

CAMPsites

Camp: 1. a place where an army or other body of persons is lodged in tents or other temporary means of shelter. 2. such tents or shelters collectively. 3. the persons so sheltered. 4. the act of camping out. 5. any temporary structure as a tent or cabin, used on an outing or vacation. 6. a body of troops, workers etc., camping and moving together. 7. army life. 8. a group of persons favouring the same ideals, doctrines, etc. 9. any position in which ideals, doctrines etc., are strongly entrenched.

Campsite: n. a place used or suitable for camping

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Foreword



Introduction

Melanie Townsend

WHILE WORKING AS THE CURATOR of the Walter Phillips Gallery, I first began to wonder at the contradictions amongst Banff's various communities. I noted its small residential contingent of "locals," saturated by thousands of employees who, like myself, worked in Banff but commuted from elsewhere (the result of premium estate prices). I observed the millions of visitors, typically wealthy, or at least with some disposable income—from across Canada and around the world—who came to ski, camp or hike; the young people who came to work in service industry jobs, in hotels, restaurants and ski hills; hitch-hikers and campers passing through *en route* to other destinations, and the often unseen homeless that also inhabited the Bow Valley. A job change put me on the road again, all the more aware of the necessity of mobility in today's economy. Together these everyday realities were the impetus for a more sustained consideration of transience, as illustrated by this exhibition.

Tunnel Mountain Campground, Banff National Park,
Photo: Tara Nicholson



Tunnel Mountain Campground, Banff National Park, Photos: Tara Nicholson

The publication is, in part, a record of the exhibition *CAMPsites*, an exploration of impermanence and itinerancy as conditions of contemporary life and an examination of socially motivated work. Over the course of its three installations from 2005 through 2007, *CAMPsites* included mixed media, photography, sculpture and video by Kim Adams, Rebecca Belmore, Robin Collyer, Fred Douglas, Ellen Driscoll, Faye HeavyShield, Kristina Jaugelis and Reece Terris, Adriana Kuiper, Donald Lawrence, Liz Magor, Janet Morton, Tsuyoshi Ozawa, Ana Rewakowicz, Sandra Vida and Paul Wong. They represent an eclectic (and by no means comprehensive) sampling of artists whose works confront the various themes of the exhibition. At times witty, politically engaged or reflective, their works illuminated the preponderance of contemporary nomads across all cultures and economic classes, often juxtaposing the contradiction between the urban homeless, immigrants and refugees against upper middle class recreation activities.

In confronting traditional notions of camp (and camping), some works celebrated fun, kitsch and middle class recreation; others illuminated the often-stark realities of economic inequity and political injustice. Issues of survival, shelter, and the portability of home remained central to many of the works, and were underpinned by questions of

community, nationhood and a connectedness to the land itself. Even as the political and activist nature of the work was undeniable, the research by contemporary artists into habitual, temporary and mobile architecture was also paramount. Social and psychological investigation into space was a significant undercurrent of the exhibition.

The host venues, The Walter Phillips Gallery (Banff, Alberta), Museum London (London, Ontario) and The Confederation Centre of the Arts (Charlottetown, Prince Edward Island) represented variations in a shared proximity to issues of transience across Canada and around the world. Set in the recreational nexus of Banff National Park the works took on a particular poignancy, illuminating the disparity between bourgeois leisure activities and the economic realities of the poor and displaced peoples. They dealt with a reality that was particularly evident among communities in the Rocky Mountains that once served as frontier towns, dotted with temporary housing for miners and railway workers who “opened” the West, and now face obsolescence in the wake of shrinking economic opportunities, recent flooding and forest fire.

In London the works took on new meaning, situated in the heart of south-western Ontario’s industrial and agricultural belt where the working poor, migrant farm worker and the



CAMPsites Installation View, Museum London, Photo: John Tambllyn



CAMPsites Installation View, Walter Phillips Gallery, Photo: Tara Nicholson



CAMPsites Installation Views, Museum London, Photos: John Tamblyn

homeless are hidden from the city's largely white collar citizens who venture on weekends to campgrounds and cottages on the surrounding Great Lakes. While Prince Edward Island (in the bucolic world of Anne of Green Gables, an idealized version of Canada that, despite receiving millions of international tourists), is faced with economic downturns in traditional agricultural and fishing jobs. These have driven young people out of the Maritimes in search of livelihoods in urban centres and oil towns of the West.

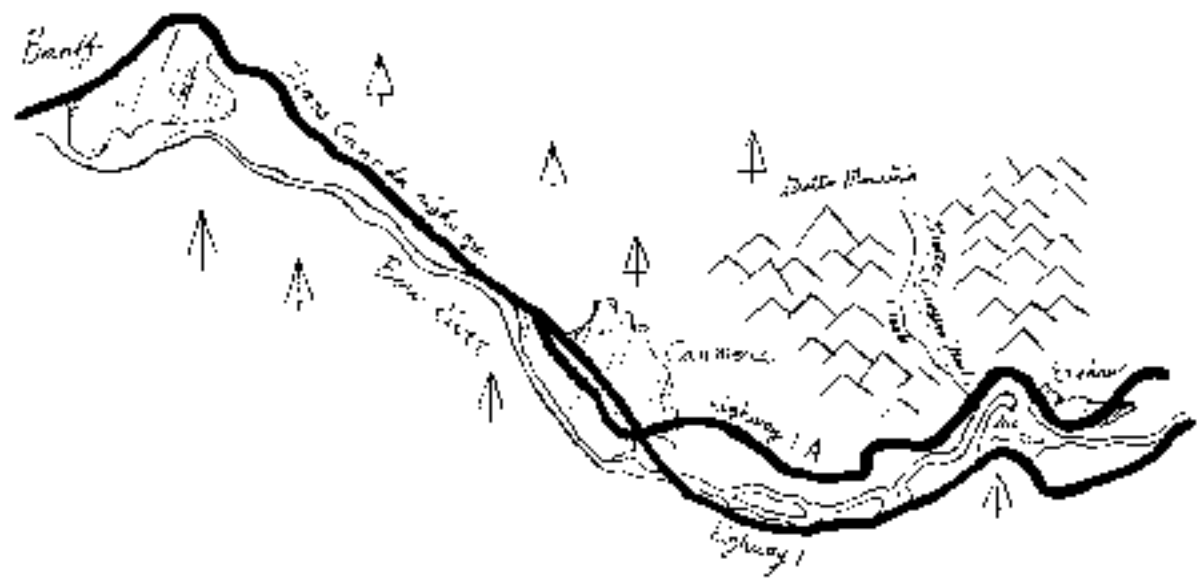
This publication offers not only the occasion to reconsider the exhibition, but to expand it, and discuss other works in relation to the show. In addition to my own essay and the pages documenting the work of the various artists included in the various versions of the exhibition, this publication also includes essays by Halifax-based artist and educator Bruce Barber and Vancouver-based curator Candice Hopkins. Expanding the dialogue first begun by the exhibition, their texts offer new considerations of the ideas inherent in *CAMPsites*. Barber's essay, *Socially Engaged Art Practice: Campsites and Squats*, reconsiders German philosopher Jurgen Habermas's theory of communicative action through the lens of littoralist works that explore the varied themes of *CAMPsites* as well as issues of morality, ethics and social and cultural change.

Hopkins's reflections *On Nomadism* provides an insightful overview of the nomadic life of First Nations who lived and passed through the Canadian west. She positions herself as both observed and observer, providing an account peppered with equal parts anthropologist and heir to the oral histories of the indigenous people of North America. Since the various versions of the exhibition have closed, Barber's and Hopkins's essays have given me much more to think about in my own consideration of *CAMPsites*, and I thank them both for their contributions to this publication.

My thanks go to the Walter Phillips Gallery at The Banff Centre, where this project began, and to Anthony Kiendl, the lead researcher on the *Informal Architectures* project, of which this exhibition and publication were but a small part. Thanks are also owing to the Social Science and Humanities Research Council, the Canada Council for the Arts and the Ontario Arts Council for the funds provided to make this publication possible. ■



CAMPsites Installation View, Museum London, Photo: John Tamblyn



PICTOGRAPHS

IT WAS NEARLY 2000 YEARS AGO that the Hopi Spider clan visited Canmore, Alberta, near the boundaries of Banff, Canada's oldest National park. There they camped and likely left behind a few tools and other artifacts of itinerant life. They stayed just long enough to put pictographs on the walls of what is now known as Grotto Canyon. The duty of the clan, as I understand it, was to venture outside their usual territories and to gain knowledge from the far corners of the world; to re-interpret their findings upon their return to present-day Arizona, in the form of maps, and I am sure, stories.¹

This past spring I walked down the narrow creek bed in search of the pictographs. When I finally found them, on a flat rock face jutting up from a prominent bend in the creek, some had been touched so often that their surface

Map of the Bow Valley, 2007, Illustration by Dean Long, Courtesy of the Artist



Grotto Canyon Pictograph, Photo: Tara Nicholson

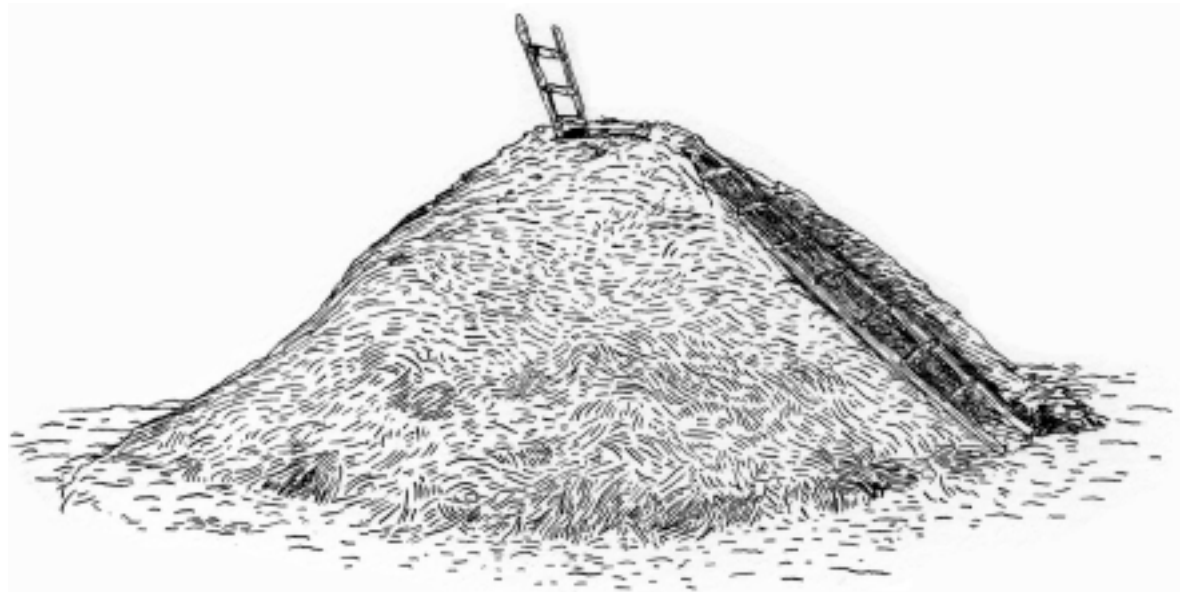
was polished smooth. Others, out of reach, showed signs of exposure and the ongoing wear of the extreme mountain environment. Rendered in yellow and red ochre and black, the representations ranged from a hunched figure playing a flute—the deity *Kokopelli*, who is meant to bring about spring—to what looked like buffalo, horned elk and deer. They included a line of people with long ears and tapered faces that looked like jackrabbits or coyotes.² Although the Stoney/Nakoda, Siksika and Tsuu T'ina nations had known of the pictographs for centuries, their discovery is attributed to Selwyn Dewdney in 1962. However, it wasn't until three decades later, when the archaeologist Marty Magne recognized the *Kokopelli* as a uniquely Hopi image, that the existence of the pictographs gave credibility to what, up to that point, had been considered tales by the Blackfoot and Stoney/Nakoda people. Tales of northern expeditions by a people who have populated present-day Arizona since 500 C.E. (Some of the earliest archaeological records of human life in the United States are attributed to ancestors of the Hopi.)³

Prior to Magne's identification of the *Kokopelli* there was (and remains) resistance in the archaeology and anthropology communities to the idea that the Hopi had travelled as far north as Alberta. Their disbelief stemmed in part from the sheer distance between Arizona and Alberta — approximately 1 626.73 miles—as well as the lack of tangible evidence, (oral history notwithstanding⁴). One theory put forth is that the pictographs were in fact appropriations of Hopi images by the Stoney/Nakoda (or another group who had travelled through the area) supporting the idea that the images found in Grotto Canyon were fakes.

While an intriguing example of early cultural appropriation, this theory can be disputed at the level of the pictograph's function in early Native North American societies. Representations of people engaged in hunting and ceremony, as many anthropologists have rightly pointed out, did not function merely on an aesthetic level or as documentation of a past event (the rendering of a successful hunt for example) but were engaged with religiously through their role in ceremony and ritual. Pictographs then, are not linked so much to the past (as is signified through drawing as documentation) but to the future: central to their creation is the idea that the very the act of *representing* a successful hunt might enable it to happen. But Grotto Canyon was not the Spider clan's final destination. The story goes that they were trying to make it to the Arctic.⁵

Although they journeyed great distances, Hopi are not characterised as a nomadic people, but neither are they strangers to covering ground. The area they visited was a well recognized pass, and a historic trade route through the Rocky Mountains, and they weren't the first to use it. The Americas were etched with expansive trade routes prior to European contact, there is, for example, evidence of copper from the Great Lakes to be found in Cahokia, Illinois and of Inuit objects south of the Canadian border.⁶

In June 2007, taking the idea of trade routes by indigenous peoples of the Americas to an international level, it was confirmed that bones from chickens indigenous to Polynesia were uncovered in Chile. The bones predate Cristóbal Colón's (his Spanish name is used here because it takes precedence in texts by other indigenous writers) first journey to the Americas by over 100 years. (Radiocarbon analysis of the bones, including margin of error, dates them from between 1321 to 1407 CE.⁷ (The highly advanced ocean navigation systems of the Polynesians, stemming from their almost staggering knowledge of astronomy, may have carried with it an idea that the earth was not only round but was rotating on an axis. Globalization, it has been said, begins with the very notion of the globe itself.) The uncovering of the bones is yet another example to further weaken Colón's stake on the "discovery" of the Americas. Polynesian contact, while relatively recent, is significant as it repositions the meeting point between the Americas and elsewhere, pushing it ever further back in time. It is also possible that, around this time, South American travel to the South Pacific was occurring—based on the appearance there of the sweet potato. The chicken bones themselves call into question the very idea of a singular moment of contact. Perhaps it might be more accurate to describe it as a series of moments—each with its own significance and consequences for all involved.



