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Richmond Art Gallery
180-7700 Minoru Gate
Richmond, V6Y 1R9
www.richmondartgallery.org

NEWS RELEASE

Date: February 23, 2006

End Date: April 23, 2006



Madeleine Wood, re Visioning,(detail) 2004 – 05,
oil on canvas, sextet, 60 x 216”

SOMETHING ABOUT LOVE: MADELEINE WOOD, VANESSA KWAN, KRISTINA JAUGELIS, JENNY HAM **11 MARCH - 3 APRIL 2006**

WHAT IS THE IMPACT OF LOVE ON OUR LIVES? How do individuals undertake and maintain relationships? What objects do we associate with our feelings of love and longing? This exhibition offers engaging variations on the subject of love, presenting notions of romantic love, self-love and preservation and pop culture-imposed standards of love and desire. The four Vancouver-based artists in the exhibition are all women and approach the subject of love from a female perspective.

Madeleine Wood's patchwork of paintings creates a selective personal history of romantic relationships which represent an accumulation of emotional attachments. Jenny Ham examines familial love and longing related to the embodiment of home, drawing on nostalgia and memory to create a space where the past, present and future can occur simultaneously. Vanessa Kwan negotiates the relationship that exists between nostalgic desire and mass production through the use of cast-off materials with which she fashions alternative approaches to the love token. Kristina Jaugelis creates life-size bed structures, exploring the site where love can become entangled with feelings of anxiety and vulnerability.



Heather Passmore, Bikini Projection, 2005
digital projection, 4 x 6"

BIKINI PROJECT: HEATHER PASSMORE
11 MARCH - 23 APRIL 2006

Vancouver based artist **Heather Passmore**, reconfigures used and overlooked materials to examine issues of class politics and cultural hierarchies. The Bikini Project is a projection of a succession of 300 snapshots of women at the beach. The artist has digitized each damaged snapshot drawn from a single source, a photo album found floating in Howe Sound. She uses her shared authorship with the album's anonymous creator as a means to examine the often-complex relationship between creator, subject, and audience. By projecting the images, she nullifies the role of the physical photographs as anthropological artefacts creating an alternative mode of representing the everyday experience. Through this work the artist weighs the authority created through archiving and assumptions of cultural value.

Heather Passmore earned both a Bachelor and Master of Fine Arts from the University of British Columbia. She has exhibited her work since 1994 with solo and group exhibitions throughout the Lower Main- land and in Dawson City, Yukon; with upcoming exhibitions planned for Ottawa, Halifax and Kingston, Ontario. The Bikini Project was recently included as part of the Vancouver Art Gallery's large group exhibition, Classified Materials: Accumulations, Archives, Artists (October 15, 2005 – January 2, 2006).

The **opening reception** is on Friday, March 10, 6:30pm - 8:30pm. The exhibition continues until April 23. 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 or contact us by email at gallery@city.richmond.bc.ca.

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(30)

Please see **Artists' Statements** on pg 3.

Artist Statement - Kristina Jaugelis

I have long been fascinated by the secret lives of the objects around us. Among them, those that serve as containers for the body occupy a special place in my mind. Chairs, tables, and beds not only facilitate our interactions with others, they are repositories of information, sites of personal history, memory, and experience. And yet so many of our private experiences are mediated by broader social forces. As an artist I am consistently drawn to this territory, motivated by a desire to explore the ideologies, power relationships, cultural fears and anxieties that lie beneath the surface order of our surroundings.

Several years ago I turned my attention to one object in particular, the bed: a domestic comfort, a place of rest, of intimacy, and yes, of love. But in an age when we are increasingly aware of the external threats posed to our bodies and our selves, a bed is often the site of anxiety and fear. Both pieces in this exhibition explore the underside of human relationships through an uncanny view of the place where many of our fears surrounding intimacy, sexuality, and mortality converge.

My contribution to *Something About Love* comprises two sculptural works. *Bed (No. 1)* (2002) is a lightweight aluminum single bed frame supporting a plexiglas sheet. Small holes perforate the surface, each one containing a glass test tube that hangs in the air below. *Bed (No. 2)* (2003–2004) is a life-size mahogany double bed. Like the first piece it has no mattress, just a hard expanse of wood. A hunting rifle, visible through a locked glass cabinet door, lies under the surface of the bed's polished exterior.

Bed (No. 1) examines contemporary love and sexuality in a society fuelled by fears of HIV/AIDS. If the 1960s and 1970s were characterized by uninhibited abandonment in the sexual sphere, then the 1980s, 1990s and beyond have been marked by a need to contain and control our bodily fluids, desires, and impulses. An entire generation has matured surrounded by public anxiety about sex and the permeability of our bodies. What are the physical and psychological implications of this epidemic? How does it affect the ways that we love others, and those who love us in return?

