

took place over a weekend, August 9th and 10th, 2014

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Artists in the exhibition:

Edward Allington (United Kingdom)

Anthea Behm (Australia)

Josef Bull (Sweden)

Jack Carr (US)

Ingela Ihrman (Sweden)

E.E. Ikeler (US)

Allan Kaprow (US-Allan Kaprow Estate)

Rachel Stevens (US)

Patricia Thornley (US)

STREAM

Stream took place over a weekend, August 9th & 10th, 2014, near South Windham, VT.

The surrounding Vermont forest where this stream is nestled is a changeable landscape—a site perceived as part of a natural environment, but one that has hardly been untouched by humans. This becomes evident when walking off the trail; one encounters stone walls that enclosed farmer's fields in the 18th and 19th centuries and that are now part of a forest. Further hidden from view are remnants from ancient indigenous communities ploughed over as European settlements sought agricultural dominion over the landscape. We are struck by what art historian Adrian Stokes calls a "realization of the past-living-in-the-present"ⁱ These human markers in the landscape where the stream is situated serve to "keep us in touch with our own development" according to Stokes since "(G)eological time is out of scale with our own weathering, unlike traces of culture."ⁱⁱ

All the works in the exhibition will be arranged in and around this stream in South Windham, Vermont. Some works may appear to be situated as 'part of nature', others to be 'human detritus' left behind in the natural landscape. Several works will interact performatively with the stream itself.

Allan Kaprow's work *Echo-logy* (1975), establishes a boundary, both art historical and political, that structures the way the works in the exhibition interact with each other as well as with the spectator. *Echo-logy* is a play of actions rather than a performance; no audience or spectator is assumed, and part of the point of the work at the time was a renunciation of the art market and the gallery and museum complex. Kaprow's title plays on the word ecology, which in 1975 was an urgent and hopeful term. *Echo-logy*, with its playful title and simple gestures, exerts what cultural critic Elizabeth Freeman calls "temporal drag—the interesting threat that the genuine past-ness of the past makes to the political present."ⁱⁱⁱ Kaprow's work reaffirms a pre-existing credibility for the notion of placing art works in this particular environment rather than a gallery or a museum, that the value of this gesture persists in the present. *Echo-logy* is centrally a reflection on ecology and our relationship to the environment played out in a series of scenes and actions. Participants move water upstream in a gesture that in its pointlessness illustrates quite simply the powerlessness of a single human in relation to natural systems, while other actions suggest the opposite—our destructive capacity to contaminate our environment; waving a gasoline soaked piece of fabric until the gasoline evaporates also quite simply illustrates our toxic impact, though a hopeful viewer of the piece might also note that the pollutant introduced does, in fact, dissipate. All of these actions, including speaking words to one another against the sound of the rushing water, are reminders that what we put into the environment is absorbed there even if we don't notice where it goes.

Echo-logy was "carried out" in 1975, the same year Ernst Callenbach's popular utopian fiction *Ecotopia*, was published. What is striking is that the tenets suggested by *Echo-logy* echo Ecotopian principles and behaviors: performing actions or rituals that produce nothing, allocating time to interact with the environment that is not purposeful or merely recreational; in both *Echo-logy* and *Ecotopia* these actions increase what Lawrence Buell refers to as "place attachment"— what many eco-critics and environmental activists believe is necessary to achieve in order to counter human-made environmental crises. With the waning of the more utopian visions of the 1960s and 1970s, focus has shifted to our destruction of the environment with little hope of recovery; utopia is displaced by dystopia. Works in the exhibition combine aspects hinted at in *Echo-logy* ranging from the poetic to the political and, finally, the dystopian.

Like Kaprow's *Echo-logy* Edward Allington's work *River Ring, Vermont* (2014) interacts with the stream while directing the viewer's attention to conventional uses for the stream such as fishing and contemplation. Through the symbolism of a facsimile of a wedding ring cast in silver and lead, used as "sinker," Allington points to an expansive and romantic notion of landscape as sublime as well as inward-looking, invoking a sense of personal loss. *River Ring* is related to two public sculpture commissions by Allington, *Lincoln Tree Ring* (2010) located on a tree on the grounds of the Usher Gallery in Lincoln and *Tree Ring/Engagement Tree* (2000), Niehem, Germany. These two public commissions, like artist Peter Coffin's *Tree Pants* (2007) exert an ironic awareness of the artist's own use of the natural environment as Coffin states: "as though nature only makes sense the way it relates to us. (The work) reminds us that our perspective is anthropocentric."^{iv}

With *River Ring, Vermont* Allington replaces the dominant absurdity of the monumental—where the landscape is in fact shackled—with a humble narrative gesture that results in the loss of the sculptural object into the landscape itself.