PIT HOUSES

In 1954 Charles Borden began the first in-depth archaeological survey of the East Kootenay region, an area that includes Banff National Park. He found a number of depressions in the area, later identified as traces of early pit houses, dating from 3000 years ago, located in the area of the Fairmont Hot Springs, the Upper Columbia, and the upper Bow and Red Deer Rivers in Banff National Park. What puzzled Borden about the remains of these houses (now just faint convex areas in the earth, with sparse remains of tools and the bones from animals) was that they weren't supposed to be in the Rockies. Pit houses, as they were known, were low elevation dwellings typically constructed in Canada's Interior Plateau and Columbia Basin regions.⁸

What the existence of these sites revealed was that, aside from providing temporary dwellings, the pit houses were, on one hand, "part of a sophisticated management system employed by Native people to herd bison into the mountains." On the other hand, it is believed that the builders of the houses—the Ktunaxa (formerly the Kutenai) and Secwepemc (also known as Shuswap or Interior Salish people)—were seeking refuge: the mountains provided a physical barrier protecting their seasonal hunting practices

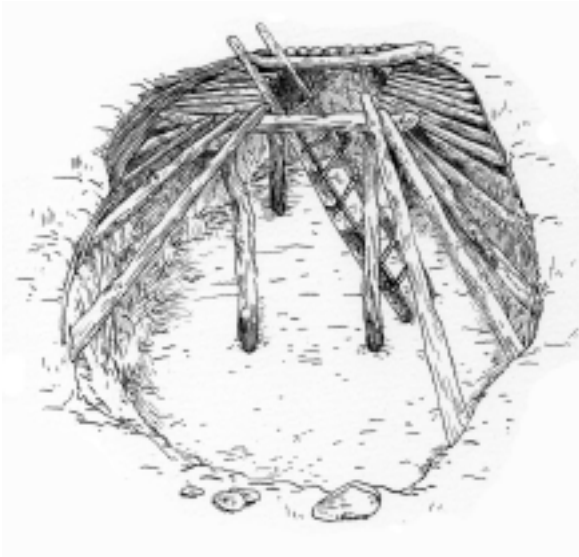
from their traditional enemies on the Plains.⁹ The idea of retreat is central to both the Ktunaxa and Secwepemc's movements through the mountains and their architecture itself. As buildings that are already subterranean, or partially hidden, the very architecture of the pit houses carries with it the idea of retreat. Perhaps the most accurate conclusion to the quandary presented by the houses is likely that it was part protection and part the remains of a hunting method. These reasons, being practical, are in addition to their travel to an area which was, and remains held as by the surrounding Aboriginal populations, one of the most sacred sites between British Columbia and Alberta. "The economies of culture," as observed by migration theorist Stephen Cairns, "affects the choice of site."¹⁰

On the Aboriginal populations of this area and their relationship to territory,

Archaeological evidence does not identify specific Aboriginal tribes in Alberta before the first contact with Europeans during the late 1600s. But Aboriginal oral tradition suggests that the Blackfoot, Cree, Stoney-Nakoda and their ancestors knew of and visited this region long before the Europeans and colonial North Americans began trading in furs. And as the traders advanced across the continent, they pushed the

indigenous people progressively westward. There are some suggestions that the Plains Cree and Stoney-Nakoda were among the groups that migrated from the east as the fur trade moved west along the Saskatchewan River trade routes.¹¹

As far as is known, this mountain pass played host to different groups of people, even those historically in conflict, without sparking territorial differences.¹² The etymological root of the word “territory” is revealing in this context: “Land under the jurisdiction of a town, state, etc.,” probably from the Latin *territorium* “land around a town, domain, district,” from *terra* “earth, land” (see *terrain*) + *-orium*, suffix denoting place. An alternate theory, somewhat supported by the vowels of the original L. word, suggests derivation from *terrere* “to frighten” (see *terrible*); thus *territorium* would mean “a place from which people are warned off.”¹³ As is seen through looking to its root, territory may have already embodied fear of the other. The word, with its origins around 1432 CE, is a relatively late addition in the history of Western thought. Further to this, Blackfoot artist Faye HeavyShield has previously noted that, although nomadic, Blackfoot people did not wander aimlessly following game and seeking out other resources. They always had a clear sense of their movements, the borders of their lands and their ultimate destination. For Blackfoot



Pit House, 2007, Interior View, Illustration by Dean Long, Courtesy of the Artist

people the idea of architecture, land and ownership was shifting and fluid, in HeavyShield's words, "the land was our home not the houses we lived in."¹⁴

Moving territory into a discussion of property, art historian Pamela Lee has written, "The idea of private property is a relatively recent phenomenon beginning as late as the eighteenth century" following perhaps, the definition of territory itself.¹⁵

NOMADISM AND RETERRITORIALIZATION

The Aboriginal occupation of the Rockies exemplifies complex acts of reterritorialization. Reterritorialization, briefly, is understood as the utilization of certain aspects of another culture and making them one's own, or "when people within a place start to produce an aspect of popular culture themselves, doing so in the context of their local culture." Think of the incorporation of Hip Hop on Indian Reserves, or prior to that, "Indian Cowboys."¹⁶ In this case it is a group of people travelling to the far reaches of their known universe, and at nearly the same time, the repeated occupation and appropriation of indigenous architecture.

The Rockies are a site where borders were, and continue to be, redrawn, challenged and subverted with every passage.

As a meeting point and a border zone they are a site of both chance and deliberate encounters and the point where Hopi, Siksika, Nakoda, Tsuu T'ina and Secwepemc people (among many others) crossed paths over a period of thousands of years. It is not surprising that Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari would write about reterritorialization at the same time as their texts on nomadism. One concerns the movement of people, the other, the occupation of space *through* the movement of people. Contained within nomadism is the ability to transcend the apparatus of the state, whatever this apparatus may be at the time.¹⁷ Through their multifarious use of this area, Ktunaxa and Secwepemc, in a similar gesture to the Hopi, occupied a kind of "non-site" in a natural pass through the mountains, and through this, worked around, or between, the prevailing systems of territory and power. These spaces are much like Indian Reserves today, in that they are unoccupied in the conventional sense and "refuse ownership" because they are illegible, ambiguous, in constant flux.¹⁸

Fittingly, in nomadic thought, it is argued that dwelling is tied not to a territory but rather to an itinerary.¹⁹ Aside from their existence in the mountains, what is unusual about the pit houses is the way in which they were occupied. Those travelling through the area, Ktunaxa, Secwepemc and



others, camped in the sites repeatedly—use which spanned thousands of years. The pit houses, presumably private when first constructed, were made communal through their repeated occupation over time, quite literally performing what is often an imaginary divide between private and public. The figure of the nomad is “the deterritorialized *par excellence*”—one that always existed outside of, and in contradistinction to, the ordered and secure space of territory, although necessarily defined in relation to territory itself.²⁰ Aboriginal groups occupied this pass through plurilocal movement, movement that is, “consisting of one’s sense of origin, current location and possible destination as well as the imaginary spaces through which these “sites” are mediated.”²¹

Considered in the current context of Banff National Park, one of the most visited, but most sparsely populated places in Canada, the pit houses and pictographs bring forth a question as to the roots of mobility in a time when migrancy was becoming increasingly normalized in the face of capitalism.²² “Contemporary migration,” in the words of Cairns, “far eclipses the movements associated with colonialism, industrialization, the Second World War, or, indeed, the immediate post war period.”²³ Banff, through its history as both (temporary) home to the Ktunaxa, Secwepemc and Hopi, and its present use, enacts

what Carol Becker so poetically observed as the difference between first world nomads and third world nomads; those who travel because they can and those (refugees and migrants) who travel because they have to.²⁴ What are the consequences of travel enabled by capitalism and global agency rather than tradition and carefully constructed itinerancy? Rather than imagining what is yet to come, it might be valuable in considering this, to again go back into time again to understand the future.

The Rockies and the sites near Banff in particular, were and continue to act as, a meeting point and a site of ongoing architectural and cultural trade and appropriation stemming from the repeated reuse of architecture. Included in this are the exchange of objects and new technologies, and perhaps more significantly, ideas. Both the pit houses and the pictographs remain troubling to the academic community. As anomalies they don’t fit within what was previously understood. Revisiting them, however, is revealing, since they provide a rupture—a way of looking again from another perspective, and of rewriting history. ■

NOTES

1. As told to me in the summer of 2003 by Hopi video artist and environmental activist Victor Masayesva. Historically, Hopi occupied a vast territory stretching from the Grand Canyon to the Navajo Mountains near the New Mexico Arizona border.

2. The *Kokapelli*, a now familiar symbol through its use in often kitsch new age and native designs intended for mass market, is associated with fertility and the weather, in particular the ability to bring about rain. The deity is said also to assure the success of crops and harvests.

3. Charles E. Kay and Clifford A. White "Reintroduction of bison into the Rocky Mountain parks of Canada: historical and archaeological evidence." From *Crossing Boundaries in Park Management: Proceedings of the 11th Conference on Research and Resource Management in Parks and on Public Lands*, ed. David Harmon (Hancock, Michigan: The George Wright Society, 2001). <http://www.georgewright.org/24kay.pdf> accessed January 2007

4. In the summer of 2006, as a form of awareness raising and protest brought about by ongoing industrial terrorism enacted on behalf of the state and large corporations on Hopi and Navajo land through the ongoing exploitation of water resources, Hopi, together with Navajo, staged a run to Mexico City for the 4th World Water Forum. At 1500 miles Mexico City is nearly the same distance south from Arizona as it is north to Alberta—and they did this *running*. The Hopi Black Mesa Trust, comprised of members of Hopi and Navajo reservations, is pressuring the world's largest coal company, Peabody Coal, to stop pumping water from the Navajo Aquifer, which uses water from an underground river flowing directly under reserve land. For over 30 years Peabody Coal has pumped an estimated 1.3 billion gallons of pure drinking water annually for its coal processing. For more information see www.blackmesatrust.org

Hopi, together with Navajo people, are now heading the fight against resource exploitation, and are historically ahead of the game. Insightful in light of the present speed at which information travels leading to what critic David Levi Strauss has termed "distraction culture," Victor Masayesva has relayed that Hopi tradition soothsayers (*Hopi Ya-yat*):

...predicted at the turn of the last century that paper (*tutuveniit*), or messages, would fly through the air and disorient the people. According to them, we would hear things from miles away, far beyond our natural range of hearing, and see things far beyond our range of vision. This would make us drunk and crazy.

Masayesva, in describing the way in which this understanding of the future has been acted upon in Hopi society, goes on to write:

This prediction has evolved into social protest and an embracing of modern media to the extent that we grab the paper out of the air and launch our own paper messages into the world so that we don't go crazy, so that we don't accept the medium as the message. (*Italics mine.*)

From Victor Masayesva, "Indigenous Experimentalism" in *Magnetic North*, ed. Jenny Lion (Winnipeg and Minnesota: Video Pool and Walker Art Center, 2000), p.236-237

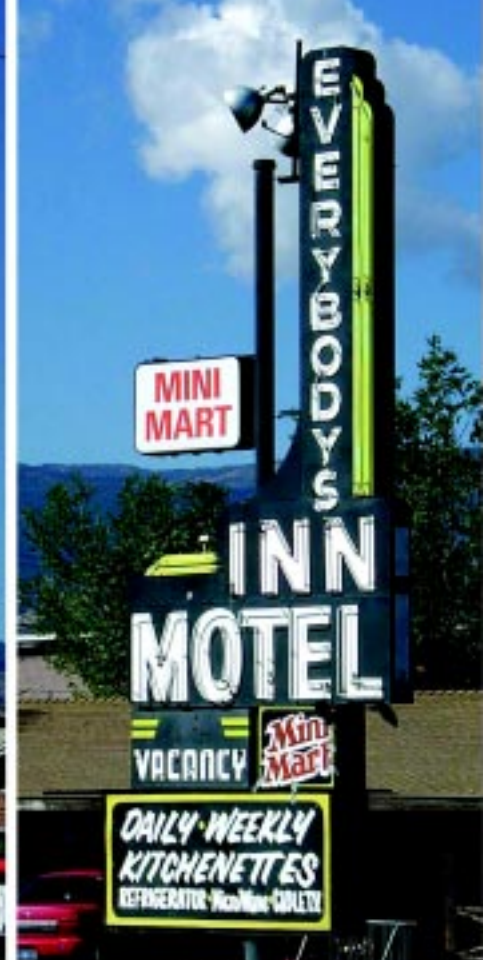
5. Masayesva also relayed that the reason the Spider clan cut their trip short was because they no longer held any influence over the weather. They were powerless in the face of the extreme cold and glacial environment of the northern Rocky Mountains. Story has it that they were told, "If you melt the snow and ice, you will cause the rest of the world to flood." Abiding by their cultural beliefs, they were forced to go back. While this warning was issued a long time ago, it bears relating it to the present crisis of global warming—in particular the rising of the water levels of the oceans stemming from the (alarming) rate at which the polar ice caps are melting, one thousand years later.

6. For more information on Native American and Aboriginal trade routes in North America see www.cradleboard.org/curriculum/powwow/supplements/a_trade.html

7. Thomas H. Maugh II, *LA Times*, June 5, 2007

8. Royal BC Museum. www.livinglandscapes.bc.ca/cbasin/salmonbeds/preinvest-index.htm accessed January, 2007

9. For more information on Ktunaxa and Secwepemc people see Alan D. McMillan, *Native Peoples and Cultures of Canada, An Anthropological Overview*, (Vancouver: Douglas & McIntyre, 1988)
10. Stephen Cairns, *Architecture and Migration*, (London: Routledge Press, 2004), p.18
11. www.cbc.ca/alberta100/en/categories/first_inhabitants/index.html accessed January 2007
12. The continued focus on the definition of specific cultural and linguistic groups perpetuates the idea that these cultures are singular and exist in a kind of bubble in relation to one another. While this is certainly an important step in understanding “difference” and defining cultures and their specificities, it is also revealing to look to the points in which these definitions are challenged—where one culture begins to appropriate another in a way that is meaningful and not necessarily damaging. Looking into the cracks and between the fissures of different cultures is revealing, as within them are trade languages, tools and objects which trouble what was previously known, events and situations which cannot be qualified or easily quantified. What is uncovered is the limits of knowledge.
13. www.etymonline.com, accessed June 2007
14. Faye HeavyShield, artist talk, Walter Phillips Gallery, 2002.
15. Pamela Lee, *Gordon Matta-Clark: Object to be Destroyed*, (Boston: MIT Press, 2001)
16. Further to this: “Reterritorialization is the restructuring of a place or territory that has experienced Deterritorialization. It is the design of the new power. For example when the Spanish (Hernando de Soto [an explorer]) conquered the Aztecs, and after the Spanish deterritorialized them by eliminating the symbols of the Aztecs’ beliefs and rituals, the Spanish then reterritorialized by putting up their own beliefs and rituals which established their takeover of the land.” See www.wikipedia.org, accessed June 2007
17. Taken from Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, “Treatise on Nomadology—The War Machine” in *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, Brian Massumi, trans., (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1987), p.351-424. In what is an admittedly a simplistic critique, I wonder how nomadic thought can be mobilized in the present with the apparatus of the state, or the new world order, taking the form of global capitalism and its antithesis, terrorism, given that these forms gain their agency precisely through uncontrollable webs of movement not unlike Deleuze and Guattari’s description of the nomad itself.
18. For more on property and ownership see *Object to be Destroyed*. Although Pamela Lee is writing in the context of the practice of artist Gordon Matta-Clark, her understanding of the nuances and histories of the use value of land and the history of property and its transgressions, are illuminating.
19. Deleuze and Guattari, p.351-424
20. Cairns, p. 1
21. Ibid, p.31
22. The disparity between those travelling through, approximately 4 million visitors pass through the Banff National Park gates in one year alone, as compared to those who actually live in the area, less than eight thousand, remains staggering. Figures based on Town of Banff Census, 2001.
23. Cairns, p.4
24. Carol Becker, *Surpassing the Spectacle: Global Transformations and the Changing Politics of Art*, (Maryland: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 2002), p.22



CONTEMPORARY URBAN LIFE is defined and shaped by the predominating conditions of impermanence, itinerancy and transience. Our increasingly global community, burgeoning urban sprawl, and the escalation of war, famine, natural disaster and economic colonialism worldwide have ushered in a state of unprecedented flux. All the while the ease of mobility, of international travel and the increasing fluidity of cultural, geographic and political boundaries have desensitized us, (certainly in the West), to the profound cultural shifts underway in many parts of the world.

