



Guise

Heidi Nagtegaal & Kristi Malakoff

Curated by Carie Helm

Opening Reception: Thursday, February 5, @ 7pm

Exhibition Dates: February 5 – March 22, 2009

Each artist creates idiosyncratic delineations between what is visible and what is hidden and considers the possibilities of potential or imagined lives and experiences. The craft-based, tactile aspects of their practices evoke human elements absent from many generically manufactured experiences in contemporary life. Nagtegaal knits a rainbow of facial hairpieces, exploring alternate identities. They convey a sense of comfort while prompting memory and exploring personal, gender and queer politics. The artist attempts to elevate these objects beyond reductive associations with marginalized craft histories, recalling the high art trope of the painter's palette through her use of coloured wool. Malakoff references the Maypole dance and May Day celebrations, traditionally colourful affairs meant to usher in the summer months and ward off winter, the artists' elucidation of this event strictly with the use of black paper modifies that perception and offers alternative readings of this oft interpreted and re-enacted event.

Heidi Nagtegaal received a BFA from Emily Carr Institute in 2005, lives in Vancouver and has been knitting continuously for the past 4 years. She has had recent exhibitions at CSA, Zulu Records, Western Front, Centre A, and the Helen Pitt Gallery ARC. Current work centres on ideas of folk and alternative cultures, costume, identity and disguise, as well as disappearance and appearance.

Kristi Malakoff is a 2005 graduate of Emily Carr Institute in Vancouver where she was the recipient of many awards, among them the Helen Pitt award, the Alvin Balkind Memorial Scholarship and the Governor General's Award. She has participated in artist residency programs at the Banff Centre, the Stride Gallery, Calgary, and SÍM, Reykjavík, Iceland and has recently returned from living in Berlin. She has exhibited extensively in both group and solo shows throughout Canada and in England, the US and Mexico. Her work is held in private collections across Canada and the US.

Carie Helm is a practicing artist, emerging curator and former RAG Curatorial Assistant. She earned a BFA from Okanagan University College (now UBC-O) in 2000 and has organized exhibitions for the Kelowna Art Gallery, the Alternator Gallery and the Richmond Art Gallery and exhibits her own work in solo and group exhibitions throughout British Columbia.

An Artist Talk will be held Kristi Malakoff & Heidi Nagtegaal talk about their artwork in the Gallery Saturday, February 7, 1:00-2:00pm.

Gallery Hours are 10:00am to 6:00pm from Monday to Friday and 10:00am to 5:00pm on Saturday & Sunday. For information on events and programming, visit the website at www.richmondartgallery.org
The artists thank and acknowledge the support of the Canada Council for the Arts.

The RAG is operated by the Richmond Art Gallery Association and is the City of Richmond's Public Contemporary Art Gallery under the auspices of the Office of Parks, Recreation & Cultural Services. The

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Artist Statements follow on PG 3.

Artist Statement - HEIDI NAGTEGAAL

Heidi Nagtegaal is a Studio-based artist with a Social Practice. (Conversely, one could say she has a Social Practice with a Studio focus.) Although her works are undeniably tactile and object based, without the relational element, they fall incomplete.

Working with textiles for the past 5 years, Nagtegaal has been exploring the DIY traditions of craft aesthetic, pushing the “cozy warm feeling” to a place of dark humor, where secrets are kept and dysfunction nourished. In doing so, in the pushing past, there is a healing. A space opens where one can reach, touch and confront things that were better off covered.

Nagtegaal lives and works in Vancouver BC, graduating from Emily Carr University of Art + Design in 2005. She has shown extensively in Vancouver, and is beginning to show nationally and internationally.

Artist Statement KRISTI MALAKOFF

As a child who grew up on Disney movies and books by Roald Dahl and C.S. Lewis, I have always been intrigued by notions of fantasy and the possibilities for escape into new, marvellous worlds via mundane objects such as a wardrobe (C.S. Lewis), a peach or an elevator (Roald Dahl). Parallel to this fascination was the delight I took, and continue to take, in the possibility of inanimate objects coming to life. As a serious child who was engaged from a young age in heavy discipline and competition, fantasy was my escape from the rigors of daily life.

Now, as an artist, I am becoming increasingly aware of my tendency to try to bring inanimate objects to life; in particular, I have been working on the 3-dimensional animation of 2-dimensional media including wallpaper, paper currency and cereal boxes. By presenting these ubiquitous objects in a new way, I hope to both challenge their entrenched symbolism as well as to bring humanism and the element of the handmade back into these highly manufactured products. As I breathe new life into these insentient things, I also strive to create a unique, exquisite object from one that was previously mass-produced. This work can also be framed as a formal investigation – that is, as rebellion against the pervasive, 2-dimensional image and my identification as a sculptor, attempting to bring this image back into its pre-representational (3-dimensional) state.

Through my installation work, I am interested in creating a visceral experience for the viewer – allowing them an opportunity to be visually and emotionally transported to a place that alternates between beauty and foreboding, awe and intimidation and reality and the façade. I have always believed that a degree of fantasy – as a respite from the responsibilities of daily life – is crucial for human health. As such, I wish to provide this sanctuary to the viewer. Though I am also interested in enchanting the viewer, it is the profundity of this experience that intrigues me. In addition, in an art world that is often focused on the cerebral, I wish to add to the mix the experience of the corporeal.

Finally, much of my work is concerned with explorations of beauty. In a world that is currently fraught with chaos and uncertainty, I believe that there is a great need for experiences that are sublime (in the common sense of the term) and exquisite. I find that the experience of beauty is as profound as any other and one that is capable of precipitating great social change. While daily newscasts serve to deaden the senses, I wish to engage the senses. As one subject that I believe is capable of such perfection, nature is quickly becoming a major subject area in my work. Challenging urban development, I strive to put nature back in the world – allowing it to reassert itself within the urban or domestic context.