

## Tracy Stefanucci: Making space for artist publishing

Situated at an intersection of disciplines—namely the visual arts, literary arts and/or graphic design—publication presents a unique space of inquiry that is often complemented by interdisciplinary practice, collaboration, or co-production. With an interest in this particular context, Project Space explores publication as an artistic medium.

Project Space is a non-profit organization that operates the Vancouver Art/Book Fair (VA/BF), Project Space Press, and *OCW Magazine*, influenced by Matthew Stadler of Publication Studio's definition of publication:

Publication is the creation of a public. It is an essentially political act. This public, which is more than a market, is created by deliberate acts: the circulation of texts, discussions and gatherings in physical space, the maintenance of a digital commons. Together these construct a space of conversation that is a public space which beckons a public into being.<sup>1</sup>

The anchor of Project Space activities is VA/BF, the only international art book fair in Canada, the first established on the West Coast, and one of only three in North America. Two days of programs, performances, and interventions by local and international presenters pair with four floors of exhibitors and installations to create a hospitable environment for Vancouver's art publishing community to grow, connect, share, and establish its presence with a local public and an international community. In 2013, the second annual VA/BF attracted 1,245 attendees—a quarter of whom attended programs and performances—and filled three rooms of the Vancouver Art Gallery Annex with publishers from around the globe.

Project Space publishes art books, catalogues, and zines via Project Space Press; the serial artists' publication *OCW Magazine*, which serves as a platform for various curatorial interests while also interrogating the ways form and content can create experiences or meaning for a reader/viewer; and investigations of past, pres-

1 From Matthew Stadler's keynote address "What is Publication?" at Richard Hugo House's writers' conference "Finding Your Audience in the 21st Century," on May 22, 2010. View at <<http://vimeo.com/14888791>>.

ent, and future art publishing—particularly in Vancouver—via the Project Space blog at [projectspace.ca](http://projectspace.ca). The organization also produces curatorial projects and events that contribute to dialogues about artist publishing, and it sells local and international art publications.

Formerly operating out of a storefront at 222 E Georgia Street, Project Space recently moved two blocks north to a studio in UNIT/PITT Projects' new building at 236 E Pender in order to focus its limited organizational capacity on VA/BF, as well as on publishing and curatorial projects. Plans to offer open studio hours where visitors can browse and purchase publications, work on projects, exchange ideas, and connect w-ith community members are in the works. Over 2014, Project Space will also launch new components of the five-part issue *OCW #21: Feminisms*—which explores women's representations in the arts and features work by Amber Dawn, leannej, Heidi Nagtegaal, Alex Leslie, and listen chen—and a collaborative serial publication *Post-Post-Print*, a dialogue about contemporary print artist publishing that takes place between practitioners in Vancouver and Dundee, Scotland.

### **Clint Burnham: In defense of lost causes**

When the David Gilmour scandal broke last fall I was pulling into Toronto—on the train, from London. I'd been in Southern Ontario for almost a week, giving talks at a psychoanalysis conference at the University of Toronto, and then at the Theory & Criticism Centre and the Fine Arts department at the University of Western Ontario. Sitting on the train, early in the afternoon of Wednesday, September 25, I saw these tweets coming in on my phone, mocking Gilmour's pronouncements, apparently anti-woman, anti-everything but middle aged white male writers. There seemed to be two issues in that scandal (and unlike journalists or self-loathing academics, I don't consider university or literary politics to be inconsequential): one institutional, one pedagogical. The first is that the university, and specifically the University of Toronto, is not just a monolithic authority: it's the site for struggle, controversy, disagreement. So the U of T that I attended for this conference, at New College, a conference that in its first panel discussion was talking about trans sexualities and psychoanalysis, is a very different U of T from that which hires

