

RAG

Richmond Art Gallery
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NEWS RELEASE

Date: April 11, 2006
End Date: June 1, 2006



Paul Mathieu, 2004 Four Binary Bowls, Porcelain

Richmond Art Gallery Celebrates Asian Heritage Month with two new exhibitions; **Making China in China by Vancouver Artist Paul Mathieu & An Opportunity To Explore The Meaning Of Art by Richmond artist Su-an Yun from May 2 – June 1 2006. A performance art tour by Nancy Nisbet will also take place at the Gallery on May 1st 6:00pm.**

MAKING CHINA IN CHINA: PAUL MATHIEU

The evolution of Paul Mathieu's ceramic practice is articulated over the history of its production. He does not simply make ceramic pieces, functional or otherwise, rather the fabrication is a part of his observation and interrogation of the place of ceramics and pottery in the world and in art. He has worked with serial production, co modification and the consequent questioning of originality and authenticity. The works in this exhibition have been produced in a factory in Jinghezhen, China, a city that has many factories and workshops that have been functioning for 1,000 years.

Mathieu first visited this area of China eight years ago and returned annually to produce this work in the factories. An exhibition catalogue will be available during the exhibit.

Paul Mathieu has been a student of ceramics since 1972, in Montreal, Calgary, Stoke-on-Trent in

England, and San Francisco and Los Angeles in the USA, where he received a Master of Fine Art degree from UCLA in 1987. He has taught ceramics since 1976 in Montreal at the college and university levels, but also in Mexico and in Paris at the Ecole Nationale Superieure des Beaux-Arts. Since 1996, he has been teaching in Vancouver in the School of Visual Arts at the Emily Carr Institute.

His work has been shown internationally in numerous important exhibitions, among them Mino, Japan in 1992, 1994 and 2002, and in Korea, Taiwan, Italy, England, Australia and all over the USA and Canada. He has received numerous prizes, including the "Grand Prix des Metiers d'Art" in 1985 and the Chalmers Award for Excellence in Crafts in 2000.

His work has been exhibited in 21 individual exhibitions since 1978, in various cities in Canada (Montreal, Toronto, Calgary and Vancouver) and the USA (New-York, Los Angeles, Chicago).

Paul Mathieu will give a talk Making China in China on Monday May 29 at 7:30pm in the Richmond Cultural Centre Lecture Hall. Admission is Free. A catalogue will be available for purchase at the opening as well on May 1st.



Su An Yun, 2006

Today's resolution is tomorrow's reality - Eradicate poor art!

Video

AN OPPORTUNITY TO EXPLORE THE MEANING OF ART BY SU-AN YUN 2 MAY - 1 JUNE 2006

Richmond-based artist Su-an Yun's work raises important questions about the function of art in our society and the role artists play within communities. Notions of self-identity that address immigrant experiences of displacement, marginalization and a potential inability to engage in personal expression are also central to her practice. The questions she raises address her desire to foster a critical engagement with the local community. Yun employs familiar advertising media such as inflatable figures, stickers, banners and video-based advertising to critically address these issues through the use of satire and "twisted humour".

The **opening reception** is on Monday, May 1, 6:30pm - 8:30pm. The exhibition continues until June 1, 5pm. The Richmond Art Gallery is located at 180-7700 Minoru Gate. **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

EXCHANGE 2006 BY NANCY NISBET

Vancouver-based artist Nancy Nisbet will launch her 6-month, North American performance art tour at the Richmond Art Gallery on MAY 1 at 6:00pm. The performance involves the artist ID tagging (RFID) and organizing all of her possessions into a commercial transport truck which she will be driving across Canada, the United States and Mexico. As part of her journey she will exchange all of her belongings with people she encounters. The performance brings attention to issues of economic politics, such as North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), Radio Frequency Identification (RFID) technology and consumer culture inspired notions of "I am what I buy". The artist employs cultural resistance to address international politics, technological surveillance, and identity construction. The RAG invites the public to attend the launch of this exciting project and bring items to trade with the artist. For news, route map, item inventory and further information about the project visit www.exchangeproject.ca.

Nancy Nisbet is Assistant Professor of visual art at UBC. She has lectured and written about human rights, surveillance and RFID technology and exhibited her artwork internationally. *Exchange* is made possible by a grant from the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada.

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Artist's Statement
Paul Mathieu

In the current complacency of entertainment culture, the creative act has to remain controversial and subversive. One of the few places left for this possibility, strangely enough, is in craft practices.

My work is an investigation of the role and function of ceramics within culture in general and art in particular. I see ceramics (and pottery) as an independent, autonomous and specific art form and it is this specificity that my work explores, around concepts particular to craft practices, like decoration, function and containment, in a unique relation to various contexts, to time, to history and to human experiences.

