



PRESENTATION HOUSE GALLERY

MARCH 24 TO MAY 6, 2012

C.1983

PART II

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VIKKY ALEXANDER
KATI CAMPBELL
SHARE CORSAUT
CHRISTOS DIKEAKOS
DON GILL
RODNEY GRAHAM
LAIWAN
MARK LEWIS
HENRI ROBIDEAU
CHERYL SOURKES
IAN WALLACE

CURATOR: HELGA PAKASAAR

This exhibition looks at camera art in Vancouver from 1981 to 1987, an important cultural moment with particular relevance to photographic practices. The early eighties in Vancouver saw the emergence of new exhibition venues, artist initiatives, collectives, publishing projects, and critical writing that enriched the city's cultural milieu, while Vancouver artists increasingly contributed to international art discourses.

By the early 1980s, photographic strategies gained a new prevalence and photography had become a dominant mode for thinking about images. Artists working across mediums were involved in retooling images from diverse sources –mass media, the histories of photography and painting, popular culture –to critically examine the social meanings of visual language. Preferring to make rather than take pictures, the artists in *C.1983* demonstrate an awareness of the social role of the camera and the politics of representation. They consider pictorial conventions with an understanding of the discursive qualities of photographic images, often filtered through literary sensibilities. Strategies of quotation and citation are

evident throughout the exhibition. For these West Coast artists, the implications of media culture, of receiving reality from elsewhere, was not so much a matter of false information but rather a rich source for revealing the contradictions of experience in late modernity. They give credence to the opacity of images and what lies beyond surface information. Fiction and illusion are understood as inherent to seeing the world through a camera apparatus, and thus questions of representation remain unresolved.

Rodney Graham considers the essential problem of representing nature through a camera apparatus. His works are reflections on the nature of projection –how we apprehend and imagine the very existence of an image that changes over time. The structure and temporal rhythm of his phantasmic film projection –a night shot of a rushing river illuminated by high wattage lights powered by diesel generators – is determined by the technology, the length of a roll of colour 35 mm film and the cyclical labour of the projectionist.

Share Corsaut approaches questions of naturalism and photographic technology through camera-less photography. Her photograms are literally drawings with light enacted in a darkroom that record momentary interactions of forms and gesture. Experimenting with the rich painterly qualities of Polaroid film, her seductive images borrow from Russian constructivist aesthetics, especially the geometric designs

of El Lissitzky. **Cheryl Sourkes** also uses elaborate hands-on techniques that involve photogram processes and the manipulation of emulsion to construct photomontages. Working from various found sources (illustrations, books, scientific texts) she layers photographs, systems of notation and signage into dense collages that interpret collective mythologies and draw attention to conditions of perception.



Rodney Graham, *Two Generators*, 1984

Throughout the exhibition, the production of meaning in an information-laden world is taken up through methods of copying, repetition and reproduction.

Laiwan replicates images and texts from source material as diverse as Gnostic texts and Rilke poems in her handmade artist books with typewritten pages. The textual voices interwoven with almost illegible replicated images form fragmented narratives that repeat with the rhythm of incantations. Don Gill takes a more ironic stance toward problems of linguistics. His decidedly artisanal photomontages of hand-drawn stenciled words with images propose absurdist instructions for social change. Like his deadpan display of news clippings, these works riff on documentary evidence and the social realist claims for the facticity of news photography and captions.

