

2007



THE TREE MUSEUM

THE TENTH ANNUAL EXHIBITION

SEPTEMBER 16 TO OCTOBER 28 2007

WHAT IS PLACE

Site-specific installations by

WEN-CHIH WANG (TAIWAN)

JAFFA LAAM LAM (HONG KONG)

MICHAEL BELMORE (CANADA)

E.J. LIGHTMAN (CANADA)

NOEL HARDING (CANADA)

Temporary interventions on site

by Persona Volare:

CARLO CESTA

MICHAEL DAVEY

JOHN DICKSON

REBECCA DIEDERICHS

BRIAN HOBBS

LORNA MILLS

LISA NEIGHBOUR

CHANTAL ROUSSEAU

LYLA RYE

KATE WILSON

JOHANNES ZITS

Exhibition curated by ANNE O'CALLAGHAN

Exhibition essays:

Transplant MARGARET RODGERS

News of Difference: Siting the Tree Museum GIL McELROY

In Through the Outdoors IVAN JURAKIC

THE TREE MUSEUM • DOE LAKE ROAD • MUSKOKA

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THE TREE MUSEUM COLLECTIVE was established in 1997. The next year Badanna Zack, Tim Whiten and Anne O’Callaghan opened the site with the first exhibition, curated by founding member E.J. Lightman. Since 1998, 44 artists have created 54 unique projects relating to the site of The Tree Museum and engaging the complex relationship between humans and nature, including adoration, reliance and exploitation. In these ten years artists have addressed a wide range of issues such as the urbanization and gentrification of wilderness, the social and natural history of the site, and geopolitics and ownership.

Connections with the historical place and the strata making up the past are the starting point for many of the works, notably the systematic documentation of the site’s natural and human-made history by Jocelyne Salem Belcourt (*Glimmer*, 2000). From upside-down shed (*A Chirp*, Noel Harding, 2007) to a patch of lawn (*A Little Piece of Heaven*, Kelly Mark, 2006) and housing for hornets (*Meadowvale Glen Estates*, Anne-Marie Bénétéau, 2002), several artists have questioned our urbanization and gentrification of wilderness with humour and irony. And Deeter Hastenteufel presciently pointed out that art is not disconnected from daily political realities. *Them US Now* (2000), a theme that he first addressed in the 1970s, is perhaps even more relevant today, as the divide between “them” and “us” becomes even wider and divisive in this age of fear of “them.”

The works at The Tree Museum contribute to an ongoing dialogue about how art and the world we live in are connected. This realization is often materialized in a personal way. For example, Lyla Rye in *Locus* (2002) takes local and personal history and a German fairy tale and “through her metamorphosis from fairy tale to remembrance, ... created a concrete metaphor for the symbiotic conjoining of things and beings.”¹

An unforeseen aspect of creating work in nature, and of inviting artists from diverse backgrounds, is that their work directs viewers to see the “land” — the beauty and the wonder of it all — with new insight. We have also seen one artist’s work encourage another artist to move forward. In 1999 J. Lynn Campbell created *In-Sight*, a spiral of cedars. The outside diameter of the spiral is 33 by 36 feet. Positioned in the centre of the spiral is a boulder, three by two by two feet. On the surface of the boulder, impressions of both left and right feet are sandblasted. At the time the cedars were three to six feet high. “In this work *In-Sight*, the tree exemplifies the world in constant regeneration. The spiral signifies continuity, guiding us to an interior location. This inner space delineates a site for contemplation of our conscious existence in relation to the external world.”² Campbell’s *In-Sight* offered encouragement and a continuum to Jaffa Laam Lam as she transplanted 16 oaks and 16 pines in a circle (*Replanting History*, 2007). *In-Sight* and *Replanting History* remind us of the resilience of nature, art and culture.

For the current exhibition and over the past decade, many individuals have contributed to the success of The Tree Museum. A very special thank-you to Art Steinberg, who first encouraged us in 1997 and provided the site, the financial means and physical help to create The Tree Museum project. Over the decade he has acted as bus driver, chief cook and bottle washer, and in 2007 he hauled and cut brush for Wen-Chih Wang’s *Bridge*.



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WEN-CHIH WANG
ON THE GO II (2007)
RATTAN, 6 X 6 X 4 M.
PHOTO: ARTIST
YORK QUAY CENTRE,
HARBOURFRONT CENTRE

Of course a major project like The Tree Museum is a dialogue and collaboration among many people. Never was that more apparent than with the tenth anniversary exhibition *What is Place*. We installed 17 works and had 16 artists on site, and three exhibitions and presentations off site, over three months. To Michael Belmore, John Dickson, E.J. Lightman, Wen-Chih Wang and Persona Volare — who not only worked on their individual installations but helped one another move rocks, cut brush and haul glass outhouses — congratulations! Your collaboration speaks to the generosity and collegial nature of the arts community. To Mei-Wen Tsai, Wen-Chih Wang's life and work partner, who with great patience and humour acted as translator, making the exchange of ideas seamless, and enriching the experience for everyone.

That collegiality and support extended off the site. Patrick Macaulay, Head of Visual Arts at York Quay Centre, Harbourfront Centre has supported our program since the museum's opening in 1998.

For our tenth anniversary, Persona Volare was invited to create a work for the vitrines, the theme *The Road North/The Road South* connecting the Muskoka site to downtown Toronto. Wen-Chih Wang was also invited to participate in the summer exhibition *Taiwan: Ilha Formosa* at York Quay. We have been fortunate to work twice with Simone Jones, first in 2002 as exhibiting artist and again in 2007 when as assistant art dean at the Ontario College of Art and Design (OCAD) she invited Wen-Chih Wang and Jaffa Laam Lam to participate in OCAD's weekly forum for first-year students. I would also like to thank Colette Laliberté, also an assistant art dean at OCAD, for facilitating this event.

This was the year for outreach educational programmes. With the participation and support of Yvonne Singer, visual art associate professor and graduate programme director at York University's Faculty of Fine Arts, and the financial support of the MFA visual art programme, we created a short-term residency and invited three York graduate students (Atom Deguire, Don J. Allain and Lauren Nurse) to create temporary works on site. Maralynn Cherry, curator of the Visual Arts Centre of Clarington, invited us to present a photographic history of The Tree Museum. All these collaborations opened up the site to a wider public audience as well as the art community.

Accompanying the exhibition is this catalogue, which contains essays by Margaret Rodgers, Gil McElroy and Ivan Jurakic. These essays amplify some of the circumstances and issues addressed by the artists in their work, and add to the ongoing dialogue between culture and nature. This is the sixth catalogue designed by J. Lynn Campbell, and I hope that there will be at least ten more.

For nine years we have had the pleasure of working with a wonderful group of artists. In this our tenth year, we offer special thanks to artists Michael Belmore, Noel Harding, Jaffa Laam Lam, E.J. Lightman, Wen-Chih Wang, Persona Volare (Carlo Cesta, Michael Davey, John Dickson, Rebecca Diederichs, Brian Hobbs, Lorna Mills, Lisa Neighbour, Chantal Rousseau, Lyla Rye, Kate Wilson and Johannes Zits) for an amazing tenth anniversary exhibition.

ANNE O'CALLAGHAN (2007)



“Of course I cannot understand it,” he said. “If your heads were stuffed with straw, like mine, you would probably all live in the beautiful places, and then Kansas would have no people at all. It is fortunate for Kansas that you have brains.”¹

FRAUGHT WITH CRISIS and weighed down with theoretical discourse, the idea of wilderness lives large in the collective psyche. A culture/nature polarity is transcended at The Tree Museum, Mentor College’s 400-acre woodland, where artists are offered the opportunity to make reflective, creative work far from many of the urban places where culture is (speciously) considered to live most comfortably, and nature is not. Here the gallery competes with nature in a multiplicity of expressions, in a dance with a locale decidedly lacking in the whitewashed neutrality of downtown galleries. A multi-layered artistic expression offers an aesthetic, cultural and intellectual encounter, the individual viewer’s subjectivity a starting point for dialogue, the artist as provocateur. Physical interaction required.

Among the many possible avenues of reflection in the work of Michael Belmore, Jaffa Laam Lam and Wen-Chih Wang is the idea of transplant and dislocation. We are a culture of transplants, as these three new installations attest. For *Upstream*, Canadian First Nations artist Belmore removed rocks from his home environs in Haliburton and inserted them into the Muskoka part of the Canadian Shield. Wang packed rattan strips from Taiwan in his luggage in order to secure his serpentine *Bridge*, a cousin to the great bamboo and rattan structures he has created elsewhere in the world. In *Replanting History* Lam researched Ontario forestry history and, by attaching rear-view mirrors to transplanted oak and pine trees, marked off key events in the area and their impact on the land.

WANG: A WEAVING

The largest piece is Wang’s *Bridge*, wherein trees become a living loom through which branches and limbs of resident scrub brush are secured using pliable rattan. It is an enclosure, a contemplative space, a space in transition, a channel from earth to sky to water. To engage with the work is to enter a space, to travel across and through, emerging at one end deeper in the forest and at the other, aloft amidst the tree canopy and overlooking the lake.