Patricia Thornley's engagement with the stream offers the spectator an exaggerated example of place attachment or subject-space connection. In *STREAM* (2014), and *STREAM the making of stream*, (2014) Thornley makes the stream the "star" of her two videos taking the anthropomorphization of nature to the extreme. Featuring the stream as filmic/video/audio subject and placing her videos on YouTube and Vimeo challenges structures of domination in conventional film and video production and dissemination that is primarily focused on the production and reproduction of celebrity. According to Laura Mulvey "the conventions of mainstream cinema focus on the human form...scale, space, stories are all anthropomorphic;" the stream, lacking both gender and language resists our attempts, as viewers, to position ourselves in relation to the image. Thornley challenges the way we experience pleasure in viewing; neither identification with the image seen or viewing as voyeur is possible here as Thornley forces us to contemplate our resistance to attend to nature close-up.

Anthea Behm's work *Object with the Sound of Its Own Discourse* (2013) uses the ubiquitous Amazon cardboard box to interrogate contemporary issues of environmental crises and the displacement of indigenous populations in Peru while also referencing Robert Morris' *Box with the Sound of Its Own Making* from 1961. The Amazon box is the embodiment of both the overpackaging of American commodity culture and a recurring component of American household waste. On a local level—it is representative of the type of household garbage dumped with regularity into the landscape near this stream and, regrettably, when placed near the stream, does not look out of place. The spectator will hear audio, emanating from the box, of voices of indigenous peoples in Peru protesting the deforestation and privatization of traditional lands and natural resources. Behm explains the intention of her work to "discursively connect the global corporation to social and environmental degradation." The name Amazon, linguistically co-opted to its generalized extreme, made as generic as its material counterpart—the cardboard box, strikes us as a cynical choice in corporate branding.

Ingela Ihrman's performance *Giant Otter Giving Birth* (2012) refers as well to the environmental crisis in the Amazon region, where the giant otter is an endangered species. Ihrman performs "nature drag" using elaborate and outsized handmade costumes to mimic the intimate spectatorial relationship of wildlife documentaries. In addition to a giant otter giving birth, Ihrman has performed as a blooming water lily, a toad, and a cave goat. Her assortment of "characters" is carefully selected to remind us of our conflicted relationship to nature throughout history and our relentless pursuit of dominion. In all cases, the detailed costumes disguise a hilariously clumsy human who fails to approximate the elegant natural processes she attempts to mimic. Through humor and parody Ihrman demonstrates just how woefully out of step humans are with nature's fauna and flora. *Giant Otter Giving Birth* can also be seen as building upon a tradition of feminist performance art like Carolee Schneemann's 'Interior Scroll' of 1975. But in Ihrman's case the otter costume problematizes our relationship to the female body. Habitat destruction and over-trapping in the 19th century has also caused the river otter in Vermont to decline in number.

Copper Pyramid Cooler (2013) by Josef Bull looks like a careless remnant of a campsite or fishing day trip left behind—but is actually a hybrid object—a beer cooler designed for camping re-fashioned as a copper pyramid used for meditative and healing purposes. Bull explains that his work often "samples outdoor equipment and explores how materials carry information about and form links between seemingly unrelated cultural phenomena." Hiking and camping, as well as meditation and spirituality, are "aspirational" activities combining physical and mental challenges with values that should be in conflict with the commodification of such activities. The proliferation of technical gear available to the consumer for both outdoor activities and spiritual pursuits (meditation, yoga etc.) would seem to suggest that self-improvement and recreation are dependent upon financial resources and social privilege. The embroidered patch bears no logo, only an image of sky with planets, landscape and stream suggesting either outdoor adventures or spiritual pursuits. The humor in this piece lies in the relatability of the six pack of beer in the cooler being acted upon by the "healing" forces of the copper pyramid which have been claimed to have an alchemical power to change the molecules of what is underneath to something better.

