



Compression (detail), video installation, 2008

Change without Notice

Seaton & Susan Stewart

November 28, 2008 – January 25, 2009

Richmond Art Gallery presents *Change Without Notice* two new video installations by Dorothy Seaton and Susan Stewart. The exhibit will be on display until January 25, 2009.

Dorothy Seaton and Susan Stewart are concerned about the economic and environmental changes occurring globally in our era. In addition to their interest in environmental sustainability, possible structural and conceptual economic revisions, and individual everyday material existence, with ***Change Without Notice*** Seaton and Stewart consider the related and equally urgent notion of social sustainability.

Change Without Notice consists of two large-scale video installations, *Open Broke* and *Compression*, examine the tensions within and between two types of social meaning-making: inviting shifts in consciousness that would enhance possibilities for greater social adaptability and generosity. It also takes on the possibility of representing unconventional gender identities, aiming thereby to offer a conceptual “technology” for creating the kinds of transformational social meanings an informed society needs and seeks.

On one long gallery wall a birthday party scene unfolds across a triptych of projections that provides a panoramic view of a conventional birthday-party, during which a set choreography of behaviour and actions occurs: in such circumstances everyone’s part is always already known. But, when a young girl’s attack on a piñata is enabled and celebrated, we see that the ritual permits a subversion of the conventional.

The companion diptych projection, *Compression*, addresses environmental concerns and interconnectedness. *Compression* consists of two large video projections one screen portrays a stunning landscape of ice and flowing water, on the other a scene of familiar ritual, a mother reading to her child. Upon closer examination, the viewer notices the story being read (a *Tintin* book) is about the politics of oil, and that the melting ice is actually moving upwards or backwards. The relationship between *Tintin*’s environmental message, and the visual references to melting glaciers, open up nuances that may not have been apparent at first glance and encourage further exploration by the viewer.

Seaton is an emerging artist and writer, working primarily in sculpture/installation, as well as photography and video. One of her primary artistic projects, in several different media, has been the exploration of illicit bodies (queered, transgendered, raced, abjected) in the context of particular social and political spaces. Her current writing focuses on the deep-level alterations in our philosophical and social beliefs that are emerging from the global environmental crisis. Seaton also works as a woodworker and carpenter.

Susan Stewart is a trans-disciplinary artist who produces video, photography, writing, and multi-media performance and installations, both in solo and collaborative productions. She was a member of the queer art collective, Kiss & Tell, whose award-winning and provocative productions were exhibited, published and

performed locally and internationally for over a decade. Stewart's work is concerned with the relational, ecological, and political aspects of the social body. Recent work includes the video installation *scene unseen* (2001), *A Space Without Fences Like You on the Prairie* (2006) in collaboration with Seaton, and the documentary *Policy Baby: The Story of Rita/Bev* (2007). Susan is an Associate Professor at Emily Carr University.

An **Artist Talk** with Seaton and Stewart will take place in the Gallery on Saturday January 17, 2pm.

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.

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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 RAG receives generous and ongoing financial support from the City of Richmond, the BC Arts Council, and the BC Gaming Commission.

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