

September 13 - October 20, 2012

Opening Reception: Thursday, September 13, 6:30 - 8:30 pm

Andrée-Anne Dupuis-Bourret: *Inlandsis*



La débâcle 2 (detail), folded and assembled screenprinted paper, mixed media structure, 300 x 450 x 65 cm, as installed at Cranes Art, Philadelphia, PA, 2010. Photo by Andrée-Anne Dupuis-Bourret.

Andrée-Anne Dupuis-Bourret's work has been featured in several exhibitions in Canada and abroad, in venues such as the Design Space Gallery (Tel Aviv, Israel), Parisian Laundry (Montréal, QC), Martha Street Studio (Winnipeg, MB), Crane Arts (Philadelphia, PA), the Bibliothèque Nationale du Québec (Montreal, QC) and the 808 Gallery (Boston, MA). She has produced more than two dozen art books, which have been presented and included in collections in Canada and abroad, including the University of California at Berkeley (Environmental Design Library), the VCUQatar Special Collections and the Art Institute of Chicago (Flaxman Library). A member of several artist-run centres, she is also president of the board of directors of Atelier Graff in Montréal and the author of two research blogs: *Le cahier virtuel* (blogaadb.blogspot.ca) and *Le territoire des sens* (territoiredessens.blogspot.ca). She is currently completing her doctoral studies in art research and practices at l'Université du Québec à Montréal based on her installations of print works and their re-actualisation through documentation.

Daryl Vocat (darylvocat.com) is a Toronto-based artist. He completed his BFA at the University of Regina, Saskatchewan, and his MFA at York University, Toronto. He has exhibited widely throughout Canada and abroad, including an internationally touring exhibition titled *Further: Artists From Printmaking at the Edge* (2006-07). His work is in the collections of the National Gallery of Canada Library and Archives, The Robert Blackburn Printmaking Workshop, The Morris and Helen Belkin Art Gallery, The Saskatchewan Arts Board, the City of Toronto and the New York Public Library. His artwork has been published in *YYZine*, *Briarpatch*, and *Printmaking at the Edge* by Richard Noyce; his writing has been published in *Xtra!*, *Dose* and *Lola*.

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André-Anne Dupuis-Bourret: *Inlandsis*

by Daryl Vocat



Andrée-Anne Dupuis-Bourret's exhibition, *Inlandsis*, is a print and paper installation comprised of one giant piece, *La débâcle*. The work is made of 5000 pieces of screenprinted paper, folded and assembled onto a hidden structure of foam and cardboard. The work evolved from Dupuis-Bourret's initial idea to make a river of

paper in her basement. As *La débâcle* grew, it evolved into something larger and less structured. The work's form is dependent on the space it is in, changing from one exhibition to another. The lines, marks and patterns screenprinted on the paper are more about providing textures and tonality than they are about giving the viewer singular images to look at. Each piece of paper making up the work is folded into the familiar shape of a four-cornered children's paper game. You know the one: "Pick a colour. OK. Now pick a number..." Though the prints are not presented in a way that they can be played with, the very fact of this shape conjures up ideas of children at play. The toys, if we can call them that, set out the structure of *La débâcle*, giving it a welcoming quality.

In its construction *La débâcle* moves from print, to object, to installation. The simple alchemy of art — turning one thing into another — erases the four-cornered toys, making them into something more material than symbol. Part of *La débâcle* is an exploration of how repeated geometric forms can evolve into a structure that appears organic. Mathematics and nature collide. Any component of *La débâcle* is a clone of any other component. However, in being adjoined, and in becoming a singular mass, the clean geometry of the individual disappears; the four-cornered paper toy is no longer itself. En masse, a loose, flowing structure of another kind sprawls across the gallery. Singular, rigid individuals become a relaxed blanket of a group. The oppositional qualities of the single, and of the mass, owe their existence to one another.

Giant paper structures like *La débâcle* mark a growth in Dupuis-Bourret's practice — a move away from editions and narrative-based artist's books. Although both types of work have diverging trajectories for her, the idea of landscape remains consistent. Her installation work uses the same basic actions as her book works: screenprinting on paper, assembling and binding, and it explodes these concepts into a process beyond image-making. Instead of focusing on individual images, Dupuis-Bourret focuses here on the craft of the work, on the material qualities and construction that record the process of labour itself. In looking at *La débâcle* one only gets part of the story — the story of a completed, singular entity lying at ease. In this form it is easy to forget the

journey of how the work came to be. We see one version of what the work tells us, but not the story behind the work or how it was developed. The *stuff* of *La débâcle* is so much about the making, the process and the activity, and not just the end product. Of course, where the journey ends is important, but

in a way it is evidence of the real work, which is to say the crafting of the installation. In repeating small, simple actions Dupuis-Bourret accumulates products of her labour and time. Her practice is process-based and highly organized, but those ideas are only whispered in the gallery space. An ongoing photo archive of Dupuis-Bourret's process and work in the studio is accessible through her blog,¹ where viewers can get a deeper sense of the work in development, and of the steps along the way from idea to structure.

Let's talk about the poetics of this project for a moment. It seems to be a rather grand existential gesture to call one's art, an enormous marker of time and labour, a debacle, doesn't it? A catastrophe. Calling the work *La débâcle* is both endearing and heart-breaking. It is an act of vulnerability to admit failure, or its possibility. It is a gesture of intimacy, but it is also an act of defeat.

We know from experience that meaning is often what we make of it. So, it is perhaps true that when Dupuis-Bourret calls her work *La débâcle* she is *not* ruminating on the likelihood of her practice, or the practice of art-making, as a disaster. Instead, let's consider the relationship of this wording to the exhibition title, *Inlandsis*, a French word referring to an ice cap or glacier. The glacier in question here is *La débâcle*, a piece Dupuis-Bourret refers to as being inspired by an ice jam on a river near her house, and by the disappearance of a glacier in the mountains of British Columbia. The organic form of the work imitates the shape of the craggy, dirty mass flowing across the water. The idea of ice melting returns the conversation back to somewhere near the beginning, to the idea of transformation. As Dupuis-Bourret changes paper to object she speaks about acts of representation and recognition. She directly refers to the glacier, but beyond that, Dupuis-Bourret is interested in looking at how we relate to what is around us and at how those relationships evolve. Dupuis-Bourret plays with what we recognize as print, or as paper toys, to address the spaces in between the parts of information we encounter. With her process, and her work, André-Anne Dupuis-Bourret looks at how we choose to understand or interpret what we see, and at how our thoughts and relations shift in accordance with the changing landscape.

¹<http://blogaadb.blogspot.ca>
Images

Left: *La débâcle 2* (detail), folded and assembled screenprinted paper, mixed media structure, 300 x 450 x 65 cm, as installed at Cranes Art, Philadelphia, PA, 2010. Photo by Andrée-Anne Dupuis-Bourret.

Right: *La débâcle 5*, folded and assembled screenprinted paper, mixed media structure, 550 x 675 x 95 cm, as installed at Galerie d'art de Matane, Matane, QC, 2011. Photo by Jean-Simon DesRochers.

