

grunt at a Glance

FALL/WINTER 2007/2008

Performance:

TIPI-AAYALA PERFORMANCE

Victoria Singh

Thursday, June 14th at 8pm

Performance Installation runs from
June 14th to June 23rd, 2007

Group Exhibition:

SPECTACLES OF INTIMACY

Curated by Lora Carroll

June 22nd to July 28th, 2007

EATING HEARTS THAT SHINE LIKE SNOW

Naufus Ramirez Figueroa

September 7th to October 13th, 2007

In conjunction with **Swarm**

REMEMBERING IN AMERICA

Edgar Heap of Birds

October 19th to December 1st, 2007

Community Public Art Symposium:

THE ART OF ENGAGEMENT

October 11th to 13th, 2007

See www.grunt.bc.ca for more details

Performance:

ATSA (ACTION TERRORISTE SOCIALEMENT ACCEPTABLE)

TBA

October 2007

Performance:

PORTAGE 2007 VANCOUVER

TBA

Terrance Houle and Trevor Freeman

October 2007

Cheryl L'Hirondelle

TBA

October 2007

TRANSACTIONS OF THE EYE

Cuban artist Harold Coego

January 11th – February 16th, 2008

MATERIALITY AND OTHERNESS

Rolande Souliere

February 22nd – March 29th, 2008

grunt is a non-profit society (The Visible Arts Society) run by a board of working artists. Our mandate is to maintain a space accessible to artists and audiences. We focus on work that would otherwise not be seen in Vancouver. Our programming is a mix of emerging and senior artists and a selection of local, national and international work.

grunt's history and programming can be interpreted as a variety of initiatives around evolving concepts of community. Our role has been to act as an intersection between various cultural groups based on aesthetics, medium, or identity. **grunt** also has a long-term mandate in the First Nations Contemporary art that is reflected in our programming, our staff and on our board.

grunt gallery

#116 – 350 East 2nd Avenue
Vancouver, British Columbia
Canada V5T 4R8

telephone: 604-875-9516

fax: 604-877-0073

grunt@telus.net

www.grunt.bc.ca

Jude Norris, the Antler series: braver antler, 2003. Photograph: Donna Hagerman

grunt

WELCOME

brunt

Editorial

Tania Willard, Secwepemc Nation

grunt gallery is changing. (new staff, new funding, new projects)

A full moon is coming.

This issue of brunt magazine and brunt online represents diverse artistic practices and ideas; it reflects the commitments of **grunt** gallery to show emerging and diverse artists in different disciplines. With an exciting six months of programming behind us, putting together brunt magazine paints a picture of the talented and creative people we work with and showcase. The past exhibitions at **grunt** fit in a way with all this change, from the changing landscape of Vancouver's building boom and bust in Dina Gonzales Mascaro's *Rubble* to the changing of our own physical bodies through ritual and modification as in Fitzpatrick's *bite & burn*; from the changing forms and sculptural spaces of found materials from urban and natural environments as in Jude Norris' work to the assemblages of Kuh Del Rosario. Artists in many ways are the change-makers, the ones who carry vision and dream.

So here's to change,
to spring and summer,
art, life and love.
To the new moon.

Staff List

grunt

Director Glenn Alteen

Administrator DJ Dyer

Legacy Campaign Manager
Raine McKay

Web Design Archer Pechawis

Technical Steven Tong

Conference Co-ordinator Pat Beaton

Documentation
Merle Addison, Elaine Moyah

Curators Gateway Project Dania Warren,
Tania Willard, Elaine Moyah

brunt

Producer Glenn Alteen

Editor Tania Willard

Art Director Auni Milne

Copy Editor Hillary Wood

Brunt Web Design Archer Pechawis
in consultation with Auni Milne

Cover Photo Donna Hagerman

Photography Merle Addison

Video (web) Elaine Moyah

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David Khang plays with language, using it as a trope to investigate constructions and performativity of gender and race. After education in psychology, theology, and dentistry, he received his BFA (Emily Carr Institute of Art and Design) and MFA with Emphasis in Critical Theory (UC Irvine). Khang is a Sessional Faculty Member at the Emily Carr Institute. He is a recipient of 2006-07 Franklin Furnace Fund for Performance Art (NY).

Lora Carroll received a Master's Degree in Contemporary Literature, Culture and Theory from the University of Lancaster (UK) in 1999. She has since worked for galleries in England and Canada, and collaborated on curatorial projects with partners in China, Australia, Italy, England, and Canada. Her curatorial interests include new media, performance, and international exchange.

Archer Pechawis is a media-integrated performing artist, New Media artist, writer, curator, and teacher. He has been creating solo performance works since 1984. His practice investigates the intersection of Plains Cree culture and digital technology. Archer also works as a "First Nations Stand-Up Essayist", webmonkey, technician, and MC.

Daina Warren was born a Prairie girl in the heart of Panoka, Alberta. Raised on pristine Vancouver Island, she currently lives the urban Aboriginal life in Vancouver, BC. Daina graduated with a BFA in Fine Arts at Emily Carr Institute of Art and Design and then proceeded directly into a curatorial residency with **grunt** gallery. Daina works as visual artist, writer, critical thinker, curator, and, most recently, administrator at **grunt**.

Tania Willard is an artist, designer and occasional writer from the Secwepemc (Shuswap) Nation in the interior of BC. She has been working with narrative and story throughout her work in the arts, media, and advocacy. Tania is the current editor of brunt magazine and a recent writer in residence with Native Women in the Arts on Toronto Island.

Nikki Maier is Tlingit (of the Taku River First Nation) and writes about all things Aboriginal. Currently based in Ottawa, Nikki travels to Vancouver for the odd art show at **grunt** gallery! In addition to freelance gigs, Nikki is working on a collection of short fiction and using her powers for good. E-mail: nikki.maier@gmail.com.

Anthea Black is an artist, art writer, and cultural worker based in Calgary, Alberta. Her recent writing has been published by The New Gallery, TRUCK, EM/MEDIA, FWD Weekly, and FUSE Magazine. In 2007 her collaborative research on radical crafting with Nicole Burisch will be published in the *Extra/Ordinary: Craft in Contemporary Art* anthology.

Glenn Alteen is a Vancouver-based curator and writer, and Director of **grunt** gallery. He has worked extensively with performance art and was a co-founder of *LIVE Performance Biennial* (1999, 2001, 2003, 2005). His writing on Performance was recently published in *Caught in the Act* (YYZ Books, Toronto, 2005), *La Dragu* (,FADO, Toronto, 2002), *Ablakela* (**grunt**, 2001), *LIVE at the End of the Century* (**grunt**, 2000), and *Locus Solus* (Black Dog, London, 1999).

Renee Rodin is a Vancouver writer and art lover. Her books include *Bread and Salt* (Talon, 1996) and *Ready for Freddy* (Nomados, 2005).

Marcia Crosby is writer, and a PhD candidate in the Department of Art History and Cultural Theory at the University of British Columbia. She writes about contemporary art, including performance art, and broader issues of representation. Although she is interested in various writing disciplines (i.e., creative non-fiction about contemporary Aboriginal life), most of her published essays can be found in anthologies and exhibition catalogues. Her research has been focused on theories about public, shared, and common memory, including traumatic memory. She has been a full time instructor in the English and First Nations Studies departments at Malaspina University, Nanaimo B.C. since 1996.

Jeremy Todd is an interdisciplinary artist, writer, and educator. His work and interests often lead to examinations of cultural memory in the formation of socio-economic realities. He has taught at the University of British Columbia, Emily Carr Institute of Art and Design, North Island College, and the Vancouver Film School. He was the Director/Curator for the Helen Pitt Gallery Artist-Run Centre (2003-5) and is currently the Interim Director/Curator for the Richmond Art Gallery. In March of this year he completed his first feature-length film (www.dearguyfilm.blogspot.com).

Dina Gonzalez Mascaro, *Gone 3* (Seymour & Smithe), 2007



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CITY OF VANCOUVER



Kohnke

by Jeremy Todd

Reading Death, Becoming Animal: Thinking About Joseph Kohnke's *Marked*

"The decisive theoretical break came with Descartes. Descartes internalized, within man, the dualism implicit in the human relationship to animals. In dividing absolutely body from soul, he bequeathed the body to the laws of physics and mechanics, and, since animals were soulless, the animal was reduced to the model of a machine."
— John Berger from *Why Look at Animals*

I think the doubling of bodies within Joseph Kohnke's *Marked* is of key importance. To one side of a mechanical apparatus is a taxidermied fawn perforated by pin-point light sticks. To the other is a translucent wax-like male figure periodically lit from within by various points of light approximate in size to the lights sliding in and out of the fawn's body. Everything is connected, attached by various wires and hardware.

It was only after reading Kohnke's statement at grunt that I discovered *Marked* originates in part from a particularly personal experience. After a friend's death from melanoma, the artist grew increasingly preoccupied with the surface of his skin and what it might indicate or signify. He began to consider his body as a site of abstractions—signs or indicators—a repository of language. The large device in the middle of the gallery consists of an examination table fitted with a conveyor belt and a scanner facing upwards from the middle of the table. A perforated scroll (derived from detailed photographs of the artist's skin) is looped through a conveyor belt over the table and scanner. The perforations in the scroll coincide with markings or blemishes on the surface of the artist's body. This information is fed through a mechanical vacuum reminiscent of a player piano. The light activity in both the human figure and the fawn seem to correspond with these perforations as they pass over the scanner.

The fawn (as a fawn) is generic but also, unmistakably, the stuffed corpse of an individual animal. The human form lacks surface detail and lies on the floor as if unearthed at Pompeii (but one can confidently assume

it is cast from an actual body—most probably the artist's). It all seems intentionally clichéd—iconic common metaphors for innocence and civilization embalmed by Fate or Nature. This purposeful artificiality is complemented by a consistently accomplished set of D.I.Y. production values. I conceive of all the components within *Marked* as props of props.

