

LISA KLAPSTOCK / PAULETTE PHILLIPS

Du 29 novembre 2007 au 2 février 2008 au Centre culturel canadien
vernissage le mercredi 28 novembre à 18h00

accès jusqu'à 20h30

Dans le cadre officiel des Rencontres Internationales Paris/Berlin/Madrid (du 22 novembre au 1er décembre), événement culturel européen rendant compte des spécificités et des convergences des pratiques artistiques entre nouveau cinéma, vidéo et art contemporain, le Centre culturel canadien présente la première grande exposition en France des artistes canadiennes Lisa Klapstock et Paulette Phillips. Composée d'installations vidéographiques et de photographies, cette exposition réunit un ensemble d'œuvres majeures de ces artistes de Toronto.



Lisa Klapstock, *Ambiguous Landscapes*, 2003-2005. Photo © Lisa Klapstock

Le regard de **Lisa Klapstock** aime à confronter le spectateur à des lieux de passage, vides ou achalandés, qu'elle réduit à des plans rabattus (volées de marche, replis de terrain) éminemment ambigus. Sa pratique artistique examine les mécanismes du regard et le rôle de l'objectif dans la construction de la perception, ainsi que notre expérience de l'environnement quotidien. L'exposition est axée sur la série de cinq petits paysages vidéographiques *Ambiguous Landscapes* (2003-2005) et la série photographique *Threshold* (2001-2002) ouvrant des vues indiscrettes sur les cours arrière de maisons de ville de Toronto. En première mondiale, le Centre culturel canadien présente également l'installation vidéographique *Field Studies* (2007) qui plonge le spectateur dans une expérience sonore et visuelle totalement inédite : une double projection en plan fixe y traduit de manière bouleversante le rapport de l'individu à la foule dans un espace public abstrait et brouillé où la figure humaine est réduite à une tâche en mouvement.



Paulette Phillips, *The Floating House*, 2002. Visuel © Paulette Phillips

Les créations vidéographiques de **Paulette Phillips** explorent les dérapages du comportement et de la pensée qui transforment des situations courantes (marcher dans une foule, regarder le paysage, visiter un lieu touristique) en événements mystérieux. Le paradoxe, le traumatisme, le décalage, l'inconfort sont des éléments récurrents dans son œuvre. Présentées pour la première fois en France, quatre œuvres vidéographiques engagent le spectateur dans des drames latents structurés autour d'une double tension, perceptuelle et émotive : *It's about how people judge appearance* (2001), *The Floating House* (2002), *Crosstalk* (2004) et *Monster Tree* (2006) associent diverses formes de voyeurisme à une approche paradoxale, réunissant l'indifférence et l'indifférenciation urbaines et la curiosité spectaculaire associée à la forme cinématographique du suspense.

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Centre culturel canadien - 5, rue de Constantine 75007, Paris

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***Field Studies* (2007)**

Création inédite présentée en première mondiale à Paris, *Field Studies* est une œuvre « in progress ». La bande sonore fait partie intégrante de cette partition où l'artiste cherche à évoquer l'espace en trois dimensions dans le contraste qu'elle crée avec l'espace bidimensionnel de l'image projetée.

Dans *Field Studies*, le contexte est effacé par une surexposition de lumière, mais il existe toutefois des moments où, à cause des changements de la lumière du jour, le contexte émerge subtilement. Cette œuvre témoigne de l'intérêt de l'artiste pour la perception, les limites de cette dernière, et l'occupation humaine de l'espace. Elle questionne les limites de la représentation picturale en explorant la quantité d'informations qui sont nécessaires à la lisibilité de l'image.

Field Studies traite également du mouvement de la population mondiale et de la redéfinition des notions de frontière et d'identité. En filmant des visiteurs sur des sites touristiques ou de divertissement (cathédrales, musées, plages...) et en les filmant de très près ou en surexposition, l'artiste crée un tableau abstrait, en mouvement. Les distinctions entre les personnes filmées et leur environnement sont réduites et leurs différences estompées. Avec la décélération du son et de la vidéo, l'œuvre crée une ambiance angoissante, troublante, rappelant parfois des enregistrements de migrations en masse de peuples déplacés.

***Ambiguous Landscapes* (2003-2005)**

Cette œuvre comprend des diptyques photographiques « disloqués » de grand format, et une œuvre vidéographique composée de cinq petits écrans muraux encadrés comme des photographies. On y voit des paysages naturels et fabriqués – un escalier en granit, un champ d'herbe, une digue bétonnée, un coteau broussailleux et une pente enneigée – transformés par la caméra en lieux ambigus.

