

KNOWING THERE WILL NEVER BE ENOUGH NIGHT

KATE WHITEWAY WITH LAURA CARUSI AND ANTHONY COOPER

In “The King of Queen,” Gerald Hannon’s article on Andrew James Paterson published in *LOLA Magazine* in 2002, the artist Andy Fabo is quoted saying “it’s about time that someone pulled together a Paterson retrospective.” Twenty-some years later, we are honoured to heed the call. Presented by the plumb, *Andrew James Paterson: Never Enough Night* is the most extensive survey exhibition of the seminal Canadian artist’s work to date. The exhibition includes a vast selection of Paterson’s video works from the early 1980s to the present as well as poetry, painting, music, archival material, and a live performance series. This book, which both documents and expands upon the exhibition, is co-published with Art Metropole and generously supported by Partners in Art.

As a three-person curatorial team, we all came to this project via different avenues. One throughline among us is an interest in artists of previous generations, in continuity, legacy, gossip, persistence, loss, and in looking to what came before to understand where we are now. The plumb opened in Toronto in 2020 as an artist-run project with the intention to provide exhibition space and resources to as many artists as possible, aware that opportunities for artists to show work and be in critical dialogue are exceedingly restricted. Run by a collective of members who contribute time, money, and resources, the plumb is, literally and figuratively, an underground space. As trust between the (art) public and major institutions flags, the importance of alternative art spaces grows increasingly apparent. We turn to our own, person-to-person networks and resources to exhibit the artists we feel should be studied and celebrated, and, most importantly, we aim to do so *with* the artists. If public museums tend to consider the careers of artists once they have passed, or at least haven’t yet honoured certain living artists’ bodies of work, the plumb could, in this case, serve as a different kind of museum, an underground or *anti*-museum.

If we were riffing on the concept of a museum-level exhibition, adopting the format of the decades-long career survey within an artist-run, resource-strapped context, one of our earliest questions was how to deal with chronology. Chronology, the museum’s standard device for organizing exhibitions, can be powerful, allowing the highlighting of alternative histories as they run alongside established ones. ¹ Andrew James Paterson proposed a model for this exhibition’s approach to chronology when he noted that he had written a poem that was a chronology of his life. With one stanza per year of life, *My Memoir!* – reproduced on the pages directly following this essay – set the tone for the project and encapsulated its ethos. This chronology is self-authored, elliptical, poetic, and mysterious.

¹ The exhibition *AIDS Timeline* by the artist collective Group Material from 1989-90 comes to mind as a moving and critical example of how chronology can be mobilized to point to what has been left out of mainstream record-keeping, in this instance, the criminal negligence of politicians and governmental bodies to address the AIDS crisis, a subject also present across Andrew James Paterson’s videos and writings and throughout the archival materials in *Never Enough Night*. As Claire Grace writes in her essay on the *AIDS Timeline* exhibition, “The enormity and seeming inexorability of loss bent and buckled time.” See “Group Material: AIDS Timeline,” *The Artist as Curator: An Anthology* (Mousse Publishing and Koenig Books, 2017).

Some events are important only to Andy, while others can claim lasting effects on the art scene in Toronto, and still others are major historical-cultural benchmarks. Likewise included are the names of Andy's video works and the first names of people with no elaboration – in short, a chronology filled with politics, intimacy, and secrets.

Andrew James Paterson is an artist who, as John Greyson points out in this book, has very often made work in response to calls and commissions from artist-run centres, in dialogue with collective themes and shared moments in Toronto's art scenes. This exhibition demonstrates, through its inclusion of work in video, poetry, writing, painting, music, and performance, an artist who hungrily crosses mediums with little regard for profitability. As Vera Frenkel puts it, "Andy's indifference to received ideas, his impatience with administrative garbage, and his dismissal of the marketing fervour of Toronto's art world and beyond are welcome traits, and for an artist who isn't always state-supported, they require courage. It also seems that despite his well-known collaborations with other artists, Andy remains independent, outspoken, and undeterred by fashion, and is seen as a respected, iconic presence. Rare is the artist who follows his own star to this extent."