Ed Keinholz, Max Dean, local Vancouver artist Kevin Greisch and many others come to mind (perhaps even Laurie Anderson or Bill Viola). The interests of these artists in narrative sculptural theatre and/or sensory tableaux, bio-tech interfacing and activating viewers within environments, seem relatable to Kohnke's work in a variety of ways. And yet there is something about *Marked* quite removed from these kinds of associations. Instead of utilizing the body as a ground zero in confronting modern alienation, *Marked* takes such a condition as a fixed given. These bodies (bodies that are literally without organs) offer no suggestion of emancipation, no joyous remove or distancing from the inherent violence of capital, language or rationality.

In trying to read death on the surface of the body (any body) we discover an entrenched and seemingly insurmountable object/subject split that our economically determined society depends on for the construction of desire, denial, and continuous consumption.

They mirror the incompleteness of these abstractions as much as they do each other.

The only thing in-and-of-itself here is Death and it is not a Death that speaks of rebirth. This Death has no consciousness or language—no narrative or intention. It exists outside of any possible comprehension. It is

the presence of reality or the Real, reflecting back our constructions, our fears, our inventions and armatures (I think this is partly why Kohnke's machines are so bizarrely archaic or low-tech in relation to our current micro-digital technological moment—like something out of an H.G. Wells story or an ambitious amateur-scientist's basement). This mirroring reveals a kind of equivalency in contemporary global society—a common reduction of all things to packaging without content (at times loud and visually or linguistically complex, but empty nonetheless).



Joseph Kohnke, *Marked* (detail), 2006

This is why the relation of human and animal within *Marked* is so poignant to me. With this pairing, we see another sameness that perhaps contradicts modern assumptions about an irreversible disconnection from Nature. In trying to read death on the surface of the body (any body) we discover an entrenched and seemingly insurmountable object/subject split that our economically determined society depends on for the construction of desire, denial, and continuous consumption. Rather than assume it is consciousness and notions of “the soul” that separate humanity from the machine-like conditions of animal existence, *Marked* suggests, amongst many other things, that the external colonizing violence of human consciousness reduces animal existence to the machine-like conditions of humanity. Perhaps it is we who do not become animal in death. Perhaps there is no reconciliation for us with a distant past in which the human and animal are singular. *Marked* suggests we have been irrevocably cut-off from such an historical threshold. Will modern society ever come to terms with Death before dying out? ■



Joseph Kohnke, *Marked* (detail), 2006

Jason Fitzpatrick

by David Khan

Transitions and Transformations

More often than not, Jason Fitzpatrick's work requires labour. Whether lifting logs, working as a security guard for art openings, or being tattooed for three hours straight, his work emphasizes the body's physicality over other traditional sculptural elements.

Fitzpatrick's "action/sculpture" at grunt gallery, titled *bite & burn*, is the second of three installments in this series. In the first installment at Open Space (Toronto), the obelisk-shaped tattoo that is to run down the length of his spine was begun near his neck. At grunt (Vancouver), the bottom third of the tattoo was completed. The middle third will be completed within the next year at a yet-to-be-named location in Atlantic Canada. In a sense, Fitzpatrick's work is not so much about the finished product as it is a work-in-transition through time and space, across his changing body (as site), and across the body of a changing nation.

Fitzpatrick writes:

"Sculpture (is) decentralized, not limited to exist within a static form but ... (as) transformation of form (sculpture—body)... the body is used as a point of departure: my height, weight, strength, mental capacity, sexuality, gender and endurance are utilized as material to establish the initial context in which I work."

As one enters the gallery, a death-metal tune drones from the back room; the

music is to the ear what the tattoo needle is to the skin. The music becomes a "wall of material" that the audience members must necessarily penetrate. Inside the gallery, the viewer is confronted with a pink cubicle that has the appearance of an unfinished basement: a two-by-four construction padded with fiberglass insulation on the outside—"a skinned Judd," as Fitzpatrick calls it. A walk around the cube reveals a Duchampian sliver of a window at eye-level, a deliberately confining and thus frustrating design that allows only a voyeuristic peek into the ritual being performed inside. It is only when a music track ends that the buzz of the tattooing-in-progress is heard,



Jason Fitzpatrick, *bite & burn* (performance still), 2006

overlying one sensory experience upon another. The cotton-candy appearance of the pink insulation tempts the viewer to touch, but the knowledge that the microscopic glass particulates would “bite and burn” afterward, is perhaps a warning not get too close to what is going on here.

Confined inside the cubicle are three (white) men, methodically (and importantly for Fitzpatrick, without theatricality) engrossed in their designated labour: tattooing, being tattooed, and printing from the resulting blood/ink/sweat admixture. The tattooing, despite the presence of blood, seems gentle in its controlled application. The artist being tattooed, with his eyes closed and laying still, appears more like a sculpture than an artist-in-performance. And the “monoprints” that are coming off the body read as codices or transcripts of an arcane ritual-in-progress. As they are sequentially hung on the cube’s interior walls, the still-wet red/black liquid begins to run, yet the pattern is such that the bloody ink appears to drip upward and not down, seemingly defying gravity. Enclosed in such a small space that is reminiscent of a dank basement in a suburban home, the atmosphere seems particularly arcane—that of a secret rite of passage. Fitzpatrick describes his evocations in this way: “It’s about teenage boys growing up in a culture where they were trying to find a new culture because they somehow knew that they were cultureless.”²

There is a self-acknowledged desperate pathos in Fitzpatrick’s work, with perhaps a tinge of nostalgia. This may be particularly poignant for Fitzpatrick, looking back in time at a collective boyhood and now himself the parent of an infant son. Nothing is static in his oeuvre, neither sculptural form nor life forms. For Fitzpatrick, responsiveness to changing social and cultural conditions is vital. Fitzpatrick’s oeuvre—sculpture, installation, performance, video, and drawing—points to the diverse ways in which the artist grapples with the changing relationships between form and formlessness. While it may be trite to name this relationship a “transformation,” the relationships between actions, objects, and bodies in his work point to the artist’s grappling with layered and multivalent narratives that resist easy readings. ■

¹ Taken from the artist’s website: www.jasonfitzpatrick.ca

² From an interview with the artist.



Jason Fitzpatrick, *bite & burn* (installation view), 2006

Jason Fitzpatrick, *bite & burn* (detail), 2006

by Nikki Maher *—* *IndigIt Nation*

Give Her a Face





Felicia Gay and Joi Arcand, *Moon Lake Series #1*, 2005

Hundreds of Aboriginal women are missing

and have been murdered in Canada. Conservative estimates over the last twenty years put that figure at 500 missing aunties, sisters, mothers, daughters, cousins, girlfriends, wives, and friends.

One group of Aboriginal women—Joi Arcand, Felicia Gay, and Chrystal Kruszelnicki—created a show called *Give Her a Face* to highlight the lack of media exposure and the overwhelmingly high levels of violence against Aboriginal women in Canada. The exhibition opened at grunt gallery on October 22, 2006.

Joi Arcand, Felicia Gay, and Chrystal Kruszelnicki met at the University of Saskatchewan where they trained in Fine Arts, and decided they wanted to work together. With the support of Paved Arts in Saskatoon they compiled the work for *Give Her a Face*.

Joi Arcand is from the Muskeg Lake Cree Nation and is 25 years old. Her solo piece, *By A Thread*, in the show



Felicia Gay and Joi Arcand, *Moon Lake Series #3*, 2005

was the starblanket design, which she sewed from photographs taken on her home reserve. For Arcand, art is all about understanding, “I want people to gain an understanding of what I stand for and what I believe,” she says. “At the same time, creating art helps me understand what I stand for and believe. It works both ways; it’s an ongoing journey—making art. I hope the audience takes something, anything, from it.”

By the time *brunt* magazine is published, Felicia Gay will be 30 years old. As a single mom to a four-year-old daughter and an 11-month-old son, it’s surprising how much she’s managed to pack into the last year. Gay is from the Opaskwayak Cree Nation (Swampy Cree). Currently, she is in her second year of a Masters in Art History at the University of Saskatchewan. Her work in the show was called the *Moon Lake Series* and was a collaborative effort between her and Arcand. Gay photographed the series, while Arcand was the model and advised on the technical aspects for the shoot.

“I felt I had a responsibility as a First Nations person, woman, and mother to not speak for these women but to speak on behalf of them.”

Chrystal Kruszelnicki is 24 years old and is of Cree, Polish, and German descent. A graduate from the University of Saskatchewan, 2004, she majored in

photography. Her works in the exhibition were self-portraits exhibited with live flowers. Kruszelnicki describes her process saying,

“I want to create beauty and I just kind of want to open people’s eyes to my own ideas and to my world.”

Partly inspired by the book *Just Another Indian*, by Warren Goulding, the women set out to explore not only the media indifference or the lack of police action, but also the larger society and the silence we live in and tolerate.

Gay relates, “I first heard of the John Crawford murders [a Saskatoon serial killer] as a pre-teen in Saskatoon, but there was very little about it in the media once he was caught. In this particular project I felt I had a responsibility as a First Nations person, woman, and mother to not speak for these women but to speak on behalf of them.”





Felicia Gay and Joi Arcand, *Moon Lake Series #4*, 2005

Arcand says, “[Crawford] basically would look for women, mostly prostitutes, and he took them down to the river and killed them there. So we went back to the place where he would take them and that’s where we shot the photos for the main piece.”

Gay adds, “The reason I wanted to go to the site with Elder Norah Wasacase was to pray for the women (there may be more at the site, not found) and to re-appropriate that site of violence as a site of healing and transformation. The blanket was a signifier of solidarity and warmth. At the court trial women from the community wore them as a sign of solidarity.”

Illustrating the honoured position of women in First Nations communities and countering the violence, is the stunning starblanket piece by Arcand. At first glance, it is as though the piece is drawing you into a vortex, almost like a vaginal opening. But when you look a little closer, you see that the star is made up of image upon image of beautiful Aboriginal women.

Arcand took the photos on her reserve, the Muskeg Lake Cree Nation. She explained, “I cut them out and sewed them together into a star that’s used in starblanket quilts just to stand for how women in the community are the strength of the community, creating a strong bond the way a quilt, where you sew tiny pieces together, creates a larger whole. The women are the ones who sew the quilts and they’re used as gifts whenever there is a special event in the community.”

