

WYNICK/TUCK GALLERY EXHIBITION PROPOSAL

DIFFERENCE AND REPETITION

Caitlin Sutherland
2230845
December 11, 2009

DIFFERENCE AND REPETITION

I'd like to propose a show drawing on the work of Wynick/Tuck artists, Sara Angelucci, Kelly Mark, Kim Ouellette, and Janice Gurney. In addition to these artists, I'd like to introduce Leisure Projects (Meredith Carruthers and Susannah Wesley), a Canadian artist/curator collective that compliments the explorations of identity (regional/personal), the construction of memory and nostalgia concurrent in the other artists work.

I've found through personal curatorial practice, that part of what excites me is finding and strengthening connections between artists. I tend to be drawn towards group shows because they enable a broader conversation between the artists and the public, encouraging pluralist dialogues through sometimes contrasting visual forms. Each of the artists presented investigate identities and memories through routine, everyday objects and experiences. None of their projects become conclusive, but rather probe assemblages of personal understanding and encourage further inquisition into how and why our identities become formed by the people and places that surround us past and present, and our continuous obsessions with these fleeting apparitions of the past.

Many have tried to articulate this, but I think Deleuze might offer a distinct insight in *Difference and Repetition* that helps tie the work of these artists together. While examining the concept of time, Deleuze helps us pinpoint ourselves in the present. We can only function in the present, but we are always in motion, always becoming. Our pasts make up who we are, but by contemplating these moments of the past, we are no longer remembering, we are constructing something new, in turn effecting our future understanding of the present. Deleuze quotes Hume, "Repetition changes nothing in the object repeated, but does change

something in the mind that contemplates it.”¹ In the context of this exhibition, I think that the notion of repetition in this respect can be associated with the idea of medial, everyday objects that we the viewer can relate to. This can take the form of Sara Angelucci’s archival family photos or transcend into the ordinary objects and actions present in Kelly Mark’s work.

In a catalogue essay for Angelucci’s show at the Cambridge Galleries, *Somewhere In Between*, Ivan Jurakic posits precisely this point of homogeneous relation and identification with images of nostalgia. “Looking at vintage photographs, regardless of their compositional merit, is an extremely satisfying pursuit. Old photos are no different than antiques or other vintage items in this respect; they attract us because they are conduits into the past and as such they encourage our empathy.”² These photos seldom depict an experience out of the ordinary, if anything they represent quite the opposite; how many families have the same photos? Regardless of how ordinary or banal an object may seem, it is precisely this quality that resonates. This common subconscious association serves as Angelucci’s starting point, drawing the viewer (and no doubt herself) in almost immediately, the resultant landscape ripe for delving into her familial and concurrent personal identity.

Each of these artists use the past as a jumping point with which to examine the present or at least how we perceive the present. Kelly Mark’s piece *I Called Shotgun Infinity When I Was Twelve* (2006), and her continual use of everyday objects and activities not only cultivate the same sense of nostalgia present in Angelucci’s work, but also speaks to the location and structure of memory in time in a Deleuzian sense. Constructed out of neon orange lights, the subject and structure of this work merge. What does infinity really mean to a twelve year old? What does it mean now? To me, this piece gestures towards how hard it is

¹ Deleuze, Gilles. *Difference and Repetition*. London: Althone Press, 2004. 90

² Jurakic, Ivan. *Sara Angelucci: Somewhere In Between*. Kitchener: Pandora Press, 2006. 4

to hold onto a memory, something that is always in motion, always changing and refracting. Although it may seem the same, it can never be the same; even the act of choosing to remember becomes an act of reconstruction, as is echoed by Mark's use of neon.

