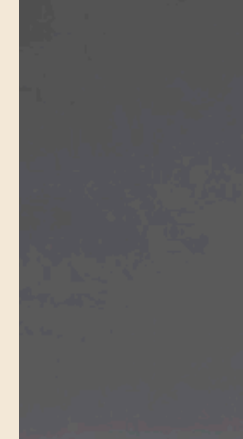
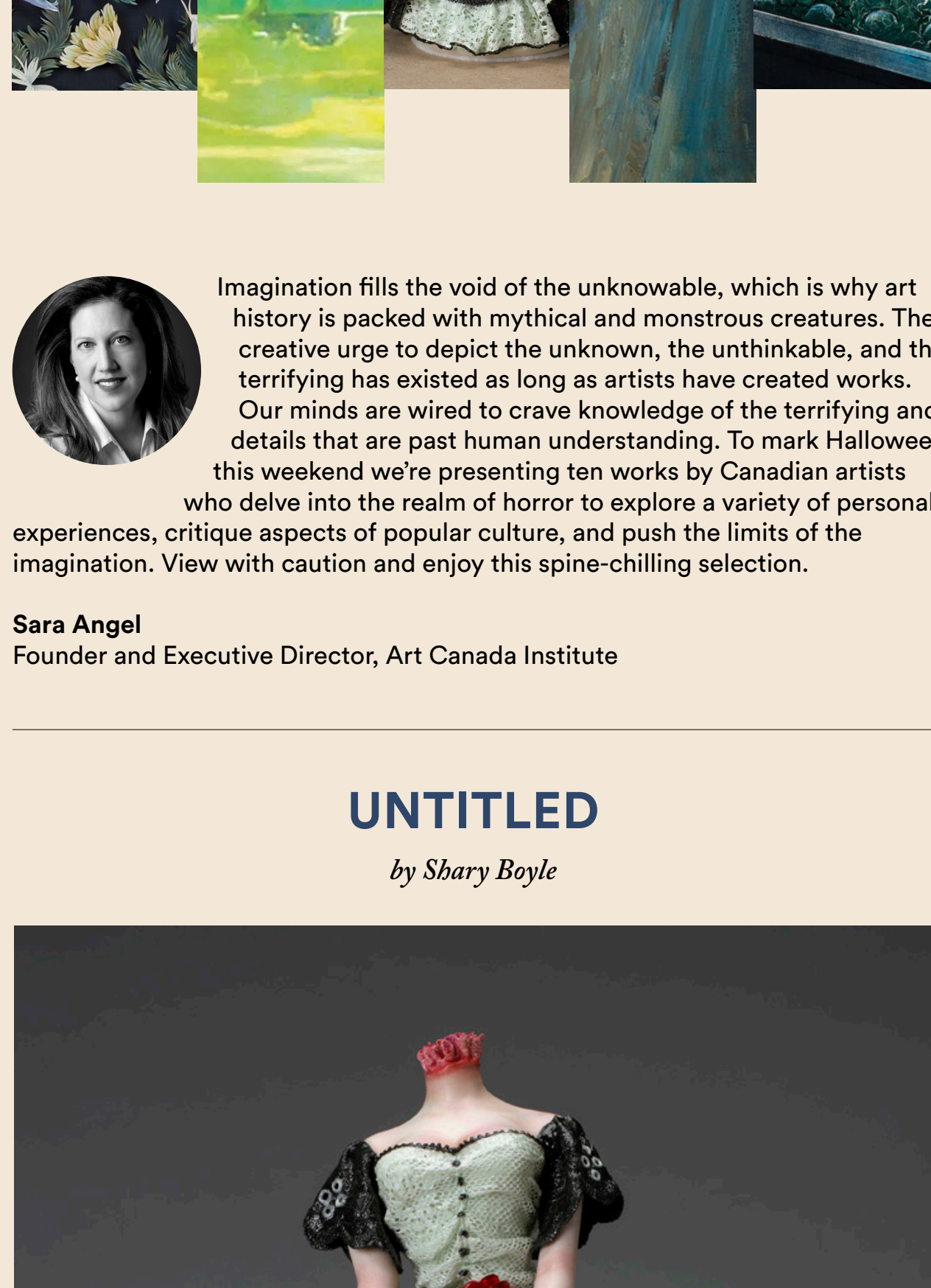