To add an element of calm to the show, Kruszelnicki chose to put self-portraits in because “it’s more about giving a feeling of peace and serenity to the women. It’s kind of like giving them a voice and a face.” Kruszelnicki added live flowers around the photographs and says they were “symbolic of laying flowers on a grave and giving them respect, and yet the flowers died and wilted.”

In addition to working as practicing artists, Arcand and Gay also started an artist-run centre in Saskatoon called the *Red Shift Gallery*. Arcand says of the centre, “It’s a space that is dedicated to showing contemporary Aboriginal art and a venue for new and upcoming artists as well as established artists.”

In this way, these artists truly have gone beyond the book that inspired them in which it was suggested that the best way to reach out and expand the message of the missing Aboriginal women was often limited to posterizing telephone pole upon telephone pole. While it is no small feat to accomplish what this trio has, it is clearly not impossible. In order to create the change we need to stop the ongoing violence against Aboriginal women, we need to continue paving the way in our own fashion, perhaps fueled by the artistic endeavors of artists like Arcand, Gay and Kruszelnicki. ❖





Carole Itter, *Metallic* (Performance still), 2007

Carole Itter

by Renee Rodin

Shimmering and Shining

"Draped in a shredded collage of reflective cloth, an elder fisherwoman observes a school of silvery fish-like shapes bobbing in the water, which triggers in her an atavist compulsion to set a net and begin harvesting 'fish' from the once plentiful but now moribund ocean."

— Carole Itter

Over the decades, Carole Itter, visual artist and educator, has produced a large body of work marked by scintillating imagination. *Metallic: A Fish Film*, set in the possible future, is an aesthetically beautiful film with serious social and political overtones.

Water is a metaphor for the fluidity of life and change. We live in it before we are born; it is essential to us all our lives. Until now, bodies of water have supplied us and other species with an abundance of food. We can no longer deny ecological imperatives, the real consequences of our having squandered natural resources, in particular over-fishing.



Carole Itter, *Metallic: A Fish Film* (still), 2007

Despite the cold and snowy evening it was standing-room-only on January 5 when Itter premiered her film. Along with directing and appearing in it as the fisherwoman, the multi-gifted Itter also gave a live performance.

"It has to do with hope. It has to do with artists acknowledging, as we always have, the environmental situation on this planet, and wanting to do something about it. And also having faith in artists being able to do that."

Originally filmed in 16 mm and then transferred to video, the five-minute film, *Metallic*, was shot on Burrard Inlet by cinematographer Bo Myers and a professional crew. Myers focused on the kinetics of water and light to create layers of stunning imagery. The editing was sensitive, precise, and pertinent.

For the premiere the film was projected onto sheets of paper mounted on the wall. At two separate intervals, Itter froze the frame and projected slides she had shot

off the film to add more dimension. In the first frame, mythological sea life appeared. In the second frame, Itter's hands were visible as she 'canned' the fish—human intervention with nature. She proceeded to draw, using acrylic paint rubbed on with rags, and felt pens. It was sheer magic to see these shapes lift off the film as they were transformed into another medium and, simultaneously, to see the same shapes remain on the wall once Itter had removed the completed drawings.

While Itter was drawing, improvisational cellist Peggy Lee provided the dramatically rich score. Itter chose the staccato beats of machinery to simulate canning and the menacing drone of a helicopter as a reminder of militarism. These sound effects and the music were created by sound designer Teresa Connors.

In the film and for her performance, Itter was covered in the 'shredded collage' she made out of silver lamé cloth and paper. Shimmering and shining, it mirrored the reflections in the film. She was a non-figurative being, in camouflage. The set was made from rows of metallic cloth Itter had sewn together into baffles.



Carole Itter, *Metallic* (Installation view), 2007

As they caught the light they resembled the flickering movement of waves. Itter the Illusionist.

From January 5 to February 10, *Metallic: A Fish Film* was on continuous view at grunt gallery. As well, Itter's drawings were exhibited, both the large ones she made at the premiere and the series of miniature illustrations she made for the film's storyboard.

On January 20, Itter and Myers gave a talk about technique and process. Ultimately, they explained, it was nature itself that called the shots; their schedule revolved around the timing and action of the tides. When asked about her 'fish', Itter said that years earlier a neighbour had called her attention to hundreds of wooden spindles, which had been discarded by a local textile mill. She climbed into the dumpster and tossed them out to her partner, Al Neil, for transportation to her studio. After storing them for decades, she realized the spindles would make excellent fish symbols. She painted them silver and put them, temporarily, in the ocean.

Myers spoke of her responsibility as a filmmaker to realize an artist's vision, and of how important it is to be true to it. She said, "It was a privilege for me to enter into Carole's mindset." Judging from the audience's enthusiastic response to the film

and performance, it was obvious they too felt privileged to be able to enter into Itter's mindset.

About her inspiration to make the film Itter said, "It has to do with hope. It has to do with artists acknowledging, as we always have, the environmental situation on this planet, and wanting to do something about it. And also having faith in artists being able to do that."

Metallic: A Fish Film, with its myriad of transformations and foreshadowings, is a powerful and profound work of art. It resonates with possibilities leading us to be reflective about the present and the future. That such a dire scenario could be expressed so creatively is the very embodiment of hope.



Carole Itter, *Metallic* (detail), 2007

ATSA, *Attack #15* (Infraction ticket), 2007



ATSA, *Attack #15* (Installation view, Fuse, Vancouver Art Gallery), 2007



by Glenn Alteen

ATTACK #15

The Montreal group ATSA, Action Terroriste Socialement Acceptable, perform political interventions into the urban landscape. *ATTACK #15*, in Vancouver during the recent Push Performing Arts, placed a destroyed and smoking Sports Utility Vehicle (SUV) on the corner of Robson and

Hornby, a main commercial corridor in Vancouver. Inside the SUV a video manifesto

reveals the rampant gas consumption and waste these vehicles represent. The two artists, Pierre Allard and Annie Roy, speak to the Robson Street crowd, handing out information including realistic looking traffic tickets that people can put on offending SUVs, idling cars, etc. to draw attention to the waste these products and practices represent.

Their works investigate and transform the urban landscape and restore the citizen's place in the public realm, depicting it as a political space open to discussion and societal debates.

The performance draws a lot of interest from the vast crowds on the Robson Street stroll. The smoke slowly wafting off the vehicle causes some concern that changes to interest when they get closer and encounter the video inside. The manifesto is brief, hard hitting, and to the point. It condemns us all—the government, industry, advertising, and consumers—for allowing these wasteful monsters to be built. The manifesto makes sweeping statements that the time for this

wastefulness is over. *ATTACK's* timing as federal and provincial political parties upped the rhetoric on environmental strategies couldn't have been better,

and the work was extremely well received. ATSA also did an artist talk at Emily Carr Institute of Art and Design, a workshop at the Vancouver Art Gallery (VAG), and participated in *FUSE* at the VAG.

"Allard and Roy have been producing these urban interventions since 1997: installations, performances and realistic staging bearing witness to the various social and environmental aberrations which preoccupy the two artists. Their works investigate and transform





ATSA, Installation view Robson Street, Vancouver-Attack #15 2007

the urban landscape and restore the citizen's place in the public realm, depicting it as a political space open to discussion and societal debates. ATSA promotes an open, active, and responsible vision of artists as citizens contributing to the sustainable development of their society." <http://www.atsa.qc.ca>

ATSA's history in Montreal is well known: État d'urgence, or State of Emergency, is an annual event organized by ATSA since 1998 in collaboration with various artists and private and public organizations. État d'urgence recreates the images of a refugee camp in downtown Montreal. Focused on the homeless, the event creates a sense of community and mobilizes many allies to provide services and entertainment over five days culminating in a large community feast. These events

change the ways we all view the city by allowing places for human interaction to occur and flourish. *Frag on the Main*, another ATSA project, is a walk along Montréal's venerable Saint-Laurent Boulevard. The Frag, or fragments of history, is marked using photos, text panels, and a Podcast to tell the story of the social history of the area.

ATTACK #15 was a co-production between ATSA, grunt gallery, and PUSH. ATSA will return to Vancouver in 2007 as part of the LIVE Festival and in conjunction with *LIVE in Public—The Art Of Engagement*, to begin a project in the Downtown Eastside working with a host of community members and groups in the area. The project will begin this fall and in the summer of 2008 and culminate in a new work for PUSH 2009. ■

PuSh

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ATSA, Attack #15 (Installation view Robson Street, Vancouver), 2007
Photo by Khaled Ben-Rabha



ATSA, Attack #15 (Installation view Robson Street, Vancouver), 2007
Photo by Khaled Ben-Rabha

by Marcia Crosby

Dina Gonzalez Mascaro



All of the Rubble

"In Argentina, I remember going to watch when buildings were being demolished (I am fascinated with architecture and its destruction ...) When it was over I would take a piece of rubble to my house and paint it white"
(Dina Gonzalez Mascaro, April 2007).

Dina Gonzalez Mascaro has always been interested in the destroyed as part of a whole. Her exhibit, *Rubble*, at grunt gallery is her most recent in a series of projects set off by the past five years of architectural change in Vancouver. It is an eclectic mix of drawings, paintings, photographs, and sculptures made about or from the rubble of the continual construction, demolition, and re-construction of the city.

Gonzalez Mascaro works with material that could be seen as artefacts, as public, maybe even as historic, but the materials themselves are inherently devoid of any sense of the local. Building materials—rebar, cement, nails, brick, wood and plaster—are some of the constituents of her lexicon for the presence of what is no longer here. Not here. As in the hospital that used to be on 10th and Heather, or the parking lot that used to be on the corner of Seymour and Smithe.



Dina Gonzalez Mascaro, *All the Rubble the Rubble*, 2007

This rubble is nothing like what she collected as a young woman in Argentina. There, to take home a piece of the Palacio Municipal, for example, would be to collect a fragment of historic architecture that could be 350 to 500 years old. Having a piece of the building, a freize, column, plinth, a scroll, even the foundation or wall, would reflect a sense of its value as a precious part of a venerated history. Here in Vancouver, Gonzalez Mascaro has created an exhibition of unpretentious rubble, a process that resonates with some of the ideas in *El Hombre, Todo Los Hombres* (“the man, all the men”), a book that she referred to in her artist’s talk; the text’s meaning translates in her exhibit as a single piece of rubble that can stand in for all of the rubble, or vice versa: each of the works and its components, a synecdoche for the city, all of the city, including the parts that have disappeared.

