

The dimension of permeable boundaries  
Yasmin Nurming-Por

They begin to emerge as soon as the weather turns cold. At first one, then several, and then an uncomfortable amount. I rush around my apartment chasing them, squishing their dusty bodies against white walls, simultaneously repulsed and satisfied. Occasionally I think I have the upper hand, until a new hole appears, and then another.

Friends advise storing all dry food in the fridge, putting clothes in the freezer, spraying cedar extract, fastidious cleaning, and other strategies—none of which have any impact. Each day I enter a late-evening frenzy of chasing the uninvited roommates around my apartment with an imagined level of success.

One day I am advised to consider purchasing *Trichogramma*—parasitic wasps. After corresponding with an entomologist wholesaler one hundred thousand miniscule eggs are shipped to my apartment. They arrive within a few days on small, corrugated sheets wrapped in newspaper that are temperature controlled by U-Line ice packets. I separate them carefully, trying to avoid touching or crushing the larvae, and then disperse them throughout my home. Over the next few weeks, phantoms appear in my peripheral vision like small shadows darting through the air.

This saga plays out at the same time I am subletting a studio for writing. Easily distracted in coffee shops and feeling isolated at home, a basement shared with artists (and their various fumes) offers a welcome reprieve. I steal glimpses into their spaces while they aren't there and wonder if this is a welcome intrusion. A single wall delineates Amanda's area from mine, and reaching my desk requires walking past her works, including those that are in progress.

Similar to the phantom shadows in my home, her paintings begin to trace pathways in my subconscious mind. I find myself easily lost in their sensuous colours and textures. With each passing I notice a new detail—a window, a bucket, a bug—embedded in her surreal, fleshy canvases. It is unnerving, the way the things I see also look back at me.

Visual murmurs of imagination, desire, and difficult memories find their way across permeable boundaries: hands are hands until they are also wings, and water drips from a rope that is on fire. The challenge of parsing memories that are not ours, but which still belong to us across nations and generations, is echoed in these works. I understand these encounters as an invitation to resist the desire to contain, comprehend, or flatten in favour of a space that remains dimensionally complicated and porous. As easy as it is to say that all truths are illusions, perhaps delusions and subtle shadows make embodied dreams feel possible. A place where the upper hand is open to subjective interpretation.

Accompanied text for *Will o' Wisp* an Exhibition by Amanda Boulos • Curated by Angel Callander • Blouin Division, Toronto • 2023