



## MEDIA RELEASE

4 September, 2007

### **Inside Out**

[Gwenessa Lam & Janet Wang](#)

September 21 - November 4, 2007

### **Of Landscape and Light**

[Sara Angelucci: Curated by Karen Henry](#)

September 21 - November 4, 2007

## **Join us for the opening reception on Thursday, September 20, 6:30-8:30 pm.**

Participating artists and guest curator will be in attendance

The Richmond Art Gallery will present two new exhibitions opening on Thursday, September 20, featuring the work of Gwenessa Lam & Janet Wang in Gallery one and Sara Angelucci in Gallery Two. A publication will accompany both exhibitions.

The division between interior and exterior spaces is explored in the paintings of Gwenessa Lam and Janet Wang in the exhibition, *Inside Out*. Their work examines the play of light as it flows through windows and into living spaces, providing minimal information as to what may be outside the pane of glass. Lam considers issues of access and denial in her large-scale paintings, placing the viewer on the inside looking out with vague or cropped views of the external space. Wang's paintings use the play of light through the window to imply the exterior, and show the use of decor on the interior to infer personal character and style. Painted on toile de joie fabric, depicting images of bucolic living which become elements of the picture plane, Wang contrasts the pastoral with modernist sensibilities.

Gwenessa Lam received a Bachelor of Fine Arts from the University of British Columbia in 2001 and a Master of Fine Arts from New York University in 2004. Her work has been shown in British Columbia and New York State, including the Queens Museum of Art and the Bronx Museum of the Arts. She is currently based in Vancouver and has taught at the Emily Carr Institute, the Art Institute of Vancouver, and New York University.

Janet Wang lives and works in Vancouver, Canada. She received a Bachelor of Fine Arts (1999) from the University of British Columbia and a Master of Fine Arts from the University of Leeds in 2001. Wang has exhibited in Vancouver, San Francisco and throughout the UK.

*Of Landscape and Light* guest curated by Karen Henry, brings together the landscape photographs from several bodies of work by Toronto artist Sara Angelucci. This is Angelucci's first solo exhibition in Western Canada. Angelucci explores place, time and light in photography both technically and in association with meaning and memory. She has mastered the technique of leaking light into the camera to make highly aesthetic and evocative images, spreading colour across the surface, or shooting light dramatically through the picture plane. The affect is one in which the formalities of technological precision are disrupted by the chaotic elements of lived experience and the layering of memory over objective representation. Angelucci is a photographer and video artist and will screen the digital video, *When the Cricket Sings* from her recent residency in Shanghai.

Angelucci received a Bachelor of Arts (1987) and a Bachelor of Fine Arts (1993) both from the University of Guelph. She went on to earn a Master of Fine Art from the Nova Scotia College of Art and Design (1997). Her photographic work has been exhibited widely in Eastern Canada and her video works have been screened across Canada and included in festivals in Europe and Hong Kong since 1996

Karen Henry is a curator, writer, editor and consultant in the visual arts. She has produced a number of exhibitions including *Glenn Lewis: Utopiary, Metaphorest and Bewilderness* (1993, with Brice McNeil); *War Zones* (1999, with Karen Love); *By Land and Sea (Prospect and Refuge): Marian Penner Bancroft* (1999); *Allyson Clay: Imaginary Standard Distance* (2003); and *Variations on the Picturesque* (2005, with Karen Love). She was formerly Director of the Western Front in Vancouver and the Burnaby Art Gallery and currently works as a public art consultant.

The Richmond Art Gallery and Guest Curator, Karen Henry, would like to thank the artist and the lenders of the artworks: Macdonald Stewart Art Centre; Rick Dzupina; Wynick/Tuck Gallery, Toronto.

In conjunction with the Opening Reception of our autumn exhibitions we will announce the re-naming of the exhibition space to the **Mike Roscoe Educational Gallery**. Naming the Gallery after Mike Roscoe is also an important step towards making the RAG's history and community heritage visible to the general public.

The Richmond Art Gallery is located at 180-7700 Minoru Gate in Richmond. **Gallery hours are 10:00am to 6:00pm from Monday to Friday and 10:00 am to 5:00 pm on Saturday and Sunday.** For more information visit our website at [www.richmondartgallery.org](http://www.richmondartgallery.org).

The RAG is operated by the Richmond Art Gallery Association and is the City of Richmond's Public Contemporary Art Gallery under the auspices of the Office of Parks, Recreation & Cultural Services. The RAG receives generous and ongoing financial support from the City of Richmond, the BC Arts Council, the BC Gaming Commission and the Canada Council for the Arts.

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Artists Statements follow on Pages 3 & 4

*Living Room* - Statement by Janet Wang

An architect once aptly stated, "A person's car reflects who they want to be; a person's home shows who they really are." With a growing contemporary obsession with home decoration, room makeovers, DIY and renovation, our homes are increasingly becoming sites of status anxiety and extensions of our self-image. In effect, a home, in its contents and discontents, is an advertisement of the occupants' way of life.