David Gilmour to teach literature. At New College, well turned-out young women were “queering” the men’s washroom, as I suddenly realized—don’t know if that’s happened to Gilmour. So it’s about how and why a prize-winning middlebrow novelist who writes about leaving his kid to be snatched (fiction) and teaching his kid how to watch films (non-fiction?) is hired to teach literature (as opposed, say, to creative writing). Now, I think universities should hire writers to teach, and even to teach literature. But when they try to grab some of the luster of CanLit, it isn’t just the spectre of a scandal that should make them take pause: it’s also the kind of crap teaching that may result. The second issue is around that pedagogy—Gilmour seems to be arguing that he only teaches literature (or books or writers, it isn’t clear) that he loves or knows. I agree with that to a certain extent—I don’t teach a lot of books that I hate (whether a “classic” or not—there are always workarounds). But (and here the psychoanalysis returns), I think that it’s not so much teaching what you know, as what you don’t know, what puzzles you about a text—perhaps the radically different subjectivity or history (slave narratives, queer comics about the 70s), perhaps the lingering conceptual or theoretical questions (Stein, Benjamin), perhaps just because any literature worth teaching or writing about keeps being unsettled, unknown.

### **Sonnet L’Abbé: A Space for Soft Fascination**

Recently, sports medicine researchers “discovered” what poets—be they Virgil’s lolling swains, Lake District wanderers, or field naturalists like Don McKay—have known since the dawn of rhyme. The brain activity of walkers in a green environment was less frustrated, less engaged (here meaning a “hard” engagement as when one plays a videogame), less aroused and more meditative than those of people moving through urban or commercial streets.

This fall, poet and educator Nancy Holmes, whose own writing insists on the centrality of place to the poet’s vision, announced the launch of UBC-O’s Eco Culture Centre, “an innovative multi-use space where visiting artists, scholars, and graduate students can live, work, create and research...in a stimulating, natural setting.” A former residential home and acreage developed in partnership with the Regional District of the Central Okanagan, the Eco Culture Centre sits on heavily



forested land that is part of a natural wildlife corridor that runs from craggy highlands in Myra Bellevue Provincial Park down to Okanagan Lake. Holmes calls the retreat-like property, nestled within the urban area of Kelowna's lower Mission, "the culmination of a long-held dream." The Centre will host its first visiting artists, poets Don McKay and Camille Martin, in January 2014.

The concept of the rustic artist's retreat is hardly new, nor is the concept of the interdisciplinary ecological centre. But UBC-O's space, because it is artist-led, is a place where researchers from many other disciplines will experience, under the observation of creative researchers, the kind of meditative green thought that occurs in a green shade. As a community beyond artists are encouraged to consciously experience and yet still analytically parse the restorative benefit of time spent in wild spaces, the states of awe, pleasure, attentiveness, ecocentredness and creativity documented by nature poets are demystified, brought back into the discourses of mental health, ecology and technology.

Harvard art historian Jennifer L. Roberts speaks of the value of teaching "deceleration, patience and immersive attention" to students living in an on-demand world. Her insistence that her students look at a painting for three full hours before writing about it reminds me of biologist Louis Agassiz asking his student to look at a fish for three days to hone his powers of observation. This sustained practice of open attention, that seamless inward/outward contemplation that takes place through "immersion in nature" is intrinsic to naturalist approaches to poetry. It stands in ironic distinction from the kind of hyperfocused, aroused attention gamers experience as they enter the "immersive" experience of digital games.

If the quantitative folks have now graphed the mind's movement at the sight of the daffodil and blackbird, of what use now is nature poetry? I'm excited at the Eco Cultural Centre's capacity to pose nature poetry as the translation of a kind of cognitive health, of the gentle, open attention psychologists Rachel and Steven Kaplan have called "soft fascination," of a mindful physiological relationship of the human body to other natural forms.

Aspinall, P., et al. "The urban brain: analysing outdoor physical activity with mobile EEG." *British Journal of Sports Medicine*. 6 Mar. 2013. Online.

Kaplan, Rachel, and Kaplan, Steven. *The Experience of Nature: A Psychological Perspective*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1989.

Roberts, Jennifer L. "The Power of Patience." *Harvard Magazine* (Nov.-Dec. 2013). Online.

