

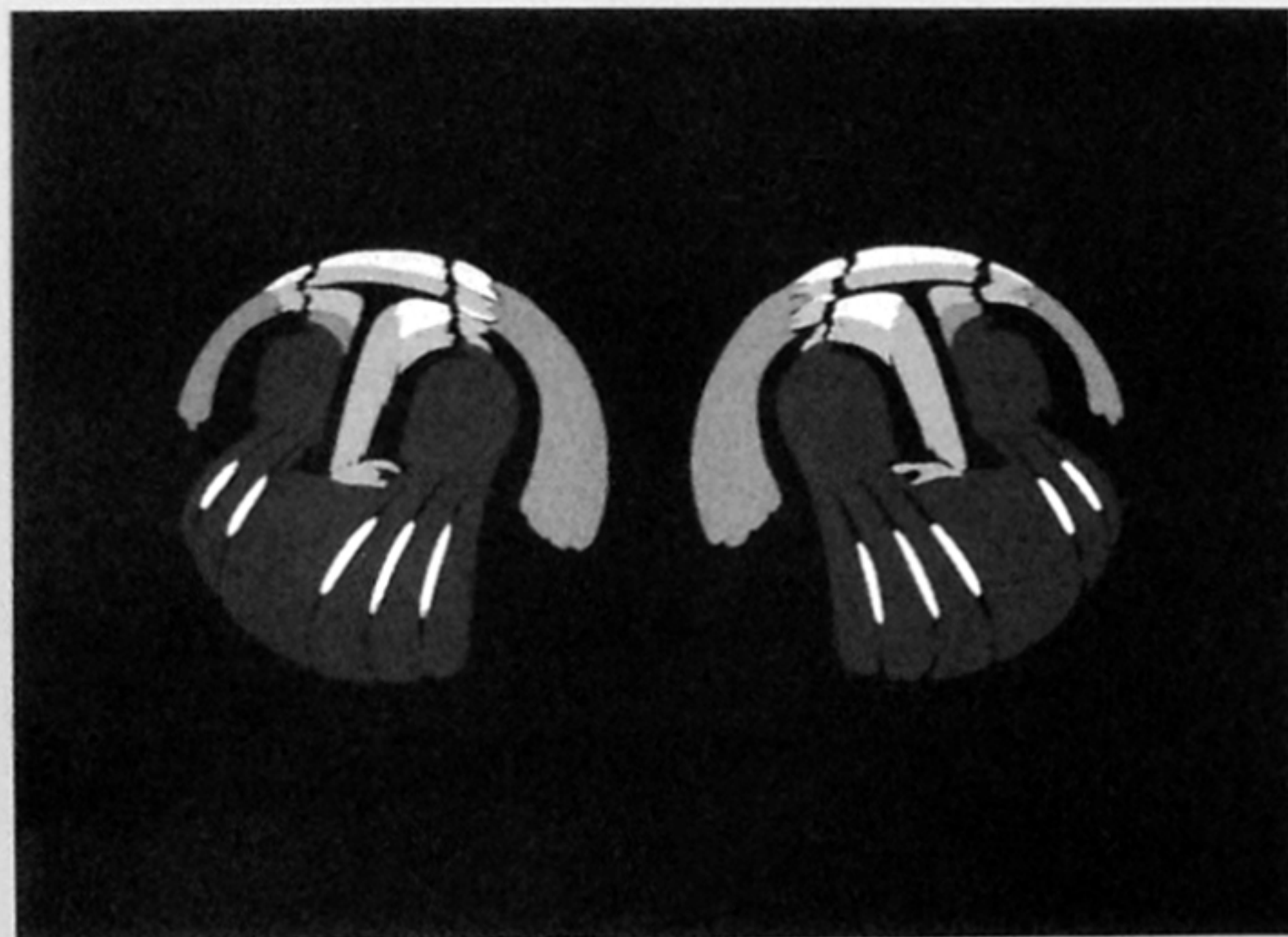
April 30 to May 23, 2009

Opening Reception
Thursday, April 30 | 7-9 pm

Artists' Talks at Open Studio
Thursday, April 30 | 6 pm. Free admission

Suzanne Nacha

Origin



Suzanne Nacha, *the indifferent: double articulation (black)*, 1/1 screenprint, 22" x 30", 2008



