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Nov. 17, 2011 – Feb. 25, 2012:

Mapping the Everyday:
Neighbourhood Claims
for the Future

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Audain Gallery

SFU WOODWARD'S

Mapping the Everyday: Neighbourhood Claims for the Future

Since Simon Fraser University's (SFU) School for the Contemporary Arts (SCA) and the Audain Gallery moved in the fall of 2010 to the Downtown Eastside (DTES) of Vancouver, often described as the poorest postal code in Canada, questions of gentrification, representation, site-specificity, and research ethics have become crucial. These questions, emerging out of shifts in globalization that have intensified urban change and inequality, have been addressed by what curator Maria Lind has called "the collaborative turn" within the history of socially engaged art practices.

The DTES communities' profound sense of the logics and strategies of representation is expressed in the common use of the demand "Nothing About Us Without Us." This complexity of issues, addressed by the knowledge of activists, social movements, and community organizations, is the starting point for the collaboration *Mapping the Everyday: Neighbourhood Claims for the Future*.

In order to approach new contingent articulations of agency, the Downtown Eastside Women's Centre (DEWC), a self-organized feminist space devoted to empowerment and fighting inequality, the visiting artist Elke Krasny, and the Audain Gallery have formed a temporary alliance for this project.

A key goal of this alliance is to turn the Audain Gallery into a meeting ground for the production and sharing of different forms of knowledge. To achieve this, the collaborative project expanded to include the art collective *desmedia*, *red diva projects*, the art collective *Coupe*, *Out of Bounds: Festival of Site-Specific Interventions*, students from the SCA at SFU, and members of the DTES community.

While this project is necessarily tied to local complexities and possibilities, it is also in dialogue with the global practice of institutional, artistic, and community collaborations. Through this dialogue, *Mapping the Everyday* aims to build a politics and an aesthetic that somehow opens possibilities, however contingent, and to combine different knowledges and to build agency.

To answer Lind's question, "Does art have anything to do with the world beyond its own professional rituals and priorities?" The answer from here, now, is inevitably "yes."

Opening: Nov. 16, 7pm

The Downtown Eastside
Women Centre (DEWC)

Elke Krasny

Contributors:

The women of the DEWC

The art collective *desmedia*
red diva projects

The art collective *Coupe*

Artists participating in *Out of
Bounds: Festival of Site-Specific
Interventions*

Students from the School for
the Contemporary Arts at
Simon Fraser University

The Audain Gallery serves as a vital aspect of the Visual Arts program at Simon Fraser University's School for the Contemporary Arts. The gallery's mission is to advance the aesthetic and discursive production and presentation of contemporary visual art through a responsive program of exhibitions and to support engaged pedagogy. The gallery encourages conceptual and experimental projects that explore the dialogue between the social and the cultural in contemporary artistic practices. The *Audain Visual Artists in Residence Program* and student exhibitions are central to the gallery's programming.

The Audain Gallery is curated by Sabine Bitter, working with gallery assistant Brady Cranfield.

Mapping the Everyday is realised in partnership with the Downtown Eastside Women's Centre with support from the City of Vancouver's 125th Anniversary Grants Program; the Austrian Federal Ministry for Education, Arts, and Culture; Am Johal, Vancity Office of Community Engagement as part of Simon Fraser University Woodward's Cultural Unit; and The Ellen and Warren Tallman Writer in Residence Program at the English Department at Simon Fraser University.

Elke Krasny

There are three key components in this collaboration: the archive, the map, and the library. These components are formal, foundational, and conceptually important. If we situate these components in a genealogy of the history of ideas, we can see that their purpose is to collect, store, and convey different forms of knowledge. Each component also performs a surveying function, taking on while producing a specific kind of spatialization: they occupy actual space and they also direct and construct perceptions of space.