There is a growing fascination with the way we style and decorate the places we live in, and how in turn this reflects on us, the inhabitants. This awareness of our living spaces is evident in the increased consumer obsession with our homes, and other people's homes - namely, the huge crop of television shows and magazine titles allowing us voyeuristic glances into the lives of others. Publications range from titles such as *Traditional Home* and *Verandah* to others lauding modern style, like *Dwell* and *House & Home*.

In the *Living Room* paintings, images of homes glorified for posterity in these glossy magazines have been cropped, replicated, and laboured over. Images were selected based on various factors - the quality of light, the interaction of the interior to exterior (sometimes only shown through reflection), the use of colour - whether a monotone palette or a deep red highlight. These images then were cropped to focus the attention on an aspect of the overall image. In some instances this was a small detail - shoes stored under a bench, an artwork in the space, the cut flowers in the vase - while other paintings focus on the overall grandeur or the oversized scale of the "glamour" space, such as double height ceilings, floor to ceiling windows, oversized furniture, a profusion of opulent glass and silverware. The boundary of this enquiry into the home is the living room; according to its name, it should be the centre of a home, but instead is often a showroom and the least functional.

The images have been painted on toile de joie, a traditional fabric design used for upholstery and decoration, which depicts imagery of sexual frolicking and pastoral living. The conflation of the illusory painted surface and the printed décor motif defies minimalist tastes, reminding the viewer of the purely ornamental aspect of the painting itself, and in the case of *Living Room #15*, overwhelming the eye. The compositions begin simply and nearly monotone early in the series, progressing to greater profusions of detail and saturations of colour. The toile at first acts as a border, or frame to the painted surface, and as the series progresses, becomes an element itself in the composition, while finally becoming the setting in paintings #8 and #14.

## Artist Statement

Living in uncertain times and under a general malaise, it was during my move to New York that I began to investigate notions of alienation and unease in my paintings. Adjusting to a new environment, I attempted to negotiate my own sense of place through memories and images of my former home. Within my work,

seemingly banal portraits and window scenes become sites of emotional absence and the uncanny. The paintings withhold a specific narrative from their viewers and convey an underlying tension by means of the cropping and lighting of spaces. I question the stability of vision and explore notions of estrangement, where familiar scenes are inserted and inverted with elements of disquiet.

In my research, I also explore the nature of perception, particularly the value of sight as the predominant sense through which one acquires information. I am interested in the viewer's desire to see, and the expectations such a desire can bring to the experience of painting. Traditionally, painting acts as a window or portal into another visual space; however, such a model is subverted to re-evaluate the manner in which we habitually accept and experience images

An artist statement in response to the exhibition *Landscape and Light* curated by Karen Henry by Sara Angelucci

*Landscape and Light* curated by Karen Henry brings together several bodies of photographs including the *Perfect Past*, *Timescapes and Stillness*, in which landscape is a primary subject. Interestingly, she observed a connection between this earlier photographic work and *When the Cricket Sings*, a video I recently completed during a residency in Shanghai, in the fall of 2006.

While writing the titles of these works—*past, time, still, when*—I noticed their common temporal preoccupation. It is often said that artists have only one work that they make again and again. While formally, these photographs and video take different approaches, Henry has keenly noted my ongoing interest in memory, the passage of time, the desire to connect to place, and the limitations of indexical media to resolve this longing.

The relationship Henry observed between the *Timescapes*, film-strip like photographs recording a passage of time and place, and *When the Cricket Sings*, a video walk, is particularly inspired. These works make evident my ongoing interest in fixed vs. the fluid moment; in my effort to capture and control time. The *Timescapes* record a series of still moments in a short-lived experience—a walk, a train ride. In the still photographs, made using a plastic toy camera, light leaks flare across the film plane. *When the Cricket Sings* leads the viewer on a brief walk in real time. A single, unedited take of 8 1/2 minutes winds through a traditional Shanghai street soon to vanish under the city's rapid urban development. Shot at night using a small camera with auto focus, the bursts of light periodically reveal individual shops and street life framed between the dark city walls, echoing the still frames and rhythm of the *Timescapes*.

While the light referred to in the exhibition title unites these works, it is uniformly permitted (even encouraged) to wander as it pleases. What comes into view or remains with us is sporadic, at best a momentary gift. In seeking out the past it becomes clear that memory is beyond our control, beyond reach. Will has no power over memory; yet by using lens-based media I seek to firmly grasp that which is fleeting.

The collected work in *Landscape and Light* demonstrates that desire is stronger than common sense. I am driven to hold onto a cultural past separated by a great divide of time and distance. While knowing the past is disappearing exponentially as time passes, the desire to capture it, in spite of its futility, directs the picture I try to create again and again.