What we find, when encountering five decades of Andy's work set in relation, are themes, affects, and obsessions that take root and recur in fugue-like variation. **2** There is an affinity with the genres of film noir and detective fiction (*Basic Motel*) and the daytime soap (*Passing; The Archivists*). As an artist with a certain discomfort with straight biography, who prefers hybrid forms, Andy also explores the matrix of celebrity and the apparatus behind the creation of identity and persona (*Immortality*). In Andy's own words: "I am attracted to that uncomfortable zone in which a represented event hovers between invention and documentary." **3** Another preoccupation is state patronage of the arts in Canada, and the government's bureaucratic effect on artistic prosperity (*Controlled Environments; Governmentality*, and of course the band itself, *The Government*). In his often intricate, verbose scripts, there is a continual return to systems of exchange, be they financial, intellectual, sexual, or all three (*Cash and Carry; The Walking Philosopher*). Often adopting a meta-relationship to art, Andy's work also questions several concepts that tend to traverse the art world unexamined, perhaps chief among them being the notion of "the" community (*Rectangular World; The Enigma of S.A.P.*).

It might also be possible to point out two *eras* of Andy's video work. Earlier works mimic and pervert the dramatic form: "H is

for Highsmith, Patricia. Ambitious protagonists, queer subtexts, and the pleasure of both following and forsaking genre. Noir but not." **4** The later, contemporary work uses digital painting, found imagery, and camera-less videos often set to musical scores by Derwatt, Andy's project with Kevin Dowler (*Floating; Framing Device*). During *Andrew James Paterson Interviews Andrew James Paterson*, the artist talk that accompanied the exhibition, Andy said that he often uses music as a barometer to analyse the palpability or emotional impact of an artwork: Is this painting musical? Does this poem have a melody? "M is for melodrama. Melody plus drama." **5**

We have contextualized Andrew James Paterson's artworks within a large and varied suite of archival material, showing that this art world is fundamentally a network of people in relation. In this book, you will therefore find archival material and ephemera from the post-punk band *The Government* of the 1970s, the quasi-dramatic artist videos and performances of the 1980s and 90s where friends and lovers play roles and viewers witness a scene or "community" in the process of self-documenting, and the concrete poetry, bookwork (*Collection/Correction*), and self-reflexive painting of the 2000s. Though Andy hasn't always been convinced of the relevance of archival material to the artworks – "There has of course been a tradition of the personal being political," he says, "though I would counter that far too often the personal is just the personal" **6** – this material evinces the safeguarding and stewarding of many artist-run centres, the practices of history-building and legacy-keeping thanks to which we can include this material at all.

As Andy is an artist for whom age (among many other categories) is not a barrier for closeness with others, we wanted to bring in the voices of artists and curators from different generations to respond to his work. In this book, thus, you will find three brilliant texts contributed by Toronto video artists Vera Frenkel and John Greyson, and curator Parker Kay. Frenkel's text "Meeting Andy Paterson" offers a personal and poetic reflection on, by her measure, Andy as an avatar, an anthropologist, and an artist. The text unfolds across several conversations between the two artists, including one in Frenkel's studio during the recent lunar eclipse where they drink tea and watch television. Frenkel wanders through Andy's work, describing it as layered and nested like Matryoshka dolls. She responds to his videos and writing, and elaborates on his disposition, describing an "informed view" and a "witnessing presence."

In "Andrew & Johnny Write a Song..." John Greyson and Andy do just that. Their song, "The Lout of Queen West", emerges

4 Jacob Korczynski, "Andrew James Paterson," "Predecessors", *C Magazine*, 2015.

5 Ibid.

6 Hoolboom, "The Government was Kaput," 2015, interview.

2

The definition of a fugue is a contrapuntal composition in which a short melody or phrase (the subject) is introduced by one part and successively taken up by others and developed by interweaving the parts. It feels a particularly apt description of how themes, characters, and ideas recur across Andrew James Paterson's storied body of work.

3

Mike Hoolboom, "The Government was Kaput: an interview with Andrew James Paterson," 2015, interview, <http://mikehoolboom.com/?p=19159>.

through a keyboard conversation that roots around in their decades-long friendship. They go back and forth on Andy's favourite lyricists, works by themselves and other beloved video artists, the exhibition at the plumb, poetry and manifestos, language games, and "Fraudian" slips. As their text reveals, this isn't the first song the two have written together. In 1979, when they both lived in a glass factory building on Mercer Street, they wrote "The Cock and Bull" songs for a performance Greyson was doing in Paris that involved "kissing strangers in the dark with crimson lipstick."

Parker Kay's text "Cities Grow, Humans Age" tests the hypothesis of Andy's film *The Walking Philosopher* (1999), that "Philosophy is not static. It is anything but static. Ergo, philosophers should be on the move constantly. On the move, on the prowl." Kay uses Walter Benjamin's concept of the flâneur as an urban wanderer whose drifting through the city is an empowered and sometimes even sexy subversion to capitalism's compression and standardization of movement and activity. Kay makes a compelling argument that *The Walking Philosopher* provides a political framework to understand Andy's social omnipresence in the art world as itself a radical act.