The archive, the map, and the library have long been part of a set of governmental strategies of organization and consolidation. If read from another vantage, however, these strategies allow people to see how “seeing like a state” functions. In other words, this alternative view makes it possible to see the inner operation of the state in the production and reproduction of hegemonic power. Ultimately, this view is double because it sees—and sees through—the ways of viewing the state offers, while also seeing alternative ways of viewing that have been excluded by the state.

This doubled viewing is profoundly dialectical. On the one hand, it is a demand to be seen by the state in order to become included in the state’s archives, maps, and libraries, according to the processes of the state but on one’s own terms. On the other hand, it creates alternative systems of archives, maps, and libraries, often hidden from the view of the state. Social movements, protest groups, emancipatory education

movements, feminist collectives, and others have taken up both sides of this dialectic strategically.

I am concerned with counter-hegemonic and feminist strategies of intervening in historical narrative and with creating new constellations in the exchange of different forms of knowledge, which can then be literalized in space. My role in this collaboration is to use the occasion of the exhibition to help initiate the writing of the history of the DEWC. I asked them to focus on their claims and demands. This mapping revealed not only claims towards the public, which mirror larger socio-economic and political transformations, but also demands that have been made by and within the immediate community of the women of the Centre. This exhibition is part of a much larger project of writing the histories of feminist practices, specifically addressing the feminist production of space.

The women themselves take the writing of this history into their own hands. This writing is also a kind of mapping of the Centre’s own archive. The women of the Centre also generously allow these processes to become a text-based installation for public viewing: the horizon for the entire exhibition. As a result, the work of the women constitutes and occupies an actual space, a space of and for an archive, a map, and a library.

Elke Krasny is an artist, curator, and writer. She is Senior Lecturer at the Academy of Fine Arts in Vienna. Her work is process-oriented and research-based. It deals with issues of space, urban transformation, interventions into hegemonic representations, feminism, and the production of memory.