Bridge bears some resemblance to an earlier work, *Dragon Dares Tiger Lair*, built with the assistance of fifteen former military personnel from Nanshan Fortification, an old army base that is now the Bunker Museum of Contemporary Art.² The fortification is on Kinmen, an island between China and Taiwan that was the major battlefield for the two countries from 1950 to 1980.³ In both structures Wang weaves natural material into fluid, sinuous forms through which participants/viewers are transported, experiencing the work both inside and out in myriad ways, from playful exploration to a “Zen state of meditation and clarity.”⁴ Viewing the forest from the interior of the structure heightens perception, enhances awareness of the surroundings, and calls up childhood memories of tree forts and hideouts.

2

WEN-CHIH WANG

BRIDGE (2007) DETAIL

WOVEN SCRUB BRUSH, RATTAN,

PLYWOOD, ROPE. LENGTH 46 M,

WIDTH AND HEIGHT VARIABLE.

PHOTO: MICHEL BOUCHER

While Wang describes his Bunker Museum piece as a searching for harmony after catastrophe, the suggestion of crisis amelioration is not specific in the Canadian work, which is more suggestive of the deep natural history of Canada's old forests and their early inhabitants. He describes his process as a borrowing of ancient forms by which "viewers are led to experience the embodiment of the primitive setting."⁵ What remains is a purity of experience, one that brings forth a longing for undefined notions of the primitive.

Walking into Wang's construction, one enters a created environment that leads both into the enclosing forest and away toward the lake and sky. It is a conduit within which to give oneself over to the artist's direction, to enter into a conversation with this artist, who has traveled from Taiwan with his wife and child to make art in a culture where he does not speak the language. The experience is not neutral, as Alphonso Lingis writes in *The Community of Those Who Have Nothing in Common*:

To enter into a conversation with another is to lay down one's arms and one's defenses; to throw open the gates of one's own positions; to expose oneself to the other, the outsider; and to lay oneself open to surprises, contestation, and inculcation... To enter into conversation is to struggle against the noise, the interference, and the vested interests, the big brothers, and the little Hitlers always listening in – in order to expose oneself to the alien, the Balinese and the Aztec, the victims and the excluded, the Palestinians and the Quechuas and the Crow Indians, the dreamers and the mystics, the mad, the tortured, the birds and the frogs. One enters into conversation in order to become an other for the other.⁶



Providing links – spatial, geographic, spiritual or cultural – is a continuing theme in Wang’s work. *Bridge* imposes through immensity, not only of scale but also in transformative potential. As a footnote (and in translation), Wang reports that “on the surface of the platform, we have found the dung of the ringtail (i.e., raccoon). It may want to announce its new home or territory.”⁷

LAM: A WEAVING OF MATERIAL AND MEMORY

Through the interlacing of natural materials, Wang constructed an affecting object with aesthetic and spiritual potential for contemplating the ineffable, an object of wonder. Lam’s *Replanting History* is also a weaving, a weaving together of personal memory and the memory of the forest itself. Integral to understanding the piece is the artist’s own story. As transplants from mainland China to Hong Kong, Lam and her family had to scramble for survival in a new community. The work is factual, empirical, invested with a meaning system, while its visual presence will increase as time passes. More accustomed to working on performance-related and interactive projects with people, the artist found herself in the middle of an Ontario woods, her subject matter seemingly at odds with her usual practice. Researching the natural and human history of this relatively “unpeopled” site led to a resonant connection between her artistic and private life and that of the region.

The choice of white oak and eastern white pine is deliberate. Both are indigenous species, white pine with historical importance in the Canadian lumber industry, and oak as an art-historical referent to Joseph Beuys’s *7,000 Oaks* project and to the revered artist’s belief in the social, cultural and political function and potential of art.⁸ Lam’s thirty-two trees are saplings, intended to grow into a new circular woodland overlooking Ryde Lake. One soft conifer, one hard deciduous; one fast-growing and one slow – the trees grow in concert, offering support and shelter as they develop. The rear-view mirrors are not only artist-made signifiers of events and eras, but with respect to their main use in automobiles, they connect to this singular element of environmental destruction and to an earlier Tree Museum installation, Badanna Zack’s embankment of crushed cars from 1998.

Set out as if it were a special issue of *Better Homes & Gardens* magazine, an accompanying text details the artist’s intent and indicates her sense of community interaction. Her materials list of “16 White Oak, 16 Eastern White Pine, and rear-view mirrors” also includes “2 curators, 1 artist and 1 philosopher,”⁹ i.e., her helpers digging, planting and watering in this ambitious endeavour.

Each mirror is a marker; each chosen year a provocative signifier. Edward Said’s discussion of memory, identity and nationalism offers insight into the level of depth and engagement that Lam has undertaken:

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WEN-CHIH WANG

BRIDGE (2007) DETAIL

WOVEN SCRUB BRUSH, RATTAN,
PLYWOOD, ROPE. LENGTH 46 M,
WIDTH AND HEIGHT VARIABLE.
PHOTO: MICHEL BOUCHER

4

WEN-CHIH WANG

BRIDGE (2007) DETAIL

PHOTO: MICHEL BOUCHER



4

5



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*Memory and its representations touch very significantly upon questions of identity, of nationalism, of power and authority. Far from being a neutral exercise in facts and basic truths, the study of history... is, to some considerable extent a nationalist effort, premised on the need to construct a desirable [sic] loyalty to and insider's understanding of one's country, tradition, and faith.*¹⁰

So what are the significant dates that she has chosen? In *Better Homes & [Artist's] Gardens*, a photograph of one of the pine trees carries the caption "I was transplanted on August 29, 2007. I arrived in Hong Kong on August 29, 1985."

Making the connection between her own transplanted life and historical changes in the Ontario forest, Lam quotes from an Ontario Forestry Association document, beginning at 10,000 BC with the retreat of the continental ice sheet. Over millennia are the appearance in Ontario of Paleo Indians and the gradual migration north of the eastern white pine. Agriculture is introduced and many aboriginal peoples farm the land, including Cree, Ojibwa and Algonquin, and later the Hurons. By the sixteenth century other interests are at play, Aboriginal populations are decimated and land either reverts to forest or is settled by Europeans. Through the nineteenth century both farming and timber commerce dominate. Lam records key years such as wartimes when lumber and pulp and paper industries flourish. In the twentieth century, and particularly after World War II, various land-use legislative actions are instituted. In 1920 the existing farmhouse (now The Tree Museum Residency) is built.¹¹ She completes her list with her 2007 invitation to work on site as artist-in-residence. She has dated the piece 2007-2041, and wonders that "[the] life of the tree and me seems coincidentally to come together, however, who/which will last being here? Nature or human? Tree or Art?"¹²

BELMORE: A DISPLACEMENT

The artistic choices of Lam, Belmore and Wang articulate Edward Said's statement in varying degrees. To a Canadian audience, questions of identity, nationalism, power and authority are immediately readable in Belmore's displaced stones, as representation at a basic level for the cultural displacements experienced by First Nations people. The piece is a quiet whisper, a soft chuckle, a sly dig. Belmore carefully plots the ideal location, sculpts white stones into a subtle pattern, and transports them to their final placement – through the woods, up and down several rocky prominences to a crevice on a the perfect chunk of Canadian Shield. Viewers must make a commitment, leave the main path and follow a marked trail deep into the woods. The approach to the actual installation is a final climb to a rocky promontory. Experiencing step-by-step physicality in both the artist's efforts and the demands upon his audience exemplifies the theoretical writings of Donna Haraway, who calls for "limited, localized and embodied knowledges."¹³

5

JAFFA LAM LAAM*REPLANTING HISTORY* (2007)

16 WHITE OAK, 16 EASTERN WHITE PINES, REAR-VIEW MIRRORS.

SIZE VARIABLE.

PHOTO: MICHEL BOUCHER

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JAFFA LAM LAAM*REPLANTING HISTORY* (2007) DETAIL

PHOTO: MICHEL BOUCHER

7

JAFFA LAM LAAM*REPLANTING HISTORY* (2007) DETAIL

PHOTO: MICHEL BOUCHER





Like Lam, Belmore has stories of personal dislocation. He tells of his father's experience as a WWII veteran who lost treaty status, pointing out that this meant he is not officially categorized as First Nations. That said, his life in an English world has been juxtaposed with regular visits to Ojibway-speaking relatives north of Lake Superior, his knowledge of his people's history is deep, and his resistance to notions of a "pan-Indian" aesthetic demands that the work be viewed beyond that paradigm.

The movement of stones from one section of Ontario's rocky landscape to another might seem to have minimal impact, but difference is obvious in the realization of this activity. Belmore's transplant testifies to his understanding of just how refined human sensitivity to environment can be. Something seems immediately out of sync. Like strange fungal growths, these smooth white stones nestle together within a cleft in the existing rock. Sculpted to fit together in tight formation, they flow visually in opposition to the obvious direction of their rocky host, its striae clearly indicating an ancient glacial push in the other direction, the jagged edges in stark contrast to Belmore's rounded sculpture that appears to move against the gravitational pull. Without knowing the title, *Upstream*, volumes can be read into this unnatural fit.

Regarding a previous work shown at Gallery 101 in 2005, Belmore stated that "the precision of the interlocking stone reflects not only the visual formation of air bubbles within water but also the conceptual and real implications of the effect our actions have upon the natural world."¹⁴ In comfortable ignorance, we humans regularly rearrange the natural environment at our peril. At The Tree Museum, Belmore's displaced stones, while precisely connected, are clearly out of place, in plangent reminder that while they might look like water bubbles they will not flow upstream.

