

DISTANT EARLY WARNING



DEW LINE EXHIBITIONS

The DEW Project by Charles Stankieveh

Welcome to BAR-1 by Joanne Jackson Johnson and David Neufeld

Yukon Film Society and Yukon Arts Centre Gallery,
with the cooperation of Parks Canada, present

DISTANT EARLY WARNING: DEW Line exhibitions

The DEW Project by Charles Stankieveh

Welcome to BAR-1: The DEW Line in Northern Yukon
Images and artifacts by Joanne Jackson Johnson
and David Neufeld

March 26 – April 6, 2011, Noon – 5:30pm
Old Fire Hall, Whitehorse, Yukon

Friday, March 25, 5pm – 8pm

Opening Reception

Under the Rainbow: Artist Talk by Charles Stankieveh

Under The Radar: Curated Programme of Cold War Films by Charles Stankieveh

Radar Station (NFB, 1953, 15 min)

Radar: The DEW Line Story (Western Electric/US DoD, 1958, 28 min)

On Guard! (IBM Military Products Division, 1960, 12 min)

Thursday, March 31, 7pm

David Neufeld Talk: *The DEW Line and Modernism in the Arctic*

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ISBN: 978-0-9865785-1-9

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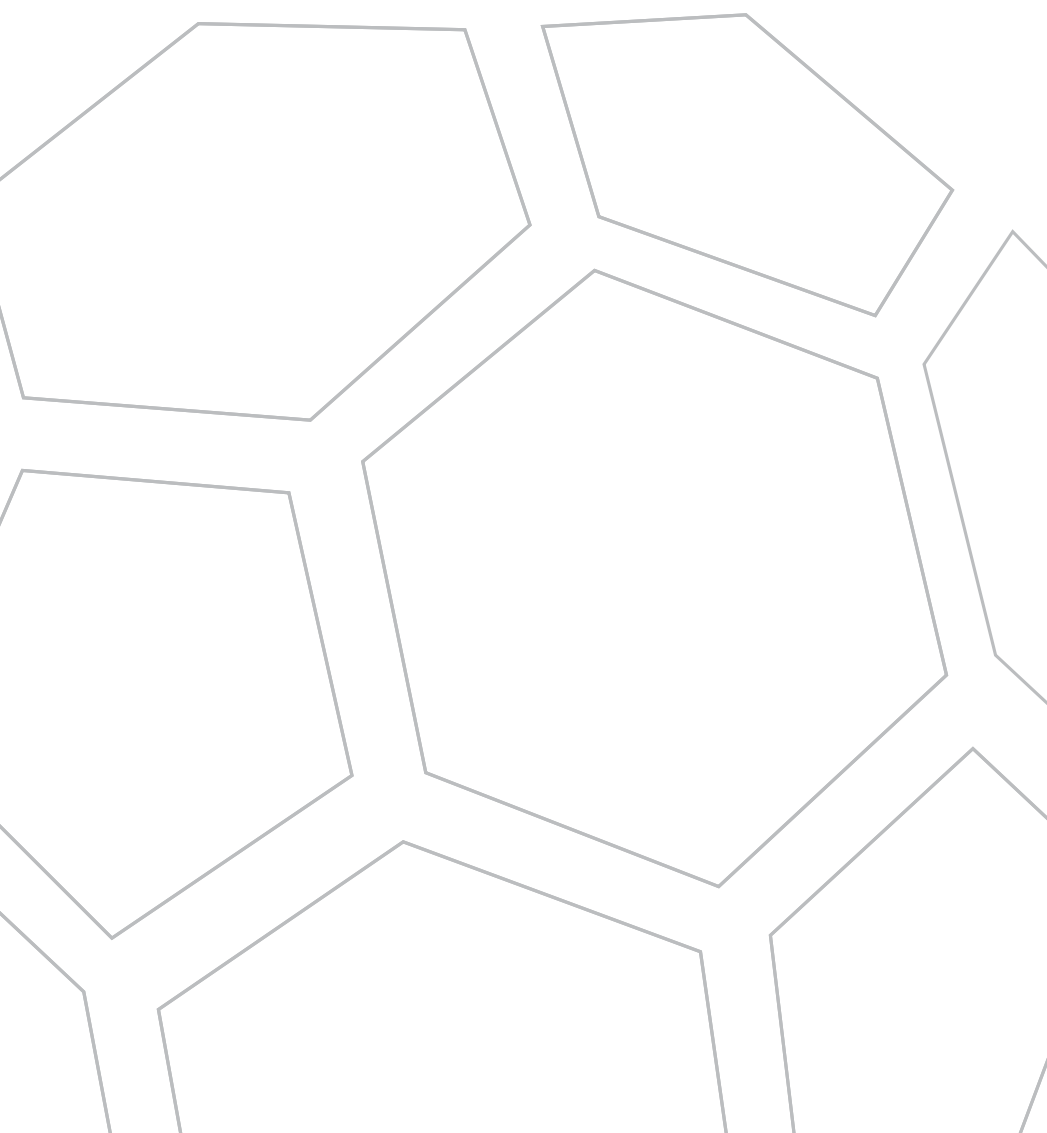
Programmer for Yukon Film Society: Andrew Connors

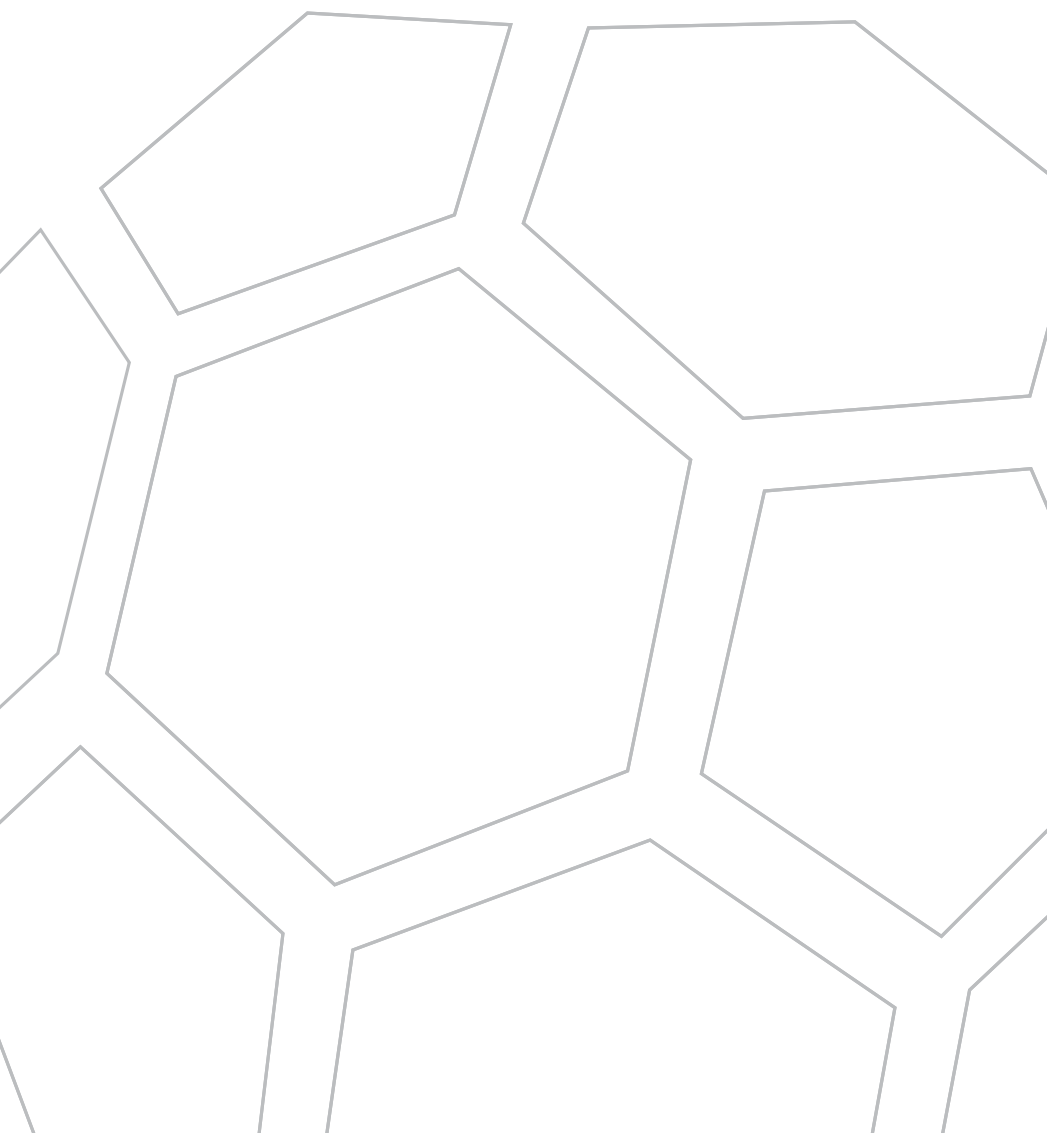
Yukon Arts Centre Gallery Director: Mary Bradshaw

