

# *SHE PRESSES A FLOWER TO HER CHEEK:* *A Feminist Revisioning of Colour Theory*

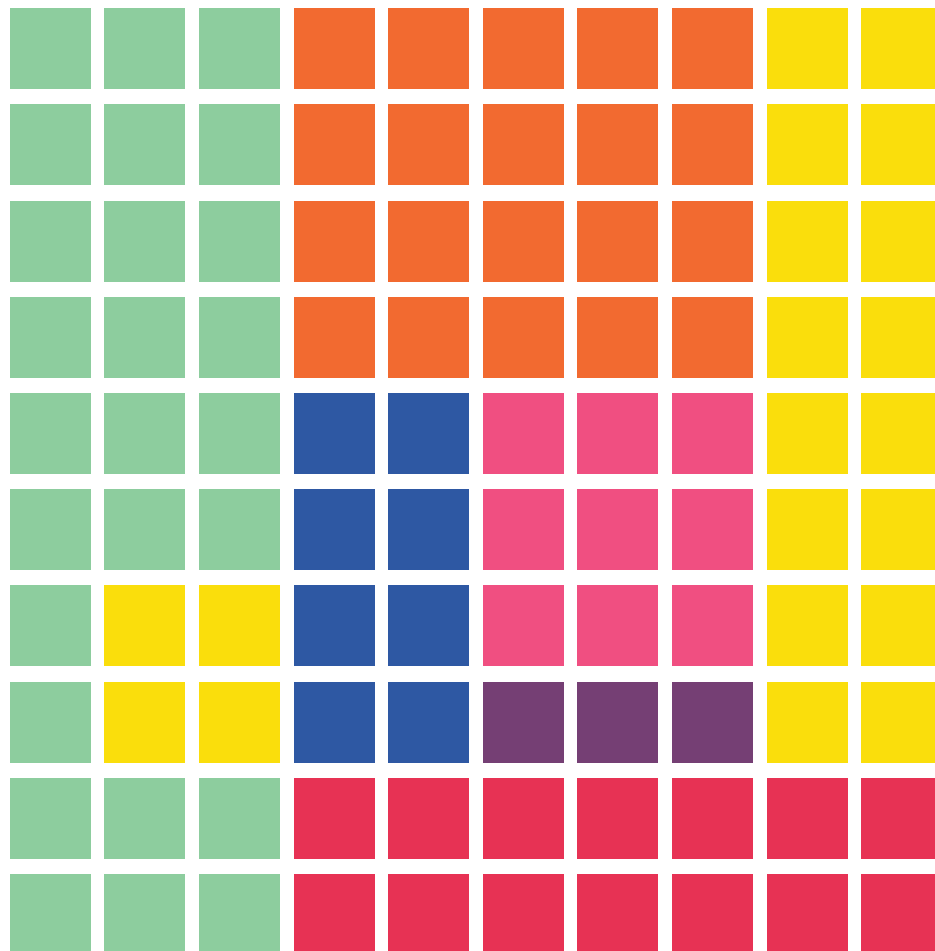
Works from the School of  
Art's Community:

ALYSSA BORNN  
LEIGH BRIDGES  
CASSANDRA COCHRANE  
JANINE-ANNETTE LITTMANN  
EKENE MADUKA  
HANNA REIMER  
LIV VALMESTAD

*Featuring*

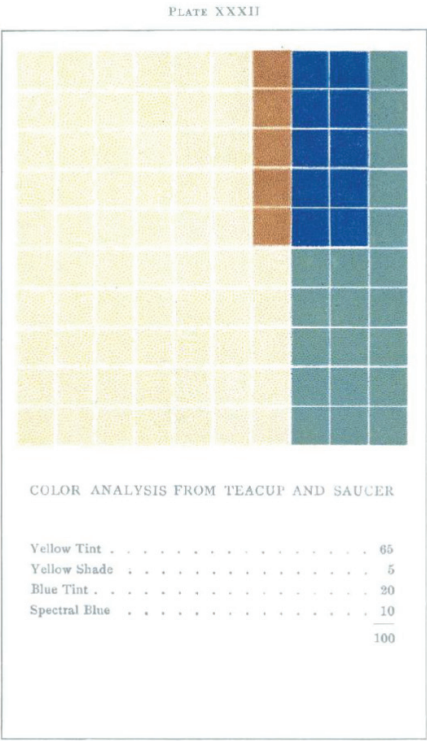
Works from the School of Art  
Gallery's Permanent Collection:

JOSEF ALBERS  
JUDITH ALLSOPP  
PATRICIA FULFORD  
EMILY HALLUQTALIK  
VASILY KANDINSKY  
WANDA KOOP  
AUDREY RILLER  
ELIZABETH WILLMOTT

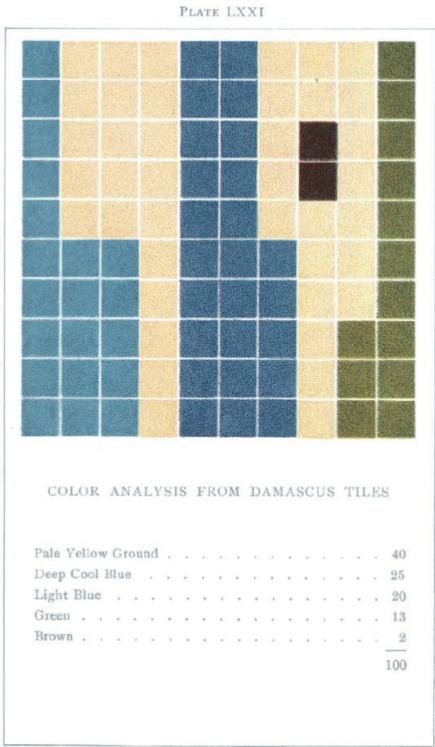
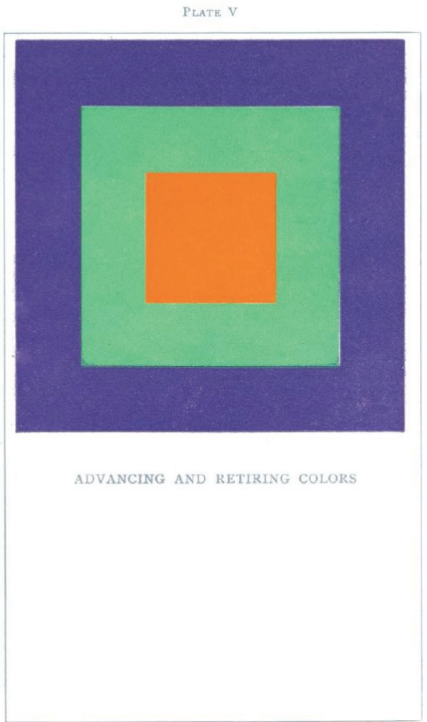


*Curated by Genevieve Farrell*

FEBRUARY 13- MARCH 8, 2019



Emily Noyes Vanderpoel in her New York studio. Image courtesy Litchfield Historical Society.



L-R, Top - Bottom: Pages 115, 88, and 154 of Emily Noyes Vanderpoel's *Color Problems*.

In 1901, the little known American artist Emily Noyes Vanderpole published her book *Color Problems: A practical manual for the lay student of color*. Disguised under the genre of flower painting and decorative arts, (subjects considered appropriate for a woman of her time), Vanerpole's 400-page tome provides a comprehensive overview of the key ideas related to colour theory at the time, as well as her own original approaches to colour analysis and interaction. Seeming to stumble upon a minimalist aesthetic and mid-century modernist design decades prior to the conception of these movements, her ideas would later be popularized by men. Indeed, working some 50 odd years after Vanderpole, art historical icons such as Josef Albers and Wassily Kandinsky are now prevalent names within Western art departments.