My work is a contestation of art, of design and of crafts and of other institutional practices. As such it situates itself OUTSIDE art, outside design and outside crafts as well. It is altogether all of these things and none of them. In our present time, art is mediated, impermanent, nonfunctional, visual, discursive and language based. My work is handmade, very permanent (a particular characteristic of ceramic materials), tactile, functional in a practical way and based on a direct physical experience in its making and its appreciation. Design is mechanized, multiple, concerned with style and the market place, while my work is again, hand made, unique, stylistically diverse and basically unmarketable...Crafts are largely about exquisite making and taste, particular materials and techniques and, again, about individual style and personal expression. My work is not particularly well made and beautiful, in fact it might easily be considered ugly, the materials and techniques that I use are not that important or even relevant and I long for a certain anonymity, so that when, where and by whom the object is made is at least confusing and at best irrelevant. My intent is to contest and subvert altogether art, design and crafts.

The concepts of decoration and containment (function) are central to this investigation. Decoration for its historical significance but also its relation to excess, exuberance and celebration. Containment and thus function, for their subversive potential, as a political statement in a world where art is perceived as essentially useless and fundamentally visual. By retaining function, I celebrate the history of the field, but also contest the hegemony of the image in culture now and reaffirm the necessity for a direct, tactile experience.

My aim is to reconcile extremes and oppositions, destroy hierarchies and confuse conventions. Contradictions are built-in, embraced and essential.

Artist's Statement

Sun An Yun

This installation deals mainly with the doubtful roles of art and artist in the community as well as the isolated relationship between art and the public. It also addresses the issue of cultural identity, which has been re-shaped by the perception of displacement, marginalization, and losing faith in the ability to express one's self. Through satire and humor, these issues are critically examined in the work. This installation consists of two sky dancers (inflatable advertising puppets), two oversized banners, stickers, videos, and souvenir towels. With the intention of having an immediate relationship with the audience, the various forms of advertisements are appropriated into the work. In spite of the artist's envy over the close relationship between the public and the advertising medium, employing these forms is making a satirical statement on the flashy commercial art and consumer driven society.

Biography

Nancy Nisbet, Artist

Nancy Nisbet is a multidisciplinary artist with a practice that weaves connections between the political, the technological and the personal. Her current artwork, *Exchange*, has been in development since 2003. *Exchange* uses cultural resistance to unsettle questionable relationships between international politics, technological surveillance, and identity construction. For this project all of Nancy's personal belongings are inventoried and marked with Radio Frequency Identification (RFID) tags. Nancy will drive a semitruck, trading personal items with individuals encountered on her 6-month road trip around North America.

As part of the art project itself, Nancy will consciously place herself outside of the expected private/commercial categories with respect to international border crossings. Her *Exchange* performances create friction surrounding international trade agreements, surveillance and national security. Participants must reconsider negotiation and exchange based outside of the standard economic model. There is no need for economic parity between traded items. Sharing of personal stories and experiences and the development of community and solidarity are the currency of *Exchange*.

Previous artworks include *Crude Events*, *Pop! Goes the Weasel* and *After/noon Tea*. In *Crude Events* Nancy donned a mask and stormed a gallery with a paint-ball gun to shoot paint onto canvases in a reflection of the price of crude oil during the 2002 build up to the War in Iraq. For *Pop! Goes the Weasel* Nancy created a video of the surgical implantation of her hands with RFID microchips as

part of a larger installation that used RFID badges to track visitors' positions in a gallery space. *After/noon Tea* was a performance and installation that created community through the taking of tea. Each week for six months Nancy dropped large hand-made tea bags, hot and dripping, onto table-cloths in the preparation of tea to give to passers-by. The tablecloths were then hand-sewn together in a reflection of the labour and active process of community building.

Nancy is well known for her interest in RFID technology and is the author of "Resisting Surveillance: Identity and Implantable Microchips" and "What do we get out of what we put into the Blueberry iBox". Her artwork has been presented internationally including exhibits in the United States, Germany, Japan and Thailand. She maintains an active international conference portfolio and speaks on issues of art in connection with resistance, surveillance, human rights, RFID technology, and identity.

Nancy is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Art History & Visual Art at The University of British Columbia and is the recipient of the 2002/2003 Peter Wall Early Career Scholar Award. In 2004 Nancy was awarded the UBC Scholar in Residence at the Center for Research in Women's Studies and Gender Relations and she continues to be an associate Faculty member of the Centre.

Nancy received her MFA from the California Institute of the Arts in Photography in 2000 and holds a BSc. in Genetics('91) and a BEd. in Secondary Education('93). Now based in Vancouver, British Columbia, Nancy continues to push the boundaries of technology, politics, human interaction and identity while enjoying the beauty of west coast life.