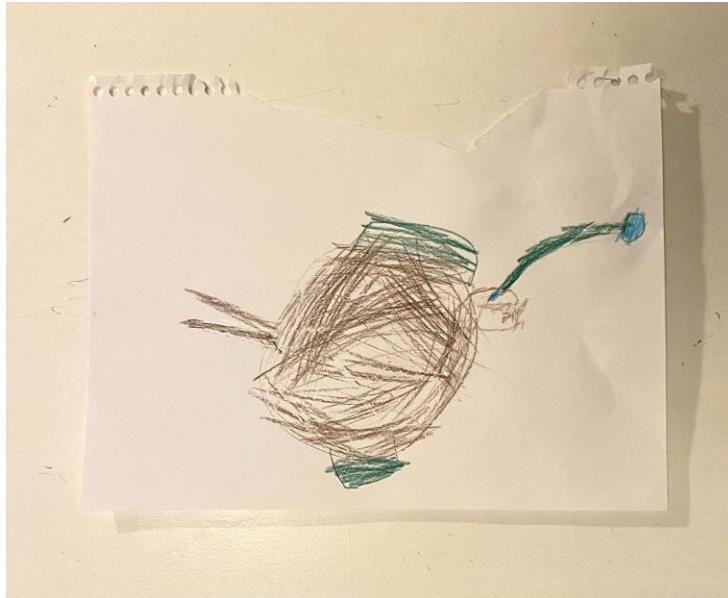


## FrameWork 2/24

### Yasmin Nurning-Por on Gareth Long

*Notes on how to be alluring*



Lucian Löffler Long, *Anglerfish*, 2024

A lenticular print is, at its most basic, a form of dense compression. With semi-circle lenses like serpentine undulations, light ricochets off their surfaces into the pupils of each viewer. No two people experience the identical image. Our eyes catch a flicker before it disperses and dissolves into another which can lead to a vicious cycle of chasing the *original* encounter. Taking form from material, Gareth's watery lenticulars—of Fogo Island and the Delaware River—are visual phantoms. What is presented as one place is in fact many, with an effect similar to a psychedelic haze. Using the technology of animation software, he constructs a weaving of liquid lines and dimensions in motion, re-presented as a singular location. Unreliable narrators, these works exploit the ever-changing and free-flowing shiny topographies of water.

While I have never visited Fogo Island or the Delaware River, bodies of water pull me in. Throughout the summer, and often nearing winter, I seek out opportunities to catapult my body into liquid. The closer the temperature of it is to feeling like it might freeze my blood or restart my cardiovascular system, the better. I desire the shock of an inelegant cannonball that briefly transports my body from one environment to another. Before I jump there's an adrenaline rush of fear, knowing that I enter this ecosystem loudly and without its explicit permission. When I emerge the transition in and out of this place—an assemblage of liquid entities—is palpable and I am reminded of how little I understand about aqueous worlds. As a child visiting the Eastern Townships in Quebec

my foot once got caught while swimming in Lake Memphremagog. Fortunately an adult noticed and fished me out but I can still recall the experience of seeing the surface of the water from below. Perhaps my special affinity for water comes from knowing that although my entry temporarily displaces volume, I am nevertheless enveloped. I have a few favourite swimming spots. Each time I visit I wonder if the water will feel the same and if it might remember my previous intrusions.

Rising from the murky deep, water can possess an entire colour field— a medium with limitless potential. Liquid on top of liquid, its surface flickers under celestial and human made light. Obsessed with reflections I often find myself attempting to capture these passages, fruitlessly knowing that their sensorial presence cannot be represented by my iPhone snapshots. Standing in front of Gareth's lenticulars my body engages in a delightfully frustrating dance as I try to correct the discrepancy of visual experience between my eye and my camera lens. Coming to stillness, my imagination wanders to the water's edge and the feeling of getting ready to break the surface, wishing again to be enveloped—to become familiar with these new places.

I often take for granted that my understanding of places is tied to my ability to wander, or wade, through them. In contrast to North American values of individual property, the mental space of the "right to roam" experienced in the Outer Hebrides is a luxurious perversion. Walking without paths or a destination in mind, my mind attunes to the markers of accumulation—the spaces trodden by cows and the sites where bog cotton is abundant. Approaching the lenticulars, as someone who has never visited their so-called "locations," there is an impression of expansive anonymity. Through his compression of images Gareth reminds me that an encounter has occurred, just not mine.

This reminder once again rings true in the context of the Delaware Abstract Corporation rubbings that force a form of corporeality onto an abstracted existence. Delaware as a state invokes the ideas of these corporate structures, the real "non-sites" of capitalism; those that operate to perform tax "optimization" and that allow companies to register to trade in things and land. The named "abstract corporation," located in upstate New York along the Delaware River, produces summaries and ledgers as evidence of land purchase and ownership: the very concept of these titles the *real* abstraction.

Placed in contrast to the lenticulars, the surfaces of these rubbings are impenetrable: they lead nowhere, but point to somewhere concrete. Juxtaposed, the representation of a "real" place—the lenticulars—and materialization of a "non" place—the rubbings—point to the idea of place as something to be both desired and forgotten.

Sharing my adoration of aqueous worlds, Lucian Löffler Long – a sometimes collaborator of Gareth's – is braver than me. While I love the sensation of a dip, I fear the creatures who inhabit the deep. I prefer that the reality of ghastly teeth and transparent or snake-like bodies remain at a distance. For Halloween, Lucian requested an anglerfish costume. Gasping with delight, he wanders about their family home wearing a helmet-like costume with two blinking lights blinking atop and a protruding light hanging in front. Rendered outside its preferred pitch-black habitat, this creature adapts to life above sea level with a pair of human legs.

Inhabiting the midnight zone of the ocean, some female species of anglerfish hunt upended. Like parasites, their male counterparts attach, or at times fuse to the body of the female—a peculiar kind of symbiosis of being fed and fertilized. The economy of their survival depends on their ability to

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produce their own kind of costuming: a sac of glowing bioluminescent bacteria that provides the illusion of light. Another species has a stomach with capacity to distend after overconsumption. Rewarded for its gluttony, the lining of its stomach is black to mask the bioluminescence of its prey to avoid becoming the object of another's hungry eyes. Even in the deep, illusion—or abstraction—can be a trap with consequences.



*Lucian Löffler Long as an Anglerfish, 31 October 2024*