Preparator: Scott Price Catalogue Design: Guiniveve Lalena

Front cover: *The DEW Project* (site documentation), confluence of Klondike and Yukon Rivers, YT, Canada. 64o03' N, 139o27' W. Photo: C. Stankieveh, 2009

Back cover: Prototype of First Rigid Radome, R. Buckminster Fuller and Massachusetts Institute of Technology's Lincoln Laboratory, 1952-4









CHARLES STANKIEVECH ARTIST STATEMENT

THE DEW PROJECT (2009)

A border is not a connection but an interval of resonance, and such gaps abound in the Land of the DEW Line. The DEW Line itself, the Distant Early Warning radar system installed by the United States in the Canadian North to keep this continent in touch with Russia, points up a major Canadian role in the twentieth century, the role of hidden ground for big powers. Since the United States has become a world environment, Canada has become the anti-environment that renders the United States more acceptable and intelligible to many small countries of the world; anti-environments are indispensable for making an environment understandable. — Marshall McLuhan

The Geodesic Radome is the synecdoche of post-WWII warfare—an architecture that distributes its structural forces through a *framework* formally related to the communication *network* connecting the architecture.

Echoing Paul Virilio who argued in 1975, “the bunker is the last theatrical gesture in the endgame of Occidental military history,” the geodesic radome is the first architectural gesture in the play of Network Centric Warfare (NCW). With the onset of the Cold War, foreign policy shifted into game theory where communication of ideologies between players functioned as much as propaganda as defense asset—such as the strategy of M.A.D. (Mutually Assured Destruction). In order for these strategies to be executed, new infrastructures—including the integrated air defense systems SAGE and DEW—were rapidly developed by the US Military, private corporations like IBM and Western Electric, and research centres such as Massachusetts Institute of Technology’s Lincoln Labs. A joint venture between the US Air Force and the Royal Canadian Air Force, the DEW Line (or Distant Early Warning Line which became operational in 1957) was a network of remote radar and communication outposts extending across the high Arctic from Alaska, across Canada, to Denmark’s Greenland. Always on alert for USSR bombers flying over the icecap to deliver nuclear warheads, the outposts utilised new technological developments in the fields of radar and automatic signal detection. In order to protect these electronics from the harsh environment of the Arctic, Lincoln Labs collaborated with Buckminster Fuller to design the rigid geodesic radome—an improvement from Fuller’s earlier steel struts design to an electromagnetically invisible shell needed to house antennas.

By the end of the 1960s, the geodesic dome's iconic status as DEW (Distant Early Warning) architecture had been subverted by alternative cultures like Drop City as a means of expressing Fuller's concept of 'Spaceship Earth' and ecological concerns. Today, geodesic domes represent the ambiguity of invisible military operations in the electromagnetic realm, as well as counter-culture utopias—all while referencing another type of polar dome: the igloo.

Once again, the same regions invested in the Arctic during the Cold War (Canada, USA, Russia, Norway, and Denmark) are again turning their attention towards the North driven this time by melting temperatures and greater pressure for natural resource extraction resulting in a renewed confrontation that could be called the 'Warm War'.

The Cold War might have ended in a successful negotiation over the frozen 'nomad/no man's' landscape of the Arctic, but will the current battle over natural resources and sovereignty in a rapidly melting world share the same quiet fate?

A germane topic today, sustainability is not just a trend concerning a particular architectural design but the infrastructure and networks between nation states that will determine not only what—but who—is sustained in the future. The DEW Project revisits the issue of boundaries—both in regards to the environment and sovereignty—while observing how communication technology plays a pivotal role in the definition and delivery of such ideologies.

sheets and billows and colomnades of light and current, in transfiguration unceasing.

In small, remote corners of the planet nobody was paying much attention to, between factions nobody knew much about, the undeclared and largely imperceptible war had been under way for years. All up and down the Northern latitudes, clandestine transmitters had been deployed amid pinnacles of ice, in abandoned mining works, in the secret courtyards of ancient Iron-Age fortresses, manned and unmanned, lonely and uncaringly in the iceblink. On sky-piercing crags as likely to be frozen seabird guano as rock, scouts of Earth's Field, desperate, insomniac, interrogated horizons as to any signs of their relief, who were often years late. . . . And indeed for some, the Polar night would last forever—they would pass from the Earth amid unreportable splendor, the aurora in the sky raging up and down spectra visible and invisible. Souls bound to the planetary lines of force, swept pole to pole and through the faded interior regions as well. . . .

Manœuvring in vessels camouflaged in naval-style "dazzle painting," whereby areas of the structure could actually disappear and reappear in clouds of chromatic twinkling, scientists/skyfarers industriously gathered their data, all of deepest interest to the enterprisers convened leagues below, at intelligence centers on the surface such as the Inter-Group Laboratory for Opticomagnetic Observation (I.G.L.O.O.), a radiational clearing-house in Northern Alaska, which these days was looking more like some Lloyd's of the high spectrum, with everyone waiting anxiously for the next fateful Latine announcement.

"Dangerous conditions lately."

"Hell, some days you'd give the world for a nice easygoing Indian attack."

"I tell you it can't go on like this."