TERRIBLE BEAUTIES HAUNTING CANADIAN ART

Subtly eerie and downright terrifying, in this week's showcase of works, artists bring the fearsome and the fantastical to life



Imagination fills the void of the unknowable, which is why art history is packed with mythical and monstrous creatures. The creative urge to depict the unknown, the unthinkable, and the terrifying has existed as long as artists have created works. Our minds are wired to crave knowledge of the terrifying and details that are past human understanding. To mark Halloween this weekend we're presenting ten works by Canadian artists who delve into the realm of horror to explore a variety of personal experiences, critique aspects of popular culture, and push the limits of the imagination. View with caution and enjoy this spine-chilling selection.

Sara Angel
Founder and Executive Director, Art Canada Institute

UNTITLED

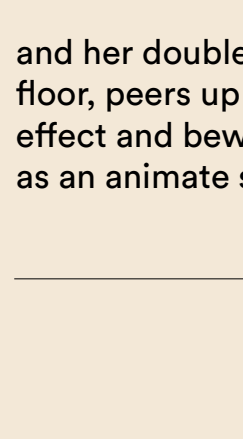
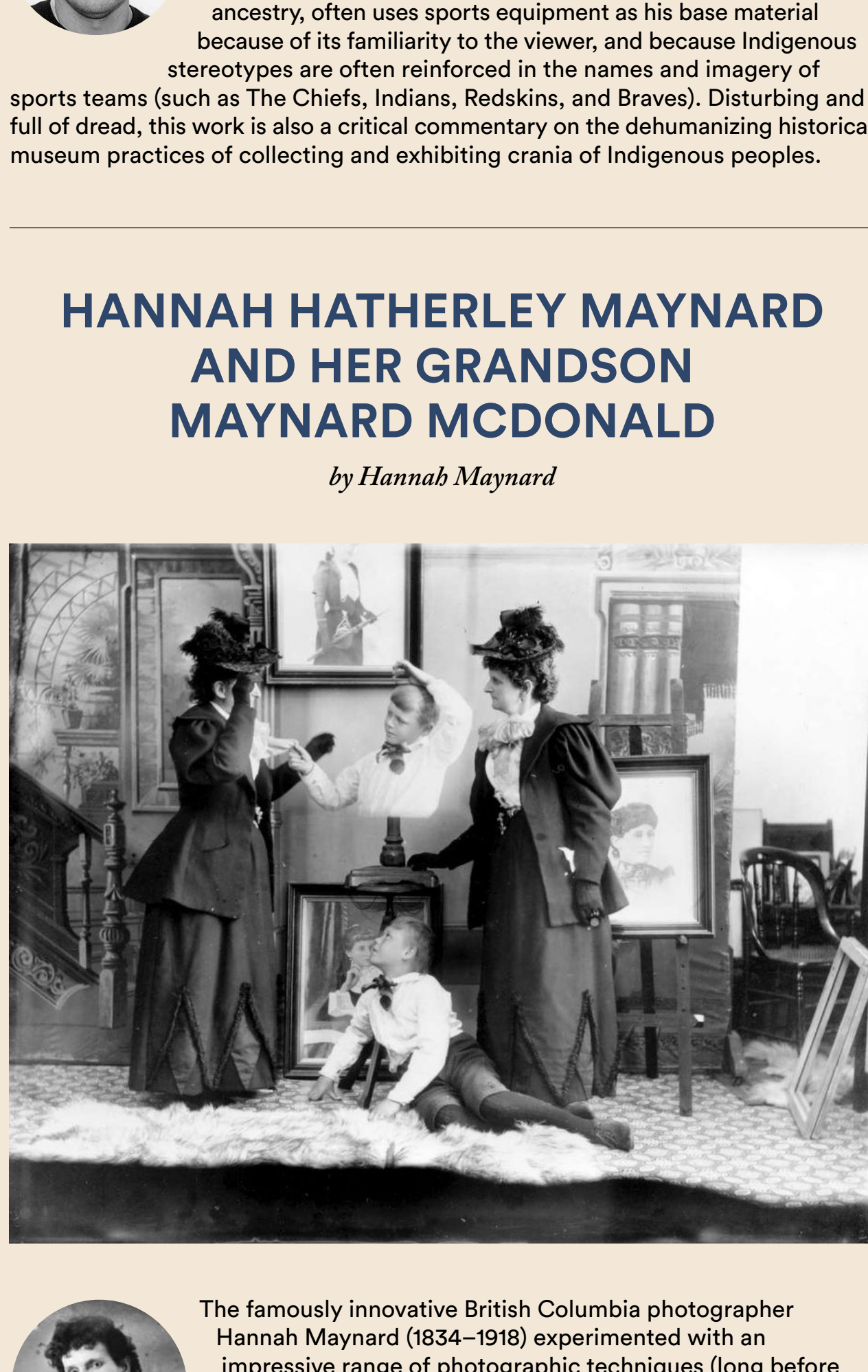
by Shary Boyle