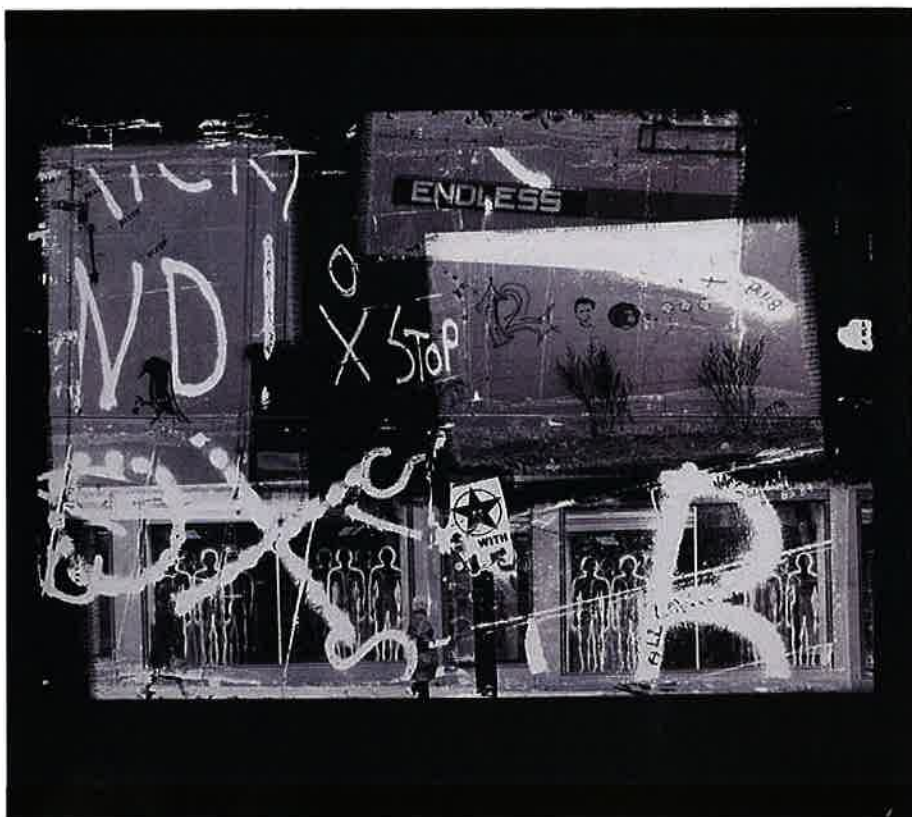
Eighties debates and picture theories often referred to the mediated world as a consciousness industry that caused a crisis in representation. The artists here redirect those ideas of media images as cultural signs more as loaded artifacts that carry social memory and subjectivities.

Kati Campbell removes all language and human figures from the photographs she



Share Corsaut, *No.14*, 1981

appropriates from advertising, arranges hieratically, and backlights, as if an ironic altarpiece to commercialism. An abandoned car, living room with a mysterious shape hovering in the foreground, and bathroom sink forms an enigmatic narrative that reconstitutes human presence. The quick takes and seductive surfaces of advertising photographs are similarly slowed down and given new meanings in **Vikky Alexander's** works. The effect of overlapping two photographs taken from the pages of magazines

Cheryl Sourkes, *Endless Stop*, 1985

and calendars amplifies their visual rhetoric in a way that redirects artifice into an intensified and idealized dream space. Mark Lewis is also concerned with subverting spectatorship in the *Burning*

series for which he rephotographs details from advertising, fashion, and pornography magazines. Sliced figures are collaged into a columnar shape that, together with a parallel text, sets into play the subjective

lure of the seductive, commodified bodies that further manipulates desire and implicates the viewer.

Ian Wallace's installation reconfigures readymade images into a spatial narrative, the arrangement of panels becoming architectural elements that reference the facades of classical buildings. The vagrants depicted in this work (evoking 19th century social realist photographs) are flanked by classical statuary, framing modern class concerns against the civic ideals of antiquity. Similarly allegorical, the diptych *1900* (1984) offers many fragmented views of artworks in a museum that are further reduced to gestural traces in the form of stenciled line drawings.

Collage as a technique for negotiating disjunctive realities is seen throughout the exhibition. Christos Dikeakos draws out the collisions of urban landscapes through views of debris and ruination. His photographs acknowledge the diverse histories and colonizations of the city. The economic and social shifts that impacted civic space so visibly during this period in Vancouver appear in his work as palimpsests of a place and its histories

Henri Robideau takes the most direct approach to considering what is at stake in photographic depiction. His panorama documenting an ad hoc civic protest in 1983 proposes an alternative to the biases of news photography and editorial captioning. Responding to the dictum that the camera records in order to forget, he asserts the importance of recording political activism by appending his own written commentary that underscores how photography is interwoven with history.