Dans cette série, des paysages que le cadrage rend abstraits sont ramenés au monde réel par des mécanismes temporels comme la présence d'une figure dans l'œuvre. La figure enregistre et décrit l'espace et le temps, altérant notre perception du paysage représenté, et transformant ainsi une image plate en un espace en trois dimensions. La figure révèle la topographie des paysages, ainsi que leur étendue, et à même ce processus enregistre le temps et l'espace. Largement statiques, les vidéos créent une sensation d'attente et d'anticipation chez le visiteur.

***Threshold* (2001-2002)**

Cette œuvre comprend une série de 28 photographies de champs de couleur interrompus par des fragments de vues d'une étonnante netteté. Ces images montrent des frontières séparatrices (clôtures, murs) et les vues abstraites de jardins privatifs aperçus à travers les trous de leurs surfaces. Les images de cette série ont été réalisées dans les espaces publics d'allées donnant sur l'espace privé des jardins de pavillons à Toronto.

Threshold présente des images qui n'existent que dans la forme photographique mais qui reflètent les limites inhérentes de la vision humaine. Ici, la frontière floue du premier plan et la netteté de la mise au point de la scène fusionnent dans une seule et même vue, réduisant la séparation apparente entre surface et espace, entre extérieur et intérieur, entre sphères publique et privée.

Paulette Phillips

« Ce qui m'occupe c'est l'analyse de notre comportement social ; notre réaction face à ce qui est dans et en dehors de notre contrôle ; nos espoirs, comment nous échouons ; et ce que nous révélons de nous-même, de manière inconsciente, à travers le déplacement du désir. »

Puisant dans les associations issues de pratiques interdisciplinaires, j'utilise de multiples formes d'images, de sons et de constructions spatiales afin de communiquer des substances culturelles, physiques et émotives.

Intéressée par la structure de l'expérience, j'aime jouer avec, et en réponse à, la lecture visuelle du spectateur en référençant les stratégies avant-gardistes, modernistes et post-modernistes, telles qu'elles se réfèrent à l'image et à la construction du sens. Cette approche est guidée par une sensibilité pour le polyvalent, que je considère comme étant une tendance féministe.

Telle une sorte d'« observatrice-éponge », je suis témoin de lieux marginaux au sein desquels je rôde, réceptive et sensible à un monde stimulant. Cette observation se catalyse à travers la recherche de phénomènes du monde naturel et de la technologie – l'électromagnétisme, la médecine légale, la reproduction de la moisissure, l'hybridité, le parcours d'un essaim de moineaux – c'est-à-dire, le pourquoi qui explique que nous voulons regarder. En combinant une lecture critique des principes déterminants de l'époque des Lumières avec notre articulation constamment changeante de ce que cela signifie d'être ici – maintenant – je propose, à l'aide de moyens simples, une rencontre avec la complexité. »

Paulette Phillips

Monster Tree (2006)

Filmée près des Chutes du Niagara, l'œuvre *Monster Tree* traite d'une malformation découverte par l'artiste sur le tronc d'un vieil arbre. Un défaut naturel, dû à une réaction organique, l'expression impertinente de cette bosse devient le « visage » animé de l'arbre, évoquant un humour naturel ainsi que notre fascination pour le bizarre. Longtemps une attraction touristique célébrant la puissance de la nature, les Chutes Niagara ont toujours également eu beaucoup de succès auprès de nombreux téméraires, camelots et amateurs d'expositions de monstres et de maisons hantées. Le film de Phillips reflète toutes ces qualités, exprimant notre perpétuelle curiosité pour l'éthos liminal qui réside là où le rationnel et l'irrationnel se rejoignent. Malgré notre quête obsessionnelle pour l'uniformité et la beauté idéale, jamais le grotesque et l'anormal ne cesseront de nous captiver.

Source : www.paulette-phillips.ca

Crosstalk (2004)

Crosstalk est un terme qui s'applique à la communication entre organismes en détresse. Ce film projeté en boucle est un élément extrait d'un film réalisé par l'artiste où une femme crée une perturbation et arrête un tramway. Nous ne voyons pas la perturbation ; ce qui reste dans cette installation c'est l'espace « entre »... Lorsque nous regardons l'événement invisible, nous sommes piégés par la fixation de notre regard sur notre propre voyeurisme, le nôtre et celui des personnes regardant le trauma ou la perturbation.

The Floating House (2002)

Filmée sur l'océan Atlantique au large de la Nouvelle-Écosse, *The Floating House* est une méditation sur l'oscillation entre le réel et le simulé. À partir de sources historiques, Phillips crée un événement qui amène le spectateur à questionner les forces naturelles et culturelles qui interagissent et se répondent. Phillips observe les lois qui gèrent notre existence physique et la manière dont nous les entravons psychologiquement.

Source : www.lacentrale.org

It's about how people judge appearance (2001)

Une femme se frappe la tête contre un mur en brique, s'en remet et repart...



