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February 6 – March 20, 2010:
First Nations / Second Nature

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Audain Gallery

SFU WOODWARD'S

First Nations/Second Nature

Curated by Candice Hopkins

Presently there is a slow race taking place in the northern-most part of the Arctic that is being played through different signifiers. This race was initiated in the summer of 2009 when Russia planted its flag on the Arctic seabed 4,200 meters below the North Pole. It was furthered when Canada responded with a decision to build six naval patrol vessels and new military outposts. In what was called the first expedition of its kind, the Russian explorers descended to the ocean bottom in two mini-submarines and planted a titanium Russian flag in an attempt to strengthen their claims to the Arctic. Sergei Balyaskikov, speaking on behalf of the Russian Arctic and Antarctic Institute, described the action as akin to “placing a flag on the Moon.”

The planting of the flag brings up a host of questions regarding how territories are mapped, colonized, and signified. (In this instance, what is being mapped has shifted from the surface of land—topographical—to a lateral exploration that contains sea beds and underwater borders). However, these questions extend beyond issues of geography to the elaborate performance of power, marginalization, and colonization on an international scale. Many of the works in this exhibition take the specificities of historical colonial encounters in North America to enable their reconsideration in the present, and through this, draw attention to First Nations and Native American histories. Others consider ideas of territory and nationhood more broadly and in some instances directly respond to the specific location of the Audain Gallery on the 100 block of West Hastings—Musqueam traditional territory—in a shared engagement of the social and political dimension of art.

Opening: February 6, 7pm

Greg Cunroe
Pia Fuchs (German ID of Patricia Reed)
Brian Jungen
Jimmie Durham
Sam Durant
Andrea Geyer
Matthew Buckingham
Rebecca Belmore
Cheryl L'Hirondelle and Andrew Lee

Named in Honour of arts supporter Michael Audain, the Audain Gallery will serve as a vital aspect of the Visual Arts program at Simon Fraser University's School for the Contemporary Arts, particularly in relation to the School's pedagogical practices, its emphasis on critical thinking, and its engagement with international contemporary art practices.

The Audain Gallery's mission is to advance the aesthetic and discursive production and presentation of contemporary visual art in Vancouver and internationally through a responsive program of exhibitions in a flexible project space and in support of engaged pedagogy. The Audain Gallery will encourage conceptual and experimental projects, exploring ways in which contemporary art is socially and politically formed and formative.

The Audain Gallery is curated by Sabine Bitter. This exhibition marks its opening as part of SFU Woodward's Inaugural Program. The Audain Gallery is an integral feature of the Visual Arts Program within the interdisciplinary School for the Contemporary Arts, which moves to the Woodward's site later in 2010.



Artists

Rebecca Belmore

Rebecca Belmore's sculptures and installations are regarded for their spare an exacting use of form. Addressing the political of representation and a way of knowing which comes from being "on the periphery of Anishnabe knowledge," her works often operate through a series of tactical inversions. Subjects frequently returned to in her practice include the historical contingency between Native and non-Native people and moments of cultural and collective trauma. For this exhibition Belmore will create a site-specific installation in the windows of the Audain Gallery facing the 100 block of West Hastings.

Matthew Buckingham

Matthew Buckingham's installation includes an image of Paha Sapa (Mount Rushmore) as geologists believe it will look in 502,002 C.E. At this future point, the faces of the first four US presidents—Washington, Jefferson, Roosevelt, and Lincoln—carved into the mountainside between 1926 and 1941, are almost entirely eroded. The wall text included as part of the installation tells another history of one of the most visited monuments in America. (Wikipedia reports approximately two million people make the trek every year). Paha Sapa, or the Six Grandfathers, as the Kiowa called it, is a site of continued displacement. Buckingham traces the monument's beginning to the moment when the sculptor Gutzon Borglum, a former high-level member of the KKK, first proposed to make a "Shrine of Democracy" including presidential portraits and a proposed 500 word history of the United States. The wall text also notes that while a 1980 US Supreme Court decision officially recognized that the Black Hills were illegally appropriated from the Sioux by the United states, that because of the changes to the land, the Sioux were not allowed to return.

