

The Pleasure Report is the first institutional solo exhibition in North America by New Mineral Collective.

The exhibition is presented in conjunction with a related project at Salzburger Kunstverein, 14 March–4 May, 2025.

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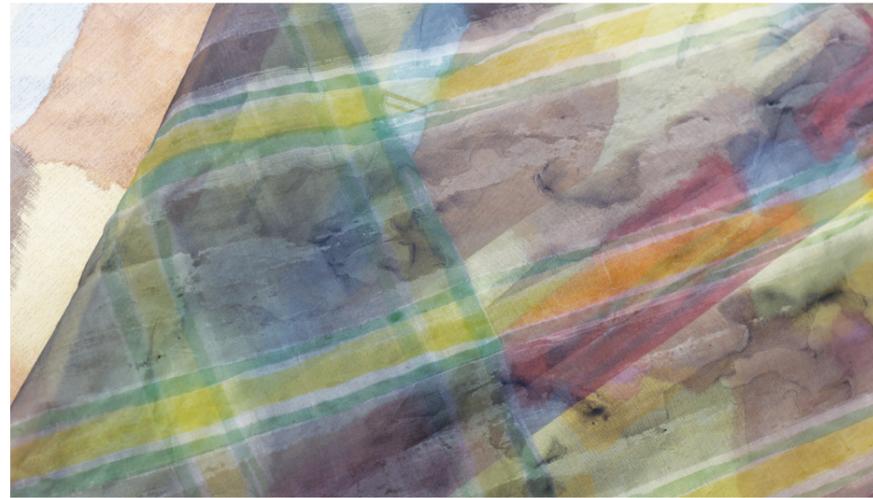
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SPACE: Ella Gonzales | Sleeve: A YEAR IN REVIEW
24 January–12 June 2025

Mercer Union's SPACE billboard commission has invited artist Ella Gonzales for its 2024–25 season for a yearlong series titled *Sleeve*. Working with materials such as plastics, silks, and acrylic paint, *Sleeve* plays with the billboard site through iterative gestures that change the composition within a single shell. Over the course of the year, the artist presents three sculptural banners or perhaps, three distinct moments in a single work always in the process of becoming. Read more about the second edition, *A YEAR IN REVIEW* (2025), along with an accompanying text at mercerunion.org

Ella Gonzales is a Filipina Canadian artist working between painting and Computer-Aided Design programs. She has recently exhibited at Unit 17, Vancouver (2024); grunt gallery, Vancouver (2024); The Power Plant, Toronto (2023); Galerie Nicolas Robert, Toronto (2023); Xpace Cultural Centre, Toronto (2023); and the Southern Alberta Art Gallery, Lethbridge (2022). She holds a Bachelor of Fine Arts from Western University and a Master of Fine Arts from the University of Guelph. Gonzales is represented by Unit 17, Vancouver.

SPACE invites one artist to produce a yearlong series of images for a public-facing billboard on the east façade of Mercer Union.

Image: Ella Gonzales, production still from *Sleeve: A YEAR IN REVIEW*, 2024. Courtesy the artist.

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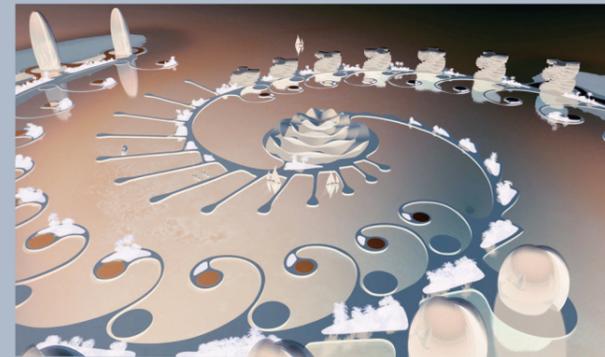
artistfirst

BIOGRAPHIES

New Mineral Collective is the collaborative practice of Canadian artist Tanya Busse and Lithuanian artist Emilija Škarnulytė. Working across sculpture, photography, and time-based media, the artists look at contemporary landscape politics to critically examine and reconceptualize the nature of human interaction with the Earth.

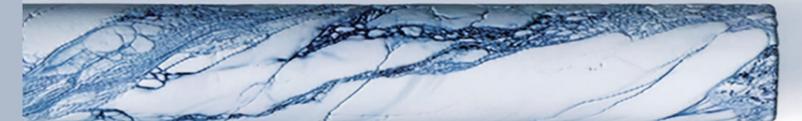
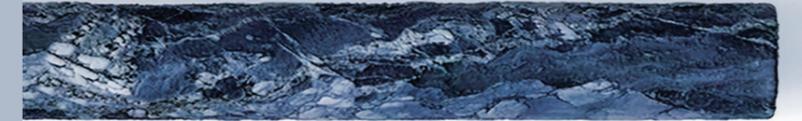
In 2023, Mercer Union invited New Mineral Collective to develop a new sculptural and sound installation for their first institutional solo exhibition in North America, *The Pleasure Report*. Culminating over five years of research engaging with mineral prospecting processes in the province of Ontario, the artists' project advances their subversive strategy of reappropriating mining industry practices, and contemplates the concept of a "corporate toolbox": a series of speculative instruments as tools for reparation, rather than profiteering and destruction.

