FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: OCTOBER 2018

View four major exhibitions by artists Vivian Suter with Elisabeth Wild, Karla Black, Beth Stuart and Abbas Akhavan this Fall 2018 at The Power Plant Contemporary Art Gallery.

On view from 20 October to 30 December 2018, The Power Plant presents a range of exhibitions that uniquely respond to our changing physical and social environments through paint, pigment and colour.

Join us as we launch the season with a FREE Public Opening Party on Friday, 19 October 2018 from 8-11PM.

Vivian Suter develops an installation that references the various ways in which Suter hangs and drapes her canvases in her studio in Panajachel, Guatemala. Titled La Canícula, this exhibition highlights Suter’s process, which embraces the forces of nature as an active collaborator in her paintings. The exhibition also features newly commissioned collages by Elisabeth Wild.

Karla Black presents an expansive and immersive site-specific sculpture that engages with the spatial and light qualities of the gallery. Black’s work is comprised of everyday materials such as eye shadow, cotton and cellophane alongside traditional art-making materials. Resisting metaphorical or symbolic association, Black’s abstract sculptures produce a physical experience in order to shape our understanding of our world.

Beth Stuart presents a new body of work that explores the tension between two dimensions and three, the past and present, and the rational and spiritual. Expanding from the inside of the gallery towards Lake Ontario, the core of Stuart’s exhibition Length, Breadth, Thickness and—Duration is a critical engagement with the Victorian-era bathing machine, reinterpreted for contemporary audiences.

Abbas Akhavan evolves his site-specific installation, variations on a landscape, which continues to use a round fountain to alter the rigid symmetry of the gallery’s high and narrow Clerestory. Working against the gridiron street plan so prevalent in North American cities, the installation aims to offer a communal space for contemplation through the creation of a circular point of gathering.

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
Vivian Suter with Elisabeth Wild

La Canícula

Curator: Nabila Abdel Nabi

Vivian Suter’s works are partnerships; with the mud, rain, insects that crawl across the soil and the avocados and mangos that drop from the trees surrounding her home in Panajachel, Guatemala. These elements and more work in concert with Suter’s own marks upon the canvas, which are inspired by her remarkable natural surroundings: since 1983, Suter has lived on the site of a former coffee plantation along the shores of Lake Atitlán, itself nestled in-between a ring of sweeping, verdant hills and volcanoes. When Hurricane Stan (2005) and Tropical Storm Agatha (2010) flooded her studio and left watermarks across all her canvases, the artist began to embrace the unpredictability of her natural surroundings. Since then, Suter has moved her canvases between the indoors and outdoors, allowing the constantly changing weather to commingle with her process. By layering broad swaths of vivid colour on raw canvas to create gestural forms, Suter evokes the wildness and luminosity of her adopted home. In this way, her paintings operate both as references to and direct traces of their environment.

The exhibition will also feature newly commissioned collages by Suter’s mother, Elisabeth Wild, who, like Suter, is also making her Canadian debut. Around twenty years ago, Wild bought an extension of her daughter’s coffee plantation in Panajachel and has been living near Lake Atitlán since. Wild has worked in several media over the years, but collage-making has become her primary medium. The act of cutting and reassembling from the pages of glossy magazines is a daily meditative exercise for the artist, in which she formulates new landscapes and iconographies—what she calls Fantasías. These works are self-contained universes, operating in the realm of Surrealism by drawing from the natural world without referring to it.

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Karla Black
Curator: Nabila Abdel Nabi

Karla Black’s sculptures hover between sculpture, painting, installation, and performance, challenging easy categorization. Her work comprises traditional art-making media including pigment, plaster and paint alongside everyday substances such as eye shadow, Vaseline, lipstick, cotton wool and toilet paper. Black thus draws from a multiplicity of artistic traditions, including expressionist painting, land art, performance and formalism. Materials are suspended in space or carefully arranged on the floor to produce a multisensory, visceral experience.

The artist is concerned with the physical properties and aesthetic possibilities of the materials she works with, rather than their symbolic or cultural connotations. Hers are self-contained gestures, not intended to draw associations with elements in the external world. In particular, Black regards language as a secondary framework to the deeply material, affective experience that her sculptures evoke. Her simultaneously delicate and monumental works often reveal traces of the artist’s process on their surface—such as fingerprints and dust—and are therefore encountered as both sculpture and site, an experimental approach that enables her audience to engage with the materials differently and encourages new ways of looking at the spaces they activate. For her exhibition at The Power Plant, the artist will produce a new site-specific, immersive sculpture that engages with the particular spatial and light qualities of the gallery.