A bed can also be a staging ground for a number of private dramas involving relationships with loved ones, strangers, or the outside world. *Bed (No. 2)* explores the ways that power and vulnerability intersect with gender, sexuality, and the body in the context of our most intimate relationships. I am particularly interested in the unspoken fears we harbour towards those we love; the spectre of implicit or implied violence that marks many relationships; and the subtle gestures that disrupt or maintain the balance (or imbalance) of power between partners and lovers. Like the gun concealed beneath the surface of the bed, these gestures are often barely perceptible though their consequences may be profound.

I use dissonance and juxtaposition in both pieces to draw attention to those areas where personal and social conflict seem least likely to occur. In much of my work this tension, between social harmony and disharmony, surface order and underlying disorder, is expressed through the unsettling combination of precise, economic design with elements of violence, aberration, or discord. Behind the comfort of our possessions lies a story, beneath the surface of a bed perhaps an unperceivable threat.

Artist Statement: Love Objects 1 – 4, 2006 Vanessa Kwan

For the last few years, I've been making work that investigates an individual's interaction with popular media and culture. Whether through our consumption of mainstream media, participation within dominant cultural value systems, or our experiences as individuals in urban landscapes, contemporary emotional experiences are more often than not complicated by collective, often consumer driven, concerns. The creation of unique emotional qualities through the language of dominant forms of cultural production is central to my work.

This thinking has evolved in a variety of ways for me. In the Spring of 2005, I participated in an artist in residency program called "Out Of Office Reply" at Vancouver's Or Gallery. Designed as an opportunity for artists to create work that took shape outside the conventional gallery space, I chose to work with a designer to create a book of postcards that investigated the changing parameters of Vancouver's landscape. The work, called "Your Private Sky", combined do-it-yourself sensibilities with a design that replicated common postcard formats. Images of 'world-class' cityscapes—New York, Paris, Hong Kong and so on—were reproduced in a booklet, available to gallery visitors for a nominal fee, and were altered so that individual's could punch out certain sections of each image and hold it up to the real-world vistas of Vancouver. This project presented an opportunity for me to contemplate larger cultural issues of urbanization and tourism, while placing the hand of each unique viewer at the centre of the creation of the work.

A second project, mounted in Penticton, BC, similarly dealt with issues of tourism and monumentality. The work was called "Your Private Sky (Penticton)" and was presented at the Art Gallery of the South Okanagan during the city's annual Peach Festival. It took the shape of a person-sized peach-monument, mirroring the popular (and much larger) landmark that inhabits Penticton's lakefront year-round. The sculpture was created out of fibre-glass, and had a light-tight interior that visitors could walk into. The interior featured a false ceiling with holes randomly drilled in it and a light fixture behind, creating a simple, do-it-yourself illusion of a starry night sky. The project again paired a slick format—the fibre-glass was buffed and airbrushed professionally—with a DIY experience. This 'hand-held' quality is a very important aspect to my work, and is central to my project of combining the forms and language of contemporary mass culture with the markers of individualized, subjective experiences.

Other recent projects have included a picture of artist Rodney Graham autographed by pop star Justin Timberlake, a cowboy shirt made of dish rags, a stuffed toy version of the "Virgin Mary grilled cheese sandwich" that recently sold on eBay for \$25,000, and a series of quilts made exclusively of new American Eagle clothing. In all of these, as in the postcard and peach works, I have attempted to 'filter' the issues underlying our contemporary, North American values and by-products, providing a cultural product that hovers somewhere between replication and critical engagement. Idol worship, manufactured

nostalgia (evident in the 'vintage' trends in popular fashion), and concepts of faith and hope in modern times: all of these subjects appeal to me, especially in their varying abilities to accommodate the subjective, emotional experience of the individual.

I consider the present works—Love Objects—to be another part of the collection of objects that have made up my art practice thus far. When given the opportunity to make work on the subject of 'love', I was immediately attracted to the idea of creating alternative love tokens—objects made from everyday materials that would replace those lavish gifts that might usually be associated with the translation of love into a material form. I was hoping to create objects that express emotional realities without falling into clichéd territories, so fully inhabited by readily available consumer products. Ideas of obsession, devotion, transformation and loss are all concepts that exist in the work; these are, I hope, evident in the idiosyncratic forms that are exhibited here.

Artist Statement - Madeleine Wood

So Much for Love is at once an ironic dismissal and an admission of romantic investment. In either case, it reinforces the universal concern that I seek to depict in my work – the difficult states of human interaction; warmth, coolness, proximity, distance, arousal, indifference, clarity and confusion, as well as my shifting perceptions of those I have loved. I explore the social and physiological phenomenon of falling in love, and its impact as an energizing force in life.

