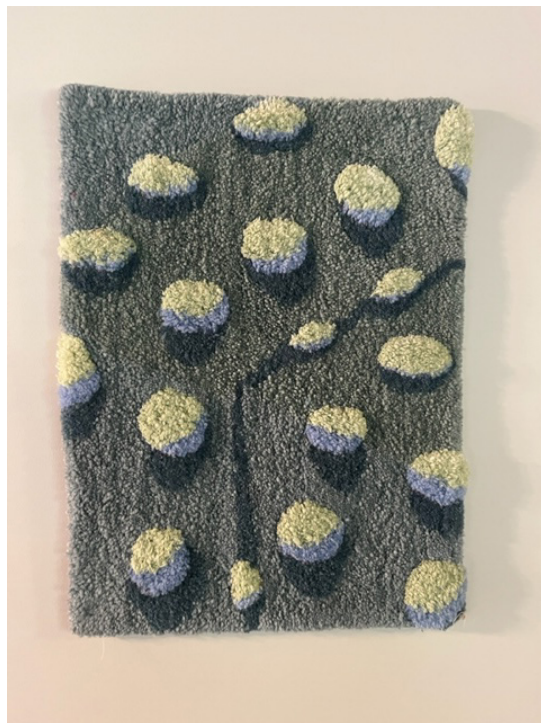
Indexical proof has always been a double-edged sword and art has tangled with our less-than-seamless belief in the image and the dubiousness of the image's power to witness. Social media and AI have led to a renewed power and doubt in what we see, hear and read. How images and texts are created and in what context they are seen are determinants in reception, requiring that we ask what is at stake when media and mediums construct realities through images and words that are inconvenient to power.

The works in the exhibition confront perception and examine power structures to variously query art histories, the patriarchy, capitalism, and the acquisition of knowledge. Elizabeth Zvonar's sculptural installation *Timing is Everything* (2006) positions two mirrors across from one another, etched with the astrological birth charts of the space mission Voyager I and 2, accompanied by texts exploring time and notions of the future, while her collages *Face* (2013) and *Gattamelata* (2020) reflect a re-examination of female representation, shifted consciousness and space for projection to open up a rewriting of accepted histories. Mark Lewis's film *From Third Beach 1* (2010) quotes the classic Hollywood technique of "day for night" in which the light of the sun is manipulated to stand in for the moon in filmmaking. In foregrounding this eerie and stylized footage—often only seen as a backdrop—Lewis reveals the perceptual slippages in image-making.

The stability of an image or text's meaning is called into question in Dani Gal's installation *Failed to Bind* (2013), which pairs two sets of slides: one of news images from the last four decades, the other of statements made by visual artists from the same time period. The images are decontextualized from their specific events and the artist statements are read in relation to images resulting in a visual experience that explores attitudes to history and truth, and how elements can be manipulated, reactivated or reinvented.

The certainty of images to deliver news or political messages is under transformation in Jalal Toufic's video *Saving Face* (2003), which documents political posters from a 2000 Lebanese parliamentary campaign being removed from city streets, revealing the layers of candidates as recombinant faces. The layered faces are sites where, in Toufic's words, "Lebanese culture in specific, and Arabic culture in general, mired in an organic view of the body, in an organic body, exposes itself to inorganic bodies."

Jenine Marsh's installation including three sculptures *How to Fulfill a Wish* (*Bronze, Silver, Gold*) (2023) considers social practices converging around the form of a public fountain that at once delivers water to a public and is also a site of symbolic wish-making. The works, in the form of wrapped fountains, include coins, preserved flowers, casts of feet and texts from the socialist newspaper *People's Voice* to investigate forms of belief and value. Azza El Siddique's installation *Solar Evocation* (2022) considers architectures of transformation and the instability of form to construct a narrative experience of a journey between this life and the next. The work engages a map and texts from the *Book of Two Ways*—a series of ancient Egyptian maps and spells related to the underworld—to posit an experience that history cannot hold over the course of circular time.



Colleen Brown, *Chenille*, 2022, wool yarn and embroidery floss on cotton/ acrylic carpet backing. Courtesy of the artist

Memory's materiality and texture is examined in Colleen Brown's sculptural works *Chenille* (2022) and *Semi-extendable* (2016), balancing narrative and the tactile, images and the gestural, craft and contemporary art. Collaborators Katie Kozak and Lucien Durey's hanging installation *Covers* (2023), a series of hand-dyed and marked bedsheets reminiscent of a rainbowed celestial sky, are compositions of kinship as well as invitations to be held in a space between, a space of indeterminacy, as well as of potential.

