

Volume 47 - Issue 5
 October 2, 2013
 theeyeopener.com
 @theeyeopener
 Since 1967

the Eyeopener

Wednesday, Oct. 2, 2013

ARTS & LIFE

11

Markham art exhibit rooted in Ryerson

Student artists portray remnants of the past and prospects of the future in *LandSlide: Possible Futures*

By Isabelle Docto

In the middle of a Markham field, a 70-foot wide and 12-foot tall white snow fence stands alone. The seemingly out-of-place rural landmark is meant to raise a few eyebrows.

The installation, created by artists Dave Colangelo and Patricio Davila, both doctoral students in the joint Ryerson-York Communication and Culture program, is part of *LandSlide: Possible Futures*, a free large-scale contemporary art exhibition that runs until Oct. 14 at the Markham Museum.

For the exhibition, the museum's historic buildings were transformed into galleries for interactive pieces that raise questions regarding sustainability, land use, urban sprawl and multiculturalism. The exhibition questions where society should draw the line when it comes to the development of suburban areas such as Markham.

Colangelo and Davila addressed this issue through their

snow fence piece, "The Line."

The project is split into two parts: the massive fence, as well as a video recording of the fence — which shows it in front of places such as cornfields, strip malls, and parking lots — projected onto the side of a barn.

"That's the symbolic thing that we're trying to pick up on — this idea of a man-made structure that we place in the environment in some way and to then determine how we interact with it," says Colangelo. "That has political, environmental and cultural consequences."

Plans for the exhibition began three years ago with curator Janine Marchessault, a former Ryerson Image Arts professor and current faculty member of the Ryerson-York communication and culture program.

"Since 2009, I've been creating site-specific exhibitions that engage with processes of urbanization in suburban spaces," says Marchessault. "For *LandSlide*, I really wanted to come out into an

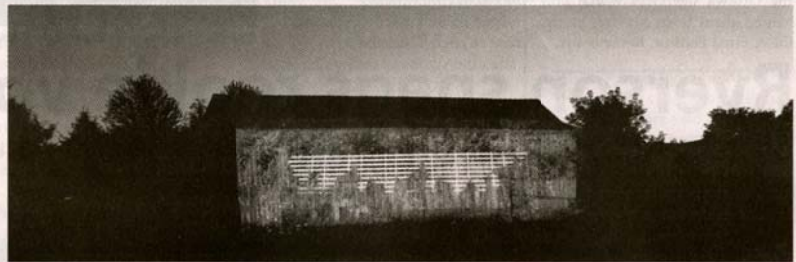


PHOTO COURTESY OF CHERYL HSU

edge city like Markham and stage something that's about the past."

In addition to "The Line," the exhibition also includes roughly 30 other installations, including photography posted on an old train and an interactive exhibit that uses iPads to tell the stories of historical objects.

"We've really opened things up to get artists to give different interpretations of the past — augment some things that are already here — but also to think about the future," says Marchessault.

The design and marketing for *LandSlide* reflected just that. Created by the Madeleine Collective — Cheryl Hsu and Alexandra Hong of Ryerson's Research and Innovation Office and Nicole Ba-zuin, an alumna of the Image Arts program — were pieces of art on their own. The collective wanted to make sure that *LandSlide* drew in an audience unfamiliar with contemporary art in order to



PHOTO: ISABELLE DOCTO

"The Line," a two-part installation by Dave Colangelo, pictured, and Patricio Davila, projects footage of a snow fence onto the side of a barn in different settings.

branch out to the community.

The collective said the exhibition has attracted both art enthusiasts and families who have reacted with a "sense of wonder and discovery."

"We made a concerted effort to reach out to the Markham public," says Hsu. "We want to expose them to contemporary art in a new, fresh way — not just in an art museum."