Gallery Hours

Tuesday to Saturday, noon to 5pm

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Against Indifference: Suzanne Nacha's *Origin* at Open Studio

by Matthew Brower

Suzanne Nacha's *Origin* presents a selection of prints from three series of monoprint screenprints printed at Open Studio by Daryl Vocat. These series share a common format of paired laterally reversed circular forms. The forms for each series are images that have been abstracted from Nacha's paintings of underground spaces (catacombs and tunnels). The subterranean iconography of the works revisits Nacha's earlier series of mining images but reframes her engagement with the technological underworld as an allegorical examination of excavation and interiority. The titles for the series are drawn from an engagement with beginnings of Dante's *Inferno* – the story of a descent into the earth that becomes a descent through the soul. The images in the first two series, *limbo fraternal* and *the indifferent: double articulation*, have the same overarching title with a distinguishing phrase appended in brackets. The third series, *against oneself*, is divided into two sub-series with the related sub-titles *double bind* and *double blind*. The difference hinges on the sense of the image's engagement with the viewer: whether or not the tunnel imagery can look back at us.

The paired circular forms variously suggest holes in the surface, swellings, eyes, faces, targets, and masks. The diptych format creates a sense of narrative or implied action – in which viewers read the two circles against each other. Despite the stillness of the source images there is a dynamism to the images, particularly as we read them in relation to the larger series. While the images are contained in their forms, their relation to page and each other is vital to the workings of the prints. The images in *limbo fraternal* are confined by the edge of the circles which circumscribe the limits of the images' composition. *The indifferent* and *against oneself* are constructed differently; the elements of the images work to allow the forms to find an edge that articulates itself according to the requirements of the images rather than constructing them in relation to their frames.

As with any screenprint, the images are built up from the accumulation of printed layers of colour that combine to form a representation of the source paintings. Each of the colour layers is a separate screen on which Nacha has painted, in a series of quick, fluid gestures, the ele-

ments of the images. However, rather than producing a series of reproductions of her paintings, Nacha instead explores the possibilities opened up by the decomposition of the images into stratifications of shape and colour. These layers, or strata, then function as building blocks in the articulation of the series as Nacha removes layers from the images and reconfigures the colour choices. In doing so, she detaches the prints from a logic of reproduction and representation and re-articulates their operation as a space of investigation.

In Dante's reading, Limbo is the space on the outskirts of hell for good people who are excluded from heaven based on an accident of birth; the indifferent are the souls who made no choices in life, thus sinning against themselves, the result of which is that there is not enough moral weight to their lives to be judged. For this reason, the indifferent remain on the near shore of the river Styx unable to commit to crossing over. The title's reference to a failure of choice could be interpreted as underlying the need to create permutations of the series rather than settling on a fixed image. However, the aesthetic operating in these images emerges not from an inability to make choices but from a careful positioning of the works in relation to a threshold which they continually invite us to cross over. The works create a productive tension and oscillation between an interiority that recedes from us and an image that looks out at us, between the evocation of space and the assertion of a surface, between masks that can be seen and faces that can be engaged; a tension, in other words, that asks viewers to aesthetically commit to the images. In this regard, Nacha's prints, despite their subject, work against indifference.

Suzanne Nacha is a visual artist working in and against painting. Her practice at times incorporates sculpture and installation and seeks to make connections between a human experience of the landscape that surrounds us and the earth as a physical body, endlessly evolving. Born in Hamilton Ontario, she holds undergraduate degrees in both Geology and Fine Art from McMaster University and the University of Guelph respectively, as well as an MFA from York University in Toronto. She has taught in the Fine Art departments of OCAD, Sheridan/UTM and York University, and for the past fifteen years has worked in the mining industry mapping geographies of fortune and need.

The artist would like to thank Daryl Vocat for his amazing work and creative moves, Jill Graham for her invaluable help in always making things make sense and Matt Brower for his great insight and ideas. Thanks also, to all the wonderful folks at Open Studio for making this residency such a pleasure.

Matthew Brower is the Curator of the University of Toronto Art Centre and a Lecturer in Museum Studies in the Faculty of Information at the University of Toronto.

Through the Visiting Artist Program, Open Studio is accessible to all professional artists, with or without printmaking experience, to explore and develop new bodies of work through print media. Each year, four artists produce their work in the Open Studio facilities followed by two-person exhibitions in the Open Studio Gallery.

Open Studio, Canada's leading printmaking centre, is dedicated to the production, preservation and promotion of contemporary fine art prints.

Open Studio acknowledges the generous support of its government funders, members, individual donors and volunteers.

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