

JUDY RADUL

Downes Point And So Departed (Again)

SEPTEMBER 17 - OCTOBER 30

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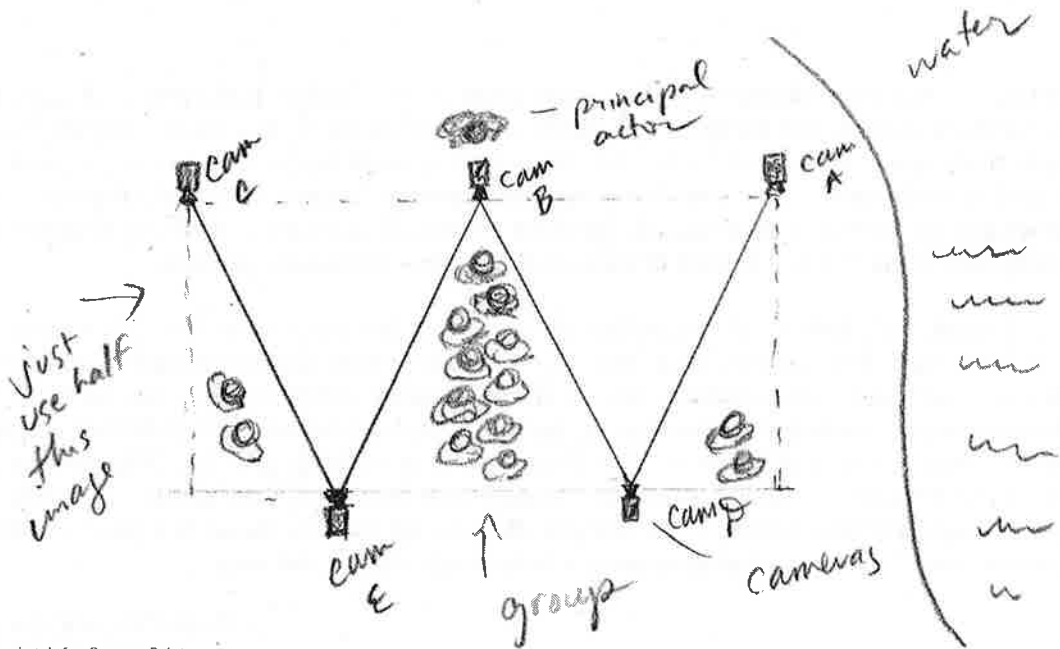
Opening Reception: Friday, September 16, 8-10pm

Artist Talk: Saturday, September 24, at 2pm

This exhibition of two multi-projection installations highlights Judy Radul's interest in the conventions of cinema and theatre. Both abstract and concrete, these works reveal the mechanisms of illusion through formal techniques, repetition and the insinuation of real time and space. The projections are spatially configured in response to the gallery space. Informed by her background in performance art, Radul draws out the contingencies of performance with incidental sounds, improvised moments and inconclusive narratives. We are made aware of the constituent elements of the theatrical – staging, direction, characters moving through space. The works question traditional notions of tragedy and comedy. Shot with stationary cameras, the moving images in the two installations seem caught between theatrical stillness and cinematic flux. The artist also brings considerable humour and an absurdist sensibility to this work.

Downes Point places us in the middle of a mise-en-scene between two panoramic projections. Filmed in an arbutus forest on Hornby Island, the dramatic setting is a quintessential westcoast landscape that refers to the pictorial traditions of landscape art. The natural setting is effectively transformed into a type of theatrical stage where a cast of characters slip in and out of seamed images in a play of exits and entrances. The action is an ambiguous interaction between a "director" and a cast of characters. The Poet/Director begins his soliloquy with "who's there?", the first words of Shakespeare's Hamlet. While giving instructions, he also seems to speak to something imaginary, a phantom presence, that is emphasized by the apparitions that occasionally appear on the screen. The artist set up five static cameras arranged at precise angles to produce a montage effect that demarcates the scene into a spatial architecture. (See sketch) The array of projections replicates this formal system. Radul plays with the anticipation in film that what lies beyond the image frame may be revealed to us, by simultaneously showing that view.

And So Departed (Again) engages notions of staged theatrics. Here, we witness five directors rehearsing an actress in a death scene. The edited footage of the twelve-hour session in which she repeatedly enacts variations of life leaving the body reveals the conventions of acting, as she comes



Artist's sketch for Downes Point

in and out of character. Moreover, we are made aware of the artifice of the rehearsal space and each director's individual technique. The clichés of faking death in this bizarre melodrama are derived from genre movies and classical theatre. This work highlights the impossibility of representing death with a live actor. The prolonged enactment creates a dynamic between staged theatrics and the realism of performance. The three projections arranged in close-up, medium-shot, and long-shot views forces a tension between static staging and moving pictures.

Born in Lillooet, B.C., Judy Radul lives in Vancouver and teaches art at Simon Fraser University. She has an MFA from Bard College, New York. Her interdisciplinary practice includes photography, performance and audio art, sculpture, video and mixed media installation. She has exhibited and performed across Canada and internationally, and her critical writing has been published widely. In 2003, she had a solo exhibition at The Power Plant in Toronto and in 2004 was part of *Videodreams: Between the Cinematic and the Theatrical* at Kunsthaus Graz, Austria, for which she also contributed a catalogue text. Later this year, *Downes Point* will be shown in a group exhibition of contemporary Vancouver art at Museum van Hedendaagse Kunst, Antwerp.

Helga Pakasaar, Curator