

“Caught Up in Disappearing: New works by Annie Martin and Denton Fredrickson”

By Ken Allan

Trianon Gallery

104 5th Street South

Lethbridge, Alberta

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Annie Martin's and Denton Fredrickson's recent works involve sound-emitting and visually engaging objects and devices. Martin presented two monochrome sound paintings and a set of musical scores altered through over-painting. Fredrickson displayed a digital projection involving a wind sensor linked to the gallery's roof in addition to a reconstructed and technologically modified antique player piano.

Martin's *The Outside of Sound* comprises two square monochrome paintings with eight small, barely visible speakers arranged in an octagon formation behind and against the paintings' surfaces. The left painting is stretched natural linen rubbed with bleach, while the painting to the right is lightly worked in a mottled, creamy colour, with raw fabric showing through in areas. The speakers are discretely wired behind the paintings and through the wall. A subtly composed collection of sounds emanate from the paintings, including field recordings of natural environments as well as the gurgling utterances of an infant.

Monochromes necessarily allude to the idealistic, philosophical, and spiritualized versions of earlier European abstraction, as well as the more reductive surface- and edge-oriented work of later 1950s and 60s abstraction. Monochromes are often associated with silence, but Martin sets up a subtle tension between the strict order of the squared paintings and grouped speakers with the amorphous surfaces and

the indeterminate sounds that project through them. The dual paintings suggest a coming into being of sensed space, auditory reception, and awareness.

Fredrickson took advantage of the fact that Lethbridge is one of the windiest cities in Canada to produce a wind-dependent technologically complex work entitled *The Physicist's Failed Attempt to Disappear into the Invisibility of Wind and Sound*. In a short digital projection sequence borrowed and re-animated from a science demonstration video, a scientist wields a corrugated plastic tube over his head like a lasso. The projected speed of the scientist's action is determined by an anemometer (wind sensor) mounted on the gallery's roof. As outside wind speed increases or decreases, electric pulses from the sensor cause the physicist and whirling tube to do the same. If wind speed increased exponentially, the figure would disappear momentarily in a blur. Within the projection's illuminated rectangle, an actual wall-mounted container contains a collection of digital recording devices. Headsets permit the audience to listen to the devices' recordings which are activated in quantity and pitch in proportion to local wind speed. Fredrickson allows environmental conditions to function as a co-producer of the work.

Ken Allan

kenneth.allan@uleth.ca