Lisa Klapstock
Field Studies, 2007
Installation vidéographique, son multicanal, (23 min. 32 sec.)
Visuel © Lisa Klapstock



Lisa Klapstock

Ambiguous Landscapes, 2003-2005

DVD, écran plats LCD, cadre en bois laqué, 48 x 58 x 11,5 cm

Visuel © Lisa Klapstock



Lisa Klapstock

**3 Major Street

de la série *Threshold*, 2001-2002

Tirage couleur, panneau en bois trempé laminé mat, 44,5 x 44,5 cm

Photo © Lisa Klapstock



Paulette Phillips

Monster Tree, 2006

Pellicule 16mm transférée sur DVD, projection en boucle (5 min.)

Visuel © Paulette Phillips



Paulette Phillips

Crosstalk, 2004

Pellicule 35mm transférée sur DVD , projection en boucle (7 min.) , son en stéréo

Visuel © Paulette Phillips



Paulette Phillips

The Floating House, 2002

Pellicule 16mm , projection en boucle (5 min.), système de son multicanal 5.1

Visuel © Paulette Phillips



Paulette Phillips

It's about how people judge appearance, 2001

Pellicule 16 mm transférée sur DVD, projection en boucle (1 min.), écran plat 12 pouces encastré dans un mur, encadré avec de la fausse peau d'autruche rose, son en stéréo

Visuel © Paulette Phillips

Lisa Klapstock

Photographe et vidéaste, diplômée en communication de la Simon Fraser University (Vancouver), Lisa Klapstock vit et travaille à Toronto. Intéressée par les lieux banals et leur mode d'occupation par les êtres humains, Klapstock explore les mécanismes de l'acte de voir et le rôle de la caméra dans notre expérience visuelle de l'environnement. Ses créations photographiques et vidéographiques oeuvrent sur la zone liminale entre abstraction et réalisme, révélant la relation complexe entre la représentation photographique et la perception visuelle.

Ses premières œuvres examinent le cadre caché des allées urbaines à Toronto, avec une attention particulière au détail, rendant ainsi visible l'interface fragile et altérable séparant les sphères publique et intime. Ses œuvres récentes mettent en scène des paysages naturels et fabriqués ainsi que des sites touristiques surpeuplés.

Klapstock a présenté des expositions collectives et personnelles à travers le Canada, les États-Unis et en Europe où elle a également été invitée en résidence d'artiste (à Copenhague - 2007, à Helsinki - 2004 et à Rotterdam - 2002). Parmi les expositions européennes consacrées à ses œuvres, notons *Installation In-Situ*, Galleri Signe Vad, Copenhague (2007) ; *Lisa Klapstock : Threshold*, Musée de la Photographie, Charleroi (2005) ; *Living Room*, Odense Photo Triennial, Danemark (2003) ; Museum Van Nagsael, Rotterdam (2003). Sa série récente *Depiction* a été dévoilée lors de la Toronto International Art Fair (2006).

Les œuvres de Klapstock font partie de collections publiques et privées, telles que celles du Musée du portrait du Canada, du Musée de la Photographie de Belgique, du Museet for Fotokunst au Danemark, de la Winnipeg Art Gallery et de la Art Gallery of Hamilton.

Entre 2004 et 2006 son exposition personnelle *Liminal*, organisée par la Southern Alberta Art Gallery et accompagnée d'une publication monographique, a fait l'objet d'une tournée nationale au Canada. En 2008, l'artiste présentera son travail lors d'une exposition personnelle au Senko Studio, au Danemark.

Lisa Klapstock est représentée par Jessica Bradley Art + Projects à Toronto et Diane Farris Gallery à Vancouver.

www.jessicabradleyartprojects.com
www.dianefarrisgallery.com

Paulette Phillips

Vivant à Toronto, Paulette Phillips enseigne le cinéma, la vidéo et l'installation au Ontario College of Art and Design. Elle a également travaillé dans le milieu du théâtre, du cinéma et de la télévision.

Les installations filmiques de Phillips construisent des expériences étranges qui amplifient notre attachement aux plaisirs du voyeurisme, en faisant une narration de l'observation au moyen de techniques cinématographiques classiques.

