View three major exhibitions by artists Ellen Gallagher, Grada Kilomba and Abbas Akhavan this Summer 2018 at The Power Plant Contemporary Art Gallery

On view from 23 June to 3 September 2018, The Power Plant presents solo exhibitions by Ellen Gallagher and Grada Kilomba, both firsts in Canada, and a site-specific installation by Abbas Akhavan.

Join us as we launch the season with a FREE Public Opening Party on Friday, 22 June 2018 from 8-11PM.

Ellen Gallagher’s exhibition Nu-Nile is organized around circulating nodes, which consider dominant themes in her practice. Gallagher’s exploration of visual culture covers a wide ranging temporal terrain stretching from blackface minstrelsy to 20th-century abstraction, and involves the mining of vernacular forms as diverse as science fiction, advertising, mid-century race magazines, travelogues and scrimshaw in order to explore the relationship between figuration and abstraction around narratives of race and representation.

Grada Kilomba’s exhibition Secrets to Tell features her three-channel installation The Desire Project (2015-2016) alongside recent video works and new installations. Evoking African oral traditions, the artist’s work gives voice to silenced narratives with the aim of rewriting and retelling a history that has been suppressed or disregarded.

Abbas Akhavan produces a site-specific installation, variations on a landscape, using a round fountain to alter the decentralized space of the gallery’s high and narrow Clerestory. Working against the rigid symmetry of the space, recalling the grid so prevalent in North American cities, the installation aims to give way to a circular point for gathering, one that reflects on the role of an art institution, one that might offer a communal space for contemplation.

The Power Plant also presents numerous opportunities for all to extend their exhibition experience. Whether through a workshop, a film screening, an artist talk or a guided tour, pair a visit to the gallery with a favourite activity.

Details about the exhibitions and programs are below. Join the conversation online with @ThePowerPlantTO
Ellen Gallagher

Nu-Nile

Curator: Carolin Köchling, Curator of Exhibitions
Assistant Curator: Justine Kohleal, RBC Curatorial Fellow

Born in the port city of Providence, Rhode Island Ellen Gallagher has long been an inspired and imaginative chronicler of the watery ecstatic realm. Her large-scale history paintings featuring seascapes, science experiments, portraiture, abstraction and minstrelsy are mutinous assertions of blackness in a medium in which the African body has habitually been concealed. Her exploration of visual culture covers a wide ranging temporal terrain that stretches from blackface minstrelsy to 20th-century abstraction, and includes mining of vernacular forms as diverse as science fiction, advertising, mid-century race magazines, travelogues and scrimshaw in order to address and release the concealed threads which bind the visible.

Nu-Nile reveals Gallagher’s practice of synthesizing a wide range of pictorial traditions in order to counter static representations of black people in culture, and critically examines and reimagines the figure-ground protocols circulating within the canon of Western painting.

Encompassing paintings, drawings and films, Nu-Nile is Ellen Gallagher’s first solo exhibition in Canada.

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Grada Kilomba

Secrets to Tell

Guest Curator: Inês Grosso, MAAT–Museum of Art, Architecture and Technology, Lisbon

Grada Kilomba’s work addresses issues of gender and race, trauma and memory, either in the context of current debates on colonialism and post-
colonialism or as research into the ambiguous relationship between memory and forgetting, delving into the collective memory and identity of Africans and their Diasporas.

Evoking African oral traditions and their power to carry on the spoken word, Kilomba's work gives voice to silenced narratives with the aim of rewriting and retelling a history that has been suppressed or disregarded. Using and combining different mediums, Kilomba explores unconventional, experimental and interdisciplinary artistic practices; her performances, video installations, readings and lectures create an interface that connects text and image as well as the languages of art and academia.

Secrets to Tell, Kilomba’s first exhibition in North America features her installation The Desire Project (2015–2016) alongside a selection of recent video works and new installations.

The exhibition is a production of the MAAT - Museum of Art, Architecture and Technology/EDP Foundation, Lisbon, in partnership with The Power Plant, Toronto. Secrets to Tell was first shown at the MAAT from 27 October 2017-5 February 2018. It is accompanied by a fully illustrated book with texts by Inês Grosso and Alfredo Jaar, and a conversation between Theresa Sigmund and Grada Kilomba.

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Abbas Akhavan  
*variations on a landscape*

Curator: Carolin Köchling, Curator of Exhibitions  
Assistant Curator: Nabila Abdel Nabi, Assistant Curator

Abbas Akhavan’s practice ranges from site-specific ephemeral installations to drawing, video, sculpture and performance. The domestic sphere, as a forked space between hospitality and hostility, has been an ongoing area of research in his practice. More recent works have shifted focus, wandering onto spaces and species just outside the home – the garden, the backyard, and other
domesticated landscapes.