Reflecting on the immense and ongoing work that is being done to bring female voices into prominence within art historical canons, the exhibition *She Presses a Flower to Her Cheek: A Feminist Revisioning of Colour Theory* begins from within the School of Art Gallery's permanent collection while thinking through the legacy of women artists and their work with colour theory and design. Considering the flower - one of nature's most intense sources of colour, and a universal symbol of the female or the feminine, and in turn, the role of colour in female life; in her wardrobe and textiles, her makeup, home interior, and many other facets of everyday life, the exhibit references art historian Linda Nochlin by asking "why have there been no great woman colour theorists?"

Responding to the lack of work by female artists in the SOAG's permanent collection, the exhibit enlists the work of 7 contemporary Winnipeg based artists in pointing towards the thoughtful and carefully considered use of colour and design within female art practises. Creating an intergenerational dialogue between historic and contemporary female artists, the exhibit examines the ways in which colour has been used to understand and communicate a sense of outer and inner worlds and emotions. Please join us at the School of Art Gallery from February 13 to March 8, 2019, in celebrating the vibrant and joyful work of 13 female artists in dialogue with prominent colour theorists Kandinsky and Albers.



AUDREY RILLER

(Canadian, b. 1934)

*She Presses a Flower to Her Cheek*, 1975

serigraph, A/P

Gift of Bill Lobchuk

The artwork from which this exhibition takes its name, *She Presses a Flower to Her Cheek* (1975) is exemplary of the vibrant fem aesthetic Audrey-Ann Riller cultivated over the course of her 40-year career. Employing a bold colour palate and design elements to frame the central character; a young woman and her matching red headed cat, the scene exudes the warmth and joy of a carefully constructed home interior. Sitting comfortably in the nude, the woman appears completely at ease, immersed within her dizzying 1970's floral patterned wallpapers, sea foam green pinstripe curtains and checkered pink and purple floor tiles. These colour combinations, while perhaps a bit much, are for me as evocative and charming as the title Riller has given to her artwork.



WANDA KOOP

(Canadian b. 1951)

*Sightline (orange line)*, 1999

acrylic on canvas

Gift of the artist

"I always think of myself as a visual language researcher. I've spent a lifetime researching colour, and it became this vehicle for me to talk about an environment that was in some ways familiar but also overwhelming for me."

Wanda Koop in conversation with Michael Slenske

Wallpaper Magazine. Sept. 5, 2016.

[www.wallpaper.com/art/in-absentia-wanda-koops-abstract-cityscapes-at-toronto-division-gallery](http://www.wallpaper.com/art/in-absentia-wanda-koops-abstract-cityscapes-at-toronto-division-gallery)

In her painting series *Sightline*, Wanda Koop filters vast landscapes through the lens of colour field abstraction. Placing the viewer within a dense vista of intensely colorful brushstrokes, Koop consciously juxtaposes highlighter yellow against khaki and faded out blues and pinks, in a successful attempt to creating perspectival shifts. The canvas plane appears almost in a state of flux, rolling like water, pulling the viewer in and out of an immersive environment. Looking at *Sightline (orange line)*, the viewer's eye shifts back and forth between the ephemeral abstract hard yellow line and representational sea, sky, and mountain air in the distance.





EMILY HALLUQTALIK  
(Inuit-Canadian b. Uqsuqtuuq, 1934)  
*Untitled*, n.d.  
felt and thread  
Gift of Magda Linka Bihler

Emily Halluqtalik's bold graphic imagery is grounded in multi-layered personal and mythological storytelling. Her manipulation of biomorphic shapes in brightly contrasting colours against a solid backdrop works to create a sense of movement and play. The colorful animal-human creatures which appear to dance, swim and leap, are frequent subjects of wall-hanging imagery, central to Inuit traditional belief in man-animal transformations. The vivid colour combination also work to challenge notions of the North as a frozen, barren, all white, or static tundra. Quite to the contrary, the hamlet of Uqsuqtuuq ("place of plenty blubber" in Inuktitut) from which Halluqtalki hails, is dappled with beautiful multi-colored wildflowers each summer.