Phillips a plusieurs expositions personnelles et collectives à son actif, au Canada et en Europe. Parmi ses récentes expositions personnelles, signalons : *Monster Tree*, Diaz Contemporary, Toronto (2006) ; *Dying to Make a Living*, Sparwasser, Berlin (2005) ; *The Secret Life of Criminals*, Danielle Arnaud Contemporary Art, Londres ; *The Floating House*, Art Gallery of Ottawa (2004) ; *Ecstasy*, Paul Petro Contemporary Art, Toronto (2003) ; *Its About How People Judge Appearance*, Paul Petro Contemporary Art, Toronto (2002). Ses expositions collectives incluent : *Corps Electromagnétiques*, La Maison Européenne de la Photographie, Paris, V2_Institute for the Unstable Media, Rotterdam et Ludwig Museum, Budapest ; *We Can Do This Now*, The Power Plant, Toronto (2006) ; Guardami, Palazzo della Papesse, Sienne, Italie ; *Staged*, Danielle Arnaud Contemporary Art (2005) ; *Undertow*, Generator projects, Dundee, Ecosse (2004) ; Artists Space, New York (2003) ; *Artissima*, Festival du Film de Turin (2002).

Ses oeuvres font partie de collections privées et publiques dont celle du Museum of Modern Art à New York, de la Banque d'œuvres d'art du Conseil des Arts du Canada, du Musée des Beaux-Arts du Canada (Ottawa) et de la Facultad de Bellas Artes de l'Universidad Complutense à Madrid. Son travail a fait l'objet d'articles récents dans *Art in America*, *ArtForum*, *Modern Painters* et *Flashart*.

L'artiste est représentée par Danielle Arnaud Contemporary Art à Londres et Diaz Contemporary Art à Toronto.

www.daniellearnaud.com
www.diazcontemporary.ca

Jackson's. Her figures are more awkwardly drawn than Bertram Brooker's, albeit more sensuous. David Milne's adaptations of post-Impressionist and cloisonné-like divisions of the canvas seem evident in her work, as do the later robust and intelligent faces and bodies typical of the east-coast artist Miller Britain.

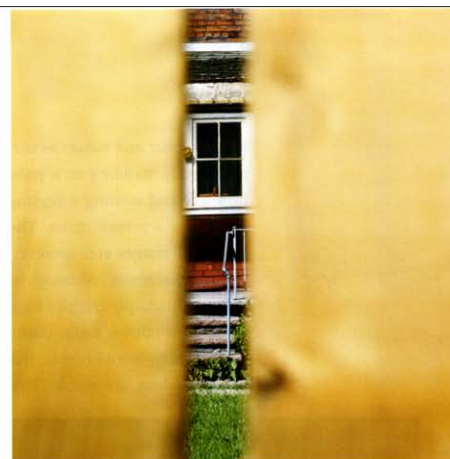
Projects of retrieval and expansion in art history fuel the academic machine and the archive. They also bring about a certain amount of canon busting and reformation as they ask us to consider the relationship of new artists to the existing narratives. The modernist narrative in Canadian painting is dominated by male members and landscape storylines. Viewing the exhibition after reading the biography is revealing. Many of the colours have a muddy quality. Other paintings employ what looks like Matisse's North African palette. Accurate drawing, light and shadow are often ignored. Consistent tonal ranges make deciphering over-busy compositions more difficult. Exquisite, tiny self-portraits and mother and daughter paintings show the force of her personality. The war work utilized post-Cubist and vorticism repetitions before the artist's life was cut short at age 45. Spontaneity and affection ruled.

True, there may be too many works, an impulse that reflects upon the joy of discovery and the constant amassing of detail necessary for a groundbreaking biographical work. The impulse to excess in curation is sometimes deleterious in constructing an exhibition of consistent, high quality. Yet Brandon's intentions across the

book and the exhibition appear to be about locating a heretofore little-known female artist in relation to her self and the multiple others in Canadian art. In this, she has made an immense contribution to the study of Canadian women artists, one bound to affect subsequent narratives and exhibitions. Adherence to that ineffable bugbear, "quality" in art, would have forced Brandon to omit quirky paintings such as *Children in Pliofilm* of 1939. Thanks to Brandon, Nicol MacLeod presents herself at the margins. The sifting, categorization and integration of the visual works will undoubtedly follow. A vivacious, energetic and lively spirit emerges—extrovert, gamine, athlete, teacher, daughter, lover, mother, friend and artist. ■

"Pegi Nicol MacLeod: A Life in Art" exhibited at the Carleton University Art Gallery in Ottawa from February 7 to April 17, 2005. The exhibition will travel to the Winnipeg Art Gallery from May 21 to July 31, 2005, to the Robert McLaughlin Gallery in Oshawa from September 9 to November 6, 2005, and to the Beaverbrook Art Gallery in Fredericton from March 18 to May 28, 2006. Pegi by Herself: The Life of Pegi Nicol MacLeod, Canadian Artist by Laura Brandon, Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2005. Hardcover, 280 pp, \$39.95. Pegi Nicol: Something Dancing About Her, a National Film Board production, directed by Michael Ostroff. 72 mins, 2005.

Amy Karlinsky recently curated "figure ground: paintings and drawings by Ivan Eyre" for the Winnipeg Art Gallery.



