POST
MFA Alumni Survey of Keith and Winifred Shantz Internship Award Recipients
Introduction

In Fall 2012, the University of Waterloo Art Gallery, hosted POST, an exhibition celebrating the artistic achievements of eleven alumni who received their Masters of Fine Arts from the University of Waterloo in the first decade of the 21st century. The primary aim of the exhibition was to highlight the Keith and Winifred Shantz International Internship, the unique and defining feature of the UW MFA that gives each student the opportunity to work anywhere in the world for up to two months with a professional artist of international repute.

Since the mid-1990s, over sixty students have benefitted from the Shantz Internship, gaining first-hand day-to-day experience working alongside practicing professional artists in such locations as Berlin, New York, London, Buenos Aires, Los Angeles and Seoul. The range of experience can include assisting the artist with the making of work, helping to package and install the work for exhibition in major gallery venues, attending openings and related events, while connecting with other artists, curators, gallerists, studio assistants and so much more. The intensive hands-on interaction between working artist and student is extraordinarily fruitful and the depth of experience gained from a prolonged stay in another country, the first such opportunity for most of these students, is inestimable. Win Shantz, an enduring supporter of the arts regionally and nationally, recognized the critical importance of both the business side of art and the necessity for international exposure, and it is through her generosity that the Internship was established.

The idea for a postgraduate exhibition had been ruminating for some years and it fell to Ivan Jurakic, appointed Director/Curator of UWAG in 2010, to bring it to fruition. By narrowing the focus on eleven artists, POST not only celebrates the Shantz Internship but also stands on its own as a cohesive exhibition that showcases the work of a diverse group of up-and-coming Canadian artists. The range of painting, sculpture and new media in the exhibition evokes the interrogation of materials and hybridity of concepts that have become a hallmark of contemporary art practices internationally.

Win Shantz, who survived her husband by over two decades, was aware of the project in the early stages of its planning. Unfortunately, Win passed away suddenly in February of 2012. Consequently, the exhibition took on a memorial dimension. It is through her unwavering generosity that students have, and will continue to have, more than a taste of real-world practice. This, combined with the rigorous academic environment of the MFA program, uncannily corresponds to the three primary pillars of the University of Waterloo: innovation, entrepreneurship and globalization.

Joan Coutu
Chair, Fine Arts
So POST. What does it mean? It is a word with multiple dimensions. It can refer to a piece of timber, a system of mail distribution or a position to which one is stationed. It suggests newspapers, the placement of public announcements, and in its archaic form a hasty dispatch. As a prefix it invokes the period following a historic development or circumstance. Postindustrial. Postmodern. Postcolonial. Postgraduate.

When the idea of developing some form of MFA alumni exhibition was first proposed, I was initially hesitant. I was familiar with the Fine Arts program at the University of Waterloo, and had made the acquaintance of many faculty and several talented emerging artists from the program over the years so had a good sense of the context. My reservations had less to do with curatorial elitism than well-founded concerns about the logistics of putting together any sort of cohesive exhibition out of a selection of sixty disparate candidates who had graduated over a thirteen-year plus period.

So what changed my mind? While doing preliminary research on graduates that had received the Keith and Winifred Shantz Internship Award, I was surprised to discover over a dozen names on the list that I was familiar with or found I had an interest in. Once I had established a longlist of artists it occurred to me that this might prove to be an intriguing challenge; an opportunity to address the increasingly central
MFA programs have proliferated. In Ontario alone, graduate degrees in Studio and Visual Arts are now offered at York University, the University of Windsor, the University of Guelph, the University of Western Ontario, the University of Ottawa, the University of Toronto, as well as OCADU, and the University of Waterloo.

Despite the still widespread notion of the artist as a self-taught iconoclast, the reality is that most artists today tend to be college or university educated. Increasingly, many young artists elect to pursue an MFA as an important step in their artistic development. Graduate degrees have become increasingly common and are viewed by many as a necessary means of pursuing an art career and establishing their name professionally.

This knowledge framed my approach to the exhibition and helped me to structure a shortlist of basic criteria, a litmus test that I applied to each artist under consideration.

All of the artists graduated between 1999—the first year that the Shantz Internships were awarded—and 2009—one year prior to my hiring. Several artists have gallery representation, others have exhibited internationally, and some have elected to work in the region. While they come from diverse backgrounds and have wide-ranging interests, they share a deep commitment to their practice. Each artist demonstrates a consistent work ethic and the ability to explore and develop while consistently exhibiting their work publicly. Importantly, each has established herself or himself as an exceptional artist since graduating and continues to make new and challenging works of art.