Rachel Steven's *Survivalist Cinema* (2014) situated in a rustic lean-to plays on the ubiquity of screens in our environment. Repurposed plywood salvaged from a defunct drive-in movie theatre screen combine with a digital projector and solar panels used to power the entire contraption. Steven's installation focuses on the materiality of image production and consumption that Hito Steyerl claims demands our attention:

How about acknowledging that this image is not some ideological misconception, but a thing simultaneously couched in affect and availability, a fetish made of crystals and electricity, animated by our wishes and fears—a perfect embodiment of its own conditions of existence.^v

The screened content of survivalist and dystopian films from the 1970s once again tugs us backwards to the time of Kaprow's *Echo-logy*. Like Dan Graham's significant work *Cinema* (1981), Stevens is interested in manipulating viewing conventions. Stevens suggests that the experience

of collective viewing in a drive-in or movie theatre, like the films on view from a past era, are irretrievably lost in the deluge of personal screens. But because this installation also embodies a physical signifier of the horror films on view—the viewer huddled in a lean-to in the wild—the isolated viewing experience is met with dread and anxiety.

The Octopus (2014), a story by Jack Carr, outlines the birth and education of what might be the last being on earth, a young octopus conceived in a test tube and raised in a tank by what appear to be machines programmed for this purpose. Her educators manage to instill in her all human knowledge including eastern religion and Saussurian linguistics. In the world of dystopian fiction, Carr's story falls somewhere between what Fredric Jameson terms a "critical dystopia" which Jameson considers "a negative cousin of the Utopia proper," still "in the light of some positive conception of human possibilities that its effects are generated" and "apocalyptic"^{vi} fiction, since it would seem that human life on earth is over. Jameson might also approve of the term Carr himself applies to this piece—"post-ironic" since it most aptly describes Carr's earnest yet unrelenting prose.

And finally E. E. Ikeler's two works *Atmospheres (After Judy)* (2014) and *Untitled Figures (Sense & Spray)* (2014) interact directly with the air and atmosphere around the stream. *Atmospheres (After Judy)* is an "unofficial restaging" of and homage to Judy Chicago's series of happenings entitled *Atmospheres* (1969-1974) focusing attention on Chicago's "lesser known minimalist works and her experimental use of fireworks, dry ice, and smoke."

Untitled Figures (Sense & Spray) is a grouping of hand-painted automatic air fresheners that detect motion and release spray when something passes by. Their squat sculptural presence, sitting together in the woods, is reminiscent of a group of ancient roman votives albeit manufactured in smooth plastic. Produced in two colors, beige and black, as product lines for Glade and Axe Body Spray, Ikeler here repaints them in stark black and white, embodying a series of problematic dualities (race, gender, nature/human and indoor/outdoor). The Glade Sense and Sprays invoke indoor "feminine" scents like clean linen while the Axe Body Sprays are "masculine" and woodsy characterized by the outdoors. Confronted by nature, in an outdoor setting, all the scents are reduced to what they really are: noxious chemical concoctions. But there is something else. Ikeler explains: "I'm also interested in the erotics of these objects: the Axe sprays are machine-like and phallic while the Sense & Sprays' involuntary squirt reminds me of Duchamp's *Why Not Sneeze, Rose Sélavy?* (1921) The S&Ss react to stimulation, but involuntarily, with an orgasmic discharge. Being the little cyborg she is, however, her emission is synthetic, and relies on the wind to carry its smell downstream."

ⁱ A Stokes, *The Invitation in Art*, 1965, Tavistock Press, London, p. 207.

ⁱ *ibid*, p. 207.