VISUAL ART

Lisa Klapstock
Leslie Dawn

top: Lisa Klapstock, *Crawford Street* (from the "Threshold" series), 2001–02, c-print, 17 1/2 x 17 1/2". All photographs courtesy the artist.

below left and right: Lisa Klapstock, *Helsinki* (from the "Ambiguous Landscapes" series), 2004, c-print, 4 x 5" each.

I should confess from the outset that my critical eye is more attuned to painting than to photography. But in the case of Lisa Klapstock's recent works, the concerns of the two overlap, especially around the issues of space, place, the self and sublime utopian visions. Klapstock's photographs, done over a number of years, are divided into a series of four suites. The



first, among the smallest in scale, is titled "Threshold." These ongoing investigations were taken in Toronto's urban alleys, an ambiguous backside locale that Klapstock seems to favour. The views are shot through knotholes, nail holes and cracks between boards in fences. They position both the

photographer and viewer as surreptitiously standing in a public space and stealing a fleeting glimpse of a private realm. The restricted images are, however, always uninhabited. Although in focus, only sharply cropped fragments of windows, walls, chairs and greenery, bits of edenic, but urban, gardens, are visible. This



Lisa Klapstock, *Yellow Armchair*, 2000 (from the "Livingroom" series), c-print, 34 1/2 x 34 1/2".

frustration with completion and occupation mitigates against the sensation of voyeurism associated with the violation of property divisions, restrictions of sight and invasion of privacy. The fences, in contrast, are, although close up, blurred into almost flat, non-differentiated, immaterial fields, which take up most of the surface of the print. The contrasting holes or vertical bands of vision that punctuate them are composed like Barnett Newman's painterly zips. But the implied sublimity is of the everyday, momentary and withheld, rather than the universal, eternal and immanent. The contrast between the specific and non-specific is increased through the titles, which give the precise

address of each location, but withhold one of the numbers, which is replaced by a generic asterisk.

In the second ongoing set, titled "Living Room," which dates from 2000, the works grow in scale. Klapstock stays in the alleyways, but introduces her own presence, turning the camera on herself. Here the artist sits on outcast, discarded and dispossessed pieces of furniture, remnants of bygone, low-end styles in plush, plaid and faux leather, from which the individual pieces take their titles. These abandoned, derelict objects suggest the failure of the modernist promise. The clearly focussed surroundings are dilapidated garage doors, peeling paint, tilting eaves, slipping shingles, broken concrete and weedy growth; in short—decay. The sense of melancholic ruin, a trope drawn from painting, is enhanced by the grey, shadowless and subdued lighting. Contrasting hand-painted signs warning against parking or dumping, and prohibited signs of spray-painted graffiti, suggest attempts to use painting and text to either regulate or resist regulation. The failure and frustration on both counts add an ironic and subtly humorous note.

Everything is shot straight on and arranged in flattened and carefully composed interlocking rectangles with little perspective, like the modernist grid, which has, in the painting of the last century, signified a utopian vision. But this neglected section of urban utopia is best avoided. In its midst, Klapstock has placed herself, sitting primly on the furniture in

non-expressive poses. She is uniformly dressed in an antiseptic, protective white overall, avoiding the contagion of this potentially toxic environment, but also displacing her body and rendering her without personality or individuality. The homogeneity of both the images and the artist's presence again plays the differentiated against the non-differentiated, a contrast further enhanced by subtle details such as the cutlery delicately placed beside her in one image.

The third ongoing series, the "Ambiguous Landscapes," is the most recent and, at four by five feet, the largest. Three profoundly different sites are each represented twice: a monumental flight of grey stone steps from a popular tourist spot in Helsinki; a barren field of dark grey asphalt from Zeeland in the Low Countries; and an arid, sage-covered, high plateau hillside near her former home in Kamloops, British Columbia. Although the titles taken from these places point out the diversity of subjects, they have a commonality. Each image hovers between the sublimely non-differentiated and the incredibly specific, in a manner drawn from painting but befitting photography. All three images are intensely detailed, the result of using a great depth of field to achieve consistent focus over the entire field, and shot from a distance so that shifts in scale are minimized. Implications of visual infinity are arrested by the consequent flatness of the image. The horizontal expanse of pavement, like an airport tarmac, and the steep, vertical hillside are

both sharply divided from the matte grey or blue skies above them, the first through its barren expanse of man-made materials, the second through its softer, but equally continuous, field of natural, tenacious sage. The steps of the third mediate between the high and low found in the first two. The staircase has no horizon, but extends in repeated and uniform bands from bottom to top and side to side, like a classic Minimalist painting by Agnes Martin. But unlike this precedent, Klapstock appears bodily in three of the six, leaving the other three unpeopled. In each, the artist wears a bright red jacket in a passionate and sensuous hue, which situates her diminutive, definite, but non-defined figure almost intrusively in the vastness of the otherwise empty spaces.

