



Beaufort 0: Cumulus, 2006/2008
Tomás Saraceno's video installation filmed in Salar de Uyuni in Bolivia presents a three-acre salt lake in a desert located more than two miles above sea level. A thin layer of water reflects skylines so that clouds and land fuse together.
Image: Toni Hafkenscheid



Beaufort 1: Dispersal Zone, 2015
Tim Knowles modifies existing street lamps and causes smoke to fall in a glowing deluge to the ground. The character of the smoke is affected by wind and humidity, which sometimes create a dense fog. The project blends a spectral theatricality with visions of civil unrest and military action that regularly alter the atmosphere: tear gas, tires burning in the streets, smoke grenades, or more sinister gas attacks and chemical warfare.
Image: Toni Hafkenscheid

More Blinding than the Night

Marcin Kedizor

“When the sun rose there was a white fog, very warm and clammy, and more blinding than the night. It did not shift or drive; it was just there, standing all round you like something solid.”

–Joseph Conrad, Heart of Darkness

The irresistible, unceasing tide of the night ran in. An uninterrupted, shadowy murmur of Sleepless Bodies restlessly comb the streets—dragging their feet, laughing, howling like wind, shivering, staring into space, full of chatter, exclamations, unexpected gestures, with their cell phones and their questions—framing the scene. Performing to each other, watching art, watching each other and excited by looking in itself. Each glance adding perceived value. To see what they could see.

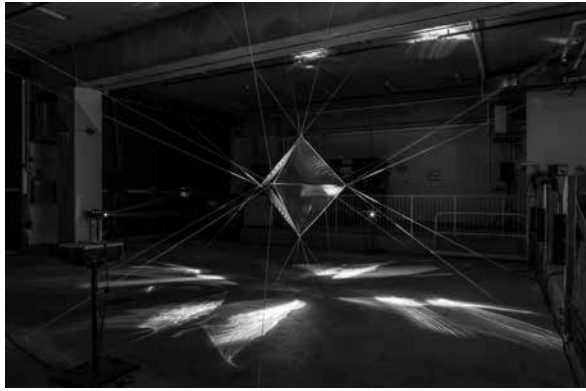
During the entire night of October 2015, in Toronto, Christine Shaw curated The Work of Wind as part of Nuit Blanche, or White Night,¹ an event in which artists formed alternative relationships to the night and the city. The curatorial project was organized around the Beaufort Scale of Wind Force.² Although the scale depends on appearance, as wind conditions intensify there is a growing and ominous lack of visual phenomena. Thus the scale anticipates its own inability to measure. Throughout the scale, we move from a multiplication of vision via “a mirror,” to opaque air of “foam and spray”:

Beaufort Force 0 — SEA: SEA LIKE A MIRROR

Beaufort Force 12 — SEA: SEA COMPLETELY WHITE WITH DRIVING SPRAY, VISIBILITY VERY SERIOUSLY AFFECTED. THE AIR IS FILLED WITH FOAM AND SPRAY

Both the Beaufort Scale's culmination and Conrad's blinding fog present something inaccessible, not because of a lack but because the phenomena exceed the available metrics. For Beaufort, the air is filled with white foam and spray; for Conrad, the fog is more blinding than the night because when illuminated an opaque whiteness bounces back, revealing nothing but our own mechanisms of observation.

