

November 5 to 28, 2009

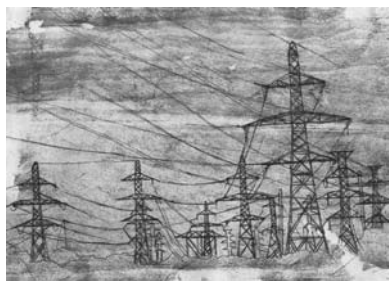
Artists' Talks at Open Studio  
Thursday, November 5 | 6 pm. Free admission

Opening Reception  
Thursday, November 5 | 7-9 pm

**Pamela Dodds: *Memory's Witness***

**Hazel Eckert: *[MONUMENTAL]***

**Kelsey Schuett: *my own square of innocent noughts***



Left to right clockwise: Hazel Eckert, *Artifacts of Progress, Excavating Sketches* (detail of pg. 2), Case bound book of etchings, collage & letterpress, 3" x 4 1/4" x 1/4", 2008-09; Pamela Dodds, *Crone's Lament*, woodcut, 26" x 17", 2009; Kelsey Schuett, *Haben sie ihr Madel verloren*, intaglio, 14" x 9 3/4", 2009.

## 2009 Scholarship Exhibitions



Gallery Hours

Tuesday to Saturday, noon to 5pm

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# *2009 Scholarship Exhibitions*

by Lauren Nurse

The current exhibition at Open Studio features the recent work of Pamela Dodds, Hazel Eckert, and Kelsey Schuett. They are the recipients of the Nick Novak/Open Studio Members' Scholarship, the Donald O'Born Family Scholarship, and the Don Phillips Scholarship respectively. These three artists have spent the past twelve months working at Open Studio and are exhibiting work developed during this tenure.

My first impression of the works for the exhibition was that the artists' conceptual and material interests were quite disparate, but upon reviewing some of the pieces I came to a realization: each artist deals with an imagined space – one that is informed by an interest in materiality, whether it be wood, flesh, or the weathered infrastructure of the city.

**Pamela Dodds** is also a large-scale painter, typically using vibrant colours and a bold palette. Her subject matter has been concerned with the figure, but also with the idea of narrative. Each painting features figures frozen in a moment of interaction – an interaction that has no precedent, and no discernible conclusion, as the viewer has no access to the story the painting told. Discussing her work, Dodds explained that she is interested in the idea that each viewer brings a new story to the piece, and in that way the work is intended to be participatory.

In her recent woodcuts, Dodds utilizes symmetry and the mirror image as a conceptual and aesthetic approach. Her figures are twinned, back-to-back or face-to-face in rhythmic cycles of intimacy and distance. The continuous thread that runs through this series is that of relationships – the relationship between humankind and the natural world, our relationships with other humans and the relationship between the printmaker and her matrix.

Dodds exploits the grain of her woodblocks as an important collaborator; the surface of the wood itself plays an active compositional role in this suite of prints. Having carefully selected and marked out each plank of wood so that it featured a particularly symmetrical pattern, from the inception, these works emphasize the idea of the mirror both aesthetically and conceptually.

A number of the works, specifically *Memory's Witness*, deal with war and how it reverberates through our memories, bodies and experiences, thus creating reflections of itself over and over again. We see a ghost-like figure in this print, bearing witness to a war, which regenerates itself, according to the artist, as "an echo through time." Planes drop bombs amid smoke and devastation and the surrounding landscape appears ravaged and destroyed. Images of the natural world in states of distress also figure prominently in Dodds' work — the artist uses representations of nature in dire straits as illustrations of our problematic interactions with the environment.

Dodds' conceptual preoccupation with relationships and cycles of interaction is played out through a series of micro and macro-narratives that occur in her work, over and over again. In these works personal catastrophe can be seen as a micro-reflection of public catastrophe (war, strife, etc.) and intimate relationships as a mirror for cultural relationships.

**Hazel Eckert** is interested in the idea of 'industrial antiquity' – remnants of an urban culture that no longer exists. Acting as part scavenger, part archivist, she collects artifacts and repurposes them as collage, installation or print.

Eckert's [*MONUMENTAL*] installation deals with the ubiquity of the printed image in industrial and cultural contexts. Encountering the die-cut tags strewn on the gallery floor, the artist's gesture could be interpreted as both generous and careless. Generous, as the tags are precious souvenirs for the viewer to take home; careless, as they are scattered accumulations of printed matter littering the floor. As viewers we are used to seeing the mechanical print process function as ubiquitous mark-making in industrial contexts, but within the gallery the hand printed object generally functions as a precious commodity. Eckert is essentially flaunting this convention by giving away these smalls prints within the context of her larger installation.

The artist's installation consists of a series of old-fashioned power lines drawn in black ink on an aged piece of plywood. In this mural-sized rendering the negative space of the drawing is as integral to the piece as the positive space. The image appears almost skeletal; the poles jutting up like spinal cords and forming the skeleton of the city. This mural is connected by wires to an ancient telephone pole that the artist found near her studio – the drawing for the mural is based on this artifact. For Eckert, this imagery serves to reinforce her notion of the city as anatomical construct.

Bones, vertebrae, veins and connective tissue are all suggested by the power line and its role within the organism that is the city. This is an important and recurring metaphor central to her previous work.