While devoid of specific iconographic reference, the still beauty of this lovely sculpture asserts an ideological imperative. It counters the functioning of wilderness depictions in earlier Canadian art, described by Jonathan Bordo as legitimating "terrain violently seized, dispossessed of its indigenous inhabitants, and reconstituted as territory."¹⁵

ARTISTS AND THE MAKING OF THINGS

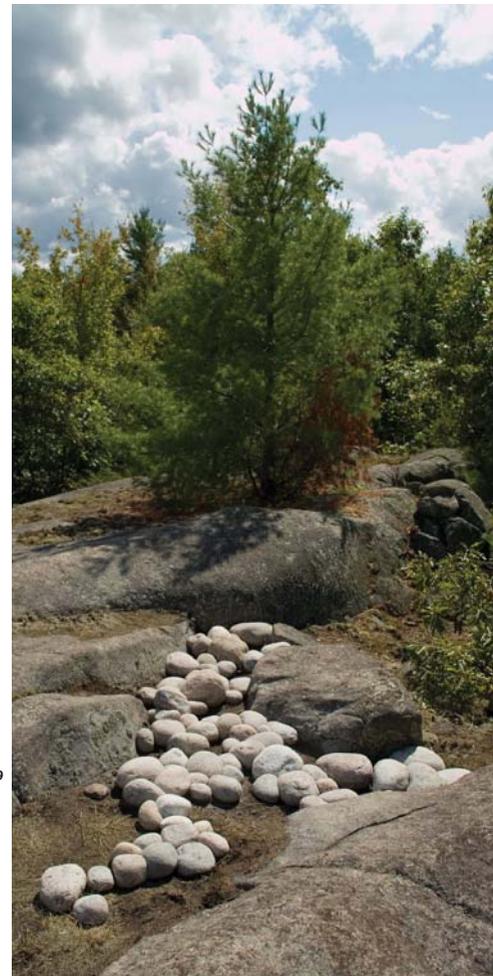
Works can be considered in terms of their materiality. All three artists here have undertaken projects that involve an enormous amount of physical labour. In an era of conceptual and often digitally derived art making in which much creative effort is expended in small dark rooms, the intensity of sheer physical force and necessarily collaborative muscle stands out as a significant feature of The Tree Museum installations. One might ask whether artists are drawn to making work outdoors in order to re-engage with material, with the hands-on physics and engineering of art making, and with a sense of communality.

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MICHAEL BELMORE
UPSTREAM (2007) DETAIL
 CARVED WHITE STONES.
 SIZE VARIABLE.
 PHOTO: ARTIST

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MICHAEL BELMORE
UPSTREAM (2007)
 PHOTO: ROGER HENRIQUES



Collective labour is required. To move rock is rarely a one-person job; a team was needed to strap poles and switches for Wang's labyrinthine design, and Lam worked with assistance to find and dig up the perfect trees, transport and carefully re-establish them in their new home.

The formations made by Wang, Lam and Belmore belie the suggestion that they are natural events; they confound the landscape. While each piece is considered permanent, intrinsic to the work is the understanding that over time they will develop according to the vagaries of their forest environment; to speak with, rather than impose upon. In sympathy with this concept, Peter C. Van Wyck argues for a weak, rather than deep ecology, in order "to enter into a reciprocal relationship in which heterogeneous elements become co-functioning... a form of sympathy or symbiosis."¹⁶

WILDERNESS AND THE "PRIMITIVE"

Van Wyck pulls together theoretical writings of several big-brained humans to suggest a middle way between deep ecology and the prescriptive bureaucratic, economically driven sustainability of anthropocentric environmentalism. He posits an "attempt to break open a space in which a non- or less foundational environmentalism might start to make sense."¹⁷ He identifies deep ecology:

*[A] system of normative and prescriptive precepts, deep ecology (or transpersonal ecology, or foundational ecology) represents a dominant stream of thought within the contemporary environmental movement. From pagan religious groups, to civil disobedience, to ecological sabotage (or ecotage), deep ecology is invoked as a philosophical, theoretical, normative, and intuitive foundation for belief, thought, and practice.*¹⁸

It would seem that the artworks under discussion function within the middle space, neither fundamentalist nor proscriptive. Lam, Wang and Belmore have targeted given cultural truths in relation to the larger world. A culture of displacement, a breaching of boundaries takes place, whereby the artists signal a direction toward an understanding of disruption, dislocation. An unsettling.

MARGARET RODGERS (2007)

That which gets from territory to map is news of difference. – GREGORY BATESON

17

IN HIS PARAGRAPH-LONG SHORT STORY “On Exactitude in Science,” Argentine writer Jorge Luis Borges tells of an empire that had perfected the discipline of cartography to such a degree of detail and precision that the map of its territory was the exact size and scale – 1:1 – of the territory itself. “In the western Deserts,” he ends, “tattered Fragments of the Map are still to be found, Sheltering an occasional Beast or beggar...”¹

Borges’s story constitutes a literary reframing of philosopher Alfred Korzybski’s oft-cited dictum “the map is not the territory”; i.e., the representation of a thing is not the thing itself. Both the Borgesian literary device and Korzybski’s philosophical pronouncement can be employed to contextualize a consideration of works of art – arguably aesthetic equivalents to what Korzybski conceptualized as the “map” part of the relationship – that in some way seek to engage the “territory” that is nature.

Such art has of course many names: eco-art, earth art, environmental art and land art, to name but a few. But no matter the choice of nomenclature, it is the how the aesthetic expression of a map/territory ratio is established and, even more important, sustained, that is of concern.

One place where such issues are explored is about 200 kilometres north of Toronto, near the town of Gravenhurst, Ontario, east of Highway 11 and a couple of rough kilometres off Doe Lake Road down an unpaved road into the bush. Over the last ten years, The Tree Museum has set a stage for aesthetic mappings of territory by providing artists the opportunity to engage and work with the myriad potential geographical, historical and social meanings that have accreted around this particular spot on the planet.

But there’s a big picture to all of this. To meaningfully articulate and frame the processes at play out at The Tree Museum, to speak of the unique aesthetic map/territory ratios established by the artists working out here and how they are sustained, one need consider a place southwest of here – a remote spot in the northern panhandle of the state of Utah – and note what can occur when an artist’s expression of an aesthetic map/territory ratio goes awry, distorted by a competing idea of what should constitute the natural world. It’s happening to the late American artist Robert Smithson’s monumental earthwork, *Spiral Jetty*.

Smithson’s sculpture is an enormous coil of basalt rock, mud and accreted salt crystals that juts out into Great Salt Lake. Thirty-eight years after its creation, it is making news once again. “Artists Rally for Spiral Jetty in Utah,” read a headline in the February 6, 2008 edition of the *New York Times*; “Drilling plan near *Spiral Jetty* renews art protest,” said the *Salt Lake Tribune* two days later.

The furor, it turned out, was Canadian in the making. A Calgary-based oil company was planning on drilling exploratory oil wells from barges anchored in the Great Salt Lake. According to the art world, it was going to happen all too close to *Spiral Jetty*:

*The sight of oil drilling less than eight kilometres away would spoil the experience of art lovers who visit the site, the [Dia Foundation] said.*²



In the ensuing hullabaloo, no one saw fit to talk about the map/territory relationship that Smithson actually sought to explore. It doesn't show up in the classic photographs of *Spiral Jetty* by which most of us have come to know the work: the piece typically shown from the vantage point of the lake looking toward the immediate shoreline behind it. We've consequently come to believe Smithson's piece to be an isolated artifact, contextualized only by the harsh and lonely landscape of the region.

But we're wrong. The July/August 2004 issue of *Sculpture* magazine reproduces a photograph of the piece as seen from space, disclosing the reality of the work's broader experiential frame of reference: the nearby presence of another jetty, it too an earthen pier. This jetty predates Smithson's, and is an artifact of oil exploration that went on here over a sixty-year period, from the 1920s to 1980s.

Smithson was, of course acutely aware of its presence when he chose this site:

*Two delapidated [sic] shacks looked over a tired group of oil rigs... Pumps coated with black stickiness rusted in the corrosive salt air... A great pleasure arose from seeing all those incoherent structures. This site gave evidence of a succession of man-made systems mired in abandoned hope.*³

This, then, was Smithson's map/territory relationship – one he carefully chose to aesthetically explicate. But for those many of us who have experienced *Spiral Jetty* only via second-hand photographic manifestations, we have been proffered a much tidied-up version.

The argument, then, of the Dia Foundation and all those individuals who have petitioned the State of Utah concerning Smithson's work is essentially that our sanitized misunderstanding of *Spiral Jetty* should be left undisturbed, despite the fact that oily bits of obsolescent technology and a despoiled local ecology contextualized the work from the start, and were indeed critical to Smithson's thinking.

So there are, in the end, two very different and competing versions of *Spiral Jetty*, and “difference,” as the anthropologist and philosopher Gregory Bateson wrote,

*... is neither in the outside world, nor solely in the inside world but is created by an act of comparison and this act is an event in time...*⁴

“News of difference,” a term Bateson employs in much of his work, has to figure in anything we might have to say about the aesthetic map/territory ratios that come into being when artists work with nature.