Leisure Projects often reconstruct these sorts of actions and experiences in order to better understand the past and the present through public and private performance. In the video installation *Hairdone Verdun* (2005), a dual image documents the girls unassumingly dressed for the Montreal weather getting an up-do for an unspecified occasion. They sit in the same chair, and receive the same hairdo from the same woman, but there is a sense of displacement. Although almost everything in the scene is repeated, as is reflected by the mirror in the centre, the sitters differ. This strengthens the connection they seek to explore by undertaking this activity, that of casting off the second wave, dismissive attitudes of their mothers towards their grandmothers. Instead, Leisure looks for ways to identify with their grandmothers and the highly romanticized post-war feminist, which in turn informs their identities in the present as reinforced by the mirror, a baroque symbol of self-enlightenment. This reenactment is also characterized in the resultant work of their *Imaginary Places* Banff residency, *Brushing Up Against The Wild* (2007). Focusing on female figures from early 19th and 20th centuries, Leisure sought to collect and reenact their presence in the majestic Banff landscape, most stoically evoked by the use of traditional Hudson's Bay jackets, nostalgic and controversial symbols of Canadian identity.

Kim Ouellette similarly uses the Hudson's Bay blanket to look at female identity and the identity of a nation. Juxtaposing Ouellette's *Blanket Works* next to Leisure Projects' *Brushing up against the Wild*, helps strengthen the connections between personal and national, but also reinforces the power of the everyday object. Ouellette's work is referred to

as warm and cozy,³ not simply because she strategically uses the Hudson's Bay blanket as her canvas, but again because there is an immediate recognition and identification with that object and the somewhat kitsch imagery she employs a la Deleuze.

Jon Roffe provides a succinct synopsis of Deleuze which acts as a segway into Janice Gurney's portraits, "...Memory does not relate to a present, but to a past which has never been present, since it synthesizes from passing moments a form in itself of things which have never existed before the operation."⁴ It could be argued that Gurney draws on and examines this particular idea of the construction of memory and identity as seen in the 2002 series *Portraits From Memory* to more recent work, such as *Thick Description*. In each case the person who the portrait represents is absent, the description an incomplete and somewhat fictional characterization.

By presenting these artists together, the audience will have a chance to connect some of these broader issues of identity and memory within the work. These connections appear fluid and familiar, although of course this is the bait for the underlying Deleuzian framework. The diversity of artists should encourage patronage to the gallery in the slower summer months and the inclusion of Leisure Projects helps continue the tradition of Wynick/Tuck as a platform for emerging and mid-career artists.

³ Feaster, Felicia. "Marcia Wood Gallery: Kim Ouellette." <http://www.marciawoodgallery.com/artist/ouellette/intro.html>. 2003. December 8, 2009.

⁴ Roffe, Jon. "Deleuze, Gilles. Difference and Repetition: c. Difference and Time." <http://www.iep.utm.edu/deleuze/#SH4c>. July 12, 2005. December 11, 2009.

Installation Proposal

The works being proposed are flexible. However, the availability of one piece may effect the efficiency of another to elaborate the concept to the fullest. In such a case, the other pieces would be reviewed in order to avoid repetition.

Project Room (south/window)

Kelly Mark. *I Called Shotgun Infinity When I Was Twelve*, 2006

South Gallery

South Wall: Sara Angelucci. *Regular 8 (Swimmer)*, 2009; *Regular 8 (Skaters)*, 2009

East and West Walls: Sara Angelucci. *Everything In My Wallet/ Everything in My Father's Wallet*, 2005.

North Gallery

North Wall: Kim Ouellette. *Lake Louise Fire*, 2004; *National Park Series*, 2009; *Dog Team*, 2004

East and West Walls: Janice Gurney (whatever remains of Portraits from Memory). *Portrait of R. & J.*, 2002; *Curnoe Family Portrait*, 2001; *Past Self Portrait*, 2000

Project Room (north)

East Wall: Leisure Projects. *Hairdone Verdun*, 2005. [to be projected onto east wall]

*Please see dvd (Andrew- I'd like to pass this along in person)

West Wall: Leisure Projects. *Brushing Up Against The Wild Folio*, 2007 [Booklet provides documentation of performative series. To be installed on a small table of the artists' choosing]

*Please see image below

Didactic Materials

Previous catalogues of the Artists work should be provided at the front desk.

Extended labels and curatorial didactic are unnecessary, although regular labels should be included.



Documentation from Leisure Projects *Brushing Up Against The Wild*, 2007

To learn more about Leisure Projects, please visit <http://www.leisuregallery.ca/>