**Kelsey Schuett** has created a suite of etchings where the human subject functions as a closed system – renderings of limbs that begin and end in the same place, a heterogeneous whole with no true beginning or end. The quality of her line functions as if it defines the outer borders of the limbs; upon closer inspection, however, we realize that these bodies have no borders as such, since one begins where another ends.

These convoluted sets of arms and legs sit upon a ground, which feels like ether, or fog, but could also be seen as a texture or backdrop for the image. Existing in a space that does not define them, these bodies have no context or explanation. They simply exist. In the print *Envision*, we see a number of seated figures flanking each other. They all face the same direction, but are each positioned in a different manner. Simultaneously nonchalant and strained in their proximity to each other, the figures seem comfortable with one another, but restless in their environment. It could be one individual executing a Muybridge-esque series of poses, or many individuals shifting their positions again and again. In a kind of limbo, the bodies are neither moving nor staying still.

By repeating the same forms over and over again, Schuett creates a visual progression without a clear beginning or ending. The action taking place in the print does not seem to occur in sequence, but rather it feels as if it is all happening at the same time. Schuett is clearly interested in the durational quality of these images – an uncanny sense of time passing or being suspended within the space of the print, or temporality as it exerts itself upon the body. Schuett appears to be channeling Goya's *Caprichos* through her careful draftsmanship and the visceral ambiguity of these writhing figurative scenes.

Within this trio of exhibitions we are exposed not only to the various ways in which materiality can be explored, but also to an accurate cross-section of the different ways print can function in current art practice. In Schuett's etchings we see inventive compositions presented very traditionally. In Dodds' work, the interrelationship between the woodcuts and their sequence requires that we take the sum of all of the parts in order to fully appreciate the work as a whole. Eckert's installation utilizes the print as a multiple by referencing printmaking's implied symbiosis with industrial process and output.

## Artists' Biographies

**Pamela Dodds** was born in Halifax, raised in Toronto, and lived most of her life in the USA. While living in Boston, MA, she often displayed her work in public places, putting it in view of those who might not find their way into an art gallery. Upon returning to Toronto in 2007, she became a regular at Open Studio. Pamela has received many grants, including an Individual Support Grant from the Gottlieb Foundation, and has been awarded many residencies, including at Fundación, Valparaiso, Spain, and the Wurlitzer Foundation, New Mexico (2010). Collectors include the Boston Public Library and the Cleveland Museum of Art. She is most rewarded by the connection that viewers find in her work.

*Pamela Dodds is grateful to the staff and artist colleagues that she has met through Open Studio and for the inspiring year of artistic exploration provided to her by the Nick Novak Scholarship.*

A Torontonian, **Hazel Eckert** was made in another country and assembled throughout Canada. Employing a BFA by the Ontario College of Art and Design, she documents converging telephone wires that capture ready-made compositions strung above the cityscape. Her days are spent at a letterpress print shop salvaging scraps of printed matter from refuse bins and hoarding paper ephemera. By night, Hazel collects pieces of old wood and metal from the streets, warehouse loading docks, and train tracks. These materials then endure a process of cut and paste assembly combined with digital doctoring to produce print-based collage works verging on installation.

*I would like to thank my family, friends, and mentors from whom I've received so much help in every way. The O'Born family and Open Studio for making this incredible opportunity a possibility and an experience to remember. My employers at Lunar Caustic Press for being such an invaluable resource and giving me both their support and their patience. I would especially like to thank Nicholas Kennedy and Essi Oenal from Trip Print Press who indulged in all the whims and ambitions of this "crazy artist".*

**Kelsey Schuett** received a Bachelor of Fine Art in Print Media from the Alberta College of Art and Design in Calgary. Her recent work incorporates drawing, lithography and intaglio and examines identity and how we communicate, particularly through body language. She is currently based in Alberta.

## Writer's Biography

**Lauren Nurse** is a transplanted Québécois living and working in Toronto, Ontario. She is a graduate of Concordia University's Print Media program, and recently completed York University's MFA program. She has participated in exhibitions in Toronto, Montreal, New Mexico and Italy, and attended residency programs at Montréal's Atelier de L'île, Atelier Circulaire, the Vermont Studio Center, Newfoundland's Pouch Cove Foundation and Muskoka's Tree Museum Sculpture Garden. She teaches Design at Sheridan College, and Lithography at York University. Her current work explores intersections between real and fictive environments. Lauren's diverse art practice includes print media, painting and drawing, video and performance.

**Open Studio Scholarships** are awarded annually to three artists of merit to develop their professional practice and artistic excellence. Scholarships are 12 months in duration and provide print media-based artists with free access to Open Studio's facilities to produce new work and engage in professional development opportunities.

The **Don Phillips Scholarship** is awarded to a graduating student in an undergraduate art program who will not be returning to full-time studies the following year.

The **Donald O'Born Family Scholarship** is awarded to an artist in the early stages of his or her professional career with demonstrated commitment to their practice.

The **Nick Novak Scholarship** is awarded to an outstanding Open Studio Artist Member with a commitment to a long-term project.

Annual application deadline is May 1st. Please visit [www.openstudio.on.ca](http://www.openstudio.on.ca) for further information.

Open Studio would like to thank The Catherine and Maxwell Meighen Foundation and the O'Born Family for their kind support of the 2009 Scholarship Program.

**Open Studio**, Canada's leading printmaking centre, is dedicated to the production, preservation and promotion of contemporary fine art prints.

Open Studio acknowledges the generous support of its government funders, members, individual donors and volunteers.

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