

# DIAZ CONTEMPORARY

## PRESS RELEASE

### *Sculpture Group Show* 2 August to 1 September 2007

Mowry Baden, Michelle Bellemare\*, Daniel Borins & Jennifer Marman, James Carl, Carlo Cesta, Patrick Coutu\*\*, Christian Giroux & Daniel Young, Allison Hrabluik, Kristiina Lahde, Ricardo Rendon, Andrew Reyes, Francine Savard\*\*, Oona Stern, Flavio Trevisan, Dallas Wehrle

The *Sculpture Group Show* at Diaz Contemporary includes a selection of works by sculptors working in Toronto, Montreal, Vancouver, New York and Mexico City. The show presents a wide spectrum of stylistic, formal and conceptual tendencies and highlights diverse approaches to materials and techniques that challenge preconceived notions of contemporary sculpture-making.

**Mowry Baden's** *Fulcrum of Vision* playfully renders our visual perception of surrounding architecture and the interception of particular sightlines which block or highlight nearby architectural structures. Baden's maquette reveals the point of view where the viewer's sightline is blocked by a 6' aluminum structure when seated in a specific position. The blocked architecture is BC Place, the largest public building in Vancouver. *Fulcrum of Vision* was a proposal for a public art competition in Vancouver for a site at 858 Beatty Street.

**Michelle Bellemare's\*** life-size Casket comically alludes to more serious and grave concerns and anxieties of contemporary life. A sarcophagus shaped Ziploc container clearly stands as a vessel for the human body leftover and preservation. Notions of the efficiency of urban life, moving from one prefabricated disposable compartment to another in order to keep up with the demands of contemporary society are questioned. Are we consuming or being consumed by a society whose mandate is to use and then discard what is no longer valued ?

**Daniel Borins and Jennifer Marman's** piece *Big Blue* combines sound and sculpture. Angularly hanging and erectly standing, *Big Blue* expresses breadth and architecture, while overtly singing its weighty scale through big band music. Startling the viewer with its off-putting perspective and distorted composition, the piece is contrastingly minimal and smooth in finish and calmly absorbs light and shadow. Adding to this interplay between overtness and subtlety is the music that emanates from within-the famous Big Band standard "In the Mood" by Glenn Miller.

**James Carl's** *Woof* sculptures, black serpentine carvings that mimic Bose audio speakers, have a Brancusi-like mass and highly sleek finish. Transforming a common placed mass-produced technology into durable material form, Carl challenges the viewer to reconsider the everyday artifacts of consumer culture.

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**Carlo Cesta's** *Vertical Blind* combines standard vertical blinds with wrought iron and Plexiglas. This work represents an early example of Cesta's metal sculptures in which contextual references subvert pure abstraction. The work can be seen as a collision between local traditions and international ideals. *Vertical Blind* was first shown in *Perspective 94* at the Art Gallery of Ontario.

**Patrick Coutu's\*\*** *Pointe* blurs the frontiers between forms obtained by natural processes and those constructed by human activities. *Pointe* seems to have taken its shape on its own; its organic formation obtained by thousands of layers of streaming mineral material. Hanging from the gallery ceiling as stalactites hang from caves, his technique reveals the extent of his time consuming process.

**Christian Giroux and Daniel Young's** *Alouette* emulates the form of a space satellite constructed as a large-scale sculptural model. Recreating a 1960s-era Canadian satellite, *Alouette*, like the Soviet and American communication satellites Giroux and Young have also reproduced, expresses the overblown and distressed spirit of the nations that developed them in the Cold War era.

**Allison Hrabluik's** *Flemish Tree* is a reproduction in paper mache and bark rendering photocopies, of a porcupine tree found in abundance in Flanders. These trees are highly pruned each year, resembling a cast of limbless roadside figures. The work was made to align with the video *Rosendale* (2006), which looked at the self-help relationship between a farmer and his equipment. The porcupine tree took the role of the physical symbiosis of the two – a kind of 'THE FLY' like outcome of their coupling.

**Kristiina Lahde's** *Re-Tread*, a life-size tractor tire, emulates the design of the neo-gothic carved wood and stone architectural details found throughout the University of Toronto's Hart House building. Combining the tractor tire's industrial aesthetic and neo-gothic patterns, *Re-Tread* brings together the seemingly opposing ideological positions between the architecture of Hart House and the farming industry that created it.

**Ricardo Rendon's** *Tombstone* is part of his ongoing project, TIEMPO MUERTO, which registers and commemorates specific time and space of artistic production by means of a tombstone. The tombstones, acting as unique autobiographical accounts of the artist's creative process, are accumulated over time and are to be exhibited altogether. Each tombstone is made in the site of its presentation, inspired by the formal characteristics of the tombstones of the region.

**Andrew Reyes' Adults**, is a large, black monochrome. The obviousness of its monumentality along with its allusion to dead technology is the artist's meditation on modernity. *Adults* was first shown in the exhibition, *News from Nowhere* at the Susan Hobbs Gallery in 2005.

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**Francine Savard's** \*\* *Élément 17D* and *Élément 19B*, constructions made of plywood, are outcomes of a series of shaped monochrome paintings, *Suite 1-111* (2005). The series, exposing the folding and unfolding of a simple cardboard box, displays the delicate position between the real and the represented, between object and "objecthood", each element playing a part in the "inventory of the possible" and the "quasi-infinity of the banal". *Élément 17D* and *Élément 19B* give back the container quality of the represented box in its harsh reality.

**Oona Stern's** *floor tile*, made from adhesive vinyl, reproduces a pattern found in New York City tenements and pre-war housing. As a drawing affixed to the floor, it is almost without material presence. Embedded with nostalgic emotion, *floor tile* is a cultural artifact, a memory, a ghost glowing through the floor.

**Flavio Trevisan's** *Public Space (grotto)* approaches the exploration of constructed space through the continuous accrual of a single surface. The work's accumulation of the plaster-like surface creates the illusion of a continuous folded volume, and appears to give the otherwise hollow construction a mass. The resulting continuous undulating surface reads at times shallow or deep, depending on the lighting conditions and the location of the viewer.

The process alludes to the now abandoned construction system of interior surfaces in churches and in theatres, where the formal space on public view is separate from the architecture of the building. In this work, once the viewer has experienced this public side first, the rear or private supporting side comes into view, providing a very different experience of the same space. The framework is revealed to be composed of milled pine strips, fastened together to form a coarse wire frame-like structure. This frame is then covered with millboard, with the final surface of drywall compound being hand applied to smooth out the transitions.

**Dallas Wehrle's** *Airplane* models, hanging from the gallery ceiling, playfully transform mass produced model kits into art objects and in the process disrupt conventional model making and sculptural aesthetics.

\*Michelle Bellemare appears courtesy of Peak Gallery, Toronto

\*\*Patrick Coutu and Francine Savard appear courtesy of Galerie Rene Blouin, Montreal

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