## Oana Avasilichioaei: Plusieurs Montréalais

In any one city, many cities often coexist simultaneously, impacting each other, interweaving, coalescing and dispersing. So it is with Montreal, une ville qui contient plusieurs Montréalais. Of particular interest to me is a Montreal in which several bridges are being simultaneously attempted, viaducts that bridge the edges of language (between the many Frenches and Englishes that proliferate, certainly, but also between many others), and bridges that traverse the bounds of artistic fields and modes of thought, making these edges, à travers des ponts, more porous, an active site of exchange, instability, flow. In recent years, I have seen an increase in these cross-pollinations through multilingual and multidisciplinary works, events and exchanges. These works enact the citizen as a fissured, multiple site that reacts to/with/against others, and with a sense of responsibility towards others. These events speak out of a place of difference, against uniformizing forces (such as the recent proposition of the “Quebec Charter of Values” that promotes a uniformity racist and exclusionary in its intent, though couched in the language of liberalism). These exchanges contribute to making this island metropolis open, curious, cosmopolitan. These movements circulate not only within the city but also out of the city towards other places, where they interact with varied currents, which then seep back into the city.

As an example, a brief survey of recent pollinating happenings:

- A series of readings, discussions and exchanges in New York around the publication of *Aufgabe* (Litmus Press), featuring an extensive section of current vital poetries in Quebec’s literary weather, and *Theory: A Sunday* (Belladonna), a translation of the seminal feminist work *Théorie: Une Dimanche* by Louky Bersianik, Nicole Brossard, Louise Cotnoir, Louise Dupré, Gail Scott, and France Théoret.

- “Image Invisibles” in Montreal, an aural evening of collaborations between four writers (Daniel Canty, Simon Dumas, Renée Gagnon, David Leblanc) and four sound artists (Mathieu Campagna, Antoine Caron, Marc Doucet, Miriane Rouillard) from Montreal and Quebec City. Immersed in total darkness, the audience listens to the spatialized composition of word and sound.

- Genviève Robichaud’s “Self-Translation in Two Movements” on *Lemon Hound*, a staged bilingual conversation between l’auteure and l’autre, and an essay on the bilingual text.

- At a conference at the Université de Montreal, a reading by Gail Scott from

*Obituary*, a novel whose English poetical idiom is significantly impacted by the presences, undercurrents, proliferations of Quebec's French and Aboriginal languages.

– At the same conference, a talk by Claudia Lucotti (a professor of Canadian Literature at Universidad de México) on the translational affect of *Expeditions of a Chimæra* (an impish, multilingual exploration of original/copy by writers/translators Erín Moure and myself) in Mexico today.

– Launch of *Petits Théâtres*, a translation of Erín Moure's *Little Theatres* by Daniel Canty, voiced through the mouths of several interlocutors, including Martine Audet, Nicole Brossard, Steve Savage, François Turcot.

This is not *the* Montreal, but *one* Montreal; it is not everyone's Montreal, but the Montreal that excites, urges, challenges me to keep probing, to keep bridging.

Rebecca Brewer & Tiziana La Melia  
CAPILANO STYLE COLUMN  
Not-poetry in Vancouver

OR

ADMONISHMENTS ON WHAT TO WEAR AND, SOMETIMES,  
THE SPECIAL OCCASION ON WHICH TO WEAR IT...

1984. IN A FICTO-DOCUMENTARY ON 20-YEAR-OLD CHOREOGRAPHER MICHAEL CLARK'S life, clothing signifies freedom and free spirits are a motif. London street urchins dress up like royalty and a dress made of sores adorns a leaping male body. Inside his dance studio, tall mirrors lean into Charles Atlas' absurdist camera angles. Dancers in immodest dance attire are the height of joy; Michael glides through life in a tasseled leather jacket and a kilt, pouting. The contrast between formal sensibilities in Clark's dance pieces reminds us that there is something moralizing about the structure of ballet. With post-punk sarcasm, *Hail the New Puritans*, by its very name, carries an ironic message about moderation and morality. Mark E. Smith provides lyrics that inflect the film with its attitude; he also features as the film's chain-



smoking Mahatma. Leigh Bowery's cross-dressing production design sets the stage for a manic constellation of club kids and ballerinas, performing an elaborate satire of Thatcherite misery. Did this cast of untrained squares and skilled queers feel bad for the forlorn Neo-Cromwellians of the time and want to invite them to join their dance party of taboo, rhythm, decadence and style?

