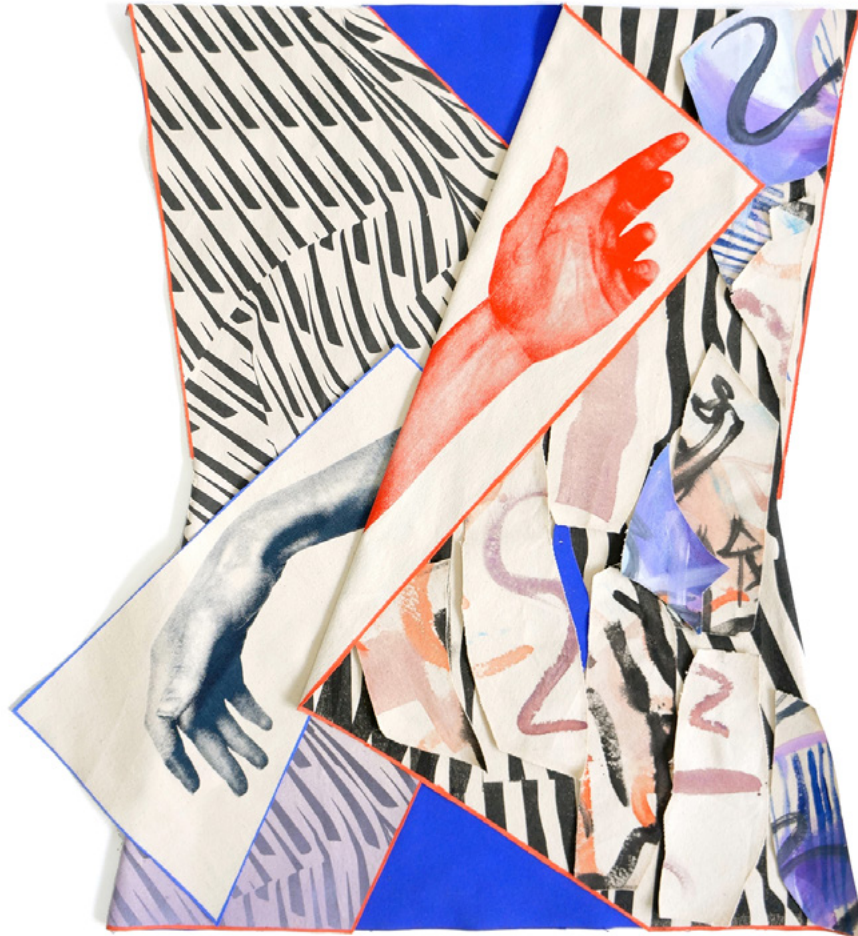


Towards  
87 Wade Ave  
Unit B1  
Toronto ON



## Fay Nicolson

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### *I Love Your Euclidean Stance, Galileo Flow*

06 October – 29 October 2016

Opening reception: Thursday, 06 October, 6–9pm

Towards is pleased to present a new exhibition by UK-based artist Fay Nicolson, collecting together art works, documentation and a text that explore the body, form and pedagogy.

Gallery Hours  
Thurs–Sat, 12–6pm  
or by appointment

[galleries@towards.info](mailto:galleries@towards.info)  
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## Play Sense — The Work of Fay Nicolson by George Vasey

How does the body learn? Think of learning to drive or type on a keyboard — it is repetition that consolidates muscle memory. How the mind learns is a much more contested territory. What is knowledge? How do we articulate the process of unlearning? How do we productively fail? In the context of a liberal arts education, we can define creativity as the ability to work against repetition — a process of productively harnessing failure. The history of artistic pedagogy has revolved around these twin approaches — between skill acquisition and more nebulous qualities of criticality and creativity. We can think of the various legacies of Bauhaus as well as Basic Design as foregrounding a philosophy of formal and material enquiry while Post-Studio at Cal Arts as innovating more discursive and theoretical frame-works. While both approaches differ, they resolutely venerate education over training, permissive experimentation over defined outcomes.