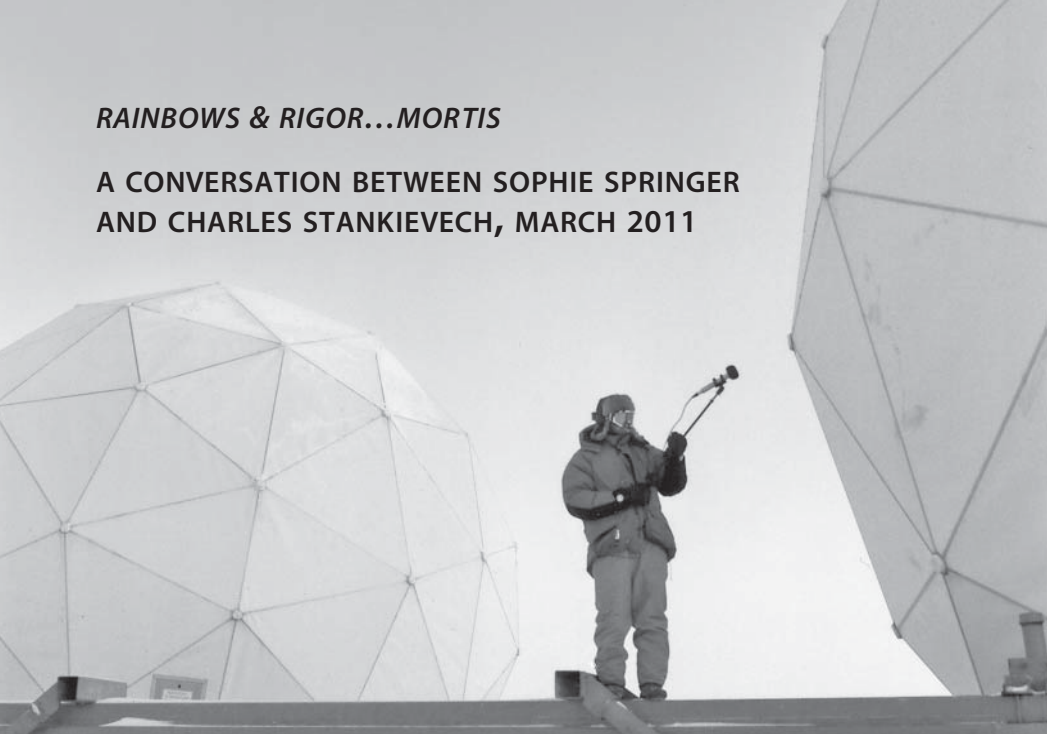
A few heads turned, though the plangent note was long familiar. "Presumptuous whelp, what would you know, you weren't even around for the last eclipse."

Besides keeping a sharp eye out himself from the flying bridge, Randolph St. Cosmo had also posted lookouts forward and aft with the most powerful binoculars on the ship. Here, north of the Arctic Circle, the standing directive to all Chums of Chance vessels was, "Unfamiliar sky-traffic is to be presumed hostile until proven otherwise." Daily skirmishes were now being fought, no longer for territory or commodities but for electro-magnetic information, in an international race to measure and map most accurately the field-coefficients at each point of that mysterious mathematical lattice-work which was by then known to surround the Earth.

As the Era of Sail had depended upon the mapping of seas and seacoasts of the globe and winds of the wind-rose, so upon the measurement of newer variables would depend the history that was to pass up here, among reefs of magnetic anomaly, channels of least impedance, storms of rays yet unnamed lashing out of the sun. There was a "Ray-rush" in progress—light and magnetism, as well as all manner of extra-Hertzian rays, were there for the taking, and prospectors had come flooding in, many of them professional claim-jumpers aiming to get by on brute force, a very few genuinely able to dowse for rays of all frequencies, some neither gifted nor unscrupulous, simply caught up in everybody else's single-minded flight from reason, diseased as the gold and silver seekers of earlier days. Here at the high edge of the atmosphere was the next untamed frontier, pioneers arriving in airships instead of wagons, setting in motion property disputes destined to last generations. The Northern Lights which had drawn them from their childhood beds in lower latitudes on so many deep winter nights, while summoning in their parents obscure feelings of dread, could now be viewed up here at any time from within, at altitude, in heavenwide pulses of color, dense

RAINBOWS & RIGOR...MORTIS

A CONVERSATION BETWEEN SOPHIE SPRINGER AND CHARLES STANKIEVECH, MARCH 2011



SOPHIE SPRINGER To start off I'd like to know how you first became interested in the DEW Line as a topic to be incorporated into your art practice. I mean, did you go for the first drive to the Arctic Ocean and that's when you saw the radar stations? Or did you go up there once you already had developed plans for the project? I'm asking this because I'm particularly keen to find out how you developed *The DEW Project* conceptually. Still now you continually do a lot of research around the history of communication technology and the military's role in these developments. You continue to find and establish ever more connections between history, science, literature, pop, and visual culture that feed back into both your theoretical work and of course your practice (including current projects like the *Magnetic Norths* exhibition (2010) or the ongoing *Ghost Rocket* series). So, how much theoretical material did you have piled up initially, or, when was the moment that you felt things were coming together—informing and, ultimately, forming your DEW Project?

CHARLES STANKIEVECH My research has always been about site. Before coming to the Yukon, I was living in Montréal where I had just finished the shooting for a video installation that looked at the birth of cinema exhibition and sound recording as it specifically developed historically in the city of Montréal. I looked at how both of these architectural and media technologies were located and participated in the history of communications. When I moved to the North to help get the Yukon School of Visual Arts started, my research shifted to what was unique about this

landscape and what role communication and architectural history played and how it developed as a result of the geography. The history of Radio was an area in my sound research that I wanted to investigate further, and I had an intuition that because of the vast spaces of the Arctic such a technology would play a significant role. At this point I started looking at all sorts of historical examples and practical uses of wireless technology in the North: from wireless telegraphy of the Gold Rush to contemporary infrastructure for the Internet. Of course when we look at the 20th century, there is little communication technology that is not somewhat first experimented by the military. So in between these outer limits of the electromagnetic spectrum and history, I found of course the history of the DEW Line (or the Distant Early Warning Line) that served as a wireless radar and communication network of outpost stations during the Cold War. The fortunate aspect of this research project, which I was not expecting, is that it filled two of my major interests: communication and architecture. In other words, the DEW Line became the site for both wireless innovation as well as avant-garde architecture—in particular Buckminster Fuller's radar domes. This resulted in a continuance with previous research and writing I had already done while also allowing me the space to push this research even further.

In regard to my trips to the Beaufort Sea to visit the actual sites of the military outposts, these field trips were made after I had decided on the basic design of *The DEW Project* and I needed to acquire field recordings of the ice and electromagnetic pulses from the radar stations themselves. To locate a specific moment when the project coalesced into something that would be recognisable by what we see today as *The DEW Project*, I would say it was when I made the connection between the framework form of the geodesic and the network form of the communication system. Up until this point, I was experimenting with a variety of different architectural forms in order to house an 'off grid' radio station. I had not decided on a specific form since I wanted to reference a whole history of electromagnetic in the Arctic from the traditional belief of spirits in northern lights to radio phones in the bush. Original design experiments ranged from black crystalline meteorites to glass ice cubes, but by experimenting plastically with models (both paper and CAD), something about the geodesic form clicked with the historical information surfacing in my research. In a sense, this folding and assembly actually opened up a strategy of thinking. I don't think I could have made the theoretical connection between form and history without this material process. I finally focused on the specific history of the Cold War and geodesic radome because of their conceptual resonance and because the geodesic dome became a powerful symbol for much wrapped up in

the Arctic: outpost architecture, military colonisation, electromagnetic anomalies, polar ice cap, outer space aesthetics, counter culture utopias, and indigenous architecture.

