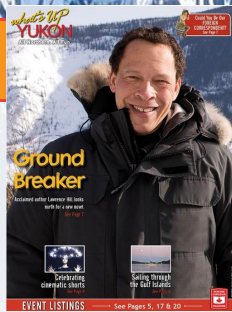


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By Kay Linley

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March 29, 2012

ONE, TWO, THREE, JUMP!



Contemplate control and laze under views of falling people at "Force Majeur", taking place the ODD Gallery until April 13 *Photo by IMAGES: Paul Litherland/Valérie Pelletier*

As I watched footage of Paul Litherland's "near miss" during his first BASE jump in a squirrel suit, I thought to myself, "that's enough to stop anyone from BASE jumping".

Then, the very next clip showed him ready to make the jump again.

It is hard for me to believe that Litherland, a photographer and multi-media performance artist, struggles with fear because he faces it regularly in his favourite pastimes, skydiving and BASE jumping.

However, he makes it clear that addressing fear is the "force majeure" behind his artistic process.

Contemplate control and laze under views of falling people at "Force Majeur", taking place the ODD Gallery until April 13 - IMAGES: Paul Litherland/Valérie Pelletier

During his artist's talk held in Klondike Institute of Arts and Culture (KIAC) on March 8, Litherland explained his initial fear associated with BASE jumping.

"I was at the edge of the skyscraper ready to jump, and then I froze. I wasn't sure what I was afraid of," he said.

"I had gotten over the fear of death a while ago, so I couldn't figure it out".

Litherland's current exhibition at the ODD Gallery in Dawson City is a video installation piece. The show, called "Force Majeur", is a French connection to L'espace Aerodium, which is the outdoor wind tunnel in Montreal where the footage for this piece was taken.

The installation is a simple set-up of five flat-screen TVs attached to the ceiling and facing towards the floor. Two large, wooden lawn chairs are situated in the centre of the room.

The viewers are invited to recline in the lawn chairs and gaze up at the TV screens—the light cast down from the TVs is a welcome glow after the dark months of winter in this northern community.

The ovoid space of the exhibition is created with a heavy, black curtain that the viewer has to push through to experience the work, creating an alternate space to the rest of the gallery.

Litherland's installation alludes to the experience of skydiving in an indirect and tasteful way. Each TV screen shows a unique, yet cohesive, blue sky with fluffy white clouds. Video of people free-falling through the sky-scape plays intermittently.

These people seem unaware of their roles as "skydivers" and they are dressed in completely irrelevant attire, pertinent only to the personas they maintain throughout the fall.

One man wears a clean business suit as if he's on his way to work, while an elderly man flies through the air in long underwear. Another woman puts on lipstick in mid-fall.

The personas have calm facial expressions and are relatively unreactive to the engaging environment of the wind tunnel.

Inside

Connecting Cultures by Amber Church - Archery to Zumba

One, Two, Three, Jump! by Kay Linley

A Summer of Struggle by Virginie Hamel - French Toast

Didee & Didoo by Allan Benjamin - Didee Didoo

Keeping Their Music Playing by Connor Matak

Process of Imagination by Alyssa Friesen

Not Depp, or Deep by Brian Eaton - Middle Row, Centre

Short Sightings, Wide Views by Alyssa Friesen

Red Flag Moments by Doug Rutherford - Virtual Village

The Origins of Berton House: Part 1 by Dan Davidson - A Klondike Korner

I Feel Like "Chicken" Tonight by Jeffery Mickelson - Cutting Board

Two Fine, Big Reds by Peter Turner - Vino Borealis

Wind's Aft the Beam: Pt. 2 by Anna Tupakka - Intrepid Traveller

Common Cat Poisons by Jim Kenyon, DVM, MRCVS - Ask a Vet

Skiers on Patrol by Amber Church - Archery

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Litherland's personas respond calmly to their unusual environments and sudden fluctuations in gravity, offering something we can learn from—to take life's falls in stride.

"Force Majeur" runs from March 8 until April 13.

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