*The conventional is now experimental*

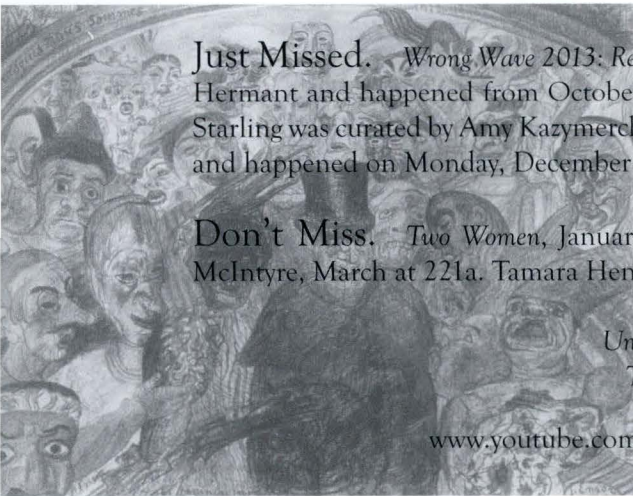
2013. WRONG WAVE'S SCREENING OF *HAIL THE NEW PURITANS* PROVIDED US WITH ONE long, vivid and glamorous Commedia dell'Arte puppet show.

*The grotesque peasants stalk the land  
And deep down inside you know  
Everybody wants to like big companies*

1928. A WELL-DRESSED MAN LEAVES THE CROWD AND CROSSES THE STAGE. BRECHT'S version of *The Threepenny Opera* incites ten thousand jazzy European performances with its modern, anti-capitalist charms. Devout Marxism begets a masterpiece of musical schlock with a criminal for an anti-hero and a fusty old Dad who uses his influence against this lower-class nemesis.

1990. WHILE CONSIDERING THE SCENE OF THE FAMOUS EXCHANGE OF \$200 000 CASH for a kidnapped daughter, social inequity gets complicated by aesthetic preoccupations. In this recasting of Brecht's play, Jimmy Pattison is the baron who controls the beggars, and the beggars include bored teens obsessing over logos in Pacific Centre shopping mall. Dan Starling's *The Kidnapper's Opera* is a heist movie and piece of epic satire set in Vancouver, with suburban teenagers dressed in pastel hues and tumble dry fabrics listening to Vanilla Ice. Shot over three years, Starling's hilariously distorted fantasy of anti-capitalist motivation as it plays out in the banal lives of privileged youth is a montage of video technologies and techniques, generated from multiple collaborations (locally and in Frankfurt and Brussels), ranging from the incredibly lo-fi to the extremely choreographed. Picture a scene where the camera catches a glint from the brass door knob and a kidnapper practices her bubble cursive while writing a ransom note. Replace the grubby crowds of London with a group of intrepid youth scheming at the Orange Julius booth and contemplating the violence of the law. B.U.M. Equipment™ sweatshirts spark debate over rising price-points. Clothing signifies freedom and Esprit™ is the motif. The logo-centricity of Starling's antiheros is a self-actualization of political desire.

*All decadent sins will reap discipline*



**Just Missed.** *Wrong Wave 2013: Revenge of the New Puritan* was curated by Sydney Hermant and happened from October 24–27, 2013. *The Kidnapper's Opera* by Dan Starling was curated by Amy Kazymerechuk for DIM Cinema at Pacific Cinematheque and happened on Monday, December 9, 2013.

**Don't Miss.** *Two Women*, January/February at Model. Zin Taylor and Lorna McIntyre, March at 221a. Tamara Henderson, April/May at The Apartment.

Ungodly mass  
Thick ass

[www.youtube.com/watch?v=maqTPJkA-So](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=maqTPJkA-So)

James Ensor, *Masks We Are or Intriguing Masks*, 1901

## Mark Goldstein: A Change-ringing of the Mind

Chapbooks are how burgeoning poets speak with one another, how we disseminate our writing, and how we instruct ourselves. For decades the chapbook has proved a cost effective means of taking part in this conversation. The small press has fed my work as a writer for more than a decade and I still thrive on it. Under my own *Beautiful Outlaw* imprint, I've issued works by unknown or arcane authors unavailable in mainstream publications. I've issued my own work and that of my friends, too, and my mantra, printed on some of these items, has become, "Poetry is a Gift Economy." But this paradigm is shifting. Regrettably, the blanket "design" that an e-text offers the reader is a step toward typographic oblivion. Just because we can now set *Finnegans Wake* in Comic Sans doesn't mean that we should.

