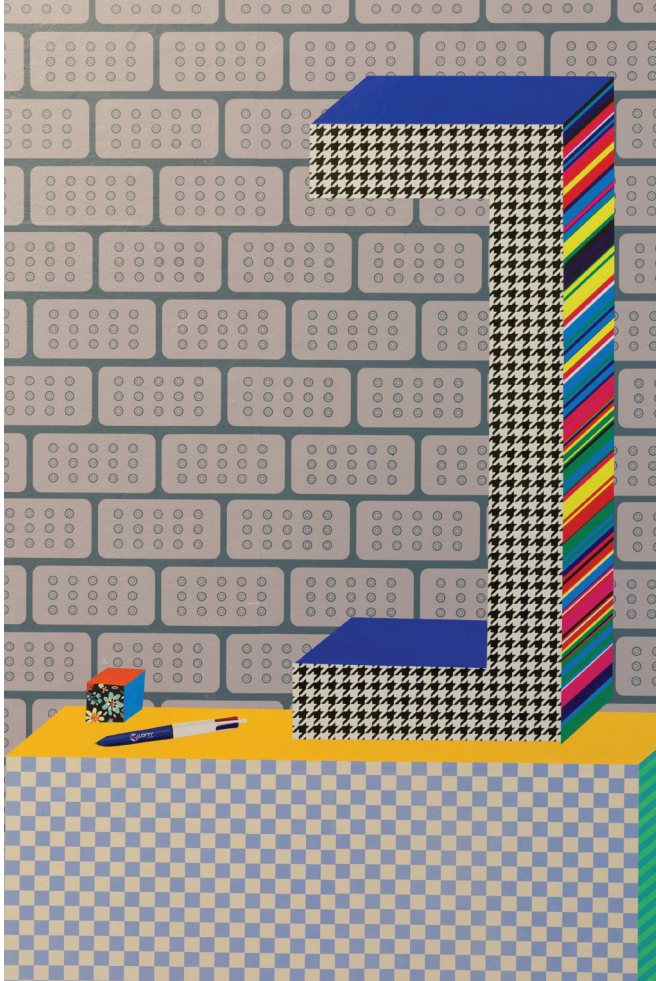


Dominique Pétrin is a multidisciplinary artist living and working in Montréal, Canada. A former member of the petrochemical rock band Les Georges Leningrad from 2000-2007, she has collaborated with artists such as Banksy, Sophie Calle, the Pil & Galia Kollektiv and choreographers Antonija Livingstone, Stephen Thompson and Jennifer Lacey. Her work has been exhibited across Canada, France, the United States, Belgium and the United Kingdom. In 2014 she was longlisted for the Sobey Award. She is represented in Canada by Galerie Antoine Ertaskiran.



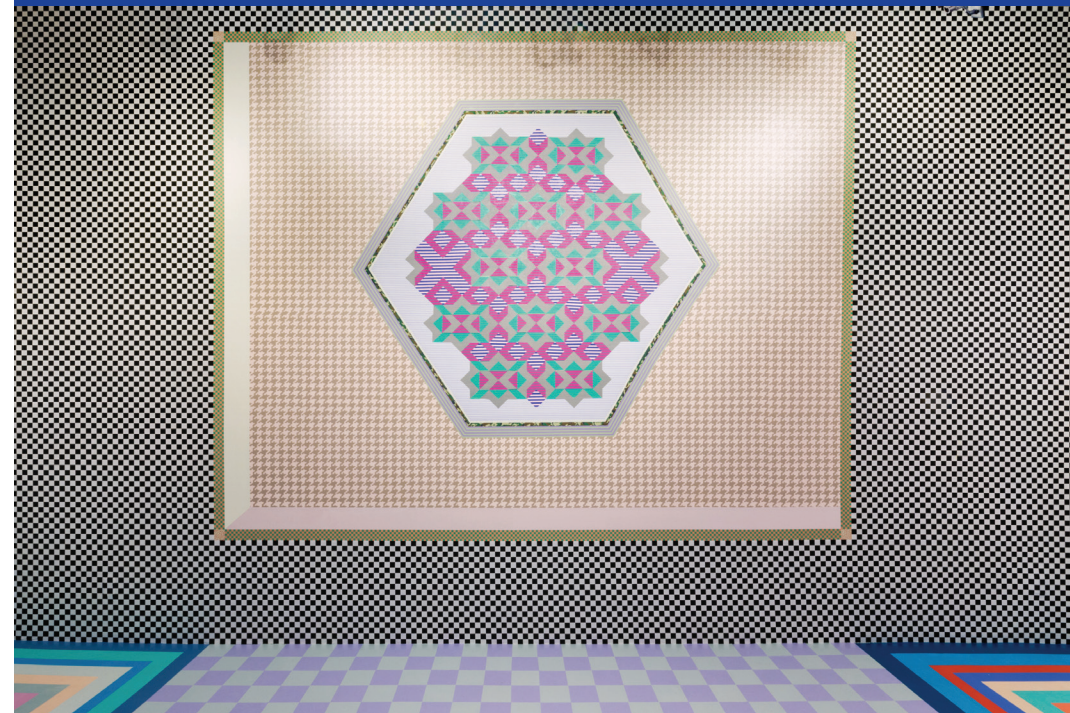
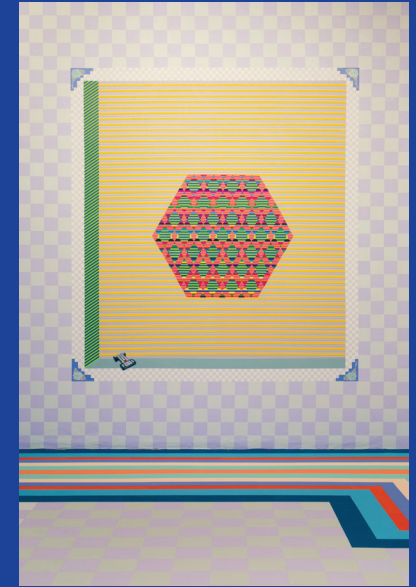
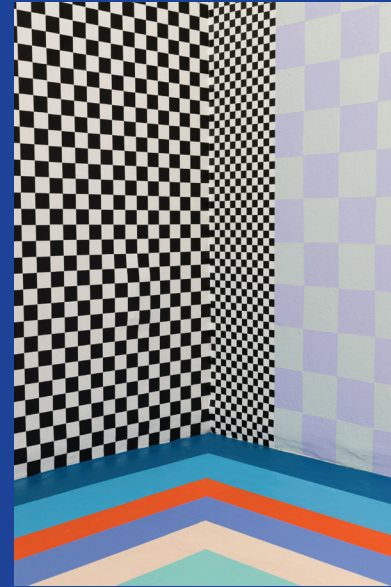
grunt gallery would like to acknowledge our funders: The Canada Council for the Arts, The British Columbia Arts Council, the City of Vancouver, BC Gaming and the Audain Foundation, as well as individual donors and supporters.