In the exhibition, four works on two shelves are clear links to the relationship between the particular and the general. On one shelf, *all the rubble, the rubble*, consists of a small “pile” of concrete pieces placed over a photograph of Vancouver. Bits of rubble fill two thirds of the foreground to create a horizon line against small

skyscrapers and tinted blue sky, and all of it is cast in amber resin. Beside it, used nails cast in resin, straight, rusty and crooked, are framed in something like a shadow box; in *all the nails, the nail*, the nail is displayed as an entangled mass of many, or any. On the next shelf, a work made with a plywood backing, mostly obscured in white paint, is embedded in a lining of plaster, and along its bottom, the odd nail and a few wood splinters (some painted green and red) are held in resin; the title, *all the wood, the wood*, is stamped in letra-set, tenuous and uneven, above the wood bits on the bottom. The fourth piece, *the parking lot*, consists of a bed of crushed concrete and red brick. In its center is a flat piece of plaster, and on it a detailed green sketch of a parking lot. Like most objects placed on a shelf, each work, framed in white and bearing similar titles, conforms to one another. Displayed like framed family photographs and collected mementoes of an unforgotten past, they blend with my memory of

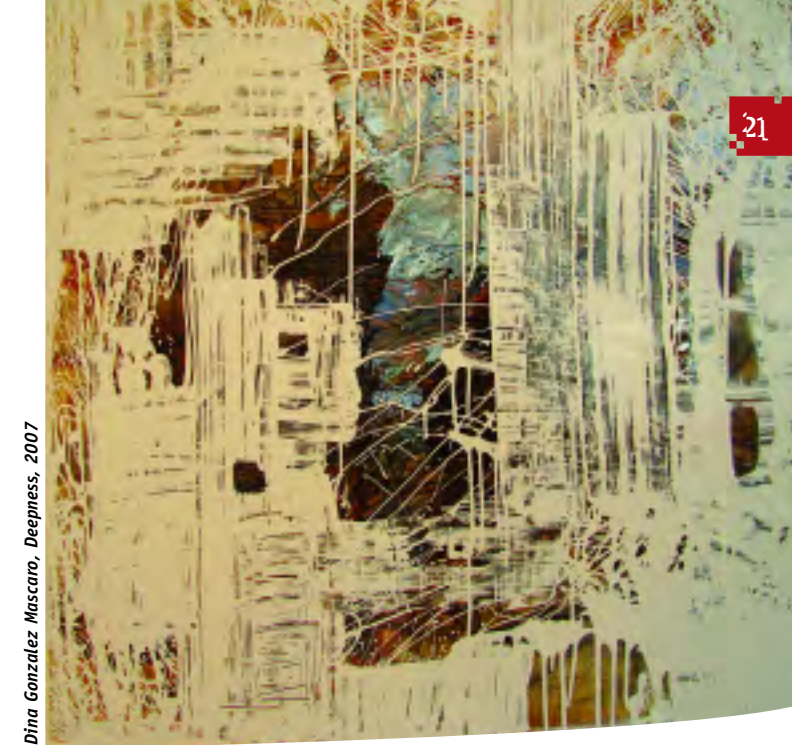
Neruda’s *Invisible Man*. In this poem, there is a clear shift in the Romantic poet who turns away from one kind of love for another, that is, from the interests of an individual, to an interest in all of the people, objects, and events of everyday life.

The work in *Rubble* cannot be described as precious, but the first of her works that I noticed when I came into the gallery was titled *nice*. And it is. Wood rests at the bottom of a pale green rectangle of resin; on top of that is a piece of rebar wrapped in concrete, filed into smooth planes on one end and washed in a shiny finish. Both objects are thickly coiled together in two places with 1/8th inch wire. Like metamorphic rocks made up of irregular plates (the schist used for building walls and houses and for testing alloys),

her exhibition leaves its mark. It is a schistose assemblage that speaks to an ongoing metamorphosis in the city, a layering of what is no longer here, or not yet here, with what is. In the deepness of the city (Painting: acrylic, graphite, gesso, latex, enamel and resin), she limns white striations and scrapings of paint over a planar field. It drips, but like a line that has the possibility of becoming three-dimensional. She paints

like a sculptor, makes work about what is and isn’t here, leaves traces of her labour, her ideas, and her creativity in every object, the beauty of which can be seen and felt when she speaks of her fascination with the production of architecture, and its destruction: “I love that,” she says.

Although her work may evoke memories of particular city sites, the exhibit underlines that the spacialized locale does not simply exist. In fact, she makes visible the fact that its production and destruction require continuous and deliberate attention. Similarly, memory does not just exist, that is, the memory of a person place or thing does not inherently exist in an object, or in one’s mind. The past has to be articulated to become memory, which, unlike history, is always about the present. So, Gonzalez Mascaro’s work may evoke a memory of, say, when you last saw the parking lot at Seymour and Smithe, the cars just hanging there in the air, or floating toward you as you drive toward the lot, and that memory may even be nostalgic. But her work, this exhibit, is about the fissure that opens up between an empirical reality, and the memory or representation



Dina Gonzalez Mascaro, *Deepness*, 2007

of the past. It is about the cleavage of building rubble and resin and paint: cleave as in angle of repose, and cleave as in split apart. This paradox is not only unavoidable, it is what makes *Rubble* alive with the present. ■



Dina Gonzalez Mascaro, *nice*, 2007

Kuh Del Rosario, *Bubbling Holey Gobs Claim Space* (Installation view), 2007

Scavenging The City in Bubbling Holey Gobs Claim Space

Conversation about condo real estate, neighborhoods, and the steeply increasing costs of renovating a spot to call home in this boomtown can be easily eavesdropped at every corner. A girl is breezing out the door as she swoons to her friend, “We could move into a nice house with a yard plus garage, but with a massive mortgage.” It’s getting pretty hot and heavy. In Vancouver, and now Calgary too, there are times when cities seem obsessed with their buildings. Everyone’s talking.

No one except Kuh del Rosario is talking about the texture of freshly laid astro-turf, billowy blobs of caulking foam, or the secret aesthetic beauty that hides between the walls. Del Rosario disrupts the conventional ways in which building materials are used, with a thick smear of mis-tinted taupe, or the ripply corrugated cardboard edges squeezed up against bricks of porous green foam. When she does this, our ideas about buildings are literally ripped open and splayed in front of our eyes. These materials bear the functional traces of their former selves, like a factory marking on a smooth sheet of pink polyurethane insulation that would usually be sealed up in a wall. As with many artists, her use of recycled and scavenged materials, partial constructions, and temporary spaces have the ability to disrupt and question domestic and public spaces.

As new developments crowd pedestrians off the sidewalks, we’re forced to navigate around blocked sidewalks, temporary chain-link fences, and colourful road pylons. Each layer accumulates as a series of revisions, additions to the visual landscape. As construction revises our skylines, maps, and the routes that we walk, so too do Del Rosario’s sculptural masses squish us to the edges of the gallery space.

A year ago, her subterranean installation transformed Stride’s project, *Grotto*, into a feat of quirky architecture. The Stride Gallery has situated itself on the dusty edge of Calgary’s downtown for almost 10 years, and the Stride Project Room, a tiny basement art space, is even further removed from reminders of the gentrification and condo-izing of the surrounding ‘hood. It sometimes seems like a small pocket of the city that has been forgotten, and Del Rosario’s ramshackle candy floss build-a-thon down there emphasized how the space has been radically stubborn in the face of transformations above ground.

As artist-run spaces go, Stride and grunt are almost on opposite ends of the scale. Old, historic art spaces such as Stride’s are a dying species in Calgary, and soon our city’s downtown-centred artist-run culture may also become a relic. In grunt’s considerably up-market condo storefront, Del Rosario’s installation plays differently off the fresh gallery space. The space isn’t scavenged from the margins of the city like the Stride; the gallery is a negotiated territory that stands in where we expect to

see a condo. Perhaps in the wake of the building boom, or riding a tide just ahead of it, arts spaces that fuse with domestic spaces are the answer to being crowded out of our own cities. When the walls of the cities reconfigure around us, and artists and art spaces deal with the daily crisis of where to find space in the city, it's no wonder that artists want to pry into the very idea of buildings themselves.

Del Rosario's process is one of question and answer, adding materials to each other. Her bricks conjure ideas of built spaces: plastered, dense, hairy filter foam, a chunk of buttery

yellow, and one that looks like a cartoon block of cheese, with a too-thick flow of grey house paint over one side. Her piled-up milk crates are part of the visual vocabulary of back alleys and DIY apartment furniture alike, and now they're also integral to holding up this curious structure. Like Donna Akrey's *Greenwoodhavenpointeterrace.inc*, that collected (i.e. stole) plywood from suburban building sites, her materials are reused, reclaimed, and these very serviceable scraps are assembled into spiffy new spaces. Akrey's artist-manufactured houses are held together with biting commentary and ironic juxtaposition of materials. Layered in white and grey, with only the briefest bits of colour coming through, parts of Del Rosario's work also read like studies for Rachel Whiteread houses, like a glimpse of pristine plaster or a whitewashed building showing wear and weathering. Stacked side by each, they become dwellings, with hints of roofs or entrance façades arranging themselves on the same planes as a neighbourhood housing block.

Practice, Practise, Praxis holds the photo essay "mouldy modernism" by Scott Sorli, where he lays out a suite of photographs that read as coolly designed modernist propaganda. The only problem is that they're rotting and covered in mould. The "optimism and self assurance" of the blocky, low-rise buildings of the late 50s/early 60s is contrasted with decay—both in our environments and our imaginations. This pairing of hopefulness and disintegration happens simultaneously on one of Del Rosario's surfaces.

It mimics grayish cement that looks like it was originally sitting on one side, then reluctantly peeled up from the floor and tipped over to reveal the goop that becomes unstuck from the floor. Just as mould revises the tactile surface of the photos, her obsessive layering also becomes a metaphor for our changing experience of spaces.