As with *Spiral Jetty*, the mundane realities of context – “news of difference” – are critically important in constructing a meaningful frame of aesthetic reference for The Tree Museum's several hundred acres and in comprehending the map/territory relationships set out here by artists who have participated in the Museum's ongoing projects. The context of, say, pre-history would include consideration of the striations left by retreating ice age glaciers that are still evident in the area and that gave shape to the regional landscape as a whole. But a delimitation to a more recent historical era would encompass the wholesale cutting of the old-growth forest that once

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NOEL HARDING
A CHIRP (2006-2007)
INVERTED OUTDOOR STORAGE
SHED, BIRD SEED, PEANUTS,
PLASTIC FOLIAGE, SMALL BIRDHOUSE.
244 CM (W) X 305 CM (D).
PHOTO: DAVID ACHESON

grew here (Gravenhurst was once apparently known as “Sawdust City”), and the eventual rise of the region as a popular summer destination that led to the moniker “Cottage Country” by which we caricaturishly know it today.

The land that comprises The Tree Museum is consequently grown over with second-growth forest, and increasingly encircled by nearby cottages on increasingly pricey real estate with all the accoutrements that necessarily accompany this lifestyle (hydro lines criss-crossing the land being the most visually obvious). “Nature” out here is not the sanitized, pastoral thing of wishful idealization, but the real thing: damaged and scarred, healed over and grown anew. It all affords a set of possible relationships for the art work that has been situated out here in the ten years of the site’s existence as an aesthetically intentional entity.

This set of contexts is not, by any stretch of the imagination, the sum and total; “news of difference” can function with and within a myriad of potential contexts. That is of course especially the case for art – not just the art out here at The Tree Museum – that seeks direct engagement with an idea of what constitutes nature. By way of historical exemplar, I would proffer an early work of Marlene Creates in which “news of difference” involved moving a stone from the bottom to the top of a mountain. Too, the walks of Richard Long or Hamish Fulton that have included minor and non-disruptive aesthetic rearrangements of small pockets of landscape (and of course their documentation in photography). And Andy Goldsworthy’s fleeting aesthetic incursions into landscapes creating work involving only *in situ* materials – ice, snow, leaves, twigs, etc. – and a camera to document the artifactual transience. And Peter von Tiesenhausen’s work, inclusive of his copyrighting of the Alberta land he lives on so as to protect it from the exploitative contexts of oil and gas exploration.

Von Tiesenhausen also figures back over at The Tree Museum, where in 2006 he incised eye-like shapes into the bark of numerous trees on the property using only his thumbnail. *Points of View*, as the piece is called, is one of the few works on this site that doesn’t involve the importation of materials not indigenous to the site. But make no mistake about it: as a non-indigenous form denoting presence (however temporary) and incursion (however benign) it is as artifactual and explicative of a map/territory ratio as any other work out here.

Toronto artist Noel Harding’s *A Chirp*, installed at The Tree Museum in 2007, in large part comprises an up-ended garden shed-become-container from which sprout trees and a birdhouse set high atop a pole. A senior Canadian artist, Harding has long responded to the erosion of the natural world by the forces of urbanization with work that redefines what have become the normative aesthetics of map/territory relationships. His project *The Elevated Wetlands* in the Don Valley of Toronto actively participates in its environment, cleaning some of the polluted waters of the Don River through the artifactual micro-ecology that is the work itself, and returning it from whence it came.

A Chirp was originally installed at Harbourfront in Toronto back in 2006. Filled with seeds and nuts for urbanized birds and squirrels, the piece was intended to be an active agent in this waterfront micro-environment of Toronto, a process that was disrupted by the City courtesy an

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E.J. LIGHTMAN

IMPOSSIBLE SITES FOR GROWTH (2007)

PHOTOGRAPH / LIGHTBOX, EACH

91.5 CM (H) X 61 CM (W) X 13 CM (D).

GALLERY INSTALLATION

PHOTO: ARTIST



11



12

alteration to the work that denied foraging animals' access to its interior through a small hole in the base of the piece. Relocated out here to The Tree Museum, *A Chirp's* map/territory ratio may have been reimagined and reconfigured, but it is no less meaningful for having been so.

Urbanization is, after all, not so very far away; fescue and bluegrass lawns are now an everyday part of Cottage Country as land is planted with non-indigenous flora to suit the tastes and habits of urban escapees. As a container, Harding's work even effects a possible reading as a kind of micro-sanctuary; set off the ground atop a pedestal, the inverted garden shed cradles – arguably even isolates and protects – a tiny little fragment of the natural world, pointedly reminding us of the truly precarious condition of things, and that human intervention doesn't necessarily have to be to the detriment of the living world. Harding's is indeed “news of difference,” assuming yet another guise.

E.J. Lightman's *Impossible Sites for Growth*, an installational work mounted at The Tree Museum in the summer of 2007, sheds some light on our (mis)understanding of a historic work like *Spiral Jetty*, the piece that set an early course for artists working directly with nature. Lightman's work addressed the issue at the heart of the Smithson dilemma and consequently encompasses issues relevant to any discussion of art that directly responds to the contexts of nature.

Between two trees on a slope of land that leads down to a lake abutting The Tree Museum property, Lightman strung up two banners, back to back, each depicting a different photographic image of trees growing from rocky outcroppings of the Canadian Shield somewhere else on the site. Out here, in an admittedly reshaped version of the natural world, the view is overridden by, well, a view. *Impossible Sites for Growth* (which Lightman has stated was born of her fascination with trees that grew from the rocks, “cracking open small fissures with their roots so they could somehow survive in a difficult place”⁵) experientially displaces what we understand as being natural with what we recognize as decidedly artificial: images of what it displaces, representations (photographs) of the thing, and not the thing (the natural world) itself.

In essence, Lightman's installation aesthetically explicates a perfect map/territory ratio, and in so doing bluntly confronts us with issues relevant to comprehending art work set in an environmental context: how will changes to that environment (at both the local and global levels) affect the intentions and meanings of art set in it? Will aesthetic map/territory relationships be sustainable, or will they be subject to erosion, displacement or even evacuation?

Out in northern Utah, in the pink water off the northeastern shore of Gunnison Bay in the Great Salt Lake, Robert Smithson's intended artistic “news of difference,” the map/territory ratio he sought to explore, has long been replaced by a preferential, photographically manifested, second-hand “pastoral” aesthetic that is, as of this writing, being all but made normative.

Spiral Jetty has, then, demonstrated one trajectory for the course of how things might turn out. But it isn't necessarily the only path. For ten years now (and counting), The Tree Museum has made eloquent arguments for others.

GIL McELROY (2008)

13 + 14

E.J. LIGHTMAN

IMPOSSIBLE SITES FOR GROWTH (2007)