As more and more people live away—apart from their families and the communities in which they were raised, and as tourism and travel become increasingly essential to the social and economic realities of most people in the West, “hotels,” argues writer Donald Albrecht, “have been transformed into

Reno Motels, Photo: J. Marshall Mangan



May 1963, new arrivals in the Immigration Annex at Pier 21, Halifax, Nova Scotia,
Photo: Ken Elliot, Courtesy of the Ken Elliot Collection of the Pier 21 Society

crossroads of our nomadic society. Geographic borders appear to have eroded as people travel anywhere anytime.”¹ Other examples of the contemporary nomad abound: the “snowbird” that travels to retirement communities in the south for the winter; tourists and RV campers and the urban homeless; at the same time the increasing rigidity of national borders and shifting global and cultural realities have led to the erosion of traditionally nomadic ways of life. The contradiction between those who are migratory by design (RV owners, campers, travellers) or transitory by circumstance (refugees, immigrants, the homeless) can be seen almost anywhere.

DISPLACEMENT AND DISLOCATION

While examples of the contemporary nomad can be found in the “identities” of artist, computer hacker, the flaneur, the saboteur, many of which are beguilingly glimpsed in Tom Kalin’s 1994 video *Nomads*, much contemporary migration is the result of physical, rather than psychological flux—individuals in search of new opportunities, improved living conditions and employment. Today, business is conducted globally rather than locally, and family and friends maintain relationships on-line or by telephone and much less often in person.

Notions of the displaced abound in contemporary video. Ming Yuen S. Ma work *Myth(s) of Creation* (1997) is part experimental video, and part conceptual “road movie” that oscillates between cities and countries as well as between language and culture. In combining accounts of trips to family members dispersed around the world from their home in Hong Kong, the romanticism of travel writing is juxtaposed against the day-to-day realities of political exiles and refugees. While “post-modern theories postulate a de-territorialized nomadic subjectivity,” she astutely observes: “recent immigrants stubbornly hold on to their ideas of nationality,” and thus begins a dance between belonging and alienation.

Among the artists featured in the CAMPsites exhibition, Montreal-based artist Ana Rewakowicz confronts the dislocation and detachment of the immigrancy. “As someone who has moved from one culture to another and lived through cultural displacement, I am interested in the issue of transience and how it relates to the notions of identity, belonging and living in a culture and society of global and technological developments.”² An immigrant to Canada from Poland, her inflatable works explore the very personal aspects of community, impermanence and mobility.



Ana Rewakowicz, *SleepingBagDress 2*, 2004, Courtesy of the Artist



Ana Rewakowicz, Walking performance, Mexico City, 2003, Photo: Eduardo Flores, Courtesy of the Artist

PUBLIC, PRIVATE AND THIRD SPACES

With the rise of tourism throughout the twentieth and twenty-first centuries, and the emergence of the hotel as an international business venture, the hotel room has become an increasingly standardized, corporative and culturally unspecified space. It is a third space, consumable, at once both publicly and privately available for a price. In recent years, argues Albrecht, some hotels have begun to respond to the vast changes in business itself. The example of the Japanese capsule hotels, which can now be seen in airports around the world, has reduced the hotel room down to its most essential elements, its basic requirements and minimal dimensions, offering little more than a clean and compact place to sleep in an age of accelerated travel.³ “Capsule hotels were developed in Japan in the late 1970s as a response to sudden increases in population, urban density, workdays, and business commutes. These small, urban hotels offer business people and other travelers extremely compact sleeping compartments at a modest price. They combine small guest rooms with larger public spaces and amenities—from bars, lounges, and restaurants to spas, gyms, and mah-jong rooms.”⁴ In effect these commuter campsites have become a new sort of abbreviated bedroom community.

These refrigerator-box sized, stackable units are utilized as works by artist Tsuyoshi Ozawa. His *Sodan Art Hotel* (2001), which was formed around three capsules, a lounge area and reception, was transformed regularly as the result of three renovations that took place over a one week period. Ozawa's desire to confront the rapid economic growth that shaped Japanese society throughout the 1970s and 1980s can also be seen in his work *Ivan the Fool House (Capsule Hotel Project)* (2003) in which he juxtaposes an urban homeless squat with the apparent luxury of a capsule hotel room. Here displacement is central in a work that is intended to address a combination of issues: architecture, urban development, industrial design, and the housing shortage in Japan's metropolitan areas, which resulted from Japan's growing economic power and the erosion of community and isolation.

The transportability of home and community can also be seen in the Los Carpinteros work *Transportable City*, an installation of ten tents, each forming the shape of an iconic architectural form: a domed capital, Gothic church, lighthouse, factory, apartment building, hospital and so on—each, the artists believe, conveys the essence of modern life. The idea of “building” an entirely portable city juxtaposes a yearning for social stability and communal infrastructure with the global realities of displacement caused by war, famine and natural disaster.



Tsuyoshi Ozawa, *Ivan the Fool (Capsule Hotel Project)*, 2003, interior view, Photo: Tara Nicholson



Los Carpinteros, *Ciudad transportable/Transportable City*, 2000, installation view, 7th Havana Biennial, Courtesy of the Artists



Kyohei Sakaguchi, *Solar System (replica)*, 2006, installation view, Vancouver Art Gallery, Courtesy of the artist

As many artists have increasingly oriented their work towards social and political phenomena and commentary, they have inevitably confronted the contradictions of public and private space. As ownership has privatized property, public space and common lands have been eroded. Research into the provisional shelters of Japan's urban homeless have been the subject of a series of investigations by Kyohei Sakaguchi, who became fascinated with the architecture when he unexpectedly came upon a dwelling by a homeless person on the banks of the Tama River. "His investigations of this sub-culture" explains curator Makiko Hara, "have also revealed that the street peoples' dwellings tend to be treated with silent contempt. Sakaguchi is attempting to defeat this prejudice and, while not idealizing the situation of homelessness, bring recognition to the ingenious and artistic ways this architecture can challenge bias by showing how anyone can take positive action in one's environment."⁵

Transitional sites, rest areas, park benches and bridge shelters have become the preoccupation of initiatives by artists such as Sean Godsell or SYN—*atelier d'exploration urbain*, a project of Montreal-based artists Luc Lévesque and Jean-François Prost. In 2002, the Australian architect Sean Godsell created *Park Bench House*—by day an ordinary park bench and by night a bed, made ready by

simply lifting the seat and climbing inside. The bench also includes a solar powered night light. Writer Sean Topham argues “The *Park Bench House* provides a space in the city for rough sleepers, and suggests that merely clearing those deemed “illegal campers” from public parks and squares will not solve the problems associated with homelessness.”⁶

Similarly, the Montreal-based collective SYN have initiated a series of projects that introduce “urban furniture” to provisional spaces (under highway interchanges, between buildings and areas adjacent to corporate shopping malls) as catalysts for socializing, community and to prompt a reconsideration of the use of these often familiar but unutilized spaces.

The reinvention of provisional spaces is also central to Rirkrit Tiravanija’s propositional *Billboardhouses*, in which a sheltered sleeping area could be created behind a series of advertising billboards. With advertisers paying for the construction, these dual purpose structures also serve as a respite urban dwellers, recreational users and the homeless alike. At the time of writing, only *BillboardThailandhouse* (2000) had been realized.⁷ In a similar vein, Michael Rakowitz’s *paraSITE* (an ongoing series of works first begun in 1999) offers a lightweight, portable shelter for homeless people, inflated by the ventilation systems link to building exhaust systems.



Rirkrit Tiravanija, *BillboardThailandhouse*, 2000, Courtesy of ????



Sean Godsell, *Park Bench House*, 2002, Courtesy of Sean Godsell Architects



Judy Koch, *The Pope Squat*, 2002, video still, Courtesy of V tape



Kristina Jaugelis & Reece Terris, *Trailer*, 2002, installation view, Vancouver Art Gallery, 2002, Courtesy of the Artists

Mobile, provisional and portable architectural imaginings have long been a vehicle for artists to address urban homelessness. Krzysztof Wodiczko's *Homeless Vehicle* (1988-1989) was developed in response to cuts in public housing and to a shift in living conditions throughout New York City. He considered the project as a proposition—a temporary solution to homelessness. If a failure, the venture was an equally prophetic idea in light of the recent development of squatter camps in places such as Vancouver's former Woodward Building, Toronto's "tent city," and homeless protests such as that captured in Judy Koch's 2002 video *The Pope Squat*, which documents a group of political activists and homeless people who, on the occasion of Pope John Paul II's visit to Toronto, took over an unoccupied building, renovating it into a makeshift homeless shelter.

Trailer (2002), the collaborative creation of Kristina Jaugelis and Reece Terris is at first an obvious homage wilderness escape in the Canadian landscape, but when situated outside of the Vancouver Art Gallery, in the urban downtown of Vancouver, took on an entirely new meaning in the face of urban housing shortages and the realities of a makeshift squatter's camp—which took root in December of 2002 outside of a former Woodward's department store. The site also became the subject of artist Paul Wong's

video, *EAT: Mainstreet Dinner for the Homeless*. Both works are reminders of the often ridiculous contradictions of urban living and the lack of affordable housing in urban centres.

The examination of homelessness in contemporary art extends well beyond these examples of provisional and mobile architecture. Among dozen's of examples are Janet Morton's *Cozy* (1999), an ironic "house-warmer" for her former bungalow on Wards Island; Bruce Barber's series of collaborative *Squat* projects (which is nicely outlined in his essay elsewhere in this publication) and Rebecca Belmore's *Untitled (A Blanket for Sarah)* (1994), a haunting homage to a woman who froze to death on the streets of Sioux Lookout, Ontario. The homeless and the refugee are also the subject of works by documentary photographers such as Larry Towell, who bring the plight of the impoverished and displaced into focus.

But camps are not exclusively the domain of the homeless or the uprooted. Sometimes they exist as a manifestation of strong cultural roots and kinship; as with the Romany of Europe, whose nomadic lifestyle, like that of many of the First Nations of North America, is now almost all but impossible in the face urban by-laws and the diminishment of common lands. Faye HeavyShield's *body of land* (2002-



Paul Wong, *EAT: Mainstreet Dinner for the Homeless*, 2003, video still, Courtesy of the Artist and V tape



Janet Morton, *Cozy*, at 13 Third Street, Wards Island (November 1999), Courtesy of the Artist



Faye HeavyShield, *Aapaskaiyaawa (they are dancing)*, 2002, Photo: Don Lee, Courtesy of the Artist

2006) pays tribute to the traditional ways of the Blackfoot people of the prairies who followed migrating herds of buffalo. Constructed of digitized photographs of the skin of family and friends, the work is an elegiac installation marking the inseparable relationship between community and the land. Like *body of land*, HeavyShield's *Aapaskaiyaawa (they are dancing)* (2002) is suggestive of teepee forms, their familiar shape critiques what curator Lee-Ann Martin describes as simplistic terms such as "'aimless', 'wandering', 'roaming' and 'drifting'" that are frequently used to describe the nomadic lives of Aboriginal people on the prairies."⁸

Video remains an important documentary tool in the investigation of home, particularly in Canada's north. Works such as *Anana (Mother)* (2001) from Arnait Video Productions (Women's Video Workshop of Igloodik) traces the story of Vivi Kunuk and her nomadic life on the land, living as her ancestors did. Similarly, films and videos by Zacharius Kunuk, such as *Nunaqpa (Going Inland)* (1991) or his more widely heralded *Atanarjuat (The Fast Runner)* (2001) recall life on the land, prior to the creation of government imposed settlements in the Canadian arctic in the 1950s.

NOMADS

The chauvinistic belief that settled cultures are superior to nomadic ones has persisted throughout the Western world, giving rise to a notion of the nomad as primitive. As such, the sturdy, durable, stone buildings that have served as a lasting document of past empires have for centuries been celebrated and studied by historians as great feats of architecture, while innovative portable structures used by nomads, have until very recently, remained largely ignored by scholars.⁹

This bias is also palpable within the wider Western society that has traditionally regarded the 'nomad', the 'drifter' and the 'gypsy' as suspect. Other images such as the travelling sales man, carnie, or circus performer readily come to mind. Writer David Pearson, for example, cites England's Vagrancy Act of 1824, which identified anyone travelling in a cart or wagon, "who did not have a visible means of support to be a rogue or vagabond."¹⁰ And certainly contemporary vagrancy laws are designed to keep the travellers "moving along."

But despite suspicion of the nomadic lifestyle among Western cultures, it has also been regarded with interest and curiosity. And although leisure caravans became popular



Atanarjuat (The Fast Runner), 2001, Zacharius Kunuk, director, film stills, Courtesy of Igloolik Isuma Productions



Yurt, www.yurt_ski@yahoo.com



Traditional Romany Caravan, www.cottage-holiday-wales.co.uk

among affluent Europeans by the late 1800s, the rise of the middle class and the advent of an affordable automobile, gave rise to a “camp” of individuals who consider transience the reward of working hard and the nomadic lifestyle a sustaining symbol of freedom. Since the 1960s Pearson argues “what was ‘counter culture’ has shifted to ‘tribal culture’ and, for some, this has meant a more nomadic lifestyle.” With little chance of stable employment or housing, they feel themselves to be economic refugees taking to the road in search of a new way of living.¹¹

THE FRONTIER AND THE OPEN ROAD

In today’s popular consciousness, spurred on by writers such as Jack Kerouac, the open road has become symbolic of adventure, freedom, self-reliance and independence. And with it, an array of improvised and customised vehicles and shelters that have rejuvenated an interest in nomadic architecture, have popularized a do-it-yourself aesthetic. Among numerous artist-led investigations of this phenomenon was the 2003 outdoor exhibition *Parasite Paradise*, which featured experimental constructions such as Acconci Studio’s *Mobile Linear City* (1991). The exhibition was an initiative of *Beyond Utrecht*, a long-standing art project initiated for the location of a new housing development in the suburbs of Utrecht, Netherlands.¹²

The use of everyday objects in the creation of machines and habitats is a trend that can be seen in the work of artists such as André van Bergen, whose work *Mobile* (2001) is a movable house comprised of eight individual units mounted onto the undercarriage of a tractor trailer; or the playful, less functional modular constructions of Andrea Zittel, Atelier van Lieshout or Kim Adams. Zittel's *Homestead Units*, for example, were inspired by the tradition of homestead cabins and are the latest in her series of *A-Z Living Units*. She describes the inspiration for the project as dating back to the 1940s and 1950s, when:

...the US government gave settlers five acres of land for free if they could "improve" it with the construction of a minimal homestead structure. The result is a seemingly infinite grid system of dirt roads that cut up a very beautiful desert region. In the middle of each preface square of land is a tiny shack—most of them have now long since been abandoned. The original pioneering spirit of the "frontier" considered autonomy and self-sufficiency as prerequisites of personal freedom... we at A-Z West, were investigating how such perceptions of freedom have been re-adapted for contemporary living. Now it seems that personal liberation is more often achieved through individual attempts to "slip



André van Bergen, *Mobile*, 2001, Courtesy of ??? Contact info@skol.nl for permission details



Acconci Studio (Vito Acconci, Luis Vera, Jenny Schrider), *Mobile Linear City*, 1991, Courtesy of Acconci Studio



Kim Adams, *Square/Round/Square*, 2002, Photo: John Tamblyn, Courtesy of the Artist and Wynick Tuck Gallery, Toronto



Kim Adams, detail from *Research Photographs*, 1978 – ongoing, Courtesy of the Artist

between the cracks.” Instead of building big ranches and permanent homesteads, today’s independence seekers prefer small portable structures, which evade the regulatory control of bureaucratic restrictions such as building and safety codes.¹³

The works may also be seen as ironic commentary since the homestead (the very thing that displaced nomadic life on the prairie) in Zittel’s hands is now a site to rebuke the rigidity of contemporary life.

