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The Pond

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The Pond

*A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of
Master of Fine Arts, Sculpture + Extended Media at Virginia Commonwealth University.*

by

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BFA Intermedia, Concordia University, 2012*

Thesis Reader: Michael Jones McKean

*Committee Advisors:
Corin Hewitt
Michael Jones McKean
Sable E. Smith*

*Virginia Commonwealth University
Richmond, Virginia
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**Note on style: due to the visual and creative nature of this thesis paper, page numbers, capitalization, punctuation, and typography standards have been ignored. Translation of text written in French has been withheld intentionally.*

Abstract

THE POND

By Jordan Loepky-Kolesnik, MFA

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Fine Arts, Sculpture + Extended Media at Virginia Commonwealth University.

Virginia Commonwealth University, 2018.

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A collection of creative texts written concurrently with the creation of the artist's thesis exhibition. A range of written forms coexist - poetry, prose, and dialogue - to open up the narrative and emotional space of the visual work. The text emerges from the point-of-view of different voices, describing experiences and body states that hinge upon the physical and conceptual space of the pond. Amphibiousness offers a gateway to a state of becoming and transformation. Some of the following texts appear in video works by the artist.



the pond

jordan loeppky-kolesnik

a: “tell me about your kneecaps.”

b: “well what do you want to know? kneecaps are soft. wait, do you want to know about mine in particular? i feel like mine are floating in a bath of jelly and don't always want to help me. they have little twigs of cartilage under them that just decide to pull sometimes. they've got a mind of their own.”

a: “tell me about that time you said they came off.”

b: “one time i was walking in this field. there was a sudden gust of wind and all of a sudden i felt so weak. my legs went soft and my knees gave out completely, just folded in half, my kneecaps came off. i didn't fall down. the wind was still coming, i sort of just floated there. my kneecaps just floated forward, in front of me. i started walking behind them, following them somewhere.”

a: “it reminds me of the other day, in my bedroom. i ceased for a moment, lights out. just went blank. but it was a hiccup, i was right back there the next second, light came back on.”

b: “have you heard of the will-o'-the-wisp, this haunted light that leads people astray in the forest? my kneecaps were floating ahead of me, and as i tried to catch up, the wind pushing me along, i got so lost.”

a: “you're not haunted.”

b: “you sound so sure.”

a: “maybe i'll start to haunt u. you won't be able to get rid of me, the thought of me will be in your head at every moment.”

b: “try your hardest, my head is thick as shit. only thing that'll haunt me is my own bad dreams and i have enough of them, thank you.”

a: “i meant it in a romantic way, i think..”

b: “what's romantic about torment?”

a: “what's romantic about kneecaps?”

b: “ggggggm.” *coughs*

a: “take a deep breath. take your time, don't choke on your own excitement. you may be here today, but tomorrow you may be a ghost. hold it in, keep up your stamina. you never know when you'll just become vapour and then what will you do then?”

b: “if i'm a ghost i'll be a ghoul.”

thirteen days i've been waiting and it's getting painful.

18 days i've been waiting and it's getting unbearable.

21 days i've been waiting and it's starting to set in that I'll be waiting here until _____.

i'm sitting here under this rock, unknown forever. one of those shrimps that see 1001 colours that we can't imagine plus ultraviolet and gamma and infrared and auras and black light and all the rest and whatever other kinds of light there are that we haven't discovered.

38 days and it starts to get better.

45 days and i'm a new being.

101 days and i'm somewhere else.

