

Beth Frey

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Watercolour, video performance, installation, AI



Portrait in studio, 2024



baddie poo and the pom that got everything, 2022
Watercolour on paper 56 x 76 cm

Watercolours



The end of an organism, the beginning of our unity, 2024,
watercolour on paper, 56x76 cm

My watercolour work sets out to humorously celebrate contrasts: I create a colourful and aqueous world of cartoonishly grotesque beings; a cast of 'beautiful failures' caught between joy and disquiet, perversity and innocence. The figures in my work are typically coded as feminine, while hovering between representation and abstraction, often resulting in blobby and monstrous forms—employing humour and the grotesque as liberating strategies in the face of gendered expectations. My goal is to create images that are at once visually seductive and disorienting, and that inhabit an emotional space that is not easily defined.



Meg can't catch a break, 2025, watercolour on paper, 30x40 cm



A blueberry for the poet, an important meal, 2023, watercolour on paper, 56x76 cm



That was then, that is now, and all of the old is gone, For now I am a New Creature, 2023 watercolour on paper, 56x76 cm

These watercolours are a part of a process of several translations: from drawings to texts to AI-generated imagery, back to drawing, and then to watercolour, shifting slightly in each step, like a game of “broken telephone”

At this stage, I take photos of the works to incorporate into my video performances.

Video Performance



*We are looking through a window, through a window, through a window.
The window does not exist. 2023, watercolour on paper, 56x76 cm*

Using free social-media apps, I “face swap” my watercolour characters onto my face as a way to become one of my painted creations and exist in that world. I use a green screen and a children’s green screen app to collage the faces with other body parts.

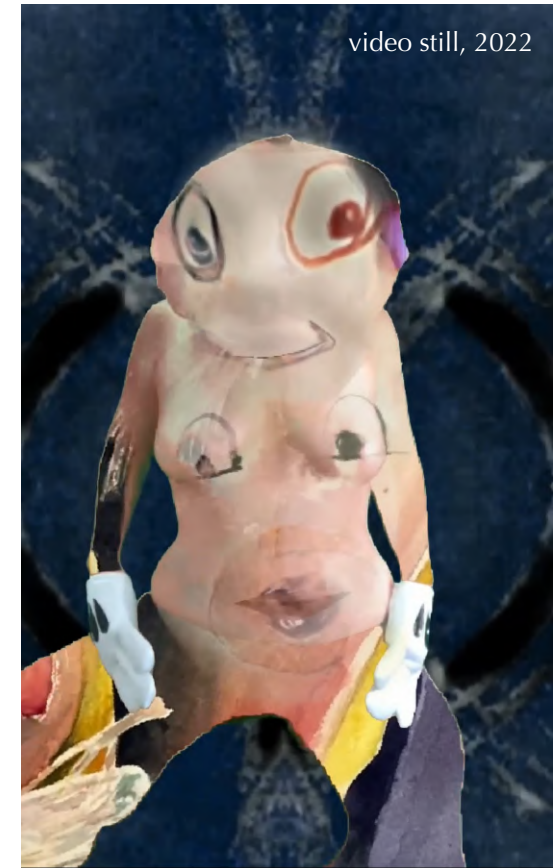


video still, 2024





Without formal training in video editing, I create all the videos on my phone or tablet using accessible social media apps. I enjoy the glitch effect that comes from the limitations of the technology.



Some examples of my video work can be found here:
<https://vimeo.com/user109152092>



Pictoplasma, Berlin, 2023

I often incorporate the cheap and handmade props I use for the videos in my installations, and rearrange them into new forms each time.



Clavo, Mexico City, 2021



Meet Me at the Puppet Motel, Pamela Weissenberg, Mexico City, 2022



Dither and Hum, mother's tankstation, London, UK, 2024

I've also displayed them in more conventional installations alongside the watercolours I'd used to create them.

I recently collaborated with the experimental voice ensemble "Phth" on a three-channel production, this time, using the singers' faces and bodies as characters in the videos. Société des arts technologiques, Montréal, February 2025



Artificial Intelligence



A strange thing happened in 2022 when I was experimenting with AI image generation on Instagram - it went viral! Of course, these images were an extension of my exploration of the uncanny body and camp sensibility, but this experience on social media went far beyond any intentions.

Rather than shying away from AI, I became obsessed with it as a problem to solve. If it is so easy to generate “interesting” images with AI, does this alter our definition of interestingness? How do I integrate this work into my studio art practice? How can I bring my body into this experience?

As a visual artist who puts a lot of value in my labour and body of work I’ve created over the years, the sensation of receiving so much attention from something that felt so “effortless” to me was unnerving.



