

support for her paintings, a place where femininity is elusively represented and acutely considered through the layering of meanings. By rethinking the walls and pronouncing them collaborators, she allows them to be more than just a foundation: they become an extension of corporeality, a respondent.

Wright's current work, minimalistic and non-narrative, focuses on the body as an archive, and explores how memory plays a role within choreography. The barrier between the audience and performer is acknowledged only at the beginning and end of the performance. Together, the pair approach choreography with a "looseness to timing and sequencing" with the "possibility for recognition, related to how [they] move outside in the world."

The women wear their historical posturing in and on their bodies: Wright is visibly trained; Lyle moves more naturally. Through a language of movement, each integrates her training and subjectivity. Their collaborative process unfolds through the observation of each other: a combination of mimicry, molding of formal relationships between the movements, and consideration of site specificity. It is not just a collaboration between Lyle and Wright, but also with the space itself: it too becomes a participant. The work morphs to fit each individual context where it is shown: the shape and characteristics of the space inform the movements and choreography. Definitions of space are individually authored: at times, we are aware of this; at others, we forget about the walls.

In a recent press release for a performance at MoMA PS1, dance artist Mårten Spångberg's work was framed as: "choreography as medium... considering the potentiality of dance as an object."¹ Doing so situates *character vs. author*, a theme Lyle explores in her work. In conversation about this performative dialogue, Lyle and Wright tease out the interfaces of choreography, performance and self, asking: "What is a performance of femininity? How do we naturally move? What is calculated or rehearsed?" Though they see this work as non-emotive and non-narrative, wondering: "Are we in character? Are we playing a role in a story? Is this performance?"

As enunciated through the work's changing titles, the artists dedicate the performance *for* each room, rather just performing *in* each one. Through these dedications, the spaces become eponymously part of the performance. The room is personified and becomes a character, performer, collaborator, participant, respondent and specimen: it is a living organism. And through choreography, Lyle and Wright make viewers aware of the space they inhabit – the use of it, the ways to be in it and the mutability of what it can be. Their performance underscores the changing definitions of locus, the forms and functions of private and public space, and the interplay between them. By changing the quotidian – moving a painting, or working with the body instead of a paintbrush – our thoughts about the way we inhabit space can be distilled, whether within a physical room or an artistic practice.

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1 <http://www.e-flux.com/announcements/marten-spangberg/>

**Aleesa Cohene, Derek Dunlop
and Deborah Edmeades:**
The accursed share
Artspeak, Vancouver,
British Columbia
April 2 - May 21, 2016
by sophia bartholomew

Emitting a diffused scent from its place on the floor, Aleesa Cohene's *You, Dear* (2014), initiates entry into Artspeak's space on Carrall Street and presents a quiet reminder that entering this space constitutes crossing a threshold. Every morning, the gallery attendant performs a small rite, releasing scent into the room, and activating the exhibition as a slow and sacred space. Cognitively, reality is held together by the performance of small rituals, and the use of smell in particular keeps visitors rooted inside their bodies, as they enter the gallery. The smell of Cohene's work is strange and somewhat earthy: it is a compound of aluminum, cumin, cyprus, frankincense, and the Smell of Real Ass™, which dissipates throughout the afternoon.

Caught in the overcast light angling in from the storefront windows, a small pile of publications is stacked on the hardwood floor. The black ink on their cardstock covers is mottled and glossy. The eight non-chronological pages of Marina Roy's curatorial essay are creased, but unbound. This printed format is standard for Artspeak, but when placed in conversation with the exhibition, its loose tactility supports Roy's essay as an artwork in and of itself: one which speaks beside the other artworks, rather than speaking about them prescriptively. The writing moves playfully around ideas of excess and affect, sexuality and sacrificial offering, emphasizing the possibility of invoking altered, expanded modes of existence through the creation and presentation of

art, and referencing concepts put forward by Elizabeth Grosz, Georges Bataille, and Eric Santner.

Roy has lifted the exhibition's title from George Bataille's *La part maudite* (1949), three philosophical volumes ("Consumption", "The History of Eroticism," and "Sovereignty") that put forward the alternate economic theory of a "general economy," in which actors make use of a networked superabundance of energy, rather than being motivated by scarcity. According to Bataille's thinking, "the possibility of pursuing growth is itself subordinated to giving,"¹ and Roy's essay works to align art practice with his description of the human desire to form a new world. She makes use of Eric Santner's image of "the fleshy remainder" of ritual sacrifice to better understand the cultural function of art, and proposes that the world's unpragmatic excesses (the accursed share), might work towards sublime experiences of abjection.

Messy intersections of mortal bodies press out of every object in the room, but in different ways. Each object moves at a different time scale, and emphasizes a different bodily sense: smell, sight and touch. Piled in a mound that mirrors the curvature of a pregnant human belly, the component parts of *You, Dear* are also the exact size and shape of seedless grapes: they are made from small ovals of onyx, strung together with galvanized wire entwined in thread. Seen from the corner of an eye, they could be a heady share of treasure, or a pile of wild animal shit; they could be a living room decoration, or an abandoned grocery store purchase. There's a certain discomfort in this kind of misidentification: confusing the boundaries and hierarchies that are used to organize bodies.

