



LEFT: **Addie Wagenknecht**
Asymmetric Love 2013 Steel,
 CCTV cameras and DSL
 Internet cables 1.49 m x 99 cm
 COURTESY BITFORMS GALLERY,
 NEW YORK PHOTO DAVID PAYR

OPPOSITE: Installation view
 of "Electronic Superhighway"
 with (centre) **Katja**
Novitskova's Text Butt 2015
 and *Innate Disposition 2*
 2012 and (left) **Douglas**
Coupland's Deep Face 2015
 PHOTO STEPHEN WHITE

MICHEL DE BROIN

BMO PROJECT ROOM, TORONTO

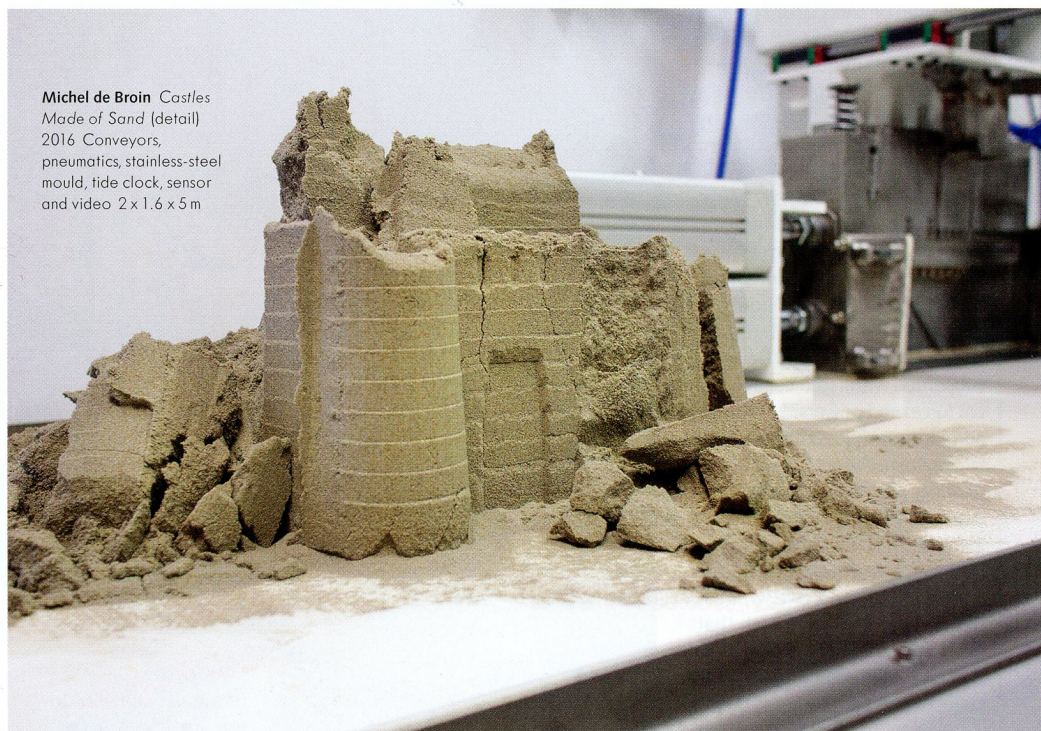
There is no beginning and no end to Michel de Broin's *Castles Made of Sand* (2016). Installed high above the Toronto financial district as the most recent commission for the BMO Project Room, de Broin's hulking installation pivots on a simple conceptual proposition: how to construct a machine that builds and rebuilds sandcastles. Yet what might seem like child's play is in fact deceptively complex. Months of consultation with engineers, scouring scrapyards and custom-designing parts, and testing the granular composition of various sand types all had a part in this feat of mechanical improvisation. A spout at one side of de Broin's machine pours precisely 10 litres of hydrated sand (sourced from Sandbanks Provincial Park east of Toronto) on to a conveyor belt. The pile is carried to a stainless-steel mould and, with a massive 4,000 pounds of pneumatic pressure, shaped in a few seconds into a castle. That castle—a coincidental replica of the Royal Canadian Mint, according to de Broin—continues along the conveyor, stopping at the end of the belt where it dries and cracks until the next turning of the tide (the machine is timed on lunar cycles) when it's tipped over the edge and the circuit repeats, ad infinitum.

Castles Made of Sand is more than just an infernal machine of sorts; it's a metaphor rife with contradictions. Consider the reversal of economic hierarchies in embedding an industrial-scale machine at the heights of white-collar

(2013) appears as both the conceptual linchpin and a respite from the chaos, delighting in serendipitous connections as it suggests the futility of comprehensive categorization. Another central work is Ryan Trecartin's *A Family Finds Entertainment* (2004) with its manic, intimate, made-for-YouTube performativity. The exhibition reminds us that a double sense of being both watched and constantly watching is not a recent phenomenon: consider the roving, motion-sensing eye of Rafael Lozano-Hemmer's *Surface Tension* (1992), which presages NSA-driven paranoia, or Lynn Hershman Leeson's interactive *Lorna* (1979–83).