Cecily Nicholson

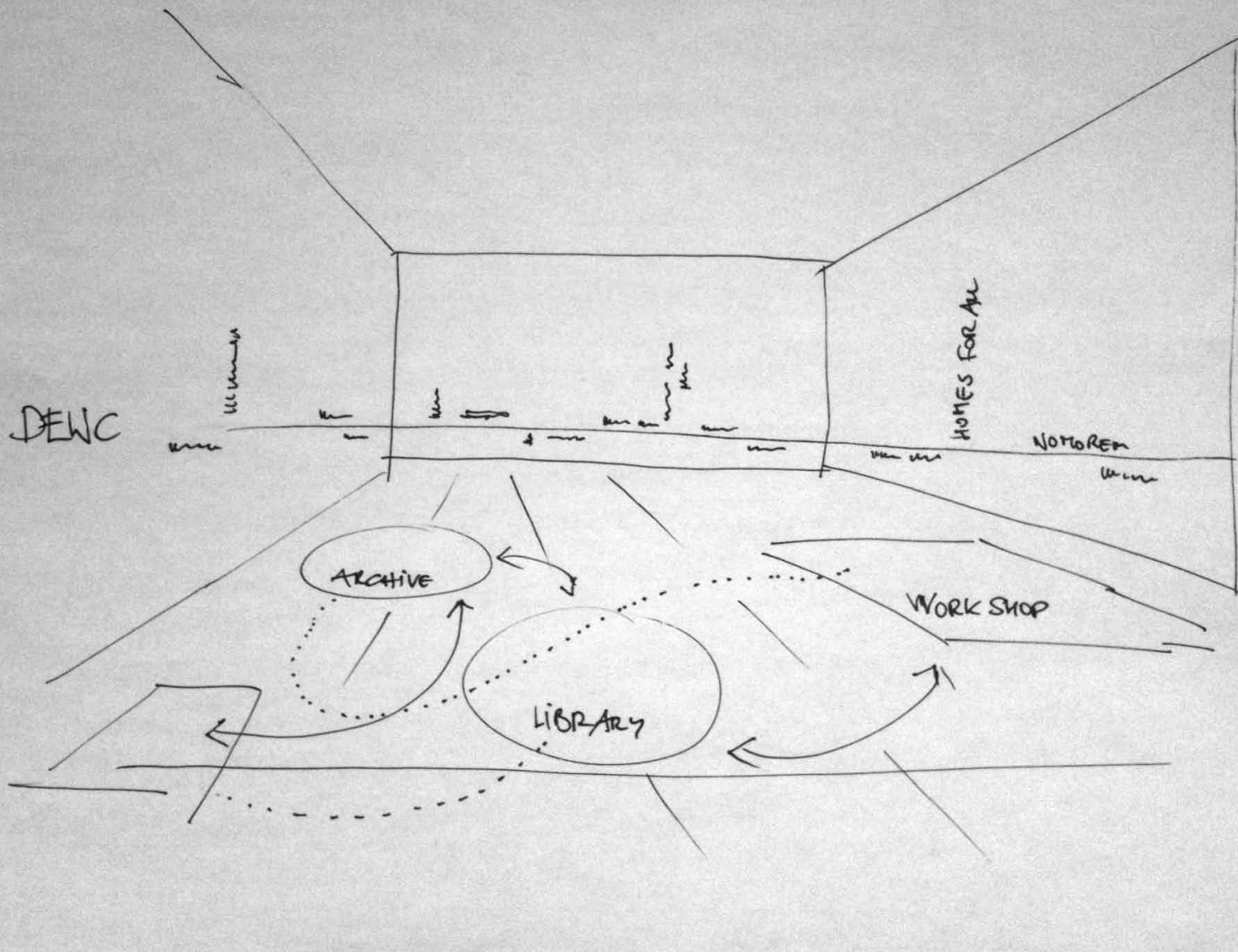
The Downtown Eastside Women’s Centre, formed in 1978, provides basic needs and advocacy for women and children living in the downtown eastside of Vancouver. High levels of violence, homelessness, and poverty impact this community; women and children are particularly vulnerable to exploitation, injustice, and harm. The DEWC offers refuge, hot meals, filtered water, clothing, phone access, secure toilets and showers, toiletries, sewing machines, computer access, harm reduction supplies, first aid, nurse and victim services, as well as outreach, referrals, advocacy, and arts and social activities. We provide practical support to hundreds of women daily. Participating more broadly in committees and coalitions, our community fights injustice and inequalities that contribute to women’s vulnerability.

Mapping the Everyday foregrounds women of the Downtown Eastside’s capacity to affect social transformation via sustained resistance to, and rearrangement of multiple, relational modes of ruling apparatuses and

regulatory bodies including police, court and legal systems, the service industry, business, education, and media. Open to the voices and everyday actions of community members, the Audain Gallery and Elke Krasny’s collaborative efforts subvert the representation of women in the downtown eastside as victims, fixed or pacified, and as abject components of a still-colonial and patriarchal gaze.

This project engenders useful standpoints—*points d’appui*—to build awareness of women of this community’s resilience, lived experience, text, discourse, economy, and knowledges that contest and shape the conditions of their everyday lives. For the time being, we can reduce our marginalization as our work is placed vitally in conversation with other local forms of knowledge and knowledge production.

Cecily Nicholson has worked with women of the Downtown Eastside community of Vancouver since 2000, the past three years as a coordinator of the DEWC. She works with *Press Release* poetry collective, VIVO media arts, and is a member of the *No One is Illegal*, Vancouver collective. *Triage* (Talonbooks, 2011) is her first book.



Installation sketch of *Mapping the Everyday: Neighbourhood Claims for the Future*, showing the rough plan for the text-based horizon line and the overall spatial organization of exhibition materials in the Audain Gallery.

DEWC Mapping of the Archive

A series of workshops at the DEWC, which inspired the formation of an ad-hoc group by the women of the Centre, created the opportunity to work through the collection of archival materials from the Centre, mostly the newsletters they produced since 1978. Drawing from those materials,

the women organized their claims and demands chronologically and thematically, in the process revealing patterns of change and continuity.