Nuit Blanche asks us to re-orient our relationship to the night and the city. The White Night shatters and expands the white cube of the gallery. Just as the gilded frame expanded in early modernism to become a new spatial container—the white cube—the gallery itself now stretches throughout the city, embracing infrastructure, traffic, and commerce. The parameters of time are also shifted, since the event occurs over an entire night. The ready-made forms of interaction in a gallery space during operating hours suggest a laboratory, complete with controlled lighting and modes of behaviour, with the anomalies of the city bracketed out. By stretching the space of art into the urban nocturnal, Scotiabank is able to extend the time-span of its advertising beyond the day,



Beaufort 2: The Question of a Hunch, 2015
Kika Thorne's video installation combines the oldest visual representation of an atom (an octahedron standing in for air, taken from Plato's Timaeus) with the most recent video capture of an electron (created by Anne L'Huillier and Johan Mauritsson of the Atomic Physics Department at the University of Lund, Sweden, 2008).
Image: Toni Hafkenscheid



Beaufort 3: Glaciology, 2013/2015
In this performance installation by Anandam Dancetheatre, a human glacier slowly drifts through the city as a living landscape with an accompanying sonic score. Using the movements of glaciers across the Earth's surface as an entry point, this piece explores states of density, collaboration, collapse, overpopulation, relocation, disruption, environmental tipping points, mass graves, icebergs, and melting ice caps.
Image: Toni Hafkenscheid



Beaufort 4: Lava Field No. 2, 2015
Robert Wysocki produced a geomorphically accurate lava field using a customized coke-fired cupola, generating temperatures upwards of 1800° C. This project conveys the dangerous and spectacular power and force of earth processes.
Image: Toni Hafkenscheid



Beaufort 5: Torus, 2015
Mary Mattingly's architectural vessel echoes the watery pathways it rests upon. Toroidal topologies are found in tornados, whirlpools, vortices, and magnets, which are used here to facilitate various social groupings.
Image: Toni Hafkenscheid



Beaufort 6: Hit, 2015
Christof Migone uses microphones as percussive instruments to sound a space. Performers hit various surfaces with the microphones, while invited artists mix the resulting sounds into a live composition over an array of speakers. The collection of overlapping beats results in a resonating rumble resembling the dull roar of urban activity.
Image: Sam Javinrough



Beaufort 7: Destroyer and Preserver, hear, O hear
 Jon Sasaki uses tall, dancing, inflatable smoke stacks to re-imagine the manufacturing sector that once featured prominently on Lake Ontario, but has since been replaced by other land uses, such as residential, tourism, and culture. They appear as spectres, reminders of our continual dependence on carbon-emitting industries.
 Image: Sam Javinrough

NIGHT: RHYTHMS

Beaufort 8: LOVELAND, 2009
 Charles Stankieveh's video installation was shot on the Bering Sea, a site of increasing international contention over massive oil reserves. It depicts an empty Arctic landscape that gradually fills with purple smoke from a military grenade. On a seamless loop, it alternates the vast blinding white glare of the Arctic with the smothering effect of the purple smoke screen.
 Image: Toni Hafkenscheid



Beaufort 9: Requiem for Harley Warren ("Screams from Hell"), 2015
 Marguerite Humeau's installation stages the voice of the earth itself, inspired by recordings of "screams" emanating from various fissures in the planet's crust, including the so-called "door to hell" in Turkmenistan. It is comprised of a choir of shrieking and bellowing sculptures—three vitrines and their vocal catalysts—combining raw minerals and high-tech elements.
 Image: Sam Javinrough



Beaufort 10: Frío estudio del desastre, 2005
 Los Carpinteros' Frío estudio del desastre (Frozen Study of a Disaster) presents what appears to be a three-dimensional reconstruction of a photographic image of an exploding wall. Shattered fragments from a cinder block wall are forensically suspended in the air, while a gaping hole indicates the point of impact from the blast responsible for this domestic ground zero.
 Image: Toni Hafkenscheid

