



NEWS & REPORTS

OAG AWARDS: WELCOME TO THE SUBURBS!

AGYU was very proud to take home the Ontario Association of Art Galleries Award for **Best Exhibition** (thematic) for our pathbreaking fall 2017 exhibition *Migrating the Margins*. Not only an important exhibition that took a bold stance on exploring the future of Toronto's visual culture, *Migrating the Margins* was also a special exhibition in that it was the last collaborative project at AGYU between long-time colleagues **Emelie Chhangur** and **Philip Monk**—the co-curators of the exhibition. The OAGG jury commented:

"The monumental commissioned work and bold exhibition design are balanced with exceptional community partnerships and programs... As the title of the exhibition suggests, *Migrating the Margins* reclaims suburban space while also demonstrating the strength of curating exhibitions for suburban audiences."

AGYU thanks all the artists, without whom this exhibition could not have happened: **Nep Sidhu**, **Anique Jordan**, **Tau Lewis**, **Erika DeFreitas**, **Rajni Perera**, **Sister Co-Resister**, **Otherness** (Pamila Matharu + Marilyn Fernandes), and **Farrah Miranda**.

GOODBYE? WHAT! NOOOOOO ...

It is with mixed emotions that AGYU says goodbye to one of its ilk, **Suzanne Carte**. Suzanne joined the AGYU's powerhouse team as an Assistant Curator in late 2008 and for the past decade has contributed significantly to all aspects of the gallery's growth, in particular in the area of student engagement through her innovative *Creative Campaigning* series. While at the AGYU, Suzanne was a fierce exhibition coordinator, organizer, multitasker, and producer, and she grew as a curator, presenting exhibitions of US-artists Rashood Newsome and Postcommodity as well as commissioning projects for AGYU Vitelines by local artists and YorkU MFA students. And this is why we are so proud and happy for her in her new role of Senior Curator at the Art Gallery of Burlington. We hope that North York and Burlington can find ways to collaborate in the near future ☺. Good luck Suzanne! With love, us. XO

RESEARCH & RESIDENCIES

RUANGRUPA: AN IMAGINATION TOOL FOR INSTITUTIONAL OPERATIONS

To mirror the AGYU trip to Jakarta of last summer, members of the Jakarta-based art collective **ruangrupa** make their way across the globe this March/April to visit us here in Toronto. Additional members will come in the summer, and more in the fall, and so it will continue through fall 2020 when our project will emerge. The exchange is the very beginning of what we hope to be a long engagement with reciprocal benefit—both artistically and administratively—as we introduce each arriving group to a different aspect of AGYU, our surrounding communities, our local context, and, of course, York University. It is not by coincidence that we are embarking on this long-term project with ruangrupa as they too advance as an organization by transitioning to the new formation of **Gudskul**, a fully-functioning school conceived and structured with two other Jakarta collectives: **Serrum** and **Grafis Huru Hara**. Members of **Serrum** and **Grafis Huru Hara** will also be travelling to Toronto over the next year and a half—and we suspect already—some of the first graduates of **Gudskul**'s inaugural year (November 2018 to August 2019). Each mini-residency will be tailored to the time of year collective members visit (fall, spring, summer, etc.) and their particular research trajectory will be shaped by the operative role they play in **Gudskul**. Our exchange over the next few years will also be shaped through AGYU's continued visits to Jakarta and our own transformation as an institution.

At present, the main interest developing in these oscillating interactions—in Jakarta and in Toronto—is the correspondence, and the lack thereof, in understandings of what constitutes a collective practice in the Indonesian sense (a place defined by the phrase, "doing things together") and in the Canadian one (and the jury is still out on how to define how we approach that very distinct concept). From here we build something at the intersection of both and the next set of residency visits will move our research further afield: to our local neighbourhood, to the GTA, etc., etc., onward and outward and, eventually, inward.

Over the course of the next two years, we will be pushing forward our project until, eventually, **Gudskul X**, a collective of collectives, will take over the AGYU, putting our institution into residency and advancing a new chapter of AGYU's pedagogical role within York University and Toronto at large, modelled on the **Gudskul** and informed by the collectives' in-situ research.

WAGING CULTURE: THE NUMBERS ARE IN!

We just spent the last eight months begging visual artists from across the country to give us their deets. Demographics. Income. Expenses. We were asking all the questions, and they answered our calls. We can now move into the analysis phase. Right now, as you read this, we're putting our abacus into overdrive, counting and adding and subtracting and computing. This part is quiet, done under low light, and without much fanfare. That's ok. We know that we're going to be able to come to some new understandings of the motivations behind all the art that's art-ed here in Canada. And when we get to the point where we can start telling you about it, we will. Loud and clear.

