

DIAZ CONTEMPORARY

July 25 2006
Press Release

ABSTRACTION

JORDAN BROADWORTH*, FRANCISCO CASTRO, CORA CLUETT**, KARIN DAVIE, JONATHAN FORREST***, ILSE GRADWOHL, ELIZABETH MCINTOSH, RUBEN ORTIZ TORRES, IRMA PALACIOS, ELSPETH PRATT, LAURA ST.PIERRE

JULY 27–SEPTEMBER 2, 2006
OPENING SATURDAY JULY 29, 3-6 PM

Diaz Contemporary presents a collection of outstanding abstract painters and sculptors from Toronto, Montreal, Vancouver, Saskatoon, Los Angeles, and Mexico City currently working in ways that reinvent and extend Abstraction as a genre.

Jordan Broadworth creates refined canvases with elegant coiling lines that criss-cross their surfaces. Reminiscent of delicate organisms pressed between glass slides for viewing under microscopes, Broadworth achieves his spare lushness through the laboured use of squeegees; paint is laid on, then scraped down, leaving the motion lines of the tool's use. The effect is that of secretive information relayed to the viewer.

Francisco Castro creates works filled with iterations of repeated squares. Using lyrical muted tones that define regular geometric shapes, Castro's canvases are hybridised systems referencing the austerity of Suprematism or early Modernism, the natural, and the domestic. Castro's paintings both embrace and break with their materiality—enforcing the dimension and construction of the canvases while simultaneously denying them and creating an illusional space.

Cora Cluett makes visceral, viscous works with seemingly gelatinous layers of paint and glazes that catch and diffuse the light. Conjuring up references to the body, wounds, and the healing process, Cluett's pieces form an empathetic dialogue between the viewer and the work. Long engaged by feminist theory, Cluett succeeds in melding her investigations into the possibilities of her own techniques with contemporary theories about the body, and sees her paintings as continuations of processes of growth and decay.

Karin Davie creates large swirling canvases with whorls of colour that gush across their surfaces and form punctum lozenges of paint. Implicitly physical, a connection is made between their creation and the contemplation of them.

Jonathan Forrest uses his canvases as horizontal work surfaces upon which he applies flat layers of paint, using stencils to block out areas. The resulting works are Jacob's ladders of uni-dimensional blocks that hover or recede in a proto-videogame-like fashion.

Ilse Gradwohl is known for her neutral canvases, built up with palimpsests of glaze and liminal hints at form swimming across their surfaces. Subtle and lyrical, her paintings feel deeply personal, as if one might be interrupting a personal reverie suddenly made material.

Elizabeth McIntosh has accrued a very personal abstract language, grazing on the tropes of Neo-Geo and home textile design of the 60s and 70s, mixed with references to heady High Modernist architectural detail. These suggestions for form are reiterated with strong flat colours used in surprising combinations.

Ruben Ortiz Torres has become known for his intelligent sculptural and painterly discussions with the aesthetics and politics of Chicano-associated car customisations and other facets of Mexican American culture. For several years he has been

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creating hypnotic, glossy works using the paints developed for custom cars and other vehicles, featuring iridescence, colour shifting, and holographic flecks.

Irma Palacios is one of Mexico's foremost Abstract painters. Her muted canvases carefully repeat subtle forms such as dots and lines, using earthy browns and greens, scumbled with dark blues and greys. The effect is mesmerising, with forms shifting between suggestions of geographic markings and purposeful scarring of the body, moving across subtle colour fields.

Elsbeth Pratt creates spectacularly sparse sculptures using familiar construction materials including foam insulation board, plastic laminate veneer, and MDF. Where these materials are intended to be used in measured and solid ways, Pratt creates airy assemblages undermining this purpose and underscoring their intrinsically feeble nature. Her works become ghosts or memories of construction sites, types, or buildings.

Laura St. Pierre accumulates mis-tinted household paints, rejected furniture, and discarded packaging materials. These elements are combined with the vernacular of D-I-Y home decoration and renovation to create works that sprawl between painting and sculptural installation. The final pieces appear almost as exuberant window displays, abandoned mid-way though their production, with discarded wrappings coming together to re-present themselves as viable objects.

*Jordan Broadworth appears courtesy of Leo Kamen Gallery, Toronto

**Cora Cluett appears courtesy of Wynick Tuck Gallery, Toronto

***Jonathan Forrest appears courtesy of NewZones Gallery, Calgarythedrakehotel.ca.

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YVONNE VENEGAS
FOTOGRAFIA RECIENTE

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Diaz Contemporary is pleased to present young Mexican artist Yvonne Venegas' first solo exhibition with the gallery. For *Fotografía Reciente*, Venegas shows a series of 25 colour images, framed in a contemporary Mexican style.

Born in California, raised in Tijuana, Yvonne Venegas spent her childhood assisting her society wedding photographer father with his work. Now living in both San Diego and Tijuana, Venegas trains her eye back on the lives of the middle-class, Mexican women who were her childhood friends. Venegas' eye is empathetic, yet she is still an outsider of sorts, and this dissonance is palpable in her images.

The images presented in *Fotografía Reciente* exist in a netherworld between documentary images and family snapshots. Somewhat personal, there is a haunting sense of an allowed intrusion given to someone familiar yet not wholly part of that which she is capturing. Awkward gestures and poses—expressions generated by the subjects, but not intended for the eye of the camera—create sumptuous disjunction. Gestures and expressions are supported by Venegas' keen awareness of the lush possibilities of seemingly banal palettes, wherein she makes beige living rooms become heaving oceans of chromatic nuance.

Yvonne Venegas has had recent solo exhibitions at Casa de America, Madrid; Musée des Beaux Arts d'Orléans, Orléans; and the Museum of Contemporary Art San Diego, San Diego. Recent group exhibitions include Tijuana Sessions, ARCO Fair, Madrid; *Fotografía Mexicana Contemporánea*, Huesca; *From Baja to Vancouver*; travelling exhibition, Seattle Museum of Art, Seattle; The Museum of Contemporary Art San Diego, San Diego; and Cornerhouse, Manchester. Venegas won first prize at the X Bienal de Fotografía, Mexico, 2004; and the Young Creators Grant from the Fondo Nacional para la Cultura y las Artes, FONCA, 2004.