

There's a lot to be offered in slow, meandering forms of looking; Haley's work prompts that kind of pace. It feels difficult to finish because it's a process that offers no clean conclusions. There's always another detail to be spotted, another haze of colour to access in the tilt of a head. Even now, these three works feel wholly, impossibly different every time I glance in their direction.

It's nighttime now. The arcs of shadow within the first canvas—airy blue with strips of gel medium—form graceful, parallel lines with the houseplant resting alongside it. I've just extinguished a candle and the second

canvas—scattered with curves and orbs—feels a little smokier from its home at the other end of the room. The third work—little and green—darkens at my desk, as if the shadows seen through each cut have somehow permeated its otherwise spring-like surface.

They'll be re-wrapped soon, back to Haley's in a crinkle-blue Ikea bag, to YYZ's walls and elsewhere after that. More atmospheres to absorb, more worlds to filter. An opportunity for change with every fresh breeze from an open window.

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HALEY UYEDA is a Toronto-based artist working primarily in painting and print media. Her work explores the materiality of painting, considering the potential for painting to be a responsive proposition, rather than a fixed, permanent gesture. Taking inspiration from atmospheric conditions of weather, movement and light, her work both references and engages with the temporal conditions of nature. Uyeda holds an MFA from York University (2016) and has recently exhibited at Zalucky Contemporary, Diaz Contemporary and Art Mür (Montreal).

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HALEY UYEDA—UNDER THE VEIL OF MORNING MIST

BY DANIELLA SANADER

MARCH 14–

Today was one of the first warm days of the year. Gray and wet, that first moment when the air seems to soften and people emerge from their homes in less layers; exposed ankles and necks grateful in the breeze.

I've returned home from a studio visit with Haley Uyeda, three of her paintings in tow. We've devised a plan: I'll keep them in my apartment for the coming weeks, in advance of her exhibition at YYZ Artists' Outlet in late May. As I write this text, I'm to live with these works and build an intimacy, a slow form of spectatorship as they are absorbed into the surfaces of my everyday life. Gingerly, I unwrap them and source their new, temporary homes. One—a pale, atmospheric blue, with neat vertical-cut strips that undulate behind a careful, translucent layer of gel medium—sits propped on the little-used dining table in my living room. The second—an equally diaphanous blue, with two canvas layers of cut shapes that feel akin to beads of condensation or pebbles in the sand—I leave near the messy bookshelves in my office. The third is smaller, simpler—a muted green with denser cut shapes, maybe like seeds in a piece of sliced fruit—and is placed on my desk immediately behind my laptop, where I find myself now.

Even though it's still a bit too cold for this, I cannot help myself: I crack open my windows and let the dewy air cut through the stale dust of my living room. It feels, in a small way, as if Haley's work brought a new atmosphere home with me: cloudy, fresh, and potent, like change is finally on the way.

MARCH 17–

Currently, I cannot see all three of Haley's works from any given vantage point. Nor are their viewpoints direct: one is partially eclipsed by a houseplant, one forms an assemblage with some lumpy homemade candles and unread magazines. Amidst the messy sediments of my life, I'm reminded that Haley's work has always carried its own particular density. Occasionally, she paints bright colours on the backsides of her canvases; they ghost and echo off the white walls that (typically) support her work, refracting to catch your eye at sudden, unpredictable angles. Often, cloudy skins of gel medium are reapplied to cover cut shapes; like a window

fogged temporarily with breath or sediment swirling in a cup of tap water.

I'm transfixed by the porousness of her works, the thresholds they offer up—layers of flatness that meet the atmosphere to produce a different kind of depth. Haley's been playing with this, translating the cuts and glows of her paintings into other vocabularies. In a series of photo-collages to be shown at YYZ, she directed the light of an overhead projector through cuts made in earlier paintings, photographing the resulting constellations of light, shadow, and refracted colour across white studio walls. Cutting the dew-like orbs and producing new arrangements on paper, Haley's process is turned inside-out—a negative cut becomes a positive form, like a stone shaped by a current of water. Malleability where you otherwise wouldn't expect it.

MARCH 21–

I'm still thinking about Haley's collages. The photographic shapes feel seemingly scattered, yet it's clear that they are carefully arranged: dense but entirely separate, they produce a quivering, expectant proximity.