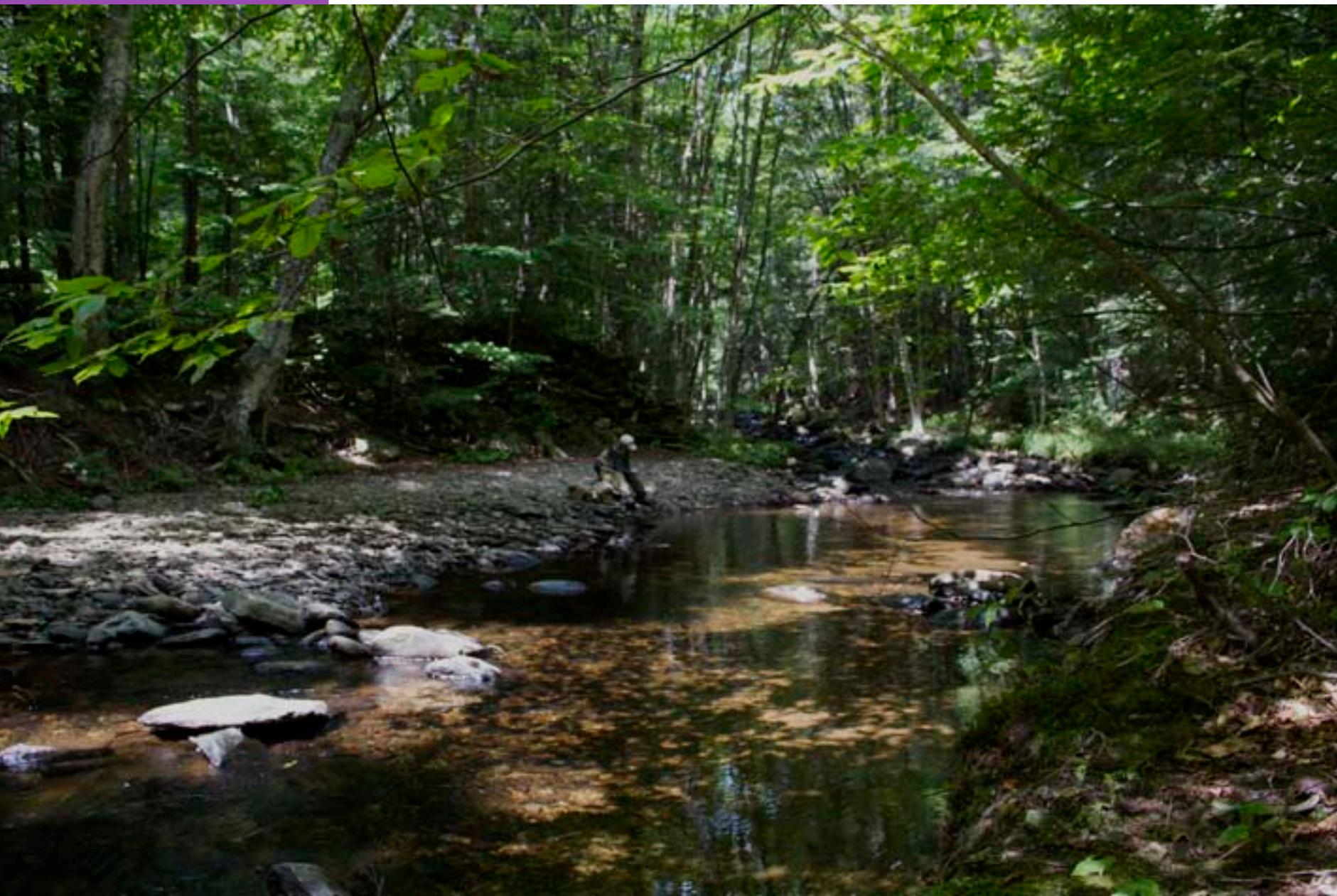
ⁱⁱⁱ E Freeman, 'Packing History, Count(er)ing Generations' in *New Literary History*, 31.4, Autumn, 2000 p. 728.

^{iv} P Coffin, magazine.saatchiart.com/culture/.../peter_coffin_at_the_horticultu_1

^v H Steyerl, 'A Thing Like You and Me' (2012) in A Hudek (ed.), *The Object*, The MIT Press, Cambridge, 2014, p. 47.

^{vi} F Jameson, *Archeologies of the Future: The Desire Called Utopia and Other Science Fictions*, 2005, Verso, New York, p. 198-199.