The last series on exhibit, "Umbilicus, Spectrum," which has been ongoing from 2001, gives a humorous twist to speculation on the representation of the sublime. The most object-like of the works, this series is composed of ordered grids of small half domes of clear acrylic, set over rainbow-hued photographs of small disruptions in otherwise continuous surfaces. These bits of decay in the pristine flatness appear, through the overlaying and magnifying lens, as belly buttons. This visual pun suggests that photographic navel gazing must include a belly laugh and a bit of self-deprecation to avoid the overstated rhetorical gestures of others engaged in this field of inquiry.

In Banff, following the first installation, Klapstock added to the "Ambiguous Landscapes"

with a series of sublime white-on-white photographs of the snow in the mountains, in which there was only the merest hint of definition. She is developing an accompanying multiscreen video work depicting the same landscapes as the photographs. The videos are largely still, with the only movement being Klapstock's figure as she passes through the frame. In the video component of the Banff piece, Klapstock's body, dressed in black, appears and disappears into the white field/void. The videos magnify her vision substantially. ■

Lisa Klapstock's "liminal" was on exhibit at the Southern Alberta Art Gallery in Lethbridge, Alberta, from November 27, 2004, to January 16, 2005. The exhibition will travel through 2007 to the Tom Thomson Memorial Art Gallery, the Kamloops Art Gallery, the Robert McLaughlin Gallery and the Owens Art Gallery.

Leslie Dawn teaches art history and critical theory at the University of Lethbridge.

the handbook features a photograph of four armed Navajo warriors and the slogan "Fighting Terrorism Since 1492." And its pages of how-to descriptions on topics such as "Sniping" and "The Use of Land Mines" are taken straight from a U.S. Army training manual. Terrorism and the fight against it have a history, and this history can complicate the present and the past.

The ramifications of terror often escape the control of the terrorists themselves, and this is the subject of Canadian artist Jayce Salloum's three-part *Untitled* video series. Salloum's arresting videos deal with destruction visited upon people through terrorism, the terms of resistance to it and the hope of recovery from it. Migrants, refugees, asylum seekers and residents from cities in the former Yugoslavia (including Serbia) reflect on the processes of dehumanization that tore apart their communities in the course of the civil war. The interviews are threaded through with astute observations of the use of military force by governments to reinforce territorial agendas. It would seem that nationalism demands terrorism and the renunciation of terror demands the denunciation of nationalism—peace in the former Yugoslavia is achieved in each individual refusal to play the terrorist's game and take sides. There is no recovery from the massacre of Palestinians in two Lebanon-based refugee camps during the Israeli invasion of Lebanon in 1982, but by superimposing footage of running streams, blooming flowers and passing clouds over camp scenes, Salloum suggests nature can obliterate terror regardless. An interview with a female Lebanese resistance fighter who spent ten years in an Israeli prison reveals that torture is powerless to control the human spirit. Moments of endurance, capitulation, humiliation, fear and pain never shook her sense of self or the political consciousness that saw her through her confinement.

"Terrorvision" is resolutely humanist in its assertion that there is more to terror than the act of terrorism. If we are ever to escape from the cycle of conflict that feeds terrorism, this exhibition is a good place to start. by Allan Antliff



Installation view of "Terrorvision" at Exit Art

Lisa Klapstock

GALLERI IMAGE, ÅRHUS, DENMARK

Lisa Klapstock's series *Threshold* brilliantly tricks the viewer into awareness of both his or her own expectations of pictures and photography in general. Klapstock has photographed gaps and knotholes in Toronto alleyway walls and fences, behind which people's backyards are usually hidden. Our gaze is drawn to the fragment of space beyond the divide where a chair, a window or shrubs can be glimpsed. Attempts to render these fragments symbolically significant or to establish any rational sense of space, however, fail with the realization that the subjects beyond the cracks are not the point of the images.

The small pictures within pictures remind us of looking through a telescope in reverse, pushing the object further away rather than bringing it closer. Klapstock's focus is the threshold—the boundary between public and private, which raises themes related to the isolation of city life. The images make us wonder if the walls represent enclosure or exclusion. The threshold dominates the image and accentuates the visual barrier between foreground and background, which is simultaneously dissolved by the shallow depth of field, resulting in a merging of the two realms into a single, almost abstract surface.