SOPHIE Can you talk more about the geodesic dome as nexus?

CHARLES I think the easiest way to understand what I am discussing when I talk about the geodesic radome is to look at the shift in military outpost architecture from before to after World War Two. Paul Virilio, in 1975 returns to his childhood in WWII and specifically his experience of the military bunkers on the Atlantic Coast of France built to defend against an Allied invasion of a Nazi occupied Europe. His insight is in connecting the structure of the cement bunker and how it symbolised WWII warfare. In particular he observed that the strength of the bunker's architecture was based not in its embedding into a foundation surrounding its structure, but rather in its own centre of gravity. In this way, the cement bunker was an autonomous building able to withstand its surrounding landscape's destruction by explosives. For Virilio it was the endgame of the strategy of entrenchment and burrowing into the ground as a defence strategy against the enemy—in a sense to hide from view in order to better attack.

The end of WWII resulted in two significant weapons technologies that radically changed the strategy of warfare: the nuclear bomb and the long-range bomber, which eventually evolved into the InterContinental Ballistic Missile (or ICBM) in a





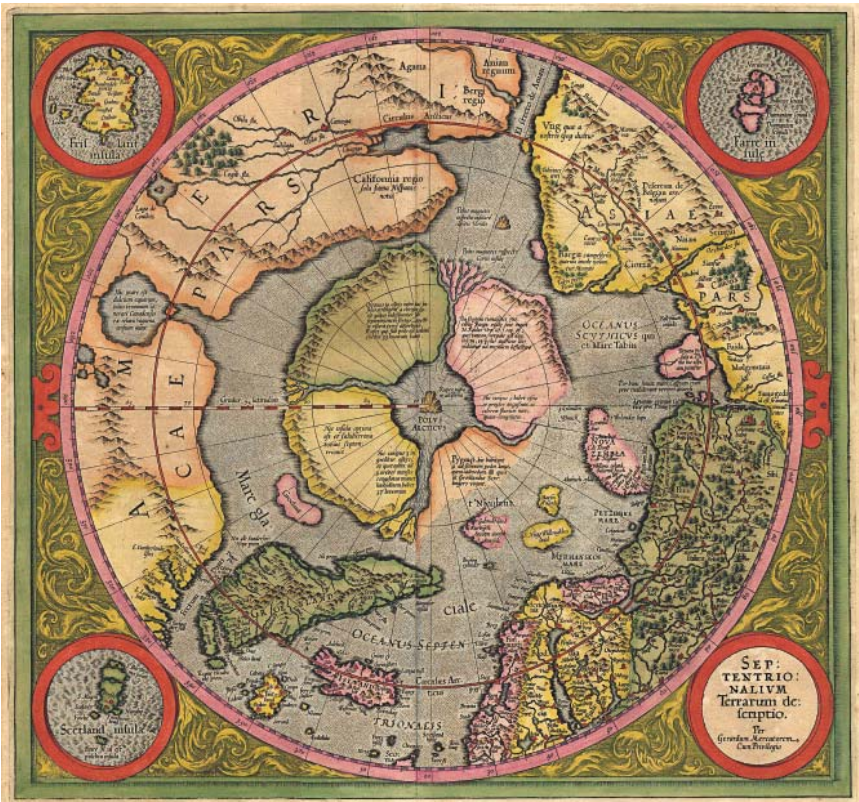
post-Sputnik-era. The nuclear bomb resulted in an event that was unwatchable (it was, literally, a blinding event) and with the ICBM no territory was beyond reach. In response to this new landscape, the Atlantic wall of bunkers from WWII morphed into the DEW Line radomes of the Arctic. But instead of creating a string of hidden bunkers, the geodesic domes stood in plain sight. The radome's real function is not in the play of camouflage and attack, but rather in its electromagnetic invisibility and connectivity. Instead of a monolithic entrenchment, the DEW radome is a framework of nodes and connections delineating a white dome much like the sensing and communication network spread over the white ice cap of the Arctic. The DEW Line did not fire projectiles back at the enemy; rather it fired warning signals back to its NORAD headquarters. The electronic network developed to do this was called SAGE and built in tandem with the DEW Line at MIT. Together, SAGE and DEW presented the first example of a continent-wide network of cybernetic processing... something which eventually grows into the Internet we use today.

SOPHIE The radar infrastructure of the DEW Line was used to detect, warn and thus, basically shield off aggressive attacks on North America from above, or as their slogan says 'Deter. Detect. Defend.' Can you explain what inspired you to not only record electromagnetic waves and radio frequencies from up in the air but, consequently, also reversing the direction by going down and recording the sounds and noises of the ice and water beneath your feet?

CHARLES The strategy to shift from sensing the air to sensing the water is located in the shift from the historical Cold War to something I call the coming 'Warm War.' While the DEW Line is operational still today and not a relic of the past, but rather significantly updated to be farther reaching and more powerful only under a different branding name – The North Warning System, I think the threat in the theatre of the Arctic is no longer of nuclear attack from an ideological opponent, but rather the contention of national borders in the water—including between

such allies as the USA and Canada. In other words, while the DEW Line was about creating an invisible electromagnetic border between the USSR and North America, today the issue is about who owns the Arctic Ocean. We are no longer dealing with an empty Arctic, which acts as a buffer zone, but rather as a site for extraction and passage. The primary concern is no longer ballistic weapons flying over the ice cap, but rather: how can we extract oil out of the seabed or shorten our shipping routes through the Northwest Passage? For this reason, it was important in *The DEW Project* to change sensing technology from air to water. More importantly, I used two microphones: one in water and one in ice specifically at the end of the winter when the ice was rapidly melting to articulate that this 'Warm War' is being propelled by a shift in climate change which is linked to fossil fuels and opening of the Northwest Passage due to warmer temperatures.

SOPHIE Remaining with water and ice let's next talk about the ways in which *The DEW Project* has been installed for exhibitions, or precisely, how it affects the character of the work when you experience it as a piece in a museum or as a site-specific installation outdoors.



In 2009 *The DEW Project* was produced as a site-specific installation just outside of Dawson City– on the frozen riverbed at the confluence of the Klondike and the Yukon River. This way, there was a strong live aspect to it. People could not only come out and experience the piece within the landscape, but moreover, much of the sound one could hear then was emerging in real-time from the ice just beneath the dome, that is, right where the audience were standing. Besides the possibility to listen on-site, the soundscape was also directly broadcast via radio and eventually the Internet. In Whitehorse, however *The DEW Project* is presented to the audience as a gallery installation, thus similarly to how I too first encountered the artwork at the *International Symposium for Electronic Arts*, 2010, at the Museum für Kunst und Kulturgeschichte Dortmund: the geodesic dome you built shining its rainbow coloured lights in a corner of the gallery, the large radio antenna beside it, transmitting a pre-recorded and pre-edited abstract carpet of sound and noise to a couple of pocket-size radio receivers that, if you use the headphones, provide the soundtrack to a meditative large-format video projection of several shots of Arctic panoramas; far-away horizons of softly pink-blue skies before seemingly eternal stretches of windswept ice and snow from which, like science fiction architecture, occasionally rise the majestic dome buildings of the DEW Line... I am wondering if you as the artist, confronted with translating this experience into the 'White Cube' of the gallery, perhaps initially operated by turning this problem inside out. By first installing *The DEW Project* outdoors, was it the snow-covered landscape which you turned into a white cube?