In his work variations on a landscape the artist uses a round fountain to alter the decentralized space of the gallery’s high and narrow Clerestory. Working against the rigid symmetry of the space, recalling the grid so prevalent in North American cities, the installation aims to give way to a circular point for gathering, one that reflects on the role of an art institution, one that might offer a communal space for contemplation.

The exhibition takes into consideration elements outside the white cube, allowing the visitor’s experience in the space to be shaped by the seasons, the time of day and the weather conditions. Akhavan has invited six writers and artists to contribute a text to the installation. Each text will be introduced to the physical space on a monthly basis.

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**Summer 2018 Season Programs and Events**

The Power Plant also presents numerous opportunities for all to extend the exhibition experience. Whether its artmaking, a film screening, a writing workshop, pair a visit to the gallery with a favourite activity.

For a full list of programs and events:
thepowerplant.org/ProgramsEvents.aspx

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**SUMMER 2018 PUBLIC OPENING PARTY**

**Friday, 22 June, 8 - 11 PM**
Be among the first to experience the new exhibitions. Celebrate the launch of the gallery’s new exhibitions and the start of the summer season.

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**TALKS & IN CONVERSATION**

**In Conversation with Grada Kilomba | Saturday, 23 June, 2 PM**
Grada Kilomba will engage in lively conversation at the Harbourfront Centre’s Studio Theatre with The Power Plant’s director, Gaëtane Verna, about her career as a writer and artist and her exhibition, Secrets to Tell. This program will include
the Canadian premiers of two video works by Kilomba.

In Conversation with Ellen Gallagher | Sunday, 24 June, 1 PM
Co-presented with the Art Gallery of Ontario, Ellen Gallagher will be in conversation with poet Natasha Trethewey, to be moderated by Ivy Wilson. They will discuss Gallagher’s work and exhibition. This talk takes place in Jackman Hall at the Art Gallery of Ontario.

Sunday Scene Talks | Various Sundays, June to September, 2 PM
Hear from speakers from the art world and other disciplines as they draw provocative connections between the exhibitions and broader cultural and intellectual debates and topics. Guests include actress and creator Ngozi Paul, graphic novelist Elisha Lim and artist Sandra Brewster.

FILM SCREENINGS

Wan Pipel | Thursday, 19 July, 7 PM
Wan Pipel is a 1976 Surinamese/Dutch film directed by Pim de la Parra. The film was the first produced after Suriname established independence from the Netherlands. Roy, a young Surinamese man, returns to his native country from the Netherlands and is confronted with the consequences of colonialism and clash of Surinamese, African, Indian and Dutch cultures.

Ellen Gallagher selected the film Wan Pipel, to be shown in the context of her exhibition Nu-Nile. The film holds an extra significance for Gallagher who lives in Rotterdam, The Netherlands. The film will be introduced by Vincent van Velsen, writer, curator and editor of Metropolis M, who will also engage in conversation following the screening.

CHILDREN & FAMILY PROGRAMS

Power Kids | Various Sundays, June to September, 3 PM
These FREE bimonthly arts workshops for children ages 7-12 together with their parents/guardians begin with a tour of the gallery and conclude with an art activity, inspired by the ideas behind the current exhibitions.

Power Tours | Every Saturday, 3 PM & Thursday 6:30 PM, June to September
Join one of The Power Plant’s knowledgeable Gallery Attends on a guided tour of the exhibitions, and engage in dialogue about art and ideas. Open to any of all ages and contemporary art backgrounds.

WORKSHOPS

Slow Art Tour | Thursday, 26 July, 6:30 PM
Pivoting off the global event, Slow Art Day, this program seeks to help more people discover for themselves the joy of looking at and loving art by encouraging visitors to look at art slowly, and then meet to talk about their
Writing Workshop: David Bester – The Gathering Place | Saturday, 18 August, 1 PM
This hands-on writing workshop is connected with Abbas Akhavan’s site-specific installation at The Power Plant. Creative writing exercises inspired by Akhavan’s work will follow a guided tour and discussion of his exhibition, variations on a landscape. All writing and experience levels welcome.

About The Power Plant Contemporary Art Gallery

The Power Plant is Canada’s leading public gallery devoted exclusively to contemporary visual art. It is a vital forum for the advanced artistic culture of our time that offers an exceptional facility and professional support to diverse living artists, while engaging equally diverse audiences in their work. The Power Plant pursues its activities through exhibitions, publications and public programming that incorporate other areas of culture when they intersect with visual art.

Director: Gaëtane Verna

ADMISSION: ALL YEAR, ALL FREE
presented by BMO FINANCIAL GROUP

Providing as many people as possible with access to these programs and events remains the gallery’s top priority. The initiative leading these efforts is a renewed partnership with BMO Financial Group, whose support of the ALL YEAR, ALL FREE initiative is vital to expanding and diversifying audiences by eliminating the cost of admission to The Power Plant’s exhibition program.

For bios, images, interview requests or more information please contact:
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media@thepowerplant.org / 416.973.4949

For more information please visit:
thepowerplant.org

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