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Animate Materials Workshop

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Refractions

Mia Milardo

Weiwei Wu

Wall screens

Weiwei Wu

Blue Spider, 2022. Frameworked glass puppet and found glassware landscape. Stop-motion animation with motion control rig camera.

Microbes, 2022. Tempered glass puppets on black glass. Stop-motion animation under the camera.

Molecules, 2022. Found glass marbles and vials. Stop-motion animation under the camera.

Mia Milardo

Pond, 2022. Gouache and watercolour on rice paper and watercolour paper. Timelapse, stop-motion paper cutout and painted frame by frame animation.

Flower Field, 2022. Gouache on rice paper and acetate cel. Stop-motion paper cutout animation.

Roots/Veins, 2022. Gouache and watercolour on acetate cel and watercolour paper. Scratched into paint and painted frame by frame animation.

Display case (from left to right)

Weiwei Wu

Tempered glass microbe puppets
Glass marbles and vials
Frameworked glass spider puppet
Found glass

Mia Milardo

Gouache and watercolour on watercolour paper
Gouache on tracing paper
Gouache on rice paper and acetate cel

Refractions brings together new work by Mia Milardo and Weiwei Wu, both of whom embrace artisanal animation techniques to amplify the elemental capacities of their material partners: pigment and glass.

Each artist employs a triptych composition to illuminate different optical and tactile qualities of her chosen material. Wu channels the translucency of glass in a stop-motion study of insect vision and particle movement. Reclaimed glass vessels, original frameworked sculpture, and puppets cut from tempered glass catch and redirect light in a playful series of interactions. Each successive composition alters the scale of magnification, shifting from an intimate study of a spider crawl to a dynamic portrait of microscopic critters and an entrancing game of molecular bonds. These shifting scales recall the vital contribution of glass to scientific optics – its role as a variable lens onto macroscopic and microscopic realms.

Mia Milardo explores gouache and watercolour as two related pigments capable of modulating between solid and liquid gestures. In her triptych reflection on landscape painting, Milardo returns the pigments to their primary sources in mineral, plant, and water life. As with Wu's series, the perspectives shift from a frontal mountainscape view to a floating glimpse of aquatic life and an underground encounter with living soil. Working primarily with rice paper, Milardo's gestures bring out the textured threads of cellulose and the breathing pulse of brushstrokes.

These works were produced in the Animate Materials Workshop, which explores animation as a creative material-research method. Founded and directed by Alla Gadassik, the Animate Materials Workshop is supported by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada (SSHRC).