Artist Biographies

Colleen Brown (Canadian, b. 1965) is an artist, writer, educator and cultural worker who lives and works in Vancouver. Known primarily as a sculptor, Brown explores the relationships of objects and materials as a means of thinking through abstraction and social encounters. Brown holds a BFA from Emily Carr University and an MFA from Bard College. She is currently artist-in-residence with the City of Maple Ridge, and has participated in exhibitions and events at Cooper Cole, Toronto; Vancouver Art Gallery, Burrard Art Foundation and The Apartment, Vancouver; Western Gallery, Bellingham; and Hedreen Gallery, Seattle. Brown is the recipient of a 2016 Portfolio Prize. Brown's book *If you lie down in a field, she will find you there* was released in 2023 by Radiant Press.

Azza El Siddique (Sudanese, b. 1984) lives and works in New Haven, CT. Known for her large-scale sculptural environments, El Siddique combines steel and ceramic sculptures with ephemeral matter to explore ritual, mortality and memorialization. El Siddique holds an MFA from Yale University School of Art and a BFA from Ontario College of Art and Design University. Recent solo exhibitions have been presented at MIT List Visual Arts Centre, Cambridge; Bradley Ertaskiran, Montreal; Helena Anrather, New York; and Cooper Cole, Toronto. Her work has been included in group exhibitions at MOCA, Toronto; Gardiner Museum,



Azza El Siddique, *Solar Evocation* (detail), 2022, installation.
Courtesy of the artist and Bradley Ertaskiran, Montréal

Toronto; Oakville Galleries, Toronto; Shin Gallery, New York; and Green Hall Gallery, New Haven. She was a Skowhegan resident in 2019 and was a 2022 finalist for the Sobey Art Award.

Dani Gal (b. 1975, Jerusalem) lives and works in Berlin. His work takes the form of films, sound-works and installations to focus on the production of ideology through the representation of specific historical narratives. Using archival documents, Gal explores the relationship between image, sound and text to illuminate the processes of shaping collective memory. Gal studied at Bezalel Academy for Art and Design in Jerusalem, Staatliche Hochschule für Bildende Künste Städel Schule in Frankfurt and Cooper Union in New York. His films and installations have been shown at the 54th Venice Biennale; Istanbul Biennale; New Museum, New York; Kunsthalle St. Gallen,

Artist Biographies

Switzerland; The Jewish Museum, New York; Berlinale Forum Expanded; Kunsthaus Zurich; Kunsthalle Wien; Documenta 14; Centre Pompidou, Paris; Club TransMediale Festival Berlin; and Polygon Gallery, North Vancouver in 2024. In 2019 Gal was artist-in-residence with Blood Mountain Projects and research fellow at the Vienna Wiesenthal Institute, and in 2024 Gal will be a fellow inHerit in the Centre for Advanced Studies - Heritage in Transformation, Humboldt University, Berlin.

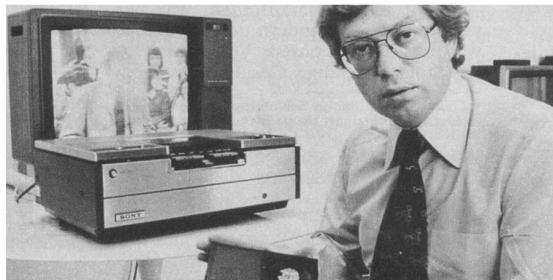
Katie Kozak (Canadian, b. 1985) and **Lucien Durey** (Canadian, b. 1984) have been collaborating together since 2012. **Katie Kozak** is a queer artist of Métis and Ukrainian settler descent. She grew up in Denare Beach, SK, and her ancestral roots are in the Métis communities of St. François Xavier and Boggy Creek, MB.

It's not always easy to stand aside and be unable
to do anything except record the sufferings around one.



Katie Kozak and Lucien Durey, *Covers* (detail), 2023, bedsheets, dye, beeswax and sea salt. Installation view, Gordon Smith Gallery of Canadian Art. Courtesy of the artists. Photo: Blaine Campbell

Kozak's visual art practice is centered around connectivity to land, relationship, ritual and traces. She holds an MFA from Simon Fraser University's School for the Contemporary Arts. Recent exhibitions of her work include those at Gordon Smith Gallery, North Vancouver; Vancouver Art Gallery; and the Vancouver Public Art Program. **Lucien Durey** is an artist, writer and singer based in Vancouver. His mixed



media and performance-based practice engages with found objects, photographs, sounds and place. Durey holds a BFA from Emily Carr University of Art and Design and an MFA from Simon Fraser University's School for the Contemporary Arts. Recent exhibitions include those at Gordon Smith Gallery, North Vancouver; School of Art Gallery, University of Manitoba, Winnipeg; Neutral Ground Contemporary Art Forum, Regina; with performances at Burnaby Art Gallery; Art in the Open, Charlottetown.