Various selfies and resulting AI-generated images. 2023

I experimented with engaging in a number of performances with my studio props, taking photos of myself to instruct the AI (along with a text prompt) to create images. This was a way to put labour into the AI generated imagery, to have my body behind the characters created by the machine.

I turned a few of them into watercolours, and from there, I used the watercolours to make videos with my body. The cycle continues...



Watercolours based on AI images. 2023

Beth Frey

Selected Solo Exhibitions

2025 TBD, McBride contemporain, Montréal, QC
2024 *Dither and Hum*, mother's tankstation, London, UK
2022 *Meet Me at the Puppet Motel*, Pamela Weissenberg, Mexico City
2022 *Awkward acuarelas y mi propia telenovela*, Acapulco 62, Mexico City
2019 *UnFinished Busyness*, Galeria A4, Tlahuilipan, Hidalgo, MX

Selected Group Exhibitions

2024 *We Made This Mostly at Home...* University of Alberta, Edmonton, AB
2024 *Apple of Discord*, Louise Alexander Gallery, Porto Cervo, IT
2024 *Beautiful Haze*, Samara Contemporary, Toronto, ON
2023 *Reverb*, Art Mûr, Montreal QC
2023 *Ravalement de façade*, Hyperbien Galerie, Montreuil, FR
2023 *Steamed Hams*, Dowse Museum, Wellington, NZ
2023 *Hors Scène/Off-Stage*, Stewart Hall Gallery, Pointe-Claire, QC
2023 *Pictoplasma*, Berlin, DE
2022 *Stat. Sig.*, TAP Art Space, Montreal, QC
2022 *Escrituras*, Museo Cabañas, Guadalajara, Jalisco
2021 *Temporary Collection*, Ed Video, Guelph, ON.
2020 *Works on Paper*, Galería Karen Huber, Mexico City

Video Screenings

2025 Festival Montréal/Nouvelles Musiques, SAT, Montréal, QC
2024 Bienale FEMSA, Guanajuato, Mexico
2022 Press Play, Moisturizer Gallery, Gainesville, Florida
2021 Phthethisms, Ada X Montreal QC

Fairs

2025 Foire Plural, Montréal QC
2022 Material Art Fair, Mexico City, MX
2021 Clavo, Mexico City, MX
2020 Material Art Fair, Mexico City, MX

Collaborative Projects

2023 Production design, Running with Strippers performance festival, Singapore
2021 Tiempo Compartido, (con Kasha y Shirotta), Museo de Arte Carrillo Gil, Mexico City
2020 Phthethisms, collaboration with Phth experimental voice collective

Education

2015 Master of Fine Arts, Concordia University, Montreal QC, Canada
2004 Bachelor of Fine Arts, University of Victoria, Victoria BC, Canada

Residencies

2023 Bonnie McComb Kreye Residency, Victoria BC
2023 Artist-in-Residence, Galerie Stewart Hall, Pointe-Claire, QC
2019 Artist-in-Residence, SSASS, Millersville University, Lancaster PA
2018 De Licieras 18, Porto, Portugal
2017 Struts and Faucet Residency, Sackville, NB

Awards and Grants

2024 Canada Council Grant: Research and Creation (collaboration with Sarah Albu)
2024 Canada Council Travel Grant
2023 Canada Council Grant: Research and Creation
2022 Canada Council Travel Grant
2021 Canada Council Grant: Research and Creation

Selected Press

2023

["Artist Beth Frey's love/hate relationship with AI"](#) Rebecca Fulleylove, *Creative Review*

["Singer Róisín Murphy taps MFA grad Beth Frey to design new album cover"](#) Lindsay Lafreniere, *Concordia University News*

["Die module spielen verrückt"](#) Wolfgang Ullrich, *Art - Das Kunstmagazin*, Munich, DE

["Beth Frey — A fleshy world made from watercolors and AI tools"](#)

Rolien Zonneveld, *WePresent10* January 2023

2022

["Imperfect bodies, self-representation and AI as a line of flight. An interview with Beth Frey"](#) Davide Andreatta, *Red Eye Metazine*.

["Is this art? Or is it a digital jail? I'm not sure, but I know it's creepy* On Beth Frey"](#) Nicolas Barraza, *Onda MX*

["Following: @bethisms"](#) Michael Anthony Farley, *BmoreArt*.

["La tecnología emocional"](#) Eduardo Edea, *Crónica*.

2020

Art Maze Mag. Two-page feature.

2019

["Chaos, Discomfort, And Absurdism"](#) *The Concordian*.