The lineage of Adams’s work is most apparent in the consideration of his long-standing *Research Photographs*, an ongoing series, first begun in 1978, which documents the improvised, possibly improved, manipulation of an array of cars, trucks, bicycles and homes across North America and in various European locales, and which continues to fuel, shape and inspire the art context in which he works. Many, if not all, of the works have wheels, a nod to escapism and a feature which critic and writer Robert Enright thinks makes Adams the perfect Canadian, “since above all else, geography is the thing we have to overcome.”¹⁴ It is ironic to think that the mobile homes that are the inspiration for many of his creations, are often, in fact, ironically immobile—perhaps so called because they sit on land rarely owned by the home owner, and thus their name is a reminder of their uncertain tenancy.

Among the earliest examples of a customized vehicle for habitation in Canadian art is Fred Douglas's 1983 creation *The Van*. Begun in the early 1980s with the intention to "camperize a van as an art piece," Douglas and his father took to rebuilding a 1961 Morris van, which was at once a garage project, performance site and photographic diorama.¹⁵ The everyday, performative and story telling aspects of the work represent Douglas as a sort of beatnik traveller, rogue adventurer, travelling from exhibition site to exhibition site. *The Van* was traditionally shown with all of its 'things' (pots, pans, equipment, maps, chairs and the like) arranged around it, in the manner of a museum display, but for Douglas the experiential aspect of the work was missing until he took it on a cross country adventure from its exhibition venue at Harbourfront back home to British Columbia.¹⁶

Perhaps a uniquely Canadian experience, notions of independence, self-reliance and retreat into nature are most evident in Donald Lawrence's work *The Sled* (1997), a sculpture, performance and narrative-based work that explores notions of retreat and survival. Created during a 1996 creative residency at The Banff Centre in Banff National Park, the work, both shelter and vehicle, implies the transience that may result from natural disaster, such as flood and fire (recently common to the region) as well as the survivalist escapades of the adventurists who use the Park.



Fred Douglas, *The Van*, 1983, Photo: John Tambllyn, Courtesy of Evelyn Douglas



Donald Lawrence, *The Sled*, 1997, Photo: Tara Nicholson



Ellen Driscoll, *The Loophole of Retreat*, 1991, b/w pinhole photographs, detail



Ellen Driscoll, *The Loophole of Retreat*, 1991, installation view, Museum London
Photos: John Tambllyn, Courtesy of the Artist

THE LOOPHOLE OF RETREAT

A campsite may also be a site of surrender or escape. Ellen Driscoll's 1991 work *The Loophole of Retreat* eulogizes the self-described, seven year confinement of Harriet Jacobs. Its eerie lighting and the close, dark enclosure of its camera obscura recreate for viewers a sense of Jacobs's existence as a runaway slave hiding in the narrow enclosure of the eaves above her grandmother's home. Driscoll's interest in the psychological aspects of retreat are also explored in the paranoid dislocation central to the recent storm and fallout shelter drawings, kites and sculptures of Adriana Kuiper. In our contemporary climate of fear and terrorist paranoia, home becomes a site for withdrawal. Here there is both a literal and a metaphorical shifting of ground—in a climate of change and uncertainty, home is both haven and prison from natural disaster, war, cultural xenophobia—each the invention of a survivalist instinct.

Similarly the recent sculptural work of Liz Magor suggests the kinds of hide-outs in nature that might attract children. Hollow logs and tree trunks appear to form perfect shelters for games of hide-and-seek or for quiet times where the small domestic scenes of children might be played out. Instead, they are meant to evoke the refuges of the homeless, the misanthropic and the fugitive. In sharp

contrast to visions of innocent childhood games, photographs of actual rudimentary shelters found in the woods and wilderness of British Columbia accompany her sculptural creations. Photographic works such as the *Deep Woods* (1999) portfolio depict the remnants of cabins built by homesteaders, hippies or hermits, once populated by society's drifters, are presented in states of disrepair and abandonment. They, like the photographic works of Robin Collyer, suggest subtle ambiguities and juxtapositions. *Temporary Hunt Camp* (1994), *Ghost Town, California* (1995), *Forest Floor* (1998)—these transitional campsites are restrained reminders of our enduring impact on the natural world. The powerful force of nature as shelter is also significant to Sandra Vida's *Bower*. Created *in situ* from the branches of nearby trees, Vida's bowers pay homage to ancient tradition, haven and a retreat from the clamour of the contemporary world.

Together, the works in *CAMPsites* illuminate the preponderance of contemporary nomads across all cultures and economic classes, often juxtaposing the contradiction between the urban homeless, immigrants and refugees against upper middle class recreation activities. Issues of refuge, shelter, survival, and the portability of home abound in their explorations of the varied notions of campsites. ■



Liz Magor, *Hollow*, 1998-99, Collection of the National Gallery of Canada, Courtesy of the Artist and Susan Hobbs Gallery



Robin Collyer, *Temporary Hunt Camp*, 1994, Photo: Courtesy of the Artist and Susan Hobbs Gallery



Sandra Vida, *Bower*, 2005, Photo: Tara Nicholson, Courtesy of the Artist

NOTES

1. Donald Albrecht, "Here You Meet Everybody and Everybody Meets You." *New Hotels for Global Nomads*. (London: Merrell Publishers Limited & Cooper-Hewitt, National Design Museum, 2002), p.9
2. See Rewakowicz's artist statement at www.geocities.com
3. Albrecht, p.22
4. See Elizabeth Johnson and Jeff Gompertz, "Capsule Hotel, 2002" in Donald Albrecht, *New Hotels for Global Nomads*, p. 101
5. Makiko Hara. Kyohei Sakaguchi *Zero Yen House*. Exhibition brochure. (Vancouver: Vancouver Art Gallery, 2006).
6. Sean Topham, *Move House*. (New York, Prestel Publishing, 2004), p.26
7. See *Parasite Paradise: Manifesto for Temporary Architecture and Flexible Urbanism*. (Rotterdam, Netherlands: Nai Publishers and SKOR, 2003), p. 101
8. Lee-Ann Martin, *Au Fil De Mis Jours*, (Québec City: Musée national des beaux-arts du Québec, 2005), pp.59-60
9. This notion of permanency extends to the perceived primacy of written documentation as fact, over the oral traditions of many nomadic and indigenous cultures. Also see Sean Topham, *Move House*, pp.8-9
10. David Pearson, *Free Wheeling Homes*, (White River Junction, Vermont: Chelsea Green Publishing Company, 2002), pp.9-10
11. *ibid*, p.15
12. See www.parasiteparadise.nl
13. See www.zittel.org

14. See "A Model Artist: Observations on Art and Play from Kim Adams, an interview with Robert Enright." *Border Crossings*, Winnipeg, 1999, p.22

15. from a transcript of Fred Douglas's artist's talk at Thompson Rivers University, February 26, 2004

16. Donald Lawrence discusses the history of the work in his text featured in *PhotoGraphic Encounters*. (Kamloops: Kamloops Art Gallery), p. 186

Artists' Pages

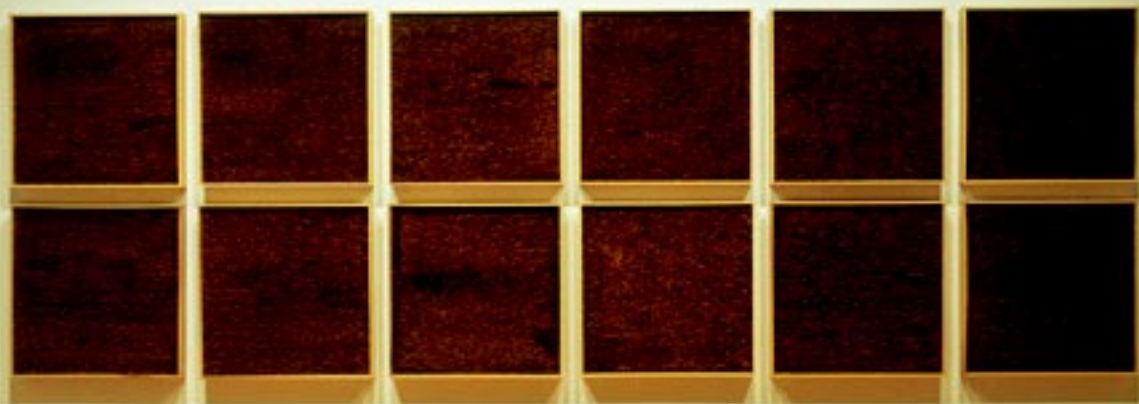


Underpinned by the socio-economic condition in which campers, vehicles and railway cars also serve as living environments, much of Adams's work is devoted to the examination and creation of fantastic machines, nomadic habitats and communities. Adams is a tinker of sorts, transforming ordinary things into a wondrous array of sculptural observations of the contradictions of everyday life.

First begun in 1978, his *Research Photographs* document an odd assortment of modified mobile homes, vendor carts, barbeques, travelling carnivals, sideshows and the like. Collected on his travels to various locales around the world, the images create what essayist Tomas Pospiszyl calls "a dictionary of folk art from the industrial age."¹ The "subversive engineering" (as Adams refers to it) of his research subjects has sparked the creation of a variety of sculptural works, including living environments and proposals for often bizarre communities. His shelters are almost always only structural. The absence of stairs, doors and other points of entry resist habitation, illuminating the complex, sometimes-contradictory, relationship between the abstract and the application.

With a fastidious attention to detail, miniaturized models allow Adams the freedom to realize the possibility of projects that might not otherwise be achievable (physically or financially). Created from plastic model train sets, the works are in fact "models"—utopian communities and fantastic dreamlands—and iconic symbols of a culture in flux, and "on the go"—defined by suburban commutes, drive-in theatres and drive-through restaurants. His quirky sense of humour illuminates the often-contradictory preoccupations of contemporary society, of the disposable, do-it-yourself, renovation-crazed culture of North America.

1. Tomas Pospiszyl, "Kim Adams' Vocabular: Catalogue of Products and Instructions for Use" from *Kim Adams* (Toronto: Power Plant and Oakville Galleries, 2001) p.35.



A self-described wanderer, Belmore confronts the social issues of community and identity, asserting the centrality of nature in her examination of life and history. Her work gives voice to the disenfranchised, often to Aboriginal women who continue to be the caretakers of culture and history in their communities.

Belmore's untitled work, originally created as *A Blanket for Sarah*, was made in response to the passing of a homeless woman who froze to death while living on the streets of Sioux Lookout, Ontario. Created from a series of stretched nylon panels interwoven with pine needles, the blanket is comprised of nearly 1,000,000 pine needles collected from the forest floor around Sioux Lookout, each individually woven by Belmore with the assistance of her sister Florence Belmore, Michael Beynon and numerous other volunteers.

Minimalist in its presentation, the *Blanket* suggests a much richer content. A poetic reference to the forces of nature, the blanket is a representation of life, nature as both haven and abuser, a marker of the passing of time, eventually disappearing back into the land. It doubles, as curator Lee-Ann Martin describes, as a "cloak of denial for society's irresponsibility toward issues surrounding homeless people."¹

An eloquent demonstration of the singularity of life and land, Belmore uses one to represent the other. Here the fresh pine needles, once a soft and aromatic bedding for sleeping outdoors, have, over time turned stiff and sharp, transforming the blanket from a protective covering into a stinging metaphor for the cold and lonely life of a homeless person on the streets.

1. Lee-Ann Martin, "Structure as Painting – Painting as Memorial." *Divergences: Rebecca Belmore and Shelley Niro*. (Regina: Norman MacKenzie Art Gallery, 2003)



Collyer's works address a wide range of concerns, including architecture and urban planning, mass communications, politics and current events. Contrasting manufactured and natural environments, he offers a sustained commentary on architecture, urban planning and the commodification of contemporary life.

His minimalist sculptures—such as *No TV* (a rectangular box constructed from prefabricated parts and cast-off shelves, wallpapered with tabloid advertising) or *Zulu* (an impenetrable camping trailer), which alludes to the predominance of homelessness in a seemingly affluent industrialized North America—offer only the most basic architectural forms.

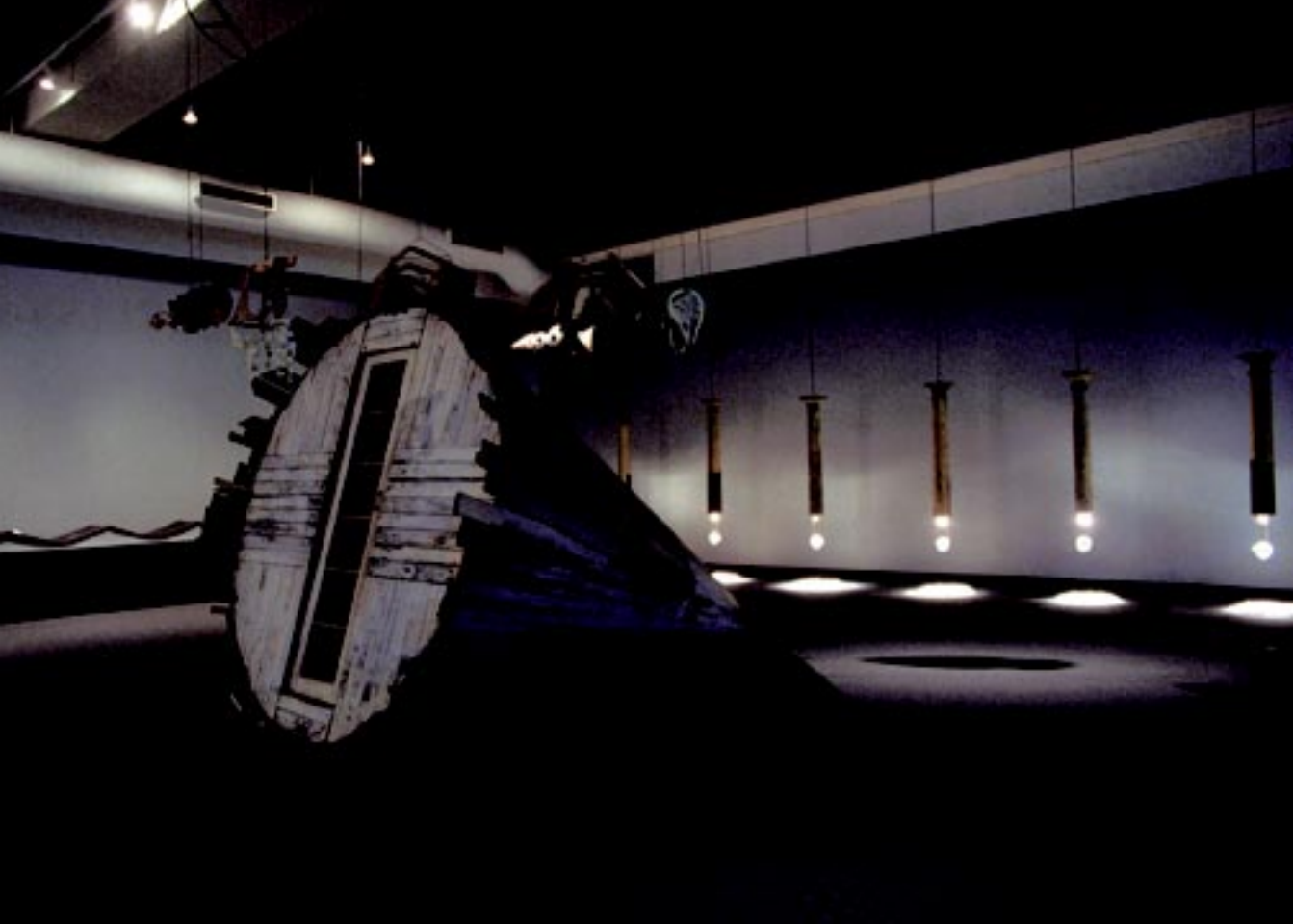
Similarly understated, Collyer's photographic images goad us to look carefully for subtle ambiguities and juxtapositions. Abandoned buildings amidst the arid desert of *Ghost Town, California*; an empty beer bottle embedded, and forgotten, in the soft loam of *Forest Floor* or the barely visible outline of a shelter in *Temporary Hunt Camp*, these images of pristine natural scenes reveal traces of human presence, anti-monuments to our passing through and to nature's ability to reclaim the landscape. The photographs are at once artworks, research (perhaps for future sculptural works), found objects and a record of fleeting habitation. Testimonials to sites in transition, they are signs in the landscape of a natural world violated and then abandoned, suggesting the incompatibility of the "values" of contemporary urban society with nature.