WASSILY KANDINSKY  
(Russian b. 1866-1944)  
*Untitled*, 1939  
Colored Ink  
Gift of Dr. Evelyn Shapiro

"Color directly influences the soul. Color is the keyboard, the eyes are the hammers, the soul is the piano with many strings," - Wassily Kandinsky in his book *Concerning the Spiritual in Art* (1911)

Wassily Kandinsky was a Russian painter and art theorist who is believed to have had synaesthesia, a rare neurological condition that results in the merging of senses that aren't usually connected. In Kandinsky's case, he would literally see colors when he heard music, and hear music when he painted. Exploring this criss crossing of sensations, Kandinsky is largely credited with having pioneered the abstract art movement. He also conceived experimental performance-based expressions of synesthesia. His theatrical peice, *The Yellow Sound* utilized original musical scores, lighting, and various media to explore prevalent color theories of his time.



Patricia Fulford photographed by Bob Olsen for the Toronto Star, (June 1967).

Image via: [www.torontopubliclibrary.ca/detail.jsp?Entt=RDMDC-TSPA\\_0103842F&R=DCTSPA\\_0103842F&searchPageType=vrl](http://www.torontopubliclibrary.ca/detail.jsp?Entt=RDMDC-TSPA_0103842F&R=DCTSPA_0103842F&searchPageType=vrl)

## PATRICIA FULFORD

(Canadian, b. 1935)

*Untitled (Plexi Sculpture)*, 1970

plexiglass

Gift of the artist

Toronto born artist Patricia Fulford studied and taught at the Ontario College of Art throughout the 1950s and 1960s. Her *Untitled* plexiglass sculpture demonstrates a keen eye for composing line and form into harmonious architectural forms. Playing with the black, white and transparent geometric colour structures, this small-scale sculpture works out of the tradition of geometric abstraction.

In the photograph to the left, Fulford is seen posing with two of her artworks; one, a wood painted totemic sculpture, the other, a dress which she designed and wore for the opening of her 1967 solo exhibition in Toronto.

## ELIZABETH WILLMOTT

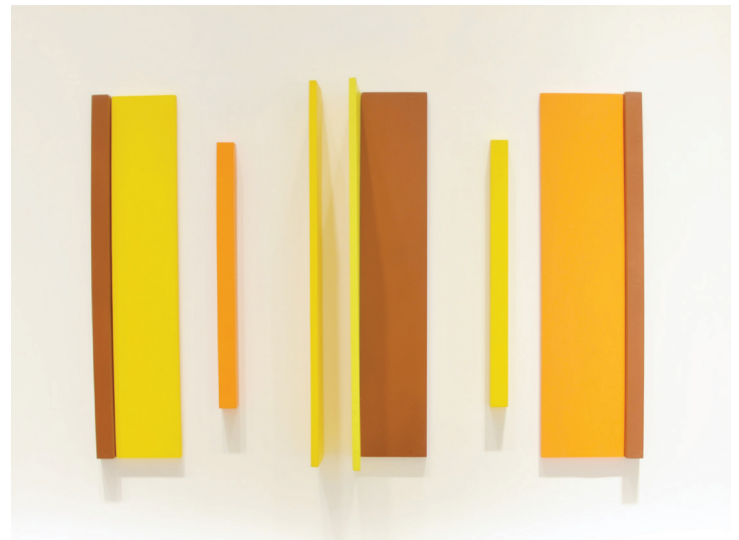
(Canadian-American b. 1928)