Mercer Union's collaboration with New Mineral Collective emerges from our long-held commitment to commissioning new work, and creating milestone opportunities for artists to bring their visions to fruition in Toronto. Through our commissioning platform *Artist First*, we invest in the lifecycle of a project from conception to realization, cultivating discovery, risk-taking, and artistic development through long-term support and dialogue. To learn more, visit mercerunion.org/support



New Mineral Collective (NMC) is a platform that looks at contemporary landscape politics to better understand the nature and extent of human interaction with the earth's surface. As an organism, NMC infiltrates the extractive industry with alternative forces such as; desire, body mining and acts of counter prospecting. Their work has been shown nationally and internationally, including University of Queensland Art Museum, Brisbane (2023); Lofoten International Art Festival, Svolvær (2022); Künstlerhaus Bethanien, Berlin (2021); Kunstnerforbundet, Oslo (2021); Tate Modern's Starr Cinema, London (2021); Seoul Museum of Art (2020); the Swedish Center for Architecture and Design, Stockholm (2020); Tromsø Kunstforening (2019); Toronto Biennial of Art (2019); Serpentine Galleries, London (2018); SIART International Biennial of Art, Bolivia (2016); Artists' Film International, Whitechapel Gallery, London (2015), and many more. Their current headquarters are in Tromsø, Norway.

Image: New Mineral Collective, video still from *Tidal Body*, 2022. Courtesy the artists.



New Mineral Collective:
The Pleasure Report

25 January–22 March 2025



New Mineral Collective: Fictioning Against Speculation

by Margarida Mendes

New Mineral Collective's tenth year of collective practice culminates in the exhibition *The Pleasure Report* at Mercer Union. For their first institutional solo exhibition in North America, the collective formed by artists Tanya Busse and Emilija Škarnulytė present an exploratory installation that expands on their insurgent creative practice as counter-prospective agents imbued with powers to halt the mining industry's speculative cycles.

The Pleasure Report brings together over five years of the artists' research in Ontario, a major hub for the mining industry in Canada. Precedents to this exhibition are found in the artists' work presented in the first edition of the Toronto Biennial of Art (2019), when the artists formally began their operations as the "largest and least productive mining company in the world" and began acquiring mineral prospecting licenses for parcels of land to prevent mining companies from exploiting them. This practice—referencing strategies of delay, deferral, and passive resistance—articulates a set of counter prospecting values developed by New Mineral Collective, that counter the voracious speed of mining and the industry's colonial approach of land ownership, and inflict another sense of purpose and agency into land custodianship. Halting the grinding of the machines of speculation that perforate the Earth's crust with drilling technologies and seismic frequencies, the artists reclaimed the power of a reparative geopoetics and detoured the meaning of speculation into new forms of speculative fictioning.¹

Infused by a tactical practice that aims to debunk the rippling effect of extractive corporations, the artists merge their technopoetic sensibilities to further what they call counter prospective tools: a series of sculptural elements that compose their fictional mining company's "corporate toolbox." In *The Pleasure Report*, we see that these sculptures reference sand casting, an industrial tool-making process that uses packed sand to create negative molds. Rather than showing the final products of the casting process, these works allude to the human and industrial contact made upon the Earth's surface and present the hollow space of embodiment and technology. Pointing towards a critical reading of the infrastructure of mining operations, by evoking a series of ghostly counter prospecting tools, the collective introduces the audience to a series of absences, which nonetheless testify to a presence—a presence of earthly surgical technologies, a presence of the body to be unfolded, and

traces of a reworked infrastructural continuum. These moulded material inversions appear to hold a practice and a space. They have a Lacanian touch to them, as the viewer is asked to be a witness of unfolding geotraumas, a witness hereby invited to transcend realms of possibility beyond those predefined, and be restored via geopoetic and somatic proposals.²

Experimenting with molds is a recurrent practice in New Mineral Collective's work. In their installation *Pleasure Prospects* (2019) at the Toronto Biennial of Art, a series of casts of prospecting bore holes, including rammed earth, black copper slag, copper, zinc, mirrored stainless steel, aluminum, fine gold and silver shavings, and concrete, served as examples of "vertical territories"³ and embodiments of soil strata, to be scrutinized both as abstract sculptures and as ghostly spectres of extractable sites. Like composite landscapes, these mineral monoliths can be viewed as material indexes of unceded lands. These sculptures can also be read as casts of borehole drill sites which operate as "geotraumas or scars," the assembled evidence of petrified geomagnetic flows and terrains ungrounded by human extraction.⁴ But who are we to detain the Earth's course? In *The Pleasure Report*, the collective revisits this imagery, this time through images of core samples printed on textiles. Stretching the height of the gallery, the monumental and speculative mineral columns are hung interspersed amongst the tools, which are themselves a series of compositions made of earth.