A photographer and installation artist, Douglas originally created *The Van* as a tableau for a series of photographs documenting everyday life. Over time, the staging of the images became a performance and evolving installation work as Douglas routinely emptied it of its contents, displaying them around the circumference of the van like an archeological or museum display.

According to Douglas, no aspect of the work is unimportant, even the labels on the cans of food are part of what is required to understand it. The refurbished 1963 Morris van, with an array of accessories from commercially produced and hand-made fittings, became a fully functioning recreation camper.

In this sense the work is a metaphor for our psychological need to surround ourselves with objects of comfort and convenience—even when attempting to “get back to nature”—providing a view of contemporary recreation and nomadic life. The work is vehicle and destination, a home away from home, a celebration of portable and mechanized architecture, a holiday bus and an embodiment of the freewheeling hippy culture, in which travel is equated with freedom.



Inspired by the life of Harriet Jacobs, as told in her 1861 autobiography *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl*, Driscoll's *The Loophole of Retreat*, borrows its title from the 21st chapter heading, in which Jacobs chronicles her punishing, seven year-long, self-imposed confinement.

The autobiography details Jacobs's life as a slave in North Carolina and her thwarted attempts to escape an abusive "master," which resulted in her decision to recoil into the eaves of a shed at her grandmother's home, until she could safely flee to freedom in the North. In the cramped quarters of the eaves, Jacobs bored a small hole through which she viewed the world, and often her two small children playing outside.

Driscoll's work is an elegant expression of the dark, cloistered life of Jacobs's exile. *The Loophole of Retreat* consists of three distinct but connected sculptural elements. The conical structure, central to the work, is constructed of discarded floorboards and scraps of salvaged wood, thus simultaneously referencing the makeshift shelter one might see in an urban park or alleyway. The structure, which can be entered by viewers through a door at its wider end, acts as a camera obscura, a dark space in which a small aperture and a stream of light create inverted images of the objects suspended above. Attached to the wheel above, objects slowly revolve around the cone by way of a motorized wheel. In a seven-minute cycle, images appear and disappear in the darkness of the cone's interior hold, casting temporary images of a transient and fragmented life.



Temporary and transitory sensibilities are central to HeavyShield's work. Her installation *a body of land* is comprised of more than 200 digital snap shots of varying shades of skin, shaped into cones, reminiscent of the teepees that once dotted the Western plains of HeavyShield's Blackfoot territory. Affixed to the plane of the walls of the gallery, the cones function as a series of metaphors—each is at once a body—a body of knowledge and a body of history. Situated within the history of HeavyShield's nomadic Blackfoot culture, the cones represent both relation and retreat, "skin is home, and body is landscape" argues HeavyShield. This *body of land* is also literally the embodiment of her community; their photographed skin now, like HeavyShield herself, forms the work.

The hooded enclosures of her more recent work, *Aapaskaiyaawa (they are dancing)* suggest the body as refuge. Her lightweight, portable forms, like the cones of *a body of land*, resemble both teepees and people, their gentle sway in the gallery space enticing viewers to join in. Both works confront and critique the idea of the nomad as an aimless wanderer, adrift. Here the gathering place, amidst community, is home, not the destination.



Simply titled *Trailer*, one side of this modified camping unit, created by Jaugelis and Terris, has been cut away and replaced with Plexiglas, revealing its interior. Sleeping bags, cushions, playing cards, a lantern and other signs of habitation abound within.

The work provides a view of leisure in the Canadian outdoors that is quite distinct from the idealized landscapes found in the iconic Canadian paintings of the Group of Seven and others. Within the locale of Banff National Park, *Trailer* suggests a not entirely uncommon view of the contemporary camping experience, but, as a holiday vehicle situated on the streets of downtown Vancouver (where the work was first shown) the work takes on new meaning. Its potential to serve as a permanent residence or home, presents an all the more poignant view of low incoming housing in cities across Canada. Its second-hand décor, long out of fashion, imbues the work with a campy, self-conscious kitsch, further underscoring the implied economic disparity of its urban inhabitants.

Trailer questions the use of public space and at the same time deconstructs illusions of architectural permanence, illuminating contemporary conditions of impermanence, transience and nomadism.



Using books and instructional manuals found on the Internet, Kuiper uses the plans for prefabricated structures as a starting point in her work. Interested in these structures as sculpture she finds their promise of safety against overwhelming forces both optimistic and foolish. Kuiper's drawings combine multiple aspects of prefabricated shelters with elements of her own design. Her ironic creation, *Shelter Kite* is both refuge from and dependent on the wind for flight. The work unearths childhood memories of tornado drills and the threat of oncoming weather. Allusions to Dorothy Gale are subtly present, as the *Kite* becomes refuge, vehicle and site of imagination.

In her work *For Homes with Basements*, Kuiper probes the potential potency of home-made survival stations, bunkers and other hidden architectural structures: tornado shelters, bomb shelters and bunkers, constructed campsites of the cold war, where one might fend off or wait out attack. Of particular interest to Kuiper are the psychological and social particularities of these spaces—spaces that are familiar, idealized spaces in our collective conscious, yet claustrophobic, ominous and removed from most people's daily lives.



Informed by issues related to travel, exploration and mechanical invention, Lawrence's mixed media works include film, photography, and sculpture, often incorporating storytelling. His work *The Sled*, created during a 1996 residency at The Banff Centre, is both portable vehicle and shelter, its form, constructed to mimic the rocks of the natural environment around it. Hatches closed, and sleeping bags strapped on, the shelter (which is mounted on skis) becomes a personal vehicle, its cargo stored safely inside. Lawrence's project also included a super 8mm film, which documents a camping trip with *The Sled* on Vermillion Lake in Banff National Park, while *The Sled Journal* offers a fictionalized account of his activities.

Subsequent to *The Sled*, Lawrence created *The Storm Kit*, a wooden and canvas construction that mimics the small survival kits commonly found in outdoor supply stores. The replication of their carefully packaged items, such as teabags, matches and bouillon cubes, suggests our growing inability to survive in the natural world. Issues of survival and depravity figure centrally in the work, as camping becomes a site of relative comfort and luxury in the midst of extreme weather and a symbol of our growing dislocation from the natural world.



Shelter as a site of refuge and retreat is central to Magor's work. In the late 1990s she created a series of shelter works, among them *Tent* (an upright, boy-sized work made of soft, pliable rubber, cast from the trunk of an apple tree) and *Burrow* (a replicated fallen log outfitted with a sleeping bag interior). While notions of Canadiana come to mind, the works evoke images of refugees, the homeless and fugitives who may take haven in the wilderness, probing the possibilities of nature as a place of retreat and refuge. The work may also be read as deluxe gear, portable shelter, imbued with a sense of independence, as a simulation of nature, a refuge from urban life or as nature itself, commodified, and plasticized as it is consumed by an ever-expanding market place. Invariably the work takes on different meanings in different locales. In the context of Banff National Park, the work may be seen to be address a desire to return to nature, while in an urban environment may suggest nature as a place for refuge, a place for the homeless to bed down.

Magor's *Camping Portfolio* offers a series of images, shot across North America, which focus on domestic activities such as cooking, eating and setting up camp. At first glance, the photographs appear to be historical documentation, but upon closer examination—contemporary buildings, fences and picnic tables, among other clues, reveal the subjects to be contemporary men and women re-enacting scenes from war encampments and life on the frontier. In addition to the literal leisure activity of camping—it is the role-playing that is of primary import to Magor, and the way in which the re-enacted personas, worn by the participants, operate as a psychic shelter—shielding them, if only temporarily, from contemporary social norms.



Created from more than 800 recycled sweaters, the unconventional, domestic materials of Morton's *Cozy*, seem to suggest a homespun parody of apparently more serious public art and civic monuments. On the contrary, the work engages public art, questioning its use in a contemporary society that appears to have little time or appreciation of it.

First created in the fall of 1999 as a cozy for her former home on Ward's Island, the work was later installed in downtown Toronto at Trinity Square Park. In both venues, the work explored the intersection of art in public and private spaces. In the urban locale of London, Ontario, the work came as a surprise to visitors, both familiar and out of place in downtown where single-family homes have made way for condominium development and big business. *Cozy* was developed as an articulation of Morton's thinking about issues of home and homelessness, so it's not surprising that, as winter approaches, visitors were struck by the irony of a house dressed for winter when so many urban homeless people are left in the cold.



Ozawa's *Ivan the Fool (Capsule Hotel Project)* confronts contemporary architecture, urban development, industrial design and the way in which our urban environments are shaped. It is a funny yet poignant work that juxtaposes the strikingly similar habitat of a makeshift homeless shelter and a capsule hotel room. The capsule hotel, sometimes called "commuter crash pads," offers a low cost "squat" for student travellers or business people who need a place to flop while on short trips. They are the inevitable product of the combination of housing shortages in Japan's metropolitan cities and a labour environment, which makes commuting a necessary reality—although they are fast becoming popular in airports and train stations around the world. Equally, and perhaps more surprising, is their use as a home away from home, for couples in search of a quiet retreat away from family, in the often overcrowded circumstances of their homes. These small compact spaces, outfitted with fresh linens, a TV and radio—all the trappings for a safe and restful night's sleep are juxtaposed with what might best be described as a temporary street shelter for a homeless person.

Tsuyoshi Ozawa, *Ivan the Fool (Capsule Hotel Project)*, 2003, detail, Photo: Tara Nicholson, Courtesy of the Artist



Shaped by her own immigrant experience and by her travels around the world, Rewakowicz's work is informed by issues of cultural displacement, identity and immigration. She has used portable architecture to explore issues of transience and mobility and, over the past several years, has created a series of mobile, inflatable environments as a means to explore these concerns.

Moving from place to place, Rewakowicz became acutely aware of the emptiness of travel, and of the imposing sense of being, but not belonging. In 2001, she travelled across Canada with an inflatable, rubber latex, recreation of a room from her Montreal apartment, creating in the process a home, away from home.

Dressware, a work of her own design, which can be worn as a dress or used as a solar powered inflatable shelter, functions as performance costume, interview room and hospitality suite for meeting people on her travels. Inevitably, it is also a venue for the contemplation of ideas of belonging and community, adventure and discovery. Its membrane is a metaphorical reference to the collapsing divisions of our increasingly globalized world.

A larger version of the *Dressware* work serves as an exhibition space for a series of documentary videos, which record her travels in Belgium, Estonia, France and Mexico.



An interdisciplinary artist, Vida's work is often inspired and motivated by her feminist politics and Celtic heritage. Interested in exploring process-based, performative works, Vida has constructed several Celtic-influenced woodland shelters, or bowers, as a way to relate to a specific location, and the forest in particular.

Part sculpture, part shelter, the bower is a site for meditation and exploration. It's shape is derived from early Celtic designs for small, makeshift, fishing boats, in which skins were stretched over a basket framework, creating a shell that could be inverted to shelter fishers while on a journey, or at a temporary camp. Here the form offers both a literal and metaphorical reference to journey.

A private space but one that can be shared—the *Bower* is an invitation to make a place for oneself away from the hectic pace of contemporary life. From materials collected by hand from the forest, the work provides shelter, created without reliance on manufactured products that separate us from their origins in nature. Once abandoned, the *Bower* will eventually collapse back into the forest, erasing all evidence of its existence.



A cultural strategist and activist, Wong's politically motivated videos confront social injustice and inequity. Influenced by, and critical of, mass media and pop culture, they vacillate between fiction and non-fiction, probing issues of identity and disenfranchisement. His works explore the cultural landscape of the urban environment and, in the process, the shifting worlds of acceptance and displacement.

His 4-minute video *EAT: Mainstreet Dinner for the Homeless* Wong draws attention to homelessness by documenting a December 2002 visit to an ad hoc community of destitute people, camped out around a former Woodward's Department Store in the downtown east side of Vancouver. As winter, and the coming holiday season, approached, the building sat unoccupied, its future use yet to be determined, while dozens of Vancouver's homeless camped unsheltered in its shadow.

As he explained in a March 2007 email exchange, "The department store was the anchor of a thriving street and community that succumbed to the increasing poverty and associated social, drug and abuse problems that devoured the neighbourhood that started during and immediately after the glory days of EXPO 86."

The video was produced for the EAT issue of the on-line magazine of horizonzero.ca, an initiative of the Banff New Media Institute. In response to an invitation to participate in their on-line dinner party.

Wong donated the project fees for the horizonzero commission to the tent city kitchen.



Since the turn to autonomy, art has striven mightily to mirror one basic aesthetic experience, the increasing decentration of subjectivity. It occurs as the subject leaves the spatio-temporal structures of everyday life behind, freeing itself from the conventions of everyday perception, of purposive behaviours, and of the imperatives of work and utility.²

One of the extraordinary features of contemporary vanguard cultures that distinguish them from the earlier avant-gardes of the last century is that they do not announce their entry into the culture in the same manner; that is with manifestos, broadsides and *épater le bourgeois* behaviours. Renato Poggioli identified these as the three A's: Agonist, Activist and Antagonist; that is strategic, subversive and insubordinate actions aimed at undermining the (bourgeois) status quo. But, like their prototypes in the first decades of the twentieth century, contemporary avant-garde formations may be discerned in the

Squat II, July - August, 1999, Walter Phillips Art Gallery, The Banff Centre, video still, Courtesy of the Walter Phillips Gallery

popular media and in small-scale discussions around events and debates occurring within various discursive communities.³ In other words, the contemporary avant-garde may not be recognised as such until it stimulates certain inflexions or accents in the popular media. An example of this accenting is provided by several Harry Rosen advertisements that appeared in *The Globe and Mail* in the late 1990s and continue into the present:



Advertisement for Harry Rosen

This advertisement seems conventional enough, except for the caption that announces that, on behalf of Malcolm Gladwell⁴—the celebrity author appearing in this advertisement—Harry Rosen has made a donation to the

Toronto General Hospital Multi-Organ transplant Program. Rosen produced many similar advertisements throughout the 1990s donating on behalf of his celebrity models to local food banks and in aid of the homeless and impoverished in Toronto. These advertisements are contradictory; on the one hand they advise the consumer of the symbolic value of the goods advertised, and provide some additional incentives for purchase through the association of the articles of clothing with notables of various kinds Mel Hurtig, David Cronenberg, Malcolm Gladwell, Daniel Libeskind *et al.* On the other hand, they disavow this act of consumption with an act of giving, a donation to a personally chosen social agency—usually a food bank—personally chosen, so the ad copy tells us, by the figure dressed for the advertisement.