We are incredibly grateful for all the support we have received in realizing this exhibition and book. We extend our thanks to our partner organizations, including Vtape, Partners in Art, Art Metropole, A Space, Trinity Square Video, YYZ Artists' Outlet, FADO Performance Art Centre, 7a*11d International Festival of Performance Art, Ontario Arts Council, Art Museum at the University of Toronto, Mercer Union, and the Canadian Filmmakers Distribution Centre, as well as the numerous individuals who offered their time, money, and skills, including Rowan Lynch for tirelessly designing this publication, Sebastian Frye for producing and printing it, Christophe Barbeau for archival and editorial support, Sandy Plotnikoff for producing a massive vinyl poem and merch, Charlie Huisken for enabling us to extend the public's access to the exhibition, Miles Rufelds and Mani Mazinani for technical expertise, and Toni Hafkenscheid for the exquisite exhibition documentation.

The Andy Fabo quote that opened this essay and instigated this exhibition is recorded in Gerald Hannon's article on Andy Paterson, "The King of Queen." The title of this book and exhibition emerge from that same essay's closing lines: "Perhaps that was my mistake. Always wanting straight answers. Wanting A then B then C. Better just to have followed, down into the alleys, down onto the tarmac, up along the fence, knowing the small, dark spaces beneath cars, knowing the hopeless

innocence of windows, knowing there will never be enough night, knowing the world as Andy Paterson knows it. Knowing the world as he's helped make it." We too see Andy as an artist who lives by a yearning, searching, and openness to encounter, one who works in the shadows with intensity, drive, and sometimes isolation, who works with few resources and usually alone, but who also collaborates with friends and lovers, who has crafted a world in which the mystery and interiority of the nighttime can never last long enough, and in which world we are moved, as Hannon was, just to have followed.

The ethos of this exhibition and book are perhaps best heard when we listen to Andy's own words. In *Passports of Love*, a performance at Western Front in 1984 whose voice-over was later printed in *Impulse* magazine, he states with aching emotional acuity, "People can't stay together forever, they have to breathe. But breathing safely by yourself is not the rush you get from breathing dangerously together."⁷ Andy's life as an artist compels us toward the rush of breathing together. In his five decades of work, we see the cumulative effect of someone who witnesses us, who records, remembers, and reacts to our art world, who defines it in large part by presence itself. Andy, as Parker Kay points out in his essay, *pays* attention, and in doing so, circumvents the pay-to-play logic that surrounds us. *Never Enough Night* is our attempt to witness Andy back, to pay him in turn with our presence, attention, and record-keeping. To borrow the words of Andy's dear friend, collaborator, and curator Jacob Korczynski: "Thank you, Andrew. We're still catching up."⁸

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Andrew James Paterson, "Passports of Love," "Death", *Impulse*, volume 11, number 4, 1985.

8

Jacob Korczynski, "Andrew James Paterson," "Predecessors", *C Magazine*, 2015.

April 23, 1952 Thunderstorm

Chicken Little and Henny Penny

Hurricane Hazel
Basement Flooding

Paper records in the backyard
Uncle Dave
Kennebunkport

Birth of Chuck
Developed physical aversion/repulsion to
eggs, cheese, butter and many vegetables

Refusal to sing Jesus Loves Me
Green corduroy shorts

Mrs. Bader
Attacked by dog outside Hudson, Quebec
Some asshole had hit the dog with a stick
I had been playing baseball with my
cousins

Realization that I was obsessed
with thunderstorms
Hit by golf club on the lips
Chapped lips

Move to 32 Normandale

Mrs. Edgar's cottage

Mrs. Turner
There were thunderstorms on days
204 and 242

There were thunderstorms
on days 204 and 242
Mrs. Shannon
The Brothers Blackstock

There were no thunderstorms
on days 204 and 242
Mrs. Caston
Not accelerated.
Current events... meaning sports
School let out early because
American president was assassinated

St. George's College
Learn to tie a tie
Marks improve

John
Move to 113 Underhill
Marks begin slipping

My grandmother's funeral on Friday 13th
Teenage Marxist at a private school

Expo 67
Czech Pavillion
Bucky Fuller's Golfball

Mr. Phillips
Margaret Rutherford
cut my hair off
Trudeaumania in Canada
Russia invades Czechoslovakia
Riots at Democratic Convention in
Chicago