Mark Lewis (Canadian, b. 1958) is an artist based in London, UK. Known for his investigation of the cinematic image and its representation of modernity, Lewis is interested in exploring how the pictorial tradition "can continue through film and if so, how that tradition itself has been transformed by film." Lewis trained at Harrow College of Art and Polytechnic of Central London. He worked in Vancouver and Toronto before moving to the UK, where he is Professor of Fine Art at Central St. Martins College of Art and Design, University of the Arts, London. He is co-founder and co-editor of *Afterall - A Journal of Art, Context and Enquiry* and editor of *Afterall Books*. His works have been exhibited extensively in North America and internationally in solo exhibitions such as at The Power Plant, Toronto and the Musée du Louvre, Paris. In 2007, Lewis received the Gershon Iskowitz Prize and the Brit Art

Doc Foundation Award and in 2009, Lewis represented Canada at the Venice Biennale.

Jenine Marsh (Canadian, b. 1984) is an artist based in Toronto who uses sculpture and installation to explore themes of agency, mortality and value. She uses coins as well as other paraphernalia of exchange through serialized processes of destruction and transformation to cultivate illicit and intimate responses to the shared conditions of end-stage capitalism. Marsh received a BFA from the Alberta University of the Arts, and an MFA from the University of Guelph. Marsh's work has been exhibited at Cooper Cole, Toronto; Franz Kaka, Toronto; Centre Clark, Montreal; Vie d'ange, Montreal; Griffin Art Projects, Vancouver; Gianni Manhattan, Vienna; Union Pacific, London; Night Gallery,



Jenine Marsh, *How to Fulfill a Wish (Silver, Bronze, Gold)*, 2023, cast bronze, coins, newspaper clippings, epoxy clay, powdered pigment, nails, acrylic varnish, polyethylene tarp, polymer-based mortar and rigid foam. Courtesy of the artist and Cooper Cole, Toronto.

Artist Biographies

Los Angeles; Essex Flowers, New York; Palais de Tokyo, Paris; OSL Contemporary, Oslo; Entrée Gallery; and Lulu, Mexico City. She has been artist in residence at the Banff Centre for the Arts; AiR Bergen at USF Verftet, Bergen; La Datcha, Berlin; Rupert, Vilnius; and Vermont Studio Center, Johnson.



Jalal Toufic, *Saving Face* (still), 2003, video, 9 m.
Courtesy of the artist

Jalal Toufic (Lebanese, b. 1962) is a thinker, writer and artist. He was born in 1962 in Beirut or Baghdad and died before dying in 1989 in Evanston, Illinois. He is a professor of film studies at the American University in Cairo. He has made essay films and conceptual films and is the author of *What Was I Thinking?* (e-flux journal-Sternberg Press, 2017); *The Dancer's Two Bodies* (Sharjah Art Foundation, 2015); *Forthcoming* (2nd ed., e-flux journal-Sternberg Press, 2014); and *What Were You Thinking?* (Berliner

Künstlerprogramm/DAAD, 2011). His work has been included in Sharjah Biennials 6, 10 and 11; 9th Shanghai Biennale; San Francisco Museum of Modern Art; Centre Pompidou, Paris; MoMA PS1, Brooklyn; and MAXXI, Rome. He was a guest of the Artists-in-Berlin Program of the DAAD in 2011, and Director of the School of Visual Arts at the Lebanese Academy of Fine Arts, Alba 2015–18.

Elizabeth Zvonar (Canadian, b. 1972) is an artist based in Vancouver. She makes objects and pictures that think through metaphor and the metaphysical, often using humour and referencing art history. Zvonar graduated from Emily Carr University of Art and Design, after having studied at the Aichi Gakusen University in Toyota City, Japan and the Hokkaido University of Art & Design in Sapporo, Japan. She has had solo exhibitions at SFU Audain Gallery, Vancouver; Polygon Gallery, North Vancouver; Daniel Faria Gallery, Toronto. Her work has been exhibited at the Southern Alberta Art Gallery, Lethbridge; Vancouver Art Gallery; Musée d'Art de Joliette, Quebec; and Aga Khan Museum, Toronto. Zvonar has held residencies at Malaspina Printmakers, the Banff Centre, and was a City of Vancouver's Artist in Residence 2012-15. She has received awards and recognition including the Jack and Doris Shadbolt Foundation's VIVA Award and was a finalist

List of Works

Colleen Brown

Semi-extendable, 2016

stainless steel and dishtowel

dimensions variable

Courtesy of the artist

Colleen Brown

Chenille, 2022

wool yarn and embroidery floss on
cotton/acrylic carpet backing

62.0 x 47.5 cm

Courtesy of the artist

Colleen Brown

Dish Towel Rumped, 2023

wool yarn on cotton/acrylic carpet
backing

41.5 x 54.5 cm

Courtesy of the artist

Colleen Brown

Swamp, 2023

oil on paper

31.0 x 40.8 cm

Courtesy of the artist

Azza El Siddique

Solar Evocation, 2022

installation and video

dimensions variable

Courtesy of the artist and Bradley
Ertaskiran, Montreal



Elizabeth Zvonar, *Face*, 2013, inkjet print mounted to Dibond.
Collection of Amy Kazymierchuk

for the AIMIA|AGO Photography Prize in 2016. Her work was included in the 2021 Gestalten publication *The Art of Protest, Political Art + Activism* as well as the 2023 Phaidon publication *Vitamin C+ Collage in Contemporary Art*.