The theme of the gift, of freedom and obligation in the gift, of generosity and self-interest in giving, reappear in our own society like the resurrection of a dominant motif long forgotten.⁵

Within the politically progressive arts of the post-modern era (especially the 1980s), strategies of taking, quoting and appropriating usually assumed greater currency than those of giving, donating and providing. In this new millennium, however, the practice of giving seems to have become more readily appreciated as a *modus operandi* for producing ethical, socially responsive and politically efficacious art.⁶ In this essay I argue that, as a specific form of littoralist art

practice⁷—the art of giving, and its associated ‘modalities’—conform in many ways to what the German philosopher Jurgen Habermas acknowledged as forms of *communicative action*, aimed at the progressive decolonization of the life world; even perhaps, the inauguration of his “good and true life.” The discussion will focus upon several examples of littoralist art practice that have occurred during the past two decades within several international contexts, including several cities in Canada.⁸ Terms of social commitment, cultural ethics, engaged art practice and tendency, or *tendenzkunst*, will be discussed as the implicit ground for the critical negotiation of this category of art as a normative and not politically radical practice. These terms bear an extensive intellectual legacy that have challenged many artists, philosophers, art theorists and critics, beginning with Marx and Engel’s famous critiques of Ferdinand de Lasalle’s historical drama *Franz von Sickingen* (1859) and Eugene Sue’s *The Mysteries of Paris* in *The Holy Family* (1845).⁹

Acknowledging the political problematics of some of these art works, I nevertheless establish a claim for considering them as practical examples of Habermas’s theory of communicative action, *in action*. I hope that this discussion of littoralist art practice and its theoretical implications will contribute to the various inter-related topics offered by the CAMPSites exhibition: homelessness, nomadism, portable architecture, education, criticism, post-modernity, reason,

morality, ethics, social and cultural change and democracy. This essay represents an attempt to match Habermas’s theory of communicative action with some “crystallized” examples of littoralist art practice.

WOCHENKLAUSUR

A powerful example of littoralist art practice as communicative action is represented in the collaborative work of WochenKlausur, an Austrian-based group of artists. Their activities to date have been identified by titles that simply represent the length of time they spend working on each project, for example *sechs, acht oder elf Wochen Klausur* (6, 8 or 11 Weeks of Enclosure). Encouraged in the summer of 1993 by Wolfgang Zingg, project co-coordinator and art theorist, a group of eight artists¹⁰ used the existing social infrastructure of the Wiener Secession, a famous exhibition hall for contemporary art in Vienna, “to work on the problem of homelessness.”¹¹ Through a series of informal discussions with individuals and various groups, including homeless people, representatives from government and social agencies, they discovered that a major problem for the Viennese homeless was that they did not have access to medical care, the result of not being officially registered for health insurance. Over the course of several days of round table discussions, the artists decided to raise funds to purchase a bus that was remodelled into a multi-purpose



WochenKlauser, Courtesy of Wolfgang Zingg

ambulance. The group also lobbied the local government to provide a physician to work with the bus, and subsequently the overall management of this vehicle was taken over by the Caritas organisation.

Since its inception, this medical health service has provided medical aid for more than 500 homeless people a month, people who previously had no access whatsoever to health care. The group also discovered from their discussions with the homeless that they had no place to store or protect their personal belongings. As a response, the group arranged for some 200 lockers to be provided at various shelters throughout the city. Through ongoing dialogue with various government and social agencies the 11 WochenKlausur group also developed a communication system which would prevent unfair evictions of tenants from their rental accommodations. They have since established a pilot system for two Viennese districts.

In Switzerland eight months later, at the Zurich Shedhalle, an exhibition gallery for contemporary art, the group, with a few new members, tackled another social topic—the city's drug problem, reputed to be one of the worst in Europe, and a source of growing embarrassment for the Swiss government. After several months of intense research into the issues, they realized that the problem was exacerbated by what they called “the highly superficial, meaningless and politically overburdened discussion of the issue.”¹² Their response was to arrange daily “boat talks” which took place over several hours on Zurich Lake. Small groups of four specialists—each representing the spheres of business, politics, human rights organisations, medicine, social work—and including some of the drug addicts themselves—met over the course of eight weeks (8 WochenKlausur). Each of the groups discussed various aspects of the drug problem. Away from their various institutional and administrative contexts, minute takers, file systems, and in a genial context with coffee, fresh air and a view, the groups were able to have relatively open discussions about the drug problem and how best to respond to it.

According to members of the 8 Wochenklausur group, the atmosphere on the boat trips encouraged the ‘specialists’ to articulate positions that would have been difficult or impossible to communicate within their highly administered institutional environments. In this new context they could minimize or erase the conflicts which had developed between their various institutions and expert communities,

and challenge prevailing attitudes, in a reasonable and ethically responsible manner. Over the course of several weeks some 60 representatives from various political and business constituencies met, including the chairmen of all the Swiss political parties, two senior prosecutors, police superintendents from several Swiss regions, members of privately and publicly funded relief organisations, business, church groups, social volunteers and the chief editors of the Swiss print media.

The discussions on the boat led to the formation of an enhanced needle exchange initiative, and resulted in a lessening of spectacular news coverage and the 'othering' of drug addicts that typically took place in the media on a regular basis. The discussions also resulted in a plan to institute a boarding house for drug-addicted prostitutes, and other long-term initiatives. In a short time the artists' group raised the sum of 100.000 Austrian schillings for the boarding house, but when they attempted to institute it in a neighbourhood, a demonstration led to a withdrawal of the plan. According to Katharina Lenz, one of the members of the group, the next round of discussions involved more individuals from the projected neighbourhood site for the boarding house.

A third WochenKlausur project in Italy involved a small village 90 km north of Rome. After examining the local newspapers from the previous ten years, consulting with



WochenKlausur, Courtesy of Wolfgang Zingg

municipal authorities and different groups of village inhabitants, one third of whom were over 65, they decided to focus upon the development of a recreational facility for seniors. Using a novel method of fundraising, the group provided a centre with some basic equipment, bar with refrigeration, dishwasher, etc. They initiated a photographic event which had people pay a nominal fee to be photographed in front of a large painting of the town. Through this action the local population indirectly financed the bar. In addition the group arranged for the recuperation of a "centrally located but incorrectly constructed and therefore abandoned *boccia* field." The recuperation of this important facet of rural Italian social life was obtained through the development of a contract with a large-scale wine producer, the initiation of export connections and sales within Austria, which netted a small profit that was re-channelled into the reconstruction of the *boccia* court.

CAMPsites

The curatorial theme of *CAMPsites* is presented as an investigation into “transience as a condition of contemporary life.” Curator Melanie Townsend described the exhibition as concentrating on “the idea of home” contrasting “representations of kitsch middle class recreation with stark visions of homelessness and temporary shelters.” Through their articulation and construction of varied notions of campsites the artists in this exhibition explored issues of survival, shelter and the portability of home, which engaged notions of class, identity, displacement. The curatorial themes also corralled several other social and political issues of relevance. Townsend writes “The contradiction between those who are migratory by design (RV owners, campers, travellers) or transitory by circumstance (refugees, immigrants, homeless) can be seen almost anywhere.... In today’s increasingly global community, economic colonialism, unprecedented expansion of cities, war, famine and natural disaster have resulted in a period of unprecedented flux, while the ease of international travel has desensitized us to the significant cultural shifts that now grip many parts of the globe.”¹³

It is interesting in this context to invoke the theoretical work on the camp extrapolated by the Italian philosopher Giorgio Agamben. A primary fulcrum of Agamben’s view of modernity is his discursive negotiation of the camp; nominally the

concentration camp, and the state of exception, both physical and psychical, that the camp induces in its inmates and overseers, who become at times, perhaps ultimately, indistinguishable. He argues that the camp was/is the space where a state of exception occurs; where the exceptional could and indeed does take place. The camp is also the territory in which Agamben’s theories of bio-politics come into play; more specifically where the antagonism between naked life (*bios*) and political life (*zoe*) become evident. Under Agamben’s “state of exception” the human subject is not only stripped of *zoe* but exposed as *bios*, so that anything, including the unspeakable, can be done to the inmate—and here is the important qualifier—since nothing can be considered a *criminal act*. Moreover the camp, according to Agamben, is “the space that opens up when the state of exception starts to become the rule.”¹⁴ He argues that the camp is the new biopolitical *nomos*¹⁵ of the world today, which arguably has its most contemporary manifestations in the detention camps in Afghanistan, Iraq and Guantanamo Bay, not to mention the Palestinian camps in Israel, those in Nigeria, Rwanda, Afghanistan, the Sudan and elsewhere throughout the world. His important rumination on the state of exception enables us to understand the camp beyond its archetypes in refugee camps, prisons and gated communities; where the pursuit of the good (sovereign) life is compromised by the prospect of an ignoble death, to imagine a permanent political ecology of the mind.¹⁶

In its various locations CAMPSites included sculpture, photography, video and installation by numerous artists. Among the works included in the exhibition was *EAT: Mainstreet Dinner for the Homeless* (2003), by Paul Wong. Originally featured in *Horizon Zero*, a multimedia Web magazine produced at The Banff Centre, this compelling video records a 2002 visit to an impromptu community of homeless people who camped in and around a former Woodward's department store. Wong explores homelessness from the position of one who understands the potentialities of networking and community building, of squatting in vacant buildings, and also the political capital that can be obtained by city councillors and parties who wish to draw attention to social inequities.¹⁷ The homeless, low-income people who took part in the squat aimed to create new anonymous housing by direct action from the cast off structures of the profit culture and safe affordable homes constructed by poor people, free from landlords, governments and profit.¹⁸ The squatters' objectives were partially achieved when the Vancouver City Council purchased the Woodward's department store in 2003, with plans to provide low cost housing as part of their objectives.

HOMELESS AND SQUAT PROJECTS

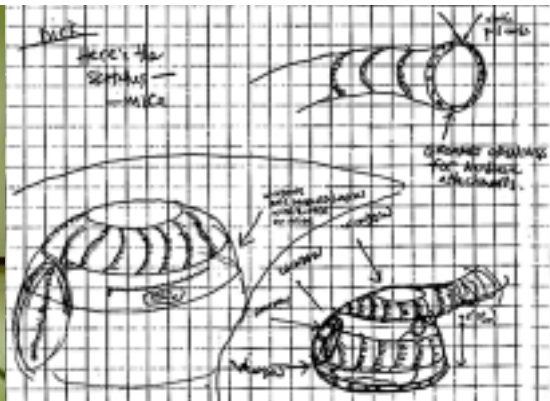
Homeless statistics are alarming. Approximately 33,000 Canadians are identified as homeless, with about a 1/3 or 8,333 to 11,000 of this number being youths between the ages of 15 and 25. In the city of Toronto 10,000 is considered a good estimate of the number of homeless there are on any night of a given year. In Los Angeles, by contrast, there are around 82,291 people homeless in the metropolitan area.¹⁹

In San Raphael, California, a homeless project titled *Drawbridge* operates in nine bay area homeless shelters in three counties, in which homeless youth (ages 14 to 16) may express their needs, fears, hopes and feelings through using various materials from standard painting and drawing media to sculpture and video. *Drawbridge* uses simple art materials and brings together trained art facilitators and volunteers, who work in the shelters.

In Wales the Newport homeless project consists of a community building that provides opportunities for homeless people to develop their skills and gain confidence in their social milieu. Dominic Hislop, an artist based in Scotland, collaborated with Miklos Erhardt, a Hungarian artist. Photographing homelessness and poverty from the inside out, they obtained sponsors to purchase some flash disposable cameras, offering these to homeless people in a



Michael Rakowitz, *paraSITE*, 1999, installation and drawing view, Courtesy of the Artist



variety of situations such as overnight shelters, suggesting that the recipients of the cameras could document anything they felt was of interest in their daily life. The collected images were subsequently exhibited in Budapest's largest homeless shelter.

In a parodic spoof of Krzysztof Wodiczko's vehicle for the homeless and related works, U.S. artist Michael Rakowitz proposed to utilize the exterior ventilator systems of buildings to provide the homeless with a temporary shelter.

MICHAEL RAKOWITZ *paraSITE* (1999)

In 2003 the Interdisciplinary Humanities Center at the University of California, Santa Barbara, coordinated a special program of events under the title *HOME FREE? Liberty, Security and the 21st Century American Habitat*. An exhibition coincided with a lecture series and a course outline associated with the project explored "What are the minimum requirements for human shelter? How safe is safe

enough? What should the 21st century American habitat look like? How about you designing a prototype portable home using found materials? Using prefabricated, “found” and recycled materials, students will be asked to think in three dimensions about how people use, consume and live with manufactured products and (post) industrial by-products.”²⁰

SQUAT PROJECTS 1998-2003

Since 1998, I have collaborated with a number of individuals and institutions in Canada, (Halifax and Banff), Poland (Piotrkow Tribunalski) and New Zealand (Christchurch), and via the worldwide net on the production of several *Squat* installations. Each squat occupied a different architectural space ranging from a closet space and its adjoining room in Halifax, a 12 foot cube in the Walter Phillips Gallery at The Banff Centre (CD ROM), a vacant building (Piotrkow); a gallery storage space (Christchurch) and, most recently, in Halifax, a gallery window. Each squat installation contained a similar set of elements: a bed or couch, table, chair, computer with web access, a web cam, printer, a doorscope (and in two instances a video projector) as well as access to washroom and/or cooking facilities. Advertisements were placed in local papers and handbills distributed requesting the participation of one or more individuals who were prepared to occupy the space for

periods of a few hours to several weeks in order to produce a text collaboratively. In the first squat in Halifax Jon David Welland, a managed schizophrenic, wrote and broadcast on CBC radio several dramatic dialogues. Welland and I also collaborated on the formation of a group for writers.

In The Banff Centre squat, Katherine Grant, a homeless woman, occupied the squat for almost two months and produced a diary, several short stories, drawings and a video tape. In other squat installations an exquisite corpse novel was produced collaboratively by visitors to the squat or via the website. With its associated chat room and links the website also provided opportunities for homeless, itinerant or otherwise disenfranchised individuals to communicate with each other about squats and squatting on the web.

Before I arrived in Banff in the summer of 1999 we had submitted a handbill design for general circulation and publication in the local Calgary street journal and other venues. It stated that the Walter Phillips Gallery at The Banff Centre was seeking an itinerant or presently homeless writer to occupy a squat for a period of eight weeks during the summer to communicate with other writers on the web. Katherine Grant, an itinerant writer, responded to the call and occupied the space for a period of seven weeks. Instead of occupying one of the special architect-designed studio pods provided in The Banff Centre grounds, Katherine Grant was provided with a squat, which I designed for the gallery.