These claims and demands, both current and historical, address issues of poverty, violence and insecurity, social exclusion, the deferral of rights, and the legacy of colonialism. Although

describing specific challenges, they are also expressions of conviviality and solidarity between women, between women and their neighbourhoods, and between the women of the Centre and their global context.

The outcome of this collective process constituted the content of the text-based horizon line spanning the walls

of the Audain Gallery for the exhibition. This horizon line is a framing device and backdrop for a series of events, performances, and projects that aim to build neighbourhood constellations that go beyond familiar exchanges in the production and sharing of different forms of knowledge.

DEWC Workshops

Workshops function within the DEWC to provide support, training, education, and experience opportunities to the women of the Centre. Both attending as well as guiding workshops are expressions of the Centre's principles of self-help, peer support, and community building. Following these principles and working with the program of existing workshops at the Centre, *Mapping the Everyday* asked for a specific set of workshops to be held at the DEWC. Their outcome was fundamental to the structure and content of the exhibition in the Audain Gallery. These workshops resulted in the mapping of the archive used in the production of the text-based horizon line, the making of the library, and the design and creation of bookplates. Sharing their skills and knowledge, women from the Centre have also agreed to host workshops on traditional artistic practices in the Audain Gallery, including instruction on cedar weaving by Stella August and on Japanese brush painting by Ari Tomita. Working with Andrea Creamer and Mairin Cooley, two undergraduate SFU visual art students, the Audain Gallery produced a set of storage boxes to organize and display materials for the workshops, both for the exhibition and ultimately at the DEWC.

DEWC Library

Reading is an essential activity for the women of the DEWC. With the involvement of Gabriel Mindel Saloman and Alize Zorlutuna (MFA students from the SCA at SFU), Aja Rose Bond (an independent arts facilitator), Beth Davies (Head of the Carnegie Branch of the Vancouver Public Library), Proma Tagore (DEWC Program Coordinator), Ayumi Goto (DEWC arts facilitator) and women from the Centre, the exhibition provided the occasion to discuss and initiate the building and operation of a new library at the DEWC. Informed by the preferences of the women of the Centre, the gathering and selection of books for the library, ongoing for the duration of the exhibition, will establish a first collection for the women to contribute to in the future. Following a proposal by Saloman, the women of the Centre have also been invited to design bookplates for the books and to name the library. To serve both as a display for the library in the space of the gallery and eventually to store the library at the DEWC, the Audain Gallery produced two mobile book carts, modeled after the original carts used in the Library at SFU's Burnaby Campus, for the exhibition.

desmedia

desmedia (downtown eastside media), a collective of artists committed to working on engaged collaborative arts projects with other residents and members of the DTES, began running drop-in workshops in May 2000. Describing their project as a "living archive," *desmedia* challenged the "dominant media's over-arching image of the DTES," and facilitated the production of painting, video, photography, and text. Exploring ways of documenting life, histories, and the vitality and creativity of the area, the workshops provided an opportunity for the possibilities of self-expression, reflection, and self-representation. On the occasion of this exhibition, *desmedia* will reassemble their complete archive in the Audain Gallery—including a workstation, shelving, videotapes, paintings, and related ephemera—and discuss potential collective models and the dissolution or morphing of *desmedia* (and their archive) into another form. *desmedia* will host *Collective Futures in the Downtown Eastside*, a public forum where DTES artists and residents will be invited to discuss the successes and challenges of, and possible futures for, cultural collectives in the community. Although present in the gallery, the *desmedia* archive will not be available for public access, only on display.

red diva projects

red diva projects is a collaboration—between veteran artists Michelle St. John and Marie Clements—committed to deepening the vocabulary and aesthetic style of integrative Indigenous performance and creating and producing new innovative work. Drawing on Clements' previous experience working with the DEWC, *red diva projects* will guide women from the Centre through a series of workshops that will explore the use of written words and vocables (non-lexical sound-words) to address the themes of isolation and incarceration. The outcome of these workshops will be a performance by *red diva projects* and the women of the Centre. *red diva projects* will also present and discuss their short film *Jesus indian*, which is part of their new creative initiative called "Prison Chronicles." *red diva projects'* frequent collaborator, singer and composer Jennifer Kreisberg, has also been invited to perform new songs and talk about her practice, which is rooted in Southeast Indigenous musical traditions. All three of these events will be held at the Audain Gallery.

