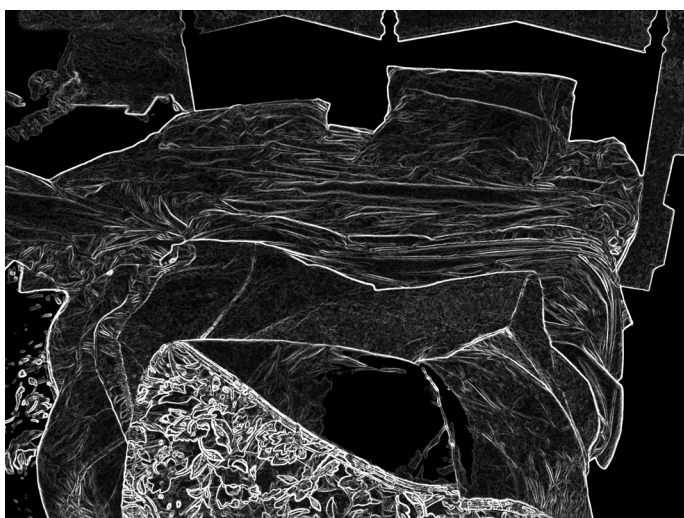


# Nuits blanches et chambres noires

September 26 - October 26, 2012  
Opening September 25, 6 - 8:30 p.m.

Exhibition by Derek Besant : Nuits blanches  
Exhibition by Michel Campeau : Chambres noires

Curator : Catherine Bédard



Derek Michael Besant, *Restless Nights, Motel Bed #9*, 2011



Michel Campeau, *Sans-titre 7987 [Montréal, Québec], La chambre noire*, 2005-2009

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As part of the Semaine des Cultures Étrangères and Nuit Blanche, the Canadian Cultural Centre presents two exhibitions exploring different types of revelation: *Nuits blanches* by Calgary artist Derek Besant and *Chambres noires* by Quebec photographer Michel Campeau.

Derek Besant's installation *Nuits blanches* plunges the viewer into a mysterious realm in which floating images – empty motel rooms that look like crime scenes – become surfaces on which fantasies may be projected. Paradoxically, *Chambres noires* takes us into the now obsolete secret closed spaces of the photo lab, where images used to be revealed in the dark.



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Free access from Monday to Friday, 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. Thursday until 7 p.m.  
[www.canada-culture.org](http://www.canada-culture.org)



Forum  
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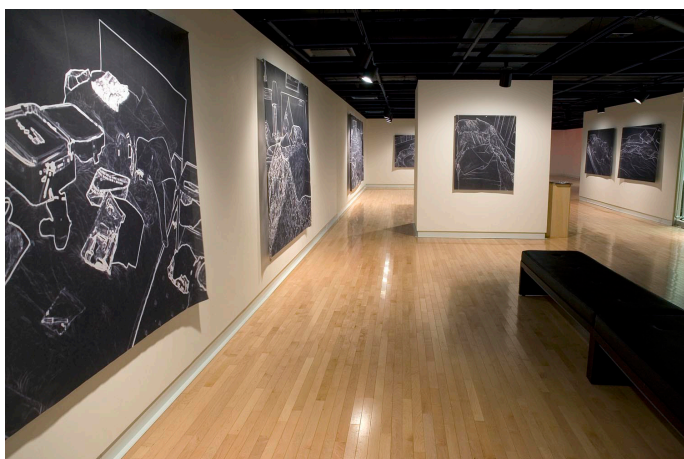
AIR CANADA 

Canada 

## Derek Besant : Nuits blanches

*Nuits Blanches* invites us to experience a particular aspect – more cinematic than photogenic – of the vast Canadian landscape, the never-ending journeys and impersonal service stations along the deserted roads taken to cross the country from east to west. It is a metaphorical and lonely night journey, a road movie that leads us to from one motel room to another, with their unmade beds, silent witnesses to restless nights serving as a frame for the narrative. A hybrid soundtrack, an intriguing mix of music, noise, and stories, immerses the visitor in an open-ended narrative.