Masters of Fine Arts programs have become increasingly prevalent in the last two decades. If the cliché of the artist in the 20th century slanted towards that of a talented yet troubled outsider—Tom Thomson and Emily Carr both fit this mold rather neatly—then I would argue that there has been a shift in perception, particularly in the manner that emerging artists increasingly position themselves as young professionals in the art world.

During the postwar period, art colleges such as the Ontario College of Art—now OCADU—became important incubators of modernism in the arts. Unprecedented funding and growth in education throughout the 1960s and 70s also saw the Humanities flourish at universities across the country. As Arts Faculties grew so too did the enrolment of students attending Bachelor of Arts programs in Studio Art.

Since then most studio-based programs have expanded to include graduate degrees as a key component of their offerings. Prior to 1990, there were only a handful of universities that offered graduate level degrees in studio-based practice in Canada. In the last twenty years,
With paintings such as *Ups Opposite*, Anders Oinonen (MFA 2004) continues to make full use of opacity in his richly saturated oil paintings. Evoking totemic masks, his paintings combine faces with landscapes to suggest dreamlike states of being and languid elemental entities pulled inevitably towards consciousness.

*Hot Wet Planet*, marks the continuing development of Susy Oliveira’s (MFA 2006) technique of melding two-dimensional photography with three-dimensional bitmapping to construct strange sculptural artifacts. Her digital topographies resonate with the latent possibilities of gardens as sexually charged psychological spaces.

Wojciech Olejnik’s (MFA 2002) *Swaying Bunkers I and II* features a matched pair of videos depicting the remnants of abandoned World War Two bunkers along the North Atlantic coast. By filming and editing footage of his own homemade translucent models, he produces architectural phantoms that hover between function and illusion.

*At The Mercy of the Sea* demonstrates the lyrical sensibilities at the heart of Scott Everingham’s (MFA 2009) paintings. His use of oils is fluid and dynamic, delineating clear relationships between foreground and background. His painterly abstractions suggest atmospheric spaces hovering at the very limits of our perception.

Michael Jacob Ambedian’s (MFA 2001) *Two Rectangular Sawdust Prisms*, is a process-oriented sculpture made out of compressed sawdust and water. Replicating the dimensions and placement of the World Trade Center in miniature, the structures lean precariously before inevitably collapsing on the final day of the show.

*A Frame* is from a new series of paintings by James Olley (MFA 2008) that are inspired by architecture. Using linear perspective as a means to activate the flat surface of the picture plane, his increasingly refined delineation of architectural spaces makes a smart complement to his muscular painterly sensibility.

*Object a and Object b* are sculptural hybrids by Rick Nixon (MFA 2006) that alternately suggest macroscopic amoebas, viruses or antibodies. Cast and refined in plaster, each form neatly mirrors the other. Integrating modernism and science-fiction the inexplicable pair appears to hover discretely above the gallery floor.

Nathalie Quagliotto’s (MFA 2009) neon sign *Hot Beer* is a fabricated multiple that functions just as comfortably within the gallery as it does in a retail environment. Playing on the conceptual possibilities of art as commodity, she positions her work as a way of co-opting the merchandising of art.

*Untitled* was a site-specific wall installation that Emmy Skensved (MFA 2007) developed for the exhibition featuring a series of three wallpaper-like patterned prints. She further activated the space by adding a pair of multicoloured LED lights to create an optical effect that resulted in a three-dimensional perception of depth within the patterns.
Constructed out of wood, plaster and fabric components, Michael Murphy’s (MFA 2003) *Walking on Air* discretely combines modern and postmodern sensibilities. His work can be appreciated as an object in space, but also functions as a self-reflexive critique about the actual process of constructing a sculpture.

Sasha Pierce (MFA 2004) fashions modest paintings that look remarkably like textiles at first glance. Under close inspection, each reveals itself to be an extremely labour-intensive application of oil paint. *Vary* and *Diverge* are prime examples of the artist’s precise painting technique and her obsessive attention to minute detail.

While seeming to privilege painting and sculpture, the range of works in the exhibition included installation and new media. It was interesting to note that the artists tended to have a studio-based practice and were primarily concerned with the investigation of form, process and materiality. Even the more conceptually oriented works had a distinctly tactile and material quality. While curatorial decisions certainly played a role in framing these selections, I have come to believe that the exhibition itself mirrored the fundamental strengths of this particular MFA program in an unexpected, yet wholly satisfying way.