Internationally renowned artist Shary Boyle (b.1972) simultaneously engages and repels us with this exquisitely gruesome sculpture of a woman wearing a black and mint green lace dress and holding her decapitated head in her hands. Created for Boyle's first major exhibition in 2006, in which the artist displayed a virtuoso mastery of porcelain, the figure's ghastly wound, combined with her tearful face, comments on the violence and pain of female subjugation. Boyle's haunting ability to subvert the traditional boundaries between species, genders, and life and death leaves us in awe.

ALL THINGS BETRAY THEE WHO BETRAYEST ME

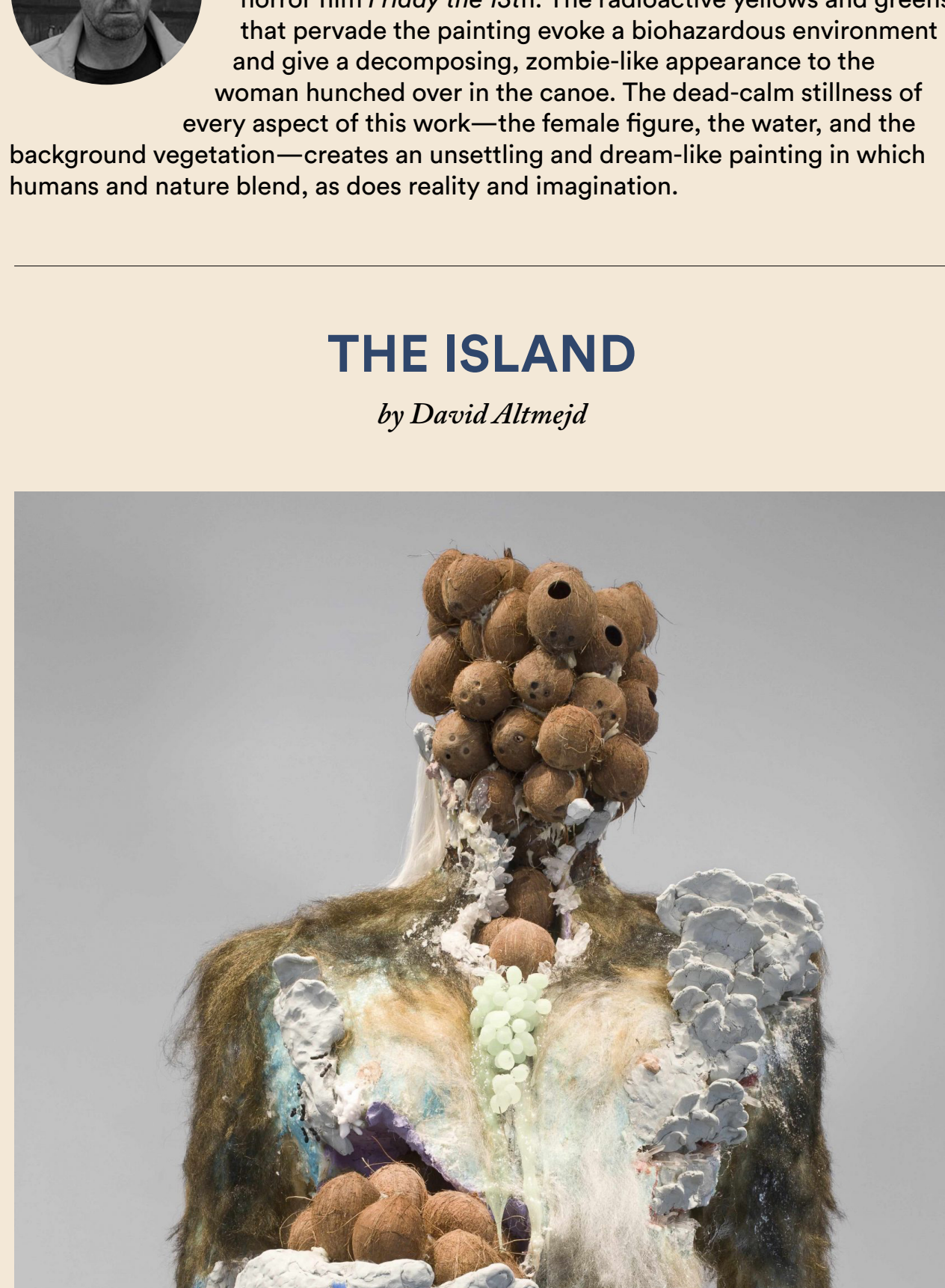
by William Kurelek



In this super spooky scene, Alberta-born artist William Kurelek (1927–1977) depicts a memory from his stay at Netherne Hospital, a psychiatric facility in Surrey, England in the early 1950s. The artist awoke suddenly in the middle of the night and was gripped by an overwhelming sense of abandonment. Staring out from his window at the moonlit cabbage patch and pine forest, Kurelek found himself in his darkest hour. As a last resort, Kurelek later recalled, he began to pray.