Besant's *restless nights* are in fact darkrooms, "negative" images in the luminous sense of the word, stripped of any distinctive features and inhabited by lines. Outlines innervating a ghost; blurrier lines that only reveal folds and creases. Made up of large photographic canvases printed in thermal ink using a high-tech process, the *Nuits blanches* exhibition is taken from the *15 Restless Nights* series first exhibited in 2006 on the occasion of the thirtieth anniversary of the Harbourfront Centre in Toronto. The series has travelled across Canada and Eastern Europe.



Derek Besant : installation view from *15 Restless Nights*

**Derek Besant** lives in Calgary. His multimedia works explore the themes of sleep, immersion, migration, absence and underlying narratives. They often feature a sonic element, and many of them were produced in collaboration with writers. In association with one of the biggest Canadian outdoor advertising agencies, the Pattison Outdoor Group, which uses state-of-the-art technology, Derek Besant made a name for himself the international scene with monumental public installations presented in several cities. Besant represented Canada at several international biennials, including London, Cracow, Liège, Tallinn, Barcelona, Rome and Tokyo. His work, which has been exhibited around the world, has won international prizes, including in Novosibirsk, Los Angeles, London and Győr.

Media partners for exhibition *Nuits blanches et chambres noires*:



Le Journal **des Arts**

The exhibition *Chambres noires* is organized in partnership with the Galerie Simon Blais (Montréal), the Centre National des Arts Plastiques and with the support of Rencontres d'Arles.

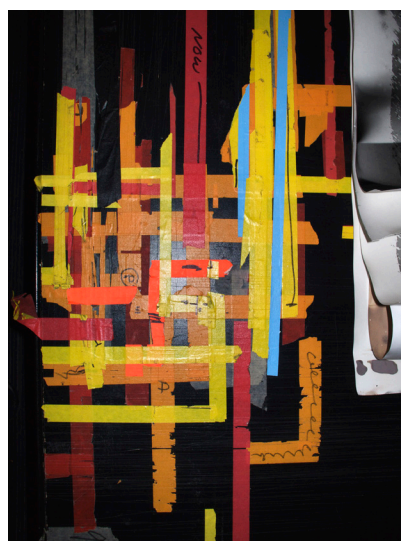
GALERIE SIMON BLAIS



## Michel Campeau : Chambres noires

Comprising some thirty colour photographs taken between 2005 and 2009, *Chambres noires* is the composite portrait of that endangered place of revelation, the darkroom. Fragments of darkrooms visited in Vietnam, Niger, Mexico, Cuba, Canada, Germany, Belgium and France, the images are both intimate and transnational. Without the slightest hint of nostalgia and without ceding to the temptation of producing a photogenic image of the private place with restricted access shielded from the light, Campeau photographs the artist's equipment and clutter, the context of his work in which instruments and techniques, as well as the traces of experiments, no longer serve to reveal an image but themselves become the subject of the image. Transmitted in pieces borrowed from various cultures and territories, exclusively seen from close up which makes seeing the big picture impossible and refers to a subjective individual presence, the very idea of the darkroom is thus not really revealed, or really objectified, and retains an extraordinary imaginary power.

This series was the subject of an important monograph, *Darkroom*, published in 2007 by Nazraeli Press (United States) in the collection edited by Martin Parr; it was also the subject of a special report in New York-based magazine *Aperture*. Being shown for the first time in Paris, the series was first exhibited at the Rencontres d'Arles in 2010, then at the Château d'Eau in Toulouse and, this summer, at the Musée Nicéphore Niepce in Chalon-sur-Saône.



Michel Campeau, *Sans-titre 7987* [Montréal, Québec], *La chambre noire*, 2005-2009

**Michel Campeau** lives in Montreal. His work stretches out over the last four decades of contemporary photography. Expressing a concern for interiorization at odds with the medium and breaking with the formal conventions of documentary, Campeau explores the subjective, narrative and ontological dimensions of photography. His work has been exhibited at *New Typologies*, New York Photo Festival, Brooklyn, in 2008 and at the Rencontres d'Arles in 2010. Recent major solo exhibitions include the retrospective *Eloquent Images: Photographs, 1971–1996* organized by the Canadian Museum of Contemporary Photography in Ottawa. In 1994 Michel Campeau won the Higashikawa Overseas Photographer Award (Japan). He received the Duke and Duchess of York Prize awarded by the Canada Council for the Arts.