With this in mind, I set off to the 2013 Toronto Antiquarian Book Fair (held at the AGO in November) on a bibliomaniacal hunt for a thoroughly edifying printed work. After searching for contemporary small press items throughout the thirty-two booths at the fair, I finally discovered what I was looking for in an old wooden box full of exquisitely produced offerings perfectly preserved in acetate sleeves: I found a chapbook that shares my concerns.

*A Change-ringing of the Mind (An Extract from Zangezi)* by Russian Futurist Velimir Khlebnikov was translated, designed, printed and bound in 1978 at Imprimerie



Dromadaire, by the late Glenn Goluska. Issued in a limited run of seventy-five copies, the book measures 9.75 × 8.75 inches with eight leaves. It is hand set in Alternate Gothic and a variety of wood type, which, I'm told, Goluska acquired over years of urban foraging. Printed on Tweedweave with red Mayfair paper wraps it was hand sewn and issued for the Eleventh International Sound Poetry Festival. It exemplifies the best of what the small press has to offer.

Goluska was a designer and typographer of the highest order (he died in 2011), and in his hands *A Change-ringing of the Mind* became the perfect marriage of text and texture. The translation is sublime, with Goluska's artistry and total vision apparent throughout. A work such as this could not survive the digital realm—the pleasure of the letterforms, their special arrangements on the page, the touch of the papers themselves, the subtle echoing of word-stuff would be lost in such transference. *A Change-ringing of the Mind* best exemplifies the necessity of the small press, one where the difficulty of creation and dissemination is met with vitality.

Unfortunately, both the work's beauty and scarcity has pushed it into the rarified air of the antiquarian bookseller. This divide between reader and collector keeps works such as these in private libraries, out of reach of those laboring writers who need them most. It is obvious that *A Change-ringing of the Mind* was meant to be read and yet, with a \$100.00 asking price (a bargain compared to other items at the fair), it is beyond reach.

Yes, a digital version would provide the content of the work but the total power of the book would be lost. The bitter irony here is that Goluska's superb translation has now been rendered mute.

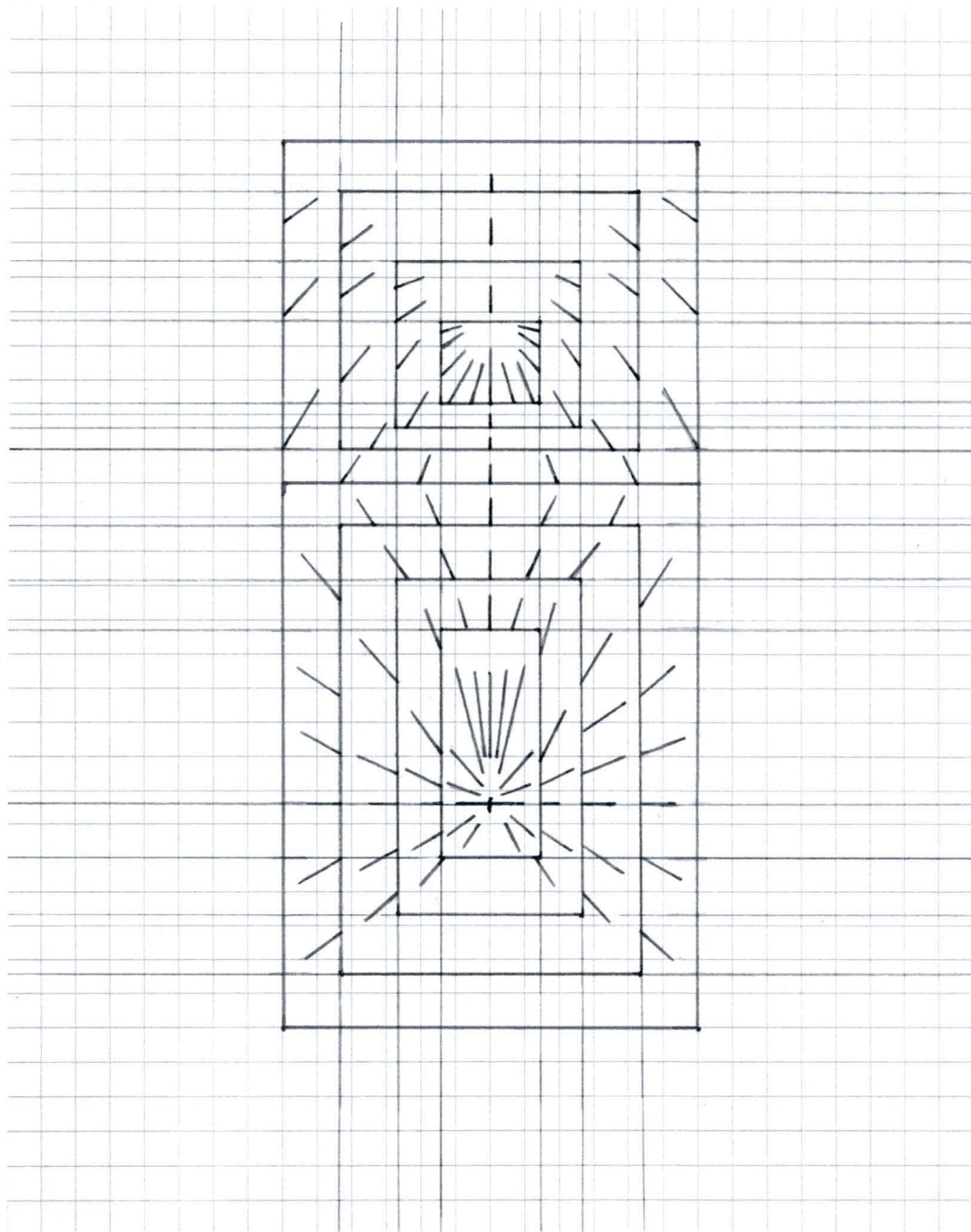
## **Julian Weideman: Careers counselling**