Amid all the monitors, headsets and outdated platforms, what seems most obsolete in "Electronic Superhighway" is optimism. This may be strongest in Nam June Paik's *Good Morning, Mr. Orwell* (1984), a celebratory refutation of the titular British author's famous dystopian vision. And so the abandon with which artists once romped through novel platforms appears to give way to self-aware complicity in an age of a militarized, corporatized Internet. Subversion becomes as important as enjoyment, and the motif of the millennial as a wily, system-literate participant is characterized by Amalia Ulman's finely constructed selfie artwork, *Excellences & Perfections* (2014). "We can't work on the assumption that immersion has no consequence," said John Akomfrah recently of our all-encompassing relationship with the digital. "Electronic Superhighway" comes to tenuous terms with the pleasures, dangers and uncertainties of our present moment.

—ALEX QUICHO



Michel de Broin *Castles Made of Sand* (detail)
 2016 Conveyors,
 pneumatics, stainless-steel
 mould, tide clock, sensor
 and video 2 x 1.6 x 5 m

REVIEWS

capital, or the parallels between the unseen hand of tidal gravity and the mysterious market forces of financial ruin and return. There are odd ironies, too: the complex design and absurd amount of power needed to form a simple sandcastle, and the fact that, despite its imposing presence, the machine sits static during office hours waiting for the next tide (though it can be set in motion on demand by a "privilege key"). From its vantage point atop the skyline at the edge of Lake Ontario, the work looks out over an ever-changing cityscape of brinks and mortar and glass facades—all in essence made of sand. De Broin's castle becomes a temporary fixture in that view but, like all things subject to an ephemeral existence, it and the city and society that surround it remain perpetually on the brink of collapse and reparation, no matter how seemingly dominant or eternal. —BRYNE MCLAUGHLIN

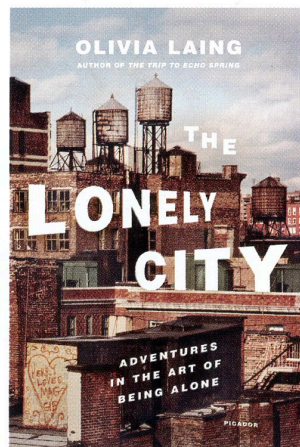
DAVID MALJKOVIĆ

VOX, MONTREAL

To enter David Maljković's recent exhibition at VOX, the Zagreb-based artist's first solo show in Canada, is to step inside the concept of projection. Not just projection as generated by a cinematic apparatus, but also those ideological projections that so adeptly deployed the flicker of the moving image throughout the 20th century. In an assemblage of support structures, including a microphone and stand, guitar amp and potted plant, as well as slide, 16-mm and digital projectors and the images they project, the installation continues in the vein of previous exhibitions, in which earlier projects are reworked to allow the latent institutional histories of their former display to haunt their present contexts. Where works such as *Display for Lost Pavilion at Metro Pictures, New York* (2009–11) and *Untitled* (2003–14) re-evaluated the spectre of modernity, the plinths into and onto which the installation's elements are built are left unfinished at VOX, revealing the means of their construction and denying their perceived neutrality. This revisitation is further manifest as a series of large-scale ink-jet prints pasted to the gallery walls and displaying images of previous Maljković exhibitions culled from Instagram. This pixelated presence operates as a reminder of the hand-in-hand decline of modernity alongside its own most ubiquitous descriptor, film, which has been supplanted in the 21st century by digital modes of documentation and dissemination.

In Steven Shaviro's essay "What is the Post-cinematic?" he asks, "What happens to cinema when it is no longer a cultural dominant, when its core technologies of production and reception have become obsolete, or have been subsumed within radically different forces and powers?" Maljković adroitly reconfigures this question to implicate the act of exhibition making. In his work, however, the "Post" never truly arrives. Instead these histories play out in a loop, oscillating between what is projected and what is hidden at the interval, with that exchange in turn producing a persistent after-image on our collective gaze.

—ARYEN HOEKSTRA



OLIVIA LAING

THE LONELY CITY:
ADVENTURES IN THE ART
OF BEING ALONE,
PICADOR, 336 PP, \$26.00

New-York-proper has transformed into New-York-the-idea: the reality of the modern urban, with its poverty, anomie, race tensions and danger, repackaged as a tough(ish)-love, contemporary means of contemplation and actualization for the privileged. British critic Olivia

Laing moved to New York to be with the love of her life, but he dumped her, leaving her adrift. This is the occasion for her book, *The Lonely City*, a study of several (more or less) New York artists (Hopper, Wojnarowicz, Warhol) pitted loosely as a memoir. Laing finds a community by studying and writing about these figures. For her, loneliness "does not mean one has failed, but simply that one is alive." While the city alienates us, art beckons. Yet Laing's friendships are imaginary and one-sided. (You will be hard pressed to find another portrait of Warhol this sympathetic. And would Laing do heroin with Wojnarowicz?). Can we not learn something, indeed more, from accepting that art often pushes us away, even traumatizes us, at the very moment it draws us near? Now that cities like New York are "safe," art's risk seems more vital than ever. —DAVID BALZER

David Maljković. *Display for
Lost Pavilion at Metro
Pictures, New York 2009–11*
Plinth, microphone,

microphone stand and
amplifier COURTESY
METRO PICTURES, NEW YORK
PHOTO MICHEL BRUNELLE

