

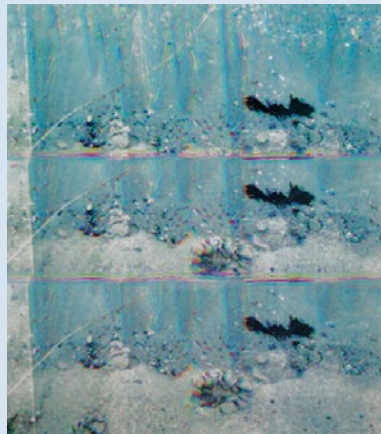


## RAYMOND BOISJOLY

Raymond Boisjoly is an Indigenous artist of Haida and Québécois descent based in Vancouver. His contribution to *The Source* was a suite of mounted digital photographs that documented a disjointed conversation between two incompatible technologies, an iPad that captures video imagery and the raking eye of a flatbed scanner. Both technologies are recording devices; however, when meeting face to face, their conversation and the product created is fragmented.

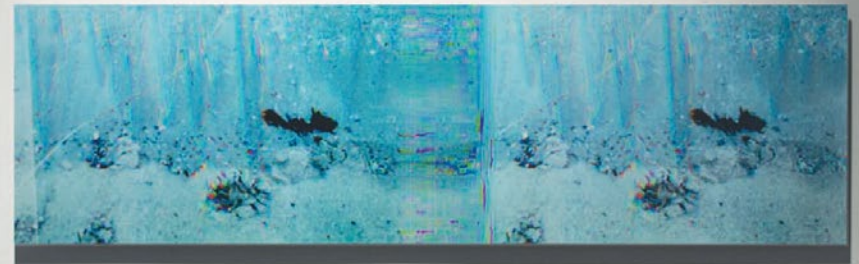
The works *Jericho (where there will be other places after)* and *This place (where there had been other places before)* took their source image from Jericho Beach in Vancouver. The artist produced a sequence of images in response to a poem by Daphne Marlatt called “this city: shrouded” from her book *Liquidities: Vancouver Poems Then and Now*,<sup>1</sup> which references Jericho Beach and the Musqueam village of Ee’yullmough that existed there before. Boisjoly created these prints by recording video imagery of the shoreline on an iPad. The moving images were then scanned on a flatbed scanner. The resulting images are distorted, unmoored from the logical reality of a linear reading. While the image is no longer representative of a specific place, it becomes another type of “found object” incorporating the scratches, imperfections, blurs and smears inherent in its making. The act of dislodging meaning from place draws attention to Indigenous peoples’ perspective on Jericho Beach as a culturally significant site, alienated from its traditional use and its displaced former inhabitants. The broken links between image and meaning allude to the effects of colonialism on long-held memory and human connection to place. The imagery Boisjoly has produced depicts the surface of water passing over the shore. Like the lapping action of a wave, which mimics the scan of the electronic eye, the artist draws attention to the fleeting nature of water, the washing away of imprints and the changing nature of shorelines.

<sup>1</sup> Published by Talonbooks, Vancouver, 2013.



ABOVE  
*This place (where there had been other places before)* (detail), 2014

OPPOSITE PAGE  
*Jericho (where there will be other places after)*, 2014



# MEDIATION, HISTORY AND REALITY/FICTION

RAYMOND BOISJOLY AND COLIN MINER



RAYMOND BOISJOLY

*Jericho (where there will be other places after), 2014*

*The technologies and discourses surrounding mediation (photography, digital imaging/scanning) are foregrounded in your respective works. How do these strategies relate to your thinking about your practice, and about the theme of water?*

R: Mediation as both a productive and degenerative process is central to my work as it appears in various guises – such as cultural, political or technological mediation. All works require some type of embodiment – that is, all works require a material carrier; this material carrier is a primary mediation. Water, a seemingly simple substance, provides a useful entry into thinking of mediating processes. When is water ever simply itself? Water is modified, and filled, by its changing contexts.

C: For me, the considerations of technologies are positioned in the background rather than the foreground. Various photographic techniques and technologies are certainly engaged in the production of my work, but this is not a focus. As for *mediation*, I appreciate the attention this term places on a particular form of relation. I often find myself thinking about the quality of relations between things, and the space of composition is something I return to frequently. By questioning the methods and processes of my practice, I consider it to be continually developing, being unsettled and unfixated. Perhaps this can be related to water, through suggestions of unease and uncertainty that I feel are needed and in fact are required to reflect photographically on different qualities of space-time relations concerning the past, present and future.

*Does the “history” of media, and history itself, play a role in your work? Does history intersect with the way you think about your role as an artist and, inferentially, about water?*

R: The history of media – and by extension, communication – heavily informs my work, as does the concept of “history” itself. These fields allow a consideration of the very provisional arrangement of our understandings of the world and the sociopolitical implications of these understandings. My thinking continually returns to the fact that things could have always been otherwise, and to the potential agency afforded by this realization. The contingencies negotiated through my work frame issues that resist full articulation; all media is always already historical, bearing traces of its representational limits. As for water, it is also a communication network. As Harold Adams Innis describes the railway as a tool of communication, water can also be understood according to its historical and socialized uses.

C: While the history of media does not play a direct role in my work, I do spend a lot of time thinking about photography. I find the concept of history to be quite contentious when it is presented as singular, and not spatially as an arrangement of fragments. Further, I often find the term *history* to be veiled, and subsequently used to promote specific power relations, along with increasingly narrowed notions of progress. Essential to both traditional understandings of history and progress is linear movement, and the encouragement to go forward while prioritizing a “means toward an end.” This takes emphasis away from processes and duration in which

COLIN MINER  
*blue eye*, 2014

meaning is given space and time to take form, while not being fixed in the singular.

What I find interesting is the potential offered in conceptions of time as non-linear, and by extension the potential offered in realizing a multiplicity of histories. Bringing this back to water, my role as an artist can be understood as questioning and exploring the fluidity of history and my relation to the specific time and place I find myself within. A position that antagonizes history doesn't have to be monumental, it could simply take place through a critical engagement that asks how histories are conceived, in whose perspective they are formed and what specific power relations are being developed and promoted.

*Does your work engage with questions regarding the "real" and, potentially, what might be termed "fictional"?*

R: I often engage with issues relevant to questions of the "real" and the "fictional." My works often concern fiction as a means to access reality. This draws upon the "fictive" as something made rather than simply something made up. The "real" impinges upon fiction as a contingency that frames the

legibility of the work itself. I have pursued this thinking in projects that attempt to rethink the premises of tools used in the production of photography. By highlighting the provisional character of images and image-making technologies, "fiction" can be understood as a threshold beyond which lies everything else.

C: What is the distance between the real and the fictional, and why do we need to separate the two and make a distinction? These are questions I could imagine my work addressing, while being more comfortably positioned in relation to abstraction, representation and the spaces between them. I am interested in these spaces and their potential to provide access to the photographic anxiety of questions without answers. My work converses with an ontology of photography in order to engage a questioning of meaning, and I think meaning is both absent and present, located photographically within the space between representation and abstraction. Paradoxes contain immense potential, in this case as a mode of questioning that contains the possibility of meaning itself as the answer – as being not singular but fragmented and composed in time and space: both a fiction and a reality.

