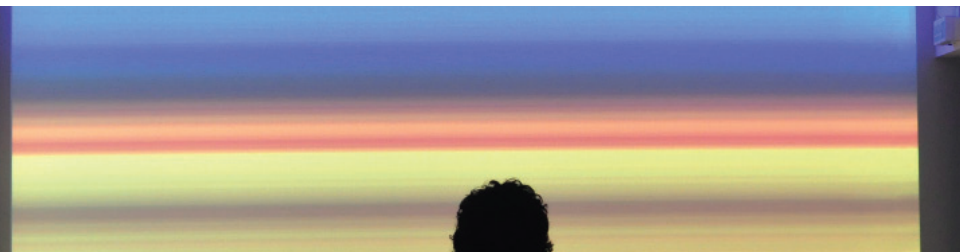


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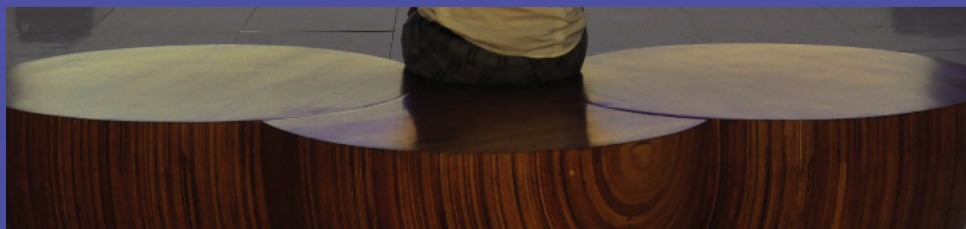
# TRAVELLINGS

Bertrand R. Pitt

March 23 to April 19, 2012



OPENING RECEPTION  
MAR 23, 2012 @ 8PM



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## TRAVELLINGS

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March 23 to April 19, 2012

Essay by Tammy McGrath

“Like you're riding a train at night across some vast plain, and you catch a glimpse of a tiny light in a window of a farmhouse. In an instant it's sucked back into the darkness behind and vanishes. But if you close your eyes, that point of light stays with you, just barely for a few moments.”

— Haruki Murakami, *Sputnik Sweetheart*

The initial lure of Bertrand Pitt's installation *Travellings* is in its deceptively uncomplicated beauty. The viewer is first introduced to a number of colourful digital prints, imagery reminiscent of large abstracted landscape paintings. The second room contains a projection of a lush electronic plane that fills one wall. The digital creation is similar to the static images in the previous room. The image is void of human presence, vibrant bands of colour pulses in the dark gallery space. Sound also permeates the senses, much like waves of mechanical humming one would encounter in an underground subway when the train is going at full speed. The audio fluctuates as the projected bands of colour widen, thin out and change place. The effect is hypnotic. The viewer is immersed in an environment not unlike that of an imagined digital information superhighway.

This initial experience is an illusion. The moment the viewer sits on the bench in front of the projection, a sensor is detonated and the image and sound begin to break down into a futurist tumble of shapes and shadows – then recognizable imagery is unveiled. The abstract bands of colour slow (but do not stop) and become tethered to reality as they form into trees, a ditch, maybe a hill or stream. If you do not recognize the passing location it does not matter (even though some or all of the imagery may be from your point of origin) because Pitt has constructed a scenario that is not about the destination. It is about the journey, and perhaps more importantly, what you imagine you remember from the trip.

Memory is elusive and notoriously unreliable. If more than one of our senses is involved will our experience stay with us longer? The projected bands of colour are linked to the audio, which in turn are linked to the speed of each image frame. The sound varies according to the RGB channels: red produces the higher frequencies while green produces the mid range and blue the lowest. When the video slows down (when the viewer sits), frequencies change as well. Hearing the changes within the image as well as seeing it may prolong the impact but it is the combination of speed, site, sound and control that helps to solidify the experience. The viewer is given agency. He or she chooses to rise from their seated position on the bench when they are ready, the image and sound once again speed up and the landscape begins to fold back into its abstract form.

This is not an exercise in futility even if no two viewers will ever have the same experience. The difference in interpretation is not because each person enters the projected piece at a different time than the person before him or her or because they made different choices about when to sit and stand – or if they even sit at all. Individuals will remember the experience differently no matter how similar it was to the person before them because it is impossible for us to sense everything in the same way as the next person.

*Travellings* is a visual and aural demonstration of the poetics of human flaw. This is at the heart of Bertrand Pitt's piece. The artist has carefully structured the installation in such a way as to slowly introduce the viewer to the memory of a “real” location. But not just the visual rendition of the memory – also the speed at which we could imagine the memory being blurred or completely lost. In the end, it is the beautiful, the undefined and the abstract that is more true to our experience.

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### ABOUT THE AUTHOR

**Tammy McGrath** holds a Master's Degree in Fine Art (Intermedia) from the University of Regina. She has spearheaded and initiated projects such as the Mountain Standard Time Performative Art Festival and Space for Space performative art collective. Tammy is the Visual and Media Arts Programmer at the EPCOR CENTRE for the Performing Arts where she also curates Soundasaurus, a multimedia sound arts festival.

### ABOUT THE ARTIST

**Bertrand R. Pitt** lives and works in Montreal. His videos and installations have been shown in more than fifteen solo exhibitions and a variety of group settings in Quebec and Canada as well as in Brazil, France and Switzerland. He completed a Master's Degree in Visual Arts at the Université du Québec à Montréal and currently teaches in the Fine Arts Department of the Collège Lionel-Groulx.