



Arts and Humanities Colloquium presents “Meridian”

by Contributor

By contributor Gordon Hak

In its six-year history, the Arts and Humanities Colloquium Lecture Series has pushed limits, encouraging us to think about new things as well as old things in new ways. The upcoming presentation promises again to stretch boundaries. The talk and show, entitled “Meridian.is: Collaborative Performance Research,” brings together four faculty members from three departments.



The group on stage. Left to right: Kevin Mazutinec, Marian Van der Zon, Justin McGrail, and Robin Davies. Via ladysmithdowntown.com

The collective features Robin Davies (electronic music), Kevin Mazutinec (digital video and animation), Justin McGrail (spoken word), and Marian van der Zon (instruments). As a foursome, they combine projected video, ambient soundscapes, acoustic instruments, processed and looped vocals, and poetry. The goal, says Robin Davies, “is to immerse the audience in themes of technology, humanity, and their offspring.” It stimulates eyes, ears, and minds.

“Meridian” is all about collaboration, and it is this aspect of the process that will be discussed at the presentation. According to Davies, “the collaborators view performances as iterative publications, meaning that the components in the work are continuously formed, nurtured, and revised at the individual and team level. Each step of the team’s process—including workshoping, rehearsal, gigging, and reacting to diverse audiences and venues—allows for instantaneous exploration and meditation necessary for individual growth as an artist. Reflective process is inherent in ‘Meridian’s’ collaborative creativity.” The participants view their studio practices as central to their professional research obligations, and to them “the academic mandate to publish is subsumed by a desire to produce and perform art.”

In addition to the exploration of the collaborative process behind “Meridian”, using examples from the work to show how it fits together, the presentation will also include a short performance.

Since its inception in 2012, “Meridian” has been performed in Courtenay, Nanaimo, Victoria, Hamilton, and Toronto. A recent performance at a conference at UVic shared Meridian with an international audience of humanities scholars.

The participants have impressive backgrounds. Marian van der Zon, from the Media Studies and Women’s Studies departments, has been involved in radio for over a decade, hosting shows and contributing sound art and radio documentary pieces to various stations and festivals. Publications include Islands of Resistance: Pirate Radio in Canada, which she co-edited in 2010. Justin McGrail, who has a Ph.D. from the UVic and teaches in the department of Art and Design at VIU, has been performing spoken word poetry in bookstores, clubs, malls, poetry slams, classrooms, galleries, cafés, and at festivals across Canada since 1991. He has worked with Montreal’s Fluffy Pagan Echoes, Montreal’s DuoDance Company, and Victoria’s Suddenly Dance Theatre Company. He has been heard on CBC Radio, and performed at the Vancouver International Writers’ Festival, the Vancouver Folk Festival, and the Victoria Spoken Word Festival.

Kevin Mazutinic, from the departments of Media Studies and Art and Design, holds an MFA in New Media and taught at the University of Calgary before coming to VIU. His artistic practice is conceptually driven and has focused on numerous disciplines, including printmaking, sculpture, written and spoken word, 3D modeling and animation, and video-based performance. Robin Davies studied double bass and music technology at McGill’s Schulich School of Music before joining VIU’s Media Studies Department. His interests include the utilization of the human voice in auditory storytelling, sound design for visual art, and the construction of software-based musical instruments for live music performances. His work can be heard on releases from Phoenixa Publishing, Six Records, Maple Music, Ad Noiseum, and Sunchaser Pictures.

The free, illustrated Colloquium presentation is on January 22 from 10 to 11:30 a.m. in the Malaspina Theatre. It is open to all, and students are especially welcome. There will be refreshments.

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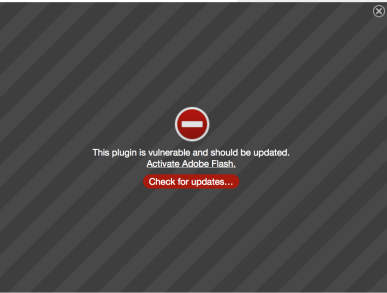
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