PHOTOGRAPH PRINTED ON

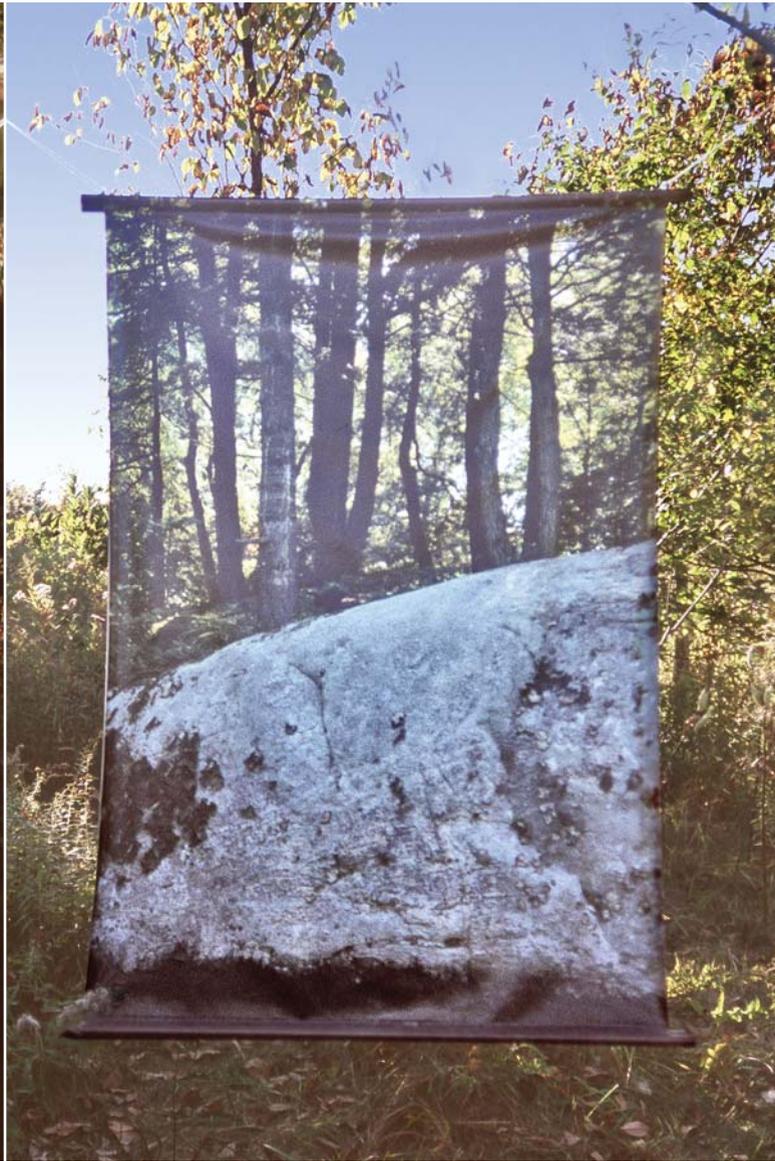
POLY-VINYL, EACH 183 CM (H) X

122 CM (W).

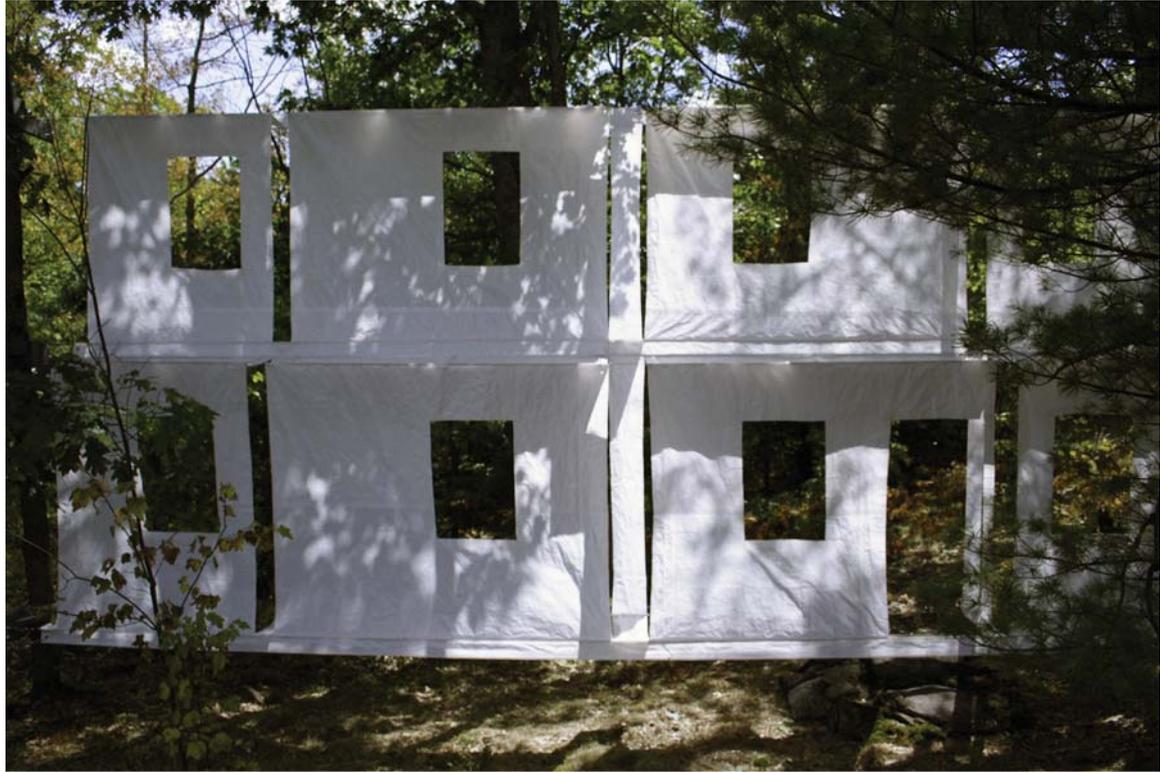
PHOTO: ARTIST



13



14



PERSONA VOLARE IS AN ARTIST COLLECTIVE based in Toronto with a track record of developing exhibition projects that respond to site and context. As a loosely knit confederacy, Carlo Cesta, Michael Davey, John Dickson, Rebecca Diederichs, Brian Hobbs, Lorna Mills, Lisa Neighbour, Chantal Rousseau, Lyla Rye, Kate Wilson and Johannes Zits have been generating site-responsive exhibitions for the better part of a decade. Invited to develop a project for The Tree Museum, Persona Volare made their first foray into the great outdoors.

In *Granite Club*, the group elected to follow in the footsteps of the Group of Seven, a historically familiar alliance of artists fondly affiliated with the Muskoka landscape. Their project statement unflinchingly declared: “Muskoka is the landscape most associated with the Group of Seven and is one of the references we have responded to. If a group of seven artists can do it, why can’t eleven?” Persona Volare’s take on the great outdoors proved to be a tonic to the mythic Group of Seven. They approached the sprawling outdoor venue as an experiential foray, seeding the natural environment with grit, humour and attitude.

Following a winding trail off the main road up a treed hillside led me to *Façade*, an installation by Lyla Rye. Constructed of white tarpaulin material, with rugged fabric anchored between the trees, it suggested a dollhouse, but also the front elevation of a two-storey home or northern lodge. Walking through a low doorway, the proposed house was little more than an empty shell, and yet it proved to be an important threshold onto the site. In fact, Rye’s billowing *Façade* formed the conceptual gateway into *Granite Club*, a defining first encounter that suggested a melding of rural and urban topographies.

Next up was Carlo Cesta’s *Vacancy*, a tent-sized A-frame constructed of a folded garage door with narrow, brightly coloured windows. Suggesting a cross between a sci-fi tent and nomadic shelter, the piece offered refuge from the elements. Nearby, a rotating sign advertising “vacancy,” the same sort of wind-powered advertisement found by the roadside at retail outlets, completed the installation. The promise of free shelter, while inviting, was also confounding. The structure suggested homelessness as much as camping, and although aesthetically alluring, it ultimately proved inhospitable.

Chantal Rousseau’s *Bird Stack Flag* featured a single white flag mounted on a trimmed tree branch. Printed on both sides, the flag suggested bird watching, with half a dozen silhouettes of barn swallows and sparrows, species known for their ability to migrate long distances. A common sight in rural environments, barn swallows are inclined to build nests on or near human habitats. House sparrows, on the other hand, were introduced to New York City from Europe in the mid 19th century. An aggressive species with no natural predators in North America, sparrows have become a ubiquitous presence across the continent, often crowding out indigenous birds from their habitat. Gently flapping in the breeze, the flag suggested flight, and perhaps on a darker note, surrender.

Camouflaged within the branches of an oak tree, Michael Davey’s *Short Life-Long Branch* featured several bronze branches precariously suspended from nooses, alongside a series of small bronze skeletons concealed amidst the foliage and performing a suggestive *danse macabre*. Recalling an

15

LYLA RYE

FAÇADE (2007)

POLYVINYL TARPAULIN, AVIATION
CABLE. 5 M (H) X 9 M (W).

PHOTO: ARTIST

16

CARLO CESTA

VACANCY (2007)

STANDARD GARAGE DOOR,
PLEXIGLAS, WINDOWS AND
COMMERCIAL SIGNAGE.

SIZE VARIABLE.

PHOTO: LISA NEIGHBOUR





21



22

20

incident in which the artist fell through ice while skating, and was rescued by a neighbour who pulled him out of the frigid waters using a branch, the piece functions as a *memento mori*. Hidden within this idyllic environment, the dangling branches and skeletons evoke the inevitable cycle of life and death.

Set amidst a grove of pines, Johannes Zits's *The Seduction* featured a floating photo mural of a forest collaged over with magazine images. Complemented with painterly bravado, the central representation featured a male nude seemingly climbing up into the trees, all but camouflaged by the environment. Suggesting a direct link between the landscape and Western ideals of beauty, the piece deftly subverted expectations. Presenting an eroticized male image amongst the trees, the piece was a cunning reversal of outing, situating queer culture in the great outdoors. Zits's work appropriated nature as an unexpected frame for his ongoing explorations of art, fashion and human sexuality.

Inspired by a dilapidated wooden latrine, John Dickson and Lisa Neighbour collaborated on *Out-House*. Dickson rebuilt the outhouse featuring an exterior composed entirely of mirrors. From a distance, the mirrors effectively warped the vista of rock, trees and sky around the structure, perceptually blending into the surrounding landscape. The effect was hypnotic. As I approached, my reflection helped break the perceptual spell and I became part of the panorama. Inside, Neighbour's 'solar orchard' brightened the darkness. Featuring a glowing plastic orange, apple, lemon, pear and prickly fruit, the floating arrangement was powered by solar panels on the roof of the structure. Neighbour's radiant composition provided visual sustenance within an otherwise hot and claustrophobic interior. Together, the artists transformed the vernacular form of the outhouse into an aesthetic isolation chamber that contrasted outdoors and indoors, natural and artificial, day and night.

Brian Hobbs's *Tool #2* was an elegantly crafted cedar cone perched atop an outcropping of rock. The cone was aligned with a black sunburst pattern printed onto a flat rock surface several metres away. Using the sculpture itself as his printing block, Hobbs's mysterious composition proved strangely compelling. Alternately suggesting an elaborate speaking trumpet, listening device or acoustic funnel, the spatial relationship between object and symbol suggested an environmentally operated gramophone.