While studying in the UK last year I came across *80,000 Hours*, an Oxford-based charity that provides advice on how to make the biggest possible positive “difference” with a career. The advice takes the form of an equation in which the average number of hours people spend at work (80,000) is assessed by their “potential for impact” and their “career capital”: gains in “skills, connections and useful credentials” that can be used in the future to expand “impact.” One controversial piece of advice is “earning to give,” which involves getting a high-earning job and donating

a substantial portion of the salary to “effective causes.” In determining what is “effective” and what is a “cause,” *80,000 Hours* draws on Peter Singer’s utilitarian ethics and on the work of other organizations within the effective altruism movement, the most prominent of which is Give Well, an American nonprofit that assesses charities and that in 2013 attracted almost ten million dollars of donations for its top recommendations.

Critics of *80,000 Hours* object to the forcefulness of its analytical approach, which ranks certain causes as more “solvable” or “important” than others. Their formula,  $\text{Cause Effectiveness} = \text{Importance} \times \text{Solvability}$ , almost always yields the conclusion that altruistic initiatives in poor countries—for example, fighting tropical diseases—are more effective than philanthropic work in the West. The approach privileges the quantifiable and there is little room for the arts or humanities, except as tools for training rationality and cultivating altruism, or as diversions to relax with after a day of “earning to give.” In a context of shrinking public support for both humanitarian and cultural causes, the emphasis on effectiveness risks disqualifying whatever cannot be defended in empirical terms, while the idea of individuals “earning to give” encourages a privatization of charitable giving.

On the other hand, getting a job specifically to generate capital for altruistic initiatives does break with a current mode of donation in which corporations, having accumulated vast profits, “give back” a fraction of their wealth and then market this gesture as “social responsibility.” *80,000 Hours* is committed and idealistic, giving careers advice only to people who are “deeply socially motivated”; it is justified in arguing that the capacity of many people in the West to donate capital to underfunded causes is a widely neglected ethical contribution. Effective altruism organizations tend to be transparent about their methodology and assumptions, sometimes going so far as apologizing when their discourse becomes too forceful—Give Well’s website has a section entitled “Our shortcomings,” which includes “tone issues” (“A recent example of our problematic tone is our December 2009 blog post, ‘Celebrated Charities that we Don’t Recommend’”). The emphasis on transparency and measurable results is winning support for the effective altruism movement. With students graduating into a world of self-interested and tight-fisted governments, one can understand the impulse to forgo electoral politics and channel progressive energy into a scheme like “earning to give.” If nothing else, *80,000 Hours* might shake up the dull and apolitical genre of careers counselling.



Lyndl Hall, *Everywhere, All The Time*, 2012, pencil and ink on paper, 19 × 15 cm