



University  
of Victoria

Graduate Studies

Notice of the Final Oral Examination  
for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy

of

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MA (University of Victoria, 2013)  
MA (University of Victoria, 2011)  
BA Hons (Carleton University, 2007)  
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**“The Toronto New Wave, Post-Anarchist Cinema Theory, and the  
Progressive Apocalypse”**

Department of Art History and Visual Studies

Friday August 16, 2019  
11:00 A.M.  
Clearihue Building  
Room B017

Supervisory Committee:

Dr. Lianne McLarty, Department of Art History and Visual Studies, University of Victoria (Co-Supervisor)  
Dr. Allan Antliff, Department of Art History and Visual Studies, UVic (Co-Supervisor)  
Dr. Serhy Ekelchik, Department of Germanic and Slavic Studies, UVic (Outside Member)  
Dr. Lincoln Shlensky, Department of English, UVic (Outside Member)

External Examiner:

Dr. Ernest Mathijs, Centre for Cinema and Media Studies, University of British Columbia

Chair of Oral Examination:

Dr. Keivan Ahmadi, Department of Mechanical Engineering, UVic

Dr. David Capson, Dean, Faculty of Graduate Studies

## **Abstract**

A group of Canadian films emerged in the 1980s and 1990s that has come to be known as the “Toronto New Wave” (TNW). Most scholarship regarding this “wave” considers the films usually identified with it not as an ideologically or aesthetically cohesive ensemble, but as a disparate mélange engendered by the merely coincidental socio-political, economic, and government policy circumstances that developed at the beginning of the 1980s. Critics who engage more robustly with the cinematic content of these films often make reference to a new global sensibility of the filmmakers and almost universally discuss the theme of urban social alienation that permeates the film narratives. However, the motif of urban social alienation is always understood by these critics as merely a theme in these films. These critics overlook or openly reject the possibility of what anarchist cultural studies refers to as philosophical praxis, an active effort to intervene in cultural meaning-making and to change dominant ideologies. Moreover, the urban alienation theme upon which so many of the TNW narratives trade seems to map very specifically onto more progressive understandings of the term “apocalypse” in the project of philosophical praxis. In the following dissertation, I will argue against the commonly held view that the films of the TNW do not share any significant aesthetic or political unity. In doing so, I will make a case for the marriage of theories of apocalypse with both anarchist cultural philosophy and perception-based psychoanalytical theory as a means to understand a selection of films from within the TNW that I argue are particularly “anarchist-apocalyptic” in their cultural and political work.