Playing with words and materials, Lorna Mills created *Moss Mosque Moss*, a miniature of the El-Zayed Mosque currently under construction in the United Arab Emirates. Modeling images captured from Google Earth, Mills created an unlikely intervention in the moss that suggested an elaborate sand castle or fantastical miniature not unlike the architectural interventions of American artist Charles Simmonds. Mosques, like cathedrals, tend to dominate or even supplant the landscape – but here the tables had been turned. Mills's place of worship was unexpectedly dwarfed by its natural surrounding, inverting the conflicted relationship between a transcendent and imminent environment.

Rebecca Diederichs's *Trail Hitch* was a 20-metre long clothesline running into the woods. Covered with alternating groups of red, green and blue clothespins, the clothesline drew a straight

17

CHANTAL ROUSSEAU*BIRD STACK FLAG* (2007)

SCREEN PRINTED FLAG.

91.5 CM (H) X 75 CM (W).

PHOTO: AUDREY HLADY

18

MICHAEL DAVEY*SHORT LIFE – LONG BRANCH* (2007)MULTIPLE BRONZE CASTING OF
A TREE BRANCH, SKELETON AND

ROPE. SIZE VARIABLE.

PHOTO: ARTIST

19

JOHANNES ZITS*THE SEDUCTION* (2007)

DIGITALLY MANIPULATED COLLAGE

PRINTED ON POLY-VINYL.

243 CM (H) X 365 CM (W).

PHOTO: ARTIST

20

LISA NEIGHBOUR/JOHN DICKSON*OUT-HOUSE* (2007)

EXTERIOR BY JOHN DICKSON:

PLYWOOD, MIRROR.

INTERIOR BY LISA NEIGHBOUR:

SOLAR CELLS, PLASTIC FRUIT AND LEDS.

223 CM (H) X 90 CM (W) X 90 CM (D).

PHOTO: ROGER HENRIQUES

21

OUT-HOUSE (2007) INTERIOR DETAIL

PHOTO: ARTIST

22

OUT-HOUSE (2007) INTERIOR VIEW

PHOTO: ROGER HENRIQUES



line into the trees through a cacophony of branches. Approaching the piece required a determined commitment. As a conceptual trail marker, it was set back from the trail and installed well out of hands' reach. The colourful clothespins lured me further into the increasingly dense foliage, and while I was never in any danger of getting lost, the experience proved disconcerting.

Finally, Kate Wilson's *Living Signs* featured a series of five signs mounted on tree trunks. Also set back from the trail, these signs mimicked the shape, colour and style of ubiquitous urban signage. Unlike common street signs however, these confound easy interpretation. With truncated phrases such as "Elevator On The Lake," "No Miracles Here, Lost Filofax," and "The Bones of Greece," each proved perplexing, and contained no obviously helpful information. Instead, the cryptic texts implied a semiotic collapse, blanketing the otherwise unspoiled woods with an anxiety of broken-down information.¹

23

BRIAN HOBBS

TOOL #2 (2007)

RED CEDAR, EPOXY, FIBERGLASS,
URETHANE RUBBER. 76 CM (H) X
76 CM (W) X 91.5 CM (D).

PHOTO: ARTIST

24

BRIAN HOBBS

PRINT FROM TOOL # 2 (2007)

PRINTING INK ON GRANITE.

185.5 CM IN DIAMETER.

PHOTO: ARTIST

25

LORNA MILLS

MOSS MOSQUE MOSS (2007)

HYDROCAL, INK, ACRYLIC

POLYURETHANE. 89 CM X 68.5 CM.

MOSS MOSQUE MOSS WAS MODELED
USING ONLY THE INFORMATION
AVAILABLE IN A SINGLE GOOGLE
EARTH IMAGE OF THE EL-ZAYED
MOSQUE UNDER CONSTRUCTION.

PHOTO: ARTIST

26

REBECCA DIEDERICHS

TRAIL HITCH (2007)

5800 WOODEN CLOTHESPEGS,

LATEX PAINT, CLOTHESLINE,

STRAPS AND PULLEYS.

22 M LONG, 2.4 M OFF THE GROUND.

PHOTO: LYLA RYE

27

KATE WILSON

LIVING SIGNS (2007)

SEVEN PARTS

TEXT ON ALUMINUM.

22 CM (H) X 30 CM (W).

PHOTO: LYLA RYE

Completing the circuit, I retraced my steps to consider both art and landscape from different vantages. Dysfunctional shelters. Concealed *mise-en-scènes*. Uneasy ciphers. Affected by these encounters, I began to draw parallels between walking in the woods and strolling through city streets. The artworks were visual markers that led me to navigate and interpret the site in uncommon ways. Like the plastic trail markers tied to tree branches at regular intervals, Persona Volare had affixed their artwork to the site as a means of marking their own trail. Instead of escaping the oppressive bustle of the GTA,² they refracted the Near North through a distorted lens. As I drifted through the terrain mapping out the *Granite Club* trail, I wandered further and further from the predictable northern landscape of the Group of Seven.

Taking a page out of the playbook of the Situationist International, an earlier alliance of urban explorers, Persona Volare transposed the notion of *dérive* into the great outdoors. According to Sadie Plant, "to *dérive* was to notice the way in which certain areas, streets, or buildings resonate with states of mind, inclinations, and desires, and to seek out reasons for movement other than those for which an environment was designed." To *dérive*, or drift, did not simply imply an unconscious experience, but a "technique of locomotion without a goal, in which one or more persons during a certain period drop their usual motives for movement and action, their relations, their work and leisure activities, and let themselves be drawn by the attractions of the terrain and the encounters they find there."³ Typically it's a strategy to decipher the psycho-geographical complexities of cities, but in this case a similar idea has been applied to the great outdoors with surprisingly cohesive results.

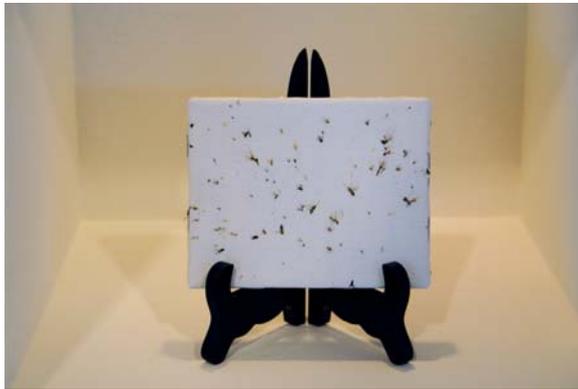
Granite Club brought a decidedly metropolitan air to the Muskokas, peppering the site with objects and signs that distort the dividing line between rural and urban. By collectively colonizing the landscape so closely associated with the Group of Seven, Persona Volare conceptually reclaimed the site on their own terms, while retaining a similar sense of camaraderie and adventure. They managed the difficult trick of transporting their own particular brand of anxiety into the tranquil heart of cottage country.

IVAN JURAKIC (2008)



THE ROAD NORTH/THE ROAD SOUTH

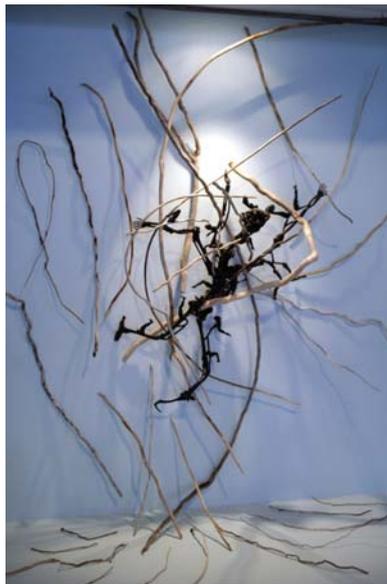
PERSONA VOLARE @ YORK QUAY CENTRE, HARBOURFRONT CENTRE



28



30



29



31



32



33



34

28

CARLO CESTA

BUG OUT (2007)

CANVAS, BUGS, WOODEN STAND.

22 CM (H) X 17 CM (W).

PHOTO: JOHN DICKSON

33

29

MICHAEL DAVEY

LONG LIFE-SHORT BRANCH (2007) DETAIL

BRONZE, PLASTIC, WOOD.

300 CM (H) X 150 CM (W) X 43 CM (D).

PHOTO: JOHN DICKSON

30

JOHN DICKSON

TERRA INCOGNITO (2007)

PLASTER, MODEL-MAKING SUPPLIES, TALC,

COMPRESSED AIR AND ELECTRONICS.

90 CM (H) X 90 CM (W) X 38 CM (D).

THROUGHOUT THE COURSE OF THE EXHIBITION, A MINIATURE LANDSCAPE GRADUALLY DISAPPEARS BENEATH LAYERS OF TALC.

PHOTO: ARTIST

31

REBECCA DIEDERICHS

OFF-TRAIL (2007) DETAIL

INK-JET PRINTS. 90 CM (H) X 99 CM (W).

PHOTO: JOHN DICKSON

32

BRIAN HOBBS

TOOLS (2007) DETAL

CEDAR, BLACK RUBBER FEET,

LATEX PAINT, CEDAR SHAVINGS,

CLEAR POLYURETHANE RUBBER,

STEEL HANDLES, INK.

DIMENSIONS VARIABLE.

THESE TWO PRINTING OBJECTS WERE CONSTRUCTED WITH THE WASTE MATERIAL FROM TOOL #2, LOCATED AT THE TREE MUSEUM.