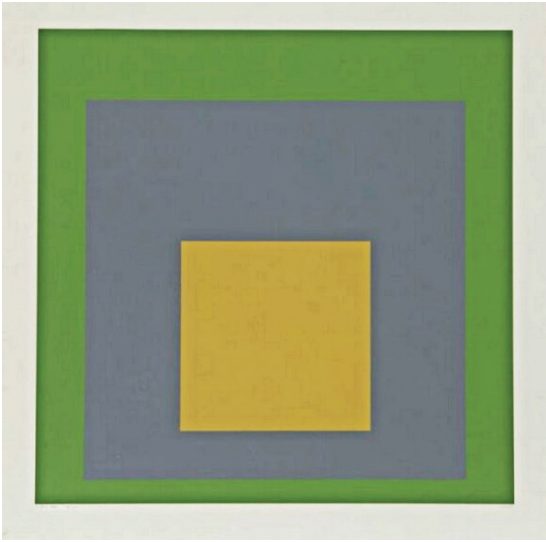
*Relief Structure*, 1963

Plexi glass and painted wood

On loan from Dr. Oliver Botar

Elizabeth Willmott is a Winnipeg based artist who was a part of the Structuralists movement. Structuralists regarded colour as the essential element in the instrumentation or 'structure' of the complex world around us. Rooted in scientific theories and close observations of the natural world, Willmott's work endeavors to interpret systems of biological activity (growth, decay, the movement or transfer of energy) through the universal language of form and colour. Her large scale three-dimensional compositions such as the one seen here, feature arrangements of relief elements; groupings of long thin blocks or cubes at varying heights and colours in an attempt to understand nature's dynamic state of being; at once solid, real and stable, yet forever in flux.





JOSEF ALBERS  
(American-German 1888-1976)  
*SP VIII*, 1967  
Lithograph, I/V

Josef Albers was a German artist and teacher who fled Nazi Germany in the early 1930's. Settling in the United States, Albers would go on to established himself as the most influential name in color theory through his teaching and writings as a professor at Yale University. His book *Interaction of Colors* (1963) remains a prominent text in Western contemporary arts education. In this book, Albers emphasizes the instability and relativity of perceived colours and the power of visual training in the process of make sense of how to predict, control and manipulate these uncertain outcomes. Albers is best known for his *Homage to the Square* series which he created over a 26-year period. *SP VIII*, (1967) is one example of the hundreds of variations on this basic compositional scheme (three or four squares set within and upon one other) that he produced. A seemingly narrow conceptual framework, Alber's Squares reveal the remarkable complexity of colour perception.



JUDITH ALLSOPP  
(American-Canadian, b. 1943)  
*Apache*, 1977  
acrylic and ink on paper  
Gift of Dr. Evelyn Shapiro

Judith Allsopp was an American-born artist who lived in Winnipeg through the 1970s. During her time in the city she was closely involved with The Grand Western Canadian Screen Shop. Her gestural paintings present a confidence in spontaneity typical of abstract expressionism. In work *Apache*, energetic brushstrokes and slatches of dripping paint spring to life, demonstrating her studied sense of colour interplay and composition.





EKENE MADUKA  
*Embodying Ala*  
oil on canvas  
2019

Ekene Maduka is a Nigerian artist based in Canada. She is in her third year of studies at the University of Manitoba's School of Art. Using her own body and personal experiences as subject matter and material for her artistic practice, Maduka's paintings reflect upon and call attention to the black female body. Using an intersectional feminist lens, Maduka sets out to investigate the "gaze" between subject and viewer. Throughout her work, colours, whether those used to render detailed fabrics or the skin of her subjects, become significant elements in the exchange of meaning, experience, cultural heritage and memory. Indeed, every space and fabric Maduka includes within her painted narrative works are particular to the specific story she is choosing to share. In *Embodying Ala* (2019), one of Maduka's newest works, red-ochre paint is used to render overlapping outlines of the artist's unclothed body. One of oldest known natural pigments in the world, the selection of a red-ochre paint works to draw links to ancient human history, the archives and scripture.