As construction revises our skylines, maps, and the routes that we walk, so too do Del Rosario's sculptural masses squish us to the edges of the gallery space.

Unlike the modernist relics and low-rise apartments ploughed over to make room for new high-density neighbors, Del Rosario's aesthetic is slightly more resistant to the ravages of

time. Her installations are in a state of construction, layering, and decay, ready to reconfigure at any time. They offer clever aesthetic manipulations of materials we usually overlook, even as they're swallowed up by a constantly reconfiguring city. Amidst quietly crumbling structures and roaring demolitions, Del Rosario's chock-a-block installations of goopy impermanence are intense amplifications of a building's life cycle. ■



Kuh Del Rosario, *Bubbling Holey Gobs Claim Space* (Installation view), 2007



by Tania Willard

Jude Norris, *love code antler*, 2007



I am in a Place of Beauty: The Art of Jude Norris

"...There are often layers of meanings or teachings in a thing, and they may slowly reveal themselves. In the end it is all about our relationship to the earth—where ALL these materials come from."

Jude Norris is a multi-disciplinary Cree-Métis artist working with Native icons and materials juxtaposed with Western technologies to comment on contemporary colonization.

In an exhibition at grunt gallery, Norris exhibited works from the *Affirm/Nation* series—*Buffalo Basket* and *Imperfect Doll*, as well as works from the *Antler* series, *braver antler* and two new antler works adorned with computer code.

In the *Antler* series, Jude carefully selects the shapes of the moose, caribou, and deer antlers. She treats each piece with a respect and gentleness emphasizing their grace. In *braver antler*, text flows with the shape of the antler. Written on the surface of the antler, as in an affirmation, are the repeating words, "I am brave.

"I must be braver." Tightly-knit words, or in the case of the recent works, computer code, weave over the surface of the antlers repeating almost endlessly.

"...the use of repetition is not only an effective tool for 'reprogramming' (i.e. changing negative thought patterns and/or instilling positive ones); it relates directly to ritual, where repetition is a universal tool for inducing trance states or making connection to other realms or levels of reality—particularly through action or motion or rhythm, the drumbeat."

In this endless weaving of mantras, Norris is sharing with us the teachings of these antlers, of these animals, their spirits and ways as translated through, space, language and, in the case of the latter works, computers.

Painting the surfaces not only with text and affirmations, Jude also uses bright monochromatic colours and metallic finishes to emphasize the shapes and beauty of the antlers as well as to create a contrast between the plastic and industrial quality of the paints and the natural quality of the antlers. Painting the antlers can also be seen as a way that Jude is reclaiming their teachings and expressing a reverence for them.

She also says of the antler works, "These works are in part like a collaboration between myself and the bulls and bucks who 'created' these wonderful objects." Norris is also exploring the feminine and the masculine in

Jude Norris, the Antler series: braver antler (detail), 2007

these works. The antlers come from male animals and are used as weapons between competing bucks. We infer the antler trophies and objects as markers of hunting and masculine-ness. However, their serpentine form, the emphasis of their curves, and their graceful surfaces of paint and text suggest the feminine. The affirmations on their surfaces break this duality with their honest repetition of universal issues: insecurity, searching for perfection, and acceptance and healing.

Norris only came to know her father's side [First Nations heritage] of her family later in her life. She bears her family history and our Aboriginal experience in that knowing and not-knowing. In finding her family and herself, Norris' work is very much about her journey and the teachings she has had along the way. The *Affirm/Nation* series is also about healing through self- and cultural awareness. Through her work we bear witness to the acceptance and celebration of self.

"My process of learning about, or perhaps more accurately, 'remembering' my culture is constantly reflected in my work. This can be through the inclusion of or expression through traditional creative practices, like bead- and hide-work (in making 'traditional' dolls or clothing), or through the use of other materials that have a long cultural history, like the red willow in Buffalo Basket."

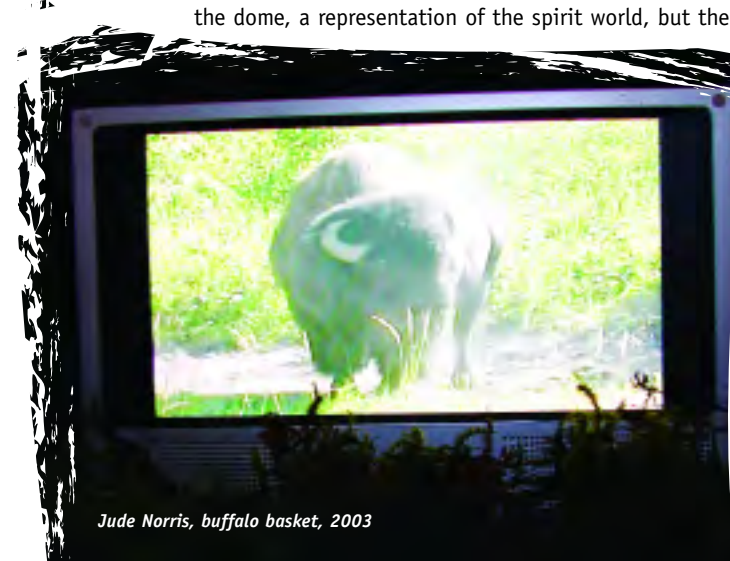
Buffalo Basket, a video-sculptural work, consists of a small shopping cart, its metal construction woven with red willow and domed with a red willow and hide structure. Red willow is used in Plains basketry, and as the structure of the sweat lodge, like the ribs and womb of mother earth, this domed shape implies a sacredness. Inside the domed structure is a video monitor resting on a nest of moss, looping images and sounds of buffalo. The monitor creates a glow within the dome, a representation of the spirit world, but the



Jude Norris, *Buffalo Basket*, 2003

viewer has to come right up to it and look down from the top into the opening to see the contents. The sacredness and the fused relationship of the buffalo with Indigenous cultures of the plains is seen in this piece through the representation of the shopping cart, referring to the importance of the buffalo and its essentialness to survival: The bison was the 'supermarket' of the plains. Linked with this analogy is the examination of the commercialization of culture and the impact of colonization on an entire way of life and spiritual relationship to the land as provider.

In *Imperfect Doll*, Norris is reflecting on culture and identity and the teachings of her family and community. A small Plains-style faceless doll sits in front of a monitor that is playing video images of the



Jude Norris, *buffalo basket*, 2003



Jude Norris, *Imperfect Doll*, 2003

doll's creation by the hands of the artist, and an audio soundtrack with the voices of an elder and youth. The doll, about 10", is beautifully crafted with a tiny buckskin dress, beaded leggings, and small hand-painted words repeated, as in the *Antler* series, over the surface of the exposed deer hide. The words are in English and Cree: In English they say, "I am perfect, just as I am," in Cree (an interesting translation that reveals cultural disjunction):

"There is no word for perfect in Cree." The English translation of the Cree translation is something like "I am in a place of beauty,

just as I am now." This self-portrait of the artist making herself, creating and healing herself, also reflects the healing of a culture. The women's teachings are represented by the voices of the girl and elder who speak the Cree phrases, and explain the lack of a word or phrase to mean 'perfect' in the Cree language. This audio track is punctuated by sounds of girls laughing. The looping of the doll's creation suggests the ongoing

"There is no word for perfect in Cree." The English translation of the Cree translation is something like, "I am in a place of beauty, just as I am now."

creation of identity and acceptance of self as well as the artist's act of creating.

In Indigenous Plains cultures, dolls were used to pass on teachings to young girls. The faceless doll was a teaching in the imagination of the child, who would create the doll's face, name, and story. This doll would echo the child's learning process in becoming a woman and in the understanding of the power of creation, the creation of an artist, and the creation of a mother. *Imperfect Doll* acts in the same way for the artist: In the creation of the work, Norris learns Cree language and story, and in her own process of learning shows the cultural dissimilarities between colonizer and Cree culture. In reflecting on her use of Cree language in her work Norris says,

"I use language a lot as expression of contrasting cultural paradigms, and also as a record of my own personal process and experience—of not knowing Cree, and of learning it. My use of Cree is also a chance to share the beauty of the language. Even when I don't understand what is being said, the language still touches me very deeply through its forms and sounds, which I feel to be, in part, a direct expression of the land."

The teachings of Norris' work are revealing in their translation. Meanings and story are uncovered in the translation of texts from Indigenous and English languages and in the spatial and spiritual translations of cultural ideas. The worldviews and cultural teachings that are 'lost in translation' and the adaptation of teachings to contemporary contexts are in flux; meanings and ideas are reclaimed through

re-translating. By healing and decolonizing the language of the colonizer, and by reigniting the spirit and culture through the hands of the artist, Norris' work teaches us, the viewers. The

process and materials become teachings for the artist that are then shared with all of us, shared with our spirits, left with us to translate their meaning for our own lives and experiences.

"My people will sleep for a hundred years and when they awaken it will be the artists who give them back their spirit."—Louis Riel

1. Jude Norris, from an email interview with the artist.

Megan Dickie, *Fiddly Finger Assistant (detail)*, 2004



Spectacles of Tradition

by Lora Carroll

Spectacles of Intimacy

Artists:
Megan Dickie
Jamie Drouin
Suzanne L. Mir
d. bradley muir
Lance Olsen
Ingrid Mary Percy

Spectacles of Intimacy showcases the work of six Vancouver Island artists. The work precariously straddles the line between public and private spheres. It unravels the common threads that connect individuals: birth, aging and death; sex, love and hate; beauty and decay; joy and sorrow. Each artist engages with experiences considered to be personal and private, hidden and unique, and reveals their habitual and

mundane nature. *Spectacles of Intimacy* is an exhibition that acknowledges the role of artist as social spectator—one who celebrates banality through the creation of spectacle.

Megan Dickie's *The Assistants* is a series of intimate and seemingly innocuous sculptures cast from the arms of individual artists. Each piece is designed for the practical purpose of 'assisting' with the art making process, acting as a form of artistic tool belt that straps to the arm. But as one inspects the sculptures more closely, noting the sensuous and subversive materials that Dickie has carefully chosen to work with—leather, steel, and wax—undercurrents of touch, control, bondage, sexuality, and sensuality rise to the surface. Dickie's work peels away the layers of the art making process, exposing the rawness of the occupation and its relentless demand for self-exposure.