CHARLES Your latter suggestion is how things unfolded. I had originally thought of relating the snow-covered landscape to the 'White Cube' of the museum when I first built *The DEW Project*. Up until that point, I had built few pieces outdoors and I was much more familiar with engaging the space of a gallery. I pushed this connection further when there was a temporal relation between the date of the DEW Line's operation in the 1960s and the minimalist art of the same period along with Brian O'Doherty's essay on the 'White Cube' and the critique of the Institution. Thus there was a two-fold inversion. 1: in the original setting, the geodesic radome and monolithic solar panels had to be functional first and second were designed as cinematic architecture in an extreme landscape (referencing Buckminster Fuller, *Star Wars* and Stanley Kubrick), but I had planned from the beginning to eventually reconfigure the project for museum exhibition where it would appear as sculpture (ie. Donald Judd, Dan Flavin and Tony Smith), and 2: while originally Fuller designed the high-tech radomes to be shipped up North in a cheap lightweight manner to save fuel, in my case I built the domes out of low-tech local material but used his

same design principle so that it could be easily packed and shipped down South. I'd like to believe that both versions of the project have a physical effect on the visitor. While I often compare a phenomenological experience of the Arctic landscape with the phenomenological experience of minimalist art, nothing really can communicate the radical sublime of the northern landscape—again Tony Smith is applicable here and in particular his account of driving along the highway in the dark of the night as incomparable to the experience of art. For me, this unlikely relationship between 'White Cube' and Arctic sublime only provides an understanding of how thresholds are really what are at the core in experience itself. In this way we can start to relate experiences that seem in direct contrast to each other: such as minimalism and the psychedelic, or a museum and a frozen landscape.

SOPHIE Due to your work at the Yukon School of Visuals Arts and your multiple projects that focus on the history of the Arctic you get invited for lectures on the notion of 'the North'. On the occasion of the exhibition in Whitehorse you will give your latest talk *Under the Rainbow*, which you just wrote for the conference *New Northern Cartographies* at the Phyllis Lambert Seminar for the Université de Montréal's Ecole d'architecture in February. In it you trace the history of 20th century communication technology, outpost architecture, and cold war history as a backdrop for identity formation in these remote areas and, intriguingly, as pop culture material. Formally, I'd say, what you are delivering is not merely an artist talk nor a traditional academic lecture, but much rather a mix between visual essay and performative lecture. Perhaps you want to pick up on the relation between fact and fabrication in the context of 'the North' as well as how that reflects back into how you actually weave the storyline of your lecture.

CHARLES While I am often asked to give a perspective on 'the North', I am far from an expert in northern cultures nor do I come from the region. I have lived in 'the North' for several years and been involved in the setting up of an institution in the region, but I find myself more as a translator of the experience of 'going North' (to use a phrase from Glenn Gould's 1967 CBC radio documentary *The Idea of North*). Rather than pretend I am an expert, which I see happening all the time in the most ridiculous of circumstances and to the detriment of the local, I offer a very idiosyncratic perspective that I hope looks at some of the most interesting and troubling parts of the North. Coming from this personal perspective I realise 'the North' is composed of the dual nature of the brute reality of experience and the fantasy of projection. In my work I want to acknowledge this dual element, which

I feel is rarely brought together at the same time. We often see these days eco-activist artwork concerned with the North and more recently a growing number of 'objective' news reports on the region. On the other hand, the Polar Regions are also a place of fantasy from sublime artwork to science fiction film locations. There is a third way, of course, which is the stories of the aboriginal people in the region, but I am not qualified to speak on their behalf, and I feel the best I can do is point to their importance in the history and the future of the North. I think for most people who do not live in the North (which is the majority of the world), 'the North' is composed of this mixed reality. I think the 1569/1595 Polar Map by the famed cartographer Gerardus Mercator depicts this duality perfectly. On the one hand, the map used the most advanced cartographic techniques of the time with the most current scientific data for magnetic readings collected around the world by explorers in order to create a utilitarian map for exploration and resource extraction. On the other hand, the map attempts to illustrate a region of the earth no one had visited (like the dark side of the moon) and actually is more informed by medieval fantasy—particularly the rendering of four continents separated by four rivers that swirl around a large magnetic mountain at the North Pole. What is unique about this map is the combination of the traditional theory of a magnetic mountain attracting all the compasses of the world, with the empirical data that compasses pointed more to the Beaufort Sea rather than the celestial North Pole. To account for this discrepancy between data and theory, Mercator posited a second magnetic mountain near the Bering Strait and thus assumed compasses averaged their attraction between these dual magnetic norths and pointed to where we roughly today locate the earth's single magnetic north. While outdated scientifically, I think this double magnetic north can become a conceptual tool for us to understand two different elements of 'the North,' which attract our attention and often are at complete odds with each other—in a sense one could poetically suggest this is the first example of electromagnetic warfare on the planet.

Be it my lectures, curated exhibitions or even my artwork, I use the same technique bound up in this Mercator map: I provide a material map, fragments of stories, and a constellation of concepts which the audience must use to navigate their own way through the territory.

SOPHIE I feel that you take material from these two different realms, as embodied in Mercator's two magnetic poles, and bring them really closely together, at times producing or maintaining a certain sense of ambiguity between the two, as a statement of what 'the North' is. Can you relate to that?

CHARLES Perhaps the opposing strategies of Walid Raad and Eyal Weizman are useful foils, as I find a lecture like *Under The Rainbow* situated somewhere in between the two. Walid Raad as spokesperson for the imaginary research identity, *The Atlas Group*, creates a fictional story and sells it to the audience in an academic presentation as historical fact in hope of a political effect. The power of his work is the conflation between fact and fiction. On the other hand, Eyal Weizman is an architect who presents academic research in direct formats such as unambiguous lectures and books. I've been relatively clear when I'm presenting fiction and when I'm presenting more objective information. However with the extreme nature of the Arctic, these two realities are sometimes hard to tell apart. For a region that exists beyond the direct experience of the majority of the world's population, my strategy to present both fantasy and fact on par with each other is a conscious tactic. I firmly believe that in the minds of people each are of the same power—be it an imagination of some science fiction outpost (like Superman's 'Fortress of Solitude'), or what publicity purpose a military outpost holds (like the DEW Line)...or inversely what little we know about the reality of Dark Regions...like military research sites such as HAARP and industrial processes like oil extraction in the Beaufort Sea.

SOPHIE Whilst you're clearly dealing with very serious subject matter I wonder if we could also talk about aspects of humour in your work. After the talk in Montréal someone uttered their surprise at seeing you present your ideas in such a dead-pan manner. I think for some people the mix of a humourous style and military subject matter is problematic, especially when they focus more on the destructive side of war than on the inventive role of the military in science.