Laiwan, *Unknown Cause* (detail), 1982



Don Gill, *Xenophobia series* (detail), 1980-1985

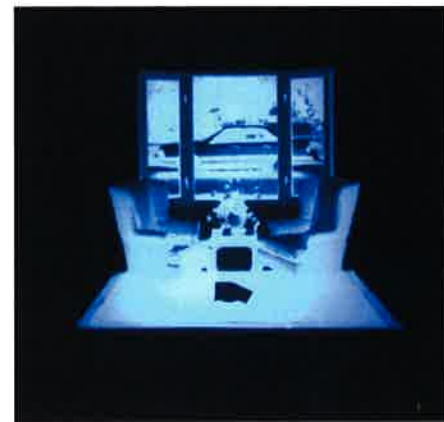
VIKKY ALEXANDER studied at the Ontario College of Art and graduated from the Nova Scotia College of Art and Design in 1979. Her photographic works and photo-mural installations of the 1980s were exhibited widely throughout North American and Europe. She had exhibitions at Coburg Gallery in Vancouver in 1983 and 1987, and was in many group shows in New York such as *The Stolen Image and its Uses* (1983), and *Material Fictions* (1987) at 49th Parallel Centre for Contemporary Canadian Art.

KATI CAMPBELL graduated in Interdisciplinary Studies from Simon Fraser University in 1984 and received a M.A. in social history of art from Leeds University in 1991. She co-founded the Vancouver Association for Noncommercial Culture in 1986, an artist collective that mounted public projects until it disbanded in 1998. VANC produced unique public art projects such as *Objects of Labour* (1986) and the bus shelter project *AdVerse Practises* (1988). Campbell was in numerous shows throughout the 1980s

including *Op-positions*, Second Fotografie Biennale, Rotterdam, *Canadian Biennial of Contemporary Art*, National Gallery of Canada (1989), *Vancouver Now*, Walter Phillips Gallery, Banff (1987), and *Urban Circuits*, YYZ Artists' Outlet, Toronto (1985). She produced a number of bus shelter projects including for *Prive/Public* (1990) in Rennes, France and Skytrain Stations in Vancouver. She had a solo exhibition at the Vancouver Art Gallery in 1992. *Production* was originally exhibited at *Urbanarium* in 1987

SHARE CORSAUT began painting in the 1960s and graduated from the Vancouver School of Art in the 1970s. Influenced by the experimental photography of Man Ray and Moholy Nagy, she began producing black and white photograms in the late 1970s. She showed locally at the Charles H. Scott Gallery, Surrey Art Gallery and Coburg Gallery in the 1980s. The large polaroid photographs in *C.1983* were made in 1981 when Corsaut gained access to the large format Polaroid studios in Cambridge, Massachusetts. These works were first exhibited in a solo show in 1981 at the Southern Alberta Art Gallery, Lethbridge and in *Vancouver: Art and Artists 1931-1983* (1983) at the Vancouver Art Gallery.

CHRISTOS DIKEAKOS graduated from the University of British Columbia in 1970. He played an important role in the production and development of photo-based art in Vancouver. He curated and contributed to the catalogue for the Vancouver Art Gallery's touring Ian Wallace retrospective of 1987. His mixed media works of the 1980s focused on the diverse histories and colonizations of Vancouver. Dikeakos had solo exhibitions at Coburg Gallery, Vancouver in 1985 and at the Vancouver Art Gallery in 1986. Throughout the 1980s he also took part in group shows such as *Open Site*, *Center Which is Time* (1986), *Dazibao Gallery*, Montreal and *It's Classical* (1988) at the Surrey Art Gallery.