Suzanne Mir, *Escondito*, 2007



d.bradley muir, *Hilltop (Odds and Ends)*, 2005

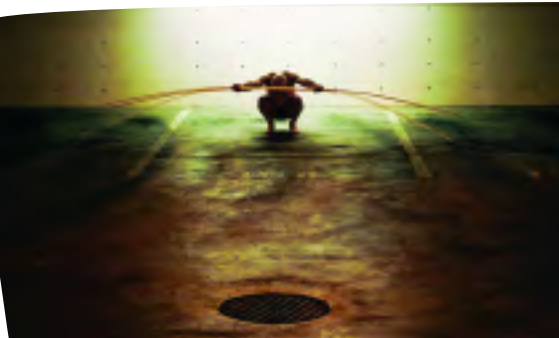
Suzanne L. Mir's visceral images engage with communal rituals of mourning, particularly the intense, yet mundane integration of death into everyday life in Latin America. *Escondito* is the artists' response to *Isla de las Muñecas* (Island of the Dolls): a remote island located outside of Mexico City. One man—Don Julián—lived alone on the island for the latter part of his life. For over twenty-six years, he obsessively transformed the site into a living shrine, rumoured to be in honour of a drowned child. Dolls are suspended from every tree, bush, and building on the island. They are in various states of decay: plastic cracking, limbs missing, insects emerging from orifices. Although it has been years since Don Julián passed away, the island and its enigmatic displays continue to attract visitors from around the world. *Escondito* speaks to Mir's own internal struggles with aging, death and loss.

Implicit collective experiences.
Witnessed. Interpreted. Exposed.

d. bradley muir's photographs break down the aesthetic of the ready-made. His work challenges the commercialized ideal of a perfect, sanitized domestic space, relocating the private realm back to the public and reverting constructed space back to nature. muir's images reference the illusion of the film set and the elaborate temporary structures erected to create a false reality. His work reveals the interstice at the fringe of a scene, the unfinished and rough edges normally excluded through framing, where fiction and reality collide. The backdrops of his images are carefully selected: clear-cut ravaged land and abandoned construction sites, evidence of West Coast industries and their impact upon the land. muir's work is a critique of Western consumerism and our insatiable hunger for beauty and perfection.


Lance Olsen & Jamie Drouin's multimedia installation explores performance, endurance, and the body. The title of the work, *No(h) Movement*, references the highly stylized Noh Theatre of Japan. Unlike this opulent and

Lance Olsen & Jamie Drouin,
No(h) Movement (film still), 2007

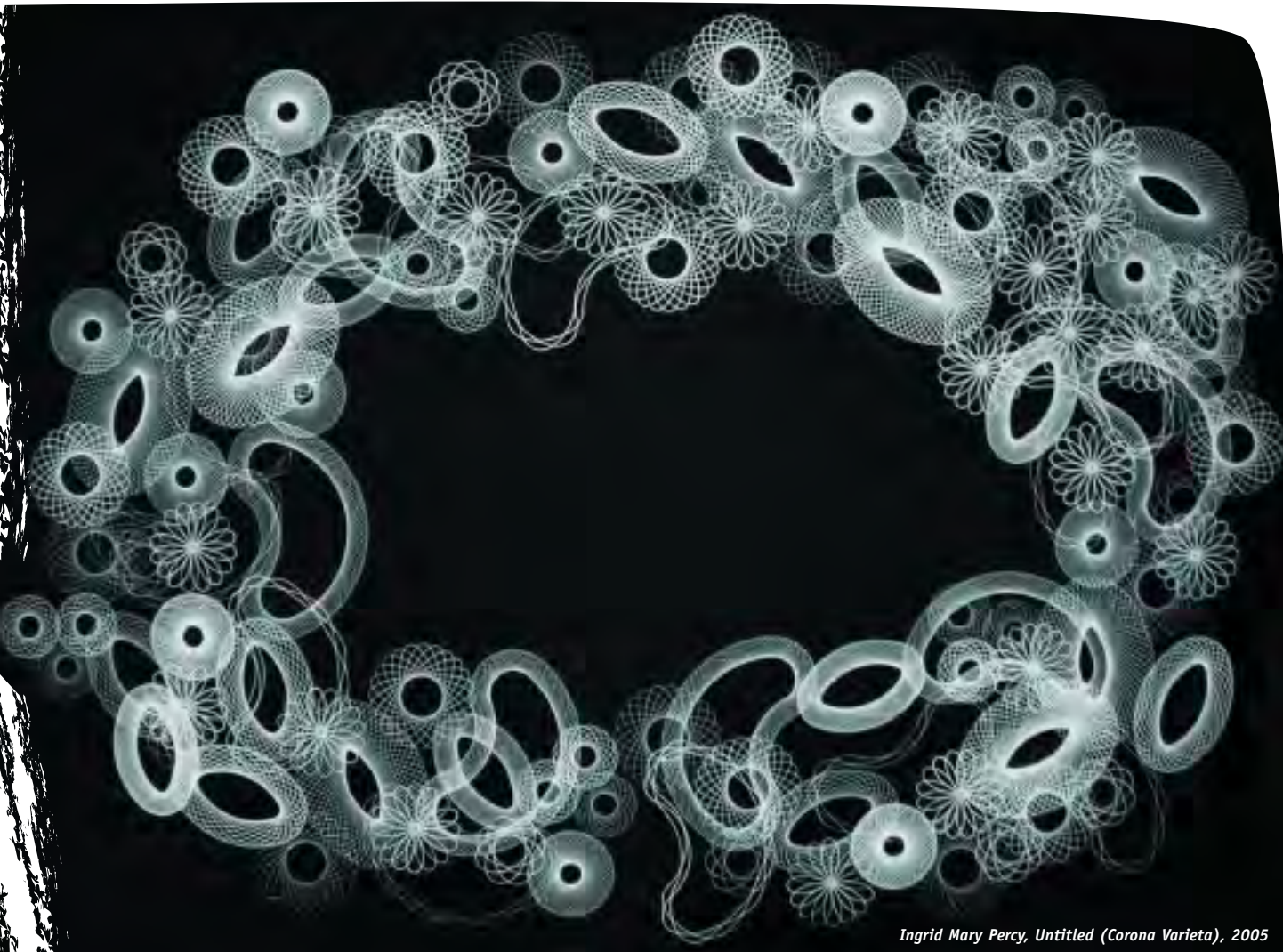


entertaining art form, however, *No(h) Movement* is conversely stark and contemplative. In the video, a naked and aging figure pushes his body through a series of deliberate and meditative poses. His action (or lack thereof) demands endurance and patience—from both himself and the viewer. *No(h) Movement* grapples with nothingness; it forces the audience to contemplate the importance of the pauses, subtleties, and nuances of life.

Ingrid Mary Percy's drawings are imaginary worlds based upon the hidden, interior spaces of the body. Her delicate images reference the abstract forms, textures, and symmetry found in nature. Percy's work, although seemingly playful and whimsical, underscores the fragility of human life. The pathogenic organisms depicted in her drawing expose the insidious nature of sickness and disease, bacteria and viruses, drugs and vaccines. Although hidden from the naked eye, Percy reminds the viewer that death hangs in the air around us, clings to our skin, and hides in our bodies.

However diverse in their approach and use of media, the artists in *Spectacles of Intimacy* share a common fascination with the human condition. Their work challenges the demarcation of the public from the private sphere; it exposes implicit collective experiences. The artists in this exhibition are the voyeurs of the everyday. Through the rigour of their independent investigations, they each transform intimacy into spectacle. 

The Canada Council of the Arts generously supported the production of Megan Dickie's piece, *The Assistants*.



Ingrid Mary Percy, *Untitled (Corona Varieta)*, 2005

The Influence of the Moon

Laurie Anderson's artistic career has cast her in roles as various as visual artist, composer, poet, storyteller, photographer, filmmaker, electronics wiz, vocalist and instrumentalist. She has collaborated with other great artists of our time, notably William Burroughs, Brian Eno, Peter Gabriel, Philip Glass, Wim Wenders, Robert Lepage and Lou Reed.

On the eve of the 25th anniversary re-release of Laurie's seminal 1982 album, "Big Science", Archer Pechawis has an email conversation with the artist.

AP: In Vancouver we have seen two of your recent projects, *The End of the Moon* and *Hidden Under Mountains*. At your artist talk here in Vancouver last September you spoke of working at both during the same period. *Mountains* is so completely visual and *Moon* was such an exercise of storytelling and audio. Was there a relationship between them?

LA: The film is *Hidden Inside Mountains* and it was my chance to work with visuals without having to take big trucks full of stuff on tour. On the other hand it wasn't just laziness that made me exclude visuals from *The End of the Moon*; I genuinely love closing my eyes and listening to very long stories...

AP: Your work has been an almost incalculable influence on myself and many other artists working in various media. Whose work influenced you as a young artist, and how have your influences evolved over time?



Laurie Anderson, © Maggie Soladay



Laurie Anderson, © Laurie Anderson, November 2006

LA: Vito Acconci, because he was fearless and I love his voice and he broke a lot of taboos; William Burroughs for all those reasons plus he made me laugh.

AP: While thinking about your work and the questions I might ask, I kept coming back to one aspect of your performance style, namely your trademark vocal delivery. What I am curious about is development of this style, and what (if any) effect the punk/new wave movement had on this.

LA: I've always tried for style-less, to be as simple as possible, also as flat. No theatrics. Must have something to do with the Midwest.

AP: What effect did the chart success of *O Superman* (#2 in the UK) have on your self-perception as an artist?

LA: We recorded *O Superman* on a \$500 grant from the National Endowment for the Arts. We pressed 1000 copies.

Sales were pretty slow until one day when I got a call from London. They wanted 40,000 copies by Friday and 40,000 more the following week. The DJ John Peel was playing the record and it was climbing the British charts.