Coupe: Wednesday Night School

The Audain Gallery invited the artist collective *Coupe* to reflect on the issues of agency and institutionality and the strained relationship between activism, artistic production, and the absorption of cultural production into what the collective calls “monopoly-capitalist development.” Under the title *the Wednesday Night School*, *Coupe* will facilitate a biweekly reading group, following a reading list designed by the collective, for the duration of the exhibition. An opportunity for research and discussion, the reading group will also inform the production of a new text written collaboratively by the evolving members of *Coupe*. In addition to its regular meetings, the collective will hold four public meetings in the Audain Gallery as part of *the Wednesday Night School*. A sign-up sheet to join the reading group, with contact information and a full schedule for the meetings, will be available in the gallery and by email at unlimitedhumanstrike@gmail.com.

Out of Bounds: Festival of Site-Specific Interventions

Running during the month of November, *Out of Bounds* was organized by Mariane Bourcheix-Laporte, an MFA student in the SCA at SFU. It features work by graduate and undergraduate visual arts students from the SCA. Students regularly travel across the DTES, moving between the two facilities the SCA uses for instructional and studio spaces. Although transitory, students are a regular, everyday part of the community of the DTES, even if they, themselves, do not recognize that relationship. Foregrounding their connection to and participation in the neighbourhood, *Out of Bounds* challenged students to engage actively and creatively in the area, producing a variety of site-specific interventions at different locations in the DTES. For *Mapping the Everyday*, Bourcheix-Laporte and the artists participating in *Out of Bounds* have been invited to host a panel discussion in the Audain Gallery to address their experiences realizing the festival and the multiple challenges of producing site-specific art in the DTES.

Mapping the Everyday: Schedule of Events

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| Nov. 19, 2pm | How can we collaborate?
Elke Krasny, Cecily Nicholson, and Sabine Bitter |
| Nov. 22, 1pm | Workshop on Cedar Weaving
Lead by Stella August |
| Nov. 24, 1pm | Workshop on Japanese Brush Painting
Lead by Ari Tomita |
| Nov. 26, 2pm | Collective Futures in the Downtown Eastside
Panel discussion by the <i>desmedia</i> collective |
| Nov. 27, 7pm | Wednesday Night School: Introduction
Reading group developed by the art collective <i>Coupe</i> |
| Dec. 18, 7pm | Wednesday Night School: Class Restoration
Reading group developed by the art collective <i>Coupe</i> |
| Jan. 19, 7pm | Discussing Out of Bounds
Student-lead panel discussion on the Out of Bounds: Festival of Site-Specific Interventions held in the DTES |
| Jan. 22, 7pm | Wednesday Night School: Marxism & Factography
Reading group developed by the art collective <i>Coupe</i> |
| Feb. 7, 7pm | Jesus indian
Screening and discussion of a short film produced by <i>red diva projects</i> and Frog Girl Films |
| Feb. 10, 7pm | Jennifer Kreisberg
Performance and discussion |
| Feb. 14, 1pm | Annual February 14th Women’s Memorial March
Starts at Main and Hastings Street, all welcome |
| Feb. 24, 7pm | Wednesday Night School: How to Trace the Destruction of the Old World on Our Hands
Presentation and discussion by the art collective <i>Coupe</i> |
| Feb. 25, 7pm | red diva projects
Performance of workshops by Marie Clements, Michelle St. John, and women from the DEWC |

The workshops and the *Wednesday Night School* have limited availability. Please contact the Audain Gallery for more information at info@audaingallery.ca.

SFU

SIMON FRASER UNIVERSITY
THINKING OF THE WORLD

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