PHOTO: JOHN DICKSON

33

LISA NEIGHBOUR

SOLAR ORCHARD (2007) DETAIL

7 PLASTIC FRUIT, LEDs, SOLAR

PANELS, INSTALLED ON TREE.

DIMENSIONS VARIABLE.

PHOTO: ARTIST

34

LORNA MILLS

THE ROAD WEST: TRAFFIC (2007)

VIDEO STILL OF AN ANIMATED GIF.

DIMENSIONS VARIABLE.

PHOTO: ARTIST

34



36



35

CHANTAL ROUSSEAU
BIRD FIGHT FLAG (2007)
SCREENPRINT ON FABRIC.
99 CM (H) X 90 CM (W).
PHOTO: JOHN DICKSON

36

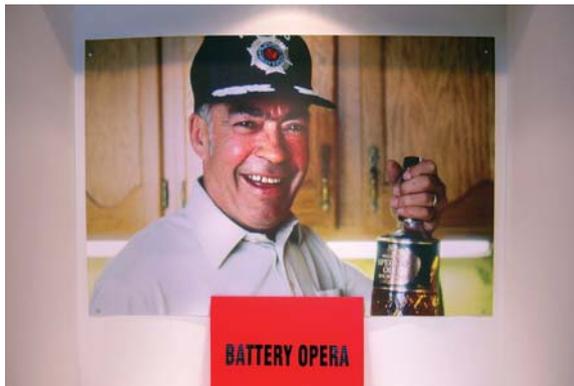
LYLA RYE
INVERSE FAÇADE (2007)
CHROMIRA DIGITAL PRINT, MIRROR.
63 CM (H) X 75 CM (W) X 13 CM (D).
PHOTO: JOHN DICKSON

37

KATE WILSON
HEY KID (2007)
PHOTOGRAPH, SIGN, TEXT.
PHOTO: 52 CM (H) X 81 CM (W).
SIGN: 21.5 CM (H) X 29 CM (W).
PHOTO: JOHN DICKSON

38

JOHANNES ZITS
RUNNER (2007) DETAIL
ACRYLIC PAINT AND COLLAGE
ON DIGITAL PRINT.
90 CM (H) X 99 CM (W).
PHOTO: JOHN DICKSON



37



38

Preface ANNE O'CALLAGHAN

- 1 Dot Tuer, *Metamorphosis and Metaphor: The Re-Enchantment of Nature and Art*, The Tree Museum (The Tree Museum, 2002-2003) p. 9.
- 2 J. Lynn Campbell, artist statement, 1999.

Transplant MARGARET RODGERS

- 1 L Frank Baum, *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz*, www.literature.org/authors/baum-l-frank/the-wonderful-wizard-of-oz/chapter-04.html
- 2 Cai Guo-Qiang, Curator, Bunker Museum of Contemporary Art, September 2004- February 2005, Nanshan Fortification, Tashan Battery, Guningtou Cihu Great Bunker, Changliao Rezoning District, Shuito Village, Lintsuo Old-Battlefield Army Base.
- 3 Wang, email 2007/11/29.
- 4 Cai Guo-Qiang.
- 5 Cai Guo-Qiang.
- 6 Alphonso Lingis, *The Community of Those Who Have Nothing in Common* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1994) p. 87-88.
- 7 Wang, email 2007/11/2.
- 8 Beuys's project *7000 Oaks* (1982-7) called for the planting of seven thousand trees throughout the greater city of Kassel, and eventually throughout the world, as part of a global mission to effect environmental and social change. www.diacenter.org/ltproj/7000/
- 9 Lam, *Better Homes and [Artist's] Gardens* from *Replanting History*.
- 10 Edward W. Said, "Invention, memory, and place," *Critical Inquiry*, Winter 2000 (Vol. 26, No. 2) p. 176.
- 11 K.A. Armson, *Ontario Forests: A Historical Perspective* (Toronto: Ontario Forestry Association, 2001).
- 12 Lam, *Better Homes & [Artist's] Gardens*.
- 13 Peter C. Van Wyck, *Primitives in the Wilderness: Deep Ecology and the Missing Human Subject* (Albany: State University of New York Press, c.1997) p. 123.
- 14 www.gallery101.org/content.php?lan=en&col=5&sub=cornerstone&act=exhibitions&lev=1
- 15 Jonathan Bordo, "Picture and Witness at the Site of the Wilderness," *Critical Inquiry*, Winter 2000 (Vol. 26, No. 2) p. 227.
- 16 Van Wyck, p. 121.
- 17 Van Wyck, p. 9.
- 18 Van Wyck, p. 34.

News of Difference: Siting the Tree Museum GIL McELROY

- 1 J.L. Borges, *A Universal History of Infamy* (London: Penguin Books, 1975).
- 2 "Art lovers rally to save Spiral Jetty from oil drilling," www.cbc.ca/arts/artdesign/story/2008/02/06/spiral-jetty.html
- 3 Robert Smithson, "The Spiral Jetty," in *The Writings of Robert Smithson*, Nancy Holt, ed. (New York: New York University Press, 1979) p. 111.
- 4 Quoted in Peter Harries-Jones, *A Recursive Vision: Ecological Understanding and Gregory Bateson* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1995) p. 175.
- 5 E.J. Lightman, artist statement.

In Through the Outdoors IVAN JURAKIC

- 1 Kate Wilson's installation was originally titled *Lawrence Park Amnesia* after one of the first planned suburbs in Toronto, Ontario.
- 2 Greater Toronto Area.
- 3 Sadie Plant, *The Most Radical Gesture: The Situationist International in a Post Modern Age* (Routledge: London, 1992).

ARTISTS **MICHAEL BELMORE**, born north of Thunder Bay of Ojibway heritage, graduated in sculpture and installation from the Ontario College of Art in 1994. Belmore has shown his work extensively in Canada, including exhibitions at the Woodland Cultural Centre, Brantford, Ontario; the Power Plant Contemporary Art Gallery, Toronto; and the Toronto Sculpture Garden. His works are included in the collections of the Indian Art Centre, Hull, Quebec; the McMichael Canadian Art Collection, Kleinberg, Ontario; the Thunder Bay Art Gallery and the Agnes Etherington Art Centre in Kingston, Ontario, among others. Mary Anne Barkhouse and Belmore recently completed the sculpture *Esker* for the Millennium Park in Peterborough, Ontario.

NOEL HARDING is an international Canadian artist and urban innovator recognized for his monumental scale public art projects and environmental sculptures. Harding's work has been shown in more than 200 exhibitions, nationally and internationally including exhibitions at the Museum of Modern Art in New York, the National Gallery of Canada and the Art Gallery of Ontario; his work has been archived in the permanent collections of the Art Gallery of Ontario, National Gallery of Canada and Museum of Modern Art. He is well known for his sculpture *The Elevated Wetlands* (Don Valley, Toronto), where vegetation lives in recycled plastic soil while cleaning polluted water. In the development of the Green Corridor project (Windsor, Ontario), Harding has worked collaboratively with University of Windsor visual arts professor Rod Strickland. The Green Corridor engages local and international visitors with environmentally aware, multifaceted 'art and science' public projects. Harding is currently a member of the City of Toronto's Art Committee for Public Places, a Distinguished Visitor at the University of Windsor and a member of both the Royal Canadian Academy of Art and the International Kunster Gremium in Berlin. <http://noelharding.ca/>

JAFFA LAAM LAM was born in China, and lives and works in Hong Kong. She specializes in cultural/site-specific work that uses various media and materials. Her work has been shown in the Hong Kong Art Biennial Exhibition (2005, 2003, 2001 and 1996), plus in Paris, New Zealand, Singapore and Macau, Hualien (Taiwan) International Artists' Workshop, Wasanii (Kenya) International Artists' Workshop, Shanghai Pottery Workshop and Britto Arts Trust (Bangladesh). In recent years, she participated in public sculpture and community projects in Hong Kong and overseas, and co-founded and chaired the AiR Association, a Hong Kong-registered charity that initiates, stimulates and reinforces exchanges with overseas artists, and supports the local artist community and public artistic exploration. Lam worked and researched public art in the United States in 2007 on an Asia Cultural Council grant.

E.J. LIGHTMAN, an artist based in Toronto, is a founding member of The Tree Museum (1997) and co-curator and organizer of the site-specific outdoor installations at The Tree Museum, Gravenhurst, Ontario. She has exhibited in Canada, the United States, Europe, Central and South America, and Mexico. Lightman was an active member of WorkScene Gallery in Toronto from its inception in 1989, curating several group shows, including *Art & Technology* (1994). She also co-curated *Myths from Cyberspace* (1996/97) with Carolyn Bell Farrell at the Koffler Centre, Toronto. Exhibitions include mixed media works *Natural Icons* (Tusk Gallery, Toronto, 2001) and *The Tree Museum Collective: An Alternative Site* (Visual Arts York Quay Centre, Harbourfront Centre, Toronto, 2002), and site-specific installations at The Tree Museum (2005 and 2007), the Visual Arts Centre in Clarington, Ontario, and Oeno Gallery in Prince Edward County, Ontario (2007).