STUDY FOR THE EVENING REDNESS IN THE WEST

by Brian Jungen



Made with deconstructed softballs, Brian Jungen's (b.1970) haunting *Study for The Evening Redness in the West*, 2006, reflects his signature practice of refashioning everyday materials into intricately assembled sculptures. The North Okanagan-based artist, who is of Dane-Zaa and Swiss ancestry, often uses sports equipment as his base material because of its familiarity to the viewer, and because Indigenous stereotypes are often reinforced in the names and imagery of sports teams (such as The Chiefs, Indians, Redskins, and Braves). Disturbing and full of dread, this work is also a critical commentary on the dehumanizing historical museum practices of collecting and exhibiting crania of Indigenous peoples.

HANNAH HATHERLEY MAYNARD AND HER GRANDSON MAYNARD MCDONALD

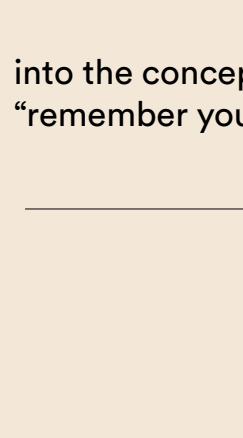
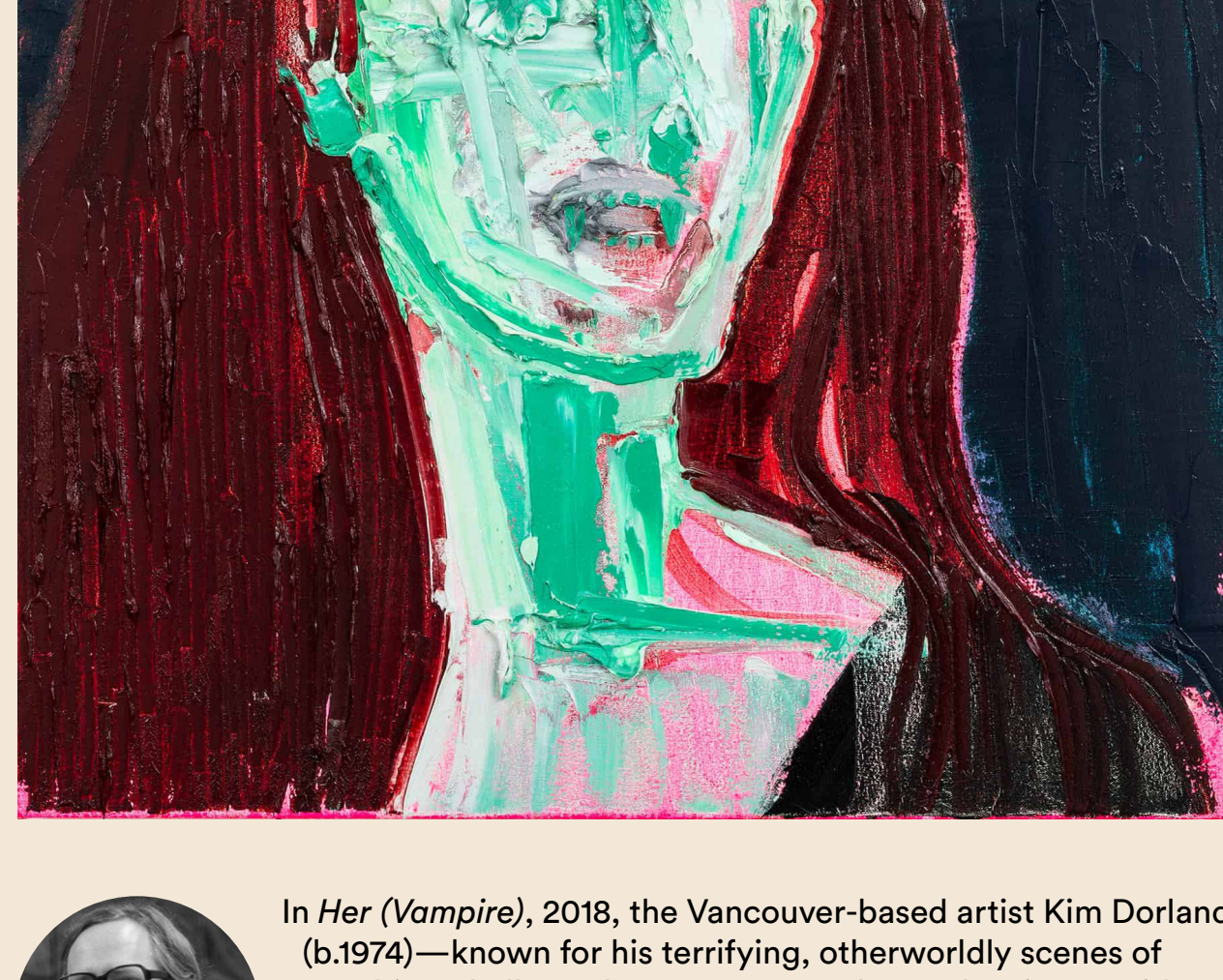
by Hannah Maynard