Klapstock uses a macro lens and enlargements that provide us with a view denied the average pedestrian in the back alleys of Toronto. However, she does not zoom in on private details. The openings appear as opaque specks in a field of colour, reining in any mimetic reading of the photographs. In presenting themselves as non-figurative images, the photographs can be seen in relation to experiments in 20th-century abstract painting. The approach emphasizes Klapstock's interrogation of the traditional expectation that photography serves as a window onto the world. The medium is not merely an extension of the human eye; the elements of the image, and its surface, also determine the meaning of the photograph.

The hole shapes that recur in the images are reminiscent of the pinhole camera. The "natural camera," as it was once known, was an expression of the desire for images that matched what the human eye observed and which were thought to provide an unmediated, objective view of reality. Furthermore, the unfocused fences form an amor-

phous membrane, like the skin that separates bodies from the world. *Threshold* thus has a transitory quality. It rejects the point of view of the universal spectator capable of surveying everything from a fixed position. Non-monumental, Klapstock's photographs seem to say that the world can never be absorbed in its entirety, but rather reveals itself in unexpected glimpses.

In the midst of the blurred foreground the sharp subject in the aperture is like a prick or shock—terms that have also been used by theorists like Roland Barthes and Walter Benjamin to describe the invasive immediacy of the photographic medium. By exploring boundaries with her camera, Klapstock makes us aware of perceptual limitations. She identifies sight as a fallible source of information and investigates the voyeurism associated with the photographic act. by Louise Wolthers



Lisa Klapstock 179 Clinton Street 2001-02 C-print 44.5 x 44.5 cm

Paulette Phillips

DANIELLE ARNAUD CONTEMPORARY ART, LONDON, ENGLAND

Paradox is an essential element in Paulette Phillips's work. In her show "The Secret Life of Criminals," it keeps the viewer mesmerized and transfixed. Like a detective at the scene of a crime, the viewer has to unravel a narrative in each of the five video and film installations.

The title piece sets the tone. Viewers are lured to view a three-minute loop of a female contortionist through a stainless-steel cone that points downward. The movement of the contortionist is both liberating and constrictive; with the viewer's own reflection visible on the inside of the cone, one has a hovering self-awareness of being a voyeur.



Paulette Phillips *It's about how people judge appearance.* 2001
Leather, padded frame, flat-screen monitor, 16 mm film
transferred to DVD 1 min loop PHOTO: JAGO GLENNING

The work expresses Phillips's concern with "how people undo themselves and seemingly participate in their own misfortune," which fits with the exhibition's overall sense of voyeurism. *It's about how people judge appearance.* (2001) shows a well-dressed woman walking down an alley. Suddenly, without provocation, she hits her head against a brick wall. The minute-long loop repeats and we hear the thudding sound of her skull hitting brick again and again. She then continues walking, blood dripping down her forehead.

In *Smut* (2004), it's the title that plays on the viewer's voyeuristic relationship to the art. Ten screens show images of mushrooms, seemingly growing from the floor of the gallery. Nine are backlit photographs; one is a time-lapse video that shows both mushrooms and the artist dressed as a mushroom. Through headphones, the viewer hears a child-like voice tell the story of an 1897 murder in a Paris cave, where the victim's body was burned and his ashes scattered over mushrooms. The work's title refers to the media's fascination with murder stories, and to the meaning of the word

Frantisek Drtikol

MUSEUM OF DECORATIVE ARTS IN PRAGUE, CZECH REPUBLIC

smut in relation to spores; the semantic overlap is an important facet of Phillips's work.

The Floating House (2002) and *Crosstalk* (2004) are shot on film, not video. The bizarre setting of *The Floating House* involves a Gothic-revival house set afloat off the coast of Nova Scotia; it eventually sinks in a *Titanic*-style drama. The viewer is left with haunting images of floating chairs and the murmur of a family gathering that moves from one speaker to another. For Phillips, the floating house is a metaphor. "When a person is unmoored," she says, "there is potential for tragedy."

It is a mood continued in *Crosstalk*, in which we see a film clip of people crossing a street. Their attention is suddenly caught by something off-camera. Some stop dead in their tracks; others gaze toward the scene while continuing to walk. The catch is that the source of the troubling scene is the viewer. The subjects of the work have been startled. They are looking back. Phillips catches us all in the act of voyeurism. by Tania Buckrell Pos

If you've never heard of the early 20th-century Czech photographer Frantisek Drtikol, you can forgive yourself. His works had all but disappeared from public view until the early 1970s. Even since, opportunities to see his work have been rare.

"Frantisek Drtikol: Photographs from the Years 1918–1935" is therefore reason to rejoice. It traces his maturation from young Sezeccion photographer to visionary avant-garde artist obsessed with capturing the immateriality of the human spirit.

Drtikol's interest in the spirit was forged in his hometown of Pribram. A mining community with a famous pilgrimage site, Pribram produced citizens who were both radically minded and hyper-attuned to religious matters. Drtikol was no exception.