CASSANDRA CHOCHRANE  
*He Helps Me Grow*  
Silkscreen with embroidery and beadwork overlay  
2018

Cassandra Cochrane is a 3rd year Anishinaabe student at the (U of M) School of Art. Her preferred medium is beadwork and sewing. She enjoys creating work that encourages and provokes conversations surrounding contemporary Indigenous peoples; addressing stereotypes and painting Indigenous people in a positive light. Through the exploration of colour, Cochrane has created a hanging textile which mixes traditional imagery with contemporary mediums. This piece is about her relationship with her spouse and the positive impact he has had upon her life.

"Through love, I was able to grow as a person and an artist. The beauty of flowers and the complexities of the colours is a representation of those beautiful and complex aspects of navigating romantic relationships." Casandra Cochrane.







HANNA REIMER  
*Grace 1*  
 latex house paint on board  
 2019



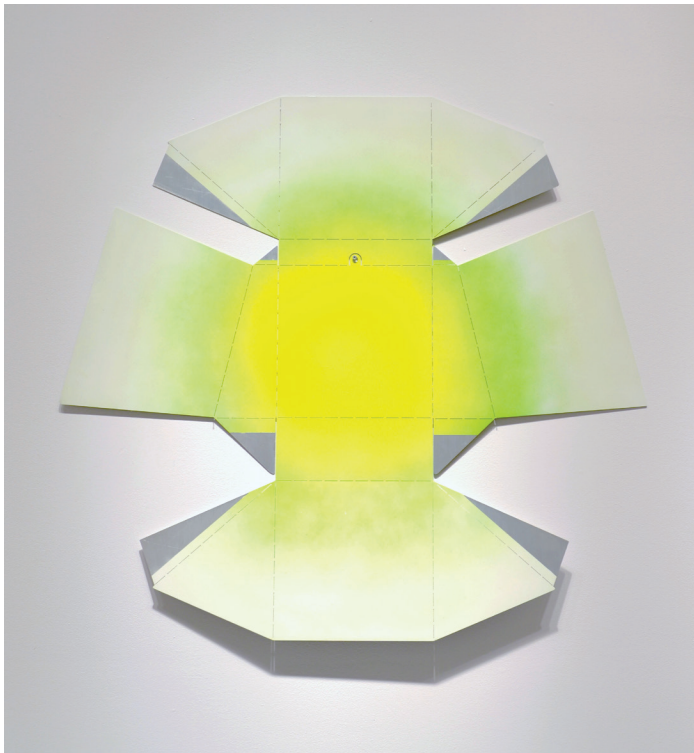
*Grace 2*  
 latex house paint on board  
 2019

Hanna Reimer is a multidisciplinary artist in her third year of Fine Arts at the University of Manitoba. Experimenting with fabrics, silkscreen, ceramics, and painting, Reimer sets out to explore the nature of language, disconnect and awareness. Throughout her work, strips of colorful patterned fabrics become placeholders for deeper meaning. The folds and crumples of a bed sheet directly translating to the desired and actual outcomes of significant personal relationships. In *Grace 1* and *Grace 2* Reimer reflects on the nature of her relationship with her younger sister. Using paint samples and mis-tints picked up from Home Depot, chance and randomness paired with intentional and thoughtful use of colour, inform the construction of her paintings. In these paintings, wall-paint and architectural folds link the work to a home interior, perhaps the most significant sight wherein which most familial relationships are formed, contested and experienced.



ALYSSA BORNN  
*Sketch / Draft for a Room*  
*(Summoning a Likeness)*  
 installation  
 2019

Alyssa Bornn is a Winnipeg based interdisciplinary artist working primarily in photo-adjacent fields. Her work engages themes of nostalgia, domestic space, and archival failings through traditional photographic methods, digital means of image making and manipulation, as well as physical constructions that are informed by the language and tropes of lens-based practices. She seeks out and constructs scenarios that embrace a failing of photography to hold things in place.



