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CANADIANART

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In his past work, Gareth Long has aimed to translate the ephemeral experience of video into tangible objects. His most recent exhibition, "And She Was," consisted of a series of four lenticular prints derived from video. Unlike video, which holds 30 frames per second, a single lenticular print can contain a maximum of 20 to 30 frames. When these frames (rendered as digital graphic files) are interlaced and mounted on a lenticular lens, the result is a photo-video hybrid. Shifts in viewing angle reveal different stills, so the image appears to move as one tilts one's head or walks by.

Each of the four prints in "And She Was" captures a temporal fragment of what may or may not be a continuous encounter between a man and a woman. In one print, a woman arising from bed is wearing a pink tank top and pink underwear. Her hair is covered, then uncovered. In all the other prints, she wears a black flower-print summer dress. One print shows her sitting on the edge of a bed. Part of a man's clothed body can be seen opposite; presumably he is already sitting on the bed. Next is a close-up of both their torsos. She takes off her dress as he faces her, his belt only partially buckled. A fourth print shows the woman wearing the black dress once again as the male figure walks in front of the camera. The viewer is left to wonder what has occurred between the figures, as each scenario is suggestive but inconclusive.

The viewer's desire to grasp the narrative is both aroused and thwarted by the medium. Lenticular prints offer visual moments that are simultaneously stilled and active, alive. Unlike traditional video, which denies us the opportunity to concentrate on fleeting moments, since images speed by and vanish, the lenticulars tempt the viewer to review and relive each fragment. Since the speed at which each moment unfolds can be controlled by moving slowly or quickly past the prints, the viewer appears to be in control of the narrative, of the visual experience itself. No matter how long one lingers before a particular print or how many times each moment plays out, however, the ambiguity of the encounter between the man and the woman does not subside. The viewer is teased with a sense of agency, but is ultimately reduced to a voyeur.

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