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Beth Stuart  
*Length, Breadth, Thickness and – Duration*  
Curator: Justine Kohleal, RBC Curatorial Fellow

*Length, Breadth, Thickness and – Duration* by Toronto-based artist Beth Stuart presents a body of new work that expands from the inside of the gallery towards Lake Ontario. At the core of the exhibition is a critical engagement with the Victorian-era bathing machine, which emerged as members of the European gentry began to take to the seaside. The placement of Stuart’s *Bathing Machine* (2018) next to Lake Ontario not only refers to its original purpose, it also speaks to Stuart’s interest in the reclamation of public space by unruly bodies and ideas that push back against established norms. Whereas the Victorian bathing machine represents an oppressive architecture of control and exclusion, the artist’s *Bathing Machine* becomes a reflexive, self-critical structure open to new uses and interpretations.

Inside the gallery, the bathing machine is further deconstructed and placed in dialogue with the garment patterns of twentieth century French fashion designer Madeleine Vionnet. Most famous for the invention of the bias cut, Vionnet’s clothes were designed to cling to, rather than squeeze, the body. She was also responsible for developing some of the first transitional beach fashion for women, referred to as *pyjamas de plage*. In conjunction with the *Bathing Machine*, Stuart’s plaster sculptures recalling Vionnet’s patterns ask us to reconsider the aesthetic and moral codes from the past and how they persist in the spaces we inhabit today.

**Support Donor**  
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Abbas Akhavan
variations on a landscape

Curator: Carolin Köchling
Assistant Curator: Nabila Abdel Nabi

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 institution’s rigid architectural symmetry, 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 will be evolving over the Fall season, taking 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. The exhibition will be evolving over the Fall season.

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Fall 2018 Season Programs and Events

The Power Plant also presents numerous opportunities for all to extend the exhibition experience.

For a full list of programs and events:

thepowerplant.org/ProgramsEvents.aspx

FALL 2018 PUBLIC OPENING PARTY

Friday, 19 October, 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 fall season.

ARTIST TALKS & IN CONVERSATION

Artist Talk with Karla Black I Monday, 15 October, 7:30 PM

The Power Plant partners with OCAD University to present Karla Black, who will speak about both her past work and her current exhibition at The Power Plant Contemporary Art Gallery. After the talk, Black will take questions from the audience.

In Conversation with Abbas Akhavan I Saturday, 17 November, 1PM

The fourth iteration of the Fleck Clerestory Commission program by Abbas Akhavan opened for the Summer 2018 season, and remains on view through the Fall 2018 season. Each month, the installation is accompanied by a text from a different author based in Canada. Join us for a lively conversation between Abbas Akhavan, exhibition assistant curator, Nabila Abdel Nabi, and the author of one of the texts, Marina Roy.

Artist Talk with Beth Stuart I Saturday, 8 December, 1PM

Beth Stuart is presenting a new body of work in her exhibition Length, Breadth, Thickness and—Duration. In this talk, Beth Stuart will first speak about the evolution of her work, followed by questions from the audience.
Sunday Scene Talks | Various Sundays, November and December, 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 contemporary art consultant Jessica Bradley, painter John Kissick and CBC Literary Prize winner Becky Blake.

FILM SCREENING & LECTURE

“Vivian’s Garden” & Stefan Benchoam | Saturday, 20 October, 5PM

“Vivian’s Garden,” by artist and filmmaker Rosalind Nashashibi, is a documentary about Vivian Suter and her mother Elisabeth Wild that “takes a close and dreamy look at their artistic, emotional and economic lives, with their extended householders: Mayan villagers as guardians and home help, and an assortment of dogs, it offers a tender look at an instance of post-colonial complexity.”

Following the film, Stefan Benchoam will speak in depth about the art of Vivian Suter and Elisabeth Wild. Benchoam is an artist and the co-founder of Proyectos Ultravioleta, a contemporary art space based in Guatemala City.

CHILDREN & FAMILY PROGRAMS

Power Kids | Various Sundays, 21 October to 2 December, 3PM

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 | Saturdays, 27 October to 29 December, 3 PM

Join one of The Power Plant’s knowledgeable Gallery Attendants on a guided tour of the exhibitions, and engage in dialogue about art and ideas. Open to any and all ages and contemporary art backgrounds.

WORKSHOPS

Master Class: Stefan Benchoam | Sunday, 21 October 2018, 1 - 5 PM

Artist Members of The Power Plant are invited for a unique opportunity to meet with artist and curator Stefan Benchoam, based in Guatemala City, for a facilitated critique of participants’ work. Each participant will have 10 minutes to present their work, then Benchoam will lead discussion for creative feedback and constructive criticism.
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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For more information please visit:
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