POST was not a retrospective. While it celebrated the outcomes of the MFA program and the Shantz Internship in particular, this proved to be an impetus rather than a conclusion. The exhibition was ultimately an engagement between peers who continue to define themselves by making meaningful artwork in the studio or otherwise. Rather than looking backwards, it was a survey of artists who are still challenging themselves to produce the best work of their early careers while working towards what they will be contributing to the field in five- to ten-years time.

Here’s looking forward to the next decade.

**Ivan Jurakic**
Director/Curator, University of Waterloo Art Gallery
**Artist Biographies**

**Michael Jacob Ambedian** (Canada, 1973) received his MFA from the University of Waterloo in 2001, a BFA from the University of Windsor and as a recipient of the Keith and Winifred Shantz Internship apprenticed with Canadian artist Peter von Tiesenhausen. He has exhibited his work at the Home Watson House and Gallery, Kitchener; CAPKA 2001, 2005, 2011; Artcite, Windsor; Art Gallery of Windsor; John B. Aird Gallery, Toronto; Oakville Galleries Gairloch Gardens; Glenhyrst Art Gallery of Brant, Brantford; Detroit Contemporary Gallery, Michigan, and recently at the Tom Thomson Gallery in Owen Sound. His work has been reviewed in Espace and Canadian Art. He has received grants from the Ontario Arts Council and the Region of Waterloo Arts Fund. He is a member of the artist collective Stopgap, along with his wife and fellow artist Sheila McMath. He lives and works in Kitchener.

**Scott Everingham** (Canada, 1978) received his MFA from the University of Waterloo in 2009 and a BFA from NSCAD University. As a recipient of the Keith and Winifred Shantz Internship Award he worked with Nathan Redwood in Los Angeles. He has recently exhibited at The Power Plant, Toronto; Musée d’art contemporain de Montréal; Bryan Miller Gallery, Houston; and the Art Gallery of Calgary. He is the recipient of a Canada Council for the Arts Project Grant and was a semi-finalist in the 11th and 12th RBC Painting Competitions. The artist lives and works in Toronto. Scott Everingham is represented by Galerie Trois Points, Montréal and Patrick Mikhail Gallery, Ottawa.

**Michael Murphy** (Dublin, 1971) is an artist working primarily in the medium of sculpture. He received his B.Ed. at OISE at University of Toronto, his MFA from the University of Waterloo in 2003, a BFA from the University of Guelph and a diploma in culinary arts from George Brown College. As a recipient of the Keith and Winifred Shantz Internship he worked with David Batchelor in London, UK. He has exhibited at MOCCA, The Power Plant, G Gallery and Greener Pastures in Toronto; Electric Eclectics in Meaford, Ontario, Modern Fuel in Kingston; and at Open Space in Victoria, BC. Murphy has also been involved in projects in Radio X, Frankfurt DE, and ACM LA, USA. He has recently exhibited at PJM gallery in Toronto, and has been the recipient of two Ontario Arts Council Grants to the Visual Arts. He lives and works in Toronto.

**Rick Nixon** (Canada, 1956) is a sculptor/multidisciplinary artist. He received his MFA from the University of Waterloo in 2006 and his Masters in Art History from York University. As a recipient of the Keith and Winifred Shantz Internship he apprenticed with internationally reknown sculptor David Mach in Scotland. He has exhibited his work nationally and has recently exhibited at Cambridge Galleries and the Maclaren Art Centre. He is a recipient of a Research in the Americas Grant from York University and numerous Ontario Arts Council grants. He currently lives and works in Waterloo, Ontario.

**Wojciech Olejnink** is a multidisciplinary artist, who currently lives and works in Toronto. He received his MFA from the University of Waterloo in 2002 and as a recipient of the Keith and Winifred Shantz Internship Award apprenticed with Stephen Ellis in New York. He has exhibited his work nationally and internationally and has recently exhibited at at PAVED Arts (Saskatoon), Center Clark (Montréal), Stride Gallery (Calgary), YYZ (Toronto), Southern Exposure (San Francisco) and Videobrazil 2011 (São Paulo). He is the recipient of numerous grants and awards including The Stauffer Prize for Emerging Artists (2008) and a Canada Arts Council residency in Paris, France (2013).

