



## Tracing Time

Meghan Duda and Amenda Tate

INEZ GREENBERG GALLERY

JAN 11 – FEB 22, 2019

Artist Talk: TUE, FEB 5, 7p.m.

For this exhibit **Meghan Duda's** has moved her camera along two types of horizon, the traditional or 'apparent horizon' off in the distance, and the horizon that we might stand on alongside the Mississippi river, a.k.a. the 'sensible horizon'. (Astronomers use this concept of horizon; it includes the point where the viewer is standing and extends out from there.)

She follows and documents these two horizon lines with separate methodologies.

In *Two Mississippi*, she drives, pulling a trailer converted into a camera obscura, which allows the image to develop over many miles. She is effectively painting with the light reflecting off the landscape as the camera zooms along it. The result is a composite image where the distant horizon is marked by the contrast of sky and ground, both blurred beyond recognition, leaving only the unmistakable but dreamy 'apparent horizon' line. This imagery is captured on a grid of 8x10" photo papers, perhaps to remind us that the overlay of human endeavor covers both earth and sky. These artworks transmit a moody, soft beauty, and call to mind foggy morning views over a great lake, or across the great plains, or across the vast expanse of one's own psyche. The work reminds us that we are dark and mysterious creatures, capable of reverie, and science.

In *Mississippi Panorama* Duda has produced a collection of photographs taken along the 'sensible horizon' of the Mississippi river and combined them panoramically into a landscape 30 ft wide by 14 inches high. The viewer has a choice: we can either step back to take in the whole horizon but lose the detail, or we can come in close to see localized details but lose our view of the distant points. In this way the sensible horizon is recreated. The photos are dark and moody and once again confined in rectangles, presented this time in a long, segmented line. Again, this references the landscape as it is: beautiful, dark, and with heavy human footprint.

**Amenda Tate's** paintings are artifacts that require a knowledge of how and why they were made in order to interpret or respond to them in a meaningful way. To start with, she is not a painter, nor the painter of the works in this exhibit - her robot did them. The robot works by responding to orientational movement of a transmitting device pinned to the

body of a performer. So, to be clear, it is not tracking movement across a space, just the tipping and flexing of the transmitter as the performer bends in space.

Her artwork is in the realm of 'social practice', where the artist incorporates many activities, skills, and areas of research in order to engage others in the arts and social action. For this project she designed and built the robotic system, defined and pitched the value of this project for performing arts organizations, operated the robot, managed the project to achieve increased artist and audience engagement, and prepared the paintings (artifacts) for exhibition. These outcomes mean that more people appreciated and participated in performative motion, such as modern dance, and more people had fun making paintings (via a robot mediator). Regarding the latter, the robot breaks down inhibitions because it is fun to work with - for professional and novice artists alike. It is not so serious, not so 'high art', and if it doesn't look good, well the robot did that, not you. For people that feel like they don't get modern dance or Jackson Pollack paintings, Tate's art can provide another way to make sense of it. What is art if not a facilitator of notions, emotions and personal meaning making?

In this exhibit Tate has presented us with two types of paintings. The first are simple, erratic, gestural markings on a field of white made from a short segment of a dancer's performance. These are whimsical, a bit scribbly and meant for analysis by the dancer and the audience. The second type of paintings are the multilayered and multicolored works made by numerous audience-volunteers who got to 'play' with the robot painter. We can see by the paintings that the robot was very, very busy and that means a lot of people got personally and physically in touch with this art.

 an essay by John Schuerman

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**John Schuerman** is an independent curator and a self-taught artist and until 2017 was the Gallery Director for Instinct Art Gallery in Minneapolis. Instinct was awarded Best New Gallery by the Star Tribune in 2015, and was a contemporary gallery with an emphasis on art that honors the natural world. Schuerman's deep interest in nature and human nature are reflected in both his art, and his curatorial work, primarily group exhibitions focused on sociological themes. His aesthetic style and social consciousness formed as he grew up on a dairy farm in southern Wisconsin, coming of age during the cultural revolution of the late 60's and early 70's.