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grunt

YOU WON'T SOLVE THE PROBLEM WITH AN AIR FRESHENER

DOMINIQUE PÉTRIN



On the last day, the heat didn't work. grunt had new baseboard heaters installed last year and they've been a bit finicky, so turning them on for the first time since the summer didn't go well. Also the sink broke.

Dominique was putting on her kneepads when we called Vivianne in to help the last push to get the floor done. They were busy cutting, mixing glue and pasting paper to the floor when I left, in a huff, to go find space heaters and a dehumidifier. It's got to dry fully before people come in, or else everyone gets potato paste on their feet and it ruins the installation.

I'm a bit of an alarmist, and I could feel stress in my body, welling up like a childhood tantrum.

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You won't solve the problem with an air freshener is a new exhibition of work by Dominique Pétrin, a Montreal-based artist with an international reputation for making works of outrageous impact, often engulfing gallery spaces in a riot of pattern, colour and print. Her process is meticulous and strange, drawing from a life of both careful observation and punk rock rage. She's pissed, but also she loves retro interiors. We talked often during her install about where she finds inspiration, and (don't judge) where this work lives in the body (spoiler alert: the sternum).

She began her work as an artist in performance, as lead singer for the quite famous band Les Georges Leningrad. They broke up in 2007, but not before gaining a huge following, and touring internationally. Dominique had stage fright, and the first time she stepped out she decided that if the stage was going to create fear, she had to destroy it. And so the body does what it needs to do, and her performances were an expression of an extreme position: a subjectivity that starkly refuses the conditions of her environment. Seeing Les Georges, by most accounts, was both euphoric and destabilizing.

At the same time she was working for a poster company, pasting gig announcements and advertisements in the street. Her first works as a printmaker weren't located in the gallery, but outside, and in relation to the mess and jumble of public address; there was no targeted viewer.

(The gallery is painted in cloud white. We prep the walls by patching the holes and smoothing the spackle, sanding away rough spots. Every six weeks we return it to this state.)

Dominique's references are a kind of vertical sampling of what the eye pulls in. Digital interfaces, internet memes, frescoes, hamburgers, branded pens, a happy face mug, a potted plant. Patterns are put together in seemingly bad taste, irrespective of origin or historical reference; Nickelodeon slime splats bump up against houndstooth, Mario-land brickwork and checkerboard. Camp and kitsch have birthed a beautiful weird cousin; it's too much, and yet.

The overstatement of Pétrin's work performs an obscenity in the cleanliness of the white cube. It offends, but not unpleasantly. To the contrary, you'll want to be framed by this exuberance, finding the perfect angle to take your s*lfie (I did). Other factors worry at the edges of these cognitive pleasures – a security camera lurks on the upper reaches of the wall, and the text belies the spectacle: *Don't even try/Do not touch/Don't even try*. I am reminded of that story about stage fright, and the need for a body to reorient itself, to perform so outrageously that the limits and regulations of the space seem not only smaller but irrelevant.

Being with the artist during her 11 days of installation confirms the presence of the working body. It's a near-unfathomable amount of work. She arrives with hundreds of pounds of hand screen-printed sheets of paper, and a garbage bag full of glue paste. She measures precisely, agonizes over details, maps and remaps patterns. It is entirely out of scale with any assumptions we might have around the economics of making art and making a living. It is absolutely implausible if not for the effort of an extreme practitioner, an outlier.

**

I borrow a heater, a fan and a humidifier, and I don't end up having that tantrum. I'm composed by the time I come back to the gallery and find the floor halfway done.

The gallery is a study in excess. A body expands the system beyond what we had previously imagined.

Back Cover

You won't solve the problem with an air freshener (detail)

2017

photo credit: Dennis Ha

Front cover

You won't solve the problem with an air freshener (installation view)

2017

photo credit: Dennis Ha

Published on the occasion of the exhibition

You won't solve the problem with an air freshener

Dominique Pétrin

October 27th - December 9th, 2017

Curated by Vanessa Kwan

Edition of 400