that light that comes out from the ends of your fingers, when tongues are touching, the light from the simmering spit, while it's vapourizing. that light that i use to see in the dark at night, that converts everything to its stickiness. bits of everything stick onto everything else in this noxious night-light that keeps flowing out of these eyeballs coating everything.

~~~~~



*pleine de tendresse  
pleine des questions  
pleine*

*un manque  
de soins  
d'action*

*vas-y on y pense aléatoirement  
oui je pose la question mais non j'suis pas permis  
c'est-à-dire une partie de chaque moment contient une trace de cette pensée  
pour l'instant je veux simplement poser la question*

*je supplie la moment de me laisser tout seul,  
laisse-moi penser pour quelques instants avant de concrétiser ces idées*

*câlisse je parle trop des moments  
je devrais parler plutôt de l'avenir  
ou des rêves peut-être*

*O. R.*

*tous ces mots sont rien que d'évasion*

*i'm a filthy pig wallowing in yr scent,  
gulping helplessly, fucked, thru  
and thru, a rush of the inevitable  
down to your feet. crying as you  
fuck me. i'm hiding it. i'm healing.  
tears streaming down, keeping  
me hydrated i need all these  
fluids after all this sweating. i'm  
completely drunk. i move without  
thinking. my hand on my face like  
i can't believe it. i slap myself hard  
can't feel a thing. i'm tongue-tied,  
speechless, confined to thinking all  
this. making myself heard through  
sweat and movement only. i end  
my sentences by collapsing, leading  
the way somewhere in front of  
me, here on the floor, dead skin  
and dead hair moulting, washing  
off with cool water raining down  
on me, i'm just a surface to hold.*

*a gush comes thru and i'm weak,  
my knees give out completely,  
fold in half, knee caps pop off.  
they're floating forward, leading the way somewhere in front of me.  
i cease for a moment  
it's just a hiccup - i'm back the next second.  
here on the floor, dead skin and dead hair moulting  
washing off with cool water raining down on me  
i'm just a surface  
a surface to hold - down to the surface  
to an underlayer; underlay*

---

*lying there for hours discussing circadian rhythms.  
rules that would tell us when to move:  
a frightened possum becomes paralyzed and drools.*

*distill:  
the way something is digested*

*words mumbled -  
slipped into another sentence*

---

*take three steps back and dial back the exposure rate by half. the outline is clear but the details  
are still fuzzy. that's the sweet spot. hold it right there for a little bit and take in as much as you  
can and let your mind fill in the rest.*

*you're standing in an open field*

---

*when inner eyelids help you they filter water, dirt, dust, filth, insects, aliens, ufos  
from interrupting yr vision.*

*me and the alien were together for a few weeks before they said they had to go back home.*

*"do nothing" I said to them. the best motto.  
dont be seen, don't be heard. blend in.*

-----

-----

*fruitless*

*there's two long dirt paths through the trees  
fruitless*

*la fréquence avec laquelle  
avec qqch de même*

-----

*gelatinous*

*sandblasted walls - peeled back - opening cracks  
place the tongue at the top, let the ice melt  
hold it back for another moment*

*sliding back down from the rooftop  
you're outside the door breathing / listening for something  
some footsteps*

*the application of herbal oils on the earlobes  
you take the tongue and let it lead you to the end of the rope  
no sex last night - and the burning scent of cinnamon*

---

*stretch your arms out wide enough so you're holding yourself and everything around you close.  
hold it tight and keep holding. be strong.*

*don't let yourself crack, fill in the gaps.*

*my name yesterday was lost  
my name today is what it was  
yesterday*

*don't let yourself crack  
keep holding on tight, white knuckle it*

-----

—

***sour***

take two looks and

***sour***

leave out the back door and

***sour***

allow it to keep going and

***sour***

be alone in the back room and

***sour***

lead it down the road and

***sour***

be alone and

***sour***

be here and

***sour***

two looks over your shoulder and

***sour***

—

***this is my new smut:***

*you walk around wrapped up inside me  
three ghosts walk in  
i don't feel the footsteps, or the door close*

***this is my new smut:***

*a set of translucent envelopes, all colours  
addressed to someone named roygbiv  
inside each an invitation*

***this is my new smut:***

*i said to the alien, "let's be together"  
they said to me, "yes, let me hold you"  
i said to them, "O.K."*

***this is my new smut:***

*a long never-ending sentence  
run-on into oblivion  
read by you and me  
and others*

***this is my new smut:***

*a long robe  
its soft cloth just touches the floor*

***this is my new smut:***

*as many bites on my arm  
as mosquito season in Winnipeg*

~~~~~

xanax ;

*tendons fluid
all tendons out
today they feel like winter, freezing til they crack
refresh, wait
stretch the tendons, warm up the meat around them
by the fire*

*ice cold are the veins as they say
when you have a feeling of dread*

but a substance that causes desaturation can't be trusted.

*- - - - -
-*

~ ~ ~ ~

allow access to the pores even after the burning sensation starts

*taste freshly each time reassure based on taste
the tongue's instinct for death is more trustworthy than
your hands or eyes or skin
even nose*

don't neglect your asshole

*allow your nose to run, snot to bleed
just drip*

don't be afraid of pungency

*become friends with lactic acid. get to know exhaustion
one efficient way to do this is
swimming upstream*

salt water heals all wounds

ask me to go swimming on a moonlit night

-

ghostly vibes

bawling, emitting light, and the afterimage caught in my eyelids

*when the morning is up, freezing in place
when you most had need to move*

*and getting less and less til you're translucent, letting light thru your palms
ghostly*

*that obsession of cryogenicists:
that frogs freeze solid and thaw alive and intact in spring*

*we wait
being human*

three ghosts walk in, you don't feel the door close

it's a run-on sentence into oblivion

your robe was just touching the floor: i wonder how many mosquito bites on my arm?

we were there at the pond

i was burning the candle down to the stub

what does this have to do with me getting u?

it has everything to do with desire and filth.

*it has to a lot to do with reptiles, the filth of amphibians.
and sticky skin.*

*it's like when you don't quite remember what you were thinking.
that moment you're confused.
there's that moment, and then the pond.*

*I mean I don't really know. but then again, how could I?
and should I really know what you lived? is there really any point to me knowing?*

O.K. so there's this pond. and then what?

*it's like you're a ghost, getting less and less til you're translucent,
letting light thru your palms*

the afterimage caught on your eyelids

and that light i use to see in the dark at night.

~~~~~

~ ~ ~ ~

*you hold it til you sweat, they dare you to keep holding. you give in and keep going. they dare you to keep going. you just want to prove them wrong, prove it to yourself. you keep holding, arms shaking, veins popping, hair wet with sweat. sweaty palms slipping on the smooth surface, you keep holding, the effort almost breaks you, you keep holding don't let it crack, don't lose your focus. they yell at you - fuck you! - you won't lose it - fuck them! - the sweat keeps coming, it's a stream. the sweat is a babbling brook, your habitat. an amphibiousness comes over you and all you can do it stare through the current up at the ceiling, sweat engulfing you.*

*sleepless on the riverbed, amphibious*

~~~~

This text was written during the creation of the eponymous thesis exhibition by Jordan Loeppky-Kolesnik at the Anderson Gallery in spring 2018. The exhibition took place over 4 floors in the back sections of the gallery building, previously used only as storage and service entrances.

The Pond, 2018, installation on 4 floors, variable dimensions.

Materials: wood, drywall, acrylic, metal, textiles, vinyl, humidifier, air conditioner, ventilation duct and fans, tile board, plumbing, silicone caulking, plastic, epoxy resin, charcoal, pond water, tadpoles, stinging nettle.

HD Videos: greenhouse 2:03 minutes, shower room 3:53 minutes, boiler room 2:56 minutes.