Kati Campbell, *Production* (detail), 1987



Mark Lewis. *They Sucked a Filthy Tongue...*, 1987

DON GILL studied at Simon Fraser University and the University of Victoria and has a master of fine arts from the California Institute of the Arts. He began exhibiting in 1976 and participated in numerous group shows in Vancouver throughout the 1980s, including *Photoperspectives '85* (1985) at Presentation House Gallery and *Camera-works* (1986) at Or Gallery. He also took part

in the Vancouver Association for Noncommercial Culture, an artist collective devoted to exploring art practices for engagement. His solo exhibitions *The Attitude of Everyday Life* (1985) and *Xenophobia-28* (1986) took place at the affiliated (N)On Commercial Gallery and Window for Noncommercial Culture, respectively.

RODNEY GRAHAM studied art history at the University of British Columbia and Simon Fraser University. An artist and musician, Graham has created a rich body of work, beginning with the light event installations *Camera Obscura* and *Illuminated Ravine* both of 1979. He has made use of such diverse mediums as film, photography, installation, painting, prints, artist books and music. Solo exhibitions of the 1980s include Galerie Johnen and Schottle, Cologne (1986), Art Gallery of Ontario (1987), Ydessa Hendeles Gallery, Toronto (1987), Vancouver Art Gallery (1988), Stedelijk Van Abbe Museum, Amsterdam, *Books and Writings by Rodney Graham* (1989), Yves Gaevert, Brussels, and Or Gallery (1989). His first film work, *Two Generators* of 1984 was launched as a cinema screening during the exhibition *Rodney Graham, Ken Lum, Jeff Wall, Ian Wallace* at 49th Parallel Centre for Contemporary Art, New York in 1985.

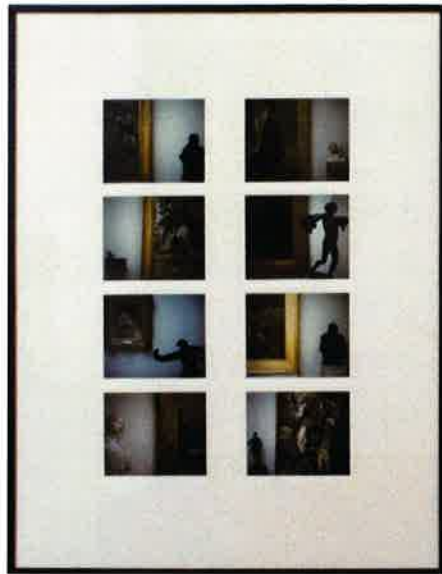
LAIWAN studied at Emily Carr College of Art and Design and began exhibiting in 1982. She founded Or Gallery as a personal project in April 1983 and was artist in residence and curator for a year when it became an artist run centre. During the eighties she wrote and produced artist books, performed with the music group "The Courage of Lassie", and initiated the First

Vancouver Lesbian Film Festival (1988). Her works were exhibited at the Miyagi Museum of Fine Arts, Sendai, Japan (1984), *Artist's Books*, Universitat Oldenburg, Germany (1985), *Broken Muse*, Vancouver Art Gallery (1986), *25 Young Artists*, The Convertible Showroom (1986) and *Yellow Peril: Reconsidered* that toured across Canada.

MARK LEWIS studied at Harrow College of Art, London and the Polytechnic of Central



Vikky Alexander. *St. Sebastian*, 1983



Ian Wallace, *1900* (detail), 1984

London, and later taught in the fine arts program at the University of British Columbia. By the late 1980s his photographic and billboard works were exhibited widely in *Tyrannies of Intimacy* (1989), Or Gallery, *Of Politics and Conventions* (1989), Mois de Photo, Montreal, *Adverse Practices* (1988), Western Front, and *Sexual Difference: Both Sides of the Camera* (1988), Wallach Art Gallery, Columbia University, New York. His critical writing was widely published and in 1988 he co-founded Public Access, a writer and artist collective in Toronto, which

produces *Public*, a journal of art and theory. The works in *C.1983* from the *Burning* series were initially exhibited at Artspeak Gallery in Vancouver in 1988.