2.



Greg Curnoe

Known for his ongoing explorations into regionalism, in the fall of 1990 Greg Curnoe undertook two encyclopedic projects stemming from his research into the land title of his studio at 38 Weston in London, Ontario. His initial findings led to an extensive history project, which unearthed people and events in the area dating back thousands of years. One of his intentions was to place First Nations signatories of the early land surrender, together with other First Nations people living in the region, back on public record. The resulting books, *Deeds/Abstracts: A History of a London Log*—a textual history from 8500 BC to 1992—and *Deeds/Nations*—a bibliographical directory of the predominantly First Nations inhabitants of southwestern Ontario from 1750 to 1850—were published posthumously in 1995 and 1996. (An early version of *Deeds/Nations* was published by Forest City gallery in 1992). The books were an attempt to challenge Canadian history, which in Curnoe's view, had actively forgotten thousands of years of First Nations social history and cultural development.

3.



Sam Durant

Sam Durant's series of light boxes recontextualize handmade protest signs found in archival photographs of Aboriginal land protests in Australia and African American and Native American civil rights protests in the United States into the language of commercial signage. As signs they consider how historical moments can be reinstated, not only as reflections on the past but to enable a reinterpretation and reconsideration of these political moments in the present. This exhibition includes a single lightbox from the series containing the words: "You are on Indian Land Show Some Respect." The words, while from a different context, resonate with recent housing protests at the Woodward's site as well as the history and ongoing struggle for recognition of Native land rights in the Vancouver region.

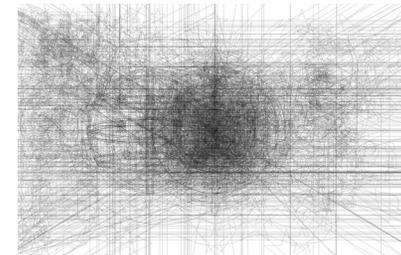
4.



Jimmie Durham

Since moving to Europe in 1994, Jimmie Durham's practice has been "against architecture" (and with this, monuments, the weight of history and other national narratives). In 1995, shortly after making the trip over from Mexico, he began to create a series of hand carved poles that would each mark "the center of the world." He made the first one for Brussels, a city he described as trying to be the economic and political center of Europe. Shortly thereafter he made another one for Siberia. In relation to the project Durham has written, "I decided that every continent has seven centers. This is an arbitrary decision—maybe there are eight, maybe there are nine—it doesn't matter. And every village also has seven centers. For every continent I would make a staff of the seven centers." *Pole to mark the center of the world (at Vancouver)* is the first created for North America. More concerning continual displacement than declaration, Durham's poles are a gesture of speculative agency.

5.



Pia Fuchs (German ID of Patricia Reed)

Pan-National Flag consists of a single white flag overlaid with the outlines of the flags of each country recognized by the UN. The resulting object is an absurd territorial marker, one that nullifies the ability to identify any singular nation. In 2001, as part of an effort to reconsider her identity within different locations, Patricia Reed began to take on local names as a means of adapting and negotiating differing cultural and linguistic contexts. Understood not as re-naming but as a compounded gesture, she started creating work as her German ID, Pia Fuchs, in 2003.

6.



Andrea Geyer

Andrea Geyer's *Spiral Lands/Chapter 2* is one aspect of a three-part project, which is a poetic retelling of a history of Native America through images and text. This installation, which includes a slide-shoe, a narrative voice-over, and a take-home brochure, highlights the relationships between photography, the identity of the American Southwest, and the ongoing dispossession of Native land. The artist, assuming the role as a scholar or researcher, asks critical questions of the viewer, interrogating the mechanisms of colonization, the politics of the gaze, and the ongoing pilgrimages to the region by anthropologists, ethnographers, and artists to conduct research. To piece together her narrative, Geyer mined manifestos from the American Indian Movement, personal histories, academic texts, colonial proclamations, treaties, travelogues, and oral histories.