In 1910, he moved to Prague and set up a studio. Although the First World War put his photography on hold, Drtikol returned to it as soon as the war ended, with images of Salome dancing around the head of John the Baptist, or a bare-chested boy blowing into pan pipes. The war and Cubism, however, had killed off public taste for Art Nouveau, so Drtikol trained his camera on ordinary people. During the early 1920s, his portraits of the burghers of Prague were still his bread and butter, but Drtikol was also becoming known for experimental, somewhat abstract nudes.

In 1925, Drtikol won a Grand Prix at the International Exhibition of Modern Decorative and Industrial Arts in Paris, and his career took off. His increasingly bold nudes—slim, athletic women set against architectonic elements such as cubes, columns or circular discs—reveal his fascination with the human form, and equally with the spirit, as expressed through dramatic lighting. As the decade progressed, Drtikol's nudes became more radical, particularly in his photographs of women interacting with ropes and his studies of movement in the *Step* series.

Despite the popularity of such images, Drtikol's work shifted again around 1930. He had been studying yoga and Eastern philosophy and sought to incorporate both into his art practice. But the sheer physicality of live models interfered with his efforts to represent pure soul. Drtikol decided to build tiny stylized figurines, which, he felt, "correspond to reality, yet not exactly so." Then he photographed them in ecstatic poses or surrounded by an aura of radiant light. Eventually, he did away with the human figure, for the most part, in favour of pure geometric shapes.

Drtikol knew that what he was doing might seem weird, but he didn't care. He wrote: "I can say that only now am I satisfied with the results of my work, for it is mine from A to Z...it is better to go one's own way than to...follow the beaten path."

In 1935, Drtikol abandoned photography. Sick of the fame it brought him, he sold his studio and its equipment and devoted the rest of his life to painting and study. Some years later he donated several thousand of his photographs to the Museum of Decorative Arts in Prague. The world is richer for them. by Sascha Hastings



Frantisek Drtikol *Nude* 1927 Pigment print 28.8 x 22.5 cm

Paulette Phillips at Diaz Contemporary (Toronto)

Art in America

May 2007

by Dan Adler

Paulette Phillips's first solo show at Diaz was spare—consisting of a sculpture and a flat-panel monitor both installed on the gallery walls. Made of electronic components and multi-colored wiring, the sculpture, *Home Wrecker I* (2005), had been meticulously engineered to serve a single absurd purpose: a white chiffon scarf is held in midair just below the device by means of a magnetic field. Hovering at eye level, kerchief delicately drapes down from its center like a child's notion of a ghost. It often sways when observers move or pass by.

The downward cascade of the suspended scarf was echoed by the rushing water of Niagara Falls in the looping video *Monster Tree* (2006). A Toronto-based artist, Phillips is known for film and video installations that create tension between idyllic landscape settings and sinister or subversive suggestions. In *Monster Tree*, the camera moves from lush views of waterfalls and moss-covered rocks shrouded in mist to tourists on the bustling thoroughfare that overlooks the water. The focus on the honeymooners in horse-drawn carriages inevitably brings up the theme of nature as commercial spectacle. Beyond that rather familiar observation, a sound track of ominous, heavy breathing plays throughout the video, evoking uneasy and perverse connotations of voyeurism or predation.

Eventually the camera pans slowly to the trees in the foreground that frame the vigorously flowing water in the distance. The artist closes in on the trunk of an immense tree with a large burl jutting out. The malformation looks remarkably like a pig's head; a snout and two dark hollows suggesting eyes. The breathing noise becomes a louder growl; then, suddenly, moving eyeballs appear in the hollows of the facelike deformity. A creature it appears, resides within. This presence strikes a grotesque note that leads to thoughts about the perverse ways we frame nature in our society.

by Roy Exley

A strong forensic thread runs through the five video installations that make up Canadian artist Paulette Phillips' exhibition "the Secret life of Criminals." The narrative traces of the events depicted in these videos suggest traumatic undercurrents. Coaxing the viewer into the role of detective, these works compel us to pay attention to their details, in case we miss a vital clue. The Floating House (2002) oscillates in its mien between the real and the simulated. One minute we see a model of a house floating in a lake, slowly sinking; the next minute we are sucked in to a catastrophic event as the lens zooms in to experience the trauma of inundation. All the works in this show have emotive hooks that seduce us into a suspension of disbelief. Something strange is happening to us at a road intersection in Crosstalk (2004). The viewer becomes identified with the camera as it looks out from a scene of...what? A crime? An accident? A performance? Passing pedestrians turn to stare at us. What bizarre event are we involved in? This staged video has a Jeff Wall feel but transcends Wall by implicating the viewer in the action. Instead of being voyeur here, we have become the object of the voyeur's gaze.