

*Three weeks in Quarantine* (2020) is a suite of four videos made on a DSLR camera and Premiere Pro from May to July 2020. This technical context intends to frame that video is not the primary purpose of this camera, and these limits contribute to creating the work. The recorded moments are the tracing of a bodily habit through space during the first lockdown in Ontario at the beginning of the COVID-19 Pandemic.

In *The Allegorical Impulse: Toward a Theory of Postmodernism* (1980), Craig Owens writes that allegory is attracted to the fragmented and the incomplete. "In allegorical structure, then, one text is read through another, however fragmentary, intermittent, chaotic their relationship may be; the paradigm for the allegorical work is thus palimpsest."<sup>1</sup> These videos are made from fragments: images recorded on camera, ambient and incidental sound, and text and voice messages exchanged over social media. The doubling and layering of various texts imbue significance and inform the work's construction, where and when it unfolds.

A notable tension in my work is an antagonism between the outside and inside. In this case, the limited time spent outdoors is echoed within the apartment interiors. For example, The radiators engage in morphology with the fountain, as they both contain water and are made of iron. One does not stand-in for the other but acts as a mirror, pulling these elements back and forth. There is a shell on the fountain base. The shell remains a shell, serving as one of the few natural (i.e. not humanmade) elements to traverse both spaces; ironically, it is made of iron on the outside, but the natural shell becomes ornamental in the apartment.

The fragments of columns and architectural details echo antiquity and promote ideas of the passage of time, through which a critique of progress can immerge. Owens speaks to Walter Benjamin's observation of allegory as ruins being absorbed back into the landscape, though these ruins remain. The columns are structural, and their purpose is slowly revealed. The brown columns on the side of a building were once pillars supporting that building's balconies and upper levels. These buildings were once stately mansions now duplexed into apartments. The vintage car functions similarly to the fragments of architecture, part of the outside that is echoing through the interiority text messages and sharing dreams.

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<sup>1</sup> Craig Owens [The Allegorical Impulse: part 1](#)  
From *Beyond Recognition: Representation, power and culture* Craig Owens anthology  
ed : Scott Bryson, University of California press 1992

Pandemic time refers to the destabilizing of time's value, as days or weeks blur together, and previous work/life boundaries and milestones are dissolved. Hourly news cycles during the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic illuminated new shifts in behavioural patterns. People are actively reporting disruptive sleep and weird dreams, too much screen time (on the phone and otherwise), and being messaged by former lovers etc. These "quarantine tropes" are addressed in the videos. Walter Benjamin critiqued progress as a naturalizing of history, creating the mythic; a rigidity that places laws and societal norms outside human control.<sup>2</sup> Pandemic time has destabilized that process. Pandemic time also signifies the apartment space within its own agedness; the radiators, with their craquelure, point to a specific era of public health initiatives relying on steam heat and open windows to circulate fresh air and fight pathogens.<sup>3</sup> Video is a time-based medium, and the layered images placed together and side by side are given meaning through time unfolding. This exercise in the prosaic also returns to Benjamin's remarks on film in *Mechanical Reproduction*; fittingly now, in Pandemic time, to reorient and negotiate perception and coordinated distractions.

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<sup>2</sup> Thijs Lijster. "The Interruption of Myth: Walter Benjamin's Concept of Critique." 2012. 10.1057/9780230357006\_10.

<sup>3</sup> Patrick Sisson "Your old radiator is a pandemic fighting weapon"  
<https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2020-08-05/the-curious-history-of-steam-heat-and-pandemics>  
August 5 2020