In the meantime, you can listen in on **Mass Culture**'s podcast series, where the **Mass Culture** team interviews individuals involved in cultural research in Canada. The first in this series of podcasts is none other than the person behind *Waging Culture*, **Michael Miranda**. See: <http://massculture.ca/podcasts/>

PUBLICATIONS

We occupied our table at *Edition/3*, Toronto's art book fair, with copies of our **Public Studio** book, *The Long Now*. **Lauren Wickware** really did some stunning work, bringing the included essays (by T.J. Demos, **John Greyson**, **Susan Schuppli**, and **Jayne Wilkinson**) and interview (by curators **Emelie Chhangur** and **Philip Monk**) forward in an elegant and understated manner. We'd really like you to see, and read, this one, so get on over to our website to purchase a

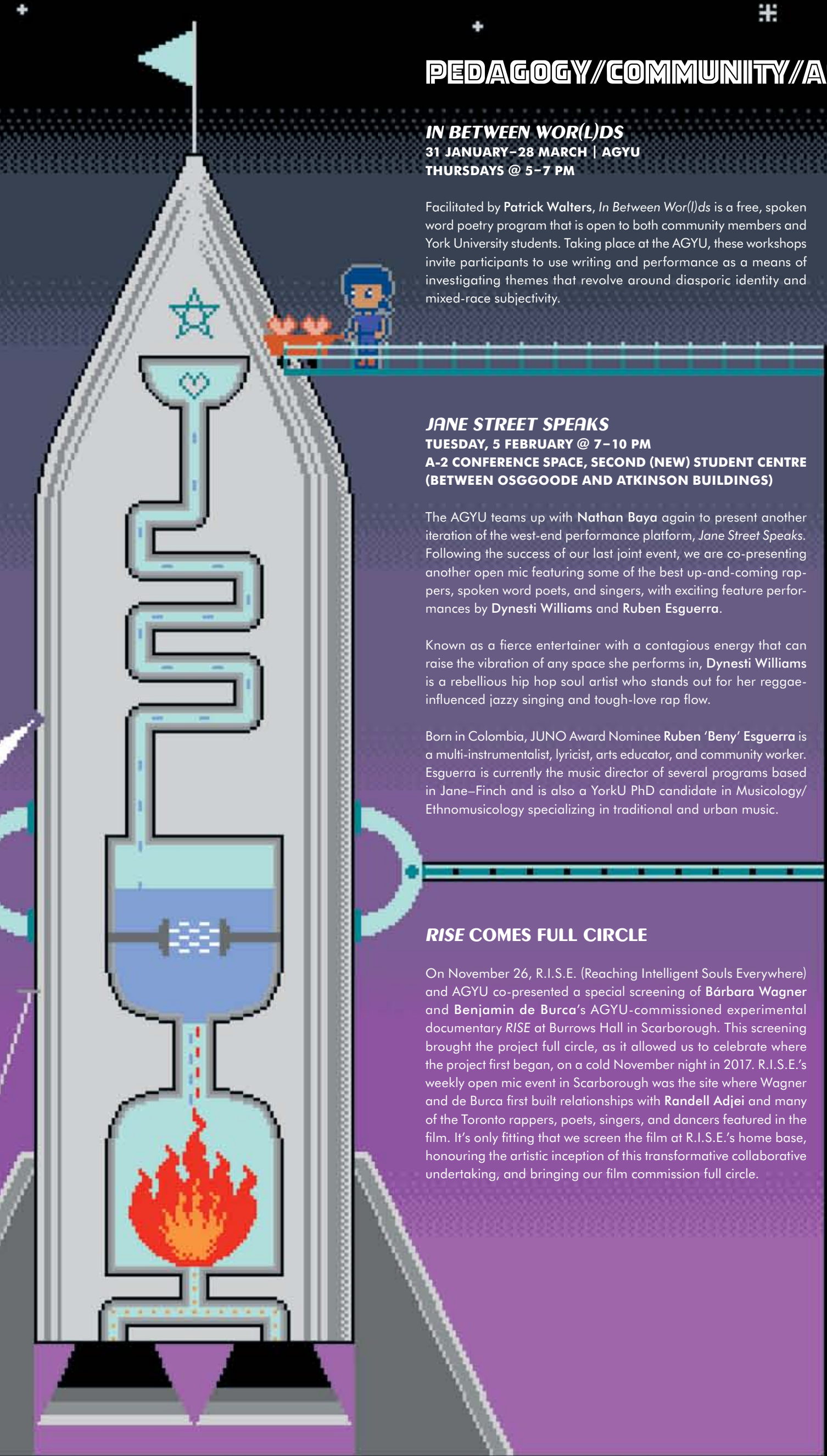
CAECILIA TRIPP: EVEN THE STARS LOOK LONESOME