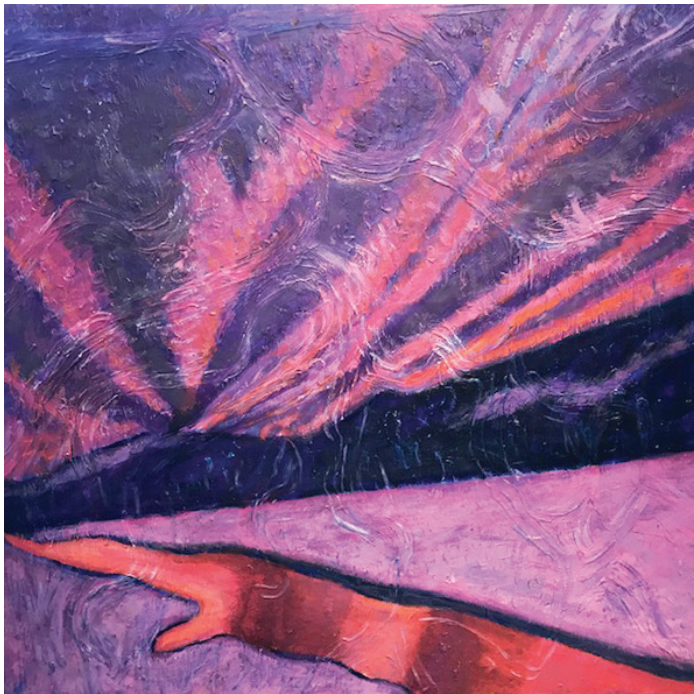
LEIGH BRIDGES

*Colour Field Cookstove Flat Pack (Spring 8am)*

Acrylic spray paint on aluminum

2016

Leigh Bridges is Canadian artist based in Winnipeg, Manitoba. She has a professional practice which spans the fields of art and graphic design. Building from an investigation of atmospheric landscape and the optical phenomenon of light and color, her most recent work represents an expanding conversation between modernist forms, landscape and DIY designed technologies. Through painting, sculpture and printed poster design Bridges has been imagining technologies that interface between people and natural systems, such as the “Colour Field Cook Stove” sculptures. These painted aluminum sculptures are modified from a functioning flat-packed and folded solar cook stove designed to be sold to off-the-grid communities. Whereas the original open-source cook stove used metallic reflective foil to focus the sun’s heat, these sculptures use radiant color and tone to generate optical “heat”.