HENRI ROBIDEAU is a photographer and photographic historian whose two-decade long project, the *Pancanadienne Gianthropological Survey*, is a record of eccentric Canadian landmarks. In 1983, he had a solo exhibition at the Coburg Gallery and took part in *October Show, Vancouver Art and Artists 1931-1983*. Throughout the 1980s he taught photography at Simon Fraser University and Emily Carr College and conducted extensive research on the historical British Columbia photographer Mattie Gunterman. His panorama in *C.1983* was first exhibited in the *Warehouse Show* in 1984 and at political events and labour halls, and in 1992 at the Centre Nationale de la Photographie in Paris as part of the exhibition *Panorama des Panoramas*.

CHERYL SOURKES studied at McGill University before moving to Vancouver in 1967 where she became involved with Intermedia, an experimental art collective. University and post-graduate studies in sciences, psychology and biology led Sourkes to explore behavioural science, and physiological processes. Throughout her career as an artist,

writer and curator, she has explored themes of language, time, history and the conditions of perception through photography, and more recently through new technologies. During the 1980s she exhibited in Vancouver at the Western Front, Blue Sky Gallery, Vancouver Art Gallery and had a solo exhibition *Street Photographs* at Coburg Gallery in 1983. Her photographic collages were initially shown in *Of Difference Lost and Retrieved* at Presentation House Gallery in 1985.

IAN WALLACE completed an MA in art history at the University of British Columbia in 1968. He taught briefly at UBC and then at Emily Carr College of Art and Design from 1972 until 1998 where he introduced contemporary art into the curriculum and developed an important visiting artist and critic series. During the eighties, he was a prolific writer and his critical texts were published widely. In addition to exhibitions across Canada including *Stations*, International Centre for Contemporary Art in Montreal (1987), he exhibited in Toyama, Japan (1987), Rome (1988), St. Etienne, France (1989) and Frankfurter Kunstverein, Germany. *The Poverty* series that Wallace began in 1980 went through many iterations in different mediums including photographic sequences, paintings with silkscreen and laminated photographs, video and a book.



Christos Dikeakos, *Column Ruin* (installation view), 1987



Henri Robideau, July 23, 1983, *Giant crowd of 50,000 people...* (detail), 1983



Chris Gallagher, *Terminal City* (still), 1982, 8 minutes, 16mm film

C. 1983

VIKKY ALEXANDER

Between Dreaming and Living, #5, #1, #2, 1985
cibachrome prints
three panels, 39.5 x 58.2 cm. each
Courtesy the artist
and Trépanier Baer Gallery, Calgary

St. Sebastian, 1983
C-print
127 x 96.5 cm.
Courtesy the artist
and Trépanier Baer Gallery, Calgary

KATI CAMPBELL

Production, 1987
mixed media
76 x 212 x 24.7 cm.
Courtesy the artist

SHARE CORSAUT

No. 14, 1981
Polacolor photogram
57.2 x 47.7 cm.
Collection of Robert Keziere

No. 20, 1981
Polacolor photogram
24.1 x 19 cm.
Courtesy the artist

No. 28, 1981
Polacolor photogram
19 x 24.1 cm.
Collection of Robert Keziere

No. 15, 1981
Polacolor photogram
57.2 x 47.7 cm.
Courtesy the artist

Untitled, 1983
cyanotype photogram
22.5 x 17.7 cm.
Collection of the Surrey Art Gallery.
Gift of Bill Jeffries

CHRISTOS DIKEAKOS

Column Ruin, 1987
gelatin silver print, glass
325 x 66.8 x 40.5 cm.
Courtesy the artist
and Catriona Jeffries, Vancouver

False Creek Panoramas, 1983/84
gelatin silver prints
6 x 113.5 cm.
Courtesy the artist
and Catriona Jeffries, Vancouver

DON GILL

The Attitude of Everyday Life series, 1985
Ektacolor prints
two panels, 50.5 x 63.0 cm. each
Courtesy the artist

Xenophobia series, 1980-1985
mixed media on paper
six panels, 45.7 x 60.9 cm
Courtesy the artist