Grant informed me that she had previously taken one continuing education course in writing (in B.C.) and although she was “always writing” she had not yet had the opportunity to publish any of her work. During her residency in the squat she managed to publish one piece locally and received invitations to publish others. Her daily activities were streamed on to the squat homepage via a web cam placed in her room and she communicated with writers and others via the internet. During her squat occupation Katherine encouraged hundreds of visitors to leave some memento of their visit in the form of drawings or statements on the wall, which was subsequently videotaped. She published several of her short essays and was interviewed by reporters from webnews.com. She began work on her life history, learned some aspects of video making and became a popular member of The Centre community, making friends with everyone she encountered. She personalized the squat space with her stuffed toys and bed quilt, inviting people to sign the walls of the interior of her bedroom, which many did, leaving messages of support and friendship, drawings and poems that were subsequently documented on video. This advertisement had circulated for at least two weeks prior to my arrival and the gallery personnel had set up some interviews with prospective squatters for me during the week prior to the exhibition opening. I was also taken to Calgary and distributed other handbills to homeless people. At one of the Calgary drop-in centres for the homeless we established a time to meet with Katherine Grant—whom the

coordinators recommended as someone who would both contribute to and benefit from the project. Katherine, a woman in her late forties or early fifties, lived in an old car and traveled regularly between Alberta and British Columbia to maintain contact with her two sons. She had little formal education and recounted a particularly difficult life history, which I did not feel comfortable discussing with her or representing in this context without her express permission. She disclosed that she was receiving disability payments and rejected the idea of receiving payment for her role as a squatter, as this would have jeopardized her social security payments. She did take the opportunity, however, to receive the hospitality of the Banff residency program—food vouchers, the opportunity to sit in on various workshops, access to exercise facilities—to become, in effect, (without conventional symbolic capital) just like any of the other artists and writers invited to become part of the Banff art residency program.

HABERMAS’S THEORY OF COMMUNICATIVE ACTION

How do these campsites, squat projects and ‘art’ actions conform to Habermas’s theory of communicative action? Habermas distinguishes between *strategic*, *instrumental* and *communicative* actions. The distinction, he says, between actions that are oriented toward success and those toward understanding is crucial:

I speak of communicative actions when social interactions are co-coordinated not through the egocentric calculations of success of every individual but through co-operative achievements of understanding among participants.²¹

And elsewhere he writes:

Whereas in strategic action one actor seeks to influence the behaviour of another by means of the threat of sanctions or the prospect of gratification in order to cause the interaction to continue as the first actor desires, in communicative action one actor seeks rationally to motivate another by relying on the illocutionary binding/bonding effect (*Bindungseffekt*) of the offer contained in the speech act.²²

In these art projects Habermas's pre-requisites for communicative action, as opposed to instrumental or strategic action, are respected. With *WochenKlausur* as the exemplary model, for instance, at the outset in this and other projects, no agendas or goals are established, neither are outcomes predicted by any members of the group, including its facilitator, Wolfgang Zingg. Rather, the group employs a method of on-going dialogue with provisional consensus taken at appropriate points in the process, in order to exercise a modicum of control over the resulting plans and initiatives.²³ No one individual assumed control of the



Ala Plastica La Plata Project, <http://www.ecoportal.net/content/view/full/29437>

process; rather it was, in the best sense possible, participatory and democratic.

Cooperations, the International Program of Art & The Environment, based in Luxembourg, has had some extraordinary success in developing new modes of communication between expert communities. Their program encourages the development of multifaceted interdisciplinary projects, in which artists, social workers, psychologists, landscape architects and members of marginal groups (the homeless, the mentally and physically challenged) have co-operated to create new ways of responding to the environment. "The interaction with marginal groups and their integration in such projects has led to extraordinary results in which artistic, social and environmental 'objectives' overlap."²⁴ One of Cooperation's most successful projects has been the redesign and building of an extraordinary garden in Wiltz. Similarly, the Argentine artists' group *Ala Plastica*, an NGO (non-government organisation) established in 1991, has



Hirsch Farm Project, www.novelsquat.com/conceptualart.html

promoted various environmental projects, recycling programs and educational initiatives. These include the recuperation of degraded spaces in La Plata Zoo and their transformation into public spaces for the environmental education of schoolchildren. Since their founding, Ala Plastica has used collaborative methods to develop proposals for improving the life quality of municipal, provincial and “cultural organisms,” education, and urban waste management. Members of the group are represented on the Environmental Advisory Council of Buenos Aires State and La Plata City hall. They have also established co-

operative agreements on environmental education with La Plata National University.

The Hirsch Farm Project group represents probably the purest example of communicative action in action. Based in a rural context in Northbrook, Illinois, the HFP is described as “an arts based think tank concerned with public art, the environment and community,” that brings together individuals from a wide range of disciplines to meet *in camera* for a period of a week to discuss specific topics and subtopics. Their *Nonspectacle and the Limitations of Popular Opinion* expanded upon results obtained from 1991 MUD (Multi-User Dungeons) and Pressure on the Public Programs. The group examined “the dynamics of how artists and other professionals communicate with a specified audience or community, and how these intentions are received.”²⁵ Each participant in the HFP ‘focus’ groups develops a proposal or essay that reflects or responds to the conversations generated during the week-long discussion sessions. This results in a publication that is distributed to individuals and organisations in the arts, sciences and humanities. According to Laurie Winter, a co-coordinator, the goals of HFP are simply to “stimulate dialogue and elevate the standards of conversation between different communities and disciplines whose paths would normally not cross.” Another early example of littoralist art was produced in Halifax, in an exhibition entitled, appropriately enough for these times, *Food Bank*. This exhibition, by artist Kelly Lycan,

was installed during the first two weeks of December 1994, at the then newly founded artist run Khyber Arts Centre in Halifax. As the title suggests *Food Bank* was “an exhibition with the function of gathering and offering food.” Several weeks before the exhibit, a notice was sent out to members of the Halifax community with instructions on how to participate in the exhibition, together with a number of blank card tags. Participants were requested to write a favourite recipe or two on the cards and to describe their occupation in the space provided. The artist offered to pick up the recipe tags and participants’ donations for the Metro Halifax Food Bank. The food donations and recipes could also be deposited by December 1st in a drop box in the vestibule of Kelly Lycañ’s apartment building on Morris Street. The announcement card stated that the recipes would be placed on the gallery wall for others to see and exchange. People were invited to bring food to the exhibition and to choose a recipe from the rear wall display to take home with them.

Lycañ’s intention was to initiate what she called “a circular gift.” People who took the recipes could cook them for friends, thus passing on what the artist referred to as “the gift of food.” At the gallery the packaged food items were arranged in a square on the floor, bounded by an elegant gold line. On the adjacent wall, the recipe cards were hung on hooks, and on the other adjoining wall, a service line control ticket tape machine, such as those found in super

markets or government agencies, provided numbers for the participants. A notice informed them that the number they received from the ticket tape machine corresponded with a recipe card, which they could take home. At the conclusion of the exhibition the collected food was delivered to the Metro Food Bank and distributed to its users.

Lycañ’s *Food Bank* engages a number of critical issues relating to the value of art, productive labour, the politics of reciprocity and what we can term the political economy of giving.²⁶ Many of the participants identified humbly with the actual needs of food bank users by providing cheap and easy to produce recipes. The reciprocal and participatory form of the work which obliged gallery-goers to give food and take a ticket in order to collect a recipe encouraged the donors to identify themselves as potential food bank users. They were not encouraged to choose any recipe they desired. Instead, they were required to donate food and then take a ticket and line up as they would for the food bank itself. Some donors recognised that their privileged status as food donor rather than food bank recipient (or ‘client’ as some bureaucratic agencies euphemistically call them) was transitory, thus reinforcing sociological studies which reveal that the majority of givers are often barely able to make ends meet, and occasionally have been aid recipients themselves. Many donors took the opportunity to produce their best recipe for the exhibition that they decorated artfully on the card. Others presented their favourite creative alterations of

famous staple/comfort foods for the impoverished, such as macaroni dinner and tomato soup. Many realized upon entering the exhibit that they had engaged in a collaborative process, in which they too became exhibitors, where donors became recipients and where exhibition value was transformed conveniently into use value. Discussions about the meaning and value of the work took place informally both inside and outside the gallery context throughout the two-week exhibit.

The end result of Lycan's exhibition was not simply the donation of food to the local food bank, although this, to be sure, was one important aim. It was also the critical engagement of the *Food Bank* participants in various aspects of the labour process, including the acknowledgement of the important ideological relationships between social class (here indicated by occupation) and cultural consumption. *Food Bank* encouraged the negotiation of the conditions of the purchase of food items, of cooking, creating recipes, exchanging and consuming food as forms of "cultural capital" (Bourdieu, 1977, 1984). Lycan's project questioned the terms of market value, exchange versus giving, altruism and giving as necessary and obligatory components of receiving. Her exhibition reinforced the reciprocal nature of giving and the critique of capitalism so eloquently expressed in French sociologist Marcel Mauss's formative study *The Gift* (1924). Since its publication, this has become the

foundation for many subsequent studies on the socio-cultural characteristics of giving by Mauss's followers and critics, among them Claude Lévi-Strauss and—more recently, Pierre Bourdieu. Forty years before the introduction of the computer and the inauguration of the so-called "information age," and now the putative, "age without work," Mauss wrote:

It is only our Western societies that quite recently turned man into an economic animal. But we are not yet all animals of the same species. In both lower and upper classes pure irrational expenditure is in current practice. *Homo oeconomicus* is not behind us, but before (us), like the moral man, the man of duty, the scientific man and the reasonable man. For a long time man was something quite different; and it is not so long now since he became a machine—a calculating machine.²⁷

With the exception of Mauss's negative gloss on reason, these are probably sentiments with which Habermas himself could identify. In her discussion of *Food Bank* Lycan refers to Mauss and one of his more recent disciples, Lewis Hyde, whose book *The Gift: Imagination and the Erotic Life of Property*, she acknowledges, has provided some of the key theoretical underpinnings of her work—such as her negotiation of the complex relationships between the gift

and capital. She agrees with Mauss and Hyde that the “gift should move” and moreover—an important point—that givers should not capitalize upon their giving. Hyde interprets the ‘spirit’ of gift exchange as an “erotic commerce.”²⁸

In this he acknowledges the influence of anthropologist Marshall Sahlin’s *Stone Age Economics* (1972), a rereading and insertion of Mauss’s interpretation of the potlatch, prestation, and various other forms of reciprocal giving and exchange into the context of a political philosophy, liberal humanism. Hyde argues that various models of creative giving, and the gift itself, are not only a means toward critically renegotiating property and capital, but also of formally renouncing the profit motive, acquisitiveness and selfishness as the primary motors of social life within capitalist society. Yet he acknowledges also the implicit refutation of his humanism, and suggests as a possible antidote to his positive pronouncements on the social panacea of giving, the somewhat more pessimistic essays by Garrett Hardin (1968) and Millard Schumaker (1980) who discuss the limits of altruism and the problematics of giving, obligation and reciprocity in an increasingly secular, individualistic, administered and technological society.

While Lycan’s work does not use democratic discussion as a key element in her project, as in the works discussed earlier, I would argue that it also conforms to Habermas’s

prescription for communicative action by privileging the use of critical reason and the bonding/binding of participants throughout.

The next examples initiate a similar critical negotiation of the political economy of giving, the socio-cultural significance and politics of food distribution, and, implicitly, international aid. The *Empty Bowls* project initiated by ceramists Lisa Blackburn and John Hartom of Franklin, Michigan, began in 1990 with a simple idea; ceramic artists, teachers, students and others would make some bowls, then invite some friends for a meal of soup and bread (or rice or ice-cream), convivial discussion and possibly music. In exchange for the bowl and the meal, the guest was asked (but not expected) to donate \$10.00 or more to a hunger organisation chosen by the sponsors of the meal. Their promotional material provides details on three primary objectives for the *Empty Bowls* project; the first, “to raise as much money as possible to feed hungry people in the U.S. and abroad;” second, to engage people in hunger awareness and education, and third, art education. “The language of art,” they suggest in a romantic passage, “circumvents the boundaries of all other languages to touch our souls. We feel through creativity we can create positive social change.”²⁹

According to their literature, the original *Empty Bowl* project was timed to coincide with International Food Day, October

16th 1991, an annual event based upon the founding on that date in 1945 of FAO, the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organisation. Blackburn and Hartom encouraged what they called “a high level of integrity for the project.” In order to achieve this ideal, they wrote, “*Empty Bowls* is a project of inclusion, cutting across social, political, racial, religious, age and any other perceived boundaries to join us all in working towards a common goal.”³⁰ Since their project was initiated, many groups throughout the U.S. and further afield (as far away as New Zealand) have used this model successfully to plan and undertake fundraisers and education programs for local food banks and world hunger relief organisations.

Using the successful model established by Hartom and Blackburn, a group in Halifax established their own *Empty Bowl* initiative, renaming it the *Hungry Bowls Project*. Members of a ceramics tableware class at the Nova Scotia College of Art and Design led by instructor Walter Ostrom negotiated with several restaurants in the Halifax metropolitan area to donate tureens of soup to the NSCAD Cafeteria venue. Participants purchased tickets for \$12.00 each and two days before the event they were sold out. A ticket provided the bearer with a bowl of gourmet soup and several helpings of bread. In addition, they could take home the hand-crafted bowl, which had been created for this purpose by students and faculty of the Ceramics Department.

The event raised over \$2,400 for the local Metro Food Bank, and garnered much media attention.

Hungry Bowls is more of a do good, feel good project than the Lycan example or Food not Bombs projects, and it is certainly no frontal assault on the socially constructed and reproduced inequities within capitalist society. Yet its aim is similar, extending the language of the altruistic gift into a more politically efficacious education—communicative action—program of the type endorsed by Blackburn and Hartom. Only upscale restaurants, where a bowl of soup would typically cost between \$5.00 and \$10.00, were requested to donate. The event was promoted in the press and on air as a focus for Food Bank donations from the general public. At the conclusion of the event, money rather than food was sent to the Food Bank, thus assisting it to reinforce its bulk purchasing capacity.

CONCLUSION

From his earliest essays of the 1960s and early 1970s, Habermas’s views on the role of art in the transformation of society have remained somewhat opaque, yet not underdeveloped. While he has affirmed that art, along with philosophy, law, politics and economics, is an important terrain for mediation, communicative rationality and

pragmatic action, he is somewhat ambivalent about the extent to which this can occur in an institution which the forces of an increasingly technocratic and bureaucratic modernity have rendered into increasing autonomy from the life world. As a Kantian, he has remained somewhat resolute in his defense of the separation of pure and practical reason from aesthetic judgment:

In modern societies, the spheres of science, morality, and law have crystallized around these forms of argumentation (instrumental reason). The corresponding cultural systems of action administer problem solving capacities in a way similar to that in which the enterprises of art and literature administer capacities for world disclosure.³¹

It is clear from this statement, which he employed in his extended critique of Jacques Derrida's purported collapsing of the genre distinction between literature and philosophy, that while Habermas views art and culture generally as an important locus for theoretical attention, he maintains a boundary between the forms of communicative action which can occur within the spheres of political, legal or philosophical discourse, and those that can occur within the fields of art and literature. For Habermas art remains at the level of representation, distanced from the material reality and "spatio-temporal structures" of the life world, and as

such, cannot be considered as ideal a site as language—or rather speech—for the deployment of communicative action.

There are many theoretical implications for an engaged or committed cultural practice in each of these 'works'. It is strange even to nominate them as art works when each engages in some form of performed, participatory/communicative activity and there are few final objects—commodities—to place in a permanent gallery context, save the documentation of the event. In most of the examples and on one or more levels, labour is freely given and no compensation is expected or anticipated, except perhaps—for the cynic—art world cultural capital from essays such as this. It could be argued that several of the homeless 'works' exist outside the art legitimating context altogether, and would thus have some difficulty assuming any conventional art label. To different degrees each of the examples described exist as cultural services. Within specialized art world discourse they could be framed within the so-called installation, live art, performance art genres but perhaps they are better appreciated and understood as artist initiated examples of collaborative, operative, engaged or interventionist cultural practice. As I have attempted to suggest, examples of communicative action in action.