List of Works

Dani Gal

Failed to Bind, 2013

2-channel 80 35 mm slide installation
dimensions variable

Courtesy of the artist and Kadel
Willborn, Düsseldorf

Katie Kozak and Lucien Durey

Covers, 2023

bedsheets, dye, beeswax and sea salt
dimensions variable

Courtesy of the artists

Jenine Marsh

How to Fulfill a Wish (Bronze), 2023

cast bronze, coins, newspaper clippings,
epoxy clay, powdered pigment, nails,
acrylic varnish, polyethylene tarp,
polymer-based mortar and rigid foam
172.7 x 172.7 x 33.0 cm

Courtesy of the artist and Cooper Cole,
Toronto

Jenine Marsh

How to Fulfill a Wish (Gold), 2023

cast bronze, coins, newspaper clippings,
epoxy clay, powdered pigment, nails,
acrylic varnish, polyethylene tarp,
polymer-based mortar and rigid foam,
172.7 x 172.7 x 36.8 cm

Courtesy of the artist and Cooper Cole,
Toronto

Jenine Marsh

How to Fulfill a Wish (Silver), 2023

cast bronze, coins, newspaper clippings,
epoxy clay, powdered pigment, nails,
acrylic varnish, polyethylene tarp,
polymer-based mortar and rigid foam,
172.7 x 172.7 x 31.0 cm

Courtesy of the artist and Cooper Cole,
Toronto

Jenine Marsh

Optimism, 2023

lighting, gels, saliva and pressed flowers
dimensions variable

Courtesy of the artist and Cooper Cole,
Toronto

In main gallery and gallery windows

Jenine Marsh

Untitled (Coins and Nails), 2023

coins, powdered pigment, acrylic varnish
and nails

dimensions variable

Courtesy of the artist and Cooper Cole,
Toronto

Jalal Toufic

Saving Face, 2003

video

7 m 20 s

Courtesy of the artist

Elizabeth Zvonar

Timing is Everything, 2006

mirror with reverse sandblasted image of the astrological birth charts of Voyager 1 and 2, text panels and wood mirror frame dimensions variable

Courtesy of the artist and Daniel Faria Gallery, Toronto

On the Belkin Outdoor Screen

Mark Lewis

From Third Beach 1, 2010

35 mm film transferred to video, edition 1/3
3 m 41 s

Collection of the Morris and Helen Belkin Art Gallery, gift of Roger Larry and Sandra Tomc, 2015

Elizabeth Zvonar

Face, 2013

inkjet print on dibond
120.7 x 76.2 cm

Collection of Amy Kazymierchuk

At the Walter C. Koerner Library

1958 Main Mall

Elizabeth Zvonar

Gattamelata, 2020

vinyl

Courtesy of the artist and Daniel Faria Gallery, Toronto



Elizabeth Zvonar, *Gattamelata*, 2020, vinyl. Courtesy of the artist and Daniel Faria Gallery, Toronto

Aporia (Notes to a Medium) is curated by Melanie O'Brian and made possible with the generous support of the Canada Council for the Arts, the Province of British Columbia through the BC Arts Council and our Belkin Curator's Forum members. This exhibition is part of the 2024 Capture Photography Festival Selected Exhibition Program.

Programs and Events

For details, visit belkin.ubc.ca

To arrange an exhibition tour for groups and classes, email belkin.tours@ubc.ca

Artist Talks with Azza El Siddique and Jenine Marsh

Thursday, January 11 from 5 to 6 pm

Opening reception

Thursday, January 11 from 6 to 8 pm

Reading Group: Zach Blas and Hito Steyerl

Wednesday, January 24 at 4 pm

Artist talk with Zach Blas and Jayne Wilkinson, a collaboration with Critical Image Forum

Thursday, February 1 at 5 pm

Conversation with Colleen Brown, Elizabeth Zvonar and Jamie Hilder

Saturday, March 9 at 2 pm

Conversation with Katie Kozak and Lucien Durey

Thursday, March 21 at 12 pm (online, via Zoom)

Screening of Jalal Toufic's *Variations on Guilt and Innocence in 39 Steps*

Saturday, April 6 at 2 pm and

Saturday, April 13 at 2 pm

on the Belkin Outdoor Screen

Concert with UBC Contemporary Players

Wednesday, April 10 at 2 pm



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Capture Photography Festival