7.



Brian Jungen

In drawings by Brian Jungen, pairs of caricature-like wooden signs shown pointing in opposite directions are inscribed with the words “First Person/Third World” and “First Nation/Second Nature.” The word pairings, created when Jungen was actively re-working stereotypical representations of Native people, are perhaps not so much forced binaries than an attempt at creating a continued oscillation between different connotations. “First Nation/Second Nature” bears close resemblance to the title of the controversial book, *First Nations? Second Thoughts*, written by Tom Flanagan in 2000. In his book Flanagan argues that, based on the relatively recent habitation of the Americas, Native people should be considered immigrants; on these grounds the right to pursue land claims, self-government, and other perceived benefits should be abolished. Flanagan was later appointed an advisor on Aboriginal issues to the Conservative government.

8.



Cheryl L'Hirondelle and Andrew Lee

Cheryl L'Hirondelle and Andrew Lee have refigured raw materials and sediment found surrounding the 100 block of West Hastings into a process-based “landscape” housed in a series of transparent tubes. The installation responds to the landscape painting tradition on the West Coast (which often represented Native culture through its decaying relics) while considering the extended history of the altered site of Hastings Street. The title of the work, *everything up to the sky and down to the centre of the earth*, borrowed from a textbook that traces the origins of the concept of private property in Britain, points to the extent to which private ownership has radically altered understandings, images, and relationships to land, particularly for Native people.

Images

1. Matthew Buckingham,

The Six Grandfathers, Paha Sapa, in the Year 502,002 C.E., 2002, black-and-white digital c-print, with dry transfer wall text, edition of 5, 152.4 x 109.22cm. Image courtesy Murray Guy, New York.

2. Greg Curnoe, *Nii*, October 9, 1992,

stamp pad ink, pencil on paper, 22.8 x 30.48cm. Image courtesy Wynick/Tuck Gallery, Toronto.

3. **Sam Durant**, *You Are on Indian Land Show Some Respect*, 2008, electric sign with vinyl text, 191.77 x 209.55cm, edition of 3. Image courtesy Blum & Poe, Los Angeles.

4. **Jimmie Durham**, *Pole to mark the center of the world at Prague*, 2004, wood, mirror, variable dimensions. Image courtesy the artist.

5. **Pia Fuchs** (German ID of Patricia Reed), *Pan-National Flag*, 2009, digital print on industrial-grade flag fabric, 250 x 170cm. Image courtesy the artist.

6. **Andrea Geyer**, *Spiral Lands / Chapter 2*, 2008, 80 colour and black and white slides, voiceover, 50 min, brochure with footnotes. Image courtesy the artist.

7. **Brian Jungen**, *Untitled (First Nation Second Nature)*, 1997, ink on manila paper, 35.7 x 27.2 cm. Collection of the Morris and Helen Belkin Gallery. Purchased with financial support from the Canada Council for the Arts Acquisition Assistance Program and the Morris and Helen Belkin Foundation, 1998. Image courtesy Trevor Mills, Vancouver Art Gallery.

8. **Cheryl L'Hirondelle and Andrew Lee**, *everything up to the sky and down to the centre to the earth*, 2010, plexiglass, soil, found materials, variable dimensions. Image courtesy the artist.

Biographies

Vancouver based artist **Rebecca Belmore** (1960-) creates works in performance, installation, photography, and video. In 2009 she was awarded the Hnatyshyn Foundation Visual Art Award. Her work has been exhibited widely. In 2005 Belmore was Canada's representative at the Venice Biennale and in 2008 the Vancouver Art Gallery organized the first survey of her work.

Matthew Buckingham (1963-) lives in New York City. His works question the role that social memory plays in contemporary life; recent projects have investigated the indigenous past and present in the Hudson River Valley, the "creative destruction" of the city of St. Louis, and the inception of the first English dictionary. His work has been exhibited at venues including the Camden Arts Centre, London; The Museum of Modern Art, New York, and the Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, among others.