Like a patchwork quilt, each square is a fragment from a story. The grid represents the past seven and a half years of my life, from the death of someone I loved, to the absence of someone I love now (July 1997 to December 2004.) It is a selective history, the charged, romantic and sentimental, with each square a mnemonic of my heart. I own this accumulation of attachments. It covers me, like a quilt. The rose evolves, as does my relationship to love.

Artist Statement - Jenny Ham

My recent body of work incorporates various media including video, installation and performance in order to tackle complexities and layers of my Korean-Canadian background. As such, my identity as an Asian woman is inescapable. The journey to find a middle ground between my birthplace and this Western context has been a constant struggle. The body then, becomes a tool to interweave these shifts and changes. By fusing elements of home, nostalgia and memory, I create a space where the past, present and future occur simultaneously. I am influenced by how art, theory, and the everyday: overlap, intersect, and contradict. In this way, my work can be seen as a context in which both the archetypal and personal construct the collective experience.

There are many dichotomies that exist within my work, landscape and urban(scape), the natural and the artificial, the center and the periphery. More specifically however, I am interested in how these parallel representations are read historically in relation to Modernism and contemporary art practices. The physical location of one's place serves to transform one's identity. Social and cultural alienation are some of the ramifications of contemporary existence. As such, I am interested in exploring the underside of the American vernacular by combining everyday life and theatricality. My work attempts to question the role of presentation, more specifically the position of the viewer in relation to an artwork. The principle concern is to portray a scene that is consciously contrived using reality as it presents itself to my own subjectivity - one that is by no means concerned with reproducing the outside world in an empirically accurate sense, rather one that exists within my own fantasy.

Although my choice of media is constantly changing, the social and cultural critiques remain consistent. What is at stake is the visibility or revealing of the "subject". The role of representation realized entirely through a self-reflexive approach is for me a means to reflect on and study other constructs that I realized through the production of art. A critique of representation occurs in the process of investigating notions of the self. As a result, the point of reference in my work derives from my own experiences combined with an interest in Western artistic practices particularly in the painting tradition. Using this as a point of departure, I attempt to deconstruct Western ideology by carving out a space for myself to become a part of that history. The problem of alienation and displacement often lies within the boundaries of nature and culture. It is within this space where the poetic and transgressive qualities of my work come together.

Artist Statement - Heather Passmore

The "Bikini Projection" (2003) re-presents a found, anonymous photo album of 294 snapshots. These images are projected at 4' x 5' as a continuously looping digital slide show. The majority of snapshots portray women in bikinis at local and international beaches. Each projected image (and any notes accompanying the back side of the photos) hovers for a few seconds before gradually fading into the next. A short text explaining the known history of the archive accompanies the projection. The album was retrieved from Howe Sound by log salvor Erik Hammond during the spring of 2002. Many of the photos are altered in a 'painterly' way by saltwater erosion.

I intend the projection of obscured images to favour meditation on the im/possibility of artwork or artifact to connect to the everyday as a place of the 'real'. Situated within a larger cultural context, the collected images of women at leisure may critique aspects of male bourgeois sensitivity, particularly the history of its expression within the gallery space. I aim not to present the actual album and offer an 'objective' ethnography of its contents or compiler, but to suspend the viewer's elitist desire to read, analyze and control such subjects. I do not wish to unlock the meaning of private photo albums within museum space,

or to subordinate them within institutional hierarchy. Rather than reassert a dichotomy between high and the low culture, this work seeks to offer an alternative mode of representing the everyday.

My artwork typically displays concern with its own assumption of cultural value. My discomfort with the nexus of art, power, and knowledge leaves me keen to undermine art as a sphere remote from everyday experience and people. These interests manifest in my tendency to reconfigure quotidian, obsolete, and discarded media such as found snapshots, plastic, carpet, linoleum, wood paneling, t-shirts, and photocopies. I strive to nuance my considerations and avoid wholesale reevaluation. Specifically, I aim to connect viewers to cultural division through the use of socio-historically laden materials. Class politics, and the social function of art inform much of my practice. As a prestigious realm of knowledge and culture, art functions in part to legitimate class division and perpetuate uneven distributions of cultural power and authority.

I take a critical perspective on the construction of class subjectivities and I want to consider how the pursuit of individuation and self-determination emerges aligned within the space of "lifestyle". My work crosses an impasse within cultural studies and critical theory in which the former insists that popular culture is the site of resistance and the formation of radicals, and the latter argue that the adherents of popular culture are the dupes of the culture industry. I wish to extend the notion of art as an everyday category of experience and popular practice in radical disalignment with consumer culture, and to register the potential for critical autonomy outside the realm of elite art.