Edward Allington
River Ring, Vermont, 2014









Anthea Behm

Object with the Sound of Its Own Discourse, 2013



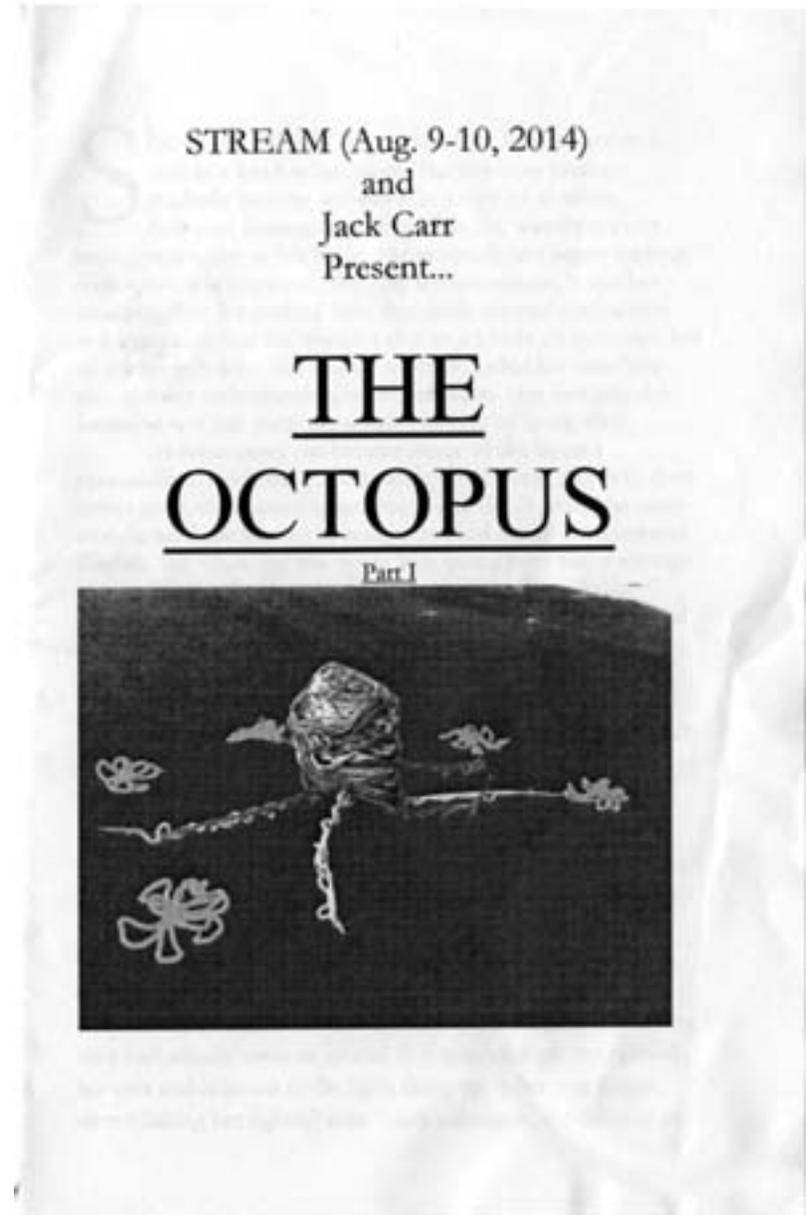


Josef Bull
Copper Pyramid Cooler, 2013





Jack Carr
The Octopus, 2014



Ingela Ihrman
Giant Otter Giving Birth, 2012









E. E. Ikeler
Atmospheres (After Judy), 2014







E. E. Ikeler

Untitled Figures (Sense & Spray), 2014



Allan Kaprow
Echo-logy, 2014





photography of *Echo-logy*,
Allan Kaprow re-invention,
courtesy of Rachel Stevens

















Rachel Stevens
Survivalist Cinema, 2014





BEX
EXPRESS BAG



BEX
EXPRESS BAG







Patricia Thornley

STREAM, 2014

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=O3cD1eO0hjY&feature=youtu.be>



Patricia Thornley
STREAM the making of stream, 2014
<https://vimeo.com/114385144>



Edward Allington, born 1951; Troutbeck Bridge, Cumbria. Lancaster College of Art, Central School of Art, Royal College of Art. Gregory Fellow Leeds University 1990-93. Sargent Fellow, British School at Rome 1996. Has held artists residencies in France, Ireland and the UK. Usually identified with the British object sculptors of the 1980's, has exhibited in museums and art galleries throughout the world and is represented in major public and corporate collections in the UK, Europe, Japan and the USA-including the Tate Gallery, The V&A, and The British Museum. Allington has completed major public commissions in the UK, Germany and France. Has written for various art magazines including Frieze and Art Monthly; a collection of his selected essays "A Method for Sorting Cows" was published in 1998. Has been writing fiction for some time some of which has recently been published through Akerman Daly. Lives and works in London and is currently Professor of Fine Art and Head of Graduate Sculpture at the Slade School of Fine Art.