O Superman was inspired by an amazing concert I heard by the black American tenor Charles Holland. He sang *O Souverain*, a song from Massenet's [opera] *Le Cid*. There was something about this song that almost stopped my heart.


In the opera, the song was written for Napoleon as he looks out over the battlefield. *O Souverain* was a prayer about empire, ambition, loss, and bitter defeat.

O Superman was also inspired by an event in April 1979. American helicopters sent to Tehran in a top-secret rescue mission collided and blew up in a sandstorm. The failure of the mission was a huge blow to the United States.

In September 2001 I was on tour and played *O Superman* at Town Hall in New York City, one week after 9/11, and as I sang, 'Here come the planes, They're American planes', I suddenly realized I was singing about the present and that for almost thirty years we had been fighting the same war.

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AP: How important do you see getting beyond traditional audiences for this work?

LA: I'm quite happy with the experimental art world—whatever that means these days! 



Laurie Anderson, © Kevin Kennefick

First Nations by Daina Warren



Skeena Reece, *Out of Consent (Poor Life of Dismay performance cabaret)*, 2006
Photograph: Riel Manywounds, courtesy Redwire Magazine

Catharsis

In three performances that took place at Open Studios, Aboriginal artists Skeena Reece, Roger Crait, and Jackson 2Bears grappled with their own sense of identity, and through each performance piece examined ideas about displacement. The curatorial intent was to create discussions about the performances, to raise questions about the reception of each performance by other artists and audiences, and to consider whether or not "identity politics" is passé.

Skeena Reece began the night with a conceptual performance titled *Out of Consent* in which she depicted a correlation between sex and violence. Reece entered the room by slowly creeping, fully nude, out of the washroom at Open Studios, and studying the audience as she made her way towards the low platform stage.

On stage, Reece put on her S&M costume and then passively watched from centre stage as a female assistant tied her up in a chair in a complex design of ropes and arm braces. The tension built as the performance assistant finished the bondage ritual. At the same time, Reece struggled with the ropes as if questioning the tautness that was crushing her body. Once the tying was



Skeena Reece, *Out of Consent* (Poor Life of Dismay performance cabaret), 2006; Photograph: Riel Manywounds, courtesy Redwire Magazine

complete, she began mumbling incoherently, her words eventually reaching a crescendo, at which point we could clearly hear a heavy sigh ending with the utterance “I am so tired!” She then broke into an impromptu acapella song, which simultaneously created a contrast between a beautiful reverberation and an image of torture. When she finished singing, she turned to her assistant and asked, “Can you help me?” Her assistant then cut Reece loose from the rope bindings, which concluded the performance.

Roger Crait was the next artist to perform in a work titled *Poor Life of Dismay*. He portrayed a lone angry man, frustrated with his life experience. Crait began his performance by stumbling through the audience onto the stage, set as a sparsely furnished apartment with a mattress on the floor, dirty walls, and broken bottles. After messing about the apartment, he studied the audience and then began a spoken word rant:



Roger Crait, *Poor Life of Dismay* (Poor Life of Dismay performance cabaret), 2006; Photograph: Riel Manywounds, courtesy Redwire Magazine

“I awake every morning, I rub the sleep from my eyes, I think of the things in this world I despise, the kidnapped’s cries, the political lies, it seems like everybody tries to stop the insanity in their own vanity but they always fail... miserably.

..After these routine thoughts pass, I think of trees and flowers, what were once ours but in dismay were taken away by a few signed papers.”

At this point, Crait began speaking in a louder voice, which got louder and louder over the course of ten minutes until he was nearly yelling at the audience:

“It’s 3:45 and time to go home, but I choose to walk alone so I can recall my day of events. But there’s nothing to recall ‘cause if you know me at all you’ll only come to say that Roger just had another typical day in ...”

Poor Life of Dismay ended with Crait kicking and punching holes in the walls that surrounded his stage.

Each artist took the audience to a very personal place through the performances, providing artist and audience with various ways to think about how popular culture influences Aboriginal artists and communities.

The third artist, Jackson 2Bears, performed a piece that explored the history of popular media through a collage of projected TV and film images, and drum & bass music. He performed on a set of decks for approximately twenty minutes. In an immersive musical environment that filled the room and rounded off the night with loud beats and popular refrains from the Lone Ranger song, “Ten Little Indians,” and the “Wahoo, Chant & Chop”—an Atlanta Braves audience cheer. The idea for his performance stemmed from a memory of a childhood incident that informs his PhD studies and which he has used to create subsequent performances:

“I was sent to a predominately white school, and at the time I was the only Indian kid in my elementary class. It was Indian week and we were learning about the noble savages that once roamed the land that we now proudly call Canada. As part of our learning experience, we were instructed in a sing-a-long with Mother Goose’s rendition of the Ten Little Indians tune. So, I’m asked to stand at my desk, and during the chorus the others would point at me and sing”...what are you doing you bad little Indian... looks like you’re eating, you bad little Indian”, and so on...” —Jackson 2Bears

Each artist took the audience to a very personal place through the performances, providing artist and audience with various ways to think about how popular culture influences Aboriginal artists and communities. This live action night was an indicator that there is still a need to examine incidents that create tension in our lives and to question the experiences that constitute who we are. ❖



Jackson 2Bears, *10 Little Indians* (Poor Life of Dismay performance cabaret), 2006; Photograph: Riel Manywounds, courtesy Redwire Magazine



IN PUBLIC

THE ART OF ENGAGEMENT

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Image by Lynda Nakashima

grunt

This three-day conference looks at artists working in the public realm and engaging communities within their art practices. The emphasis is on artists' definition of these practices, where the different practices intersect, and how they diverge in intention and focus.

LIVE IN PUBLIC
THE ART OF ENGAGEMENT
includes four panels and an Open Space discussion.

PANELS

1 Roles of artists working within community, such as community development, public intervention, activism, relational art, and the artistic process as social evolution.

2 Expectations that are brought to and develop from participatory engagement in creative processes between artists and communities.

3 Risks inherent in artistic practices that engage communities, and the exploration of how these risks are congruent with, yet different from, those taken within solitary practice.

4 Breakthroughs that have developed in community-based art practices over the last few years and the new directions of artists engaged in these practices.

OPEN SPACE DISCUSSION

Open Space is a discussion that relies on people bringing their individual questions, inquiries, and ideas to the whole, inviting dialogue in the service of the transformation needed to create and support the shifts in awareness and commitment demanded by our times.

seems like everything is changing except what we do...

With the establishment of the grunt gallery legacy fund, the development of a state-of-the-art in-gallery media centre and a pioneering educational program around contemporary Aboriginal art, grunt certainly is changing how it does things.

The grunt gallery legacy fund is an endowment that we have seeded by using the equity in our gallery and successfully receiving matching funds from Canadian Heritage and the Vancouver Foundation's Renaissance Fund. Over the next two years, we intend to leverage this \$396,600 into a stable endowment of \$1,000,000 plus, thereby creating a permanent resource for the artists' communities in this city and allowing a stronger focus for our work by assuring our resources.

Thanks to funding from the Vancouver Foundation's Medici Program, we have been able to hire a legacy fund campaign manager, Raine McKay, who will be working with our board and staff over the next two years to make this happen. We will be launching the campaign in October 2007, so over the next 5 months drop into the gallery or email us and share your ideas on how we can work together to create an arts legacy that we all can be proud of—and of course, any spare change will gratefully be accepted.

In 2009 the new media centre, the planning of which is being funded by the Canada Council, will be up and ready to be used in conjunction with our shows, performances, and publications. Designed to increase the accessibility to upcoming grunt programming along with a deeper exploration of the amazing archival material we have accrued over the past 24 years, the media centre will become an important point of sustained interaction between Vancouver's artists and the greater community.

The introduction of the CC funded education program will allow grunt to discover how best to create a sustained and dynamic link between intercity youth and contemporary Aboriginal art. We don't know what this process will look like, but we are really looking forward to pushing the educational envelope in any way we can!

So as we move into our next quarter century of existence, with your input and support, we intend to put more energy into providing spaces & opportunities for the artists' community to share innovative, collaborative and cutting-edge work—and to spend considerably less energy worrying about how we are going to pay for it—well, at least that's the plan.....



The Aboriginal Creators' Project saw the creation of three new distinct microsites profiling the work of three senior, contemporary well-known Canadian First Nations artists: Rebecca Belmore (Ojibwa), Dana Claxton (Lakota Sioux), and Lawrence Paul Yuxweluptun (Coast Salish). Each artist was paired with a young Aboriginal curator—Daina Warren, Tania Willard, and Elaine Moyah. The three artists featured represent the very best in contemporary Canadian Aboriginal art creation. They have shown extreme innovation with their work, breaking out of traditions and through boundaries to

change the way people see contemporary art. Their work reflects a range of styles and crosses many thematic, aesthetic and cultural boundaries—exploring the realities of Native spirituality, cultural renewal and survival, land claims, Aboriginal rights, colonialism and environmental issues. Above all, their work aims to create a dialogue and awareness regarding First Nations' issues and culture that involves all Canadians.

Web Designer: Archer Pechawis

The Aboriginal Creators' Project was funded by the Canadian Heritage Gateway Fund

Canada

Aboriginal Creators' Project

Rebecca Belmore, *Reservoir* (detail), 2001

www.rebeccabelmore.com

Rebecca Belmore, *Vigil* (detail), 2003

Rebecca Belmore

curated by Daina Warren

In June 2006, I had the opportunity to join Rebecca Belmore on an excursion from Winnipeg, Manitoba to Sioux Lookout, Ontario. During this trip we talked over many things: aspects of Aboriginal and reserve life, art and its many philosophies, and the nature of the landscape we were traveling through. This was my first visit to the Canadian Shield; for Belmore the trip was an opportunity to recollect people and places where she used to live. The most impressive part of the trip was the sight of all the scattered systems of lakes and bogs that created the incredible landscape. These minute yet serene lakes are embedded everywhere throughout the southwest region of the Ontario/Manitoba border and seemed to follow us all the way back to her mother's community.

This experience really put me in touch with the inspiration for some of Belmore's work, and was an amazing time to think about my own assumptions about where some of her ideas originated. Through the creation of this website, I wanted to exemplify what I learned about Belmore's territory, create parallels with some of the objects or pieces that she has created over the years, and document her diverse practice.