CHARLES I think such people are rightfully aware of the dangers of the Military Industrial Complex that Eisenhower gravely warned us of upon his exit from office, but this does not refer to the military outright but rather the nefarious triangle between private contractors, military brass and politicians controlled by lobbyists. Obviously, there isn't a person in the developed world who does not use trickle-down technology from the military or doesn't directly benefit from the military in some way. I think treating the military as a monolithic evil would be unwise to understanding one of the most influential forces in history and in contemporary times. For this reason, I find no problem working with the Canadian Forces to gain privileged access to sites and personnel I might otherwise be unable to engage. As long as I am able to keep my independent perspective—which is something that is not being jeopardised—then I am not concerned. In dire circumstances, there is of course also the role of the double agent...Furthermore, when one's identity must



exist within an institution—be it an art school or a nation state—there are particular political strategies that are useful when using the institution via positive means or subverting the institution via negative means. In regard to the latter, I'm thinking here of an old title of a paper I once wrote: *The Ethics of Failure, the Politics of Laughter*. Laughter can be a rupture within the system that critiques ideology (think of the genius humour of Charlie Chaplin in his social critiques *Modern Times* and *The Great Dictator*). Sometimes more powerful than a critique of a system's failure such as we find in the press or academic discourse, is humorous response, which can create solidarity within a group that might otherwise be overwhelmed by the atrocity of the subject matter or their own existential situation (think here of Franz Kafka laughing as he read his short stories to friends).

In my late-night ponderings I think about both of these strategies, and I fantasize about Charlie Chaplin making a movie about a double agent; it would have been hilarious—but I guess he was already playing the part in a way when he acts the double role of Jewish Barber and anti-Semitic dictator in *The Great Dictator*. Perhaps humour is counterintelligence, or thinking in disguise.

SOPHIE That's a great remark there at the end. Could you expand more about your own thinking in disguise and tell me about the humour directly working within your artworks? I'm thinking for instance in relation to your juxtapositions of rainbows and the military or psychedelia, toy rockets and 70s music.

CHARLES I'm avoiding answering this question, because I think the majority of the time I forget my artworks are humorous—it must be the repressed underside of the research that escapes when I'm in a less than conscious state. Or maybe it's just another way of thinking—less analytic, but not necessarily less critical. Or maybe it's a strategy to look at something without being critical when one is expected to have a prejudice. Honestly, I don't know. The beauty of humour is it's based on overdetermination. I joked with my friend Vincent once while playing bocce we should create a collective called, 'Rainbows & Rigor... Mortis'. Our team won the bocce game, but the collective has yet to materialise. I think there is a lesson there, but I'm not sure what it is.

SOPHIE Final question: Do you believe in ghosts?

CHARLES I believe in the luminiferous æther...and a good story.

SOPHIE SPRINGER has childhood memories of jet-planes hitting the sound wall whilst growing up in the old West Berlin of the 1980s. With an MA in Contemporary Art Theory from Goldsmiths College London, today she works as an editor and translator, mainly with the pioneering art theory publisher Merve Verlag Berlin. She has facilitated books and events by thinkers such as Thomas Hirschhorn, Michel Serres, Brian Massumi and Hélène Cixous. Springer is currently co-curating *Ha Ha Road*, a touring exhibition on 'humour as rupture of sense', for Quad and Mostyn, two public galleries in the UK. The group show opening in August includes works by Pipilotti Rist, Rodney Graham, Fischli & Weiss, Ceal Floyer, Roman Signer—among other emerging artists. At the moment, she is enjoying three months of hermit life in Dawson City, Yukon.

CHARLES STANKIEVECH is an artist who creates 'fieldworks' that employ the materiality of the electromagnetic, the strategy of architecture and the vehicle of institutions. His diverse body of work has been shown at such places as the Palais de Toyko (Paris), International Symposium on Electronic Arts (ISEA2010, Germany), Xth Biennale of Architecture (Venice), Eyebeam + ISSUE Project Room (New York), Banff Centre for the Arts (Canada), the Canadian Centre for Architecture (Montréal) and the Atlantic Center for the Arts (Florida). He has curated/produced such unorthodox exhibitions as *Magnetic Norths*, *A Wake For St. Kippenberger's MetroNet*, and the series *OVER THE WIRE* with Lawrence Weiner, Gary Hill, SIMPARCH, Center for Land Use Interpretation and others. His writings have been included in academic journals, such as *Leonardo Music Journal* (MIT Press) and *306090* (Princeton Architectural Press), artist's catalogues and translated into French, Italian and German. Stankieveh holds an MFA in Open Media with a thesis on sound and architecture and a philosophy thesis on Slavoj Žižek and Franz Kafka. A founding faculty member of the Yukon School of Visual Arts in Dawson City, Yukon Territory, Stankieveh splits his time between the Arctic and other landscapes. He is currently a *Canadian Forces Artist* working with the National Defence Department including a sortie to CFS ALERT—the northernmost settlement on earth.

The DEW Project is archived online at www.stankieveh.net/projects/DEW including sound recordings, images, and the online publication of the *BAR-1 DEW Line Archive* created by David Neufeld.

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WELCOME TO BAR-1: THE DEW LINE IN NORTHERN YUKON **EXHIBIT HISTORY AND BACKGROUND**

BAR-1 was one of many Distant Early Warning stations (DEW) installed in the 1950s along Canada's Arctic Coast at the beginning of the Cold War to detect Russian missiles and planes entering North American air space. In 1993, just prior to the de-commissioning of the station, Joanne Jackson Johnson made photographs of the station and the workers, and Parks Canada historian David Neufeld researched the political, social and economic effects of the DEW Line on northern Canada.

The photographs by Joanne were exhibited at the Yukon Arts Centre Gallery in 1994. Joanne and David then collaborated on an exhibition of photographs (contemporary and archival) and artifacts in 2003 for the ODD Gallery in Dawson City that reflected choices made in the practices of an historian and an artist to create an image of both the otherworldliness and the reality of a vast continental air defence system. The exhibit displayed at the Old Fire Hall in 2011 is a small selection of these works and artifacts.

(Continued on page 23)







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JOANNE JACKSON JOHNSON

ARTIST STATEMENT

Eighteen years have passed since I photographed the people and the buildings at BAR-1. It was located near Komakuk Beach on the small part of Yukon that touches on the Beaufort Sea. I went because I had an interest in photographing industrial environments and people working in them, and because it would be an adventure.

Previous exhibitions of this work (1994 and 2003) emphasized the day-to-day life of the station and its perception by people visiting and working there. There is only passing reference to the outside pressures of the Cold War. Sam Lightman, who worked at BAR-1 in the 1960s made photographs to help him endure the isolation, darkness and routine.

My impression of the DEW Line workers from the south was that all were visitors to the station. In the early years of the DEW Line, there were Inuvialuit families on site. At the time of my visit, there were no families living there, although two of the staff were Inuvialuit. All of the staff were routinely moved from station to station.

Despite improvement in communications and the renovations that made the station more comfortable, BAR-1 was undeniably remote and the feeling of isolation overwhelming. It could have been in outer space. Except for the occasional visit by Inuvialuit families on snowmobiles on their way to Aklavik, or the posting of bear sightings, there was very little acknowledgement of the outside environment.

DAVID NEUFELD

HISTORIAN STATEMENT

The story of modern North America is the continuing revision of utopias. Modernism is the action of first principles on a blank slate—a time with only one moment in a place with no past. The ultimate example of modernity is perhaps the thin string of Buckminster Fuller's glistening geodesic domes with their electronic curtain extending upwards into the Arctic heavens during the 1950s and 60s. Designed to protect suburban utopias, the isolated stations of the Distant Early Warning Line were a mysterious talisman offering safety. Military secrecy—DEW workers were not to talk about their jobs, thus preserving their isolation even when away from the DEW Line—and distance preserved the line in a cocoon of the 'perpetual present.'

