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# Damp: Contemporary Vancouver Media Art

*edited and designed by*

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*Damp: Contemporary Vancouver Media*

*Art* is neither glossy art book nor academic tome, but it plays at both. Eerie photographs interrupt essays such as “Decadent Resistance: The Aesthetics of Politics [and Politics of Aesthetics] in Vancouver Video Practice 1967 - The Present.” The editors of the book—Alex MacKenzie and Oliver Hockenhull—offer a diverse cross-section of topics and art, but shirk any responsibility to guide their reader through Vancouver’s media landscape (the table of contents is more for show than an actual reference point).

Turning a page lands the reader in a fragmented interview with Aboriginal video artist T’Uty’Tanat-Cease Wyss, or in a grainy, close-up photograph of what looks like crab innards by Oliver Hockenhull. There are bright but depressing illustrations by *West-coast, East coast* art duo Emily Vey Duke and Cooper Battersby and in-depth essays by Rabble.ca writer Michael Lithgow and Peter Courtmanche on the history of radio and its contribution to tele-communications art in Vancouver.

This is a bewildering, but engaging read, capturing Vancouver’s shifting personality through its new media community. This contrasting snapshot of the city works well, particularly in light of the fast-approaching 2010 Winter Olympics and the all-consuming question in Vancouver right now of what that government will do about the drug-ridden Lower East Side. With the very real possibility that part of the city’s character will be hidden, removed, or at least altered in the near future, *Damp* puts experimental artists, who deal with often ignored issues, at the forefront. (Laura Trethewey)

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