At AGYU, we've been thinking about other planets for a while now. Especially **Trippist-1**, those seven perfectly tuned planets discovered in 2016 to be a mere 40 billion light years away from earth. It's all speculative at present but the implications have us wild with wonder: the imaginative possibilities enormous for our contemporary art minds. We've also been talking a lot about relations here at AGYU, in particular vis-à-vis **Édouard Glissant** (see AGYU's 2018 program), and something lurking in the background has started to click: **Caecilia Tripp**. **Tripp** returned for a month this fall for her second residency to make a film in York University's Observatory—to tune into the cosmos in a more relational fashion and to bring into deep focus the celestial and the terrestrial (a.k.a. our lofty conceptual and imaginative speculations and the on-the-ground work we are forever foregrounding). Together with professor **Paul Delaney** (Department of Physics and Astronomy), York undergraduate film student **Andrei Para**, undergraduate astronomy students **Jared Carlson** and **Joshua Parsons**, Toronto-based sound designer **Matt Beckett**, Toronto-based Congolese spoken word poet **Borelson**, and Jane-Finch-based MC **Zak'isha Brown**, we produced one aspect of a larger five-screen film installation (also featuring performances by **David Hamilton Thompson**, musical score by **Robert Aiki Aubrey Lowe** & **Nicolas Becker**, and costumes by **Rick Owens**) that stems from our research with astrophysicists from the **Dunlap Institute** at the University of Toronto initiated in fall 2017 during **Tripp**'s first AGYU residency. *Even the Stars Look Lonesome* premieres in March at the **Sharjah Biennial 14** (as part of *Look for Me All Around You* curated by **Claire Tancons**) but will circle back to AGYU in our fall exhibition, where we will relate, relink, and relay much more information about the piece and the working process that gave rise to it.



CURATORIAL RESIDENCY: AMY MALBEUF & JESSIE RAY SHORT

It's been a little over a year now that we began discussions with artists and curators **Jessie Ray Short** and **Amy Malbeuf** around developing a second iteration of *Li Salay*—the landmark exhibition of contemporary **Métis** art that opened at the **Edmonton Art Gallery** in May 2018. This winter, we bring the two artist-curators to Toronto to conduct further research on this project and make connections along its continuum with the many **Métis** scholars here at YorkU for an AGYU exhibition in 2020.



IN BETWEEN WOR(L)DS 31 JANUARY–28 MARCH | AGYU THURSDAYS @ 5–7 PM

Facilitated by **Patrick Walters**, *In Between Wor(l)ds* is a free, spoken word poetry program that is open to both community members and York University students. Taking place at the AGYU, these workshops invite participants to use writing and performance as a means of investigating themes that revolve around diasporic identity and mixed-race subjectivity.

JANE STREET SPEAKS TUESDAY, 5 FEBRUARY @ 7–10 PM A-2 CONFERENCE SPACE, SECOND (NEW) STUDENT CENTRE (BETWEEN OSGOOD AND ATKINSON BUILDINGS)

The AGYU teams up with **Nathan Baya** again to present another iteration of the west-end performance platform, *Jane Street Speaks*. Following the success of our last joint event, we are co-presenting another open mic featuring some of the best up-and-coming rappers, spoken word poets, and singers, with exciting feature performances by **Dynesti Williams** and **Ruben Esguerra**.

Known as a fierce entertainer with a contagious energy that can raise the vibration of any space she performs in, **Dynesti Williams** is a rebellious hip hop soul artist who stands out for her reggae-influenced jazzy singing and tough-love rap flow.

Born in Colombia, **JUNO Award** Nominee **Ruben 'Beny' Esguerra** is a multi-instrumentalist, lyricist, arts educator, and community worker. Esguerra is currently the music director of several programs based in Jane-Finch and is also a YorkU PhD candidate in Musicology/Ethnomusicology specializing in traditional and urban music.