However, new technologies have replaced the Argus-eyed domes and the DEW Line has slipped into the past, largely unnoticed. Despite its lack of a past, of origins; it has legacies. Largely gone, most sites are marked only with an extensive gravel pad and a fire-scorched pit, the BAR-1's legacies, which I was responsible for assembling, include administrative files, forms, engineering drawings, strategic plans and bits and pieces of hardware. These remains carry that 'perpetual present' into the future. However, the meanings are carried forward in other ways. Perhaps the most intimate of these are the photographs of the DEW Line. The creation of an image reflects meaning and attributes value—the surviving images are insights into the creation of authenticating mythologies.

JOANNE JACKSON JOHNSON was born in Winnipeg, Manitoba. She completed her post-secondary education at the Universities of Manitoba and Minnesota, receiving a Master of Fine Arts degree in 1972. Active in the arts community in Winnipeg from 1974 until 1989, she was on the board of directors of the Floating Gallery of Photography and the Winnipeg Film Group. She taught photography at the University of Manitoba School of Art from 1977 until 1989 and was a mentor in the Mentoring Artists for Women's Art program in Manitoba.

After moving to the Yukon in 1989, she worked as Gallery Educator at the Yukon Arts Centre, and taught Art History at Yukon College. In 1992 she was commissioned to produce photographs for the Yukon Workers Compensation Building in Whitehorse and in 1993 photographed the BAR-1 DEW Line station for Parks Canada. Her work has been shown across Canada, and internationally, and has been collected by the Canada Council Art Bank, the Manitoba Arts Council Visual Art Bank, the Yukon Permanent Art Collection and Air Canada, as well as private collectors. In 2011 she divides her time between photography projects and running her organic farm outside Whitehorse.

DAVID NEUFELD grew up listening to his Groszma's stories of the pre- revolutionary Mennonite utopia in southern Russia. These stories, and the Mennonite reliance on the past as a defining element of identity, eventually steered him into the study of history. Through both an undergraduate (University of Manitoba) and then a Masters degree at the University of Western Ontario (1979), he focused on the details of the relationship between people and place.

Returning to Winnipeg in 1985, he became the curator of the Western Canada Aviation Museum where he organized perhaps the first non-aviation art shows in a temple of Canadian flight—Toni Onley’s work from the British Columbia icefields and Karen Hoeberg’s installation piece, *Catastrophe Lake*, attached chrysalis-like to one of the museum’s large aircraft.

He subsequently accepted the position as Parks Canada’s Yukon Historian and moved to the Yukon in 1990. Since then he has published extensively on Yukon history to an international professional audience and regularly presents his work to Yukoners as well. He is currently working on a history of the DEW Line and its effects in the western Arctic.



PROGRAMMER STATEMENT

Thank you to Charles Stankieveh, Joanne Jackson Johnson, and David Neufeld for agreeing to present their work in this Old Fire Hall gallery installation, and thank you to the Yukon Arts Centre Gallery for working with YFS to present these multimedia exhibits. It's an exciting opportunity for Yukon Film Society and Yukon Arts Centre Gallery to bring these works together as an exploration of the Cold War air defense system, the Distant Early Warning Line and its relationship to communication, architecture, Modernism, the development and colonisation of northern Canada, and the experience of living in an industrial outpost in the Arctic.

Charles' installation *The DEW Project* combines sculpture, video and audio collage in a configuration that has been exhibited in galleries in North America and Europe since its original 2009 site-specific installation at the confluence of the Klondike and Yukon Rivers next to Dawson City. When I first approached Charles about exhibiting this work in Whitehorse, it was obvious to us that we make room in the Old Fire Hall to include an exhibit that contains elements of Joanne and David's 2003 ODD Gallery show *Welcome to BAR-1: The DEW Line in the Northern Yukon*, which combined photographs and artifacts to document the specific DEW Line site 'BAR-1.' Their exhibit is a microscope on one DEW Line station (to Charles' macro exploration of the DEW system) and offers a strong documentary glimpse into the design, systems management, and the human experience of living and working in a remote DEW Line station. That BAR-1 was located in an eco-region that most Yukoners do not live in, the Arctic, on a coast that most Yukoners have not stood on, and operated in secrecy as one node of a vast network of continental military surveillance stations across the Arctic, is precisely the reason we should consider the DEW Line's influence on our past, present and future.

YUKON FILM SOCIETY

The mandate of the Yukon Film Society (YFS) is to present independent and alternative media art works to Yukon audiences and to support the production and distribution of works by Yukon media artists. The Yukon Film Society was established in 1984 to promote the appreciation and exhibition of films with artistic, social, and political importance.

Today, YFS works with many community organizations to: present engaging and thought-provoking film and media art works, bring guest artists and filmmakers to the Yukon, provide mentorship, equipment and technical assistance to artists, and to foster interest, discussion, and creativity for Yukon audiences and artists.

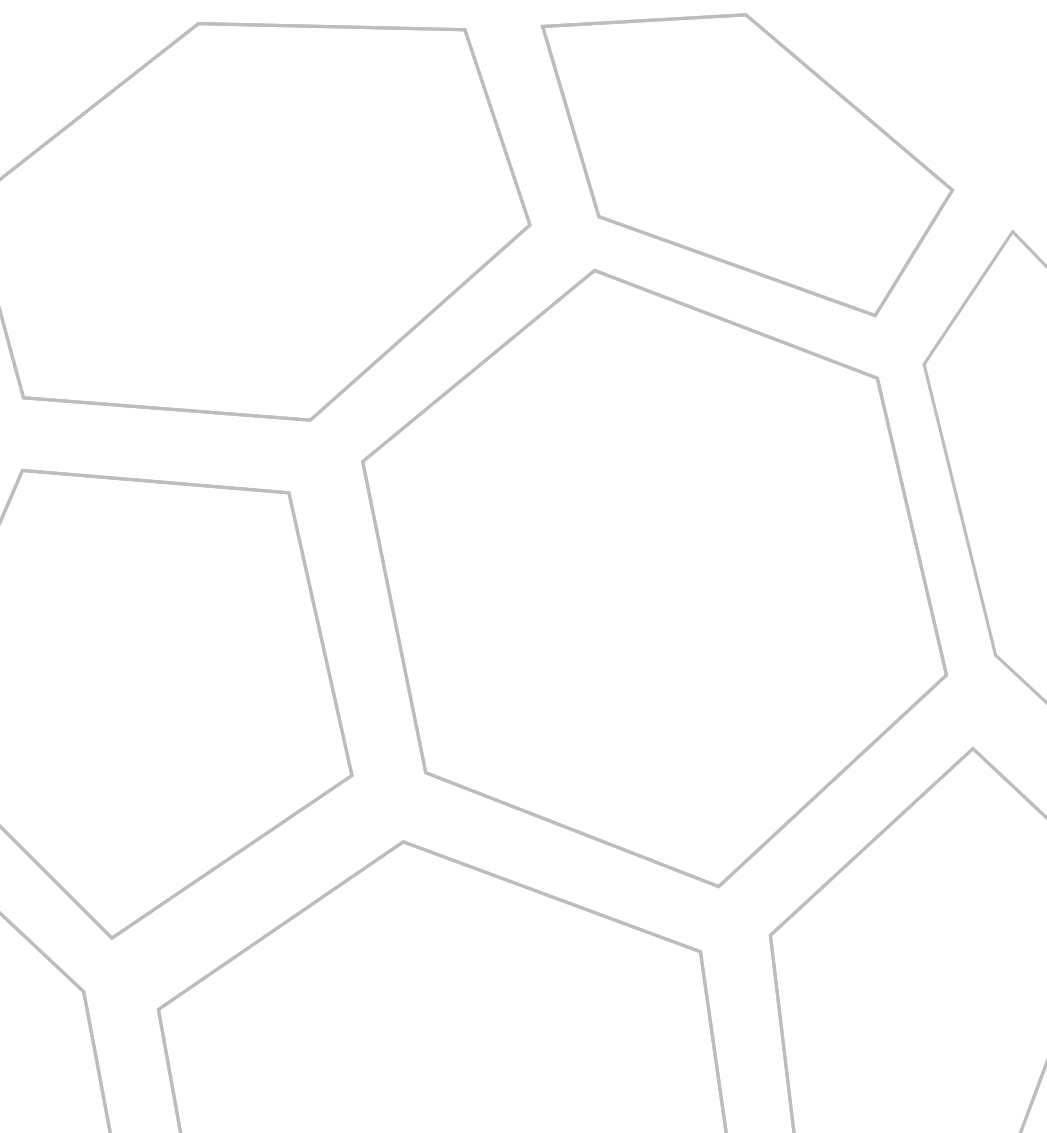
Programming presented by YFS includes: Firehall Films, Picturing the Yukon, media art creation workshops, film industry professional development, and the Available Light Film Festival.