A prolific and influential artist, **Greg Curnoe's** (1936-1992) interests included investigations into regionalism, nationalism, autobiography and everyday life. In the 1960s Curnoe participated in some of the first happenings in Canada, co-founded the Nihilist Spasm Band, and initiated periodicals, exhibition spaces, and organizations that made London one of Canada's artistic centers. In 2001 his work was the subject of a retrospective exhibition curated by Dennis Reid at the Art Gallery of Ontario.

Sam Durant's (1960-) past works have engaged subjects such as the civil rights movement, southern rock music, and modernism. His work has been included in exhibitions at the Massachusetts College of Art, Boston; Catriona Jeffries Galleru, Vancouver; Sedeljk Museum voor Actuele Kunst, Belgium; and the Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles, among others. In 2006 he edited a comprehensive monograph on Black Panther artist Emory Douglas. He lives in Los Angeles.

Jimmie Durham (1940-) was born in Washington, Arkansas and was active in theatre, performance, and literature related to the US civil rights movement throughout the 1960s. He has worked as a political organizer with the American Indian Movement, served as director of the International Indian Treaty Council, and representative to the United Nations. In 1995 Phaidon published a comprehensive survey of his art. He lives in Rome.

Andrea Geyer (1971-) lives in Freiburg and New York City and creates work mainly in photography and text. Past projects have staged public interactions to reconsider social spheres, understandings of citizenship, and national belonging. Her work

has been included in exhibitions at the Whitney Museum, New York; TATE Modern, London; Documenta 12, Kassel; the Kunstmuseum St. Gallen, Switzerland; IASPIS, Stockholm; and the Hessel Museum, Bard College, NY, among others.

Brian Jungen (1970-) is a Vancouver-based artist. His sculptures and installations play with ethnographic conventions and gain agency in reworking globalized forms of contemporary culture. In 2005 the Vancouver Art Gallery organized a survey of his work, which toured to the New Museum in New York and the Musée d'art contemporain de Montréal. His work is currently on view in the solo exhibition *Strange Comfort* at the Smithsonian's National Museum of the American Indian in Washington DC.

Since completing her BFA at Concordia University **Pia Fuchs** (German ID of Patricia Reed, 1977-) has exhibited her work widely. Recent projects and exhibitions include M6.1 *Contract of Discord* with IDEA magazine, Romania; M6.2 *Off-Season*, Cypress; *Just Space(s)*, Los Angeles Contemporary Exhibitions (with Markus Miessen); *Airs de Paris*, Centre Pompidou (with Bruno Latour); *White house Redux* at the Storefront Art and Architecture, NYC and *Building Berlin* at the Kitchener-Waterloo Art Gallery. She lives in Berlin.

Cheryl L'Hirondelle (1958-) is a halfbreed (Metis/Cree non status/treaty, French German, Polish) artist. Since the early 1980s she has created work in performance art, music (voice and percussion), theatre, performance poetry, storytelling, installation art, video, and new media (net.art, pirate radio and audio art). Her work has been included in the recent exhibitions *Database Imaginary* curated by Anthony Kiendl, Sarah Cook, and Steve Dietz, and *The World Upside Down* curated by Richard W. Hill.

Andrew Lee (1982-) is a Vancouver-based visual artist, writer, and musician. His installations, sculptures, video, and photography have explored attitudes of disavowed culture, interlanguage in Canadian families and the possibilities of time travel through videographic techniques. Lee has a BA in Art & Culture from SFU's School for the Contemporary Arts and is the technical director at the Western Front Society.

Candice Hopkins (1977-) is the Sobey Curatorial Resident, Indigenous Art, at the National Gallery of Canada. Her writing has been published widely including by MOT Press, New York University and the National Museum of the American Indian. Her recent curatorial projects include exhibitions on artist-made kits, fictional identities and Aboriginal art, and the relationships between feminism and video.



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