Image: New Mineral Collective, *Erotics of Counter Prospecting*, 2019. Installation view: Tromsø Kunstforening. Courtesy the artists. Photo: Vsevolod Kovalevskij.

The collective's work is indebted to activist gestures adhering to principles of restorative justice—such as by climate activist Timothy DeChristopher who obtained plots of public land at auction in Utah in order to block the passage of pipelines and the opening of new mining pits—as it is a source of speculative poetics. Deploying creative strategies such as *détournement*, New Mineral Collective apprehends and shifts the meaning of language to intervene in the mining imaginary.⁵ Dependent on a semantics of financial speculation, mining operates as the ungrounding of the market demoniacs, converting terrestrial metabolisms into exchangeable stocks and capturable matter, thus interfering with the course of planetary regeneration. In response to these extractive inflections and spatiotemporal bendings, New Mineral Collective's recently published monograph *The Pleasure Report* (2025) incites a space for the linguistics of futurity, including the central feature of a glossary that details the operative concepts of their practice, introducing New Mineral Collective's work as a reparative geochoreography of bodies and assembled new meanings.⁶ The speculative poetics of their practice transforms both language and tools to repurpose a sense of geo-alignment and resurfacing of earthly interconnections.

Previously, the collective developed large-scale needle sculptures for planetary acupuncture—shown in *Erotics of Counter Prospecting* (2019) at Tromsø Kunstforening—as a way to treat the earthly-encrypted mining patterns suffusing the soil, and release meridian pressure points and decoagulate mining inflexions. These early counter prospecting tools are exemplary of the collective's restorative take on land sites, and auspiciously signals the geomantic turn in their practice here in *The Pleasure Report* where they reference patterns formed by geographic features through the arrangement of their sculptural installation. Referencing the physical arrangement of ley lines and working towards a reparative axis, New Mineral Collective has been committed to finding alternative modes of energetics and material circulation, by addressing how earthly alignments are constituted. In this sense, the artists' interests in land divination lie closer to that of Korean *pungsu-jiri*, or Chinese *feng shui*, which are seriously undertaken as auspicious sciences for urban planning and have the potential to lay foundations for governance strategies.⁷ Offering the possibility of Earth divination and geotraumatic re-address, New Mineral Collective's geomantic inflexion has a futuring capacity.

A futuring capacity, that proposes imaginaries of non-extractable futures and alternate ways of cohabitation. A futuring capacity, that proposes a space for geosomatics and acknowledgement of enhanced processes

of grievance and release. A futuring capacity, that expands the idea of collective planetary custodianship.

For what does the Earth mean if it is not understood as an extended sense of oneself?

1. "Geopoetics" is a term coined by Scottish poet Kenneth White in 1979, and is an interdisciplinary approach that combines elements of geography, poetry, and philosophy to explore the relationship between places, landscapes, and human experience.
2. According to philosopher Maya B. Kronic: "Geotrauma, or Plutonics, flattens the theory of psychic trauma onto geophysics, with psychic experience becoming an encrypted geological report, the repercussion of a primal Hadean trauma in the material unconscious of Planet Earth." Maya B. Kronic, "A Brief History of Geotrauma," 2011, <http://readthis.wtf/writing/a-brief-history-of-geotrauma/>.
3. For more on "vertical territories" please refer to: Godofredo Pereira, "The Underground Frontier: technoscience and resource extraction" (Doctoral thesis, Goldsmiths University of London, 2015), <https://research.gold.ac.uk/id/eprint/11640/>.
4. Tanya Busse and Emilija Škarnulytė, *New Mineral Collective: The Pleasure Report*, ed. Jayne Wilkinson (Vancouver: Information Office, 2025), 101.
5. Defined by the French Situationists as an aesthetic strategy, *détournement* involves the reuse of pre-existing material for the benefit of a new semiotic device.
6. "Geochoreography" was first coined by Colombian artist Carolina Caycedo, who develops performative work with riverine activists in order to mobilize communities around changing territories.
7. The national Gyeongbokgung Palace Punggidae in Seoul, as an example amongst many other buildings in South Korean society, was built according to meticulously planned *pungsu-jiri* to reflect Confucian ideals and bring auspicious governance for the royal family.

Margarida Mendes is a researcher, curator, and educator exploring the overlap between critical ecology, experimental film sound practices, and ecopedagogy. She creates transdisciplinary forums, exhibitions, and experiential works where alternative modes of education and sensing practices may catalyse political imagination and restorative action. Mendes was part of the curatorial team of the 11th Liverpool Biennale (2021), 4th Istanbul Design Biennial (2018), and the 11th Gwangju Biennale (2016). She has co-directed several educational platforms, such as Escuelita at CA2M, Madrid; The World In Which We Occur/Matter in Flux; and The Barber Shop, Lisbon. She holds a PhD in Philosophy from the Centre for Research Architecture at Goldsmiths, University of London.

Cover image: New Mineral Collective, production still from *The Pleasure Report*, 2025. Courtesy the artist.