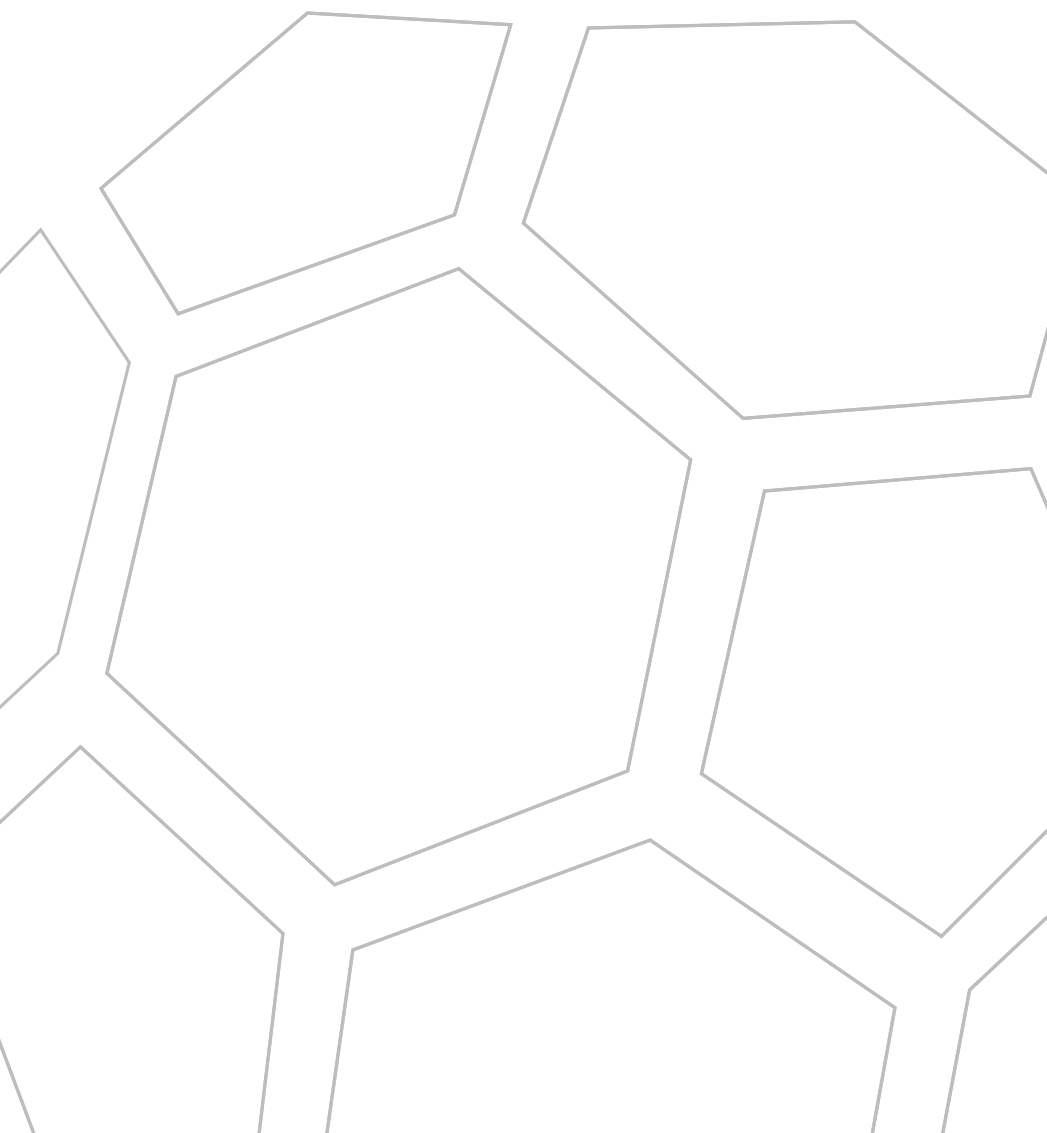
PHOTO CREDITS

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- p 9 *Ghost Rocket World Tour: Purple Haze (B-side)* [Video still, launch pad], C. Stankievech, 2010
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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS — THE DEW PROJECT

Steve Bates, Sophie Belair-Clement, Lance Blomgren, Vincent Bonin, Florian Boulais, the Community of Dawson City, YT, the Community of Tuktoyuktuk, NWT, Doug Cotter, David Curtis, Ashley Doiron, Jake Duncan, Greg Hakonson, Peter Flemming, KIAC, Aaron Flint Jamison, Joanne Jackson Johnson, Jen Laliberte, ODD Gallery, David Neufeld, Jonathan D. Solomon, Peter at Northern Industrial Sales, Veronica Verkley, Mike Yuhasz, the CFYT radio station.

The Yukon School of Visual Arts was instrumental to the production of this work. Funding provided by the Canada Council for the Arts. Hydrophones supplied by Aquarian Audio.

This work is dedicated to Magnet...I'm listening.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS — WELCOME TO BAR-1

Yukon Archives, Mario Villeneuve, Parks Canada Yukon, Sam Lightman collection, Department of National Defence and the MacBride Museum and staff for the loan and technical support needed to include the DEW Line artefacts in the exhibition.



YFS ANNUAL SUPPORT



Arts Operating Funds



We acknowledge the support of the Canada Council for the Arts which last year invested \$504,800 in the arts in the Yukon. Nous remercions de son soutien le Conseil des Arts du Canada, qui a investi 504 800 dollars l'an dernier dans les arts au Yukon.

A border is not a connection but an interval of resonance, and such gaps abound in the Land of the DEW Line. The DEW Line itself, the Distant Early Warning radar system installed by the United States in the Canadian North to keep this continent in touch with Russia, points up a major Canadian role in the twentieth century, the role of hidden ground for big powers. Since the United States has become a world environment, Canada has become the anti-environment that renders the United States more acceptable and intelligible to many small countries of the world; anti-environments are indispensable for making an environment understandable.

Marshall McLuhan