PERSONA VOLARE COLLECTIVE is a group of artists embracing transformative natural representations through observation, identification, description, theoretical explanation and knowledge gained from experience. Persona Volare's work encompasses the idea of screw-type locking connectors, searchlight controls, alignment arrays, brightness ratios, bouncing busy attractions, deviation angles' highest useful frequencies, inductive reactions, total harmonic ratios, orbital magnetic moments, liquid fuses, noise attenuation, modulating lights, frictional electricity, colour difference signals, warpage tenacity tests, hissing arcs and rare gas, which, in combination, may break the laws of nature and create flamboyant miracles. Persona Volare is Carlo Cesta, Michael Davey, John Dickson, Rebecca Diederichs, Brian Hobbs, Lorna Mills, Lisa Neighbour, Chantal Rousseau, Lyla Rye, Kate Wilson and Johannes Zits. <http://personavolare.com/home.php>

WEN CHIH WANG was born in Chiayi, Taiwan, and graduated in 1989 in fine arts at the Chinese Culture University. He studied in France for four years and is a member of Artists' Association of France. Now living in Chiayi, Wang has exhibited nationally and internationally. Selected exhibitions include the 49th Venice Biennale (2001), the *Residence* Outdoor Exhibition (2002) sponsored by Taipei Fubon Art Foundation, the Taipei Art Festival (2002), the Chinshan International Landscape Sculpture Exhibition (2003) in Taipei County and solo exhibitions at the Taipei Fine Arts Museum (1995 and 2000). Wang has participated in numerous group exhibition and artists' residences in Europe, Asia and the US. <http://cat.ntmofa.gov.tw/english/index.asp>

IVAN JURAKIC is a visual artist, writer and curator at Cambridge Galleries in Cambridge, Ontario. He has organized and written about several exhibitions that focus on installation and site-responsivity. Selected curatorial projects at Cambridge Galleries include *Passages: Lisa Klapstock and Andrew Wright* (2007), *Wordsmiths* (2006), *Sara Angelucci: Somewhere In Between* (2006), *Colleen Wolstenholme: Iconophobia* (2006) and *Group of Seven Revisited* (2005). He also curated *Re: cycle/Outdoor Art Project* (2003), and *Zone 6B: Art in the Environment* (2000) at Hamilton Artists Inc. His writing has been published in numerous exhibition publications as well as in *Fuse Magazine*, *Espace Sculpture*, *Mix Magazine* and *C International*. He received a master of fine arts degree from the State University of New York at Buffalo and has exhibited in Canada and the United States. He lives in Hamilton, Ontario.

WRITERS

GIL MCELROY is an independent curator, art critic, poet and visual artist. His curatorial projects include *Razzle Dazzle: The Uses of Abstraction* (The Robert McLaughlin Gallery, 2008), *Susan Wood: Florilegium* (Art Gallery of Nova Scotia, 2003) and *St. Art: The Visual Poetry of bpNichol* (Confederation Centre Art Gallery, 2000). McElroy has been curator for the Confederation Centre Art Gallery in Charlottetown, and was acting curator for The Robert McLaughlin Gallery in Oshawa, and interim curator for Station Gallery in Whitby. He is the author of *Gravity & Grace: Selected Writing on Contemporary Canadian Art* (Gaspereau Press, 2001), as well as three books of poetry – most recently *Last Scattering Surfaces* (Talonbooks, 2007). His visual art has been exhibited in public galleries and artist-run centres. He lives in Colborne, Ontario, with his wife Heather.

MARGARET RODGERS is the author of *Locating Alexandra* on Painters Eleven member Alexandra Luke (Toronto: ECW, 1995) and has been published in *Espace Sculpture*, *Canadian Art*, *Artfocus* and *The Journal of Canadian Studies*. As director/curator for Visual Arts Centre of Clarington, Ontario, from 1989 to 2004, she contributed essays for numerous exhibitions, including *Baghdad Museum, The History of Everyday (re-presenting the object); 44 Comes to Clarington; Ryszard Litwiniuk: On-Site; Joan O'Doherty: The Vulture Waits Series III – Blind Certainties; water: photographs by Nancy Rahija and Gaye Jackson; J. Lynn Campbell: Symbol – Process – Provocation; Women of Steel; Scenic View (Art on Public Lands); 400 Shades of Green; Crossroad; The Real Mackay?; Material Support; and Over (memory and) Matter.* (www.margaretrodgers.ca/)

ANNE O'CALLAGHAN's work extends from photo-based work to site-specific sculpture. Selected site-specific installations include The Tree Museum (1998-99); The Visual Arts Centre of Clarington, Ontario (Public Art Project 2001-2003); *An Artist Garden*, Visual Arts, York Quay Centre, Harbourfront Centre, Toronto, Ontario. (2003 to present); Fifthtown, Prince Edward County, Ontario, and Kiwi Gardens, Perth, Ontario. (2008). Selected exhibitions include: Redhead Gallery, Toronto (2004, 2006); The Visual Arts Centre of Clarington (2002, 2004, 2007); Oeno Gallery (2005, 2007); Visual Arts York Quay Gallery at Harbourfront Centre Toronto (2002, 2007). As well as being a practicing artist, O'Callaghan has an active curatorial practice. She is the co-curator and a founding member of The Tree Museum, Gravenhurst, Ontario, and a founding member of "the intersperse curatorial collective". Born in Ireland, O'Callaghan lives and works in Toronto, Ontario and is represented by Oeno Gallery, Prince Edward County, Ontario.

CURATOR

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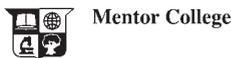
Wen-Chih Wang’s installation *On The Go II* and The Persona Volare exhibition *The Road North/The Road South* were collaborative projects between York Quay Centre, Harbourfront Centre and The Tree Museum. The artists and The Tree Museum greatly appreciated the support of Patrick Macaulay, Head of Visual Arts, and Marlee Choo, Administrator of Visual Arts, at York Quay Centre.

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CURATOR: Anne O’Callaghan
 DESIGN: J. Lynn Campbell
 EDITING: Eric Mills



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Rodgers, Margaret, 1945-

The Tree Museum: the 10th annual exhibition, September 16 - October 28, 2007: what is place / exhibition essays by Margaret Rodgers, Gil McElroy, Ivan Jurakic; exhibition curated by Anne O'Callaghan.

Site-specific installations by: Wen-Chih Wang, Jaffa Laam Lam, Michael Belmore, E.J. Lightman, Noel Harding. Temporary interventions on site by: Persona Volare Collective.

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Inside front and back cover images:

1998

Anne O'Callaghan, *Relic of Memory* (1); Tim Whiten, *Danse* (2); Badanna Zack, *Mound of Cars* (3)
Curator: E.J. Lightman

1999

J. Lynn Campbell, *In-Sight* (4, 5); Gwen MacGregor, *Chirpy, Chirpy, Cheep, Cheep* (6);
Anne O'Callaghan, *Relic of Memory 1* (7); Robert Wiens, *Log II* (8)
Curator: E.J. Lightman; Essays for 1998/1999 by Carolyn Bell Farrell

2000

Jocelyne Belcourt Salem, *Glimmer* (9); Deeter Hastenteufel, *Them Now Us* (10);
Francis LeBouthillier, *Pressure Sensitive* (11); Tim Whiten, *Danse* (12)
Curators: E.J. Lightman and Anne O'Callaghan;
Essays by Anne O'Callaghan, Badanna Zack and E.J. Lightman

2001

Lois Andison and Simone Jones, *Tidal Pool: Ode to Tom Thomson* (collaborative work) (13);
Reinhard Reitzenstein, *Shed* (14)
Curators: E.J. Lightman and Anne O'Callaghan; Essays by David Liss and Christy Thompson

2002

Wilson Chik (Hong Kong), *Chien de loop* (performance work) (15);
Janice Pomer and Barry Prophet (Ontario), *Finding the Intimate in Nature* (performance work) (16);
Ellen Dijkstra (Holland), *Extraterrestrial* (17); Lyla Rye (Ontario), *Locus* (18)
Curator: Anne O'Callaghan; Essays by Dot Tuer (Ontario) and Betty Chung (Hong Kong)

2003

T.S. Anand (U.S.A) *Intent II: Tent Dance* (19), *Intent I: Tent Dance* (20);
Anne-Marie Bénéteau, *Meadowvale Glen Estates* (21); Marguerite Larmand, *Butoh* (22);
Christy Thompson, *Borealis* (23); Francesca Vivenza, *Outpost* (24)
Curator: E.J. Lightman; Essay by Gil McElroy

2004

Simon Frank, *Core* (25); E.J. Lightman, *Pinecone Seed* (26, 27) and *Sky Shelter* (28);
Ryszard Litwiniuk, *Ex/Change* (29) and *Fire/Renewal* (30); Catherine Widgery, *Light Lines* (31)
Curator: Anne O'Callaghan; Essays by John Grande and Daniel Baird

2005

John Dickson, *Lodge* (32); Janice Pomer and Barry Prophet (performance work) (33);
Barry Prophet, *A Gathering of Quivers* (34); Nancy Paterson, *Not Waving, Drowning* (35)
Curator: E.J. Lightman; Essay by Tila Kellman

2006

Kelly Mark, *A Little Piece of Heaven* (36); Diane Borsato, *The Road Out* (performance work) (37);
Peter von Tiesenhausen, *The Land is the Canvas* (38)
Curator: David Liss; Essay by David Liss