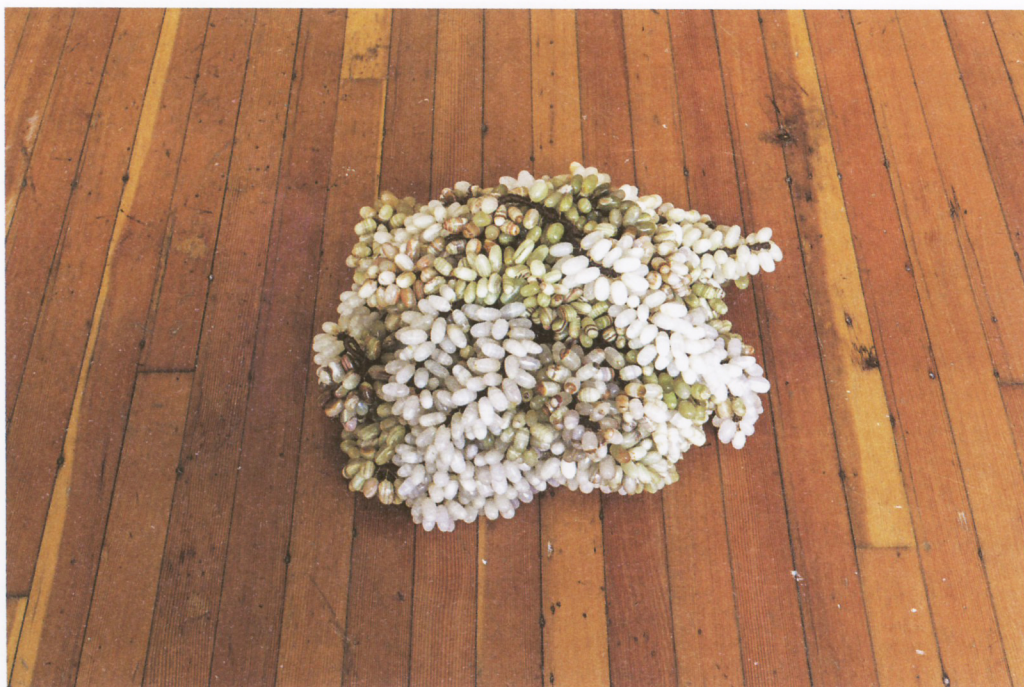
The onyx grapes are white and green, with veins of pale grey that refer to a pair of matte grey picture frames, hanging from the opposite wall. Inside the frames, Deborah Edmeades' multi-panelled drawings, *Divination, Chance & Character: Tools for the Extension of Sensibility (Index)* (2016), work to classify a set of 16 objects and actions, granting a mystical status to daily practices like reading and looking. To the right, one of the drawings is physically manifest in the back corner of the room: in *Blinking and Other Involuntary Portals* (2016), two sparse machines are staring at each other through black viewing portals,

their eyelids blinking rhythmically, mechanized by pink crystal pendulums, swinging back and forth. Both works look out inquisitively, and speak through codes of gesture and language. They diagram the unknowns of intersubjective relation, with reference to spiritual mysticism and sleek techno-scientific vocabularies. Their eyeballs' irises are gridded like colour wheels, echoing a delineative gesture seen along the bottom edge of two of Derek Dunlop's paintings.

Dunlop's *Eternal Return* (2015) and *M* (2015) hang across the room from each other, at a diagonal. The hard-edge character of these grids invokes television test signals, or the colour "control" bars printed on newspapers and cereal boxes, but unlike these ephemeral things, Dunlop's stretched canvas objects have a slow physical presence and a long life. Made from oil and acrylic, canvas and pencil, their materials are pulling inward and outward, responding to each other. They sit on top of each other, or they soak in. Recurring gestures of scribbling, scratching and rubbing out are sometimes buried, other times floating at the surface. There's a feeling of both muddy erasure and willful silence. *Bullrushes* (2015) creates the illusion of a bright pink ground, blotted out with pale pink and maybe ochre, pointing back to the palette used in Edmeades' work.

All together, *The Accursed Share*'s proposition is a compelling one. It proposes that by creating a constellation of unsettling, somatic experiences, an exhibition can emphasize the abject confusion of bodies, and in so doing, become a means of evading and surpassing capitalist systems of instrumental experience and accumulation. Here, a gallery's space might transcend being a value-added-container for objects-to-be-accumulated, and instead become a quiet space for contemplation, where artworks facilitate more sensitive manipulations of human surplus, and invite tactile, introspective forms of looking and listening. The project aspires to transform the space in this way, but ultimately remains ambivalent about its ability to do so. After all, an art gallery is always performing these two opposing functions – and many other functions as well.

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Alessa Cohene, *You, Dear*, 2014, onyx, galvanized wire, thread, diffused scent
IMAGE COURTESY OF ARTSPEAK, VANCOUVER