Mozynski Brothers
slide guitar
The Drama Club

U. of T.
Miles Davis
Eisenstein Godard Hitchcock

Dad's English sabbatical
Maggie Thatcher Milk Snatcher!
Maggie Thatcher Milk Snatcher!
Press those trousers! Press those trousers!
Hampstead to Finchley
Kant Explain

Ronnie Scott's
100 Club
Ted and Sally
I really appreciate your questions
Well, I ask them because I don't know
What the fuck you are talking about.
Wembley Fifties Event
Lemon turds

Primal clown
Cafe Kafka
Are you a dancer
No I'm a dishwasher

Diamond Dogs
Fourth Wall
Underground parking blowjob
Fat Reg Easy Piano

Chappell & Co.
Labelle
That's The Way (uh huh uh huh)
I Like It
The Pits and The Blues

Screaming Mimi and Maggie Muggins
Howard Hughes' Corpse
Eno & Fripp
Homophobic asshole heckler

Robert
The Government
Stupid Guitar Player
Son of Sam
Shoeshine Boy
Prime time TV on a gurney
Low

Electric Eye
Glenn
Stupid Guitar Player
The Kitchen
Performing Garage
Pumps Canada

1984 in 1979
K. A.
Dumb guitar player
Fear of Music
Interchangeable art openings
Phoebe Magoo's
Keep on to the post office.....

Artist's Residency
Semi-respectable video artist
Guest List uninvited
The guy with the truck

A. W.
How Many Fingers?
Times Square Hip Hop
Cameron Public House
Gay cancer

Service Industry
Death of Fassbinder
Commerce vs. Art
Video Video and censorship
Michael Armstrong
Government dissolves

Video Culture Canada
The Stage
La Land
I Do I Do

I Don't I Don't
New York Amsterdam Vancouver
Amsterdam ist poop an
dem Stoop.

Jorge Hygiene
J. C.
Mr. Gato

Pure Sin
Tim

The Disposables
Immortality

London with Dad
Canada House screening
Service industry

Arthur Kroker OD
Who Killed Professor Wordsworth

Pure Nonsense

James
Pink in Public

TSV nightmare
Artists' Television
Controlled Environments

Eli Langer Mercer Union arrest
Free speech and free market

Controlled Environments
Langer trial

Performance: A Performance
Vancouver & Calgary

Performance: A Performance
A Space 25th Anniversary Toronto

Retrovirals
YYZ Artists' Outlet

Systems and Corridors
Symptoms of Whatever

The Life and Times of Bowel Movement
The Walking Philosopher
Cash and Carry
Year 2K panic

Year 2K non panic
Susan
Reid

Snowjob
Money Value Art
9/11
Ida B. Paterson d. Sept.17
Colin

Headmaster's Ritual
Michael

Big Blackout
Mono Logical

2004 Eating Regular
rediscovered the grid

Mountain Standard Time
G.R. (Pat Paterson)d. Dec.29

Exit Service Industry
Tinnitus
Festival Nouveau Cinema

The ecstasy of Single-Frame editing
Dammed and Forgiven

The Enigma of S.A.P.
12 x 26

Typical Morning for Green and Blue
There goes the neighbourhood

Building for sale
Building not sold
Mystics luv 2 cum

the8fest
Roman Spring Leakage
Kassel DokFest

Derwatt
Mountain Standard Time
Jane

(sort of) take up painting
Passing

Tarek and John in cap...
Gallery West

More or Less
Film as noun vs. Film as verb

Must be getting old
Interview on J.M.
Interview on K.A.
Interview on The Disposables

Jacob K.
Kunstverein Toronto
Collection Correction
Salzburg Amsterdam
Post-War Exhibition Munich
Toronto launch

2017 Exit the8fest
Farewell to insufferable purists
Montreal New York
Artissima Torino
Venice Biennale

2018 Not Joy Division
Agora Phobia
Berlin
Ruth Wolf-Rehfeld
Herbert Zhang
A Most Dangerous Game
Der Boila

Federal Career Award
Nothing further to prove
Flaky Governor-General
Katharine
Franz Kafka Museum (Prague)
Vertigo at MUMOK (Vienna)

Covid-19
No travel
Richard

No travel
Enlarged Prostate
I am not a daddy
Covid-19

Elemental
Covid and Covid

Classic noirs
Inflammation
Nature