

# DIAZ CONTEMPORARY

## MEDIA RELEASE

### Michelle Allard

#### *In Transit*

November 30, 2006 – January 13, 2007

Opening Thursday, November 30, 6–9 pm

Artist in attendance

Diaz Contemporary presents Michelle Allard's eagerly anticipated first solo exhibition with the gallery, *In Transit*, for which Allard is showing sculptural works realised in the gallery space, a series of ink drawings on paper, and C-prints of recent works.

Michelle Allard's work is enmeshed in the quotidian languages of the materials used to package, protect, and ship consumer goods, and those that make up the ephemera of bureaucratic functioning. Lengths of packing tape, bubble-wrap and pallet-wrap, and quantities of cardboard boxes and letter-size paper are consumed in her spatial interjections. Combined ad nauseum with themselves or with each other, Allard's materials are formed into spheres, piles, stacks, or messy rivulets that spread across the gallery. For the work *In Transit (Box sphere)* cardboard boxes gather and cling together under a cocoon of the plastic used to secure pallets loaded with merchandise, with the resultant appearance of pixellated scaled-up fish eggs. In *Bubble Balls 1-3 (SML)*, Allard has spun the safety wrapping commonly used to protect artwork, or in the shipping of fragile items, into translucent spheres. These pieces sit on the floor, somehow massive, somehow not, suggesting the middle stages of a particular compulsion to collect, amass, and combine.

The works on paper that accompany these sculptures, *Storage + Mobility Drawings* seem speculative in the context of Allard's sculptures, appearing as observations of potential material or as studies of future quarry for her art production; observations of items and elements that Allard has already made use of or that she may harvest next. *In Transit* presents a conversation with the base matter of our socio-economic system and the trappings that sustain it wherein all the material means devised to transport, protect, and sustain have now been highlighted as the object itself; material intended to act merely as conveyance now becomes the essence of objecthood itself.

Michelle Allard completed her Master of Fine Arts at the University of Guelph in 2003, later moving back to Vancouver where she now lives and works. In 2006 Allard held a solo exhibition at Toronto's Mercer Union, and showed at the eyelevel gallery in Halifax. She has recently completed a series of artist residencies at the Aomori Contemporary Art Centre in Aomori, Japan; with Association Pollen in Monflanquin, France; and at Ace Art Inc., in Winnipeg.

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## Oona Stern

### *Patio*

November 30, 2006 – January 13, 2007

Opening Thursday, November 30, 6–9 pm

Artist in attendance

Diaz Contemporary presents the first Canadian solo exhibition of New York City-based artist Oona Stern, featuring the site-specific installation work, *Patio*.

For Diaz Contemporary, Oona Stern has created a large re-imagined patio walkway made of painted lumber and carpet. Appearing either as if dragged inside, or trying to make an escape to the outside, *Patio* spans these two spaces—the indoors and the outdoors—through the portal of the gallery's rolling garage door. Incongruous in both areas, *Patio* becomes a misfit island adrift on cement and asphalt; a displaced homage to the suburban conventions of the construction of outdoor leisure zones.

Oona Stern's practice is concerned with the transposition of the ubiquitous material languages of construction and architecture in ways that accent and highlight structures that might otherwise remain overlooked or passed by, as a means of investigating the forms and cultural practices of the urban and suburban environments. Stern creates installations using materials associated with architecture, landscape architecture, and interior spaces, such as drywall, carpeting, advertising posters, and fake or real greenery, and graphic references to construction materials such as brick, stone, and lumber. Frequently hybridising materials so that one is made to mimic the form or appearance common to another, Stern suggestively re-inserts the historical appearance of a structure, masquerades one façade style to mirror another, or purposely mistranslates construction standards and locations. Stern's work invites the viewer to reconsider habitual spaces or to rethink familiar structures, achieved through transpositions that are practically alchemical, allowing the viewer to play the role of the catalyst.

Oona Stern received her MFA from New York's School of Visual Arts in the late '90s. She has exhibited internationally with solo shows at Galerie Reinhard Hauff, and the Bund Bildender Künstlerinnen Württembergs in Stuttgart, White Columns and Elizabeth Harris Gallery in New York City, and has been included in group exhibitions at locations including Feature Inc., Sara Meltzer Gallery, The Drawing Center, the Islip Art Museum, the MIT List Visual Arts Center, and others. The recipient of numerous grants and fellowships, Stern has participated in residencies run by the Edward Albee Foundation, Dieu Donné Papermill, and the LMCC Workspace, NYC. The artist currently lives and works in New York City.

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## UPCOMING

**January 18 – February 24**

**Allison Hrabluik**  
*Rossendale*

**Leon Vranken**

**March 01 – April 07**

**Andrew Reyes**

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