River Ring, Vermont, 2014

The work: An engagement ring is bought in a pawnshop in London, England. A mould is made from it. The ring is removed and lead and silver casts are made as fishing weights or sinkers. An endless edition made to be used, and lost. The casts are taken to a river in Vermont and used for fishing.

Anthea Behm is an interdisciplinary visual artist directly engaging legacies of Modernism in current artistic, social, and political structures. She received her MFA from the School of the Art Institute of Chicago and BFA from the College of Fine Arts, University of New South Wales, Australia. Behm participated in the Whitney Museum of American Art Independent Study Program, and the Core Program, Museum of Fine Arts, Houston. Her work has been exhibited at Dallas Contemporary, the Dedalus Foundation, the Australian Centre for Photography, and Kiasma Museum of Contemporary Art, Helsinki. Reviews of her work have appeared in X-TRA, Kaleidoscope, and Art & Australia. Behm is the current Visiting Assistant Professor in the Creative Photography Department at the University of Florida.

Object with the Sound of Its Own Discourse, 2013

cardboard, Amazon box, pedestal, internal speaker <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MJlwwJLNZblbox> A1 BHO (3 1/2 x 10 x 7 1/4"); pedestal 40 x 13 x 10 1/4"; 5 minutes 44 seconds 2013

This work is a direct reference to Robert Morris's *Box with the Sound of Its Own Making* (1961) that engages the antagonistic binary drawn between object-based and social/discursive practices in current contemporary art. The work consists of an Amazon box with an internal speaker playing sound from a YouTube video clip "Protests in Peru" on loop. The sound of protestors demanding the repeal of laws affecting land rights of indigenous peoples in the Peruvian Amazon, discursively connects the global corporation to social and environmental degradation. On a material level, the Amazon box is a record of its own movement and circulation, complete with the artist's printed name—in lieu of a signature—and temporary address.

Josef Bull is a Swedish artist living and working in Brooklyn, NY. His work often samples outdoor equipment and explores how materials carry information about and form links between seemingly unrelated cultural phenomena. Bull received his BFA from Konstfack, Stockholm in 2009, and in 2013, was awarded the Maria Bonnier Dahlin's Foundation Grant. He is currently the 2014 grantee of the Swedish Polar Research Secretariat Artist Program and will participate in the arctic expedition SWERUS-C3 this fall. He has exhibited internationally at institutions and galleries such as Bonniers Konsthall, Stockholm; Museum of Ethnography, Stockholm; Hanaholmen Cultural Center, Helsinki; Jackie Klempay Gallery, Brooklyn NY; and Peter Bergman Gallery, Stockholm. He is a co-founder and editor of the publishing house and artist collective Nautofon. (www.josefbull.com)

Copper Pyramid Cooler, 2013

modified cooler, fabric, copper pipes, plastic joints, ice, beverages and embroidered patch.

Jack Carr is a writer and musician who lives in Brooklyn, NY. He is a graduate of Columbia University and a current MFA candidate in the Long Island University Brooklyn Creative Writing Program. His stories have been published in Brooklyn Paramount and Brooklyn Voice.

The Octopus, 2014, a story.

Ingela Ihrman is a visual artist based in Malmö, Sweden. She graduated in 2012 with an MA in Art in the Public Realm from Konstfack, Stockholm. Recent exhibitions include Vart tog hon vägen at Stockholm Music and Arts Festival, *The Giant Corpse Flower BLOOMS* at Microclima, Venice, *The Giant Water Lily Victoria amazonica BLOOMS* at Percival Space. She is a member of the music and art collective Hägerstens Botaniska Trädgård (The Botanical Garden of Hägersten) with whom she has performed frequently since 2009. (www.ingelaihrman.com)

Giant Otter Giving Birth, 2012

Performance in giant otter costume. A human sized female giant otter (*Pteronura brasiliensis*) gives birth to three giant otter pups. The otter is native to the Amazon river. Previously performed at Galleri 54, Gothenburg, SE.

E. E. Ikeler was born in 1986 in Arizona and currently lives in New Haven, Connecticut. She holds a BFA from Cooper Union and is currently an MFA candidate at Yale University, where she studies painting. In addition to her studio work, Ikeler is also the co-organizer of the feminist exhibition series Garden Party/Arts.