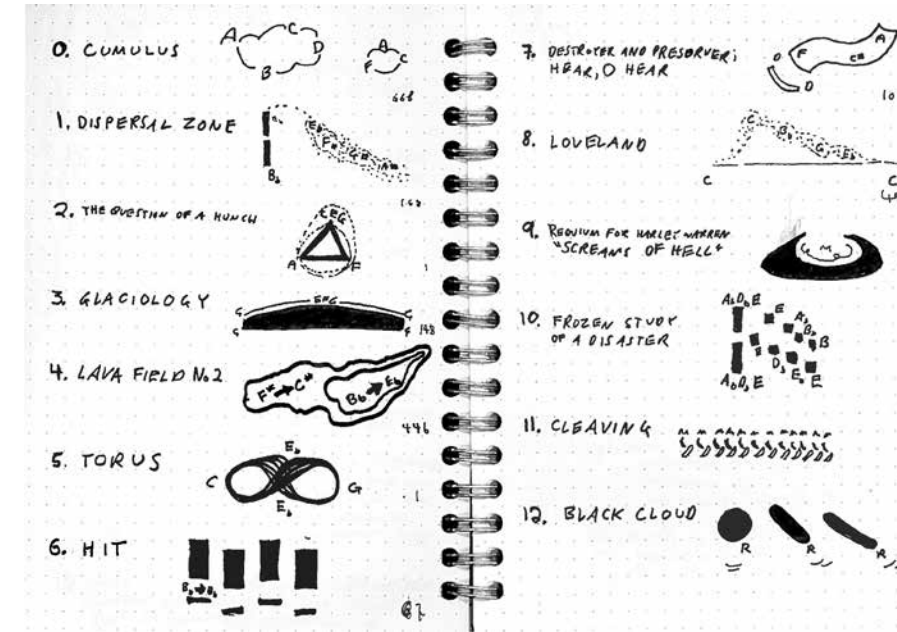




Beaufort 11: The Cleaving, 2015
Heather and Ivan Morison construct a barricade (and a possible gateway) across a city street. Formed by the detritus from a catastrophe, it creates a blockage between buildings. The Cleaving is a splitting apart, segregating, zoning, and division of population by a defensive fortification.
Image: Javin Beaufort



Beaufort 12: Black Cloud, 2007
Carlos Amoraes's installation is made of 30,000 black moths cut out of paper and clinging to the walls and ceiling of The Power Plant's clerestory. The piece uses the entirety of the space, adjusting to the various architectural conditions.
Image: Toni Hafkenscheid



Marcin Kedzior, Notation for the Work of Wind

into less predictable spaces where other forms of relating to art, the city, and night are imagined.

The event manages to create situations that are not necessarily expressible in language but may be diagrammed. During the day, relations between language and space hold together, however fictitiously—and at night they fall apart altogether. The following diagrams were used as sound scores during a curatorial talk by Shaw, performed at the Victory Soya Mills Silos in Toronto. A diagram expresses the modes of relation or spatial genre for each project in The Work of Wind. It is significant that these operate not just as musical notation, but as forms of order that may be applied to movement, sound, and space, as well as psychic, social, and material organization. The experience crystallizes our relations on various scales: to each other, to the city, to the larger material world. The works of art are thus less objects and more spaces facilitating modes of relation to landscapes, skyscapes, glaciers, lava, fissures, atmospheres, watery pathways, streets, protests, industrial legacies, military actions, traces of violence, and matter—in some cases, pulling or stretching us into a different scale

or conception of ourselves. In each situation we ask: Who are we? What kind of public is constituted? What is our position? Why is the world changing? What idea of the city is presented? What idea about the night is formed? On what scale are we engaging? How is thought organized? What is our conception of other people and their place in the city? The Work of Wind calls on alternative ways of being together with bodies of multiple scales, merging in the shadows, with different senses of time, and social-material agglomerations that either get flattened into spectacle, or go beyond the blinding coil that is a conception of the individual self.

The world is too full, like fog, or an opaque whiteness; it needs abstraction and representation to deal with it. Each work of art in The Work of Wind actually forms a particular night and a particular city.

NOTES

1 I will be using this literal translation, although "Sleepless Night" is a more accurate translation.

2 This thirteen-part scale relates wind speed to observed conditions at sea or on land, and was created by British sea admiral Sir Francis Beaufort in 1807.