The famously innovative British Columbia photographer Hannah Maynard (1834–1918) experimented with an impressive range of photographic techniques (long before the days of Photoshop) to obscure the boundaries between the material and the immaterial, the living and the dead. To create this work, Maynard exposed a photographic plate multiple times so that she and her grandson appear twice in the same image. Seemingly interacting with each other, Maynard floor, peers up at her image on the left. To further heighten the scene's uncanny effect and bewitching playfulness, Maynard also chose to present her grandson as an animate sculpture on a plinth.

CANOE-LAKE

by Peter Doig



In *Canoe-Lake*, 1997, the Trinidad-based, Toronto-raised artist Peter Doig (b.1959) combines the Canadian landscape of his childhood with a suspenseful scene from the classic 1980 horror film *Friday the 13th*. The radioactive yellows and greens that pervade the painting evoke a biohazardous environment and give a decomposing, zombie-like appearance to the woman gashed over in the canoe. The dead-calm stillness of every aspect of this work—the female figure, the water, and the background vegetation—creates an unsettling and dream-like painting in which humans and nature blend, as does reality and imagination.

THE ISLAND

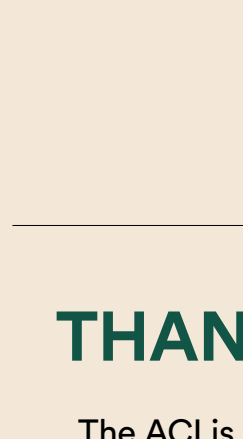
by David Altmejd



In this monumental and monstrous sculpture created in 2011, a body covered in hair and fungal forms has a cluster of coconuts emerging from its neck. The statue reflects Montreal-born, New York City-based artist David Altmejd's (b.1974) ongoing investigation into the bond between the body and architecture, energy and transformation, human and beast. Says Altmejd of how the figure was transformative to his art, "The giant opened the door. All of a sudden, I could take inspiration from the whole history of sculpture."