RODNEY GRAHAM

Millennial Project for an Urban Plaza, 1986
mixed media
dimensions variable
Collection of the Vancouver Art Gallery,
Vancouver Art Gallery Acquisition Fund
Two Generators, 1984
35 mm. 4 minutes, sound
Courtesy the artist
screened from 9:00pm -10:30pm on May 4
at Pacific Cinémathèque, 1131 Howe St, Vancouver

WORKS IN THE EXHIBITION

LAIWAN

A Mythology in Thirteen Fragments, 1985,
second edition 2012, ed. 20

Cave Caveat, 1985

Unknown Cause, 1982,
ed. 14, in English & German
Courtesy the artist

MARK LEWIS

His Scented Body Burned..., 1987
C-print
151.5 x 124.5 and 151.5 x 52.8 cm.
Collection of the Morris and Helen Belkin Art
Gallery, University of British Columbia, Vancouver

They Sucked a Filthy Tongue..., 1987

C-print
151.5 x 124.5 and 151.5 x 52.8 cm.
Collection of the AMS Student Society, University
of British Columbia, Vancouver

HENRI ROBIDEAU

July 23, 1983, Giant crowd of 50,000 people..., 1983
gelatin silver print
43.5 x 228.0 cm.
Courtesy the artist

CHERYL SOURKES

Endless Stop, 1985
Gelatin silver print
50.8 x 60.9 cm
Courtesy the artist

Point of Synthesis, 1985

Gelatin silver print
50.8 x 40.6 cm
Courtesy the artist

Suppressor – Mutator, 1984
Gelatin silver print
50.8 x 40.6 cm
Courtesy the artist

U: Person Ready, 1985
Gelatin silver print
50.8 x 60.9 cm
Courtesy the artist

The Diver of Nineveh, 1983
Gelatin silver print
50.8 x 40.6 cm
Courtesy the artist

Figures of the Middle Realm, 1985
Gelatin silver print
50.8 x 60.9 cm
Courtesy the artist

IAN WALLACE

The Imperial City, 1986
gelatin silver prints, plexiglas
four panels, 247.0 x 61.0 cm each
University of Lethbridge Art Collection,
Gift of the artist, 1991

1900, 1984
cibachrome prints, silkscreen
two panels, 142.0 x 112.0 cm. each
Courtesy the artist and Catriona Jeffries, Vancouver

CBC Archival Footage from the 1980s
Collagist: Anu Sahota
Courtesy the CBC Archives, Vancouver

C.1983

EVENTS

C.1983

PART II: MARCH 24 TO MAY 6, 2012

EXHIBITION RECEPTION

Friday, March 23 at 7:00pm

Screening Rodney Graham, *Two Generators*, 7:30pm To 9:00pm
running continuously in the Presentation House Theatre

PANEL DISCUSSION

Thursday, March 29 at 7:30pm

A panel discussion about the activities and camera practices of the 1980s.
With Kati Campbell, Don Gill, Cate Rimmer and Cheryl Sourkes

PACIFIC CINÉMATHÈQUE SCREENINGS

Friday, May 4 at 7:30pm

7:30pm A program of short films made in the 1980s by Vancouver experimental filmmakers
9:00pm A 90-minute screening of Rodney Graham's renowned film work *Two Generators* (1984)

PRESENTATION HOUSE GALLERY

333 Chesterfield Avenue North Vancouver British Columbia Canada V7M 3G9

Hours: Wednesday to Sunday 12 to 5 pm www.presentationhousegallery.org

THIS EXHIBITION IS PRESENTED IN HONOUR OF KITTY HELLER,
WITH GENEROUS SUPPORT FROM HER ESTATE.

We are grateful for the ongoing support from our funders: The Canada Council for the Arts, the British Columbia Arts Council, the Province of British Columbia, the City of North Vancouver through the North Vancouver Arts Office, Metro Vancouver and the Yosef Wosk Foundation. Satellite Gallery is made possible through the generous support of the Michael O'Brian Family Foundation.