Atmospheres (After Judy), 2014
Colored Smoke, Air, Vermont

In dialog with the reinvention of Kaprow's *Echo-logy*, understood to be—in part, an attempt at “queering” Kaprow's original work, “*Atmospheres (After Judy)*” is an unofficial restaging and homage to Judy Chicago's series by the same name.

Untitled Figures (Sense & Spray), 2014
Glade Sense & Spray, Axe Body Spray, Enamel

Allan Kaprow (1927–2006) was an American artist who established a radical new mode of working in the 1950s and 60s that brought together site-specific installation and performance, in what he originally referred to as ‘Happenings’ or ‘Environments’. Giving birth to what we now broadly describe as installation art, Kaprow challenged the commodification of art and the institution through these time-based, temporary works that encouraged the participation of the viewer to construct their form and meaning. Believing that ‘the line between art and life should be kept as fluid, and perhaps indistinct, as possible’, Kaprow sought to disrupt the conventions by which we engage with works of art and the institutions that frame them.

Echo-logy 2014/(September 1974–April 1975) is concerned with natural processes. Water flowing downstream is carried mechanically upstream, is dumped and flows back. Some is lost along the way. More water is transferred downstream mouth-by-mouth, loses oxygen, is mixed with saliva and is given back to the stream to be altered again. A word is silently formed, is recognized from a distance and is passed in that manner upstream, changing its identity, and is spoken to the trees. A word shouted from person to person, so loudly as to be misunderstood, rushes downstream similarly and is silently conveyed to the air. A gas-soaked rag is evaporated in stages on its trip upstream, becoming relatively clean as it gives its fumes to the atmosphere and further chemical change. Human breaths are collected and conducted downstream by hand. Small bits escape. The growing bagful becomes stale and the container is then released to the winds. The movement is simply back and forth. (*Echo-logy*, D'Arc Press, NYC, Allan Kaprow, 1975)

Rachel Stevens makes projects that explore materiality (in both the literal and the political sense), media and place. Her work, which has taken the form of internet archives, photography, sculpture, video, an augmented reality walking tour and curatorial projects, has been exhibited internationally at venues such as Socrates Sculpture Park in NYC and the Viafarini gallery in Milan. She recently completed the Lower Manhattan Cultural Council's Building 110 residency on Governors Island in NYC. Her writing on art and visual culture has been published in *Afterimage*, *Flash Art* and *Millennium Film Journal*, among others. She teaches in the Integrated Media Arts MFA program at Hunter College and has also taught at Brown University, the Rhode Island School of Design and Brooklyn College. She received an MFA in Visual Art from the University of California, San Diego and a BFA in Photography from the RISD. She lives and works in NYC. (www.rachelstevens.net)

Survivalist Cinema, 2014

An outmoded drive-in movie screen is repurposed as a wilderness lean-to. A solar panel on the roof powers survivalist and dystopian ecological films borrowed from the 1970s. The screen that once reflected light now absorbs it. Cinema as collective experience is recast as an experience of isolation, or cinema as waystation.

Patricia Thornley is a multi-media artist living in New York City. Combining sculpture, video and music, her projects emulate and embrace the collaborative fantasies we enact through popular media. In a recent project, *Songs for Criminals*, and current project, *This Is Us*, she uses songwriting as a vehicle, introducing original musical interludes into a documentary atmosphere in a collision of categories that questions the efficacy of our cultural tools. Her most recent work, *Don't Cry For Me*, was shown in the 51st New York Film Festival. Other venues include P.S.1 Contemporary Art Center, The Whitney Museum of American Art, Nicole Klagsbrun Gallery, Smack Mellon, The Wexner Center for the Arts, and Walter Phillips Gallery. She has been an instructor at the School of Visual Arts in New York, The Vermont College of Fine Arts, Maine College of Art, and Pratt Institute.

For *STREAM*, Thornley exploited the stream in the creation of *STREAM*, 2014 and *STREAM the making of stream*, 2014—two video works which will be posted on YouTube and Vimeo respectively, for the occasion of *STREAM*. She will also create photographic portraits of the stream which will be available through her website. (www.patriciathornley.com)

STREAM the making of stream, 2014
STREAM, 2014

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