I'm reminded of a weird childhood ritual: watching streaks of rain on the backseat windows of my family's station wagon. I'd diligently track the pathways and tributaries of rain down the panes of tempered glass as we drove around town, feeling the world pause in the moment before two drops would merge into one, before they'd pummel downwards under the pull of their newly-shared weight. When I was young—an anxious, inward-facing kid—there were whole universes in those pauses; other places and times.

MARCH 27–

When I'm working from home for long stretches, I get pleasure in tracking the hours of the day through the changing light quality in the apartment; mornings feel cold and crisp, bright but not too direct; in the early afternoon, the room becomes sharper and I'm suddenly aware of the dust lining the windowsills; the late afternoon softens, when everything is bathed in a golden light pouring through the west-facing windows of the living room. This room is its own atmosphere, its own timepiece; a lens that perpetually focuses or softens my view.

Haley's paintings are prompting me to think about this more deeply, to write it down. In my apartment, they filter the changing qualities of light across the day, perhaps they also register time. From where I'm sitting, dusty sunlight seems to collect behind the murky film of gel medium on one canvas, as if her work might be absorbing, adapting to this time spent in my care. Time spent in this particular atmosphere.

APRIL 1–

In the midst of admin work at my desk, I realize I've been staring at Haley's smaller green canvas for days without really seeing it—or perhaps, seeing it otherwise, taking in details on a different register. My attention recalibrates and I'm struck by how familiar it is, all of a sudden: the clean lip that lines each exacting cut, the rhythm that emerges between the dense, radial shapes and the pauses of painted canvas between them. A familiar tune that I've been absorbing through my pores for some time.

This green canvas has adjusted to its own fair share of unfamiliar places. In another act of translation, Haley travelled with this work and its twin—equally green, with petal-like cuts formed in dense clusters—to Nova Scotia. Placing them in the sun, she photographed the resulting light patterns across the craggy faces of rocks, sandy planes, blades of grass. It's interesting, witnessing this moment of full return—like traditions of *plein-air* painting in reverse—a canvas filtering our views of nature instead of replicating them. Watching her precise cuts blur across these new topographies, I start to imagine each canvas as its own filter, aperture, pupil, lens. Each with its own logic of sight, its own capacity to recalibrate. Taking in an unfamiliar view.

APRIL 15–

I've been doing some reading for another project, yet I keep turning back to Haley's cuts and glows, seeing them referenced everywhere I look. It's funny how the things that surround you can permeate your consciousness.

In Maggie Nelson's *Bluets*, the author references Plato's understanding of colour—as something not wholly constituted by an object or the human eye, but in the space that crackles between them: “a ‘visual fire’ burns between our eyes and that which they behold.” (21) I'm as struck by this idea as Nelson is; that

colour is not fixed in one place. Rather, perhaps it is constituted through relationships, a coming-together of bodies that see and are seen. An energy, a friction, a heat generated between us. The vibratory space between two raindrops streaking down a car window, two orbs of captured light arranged on a sheet of paper, a hint of colour glowing between a cut curve of canvas and a blank white wall.

APRIL 21–

Another small memory: I'm on a writing residency, living amongst the Rockies for the first extended stretch of time in my life. For days, I've been sitting with an uneasy blend of anxiety, writer's block, and (probably) altitude sickness, feeling worse with every over-wrought sentence I force out of myself. (I'll admit that I found those highly-celebrated mountain views to be claustrophobic, difficult.) Yet in one small moment, I looked out the window of my workspace at a distant mountain range, blue and hazy in the immensity of the air that accumulated between us. That diffuse colour—as much a marker of distance as any kind of perspectival foreshortening—offered me space; not an emptiness or a separation, but a density that swirled and crackled between here and there. This matter between us, this air we absorb; a thick, murky, diaphanous, infinite blue. I took a deep breath, I got back to writing.

APRIL 21 (LATER)–

Maggie Nelson, *Bluets* again:

“40. When I talk about color and hope, or color and despair, I am not talking about the red of a stoplight, a periwinkle line on the white felt oval of a pregnancy test, or a black sail strung from a ship's mast. I am trying to talk about what blue means, or what it means to me, apart from meaning.” (16)

APRIL 28–

Today was a slow day, sunny and bright but with a cold that would surprise you; I'm supposed to finalize my writing on Haley's paintings but I can't stop reading around them. Reading fragments of essays and poems, wandering down rabbit holes of associations and citations. Some may call this procrastination—it likely is—but I feel as if there is something else at work.