LIV VALMESTAD

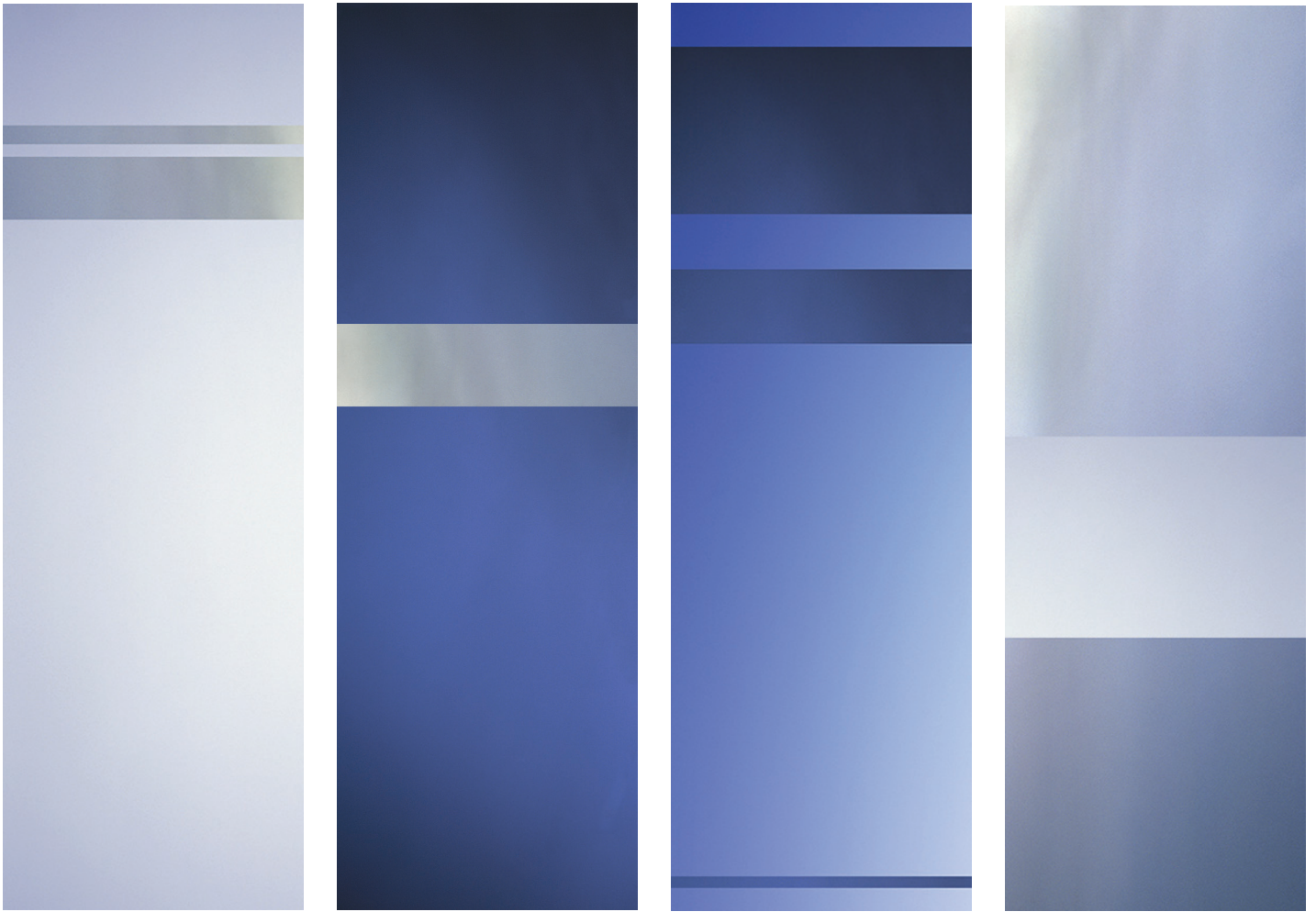
*Analagous Engerdal*

acrylic on wood

2018

Liv Valmestad is a Norwegian – Canadian artist who lives and works in Winnipeg. Her paintings range from representational landscapes to total abstractions. Experimenting with colour, shape and pattern, Valmestad will often build up layers of paint upon her canvas in order to create vibrantly textured, harmonious fields of line and colour. *Analagous Engerdal* (2018) continues her investigation into landscape and light. Breaking down geographic forms into blanketed zones of various pink and purple tonalities, Valmestad’s brushwork guides the viewer’s eye in, out and around the picture plane, resulting in a sense of play and energy especially exuded in her choice of colour.





JANINE-ANNETTE LITTMANN

*Paper & Sky Series*

photographs on paper

2018

Janine-Annette Littmann is multidisciplinary artist who has lived across Canada including Vancouver, Montréal, Iqaluit, and now Winnipeg. Using photography and textiles Littmann's artistic practice investigates human relationship to land and place. Her *Paper & Sky Series* juxtaposes strips of skylscapes she has captured from the various places she has resided. The rectangular bars of varying shades of blue call to mind the art of 1960s colourfield painters, whose works were largely characterized by large areas of a more or less flat single colours. In the case of Littmann's Paper & Sky Series, blocks and lines of sky blue wash over the viewer while calling into question the nature of place and identity.





UNIVERSITY  
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## School of Art Gallery

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Canada

255 ARTlab  
180 Dafoe Road  
Winnipeg, MB. R3T2N2  
[gallery@umanitoba.ca](mailto:gallery@umanitoba.ca)  
[umanitoba.ca/schools/art/gallery/](http://umanitoba.ca/schools/art/gallery/)