THE BROKEN WINDOW

by Jack Bush



Although Jack Bush (1909–1977) is famed for his colourful abstract paintings, during the post-war period, haunted houses, menacing figures, and funeral landscapes populated his art, including this disjointed portrait of a ghoulish man cradling broken pieces of glass. With his glowing red and yellow eyes, gaunt features, and sickly pallor, the threatening man conveys intense physical and psychological unease. Apart from reflecting Bush's state of mind—he sought medical treatment for "tension" beginning in September of 1947—*The Broken Window*, 1950, demonstrates an important transition in the artist's practice: from the latter 1940s the dark palette that characterized his work began to give way to the sumptuous colours for which he is best known.

HER (VAMPIRE)

by Kim Dorland



In *Her (Vampire)*, 2018, the Vancouver-based artist Kim Dorland (b.1974)—known for his terrifying, otherworldly scenes of zombies, skulls, and monsters—confronts the viewer with a grotesque ghoulish face against a pitch-black forest. With her face and lips rimmed with red and her mouth tightly agape, she is poised to draw blood from her next victim. Employing his signature palette of black contrasted with bright colours, this painting is part of Dorland's ongoing investigation into the concept of *Memento mori*, which translates to "remember death" or "remember you will die."

MIDNIGHT HATCHERY

by Winnie Truong

Toronto-based artist Winnie Truong (b.1988) depicts an alluring female figure with eight limbs nestled in the wilderness in this otherworldly fantastical scene. Entranced by the moon as she raises her elegant limbs towards it, her plant-shrouded head causes the viewer to question whether the creature's hidden face is that of a human or monster. Created from delicate cut outs of individual drawings deftly collaged together, *Midnight Hatchery*, 2020, presents a three-dimensional nighttime forest scene charged with a mysterious energy.

SELF-PORTRAIT: INVERSE TEN COMMANDMENTS

by Alootook Ipellie

In *Arctic Dreams and Nightmares*, 1993, Inuk graphic artist and writer Alootook Ipellie's (1951–2007) fictional book, the shaman narrator encounters this frightening vision of himself as a devilish figure with inverted eyes, tentacle-like black hair, and tiny screaming faces on his fingertips. The disturbing scene marks his arrival at Hell's Garden of Nede (an anagram of Eden), and the grotesque faces represent the inverse Ten Commandments, crying "Thou Shalt!" instead of "Thou Shalt Not." Discovering it to be false that good-natured people are sent to Heaven, according to Christianity, the shaman destroys the monstrous vision with a knee to the groin.

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Image Credits: [1] Shary Boyle, *Untitled*, 2005, lace-draped porcelain and china paint, 26 x 14 x 12 cm. Collection of the National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa. [2] William Kurelek, *All Things Betray Thee Who Betrayest Me*, 1970, mixed media on Masonite, 122 x 122 cm. Collection of the Niagara Falls Art Gallery and Museum. [3] Brian Jungen, *Study for The Evening Redness in the West*, 2006, softballs, Courtesy the artist and Casey Kaplan Gallery, New York. Photo: Bob Goedeveagen. [4] Hannah Maynard, *Multiple exposure of Hannah Hatherley Maynard and her grandson Maynard McDonald*, c.1893, glass plate negative. Collection of BC Archives, Victoria. [5] Peter Doig, *Canoe-Lake*, 1997, oil on canvas, 200 x 300 cm. Courtesy Saatchi Gallery, London. [6] David Altmejd, *The Island* (detail), 2011, polystyrene, expandable foam, epoxy clay, epoxy gel, wood, synthetic hair, resin, quartz, Plexiglas, coconuts, acrylic paint, metal wire, glitter, latex paint, overall dimensions: 489 x 284 x 254 cm, 365.8 x 101.6 x 101.6 cm, plinth: 123.2 x 152.4 x 152.4 cm. Photo: Farzad Owrang. Courtesy The Brant Foundation Art Study Center, Greenwich, CT. [7] Jack Bush, *The Broken Window*, 1950, oil on Masonite, 66 x 50.8 cm. Courtesy of Cowley Abbott. [8] Kim Dorland, *Her (Vampire)*, 2018, oil on canvas, 76 x 61 cm. Courtesy of Beers London. [9] Winnie Truong, *Midnight Hatchery*, 2020, coloured pencils and cut paper, 60.96 x 50.8 cm. Courtesy Patel Brown. [10] Alootook Ipellie, *Self-Portrait: Inverse Ten Commandments*, in Alootook Ipellie, *Arctic Dreams and Nightmares* (1993).