RISE COMES FULL CIRCLE

On November 26, R.I.S.E. (Reaching Intelligent Souls Everywhere) and AGYU co-presented a special screening of **Bárbara Wagner** and **Benjamin de Burca**'s AGYU-commissioned experimental documentary *RISE* at **Burrows Hall** in Scarborough. This screening brought the project full circle, as it allowed us to celebrate where the project first began, on a cold November night in 2017. R.I.S.E.'s weekly open mic event in Scarborough was the site where **Wagner** and **de Burca** first built relationships with **Randell Adjei** and many of the Toronto rappers, poets, singers, and dancers featured in the film. It's only fitting that we screen the film at R.I.S.E.'s home base, honouring the artistic inception of this transformative collaborative undertaking, and bringing our film commission full circle.

RESEARCH ASSOCIATE REPORT: BY KATARINA VELJOVIC

"There is something strange happening at the AGYU. Strange in the sense of curatorial space. Strange in the sense of temporality of projects. Strange in the sense of engagement with their audiences.

"Over the past year, I had the opportunity to experience this strangeness firsthand. As the Curatorial Research Associate for the AGYU from January to June 2018, I worked alongside the nimble and resilient gallery team. I was mostly working toward the AGYU's film commission of **Bárbara Wagner** and **Benjamin de Burca**'s (now completed) film *RISE*. Under the mentorship of Interim Director/Curator **Emelie Chhangur**, I experienced the eccentric ways of the AGYU, diverging from institutional norms and developing their own unique path in how they relate to the space they are situated and with whom they engage. This divergence—which is unfortunately strange—should be considered closely as a case study for the potential of meaningful exhibition-making and connection to institutional communities.

"Time and space operate in a different structure at AGYU: the team allows for change and for growth of their projects. While working with **Wagner** and **de Burca** on the film *RISE*, the team allowed the project to continuously shapeshift. Along each step it was incredible to watch how **Chhangur** moved roadblocks to allow for these changes and for the project to evolve. And to see how a decade of public programming with the local community can provide as an outlet for curatorial activity. This aberrant exchange allowed for the coalescence of the film, artists, and local community to find the right voice to work together. These spatial-temporal strange activities at the AGYU have allowed it to complete projects differently. A space to watch in rethinking the meaning of supportive curatorial structures and community outreach."

SWINGING HEARTS WITH OUR HANDS ON OUR MATERNAL BELLY: BETSABEE ROMERO GIFT TO THE MISSISSAUGAS OF THE NEW CREDIT FIRST NATION

Swinging Hearts with Our Hands on our Maternal Belly is a work commissioned for our fall 2018 exhibition *Braided Roots* by Mexican artist **Betsabee Romero**. The installation piece transforms the artist's signature use of recycled tires into hand-stretched, deer-hide drums (developed in collaboration with **Jordan** and **Cathie Jamieson** of the **Mississaugas of the New Credit First Nation** in summer 2018). We are in the process of developing a protocol to gift these six altered tractor tires to the six nations of the **Mississauga**, namely, the **Mississauga First Nation** at **Mississagi River 8 Reserve**, **Mississaugas of Alderville First Nation**, **Mississaugas of Curve Lake First Nation**, **Mississaugas of Hiawatha First Nation**, **Mississaugas of Scugog Island First Nation**, and, of course, the **Mississaugas of the New Credit First Nation**, in what **MNCFN Chief Stacey LaForme** calls a legacy piece. The concept of the legacy piece performatively enacts the concept of the work, too. In Indigenous culture, drums have a material resonance—they are a heartbeat and a calling. The drum is the material manifestation of a subconscious melody or inherent rhythm, one that we know in the womb of our mother, even before birth. The drum is a medium that channels this connection. If the drums are a symbol of birth, through this re-gifting we rebirth these tire-drums into lives beyond the exhibition.