**Susy Oliveira** (Canada, 1977) received her MFA from the University of Waterloo in 2006. As a recipient of the Keith and Winifred Shantz Internship Award she apprenticed with John Karner in Copenhagen, Denmark. She has recently exhibited her work at Erin Stump Projects (ESP) in Toronto, the Hole in New York City and the Museum of Contemporary Canadian Art in Toronto. She is the recipient of grants from the Canada Council for the Arts, the Ontario Arts Council and the Toronto Arts Council. She currently lives and works in Toronto.
James Olley (Canada, 1974) received his MFA from the University of Waterloo in 2008 and his BFA from NSCAD University. As a recipient of the Keith and Winifred Shantz Internship Award he worked with Professor Alastair Strachan in Glasgow, Scotland. He has had solo and group exhibitions across Canada and abroad including KAP, Chicago; Incident Report, New York; Dundee Contemporary Arts, Scotland; and Groenhazengracht 1, Leiden, Netherlands. His work has been profiled at contemporary several art fairs, including Pulse New York, Miami, and Next Chicago and is in private collections such as the Colart Collection, Montréal. He has received grants from the Ontario Arts Council, in addition to the Vermont Studio Center Residency. He currently lives in Toronto and is an Assistant Professor in the Fine Arts Department at OCAD University. James Olley is represented by the Peter Robertson Gallery, Edmonton, Galerie Trois Points, Montréal and and Patrick Mikhail Gallery, Ottawa.

Anders Oinonen (Canada, 1977) is a painter. He received his MFA from the University of Waterloo in 2004 and as a recipient of the Keith and Winifred Shantz Internship Award apprenticed with Thomas Scheibitz in Berlin. He has exhibited his work internationally and has recently exhibited at Royal T in Los Angeles, The Hole in New York, and Cooper Cole in Toronto. His work is in public and private collections including the Musée d’art Contemporain de Montréal, St. Michael’s Hospital, Toronto and Canada Council Art Bank. He is the recipient of grants from the Toronto Arts Council, Ontario Arts Council and Canada Council for the Arts. He currently lives and works in Toronto and Montréal.

Sasha Pierce (Canada, 1974) received an MFA from the University of Waterloo in 2004 and a BA from the University of Guelph. As a recipient of the Keith and Winifred Shantz Internship Award she apprenticed with Landon Mackenzie in Vancouver, BC. She has exhibited at ACME, Los Angeles; Jessica Bradley Art + Projects, Toronto; and MOCCA, Toronto. Public collection acquisitions of her work include: Doris McCarthy Gallery, UTSC; and Canada Council Art Bank. Her work has been reviewed in Border Crossings and Canadian Art. Pierces was awarded Honourable Mention in the RBC Canadian Painting Competition in 2009. She lives and works in Toronto, Ontario. Sasha Pierce is represented by Jessica Bradley Inc., Toronto.

Nathalie Quagliotto (Canada, 1984) is a multidisciplinary conceptual artist. She received her MFA from the University of Waterloo in 2009 and as a recipient of the Keith and Winifred Shantz Internship Award apprenticed with Martin Creed in London, UK. She has exhibited her work nationally and internationally and recently had a solo exhibition at Neutral Ground in Regina, Saskatchewan. Her work is in private and public collections including The Urban Institute for Contemporary Arts in Michigan, USA. She currently lives and works in Toronto and Montréal.

Emmy Skensved (Canada, 1981) is a multidisciplinary artist. She received her MFA from the University of Waterloo in 2007 and as a recipient of the Keith and Winifred Shantz Internship Award apprenticed with Kirstine Roepstorff in Berlin, Germany. She has exhibited her work nationally and internationally including shows at the National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa; Greener Pastures Contemporary Art, Toronto; September Gallery, Berlin; and the Künstlerhaus Bethanien, Berlin. Her work is included in the collections of the Canada Council Art Bank and the Canadiana Foundation. She has been the recipient of numerous grants and awards including research and production grants from the Canada Council for the Arts and the Toronto Arts Council. She currently lives and works in Berlin, Germany.

www.olleyart.com

www.meanders.ca

www.sashapierce.ca

www.nathaliequagliotto.com

www.emmyskensved.com
List of Artworks

Michael Jacob Ambedian
Two Rectangular Sawdust Prisms, 2012
Compressed sawdust, water, lumber
Dimensions: ratio 212:1
Rectangular Prism 1:
1963mm x 298mm x 298mm
Rectangular Prism 2:
1953mm x 298mm x 298mm

