

My installation piece entitled *Window Pain* highlights the annual slaughter of millions of migratory birds in Toronto's city centre as a result of urban architectural practice and light pollution. The work is an abstract commentary on the negative effects of urbanization on nature and, specifically, on Man's indifference to the plight of migratory birds as a result of urban sprawl. Key elements of the piece are glass, light, feathers, and the urban landscape. The work is created on a large pane of glass and is to be backlit and hung within an existing exterior window of the Arta gallery. Red liquid oozes from the mass of migratory bird feathers that span the top 1/3 of the piece, dripping into the shape of the Toronto skyline.

My principle objective in creating *Window Pain* is to frame a contemporary and local issue that I feel passionately about. My hope is that the piece is recognized as a call for social awareness concerning aspects of the natural world, notably the plight of ten million migratory birds that are killed every year when they crash into the glass skyscrapers in Toronto's downtown core. I feel the piece has relevance in today's growing environmentally-conscious culture, and is especially relevant in Toronto as the work references the role of this city's urban architecture in the death of the birds.

The significance of the glass pane onto which the work is mounted is two-fold: it alludes to the common person's gaze that looks past the issue with indifference, and also references the role huge buildings of glass play in this situation. My installation offers a unique and somewhat jarring rendering of the issue by incorporating feathers collected from migratory birds, the carcasses of which fall to the sidewalks after collisions with the skyscrapers.

In terms of anti-aesthetics, viewers may be put off by the smell of real feathers and by the slowly dripping "blood". The image that links the birds, the city and slaughter is meant to encourage personal reflection. A slow, continuous "blood" drip flows down the window from the mass of feathers into the form of the Toronto skyline and then runs off the sill and is drawn back into a pump. The cityscape is displayed in vibrant red to intentionally suggest both alarm and slaughter.

The idea of using organic materials framed in such a way as to suggest new meaning and to raise questions in the mind of the viewer is very appealing to me. Conceptually I see similarities in *Window Pain* and the work of Tim Hawkinson, notably his 1997 piece entitled *Bird*. Hawkinson used real human fingernails to imitate the skeleton of a bird. As well, Chris Jordan's larger statistical representations and his photography of decaying albatross chicks influenced me in my choice to ultimately depict the issue of the bird massacre in a physical interpretation. It is my hope that my piece will contribute to the often ambiguous definition and conversation concerning New Media art and its use of organic materials.

In order to complete my plan, I have enlisted the help of Michael Mesure, Executive Director of the Fatal Light Awareness Program (FLAP) and Mark Peck, Manager of the Ornithology Collection at the Royal Ontario Museum (ROM). Both of these experts have provided me with a great deal of background information as well as practical, hands-on methods and advice regarding the legal requirements to obtain the materials I need. The bird carcasses are collected by FLAP members who also collect data on the number and type of birds killed. The birds are then frozen and ultimately moved to the ROM. I will be plucking feathers from these birds killed in Toronto to use in my piece. I am required to contact Wildlife Canada, informing them of my piece and the intended use of the bird feathers, in order to ensure that the culling of the feathers is legal for my purposes.

I intend to begin the plucking process over the winter break. As well a preliminary working pump should be ready for trial in early January. A full working mockup should be completed by early February.

As an intended audience, I hope that *Window Pain* opens a dialogue between myself and the residents of Toronto. The work is intended to engage viewers from both sides of the window. The viewer outside the gallery will see four symbolic elements of the piece: feathers, backlit glass, red blood-like liquid and the cityscape. From the inside, optimally the viewer will see the actual Toronto cityscape through the piece, providing an additional level of dimension to my piece and acting as a representation of how most people look right past the issue. Physically the piece requires a large window for display, ideally measuring approximately 7 feet by 3 feet.