Daina Warren

Rebecca Belmore, *Vigil* (detail), 2003

Starting From Home:

An Online Retrospective of the Work of Dana Claxton
curated by Tania Willard

This online retrospective of Dana Claxton's work follows the artist's path, weaving together her work, experiences, and ideas. Claxton's career spans different mediums, but all her work is rooted in her worldview as a Lakota woman. From installation to performance to single-channel video works, Claxton's work is multi-layered like the artist herself—artist, moderator, panelist, arts promoter, supporter, and more. As a curator, I didn't know where to begin.

I am starting from home.

Starting from grandmothers and ancestors, land and sky, rage and beauty, Dana Claxton weaves images,

sounds, and ideas together with a sense of balance, subversion, and hope. Claxton's work is situated in place, remembering, and history, bringing these elements together in surreal homages and explorations. Claxton's work is part of a journey—the journey of identity of self and Nation (both Indigenous nations and Canadian Nationhood), the journey of history, and the journey of the spirit.

The online retrospective features a chronology of the artist's work, a bibliography, an interview with the artist, and excerpts and stills from many of Claxton's video works. Journeying through the inspiration and the framework of Claxton's practice through this retrospective brings us closer to understanding the artist and experiencing her work.

Tania Willard

www.danaclaxton.com



Dana Claxton, Buffalo Bone China (installation view), 1997



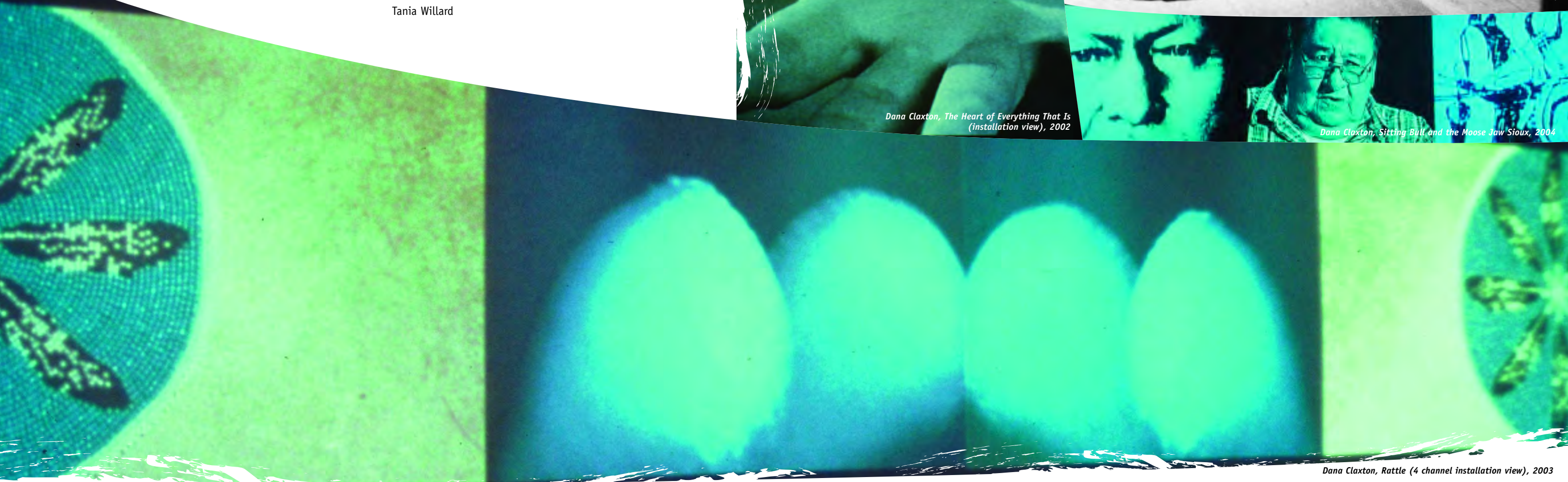
Dana Claxton, The Heart of Everything That Is (installation view), 2002



Dana Claxton, Buffalo Bone China (performance still), 1997. Image courtesy Bradlee LaRocque



Dana Claxton, Sitting Bull and the Moose Jaw Sioux, 2004



Dana Claxton, Rattle (4 channel installation view), 2003

'Kiyam': a Cree word (pronounced keeyam) meaning "never mind, let be." This is a word that my grandmother used often when I was growing up. The first time 'kiyam' became significant for me was when as a young girl I arrived home one day and told her about an encounter with racism at school. I came to understand that 'kiyam' carries with it a way of thinking that is traditional in the First Nations community. However, this way of thinking was challenged when I encountered the paintings of Lawrence Paul Yuxweluptun. I find a sense of relief in Yuxweluptun's approach to racism and difficult issues that people would rather ignore.

Lawrence Paul Yuxweluptun

curated by Elaine Moyah

"Beautifully nasty" is how Yuxweluptun described the concepts in his work during a recent interview on CBC's radio show, Ideas. Yuxweluptun's work is a political discourse on the historical, social, and cultural impact of colonialism on First Nations communities in Canada. His approach is very direct and outspoken, often satirically presenting facts with a mix of humour and irony. Humanity's relationship with the natural world and aspects of West Coast spirituality are also a part of his discourse. Lawrence Paul Yuxweluptun considers his role to be a history painter and protector of the land.

You are invited to navigate his new website, which contains a retrospective of his work from the last

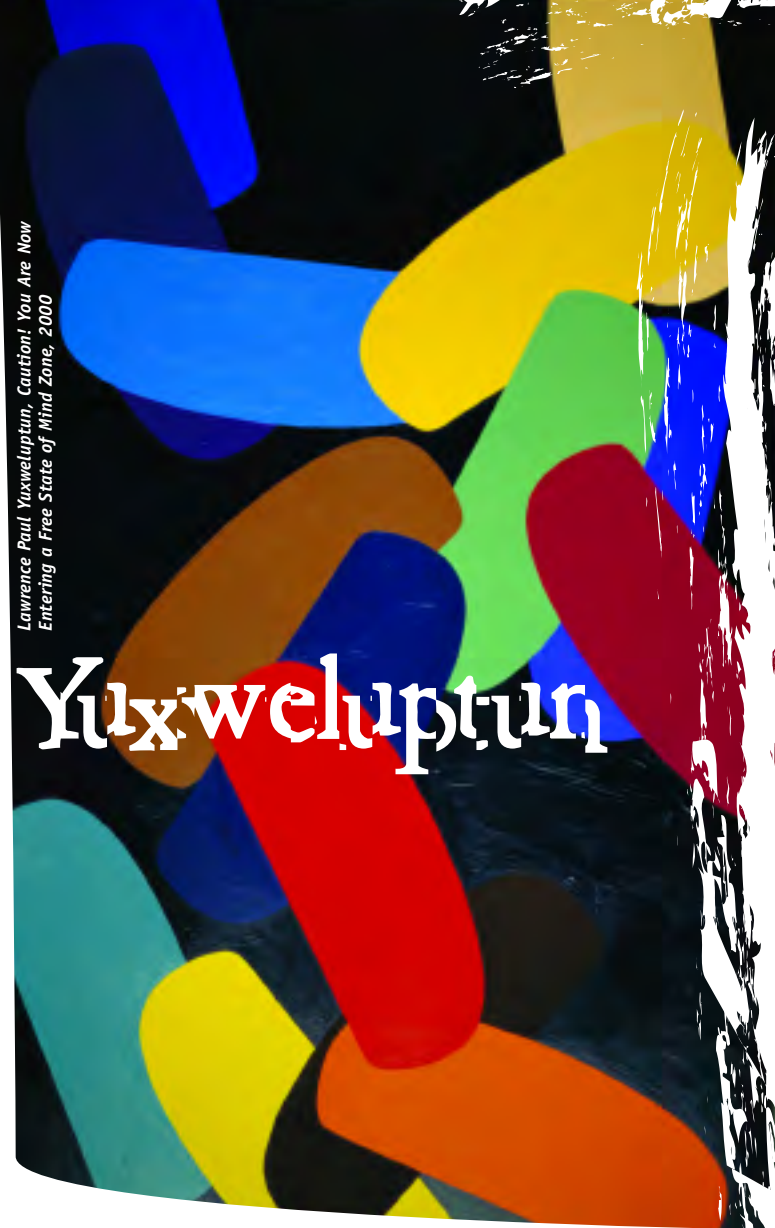
Yuxweluptun

twenty-three years. The site will provide you with an opportunity to explore his various forms, styles, and structures. It showcases his development and exploration of the ovoid in two-dimensional and three-dimensional forms, and provides examples of his interdisciplinary works in performance arts and his ground-breaking exploration of virtual environments. Image galleries on his website are divided into various themes and offer features such as the artist's video and audio commentary as well as an interview with Paul Kennedy, host of Ideas.

I sincerely hope you enjoy your visit! And, be sure to check out the Artist's Blog while you're there so you can join in on the dialogue with artist Lawrence Paul Yuxweluptun.

Elaine Moyah

Lawrence Paul Yuxweluptun, *Caution! You Are Now Entering a Free State of Mind Zone*, 2000



www.lawrencepaulyuxweluptun.com



Lawrence Paul Yuxweluptun, *Multinational Mercenaries: Global Destroyers, Soldiers of Fortune, the New World Order?*, 2001

Lawrence Paul Yuxweluptun, *McMillan Bloedel Eco-System Destroyers and Their Preferred Weapons*, 1994





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More than just an archive, *brunt online* is a space for artists' work to continue to engage others. Not just a reprint of *brunt magazine*, it is video streams of challenging performances, artists' reflections on their work, and critical writing on past exhibitions. A "partner in crime" to *brunt magazine*, together they are an art make-over, an art take-over, coming straight into your living room, or wherever your little internet window to the world is. For the professors out there and the terminal students, you can write papers and get first-hand interviews with the artists, as well as archival exhibition material. Built to please, *brunt online* offers you up art with no holds barred.

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telephone: 604-875-9516
fax: 604-877-0073
grunt@telus.net
www.grunt.bc.ca