Scott Everingham
10,000 Leagues, 2011
Oil on canvas
152 x 122 cm
Courtesy of the artist and Galerie Trois Points, Montréal

Scott Everingham
At the Mercy of the Sea, 2011
Oil on canvas
183 x 153 cm
Courtesy of the artist and Galerie Trois Points, Montréal

Michael Murphy
Walking on air, 2012
Wood, plaster, fabric, paint
165 x 97 x 203 cm
(Dimensions variable)

Rick Nixon
Object a and Object b
(Second Generation), 2010
Epoxy resin, wall compound and paint
44 x 135 x 186 cm each

Anders Oinonen
Ups Opposite, 2012
Oil on canvas
183 x 152 cm
Courtesy of the artist and Cooper Cole, Toronto

Anders Oinonen
Eyesmet, 2010
Oil on canvas
61 x 51 cm
Courtesy of the artist and Cooper Cole, Toronto

Wojciech Olejnik
Swaying Bunker I, 2012
Video, 1 min. 16 sec. loop

Wojciech Olejnik
Swaying Bunker II, 2012
Video, 1 min. 11 sec. loop

Susy Oliviera
Hot Wet Planet, 2011
C-prints on archival card and foamcore on panel with frame
92 x 61 x 8 cm

Susy Oliviera
Petal Piece, 2011
C-prints on archival card and foamcore
41 x 24 x 24 cm

James Olley
A Frame, 2012
Oil, acrylic and pencil crayon on canvas on board
122 x 122 cm
Courtesy of the artist and Galerie Trois Points, Montréal

James Olley
Chasing a Ghost, 2012
Oil, acrylic and pencil crayon on canvas
137 x 183 cm
Courtesy of the artist and Galerie Trois Points, Montréal

Sasha Pierce
Vary, 2011
Oil on linen
54 x 41 cm
Courtesy of the artist and Jessica Bradley Inc., Toronto

Sasha Pierce
Diverge, 2011
Oil on linen
54 x 41 cm
Courtesy of the artist and Jessica Bradley Inc., Toronto

Nathalie Quagliotto
Hot Beer, 2012
Neon sign, edition of 5
21 x 46 cm
Courtesy of the Jane Bond, Waterloo

Nathalie Quagliotto
Safety Yellow Bow-tie, Puzzling Relationships, Sucker, 2009–12
Artist Multiples
Various dimensions

Emmy Skensved
Untitled, 2012
Digital prints and LED spotlights
Dimensions variable
Keith and Winifred Shantz Internship Award Recipients

1997
Chuck Baker
Marion Manning
Franco Orlandi

1998
Sonesay Bouphasiry
Shi Le
Chris Stones

1999
Mathew Blakely
Melissa Gordon
Arounna Khounnoraj
Barry Russell Lorne
Mary-Lynne Snedden

2000
Joan O’Doherty
Robert Waldeck

2001
Michael Jacob Ambedian
Ronald Salway
Sandra Martin
Sheila McMath

2002
Tamara Izsak
In-Sun Kim
Wojciech Olejnik
Scott Sawtell

2003
Marla Botterill
Michael Murphy
Kasia Piech
Amy Switzer

2004
Macksim Grunin
Anders Oinonen
Sasha Pierce

2005
Thomas Scott Anderson
Murray Dekeyser
Cesar Forero Garcia
Erica Rapa
Natalie Reis

2006
Rick Nixon
Susy Oliveira
Francois Xavier Saint-Pierre

2007
Stephanie Bush
Richard Rizzo
Emmy Skensved
Dawn Stafrace

2008
Cameron McKnight-MacNeil
James Olley
Monika Raciborski
Joanna Roznowski

2009
Joseph Colin Carney
Scott Everingham
Sasha Nelson
Nathalie Quagliotto
Ram Samocha
Miranda Urbanski

2010
Michael Capobianco
Dyan Marie
Shannon Partridge

2011
Gary Carlson
Heidi Jahnke
Alison Shields

2012
Shauna Born
Linda Martinello
Rob Nicholls
Joshua Peressotti

1997
Chuck Baker
Marion Manning
Franco Orlandi

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Sonesay Bouphasiry
Shi Le
Chris Stones

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Melissa Gordon
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Acknowledgements

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Michael Jacob Ambedian, Scott Everingham, Michael Murphy
Rick Nixon, Anders Oinonen, Wojciech Olejnik, Susy Oliveira
James Olley, Sasha Pierce, Nathalie Quaglotto, Emmy Skensved

Curated by Ivan Jurakic

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