



Decadence: Flows of Abundance and Decay

University of British Columbia
Department of Art History, Visual Art and Theory (AHVA)
43rd Annual Graduate Student Symposium
March 5–6, 2020
Exhibition Opening March 5, 5–7 PM

Deadline for Submission of Artworks: December 27, 2019

Décadence itself is nothing to be fought: it is absolutely necessary and belongs to every age and to every people – Friedrich Nietzsche¹

Originating in the Latin roots *de*, meaning “apart/down” and *cadere*, meaning “to fall,” *decadence* came to signify decay, or a fall from a more vital state. Since, *decadence* has taken on a plurality of often contradictory meanings.

Coming into vogue near the end of the nineteenth century, the word *decadence* gestured toward decay in morality, religiosity, and spirituality in the areas of politics, literature, and aesthetics. The anti-traditionalist attitudes and enthusiasm of the writers and artists who came to define the decadence movement inspired a period of artistic output marked by perceived spoil, the *fin de siècle*. The decadent consciousness prioritized individual experience, rejected false promises of progress and welcomed excessive and sumptuous imagery. Beyond its radical embrace by creatives as a method of cultural production in the *fin de siècle* French context, the concept of *decadence* was and continues to be hijacked by the right-wing to criticize democracy and call for “purified” societies. Recent scholarship has worked to reclaim decadence, examining it as “an ingenious style complex, wise, full of nuances and refinements, forever extending the limits of language, borrowing from all technical lexicons, taking colours from every palette and notes from every musical instrument.”²

In conjunction with the 2020 University of British Columbia Art History, Visual Art and Theory (AHVA) 43rd Annual Graduate Symposium, the organizing committee invites artists enrolled in or recently graduated from Master of Fine Arts programs to propose work for inclusion in the accompanying exhibition.

Decadence: Flows of Abundance and Decay will examine decadence as a generative force in understanding past and contemporary culture and politics. We encourage submissions of all

¹Friedrich Nietzsche, *Will to Power* ed. Walter Kaufmann, trans. Walter Kaufmann and R. J. Hollingdale (New York: Random House, 1967), 25.

²Théophile Gautier, introduction to *Les Fleurs du mal* by Charles Baudelaire, trans. C. Nissen (Paris: Lévy, 1869), 16–17.



mediums that examine aspects relating to this topic and its influence in the creative field. Possible topics may include:

- Excess, consumption, decay, and decline
- Abjection and boundaries of the body
- Commodification and the accumulation of capital
- Desire, temptation, and extravagance
- Pleasure and fetishization
- Labour, production, and exploitation
- Self-indulgence, obsession, vice, and addiction

All pertinent information must be submitted via email to grad.symposium@ubc.ca by **December 27, 2019** with the subject line “AHVA Symposium Artist Submission.” Please indicate if works have specific spatial requirements.

SUBMISSION GUIDELINES:

1. Artist’s name, e-mail address, telephone number, and mailing address. For artist collectives or collaborative projects please include the aforementioned information for each participant.
2. An artist statement no longer than 300 words containing the title of the work and a description of the work (materials, dimensions, provenance and if possible, a photo of the work). If the work has been previously exhibited, please include the date and location of all showings.
3. A detailed list of the resources necessary to install the work: such as materials and tools; electronic, audiovisual and lighting equipment; and expected installation time.
4. Design and/or floor plan, including specifications regarding spatial requirements, physical layout, and installation, as required.
5. A maximum of 3 JPEG-format images, or 1 minute of audiovisual material in MPEG or AVI formats, or 1 minute of sound material in MP3 format. Weblinks of the same quality are also acceptable.
6. A brief curriculum vitae (2 pages maximum). Should work be submitted by an artist collective, please include a brief history of the collective and a CV of each of its members.
7. Proposals for production costs are welcomed. They should be around 300–500 words, detailing the fees, resources and timeline of the production and include the artist statement, photographs of past works, and a CV.

*PLEASE NOTE: There may be a small honorarium for each participating artist, dependent upon the scope of the exhibit and exhibition funding.