Fay Nicolson embeds these twin pedagogic concerns within her practice across a broad array of media. Print, performance, drawing and writing — motifs are reworked and translated across space and time. Take *Over and Over Pure Form*, (2015—16) a choral work published as an audio piece, performance and text. These differing modalities introduce contingencies that resist repetition. For Nicolson, abstraction is a negotiation between the ideal and the actual. In ‘*Over and Over...*’ rationalism abuts the biographical, the anecdotal and the organisational. The institution is presented as a space where individual desire comes up against collective will. Represented and actual bodies abound in Nicolson’s practice.

Her paintings often incorporate screen printed hands and arms among the largely abstracted iconography. She hangs these unstretched canvasses from the ceiling to form screens that frame the spectator’s body as they move through the space. Looking and moving are both implicated in the processes of thinking, while Nicolson’s work is often pictorial it also operates spatially, and it’s the movement around the image which is paramount. Through

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much of Nicolson's practice is a series of questions; how can the body communicate? How can the image become a body? And, how does individual agency operate under the demands of the institution? Bodies and their myriad imperfections tend towards dispersal, and as such cannot be quantified and contained.

These are prescient issues, certainly here in the UK, at a moment of rising student debt and increased post-graduate precarity due to swinging public funding cuts. To paraphrase the artist and activist Tania Bruegera, there is a crisis in institutional form because there is a crisis of power. The space of enquiry and curiosity is at risk of being eroded because it doesn't fit the quantifying metrics that are demanded by the market. Art is where value is contested at every level — aesthetic, political and social which is why it makes it so vulnerable to attack. While Nicolson's work isn't explicitly polemic, these issues run through the background of her practice. How is art taught, to who and why? How do we work against the quantifiable and the knowable? Nicolson's work provides a much needed noise in the machine of pure information, she puts the misbehaving body back into the pure form of cool abstraction.

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## Biography

Fay Nicolson (b.1984 in the UK) plays with the limits of painting, image and object and how these definitions relate to the body. Her works shift fluidly between print, paint and sculpture with a focus on ideas of learning, documenting, performance and weaving. Fay graduated from the Royal College of Art in 2011 and Central Saint Martins College of Art and Design in 2006.

Recent solo exhibitions and projects include: OVER AND OVER PURE FORM (an enactment), Kunstraum, London (2016); UN MAKE ME, Galerie Rolando Anselmi, Berlin (2016); OVER AND OVER PURE FORM, Grand Union, Birmingham, UK; PLAY SENSE, Gerald Moore Gallery, London, UK (both 2015); A P E L, Almanac Projects, London, UK; P A R E, West Lane South, London, UK, WORK WITH MATERIAL; Künstlerhaus Wien, Vienna, AU (all 2013); Bad Signs, PLAZAPLAZA, London (2012).

Recent selected group shows include: Sat What?, ASC Gallery, London; UEP, Addaya Centre d'Art Contemporani, Mallorca, ES; Basic Structures of, Austrian Cultural Forum, London, UK; FACE TO FACE: A Selection of International Emerging Artists from the Ernesto Esposito Collection, Fruscione, Salerno, IT (all 2016); Madrugada, Tomorrow Gallery, New York, USA; Jacopo Miliani, Fay Nicolson, Jackson Sprague, Frutta Gallery; Elapse / End, MAISTERRAVALBUENA, Madrid, ES; As it seems, COSAR HMT, Dusseldorf, DE; Palourde Cuites, Christopher Crescent, Brussels, BE; The Decorator and the Thief (...), NGCA & Priestman Gallery, Sunderland, UK (all 2015); ACCORDION, Laura Bartlett Gallery, London, UK; before breakfast we talked about the furthest visible point before it all disappeared, Tenderpixel, London, UK; Textile Languages, Thalie Art Project, Brussels, BE (all 2014); Open Cube, Mason's Yard White Cube, London, UK (2013).

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*For more information regarding the exhibition including press images  
please contact [galler@towards.info](mailto:galler@towards.info)*