BÁRBARA WAGNER AND BENJAMIN DE BURCA: TORONTO ON THE INTERNATIONAL MAP

We worked intimately, intensely, and passionately with Brazil-based artists **Bárbara Wagner** and **Benjamin de Burca** for over a year. If you haven't noticed (see our last four newsletters), we love them—a lot. We got engaged at **Niagara Falls** and honeymooned in the **Alagoas** "B&B" became integrated in all aspects of the AGYU and lived in Toronto for five months while we researched, commissioned, and produced their most complex film to date: *RISE*. Completed at the **Wexner Centre for the Arts** in late June 2018, the film has now been shown as part of a program for **FRONT INTERNATIONAL Triennial of American Art** in the USA; in Brazil as an installation at **Fortes D'Aloia & Gabriel** during the **33rd São Paulo Biennial** (where *Frieze Magazine* called it the best show across São Paulo); and **Jayne Wilkinson** of **Canadian Art** said it was where she found the social and affective affinities lacking at the Biennial); in Toronto at **CONTACT Gallery** as part of our *Communities of Love* exhibition with **Anthony Gebrehiwot**; at **Scarborough Nuit Blanche** (where we got to see the film projected in a **Cineplex Odeon Theatre**); and at the **Burrows Hall Community Centre** in Scarborough during **R.I.S.E.** (all presented with equivalent care, importance, and value, we must add). We are very proud to announce that the film will now travel to Berlin for its **International Film Festival Premiere** at the **Berlinale**! As **Wilkinson** writes, "It is a film of voices, of collaboration, and demonstrates what is possible when a project is produced through finding affinities, not made about them." SNAP.

If you haven't seen it yet, you should—somewhere in the world or in Toronto's suburbs. JEEZE.



AND! AGYU is delighted to announce that **Bárbara Wagner** and **Benjamin de Burca** will represent **Brazil** at the **Venice Biennale** this year! (Do we have our finger on the pulse or what?!)



STUDENT CASH! WRITING AWARD

AGYU has two cash awards for undergraduate critical writing! Send us your review or essay on one of our 2018/19 exhibitions and we will send you AGYU CASH—\$150 for a review and \$200 for a thematic essay. The review discusses the exhibition and offers a brief critical analysis of its content (word count: 500–1000) and the thematic essay thoroughly explores one or two underlying themes of the exhibition (word count: 1500–2000). Email submissions to agy@yorku.ca by Friday May 3, 2019.

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HELLO! AGYU WELCOMES NEW INTERIM ASSISTANT DIRECTOR/CURATOR

AGYU is pleased to announce the appointment of **Alissa Firth-Eagland** to the position of Interim Assistant Director/Curator. A curator, writer, and arts administrator who deeply values the sharing and decentralization of culture, **Alissa** has developed a range of local and international projects over the past 15 years in contemporary art, community development, multimedia, equity practices, cultural mediation, critical writing, publishing, and alternative forms of learning. She has held positions as Project Manager, **Isma Distribution International** (Igloolik, NU/Montréal, PQ); Curator, **Musagetes** (Guelph, ON); Director/Curator, **Western Front Media Arts** (Vancouver, BC); and most recently Curator at **Humber Galleries**, where she established the organization's first 5 year strategic plan for targeted polytechnic programming and organizational development in 2017. Welcome to AGYU **Alissa**!



art-book mashup we're co-publishing with **UBC Press** and **One Archive** from California. The subject is, of course, **Allyson Mitchell's Killjoy's Castle**, a fun-house/haunted house/critical journey-to-the-heart-of-lesbian-feminist-greatest-hits that we presented a few years back one hallowe'en. It's an incredible journey, learning lots about the goings-on of academic publishing, and having fun with our designer, **Cecilia Berkovic**.

Then there's the big one: funded by the **RBC Foundation** with the support of the **Toronto Friends of the Visual Arts (TFVA)**, our

We weren't only working launches and book fairs, though. We will be bringing out in short order a co-publication with the **Southern Alberta Art Gallery (SAAG)** a catalogue for **Derek Liddington's** exhibitions at the AGYU and the SAAG. This book includes essays by curator **Emelie Chhangur**, critic **Fabien Maltais-Bayda**, and an interview with **Ryan Doherty**, former director of SAAG. We so much enjoyed working with **Zab Design** previously, that we just had to work with her again.

We really wanted to launch this book properly. Thus, on November 29 we called together writers, artists, designers, and friends to properly fete *The Long Now*, as well as *The Sophie La Rosière Project* publication. Thanks are due to **Type Books** for hosting, as it made the evening perfect.

copy for yourself. We are pleased to acknowledge the financial help of the **Jack Weinbaum Foundation** and **David and Yvonne Fleck** in seeing this book to print. Thank you ever so much for your commitment to print culture!

and a recognition of the suburb-to-suburb conversations that are restructuring our culture in real time. We needed the perfect designer for this work, and we think we found him in **Sameer Farooq** (who designed our beautiful **Oliver Husain** book back in 2012).

Stay tuned for the launch of this one, you want to be there when we redefine the conversation.