Some will argue that each example of the art of giving discussed above can be framed as either liberal altruism, or

as leftist *tendenzkunst*—and perhaps both. The tendency argument would insist that, while evidencing the ‘correct political tendency’, the work remains at the level of representation, acting out the forms of cultural politics without providing the important political substance which would engender real change. Armed with the legacy of Marx, Engels, Benjamin, Georg Lukacs, many on the left would argue that the artist/intellectual should align him/herself with the appropriate progressive or revolutionary forces within society and their representative social groups and political parties. Like Marx and Engel’s critiques of de Lasalle, each example of giving could be criticized for evidencing the correct political tendency but is lacking the correct engagement with its object of concern, which would necessitate an adoption of the appropriate (time honoured) and normative political strategies for social change.

However, I believe that the most important strategic element of each project is the artists’ insistence upon working with social reality itself rather than indirectly through various forms of representation, and this militates against a strong endorsement of the *tendenzkunst* conclusion. Lycan’s exhibition is not simply another form of compassionate victim art masquerading empathetically with the disenfranchised proletariat. On the contrary, Lycan problematises the very conditions of giving as a reciprocal process within a structured economy which privileges taking,

individual ownership, the profit motive and conspicuous consumption. She understands that the political economy of altruistic giving, like the corporate identity of some national and international aid organisations, churches and food banks, conforms to a “logic of practice”—to use Pierre Bourdieu’s description of the social habitus— “a system of structured (and) structuring dispositions, [the habitus] which is constituted in practice and is always oriented towards practical functions.”³² Her *Food Bank* example insists that giving can be used ‘strategically’ to further a number of identifiable life world and humanitarian goals, as well as provide some critical intervention into the ideological fabric of our culture.

Claude Lévi-Strauss has argued, “The automatic laws of the cycle of reciprocity are the unconscious principle of the obligation to give, the obligation to return a gift and the obligation to receive.”³³ However, as Bourdieu argues in his critique of Lévi-Strauss’s structural logic of the (Maussian) law of reciprocity, in reality “the gift may remain unreciprocated.”³⁴ For the Austrian artists, this realization would necessitate that the givers themselves become the first targets of conscientization. 11 WochenKlausur and Lycan’s *Food Bank*, engage a logic of practice which permits an infinite variety of exchanges or gifts, challenges, ripostes and reciprocations to occur. These examples of the littoralist art are exemplary in the manner in which they creatively engage

their public in conscientiousness and provide service of some social and cultural value. But in accordance with Bourdieu's wry observation on the politics of giving and receiving these examples acknowledge:

The simple possibility that things might proceed otherwise than as laid down by the 'mechanical laws' of the 'cycle of reciprocity' (and that this) is sufficient to change the whole experience of practice and, by the same token its logic.³⁵

In contrast to Mauss and Levi-Strauss' insistence on laws and structure in the cycle of reciprocity, of obligation and exchange, Bourdieu's logic of practice privileges individual agency, in all its unpredictability and contrariness, as the primary component of an ethically generative model of giving (and understanding). Perhaps this logic of practice, like that promoted by Habermas himself, "provides an alternative to money and power as a basis for societal integration."³⁶ And without this acknowledgement of individual agency, of potential for contrariety, the practice of giving, the gift of labour, the gift of blood, of life itself, would seem valueless. ■

NOTES

1. A version of this paper *The Art of Giving* was read as a keynote address at the *Chimera: New Zones for Critical Art Practice* symposium held at the Goethe Institute in Sydney, Australia February 21-27, 1995. and was published subsequently in EVA, *The Electronic Visual Arts Journal* Vol. 1:3 and FUSE Vol. 19:2, Winter 1996. The first *Littoral Symposium* was held in September 1994 in Manchester, England.
2. Jurgen Habermas, *Moral Consciousness and Communicative Action*, Christina Lenhardt, Shierry Weber Nicholsen, trans., with introduction by Thomas McCarthy, (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1990), p. 17
3. Grant Kester, *Conversation Pieces Community + Communication in Modern Art*, (Los Angeles: UCLA Press, 2005)
4. Malcolm Gladwell, *The Tipping Point: How Little Things Can Make a Big Difference*, (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 2000) and *Blink: The Power of Thinking Without Thinking*, (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 2007)
5. Marcel Mauss, *The Gift: Forms and Functions of Exchange in Archaic Societies*, (New York, New York: Norton Publishing, 1967), p.66
6. There are many historical prototypes of littoralist art practice in evidence, both within western modernism and cross culturally throughout various epochs.
7. Littoral describes the intermediate and shifting zone between the sea and the land (coastal) and refers metaphorically to projects which are undertaken predominantly outside the conventional contexts of the institutionalised artworld and into the public sphere—lifeworld affirming as opposed to system. The first *Littoral: New Zones for Critical Art Practice* symposium was organised by Ian Hunter and Celia Larner of Projects Environment in Manchester, England in September of 1994 and attracted artists from over 20 countries. The second *Littoral Symposium*, *Chimera* was organised by Neil Berezky and Adrian Hall, members of the Australian littoralist group Synapse.

8. Within the international field of littoral art practice there are many examples including artist groups that work with people with disabilities (Co-Operations in Luxembourg), children (Projects Environment, Manchester), the environment, (Ala Plastica Foundation, Argentina; ArtLink, Ireland) and as a think tank (Hirsch farm project in the U.S.)

9. In their individual correspondence with de Lasalle regarding his drama, Marx and Engels criticised him for schillern, a propensity in his text to "Avoid... the real material issues (content) of the Revolution, which was its subject." In other words to focus on the aesthetic form of the work at the expense of its political potential. Schillern is both a pun on the German word for describing, and the name of the writer Friedrich von Schiller, who tended to privilege aesthetic form and the plight of the tragic individual over the collective tragedy. Both Marx and Engels suggested that de Lasalle's tragedy would have been more realistic and therefore more politically efficacious had he taken Shakespeare as his model and not Schiller. Marx's critique of Eugene Sue was more pointed: comparing Sue to a bad painter who must label his painting to say what it represents, accusing him of producing the "most wretched offal of socialist literature." See Lee Baxandall and Stefan Morawski, eds., *Marx and Engels on Literature and Art*, (St. Louis and Milwaukee: Telos Press, 1973)

10. Frederike Klotz, Martina Chmelarz, Anne Schneider, Gudrun Wagner, Marion Holy, Christoph Kaltenbrunner and Wolfgang Zingg.

11. See WochenKlausur website <http://www.wochenklausur.at/>

12. [http://www.homeless.org.au/pictures/ Art and Social Intervention pamphlet](http://www.homeless.org.au/pictures/Art%20and%20Social%20Intervention%20pamphlet.pdf), September 1994

13. Melanie Townsend, *CAMPsites*, exhibition brochure, 2005

14. See Giorgio Agamben, *State of Exception*. Kevin Attel, trans., (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004), pp.11-22. Agamben is an esteemed faculty member at the European Graduate School in Saas-Fee, in the Canton of Wallis, Switzerland where he lectures and leads seminars each summer.

15. *nomos*, pl. *nomoi* a norm, in the sense both of custom and of law. In 5th century Athenian thought *Nomos* is contrasted, with *physis* (nature); the latter represents underlying reality and the former denotes the patterns by which men try to shape this. In this sense *nomos* is normally translated as convention. In Agamben's sense this is also the new order, or the extant hegemony.

16. The phrase "ecology of mind" derives from anthropologist Gregory Bateson's book *Steps to an Ecology of the Mind* originally published in 1971. A new edition has recently been published by the University of Chicago Press, 2000.

17. Under the headline Book claims political strategists behind squat David Carrigg, staff writer for the Vancouver Courier questioned whether "Woodward's squat started by homeless people seeking affordable housing, or by left-wing political strategists in the lead-up to the last municipal election." Tony Snakeskin, who spent 60 days living in the abandoned Woodward's building between September 14 and December 14, 2002, wrote that the squat was "deliberately created to help oust the then-ruling Non Partisan Association from city hall. In the end, the Coalition of Progressive Electors won a landmark victory, winning all but two seats on council" <http://www.vancourier.com/issues04/035104/news/035104nn9.html> accessed April 2007

18. See Aaron Vidaver, ed., *Woodsquat*, Issue 41 of West Coast Line, (Burnaby: West Coast Review Publishing Society, 2004)

19. See *The Greater Los Angeles Homeless Count Final Report* (2005), sponsored by the Los Angeles homeless authority. "The overall homeless population of the Los Angeles Continuum of Care (CoC) at a given point in time is estimated to be 82,291 people. Approximately 72,413 were unsheltered, and 9,878 people were living in either emergency shelters or transitional housing programs at the time of the census. For the purposes of this study, the HUD definition of an unsheltered homeless person was used: someone who is living either on the streets, or in a vehicle, encampment, abandoned building, garage, or any other place not normally used or meant for human habitation. An additional 4,360 homeless people were housed in jails, hospitals, and rehabilitation facilities, but do not meet HUD's homeless definition."

20. <http://www.ihc.ucsb.edu/homefree/events/artmotion.html> accessed April 2006 >
21. See Habermas in J.B. Thompson and D. Held eds., *Habermas Critical Debates (including a reply to my critics by Jurgen Habermas)*, (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1982), p.264
22. Jurgen Habermas, *Moral Consciousness and Communicative Action*, p.58
23. Katharina Lenz, artist presentation, (Manchester: September 1994)
24. See *Cooperations, the International Program of Art & The Environment*, brochure, 1995
25. *Littoral Symposium* booklet
26. An earlier Lycan exhibition employed a similar participation process, this time used to gather house plant cuttings from London, Ontario residents for exhibition in a local gallery.
27. Marcel Mauss, *The Gift: Forms and Functions of Exchange in Archaic Societies*, p.74
28. Lewis Hyde, *The Gift: Imagination and the Erotic Life of Property*, (New York: Random House, 1983), p. xiv
29. Lisa Blackburn and John Hartom, *Empty Bowls Project*, (Franklin, Michigan: self-published, 1990), p.2
30. Ibid
31. Jurgen Habermas, *The Theory of Communicative Action*. (Boston: Beacon Press, 1987), p.207
32. Pierre Bourdieu, *The Logic of Practice*. (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 1990), p. 53
33. Claude Lévi-Strauss, *Les Structures élémentaires de la parenté*, from *The Elementary Structures of Kinship*, Rodney Needham ed., J.H. Bell, J.R. von Sturmer and Rodney Needham trans., (Boston: Beacon Press, 1969), p.43
34. Pierre Bourdieu, *The Logic of Practice*, p.98
35. Ibid, p.99
36. See C. Calhoun, ed., *Habermas and the Public Sphere*, (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1992), p.31

List of Works

Kim Adams

Research Photographs,
1978 to present
Colour photograph mounted
on foam core
40.64 x 50.8 cm each
Courtesy of the Artist and
Wynick Tuck Gallery, Toronto

Invented Homes, 1994-1995
HO scale model parts,
landscaping and wood
24.13 x 63.5 x 58.4 cm
Collection of the Macdonald
Stewart Art Centre, University
of Guelph, Gift of Barbara
Fischer, 1996

Square/Round/Square, 2002
HO scale model parts
10.2 x 22.9 x 10.2 cm
Courtesy of the Artist and
Wynick Tuck Gallery, Toronto

Week-enders, n.d.
HO scale model parts
35.6 x 35.6 x 27.9 cm
Courtesy of the Artist and
Wynick Tuck Gallery, Toronto

Rebecca Belmore

Untitled (Blanket for Sarah),
1994
pine needles through nylon
screening, 12 panels
71.0 x 71.0 cm each panel
Collection of the Art Gallery of
Windsor, Purchased with the
support of the Canada Council
for the Arts Acquisition
Assistance Program and the Art
Gallery of Windsor's Volunteer
Committee, 1998

Robin Collyer

Temporary Hunt Camp, 1994
colour photograph
50.8 x 61 cm
Courtesy of the Artist and
Susan Hobbs Gallery, Toronto

Temporary Hunt Camp, 1994
colour photograph
50.8 x 61 cm
Courtesy of the Artist and
Susan Hobbs Gallery, Toronto

Forest Floor, 1998
colour photograph
76.2 x 106.6 cm
Courtesy of the Artist and
Susan Hobbs Gallery, Toronto

T-Bay, 1996
colour photograph
76.2 x 106.6 cm
Courtesy of the Artist and
Susan Hobbs Gallery, Toronto

Ghost town, California 1995
colour photograph
50.8 x 61 cm
Courtesy of the Artist and
Susan Hobbs Gallery, Toronto

Fred Douglas

The Van, 1983
van, camping equipment etc.
200 x 450 x 600 cm
Collection of the Canada
Council Art Bank, Ottawa

Ellen Driscoll

The Loophole of Retreat, 1991
mixed media, wood, paper,
b/w photos, found objects
camera obscura
approximately, 214 x 296 cm;
mobile, 245 x 121 x 92 cm
with found objects, accordion
book, 732 x 61 x 38.1 cm; ;
7 architectural columns 11.4 x
183 cm
Collection of the Artist

Faye HeavyShield

body of land, 2002-2006
digital print on paper
paper cones
approximately 10 cm x 5 cm
each
Collection of the Artist

Kristina Jaugelis & Reece Terris

Trailer, 2002
trailer, plexi-glass, props
427 x 214 x 214 cm
Collection of the Artists

Adriana Kuiper

For Homes with Basements,
2004-2006
wood, canned goods, shelving,
found objects
approximately 200 x 200 x
140 cm
Collection of the Artist

Shelter Kite, 2005
wood, string, metal and Tyvek,
approximately 100 x 150 x 80
cm
Collection of the Artist

Donald Lawrence

The Sled, 1996
mixed media installation
varying dimensions
Collection of the Vancouver
Art Gallery, Vancouver Art
Gallery Acquisition Fund

Liz Magor

Burrow, 1999
polymerized alpha gypsum,
fabric
59 cm x 137 cm x 198 cm
Collection of the Vancouver
Art Gallery, Vancouver Art
Gallery Acquisition Fund with
the financial support of the
Canada Council for the Arts
Acquisition Assistance
Program

Camping Portfolio, 2002
8 silver gelatin prints
20 cm x 20 cm each
Courtesy of the Artist and
Susan Hobbs Gallery, Toronto

Tent, 1999
silicon rubber, camouflage
fabric
193 cm x 46 cm x 20 cm
Courtesy of the Artist and
Susan Hobbs Gallery, Toronto

Janet Morton

Cozy, 1999
recycled sweaters
762 cm x 853 cm
Collection of the Artist

Tsuyoshi Ozawa

*Ivan the Fool House (Capsule
Hotel Project)*, 2003
Capsule hotel, vinyl sheet, TV
monitor, radio blanket
125 cm x 693 cm x 583 cm
Courtesy of the Artist and Ota
Fine Arts, Tokyo

Ana RewaKowicz

Mexico City,
(Dressware, 1st prototype)
DVD, Running time: 12:12
Collection of the Artist

Toulouse, France
(Dressware, 1st prototype)
DVD, Running time: 3:42
Collection of the Artist

Brussels
(Dressware, 2nd prototype)
DVD, Running time: 5:19
Collection of the Artist

Tallinn, Estonia
(Dressware, 2nd prototype)
DVD, Running time: 3:42
Collection of the Artist

SleepingBagDress 2, 2004
mixed media
Collection of the Artist

Sandra Vida

Bower, 2005
tree bows
approximately 200 x 200 cm
Collection of the Artist

Paul Wong

EAT: Mainstreet Dinner for the Homeless, 2003
DVD, running time: 4:00 mins.
Courtesy of V tape, Toronto



Exhibition venues

Walter Phillips Gallery, The Banff Centre
July 16 to August 22, 2005

Museum London
September 24 to December 4, 2005

Confederation Centre of the Arts
September 24, 2006 to January 6, 2007

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